THE ETHICS
AND THEOLOGY OF
THE OLD TESTAMENT
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PREFACE

THIS book contains notes on the Ethics and Theology of the Old Testament. It must not be taken to be anything more. The subject is too vast to be treated adequately in a short space. Many lines of argument necessary to the conclusions advanced have been omitted perforce. It is intended to be read with the Bible in hand, so that the points may be seen clearly. The compiler is very sensible of its defects, and hopes that the reader will consult some of the books named in the Bibliography for fuller information and reasoning. To all of them he owes much, most of all to Dr. Foster Kent's excellent 'Student's Old Testament,' five volumes of which have been already published, and the sixth is eagerly awaited by all students of the Old Testament. The author's object is to awaken an interest in one of the most human and living collections of man's thought on the nature and

being of God, and his relations to man and the world. He wishes too to scatter some old misconceptions of the meaning of revelation and inspiration, which have hindered the Bible-reader from a real understanding of the Jewish Scriptures.

He has based his conclusions not upon those of great Old Testament scholars alone, but on an independent and careful examination of the various books. Had greater space been at his disposal, he could have elaborated both the evidence and conclusions drawn from it. His work has been a labour of love undertaken in a spirit of deep reverence, yet with that freedom of investigation which alone can lead towards truth. It is his earnest desire to induce others to study the Old Testament, that they too may perceive the wonderful evolution of thought and conduct, which is shown so clearly in its various writings. He acknowledges thankfully his debt to Dr. Mellone, Principal of the Unitarian Home Missionary College, for real help and valuable suggestions.

A. W. F.

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Chapter I

THE STUDY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

The old view and the new. Inspiration and Revelation. Textual Criticism. Historical Criticism. Illustrations of its results. Foundations of the study of the Old Testament.

ALTHOUGH the old belief in the plenary inspiration of the Bible has largely yielded to the assaults of criticism in the minds of most reflective readers, its effects survive in unexpected quarters. Dean Burgon once stated its extreme position with fine exaggeration, when he ventured to assert in substance that 'every word, every comma, every letter, every full stop in the Holy Scriptures were divinely inspired.' He forgot surely that in most of the oldest original manuscripts there were no marks of punctuation. When indeed a colon was inserted in Romans ix. 5, in the excellent manuscript *Codex Ephraemi*, he refused on dogmatic

grounds to recognize its existence. What he meant in plainer terms was simply this: the Spirit of God dictated precisely what was written down, while the sacred authors wrote from his dictation inerrant statements of final truth. Others have called the ancient writers 'God's pens directed by his Spirit.'

Such a theory of inspiration—for theory it is and nothing more—needs only to be stated to show its inherent unreality. A few sects cling to it in its crudity; but most scholars have rejected it, though all of them have not shaken themselves free from its influence.

Hence many theologians postulate a different kind of inspiration for the Bible from that which is the source of other sacred or ennobling books. Thus they are led to wrest the plain sense of a multitude of passages in the Bible when they attempt to interpret them. Others again persistently, perhaps half unconsciously, imagine that the conceptions of God in the various writings of the Old Testament are one and the same. Even if they do not admit this glaring fallacy to themselves, its influence colours no small part of their thought.

The scholars of the Roman Catholic

Church do not hesitate to regard the Bible as the secret treasure of their Church, which alone is able to interpret it correctly according to ecclesiastical tradition. Luther and the Reformers effectually shattered that arrogant claim, but set up a no less false view of inspiration. With this view is closely bound up an equally unreal conception of revelation, which in divine truth is confined to the Bible and closes with the end of the hallowed volume. Thus a radically untrue definition of revelation is held up by a host of preachers for popular acceptance.

Any scholar who holds that inspiration means dictation by God, and that it is his sole duty to interpret new truth in the light of any such divine dictation, will never understand the Bible. Such a conviction does grave injustice more especially to the Old Testament. In Puritan times and before, it led to the absurd allegorizing into a picture of Christ and his Church of that collection of exquisite and sensuous bridal odes known as the Song of Songs. Even in our own day many struggle to do away with the difficulty of the obvious conflict of physical science with the narrative of

Creation (Genesis i.-ii. 4a) by lengthening out the days of creation into myriads of years. Such attempted harmonizations, though pious in intention do not carry the serious student far on the way towards truth, but have a tendency to lead him away from it. They are the direct result of that unreal conception of inspiration which confuses it with dictation and consequently accepts its written results as infallible. Something different then must be meant both by inspiration and revelation.

In the first place revelation must never be regarded as a completed process, but rather as the gradual unveiling by God of his nature and being in the soul of man along the centuries with so much light as the thinkers in each were able to bear. By its very essence it must be and is progressive, as may be seen by any unprejudiced reader of the Old Testament. At each stage of its progress it displays unmistakable evidence of the ideas of the thinkers during that stage. In the various conceptions of the personality of God we can follow the development in thought about *Jahveh* (*Jehovah*) from the family to the tribal god, from the tribal to the national god, from the national to the

supreme God of the universe. Similarly, there is a distinct growth in the ethical and spiritual perception of the character of *Jahveh* corresponding to the ideals of the holiest men of each succeeding generation.

To the authors of the early traditions lying at the back of the book of Judges the character of *Jahveh* appeared to be far less exalted than to Hosea or Isaiah. Gideon, Jephthah, and their contemporaries would hardly have understood the thought of God which breathes through the beautiful pages of Deuteronomy. Step by step along the ages of the past the thinkers of each generation, beginning from the vantage-ground attained by the one immediately preceding it, climbed gradually up the path of revelation, until the priests became supreme and the Old Testament was finally closed. So those who understand revelation to imply finality fail to perceive the method of God in relation to his children, as it is displayed in the history of mankind. In the past his Spirit stirred more gifted men to think out the problems of God, the origin of men and things, duty, life, death. They were moved to utter their thoughts in speech, or to write them down for the benefit of the

future. But they were left free to express their ideas in their own words, with their own imagery, limited largely by the conditions of their own day, but occasionally transcending these by the power of their ideal. With each generation the ideal became more exalted; thus human progress has been rendered possible, nor has it ceased with the close of the Bible.

Such is inspiration, the stirring of the Spirit of God in the soul of man to noble thoughts and lofty ideals, while its consequent result is revelation. The old view, by which the Bible was regarded as the only divinely inspired book, the actual and 'literal word of God,' is slowly but surely passing away. The study of comparative religions has hastened its passing by showing that to other nations besides the Hebrews inspiration and revelation have been given in varying degrees and leading to various heights of truth. The Old Testament in particular has suffered sorely from its long prevalence. Types of Christ have been found in passages which have nothing to do with Christ; antitypes have been set in opposition to the types, and prototypes been set before both. False conceptions of the

character of God drawn from the oldest traditions of a primitive age have been foisted into Christianity itself and endless confusions have arisen.

Now a change has taken place in theological inquiry: it has been clearly realized at last that the Bible is a human library containing many different books, the work of many different thinkers of widely different dates, each of which must be so studied that we may understand its distinctive thought and characteristic manner of expression. It is surely more important to discover what a given writer really means than to credit him with conceptions drawn from a more advanced stage of thought. The Old Testament especially must be read in each of its parts not with the view of importing into it that Christian theology which is the growth of at least five centuries, which may have its roots in the Bible, but certainly is not found in its full development in the Bible, much less in the Hebrew Scriptures. It must be studied with the plain object of getting at its original meaning, as it was intended by its writers and recognized by their contemporaries.

It is only when the earnest and reverent

inquirer observes this guiding principle, that he can hope to discover the true sense of what he is reading. Doubtless he will make many mistakes and commit some extravagances: but as inscriptions and manuscripts are discovered, as more is learned of the thought and life of the neighbouring peoples whose influence can be traced over Israel, the possibility of mistakes grows less and the attainment of truth becomes more assured. It is the object of this little work to trace the growth of the progressive self-revelation of God in his relations with one ancient people, which is found with unique clearness and beauty in the Old Testament.

As far as can be divined with any degree of certainty, the Hebrew nation differs from every other people of antiquity in insisting from its earliest origin upon the holiness of God. That is why the study of its history and religion is so essential to our modern thought, to say nothing of the further reason that Christianity cannot be understood without it. The first step in any such investigation is to secure as accurate a text as possible, so that we may feel comparatively confident that we have before us what was actually written by the writer in his very

words. First the various manuscripts must be compared with one another that from their different readings the best and most coherent may be selected. If the printing-press leaves room for many mistakes, the copying out by hand of ancient manuscripts left room for many more. Secondly the translations of the earliest date must be consulted, as they often help the student to restore the original Hebrew of the manuscript from which they have been made.

Amongst these the *Septuagint* or version of the Old Testament by the 'Seventy Elders' in Alexandria is of prime importance, as its text differs often from that of our ordinary Hebrew Bible and was earlier (250-105 B.C.). Lastly and more sparingly the positive blunders of the scribes who made the copy, must be corrected as far as may be. It must be remarked that there is no finality in Textual Criticism: an older manuscript than any which have survived, may yet be found, and the text materially altered. But there is good reason to believe that we have a fairly correct text of the Old Testament in its more essential parts, so that we may feel a certain degree of security in attempting its sound interpretation.

When Textual Criticism has done its work, a further step must be taken. The student needs not simply to be able to translate it, but to understand what the text means. This he can hardly achieve without the aid of Historical Criticism, by which an attempt is made to find out if possible when the documents were written, who wrote them, the circumstances under which they were written, what their authors meant by their writings, how those understood them for whom they were written. That is the process applied by all scholars to ancient works of any country and in any language: why then should the Old Testament alone be exempt from it, nay, how can we hope to understand the Old Testament without its employment?

So far is its sacredness from being destroyed by this necessary process, that as its historical application is perceived, its religious worth is immeasurably enhanced. It is not holy, as not a few still believe, because its manner of writing was fundamentally different from that of other sacred books, but because of what is written in it, because it is possible to trace clearly in its pages a continuous revelation of God in the spirits of

prophet, historian, thinker, poet, which is seen at its highest in the life-work of Jesus 'the prophet of Nazareth.' It is the purpose of Historical Criticism to investigate this development in thought from its original simplicity to its fullest achievement, from its tiny seed to its ripened fruit. Hence Historical Criticism is not only extremely helpful, but absolutely essential, to the correct understanding of the Old Testament, as of all other ancient writings. It is the guide leading by slow and painful steps to the mountain-top, from which the widest prospect can be obtained, noting by the way the various view-points passed and calling attention to the beauties of each.

This is not the place to recount the different methods which have been adopted to secure a better understanding of the Old Testament or the scholars who have adopted them. Such a narrative would fill a long series of volumes. At this point it will suffice to state that the general results of Historical Criticism will be taken for granted, though the extreme positions of certain modern scholars will be set upon one side as too speculative and as lacking sufficient evidence. In the first place it will

be interesting by way of contrast to submit examples of the older view of some portions of the Old Testament, to show what Historical Criticism has done in the past, what it can do in the present and future. Former readers regarded the whole of the Pentateuch —or first five books of the Bible—with a few insignificant exceptions as having been written by Moses, the book of Joshua as bearing the name of its author, the Psalms as having been produced by David save where some are stated to be the work of other men.

Historical Criticism has long since sapped the foundations of any such belief, which involves the Bible-reader in a maze of contradictions extremely puzzling to all who accept the infallibility of the book. It has been applied resolutely to the Pentateuch, which with the book of Joshua makes up the Hexateuch—or work in six parts—with a surprising uniformity of results amongst a great number of sober scholars. Colenso, Driver, and many others in England, Kuenen and Oort in Holland, Wellhausen and Duhm in Germany, Dr. Moore and Dr. Foster Kent in America, to name only a few, have reached very definite conclusions from their patient and laborious research:

while they differ widely in detail, they agree in their main results.

At least four strands have been found carefully intertwined or singly in the Hexateuch, each representing the traditions of a different period with a long interval between the first and the last. The earliest is *J* or the *Jahvist* (*Jehovist*) so called because from the beginning he applies the name *Jahveh* to God. The writing of his school is the most vigorous and picturesque of the four, as his conception of God is the most anthropomorphic. His work may be said with probable correctness to have been written down from about 850 to 800 B.C. The writers of his school, who are denoted by *J* as if they were a single person for convenience, have a strong interest in the kingdom of Judah and were also of the prophetic class.

About 750-700 B.C. the prophetic schools of the northern kingdom began to compile their history-book beginning with the story of Abraham and probably ending with the fall of Samaria in 721 B.C. They are known by the general name of the *Elohist* denoted by the symbol *E*, because they use the word *Elohim* for God until the revelation of his name to Moses (Exodus iii. 15). The

Elohist is more spiritual and less anthropomorphic than his predecessor and at the same time less vivid and picturesque. Somewhere about 650 B.C. an historian of the Judah linked together *J* and *E* into one history-book known as *JE*, which lies at the basis of the historical portions of Deuteronomy and of much of its legislation. Together with the book of Judges *JE* contains the earliest legends and traditions of the Hebrew race, which are told always to drive home some moral lesson.

Some years after 621 B.C. the law-book of Deuteronomy was added to *JE* to form what may be styled *JED*. This may have occurred just before or just after the Exile in 586 B.C. At the same time the previous history was retouched by the Deuteronomist or *D*, whose hand is most conspicuous in the early part of Joshua. This school of writers edited Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings, making large additions to each, and handing them down substantially as they are found to-day. They could not accept the ancient stories in their original simplicity and occasional crudity: hence they interwove narratives of their own into the older traditions to correct them according to their moral standards.

This process of rewriting history was carried to a great excess by the priestly writers of the Exile and just afterwards, whose work is commonly known as *P*. Believing that Israel from the first was a 'covenant people' bound together in a divine theocracy, in which the priest alone was entitled to sacrifice and the high priest was spiritual head of the whole, they transferred the gorgeous ritual of the Temple of Solomon to the first days of the nation, and imagined that their elaborate ceremonial code centred upon an impossibly splendid tabernacle was revealed to Moses upon Sinai. This with a bare annalistic account of the patriarchs they interwove with *JED*, thus forming *JEDP*, or the Pentateuch as it has survived. Probably their work was not completed until somewhere about 400-350 B.C. The style of these four schools of authors or compilers is quite distinct and for the most part the components can be separated from one another, when each will be found to form a connected story.

Historical Criticism has succeeded with marvellous skill in disentangling these four strands of tradition, so that the student is able to assign each to its own place in the

development of Hebrew religion with comparative certainty. The task at first was one of enormous difficulty, requiring a competent knowledge of Hebrew and its cognate languages, a minute examination of other ancient records and inscriptions, a nicely balanced judgment, and above all an intense sympathy with the matter under investigation. It has had to combat deeply rooted prejudices, to destroy the foundations of many old and fondly cherished beliefs.

What, then, are the foundations of the present brief study of the theology and ethics of the Old Testament? First and foremost it is based upon a searching examination of the Old Testament itself, such as would be essential to the understanding of any other ancient document. Next that great religious library must be read as far as possible in the light of the circumstances in which its various books were written, read as a collection of intensely human documents, containing the record of God's progressive self-revelation to his people along the centuries of its independent existence, during the Exile, and after its return to its beloved home-land.

Historical Criticism is a necessary guide in any such investigation. Beginning with the writings themselves it simply seeks to discover their historical order, to arrive at the actual meaning of each. From its patient efforts we learn that the tradition of Israel is fourfold, that the intertwined strands can be separated, that each belongs to a well-defined period. The positive results of this method of inquiry will supply a generally secure basis for the conclusions which will be drawn. An attempt will be made to weigh the evidence impartially: theories simply traditional or merely speculative will be set in their proper places, though they cannot be entirely ignored without doing injustice to their underlying thought. But many of the results of modern criticism are as certain as human study and human judgment can make them. They are supported alike by such external evidence as is available, and what is of far more importance, by the Old Testament writings themselves. Finality is not sought or attempted, since it cannot be reached by human thinkers: the student moves towards truth, which in its fullness rests with God alone.

The prophet-preachers of the Hebrews collected the oral traditions of the far past of their race, writing them down to illustrate profound moral lessons. Hence it will be possible to discern their thoughts and ideals in the realm of religion. This purpose in their writing must be borne in mind in any attempt to get behind their range of conceptions to the traditions themselves as they formed part of the national development. They have been set down in many cases so exactly, that it is still possible to arrive at their original form apart from the lesson which it was intended to convey. Alike in the oracles and narratives of the prophet-preachers the student will find secure foundations for such conclusions as he is able to attain. From age to age their thought grew in range and intensity, though each of them plainly reveals the circumstances and conditions of his own age. By their aid and by the evidence which they offer, the student will be able to trace religious progress step by step, making each secure as he passes along. So to him the Old Testament will become luminous with heavenly light shining through pure and holy human souls, and he will be able not only to apprehend the growth

of Hebrew religion, but the eternal progress of all religion.

Nor will he forget that the ancient teachers have their descendants in these later days, who bear a closer resemblance to them than is always either recognized or admitted. He will bear in mind that the book of revelation is not yet closed; nor will he seek to close it by limiting it to one nation or to one period. He will proceed along the toilsome path of patient research in perfect freedom, moving from recess to recess, until he has penetrated to the heart of the matter, as far as his strength will permit. Then he will lay the results of his inquiry before the reader, knowing well that they are fallible and liable to revision by later investigators. The reasoned conclusions of some of the greatest Old Testament scholars will be set forth in the following pages, though an independent judgment will be exercised in their selection and with regard to their validity. By this means it is hoped that the Old Testament will be no longer considered as a closed and completed record of all revelation until the New, but as a living human library containing the narrative of a progressive revelation of God himself to man and through man,

Chapter II

EARLIER HEBREW RELIGION

The early Hebrews. The most ancient Legends. The Creation and the Fall. Two traditions of Cain. The Sons of God and the Daughters of Men. The Flood. An early Genealogy. The Tower of Babel. Jahveh as he appeared to the Patriarchs. Early Ethics and Theology.

THE earliest known home of Israel lay in Haran, between the Euphrates and the Tigris, where the richness of the soil had induced the original Semitic race to make its first settlements. Its ancestors were one of the youngest branches of the parental stock, to which their kinship is betrayed by their language and the most ancient form of their religion. Many nations descending from the ancestral race had already attained a high degree of civilization, while Israel was in its infancy, and continued to exercise a powerful influence upon its subsequent development.

One of the first names of the tribes was that of 'the Hebrews'—*the men who had* crossed over, the word 'river' being understood. It still remains uncertain, if the river in question is the Euphrates or the Jordan. In the one case the name would be given to the nation on its departure from its primitive home, in the other it would date from the beginning of the conquest of Canaan. The former explanation derives some doubtful support from Genesis xiv. 13, where Abram or Abraham is named 'the Hebrew': but its force depends upon the date assigned to that enigmatical chapter.

It is, however, of comparatively small importance which alternative is chosen, so long as it is remembered that the first Hebrews were a clan or clans of emigrant nomads leaving their first home under some well-known leader, halting for a time in Canaan, and settling for a longer period in the district of Goshen in Egypt. This leader is always represented as Abram in the earliest documents, whose name afterwards became Abraham, which form will be used henceforth. The clan appears first as his household; behind his figure very possibly was a real hero of the name, whose

strong personality impressed itself so deeply upon his followers that they learned to regard him as their 'first father.' Genesis xiv. may supply a hint of such a heroic personality, where he is represented as a mighty Sheikh able to recover his nephew Lot by a rear-guard action with the powerful army of the local kings. If indeed 'Amraphel king of Shinar,' who appears in this narrative, be the same with Hammur-abi, who flourished about 2200 B.C., the evidence would be definite. But as the date of the chapter is uncertain, its testimony must not be pressed, though it must not be overlooked.

One fact must be noted at the outset; all Semitic peoples have the custom of describing a whole clan by the single name of a heroic leader, and embodying its history in his exploits. The nations of Moab and Ammon are thus described as the sons of Lot by his own daughters (Genesis xix. 30-38). Indeed the later but more familiar designation of the Hebrews as 'Children of Israel' differs little from the Irish and Highland clan-names, such as the O'Neils, that is 'descendants of Neil of the nine hostages,' or the McDonalds, that is 'sons of Donald.' Hence the story of Abraham

in its essence may be nothing more than a piece of graphically told clan-history.

Few of the earlier stories in Genesis have survived exactly in their primitive form. The oral traditions were written down by the prophet-preachers of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel with a definite moral purpose. Hence it is natural to suppose that they have toned down the crude simplicity of the more ancient myths and moulded the first legends to secure their object. Some have maintained that the patriarchs are the heroes or gods of local Canaanite shrines, Abraham of Hebron, Isaac of Beersheba, and so forth. But even though the Hebrews found a considerable civilization in Canaan, when they raided it, there is no adequate support in the Old Testament for this conjecture—it is nothing more—wherein so far as they are concerned there is almost no trace of ancestor worship. It may, therefore, be passed by until more conclusive evidence is produced in its support.

So far as we know their story, the first Hebrews were nomads starting from Mesopotamia, seeking pasturage for their flocks and herds as they passed westward. They must

therefore have brought with them many of their old conceptions and customs of worship from their home in Haran. It is the task of the religious historian to trace these ideas and habits as nearly as may be to their source. The matter involves much difficulty: the surviving narratives are derived from a period considerably later in the national history, and cannot fail to be modified by its thought. An invaluable antiquarian note (Joshua xxiv. 2) runs thus:—'Your fathers dwelt of old beyond the Euphrates, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nahor; and *they served other gods*.' Here it is plainly asserted that the forefathers of the Hebrews before their migration from their earliest home were polytheists like the rest of the Semites, who remained such through the future.

It cannot now be decided how long their descendants continued to follow the practice of their ancestors. Probably the clan of Nahor which lingered along the banks of the Euphrates, remained true to its ancient faith. The clan of Abraham in its wanderings from pasture-ground to pasture-ground would naturally tend towards the belief in a tribal god, who could go with them on their

journeys and protect them. A further note is found concerning Enosh the son of Seth (Genesis iv. 26), which declares 'Then men began to call on the name of Jahveh.' In other words the worship of Jahveh dated from the time of Enosh, which would locate its origin in Haran before the migration took place. The note itself may have no great historical value: but it does show that in the opinion of its author there was a time when Jahveh was either not known, or not worshipped under that name. If the two notes be taken together, it is possible to infer that the worship of Jahveh was not the practice of the nation in the far-off past, though his name may not have been entirely unknown in some of its families. It has indeed been contended, perhaps with more emphasis than force, by Friedrich Delitzsch ('Babel and Bible,' pp. 71-72) that the name Jahveh has been found as part of proper names amongst the records of Babylon. But greater agreement than exists to-day in the interpretation of these venerable documents is needed, before a positive conclusion can be reached.

The story of Jacob supplies a hint of primitive polytheism in the family of Terah.

When he was bidding farewell to Laban, he is represented as making a covenant with his wily father-in-law (Genesis xxxi. 53), wherein the latter says, 'The God of Abraham and the god of Nahor, the *gods* of their fathers, shall judge between us.' It is true that the word 'gods' may be translated as in the Septuagint by the singular word 'God': but as the Hebrew verb is in the plural, such a rendering is not so correct. Now Laban is said to have had a household god or gods (Teraph or Teraphim), which Rachel stole from her father (Genesis xxxi. 30). Hence it seems probable that Laban swore by his family-god, while Jacob swore by his under the name of 'the Fear of Isaac.' Again it is recorded that Jacob at a later period in obedience to the divine command caused the members of his caravan to 'put away the strange gods,' which they had been worshipping (xxxv. 2-4), which he buried beneath the terebinth in Shechem. Hence it would seem certain, that so long as he remained with Laban, Jacob's household worshipped other gods than the leader of their clan. No doubt Laban's Teraph may have been an image of Jahveh; but that is far from probable. Of course the evidence

based upon a single passage of disputed interpretation must not be pressed too closely; but the passage itself is significant and must be allowed its due weight in any faithful investigation of Hebrew religion.

It now becomes necessary to consider some of the most ancient Semitic legends, which the nomads almost certainly brought with them from Mesopotamia. The first natural questions which primitive man asks himself are these. Whence did I come, what am I, whither am I going, what is the source of all that I see around me? In the oldest legend of the *Creation* with its accompanying story of 'the Fall' (Genesis ii. 4b-iii.) a noble attempt has been made to find satisfying answers in a beautiful and childlike form. The Creation-story found in the opening of Genesis (i.-ii. 4a) cannot properly be discussed at this point of the history: it is one of the latest additions to the Pentateuch, and though based on an old Babylonian narrative its underlying thought is more scientific and more spiritual than the one under consideration.

Hitherto no close parallel to the earlier account has yet been found in the Babylonian records. Hence it may fairly be re-

garded as an original contribution to religious thought from some northern Semitic source. It may be noted that at the beginning of the description of the Fall the presence in Eden of the 'tree of life,' as well as of the 'tree of knowledge,' has been omitted. Much weight need not be attached to the omission, which may be paralleled in historians of a far later date. Oral tradition is rarely exact or self-consistent in all of its details. Though the narrative of the legend has been invested with a fine prophetic glamour, it is clearly most primitive and in its earliest form lies within the beginnings of recorded Hebrew thought. It is based upon the inference that as children are born into the ordinary family, so the human race must have owed its origin to a solitary pair.

The story of the creation first of the man, then of the woman, is in the highest degree anthropomorphic. Jahveh is represented as actually moulding Adam out of 'the dust of the earth,' as literally 'breathing into his nostrils the breath of life,' as making the animals to be his companions, and upon the failure of these as shaping Eve out of one of his ribs. What matters most in this simple process is that it finds an answer to the

question 'what is the source of all things?' in the creative activity of Jahveh. Again after appointing the man and the woman to tend the garden, during 'the cool of the day' he comes to walk in it like an Eastern monarch in his plaisance. It is very human, yet at the same time very dignified, and just what might have been expected from childlike prehistoric thought.

Moreover, as it was natural for an Eastern king to forbid his gardeners to eat of some particularly choice fruit, Jahveh laid a strong prohibition upon the man and the woman. Immediately their curiosity was aroused and made them long to break his commandment. The idea of the 'tree of knowledge' has no exact parallel elsewhere in Semitic thought. The 'tree of life,' on the other hand, appears amongst the ancient myths of many different nations. It is worthy of remark that Semitic nations commonly ascribed the Creation to their own chief deity, though they were far from denying the existence of other gods in their own and in other peoples. It is of the essence of polytheism to be tolerant.

The story of the Fall originally was probably an 'aetiological legend,' that is a legend

attempting to explain the 'cause' of common events in life. It would seem to have been meant to account for the severe pangs of child-birth, the necessity of hard and laborious work, the serpent's peculiar way of moving over the ground. The talking serpent itself finds many parallels in the numerous Eastern stories in which speaking animals play a prominent part. As it has survived in the dressing of the Judean prophets, the legend has taken upon itself a more solemn meaning than was probably involved in it at first. It does explain what it set out to explain, but it does infinitely more. It describes in clearest terms the source of temptation, sin, punishment. Curiously enough the legend does not seem to have influenced the later prophetic theology; nor do we find any allusion to it in the Old Testament after the first six chapters of Genesis.

The tale may contain reminiscences of the fertile home of the first Hebrews in Mesopotamia, as may be implied by the elaborate geographical note upon the situation of Eden (Genesis ii. 10-14), which seems to have been added by a later editor. If that be the case, the story itself grew in Haran or Syria, before

the nomads made their first appearance in Canaan. By it we learn that in older days they held an anthropomorphic conception of the nature and being of Jahveh, which was lower than the more spiritual thought of the prophets, who told the legend in such a manner as to draw their own moral from its teaching. It calls up the picture of a far-distant past, when God was believed to walk on the earth in a glorified human form, to hold converse face to face with man, to make a definite sound when he walked (Genesis iii. 8), to present the characteristics of a nobler and mightier man. In this guise he will meet us again in the stories of the patriarchs and in many of the later traditions, though the lessons drawn from them are of the loftiest and most impressive kind.

The early Creation-legend is followed by two traditions of Cain, the 'smith' or 'artificer' (Genesis iv. 1-15, 25, 26; iv. 16-24), which do not entirely agree with one another in their respective views of his character. In the former he is described with high dramatic power as the first murderer, because his vegetarian offering was less acceptable to Jahveh than Abel's sacrifice from his flock. In this story he is pictured as con-

demned to bear a particular mark stamped upon his brow, so that men would recognize him and suffer him to pass on unharmed. The other tradition, which takes the form of an annotated pedigree, makes Cain the father of a distinguished family including Jubal the first musician and Tubal-Cain the father of smiths. No fratricidal murderer could well be looked upon as the ancestor of such noteworthy and useful descendants.

Hence probably two independent traditions have been joined together, of which the second may be older than the first. It contains a snatch of most ancient poetry in the 'sword-song' of Lamech (Genesis iv. 23, 24), which while it gives a high estimation of Cain as able to exact a 'sevenfold vengeance,' pays a still higher tribute to Lamech himself, whose revenge was 'seventy and sevenfold.' Surely neither Lamech nor his ancestor in this tradition can be regarded as a common murderer. The source of this fragment of minstrelsy is unknown; but of its extreme antiquity there can be no reasonable doubt. The first story of Cain was told to a people not indisposed to hasty murder, to impress upon their minds the heinousness of the sin. In its earliest form it may have been simpler

and told to explain why the murderer was cast out of the camp and continually liable to the revenge of the kindred of the murdered man. The so-called 'brand of Cain' may once have been some particular tribal mark, the meaning of which has been long lost. Moreover it seems quite possible that the 'Kenites' or 'artificers,' who played so important a part in later Hebrew history, may have been believed to be descendants from the Cain of the second tradition.

Amongst these old-world legends has crept in one which bears a closer resemblance to the cruder forms of Oriental myth than is usually found in the Old Testament. Evidently it has been told by the prophetic author just as it has come down to him. But it bears the mark of its mythical origin no less than of its venerable age. In substance it is this: the 'Sons of God' or 'angelic beings' had seen and captivated by the daughters of men, had made them mothers of renowned heroes and 'giants' or 'Nephilim' (Genesis vi. 1-8). Here is presented a cosmic myth, which the author leaves as soon as he has written it down without any explanation save to account for the wickedness of man and his subsequent destruction by 'the

Flood.' In his Oriental view of women as temptresses in chief it never seems to have occurred to him that the ' Sons of God ' were chiefly, if not wholly, to blame in this matter, when he says ' it repented God that he had made man,' so that they ought to have been punished rather than man.

The essence of the myth is alien to prophetic thought, which could hardly have admitted beings so frail as surrounding the throne of God. It is part of a cycle of myths such as Jahveh's conflict with ' Rahab ' or the ' great dragon ' (Isaiah xxx. 7, li. 9; Psalm lxxxix. 10), which the later prophets and poets did not shrink from using to point their moral, when all belief in the truth of the myth had passed away. Similar stories are told in the mythology of other nations. Ancient Greece had its host of demigods drawing their origin on the one side or the other from divine parentage such as Heracles and Achilles, with whom may be compared the Romulus of Roman tradition. But the manner in which its prophetic editor has employed it is peculiar to himself: nor can the reader fail to perceive his horror at the myth itself and his haste to draw from it its terrible consequences to the human race.

Living as they had done in Haran in the infancy of their race, the Hebrews had had frequent experience of the destructive floods caused by the overflowing of the Euphrates and Tigris. There, too, they had doubtless suffered from the torrential tropical rains, which had left a deep impression upon their minds. With their contracted notions of the extent of the earth, they had come to the conclusion that at least once the whole of the world had been overwhelmed by a gigantic deluge. Two accounts of this cataclysm have been preserved in Genesis (vi. 9-ix. 17) ingeniously blended into one. Here we have the inestimable advantage of being able to compare the joint narrative with the Babylonian epic on the subject, which has also a parallel narrative preserved by Berosus.

Both the joint Hebrew story and the single Babylonian poem coincide in many of the details, such as the building of the ark and the sending forth of the two birds, though their fundamental motives differ widely. In the Hebrew tradition ' the Flood ' is sent by Jahveh as a judgment upon the earth for the wickedness of man. In the Babylonian epic it would seem to have been caused rather by the jealousy of man on the part of some of

the gods than by any moral guilt. The end of each contains both a resemblance and a difference. In the Hebrew story it is said, that when Noah offered sacrifice 'Jahveh smelled the sweet savour' and blessed him and the earth for his sake (Genesis viii. 20-22). In the Babylonian poem occurs the phrase 'the gods gathered like flies to the sacrifice,' which is altogether on a lower plane of thought than that of the Hebrew writer. It may be urged that this difference of tone is due to the united prophetic and priestly editing of the original legend, as it was told amongst the primitive Hebrew nomads. But there is no conclusive reason against the supposition that the narratives were parallel rather than interdependent.

No attempt has been made to separate the two stories in the Hebrew tradition formed as they are of the interwoven contributions of the Jahvist and the priestly editors. It may be noted that the former is more simple and childlike, the deluge being caused by the rain and lasting for 'forty days and forty nights' (Genesis vii. 12). In the latter it was far more cataclysmic; not only was there rain, but the 'fountains of the abyss were broken up' (Genesis vii. 11), while the

deluge lasted for a whole solar year. But in each case the moral is the same: 'the Flood' is God's judgment upon the guilty human race. The prophetic and priestly editors probably modified the legend, giving to it a more ethical purpose than it had in its original form, while the latter have made it the occasion for the renewal of God's covenant with Israel through Noah.

