BIBLICAL AND LITERARY ESSAYS

BY THE LATE

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PREFACE

THE loss sustained by Biblical Scholarship through the death of Professor Andrew Bruce Davidson in the opening month of this year has been acknowledged and lamented in every quarter of the globe. Generous tributes have been paid to his memory by the best-known scholars of all the churches; and the hope has been earnestly expressed that no time would be lost in giving to the world some of the treasures which this gifted but modest teacher had, during life, unveiled only to his students.

Dr. Davidson's long-promised work on Old Testament Theology will certainly be published as soon as possible, and will be followed by another on Old

Testament Prophecy, and, in all probability, also by a commentary on Isaiah. But books like these appeal only to a comparatively limited number of professional scholars. It is fortunate, therefore, that it has been found possible to publish at once a volume of essays likely to interest a much wider circle of readers.

Of the thirteen essays now published eight see the light for the first time. The remaining five, viz. "The Wisdom of the Hebrews," "Hosea," "Amos," "Modern Religion and Old Testament Immortality," and "The Uses of the Old Testament for Edification" have already appeared in *The Expositor*, a magazine to which Dr. Davidson was, during the long period from 1878 to 1900, a frequent contributor. In the circumstances indicated, however, the range of selection from his numerous articles in *The Expositor* was considerably restricted; for to have taken any of those

dealing with Old Testament theology, or with prophecy in general, or with the theology of Isaiah in particular, would have been to use prematurely some of the material that may be required for the works just mentioned.

This volume should have a special interest for the many ingenious persons who delight to trace in an author's writings the development of his mind, for it opens with the inaugural lecture with which, in October, 1863, Professor Davidson began his life-long career in New College, and it closes with the last introductory lecture which he delivered to the students of that College in October, 1899. No attempt, however, has been made to arrange the other essays in chronological order. This is due to the fact that there is no date on any of the manuscripts, a fact that is greatly to be regretted. Hence the date of the several essays can only be inferred from internal

indications, such as the incidental allusions that are occasionally made to passing events, or the particular scholars to whose opinions special prominence is given. Such data, however, are manifestly too vague to warrant very definite conclusions. Consequently no inference as to the relative time of their composition is to be drawn from the order in which the essays are printed, except, as has been stated, in the case of the first and the last.

Their selection was, to a large extent, determined by the marked variety of their subjects and by the consequent variety of treatment. The titles are so definite as to render a separate description of each essay unnecessary. Suffice it to say that in this single volume the reader will be able to see how this great teacher was accustomed to deal with the Wisdom-literature of the Hebrews, with individual books of prophecy, and with Messianic psalms. The

non-Biblical essays, those on Mohammed and Islam, and on Arabic poetry, based as they are on first-hand knowledge of these wide and difficult themes, are yet written in so popular a style as to be thoroughly intelligible and interesting to persons wholly ignorant of Arabic.

This variety of subject will enable the attentive reader to understand the secret of Dr. Davidson's power as a Professor. He was not only a specially gifted linguist, as his *Hebrew Grammar*, now in its seventeenth edition, and his more recently published *Hebrew Syntax*, as well as his commentaries on several books of the Bible conclusively prove. This quality of refined scholarship is signally illustrated in the essay on "The English Bible and its Revision." That essay makes it perfectly clear that he foresaw and indeed foretold, even before its publication, the fate that has already overtaken the Revised Version. Had

the principles which he enunciates in this essay been more fully carried out by the New Testament Company of Revisers, the faults so apparent in the Revised Version of the New Testament would have been avoided; and, in that case, the Revised Version of the Old Testament would very probably have won for itself the public recognition which that part of the Revisers' work certainly deserves.

To the accuracy and taste of a finished linguist, Professor Davidson added the deep insight of a philosophic thinker and the spiritual intensity of a large-hearted Christian. These characteristics are particularly marked in such essays as the first and the twelfth of the present volume. But he had also another gift, rarely found in combination with the faculty of abstract thinking. He had a poet's eye and a poet's power of expression, as will be acknowledged by any one who reads with care his brief survey

of Arabic poetry. It was the union of these gifts that gave him the unique influence he wielded for well-nigh forty years over the students who came under the spell of his personality at the very time when their minds were most impressible and plastic.

May the thoughts which proved so quick and powerful when spoken exert a like effect when read. Then the judgment of those who gratefully cherish the memory of their honoured teacher will be confirmed by a long succession of interested readers.

J. A. PATERSON.

NEW COLLEGE, EDINBURGH,
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BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

BIBLICAL Theology is a complex expression and idea—first Theology, then Biblical. Theology is the science of religion. Religion may be said to be the consciousness of God in the human soul, or the consciousness in the human soul of standing in a certain relation to God. Now this religious or God-ward side of human nature is an essential aspect of it. Religiousness is as much native to man as reason. You do not implant reason in him by education, but you unfold it; you do not implant the religious faculty by revelation or any other means: you merely evoke and educate it. The fall has not abolished it any more than any other element of human nature: it has merely impaired it. And there is no side of human nature so utterly ruined but that truth may naturally be reached on that side.

These three things must be said of man's nature in general, and of his religious nature as well, though perhaps not as much as of his rational nature:— First: the soul has a bent in the direction of truth; it loves it, longs for it, strives after it, is straitened till it find it. Second: it loves and seeks truth truly. Its instinct that there is truth, and that it may be reached, is a true instinct and no delusion; and, moreover, its mode of seeking, its mechanical or organic operations in the search, are true and not false. In other words, this inborn presupposition of the soul

that there is truth, and that it can be attained, is a true supposition; and its spontaneous action and manner of working in the pursuit of truth is the true manner, and will lead it to truth. Third: the soul, having an instinctive desire for truth, and an instinctively true mode of seeking to reach it, has an instinctive feeling of possessing it. Truth is its own highest evidence. These are general principles true of men and truth in the gross; but of course neither true of all men nor of all truth—true of one side of human nature as well as of another, though perhaps not equally true of all sides of human nature.

Perhaps the evolution of the religious side is something like this. First, there is in the mind a certain vague unresolved feeling and consciousness of God; second, this resolves itself and breaks up into separate individual sentiments, passing over into ideas, opinions, convictions, beliefs. This is the sphere of Religion. Third, this mass of individually distinct beliefs is again bound, by passing some principle through them, into a new unity. And this is Theology. The principle of order that unites the individual beliefs together gives character and name to the Theology. Thus, we speak of a natural theology, when nature is the source of the religious convictions, and furnishes the scientific principle that connects them. And so of a Biblical Theology, when the Bible supplies the religious elements, and is the principle that unites them together. The religious faculty, like the reasoning, may be called into operation and supplied with materials in many ways: by external nature, by the example and teaching of parents or fellows, by the workings of itself, by the Bible, or by all. That which awakes it into life, also supplies it with nourishment—with sentiments and with truths. When it is awak-

ened or supplied with its contents immediately by the Bible, or immediately through those who derive from the Bible, the religion is called a Biblical religion; and when the individual truths, thus gathered from the Bible, are elevated to an organic unity, the connecting principle of which is the Bible—not any particular truth in the Bible, such as justification by faith alone, or the doctrine of predestination, or that of complete human depravity—but the Bible itself, i.e., the conception, "the Bible," we name it Biblical Theology. Biblical Theology is the scientific presentation of the religion contained in the Bible, having the Bible for its scientific principle—in a word, Biblical Theology is the religion of the Bible presented Biblically.

What, then, is "Biblical," in its contents and in its conception? It has been supposed that the writers of the Old Testament possessed themselves, and imparted to favourite disciples, an esoteric faith, deeper and more Catholic than that which they gave to the mass of their countrymen in writing. With that, even if true, we do not meddle. No traces of such a thing appear in Scripture. This esoteric faith, be it a thing of fancy or not, is not Biblical. As little have we to attend to external traditions, said to be concurrent and to some extent coincident with the written Scriptures, and for which is claimed the power of aiding, and to some extent controlling, the interpretation of these. Such traditions may exist, and may be useful; but, again, they are not Biblical.

In like manner we exclude the Old Testament Apocrypha. It is not Biblical. It has no historic place in the Jewish Canon. Certainly in these days it has a tremendous interest. It comes to us as the only utterances out of that dark night which came down

upon the Jewish Church when it slept for four hundred years, and awoke, and arose, and found itself Christian. Even the dreams of such a time, the troubled moanings of such a weary trance, we may turn aside to look upon with a fearful interest. And, when on that uneasy swoon the Lord of Life enters, saying, "She is not dead, but sleepeth," and at His word the rosy current begins to circle in the lip and flush the cheek, it will enhance the miracle, that we knew well the pale emaciated form before. But these years were a time of deep and inward development. When the Jewish Church sealed her Canon, it was a time of impatience and sharp remonstrance with the Most High; the Church deemed she had not got her due from heaven. "Your words have been stout against Me, saith the Lord; yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against Thee?" and Malachi ends with dim words of an impending curse. Four hundred years of outer fighting and inner fear had altered this: "I have waited for Thy salvation. Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to Thy word." There was now both a submission to, and a receptivity for, the Divine.

In God's procedure there come no sudden starts. Imperfection orbs slowly into perfection. Inner circles widen silently into outer. Both within Palestine and in the Greek-speaking countries about, there were swellings of thought and need rising up from the deeps of men's hearts, and toiling inward towards the centre where Christ should be born. Judaism came laden with its positive hope; the Gentiles came bearing their consciousness of emptiness. The New Testament has affinities both of thought and expression with the Palestinian exegesis on the one side, and the Alexandrian on the other. This is not to be denied, rather

to be expected. It is but the premonitory heavings, as it comes to the surface, of "the mystery that has been hid from ages and from generations, but is now made manifest to the saints." And in these days, when our ears are vexed with "origins" and "antecedents" of Christianity, and we are beckoned into this cloudy region, and bidden behold Christianity gathering itself into life within it, the creature of the moral and social forces of the time, we cannot refuse to enter and to examine, that we may know how to distinguish between the preparation for a manifestation of God, and that manifestation itself; and if we would be fit to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, all this region must be explored to the foundation, and the names of the Apocrypha and Neo-Platonism, of Philo and Josephus, become familiar as household words.

"Biblical," then, in *extent* is confined within the limits of our Protestant Canon, so far as the Old Testament is concerned. What, now, is "Biblical" in *conception*? Is the Old Testament a finality? Such is not the thought it cherishes of itself. It is continually overshooting itself, and reaching forth to what it cannot yet grasp. At its very birth the Jewish Church is conscious of a higher destiny than Judaism. "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blest." And though it be yet a child under tutors and governors, it yearns for the larger life, and is shaken by impulses that project it far into the future years. Indeed, at first it sometimes scarcely seems to realize its mission, and speaks harshly and somewhat mechanically, and grasps tenaciously at forms, and proscribes sternly other tendencies of thought; yet all this is but the reserve of minority, but the conserving of its strength and the formation of its

character, lest, by too early intercourse with a world which it has to subdue and fashion, it should be overborne, and slide insensibly into the common degradation. But it flings off these restrictions by and by, and becomes softened; and the idea of a humanity rises before it, and a God of humanity, and it chants hymns of a "mountain of the Lord to which all nations shall flow"; and the idea of a universal fatherhood and brotherhood seizes it, and Egypt shares in its love and Assyria in its God, and the day comes when "Israel shall be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, and the Lord of Hosts shall bless them, saying: Blessed be Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel Mine inheritance."

With such music on her lips the Old Testament Church expires, entering into night, full of dreams of the distant but approaching morn. And the New Testament Church emerges into day, conscious of a personal identity with the Old, and claims to have the same consciousness, but now higher and better informed. And it utters such words as these: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son." God has been speaking, and through all the ages. It is a historic process: to the fathers, bit by bit, and in many ways, and mediately by the prophets: to us, immediately by a Son, and in the fulness and finality of truth. "Ye search the Scriptures, and they are they which testify of Me." "And beginning at Moses and the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." Hints, at least, of Christ—projected shadows of Him—lie along the whole line of the Old Testament Scriptures. He, who is the fulness of the New, runs in an unbroken vein from end to end

of the Old. "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." "The promise which God made unto the fathers, He hath fulfilled unto the children in that He hath raised up Jesus." The law, the prophets, and the promise—He is not an element in them: He is the fulness and concentration of them all. "If ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise"—heirs in the sense of the promise. The theocratic life culminates, too, in the life of Christ. Thus, then, all the divine speech and energy, and guidance and consolation—in a word, the *grace*, the divine condescension and self-approach to man, from the first even until now, bursting up from the abyss of brightness in rays of light upon our horizon, drawing to it the eyes of the fathers, and their hearts—all are but vanward glories of the sun of righteousness fully risen. And all the longing and travailing in pain, and hope half realized, and upward struggling of the Church, are but prophetic of its fulness of life in Christianity.

Here, then, are materials for defining Biblical Theology. It is historical, reaching down through all the ages till Christ. It is genetic, i.e. progressive; its parts have not the connexion merely of successiveness, but form a development from less to more, through a series of ascending imperfect forms, each unfolding out of the other, up to the perfect form; and we have it all presented to us *in genesi*, in the very act of evolution. It is formed of two parallel lines—a gradual revealing of the fulness of God's face, till there shines out the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person; and a gradual comprehension of this by man and his transformation by it, till he is like God, seeing Him as He is.

Biblical Theology is the historical presentation of the realization of the theocracy, the kingdom of God on earth, the communion of God and man in and through the person of Christ, the God-man. That Christ was announced in many ways from of old, is one of the first lines of our theology; and this is now not denied anywhere, though the fact is very differently conceived — neither could it well be denied. For if Christ, as in some sense all admit, be the realization of all the religious strivings of the race, whether the ideal in them or the real out of them, the perfect flower of humanity, conceiving and speaking out, or say, embodying the clearest thoughts of God, is it not to be expected that there will be imperfect adumbrations of such a thing, that holy men who spake as they were moved—moved pantheistically or moved naturally—would be moved to speak, even if in muffled words, even if in tears of hope and cries of emptiness for Him? Humanity, surely, is prophetic of its own destiny. Nature cannot but be predictive of her own emancipation. Will not the whole creation, that groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now, moving through such nameless cycles of distress, have uttered many a time from the deeps her awful need and her sublime hope? Is she all unconscious of her goal, unable to know the divine germ which she has conceived, and is slowly nurturing into life? Render the Incarnation into such formulas as these, and should we not, even then, expect an Annunciation?

And if, on the supposition that the advance of humanity be but a "motion toiling in the gloom," we should anticipate premonitions, how much more, if the Incarnation be the voluntary and conscious deed of Him "who was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these

last times for you?" God's manifestations are not sudden. Premonitions are heard or seen. "I send My messenger before My face. Prepare ye the way of the Lord." Outposts and skirmishers precede the array of the Lord of Hosts. No great creative act is isolated. It is typified; it realizes itself in a lower form. It projects dim shapes of itself. It exhibits a struggle towards complete embodiment, rising through hindrances into imperfect forms, till by succession and inward strife it reaches perfection.

What then is this event which is being prepared for, and the progressive preparation for which is, at the same time, a progressive realization of it? It is the communion, through Jesus Christ, of God and His creatures. This takes place in Christ. But Christ is the realization of two converging lines—the self-communication of God, and the assimilation of this by man, and his consequent progressive elevation. Both are historic processes. For, that there may be communion with God, there must be knowledge of Him; and thus there commences a self-unveiling of God. But as this is an ethical revelation, it can take place only in ethical relations, in social life, in political organization—in a word, in human history. The living God must condescend to be an historic personage, to mix Himself with life, that human eyes may see Him in relation, since human thoughts are unable to grasp Him absolutely.

This has been done both in the Old Testament and the New. And as the light from God's face, like that from some distant star, needs ages to pierce from rim to rim of society, it no less needs ages for society to be penetrated by it. This knowledge of God must be realized again in life, must be achieved in successive generations, each leaving some legacy of its attain-

ments as an inheritance to the next. To be taught morality, monotheism, and the Messianic hope, was no mean achievement even for two thousand years. And the lesson could only be learned in a supernatural history. In a history, for you cannot mechanically or magically pour truth or knowledge into man. It is a moral process, and must be accomplished through the working of his moral nature in all the phases of life and action; and that it is supernatural is implied in the idea of a remedial scheme.

The economy of creation was one fitted merely for the development of innocent beings, which implies a certain economical self-restriction of God. It did not contain within it powers to deal with the possible fall from innocence. It contained, indeed, so much elasticity that it did not, on the entrance of sin, fall into dissolution, even as the human body subsists under a condition of disease. But it naturally contained no powers able to eject the evil. Sin is a thing supernatural, or, if you like, infranatural; and the natural economy of creation is helpless to overbear it. There must be induced upon the economy of creation a higher economy—that of grace — and thus grace is supernatural. And it is here that our theology comes into conflict with the thinking of the age. That thinking rejects our conception of the economy of nature and the unnaturalness of sin, and so the supernaturalness of grace. To it sin is not sinful; and therefore morality is not the good, and the Creator is not the living God; He is but an indifferent, unconscious pulse, throbbing out successive tides of existence at the centre of the Universe.

Thus, then, as Jewish history makes its revolutions, there fly off from it, if we may say so, scales, rinds, thin shells, a series of abstractions, which the spirit

of prophecy projects forward, and looks through and idealizes, till each transforms itself into Christ and His Kingdom. This can only be because the history is so divinely disposed that, at each separate evolution, such a type does appear. It might be explained, indeed, on the ground that Christ is the Archetype of man, and that as man develops from less to more, he successively evolves and throws off types of Christ, as nature rises by successive stages into man. This may be, to some extent, true, and may explain the vague Christology of heathenism; but the typology of the Bible is conscious, and not blind. As Biblical theologians, therefore, we have to sink ourselves into this history, and mark and estimate its parts as they roll past, drawing attention to every new truth as it emerges along the line of development, interpreting and stating the significance of every man who was an organ in the hand of God in bringing on the scheme, and estimating the character and force of each new momentum along the whole line of motion. Obviously, we shall be overpowered and confused, if we attempt to do this in the mass. We must break up the history into sections; and, happily, the Canon itself supplies us with the division.

1. The Era of the Law. There was here a certain realization of communion between God and man, inasmuch as there lay at the foundation of the law a covenant, and inasmuch as the ceremonial ordinances prefigured, and so to some extent conferred, the blessings of the reality. We must beware of speaking of the law as a dispensation or economy of salvation. The distinction between the old and the new dispensations is not that of law and gospel, but that of promise of the gospel—in itself essentially a gospel—and the gospel. Subjectively, the two dis-

pensations are one; they differ, mainly, in the amount and clearness of objective truth enjoyed.

2. The Era of Prophecy. Prophecy came not except there came a falling away first. The memory of the law died out, and Samuel arose; the efflorescence of piety and poetry under David and the early monarchy faded into philosophy under his successor; and speculation died into defection and idolatry. Then prophecy came with a new divine message. The office of the prophets was very much interpretative of the law and of the history. It was their business to take the nation down with them into the midst of the historic stream, to make it conscious of the currents and tendencies of the time, to interpret to it the forces that were wrestling together, and so acting out its history; and thus to impress deep religious convictions upon the hearts of the people, and awaken a strong consciousness in them of a present God in the midst of them, and a deeper longing for fuller manifestations of the Messianic redemption. And the prophet, abiding thus in the very presence of Jehovah, was himself a standing symbol and prophecy, to men, of the time when God's spirit should be poured out on all flesh, as He was now on him.

3. The Writings. This does not form a distinct era, but marks an effect co-ordinate with the two former. Jehovah utters commands from heaven; the prophet preaches lessons of hope, or trust, or words of warning; and these writings give the response that rises from the hearts of the great congregation. This response runs through all the scale of human feeling, in ready sympathy with the aspect of God. "The Lord hath triumphed gloriously." "My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" "We will return unto the Lord, for He will be gracious." And is it

not finely fitting that many of these utterances should be anonymous, these sobs by the rivers of Babylon, these long, low, mournful monologues over the unatoned contradictions of man's destiny, that meet us in Job? We know not whence they are; they come upon us as you have heard some deep voice, quivering with pathos, raise from the bosom of a congregation its cry for mercy or of hope. It thrills us all the more, that its origin is hidden.

This, then, is the Bible; but to form a Biblical Theology, we must interpret it; and for that we must find a law of interpretation. The steps of progress are these. First, Grammatical analysis, busied about the government of words, and the connexion and subordination of clauses. Second, Exegesis, which, assuming the results of analysis, combines the propositions into a whole, presenting the ideas in their connexion and scope. Furthermore, Exegesis has a right to combine such paragraphs of sense into one great section, consisting of one or more chapters; and these again into a book or treatise. It is, likewise, the part of Exegesis not only to find and combine ideas, but to define them historically—to shine around them, and set them in the light of the mental tendencies and social currents of the time, to bring them within the sweep of the great tides of progress, and civilization, and thinking, and to make out their integral and organic relation to these and all other forces of the time—particularly to gauge mentally the writer, and exhibit how his age influences him generally, and his present circumstances in particular. Exegesis must interpret both historically and psychologically.

Biblical Theology assumes all these separate links to be already forged by grammatical analysis, all these several pieces of chain to be made by an en-

lightened Exegesis; and its function is to take these pieces, and bind them all into an organic and progressive unity. This theology, as I have defined it, is the only theology that can lay claim to be strictly Biblical. It imports nothing into the Bible, it merely examines and finds. It levels no obstacles, bridges no chasms —it only finds. And often the chasms are, theologically, deeply communicative. If we had not mystery, we should die of inertia. The mystery without, the mystery of impulse within to enter it, keeps us living. And it makes the Bible its principle of unity—not merely any one truth of it, as is the doctrine of Justification by faith, in Protestant dogmatics.

In seeking to find a law of interpretation, the student is opposed by a term which seems to debate with him the possibility of crossing the very threshold of the temple of truth—the term *inspiration*. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God"; and the interpreter begins his task, paralyzed by the vague awful sense which he forms to himself of this quality; and his progress is cramped and halting. Now Scripture nowhere defines this term; and I think we do but wrong the Bible, and wrong ourselves, when we proceed to interpret Scripture with any *a priori* conception of what this quality must contain or preclude. By "inspired" we mean that, by the divine influence upon the writers, Scripture is what it is. But what it is we can only learn from itself, from what it says and what it seems. The only thing the term postulates is the divinity of its production; but what that involves or excludes, examination only can determine. The true law of interpreting the Bible is to interpret biblically. This law is common to it and all other books. You interpret Homer homerically. There is so much of every author plain, so much expressive

of his spirit and manner, that you speedily catch them up, and under their guidance you resolve the passages that are obscure. The whole is before any of its parts. And so you interpret the Bible biblically.

But, again, what is Biblical? We start from this that the Bible is not Doketic—that what seems human in it, is human—that what in any other place I should call human genius, and passion, and pathos, and strong crying and tears, and blank despondency, and ecstasy of hope, and all the symbols of intensest human life, are to be called by the same names in the Bible. On the other hand, the Bible does not pretend; what calls itself divine, is divine. These are deeps to which human spirits do not now sink; and these are heights of ecstasy and insight to which human spirits do not now soar. These human spirits indeed went down thus far, and rose thus high; but they were dragged down and borne up by a mighty influence from without. "The hand of the Lord was upon me." "Thou, Lord, Who, by the mouth of Thy servant David, hast said, Why do the heathen rage?" Thus the Bible exhibits two elements as conspiring to produce Scripture; and to interpret biblically we must admit them both. Yet the effect is not twofold, but singular; the two elements combined to produce the effect, and their combination preceded its production.

What then is the relation of speech to thought? Is it not that speech varies as thought—that to think clearly is to speak clearly, to think dimly is to speak dimly—in a word, that speech is, by an invariable psychological law, the necessary expression and body of thought? Thus there is no such thing as an inspiration of thoughts and mental states, of which the words are the necessary expression; and, on the

other hand, there is no inspiration of mental states which is not at the same time, by the necessary psychological law, the inspiration of the words that necessarily express them. Thus the infinite condescension of God consisted neither in making use of human words—that would be a species of Doketism, akin to giving Christ a phantasmical body—nor yet in making use of men as the medium through whom to utter words or thoughts—that would be a species of Ebionitism. It consisted in this, that His Spirit begot His own thoughts in man's breast, whence, being conceived, they came forth clothed in perfect human flesh, as the Word of Life came; and that holy thing, thus begotten and thus born, is the Word of God. We have, therefore, a fixed basis for interpretation. We have not two senses to look for, one of the writer and another of the Spirit, but one sense common to both, begotten of one in the bosom of the other. This is the Biblical sense; and we shall find it, if we seek it biblically.

Again biblically? Is there aught still recondite? Is this one sense not exhaustive? Was Adam exhaustive of "man"—crowned with honour and with glory? Was Abel, or Enoch, or any child of man, exhaustive of "the seed of the woman"? Was the burnt-offering exhaustive of "sacrifice," or the Sabbath of Sabbatism? Was Solomon exhaustive of the "Son of David"? "He shall be to Me a Son, and I will be to him a Father"; or any king of Israel of the second Psalm, "I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion"? Was Aaron exhaustive of the "High Priest," or Isaiah of the "Prophet," or Israel of the "Kingdom of God," or the Tabernacle and Shekinah of Him who "tabernacled" among us, or the Theophanies of the Incarnation? Were they not all

empty, of vast capacity, but as yet of miserably small contents, and was not that which was yet future, the filling full of them? All were but symbols, yet symbols that were themselves partial realizations.

Here it is that we must remember our definition of "Biblical"—a current, a tendency, a promise, a prophecy, the spirit of the years to come rising up and imprinting His stamp and signature on all things, the Spirit of Christ, of Revelation, and of the Church, symbolizing and realizing, producing fact without and word within, manifestation in the world, inspiration in the Church, both still imperfect, yet true, and bearing in their imperfection the germ and promise of perfection. In a development such as that contained in our conception of "Biblical," every step of the development has a double identity with the end and issue—a subjective identity, that of consciousness; and an objective identity, that of the essential elements of nature common to both and all.

To a great extent the writers of Scripture were conscious, though amid some haze and cloud, of the nature of their dispensation, of the nature of its issue, and to some extent even of their own particular whereabouts in the great stream of Evolution. But it is not in their consciousness, but in that of the Spirit who conspired with them, that the full idea of the development in all its stages was reflected. The Spirit of Christ, who was leading on all manifestations to fulfil themselves in Christ, saw in each step the end. Hence New Testament writers, having this same Spirit of Christ, speak in the same way. Looking now back, as the Old looked forward, over a common road, and with the issue full before them, they describe each step, not quite as it may have appeared to the Old Testament writer, whose consciousness

was but dim, but quite as it appeared to the great Divine Spirit; and with singular accuracy they ascribe the view, not to the writer, but to the Spirit. The objective identity consists in this, that in any evolution from a germ, the elements in each step are essentially the same, only on a greater scale successively. Hence the language which describes the smaller is the same that describes the larger onward even to completion; and hence there is no need to say even with Bengel, "divina intentio sic *formavit* orationem ut magis proprie deinceps ea conveniret in tempora Messiae."

Thus to interpret biblically is to interpret always in the light of the *end*. It is to interpret, as a great modern theologian (Beck of Tübingen) says, *pneumatically*, that is, by elevating ourselves into the region and consciousness of the inspiring Spirit. And this is a double thing; it is, first, a personal, spiritual preparation; and, then, it is diligently to search for and gather up all the indications everywhere, especially in the New Testament, bearing on our passage, that we may see if possible how it stands related to the end, how far the end is realized and mirrored in it. And remember that the end is not Christ merely, but Christianity, a kingdom of God, domestic, social, political, intellectual—in a word, a human communion of love with God. Thus, unnumbered currents of development and progress run into the Christian sea; and not express references to Christ merely, but even things of this kind, we are justified in naming Christological.

Once more we must interpret biblically, not in the sense of reconciling and squaring Scripture with Scripture—that we must no doubt do—but in the sense of refusing to square or force a reconciliation,

where it does not seem possible. I speak not of historical statements, but of doctrines, especially of those where some conception of the Deity is involved. I believe that no duty is so imperatively incumbent on the interpreter of the present day as that of bringing out fully the antinomies—the apparently irreconcilable propositions—in the Bible with regard both to God and man, and of refusing to subordinate or explain away anything, in order to give fuller swing and scope to something else. These opposite propositions in Scripture are usually also akin to opposite principles in the human mind and in Providence, and our moral nature often demands their full statement; and when, in a system, one is raised to predominance at the expense of depressing the other, we instinctively feel the falsehood of the system: and much of the revolt against religion and the Bible is, I think, a revolt, not so much against them, were they rightly known, as against undue theological subordinating of one part of them to another.

Every express statement of Scripture must be considered a principle which no other principle has a right to overbear, or even modify. You cannot modify principles; you can only refuse to carry them out, when they come in conflict with others. We cannot comprehend truth or God in their synthesis, only in their analysis; and, to gather up the truth fully, all fragments of the analysis must be accepted. The mind demands principles; but all experience proves that falsehood is chiefly generated by carrying them out too far, and especially in religion, where such mysteries are presented to us. And beware of reasoning on Scripture statements, for logic in theology can effect anything. Its utter inapplicability is shown from this, that we must frequently believe, in religion,

what, on admitted premises, we can logically disprove; and, on the other hand, refuse to believe what, on admitted premises, we can logically prove. The mind is not a logic—truth streams into it through a thousand channels. And it is no proof in religion that you are in the wrong way, if you see a precipice before you—you will be in the wrong way, if you go over it. Reflect that even in the economy of Providence no principles are carried to their full application, but there is an equipoise of forces.

And this suggests, finally, an allusion to the bearing of Biblical Theology on the human mind, particularly in its state of almost feverish activity in this age. The mind cannot be satisfied with results which others have reached; it must have processes, and reach results itself. Truth cannot be communicated; it must be learned. It is in vain to bid the human mind rest and be still, on the ground that truth has already been won for it; to gather all the works of Philosophy or all the symbolical books of Christendom together, and, flinging them before it, to say, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease; eat, drink, and be merry!" The outer must become the inner, and by processes within; there is in the spirit a principle of restlessness, of personal craving. You may as well "go, bid the main flood bate his usual height," as tell the spirit to content itself with the truth already gained. The tide will not listen, nor the spirit. From afar impulses rise within it, which it cannot repress; strange pressures from behind, out of the great deeps of past human life, and mysterious drawings from above, lifting it up and leading it on, and a restless mobility within. Every higher spirit feels it, and every age feels it. And I think a Biblical Theology is the salvation of the Church,

both as an outlet for her activity, and as a fresh—I do not say new—a fresh form for her consciousness. The Church is an organism, like the body; and I think it should, like the body, repair its wastes, and preserve its outer form. It would be an awkward thing for the human body to throw off its skin like the serpent. Nevertheless it is continually changing and repairing. And just as the body circulates the strength of its nourishment in vigorous blood from within outwards, even to its outmost integument, keeping it thus fresh and healthy and conformable to its inner advancement, so the Church, having taken the Book of Life and eaten it, must be ever, out of this, renewing its outer form, thus preserving it flexible enough for the easy movements of its inner life, and sensitive and sympathetic enough with all contact without.

And I believe that the reason why we are both the most orthodox and the most sympathetic of Churches is that we are mainly Biblical theologians; that every Sunday, by the process which we call "Lecturing," our pastors and our people sink themselves within the current of the great Divine Revelation and historic stream of salvation, and are carried on with it, and drink its healing waters fresh from the fountain of truth. And what we want is this, that escaping from all abstractions regarding God, which we vainly think truer than the concrete, whereas abstract is but unfamiliar concrete—I say, making our escape from all this, what we want is, that this blessed process of meeting God at first hand in history and in thought, as He has presented Himself to our race, on that arena and in those conditions where He chose, so to speak, to live out His divine life on earth that we might behold His glory full of grace and truth—that this should be more common, that all our teach-

ers should be imbued with the principles of a sound Biblical Theology; and not our teachers merely, but our people, for we sympathize with the marvellous liberality of the man of God four thousand years ago, "Would that all the Lord's people were prophets!"

THE WISDOM OF THE HEBREWS

THE Book of Proverbs and other parts of the Old Testament Scriptures often refer to what is called Wisdom, and that not as a mere possession or attribute of an individual, but rather as the property of a class, and as the name given to a pursuit or tendency of the national mind. Certain sections of Proverbs are headed, "These also belong to the Wise" (chap. xxiv. 23), i.e., are the fruit of their reflection, or have been uttered by them. It is the purpose which the author or editor of the Proverbs sets before himself, "to give subtlety to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion, . . . that he may understand a proverb and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings" (chap. i. 4 foll.). The party in the State in the days of Jeremiah, who opposed that prophet, supported themselves by falling back upon distinguished men and classes in the State who agreed with them in their view of the political situation, and of the course that was best to be pursued. They said, "Come, and let us devise devices against Jeremiah; for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet. Come, and let us smite him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words" (Jer. xviii. 18). The term Wisdom thus appears to describe a distinct direction of the Hebrew mind, a direction marked and powerful, deserving to

be ranked along with the most remarkable characteristic of Israel, its prophecy. The direction, indeed, was not peculiar to the mind of Israel. It was one that manifested itself among the neighbouring peoples as well. In 1 Kings iv. 30 it is said that "Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all men; than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol"; and in Obadiah, verse 8, we read, "Shall I not in that day destroy the wise out of Edom, and understanding out of the mount of Esau?" with which may be compared Jeremiah xlix. 7: "Is wisdom no more in Teman? is counsel perished from the prudent? is their wisdom vanished?" This Wisdom of the Hebrews and other Oriental nations has been compared, by those who have examined its operations and results, to the philosophy of other nations.

The strongest things have been said on both sides of the question, Whether the Hebrews possessed a philosophy? The difference of opinion has partly arisen, as in many similar cases of dispute, from attaching different senses to the term philosophy. C. B. Michaelis says, when passing in his exposition from the Psalter to the Proverbs, "We step out of the closet of David into the porch of Solomon—to admire the son of the great theologian as the great philosopher." Oetinger lectured on the Proverbs under the title, "Philosophia sacra et applicata." Even De Wette speaks of the "speculative and practical philosophy" of the Hebrews; and Ewald considers that, like the Greeks before Socrates, the Hebrews had attained at least to the beginnings of a wisdom and science which, under favourable external circumstances, might have developed into an independent philosophy. On the

other hand, many writers, e.g., Ritter, give a strong verdict to an opposite effect.

That the Hebrews possessed among them something of the nature of a Philosophy, whether any remains of it have come down to us or not, is to be deemed probable on various considerations—such, for instance, as the natural tendency of the human mind to seek satisfying knowledge ; the example presented by other nations who have attained to any degree of civilization ; and, in particular, the keen intellectual character of this people, and its lively sensibility to moral conditions. The mind of man, so soon as it rises above being engrossed by mere animal desires and the struggle for life, begins to exhibit a craving to comprehend the things around it. And it is not satisfied with such a knowledge as will suffice merely to ensure personal safety, and advance material well-being. The operations of the mind are not utilitarian except in this sense, that ignorance and mystery are painful, and that there is keen pleasure both in the pursuit and in the attainment of knowledge. But no knowledge satisfies which is not universal, which does not comprehend all within it, and afford the means of explaining each detail in the complicated whole. The pursuit of knowledge of this kind is Philosophy. And it would be surprising if there had been no instances of it among a people so richly endowed, and whose literary history extended over so long a period.

Perhaps it would be equally surprising if all traces of this direction of mind had been excluded from the Holy Scriptures. For though the Bible be a practical book, and cannot be supposed to shew any interest in mere speculations that have no bearing on life, it busies itself more than any other book about principles that contain in them the germs of conduct, and about

high generalizations that have folded up in them the details of human well-being and the true relations of men to God. Scripture certainly does not satisfy itself with merely giving rules according to which, if a man live, it will be well with him, and he will perform the part due from him in promoting the welfare of others; it offers the grounds on which these rules are based. But these grounds and principles are just what the reflecting mind labours to reach, in order that, putting them together, it may grasp that which is the ground of all.

Whether we consider the manner or the purpose of revelation, we should expect to find in Scripture traces of this particular direction of the mind of man. For as the purpose of revelation was not to educate a one-sided man, but to train him up on all sides of his mind, till he should attain the fulness of the stature of the perfect man, so it was its manner to lay hold of every part of him, presenting itself to that side of his nature, which was open and fitted to receive it. For the revealing Spirit was, in a certain sense, an indwelling Spirit, uniting Himself intimately with all the highest affections and noblest aspirations of the men whose minds He illuminated. And these men were not persons who stood as mere objective instruments to the people whom they addressed; they were of the people; the life of the people, that flowed through the general mass, only reached its flood-tide in them. Every feeling of the people, every movement of life at its very lowest stratum, sent its impulse up to them; every hope or fear was reflected in their heart: and with all these movements and these reflected emotions, shared with so true and quick a sensibility, the Spirit of revelation, which was not a Spirit of knowledge merely, but of life, sympathized and, if the word can be

used, coalesced; and, by that ineffable mode in which He unites with men's minds, used them as channels through which advancing knowledge and deeper rest were communicated. The people of Israel, as the Church of God, lived a profound life; in its outstanding men, that life was at its profoundest and broadest; and as, at the first, the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters that covered the earth, so He moved upon that unquiet sea of the Church's mind, agitated with emotions, with presentiments, with fears, with speculations; and out of them all brought forth more perfect forms of truth, and a fuller religious life. Why that which we are accustomed to consider not the least noble capacity of the human mind, the capacity of speculation upon the mysteries of the world and the soul, should be excluded as an organ of revelation, when other high capacities, such as that of intuition, are included, would be hard to guess. There is no doubt an irreverent speculation, an impious pressing upon the threshold of the unrevealed, which touches too nearly the Majesty of Heaven, and which, like the desire of the wicked, the Lord will thrust back (Prov. x. 3); but that reverent following upon the tracks of His feet, or that listening with eagerness, though in awe, to the far-off thunder of His power, with an irrepressible longing to come unto His place, and be satisfied with His likeness—this cannot be displeasing to Him, nor be too much tainted with human pride to be serviceable as a channel of revelation.

And if we consider another point in the manner of revelation and the condition of the Church under it, namely, the gradual and broken way in which it was communicated, we shall see that the effect must have been to stimulate the reflective and speculative side of the mind. God spake at sundry times and in divers

manners. Only a fragment, not the whole round of a truth, was given at once. Light was thrown only on one side of a situation ; the other sides were left enveloped in darkness. Even if light enough was shed for the immediate need, higher needs speedily arose, and men went straining their eyes into the darkness that still remained. There is yet even to ourselves, who possess the whole body of revealed truth, many a question over which obscurity continues to hang.

There must have been, too, in Israel, to some extent, that condition and direction of mind which has been such a striking phenomenon in the history of the Christian Church, especially in the Middle Ages, but in some measure at all times—the dogmatic direction of mind, the tendency to seize upon external and positive truth like that given in revelation, and not only to systematize it, but to bring it into connexion with the general principles of thinking of the human mind. This tendency was probably less observable among the Hebrews than it is among peoples of the Western world. And the comparative want of it was one thing which particularly fitted this people to have committed to them the oracles of God. They were content to preserve and retain them in a more purely objective form than more speculative nations might have done. But the direction of mind referred to cannot have been altogether wanting. The mind cannot be kept from exercising itself upon outward and positive truth. It seeks to reconcile the data of this kind of truth with itself, and with principles of which it is already in possession. The truths which it receives on external authority it endeavours to verify by combining them with other truths, or forcing them up under general forms which it has already constructed or constructs instinctively. This process is quite compatible with

faith in the external authority, although a strong faith may keep it in the background. But in times of perplexity, of which there were many in the history of the ancient Church, when problems of Providence pressed hard upon the heart, and faith wavered or declined, this instinctive tendency of the mind would reassert itself. It is always interesting to observe how faith and knowledge adjust themselves here, where so much is unknown. When that which is in part shall be done away, and we shall know even as we are known, this instinctive desire of the mind for self-verifying knowledge may have full satisfaction, and the only link that binds us to God will be love. But this legitimate tendency which has exercised itself in so remarkable a manner in the Christian Church, in connexion with a completed revelation, must have shown itself in some degree in the ancient Church; and, operating in the midst of a revelation not complete, but only in process of being communicated, it is not unnatural to suppose that it may have exerted an influence on the form of some parts of Divine truth.

From the foregoing allusions a general idea may be gathered of what elements of a philosophic direction of mind probably existed among the people of Israel; and it may also appear from them in what sense we are to accept the contradictory statements of those who assign and those who deny to the Hebrews the possession of a Philosophy. The Hebrew Wisdom differed from the Greek or any other secular philosophy in two important particulars: first, in the point from which it set out; and consequently, second, in its method. Greek philosophy was the operation, or the result of the operation, of the reason of man upon the sum of things. It threw the entire universe into its crucible at once. It had to operate upon the unre-

solved, unanalyzed whole. Its problem was: Given the complex whole of existence, to frame such a conception of it as shall be satisfying to the mind, and contain an explanation within it. Its object was to observe the streams of tendency, and, by following them up against the current, to reach the one source which sent them all forth. Thus to name God was its latest achievement. Philosophy has to reach, to create, God for itself; or, at least, to discover and set Him apart from the involutions and flux of the universe. It has mostly failed in this, being unable to effect the analysis; and the residuum of its efforts has been, either a world without a God, or rather, a world the order in which reflects itself in the human mind in an image or idea called God; or else, a God without a world, or rather, a God who is the world, and is conscious of Himself in the human mind. But the problem of the Hebrew Wisdom was quite different. It started with this analysis already effected, effected so long ago, and with such a firmness and decisiveness, that the two elements, God and the world, stood apart with a force of contrariety so direct that even the imagination could not induce them to commingle or become confused. Hebrew thought was at the source, to begin with; and, instead of following the currents upwards, it had the easier task of descending to them, and seeing how they subdivided and ramified, till they flowed under all things. Thus the efforts of the Wise Man were not directed towards the discovery of God, whom he did not know; what occupied him everywhere was the *recognition* of God, whom he knew. As he looked upon the world with its changing phenomena, or observed life and society with their varying aspects, he recognized the power within, which threw up all these changes upon the surface of things, to be a present

God. Very fascinating it must have been to a religious mind, starting with the knowledge of God and the great principles of moral order which revelation gave him, thus to trace God and the operation of these principles everywhere; to feel the pulses of His will throbbing in everything; to observe His purpose effectuating itself with a silent irreversible energy, lifting up all things upon its bosom like a rising tide, and bearing them in towards a shore which, however thick the mists that hung over it at present might be, would be clearly seen and reached at last. The Hebrew philosopher never ascended from nature or life to God; he always came down from God upon life: and his wisdom consisted in detecting and observing the verification of his principles of religion or morals in the world and the life of men. Hence the Proverbs of Solomon or others of the Wise are not popular sayings, as proverbs are with us, shrewd or lively condensations of human wisdom in the mere region of secular life; they are, for the most part, embodiments of some truth of religion or morals, statements of how such truths may be observed verifying themselves in life and society.

But this essential difference between the Wisdom of Israel and secular philosophy, the latter being a process of discovery, while the Wisdom was one of recognition, had, of course, an effect upon the method. The Wisdom had strictly no method. As a principle already known was observed verifying itself in some form or other, that form was seized, and set apart in a single gnome or proverb. No doubt in the oldest form of the Wisdom, the Proverbs of Solomon, especially those from the tenth chapter onwards, there is such a multiplicity of these distinct and separate photographs that they might now be classified almost into a system. In that quiet and happy time when the nation had peace

without, and society and life had free scope to display their characteristics both in religion and the arts of peace at home, and in commerce abroad, the reflective mind of the Wise Man had under its eye the most abundant materials for the widest and most varied generalizations. And these opportunities were not neglected. In these most ancient proverbs there is a nearer approach to reflective observation in a methodical way, and for the mere pleasure of the thoughtful religious mind, than we find anywhere else. But the train of reflection, being religious and practical, was usually set in motion only by something personal. Some crisis in the religious life occurred, some point of God's dealing was covered with obscurity; and the Wise Man's mind threw itself upon the problem with an energy and a passion which only a matter of life and death could inspire. Hence the Hebrew Wisdom is characterized by a personal interest in the questions debated, very different from the objective coldness of ordinary speculation, and by an earnestness which has nothing in it of the gaiety of the Socratic banter.

The nature of the Hebrew Wisdom will now be apparent. It is not a view of the Universe distinct from God, much less a view of God distinct from the Universe; it is a view of the Universe with God indwelling in it. The term Wisdom, however, is used in various ways, to express modifications of this general idea.

First, the world, and every phenomenon and occurrence in it, may be considered in an objective way, out of all relation to the mind of man as comprehending it, or taking up any moral position in regard to it. Every separate thing that is, or that occurs, may be considered as an expression of God, as a manifestation

of His will or purpose or efficiency, or, in short, of Himself. Man, and the human reason, and the moral order of social life, and the rewards or punishments of conduct in prosperity or misfortune, every individual thing, in short, whether in the physical world or in the conscious life of man, may be regarded as a phenomenon behind which lies a reality, which is God. "The ear which hears, and the eye which sees, God made them both." "The poor and the money-lender meet, the creator of them both is the Lord." "The blessing of the Lord maketh rich, and labour addeth nothing therewith." The highest generalization of this conception is contained in such expressions as these: "The Lord hath made all things answering to their end" (Prov. xvi. 4); "He hath made everything beautiful in its time" (Eccles. iii. 11); and the statement which, in the mouth of the Preacher, has a slight tone of fatalism in it: "To everything there is a season, and a time to every matter under the heaven" (Eccles. iii. 1 foll.) For, here, the fact that human life is conscious or voluntary does not come into consideration. It is a phenomenon among other phenomena; and, behind it, or beneath it, the efficient reality is God. But of course it is not in separate occurrences or in individual phenomena merely that God exhibits Himself. His manifestations taken together form a unity. The world, as an orderly whole, is the expression of God's mind; it embodies and expresses God, His character, His thought, and His method. The world with God immanent in it, considered in itself as an objective thing, is Wisdom. This is the *Divine* Wisdom.

Further, the world being a unity, animated by Divine principles, of which all its phenomena are embodiments, these principles may be regarded as an arti-

culated organized whole, outside of God Himself, the expression of His mind, but having an existence of its own alongside of God. The unity of thought and efficiency that animates and operates the world may be abstracted from God, the actual living Operator. Thus there arises the conception of an idea of the Universe or world-plan, which however is not a mere thought or purpose, but an efficiency as well. On account of the powerful efficiency of God, this plan or organism of principles, which is the expression of God's mind and power, may be idealized, and regarded as animated and active, and have consciousness attributed to it; and, being a thing of which God Himself is conscious, seeing He does not work blindly, but sets before His own mind what He does, it may become the Fellow of God: and on account of the free irresistible way in which it realizes itself in creation, and particularly in the economy of man, it may be described as "playing" before God, in the joyous consciousness of power and capacity, and having its delights with the children of men. This is the Divine Wisdom as it appears in Proverbs (chaps. i.–ix.); and this remarkable conception is the contribution which the literature of the Wisdom furnishes to the Christology of the Old Testament.

But, second: though this universal plan of God effectuates itself in all things, and in man no less than in other things, it was not meant to lie outside of man's mind or effectuate itself in him unconsciously, as it does in other things. His peculiarity is that he is capable of understanding it, and can by the free exercise of his will throw himself into its current, and thereby realize it in himself voluntarily. His relation to it is a relation on two sides—one intellectual, and one religious. He can comprehend it, and he can

accept it, and harmonize his will and conduct with it. This is *man's* wisdom. It has both a theoretical and a practical side. But these two are rarely kept apart; for it is a fundamental position that the theoretical comprehension of God's purpose is only possible to those who morally are in harmony with it: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," which means both that to have the fear of the Lord is a necessary equipment to enable one to enter upon the speculative study of His ways (for to be in harmony with Him is surely necessary in order to understand Him), and also that the fear of the Lord is the first step in practical wisdom. Hence the singular fact that, in the Hebrew Wisdom, one set of terms does service to express both the intellectual and the moral wisdom. The "wise" man means the righteous man; the "fool" is one who is godless. Intellectual terms that describe knowledge are also moral terms describing life. Only on rare occasions is a distinction drawn between the theoretical and the practical wisdom. When the Hebrew Sage found himself completely baffled before some mysterious Providence, as Job did, then he despaired of a speculative wisdom; and, renouncing the task of understanding God's ways, fell back upon the sure and immovable first principle of practical wisdom: "Surely there is a vein for the silver, and a place for gold where they fine it; iron is taken out of the earth, and brass molten out of the stone; man setteth an end to darkness, and searcheth out all perfection; . . . but where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding? The Depth saith, It is not in me, and the Sea saith, It is not with me. . . . Abaddon and Death say, We have heard the report thereof with our ears. God understandeth the way thereto, and He knoweth the place thereof. . . . But

unto man He hath said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding" (Job xxviii.)

