

the all comprehending supremacy of God in human affairs we cannot avoid the conclusion that, not intending and not, indeed, being able to present an exact record of what took place before human affairs had an existence, Moses simply designed this introductory portion relating to the creation, to produce the conviction in the minds of the Israelites, that He to whom they rendered obedience and in whose paternal care they trusted had this warrant for His claim on their service and love, that He was the actual Creator of the universe, and not a dependent on a higher power. And, practically considered, no reasonable man can doubt but that the purpose contemplated was most judicious in itself; that the particular method chosen for its realization was most effective; for there is, in the first chapter, just the clear authoritative announcement, the careful connecting of all the leading features of organic and inorganic existence with an independent will, and the graphic intimation of an orderly sequence from a primal condition of confusion to the known freshness and beauty of nature, as would be likely to impress very deeply the uncritical Semitic mind.

That Moses did then depict in colours which were designed to be only approximately correct, the events that took place before human history began, is borne out by the tenor of the references contained in the closing chapters of the Bible, to the process of events that will succeed the termination of man's history on earth. That there is a future beyond the utmost point attainable by man on earth, is as certain as that there was an order of things before he began to perform his part; and that in that future there will be a steady process of events suited to the changed condition of the human spirit, is a necessary corollary of our faith in the ever unfolding wisdom of God. The immediate design of the Bible, is to assist us in spending our life aright while on the earth,—the subsequent history of our existence, being regarded as the natural product of our present conduct—but in order to ensure this, the Bible comes to us as an authority, to make certain the fact of a great hereafter. Just as it was for practical uses important for the ancient Israelites to be assured of the past in its relation to their God as Creator, so is it highly subservient to the right use of our present life, that we be assured of the reality of a future in which God sustains to us a relationship, determined in its nature by the relationship we have cultivated with Him on this side the grave. It may be left to the candour of any man to say whether it would be for our benefit in the struggle with evil, to be informed in detail and with the accuracy demanded by science, of all that lies in that "undiscovered land;" and the slightest reflection must suffice to show that, considering our necessarily material modes of thought, it would be as impossible for us to receive a full and exact statement of what the future life is, and of what order of events its staple of experience will actually consist, as it was impossible for Israel in Egypt, with their untutored notions of "force" and "natural order," to receive an elaborate, exact representation of the events that must have taken place before the creation of man. When, then, we turn to the representation of the future given to us for practical purposes in the New Testament, we find just what such considerations as those now touched upon would lead us to anticipate—namely, a distinct assurance of the certainty of a future life, with such outlines of the events that will make up its grand totality as are suited to our present conceptions. There is a "world to come." What that world is, what its employments, what progression of events will characterize its history, in what new forms the wisdom and goodness of God will become manifest—we are not told exactly; but our inherited and ordinary modes of thought and forms of expression are employed to give to us a representation which is only approximately correct. When we are told of "mansions" in the skies; of the city guarded by "twelve gates" and a "wall of precious stones;" of a "river" springing out from beneath the throne and giving life to the tree which bears "twelve manner of fruits," and even of a solemn tribunal before which each one will be adjudged according to the deeds of the body, we know very well that these statements indicate and are intended to assure us of most momentous realities, while at the same time we know that the realities themselves