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# THE BIBLE

## ITS STRUCTURE AND PURPOSE

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# THE BIBLE, ITS STRUCTURE AND PURPOSE

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE HIGHER CRITICISM AND THE BOOK OF EXODUS.

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**I**T was said of the monarchs of a certain doomed régime, whose name has long been a synonym for splendid arrogance and criminal recklessness, that they forgot nothing, and that they learned nothing. It bodes ill for any movement when it assumes the Bourbon character. The higher criticism has itself, as all are aware, been the subject of a quite extensive and most serious criticism. Its fundamental positions have been challenged, and some of these at least have, in the judgment of undoubted scholars, been shown to be illusions. Their "ascertained results" are also in conflict with facts. In the light shed by the discoveries of archæology, it is seen that what criticism had written down as myths have all the lineaments of sober history; while it is now beyond doubt that the critics have utterly misconceived the condition of the early ages. There is no branch of scientific inquiry which, had it been so attacked, would not have listened, and weighed the

arguments advanced, and, wherever necessary, have honourably withdrawn its statements and remodelled its positions. But the higher criticism has nothing to learn, and nothing to retract. As for its enemies, it puffeth at them. If its opponents are named at all, it is with an assurance that they are beneath consideration, and with an admonitory hint to its disciples not to read their productions. That these writings differ from the critics is their heaviest possible condemnation!

To what all this is to lead is shown in some recent critical publications. Among these is *The Messages of the Bible*, by Dr. Charles Foster Kent, Professor in Yale University, U.S. America. The title of this series of volumes—*The Messages of the Bible*—is couched in the most reverent form, and there is no believer in the Divine origin of the Scriptures whom it does not satisfy. It acknowledges fully that the Bible, as befits a Book from God, has its “messages” for this as for every other age. But when we pass from the cover to the contents, there are no messages; and there is no Bible. There are no longer any Biblical Books in the critics’ “re-constructed Bible.” The second title of the volume, which more immediately concerns us, is significant. It is as follows: “THE MESSAGES OF ISRAEL’S LAW-GIVERS. THE LAWS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT CODIFIED, ARRANGED IN ORDER OF GROWTH, AND FREELY RENDERED IN PARAPHRASE. Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1902.”

The reader will note the significance of the word

“Lawgivers.” The distinct testimony of the Scripture is that the Law is God’s Law, and that it was given by the hand of one Mediator, Moses. All this is at once set aside as an account of this matter which no fully-informed man can now possibly receive. The Laws have come, not by immediate Divine revelation, but by “growth”; and Israel has had “Lawgivers,” and not one Lawgiver. The title is followed by other, and still more painful, surprises. Four Books—Exodus to Numbers—are put in at one end of the critical machine, and they come out at the other what our readers will kindly pardon our describing as a German sausage. There is a host of scraps and fragments more or less recognisable, but any trace of the Books will be searched for in vain. These were apparently, in the view of the critics, necessary arrangements for the infancy of Biblical science; but, now that the envelopes have sufficed to convey the contents down to the time of Wellhausen, they may, and, indeed, must, be forthwith cast away. According to the teaching now being imparted almost everywhere to the coming ministry of the Churches, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy are cunning concealments of the grand, orderly development of the Israelitish laws. And that is by no means the whole of their offending. They entirely falsify the history of those Laws, so that in this case **THE MESSAGES OF THE BOOKS** are by no means **THE MESSAGES OF ISRAEL’S LAWGIVERS**. The Books must, therefore, be broken up, that the Laws may be arranged in an order which brands Old

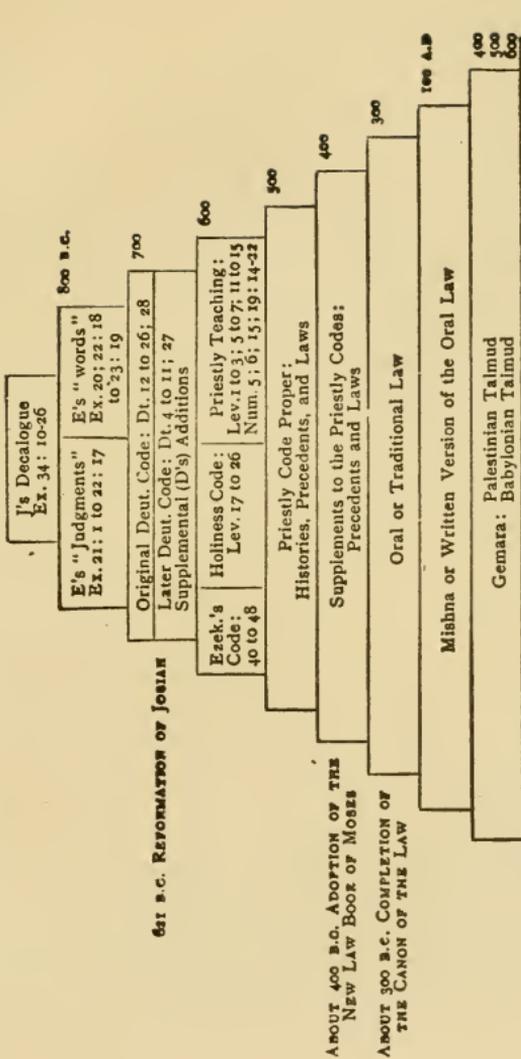
Testament history and New Testament references as ignorance and falsehood.

That the reader may have under his eye unchallengeable testimony as to this critical impeachment of the Word of God, I reproduce the table which Dr. Kent has prefixed to his volume. It will be found upon the following page. Let me briefly indicate its leading features. In the Law, which is most distinctly and solemnly ascribed to his instrumentality, Moses, it seems, had no part whatever. All that the critics permit to be attributed to him are "PRECEDENTS, CUSTOMS, TRADITIONS." Then comes the first instalment of the written Law about 600 years after Moses had passed away. This is a tiny portion—as befits a first essay in a new field—of seventeen verses, and it is dubbed "J's Decalogue." I need not follow in their order the other layers in this pyramid, which really ought to be turned upside down if it is to show the supposed huge growth from a supposed tiny seed. The Divine authorship of the Law is thus completely set aside. Exposition of the Pentateuch is henceforth to deal, not with a Revelation, but with an Evolution. That, however, is not all. The reader will observe that the evolution did not cease with the last part of the Law as contained in the Scripture. It found its flower, according to the critics, only in the "Oral or Traditional Law." This "tradition of the elders," which our Lord condemned as making void the commandments of God, is thus accepted by the critics as a fuller growth and mature outcome of the Law. That the

# MOSES

ABOUT 1200 B.C. COVENANT AT SINAI

RECORDS  
EVENTS  
CUSTOMS  
TRADITIONS



THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF ISRAEL'S WRITTEN LAW.

Rabbinism of the Talmud should be represented as the ripest fruit of the whole will not now astonish us. This was another point at which the critics had to choose between Christ and their theories; and here again they have clung to their own conclusions and have set aside His explicit and solemn testimony.

It was entirely natural that by a system of that kind those ancient Scriptures should be very lightly esteemed, and that, where our fathers found a Divine Revelation, the critics should see only the crude ideas of unlettered and semi-barbaric times. We meet, for instance, the following reference to the Passover. "*Tradition* declares that, when the Pharaoh of Egypt had repeatedly broken his promise to allow the Israelites to depart,"\* &c. Again: "The old prophetic narrative of Genesis viii. 20, 21 states that after he emerged from the ark, 'Noah builded an altar unto Jehovah; and took of every clean beast, and every clean bird, and offered burnt-offerings on the altar. And Jehovah smelled the sweet savour; and Jehovah said in His heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake.' This is the Biblical version," continues Dr. Kent, "of the still older and more anthropomorphic Babylonian account of the deluge, according to which:

The gods inhaled the odour,  
The gods inhaled the sweet odour,  
The gods gathered like flies around the sacrifice.

These and kindred passages suggest that the primitive

reason for burning the whole or parts of the sacrifice was that the god might be enabled to share directly in the food presented to him in this less material form." In other words, Dr. Kent imagines the ancient notion to have been that the gods were unable to partake of food in its usual form, but were able to assimilate it when it was changed into smoke. If he had, however, explained to his readers that the Hebrew says nothing of "a sweet savour," but tells us that "Jehovah smelled a savour of THAT WHICH GIVETH REST," the resemblance between the Scriptural and the Babylonian conceptions would have disappeared. God is satisfied with the sacrifice only because it is a promise of some better thing yet to come. It did not give rest; but it was a savour of that which would bring in lasting peace. In other words, Noah's altar spoke of Calvary.

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## CHAPTER II.

### WAS THE LAW GIVEN AT SINAI?

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**T**HAT is the vital question which the intellect and conscience of Protestantism have now to settle. Everything depends upon the solution reached. If the reply is in the affirmative, the Scriptures may still be to us, and to our children, all that they were to our fathers. But if the reply is in the negative, we have no longer a Revelation. The forged Jewish

Laws can rank no higher than the forged decretals of the Papacy, or those impositions which have from time to time disgraced literature and to which we rightly refuse a position upon our shelves. And the value of the New Testament will not be much higher. It may not have shared in the imposture; but, seeing that it accepts, enforces, and builds upon this Law as the very Word of God, it would plainly rest upon essential error.

The extracts already given from Dr. Kent's book show that this is the value now put upon the Scripture by himself and his school. To those, however, who are not immersed in fatally misleading theories, but who are able to give a candid consideration to facts, the Scripture is as marvellous and as Divine to-day as it ever was to man. We shall see how fully the student of Exodus is compelled to acknowledge that the very structure of the Book is prophetic, and, therefore, Divine. He will require no further proof that the contents of the Book are reliable, and that it records facts and not fictions. But discoveries are daily accumulating that are silencing every critical contention, while they marvellously confirm and illuminate the Scripture history. A word or two may be fitly given to these before we commence our study of this Great Book of the Law.

The breaking up of the first five Books of the Old Testament into fragments is professedly justified by what Dr. Kent, with refreshing candour, describes as "the maze of technical pentateuchal discussion."\*

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\* Page 7.

But the repudiation of their Mosaic authorship is a simpler matter. This rested first of all upon the supposed non-existence of the art of writing in the age of Moses. It was assumed, notwithstanding the distinct assurance that Moses "was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians" (Acts vii. 22), that he and the scattered tribes, which critical theories suppose he welded into a people, were on a level not much higher than that of savagery. It was only after long ages had passed away in the occupation of Canaan that the Hebrews were supposed to have learned and applied the art of writing. Though the critics have been hard pressed by recent discoveries, this is, nevertheless, a position which they still maintain. Speaking of what he calls "the agricultural stage" of Israelitish life in Palestine, Dr. Kent says: "Under the radically changed conditions, earlier customs were cast aside or else modified. *Written literature became a possibility and a necessity*, as the social and religious life of the nation became more complex, and the laws regulating it multiplied."\*

It also follows that, if the condition of the Israelites in the Mosaic period was—as it is here represented to have been—an age without a literature and without writing, then it is plain that a body of Laws, such as is contained in the Pentateuch, was an impossibility. How could such an extensive and elaborate legislation have been received, and, above all, how could it have been perpetuated, without writing? All that was needed for such a

time were certain customs that were universally understood and acknowledged. A rude state of society, such as that of Israel in the 13th, or rather the 16th, century is assumed to have been, required, and was able to utilise, nothing more. Upon these two principles—that the time was (1) too early for writing and (2) too rude for laws—hang all the critical repudiation of the Mosaic authorship of the Law and the re-arrangement of the Law and the Prophets.

But these two principles can be no longer accepted by any man worthy of the name of scholar. The discovery of the Moabite stone, and the results of investigation in Southern Arabia, have left little room for doubt that even Hebrew writing is older than Moses. But the notion, that the time of Moses was an illiterate period, and one in which the art of writing was unknown, can no longer be entertained by anyone acquainted with the facts. The age of Moses was one of the most literary periods in the world's entire history. Where had those "scattered tribes" been, of which the critics imagine the Israel of Moses to have been composed? Certainly not in Egypt; for writing was universal there, and literature was abundant. Nor could they have been in Palestine; for the discovery of the Tel-el-Amarna letters has shown that there also the art of writing had long been known and was in daily use. All over the East in the time of Moses that art was in constant exercise. And this was no new thing. It had been the custom from times which were then ancient. Boscawen says: "In Babylonia; to write, and con-

sequently to read, was a duty imposed on all except the lowest classes of the people. Among the duties imposed upon the parent was that of having his son taught to write; and ample proof is afforded that there were regular schools and colleges attached to most of the temples in Babylonia—certainly at Borsippa, Nippur, and Larsa. Another proof that the majority of the Babylonian people possessed some of the elements of education is afforded by the large number of contracts, letters, memoranda, and even jottings, which have been discovered, and the varieties which they exhibit.\* And he adds: "All doubt as to the literary character of ancient Chaldea is now removed, and the result has far exceeded the wildest dreams of Orientalists."† This Babylonian civilisation had for ages impressed itself upon Palestine and the surrounding regions; and the "nomadic tribes" of the critical imagination must have been out of the world to have been ignorant of an art whose universal use was one of the great characteristics of the time.

But, serious as this collapse of the first of the two critical principles is, it is nothing in comparison with the ruin which has overtaken the second. Never again can any man hope to be heard who would represent the Mosaic age as too early for such a body of laws as we find in the Pentateuch. There are inscriptions in Babylonia which take us back about 2,000 years beyond the time of Moses; and there are references in these which imply the exist-

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\* *The First of Empires*, p. 264. † Page 265.

ence of a large body of laws. "Judges" are mentioned in the most ancient inscriptions. There were law-courts with numerous officials in the time of Gudea, whose time takes us back into what was the dim past in the age of Moses. In an inscription on a statue of Gudea's there is an account of the ceremony connected with the laying of the foundation of a temple. This mentions "Judges, doctors, and chiefs who attended in state."\* Legal procedure had evidently been long reduced to system. There were always two judges in a case, and often more. The court was held in the Temple.†

A recent discovery, however, of the first magnitude has given this demonstration an unexpected fulness and finality. In December, 1901, and January, 1902, the French expedition at Susa, which has done so much to restore a knowledge of the ancient capital of Elam, made its most memorable achievement. An inscribed block was discovered. It was in three pieces, but these were easily joined together. When restored, the monument was found to be about seven feet four inches high, while its circumference at the top was five feet four inches, and at the bottom six feet two inches. At the top of the fore-side a representation is sculptured which was no doubt intended to commend the inscription which follows. King Hammurabi, the Amraphel of Gen. xiv., is receiving from the god Shamas the laws recorded upon the stone. These are set forth beneath in sixteen columns, arranged from right to left. Each

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\* Boscawen, *The First of Empires*, p. 196. † Page 201.

of the columns contains from sixty-six to seventy-seven lines of writing. On the back there are twenty-eight columns, each of them containing from seventy-three to 103 lines of writing. Part of the inscription has been chiselled out, evidently by order of the Elamite conqueror who had carried the stone to Susa, and who had no doubt intended to record there the story of his triumph.

But the great bulk of the inscription remains, and this has placed the Pentateuch controversy in an entirely new position. The supposed isolation of the Law of Moses, of which such powerful use was made to discredit its claims, has suddenly and finally disappeared. For here are Hammurabi's laws equally detailed, equally elaborate, and indicating an advanced state of civilisation between 400 and 500 years before the legislation of Sinai. These laws, too, undoubtedly carry us farther back than the times of Abraham; for the code of Hammurabi is only an authorised edition of laws that had long been in operation, and which had no doubt also existed in written form previous to his time. They regulate the home life, the relations between masters and slaves, the commercial activity, the social and, to an extent, the religious duties of what is plainly a highly-developed civilisation. These laws, indeed, are in many instances so parallel with the Laws of Moses, that learned comparisons are being instituted between them, and suggestions are already being made as to whether Moses was not indebted to Hammurabi for much of the Sinaitic legislation.

There is thus a danger of our entering upon a new controversy before we have settled the old one. Let me, therefore, point out that this discovery has killed the critical contention that the time of Moses was too early for so elaborate a code of laws. The now undoubted fact, that five hundred years and more before the time of Moses there existed a body of laws, equally elaborate, and containing many similar provisions, has made the repetition of that presumptuous fallacy impossible to any well-informed and honest man. For how can it be said that such a law was impossible in the time of Moses, when it is demonstrated that it was not only possible but was also actually in existence half a millennium earlier?

But this is not all. The discovery at Susa has shown us that the Sinaitic law was a necessity. Diodorus Siculus has informed us that Egypt possessed an extensive code of laws. That was a necessity for a State which had existed in a highly civilised condition long ages before the Exodus. We now learn, as we have just seen, that Babylonia, Palestine, and the surrounding districts, were governed by a like extensive code. What, then, was Israel to do? Was it to carry with it the Egyptian code? or was it to lay that aside and to adopt Hammurabi's? And when we have answered that question, we are confronted by another. If it chose one or the other of these codes, how could it separate itself from the life of Egypt and of Canaan and be the people of Jehovah? Or, to put our question in a still more pertinent form, how could Israel be Jehovah's

people unless God gave them the directions that were needful and made known to them His ways? A specific law for this people, which was to be separate from the nations, was an absolute necessity. Without it the Exodus would have been a fruitless experience, and the world would still have had to wait for the nation which should be the priest of Jehovah, and, by-and-bye, His messenger to the peoples of the earth.

It need not be said that this is fully borne out by constant references to the Law in the earlier Books of the Old Testament. The Law is in existence when Joshua crosses the Jordan. The study of it is to be the condition of the new Leader's success: "This Book of the Law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success" (Josh. i. 8). And so in Judges and the following Books the commandments, the covenant, the promises, and the threatenings contained in the Law are constantly referred to. But there is one highly-significant passage, the authenticity of which is admitted, and which is quite sufficient to settle this question even if it stood alone. Speaking of Ephraim's idolatry, God says (Hosea viii. 12): "I have written to him the great things of My Law, but they were accounted as a strange thing." The words, "the great things of My Law," refer not so much to the importance of the commandments as to the multi-

tude of them. The words so rendered are literally: "I have written for him the multitudes"—the multitudinous things—"of My Law." Here, then, in Hosea's time, there is a Law of Jehovah, named by the name which has always been applied to the first five Books of Scripture—the *Thorah*. It is not even in Hosea's time a new thing. It has been in the hands of his people for ages. It was given to Ephraim and has been finally set aside by the nation. It has contained not a few commandments only. It challenges attention, on the contrary, by the multitude of its injunctions, showing how fully God has cared for all that concerns His people. And, to crown all, this is not an oral, but a written, Law. "I have WRITTEN for him," says God, "the multitudinous things of My Law." If the reader will turn back to Dr. Kent's table on page 5 he will find that in 800 B.C. the critical theory permits only some five chapters of the Law to exist. And, nevertheless, Hosea, in the 8th century B.C. writes for Israel these solemn words, in which they are condemned for the neglect and the practical repudiation of a written Law which in its multitudinous directions was co-extensive with their needs. What Law could this have been, if not the very Law of Moses? If it was in the possession of the ten tribes in the time of Hosea, it is plain that it must have been known to the whole people before their separation into the antagonistic kingdoms of Israel and of Judah.

CHAPTER III.

THE LAW WAS WRITTEN IN BOOKS.

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THE beginning of the Law was given by God directly to the people (Exodus xx. 1-17) at Horeb, and then afterwards through Moses, who met with God in the Mount. The directions for the sacrifices and the other Laws contained in Leviticus were spoken from the Tabernacle, the dwelling-place which Israel had erected for Jehovah in the midst of their own dwelling-places, and which He had graciously accepted (Leviticus i. 1). The directions for the separation and location of the tribes, for the consecration of the Levites, the order of march, and the advance to the promised land were also issued from this earthly dwelling-place of Jehovah (Num. i. 1). But, in recording all this for that and for after generations, a striking departure is made from what we may call ordinary procedure. Usually, in such circumstances, we should have had a continuous history. The story would have gone on, giving the incidents of one day after another, just as we find them recorded in so large a part of the Book of Exodus. The story would have gone on without a break, beginning with the commencement of these experiences, and ending with their termination. By that method, however, it would have been the history which would have held the chief place in the reader's thought. The Laws and the Divine arrangements

would have ranked among the ordinary incidents of the narrative. But this would, in a measure, have defeated the Divine purpose. So the ordinary plan is abandoned, and another is adopted. *The Law* is made the chief thing; and the history becomes merely its illustration. Instead of one Book we have four, each of which sets forth some one aspect of the Law. Those commandments of God were evidently not to be hid away in the annals of early Israel. It will be observed how the Divine oversight of these Books and their arrangement here manifests itself. Sinai is to endure. Israel is not to be gathered round the doings of that generation of their fathers; but they are to be gathered, along with that generation, around these commandments of God. Those four Books (Exodus to Deuteronomy) will be the nation's School and Temple; and from one court and one chamber to another each generation will pass, with widening knowledge of, and with fuller obedience to, the commandments of Jehovah.

The reader will also note the indication which is met with here, that the Builder of the New Testament was also the Builder of the Old Testament. The four-fold Gospel was preceded by the four-fold Law. The Israelites were led back again and again to the Law as we are now led back again and again to Christ. That fourfoldness gave to the Law its central position, just as the four-fold Gospel gathers all generations of the Church round the Master. That, therefore, which is fundamental in both Testaments, and around which everything else in each is

gathered, is thus held forth and emphasised by the same simple and unique plan. But what we have to note specially now is that this has been done, not by giving a large space to the Law and to the Life of Jesus, but in setting each forth in four separate and distinct Books. Those Books in each case set their great theme before us from four different points of view. This fact is being increasingly recognised in the Gospels; and we shall have evidence enough of it even in the analysis of this Book of Exodus upon which we are about to enter. But it is important to notice that the wisdom manifested in that arrangement has had to wait long for recognition. In the second century of the Christian era there was a certain impatience experienced with the four-fold presentation of the life of Christ; and, when Tatian produced his "Diatessaron," or harmony of the Gospels, it was adopted by the Syrian Churches almost to the entire exclusion of the Canonical Gospels. It was on that account that the Diatessaron was afterwards hunted down, so that for a long time it was supposed to have utterly perished.

Although no such attempt appears to have been made to harmonise the Law, yet the Jews have shown a similar disinclination to cordially accept this Divine arrangement of it. Genesis to Deuteronomy has been to them *one* Book; and they have acknowledged the five-fold division in a somewhat peculiar way. They speak of the whole as "the five-fifths of the Law," thus emphasising the unity and minimising—one might say ignoring—the diversity. This has

an important bearing upon present discussions. The critics refer everything to "the sources." These "sources" are supposed to have been more or less continuous narratives by various writers. And, when the critical labours are concluded, and we have before us "the ascertained results of the higher criticism," we have a narrative, or narratives, but no longer Books. This we have already seen to be the result of Dr. Kent's analysis. It is equally conspicuous in Baentsch's volume on "*Exodus—Leviticus—Numeri.*"\* These three Books are run, as we shall see, into one. Dillmann and others arrange them similarly. The Book-divisions disappear; and, so far as Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers are concerned, we have one narrative instead of three.

Now all this impatience with the four-fold arrangement of the Law evinced by Jew and Gentile surely indicates that it is an arrangement which is not of man. That impression is deepened when we mark how it has "magnified the Law," and given it from the first the commanding place which it was needful it should have in the thought and the affections of the people. That, again, seems to be the arranging of a Divine hand. But if, in addition to all this, we discover that each Book has had a distinct mission; that each has placed the Laws which it records, and the institutions it sets forth, in a light that has endeared and hallowed them to the people of God; and that each presents besides a great prophetic picture of God's salvation and of God's Church throughout all

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\* *Hand-Commentar zum Alten Testament*, Göttingen, 1903.

time—what shall we say? Is it possible that the conception and the execution of such Books should be of man? Such a revelation of their nature will prove not only that they are of God; but will also demonstrate that God is, and that He is the God of our salvation.

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#### CHAPTER IV.

##### THE DIVISIONS AND THE PLAN OF EXODUS.

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THE Jewish name of Exodus consists of the opening words of the Book, *Vē Elleh Shēmōth*, "And these are the names." In this we now know that the Jews followed the ancient custom of the East, the most ancient classics of Babylonia being cited in the same way. That may possibly be due to the practice of committing such books to memory and of reciting them at religious festivals. The opening words would thus be all that was necessary to cite the book, just as to-day the opening words of a psalm or of a hymn are quite sufficient to identify or recall it. But, when the Greek translators undertook to give the Septuagint to the world in the beginning of the third century B.C., something more had to be done in providing a name for the Book. For us Westerners it is not enough that a book should be indicated: we require to have it described. The name must sum up more or less fully its contents; and so the second Book of the Pentateuch was called

“the Exodus,” that is, “the going-forth,” a name which has happily expressed the great deliverance which the Book records.

In regard to the leading divisions and the plan of the Book we find general agreement among expositors, but not unanimity. Baentsch, ignoring the division of the Law into Books, divides the contents of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers as follows:

- (1) The work of deliverance. Exodus ii.—xv. 21.
- (2) Israel in the Wilderness. Exodus xv. 22—Numbers xx. 13.
- (3) From Kadesh to the Plains of Moab. Numbers xx. 14—xxxvi.

Dillmann's division of Exodus to Numbers x. 10 follows similar lines:

- (1) The deliverance of Israel from Egypt. Ex. i.—xv. 21.
- (2) The journey to Sinai and the forming of the Covenant. Exodus xv. 22—xxiv. 11.
- (3) The revelations to Moses on Sinai, the breaking and renewing of the covenant. Ex. xxiv. 12—xxxiv. 35.
- (4) Restoration of the regulations and ordinances to the congregation at Sinai. Exodus xxxv.—Numbers x. 10.

As summaries of the contents of these three Books there is no good ground for objecting to the above. But in our effort to understand this first Book they embarrass us. They excite a doubt as to whether the Book should have concluded with its fortieth chapter.

For, if the story told by Exodus really runs on in that way into Leviticus and Numbers, why did not the writer of Exodus continue, and so give us one Book instead of three? Dillmann, Baentsch, and the others who cling to the above divisions, are not content to explain the Law as it has been conveyed to us. Their aim is more ambitious. They desire to set aside its present order and form, and to impart to the Law of Jehovah a systematic arrangement, which, in their view, it has sadly lacked from the first.

Holzinger, in his volume on Exodus,\* adopts a two-fold division: (1) I.—XVIII., the redemption of Israel; and (2) XIX.—XL., the giving of the Law at Sinai. A much less logical, but more popular, division has been generally adopted. The first Part of the Book, we have been told, contains the history, and the second Part contains the Laws. That division has laboured under two weighty objections. There has, first of all, been a difficulty in defining exactly where the history ends and the laws begin. Some have confined the history to the first eighteen chapters and the laws to the last twenty-two. Others have thought to improve upon this by altering the point of division. Some of them have made the first nineteen chapters to constitute Part I., and the last twenty-one chapters to form Part II. Others, again, have halved the Book, giving the first twenty chapters to the history, and the last twenty to the Laws. It is not surprising that, with all this uncertainty, the unsatisfactory character of the division

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\* *Exodus Erklärt* von H. Holzinger (Tübingen, J. C. B. Mohr).

should be openly confessed. A clear partition, we are told, is impossible; "for there are laws in the history, and there is history in the laws"! The climax of this confusion is reached when we are told, as we are told by some, that the Book is "badly arranged"!

Goethe has expressed a similar judgment. Referring to the difficulty experienced in following out certain lines of investigation, he has said that Exodus and the following Books have been "wonderfully, indeed unhappily, edited."\* This simply means that they are not arranged in such a manner as best suits investigators like himself. In Temple Records, or State Annals, contenting themselves with a bare recital of events as they transpired, and giving a continuous narrative, no such difficulty would be encountered. But, on the other hand, the very fact that the difficulty is met with has only one explanation. These are Books not in form only, but also in reality. Each has its own design, and is handing on, not merely a knowledge of the events, but also a reading of them that was vitally important both for that age to which they were first given, and for ages that were then to come. The Books are, on this account, not history only, but also a revelation. It is our wisdom, therefore, instead of complaining that the Books are not written in our way, to study them patiently and permit them to disclose their purpose.

Discarding accordingly all the foregoing divisions, we turn to Exodus, and read its pages for ourselves.

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\* Quoted by Holzinger, *Exodus Explärt*, S. X.

We discover that the narrative proceeds in the closest possible connection, and with a dramatic power that invests it with perennial interest. We are, first of all, reminded of the seventy souls that went down into Egypt. We are told of their rapid increase; of the alarm of the new race of Pharaohs that are now the lords of Goshen; of the bitter persecution to which the Israelites are subjected, in the vain expectation that they may fade away; and of the last device of the Egyptian king—the slaughter of the male children.

All this is told in one brief chapter. Then comes the story of the birth of Moses; his preservation; his visitation of his brethren; the defeat of his attempt to save them; his flight and long exile; his meeting with God at Horeb; his being sent back to Egypt to demand the freedom of Israel; and the opening scenes of his embassy. Here there is one definite line pursued; and, while every scene that is presented is distinct and, indeed, vivid, the narrative proceeds with a swiftness that is unparalleled in any literature we are acquainted with outside the Bible. But at the 12th verse of chapter vi. the swift onward career of the history is suspended. We read there that Moses in despair declines to carry any further demand to Pharaoh.

“And Moses spake before Jehovah, saying, Behold, the children of Israel have not listened to me; and how shall Pharaoh listen to me, and I a man of uncircumcised lips?” (ver. 12).

At these words—as if they marked a crisis in the history—the narrative stops. We are not told what

God replied. Nothing is said as to whether the declination of Moses is accepted or not. Instead of that the narrative makes a new beginning, and we read:

“ And Jehovah spoke to Moses and to Aaron, and gave them a commandment to the children of Israel, and to Pharaoh king of Egypt, to cause the children of Israel to go up out of the land of Egypt. These are the heads of the house of their fathers,” &c. (verses 13, 14).

This might have stood at the commencement of the history; and it plainly marks the beginning of a second part of it. But, when we have noted this, we have not seized all that is indicated here. It is a new beginning; but why is a new beginning made? What follows explains. The impotence of the servant has called for the intervention of the Master. The ambassador has made his demand: Israel also has expostulated and entreated: and now God's hand knocks at the door of the king's council-chamber. The conflict from this point onward is one not of words, but of deeds: it is war between Egypt and the Almighty. The break in the narrative is, consequently, another and still higher indication of the marvellous skill with which every scene has been set before us, and by which every picture has been perfected. A new beginning is made in the history just at the point when a new and striking series of events is to be introduced. Let us observe, too, that Moses is not discarded. The confession of his impotence is met by a new investiture of power; and Egypt and we are to be witnesses of the unex-

amplified and eternally memorable triumph of this poor beaten man. And so when the new commencement has thus been made, we are brought back, in verse 30, to the point at which the story was interrupted:

“And Moses said before Jehovah, Behold, I am a man of uncircumcised lips, and how shall Pharaoh listen to me?” (verse 30).

From that point the narrative flows on again along its own well-defined course.

Before we inquire where the next break occurs, let us clearly mark what this first part of the history concerns itself with. It is the story of Moses. After a brief statement as to the deadly persecution of Israel and its cause, we are told of Moses' birth, his deliverance from slaughter, his early training, the identifying of himself with his people, his flight, his meeting with God, his being sent to Egypt, and his effort to obtain the king's consent, and to plant faith in Israel's heart. These are the contents of the first part of the Book. But, while they form the story of Moses, it will be recognised that it is Moses' story as the man is seen in one definite relationship. Nothing whatever is told us of his history as a prince of Egypt. The Scripture has said that he was “mighty in words and deeds” (Acts vii. 22); but none of those acts or sayings is recorded here. During those forty years spent in Midian, too, there was doubtless much that would have adorned a history and have interested posterity; but as to this also there is utter silence. The Scripture concerns

itself here with Moses as *prepared for this work of deliverance*, and with that only. Putting this, then, into words, the subject of the first Part of Exodus is—*The story of the Redeemer of God's people.*

Having found this suggestive division so plainly marked off by the Book itself, it is natural for us to ask whether other dividing lines have been similarly drawn. Turning once more, therefore, to the narrative, we find a like suspension of the story of events in the twelfth chapter. We have been told of Pharaoh's sudden surrender, of the proclamation of liberty for the Israelites and of the pressure brought to bear upon them to leave Egypt at once (31-33). The narrative describes their hurried departure, loaded with the presents of the Egyptians; their marching with a force 600,000 strong, with a mixed multitude, "and flocks and herds, even very much cattle." It is then noted that, notwithstanding the confusion and bustle attending their hurried departure, the special character of this first paschal season was Providentially preserved, so that even those days of excitement and haste were days of unleavened bread. "They baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they brought forth out of Egypt, for it was not leavened; because they were thrust out of Egypt, and could not tarry, neither had they prepared for themselves any victual" (39). Here the story is a second time momentarily suspended. And, during this pause, so to speak, the reader is called upon to note two things. First, God's promise had been kept. The covenant made with Abraham

(Gen. xv. 9-21) had been observed to the letter. From Abraham's call to the birth of Isaac thirty years had elapsed. The interval from Isaac's birth to the end of Israel's sojourning, persecution, and bondage, the prediction had described as a period of 400 years: "And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the self-same day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt" (41). Then, secondly, Israel had passed into this deliverance *through the Passover*. That was the gateway by which they entered into freedom. God's command is consequently re-stated (43). The details which made it specially *Israel's* feast are again placed upon record (43-49). And now those two things are joined together as effect and cause, deliverance and its explanations: "Thus did all the children of Israel; as the Lord commanded Moses and Aaron so did they. And it came to pass the self-same day, that the Lord did bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their armies" (50-51). The reader will note the repeated reference to the fact that Jehovah had kept His promise to a day. And so here, as in the previous break in the story, we are brought back again, by that repetition, to the point at which the narrative was for the moment suspended. We paused to mark first of all that the promise was kept to a day; and now, with the fresh reminder that "it came to pass the self-same day," the history once more resumes its course.

Recognising this, then, as the second dividing line, what is it that is enclosed between it and the pre-

ceding one? Have we here a second distinct and separable part of the history? As soon as that question is considered, we are surprised by the reply. At vi. 12 Moses, it will be remembered, is in despair. He is unable to waken hope in the breasts of his own people, and he declares that it is vain for him to go to Pharaoh with a demand which he has definitely rejected, and with pretensions which the Egyptian king has already scorned. And what have we now at xii. 39? The people of Israel completely delivered! They are delivered with a completeness unexampled in history. Blow after blow from God's own hand has descended upon Egypt; and now Pharaoh and the Egyptians are more eager to see the Israelites away than ever they were to retain them. They send them away with honour and laden with treasure. Instead of the slave they see in the Hebrew the favoured and the chosen of the Almighty. To sum up then: at the commencement of this Division of the Book the Israelites are unrelieved. The Divine intervention on their behalf has only served to add to their afflictions. And now at the end of the Section the work of deliverance is done. Nothing requires to be added to it. Israel, with all its possessions, and marshalled in its armies, is there outside the Egyptian border. Plainly, therefore, we find here a distinct portion of the history—it is *the story of the Redemptive work*.

