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A STUDY IN BIBLICAL EXEGESIS.

אִשְׂרָחִי

SINCE Oppert demonstrated that the numbers used in the Book of Genesis with regard to the generative ages of the first ten generations of mankind show exactly the proportions of ancient Babylonian systems for the same period, it seemed to me indubitable that the numbers of the Masoretic text are the only correct ones in comparison with the Septuagint and with the Samaritan text. The latter two, as it is known, greatly differ. For, whereas we find in the Hebrew text the number 1656, the Samaritan gives the number 1307 and the Septuagint 2242 (cod. Alex. 2262) as the year of the deluge. But although, as I have said, the proofs brought forward by Oppert appear self-evident, the two other texts have still their adherents. Dillmann and Budde prefer the Samaritan text, while P. Schanz¹ shows a leaning towards the Septuagint, or he, at least, thinks that not sufficient reasons are given for the preference of either of the texts.

I am, I think, able to prove, beyond refutation, by the Hebrew text itself, that the Masoretic numbers are correct. We shall, moreover, in the course of our evidence learn to interpret more correctly a number of very important

¹ "Das Alter des Menschengeschlechts," in *Biblische Studien*, herausgegeben von O. Bardenhewer I, 2, Freiburg, 1896, p. 22.

passages, and to doubt some of the methods of the modern "Quellen-kritik."

The genealogical account in Gen. v is given in a definite and invariable form.

"A lived x years and begat B . And A lived, after he begat B , y years and he begat sons and daughters. And all the days of A were z years, and he died."

There is but *one* exception made in this so strictly observed rule, viz. in the case of Adam. Here the text varies and is as follows: "And all the days that Adam lived," אִשָּׁר־חַי. To render these two little words in the translation by "that he lived" would be an insignificant repetition of the same meaning, which is totally superfluous. Besides, with but one exception, in Gen. xxv. 7, to which passage I shall return later on, these words are not again met with in the whole Bible, wherever a statement of a person's age is given. By this אִשָּׁר, undoubtedly some other relation, which follows from the context, was intended to be expressed and thus special attention was to be called to it.

The following instance will serve as an instructive example: Lev. viii Moses is told to take Aaron and his sons with him, and the garments, and the anointing oil, and a bullock for the sin offering, and two rams and a basket of unleavened bread. Then follows a description of their consecration. Aaron and his sons are invested with the garments and are anointed with the oil, and the animals are sacrificed. Thereupon Moses takes out some loaves from the basket of unleavened bread, אִשָּׁר לִפְנֵי יְהוָה, that was before the Lord. This additional sentence is not without import. For practical reasons, viz. those of cleanliness, the animals that were offered up were only brought into the fore-court before the altar immediately prior to their slaughter. But the basket of unleavened bread, which was also wanted close by the altar, had been brought there before the whole function had begun. For, in the latter case, such a precautionary measure as was taken in the former one was

not necessary. That is the meaning of אֲשֶׁר לִפְנֵי יְהוָה, that is to say, that which *up till then* stood (had stood already)¹ before God, viz. before the altar.

Thus also אֲשֶׁר־חַי (Gen. v. 5) is to be rendered: "The days of Adam, namely those that he had lived *up till then*, were nine hundred and thirty years"; that is to say, he has lived nine hundred and thirty years. We have to note this well and bear this fact in mind. But what can it be that is to be brought under the special notice of the reader? Is it to notify that Adam, though his death is already mentioned in this place, survived the births that followed, and is it because Adam is the first in the lineage that only in his case the information is given? This would presuppose the reader to be very impatient. For who would not know himself when he is told that Adam begets in the year 130, that Seth begets 105 years after that, that Adam is by a long way not yet dead, seeing that he lived 930 years.

By the little words אֲשֶׁר־חַי it is intended to expressly call attention to *how long* Adam lived, i.e. when he *died*, as there is a certain relation between the year of his death and another fact. And this can only be the birth of Noah, which occurred when Adam had already died. Thus Noah was the first descendant of Adam, in the direct and principal line, who was born after his death.

This leads us to understand what Lamech said, when he called his son by the name of Noah: "This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed," אָרְרָה מִמַּעֲשֵׂי וּמַעֲצָבוֹן יְרִינֵנוּ מִן הָאָדָמָה אֲשֶׁר אָרְרָה יְהוָה. For only for the lifetime of Adam had the ground been cursed. "Cursed is the ground for thy sake, in sorrow shalt thou eat of it *all the days of thy life*," אָרְרָה הָאָדָמָה בְּעִבְרֶיךָ בְּעִצְבוֹן אָרְרָה תֹאכְלֶנָּה כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ: (iii. 17).

