
EXODUS 8:1 The LORD spoke to Moses, Go in to Pharaoh, and tell him, “This is what the LORD says, ‘Let my people go, that they may serve me.

The plague of frogs threatened, Exo 8:1, Exo 8:2. The extent of this plague, Exo 8:3, Exo 8:4. Aaron commanded to stretch out his hand, with the rod, over the river and waters of Egypt, in consequence of which the frogs came, Exo 8:5, Exo 8:6. The magicians imitate this miracle, Exo 8:7. Pharaoh entreats Moses to remove the frogs, and promises to let the people go, Exo 8:8. Moses promises that they shall be removed from every part of Egypt, the river excepted, Exo 8:9-11. Moses prays to God, and the frogs die throughout the land of Egypt, Exo 8:12-14. Pharaoh, finding himself respited, hardens his heart, Exo 8:15. The plague of lice on man and beast, Exo 8:16, Exo 8:17. The magicians attempt to imitate this miracle, but in vain, Exo 8:18. They confess it to be the finger of God, and yet Pharaoh continues obstinate, Exo 8:19. Moses is sent again to him to command him to let the people go, and in case of disobedience he is threatened with swarms of flies, Exo 8:20, Exo 8:21. A promise made that the land of Goshen, where the Israelites dwelt, should be exempted from this plague, Exo 8:22, Exo 8:23. The flies are sent, Exo 8:24. Pharaoh sends for Moses and Aaron, and offers to permit them to sacrifice in the land, Exo 8:25. They refuse, and desire to go three days' journey into the wilderness, Exo 8:26, Exo 8:27. Pharaoh consents to let them go a little way, provided they would entreat the Lord to remove the flies, Exo 8:28. Moses consents, prays to God, and the flies are removed, Exo 8:29-31. After which Pharaoh yet hardened his heart, and refused to let the people go, Exo 8:32.

Verse 1

Let my people go - God, in great mercy to Pharaoh and the Egyptians, gives them notice of the evils he intended to bring upon them if they continued in their obstinacy. Having had therefore such warning, the evil might have been prevented by a timely humiliation and return to God.

EXODUS 8:2 If you refuse to let them go, behold, I will plague all your borders with frogs:

Verse 2

If thou refuse - Nothing can be plainer than that Pharaoh had it still in his power to have dismissed the people, and that his refusal was the mere effect of his own wilful obstinacy.

With frogs - צַפְרַדְעִים tsepardeim. This word is of doubtful etymology: almost all interpreters, both ancient and modern, agree to render it as we do, though some mentioned by Aben Ezra think the crocodile is meant; but these can never weigh against the conjoint testimony of the ancient versions. Parkhurst derives the word from צַפַּר tsaphar, denoting the brisk action, or motion of the light, and יָדַע yada, to feel, as they seem to feel or rejoice in the light, croaking all the summer months, yet hiding themselves in the winter. The Arabic name for this animal is very nearly the same with the Hebrew zafda, where the letters are the same, the ך resch being omitted. It is used as a quadrilateral root in the Arabic language, to signify froggy, or containing frogs: see Golius. But the true etymology seems to be given by Bochart, who says the word is compounded of zifa, a bank, and rada, mud, because the frog delights in muddy or marshy places; and that from these two words the noun zafda is formed, the re being dropped. In the Batrocho myomachia of Homer, the frog has many of its

epithets from this very circumstance. Hence Λιμνοχαρις, delighting in the lake; Βορβοροκοιτης, lying or engendering in the mud; Πηλευς, and Πηλβατης, belonging to the mud, walking in the mud, etc., etc.

