

(1) "The writing must be in accordance with its supposed historical position as to time, place, and circumstances."

No fault can be found with this as a general principle. But the fallacy comes in when it is openly or covertly assumed that in determining the historical position of a writing every prediction must be regarded as *post eventum*. Thus it is claimed that the promise to Abraham (Gen. xvii. 6) and to Jacob (xxxv. 11), that kings should descend from them could not have been put in this form until after the time of David, nor Isaac's blessing to Esau (xxvii. 40) until Edom's successful revolt against the dominion of Judah; and every anticipation of the Babylonish exile by Isaiah is held to be proof that the passage containing it belonged to a later age.

So, too, when miracles are discredited, and the presence of supernatural facts in a narrative purporting to be that of an eye-witness is held to conflict with its alleged historical position, and to show that it belongs to a much later period, when legend had magnified what were in reality natural occurrences into the miraculous. Thus the mighty deeds ascribed to the age of Moses are held to evince that they could not have been recorded by a contemporary, and that the history must have been idealized by being seen through the haze of centuries. We are accordingly told that we must distinguish between the ideal and the actual, between the exaggerations of the narrative and what can be supposed to have really taken place.

A further fallacy, of which large use is made, is that of deciding the age of writings by means of an *a priori* scheme of doctrinal development. The critic fixes upon the grade of religious knowledge which can be attributed to a particular period; and if a certain book contains more exalted ideas than his scheme allows, it is held to be not "in accordance with its supposed historical position," and it is forthwith remanded to a later date. Thus, when Dr. Driver (Lit. of O. T., p. 83) argues that Deuteronomy cannot be from Moses, but must belong to the age of Josiah or shortly before it, because "the prophetic teaching of Dt., the point of view from which the laws are presented, the principles by which conduct is estimated, presuppose a relatively advanced stage of theological reflection."

Dr. Briggs's next rule is:

(2) "Differences of style imply differences of experience and age of the same author, or, when sufficiently great, differences of author and of period of composition."

The fallacy here consists in overlooking the fact that differences of style may likewise arise from diversity of the subject, or a diversity in the species of composition. Thus great stress is laid upon the obvious difference of style between Gen. i. and ii., iii., as implying diversity of authorship. In reality, it simply results from the fact that Gen. i. deals with the grandly majestic fiats of the Creator in bringing the world into existence and peopling it with the various