One entirely misunderstands the punishments promised by God in iii. 14 if one believes them to refer to all the succeeding generations. God addresses only the individual

¹ See Wessely, *ib.*

persons present. Unto *the* serpent, unto *the* woman, unto *the* man he spoke. Only the serpent in the garden of Eden shall eat dust all the days of its life, בְּלִי יִמֵי חַיָּיו. Nowadays the serpents will not dream of it. When, however, the condition of Paradise will be renewed in the Messianic age, then the serpent shall eat dust again (Isa. lxv. 25). Only Eve shall suffer *many* and painful pregnancies of births and shall, nevertheless, be possessed by a morbid desire for her husband. *Only Adam shall rule over his wife.* In the natural order of things it is the man who leaves his father and his mother in order to cleave to his wife. There shall be a unity in marriage, בְּשֵׁר אֶחָד, and the one is not to rule over the other (ii. 24). Husband and wife have, from the Biblical standpoint, perfectly equal rights before God, like all human beings. And not without reason does the Bible derive אִשָּׁה from אִישׁ. It is nothing but empty talk to speak of the "inferior position of woman in the Orient." The standard for eternal laws and everlasting regulations is not to be prescribed to the Bible by godless customs and bad habits. This is specially noted in the one point in God's speech, in which reference is also made to the descendants, "And I will put enmity between thy seed and her seed."

And what have dogmatics not attempted with this speech! The most natural conditions, which had already been predestined in the first order of creation (i. 28; ii. 5, 15), and which could not be dispensed with, even in the Messianic age, viz. pregnancy, birth, agriculture, have been stamped as being unnatural and a curse. The God of the Bible, who is a God of love and justice, has been made into a God of monstrous cruelty and injustice, who on account of the sin of the first man has doomed all unborn generations by an everlasting curse.

However this may be, it is clear that Adam must be dead before the curse pronounced upon him ceases. Now Lamech is born anno mundi 874, Adam dies 930, Noah is born 1056. When Adam, the chief of the family, dies

mankind breathes anew, in the hope that now the destined fate will cease, and this hope finds prophetic expression in the short prayer uttered by Lamech, when he named the first people born after this event. And he intentionally makes the appellation of his son accordant with his prayer, לִנְחִיָּמָה. However, this manifest relation between the death of Adam and the birth of Noah, which is also indicated by the choice of the same expressions in iii. 17 and v. 29, only exists in the numbers of the Masoretic text. This is shown by the following table of the birth-years, arranged according to MT., LXX, and Samaritan texts:—

			MT.	LXX	Sam.
Adam	dies	anno mundi	<u>930</u>	<u>930</u>	<u>930</u>
Seth	is born	„	130	230	130
Enos	„	„	235	435	235
Cainan	„	„	325	625	325
Mahalaleel	„	„	395	795	395
Jared	„	„	460	<u>960</u>	460
Enoch	„	„	622	1122	522
Methusela	„	„	687	1287	587
Lamech	„	„	874	1474	654
Noah	„	„	<u>1056</u>	1662	<u>707</u>

Hence it follows that according to the LXX Adam already died at the time of Mahalaleel, before Jared was born; and that, according to the Samaritan, Noah was already over 200 years old when Adam died. But as both nevertheless concede to Adam 930 years, they thereby betray falsification. To disguise it, it would have been necessary for them to let Adam be much older or younger. Having omitted to do so, they prove not to have understood at all the purpose of the Biblical reckoning. Moreover, the tendency of these falsifications is somewhat transparent. The interest of the Septuagint is directed toward the chronology. Its aim is to get at a higher number for the year of the deluge and, therefore, for the age of the

world, than is given in the Masoretic text. This is probably prompted by an apologetic desire to meet the assertions of some Greek or Egyptian chronologers. To this end the generative ages are increased, whilst the periods of the lives of the individual ancestors are ignored, and the progression of the respective numbers in the Masoretic text is left intact. There is only in regard to Lamech a slight variation in the present text of the Septuagint.