A frog is in itself a very harmless animal; but to most people who use it not as an article of food, exceedingly loathsome. God, with equal ease, could have brought crocodiles, bears, lions, or tigers to have punished these people and their impious king, instead of frogs, lice, flies, etc. But had he used any of those formidable animals, the effect would have appeared so commensurate to the cause, that the hand of God might have been forgotten in the punishment; and the people would have been exasperated without being humbled. In the present instance he shows the greatness of his power by making an animal, devoid of every evil quality, the means of a terrible affliction to his enemies. How easy is it, both to the justice and mercy of God, to destroy or save by means of the most despicable and insignificant of instruments! Though he is the Lord of hosts he has no need of powerful armies, the ministry of angels, or the thunderbolts of justice, to punish a sinner or a sinful nation; the frog or the fly in his hands is a sufficient instrument of vengeance.

EXODUS 8:3 and the river shall swarm with frogs, which shall go up and come into your house, and into your bedroom, and on your bed, and into the house of your servants, and on your people, and into your ovens, and into your kneading troughs:

Verse 3

The river shall bring forth frogs abundantly - The river Nile, which was an object of their adoration, was here one of the instruments of their punishment. The expression, bring forth abundantly, not only shows the vast numbers of those animals, which should now infest the land, but it seems also to imply that all the spawn or ova of those animals which were already in the river and marshes, should be brought miraculously to a state of perfection. We may suppose that the animals were already in an embryo existence, but multitudes of them would not have come to a state of perfection had it not been for this miraculous interference. This supposition will appear the more natural when it is considered that the Nile was remarkable for breeding frogs, and such other animals as are principally engendered in such marshy places as must be left in the vicinity of the Nile after its annual inundations.

Into thine ovens - In various parts of the east, instead of what we call ovens they dig a hole in the ground, in which they insert a kind of earthen pot, which having sufficiently heated, they stick their cakes to the inside, and when baked remove them and supply their places with others, and so on. To find such places full of frogs when they came to heat them, in order to make their bread, must be both disgusting and distressing in the extreme.

EXODUS 8:4 and the frogs shall come up both on you, and on your people, and on all your servants.”

EXODUS 8:5 The LORD said to Moses, “Tell Aaron, ‘Stretch out your hand with your rod over the rivers, over the streams, and over the pools, and cause frogs to come up on the land of Egypt.’”

Verse 5

Stretch forth thine hand - over the streams, over the rivers - The streams and rivers here may refer to the grand divisions of the Nile in the Lower Egypt, which were at least seven, and to the canals by which these were connected; as there were no other streams, etc., but what proceeded from this great river.

EXODUS 8:6 Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt; and the frogs came up, and covered the land of Egypt.

Verse 6

The frogs came up, and covered the land of Egypt - In some ancient writers we have examples of a similar plague. The Abderites, according to Orosius, and the inhabitants of Paeonia and Dardania, according to Athenaeus, were obliged to abandon their country on account of the great numbers of frogs by which their land was infested.

EXODUS 8:7 The magicians did the same thing with their enchantments, and brought up frogs on the land of Egypt.

Verse 7

The magicians did so - A little juggling or dexterity of hand might have been quite sufficient for the imitation of this miracle, because frogs in abundance had already been produced; and some of these kept in readiness might have been brought forward by the magicians, as proofs of their pretended power and equality in influence to Moses and Aaron.

EXODUS 8:8 Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, "Entreat the LORD, that he take away the frogs from me, and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may sacrifice to the LORD."

EXODUS 8:9 Moses said to Pharaoh, "I give you the honour of setting the time that I should pray for you, and for your servants, and for your people, that the frogs be destroyed from you and your houses, and remain in the river only."

Verse 9

Glory over me - הִתְפַּאֵר עָלַי hithpaer alai. These words have greatly puzzled commentators in general; and it is not easy to assign their true meaning. The Septuagint render the words thus: Ταξαι κρος με ποτε, etc., Appoint unto me when I shall pray, etc. The constitute mihi quando of the Vulgate is exactly the same; and in this sense almost all the versions understood this place. This countenances the conjectural emendation of Le Clerc, who, by the change of a single letter, reading הִתְבַּאֵר hithbaer for הִתְפַּאֵר hithpaer, gives the same sense as that in the ancient versions. Houbigant, supposing a corruption in the original, amends the reading thus: אַתָּה בֹּאֵר עָלַי attah baer alai - Dic mihi quo tempore, etc., "Tell me when thou wishest me to pray for thee," etc., which