Reading through the remaining chapters we fail to discover any other dividing line. There is no other break in the narrative and no resuming of the story

## The Divisions and the Plan of Exodus. 31

by the repetition of a previous statement. On the contrary, all flows on evenly from xii. 41 to the end of chapter xl. Do these more than twenty-eight chapters, then, deal also with one theme? Are they a distinct and separable portion of the narrative, carrying on to its conclusion the history begun and detailed in the two preceding Sections? To answer that question we must once more turn to the history. At the first glance we might be inclined to say that these concluding chapters contained the record of the passage of the Red Sea; of the journey to Sinai; of the giving of the Law, &c., &c., &c.; and so to see in them something that is very far from a unity. It is an easy matter to draw up a catalogue of facts; for these lie upon the surface. It is not quite so easy to discover their connection and significance; but, until that is done, nothing worthy of the name is achieved in science, and just as little is accomplished in the interpretation of Scripture. When we ask, however, whether there is any link of connection between these events, we find a most welcome hint in the closing verses of chapter xiii.

“And they departed from Succoth, and encamped in Etham, in the edge of the wilderness. And Jehovah kept going before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, for the leading of them in the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light, to go by day and by night: He did not withdraw the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of the fire by night, from before the people” (verses 20-22).

Let me ask the reader's attention first to the fact that this happened as "they departed from Succoth." That is, in other words, just when this third part of the history begins. The portion which intervenes (xii. 41—xiii. 19) is explanatory and introductory. It is only in the above verses that we see Israel passing out into the experiences for which all that has previously transpired has been the preparation. The second point to be marked is that what is here described is characteristic of the whole wilderness sojourn. Not only have we the continuative form of the verb, "kept going," but also the emphatic statement that God "did not withdraw the pillar of cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night from before the people." All this, however, is nothing in comparison with the stupendous fact itself. What was this that appeared now for the first time, and that was continued throughout the whole of those eventful forty years? It was the manifested presence of God at the head of the armies of Israel. The day revealed it: the night could not hide it. God Himself assumed the leadership of Israel. Moses did not become less to Israel; but God Himself takes here in visible manifestation the leadership of the people. The great outstanding fact in connection with that journey is that God, the Creator of heaven and earth, is with this people, guiding and defending them. I have said that this strikes the key-note of the third portion of the history. Israel goes to Sinai; but why? It is to behold God's glory: to hear His voice: to receive from His own lips and His own

hand the Law which makes known His way. And how does the Book end? The last sixteen chapters (xxv.—xl.) are occupied with the building of a Tabernacle that God the Lord may dwell among them, and that this union between God and His people may be perfected and abiding. And, with the record of the Divine acceptance of that dwelling-place, the Book of Exodus ends, and so completes its mission. Moses, we are told, “reared up the court round about the Tabernacle and the altar, and set up the hanging of the court gate. So Moses finished the work. Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle” (33-35). Henceforth that Tabernacle became the palace of the great King, and from it He directed the movements of the host. “When the cloud was taken up from over the Tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in their journeys: but if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up. For the cloud of the Lord was upon the Tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys” (36-38).

It is abundantly plain, therefore, that from Succoth onwards—from that first day’s marching towards the land of the inheritance as redeemed men—there was a mighty change in Israel’s experience. It was a change that continued, and that, in the end, was

perfected and made enduring. If we put that new and lasting experience into words, the expression will take this form—“*The Redeemed with God.*” Moses and Aaron still hold their place and discharge their functions. That place is not less honourable, and those functions are not less needful; but there is one thing, which beyond every other fills Israel’s thought, and which sheds a new glory upon Moses and Aaron and all the ceremonies of the Law. It is the presence of God. He has brought out this people with a high hand not merely that they should have their freedom. If that had been all, they would have been left at Succoth to find their own way. No, their redemption is the beginning, and not the ending, of the story. God has brought them forth that they may know Him as the living God; that they may see His glory; that they may learn His ways; and that He may dwell among them.

Let us now place those three Parts of the Book in their order.

(1) THE REDEEMER OF GOD’S PEOPLE (i.—vi. 12).

(2) THE REDEMPTIVE WORK (vi. 13—xii. 39).

(3) THE REDEEMED WITH GOD (xii. 40—xl. 38).

It seems to be impossible that any one can look at this revealed plan of the Book and not see something more. Those three Sections tell the story of Redemption! There was first the manifestation and preparation of the Redeemer, ending with rejection and apparent failure; then the Redemptive work; and, last of all, as the outcome and fruit of the whole, the Redeemed with God, a separated people not

only serving God but also glorying in His presence and in the assurance that they are His and that He is theirs. The spaces allotted to the various Parts also tell their tale. Less than twelve chapters are given to both the First and the Second; while twenty-eight chapters—more than twice as many—are given to the Third Section that tells of “the Redeemed with God.” It is this last experience, therefore, to which the Divine purpose presses forward. It was for this that Christ came; and it was for this that He died. Without that subsequent walking and dwelling with God, redemption would miss its mark.

This second Book of the Pentateuch is, consequently, not a mere continuation of the story of Israel which was begun in Genesis. Like Genesis itself, this Book also presents us with a completed picture. It is a representation of the Church in its history and its destiny—a picture that has spoken to every age, and that will speak more fully yet, as the time of darkness—the night of trouble begins to fall. Meanwhile, the structure of Exodus settles one question. No one can note this prophetic plan and retain a vestige of belief in the higher criticism. No collection of snips and snatches ever arranged themselves into a story so thoroughly planned, so beautifully proportioned, and so prophetic as that. Nor was it possible that a body of Editors, working in utter ignorance of the things that were to be, could have fashioned out of documents and fragments this superb unity glorious with its full disclosure of the kingdom of God.

# THE INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS

I. 1—22.

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## CHAPTER I.

ISRAEL'S EXTREMITY.

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THE Bible is distinguished from all other literature by the wealth and the unobtrusiveness of its suggestiveness. There are many books, both in ancient and in modern literature, which it is an education to read. They are invested with an unfading charm; for to the thinker and the poet there is stimulus in every page. But in all these, pains are taken to guide the reader's sight, so that the views which are opened up, and the sidelights which throw in their radiance, may not be missed. But in this, the most suggestive Book of all, no effort of the kind is made. Words are chosen, phrases are arranged, and facts are related in a certain order; and all are left there. It is with the Bible as it is with the earth which God has also given to the sons of men. Everything we require for food, and drink, and comfort lies on the surface. But the treasures are hid beneath the surface. Gold, and silver, and brass, and iron, and the gems that are found in the depths of earth and sea—the means of enrichment, and adornment, and world-mastery are for those who

explore and toil. So upon the Bible's surface we have what we need to know about God and ourselves, about time and eternity, about sin and salvation. All is presented in the most absolute simplicity, so that the wayfaring man, though a fool, may not err as to knowledge of things that are essential. Nevertheless, beneath that unrivalled simplicity there lie enrichment and power for all "whose *delight* is in the Law of the Lord," and who in that Law "*meditate* day and night" (Psalm i. 1).

The subject of Exodus is to be the deliverance from Egypt. The reader will accordingly note with what precision the opening words are selected. If this is to be the story of Israel's deliverance from Egypt, we want to know how it had happened that Israel came into this land, and what led to the persecution which threatened the existence of God's chosen people. It is this information, and this information only, which is now given. It is given briefly, but with an absolute clearness that leaves nothing to be desired.

"And these are the names of the sons of Israel, who went to Egypt with Jacob; each man and his house went. Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin, Dan, and Naphtali, Gad, and Asher. And all the souls which came forth from the loins of Jacob were seventy souls: and Joseph was in Egypt" (verses 1-5).

We shall look immediately at an alleged contradiction in regard to this number "seventy." Mean-

while, let us note the order in which the sons of Jacob are named. We have first the six sons of Leah; then the son of Rachel, Benjamin, an explanation being given in verse 5 as to why Joseph is not named here, where according to order of birth his name should have appeared. He was already in Egypt. Following these seven names come those of the sons of the handmaids (verse 4).

Thus in words, which could not be simpler or fewer, but which are marked by perfect order, we are reminded how Israel came to be in Egypt. We are now told whence the trouble sprang.

“And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation. And the sons of Israel were fruitful, and they swarmed; and they multiplied; and they became strong exceedingly; and the land was filled with them” (verses 6, 7).

The time was approaching when Israel's sojourning was to end and its national life to begin. The tribe must, therefore, assume the proportions of a people; and the rapidity with which this was done, and the enormous increase which challenged the attention of all Egypt, are set forth in words which recall the astonishment of the time. The increase, too, was not in numbers only. Israel was not a puny, feeble, resourceless race. They were strong, vigorous, and full of well-directed activity. This aspect of national strength is accentuated in the original *b'meōd meōd*, “exceeding in exceeding.”

Now this rapid and extraordinary increase of numbers and strength would naturally either gratify or alarm the Egyptian authorities according to their circumstances. If there was no ground for anxiety, the added numbers and strength would promise well both for the revenue and the stability of the country; but if the Egyptian monarch were apprehensive as to the stability of his power, the increase of the Israelites might be regarded as full of menace. That this was the light in which the Hebrew sojourners were regarded is now shown.

“And a new king arose over Egypt, who knew not Joseph. And he said to his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more numerous and more mighty than we. Come, let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply, and it happen when war breaks out, that this people also will be added to our enemies, and fight against us, and go up out of the land” (verses 8-10).

Those words, evidently selected with intention and care—“a new king,” “arose over Egypt,” “who knew not Joseph”—indicated to students long ago some great, but then unknown, crisis through which ancient Egypt had just passed. Where, for example, had this king been who knew nothing of the services of the man who had saved the Egyptian people from famine and death, who had placed the land tenure on an entirely new basis, and who had given the country abiding peace? Services like these are not forgotten in a century, even in eventful times like our own, and

the memory of them must assuredly have lived on in an eastern land like Egypt. But the light shed by the decipherment of the Egyptian inscriptions has now enabled us to appreciate the marvellous exactitude of these expressions. The Egyptian Viceroy of Thebes, a descendant of the old Pharaohs, had risen in revolt against the dynasty of the Shepherd kings whom Joseph had served, and had swept the Hyksos, or Shepherd race, out of Egypt. He was a new king; he came from a distance; he "arose over Egypt" as his army fought its triumphant way from south to north. The reader will observe, too, the words, "his people" (ver. 9); that is, not the Egyptians of the north, but the southern army which had placed him on the throne. This enables us to understand this statement, and the fear which lay behind it: "Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we." The Israelites were not stronger nor more numerous than the resident population; but their two or three millions certainly outnumbered the invading army.

We are now told of the plans that were successively adopted to lessen the supposed danger. It was imagined that oppression would diminish them; and so Israel was practically enslaved. They set taskmasters over them (*sarē missīm*) "to afflict them with burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure-cities, Pithom and Raamses" (verse 11). That plan failed; for "the more they afflicted them the more they multiplied and grew" (verse 12). Pharaoh's anxiety, and that of his people, deepened. Israel became an

increasing burden and dread to them. It was quite natural, therefore, for them to conclude that they had not been rigorous enough with Israel; and so they resolved to cast pity to the winds. "And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage." But the burdens are increased in vain, and the king descends from pitiless oppression to more manifest crime. The midwives are commanded to murder the male children as they are born. "But the midwives feared God," and this plan failed as completely as the others.

"And God did good to the midwives: and the people multiplied, and grew strong exceedingly" (verse 20).

The chapter concludes with the edict of the baffled king, which enjoined "all his people"—and there were doubtless many ruthless hands among those invaders, who would naturally also form the police of the country, "Saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the waters, and every daughter ye shall save alive" (verse 22).

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## CHAPTER II.

### THE CRITIC AND THE ARCHÆOLOGIST.

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ONE of the big discrepancies of the Bible is supposed to be furnished, in part at least, by the statement in verse 5 as to the number of the Israelites at their settlement in Egypt. Exodus i. 5,

which is a re-statement of what we find in Genesis xlv. 27, is said to be in conflict with what is alleged by Stephen in Acts vii. 14, and also with Gen. xlv. 26. Let us place the three passages in parallel columns :

GEN. xlv. 26.	GEN. xlv. 27.	ACTS vii. 14.
"All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, which came out of his loins, besides Jacob's sons' wives, all the souls were threescore and six."	"And the sons of Joseph, which were born him in Egypt, were two souls: all the souls of the house of Jacob, which came into Egypt, were threescore and ten."	"Then sent Joseph and called his father to him, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls."

It seems incredible that anyone could imagine the two first passages to be inconsistent with each other. The terms are precise, and are plainly chosen to prevent misapprehension. In Genesis xlv., verse 26 speaks of "the souls that came *with* Jacob into Egypt," and these are given as sixty-six. That is, sixty-six children and grandchildren accompanied him. Let it be noted these came "with Jacob," so that neither is Jacob himself included in the number sixty-six, nor Joseph and his sons. When these four are added we have the seventy of verse 27. Note again the careful exactitude of the Scripture statement here; "all the souls of *the house of Jacob*, which came into Egypt, were threescore and ten." Sixty-six *came down with Jacob*; but "all the souls of the house of Jacob" were seventy.

The statement in Acts does present a difficulty in its mention of seventy-five; but no man who presumes to judge the Scripture should have omitted to study the words on which he pronounces condemna-

tion. These not only explain everything, but also give us additional information. There seems to have been a Jewish tradition which coupled the number seventy-five with the settlers in Egypt. The Septuagint substitutes that number for the seventy in Genesis xli. 27. But the Greek translator felt it to be incumbent upon him to explain how this number was reached. Instead, therefore, of a translation of the Hebrew, he substituted the following for verse 27: "And the sons of Joseph, who were born to him in Egypt, were nine souls. All the souls of the house of Jacob, who entered with Jacob into Egypt, were seventy-five souls." He forgot that Joseph was not included in the sixty-six. Had he observed that, he would have been saved the invention of a ninth son for Joseph. Eight would have sufficed, as these, with the addition of Joseph himself, would have brought up the sixty-six of Scripture to the seventy-five of the tradition.

But when we turn to Acts we find another illustration of the exactitude of Scriptural phraseology, and an explanation of the traditional seventy-five, which is perfectly satisfactory. Will the reader kindly note Stephen's words—"Then sent Joseph and called his father Jacob to him, and *all his kindred*, three-score and fifteen souls"? Here the Scripture includes not only the offspring of Jacob, but also "all his kindred." We are told in Gen. xli. 5 that "Jacob rose up from Beersheba: and the sons of Israel carried Jacob their father, and their little ones, *and their wives*, in the wagons which Pharaoh

had sent to carry him." Then verse 26 notes that "Jacob's sons' wives" are excluded from the number "sixty-six." But these belonged to Jacob's "kindred," whose number made up the traditional seventy-five. This enumeration, let it be remarked, applies apparently to "all his kindred" that went down with Jacob to Egypt, and does not include either Joseph and his sons or Jacob himself. Now, how many of "his sons' wives" were there? Judah's wife was dead (Genesis xxxviii. 12). We also learn that Simeon's youngest son was "Shaul, the son of a Canaanitish woman" (Genesis xlvi. 10), which seems to imply that Simeon's wife was also dead. This reduces the wives of the eleven sons to nine, which, added to the sixty-six children, make exactly the seventy-five mentioned by Stephen. In any case, there is no contradiction and no discrepancy. The three passages show, by the most careful selection of words, that they are dealing, not with the same thing, but with different things. And no one, accustomed to the reading of documents, could ever have imagined the passages to be, and still less have represented them to be, in antagonism to each other.

No person of ordinary discernment ever had any doubt as to the essential character of the higher criticism. It began in unbelief, and it ends in unbelief. The fruit is distinguished from the seed, not in kind, but merely in abundance. An illustration of this is found in Baeretsch's remarks on "The historical value of the traditions contained in the

books of Exodus and Numbers."\* He attributes them to "the two great circles of tradition." From the earlier traditions, as to the Exodus and the giving of the Law, others sprang, which may be described as etymological sagas. That is, a history "is spun out" of the names of places, and "almost always," he says, "according to the same recipe. The people murmur, chiefly on account of the want of water, once on account of the want of food, and once on the general ground that things are going badly. Then follows, according to the rule, a reprimand through Moses, and, last of all, an intervention of Jehovah, it may be for their help, it may be for their chastisement, or for both together." That is an estimate of "the historical value" of the contents of Exodus and Numbers which the higher criticism in this country was very careful not to give at the commencement; but when it *is* given, as is now quite freely done, it is indistinguishable from open and, indeed, scurrilous infidelity. And it is foolish, as well as scurrilous. Why should there not be regularity in the Divine action? Would the narratives have been more credible had the Divine procedure been in accordance with no discernible law? Or do the critics believe that it was impossible for God so to deal with Israel; and do they scout the notion of any Divine government of the world?

That this confident repudiation of the Old Testament history rests, not upon proof, but upon foregone conclusions, is shown by the desperate efforts to

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\* *Handkommentar*, S. lxvi., lxvii.

make out a case in the critical remarks upon this first chapter of Exodus. To the ordinary Bible student nothing can constitute a more evident and unchallengeable unity than the first chapter of Exodus, with which we are now dealing. This is admitted in a way by Baentsch. He believes, with Wellhausen, that there is a literary connection between the first five verses and Genesis xli. 8-27. That is a statement in which we cordially concur, seeing that we believe both passages to have proceeded from the pen of Moses. He then continues: "The remainder of the chapter makes the impression of a narrative that is a unity, only in verse 20 the hand of the editor makes itself visible."\* But Holzinger breaks up this confessed unity without scruple or hesitation. He asserts that in verses 8-14, verses 13, 14 are a "doublet" to verse 11. The "doublet" is, of course, a supposed repetition—a second account taken from another source, and which shows itself to be a second account by its repetition of the same things. That we may give due effect to this critical "discovery," let us place the alleged repetition fully before us:

## VERSE 11.

"Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses."

## VERSES 13, 14.

"And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour. And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage in mortar, and brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour."

\* S. I.

Verse 12 is conveniently dropped out of sight ; but taking what is set before us above, it is a hard matter to discover Holzinger's "doublet." For instance, we find in verse 11 a special piece of information which is entirely absent from verses 13 and 14. The former tells us of the appointment of the taskmasters, about which nothing whatever is said in the latter passage. If we now take the second half of verse 11 we shall search verses 13 and 14 with an exactly similar result. The former tells us of the building of the store-cities ; but of the erection of these, verses 13 and 14 say never a word. Where, then, is the repetition ? The first passage mentions two things, and two things only, neither of which is even distantly referred to in the second ; and, nevertheless, the critic assures us that the second passage is a repetition of the first ! When we turn to inspect the second passage, we discover equal independence there. It has its own special message. This speaks less of the service than of the manner of it. The Israelites are now not enslaved merely ; they are mercilessly driven. That feature is emphasised three times and in three forms. First, it is stated that "the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour." This is repeated in verse 14 : "All their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour." Secondly, we read that "they made their lives bitter with hard bondage" ; and thirdly, we are told of the industrious ingenuity with which all sorts of laborious and degrading toil were arranged for the Israelites : "They made their lives bitter with hard

bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field." Here it is not the origination of the slavery that is described, but rather an advanced stage of it. What is now aimed at is evidently not the labours of the people, but their annihilation. That is the one and distinct message of those latter verses. They repeat nothing that has gone before. They tell only of an accentuation of the miseries of God's people; and when we insert verse 12, the meaning and the perfect unity of the section flash upon every mind: "But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel." Mere slavery had failed. The dreaded increase of the Israelites was not arrested. Hence more rigorous measures were adopted with the stern determination of the Egyptian people and of a ruthless time. Verse 12 makes verse 11 and verses 13 and 14 equally necessary. Verse 11 is the beginning of a story, and verses 13 and 14 are its continuation.

Another contribution to this intense "criticism" is repeated by Holzinger. He says that verse 15 (which speaks of the two midwives Shiphrah and Puah) is not in accordance with verse 9, which represents Pharaoh as saying that the children of Israel are more numerous and powerful than his own people; for how could two midwives have sufficed for so large a district? But the representation of the text is much more in keeping with the time than the critical comment. All labour in ancient Egypt was thoroughly organised, and responsible authorities

were placed at the head of every department. This fact, which is indicated in verse 11, is not quite so clearly set forth in our Version as might be wished. Pharaoh set over the Israelites not "taskmasters," but literally, "Princes of the tribute," or "labours." These were the great officials responsible to the king, and who were in direct contact with him in regard to that matter. When we read, therefore, of two mid-wives in verse 15, what, in view of the fact recorded in verse 11, are we to conclude? Shall we rush with Holzinger to the deduction that these two women were alone engaged in this employment, and that, secondly, if two sufficed, then the numbers of the Israelites must have been much fewer than they are represented to have been in the preceding part of the chapter? Or shall we say that these are plainly important personages who are the presidents of this department, and through whom the king transmits his orders to their subordinates? This latter interpretation is quite in keeping with the great country which Egypt was in the 16th century B.C.; but the critical interpretation represents Pharaoh as the headman of a big village, or the Mayor of some tenth-rate town.

We meet here, however, in the very beginning of Exodus, proofs that have deeply impressed genuine science, and that have long since foreshadowed the doom of the higher criticism. Egyptologists know that this Book is not a late Jewish romance, for they recognise in the Biblical narrative the place, the time, the manners and customs with which their

discoveries have made them familiar. The Book lives and breathes in, and is in constant contact with, the ancient Egypt which their discoveries have brought back from the tomb. We take, for example, the name "Pharaoh." That, and no other title, is used for the Egyptian king in this Book and elsewhere in the writings of Moses. Later we have individual names substituted or added by which the special king referred to is particularised. Thus in 1 Kings xiv. 25 we read that "Shishak king of Egypt" came up against Jerusalem. This was about the middle of the tenth century B.C. So also in 2 Kings xxiii. 29: "In his (Josiah's) days"—about three and a-half centuries later—"Pharaoh-Necho king of Egypt went up against the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates"; while again in Jeremiah xlv. 30 we find another instance of the changed use: "Thus saith the Lord, Behold I will give Pharaoh-Hophra king of Egypt into the hand of his enemies, and into the hand of them that seek his life." Now all this is in marvellous agreement with facts which have only recently come to light. The title "Pharaoh" was first of all said not to occur upon the Egyptian monuments, and the constant use of the name in Scripture seemed difficult to explain. The use of the individual monarch's name seems to have wholly displaced the older designation, and it was utterly unknown, apparently, to the Greek travellers and historians who have written on Egyptian affairs. This was accordingly added to the number of Bible "mistakes." But, as usual, fuller research has justi-

fied the Scripture. De Rouge was able to determine the pronunciation of a hieroglyph which always accompanied the king's name upon the monuments. This was the long-forgotten *Perao* or *Pherao*, the Pharaoh of the Bible! It was afterwards discovered upon a monument in which Sargon, king of Assyria and father of Sennacherib, speaks of *Pir'u sar mati Musri*, "Pher'o king of the land of Egypt."\* But another discovery indicates that this title of the Egyptian king has an important bearing upon the question of the authenticity of the Pentateuch. The use of the term to designate the Egyptian king is said to be a characteristic of the 18th dynasty. To the time of that dynasty Moses belonged. It was in the palace of its early kings that he had found his home, and had received his training "in all the wisdom of the Egyptians." It was, in the first instance, for Israelites who had grown up in the closest contact with the Egypt of that period, that the Pentateuch was written; and here, just as would be expected, the Egyptian king is always referred to by the title in daily use at this very time. But, if the critics are right in their assured conviction that the Pentateuchal history is a late production, then they have to explain the use of this name by the writer or writers. The date to which they have assigned the history of the Pentateuch is even later than that at which Herodotus entered Egypt; but at that time all trace of this title seems to have passed away. He has no record of it. He makes no reference whatever

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\* See *New Biblical Guide*, vol. ii., p. 118.

to it. If, therefore, this history *had* been written when criticism believes it was, the ancient appellation of the Egyptian monarchs must have been equally unknown to the writer or writers, and his or their silence regarding it would have been as profound as that of the Grecian historian. But, on the other hand, when we find the title of the 18th dynasty in constant use in a Book which is said to have been written during the time of that very dynasty, it will be admitted that we have in that fact no insignificant testimony in favour of the earlier date, and of the historical character of the Pentateuch.

Whatever weight may be assigned to the foregoing, the Egyptian king's title is only one of many facts which link the Pentateuch with Egypt. We have in this first chapter of Exodus, for example, three other expressions which tell a similar tale. The two words which are translated "taskmasters" in verse 11 are *Sārē Massīm*. Attempts have been made to explain these as Hebrew words without the slightest success. *Sārē* is, indeed, found in Hebrew, where it means princes; but *Mas*, or its plural *Massīm*, no one has been able to discover, or to explain, as Hebrew words. The ancient Egyptian, on the other hand, sheds light at once upon the words and upon their use in the connection in which the Scripture places them. *Mas* means to bring tribute, while *Sar* is the title applied to the noble who was set over any department of the public works. In the Egyptian monuments, containing representations of brick-making in this very eighteenth dynasty, *Sar* is the

title given to the head of that department; and the *Sarē-massim*, "chiefs of the tribute-labours," were plainly the nobles to whom was committed the oversight of this new department of the public service.

Shiphrah and Puah, the names of the midwives, yield no appropriate sense when treated as Hebrew words; but, taken as Egyptian words, they are at once intelligible. The presence of such words are a special characteristic of the Pentateuch. We meet them, for example, in Genesis, as in the title conferred upon Joseph, and of which no explanation is given. This means that for the people to whom these Books were committed, and for whose use they were first of all written, *no explanation of such Egyptian words was needed*. The only possible interpretation of that fact is that the Books were originally written for people *who had been in Egypt*, and to whom such words, titles, and names were so familiar that no explanation was necessary. This fixes the composition of the Pentateuch to the time of the Exodus.\*

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\* See for further facts *New Biblical Guide*, vols. ii. and iii.

## THE FIRST PART OF EXODUS

(II. 1—VI. 12).

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### CHAPTER I.

THE BIRTH AND EARLIER CAREER OF MOSES

(II. 1—22).

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THE manner in which this part of the history begins is suggestive :

“And there went a man of the house of Levi, and married a daughter of Levi. And the woman conceived, and bare a son: and she saw that he was a goodly child, and she hid him three months.”

There is much in the very form in which this is told us. Neither the father nor the mother of Moses were otherwise noteworthy in Israel than by their connection with him. This was not one of the princely homes to which Israel would naturally turn in their expectation of a deliverer. That was true also of the stable at Bethlehem and of the home at Nazareth, of Joseph the carpenter, and of the daughter of that other branch of the decayed house of David. And it has been so all down the world's history. Those to whom the world has owed most have sprung from the unknown. It is God's cheer to the poor and the lonely. It is His rebuke, too,

## The Birth and Earlier Career of Moses. 55

to the world's pride, and lordly disdain of the lowly. "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men, not many mighty, not many noble, are called" (1 Corinthians i. 26). But there is also another lesson. These things which are now told us are apparently among the most ordinary events of the time. They are the common-place things of the day. Not a hint is dropped of any Divine arrangement, or of any special guiding of God; and yet that is, nevertheless, the commencement of the mightiest story of antiquity. God is in the usual and the common-place, as well as in the extraordinary. His hand touches everything; and every place whereon we tread is holy ground.

Apparently Moses is born soon after the issuing of the Royal decree commanding the slaughter of the male children. Aaron, Moses' senior by three years only, has plainly been exposed to no such danger. In spite, however, of the king's commandment, the mother tries to save her child. But either the child's increasing strength, or some other circumstance, renders further concealment impossible; and once more, in what seems to be merely the ingenious contrivance of maternal solicitude, we see again the finger of God. The ark, made of papyrus, and protected against the water by a coating of pitch without and within, is placed among the reeds which then grew luxuriously upon the river's banks, and is thus saved from being carried away by the stream. There it attracts the notice of Pharaoh's daughter, who goes down to bathe in the sacred waters. The

child is sheltered in Pharaoh's palace; and the very power, which threatened to destroy this hope of Israel, becomes the servant of it, and prepares Moses for the accomplishment of his mighty mission.

The next great incident in his career also takes place in what we may describe as a quite ordinary fashion. It would be well were this fact noted by those who imagine that the Scripture moves perpetually in an atmosphere of miracle. Moses is called forth from the midst of Egyptian greatness and luxury by no Divinely-sent vision. He receives no audible command from God. What happens is apparently on a level with those determinations which men are making daily. He has awakened from the dreams in which his life has hitherto been passed. With open eyes he looks upon that luxurious, self-pleasing, life; and he sees in it simply the mockery of his heart's cry. He remembers his enslaved brethren and their hope, and he makes his great life-choice. He goes forth, refusing to be called any longer the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and takes his place among the Israelites as one of themselves. But there he witnesses scenes which make him no longer master of himself. He sees an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, "and he looked this way and that, and when he saw there was no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand" (ii. 12). Expostulation would have been useless even from him; and so, when he saw there was no one near to report the deed, he slew the Egyptian. It was an act which no one can defend; but it shows the

bitterness of Israel's case when no other remedy lay within the power of an earthly helper.

Israel, however, was not to be delivered by insurrection, or by a system of assassination. On the second day Moses' burden is exchanged for despair. He is rejected by his people. He finds two Hebrews in conflict, and, while expostulating with the aggressor, he has his intervention scornfully repelled. "Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? Intendest thou to kill me as thou killedst the Egyptian?" It was one of those moments when the veil is lifted, and when a man stands face to face with a hideous disclosure of his incapacity. What shadow of a right had he to intervene, and how could redemption come from one with such a stain upon his soul? And there was still deeper degradation for him. When that thought of redeeming Israel lay trampled in the dust, this heroic soul was shaken with alarm. He feared for his life, who but yesterday would have joyfully sacrificed a thousand lives had he possessed them. What was a matter of common knowledge among the Israelites could not be concealed from the Egyptians; and what of the royal anger when the deed was told in the palace?

Moses' premonition of coming evil was fully justified. The officers of justice are in search of him, and he has to flee. He escapes to the desert of Sinai, and passes to Midian on the shore of the Gulf of Akaba. There a deed, which revealed the princely spirit of the man who had dreamed of delivering Israel, gains him a home and a place in

the family of the high-priest of Midian. He is sitting beside a well, with the intention probably of spending the night there. Flocks approach at the evening hour, led by a number of young women. They fill the drinking troughs; but, meanwhile, other flocks have come, and the shepherds drive away the girls and their sheep and appropriate the filled water-troughs. Moses' spirit is roused. He scatters the men, single-handed though he is, and sees that the girls' flocks are watered before the shepherds are suffered again to approach. The shepherds' appropriation of the well seems to have been habitual; for on this occasion Reuel is surprised by his daughters' early return. He asks an explanation, and then one generous spirit hails another. He bids them haste and entreat the stranger to share their hospitality; and in that home, opened to him thus in the silent and unobtrusive Providence of God, Moses find a resting-place for the next forty years of his life. He marries Zipporah, Reuel's daughter, and names his first-born son *Ger-shōm*, a name formed of two Egyptian words, meaning "a sojourner in a strange land." It told of the burden of a broken heart. He had seen before him a glorious mission; and now it seemed as if his opportunity had gone for ever.

CHAPTER II.

CRITICISMS AND DIFFICULTIES.

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CRITICS continue to tell us that they believe in the inspiration of Scripture. On the most solemn occasions they have not hesitated to adopt our own language, and to declare that they accept the Bible as the Word of God, until at such times we are almost ready to ask whether this huge and sad controversy is not based upon some unfortunate misunderstanding of our own. But the slightest reference to their books, and to the fundamental conception of the Scripture upon which their treatment of it proceeds, reveals the worth of those professions. Baentsch's comment upon the opening words of Exodus ii. furnishes a farther example. "The name," he says, "neither of the father nor of the mother of Moses is known, nor yet of the sister. As to whence, too, this sister comes, we are left completely in the dark. According to verse 1, the marriage is celebrated; according to verse 2, Moses is the firstfruit of this marriage; in verse 4, an elder sister steps forth, just as if it were a matter of course that every newborn child finds a helpful sister before it upon the earth. The author relates carelessly, like a fairy-story teller." All this is to set off the particularity of the supposed writer "P," to whom the critics assign vi. 14, &c. Can a descrip-

tion like that be reconciled with any belief in the inspiration of Scripture? But Baentsch and his school seem unable to perceive the meaning of the language in the text. As we have already noted, the form of expression chosen indicates that in what seemed an ordinary commonplace event, God was preparing help for His people. The charge, too, of careless narration refutes itself. There is nothing more masterly in literature than these verses, which give us a history in a few simple touches. The writer has one distinct goal before him; and, pressing on to that, he turns aside neither to the right hand nor to the left. He has to tell us about Moses; his birth and preservation for the first months; his after peril and deliverance; his training; his championship of, and rejection by, Israel. All this is done with a directness, brevity, and ease which reveal the perfection of the narrator's art. It is no more a part of the writer's purpose to tell the story of that family than it is to give the history of Egypt. He desires as little to say how many children there are in this family, or to record their names and those of the father and the mother, as to record the names of the reigning Pharaoh and of his wife and children. All needful information will be given by-and-by in its proper place. Here we have to mark one thing only, and that is the beginning of the story of Moses.

A passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews has been generally connected with the flight of Moses. There we are told (Hebrews xi. 27) that "by faith he (Moses) forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the

king; for he endured as seeing Him Who is invisible." Two methods of explanation have been followed. One applies these words to the breaking up of the camp at Succoth, and the advance into the wilderness. But no wrath of the king stood in the way of that advance. Everything was then done, indeed, with the permission and the goodwill of king and people. It has been pointed out, too, that to apply the words in that way is to throw the references in Hebrews xi. into confusion. Just before, we have the determination of Moses to identify himself with his people (verses 24-26); and immediately after this statement about the forsaking of Egypt (verse 27) we find these words: "Through faith he kept the Passover" (verse 28). It is plain, therefore, that the abandonment of Egypt preceded, and did not follow, the keeping of the Passover. That solution of the difficulty has, therefore, to be abandoned. The second explanation understands the words to refer to Moses' flight from Egypt into the land of Midian. But in the latter case the words of Scripture have to be subjected to an intolerable strain. The faith of Moses on that occasion is not at all apparent; and, as for confidence in God, which sweeps out dread of the king's wrath, we search for it in vain. The words of Exodus are plainly intended to show us a spirit the reverse of that described in Hebrews xi. 27; for we read: "Moses feared and said, Surely this thing is known . . . Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh" (Exodus ii. 14, 15).

Neither of the above explanations can be accepted,

and the difficulty sends us back again to the Exodus history. Was there any incident which occurred between the return of Moses to Egypt and the observance of the first Passover to which the reference in Hebrews can be applied? Recurring to the history, we are arrested before one of its most memorable scenes, which occurred just before the observance of the Passover. We are told in chap. x. that, terrified by the three days' darkness, Pharaoh sent for Moses, and proposed a compromise. The entire people were to have liberty to go and serve Jehovah, but they were to leave their flocks and herds, apparently as pledges for their return. Moses refused the offer. The Israelites must have sacrifices with them. "Our cattle also," said Moses, "shall go with us; there shall not an hoof be left behind" (x. 24-26). The result was an exhibition of royal fury, which kindled an answering indignation in the breast of Moses. "And Pharaoh said unto him, Get thee from me; take heed to thyself; see my face no more; for in that day thou seest my face thou shalt die" (x. 28). The narrative has suffered in our translation by the use of the past tense instead of the pluperfect. Instead of "And the Lord said unto Moses" in xi. 1, read: "And the Lord had said unto Moses," and the connection is clear. God had already commanded Moses to have preparations made for departure. He had directed him to urge the Israelites to ask from the Egyptians who surrounded them "jewels of silver and jewels of gold." This had been done with great success, for "the

Lord gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians." In view of this, Moses now announced to Pharaoh what was about to happen. God would break the proud heart of the king. All the first-born in the land of Egypt would die. "And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more. But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast. . . . And all these thy servants shall come down unto me, and bow down themselves unto me, saying, Get thee out, and all the people that follow thee: and after that I will go out. And he went out from Pharaoh in a great anger" (xi. 6-8).