In the Samaritan text, on the other hand, a theological tendency seems to be pursued. Both the year of generation and the lifetime after the generation are decreased. Jared not 162-800, but 62-785; Methusela not 187-782, but 67-653. Lamech not 182-595, but 53-600, if the text can be relied on. Hence the number, representing the whole period of life, must be changed and reduced.

We can now understand why the formula in which the account is given is so circumstantial, the year of generation, the remainder of lifetime, the total period of life, and finally the apparently totally superfluous "and he died." The author wished to specially emphasize the fact that Adam died 930 anno mundi, and he therefore gives this number expressly, which notifies not so much his lifetime as the year of his death. And in order to make the formula uniform he does exactly the same in the accounts that follow. Moreover, by the word וימת—and he died—is to be further indicated that the threat which had been declared in ii. 17 had been carried out: "For in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," כִּי בַיּוֹם אֲכָלְךָ כִּי בַיּוֹם תָּמוּת מוֹת תָּמוּתָּ: . It has been unjustly argued that Adam should have died on the very same day that he ate of the fruit. For בַּיּוֹם with an Inf. has simply the meaning of *after*. This is convincingly shown by such passages as Num. vii. 84, בַּיּוֹם הַמָּשָׁח (the anointing had taken place *twelve days* before); Jer. vii. 22¹; xi. 4, 7; xxxiv. 13 which happened *two months* after.

¹ "For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings

There is no need for the other genealogical account to be equally diffuse and, therefore, it is left to the reader to make out the total period of life by adding up the number of the year of generation and that of the years that followed it.

A series of other passages is thereby fully elucidated, Gen. iv. 26, "Then began men to proclaim the name of the Lord," אָז הֵיחֵל לְקַרְא בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה. Wherever this expression is found, it has the meaning "to utter a sound in which the word God is proclaimed"; hence to address to God a prayer, especially one of supplication. To render this sentence in translation: "Then men began to call (their names) after the name of the Lord" is grammatically admissible. But we do not hear of such names or, at least, such a conjecture would have its difficulties. It has been surmised that the author intended to give a casual notice of the beginning amongst mankind of the worship of God by prayer. But apart from the fact that we can always detect a special reason wherever in Genesis casual historical notices are given, we do not see why this special form of worshipping God should only have begun with Enoch and not already with Seth. The use of the passive form, which conspicuously conceals the subject, and the indefinite אִנִּי are also striking. Who called? And when?

The words are merely a preliminary indication. The or sacrifices." Hence it was conjectured that Jeremiah was not yet acquainted with the legislation of Leviticus regarding sacrifices. And this is one of the many proofs how hasty criticism is in its conclusions. By the words that follow it is clearly shown what the prophet wishes to express: "But this thing commanded I them, saying: Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you."

The prophet clearly and literally refers to Exod. xix. 5, the mission of Israel, and wishes to say: "At that moment I did not ask for sacrifices as a condition of my choice,—I did not utter a single word about them,—but only for the moral obedience towards me and the faithful persistence in the (10) commandments, which I was then about to announce to you. But have you kept them?"

prayer of Lamech is meant, the first hopeful supplication to God, of which the sentence quoted was perhaps to be only the beginning. Or there is the word יהוה to be supplied to the name לם, just as that of Cain is explained by an additional sentence with יהוה, and that of Seth by one with Elohim, though their respective names do not contain these words. (The same is the case with the names of Reuben, Simeon, Jehudah, Zebulun, Dan, Naph-tali.) To this, however, the name of Cain, in connexion with which יהוה has already been mentioned, may be opposed, unless we presume that it only refers to the lineage of Seth and that, for that very reason, the word יהוה is avoided in regard to Seth and the word Elohim used. But in any case, the statement refers to the sentence of Lamech, who was the first to proclaim יהוה. But when Lamech uttered these words, Seth was no more amongst the living, just as Adam did not survive them. But Enos was the oldest still alive. For Adam died 930, Seth 1042, Enos 1140, and Noah was born 1056. In *that* year, 18, one began, הוה, as the author indefinitely and but preliminarily here indicates, and, as we now learn, it was Lamech who began to proclaim the name of God. And in thus pointing out already in this place the proclamation of and the supplication to God, the author shows that he looks upon this fact, occurring at the birth of Noah, as the main point in the whole genealogy. The Cainites form the *worldly* lineage and are the representatives of the progressive human culture. Cain himself is the first who built a city, Jabal accumulates wealth by the possession of cattle, Jubal is the inventor of music, whilst Tubal-Cain invents weapons. But this kind of culture leads to destruction. It begins with murder and ends by praising a murder. On the other hand, the Sethites form the *spiritual* lineage. Their progress is an advance in the religious conception of Elohim (Seth) through Ha-elohim (Enoch) to Ihvh (Noah). Only relations to the Deity are reported of them, and, this being the chief consideration

of the author, he at the beginning already makes a reference to the final result.