Such Flood-stories are not the monopoly of Semitic nations. The Greeks had their tradition of the destruction of the world on account of man's wickedness by a deluge from Zeus, from which Deucalion and Pyrrha by the aid of a boat were the two survivors. They repeopled the world by respectively throwing stones over their shoulders: from those cast by Deucalion men arose, women from those cast by Pyrrha. It may be noted in passing that *J* has preserved another and not very edifying story of Noah, which does not accord entirely with that of 'the Flood' (Genesis ix. 20-27), but represents him as the father of husbandry and first cultivator of the vine. From this he both made wine and fell a victim to its seductions to the open mockery of his son Canaan. It is not easy to decide why this tradition has been pre-

served unless its object were in the first place to warn the reader against drunkenness, in the second to fix a curse upon Canaan the father of the Canaanites, which would be fulfilled in the country called by his name.

The genealogy of Genesis x. (8-19, 21, 24-31) is most ancient, and has this special claim to attention. It is the original method of tracing the birth of nations from one primal stock and their mutual relationship by treating them as individuals descending from the one ancestor. That such was the intention of the compiler of the present pedigree is obvious from some of its connecting links. Canaan is said to have been the father of Zidon, of such clans as the Jebusite (15-17). Now Zidon was a great Phœnician city, while the persons described as individuals were in reality clans as may be seen in the subsequent history. Clearly, then, Canaan is a personal name used to designate the inhabitants of Canaan, which contained and therefore was 'father' of the city and tribes mentioned as 'his sons.'

The genealogy contains an interesting reference to one Nimrod, 'a mighty hunter before Jahveh' (x. 9). Whether he was, as some maintain, the Accadian god 'Merodach,' or some later tyrant over the Hebrews, is uncertain. Possibly verse 9 is a slightly later note to identify this Nimrod, whom the Jewish scholars regard as the founder of Babylon, with the hero of a popular proverb. Be that as it may, the compiler's purpose in putting together this genealogy was in great part to claim that all the peoples of the earth were of one stock, and therefore ought to have been worshippers of Jahveh. His sources are unknown, and may have been largely imaginary. Eastern peoples are great upholders of genealogies, which have often been handed down by word of mouth long before they were reduced to writing. This custom grew upon the Israelites and may be seen in its full tediousness in the Chronicler (1 Chronicles i.-ix.). Whatever may be thought of the later pedigrees, which have a close likeness to their present-day successors, it is certain that *J*'s sources were very ancient, and may have been the offspring of a long line of oral tradition. In that consists its chief interest to modern investigators.

The last of the earlier Hebrew legends of this kind is the story of the 'Tower of Babel' (Genesis xi. 1-9), which may have been compounded of two separate legends, as some

scholars hold on no very convincing evidence. Starting from the genealoger's conviction that all nations were of one stock, this old story concludes that they must all have once lived together and spoken one language. How, then, had even neighbouring peoples come to use quite different tongues? The author had also noticed the fact that in the centre of ancient Babylon was a high tower; or he may have seen the ruins of some old-world city with the remains of a similar tower within it or near it. How, then, had this city come to be left in ruins? These were the questions he attempted to answer in his legend. The peoples of the earth gathered together to build a city with a tower which would reach right into heaven, a matter of no great difficulty to that primitive thought which conceived the vault of heaven to be solid and comparatively near to the earth which it covered.

Jahveh hearing some tumult upon earth came down to see what might be its cause. When he found that his creatures were trying presumptuously to reach his dwelling, he took instant measures to circumvent them. He confounded the speech of the builders so that they could no longer understand one another. Thus they were compelled to cease building, and were scattered over the face of the earth. The city and tower remained in ruins as the monument of Jahveh's punishment of the sin of presumption, while the differing languages of the nations proclaimed the same abiding truth. The old writer adds one of his favourite 'etymological puns,' naming the city *Babel*, which he derived wrongly from the Hebrew root *balal*—confusion, because Jahveh had confounded the speech of the nations. *Bab-el* or *Bab-el-Illah* in reality means *the gate of god*. The traditional false etymology need excite no surprise; it has many parallels in the Old Testament, and at least one in the New (Galatians iv. 25). What is noteworthy in the story is the anthropomorphic character of Jahveh, who had to come down from heaven to see what was happening upon earth and to put an end to it. The legend is manifestly one of the stock, which the Hebrews brought with them from their early home across the Euphrates.

The old traditions which have just passed under examination, differ from one another in many respects, sometimes flatly contradicting one another. But when they have

been stripped of the prophetic conceptions of Jahveh of 900 to 800 B.C., they will be found to agree closely in certain definite ideas of his personality and being, which reappear in the earliest stories of the patriarchs. Though he was believed to be the Creator of heaven and earth (Genesis ii. 4b), he does not seem to have been regarded as the *only God*. The fathers of Israel are said to have worshipped *other gods* beyond the Euphrates (Joshua xxiv. 2), where nothing is urged of the unreality of these, nor are they dubbed 'idols,' as Isaiah would have called them. If Abraham be understood to typify a clan, his God would naturally be that of the clan whether known as Jahveh or not. Of the tribal conception of deity there is no direct evidence in the first eleven chapters of Genesis, a fact which may be due to the prophetic revision of their stories.

In the narratives of the patriarchs there is more testimony pointing towards this conclusion. Indeed it was less natural to represent Jahveh as a tribal or family god, when the theme was the history of mankind. Though most of the clans and nations had each its own chief deity, each of them regarded its own deity as the most powerful

of the gods and usually referred to him as the source of all things. To the ancient Babylonian for example 'Marduk' was the creator of heaven and earth after his victory over 'Tiamat,' the monster of the abyss, whose body he cut in twain to form the arch of heaven and the earth beneath it. Hence he became the supreme Babylonian god, though others also were worshipped.

In the 'story of the patriarchs' two distinct conceptions of the being and nature of Jahveh appear, the Judean (*J*), which is more anthropomorphic and bears a greater resemblance to that of the primitive legends, and the Israelitish (*E*), which is more spiritual and loftier. It will be convenient to discuss them separately, beginning with *J*, and using the forms Abraham and Sarah to denote the patriarch and his wife. Throughout *J*'s account of Abraham Jahveh maintains the closest intimacy with his worshipper, speaking with him face to face. To him personally the call to Canaan is uttered (Genesis xii. 1-4). Nor during the famine when he was in Egypt and attempted to save his own life by passing off his wife as his sister, is his conduct in any way censured (Genesis xii. 10-20). It is quite true that

when Hagar and Ishmael were banished into the wilderness, the *angel of Jahveh* appeared to show her the hidden spring (Genesis xvi. 7-14); but this expression may mean simply Jahveh himself. At least with Abraham his dealings are always personal and face to face. With two of the heavenly host he comes in person to announce the birth of Isaac to the aged patriarch, has his feet washed according to Eastern custom, even eats of the meal prepared for him (Genesis xviii. 1-15). His two angels leave him to go on to Sodom, whither he soon follows them to see for himself if its guilt is as great as has been reported to him (Genesis xviii. 20, 21). Before leaving him he permits Abraham to plead with him to mitigate his sentence upon the guilty cities, if certain conditions are fulfilled (Genesis xviii. 23-33), and departs after having 'left communing with Abraham.' To Lot indeed he sent his two angels to save him from destruction (Genesis xix. 1-22); but with Abraham his relations are always personal and direct. It is the simple and beautiful conception of God caring personally for his faithful worshipper.

Of the Isaac of *J* it must be confessed that he is a somewhat shadowy personage, who

was not even allowed to go and choose his own wife, Eleazar, Abraham's steward being entrusted with this delicate task (Genesis xxiv.). As his story adds little to our perception of Hebrew thought upon the person and being of Jahveh, it may be passed over and the more vivid narrative of Jacob be put under examination. Even of this typically pious Hebrew cattle-breeder much need not be said. His chronicler is so deeply interested in his deeds and misdeeds, that his story is of small help to the matter in hand. His piety is no doubt sincere after its kind, though his conduct cannot be deemed irreproachable. Still he is a more probable founder of a civilized nation than Esau. He is followed in the record of his wiles with much of the same mischievous glee as the Odysseus of Homer, to whom he bears some resemblance.

After he has twice beguiled that typical Bedawin Sheikh Esau, Jacob flees with the connivance of his mother to her kinsfolk in Padan-Aram. On his way he sees a vision renewing to him the promises made to Abraham (Genesis xxviii. 10, 13-16, 19, 21b, where much of *J*'s narrative has given way to that of *E*). After first by Laban's

trickery marrying his elder daughter Leah, then her sister Rachel, and faithfully serving his father-in-law while enriching himself, he leaves Laban to return to Canaan. When with some reasonable fear he is going to meet the twice deluded Esau, one night he wrestles alone till morning with Jahveh himself, who finally overcomes him by putting his thigh out of joint (Genesis xxxii. 24-29, 31, 32), whereafter 'the children of Israel eat not the sinew of the hip, which is upon the hollow of the thigh unto this day.' The divine wrestler changes his name to 'Israel,' renews his promises to him and departs without revealing his name to him directly. This legend is one of the most anthropomorphic in the Old Testament, and is clearly used to explain the origin of a well-known custom. The change in Jacob's name may point to the fusion of two petty clans into one larger tribe. Throughout the story of Jacob the conception of Jahveh is the same with the one already indicated as characteristic of *J*'s writing.

To the patriarchs of the earliest narrative Jahveh appears as a family-god, though Abraham does once refer to him as the 'Judge of all the earth,' which may be rendered of 'all the *land*' (Genesis xviii. 25). His powers extend beyond the family and may have been thought to cover the whole land of Canaan; but he especially chose out the family of Abraham for distinguished favour, promising to give it a great inheritance and to increase it into a mighty multitude. *J* gives indications of the recognition of other gods, who, however, were not to be worshipped. But Jahveh is always pictured under a human likeness and with characteristics far different from the spiritual God of the 'literary prophets.' He is indeed represented as a 'righteous God, expecting righteousness from his worshippers.' But the earlier standards of righteousness would be very crude and human, much more so than they appear in the surviving stories. How far this conception is due to the Judean prophets who first wrote down the oral traditions, it is not easy to decide.

The oldest view of worship is very simple. The worshipper said to his god, 'If I worship you and offer sacrifices to you, I claim that you will protect and bless me.' This by no means lofty conception of the mutual obligation between man and God held wide sway amongst the Hebrews to the time of the

Exile. Hence it is natural to assume that the forefathers of the race were inspired by the same conviction of the relations between Jahveh and his people which was entertained by their remote descendants, of which indeed there is good evidence in the early stories. At all events in *J* he is represented in the guise of a man of marvellous power, but neither as omniscient nor as omnipotent. If his will is to be done, he must perform it in much the same way as a man is compelled to do. The idea is primitive, but it does bring Jahveh into closest communion with his people.

The Israelitish prophets (*E*) were later in the date of their writing than their southern compeers: hence *E*'s conception of Jahveh, while it tends to remove him from direct personal contact with the patriarchs, is at the same time more spiritual and elevated. Apparently he opens his narrative with the story of Abraham, of which the beginning has been largely lost or supplied from *J*. As has been noted, he never refers to God as *Jahveh*, but always uses the generic term *Elohim*, until the special revelation of the divine name to Moses in Midian (Exodus iii. 15). Nor does he bring him down from

heaven to utter his commands or to work his will. These he achieves through an act of volition or by means of an angel (Genesis xxii. 11), or more frequently by dreams (Genesis xxxvii. 5-11). *E* makes Abraham a more perfectly righteous man adding more considerateness to his character. He describes the patriarch as sorely distressed when compelled by Sarah to part with Hagar and Ishmael (Genesis xxi. 8-14), as only letting them go upon God's assurance that it would be well with them, and as bestowing upon them some provisions for their journey.

Furthermore *E* gives evidence of the common belief that Jahveh could not be worshipped outside of his own land by putting that conviction into the mouth of Abraham when excusing himself to Abimelech in Gerar (Genesis xx. 11). Besides he tries to soften the patriarch's treatment of Sarah in respect of this prince by representing her as actually his sister by another wife (Genesis xx. 12). Similarly he enters his protest against human sacrifices and substitutes a ram for Isaac just when his father was on the point of sacrificing him upon the altar in Moriah (Genesis xxii.

1-14). It must not however be inferred from this story, that those hideous sacrifices occurred frequently amongst the Hebrews until a later time, when they were contaminated by the worship of Molech. This legend of Isaac may also be intended to glorify mount Moriah, on which the Temple of Solomon was built. *E* as a good Israelite is much fuller in the story of Jacob and Joseph as the direct ancestors of the people of the northern kingdom.

Both in *J* and *E* one or other of the patriarchs had set up altars in various parts of Canaan, such as at Hebron, Shechem, and Beersheba, thus consecrating what may have been primitive Canaanite shrines to God. That is a practice followed later by the Roman Catholic Church, which has changed many pagan monuments into altars of God, and hallowed tens of thousands of wells once sacred to heathen deities. Both prophetic schools used the earliest traditions which had come down to them for this pious purpose. In *E* strangely enough is found an instance of what appears to be a survival of primitive stone-worship. In his account of Jacob's dream which he saw when on his way to Laban (Genesis xxviii. 11, 12, 17, 18,

20, 21a, 22), he pictures him as consecrating upon awaking, the stone which had been his pillow by setting it up on end and pouring oil over it. At the same time Jacob says, 'This stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be *God's house—Beth-el*: and of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth part to thee' (xxviii. 22). Clearly Jacob is represented as somehow believing that God inhabited the stone, which he had erected to him.

Such stones, or *Baal-pillars*, were common all over Palestine and survive in many lands. They commemorated originally the sun's fertilizing power; in their neighbourhood were often found and are found to-day those 'stone circles' or 'Gilgals,' which are in part tombs in part temples. *E* also tells how Rachel stole her father's teraphim (Genesis xxxi. 19), gives a hint that Jacob's God was not that of Laban (xxxi. 53), and twice refers to the former as the 'Fear of Isaac' (xxxi. 42, 53), an expression peculiar to him, which may indicate that Isaac was the hero or local Canaanite god of Beersheba. More probably it simply means 'the God whom Isaac feared.' It has already been noted that according to *E*

'strange gods' were worshipped for a time in Jacob's household (Genesis xxxv. 1-4). Herein are evidences of the fact, that while the ancient Hebrews regarded Jahveh as their tribal god, they did not deny that there were other gods and may upon occasion have worshipped them.

From *E*'s writing with its strong antiquarian tendency many traces of a worship much older than his own time may be perceived. As has just been said, there is primitive stone-worship with the custom of setting up a pile of stones crowned by a pillar, or a solitary pillar, to commemorate some important event such as a treaty. Both *J* and *E* give a number of indications of tree-worship amongst the first Hebrews, or at least of the consecration of Canaanite holy trees by fixing near them the dwellings of the patriarchs. Near Shechem stood the 'Soothsayer's terebinth' (Genesis xii. 6), obviously a spot where oracles were given. Here *J* established one of the resting-places of Abraham, whose favourite home stood near the 'Terebinth-grove of Mamre'—Hebron (Genesis xiii. 18, xiv. 13, xviii. 1). Both the single tree and the grove must have been consecrated places to the Canaanites.

But though *J* and *E* have much in common a marked difference in theological thought parts the two schools of authors. Though the word *holy* in later times the distinctive title of Jahveh does not seem to occur in Genesis, *E*'s conception of the being of God comes nearer to it than that of *J*. The word itself implies *separation* or *aloofness*, much in the sense of the *taboo* of the less advanced religions. When it is used to convey the essence of Jahveh it carries with it the idea of a magnificence which keeps him apart from his worshipper, who regards him with distant awe if not positive fear. By removing God from personal contact with his servants *E* tended to give him this *aloofness* or *holiness*, which at first was rather a distinction in majesty than in ethical thought and conduct. In his story of Jacob's dream at Beth-el he makes the patriarch exclaim, 'How *dreadful* is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven' (Genesis xxviii. 17). Thus the northern prophet marks the sanctity of the shrine where Jeroboam set up one of his 'golden bulls' in honour of Jahveh; thus, too, he hints at that dread of God in Jacob, which later became reverent worship.

It now remains to gather up the scattered threads of early Hebrew theology and ethics. The task is of much difficulty: it is seldom easy to discern which idea belongs to the primitive thought of the race, which to the prophetic schools which collected and edited the oral traditions. Long before *J* and *E* had been joined into *JE* there had already been a line of distinguished prophetic teachers both in Judah and Israel. These had exercised a mighty influence upon the more thoughtful of their people. They themselves had recognized the continuity of revelation along the ages; yet they had painted Abraham, to take one example, in the colours of the best thought of their own time. Indeed he has become rather a Hebrew saint than the typical founder of a nation. Under their skilful hands tradition has been transfigured, until most of its mythical and legendary crudities have disappeared, and the patriarch as we know him, has become the pattern of his race.

That is the way in which early historians write history: they are unwilling or unable to project themselves back into the past, to think its thoughts, to reproduce them exactly in their writings. The difficulty is

increased when like *J* and *E* they set out upon their task with a definite moral purpose. Like the priests of centuries later these two schools could not believe that their heroes could have fallen beneath the standards of their own time. Fortunately for posterity the early historians were single-minded and have suffered some traits and characteristics of the earlier form of the tradition to appear in their narrative, notably in the case of Jacob, the most human and the most humanly portrayed of the patriarchs.

It will be simpler first to review the ethical ideals of the earliest Hebrews. That their standard was by no means lofty has been seen already. The song of Lamech for example (Genesis iv. 23, 24) is merely the glorification of revenge, which long remained a stern Hebrew quality, though by no means confined to that ancient race. Similarly, Abraham's deception of the Pharaoh or of Abimelech, if we regard him with *J* to have told a falsehood in respect of Sarah or given a plausible excuse as in *E*, is the one considerable blot upon his character which must have descended from oral tradition. In neither account is there any moral condemnation of his sordid cowardice expressed

or implied, of the fact that the early Hebrew did not hesitate to subordinate his wife's honour to his personal safety. Nay, Jahveh is represented as punishing the innocent king for an unconscious sin. That cannot have represented the standard of the prophetic authors either in their judgment of falsehood or the treatment of Sarah. We need only contrast the episode with the account of Nathan's severe rebuke of David for an act of despicable perfidy and adultery (2 Samuel xii. 1-23), which emanated from the same school of writers as are denoted by *J*.

Again, the story of Jacob's young manhood abounds in details, which exhibit an equally low standard of right and wrong. Who can but sympathize with Esau, generous though twice defrauded by his brother? Yet here no moral condemnation is pronounced, perhaps because of *J*'s hatred of Edom, which is personified under the name of Esau. Jacob was sincerely pious in his way; but his piety did not prevent him from using unworthy means to ascend to eminence and wealth. His tendency to bargain was a ruling principle with him: even at the outset of his career he dared to make a bargain with Jahveh (Genesis xxviii. 20, 21b,

22) to preserve and prosper him, in which case he would repay him with worship and a tithe of his substance. Such a bargain was quite alien to prophetic thought, and must date back to the primitive tradition, to a time indeed when men were accustomed to such relations with their gods.

In sum it may be affirmed with considerable confidence that the Hebrews brought with them a comparatively lowly standard of ethics from their ancient home. They nourished the nomad's bloodthirsty satisfaction in murderous revenge, the nomad's care for his own life at the expense of all else where woman was concerned, the Oriental's light regard for woman as seen in the story of Judah and Tamar (Genesis xxxviii.), and the nomad's habit of cheating his fellow nomad as occasion served. In this connexion no sympathy need be wasted upon Laban for the trickery of Jacob, though Jacob himself can only be admired for the cleverness of his device. The story of their dealings with one another is manifestly a camp-fire tale set down without any ethical purpose and no doubt very popular with its people. Though some of their kindred races in Mesopotamia from which they

had migrated, had attained an unusually high degree of civilization, with a correspondingly high ethical standard, the original Hebrews had reached neither the one nor the other at the beginning of their nomadic life. They had much to learn ethically, which they did learn so thoroughly that their descendants have been able to teach many of the most progressive races of the world.

Once more the Hebrews would seem to have brought with them some survivals of the most primitive Semitic cults, such as the worship of trees, stones, and wells, which they not only took down with them into Egypt, but brought back with them on their return to Canaan. Their culture at this early date was no less primitive than their ethics. Their wandering life in the wilderness would tend to obliterate their memories of the older civilized nations with which they had once been in contact, though it may reasonably be concluded to have drawn them to the worship of one tribal or national god, who would guard and guide them on their wanderings. The nature of this deity has been set forth tentatively on account of the scarcity of positive evidence, but with no

small degree of probability. As might well be expected Jahveh was in essence a *sky-god*, the only kind of deity likely to appeal to nomads, who depended upon the sky for rain to renew their pasture-grounds, to fertilize their scanty tillage, who suffered so severely from extremes of temperature and the violence of storms.

In the older legend of the Flood Jahveh sent forty days and forty nights rain upon the sinful earth, just as when gratified by the steam of Noah's sacrifice he promised that interchange of seasons by which the land might be made fruitful (Genesis vii. 4, viii. 20-22). He rained 'fire and brimstone out of heaven' upon the guilty cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis xix. 24, 25). These varied forms of his activity clearly prove Jahveh to have been originally regarded as a *sky-god*. The fact that the patriarchs set up stone pillars pointing skyward is additional evidence of this conclusion (Genesis xxviii. 18, xxxi. 45, xxxv. 14). In the last case Jacob 'poured a drink offering and poured oil upon the pillar,' which he had set up, thus affording a strong testimony to the sacredness with which he invested the stone as a symbol of Jahveh.

The 'teraphim' or 'household images' possibly of Jahveh may well have been borrowed at a later date from the Canaanites, who had long been civilized when Israel attacked and conquered them. It is however probable that in the dawn of their thought a sacred stone, tree, or well, may have been used either as a symbol or shrine. The original altars were very simple; for the most part they were made of earth and easily built up as need required, though in some cases low piles of unhewn stones were their chosen materials. They were altars suitable to nomads, such as nomads have invariably erected from the infancy of their history. Whether God was known to the patriarchs as Jahveh must still remain an unsolved problem. *J* intended such to be believed, and the traditions preserved by his school are the most ancient which have survived: *E* apparently held the opposite belief, in which he was followed by the priestly writers in their account of the patriarchal age. *P*'s point of view will be presented later, when his completed work falls under review. That of *E* is more difficult to understand unless it was the received tradition of the northern kingdom,

though the evidence of the occurrence of the name Jahveh in ancient Babylonian documents is of doubtful validity.

Under whatever name he was worshipped, Jahveh's character and essence were the same. Like his worshippers in both, but nobler and more majestic, mightier far than they, yet limited in power, knowing infinitely more than they did yet by no means omniscient, he presented a venerable figure in the mind of his faithful servants, which might well inspire their fearful awe. Though he was said to have eaten and talked with the father of their race, Abraham always treated his divine visitant with seemly reverence, and his descendants imitated their ancestor. He had no regular priest, if any priest at all; for the enigmatical personality of Melchizedek (Genesis xiv. 18-20) may or may not belong to this early period. When sacrifice was due the Sheikh himself offered it on behalf of the clan, the head of the family for the rest of its members, who in each case expected a return in blessing for the worship and the offering.

Between the writing of *J* and *E* there is evidence of a distinct exaltation in the character of Jahveh, as has been shown in its

place. But even at its highest it remained primitive alike in its majesty and its limitations as compared with the fuller revelation made through Amos and Isaiah. Hence we cannot fail to perceive the smallness of the beginnings out of which a mighty growth was destined to be developed to the priceless advantage of mankind. From the earliest time of which we have any knowledge Jahveh would seem to have been conceived of by his people as essentially a righteous God according to the standards of the time. Nowhere in the Old Testament is there so much as a hint of the ascription to him of those discreditable episodes, which fill up the stories of most of the gods of polytheism. A righteous God he remained in the subsequent thought of Israel, when the standards were lifted high as heaven itself. His holiness in the first instance was rather a separation in majesty and might from his worshipper, a source of timid awe rather than of warm affection. Gradually its conception grew in depth and breadth, until it covered a supreme standard of moral excellence and required a corresponding holiness in his servants.

CHAPTER III

MOSAISM AND THE HEBREWS

The Divine Names. The Ethics of Sacrifice. Mosaism and its Sources. The 'Shorter Code.' The Feast of the Passover. The Sabbath. General Conclusions.

BEFORE endeavouring to estimate the contribution of Moses to the religion of the Hebrews, it will be essential to discuss briefly the *Divine* names, to ascertain the meaning and ethics of sacrifice. The generic name for any God in the Old Testament is *Elohim*, the plural form of the rarer and more poetical *Eloah*. The word itself, though plural, takes a singular verb, when it means a single God: nor does it denote a plurality of persons as older interpreters once asserted, a conception quite alien to the Hebrew mind. There are many suggestions of the derivation of the word Elohim: the prevailing one traces its formation to a root

implying *fear*. Hence Elohim would mean 'the power which inspires fear or awe.'

Its most frequent though not its true singular is the word El, which in the Pentateuch is usually found combined with some word expressing an attribute of deity. Melchizedek for example (Genesis xiv. 18) is said to have been priest of 'El-Elyon,' which is inexactly rendered 'Most high God.' The strict meaning of El is still uncertain: provisionally it may be connected with a root implying 'strength,' thus meaning 'the strong one.' The word 'Elyon' is better translated 'Almighty,' so that together 'El-Elyon' means 'God Almighty.' Unless, as many suppose, Genesis xiv. is a late addition from an unknown source, the phrase is all but invariably found in post-exilic literature: but to assert that it is entirely post-exilic is to prejudge the date of the chapter cited.

Another compound form of the Divine Name is 'El-Shaddai,' which, according to *P*, was the name by which Jahveh was known to the patriarchs (Exodus vi. 3), in spite of *J*'s frequent use of the name Jahveh itself. Too much weight need not be assigned to this the youngest of the compilers of the Pentateuch, who freely employs the title

'El-Shaddai' in his additions to *JE* (Genesis xvii. 1, xxviii. 3, xliii. 14, xlviii. 3). It is once found in the so-called 'Blessing of Jacob' (Genesis xlix. 25) in a passage which is usually given to *E*, but which may readily be a later addition to the poem by *P*. The meaning of 'shaddai' is uncertain; but the common rendering 'Almighty' is probably wrong. In the Septuagint it is treated as a personal pronoun and translated by such phrases as *my* or *thy* God. No doubt this rendering may be due to the fact that the original meaning of the word had long been forgotten. But the tradition has some weight: it would seem to imply that the word 'shaddai' was an 'intensive and personal epithet,' and there it may be left until further evidence be forthcoming.

Of much greater importance and of no less uncertainty are the meaning and pronunciation of the word Jahveh. One of its transliterations into the Greek has preserved the form Ἰαβέ, which seems to follow the most ancient tradition: thus the word may be written 'Jahveh' and pronounced 'Yahweh.' Some contend that the true pronunciation of the word had been lost before the Pentateuch was written down in its final form.

But their contention does not seem to be well founded, since tradition must be allowed its due weight, though at a later time it was forbidden to utter the Divine Name to a great extent. In the Septuagint the word is almost invariably translated 'the Lord,' because in the manuscript translated the word was written with its true Hebrew consonants, while the vowels of the word 'Adonai'= 'my Lord' were substituted for the original vowels. Thus the scribe intended the reader to use the word 'Adonai' for the more correct 'Jahveh.'

From this fact the unintelligible form 'Jehovah' has arisen, which dates no further back than about A.D. 1520, during the early years of the Reformation. It is an impossible form which only long usage has sanctified. The form Jahveh is much truer and was probably used by the earlier writers of the Old Testament. But what is its meaning? Here we must rest content with the double strand of evidence supplied by tradition. *E* clearly connects the name with the Hebrew word *to be* (Exodus iii. 12-15). First he presents the words of the divine promise as, 'I WILL BE surely with thee'; secondly he represents the word

Jahveh as the equivalent of the clause 'I WILL BE WHAT I WILL BE.' Similarly *P* identifies the name Jahveh with God's constancy to his people both in the past and through the future (Exodus vi. 2-8). Thus by both of these authorities the name Jahveh appears to be derived from the root meaning 'to be.' Self-existence is not implied, which is an abstruse conception never entering into the minds of those early thinkers. What is meant is simple existence and its continuity. Hence it may be assumed with much probability that the name Jahveh means 'He who exists continually and is constant.' No doubt that derivation is merely traditional: but in the absence of any final authority, tradition must be suffered to speak for itself.

At this point it will be advantageous to investigate briefly the original purport and ethics of sacrifice, of which a few hints have already been given. In its origin the offering of the whole or part of an animal to God was quite simple and natural. When the head of the household killed a lamb or any other clean animal, he was accustomed to build up an earthen altar or to use a convenient slab of rock, whereon to burn part

of the victim in honour of his god. The god himself as founder of the feast, was held to be entitled to his share of it; he was expected to be present and to bless all the partakers of it. In primitive times he was imagined in some way to find food in the sacrifice (Genesis viii. 21, 22). Nay, if Jahveh could be pictured as actually eating of Abraham's meal thus making it *sacrificial* (Genesis xviii. 3-8), it is fair to conclude that in the beginning the burnt offering was regarded in some sense as his food. Thus the 'first fruits' of cattle or of the ground were offered to Jahveh as a *thank offering* and as *his share* of the results of his beneficent providence.

In later times out of this simpler sacrifice of thankful affection were developed the *sin* and *trespass* offerings, whereby men hoped to win the divine forgiveness for their wrongdoing. In the Bedawin encampment, or even in the later village-life, an animal was not killed every day for food: it was a solemn occasion to be marked by a special ritual and glad thankfulness. Thus by taking his share of the banquet the god was brought into close fellowship with his worshippers, who felt him to be in fact the head

of their clan. But the sacrifice always involved the notion of mutual obligation and reciprocal benefit. If a man sacrificed to a particular god, he claimed the care and blessing of that god. This fundamental idea, as has already been pointed out, is bluntly stated in *E*'s narrative by Jacob himself (Genesis xxviii. 20, 21a, 22).

It can hardly be doubted that this conception of bargain lay at the very root of sacrifice as an integral part of Semitic worship. Even in the time of Amos the chiefs of the northern kingdom imagined that it was possible to secure Jahveh's favour by the offering of countless hecatombs in his honour. The severity of its denunciation by the 'literary prophets' proves clearly its prevalence in their time. The Israelites attributed their prosperity under Jeroboam II, directly to Jahveh's favour secured by elaborate worship and lavish sacrifices. Originally these were joyous feasts not entirely free from excessive eating and drinking. Thus the ethics of sacrifice was in the main the unethical principle of a mutual bargain, in which Jahveh was expected to care for his worshippers, because they worshipped him and burned offerings to him.

It is now possible to consider the revelation through Moses to the 'Children of Israel.' That he delivered them from an oppressive bondage in Egypt and led them to Kadesh Barnea on the south of Canaan is a tradition so deeply rooted in Hebrew history, that however many of its details may be legendary, its substantial truth cannot reasonably be doubted. A singularly futile attempt has been made to remove Moses from the realm of the actual, an undertaking as needless as impossible. Nor can Cheyne be admitted to have proved his theory that 'Mizraim' = 'Egypt' was in reality a tract of northern Arabia. So much of his argument depends upon the use of the clan-name of 'Jerahmeel,' from which he derives a multitude of important names geographical and personal by the simple process of emending the Hebrew text, that great weight cannot be attached to it. So constantly does he introduce this favourite catchword into his later writings, that the student of 'David Copperfield' is irresistibly reminded of 'King Charles I's head' in 'Mr. Dick's memorial.' It is a pity that so fine a scholar to whom Old Testament criticism owes so vast a debt, should have

been so persistently misled in his old age by an *Ignis Fatuus* under the guidance of Winckler and others.

The meaning of the name 'Moses' is obscure and no conjectural derivation will be attempted. But such a deliverer certainly existed, who by excellent strategy succeeded in saving his people. It will not be necessary to review the traditions gathered around his name, nor to trace the wanderings of the Hebrews through the peninsula of Sinai. It seems certain that the tribes marched directly to the great oasis of Kadesh Barnea, where they settled for a considerable time, before they made their attack on Canaan. From this admirable camping-ground for a nomadic people spies were sent forth shortly before the death of Moses (Numbers xiii.); from the same place they attacked Sihon the king of the Amorites (Numbers xxi. 21-30), before they passed round Moab and are said to have defeated the more or less legendary Og king of Bashan (Numbers xxi. 33-35). Indeed the historical retrospect of Deuteronomy (i. 1, 2) begins with Kadesh Barnea and implies a long sojourn there.

On their way through the 'Arabhah' or

wilderness Moses had found for his people a sacred mountain named *Sinai* in the older, *Horeb* in the later tradition, which he regarded as peculiarly Jahveh's throne, when he descended to earth. To its summit he is represented as climbing to meet God and receive his revelation (Exodus xix. 2 *seqq.*). Even so late as the 'Song of Deborah' Jahveh is portrayed as coming from Sinai to the rescue of his people (Judges v. 4, 5). This mountain was probably at some distance from the camp, though its site has not been exactly determined. It seems likely too that Moses actually wrote something upon 'two tables of stone,' to contain which he made a sacred chest or 'Ark' (Exodus xxv. 10, which, however, belongs to *P*; cf., Deuteronomy x. 1). By this must be understood a plain box of acacia wood, which stood in the little tent pitched outside of the camp during the sojourn in the Wilderness (Exodus xxxiii. 7).