amounts to the same in sense with that proposed by Le Clerc. Several of our English versions preserve the same meaning; so in the Saxon Heptateuch; so in Becke's Bible, 1549, "And Moses sayed unto Pharaoh, Appoint thou the time unto me." This appears to be the genuine import of the words, and the sense taken in this way is strong and good. We may conceive Moses addressing Pharaoh in this way: "That thou mayest be persuaded that Jehovah alone is the inflicter of these plagues, appoint the time when thou wouldst have the present calamity removed, and I will pray unto God, and thou shalt plainly see from his answer that this is no casual affliction, and that in continuing to harden thy heart and resist thou art sinning against God." Nothing could be a fuller proof that this plague was supernatural than the circumstance of Pharaoh's being permitted to assign himself the time of its being removed, and its removal at the intercession of Moses according to that appointment. And this is the very use made of it by Moses himself, Exo 8:10, when he says, Be it according to thy word: that thou mayest know that there is none like unto the Lord our God; and that, consequently, he might no longer trust in his magicians, or in his false gods.

EXODUS 8:10 He said, "Tomorrow."

He said, "Be it according to your word, that you may know that there is no one like the LORD our God.

EXODUS 8:11 The frogs shall depart from you, and from your houses, and from your servants, and from your people. They shall remain in the river only."

EXODUS 8:12 Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh, and Moses cried to the LORD concerning the frogs which he had brought on Pharaoh.

EXODUS 8:13 The LORD did according to the word of Moses, and the frogs died out of the houses, out of the courts, and out of the fields.

EXODUS 8:14 They gathered them together in heaps, and the land stank.

Verse 14

They gathered them together upon heaps - The killing of the frogs was a mitigation of the punishment; but the leaving them to rot in the land was a continual proof that such a plague had taken place, and that the displeasure of the Lord still continued. The conjecture of Calmet is at least rational: he supposes that the plague of flies originated from the plague of frogs; that the former deposited their ova in the putrid masses, and that from these the innumerable swarms afterwards mentioned were hatched. In vindication of this supposition it may be observed, that God never works a miracle when the end can be accomplished by merely natural means; and in the operations of Divine providence we always find that the greatest number of effects possible are accomplished by the fewest causes. As therefore the natural means for this fourth plague had been miraculously provided by the second, the Divine Being had a right to use the instruments which he had already prepared.

EXODUS 8:15 But when Pharaoh saw that there was a respite, he hardened his heart, and didn't listen to them, as the LORD had spoken.

EXODUS 8:16 The LORD said to Moses, "Tell Aaron, 'Stretch out your rod, and strike the dust of the earth, that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt.'"

Verse 16

Smite the dust of the land, that it may become lice - If the vermin commonly designated by this name be intended, it must have been a very dreadful and afflicting plague to the Egyptians, and especially to their priests, who were obliged to shave the hair off every part of their bodies, and to wear a single tunic, that no vermin of this kind might be permitted to harbor about them. See Herod. in Euterp., c. xxxvii., p. 104, edit. Gale. Of the nature of these insects it is not necessary to say much. The common louse is very prolific. In the space of twelve days a full-grown female lays one hundred eggs, from which, in the space of six days, about fifty males and as many females are produced. In eighteen days these young females are at their full growth, each of which may lay one hundred eggs, which will be all hatched in six days more. Thus, in the course of six weeks, the parent female may see 5,000 of its own descendants! So mightily does this scourge of indolence and filthiness increase!

But learned men are not agreed on the signification of the original word כִּנִּים *kinnim*, which different copies of the Septuagint render σκνιφες, σκνιπτες, and σκνηπτες, gnats; and the Vulgate renders sciniphes, which signifies the same.