This practical side may be called the Human Wisdom; but it is difficult to say what department of modern thought this Wisdom most nearly resembles. Still it can readily be seen that the Wisdom, starting with certain conceptions of God, and His character and purposes, and His relations to the world and man, supplied by revelation, came practically to be a doctrine of Providence in an universal sense. What the Wise Man observed or recognized in the world, and in the life of men, was God, fulfilling Himself in many ways. But his ideas of God, and of His plan, were not discovered by him in the world; they were given in the Law, and were *a priori* principles with which he came down upon the world and life; which he saw realized there, or which, after a time, he failed to see realized; and in his success or failure to see them realized is found the principle, according to which the phases of the Human Wisdom may be classified.

1. In the first form in which the Wisdom appears (for example, in Proverbs, chap. x. foll.), there is a complete harmony between principles and manifestation. The Wise Man has a certain conception of God, of His method of government, of His relations to men, and of their life; and he beholds these principles everywhere receiving perfect illustration. The current of principle realizes itself in all circumstances; it flows on, smooth and straight, unruffled and uncircuitous. The history of events and of the life of man shews a perfect equation between occurrence and principle. External providence and God, as conceived, are in complete accord. Naturally, in an universalistic view of the world, the question of evil and its conse-

quences, and its relations to God, conceived as just in operation as well as in mind, occupies a large place. So, too, does the question of human prudence, of sense and intelligence. Now, in this stage of the Wisdom, that always happens to men which the principle demands should happen. Exceptions do not occur :—" Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth : much more the wicked and the sinner " (Prov. xi. 31). " The fear of the Lord addeth length of days : but the years of the wicked shall be shortened " (chap. x. 27). " Riches profit not in the day of wrath : but righteousness delivereth from death " (chap. xi. 4). " The Lord hath made all things answering their end." " He that handleth a matter wisely shall find good : and whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he " (chap. xvi. 4, 20). The Wise Man goes about among men, putting his finger everywhere down upon reality—on that, whatever it be, great or small, which has come from God—and shows how in life it fulfils itself.

2. The second form in which the Wisdom appears offers a great contrast to this former one. This is the era of principles ; exceptions do not occur, or are unheeded. Now commences a deadly struggle between the mind filled with principles, and phenomena in Providence which seem to contradict them. And here the Wisdom contracts itself, and becomes a philosophy of Providence in the narrower sense ; that is, a theodicy. It moves now, almost exclusively, on the line of the question of the Divine retributive righteousness in its two sides. God's external providence was found to be out of harmony with the necessary conception of God. Now the Oriental thinker had not that convenient *tertium quid* which we have learned to intercalate between ourselves and God, and to which we give the vague name of Providence, meaning by that

a great universal scheme, pursuing vast ends on general principles, in the midst of whose gigantic march towards the securing of its broad purposes, smaller infractions of law, and a certain neglect of the individual, or a treatment of him in the interests of the whole, are to be expected. To the Eastern mind God and history, God and occurrences, were in immediate connexion. God did all that was done, and did it immediately.

Accordingly the Wise Man, amidst his other observations, began to take note of two points which greatly disquieted him : he saw the wicked prosperous, and he saw the righteous begging their bread. Or, on a wider scale, he saw the gigantic idolatries of the heathen world triumphing over God's people, and treading them in the dust. It was a mote that troubled his mind's eye ; and he made desperate efforts to cast it out. And it is a most interesting study to move along the portions of Scripture containing a record of these efforts, and observe how pious men were enabled to accommodate themselves to the mystery : what old principle they fell back upon ; or what new insight into God's providence was granted to them, when they went into the sanctuaries of God ; or how, sometimes, the speculative darkness remained impenetrable, and they sought to realize to themselves the consciousness of God's presence in spite of it : " Nevertheless I am continually with thee " (Psa. lxxiii. 23). What adds so much to the pathos of the complaints and the demeanour of the pious Wise Man amidst these problems is just this, that, being accustomed, from the nature of his dispensation, to see his principles verify themselves in life externally, when a calamity befell him, it not only created a speculative difficulty, but it reacted upon his personal relations to God, and threw a cloud over them. The various considerations through which

the Wise Man, in presence of the prosperity of the wicked, or the calamity of the just, was enabled to reach peace, will come up for discussion afterwards. They were in the main practical, and scarcely touched the principle. The Wise Men moved the difficulty onward from stage to stage, till at length they pushed it across the borders of this life altogether ; and then the Wisdom expanded into an Eschatology. The parts of Scripture where this second form of the Wisdom appears are such Psalms as xxxvii., xxxix., xlix., lxxiii., and the Book of Job.

3. The third form of the Wisdom is that which appears in Ecclesiastes. It is not meant to be implied, apart from discussion, by this classification that these three forms follow one another historically. There is always a certain precariousness in arguing, from the degree of development of a truth in Scripture, as to the era in history at which it appeared. Where there are so many writers concerned, much may depend upon the power and idiosyncrasy of the writer ; and in that kind of truth with which the Wisdom is occupied, namely, generalizing on Providence, the subjective feelings of the author are very influential, because they colour what is outside with the gloomy or sunny hues of the mind itself. A great deal also is dependent upon the particular crisis in the people's history, on which the writer was commissioned to shed light. And from the nature of Scripture, we must always be ready to recognize an element in it, which refuses to accommodate itself to what we might consider beforehand would be the way in which truth would develop itself. The classification here given, therefore, does not forestall the question of the age of Ecclesiastes, but leaves it open, as well as the question of the age of Job and the Psalms referred to.

It is enough, however, to indicate in a general way the relation of Ecclesiastes to the two phases of the Wisdom already mentioned. The condition of things in that Book seems to be this. All the principles of the Wisdom as they appear in Proverbs are still maintained. Again, all the problems of the second phase of the Wisdom are still present, and in what seems an aggravated form. But the attitude of the author towards these problems is quite different. He no more launches himself against the difficulties, determined to remove them and equate occurrences with principles. The difficulties are not to be removed; and he sets himself to utilize them. These problems are no more regarded as intruders, obstacles to the clear and far perspective of the Wise Man's eye, which he resents and must level at all costs; they are permanent elements of the landscape. And the writer heaps consideration upon consideration partly to turn them to account positively, and partly to ease the pressure which they exerted on his heart or on the hearts of others. There is, of course, a deeper element in Ecclesiastes—a tone of mind out of which all these efforts raise themselves, or into which they again fall back. This tone is not scepticism so much as weariness and a paralyzing sense of human powerlessness. This temperament must have been natural to the author, though it was aggravated by the evil condition of the world in his day. But his temper found nourishment both in the principles of the Wisdom, and in its problems; and he was nearly carried away, on the one hand, by a sense of dependence upon God and His overpowering efficiency, which was abject; and, on the other, by a sense of the crushing evils and mass of the world, which was overwhelming: and, between the two, human prostration was complete.

There are in this way three aspects of the Human Wisdom.

First, the period of principles, without exceptions. Such a period was needful to begin with, in order that positive general truths regarding God's government and human life should be well lodged in the minds of the people.

Second, the period of difficulties and exceptions. Here the principles are still so powerful that the exceptions are felt to be intolerable, and are flung, in general with a certain violence, out of the way. But the principles begin to raise questions, and in consequence to suffer modification through a more extended observation of actual life.

Third, the period of comparative quiescence in the presence of difficulties, which are themselves drawn into the general scheme, and shewn, as parts of it, to have their own utility.

The first period we find best illustrated in the Proverbs of Solomon, particularly in the chapters from the tenth onwards. The moral maxims and generalizings on life and Providence contained in these proverbs are, in all probability, the earliest examples which remain to us of the efforts and activity of the Wisdom. There is no valid reason to doubt that many at least of these proverbs belong to Solomon, and others to his age. The renown for wisdom which this king had among his own people, and even, although in a distorted and fantastic form, among the other peoples of the East, must have rested on some real foundation of fact. No doubt reputations grow, and veneration enlarges its hero sometimes in proportion to the indistinctness of its real knowledge of him; and objects, seen in the broad blaze of day, are very insignificant compared with the bulk they assume,

when seen between us and the light, still lingering on the horizon, of a day that has gone down. But making allowance for the exaggerations of later and less happy times thirsting for the wells of an ancient Wisdom now run dry, we should leave tradition and history altogether unexplained, if we disallowed the claim of Solomon to be the first and greatest of the Wise, and refused to accept some considerable portion at least of the Proverbs that pass under his name as really his.

Our present Book of Proverbs is a miscellaneous collection. It is an Anthology of the words of the Wise, just as the Psalter has gathered into one the Hymnology of Israel, the product of every age and the reflection of every feeling of the people's life. But there is no more reason to doubt that Solomon was a Wise Man than there is to doubt that David was a poet. The breaks in the Book of Proverbs, that reveal its composite character, are quite visible. After the general heading: *The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel,* in the beginning of the Book, we are surprised to come upon another: *The proverbs of Solomon,* in the beginning of the tenth chapter. The first heading is probably due to a general editor, although how much more is due to him may be difficult to say. It is not improbable that chapters i.–ix. may be also from his pen. These chapters are wholly unlike the rest of the Book, consisting of connected moral pieces, and are less expositions or expressions of Wisdom herself than exhortations to a diligent seeking after her. There is that kind of difference between chapter x. foll. and these chapters, that we are familiar with as the difference between productivity and criticism. In the middle chapters the Wisdom is creative; and, absorbed in the fascination of her own activity,

and in the delight of expressing and revealing herself, she has no place in her own thoughts herself; in these nine early chapters she is become self-conscious; she is fascinated by her own beauty; she invites men to behold her, and to love her. It must have taken some time before a pursuit, followed at first instinctively and without even consciousness, out of the mere religious and mental delight which it afforded, was drawn under the eye of reflection, and became, as an operation of the mind or a posture of the whole nature, a subject of contemplation and discussion. On this internal ground alone, we must assume that these nine chapters are considerably later than those in the middle of the Book. It is of little consequence whom we suppose to have been the writer of them, whether an author working independently, or the editor of a collection of Solomonic proverbs at an earlier time, or the general editor at last. Their relation to the body of the Book is the main thing, as exhibiting a later development of the Wisdom, when she had ceased to be creative, and had become self-conscious and the subject of her own contemplation.

There is no reason to doubt the genuineness of the superscription in chapter x. It marks an early collection of Solomonic proverbs. It is not necessary to suppose that every one of these proverbs is Solomon's. Words of other Wise Men may have become mixed with his. The same or similar sentiments may have been uttered by others; and in a kind of literature much in the popular mouth, and liable to alteration, as circumstances *à propos* of which quotations were made altered, occasional substitutions may have occurred, and found their way into MSS., as happened with the sayings in the Gospels. We are without materials for judging how far this may have been the case, for we

have no knowledge of the condition of the MSS., or of the means taken to preserve them, or of the date at which this collection was made. We may fairly assume that the contents of the middle chapters correspond in the main to the heading. The presence of other small collections is marked by headings more or less distinct. The great collection beginning with chapter x. ends with chapter xxii. 16. Then commences a new section with the words, "Bow down thine ear, and hear the words of the wise." This section continues to chapter xxiv. 22, and is followed by a small collection beginning, "These also belong to the wise." Then follows a further collection of Solomonic proverbs "which the men of Hezekiah, king of Judah, copied out," i.e., probably, edited from various sources. This collection extends to the end of chapter xxix., and is followed by several other small collections, which bring the Book to a close.

It is not easy to say, in a word, how this kind of literature differs from other kinds represented in the Old Testament. The point of view of the Wise is general, while in other writings of the Old Testament it is particularistic; it is here human, whilst elsewhere it is national. There are certain terms and ideas characteristic of the other writings in the Old Testament, which are absent from the literature of the Wisdom; and, perhaps, a better idea of its nature can be got from this negative peculiarity than from its positive contents. For example, though sacrifice is once or twice referred to, the ritual system which occupies so large a place in the Pentateuch is completely ignored. The mass of positive enactments of the ceremonial law, the complicated arrangements of the Tabernacle and Temple service, the priesthood and the hierarchy, do not seem honoured even with an

allusion. The Wise Man is occupied with the thought of God and man, with the relations of men to God and to one another ; but it is only what is moral in all this, what touches mind and conduct, that interests him : the external exercises of worship are passed by without mention. Again, the Wise Man differs as much from the Prophet as from the Lawgiver. All those ideas around which prophecy revolves, such as the idea of a Kingdom of God, of a chosen people, of a Messiah, and the like, are, if not unknown, without significance to the Wise. The distinction between " Israel " and " the Gentiles " has no place in his mind. The darling phraseology of the prophets, such as " Judah," " Israel," " Jacob," " Zion," " My people," " the latter day," and the whole terminology of particularism, nowhere occurs in the Wisdom. The universalistic idea of God has created an idea of mankind equally large.

From these peculiarities of the Wisdom conclusions have been drawn which, though natural, are hasty. From the meagre allusions to ceremonial, it has been inferred that, in the age of the Wise, the ritual was much less developed than it became at a later period. It may be true that the ritual was scanty and less imposing in early times ; but such a conclusion cannot be drawn from the Proverbs, for other portions of the literature of the Wisdom, such as Ecclesiastes, usually considered a very late book, are marked by the same want of ritual allusions. And, unquestionably, the prophetic age ran parallel in great part to the age of the Wisdom ; but the whole circle of prophetic ideas is foreign to the Wise.

Again, it has been inferred, from the universalistic point of view of the Wisdom, that the Wise were men who found themselves outside the circle of beliefs

cherished by their countrymen, which they repudiated or sought to reduce to a naturalistic basis. But this view confounds the Wise with their direct opponents, the *letsîm,* or scorners. The latter were a class of sophists or sceptics, the deadliest enemies of the Wise, who being "wicked" and sinners" (Ps. i. 1) had gone the length of finding a speculative justification for their wickedness and unbelief. Looking back from the distance at which we ourselves live to the times of Revelation, we are apt to fancy that it came in a manner which made all denial of it or opposition to it impossible. But this was far from being the case. The evidence which authenticates Revelation is never demonstrative, but always moral. The contents of Revelation have always been the largest part of the evidence for its truth. But moral evidence is strong or weak according to the kind of mind to which it appeals. And thus there has always been opportunity for opposing, and, in point of fact, the same opposition to, Revelation. The prophets were disbelieved and persecuted. They were confronted by other prophets whom *they* called false, and who were so; but all of whom were not consciously false. There were the same confusions and the same difficulties in the path of faith, at the time when Revelation was given, that exist now, when it is complete.

The essence of faith lies deeper than intellectual judgment; and, consequently, external evidence is never of more than negative and secondary value. That "scorners," or sceptics, should exist alongside of Revelation, and be found like waifs in the pools and eddies down its whole course, was to be expected. How far they combined into societies, or formed a propaganda, is not easy to say. From allusions in the Proverbs, it is evident that they strove assiduously to

gain possession of the youthful mind of the country; and in this attempt they were met by the Wise, who put forth efforts equally strenuous to draw the rising thought of the land to their side. The aim of the Wise Man who gathered the Proverbs together was "to give subtilty to the simple [i.e., the undeveloped mind], to the young man knowledge and discretion" (chap. i. 4). And most of the exhortations of the Wisdom are directed to youth; for the hearer before the ancient sage is always his "son," that is, youthful scholar and friend. But, however peculiar and distinctive may be the direction which the Wisdom takes, the Wise Men stand on the common foundations of the faith of their people, and pursue the same ends as the other teachers in the nation.

The best known and best loved of the Wise is the author of the Proverbs chapters x.–xxii. Among these proverbs there are a few which seem to want any very deep moral purpose, and are little else than the remarks of a keen insight into the ways and motives of men, all of which to a thoughtful mind are full of interest, and the observation of them conducive to a lively though quiet enjoyment. Most of them, however, have a visible connexion with higher principles, and are designed to exhibit God realizing Himself in life and providence. Of whatever kind they be, the observations are always good-natured, and never betray irritation or dislike on the part of the Philosopher to his fellow men. He walks through the bazaars, and observes the peculiarities of Oriental marketing: "It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer: but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth" (chap. xx. 14). Or he remarks how our natural selfishness cuts into us somewhat deeper, and describes it with a certain caustic though even still kindly cynicism: "All the

brothers of the poor man do hate him; how much more will his neighbours go far from him" (chap. xix. 7). The difficulty of one's poor relations existed already in those days.

Sometimes his expressions are so pointed as to border on humour, as when he represents the slothful man expressing his deadly dread of labour by saying, "There is a lion in the road"; or as too lazy to lift his hand from the dish to his mouth, or to roast what he had taken in hunting; or when he describes the poor man whose domestic relations have been unfortunate as preferring to squeeze himself into a corner of the house-top rather than dwell with a brawling woman in a wide house (chap. xxv. 24); or when he ridicules the over-tenderness of the paternal heart: "Withhold not correction from the child: if thou beatest him with the rod, he will not *die*" (chap. xxiii. 13). But usually he shews a broad sympathy and a grave kindly tenderness for all the natural feelings and the instinctive desires of every sentient creature, embracing even the lower creation in his benevolent regard: "A righteous man regards the natural desires (*nephesh*) of his beast" (chap. xii. 10). That philosophy which annihilates the individual, which recognizes mankind but not men, to which humanity is an ever renewing, ever growing tree, from which the separate leaves drop off exhausted, where "the individual withers, and the race is more and more"—this philosophy is unknown to him. The whole endures, because each part endures; and he knows an antidote to the individual's fall: "Righteousness delivereth from death" (chap. x. 2). Hence to him every emotion and natural desire of the individual is of worth, and he regards it with sympathy, whether it be sorrow or its opposite, joy: "Sorrow in the heart

of a man bears him down" (chap. xii. 25); and on the other hand, "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine" (chap. xvii. 22). And his perception is delicate enough to see that, however grateful ordinarily the fellow feeling of other men is to us, there are times when we must be left alone with our feelings; and that in every human soul there is an inmost core so sensitive that it shrinks from all external condolence or sympathy as something too rude: "The heart knoweth its own bitterness, and a stranger intermeddleth not with its joy" (chap. xiv. 10). Yet, on the other hand, we live in one another, we stretch out our hands to the future; and sometimes we are divided, and the "half of our soul" embarks upon the sea, or wanders in distant lands, and we long to know how he fares: "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but the desire accomplished is sweet to the soul" (chap. xiii. 12, 19); "The light of the eyes rejoiceth the heart: and a good report maketh the bones fat" (chap. xv. 30); and, "As cold water to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country" (chap. xxv. 25). Nothing human is alien to the Wise Man; he is philanthropic in the literal sense; every way of man and every expression of his mind or nature has a charm for him.

Again, when we pass from the individual in itself to those broad distinctions which characterize it, as man and woman, father and child, youth and old man, it is singular to observe with what pleasure the Wise Man dwells on them as all beautiful in their place; and how he seizes on that in each, which is becoming to it, and constitutes its charm: "A gracious woman attains to honour: and strong (or laborious) men attain to wealth" (chap. xi. 16). That indescribable delicacy in woman, whether you call it tact, or taste, or sensibility, or grace, which is the complement of the strength or

force of man, and gives her her power, and secures her her place as surely as these secure him his, the Wise Man's eye fastens upon at once; and he is almost rude when he describes the opposite of this, that which we call vulgarity or coarseness, and which he calls want of "discretion," which even beauty is so far from hiding, that it throws it into relief: "As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is beauty in a woman who is without discretion" (chap. xi. 22). Similar is his judgment on other classes: "The glory of young men is their strength: the glory of old men is the grey head" (chap. xx. 29). It is not nature alone, but moral conduct, that makes the young man strong (chap. xxxi. 3, 4); and why the glory of old men is the grey head is explained in the following proverb: "The hoary head is a crown of glory, it is found in the way of righteousness" (chap. xvi. 31). The English Version spoils this by translating "*if* it be found," misapprehending entirely the Hebrew point of view, which is that "The fear of the Lord prolongeth days: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened" (chap. x. 27).

To the Hebrew this life in the body was the normal life. He had no doctrine of the immortality of the soul as distinct from the man. Neither had he any doctrine of a transcendent place of blessedness different from this earth, where the principles of God's government, impeded in their flow here by many obstacles, should roll on in their majestic course smooth and straight. He saw all those principles realized here. "Life" to him was what we ordinarily call by that name, and as lived in the body; and immortality was the continuance of this life, and was conferred by righteousness. The blessedness of the just, arising from the fellowship of God, was en-

joyed here. This, at least, is the point of view of these proverbs and of the early lyrics. The *fact* of death was ignored. In the lyrics death is absorbed in the higher feeling of life and in the ecstasy of conscious blessedness. And in the deep flow of principles in the proverbs it is submerged. To us Westerns, our metaphysical ideas about the "soul" and its natural immortality, and the ideas, naturally accompanying these, of the imperfection of matter and the body, and its being a clog upon the spirit and its prison-house, have suggested a different train of thought. "They whom the gods love die soon."

> The good die first,
> And they whose hearts are dry as summer dust
> Burn to the socket.

There is scarcely a trace of such an idea in Scripture: "In the way of righteousness is life; and the pathway thereof is immortality" (chap. xii. 28). Perhaps the other idea might be suggested by the events recorded regarding Enoch; but it was an idea foreign to the whole strain of Hebrew conception, which regarded this life as fully expressing the principles of Divine government, in which therefore the destiny of man was to be conclusively worked out, whether the destiny of the individual or the race. Such passages as Isaiah lvii. 1. "The righteous is taken away from the evil to come," are misinterpreted; the meaning being that the righteous is swept away and destroyed before the advancing tide of evil.

If now, before passing on to the individual's relation to that which is without him, we inquire how he should bear himself, what conditions and habits of mind he should cherish, and what activities he should pursue, we enter into the region of duty; and that brings up the great fixed idea on which all is built,

viz., the idea of Jehovah. The prevailing feeling in the mind should be the fear of the Lord, the sense of the all-present God, and that awe which this sense carries with it. Out of this will grow those conditions of mind that are becoming. One of the first of these will be *humility*, which, in a world where God is all, must be the way to all conduct that has in it success: "The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility" (chap. xv. 33): "By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, and honour, and life" (chap. xxii. 4): "When pride cometh, then cometh shame" (chap. xi. 2). This humility is not merely a temperament, or a social or ethical condition of mind; it is a religious attitude; it is the broad general sense of what a man is in the presence of God; hence one of its expressions is this: "Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?" (chap. xx. 9). But this abiding awe of God will reveal itself in the whole life, in a general gravity of deportment befitting him that is Wise, in equanimity of mind, in self-restraint and patience of temper, in thoughtful consideration in the presence of men, or on matters of importance, in slowness to speak, and even in a dignified manner of utterance, in opposition to the levity and want of consideration and the unthinking haste of the fool; and in general in a cautious and discreet course of conduct: "He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly" (chap. xiv. 17); "An equal temper is the life of the flesh; but keenness of mind is the rottenness of the bones" (chap. xiv. 30); "He that is slow to anger is greater than a hero; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city" (chap. xvi. 32); "The heart of the righteous meditates in order to answer: but the mouth of the wicked bubbleth over with evil things" (chap.

xv. 28); "The tongue of the righteous gracefully uttereth knowledge: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness" (chap. xv. 2); "He that spareth words hath knowledge. Wise men reserve knowledge: but the mouth of the fool is an imminent downfall" (chap. x. 14); "A fool's chagrin is presently known: but a prudent man covereth an affront" (chap. xii. 16). Many more proverbs to the same effect might be cited; they culminate in that which is the highest encomium of reticence: "Even a fool, when he holds his peace, is accounted a wise man" (chap. xvii. 28). There is an exquisite polish in these proverbs in the original, which a translation cannot convey; a delicate balance and opposition of clause to clause, and word to word, which betrays acute thinking and great elaboration. The proverbs chapter xv. 2 and chapter x. 14, are good examples; in the latter, the caution and reserve with which the Wise Man speaks, and the knowledge which at last he expresses, are balanced against the readiness of the fool, which is like a toppling ruin, and his utterance, which is like the clatter and confusion of the ruin when it falls.

These proverbs, describing how the individual expresses himself, already form a passage over to his general activity and relations to men. However profound the sense of Jehovah's power and efficiency was in the mind of the Wise, it never paralyzed the man, or led to a fatalistic and inert quiescence. Rather it stimulated him. For this Jehovah, whose spirit pervaded all, was not a Being unsympathetic with man or inaccessible to him, much less an insensible stream of force, deaf to appeal. Rather there was in man, or man himself was, a spirit similar; perhaps even it was the same spirit that was in man: "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward

parts of the breast" (chap. xx. 27). This spirit of man which goes through his breast like a lighted candle, bringing to view all that is there, being both a consciousness and a conscience, has been kindled by Jehovah, and He has lighted it at His own flame (Job xxxii. 8). Man is but a dimmer God; his capacities and motives and aims are the same, though feebler and more contracted. The nearness to him, therefore, of the great primal light will not be to obscure his own, but to make it burn the brighter. It will arouse him to activity, and to an activity in harmony with God Himself.

In these proverbs there is no trace of the strong sense of God driving men either to a pantheistic sluggishness and quietude, or to the despondency of a hopeless individualism. In this early time of the nation's strength and high fortune, the spirit was too fresh and strong to feel overpowered. Rather it was quickened, and the sense of harmony with Jehovah made it feel almost omnipotent. Later, when the nation sank beneath its accumulated misfortunes, and the individual lay prostrate under a heap of miseries which he could do nothing to shake off, there did begin to lie on the breast the nightmare of a destiny almost fatalistic; and the best advice Coheleth has to give is to accommodate one's self to it with what skill one may, in fear and reverence, and to snatch at the same time what enjoyment the senses or the sunshine will afford. But there is, at no time, any trace of that annihilation of effort seen in other Oriental religions, where "the life of the All is but the course of nature, where there is no history with a spiritual goal to be attained by moral activity . . . where there is no ideal yet to be reached . . . where the stream of world-history flows on of itself without the co-operation of man, man

having simply to yield himself to it, to adapt himself unresistingly to the eternally unvarying order of the world, to join himself as a passively revolved wheel into the constantly uniform moving clockwork." [1] Man is free as God is, if not so powerful; and his task is to use his freedom to fall into harmony of thought and conduct with Jehovah, the righteous Lord who loveth righteousness. Hence the encomiums passed upon diligence, and the severe reprobation of sloth: "The hand of the diligent maketh rich" (chap. x. 4); "Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty" (chap. xx. 13); "In all labour there is gain" (chap. xiv. 23).

But of course it is in intercourse with men that this activity can be best displayed, and the dispositions that should accompany and animate it can best be seen. This disposition, to state it in a single word, is charity, philanthropy in the widest sense. The grave, considerate kindliness of the Wise Man is one of his most attractive traits. Looking abroad upon the classes of men, his eye alights upon the poor, whom we have always with us, and he compassionates the dreary monotony of their condition: "All the days of the poor are evil" (chap. xv. 15); and he puts in a plea for their kindly treatment: "He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth; but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he" (chap. xiv. 21). Nay, regarding the various orders of society as the will and creation of Jehovah, he who disdains any of them seems to him to slight Jehovah Himself: "He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker" (chap. xiv. 31); but on the other hand, "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will He pay him again" (chap. xix. 17).

[1] Wuttke, *Ethics*, vol. i. p. 45.

But the bearing of the Wise among all classes is the expression of a wide human goodness. In the presence of men in general he is courteous: "A soft answer turneth away wrath"; he esteems others highly: "He who despiseth his neighbour is a fool" (chap. xi. 12); and should evil rumours regarding others reach his ear, he will give them no further currency: "He that divulges a slander is a fool" (chap. x. 18). Tale-bearing and slander are alluded to in the Old Testament in language of particular virulence. It seems to have been conducted of old, as a kind of private warfare, with great ferocity. In Psalm ci., which has been called "The King's Mirror," the royal author expresses his detestation of it, and his resolution to proscribe it in his court; and in Psalm xv. it is treated almost as a cardinal sin.

In our day the number of sins has greatly diminished, and it is only particular classes that can fall into them. A clergyman may still be guilty of several; a trader, perhaps, of one; but an independent man of wealth or station cannot sin. To the Hebrew mind backbiting was an odious vice. But civilization has softened our verdicts regarding many things; it has also taught us discrimination in applying our judgments. Perhaps in those days, from want of the means of public speech, slander was the weapon of strong men; it has now very much fallen into the hands of the weak things of the world, such as controversial writers on Scripture, and we mind it less. Christianity, too, the finest evidence for the truth of which is not miracles, nor its moral contents and the answer which it evokes in our own heart, but that it has raised woman to her true place, has perhaps contributed to the same result. By the softening influence of women on this species of warfare, its horrors

have been greatly mitigated.—In a word (to return to the Wise), the feeling of the Wise Man towards his neighbours is *love*, which thinketh no evil: "Hatred stirreth up strife; but love covereth all sins" (chap. x. 12); so that, so far from seeking to revenge evil, he hideth it: "He that covereth an offence seeketh love" (chap. xvii. 9). Of course, coupled with this, there was the practice of the severer virtues of justice, and particularly truthfulness, no vice being stigmatized so often as lying, and especially that form of it which is injurious to others, the bearing of false witness.

The foregoing pages, though containing little more than a number of passages from the Proverbs, may have given some distant and partial glimpses of the benevolent countenance and stately demeanour of the Wise Man. It remains to allude to the question, To what does this conduct, inculcated by the Wise Man, and followed by him, lead? The answer to this question, though here put last, is in truth the presupposition of the Wisdom, which is not a mere ethic, but an outcome of religion.

The reward of such conduct as the Wise Man inculcates might seem already attained in the satisfaction of doing good. But this mode of thinking was little in the way of the Hebrew mind. Both in speculation and in temperament the Jew was sensuous. As the body entered into his anthropology and his conception of life as an essential factor, the material world entered also as an essential element into his conception of the universe and its government. He was as far as possible from being an idealist. He demanded that his moral principles should be realized in the external world, and he believed that he saw his demand complied with. It was needless to raise the question whether virtue was its own reward,. It had its external reward in the

necessary principles of God's government: "Many a one scatters, and yet it increases" (chap. xi. 24); "The liberal soul is made fat; in the good of the righteous the city rejoices" (chap. x. 13). There is a moral order in the world without, and in the heart of man; and it pursues its end with an irreversible certainty.

It is here that the explanation is to be found of what has been thought extremely puzzling—the absence of a formal doctrine of immortality from the Old Testament Scriptures—and not in any intentional avoiding of such a topic by the Lawgiver or Revelation, for the purpose of inculcating the principles of the present moral life, or for any other purpose. That style of speaking of Revelation, common half a century ago, which told us that it was constructed so as, by its difficulties, to try our faith; and that prophecy was given in such a way that it should not be understood till it was fulfilled, and that its obscurity was necessary, lest infidels might say it had been fulfilled by men of set purpose—this style of thinking, which represented the Author of Revelation as stooping to subtleties and quirks for the purpose, of all others, of tripping up infidels, is happily disappearing. "I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth . . . I, the Lord, speak righteousness, I declare things that are right" (Isa. xlv. 19). Scripture speaks simply and without passion, and it says to infidels as to all others: "Whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear." Instead of looking for an explanation of the form of Scripture to an intention having respect to the future, we are turning more to seek a reasonable and sufficient cause in the conditions of the present.

The theory that the doctrine of immortality was kept hid from Israel, in order that the attention of the people might be fastened on the conditions of a

moral life here, introduces Western ideas into Scripture, makes two things out of one, and puts the cause for the effect. A moral life here *was* immortality. To what purpose present, in early or later Scripture, an explicit doctrine of immortality, when the doctrine was already given in the very conception of the universe current among the people? when it was held that life was that existence of the whole man in the body, which we ordinarily so call; that this life was had in fellowship with God, or in its coördinate human righteousness; and that it was indissoluble, because the conditions of the universe were normal, fully representing the character of God and His relations to men? Of course all this was, in some respects, ideal; and *facts*, such as death, were opposed to it. But the Hebrew doctrine of immortality was given in the idea and in the consciousness of the living saint; and the task of after revelation was to move out of the way the obstacles that stood before it. To us, on the contrary, the obstacles bulk so largely that we begin with them; and we are scarcely able to conceive a condition of mind that could give death a secondary place, or sweep it away in the rush of great principles regarding God and the universe, or sublime it in the intense ecstasy of conscious life in fellowship with God.

We have now to look at some of the particular problems of the Wisdom, and, after this, to advert shortly to that highest generalization of it which appears in Proverbs (chap. viii.), where, being abstracted from its empirical manifestation in the laws of life and providence, it was elevated into the region of transcendence, and acquired a subsistence of its own, being personified as the counterpart of the Divine mind, and Fellow of Jehovah.

As the Wisdom aimed at detecting and exhibiting

the operation of fixed principles in the world and life, it became practically a doctrine of Providence in a wide sense. In no nation were the principles and conditions of well-being and misfortune so clearly distinguished as among the Hebrews. The Lawgiver set out by laying before the people "blessing and cursing." Though the Theocracy was administered, as to its principles, in no way different from God's government of other nations, there was a difference in the swiftness with which these principles manifested themselves. When the nation sinned, defeat and subjection followed close upon the sin; when other nations sinned, or when they still sin, subjection follows with equal certainty, though not with the same rapidity. When an individual offended, there was immediately, in the ceremonial disability that ensued, a punishment of his offence. Thus, that fundamental connexion of evil and suffering, being extremely prominent in the Hebrew commonwealth, took possession of men's minds with a very firm hold. And no doubt this was intended. The Law was a ministration of death. Its purpose was to educate the people in the knowledge of sin and of retribution. In the theology of St. Paul the law stands not on the side of the "remedy," but on the side of the disease. It came in to aggravate the malady—that the offence might abound. It had other uses, and this view of it is not meant to be exhaustive. But as an intermediate institution, coming in between the promise and actual redemption, this was one of its effects and purposes. It augmented the disease both in fact and in the consciousness of the mind struggling with its demands. It revealed both sin and its consequences: "By the law is the knowledge of sin; when the commandment came, sin revived and I died." And the supernaturalness of God's conduct of the Theo-

cracy, under the covenant of Sinai merely, or mainly, brought out very plainly the principles of all moral government. God governs all States as He governed the Jewish State; the laws of His natural government do not differ from the laws of His supernatural government; but in the latter, their operation, being immediate, was very perceptible, while in His natural government, as they operate slowly, they often elude observation.

It was natural in this way, especially for a member of the Hebrew State, to apply the principle of retributive justice very stringently and universally. All evil he knew to be for sin; any evil, he concluded, must be for some sin. Where there was an evil, there must have been a sin to bring it forth. Evil was not an accident, nor was it a necessary outcome of the nature of things; it was an ever present parasite, fastening upon the trunk of the tree of human life, and bred by the condition of that tree: "Affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground; but man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward" (Job v. 6). This stringent application of the Law was more natural in a state of society like that existing in the East than it would be with us. There, society is simple; and its elements are detached from one another. The tribes live apart. They draw their subsistence from the soil in the most direct way. One class does not depend on another; there is no complex and intricate interweaving of relations, as in modern society. Hence the incidence of a calamity was generally direct; it did not pass through several strata, affecting the lowest most severely, though it might be caused by the highest. The movements of life were all simultaneous, and a calamity was seen to fall generally where it was deserved. In this way, not

in Israel only, but throughout the East, the principle of retributive righteousness was held very firmly : with the man who doeth well, it is well ; with the sinner, it is ill. And all evil is the direct effect of God's anger for sin.

It is probable that this general principle was one common to the Shemitic races, before one of them, viz., Israel, became " the people of the Book." Revelation adopted the principle, and sanctioned it at first in its generality ; by and by individuals and the whole people were led into circumstances, and passed through struggles, that suggested the necessary modifications upon it. The moral ideas of the primitive Shemitic races afford a very attractive subject of investigation. Unfortunately the materials on which a judgment must be formed are very scanty. It is becoming apparent, however, that Israel had much in common with the other tribes surrounding her, and that they remained behind at stages of moral condition and opinion which she abandoned for others far in advance. Even in such an approach towards organized society as was made on the settlement in Canaan, this simple faith must have received rude shocks. In the happy days of the early monarchy, indeed, when the kingdom of God was everywhere prosperous, and heathen States on all sides bowed before it, the principle was receiving splendid illustration. But in later times, when great heathen monarchies rose in the East, and trampled the little State under their heel, the principle could not but come into danger of question.

At first the deeper sense of sin might afford an explanation to reflecting minds ; these calamities befel them because they had forsaken the Lord their King. But in the long run, even repentance failed to secure restoration. The kingdom, which was still the king-

dom of God, was hopelessly trodden down by the heathen oppressors. The Psalms and Prophets are filled wlth the complaints and the astonishment of pious men over this anomaly. In the fate that overtook the different classes of the people, the failure of the principle was most signally manifested. It was the very cream of the nation that suffered the severest calamities. The lax and ethnicizing party, agreeing with their conquerors, or at least submitting to them, escaped suffering; while the true theocratic-hearted men, whether those left at home, such as Jeremiah, or those carried into exile, like Daniel, were the victims of extreme hardships and indignity, both at the hands of their enemies and from their false brethren. It is probable that many of the Psalms, which express complaints of the prosperous wicked, and suggest questionings as to the righteousness of Providence, belong to the era when the State was falling into decline. In the Book of Job, too, which is the Epic of the Wisdom, there are passages which show traces of great sufferings on the part of some classes of the people; but, as the scene of the poem is laid among the tribes lying east of Palestine, the pictures of social misery may represent the condition of the subjugated races there; although, the author being a genuine Hebrew, it is probable that something more than mere speculative interest or a personal experience moved him to his great undertaking, and that his colours are partly borrowed from the national sorrows of his own day.

The principle of retributive justice is the fundamental principle of moral government. The assertion of it was therefore natural at all times, whether late or early in the history of the people. It is asserted with perfect roundness in the First Psalm, probably a late composition. Doubts regarding the principle would

only be expressed when circumstances suggested them with such a force that they could not be repressed. When, therefore, we find a lengthy composition, like the middle chapters of the Proverbs, asserting the principle without restriction, we infer that the composition is early, and reflects a period of settled prosperity and reign of law. On the other hand, when we observe a great literary work, like the Book of Job, formally devoted to the treatment of moral anomalies in Providence, we may conclude that the body of the State was beginning to be covered with sores, and that the composition is considerably later. It is less easy to determine the date of smaller pieces like the Psalms, in which such questions are mooted. Some of these pieces are emotional and lyrical rather than didactic, and might be occasioned by any grave failure of the principle, though operating within a small area. Others, such as Psalm xlix., open with expressing a formal intention of treating the problem, and indicate that the difficulty was one which had begun to press on many minds.

The general principle, that it was well with the righteous and ill with the sinner, was seen to be broken in upon, on two sides. The wicked were many times observed to be prosperous; and, on the other hand, the righteous were plagued every day. The first side of the difficulty is treated in such Psalms as xvii., xxxvii., xlix., lxxiii. and others; the second side, in the Book of Job.

The simplest resolution of the problem is, perhaps, that seen in Psalm xxxvii. There the condition of the perplexed mind is not very aggravated, and the relief administered is simple. The difficulty was felt; it seems, was pretty widely felt. But the difficulty was simply a practical sore: it had not yet so lodged itself

in the mind as to become a speculative trouble. The condition of society was such that many wicked men were rich and prosperous, and there were righteous men in distress. This state of things led to envy, to irritation on the part of the just; and the Psalm is directed towards calming the ruffled feelings of the pious. Relief is administered in the form of an advice oft repeated, backed up by a statement of the method of moral government. The advice is: "Fret not thyself because of evil doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity; cease from anger, and be not wrathful; fret not thyself in any wise to do evil." The consideration urged in support of the advice is that the prosperity of the wicked is *brief*; it is an introduction to the general scope of things, speedily overcome by them, and the current flows on in its accustomed channels—"Fret not thyself because of evil doers, for they shall soon be cut down like the grass." "The wicked plotteth against the just; but the Lord laugheth at him, for He seeth *that his day is coming*." And on the other hand: "Trust in the Lord and do good; and thou shalt *inherit* the earth." The Psalmist satisfies himself and others with affirming the general principle, and by saying that the exception to it is of short duration. It is a practical solution, sufficient when the evil has gone no further than to breed discontent. The difficulty that there is exception at all, does not bulk largely in presence of the acknowledged brevity of its duration. There is no stretching out of the hand to grope after any principle, whether in God's general administration, or in His particular treatment of the wicked; nor even in that direction in which peace was sometimes found—a profounder conception of what true felicity and prosperity was. The Psalmist does indeed refer to the

joy that accompanies faith, but this joy is not held up as true felicity, in contrast with the happiness of outward prosperity. It is rather touched on incidentally, in course of an exhortation to keep the faith even amidst present confusions, because out of these the old moral order will speedily arise—"Delight thyself also in the Lord; and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart." "A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked; for the arms of the wicked shall be broken." All turns upon the speed with which the current, hemmed or turned aside for a moment, sweeps away the obstacles, and returns to fill again the old channels.

The doctrine of Psalm xxxvii. is that the triumphing of the wicked is for a moment: "Yet a little while, and they shall not be." But the righteous shall be fed, shall dwell in the land, and inherit the earth. "Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days." Calamity comes upon the wicked man in the midst of his life. The Psalmist does not pursue his fate further, nor does he emphasize particularly the manner of his death. Now this solution is, of course, true in particular cases. It is many times applicable. But it is obviously incapable of being made a general principle, to explain and satisfy the mind on all cases. The friends of Job urged it as a universal principle against him. Job has hardly words to express his scorn of the infatuated self-hardening of the dogmatic mind against obvious facts, and his sense of the melancholy contrast which facts presented to traditional theories—"When I remember I am afraid, and trembling taketh hold on my flesh. Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, wax mighty in power?"

Obviously the observation of new facts demanded new explanations and further modifications of the

theory. Wicked men might be seen who had grown hoary in their wickedness. Relief from such a spectacle was sought by dwelling on the manner of the wicked man's death. It was said that however long the ungodly might live, he would not depart from this world in peace, his end would be amidst terrible manifestations of the Divine displeasure. This is the position held in Psalm lxxiii. This Psalm forms an advance on xxxvii. in various ways. The Psalmist's mind is in a condition greatly more inflamed. The problem has passed out of the region of mere feeling, and become a real speculative difficulty, what the writer calls an *'amal*, a trouble so great as to threaten to confound the boundary lines of good and evil: "As for me, my feet were almost gone. . . . Behold, these are the ungodly who prosper in the world. . . . Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain . . . for all the day long have I been plagued." The moral equilibrium of the Psalmist had been disturbed by the spectacles that life presented, and he rocked to and fro between faith and disbelief. At last his mind returned to steadiness; and, in the Psalm, he surveys the path by which he had reached it. In the "sanctuaries of God" a light was shed upon the end of the wicked; and, on his own side, the consciousness of God's presence with him without change upheld him: "Surely Thou didst set them in slippery places . . . How are they brought to destruction, as in a moment! . . . I am continually with Thee. Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel; and afterwards take me to glory." The "sanctuaries" or holy places of God do not appear to be material localities; they are the innermost circles, the furthest back principles of God's holy providence. The Psalmist was enabled to look through the confusions of a life, however long, and behind the brilliancy of a prosperity, however great;

and behold the terrors of God's displeasure gathering round the wicked man at last.

This is a solution far in advance of that in Psalm xxxvii. It shifts the problem from this life to the edge of the grave. Psalm xxxvii. brought the wicked to destruction in the midtime of his days, and left the godly inheriting the earth. Death, except as an event that cleared the ground of the wicked, did not enter into the question. In Psalm lxxiii. all turns upon death and its accompaniments, in the destiny both of the righteous and the ungodly. We must dismiss from our mind those inveterate ideas of death and the world beyond, which are now ingrained into our habits of thinking, partly from heathen and partly from Christian sources, if we would understand the Old Testament mode of viewing such a subject. To the philosophic Greek death was a relief; the soul escaped from her prison, and spread her wings, to soar unhindered in the sublimest regions. To the Christian to depart is to be with Christ, which is far better. To the Old Testament saint to die was to remain dead, not non-existent, but dead. To be dead was to be insensible to the fellowship of the living, whether man or God: "In Sheol who shall give Thee thanks?" A change in Sheol was not to be conceived, for Sheol was the realm of changeless silence, where the departed subsisted, but did not live. There were not two worlds, one here, and another beyond; the one a howling wilderness and vale of tears, the other a happy land where bliss immortal reigns. Something like the opposite of this was the conception that prevailed; the bliss and life were here, the gloom and apathy there. The afflicted suppliant in Psalm xxxix. begs for a brief respite, ere he departed, of happiness and light; for these would soon be no more possible: "O spare me,

that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more; for I am a stranger with Thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were." Life was a brief but happy visit and sojourn with God; soon it came to an end, and joy died with it.

It is true that this is not to be called the *doctrine* of Scripture. Sheol is no creation of Revelation. Such views were rather national sentiments which Revelation found and raised its own fabric upon. Sheol was a creation of the religious imagination of the people, based on the sense of sin; and its dark and huge proportions were but projections of a haunted fancy working on the sights and circumstances of natural death. But Revelation waged no war against the fancy. It left Sheol yawning and dark, and gave relief to trembling faith in another way. It brought both just and wicked to the brink; but the just it transported across the abyss to God. If there were two worlds, the one was not here and the other beyond; both were here, and what was beyond was but a prolongation of that which existed here, and which could be observed here; if not always in life, at least in the circumstances of death. This world was not one where merely tendencies could be detected, where there was an excess or preponderance in one direction, but so much which was adverse that principles struggled vainly to attain their goal. The tendencies reached results. The crisis or judgment worked itself out. Men's destinies were matured. And in the article of death they manifested themselves. The wicked were brought to destruction as in a moment; and a veil of darkness is let fall upon their further destiny. The righteous is brought also to the brink of a Sheol where a gracious hand is held out to "take" him, and Sheol is overleapt. The fellowship with God is not broken

in death, but continued. The phrase "afterward wilt take me to glory" might seem to imply more, that the fellowship was not only prolonged, but perfected. This is possible. But the idea, that the blessedness of the saint was greater after death than here, would be a very remarkable one in the midst of other Old Testament ideas. If the translation *to* glory be adopted, the term "glory" probably refers to God Himself, and not to any new condition of the saint. The words might be rendered, *in* glory, or even, "after glory thou wilt take me," in which case the reference would be to the manner of the death or life of the just, in opposition to that of the wicked. And this would make the antithesis in the Psalm more exact.

The solution in Psalm lxxiii. is almost complete, and embraces all the elements. No doubt, it has no explanation to offer of the fact that the ungodly may enjoy a lifetime's prosperity. But, in the deeper analysis of life which the Psalmist is enabled to effect, a great step towards this is made. And he is enabled, in the interests of the righteous at least, to dispose of death. Death is always, in the Old Testament, a secondary thing; it is an obstacle, a mystery, a cloud that hangs on the horizon and darkens the outflow of principles. The light of faith pierces and dissolves it, and the stream of life with God on this side flows on visible and unchecked beyond. The solution in Psalm xlix. is identical, although the lines drawn in lxxiii. are laid down there in deeper colours. Psalm lxxiii. pursues mainly the destiny of the just; Psalm xlix. hangs, with an awful interest, over the fate of the ungodly. But there is no real advance: "God will redeem my soul out of the hand of Sheol: for He will take me." But of the wicked it is said: "Like sheep they are set in Sheol; Death shepherds them." The life of the

righteous with God is prolonged, and Sheol is overleapt. The wicked sink into Sheol; they remain dead; but death, though not life, is still subsistence.

There is one point in the solution of Psalm lxxiii. which left room for further complications. The ungodly are represented as being delivered over to death amidst terrible external manifestations of God's anger; even on this side their destiny was declared. This was a solution, no doubt, true in many cases. It was a solution, too, in advance of former ones; and it came to be regarded as a finality. The traditional mind found rest in it, and shut its eyes. It was very hard, in Old Testament times, to detach the spiritual relation to God from its material illustration, to hold fast to a spiritual truth which found no verification in the visible events of life. It was the very axiom of the Wisdom that principles and phenomena were in correspondence. And in laying down this axiom it was but expressing the grand principle of the Old Dispensation. In that Dispensation the general law was that all truths were *embodied*; they had also a material expression. But one of the tasks of the old economy was to drill holes in itself, to begin making breaches along the whole circumference of the material wall that bounded it —by the Law to die to the Law. And none were busier agents in these operations than the Wise. A psalm here and there, the complaint of a prophet like Habakkuk, are all the evidence that remains to us of processes of mind, that must have been going on extensively among reflecting men.