To this primitive sanctuary the people brought their disputes to be settled by Moses, who sat at the door to receive them (Exodus xviii. 13-27). This simple tent differs far from the gorgeous 'tent of meeting' described by *P* as set in the midst of the host

(Exodus xxxvi., xxxvii.) and modelled on the Temple of Solomon. It never seems to have occurred to him that such a tabernacle could not possibly have been made and set in order by comparatively uncivilized nomads in an uncultivated country. His description of the 'tabernacle' is as fictitious as his host of priests and Levites created to support Aaron in his office of high priest. Doubtless Aaron may have been a simple priest like Eli, with one or two assistants appointed to administer the duties of the sanctuary. But in the older and sounder tradition not only Moses *went into the tent*, but Jethro his father-in-law, who was a Kenite priest and Sheikh (Exodus xviii. 7). To understand what Moses really was to his people we must put out of our minds the priestly account of the wanderings, which is post-exilic and largely an elaborate piece of invention, made with perfect honesty of purpose and with a firm conviction of its accuracy. This school of writers knew what the ceremonial in the Temple had been up to their own time: they believed that what had existed in their day must have been from the beginning. They wrote history backwards, carrying into the past the product of centuries of development.

What religion, then, did Moses reveal to the Hebrews, what were the ordinances which he actually issued, what apart from the inspiration of Jahveh was the ultimate source of his teaching? First and foremost he taught that Jahveh was the sole God of Israel. By this statement an exact monotheism is not implied, which indeed was only established in the thought of the prophets by the time of Amos in the eighth century B.C. What is meant is that Jahveh had especially chosen Israel of all the nations upon earth to be his people (Exodus iii. 16-18), just as Chemosh had chosen Moab, that therefore Israel must worship Jahveh alone as Moab worshipped Chemosh alone.

Whence did Moses derive the name Jahveh? Some assert that Jahveh was a 'Canaanite name'; whence it would follow that the Hebrews adopted the very name of their God from the people whom they attacked and in a great measure subdued. Unless by this answer it is understood that the Hebrews had learned the name of Jahveh during the patriarchal age, and taken it with them into Egypt, it has little inherent probability in spite of similarities to the Divine Name to be found amongst the

Phœnicians. Where there is no positive evidence, it is necessary to rely partly upon tradition, partly upon the balance of probabilities. Taking, therefore, the oldest tradition of *J* we conclude that the clan of Abraham brought with them the name Jahveh from Haran, when the first migration began (Genesis xii. 1).

Further we infer on the same grounds that the clan worshipped Jahveh as such until the settlement in Egypt. During their abode in Goshen the Hebrews were in the end so utterly crushed by the oppression of the Pharaoh, that they may well be supposed to have all but forgotten the name of the God of their fathers, which would only be preserved faintly by tradition in some of their families, possibly the family of Levi. Of this Moses was a member, who when he came to be their leader appealed to them by the ancient name of their God. Had he introduced an entirely new Divine Name, his appeal to them would almost certainly have failed. As it was they were not too faithful to their God (Exodus xxxii.; Numbers xxv. 1-6): had his name been quite new to them, they would hardly have followed Moses when by its inspiration he led them to liberty. The story

of the 'burning bush' at least in *J*'s narrative (Exodus iii. 2-4a, 5, 7-9, 16-18) does not conflict with this conclusion, in which Jahveh maintains an abiding interest in his people.

The same line of argument applies to the hypotheses of those who derive the Divine Name from the Kenites, because Moses is said to have married the daughter of their priest (Exodus ii. 15-22). Doubtless he is represented as spending some years of his life amongst this Midianite clan. But no hint is given of Jethro's knowledge of the name Jahveh before his visit to Moses and the people in the wilderness; nor does it seem to have been known to any other Midianite clan. Moreover the *Kenites* were absorbed by the Hebrews and became part of the fighting men who went up to assail Canaan from the south under Caleb (Judges i. 12-15), who is described elsewhere as the *Kenizzite* or *Kenite* (Numbers xxxii. 12).

But though Caleb is also said to have been one of the two faithful spies sent into Canaan (Numbers xiii. 30), it does not follow that he or his clan gave the name of their God to the Israelites. The Kenites may just as readily have adopted the name and worship of Jahveh from the larger people. No other

source of the Divine Name than its primitive existence amongst the Hebrews or their ancestors, either before or soon after they crossed the Euphrates, fits in so well with all of the probabilities of the case. For the present, therefore, it will be sufficient to assume that Moses derived the name of Jahveh from the traditions of his race, which had been all but obliterated during the terrible interval of persecution, but which formed a strong rallying point in his appeal to his people.

The long period of sojourn on the fringe of the wilderness may have helped to consolidate Jahveh's sole worship. That Moses conceived of him as a *sky-god* the source of the familiar phenomena of the sky may be seen in the story of his revelation to his first prophet. The venerable legend of the 'burning bush' (Exodus iii. 2-4a) points in this direction. His abode on the 'mount of consecration' is confirmatory evidence (Exodus xix. 3). His further appearance with 'smoke as of a furnace,' the quaking of the mountain, the thunder of the divine voice (Exodus xix. 18-21) is inseparably associated with a desert thunder-storm. Herein too may be seen a hint of his *holiness*. Though

Moses himself like the patriarchs was permitted to talk with him face to face, the rest of the people remained at a distance lest they should be consumed (Exodus xix. 21). That prohibition implies 'separation,' which is the root-meaning of 'holiness,' no less than the extreme awe inspired by the hallowed presence.

Hence it is possible that we ought to date this conception of the holiness of Jahveh from the revelation of Moses. Too much emphasis must not be placed upon narratives which are in a great degree legendary. But the uniformity of tradition certainly supports these two elements in the thought and worship of Jahveh as owing their inception chiefly if not wholly to Moses. He was the first founder of the federation of tribes out of which the nation was formed. He shaped their common ideas with regard to their God. He taught them to worship Jahveh alone as their national deity, thus giving them a dawning sense of nationality for the first time, while he bade them reverence him as a *holy God*.

Before leaving for a time the question of the meaning of holiness, it will be of interest to consider why certain animals were held

to be 'clean,' some to be 'unclean.' This distinction is at least as old as Moses: probably it goes back to the beginnings of the race, when particular animals were believed to be the 'totems' of certain families or tribes, and so were 'taboo' to these families or tribes. To each of them the animal had its distinct relationship, and thus in the process of time had become to a certain extent consecrated. Such animals were neither used as food nor wantonly destroyed. Later they came to be looked upon as 'unclean,' that is as defiling those who injured them or partook of their flesh. That animals once held to be 'taboo,' or in a certain sense sacred, should continue to be set apart as 'unclean,' need excite no surprise. When the original meaning of the distinction was lost, the distinction itself was jealously preserved as a fundamental matter of religious observance. Possibly too the prohibition to eat unclean animals justified itself by its satisfactory sanitary results, thus securing a firmer conviction of its validity. That Moses was the first to make the distinction is in the highest degree improbable: that he used a traditional custom under the belief of its sacredness and for

the benefit of his people may be taken as all but certain.

Next arises the important question what was the ethical content of his teaching? In his traditional capacity of lawgiver how did he discharge his office? As leader of the Hebrews he was also their 'judge,' just as the Sheikh to-day is amongst the nomadic Bedawins. He sat at the door of the sanctuary to hear all the subjects in dispute brought before him (Exodus xviii. 13-27). He pronounced his verdicts = 'mishpatim' in individual cases; but they gradually became embodied into a collection of *precedents*, which was the earliest form of the 'Torah' = 'teaching.' According to the passage just cited (verses 14-17) by the advice of Jethro to lighten his labour he chose suitable men from the heads of the various families to give similar verdicts. There is no reason to doubt the literal truth of this tradition, which agrees exactly with the practice of nomadic tribes.

No examination of the great body of the Torah afterwards attributed to Moses and undoubtedly growing from his spirit will be attempted here. Many of the oldest laws may well date from his time, though as they

have survived they have been far removed from their original setting. Laws which suit nomads have been mingled with laws which could only have come into being amongst an agricultural people. The three great farming feasts for example—the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Tabernacles—could not have been instituted in the wilderness. The first commemorated the beginning of the harvest, the second the end of the wheat-harvest, the third the vintage. Such festivals could only have been ordained amongst a settled people tilling the soil and cultivating the vine. But side by side with these later laws are many, which may well have come down from the time of Moses. To take one illustration, 'Thou shalt not seethe a kid in its mother's milk' (Exodus xxxiv. 26), is manifestly most ancient and may have been necessary at the period of its issue. In connexion with this subject it must be borne in mind that ideals are prophetic, while laws are the embodiment of long standing custom and experience.

What then did Moses achieve towards the ethical growth of Israel? This is a difficult question, which as yet admits of no final

answer. It seems certain that he wrote ten very sacred commandments upon 'two tablets of stone,' which were preserved with the utmost care in a consecrated chest said to have been made by him for the purpose. Some would date these tablets only from the united monarchy under Solomon, as made and placed for the first time in his Temple. But the tradition of their earlier date is too ancient, too definite, to be entirely set aside. It is found in each of the four strands of which the Pentateuch is compiled. Each of them attributed these first commandments to Moses as uttered to him by Jahveh on the mountain.

Many subsidiary traditions have been blended with the main one, which do not always agree strictly with it or with one another. But it remains distinct, consistent, and what is more eminently suited to its place in history. Hence it is natural to conclude that Moses did write 'ten words' or 'commandments' on two stone slabs, which were long preserved by the Israelites, and possibly renewed with additions in a more exalted form during the early days of the kingdom. Now two such 'decalogues' or 'collections of ten words' at least are to

be found in the Pentateuch. Of each of these two forms slightly differing from each other survive, but in each case pointing to a common origin. The decalogue found in Exodus xxxiv. (14-26) is blended of two slightly different forms of one tradition. It is usually considered the earliest of its kind: but in its present form it cannot have come down from Moses, though some of its injunctions may have done so. In it the celebration of the three feasts commented upon above is distinctly commanded (18a, 22, 23). As has been said agricultural feasts have their origin in agricultural life, nor are the laws commanding their celebration made before their institution. Hence Moses could not have been the author of this *decalogue* in its present form.

Which Decalogue, then, do we owe to Moses? The second is the well-known 'prophetic decalogue' as it is commonly called to-day (Exodus xx. 3-17; Deuteronomy v. 6-21), which with the exception of the prohibition of image-worship deals with simple ethical principles. It may be noted that both of these decalogues enjoin the observation of the 'Sabbath.' The two forms of the prophetic decalogue

have some minor differences of importance, but in the main are in close agreement. No doubt in their present shape they have grown from a more simply stated original, while they point to a loftier ideal than can be traced in Exodus xxxiv. But it by no means follows that the form which they assumed under the deeper inspiration of the later prophets was theirs from their first utterance.

Nor is it by any means certain that the very simplicity of many of the commands is not a proof of their early origin. There is nothing in these which does not apply to nomads just as fittingly as to a people settled down in their own land. If we omit the long explanation (Exodus xx. 4b-6), the command will run 'Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image': if further we change *graven* into *molten* in agreement with Exodus (xxxiv. 17), we shall get such an injunction as Moses may well have uttered, and room will be left for the 'Teraphim' and 'Baal-pillars,' which we know were honoured by kings as pious as David and not condemned by prophets such as Elijah. If also from the commandment referring to the Sabbath we omit the historical explanation (Exodus xx. 9-11) which is plainly later, we shall have just such a commandment as may well have come from Moses.

The same method of reasoning applies with equal force to the form of the 'ten words,' as it appears in Deuteronomy (v. 6-21), where quite a different account of the origin of the *Sabbath* is given from that found in Exodus (xx. 9-11). Obviously the reason given in each case for the keeping of the Sabbath is later than the custom itself. Hence in the Deuteronomic form, if the commandments be reduced to their lowest terms, a similar conclusion to that already attained will be reached. In sum it seems not only possible but probable, that the original form of the prophetic decalogue, one of the noblest moral codes ever revealed to an ancient nation, may be ascribed to Moses. The fact that the later prophets seized upon it as containing the kernel of their ethical teaching, that they extended some of its simpler enactments, made it largely the basis of their instruction, does not prove that they originated it.

Moses according to tradition had been well educated as 'the son of Pharaoh's daughter' (Exodus ii. 10). He would therefore in all

probability be instructed in Egyptian ethics as well as in other branches of knowledge. Now the Egyptians had a comparatively high standard of ethics. Hence the balance of evidence would seem to incline to the ascription of the simplest form of the second decalogue to him. It may be remarked that the number *ten* is the natural one to be chosen for this sacred purpose: the fingers of both hands would readily suggest its use in such a moral code to the man of an earlier day.

It is utterly impossible in a limited space to discuss even cursorily the great problem as to which of the laws in the existing collection may be ascribed to Moses. But of the ceremonial enactments very few would date from his age. One distinctive Hebrew rite, that of circumcision, must be noted amongst these. It is true that *P* asserts that it was the divinely prescribed mark of God's covenant with Abraham (Genesis xvii. 10-14). He may represent an early tradition; but his authority cannot weigh against that of *J* where there is conflict of evidence. In a remarkable passage (Exodus iv. 24-26) Jahveh is described as meeting Moses and seeking to slay him, because his son had not been circumcised. Indeed Zipporah his wife

by promptly fulfilling this rite alone was able to save his life. From this passage it may be inferred that *J* regarded Moses as the originator of circumcision. Herodotus (ii. 104) asserts that only the Colchians, Egyptians, and Ethiopians from their first origin used circumcision.

Still it does not seem probable that the Hebrews learned this rite from the Egyptians, but that it was an old tribal mark brought with them from Haran. Originally it may have been a prenuptial ceremony (Genesis xxxiv. 19); but later it was performed on the eighth day after birth. In spite of *J*'s story of Zipporah it would seem that Moses adopted this practice from the oldest tradition and did not borrow it from Egypt. As the reason of its origin became forgotten, it was invested with a sacred character becoming alike the token of Jahveh's covenant with Israel through Abraham and the mark of the purification of the infant boy. Its primeval antiquity is further supported by the use of flint knives during a considerable period after they had fallen out of general use.

The antiquity of many ceremonies attributed to Moses cannot be proved, nor is it probable in itself. The religion of the nomad

does not admit of elaborate ritual, such as *P* has prescribed in full detail. Nor are there any traces of such ritual in subsequent Hebrew story until its beginnings with the Temple of Solomon. It is not even possible to assert that Moses introduced the *sin* and *trespass* offerings. These can hardly date further back than the time when the priests had gained overpowering influence in the control of Temple-worship. The earlier critics were wont to assign to Moses the 'shorter code' (Exodus xx.-xxiii.), which was known as the 'Book of the Covenant' because of the covenant detailed in the next chapter. But the true 'Book of the Covenant' is really to be found in the complex chapter of Exodus xxxiv., which contains some of the oldest laws in the Pentateuch, which is in fact described as 'the writing of the covenant' (verse 27).

The 'shorter code,' while containing many primitive enactments proves itself to be a gradual compilation of Torah. Some injunctions, as we should expect, are designed for nomadic tribes; some point to the period of the Judges; some imply the existence of the kingdom, or at least a settled state of society. There is plain reference to the

tilling of the soil and the culture of the vine (Exodus xxii. 29, xxiii. 10, 14-17), which nomads rarely achieve save in the most rudimentary fashion. There is an interesting reference to holiness connecting it with the idea of taboo (Exodus xxii. 31): 'And ye shall be *holy* men unto me; therefore ye shall not eat any flesh that is torn of the beasts of the field; ye shall cast it to the dogs.' There is the sense of a symbolic value in stones in the prohibition to use any tool to fashion the stones of which an altar is made (Exodus xx. 25), while the more frequent altar of earth is mentioned in the previous verse and may be erected anywhere. Moreover the Hebrew was allowed himself 'to offer upon it his burnt offerings and his peace offerings.' His 'peace offerings' would be made to win peace from Jahveh in case of any offence against him. The whole code though not very early contains a collection of the precepts of many generations.

One feast the Hebrews brought with them into Canaan from their nomadic days, the feast of the 'Pesach' or 'Passover.' The origin of this important festival is lost in comparative obscurity. It can hardly have

been a spring-sacrifice of the firstlings of the flock to redeem 'the first-born males' of the human family, as there is no trace of human sacrifices amongst the primitive Hebrews as a general practice. Doubtless Moses when he wished to get his people into the wilderness by any possible means, alleged this spring festival to induce the Pharaoh to let them go (Exodus x. 9). But that festival has nothing to do with the Passover which is described later (Exodus xii. 1-14, where *P* preserves an ancient tradition). But the ritual depicted by *P* throws some light upon the primitive character of the feast. Clearly it was an occasion of solemn meaning, which may not at first have been celebrated year by year.

An essential rite was the sprinkling of the lintel and door-posts with the blood of the slain lamb, which was to be eaten roasted and not boiled (Exodus xii. 7-9). Now the blood-rite implies the seeking for some great deliverance. A similar implication is to be found in the tradition that Jahveh's angel *passed over* the homes of Israel, when he smote the first-born of Egypt (Exodus xii. 13). The blood-sprinkling may point to the custom of placing the teraphim just within

the house or tent. But its object was to secure especial favour and protection from the deity in some grave crisis. The blood of every offering was Jahveh's and not to be eaten by his worshippers, because the 'blood was the life' of the victim.

Later in the history the feast of the *Passover* was always connected with the deliverance from Egypt, though it was joined to the feast of 'Unleavened Bread.' It is true that in the account of Josiah's celebration of the *Passover* (2 Kings xxiii. 22) it is said 'Surely never *such* a Passover was kept from the days of the judges, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah.' But in that saying the emphasis is on the word *such*, and the reference is to the magnificence of the ceremonial adopted by Josiah from Deuteronomy. The word 'Pesach' means the 'passing over,' and may well have involved the forgiveness of some serious sin. We may rest secure that this the oldest of the festivals came with the Hebrews into Palestine and was afterwards consecrated by association with the event of greatest national importance.

The Hebrews brought another festival with them from Haran, which is known as

the 'Sabbath.' The word itself is derived from a Hebrew root meaning the *desisting* or *coming to an end* not directly the *enjoyment of rest*, though when men cease to work they may certainly be said to rest. The Hebrew week does not appear to have been the Babylonian astrological week, in which each day was consecrated to a particular planet, the seventh being 'Saturn's day.' Hence the 'Chiun' of Amos v. 26, though undoubtedly the Babylonian name for Saturn has no connexion with the origin of the Sabbath. The prophet of Tekoa only asserts his conviction of the idolatry of Israel during the sojourn in the wilderness.

Neither was the Hebrew day the same with the Babylonian *Sabbath*, which was certainly an *unlucky day*, on which even the king was not allowed to do some things. It corresponded to the Roman *dies nefasti*= 'days of evil omen,' on which no public business could be done. It had no evil associations to the early Hebrews, who esteemed it a day of gladness. Though no work was to be done upon it, for long it had little of its later harsh severity. One of man's earliest discoveries was that the moon takes twenty-eight days to complete its

changes. Hence four weeks of seven days were naturally derived, the last of which in each week was the *Sabbath*. Isaiah (i. 13, 14) joins it with the glad 'feasts of the new moon,' thus giving a hint of its ultimate origin. Hence the Sabbath began by being a 'lunar feast,' marking in some way the phases of the moon. Gradually it grew in sacred worth to the Israelites, who finally found its first establishment in the thought that 'God rested from his creative work on the seventh day' (Genesis ii. 1-3; Exodus xx. 11) thus instituting the first *Sabbath*.

Our authority for the divine origin of the hallowed day is certainly late, being derived from *P*. But its conception represented the spirit of the Israelites and their reverence for the Sabbath from quite an early period of their history. Though some of the prophets denounced a mere outward regard for it, those who compiled Deuteronomy certainly taught their people to hallow the Sabbath, though they gave an historical and less sublime explanation of its sanctity (Deuteronomy v. 15). But whatever the cause the day itself was held in deep affection, and in its celebration differed widely from the customs of all other nations. As

we learn from one of the great anonymous prophets of the Exile or soon afterwards (Isaiah lvi. 1-7), the Israelites in Babylonia kept their Sabbath in such a way as to distinguish themselves from the people of the land, thus enabling the faithful amongst them to preserve their nationality and fit themselves for their return to Jerusalem.

Hence from a survey of all the evidence it would seem to be established that under the influence of their great teachers the Hebrews ordained, observed, altered, and adapted to their varying needs a primitive Semitic festival. This they called the Sabbath, the keeping of which they developed along their own individual lines, gradually turning a once joyous feast into a day of rigorous rest in its most literal sense. This day of rest has been one of their greatest contributions to the well-being of Christian nations, which have adopted it from them, though they have changed the day from the seventh to the first.

Probably Moses found these two feasts in existence amongst the tribes in Goshen, the Passover kept in its simplest form, the Sabbath observed faithfully week by week, so far as Egyptian tyranny permitted.

Though certainly the most ancient Passover was not celebrated with the complicated ritual of a later time, he may very well have changed what had been a feast of propitiation into a memorial of the deliverance from Egypt. At all events though blended with a later agricultural feast, tradition unmistakably points to its observance as such for a considerable period before the Exile. But Moses made some highly important original contributions to the thought and life of the 'Children of Israel.' He was the first to give something approaching a corporate life to the kindred clans, which became more securely established during the slow conquest of Canaan and was completed under the victorious rule of David. He achieved this great result largely by revealing to them a common deity and giving them a common worship.

Recalling the sacred name of Jahveh the tribal God of Abraham and his descendants, he stirred long forgotten memories of an earlier and happier time in the crushed hearts of his oppressed countrymen. In Jahveh's name he led them, rebellious as they often were, in safety through the barren desert of Sinai to Kadesh Barnea on the southern boundary of that land, wherein

according to their oldest traditions their fathers had lived a happy pastoral life. But he did more for them: he revealed something of the nature and being of Jahveh. He taught them that they were Jahveh's people, to whom he had uttered promises to which he had been and would be faithful. By the very name Moses showed them that Jahveh had existed from the distant past, had been the God of their ancestors, would continue to exist in the future to be their God. So long as they worshipped him alone as their national God, he would be constant to them and bestow upon them alike his blessing and his protecting care.

Of greater importance for the growth of spiritual truth their mighty leader had forbidden them to worship Jahveh under the symbol of any *molten image*. It is uncertain if he included the teraphim under this strict prohibition: but it is improbable, since even so devout a Jahveh-worshipper as David had such an image in his house (1 Samuel xix. 13-17). But the fact remains that in his ordering of the worship of Jahveh no image of any kind was permitted. The sacred chest or 'Ark' was his only symbol, and remained such for centuries. Doubtless

whatever Moses himself may have thought of the matter, the average Israelite imagined that Jahveh dwelt in some mysterious way in the Ark, as is shown by many episodes in its subsequent history (1 Samuel v.-vii. 2; 2 Samuel vi. 6-11). But the absence of an image by the altar of sacrifice in itself laid the foundation of that more spiritual worship of Jahveh, which was the most precious revelation given to the Hebrew people.

Besides Moses taught that he was a *holy* God, whatever his conception of the meaning of the word holiness may have been. That deep thought in its turn sowed the seeds of the prophetic teaching of the need of holiness in his worshippers. So it was a priceless contribution to the ethical progress of Israel, through Israel of the nations of the world. It is uncertain if he was the first to prohibit the eating of blood to his people. That practice seems to look back to an earlier origin. To ancient peoples there was something highly sacred in the blood, which to them represented the life itself, and consequently ought to be offered to God himself by being poured out upon the ground and smeared over the sacrifice. But there can be no question that he attached great im-

portance to the prohibition and made it an essential part of his ordinances for worship.

It must not, however, be understood from the foregoing considerations that his conception of the nature and being of Jahveh was in any way so exalted or so spiritual as that of his greatest prophetic successors. In the first place he does not seem to have had any such deep conviction that Jahveh was the only God, as Amos or Isaiah had. To him Jahveh was Israel's God, and as such to be worshipped by Israel as its only God. But that more limited conception did much to bring about the later monotheism. Though far less anthropomorphic than that of his predecessors his thought of God would be coloured by many of the less noble human attributes which were far more slightly condemned if condemned at all in those early days. Stern cruelty, vindictive jealousy, plain partiality, and many other such qualities would seem to him to be a part of the divine no less than of human nature. Thus Jahveh the God of Israel was a being less to be loved than feared, to be worshipped alone lest his destructive anger should be kindled against his people, and he should blot them from the face of the earth.

His relations with Israel's enemies, who were also his enemies, were fierce and pitiless. They were to be *devoted*, that is to be utterly destroyed, men, women, and children alike (Joshua vi. 24-27) by his conquering people. Again, if such a figure occurred to his mind, Moses would think of Jahveh's omnipotence simply as resembling the might of an Oriental despot highly exaggerated. Similarly he would contemplate Jahveh's wisdom as far exceeding that of an exceptionally wise man. The idea of infinity did not present itself easily before the Hebrew mind. But for all these limitations of outlook Moses was in a very true sense the founder alike of Israel's nationality and of its religion. Hence his people do well to recognize their supreme debt to the first of their prophets, the earliest of their lawgivers, and the greatest of their national leaders.

Naturally enough additions springing from further revelation of God through the succeeding prophets, of man's ceremonial zeal from the orderly minds of the priests, were ascribed to Moses: they had grown from his spirit and were largely the fruit of his life and teaching. These are to be found chiefly

in the vast mass of legislation developed through almost ten centuries yet given to him in all good faith. That was the habit of all ancient nations. The Hindus have given to Gotama the first Buddha, the teachings of a considerable line of Buddhas, just as the Greeks gave to Solon a multitude of laws, which he neither saw nor conceived. So with Moses, extremely little of his practical legislation has come down to us. Yet the fourfold tradition persists in making him not only the leader and prophet but also the lawgiver of Israel. In other words he was the judge in chief of his nation. By degrees a collection of his decisions would be accumulated and kept to serve as precedents in the retentive memories of an eastern race.

This collection would be hallowed by the remembrance of what Moses had actually been, of what he had done for the benefit of his people. In due course additions would be made to it from many sources, especially from the words of his successors, long after he had passed from earth. Amongst such sources must be named a 'priestly Torah,' which would preserve directions for the ordering of sacred ritual, with the customs of worship and sacrifice and a certain amount

of ethical teaching, for a considerable time before it was perhaps engraven on a pillar or set down in writing. All succeeding lawgivers in Israel looked back to Moses as the first of their office: hence they regarded their own additions born of later needs and circumstances as merely expansions of his original utterances. Nor did they ever hesitate to put forth their ordinances in his name and to attribute them directly to him.

On his ethical side Moses was supremely great: he was the first to perceive the ethical needs of the community of Israelites, the first to issue a moral code which is still the recognized basis of civilization amongst many peoples. As has been said he was the first to give the Hebrews a sense of collective nationality. It is true that in his day and for centuries afterwards this nationality took little account of the individual as such. The nation was so closely knit together that an individual sin corrupted and brought punishment upon the whole people (e.g., Joshua vii.). Hence for centuries it developed no real perception of or belief in the future life. What the Israelites claimed from Jahveh was this and nothing more: if they worshipped him alone with constant

fidelity, he would perpetuate their nation as a nation, not that he would give each one of them eternal life. They looked for prosperity and happiness on earth and no further. In that limitation they stand almost unique amongst the nations of the earth: nor did they shake themselves free from it until they had come into contact with the Persians and Greeks.

Moses therefore in his work and teaching sowed the seeds of a mighty development. Though his own conception of Jahveh may have been to a large extent elemental, and in no high degree spiritual, from it and from it directly the most truly spiritual conception of the God of the universe has been evolved step by step, in proportion as man's mind was able to bear the light broadening along the generations. In like manner though his conception of holiness may have been to a certain extent ceremonial and below the loftiest ethical heights, it was the direct source of the prophetic teaching that the worshippers of a holy God must be holy too. The very fact of its revelation in his great soul has set the nations of earth upon the path to a truer, more spiritual, purer and more profound perception of the character

and demands of holiness, which has its ripened fruit in the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth.

It is so often forgotten to-day in all lands so-called Christian, that Jesus himself was a Jew, a prophet in a direct line from Moses. Hence the Hebrew lawgiver and prophet must be looked upon as one of the world's greatest creative spirits in the realm of religion and ethics. However much he owed to the thought alike of Egypt and the generations before him, he has laid all succeeding ages under a supreme obligation, which they would do well to recognize thankfully. A certain set of self-styled rationalistic critics refers to the Israelites scornfully as 'a half-barbarous nation.' To them and to their great leader Moses these very critics owe almost all of their purer notions of ethics, almost all of their clearer thought of God.

Chapter IV

THE BIRTH OF PROPHECY

The Hebrews under the Judges. The word Prophet. The Sons of the Prophets. Samuel and his successors. Divination and the Prophets. Religious thought in the days of Samuel. Religious thought in the time of David. Solomon and his Temple. The Solitary Prophets. Elijah and Elisha.

BEFORE attempting to estimate the growth and influence of the prophets amongst the Hebrews it will be necessary to survey briefly the state of affairs during the period of the Judges. The book of that name has not survived in its earliest form. It contains many old traditions of a line of tribal deliverers and heroes, which are in great part historical. But its setting is far from historical. First it assumes that Canaan was conquered completely under the leadership of Joshua (Judges ii. 6-10). Secondly, it imagines that the Hebrews were one people

united in the worship of Jahveh, from which they fell away from time to time and were punished by the Canaanite tribes left in their own land by Jahveh for that purpose (Judges ii. 6-23, iii. 7, etc.). The recurrent phrase, 'And the children of Israel did that which was evil in the sight of Jahveh; and Jahveh delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years' (Judges vi. 1) with the variant name of the punishing race, is due to the Deuteronomic editor of the earlier book (ii. 6-xvi.). He looked upon the old traditions in the light of his time; hence he used them to point out the sin and judgment of idolatry.

Later two appendixes (xvii., xviii.; xix.-xxi.) were added also containing old traditions, though the latter has been rewritten by *P*. Finally the fragment of an old and genuine narrative of the gradual conquest of Canaan (i.-ii. 5) was prefixed to the whole work. The word *Judge=Shophet* means rather a national hero, a devout worshipper of Jahveh, who delivered a tribe or confederacy of tribes from its oppressors. When he had defeated his foes, he ruled as a kind of dictator, until he died leaving in the case of Gideon his sovereignty to his son (Judges ix., x.). Obviously the tribes made their

conquest either singly or in small leagues, and were parted from one another by strong Canaanite cities. It was not until the time of David that they became one nation. It is also clear that the traditions themselves are ancient and little altered by the editor. From them the unsettled state of society in those wild days can be discerned no less than the laxity of morals and religion.

What, then, were the religious ideas prevalent at this time amongst the Hebrews? With comparative certainty it may be observed that the tribes adopted the shrines of the Canaanites, wherever they conquered them, as well as the symbols of their worship. The name Jerubbaal with its faulty etymology (Judges vi. 32) implies that they did not shrink from calling Jahveh himself 'Baal,' of using the name 'Baal' in the names of their children. The Canaanites being a much more highly civilized people than their assailants influenced them even in their form of worship. Every lofty hill-top and many single trees or groves had each its altar with its 'Baal-pillar' (*Massebha*) and 'lopped log' or *Asherah*. Here the Hebrews worshipped Jahveh, but used some of the Canaanite rites. Even so earnest a

Jahveh-worshipper as Hosea at a later time could contemplate these pagan symbols as parts of the worship of Jahveh. In picturing the desolation of Israel for its sins he expresses the final horror thus: 'For the children of Israel shall abide many days without king, and without prince, and without altar, and without *pillar*, and without *ephod* or *teraphim*' (Hosea iii. 4). What survived to his day must have preceded it. Hence it may be seen that the pillar, ephod, and teraphim were symbols of Hebrew worship from a time dating soon after their arrival in Canaan. Of these the pillar was probably adopted from the Canaanites.

All of these symbols are mentioned in the book of Judges as being extremely sacred. Abimelech was made king near a pillar under 'the terebinth in Shechem' (Judges ix. 6). Now the pillar was a well-known symbol of Baal. This word is not the real name of a God. It is a generic rather than an individual title; it means the 'masculine principle,' so that a *husband* is called *Baal*, though *Ishi* is the more usual term (Hosea ii. 16). By a late prophet (Isaiah lxii. 4) Israel is said to be 'Beulah,' that is 'wedded' to Jahveh. By the side of the pillar usually

stood an 'Asherah,' which symbolized the 'female principle,' though the word is sometimes used for an actual 'goddess of fortune' (1 Kings xv. 13). Such an Asherah stood by the altar of *Baal* under the terebinth at Ophrah, which Gideon threw down (Judges vi. 25). Doubtless a pillar would be there also, as Ophrah would be an old Canaanite shrine.

The two symbols represented the divine powers giving fertility to the earth, and so were connected with the sun. When the Hebrew tribes conquered parts of the land there was nothing to prevent them from using the old altars and symbols of the beaten enemy. Perhaps too they forgot Jahveh in the more riotous Canaanite worship of Baal, though more probably they still worshipped him at the shrine of the heathen deity. The worship of Baal was much coarser than any which they had brought with them from the wilderness. It was marked by gross sensuality: sacred prostitutes of both sexes formed an integral part of its ritual and were known as the 'kadesh' and 'kadeshah' (Hosea iv. 13, 14; Amos ii. 7; 2 Kings xxiii. 7). Most of our evidence for this sexual indulgence at the consecrated shrines

of Canaan comes from a later date. But such a custom must have had its origin in a remote antiquity. The Hebrews neither learned it in a moment nor brought it with them from their nomadic life. They found it in Canaan, and yielded easily to its seductive influence.

The 'ephod' is difficult to define exactly. It occurs under four forms in the Old Testament. First there is the simple linen garment, the 'ephod bad' of the priests, which the child Samuel wore in Shiloh (1 Samuel ii. 18). Secondly there is the 'ephod' by which oracles were taken, which was a sort of bag into which the sacred lots 'urim' and 'thummim' were placed, from which they were drawn out (1 Samuel xxiii. 6, 9). Thirdly there was the high priest's sacred garment, which was woven in gorgeous colours and hung over his shoulders (Exodus xxviii. 6-12).