Mr. Harmer supposes he has found out the true meaning in the word *tarrentes*, mentioned by Vinisaufr, one of our ancient English writers; who, speaking of the expedition of King Richard I. to the Holy Land, says, that "while the army were marching from Cayphas to Caesarea, they were greatly distressed every night by certain worms called *tarrentes*, which crept on the ground, and occasioned a very burning heat by most painful punctures; for, being armed with stings, they conveyed a poison which quickly occasioned those who were wounded by them to swell, and was attended with the most acute pain." All this is far fetched. Bochart has endeavored to prove that the כִּנִּים *kinnim* of the text may mean lice in the common acceptation of the term, and not gnats. 1. Because those in question sprang from the dust of the earth, and not from the waters. 2. Because they were both on men and cattle, which cannot be spoken of gnats. 3. Because their name comes from the radix כִּן *kun*, which signifies to make firm, fix, establish, which can never agree to gnats, flies, etc., which are ever changing their place, and are almost constantly on the wing. 4. Because כִּנָּה *kinnah* is the term by which the Talmudists express the louse, etc. See his *Hierozoicon*, vol. ii., c. xviii., col. 571. The circumstance of their being in man and in beast agrees so well with the nature of the *acarus sanguisugus*, commonly called the tick, belonging to the seventh order of insects called *Aptera*, that I am ready to conclude this is the insect meant. This animal buries both its sucker and head equally in man or beast; and can with very great difficulty be extracted before it is grown to its proper size, and filled with the blood and juices of the animal on which it preys. When fully grown, it has a glossy black oval body: not only horses, cows, and sheep are infested with it in certain countries, but even the common people, especially those who labor in the field, in woods, etc. I know no insect to which the Hebrew term so properly applies. This is the fixed, established insect, which will permit itself to be pulled in pieces rather than let go its hold; and this is literally באדם ובבהמה *baadam ubabbehmah*, in man and in beast, burying its trunk and head in the flesh of both. In woodland countries I have seen many persons as well as cattle grievously infested with these insects.

EXODUS 8:17 They did so; and Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod, and struck the dust of the earth, and there were lice on man, and on animal; all the dust of the earth became lice throughout all the land of Egypt.

EXODUS 8:18 The magicians tried with their enchantments to produce lice, but they couldn't. There were lice on man, and on animal.

Verse 18

The magicians did so - That is, They tried the utmost of their skill, either to produce these insects or to remove this plague; but they could not, no juggling could avail here, because insects must be produced which would stick to and infix themselves in man and beast, which no kind of trick could possibly imitate; and to remove them, as some would translate the passage, was to their power equally impossible. If the magicians even acted by spiritual agents, we find from this case that these agents had assigned limits, beyond which they could not go; for every agent in the universe is acting under the direction or control of the Almighty.

EXODUS 8:19 Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God:" and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he didn't listen to them; as the LORD had spoken.

Verse 19

This is the finger of God - That is, The power and skill of God are here evident. Probably before this the magicians supposed Moses and Aaron to be conjurers, like themselves; but now they are convinced that no man could do these miracles which these holy men did, unless God were with him. God permits evil spirits to manifest themselves in a certain way, that men may see that there is a spiritual world, and be on their guard against seduction. He at the same time shows that all these agents are under his control, that men may have confidence in his goodness and power.

EXODUS 8:20 The LORD said to Moses, "Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh; behold, he comes out to the water; and tell him, 'This is what the LORD says, "Let my people go, that they may serve me.

EXODUS 8:21 Else, if you will not let my people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies on you, and on your servants, and on your people, and into your houses: and the houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms of flies, and also the ground whereon they are.

Verse 21

Swarms of flies upon thee - It is not easy to ascertain the precise meaning of the original word הערב hearob; as the word comes from ערב arab, he mingled, it may be supposed to express a multitude of various sorts of insects. And if the conjecture be admitted that the putrid frogs became the occasion of this plague, (different insects laying their eggs in the bodies of those dead animals, which would soon be hatched, see on Exo 8:14 (note)), then the supposition that a multitude of different kinds of

insects is meant, will seem the more probable. Though the plague of the locusts was miraculous, yet God both brought it and removed it by natural means; see Exo 10:13-19.