It was an open defiance of the king. If Pharaoh's anger burned before, it must have flamed now with a ten-fold fierceness. And why was that word spoken? Simply because the departure was determined upon, and was being arranged for. Never again would the Israelites bear an Egyptian burden, or be smitten with the rod of the taskmaster. The final preparations are made, and the fourteenth of the month Nisan is fixed for Egypt's final chastisement and Israel's freedom. That was a point in the long struggle at which the faith of Moses shone out with surpassing splendour. The final word was spoken; the great resolve was made; the last links with Egypt were severed. It was forsaken in faith, "not fearing the wrath of the king, for he endured as seeing Him Who is invisible." It is, indeed, open to anyone to reply that the land was not actually

abandoned, and that several days elapsed before the hosts of Israel assembled and marched to Succoth. That is so. But the fact remains that all that followed was the result of this final determination now announced to Pharaoh. The last preparations in the issuing of directions for the choice of the lamb, and the observances of the 14th Nisan, were all in view of the departure. They were as much part of it as the actual assembling of the tribes, the issuing of the orders for the march, and the march itself. All these were the consequences of that final rupture with the king, and the closing of the prolonged negotiations. Notwithstanding the wrath of the king, Moses bade him farewell, telling him that the departure of Israel was now resolved upon, and arranged, and that they should pass out unhindered. "By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured as seeing Him Who is invisible."

Another difficulty is connected with the name of Moses' father-in-law. In Exodus ii. it is Reuel, or Raguel (see Numbers x. 29). But in iii. 1 (as we shall see immediately) we read: "Now Moses kept the flock of *Jethro* his father-in-law." The difficulty is increased by a further reference in Judges iv. 11, where we read "of the children of *Hobab*, the father-in-law of Moses." This difficulty is entirely due to those who introduced the vowel-points into the Hebrew text about the sixth century of our era. The word, as *written by Moses*, was applied to any *relative by marriage*. It is applied to Moses himself

by Zipporah in Exodus iv. 26: "A bloody husband thou art because of the circumcision." The Jewish rabbis, by furnishing the word with one set of vowels at one time, and at another with a different set of vowels, and taking the first arrangement to mean father-in-law, and the second to designate any relative by marriage, are the sole authors of the difficulty. Hobab, and Jethro, and Raguel were each accurately described as the *khothen*, or the *khathan*, of Moses. When Moses first arrived in Midian, Raguel, the father of Zipporah, was alive; but forty years afterwards, when God appeared to Moses, Raguel seems to have been dead. Jethro, his son, had succeeded to the priesthood and to the headship of the family. Hobab seems to have been a younger brother of Jethro's.

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## CHAPTER III.

## THE CALLING OF MOSES

(II. 23—IV. 17).

THIS second section of the first Part of Exodus commences with an expression of the Divine pity, which probably entirely escapes the notice of the reader of the Authorised Version. Instead of "It came to pass in process of time that the king of Egypt died" (ii. 23), the Hebrew reads: "It came to pass after those many days." This is what Holzinger rightly calls "a wonderful dating of an

event.”\* But it contains a wealth of suggestion to which the higher criticism is quite oblivious, and for which it can find no place in that haphazard patchwork which it conceives the Scripture to be. The words throb with the Divine compassion. “Those many days”—and there were between fourteen and fifteen thousand of them in the forty years of Moses’ sojourn in the land of Midian—were all of them days of anguish for God’s people.

The note struck in this “wonderful dating” prepares for what follows :

“And the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage; and they cried; and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God knew (them).”

The Israelites may have expected that the death of a monarch who had shown himself a pitiless oppressor, would have brought them some measure of relief. But the suppression of everything that could make Israel dangerous was now the settled policy of Egypt. The sighing of the Israelites continued, therefore, until their cry came up before God. It was a moment for the tyrants to tremble. God, as it were, sets aside all else, and proceeds to deal at last with this hoary wrong. His “remembering,” His “looking upon,” His “knowing,” are expressions full of the hope of mighty and immediate

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\* Exodus, S. 10.

deliverance. The reader of Scripture is quite aware of their significance. That phrase, for example, "God *knew* them" meets us in Psalm i. 6: "The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous"; that is, the Lord is there to prosper and to bless. His knowing Israel tells of Divine championship. The Lord identifies Himself with them; and henceforth he that touches Israel has to reckon with the Almighty. Such moments have come again and again in the world's history. Wrong has trampled upon human rights and upon human hearts generation after generation. And then at last the end has come. God has arisen. He has acknowledged the oppressed; and before the irresistible wrath of Jehovah the oppressors have gone down, and their overthrow has made the rights which they had scorned more sacred than ever in the eyes of humanity.

The reader will note how admirable an introduction these verses are to the narrative of the calling of Moses, upon which we now enter in chapter iii.

"And Moses was shepherding the flock of Jethro his brother-in-law, the priest of Midian; and he led the flock behind the desert, and he came to the mountain of God, to Horeb" (iii. 1).

This picture of Moses' placid, common-place, existence is dramatic in its contrast with the intensity of what has preceded and what is to follow. Moses has no consciousness of the great part which he is about to play in the history of the world; and he has, apparently, made no preparation for it. He seems

to have heard nothing of Israel's sufferings, and to be intent merely upon the discharge of his duties as Jethro's shepherd. But the hour has come when he shall have to shepherd men. His attention is attracted by an unusual spectacle. It is not so much that the bush is on fire, though that itself may have been strange enough. It is that, though he has watched for some time, that fierce flame leaves stem and branch, and even leaf, unconsumed. An observant and reflective man could not leave a matter of that kind without inspection. But, when he advances to examine, he enters upon the first of those new experiences that were to change everything for him in heaven and on earth. His steps are suddenly arrested; "God called unto him out of the bush, and said Moses! Moses!!" (verse 4).

With the reply, "Here am I," commenced that Divine converse, unmatched before in all the world's experiences, and which ceased not till Moses' last breath was drawn upon Mount Nebo. His was a work which was to be done in direct and constant contact with God. While walking to and fro among the men of his time, he was nevertheless to be shut in with God. But there could have been few more startling experiences in that long mediatorship than this which marked its beginning. Before speaking of the words which follow, let us first note what is intended by the symbol with which God here associates Himself. The lowly acacia, or thorn, bush of the desert is plainly intended to represent Israel, and the fire to set forth God as manifested in

His relation to that people. Israel was to be a separated race—a desert dweller—in itself possessed of no beauty or magnificence—but marvellous to all men as the abode of God, and the place of His revealing. The fire tells another part of that story, which Israel's experiences were to add to the records of humanity. Fire is the symbol of the Divine indignation against sin. "Take heed unto yourselves," said Moses afterwards to Israel, ". . . for the Lord thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God" (Deuteronomy iv. 23, 24). The fire set forth God in the swiftness and the terribleness of Divine judgment. The third and last part of the story is the fact which astonished Moses that, notwithstanding the fierceness of the flames by which the bush was permeated and enveloped, it remained unconsumed. To-day, scattered, persecuted, slaughtered, crushed as no other people has ever been, Israel survives. Is it not marvellous to find in that three-fold symbol this people's character and unparalleled history, and the special revelation which it was to furnish of God thus set forth at the very commencement of its career? Can any theory of the merely human origin of these Scriptures account for the origination of a symbol so strikingly prophetic?

The name by which God announces Himself twice to Moses (verses 6 and 15) is also full of significance. That is indicated by the words: "This is My name for ever, and this is My memorial unto all generations" (verse 15). As we have already seen,

the doctrine of the Trinity is plainly indicated in the association of the Godhead with those three founders of Israel. Abraham and Isaac, as associated together in the Moriah sacrifice, are manifestly typical of the Father, Who gave His only-begotten, and of the Son, Who yielded Himself to the Father's will for the world's salvation. Jacob's history is an equally fit symbol of the revelation of the Spirit. In Abraham's and in Isaac's time the *people of God* are merely a prediction and an expectation, as they are under the manifestation of the Father in the Old Testament period, and of the Son in the dawn of the New Testament period. But in Jacob the people of God appears. The individual becomes a family; the family a tribe; and the tribe a nation. So when the Spirit is manifested, the Church appears and is multiplied. The reader will note how this is borne out by the repetition of the name "God" in connection with each of those three men—"the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." This form of expression is observed in verses 6 and 15, as well as in iv. 5. Here, again, there is an outlook which carries us on to Calvary and the day of Pentecost. The assurance, too, that this is God's "name for ever," and His "memorial unto all generations," announces that God is to be revealed fully and for all aftertime in His relationship to this people of Israel; and here, again, we have an anticipation which nothing can explain but the full inspiration of this Book of God.

There now follows a record of pitiable hesitation

and disinclination on Moses' part to accept the work so graciously assigned to him. That is a feature of the history which no makers of Moses-legends would ever have imagined, or have dared to associate with the great deliverer of Israel. "Who am I," he asks, "that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" For a moment he seems to be lifted up by the Divine assurance: "Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be the token unto thee that I have sent thee: when thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain" (verse 12). But Moses, looking onward, and imagining himself in the presence of Israel, anticipates a time of searching questionings.

"Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say unto me, What is His name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses I AM, WHAT I AM: Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you" (verses 13, 14).

Everyone has asked why Moses made this inquiry as to God's name, and especially after the Divine declaration, "I am the God of Abraham," &c. Was it because Israel, and even Moses himself, had fallen into the ways of the heathen who distinguished between their "gods many" by special designations? That this is the meaning of Moses' question is, of course, set down by the higher criticism as unques-

tionable. It sees here nothing save a heathen idea. "It is only when one knows," writes Holzinger, "the name of a god that one can work upon him, and call upon him."\* But if a notion of that sort had inspired Moses' question, there was absolutely no necessity for that question to be asked. A name was already provided. It would have been enough to say "the God of Horeb," or "the God of the bush that burned and that was not consumed." And the slightest attention to the Divine reply dissipates this flimsy notion. No name whatever is given such as the higher critics tell us was asked for. Moses is not supplied with a designation such as heathenism has lived and thriven upon. He receives no name that could be put by the side of Amon or Thoth, or Baal or Dagon, or Brahma or Vishnu. God does not here assume even the name Jehovah. The Divine answer is not the communication of a name, in that sense of the term. Instead of that it lifts the veil, and reveals the Divine nature: "I am, what I am."

But what, then, did Moses really mean? To answer this question we have to recall his position. He is commanded to visit Israel, and to awaken confidence in a people whom a heartless oppression has plunged into despair. He himself is utterly wanting in any power to create so mighty a change. If the change, then, is to be brought about, the power must lie in the message he is to carry. There must be life and might in that, or he need not turn

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\*S. II.

his face towards Egypt. When they ask, as they will ask, who it is that sent him, the reply must in some way accredit him and convince them. He himself is in the presence of the Divine glory. If he can convey to the people something of the power of that disclosure—if the fire will burn in the name—if God will reveal Himself in some striking designation as Israel's champion and their oppressor's foe—then the task of God's messenger will be easier. To speak of God as the God of their fathers did not seem to meet the need. It revived, indeed, the memory of the past; but it appeared to lack any vitalizing touch for the present. Moses and Israel had yet to learn that God's past is surest promise for the present and for the future. And this seems to be the lesson of that name which God now assumes. "I AM WHAT I AM" tells of the unchangeableness of the Divine nature, and, therefore, also of the continuity of the Divine purpose. He who watched over the fathers in Canaan has neither forsaken nor forgotten the children in Egypt. The choice which God had then revealed He had not abandoned; He has not abandoned it even now, in this twentieth century of the Christian era; and if the ground of this assurance is asked for, it is there in that name: "I AM, WHAT I AM"—THE UNCHANGEABLE—"the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

The needful instructions are now given to Moses. He is first of all to assemble the elders of Israel and to acquaint them with his mission, the nearness of

the Divine help, and God's resolve to give them now the inheritance promised of old to the fathers. The reception which Moses will meet with is then disclosed. The elders will listen to, and believe, him. They will also accompany him to Pharaoh, and will, by their presence, support the demand that Israel be allowed to depart upon a three days' journey into the wilderness to worship Jehovah. He is further told what the result of the appeal will be. It will be refused. But that refusal will be the beginning of a struggle with God in which Egypt will be vanquished, and Israel will not only be set free, but will also go out enriched by the gifts of the Egyptians (verses 18-22).

But God has still to wrestle with the unbelief of him whose trust, though sorely tried, never afterwards faltered. Moses vividly realises his utter unfitness for this mighty service, and, in his reckoning, that assurance of God, "Certainly I will be with thee," finds no place. To his expressed conviction: "They will not believe me, nor hearken to my voice; for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee," God replies by arming with a threefold sign. The rod in his hand, cast upon the ground, becomes a serpent, from which he flees in terror. He is directed to come behind it, and to seize it by the tail, when it becomes again a rod. He is bidden to put his hand into his bosom, and it becomes "leprous as snow." Again, in obedience to the Divine command, he places it once more in his bosom, and "it was turned again as his other flesh."

Last of all, he is told that power is given him to work a third sign in Egypt. He will take there of the water of the Nile and pour it upon the dry land, and the water will be turned into blood. Had those signs any significance beyond their certifying Moses' message? In the case of the first, Moses' attention is drawn to the fact that what is in his hand is a rod (iv. 2). It was his support. The upholding of Him in Whom "we live and move and have our being" is seemingly as passive and as commonplace as the rod in Moses' hand. But let God be renounced—let Him be cast away—and the hitherto seemingly passive power will become a peril and a terror from which we flee. On the other hand, when no longer opposed, but taken to us again in submission and holy fear, it will once more serve us. It was a warning to Moses, to Israel, and to Pharaoh. The second sign told of the power of God to judge and to bless; to make life a horror, and to sweep away the horror as if it had been a dream. That also was prophetic of Egypt's coming tribulation, and of many a period in Israel's after history. In the third sign the place whence Moses is directed to take the water affords a key to the interpretation.

"Thou shalt take of the water of the river, and pour it upon the dry land: and the water which thou takest out of the river shall be and shall be blood upon the dry land" (iv. 9).

The Nile was Egypt's life. Its waters, in the annual inundation, pouring over its banks and spreading the fertilising mud over the ground, pre-

pared the way for the harvest. But the sign showed that God could turn that blessing into a fearful scourge. Instead of life He might make the river bring forth death: instead of fruitfulness, corruption. The unusual form, "shall be and shall be," conveys the strong and solemn assurance that this means of blessing shall certainly be turned into a vehicle of judgment—a threatening that was afterwards fulfilled in the two first plagues.

But all this wealth of assurance only increased Moses' terror. It was like arming a man for the battle whose heart faints and whose only desire is to flee. There is a note of liveliest apprehension, and even of anguish, in his words (for it is only now that we find the entreating phrase "O my Lord").

"As for me, O my Lord, I am not a man of words, neither yesterday, nor from the third day, nor from the time of Thy speaking to Thy servant: for I am heavy of mouth, and heavy of tongue" (iv. 10).

The phrase, "neither yesterday," &c., indicates that Moses has been conscious of no preparation for such service; as if such a preparation must have been a necessity had it really been intended that he should undertake the embassy! God's longsuffering, however, still abides, and this objection also is met with the pledge of Divine help. God will be mouth and wisdom to him. And now, driven from every shelter of excuse, and wholly at bay, Moses ventures to absolutely decline the service. The Divine anger is kindled, and Aaron is assigned to him as his

helper. What God desired to be the glory of one man is now divided between two. It is the penalty of timidity. The shrinking from God's service is the diminishing of man's glory. Aaron was to be the spokesman of Moses. "He shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God" (verse 16). And that display of the Divine indignation did its work. Moses' opposition instantly ceased; and his great career began in holy fear, if not in the joy of assured confidence. God's last word was: "Thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs" (verse 17). That hour at Sinai was never to be forgotten throughout all the after triumph and service.

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#### CHAPTER IV.

##### CRITICAL FANCIES AND ANCIENT DIFFICULTIES.

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THIS Section of Exodus has been subjected by the critics to the most minute analysis. One result must be to make their students despair of ever embarking upon really independent study. The opening words of the Section (ii. 23, etc.), for example, are divided as follows: "And it came to pass after" (assigned to J) "many" (given to Rp) "days that the king of Egypt died" (J again), etc. The notion, that any writer called J, or named by any other letter of the alphabet, could not have em-

ployed that word "many," and that another writer must, therefore, be invented to account for its presence in the Scripture, will hardly find a parallel in all the annals of absurdity. There are signs, however, that the critics are at last realising that they have got beyond their depth in this pursuit of folly, and that they are floundering hopelessly. Baentsch (1903) gives iii. 19, etc. to E; but he follows that sign "E" with ["Rje"?]. The meaning of this is that, while he assigns the portion to E, he thinks that opinion open to question, and believes it to be quite possible that the passage is the result of the writing and the tinkering of at least three different hands! If we turn to Holzinger's analysis of Exodus (1900), we find those marks of interrogation\* as thickly scattered as if they had fallen from a vigorously shaken pepper-pot. And, nevertheless, uninformed men talk of "the *assured* results of the higher criticism"! The critics have now advanced so far that they begin to perceive that their "results" are open to questionings which they are unable to resolve.

We have seen how the unique plan of the Book—a plan which permeates the whole—demonstrates its unity. We have to do throughout with one writer and not with more. Were it worth the toil, the unity of the Book might be proved in many ways. I mention one fact only, which Keil has long ago pointed out. The situation of Midian, the home of Zipporah, the wife of Moses, and of her relatives, is

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\* Ss. xv.—xix.

not described. Its situation is supposed to be so fully known to the first readers of Exodus that any information concerning the locality was unnecessary. The generation which marched through the wilderness was in exactly that position. Now, if we have to do here with the work of one writer, though the geographical position is not described, yet the position of it implied in one part of the Book will be identical with the position which is implied in other parts of the Book. If, on the other hand, the Book is compiled from documents belonging to far separated ages, and written by men who had no accurate acquaintance with the localities to which the Book refers, we may expect that the geographical position implied in one passage will differ from that implied in another. That there should be absolute agreement among blundering traditions, idle legends, and bold falsifications would be nothing short of miraculous.

But this absolute agreement between the alleged "sources" actually exists! For example, Moses (iii. 1) has to cross a desert in order to pasture Jethro's flocks in Horeb. Midian, therefore, lay somewhere on the eastern side of Sinai, with a desert between the mountain range and it. Will the reader note that iii. 1 (from which we glean this information) is assigned to E? If we now turn to iv. 27, we learn that Moses, on his way from Midian to Egypt, meets Aaron at Horeb. Let us pause a moment and see what this means. Egypt lies to the north-west of Horeb. If Moses, then, comes to Horeb on his way from Midian, he must have come from the south-east.

Midian, therefore, lay to the south-east of Horeb. Let me ask the reader to note that iv. 27 is assigned to JE. Last of all, in Numbers x. 30, we are told that Hobab proposes to return to his own land and to his kindred. That determination was come to when the Israelites had commenced their march to the south of Palestine. They were then about to march to the north-east. Now if Hobab feels that he has to part company with them there, it can only be because his home lies in another direction. That is explained at once when we recollect that Exodus iv. 27 implies that Midian lies south-east of Sinai. Let the reader now make a third note. Numbers x. 30 is assigned to J! Consequently E, JE, and J are absolutely at one in this subtle harmony of reference. That fact, while perfectly in harmony with the Scripture teaching as to the unity of the Book, can not be reconciled with the critical theory of diverse "Sources."

The request which Moses is commanded to lay before Pharaoh has long presented a very serious difficulty. In iii. 18, we read: "And thou shalt come, thou and the elders of Israel, unto the king of Egypt, and ye shall say unto him, The Lord God of the Hebrews hath met with us: and now let us go, we beseech thee, three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God." That this demand asked for less than God had promised to Israel cannot be denied. Already in iii. 12 Moses has been told that he and the people of Israel shall worship God on that mountain. But Sinai was more

than a three days' journey from Egypt. There was one day's march from Rameses to Succoth (xii. 37), and a second from Succoth to the camping-place between Migdol and the sea (xiv. 2). After that they went three days' journey in the wilderness to reach Marah, now "the well of Moses" (xv. 22). Here, then, after five days' journey from Rameses, they are still far from Sinai, which, as a matter of fact, they only reached after from six weeks to two months' marching and resting in the wilderness (xix. 1). Still less can the demand be reconciled with the promise (iii. 8): "I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large." The request held out the distinct hope of Israel's return; but it is already promised to Israel that there will be no return. The "three days' journey into the wilderness" asked merely that Israel should be permitted to go sufficiently far from the Egyptian frontier to worship Jehovah without let or hindrance. To Israel, on the other hand, no mention is made of a merely temporary relaxation from their bitter bondage. They are promised a full deliverance—an Exodus which will be followed by no return. Is the Scripture speaking, then, with two voices? Is Israel to be got away by stealth, and is the foundation of the kingdom of God, the dominion of righteousness and truth, to be laid in duplicity?

The critics have not hesitated to give an affirmative reply. Knobel distinctly says that Moses and the Israelitish elders were "to deceive the king." To

this Keil and Hengstenberg rightly reply, that the request placed before Pharaoh is limited in accordance with an entirely different purpose. God is entering upon a controversy with Pharaoh and with Egypt. He is about to judge them; and, in order that they may be judged, they must first be revealed to themselves and to all men. Had they been asked to suffer the Israelites to depart from Egypt, so large a demand might have seemed to others, and certainly would have appeared to the Egyptians themselves, as so unreasonable as to justify their refusal. A request is made, therefore, against which no charge of the kind can be brought. A three days' journey into the wilderness need not have taken the Israelites much beyond the Egyptian frontier. It was also perfectly reasonable, even to heathen notions, that they should be permitted to worship their God after the accepted manner. The heart of Pharaoh and of his people was, therefore, revealed in their scornful refusal of a perfectly reasonable request. In this way they committed themselves to what was manifestly unjust; and in proceeding against them God was consequently justified even in their own eyes. Conscience was stirred. Egypt knew itself to be in the wrong; and a pathway was made there for return to the living God—the God of the conscience—for all who desired to be at peace with Him Whom they had offended. Has God ever judged a people whom He has not first dealt with in that very way? National judgments have been preceded by some outstanding transgression in which the heart of the nation has been

manifested. Carlyle traces the fearful blow which fell upon the clergy and the aristocracy in the French Revolution to the massacre of St. Bartholomew. France had sought to crush the Reformation as Egypt had sought to crush Israel. Spain dug the grave for her greatness and her fame in the establishment of her Inquisition, and in her relentless wars against a people who desired to remove from the Church what were glaring, and largely confessed, scandals.

But we have to go farther to find the full explanation of that request. The demand was indeed limited. It was seemingly a small matter that was asked for. But what was asked for set forth and inscribed in flaming characters Israel's mission. This conflict was to be waged on ground chosen by the Almighty. The battle was not one merely for Israel's deliverance from bitter bondage. It was not fought and won solely that Israel might be able to go forth and possess the land promised to her fathers. The one purpose, to which every other was subsidiary and contributory, was that Israel should dwell in God's Tabernacle. She was redeemed to be His people. Her one mission was and is to serve Jehovah. No other demand would have adequately stated the claim that God was now making and urging in the face of humanity. No other could have so set forth God's claim as against the claim of Pharaoh. Pharaoh said: "The people is mine; I will not let them go." God said: "The people is Mine; thou must let them go; they have been created and chosen that they

may serve Me." The conflict was being waged over the destiny of a race, its place in history and in the service of humanity. Was Israel to be slave, or priest? Egypt's beast of burden, or the anointed of Jehovah? That was the question; and was it possible that God could have done other than put that question, written large and clear, in the forefront of this great controversy?

And let me add that the demand was prophetic. Israel is in this matter also the type of God's people. When Christianity began its conflict with the Roman Empire, what was the one question over which the great debate proceeded? We all know now what God intended. The nations were to abandon their idols so that their very names, as the household words of the peoples, were to perish. But no demand was made by the Christian Church that the temples should be closed, and that the heathen priesthoods should be abolished. One thing only was asked, and that apparently one of the slightest. It was freedom to worship the living God—*the very demand made for Israel in Egypt*. Over that the battle raged for centuries. The triumph came when that was won. It was not for any claim the Christians made to direct the worship of the Roman Empire: it was not for their rights as citizens: it was for liberty to worship God in accordance with His demands. That claim kept them, and when the triumph came it consecrated them, as the people of God.

Another difficulty claims a final word. It is one which the rationalist is most unwilling to lay down.

It has served him well in the past, and might have been serving him still, had not scholarship proved its utter unworthiness. In iii. 22 we read: "But every woman shall borrow of her neighbour, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and ye shall put them upon your sons, and upon your daughters; and ye shall spoil the Egyptians." The word "borrow" has, in English-speaking lands, imparted to this old weapon its sharpness and venom. He who borrows plainly implies an intention to restore. But, as it is quite clear that the Israelites had no such intention, they (it used to be urged) were guilty of fraud, and that, too, in their obeying a Divine command! And certainly, if the premiss were trustworthy, the conclusion would be inevitable. But that the premiss is a delusion every Hebrew student knows. The word *sha-al* does not mean to "borrow." It is the ordinary Hebrew word "to ask," and is used scores of times in that sense. It was probably the context which led our translators to give a sense to the word here which is not given to it in any of the ancient translations, or even in the German of Luther. The Septuagint renders the word *aitēsi* (ask); Jerome's Latin renders it by *postulabit* (ask, request); Luther by *fordern* (demand, ask).

While knowing all this, Holzinger\* declines to abandon the objection. He writes: "Concerning the permissibility of this cheating of the foe, the narrative does not reflect." And why should it

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\* *Excelsus*, S. 15.

reflect upon a view of the matter which could not have presented itself except to a mind bent upon distorting the facts? To whom could the notion have suggested itself that the Egyptians were being “cheated” in that transaction? The Israelites were being thrust out of the land. The Egyptians had learned to tremble at their presence, and desired nothing less than their return to Egypt. They now saw in them the favoured people of the living God, and had the liveliest sense of the accumulated wrongs which they and their fathers had heaped upon them. When, therefore, the Israelites made this request—a request which we may well believe had behind it the most painful need as well as the Divine injunction—it presented to the Egyptians a means of atonement of which they availed themselves with fervour. To calmly pen that word “cheating” may well become a partisan, but is quite beneath the dignity of a scholar.

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## CHAPTER V.

### MOSES IN EGYPT

(IV. 18—VI. 12).

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WE shall fail to understand this third and last Section of The Story of the Redeemer of Israel unless we weigh well its opening words. Moses now acquiesced silently in this Divine appointment which he was not permitted to decline.

But there was no elation : there was not even perfect confidence. There seems, at first sight, to be no connection between verses 18 and 19. There appears to be, indeed, a distinct break in the narrative, so much so that some commentators have begun this third Section with verse 19, and regard verse 18 as closing the preceding Section. A careful reading of 18, however, dispels that illusion. Moses prepares to return to Egypt ; but, in breaking the news of his intended departure to Jethro, he says nothing of the Divine command, and is equally silent as to the vision at Sinai. He is returning, he says, to see whether his brethren be yet alive. What does it mean? Is it, that though he returns to Egypt, he has no confidence in his mission; and that, in case of the failure he dreads, he will not commit himself by saying a word as to that which has really necessitated his departure? There is thus the closest connection with the next words: "And the Lord said unto Moses in Midian, Go, return into Egypt: for all the men are dead that sought thy life" (verse 19). The Divine command is reiterated, and the not unnatural apprehension of Moses that he was thrusting himself into the very peril, from which forty years ago he had fled, was graciously removed.

There is now immediate obedience on the part of Moses; and among his preparations there is one which speaks of better things: "And Moses took the rod of God in his hand" (verse 20). That obedience opens the heart's door to consolation. Moses is now sustained by the recollection of the

powers with which God has endowed him. He is to be possessed by the consciousness of the fact that he is not the bearer of a verbal message only, but is also able to display the Divine warrant :

“And Jehovah said to Moses, In thy going to Egypt, look upon all the signs which I have put in thy hand, and thou shalt do them before Pharaoh : and I shall harden his heart, and he will not let the people go” (verse 21).

While resting in the consciousness of the power with which God has entrusted him, Moses is to be prepared for apparent failure. It is in God’s plan that Pharaoh will resist. Through that resistance will come Egypt’s punishment and Israel’s full and enduring deliverance. And now his commission is repeated. The rod is to be used and the signs are to be done before Pharaoh :

“And thou shalt say to Pharaoh, Thus hath Jehovah spoken, Israel is My firstborn son : and I have said to thee, Send My son away, and he shall serve Me : and thou hast refused to send him away, behold I am slaying thy son, thy firstborn” (verses 22, 23).

This description of Israel as God’s firstborn is noteworthy. It explains and suggests much to the Bible student. The *first-born* is the type and promise of others who will appear in due time. The choosing and separation of this nation was a pledge of the coming consecration of all nations ; and God’s caring for, and honouring of, Israel was a prophecy of His care for, and honouring of, them. When we now read

of God's seeking to slay Moses, abrupt and thorough though the transition seems to be, there is still the closest connection with what has just been said. The mark of Israel's sonship was circumcision. But for some reason—probably Zipporah's antipathy to the rite—the younger son of Moses had not been circumcised. Thus he, who was going to bring God's people to Him, had discarded the token of the Covenant between God and them! There was a loud call, therefore, to mark here the sacredness and absolute necessity of this initiatory rite; and so the Lord's dealing with Moses has its record here. Zipporah's words: "A bloody husband art thou to me. . . . A bloody husband thou art because of the circumcision," have been variously understood. Gesenius and others strongly contend that they were spoken, not to Moses, but to the child upon whom the rite had just been performed. It is supposed that Zipporah's meaning was that, by the shedding of his blood, she had purchased her child's life, so that he was hers now in a fuller sense than before. But it was not *that* life which was threatened; and the only life that had to be redeemed by an immediate obedience was that of Moses, to whom the words must have been addressed. Casting the child's foreskin at her husband's feet, she intimated, not only that his life was saved, but also her abhorrence of the necessary sacrifice. She had purchased her husband; but a bloody husband she must ever afterwards esteem him to be. And Moses had now to proceed alone to Egypt, for it is plain that Zipporah

and his children now returned to Midian (see xviii. 2). The Revised Version has rendered *Khathan* by "bridegroom." The word is undoubtedly used in that sense throughout the Hebrew Scriptures; but there is no call here to substitute that for the more ordinary meaning, "husband," or "relation by marriage." To imagine that Zipporah intended to say that she had now entered upon a new and closer relationship to Moses is impossible; for even the relationship which existed before is for the time suspended.

But God has refreshment in store for His servant. Aaron is told to arise and meet him; and the long-sundered brothers fall on each other's necks at Sinai—a fitting place for the tale which Moses has to tell of the coming deliverance of Israel and of the part which each of them is to take in it. And further encouragement awaits him. Moses and Aaron call a meeting of the elders of Israel, and these assemble the people. Aaron is the spokesman.

"And Aaron spoke all the words which Jehovah had spoken to Moses, and he did the signs before the eyes of the people. And the people believed: and when they had heard that Jehovah had visited the children of Israel, and that He had looked upon their oppression, they bowed down and worshipped" (verses 30, 31).

But a different experience awaited them at the palace (v. 1-9). Moses and Aaron present themselves before Pharaoh, and are at once met with refusal and insult. The "Divine" king is not to be terrified by

such a tale as theirs, and he scoffs at the God who sent them. "Who is Jehovah, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go?" It is in vain that they proceed to explain. They cannot be listened to. They are demagogues. They are putting silly, and indeed dangerous, notions into the heads of the people; and the king will put an end to it. The whole thing has sprung from this people's inveterate laziness. The remedy for it is heavier toil and increased rigour. And so the edict is issued that the straw, which till then had been furnished by the State, must now be provided by the Israelites themselves, who must also continue to make the same number of bricks as formerly. Pharaoh's command to his overseers ran :

"Make heavy the service upon the men ; and let them toil at *it*, and not listen to words of falsehood" (verse 9).

The result was grievous. The Israelites were scattered over the land gathering material which might be used instead of the chopped straw which they had hitherto employed in making the bricks. But, while occupied in that quest, they could not be present in the clay-fields. It was simply impossible, therefore, to have the usual number of bricks waiting to be counted and tested by the Egyptian overseers. That failure was visited upon the Israelitish officials. It was assumed that they had been too lenient with the people; and they were subjected to the shame and suffering of the bastinado. They went in a body to Pharaoh to complain of the injustice.

“But he said, Idle are ye, idle: therefore do ye keep on saying, Let us go: let us sacrifice to Jehovah. And now go, slave on; and chopped straw shall not be given you, and the number of bricks shall ye render” (verses 17, 18).

As the elders came forth from the palace, they met Moses and Aaron on their way. Is it to be wondered at, knowing what we do of poor human nature, that their words were those of indignant upbraiding? They had been distinctly warned that Pharaoh would not listen; and his refusal, therefore, should not have astonished them. But nothing had been said about the demand making their case worse, and changing slavery into torture. They did not reflect that the way to the rest which God gives lies through tribulation; and that storms rage round the ark which shelters the heirs of the new time. But Moses goes farther than they. He comes to God with his sorrow and theirs.

“And Moses returned to Jehovah, and said, O Lord, why hast Thou brought evil upon this people? Why didst Thou send me for this? And from the time I went to Pharaoh to speak in Thy name, he hath brought evil upon this people, and Thou hast certainly not delivered Thy people” (verses 22, 23).

Let it be observed that it is here—at this supreme crisis—God speaks of His new name Jehovah. We shall consider that name, its proper pronunciation, and its meaning, in the following chapter. But, as a step to this, it is essential to note the circumstances

in which the Divine communication is made. vi. 1-12 closes this first Part of Exodus. The opening verse of chapter vi. is the Divine reply to the complaint with which chapter v. ends :

“And Jehovah said unto Moses, Now wilt thou behold what I shall do to Pharaoh: for by a strong hand shall he let them go, and by a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land” (vi. 1).

Between these and the next words some time is generally supposed to have elapsed. The foundation of that opinion is no doubt the presence there of the word “God” (*Elohim*), “And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him,” &c. That has appeared to them too formal to be a mere continuation of the words contained in verse 1, and it must, therefore, they believe, mark a fresh beginning. But to entertain that notion is to lose sight of the meaning of the name *Elohim*. It is the plural of *Eloah*, “strength,” and is equivalent to “almighty.” It refers to God as the Possessor of every form of power, and its use here is highly significant. It is an indication that He Who has undertaken this task of deliverance must and shall prevail.

“And God (*Elohim*) spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am JEHOVAH: and I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob as *El Shaddai*, and My name Jehovah was not made known to them. And I have also established My covenant with them, to give to them

the land of Canaan, the land of their sojourning, where they sojourned" (verses 2-4).

The promise then proceeds to mention in detail what God will now do in behalf of His people.