None of these is mentioned in the book of Judges, where the word itself occurs twice (viii. 27, xvii. 5). In the first example it can only be an image of some sort set up by Gideon overlaid with the gold taken from the Midianites. In the second case the 'ephod' is closely connected with the images made by

Micah for his sanctuary in Mount Ephraim, and is mentioned side by side with the 'teraphim,' which were images fashioned like a man (1 Samuel xix. 13), and possibly used for divination. Hence this 'ephod' must have been one of a set of images. Probably the original meaning of the word has been lost from its former connexion with idolatry. Gideon's 'ephod' at all events was an image, which he intended to symbolize Jahveh in spite of the teaching of Moses. Micah, the Ephraimite, was certainly a Jahveh-worshipper, as he obtained a 'Levite' to be his priest (Judges xvii. 7-13) expecting to be richly blessed because he had been so fortunate. Here the word 'Levite' can only mean one trained for the priesthood, not a member of the tribe of Levi. When the Danites robbed Micah of his images and his priest, they set up a shrine at Laish, known later as Dan (Judges xviii. 30), where long afterwards Jeroboam the son of Nebat set one of his 'golden bulls' at the ancient sanctuary. The priest is said to have been Jonathan, the grandson of Moses.

From Micah's story we learn that a man could set up his own son as his priest, or if he could get a Levite he paid him an annual

sum for ministering at his private shrine. Thus from the book of Judges we learn that there was no fixed temple of Jahveh as in the later period, that men offered sacrifices much as they chose, that they thought themselves fortunate if they secured a Levite to be their priest, that there was no definitely fixed order of priests, that the Hebrews adopted the symbols of Canaanite worship, and may have often served the gods of Canaan, though they never entirely abandoned the worship of Jahveh as their peculiar God.

We learn, too, that heroes who clung to the sole worship of Israel's God were the natural leaders of their tribes against their foes. They are said to have been filled with the 'spirit of Jahveh' (Judges vi. 34), as sacrificing when Jahveh's angel appeared to announce his will (vi. 19-21, xiii. 18-20). They regarded Jahveh as the divine leader of the tribal army (v. 4), indeed as the 'warrior-god,' ready to help his oppressed worshippers. Jephthah the Gileadite does not hesitate to offer up his own daughter to Jahveh because of his rash vow to give him 'whatever met him first from his home' on his return from victory (xi. 30-40). Manifestly the time of the Judges was a rude age

in respect of the Hebrews with relatively low ethical ideals, but observing the sanctity of a vow.

The story of Samson shows a still lower tone than that of most of the Judges. His name is curious and connected with the *sun*, just as Beth-Shemesh meant the 'house of the sun.' He has been said to be the centre of a solar myth applied to some actual strong man. His carrying off the gates of Gaza (Judges xvi. 3) is said to typify the sun carrying off the gates of darkness in the morning. The seven locks of his hair are said to symbolize the seven rays of the sun in which his strength consists. When they are shorn off at the instigation of 'Delilah' = 'the night' he loses his might: when they are grown once more it is renewed, and so forth.

But such an explanation is perhaps a little too easy and too clever. What is more important to note is the fact that Samson was a 'Nazarite,' that is a man under a vow to drink no strong drink, to live such a life as a Bedawin lived. Under his personality is pictured a revolt amongst the tribes against the growing civilization arising from the gradual absorption of the Canaanites (xiii. 2-7). It is also significant that he is said to

be of the tribe of Dan, a large body of whose members under the pressure of the Philistines migrated to the northern town of Laish (Judges xviii.). His successor after a long period was Jehonadab the son of Rechab (2 Kings x. 15-17), whose followers had much in common with the Nazarites. They were Jahveh-worshippers, who chose to worship him with the simplicity of an older time, and regarded Baal-worship as directly due to more luxurious modes of living.

The book of Judges reveals a disturbed state of society, a conquest proceeding by degrees, a stern conception of Jahveh as fighting his people's battles at their head. In the original traditions is scarcely a trace of organized worship, though a temple of Jahveh is said to have existed in Shiloh, when the Danites set up Micah's images at Laish (Judges xviii. 31). But its influence would be merely local not national. Similarly Gideon established a sanctuary at Ophrah (Judges viii. 27), where his image probably symbolized Jahveh. Other shrines of a like kind are referred to as well known, which would certainly be Canaanite sanctuaries taken over by the Hebrews, as they conquered the neighbourhood of each.

Whatever may be said of the mass of the people, it is quite evident that there were enthusiastic worshippers of Jahveh, who were able to call many followers in his name to aid them in battle with his foes. As in religious matters so it was in ethical: the standards of right and wrong were by no means lofty. Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite committed a deadly sin against eastern notions of hospitality by murdering Sisera in her tent (Judges iv. 21, v. 24-27). Yet Deborah with a fine unction blessed her in her magnificent triumph-song (Judges v. 24). Ethical ideas are almost absent from the story of Samson. Ehud's murder of Eglon (Judges iii. 21-23) though intensely patriotic was despicably treacherous and could only have been applauded by comparatively uncivilized men. But the book is ennobled by the faithfulness to Jahveh of the heroic leaders, who gathered armies to fight his battles. Their conception of him might not be high, but their fidelity to him was beyond reproach. In his name they dared fearful odds; in his name they triumphed, and governed the tribes to which they themselves belonged.

One valuable hint on the growth of the

order of prophets is to be gained from this deeply interesting book. Deborah the Judge was also a *prophetess*=*Nabi'ah*, who dwelt and possibly ministered at a little shrine under the sacred palm called by her name (Judges iv. 4, 5). The derivation of this word is much disputed: perhaps the most plausible explanation is to trace it to a Hebrew root meaning 'to bubble over,' that is with inspiration. This derivation has the solid advantage of covering all the various kinds of prophets of Jahveh found in the Old Testament.

An interesting antiquarian note has been added to the earliest tradition of Samuel, the substantial truth of which cannot be doubted (1 Samuel ix. 9). It runs thus, 'Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, thus he said, Come, let us go to the *Seer*; for he that is now called a *Prophet* was beforetime called a *Seer*.' The office of this Seer=*Roëh* was to be consulted amongst other things about lost property (1 Samuel ix. 1-7). He was held in high repute near his abode, and the priest and people would not eat of the sacrificial meal until he had blessed it (1 Samuel ix. 22, 23). Such a meal was held at the

'high place,' where the sacrifice was offered, in this case at Ramah. The Seer differed widely from the later prophet. Though his gift of what is sometimes called 'second sight' was highly valued, he was no religious or political reformer, though he had some interest in national politics. Yet he must have been esteemed more honourable than the priest who offered the victim, since the feast was incomplete without his blessing. At all events the character of Samuel the Seer stood so high, that he was able to anoint first Saul then David to be king over Israel (1 Samuel x. 1, xvi. 13, 14).

The word 'gazer'='*Chozeh*' was sometimes used for prophet, which may have meant 'he who sees visions,' that is one who receives revelations from Jahveh in dreams. Throughout *E* are evidences that such revelations were believed to be alike common and truthful (e.g., Genesis xxxvii. 5-11). But in Amos vii. 12, Amaziah the priest of Beth-el uses the word in much the same sense as prophet. He may have meant simply to taunt Amos as a visionary. But Amos's answer (vii. 14) implies that he did not so understand the priest: he refused to be ranked as a member of one of the 'prophetic

guilds,' and declared that he owed his call to Jahveh directly. That such 'dreamers' existed is clear; but how far they became organized revealers of the divine will is entirely uncertain.

Another frequent name for prophet is 'man of God,' that is 'inspired by God' (2 Kings v. 8). The phrase explains itself, but is usually applied to the 'solitary prophets,' who lived alone in many parts of both kingdoms. The Greek word προφήτης itself, of which our word prophet is a derivative, originally meant a *forth-teller* not a *foreteller*, though both functions gradually became blended. When the priestess of Delphi uttered her oracles, they were usually unintelligible to those who consulted her. Hence she employed a 'prophet' to interpret her words. Thus the prophets of Israel were 'those who interpreted the will' of Israel's God to the people. That is a sense admirably suited to the later prophets, but it does not accord with the earliest of the class living in the time of Samuel.

First it will be helpful to examine some of the Hebrew methods of ascertaining Jahveh's will. Like the surrounding tribes they used divination of various kinds,

notably by the ephod and teraphim. Of the ephod enough has been said; of the teraphim little or nothing is known of their earliest employment. In addition to these the people consulted those who uttered incantations, observed omens, wove spells, consulted familiar spirits, used a kind of necromancy (Deuteronomy xviii. 10, 11). But none of these is ever called a prophet. A sort of *medium* is described in the person of the 'witch of Endor,' who professed to have called up Samuel from his grave to instruct Saul (1 Samuel xxviii. 6-25).

There is also one trace of a belief similar to that of the ancient Greeks who imagined that Zeus revealed his will by the talking oaks of Dodona. David is represented as inquiring of Jahveh if he should attack the Philistines and as receiving his answer by 'the sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry trees' (2 Samuel v. 23, 24). So there was a famous tree near Shechem known as 'the soothsayer's terebinth' (Genesis xii. 6), where oracles may have been given. Thus it is evident that the Hebrews like other ancient peoples had distinct methods of consulting Jahveh in various kinds of divination. These excited the fierce wrath

of the greater prophets at a later time, but were the natural customs of an older day. They always precede the age of distinguished religious teachers and form part of the common stock and practices of primitive mankind. They may rightly be regarded as the first searchings after the divine, the cruder preparations for fuller revelation to come.

In this respect the Hebrews resembled other nations: they had not fallen from a higher state of revelation, but were emerging from a lower plane of thought. To aid them in their ascent they had a unique possession, by which they stand out in marked contrast with most other ancient races. These had their individual prophets and founders of religions: but few if any have had so long a line of noblest teachers succeeding one another in such rich profusion. It is of the highest importance to trace the growth of prophecy from its crude beginning to its unique culmination under its greatest exponents.

The first organized body of prophets so called bore a close resemblance to a band of modern Dervishes, indulging in inarticulate transports in Jahveh's honour. It has been

thought that they were of Canaanite origin ; but of this there is no certainty. They were guilds living at a later time in little communities, using 'lute, tambourine, pipe, and lyre' to stimulate their divine frenzy. Such a band met Saul after his anointing as king by Samuel (1 Samuel x. 10-13) ; by them as by the overpowering influence of the crisis in his life Saul yielded to ecstasies like theirs. Once again he is said to have acted in this way when he was in pursuit of David his son-in-law (1 Samuel xix. 18-24), though this tradition is neither so early nor so probable as the former.

These 'sons of the prophets' appear with startling suddenness in Hebrew story to disappear no less suddenly. From the time of Samuel nothing is heard of them for several centuries. Of their origin nothing certain is known : but their conduct agrees closely with that derivation of the word prophet which traces it to the root 'to bubble over.' Their inspiration was inarticulate, displaying itself in physical and mental excitement. Doubtless their practices would impress deeply the people and serve to keep alive solemn reverence for Jahveh. Such early manifestations of loyalty

to the divine being must never be stigmatized as folly. From small beginnings great results are achieved. Some of the 'solitary prophets' indulged in actions not untinged by frenzy. Elijah is said to have run swiftly before Ahab's chariot (1 Kings xviii. 46), while Elisha needed the stimulus of a minstrel's music once to enable him to utter his message (2 Kings iii. 15).

In due time these bands of enthusiasts became known as 'sons of the prophets,' that is 'members of a prophetic guild' (2 Kings iv. 38). Elisha evidently did much to organize them, and their manifestations may have become less purely emotional, though the one whom he sent to anoint Jehu the son of Nimshi was thought to be mad by the rest of the captains (2 Kings ix. 1-12). In the days of Amos the professional prophets who gathered round the various temples of Jahveh still bore the name of 'sons of the prophets,' with whom he angrily disclaimed any dealings (Amos vii. 13, 14). Whatever the guilds became, they began their mission somewhere about the time of Samuel, who though by no means of their kind had much sympathy with them as devotees of Jahveh. Many of the early

Christians at Corinth indulged in manifestations similar to theirs and caused St. Paul much trouble by their inarticulate egoism (1 Corinthians xiv. 5-18). That is what is meant by 'speaking with tongues,' namely, the utterance of babbling noises.

In discussing the place of Samuel in the history of prophecy we are met by serious difficulties. The records present two portraits of him differing materially from one another. In the first he appears as a hallowed seer, in the second as a Hebrew saint. The first is certainly nearer to the truth than the second: but clearly he was a man of unusual gifts, who impressed his personality so deeply upon the men of his day that an exaggerated picture of him has found its way into history. He may actually have judged Israel and prepared the way for the kingdom, which was due to the oppression of the Philistines (1 Samuel ix. 15-17). At all events he was the leading spirit in the worship of Jahveh, to which he had traditionally been dedicated from his birth (1 Samuel i. 11). He dwelt at Ramah, where there was a hill-top sanctuary at which he may have ministered occasionally.

Here his influence was so great that he was

regarded as a kind of prophet, though he was known as the 'seer,' or as 'the man of God.' But he must have been more than an ordinary seer; otherwise he could hardly have become one of the most commanding figures in Hebrew history before the kingdom. So great indeed did he come to be, that his latest biographer has given him many unreal episodes and speeches. He cannot be credited with uttering a long oration on the miseries of the kingdom many years before they had been experienced (1 Samuel xii.). Nor can the same speaker, when his nation asked him for a king, have actually blessed the monarch as God's gift to save his people from the Philistines, and banned him as a punishment for their rejection of him (1 Samuel ix. 16, cf. viii. 4-22).

While then no final conclusion can be reached about the real Samuel as he actually lived, his influence is seen to be intensely real. His relationship to the 'prophetic guilds' of his time is also very obscure. He may have organized them and set them in a surer way of gaining an abiding influence over their countrymen, so that they might help to keep alive the sacred flame of the worship of Jahveh. In this he was supremely in-

terested : it was in the name of Jahveh that he anointed both Saul and David to be king. If he did not in fact govern a portion of Israel, he was little less than ruler of that portion. He was constantly consulted by Saul until their quarrel. Nay, it was to his wraith that Saul is said to have applied for counsel just before the fatal battle of Mount Gilboa. Though many legends have grown around his name, it still remains venerable as that of the first true successor of Moses, who did much to establish upon a secure foundation the religion of Jahveh.

Samuel did not live to see David ascend the throne and pursue his victorious career. But his work did not die with him. Saul and David were both devout Jahveh-worshippers and did much to make their religion the faith of the whole people. A long line of distinguished prophets took up the work of their great predecessor. Of these Nathan and Gad are especially named and something is told of each of them. In a Deuteronomic passage Nathan is said to have warned David against building a temple for Jahveh, when he brought back the ark from the Philistines to Mount Zion (2 Samuel vii. 1-17) after his conquest of Jerusalem. Nathan

rebuked with unsparing rigour the king for his sin against Uriah the Hittite (2 Samuel xii. 1-9, 13, 14). Finally Nathan joined with Bathsheba in the disreputable court intrigue by which Solomon secured the throne (1 Kings i. 9-52). He must, therefore, have been a man of sterling courage and great weight at the court, though his last recorded act was one of treason against David's eldest surviving son.

Of Gad little more is known than that he rebuked David to his face, when in his pride he numbered the people, and foretold his punishment (2 Samuel xxiv. 10-25). Whether these two men knew Samuel personally is quite uncertain, but they kept alive his spirit. Gad is called the 'king's seer,' which implies that he held the highly important office of religious instructor and revealer of Jahveh's oracles to David. How these oracles were given is unknown : but Gad's method must have differed from the consultation of the ephod, which was performed by the king himself in conjunction with the priest of the sanctuary (1 Samuel xxiii. 9). It is noteworthy that after David ascended the throne he is never represented as inquiring of Jahveh 'by the ephod,' but

simply as 'inquiring of Jahveh' (2 Samuel ii. 1, v. 19). Hence Gad must have employed some other means of discovering Jahveh's will, or he may have trusted to direct inspiration like the later prophets.

What, then, was the prevailing religious thought in the days of Samuel? It must not be imagined that the worship of Jahveh was what it became at a later period. Though he had no actual image, the 'ark' took the place of an image. It was regarded as Jahveh's residence by most of his worshippers. Hence has arisen the story of Uzzah, who was said to have been struck dead by presumptuously steadying it on its way to Jerusalem (2 Samuel vi. 6-8). Similarly arose the story of the blessing of the house of Obed-edom, while it remained there (vi. 11). Under the influence of its symbolism David clad in the priest's garment (ephod bad) danced before it as it was borne triumphantly to its resting-place on Mount Zion, where it stood in a simple tent till the days of Solomon.

Nor at this time was it considered a sin to call Jahveh by the name of *Baal*. Saul was his true worshipper; yet he did not hesitate to call one son 'Ish-Baal'='Baal's

man' (2 Samuel ii. 8), while the equally pious Jonathan named his son 'Merib-Baal' ='Baal's warrior' (2 Samuel iv. 4, where he appears as Mephibosheth; cf. 1 Chronicles viii. 34, where the true name is found). The later editors have substituted the word 'Bosheth'='shame' for 'Baal' in both of these cases as in many others, holding it impossible for persons so devoted to Jahveh to use the generic name of a heathen deity as part of the names of their sons. But Saul and Jonathan intended to do honour to Jahveh by thus using a title very generally applied to him in their time. The worship of Jahveh has been rightly called *syncretistic*, that is to say it took up into itself much of the popular worship of Baal. When the Israelite was worshipping at the local shrine where the Canaanite had worshipped before him, and addressing Jahveh as Baal, he believed himself to be worshipping Jahveh in all honesty. But gradually the worship of Jahveh at the sanctuary of the local Baal lost its distinctive features and the worship of the local Baal himself in part took its place. Hence the campaign against the 'high places' in the Deuteronomic reformation under Josiah (2 Kings xxiii. 13-15).

During this period and long afterwards no conception of the universality of Jahveh was to be found even amongst his true worshippers. To David he was the 'God of Israel,' who had taken for his portion the *land of Israel*, who could not be worshipped outside of its boundaries (1 Samuel xxvi. 19). Similarly the conception of Jahveh's being was limited, while the ethical standards of the day matched the conception. The right and duty of revenge, however treacherous, ruled in the mind of Joab (2 Samuel iii. 23-28), of Absalom (xiii. 28, 29), and was the common practice of all Israelites. David no doubt condemned the murder of Abner with extreme severity; but his anger was partly stirred by the sense of the political loss which he had sustained in this way. That he did not shrink from revenge himself is shown in his charge given to Solomon shortly before his death (1 Kings ii. 1-9). In that remarkable utterance, which is found in a scene undoubtedly in essence historical, there is a curious blending of piety with treacherous cruelty. He commanded his son to put to death his loyal general Joab, possibly because he had slain his son Absalom, with an ingratitude truly royal.

That David was genuinely pious cannot be doubted; but his piety belonged to his own day and seldom soared above it. It did not prevent him from committing his dastardly crime against Uriah, though it did constrain him to repent when his baseness was made manifest to him. He had the gifts of the hero in rich measure: he was a resourceful commander, a faithful friend, a warm-hearted and generous man in many respects ahead of the kings of his time. He was an intensely human man, dowered with great and noble qualities, but by no means a saint as he has often been represented. Of his capacity as a religious poet something will be said in its place: here it will be well to note carefully that not many of the Psalms are certainly his, probably none exactly as he wrote them. None of them bears a close resemblance to the dirges over Saul and Jonathan (2 Samuel i. 19-27) and over Abner (2 Samuel iii. 33, 34), which have survived apparently in their original form. The first shows David as a great and tender-hearted poet, who knew how to sing the faithfulness of friendship with deep and moving power.

The most striking event in the reign of

Solomon was the building of the Temple and his palace on Mount Zion. At the same time he established the Levitical priesthood under Zadok, who took the place of the deposed Abiathar. This single event did more to accomplish the unification of the worship of Jahveh than any other in Hebrew history. But its importance must not be exaggerated; at first the Temple was rather a royal chapel than a national sanctuary. The farming feasts were celebrated at home, not within its precincts. There was no high priest in the later sense; the king himself consecrated the sanctuary and offered sacrifices (1 Kings viii., ix. 25).

An increasing number of priests would be needed to maintain the services in the new shrine. But Zadok the head of them was Solomon's very humble servant dependent upon him for his office and support. He would never have dared to protest against the ecclesiastical policy of the great king, which was rather prudential than strictly religious. Though Solomon was a faithful worshipper of Jahveh as *patron-God*, if such an expression may be used, of his kingdom, without hesitation he built temples for his numerous wives side by side

with that of Jahveh. The Deuteronomic editor says in so many words, 'Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab in the mount that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomination of the children of Ammon. And so he did for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods' (1 Kings xi. 7, 8). This comparatively late authority charitably assumes that 'his wives turned away his heart after other gods.' It is clear that Solomon hoped to strengthen his position as king by marrying a multitude of heathen princesses, though their number has probably been exaggerated.

Now it must not be assumed that Solomon regarded either Chemosh or Molech as 'abominations.' He looked upon the one as the national god of Moab, the other as that of Ammon. Hence he provided sanctuaries for the worship of his Moabite and his Ammonite wives respectively. Nay, sometimes he may have worshipped with them without ever holding himself false to Jahveh. The Deuteronomic principle of a single sanctuary was not born in his time; 'high places' abounded on every conspicuous eminence each with its separate priest.

Nor were they condemned by Isaiah as such, though Amos and Hosea held the worship at them to be not of the right kind. We must be careful not to read back into the reign of Solomon the conceptions of a later age. He certainly deemed it no sin to worship with his wives, so long as he recognized Jahveh as the supreme God of Israel. Nor did he hesitate to offer sacrifices at well-known 'high places' such as Gibeon (1 Kings iii. 4). So little does his biographer condemn the king, that he represents him as receiving divine promises in a vision. In reading the history of the kingdom we must rid ourselves of the conceptions of the Deuteronomists if we are to hope to understand it.

Soon after Rehoboam came to the throne, Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, rebelled against him taking with him ten of the tribes and acting under the instigation of Ahijah the Shilonite, a prophet of Jahveh (1 Kings xi. 26-40). By later authors he is always denounced as 'Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin' (1 Kings xv. 30). His sin upon examination appears to have been threefold. First he rebelled against the lawful king, secondly he set up two

'golden bulls' at Bethel and Dan, thirdly he made priests of the ordinary people not of the tribe of Levi (1 Kings xii. 25-33). The first needs no comment, though it was a deadly sin to the Deuteronomists. The second they regarded as a lapse into idolatry, the third as the degradation of the priesthood. Whatever Jeroboam's other sins may have been, he was no deliberate idolater. His only son's name, Abijah = 'my father is Jahveh' proves his constancy to Jahveh, whose symbols he intended the 'golden bulls' to be. These he set up at either end of his kingdom to prevent his subjects from feeling the need of going up to Jerusalem to worship in the Temple. By this means he attempted to establish two temples to Jahveh in his kingdom, which would rival the older Temple of Solomon. In this politic purpose he succeeded; nor did either Elijah or even Amos condemn these sanctuaries as such.

Similarly the latest redactors of the book of Kings took great offence at his promiscuous manner of making priests (1 Kings xiii. 33, 34) to the utter disregard of the sole claim of the tribe of Levi to this office. Such a practice was intolerable to the later high ideal of the Levitical priesthood and its

representatives amongst the priestly writers. His people appear to have seen nothing wrong in his action; nor did the great prophets of his own kingdom ever denounce him for performing it. He was a practical ruler far-sighted enough to perceive the powerful attraction of the noble Temple of Solomon to his subjects and determined to provide counterbalancing attractions. Similarly his method of filling up his priesthood rather implies that the later practice of confining it to the tribe of Levi was not firmly established than any intentional slur upon it. The foregoing view is opposed to the traditional interpretation: but it is drawn entirely from the facts of the case and from such evidence as is afforded by the complex account of his reign. In fact in Old Testament interpretation it is of little use to cling to the presuppositions of the Deuteronomic or priestly editors, which are based upon no contemporary evidence, but on the habits of thought of their own respective periods.

During the reigns of Jeroboam and his successors both in Judah and Israel arose a number of 'solitary prophets' of Jahveh, who lived either by themselves or at most with a single attendant, coming forth sud-

denly from their homes to utter their message on important occasions. Of this kind was Ahijah the Shilonite, who used a symbolic action to emphasize his words (1 Kings xi. 29-39). The royal temples had each its band of professional prophets maintained by the king and consulted by him when he was undertaking any expedition. Naturally they often uttered oracles in accordance with the king's wishes (Micah ii. 5-11). Ahab had four hundred such (1 Kings xxii. 6-28), of whom one was incorruptible, Micaiah, the son of Imlah. These were prophets of Jahveh, whose worshipper therefore Ahab must have been. Nor is he said to have consulted any other kind of prophet, whatever Jezebel may have done.

Moreover he called his sons by the name of Jahveh, namely Jehoram='Jahveh is exalted,' and Ahaziah='Jahveh hath grasped,' a further proof that he had not abandoned the national religion. In strong opposition to the professional prophets stood men like Micaiah, who dared to foretell evil to Ahab, when it needed great courage to do so. Prophets of his kind never imagined, however, that the rest of the guild were consciously deceiving Ahab. On the con-

trary they held that a 'lying spirit' from Jahveh himself put false words into their mouth to lead the king to his ruin (1 Kings xxii. 20-23). Doubtless the kings of both kingdoms followed the oracles of the prophets which agreed with their own wishes, thus differing little from other kings.

Elijah the Tishbite stands out amongst the 'solitary prophets' as a stern enthusiast of a mighty personality, around whose name so many legends have gathered that it is difficult to present a picture of the real man (1 Kings xvii., xviii., xix., xxi. 17-29; 2 Kings i., ii.). A native of Gilead he led an ascetic life, making appearances and disappearances so suddenly that he was believed to be borne hither and thither by the 'spirit of Jahveh' (1 Kings xviii. 9-12). Towards the close of his life he is described as 'an hairy man with a girdle of leather about his loins' (2 Kings i. 8), in other words he was a Nazarite trimming neither his hair nor beard and wearing a skin garment. It seems certain that he was an anchorite in his manner of life, while his athletic frame and his deep knowledge of the by-ways of his native land made it easy for him to appear and disappear mysteriously.

Like all his fellow prophets he believed that

Jahveh himself had given to him the exact words of his message. A terrible drought afflicted Israel, of which there is confirmatory evidence from other sources. Ahab had married Jezebel, daughter of Ethbaal, king of Tyre (1 Kings xvi. 31, where *Zidonians* is put for *Tyrians*). For her worship he built a temple in honour of the Tyrian Baal. Many of the people followed the custom of the queen, and Elijah's wrath was aroused. Regarding the drought as a punishment for this falling away from Jahveh, he came from his mountain home to confront Ahab, to denounce the worship of Baal side by side with that of Jahveh. The great scene on Mount Carmel is described with unmatched sublimity of words, in which truth is so closely intermingled with legend that they can no longer be disentangled (1 Kings xviii.). The story represents the conflict of two ideals; it is not simply a contest between Jahveh and Baal. With keen penetration Elijah saw the sensual associations inseparable from the worship of Baal, while he himself stood for the stern purity and simplicity of the worship of Jahveh. He saw that the first would be the ruin of his country, that in the second was its supreme hope. He does

not seem to have thought of any land save his own as under the sway of Jahveh; he uttered no protest against the 'golden bulls,' nor against worship at the 'high places,' so long as it was the worship of Jahveh. It was for Jahveh the God of Israel that he was 'very jealous': by his side he could tolerate no alien worship.

When for the moment he had prevailed, Jezebel determined to kill him, and one of his moods of deep despondency fell upon him. He fled to Horeb, where he is said to have received his commission to anoint Jehu the son of Nimshi to be king and Elisha the son of Shaphat to succeed him as prophet (1 Kings xix. 1-18). In the wonderful vision at Horeb the character and motives of Elijah are clearly seen. He went thither in deep despair; he returned encouraged to do the remainder of his work. It is not necessary to press the details of the story: its supreme value consists in the portrayal of the character and ideals of the man. Such a man could not fail to inspire his followers with strength and enthusiasm; they could but revere the stern prophet who had dared to tell the unpalatable truth to the great king face to face.

Nor was Ahab in spite of many faults entirely the evil monarch whose picture has survived as painted by his resolute enemies. He was brave, chivalrous, wise, a capable general, and a successful king, who could not have been unpopular with all of his subjects. If he was guilty of a heinous sin against Naboth, so was David against Uriah. Hence no common courage was needed to meet him on his way, to condemn him for having 'troubled Israel,' to denounce ruin upon him and his. This Elijah did more than once, so deeply did his confidence in Jahveh stir him to do this dangerous duty. His next public appearance was provoked by a serious crime committed by Ahab against Naboth under the evil influence of his wife, who was the chief figure in the treacherous tragedy. The right of inheritance was and is of supreme sanctity to eastern nations. This Ahab and Jezebel violated by the legal murder of Naboth for the sake of his vineyard. Elijah's whole sense of justice and right was outraged by this flagrant crime. Once more he denounced Jahveh's judgment upon him (1 Kings xxi. 17-29) so powerfully that Ahab afterwards repented and was promised a respite from the threatened

calamity. This repentance is quite as much to his credit as that of David for his sin against Uriah. Yet his biographers in their estimate of him have overlooked this and several other pieces of evidence of a not wholly ignoble nature (e.g., 1 Kings xx. 26-34), because he had dared to permit the worship of Baal Melcharth alongside that of Jahveh. In that he was wrong: but he must be judged by the whole and not by a part of the evidence.

Elijah had already called Elisha to be his successor (1 Kings xix. 19-21), but he did not survive to anoint Jehu the son of Nimshi. With his new disciple according to the tradition he moved from place to place, until they left the 'prophetic guild' at Jericho to cross the Jordan (2 Kings ii. 1-12). There in the region of Mount Nebo a flaming chariot and horses bore him from Elisha's sight, while he dropped his mantle as a sign that a double portion of his spirit would rest upon his disciple. The tradition is in great part legendary and has some affinity with the one representing the grave of Moses as unknown.

Its author would have rightly ranked Elijah with Moses as his truest successor.

He left an ineffaceable impression upon the hearts of his countrymen. He had withstood an unusually able and powerful monarch not only in the interest of the sole worship of Jahveh, but as the vindicator of one of the most cherished rights of the people of Israel. His mysterious way of coming and going had fired the imagination not only of his contemporaries, but of those who followed him. They endowed him with superhuman powers, such as are given again and again to their heroes and saints. Elijah has come down to us rather as the desert-saint than as the mighty human personality which was actually his. Through all the legends which have gathered round his name, this personality stands out with convincing force. The Jews of the time of Jesus expected him to appear to prepare the way for the coming of the Messiah. With profounder insight Jesus saw the renewal of the spirit of the prophet of Israel in the sturdy soul of John the Baptist. Elijah's figure remains as that of a mighty leader in the days of a serious crisis, as one who since the time of Moses did most to secure the sole worship of Jahveh in his own land. Indeed he paved the way for the coming of the

'literary prophets' who taught that Jahveh was not only the sole God of Israel, but Lord of all the earth.

Elijah passed away leaving a worthy successor behind him. Elisha was cast in a kindlier mould, though now and then he was guilty of cruelty according to tradition. Before he obeyed Elijah's call, he asked leave first to go and give his father and mother the kiss of farewell (1 Kings xix. 20). He was unselfish: when he left his home, he left a prosperous farmstead, for he was 'ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen' at the time (1 Kings xix. 19). Yet without a murmur he left all behind to take upon himself the hard and dangerous office of a prophet. Around him as around his master many miracle-stories have grown, of which the majority consists of acts of kindness.

Though he was interested in the 'prophetic guilds' (2 Kings vi. 1-7) he lived simply by himself with his one attendant Gehazi, until the latter was stricken with leprosy. To his lowly home came great men such as Naaman the Syrian seeking for his help (2 Kings v. 9-19). Here he was consulted more than once by the king. His career need not be followed closely: but

it must be remembered that he was not merely a prophet but a politician, whose wise advice more than once saved his country from ruin. He was the inspiring force behind the rebellion of Jehu, who perhaps did little credit to his prophetic sponsor (2 Kings ix.). Though he had no new revelation to give, he was constant in all things to the spirit of his master, faithful to the worship of Jahveh as sole God of Israel. When he lay dying he sent for Jehu's grandson, Joash, to give him final counsel. Well might the king as he hung over the dying prophet exclaim, 'My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof' (2 Kings xiii. 14). He served his God faithfully displaying alike profound religious conviction and fervent love of his country.

Elijah and Elisha prepared the way for the 'literary prophets' who succeeded them. They had definite limitations; but their teaching formed a sound foundation for further building. In them we trace the growing ethical tone of the prophets. Neither of them soared beyond the conception of Jahveh as sole God of Israel. Naaman for example is represented as receiving 'two mules' burden of earth,' that he might build

an altar in Damascus to worship Jahveh (2 Kings v. 17-19). Obviously, both he and Elisha believed such worship to be impossible in an alien land without some such compromise as this. Elijah too perceived the moral iniquity of Ahab's crime against Naboth, as Nathan had done in a similar case before him. He represented Jahveh as passing sentence upon the king for his undoubted guilt. That was the foundation of the later teaching of the ethical holiness of Jahveh, which plays so important a part in the writings of Amos and Isaiah. Elijah and his disciple Elisha perceived clearly the gross and degrading sensuality of the worship of Baal: hence they stood forth boldly for the purity of worship, for the righteousness of Jahveh. They left their work unfinished, as all men even the greatest must do. But it remains ever to their glory that they saw the light and gave up all to follow its guidance along the upward path towards truth.