The author of the Book of Job uncovers fires that had been smouldering long in many hearts, and rakes them together, heaping piles of fuel of his own upon the mass. The condition of Job differs from that of the Psalmists. Their problem

was the prosperity of the wicked; or, if it was their own affliction, they either knew the cause of it, or it had not gone so far as to interrupt their fellowship with Heaven. Job's problem was the affliction of the just, an affliction unexplained by anything in his life; and as he saw in it proof of the anger of God, and believed, as his malady was mortal, that this anger would pursue him to the grave, this threw the solution of his problem out of this world altogether, and into the realm beyond. It was *there* that he knew he would see God. But here he came into collision with the principle of Psalm lxxiii., in which his immortal friends sought refuge against him. Step by step, Job's mind reached to some apprehension of the meaning of his history. At least he threw to the winds, one after another, traditional solutions of it which satisfied his friends, and which, if the case had not been his own, would probably have satisfied him. Stripped and naked, tortured by disease, with not a shred of material verification to hang by, God even repudiating, as it seemed, his friendship, he planted his foot upon his own consciousness of fellowship with God, and stood unmoved; for he *knew* that his fellowship with God was also, in spite of all evidence to the contrary, God's fellowship with him. And when his friends pointed to his frame dissolving amidst the awful tokens of God's anger (which he admitted), and said it was ever so with the wicked, he called it false—false on both its sides; false that he, though so plagued, was wicked, and false that the wicked were at all times so plagued. The death of the wicked could be seen many times to be peaceful, and his memory cherished among men; "They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment (i.e., in peace) go down to the grave. . . . He is borne away to the grave, and men keep watch over his

tomb. The clods of the valley are sweet unto him, and all men draw after him, as there were innumerable before him. How then comfort ye me in vain, seeing in your answers there remaineth falsehood." Job chased his adversaries, one after another, out of the ancient strongholds. His results, however, as given in the body of the Book, are wholly negative. He destroys, in every one of its forms, the absoluteness of the principle of retributive justice. But the general principle itself is still conserved in the Epilogue, and the positive contribution to the question is given in the Prologue. The principle is re-affirmed in Job's renewed prosperity, as it could not but be, if the equilibrium of doubts and certainties was to be preserved, and the centre of gravity of human life not shifted from faith to scepticism; and an advance on the former doctrine, equal almost to a revolution, is made in the revelations of the heavenly Cabinet, where suffering is seen to be abstracted from the merits of the sufferer altogether, and raised to the place of a general force in the constitution of the Universe, wielded by God for general ends like other forces, and affecting individuals not in their own cause, but in the interests of the whole.

In Proverbs x. and following chapters, Wisdom unveils her face to men without any thought of herself. The Wise Man, in whom her spirit had taken up its abode, pours it out with no formal thought of what he is doing. In the happy early times of the commonwealth, when peace and good order prevailed, and the moral life of the people was yet rigid and severe, Wisdom was silently giving effect to herself in all her principles; and every effort of her power was reflected in the heart of the Wise, and his lips expressed it, all consciousness of what he was doing being repressed in

the fascination of his task. But in later days, when, amidst repeated revolutions, external authority was relaxed, and social morality debauched; when brigand Murder stalked through the land, or lurked in the thickets; and Adultery, in the shape of the strange woman, with lubricity in her looks, and the harlot's attire upon her back, flitted about the streets, decoying the youth to her haunts, these hideous shapes, impersonations of Folly, threw up by contrast before the Wise Man's eye another figure, chaste and beautiful, with the serenity of order on her face, and truth and religion in her eyes, the figure of Wisdom. The traits of this exquisite picture are borrowed from a hundred sources, from the political conditions of the time, from the usages of the religious teachers of the day, from all the ways of public life in the city, and the manners of the men and women of the age, good and bad; yet not from these as superficial phenomena, playing before men's eyes like unsubstantial shadows that come and go, but all of them, in their true meaning, fragments and expressions of a hidden whole, the moral framework of the human economy, image of the mind of God, whose Agent and Fellow it is. This is the Wisdom of chapters i.–ix., an abstract idealism of surprising depth and beauty.

These nine chapters are all from one hand, though possibly, as some think, they may contain in some parts later amplifications; and the figure of Wisdom is the same throughout. The eighth chapter, however, gathers all the scattered traits together; and an outline of this chapter, with a few additional remarks, is all that need be offered here.

First, in Verses 1–3, Wisdom is introduced as a public teacher, and the places are described where she takes her stand and speaks:

Doth not Wisdom cry?
And Understanding put forth her voice?
She standeth in the top of high places, by the way,
In the meeting-places of the paths;
Beside the gates, at the entry of the city,
At the coming in at the doors, she crieth.

The high places, on the top of which Wisdom takes her stand, are supposed to be the heights about the Temple, from which the crowds of worshippers could be addressed as they passed—a favourite position of the prophets in their public office. The crossways or meeting-places of the streets were naturally the throngest parts of the city ; and the gates, where justice was dispensed, and the public life and thought of men expressed themselves, were ever crowded with masses of people passing out and in at their narrow openings. There, where the people most did congregate, Wisdom takes her place, and appeals to men.

Second, verses 4–11, Wisdom herself speaks; she names those whom she desires to hear her, men in general, and particularly the unformed minds among them, and descants upon the rectitude and preciousness of that which she brings before them.

Unto you, O men, I call;
And my voice is to the sons of men.
O ye simple, understand wisdom;
And, ye fools, be of an understanding heart.
Hear, for I will speak of excellent things;
And the opening of my lips shall be right things.
For my mouth shall speak truth;
And wickedness is an abomination to my lips.
Receive my instruction, and not silver;
And knowledge rather than choice gold.
For wisdom is better than rubies;
For all the things that may be desired are not to be compared unto her.

What Wisdom offers to men is Wisdom herself, true

and precious. And this being the case, she passes on to a delineation of herself, the forms in which she appears, the good she procures; and ends with a history of her origin, and her work from the beginning.

> I Wisdom indwell in prudence,
> And find out knowledge of witty inventions.
> Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom:
> I am understanding;
> I have power.
> In me kings rule,
> And princes decree justice.
> In me princes are princes,
> And nobles, all the judges of the earth.

It is not said that Wisdom gives prudence, that she supplies counsel and power, that the king who has her rules well, but something much more than that. She indwells in prudence or subtilty of the loftier kind; it is a form in which she expresses herself. She is the soul of which it is the body. She *is* understanding, kingship, judgment. The forms of intelligence express her. That society is organized, that intelligence and rule are exercised, that there are offices and officers dispensing right—these things are embodiments of her. Like a subtle element underlying all, Wisdom determines to a point in intelligence and mind; she polarizes herself in kingship and social order; she scintillates off in understanding and counsel and administration. She is the substratum of intelligence, and, of course, also of godliness; for the fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom, and all that is opposed to piety is the negation of her: "Pride and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate" (verse 13).

Then, having said that she was not prudish or hard to win, as might be feared of one so beautiful, but ready to give herself to him who would embrace her—

"I love them that love me"—and having spoken of the splendid dowry that she brings with her: "Riches and honour are with me; yea, durable riches and righteousness"; her own image seems to fill her mind wholly; she forgets the crowds around her, and, in a reverie, soliloquizes on her past, when she was alone with God, the first of His works, or ever the earth was; and when she was His workman in creation, all of which was but herself taking shape in the magical play of her power (verses 22–31); till at last, opening her eyes, she again addresses the astonished throng: "Now therefore, hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep my ways" (verse 32).

The Lord possessed me as the beginning of His way,
The first of His works long agone.
I was set up from of old, from the beginning,
Or ever the earth was.
When there were no deeps, I was brought forth,
When there were no fountains laden with water.
Before the mountains were sunk,
Before the hills was I brought forth:
While as yet He had not made the earth, nor the fields,
Nor the highest part of the dust of the world.

When He set up the heavens, I was there,
When He drew a circle upon the face of the deep:
When He made firm the skies above,
As the fountains of the (upper) deep gushed wildly forth:
When He gave to the sea His decree,
That the waters should not pass His commandment:
When He marked out the foundations of the earth;
Then was I with Him, as His workman,
And day by day was I (full of) delights,
Playing before Him at all times;
Playing in His habitable earth,
And my delights were with the sons of men.

The first half of this passage, verses 22–26, states that Wisdom was with God from the beginning; she was brought forth before the hills, or ever the earth was.

God possessed her, or gave her being, as the beginning of His way, i.e., of His activity. The first movement of the Godhead outward was the giving subsistence to the Wisdom. The second half states that Wisdom was present at creation, and that, not as a spectator, but as a workman; that the work was an intoxicating joy, that the self-realization of Wisdom in all the forms of creation was with the ease and conscious power of one playing before Jehovah; and that in His habitable earth and among the sons of men the play was most brilliant and the delight keenest.

The details of this most singular passage may be summed up in one or two final remarks.

1. Wisdom appears as a public teacher. This picture of Wisdom, as occupying all the prominent places by the ways, as taking her place in the crowded thoroughfares and at the thronging gates, and making her appeal to men, forcing herself on their attention, as she brings her own beautiful form before their eyes, and greets them with her musical words, and offers herself to them to be loved, is very charming. The picture could have been drawn only by combining many materials together, such as the public teaching of the prophets, the more private conversational instruction of the Wise, the judicial procedure of the public law at the gates, and the many lessons of the social order and well-being which the thronging thoroughfares presented. These are the things that swell the voice of Wisdom; and the halo of beauty that surrounds her person, the serenity and the purity, the truth and goodwill to men, are in contrast to the disorder and the vice and the wretchedness that follow them, and from which she would hold men back. She is the personification of everything that had a voice to speak to men, and impress upon them the principles of Divine order in

the world. Her voice gathers into itself the many voices continually sounding in men's ears, the voice of public life, of a well-ordered society, of revelation, or, in a word, of the whole course of things.

Distinctions might be drawn between these at other times, but, to the universalistic view of the Wise Man, they are all but elements of one whole.

2. If the picture of Wisdom, the Teacher, embraces all this, that which she teaches will be equally broad. The theme of Wisdom, the Teacher, is Wisdom herself—Wisdom the thing. There is such a thing. Within the sphere of life and the world, there is a fixed order. In men's minds there are principles of thought and judgment. The order without and the principles in the mind correspond. Together, they form one system, one framework upon which the world is built. Fragments of these inner principles, corresponding to forms of the external order, are called prudence and counsel: "I, Wisdom, indwell in prudence." Other fragments are called rule, kingship, judicial function: "In me kings are kings." And still other, and the highest, are the fear of the Lord and the hating of evil. But it is obvious that these things, though capable of being considered separately, make up together a unity which embraces the principles of ethics and religion and even of intelligence. And this, which is Wisdom, the objective thing, is the theme of Wisdom, the Preacher. In a word, the principles of the economy of the human race and the earth on which it is placed, form a well-ordered organism, an immaterial framework; but, though immaterial, it is not latent; it speaks with a thousand tongues of revelation and of life; and what it speaks of in the ears of men is itself.

3. One more step remains to be taken. This Wisdom, this organic frame of principles now realized

in the human economy, had its origin in God; and the organism existed with Him, before it was realized in the actual creation. It was from the beginning. The first movement of the Divine Mind outward gave it birth. It was not so much a Divine conception as a scheme articulated and pliant, with a power inhering in it of effectuating itself, projected out of the Divine Mind. Hence it is idealized as having subsistence of its own beside Jehovah; and His purpose to realize it is regarded as a faculty of its own, a capacity within it to effectuate itself, which it does in creation. It is Jehovah's Artificer in creation. In this work it plays before Him in the intoxication of delight. Its play is creation. As it moves in grace and power before Him, its exquisitely articulated limbs and frame bearing themselves with a Divine harmony, every movement embodies itself in some creative work. And where the Divine beauty and power of its movements were most conspicuous and its delight deepest, was in the habitable earth, and with the children of men.

It would be strange if that portion of the Old Testament known as the literature of the Wisdom offered no contribution to the Christology of Scripture. Every portion of Scripture makes a contribution to this, suitable to itself. The prophets, who are statesmen, furnish the idea of the kingdom of God and the Messiah, the Anointed, who is its King. The Psalms, which are private utterances of the believer, consecrate the idea of the Saint or Holy One, often afflicted, but staying himself on God, and delivered from death through his godly fear. The contribution which the Wisdom will make will partake of its own character, and consist of some idea universalistic or cosmical. And this idea we have in the Wisdom of Proverbs. There can be no doubt that the conceptions of Wisdom, just

referred to, entered into the Messianic consciousness of Israel, and enriched it; and they are reproduced in the New Testament in connection with the Son. "The Word was with God." "All things were made by Him." "In Him do all things subsist."

THE PROPHET HOSEA

THERE are several points of interest in the person and work of Hosea. First, he was a prophet of the northern kingdom: we may say, the only prophet of the northern kingdom who has left any written prophecy. The great prophets of Israel, Elijah and Elisha, lived before written prophecy began. Unless we accept the theory of Hitzig and some other critics, that the two chapters numbered xv. and xvi. in our present book of Isaiah form a fragment of the prophecies of Jonah, who was a prophet of the North, we possess nothing of his; for the book that goes by his name is not prophecy but narrative, and makes no pretension to be written by him; and is, to all appearance, a very great deal later than his day. Amos, though his prophetic career, so far as we know it, was confined to the North, was a native of Judæa; and he looked on the conditions of human life in the North with a stranger's eye, and estimated them from a stranger's point of view. Perhaps the pictures which he draws are all the sharper in their outlines on this account, and the figures bolder and more energetic, and the colours laid on with a more vigorous and determined hand. At least his sketches of the magnates of Israel and of the women of Samaria are by no friendly pencil. The artist is one of the people, and his subject is an effeminate and dissolute aristocracy; and we may be sure no pains was taken to tone down the picture or throw any shade over its hideousness. But

Hosea was a native of that evil northern land himself. He had grown up familiar with all the forms of its life: however evil they might seem to him, they could not strike him as strange. And as even the forms of wickedness which mark a people's history spring from characteristics of the people's mind and position which are not evil, these must have been shared by the prophet; and if he could not sympathize with the evil wrought by his countrymen, he could see whence it arose, and judge it more leniently, and condemn it less severely.

It is cause for special thankfulness that Scripture has preserved to us this book, the product of a northern mind, the testimony borne to itself by the northern kingdom. The books of Kings and Chronicles are late, and pass lightly over the affairs of the kingdom of the Ten Tribes: their view is general; and, as was right, condemnatory. And we are apt, in our hasty and superficial manner, to conclude that, because this kingdom is condemned as upon the whole bad, therefore it was wholly bad, and to forget that moral uniformity is nowhere seen; that there is a struggle everywhere between the good and the evil, and that only after a conflict of many generations is the one or the other victorious. The designs of Providence in the erection of this kingdom form a very profound problem. Favoured in its origin by prophets, Ahijah and Shemaiah; fostered and purified by the greatest prophetic geniuses of the Hebrew people, Elijah and Elisha; preached to by Amos, a direct messenger from God, and its sins condemned, but with only a condemnation by inference for itself; at last assailed by Hosea, one of its own children, and the chiefest and first of its sins declared to be the sin of its ever having come into existence—these things form a riddle difficult to solve.

Had Providence, in permitting its rise, other designs? and the prophets, in promoting the secession, other hopes? And might the kingdom have had a great destiny, and played a great part in the history of salvation, if Jeroboam the son of Nebat had understood the principles of God's kingdom? We see the possibilities of things only when these are possibilities no more. When our life is spent, or irrevocably lowered, we see the meaning of living, and exclaim, What this life of ours might have been! By the time Hosea came upon the scene, the energies of Israel were exhausted; his youthful powers had been wasted; there was no destiny awaiting him now; he was prematurely old: "Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not: yea, grey hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth it not" (chap. vii. 9). Not in years, but in vital power, he was old; and, like others in that state, he could not be made to feel it.

Yet we cannot help a certain sympathy for that northern kingdom. It embodied in its origin a protest, strong and strange for that time and that Eastern land, against political despotism, even if we should not go the length of regarding the movement as a protest against religious innovation and centralization, and an appeal to the conservative spirit to return to old forms —a view certainly not that of Hosea. No doubt the break occurred where there had always been a weakness. A crack in the political unity ran across the country, from the Mediterranean to the Jordan, between the boundaries of Ephraim and Benjamin. In the Song of Deborah we observe all the northern tribes acting together, both east and west of the Jordan; but no allusion is made to any of the tribes south of Ephraim. The secession of the northern confederation was, however, none the less a bold and decisive

stroke in behalf of freedom and popular rights. Perhaps, like a political neighbour of our own, its instinct for freedom was much in excess of its capacity for self-government; and the frequent use which it made of the weapon of revolution brought no lasting liberty or tranquillity to itself. It shook off one despot only to come under the yoke of another. The great number of different tribes formed an obstacle to close coherence, although it was favourable to the love of freedom; and the kingdom was rarely united except when some stern soldier grasped the reins of power. The three greatest rulers of the North were Omri, Jeroboam II., and Pekah, the son of Remaliah, all of them military despots, but men of ability, obeyed at home and feared abroad.

The northern kingdom embraced the happiest regions of the country: the most fertile, as the plains of Sharon and Jezreel; the most splendidly wooded, as Ephraim, Carmel, and Lebanon; and the best watered. The streams of Naphtali and Gilead never ran dry; and the cool breezes from Lebanon perpetually invigorated the dwellers in the great plain at its foot. Nature was kinder, and her moods more variously genial, than in the South. Hence the life of the people was perhaps more joyous, and their love for nature deeper; and, as they were far from the centre of Jehovah-worship, their religious feelings and thoughts were freer. Both what is good and bad in their history may be partly accounted for in this way. There are allusions in the Song of Solomon which seem to imply a later age than that of Solomon. If this exquisite pastoral be not by him, it owes its origin to the northern kingdom, nature's varying moods in which it perfectly reflects. Again, if the afflicted righteous of Job be not merely the righteous man, but the righteous

nation and people trodden down under the foot of professed idolaters, it was in all likelihood the sufferings of Ephraim that drove one of his children thus to express his sorrow and his perplexity over his country's fate and the inexplicable ways of God. Such freedom in criticizing God's ways, such boldness of despair in the face of the problems of Providence, seem foreign to the devouter minds of the South. They might have been found in the desert; but the book is certainly a production of the Hebrew mind, and perhaps the conditions of its production are easiest to be conceived in the northern kingdom.

If we owe to the North the Song of Songs, the book of Job, and the Prophet Hosea, to say nothing of the Song of Deborah and much else in the historical books, our obligations are of such a kind as to make us regard, with a perplexed wonder, the profound capabilities and the perverse destiny of this people. But, on the other hand, the evil in Israel may to some extent be explained in the same way. This profounder love of nature and this less deep awe of God might readily increase each other, and grow into excess; and so it seems to have been. The charms of nature altogether overpowered the people, and her sweet influences became divine. The nation fell into the worship of the many powers of physical life under the name of Baal; and this enfeebling worship crushed out all the moral energy from their heart, and led to the grossest dissoluteness of manners.

In the South the moral temper was sterner. No prophet of Judah draws such pictures of immorality as Amos does, or even Hosea: "Whoredom and wine and new wine take away the understanding" (chap. iv. 11). Micah and Isaiah both chastise the

people of the South for the oppression of the poor by the rich, for their avarice, and judicial corruption, and drunkenness ; but neither of them alludes to licentiousness. But in Israel this vice, with its usual accompaniments of violence and bloodshed, had deeply penetrated all classes, even those whose purity is most closely watched : " I will not punish your daughters when they commit whoredom, nor your betrothed when they commit adultery : for ye yourselves go aside with whores, and ye sacrifice with harlots " (chap. iv. 14) ; " False swearing, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood " (chap. iv. 2) : i.e., one bloody deed follows immediately on the heels of another.

It would be to carry the theory of the influence of circumstance in the formation of mind and character too far, to explain the peculiarities of this prophet's disposition and writings from his northern origin. And with the life of Elijah before us, we could hardly deny that there were minds with strong enough fibre in this kingdom, Yet it is singular that the author of Isaiah xv. xvi. so completely resembles Hosea in the tenderness and sorrow of his tone. Hosea surpasses him only because it is his brethren, and not strangers, whose fate he laments and strives to avert. His voice, when addressing his countrymen, is always choked with emotion. His speech is little else than a succession of sobs. He behaves, before the wickedness and inevitable doom of his countrymen, with the extravagance of a distracted mourner in the presence of his dead. He clings to them, and calls to them, and will not believe that hope is past ; and, rising up to a height of ecstasy which is almost frenzy, he apostrophizes death with the threat, in Jehovah's name, " O death, I will be thy plagues ! " His grief over his countrymen is pure,

without one element of anger. He has none of the scorn which Amos cannot conceal for the luxury and effeminacy of the magnates of Israel. And corresponding to his own character is his conception of God. The Divine Heart is but his own with Divine deepness. Jehovah also is at His wit's end with His people: "O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? for thy goodness is as a morning cloud" (chap. vi. 4). He too is distracted between love and grief: "How shall I give thee up, O Ephraim?" (chap. xi. 8). Hosea, first of all the prophets, rises to the sublime height of calling the affection with which Jehovah regards His people, *love*. No prophet had named such a word before. In Joel, God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth Him of the evil" (chap. ii. 13). In Amos, He is good and beneficent, the great outstanding example of His goodness being His redemption of His people from Egypt, and His planting them in Canaan: "Also I brought you up from the land of Egypt, and led you forty years through the wilderness, to possess the land of the Amorite" (chap. ii. 9, 10); and His relation to Israel is expressed by the profound term *know*: "You only have I *known* of all the families of the earth" (chap. iii. 2). But no prophet before Hosea ventures to name the *love* of God: "When Israel was a child, then I *loved* him, and called My son out of Egypt" (chap. xi. 1); "I will heal their backslidings, I will *love* them freely" (chap. xiv. 4). This idea is the most remarkable thing in Hosea's prophecy, and perhaps is almost the only theological idea in it—the various forms in which it is presented, the figures in which it is set, and the various deductions from it, virtually making up the prophecy.

The main contents of Hosea's prophecy are these:

1. His lamentations over the immorality and the violence everywhere prevailing among the people. This immorality he calls whoredom and adultery: "They are all adulterers; they are as an oven heated by the baker." (Chap. vii. 4. Compare the passages already cited.) Coupled with this is the riot and excess in wine indulged in by the highest in the land on great State occasions—"On the day of our king the princes made themselves sick with a fever of wine" (chap. vii. 5)—and the treacherous revolutionary spirit that burned in the hearts of the nobles, breaking out in deeds of bloodshed, and manifesting itself, as it descended through all classes, in robbery and violence, in which even the priests engaged: "They have made ready their heart like an oven, whiles they lie in wait: . . . they are all hot as an oven, and devour their judges; all their kings are fallen (chap. vii. 6 ff.); "Gilead is a city tracked with blood, and as robbers lie in wait, so is the company of priests; they murder in the way towards Shechem." (Chap. vi. 8, ff. Comp. chap. vii. 1.) In addition to this there was the secular spirit and devotion to material well-being that had taken possession of every mind: "Canaan! in his hand are balances of deceit: he loveth to oppress. Ephraim saith, Surely I am become rich: I have found me wealth" (chap. xii. 7).

The picture which this prophet exhibits of the internal condition of the northern kingdom in his day is a terrible one. He lived during, perhaps, the most unquiet and turbulent times which the country had ever passed through. His prophecies extend over a considerable period of its history. Some of them, perhaps, belong to the time anterior to the death of Jeroboam II., but others fall in the time of the long interregnum that followed his death. After this interregnum of eleven

years, Zechariah, son of Jeroboam, succeeded in mounting the throne, on which he sat only a few months, and then was assassinated by Shallum. It is in the midst of this unquiet time that Hosea addresses his countrymen. The firm rule of Jeroboam had just ended. The forces of revolution were newly broken out, and were acting in all their strength. Under the last king's long and successful reign the country had advanced greatly in material prosperity. There were ample resources in the land to nourish the various factions, and they struggled against each other with a fury that was fresh and unexhausted. The Prophet can compare this destructive fury to nothing but the raging heat of an oven, although the figure contains the darker trait of a long-sighted, scheming policy, that suppressed and nursed the fire, till the time came to let it blaze out.

In Amos's day, who prophesied under Jeroboam, society was dissolute; but in Hosea's day it was dissolved. The former prophet assails the great, the upper classes, for their immorality and drunkenness, calling the women "kine of Bashan," full-fed, luxurious, and gross, saying to their lords, "*Bring, and let us drink*"; and for their pitiless treatment of the poor, whom they sold for a pair of shoes, whose pledged garments they retained overnight, and to whom they sold the refuse of the grain. But oppression of the poor and injustice are usual occurrences in the East, and only prove that a government is bad, not that it is unstable. In Hosea's days, however, every class seemed flung against another; and the furious passions, whether revolutionary or immoral, of the people consumed all about them. In these circumstances, it hardly needed a prophet to see that the end of the State was at hand. And, what was worst of all, no hold could be got of the people, from their superficial fickleness and moral shal-

lowness. Sometimes they seemed resolved to abide by their idolatry, with a resolute insensibility to better things: "Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone." Sometimes, again, the feeling of their true relations to Jehovah seemed as if it would come back, and soften their hearts: "My God, we know Thee, we Israel" (chap. viii. 2); "Come, and let us return unto the Lord: . . . He hath smitten, and He will bind us up" (chap. vi. 1). But their superficiality and changeableness threw even the Divine Mind into despair: "O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? . . . for your goodness is as a morning cloud" (chap. vi. 4).

2. The religious declension and false worship of the people, in its two forms of Baal or nature-worship, and Jehovah-worship under the figure of a calf or young bull, forms the largest element in Hosea's book. The prophet calls this also, whoredom and adultery: "Plead with your mother, plead; for she is not My wife, neither am I her Husband: and let her put away her whoredoms from her face, and her adulteries from between her breasts." (Chap. ii. 2. Comp. ver. 5, 7, 12, 13; iv. 13 ff.; v. 3, etc.) The name of whoredom, given to this false worship, might be the natural corollary of the conception, first expressed by this prophet, and but a figure for his main idea of the Love-relation of Jehovah to His people, that the Lord is the Husband of the Church. But it is probable that the name arose in another way. The Baal-worship was accompanied by shameful prostitution, in which, indeed, it partly consisted; and it is likely that these practices first brought down upon the Baal-religion this general name, although the idea fitted perfectly into the great conception of Jehovah's relation of Husband to Israel, and in this connection received much elaboration and extension from successive prophets.

It is remarkable that Hosea joins the calf-worship with the worship of Baal in the sweep of a single condemnation. The calf-worship is also idolatry: "He hath cast off thy calf, O Samaria: . . . for from Israel is it also: the workman made it, and it is no God." (Chap. viii. 5. Comp. x. 5 ff.; xiii. 2 ff.) This looks like an advance in logical clearness and stringency over the Prophet's predecessors. To Amos the calf-worship was reprehensible, but he had not called it idolatry. And when we read the history of Elijah, we discover that, while he fought against the Baal-worship as a matter of life and death to Israel, he has no word of condemnation for the worship of the calf. The conclusion has been drawn that in these facts we may trace the advance, step by step, of the popular religion of Israel, from nature-worship first to a worship of Jehovah which was still sensuous; and then, by a further clarification of the Divine idea, to a worship of Him which was purely spiritual, and that the leaders in this advance were the prophets.

That this advance was involved in the conflict which the prophets waged, no one will deny. But what will be denied is, that the spiritual worship of Jehovah is a novelty, and the result of the conflict. The prophets fought, according to their own representation at least, not in order to gain this, but lest it should be lost. They are not innovators; they call men back to the old paths. The storm-cloud of judgment which, in the vision of Amos, sweeps round the whole horizon, discharges its fury on Judah "because they have despised the law of the Lord, and have not kept His commandments, and their *lies* have caused them to err" (Amos ii. 4); and Hosea threatens the priests in these terms: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast

rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to Me: seeing thou hast *forgotten* the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children" (chap. iv. 6).

The spiritual worship of Jehovah, without material form, had prevailed from the time of Moses, for it is not supposed that any image existed in the Tabernacle. But that this worship was sometimes in danger of being overwhelmed by the tide of idolatry is certain, and is a thing quite natural. For the Israelites were surrounded on all sides by these idolatrous tendencies, and their kings sought alliances with the nations where they prevailed. And the religious condition even within Palestine must have been a very mixed one. For a "mixed multitude" came up with Israel out of Egypt. Tribes here and there attached themselves to the host in the wilderness. The native populations of Canaan, among whom the grossest forms of nature-worship prevailed, were not exterminated, but absorbed into the nation, becoming with it practically, with the rarest exceptions, one people. Such a mass could not be penetrated in a day with pure conceptions of deity. On the contrary, the pure light of Jehovah could only illuminate the fringes of this illimitable darkness, which threatened ever to swallow it up. Too much weight is given to the presumed silence of Elijah regarding the calf worship. The history of Elijah which we possess is later than his day; and it was no doubt the design of the author of it, to confine his work to tracing the glorious campaign of his hero against the infamous priests of Baal —a campaign the full fruits of which were reaped only in the sweeping revolution of Jehu, that shortly after involved the house of Omri in the ruin of the superstition which it had upheld.

And then, as to the difference between Hosea and Amos, we must, in judging their statements, observe their type of mind, and the natural light in which they view things. Amos is the prophet of morality, of natural right, of the ethical order in human life—upheld, no doubt, by Jehovah, and referrible to Him at last.[1] Hosea is a prophet of religion. Jehovah is the starting point from which he begins, the centre of his whole view. The light that covers all things is a light that falls on them from Jehovah. In that light he sees sharply the bearings of all practices in the nation's life; and the incongruity of the calf worship with the true idea of Jehovah at once strikes his eye. The prophets of the second half of the ninth and of the eighth century are of immense value in enabling us to conceive the condition of men's minds in their day. But they do more than this: they enable us to overshoot their day, and behold what is indefinitely anterior to it. The most significant contribution which they make is the attitude which they take up. They are not leaders of the people in a path that shall conduct them to new truths—truths never known before. On the contrary, their movement is retrograde. They desire to preserve for the people what they are losing. They call them back to old attainments in knowledge and sanctity; they tell them that they have "forgotten" and "corrupted themselves." (Comp. chap. viii. 1; xiii. 4, where, for "shalt know," read "knowest.")

But the picture of religious confusion which the Prophet draws is even more extraordinary than his pictures of social and political anarchy. He justly complains that there is "no truth, nor mercy, nor *knowledge of God*

[1] Duhm, *Theology of the Prophets*.

in the land" (chap. iv. 1), and that the "people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (chap. iv. 6). All true conceptions of deity had gone from their minds. A vague sense of some power "not themselves" in nature seemed the utmost they could reach. There was no want of sacrifice and incense and feasts; and these were offered too, to the name of Jehovah, but with no perception of His character: "I desire . . . the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings" (chap. vi. 6). The Baal-worship and Jehovah-worship had run into one. The existing syncretism was the confluence of two streams: a worship of Jehovah, although, among the mass of the people, with somewhat clouded conceptions of His spirituality and ethical nature —conceptions which the calf-worship tended to darken still further—and a nature-worship, under the name of Baal, which, running always as a feeble stream among the people, as their history in the wilderness shews (chap. ix. 10; xi. 1 ff.), had been reinforced and increased to a flood by the inbreak of Phœnician idolatry. Even when the revolution of Jehu put an end to this worship as a public institution, its spirit remained, and served itself of the various forms of Jehovah-worship, and lived on.

The confusion was deepened by the fact that in Israel the name Baal, which means "lord," had naturally been in use as a designation of Jehovah —a fact which can hardly be doubted, when we remember the many proper names compounded with Baal, such as Ishbaal. Afterwards, when the name fell into disrepute, and, from its dangerous character, was proscribed, these names were transformed; and the popular abhorrence substituted *bosheth* ("shame") for the primary element of the compound. Hosea (chap. ii. 16 ff.) looks forward to the happy time when this

name shall no more be used: "In that day thou shalt call Me *Ishi* (my Husband); thou shalt no more call Me *Baali* (my Baal, lord)." But a change of name could do little to clarify the people's conceptions of God. Sterner measures were demanded. As sin has so infected our natural bodies that they must die and be dissolved, and atom be separated from atom, till sin has nought to which to attach itself, and thus really we shall "die unto sin"; so every institution which the Baal-spirit had infected in Israel, from the rites of religion down to the husbandry of the ground, shall perish and cease, and the remnant of Baal shall be cut off, and Jehovah alone shall be exalted. "The corn, and the wine, and the oil, of which the people said, These are my hire that the Baalim have given me, the Lord will take back in the time thereof" (chap. ii. *passim*)—and the institutions of religion, which Baal had invaded and filled with his unclean spirit, shall be abolished, till a purer worship arise; and the kingdom shall be broken up, and the people go into captivity: "The children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim." (Chap. iii. 4. Comp. ii. 13 ff.; viii. 11 ff.; ix. 1 ff., etc.)

3. Another considerable element in Hosea's prophecy is the opposition to the foolish politics of his country, the alternate coquetting with Assyria and Egypt. He gives the same name of whoredom and "hiring loves" to this policy: "They are gone up to Assyria, like a wild ass alone by himself: Ephraim hireth loves" (chap. viii. 9); "Then Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound, and Ephraim went to Assyria, and sent to king Jareb: but he is not able to heal you" (chap. v. 13). The name

of whoredom may have been given to the foreign policy of the nation, either because the foreign nations whose aid was sought were idolatrous, and their overwhelming influence tended to a reciprocity of religion, and to the flooding of the land of Israel with their thought and the forms of their civilization, as Isaiah says of his countrymen, "*They are filled from the East*," and contrasts the happy time coming, when the people shall return to what is native, and when the branch of the Lord shall be beautiful, . . . and the fruit of the land a pride and a glory (Isa. ii. 6 ; iv. 2) ; or the name may have sprung immediately from the Prophet's conception of Jehovah as the Husband of Israel. This leaning on foreign nations and trust in them indicated alienation from Jehovah and mistrust of Him ; the Husband felt He did not possess the whole-hearted affection which He claimed.

This changeable policy, not unnatural to a small State situated between two great empires, in the collision of which it was ever liable to be crushed, was dangerous even on principles of ordinary Statecraft. It was like the unstable fluttering, from place to place, of a foolish bird : "Ephraim is like a silly dove, without understanding : they call to Egypt, they go to Assyria" (chap. vii. 11). In the nature of things such a policy must prove disastrous. Both empires resented, and felt free to revenge, what they could call disloyalty. But, in the Prophet's view, the disloyalty was of a deeper kind; it was against Jehovah : and the chastisement of it came direct from Him : "When they go, I will spread My net upon them" (chap. vii. 12). Here and everywhere in the Prophets, the Nemesis of the evil deed is wrapped up within it ; men fall by their own counsels (chap. xi. 6) ; the reed on which they lean goes up into their hand : "Ephraim

shall return to Egypt, and they shall eat unclean food in Assyria" (chap. ix. 3).[1]

4. The last thing which Hosea blames in Israel is its rebellion and defection from the house of David, which, truly considered, was defection from Jehovah also. This is its primary offence, and the root of all other offences (chap. viii. 4; xiii. 11, 16). Hence in their regeneration they shall undo their past rebellion, "and seek Jehovah their God, and David their king" (chap. iii. 5).

5. The great truth which Hosea has to teach is the love of Jehovah to Israel. It was in love that He redeemed them from Egypt (chap. xi. 1); His relations to them, all through their history, have been those of love (chap. xi. 4); even His chastisements have been inflicted in love (chap. ii. 14 and chap. iii. *passim*);

[1] The expression "unclean" used here indicates that, in the view of the Prophet and those of his time, the land of Israel was sacred, and all other lands profane; that only in that land could Jehovah be worshipped by sacrifice and aright; and that food, not sanctified by the preliminary rite of sacrifice to Jehovah, was unclean (chap. ix. 4 ff.). This is one of a class of references in the early Prophets of extreme value in the present condition of Old Testament criticism, when investigators into the antiquity and order of succession of the Hebrew records have turned away from the literary characteristics of the books, as offering no basis for anything except the most general conclusions, to pursue inquiries into the archæological contents of the books, the ideas prevailing in them, the relations of law to law, and codes of law to one another, and the like, and thus trace the progress of thought and institution, and construct a history of Israel from within. Hosea is particularly rich in allusions to matters now in controversy. Compare, on the appliances of worship, chapter iii. 4; on the written law, viii. 12; the multiplicity of altars, xii. 11; viii. 11; x. 1; iv. 13; the novelty of the Baal-worship, xiii. 1, 4; xi. 2; ix. 8; vii. 13; historical allusions, i. 4; iii. 5; vi. 7, if we read "like Adam"; x. 9, 14; xi. 8; xii. 3 ff., 12 ff.

and, finally, their restoration and everlasting peace shall come about through Jehovah's love (chap. v. 4 ff.). This relation of love Hosea expresses by calling Jehovah the Father and, especially, the Husband of Israel. The idea of the latter relation runs through the whole prophecy, and is the more fertile idea of the two; or, at least, is truer to the primary conception of the Old Testament religion, which is that of a covenant (chap. vi. 7), and not that of generation by Jehovah; although the latter idea, really the more profound, is touched upon by Hosea, and more fully developed by later prophets. Throughout the Prophets, who are statesmen in the kingdom of God, the person or subject, with whom Jehovah enters into relations, is always the community of Israel. Individual Israelites only share the blessings of this fellowship, in a secondary way, as members of the community.

No doubt, side by side with this view, there runs another. The claims of the individual spirit ever thrust themselves forward, and become more pressing; and the fruit of this strife of the individual to attain and express his true relations to Jehovah, we observe in the Psalms and in such books as Job. To this strife we owe the full development of such doctrines as that of immortality. But the Prophets deal with the kingdom of God and its destinies; all their activities are directed toward the well-being and perfection of the community. And the idea of the marriage relation between Jehovah and the community, when once struck, opened up the way both to the extension and the deepening of former conceptions of the covenant relation. The somewhat hard and merely civil notions of fidelity to a paction, and offence at the breach of it, have the glow of human relations thrown over them. Affection, and faithful-

ness, and the keen emotions of wounded love, and hasty anger (Isa. liv. 8), and putting away, and an overwhelming regret that longs for reunion, and much else (chap. ii. 19 ff.), are all sides of one great truth, proofs of profound efforts to approach what can never be reached, the idea of the love of God "that passeth knowledge." How strong a hold this idea had taken of the prophet Hosea, we may see from the extraordinary use which he makes of the circumstances of his own married life, in the first three chapters of his book.

In this connection an interesting question arises, viz., What is the relation to one another of the ideas which have been referred to above in particulars 1 to 5? Which of them is primary, and in what order did they rise? In seeking an answer to such a question, we must distinguish between the way in which these ideas arose historically in the Prophet's mind, as the forms of the national life and the tendencies of his country presented themselves to him, and the way in which we perceive them to lie in his mind, when, towards the end of his career perhaps, he sat down to write his book. By this time his scheme of ideas had crystallized; and the order of thought in his own mind, although he does not follow this order strictly in his book, is the order which reading his book at once suggests to our minds. The idea of the Divine Love and the marriage relation is first; and all the other ideas are but deductions from it. That this idea had already become primary when he wrote, is evident from his placing, at the head of his work, the history or allegory of his own married life. What follows, not only in chapter ii., but on to the end, is but exposition of the one thought. But the thought is grasped with extraordinary clearness, and followed out with great consistency.

First, the love of Jehovah elevates the object of it into a personality, and gives it a unity of feeling, giving it also the sense of benefit, and of responsibility. But from this unity follows the sin of the schism of the nation under Jeroboam. This divided the object on which God's love was fixed; it both made that love, which cannot be divided, impossible; and, particularly, it made impossible the reciprocal duties. Whether we might not find here an argument even for a more perfect superficial unity than exists among Christian Churches may be left a suggestion.

Again, it seems carrying out the idea of the married relation with even a greater stringency and inwardness, when the Prophet condemns the national policy. It was not merely that seeking the help of Assyria and Egypt shewed distrust of Jehovah: this might be momentary, and due to the perilous exigencies of the situation. The Prophet, with a certain subtlety, seizes the condition of mind of the community, and the direction of the nation's heart, which indicated profound alienation of feeling, and dissatisfaction with the whole range of affections and duties that her relation to Jehovah imposed. What he detected in her policy was the desire to rank as one of the nations (chap. vii. 8), to become a military power and ride upon horses (chap. xiv. 3), and affect the pomp of a secular State by building "palaces" and "fenced cities" (chap. viii. 14). It was this secular feeling and entire misconception of her true meaning that prompted the community to demand a king at first, and led men like Samuel, who saw clearly the meaning of it, to resist the demand. Even in this early age Hosea and other prophets understood clearly what Christ stated in words: "My kingdom is not of this world."

And, once more, if the breaking up of the kingdom,

and mixing among the nations (chap. vii. 8), were held by the Prophet to be a disruption of the one consciousness of the object beloved, and a confusion fatal to the continuance of Jehovah's affection, and to the right performance of duties to Him, the setting up of Baal-worship or even calf-worship was much more an offence against His love. This not only shewed alienation of feeling; it was downright infidelity. And the Prophet exposes, with a grave severity unmixed with any feeling of its absurdity, the feminine vanity and love of attire that characterized the community even when pursuing her grosser pleasures—when "she decked herself with her ear-rings and her jewels, and went after her lovers" (chap. ii. 13).

The order of the Prophet's book shews that, when he wrote it, the primary idea in his mind was the love-relation of Jehovah to Israel, and that his other thoughts follow from it as corollaries. It is possible, however, that he did not start on his prophetic career with any such scheme in his mind, but was led to it in attacking, one by one, and independently, the practical mischiefs he encountered among the people. There are some indications, however, which would lead us to infer that the idea of the marriage-relation of Jehovah to Israel was one with which the Prophet began his career of public preaching; and, if this be so, we are perhaps put upon the track of the way in which this great primary idea came to take possession of him. The prophecy commences: "In the beginning, when the Lord spake by Hosea, the Lord said unto Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms" (chap. i. 2). There seems this much at least of history here, that the idea of Israel's infidelity, and consequently the idea of her married relation to Jehovah, was a primary one in the Prophet's mind from the moment of his public

action, however much his long activity may have given it clearness. Consequently we are thrown into a period anterior to this, to find the circumstances that gave the idea such force to him. These circumstances are no doubt those which he narrates in his own personal history. To suppose that Jehovah would have commanded his prophet to ally himself to a woman already known as of impure life is absurd and monstrous. On the other hand, the supposition that the story told in chapters i. to iii. of the Prophet's married life is pure allegory, with no element of history in it, is superficial, and does no justice to the severe realism of the Prophet's character and words. Some such miserable history as he narrates had no doubt been his own. His wife had gone astray from him, sharing the deep corruption of the time. What had happened to him had happened to others. Nay, it was not a corruption of individuals only ; it was universal. Israel was corrupt ; and the thought flashed on him that his history was but a type of the history of Jehovah and His people. And, when he looked into it still more deeply, the additional conviction forced itself on his mind that it was not an accident, or a misfortune, that had brought him through such painful experiences. It was God's providential way of making a prophet of him, and giving him His prophetic word. Henceforth he comes forward as a prophet, and speaks with the energy and pathos of one who has experienced in life what he speaks, whose experiences have been his school for his work, and who feels that the Lord designed them to be so, and had through them lifted him up into a fellowship with Himself. Of course, when he came to write his prophecies, long after, he extended the bare outline of facts, and added to it much ideal ornamentation, in order the better to body out the great divine truth

which both his life and revelation had so profoundly impressed upon him.

Nothing more than a brief allusion need be made to the brilliant anticipations of the Prophet in regard to the future of his people, founded on the unchangeable love of Jehovah. These anticipations prove that Hosea felt certain of Israel's restoration to God's favour (chap. i. 10; xiv. 3 ff.); of the reunion of the disrupted kingdom, in the Messiah's days, under "one head" (chap. i. 11); of the reconstruction of the dismembered tribes, set forth as a resurrection (chap. vi. 2), an idea elaborated into such splendid proportions by Ezekiel (chap. xxxvii.), and applied, apparently, in a literal way to deceased individuals of the house of Israel in Isaiah xxvi.; of the destruction of Death and Hell (chap. xiii. 14); and the final settlement of the people of God in holy beauty and unchanging power, when they "shall grow as the lily, and cast forth their roots like Lebanon" (chap. xiv. 5).

THE PROPHET AMOS

THERE are many of opinion that the oldest written prophecy which we possess is that of the prophet Joel, which is assigned, by those who consider it very early, to the first quarter of the ninth century, in the beginning of the reign of Joash. The balance of modern opinion, however, inclines towards assigning a much later date to this prophet. The prophet Jonah lived and prophesied during the earlier part of the reign of Jeroboam II.; but beyond the prophecy referred to in 2 Kings xiv. 25, which was fulfilled by the warlike operations of Jeroboam, nothing of his has come down to us; for our present Book of Jonah is not a prophecy, but an historical episode. Some scholars, indeed, assign to him the two chapters xv. and xvi. in the Book of Isaiah, but this is only a conjecture. Consequently the earliest prophetic writing of which we can speak with certainty is the Book of the prophet Amos.

The heading to the prophecies of Amos states that he prophesied "in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel, two years before the earthquake." The chronology of the kings of Israel and Judah is confessedly obscure. Jeroboam probably did not outlive the middle of the eighth century, though some place his death in the first quarter of the century. Uzziah or Azariah is supposed to be mentioned in the Assyrian records as late as 740,

though the reference is disputed. The precise date, "two years before the earthquake," suggests that the prophetic career of Amos in northern Israel was of short duration, and that he fulfilled his course when Jeroboam and Uzziah were both upon the throne. The Book supplies evidence that he prophesied in the reign of Jeroboam (chap. vii. 10 *seq.*); and a later prophet (Zech. xiv. 5) informs us that the earthquake referred to occurred in the reign of Uzziah, though we have no means of fixing its date more exactly. The prophetic work of Amos may therefore be assigned to the first half of the eighth century, before 750.

Little more is known of the prophet than that he belonged to the district of Tekoa, and was a shepherd. Tekoa, whence the wise woman came whom Joab employed to turn the heart of David again towards his banished son (2 Sam. xiv.), was a place twelve miles south of Jerusalem, almost the farthest village in that direction, all beyond it running into pasture and dipping into the desert, so that the district was well adapted for flocks, and the valleys for the cultivation of the sycomore fig. The place has been identified from ruins still remaining. Here Amos was one of the herdmen. The term *noked*, rendered herdmen, is not conclusive as to the prophet's social position. He might have borne such a name though the owner of flocks, for Mesha, king of Moab, is so called (2 Kings iii. 4), though the word is there rendered "sheepmaster." Amos, however, further says of himself that the Lord took him from behind the flocks (chap. vii. 14), which seems to imply that he kept the flocks, though perhaps it does not exclude his being the owner of some of them. He adds that he was a cultivator of sycomore fruit, a kind of food said to be used by the poorer class of people. He was thus a man of the lower ranks of life, unlike the three

other great prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, all of whom belonged to the higher or to the priestly class; and his history illustrates the freedom of the grace that called to the prophetic office.

Of the manner of the prophet's life before his call to prophesy, beyond what we can imagine from his occupation, we know nothing; nor of the causes, if any secondary causes there were, that induced him to cross the border, and testify against the northern kingdom. Though a shepherd, he was learned in the things of God. He shows such familiarity with the history of his people that we are justified in inferring that some historical work was in his hands. He cannot, one would fancy, be a specimen of the men of whom his class in the kingdom of Judah was composed. It could hardly happen that such knowledge of history, and such power to generalize upon the principles of God's government of the world and men, as he everywhere shows, could have been common among the herdmen of his day. And yet the spirit of God does not usually teach mere facts capable of being otherwise learned. And we may infer, from the case of this prophet, that the nation's history was known in its great turning points even among the common people, and that even those whose occupation was the meanest, and whose life was passed farthest from the centres of religious influence and what we should call civilization, were able to rise to lofty thoughts of God, and to generalize very broadly on His ways.

The prophet's history, indeed, compels us to be more careful than is usual, in regard to the inferences which we draw from his own language in his prophecies. Reading him, or indeed any of the prophets, we are ready to conclude that the prophet stood on one side, and the nation *en masse* upon the other; that besides him there was none righteous, no, not one. The idea suggested to

us by the prophets of each successive age is the idea to which Elijah gave expression when he said, "I only am left alone." Yet we know how greatly he was mistaken; and it is certain that we must be on our guard against drawing too sweeping conclusions from similar language in other prophets. The prophet's function was that of a *corrector morum*; he was "full of power by the Spirit of the Lord, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin" (Mic. iii. 8), and it was the blots on the face of society, and its perversities, that attracted his eye. Those evils to which he applied his scourge undoubtedly existed; probably they were practised by the majority of the nation, but there was, at all times, a minority likeminded with the prophet; and how large the minority was cannot be inferred from his words, which are those of despondency or indignation.

The existence of such a right-minded minority may be inferred, not only from the principle laid down by St. Paul, as applicable both to his own times and those of Elijah, that there was a "remnant according to the election of grace," but from many other circumstances. Too often, no doubt, the minority wanted courage; or they were scattered, and unable to make their power felt against the ruling classes when opposed to them; or special circumstances prevented them from acting in the way to be expected of them. For example, the permission to return granted by Cyrus to the exiles, was not taken advantage of by nearly all who remained true to the religion of their fathers, for a second colony returned nearly a hundred years later under Nehemiah. The exiles, acting on the advice of Jeremiah in his letter to them (chap. xxix.), had probably formed connexions which could not easily be severed; and they might not feel assured that the Lord's

set time to favour Zion was fully come. Men's actions are often not those which we should have expected from their position in history, because circumstances of which we are ignorant influenced their conduct.

