

can railroad buildings, which for the most part display a contemptuous disregard of every principle save that of the barest utility.

But my visit to Boston was of short duration. Leaving that city by the morning express of the Albany road, I was soon on my way westward, regretting that arrangements previously made had placed it out of my power to select the more interesting route by way of Fitchburg and the Hoosac Tunnel, which would have given me an opportunity to make acquaintance with some grand mountain scenery, and at the same time enable me to appreciate at its full worth the Canadian energy and perseverance which completed the great tunnel after several American contractors had given up the task in despair. The Albany route traverses the same mountain range some thirty or forty miles further south, by a series of heavy grades where two powerful engines can only haul the train at easy walking speed, in some places. This range passed, the train glides down the steep descent beyond at a breakneck pace, stopping only for a moment at Pittsfield, near which place is the celebrated Shaker Village of New Lebanon. But just now we have not time to spare for a ten mile drive over the hills to interview Elder Frederick Evans and ascertain whether the most remarkable religious community in the world is still progressing as prosperously as ever.

Soon after this the beautiful vale of the Hudson comes in sight, far below us, towards the west; and a rapid run of twenty minutes more brings us under the shadow of the huge capitol that New York State is building for the benefit of her legislators, at the risk of bankruptcy to herself. Hard by the placid Hudson glides due south, bearing its load of heavily-freighted canal boats that have worked their way down the sinuosities of what has been disrespectfully termed the Erie Ditch.

(To be continued.)

## SCIENCE AND THE EXODUS.

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### II.—REPHIDIM AND SINAI.

(Continued.)

If this question be considered as settled then it remains to inquire which of the mountain summits of that group of hills in the Southern end of the peninsula which seem to be designated in the Bible by the general name of Horeb, should be regarded as the veritable "Mount of the Law." Five of the mountain summits of this region have laid claims to this distinction; and their relative merits the explorers test by seven criteria which must be fulfilled by the actual mountain. These are: (1) A mountain overlooking a plain in which the millions of Israel could be assembled. (2) Space for the people to "remove and stand afar off" when the voice of the Lord was heard, and yet to hear that voice. (3) A well defined peak distinctly visible from the plain. (4) A mountain so precipitous that the people might be said to "stand under it" and to touch its base. (5) A mountain capable of being isolated by boundaries. (6) A mountain with springs and streams of water in its vicinity. (7) Pasturage to maintain the flocks of the people for a year.

By these criteria the surveyors at once reject two of the mountains, Jebel el Ejmei and Jebel Umm-alawi, as destitute of sufficient water and pasturage. Jebel Katharina, whose claims arise from a statement of Josephus that Sinai was the highest mountain of the district, which this peak actually is, with the exception of a neighbouring summit 25 feet higher, they reject because of the fact that it is not visible from any plain suitable for the encampment of the Israelites. Mount Serbâl has in modern times had some advocates, but the surveyors allege in opposition to these that they do not find, as has been stated, the Sinaiitic inscriptions more plentiful there than elsewhere, that the traces of early Christian occupancy do not point to it any more than early tradition, and that it does not meet the topographical requirements in presenting a defined peak, a convenient camping-ground, or a sufficient amount of pasturage.

There only remains then the long-established and venerated Jebel Musa—the orthodox Sinai; and this in a remarkable and conspicuous manner fulfils the required conditions, and besides illustrates the narrative itself in unexpected ways. This mountain has, however, two dominant peaks, that of Jebel Musa proper, 7,363 feet in height, and that of Ras Sufsafeh, 6,937 feet high; and of these the explorers do not hesitate at once to prefer the latter. This peak or ridge is described as almost isolated, as descending precipitously to the great plain of the district, Er Rahah, which is capable of accommodating two millions of persons in full view of the peak, and has ample camping-ground for the whole host in its tributary valleys. Magnificent photographs of this plain and the mountain are given in the work, which leave no reason to doubt that it is just such a theatre of the giving of the law as the most sanguine and vivid imagination would conceive. "From the time when the traveller enters the plain, the peak of Sufsafeh stands out sharp and clear against the sky," and he never loses sight of it for a moment till "he crosses the dry wady bed at its foot and gazes up at the tremendous cliff in front of him, and which is sufficiently steep to be described as a mountain that may be touched." Farther, it is so completely separated from the neighbouring mountains that a short and easily intelligible description would define its limits, which could be easily marked out.

Another remarkable feature is that we have here the brook descending out of the mount referred to in the Exodus, and besides this five other perennial streams in addition to many good springs. The country is by no means desert, but supplies much pasturage; and when irrigated and attended to forms good gardens, and is indeed one of the best and most fertile spots of the whole peninsula. The explorers show that the statements of some hasty travellers who have given a different view are quite incorrect, and also that there is reason to believe that there was greater rainfall and more verdure in ancient times than at present in this part of the country. They further indicate the Wady Shreick in which is the stream descending from the mount, as the probable place of the making and destruction of the golden calf, and a hill known as Jabel Moneijeh, the mount of conference, as the probable site of the tabernacle. They think it not improbable that while Ras Sufsafeh was the Mount of the Law, the retirement of Moses during his sojourn on the mount may have been behind this peak, in the recesses of Jebel Musa, which thus might properly bear his name.