CHAPTER V

THE LITERARY PROPHETS

Affairs in Judah and Israel after the death of Elisha. The coming of Amos. Hosea the Israelite. Isaiah of Jerusalem. Micah the Morashtite. Deuteronomy. Jeremiah of Anathoth. Ezekiel the Exile. The Second Isaiah. The Message of the Literary Prophets.

WITHIN forty years after the death of Elisha a new era began in prophecy, founded upon the old, but of immense consequence in its inherent power and effect upon the nation. This was the age of the 'Literary Prophets,' who began their work by uttering their message in the market-place of one or other of the larger towns in Israel and Judah (Amos vii. 10-17); but finding themselves suspected or despised, issued their oracles in a written form to be read in public either by themselves or their disciples. Some were peasants, some aristocrats, some descended from priestly families, some actually priests.

The writings of many were collected in their own lifetime or after their death, and have been handed down under their own names. Some are only known by large collections or scattered fragments of their oracles, which have been attached to the writing of better known prophets. The books of Isaiah and Jeremiah for example contain almost more of the words of a number of anonymous prophets than of the actual sayings of their reputed authors.

At this point it will be advantageous to survey very briefly the social advancement in Israel and Judah during the forty years between the death of Elisha and the coming of Amos. In Israel a strong ruler, Jeroboam II (782-743 B.C.) had recovered the former boundaries of his kingdom and peaceful prosperity followed victorious war. In Judah similarly a great king, Uzziah, reigned possibly from 789 to 737 B.C., during the last years of which his son Jotham was regent after his father had become a leper. In both kingdoms the ruling classes had grown wealthier and more powerful: they indulged in riotous luxury and joined the priests in grinding the face of the poor. The worship of Jahveh was celebrated with a

Canaanite magnificence degenerating often into grave debauchery. The national festivals were joined with national fairs and frequented by pilgrims coming from a great distance.

Gorgeous palaces were built by the great nobles, who lived largely by plundering the mass of the people. Every 'high place' had its sacrifices, while the great temples were distinguished by innumerable offerings. But the leaders of neither kingdom understood the need of practising strict morality. They had yet to learn that Jahveh was a God of righteousness, who demanded righteousness from his worshippers. Hence corruption grew apace and ended in ruin and exile. That fine poem the so-called 'Blessing of Moses,' which is in reality the work of an Israelite poet of this time (Deuteronomy xxxiii.), thrills with triumphant thankfulness to Jahveh for blessing Israel with so splendid a prosperity. Like the majority of his day he dreamed that this prosperity was a proof of Jahveh's satisfaction with his people. Hence all but the poor were filled with a proud self-complacency not easy to shake, which led by quick downward stages to utter decay.

At this time Amos received his call and delivered his stern message of speedy destruction because of national sin (765-760 B.C.). He was a shepherd of the desolate mountain region of Tekoa, beneath whose bare heights he cultivated a watery kind of fig (vii. 14). Living a lonely life in narrow circumstances he looked with suspicion upon the luxury of the towns of Israel where he sold his wool. As he followed his sheep, or gazed upon the nightly heavens glittering with innumerable stars, or heard the howling of savage beasts in the darkness, his keen eyes took in all that he saw, and he has left us occasionally vivid vignettes of desert-life (iii. 4, 5, 8, 12). As he says, 'The lion hath roared, who will not fear? Jahveh hath spoken, who can but prophesy?' (iii. 8). He chose the northern kingdom, which was far more powerful than his own land of Judah, as the true representative of the Israel of Jahveh. He was strictly a monotheist, who took a great forward step, when he made Jahveh ask 'Have I not brought up Israel from Egypt, and the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir?' (ix. 7). Thus he recognized that Jahveh had guided these foreign nations

as providentially as he had led Israel to its land. From the moment of his call he put all on one side and went about the divine errand, until he was silenced by Amaziah the priest of Bethel (vii. 10-17). He returned home and wrote down his message almost entirely in the form in which it has survived.

His teaching is intensely ethical. He begins by denouncing Jahveh's judgment upon the neighbouring nations in each case for some grave moral crime (i.—ii. 5). Turning to Israel he rudely scatters its hope of escaping any such fate, because it was Jahveh's people, which had been faithful to its ritual worship (ii. 6-15). Of the ruling classes he asserts with pitiless force, 'They know not how to do right, saith Jahveh, who store up violence and robbery in their palaces' (iii. 10), while he charges the great ladies of Israel with oppression of the needy and with drunkenness (iv. 1-3). He calls attention to such signs of Jahveh's wrath as famine, drought, pestilence, and an earthquake (iv. 6-13), after condemning the popular worship at Bethel with its tithes and offerings as pure transgression. Next he shows the ruling classes their infamous

luxury, their brutal oppression of the poor, uttering the memorable words which contain the pith of his message: 'Seek good and not evil, that ye may live, and Jahveh the God of hosts be with you, as ye say. Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate; it may be that Jahveh, the God of hosts, will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph' (v. 14, 15).

The title 'Jahveh the God of hosts' is frequent in Amos and may mean that 'the God of the heavenly hosts' will come to punish the guilty people. Seeing the rulers looking forward to a 'day of Jahveh,' when he would appear to give them greater glory, he warns the Israelites that that day will be one of gloom, when Jahveh will punish them for their sins by causing them to be carried off into exile beyond Damascus (v. 27). Thus though more dimly than his successors he looks upon the Assyrians as the agents of Jahveh's vengeance. Similarly, he lays the foundation of Isaiah's doctrine of the 'restoration of a faithful remnant' (v. 15). He ends his oracles with a graphic picture of the oppression of the poor (viii. 4-6) and a terrible presentation of the total destruction of the people (viii. 8—ix. 1-10).

It is true that his book ends with a promise of restoration, which agrees with v. 18. But most critics hold that this section (ix. 11-15) is a later addition to relieve the gloom of his message. Their reasoning is clever but not wholly convincing: it is based upon their views of Messianic prophecy, which they are apt to date too late in some cases. Nor can it be maintained with absolute confidence that Amos had no hope of the deliverance of a 'remnant' of the faithful. Be that as it may the shepherd of Tekoa struck a new and continuous note in Hebrew prophecy, which had had a momentary sound in Nathan's reproof of David and Elijah's condemnation of Ahab's crime against Naboth.

The very essence of his message was that Jahveh was not only the universal God but a righteous God, who would be content with no ritual worship or pilgrimages to sacred shrines such as that of Beersheba, but demanded righteousness from his people high and low alike. As they were his chosen nation, so would their punishment for sin be more severe. He does not seem to have denounced the 'golden bulls,' but the corrupt worship at their altars. Himself a man of the people, he could see with fatal clearness the

oppression of the poor by those who ought to have cared for their needs, for which no outward piety or lavish offerings would atone. He called them to quit their evil ways, lest the horrors of exile should overtake them. They heeded not the warning voice, and within forty years Samaria was a heap of ruins and the people of the northern kingdom disappeared as a nation from the peoples of the earth.

During the last years of Jeroboam II (745-743 B.C.) and the subsequent anarchy (743-721 B.C.) appeared a man of gentler soul, whose message though no less uncompromising than that of Amos was wrung from his very heart and mingled with promises of a more hopeful future at the price of genuine repentance. Hosea the son of Beeri was an Israelite, and his words were directed to his native land with the anguish of one who loved it more than life. He had had the sad fate of marrying Gomer, daughter of Diblaim, who was untrue to him (i. 2-9). Hence he called his children by symbolic names when he wrote his story for the instruction of his people. The first was Jezreel on account of Jehu's murders there (2 Kings ix., x.); the second was

Lo-ruhamah=one who has not known a father's loving pity; the third was Lo-ammi, because Israel no longer would be Jahveh's people (i. 4, 6, 9). Hosea loved his wife too dearly to leave her in the terrible plight to which her guilt had brought her. He bought her back at the price of a slave, maintaining her no longer as a wife but free from sin (iii. 1-3). Such was the tragedy of his life in actual experience, through which he received a revelation of Jahveh to Israel of his loving nature no less than of his eternal justice.

The prophecy falls into two parts (i.-iii.; iv.-xiv.), the first probably delivered during the last years of Jeroboam II, the second during the murderous succession of the following kings. The first part may be considered first. Amos had fastened upon ethical corruption as the source of Israel's exile: Hosea went to the root of the matter by tracing this moral decline to the symbolism of the 'golden bulls.' He realized that though his people imagined themselves to be worshipping Jahveh, they were in fact worshipping Baal. Their use of images had led them away from the more spiritual thought in which they had been reared into

the grosser Canaanite religion. From his own sad experience he had learned that Israel had wandered away from Jahveh her *husband*, and ascribed to the local Baals the fertility of her soil.

The ordinary Semitic conception of the national gods was that in each case they were *husbands* of the land which they had adopted. Hosea elevated this idea into one of much tenderness and nobility. Himself a long-suffering husband, he had been able to perceive Jahveh's tenderness towards his erring wife Israel. Hence he denounced her popular worship as idolatry (ii.), as mere harlotry with an eye to the immoral practices at the great sanctuaries. For this sin a ravaged land and the exile of its people were the certain penalty (ii. 1-14). Then by one of those sudden changes characteristic of his oracles, he imagines Jahveh as alluring back his faithless wife, as causing her to repent and restoring her to her former greatness. His covenant would be extended even to the wild creatures of the land, and he would betroth her to himself 'in righteousness, in judgment, in *loving-kindness*, and in mercies' (ii. 14-23), so that she would learn his true nature and worship him for ever.

The swiftly increasing national corruption made Hosea take a sterner tone in his next collection of oracles: but even here his conception of the *leal love*, as Sir G. Adam Smith well translates the word *chesed*, of Jahveh to his people impels him to utter more than one oracle of promise. He begins by a sorrowful yet severe condemnation of the practical idolatry of the land, whose people relied no longer upon Jahveh, but now on Assyria, now on Egypt (iv.). Then he attacks the priests, who made a rare harvest out of the 'sin-offerings' of the guilty Israelites. They ought to have taught the people better; they contented themselves with an idolatrous ritual, out of which they made their profit.

With deep anguish he speaks of the frivolous professions of repentance put forward by the Israelites, which would be utterly rejected (vi.-vii. 2). They trusted to win his favour by burnt offerings: his answer was plain and direct, 'I have desired *leal love*, and not sacrifices; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings' (vi. 6). This 'constant love' has three implications in Hosea; it denotes Jahveh's feeling towards Israel, the feeling which Israel ought to entertain towards Jahveh,

the emotion which ought to subsist between Israelite and Israelite. It is the distinctive feature of Hosea's message to Israel, which he doubtless confined to his own people. But this conception of his is one of the profoundest in the Old Testament and prepared the way for the fuller truth 'God is love.' Though he did not take so sweeping a view of the surrounding nations as Amos, he pierced more deeply into the nature and being of God.

Turning from the priests to the king Hosea represents him as a coarse drunken monarch, utterly unfit to govern justly. He and his court had lost their faith in Jahveh and sought the help of foreign powers (vii. 2-11); hence they would be severely punished, while their false friends in Egypt would mock them (vii. 16). A terrible picture follows of national corruption and destruction, which is painted in tears, nay, in the prophet's heart's blood (viii.-x.). But thinking of his own tenderness to his sinful wife, his soul went forth to Jahveh, who must surely be more loving than man. In Israel's youth Jahveh had made him his son, taught him to walk in the right way (xi. 1-4). Nor could he forget his love for the guilty people,

or even yet abandon it to destruction. In his own words 'I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, for *I am God, not* man' (xi. 9). In other words Jahveh will forgive Israel, because of his loving nature as God. The prophet's mood changes; once more he denounces Israel's sin and its punishment (xii., xiii.) in words flaming with scorching fire. But he does not end his message thus: he bids Israel repent, trust in Jahveh, leave off idolatry; then would a calm and peaceful prosperity be theirs in *leal love* shown by Jahveh to his people, by his people to Jahveh (xiv.). Just in this conception of the loving nature of God does Hosea make his highest and most original contribution to the religion of mankind.

Turning now to the southern kingdom of Judah we find that it had been much less troubled than Israel because of its unbroken succession of Davidic kings. When Uzziah passed away (737 B.C.) it was highly prosperous though debased by gross tyranny over the poor, some idol-worship, and the luxurious living of the upper classes. At this time Isaiah a young married man of aristocratic parentage received that divine vision, which he has described so magnifi-

cently (vi.), which made him a prophet of Jahveh. Only mere hints of his activity can be given, who was poet, prophet, and statesman combined. He had learned much from Amos, something from Hosea. To his unswerving loyalty to Jahveh was joined a keen political sagacity, which enabled him to guide his country safely through a serious crisis.

One distinctive feature of his message was his insistence upon the absolute *holiness* of Jahveh, which combined his supreme majesty with his ethical perfection. Such a God required his people to be holy too in its human measure. From Amos he had learned the universality of Jahveh of hosts, from Hosea to give his sons symbolic names, 'Shear-jashub'='a remnant shall turn' and 'Maher-shalal-hash-baz'='the spoil speedeth, the prey hasteth' (vii. 3; viii. 3). The name of the elder son explains one of his chief doctrines, that a devout 'remnant' of Judah would turn from evil and be faithful to Jahveh, out of whom he would build up a glorious and abiding kingdom on earth (i. 9; x. 21).

In his oracles Isaiah often gives the title 'The Holy One of Israel' to Jahveh (v. 24; x. 20; xvii. 7), showing that though he believed Jahveh to be God of the universe and other gods to be *elilim*=*nonentities* (ii. 18; x. 10), or *idols*, he was convinced that Israel was his peculiar people. So too he believed in Jahveh's providence, which he describes as 'work' (v. 12; x. 12) no less than that the Assyrian was a 'rod in his hand' to chastise his guilty nation (x. 5). His first oracles were aimed at national sins, not forgetting the luxury of its fashionable women (i.-v. especially iii. 16-26). For these Jahveh's day would come (ii. 12-22) with terrible natural phenomena to destroy the present, to prepare for a better order of things.

In 735 B.C., Ahaz the king had made an alliance with Assyria against Rezin, of Damascus, and Pekah, of Israel. Isaiah sought him out (vii.) to protest against this policy, giving him that enigmatical sign, which has foisted a dogma into Christianity, though it has no reference direct, or implied to Jesus of Nazareth (vii. 14-16). The passage should be rendered 'Behold a young woman shall conceive and bear a son and call his name Immanuel. Curds and honey shall he eat when he knows how to refuse the

evil and choose the good. For before the child shall know how to refuse the evil and choose the good, those two kings whom thou dreadest shall be forsaken.' The word translated 'virgin' by the Septuagint is never so used in Hebrew: it means rather the 'young bride,' or more generally 'young woman' and may have referred to some particular lady of the royal harem known to the king and the prophet. But the point of the sign consists in its last words, which mean 'Before the child would be old enough to tell right from wrong Rezin and Pekah would be discomfited.' To that catastrophe alone does the sign apply, nor has it any reference to a coming Messianic king in the prophet's mind.

Whatever its meaning the sign was rejected and Isaiah retired into seclusion for a time. At the accession of Hezekiah, just after the fall of Samaria (721 B.C.) he returned to his prophetic task. When a combination was formed against the Assyrians he vainly advised the king to keep out of it. In 701 B.C. Sennacherib came southward taking many strong towns of Judah (2 Kings xviii. 13-16). Hezekiah submitted, but the commander-in-chief (Rab-

shakeh) of the Assyrians beleaguered Jerusalem. At last the king consulted the great prophet, determined to follow his advice. Isaiah succeeded in so heartening the citizens that they stood firm until the siege was raised on account of an outbreak of pestilence in the invading army (Isaiah xxxvii. 36-38).

Little more is henceforward heard of the prophet, who is said to have perished during the reactionary reign of Manasseh. He had done his work; disappointed that Judah had not seen Jahveh's hand in its deliverance he turned to the future for consolation, and pictured his ideal king of the house of David whose reign would be a season of national righteousness and great prosperity. If we retain the Messianic passages (ii. 1-5; ix. 1-7; xi. 1-9); Isaiah was the first prophet to look forward in this way to the advent of an ideal king. One school of critics has declared against their authenticity in Isaiah and the other pre-exilic prophets. But a careful study of their arguments does not inspire a sense of conviction. The habit of framing a theory of what must be post-exilic and of fitting into it many passages, which may just as well have been pre-exilic, is dangerous and occasionally misleading. The

passages in question seem to have the true Isaianic ring about them, and they may well be left with him as embodying his last thoughts and shaping the future hopes of his people.

Such was the work of Isaiah, who believed that Jerusalem would be inviolable, that the Assyrian would himself be punished after he had done his task and punished its guilty citizens (x. 5-19). He was sternly ethical like Amos, never teaching Jahveh's love for his people with the gentler Hosea. His contributions to religious thought are these. There is the perfect moral holiness of Jahveh the universal God requiring corresponding holiness in his peculiar people. There is the doctrine that a 'remnant' would be saved by its righteousness, out of which a great nation would be born in Jerusalem. There is his conception of an 'ideal king' to be born of the house of David who would restore the glory of the whole of Israel. If he built on the foundation of Amos and Hosea, all succeeding prophets have built upon his foundation.

The splendour of his language, his high genius, the constant faithfulness of his life, and his political sagacity have left him a

unique place amongst the prophets of the Old Testament. He is said to have moved Hezekiah to undertake a reformation in the worship of Judah (2 Kings xviii. 4), though more probably that was due to Micah (Jeremiah xxvi. 18, 19). When he passed away he left a band of disciples, who carried on his work in so far as their more limited gifts permitted them to do (Isaiah viii. 16).

Of Micah, the native of Moresheth-gath, little is known save that by his preaching, as has just been recorded, he stirred Hezekiah to repentance, and the contents of his little book. He was born of the farming stock: hence most of his undisputed oracles denounce the cruel oppression of the poor (iii. 1-4, especially), the false prophets who uttered messages for hire (iii. 5-8), and the national sins (i.-iii.). He was essentially ethical, though he may have uttered the Messianic oracle which appears also in Isaiah (cf. Isaiah ii. 2-4 and Micah iv. 2-4); or both prophets may have quoted it from a common source, since it is highly improbable that any editor would have added the same passage to the works of two different prophets.

The modern critics have robbed Micah of

most of the last chapters accredited to him (iv.-vii.). In spite of their arguments it seems probable that the greater part of these oracles (vi., vii. 1-12) really is Micah's. Hence the noble summary of Jahveh's requirements is due to the countryside preacher :—'He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Jahveh require of thee but to do justly, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?' (vi. 8). It may be urged that the sacrifice of the first-born of the previous verse was hardly known till the days of Manasseh. But Micah's prophetic activity may well have continued into that evil time. So until more convincing evidence be produced we are content to leave this noble pronouncement with Micah the Morashtite.

Hezekiah was succeeded by his son Manasseh, under whose long and reactionary reign a fierce persecution raged against all who were faithful to Jahveh (2 Kings xxi. 1-18). He returned to the combination of the worship of other gods alongside of that of Jahveh, and it seemed as if true religion would die during his lifetime. Probably during the late years of this dark period the prophets and priests joined together in

Jerusalem to compile a 'book of the Torah,' which they hid in the Temple in a place where it might easily escape notice and yet not be difficult to find. Its compilers were animated by the prophetic spirit, so that their code differed alike in style and contents from the later Levitical law-book. It was based upon the 'Shorter Code' (Exodus xx.-xxiii.) and contained many precepts of priestly Torah which had gathered around the Temple. How long it took to compile the Code is unknown; but it was found in the eighteenth year of king Josiah (621 B.C.) and formed the basis of his reformation of the cultus (2 Kings xxii., xxiii. 1-30). It is comprised in Deuteronomy v.-xxvi., xxviii., xxix. 1. When the book was read to him the young king was deeply moved and set about his reforms as speedily as possible. The curses denounced upon disobedience (xxviii.) were enough to alarm any pious soul of that period and Josiah was sincerely pious.

Of Deuteronomy itself only a few of the salient principles can be noted. It was strictly monotheistic, forbidding absolutely worship at the high places, and centralizing all worship and sacrifices at Solomon's

Temple. Even the great national festivals were to be held in the capital alone; thus their character was largely altered, though they were still to be celebrated joyously with kindly thought of the slave, the Levite, the stranger, the widow and the orphan (xvi. 11, 12). The whole code is marked by the prophetic note of complete love to Jahveh (vi. 5) and kindness to neighbours. It is a cheerful note, very different from that sounded by the later priestly code, which was the sorrowful fruit of affliction and exile. The regulations cover the whole of the Hebrew's life, and are carefully drawn, though some of them are Utopian. Though they had a strong practical vein, the prophets were very truly idealists who wished to impress their ideals upon their people.

The moral law is embodied in the decalogue with the insertion of a few interpretative clauses. But the whole of the code is based upon love to Jahveh and considerate kindness to the neighbour. It has well been called 'the prophetic law-book,' because it embodies into a series of legal enactments the teaching of more than one generation of great prophets. Not content with their achievement the Deuteronomists

and their successors set about rewriting the national history in the same spirit. As they had issued their code in name and as coming from Moses, they added long passages to *JE*, which they probably found already united. It was their object to emphasize their moral teaching by historical examples, and they did not shrink from addition and alteration. It is uncertain when Deuteronomy was finally completed by the addition of chapters i-iv., xxvii., xxix., 2-xxxiv. Its theory of rewards and punishments confined their administration to this life, giving prosperity to the good and adversity to the evil (e.g., v. 16). The issue of Deuteronomy was an event of great national importance; though not entirely successful it laid the foundation of the strict monotheism of the later Hebrews, no less than of the more elaborate priestly code.

Somewhere about 626 B.C. in the reign of Josiah the great and sorely tried Jeremiah received his call (i. 4-19). A member of a priestly family of Anathoth, a little town lying about four miles north-east of Jerusalem, he may have been a lineal descendant of David's priest Abiathar. From experience he knew the jealousy of the hier-

archy in Jerusalem, which excluded the priest of the country shrines from sharing in their office in spite of Deuteronomy (xviii. 6-8). When he began to prophesy, Judah was threatened by a marauding host of Scythians (iv. 11-13; v. 15-17), whom he regarded as Jahveh's instrument for the punishment of his guilty people. Deeply influenced by Hosea, he constantly reproved Judah as the faithless wife of Jahveh.

But he made one striking contribution to the development of Hebrew religion. The prophets before him had spoken of national rather than of individual sin and punishment; he was the first to individualize sin. Faint traces of this important conception are to be found in his earlier oracles (iv. 3, 4). But as his conviction of the ruin of his country deepened, his doctrine of sin grew more definite, until he was able to utter the notable words, 'In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge. But *every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge*' (xxxi. 29, 30). Though Jeremiah seems to be speaking mainly for the future, his conception marks a great advance upon the older idea of the concrete unity of the nation. It was born of his deep sense of justice; though he does not seem to maintain it throughout his teaching, to discover it was a token of his piercing insight into moral truth.

Of a poetic and sensitive temperament, Jeremiah felt keenly the failure of some of his oracles and the rejection of his warnings. Throughout his career he reasons passionately with Jahveh as having sent him upon a mocking errand (i. 4-19; xii. 1-6; xv. 10-21; xx. 14-18). Yet he felt so strongly the divine message in his heart, that he could not refuse to deliver it continually to unheeding ears. Josiah's reforming zeal had destroyed the pagan altars which had gathered around and within the Temple. When Deuteronomy was issued Jeremiah seems to have remained silent for a time, perhaps till the death of Josiah in 608 B.C., who was succeeded by his worthless son Jehoiakim.

Moved by the failure of the reformation he appeared in the Temple (vii. 1-viii. 3) to utter a powerful oracle denouncing the worship of Molech in the 'Tophet' of the

Valley of Hinnom, even daring to threaten the Temple itself with destruction (vii. 12-15), while he condemned severely the moral guilt of his nation. On this account he was attacked by the authorities and narrowly escaped with his life. The false prophets of the Temple who proclaimed its eternity, leagued themselves with the priests to silence the brave speaker for ever (xxvi. 10-24); but some of the elders cited the case of Micah (iii. 12), who had uttered a similar threat against the Temple, been left unpunished, and had moved Hezekiah and his ministers to sincere but short-lived repentance. Uriah his fellow prophet and supporter was put to death. But Jeremiah remained true to the divine message and faced persecution, noisome imprisonment, exile in Egypt (xliii. 1-7), it may be murder there, in its utterance.

Though no man who ever lived could have longed more keenly for the peace of home-life, he never married (xvi. 1-4). He advised one king after another to avoid alliance with Egypt, to remain true to their allegiance to Babylon (ii. 18, 36; xxvii. 12-22; xxviii. 12-14). Thus, like Isaiah, he was a statesman as well as a prophet. As he had seen

the deportation of Jehoiachin with the flower of Judah (597-6 B.C.), he foresaw the end of Zedekiah's rebellion in the Exile of 586 B.C. He lingered in the ruined city with the remnant until the murder of Gedaliah the governor, when he was hurried off into Egypt against his will. Through this period of trial he continued to preach the gracious doctrine of pardon upon repentance (xviii. 8; xxvi. 13), of the final restoration of his people through the piety of a remnant, when his hope of the national repentance faded from his mind.

Stern as were the penalties with which he threatened Judah and its leaders, with deep spiritual insight he was able to proclaim the 'new covenant of Jahveh' with his people in simple and touching words. 'But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith Jahveh; I will put my law in their inward parts and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people: and they shall no more teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know Jahveh: for they shall all know me from the least to the greatest of them, saith Jahveh: for I will forgive their

iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more' (xxxi. 33, 34).

This is Jeremiah's greatest contribution to universal religious thought. He saw plainly that true religion consisted in the intimate knowledge of God, that such knowledge could only come to sinners from a changed heart and mind. This teaching of his lies at the root of the thought of Jesus as expressed in the single word 'repent,' or 'change your heart and mind,' and taught with exquisite detail in the parable of 'The Prodigal Son.' So this strong, heroic, sensitive, sorely troubled man left a priceless heritage to his race, through them to the world, in the deep truths which God had breathed into his spirit. He had the added grief of seeing the fulfilment of many of his words of warning. Yet he could remain confident of the restoration of his race with a changed heart and mind, though his actual prediction of a return from exile after 'seventy years' (xxv. 11) was unfulfilled. He was a lonely soul in an unheeding world: hence arose his true greatness; for earth's great ones are usually lonely souls drawing their inspiration from solitary communion with God.

In the first deportation to Babylon (597 B.C.) was a prophet of another order, also a priest of the line of Zadok, deeply interested in the future of his people, but equally devoted to the exact observance of pious ritual. Ezekiel is a teacher of great importance, because he supplies the link between the older Hebrew religion and the later Judaism. He dwelt with the exiles in comparative comfort near Tel-abib by one of the canals of Babylon, which he calls the 'river Chebar' (i. 1). With them he had much influence, though his teaching had little lasting effect upon them. He appears to have experienced a series of trances in which he saw visions which he afterwards wrote down and elaborated (i.; ii. 8-iii. 3; xxxvii. 1-14, 15-23).

The vision of the wonderful chariot with the 'four living creatures' and the 'firmament' whereon Jahveh was enthroned (i.) was the occasion of his call. His book was clearly edited and arranged by himself; hence it has a unity not common in the prophetic writings. It is written in a rich and sonorous prose and contains passages both of great imaginative power and trembling with suppressed passion. Here only the

barest outline of his prophetic activity is possible. His book is divided into three sections. The first section (i.-xxxii.) is divided into two subsections, one denouncing punishment upon Israel and Judah (ii.-xxiv.), the other containing oracles against the surrounding nations (xxv.-xxxii.) which were destined to be judged before the restoration of the united Israel. The second division (xxxiii.-xxxix.) treats of the purification and restoration of Jahveh's people. The third describes the ideal theocratic commonwealth with a sort of president in the person of the prince by the side of the high priest. The first section resembles the thought of the older prophets. In it Ezekiel denounces the guilty priests and false prophets with the fervour of Jeremiah (xiii. 2-16). But he has a different conception of Jahveh's motive in willing the exile of Zedekiah and in ultimately bringing back his people from Babylon (xvii. 11-21; xxxvi. 32-36). In either case Jahveh sought to vindicate his own honour rather than to show special anger or special mercy to Israel.

His conception of Jahveh is remarkable for its harshness and severity. Learning from Isaiah to regard him as the 'Holy One

of Israel,' he invests his God with a dazzling holiness, which has been offended by the want of holiness in his people. His intense desire to secure cleanness, moral and ceremonial, leads him to stress ritual no less than ethical holiness. It was to fulfil his promise to his people that Jahveh would ultimately restore them with a changed heart which would sin no more. In other words he desired to vindicate his holy name and his promises in the sight of the nations of earth. For a similar reason he takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked (xxxiii. 11), but wishes solely to assert his holiness and the need of human holiness in his servant.

So the prophet elaborates the story of Israel's past to exhibit the justice of its severe punishment (xx.). He has little tenderness: he had seen the elders guilty of idol-worship, heard the women wailing for 'Tammuz' or 'Adonis' (viii.), hence he realizes that an unclean ritual means an unclean heart. Hence his judgment upon his guilty nation is pitiless and severe. But he learned two things from Jeremiah, the virtue of individual repentance (xviii.; xxxiii. 10-20), and the new covenant of the changed heart in the regenerated race (xxxvi.

22-36), though he does not actually use this word. Hence he kindles a gleam of hope in the dark places of guilt and sin. He condemns the false ruler of Jerusalem, but assures the exiles that Jahveh himself will be their shepherd (xxxiv. 1-19) with David as his deputy (xxxiv. 23-25). In spite of this reference to David there is little Messianic hope in Ezekiel, who looks forward rather to a holy people under Jahveh's kingship than to a great nation under a mighty earthly monarch.

With this conception before his mind he depicts his ideal theocracy with its shadowy figure of the 'prince' (xl.-xlviii.) for the guidance of the restored nation. Though well acquainted with Deuteronomy, he is obviously ignorant of the 'priestly code.' He will admit only descendants of Zadok to be full priests in his rebuilt Temple (xliv. 15-31) instead of the 'sons of Aaron' of *P*. The Levites he condemns to take the place of former heathen servitors for their sin in ministering at the 'high places' (xliv. 9-14). There are many minute differences between the speculations of Ezekiel and his priestly successors. He gives no hint of such a high priest with his peculiar breastplate and gorgeous robes as appears in the later code (Exodus xxxix. 8-26), nor of the great 'day of Atonement' (Leviticus xvi.). Had he had such a code before him, he would never have ventured to draw up a constitution of his own. Hence his book had no small difficulty in gaining recognition in the Hebrew canon. It represents an intermediate stage between Deuteronomy and the subsequent legislation. That is its supreme value to the historical student.

But in setting forth his Utopia he felt the urgent need of correct ceremonial no less than of correct moral conduct. He was a priest, though endowed with great prophetic capacity; hence the background of his thought was the priest's orderly method of worship. For this purpose he not only portrayed the rebuilt Temple, around which his thoughts moved always, but drew up a careful ritual for the guidance of the future. The last of his visions was unfulfilled; but it remains a landmark on the pathway towards that rigid theocracy, which was finally developed after the return of Israel.

Towards the close of the Exile Cyrus the Persian gradually conquered the nations around Babylon, until the great city fell into

his hands without a serious struggle in 538 B.C. At this time an unknown prophet of mingled majesty and tenderness arose amongst the exiles, who saw in the victorious march and policy of Cyrus the assurance of the restoration of some at least of the Hebrews. His oracles have been attached to those of Isaiah ; the words of at least two prophets occur in that place (Isaiah xl.-lv., lvi.-lxvi.), the first writing during the last years of the Exile, the second a few years later when the building of the Temple was delayed, until Haggai and Zechariah stirred up the builders to greater faithfulness. The heart of the first prophet was overflowing with the joyful anticipation of an immediate fulfilment to his oracles (xl.-xlviii.). He believed that Cyrus would be their deliverer, and even represents him as Jahveh's 'Messiah' = 'anointed one' (xlv. 1), as the 'righteous man from the east' (xli. 2), and as Jahveh's 'shepherd' (xliv. 28) who will 'perform all his pleasure.' He must have followed the policy of Cyrus with close attention to forecast his purpose with so much accuracy.

To him Jahveh was the universal God as opposed to those stocks and stones known

as idols (xl. 18-20). He represents Jahveh as summoning the false gods to a grand assize, wherein they are put to confusion (xli. 21-24). Jahveh had summoned Cyrus from the north and the east to deliver Judah (xli. 25-28). He is Israel's 'Vindicator,' who by setting his people in their own land will vindicate his plighted word. Jahveh is 'righteous,' which implies both ethical perfection and faithfulness to his promises (xlvi. 13). Thus with his righteousness his *saving power* is blended. Such terms as 'redeemer' or 'salvation' must be avoided for 'vindicator' or 'deliverance,' which have long acquired a theological meaning unknown to the prophet himself. Similarly the word 'Saviour' must be rendered 'Deliverer.' It implies simply that Jahveh will deliver his people from oppression and restore them to their own land. Though Lord of the whole earth he is the 'Holy One of Israel' (xlv. 11) caring for his people and resolved upon deliverance (li. 6-8). So Israel is his 'servant,' not the crushed slave of an oriental house, but the trusted servant of a generous master. This important attribute had two different meanings. First it is applied to all of the Exiles (xlii. 19 ; xliii.

10 ; xliv. 1) as being Jahveh's people, whom he had chosen from the nations of the earth.