The great proof, however, of the presence of this right-minded minority in the nation at all times is just the fact of the existence of the prophets. We cannot account for the appearance of a succession of such men otherwise than on the supposition that they arose out of a society, in the main, likeminded with themselves, and fitted to give them birth—that they were the efflorescence, season after season, of a tree whose roots always stood in the soil. Something immediately extraordinary in the case of each individual prophet being fully admitted, something which is not to be quite explained by the operation of the mind upon truth already committed to it under the influences of Providence and life, still this operation is a thing on which the strongest emphasis must be laid. For this operation is but another name for religious life; and the history of Israel is a history of religious life, and not a history of successive external Divine interpositions merely, which never succeeded in translating themselves into conditions of the human mind. Each prophet is the child of a past stretching back indefinitely behind him; and, if so, this past must have put forth its power in the forces and religious life of the society which gave the prophet birth.

Several well known modern writers on prophecy, using as argument the strong language of the prophets just referred to, have concluded that such a prophet as Amos stood virtually alone in the nation; that there was a great gulf fixed, on one side of which stood the prophet, and on the other, the people in a mass; and that what the prophet did was nothing less than to

enunciate and introduce a new religion, which had almost nothing in common with that hitherto professed by the people beyond the name Jehovah, employed by both. This theory is not only opposed to all the representations of the prophets themselves, and the universal tradition among the writers of Israel, but it entirely fails to account for the prophet. The old view, according to which each prophet was a simple isolated miracle, out of all connexion with the life and thought of his time, really offered an explanation, if the view could be accepted; and if the choice lay between the two theories, we should be driven to accept the old theory as necessary to the satisfaction of our understanding. The fact, however, that the prophet Amos himself arose out of the lowest ranks of the people, is sufficient evidence that there existed no such gulf between the prophets and the universal mass of the nation, as the modern writers referred to represent.

Returning to the prophet, we find him familiar with the history of his people. From a single word, "his brother," we infer that he was acquainted with the story of Jacob and Esau (chap. i. 11). From another expression, "Moab shall die with tumult" (chap. ii. 2), we perceive that the prophecies of Balaam were familiar to him (Num. xxiv. 17). The prohibitions of the law are insisted upon, when he is denouncing the sins of the people, such as retaining pledged garments over night: "They lay themselves down upon clothes laid to pledge by every altar" (chap. ii. 8)—in defiance of the law (Exod. xxii. 26). These laws were, no doubt, in his hands in a written form. He knows of the forty years' journeying in the wilderness, and the traditions about the gigantic bulk of the Amorites (chap. ii. 10). He is acquainted with the history of David, and knows that he was a poet and musician (chap. vi. 5). Besides

all this, he is familiar with the history of the nations around Israel, and even of those far off, such as Calneh, Kir, and Hamath (chap. vi. 2); his eye is attracted by the movements among the nations, and their migrations from one land to another, on which he bases broad religious generalizations, seeing in them the directing hand of the God of Israel, "who brought the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir, and Israel from Egypt" (chap. ix. 7). Though the earliest of the canonical prophets, his view of the world is perhaps broader than that of any of them, just as his definitions of religion surpass in incisiveness and clearness those of the majority of his successors.

It is not quite easy to give any outline of the prophet's Book or sketch of its contents, because the same general ideas occur very frequently. These general ideas are in the main: the injustice done to the poor of the people and the oppression of them by the great, in forgetfulness of the law of Jehovah, and of His goodness to them in bringing them up out of Egypt and destroying the nations before them, and in raising up prophets and spiritual guides among them; then threats of judgment and the downfall of the State because of these sins; then warnings against such hopes as they cherished regarding Jehovah's relation to them as His people, whom He could not cast off. Such hopes were vain: the anger of Jehovah could not be appeased by sacrifice and offering, nor was He one to be bribed by the fat of fed beasts. He sought righteousness. And their longing for His appearance at the day of the Lord was a delusive desire. He would appear, but for their destruction, not their salvation: "Wherefore will ye have the day of the Lord? the day of the Lord is darkness, and not light; as if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him" (chap. v. 18). Jehovah was their God,

but this was no mere national relation; as a nation, they were no more to Him than other nations: "Are ye not as the children of the Ethiopians unto Me, O house of Israel?" (chap. ix. 7); only as a righteous nation could He be their God, and it was not their need of deliverance, but their sins, that would draw Him forth from His place, to chastise them: "Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel" (chap. iv. 12). Yet He could not cease to be their God, and in the far-off future, when judgment had done its work, and He had sifted them among all nations, He would return and build again the tabernacle of David that had fallen down, and plant the people on their own land, from which they should no more be plucked up (chap. ix. 11).

The prophecy may be divided into five general sections, each containing a principal idea, though not to the exclusion of the conceptions found in the other divisions.

Chap. i.–ii. A universal view of the sin of the nations and the judgment of Jehovah. Jehovah shall roar out of Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; and the breath of His anger shall wither up Carmel and the pastures of the shepherds. The lion's lair is Mount Zion, and his roar is that with which he springs upon his prey (chap. iii. 4). The judgment is universal, upon all the nations of the world as it lay under the eye of the prophet; and each nation is judged for its particular sin. The cloud laden with disaster trails round the whole horizon, discharging itself upon the nations in succession, Syria, Edom, Ammon, Moab, the Philistines, and Phœnicia, Judah included, till it settles at last over Israel. The judgment comes from Jehovah, who dwells in Zion; it falls on all the nations, and it falls on them for their sin. This sin is regarded chiefly as inhumanity or injustice, though to this, on Israel's part,

are added ingratitude and forgetfulness of Jehovah's will.

Chapter iii.–iv. 3. The second section contains threats of judgment upon the people because of their injustice to one another, and because of the oppression of the poor by the privileged classes. This oppression is such a flagrant breach of the natural law of mankind that even the heathen would shudder at it: "Publish ye in the palaces of Ashdod, and in the palaces of the land of Egypt, and say, Assemble yourselves upon the mountains of Samaria, and behold what great tumults are therein, and what great oppressions are in the midst of her" (chap. iii. 9). The spirit of cruelty and oppression has taken possession not of the men only, but of the women, who are indifferent to the sufferings of others, if they can but gratify their own voluptuous desires: "Hear, ye kine of Bashan, in the mountain of Samaria, which oppress the poor, which crush the needy, which say unto their lords, Bring, and let us drink" (chap. iv. 1). Therefore destruction shall be on men and women alike—on men: "Thus saith the Lord, An adversary shall there be even round about the land; and he shall bring down thy strength from thee, and thy palaces shall be spoiled" (chap. iii. 11); and on women: "The Lord God hath sworn by His holiness, that, lo, the days shall come upon you, that they shall take you away with hooks, and your offspring with fish-hooks. And ye shall go out at the breaches, every one straight before her" (chap. iv. 3).

Chap. iv. 4–v. Threats of judgment because of the false worship of the people, and their misconception of the nature of Jehovah and the true meaning of His relation to Israel.

The passage is probably an answer to a thought which, the prophet felt, might rise in the people's mind

to obviate the force of his former threats. They deemed that they could avert the anger of Jehovah by increasing the richness of His sacrifices and the splendour of His service (chap. v. 22). The same delusion on the people's part is met by Hosea with similar words : " With their flocks and their herds shall they go to seek Jehovah ; but they shall not find Him : He hath withdrawn Himself from them " (chap. v. 6). The prophet ironically invites the worshippers to redoubled assiduity in their ritual service of Jehovah : " Go to Bethel, and transgress ; to Gilgal, and multiply transgression ; bring your sacrifices every morning, and your tithes every three days ; proclaim freewill offerings and publish them : for so it liketh you, ye children of Israel " (chap. iv. 4) ; and then, suddenly turning round, he bids them judge what Jehovah thought of such service : " And I on My part have given you cleanness of teeth in all your cities, and want of bread in all your places : . . . I have withholden the rain from you, when there were yet three months to the harvest : . . . I have smitten you with blasting and mildew : . . . I have sent among you the pestilence after the manner of Egypt." This assiduous ritual service of their God was in truth nothing but so much sinning ; and Jehovah appeals to the people to cease from it, and *seek Him.*

Chap. vi. A threat of destruction because of the luxury of the ruling classes, their self-confidence and national pride, and their blindness to the signs of the times and to the operations of Jehovah, which, though in a far-off region as yet, were alarming enough to all who had eyes.

" Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and that feel secure on the mountain of Samaria ; that lie on beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches ; that eat lambs out of the flock, and sing idle songs to the

sound of the viol; that drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments, but are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph; who rejoice in a thing of nought (their national power), and say, Have we not taken to us horns? Therefore shall they go captive with the first that go captive."

Chap. vii.–ix. The last three chapters contain the same idea of the destruction of the nation, but conveyed in a variety of symbols seen in vision. In chapter vii. there are three of these symbolical visions, the locusts, the fire, and the plumbline. The Lord's resolution to destroy His people and His compassion are represented as struggling with one another. The prophet intercedes twice for the people: "O Lord God, spare, I beseech thee: how shall Jacob stand? for he is small!" and twice the judgment is deferred: "The Lord repenteth, saying, It shall not be." At last the plumbline, the line of rectitude, must be applied to Israel: "I will not pass by them any more."

In chapter viii. there is a single symbol, that of the ripe summer fruit (*kaits*), suggesting by a play of sound that the end (*kets*) is come upon the nation; it is ripe for destruction and the harvest of Jehovah's wrath. And chapter ix. consists of a still more graphic symbol with its interpretation: the false worshippers are represented as gathered together in the temple at Bethel, and Jehovah commands to smite the pillars, that the fabric may fall upon the heads of all of them—they are buried in the ruins of their false religion. And, if any escape, the sword of the Lord shall pursue them, that not one shall save himself, and all the sinners of the people shall be cut off. Then follows the bright picture of the restitution: the tabernacle of David that is fallen down shall be raised up; the kingdom shall assume its old boundaries from the sea unto the river; nature shall

be transfigured ; and the people shall dwell in the land given them by their God for ever.

In the prophets, the two subjects that meet us are the people and Jehovah their God. The prophetic teaching is not abstract, but consists always of concrete statements regarding these two great subjects, and their relations to one another. We cannot, therefore, begin by asking, What is the prophet's doctrine of God ? We must inquire what his doctrine in regard to Jehovah, the God of Israel, is. When that is seen, we may inquire what his doctrine of Jehovah implies, or amounts to, as a doctrine of God.

1. It does not need to be said that, to the prophet, Jehovah is a self-conscious Person : He swears by Himself (chap. vi. 8), or by His " holiness," that is, by His Godhead, or by Himself being God (chap. iv. 2). His name is God, or Jehovah, or the Lord (*Adonai*), meaning the Sovereign (chap. iii. 7), or the Lord Jehovah (chap. viii. 3). Another name which the prophet frequently uses is Jehovah the God of hosts (chap. iv. 3 ; v. 16 ; vi. 8, 14), or Jehovah whose name is the God of hosts (chap. v. 27), or the Lord Jehovah the God of hosts (chap. iii. 13), or finally, the Lord Jehovah of hosts (chap. ix. 5). It is not quite certain how the name God or Lord of hosts took its rise, whether it was from the idea that the Lord led the armies or hosts of Israel, or from the idea that He commanded the hosts of heaven. At all events in later usage the name referred principally, if not exclusively, to the hosts of heaven. These hosts, to the eye, were the stars ; but the stars were idealized as living, and were, or at least symbolized, the armies in heaven. To command and move these armies required omnipotent power, and suggested it ; hence Isaiah says, " Lift up your eyes and behold, Who created these things ? who bringeth forth

their host by number, and calleth them all by their names; by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power, not one faileth" (chap. xl. 26). The name God or Lord of hosts is equivalent to the Almighty or Omnipotent, as the Septuagint, according to its tradition, rightly rendered it (παντοκράτωρ). The term hosts, Sabaoth, appears to have been considered sometimes a proper name. It is remarkable that Amos never calls Jehovah the God of Israel; the nearest approach he makes to this is when he says, "Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel" (iv. 12).

2. Further, Jehovah not only possesses all power, He constantly uses it. First, in nature: He is the creator of all that exists, of the most gigantic masses in the Universe, as well as its most subtle influences: He made Orion and the Pleiades (chap. iv. 8), He formed the mountains, and createth the wind (chap. iv. 13); He is the mover in all the movements which we observe: He turneth the darkness into morning, and maketh the day dark with night; He calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth (chap. v. 8, iv. 13, ix. 5); His angry breath withers up Carmel (chap. i. 2); He withholds rain, sends locusts, mildew, pestilence, and overthrow (chap. iv.); He touches the earth, and it melts, and rises up, and sinks (in the oscillations of the earthquake) like the river of Egypt (chap. ix. 5). Secondly, He puts forth His power equally in the rule of the nations, moving them upon the face of the earth and according to His will, like pawns upon a board, bringing Israel from Egypt, the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir (chap. ix. 7). And as He brought the Syrians from Kir, He sends them back whence they came (chap. i. 5), and Israel He causes to go into captivity beyond Damascus (chap. v. 27). It is at His command that the Assyrian

comes up, and overflows the land like a river; it is He that breaks for him the bar of Damascus, and launches him upon the sinful kingdom of Samaria, causing him to afflict it from Hamath unto the river of the wilderness, the border of Edom (chap. vi. 14). And the omnipresence of His power is expressed in chapters i.–ii., where He smites one nation after another—all the peoples of the known world—and in such passages as chapter ix. 8: "Behold, the eyes of the Lord Jehovah are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth"; and particularly in the terrible passage (chap. ix. 4 *seq.*), where His wrath is represented as pursuing the sinners of the people, and plucking them out of every refuge, heaven, hell, the top of Carmel, the bottom of the sea, captivity among the nations; for He sets His eye upon them for evil, and not for good. And His glance penetrates equally into the spirit of men, for "He declareth unto man what is his thought" (chap. iv. 13).

3. These passages contain the expression of what is called personality in Jehovah, that He is creator, that He is ruler over all, that He has all power, is omniscient and omnipresent. Some of them also suggest what the essence of His personality is, and what the spring is which moves and guides His power and rule: it is His ethical Being. It is because of three transgressions, and of four, that He will overthrow nation after nation around Israel. It is because they sell the righteous for money, and turn aside the meek from his right within Israel, that He will press them down, as a cart presses that is full of sheaves (chap. ii. 13). It is because of the oppressions in the midst of Samaria, and because they know not to do right, that the Assyrian enemy shall encamp on the land, and bring down their palaces to the ground (chap. iii. 11). It is because they turn justice

to wormwood, and fling righteousness to the ground (chap. v. 7); because they turn eternal principles upside down, acting as madly as if men were to drive horses upon the rock, or plough the sea with oxen (chap. vi. 12), that Jehovah is raising up a nation that will afflict them from Hamath unto Edom. There are almost no positive statements made as to what Jehovah is; we must infer what He is from what He does and what He desires: "I hate, I despise your feasts; take away from Me the noise of thy viols: but let justice roll down as waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (chap. v. 21). "Seek ye Me, and ye shall live: and seek not unto Bethel. Seek good; and so Jehovah, the God of hosts, shall be with you, as ye say. Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish justice in the gate" (the court of justice, chap. v. 5, 14). What "good" is, will appear immediately. "What Jehovah demands is righteousness, nothing more and nothing less; what He hates is injustice. Sin or offence to the Deity is a thing of purely moral character. Morality is that for the sake of which all other things exist, it is the alone essential thing in the world. It is no postulate, no idea, but at once a necessity and a fact; the most intensely living of personal powers—Jehovah the God of Israel."[1]

Like all the prophets, Amos is first of all a theologian and then a moralist. His doctrine of God, or rather, of Jehovah, the God of Israel, is the primary thing; his doctrine of men or of the people is secondary, and but a reflection of his doctrine of Jehovah, or a deduction from it. The people must be what their God is, or they can be no people of His. The relation between them is that of mind to mind, nature to nature. Hence, while he speaks abundantly of Jehovah, and of what He

[1] Wellhausen: *Hist.*, p. 472.

is and requires, he never takes occasion to contrast Him with other deities ; and while he reprobates severely the worship of the people, it is the spirit of it, the wrong state of mind which it manifests, rather than particular practices, that he dwells upon. He differs from his successor Hosea in this respect ; and hence it has been supposed that, because he does not expressly condemn the golden calves, he found nothing offensive in them. This view has been repeated so often that it may be called traditional. " Amos expresses no dread of the religious symbolism prevalent in northern Israel ; like Elijah and Elisha, he lets the 'golden calves' pass without a word of protest." [1] It is questionable if this representation be true, even in the letter. Several passages are hard to reconcile with it, as this : " When I visit the transgressions of Israel upon him, I will also visit the altars of Bethel : and the horns of the altar shall be cut off, and fall to the ground " (chap. iii. 14) ; or the ironical invitation, " Go to Bethel, and transgress " (chap. iv. 4) ; or this : " They that swear by the sin of Samaria (probably the calf of Bethel), and that swear, As thy god, O Dan, liveth, shall fall, and never rise up again " (chap. viii. 14) ; or the graphic picture of the worshippers gathered together in the temple at Bethel, which Jehovah smites and brings down upon their heads.

These passages appear to carry in them a formal repudiation of the calves. Minds may differ, but if the prophet's language be not a verbal protest against the calf worship, it is because it is a great deal more ; it is a protest which goes much deeper than the calves, and is directed to something behind them. The calves, and the whole ritual service as it was practised, were but symptoms of that which gave offence

[1] Cheyne : *Hosea*, p. xxxi. Comp. Stade : *Hist.*, p. 579.

to the prophet, which was the spirit of the worship, the mind of the worshippers, the conception of Deity which they had in worshipping, and to which they offered their worship. Jehovah distinguishes between this service and the worship of *Him*: "Seek Me, and seek not to Bethel." Jehovah as He knows Himself, and Jehovah as He sees the people worship Him, are not one but two. They possibly thought Him their national god, to whom they were in a sense as necessary as He was to them, whose prestige and credit were involved in their preservation and prosperity; or they judged Him a sharer in their own sensuous being, and therefore one that smelled with satisfaction the smoke of their sacrifices, and who could always be called back, when offended, by more abundant offerings, which were what He sought, and what was felt to be due; while in truth He was a purely spiritual Being, to whom sacrifices of flesh were inappreciable, whose sole desire was righteousness, being Himself, as might be said, the very ethical conception impersonated. Therefore He says, "Seek good, and the Lord shall be with you, as ye say." The term "good" is used in other prophets, just as in Amos, to describe moral in contrast with ritual service, as by Micah: "Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? . . . He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (chap. vi. 7).

The truth appears to be, that the difficulty does not lie where it has been laid, namely, in Amos's failure to protest against the calves, as if he stood on a lower platform than his successor Hosea, who does protest against them; the difficulty lies in an opposite quarter: the prophet doth protest too much. His stringent

doctrine of the moral Being of Jehovah appears to lead him to discard all ritual service as worthless, or even false. The service which Jehovah desires is a just and humane life among one's fellow men, and humility before Himself (chap. vi.). The prophet has already transcended his own economy, and stands by the side of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews: "But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." To us, with our views of the central place of sacrifice in the old economy, this is rather perplexing; not, of course, that he should speak thus, but that he should speak only thus. The explanation possibly is, that he had in view merely the people's abuse of the idea of sacrifice; what its just uses were it did not fall to him to state. If, however, it were objected to him that he sets too great store by good works, he would probably reply with the apostle, Forgive me this wrong.

When we observe two ideas expressed by a writer, one of which might be a deduction from the other, the temptation is great to regard the ideas as so related. The prophet's universalistic conception of Jehovah, his view that He is God over all, might be the natural conclusion from Jehovah's purely ethical Being. For it is not easy to see how a purely moral being can have any relations but those which are moral, and therefore universal—unless, indeed, the other relations be of a temporary kind, and existing for the purpose of realizing the universal relation. And there are some signs in the prophet's Book that his general conception of Jehovah put his faith in Jehovah's special relation to Israel under a certain strain. His principles would have led him to ask with St. Paul, "Is God the God of the Jews only? Is He not also of the Gentiles?" And, in point of fact, he does put a similar question: "Are

ye not as the children of the Ethiopians unto Me, O house of Israel? saith the Lord."

The remark has been made in regard to Hosea that "as a rule, like Amos, he speaks of Jehovah as the national God of the Hebrews."[1] The remark needs modification, or at least interpretation, in regard to both the prophets. The term "national" carries an ambiguity in it. All the prophets and Old Testament writers operate with nations or peoples. The nation is, to their minds, the unit of organization and life. Even the new covenant of Jeremiah is made with the people; though it operates first upon individuals, it is in order to gather them into a people. This is partly a mode of thought, and need not have any religious significance at all. The religious *differentia* lies entirely in the nature of the relation between the god and the nation. In the heathen Shemitic religions, this relation is natural or even physical; in both the prophets referred to, it is moral or spiritual. The prophet Amos does not even make use of the expression "Jehovah, God of Israel," he employs the term God of hosts, which expresses his broad conception of Jehovah.

The first two chapters of the Book are of particular value in regard to this point. There Jehovah chastises all the nations because of their breach of the natural law of humanity and mercy written on men's hearts, of which law He is the guardian, because He is the impersonation of it. His relation to the heathen nations is not mediate, but direct; He does not punish them as God of Israel, and because they have offended against His people. Even when their cruelties have been committed on Israel, this is not the point that calls forth the judgment; it is the inhuman

[1] Cheyne: *Hosea*, as above.

cruelty itself, the breach of a law known to all men. But it is not only offences against Israel that He resents; He watches the conduct of the heathen nations to one another, such as Moab and Edom, and upholds among them the law of the human mind, throwing His shield of protection even over those feelings of men which, though sacred, might seem in some sort sentimental: He destroys Moab, because they burned the bones of the king of Edom into lime.[1]

The question of the relation of God to the people Israel is a difficult one, on which men even now differ. Our Lord teaches that salvation is of the Jews, as the prophets taught before Him (Isa. ii., xlii., etc.). And we might suppose that, the Saviour of mankind having come forth from Israel, the purpose of God in its election had been fulfilled; and that Jew and Gentile now stood on a level, as common sharers of God's love to "the world." There are many devout Christians who think differently, believing that God's relation to Israel is still in some sense "national," and that the results of it are not yet exhausted. At all events, when Amos, though upholding the special relation of Jehovah to Israel, speaks to the people in the name of the Lord, "You only have I known of all the nations of the earth, therefore will I visit your transgressions upon you"; and when He teaches that Jehovah will sift out all the sinners of the people, that at last He may be God of a righteous nation, he introduces an element which modifies the idea of "national" to such an extent as almost to reverse it, and which makes the use

[1] The passage 2 Kings iii. 27 is probably to the same effect, and is even more remarkable, inasmuch as the "indignation" was against Israel, who had pressed their ruthless warfare so far as to drive the king of Moab to the inhuman act of immolating his son.

of such a term, to describe the prophet's conception of the relation of Jehovah to Israel, very misleading.

Very probably the prophet did not make the use of his conceptions that we think he might have done. His picture of the final condition of the world looks contracted. It is certainly a miniature; but, possibly, it suggests as many thoughts as if it had filled more canvas.—The broken fragments of the people shall be restored, and the house of David shall rule over a united Israel; the people shall be all righteous, and nature transfigured shall be supernaturally kind; the kingdom of Jehovah shall regain its widest boundaries, from the sea to the river, and embrace all the nations on which Jehovah's name had ever been named.—This extent of the kingdom of the Lord may seem petty; yet it was virtually the world, as Amos knew it. His successors, who saw the vast empires of Assyria and Babylon, have a larger idea of the world, but not another idea. Their wider view of the world might enlarge their thoughts of Jehovah, but this prophet's conception of the relation of Jehovah to the "world" does not differ from their conception of it.

The prophet's doctrine of Jehovah was thus a very elevated one. Jehovah was a self-conscious Person, for He sware by Himself; He was all-powerful, His name being not the God of Israel, but the Lord of hosts; He not only possessed all power, but wielded it. Further, He not only commanded the material forces of the universe, He ruled equally among the nations of the earth. It is, however, upon the ethical or spiritual nature of Jehovah that the prophet chiefly insists. Jehovah upholds the law of righteousness and humanity, which is common to Himself and to men. To this is due that He must chastise the nations and Israel also, the latter doubly.

And for the same reason all service of Him, to be acceptable, must be spiritual, that is, mental. Sacrifices of flesh are inappreciable to Him; He and they are incommensurable. It is interesting to know for certain that this teaching is as old as the first half of the eighth century. It is not uncommon teaching in the Old Testament, being found in the Psalms as well as in the Prophets (Ps. xl. and l.); but the date of any psalm can hardly ever be fixed. Historical tradition lifts the doctrine into a much greater antiquity, putting it into the mouth of Samuel: "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord?" (1 Sam. xv. 22.)

Though Amos insists most on the idea of the Divine righteousness, and on a righteous life as true service of Him—"I will not smell in your solemn assemblies, but let righteousness run down your streets like water,"—it would be a mistake to suppose that Jehovah is a mere impersonated justice, or that righteousness among men is but a cold giving to every man his due. Jehovah is also good, for He brought up Israel from Egypt, and He raised up among the people prophets and Nazarites. He is not only good to Israel, He is compassionate: twice, in other words, many times, He repented Him of the evil He thought to do to Israel, and averted His judgment, moved by the consideration that Jacob was small (chap. vii.); and it is His pity for the poor of His people, that sees so great an offence in the oppression of them by the rich. Neither is righteousness among men a mere cold civil or judicial rectitude of conduct. It embraces consideration for the poverty of the poor, for the sorrow of the wretched, for the human feelings of mankind in all their compass.

It is no doubt interesting to observe the leading conceptions of particular prophets, what strikes them as the great attribute or characteristic of Jehovah's Being, and corresponding to this, what should be the great feature of men's service of Him; yet we are in danger, when generalizing in this way, of making particular prophets the exponents of merely a single conception, and of failing to observe the many other conceptions, which, though less prominent, are present, either expressed or suggested. It is the manner of one writer to teach or suggest by examples, while another expresses his idea explicitly; but it may not always be a just inference that the second makes an advance upon the first. Amos says in Jehovah's name: "Also I brought you up out of Egypt, and led you forty years in the wilderness, to possess the land of the Amorite" (ii. 10), leaving the action to appeal to men's minds and suggest the affection in the mind of the Lord which prompted it; while Hosea speaks explicitly: "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and called My son out of Egypt" (xi. 1). Amos denounces those who sell the poor for money, leaving the denunciation to suggest to those who heard him that humanity should characterize their treatment of one another; but Hosea has the word that expresses the positive idea: "There is no truth nor mercy (hesed), humanity or goodness, in the land." Again Amos says: "I hate, I despise your feasts; go to Bethel, and transgress," leaving it to be inferred that Jehovah was altogether another from the people's conception of Him; while Hosea says plainly, "There is no knowledge of God in the land; I desire goodness and not sacrifices." The task of biblical theology is an exceedingly delicate one. The passion of the human mind is for dis-

tinctions and classification. Broad distinctions are rare in the Old Testament. The course of revelation is like a river, which cannot be cut up into sections. The springs, at least, of all prophecy can be seen in the two prophets of northern Israel; but the rains which fed those fountains fell in the often unrecorded past.

Corresponding to the idea of Jehovah is the idea of the People. It is the god that makes the people; its unity lies in its having a god. The two conceptions are correlative; but in Israel, at least, the idea of God is the formative idea. Its God is not a reflection of its national spirit; on the contrary, its consciousness is expressed in the favourite figure of the clay and the potter (Jer. xviii.). Jehovah is the framer of Israel, and the mould in which He casts it is that of His own nature; the image He impresses on it is His own. Historical investigators are never weary asking where or when or how Israel came by its conception of Jehovah; but they fail to elicit an answer from history. They construe the history of Israel with the view of showing how its various turns must have suggested to the people the ideas which they had of their God. In this, however, they directly traverse the consciousness of the people as reflected in their Scriptures; for this consciousness persistently inverts the order of the evolutionists, and always explains events by the conception of Jehovah already possessed. And this is as true of the exodus as it is of the exile.

The history of Israel ran a course very much like the histories of other peoples. The nation began as a confederacy of tribes, consolidated into a monarchy, split into divisions, and fell a natural prey to the great eastern empires. Other States did the same. The institutions of Israel, such as the monarchy or the priesthood, were just the institutions of the neighbouring peoples.

The people was a Shemitic people, amidst others of the same family. How came Israel to entertain such exalted notions of its monarchy, as we find in Isaiah vii.–xi., or of itself as a people in opposition to other peoples, as we find in Isaiah xlii., xlix. ? What is the *differentia* in its consciousness from the mind of other nations ? It cannot be doubted that it is the conception of Jehovah, its God. This is the source of the whole of that imperishable ideal element which Israel contributed to Christianity and to the perfect religion of mankind. Its institutions had little in them peculiar ; what gave them meaning was something anterior to them, something which already lay in the mind of the nation, and which it brought to the institutions, or to the events, and which transfigured them.

The kingship in Israel had nothing in it, of itself, to awaken such thoughts as we find connected with it, any more than the kingship in Moab. It was the preliminary thought that Jehovah was the people's King, and the human king His representative, on whom lay His glory, that gave the monarchy its elevation, and struck an ideal which found no satisfying limit short of making the representative king in some way an embodiment of Jehovah Himself—" God with us." And what made the people, or the prophets speaking for them, put forward the extraordinary pretensions above other peoples which they made, was the consciousness that they were the people of Jehovah. It is always difficult to argue about God or gods, unless we assume more than we are entitled in argument to assume. When we speak of God or gods, we mean the conception of God entertained by the people. Israel's thoughts of Jehovah their God were such that the fact of their being His people raised them, to their own minds, above all the nations of the world, and

gave them a place in the history of the human mind that was unique. Jehovah's Word, incarnated in the flesh of the seed of Abraham, was the Servant of the Lord, who should bring forth judgment to the nations. The self-consciousness of the religion of Israel is a phenomenon almost more singular than the religion itself. And this self-consciousness is reflected more vividly already in the prophecies of Balaam (of whatever age they may be) than even in the second half of Isaiah; for Isaiah has still to argue with heathenism, but Balaam, the prophet of heathenism itself, acknowledges the uniqueness of Israel and its God.

The prophet Amos appeared at Bethel some time in the reign of Jeroboam II., before the middle of the eighth century. The northern kingdom reached its highest splendour under the second Jeroboam. His long reign gave his great talents scope, and afforded time for his enterprises to consolidate. Along with great energy and military ability, he appears also to have had self-control. In matters of ritual the usual verdict is passed on him, that he "did evil in the sight of the Lord." But men of great talents are not usually altogether destitute of reverence for the truth; and, whatever his motives were, he does not seem to have allowed himself to be drawn, by the representations of his priest at Bethel, to take any measures against the prophet. At an earlier period, the preaching of Amos would have been a more dangerous thing than it appeared now. The history of Israel contained many examples of the power of the prophets to overthrow dynasties; and the priest of Bethel craftily recalled this fact, when he said, "Amos has conspired against thee." But prophecy had undergone a change; the two last prophets of Israel no more use political weapons, but rely altogether on the power of the word

of God. Whether the king perceived this or not, so far as he was concerned, the prophet appears to have been unmolested.

The time was one of great outward prosperity. The arms of Jeroboam had been successful everywhere; the old enemies of Israel had been defeated, and the old boundaries of the kingdom restored. Peace reigned, and with peace, security. Men were at ease in Zion, and confident on the mountain of Samaria. Distant rumours of a mighty power operating on the Euphrates, and coming into collision with Syria, were too vague to cause alarm; the politicians were too glass-eyed to perceive that, the barrier of the Syrian kingdom once broken by the Assyrian, nothing lay between them and that irresistible power. The prophet alone perceived it, and foretold that the kingdom of the North would speedily fall before the Assyrian invader.

Two or three things which the prophet refers to, give us some insight into the religious condition of the country; and certain other things mentioned by him cast light on its civil and social state.

The worship of the North was not pure worship of Jehovah, but it was not strictly idolatry. It was worship of Jehovah under sensuous forms, mixed no doubt with many Canaanitish impurities, especially at the rural high places, and too often with conceptions of Jehovah, which were proper rather to Baal than to Him. It is not quite certain how the calf-worship originated, whether it had its origin in Egypt, or was an old pre-mosaic superstition revived, or had been borrowed from the Canaanites. Nor is it quite certain whether the calf or young bull was considered a representation of Jehovah in His whole nature, or only a symbol of some of His attributes. Such a worship, though impure, was different from formal Baal-wor-

ship; though corrupt, it was not absolutely false. And one can imagine, from the example of the Christian Church in many ages, that there may have been real virtue and piety in spite of it in many hearts in the northern kingdom. Although religious opinions be the food on which religious life is supported, the latter has, like the natural life, the power of assimilating what is healthy, and rejecting what is hurtful. On many the corrupt doctrines of the Church in the middle ages exerted but little deteriorating influence; the religious taste instinctively put aside what was noxious. It is possible that to some minds in Israel the symbol of the calf had little significance; that, just as real corruptions, like saint worship, lose their meaning, and pass in process of time into mere æsthetic representation or adornment on sacred edifices, to many the images of the calves had little more meaning than the brazen bulls in Solomon's temple. Among the mass, however, this would by no means be the case; and in process of time the evil, as its manner is, overmastered the counteracting good.

As Amos represents the national mind of his day, it was very religious. The worship at the high places, and particularly at the national temple at Bethel, was sedulously practised with much outward impressiveness and eagerness on the part of the worshippers. Men were ready with freewill offerings in addition to those prescribed by law or custom. The stated feasts were carefully kept. Tithes were paid every three years, and sabbaths and new moons observed. As at Jerusalem, the service was accompanied with sacred music: "Take away from Me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols" (ver. 23). Men thought they were worshipping Jehovah. And there may have been true worshippers among them.

Some pious hands may have helped to rear those altars, and some devout hearts may have bowed before them.

It is always difficult to say what amount of corruption is needed to invalidate religious service. Corruptions that are hereditary, and practised without anything better being known, do not at least hurt the conscience like those into which men have of themselves declined. Nevertheless sin, even when unconscious, is sin. The sore at the heart of the people could not but affect all parts of the body. The sun that holds in equipoise the moral system of human life is God. As St. Paul teaches, the fountain of all evils is ungodliness. When men corrupt the image of God in their hearts, they forthwith proceed to the debasing of themselves, and then to such enmity and strife that the bonds of society are wholly broken. The law is illustrated in the history of northern Israel, though perhaps it was not till Hosea's days that full evidence of it appeared.

Some other conceptions of the people are referred to by the prophet which throw light upon their religious condition. He represents them as trusting to the fact that they were the people of Jehovah, and therefore as desiring the coming of the day of the Lord. The "day of the Lord" is one of the most prominent prophetic conceptions. Some prophetic books, as that of Zephaniah, are little else than an expansion of the idea. In others it occupies a less prominent place, though it appears in very many.

This day was the day of Jehovah's interference, when He would manifest Himself as that which He truly was, when He would grasp the reins of rule, and bring to manifestation His purposes. At many times He seemed a God that hid Himself; on the day of the Lord men would behold His full revelation, and He would perform His work — His strange work.

Some writers make the representation that the day of the Lord denotes any great calamity or judgment, and they speak of "a day of the Lord." This is, no doubt, a misinterpretation of prophecy. To the prophets the day of the Lord was an *a priori* religious presentiment, a moral necessity and certainty. They do not identify it with any calamity or judgment, or any particular and actual event. These calamities are, at most, the tokens and signals of its nearness, as no doubt such judgments sometimes accompany it. The day of the Lord is something universal and final, and never a mere crisis that may pass over. At one time the moral situation is such that the interference of Jehovah and the day of the Lord seem a necessity (Isa. ii.–iii.); at another time the judgments that afflict the community, or the great convulsions that shake society, suggest the presence of Jehovah: men seem to hear the sound of His goings through history, and the presentiment of His perfect revelation of Himself as at hand fills their minds (Joel ii., Isa. xiii.). Of course, the world passes through the storm; and the day of the Lord is deferred. But this does not entitle us to denude the idea of its true significance, and reduce the day of the Lord to any merely temporary crisis, or to imagine that any prophet ever used the phrase in this attenuated sense.

In the prophet Amos, we meet with the idea of the day of the Lord for the first time; but the idea was not new in his days. It was already a popular conception. Such a profound moral conception can hardly have originated in the mind of the Hebrew populace, else that populace was very different from modern representations of it. The prophet treats the popular notion of that "day" as a delusion: "Wherefore will ye have the day of the Lord? The day of the

Lord is evil, and not good; darkness, and not light. It is as if a man fled from a lion, and a bear met him." He treats as equally a delusion the people's confidence in Jehovah's protection, because they are His people. Other prophets have to meet the same delusion: "They shall cry unto Me, My God, we Israel know Thee"; to which the Lord responds, with scornful accentuation of the term Israel: "Israel hath cast off good; let the foe pursue him" (Hos. viii.).

The usual explanation of such ideas on the part of Israel is, that they are nothing but the expression of the natural confidence of a people in its national god, who, being its god, was naturally thought better and stronger than other gods. The explanation is hardly satisfactory. There seem reminiscences and echoes in this language of the people, superficial as it was in their mouths, of meanings more profound. The phrases they use are not their own; they have been taught them, or have inherited them; and those who first gave them currency used them in a deeper sense, and with a better knowledge of what Jehovah was.

The information which the prophet affords regarding the social condition of the people is remarkable. The sin which he reprobates most severely is the injustice of one class to another, and the oppression of the poor by those above them. "They sell the righteous for money; . . . they pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor." It is not quite easy to understand the laws relating to land and debt in Israel, nor how it was that oppression was so rife. According to the Law, each tribe and each family or clan had its own possession. The land was the Lord's, and was held of Him; it was the portion given by Him to those who held it, and was inalienable.

If, for any temporary reason, it passed out of the hand of the proper owner, it was always redeemable for money; and at the year of jubilee it returned free. Such temporary transfers of land probably occurred frequently, and mainly on account of debt. The debtor in Israel appears to have been legally defenceless, though many exhortations are given to the people to use mildness and show brotherly feeling in their treatment of the poor.

The chief want in Israel, as in the East generally, was probably not so much the want of laws or customs as the want of an upright executive to put them in operation. Micah complains that "the prince asketh money, and the judge asketh for a bribe; and the great man uttereth his mischievous desire: and so they pervert it" (vii. 3). When Amos prophesied at Bethel, the country had long been scourged by expensive and exhausting wars. The protracted feuds with the Syrians had drained into the army the smaller yeomen in great numbers; their fields and vineyards probably remained without due cultivation; if they returned, they were impoverished, and fell into the hands of creditors. The prophet mentions some other things that must have been disastrous to the agricultual population, as droughts: "I have withholden the rain from you, when it was yet three months to harvest" (iv. 7); and failure of crops: "I have smitten you with blasting and mildew." The land probably in many cases changed hands. From being owners, multitudes became hirelings. The law of restitution at the fiftieth year was a good law; but those who were entrusted with its administration were not good.

The tenacity with which men clung to their paternal inheritance is illustrated in the case of Naboth, who

refused an excambion even to the king; but the nefarious stratagem, which the latter permitted himself to employ in order to dispossess him, shows the length which men might go to compass their ends: and when such things were done by the king, the fountain of justice, the powerful upper classes would not be restrained by ordinary scruples. The laws in Israel were customs rather than statutes, based on equity more than enactment. And when society lost the sense of justice and brotherhood, the "law was slacked, and judgment did never go forth" (Hab. i. 4). It is the air of a society in this condition, that Amos feels he is breathing; both in religion, and in things civil, it is the spirit of the people that he reprobates.

Whatever genuine religion there may have been in Israel, the national worship probably contained too fundamental a falsehood to retain influence over the people as a whole. The salt eventually lost its savour; society became secularized in its spirit; there was an overmastering devotion to trade, and fraudulence in the prosecution of it: "When will the new moon be over, that we may sell corn? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat? making the ephah small, and the shekel great; . . . that we may buy the poor for silver, and sell the refuse of the wheat?" (viii. 5, 6.) Even in a more decided way the spirit of ungodliness revealed itself in revelry and illegality at the religious shrines: "That drink wine out of sacrificial bowls, and lay themselves on pledged garments beside every altar, and drink the wine of the condemned in the house of their God" (ii. 8). But they went further: they were not only wicked, they became calculating in their wickedness; they went about beforehand to remove obstacles to it: "Ye made the Nazarites drink wine; and the prophets ye

commanded, saying, Prophesy not" (ii. 12). They stopped the mouths of the prophets, not being able to corrupt them; and the Nazarites they seduced, that they might silence the reproof of their temperance and self-restraint. Greed of gain, luxury, oppression of one another; such irreverence, that it sinned even in the holy place; such impenitent hardihood, that it strove to befool and silence the voice of God among them—these were the sins of the time.

And this stern shepherd from the South was the man chosen of God to denounce them, and foreshow His certain judgments upon them. No fitter instrument could have been found; the disease needed a desperate remedy, if any remedy now availed; these corrupt members must be hewed by the prophets, if any part of the body was to be saved. And to the soft livers in the northern capital, the wild tragic shepherd from the wilderness must have been as wonderful and disquieting, as they were odious to him. In the language of Amaziah, the land was not able to bear all his words.

THE SECOND PSALM

WITHOUT any introduction, and with no preliminary statements indicating the previous line either of his thought or feeling, the Psalmist utters a startled cry: Why do the heathen rage? It seems as if, while meditating on other things, on his own high functions or on the lofty destiny of the Messiah's Kingdom, or absorbed in thoughts proper to the fellowship which he had with God, there had suddenly fallen on his ear the sound of assembled nations, and he exclaims, Why do the nations rage? The question might be one of astonishment, as if he did not know the meaning of their tumultuous outcry. But the next clause "and the peoples meditate a vain thing?" seems rather to imply that the question is one of dislike and repudiation: Why will the nations rage? These world powers, these untheocratic forces, are even opposing Jehovah, even attempting something in opposition to Him, something which is an "empty thing"—vain in its nature, and vain in its issue, an impiety, and an impiety that can never be successful.

Verse 2 further explains the question by describing to whom it refers. When the Psalmist turns his eye to where the tumult is heard, a council of the powers of the world lies under view. In the centre are kings leaguing together: "The kings of the earth set themselves"—minor princes standing around aiding them with counsel: "And the rulers take counsel together."

In a wider circle are the masses of the people. The chiefs are framing a league against the Lord and His Messiah; the people give their countenance and tumultuous assent. We may suppose that the sound which first fell on the ear of the speaker in verse 1 was inarticulate; it was the shout of the peoples, the distant noise of assembled nations borne upon the wind—or it might be that the sound was the mere inarticulate voice of rage giving itself out in cries, unable from its very violence to put itself forth in words.

At last (ver. 3) their deliberations find expression; the plan of action has been resolved upon. The blind and inarticulate fury, which came out in cries before, has so far calmed down at the prospect of active resistance, that it can express itself in words. "Let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us," though such scorn and hatred have they of those against whom they rebel that they will not take their names in their mouth, but speak of Jehovah and His Anointed as *they*—let us break *their* bands asunder.

2. Verses 4–6. Such is the demeanour of those rebelling—the nations; now is described the demeanour of Jehovah and His Anointed against whom they rebel.

The scene in heaven is sublime indeed. The contrast between earth and heaven is extreme. He who sits there is *one*; while, below, there are kings and princes and a countless host of followers. Below, all is fury and blind rage working itself into fits of wrath, and uttering wild cries of rebellion. Unmoved, placid, calm, even indifferent, He that sits in heaven laughs, the Lord has them in derision. He smiles in scorn at their resistance. But the smile goes off His face, and

anger gathers: "then shall He speak to them in His wrath." Verse 6 contains what Jehovah says to these foes; He holds up before them His irreversible purpose: Will ye seek to cast off the bands of My Anointed, to rid yourselves of his authority? Then know this—*I* have established him My king, king in My stead, on Zion My holy hill.

3. Verses 7–9. The Anointed himself, introduced in this way, now comes forward and takes up the words of Jehovah, "I will declare the decree." The decree is that alluded to in the preceding verse, viz.:—of Jehovah's appointment of him king on Zion; and the words he recites are those spoken by Jehovah to him when He constituted him king, and are also words interpreting the act of constituting him king, or expounding the principles on which he is constituted king. The king who comes forward has already been constituted king; the rebellion is against him, being already king, not against his being made king, for it is said: I have set My king on My holy hill of Zion. Jehovah leads him to the throne, and by His spirit anoints him, as He had anointed him with the symbolical oil through the prophet. Entering into his new office, he assumes a new relation to Jehovah; and Jehovah, whose spirit had fallen on him, and who had then created him king for Him, in His stead, pronounces the words explicative of the change of position, and of the new relation and dignity: "Thou art My son, I have to-day begotten thee." The begetting is not strictly, perhaps, making him king, if that had been done without bestowal of the spirit—nor is it bestowal of the spirit, distinct from the official change which was the consequence of it—begetting is rather both the bestowal of the spirit and the official change in relation which was its consequence; it is both the endowment

with fitness to be king, and the actual making king. And the day of begetting was, of course, the day on which this Anointed was made king—who, being so endowed and appointed, was henceforth son of Jehovah who had begotten him.

Further, the idea of "son" suggests the idea of inheritance; the son of Jehovah shall receive the inheritance of Jehovah, "Ask of Me, that I may make the heathen thine inheritance"; the people who now rebel against the Anointed, Jehovah has already destined for his heritage. These purposes of Jehovah the Anointed speaks in the ears of the heathen; it may be, they will cease from their madness, and trust in the Lord.

4. And, finally (vv. 10–12) an exhortation is added in view of these firm resolutions of the Lord, to the kings and princes of the earth, to be wise and submit to Jehovah:—

> Be wise now, O ye kings,
> Be instructed, ye judges of the earth.

And the two elements of wisdom consist, first, in serving the Lord, "Serve Jehovah with fear" (ver. 11); and second, in submitting to the son, the Anointed: Kiss the son (ver. 12) for otherwise, Jehovah shall be angry, for His anger will soon kindle: and the whole winds up with a blessing on those who trust in Jehovah:—

> Blessed are all they who put their trust in Him.

Now there are two questions that require to be answered here: Who is the author of the Psalm? And who is the subject of whom it is spoken? Or is the author of the Psalm also the subject of it? Is the Anointed who is referred to in verse 2, "they take

counsel against the Lord and against His Anointed," and who says in verse 7 "I will declare the decree—The Lord said of me, Thou art My son"—is this Anointed the same as the speaker in verse 10 who exhorts the kings: "Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings," and who appears to be the author of the poem? Or, to put the question otherwise, is the poem a lyric in which the author speaks of himself? Or is it a short dramatic poem, in which the author introduces a variety of speakers, he himself looking at them merely from the outside?

There seems no evidence sufficiently strong on either side to enable us to decide this question with certainty. The Psalm is anonymous, and though it is cited in the New Testament under the name of David, it may be doubtful how far this method of citation can be pressed; for the whole Psalter went under the name of David, and even Delitzsch argues that the expression, "Who by the mouth of Thy servant David hast said, Why do the heathen rage?" cannot be interpreted to mean more than "Who in the Psalm or who by the Psalmist hast said, Why do the heathen rage?" We are therefore left to any induction that the nature and terms of the Psalm itself may enable us to make.

The Psalm cannot have been written before David, nor before the time when David removed the seat of his government to Jerusalem. For the expression, "I have set My king on My holy hill of Zion" must imply, at least, that the kingdom had already its seat there, and that the king ruled from there. It might seem to imply more, viz.:—that this king had sat down on a throne already placed on Zion—had been made king on Zion. If this inference were correct, then the hymn could neither be by David, nor refer to him, but

must have been sung concerning some of his successors. Such an inference is, certainly, very probable; for the act of appointing king on Zion is, in all probability, contemporaneous with the act of begetting a son: and the latter could be spoken of correctly only in reference to the original appointment of the king. Such an expression seems inaccurate, if said regarding the mere transference of the seat of the kingdom of one already king, and not likely to be used of this. These arguments, then, go a certain way to show that the Psalm refers, not to David, but to some successor of his.

Further, the use of certain terms such as the word "son" leads to the same conclusion. For an explanation of this term, we must go to the promise given to David by Nathan, which is the source of almost all the ideas in the cycle of Messianic prophecies belonging to this time. That promise runs thus: "I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be My son: if he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men. But My mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it away from Saul, and thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever" (2 Sam. vii. 12–16).

Several things are evident at first sight, without the necessity of going meantime far into the prophecy. First, the promises are made, not to David, but to his seed after him which shall proceed out of his bowels. And it is to his *seed*, not to his son, that they are made. Seed here is not to be interpreted of one individual, but of each of a line of individuals. The first of these individuals making up

the seed was Solomon; but the things said pertain to the whole family of Davidic kings—not, however, to the whole members of David's house, but to such of them only as filled the throne. Second, the thing promised to this seed is that God shall be his Father, and he shall be God's son. And the thing threatened this seed is that, if they sin, God shall chasten them with the rod of men—although, even should they sin, His mercy would not depart from them, as it did from Saul—for the house of David and his kingdom shall be established for ever. But this contingency, here provided for, of the seed's sinning and the chastisement determined, indicates that the seed, though son of God, and never to be wholly cast off, is yet the general royal family of David. Third, the expression just quoted, "thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever," and others in the passage, imply perpetual connexion of the house of David with the Kingdom of God. As long as God's Kingdom endures, the house of David shall rule over it; the two are from this time inseparably bound together.

