

Stalker, D.M.G., Peake's Commentary, p. 208

(175c) It becomes more and more difficult now to believe that the monotheism of the 8th cent. prophets could have evolved naturally from polytheism, as was formerly supposed, and we are driven more and more to postulate on the one hand some divine thrusting-in of revelation by which the Hebrews were pointed from one plane of apprehension to a higher, and, on the other, some great personality to interpret the thrusting-in. In other words, we are being driven back to take seriously what the Hebrews said in our book - that God entered into a covenant with their forefathers at Sinai, which determined not only their relation to him, but also the form of their society. Their emphasis, unique in the ancient world, upon justice and righteousness, derived from the character of the God who revealed himself there, and not from growing insight into what was humanly desirable. . . . In the same way, it is no longer possible to dismiss Moses as little more than a figure of legend. . . . But of his mediation to his people of the God revealed to him himself on Sinai, and that he laid the foundations of the social, ceremonial and legal systems of Israel, of these there can now no longer be any reasonable doubt.

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But it should be noticed that another mark of more recent scholarship is the disposition to treat P with much more respect, and to regard it as a source from which valuable historical information can be derived. It can no longer be looked on as a largely idealistic exilic and post-exilic projection-back. In many places it is now seen to be based upon sources that are quite old and to make use of ancient tradition.