But in four passages (xlii. 1-4 ; xlix. 1-6 ; l. 4-9 ; lii. 13-liii.) the word *servant* is restricted to the oppressed minority, who remained faithful to Jahveh, and were persecuted as rebels by the Babylonians and regarded as fools by their more compliant fellow countrymen. This limitation is so natural to the prophet's thought, that these oracles must be assigned to him, since they are couched in his style. In the first he proclaims a mission to the Gentiles after the restoration of the nation (xlii. 1-4) to win them to the worship of Jahveh. In the second (xlix. 1-6) this thought is emphasized, the faithful being described as ' a light to the Gentiles,' and God's ' deliverance to the ends of the earth.' The third oracle speaks of the fidelity of this little band (l. 4-9), whose justification is close at hand.

His message would seem to have fallen largely upon unheeding ears. Hence he penned his sublime picture of the deliverance of the faithless ones by the sufferings of the faithful (lii. 13-liii. 12). Thus he makes his greatest contribution to religious thought in his doctrine of vicarious suffering for the sake

of the guilty. Then he ends his oracles with an outburst of triumphant song (liv., lv.). So to this deep thinker it was manifest that Jahveh had his divine purpose in permitting the suffering of the righteous, which was a sure means of moving the unrighteous to righteousness. This fourth oracle has no reference to Jesus of Nazareth, nor to any later doctrine of the atonement in the mind of the prophet. The figure of the ' leper ' (lii. 14, 15) does not accord with him, while many of the characteristics of the ' suffering servant ' do not correspond with his life and teaching. What the prophet means is simply this : the suffering of the faithful Israelites would turn to repentance those who mocked them, so that they might be fitted to receive deliverance.

What then was the message of the literary prophets ? First and foremost one and all of them preached Jahveh as the sole God of the earth. They taught that he was a God of perfect holiness, righteous himself and demanding righteousness from his worshippers. Save Ezekiel they had little interest in ritual. Though they held Jahveh to be universal God, they still conceived of him as especially favouring Israel, which he

destined one day to be a missionary to the other nations. Hosea and Jeremiah saw more deeply than the rest into the loving heart of God, in which they were followed with piercing insight by the 'Second Isaiah.'

Furthermore in spite of much anthropomorphic language all of them conceived of Jahveh as a spiritual being needing no outward symbol for his worship. Thus though they were especially interested in their own people, they conferred a priceless blessing upon the human race. They guided mankind towards a more intimate knowledge of God. They were the preachers and teachers who prepared the way for the teacher and preacher of the ages, Jesus of Nazareth, though not one of them had the slightest prevision of his coming. He was their lineal successor, destined to reveal the new heavens for which they sighed to an earth which is gradually becoming new. Thus they proved the glory of their ancient race, they shed the first beams of the Light of the World.

CHAPTER VI

THE RELIGION OF A BOOK

Priest and Cultus. The growth of the Torah. The Return from the Exile. Ezra-Nehemiah. The People of a Book. The Chronicler. The Theocracy.

IN order to understand the reformation under Ezra and Nehemiah it will be needful to retrace the gradual growth in the power of the priest and the development of the 'book of the Law,' even at the risk of repetition. In the earliest tradition of the race no priests are found save the mysterious figure of Melchizedek, to whom Abraham is said to have paid tithes (Genesis xiv. 17-20). Even he is not called the priest of Jahveh, while the date of the tradition in which he appears is quite uncertain. The patriarchs themselves sacrificed when and where they would. *P* alone deprives them of all such occasions for sacrifice, in accordance with his theory that this was the province of the priest exclusively.

Though there were many hallowed spots in Canaan, there were no fixed temples in the story of the earliest time. It is quite uncertain if the Israelites in Egypt offered burnt offerings, though the excuse made to the Pharaoh just before the Exodus implies such a habit of worship (Exodus x. 1-7). The rite of the Passover, which does not fall under this head, was probably in existence at that time. Amos roundly asserts that no sacrifices were offered to Jahveh during the wanderings (Amos v. 26, 27). Doubtless in the period of the patriarchs we are in the land of legend ; but the keenest critics must admit that the legends are most ancient, that many old-world customs can be traced in the web of ancient legend. In *J* the oldest collection of national stories Aaron so far from being a priest hardly appears or at most takes no part in the preparation for the Exodus. At the same time sacrifice forms an integral part of most ancient religions, though that fact does not carry the priest back to their beginning in all cases. If sacrifices were offered, there can be little doubt that they would be offered by Moses himself.

In the book of Judges the priest plays

quite an insignificant part. Not one of the national heroes hesitated to offer sacrifices when the occasion required (Judges xi. 39). During this period of the slow conquest of Canaan certain men seem to have made private shrines of their own, and to have appointed their own priest either from their own family or as a salaried official (Judges xvii.). Micah's paid priest, whom he consecrated himself, is described as a 'Levite,' which cannot mean a member of the tribe of Levi, which with that of Simeon had disappeared at this stage of the history. Hence the later view that they were a consecrated tribe destined from the beginning for the service of the 'Tabernacle' cannot be maintained (Numbers i. 47-54). There is no trace of any such hallowed separation until the post-exilic literature. Thus Samuel, who was not of the tribe of Levi, according to one of the traditions of his life, was consecrated a priest and wore the 'linen ephod' in Eli's shrine at Shiloh, where the priesthood would seem to have been hereditary (1 Samuel i. 24-28, ii. 18, ii. 12-17).

Similarly the kings of the united kingdom and of the two kingdoms after their separation had no scruple in offering sacrifice, just

as they appointed their own priests. In early days it appears certain that the priest was the custodian of the 'Ephod,' 'Urim,' and 'Thummim' (1 Samuel xxiii. 9), who helped to inquire from Jahveh by their means. David appointed Abiathar to be his priest, while Solomon deposed him on account of his fidelity to Adonijah the real heir and set up Zadok in his place (1 Kings ii. 26, 27, 35). Clearly, then, the priest of the sanctuary in Jerusalem was dependent upon the king for his appointment and his maintenance. That sanctuary was the private chapel of the king, for the upkeep of which he was responsible. Solomon too not only offered many sacrifices at the 'great high place' in Gibeon (1 Kings iii. 4) and later at the Temple, at the dedication of which he himself prayed before the altar and gave the priestly benediction (1 Kings viii. 22, 55).

But the magnificence of the Temple caused a great number of priests to gather round it, who regarded themselves to the time of the Exile as 'sons of Zadok,' thus tending to make the priesthood hereditary. A notable instance of the complete subservience of the priest is seen in the case of Ahaz (2 Kings xvi. 10-16), who saw an altar in Damascus,

which caught his fancy. On his return he ordered Urijah the priest to make one like it, which was to be set side by side with the brazen altar and used for sacrifices; nor did Urijah show the faintest scruple in obeying his command. Thus it is manifest, that so long as the royal power lasted, the king was supreme over the priest.

When the origin of the multitude of Levites is sought, it will be found in Deuteronomy, which plainly implies that they were the dispossessed priests of the local sanctuaries (xviii. 6-8) overthrown by Josiah (cf. Ezekiel xliv. 10-14). The Deuteronomists strove in vain to give them an equal share with their fellow priests in Jerusalem, who finally succeeded in making them servants. Until the Exile there is no distinction between priests and Levites, though the latter gradually fell into the position of the Carites and foreign mercenaries, who had formed a Temple-guard and ministered to the priests. Upon these Carites Jehoiada relied when he set Joash on the throne in place of Athaliah (2 Kings xi. 4-16). So the 'Nethinim' were almost certainly foreigners, who served the same purpose. Nor did the kings and priests of those days deem the Temple

desecrated by the presence of these aliens in its precincts. How contrary this was to *P*'s principle is plain, as he assigns these offices always to Levites alone, whom he transfers to an impossible place at the beginning of the ordered worship established by Moses at Sinai (Numbers i. 47-54).

Ezekiel, himself a priest, took with him into the Exile the separation between the priests and the Levites, which had already become established in practice though it had had an accidental origin. Moreover he gave a definite reason for the subordinate position of the Levites (Ezekiel xliv. 9-14). From his day the two orders remained separate until the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. He did not contemplate a high priest of the later pontifical kind. In his ideal commonwealth the 'prince' had his part to play in maintaining the Temple-worship out of the revenues of the estate granted to him for that purpose (Ezekiel xlv. 16-25). The idea of the 'high priest' in its final form was the product of many centuries of religious growth. Indeed the culmination of his powers as described by *P* could only exist when Israel had become a 'Covenant-people,' a Church rather than a nation. His consecration was

regal, his official robe was of royal purple, save when he assumed the priestly 'ephod' for the purpose of sacrificing. To him priests and people looked up as they had formerly looked up to the king. But that thought and custom date no further back than to the time following the Exile.

As the influence of the priest grew the number of sacrifices increased and their meaning was changed. Originally the whole burnt offering was made every morning in Jerusalem, and the meal offering in the evening. The first consisted of a whole bullock, of which the priest took the hide; the second was usually a handful of meal, while the remainder of the portion fell to the priest. Until Deuteronomy most of the offerings of the people were made at the 'high places,' and were 'thank-offerings.' Even the three great national feasts were held at the local sanctuaries until the reformation of Josiah (621 B.C.). When the worship was centralized at Jerusalem, the free-will offerings had to be made there. Thus they became fewer and less joyous than in an older time. As with the general sacrifices, so it was with the great feasts. The heart was taken out of them, fewer people were able to attend

them, and their character slowly but surely changed. Moreover, Deuteronomy began to connect with historical events what with the exception of the Passover had been up to its date farming festivals of spontaneous thankfulness to Jahveh as Lord of the Soil for making it fruitful. What is more, they were movable feasts until *P* confined them to a definite date (Numbers xxviii. 16-25), whereby they were rendered more formal and less joyful.

From an early time the priests of the greater temples and of the local shrines gave to those who consulted them a 'Torah'='instruction' not only in correct ritual, but also in moral duties. Hosea rebuked them sternly for their neglect of ethical teaching (v. 1-7). The most important early collection of Torah, though not the only one (Exodus xxxiv. 10-28), was the 'Shorter Code' (Exodus xx.-xxiii.), which held good till 621 B.C. In addition to the moral principles of the 'Ten Words' it contains rules for the ordering of the common relations of life and the simple ritual of an older day. Upon its foundation and with the additions which had been gradually made to it by priest and prophet Deuteronomy was built up, which contains much more ethical than ritual Torah.

This noble Code marks a great advance upon its predecessor. It lays no especial stress upon ritual, though much on the place where it was to be performed. It embodies the teaching of the prophets, and makes no distinction between the priests and Levites, though that distinction arose from one of its main enactments. Side by side with it there was a great mass of ritual Torah preserved either orally or in writing in the Temple, which served as the basis of the later *priestly code*. To this class the so-called 'Law of Holiness' (Leviticus xvii.-xxvi.) may very well belong, though it can hardly have been compiled until Deuteronomy had been issued. Filled as it is with ritual enactments it contains many ethical principles of high spiritual worth such as 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself' (Leviticus xix. 18), which Jesus universalized in his parable of 'The Good Samaritan.' Indeed its object was to keep Israel morally and spiritually clean, the holy people of a holy God.

What has already been said of the meaning of the word 'clean' requires amplification at this point. To the Hebrew it implied the transgression both of ritual and moral law. As from some primitive totemism the dis-

tinction between 'clean' and 'unclean' animals had arisen, so much of ceremonial cleanness meant the abstention from well-defined acts and things, which during many ages came to be looked upon as taboo. These objects of *taboo* were gradually multiplied by the priests who found their advantage in the consequent 'sin-offerings,' which were at first paid to them in money for purification. Ezekiel was especially impressed with a horror of uncleanness, ceremonial and moral. The two are hardly separated in his mind, and he assigns an almost equal importance to both. Hence he helped to extend and enforce the regulations which are to be seen in their fullness in the 'priestly code.' The compilers of this elaborate document did not, however, invent the huge body of laws which they put together. Some may well have been new: but a large proportion must have been the growth of centuries. As ceremonial uncleanness became more stringent, the need of atonement for it grew ever greater. Thus the 'sin' and 'trespass offerings' increased in number. Nor is it easy to distinguish between them, though the former included unintentional breaches of certain ritual and

moral precepts, and required such satisfaction as the purification of women after childbirth (Leviticus xii. 6, xv. 14, 15; Numbers xv. 22-31).

Once more it must be noted carefully that from the first the *blood* as meaning the *life* of the victim was not burnt with its portion of flesh. Later it was esteemed to have an *atoning power*, when men ceased to regard Jahveh as sharing in the sacrificial meal. After Deuteronomy, when the priest alone could sacrifice, it became necessary to permit ordinary slaughter of animals for food at home: hence all the old sacred associations bound up with it vanished. Thus sacrifice, which had once been simply a 'thank-offering' of the 'firstfruits' of the cattle and field, grew to have a *propitiatory* meaning. That meaning is found throughout *P*: so the priest rose to the full height of his power as the mediator of communion between God and man. He alone could sacrifice, he alone could approach Jahveh's altar with this purpose. Finally only the High Priest could enter the 'Holy of Holies,' and that but once a year.

As sacrifice gradually assumed this *piacular* character, it was felt that some unintentional

breaches of moral and ceremonial law might have escaped atonement; hence once a year *P* set apart a special day for that purpose. It was known as the 'Day of Atonement,' and still retains its peculiar sanctity, though much of its ritual can be practised no longer. Two goats were chosen and lots cast to decide which should be for Jahveh, which for Azazel, who was probably some demon derived from Babylonian thought. Jahveh's goat was sacrificed, that of Azazel let loose into the wilderness, symbolically bearing with him the whole of the national sins for the year (Leviticus xvi. 1-28). This atoning ceremony took place after the morning burnt offering; during its procedure the high priest entered the 'Holy of Holies,' and the day itself was to be a complete fast-day for all time. There is no trace of the 'Day of Atonement' in the earlier codes or history of the Hebrews. Clearly, then, it is a growth of the Torah, which was reached during the Exile or shortly after the return.

It is now possible to come back to the first home-coming of a body of the exiles under Zerubbabel and Joshua the priest. These two leaders did not take the 'priestly code' with them, possibly because its compilation

was not finished in their time. Their first object was to restore the fallen altar, their second to rebuild the ruined Temple and perhaps the battered walls of Jerusalem. In 538 B.C. by a decree of Cyrus, which has not survived in its original form (Ezra i. 2-4), the first band of exiles reached Jerusalem, set up the altar, and laid the foundations of the Temple. But the opposition to their efforts was so great, that they ceased building until moved to continue by the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, who ascribed all their misfortunes to this cessation (Haggai i. 3-11, ii.; Zechariah iv. 6-14, etc.). By their inspiration the second Temple was completed in 516 B.C.

From that time the little nation, if so it may be called, lived amid great hardships and continual fears. Then the Samaritans became bitter enemies of the Jews, because from their mixed race they were not allowed to take a share in the sacred building (Ezra iv. 1-6). It is just possible that Zerubbabel and his company may have rebuilt the walls of the city, which were again thrown down owing to a revolt of the Jews against Darius. But this suggestion is merely conjectural: of the period of nearly sixty years (516-458

B.C.) between the completion of the Temple and the first recorded arrival of Ezra there is practically no information, though the book of Ezra-Nehemiah has survived.

The two parts of this interesting book are in fact one, though their contents have probably been disarranged. They have come down to us from the pen of the 'Chronicler,' who may have compiled his work about 300 B.C., as he mentions Jaddua the high priest in the time of Alexander the Great (Nehemiah xii. 10, 11; cf. Josephus, *Antiquities*, xi. 84 *seqq.*). It was intended to be the sequel to the book of Chronicles (cf. 2 Chronicles xxxvi. 22, 23 with Ezra i. 1-3). It contains fragments of the autobiographies of Ezra and Nehemiah, an Aramaean part with a supposed decree of Cyrus, a later edict of Artaxerxes which may or may not be genuine, and sundry Temple-traditions. The autobiography of Nehemiah (i.-vii.) is of priceless value as information about his period.

Of Ezra it has been concluded on purely presumptive evidence that he was a mere creation of the Chronicler's brain. He may not have come to Jerusalem until the time of Nehemiah, as nothing is known of him

from 458 to 445 B.C. But this is not conclusive: if his reforming zeal brought him into collision with the chiefs of his nation, he may well have disappeared from public view until he had the strong support of the later leader, especially if the insistence upon the putting away of alien wives were due to him. It may be noted that about this time the beautiful little idyll of Ruth was written to protest against this harsh measure enacted to secure a purely Jewish nationality. No doubt Ezra is omitted in the 'Praise of Famous Men' (Ecclesiasticus xliv. 1), while Nehemiah does find a place therein (xlix. 13). But that omission in itself is not sufficient evidence to set against what appears to be a genuine piece of autobiography (Ezra viii., ix.), while some other chapters resemble the abbreviation of such a work.

In 445 B.C. Nehemiah came to Jerusalem, and within a short time the walls were rebuilt, so that the neighbouring nations could no longer disturb the people (Nehemiah ii.-iii.). After the completion of that important task a solemn 'Feast of Tabernacles' was held at which Ezra the Scribe read 'the words of the Torah' (Nehemiah

viii. 13-18). Whether he read the whole of the Pentateuch or only the 'priestly code' to the people during the seven days of the feast, is quite uncertain. It is highly improbable that Ezra was the compiler of the former, as may be seen from the fact that the poll-tax was only *one-third* of a shekel in Nehemiah's time (x. 32), whereas in the priestly code *one-half* a shekel was required of all alike (Exodus xxx. 13). But whatever book was read, it was entirely of the school of *P*. The people pledged themselves to obey it, thus the religion of Israel became Judaism. Soon afterwards Nehemiah returned to the Persian king in Susa, to come back in 432 B.C. to complete his work. Two years later the Samaritans established their worship and temple on Mount Gerizim (Josephus, *Antiquities*, xi. 7, 8) and the Hebrews were left to endure their hard lot unmolested at least by them. Probably at this time the noble little book of Jonah was written in the form of a sacred romance to protest against the rigour of this reformation and to plead for missionary enterprise on the part of the Jewish nation.

From the reading of the Torah by Ezra and Nehemiah's accompanying reforms the Hebrews became the 'people of a book.' From henceforth or at least from the following century they became known as *Jews* to all outside of themselves. Natural spontaneity all but died out of their public worship. The sacrifices were gradually restored and multiplied at the Temple, while the whole community paid for their maintenance. Each of them was definitely prescribed and no longer regulated by choice or custom. The civil governor was usually an alien set in his place by some conquering monarch, while the high priest was the religious ruler of his race. He was held to be Jahveh's earthly representative, who exercised his divine office with the help of a council afterwards called the *Sanhedrim* and made up of 'the Levites and the priests, and the heads of the fathers of Israel' (2 Chronicles xix. 4-11).

It is true that the Chronicler finds a previous origin for a contemporary institution in the time of Jehoshaphat, simply because his name means 'Jahveh is Judge.' The office of the priests, the daily and special sacrifices, the Temple-service, the guilds of singers, the Levites, even the functions of the high priest himself are all defined in the

priestly code. It was the business of Jahveh's great vicar to take care that the people as a whole, and as individuals obeyed the Torah exactly, brought the required offerings, paid the commanded dues. Hence the joyous if rather sensuous worship of the early Hebrews became hardened into a severe ritual: the voice of the prophet all but ceased, the word of the priest prevailed.

Before developing the subject further, something must be said of the reliableness of the Chronicler as an historian. Steeped in the thought of the 'priestly code,' he could not understand the freedom and comparative truth of the original story. He imagined that from the beginning of Solomon's Temple only the priest could sacrifice with a large band of Levites as his attendants. Not finding them in the earlier narratives he conceived of them as omitted. It was his task to introduce them, and introduce them he did with much besides (2 Chronicles v. 2-14). Similarly when David brought up the 'Ark' to Mount Zion, the king is represented as needing a host of Levites in addition to the priests to help him (1 Chronicles xiii.). His whole story stands in marked contrast to the older account. It was because the

'Levites' had not carried the 'Ark' that the 'breach of Uzzah' occurred, while the lifelike story of David's dancing before the 'Ark,' of Michal's scorn at his exhibition of himself, of his severe reproof of her, is discreetly omitted as detracting from the dignity of the great king (2 Samuel vi. 4-23).

The Chronicler's omissions are as remarkable as his additions. He has nothing to say of the disgraceful episode of Bath-sheba and Uriah (2 Samuel xi., xii.), nor of the no less disgraceful court intrigue by which Solomon became king (1 Kings i.). With similar motives he altered events to suit his purpose: shocked by the early story which plainly asserted that Jahveh in anger prompted David to number the people, and punished them with a pestilence, he ascribed the suggestion to a 'Satan from Jahveh' (cf. 2 Samuel xxiv. 1 with 1 Chronicles xxi. 1). A large number of similar illustrations of his method might be cited; but a careful study of his work will reveal the fact that though honest in intention he was so obsessed by the imagined early origin of the ritual of his day, that he could not write history as events occurred. For his own time his evidence is

invaluable; for the previous centuries it is practically worthless.

The Chronicler therefore had before his mind a *theocracy* or government by God through his priests and the Sanhedrim; the people of warriors and prophets had become the people of a *church*; it can be called nothing else. Its institutions were divine, its laws were divine, it was the 'holy people of a holy God.' But the very term 'holiness' in its later sense comprehended far more than its meaning in the mouth of the vast majority of the prophets. With their deep spiritual insight they had perceived the vanity of worship without ethical and spiritual holiness. They had denounced the pompous ceremonial of their day as positively displeasing to Jahveh, as destined to bring the Exile upon their people. To them, rites, however useful in themselves, mattered little or nothing in the sight of Jahveh. Hence their holiness was a plainer, simpler, more ideal quality than lay at the root of the later theocracy.

This profounder conception of spiritual holiness was by no means absent from the subsequent Judaism: but in the minds of the people as a whole it was apt to be choked

by an overgrowth of ritual. Each successive sacrifice was apt to take the place of the idea which it symbolized. Hence when a man made a 'sin' or 'trespass offering' he was likely to forget that the sacrifice itself was only symbolical, that the temper of soul with which it was offered was all important. Not even the great 'Day of Atonement' always impressed the positive need of penitence: the ordinary Israelite was prone to imagine that the scapegoat in actual fact bore away the sins of the nation, of course including his own, into the wilderness. Thus were born two classes destined to great influence amongst the later Jews. There were the Sadducees, tenacious of outward ritual, but often at heart deeply influenced by Greek thought. There were the Pharisees or *separatist* zealots, who were no less faithful to the ritual, while they drew deep spiritual lessons from the ethical Torah. Of these two classes are few if any traces in the Old Testament; but they were the natural fruit of a religion hemmed in with ritual prescribed in a sacred book.

To the faithful Jew his religion was essentially the 'religion of a book.' Just as the Protestant reformers cast down an infallible

Pope to set up in its place an infallible Bible, the priests of Judaism made their people no less confident of the eternal verity and everlasting authority of the Torah. Parts of it were taught in every school, some of its simpler passages in many a home of Israel. Where there is so much ritual, the 'weightier matters of the law' are apt to pass into the background. Thus when the religion became the 'religion of a book,' there was scarcely room for a prophet within it. The prophet must have freedom of utterance, if he is to proclaim his message to the people. Under the more stereotyped religion of the Torah such freedom was out of the question. The worshipper no longer asked what is the will of God, but what is the will of God as set forth in the Torah? Henceforth the priest and the scribe ruled; by the priest's mediation alone man was able to make his peace with Jahveh. Of the synagogue worship nothing can be said here, since it finds no place as such in the Old Testament, though it may well have begun at a comparatively early date after the return from the Exile, while some would set its beginnings during the sojourn in the land of Babylon.

The rigour of ritual is one side of the

theocracy; but it is by no means the only or the more important side. By it the Jews were kept faithful to the one true God through all their trials and sufferings. Each individual Israelite believed himself to be a member of the 'congregation of Jahveh,' thus standing in a special relation to his God shared by no other nation. Hence any lapse into idolatry was impossible, though it might have saved his property, to say nothing of his life. Furthermore the Israelites as a whole derived much inspiration from their worship, however burdensome its legal exactions may have seemed to others. In fulfilling them they considered themselves to be fulfilling their part of a covenant, in which Jahveh would undoubtedly fulfil his. If they went to Jerusalem to one or other of the national feasts, they went to the holy city with glad hearts (Psalms cxxi., cxxii.), though the solemn character of their celebration had the inevitable tendency to rob them of their brightness.

Though their Sabbath-day became a day rather of rigour than of rest, to them it was truly blest by its lofty and divine symbolism. It is quite true that the priest was elevated in the eyes of the people as the one means of

making their offerings to Jahveh. But though he may have seemed further off in the past, the thought of God became alike sublimer and more reverent, so that his love for his people became more precious to them. Hence, as will be seen later, the Psalter or 'hymn-book of the second Temple,' largely the offspring of that great outburst of sacred song which took place after the Exile, contains some of the world's noblest religious poems, and it is abundantly clear that the spiritual faculty of 'resting in Jahveh' in quiet communion was a dominating influence at least in some deeper souls.

At or about this time the 'Scribes' or 'students of the Torah' began to attain a fixed position outside of the recognized priesthood. It was their task to make copies of the Torah and other sacred books such as the rolls of the various prophets. But they spent much time upon studying the Torah with minute care, interpreting its darker sayings and defining more strictly its requirements. Regarding it as the pledge that Jahveh had made an everlasting covenant with his people which was described in his Torah, the Scribes and Pharisees studied it with loving care. The people

for the most part were not able to enter upon such studies; but in their turn they looked up to those who could and did engage in them with a high and affectionate reverence.

Still, in spite of this beneficent side of its influence, the 'religion of a book' is usually lacking in perfect spontaneity and freedom, while it is apt to breed theological pedants. When all thought upon sacred matters is fixed in a rigid orthodoxy, spiritual progress becomes wellnigh impossible. That was the inherent defect of the Jewish theocracy, as it is of all orthodoxies. The dispersion of the Jews amongst all nations, while it did not alter the fundamentals of their religion, yet by depriving them of the power of celebrating its ritual made it once more a living and universal religion. When their faith ceased to be centred upon one sacred place, it was seen to be possible to worship Jahveh in any part of the world.

Of the ethical side of the Torah little remains to be said. Though to them Jahveh was the universal God, the Jews believed him to be in an especial sense the God of Israel. Hence passages in the Old Testament which seem to have a universal bearing to the Jew in Palestine referred distinctly

to himself and to his fellow Israelites. The commandment already cited, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself' (Leviticus xix. 18) refers strictly to the *Jewish* neighbour and could not have included the Samaritans. Deuteronomy forbids the Israelite to lend upon usury to his brother Israelite (xxiii. 19, 20), while the same is permitted in the case of an alien. The word used means 'to bite like a serpent,' so that usurious interest is clearly implied. When we read the noble passages of the Old Testament we must never forget that Jewish particularism which lies at the root of all the national history. No Jew in Palestine after Nehemiah's time would have dreamed that the Torah was an international moral code bidding him to treat a Samaritan as he would treat a Jewish neighbour. That is the difference between the thought of Israel and the universal teaching of Jesus and the Apostle Paul.

The Torah contains no intimation of individual personal immortality. The rewards of a good life and the punishments of an evil life are to be received from Jahveh on earth. When they returned from Babylonia the Jews expected great national prosperity for their faithfulness to Jahveh, who had made

his covenant with them and restored them to their land. The non-fulfilment of their expectation has nothing to do with the expectation itself, though it led the deeper thinkers amongst them to inquire into the suffering of the good and the prosperity of the bad. In Isaiah liii. a beginning is found so far-reaching that it is not possible to go far beyond it to-day. But the noble oracles of the great prophet of the Exile had little influence upon the popular thought, especially in those passages which describe the vicarious suffering of 'Jahveh's faithful servant.'

To the ordinary man 'Jahveh's Torah was complete, restoring the life' (Psalm xix. 7). Beyond it he could not go; happy indeed was he if he could fulfil it exactly. Hence he had no theory of future rewards and punishments to disturb his serenity or to cheer his despondency. To the Israelite of this period life on earth counted supremely and alone was real existence. Yet for all that the absence of any image in his worship helped him to conceive of Jahveh as a 'spirit' brooding over the abysses of primeval chaos (Genesis i. 2). In his own mind he may have pictured Jahveh as a man,

as most of us do in the human limitations of our thought. But though man might have been made in his image, man was permitted to make no image of him. Hence the general Jewish conception of God was in the main spiritual.

Though the theocracy has its unlovely side, it has nursed a race of strong men faithful unto death for the Torah of Jahveh. The Jewish nation bore a multitude of unselfish heroes of real and fervent piety, who were born into the Torah, lived by the Torah, were ready to die for the Torah. In it they found, as they believed, the full revelation of Jahveh to their people, the token of his special grace to Israel, the assurance of the future greatness of their race. Though it was and is hampered by its limitations, though it contains many contradictions, to the Israelite it was a unity vouchsafed to his nation alone. The stages of the traditions which make it up, have been traced: it has been shown to contain the religious conceptions of many centuries set together without any definite order.

But to the Hebrew student of the days of its first completion that made no difference: in his own way he could reconcile the con-

tradictions by treating them as allegory or in some similar manner. It has sufficed to give all of the Jews a national religion, which has endured unimpaired to the present day. Furthermore it was in part the teaching upon which John the Baptist and Jesus were reared. In any estimate of the Jewish theocracy that great fact must never be forgotten. Though these two were emphatically prophets and not priests, they had learned what the Torah had to teach, so that Jesus was able to correct deliberately its cruder enactments and to universalize its teaching. That he had learned it thoroughly may be seen from the 'Sermon on the Mount,' the use that he made of it has been for the lasting blessing of the human race.

CHAPTER VII

THE RELIGION OF SACRED SONG

The Psalter. Conceptions of God. Strict monotheism. His goodness and loving-kindness. His righteousness. His justice. His faithfulness. Man's relation to God. Thankfulness. Love. Trust. Obedience. Penitence. Life, death, Sheôl. The Messianic Psalms. Summary of Conclusions.

THE Psalter extends over a period of more than eight centuries (1000-145 B.C.), though the larger number of its poems is probably post-exilic. Its final division into five books each closed by a doxology, dates from a comparatively late time, and is possibly based upon the fivefold division of the Torah. It is made up of a number of smaller collections, the oldest of which is ascribed to David, though it contains many poems which he could not have written. The earliest guild of sacred poets was called by the general name of 'David' or 'sons of

David,' who was famed as the great national poet. It may undoubtedly contain some of his songs, but none perhaps as he actually wrote them. When the Psalter became the 'second Temple hymn-book,' its oldest poems would need modernizing, so that the worshippers could understand them. That happens to most modern hymn-books, whose editors without scruple alter the words, even the doctrines, of hymns to suit the needs of their denomination.

It is quite possible that some of the Psalms assigned to David may be his, though modified at least in language. The *titles* came not from the original authors of the poems, but from one or other of the editors of the smaller collections. The ascription 'David's' does not of necessity imply David's authorship, but may mean either 'from the guild David,' or 'after David's manner.' The events of the hero-king's adventurous life may well have suggested illustration to the later poets of the lessons which they desired to teach. The earliest guild of Levitical singers in the 'second Temple' was called the 'sons of Korah' (e.g., xlii.). Finally, three such guilds were formed and known as the 'sons of Ethan,

Asaph, and Heman,' where Heman takes the place of Korah (1 Chronicles xv. 17-22; Psalm lxxxviii.). Hence a Psalm assigned to one of these names must be understood to have come from or been written for one of the respective guilds of Levitical singers (e.g. lxxvii., where Ethan appears as Jeduthun; lxxiii.; lxxxviii.).

It will be interesting to note the various kinds of Psalms. One (xxx.) is styled a 'Shir,' which was the general Hebrew name for any kind of song. A common title is 'Mizmor'='*a song set to music*' (e.g., xxxi.). A small class is known by the name of 'Michtam'='a golden' or 'chosen poem' (e.g., xvi.; lvi.; lx.). Another kind is the 'Maschil'='reflective poem,' which closely resembles such a hymn as that beginning, 'O blessed life, the heart at rest' (e.g., xlii.; xlv.; lxxviii.; lxxxviii.). A number of Psalms beginning 'Hallelujah'='praise ye Jahveh' is named the 'greater' or 'lesser Hallel' (cxi.; cxvii.; cxlvi.-cl.) and used at the national feasts. Another little collection is called 'songs of ascents'=probably 'pilgrim-songs,' to be sung by faithful Israelites on their way to special worship in Jerusalem. The whole body of the Psalter

is known as 'Tehillim'='praises,' though its devotional character may be seen from a note, 'The Tephillim (prayers) of David the son of Jesse are ended' (lxxii. 20).

Sometimes musical directions are added such as *Selah* which may mean an *interval* of instrumental music. At other times the names of popular melodies are found in the title indicating that the Psalm was to be sung to the tune named. One such is the name 'Shoshannim'='*lilies*' (xlv.). Again a musical note 'set to Alamoth' is given, which may correspond to our 'soprano voices,' but probably refers to the type of musical instruments to be used in the accompaniment. These were the 'Jebel'='psaltery' or larger harp, which sometimes had ten strings; the 'Kinnor'=lyre or smaller stringed instrument; the trumpet or horn; the flute; the cymbals which were of two kinds, and the tambourine.

In the earliest times at least the worshippers used *dancing* as part of their ritual in joyful thanksgiving (cl. 4).

Gradually the Psalter became the 'second Temple hymn-book,' to which additions were made probably as late as 145 B.C. during the times of the Maccabees. The fall of Jeru-

salem, its restoration under Nehemiah, and the victories of Simon and his family, each inspired the poets of Israel to burst forth into sacred song. However ancient in thought the oldest hymns may have been, with a new setting they took largely a new form. The last editors were strict monotheists and may well have modified the cruder ideas of a more primitive time, though traces of these survive in some of the Psalms.