Now, though these promises were made to David's seed, they were not made to David himself. In Psalm xviii. among the terms which David applies to God, *Father* is not included. Compare also 2 Samuel xxiii. We might infer that, his seed being called *son*, the name would be suitable and applicable to David, but we must abide by what indications Scripture affords us; and to us now, looking back from amidst the light of this dispensation, it does not seem without meaning that it is not David, but David's *seed*, that is called *Son* of *God*. Now this is an important position to gain in the interpretation of the Psalm. The subject of it is not David, neither is it therefore at all likely that he is its author. The subject of it is David's seed; but

it seems very difficult to make any closer definition. We might suppose his seed as such the subject, i.e. the whole house of David, and regard the poem as a dynastic ode, occasioned probably by some attempt to dethrone the reigning family, such as was made by Syria and Ephraim, in the reign of Ahaz, when they meditated setting up the son of Tabeel as king—and the prophet Isaiah gave to the house of David the promise of the Virgin and her son—implying that the house should stand till that extreme wonder occurred. And Delitzsch in his early commentaries considered this to be the real historical position of the Psalm, which he regarded as the poetical echo of Isaiah (chap. vii.–xii.). And, in truth, this rather abstract subject is much less suitable for poetry than for prophecy, as the former deals more with personal feelings and circumstances, the latter with public affairs and the Kingdom of God in itself.

It seems, therefore, only left us to consider some one individual of David's seed the subject; and being utterly without materials for determining which individual, except such as we may find in the Psalm itself, we shall probably be obliged to leave the matter rather indefinite. The only length we can go is to determine, with some degree of probability, whether the Psalm be a directly Messianic or a typically Messianic composition—i.e. whether the author, in his own mind, fixed his thoughts on the Messiah, or whether he had in view some Old Testament king of his own days. To us the distinction between the Messiah and any Old Testament king is decided and great; but it was less to an Old Testament writer who fancied, as they all did, that the Messiah would come in the conditions of the Church and world existing in their own time; and that He would be a theocratic King, such

as, though greater than, the theocratic kings they were familiar with.

Now, in the Old Testament, there are passages certainly spoken by their authors of Old Testament characters, of which some parts might be applied to corresponding characters in the New, and some might not. And the reason of the inapplicability of these parts is that they applied to the Old Testament characters in their private rather than their representative position. David for example was king—kinghood is that kind of thing called a type—it is a combination of relations, essential to the Kingdom of God, appearing therefore in all forms of that kingdom both imperfect and final. But this kinghood did not exhaust David, nor did all the typical characters which he sustained exhaust him. Many things might be said of him privately in a Psalm, i.e. in relations peculiar to him personally—some of them even alongside of things said of him typically, i.e. in relations essential to the Kingdom of God; and while the latter class of things might be applied to Christ in the New Testament, the former could not.

The present Psalm is not a passage of this kind. There is nothing here that seems inapplicable to the New Testament king. The names, Messiah, son, are most applicable; the extent of his destined heritage, "the ends of the earth"; the manner in which this destined heritage shall become his, by his asking, and by the gift of God, "Ask of Me and I will give thee" —these and all other things perfectly suit the New Testament theocratic king. Some critics indeed consider the expression, "thou shalt break them with a rod of iron" inapplicable, the Messiah's reign being one of peace. But, if one may say so, these critics are too Christian in their sentiments. Scripture speaks

also of the wrath of the Lamb. The author of the Apocalypse applies these disputed words to the man-child caught up into heaven, "he shall rule all nations with a rod of iron." Christ Himself, when on earth, habitually used the severest language regarding the enemies of His Kingdom: "But these Mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither and slay them before Me" (Luke xix. 27). We may therefore conclude that the Psalm is not a partially typical Psalm.

Again, there are some passages certainly spoken by their authors with Old Testament characters in view, in which the things said are quite applicable literally to the Old Testament character, though they may be also applicable to the corresponding New Testament character. For example, the words used of Himself by Christ: "The zeal of thine house hath eaten Me up," were those used by an Old Testament character of himself; and the words used by Matthew of Christ, "Out of Egypt have I called My son," were employed literally by Hosea of Israel. Now, though most of the things said here about the king, such as that he is Messiah, the Anointed, that he has his seat on Zion the holy hill, that he is son of God, that he is God's king, and the like, are things competently said of every Davidic king, there are some things in the Psalm that exceed greatly what any theocratic king, except the last, ever realized.

No doubt every Jewish king was more than king of the Jewish nation. That nation was the Church of God, in the form in which it was then found; the surrounding nations were the world. The separation of the Church from the world was symbolized and embodied by the nation being bounded, in a limited locality, by seas and rivers, as its redemp-

tion from the world had been symbolized by actual deliverance from a powerful idolatrous nation. The Lord was Himself the real King of that nation which was His Church; but He delegated His authority to a king from among themselves. Jehovah, as King, had His seat on Zion Hill, for there was His palace and place of abode, the Tabernacle; and the delegated king sat beside Him on his throne. All this was true of any king of the Jewish people. There were realized and shewn in the Jewish people and their surroundings, in their king and his relations, such things as these: the Church, the world, their separation, their enmity, God in the midst of His Church, not ruling directly but by means of a mediatorial king—all this, in a real though material form. And, consequently, to the king and his rule very much the same terms might be applied as to Christ and His rule, because though the form differed, the thing, viz. the kingdom and the king, was identical.

But it is quite evident at least that the things said in this Psalm, if said of any Israelitish king then existing, are said of him, not according as he then was, but *ideally*, according to the principles and conceptions involved in the theocratic kingdom. The writer does not speak of a king of Israel; it is of God's king and God's Anointed. He does not speak of countries and peoples; it is of the heathen, the Goyîm—those outside the kingdom and covenant of God—and of the kings of the earth. He does not conceive the theocratic king to have an extensive sway merely; his sway is universal, to the ends of the earth, and particularly it is the Goyîm that he shall receive for his inheritance. The Anointed and Jehovah have not distinct interests, nor is it merely that Jehovah aids the Anointed; the cause is primarily Jehovah's own. It

is against Jehovah and against *His* Anointed that the kings of the earth set themselves; it is Jehovah that they are exhorted to serve with fear; it is Jehovah's anger that will burn speedily; it is those who trust Jehovah that find blessedness.

There is nothing political in the Psalm; all is religious. Particularism has quite vanished, and things have expanded into the universal. The only remnant of particularism seems to be this, that Zion Hill is still considered to be the seat of the kingdom. But this is a thing necessarily remaining in that material dispensation. Of course the kingdom, though considered to be universal, is also still conceived as an earthly monarchy, such as then existed. I think it altogether false to assume that any Old Testament writer had reached the thought that the seat of the kingdom of God would cease to be Zion, or that the kingdom would cease to be material. And consequently the expression *Zion Hill* is to be taken literally, when we are seeking to discover the view of the Old Testament writer.

Now when we have got thus far, and found that the Psalm may be classed among the Messianic passages described as *ideally typical*—that is, passages in which the Old Testament king and kingdom are spoken of according to the true conceptions of the King and Kingdom of God; that is, at least, according to many of the true conceptions of it, it will probably seem of no great importance, except as a not uninteresting critical question, to discuss whether the Psalm be not *directly* Messianic—that is, spoken consciously by the writer of the Messiah—though he was not able to view Him quite distinctly apart from the relations of the Old Testament dispensation. There do not seem to me materials for settling that question. If the Psalm could be sup-

posed as late as the age of Isaiah or later, then I think it might well be directly Messianic—and perhaps the want of a Title is some evidence that it is not quite early. If however this is an early Psalm, as it seems to be, it is certainly greatly earlier than Psalm lxxxix. which imitates it, and combines in one picture the things said of the Anointed here, and the things said by David of himself in Psalm xviii. 2: "He shall cry unto me, Thou art my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation. Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth" (Ps. lxxxix. 26, 27) —if this is an early Psalm, it seems to me probable that it is Lyrical, that it is said by the author of it with respect to himself. In that case the Anointed is, also, the writer; and he speaks of himself and his kingdom in the light of the prophecy given to Nathan.

The thoughts of the Psalm are so fresh and bold, and the poetical elevation so great, that the thoughts here seem to have for the first time taken hold of the writer, who is one whom they directly concern. Some young king, entering upon the rule of God's Kingdom, has borne in upon his mind, from his very position, those strange and unprecedented and but lately uttered words of Nathan—words of inexhaustible meaning, and yet quite fresh from their novelty—and entering into their spirit as, to a pure and thoughtful mind, they opened up regions of contemplation interminable in extent and full of wonders, and combining them perhaps with some shew of opposition to his rule at home, or some threatened defection from his authority by tribes abroad, who took the opportunity of a new ruler's appearance to assert their independence, — the young king cast his thoughts and aspirations into this hymn.

And what young monarch was in such a condition except Solomon? Every one of the conditions of the

problem suits this prince. He was the seed of David, and, therefore, the son of God. He was appointed king on Zion Hill. His rule tended to universality; and his aspirations, being those of a profound intellect, and, at this time, of an uncorrupted youth, must have aimed at conferring on all peoples the blessings of God's Kingdom. It is so strange to us as almost to be inconceivable that a man should so speak of himself, as is done in this Psalm. If we could realize to ourselves the thoughts and emotions of these early Davidic kings—standing, as all of them did, to Jehovah as His Anointed, bearing all of them the title of His son, and pointed forward to such a heritage, even all peoples; and yet so surrounded with darkness, and having but such imperfect instruments in their hands wherewith to realize their ideal, and so circumscribed on every side—what aspirations must have filled their hearts, as they stood thus before so high a destiny! And yet, as all things seemed to make it impossible for them to reach it, what perplexities must have tormented them, till, wearied out by the riddles of their position, some of them turned wilfully aside from the true path! But if we can ill fathom the thoughts of these great creative minds, such as David's and Solomon's of the eleventh century before Christ, how much less can we fathom the thoughts of the true theocratic King, the true Messiah and Son of God, when entering upon His Kingdom, and standing at its threshold with all the possibilities of it clear before Him, and the way needful to be trod to reach it also clear! We know that He was sometimes troubled in spirit, and sometimes rejoiced greatly, alternating between a gloom more dark than falls on any son of man and a brightness more luminous than created light. But with full view of His work He entered on it, and with full

view of the glory He prosecuted it to the end; for the joy that was set before Him He endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Now if we consider the conditions of things exhibited in the Psalm, we find it to be the following: The people of God are not now for the first time coming into existence; they already exist. The covenant has been formed, the kingdom is constituted. God is its true King; but He appoints another to rule for Him. He sets a son of David down on Zion Hill to be His king. He enters into very close relations with this king. These relations are all embraced under the name of *Sonship*—Thou art My son. It is not easy to fill up the outline of Son with its just contents. It implies, on the part of the Son, obedience and trust, and on the part of the father, protection and upholding with the divine power. But there is room for a similarity of nature, a closeness of fellowship, an identity of aim, a unity of honour, and much more which may justly be embraced under the name. The Sonship is not identical with the Kingship; but the one comes to manifestation through the other. The Sonship operates through the Kingship; its operation is the realization of the Kingship in its fulness. What is due to the son, and what the relations of son operate to produce, is heirship, "Ask of Me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance." The Son who is King is destined for this inheritance, but he has not yet attained it. This is the picture as painted on the ground of the Old Testament theocracy.

What is there that corresponds to it in the region of things themselves? Surely only one connexion of things, viz. this:—when the new covenant had been consecrated by the blood of the better sacrifice, when

the New Testament community had thus come into existence, when the kingdom was constituted, and when the King, Son of David and Son of God, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, appointed heir of all things, waiting till his enemies be put under his feet, crowned with glory, and yet not glorifying himself but Him that said to him: Thou art My Son; to-day have I begotten thee. The parallelism is complete. Both in the Psalm, and in the application of it in the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Sonship referred to is the Messianic Sonship; and 'to-day' in both cases refers to the moment when this came to full manifestation and perfection, and was operative for its great purpose, viz., the heirship of the world.

And this is the way in which the second Psalm is used everywhere in the Pauline Epistles and preaching as well as in Hebrews. For instance, in his sermon at Antioch in Pisidia, recorded in Acts xiii. 29–33, Paul says of Christ: "When they had fulfilled all that was written of Him, they took Him down from the tree and laid Him in a sepulchre. But God raised Him from the dead . . . and we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God has fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that He raised up Jesus again; as it is written in the second Psalm: Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten thee." To Paul the resurrection of Christ is everything. It was this risen Christ that appeared to him, and caused the great crisis in his life. The resurrection was evidence to him that Christ was the Messiah, the Son of God. Hence he always speaks of the Resurrection, including under it, of course, the Ascension which was involved in it. In Hebrews, again, the present position of the Messiah as officiating High Priest is the prominent idea; and hence the

Ascension and sitting at God's right hand is made prominent, which however implies the Resurrection. But both agree in referring the Psalm to the same general event.

This is even more clear in the remarkable passage in Romans i. 3, 4: "Concerning His Son Jesus Christ, our Lord, who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and determined (or instituted) to be the Son of God in power according to the spirit of holiness, by (or from) the resurrection of the dead." As to His flesh, Jesus is seed of David. As to the other side of His nature, the background or real substratum of it, the spirit of holiness, i.e., not the Holy Spirit as third person, but His own eternal, spiritual, holy Being—what is called in Hebrews the eternal spirit by which He made atonement—according to this He was instituted Son of God in power, from the resurrection of the dead. What the words say is that, as regards the spirit of holiness (in virtue of which He was already from the first *potentially* the Son of God) He was instituted or destined to be the Son of God in power from the time of His resurrection from the dead; that is to say, that what He already was from the beginning in Himself, but in inward fashion only, not in outward manifestation, that He became in the complete actuality of an existence in power, on His resurrection and ascension.

The Psalm, if a typical Psalm in the mind of its human author, referred to the installation of the theocratic King on Zion, who took God's place over His Kingdom, and stood to Him in all the endearing relations expressed by the name of *Son*. The writer to the Hebrews finds in it the statement of the manifestation of the true Theocratic King and Son in power from His resurrection and ascension; and his principle

of interpretation is just. The one was a rehearsal of the other. All this Old Testament machinery, and this calling one who was king by the name Son, and the like, would never have been but for the other; it was only in order to suggest the other, and prepare for it. It was a prophecy of the other. It contained the same ideas. And its having been imperfect, as it was, implied that the other—that which was perfect—should also be. Only, that which the Old Testament writer had not yet foreseen had now taken place: the material embodiment of the ideas of the kingdom had passed away, and all things had become spiritual in Christ.

PSALM LXXII

THE heading of the Psalm some would render 'for Solomon,' holding the Psalm to be a prayer on his behalf, the author of which perhaps was David. The Hebrew preposition here used, when found elsewhere before a name in the heading of a composition, is the sign of the dative of authorship, i.e., the dative after the passive verb understood, and it means "*composed by*." It is therefore unfair syntactically to translate *for* Solomon. Evidently the person who prefixed this heading considered Solomon the author. We may doubt the correctness of this person's opinion; but we must not allow our doubts to lead us into a perversion of the idioms of the language. This question of authorship will, however, be discussed with more advantage after we have briefly reviewed the contents of the Psalm.

This Psalm is a prayer for a king and his kingdom. Of course the king is an Israelitish king, and no foreign ruler; and the kingdom is no other than the Israelitish kingdom, in the form which it had in Old Testament times. The Psalm does not allude to any divisions in the kingdom; there is no prayer for union of discordant elements; and, for all that appears, the composition belongs to the time anterior to the disruption of the Monarchy, though of course it may belong to a time when Judah alone existed

as a kingdom. There is no indication of time whatever, further than that the king is also styled "the son of the king"—an expression which, even supposing it used inaccurately, and as a mere title of honour, would hardly have been applied to any king prior to Solomon.

The king has newly mounted the throne; how he is to rule has not yet appeared, nor on what principles he is to conduct his government. And the Psalmist prays that God would give him His righteousness and His judgments.

> Thy judgments give to the king, O God,
> Thy righteousness to the son of the king,
> That he may judge Thy people in righteousness,
> And Thy poor with just judgment.

The petition of the speaker is singular both for the things wished for, and for the measure or quality of them. The things are righteousness and judgment; the measure or quality of them is divine—*Thy* judgments, O God. The thing wished for to the king is profound views of right, a keen sense of justice and equity; and this not as a mere theory of right, which he is too apathetic or too feeble to turn into a reality, as if the currents of injustice were too strong for him to stem, and the petty wrongs done among men too numerous and hidden to detect or redress; or as if, with all his fine sense of abstract right and his love for it, he were yet lacking in that practical tact and skill which can unravel all the intricacies of an individual case. What is wished is that his righteousness shall also be accompanied by just judgments.

But the measure both of his righteousness and his judgments is the Divine. The whole sphere of things

spoken of belongs to God. The people to be judged are God's people; the poor are God's poor. The king is no doubt also God's king, though he is not so named. But it is needful that God's people should be ruled by a king who dispenses God's judgments. The wish of the Psalmist is, not that God in person should rule His people and poor, but that the king who rules should so rule that his government should perfectly coincide with God's, and perfectly express God's. The kingdom of course is the earthly, Israelitish kingdom; the king, some one of the house of David. And the prayer is that this king and kingdom should rule, and be ruled, on principles and in practice, altogether as God Himself would rule.

It is not quite easy to trace the order of thought in the Psalm; at least it is not easy to draw divisions in the line of thought, so as to mark off the Psalm into strophes. Nor is it quite easy to know whether to translate the Imperfects, which run through the Psalm, as strict Optatives, or as dependent tenses all hanging upon the first prayer for righteousness.

There are at least three or four main ideas in the Psalm. First, the kingdom prayed for is a righteous kingdom. Second, this righteousness of the kingdom develops as by inward necessity, first, into *peace*: The mountains shall bring forth peace to the people; second, into *perpetuity*: They shall fear thee throughout all generations; and third, into *universality*: All nations shall serve him. Finally, the earth itself shall participate in the blessedness of the time, and contribute to the felicity of men: let there be plenty of corn in the land, even on the tops of the mountains. The natural consequence of a righteous rule is peace. The abundance of peace is described under the figure of a *crop*, which the earth bears so richly, that even the

hills and lofty mountains are covered with it. And another natural consequence of righteousness in the ruler is the similar fear of God among the ruled; and, therefore, the perpetuity of the kingdom established on such principles. He that doeth the will of God endureth for ever.

The expression "let him descend like rain upon the mown grass" seems to have reference to the history of the time. The word translated "mown grass" need not indeed refer to grass actually cut, but to grass that is used to being cut. Yet the frequent references to peace seem to indicate a background of unquiet. Behind the people of God lay their past experience and history, a time of hardship and tumult, a time of drought and scorching trouble, when the mower cut them close, and the hot heavens beat upon them and burnt them up. This king shall descend like rain upon them. In his days the righteous shall sprout. Their Divine longings, not plucked up, but shorn to the root, their holier instincts, not dead, but scorched and shrunk beneath the surface, shall be quickened, and again spring up; all those energies, that make up spiritual life, shall begin to move. This background of drought and trouble may be the unquiet times of the early Monarchy, when tribe warred against tribe, and angry passions burned; and human feeling and even the religious emotions seemed to the poet, who had lived through at least part of it, to have been consumed in the fiery jealousies and bloodthirstiness of the time: and all was like the dreary monotony of the parched waste. But this reign of righteousness and peace fell upon the people like the thick shower; and their whole religious life, that had fallen off them like withered buds, came out into blossom, and promised to ripen into a fruit that

should never fail. So shall they fear thee while the sun endures.

There is thus a natural break in the Psalm at verse 7; and there seems to be another at v. 15, where there is a transition from the description of the state of men to that of the condition of external nature. Thus the first strophe (vv. 1–7) lays down the fundamental character of the kingdom—its righteousness; and describes the effects of this on the kingdom as it was then. It becomes a reign of peace, and perpetual. So far as appears, however, it is still confined to the limits of the Jewish people. But the next strophe (vv. 8–15) describes it as expanding over the world, embracing all peoples within it: "May he rule from sea to sea." And the last strophe (vv. 16–17) describes the condition of the world at such a time—the peaceful earth yielding her increase in prodigal fulness—"Let there be corn in plenty on the tops of the mountains."

The way in which the kingdom becomes universal is not by means of wars, but through the attractiveness of its principles and its king, who draws all men after him—

> Yea, all kings shall fall down before him:
> All nations shall serve him:
> For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth:
> And the poor, that hath no helper.

It is not needful to go more largely into the Psalm itself—which is quite simple. There are two questions of more interest that need to be considered a little, viz., By whom was the Psalm written and of whom does it speak?

I. By whom was the Psalm written?

Regarding the date and authorship of the Psalm complete certainty cannot be reached. Some scholars,

such as Hitzig, consider the composition destitute of all poetical worth; and this writer regards the subject of it to be Ptolemy Philadelphus. Two things are very conspicuous in Hitzig's criticism of the Psalms, his singular skill in the Hebrew language and accurate knowledge of its Syntax, and his equally singular incapacity as a historical critic. No other writer of any eminence has imagined that the king spoken of here is a foreign prince. Hitzig, as is known, dates the composition of the majority of the Psalms in the Maccabean age. But Ewald with right protests against the idea that any but a true Theocratic king could be so spoken of in Scripture. Hupfeld agrees with Hitzig in his estimate of the worth of the Psalm, which he considers the product of a late age, consisting, to a great extent, of imitations of more powerful pieces. And even Ewald, who when rightly understood is really one of the most conservative and even orthodox of critics, says, "The poet has certainly not for the first time given expression to such hopes as the Psalm contains. The road was already opened up; and, long before, great prophets had in their own way uttered similar things. The Davidic kingdom was now greatly reduced, impoverished, and deeply fallen; the rule of the world was lost, and must be won back again by other means. All this leads to the conclusion that Solomon is not the king here, but a later descendant of David, perhaps Isaiah, or rather, if possible, one still later. For the language and mode of presentation is, for an early poet, too light and flowing, too artificially smooth and elaborate; and not seldom older thoughts and images are more fully expressed or simply repeated."

These views of Ewald's have at least this amount of truth in them, that we cannot ascribe this Psalm to

David. Neither the language nor the thoughts in the least resemble his. David's language is always rather jagged, very terse and condensed, bordering sometimes on the enigmatical. Further, his thoughts run always on life, not on nature, except when he feels that nature only clothes God. The 15th or 101st Psalm, describing what in his view the king of the Theocracy should be, differs entirely from the description here given. Passion characterizes his poetry.

We know the character of Solomon's mind from the Proverbs, many of which are undoubtedly his. In him passion had given way to reflection, as the active and adventurous spirit of the father had given way to love of ease and luxuriousness. That feeling of nature which, in David, was purely lyric and subjective—according to which nature herself has no place except as reflecting the emotions of the poet, or as the garment through which is seen the form of God,—quite alters in the son to a feeling of nature itself, of its beauty and harmonies. In the former case the subject is all, and the world takes its bias from him; in the latter, the object is all, the subject himself being at most a part of it.

Now there is some ground for discovering the authorship of Solomon in the Psalm on account of the presence of such peculiarities. The poetry is not that of passion but of nature—it is objective. The sun and the eastern moon, and the rain grateful to the parched and shorn grass, all the images of peace and beauty, freshness and health, are taken from the external world.

Then the colouring of the piece agrees with Solomon's reign, and, perhaps, with its commencement. His father's reign had been one of blood: the land longed for peace. Solomon's rule extended to the Euphrates. Foreign kings such as Hiram sent him

presents. He was in alliance with Pharaoh, who gave him his daughter, and as a dower subdued to him the cities of the Philistines. He traded with ships to Tarshish, and had gold of Ophir. Sheba's queen came to hear his wisdom. And though all this took place somewhat later, yet the young king's aspirations were the same from the beginning. And perhaps the poem might not have been written till he had, at least, projected those great enterprises which have made his name famous. And finally, the prayer at the commencement is very much that recorded of Solomon—that he desired wisdom more than riches.

If all these arguments come short of proving that Solomon is the author of this Psalm, they will at least explain how he came to be regarded as its author, and furnish an account of the heading: by Solomon.

But whoever the author was, the Psalm itself must be looked upon as the lyrical expression of thoughts, that run through all the prophets, concerning the Kingdom of God. If we ascribe it to Solomon, then it must be the source whence the prophets borrow many of their thoughts. If we bring it down later, making it contemporary with these prophets, it becomes a Lyrical Compend of thoughts taken from them, or common to its author with them. In any case it is a Prophetical Ode, and should be read as a summary of prophetic hopes regarding the Theocratic King and Kingdom.

II. Of whom does the Psalm speak?

This is not a question that ought ever to be put as a primary question, without very fully considering what the ideas of the Psalm are, and to what at least there must be reference in it. Now the main ideas of the Psalm are, as we have shown, the thought of a righteous king, one ruling in righteousness in such a

way that the righteousness of God comes to manifestation in his rule. His judgments, his decisions and deeds are such not only as God approves, or as God helps him to, but are such as God, were He ruling this kingdom immediately, would give.

> Give the king Thy judgments, O God,
> And Thy righteousness unto the king's son.

Secondly, such a rule leads to peace.

> The mountains shall bring peace to the people,
> And the little hills by righteousness.

Then a righteous kingdom becomes, from its nature, eternal.

> They shall fear Thee while the sun endureth,
> And before the moon, throughout all generations.

Also, it will speedily be, through its attractiveness to men, and the cohesive strength which righteousness gives it, universal.

> He shall have dominion also from sea to sea,
> And from the River unto the ends of the earth.

This logical sequence of thought resembles almost a deduction of western reasoning.

Now these are the thoughts of the Psalm. They are at least the wishes, whether hopes or anticipations or not, of the writer. He ventures to pray for such a destiny for some king or other, some Jewish king. He does not regard it as a thing impossible that a Jewish king may possess God's righteousness, and utter God's judgments, and rule over a monarchy embracing mankind.

Whether the Psalm be held to be throughout a prayer, or be considered to pass into strict prediction, is of no importance. Give the thoughts any name you

choose—presentiments, momentary upbursts of desire that it might be as he said, mere conceptions of possibilities—the thing to be attended to is that such thoughts really arose in the heart of some Jewish writer, that he gave them shape and expression, and that he was not dreaming, or uttering mere vacant hyperboles or empty formalities on the occasion of the enthronement of some new monarch of an Oriental State. He is speaking of the Jewish kingdom and the Jewish king; and in all sobriety he dares express the wish that the king may be just, that such a king shall reign in righteousness, that his time shall be one of peace, that his reign may be over all the earth, and that it may be eternal.

It is not of consequence even if they are inconsistencies between one element of the representation and another. What the writer expresses may be mere fits of hope that do not abide, gleams of distant glory that pass away. If that were true, while a certain disharmony might thus be found in the whole, the separate thoughts would not be affected—especially the main thought, which is the foundation of all the others, the righteousness of the king, the appearance in him of the Divine rectitude.

The kingdom is not considered here as a mere polity. It is a religious organisation. The kingdom wished for is a righteous kingdom, a kingdom really of God. It is not merely a good constitutional monarchy that is desired. It is the realization of that kingdom of God among men, of which He himself spake, when He said to Israel: "Ye shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and an holy nation." It is not identical with God's government of the world, the kingdom of Him that ruleth over all, because He is creator; it is not identical with this, nor a part of it, but a kingdom of another

kind; for God hath not dealt so with any nation as with the people of Israel.

Now having got thus far, so far as to see that the writer speaks of the kingdom of God, that is, of the Jewish State, and of the Theocratic King, we must face the question, What Theocratic King had the writer in his mind? Was it a present king or one future? Was it Solomon or some king contemporary with the writer? Or was it that future king of whom the Old Testament writers often speak, the flower of the kinghood of Israel, the perfect realization of all the ideas involved in the Davidic King—He whom we name the Messiah?

This does not seem to me a very important question. The really important thing is to feel that the writer is speaking of the Jewish State or Kingdom of God, and of the Theocratic King of it. On the one side it may be argued that these aspirations of the writer might be connected with Solomon. High hopes were entertained of him. His name meant prince of peace; God said of him to his father: "I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days." He himself sought wisdom to govern rather than riches. He raised the kingdom of Israel into an empire. His name and power were known in Europe and in Africa and in the distant Indies. There were on all sides, connected with his reign and himself, tendencies which, if they never went so far as to realize the hopes here expressed, may at least have suggested them. And, however it is to be explained, Hebrew prophets did look for the perfection of the kingdom of God, many times, to all appearance, even in their own day. Both in judgment and in blessing they link together the present judgment and the last, the present blessing and the final. But when we realize that, whether spoken of the future expected

king or of some present king, it is spoken of him as king of the kingdom of God, then any other interest which we have in the passage is critical rather than theological.

It may seem a truism that the Jewish State was the kingdom of God. My impression is that it is not so. It is usually said that the Jewish State was a type of the Christian Church; and that the prophets, in such Psalms as this, are describing the Christian Church in colours borrowed from their own State, which was not a kingdom of God, but only a shadow of it, only a certain machinery of relations, the working of which taught certain ideas that could be transferred to the sphere of the church and religion. The Jewish State was the kingdom of God; and all its machinery and institutions were institutions expressing some side or phase or idea of the kingdom of God. And the prophets speak of this as it was. The question whether what they say of it, and the hopes they express of it, shall be realized in the form stated, is a question that concerns the interpretation of the whole Old Testament. But what I wish to insist upon is that they themselves had no such duality before them as we now are apt to conceive, viz., a Jewish State, which was a mere State among other States, and a Kingdom of God or Church, which could be described in colours drawn from this other, and by analogy. It is possible that sometimes such an idea may have risen in the prophets' minds; at least this idea may have arisen that the present form would greatly change; but there was always an identity in their conception between the form and the thing. That being so, the whole question of the Old Testament is, Has what the prophets say formal, as well as substantial, truth? This is the same as to ask, Is this form of the kingdom a perma-

nent, or only a temporary form?—a question that exercises a pervasive influence on the meaning of the whole Old Testament.

Now as to the fulfilment of the wishes of this Psalm. We believe they will be fulfilled in Christianity. Christ is the righteous King. His kingdom shall be one of peace; it shall be universal; it shall be eternal. But this which we call Christianity or Christendom is not another thing from the Jewish Theocracy but the same thing, though in another form. And even the form of Christianity may yet greatly vary, and is not now, at least, in that form in which it shall be eternal.

If we start from the idea that the theocracy was the kingdom of God, it may not be difficult to trace the progress of Revelation as expressed through the prophetic mind, in reference both to the kingdom and the king.

First: when the people suggested the idea of a human monarchy to Samuel, he instinctively opposed it. He felt, and indeed the people did not conceal the thought that lay in their minds, that the proposal sprang from the mere natural, national sentiment of the people, and their desire to assimilate themselves to the nations round about, and take their place as one of them. They said: "Give us a king to judge us like all the nations." But this was just to propose to renounce the theocratic idea, to descend from the position of being a kingdom of Jehovah to being a kingdom of this world. The proposal betrayed, on the part of those who made it, misconception or neglect of the true nature of the Hebrew Commonwealth. Detecting this, the prophet offered the strongest resistance to the people's wishes. And Jehovah recognized what feeling in the people's minds prompted their request, when He said to the prophet: "They

have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me that I should not reign over them." It is the same insight into the secular spirit that always more or less determined the popular movements, that dictates the consistent policy of the prophets, which they are never weary of inculcating upon the people, their home and their foreign policy being that the nation should cultivate peace and not affect to be a military power, riding on horses and building fenced cities ; but that it should trust for defence to Jehovah alone, and abstain from foreign alliances which drew it into the circle of heathen influence. While insisting on these general principles, the prophets do not otherwise mix themselves greatly up with political movements. They generally accommodate themselves to the form of government that exists. They interfere only when the principles of the Theocracy are flagrantly transgressed, as when the house of Ahab sought to introduce Baal worship, or when Saul threatened to become a mere autocrat, and a rival to Jehovah.

Second: the fear that laid hold of the mind of Samuel, and which was to a large extent verified in the reign of Saul, that the human kingship would come into collision with the Kingship of Jehovah was dispelled on the accession of David. He was a man according to Jehovah's own heart, who did all His will. He understood the principles of the Theocratic kingdom, and made it his aim to realize them. His first act was to recognize the supreme rule of Jehovah, by removing the ark which was His throne, to Jerusalem, the seat of his own authority. The seats of the heavenly and the earthly kings were side by side. The earthly king was indeed Jehovah's king, whom He had set on His holy hill of Zion.

Now, from this point, there commences a process

which must be regarded as a not unnatural one, although it is one that threw off, as it advanced, very profound ideas, a process in the prophetic mind towards assimilating the earthly kingdom and king to the heavenly ones; towards idealizing the earthly, and clothing them in the spiritual attributes of the heavenly, till at last they were identified, or at least epithets proper to the one were bestowed on the other. The king on Zion was son of Jehovah. He shared in His love and enjoyed His fellowship; he reigned in His spirit; and the more perfectly he did all this, the more truly was he a theocratic king. The kingdom was a redemptive kingdom, not a natural one; although a redemptive kingdom in those days had a distinct material side, and was obliged to maintain its existence against the world in the shape of foreign nations with armies at their back. But this was not the case for centuries of the existence of the kingdom. Only during the last century of its existence had Judah any grave trouble from abroad. And it was, therefore, the internal condition of the people to which the prophets mainly directed their attention, and the redemptive attributes of Jehovah as affecting these that they brought into prominence. The nearer the earthly king and kingdom were to the Divine King and His rule, the more perfect they were. They would be altogether perfect when they were entirely similar, when they were identified and became one. And thus commenced and advanced a process towards this identification.

Now it was probable that the prophet would not venture to array the theocratic king, to begin with, in all the attributes of Jehovah, the Redeemer King. Circumstances always called forth the revelation, which came through exercise of the prophetic mind. Now

a particular crisis would demand a particular interference of Jehovah, the revelation of a particular deed or attribute of His redemptive character. But Jehovah manifested Himself, as in word through the prophets, in deeds, in rule and in judicial function, through the king. Thus the king came to be clothed with some single attribute of Jehovah. Jehovah was present with the king, was in the king in that redemptive attribute.

So the prophetic author of this Psalm prays that Jehovah's righteousness and His judgments may be given to the king, i.e., that the king may realize, in his rule and in judging the people, the very ideal of the Divine Kingdom. Another operation of Jehovah, the natural effect, indeed, of His own righteousness, was to make His people righteous. One prophet says: In Jehovah have we righteousness and strength. Another names the Messiah, the Lord our righteousness. Jehovah is in him, making His people righteous—calling them righteous, and making them correspond to the designation.

Another saving attribute of Jehovah was His might. One of the standing designations of God in the Prophets is Jehovah of hosts. The name probably arose from the idea that He was Israel's warrior king, who led her armies. But if the name arose in this way, it certainly extended so as to embrace under it the idea that Jehovah had at His command heavenly hosts. This idea appears already in Joel: "Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together" (i.e., to the valley of Jehoshaphat): "thither cause Thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord" (iv. 11). "The Lord is a man of war, the Lord is His name." But this attribute of Jehovah, His saving power, the prophet assigns to the theocratic king when he calls him: God-heroic.

It is not merely that he is clothed with this attribute; but Jehovah is in him in the fulness of this attribute. It might be some time before the prophetic mind rose to the height of identifying the theocratic king and Jehovah altogether, or of saying that God, in all His attributes or absolutely, was in the king, or that the king was God. And we might fancy that we should be able to trace the progress towards this, through the assigning of attribute after attribute, till Jehovah was represented as dwelling in the theocratic king wholly. But it is doubtful how far such a progress can be traced; and my impression is that, although we may be right in making the general assumption of the gradual development of all the great redemptive ideas in Scripture, it is not always possible to verify the assumption.

It is certainly not the case that later prophets always make an advance on earlier ones. Much depends on the idiosyncrasy and power of the prophet or individual writer; much upon the particular crisis during which he lived, and to which he had to minister light. And we must recognize an element in Revelation which will not accommodate itself to what we might, beforehand, conceive would be the order followed. And where there are so many writers as in the Old Testament, it is a very precarious undertaking to attempt to classify them historically or assign dates to them, according to the principle of the mere development of ideas that we find in them. Isaiah in one passage calls the Messiah by a name *El Gibbor* signifying: *God in His might*; but in a passage which is certainly earlier, he calls Him absolutely *God with us*; and in yet another, which is certainly later, he appears to descend from this high position, and represents the Messiah as endowed with the Spirit of God, which is in him a spirit of counsel, and a spirit of might. On the other hand, a Psalm, which is

probably much earlier than Isaiah, applies the ordinary name of God to the theocratic king: "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." In all these very extraordinary designations which the prophets, particularly Isaiah, give to the Messiah as perfect Theocratic King, we observe evidence of an effort made to rise to the conception of a complete unity between this king and Jehovah—an effort to lift the Messiah, the Anointed of Jehovah, into a superhuman being, while He remains most human. The name Wonderful Counsellor is a term used elsewhere of what is Divine. The Angel that appeared to Manoah said: "Why askest thou thus after my name seeing it is Wonderful"? And the passage in Isaiah further says of the Messiah that He is Father of His people for ever, and Prince of Peace; the Hebrew word having a much deeper meaning than our word "peace." It is that quiescent harmony which reigns between God and those saved, as it is said: "The chastisement that led to our peace was upon him."

Now no doubt the question suggests itself, How did the prophets conceive this unity of Jehovah and His Anointed? Was it an ethical unity merely, or an essential oneness? was God united to him merely, or was he God? This union of Jehovah and His king was certainly not merely ethical—it was redemptive. Jehovah, the Redeemer of Israel and his king, was present in all His redemptive attributes in His Messiah. But it was perhaps the case that the prophets had not risen to that particular conception of oneness which we express by saying that God "became" man. They approached the idea of unity rather from a different side. They began to move first on the lines of official unity; and it is possible that the idea of incarnation in the truest sense was not realized by them. Now, in the view of Scripture itself and the writers of Scripture, the whole of

Scripture, including both the Old Testament and the New, is a unity. This unity it derives from its being the expression of a single mind, the mind of God; and consequently an allusion to any particular truth in early Scripture was, nevertheless, the introduction to that whole truth. Each particular statement of Scripture derives a certain additional meaning from its being part of a whole system of truth. And therefore in estimating the meaning of these particular words applied to the Messiah in Isaiah, chapter ix., you must have regard to the revelation in its complete state. Another principle, however, needs also to be attended to, viz., that the writers of Scripture always wrote intelligently, and understood the particular revelation made to them; but they might have imperfect understanding of the whole scheme of which the particular truth was a part; and therefore, though always intelligent, they might not be enabled to rise up to the full meaning of the language they used. And perhaps the prophets, when calling the Messiah God, had not themselves that precise view which a clearer revelation has given to us—yet it must have been a very singular feeling that they had. To us such truths are old, and have lost their novelty; and it is hard to give them vitality in our minds. And we might sometimes long for that freshness of feeling which a prophet like Isaiah had, when he wrote that exquisite hymn in chapter ix., and when the thought came upon his mind that in the theocratic king, the king of Israel, God should be really present to the people, in all His saving power, and that His presence would bring righteousness and peace to mankind.

PSALM CX

PSALM cx. belongs, no doubt, to the circle of Psalms which embraces Psalms ii., xx., and xxi., and others that speak of the theocratic monarchy and king. Although its terms are very lofty, they are not more inapplicable to the theocratic king than those employed in Psalm xlv. or Psalm lxxii., which nevertheless seem only mediately Messianic. The circumstances of the home-bringing of the Ark, and the placing of it on Zion Hill, and the demeanour of the king on that occasion, the rôle he played and the place he assumed in relation to the people, and the consciousness which all these acts expressed of his own relations to Jehovah, the true Theocratic King, furnish an explanation of the imagery employed, and the language used. Even if we should regard the Psalm as directly Messianic, we must conclude that the author had not risen to the conception of the perfect spirituality of the Messiah's Kingdom, but still regarded it as having a local seat on Mount Zion, when he says : " The Lord shall stretch thy strong sceptre out from Zion " ; and that he had in his mind not Jehovah's throne in heaven, but His Theocratic throne in Jerusalem, when he speaks of the king as taking his seat on the throne at the Lord's right hand.

But in interpreting any single Scripture of the Old Testament, you must always bring to bear upon the interpretation of it a general conception of the whole

Old Testament, according to which its spiritual truths are to be considered as having been clothed for a time in a material embodiment, which at a certain period disappears, and leaves the spiritual truth in its naked absoluteness. The truth that the theocratic king sits at Jehovah's right hand, was expressed to men's eyes in his being seated on God's throne in Jerusalem. But God's throne in Jerusalem was itself but a material embodiment, for a time, of the spiritual truth that He is King of Saints. And when the time appointed of the Father came, both His own visible throne and the human theocratic king's sitting down upon it disappeared from the circle of material things, and were sublimed into the spiritual things represented by them.

But while the Psalm might be very well regarded as an indirect Messianic passage, like the other Psalms belonging in general to the same circle, so far as its language is concerned, when we inquire into the authorship of it, and find it ascribed to David — an ascription with which all the circumstances which must have given it rise, the warlike character of its language, and the method adopted of presenting the truth under the form of divine oracles, completely accord— there seems no alternative left us but to assume that it is a directly Messianic Psalm. It may be so in two ways. It might be what may be termed an abstractly Messianic Psalm, the figure presented being that of the theocratic king in his essential characteristics, without reference to any particular person in whom they should be realized. In other words, it would not be a real theocratic king such as David himself, presented ideally, nor yet that distinct theocratic king who was destined to realize the ideal, to whom Isaiah refers, but the mere ideal character itself.

Out of the strange scenes of that day, what he was and what he had done, the kingly dignity which had been long his, and the priestly which he had, under he could hardly tell what impulses, assumed, there might rise up before the Psalmist's mind the conception of the theocratic king in his true perfection as a King and a Priest. The effect of this mode of regarding the Psalm is not different from the effect produced by the more natural supposition, that the writer had in view the distinct future King who should embody, in himself, such characteristics as are here described. This seems the way in which this Psalm is regarded in the New Testament. And if I say a word more on the subject, it is not because I think this view of the Psalm doubtful.

In our bearing toward such difficulties as the present one, there are two things which we should keep before us: (1) to maintain a position of reverence toward Scripture; and (2) to allow the utmost freedom, consistent with this, to criticism and individual opinion, meaning by the last, freedom to differ not only on matters on which, as to themselves, difference may be allowable, but also on the bearing which differences have on things held in common, and on which difference is not allowed. For instance, you must permit a man not only to say "I disagree with you on this point," but also to add, "My divergence on this point does not, to my mind, affect the other doctrine which you think must be affected by it." In a community, the lowest foundation of which is conscience, you must allow great weight to a conscientious statement by any one of a position, even although you may not be able to comprehend it.

Critics have not been unanimous in accepting the Davidic authorship of the Psalm; and when I mention

Meyer and Neander as taking the other view, every one will perceive what havoc on Christian fellowship would be made by an ill-advised pressing of one view of the question. There seem to be two questions raised by this matter, which it is well to keep apart. One is the question of the limitation of Christ's knowledge; and the other is the question of the validity of Christ's argument with the Pharisees. With regard to the first, the Mediator is the Son in human nature. The subject is the Son; but He is, as incarnate, subjected to the limitations of the nature which He has assumed. The Son, in His human nature, is not impassible nor immortal, neither is He omniscient. As He may suffer and die, so without sin He may have imperfect knowledge. He grew in wisdom as in stature.

Predications of opposite kinds are made regarding His knowledge. It is said, on the one hand, that He knew all things; and on the other, "Of that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels in heaven nor the Son, but the Father." It is plain here that the negative statement must overrule the positive, because a single case of nescience is conclusive against any number of cases of knowledge. It is admitted that He had supernatural knowledge; but it appears that this supernatural knowledge was not universal, and was not, therefore, the immediate necessary result of the constitution of His person, but was administered to Him in His human nature on some economic principle. It was as teacher and prophet of the Church that He received the supernatural knowledge which He exhibited. Now then we are at the point whence views may diverge. All will agree that, in His human nature, His knowledge was finite. Again, all will agree that, as perfect teacher, He can have been allowed to say nothing that was of error; that whatever He said, in

this capacity, was true, and the sum of what He said, sufficient.

But must we hold that everything that He said, He spoke as prophet; and that no utterances of His are recorded, which belong to a personal sphere, or to the region of things indifferent? All men will not be found to answer this question in the way of affirmation. But if such a class of utterances be admitted, there will naturally be diversity of opinion as to what particular statements belong to it. Some will argue that, as Christ used the language of His time regarding the motions of the heavens, and spoke of the sun rising, there is no reason to doubt that on indifferent critical questions, such as the authorship of a Psalm, He adopted the common phraseology also; while others, although they may have difficulty in maintaining that they are consistent, will feel averse from making such an acknowledgement. On this supposition, no conclusion as to His own opinion could be drawn from His language.

But some will go further, and say that as Christ's knowledge was limited except as prophet and in matters concerning Salvation, in other matters such as Natural Science and Criticism He may have remained unilluminated, these having no bearing on Salvation or on the truth necessary to it; and that, in order to be tried in all points like as we are, He must have possessed limited knowledge, seeing that our severest trials often arise from our ignorance. At the same time a distinction is to be drawn between the possession of imperfect knowledge and the utterance of any statement expressing it. Perowne expressed the feeling that, for his part, reverence would prevent him finding any statement in Scripture that contained an expression of limited knowledge on the part of our Lord. That is a very good rule for one's own guid-

ance, and a rule that may be recommended, perhaps, to everyone; but it is not a rule that you can impose on any one.

The other question whether our Lord's argument with the Pharisees, in order to be valid, does not require the Davidic authorship, is a less interesting question. It is Perowne's opinion that it does. It perhaps requires, in order to validity, that David should call Christ *Lord*. But perhaps he might be regarded as doing so, without being the author of the Psalm. The hymn might be a voice from the bosom of the congregation, the address of all saints to their King. And among saints David was included; for that royal dignity which he held was but an imperfect acting, for a brief time, of the part of another; it really gave him no privileges over other sinners. Jesus was his Lord, although He was also his Son. By some such round-about argument as this, David might be brought in, though not the author of the Psalm. But the question remains, Is this *the* way in which our Lord argues? Not many will say that it is.

There is only one remark more which need be made. It is the opinion of many critics that our Lord is here arguing with the Pharisees *e concessis*—on their own principles. They understood David to be the author of the Psalm; and He employs their convictions, without of necessity committing Himself to them, to lead them to a higher truth regarding the Messiah than that which they were willing to profess. The truth itself of course is independent of the Psalm, and might have been proved otherwise; but the language of the Psalm readily lent itself to express it, and therefore it was turned to that service.

If anyone should argue so, you will undoubtedly have to bear with him. In this case Christ's argument

was useful for the time and purpose for which He then employed it. With our greater knowledge it may not be serviceable to us. But the truth in question, happily, is not dependent on this argument alone for its support. My impression is that Christ nowhere argues in this way. In His keenest encounters with His adversaries, He never fought for mere victory. He never contented Himself with thrusting His foes into a corner, or fixing them on a dilemma, by reasoning on their own principles; nor does He ever seem to have used false premises, or premises not His own, from which to draw conclusions that He desired to uphold.

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, having in chapter v. 1–10 stated the two great characteristics of a Priest, viz., that, being taken from among men, and appointed for men, he is able to bear gently with the ignorant and erring; and that he taketh not the honour unto himself, but is called to it by God, as was Aaron: and having shown how these characteristics were illustrated in Christ, called of God an high priest after the order of Melchizedek, inserts, before proceeding to define the nature of the Melchizedek priesthood, another warning more solemn than any that precede, against falling away from the religion that has such a priest. What the author says of the Priesthood, is contained in the first ten verses of the seventh chapter, the remaining part of that chapter containing some inferences from it as to the Old Testament economy.

Psalm cx. speaks of a priest arising after the order of Melchizedek. This Psalm must be regarded as a prophecy. Such a priest is not a mere conception; he must really appear. He has appeared in Christ. But the appearance of a new priest has pervasive consequences for the whole dispensation. For under the

Levitical priesthood, i.e., on the basis of this priesthood, the people received the law. The constitution rested on this priesthood; and, the priesthood being changed, there is of necessity a change also of the law. The Old Testament law goes with the Old Testament priesthood. At least with a new priesthood a new principle is introduced.

The principle of the Old Testament priesthood was that of a carnal commandment. It was first a mere matter of positive command; and second, this positive command referred merely to flesh. Being positive, it had in itself no principle of permanence, no essential abiding element; and being a matter of flesh, i.e., descent from a particular family, and referring to washings and bodily purifications only, it possessed no power. But the Melchizedek priesthood is after the power of an indissoluble life. Its principle is life indissoluble, which means not only life that cannot now be dissolved, but life that never could be dissolved, that death could not destroy. And with this principle there goes power.