"Wherefore say to the children of Israel, I AM JEHOVAH, and I shall cause you to go out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I shall snatch you away from their servitude, and I shall redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments: and I shall take you to Me for a people, and I shall be to you for a God: and ye will know that I am Jehovah your God, who causeth you to go forth from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I shall bring you to the land, which I lifted up My hand to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I shall give it to you for a heritage: I am Jehovah" (verses 6-8).

Moses had thus received consolation, and Israel also must be comforted. But, when Moses takes God's message to them, they are drowned in trouble and cannot listen. "They hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage." God, however, hastens to deliver them. He sends Moses once again with the demand for Israel's freedom. But the sorrow of the people, and their refusal to listen to his message, have been too much even for Moses.

"And Moses spake before Jehovah, saying, Behold, the children of Israel have not listened to me; and how will Pharaoh listen to me, and I of uncircumcised lips?"

And thus the First Part of the Book concludes with God's full promise and with man's despair. There could be no more fitting—and no more dramatic—introduction to the ever-memorable record which is to follow.

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## CHAPTER VI.

## THE JEHOVAH NAME.

THE statement that God was not known to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob by His name Jehovah constituted an ancient difficulty. It may be said that this has now become an entirely secondary matter in view of the new problems of the critical controversy; but, like other Scripture difficulties, it contains within it an explanation of the utmost importance to the Bible student.

Before dealing with the difficulty referred to, we must touch upon another question. How was the name pronounced? The reader has no doubt been startled by the outlandish form "Yah-weh," which he encounters in critical books. That is said to be the ancient and undoubtedly correct pronunciation of the name. It will be no surprise, to some at least, that for this assertion there is nothing which, by any stretch of imagination, can be called a foundation. In Leviticus xxiv. we are told of the man whose father was an Egyptian, and who, while struggling with an Israelite, "blasphemed the name of Jehovah."

He was put in ward that "the mind of Jehovah might be showed them." The Divine decision was given in the following words:

"He that blasphemeth the name of Jehovah, he shall surely be put to death . . . as well the stranger, as he that is born in the land, when he blasphemeth the name, shall be put to death" (verse 16).

It will be observed that while the words, "the name of Jehovah," occur in the first part of the verse, in the latter part we find only "the name." This was understood by the Jews to signify that the word "Jehovah" was not to be pronounced upon pain of death! It had accordingly become the custom before the time of our Lord to avoid pronouncing the word "Jehovah." Josephus, writing in the first century of our era, says in his account of Moses at Sinai: "Then God revealed to him His name, never before heard or known by any man, of which I judge it to be neither lawful nor right that I should speak" (*Antiq.* ii. 12, 4). Josephus was a priest; and he intimates here that, while he knew the name, it was not lawful for him to communicate it. That was in the first century of our era. The pronunciation of the name, however, seems to have been known to Diodorus Siculus in the first century B.C. According to him it was composed of the three syllables I-a-o. That was the traditional belief. Clement of Alexandria pronounces it I-a-ou. Jerome, while mentioning that the Jews do not pronounce the name, says it may be read Ja-ho.

When the vowels were introduced into the Hebrew text, it is generally believed that with this Divine name the Masorites associated the vowels of the name Adonai (Lord), so that the readers might substitute Adonai for the name which it was not lawful to pronounce. There is one difficulty in accepting that statement. The first vowel in "Jehovah" is "e," whereas the first in "Adonai" is "a." But it is undeniable that, where the compound name Jehovah-Adonai is found in the Hebrew text, the vowels then supplied to Jehovah are those of Elohim. This seems to show that Adonai was meant usually to be read instead of Jehovah. Gesenius was of opinion that the real pronunciation was "Yah-veh." But Delitzsch pointed out that this violated the rules of Hebrew grammar. He himself suggested the reading Ya-ha-vâh. The reader will gather from this what slender ground there is for the critical pronunciation. It seems impossible also to exclude the "o" sound from any correct pronunciation of the name. As we have seen, Diodorus includes that sound; and we have still earlier testimony in Old Testament names. We meet, for instance, with *Jeho-nathan*, "Jehovah-has-given"; *Jeho-zadak*, "Jehovah-has-justified"; *Jehoram*, "Jehovah-has-exalted," &c., &c. This makes it plain that any pronunciation which excludes the "o" sound can not be correct, and that the ordinary pronunciation Ye-ho-vah, or Jehovah, may confidently be retained as nearer than any other which has yet been proposed. Another fact tells still more heavily against the reading adopted by the higher critics.

They make the name to consist of two syllables only. It is now proved, however, that the fuller and more usual form of the name consisted of *three* syllables. Dr. Pinches found a number of names of Jews upon Babylonian contract tablets. Into many of these this Divine name enters under the form Ya(h)-a-va(h).\* The name was, therefore, one of three syllables, as it still is in the pronunciation which the critics would displace.

We now return to that other question, which is of infinitely greater importance in view of the constant use of this Divine name in the Old Testament. What does the word mean? And with what special message was it charged at this crisis of Israelitish history? It is plainly derived from an old form of the Hebrew verb "to be." The later form of that word, *ha-yah*, was already in use in the time of Moses; but the ancient Hebrew word appears to have had the form *ha-vah*, which the Aramean and the Syriac have retained. The word *Ye-ho-vah* consequently belonged to the time previous to the separation of these kindred races. This conclusion is borne out by recent Eastern research. Delitzsch has shown that the name is older than Abraham, being found in Babylonian inscriptions, under the form *Ya-a-we(or va)*, not later than 2000 B.C.† Taking the name, then, as derived from the ancient form of the verb "to be" we repeat our question as to its meaning. Gesenius and Reuss believe that it

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\* Sayce, *The Higher Criticism versus the Monuments*, p. 87.

† *Babel and Bible*, p. 71, etc.

is the future of the Hiphil, or causative, conjugation. This gives as its meaning: "He shall cause it to be," or "He shall cause it to come to pass." Dr. Robertson Smith also accepts this causative sense.\* Let it be remembered that these names *Jehovah* and *Elohim*, which are necessarily so strange to us, were transparently clear to the Israelites. They were Hebrew words, and their meaning was seen at once. Could there, then, have been a more appropriate name for God as the fulfiller of His covenant with the Fathers and of the promise now solemnly given to these their children? To name God as "He who shall cause it to come to pass" sustained the despairing, and swept away every fear inspired by the power and the determined vindictiveness of Egypt.

But we may be reminded that the Scripture has here assured us that God was not known by this name in preceding generations, and that we have just shown that the name *was* known and used in and before those very times. The latter fact can not be doubted; but, instead of proving to be a difficulty, it affords the very guidance which we here need. The name had been known and used—that is proved by its presence in Genesis and in the preceding chapters of Exodus; but it was now to have an illustration for which the ages had been waiting, and to which after times would ever look back. If anyone, who had helped us in the past, were to say, in view of a promise he was giving of fresh assistance: "As a helper you have never yet known me;

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\* *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, p. 423.

but you will know now that I am worthy of the name," what should we conclude? It would certainly never occur to anyone to sit down and say: "What *can* this mean? How can he say 'you have never yet known me as a helper,' when no one has ever helped me so much?" That past help would fire the soul with expectation. We should at once conclude that the coming assistance would be of so extraordinary a character that it would put all previous help in the shade. Treat this promise in the same fashion, and its meaning will be evident. God was about to arise and to so gloriously fulfil His promises, that all previous fulfilments would be utterly insignificant as compared with this, and the faithfulness of God would shine out with a glory that no after time would dim.

And that is what actually happened. The Exodus, the wilderness journey, the conquest of Canaan, have manifested God as the Fulfiller of His Covenant. The Jew looks back to that revelation to-day, just as the persecuted Church of God has looked back to it in every time of trouble. God kindled a beacon light there that has thrown its brightness down through the ages. And there is nothing, in all the ages which preceded the Exodus, from which such light has come. They had not known what glory lay under this name Jehovah, "He-shall-cause-it-to-come-to-pass." It will be seen, too, that this meaning explains a use of that Divine name which is of great frequency in the Old Testament. If the reader will look at vi. 8, he will observe that the assurance of

full deliverance and of settlement in Canaan is closed with one brief sentence. In the original it is briefer still, seeing that it consists of two words only: *Ani Jehovah*, "I (am) Jehovah." This sentence occurs again and again at the conclusion of Divine promises or threatenings. But how is it that it can form a fitting, and, indeed, impressive, conclusion to these? Substitute the meaning, which was then plain to every Hebrew reader, and its fitness is immediately apparent: "I am He who shall cause it to come to pass." That is God's name; its repetition is, therefore, God's fullest pledge that promises or threatenings will find their accomplishment.

PART II.  
THE REDEMPTIVE WORK.

VI. 13—XII. 39.

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CHAPTER I.

VI. 13—VII. 7.

JEHOVAH'S AMBASSADORS.

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THE first Part—the Story of the Redeemer of God's people—closes, as we have seen, with a question which expresses the despair of Moses (vi. 12). And now, before we are told how that despair is changed into triumph, we are reminded that God had invested these two men, Moses and Aaron, with Divine authority. Their standing in Israel is made known; the terms of their appointment are again set forth; and the question of Moses is shown to have had its answer already (vii. 1). We are reminded that it was foretold from the first that Pharaoh would refuse the Divine demand, and that the refusal was part of God's plan for Israel's full deliverance. Finally, the triumph of this embassy is assured.

From the want of a due regard to the tenses in our translation, the connection has been obscured, and an appearance of repetition and lack of connection has been given to the section which have veiled

its meaning and importance. Instead of rendering vi. 13: "And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron," translate: "And Jehovah HAD SPOKEN," etc., and the meaning is clear. This is not a new communication to Moses and Aaron, but a reminder to the readers of the narrative of the appointment which God had already made:

"And Jehovah had spoken unto Moses and Aaron, and had commissioned them to the children of Israel, and to Pharaoh, King of Egypt, to bring forth the children of Israel from the land of Egypt" (vi. 13).

We now learn that in this appointment there had been a distinct and solemn act of Divine selection. Three tribes were passed in review so that God might take from them a deliverer for His people. "The sons of Reuben, the first-born of Israel," are enumerated; but the choice does not rest upon any of their houses. Simeon, the second eldest, is taken; and there is a like result. The redeemer is not found there. Levi is next in order; and here, at last, the choice is made. The descent of Moses and Aaron is recorded, and a full account is given of the family of him whose descendants were to be the priests of Israel until its altar should be destroyed in the presence of Calvary. As Moses was not to hand on his office to any descendant of his, his children are not named. The list concludes:

"This is that Aaron and Moses whom Jehovah commanded to bring forth the children of Israel from the land of Egypt by their armies.

They were the speakers to Pharaoh, King of Egypt, to bring forth the children of Israel from the Egyptians—this Moses and Aaron" (verses 26, 27).

It is plainly the purpose of these words to emphasise the fact that these beaten men, now rejected by Pharaoh in his pride, and by the Israelites in their anguish, are nevertheless there by Divine appointment. What more appropriate introduction could there be to the story of the triumphs which is now to follow?

Only three tribes, as we have just seen, are mentioned, Reuben, Simeon, and Levi, the three eldest sons of Jacob. It may be that, when we have said that these are taken in their natural order, we have noted all that has any significance. That may be true; but one cannot help recalling also that over all those three tribes shadows rested. When Jacob summoned his sons, saying: "Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which will befall you in the last days"; he said of Reuben: "Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel." In the word regarding Simeon and Levi the outlook was still darker. "O my soul," exclaimed the patriarch, "come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united." He ended with the sentence: "I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel" (Gen. xlix. 1-7). It may be that these three tribes were now having another opportunity. The Lord is looking for a deliverer for His people, and He passes through these

to find one man after His own heart who will prove to be a Shepherd of Israel, and another to whom and to whose descendants that priesthood might be committed which was to endure for ages. Peoples and families have been honoured and blessed by some such life, which with holy fear and with God's great endowment has so served its generation. Reuben has no such man, nor has Simeon. But Levi has its Moses and Aaron; and, though that doom of dispersion in Israel is not revoked, it is associated with the grandest service and with the highest honour which are to be reached among the people of God. The curse has been changed into a blessing.

We are now led back to the point at which the narrative stopped :

“ And it came to pass in the day of Jehovah's speaking to Moses in the land of Egypt, and (when) Jehovah had spoken to Moses, saying, I am Jehovah: speak to Pharaoh, King of Egypt, all that I am speaking to thee, that Moses said before Jehovah, Behold, I am of uncircumcised lips, and Pharaoh will not listen to me ” (verses 28-30).

It is a most unfortunate division which makes these verses close chapter vi. The opening words of chapter vii. have the closest connection with that reply of Moses to which our attention is thus again directed :

“ And Jehovah said to Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet ” (vii. 1).

He is told again that Pharaoh will not hearken, but that this refusal will ensure the punishment of Egypt, and lead to a mightier deliverance for Israel (verses 2-5). This introduction to Part II. ends with the record of a full obedience:

“And Moses and Aaron did according as Jehovah commanded them; thus they did. And Moses was eighty years old, and Aaron was eighty-three years old, when they spake unto Pharaoh” (verses 6, 7).

Here on the one hand, the feebleness of those aged and worn men, on the other hand their unfaltering trust and complete obedience, are set before us. These last were the foundation of their greatness; for they made a place where God could reveal His power and glory. May not the question once more be asked, whether any fitter introduction could be conceived for the marvels that are to follow?

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## CHAPTER II.

PROPOSED DIVISIONS OF THE SECTION; AND THE  
LIGHT WHICH THEY SHED UPON CRITICAL  
RESULTS.

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IT is instructive to compare the dissections which the critics have made from time to time of the verses which we have just considered. Dr. Driver,

writing for a public somewhat intolerant of nonsense, gives us a refreshingly simple account of the matter. The whole of vi. 2—vii. 13 is assigned to P, that is, to the Priestly writer, who, they tell us, forged a history for the Pentateuchal laws. But P, it is now found, was not one writer, but several! The original P had finished his work some short time before Ezra read the Law to the returned Israelites in 444 B.C. But, we are now informed, there were later additions in P's style, the authors of which modified his work and added to it as seemed to them good. How such fresh editions managed to oust the older ones, and how the older copies were snatched away and the new placed in the hands of the priests without protest or complaint, and without a whisper having reached posterity regarding these tremendous changes in books venerated at that very time as the Word of God, no critic has yet ventured to explain. But, when explanations are entered upon, something will have to be said upon a still more formidable question. How did it happen that their entire work was embodied in the Samaritan Pentateuch 300 years before the Ps began their highly questionable careers?

But we have to do now with the critical analysis. Knobel (1861) distributes the forty-two verses contained in Exodus vi. 2—vii. 13, as follows:—

GRUNDSCHRIFT.

KRIEGSBUCH.

VI. 2—7.

VI. 8.

„ 9—30.

VII. 1—13.

The two documents, or "sources," named on page 107, are no doubt strange to many of my readers; for fashions in criticism, with all their "assured results," soon grow old. Let me then explain. The *grund-schrift* was the great foundation document upon which all the rest of the Pentateuch was said to be built. But, it will be asked, have you not told us that those very passages, here said by Knobel to be among the very earliest, are said by Dr. Driver to be among the very latest of the Pentateuch? My reply is that that is an exact statement of the case. The most assured results of this so-called science have been revolutionised in that very way. What were the first are now the last! A like story hangs upon that second term, *Kriegsbuch*, or "war-book." It has now utterly disappeared, and even the term is no longer found in the critical vocabulary. Poor Knobel, once among the greatest names, is now, in critical opinion, as hopelessly antiquated as the simplest Bible believer. But he has his consolation. There are other reputations, crumbling even now, that will soon be as lowly as his own.

The first readers of Addis on *The Documents of the Hexateuch* had a singular experience. In his first volume (published in 1892) the entire passage had disappeared. In the new critical Exodus there was no vi. 2—vii. 13. After vi. 1, there were four dots, to indicate that something had disappeared, and then followed vii. 14, etc. The reader had to wait six years to learn whither those forty-two verses had gone. When vol. ii. appeared in 1898, the mystery

was solved. The reader then discovered the missing portion, and found that it had been omitted from the earlier part because it was said to belong to a much later period. But he was also informed that this "priestly" portion was not quite as simple as Dr. Driver had meanwhile been assuring him that it was.\* The section was printed in two sorts of type, vi. 2-12 and vii. 1-13 being in ordinary characters, and vi. 13-30 appearing in italics. The meaning of this, he was informed, was that, in the heart of this late portion, there was a still later! Nor was this all. On turning back to Mr. Addis's explanations, he learned that the "ascertained results," of which he had heard so much, were not yet quite ascertained. He was told that the portions in italics were "later amplifications of the Priestly Document;" and of these he read: "They are by several hands and of various dates. . . . Nor can they always be distinguished from additions made by the final compiler and editor of the *Hexateuch*, which are printed in the same type."†

The very latest "results" are even less "assured" than the earlier. The critics, when last heard from, were still wrestling with the question of the authorship of those verses. Holzinger (1900) arranges them thus :

Pz.	R.
VI. 2—12	
[ . . . 14 <sup>b</sup> —16 <sup>a</sup>	
. . . 16 <sup>b</sup> 14	VI. 26, 28—30.
17—25].	

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\* *Introduction.*

† *Volume ii., p. 192.*

110 Exodus—The Redemptive Work—vi. 13—vii. 7.

Pg.	R.
VII. 1—5.	VI. 13?
„ 6—7.	
„ 8—13.	

In the second column, assigned to R (editorial additions), there are no fewer than five question marks, eloquent of Holzinger's embarrassment. Bæntsch (1903) is still more elaborate:—

P.	Rp.	Ps.
VI. 2—5.	VI. 6—8.	
„ 9—12.	„ 13.	VI. 14—25.
	„ 26—30.	
VII. 1—13.		

I shall spare the reader any farther explanations and comments. The above tables are proof enough of the uncertainty of those so-called “assured results.” But, it may be asked, what lies behind this unrelenting effort to tear the Bible to pieces? Upon what does the analysis of the narrative proceed? The reader will judge. There is first of all the well-worn plea of repetition. But if we are to tear out the passages in books which repeat, or seem to repeat, what was said before; and if on that account we are to attribute the repetition to a different author, what book is safe that has ever seen the light? One trembles even for the critics, should a canon of that kind ever achieve a settled place in literature. At present, however, there is no law against an author repeating himself; and certainly there is no necessity that in case of repetition the author shall be deprived of his

identity and be thenceforth spoken of as J, E, D, P, P<sub>g</sub>, or P<sub>s</sub>.

It may be well to note what is said by an earlier writer regarding the critical reasons for assigning the Book to various writers. The analysis of the Pentateuch was then comparatively new, and more care was taken to display the reasons for the critical belief. One example will suffice.

Bleek (Berlin, 1865) contends that "the genealogy of Moses and Aaron (chapter vi. 14-27), particularly as it there runs, is put in a very unfit and unnatural place."\* He thinks that in the original document this genealogy in a fuller form stood "quite at the beginning of the history of this time." The assumption in this is marvellous. It is quite possible for a man to imagine that something in a document might be better placed; but who would leap to the conclusion that it *must* have been so placed? The suggestion is eminently absurd; but, nevertheless, that is the sole justification for cutting out the portion and assigning it to a different writer! The objection is also eloquent of that fatal lack of sympathetic intelligence which the higher criticism has displayed from the beginning. So far from the genealogy of Moses and Aaron being placed in an "unfit and unnatural place," no fitter place could possibly be found for it than in this account of the solemn confirmation of their appointment as the ambassadors of Jehovah.

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\* *Introduction*, § 114.

## CHAPTER III.

THE SUPERNATURAL, AND ITS RELATION TO  
EGYPTIAN MAGIC.

WE are now to follow the record which tells how God, by a succession of stupendous miracles, effected the deliverance of Israel. There is a marvellous consistency in Bible representations of the Divine method, which cannot be explained if its Books were the product of varying human thought; and which will, therefore, carry the conviction to many minds that the Scriptures have had the origin which they claim. It is in this very fashion—we read in Revelation, and in other New Testament predictions, as well as in Old Testament prophecies—that God will, in the end of the days, save His persecuted people, and establish them in their own land. He will judge the nations and overwhelm the persecutors. And this will be done, not by human instrumentality, or in what might seem to be the ordinary course of Nature. It will be such a manifest intervention of the mighty and just God that the peoples of the earth will at last realise that this controversy is between them and Him; and Israel's claim to be His people will be vindicated as triumphantly then as it was in Egypt of old. Further, limiting our view to the fact that God was now establishing a true faith in the very heart of the world's idolatries, and recalling how that “new thing,”

the establishment of the Christian Church, was effected, we are struck by the similarity of the Divine procedure. The Israelitish religion was inaugurated with such a revelation of God's existence, almighty power, and absorbing interest in His people, as kept faith alive in Israel for fifteen centuries, and has preserved it for well-nigh twenty more in the face of seeming desertion and apparently unanswered prayer. And, in exactly similar fashion, was the Gospel era introduced. It was founded in a manifestation of God which has been like a wall of fire around it ever since. No man can look on Christ and not see there also the revelation of God's existence, power, and absorbing interest in His Church, and in the work of salvation which has been committed to it.

If anyone asks whether a miracle is possible, and whether it is true that the Law and the Gospel have been thus attested by supernatural signs, one fact presents a sufficient answer to both questions. I refer to the undoubted predictions of the Bible. These are miracles of foresight, which demonstrate overwhelmingly that the supernatural exists, and that God has actually manifested Himself in connection with the Bible and the work which the Bible has inspired. But there is a further fact, the mention of which causes uneasiness to many. The Bible testifies that the evidence of the supernatural is not confined to Divine acts. No one can read the narrative, upon the study of which we are now entering, without seeing that the wonders worked by the magicians of Egypt are accepted as genuine. "They

also did in like manner with their enchantments. For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents" (Exodus vii. 11, 12), &c. The witch of Endor was apparently possessed of some occult power. Such power would appear also to have been in the possession of Simon of Samaria; for we are not told that he had gained his influence over the people by imposition, but that he "used sorcery," and had "bewitched the people of Samaria"; that is, he had genuinely "astonished" them. The damsel of Philippi was possessed by a spirit of divination, and her power left her when the spirit was cast out of her. Our Lord also admitted that the sons of the Pharisees were able, in certain cases at least, to cast out demons, and we are reminded that our own conflict is not with flesh and blood, but that "we wrestle . . . . against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians vi. 12).

This may possibly be set down as a proof that the Bible has not escaped the superstitions of the times in which it was written. That, however, is a conclusion which those times distinctly repudiate, and which would show singular ignorance of the huge debt which the modern world owes to the Bible. The times in which the Bible was written were immersed in the grossest superstition. Magic and sorcery flourished with special luxuriance in all Eastern lands. Omens were constantly watched for, and charms were eagerly purchased and devoutly

trusted in. The Bible stands apart from all this with a complete severance, with a calm trust in God, and with an absolute serenity, which its Divine inspiration alone can explain. And it is to the Bible only that the nations owe their freedom from that terror of the unseen which weighed upon the ancient world.

To two points I briefly address myself. First, What was the place of magic in ancient Egypt? Did it have that national acknowledgment, and enjoy the royal patronage, which the Scripture here implies that it did? To this there is but one reply. In the picture of that court-scene, Exodus shows us the Egypt of the time. "A study," writes Budge, "of the remains of the native religious literature of ancient Egypt, which has come down to us, has revealed the fact that the belief in magic, that is to say, in the power of magical names, and spells, and enchantments, and formulæ, and pictures, and figures, and amulets, and in the performance of ceremonies accompanied by the utterance of words of power, to produce supernatural results, formed a large and important part of the Egyptian religion."\* After a reference to the miracles of Moses, the same writer says: "It is quite certain that every Egyptian magician believed that he could perform things equally marvellous by merely uttering the names of his gods, or through the words of power which he had learned to recite."† This throws light upon the judging of the gods of Egypt, so frequently re-

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\* *Egyptian Magic*, p. 7.

† Page 6.

ferred to as being brought about through the miracles of Moses. The might of Jehovah's power confronted that display of power, on account of which the gods of Egypt were revered and trusted. Egyptian literature contains many a story of the marvels believed to have been accomplished by the priestly magic. A curious indication of the place held by the priest-magician at the Egyptian court is supplied by a statuette now in the Brighton Museum. It represents a squatting figure of a man, and the inscription upon it informs us that the person so represented is no other than "Min-Mes, Chief Magician to Rameses II." In the list of his titles we find these: "The Royal Scribe; the Chief Magician of the Lord of the two Lands"—that is, of Pharaoh, Lord of Southern and Northern Egypt—"the High-priest of Anheru, Min-Mes."\* "Absurd as the pretensions of the magicians may seem," says Wiedemann, our greatest authority on the Religion of Egypt, "the multitude thoroughly believed in them, and great was the fear of sorcerers and of sorcery. In Egypt magical doctrines were not mere popular superstitions; they were part of the religion of the land, which was largely based on magic, and always intimately connected with it."† It was consequently inevitable that, when Moses and Aaron wrought their wonders before Pharaoh, the king should summon his magicians, and that their powers should be displayed.

\* Arthur E. Weigall, *Proceedings, Society of Biblical Archaeology*, xxiii., p. 13.

† *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, ch. x

There is a second, and equally important, question. Was their supposed power a delusion? The general attitude of modern thought is distinctly opposed, not only to belief in magic, but even to any recognition of the supernatural. It is the more striking, therefore, that in these days of scepticism there should be so marked and influential a revival of spiritualism, and that, in respect to the genuineness of spiritualistic phenomena, scientific opinion should be divided. That there has been, in connection with those claims to converse with the unseen, a vast amount of superstition and of imposture in both modern and ancient times, no one will deny; but many of those who are acquainted with the facts find themselves unable to resist the conviction that there is more in such phenomena than the sceptical can explain. It is the custom to scoff at the modern Egyptian magician and his ink mirror placed in the hands of a boy; but Lane, a very careful observer, both heard of, and personally witnessed, some exhibitions which deeply impressed him. "One of the most sensible" of his Mahomedan friends told him of a visit which he and a companion, the Sheikh El-Emeer, paid to one of these modern magicians, a highly-respected Sheikh, Aboo-Ru-ooos of Dasook. Invited to make trial of his skill, his companion asked that coffee might be served to them in his father's coffee-service. After a few minutes the coffee was produced in the cups which he had to acknowledge were "certainly his father's." "He then wrote a letter to his father," says Lane, "and, giving it to Aboo-Ru-ooos, asked

him to procure an answer to it. The magician took the letter, placed it behind a cushion of his *deewán*, and, a few minutes after, removing the cushion, showed him that his letter was gone, and that another was in its place. The Sheikh El-Emeer took the letter, opened and read it, and found in it, in a handwriting which, he said, he could have sworn to be that of his father, a complete answer to what he had written, and an account of the state of his family, which he proved, on his return to Cairo, a few days after, to be perfectly true.”\*

The claims of astrology have been laughed at, and not undeservedly; and yet there are what seem to be facts which appear to call for a modified judgment. Colonel Meadows Taylor relates, in his autobiography, the following experience. He was long resident at a native court where he occupied an official position. One day he found the Ranee in great trouble. She had had the nativity cast of her then infant son, the heir to her throne. The future predicted for him was so tragic, that other forecasts had been obtained from the priests of Benares and elsewhere, but these were all in substantial agreement with the first. Her son was to die when he had reached his twenty-first year. One can understand the Colonel's feelings when the youthful Rajah was condemned to death by the British Government for participation in the Indian Mutiny. But he was pardoned, and the prediction appeared to have missed its mark. He was returning to his

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\* *Modern Egyptians*, pp 244, 245.

principality, accompanied by a guard under the command of a British officer. The Rajah, in the officer's temporary absence from the tent, had apparently been inspecting his revolver. A report was heard, and when the tent was entered the Rajah was found dead. The time was kept: he had reached his twenty-first year.

Such well-authenticated cases might easily be multiplied. I mention one more only. Dr. Wolff has put the following on record in the account which he published of his travels. He was residing at Aleppo, in 1822, with the British Consul-General, Mr. Barker. On his inquiring after the eccentric Lady Esther Stanhope, Mr. Barker replied that she was undoubtedly crazy. As a proof of this he read a letter which he had received from her. This letter was read, not only in the presence of Dr. Wolff but, also in that of M. Lesseps, M. Derche, his interpreter, and M. Maseyk, the Dutch Consul. The letter was dated April, 1821, and begged Mr. Barker not to go to Aleppo or to Antioch. The reason which she gave for this strange request was that M. Lustenau, a French gentleman who resided with her, who had been a general in the service of Tippoo Sahib in India, and who had foretold to Lady Esther the precise day and hour of Napoleon's escape from Elba, had predicted that both Aleppo and Antioch would be destroyed by earthquake in about a year. The time set was almost expired when the letter was read; and M. Derche added to the amusement of the company by informing them that he also had been

warned by Lady Esther not to go to Aleppo, for it would be destroyed by an earthquake in less than a fortnight!

A few days afterward Dr. Wolff left Aleppo and encamped that evening in the desert, near the village of Juseea. "As the people of Juseea were talking with Wolff and the people of his little camp, they felt the first motions of an earthquake. In another instant the village of Juseea disappeared, being swallowed up by the gaping earth, and the thunder as of cannon came from a distance. Shock after shock succeeded, and presently came troops of wild Arabs and Bedouins . . . crying as they fled past one another: 'This is of God! This is of God!'"\* Wolff sent off a swift messenger to warn Mr. Barker at Aleppo. But Aleppo, Antioch, Latakia, Hums, Haina, and all the villages within a circuit of twenty miles, had been destroyed, with a loss of 60,000 lives. Mr. Barker, with his wife and child, had escaped, by *creeping* from beneath the ruins of their house.

So long as facts of that kind exist, it will be impossible to sweep away the pretensions of Egyptian magic as sheer imposture or delusion. It is safer far to accept the testimony of the Scripture, which bears on every page the proof of its freedom from superstition, and of its claims to be the Word of Him who knoweth all things. It clearly intimates that the magicians of Pharaoh also did wonders. This fact explains, too, the Divine procedure in those signs

\* Howitt, *History of the Supernatural*, pp. 26, 27.

worked by the hands of Moses and Aaron. God met the Egyptians where they were. The Divine power confronted that of their priesthood, and of the so-called deities in whom they trusted.

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#### CHAPTER IV.

##### THE CONFLICT WITH THE GODS OF EGYPT

(VII. 8—XI. 10).

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THE plagues were mercifully preceded by a sign. The Lord bids Moses to be prepared for the demand which Pharaoh will make when they once more appear before him (vii. 8, 9). They will be greeted with the words: "Show a miracle for you." The command was promptly complied with. Aaron threw the rod upon the ground, and immediately curiosity gave place to consternation. The rod became a serpent (verse 10). Here, however, Pharaoh imagined that he was strong. Transformations of that kind are chronicled in ancient Egyptian literature as freely worked by the great magicians. His wise men were consequently summoned in haste. When they appeared and understood what was demanded of them, they responded promptly. Their rods also were thrown down, and were immediately changed into serpents. Then something happened, significant of the ending of that conflict and of every other in which powers, terrestrial or infernal, contend with the Almighty. Moses' rod swallowed up the rods of

the magicians. The symbols of their authority had disappeared, and that of Jehovah's servants alone remained (verses 10-12).

It might have been imagined that this startling result would have led to inquiry. The defeat was signal; and the dismay of the magicians must have been such as could not be concealed. Verse 13 rendered: "He hardened the heart of Pharaoh," may also be translated, "Pharaoh's heart was hardened," or "strengthened." The word means also "to fortify." Pharaoh's heart was being besieged, and now it receives strength to withstand the besieger. We shall consider in the next chapter the hardening of Pharaoh's heart, which is here so frequently referred to. Meanwhile, it is enough to note that an impression was made by this sign, and that the impression was resisted. Pharaoh's heart would not capitulate, when, as it were, the power of God was arrayed before the walls; and now the war began. One or two things have to be noted before we begin the story of these nine plagues. There is, in the record of those judgments, a suggestive arrangement of which nothing is said, but which waits to be marked by an attentive reader. They form three divisions, each division consisting of three plagues. That these dividing lines are drawn by the Scripture itself will be plain when we note one remarkable feature. A warning precedes, in each instance, the first and the second plagues; but with the third in each series no warning whatever is given. Thus Moses is commanded to meet Pharaoh

before the waters of Egypt are turned into blood. So again (viii. 1) when the frogs are to cover the land, Moses is to go in unto Pharaoh and announce what God is about to do. But, when the dust is smitten and it becomes lice throughout the land of Egypt, there is no command to seek Pharaoh's presence. So it is with the sixth plague, when the ashes of the furnace are used, and it became boils upon man and beast; and so also is it with the ninth plague, when the land was covered with darkness as with the pall of death. In none of these three cases is there any announcement to Pharaoh. It was a reminder that God would not always strive; and that warning, repeated but unheeded, will be followed by judgment sudden and terrible.

The plagues are accordingly arranged as follows:—

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|------------------------------------|---|--|
| (1) Waters turned in-<br>to blood. | (4) The land cor-<br>rupted by<br>swarms of flies,<br>or beetles. | (7) Cattle and herbage<br>destroyed by hail.                 |
| (2) The plague of<br>frogs.        | (5) The murrain of<br>cattle.                                     | (8) The land destroyed<br>by locusts.                        |
| (3) The plague of lice.            | (6) The plague of<br>boils on man<br>and beast.                   | (9) The darkness which<br>arrested all activity<br>in Egypt. |

A glance at the above will reveal the fact that there is a steady advance in the severity of the Divine judgments. The first three interfere merely with the comfort of the Egyptians. In the second three God's hand is laid upon their property. The last three bring death and desolation.

As I have dealt fully elsewhere with the history of the plagues in their relation to Egypt,\* our review

\* *The New Biblical Guide*, vol. iii., pp. 227-296.

of them now will be somewhat brief. In the announcement of the first plague, the demand of God is once more set before the king.

“And thou shalt say to him: Jehovah, the God of the Hebrews, hath sent me to thee to say, Send away My people and let them serve Me in the wilderness; and behold up to the present thou hast not listened. Thus hath Jehovah said, By this thou shalt know that I am Jehovah. Behold, I am smiting with the rod which is in my hand upon the waters which are in the river, and they will be turned into blood” (vii. 16, 17).

Egypt was thus not only to be deprived of water, but the fish were also to die. This message was delivered to Pharaoh at the side of the river, to which he had probably come to pay Divine honours to the stream. But there was no reply from the king. There was no pleading on his part for mitigation or for delay. There was only proud, angry, possibly disdainful, silence. When has God’s demand ever been to the erring aught but an offence? Then the blow fell. In the sight of all who waited, Moses is bidden to command Aaron to stretch forth his rod upon the waters of Egypt. Aaron lifted up his rod and smote the waters of the Nile, and immediately they were changed into blood. The land was filled with consternation. The people dug pits by the side of the river into which water flowed from the moist soil, or welled up from springs. For there was no help in their magicians. They also could turn water into

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blood; but they could not reverse the process, and so roll back this judgment of God.