And thus the following deviation is also elucidated.

Genesis contains ten תּוֹלְדוֹת, which form, so to speak, the skeleton of the whole account. As a rule the person, whose תּוֹלְדוֹת, generations, are to be enumerated, has already been previously mentioned and dealt with before the chapter, which begins with אֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדוֹת. For by Toledoth of a person is always meant the account of his *sons* or descendants. Where there are several sons, and only the history of one is to be given in detail, the genealogical accounts of the others are previously dealt with, whilst the principal lineage is already mentioned along with them. But the latter is only carried on so far as is required by its connexion with the collateral lineages. To prove this invariable method it will be well to enumerate here the Toledoth (תּוֹלְדוֹת):—

Gen. vi. 9, אֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדוֹת נֹחַ : The generations of Noah are : Shem, Ham, and Japheth, &c. But that these were the three sons of Noah we have already learned at the end of the genealogy in chap. v. 32.

Gen. x. 1, אֵלֶּה הַלְוֵיִם בְּנֵי נֹחַ These are the generations of the sons of Noah. Here, in this case, the sons could not already have been previously mentioned, as this would have necessitated the anticipation of all the Toledoth (תּוֹלְדוֹת). But we know the בְּנֵי נֹחַ already.

Gen. xi. 10, אֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדוֹת שֵׁם These are the generations of Shem. In this case we are already acquainted, not only with Arphaxad, but also with Shelah, Eber, and Peleg, because the collateral lineage had in Gen. x. 25 to be carried down to the descendant Joktan, *the brother of Peleg*. Joktan's great-grandfather, his grandfather and his father had, therefore, to be named along with his sons.

Gen. xi. 27, אֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדוֹת תְּרַח These are the generations of Terah : Abram, Nahor, and Haran, &c. But that these

were the three sons of Terah, we have learned already at the end of the genealogy in chap. xi. 10-26.

Gen. xxv. 12, אֵלֶּה הַיְלֻדֹת יִשְׁמָעֵאל The account of the Toledoth of Ishmael is purely genealogical.

Gen. xxv. 19, אֵלֶּה הַיְלֻדֹת יִצְחָק. There, in the account of the generations of Isaac, Jacob and Esau could not yet be mentioned, as their birth does not take the ordinary course.

Gen. xxxvii. 2, אֵלֶּה הַיְלֻדֹת יַעֲקֹב These are the generations of Jacob, Joseph

To him, too, we have been already introduced ¹.

In comparing these accounts it must seem strange that the name of Enos is already mentioned previous to the genealogical account of Adam and his descendants by Seth. If Abel had been alive, Gen. iv. 17 should have read: "Adam had two sons, Cain and Abel." Then would have to follow the history of the Cainites (not their Toledoth; for in a collateral lineage, these invariably are purely genealogical) and then would come the Toledoth of Adam. Abel, however, had been murdered and, as the history of the Cainites follows immediately upon the account of the further fate of their ancestor, the birth of Seth is not announced, until their history has been dealt with. Immediately after the announcement of the birth of Seth, the Toledoth of Adam, viz. the history of the Sethites, ought to have followed. But, in order to signalize the fact אֵן, so important for the proper understanding of v. 29, the name of Enos is already mentioned, in whose lifetime this occurred.

¹ For the criticism of Gen. ii. 4 the observation of these fixed principles is of the utmost importance. "These are the Toledoths of the heavens and of the earth." For it proves that ii. 4 belongs to *what follows*, but that it *pre-supposes* chap. i with all its portions, from the creation of the earth and of the heavens (אֵרֶץ וְשָׁמַיִם) only here) to the creation of man, the details of which are now to be narrated. Hereby alone the theory of *two distinctive accounts* of the creation, and with it a chief pillar of the distinction of the sources, is shaken.