To judge the date of each is wellnigh impossible. The tendency of modern critics is to assign too many of them to the age of the Maccabees. That glorious period does not afford the only suitable occasions for the composition of poems throbbing with a triumphant military spirit. To say nothing of David himself, the victories of Jeroboam II in the northern, and of Josiah in the southern kingdom give quite as possible a source for these as the triumphs of a later date. Even if Aramaean words be found in them, it does not follow that they were composed during or after the Persian rule. The trading with Syria in the time of Solomon may well have given many Aramaean loan-words to the Hebrew tongue. Similarly modern critics are apt to make the pronoun I stand for the

whole nation too often in what are more simply taken as individual Psalms. Each poem must be judged by its own internal evidence, since no reliance is to be placed on the *titles*. If the *Temple* be mentioned in one of them, it can hardly be David's; the phrase 'Jahveh's house' on the contrary does not imply so much, as it could be used of the original tent. The poems, as they left the last editors, differ in rhythm, inspiration, and power: but in the fundamental thought, though it shows signs of progress, there is a striking unanimity.

What, then, were the basal ideas of the being and nature of Jahveh underlying the poems of the Psalter? With one voice the poets sing of him as the only God, a conception doubtless derived from the teaching of the great prophets. Whenever the impotence of idols is compared with the might of Jahveh, it is pointed with a contempt withering as that of Isaiah. This scornful abhorrence reaches its greatest height in a Psalm of the early Greek period (cxv. 4-7), where the poet contrasts the powerlessness of these lifeless blocks with the living might of Jahveh:—

Their idols are silver and gold,
The work of men's hands.
They have mouths, but they speak not;
Eyes have they, but they see not;
They have ears, but they hear not;
Noses have they, but they smell not;
They have hands, but they handle not;
Feet have they, but they walk not.

On the other hand with supreme confidence he sings:—

But our God is in the heavens;
He hath done whatever he pleased.

Examples of this rigid monotheism need not be multiplied. To one and all of the Psalmists Jahveh was the only God: his power was limitless; he alone was to be worshipped by 'all kindreds of the peoples' with solemn pomp (xxii. 27; xcvi. 9); to him alone were sacrifices to be offered; his mighty voice rang through the thunderstorm (xxix.); to him the floods swelled tumultuous praise (xciii.); his creative and sustaining might was to be seen in the world of nature (civ.); he could create, he could destroy (xcv. 4, 5; xlvi. 8); he could bring the lofty low and lift them up according to his good pleasure (cvii.).

Jahveh is always a spiritual being having

no image, in spite of the distinctly anthropomorphic expressions used concerning him. To the poets the dome of the sky was a solid vault or *firmament* spread over a circular flat earth (xix. 1; cl. 1), across which moved the sun, moon, and stars. There were waters above the firmament, beneath and around the earth, under which lay a vast abyss (xxiv. 2; xxix. 10). When the windows of heaven were opened, rain fell to renew the face of the earth. Above all was the pavilion of Jahveh high over the heavens, where he dwelt with the angelic hosts (ciii. 21). By his creative word he executed his will (xxxiii. 6), as he sustained heaven and earth by the majesty of his might. From heaven he heard and answered the king's prayer (xx. 6). But in all alike he was the one Jahveh, the creator, controller, sustainer of the living creatures and especially of his people Israel.

In estimating the general conception of his character it must be remembered that with few exceptions the Psalmists were particularistic in their thought, looking little beyond the bounds of their own people. To Israel he showed his goodness and loving-kindness; he was 'Israel's shepherd' (xxiii.,

lxxx. 1), he 'brought back the exile of Jacob' (lxxxv. 1), he established 'a testimony in Jacob,' which was to be handed down from father to son (lxxviii. 5-7), he was the 'keeper of Israel' (cxxi. 4), while Israel was 'his people' (cxliv. 12-15). There are many more examples confining Jahveh's goodness to his own nation.

On the other hand are what may be called 'missionary Psalms,' in which Israel is regarded as a missionary to all the earth and Jahveh's providence to be over all nations. In a beautiful song of praise (viii.) man is said to have been 'made a little lower than God,' to be always under God's mindful care, where clearly man is meant to be mankind. Another poet represents Jahveh as 'King of all the earth,' as so reigning over all nations that they shall become 'the people of the God of Abraham' (xlvii. 7-9), that is to be ranked with the real descendants of Abraham. Another Psalm is quite universal in tone, wherein it is said, 'All the kings of the earth shall give thee thanks, O Jahveh' (cxxxviii. 4). Others might be cited to show that the highest conception of their authors in respect of Jahveh was to make their people missionaries to bring other

nations to be his worshippers. Hence when a Psalm speaks of 'Jahveh's loving-kindness,' it may be either national or universal in the mind of its author; but in each case the fundamental thought is the same and the national Psalm can easily be universalized.

Jahveh's goodness and loving-kindness show themselves in many ways. There is his gift of an abundant harvest and increase in cattle (lxv. 9-13; cxliv. 13-15) in regard for man's piety and care; there is his protection in the time of trouble (xxvii. 1-6); there is his watchfulness over his faithful worshipper (xxiii.), there is his continual providence manifested in safety from sickness, danger, foes in battle, in the gift of a long and peaceful life (xci.). There is his readiness to rescue his people singly or as a whole from bitter enemies (iii. 5-8); there is that wonderful call to praise, which describes 'his goodness to the children of men' (cvii.); there is that tender portrayal of his fatherly goodness to 'them that fear him,' which shines softly through one of the most beautiful of the Psalms (ciii.); there is that great triumph-song, which begins by hymning the creation of heaven and earth, and ends by narrating the early

victories of Israel, for which the nation is exhorted to 'give thanks unto Jahveh, for his loving-kindness is for ever' (cxxxvi.).

Some of the Psalms mentioned are early, some are late; but the note of Jahveh's loving-kindness rings through all of them. It may be sounded to commemorate this quality as displayed to Israel as shown in its long and eventful history, in the beneficent intention of making it the 'foundation-stone' of a new earth (cxviii. 22, 23), or in his omniscience and intimate relations with man (cxxxix.). But everywhere and under all circumstances the Psalmists believed heart and soul in the goodness and loving-kindness of their God, which would deliver them from all their afflictions.

The Psalms considered have been mostly expressions of a conviction of Jahveh's goodness uttered after the Exile. A few poems survive, telling of his affectionate regard for his anointed king, who by the sacred oil was supposed to be possessed by the divine spirit. First a royal marriage-ode (xlv.) has been preserved, which may have been intended to grace the wedding of Jehu. In it Jahveh's loving-kindness is described in majestic language applied rather to the

kingly office than to the individual king, while a high tribute is paid to the royal bride. Another Psalm (xx.) prays for the victory of the king in some unknown battle soon to be fought, and thrills with sure confidence in Jahveh's goodness. It is followed by a song of glad gratitude (xxi.) which may have been sung to commemorate the victory prayed for in its predecessor. Here again the ode throbs with deep thankfulness to Jahveh for his goodness to 'his anointed.' Several other Psalms tell of Jahveh's care for the king, and one speaks of his severe punishment of an unfaithful ruler (lxxxix. 38-45), which may refer to the weakling Zedekiah. While the kingdom lasted, the king was Jahveh's vicegerent over his people; on him heavenly blessings would be poured; he had and exercised the right to sacrifice. In his blessing the people were blessed, in his prosperity they saw sure proof of the divine favour.

But Jahveh's loving-kindness was not wasted upon the evil-doer. He must suffer adversity, as the righteous would receive prosperity. Thus the primitive theory held the thought of most of the Psalmists, though some were inclined to question its truth

(lxxiii.). In many poems the faithful worshipper, possibly representing the nation, regarded his foes as Jahveh's enemies, upon whom he was expected to take stern vengeance (xxxvi. 10-12), though to all outward appearance they had prospered exceedingly (xxxiv.; xxxvii.). If Jahveh were good, he could also be stern, cruel as it seems to us, in his treatment of the wicked. In one terrible passage (lxviii. 21-23) he is depicted as 'smiting through the head of his enemies,' as suffering his righteous people to bathe their feet in the blood of their foes.

In the tender phrase 'Like as a father pitieth his children' (ciii. 13) Jahveh's pity does not reach the wicked. Indeed such a conception as the Fatherhood of God, as Jesus taught, is not to be found in the Old Testament. Still, according to the thought of the Psalmists as a whole, Jahveh showed himself good to the good Israelite, as he had always done in the past to his chosen people. In spite of the afflictions of Israel he was still believed to care for its well-being; nay, those very afflictions were held in most cases to be directly due to the national wrongdoing whether by idolatry or any other sin (xcv. 10, 11).

Another outstanding quality of Jahveh in the mind of all of these poets is his perfect righteousness, which can only be served by corresponding righteousness. Doubtless the standards of ethics may have differed in the thought of the various Psalmists; but the idea itself is persistent in all of them. Scarcely a Psalm is without some allusion to Jahveh's righteousness either in set terms or implicitly. Now it is said, 'The heavens shall declare his righteousness' (l. 6); now that 'He will judge the world with righteousness' (xcviii. 9). One poet prays for deliverance from his troubles 'by Jahveh's righteousness' (xxxi. 1); another seeks to be judged by the same divine quality (xxxv. 24). In a single sentence 'Jahveh is righteous in all his ways' (cxlv. 17), and punishes the unrighteous with utter destruction (i. 4-6; iii. 7), while because he is righteous he 'loves righteousness' (xi. 7). Though the Psalmists might be perplexed by the obvious prosperity of the wicked, they never failed to realize that Jahveh himself was righteous, never completely lost their confidence that righteousness would prevail in the end, though that end might be long delayed.

By his righteousness Jahveh is 'judge of all the earth' who rewards men according to their deeds (xcvi. 13). His judgments are based upon the conduct of life; his blessings or punishments are meted out in life in requital of conduct alone. He executes judgment upon the oppressor, whether a nation or an individual (xciv. 2), or lays his commandments upon the national judges (lxxxii.). He has set his throne for judgment and will judge the world with righteousness (ix. 7, 8). Over and over again with passionate fervour the Psalmists appeal to him to pass sentence upon the unjust and oppressive. They had learned from sad experience to suffer cruel injustice from barbarous tyrants. But they are prepared to 'rest in Jahveh, to wait patiently for him,' confident that in the end he will act as a just judge and do the right (xxxvii. 7). Poring over the Torah some found therein recorded 'the excellent judgments of Jahveh' (xix. 7-14; cxix.). They loved the Torah with deep affection, found comfort in it, amid all their affliction. Hence they could cheer their people by their sure conviction of the eternal justice of their God, which one day he would manifest to all the earth.

Side by side with his justice is his *faithfulness* to his people and to his faithful servants. He had plighted his word to Abraham and kept his promise righteously (cv. 42-45). Israel's forefathers had trusted in him and 'were not put to confusion' (xxii. 4, 5). He would never forsake his people even in their darkest hours. Hence he is often called the *rock* or *fortress* (xxxi. 2, 3; xlii. 9; lxii. 2) because of his eternal constancy. Such a truth must have comforted the Jews beyond measure both during and after the Exile. It fills the thought of the Psalmists and inspires them to sing. They sang of the everlasting might, of the boundless love, of the unsullied righteousness, of the unceasing faithfulness, of the unflinching justice of Jahveh, and the music of their song has awakened echoes in the human heart along the changing course of the centuries.

Another reason for the abiding influence of the Psalter is its intense humanity. It touches the whole gamut of human experience in man's relation to God, in much of man's relation to man. Thankfulness, love, trust, obedience to Jahveh, penitence, hatred of enemies, longing for revenge, delight in its satisfaction are freely manifested in its

hallowed pages. Thankfulness and praise are the twin key-notes of most of the poems. Now one poet would praise Jahveh for his beneficent rule in nature and over mankind (viii.; ix.; civ.); now another would recall Israel's past with glowing gratitude to his God for his watchful care (cvi.; cxiv.). Now an individual poet would thank Jahveh for his deliverance from sickness, from death itself (xviii.; xxx.); now some great national victory stirred an outburst of thanksgiving (lxxvi.; cxxiv.); now one who had tasted the joy of worship after a long absence poured forth his gratitude in exquisite words (lxxxiv.).

Whenever these pious poets received some great deliverance, they tuned harps and voices to the gracious note of grateful praise. It was their joy to 'walk in the light of his countenance' (iv. 6), that is with Jahveh's radiant face turned towards them, a sure sign of his favour, as the 'hiding of his face from them' proclaimed his anger (xiii. 1; xxvii. 9; xxx. 7). To share communion with him was to find at 'his right hand pleasures for evermore' (xvi. 11). So these old poets rejoiced and sang, or suffered and sang, finding everlasting consolation in Jahveh's goodness.

Similarly one after another of the Psalmists conscious of Jahveh's love to his people, repaid him in kind (xviii. 1). When they were all but sinking into despair, their love to Jahveh did not cease. Amongst the latest of them were the *saints*=*Chasidim* especially devoted to God and his Torah. It is difficult to decide whether the word *saints* refers to a section of Israel or to Israel itself as a covenant-race. Sometimes at least it seems to point to the separate class, whose members were the spiritual ancestors of the Pharisees (xxxi. 23). Some of the Psalms seem to have been written by them to express their own feeling towards Jahveh and to impart it to their disciples.

The same feeling throbbed in the hearts of all of the Psalmists, though its expression varied considerably. One and all they were vividly conscious of the presence of Jahveh alike by 'the quiet pools amid the green pastures,' or through the darkness of 'the gloomy glade.' Their love to him went forth artlessly as that of a little child; they were rarely troubled by those heart-searching questions born of the scientific spirit. Though they often imagined his face to be turned away from them, they never doubted that

it would be turned towards them in due time. They hoped in him still and found him to be 'the health of their countenance and their God' (xlii. 11).

Closely akin to this love of Jahveh was unfaltering trust in him. One poet old and suffering from sore persecution, could yet begin his hymn (lxxi. 1), 'In thee do I put my trust, O Jahveh,' could assert confidently that Jahveh had been 'his trust from his youth.' Another writing for the whole people lying at the mercy of bitter foes shortly after the completion of the second Temple (xxii.) could sing of the trust of his fathers and its fulfilment by Jahveh. Another perhaps a little earlier, begins to sing amid deep desolation (xiii.); but his sense of affliction steals away and he ends in rapturous confidence in 'Jahveh's loving-kindness.' Once more, two Psalms of different dates are joined together (xxvii. 1-6; 7-14), each thrilling with sturdy trust. The first sings of a faith fulfilled in a signal victory, and may well have come from David himself after the defeat of some of his enemies. The second vibrates with the note of present danger, such as befits the last days of the kingdom of Judah. Yet the poet's trust is

so unshaken, that he can sing of Jahveh's protecting care though his 'father and mother forsake him.' These examples of whole-hearted trust will serve to illustrate the universal thought of the Psalter in this important attribute of man's relation to God. It is an eternal attitude of soul sorely needed by men alike in prosperity and in affliction.

Much as Jahveh loved his people, he required obedience from them. This teaching of the Psalmists is admirably summed up in a Psalm (xv.) dating probably from the first days of the second Temple. It describes the true characteristics of 'Jahveh's guest' as Cheyne with fine insight calls him. Such a one must be righteous, speak the truth sincerely, abstain from slander, do no wrong to his friends, take up no calumnious report against his neighbour, despise the reprobate, honour Jahveh's true worshipper, keep his oath even to his hurt, take no usury, no bribe against the innocent. It will be seen that all of Jahveh's requirements from 'his guest' are forms of ethical obedience, which according to the Psalter is the doing of his will.

Some of the later Psalmists are known

as 'the wise,' who studied the Torah and found the 'beginning of wisdom in the fear of Jahveh' (xxxiv. 11-22; xxxvii.; cxix.). Their wisdom showed itself in righteous living (cxix. 3); to them it was folly to do evil (cvii. 17, 18). In righteousness, obedience to Jahveh consisted, in sin against him disobedience. Most of the sins condemned in the Psalter are breaches of the moral law, while most of the appeals to righteousness are directed to the leading of a healthy moral life.

If, however, he sinned, the Israelite had one sure means of making his peace with his God. If he repented and amended his ways, Jahveh 'would put away the remembrance of his wrongdoing.' One of the profoundest of the Psalms paints a vivid picture of a true penitent (li.). Its author had committed some terrible crime, for which he prayed for forgiveness. It need not be imagined that the blood-guiltiness of verse 14 must be taken in its literal sense, but rather in the meaning of mortal sin of some kind unspecified. If the writer had in mind David's evil way of getting rid of Uriah in the battle, the expression would be natural and merely imply that his sin was as great

as David's. His poem is both a confession and a prayer. Hence he begged for a 'clean mind' and the renewal of 'right spirit within him,' so that he might be able to live truly once more. He felt that his sin had cast him away from Jahveh's presence, so that all was dark around him. If verses 18 and 19 be omitted as unsuitable to their context, we find that the poet had discovered what was hidden from the priests in Jerusalem, that Jahveh needed no atoning offerings on the altar, but 'a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart.' In this way he anticipated the New Testament teaching, and laid the foundation of that wonderful story 'The Prodigal Son.' He never doubted that Jahveh would forgive his sincere penitence, but trusted that once more the face of his God would shine upon him.

Something now remains to be said of man's relation to man as depicted in the Psalter. In this important point the thinking of the Israelitish poets is in the main confined to their own nation, though a few of the Psalms consciously proclaim the obligation of universal morality. The Hebrew religion had so long been national, that it was not easy for the Psalmists to look outside of the

national boundary. Thus many of their poems are black with bitter hatred of enemies. Of course these were not always foreign foes; many of the poets suffered much from the sinners of their own race. But none of them felt bound to forgive their enemies; nay, frequently they prayed to Jahveh to help them to vengeance.

This fierce emotion is seen at its intensest in the 'imprecatory Psalms,' which hurl ferocious curses at the head of those who had wronged their author or the nation as a whole. In one every line throbs with savage satisfaction at the sight of the punishment of the wicked as following on most terrible curses (lviii. 6-11). Another (cix. 6-15) imprecates a most bitter curse possibly upon the faithless high priests Menelaus and Jason, evidently believing that the curse would cling to the persons cursed to their mortal hurt.

Passages such as these, however seriously provoked by cruel wrong, should be taken out of the Psalter, before it is used as a whole for common worship. They belong to an older and more barbarous time: though they may and do express the feelings of many professing Christians, these know very well that they are contrary to the teaching

of Jesus. But war and oppression take the kindness out of the heart of man, and call into being his most vindictive passions. There is no need to dwell upon such expressions of undying hate as are left. It is wiser to turn to the nobler Psalmists to learn from them their eternal lessons of trust, hope, loving-kindness, lowly righteousness lived out in God's abiding presence.

What then did these old poets think of the future life? It is extremely questionable if any real conviction of immortality formed part of Hebrew thought until late in the Greek period. Because quotations from the Old Testament are sometimes loosely made in the New to enforce the teaching of this doctrine, it does not follow that their authors had any conception of it, as it is understood to-day. With most of the thinkers of Israel to die was to pass from the bright sphere of God's activity into the gloom of 'Sheôl,' which lay somewhere in the heart of the earth. Probably their belief in this dark shadow-land was a survival from Canaanite thought; but it played no part in their system of ethics, which had relation to this life alone. In the Psalter are many allusions to Sheôl; in all it

is described in much the same way. One sorrowful poet in danger of death either from sickness or his foes, prays to Jahveh to deliver him from the dark land :—

> For in death there is no remembrance of thee :
> In *Sheôl* who shall give thee thanks ? (vi. 5).

This pathetic Psalm may be national, not individual : but in either case the state of unconsciousness in Sheôl is clearly depicted. Hence this 'gloomy pit' was often used as a synonym for destruction and death (ix. 17).

A Psalm using Sheôl to express *death* has been both misinterpreted and mistranslated to prove its author's belief in immortality. The verses quoted in the New Testament (Acts xiii. 35-37 ; cf. Psalm xvi. 9, 10) to impress the resurrection of Jesus upon the hearers, in the mind of their original author meant simply a prayer to be preserved from death, as may be seen in the truer rendering of Dr. Foster Kent in his 'Student's Old Testament,' which runs :—

> So my mind and my heart rejoice,
> My flesh also abideth in peace ;
> For thou wilt not forsake me *unto Sheôl*
> Nor suffer thy faithful one to *see the grave*.

In simpler language the Psalmist expresses his confidence that Jahveh would not leave him to sink into Sheôl and thus to die. No doubt St. Luke quotes these lines to illustrate a definite doctrine of his master, St. Paul. In this he resembles most users of poetical quotations, who employ them frequently to illustrate something quite outside of their author's thought.

Another prayer for recovery from severe sickness involves a similar thought of Sheôl (xxx. 9) :—

> What profit is there then in my *blood*, when I go down to *Sheôl* ?
> Shall the dust praise thee ? shall it declare thy faithfulness ?

In other words the Psalmist's *blood*, that is his *life*, would avail him nothing in Sheôl. That and his body would be left on earth to turn gradually into dust. His empty shade would be plunged into the land of darkness, where it would be unable to praise Jahveh any more than the dust mouldering in the grave. It is a peculiarly hopeless conception, which seems to have been held by no civilized race save the Hebrews.

To be confined in Sheôl was to dwell in perpetual silence (xciv. 17). The place was

described as the 'dark regions' and the 'depths,' in which Jahveh would not show his wonders and the dead consequently remained mute (lxxxviii. 6-11). Hence all of the Psalmists longed to 'walk before Jahveh in the land of the living' (cxvi. 3-9). At the 'mouth of Sheôl' the very bones were scattered as the earth by the plough (cxli. 7, 8). In spite of the pious pleading of the commentators there appears to be no belief in personal immortality throughout the Psalter. The end of life was Sheôl alone. The word comes from a root meaning *to dig*; hence it is often translated *pit* to the confusion of many readers of the Old Testament. It is not the grave itself, but follows the grave; nor has it anything in common with the word *hell*, which frequently misrepresents it in the Authorized Version.

It has not the slightest connexion with reward or punishment: it was simply a gloomy, silent realm, where the king and the beggar were alike impotent. The only exception to this idea in the Old Testament is an oracle against the great king of Babylon (Isaiah xiv. 3-23), where he is pictured as meeting with scorn from the shades on his arrival in Sheôl. But even there no belief

in personal immortality is implied. The prophet only seeks to express his contempt for the mighty but fallen monarch by putting it into the mouth of the empty shades. Well then might the troubled Israelite pray to Jahveh to spare his life that he might praise his God in happy fortune. He believed that he would receive his reward or punishment on earth; hence came his horror at the dismal thought of death with its inevitable consequence of sinking down into the dark silence and nothingness of Sheôl.

Before summarizing our conclusions on the Psalter, it will be necessary to discuss briefly the so-called 'Messianic Psalms.' Because these Psalms have been interpreted by the Rabbis or quoted in the New Testament as applying to the Messiah it does not follow that their original authors considered them in any such light. Many of the prophets had dreamed of an ideal Davidic king, who would restore the united sceptre to Judah and Israel. Amongst these the finest picture is that of Isaiah (xi.), to whom the oracle is most naturally ascribed. Micah too (iv.-v. 1; vii. 14-19, if the passages be his) had imagined a time of wondrous plenty on earth, when all

nations would come to Jerusalem to learn the worship of Jahveh.

The exilic and post-exilic prophets took up the tale, notably the earnest Zechariah (ix. 9-17). None of them uses the word *Messiah* to express the ideal king. He would be the *anointed one*, who was to receive the spirit of Jahveh, to combine the attributes of a mighty ruler and a religious reformer, under whose sovereignty his people would enjoy wondrous prosperity on a miraculously fruitful earth. With every fresh persecution, though set further in the future, this hope grew steadier and more fervent. In the days of the Maccabees under Simon, who was both religious and secular ruler, to some the golden age seemed to have come. But this period of prosperity was short and followed by troubled days.

In the eyes of the later Jews the deliverer was expected to be a great warrior, half-priest and half king, who would defeat all enemies and reign, as some believed, for a thousand years when the end of the world would come. Hence the scribes searching their prophets and the Psalter found many oracles, which could be applied to the Messiah whom they expected. Thus the

ideals of the past were changed into positive prophecies by them no less than by the New Testament writers. Hence passages were held to predict Jesus, which had not the slightest relation to him. Isaiah had naturally no idea of the domination of the Romans or the life and teaching of Jesus, when he wrote his Messianic oracles. Neither did Zechariah anticipate the riding into Jerusalem upon an ass by Jesus (St. Matthew xxi. 1-5; cf. Zechariah ix. 9). All that he would impress was the lowliness of the Messianic king whom he expected. It is certain that St. Paul and the writers of the Gospels never hesitated from their reverence for the sacredness of the Old Testament to apply in this way such passages which have no reference whatever to Jesus, though they may have influenced his own thought. They quoted from their only Scripture, just as the modern preacher quotes from the Bible, to enforce important points in his doctrine.

The 'Messianic Psalms' are at most five in number. One of the most striking is embedded in Psalm lxxxix. (17-21, 3, 4, 22-52), which may have some reference to Jehoiachin and Zedekiah. Contrasting the present misfortunes of his people with the glowing

promises to David, the pious poet felt confident that they would be fulfilled in the future under a Davidic king. Psalm ii. contemplates the confusion which had arisen amongst the great empires of the world after the fall of the Persian monarchy, all of which in his belief would be brought under the sway of the Messiah, who in honour of his office is styled 'Jahveh's son' (7). A later poet has composed Psalm cx., which may actually have in mind Simon the Maccabee (4). It was cited by Jesus to indicate that in his thought the Messiah need not be of the house of David (St. Matthew xxii. 41-45). Another late Psalm (cxxxii.) repeats Jahveh's promise to David and Zion, which, the later thinkers were convinced, would be fulfilled under the Messiah. Thus a few of the Psalmists took up the oracles of their ancient prophets and set them forth in their own way to be used as second Temple hymns. Thus they kept their own faith in the future alive, and helped to fan the flame of expectation burning in the hearts of their countrymen both in their own time and long after they were laid to rest.

Here the foregoing inadequate examination of the theology and ethics of the Psalter

must come to an end. Some principal points of doctrine stand out conspicuously, which may in part be due to final editing, though this must always remain doubtful. Without exception the Psalmists were convinced of the absolute unity of God, of his sovereign power over all the earth, of his creative and sustaining omnipotence, of the utter impotence of idols, of the supreme folly of their worship. Though some of them with deep insight looked upon their own nation as destined to be missionaries to the various nations, the large majority held that Jahveh's providence was chiefly confined to Israel itself, while some confined it to the righteous in Israel.

His righteousness was perfect and demanded righteousness in his worshippers. He would reward the good and punish the bad on earth. Though there are many references to Sheôl, none of them positively implies any belief in personal immortality. Certain ethical characteristics are clearly marked in most of the poems. They touch upon all of the experiences of their writers whether singing in a national or individual sense. By these they were taught to pour forth thanksgiving to Jahveh, to pray to

him in need, to trust him in the darkest circumstances, to love him with the whole heart, to wait patiently for the fulfilment of his gracious promises, to expect him to take vengeance upon their enemies national or personal, to rest assured that he would punish the wicked severely. Though in the main the Israelite expected Jahveh to pour out these mercies upon himself, the experiences of the various poets are life-experiences which are common to the human race. In that supreme fact is the source of the mighty influence which the Psalter has always exercised and will continue to exercise upon Christian peoples.

CHAPTER VIII

JOB, THE WISDOM LITERATURE, AND DANIEL

The Problem of Suffering and Job. Religious and Practical Wisdom. The Proverbs. Koheleth, or the Reflections of a weary spirit. Daniel, and the beginning of Apocalyptic Literature.

TWO great events in Hebrew history aroused a questioning spirit in more thoughtful minds with regard to the old doctrine of Jahveh's system of rewards and punishments as applying to this world alone. The first was the death of the righteous king Josiah at Megiddo in 608 B.C., the second was the prevailingly miserable state after the return from the Exile, in which the righteous were to be found. During the Exile the Second Isaiah had given his solution of the problem of the suffering of the righteous to serve and bless the unrighteous. But he had influenced few of his nation till Jesus

was born and understood the truth of his message, which profoundly moved his pure spirit. Old beliefs die hard even amid miseries which give them rude shocks.

Somewhere about 400-350 B.C. a poet of marvellous genius attacked the popular orthodoxy and put forth his solution of the problem of the suffering of the righteous. Using an old tradition or legend of a certain righteous man named Job (Ezekiel xiv. 14, 20), who though sorely tried remained patient under his tribulation, he composed a poem unique in religious literature. Kuenen would date it soon after the death of Josiah, a suitable time if the thought of the poem itself would accord with it. The book of Job never treats of the conflict with idol-worship, which would seem to have been a thing of the past, though Job does assert that he repressed a momentary temptation to adore the sun and moon (xxxi. 26-28). In the Prologue the introduction of 'the Satan' amongst the angels of Jahveh demands a date succeeding the Exile. But whenever the poem was written, its problem is the same: it is simply this, why should the good suffer material evil, while the wicked enjoy long life and prosperity?

The Prologue and Epilogue are both necessary to the understanding of the poem. In plain and nervous prose they set forth the problem to be solved and the consequences of its solution. In its course there are direct allusions to the Epilogue (v. 26; xi. 15-20; xix. 25-27), which clearly point to the fact that the poet had it in view during the composition of his poem. The story is soon told in its artless pathos (i., ii.). In the land of Uz lived a truly pious and prosperous man named Job, who had seven sons and three daughters. On a certain day the angels came into Jahveh's presence to report their doings. With them came 'the Satan' ='Adversary' whose task was to test the lives of men for Jahveh. Asked if he had seen the piety of Job the Satan answered that Job was only pious because it paid him to be so. He was permitted to bring misfortune upon the patriarch in the loss of his wealth and his family; but his effort was vain.

Next he smote him with a terrible disease, perhaps elephantiasis. Under this aggravation Job's wife bade him 'curse God and die.' But he rebuked her and still 'sinned not with his mouth.' From this point the

Satan disappears. As Job sat on the refuse-heap, three wise men, his friends, came to comfort him, namely Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. At first they sat silent seven days and seven nights in truest sympathy. Then followed their colloquies with him, in which they maintained the orthodox position of sin as the only cause of physical suffering, while he obstinately maintained his integrity and dared to arraign God's government of the world of men. When he had confuted their stale arguments Jahveh appeared in a whirlwind (xxxviii.-xlii.). The actual vision of God rather than his answer reduced Job to submission; whereupon his children were restored to him, his possessions doubled and one hundred and forty years added to his life. Accepting Dr. Peake's rearrangement of some of the later chapters (*Century Bible, Job*) it will be needful to examine the arguments.

After suffering long in silence, Job's intense agony burst forth into speech (iii.). He cursed not only the day of his birth, but the actual moment of his conception. Then he asked why he did not die when the joyous cry was heard, 'A man child is born.' Then

at least he would have entered the painless realm of Sheôl, of the tranquillity of which he gives a picture of rare beauty:—

> There the wicked cease from raging;
> And there the weary be at rest.
> There the prisoners are at ease together;
> They hear not the voice of the taskmaster.
> The small and the great are there;
> And the slave is free from his master.

Truly his anguish must have been great, when he longed so passionately for death, though the grave offered him no hope of immortality or of looking upon Jahveh's face. In Sheôl there was no possibility of reward for righteousness, neither was there any punishment for sin. But there at least was eternal rest faintly if at all stirred by the movements of consciousness, far alike from Jahveh's presence and the busy life of men.

Job's friends were shocked by his cursing of the day of his birth, not realizing the poignance of his anguish. They believed him to have been righteous hitherto, but were convinced that some great sin must have caused his present calamity. Eliphaz the eldest first took up in magnificent language the old threadbare commonplaces (iv., v.). He had had a vision of a spirit

revealing to him God's perfect righteousness, before whom not even his angels were pure. He punished the unrighteous by material affliction to compel him to abandon his unrighteousness. So Eliphaz proceeded without bringing any comfort to the sufferer, and ending with a promise of restitution to Job upon his repentance. Were he in Job's case he would seek God, who was mightier than man; whereupon he would find deliverance from his tribulation and

> Come to his grave in a full old age,
> Like as a shock of corn cometh in its season.

Thus the author paints a lovely picture of the peaceful death of the righteous, while he puts into the mouth of Eliphaz an unconscious prediction of what was to happen to Job as portrayed in the Epilogue.

Reasonably irritated because his friend's words did not give him what he sought with his whole heart, an explanation of his suffering which would not destroy his faith in God's righteousness, Job replied (vi., vii.) somewhat scornfully acknowledging the truth of the truisms thrust upon him. He confessed God's almighty power, to which he traced his troubles. He complained that

his would-be comforters could not understand the severity of his provocation which issued in fierce words. His friends were like streams in the wilderness, which gave no water when drought fell upon the caravans seeking them to quench their thirst. He could not even hope for speedy death or the dull peace of Sheôl, from which none returned to the joys of home.

Even his sleep was vexed with hideous dreams, so that he loathed his life and prayed God to let him alone whose 'days were but as an handbreadth.' Remembering the words of Psalm viii. he parodied them with biting force. He asked why God should visit man and yet heap on him cruel torments, why God did not pardon his sin, if he had committed any, instead of afflicting him. Yet even at this point his earlier thought of God's love for him in former days did not leave him. When he had vanished into Sheôl, he imagined God's love as returning to him, when it would be too late. He would be no longer on earth to receive blessings from the Most High, who would 'seek diligently for him, but he would be no more.' During the earlier part of the poem this thought recurs occasionally. But as the

force of his agony swept him along, Job moved further and further away from his old belief in the eternal righteousness of God.