It has also to be noted that every warning brought before the mind of Pharaoh and his court some well-known scourge, the weight and sharpness of which they could easily realise. For seven days the Nile ran blood, and the stench from it, and from canals and reservoirs and pools, filled the land. Now a second time the demand is made, "Let My people go that they may serve Me"; and this time, in case of refusal, the judgment of God will come still nearer. There was some alleviation in the first plague. They procured drinkable water from the trenches, and windows and doors might be closed against the stench of wide-spread putrefaction. But the frogs will cover the land, and enter the houses. They will penetrate to the very bedchambers and go up upon the beds. They will defile the ovens and the bread in the kneading troughs. Again the magicians also brought up frogs; but they could not banish them, nor erect barriers which they could not pass. And now Pharaoh's silence is broken. He sends for Moses and Aaron, and begs them to beseech God to remove the chastisement, and he will give the desired permission to Israel to go and worship. There is some obscurity resting upon the opening words of Moses' reply: "Glory over me." The words mean: "Have honour over me." He asks Pharaoh to appoint the time when this visitation shall end. He meets gladly the first sign of relenting. He humbles himself before the king; and makes himself his

servant in this matter. Pharaoh bowing thus under the rebuke of God, shall now be king to Moses. In such a moment a proud priest has trampled a repentant king in the dust; but there is another spirit in the true servant of God. Pharaoh accepts the honour, and names the time. Moses goes forth and cries unto the Lord that the plague may be removed, and removed at the time appointed. The plague is stayed, and it is stayed at the specified time. But the king's pledge is not kept. The mercy so readily shown opens a door of hope to Pharaoh. It seems to him that the terrors of Jehovah's power are bound up with an amiable weakness, with which other appeals may be equally successful. "And when Pharaoh saw there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them, as the Lord had said" (viii. 1-15). And now, without warning, the third plague fell. The dust of the earth springs into life that assumes the most disgusting and tormenting form. The lice referred to seem to be a kind of tick, not larger than a grain of sand, but, as they fill with blood, expanding to the size of a hazel nut. And now the magicians are baffled and give up the contest. They attempt to do as Moses has done, and they fail. They cannot even protect themselves, for they also are defiled and tormented. "Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God." But "his heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them" (verses 16-19).

The first series of plagues thus ended with the defeat of the magicians and the subduing for a time

of Pharaoh's obstinacy. In those inflictions, which, as has been said, affected personal comfort only, the Israelites appear to have suffered along with the Egyptians. Now, however, when the Divine hand is to be laid upon property and life, a division is made between the two peoples. A second time Moses is commanded to go forth in the early morning and to meet Pharaoh at the river. Once more the demand is made for liberty of worship, and a new penalty is imposed in case of refusal. This is spoken of in our Version as "swarms of flies." *Arob*, the word employed, is plainly not a Hebrew, but an old Egyptian word, which seems to have been applied to a certain kind of beetle. But, whatever the infliction was, its ravages were of a frightful kind: "The land was corrupted by reason of the *arob*" (verse 24). Pharaoh is again impressed. He sends for Moses and Aaron and proposes a compromise, which is at once rejected. He then consents; the plague is removed; "and Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also, neither would he let the people go" (verses 20-32).

The fifth plague shows a further advance in severity. Egypt's chief wealth consisted in its cattle. It is now announced that all the cattle in the field will die. "A set time" was appointed for this plague, lest it should be set down to ordinary causes. "To-morrow," said Moses, "the Lord shall do this thing in the land." It was also again announced that Israel should be severed from the Egyptians in regard to these inflictions. The warn-

ing was given in vain. With astonishing hardihood, the Egyptians left their cattle in the fields as usual, and their cattle died. Pharaoh having sent to inquire whether the cattle of the Israelites had been saved, and, learning that the property of his slaves had been kept in safety, he finds his anger come to his aid. "And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go" (ix. 1-7). A like result follows the sixth plague, which fell without warning (verses 8-12). The ashes of the furnace were sprinkled toward heaven in the sight of Pharaoh, and they became a boil breaking out upon man and beast. The plague was so severe upon the magicians that they were unable to remain in attendance upon the king. But the third of these three plagues, severe though it was, finds Pharaoh as far from submission as before.

The announcement of the last plagues was prefaced by a strong expostulation. The demand for freedom of worship was made once more. "Thus saith Jehovah the God of the Hebrews, Send My people away, and let them serve Me. For at this time I am sending all My plagues upon thee, and upon thy people; so that thou mayest know that there is none like Me in all the earth" (verse 14).

Pharaoh is told that for this very cause God had exalted him, so that in him the Divine power should be manifested. Light has been thrown upon the words by the progress of discovery. Thotmes II. was illegitimate, being a child of the harem. He had been selected from the midst of many who, like

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himself of royal blood, had, notwithstanding, no claim upon the throne; and the hand of Him who was about to judge Egypt for its multiplied transgressions against His people had been in that selection. A time was now set for the sending of a scourge unparalleled in all Egypt's history. The next day, at the same hour at which the announcement was being made, the predicted hail would descend and sweep the land with destruction. A word is added in mercy. Pharaoh is counselled to put his cattle and his servants under shelter. There were those that heard, and feared, and saved their servants and their cattle. "And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt all that was in the fields, both man and beast; and the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field. Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, was there no hail" (vers. 25, 26). The hail was accompanied with a terrific thunderstorm, the lightning running along the ground. So terrible was this visitation that Pharaoh quailed. God's messengers are summoned in haste, and find the king in an unwonted mood. He met them with the confession: "I have sinned;" and continued: "Intreat the Lord (for it is enough) that there be no more mighty thunderings and hail; and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer" (verses 27, 28). Moses replied that as soon as he had passed beyond the city wall he would entreat God, and the tempest would cease. But he intimated that he did this with no expectation that

freedom would be granted to Israel, but that it might be manifested that Jehovah was the God of the whole earth.

A difficulty has been experienced in reconciling statements made in the account of the murrain upon the cattle with the fact that the Egyptians are here found to be still in possession of herds. In verse 6 we are told that, in the fifth plague, "all the cattle of Egypt died." Where, then, had these come from? The first thing, as we have had to remark before, which those who encounter a Scripture difficulty ought to do, is to read the Scripture. When that is done in the present instance, two things will be observed. First of all, the murrain was to be only upon *the cattle that were in the field*; and secondly, the cattle of the Israelites were wholly exempt from its ravages. All the Egyptian cattle that were under shelter were spared; and, although no statement is made to that effect, the warning so graciously given may have been attended to by many. Then land-owners may have replenished their stock by purchasing from the Israelites and in other markets. The fact that these cattle were either the fruits of recent purchases, or the remnant saved from the previous visitation, must have increased the terrible-ness of this second blow.

The eighth plague was inflicted by the locust, one of the terrors of the East. When Moses had once more reiterated the Divine demand, announced the coming judgment, and passed from the royal presence, Pharaoh's counsellors threw aside the restraints

of court etiquette and urged him to consent, and not ensure the destruction of the little that was left of the country's prosperity. Moses and Aaron are recalled, but it is not to hear that Pharaoh has surrendered. It is to listen to a suggested compromise. He is willing to permit the men to go: but their families and their possessions must remain behind. The offer is at once rejected. The freedom desired must be absolute, or the controversy remains. Their refusal brings down upon them the tyrant's wrath, "and they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence" (x. 1-11). But the dishonour done to God's servants could not arrest the threatened judgment. The locusts covered the land, and the only hope now left to Egypt—that, namely, resting on its crops and its fruits—perished utterly. Pharaoh, appalled at the result of his temerity, sent in haste for the men whom he had driven away. He again confessed his sin, and intreated them to beg for mercy. The prayer was heard, and the locusts were driven away, "But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart so that he would not let the children of Israel go" (x. 20). And now fell the third unannounced chastisement: "And the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt. And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven: and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days. They saw not one another, neither rose anyone from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings"

(verses 21-23). The life of Egypt was instantaneously arrested. Their great god was Ra, the dispeller of darkness, the god of day; and their temples were resounding with his praises when the darkness fell. The utter vanity of their trust was thus manifested, and this god also was judged. Evidently Pharaoh was unable to send for Moses, for no servant of his could have found his way. But Moses had come, at the close of the visitation, to receive the king's reply. It was merely the proposal of another compromise. Liberty of worship would be granted upon one condition. Men, women, and children would be permitted to go, but their flocks and their herds—now of immense importance to impoverished Egypt—must remain. Moses has but one reply: the liberty must be utter. Israel must be free to worship God with all that it has. "And the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let them go" (verse 27). And now the baffled tyrant vents his fury upon Moses. He bids him depart, and see his face no more on pain of death.

At this point in the Scripture narrative confusion has been introduced by the lack of one small word in both the Authorised and the Revised Versions. Chapter x. ends with Moses' reply to the vain, but furious, threatening of the king: "And Moses said, Thou hast spoken well, I will see thy face again no more." Now, if we reflect upon these words, we must be struck by their strong assurance. How is it that Moses is able to say that he will not seek another audience with the king? Has he been told that the

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struggle ends there, and that the last demand has been made of Pharaoh, and that the last warning has been given to him? And if he has been told all this, when and how was the information imparted? That is a point on which the Scripture, which has told us so much, would not, we may be well assured, have left us unenlightened. But, as the eleventh chapter begins in both our Versions, no information whatever is imparted. We are carried away instead into the midst of what seems to be an entirely new matter: "And the Lord said unto Moses, Yet will I bring one plague more upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let you go hence: when he shall let you go, he shall surely thrust you out hence altogether," etc. Then we read: "And Moses said, Thus saith the Lord, About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt: and all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the firstborn of the maid-servant that is behind the mill; and all the firstborn of beasts. And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more. But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast, that ye may know that the Lord doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel. And all these thy servants shall come down unto me, and bow down themselves unto me, saying, Get thee out, and all the people that follow thee: and after that I will go out" (verses 4-8). To

whom is Moses speaking? Plainly to the king, and to the king surrounded by his court, who, though they cannot see Moses, hear all that is said. Has he, then, been sent back again, after declaring, as we are told in the last words of chapter x., that never again would he seek an interview with Pharaoh? Plainly Moses has remained in the royal presence, and the next words make that quite certain: "And he went out from Pharaoh in a great anger" (verse 8). Now, the introduction, as I have said, of one small word, removes every vestige of confusion. As has been already explained, the Hebrew past tense is also a pluperfect. Instead of: "And the Lord said unto Moses" (xi. 1), translate: "And the Lord *had* said unto Moses," and all is clear. Moses had already received the command about the Passover, and had already arranged with Israel for its observance. Apparently the 14th day of Nisan had come; and Moses, delivering the Divine ultimatum, leaves for ever the palace of the Pharaohs. So thorough is the orderly arrangement of the Book, and so complete is its unity of authorship, that the story of the negotiations with Pharaoh has not been interrupted, and nothing has been said so far of God's communications with Israel. But this part of the narrative having been ended, we are now told in chapter xii. of the instructions which have meanwhile been given to Israel, and of the preparations which have been made for their departure from the land of bondage.

CHAPTER V.

THE HARDENING OF PHARAOH'S HEART, AND HIS  
PROPOSED COMPROMISES.

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THE Scripture statements concerning the hardening of Pharaoh's heart have constituted for many a huge moral difficulty. One book,\* formerly of note, but now almost wholly neglected, has put the matter well. "The hardening of Pharaoh's heart has been a fruitful source of malignant cavil with the adversaries of the Bible; some of whom have not hesitated to affirm that this single chapter is sufficient to destroy the authenticity of the entire Scriptures; while others, more decently and speciously, assert that a just God could not punish the Egyptian monarch for a hardness of heart of which He (God) Himself was evidently the cause." But it is impossible to commend the explanation which the writer suggests, or that which he quotes from Bishop Horne. The learned Bishop practically contended that we must attach such a sense to the words as will remove all their difficulty: that God could not have hardened Pharaoh's heart, and that the words must not be read as if they said He did harden the heart of the Egyptian king. And he adds: "The heart may be hardened by those very respites, miracles, and mercies intended to soften it; for if they do not soften it they will harden it."

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\* *Horne's Introduction* (14th Edition), vol. i., p. 599.

But if this is what the words were intended to convey, it must be admitted that the expressions adopted in the Scripture are singularly unfortunate; for they state plainly that the hardening of Pharaoh's heart was part of the Divine intention from the beginning.

The additional suggestions made by the author himself equally fail to convince. He would amend the translation, and make the expressions run as follows: "I will permit Pharaoh's heart to be hardened"; "The Lord suffered Pharaoh's heart to be hardened." As a matter of translation, the suggestion is groundless; and so also are other attempts of a similar kind to rob the Scripture statements of their imagined offending. Others have sought the aid of philosophy. Pharaoh's heart was hardened, we are told, as the result of the operation of the laws which govern our moral nature; but, as God is the author of those laws, the hardening is said to be His act. Such reasoning will hardly satisfy any honest and clear-minded thinker. And still less will it reassure him when he turns to the record again and considers the Scripture phrases. These are varied. We are told at one time that Pharaoh hardened his heart; at another, that his heart was hardened; and then, again, that, at certain crises, Jehovah hardened the heart of Pharaoh. If the Bible meant us to understand one and the same thing throughout, it is reasonable to expect that one phrase would have been kept to; and seeing, on the other hand, that the phrase is occasionally so changed

as to attribute the hardening to a special Divine interposition, we conclude that that Divine act took place.

These statements, however, do not stand alone in Scripture. A similar difficulty attaches to a New Testament prediction. In 2 Thessalonians ii. 11, 12 we read: "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned (judged) who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." This passage is the more remarkable that the struggle which is here predicted is that of God with the antichrist. The struggle with Pharaoh is typical of that last conflict, as Pharaoh, the enemy of God's people and the man who opposes the founding of God's kingdom in the earth, is the type of that "Wicked One" who will set his hand to the same work. There is more in this than an imaginary resemblance. The world's sin will then have ripened for the judgment, just as the sin of Egypt had reached its climax now; and as Egypt's conflict with God was led by one man, its acknowledged king; so the world's attempt to defeat the purpose of the Lord and of His Christ will be led by the world's great god-king, who will revive the old Egyptian claims to the possession of superhuman power, "whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish: because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved" (2 Thessalonians ii. 9, 10). It is specially

noteworthy, therefore, that, in connection with this ancient conflict, and with that coming revolt against the Lord and His Anointed, we should have this same judicial act attributed to God.

But the question still remains as to what this judicial act is. The attempt to remove objection by robbing the words of their evident meaning has also been made in regard to the New Testament prediction that "God shall send them strong delusion." Referring to this, Dean Alford has well said: "*pempei* (sends) must not for a moment be understood of *permissiveness* only on God's part—He is the judicial sender and doer—it is He who hardens the heart which has chosen the evil way." That there is such actual hardening in the course of the Divine judicial procedure has been recognised from time immemorial. "Whom the gods would destroy," said the Ancients, "they first make mad." The daring of some men became so stupendous; all regard for consequences, that to the ordinary eye were so palpable and so inevitable, was cast away so utterly; that the conviction was so irresistible that these men were being driven to their fate by a Divine power. And modern times are not without examples. Who can read of Napoleon's invasion of Russia, after having roused against himself the hostility of every nationality in Europe, without seeing in it the climax of an infatuation that bore him and his armies to their fate? And when, without having secured the friendship of a single Power, he rushed from Elba, gathered his veterans once more around him, and led them on to

the terrible overthrow of Waterloo, a Divine intent seems to be equally apparent. Those scourges of the nations, having served their purpose, had to be utterly broken and cast away.

In Pharaoh's case, the Divine purpose is still clearer. Even apart from the fact that the salvation and the judgment were typical of the coming judgment of the peoples and the final establishment of the kingdom of God on the earth, we can see Divine justice in that hardening of Pharaoh's heart. Egypt and its kings had done too much, and had gone too far, in national wrong-doing, to be permitted to withdraw unscathed. Ordinary prudence must have seen that to contend with the God of Israel was to court destruction; and if Pharaoh and his counsellors had been left to the guidance of ordinary prudence, the conflict might have ended when the waters were turned into blood and the stench of the putrid streams and pools filled the land. But where should after times have read the truth that there is a God who judgeth in the earth? Whence would the oppressed have gathered the confidence that the righteous Judge will not keep silence for ever? No, God, who is about to reveal Himself in Israel in mercy, has first of all to reveal Himself in Egypt in the terrible-ness of His righteous judgments. And so Pharaoh and his ordinarily wise men are led to throw prudence behind them, and to press through one fearful overthrow after another, until the Divine sentence is fulfilled, and the fate of the oppressor reveals in blood and terror the awfulness of his crime. There-

fore, if this very difficulty had not been in the Bible— if this hard saying which so few can hear had not been placed in the heart of this account of God's deliverance of His people—the Bible would not have been the Revelation which it claims to be. Professing to recount to us what *God* did in this memorable time, it would have left us without any explanation of how the hand of God had led Egypt on to its deserved but fearful punishment.

In view of the symbolic character of this struggle, it is suggestive to note the various attempts made by Pharaoh to get a less rigorous demand substituted for that which was persistently kept before him. He was asked to grant to the Israelites absolute liberty of worship. This necessitated a three days' journey into the wilderness, so that the slave should be able to worship God in the joy of at least a temporary freedom. The compromise first proposed by Pharaoh was that they should worship God "in the land" (viii. 25-27). That was at once rejected. The Israelites, Moses said, must worship God without hindrance and without fear of molestation. They must separate from all their then surroundings so that God and they may be together. A like necessity rests upon God's people now. There can be no genuine service of God without separation. There are ties that must be sundered, and that *are* sundered when a man enters into covenant with the living God. The soul yielded to the Redeemer must needs have its Exodus. We must go a three days' journey into the wilderness; or, in the speech of the

new Covenant, we must take up our cross and follow Him without the camp. When that suggestion was set aside, Pharaoh still pleaded for some slight modification of the demand: "And Pharaoh said, I will let you go, that ye may sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness; only ye shall not go very far away" (verse 28). That plea is always urged. What necessity is there for thorough separation? Why abandon old ways and old amusements, which in themselves are innocent enough? Why should one live in the world as though not of the world? It is a plea which has not been unsuccessful. Its moderation has invested it with a fatal semblance of reasonableness. But the demand of God was not lowered. The three days' journey was not exchanged for a two days', or a one day's, or a three hours' journey. To lower God's demand is disloyalty to Him, and surrender to that fearful mastery from which He seeks to deliver us.

Towards the end of the struggle two other proposals were made. The king will permit *the men* to go, but their families must remain (x. 8-11). That measure of reform might have been received with thankfulness. If the men went, there would have been temporary relief from the terrible pressure of their bondage; for the men only appear to have been enslaved. But anxiety would have remained. Those taskmasters were not the men to whom Israel could with serenity or with safety have entrusted the women and the children. Besides, the refreshment and joy of that access to God were

blessings which they desired their wives and their children to share. If the Christian must separate from his old life, he is the last man to leave those dear to him in surroundings, and under influences, from which he himself must flee. A good shepherd finds little satisfaction in the thought of his personal safety, if the wolves are ravening among the sheep; and Israel, in order to be God's people so that a seed might serve Him, had to come out, young and old. That compromise was, therefore, also peremptorily rejected. The fourth and last suggestion was a modification of the third. Seeing that the separation must be complete, the only thing that was left was to see to it that it should be temporary. Pharaoh cannot detain the women and the children. He, therefore, proposes that their cattle remain as a pledge of Israel's return: "And Pharaoh called unto Moses and said, Go ye, serve the Lord: only let your flocks and your herds be stayed: let your little ones go also with you" (x. 24). The cattle, which formed the wealth of the Israelites and largely furnished the means of their subsistence, would have been an ample pledge for their speedy return to Egypt and its influences. The reply was that if they are to serve God, their herds and their flocks must accompany them, for from these the sacrifices have to be selected. The Christian cannot serve God if his business is carried on by methods which God condemns. If he has to separate from the life that has no practical recognition of God, his business methods must be separated also. His herds and his

flocks must needs go with him. The world's adage: "Religion is religion, and business is business," is simply Pharaoh's last attempt to hold back that which God would redeem. It will, therefore, be seen that, as our Lord's temptation in the wilderness sheds light on the temptations which have constantly assailed His Church, so these compromises, suggested by Pharaoh, have pictured the battle which has ever had to be fought, and which will have to be fought to the end, by those whom God redeems.

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## CHAPTER VI.

THE END OF THE STRUGGLE, AND THE COMPLETE  
DELIVERANCE OF ISRAEL.

XII. 1—39.

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UP to the conclusion of chapter xi. the story of the struggle with Egypt has been continued without a break. As to what communications may have been made meantime to the Israelites, nothing whatever has been said. But now, just before the last, and great, blow falls upon Egypt, we are compelled, for a reason that immediately transpires, to turn aside for a moment and mark what is being done among God's people.

Our attention is, first of all, called to the circumstance that what follows in chapter xii. is a new communication to Moses and Aaron: "And the

Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron *in the land of Egypt*, saying," &c. (xii. 1). This injunction was not given to Moses at Sinai; and a careful reading of the passage shows that it must have been spoken less than two weeks before the farewell interview with Pharaoh. That last meeting took place apparently in the morning of the 14th Nisan, or Abib, as the Israelites then called the month, using its Egyptian name; for Moses gives Pharaoh the Divine message: "Thus saith the Lord, About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt, and all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die" (xi. 4, 5). The midnight spoken of is evidently that following the day on which he is addressing the king. But when we come to chapter xii. 2, we learn that Nisan had already begun before this Divine message came to Moses and Aaron; for it ran as follows: "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you." "This month" had consequently already begun. On the other hand, the communication was made before the tenth of the month; for on that day, the Israelites are told that the Lamb is to be taken from the fold and brought into the home which it is to shield with its shed blood. Sometime, then, between the first and the tenth of the month Nisan, Moses received the communication to which reference was made in xi. 1: "And the Lord had said unto Moses, Yet will I bring one plague more upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt."

Nisan, or Abib, had hitherto been the seventh

month of the Hebrew Calendar. That it was now to become the first month of the religious year showed the stupendous character of the act which was announced. It indicated that in some way the coming event was to create them the people of God, and form the real commencement of their national history. As we read on we soon perceive that this event is indeed invested with the momentous importance which is here foreshadowed. The judgment, of which Egypt was warned at the very beginning of God's dealing with it, but to which its king made no reference, and which Egypt has apparently regarded as a vain threat, is now anew proclaimed to Israel. There, among them, we mark the signs of anxious preparation; for, when the angel of death is abroad, Israel must be securely sheltered. On the 10th day of Nisan a lamb is to be selected for each house. The Israelite is specially informed as to the kind of lamb which is to be chosen, and as to what is to be done with it. They are told what use is to be made of its blood; how the flesh is to be prepared for that night's food; and in what array and manner they are to eat of it (verses 3-11). And then the reason for all this is given (verse 12):

“And I will pass through the land of Egypt in that night, and I will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt from that of man even to that of beast; and upon all the gods of Egypt will I execute judgments: I am Jehovah. And the blood shall be to you for a sign upon the houses where ye are: and I will see the blood,

and will pass over you, and there shall be upon you no plague to destroy you in My smiting in the land of Egypt. And that day shall be to you for a memorial. And ye shall celebrate it a feast to Jehovah. Ye shall celebrate it throughout your generations, an ordinance for ever."

Down to our own time this feast retains its appointed place in Israel. The Jews are, indeed, no longer able to sacrifice the lamb; for from the one altar, before which a subsequent law ordained that it should be slain, they have been banished for eighteen centuries. But the feast is still observed with all its other striking ceremonies. Before we pass on, a word may be necessary regarding the judgment which is to be brought upon all the gods of Egypt in the slaughter of the firstborn. Egypt was notorious for one feature of its worship. The gods were associated with certain animals, which, as their incarnations, were enshrined in the temples and adored as Divine. When one of these died, the province was filled with lamentations and mourning. This folly now exposed Egyptian idolatry to a crushing blow. Terrible as was the grief for their firstborn, which bowed down every household in the land of Egypt, there was a still deeper sorrow for their slaughtered gods.

Minute directions are now given (verses 12-20) for the feast which the slaying and eating of the lamb is to introduce. This is named the feast of unleavened bread. It is to be observed for seven days, during which no leaven is to be found in any of their dwell-

ings. All these directions were published in the opening days of Nisan; but on the tenth day of the month Moses assembles the elders and commands that the people select now the lamb for the Passover, and tells them how the blood is to be applied. A bunch of hyssop is to be dipped in the blood that is—not “in the basin”—but—on the threshold. The word rendered “basin” is *sap*, which is an old Egyptian word for the step before a door, or the threshold of a house. It also occurs in the same sense in the Syriac, the Chaldee, and the Samaritan. The word is translated “threshold” in Jud. xix. 27, and “door” in 2 Kings xii. 9—apparently for the sole reason that the sense “basin,” favoured by lexicographers and translators, could not possibly be given to the word in these passages. The discovery that *sap* belongs to the ancient Egyptian language, which necessarily lent so much to the daily speech of the Israel of the Exodus, has ended all doubt upon this matter, and shed a welcome light on this ancient type. And it may be added that an important witness to the correctness of this rendering is found in the translation given by the Septuagint, the authors of which were residents in Egypt. They render, “the blood that is by the door” (*para tēn thuran*). No direction was given about putting the blood upon the threshold, for the reason that the blood was already there. The lamb was evidently slain at the door of the house which was to be protected by its blood. These directions are completed by the injunction to explain to their descendants—a custom

still carefully observed by the Jews—the occasion and the meaning of the ceremony (verses 26-28).

Such were the preparations made by Israel. None were made by the Egyptians. There seems to have been among them no “fearful looking for of judgment.” Apparently the threatening had excited no alarm. Moses is not summoned to appear in the royal presence, and Egypt retires as usual to its rest. Strange that those who were absolutely secure should have their thoughts full of that approaching hour of terror, and that those upon whom judgment is to fall should be wrapped in an indifference which nothing can disturb—that the former should watch throughout that night, and that the latter should betake themselves to sleep and dreams! Yet so it was that the Angel of Death found the one and the other. “And it came to pass that at midnight the Lord smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon: and all the firstborn of cattle. And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where there was not one dead” (verses 29, 30). And so at last the conflict ended. The Egyptians are now more eager to see the Israelites out of the land than ever they were to retain them in it. The tribes were assembled in haste in accordance with preparations evidently made long before. They poured in from all sides throughout those morning hours to Rameses, taking with them

herds, and flocks, and goods, taking their young and their old and the strangers who clave to them. From Rameses they marched to Succoth on the borders of the land. And there, to their astonishment, when they recalled the covenant made with Abraham and the time set for Israel's wandering and persecution, they found that the time had been kept to the very day! That fact directed and deepened Israel's praise, just as the like accomplishment of promise fell as a consecration upon waiting ones at the advent of Jesus, and will fall at His coming again with even mightier power upon all who love, and look for, His appearing.

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## CHAPTER VII.

## EGYPTIAN WORDS IN EXODUS.

THE vast importance attaching to the presence of Egyptian words in the Pentateuch has been already commented upon, and will be evident to all. The critical theory assigns the composition of the historical portion of the Book to Babylonia and to the times of the exile. This is applauded as a great discovery, and is widely accepted as the only account of the origin of the Book which is worthy of these, our enlightened, times. When we inquire as to the basis on which the theory rests, we are introduced to what Professor Emil Reich has happily described as the methods of the inquisition. A man was sus-

pected of heresy; was straightway apprehended; was thrown upon the rack; and, if the torture applied did not evoke a confession which was all that the examiners could wish, another turn or two of the screw produced all that was required. Such is, in fact, the method of the higher criticism. External evidence is not asked for, or regarded. The testimony of the Jewish people; the existence of the Samaritan Pentateuch; the fact that Jewish life, ecclesiastical, political, social, moral, and religious, was moulded by the Law, and, consequently, demonstrate its earlier existence—all these and kindred testimonies are set aside as impertinences. It is enough that this idea has entered the critical Inquisitor's brain. The Book is thrown upon the rack and torn to pieces. What more can any one require in order to be convinced that the Book is a cunningly arranged collection of shreds and patches, than those very fragments into which the Inquisitor has torn it asunder?

But facts cannot be neglected with safety. They remain as steadfast as the rocks upon a lee shore; and, when the wind of adverse criticism awakes, theories are wrecked upon them. Such a fact is this, that the Pentateuch is distinguished from the rest of the Hebrew Scriptures by the number of ancient Egyptian words which are contained in it. As we have already seen, the presence of these words means that the Book was written for a people who were familiar with them, and whose daily speech made it necessary to select these words in any book

intended for their use. No more unanswerable argument could be desired to show that the Pentateuch was written for the generation of the Exodus. In addition to words previously noted, *sap* or *sep*, mistranslated "basin," which has been dealt with in the preceding chapter, three others may now be added. The term rendered "Passover," *Pesach*, does not seem to have that meaning. It is entirely different from the Hebrew verb, *a-bhar*, or *ga-bhar*, so frequently used in the sense of "to pass over." *Pasach* (the verb) and *pesach* (the noun) have no connection with any other Hebrew word. They closely resemble, however, the Egyptian word *Pesh*, which means, "to spread the wings over," "to protect." The word is used—we may say explained—in this sense in Isaiah xxxi. 5: "As birds flying, so will the Lord of Hosts defend Jerusalem; defending also He will deliver it; and passing over (*pasōach*, participle of *pasach*) He will preserve it." The word has, consequently, the very meaning of the Egyptian term for "spreading the wings over," and "protecting"; and *Pesach*, the Lord's Passover, means such shelter and protection as is found under the outstretched wings of the Almighty. Does not this give a new fulness to those words of our Saviour: "O Jerusalem! Jerusalem! . . . How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not" (Luke xiii. 34)? Jesus of Nazareth was her PESACH, her shelter from the coming judgment; and she knew it not! Quite in keeping with this

sense of protecting with outstretched wings is the fact that the term *Pesach* is applied (1) to the ceremony, "It is Jehovah's Passover" (Ex. xii. 11); and (2) to the Lamb (verse 21): "Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the Passover." The slain Lamb; the sheltering behind its blood; and the eating of its flesh constituted the *Pesach*, the protection of God's chosen people beneath the sheltering wings of the Almighty.

Two other words may be mentioned. In xii. 18 it is said: "In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at even, ye shall eat *matsōth*, until the one and twentieth day of the month." *Matsōth* is translated unleavened bread. But the way in which it is used here shows that it was a technical, and yet very familiar, term. No explanation accompanies it; and there is nothing to indicate that it is a kind of bread, save the context, which shows that it was something to be eaten. That absence of explanation could only be due to the fact that the word was one in constant use. It was quite enough for those Israelites to be told that they were to eat *matsōth*. But it would not have been enough for their descendants had these been commanded for the first time to eat *matsōth*. For the term is not Hebrew. There is a Hebrew word with the same spelling, but it means "strife," "contention." It has also another meaning, "to drink" or "to suck." But it is plain that all these, instead of assisting an Israelite to understand the term, would have seriously misled him. Brugsch Bey has suggested

that *metsah*, the singular form of *matsōth*, corresponds to the Egyptian *mest*, or *mesi-t*, the name given to the cakes offered to the god Osiris at the great Egyptian New-Year festival. *Mesi-t* was probably the name given to the sweet unleavened cakes used in the sacred ceremonies of Egypt, and was, therefore, one of the commonest words in the mixed Hebrew spoken by the Israelites in Egypt. In that way we can understand how the command to eat *matsōth* (the plural form), that is, to eat festival unleavened cakes, would be at once intelligible to the people of the Exodus.

One of two companion words to the above is *sě-ōr*, "leaven." "Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses" (xii. 19). The word is met with only in this chapter. There is a Hebrew word, *sir*, "to boil"; but it lacks the letter *aleph* which occurs in *sě-ōr*. There is an Egyptian word, *seri*, meaning "to seethe," which, as it is connected with *seru*, meaning cheese or butter-milk, may have been used in the sense of "ferment." In any case, this non-Hebrew word is as commonplace to the first readers of the Pentateuch as the term *matsōth*. The other word, *khamets*, used in the same verse for "leavened dough," occurs in that sense only in the Pentateuch. There is a similar word in Coptic, the modern representative of the ancient Egyptian, meaning "acid," which, no doubt, shows whence the Hebrew word with this sense was derived.

These words are only a few examples of many, which all lead us back to Egypt and not to Babylon.

Had there been any truth in the critical theory, the words peculiar to the Book would have led us to the home of the Babylonian exiles. But, although the language and the customs of that Babylonian age are so well-known, there are no such links between them and the Pentateuch. Thus, while science on the one hand, can find no justification of the attack made upon the genuineness of these Books, it shows, upon the other hand, that the language in which the Books were composed corresponds distinctly with the conditions of the Mosaic age.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE PASSOVER AND THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD: ARE THEY TYPICAL?

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A GREAT claim is made in the New Testament Scripture in regard to the Passover. It is, in effect, declared to have been a picture of a Saviour and of a salvation not manifested until fifteen hundred years had passed away. When rebuking the Church in Corinth for their lax discipline, the apostle wrote: "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with the old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of

sincerity and truth" (1 Corinthians v. 7, 8). The same representation evidently underlies the words of Peter: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained from the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you," &c. (1 Peter i. 18-20).

With regard to this second passage, as well as to the Baptist's testimony, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John i. 29), it may possibly be felt that the reference to the Passover is not absolutely clear; but in any case the reference in Corinthians can not be mistaken. It might be supposed, however, that the Old Testament rite merely afforded a happy illustration of the work of Christ and of the life to which the Christian Church is called, and that the Apostle's use of it did not imply that those types were thus fulfilled predictions. Let us turn, then, to the emblems themselves, and mark what they may reveal. The reader of Exodus xii. is struck by the multiplicity of directions regarding the Passover Lamb, and by the impossibility of accounting for them by any influence which they exerted in saving the Israelites from death. First of all, why was blood necessary? Could not God have saved the Israelites without any such device or token? Again, why was it needful that the lamb should be selected on one day and

slain on another? And, further, why must it be slain at a certain time on the appointed day; and why must its blood be put on three specified places on the doorway, and on three only? All this is too elaborate to be destitute of design. And, if there was design, could it be other than symbolic?