Other interesting considerations are of a political and military nature. It was necessary for the Israelites to have a secure dwelling place for some time, in order that their religious and social institutions might be fully organized before their march northward to Canaan. For this purpose the plain of Er Rahah and the region in its vicinity were admirably fitted. It is in the very heart of the peninsula, and approached only by passes easily defended, one of which the Israelites themselves had to force at Rephidim. It was too remote to be attacked by Egyptian expeditions, had these been sent against it, and the Amalekites after their chastisement at Rephidim were not likely to assault a place whose strength was so well known. It was on the borders of the territories of the friendly Midianites, with whom Moses had sojourned so long and was connected by marriage. It would thus give a secure abode, with supplies of water and pasture; and after the hardships already endured by the people, would appear to them a haven of comparative rest; while on the other hand it was sufficiently a wilderness to wean them from Egyptian habits and train them to the hardihood of a desert life.

In geological character the Sinai mountains, including the Mount of the Law, are of great antiquity and simple structure. They consist of a red syenitic granite associated with other ancient crystalline rocks, and on which rest mica schists and gneisses much older than the sandstone of the region, which is known to be of the age of our Coal-formation rocks. Thus the syenite of Sinai, though a rock of igneous origin, must have been cooled down in the far back Palæozoic age of Geology. This effectually and forever disposes of the theory held by some interpreters of Exodus, that Sinai was a volcanic mountain, and that the terrific phenomena which accompanied the giving of the law were those of an eruption. It is to be observed also that "the thunders and lightnings and thick clouds" of the Mosaic narrative, rather resemble the appearances of an atmospheric disturbance than of a volcanic eruption.

Lastly—for the benefit of those who love to consider the purely human element in religion, Moses had sojourned in the region, and knew perfectly the way by which he was leading his people; a way which he had fully learned in his long exile. The place had been indicated to him by divine revelation, but independently of this it is evidently one of those grand shrines of nature which man vainly tries to rival in his temples and cathedrals, and which strike awe into the human heart, and lead it to lofty thoughts and imaginings; and such a place must have had peculiar impressiveness to a people reared in the flats of the Egyptian delta and who had just been stirred by the marvellous experiences and excitements of their flight from Egypt. It was thus one of the most fitting spots on earth to be the theatre of the revelation to man of a new and purer faith, unmixed with the figments of human invention, and leading to a worship of the one God the Creator.

(To be continued.)

## THE FUTURE LIFE.

### No. II.

I have dwelt on the argument from the character of God and His relation to man. There is another argument for the doctrine of eternal punishment drawn from the New Testament Scriptures. Let us look at that a little. I readily grant that there are many passages in the New Testament which seem to teach the doctrine of eternal punishment, as it is held by the churches. But it must in fairness be also admitted that many passages teach the doctrine of final restoration. For myself I am convinced that the Scriptures do not solve the problem. Jesus Christ speaks of "everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels," of "the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched," of sins against the Holy Ghost which "shall never be forgiven, neither in this world, nor in that which is to come." These texts, if taken without any reservation, or refinement, clearly convey the idea of a condemnation to which there is no end. But on the other hand there are passages which emphatically teach the doctrine of final restoration. The Apostle Paul says that "the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." He speaks of a time when God shall be the "all in all," making no distinction between blessed and condemned. Then "all things shall be gathered together in Christ," as the Head. And again, the passage I quoted before that, "as in Adam *all* die, even so in Christ shall *all*," not some, but *all* be made alive. Here is an apparent contradiction. But we are sure that the Word of God cannot contradict itself. All that we can do is to try and find the general teaching of Scripture, and then perhaps we shall find some reasonable explanations of passages that bewilder us now.

I dwelt in the previous article on the religious ideas the Jews had about the future life. They believed that they were the elect of God predestined to a blessed state, in a blessed place; a new Jerusalem, whose streets were of gold, and walls of jasper, having a temple immeasurably grander than that which crowned the Mount Moriah. For their enemies there was a state and a place of torment. They called it hell or gehenna. The idea became firmly rooted during that dark period which intervened between the return from captivity and the coming of Christ. From the almost intolerable miseries of life, they took refuge in the hope of a future Paradise, and unable to avenge the wrongs they suffered, they comforted themselves with the idea that their enemies would have to suffer endless, and horrible, torture in the world to come. Of course Paganism, by which they were greatly influenced all this time, had much to do with it. Just outside of Jerusalem was a horrible place—the valley in which Ahaz at one time set up their worship of Moloch, to whom children were burnt alive in sacrifice. It was polluted in the time of Josiah; and in the time of Christ it was the place where all the refuse and filth of the city lay rotting and smouldering with the fire and the worm. That valley of Hinnom became the symbol of hell. The imagination took hold of it, and many a Rabbi pointed to it as the very entrance to Gehenna itself. Now Jesus Christ was a true teacher of the people. He had a method of teaching—and one part of it was this—to seize hold of current notions or popular ideas, and use them for His own purposes. That He did with the ideas of priesthood and sacrifice, and ceremonial law. And that He did with the current notions of a future state. But instead of applying them to the future, He made them bear upon the present. Instead of speaking of a hell after death for Romans and bad Jews,