And hereby, at the same time, a rest of hope, after the gloomy and hopeless end of the history of the Cainites, is held out in Scripture by a promise of a ray of light for a better future, which will return to God. Exactly the same is the case in vi. 17. This is a truly prophetic conception of history, in which, even after the most gloomy threats and prophecies, the ray of hope and of solace breaks through in the divine promise: "But I will not destroy Israel entirely."

In this connexion, as belonging thereto, must be mentioned a passage to which the greatest dogmatical importance has been given by dint of its having become the *locus classicus* of the doctrine of original sin. It is Gen. viii. 21, "And the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake, בְּעֵבִיר הָאָדָם, for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth, כִּי יִצֵר לֵב הָאָדָם, רַע מִנְּעֻרָיו; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done."

Thus, for instance, H. Schultz says in his *Alttestamentliche Theologie*⁴, p. 672: "Sin is here undoubtedly not confined within the limits of the single determinations of the will, but looked upon as an inclination which everybody has been given with human nature, as we know it from experience, as his hereditary portion, viz. as original sin." When we consider the whole context we shall find this opinion so utterly irrational, that only a dogmatical interest could have produced it, and, moreover, could finally insinuate it even to those who no longer have such an interest or never had it. For to speak of the incorrigibility of mankind was rational *before* the deluge and might have even been made the cause of it. But now, immediately after the deluge, these words are incomprehensible. For, one is bound to put the question, if man is by nature incorrigible, and this should be here the reason why no other deluge would be brought about, why then was the first one not omitted? Besides God deals at this moment only with the family of Noah, who

has been expressly designated as pious beyond question and has been saved on that account. Was it necessary to have personal merit to be saved, if even the most wicked are saved, later on, from general destruction because of the immutability of human corruption? What indeed has happened during the period, intervening between the deluge and this sentence, which could have, in any way, prompted this new conception of God? Moreover it is entirely contrary to the whole idea underlying the Old Testament. For nowhere in Scripture is it said that sin is something innate, destined by God. It is the general conviction that creation, as the work of God's hand, was looked upon by him as "good." And now the same God who has created man after his will¹ is supposed to recognize in the *innate* sinfulness of man a fact which it is beyond his power to alter, and which he must take into account! I have, moreover, not yet taken into consideration that מנעוריו cannot possibly mean something innate. נעורים is the period of maturity, viz. the time when man can decide for himself by his free will. Otherwise it should have read מבטן.

This passage has been thoroughly misunderstood. It does not at all refer to man in general, but to *the* man, viz. Adam, and it is to be rendered: "I will not again curse the ground any more *for Adam's sake*, for the imagination of the heart *of Adam* was evil from his awakening (from his maturity)"; אָדָם = Adam, ii. 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23; iii. 8, 9, 12, 20; iv. 1. God declares that he will not repeat either of the two destinies, neither the curse of the ground, which was caused by Adam alone, nor the deluge. The latter would not happen again, because the self-acquired moral strength, such as Noah has shown in "his walking with God," and has proved himself to possess amidst all the temptations of a corrupt generation, could not be lost *entirely* in *all* the descendants. On the contrary, the

¹ I do not add: "in his own image" for צֶלֶם and דְמוּת do not designate a moral quality.

words rather testify to the indestructibility of the inmost moral worth of human nature, as well as to the Love of God who is, with the proof given, ready to establish a permanent relation (a covenant) with man. By this promise of God the prayer of Lamech, and the prophetic hope which he had placed in his son Noah, is also fulfilled. We see it being realized in Gen. ix. 20, "And Noah began to be an husbandman," וַיִּחַל נֹחַ אִישׁ הַאֲדָמָה, the peculiar wording of which, especially in הַאֲדָמָה, certainly hints at Gen. iii. 17 and v. 29, while וַיִּחַל perhaps alludes to הוֹחַל in iv. 26.

Thus the whole history from Adam to Noah is pervaded by a uniform idea, to recognize which the two apparently insignificant little words, אֲשֶׁר-חִי, have helped us.

This so highly significant expression occurs a second time in Gen. xxv. 7, where the statement of the age of Abraham is made: "And these are the days of the years of Abraham's life, which he lived *up till then*"—one should note this well, אֲשֶׁר-חִי, viz. 175 years. What is here to be indicated in anticipation? Of what other import is the statement?