Bochart, who has treated this subject with his usual learning and ability, follows the Septuagint, explaining the original by κυνομύα, the dog-fly; which must be particularly hateful to the Egyptians, because they held dogs in the highest veneration, and worshipped Anubis under the form of a dog. In a case of this kind the authority of the Septuagint is very high, as they translated the Pentateuch in the very place where these plagues happened. But as the Egyptians are well known to have paid religious veneration to all kinds of animals and monsters, whence the poet: -

Omnigenumque deum monstra, et latrator Anubis,

I am inclined to favor the literal construction of the word: for as ערב ereb, Exo 12:38, expresses that mixed multitude of different kinds of people who accompanied the Israelites in their departure from Egypt; so here the same term being used, it may have been designed to express a multitude of different kinds of insects, such as flies, wasps, hornets, etc., etc. The ancient Jewish interpreters suppose that all kinds of beasts and reptiles are intended, such as wolves, lions, bears, serpents, etc. Mr. Bate thinks the raven is meant, because the original is so understood in other places; and thus he translates it in his literal version of the Pentateuch: but the meaning already given is the most likely. As to the objection against this opinion drawn from Exo 8:31, there remained not one, it can have very little weight, when it is considered that this may as well be spoken of one of any of the different kinds, as of an individual of one species.

EXODUS 8:22 I will set apart in that day the land of Goshen, in which my people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there; to the end you may know that I am the LORD in the midst of the earth.

Verse 22

I will sever in that day - הפליתי hiphleythi, has been translated by some good critics, I will miraculously separate; so the Vulgate: Faciam mirabilem, "I will do a marvellous thing." And the Septuagint, παραδοξασω, I will render illustrious the land of Goshen in that day; and this he did, by exempting that land, and its inhabitants the Israelites, from the plagues by which he afflicted the land of Egypt.

EXODUS 8:23 I will put a division between my people and your people: by tomorrow shall this sign be."''

Verse 23

And I will put a division - פדתי peduth, a redemption, between my people and thy people; God hereby showing that he had redeemed them from those plagues to which he had abandoned the others.

EXODUS 8:24 The LORD did so; and there came grievous swarms of flies into the house of Pharaoh, and into his servants' houses: and in all the land of Egypt the land was corrupted by reason of the swarms of flies.

Verse 24

The land was corrupted - Every thing was spoiled, and many of the inhabitants destroyed, being probably stung to death by these venomous insects. This seems to be intimated by the psalmist, "He sent divers sorts of flies among them, which Devoured them," Psa 78:45.

In ancient times, when political, domestic, and personal cleanliness was but little attended to, and offal of different kinds permitted to corrupt in the streets and breed vermin, flies multiplied exceedingly, so that we read in ancient authors of whole districts being laid waste by them; hence different people had deities, whose office it was to defend them against flies. Among these we may reckon Baalzebub, the fly-god of Ekron; Hercules, muscarum abactor, Hercules, the expeller of flies, of the Romans; the Muagrus of the Eleans, whom they invoked against pestilential swarms of flies; and hence Jupiter, the supreme god of the heathens, had the epithets of Απομμιοσ and Μωωδης, because he was supposed to expel flies, and defend his worshippers against them. See Dodd.

EXODUS 8:25 Pharaoh called for Moses and for Aaron, and said, "Go, sacrifice to your God in the land!"

Verse 25

Sacrifice to your God in the land - That is, Ye shall not leave Egypt, but I shall cause your worship to be tolerated here.

EXODUS 8:26 Moses said, "It isn't appropriate to do so; for we shall sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians to the LORD our God. Behold, shall we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and won't they stone us?"