Our impression, that the rite betrays a distinct symbolic purpose, grows deeper when we consider the details. They are these: (1) *The age of the sacrifice is prescribed.* It is to be a male of the first year (Exodus xii. 5). The Hebrew phrase is "a male, the son of a year"; that is, it is to be one year old. The lamb was not to be too young nor too old. It was to die in the fulness of its first strength. If we ask how that might apply to Christ, we note that this particular might be fully sustained as a description of Him. For He died for us, not in old age, nor in childhood, or boyhood, or youth, but in the fulness of His opening manhood. (2) *It is to be four days in the home* for which it is to die. It was brought from the fold on the 10th day of the month; and it was led out to die on the 14th. The fact will be recalled that in such symbolism a day frequently stands for a year. Is there anything in our Lord's experience answering to this? He began His ministry with a solemn symbolic act. John was baptising in the Jordan, when Jesus presented Himself with the multitude. They were acknowledging and bewailing their sin. They bowed their heads meekly under the symbol of that death which was sin's penalty. But what place was there for Him

Who was holy, harmless, and undefiled, and separate from sinners? When He passed down into the waters before that multitude the whole scene became symbolic. He was there for them. He bowed His head beneath the whelming waters for no sin of His, but for the sins of those for whose salvation He had come into the world. It was, when He thus came into the midst of the people as the Sin-bearer, that He was revealed to the Baptist, His fore-runner, as the Christ. Is it not striking that this ancient type should make that generally overlooked incident in the Redeemer's life assume the significance which evidently belongs to it? Just as the lamb entered the home as the sacrifice in whose blood those in the home were to find safety, so Christ's entrance upon His place in Israel is by way of the waters of Jordan, from which He issues as the Sin-bearer. We have noted that a day in the symbol may represent a year in that which is symbolised. How long did the Lord's public ministry, which thus began, continue? Between three and four years! If the Lord's baptism occurred at the Passover season, His public ministry continued four years exactly. (3) *Whence the sacrifice comes.* Though it abides in the home, and goes forth from it to suffer "without the gate," it is not of the home. Within the limits which were here possible, could anything have set forth more fitly the relation between Christ and those for whom He died? He came, as the lamb did, from another fold. He assumed our nature and tabernacled among us (John i. 14); but He was not

from us. (4) *The character of the sacrifice.* "Your lamb shall be without blemish" (Exodus xii. 5). I need not dwell upon the sinlessness of Him, the holy One of God, Who "had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth"—the only Man Who has ever been able to lift the challenge to His own age and to humanity: "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" (5) *The lamb had to undergo examination.* Before its perfectness could be ascertained, the lamb had to be minutely inspected; and it was only after such minute inspection had discovered no blemish that the lamb was surrendered as the sacrifice for Israel's safety. The Lord passed through such a scrutiny. He was arraigned before two tribunals in succession. In the Sanhedrim, composed of, and presided over by, His bitter foes, every word and deed that could be used as the foundation for a conviction were adduced. Even false testimony was procured; and, nevertheless, all came to nothing. When He was hurried off to the judgment seat of Pilate, the Roman governor, accustomed to weigh evidence, he brought forth Jesus to the people, declaring that he found no fault in Him—thus repeating the very form of words which must have been used when the lamb was handed out of the fold. (6) *The day of the lamb's death was fixed.* It was the 14th of Nisan. When did Christ die? Just before the great Passover feast began in the afternoon of the 14th Nisan. For a long time there was a question as to whether John did not represent the Lord's death as having taken place on the 15th Nisan. But

that question is now closed, and there is no doubt that the four Gospels are in accord in fixing the date as the 14th day of the month. (7) *But the very hour was also appointed.* In Exodus xii. 6, we are told that the lamb was to be killed—not in the evening, as in our translation, but as in the margin—“between the two evenings.” Josephus has, fortunately, told us what limits are here intended. He tells us that the Passover lambs were slain in the Temple court between three and five in the afternoon. Three o'clock was consequently the first evening, and five o'clock the second evening. Six o'clock was night-fall. Now, when did Jesus die? “And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice . . . My God! My God! why hast Thou forsaken Me? . . . Jesus, when He had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost” (Matt. xxvii. 45-50). Shortly after the ninth hour, therefore—that is, three o'clock in the afternoon—Jesus expired. Not before the appointed time, nor lingering long after it, “the Lord of Glory” offered Himself for our salvation. (8) *Who were to slay the lamb?* “The whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it between the two evenings” (Exodus xii. 6). It was not the act of Moses and Aaron, nor that of the natural priesthood (the firstborn), nor the act of any selected individuals. It was the deed of the entire people, “the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel.” Who put Jesus to death? Not the chief priests and elders, nor the scribes and the Pharisees. Eager though all these were to slay Him, they could do

nothing until they had persuaded the people. For, as Pilate put the matter, only the popular vote could decide that Barabbas was to live and that Jesus was to die. It was only, therefore, when *the multitude* cried "Crucify Him! crucify Him!" and took the guilt of that decision upon themselves and upon their children, that sentence was pronounced, and that the Christ was sent to the cross. (9) Another, and last, point may be noted. *The Scripture speaks of one lamb only.* There were thousands of lambs slain on that 14th of Nisan, which ended the bitter bondage of Israel; and it was impossible that the multitude of the sacrifices required could be forgotten when the directions were issued for this first Passover. Yet not even once is the plural, "lambs," used throughout the chapter. There was only one before God's mind—the Lamb of Calvary. Now, it will be observed that, while none of those nine things which we have just enumerated was necessary for Israel's safety, all of them are needed to set forth this full picture of "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." Here everything is in its place; and, as each fresh particular is added, the story grows fuller until we have the character and the history of the Man Christ Jesus set fully before us. Is it possible to explain this as a mere series of happy chances? Could a picture, that has nothing too much in it, and that has nothing lacking to it, be other than the result of design? And what design could have furnished, centuries before He came, this pathetic, yet magnificent, emblem of the Saviour?

The conclusion to which every candid mind is shut up is, that this picture of the then coming salvation, and the salvation itself, are alike the work of God.

Further meditation upon this type discovers other marvels; but, since space must be reserved for the special study which engages our attention—the plan of Exodus, I mention one only. The Israelites took shelter behind four blood-marks. The blood was already upon the threshold. Into this the hyssop-bunch was dipped, and the blood was placed first on the lintel overhead, and then on each of the side-posts of the door. It is a striking arrangement. Had it been merely a blood-mark that was required, that would naturally have been put upon the door itself. But the door entirely escapes. There is nothing whatever upon *it*. The marks are placed upon the frame in which the door is set: and the marks are four; and four only; and four which are placed in distinctly specified positions. Look upon them once again, and say whether they remind us of anything. Over the entrance to each of those homes—hanging there between all who are within and the angel of death without—is the Crucified Christ! Blood on the head, into which the thorns were pressed: blood on the pierced right hand, and blood on the pierced left hand: blood from the feet through which the nail had also been driven! What emblem could have more fitly set forth our great Passover who died to save us?

PART III.  
THE REDEEMED WITH GOD

(XII. 40—XL. 38).

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INTRODUCTION.

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WE have already encountered many indications of the unity of authorship in Genesis and Exodus; but there is little that is more striking than the three-fold division in the longer Sections in Genesis and in the three Parts of Exodus. After a brief introduction (chapter i.) of the latter Book we have THE STORY OF THE REDEEMER (ii.—vi. 12). This, as we have already seen, is divided into three Sections: (1) The birth and earlier career of Moses (chapter ii.); (2) The calling of Moses (iii. 1—iv. 17); and (3) Moses in Egypt (iv. 18—vi. 12). The three Sections of Part II.—THE REDEMPTIVE WORK—are as follows: (1) The investiture of the Divine Ambassadors (vi. 13—vii. 7); (2) The Conflict with Egypt (vii. 8—xi. 10); and (3) The end of the Conflict and the Complete Deliverance of Israel (xii. 1-39).

In the third and last Part—THE REDEEMED WITH GOD—the three-fold division is equally well-marked. There is (1) The march to Sinai (xii. 40—xviii. 27). In that long Section, consisting of nearly

seven chapters, there is no break whatever. The story flows on in continuous, connected, narrative, until we reach the conclusion of chapter xviii., where we are told, at the end of the account of the marches and the experiences of Israel, of Jethro's coming, his counsels to Moses, and his departure. Then in the nineteenth chapter we have a break. The onward flow of the narrative is for the moment arrested. The chapter opens with the date of the arrival at Sinai and the statement that "Israel camped before the mount" (verses 1, 2); and then we have (2) The giving of the Law at Sinai. This part of the history goes on likewise without interruption from the beginning of chapter xix. to the end of chapter xxxi., the Section thus embracing thirteen chapters in all. And now we meet with another distinct break. The Section is formally closed with the words: "And He gave unto Moses, when He had made an end of communing with him upon Mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God" (xxx. 18). That plainly concludes the account of the giving of the Law. And chapter xxxii. intimates, in its opening words, with equal clearness that it begins a new Section: "And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together" (xxxii. 1); and then follows the account of the casting of the golden calf, &c. This last Section (xxxii. 1—xl. 38), therefore, gives us (3) Israel's apostacy, reconciliation, and making a Tabernacle that God the Lord may dwell among them. There is no other

interruption of the narrative until we come to the end of the Book.

That a plan of so thorough and masterly an order as that should exist, without a single remark being made upon it, or one word being said to reveal its existence, bespeaks the presence of The Great Teacher. No other has ever shown such wise, considerate, patient, reticence. No other has ever met so fully the need of the simple for instruction, and at the same time placed rewards for the studious where they were sure to find them. But I do not now insist upon the fact that the Book is of God. I point merely to this three-fold division, so consistently followed, as a conclusive proof that one author, and one author only, has had to do with Genesis and Exodus. This plan has not merely to do with the broad lines of arrangement: it also reveals itself in the selection of words and the forming of phrases. No student of these Books can fail to recognise this structural plan when it is once pointed out; nor can he, when he has recognised it, believe any longer in any critical theory which represents these Books as collections of myths, and legends, and laws, forged by a designing priesthood, and arranged, shaped, and altered by every venture-some meddler.

## THE MARCH TO SINAI

(XII. 40—XVIII. 27).

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### CHAPTER I.

#### PREPARATIONS FOR THE JOURNEY

(XII. 40—XIII. 22).

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THIS Section opens with a statement which has led to differences of opinion among Bible students, both in ancient and in modern times: "And the sojourning of the children of Israel, who sojourned in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years" (xii. 40). Do these 430 years cover the entire period from the call of Abraham in Ur of the Chaldees until the Exodus? Or are they to be understood as giving us merely the duration of the Egyptian sojourn from the entry of Jacob into Egypt until the deliverance under Moses? Had not this question been mixed up with others, the controversy which it has awakened might have been speedily settled. But the immense increase of the Israelites during the Egyptian sojourn has made many welcome the longer period; while, on the other hand, it has seemed to others that, unless the 430 years are understood as covering the entire period from the calling of Abraham to the delivery of Israel from Egyptian bondage, this part of the chronology would be thrown into confusion.

In settling the question little help is to be had from "authorities." These are found upon both sides. Our earliest authority, the Greek translation, called the Septuagint, shows that learned Hebrew opinion in 300 B.C. held the latter opinion. It renders the passage thus: "The sojourning of the children of Israel, which they sojourned in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, was 430 years." The addition, "in the land of Canaan," is made to show that the 430 years are not to be understood as applying merely to the sojourn in Egypt. The Targum of Onkelos, on the other hand, takes the 430 as the duration of the Egyptian sojourn; while the Targum of Jerusalem says: "And the days of the dwelling of the sons of Israel in Mizraim (Egypt) were thirty weeks of years, which is the sum of two hundred and ten years." Here, as we shall immediately see, the time from the calling of Abraham to Jacob's entering into Egypt is deducted from the 430, leaving 210, or 30 sevens of years. The opinions of the learned, since the days of the Targums, have been mere repetitions of these two views.

Is it possible, then, for us to come to a decision in the face of those differences. There is one ordinarily safe way which we may at least try. It is to read carefully the words of the Scripture. The Revised Version translates: "Now the sojourning of the children of Israel which they sojourned in Egypt was 430 years." Here, *asher*, "who," or "which," is applied to the "sojourning" instead of "the children of Israel." But why should that special sojourning be

thus separated from the rest and numbered? Other sojourning, besides that in Egypt, is plainly implied, seeing that this is distinguished as *the Egyptian* sojourn: why, then, is nothing whatever said of its duration? That rendering raises questionings to which the text has no answer; and the conclusion is inevitable that, if this had been the meaning, an answer would have been given. Besides, too, if the intention had been to say how long the stay in Egypt had lasted, nothing was easier than to express that in words which could not have been misunderstood. It would have been enough to have said: "The sojourning of the children of Israel in Egypt was 430 years." And, seeing that such a statement is not made, it is plain that it is not this but something else which is to be told us. Those first words, "the sojourning of the children of Israel," appear to remind us of the fact that they had been waiting for their inheritance *from the first*. It was promised to Abraham before he left Ur; but he and all his descendants have been till now dwellers in lands that are not theirs. We surely must expect, then, that it is this long waiting, and not any one part of it, that is to find its expression in years. But what, then, of the phrase, "*Who sojourned in Egypt*"? Is it not to remind us that, though the best of the land was given them there, they were only sojourners still? Not even under Joseph, and in the full favour of the Pharaoh whom he served, had Israel got that good land which had been promised to the fathers.\*

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\* See *New Biblical Guide*, vol. iii., p. 96.

But it is in their connection with what follows that we fully understand the message of those words. The time when the Divine call had come to Abraham was evidently known to Israel; and now they recognised the fact that the prediction had been kept to the letter. Thirty years apparently passed between the calling of Abraham and the birth of Isaac; and it had been revealed to Abraham that the sojourning of his seed was to endure for four hundred years (Genesis xv. 13). And now, though in their distress they had seemed to call upon God in vain, He had kept faith with them. The promise was kept to the letter. "And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day, it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt" (verse 41). There was a consecration in the recognition of that fulfilment, which Israel was to receive throughout all its generations:

"A night of watchings it is to Jehovah for the bringing of them forth from the land of Egypt: this is the night of watchings to Jehovah for all the children of Israel throughout their generations" (verse 42).

Naturally, therefore, complete instructions for the proper observance of the feast in coming years are now placed on record. It is to be *Israel's* festival. No stranger's presence is to disturb the conviction that all who are there in Jehovah's presence are His redeemed ones. The stranger is not absolutely excluded. There is a place for him also if he will seek it. If he

and his will consent to be circumcised and so come into Abraham's covenant with God, he and his may enter. Surrounded by strangers in Egypt, the Israelites had been already warned that the feast was for the circumcised alone; and though relations with those without must in many cases have made obedience hard, yet the Divine command was faithfully kept.

“And all the children of Israel did as Jehovah commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they. And it came to pass in this selfsame day, that Jehovah brought forth the children of Israel from the land of Egypt by their armies” (verses 50, 51).

To the faithful, God revealed the marvellousness of His fidelity.

And now Israel is to yield still further fruit to God: the firstborn are to be consecrated to God throughout all their generations. The record of this is put in striking fashion. The command is given to Moses. *He*, the mediator, is to accomplish this great service. The people are, as it were, to be passive; and Moses is to supply the active force which shall produce that long-enduring consecration. Chap. xiii. opens thus:

“And Jehovah spake to Moses, saying, Consecrate thou to Me every firstborn . . . among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast: it is Mine” (verses 1, 2).

And now, let it be noticed that, though Moses speaks immediately to the people, he does not at once speak of the command which he has just received. He

asks them first of all to keep that day of deliverance perpetually before them. In memory of it the feast of unleavened bread is to be rigorously observed: "There shall no leavened bread be eaten" (verse 3). When they pass into the land of the Canaanite and of the rest of the peoples whom God will dispossess before them, that feast shall be taken with them. There, too, "unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days; and there shall no leavened bread be seen with thee in all thy quarters" (ver. 7). In the feast-time also, when the mind of the young is both touched with the solemnity of the time, and filled with inquiry, the head of the household is to tell the children the story of Israel's miraculous and merciful deliverance, and so to place it among the holiest and most abiding memories of the succeeding age. And, having thus prepared the way, Moses makes known the demand for the consecration of the firstborn. The redeemed land is to witness the placing of this fruit upon God's altar by His redeemed people; and amidst the solemnity of this service also the father is to explain to his son how, "When Pharaoh would hardly let us go, the Lord slew all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of beast: therefore I sacrifice to the Lord all that openeth the matrix, being males; but all the firstborn of my children I redeem." Thus was Israel's mission passed on from age to age. The right moment was chosen, and the right words were said; and the young of even far-distant generations were brought, as it were, into actual contact with

the events of that dread but glorious night, when Israel's bondage and shame rolled off them like a dream. There is light there for all who desire to know what the command means to bring up children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. And there is more. We see how the work of the great Mediator between God and man is done. It is His also to consecrate God's redeemed, so that they shall be the Lord's in very truth. We keep the feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth in the midst of the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Amorite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite. We dwell hard by the cross, with vivid recollections of that deliverance that changed all things for us. And thus and there the consecrating power will fall. The Lord's hand will be laid upon us, and the fruits of His suffering will be laid upon God's altar.

Could there be a more fitting introduction to this greatest Section of the Book of Exodus—"The Redeemed with God"? And here commences the story of the march to Sinai. The first question a reader asks is, why that route was taken. Canaan lay to the north, and yet, nevertheless, the Israelites are turned away and led to the south. An explanation is now given (verse 17). "God led them not by the way of the land of the Philistines, though that was near: for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt: but God led the people about through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea" (verses 17, 18). There was mercy in the disappointment. And the

disappointment was only temporary. They were “led about,” but their destination was still “the land”; and of that one indication was given. Moses takes the bones of Joseph to give them sepulture there, thus keeping faith with the dead as well as with the living (verse 19). And, best of all, a proof is given that in this strange way God Himself is Guide:—

“And they departed from Succoth and pitched their camp in Etham, on the edge of the wilderness. And Jehovah was going on before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them in the way, and at night in a pillar of fire to give them light for their going by day and by night” (verses 20, 21.)

And these symbols of the Divine presence with them had come to stay. If they were ever missed by a single Israelite, it was because that Israelite was out of the way.

“He did not withdraw the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of the fire by night from before the people” (verse 22).

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## CHAPTER II.

### THE PASSAGE THROUGH THE SEA

(XIV. 1.—XV. 21).

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**T**HERE are questions regarding the Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and alleged repetitions, the consideration of all of which we postpone

until we have reached the end of the Section. We meanwhile follow to its close, at the foot of Sinai, this first momentous journey of Israel. At that time and for ages afterward, the Red Sea extended northward beyond Suez between sixty and eighty miles. Passing out from Succoth, and marching in a northeasterly direction, the Israelites had passed the then head of the gulf, and had encamped on the edge of the wilderness that stretched between them and the south of Palestine. It was a well-trodden route. The caravans of the merchants passed over those sands continually, and the hosts of the Pharaohs had often crossed them as they set forth upon their eastern campaigns. It seemed the most natural of all things that, when the pillar of the Divine presence passed on before them, this well-known route should be taken. What other way could be thought of for travellers to Canaan?

But Israel here experienced one of those surprises that remind those whom God leads that *He* is the planner of their way.

“ And Jehovah spoke to Moses saying, Speak to the children of Israel, and let them return and encamp before Pi-hakhiroth, between Migdol and the sea, before Baal-tsephon: over against it shall ye encamp by the sea ” (verses 1, 2).

A reason is given for this apparent change of plan. Terrible as Egypt's chastisement has been, something more is still needed to humble Egypt under the felt hand of God, and to banish from Israel all fear of molestation. There was one part of

Egypt's strength, and their chief glory, which had so far escaped. Their triumphant army had not been touched. Moses is told that, when Pharaoh's spies carry the tidings to Tanis that the Israelites have gone down by the Egyptian shore, it will seem to the king that the hour of vengeance has come. A force advancing rapidly upon the rear of the Israelites will block their only way of escape, and so the helpless multitude will be at his mercy. All happened as God had foretold. Pharaoh and his counsellors become suddenly alive to their folly in having permitted Israel to go. But here is their opportunity to redeem the error! The forces are summoned in hot haste. The king and the nobles arm and mount their chariots. Besides the chariot force of the conquerors of Lower Egypt, the chariots of Northern Egypt are brought forth. These, with the horsemen, appear to have hurried on in advance to prevent the escape of the Israelites, and were closely followed by the Egyptian infantry. We have another mark of the time when this Book was written in the words of verse 7, translated "captains over every one of them." The word rendered "Captains" is *Shalishim*, "thirty." We now know that the King's Council was composed of thirty nobles, and that each of them was called *Mapu*, "a thirty man." These nobles were placed in command of the chariots of Lower Egypt. "The *Shalishim* were over all of it" (the chariot force).

When the Israelites saw the foe advancing upon them, they gave themselves up for lost. The Egyptians found them resting in their camp. They

had taken no precautions against assault. Not a trench was dug, nor was one protecting wall raised between them and the foe. No one had dreamed that, after so peaceable and triumphant an exit, Egypt would have pursued them with hostile intent; and now their imagined security had been their undoing! The enemy was upon them in overpowering force, and resistance and flight were alike impossible. But had they not one unfailing Helper? Surely, of all men that ever lived, these would have been the first to say:—

“A safe stronghold our God is still,  
A trusty shield and weapon;  
He'll help us clear from all the ill  
That hath us now o'ertaken.”

But of the living God Israel has seemingly no thought. They conclude that their destruction is certain; and they use the few moments left them to pour maledictions upon the head of the man who has led them into this death-trap. The scene augured badly for this time of trial upon which Israel was now entering. Moses strove to reassure them, and to sow the seed of hope in the very heart of fear.

“And Moses said to the people, Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of Jehovah which He will work for you to-day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall not again see them any more for ever. Jehovah will fight for you, and ye shall keep silence”  
(verses 13, 14).

That is, the victory would be won without their

raising a single shout, or wasting even so much as a breath.

Evidently Moses, while assuring the people, had been lifting his heart to God; for the next words we read are these:—

“And Jehovah said to Moses, Why dost thou cry out to Me? Speak to the children of Israel, and let them break up their camp” (verse 15).

They were not to flee and leave cattle, tents, and baggage behind them, and so deprive themselves of comfort, convenience, and even subsistence in the wilderness. No; even in the face of that confident pursuit every arrangement is to be gone through for orderly departure, and all that Egypt has given them they are to carry away with them. And as they thus go onward in the obedience of faith, their way is being opened—a marvellous way such as till then men's feet had never trod. Moses' staff was stretched out over the sea; and immediately a vehement east wind made answer. All that night it laboured on, hewing out and drying a pathway for them through the depths. But what of the Egyptians during those long hours of preparation? Have they not had time enough to visit Israel with a fearful overthrow? But nothing has been overlooked that concerns Israel's safety. God Himself has become their rear-guard.

“And the angel of God, who was going before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud removed from before them, and stood behind them. And

it went between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and there was the cloud and the darkness (to the one), and the night shone (to the other), and the one came not nigh to the other all the night" (verses 19, 20).

The Egyptians, though they could not see the Israelites, no doubt heard them advancing, and madly followed. First there came deepening calamity which awoke once more the conviction that God was fighting for Israel. Then the Egyptians turned and fled. But it was too late. They had come there to die. The sea returned in its strength; and Pharaoh and his *Shalishim*, and his chariots, and his host, perished utterly. Not a man escaped. We can understand the joy that poured itself out before God in the glorious words of Moses' song, and how the praises of those millions rose and swelled again in answer to the call of Miriam and the daughters of Israel (xv. 1-21).

If the story could have ended there, we should have felt that it ended rightly: but we enter here upon the hideous self-revelation of a carnal people whom no manifestation of mercy could lead into restful trust. They took their journey southward, and marched three days and found no water. Let us admit that so far their faith had not failed under what was no slight trial. But when they came to Marah, and, rushing to the wells, found only bitter, and therefore undrinkable, water, endurance and trust were at an end. They "murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink"? (verse 24).

The limitation of their view is startling. We should have imagined that, after those wonders in Egypt, and that glorious deliverance at the Red Sea, the truth would have been indelibly graven upon the heart of Israel that God Himself was with them in very truth. But here there is no recognition of God whatever. They speak as if they had to do with Moses only. He is treated as the planner of their way, and as being personally responsible for having chosen a route destitute of a proper water supply. Moses takes his trouble whither they should have carried theirs. He cried unto Jehovah, and lo, the answer to their need lay at hand. "And Jehovah showed him a tree, which, when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet" (verse 25). Their next stage was Elim, where they had abundance of waters and a place of rest. There had been no blundering in the planning of their way. It is true that the waters of Marah were bitter; but the streams of Elim were sweet and abundant, and there were days of rest for them at that oasis of the desert. God had been leading them thither by the straight and speediest way, and Marah and the three days' travel without water were only incidents of the journey. "And they encamped there by the waters" (xv. 27).

A reference to *The New Biblical Guide*\* will show how fully the Scripture has enabled us to accompany the Israelites upon their march. They passed down from Elim to the sea, and came to the wilderness of

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\* Volume iii.

Sin (xvi. 1). Here they met a heavier trial. The bread and flour, which they had taken with them from Egypt, were now exhausted; and how, they asked, was this vast multitude to be fed? If their march had been taking them to some inhabited country, a few days' privation might have been borne with fortitude. But they were moving farther and farther away from every locality of the kind; and each day saw them marching deeper into this land of desolation and death. There seems thus to have been a quite sufficient reasonableness in the outbreak which now occurred. But that semblance of reason exists only so long as our outlook remains as limited as theirs. Theirs is practical, and inexcusable, atheism. They have with them the pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night; and nevertheless there is no thought of God! He is guiding them visibly; and yet no man seems to reflect that *He* cannot possibly be guiding them wrongly. And yet who are we that we should judge them? God leads us by like paths, and with the same purpose, that we may learn to know our own hearts, and His boundless power and unfailing mercy. Just as now, so then, God rebuked doubt by the marvels of His providence. He rained down bread to them, and the winds brought quails, reckoned among the delicacies of Egypt, into their camp. Let it be noticed that, though those murmurings were rebuked, they were not punished. We shall witness by-and-by swift and terrible vengeance; but we have first to mark the long-suffering of Jehovah.

This forbearance is equally manifest in the third provocation. The people were now (xvii.) in the neighbourhood of Sinai. They had pitched in Rephidim, and no water was to be had in the vicinity of the camp. What ought a necessity of that kind to have proclaimed to this God-led people? If the failing of the bread at Sin had been but the first chapter in that marvellous story of the Manna, was not this absence of water but the beginning of another revelation of God's glory? Nevertheless Israel has no expectation; it has bitter disappointment and venomous abuse—not of God; God is not in all their thoughts, but—of Moses.

“And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses. And they said, Why is this? Thou hast caused us to go up from Egypt, to kill me and my son and my cattle with thirst” (verse 3).

The words, “Me and my son,” etc., indicate the sharpness of the reproach which was poured upon Moses as he passed through the camp, or to which he had to listen when he was called to his tent-door by the multitude. One individual after another flung that charge of intended murder at the man who spent himself in their service. Let us note that Moses makes no answer to those reproaches. His anguish drives him to prayer.

“And Moses cried out to Jehovah, saying, What shall I do for this people? A little while longer and they will stone me! And Jehovah said to Moses, Pass over before the people, and

take with thee some of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, with which thou didst smite the Nile, take in thy hand, and go" (verses 4, 5).

And thus from the rock in Horeb, symbol of the Everlasting God, smitten with the rod of Egypt's judgment, the life-giving water gushed forth, and the perishing were saved. And now come another peril for Israel and another call for faith in God. Amalek puts his hand upon God's throne, that is being raised upon the earth, in the impious endeavour to overthrow it. The chosen men of Israel, under the leadership of Joshua, prevail, after a long struggle, through the persistent intercession of Moses. Amalek is put to flight, and the way is now open to Sinai. But before Israel passes on to that resting place, God's much-tried servant has to be comforted. Jethro, the high-priest of Midian, and brother-in-law of Moses, meets him in Rephidim, bringing with him his sister Zipporah, Moses' wife, and their two sons. He brought with him also a wise head and a heart that sympathised deeply with the man of God, and he left with Moses a lightened burden and a cheered and strengthened spirit. Judges were appointed to deal with the multitude of petty cases, the hearing of which had been consuming the time and strength of Moses.

"And they judged the people at all proper times. The difficult cases they sent to Moses; and all the small cases they themselves judged. And Moses let Jethro go, and he went to his own land" (xviii. 26, 27).

## CHAPTER III.

THE PASSOVER AND THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED  
BREAD: INSTITUTIONS OF THE EXODUS.

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THE survey of the Section which we have just concluded will convince the reader that no narrative could possibly bear clearer marks of its being the work of one writer. The Section tells one continuous story. The story is told in the clear, vivid, direct, style natural to one who has learned nothing from hearsay, but who has been a witness of the events, and a participator in the experiences, which it records; and, above all, the narrative breathes from first to last the same spirit. The most strenuous attempts, however, have been made to prove that it is a compilation from various documents; and that it has been added to, and altered, to suit the views of various editors, and to meet the supposed necessities of different times. Into any discussion of the various fragments which the critics set before us, it would be profitless to enter. And such discussion is also unnecessary. It is enough to ask the workers of all this havoc why they fancy themselves compelled to cut up and to re-arrange in that extraordinary fashion. We want to know their reasons for believing that Exodus is not the unity which the Jewish people and the Christian Church have believed and taught that it is. If those reasons

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are good, we may then inspect and pronounce judgment upon their handiwork; but if there is no soundness in their alleged reasons, we may save ourselves the trouble of arguing over, or even inspecting, fragments of the sacred text which ought never to have been torn from the record in which the critics found them.

They imagine, however, that here they are specially strong. There is, they say, such evident confusion in the communications about the Passover, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread connected with it, and there are in these so many undeniable repetitions that it is quite impossible that all could have proceeded from one author, or have been written at one time.

1. Holzinger, for example, alleges that there is a confusion between the 14th and the 15th Nisan. On xii. 17, &c., he writes: "The first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the 15th Nisan, is thrown together with the Passover, the 14th Nisan; such an entanglement can only be attributed to a revision."\* There is certainly confusion here; but it is in the criticism, and not in the Scripture. The *feast* of the Passover did not begin on the 14th Nisan. The lamb was, indeed, to be slain "between the two evenings" of the 14th, that is, between 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. But this slaying of the lamb, and the putting of the blood upon the doorway, were not the festival: they were merely the preparations for it. The feast itself began when the Israelites were gathered within

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\* S. 34.

around the festal board; and before that board was ready the lamb had to be "roast with fire." This necessary preparation took time, and the night was already begun before the feast of the Passover commenced. *That night was the beginning of the 15th Nisan.* Just as now the Jewish Sabbath begins with Friday at nightfall, and ends with Saturday at nightfall, so nightfall of the 14th Nisan was the beginning of the 15th Nisan. The lamb was slain on the 14th, but the Passover feast—the partaking of the lamb—took place after 6 p.m. of the 14th, which formed the beginning of the 15th Nisan. A careful reading of the Scripture would have entirely prevented this misconception. In verse 18 we read: "In the first month, on the *fourteenth day of the month, at even*, ye shall eat unleavened bread." Compare that with Leviticus xxiii. 5, 6, and the order and relationship of the two feasts will be perfectly clear: "In the 14th day of the first month *at even* is the Lord's Passover. And on the 15th day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the Lord." The Passover introduced the feast of unleavened bread. It was the solemn memorial act in which the unleavened bread was first partaken of. The Passover was the memorial of God's mercy, and the feast of unleavened bread was emblematic of the reply of the redeemed to that mercy. Israel, saved by God, was thereby separated and consecrated unto God. But how much of all this far-reaching symbolism will be left for those who accept the higher criticism?

2. Another so-called contradiction, "proving" that

the Book has been made up of extracts from different documents, is said to be found in the following statements. In xii. 22 the Israelites are told: "None of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning." But in verse 31 we read that it was at "night" that Pharaoh's command was issued: "Rise up, and get you forth from among the people"; and it is also plain that they marched at night; for verse 42 runs thus: "It is a night to be much observed (or a night of watchings) unto the Lord for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is that night of the Lord to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations." To the superficial reader this charge may seem to be well founded; but no man worthy to be called a scholar could be imposed upon by a statement of the kind. When was it that Pharaoh issued his order for the release of the Israelites? After the discovery of the death of the firstborn. And when did the firstborn of Egypt die? At midnight! The order was issued, therefore, when the morning had actually begun. We speak continually of one o'clock or two o'clock in the morning; but, it will be asked, does the Scripture use the word "morning" in that sense? Does it apply the term to those hours after midnight when the darkness still continues as well as to those in which the light breaks and brightens? No real student of the Scripture has any hesitation in giving an affirmative reply. We read, for example, that Ruth lay at the feet of Boaz "until the morning; and she rose up before one could know another."

The darkness, therefore, largely continued. In Mark i. 35, we are told that "in the morning," our Lord, "*rising up a great while before day,*" went out "into a solitary place, and there prayed"; and, again, in John xx. 1, we learn that on "*the first day of the week,*" Mary Magdalene went "early, *when it was yet dark,* unto the sepulchre." Not only the morning, but even the day itself, began in the darkness. It began, indeed, with the Israelites as it begins with ourselves, when midnight is past. And, nevertheless, this so-called "science" imagines that it can justify its rending of the Scriptures by blunders as gross as these!

3. Another "inconsistency," which, at a first glance, may seem to be better founded, is the alleged lack of harmony between Pharaoh's forbidding Moses to see his face again (x. 28) and his "calling for Moses and Aaron by night" (xii. 31). If Pharaoh's mind was changed, was the Scripture to be forbidden to record the fact upon pain of being rent asunder? That he did change his mind is evident, and the reason for the change is fully told; but what is not perfectly clear is that Moses and Aaron did actually appear in the royal presence. There is no record whatever of that. There is no fresh negotiation between them and the king. There is not even any recorded conversation. Besides, "the king's business," in this instance, "required haste." What was urgent was the immediate departure of the Israelites from among the people; and it is evident also from the terms of the message that there was

no summons whatever to the Court. The command was not: "Rise up, and appear before the king"; but "Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel with you."

4. How determined this attack is, and how diligently every particle of possible evidence has been searched for, will be plain from what follows, as well as from that which has gone before. The Israelites were told that the Passover was to be eaten with unleavened bread (xii. 8), and (ver. 15) were enjoined to keep the feast of unleavened bread; yet, nevertheless, it is regarded as a quite astonishing fact that they had no leavened bread with them when they left Egypt (verse 39). In regard to this, and the other points, the critics are more than usually confident. Dr. Driver says that "in chapters xii.—xiii. the double treatment is peculiarly evident," and he speaks of "the inference" being "irresistible" that a certain passage "is really part of a different account of the institution of the Passover." Now there is no stronger argument in their whole array than this, and the reader will be able to appreciate the value which ought to be attached to these "irresistible inferences." It is quite true that the Israelites were to eat the Passover with unleavened bread. That is distinctly stated in xii. 8 (the passage referred to above): "And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs shall they eat it." But there is nothing said there about their sweeping leaven out of their houses and their having nothing but unlev-

ened bread for the ordinary meals upon the morrow. The legislation affects the eating of the lamb, and the eating of the lamb only. "But," it will be asked, "was not the feast of unleavened bread also appointed, and was not the Passover the beginning of that feast?" The reply is that, notwithstanding their display of minute analysis, the critics have still something to learn in the reading of documents. The first ordinance regarding the Passover is given in xii. 3-13; and the first announcement of the Feast of Unleavened Bread is made in verses 15-20. Immense importance is consequently attached to verse 14 as the connecting link between the two passages. Let us look at it again:—

"And this day shall be to you FOR A MEMORIAL; and ye shall celebrate it a feast to Jehovah. To (*or*, throughout) your generations ye shall celebrate it a command for ever."

*This has to do with the then future observance of the Passover, and with the future observance of it only.* It is the institution of the "memorial"; and not of the original Passover feast. And now comes the institution—in connection *with the memorial alone*—of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (verses 15-20). These arrangements, I repeat, were for the memorial services, but were not enjoined in connection with the original Passover. With the confident expectation which Moses and the people had of immediate permission to leave Egypt, it was impossible to make arrangements then for its celebration of a seven days'

feast. What would have been the use, for example, of searching for leaven those dwellings that were to be abandoned before the feast was well begun? And now we can understand the astonishment of the pious Israelites, when they noted the fact that, although no injunction had been laid upon Israel to keep this feast then, it was, nevertheless, so arranged in the Providence of God, that no leavened bread was partaken of during those first days of their emancipation. Read in this, the only natural, way, the narrative is not only absolutely harmonious; it also pulsates with the life, and is permeated by the warm, living, emotions of the time.