The death of Abraham is also here already announced. At the birth of Esau and Jacob, which is only related *later* on, he could only have been 160 years old. For Abraham was 100 years older than Isaac; Isaac married at the age of forty and begat at the age of sixty. People, therefore, even in olden times, thought to be able to discover herein a contradiction, and Budde wished to improve upon the number 175 of the false Samaritan text by substituting the number 145 for it. This is not to be thought of. For, as we have already remarked above, it is the established editorial principle in Genesis to relate in anticipation the remainder of the history of an older lineage along with the collateral lineages, in order that the succeeding account should deal exclusively with the younger principal lineage, viz. Gen. iv. 16, the Cainites, before v; Gen. x, the Japhethites and Hamites, before xi. 10; xi. 26, the Terahites, before xii. 1; xxi. 20, Ishmael;

xxv. 25, the Keturahites and Ishmaelites, before xxvi. 19; Gen. xxxvi, the Esavides, before xxxvii.

For Genesis is not only arranged chronologically, but genealogically and chronologically. The Talmudical scholars of the Bible are perfectly justified in maintaining *אין מוקדם ומאוחר בתורה*, and the Samaritan text proves again to be absurdly falsified.

Hence it could not have been the purport of the *אשר-ה'* to indicate that Abraham was still alive whilst the succeeding events took place, though his death is here already summarily announced.

Evidently it was intended to point out that Abraham would again be referred to later on. This, however, can only be in xxv. 22, viz. "And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to *inquire of the Lord*." In regard to this Dillmann remarks: "It is supposed that there were at that time already places for oracles (xiv. 7) [?] or prophets and priests of the true God (xiv. 8) [?] to whom one could go for inquiry upon such matters. If chap. xxvi formerly preceded xxv. 21, it would be apposite to look for the sanctuary that is here meant in Beersheba, xxvi. 23-25 (Wellhausen)." But this is far-fetched. Rebekah simply went to *Abraham*, who was then the only qualified interpreter of the true God. Care was, therefore, taken in the narrative to already indicate, in xxv. 7, that Abraham was then still living, in order to obviate the interrogation, where Rebekah could have made her inquiry. Thus Ibn Ezra, too, refers the words *וַתִּשְׁאַל לְיְהוָה אֵת יְהוָה* to Abraham. But Shem and Eber were also still alive then. Were they not also worshippers of *יְהוָה*? Why, one would ask, could she not have gone to them to inquire? No. For, if we thoroughly consider this question, we shall see that, in this matter of moment, Rebekah could have consulted no one but Abraham, and therefore only Abraham's survival is specially indicated.

De Wette (*Beiträge*, II, 118) ridicules the literal inter-

pretation of the narratives by the following statement: "Concerning this struggling Rebekah could have been reassured by any midwife, and the movements of twins are not more surprising than those of one child." As far as the subject-matter is concerned, he may be right in the objection he raises, but it is not at all removed by his theory of myth. For even as a mythical person Rebekah must act somewhat reasonably. By the way we may here observe, that this is a criticism which can be regularly brought against De Wette. And Rebekah may appear to be a mythical person to De Wette; for the narrator she was undoubtedly a real and living woman, who knew as well as all married women of the whole world what pregnancy signified. We need, however, but supply the few, but sufficient indications of the Bible in their proper sense, and we shall have full light and a complete picture.

Rebekah is, of course, aware of the fact that it was by Abraham's wish that she was taken from her home, in order to bear Isaac, as his wife, an heir according to the Divine promise—*one* heir. Now, however, she feels herself enceinte with *twins*, and she foresees at once all the conflicts about the primogeniture. She, therefore, goes to Abraham. For it was to *him* that these promises were made; *he* it was who had her fetched from her parents; he alone can give her advice (the explanation required). She does not inquire about the cause of the "movements within her"—truly every midwife could have told her that—but what is to become of the promise, if she, as she feels, will give birth to twins. What reassures her are the *last* words of his answer, יָרֵב יַעֲבֹר זָעִיר "And the elder shall serve the younger" (xxv. 23)—which is intentionally ambiguous: *One* will rule. He has the faithful confidence that God will set right this complication, and his words are spoken in exactly the same spirit as those addressed to Isaac (Gen. xxii. 8), אֱלֹהִים יִרְאֶה לִּי הֶשֶׁה לְעֹלָה בְּנִי "My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering." It may be that Rebekah from the beginning bestowed a greater