The principle of the New Testament priesthood is life; and this introduces into the whole dispensation a new law. The author of Hebrews summarises Genesis xiv. thus: "For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of God most High, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him: to whom also Abraham divided a tenth part of all." These are the facts about Melchizedek, as recorded in Genesis. This narrative the author goes on to paraphrase thus: "Being first, by interpretation, King of righteousness, and then also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like unto the Son of God, abideth a priest

continually." Now of this Melchizedek these things are here said. First, that he is a king; and that two characteristics describe his kingdom or rule, righteousness and peace. He is a righteous king, or a king whose very realm is righteousness, this conception being expressed in the king's own name; and his rule is also peace, this being expressed in the name of the place, which is the seat of his kingdom. He is king of Salem. Second, of course, he is a priest, and not of any inferior shrine, but of God most High. He is a royal priest: he unites in himself priesthood and kinghood: and righteousness and peace characterize his rule. I need not point out how prominent these two characteristics are in the Messianic prophecies of the king.

But the author does not dwell on these Messianic commonplaces. He comes immediately to the essence of the Melchizedek priesthood. Its essential characteristics are: first, Melchizedek, in the Scripture, is without father, without mother, without genealogy; and second, in the narrative, he has neither beginning of days nor end of life, but is made like unto the Son of God. These then are the two characteristics to which attention has to be directed in the expression, "*after the order of Melchizedek*." Melchizedek was a priest whose priesthood was wholly independent of who was his father, or who was his mother, or of what family he came. Fleshly descent from Aaron, or Levi, or from any Israelitish tribe whatever, does not come into consideration in his case; his priesthood is not limited by any external conditions of this kind; it reposes on qualities and powers that belong to his own person alone. Again he is a priest whose life is without the limitations common to the life of men. "having neither beginning of days nor end of life"; a priest who is not the successor of another, and to whom no one else

succeeds; who is no member of a course of priests following one another, because not suffered to continue by reason of death: but individual, and unique, and abiding a priest for ever. The phrase "made like unto the Son of God" appears not to be a phrase characterizing Melchizedek generally, but to belong to the last phrase only: having neither beginning of days nor end of life. The expression means that Melchizedek, as represented in Scripture, was designed to be a type or preliminary illustration of the Son of God; and it is only as a priest that he comes before us, not in any way as a man.

Having thus expressed the essential characteristics of the Melchizedek priesthood, the author draws attention to the greatness of Melchizedek, and his pre-eminence over the Levitical priests, saying: "Consider how great *He* was." Both the A.V. and the R.V. by translating "Consider how great this man was," rather suggest that it is Melchizedek as a *man* that is held great; whereas it seems to be only as a *priest* that the author regards him. As a priest he takes tithes; and as a priest he blesses. And these are all the actions we know of in connexion with him. "Now consider how great *He* was to whom Abraham the patriarch gave a tenth out of the chief spoils." This greatness above the Levitical priest consists in three particulars, of which the first is expressed thus: "And they indeed of the sons of Levi that receive the priest's office have commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though these have come out of the loins of Abraham: but he whose genealogy is not counted from them hath taken tithes of Abraham, and hath blessed him that hath the promises. But without any dispute, the less is blessed by the better." The Levitical priests have a pre-eminence,

conferred on them on the one hand by their descent, and on the other by the Law, empowering them to tithe their brethren, although they are all alike descendants of Abraham. But here is one of no Levitical descent, who tithed, not Abraham's descendants, but Abraham himself, and not by any mere legal arrangement creating a factitious superiority; but in virtue of possessing a real superiority, as his blessing Abraham shows, for beyond dispute the less is blessed by the better.

The second point of superiority is expressed thus: "And here men that die receive tithes: but there one, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth." The Levitical priests are men that die. They not only share their privileges with others, but they cannot permanently retain them. The Melchizedek priest has all his privileges in virtue of his life. It is witnessed of him that he liveth, that is, as introduced in Genesis xiv., he is living, and no end is recorded of his life; and in Psalm cx. he is said to be a priest for ever. This life of his makes him alone participant in his priesthood; he has received it from none, and he hands it down to none.

And the third point of pre-eminence is this: "And so to say, through Abraham even Levi, who receiveth tithes, hath paid tithes; for he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchizedek met him." To bring the pre-eminence to Levi closer home to him, he who takes tithes of his brethren may be said to have, in a way, paid tithes to Melchizedek; for, in paying tithes, Abraham may be considered to have represented him; or he may be considered to have done, in Abraham, what Abraham did.

This is an outline of the exposition by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, of the priesthood of Melchizedek. Opinions somewhat extravagant have prevailed regarding this personage. It has been held

that he was an angel, or the Holy Ghost, or the Son of God Himself, temporarily clothing himself in flesh ; or some saint or patriarch of former times, like Shem, come to life again. All these speculations are needless. The Melchizedek of the Epistle to the Hebrews is just the picture which is drawn in Genesis, chapter xiv. The features there given, and the things on which information is craved, but which the narrative passes over in silence, combine to form the typical subject. The author regards the narrative as so constructed that a designed picture of Christ is presented by anticipation. But all investigations into who Melchizedek really was, or what he may have been in descent, and length of days, and manner of death, are wholly without relevancy.

What is said in Genesis xiv. and what is not said, the positive lines that are drawn, and the empty parts that are not filled in, equally unite to form the picture. What is said of him is that he was King of Righteousness, and King of Peace, and Priest of God most High. He is King and Priest. What is not said of him has reference to his origin, his father and mother and descent. Nothing of this is alluded to. He is without them all. Further, no notice is taken of his birth or of his death. Neither is attributed to him, or forms an element in his history : he has neither beginning of days nor end of life. Nothing of all this is recorded of him. He appears, and he alone. He passes over the stage, a king, a priest, living. That sight of him is all that we ever get. This is what Scripture shows us. This is the preliminary picture ; and on this, apart from all other thoughts or questions, we must fasten our eyes. He is like a portrait, having always the same qualities, presenting always the same aspect, looking down on us always with the same eyes which

turn and follow us, wherever we may stand—always royal, always priestly, always living, always individual, and neither receiving nor imparting what he is, but being all in virtue of himself.

A question of some interest in connexion with this has been very keenly discussed, viz., the question, When did Christ become a high priest? The traditional view was that Christ was a high priest while on earth, as well as now, when in heaven. Faustus Socinus gave a new momentum to the exposition of the Epistle by denying that Christ was a high priest during His life upon the earth, and maintaining that He became a high priest in consequence of His exaltation to God's right hand. This view became the prevailing one among the Socinians, but was very strongly opposed by writers on the other side.

The Socinian view would not have excited much opposition, perhaps, if it had merely denied that Christ, while dying on the cross, was performing Himself a priestly act; and had affirmed that the act of the priest commenced, only when he presented His blood before the Father in the heavenly sanctuary. But, under cover of denying that Christ's death was a priestly act, it was felt that the Socinians desired to deny that His death was a sacrifice. They regarded it as a mere inauguration of His present life in heaven; that is, they regarded His death merely as a door which He had to pass through, in order to enter upon His high priesthood, or, at most, as a thing the endurance of which fitted Him to be a high priest; and they limited His high-priestly service in heaven to intercession. As soon as the haze thrown around the question was dispelled, and the essential point brought into prominence, whether the death of Christ was a sacrificial death or not, the discussion about the priest-

hood was understood to be of less moment. Hence Michaelis declared himself of the opinion that, if it was admitted that Christ's death was a sacrifice, the other question, whether he was Himself performing a priestly act in dying, was of secondary interest.

The question, however, is worth some consideration. The arguments in favour of the opinion that the priesthood commenced with the Ascension are such as these. First, the archæological argument that, in the Hebrew ceremonial, the slaying of the animal was no priestly function. The offerer or person, on whose behalf the sacrifice was made, brought his victim to the sanctuary, placed his hand on its head, and himself slew it. The duty of the priest commenced with the receiving of the blood, and consisted mainly in sprinkling it on the altar, and presenting it in other ways before God. Second, there are many passages in the Epistle which seem to represent the high-priestly office as assumed only at the Ascension. Particularly strong seems such a passage as that in chap. viii. 4: "if then He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all, seeing there are those who offer the gifts according to the law." Other passages seem not less explicit, e.g., ii. 17: "Wherefore it behoved Him in all things to be made like unto His brethren, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people." And even more clearly, v. 5: "So Christ also glorified not Himself to be made a high priest; but He that spake unto Him—

> Thou art My Son,
> This day have I begotten Thee;

as he saith also in another place—

Thou art a priest for ever
After the order of Melchizedek;

and also verse 9: "And having been made perfect, He became unto all them that obey Him the author of eternal salvation; named of God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek." And only to refer to one more passage, vii. 28: "For the law appointeth men priests having infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was after the law, appointed the Son, perfected for evermore." Comp. vii. 26; ix. 11; x, 12, 13, 21, etc.

On the other hand, against this view it may be urged that the strong hortatory purpose of the author induced him to draw his readers' attention particularly to what Christ is now, to the functions He exercises in the heavenly sanctuary, to the feelings He cherishes, the capacities He has acquired, and the power to which He has attained, Confessedly, He was once weak and imperfect; and it is to His present condition of perfection, in contrast to the weakness of His earthly life, that the writer with such iteration and impressiveness turns their minds. Then, although the passages just cited seem very strong, there are others of a different tendency, which seem to regard Christ's offering up of Himself as part of His priestly action. For example, vii. 27: "Who needeth not daily like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins, and then for the sins of the people: for this He did once for all, when He offered up Himself. So ix. 26: "Now once at the end of the ages hath He been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And inasmuch as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this cometh judgment; so Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for Him, unto salvation." These passages seem to refer to His act

of dying on earth. But they must be coupled with others which undoubtedly speak of His offering of Himself in heaven. For instance, viii. 3, 4: "For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is necessary that this high priest also have somewhat to offer. Now if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all." And even in the passage: "Nor yet that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood not his own" (ix. 25), the reference seems to be to His ministration in the sanctuary on high. But the passage, x. 12, seems undoubtedly to allude to what He did on earth, when it says: "But He, when He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God." These passages, taken together, suggest the right view.

The question whether Christ offered Himself, in His capacity of a priest, would never have been raised, had the connexion of the death of the sacrificial animal and the presentation of the blood been rightly conceived. But when the death was regarded as the atoning act, and the offering of the blood held to represent the dedication of the now sinless spirit and life of the offerer to God, there was great temptation to separate the two actions from one another. But, without doubt, the true view of the sacrificial proceeding is to regard the death and the presentation of the blood as one act. The meaning of the whole is the offering up of the life. You cannot offer the life of a living creature. The life is in the blood. And the offering of the blood is the offering of the life, which takes place through death. So, in Christ's offering, His death and His presentation of His blood in the heavenly holy place are but one action.

Still, as this action is a complex one, some part of it might be His own, and some part of it belong to others, as in the ordinary ceremony of sacrifice of Israel. But here another point has to be considered. The author of the Epistle, regarding the sacrifice of Christ as of the broadest significance, compares it, not to an ordinary burnt offering or sin offering, but to the sin offering presented on the great day of atonement. Now all the ceremonial of this sacrifice was performed by the high priest in person. He brought the victim and slew it. He entered into the Holiest with its blood. It seems therefore to be a fair inference that the author of Hebrews regarded Christ's sacrifice of Himself as a high-priestly action, as well as His presentation of Himself in the heavens and His ministration there. In his view, the Messiah was a high priest even on earth.

There appears, however, to be a residuum left from several passages which suggest the question, Though a priest and a high priest on earth, was the Messiah a high priest after the order of Melchizedek, before entering into the heavenly state? Now the same kind of reasoning may be applied here as is applicable to the Sonship. He was Son on earth, though the Sonship was only manifested in power in heaven; and on this account he was then addressed—

> Thou art My Son,
> This day have I begotten Thee.

He might be a priest after the order of Melchizedek, although the order of His priesthood did not become fully manifest till His Ascension. Then only He attained to possession of His throne, although a king from the beginning. Then only He reached perfection, being crowned with glory and honour. But the question is, Whether it is not just this actual attainment,

that constitutes the *differentia* of the Melchizedek priesthood. Whether Christ's life on earth be regarded as a personal life, having issues of its own that concerned Himself only, or as a public official life entered upon at the command of God, though voluntarily on His part, and rewarded with glory for its successful conduct; or whether these two be regarded not as two distinct things, but as only sides of the same thing, as they truly should be regarded, it is certainly taught in the Epistle that Christ, through His life on earth, attained, on His Ascension, to glory and honour. And this element seems to be what the author refers to, when he speaks of Christ attaining to the Melchizedek Priesthood; and perhaps we should not be wrong in concluding that it is his opinion that Christ, though a priest and a high priest on earth, attained to be a high priest after the order of Melchizedek, only on His entry into heaven and sitting down at the right hand of the Majesty on High.

THE ENGLISH BIBLE AND ITS REVISION

WHAT is the English Bible? The English Bible, which we use under the name of the Authorized Version, belongs to the year 1611. This is the date of the first printed edition. It is a revised edition of a Bible already existing. The revision was undertaken chiefly at the instance of King James, who felt and expressed extreme dislike to some versions current among his subjects; and especially to notes with which these versions were provided. His dislike was greatest to the Geneva Bible and its annotations, in which he says he found "some notes very partial, untrue, seditious, and savouring too much of dangerous and traitorous conceits." The revision was entrusted to six committees, two of which sat at Westminster, two at Oxford, and two at Cambridge. In the title-page, with which we are all familiar, the book is said to be "newly translated out of the Original Tongues; and with the former translations diligently compared and revised by His Majesty's special command"; and further, that it is "appointed to be read in churches." It has been found impossible to verify the last statement, "for no evidence has yet been produced to show that the version was ever publicly sanctioned by Convocation or by Parliament, or by the Privy Council, or by the King." [1] The expression "Authorized

[1] Westcott, *History of the English Bible*, p. 158; cf. Lightfoot, *On a Fresh Revision of the New Testament*, p. 11.

Version" is therefore not based on anything historical; it was authorized by no authority further than that the work was undertaken by the king's authority. "It gained its currency partly, it may have been, by the weight of the king's name, partly by the personal authority of the prelates and scholars who had been engaged upon it, but still more by its own intrinsic superiority over its rivals."

The title says "with the former translations diligently compared." The "former translations" here mentioned are other English versions already in use. Of these there were many; not all of them independent, but founded one on another. For the history of the English Bible is a history of revisions. It has been often gone over; and pious hands have weeded out everything that seemed an error at the time. The first English New Testament, translated from the Greek, appeared in 1525. Ten or twelve years later the whole Bible was printed in English. And in the three quarters of a century that followed, no fewer than five revisions, that of King James being included, succeeded one another. For nearly two centuries and three quarters no further revision was attempted.

The basis of our present Bible is the translation of William Tyndale. More than a century before Tyndale's birth, the Bible had been translated into English by Wickliffe, and re-issued by his followers. But Wickliffe's translations were not from the original Greek and Hebrew, but from the Vulgate, that is, the Latin translation in use since the time of Jerome in the beginning of the fifth century. Tyndale was the first to translate from the original languages. Tyndale's translations, too, were the first that had the advantage of the printing press. Wickliffe's were disseminated in manuscript. Many of these manu-

scripts remain; and some of them are of extreme interest from the fame of the persons to whom they belonged. One belonged to Edward VI.; and another was a birthday present to Queen Elizabeth from her chaplain. Another one belonged to the unfortunate Henry VI., who gave it to the Charterhouse. Another seems to have been the property of a person of whom history does not present a picture altogether becoming the Gospel. Shakespeare represents the Duke of Buckingham as giving the following advice to Richard of Gloster, in order to secure the assent of the citizens to his seizure of the throne—

> And look you get a prayer-book in your hand,
> And stand between two churchmen, good my lord;
> For on that ground I'll make a holy descant.

When the deputation of citizens visits him, he is found within with two Right Reverend fathers. Divinity bent to Meditation. Whereupon Buckingham exclaims to the Mayor—

> Ah ha! my lord, this prince is not an Edward!
> He is not lolling on a lewd day-bed.
> But on his knees at meditation;
> Not dallying with a brace of courtezans,
> But meditating with two deep divines;
> Not sleeping, to engross his idle body,
> But praying, to enrich his watchful soul.

It is possible that this representation rests on some tradition as to the character and habits of Gloster. At any rate, he is the person to whom belonged one of the remaining copies of the Wickliffe Bible.

The real basis then of our English Bible is the translation of William Tyndale. His New Testament appeared in 1525, having been printed abroad and smuggled into England. It is strange to think that

we are still reading his words. Many portions of the New Testament, in spite of all the revisions it has undergone, are almost Tyndale's very words. In some of the shorter books, it has been calculated that nine-tenths are his; while even in longer epistles, like the Hebrews, five-sixths remain unchanged. The exquisite grace and melody of the language has been a matter of surprise to those who are familiar with Tyndale's other writings, which have no qualities that raise them above the ordinary level of the time. But Tyndale set before him the translation of the Bible as his life's work; he threw into it all his feeling, and the unwearied labour of twenty years.

Tyndale never published more than the New Testament. But he had translated the Pentateuch, and the Old Testament as far as Chronicles. Two years after his martyrdom, his friend Matthew published a Revision of his New Testament and his translation of the Old as far as he had executed it, the remainder of the Old being taken from Coverdale's Bible which had appeared shortly before, and was a translation based on the Latin and the German. Matthew's Bible may be called the *first* Revision. Its circulation was sanctioned by the king; and it may be called the first *Authorized* version.

Again two years after this, in 1539, another revision was undertaken at the instance of Crumwell. This Bible was printed in Paris in a large form, and is often called the *Great Bible*—sometimes Crumwell's Bible, and even Cranmer's Bible—from the parties who furthered the various editions of it. This likewise was authorized, and may be called the *second* Revision. It was also appointed to be read in churches, a copy being ordered to be put in every church, that the common people might read it. Contemporary writers give

lively pictures of the scenes that followed in the churches, of the crowds that gathered around the great Book, from which one read while the rest listened, and of the discussions, and even tumults, that ensued among the partisans of the Pope and of the new learning. Bishop Bonner complains that the Bible had become more attractive than the Service. "Divers wilful and unlearned persons inconsiderately and indiscreetly read the same, especially and chiefly at the time of divine service, yea in the time of the sermon;" and he threatened to have the Bible removed.

After this a period of inaction in the history of the English Bible follows. Great political events occurred which diverted men's minds to other channels. Henry's death was followed by the short reign of Edward VI. Then came the persecutions under Mary, which scattered the Reforming party to various parts of Europe. These disasters at home, however, brought the English Bible under a wave of influence which it might not otherwise have felt. When divisions occurred among the exiles at Frankfort, the Puritan section of them betook themselves to Geneva. There they came under the influence of Calvin and Beza. One of them, Whittingham, who had married Calvin's sister, put out a Revision of the New Testament in 1557. This was followed by the whole Bible in 1560, the year of our Scottish Reformation.

This is the Geneva Bible, which soon became the household Bible in England; and, next to the present version, has done most to mould the mind, and form the opinions, of English Christians. It was a great favourite among the English people, particularly on account of its notes, which are strongly Calvinistic and liberal, and consequently excited the hatred of King James. Its form was convenient; and for a long time

it held its place even against our present version. This is the Bible popularly known as the "Breeches" Bible from its translation of the passage in the history of the Fall: "Adam and his wife sewed fig leaves together and made themselves *breeches*."

A history of the peculiarities of Bibles would be amusing. One edition is known as the "Vinegar" Bible, from a misprint that occurs in the heading of the Parable of the Vineyard, Luke xx., which reads "The Parable of the Vinegar." Another edition has received the name of the "*Wicked*" *Bible*. It has anticipated the proposal to take the "*not*" out of the Commandments and put it in the Creed, and it sets about the work of reformation with boldness, reading the seventh Commandment—"Thou shalt commit adultery."

The Geneva Bible may be named the *third* Revision. It was never sanctioned by authority, nor used in churches; but the people eagerly fed on its vigorous text, and the lucid, sturdy notes. Eight years after, in the tenth of Elizabeth, the need for another edition of a public Bible was felt, and the work was commended to the prelates, who issued what is known as the Bishops' Bible in 1568. This was the *fourth* Revision.

Finally came our present version about forty years later. The succession then is: first, Tyndale, 1525; second, Matthew, 1537; third, the Great Bible, called also Crumwell's or Cranmer's, 1539; fourth, the Geneva, 1560; fifth, the Bishops', 1568; and sixth, the present unauthorized Version, 1611. Coverdale's, in point of fact the second, hardly stands in the direct line, being a translation from the Latin and the German; and the Rheims and Douai or Catholic Bible, though it was made considerable use of by the Revisers in King

James's time, and though many of the felicities of our present version are owing to it, is also a secondary version. The version that has influenced our present more than any other is the *Geneva.*

It appears from this history that the excellencies of our present Version are mainly due to the frequent and careful revisions it has undergone. Now there exists, in the minds of very many persons, especially of persons who are serious, but have not had occasion to acquaint themselves with history, a very great prejudice against meddling with the text of our present Scriptures. This prejudice is very natural; and would, in the case of the English Bible, if anywhere, be excusable. Out of it, they have first heard the words of eternal life. And its touching simplicity, and the exquisite flow of its rhythm, as well as the dignified and somewhat archaic march of its style, removing it out of the commonplace manner of the language of ordinary life, all combine to leave upon the unlearned reader the impression that its words are the very words that dropped from the lips of Divine wisdom itself. And to make alterations upon it is not only felt to offend the ear and taste, like changes on some old familiar music, but to be a kind of sacrilege and impiety. Yet these feelings, however natural, and however much entitled to respect, ought not to be allowed to hinder attempts at improvement.

The English Bible does not contain the very words of inspiration, but only a recast of them into another tongue, beautiful, it is true, and, for the age, wonderful in its accuracy, yet far from perfect. And even the excellence which it possesses has been attained through many successive revisions. The revisers of 1611, to whom we owe the Authorized Version, write thus in reply to objections similar to those which I have

alluded to: "To whom ever was it imputed for a failing (by such as were wise) to go over that which he had done, and to amend it where he saw cause? . . . Truly, good Christian reader, we never thought from the beginning that we should need to make a new translation, nor yet to make a bad one a good one, . . . but to make a good one better . . . that hath been our endeavour, that our mark."

Let me then, first, adduce a few reasons which show the necessity for a Revision of our present English Version; and, secondly, say something of the manner in which the Revision must be effected.

Our present English Version was made from a text which, with our present knowledge, we cannot maintain to have been a true copy of the words of Scripture, as it came from the pens of the original writers. The Revisers of 1611 used two current editions. One was the fourth edition of Erasmus. What then is the history of this Erasmian text? and what its critical value? Its history is short. In the year 1516, Erasmus, after not much more than six months' labour, published at Basle an edition of the Greek text, and so got the start of the splendid Complutensian Edition of Cardinal Ximenes. Erasmus honestly says that his work was a "precipitated one." It really was so. Erasmus was not insensible to the value of ancient testimony, and if he had allowed himself time, would have probably given a much better text to the world than that which is connected with his name. But the excusable, though unfortunate, desire to anticipate the lingering volume of the Complutensian Edition marred the great work; and the evil effects of that half-year of hurry last to this hour.

The MS. originally used by Erasmus was defective in Revelation; and he himself supplied the

defects by translating the Latin of the Vulgate into Greek. This famous MS. was found not long ago. It is a very late MS. of the sixteenth century, of no critical value, and can be identified with certainty; for the Basle printer used it in setting up the edition, and his marks remain upon it to this day. Not one of the great Uncial MSS. seems to have been consulted by Erasmus; and even some cursives which he had at hand he refrained from using, because they furnished a text different from that with which he was familiar. We now know it was different, because it was better, that is, more ancient. It was, indeed, a very corrupt text from which our English Version was made. For example, the verse 1 John v. 7—"There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost," is admitted on all hands to be an interpolation. It is without any authority. The history of its origin can even be traced. It is very modern, and not due even to pious fraud. It was not interpolated for the purpose of upholding the doctrine of the Trinity; for it arose after this doctrine was settled. And its place in the text of Scripture is not due to intention, but to accident. It is found sometimes before and sometimes after the other verse: "there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water and the blood;" and it was no doubt originally a gloss on this verse which some Theologian put on the margin of his MS., and which found its way at last into the text. But it stands in our Bible as a suborned witness to the Trinity, whose mouth ought to be shut. Were there nothing else in our Bibles to find fault with but this verse, they ought to be revised to the extent of expunging it.

But this verse is not the only thing which a candid criticism will have to remove. There are other ex-

crescences to which the knife must be unsparingly applied. A careful comparison of the most ancient testimonies with the more modern, which our version chiefly follows, will show here and there clauses or passages due to a mistaken piety, or to an exaggerated love of the supernatural, or to a morbid craving for the horrible in human suffering, or to Christian tradition, or to many other causes. Examples of the first may be seen in Luke ii. 33, where, after narrating the prophecy of the aged Simeon that Christ should be "a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel," the Evangelist adds: "And His father and His mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of Him"; but these words seemed to a later reader too bold, or likely to lead to misapprehension; and he altered them to "*Joseph* and His mother marvelled," as is read in our Bibles. The same sensitiveness betrays itself in verse 43, where the Evangelist, without fear, wrote—"The child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem, and His parents knew it not"; but a later age changed this into "*Joseph and His mother* knew it not." Perhaps the same kind of feeling, working however in an opposite direction, shows itself in John i. 18, if the Evangelist really wrote, though it is hard to believe he did: "No man hath seen God at any time; God only begotten, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." For "God only begotten," our Bible reads "the only begotten Son."

As an instance of a corruption arising from an exaggerated love of the miraculous, may be cited John v. 3, where it is probable that the original narrative ran as follows: "Now there is in Jerusalem by the sheep-gate a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay

a multitude of sick folk, of blind, halt, withered. And a certain man was there, which had been thirty and eight years in his infirmity." There is nothing here about the moving of the water, nor of the angel who troubled it. The very singular verses which are found at the end of Mark's Gospel may possibly be due to the same cause: "They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." But this is more doubtful; and these verses may belong to the original draft of the Gospel. One would hardly like to say that the awful statement regarding the Agony in Luke xxii. 44: "His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground," was due to a morbid feeling. Yet the statement is found only in Luke; and in many of the ancient MSS. it does not occur even there.

Such omissions open up perplexing questions. The text of Scripture requires delicate and reverent handling. If this passage be not indeed due to Luke, it perhaps reflects an authentic tradition. And the same may be the case with the beautiful story of the woman taken in adultery in John viii., which has all the marks of truth about it, though it perhaps cannot lay claim to be an original element of John's narrative. The nearer we approach to the era of Christ and the apostles, the more do the MSS. gain in simplicity, and in a certain stately coldness of narration free from all extravagance and exaggeration, whether of sentiment or dogma; and the original writer seems little more than a transparent medium through which the rays of truth pass, unrefracted and uncoloured; and he narrates the most pathetic occurrences with no apparent emotion, and utters the profoundest truths as if quite unconscious of their profundity. This strange

neutrality perplexed a later time; and so it threw in, here and there, what appeared to it the appropriate sentiment, and impressed what was considered to be the needful emphasis.

Now the present revisers have, in the New Testament, a double task before them. First, out of the great mass of existing MSS. most of them if not unknown to, at least unused by, former revisers, they have to form a text of the Greek Text. They have, by comparing MSS. and ancient Versions, and quotations in ancient writers, to decide what, upon the whole, seems nearest to the original words of Scripture. Of course the original MSS., as they came from Apostolic hands, are no longer extant. We have only copies. And these do not go higher than the fourth century. We have, however, citations going much higher, and translations considerably higher. The New Testament Revisers, on a view of the whole, form to themselves a Text; they read what seems to them most probably the original, or what, on all the evidence at hand, appears to come nearest to the original. They do not adopt any critical text put out by other scholars, such as Lachmann, or Tischendorf, or Tregelles. They decide as they proceed; and perhaps a company will more successfully solve such a problem than a single critic. But their principles are understood to be the same as those of the critics I have mentioned. They assume that the oldest MSS. come nearest the true Apostolic words; and, accordingly, they give these a predominating authority. Then, secondly, having formed this text, the Revisers proceed to translate it. I need not say that the most startling changes in the New Version will arise from the new readings adopted in the Greek. An extreme example may be found in the passage already referred to, John i. 18, where

many very ancient authorities read "God only begotten." It has been computed that, on an average, such a critical change may occur in every four or five verses. And, as may be supposed, these changes will be most numerous in the Gospels, and, of course, in the Apocalypse.

With the text of the Old Testament the case is different. There the problem is even more perplexing —so perplexing, indeed, that no solution of it can be hoped for. There is only one Text of the Old Testament, viz., that in our Hebrew Bibles. No MS. that has been discovered offers any important variety of reading; and there is not much hope of any light from new MSS. But what the worth of our Hebrew Text is, is a question difficult to decide. The Text is certainly due to the scholars of Palestine. It had been settled with a unanimity which excluded all rivals, probably, before the time of our Lord. But its history is altogether unknown; and consequently, except from conjecture and probability, its worth. But this we know, it was not the only text current at the time of its adoption. It is, in its own way, a critical edition as much as the New Testament of Lachmann or Tischendorf is; or as that of the present body of Revisers will be.

A different Recension or, at least, Codices with very different readings, were in favour elsewhere, as in Egypt. The Septuagint, or Greek translation, which was current in the time of our Lord, and much in use in the Oriental Churches for many centuries, could not have been made from our existing Hebrew text. It is absolutely certain that, in several Books of the Old Testament, the Septuagint exhibits readings greatly superior to those of our Hebrew Bibles. But from its hopelessly confused condition, arising partly perhaps

from wilful corruption, but mainly from the mixing up of several Recensions, and even of other Greek Versions, the Septuagint cannot be adopted, as a concurrent witness along with the Hebrew, to the original words of the Old Testament. It must be practically neglected. The most one can venture to do is to set its readings in the margin. And this is the procedure adopted by the present Revisers. While the New Testament Revisers construct for themselves, from all existing authorities, a Greek text, which they then translate—and many of their most startling changes will be due to the adoption of new readings of the original—the Old Testament Revisers are obliged to confine themselves to the Massoretic text, setting anything which they conceive to be of value, appearing in the Septuagint or elsewhere, in no more prominent place than the margin.

Thus it appears that, even if our present Authorized Bible were a perfectly faultless version of the text from which it was made, there would still be the most urgent need for revision. But who can indulge in so wild a flight of fancy as to imagine that all the principles of interpretation adopted by the Revisers of 1611, and by their predecessors, were correct, and that no holes can be picked in their grammar, or in their expression? Even Greek learning has made gigantic advances since then; and much more, Hebrew. And who can doubt that, with every determination on the part of the translators to be honest, the prevailing faults of that age, such, for example, as an over-leaning to scientific expression in Theology, must be more or less reflected in the version? The present age may have its own faults—I could name one which, I fear, may in some degree disfigure the new version, and, unless guarded against, make it nearly unreadable, viz., a *critical* bent,

determined to express the agreements and differences in the various books, which are of significance in questions of authenticity, the great quest of our day—the present age may have its own faults, but it is well able to see and to remove those of ages preceding. And the traces which it leaves of its own imperfections will furnish work for subsequent revisers in the times to come.

No one who has compared our version with the originals, particularly with the Greek, can doubt that the aim of all engaged upon it, from William Tyndale downwards to King James's Committee of 1611, was the same, viz., to present the Scripture in simple idiomatic English. Even a century and a half before Tyndale, this was recognized by Wickliffe and his follower Purvey to be the task of a translator. All classical constructions and Greek or Latin forms of the sentence were to be avoided. Purvey about 1388 writes thus: "First . . . the best translating is to translate after the sentence, and not only after the words, so that the sentence be as open in English as in Latin. . . . In translating into English, many resolutions moun (may) make the sentence open . . . thus, where *Dominum formidabunt adversarii ejus*, should be Englished thus by the letter: *the Lord His adversaries should dread*, I English it thus by resolution: *the adversaries of the Lord should dread Him.*

This principle was, if possible, conceived even more clearly by Tyndale, the real father of our present New Testament, and the father, I will venture to add, of the English New Testament, as long as the English language shall last. Tyndale informs us that he "perceived by experience, how that it was impossible to establish the lay people in any truth except the Scripture were plainly laid before their eyes in their

mother tongue—this thing only moved me to translate the New Testament." When still a youth, and tutor in a country family, during a heated debate with some of the neighbouring priests at his employer's table, he one day passionately exclaimed that "if God spared him life, ere many years he would cause a boy that driveth a plough to know more of the Scriptures than the Pope did." [1]

Tyndale's aim was steadily kept in view by all succeeding revisers. The object was to present the meaning of Scripture plainly in good English. But it was no part of the reviser's design to preserve any uniformity of rendering of the same word in the original or even of the same phrase. "Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the Lord," was an idiomatic and true rendering of an expression in the original; but no less idiomatic and true was another rendering: "Vengeance belongeth unto Me; I will recompence, saith the Lord"; and both renderings occur. Indeed, the Revisers of 1611 formally announce one of their principles to be variety of rendering: "Another thing we think good to admonish thee of (gentle reader) that we have not tied ourselves to an uniformity of phrasing, or to an identity of words, as some peradventure would wish that we had done, . . . that we should express the same notion in the same particular word, as for example, if we translate the Hebrew or Greek word once by *purpose*, never to call it *intent*; if one where *journeying*, never *travelling*; if one where *think*, never *suppose*; if one where *pain*, never *ache*; if one where *joy*, never *gladness*, etc., thus to mince the matter we thought to savour more of curiosity than wisdom, and that rather it would breed scorn in the Atheist than

[1] Westcott, *History of the English Bible*, p. 32.

bring profit to the godly reader. For is the Kingdom of God become words or syllables? Why should we be in bondage to them, if we may be free, use one precisely when we may use another no less fit, as commodiously. . . . We might also be charged (by scoffers) with some unequal dealing towards a great number of good English words. For as it is written of a certain philosopher that he should say that those logs were happy that were made images to be worshipped, for their fellows as good as they lay for blocks behind the fire; so if we should say as it were to certain words, 'Stand up higher, have a place in the Bible always,' and to others of like quality: 'Get ye hence, be banished for ever,' we might be taxed peradventure with St. James's words, viz., to be partial in ourselves and judges of evil thoughts."

There is no doubt that this resolution of the Revisers, somewhat whimsically defended here, has greatly contributed to make the English Bible what it is, and to give it much of the hold on men's imaginations which it has. Its pathos and music and charming variety are largely due to this; its beauty, in a word, is greatly owing to it. And religion very willingly allies itself with what is beautiful, and uses it for its own furtherance. And any change here will, without doubt, be a loss to religion. And how great a loss it will also be to the cause of literature, and the interests of the English tongue! The English Bible has been to us what the Qoran has been to the dweller in the desert, the source both of our intellectual and religious life, and the instrument for expressing our highest thought.

Yet we must admit that it may be questioned how far this Canon of Interpretation, adopted by the Revisers, was a just one. If it was just, they certainly

abused it. For example, there are passages identical in the three Evangelists which, in our version, look comparatively unlike. It is scarcely fair to an Apostle who uses the term λογίζω if not in a technical, at least, in a special sense, to obscure his use of the one word by giving it *four* different renderings, saying sometimes *count* for righteousness, sometimes *account*, sometimes *reckon*, and again *impute*. This seems excessive variety; although to a reader with common intelligence no loss could be occasioned. There is certainly now rising, and indeed running very strongly, a current of opposition to this method of rendering—a current, I fear, which will be found to work as much havoc as the opposite one. The maxim of this new method is to render the same Greek or Hebrew word always by the same English one.

Under this new principle, all variety will disappear. We shall no more read: Shouldst not thou have had *compassion* on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee? ; nor, He shall separate them from one another, as a shepherd *divideth* his sheep from the goats; nor, the *chief* seats in the synagogues and the *uppermost* rooms at feasts; nor, in the beginning of Hebrews, God who spake at *sundry* times and in *divers* manners. To Festus' exclamation: Paul, thou art *beside thyself*, the apostle will no longer reply: I am not *mad*, most noble Festus. The same apostle will no more be allowed to say: As *touching* the law, a Pharisee; *concerning* zeal, persecuting the Church. No more will that most graphic passage of James be allowed to retain its gay variety: If there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in *goodly apparel*, and there come in also a poor man in *vile raiment*; and ye have respect to him that weareth the *gay clothing*.

It may be argued that this variety is not in the original, and ought not to be in the translation. But, however plausible the argument be that the same Greek or Hebrew word should always be rendered by the same English word, it may be met with the well known fact that the genius of one language differs from that of another; that sameness and exactness characterize the Greek, variety and looseness the English; that the Hebrew language is poor in its vocabulary, while the English is copious; that even where a word corresponds in general to another, the addition of an epithet may destroy the correspondence, and render the use of another term necessary; that not only meaning, but rhythm, flow, and sound make up language. It may be fully admitted that the principle adopted by the Revisers of 1611 is liable to abuse, and was abused by them; but, if the opposite principle be adopted, it should be exercised with great liberality, and variety admitted, whenever idiom or rhythm or even vigorous expression requires it.

What is to be dreaded in the present revision or any revision nowadays, is the making the Bible a learned book—debasing it from its high place as a book that appeals to the heart, and making it a field for intellectual exercise. Perhaps the demands of this sceptical time must be had respect to, and translation in some way adapted to it; but while something will be gained by this, something will be lost. We may no longer tolerate such variety as this: "These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal;" but whatever we substitute for it, the rhythm of the verse will inevitably be ruined.

I have alluded to a canon of interpretation, the abuse of which renders a revision necessary, particularly in doctrinal passages, where it is essential that

the same term should always appear with the same rendering. When we turn to grammar, it is natural that considerable defects should appear. The defects are the same both in the Old Testament and the New; and are chiefly of two kinds—defects in understanding the use of the Article, and defects in knowledge of the use of the tenses. Faults in lexicography are not numerous, though of course in Hebrew some very glaring ones are to be met with. In Job xvii. 6 our version makes Job complain: "He hath made me also a by-word of the people; and aforetime I was as a tabret." The word translated "tabret" has been derived from a root meaning "to beat the drum," whereas it really comes from quite a different root, meaning "to spit" and the passage should read: "And I am one to be publicly spit upon," or, one to be spit upon in the face! A passage even more peculiar occurs in the same book, chapter xxii. 29 and 30: "He shall save the humble person, He shall deliver the island of the innocent." Now the word translated *island* usually has that meaning; but here it is the archaic negative, as in I-chabod, in-glorious. So the passage means: He shall deliver the not-innocent, i.e., the sinful. Occasionally even in Greek the exact force of a word is lost. In Matthew xiv. 8: "And she (i.e. the daughter of Herodias) being before instructed of her mother, said: Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger." The expression translated *before instructed* means rather *put forward*, urged on, She being pushed forward by her mother. "We may conceive," says Archbishop Trench, "the unhappy girl, with all her vanity and levity, yet shrinking from the petition of blood which her mother would put into her lips, and needing to be urged on, or pushed forward, before she could be induced to make it." Again in the singular passage in

Colossians ii. 15 ἀπεκδυσάμενος τὰς ἀρχάς is rendered: "Having spoiled (i.e. stripped) principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly," instead of "having stripped off from Himself principalities;" the powers of evil infested Him, hung about Him, clung to Him all His life like a poisoned robe; but on His cross He stripped them off from Himself, divested Himself of them forever, and made a triumphal show of them.

But it is in its translation of the Greek and the Hebrew tenses that our version stands most in need of correction. It has preserved no pervading distinction between the Aorist and the Perfect in Greek; and its renderings of the Hebrew Imperfect are full of blunders. Perhaps the use of the English tenses has altered considerably since 1611. Just as in German at the present day, the Perfect with "have" is far more common than the Aorist, so it was then in English. But in many places the use in our version of the Perfect for the Aorist obscures the Theology of the Apostles, and fosters false views of the meaning of Scripture. For example in 2 Corinthians v. 14 our version reads: "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead." Colossians iii. 3: "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Romans vi. 2: "How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" Romans viii. 2: "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Now in all these cases the Aorist is used in the original: "If one died for all, then all died." "Ye died, and your life has been hid." "How shall we that died to sin." "The law of the Spirit of life freed me in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death." These Aorists all refer to a definite occurrence in the

past, an event of man's experience, an event similar to an event in Christ's experience, and somehow depending on it, but not to be identified with it, nor absorbed in it. "If one died for all, then all died." Christ's dying for all carried the actual dying of all with it; that which took place in Him for all, repeats and realizes itself ultimately in all—all died. He who is united to Christ at that point of union died like Him. For the past tense refers to this past occurrence, union with Him through faith, externally expressed in baptism. "I was crucified with Christ," like as He was, in company with Him, potentially when He was —for His crucifixion carried mine with it—but really on my believing in Him; and in all cases it seems a moral death, a death to sin, that is intended, not a legal death. Of course, also, the Apostle speaks ideally; he regards that which takes place in the believer as the perfection of the Christian event, whatever it may be. The believer died to sin; he rose to newness of life. "We that died to sin, how shall we live any longer therein?"

Perhaps the Revisers of 1611 erred most in the matter of the Article. They act under no law in expressing it or leaving it out. They are manifestly ignorant of its force. Yet it cannot be denied that very much depends upon it. Thus when the wise men came inquiring: "Where is He that is born King of the Jews"? it casts a clearer light around Herod and his indistinct knowledge of Jewish things, and yet half-knowledge, and the compass of his fears, when it is said that he gathered the chief priests and demanded of them where *the* Christ should be born. Perhaps the same translation should be adopted in that pathetic passage where it is narrated that John in prison sent two of his disciples to Jesus saying, "Art thou He that should come,

or look we for another" ? When John heard in prison the works of *the* Christ—he heard of works being done that he knew to be characteristic of the Messiah—and he asked if Jesus was He. Again it enlarges the view when we read: "Neither be ye called masters, for One is your Master, even *the* Christ. On the other hand, the omission sometimes carries with it a strange force and truth: "To whom can we go ? Thou hast words of eternal life." It was in the beginning of the Lord's ministry, the disciples felt themselves on the brink of strange unknown ideas; strange words came from Jesus' mouth, words of eternal life. Only one more instance. "Then began Peter to curse and to swear, I know not the man: and immediately *a* cock crew." The indefinite *a* calls better up before us the startling effect, on the Apostle's ear, of that shrill and unexpected cry.

Another element in the Authorized Version which requires delicate handling is the archaic element. The Bible has kept alive many beautiful old words which, but for it, would have gone out of the language. And it is a certain advantage for Scripture to have an archaic cast about it; it makes it venerable, and it seems to speak to us a language above that devoted to common things. Yet with all this there is a good deal in the Authorized Version that is hardly intelligible, or that suggests another meaning to us than that intended. "If any man have a quarrel against any," is stronger to us than its real meaning, If any man have a complaint (*querela*) against any. When the incident in the synagogue at Nazareth is read in church, and people hear that Christ closed the book, and gave it to a *minister*, it is doubtful if everybody, especially in Scotland, understands rightly the kind of person referred to. And how many even of the well-educated

know what *ear* or *earing* means in passages such as: "In earing time and in harvest thou shalt rest;" "the king will set them to *ear* his ground"? Most fancy it has some relation to the *ears* of corn, whereas it is the correspondent to the Latin *arare*, to plough. Neither is the advice "Take no thought for the morrow," quite intelligible. In our days, this may seem a very reckless advice, coming from Scripture. In the days of the translators *thought* meant *anxiety*. In a contemporary document we read: "In 500 years, only two queens died in childbirth—Queen Catherine Parr died rather of *thought*." And then what are "taches," "ouches," "mufflers," "wimples," "habergeon," "brigandine," "bolled," "daysman"?

A curious adverb occurs in Judges which has perplexed printers and readers innumerable—the adverb *all to*. A woman at the siege of Thebez cast a piece of a millstone on Abimelech's head, and all to break his skull. Printers have separated the two words "all to" and put "break" in the infinite—all with the design of breaking his skull. But the verb is in the past tense; and allto means altogether: she altogether brake his skull. When this expression occurs before an adjective, it is modernized into "*too*." For example, in the Homily: "The coat of Christ is all to rent and torn," i.e., altogether rent; but a modern reader would say: all too rent, too greatly rent and torn.

In conclusion, let me say that any revision, to be successful, must be carried out in the spirit of our present version. The language and rhythm of the Authorized Version must be preserved. The antique cast of style must be retained. Nothing that is not absolutely wrong, or not absolutely out of use, should be removed. The modern vocabulary, and the modern

order of words, and the modern cast of sentence must be avoided. Any change in familiar passages will grate on the ear, and even on the heart, of the devout reader. He will lament, for instance, the loss of the Doxology in the Lord's Prayer, though that is a sacrifice which he must put up with. In order to maintain this archaic cast, the Revisers have bound themselves by two rules: first, to admit no words into their revision not already in the Authorized Version; and second, to admit no change except at the instance of two-thirds of the members of the Company present. These are conservative checks very needful. For it is not want of scholarship that the present revision is likely to suffer from, but over-scholarship; not want of adaptation to the time, but over-adaptation. The spirit of the present age is extremely distinct and pressing—the Critical Spirit. And that spirit is more unlike than any other to the spirit of the Scriptures.

What is to be feared in the new version, or any version made in these days, is pedantry—the pedantry of exact scholarship, and the critical consciousness. Men cannot translate without having in view the critical questions now agitating the Church; and they cannot help bringing out every point that tells in critical discussion. This will certainly make a version strained where before it was easy. One could almost have wished the revision had been delayed, till this fever of critical discussion had somewhat abated. May we not hope that Criticism will have its day, and that some of us may live to see it as much a matter of the past, as some of the subtle doctrinal discussions of the middle ages or the seventeenth century? Will the time not come when men will care little who was the author of documents, when the question asked will not be, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas was

the author of an epistle, but whether the epistle contains sound advice? If this time does come, and if the revision had been executed then, it would have been easier, simpler, less full of points, adapted more to nourish Christian feeling than to feed intellectual subtlety.

Yet perhaps it is well that the task has been undertaken now. There is also a curious abstractness creeping into our language, very unlike the concrete way of Scripture, and also a false delicacy which is hard to fight against; and all these war against the purity and simplicity of our Bible. Any one who reads private attempts at revision will wonder at their extravagances. Our American brethren perform the most curious antics here. Among them the spirit of the age is most rampant. And to them, to employ *which* for *who*, or *be* for *are*, or *his* for *its* appear mortal sins. There the Apostle mounts a stump, as if to the manner born. "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations," is what St. James says in England; in America: "My brethren, keep yourselves perfectly cheerful when you are exposed to a variety of trials." We know that that people is as modest and fastidious as it is great. The shock which their delicacy receives from some parts of our Bible may be readily conceived. Some expressions cannot be touched at all; and for others, which to us do not seem particularly dreadful, a becoming euphemism must be employed. We do not mind, in this country, speaking of the deadness of Sarah's womb; but across the Atlantic they speak of that lady's incapacity for childbearing. The blunt question of Nicodemus, "Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb?" becomes, in the mouth of these apostles of propriety, "Can he become an unborn infant of his mother a

second time ? " We think " chambering and wantonness " rather a vigorous and not indelicate expression ; but our friends cannot abide it, and speak of " unchaste and immodest gratifications." We are in some danger of being swamped by a flood of sentiment from the New World, some of it genuine, some of it false ; all of it, as it seems to me, excessive. The one old powerful instrument, called Thought, has been displaced by two, sentiment and the drill-sergeant. And for my part I am thankful that the revision of the Scriptures has been undertaken, while there is still some bone left in us.

Judging from changes made in some private revisions, it has been supposed that there may be, on an average,one change in each verse. But the changes are generally insignificant. In the New Testament, no doubt, the ear will detect a difference ; in most places of the Old, perhaps, the changes will not strike one—unless when actually compared with the present version.

In answer to the question, so often asked, " How is the Revised Version to make way, and get into circulation ? " nothing more need be said than that it must fight its own battle as its predecessors did. The Revisers have no authority. The new version that comes from their hand will simply be a revision of the English Bible by a body of men who may be supposed fairly accomplished in modern scholarship, and better able than men at any previous time were, to render the original exactly into English. The Revisers themselves are far from thinking that our present version is inaccurate ; they only think it might be more accurate. They never imagine that, on any of the great truths of religion, any changes they may make will have any bearing whatever. The several thousand

emendations which they may introduce will touch nothing that is believed. Yet it is their duty to do what they can, to come as near the original text as possible, and to present that as precisely as possible in clear, simple, idiomatic English.

MOHAMMED AND ISLAM

IN the present essay I shall direct attention chiefly to the origin of Mohammedanism. Even admitting that the system has, to a great extent, drifted away from its original idea, just as all religious systems do, some knowledge of what the system was, to begin with, puts one in a better position to judge it than any account of it as it is at present. In particular, it enables one to judge more fairly of Mohammed, the founder of the religion.