Verse 26

We shall sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians - That is, The animals which they hold sacred, and will not permit to be slain, are those which our customs require us to sacrifice to our God; and should we do this in Egypt the people would rise in a mass, and stone us to death. Perhaps few people were more superstitious than the Egyptians. Almost every production of nature was an object of their religious worship: the sun, moon, planets, stars, the river Nile, animals of all sorts, from the human being to the monkey, dog, cat, and ibis, and even the onions and leeks which grew in their gardens. Jupiter was adored by them under the form of a ram, Apollo under the form of a crow, Bacchus under that of a goat, and Juno under that of a heifer. The reason why the Egyptians worshipped those animals is given by Eusebius, viz., that when the giants made war on the gods, they were obliged to take refuge in Egypt, and assume the shapes or disguise themselves under different kinds of animals in order to escape. Jupiter hid himself in the body of a ram, Apollo in that

of a crow, Bacchus in a goat, Diana in a cat, Juno in a white heifer, Venus in a fish, and Mercury in the bird ibis; all which are summoned up by Ovid in the following lines: -

Duxque gregis fit Jupiter -
 Delius in corvo, proles Semeleia capro,
 Fele soror Phoebj, nivea Saturnia vacca,
 Pisce Venus latuit, Cyllenius ibidis alis.
 Metam., l. v., fab. v., 1. 326.
 How the gods fled to Egypt's slimy soil,
 And hid their heads beneath the banks of Nile;
 How Typhon from the conquer'd skies pursued
 Their routed godheads to the seven-mouth'd flood;
 Forced every god, his fury to escape,
 Some beastly form to take, or earthly shape.
 Jove, so she sung, was changed into a ram,
 From whence the horns of Libyan Ammon came;
 Bacchus a goat, Apollo was a crow,
 Phoebe a cat, the wife of Jove a cow,
 Whose hue was whiter than the falling snow;
 Mercury, to a nasty ibis turn'd,
 The change obscene, afraid of Typhon mourn'd,
 While Venus from a fish protection craves,
 And once more plunges in her native waves - Maynwaring.

These animals therefore became sacred to them on account of the deities, who, as the fable reports, had taken refuge in them. Others suppose that the reason why the Egyptians would not sacrifice or kill those creatures was their belief in the doctrine of the metempsychosis, or transmigration of souls; for they feared lest in killing an animal they should kill a relative or a friend. This doctrine is still held by the Hindoos.

EXODUS 8:27 We will go three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice to the LORD our God, as he shall command us."

Verse 27

And sacrifice to the Lord - as he shall command us - It is very likely that neither Moses nor Aaron knew as yet in what manner God would be worshipped; and they expected to receive a direct revelation from him relative to this subject, when they should come into the wilderness.

EXODUS 8:28 Pharaoh said, "I will let you go, that you may sacrifice to the LORD your God in the wilderness, only you shall not go very far away. Pray for me."

Verse 28

I will let you go only ye shall not go very far away - Pharaoh relented because the hand of God was heavy upon him; but he was not willing to give up his gain. The Israelites were very profitable to him; they were slaves of the state, and their hard labor was very productive: hence he professed a willingness, first to tolerate their religion in the land, (Exo 8:25); or to permit them to go into the wilderness, so that they went not far away, and would soon return. How ready is foolish man, when the hand of God presses him sore, to compound with his Maker! He will consent to give up some sins, provided God will permit him to keep others.

Entreat for me - Exactly similar to the case of Simon Magus, who, like Pharaoh, fearing the Divine judgments, begged an interest in the prayers of Peter, Act 8:24.

EXODUS 8:29 Moses said, "Behold, I go out from you, and I will pray to the LORD that the swarms of flies may depart from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people, tomorrow; only don't let Pharaoh deal deceitfully any more in not letting the people go to sacrifice to the LORD."

EXODUS 8:30 Moses went out from Pharaoh, and prayed to the LORD.

EXODUS 8:31 The LORD did according to the word of Moses, and he removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people. There remained not one.

Verse 31

The Lord did according to the word of Moses - How powerful is prayer! God permits his servant to prescribe even the manner and time in which he shall work.

He removed the swarms - Probably by means of a strong wind, which swept them into the sea.