Moved by Job's impiety, as he conceived it, Bildad the gentlest of the three friends, set about to answer him (viii.). He quietly rebuked his friend for his wild and stormy words. He could not admit that God could be unrighteous: even if Job's children had sinned and been punished, if Job himself would turn to God, he would be blessed with greater prosperity than before. Then he unfolded his pedlar's stock of wise saws of the ancients, not realizing how inapplicable they were to his friend's case. All of them were designed to prove just what Job denied, that the wicked always suffered the just punishment of God. On the other hand the 'blameless man' would be restored to God's favour: Job's mouth would yet be 'filled with laughter,' his enemies would be put to shame before him, and 'the tents of the wicked be no more.'

The last words present the kernel of all Bildad's contributions to the discussion, in which he supported himself by the sayings of ancient sages, which were ill-calculated to comfort the tortured sufferer. They implied

that some sin of his had caused his deep misery, which was just what he denied. Proverbial wisdom however pungent was by no means adapted to soothe him in his adversity. It was the manifest injustice of God's action as explained by the old orthodoxy, which was so appalling to Job. He was conscious of his own blamelessness; nor would he suffer the suggestions of his friends to filch away from him that conviction.

No wonder, then, his reply was not a little impatient (ix., x.). He acknowledged that he knew God's wisdom and might as well as his friends. He complained that he could not longer find him, though he was close to him, to plead his cause before him. Nay, even if he found him, he could not hope to prove his righteousness in the face of God, who would overwhelm him with the splendour of his omnipotence. By that he would be compelled to confess sins, which he had not committed. God destroyed alike 'the blameless and the wicked'; how then could he be perfectly righteous, who condemned one who had done no wrong? God was not a man to be answered with human arguments; nor was there anyone who could act as an arbitrator between the two.

Job then turned to express his weariness of life, asking God why he had taken so much trouble to fashion him, if he had all the time designed to break him in pieces? Why, indeed, had he permitted him to be born, why could he not suffer him to die at once, or at least to enjoy a brief respite from his misery? He complained:—

> Are not my days few? Cease then,
> And let me alone, that I may take comfort a little,
> Before I go whence I shall not return,
> To the land of darkness and desolate gloom;
> A land of thick darkness, as darkness itself,
> Of desolate gloom without any order,
> And where the light is darkness.

Job's days on earth must indeed have been hopeless, when he could long for a darkness so unspeakably desolate. On earth God had left him save to torment him; in Sheôl he would neither know God nor be tortured by him. From that gloomy realm there was no return in his view and that of his author to life on earth or in heaven.

Job's outburst with its blasphemy kindled the wrath of the youngest of them, Zophar, who next took up the word (xi.). His fierce nature reveals itself in the sternness of his rebuke. But though he could reprove Job,

he had nothing to add to the discussion: he only insisted upon the wisdom and might of God which Job had never denied, bidding Job repent and be pardoned. A harangue so unfeeling moved his friend to plainer speech, seasoned with lofty scorn of the worn-out arguments of the three (xii.-xiv.). He had deeply wounded their piety without inducing them to give any sound reason for his woeful plight. 'I am as wise as you,' he cried, who seem to think that 'wisdom will die with you.' He went on to show from the testimony of the whole creation to the wisdom and power of God as forcibly as any of his friends, while he accused them of attempting to curry favour with the Most High (xiii. 7-11).

Therefore he bade them listen silently to his indictment of God for unrighteousness. He would order his cause against God himself and he would wait for him, though he was confident he would slay him (xiii. 15). Yet even here Job swayed between his former conviction of the righteousness of God and his present sense of injustice. He prayed that God would not appear to him in his majesty of might, lest he should be unable to plead his cause before him. What

wrong had he done? Was it fair for the Almighty God to assail a mortal frail as a leaf? Man's days at best were 'few and full of trouble'; why could not God leave him in peace? Then he imagined a possibility that God would hide him in Sheôl, until his wrath was over, and recall him to earth when his love had returned (xiv. 13-15). This thought he put away from him as an impossible dream. If a man could die and live again, he would be content to wait in patience till God was quite reconciled to him. Thus for a moment the memory of his former intimate relations with God softened his heart: the next moment the thought was gone, and he came back to his conviction of the injustice of God and the impossibility of any return from that grim underworld whither all were bound.

Thus ends the first series of Job's colloquies with his friends. Neither side could seize the position of the other: he could not realize how blasphemous they thought him to be, they could not understand how his utterances were stirred by his bitter pain and the consciousness of his own integrity. Eliphaz opened the second series with an eloquent

oration describing the calamities of the wicked (xv.). He sharply rebuked Job's self-assertion, which would destroy all reverence for God, and assumed that he was the 'primeval man,' who was by God's side during the creation, and thus knew 'all the counsel of God.' Were not his friends as wise as he, was not Eliphaz older than Job's father? But when the Temanite unfolded his argument, it was nothing more than a series of nobly expressed assertions of the terrible calamities of the wicked. He did not draw his pictures from Job's actual suffering, but left him to draw the inevitable inference.

The patriarch's reply was passionate and contemptuous (xvi., xvii.). He had had enough of the platitudes of such 'miserable comforters,' to whom he too if they needed it could give lip-consolation. Righteous though he was, God pursued him with pitiless hostility. Could he be just in this? Would that his blood might remain on earth to cry out for vindication. Yet even then the sufferer felt that his Vindicator was in heaven (xvi. 18, 19), who would right him after his death, so that he would not need to seek the aid of his friends who scorned him.

He called upon God to be his surety to himself, when he had passed into the dark repose of the underworld.

In gentler but no less firm tones Bildad replied to the anguished complaint of his friend (xviii.). He reproached him for scorning those who wished him well. Could he hope to change God's order in the universe by his impious words, by which the light of the wicked would inevitably be put out? Job answered both with a complaint and an appeal to his friends (xix.), who plainly thought that he was guilty of some hideous crime. He was a contempt to his wife, even his slaves scorned him. He would rest no more upon the comfort of man; his Vindicator was in heaven, who would right him at the last, so that once again he might live on earth in communion with God (xix. 24-27).

In these words Job clearly looked forward to an earthly restoration of his lost happiness. Dr. Peake in spite of the Epilogue, towards which the poet has been working throughout the poem, imagines that Job would die before his vindication, that for a moment he would be permitted to look out of Sheôl, to see God face to face, to rejoice that he has been

righted at last, to return for ever into the darkness of the underworld. That is an acute and ably supported suggestion; but it hardly accords with the previous pictures of the impossibility of return from Sheôl painted by Job himself. In any case no hope of immortality is implied in this well-known passage (xix. 23-27); it is simply a momentary awakening of consciousness that is conveyed. The text is very corrupt, and the Christian misapplication of the words 'I know that my Vindicator liveth' has led many critics astray as to the character and meaning of Job. The sufferer looked forward to a vindication on earth, after which he would be able as a living man to renew that happy intimacy with God, which God himself had unrighteously broken.

To Job's piteous appeal and his final confidence that he would be righted Zophar had no reply to make but a fierce tirade describing the offences and speedy punishment of the wicked (xx.). Clearly he implied that Job was a sinner tortured for his sins, nor had he a word of sympathy for his anguished friend. Outside of pain himself, he could not enter the agony of one whose faith in the righteousness of God had vanished. Job

brushed aside Zophar's commonplaces and went on to describe with singular beauty and power the prosperity of the wicked (xxi.). Though they had scorned God and put him outside of their thought, they lived to a peaceful old age, they had many children, their herds increased and multiplied. What was the use of their children suffering if they did not suffer in person? God was all-wise; yet he acted in this irresponsible way, inflicting death upon saint and sinner, but permitting the wicked to live prosperously and to die in peace. Travellers could tell his friends that they had seen this in their journeys. The wicked man was safe in the day of calamity; nor was he requited for the evil which he had done. He was borne to the grave at the end of his days, where his body rested in the 'fragrant clods of the valley.' Well then might Job end his horror-stricken narrative of the fortune of the wicked with the words,

How then comfort ye me in vain,
Seeing in your answers there remaineth *only* falsehood?

So ends the second series of colloquies. In it Job has not abandoned his belief in the unrighteous government of the universe;

but the memory of former blessedness led him to the confident hope of his restoration on earth. His final question implying the impotence of his comforters was calculated to stir their wrath. Hence Eliphaz made the first direct charge against him (xxii.). After asserting that man's righteousness cannot afford advantage or pleasure to the Almighty, he proceeded to infer that Job had sinned, and specified some of the particular sins which he might have committed. Once more he urged Job to repent, when once more the light of prosperity would return to him, and by his righteousness he would be able to 'deliver *even* him that is not innocent.'

Thus by a kind of Sophoclean irony Eliphaz looked forward to what actually happened according to the Epilogue. Herein is a warning against so interpreting xix. 23-27 as to imply that Job's vindication would only take place after his death. Manifestly the author had the happy conclusion in his mind while he was writing his poem, to which he was continually working. It is therefore highly improbable that he would make Job predict for himself a momentary flash of consciousness, after he had

gone down into the desolate darkness of Sheôl. It may be noted that Eliphaz has hit upon a real fault in Job's character (xxii. 29) in his want of humility. He was undoubtedly righteous, he certainly was not humble.

The direct charge of personal guilt did not make Job less rebellious in his reply (xxiii., xxiv. 1-17, 22-25). His longing to find God and plead his cause with him had not abated, though his bitterness was less sharp. Once more he reiterated his assurance of his own righteousness, expressing his horror at the misery inflicted upon him by God, whose justice it compelled him to question. Why had God no fixed times for his judgments, that his worshippers might learn to understand them? In the world were to be seen on the one hand successful oppressors, on the other wretched outcasts who had to fight a grim battle with want, and a gang of murderers, adulterers, thieves, and the like. These God suffered to exist: one end awaited all alike. Nay, he would even raise up a sick tyrant, that he might pursue his wicked ways.

At this point there is great confusion in the arrangement of the text; many words being assigned to Job, which he would be

unlikely to have spoken (xxvi. 5-14), others which he could not have uttered (xxiv. 18-21; xxvii. 7-23). These last treat of the punishment of the wicked in a way which would have rendered the 'Speeches of Jahveh' unnecessary. Here Dr. Peake's arrangement is followed and his commentary should be consulted. To Bildad may be assigned xxv. 1-3 and xxvi. 5-14; to Job may be given xxvi. 1-4 and xxvii. 1-6, where the shortness of the speech may be set down to the omission of some exceptionally heretical doctrine. Zophar would then follow with xxiv. 18-21 and xxvii. 7-23, which in spite of some difficulties fit in with his line of argument. At this point the noble 'Ode to Wisdom' (xxviii.) has been inserted teaching that God alone can find it. It may be from the original poet, or it may be the insertion of a later poet and editor.

Accepting the foregoing arrangement of this part of the poem Bildad replied to Job by a striking description of the wisdom and power of God (xxv. 1-3; xxvi. 5-14), which includes the remarkable phrase, 'Sheôl is naked before him, and Abaddon hath no covering.' Routed from his position of the uniform punishment of the wicked he

took refuge in a panegyric of God's wisdom and might. Job answered with some sarcasm (xxvi. 1-4; xxvii. 1-6) pointing out how utterly he had failed to give him wise counsel and ending with an assertion of his integrity.

To him Zophar replied with a further description of the awful fate of the wicked (xxiv. 18-21; xxvii. 7-23), which added nothing to the matter at issue. Then the three comforters ceased to torment the patriarch, who poured forth his sorrows at the end as he had done at the beginning of the colloquies (xxix.-xxxi.). Recalling the days of his prosperity, when all reverenced him and he looked forward to a long and happy life, he contrasted them with his present misery when he was the theme of the scorn of thoughtless ballad-mongers. Yet, he complained, he had not sinned, but had been kind to all, hospitable to the stranger, done nothing of which he needed to be ashamed. He ended with a passionate appeal to God his oppressor, to suffer him to plead his cause before him and relieve him of the reproach which he himself had cast upon him.

At this point ought to come the 'Speeches

of Jahveh' (xxxviii., xxxix.; xl. 2, 8-14). But some later editor has added the 'Speeches of Elihu' (xxxii.-xxxvii.), which are written finely but with less sublimity than the rest of the poem. Their author may have been shocked that the original poet had dared to bring down Jahveh from heaven to answer for himself. He deemed himself able to answer Job without such impiety: yet he had nothing new to add to the arguments of the three friends save the idea of intercessory angels (xxxiii. 23-28), who would plead with Jahveh to heal a penitent sick man so that he would be restored to health. Elihu need not be followed in his repetitions of arguments more strongly urged; he is mentioned neither in Prologue nor Epilogue, and he added nothing to refute Job's original contention.

Turning to the appearance of Jahveh, it may be noted that he did not answer Job's prayer, but showed himself in all his terrors amid a whirlwind. He did not trouble to answer Job's accusations, but put him a series of cutting questions designed to show him his ignorance and impotence as compared with his own wisdom and might. If Job could not answer these how dare he impugn the

righteousness of God, whose ways were wonderful and past finding out? Just here have been added rhetorical patches describing the hippopotamus and the crocodile (xl. 15-22; xli.), which may have been from the original author to give supreme illustrations of Jahveh's wisdom and might, but which are unlike any other part of the book in their diffuseness of style. Job's answer is found in two passages which ought to be joined together (xl. 3-5; xlii. 2, 3, 5, 6), in which he humbles himself before Jahveh; he has seen God, that is enough for him. At this point follows the Epilogue with its happy ending, when by his intercession his three friends are saved from punishment for their presumption in attempting to defend God (xlii. 7-17).

The foregoing brief summary does scant justice to the sublime poem of Job: but it may serve to illustrate its main teaching. It was written to protest against the old doctrine of retribution, that Jahveh unfailingly punished with material evil the sinner, while he rewarded the righteous with long life and prosperity. Against this Job argues with consummate power, yet without hope of immortality. In the end Jahveh

answers him with the wonderful description of his wisdom and power. The abiding lesson is not unlike that of Psalm lxxiii. If God's wisdom is unsearchable, how dare man presume to argue with him, or condemn his ways? This truth is enforced with a variety and majesty of illustration unsurpassed by any work in religious literature. The obvious corollary is that man should trust implicitly in God, both where he can understand, and more intensely where God's ways are hidden from his perception. The author represents a growing scepticism with regard to the orthodox views of his time, which shows itself in another way in Koheleth or Ecclesiastes. The two points attained by the discussion are the truth that suffering does not of necessity imply the punishment of sin, that God's wisdom is inscrutable and demands whole-hearted trust from man.

The 'Wisdom Literature,' to which Job belongs, falls next under discussion. As early as the time of Jeremiah (xviii. 18), amongst the Hebrews was a class of students named 'the wise,' whose object was to study 'wisdom,' and to express the results of their labours in pithy epigrams. These are not so much *proverbs* as *aphorisms*, such as Bacon

uses in his 'Essays,' composed sometimes in antithetical couplets, sometimes in two parallel sentences containing the same or a similar thought. To this kind of writing belong the book of Proverbs, Koheleth, and many of the Psalms (e.g., xxxvii.; cxix.).

Before the Torah was completed, 'the wise' formulated terse directions of conduct and warnings against popular vices. Many of these are most ancient and are found in the earliest part of the book of Proverbs (e.g., xvii.). In its final form the book can hardly be dated earlier than 300 B.C. It consists of several collections most of them ascribed to Solomon himself, on no sounder ground than that the wise king is credited with a large number of proverbs. One is described as having been 'copied out by the men of Hezekiah' (xxv.-xxix.), which was added to what was believed to be the original collection of Solomon (x.-xxii. 1-16), which in its turn had an appendix of 'sayings of the wise' (xxii. 17-xxiv.), while several smaller collections were added to the end of the book. To these the latest editor prefixed a preface (i.-ix.) contrasting the beauty of Dame Wisdom (ix. 1-6) with the vanity of Madam Folly (ix. 13-18). In it wisdom is portrayed

as standing by God as his instrument of creation, as the teacher of mortal men leading them to 'riches and honour.' This conception was the origin of the *Logos-doctrine* of Philo, no less than of the thought embodied in the proem to the Fourth Gospel, as a careful comparison with both will show beyond a doubt.

Certain fundamental principles lie at the root of the book of Proverbs: it is absolutely monotheistic; the 'instruction of wisdom' is the 'fear of Jahveh' (xv. 33). By this wisdom, that is the leading of a God-fearing life, man found prosperity and escaped the early death of the wicked (i. 12; vii. 27; xv. 24). Sheôl and Abaddon are used as a synonym for death; nor is there any idea of immortality in the Proverbs. Jahveh is once said to exercise authority over Sheôl, a thought only found elsewhere in Job (xxvi. 6), which marks a higher stage of thought than is reached elsewhere in the Old Testament. But no theory can be built upon a single instance. All of the proverb-writers have no mercy on *fools*, that is both *simpletons* and *sinners* (cf. xiv. 3 with ix. 6). All commend marriage to one wife (xii. 4; xxxi. 10-31), while the virtuous wife receives

highest praise. Adultery and resorting to harlots are severely condemned (vii. 4-27); speedy death is said to be the end of such vices.

Lies are an abomination to Jahveh (xii. 22); idleness leads to ruin, while thrifty industry is a lofty virtue (vi. 6-11). Drunkenness is vigorously denounced (xxiii. 30-34); the ancient landmark is not to be removed (xxiii. 10-11), nor the land of orphans to be robbed from them. To follow out these and many similar moral truths in life is a sure token of wisdom, as to put them on one side is the certain mark of folly, such as is shown by the scorner who despises God himself (xix. 29). Deep sympathy is expressed to the poor (xix. 17), while wise chastening of children is warmly advised (xiii. 24; xix. 18, 13).

Mingled with the strongly ethical sayings are others which embody the hypocritical worldly wisdom learned from bitter experience. The king's wrath is to be avoided (xix. 12); one who dines with a ruler must be careful in his conduct (xxiii. 1-3); a bribe is recommended to a patron to secure his favour (xviii. 16). But the whole tenor of the book is not to be judged by prudential

maxims of this kind. Its ethical value is very great; it asserts that 'righteousness exalts a nation' (xiv. 34). It pleads for self-control (xv. 1, 17, 18), for the cultivation of cheerfulness (xv. 13, 15; xvii. 22), for kindness to domestic animals (xii. 10), for a willing submission to reproof when deserved (xiii. 18). Above all else it commends reverence and obedience to Jahveh (xvi. 3), while it condemns the proud with unsparing rigour (xvi. 5). It presents a very favourable view as a whole of the piety of *the wise* whose sayings it contains. Their main purpose was to teach the eternal truth that the only life offering any sure promise of happiness is one led righteously under the inspiration of faithful piety to God and man.

Next follows the strange book of 'Koheleth' usually called 'Ecclesiastes.' The meaning of the title is quite uncertain; it is a Hebrew feminine participle, though constructed with a masculine verb. It may mean *the great orator*, or simply the *disputant in an assembly*. In spite of being put forth under the name of Solomon, it had a struggle to find its way into the Canon. Both from its language and historical background it

cannot have been written before 250 B.C., while it seems better to date it during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes (175-164 B.C.). Its author assumed the name of Solomon to win a hearing for his work. Many critics imagine it to show numerous traces of the influence of Greek philosophy, notably of the doctrines of Stoicism blended with those of Epicurus. Such an inspiration must not be exaggerated, as it may well have come from the intellectual atmosphere in which the author lived. He bases most of his aphorisms upon experience, and where his ideas have any kinship with Greek thought, it is just in their commonplace truth that the resemblance consists. Koheleth was no disciple of any philosophic school, nor indeed does he seem to have practised consecutive thinking, while the background of his thought is distinctly Hebrew. Indeed his book may fitly be called the 'promiscuous reflections of a weary spirit.'

Koheleth's inconsistencies are palpable to the least careful reader, while his pessimism sounds like the solemn note of a muffled peal. Attempts have been made to reduce his book to consistency by omitting sundry passages as pious glosses. That is always a

precarious method of explaining away difficulties; at the least it is a confession of weakness. The book seems to be a series of pungent sayings jotted down just as the thought passed through the writer's mind. Everywhere is heard the sorrowful burden, 'Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.' To the author the search after either wisdom or pleasure is a 'striving after wind' (i. 17; ii. 11). Nature and man move round in one weary cycle, and 'there is nothing new under the sun' (i. 9, 10). The wise and foolish at death alike sink down to be forgotten into Sheôl (ii. 12-16). God has set for everything a time, unalterable, inscrutable (iii. 1-15).

Therefore it is best to enjoy oneself moderately, to live true to the beloved wife (ii. 24, 25; iii. 12; ix. 7-9), though this too is vanity. No future hope remains after death; man and beast alike die and there is an end of them (iii. 17-22). Yet by a sudden change of thought it is urged that life is better than death because it has some consciousness (viii. 16-ix. 9), that wisdom is better than folly because it gives much strength (vii. 19), that righteousness is more profitable than its opposite (viii. 10-13).

Amongst other matters Koheleth insists upon the superiority of sorrow to joy, no less than upon the pursuit of the 'golden mean' though with no distinct reference to Greek thought. He advises his reader to be neither 'too righteous nor too wicked' (vii. 15-18), possibly with a scornful eye to a growing tendency to extreme ritual devotion. He never doubts the existence of God, but regards him as too far off to care greatly for man (v. 2). So he utters his thoughts, just as they occur to him, caring not a whit if they be found self-contradictory. Yet now and then flashes of phosphorescent light dart across the dark waters. Occasionally he is haunted by the thought of God's judgment of wickedness, if a few passages and the note rounding off his work be really his (ii. 24, 26; xi. 9; xii. 14). More than once he ascribes to the gift of God the cheerful enjoyment of material pleasures (iii. 13; ii. 24), which he regards as not entirely without value (ix. 7-10). Indeed his main conclusion is to advise a young man to seek pleasures in his youth while he is able to enjoy them, before death falls upon him (xi. 9-xii. 8). Here his thoughts end with the words of their beginning, 'Vanity of vanities,

all is vanity,' which many critics believe to be the end of his work.

Of the following note to the whole book, verses 9-12 may well be from his pen; they are written in his style and form a not unnatural end. Verses 13, 14 are more doubtful, since they seem to contradict the hopelessness of his pessimism. But do they really contradict his previous sayings? It is quite possible, that after showing the vanity of all his studies and pursuits he could still recommend his reader to 'fear God and keep his commandments,' thus doing 'the whole duty of man.' That at least was the best thing to do even under the most depressing daily experience, while God's judgments could still be felt on earth. He was a Jew who would not find it easy to sunder himself entirely from the conceptions in which he had been reared. His theism though of the palest cast is real enough to keep him true to the traditions of his race. Born of the oppressive surroundings of his age his book reflects the thoughts stirred by them with the varying patterns of a kaleidoscope, though with every turn the word *vanity* is to be read. Koheleth represents a cycle of opinions in part peculiar to himself in the Old Testament.

Hence it is of great interest as the work of a pessimistic thinker, which remains a memorial of terrible times and their effect upon a thoughtful observer.

The same period saw the issue of an important work which had a lasting effect upon Hebrew thought. Under the priestly dispensation the prophet was heard no longer; only the Psalmist sang to cheer the failing heart of Israel. Prophecy assumed a new form in the shape of *Apocalypses* or *revelations* of the future under the mask of allegory. Failing in his second attempt upon Egypt Antiochus Epiphanes (169 B.C.) resolved to enforce Hellenic religion upon all his subjects. In this he met with strongest opposition from the bulk of the Jewish nation. Consequently he forbade their worship, and during December, 168 B.C., set up 'the abomination of desolation,' or a small pagan altar upon the great altar of sacrifice in the Temple at Jerusalem. After three years under the Maccabees Jerusalem was recovered, the Temple cleansed and rededicated, and the Feast of Dedication established.

During those dark days persecution and massacre ruled in the land, so that the heart of the faithful amongst the people was sore

distressed and like to sink into utter despair. The faithless were ready enough to yield to Greek influence with its laxity and splendour; only the little band under the family of Mattathias carried war into the ranks of the enemy. At this point the book of Daniel made its appearance, and was set forth under the name of an ancient worthy (Ezekiel xxviii. 3). Though in its present form it is written both in Aramaean and Hebrew, it is undoubtedly the work of one author. The second part consisting wholly of apocalyptic visions is intimately bound up with a collection of moral tales in the first (cf. ii. with vii.). No solution of the problem of the two languages will be attempted, which at best would be conjectural. It is enough for the present purpose to recognize that the book is one and from one and the same author.

The first story tells how Daniel and his three companions, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, were captive Israelites given into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar's chief of the eunuchs to feed on morsels from the king's table. Daniel realizing that by eating such food he would violate the Torah, induced his keeper to feed him and his companions upon vegetable diet, on which they prospered alike

in outward appearance and inward wisdom (i.). By this tale the author wished to teach his people the importance of rigorous care in food, lest they might be defiled by eating blood or part of meat offered to idols. That was a sore temptation to the Jews during that woeful period: so the faithfulness of Daniel and his friends was a living example to the people.

The next story has an allegorical bearing (ii.). It exalts the glory of Daniel, who by God's aid is able to surpass all the magicians of Nebuchadnezzar by telling him both his dream and its meaning. The dream gives a survey of the succession of world-empires under the form of an image made of various metals. The golden head was the Babylonian, the silver breast and arms the Median, the brass belly and thighs the Persian, the iron legs the Greek, the toes part of iron and part of clay, the divided realm under Alexander's successors. The stone cut without hands was the Messianic kingdom expected by all faithful Jews, which would finally take the place of all other empires. Thus the author encouraged his people to wait in patience for the full revelation of the power of God on earth.

The next story (iii.) tells how Nebuchadnezzar set up a great image in the plain of Dura, which he commanded his subjects to worship to the sound of many musical instruments. This Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to do, and were cast into a burning fiery furnace. Here they were found to be unharmed and with them an angel 'like a son of the gods.' Thus the author taught his people upon no consideration to worship any of the Greek gods, as Antiochus had commanded them to do. This story is followed by another (iv.), which again represents the king as dreaming a dream which Daniel alone could interpret, portending the king's seven years' madness. This was fulfilled, and little more is heard of Nebuchadnezzar save his recovery and repentance. Thus is symbolized the certain downfall of the oppressor of their own day, to cheer the people in their resistance to his tyranny.

Next comes the popular story, in great part legendary, of Belshazzar's feast, and the profanation of the holy vessels of the Temple (v.). A hand appeared on the wall writing words which Daniel alone could interpret into the prediction of the immediate sack

of Babylon, as the author says by 'Darius the Mede,' though the real captor was Cyrus the Persian. Daniel had scarcely spoken, when the city was taken and Belshazzar slain. Here again the author encouraged his people by the picture of the fall of a godless tyrant. It may be noted that Belshazzar never was king of Babylon, while the Median empire is misplaced both in this and the succeeding chapter.

Again the mighty men of the new kingdom conspired against Daniel to ruin him. They induced Darius to forbid any request to be made to god or man, to any save himself for thirty days, a manifest invention of the author (vi.). Daniel was found praying to his God towards Jerusalem. Much against the king's wishes he was cast into a den of lions. He escaped unhurt while his enemies were cast into the den and consumed before they reached the bottom. Thus the author wished to teach his people under all circumstances to pray to Israel's God alone. At this point follow Daniel's visions, which are all of the nature of apocalyptic prediction. In the first (vii.) he saw four beasts symbolizing the Babylonian, Median, Persian, and Greek empires. The last had ten horns

meaning the ten successors of Alexander, of which a little horn, Antiochus Epiphanes, boasted much destroying three and making them tributary. During his rule he would pollute the Temple for three and a half years, after which he would perish. Then appeared God like an 'Ancient of Days,' with the heavenly host and an angel 'like a son of man,' to set up the Messianic kingdom, which was to rule over all nations for ever. Here again the author by what he saw taking place in his own time, and by looking forward to the future sought to comfort his people in their sore stress. He taught them to hope for the coming days, when God would exert his almighty power to punish the blasphemer, to reward the faithful with an everlasting kingdom.

Next Daniel saw a ram with two horns, one larger than the other (viii.), which symbolized the Medo-Persian empire. A he-goat, by which Alexander was meant, attacked and destroyed him, from whose horns a little horn arose and grew great. This was Antiochus Epiphanes, 'a king of fierce countenance and understanding dark sentences,' who would destroy 'the mighty ones and the holy people.' Finally God

would break his power. Here according to the author an angel had charge of each of the kingdoms, of whom Michael was patron of the Jews (x. 12, 13). Here too is a vision of encouragement to the Jews in the certain fall of their tyrant.

Once more while Daniel is meditating over the prediction of Jeremiah (xxv. 11; xxix. 10) that Israel would 'serve the king of Babylon *seventy years*,' he saw that it remained unfulfilled. Hence it was revealed to him that the period meant *seventy weeks* of years (ix., x.), to be divided into seven weeks till the time of Joshua the priest, into sixty-two weeks or four hundred and thirty-four years wherein the city would be rebuilt. The final week of seven years would see the persecution and deliverance of the Jews (ix. 1, 20-27). By his next vision Daniel learned the fate of the empires of earth (xi.), and of Antiochus Epiphanes, whose oppressive reign is described in minute detail. Finally Michael would stand up (xii.) to deliver Israel from its time of trouble: whereupon all those whose names were written in the book of life would form part of the Messianic kingdom, while many dead would rise, the good to form part of the kingdom, the wicked to 'shame and everlasting contempt' (xii. 2, 3). Thus here is found the first explicit pronouncement of a belief in personal immortality such as was making its way amongst one great section of the Jewish people.

Even in the foregoing brief abstract of the book of Daniel its priceless worth to the persecuted faithful ones may be clearly seen. Its author was a noble-minded Jew, who sought to keep others faithful to the prohibited worship of God. Using noted names of Hebrew tradition, first by a series of moral tales illustrating the fidelity of himself and his friends, secondly by a series of apocalyptic visions revealing the doom of the oppressor, he uttered his message of courage and cheer when it was most needed. The book may have a traditional background; but its numerous historical errors and the language of a great part of it preclude any other date than that of the last four or five years of the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes.

Relying upon traditions not always well founded he has produced a book of lasting value under the form of moral tales and apocalyptic visions. His symbolism need not concern the modern mind greatly; but

his conviction of the final overthrow of evil by God is of supreme importance. His doctrine of immortality is little spiritual, since it was to take place on this earth and in mortal bodies in opposition to the Pauline teaching (1 Corinthians xv.). But it is valuable as showing one form in which that thought presented itself to the Jewish mind. His work exercised enormous influence over his people during their bitter anguish. Even so he has written truths which will endure to help all desolate souls, when stripped of the imagery of their period and seen in the full lustre of their universality.

EPILOGUE

THE present survey of Hebrew Religion and Ethics has attained certain definite conclusions, which are more than provisional, and seem likely to stand secure. Revelation has been shown to be no completed process, but a gradual development along the centuries. From crude beginnings Hebrew thought soared slowly to lofty heights in the conception of man's relation to God and to his neighbour. First Jahveh was a family or tribal, then a national God, whose power was limited to his own land where his care was bestowed upon his own people alone. By the teaching of the prophets his universality was made clear, though to the end he was believed to watch over his chosen people with especial providence. The events of history conspired to exalt the power of the priest, until the Torah became supreme, and Israel was changed into the 'people of a book.' Then there was no longer room for

prophets like those of the golden age of prophecy, and the mass of the people looked forward eagerly to the coming of a Messiah or deliverer, who with combined secular and sacred attributes would reign in glory over the Hebrew nation. The steps of this development are to be found in the Old Testament hewn out by Moses, the prophets, the psalmists, and the lawgivers. The conception of Jahveh was more or less spiritual from the beginning, since he was worshipped by no image. But it broadened and deepened, until the crude anthropomorphic ideas of the earliest ages passed away to appear no more.

Corresponding to this growth in the conception of the nature and being of God was a similar progress in ethical ideals. To this the great prophets contributed in no small measure, who realized that Jahveh was a righteous God, who could only be truly served by righteousness of life and character. These profound thinkers prepared the way for the coming of Jesus, who was to be the last and greatest of their order, a prophet not to Israel alone, but the founder of a universal religion, best fitted to the needs of mankind. Hence arises the importance of

the study of the Old Testament without preconceptions or prejudices, but with the same freedom as would be applied to the study of any other ancient book.

Thus an attempt has been made wholly inadequate, but with a serious purpose to trace the growth of religious thought amongst the Israelites from century to century, marking the points attained at every stage. From the dim conception of unconscious life in Sheôl to the crude form of immortality taught in Daniel the development has been followed, the varying standards in ethics of each generation have been set forth. Thus God's method of gradually revealing himself through man to man has been seen in the story of one ancient race. It has nowhere been suggested that any such revelation has been confined to the Hebrews: but nowhere outside of the Old Testament can it be traced so faithfully or with so much advantage to the student.

This brief study is left to go on its way in the hope that others will be led to read and understand the noble religious library of the Hebrew race. In this way the fuller light of the New Testament will shine with greater radiance, and the true message of Jesus to

the world be seen with clearer perception and in its deep significance. At the same time it must be borne in mind that the book of revelation is not yet closed, nor will ever be closed so long as truths remain to be discovered and thinking minds are left to discover them. The truths secured in the past abide ; what will be in the future is entirely unknown. But whatever may come to pass it is still certain that

> The Lord hath yet more light and truth
> To break forth from his word.

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The above Bibliography is by no means exhaustive. It has suggested in the General List many works useful to the advanced student, while indicating some for the more general inquirer.

INDEX

N.B.—The compiler on account of space has not been able to make this Index as complete as would have been desirable; nor has he been able to add a list of references already prepared.