5. The critic still detains us here. "If," he asks, "the Israelites were told that they were to be emancipated that night, how did it happen that they were so unprepared that no bread was made ready for their journey?" We admit the fact of their unpreparedness. That, indeed, was the occasion of the astonishment just referred to. In verse 39 we read: "And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they brought forth out of Egypt, for it was not leavened: because they were thrust out of Egypt, and could not tarry, neither had they prepared victual for themselves." I repeat that we admit the facts that Israel was warned, and that nevertheless they had prepared no victual for the journey. But what then? Must no document contain anything extraordinary on pain of being dismembered? Must we commence to suspect a dual authorship in every book in which "the unexpected"

is represented as happening? If that is so, then, in the interests of public sanity we shall have to suppress the higher criticism. But let us return now to the history, and see whether it does not after all set before us what is perfectly intelligible and in most thorough accord with the circumstances. We remember, first of all, that for that all-important day, the 14th Nisan "at even," that is for the 15th Nisan which began at nightfall on the 14th, the Israelites have prepared *unleavened* bread, in accordance with the distinct instructions which have been given them. Let it be remembered also that before the labours for the next day could be begun—while it is still dark—all is hurry and confusion. Everything is being bundled up for instant departure; for "the Egyptians were urgent upon the people that they might send them out of the land, in haste" (verse 33). Now, what kind of dough would, in these circumstances, be in their kneading troughs? Certainly that from which they had been baking their unleavened cakes! They would have added leaven in the course of the lighter hours of the morning; but before those lighter hours arrived the Israelites were on the march. So "the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading troughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders" (verse 34). Here again, therefore, the difficulty vanishes, and its discussion leaves us once more face to face with the haste and the excitement of the time.

6. The following is one of a series of difficulties

which show that the higher criticism has exchanged the noble task of Scripture exposition for special pleading of a weak and highly-questionable order. In xii. 19 there are these words: "Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses: for whosoever eateth that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, *whether he be a stranger or born in the land.*" Here, it is urged, the "stranger" is supposed to have part in the feast as well as the Israelite. But, in verses 43-49, the stranger is distinctly forbidden to participate in it. "And the Lord said unto Moses, This is the ordinance of the Passover: there shall no stranger eat thereof." Then follows a very careful description of exceptions to the rule. Slaves that have been circumcised, and strangers who desire to participate in the feast, and who, along with the other males of their households, submit to circumcision, may be permitted to eat of the Passover. Then the law is reiterated in view of those exceptions: "No uncircumcised person shall eat thereof" (verse 48). This, then, is the proof that the Book is made up of extracts from diverse sources! One taught that even strangers must keep the feast on pain of death; and the other said that the stranger must on no account whatever be permitted to keep it. But what is it that the stranger must do; and what is it that he must *not* do? Are they one and the same thing? Any child that has once read the passages can give the answer. The stranger must not violate the law of the Feast of Unleavened

Bread. If during those seven days he eat anything leavened, "even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a stranger or born in the land" (verse 19). And what is it that the uncircumcised stranger must not eat? He must not eat of *the Passover*. That is, the stranger, who is not in covenant with God, receives no admission into the circle of those who are in covenant with God; but, it is not permitted even to him to violate the sanctity of Israel's purified land. What reliance can be placed in men who, either wittingly or unwittingly, obscure a distinction so palpable and broad as that?

7. Another charge of discrepancy is founded upon the statements in xii. 16 and xiii. 6. In the former we read that on the first day there shall be a holy convocation, and another on the seventh, the last day of the feast. In the latter passage the Israelites are told that the seventh day "shall be a feast to the Lord," while nothing at all is said of the first day. But here again the terms used are not the same. The first passage speaks of holy convocations, on the first and the last days of the feast. The second passage enjoins that the second convocation shall be specially observed as a *feast* to Jehovah. In other words, the closing day of the feast was to be "a high day." Where, then, is the alleged contradiction? The want of consideration in this contention is the more flagrant that the first day of the feast has been already dealt with in chapter xiii., showing the perfect harmony of both the references: "Remember this day,

in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage" (xiii. 3).

8. But the two accounts are said to have different ways of indicating the months. In xiii. 4 the month of the Passover is spoken of as Abib; in xii. 18 it is called "the first month." Wellhausen affirms that the latter statement implies a change in the calendar, and that this change was made after the Babylonish captivity. There was also, it is said, a change in the mode of referring to the months. The older method was to name the month; and the more recent plan, introduced only in and after the exile, was to refer to the months by number. Hence it follows that Exodus xii. 18, which speaks of "the first month," belongs to a later document, dating from the times after the exile; and Exodus xiii. 4, which names the month ("this day came ye out in the month Abib"), belongs to an earlier document. To such assertions as these the temporary triumph of the higher criticism is to be almost wholly ascribed. We instinctively bow before the authority of competent scholarship; and when such statements are made by acknowledged masters in Biblical learning, and are received and handed on to the general public by others, what can an ordinary inquirer do but admit, however sadly, that the older opinions cannot be maintained? And yet the statements ought never to have been made or received. First of all, *Abib* is found only in the Pentateuch. There can be no doubt whatever that it is the Egyptian *Ephé*. Both the name of the month, and its place

in the popular Egyptian calendar at that time, are strongly in favour of the identification. From their residence in Egypt the Israelites of the Exodus knew the month by that name, and it was natural therefore that Moses should so refer to it. xiii. 4 belongs, therefore, to a Mosaic document.

What, then, of "the first month"? Could such a phrase as that be found in a Mosaic document? Let me notice first the statement that the months before the captivity were cited by name, and after the captivity by their number. No belief was ever more destitute of a foundation. Nehemiah, a writer belonging to times later than the exile, *cites the months by both name and number*: "And it came to pass in the month Chisleu" (i. 1); "And it came to pass in the month Nisan" (ii. 1); "When the seventh month came, the children of Israel were in their cities" (vii. 73); "Upon the first day of the seventh month" (viii. 2); "The seventh month" (viii. 14). Nehemiah wrote more than a hundred years after the end of the exile; and at that time, therefore, it was customary both to name the months and to cite them by number. Nothing can, therefore, be more misleading or baseless than to say that the practice of naming the months had then passed away, and that they were known only by their numbers. And now let us ask what the custom was before the exile. We have just seen that the naming of months did not cease after the exile. Are the critics, then, on surer ground when they say that the numbering of the months was not introduced before the exile? The following

quotations are from Jeremiah, whom no one has ever reckoned a post-exilic author; and who, although he lived when the exile had begun, wrote in the style and with the phraseology common to his countrymen and himself before the exile begun: "In the fifth month" (i. 3): "In the fourth year, in the fifth month" (xxviii. 1); "In the ninth month" (xxxvi. 9), &c. In 1 Kings we find: "The ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month"; in 1 Kings xii. 33: "In the fifteenth day of the eighth month." We also find, as in Nehemiah, that the months are cited both by name and number: "The month Zif, which is the second month" (vi. 1); "Bul, which is the eighth month" (vi. 38); "Ethanin, which is the seventh month" (viii. 2). In pre-exilic times, therefore, the months are referred to by both name and number; and there is accordingly not a shadow of foundation for assigning Exodus xii. 18, which speaks of "the first month," to a later document than that of Exodus xiii. 4, which refers to it as "the month Abib."

It will now be no surprise to the reader to learn that the calendar was changed long before the Jews were taken to Babylon. The Israelites have had two years from the Exodus to the present time: (1) The civil year, the opening of which, the Jewish New Year, was celebrated on the first of Tizri, after the harvest; (2) The religious year, the beginning of which, at the opening of Nisan, or Abib, was fixed at the Exodus. There are references in the earlier Old Testament Books which show that both reckonings were followed. That the *civil* year existed before the

captivity is not denied, so that I need not adduce proof to show that this mode of reckoning was practised in pre-exilic times. That the religious year, however, was also known then is shown by the following. In 2 Samuel xi. 1 we read: "And it came to pass after the year was expired (at the return of the year), at the time when kings go forth to battle, that David sent Joab," &c. When do kings commence a campaign? When the fields are bare and the winter is setting in? Certainly not. But if the civil year was here referred to, the writer must be held to mean that that *was* "the time when kings go forth to battle." The year referred to is plainly that which began in March-April—in other words, the religious year. Two other passages from 1 Kings can only be understood in the same way: "At the return of the year the King of Syria will come up against thee" (xx. 22); "And it came to pass at the return of the year, that Benhadad numbered the Syrians, and went up to Aphek to fight against Israel" (verse 26). This also was plainly a spring campaign, and the religious year was an Israelitish institution long before the Babylonian captivity.

9. Dr. Driver writes: "The distinction between P and JE in chapter xii. is sufficiently established on literary grounds."\* There are few statements in his book which are more misleading. It is evidently intended to impart to the reader the conviction that here the critics feel they stand upon ground that is well assured. The reader will judge from the follow-

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\* *Introduction*, p. 26.

ing whether the words quoted are justified. Dr. Driver assigns verses 21-27 to JE, that is, to the two writers J and E, whose writings, the critics say, have been so mixed up in parts that it is impossible to separate them. These parts they accordingly label JE. But, in this instance, the combination exhibits special peculiarities. Verses 24-27, Wellhausen says, are allied to the Jehovist in phrase and diction, and to the Elohist in contents! That is, either the Jehovist has taken to dealing with matters, the detailing of which is a special feature of the so-called Elohist writing; or the Elohist is telling his own story, but is telling it in the language and in the manner which are the marked characteristics of the Jehovist. Now to label those verses JE, and then to thrust them aside, is to stifle a most important confession. For, if the Jehovist can thus deal with what is the special province of the Elohist; and if the Elohist can assume the manner and the speech of the Jehovist, what does it mean? If they exchange with each other in such bewildering fashion here, may they not have done it elsewhere? For the problem here raised the critic has no solution. The solution is plainly that provided by the old-fashioned faith—that we have to do throughout with the work of one writer, and of one writer only.

A concluding word may be added to show how little there is of certainty in the critical analysis of the chapter. Dr. Driver breaks it up into twelve fragments, which he divides among those critical myths P, J, E, and JE. Holzinger makes twenty fragments, which he distributes among six writers; and

Baëntsch has twenty-one fragments, which he credits to no fewer than eight writers. And yet Dr. Driver can write (as if only *two* writers were supposed to be concerned) "the distinction between P and JE in chap. xii. is sufficiently established upon literary grounds"; and his followers still talk of "the assured results of the higher criticism"!

## SECTION II.

### THE GIVING OF THE LAW AT SINAI (XIX.—XXXI.)

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#### CHAPTER I.

##### THE CONTENTS OF THE SECTION.

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I HAVE again to remind my readers that they will find in a former work\* of mine what is quite a necessary companion to the present volume. The light shed by the survey of the Sinaitic Peninsula, and by recent discoveries in Egypt, has invested those ancient scenes with all the interest and charm of contemporaneous events. With these things, however, the space now at my disposal, as well as my present purpose, make it impossible to deal. We limit ourselves, therefore, to tracing the plan of the Book, showing its unity, and indicating its purpose.

There is one feature of chapter xix. which commands attention. It is the consciousness which pervades it that this choice of Israel, and of God's revelation to it, form a new and momentous epoch in the world's history. The people have come to Sinai and have encamped before the Mount. Moses, the Mediator, we are told,

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\**The New Biblical Guide*; see vols. lii. and iv.

“Went up to God; and Jehovah called to him from the Mount saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob and declare to the children of Israel. Ye have seen what I have done to Egypt, and I bore you up on eagles' wings, and I have brought you to Me. And now if hearken-  
ing ye will hearken to My voice, and will keep My covenant, then ye shall be to Me a peculiar possession above all the peoples; for all the earth is Mine: and ye shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak to the children of Israel” (verses 3-6).

Moses carried down the message to Israel, and Israel's response was unanimous and whole-souled: “And all the people answered together and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do” (verse 8).

To us, with the knowledge which we possess of what Israel has been to the world, there may seem to be nothing marvellous in this. All is as it should be. The history of the mighty part played by this small and otherwise insignificant people in the education of humanity could not have had a more fitting introduction. But let us go back to the centuries before the Christian era began. Let us take our stand—I do not say in 1600 B.C., the age of the Exodus; but—at the lowest date which has ever been assigned to the origin of those words. Let us say that they were placed upon the page of Scripture no earlier than 400 B.C. Israel was then a conquered race. The larger part of the nation—the kingdom of the

ten tribes—had been annihilated. The fragments of those tribes and the Jewish people were scattered throughout the Persian Empire. A few had returned to Jerusalem and to their ruined cities, and were fighting a hard battle with poverty and disheartenment. What shadow of foundation could have been discovered then for this unique and marvellous hope? Going back to the times of the Exodus there was quite as little in Israel's circumstances to suggest it. A horde of escaped slaves, breaking with the world's highest civilisation, finding an asylum in the desert—what could have inspired the expectation that theirs was to be the broadest, deepest, highest, holiest of all national influences? Yet here, placed on a record that has never been altered, is the prophecy of Israel's destiny. This people is to be the priest of the nations. It is to be God's peculiar treasure above all the peoples of the earth. God is to declare Himself to it, and to reveal Himself through it. All this is put into the heart of that covenant made at Sinai. And now, behold the miracle—the covenant has been kept; the destiny has been attained! The light which has swept away the world's darkness, has streamed forth from Israel. In proportion as they fulfilled the covenant stipulations, and were God's holy priesthood, the glory has been theirs. What is the origin of this Bible? "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter i. 21); and in Christ, an Israelite, according to the flesh, yet the Beloved One in whom God is well pleased, Israel has become the high priest of

humanity. And in Him who shall also turn away ungodliness from Jacob, Israel will yet reach the fulness of her destiny.

When Israel's answer was brought back to God, a revelation of Jehovah was given which showed that the covenant was to be no dead letter. Three days are allowed to the people to sanctify themselves, and the mountain is fenced round about so that the place of the revelation may be sanctified also. On the third day the people are brought forth from their tents and assembled on the plain of Er-Rahah before Mount Sinai. The array took place among thunderings and lightnings, accompanied by the sound of "the trumpet exceeding loud"; and the smoke of Sinai "ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole Mount quaked greatly." Amidst this dread scene the voice of God was heard speaking those "ten words," in which the moral law has been enunciated with a clearness, brevity, fulness, and majesty, unequalled and unapproached in any literature besides (xx. 1-17). But the power of Israel's endurance was now exhausted.

**"And all the people (were) beholding the thunderings, and the flames, and the voice of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking. And the people were afraid, and were seized with terror, and stood afar off. And they said to Moses, Speak thou with us, and we shall hear, and do not let God speak with us lest we die" (verses 18, 19).**

**Their prayer was granted; and thenceforth the law**

came to them through their mediator, the man who could hear God's voice and live. The first message which he bore to the people was the interpretation of the scene which they had witnessed. They had formerly seen the gods of Egypt, and now they had stood face to face with the living God. In that revelation idolatry had received its death-blow.

“YE have seen (there is special emphasis upon the pronoun ‘ye’) that I have spoken with you from heaven. Ye shall not make with Me gods of silver, and ye shall not make unto you gods of gold ” (xx. 22, 23).

Their altar even was to be free from every idolatrous ornament, and to consist only of heaped up earth, or of unhewn stone.

Amid the multiplicity of the laws which follow we mark a Divine order. There are

I. In xxi. 1-32—laws regarding Hebrew slaves and personal injuries. These are fitly placed together. The Israelite, reduced by poverty to temporary servitude, had a claim for the restoration of his liberty at the end of the allotted period, just as the injured had a claim for reparation or for vengeance.

II. xxi. 33—xxii. 17—laws regarding injuries to property. The last enactment in this connection—the wrong done to a maid that is not betrothed—may at first sight seem strangely placed. But when it is observed that this is the only offence of the kind that is mentioned here, though others are elaborately dealt with elsewhere in the Law, it will be seen that the aspect of the case contemplated is the injury

done to the woman's personal interests. Her hopes of an honoured place and of maintenance among her people have been blighted, and reparation is required.

III. xxii. 18—xxiii. 19—laws regarding offences against God. These begin with, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." Those who are acquainted with the religions of the time, and with the fearful bondage of superstition under which the nations lay, will realise the importance of that injunction. The "user of enchantments," whether an impostor or not, was an emissary of the kingdom of darkness, and was re-capturing and enslaving afresh those whom God had freed. If that people were to be preserved from the spiritual enthrallment of the time, and to retain a living faith in God, the witch must die. She was their, and His, foe. There is a repetition in this Section, the intention of which some of the critics themselves have perceived and acknowledged. In xxii. 21 we read: "Thou shalt neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt"; and again in xxiii. 9: "Also thou shalt not oppress a stranger; for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." The first, it is plain from the connection, is a word to the people; and the second is a word to the judges. The reader will notice that the first injunction has a wide sweep—"thou shalt neither vex . . . nor oppress"; the other is confined to one mode of procedure, "thou shalt not oppress"—a phrase which indicates a process of pressure, and which, happily, describes that form of persecu-

tion that is enacted and enforced by law. That the stranger, the widow, and the fatherless, are under the immediate protection of God, and that wrong to them is a defiance of Him, is not only the eloquent suggestion of this arrangement, but is expressly indicated in the words which follow: "If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto Me, I will surely hear their cry" (xxii. 23). The transition to the honouring of God in His institutions occurs in verse 28: "Thou shalt not revile the gods (*Elohim*)."  
*Elohim*, here as elsewhere in Scripture, is applied to the judges. They were put, as it were, in God's place; and, administering God's law, they were clothed with Divine authority. There have been few things more common from those days to the present time, among unsuccessful litigants, than the reviling of the judges. But to yield to that temptation is to offend against God. Then follow the laws for witnesses and judges. The former are not to permit themselves to be turned from what is strictly right, either by popular clamour or by the remembrance of their own wrongs. So far are they to be from encouraging any spirit of the kind, that, if they are brought Providentially into contact with their enemy in the time of his need, they are to render him what assistance they may (xxiii. 5). Injunctions are added regarding the Sabbatic year, the Sabbath day, and the three Divinely-appointed annual festivals.

The last of these laws has long exercised the learning and the ingenuity of commentators: "Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk" (xxiii. 19).

There can be no doubt as to how the Jews understood the words in the first centuries of our era. The Targum of Onkelos has: "Thou shalt not eat flesh with milk." The Targum of Palestine expresses the same notion in a fuller form: "My people of Israel, you are not permitted to dress or eat of flesh and milk mingled together, lest I be greatly displeased; and I prepare you the wheat and the straw together for your food." This is very probably a comment of despair. Had the Scripture intended to forbid merely the eating or the dressing of flesh with milk, the prohibition would have come to us in a more intelligible form than this mysterious command. There is plainly some reference to a custom with which the Israel of the Exodus was familiar, but which, through the very obedience of the Israelites, had passed away and had been forgotten before those paraphrases of the Scripture, the Targums, were written. The practice had evidently also some connection with sacrifices and offerings. In verse 18 there are directions regarding the blood and the fat of the sacrifices; in verse 19 the Israelite is commanded to bring the first fruits of his land into the House of God, and then follow the words: "Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk." The command is repeated in Deuteronomy xiv. 21. There the connection shows that the prohibition refers to what was prepared, partly at least, for food, and that the practice had also some relation to the tithes, both, perhaps, being confessions of obligation to a higher power. After forbidding the eating of that

which dieth of itself, there follows the injunction : "Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk. Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year." Probably it was some idolatrous rite in connection with the harvest celebrations which was thus set aside. Keil rejects Abarbanel's explanation, but it alone has thrown any light upon the words. The latter mentions that there was a custom in which a kid was seethed in its mother's milk in order to propitiate certain deities. And an ancient Jewish commentary says that the milk was sprinkled on the fruit trees, fields, and gardens as a charm to improve the next year's crops.

Such was the demand of the first covenant between God and Israel. It proclaimed Jehovah the God of righteousness, who was served in their abstaining from wrongdoing towards men, as well as in the performance of what are more strictly named religious duties. It concluded with the announcement of a startling change in God's treatment of Israel. They were now to be put under discipline. We have noticed that, although they had murmured on the way to Sinai, and had almost broken out into open rebellion, there had been no chastisement. If that had continued, Israel would have made no advance.

"Behold I am sending an Angel before thee to guard thee in the way. And he will bring thee to the place which I have prepared. Be watchful in his presence and listen to his voice.

Provoke him not, for he will not pardon your transgressions, for **My name is in him**" (verses 20, 21).

There will henceforth, therefore, be swift retribution—retribution so swift and so terrible that the fear of God will be planted deep in the heart of even a carnal race. But help and blessing will reveal quite as marvellously His presence and His power.

**"But if thou wilt indeed listen to his voice, I shall both do all that I have said, and I shall be the foe of thy foes, and I shall be the oppressor of thine oppressors"** (verses 22, 23).

The covenant concludes with the promise of the possession of the land as they are able to occupy it, and of marked and abundant blessing there (verses 23-33).

Chapters xxiv.—xxx. complete the account of the giving of the law. The communication of the laws, which we have already noted, ended with a summons to Moses to come up into the mountain, and to take with him Aaron and his sons, and seventy of the elders of Israel. So Moses returned to the people, made known to them the laws which he had received, and wrote them in a Book. Next morning, rising early, he builded an altar near to the base of the mountain. Sacrifices were offered by "the young men," the firstborn, who held then, by right of birth, the priestly office. Half the blood was sprinkled upon the altar. Half of it was put in "basins," for which we have an entirely different word (*aggân*) from that wrongly-rendered "basin" (*sap*) in xii. 22.

He then read the Book of the Covenant, and, when the people had expressed their resolve to obey "all that the Lord hath said," he sprinkled upon them the reserved half of the blood, saying, "Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning these words." And now to this sprinkling with the blood of the covenant there was a strange two-fold sequence. Aaron and his sons, and the seventy elders, went up into the mountain with Moses,

"And they saw the God of Israel. And under His feet as work of the transparency of the sapphire, and as the heaven itself for splendour" (verse 10).

They saw God and lived. "They saw God, and did eat and drink" in His presence. Then Moses and Joshua passed up into the mount to be forty days with God, and to come back with the tables of stone graven by God's own hand, and the directions for rearing the Tabernacle so that Jehovah might dwell in the midst of His people. It is impossible not to see in these last incidents the history of that other mediatorial work for which this of Moses was the preparation and the Divinely-arranged symbol. There has been the sprinkling of that blood which "speaketh better things" upon those brought into covenant with God. There has been also the full disclosure of Jehovah and men's communion with Him. They, too, have eaten and have drunk in His presence. And then our Mediator, the Risen Lord, has gone up to God to return again to rear God's

dwelling-place in the earth. Would that the prophecy ended there! Would that there had been no forgetfulness of Him Who has gone up from among us; no lapse into idolatry and sin; and no coming judgment that will sweep with terror and death through what was once worthy to be named the Church of God!

Chapters xxv.—xxxi. are occupied almost exclusively with details of the minutest kind regarding the structure of the Tabernacle, and the making of what is needful for the worship of which the Tabernacle is to be the scene. No man has yet been able to unfold the symbolic intention of everything in this "Interpreter's House." But that the House is there, fully provided, and waiting for the entrance of the Interpreter with those that desire His instruction, no one can doubt who has considered these symbols at all. To this subject we shall return immediately. Let us now complete our survey of the contents of this marvellous Section of the third and last Part of Exodus, "The Redeemed with God." This structure that is to be raised is to be remarkable for its splendour, if not for its extent. Never has earth seen a richer fane, nor a more gloriously-arrayed priesthood. It was necessary for the symbolic mission of the Tabernacle and its Aaronic priesthood that it should have this exceeding excellency of glory; for only then might it proclaim the unique splendours of the Priesthood and of the Tabernacle that were yet to come. But whence is all this needed wealth to come? There can be little

doubt that Moses, if asked to give, would have replied with the apostles, "Silver and gold have we none." The Israelites had been enriched, but Moses had been occupied with nobler cares. Whence, then, were the riches to be had? They were to be the free-will offerings of those whom God had so marvellously enriched. The first words spoken regarding this dwelling-place for the Most High were these:

**"And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the children of Israel, and receive an offering for Me: from every man whose heart urges him (to give) receive ye My offering. And this is the offering which ye will receive from them; gold, and silver, and copper" (xxv. 1-3).**

And so the list proceeds to name the other needful and precious things that are required. The account ends with the words:

**"And let them make for Me a Sanctuary; and let Me dwell among them. According to all that I am showing thee, as to the structure of the dwelling-place, and the structure of its vessels, even so shalt thou make (them)" (verses 8, 9).**

Directions are then given for the making of the ark, its staves, and their rings. The ark is to be plated with gold within and without. The staves, by which it is to be borne from place to place, are likewise to be plated with gold. The rings, placed in the four corners, are to be of solid gold. Next the

mercy-seat, the covering for the ark, is described as to its form and its material which is also "pure gold." Over this are to be two golden cherubim formed of "beaten work." "And the cherubim shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy-seat with their wings, and their faces one to another: toward the mercy-seat shall the faces of the cherubim be" (verse 20). The "testimony" which God is to give to Moses is to be placed in the ark, and the mercy-seat is then to be placed over it. This constitutes the furniture of the Holiest of all—the dwelling-place of Jehovah. Directions followed for the making of the contents of the Holy Place, where the priests ministered. The table of showbread, and the seven-branched candlestick, or lamp-stand, with their staves, rings, adornments, and accompanying dishes and utensils, are described in equally minute detail. These directions for the furniture of the Tabernacle close with the words:

"And see and make (them) in their structure according to what thou art beholding on the mount" (verse 40).

Man supplies in freewill offering the material for God's dwelling-place on earth; but God Himself is Architect of His Tabernacle. If God is to dwell among us, all—from the greatest to the least—must be in accordance with His declared will, and not in accordance with our notions of what is becoming or expedient.

Chapter xxvi. gives directions, equally minute, for

the preparation of the exterior of the Tabernacle; the curtains, with their various coverings; the boards, which are to be plated with gold; their silver sockets; the veil to divide the Holy Place from the Holiest of all; the five gold-plated pillars for the entrance to the Tabernacle with the hanging, &c., to which things we may give more particular consideration hereafter. Chapter xxvii. arranges for the outer court, surrounding the Tabernacle on all sides, covering a space of one hundred cubits by fifty, and containing the altar of burnt-offering, and the laver for the cleansing of the priests. Nothing in all those arrangements is too small or too insignificant to be made the subject of Divine attention, arrangement, and commandment. The curtains are to be made of a specified breadth, and are to be joined together, hung up, and fastened according to instructions conveyed in great detail. The sockets for the boards of the Tabernacle are to be of silver, as we have already noted; those for the pillars of the outer court are to be of brass, or rather, copper; and "all the vessels of the Tabernacle" (with the exception of those already directed to be made of gold) "in all the service thereof, and all the pins thereof, and all the pins of the court, shall be of copper" (verse 19). The directions for the Tabernacle, and what pertains to it, conclude with the words:

"And thou shalt command the children of Israel, and they shall bring to thee pure beaten olive oil for the light, to cause it to burn always. In the Tabernacle of Assembly without the veil,

(which is) over the testimony, Aaron and his sons shall keep it (the light) in order from evening till morning before Jehovah. This is the commandment for ever to be performed by the children of Israel" (verses 20, 21).

The olive oil was usually pressed. That which was obtained by beating the olives in a mortar was reckoned the purest and best. It was the latter which was to be provided for the lamps of the Sanctuary.

Instructions for the garments of the priests are now given in chapter xxviii., and the requirements for the consecration of Aaron and his sons in chapter xxix. In chapter xxx. one thing, which has apparently been reserved for this place, is arranged for. It is the altar of incense (xxx. 1-10). Seeing that this belongs to the furniture of the Tabernacle, we should have expected mention of it in chapters xxv. or xxvi. Is there any reason why nothing should have been said of it there, and why it should be arranged for just at this point in these communications to Moses? A glance at the preceding chapter will suggest a reply. The priesthood, which has just been appointed, is to be in constant contact with this altar of incense. It is there that Aaron comes, so to say, into the presence of God. It is at the altar of incense he presents himself before his Master, and is reminded that all he does in God's House is done under God's eye, and in the sunshine of God's gracious acceptance of him and of his work.

"And Aaron shall offer incense of odours upon it; every morning and every evening at his

trimming of the lamps he shall offer incense upon it. And in kindling the lamps between the two evenings he shall burn incense upon it: a perpetual incense before Jehovah throughout your generations" (xxx. 7, 8).

By the arrangement thus chosen, the priest and the incense altar are placed together, so that its peculiar relation to his service may be emphasised. When we recall the fact that the incense is the chosen symbol of prayer we receive one of the most needful of all lessons. It is by prayer that we, too, enter God's presence. Through it alone we carry with us the consciousness that all we do is done under God's eye. Moses is next told how the silver for the work of the Tabernacle is to be provided. It is the atonement money paid when the people are numbered: "Then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul" (verse 12). One feature in this levy we must not omit to notice, for it sheds a far-reaching light upon citizenship in the kingdom of God. Before God all men are equal. "There is no difference." All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. All the saved are heirs of eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ. Each, from twenty years old and above, gave half a shekel. "The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less" (ver. 15). Then follow instructions for the making of the laver; for the anointing of the Tabernacle; of its furniture and instruments of service; of the altar of burnt offering and its vessels; and of Aaron and his sons. Chapter xxxi. completes this revelation given to

Moses in the Mount. He is told that God has provided artificers who will perform the work of the Tabernacle; and all is concluded with a word regarding the keeping of God's Sabbaths. The world loves holidays, but loathes a spiritual holyday. Every time of spiritual declension is marked by disregard of this Divine ordinance; and in every attack upon the faith the Sabbath is one of the main objectives of the unbelieving.

“And speak thou unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily My Sabbaths ye shall keep: for this is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am Jehovah who doth sanctify you. . . . Between Me and the children of Israel this is a sign for ever” (verses 13, 17).

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## CHAPTER II.

### THE DECALOGUE IN EXODUS AND DEUTERONOMY.

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THE Decalogue has been a much-discussed matter among the critics. For them it bristles with difficulties. Their first trouble is that it does not appear in the “Book of the Covenant.” In a note upon the Section xix. 2<sup>b</sup>—xxxiv. 28, Addis says: “This narrative abounds in difficulties, one of which affects its whole structure, and may be discussed here. From Sinai God proclaims the ‘Ten Words,’ or Decalogue, in the hearing of the people. The

people are terrified, and after that, Moses alone approaches God and receives a code of laws (xx. 23—xxxii.) Moses reads this code to the people; they promise to obey it, and on these terms enter into a solemn covenant with Yahweh (xxiv. 3-8). In these verses, which relate this solemn engagement into which the people enter, there is no allusion to the Decalogue. Indeed, although the Decalogue was given before the 'Book of the Covenant,' the people as yet have not bound themselves to the former at all; it is simply ignored."\*

It is difficult to satisfy the critics. If the Decalogue had been repeated, that would have been fastened upon as a repetition, and a clear proof of different sources. But in this case the trouble is of their own making. We are told that Moses "wrote all the words of the Lord, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar"; and that "he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the audience of the people" (xxiv. 4, 7); but the contents of the Book of the Covenant are nowhere given. That fact, so evident to any ordinary reader of the Scripture, is completely ignored by the critics. It does not suit them to note it, apparently for the reason that the inconvenient question would inevitably present itself—if we do not possess the Book of the Covenant, how do we know what was in it, or what was omitted from it? The passage referred to in the above quotation (xx. 23—xxiii.) is never called the Book of the Covenant, though it is dis-

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\* *The Documents of the Hexateuch*, vol. i., p. 136.

tinctly to be understood that it forms part of it. Those enactments are merely *the rest* of the Law, which Israel was unable to receive direct from the lips of God. These were the words spoken to Moses in "the thick darkness where God was" (xx. 21). But when Moses wrote in the Book of the Covenant "ALL THE WORDS OF THE LORD," was it possible that the Decalogue could be omitted? Why should those which God Himself had uttered, in circumstances never forgotten by Israel, be excluded, and only *the continuation* of the Law be brought before the people? And, last of all, how came the idea to occur to any one that, although we are plainly told that the Book of the Covenant contained "all the words of the Lord," the TEN WORDS must have been left out by either accident or design?

A further statement by Addis is significant. He mentions Wellhausen's theory that "the Decalogue with its story belongs to the Elohist, and the Book of the Covenant with its story to the Jahvist." "This theory," he says, "may be confidently dismissed. The Book of the Covenant, no less than the Decalogue, betrays unmistakable marks of the Elohist's style." But, if the very chief of the critics fails to see the "unmistakable marks of the Elohist's style," can these be as evident as the critics say they are? But the whole truth is not told even in this criticism of Wellhausen. There is another supposed writer, named the Deuteronomist, to whom we shall be introduced immediately. He, too, is said to have his own special style, the marks of which are also

delared to be "unmistakable." But the Decalogue, admitted to be Mosaic by the great body of the critics, contains the "unmistakable marks" of all three writers! As we have seen, Wellhausen says it is Elohist, and that assertion Addis does not contradict. Besides, as the reader will himself note, the name *Elohim*, "God," appears in it with frequency. But so also does the name Jehovah! "I am the Lord thy God," *Jehovah thy Elohim* (xx. 1, 5, 7, 10, 11, 12). Six times, therefore, to deal only with the use of that name, there occurs this unmistakable mark of the Jehovist. And the hand of the Deuteronomist is equally apparent. Among his peculiarities, according to Dr. Driver,\* is the use of the phrase, "That your (or thy) days may be long"; and here is that very phrase in Exodus xx. 12: "That thy days may be long." Another mark is "the land, less frequently the ground, which Jehovah thy God is giving thee"; and once more, therefore, we meet an "unmistakable mark" of the Deuteronomist in the continuation of the verse in Exodus which we have just quoted: "That thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." Other marks, equally "unmistakable," might be named, but let these suffice. They prove that Moses was Jehovist, Elohist, and Deuteronomist, and that critical theories are irreconcilable with the admissions which critics themselves are compelled to make.

But the repetition of the Decalogue in Deut. v. 1-21 is one of the most highly-prized articles in the critics'

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\* *Introduction*, p. 92.

trading stock. Like the various accounts in the Gospels of incidents in the life of our Lord, this, and other variations, have been cited as setting aside the statements of the Scripture as to the Mosaic Authorship of the Pentateuch, and as to God being the real Author of that one Book, the Bible, which from its first page to its last bears the Divine stamp. The following puts the latter contention in its usual popular form. "Neither of the two records which we have of the one Decalogue can by any possibility be regarded as verbally and infallibly inspired; and this for the simple reason that they differ, not only in slight particulars of words, but also in a noteworthy way as to the reason for the Sabbath-law and as to the command against coveting."\* This, as a piece of reasoning, is unique. For it can only mean that if Professor Ladd, for instance, should ever have made two varying statements regarding the same matter, neither of them "can by any possibility be regarded as his"! Had it been contended that the second statement could not be his, some faint trace of what is ordinarily called reasoning might have been discerned; but to maintain that the second statement proves that not even the first was his, is too ridiculous for description. Why should it be imagined that an inspired author, any more than an uninspired author, must never repeat with variation? Why must every subsequent statement repeat the first with the rigid fidelity of cast-iron? When the repetition is made, it is made because circumstances have

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\* Ladd. *What is the Bible?* p. 107.

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called for it; and if the circumstances vary, why should not the re-statement also vary? If the Spirit of God is not less free than the spirit of man, and if the Divine is not in less close and sympathetic touch with reality than the human, the lack of variation would really have proved that the second statement could not be Divine; for had it been Divine, the statement would have met and reflected the circumstances of the second occasion, just as the original statement had met and reflected the circumstances of the first occasion.