EXODUS 8:32 Pharaoh hardened his heart this time also, and he didn't let the people go.

Verse 32

Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also - See Exo 8:15. This hardening was the mere effect of his self-determining obstinacy. He preferred his gain to the will and command of Jehovah, and God made his obstinacy the means of showing forth his own power and providence in a supereminent degree.

1. As every false religion proves there is a true one, as a copy, however marred or imperfect, shows there was an original from which it was taken, so false miracles prove that there were genuine miracles, and that God chooses at particular times, for the most important purposes, to invert the established order of nature, and thus prove his omnipotence and universal agency. That the miracles wrought at this time were real we have the fullest proof. The waters, for instance, were not turned into blood in appearance merely, but were really thus changed. Hence the people could not drink of them; and as blood in a very short time, when exposed to the air, becomes putrid, so did the bloody waters; therefore all the fish that were in the river died.

2. No human power or ingenuity could produce such frogs as annoyed the land of Egypt. This also was a real, not an imaginary, plague. Innumerable multitudes of these animals were produced for

the purpose; and the heaps of their dead carcasses, which putrefied and infected the land, at once demonstrated the reality of the miracle.

3. The lice both on man and beast through the whole land, and the innumerable swarms of flies, gave such proofs of their reality as to put the truth of these miracles out of question for ever. It was necessary that this point should be fully proved, that both the Egyptians and Israelites might see the finger of God in these awful works.

4. To superficial observers only do "Moses and the magicians appear to be nearly matched." The power of God was shown in producing and removing the plagues. In certain cases the magicians imitated the production of a plague, but they had no power to remove any. They could not seem to remove the bloody color, nor the putrescency from the waters through which the fish were destroyed, though they could imitate the color itself; they could not remove the frogs, the lice, or swarms of flies, though they could imitate the former and latter; they could by dexterity of hand or diabolic influence produce serpents, but they could not bring one forward that could swallow up the rod of Aaron. In every respect they fall infinitely short of the power and wonderful energy evidenced in the miracles of Moses and Aaron. The opposition therefore of those men served only as a foil to set off the excellence of that power by which these messengers of God acted.

5. The courage, constancy, and faith of Moses are worthy of the most serious consideration. Had he not been fully satisfied of the truth and certainty of his Divine mission, he could not have encountered such a host of difficulties; had he not been certain of the issue, he could not have preserved amidst so many discouraging circumstances; and had he not had a deep acquaintance with God, his faith in every trial must have necessarily failed. So strong was this grace in him that he could even pledge his Maker to the performance of works concerning which he had not as yet consulted him! He therefore let Pharaoh fix the very time on which he would wish to have the plague removed; and when this was done, he went to God by faith and prayer to obtain this new miracle; and God in the most exact and circumstantial manner fulfilled the word of his servant.

6. From all this let us learn that there is a God who worketh in the earth; that universal nature is under his control; that he can alter, suspend, counteract, or invert its general laws whensoever he pleases; and that he can save or destroy by the most feeble and most contemptible instruments. We should therefore deeply reverence his eternal power and Godhead, and look with respect on every creature he has made, as the meanest of them may in his hand, become the instrument of our salvation or our ruin.

7. Let us not imagine that God has so bound himself to work by general laws, that those destructions cannot take place which designate a particular providence. Pharaoh and the Egyptians are confounded, afflicted, routed, and ruined, while the land of Goshen and the Israelites are free from every plague! No blood appears in their streams; no frogs, lice, nor flies, in all their borders! They trusted in the true God, and could not be confounded. Reader, how secure mayest thou rest if thou hast this God for thy friend! He was the Protector and Friend of the Israelites through the blood of that covenant which is the very charter of thy salvation: trust in and pray to him as Moses did, and then Satan and his angels shall be bruised under thy feet, and thou shalt not only be preserved from every plague, but be crowned with his loving kindness and tender mercy. He is the same to-day that he was yesterday, and shall continue the same for ever. Hallelujah, the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!