The sources which we can draw from for our knowledge of Islam or Mohammedanism are two, viz. the Qoran, the book written by Mohammed, and what are called the Traditions, that is, the recollections of him preserved by his contemporaries.

The question whether Mohammed had ever learned to read has been keenly discussed by the Arab Traditionists. Wellhausen remarks that the point is not of importance, as any one can read in vision. I am not so sure of that. I doubt if an instance could be produced of a man, who had never learned to read, dreaming, I do not say that he could read, but that he was reading, that is, understanding the meaning of something written or printed before him. Indeed, I doubt if an instance of anything corresponding to this could be produced. But though we have in the Qoran the reflection of Mohammed's mind for about twenty

years—all the period of his prophetic or public life—the extreme confusion in which the book exists makes the use of it, for the purpose of following the development of his ideas, or even the steps of his external history, very difficult. The chapters are not arranged in historical order; but on the simple principle of putting the longest chapters first, although this is, in most cases, just to invert the historical order.

The short, abrupt Suras at the end of the Qoran are undoubtedly the earliest; they are the most elevated, containing appeals to men and apostrophes to nature, which, though not poetry, and though characterized by the bombast habitual to the prophet, are not without some poetical beauty. And then, though there are abundant allusions to men and events, these allusions are somewhat general; they are mostly attacks on the prophet's opponents; and, just as modern preachers do, he was in the habit of hitting indirectly. Probably his contemporaries knew whom he aimed at, but we do not. Mohammed himself never collected the various revelations which he uttered. Some of them were certainly in the hands of his followers, for they were read in the mosque at Medina in his lifetime; and it is said of Abubekr, the prophet's successor, who performed service when Mohammed was ill or absent, that he was almost unfitted for this public office, being unable to read the Qoran without weeping. But the first complete collection appears to have been made by Abubekr, who instructed Mohammed's amanuensis to gather the fragments together, which he is said to have done from the scraps of leather, palm leaves, and shoulder-bones of mutton, on which they had been at first inscribed. Discrepancies appeared in the copies of this first edition; and a revised edition was put out by the Caliph Othman,

which is that which we now possess. There are no various readings of any consequence.

The second source of information is the Traditions preserved by the contemporaries of Mohammed, the stories told of him, the decisions he gave on various questions on which he was appealed to, and indeed all the minutiæ of his history, his appearance, his tastes, his manner of dress and speech, and the like. The most charming of the collections is perhaps that by Ibn Hisham, founded on an earlier collection by Ibn Ishaq, called "The Life of the Apostle of God." This is considered by Mohammedans in general the most trustworthy collection.

The manner in which the Traditions are authenticated is curious. No tradition is received which is not supported by credible persons, who are named in succession from Ibn Hisham himself up to the prophet or his contemporaries. The chain of support runs in this way. Z told me, who had it from Y, who was informed by his father X, who heard W telling it in a company where he was, who was told it by V who heard it from U, and so on back to the letter A, the final authority, who most probably was Aisha, the favourite wife of the prophet, or his daughter Fatima, the wife of Ali, or one of the companions, who was an eye or ear witness. Notwithstanding all this show of authentication, many of the stories, especially those relating to Mohammed's early years, and to the time when revelations were made to him first, are too marvellous to be credible.

Mohammed was born at Mecca in the year 570, the year of the Elephant, as it is called, this appellation being derived from an attack made on the Meccans that year by an assailant who had elephants in his army. His father's name was Abdullah, and his mother's

Aminah; the former had died a few months before he was born, and he lost his mother when he was six years of age. His family was a branch of the clan of the Qoraish, several families of which inhabited Mecca, and held the most important positions in the town, being hereditary keepers of the Kaaba, or small cubical temple, in which had been gathered many of the idols of the neighbouring clans, and to which pilgrimages were made from many parts of the west and south of Arabia. Near the Kaaba was the well Zemzem from which the pilgrims drank; and into the wall of the Kaaba was built a black stone which the devotees kissed. This stone is said to be a fragment of vulcanite rock containing in it small grains of quartz and felspar. It has suffered many mishaps, having been cracked and broken when the Kaaba was burnt during the first years of the Omayyad dynasty. Mohammed pretends in the Qoran that the Kaaba was built by Abraham and his son Ishmael. The well Zemzem is that which Hagar found in the wilderness and gave her child to drink from. Around the Kaaba is the Haram, or sacred territory, in which no retaliation must be taken or feuds carried on. In the times of ignorance, as they are called, that is, of heathenism, before Mohammed appeared, there was a cessation of war every year for two months, during which the tribes visited Mecca or other markets for purposes of trade. On these occasions it is said the poets recited their verses, or entered into contests with one another for the palm of pre-eminence in poetry.

As was the custom among the townspeople of Mecca, Mohammed was entrusted to a Bedouin or country woman to nurse; and the first five years of his life were spent in the country, where he enjoyed a clear and bracing air, and learned to speak a pure tongue; for

the language of the Bedouin, being uncorrupted by mixture of foreign elements, such as naturally invaded the dialect of towns like Mecca, where merchants and traders from all parts congregated, has always been considered by the Arabs to be classical. It is for this reason that the early poets were so eagerly studied by the grammarians, for the poets were all Bedouin or country men. Mohammed prides himself upon his Arabic, and challenges his enemies in Mecca to produce anything like it. Of course the Qoran is good Arabic, because the Arabs have elevated it into a standard, and bring everything to the test of it; but there is much in it that cannot be construed on any grammatical principles; and a large part of it is the grossest fustian.

When his mother died, the child was taken care of first by his grandfather, and afterwards by his uncle Abu Talib, who, though he never became a believer in him or his revelations, continued to afford him his powerful protection as long as he lived. Many incredible stories are told of Mohammed's youth. But all that we know for certain is that he was poor, and herded flocks in the neighbourhood of Mecca. He cherished to his death the memory of this simple period of his life and of its pleasures, and he was proud that he had been a shepherd like Moses and David. Long after, when he was at the head of armies, and the greatest man in Arabia, he one day saw some black berries, and asked for them to be brought him, saying: "Even such I used to gather, when herding in the valley of Mecca; and truly no prophet hath been raised up, but he hath done the work of a shepherd."

Mohammed continued, all his life, of simple habits. He was abstemious in food, cared little for dress, mended his own shoes, and lived to the end of his days in a hut of sun-dried brick, with a roof of palm branches, and

almost no furniture. We have numerous pen-and-ink sketches of the prophet in the period of his youth, and when he grew up to manhood. He was above the medium height, with broad shoulders; he had an abundance of black hair which fell on his neck in curls, and a thick black beard which covered his chest; his forehead was broad and white, marked by a large vein, which swelled and throbbed when he was angry or excited; his eyes were large and deep, with an expression ordinarily of sincerity, but with a penetration in them, at times, under which those quailed on whom they were directed; his nose was slightly aquiline, and thin towards the point. In the Traditions a certain woman who remembered him described him as open or bright in countenance. It was remarked of him that he never addressed any one with his face half towards him, but always turned himself round, so as to look him full in the face. He bore the name, among his friends, of al-Amin, "the trustworthy." Though taciturn, and quiet in manner, he was usually genial; and his words though few, were pointed, and often not without humour; and he had that indispensable requisite of a great man, he could laugh—so as to show even his back teeth. He appears, in spite of his simplicity, to have been somewhat of a fop; his perfumes and hair-oil and tooth-pick, or rather wooden tooth-brush, have become historical.

He was certainly by nature of a kindly disposition; he would stop and pat the children on the head; he legislated in favour of the fair treatment of slaves, exhorting the believers to give them the same food as they ate themselves, and to avoid harshness. He was exceedingly open-handed and kindhearted to those in want; on his death-bed, remembering that he had six pieces of gold in the house which he had been minded to give away, but had been prevented, he ordered the

money to be forthwith distributed. He was fond, too, of the lower animals; his favourite camel is nearly as famous as himself, and with the shrewdness which was, perhaps, the most remarkable of his characteristics, he knew how to turn the freaks and self-will of the beast to good account. On more than one occasion when a decision of his own was in danger of awakening the jealousy of one or other of his followers, he left the decision to her, under the pretext that she was directed by God.

But though usually kind, Mohammed was undoubtedly vindictive, particularly in his later years, and never forgot a personal insult or injury. He was exceedingly sensitive to sarcasm; and the jibes of the poets put him beside himself. When he had some faithful followers around him at Medina, he found he could retaliate with a weapon sharper than satire; and several of those who had lampooned him felt the dagger of the assassin. He was even cowardly enough to instigate the murder of two poetesses who had satirized him, and to applaud the deed when done, saying to the murderer, "Thou hast aided God and his Apostle"; and another woman he tied by the limbs to two camels, and driving them apart, tore her in pieces. There can be no doubt that he degenerated in his later years, and displayed a vindictiveness towards those who opposed him, which his bitterest enemies never showed towards him, and a bloodthirstiness which was almost inhuman. On one day he caused eight hundred Jews to be beheaded in cold blood, himself standing by and watching the butchery; and in the evening, to efface the unpleasant impression from his mind, and give a more happy turn to his ideas, he took home the wife of one of the murdered chiefs, and added her to his harem. There is a union of cruelty and sensuality in the man,

at this period of his life, which one cannot contemplate without disgust.

But to return to an earlier period, Mohammed, when a lad, had made at least one journey to Syria in the trading caravan of his uncle. There he came in contact with Christianity, at least in some of its forms, and trod hallowed ground. The fables which the historians narrate of his intercourse with Christian monks may be held to reflect the impression produced on his reflective and somewhat dreamy mind by what he saw and heard of Christian life and feeling in these regions. About his twenty-fourth year he became the agent of a rich widow named Khadijah, who traded to Syria. The expedition was extremely successful; and when he returned, and laid before her the gold and rich merchandise which he had brought back, the lady was less charmed by the gold than by the handsome agent who had acquired it for her. She employed her sister to speak to Mohammed on her behalf. The latter willingly entered into the proposal. The lady was forty, and he only five and twenty: but she was wealthy and noble, belonging to one of the best families of the Qoraish, while he was poor, and, though also of the Qoraish, a scion of a meaner house. Khadijah's father, it was feared, would be opposed to the match; but they managed to make the old man drunk, and, casting a wedding garment over him, they completed the ceremony in his presence. When he awoke from his wine, he was furious; but facts were against him, and he ultimately acquiesced.

Mohammed's marriage was a fortunate step for him; it raised him above want, and gave him a position in the town; and he found in Khadijah a judicious and faithful companion, who advised him, and comforted and upheld him in many troubles yet before him. She

profoundly believed in him, and in his mission when the hour for entering on it arrived. Mohammed, though he married another a couple of months after her death, cherished her memory all his life, and often spoke of her; and his vivacious young wife, Aisha, used to say that she was not jealous of any of her husband's wives except the toothless old woman, who was dead. Mohammed had none of the prejudices against widows, which a distinguished father sought to instil into the mind of an equally distinguished son in our own day. He married in all thirteen wives, and of these no less than a dozen were widows; some of them, like his first wife, for the second time.

The historian Ibn Hisham devotes a long chapter to the prophet's wives, the mothers of Islam, as they were called, tracing their history and naming their former husbands; and he remarks, with a surprise that was not unnatural, that the prophet married only one young girl. This was Aisha, the daughter of his old and dearest friend, Abubekr, who succeeded him in the Caliphate, one of the finest figures in early Islam, with a nature more delicate than that of Mohammed, and less robust, but far nobler and purer. Mohammed was engaged to Aisha when she was six, and he married her when she was nine or ten. The child is said to have brought her toys and playthings with her to the prophet's house. She was only twenty at his death. She was a lively creature, though excessively spiteful; and her sallies and girlish pranks delighted the old man in his last years. He died with his head on her lap; and it is from her that most of the information comes about his domestic habits and inner life.

I mention his wives because some of the most important legal enactments in the Qoran, which still remain law in the Mohammedan world, arose out of

the jealousies of the prophet's harem, and the vast anxieties they at one time or other occasioned him. No doubt, with his usual shrewdness, he did his best to provide against bickerings. When he brought home a new wife, he built her a separate hut; and he sought to put down jealousy by distributing his time equally among the various huts. But such precautions were not sufficient. An indiscretion or a misadventure of Aisha's was the occasion of the promulgation of the law of adultery. Aisha vehemently asserted her innocence; but the circumstances looked ugly, and the prophet was estranged from her for a long time. At last her tears and protestations seem to have convinced, or at least softened him, and he resolved to clear her. A revelation was given him from God, defining the evidence necessary to convict of adultery. Such evidence required the testimony of *four eye-witnesses* of the fact—a very good law for the sinner. And such is the Mohammedan law to this day. Who can say that Mohammed was not a humane lawgiver?

When one reads in the Qoran the revelations given during this momentous crisis, and hears the Almighty repeating from heaven the gossip of the prophet's harem, and the sly insinuations of the people in the little town of Medina, and reprimanding the people because of them, one is inclined to ask, Had these Arabs no humour? Was it not amusing that Mohammed's Allah should be so completely at the prophet's disposal, and so interested in his small affairs? Perhaps one is wrong in putting such a question. It may have seemed a serious enough matter to the Arabs, and worthy of a divine solution. Probably they felt that if they needed God's help in anything, it was in keeping their women in order. It is difficult for us at all events to believe that, at this period, Mohammed was not

a conscious impostor; that he used the name of Allah, and the pretext of a revelation, merely to cover his own purposes, and give a sanction to his own wishes. There is no reason to suppose that, at this late period of his life, he had any return of those trances or semi-ecstatic conditions, which might have confused his mind, and led him to identify his own thoughts with a revelation from God. These later chapters are mere cold-blooded pieces of scolding in God's name, flat and dreary, with no mental excitation—political and social bulletins, or divine condonations of his own licentious excesses.

Our interest in Mohammed after the Hijra, or Flight to Medina in the year 622, ceases to be a religious interest, and becomes political. We behold the Arab State growing up under our eyes at Medina; we perceive Mohammed giving evidence of powers of the most remarkable kind, which he had no opportunity of exhibiting while at Mecca; he seems to us another man, and we are constrained to acknowledge that now we see the true man, and that he is a greater man than he appeared at any previous time. His greatness, however, does not lie on the religious side of his nature, but on the political, in his influence over men.

Until recently, Mohammed was regarded as throughout a conscious impostor, the false prophet perhaps of Scripture. Sir William Muir, in his valuable *Life of Mohammed*, does not close the door against the hypothesis that his career is to be explained by his being inspired by the devil. A somewhat shallow age used to explain all religions by the theory of imposture, chiefly of priests, forgetting however to explain the priests themselves. A better knowledge of the human mind has led men to the conclusion that imposture explains few things, and at least that the

persons called impostors have usually been men who, if they imposed on others, did so by imposing on themselves. They were not conscious impostors. Some reality, however grotesque and unreal in some of its external forms it may have appeared to the eyes of reason and sobriety, had laid hold of their own minds. This is now on all hands conceded in regard to Mohammed, at least in the early part of his career. And his early career was his whole religious career. He employed the religious forms of the early period to the end, and used the same religious phraseology; but the enthusiasm was gone, the life had fled. The political swathes in which the religion was wound choked it. The religious formulas of early times like "There is no God but God," became mere words of command, by which the Moslems were drilled into a political unity, and made soldiers—soldiers who, within a very few years of Mohammed's death, humiliated two empires, that of Constantinople and that of Persia, and stripped them both of their fairest and most fertile provinces.

Since Carlyle made him one of his heroes, the tendency has been to elevate Mohammed as unduly as he was degraded before. He has been elevated to a rank which made him almost the greatest man whom the race has produced, as one may read in the pages of Mr. Bosworth Smith and other of his eulogists. Perhaps some of the details already given may suffice to show that Mohammed was no hero. He was even without personal courage. His mind, though robust, and shrewd to a degree, had no fineness; he had an impure imagination; some of the most beautiful stories in the Old Testament, such as the history of Joseph, are given at length in the Qoran, but we notice the marks of the prophet's dirty fingers upon them.

Perhaps we ought to compare Mohammed with the men about him, and not with our own ideals. A comparison of him with the Arabs of his day might be in some instances to his advantage, but not in all. In all moral characteristics he was immeasurably below Abubekr and Omar, the two men who succeeded him in the Caliphate. But the founder of a religion which aspires to be universal, and of which its admirers say that it is better fitted for mankind in certain stages of civilization than Christianity, and has a great future before it, must stand comparison with the founders of other religions. We cannot compare him with the founder of our own; there is only antithesis between them, whether in thought or life. Their conceptions of God are widely apart. Mohammedanism is monotheistic, no doubt, and its strength lies here; but the essence of the Christian or even Old Testament conception of God, does not lie in its mere monotheism, but in the moral idea of the God who is one. In the Qoran there are ninety-nine epithets applied to God, called "the beautiful names," but that of "Father" is not among them. The new thought expressed by Christ, that he that findeth his life shall lose it, that to give one's life a ransom for many is the highest ideal of moral life, an idea which in its various applications is the practical power in Christian life, never dawned on Mohammed's mind. One will look in vain for any great self-sacrifice in his life. If at any time he overlooked an insult, or omitted to demand what he thought due to him, it was because it was politic; and, when the opportunity came, he was apt to exact double. Even beside Buddha, he would cut a very sorry figure as a type of humanity and its yearnings, and as the interpreter of the mission of the race or of the individual. At the same time, though we do not

find the highest in Mohammed, we find something that may be called high.

Mohammed's later life may be regarded as falling into two great divisions: the first, his religious life, from 610 to 622; and the second, his political life, from 622 till his death in 631.

About the fortieth year of his age, Mohammed certainly became powerfully affected in a religious sense. It is probable that, like most polytheistic nations, the Arabs had, along with minor deities, one supreme name whom they set above the others, between whom and men the minor gods might be intercessors and mediators. But this highest god was practically less reverenced than the many lesser deities. Each locality had its own special god; and the Kaaba, or temple at Mecca, being the chief sanctuary of all the tribes of the Hedjaz or Western Arabia, had within it a great variety of idols. The supreme God was named, before Mohammed, Allah or Allahum, a form which is obscure; and solemn contracts commenced, "Bismika Allahumma," "In thy name, Allahum." But religion was practically dead, except amongst a few who were in quest of a better faith.

A class of men are mentioned about the time of Mohammed, and somewhat earlier, who are called Hanifs, a word of somewhat uncertain meaning, but which practically meant "monotheists." In the Qoran, Abraham is frequently styled a "Hanif." Along with a monotheistic faith, these "Hanifs" were also seekers after a purer life, and manifested a certain tendency to asceticism. They were enquirers; and that which stimulated enquiry will appear immediately. Probably few of them had attained to any clearness of view. Some found rest in Christianity, but hardly any in Islam. It is probable that belief in

immortality in any real sense was unknown among the Arabs. The poets no doubt speak of a voice answering the mourner from the grave, and of the spirit or soul of the departed appearing to the eye like a bird, but there was no faith or fixed belief. The poet, Taabbata Sharran, expresses the general feeling, when he says, addressing his enemies who had captured him :—

At your hands a tomb I take not; right or portion in my burial
Yours is none; but hear, and welcome, thou hyena of the desert.
Thou my heir; my head, they claim it, once my glory, now their trophy.
But to thee the rest abandoned. on the naked sands thy portion.
Then no better life awaits me, dark and hopeless the hereafter,
Endless, night to night succeeding.

This bitter cry of Taabbata Sharran is heard in many other poets of the period. Though not quite in the same manner, the infection of religious gloom caught Mohammed. And the interesting point is the direction which his thought on religious things took. It was purely personal at first, and this decidedly strikes at the root of the idea that he was an impostor, to begin with. It was probably not till, at least, two years after, that he began to address his fellows. Historians seek to resolve his religious struggles, and his revelations, into some form of physical malady. He was certainly subject to fits when a child ; and these seem to have returned later in life. The Bedouin woman, to whom he was sent out to nurse, brought the child home, in alarm at some of his attacks. He continued to be of a nervous temperament. Writers call his disease epilepsy; it is now generally supposed to have been a form of hysteria, because the fits, though

severe, do not seem to have been attended with loss of consciousness. But his disease, whatever it was, does not explain the religious movement in his mind, though it may help to explain some of the forms which his religious ideas took. It may account for his hallucinations in regard to voices from heaven, and the appearance to him of God, or Gabriel, the Holy Spirit.

At all events, at this period, he was undoubtedly agitated by strong religious emotions. These led him to seek solitude. He retired to the caves on Mount Hira near Mecca. He was under great perturbation of mind. He fell into occasional fits or ecstasies. At last in one of these he beheld the Holy Spirit, the Angel Gabriel, as he afterwards chose to call him, who said:

> Read, in the name of thy Lord,
> Who created man from a drop,
> Read, for thy Lord is most noble,
> Who hath taught by the pen,
> Taught man what he did not know.

To "read" means merely to recite or express in words; and the command is to Mohammed himself, to put clearly before his own mind the truth. The "pen" mentioned is that of the angels who wrote the heavenly copy of the Qoran, or revelation of God.

Here we see the beginning of Islam. And men will pass different judgments on it. Some will at once name it self-delusion. Others, looking to the astonishing part that the religion of Mohammed has played in the world, will find their minds lost in musing, and will remain silent. There can be little doubt at any rate that at this period, at least, Mohammed was in earnest.

Not to dwell on his state of mind, however, the interesting thing is to discover what the influences were, and where they came from, that produced it. And

perhaps there is not much doubt that the influences came from Christianity, particularly from Christian asceticism. Long before this, Arabia had felt the touch of Christian sentiments. A strong Christian kingdom had for a considerable time existed in the south. On the north the country was in constant communication with the Christians in Syria, particularly with the ascetic Christian sects lying along the great caravan route from Mecca to Damascus, which went by the south end of the Dead Sea, and north on the east side of Jordan. Mohammedan tradition brings the prophet into connexion with a monk on the east of the Dead Sea, who predicted his future greatness. The prediction may be discounted; but the monkish life, the ideas it inspired, and the general view of the world it took, laid hold of him, and are reflected in his first religious awakening. And they show themselves in his early converts even more permanently than in himself.

The most striking thing in the early chapters of the Qoran is the frequent description of the Divine judgment; and the most outstanding peculiarity of all the best among the early converts is the terror which this idea inspires in them, and their contempt of the world and its pleasures. In the following somewhat bombastic but greatly admired passage, he evidently has Christian churches or monks' cells before his eye: "God is the light of the heavens and the earth; His light is as a niche in which is a lamp, and the lamp is in a glass; the glass is, as it were, a glittering star; it is lit from a blessed tree, an olive neither of the east nor of the west, the oil of which would well-nigh give light, though no fire touched it; light upon light—God guides to His light whom He pleases . . . in the houses God has permitted to be reared and His name mentioned therein—His praises are celebrated therein

mornings and evenings." The form of Christianity that was most striking to the Arab imagination was the ascetic or monkish. In pre-Mohammedan poetry, the hermit's lamp, twinkling in some lonely cell far away from the dwellings of men, is frequently alluded to. In Imruulqais, of whom Mohammed said that he was the greatest of the poets, and their leader into hell-fire, the lightning, pointing its fiery finger out of the cloud, is compared in its quick turns to the movements of the anchorite's lamp in the darkness.

Of this period, which occupied several years, we have naturally few details. The Tradition mentions a cessation of the revelation for a time, We must interpret to ourselves this cessation. Mohammed was as yet occupied with himself; his mind was forming itself, and his thoughts assuming shape. At the close of this period, a new revelation came to him, as he expresses it, being a command to arise and warn men. This is Sura 74, given in 612 or 613.

> Oh thou enwrapped in thy mantle,
> Arise and warn.
> And thy Lord glorify,
> And thy garments purify.

The act of washing the garments was a Sabæan custom, pointing to initiation into a new religion. Mohammed now felt himself the first of a new society, and the founder of one. He commenced the rôle of a preacher, or, as he called it, a warner, for it is not quite certain when he assumed the title of a prophet. And there are several things of interest: first, his personal religious life; second, what formed the main burden of his warning; and lastly, how his religious system gradually took shape, and where the elements came from, which he embraced in it. As to his life, it was

characterized by the same sombreness and ascetic tendency which had marked the past two or three years. He was constantly engaged in devotions. He passed much of the night in prayer, and in reciting what of the Qoran had been revealed to him; and in general in what is called the Dhikr, which consists in pious ejaculations and in repeating the name of God. A Sura of this time, chapter lxxiii. runs as follows: "Oh thou who art enwrapped, rise by night except a little—the half or deduct therefrom a little, or add thereto, and chant the Qoran, chanting . . . Verily the earlier part of the night is stronger in impressions . . . Verily thou hast by day a long employment, but mention the name of thy Lord, and devote thyself to Him . . . there is no God but Allah, take Him for a guardian." There are numberless passages to the same effect.

So far as the second point is concerned, Mohammed was continually insisting that he had a mission from heaven, that God had appeared to him, and had revealed eternal truth to him. It is possible that he insists on this so much, partly to convince his own mind against doubts which the incredulity of others might naturally raise; but it is mainly to convince others. This period is full of such protestations. The incredulous said he was a poet, or possessed, or that he told them only old stories that they had heard before. Chapter lxix.:

> I will not swear by what ye see, or by what ye do not see.
> Verily it is the speech of a noble Apostle!
> It is not the speech of a poet—little is it that ye believe!
> It is not the speech of a soothsayer—little is it that ye mind!
> It is a revelation from the Lord of the worlds.

These are the words of God concerning His prophet; and there is much similar to it which I need not quote.

More to the purpose is the question, what did Mohammed preach? This is difficult to answer as regards this period. It was something vague, a general looking for of judgment, not very definite but certain, not because of specific sins of mankind, but for their general condition, especially their idolatry. It is, in short, merely the echo of ascetic Christianity, of the great thought of the antagonism between God and the world, and the imminent doom of creation. All the most poetical parts of the Qoran are mere descriptions of the terrible day of the Lord, as chapter lxxxi: "When the sun is folded up, and the stars shoot from their place, and the mountains are moved . . . when the beasts crowd together, and when the seas shall roar, and when souls shall be paired again with their bodies . . . and the books shall be opened . . . and when hell shall be set ablaze, and paradise shall be brought nigh . . . then the soul shall know what it has prepared for itself." The judgment is followed by hell or paradise; but at this period there are no details of a voluptuous paradise; and indeed even the later descriptions are probably figurative.

To back up his terrible pictures of a coming interposition of God, Mohammed had recourse to history—partly to Bible history, and partly to the history of convulsions of Nature, that had happened in Arabia itself. Of course, he did not know the Bible directly; but Arabia had long swarmed with Jews, and its thought had been largely inoculated by their influence; and, as has been said, the caravan traffic brought the people every year, more than once, into contact with the Christian ascetics about the Dead Sea and the east of the Jordan. He appeals to seven great judgments of God, three being from the Bible, and three from the history of his own people, while the seventh is

uncertain. The former were the flood, the destruction of the cities of the plain, and the catastrophe that happened to Pharaoh, of which till a later time the prophet's ideas were vague. The calamity that overtook his own people, most frequently alluded to, is some judgment that befell those called "the people of the grove." It seems an Arabic version of the cities of the plain, or some convulsion occurring in the neighbouring territory of Edom. These stories had two purposes; first, to alarm men, and secondly, to commend Mohammed himself, as a warner; for each of these great catastrophes was preceded by a prophet, Noah, Lot, Moses, and others.

It is enough to indicate the general sources of Mohammed's conceptions. Gradually, in these years which preceded the Flight in 622, his system took shape; and when I mention what its main elements are, the sources of it will not be doubtful. The three great articles of faith in Mohammed's creed are: The unity of God, the resurrection, and the judgment, followed by the blessedness of paradise or the fire of hell—simple Christian doctrines. And the three great moral duties, or duties of worship, are: prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. These are the chief points of Mohammed's early preaching. Later, he engrafted on these the pilgrimage to Mecca, with its ceremonies and sacrifices. This did not take place, however, till the political period of his career at Medina. It is a mere piece of Arab heathenism adopted into his system out of policy, and in order to commend it to the Arabs, and was certainly an afterthought.

Feeling that he was making no impression in Mecca, Mohammed determined to try the neighbouring town of Taif; but the people there stoned him out of their coasts. Returning disconsolate, and doubtful what

he should do, he chanced to light on some pilgrims from Medina, who had come to the feasts. He spoke of the doctrines to them, and was delighted to find that, instead of being received with mockery, as usual, he was listened to with attention and sympathy. It is strange, indeed, that Mohammed had never thought of Medina before. Both town and district were largely inhabited by Jews and Christians; and the Arabs, though they had not gone over to their faith professedly, had largely imbibed their ideas. Here was soil ready prepared for the prophet's teaching.

After one or two years of negotiation, Mohammed and his followers determined to seek refuge at Medina; somewhat less than two hundred joined in the Exodus, the so-called Hijra, in 622. That up to this time Mohammed was still nothing more than a religious reformer, with no purpose of founding a State, is manifest from the conditions to which the people of Medina pledged themselves, which were these: to have no God but Allah; to abjure stealing, fornication, and infanticide; to avoid slander, and to follow the wishes of God's messenger as far as was reasonable.

This third period of his life, his career at Medina, is of great importance from a civil and political point of view. Here he gradually became the most influential man in the city; then, the head of a small State; and, finally, ruler of the whole of Arabia. The parts of the Qoran belonging to this time, though of less interest religiously, are of great importance, because they form the foundation of the civil and public law of the Mohammedan world. He legislated here on marriage, divorce, the rights of the divorced, on inheritance and testamentary dispositions, on fasting and the ceremonies of the Haj or pilgrimage, and much else.

So far as a study of the man is concerned, this is

perhaps the most interesting period of his life. He now began to exhibit qualities for which there had been no stage before. He displayed great ability, great political sagacity and address. He showed that he was a born ruler of men. There was something almost magical in his personal influence. He attached to him minds greatly more refined though less vigorous than his own. By many of these, such as Abubekr, Islam was conceived in a way much freer from alloy than by Mohammed himself. The words, for example, in which Abubekr announced Mohammed's death to the congregation, are most memorable. The more impetuous Omar had just been haranguing them on the falsehood of the news of the prophet's death, saying that he was not dead, but only departed in a trance, for a time, to return again; when Abubekr entered, and mounted the pulpit. "If any one worships Mohammed," said he, "then Mohammed is dead; but if any one worships God, God liveth and dieth not."

On the political stage on which he now acted, the prophet played his part with consummate skill. He could turn defeat no less than victory to account; and step by step his ascendancy rose till he saw himself the commander of 10,000 men. Such an army had never been seen in Arabia before; and it was omnipotent. By its aid Mohammed planted the standard of Islam in every corner of the peninsula. But that religion had very little to do with his success, appears from the fact that no sooner was he dead than every part of the peninsula rose in rebellion. The Arab might not care much whether there was no God but God, or not; but he objected to paying tithes to an authority at Medina. The tribes had to be reconquered by Abubekr like a hostile country; and Islam was again established over mountains of slain.

But, from a moral point of view, this last period of the prophet's career is the darkest. His licentiousness was a scandal to his followers. His cruelty to those who thwarted him was extreme. His fraud in giving out, as revelations of God, what was merely a needful cover or palliation of his own acts, or a skilful combination to forward some political scheme, is surprising. His admirers say that he could not distinguish between the working of his own mind and the inspiration of God. He was certainly not endowed with metaphysical subtlety. But few, who are aware of his shrewdness in general, will believe that in his later years he was not, on many occasions, guilty of conscious imposture.

Modern eulogists of Mohammed and Islam, like Bosworth Smith, endeavour to show that Islam is really a better religion for Arabs and people in a like stage of civilization than Christianity. It may be a better religion, in the sense that it is an easier one; and, no doubt, it is an advance over fetichism. That there is one God, to whom we are subject in all things, is a powerful truth, a truth that nerves the human mind, and gives it fibre. It cannot be held without inspiring some great thoughts, and implanting courage in the heart of man. It is a truth that makes men of nerve. Yet, as held by Mohammed, it is a very imperfect doctrine of God.

The deity of Islam is a king, a judge, an omnipotent potentate. His only relation to men is that of a ruler. He may reveal His will to men, but it is only His imperious will; He is not among men, but over them, distant, and not entering into their life. His communications with them are external, mechanical. Such a word as that of Hosea: "He took them on His arms, He taught them

to walk" would, in the Qoran, be like a spring in the desert. There is no descending of God to take on Himself the burdens of mankind, no saying like that of the Old Testament: "In all their affliction He was afflicted." The defect in the conception of God is the ethical—a defect, perhaps, peculiar to the Shemitic mind, of which Mohammed was a true type. Mohammedanism is filled with sects, the characteristic tenet of every one of which is some kind of protest against the mechanical transcendence of Mohammed's God. The God of the Qoran is like the desert, monotonous and barren, an unfigured surface, an unresponsive immensity.

On its human side, Islam is even more defective. As God has not come down into human life, human life has never been elevated up to God. God and man remain far, immeasurably far apart. The Qoran presents no ideal of human life. The prophet's morality was below that of his contemporaries; and the Mohammedan has before his mind no human life, such as he should strive after. There is nothing to counteract the selfish egoism of the individual. The thought of man, indeed, is the counterpart of the thought of God. The distant, imperious, non-moral ruler, whose arbitrary will is fate, "who leadeth whom he will, and misleadeth whom he will," is reproduced in human life, in the relation of the man to his harem and dependents. These he rules; but he is not one of them, has no influence over them except by his objective will. Affection is impossible; sympathy is neither understood nor desired; moral unity and support in the duties of life are unknown. For life has no moral duties either to the man or to the woman. Hence the frivolous, undeveloped mind of the inhabitants of the harem; and hence the raw, unrefined, merely male human being, which the

man remains. The Shemitic mind is individualistic. It does not take in the idea of mankind or society. It has no anthropology, and therefore no politics. For politics starts from man, from the human mind and its capacities, from the infinite variety of its powers craving for free play and activity, whether singly or in combination.

These two defects of Islam, its exaggerated doctrine of the transcendence of God, and its want of a moral ideal of man, have been found repulsive even to Mohammedans; and the reaction against them has introduced the almost universal worship of saints at local shrines. These saints, as intercessors and mediators, bridge over the chasm that separates God from man, and they present, in the halo that surrounds their memory, some ideal of human life. Mohammed's own life presents no such ideal; and indeed his moral shallowness can be understood from his entire failure to comprehend the meaning of the death of Jesus, which he therefore denied.

Mohammed certainly deserves to be called a religious and moral reformer. He abolished idolatry throughout the peninsula of Arabia. When, with an army of 10,000 men, he entered his native town of Mecca, he proceeded to the Kaaba, and hewed down the 360 idols which stood in the temple; and no idol was tolerated henceforth in the peninsula. He put down the cruel practice, that obtained among the Arabs, of burying female children alive; though he admitted it was a heavy blow to a man to be told that a girl, and not a boy, had been born to him. He forbade gambling and drunkenness, vices to which the Arabs were greatly addicted. He contented himself, at first, with merely discouraging these practices. "They will ask you," he says, "concerning wine and casting of lots; say: In both

there is great evil, and there are also advantages, to mankind; but the evil of them is greater than the advantages of them." His recommendation probably had little effect. The faithful sometimes appeared at public worship overcome with wine. In a chapter of the Qoran, he thus appeals to them: "O ye believers, come not to prayers while ye are drunk, until ye know what ye are saying." Ultimately, he absolutely prohibited the use of wine and games of chance: "O ye believers, verily wine, and the casting of lots, and images, and divining arrows are an abomination from among the works of Satan. Shun them, therefore, that ye may prosper."

It is well known that only the stricter Mohammedans follow the prophet's command to abstain from wine. Some of the strictest sects, however, such as the Wahhabis, proscribe tobacco as well as wine. The fragrant weed was, of course, unknown to Mohammed; and how he would have regarded it, is uncertain. His legislation in behalf of slaves was humane. In some respects also he accorded rights to women which they had not before enjoyed. In other respects he perhaps lowered the position of women. He introduced the veil into his own harem; and the galling seclusion of married women is probably due to him. In the poets before his day the pictures of women, both unmarried and married, show that they enjoyed great freedom, and were much on an equality with men.

The rapid spread of the religion of Mohammed has always been thought surprising; and it has generally been explained by saying that the Arabs propagated their religion by the sword, compelling their subjects to choose between Islam and death. But this representation is hardly accurate. The early Moslems were not proselytisers; indeed, such Caliphs

as Abubekr and Omar discouraged proselytism. Mohammed, it is true, laid down the law that no religion but Islam should be tolerated in Arabia itself; but his commands to destroy unbelievers refer exclusively to his native peninsula. The wars which followed on his death, especially under Omar, who conquered Syria, Persia, and Egypt, were not religious wars, but wars of conquest for empire. The conquered were offered their choice of three conditions, the sword, Islam, or tribute. Of course, the real alternative was Islam or tribute. The conquered populations were not dispossessed of their lands or compelled to become Moslems. If they became Moslems, well and good; if not, they remained of their former religion, and paid a tribute for their possessions.

It was Omar's policy to discourage a change of religion, because the change released those making it from paying tribute. It was also his policy to retain the present inhabitants of the conquered provinces in their possessions, and prevent his soldiers from settling in the country. He wished to maintain a great standing army. The whole Arab nation was, in his day, a great camp. The tribute of the vanquished races was the only means he had to fill his exchequer. There are letters extant from governors of provinces to the early Caliphs, lamenting that the subject population were going over in great numbers to Islam, and so escaping the tax, and that the revenue, in consequence, was beginning to prove inadequate for purposes of government.

It was certainly therefore not compulsion that drove the conquered races over to Islam, at least, in early times. The wars which the Arabs waged were wars of conquest, not of persecution. If the vanquished became Moslems, it was in consequence of the operation

of other forces. These forces can very readily be understood. In the first place, the very want of originality in Islam, its eclecticism, so to speak, was its recommendation. Each religion found in it something, sometimes many things, which it possessed already. Mohammed recognized much of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. To him the prophets were prophets, and Moses a lawgiver, and Jesus a worker of miracles, of supernatural birth, who was finally taken up to heaven. He enumerates among the prophets Adam, Enoch, Noah, David, Moses, and Jesus; and to him Abraham is the friend of God. He recognizes the Pentateuch, the Psalms, and the Gospels, as divine revelations. Of course, he is himself also a prophet, the last and the greatest, though he worked no miracle; and his book confirms former revelations. Of course, also, he will not acknowledge that Jesus is the Son of God, for against this he has what is, to his mind, an unanswerable argument. "How can God have a son," he cries, "when He has no female companion?" The question is a gauge of his metaphysical ability. When we remember the disputes about the natures of Jesus, and about His divinity, that so long rent the Christian Church in the East, it is not perhaps strange that many Eastern Christians, who had little else about them but the name, embraced the religion of their conquerors.

And there was the temptation already alluded to, to escape tribute. Of course, also, though the Arabs did not persecute, they were the dominant race; and their religion was the State religion. Those belonging to another faith lay under many disabilities; they were not eligible to the high offices of the State; they had to show the badge of subjection in the shape of turbans of a different colour from those of the Moslems; and

many other disagreeable things had to be endured. All these circumstances—fashion, worldly advantages, indifference—gradually combined to drive the conquered races into the bosom of the Church of their conquerors. But their profession of Islam was often nothing but a name. Except perhaps in Arabia or among native Arabs, there was little real belief. The Persians in particular never accepted Islam with any heartiness. They took on an external varnish, retaining under it most of their native beliefs. And it is from them that most of the strange sects, with which the history of Mohammedanism is filled, emanated. It is, no doubt, also to them mainly that the literary and scientific renown, to which Islam at one period attained, is due. The Shemitic Moslem has no turn for science; he is also, on the other hand, absolutely destitute of mysticism. He is hard, clear, practical; and, though emotional, without any atmosphere of the mystical about his mind.

Modern Mohammedanism may have drifted away largely from its original as seen in the Qoran. All religions, as popularly felt and practised, differ largely from the official expression of them in their canonical books. If the sketch I have given of the origin of Mohammedanism, and of the sources from which its doctrines and practices were drawn, has any truth in it, it is a religion to be approached with some respect. A religion of this kind has a claim to consideration. It is lower than Christianity, lower even than Judaism; but it makes some approach to the latter, and is of the same type. How best to approach it is, therefore, a problem worthy of earnest consideration by Christian minds. But the question in what way should Christianity be brought before Mohammedans has not been fully faced. Little has been done by Christian missions

in this direction. At least, few results have been reached. And the question, what is the vulnerable side of this religion, or what is it that renders Mohammedans so inaccessible to Christian influences, is of importance. The causes of this inaccessibility must, no doubt, be many—mental characteristics of race, the great historical part which the chief Mohammedan nations have played on the stage of the world just in virtue of their Mohammedanism, with the national and religious antagonisms which these have laid up in their memories, and, finally, the character of their religion. That which makes Islam so difficult to break in upon is, no doubt, its great truth of the unity of God, however defective its view be of that truth. The rigid Unity has judged the Christian doctrine of the Trinity already beforehand.

Another thing adds to the difficulty. Mohammed in his later years came into collision with Christians; and in his book he denounces both them and their doctrines. Mohammedans are, from their infancy, trained to hate and despise Christians. They have already passed judgment on the claims of Jesus. The case is different with heathens and Hindoos. To them Christianity is new; but it really lies behind Mohammedans, as a falsehood which they have learned to refute. Obviously, only the slow influence of events will overcome such prejudices. The great defect of Islam lies in the ethical region. It is here that its doctrine both of God and man is insufficient. The natural attributes of God are powerfully delineated in the Qoran; and, of course, He has also moral attributes. But He has no sympathy; there is no life—no modes—in the divine nature. Fellowship with man in his life is impossible to Him. And in the same way man has really no ethical life, he may sin or do right;

but this is a matter of external conduct merely. A harmony of spirit with God, a sensitiveness of soul, responsive to the mind of God, is not conceived of. It may take long to suggest this.

If the example of Christian States were higher, their influence would be powerful. But, failing this, there remains only the example of individuals. Such philanthropists as Livingstone may by and by suggest a new and deeper conception of human life, and, with it, of Christianity. By and by, a true moral ideal may be awakened by such men in the Mohammedan mind, a sense of moral defect deeper than mere transgression of some positive rule of the Qoran; and then, at last, both the life and the death of Jesus would be understood by Mohammedans.

ARABIC POETRY

THE first requisite to the existence of Poetry is that there be a thought,—a fresh, strong thought. The thought need not be one absolutely new to the world; though, that it be powerful, it must be new to the poet; or, if it had been in his mind as a germ before, and in its gentle movements underground had made itself felt, circumstances around him, like the sun and the rain, must have made it bloom into sudden splendour at last. We shall thus, naturally, look for the truest poetry furthest back in the world's history, when truth was new, when the fountain was intermittent, only rising now and then to the surface in the hearts of men, and overflowing in a joyful stream of purest waters. The most splendid poems may not belong to this era, for men are not only poets by nature, but artists; it is their glory that, besides their instinctive capabilities, of which poetry is one, they can turn themselves to an employment consciously, and adorn by art and experience their ruder instinctive productions. But the truest, simplest, humanest poetry may be looked for in early times, poetry of which both the thought and the art will be instinctive; both the utterance and the grace of it, the product of necessity, not of will.

And as a thought is necessary to poetry, it is only one thought that is needful. Not more than one rises

up in the soul at once. One fills it when it is new, and, like the little cloud from the sea, soon covers its whole horizon. It is only when men have come long into possession of truth, that they bring thoughts together and compare them, letting them out into unity or contradiction, or following them out to their consequences. This is thinking, not poetry. This way of reaching truth is altogether foreign to the poet. Truths rise upon him one by one; each is a whole to him, filling all his mind and quickening all his feelings. And hence the earliest poems generally contain but a single truth or thought.

Now, the counterpart of thought is feeling. The two go together, the one wedded to the other; thought masculine, strong and constant; feeling, feminine and variable. Again, it is only late in the history of truth that men can think unmoved; it is when the thought is familiar and old, and men use it merely as a scaffolding to rise to something higher, that it awakens no corresponding emotion in their minds. But in early times the new truth often broke upon the man's soul in darkness, and it cheered him like the rising sun; or it was itself, if not darkness—for no truth can be other than of the nature of light—yet the opening, oftentimes, of a great abyss of mystery, which made him recoil with quaking and dread. When the great questions of his relation to God and the world were beginning to open before him, being yet all unsolved; when, like a traveller in an unexplored territory, he knew not what new dangers or splendid prospect might meet him at every new step, it was natural that each new experience should fill him with the liveliest emotions.

But, once more, feeling and the impulse to express it are connected together by a law as strict and invariable

as that by which thought and feeling are connected. When young, we express every feeling. It is only when taught by our elders, or by experience, the uselessness or the inconvenience of such a thing, that we put a restraint upon ourselves, and allow our emotions to subside without expression. It may be natural to express thought as well as feeling. It is probable that there is no kind of activity of the mind within, which it is not instinctive to express by bodily action. We smile when pleased; we exclaim when surprised; we weep and groan when grieved; we dance when delighted. At least, there is an instinctive impulse to give outward expression to the varied operations of our mind. Most of all, we sing when we are glad.

Now strong emotion and even strong thought is not an equable monotony, but contains a movement. It rises and sinks, swells and subsides. The mind delights in correspondences. It balances its powerful thoughts. The flow of feeling undulates; and there is a play of wave upon it. And all this is reproduced, when the thought or feeling is expressed either in words or motions of the body. Rhythm, number, rise and fall, characterize all powerful thought and strong feeling alike. In early times this rhythm is of the simplest kind. In later times art lends her aid to vary and unite; and combinations, very ingenious and intricate, may be formed. The order therefore is thought, feeling, rhythmical expression of them.

Now, if this rather superficial analysis, which I have gone through, be correct, it will appear that the distinguishing point of poetry does not lie in the thoughts or feelings which it expresses, for these may be common to it with oratory or prophecy. Neither does it lie in the manner in which these thoughts originate in the mind, for this again seems common to it with prophecy.

What distinguishes it in its simplest form is its *intention*, or the primary sphere of its applicability. This is the poet himself. Poetry is properly personal, egoistic. It is the utterance of thoughts and feelings which the poet cannot but utter; but he contemplates no end by giving them utterance. The impulse to utter and the delight of utterance bound the scope of poetry. The poet is no teacher; he contemplates no audience. The rapture of pouring forth, and the reflex rapture of hearing what he pours forth, form the limits of his sphere. He may have regard to the circumstances about him, to the relations that connect him with others; but such a reference is only an instinctive seizing of things around him as the means of bodying out more perfectly his own feeling. This is what distinguishes prophecy from poetry. A prophet is one who speaks higher truths to men. A poet is one who speaks to himself. The prophet and he may speak the same truths, and with the same energy and feeling, and from the same imperious necessity; but the prophet addresses others: the poet's activity terminates upon himself. When the poet sets a mission before himself to be an instructor, he becomes a prophet, though he may use the arts of poetry.

Thus that which is the characteristic of poetry is its subjectivity. It may be said that this is properly the characteristic of lyric poetry. There is no doubt that the lyric is the oldest and original form of poetry, all other sorts having grown out of it, and that it is from its characteristics that we should draw our definition of the phenomenon in general. In some nations, as in Greece, the epic may seem the original form that poetic invention assumed. But this is not because epic is original; but because the heroic age is so old, that men cannot remember further back. Be-

hind that age, there certainly lay one in which the first fresh feelings of life expressed themselves in simple song; and these songs were the materials which the epic poets used in constructing their more artificial and splendid fabrics; and being thus adopted and assigned a place in the enduring fabric of the epic, their independent use was superseded, and became forgotten. In all those nations the oldest form of whose literature has been preserved to us, such as Egypt, India, and Palestine, the lyric precedes the epos as much as that is in advance of the drama. Had we a Greek literature as old as the hymns of the Vedas, or contemporary with the song of Moses at the Red Sea, we should no doubt find it of the same lyric or hymnal order as the Shemitic and Indian are found to be.

Thus Arabic poetry agrees with the poetry of other peoples in that which constitutes its essence, *subjectivity*. If we inquire, then, in what it differs from other poetry, it will be found that the chief difference lies in its preserving more perfectly its original character. It is more subjective than other poetry; it has retained its subjectivity better. The lyric has developed other kinds of poetry out of itself less among the Arabs than among other peoples. The passage of the lyric into other forms is very natural, and the beginnings of it may be seen in all national poetry. When, for instance, in the midst of a lyric, such as that sung by Israel at the Red Sea:

I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously;
The horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea:

the poet passes from the expression of his own feelings, occasioned by the thought or remembrance of Jehovah's glorious deliverance of His people, to a calmer, objec-

tive delineation of Jehovah's work, we have the germ of what might be termed epic.

The Lord is a man of war:
The Lord is His name.
Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath He cast into the sea:
His chosen captains are also drowned in the Red Sea.
The deeps have covered them:
They sank to the bottom as a stone.

When the poet does not altogether withdraw himself, but ceases to make himself the one object of our inspection, when he no more lays bare his own emotions, nor describes occurrences mediately by showing the influence they have upon himself, but narrates in fitting terms the great actions themselves—this is epic poetry.