But critical references to this matter are chiefly notable for the use that has been made of it to prove that the author of Deuteronomy could not have been the author of Exodus. Dr. Driver prints the two accounts side by side, placing the variations in the fourth, fifth, and tenth commandments in italics. I reproduce this that the reader may have the entire foundation for this critical contention under his eye.

### EXODUS XX.

8. Remember the Sabbath day  
to keep it holy.

### DEUTERONOMY V.

12. *Observe* the Sabbath day to  
keep it holy, *as Jehovah thy God*  
*commanded thee.*

Here the variations are in the most complete accord with the circumstances. Israel is asked in Exodus to "remember" the Sabbath, because it was not a Mosaic institution, but had been appointed at the creation. In Deuteronomy they are to "observe" what was already re-instituted, and this with a distinct reminiscence of the giving of the Law at Sinai—"as Jehovah thy God commanded thee."

Nothing could more fully demonstrate unity of authorship.

## EXODUS XX.

9. Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work: 10. but the seventh day is a Sabbath unto Jehovah thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor

thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:

11. For in six days Jehovah made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: therefore Jehovah blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

## DEUTERONOMY V.

13. Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work: 14. but the seventh day is a Sabbath unto Jehovah thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor *thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle*, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: *in order that thy man-servant and thy maid-servant may rest as well as thou.* 15. *And thou shalt remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and Jehovah thy God brought thee out thence by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm: therefore Jehovah thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day.*

These variations reflect again the changed circumstances in which the words in Deuteronomy were spoken. When Israel was in the wilderness, and with no immediate prospect of either ploughing or harvesting, nothing was said about ass or ox benefiting by the Sabbath rest. But now, when Israel is actually upon the borders of the promised land, and when a few weeks will see them in possession of their farms, this injunction is called for and is given. The long-concluding reference to the slavery of Israel in Egypt is equally in place in Deuteronomy, and that to the creation in Exodus. In the latter Book, the opening word, "Remember," reminded the

Israelite of the fact that the Sabbath was coëval with man's creation, and therefore the original sanction of it is repeated in verse 11 (see Gen. ii. 1-3). All other nations had *forgotten* to keep it holy; and, therefore, upon this one people, through whom the redemption of humanity is to be accomplished, the solemn injunction is laid to *remember* the seventh day—an injunction which Israel has sacredly kept. In Deuteronomy, on the other hand, the reference is not now to that first commandment given at man's creation, but to the recent re-enactment at Sinai—"Therefore Jehovah thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day." The Israelite is now addressed as a landowner and master. He has to combat the temptations which are certain to be associated with that position. He will occasionally grudge the loss of time, when time is precious, and he will always be open to the suggestions of avarice. Hence it is that he is reminded here of his former servitude and of the mercy which brought him deliverance. That memory will make the slave's rest-day sacred in the master's eyes.

EXODUS XX.

12. Honour thy father and thy mother,  
that thy days may  
be long,  
upon the land which  
Jehovah thy God is giving thee.

DEUTERONOMY V.

16. Honour thy father and thy mother, as Jehovah thy God commanded thee, that thy days may be long, and that it may be well with thee upon the land which Jehovah thy God is giving thee.

Here again Deuteronomy refers to Exodus—"as Jehovah thy God commanded thee," that is, at Sinai. The addition—"that it may be well with thee," here

addressed to Israel as it is about to step over into the land, is strikingly appropriate.

## EXODUS XX.

17. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, or his man-servant, or his maid-servant, or his ox, or his ass, or anything that is thy neighbour's.

## DEUTERONOMY V.

21. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, and thou shalt not desire thy neighbour's house, his field, or his man-servant, or his maid-servant, his ox, or his ass, or anything that is thy neighbour's.

Here the differences are slight, but are, nevertheless, significant. Emphasis is cast by the inversion of the two first injunctions of Deuteronomy v. 21 upon a temptation which might strongly assail them among their licentious surroundings in Canaan. In the addition forbidding the coveting of a neighbour's "field," we mark again the hope of immediate entry into the land. Dr. Driver's translation, "desire," of *tithaveh*, the word here exchanged for the "covet" of Exodus, is not strong enough. It is "desire for thyself," a variation perhaps called for by the same surroundings of unbridled selfishness and lust.

What now is the result of this minute comparison of the two accounts of the Decalogue? Simply additional confirmation of the Mosaic history. The first is a monument raised among the experiences of Sinai; the second recalls the last days of Moses, on the plains of Moab. Both also set forth the Spirit's method in conveying to us this word of the living God. When no change is called for, the words chosen upon a former occasion remain unaltered. When the words *are* changed, they are changed to meet the altered circumstances. The critic has con-

sequently failed to disprove either the full inspiration of Scripture, or the Mosaic authorship of Exodus and Deuteronomy. He has, on the contrary, directed us to fresh proofs of both.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### THE TABERNACLE : ITS STRUCTURE AND SYMBOLISM.

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THERE has been considerable discussion in regard to the form of the Tabernacle. What, for example, was its breadth? One conclusion is that this was twelve cubits. There were eight boards which formed the western end of the Tabernacle. These are divided into six boards and two corner boards (xxvi. 22, 23). Now, if the law regarding the boards applied to those corner boards as well, the breadth must have been twelve cubits, seeing that each board was to be one and a-half cubits broad. But the constant tradition has been that the breadth of the Tabernacle was equal to the height—ten cubits. In that case, each corner board must have added only half a cubit to the breadth. This may be the reason why these two are separated from the other six in the directions which are given.

A still more important question is that in regard to the form of the structure. Was the roof flat? Or was it elevated in the middle, as has always been usual in tent-construction? If the roof had been

flat the covering curtains must have been subjected to great pressure in the event of rain; and the question would inevitably have been raised as to how such a building could be called a "tent." Other indications incline a reader to the belief that the form was that of the ordinary tent with a ridge-pole. There are *five* pillars prepared for the front. This number shows that *one was intended for the centre*, and may have been used as a support for a ridge-pole. Then, an ordinary tent-roof seems to be indicated by the length of the curtains. A tent-roof, the sides forming at the top a right angle, would give a little under fourteen cubits for each of the sloping sides. The fine linen curtain, plainly meant to be seen from within, was exactly twenty-eight cubits long (that is, twice fourteen cubits), and would thus form the roof. The curtain which was to cover this, thirty cubits long, was to hang one cubit over each side, which it would do exactly, if the roof measured fourteen cubits on each side.

These are the reasons urged for the tent-form. But, since nothing seems to be said regarding what must have been necessary arrangements for the ridge-pole, and at least one supporting pillar inside the Tabernacle, as well as another at the western end, the former opinion that the roof was flat, seems to have more in its favour. There we must leave that question for the present. An inquiry that is more vital relates to the import of this multitude of minute directions. Were these a call to Israel and to us to gather round this sacred fane and to mark

the work of God's hands? Were they a repeated announcement that God was planting here intimations of those better things that were yet to come? The New Testament has furnished a strongly affirmative reply (see Hebrews ix.—x.) But we need not go beyond the Old Testament itself to be satisfied that there is some symbolic import in those Tabernacle arrangements. We have seen that there is, in the directions given to Moses, no disorder, nor the slightest indication of uncertainty. There is, on the contrary, the most superb mastery alike of the entire plan, and of all, even the most minute, details. When, therefore, we find that an order is followed which is far from being what seems to us the natural order, there must have been some good reason underlying the choice that is made of it. In xxv. 10, the directions for the building of the Tabernacle *begin* with those for the making of the ark. Let it be remembered that as yet there is no provision made for anything besides. We should have commenced with the boards of the Tabernacle, or with the outer coverings, or with the curtains. Certainly this most sacred of all things, which the Tabernacle was to contain and to protect, would not have been touched till a place was made to receive it. Nevertheless, God's first word is: "They shall make an ark," &c.

Is there, then, any discoverable reason why that should be the first and central object in this symbolic structure, and that everything else should be added to it, and be gathered round it? What is the ark? It is God's resting-place. The Divine glory is over the

blood-stained mercy seat; and there, over the shed blood of the accepted sacrifice, there is reconciliation and favour for sinful man. When the truth thus symbolised is declared with fidelity and simplicity, and with the fervour born of belief—when the mercy seat is manifested—all else gathers round it that is needed to make a dwelling-place for God anywhere and to provide for His service. But, let the great truths of reconciliation for sinful man through the shed blood of the Lord Jesus be discredited, disbelieved, or concealed, the glory of God is not manifested, salvation appears to be a mere figment, an empty phrase, an echo lingering in a place where faith once lived, and worshipped, and served.

The same truth is emphasised when we come to the directions for the outer court. There we should have expected that the first thing seen to would have been the preparation of the pillars and their sockets, the curtains, &c. Then, having formed the court itself, we should have seen to the furniture of it—the altar and the laver, and the necessary utensils for the altar service. But once more the finger of God is laid first upon that which is essential if any sinful man is to come into His presence. The instructions commence with the words (xxvii. 1): “And thou shalt make an altar,” &c. It is the altar of burnt offering, on the north side of which the victim is slain, and whose four horns are anointed with its blood, thus, as it were, proclaiming to north, south, east and west—the ends of the earth—that the Divinely-selected victim has died, and that its

blood is accepted of God as a covering for sin. It is there that the line is drawn between the unclean and the holy, between the common and the consecrated. The cross of Christ has divided between the ancient world and the modern. It has drawn a still deeper dividing line between the past life and the after life of millions. Banish or leave out the altar, and there is not even a beginning made in preparing a place where God may dwell among men. The most perfect workmanship, the most costly adornments, will enclose nothing that is truly apart from the world and consecrated to God.

The Tabernacle itself has its teaching. It is thirty cubits long, ten cubits high, and ten cubits wide. It thus embraces three cubes of ten cubits long, ten cubits high, and ten cubits wide. The cube is unalterable. Place it where and how one will, it is always the same. It may, therefore, be intended to be taken as symbolic of Deity, and the union of three as emblematic of the Trinity. If we now observe the uses to which the Tabernacle is put, we perceive a significant foreshadowing of the Christian revelation. The third division is the presence chamber of Jehovah: the other two form the access to it. There is but one way of approach to God—one means by which we may know the Father and dwell with Him. It is through the work of the Lord Jesus and of the Holy Spirit. Again, there is but one means of illumination for the Holy Place—the seven-branched lamp-stand. These lamps are the Churches (Rev. i. 20). As the Church sheds light upon Christ

and upon the Holy Spirit, the way to the holiest of all is made manifest. Let that light be withdrawn, and the way to the Father is shrouded in darkness.

With a brief reference to another New Testament interpretation of those ancient types, I close these slight notices of the contents of this great picture gallery of the Old Testament. In Ephesians v. 26, a fruitful hint is dropped regarding the laver which stood in the Court of the Tabernacle. The apostle, speaking to the married, says: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (verses 25-27). Verse 26 reads literally: "That He might sanctify her, having purified (her) IN THE LAVENDER of the water in the Word." We have here the meeting point, and, therefore, the concentrated light, of several types. The laver stood midway between the altar and the Tabernacle. The priest had to bathe his flesh there that he might present himself before God. Now let us recall two things. The Church is not only Christ's Bride: she is His body, His flesh. That is one part, and a most essential part, of the interpretation. We have another in the fact that He is also the High Priest, the minister of the true sanctuary. The third and last type is this of the laver; and we are here told, in effect, that the laver is the Scripture. The contents of it are "the water in the Word." We

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have stood with our High Priest at the altar; and our sin has been atoned for and put away. But the bitterness, ever springing up within, has to be sweetened. Habits contracted in the days of our ignorance have to be manifested, arrested, abandoned. The unclean thing has to be purified and made glorious in holiness. And now the type throws light upon the place where, and the means by which, this mighty transformation is to be wrought. Our High Priest, passing into the presence of the Father, takes us, His flesh, to the Word. We rejoice in the coolness and refreshing of the "opened" Scripture; but it has also a further ministry. As water penetrates the particles of the soil upon the flesh that is steeped in it, and loosens them, so this Word of God penetrates and loosens the soil upon the soul. One sweep of our High Priest's hand and the stain disappears, and the soft clean flesh is seen in its native beauty. Thus we are purified by the Saviour's invisible but ever-present ministry. And we are purified at the laver. If Satan succeed in his present attempt to remove that, where shall Christ's poor Church find cleansing?

## SECTION III.

### THE APOSTACY OF ISRAEL, AND THE BUILDING OF THE TABERNACLE BY THE RECONCILED PEOPLE (XXXII.—XL.)

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#### CHAPTER I.

##### THE CONTENTS OF THE SECTION.

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AS we have already noted, the narrative in the preceding Section has kept closely to its own theme—the giving of the Law. Events had been occurring meanwhile in the plains below, among the people on whose behalf Moses has appeared in God's presence, and to whom he is about to carry down these last commandments, as well as the two Divinely-inscribed tables, and the plan for the Tabernacle. Of the events happening among the people, however, the narrative has said nothing up to the close of chapter xxxi. It is only at the commencement of this concluding Section, and as introduction to what is to follow, that we are told of the terrible scene that is being enacted in front of Horeb, and of the command to Moses to hasten down because his people have "turned aside quickly out of the way" (xxxii. 8). The narrative is thus invested with the highest dramatic interest. We

are told briefly, but fully, of Israel's revolt, and of their making, enthroning, and worshipping the work of their own hands at the very foot of that mountain, which, but a few weeks before, had proclaimed the presence of the Creator of heaven and earth, and on which their Mediator is even now interceding on their behalf with Him in Whose hand their breath is. We next hear the startling announcement to Moses, and witness his pleading with an offended God. Then the story proceeds, through chastisement and mercy, till the clouds clear away, and a dwelling-place for Jehovah is erected and accepted amidst a repentant and reconciled people.

The Section opens with the words:—

“And the people saw that Moses failed to descend from the mount; and the people assembled themselves against Aaron, and said to him, Arise, make for us a god (an *Elohim*) who shall go before us; because as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what has happened to him” (xxxii. 1).

That address rings with the tone of insolent, peremptory, command. The contemptuous reference to Moses is couched in the same spirit—“this Moses.” All his unwearied service, and his unceasing prayers for them, are forgotten. There is no proposal to send out a search-party lest some mischance has befallen him and Joshua. No, they are, on the contrary, glad to be done with him; and now

they will get back to the idolatrous religion of pleasure, whose festivals and mad merriment they have remembered with many a sigh. Aaron is quick to read the meaning of their revolt and the menace in their bearing. Whoever may be prepared to withstand the people, it is not he. It is profitless work for us to condemn Aaron. It may help us more to note how his offence has been paralleled in every age, and how it is being repeated to-day by men who know the evil propensities of their time, and are, nevertheless, shielding, and actually promoting, the very things which they inwardly deplore. Their plea is identical with his: the people compel them, for they will have it so! (verses 2-6).

We are now led back again to the Mount. The words to Moses terrify him by their intimation that God has renounced those who have renounced Him. God speaks of them, not as *His* people, but as "*thy* people which *thou* broughtest up out of the land of Egypt." Then the indignation of God is disclosed in the words: "I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people. Now therefore let Me alone, that My wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation" (verses 9, 10). Moses, full of alarm and grief, implores God to have mercy. He fills his mouth with arguments for a people that not so long ago were on the point of slaying him. He reminds God of the triumph that will sweep over Egypt at the news of Israel's annihilation, and that they will credit Him with having

resolved from the outset to lead Israel to its destruction. And that prayer of Moses on the mountain top saved Israel: "Jehovah repented of the evil which He thought to do unto His people"—note the words, "His people." God in His mercy once more acknowledges them (verses 7-14). How often has *our* Mediator's intercession, unheard and unwitnessed by us, stood between ourselves and destruction?

Having prevailed in his intercession:

"Moses turned himself and descended from the mount; and the two tables (or tablets) of stone (were) in his hand, tables written on both their sides: on this side and on that were they written. And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God graven upon the tables" (verses 15, 16).

That description of the sacredness of that Divine testimony prepares us for the scene which we are now about to witness. As Moses and Joshua (who has now joined him) descend, they hear the cries of the rejoicing multitude below. Joshua is astonished, and rushes to the conclusion that there is "war in the camp." But Moses' ear has caught the well-remembered sounds of the Egyptian festive songs, and his fears spring up afresh. They advance with hurrying steps; and when, as a turn in the pathway brings the camp into view, and Israel's shame is spread before them, "Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount" (verse 19). To have given those sacred memorials into the keeping of a people

like this, was to this servant of God an inconceivable degradation; and so he cast the tables over the brink of the precipice, and they were dashed to fragments upon the rocks below.

The wrath of Moses, when he entered the camp and saw the calf and the frantic dancing of the worshippers, did not abate. Terrible in his indignation, he brushed people and priest aside. The idol was burned and ground into powder. But Moses' presence, even though he had, as it were, come back from the dead, did not, and could not, quell the tumult.

“And Moses saw the people that it had broken loose; for Aaron had let them break loose for a laughing-stock among those that rise against them” (verse 25).

The word translated in our version “naked” indicates rather that the people were now out of hand; they had seized the reins, and were no longer amenable to authority. Moses' decision was quickly made. He passed out from among the revellers, and, taking his stand in the gate of the camp, shouted

“Who (is) for Jehovah? Unto me!”

The tribe of Levi responded; and now the sternest of all tasks was allotted to them. They were made to pass throughout the camp from gate to gate, slaying with the sword friend and brother. They were to follow none within their tents. They were to slay only those that were madly bent upon perpetuating Israel's apostacy. And peace fell at last

upon the camp. The rebellion was quelled; but not before nearly 3,000 corpses, gashed and gory, strewed the scene of the revolt. That service of unswerving fidelity saved Israel, and laid the foundation of the Levitical supremacy.

On the morrow came repentance and intercession. Moses is ready to offer himself a sacrifice for his people. His broken prayer permits us to look into the depths of sorrow through which the servant of God was then passing (see verse 32). The first result was that God promised to give them the land, but intimated that He would withdraw from among them: He would send His angel. The repentance of the people, though shallow, was sincere; and when they heard "these evil tidings, they mourned: and no man did put on him his ornaments. For

"Jehovah had said to Moses, Say to the children of Israel, Ye are a stiffnecked people: in one moment I will come up into the midst of thee, and I will make an end of thee" (verse 5).

And now came a period of desolation. In accordance with the Divine command, their ornaments were put away, and seem not to have been resumed again throughout their entire journey. And the tent, to which the worshipping people had hitherto come, was removed by Moses, and pitched without the camp—the symbol of God's removal from among them.

It may be that, while we have no difficulty in understanding the removal of this tabernacle, and the order to put away their ornaments, we may find it

hard to see why there should be this relation between God's presence and the Divine severity. It is in order that He may spare them—that He may prevent their utter destruction—that God removes from their midst! He is acting in mercy, we are told; for, if He were present among them, He would consume them! Who, it may be asked, can understand this? And yet the explanation is simple enough. A king may find much within the boundaries of his territory which calls for the firm application of the laws; but he waits with patience till the steps taken by himself and his counsellors bear their expected fruit. If similar disorders, however, were to occur within the king's own household, they would be utterly intolerable. The perpetrators of such offences there, would be immediately overwhelmed with an indignation which would make the very thought of such temerity a terror. For how could the king presume to punish crime, and to put down disorder throughout his land, if these disorders were things so natural, and so much to be looked for, that they were of constant occurrence in his own palace? The arm of justice would be paralysed, and the monarch's pretensions to be the preserver of order and of right would be the mark for universal contempt and derision. And how could God, laying down here the foundations of *His* kingdom, have suffered those very sins, which He will sweep away from the earth, to flourish in the midst of those whom He is gathering to His aid, so that He may end the earth's iniquity? His very presence among such a people—the very fact that they formed

the household of Jehovah—would have ensured their destruction.

Moses now gathers boldness, and presents a larger request than the terribleness of Israel's sin had hitherto permitted him to ask. He bases it upon the favour which God has shown himself. If God has blessed him, so conscious of failure, will He not pardon them? And so he dares to remind Jehovah, whom they have so grievously offended, that this nation is nevertheless His own. "Consider that this nation is Thy people!" And the plea is accepted. Moses is cheered by the Divine answer: "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest" (ver. 14). Moses' reply is one more precious than gold or gems, and one which the Church has treasured throughout all after time: "If Thy presence go not with us, carry us not up hence" (verse 15). And when God replied: "I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in My sight, and I know thee by name," Moses' daring passed all previous bounds. He made a request new to human lips, though the desire which it expressed had burned in many a heart: "And he said, I beseech Thee, shew me Thy glory" (verse 18). God had hitherto, indeed, been a presence to him. He had spoken with Him in the fire and in the cloud. But Moses desired to behold Him without a vail—to see God face to face—as a favoured subject beholds a king, as a son looks up into his father's face. It was the cry that long ages afterwards sprang from the disciple's lips: "Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us!"

That request too, is not denied, but it will be fulfilled in God's own way. Moses is to re-ascend the Mount (chapter xxxiv.) He is to hew two tables of stone like the first, which he broke, and on these God will write again the ten commandments; for the mercy of God is renewal unto holiness. During the coming interview, the mountain is to be hallowed as at the first giving of the Law. Israel was to stand afar off. And then his prayer was answered. He did not see God's face—the fulness of the Divine glory—for no mortal man can so see God and live. But he saw God *after He had passed*. It is the law, for the life that now is, of all Divine revelation. God manifests Himself in His acts and in His Word. Where He has thus passed, we read the revelation of Himself that God has given in those acts of mercy and wisdom and power.

“And Jehovah passed over against him, and cried, Jehovah, Jehovah-El, compassionate and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in mercy and truth, keeping mercy for the thousandth generation, taking away iniquity and transgression and sin, and He will by no means leave unpunished (the guilty), visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and upon children's children unto the third and unto the fourth generation” (verses 6, 7).

This is in the latter part, a repetition of xx. 5, where we find the words explained by the addition, “of them that hate Me.” Those who turn to God cast away not only their own sins, but also the sins

of their fathers. Those offences are shed from them, with all their stains and all their penalties. That terrible truth of the perfectness of God's reckoning with long-continued sin has been exemplified in history again and again, and most of all in the history of Israel. But the emphasis is cast in this revelation of God, not upon His severity, but upon His goodness. Nowhere else in the Scripture has the mercy of God been more fully or more gloriously displayed. Every added word and phrase are in themselves the overflowing of the Divine compassion. It was well that here, upon this mount of terror, this name of Him with whom there is forgiveness that He may be feared, should be so declared. It was the name that Zion, in the after time, was to inscribe upon her banners. It was the name she went forth to proclaim to the world. And she took the whole name. She was not ashamed to place side by side with infinite mercy, the terror of the Lord that shall yet be manifested in the long-delayed reckoning for the world's sin. And the Church's faithfulness was her power.

“And Moses made haste, and bowed down to the earth, and worshipped. And said, If, I pray Thee, I have found favour in Thine eyes, let the Lord go, I pray Thee, O Lord, in the midst of us; for it is a stiffnecked people; and Thou hast pardoned our iniquity and our sin, and Thou hast taken us as Thine inheritance” (ver. 8, 9).

The intercessions of Moses are precious as revelations of the art of prayer. Eloquence has ever its surprises, and none surpasses those of the moved

heart in its pleadings with God. And how prophetic is God's reply! He accepts Moses and His people. He accepts them with full purpose of blessing: but the way to the mercy of the latter days lies through wonder and terror.

“And He said, Behold, I (I Myself) am making a covenant: before all thy people I will do marvels, which have not been done in all the earth, and among all the nations; and all the people in whose midst thou art shall see the working of Jehovah: for a dreadful thing is this which I will do with thy people” (verse 10).

Then follow specific injunctions against the idolatry which had been already disclosed as a sin whose roots had gone deep into the nation's life, and which was to bring upon them many a chastisement and long-enduring loss. It was a covenant which meant punishment for Israel. But beyond the chastisements, there lies the glory of unparalleled and long-enduring service. Intermingling with the nations of the land is forbidden; the feasts, the Sabbath, the presentation of the firstfruits, &c., are enjoined anew; and, then, with the tables in his hands, which have been inscribed afresh by God's own hand, Moses descends once more from Sinai. This time he finds a waiting and expecting people; and he comes among them with a manifestation of the glory which he had had with God, “Behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come nigh him.” It was a prophecy to them of the glory which awaits fidelity. And it was more. It showed, in prophetic

type, the glory of Him Who is now with God on our behalf, and Who will come a second time without sin unto salvation.

What now follows in those concluding chapters is full of minute technical details; and yet in the very multitude of these there is the more abounding consolation for those who are grieving to-day over an apostatising people. Who, when Moses cast away the first tables, would have believed it possible that those very people would afterwards be solicited by God Himself to bring their freewill offerings; that they would have made answer with such cordiality and zeal that they should have to be restrained lest they should give too much; that those forgiven idolaters should build God's dwelling-place; and that God should graciously accept the offered dwelling-place, and fill it with His glory? Nevertheless, all this is done! And now mark the teaching of those apparently dry details. *Nothing of the original plan is left out.* Compare what is described as done in chapters xxxv.—xl. 33, and it will be found that not a single thing is lacking—not one clasp or pin is omitted. Everything is there, and everything is there in its allotted place. The original plan, which seemed so hopelessly shattered by Israel's revolt, is gloriously accomplished. It will be observed, too, that in these closing chapters of the Book everything else is excluded, so that this, and this alone, may stand before us. That this should be done without a purpose no one will believe. It is a prophecy of the latter-day glory, with which this typical

history of redemption fitly concludes. And so the last words of all show us how completely the Redeemed will then be with God (xl. 34-38). God fills the Tabernacle with His glory, and He becomes, as He purposed from the first that He should become, the Guide of their way.

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## CHAPTER II.

### THE CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF EXODUS.

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WE have had to notice from time to time how the higher criticism has endeavoured to justify its existence by showing with what certainty it can assign one section to one writer, and a second section to another. But there have been fewer self-congratulations over the supposed results than we have been accustomed to in the reading of Genesis. A still more remarkable thing is that they themselves here hesitate and question in a remarkable manner. A reference to Dr. Driver's *Introduction* will supply many examples, but the reader's attention may be specially directed to the following references to this concluding Section of Exodus. "In the narrative of the Golden Calf (xxxi. 18<sup>b</sup>—xxxiv. 28)," he writes, "chap. xxxii., as a whole, may be assigned plausibly to E; only verses 9-14 appear to have been expanded by the compiler of JE"—that is, while the passage is given to E, it has also the characteristics of JE. But surprising as that admission is, it does not dis-

close by any means the full extent of the critics' embarrassment, for Dr. Driver adds: "*No satisfactory analysis of the entire passage has, however, been effected.* All that can be said is that if E be the basis of xxxiii. 1-6, it has been amplified by the compiler, possibly with elements derived from J." Here the case grows worse. We had first of all the characteristics of JE in a passage which "may be plausibly" assigned to E; and now a third writer's hand, notwithstanding the plausibility of the assignment to E, is detected in E's work, so that there may actually be "elements" in it "derived from J." Could anything be more disconcerting to those gentlemen who at Church Congresses, denominational gatherings, and clerical meetings are wont to talk with such imposing assurance about "the ascertained results of the higher criticism"?

Lest it may be imagined that the above is a quite exceptional case, let me trouble the reader to note also the following. "xxxiii. 12—xxxiv. 9," says Dr. Driver, "forms a continuous whole, though whether belonging to J (Dillmann) or to the compiler of JE (Wellhausen) *can scarcely be definitely determined.*" With the details of the various critical opinions I do not trouble the reader. It is enough to notice that the Doctors differ, though we have been often told that the marks of the alleged "Sources" of the Bible are so plain that the wayfaring man can discern them. I make one further quotation. "In the preceding pages," he says, "no attempt has been made to give more than an outline of the structure of

JE's narrative in chapters xix.—xxiv., xxxii.—xxxiv. Much has been written upon it; but though it appears to display plain marks of composition, it fails to supply the criteria requisite for distributing it in detail between the different narrators, and more than one hypothesis may be framed which will account, at least apparently, for the facts demanding explanation. It is probable that it reached its present form by a series of stages which can no longer, in their entirety, be distinguished with certainty." This is perfectly marvellous. These contributions cannot be "distinguished with certainty," and yet the narrative displays "*plain* marks of composition." We leave the critics to reconcile these statements. It is enough for us to mark their embarrassment, and to acknowledge the confession that critical theories have at last become so numerous that their inventors themselves are becoming hopelessly entangled among them.

When, however, we question the critics further, and inquire into the grounds for the statement that the narrative shows "plain marks of composition," our amazement deepens. Part of Dr. Driver's reply is as follows: "xxxii. 34—xxxiii. 6," he writes, "exhibits traces of a double narrative: thus in verse 5<sup>b</sup> the people are commanded to do what, according to 4<sup>b</sup>, *they had already done.*" The italics are Dr. Driver's, and even without them the case seems bad enough. What better proof of differing authorship could any one desire than that we should have a thing commanded which was already done?

What possibility of obedience was there for Israel if the thing was done already? And how could any man, who had actually recorded the fact that Israel had done that thing, go on to say in his very next sentence that a command was issued to have it done, and thus plainly imply that Israel had up to that time done no such thing?

This belongs to a class of statements which alone can account for the victory which the critics have won with such ease and rapidity. It seems an insult to great reputations to suggest that those statements are baseless. Even to inquire into them implies a lack of confidence in their ability, care, and common honesty that is nothing short of a scandal in the eyes of many. But let us at least glance at the Scripture statements which Dr. Driver says could not have been penned by the same writer. They are these:

“And when the people heard these evil tidings, they mourned: and no man did put on him his ornaments” (xxxiii. 4).

“And Jehovah had said to Moses, Say to the children of Israel, Ye are a stiffnecked people . . . and now cast away thine ornaments from off thee, and I will know what I shall do with thee. And the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments from Mount Horeb onward” (verses 5, 6).

The Authorised Version has translated “For the Lord *had* said” this to Moses, implying that verses 5 and 6 are an explanation of what has been narrated

in verse 4. That this is not only a perfectly good translation I need not say—but it is also a necessary one. Why were the Israelites mourning? What had been said in the preceding verses to plunge them into grief so deep and so universal? Apart from the announcement that God Himself would no longer go with them, and that they might not be consumed, there is nothing whatever to account for the mourning which filled the camp. They received a clear and full promise of the land, and the absence of God from their midst must have been hailed as a relief by multitudes of them. But receive this as the reason for the mourning of the people, and where is the critical “doublet”? Where is the commanding of a thing which had been already done? This attempt is the more inexcusable that Dr. Driver says nothing whatever of an exactly parallel case in the preceding chapter, and separated from that which he cites, only by a few verses. I translate these as the critics would have us translate the others:

“And the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses; and there fell of the people that day about 3,000 men” (xxxii. 28).

“And Moses said, Fill your hand to-day for Jehovah, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother; and He shall bestow upon you this day a blessing” (verse 29).

Here we have an exactly similar case. Translating as above, with no regard whatever to the context, we make Moses command the Levites to do the very thing which they have already done! But instead

of the simple past tense, use the pluperfect, and translate "Moses *had* said," instead of "Moses said," a translation absolutely unimpeachable—and everything is harmonious. The second statement gives the reason why the thing narrated in the former statement was done; and the two together show the hand of one narrator, and of one narrator only.

A still more gross abuse of a reader's confidence is attempted in a statement upon the same page.\* "xxxiii. 7-II," he writes, "which (AS THE TENSES IN THE ORIGINAL SHOW) describe throughout Moses' practice (verse 7, '*used* to take and pitch,' &c.), was preceded, it may be conjectured, in its original connexion by an account of the construction of the Tent of Meeting," &c., &c. When we turn to xxxiii. 7, we discover that, as usually translated, the verse tells us that Moses removed the Tent of Meeting from its usual place inside the camp to a new location outside the camp. And he apparently did this, as the context shows, to indicate that God had removed from the midst of the people. Read in that way, the whole narrative is perfectly consecutive and harmonious. But translate now: "And Moses *used to take* the tabernacle," and the dislocation is complete. The passage has then no connection with what goes before. For this is now no new action, and, therefore, no indication of God's removal from among the people. But Dr. Driver affirms plainly and emphatically that this last is the only translation

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\* Introduction, p. 25.

which a capable and honest scholar can give to the verse. "The tenses in the original," he says, "show that this is the meaning, and, therefore, compel the rendering, 'And Moses used to pitch,' &c."

What defence has an ordinary reader, unacquainted with Hebrew, against a statement of that sort? But, it will be asked with amazement, "is it unfounded?" The reply is that it is not only unfounded, but without excuse. *Yikkakh*, the word which Dr. Driver and others—among whom are the authors of the Revised Version—translate "used to pitch" is in the imperfect or future tense. It *might* be used to indicate a repeated or habitual act, but the tenses impose no necessity whatever in favour of that sense here. And it is an interpretation which the context wholly forbids. Had Israel been on the march, the sense "used to" might have been admissible, but not even then would it have been compulsory. On the contrary, however, the camp had long been stationary. The proposed rendering is consequently ridiculous. If Moses kept on taking the tent and pitching the tent outside the camp, how had the tent managed to return to its previous location inside the camp?

A concluding instance of the perverse ingenuity of the critics may close these references to a system condemned alike by sound scholarship and by the constant faith of the Christian Church. "In xxxiv. 27, 28," says Dr. Driver,\* "the preceding body of laws, on the basis of which the covenant is made, appears to be spoken of as 'Ten Commandments'

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\* *Introduction*, p. 37.

(Hebrew, 'words'). It has hence been supposed that, though in its present form it has undergone expansion, it originally consisted of ten particular injunctions," &c. But let us look at these two verses. In verse 27 we read: "And the Lord said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel." Now the words, which are here spoken of, are not said to be "ten," are not numbered at all, and refer to the feasts, the first-fruits, &c. Verse 28 is not a continuation of the special theme of verse 27. It sums up this entire episode in the history of Moses: "And he was there with Jehovah forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And He"—that is, Jehovah, *Who is last named*—"wrote upon THE TABLES the words of the Covenant, the ten words." This is the way in which the words have been always read. It is the sense in which also they are plainly meant; for Moses was commanded to prepare the two tables, and to take them with him, so that God might inscribe the "ten words" upon them. And what seems to us an abrupt transition from one agent to another, is a feature which constantly recurs in the Pentateuch. But such things will not pass muster with the critics. The words must not be taken as they are plainly intended to be taken. Moses must be held to have written the words and not God. In this way the continuity of the narrative is hopelessly broken; a new proof has been obtained that the Book has been compiled from different, and

indeed contradictory, sources; and a wide field is opened for further "critical research" as to how commandments may be arranged in ten divisions that were neither given, nor spoken of as ten. It is melancholy work, and, like every other, will in due time receive its reward. For those who refuse to permit their judgment to be enthralled by the rabbis of rationalism, and who study the Book for themselves, its unity is indisputable. Not only is it a complete narrative, having a clearly-defined starting point, a steady onward progress, and a triumphant conclusion; but it also reveals in its Parts and Sections of Parts a mastery that is positively startling. There is nothing like it in any literature outside the Bible; but it is what we might look for from Him, all whose works praise Him.



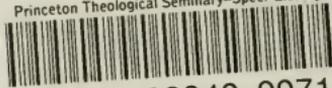




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