love upon Jacob, because she thus interpreted the words of Abraham, "And the elder shall serve the younger"; she may have been confirmed therein by Jacob's character, by the similarity of the relation between Ishmael and Isaac, who, though younger, was still the chosen one, and, finally, by the example of Sarah. In any case, from the moment Esau had taken Hittite wives, i.e. Canaanites, Rebekah was convinced that he could not be the heir of the Abrahamic blessing, the starting-point of the chosen people, the race of which was to be strictly distinct from that of the Canaanites as well as that of the Egyptians. It is for this reason that the narration of Rebekah's endeavouring to procure the blessing of the father to Jacob is immediately following the notice that Esau took Hittite wives (xxvi. 34 ff.). In the same way, the expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael, which is demanded by Sarah, is preceded, as its reason, by a forward hint at a frivolous behaviour (מְצַחֵק) of the son of the Egyptian servant. Her words (Gen. xxvii. 13), עָלַי קִלְלָתְךָ בְּנִי "Upon me be thy curse, my son," clearly show that she is not prompted by *blind* love, but is guided by the conviction that she is acting in accordance with the divine plan, which she, in the face of Isaac's error, must carry out by all means. For the latter is blind in his prejudice in favour of the firstborn. But God almost *always* rejects the very firstborn, and clearly shows us, that the birth alone does not decide. Not Cain, but Abel is preferred. Not Shem, but Japheth seems the senior, neither Elam nor Asshur, but Arphaxad continue the lineage, not Ishmael but Isaac, not Esau but Jacob is chosen. Reuben is rejected and Judah obtains the dominion. Ephraim is by Jacob preferred to Manasseh. Not Aaron, but Moses becomes the leader. David is the youngest of his brothers. We must compare Rebekah's advice to Jacob (Gen. xxvii. 8), וְעָתָּה בְּנִי שָׁמַע בְּקוֹלִי "But thou, my son, obey my voice"; with God's instruction to Abraham, of which she certainly must have heard (Gen. xxi. 12), בְּלֹא אִשָּׁר תֵּאמַר, אֵלֶיךָ שָׂרָה שָׁמַע בְּקוֹלָהּ "In all that Sarah hath said unto thee,

hearken unto her voice." The mother's heart knows better.

Rebekah shows the same solicitude lest the realization of the promises, for whose sake she left her home and her country, might be frustrated, in a second exclamation of being weary of her life, Gen. xxvii. 46 "I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth. If Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these which are of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me?" There is the danger lest Jacob marry a Canaanite woman. For even the mother of the chosen one must belong to a select family. Hence we are purposely informed that Hagar was an Egyptian woman (xvi. 1, 3), and that Ishmael too married an Egyptian woman (xxi. 21), that the wives of Esau are Hittite women (xxviii. 34 f.), and that the sons of Jacob were born in Padan-Aram from Aramite women (xxx).

Thus Rebekah is represented as a woman who only lives in the spirit and for the sake of the divine promises, and who regards their promotion as the sole object of her life. She is worthy of the choice of Eleazer, which was destined by God, and is a worthy daughter of Abraham and Sarah.

If one would call my interpretation *Midrash*, I do not object. For only by such *Midrash* can we meet the intentions of the narrator who brings the Biblical persons before us as living beings. Their speeches, actions, and experiences he relates rationally and wishes them to be also rationally comprehended. Genesis will never be understood if one scent everywhere the mythical spectre, or expect from it nothing but the relation of insignificant historical notices; and still less so, if one takes up the standpoint of the *Criticism of the sources* (*Quellenkritik*), which appears to me the most perverse theory which has ever been established in Biblical science. It seems to me to give the death-blow to true Biblical exegesis. The perplexity into which it is thrown by the fact that, for

instance, iii. 17; iv. 26; v. 5; v. 29; viii. 21; ix. 20 could only have one author, suits my position very well indeed. Hitherto it had decreed iii. 17, J; iv. 26, J; v. 5, P; v. 29, J; viii, 21, J; ix. 20, J; x, J, P, J, P, J, P; xi. 10, P, J, P. It can only find its way out of this difficulty with the help of its famous editor ("Redactor").

But in the next study I shall endeavour to raise further doubts against the critical position by showing the distinction between יִלְר and הוֹלִיר. Besides the exegetic and theological results which have emanated incidentally from my present inquiry, I hold it of importance to have given reasons for believing that the numbers of the Masoretic text in the antediluvian chronology have proved to be the only correct ones. Herein we have one more proof of the trustworthiness of the Hebrew text in general, with which no clumsy "Redactor" has interfered.

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