Again, the lyric passes over not unnaturally into the only other kind of poetry, the *dramatic*. When, in such a lyric as the Song of Moses referred to, the poet brings before his mind the thoughts and conduct of the persons concerned in the transaction, and when, out of the fulness of his realization of their motives, he brings them forward giving expression to their own purposes and desires, we have the beginnings of the *drama*, e.g.:

The enemy said:
I will pursue, I will overtake;
I will divide the spoil;
My lust shall be satisfied upon them;
I will draw my sword;
My hand shall destroy them.

Now it is certainly remarkable that beyond such small rudiments of epic and dramatic poetry, to be discovered in the midst of national lyrics, no Shemitic people has ever gone. Both Hebrews and Arabs are absolutely without the epos and the drama. It is certainly singular that among the Hebrews, a people with such a

history, there should be such insignificant efforts in the direction of epic poetry. And the entire want of the drama is quite as surprising.

No doubt, some have discovered many remains of drama in Scripture, such for instance as the histories of Samson, and Jacob, and the beautiful story of Rebecca. Ewald can still find the five acts into which this simple drama of Isaac and Rebecca was divided; first, the scene between Abraham and Eliezer, and the mission of the latter; second, the scene between Eliezer and Rebecca at the well, and all the circumstances surrounding it; third, the scene within the house, the characteristic acting of the covetous Laban and the apparently like-minded mother; fourth, the last decision, depending as it must always do, on the maiden's own will; and finally, the on all sides happy issue. And in this writer's opinion there are still two dramatic compositions in Scripture, the Song of Songs, which might be called the Divine Comedy, the sacred Opera of the Hebrews; and Job, the tragedy, the Prometheus Vinctus of the Shemites. All life is drama; and compositions representing life must contain much that is dramatic; but the cultivation of this species of poetry, as distinct from others, seems not to have been attempted by any Shemitic people.

The very vivid conception of the one living God which the Hebrew possessed, and which was laid down as the fundamental element of the national faith and development, operated both upon his speculation and his imagination. It made his philosophy become little more than a theodicy or philosophy of Providence—a problem not of the discovery of God, but of the reconciliation of God with the facts of life. And it confined his imagination also within strictly human forms. The oneness and the power of God, and His complete

distinctness both from man and nature, made quite impossible that confusion, that conflict of Divine and human, which appears inseparable from the ancient epic. Even the Christian epics, such as the Messias of Klopstock and Paradise Lost, require for their subject a Divine man.

It has usually been held a sufficient answer to the question; Why did not the Hebrews possess an epic or a drama? to refer to their conceptions of God and their general religious convictions. But the parallel case of the Arabs renders the propriety of this explanation doubtful. Neither have they any epic or drama. Consequently many writers find the explanation of the want not in the Monotheism, but in the general mental characteristics, of the Shemitic races, characteristics which must be held to explain even their monotheism. It is not only the epic and the drama that these races want; they want science and philosophy also. The artistic instinct they want altogether, or nearly altogether. And they want the political instinct likewise. "It would be," says a French writer, "to push Pantheism in history beyond fair limits, and put all races upon a footing of equality, and, under the pretext that human nature is always beautiful, to seek in the most diverse combinations the same fulness and the same richness. I am therefore the first to recognize that the Shemitic race, compared with the Indo-European, represents an inferior combination of human nature. It has neither that height of spiritualism which India and Germany alone have known; nor that sentiment of harmony and perfect beauty which Greece has bequeathed to the Neo-Latin races; nor that delicate and profound sensibility which is the ruling feature of the Celtic peoples. The Shemitic consciousness is clear, but confined; it comprehends

unity marvellously, it cannot reach multiplicity. Monotheism resumes and explains all its characteristics." This writer, you perceive, considers monotheism to be the natural product of the Shemitic mind; and to be both the typical peculiarity, and the cause of the other peculiarities, of these peoples.

Such a view raises profounder questions than I am able to enter upon, and questions which there is almost no material for solving. For all our knowledge of the Arab comes from Mohammedan sources; and Mohammedan writers throw back upon all things the light and colour of their own times. But the characteristic of the Arab may certainly be held to be *Individualism*; and this he carries out in all departments. He carries it out in religion; and as he is a monotheist, to him a science of nature is an impossibility; for there is no room for second causes or law. How should he investigate into causes? he who can explain all by his one formula, *Allah akbar*—Allah is most powerful? In politics; and the idea of a State, or country, has scarcely dawned upon him; the tribe is the most general idea he can rise to, and even family honour or individual revenge sets at defiance the laws of the tribe. The Arab State is like the sand on his deserts—an aggregate, not a unity, running before the breeze, from whatever side it blow, into new combinations and forms continually, every particle independent and having its own individualism. The Arab also carries it out in literature; and history in his hands never passes out of the stage of genealogies or annals; and poetry produces only brilliant jets, unsustained and intermittent; and a poet becomes renowned for the creation of a single figure, occupying no more than two lines of verse.

This picture of an ideal Arab hero of the olden time

is not overdrawn, and accounts for his poetry and all else as well.

Nor exults he, nor complains he; silent, bears whate'er befalls him;
Much desiring, much attempting; far the wanderings of his venture.
In one desert noon beholds him; evening finds him in another.
As the wild ass lone he crosses o'er the jagged and headlong ridges.
Swifter than the wind, unpausing, onward yet, nor rest nor slackness,
While the howling gusts, outspeeded, in the distance moan and falter.
Light the slumber on his eyelids, yet too heavy all he deems it.
Ever watchful for the moment when to draw the bitter falchion:
When to plunge it in the heart-blood of the many-mustered foeman.
While the fates, bystanding idly, grin to see their work accomplished.
Loneliness his choice companion; and the guide-marks of his roaming—
Tell me whither guide the mazes of the streaky-spangled heavens?

But now, what are the materials of ancient Arabic poetry which we possess? We have no Arabic poetry older than our era; probably, none certainly older than the fourth century of our era. The Hijra, or Flight of Mohammed from Mecca, took place in the year 622 A.D.; this is therefore the first year of the Mohammedan era. The golden age of Arabic poetry embraces the century before and the century after this. The time anterior to Mohammed is called by the Arabs *The Ignorance*; and the poets of those times, poets of the Ignorance. Those contemporary with Mohammed are poets of the Transition, and those living a certain time

after his death are poets of Islam. Tradition states that even the Qoran was written by its inspired author upon very irregular and perishable materials, leaves of plants, bones and the like, and left behind him in great confusion. Hence there is no certainty about the order in which the Suras, or chapters of the Qoran, should be arranged. We can only presume that the shorter ones, which are also the loftiest, and most full of thought and poetic imagery, and rise indeed to what would be called poetry in Hebrew, were the earliest; and that the flatter portions, being supplement and padding to round the system, came last. But the Tradition shows that writing was uncommon before Mohammed. A poet of the Ignorance compares the complexion of his mistress to Syrian paper. It is probable that the article was rare and little used, or the comparison would not have had the choiceness and delicacy sufficient to make it famous.

No poems were written before Islam. But, once shot from the poet's mouth, they flew across the desert faster than arrows. The maidens sang them as they went, with their pitchers on their shoulders, to the well. The camel driver cheered himself and his weary beasts with them, as they wended their way over the monotonous sands under the bright Pleiades. The tribe which produced a poet became famous, and embassies of congratulation were sent to it. It had now a protector more powerful than the sword; for a poetic sarcasm cut deeper, and left a more shameful scar, and one which all the inhabitants of the desert could perceive. The poet himself was the companion of princes, who richly rewarded him. And when the reward was not considered rich enough, the prince too came under the poet's lash. It was the custom to bestow rich apparel as gifts. One rich man conferred

the stuffed saddle of an ass and its cloth upon a poet, who carried them through the encampment; and, being asked what it was, answered: "I dedicated some of my best verses to the prince, and he has bestowed on me some of his own clothing in return." Sometimes a poet turned his sarcasm even against his own tribe, and threw the glory on others. The camels of a poet called Qarit ben Aniph, had been carried off; his own tribe would do nothing to help him, and he applied to the Mazinin, who speedily aided him effectually. Then he wrote:—

Had I been of the tribe of Mazin, then my camels
Those sons of a foundling, children of Dhul ben Shuban had not taken;
For then had arisen to help me, a tribe, fierce,
And tenacious of vengeance, though a poltroon be a laggard—
A tribe, which when war shows his teeth to them,
Flee to him, in troops and singly,
Never asking their brother who begs their aid in distress,
Proofs of his truthfulness in what he tells them.
But my people, though they boast great numbers,
In war are useless for aught, even the least.
The injury of those that injure, they reward with forgiveness;
The evil of them that do evil, they requite with benefit.
Give me, instead of them, a people,
Who charge the foe in fury, both with camel and with horse.

Before Islam, writing seems to have been little practised. Poems were written on the hearts of the people. Their brevity made this easy, their sententiousness, their proverb-like character, their succession of brilliant images, each like a rich pearl, and the whole, as the Arabs are never weary of saying, like a string of pearls. But it was also very natural that

the string should sometimes break, and that one pearl should remain, or several, while others were lost; or that many times pearls belonging to one band should be restrung, and mixed among those of another. It may be taken for granted that considerable confusion prevails in the present condition of the early poetry. Much of it is simply fragments, beginnings or middles or ends of poems, glittering fragments like dust of a crushed jewel. Sometimes a piece has no beginning; sometimes it appears with two beginnings. Sometimes a piece is found independent; and, again, it is found embedded in a longer poem. One school of critics attributes a poem to one poet; while the traditions of another school fix it on another.

I could not call these fragments *Torsos*, because, even when complete, they were not whole figures. They were, even at first, but individual features, cheeks, mouths, hands. No Arab poet ever got so far as to create a human figure, or delineate a human passion; only one feature of that figure, or one picture or expression of that passion, though this with a truth and subtlety unsurpassed. Hence all we have now is like the joint of a finger, or a curl of the mouth, or a segment of the curve of the rounded cheek. And it needs years of familiarity to understand and realize these broken elements, and imagine to oneself the wholes of which they are the fragments. The very causes which have preserved much of the poetry not only made it fragmentary, but confused the fragmentary elements among one another.

The movement that first reduced the poetry of the country to writing was not a literary or aesthetic movement, but one purely grammatical. Verses were not held of value because they contained beautiful thoughts; but because they were pure Arabic of the

country, and free from all alloy of baser dialects. The persons who first brought the poets into literary repute were the commentators on the Qoran. This fountain of all truth and life had to be edited and explained to the people, its difficult phrases made perspicuous, its lofty, poetical language made practical. The only appeal that could be made to a common standard was an appeal to the poetry of the country. This was already embedded in the hearts of the people. The sententious, synthetic, clean-cut, crystalline expressions of the poets were, like the Proverbs of Solomon, the public, the moral, and the social law-books of the people. They condensed into a rhymed maxim on public morals the experience of a lifetime; or they embodied, in one splendid figure, the whole beauty of social well-being.

When, therefore, it was needful either to confirm any reading in the Qoran, or to impress it, the appeal was made to some verse which contained the same expression. But this method of appeal tended to break up the poem greatly, and preserved no more than the sentiment that was pertinent for the illustration required. A host of such citations occur in the commentators, very subtle and very difficult to comprehend; and many times nothing more of the poems is preserved. And we can imagine, from these fragments, what a literature has been lost to us. Yet this drew attention to the poets, and formed the beginning of a permanent collection of them.

The other cause which has preserved much of the poetry to us also contributed to its confusion. That cause was this. The poet being the only mouth the people had for expressing their strong feelings, whether of love or hate, of pride or shame, whether on the deepest or lightest subjects that form the contents

of human life—and as he often belonged to a distant tribe, with which other tribes came only occasionally in contact—some means of publishing poetry was needful. The publishing medium was found in a class of persons called Rawis or Reciters. These wandered about the country, and recited to listening crowds around the evening-fires of the tribes, when the darkness had fallen, and the last tinkle of the bells of the flocks had been heard, the poet's stirring words of love and war. The Oriental memory is comprehensive and tenacious beyond conception. One of the most noted Rawis, Hammad by name, is said to have been able to recite 3,000 long poems, all of the time before Mohammed. He knew 700 poems all beginning with the words, "Saad is departed," which is Arabic for "Noo Nannie's Awa!" One wonders that so many poems should begin in the same way. But this is the peculiarity of Arabic poems; all the poems of a specific class begin in the same way.

Mannerism is the characteristic of Arabic poetry. Some great poet adopts a device, coins an expression, compares the beloved object to a roe, or an egg; calls her *white*, describes her mole as a drop of ambergris upon the surface of a ruby, and straightway the conceit becomes national; and all who have to do the thing again do it in the same way. The most popular and prevailing images of the poetry have been traced back to their first authorship. Thus Imruulqais, the most famous of the pre-Mohammedan poets, was the first to compare woman to *eggs*. Imruulqais was a king as well as a poet, and only celebrates women of the higher class; and they are eggs, being white, for the sun has not browned them. Moreover, they are carefully protected, and hidden away from prying eyes; but this all-conquering, marauding gallant

discovered them. The nest was the inner tent, or the litter on the lofty camel.

> With many an egg of the camel-borne litter,
> Whose hiding-place none dared aim at,
> Have I delighted myself, at my leisure.

Not only has the patient zeal of critics traced each image to its original author, but classified the special excellences of the individual poets. Thus one poet is said to be pre-eminently splendid *when he rides*, i.e., when he describes horses. And even the dry-as-dust critic becomes a poet himself when estimating the excellences of his favourite heroes; and one says that Nabigha, a poet of the Ignorance, is his chief delight, for he finds his waters sweeter and his soil deeper than those of any other.

The Rawis often attached themselves to particular poets, and became the means of making their verses widely known. It was natural that men of poetical talent themselves should be the best Rawis. Imruulqais was Rawi of an older poet, before he became himself the most famous of his compatriots. Now, retentive as was the memory of these Rawis, it was impossible, after they were removed a distance from the poets whose compositions they recited, that they could faithfully preserve their words. Fragments from one poet were unconsciously intercalated in the poem of another on the same subject and in the same metre. As the parts of a poem hung rather loosely together, this looseness made it easy to carry a piece out of its proper position, and deposit it elsewhere. Consequently, in many of the poems which we possess, the order of the lines is certainly not original; nor do the verses all belong to the author to whom the poem is

ascribed. Again the Rawi, being a poet himself, perhaps unconsciously inserted an expression of his own, or even a verse or a passage. And, finally, the Rawis were not all honest. They falsified and palmed off, as genuine antiques, their own modern productions.

The grammatical interest in the ancient poetry soon gave rise to a real and enthusiastic aesthetic interest. About 100 or 150 years after Mohammed, poetry was collected for its own sake. One who could recite an ancient fragment was eagerly sought after, and richly rewarded. Schools debated, regarding an anonymous fragment, to whom it ought to be ascribed. For gain, or from love of laughing at the grammarians, many poems were foisted on them as ancient, which were the product of living men. A person recited some verses before a collector and critic, who demanded, "Whose they were?" "By an ancient poet," he replied. "By Allah, that is a right royal piece of tapestry," said the critic. "No," said the other, "I made it myself last night." "By Allah," rejoined the critic, "I thought I could detect marks of labour and artificialness in it."

I must now describe very briefly an Arabic poem both as to form and contents. First, as to form, the poem agrees with our own poetry in being both syllabic in its metre and rhymed. The Arabic metres are as rigid and regular as the classical. The prevailing base is the Iambus; but the Amphibrach, the Ionic, the Choriamb, and especially the Spondee and the Anapaest abound. The rhyme of the poem is very peculiar. The stanza is always of two lines, and the first two lines rhyme together, and then every second line has the same rhyme. A poem may contain 50 or 150 stanzas, requiring 151 identical rhymes. A poem

whose rhyme letter is l, is called a *lam* poem, one whose rhyme is *t* is a *t* poem, and so on. The poet was often driven to despair to find rhymes for a long poem ; he wandered about for weeks, and even months in search of one. The same word cannot be used in the same poem twice as a rhyme. Many poems took years to produce, though containing only a couple of hundred lines, and hence are known as the *yeared* or *many-yeared.* Bitterly did the poet complain, when a choice expression, over which he had spent months, was altered by some ignorant reciter into one of the same sound, but commonplace and vulgar.

Then, as to contents. Of course the short poems are very various, containing generally but a single thought, and not extending to more than a dozen or twenty lines. But a Qasidah, or poem proper, is longer, extending sometimes to 300 lines ; and this poem contains many thoughts, but its form is pretty much fixed. The famous poems known as the Moallaqat, i.e., perhaps " suspended," although the tradition that they were so named from being suspended in the Kaaba at Mecca is no longer credited, are Qasidahs. These Moallaqat are usually reckoned seven, though some count nine. Their authors are the most famous poets of the Ignorance—they are Imruulqais, Tarafa, Zohair, Labid, Amr ben Kolthum, Antara and Harith—but to these must be added as poets of the Ignorance of great renown, Nabigha and Al-qama.

Such a poem has a fixed method of commencement. The author calls upon his companions to stop and lament with him the forsaken encampment of his mistress. This is not an unnatural subject to refer to. His mistress belonged to a tribe that encamped beside his own ; there he learned to know her. But her

tribe flits to other pastures, and she too flits ; and he is left forlorn.

Stand and let us weep at the memory of a loved one and a home
In the tract of twisted sand between Duchoul and Haumal,
And Taudih and Miqra, whose traces still are seen
Through the sand-web woven o'er them by the north wind and the south.

In vain his companions try to cheer him. In a splendid description of the woman he shows them what he has lost. This erotic section is the first in all the poems. The whiteness of the lady's complexion, her thin waist, and the thickness and fatness of the back parts below the waist, her dyed fingers like a certain worm, the musk upon her bed where she sleeps till noon, and much more, make the man distracted and run about and moan like a camel that has lost her young one.

But, after all, she is gone, and so go all life's pleasures; we are but prepared for the fate which is prepared for us. I, when I have cares, drive them away, with a short-haired, shining swimmer of the land, fetter of wild beasts, from whose back the saddle slips like as the smooth stone makes rain slip from it—and so on. This introduces the horse or camel ; and then may follow a magnificent account of this beast—which is of excessive difficulty. The line in which Imruulqais describes the skirmishing of a horse, and the irresistible impetus of his charge, is very celebrated.

Attacking, fleeing, advancing, backing at once,
Like a block of rock swept down by the torrent from a height.

The minuteness of descriptions of the horse or other animals is excessive. On the Continent, students of

Arabic poetry possess themselves of anatomical plates, or attend lectures by veterinary surgeons, in order to interpret the better the obscure epithets. The poet knows every gesture of horse and camel, and every tone of his voice, and every muscle, I might say, every hair, of his body.

This is generally the second part of the poem. And it is easy to see that, from this point, there may be great variety of treatment. The horse naturally suggests various things, e.g., a chase; and then may follow a brilliant description of a hunt, embracing a delineation of the gazelle, or the wild ass—a favourite topic with the poets—or of the wolf, as, roused by the hunt, he flees; or as he is met scouring across the desert, in the madness of his thirst, in search of water. If the chase be described, this may naturally lead on to another favourite subject of the desert poet—a thunderstorm, which overtakes the hunt. This is the line of subjects pursued in the Moallaqat of Imruulqais. The horse, however, may suggest a battle, on the varying fortunes of which the poet lavishes all his skill. This passes over into a furious invective against the hostile tribes; and, lastly, into an extravagant laudation of himself and his tribe. This is the course pursued by the Moallaqat of Amr ben Kolthum; and it furnishes a good specimen of spread-eagle poetry:

'Tis we that feed men in the year of famine;
'Tis we that give asylum to the suppliant;
'Tis we that prove a defence to our dependents,
Soon as the sword has leapt from out the scabbard,
As if, whenever war begins to waste,
We were esteemed the parents of mankind.
We turn away from that which we dislike,
And take alone the thing that pleases us.
We drink the well's clear waters first,
And others drink the trampled slime and mud.

We fill the land, which is too strait for us;
And cover all the ocean's breadth with ships.
The world our servant is, and all within it;
And, as victorious, we begin to fight.
Before a child of ours, as soon as weaned,
The mightiest princes bow in fear and reverence.

But the chief charm of Arabic poetry is its realism, whether in respect of physical nature or of the mind; which is perhaps to say, in other words, its trueness. It has no transcendentalism in it. It is nature and life, as men see them, and as they feel. For example, in the matter of images, these are always extremely exact and circumstantial. Byron, at a loss to describe a woman's eyes—an oriental woman's—has recourse, as he thinks, to an oriental figure for the purpose; but he misses half of the figure:

Think of those of the gazelle,
It will assist thy fancy well.

Now an Arab poet would not compare the eyes of his mistress to those of the gazelle in general, but to its eyes at some particular moment, and when they were brightest. His timid mistress turns on him eyes like those of the gazelle when she is surprised, and has her young one with her. In like manner, he would not compare her neck to that of the gazelle in general. It is like the neck of the young gazelle, the brown-lipped, when it crops the branches of the arak tree. Or, once more, when describing a horse standing inactive, the poet says that he stood on three legs, with the toe of the hoof of the fourth touching the ground. But yesterday I noticed a poor horse standing in this very attitude at the door of a whisky shop. Again, the mental photograph is equally perfect. I give one which is very small in compass. To a distant mistress:

I thought of thee, when the lances quivered between us,
And the long-shafted brown spears already tasted our blood;
And, by Allah, I know not—and I speak what is truth—
Whether it was illness, or an enchantment that came o'er me from thee.
If 'twas an enchantment, thou wilt excuse it in me that I love thee;
If 'twas an illness of another kind, thou art excused by me.

That the thought of her should come into his mind then, and that it should paralyse him in his bloody work, and that, facing death and inflicting it, he should not be able to analyse the kind of feeling he had—all this seems to me most exquisitely expressed in these lines.

Here is another, a little longer, of one who dreamed that his mistress visited him in prison.

My heart is with the horsemen of Yemen,
Moving by their side and ascending;
But my body lies bound in Mecca.
I wondered at her coming to me by night;
And how she had reached me, the prison-doors being barred.
She visited me, and saluted me;
Then she arose, and bade me adieu;
And when she turned to depart,
My soul almost forsook my body.
Think not that I am at all cast down
By being left behind by my friends;
Nor that fear of death unnerves me,
Nor that the threats of my foes alarm me,
Nor that my fetters gall me.
No! but there has come on me, from thy love, a longing
Such as came upon me from thee, when I was in freedom.

It is not that he was once free, nor that he is now bound, nor that he loves, nor that he is doomed to

death. It is all this in one that fills his heart; and all this he here expresses.

The pathos of the poetry is heightened by the entire absence of all reference to the future; there is reference only to the inexorableness of an impersonal fate. Here is a touching lament of a mother over her son; and with it our brief survey may close:

Far he wandered; but when farthest,
Fated death o'ertook the wanderer.
Oh! my lov'd one! would thy mother
Could but know how died her offspring!
Was it sickness lone and dreary?
None to aid thee! none to comfort!
Was it guile of hidden foeman?
Was it that, the unseen shadow
That outspeeds the bird of passage?
Man is ever death-attended,
Ambushed death, and we the victims.
Yet adorned with all that honours,
Satiate of success he found thee.
Still, one hour, my heart! It stills not.
How console me? Drear the silence.
Drear the path whence no returning.
Would for thine, my son, my hero,
Were thy mother's death the ransom!

MODERN RELIGION AND OLD TESTAMENT IMMORTALITY

IT has always been felt to be strange that the teaching in the Old Testament regarding immortality should be so obscure, or at least indirect and inexplicit. This seems not only strange in itself, when the case of some other nations, such as the Egyptians, is considered, in whose minds questions of death and immortality occupied so prominent and engrossing a place; it becomes doubly strange, when we take into account the very clear and elevated teaching, given in the Old Testament, regarding other truths of religion and the true conditions of living unto God. The faith in a future life is so important a part of our religion that we are surprised to find it appearing with so little explicitness in the religious thought of the Old Testament saints. This has indeed appeared to some writers, such as Warburton, so surprising, that they have concluded that the revelation of the doctrine was of purpose kept back, with the view of serving some other ends. This idea however belonged to the time when views of the nature and methods of revelation prevailed which were rather artificial. In the present day we are more inclined to conclude that the methods pursued by revelation were simple, and, if we can say so, natural, that is, that its great object was to enable men in each age practically to live unto God, and that at all times it gave them light sufficient for this, but that on other subjects

it left them very much with the ideas which they had. In other words, it took men as it found them, setting before them at all times and in each successive age what was needful that they might walk before God in holiness and righteousness, and leaving this to penetrate and transform other modes of thinking on many non-essential matters which they cherished. If therefore we find explicit teaching on this question of immortality postponed, we may infer that it was not unnatural that it should be so, that there was something in the ways of thinking of the people which, for a time at least, supplied the place of it, or at all events made it not a necessity to a true life with God. And we may perhaps also infer that at a later time events occurred, in God's providential ruling of the history of the people, which modified their former modes of thinking to such an extent that this new idea was a necessity, or that it was created out of the shattered fragments of former conceptions. Undoubtedly our ways of thinking now differ very considerably from those of the ancient Hebrews.

Our life now is very strongly individual, and so is our religion. Some make it a charge against Christianity, as least as felt and lived, that it is too individual, that it is so even to selfishness. However this may be, it cannot be doubted that a different way of feeling prevailed in Israel. The individual was always apt to lose himself in some collective, such as the family, the tribe, or the people—he was part of a greater whole, and felt himself to have meaning only as belonging to it. It is possible that this way of thinking was a survival from the ancient tribal form of existence, where, on the one hand, the individual's safety and life depended on the tribe, and where, on the other, all his energies were at the command of the tribal unity, and were absorbed

into it. The idea was favoured by other similar ideas even in the sphere of religion. The correlatives in those days were God and people. What gave a people distinctiveness was that it had a god; and what gave a god existence, or at least respect, in the eyes of other nations, was that he had a people. So the religious unit in Israel was the people that came out of Egypt. Jehovah was God of the people. The prophets address their words to the nation, to the leaders and rulers in the kingdom of God. It is the destinies of this kingdom that they pursue, out to the perfection of it. The individual shares in the blessings of the kingdom, but he does so only as a member of the people. This conception of solidarity and the repression of individualism is strange, and, as happens with things distinctive, scholars may have exaggerated it. It is a consideration, however, always to be kept in view in judging the Old Testament. It explains many things, and gives a different colour to some other things. The sweeping away, for example, of the whole family and dependents of a man along with himself, and only because of his sin or offence, was a practice due to this idea of solidarity. The children and household were not regarded as having an independent existence and standing of their own; they were part of the father, of the head of the family, and he was not held fully punished unless all that was his shared his fate. Such a practice would appear to us now an immorality, because of our strong feeling of the independence of each individual; but, from the point of view of solidarity then prevailing, it had not this aspect. And in the same way the tendency of the individual in early times to sink himself in the collective unity, the tribe or the people, helps to explain what seems to us the defective aspiration of the individual after immortality or life.

What Jehovah had founded on the earth was a kingdom of God. This was eternal. In the days of the King Messiah this kingdom would be universal, and the people would be perfect; and the individual had his immortality in that of the people and the theocracy. His great interest was in it. His hopes found realization there. His labours were perpetuated in it, even if he ceased to live. He saw the good of Israel, and he continued to live in the fuller life of his people. But this immortality of his hopes and purposes was not all. In his children he continued to live. He was there in them, for he regarded them as himself, furthering God's work and enjoying God's favour. So too his remembrance was not cut off—the righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance. This kind of feeling is illustrated in Isaiah lvi., where the prophet, encouraging strangers and eunuchs to attach themselves to the community of the Restoration, addresses the latter: "Let not the eunuch say, 'Behold, I am a dry tree.'" The feeling of those persons was that, having no children, they would have no permanent place in the community, no endless share in the kingdom of God. To them the Lord replies: "I will give them in Mine house and within My walls a place and memorial, an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off."

There must have been times, however, in which this kind of immortality in the perpetual existence of the kingdom of God in which the spirit of the individual lived must have been felt by him to be too shadowy to satisfy his heart. The individual spirit struggles against the idea of being poured out into the general stream of mankind, or even of the people of God, and claims a place for itself. And this claim will be the more resolutely pressed, the more the individual be-

comes aware of his own worth, and realizes the meaning of the personal life. Now in the providential history of Israel the time came when the State or people, in which the individual was apt to lose himself, came to an end. At the exile the people ceased to exist, being scattered into every land. But though the people and State had disappeared, Jehovah the God of Israel remained, and religion remained; and there remained the individuals of the nation, and that significance and those responsibilities, which belonged to the people before, were now felt by the individual to belong to him. We might think the downfall of the kingdom of Judah a great calamity, yet in a religious sense it was perhaps the greatest step towards Christianity taken since the Exodus. It made religion independent of any locality; it showed that a people of God could exist, though no longer in the form of a State or nation; it changed the religious centre, so to speak, making it no more the conscience of the people but the conscience of the individual. Hence in a prophet of the exile we find such words as these: "All souls are Mine, saith the Lord, as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is Mine" (Ezek. xviii. 4). To each individual spirit the Lord stands in the same relation. When this stage of thought had been reached, the craving for individual immortality would not be long in following. And by-and-by the idea would be extended; even the dead of past generations would be made to share in the blessings of the perfect kingdom of God (Dan. xii.).

There is another way of thinking common now, which makes us wonder how the doctrine of a future state could for long be so obscurely indicated in the Old Testament. We wonder how morality and religion could continue to exist without the support of those eternal sanctions supplied to the mind in the faith of a future

retribution. Perhaps this way of thinking is less common now than it was in former days. At all events the difference between our way of thinking and that prevalent at least for long in Israel does not lie in any difference as to belief in retribution. It lies rather here: we relegate this retribution to a future world; Israel believed that it prevailed, and was seen, in this world. The faith of the people is expressed in Proverbs xi. 31, "Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed on the earth, how much more the ungodly and the sinner!" To our minds now the anomalies of providence bulk much more largely than they did to early Israel at least. We may detect general principles in providence, we may see the direction the movement on the whole takes, but there are many hindrances, and the current is often hemmed, and to appearance even turned aside.

In the early literature of Israel such a feeling hardly appears. In the Book of Proverbs, occupied almost exclusively with the doctrine of providence, with God's rule of men's life, there is scarcely one complaint regarding any anomaly of providence, any hardship or infelicity to the righteous or any prosperity to the wicked. The age of the Proverbs is disputed, and held by many to be very late, in which case its statements would be ideal, and mere enunciations of the principle; and the fact that Sirach pursues the same line gives some colour to this view. The assumption of a late date for Proverbs would only show how powerfully the principle of retribution had taken possession of men's minds, seeing they could so persistently enunciate it, undeterred by the many anomalies with which they must have been familiar. The principle may be said to be just the essence of the prophetic teaching. The prophets apply the principle

to the State or people, and some scholars have argued that it was only later that it became applied to individuals. This is no doubt exaggeration, parallel to the exaggeration which maintains that, in early times, the individual had no consciousness of a personal relation to Jehovah. The early literature of Israel is composed largely of prophetic writings and histories, in both of which the people is the subject, and passages referring to individuals are rarer. Where they do occur, however, the same principles are applied to the life and destinies of the individual as to those of the people. In describing the fate of Abimelech, the very ancient historian remarks: "Thus God requited the wickedness of Abimelech, which he did unto his father, in slaying his seventy brethren" (Judges ix. 56); comp. Acts v. 28.

It might be made a question how this very stringent doctrine of retribution in this life arose. It is probably due, as almost all other doctrines are, to the very powerful theism, or intuition of God, characteristic of the people's mind. God was all in all. Events were all His work, and all immediately His work. All the changes on the earth in history and life were but the effects of an unseen power operating within all things. And this God was righteous, and His rule therefore in each particular event a display of His righteousness. As there was one God, there was one world. His rule prevailed alike everywhere. The universe was a moral constitution. The physical had no meaning in itself, it was but the medium and conductor of the moral. And thus that sphere where retribution finds realization, and which we have learned to transfer to some transcendental state, early Israel found to exist in the present world. Sin was punished and righteousness rewarded. There was no anomaly here. The anomaly

was the existence of evil, and that it was permitted to continue. But even this anomaly was overcome in faith and hope. The day of the Lord was at hand. It might break on the generation then living. The glory of the Lord would be revealed, and all flesh would see it together. He would come, His arm ruling for Him, His reward with Him, and His recompense before Him. He would feed His flock like a shepherd. But the scene of all this was the earth.

Belief in the day of the Lord was a common and unbroken faith, but it was only great movements among the nations, that suggested the nearness of the day. There were long dull stretches of history, when the earth sat still, and was at rest (Zech. i. 11), and men's eyes failed with looking for their God. In those times the anomalies of providence became oppressive, and appeals to God to arise and judge the world importunate. When the State began to stagger under the blows dealt it from abroad, and when after its fall the people continued the "slave of rulers," downtrodden and despised, the faith in a perfect retributive providence in this world received rude shocks. The fall of the State indeed was its most perfect illustration, when the State was considered as a moral person, as all the prophets from Hosea downwards consider it. But in the disastrous times that followed, it was just the righteous individuals that suffered the most grievous hardships, and that often because of their religion: "For Thy sake we are killed all the day long." And not only individuals but even the people, which, though scattered among the nations, still had an existence in idea and a consciousness, when it compared itself with the "sinners of the Gentiles," could not but feel itself more righteous than they; and particularly when it reflected that it had in it the true knowledge of the true God, and

regarded the world-history as a process between itself and the nations, it could not but be perplexed that the decision of the supreme tribunal was so long delayed.

It was then that the ideal of a perfect retributive providence in this world began to break up. Men felt it giving way under their feet. And it is profoundly instructive to observe the perplexities, one might say, the agitation and alarm, which the discovery occasioned. The unrighteousness prevailing on the earth was transferred to God as the Author of it, for He was the Author of all events. The very sun of righteousness in the heavens seemed to suffer eclipse. The reason of pious minds tottered under the suggestion that God Himself was unrighteous, as Job says: "It is God that maketh my heart soft, and the Almighty that troubleth me." Faith and hope might still sustain the community, for the community had a perennial life; but the individual lying at the gates of death, unrecognized or even stricken of God, had no hope here. The question rose, Was not religion a lie? Was not the God-fearing consciousness delusive? If this consciousness refused to deny itself, it must postulate something after death which would be its verification. This appears to be the meaning of Job xix., "But I know that my Redeemer liveth . . . and after this my body is destroyed, I shall see God." We may not attribute to Job belief in what we call a future life, only an assurance of some point or event after death, which would verify the reality of religion and of his religion, and show to him and men that the pious consciousness of God is true possession of God.

There is another point of view from which, to us now, the want of clearness in the Old Testament faith of a future life appears somewhat strange. We are surprised that the Old Testament saint seemed satisfied

with the conditions, necessarily imperfect, of a religious life with God upon the earth, that he did not feel the need of a closer fellowship with God than is possible amidst the imperfections of earth, and demand and believe in a more perfect condition of existence and a nearer vision of God. It is possible that we may have diverged further from Israel here than was necessary. The very axiomatic nature of our belief, that only in a world which is another can full fellowship with God be realized, may lead occasionally to an undue depreciation of this life, and to an unnecessary disparaging of the possibilities it offers in the way of living unto God. If we examine the utterances of Old Testament saints, very numerously scattered over the Scriptures, we do find evidence of a very vivid consciousness of the presence of God with them, and of the possession of His fellowship, "Whom have I in heaven? and on earth I desire nought beside Thee." "When I awake, I am still with Thee." "I have set the Lord always before me, He is at my right hand." "Nevertheless I am continually with Thee." This consciousness of God's nearness and fellowship seems to exceed that which men ordinarily have now. We might speculate as to what it was due to. In some respects it might be due to the extremely emotional and the highly intuitive nature of the people's mind, which realized God more powerfully than our minds do. It might also in part be due to the fact that God did dwell among the people in a house where He had placed His name. When the worshipper came to this house, he felt he was near unto God—then he appeared before Him. And we are familiar with the vividness with which God's presence was realized, and with men's longing to enjoy it: "One thing have I desired . . . that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of

my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord" (Ps. xxvii. 4). But to whatever this vivid sense of God's presence was due, it certainly existed, and the religious meaning of it is not affected. That which constitutes the essence of heaven to men now, the Israelite profoundly enjoyed on earth.

Not without bearing upon the question is another thing—the view of "life" held by the Israelite. To him "life" meant what we ordinarily mean by it, life in the body. Life was the existence of man in all his parts, and death was not merely the separation of soul and body; it was paralysis of the person. The person in Sheol still subsisted, but his subsistence had no religious or ethical meaning—he was dead. The Israelite was far removed from the philosophical view that the body was a prison-house, released from which the spirit could spread its wings, and soar into purer and loftier regions. Neither had he yet attained to the Christian view that there is a perfection of the spirit even apart from the body. His view of life was the synthetic one; he stood before that analysis, so to speak, which death effects, and his view corresponded to that new synthesis which the New Testament teaches, and his nomenclature was similar: he called the existence of man in the body life, as the New Testament names existence in the resurrection body life.

But life being understood in this sense, a physical sphere was necessary for it. Hence the earth was the abode of man, and was to be his abode for ever. A transcendental sphere of existence, such as we conceive heaven to be, would not naturally occur to the Israelite. He was far from being insensible, on many occasions at least, to the imperfections that accompanied life. Though he enjoyed God's presence, it was not yet His presence in its fulness. In a sense, therefore, the

Israelite believed in a future life, and longed for it; but it was not a life in a transcendental sphere—it was a future life upon the earth. In the perfection of the people of God, they would not be translated, and be with God in "heaven." God would come down, and dwell among them on the earth; the tabernacle of God would be with men; and He would be their God, and they His people. Then He would make a new covenant with men, forgiving their sins and writing His law on their hearts. And, simultaneously with this manifestation of God among men, the earth would be transfigured, and all hindrances to a perfect life with God removed—"Behold, I create a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." And this manifestation of God in His fulness was ever felt to be imminent: the salvation was ready to be revealed; He would turn the captivity of His people, and the kingdom would be the Lord's.

If the faith of Israel had differences from modern religion, it had also agreements with it. The remark is not without justification: "Not from want of religion, but from excess of religion was this void (specific thoughts of future immortality) left in the Jewish mind. The future life was overlooked—overshadowed by the consciousness of the presence of God Himself.[1] The sense in which Israel longed for a future life has been stated above.

It is evident how largely thoughts of the future are coloured by faith in the destinies of the community. Individualism is only yet half-born. It is real to this extent: the individual realized keenly his own personal life, and longed earnestly to share himself in the blessings upon which the community would enter—the abode of God among them, and eternal felicity. He

[1] *The Unseen Universe*, p. 9.

longed that he, the living man, should see with his people the glory of the Lord revealed, and enter into the joy of God with them. This may be the meaning of some passages in the Psalms, though another interpretation is possible, e.g. Psalm xvii. 15: "As for me, I shall behold Thy face in righteousness," reference being to the revelation of God when He comes in His kingdom. So Psalm lxxiii. 24: "Thou wilt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterward take me in (or to) glory." There are other passages, however, where such a sense appears difficult, such as Psalm xlix. 15: "But God shall redeem my soul from the hand of Sheol: for He will take me." This Psalm seems to repose on the idea that death is universal, in which case redeeming from Sheol would not refer to life here, but to a passage of the person to God in death and escape of Sheol. This interpretation may certainly be supported by reference to the parable of Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, which shows that the idea of a blessedness of the spirit at death had been reached before the time of our Lord.

It was perhaps the prospect or the fact of death that rounded off individualism, and revealed its energies. The life of the community was perennial; but, with death before him, the individual could not taste of this life. Yet his whole being reacted against death, and in the fellowship of God defied it: "Thou wilt not give over my soul to Sheol." Possibly some danger threatened the Psalmist, but his words are more than an assurance that he shall be delivered from this danger; they rise to the expression of a principle. Religion is reciprocal. The consciousness of God gives God. And the possession is absolute, unassailable. The prophets and saints of the Old Testament kingdom of God were not speculative men. They did not reason that the soul was immortal from its nature—this was not the kind

of immortality in which they were interested—though, for all that appears, the idea that any human person should become extinct, or be annihilated, never occurred to them. They did not lay stress, in a reflective, objective way, on man's instinctive hopes of immortality, though perhaps they may be observed giving these instinctive desires expression. They could not, with the patient eye of inductive observation, gather up what we call analogies to the passage of beings from a lower to a higher state, such as we may conceive death to be. They did not reason; they felt, they knew. Their consciousness or intuition of God—it was not faith and it was not reason—was immovable, *inébranlable*, something that, amidst the shaking of all things, could not be shaken (Rom. viii. 38).

THE RATIONALE OF A PREACHER

WHAT is, if I may use such language, the rationale of a preacher? what account has he to give of his existence as a preacher to men? Why does he preach to them? To say that it is his duty, or Christ's command, is not an answer. May that command not be resolved into reasons? And probably Christ has given the reasons elsewhere, when He says: "A new commandment have I given unto you, that ye love one another." Yet even this may not be the simplest element to which the command may be reduced. He adds, "As I have loved you." Yet the fact of being loved by one ourselves would not cause us to love others. There is sometimes an exuberance in joy, which makes it overrun all its channels, and overflow on all around, and there is the same in affection; and the tide of affection for one may flow so broadly as to embrace almost all within its compass. But this is either temporary, or it is due to other reasons than merely that we ourselves are loved, the rationale of which is just the thing we are wanting.

The Apostle says: "I became all things to all men, that I might gain some." He does not there describe what regimen he voluntarily subjected himself to, of aforethought and set purpose, but rather what changes he felt passing upon himself without his will, from the various elements surrounding him. He was so mouldable, that the mere breath of human creatures transformed

him, so full of affinities that he entered into combinations like a subtle fluid. What made him do so? Not his love. Rather that which made him do so made him also love. The one was not the effect of the other; but both were effects of his sympathy, of his common human feeling. And here now, I think, we have the last analysis we are seeking. The rationale of the preacher is that he is a man. His position as a member of that unity, the human race, accounts for his declaring the "Good Tidings" to them. The Gospel quickens the feelings arising out of this position. It does not cut new channels; it rather floods the currents that languidly flowed in the old channels, and quickens them, and raises them to the very brim.

To some, such a statement may seem not true at all; and to others, it may seem nothing but a truism. I do not wish to discuss it. But assuming its truth, might not the preacher make use of this sympathy, as a kind of criterion whereby to satisfy himself of the legitimacy and adequacy of his relations to things about him? And would not his relations always be adequate, if he had this quality in full measure? Especially if he had it in such a measure that it produced a full harmony in his own nature, and an unconsciousness of his own motives, and a benevolence that had become instinctive within him. The mother, watching over the life of her child, has all her faculties aroused and stimulated; she knows, almost by instinct, how to say or do the right thing at the right time; she regards his faults with mingled love and sorrow. So in the apostle Paul we seem to trace a sort of refinement, or nicety of feeling, when he is dealing with the souls of men. All his knowledge of mankind shows itself for their sakes; and yet not that knowledge of mankind that comes from without, revealing itself by experience of men and manners,

by taking a part in events, by the insensible course of years making us learn by what we have seen or suffered.

There is another experience that comes from within, which begins with the knowledge of self, with the consciousness of our own weakness and infirmities, which is continued in love to others and in works of good to them, which grows by singleness and simplicity of heart. Love becomes the interpreter of how men think and feel and act, and supplies the place of, and passes into, a worldly prudence wiser than the prudence of this world. Virtue has been generalized so far as to be called the love of being. Love and sympathy are almost one. In the latter, you coalesce with the object; and, in the former, you give yourself unto it. And if, not daring to take as a model the Lord Himself, we pass to the apostle Paul, we find him always one with those whom he is directing. "His government of them is a sort of communion with them; a receiving of their feelings and a pouring forth of his own, hardly ever bare command; a spirit which he seeks to infuse into them, not a law by which he rules them."

The preacher who, being a Christian, is most a man, will be the best preacher. If I could venture to say so, humanity is before Christianity; it is not broader, but it is prior. Christianity does not abrogate human nature; it only consecrates it. And thus all of human nature that is not yet Christian, is not, for that reason, evil. The person who is not Christian is evil; but the nature which is not Christian may not be evil. It certainly is not yet perfect. But its products may be good, because human. But let me apply what I am saying to a few cases. And, first, the preacher's relation to sinners. Let him feel himself part of a sinful family, so loved of God, redeemed by Christ—conscious of participating in the blessings of redemption—and his

sympathy with men, quickened by these wonders in man's history, will impel him to preach to them. His own personal godliness is essential to this. It was said of Christ, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." This He did not only by the sacrifice of Himself, but by His personal appearance among sinners. He took away the world's sin by making the world feel it was not all sinful. Did He deepen its sense of sin by the contrast with Himself? Perhaps; yet He relieved the dreariness, the monotony of it. It was not a desert with no oasis. In the overwhelming sense of sin, sin everywhere, all sin, the world's sin, it took it away to feel that there was One not a sinner; it broke in upon the weary, monotonous universality and hopelessness of the sin. There was a contrast, and yet a relief. Like the shadow of a cloud upon us, when we see the sun shining elsewhere; yet immediately the shadow passes, and we share in the light. As the hard, blood-stained, hoary sinner is made to feel, by the presence of a child, both more and less a sinner, so there is a reverence and joy among sinners, even yet, over the presence among them of a godly minister.

Of course this joy and relief is magnified, when there is active sympathy exhibited towards such sinners, as by Christ, who was their friend. It lifts the load of sin off a man, to feel that he is not beyond the fellowship of the good; it makes his sin less to him—not less evil, rather more—but less oppressive. He is not irrecoverable—not so ill as he felt, though much worse. It is a wonderful easing to one, to be acknowledged of the good. It is this that so unnerves the sinner in the highest case, to be acknowledged of the only good, even God. And this seems to me the glory of the ministerial relation—its broadness; it is fundamental, universal.

These associations for evangelizing the poor seem to me fundamentally false, because narrow and class. Christ did not affect a mission to any class—to the outcasts. Men err in two ways. The Pharisees despised the poor, saying: "This people that know not the law are cursed." Another class despises the rich. "How hardly shall they that have riches enter the kingdom of God." This exclusiveness begets two evils. It corrupts its objects, and it ruins those who practise it. It makes the poor a class, and thus either conceited or discontented. It constitutes itself the guardians of the poor, and thus gets itself a merit others have not. Perhaps labour must be distributed; but as much as possible the minister of the rich should also minister to the poor. There may be diversities of gifts, but all classification of men religiously should be avoided, and all organizations of people who exclusively visit the poor. It corrupts the people who do so. A man must feel very virtuous, to be able to afford to belong to such associations. Merely respectable people cannot afford to have fellowship with evil. A man's height must be so great that every one can see he is stooping. And thus there is no fellowship, at best only some patronage. But the position of the minister is different. He belongs to no class of society, though of the highest. His nobility is created immediately by God, and passes current everywhere. To paraphrase the poet: "The rank is but the stamp, and the man the gold"; here, there is no stamp; the purity of the manhood is the stamp, the sympathy, the wholeness of nature, coming near to Him who was the Son of man. If theology be the highest intellectual science, the ministerial is the highest science of government.

It has been the effort of men, at various times, to

bring out clearly that civil government is not a Christian institution—though an institution put under Christ. That which is true of this thing is true of all things. That which the Apostle calls the world to come, is this world in the form in which it is to be; it is the world Christianized. In one sense that may effect such an alteration upon it, may so completely interpenetrate it with an inner glory which shall shine through it, and so illuminate it with an eternal splendour, that it may seem to be quite another. But it shall not be so. And if this be true, we can distinguish between the world and the world Christianized, looking upon the first as the material upon which the change is to pass that perfects, without regarding it as altogether evil, even when not yet perfected.

As the chaos upon which the Spirit brooded was not evil, but only unformed, the world which has been sealed with the Spirit of Christ may not be evil wholly, but only rude and unshaped. There is an imperfection which is not sinful, or else that which is finite is evil. There is a growth which is out of a less good to a greater, and not from an evil towards a good. That, therefore, the flush of the light of Christianity has not yet passed on all things, does not make all the things evil. There is room for discrimination. The things may be evil, or they may merely not be the highest good. I think it would be well for the minister to draw this distinction, especially in an age of culture. It may be no part of what he feels his function, to prosecute that neutral region. He may say with Paul: "I determined to know nothing among you save Christ and Him crucified;" but he must not conclude that he is debarred from such a region, or that others are. The Apostle, I think, did not say, "I determined to know nothing"—but, "I did not determine to know anything";

not, "it was part of my determination to exclude all other things," but, "it was no part of my determination to include anything more." The things he did not include might be good or evil. There is such a thing as humanity. Christianity perfects it. But all its stages towards perfection are not forms of evil. There is also evil within it. But part of its imperfection is defect.

I think we must distinguish between humanity and men. We must even distinguish between men as humanity for the time being, and as persons. Humanity is endowed with powers of thought, of creative art, and of moral instinct. These powers are always realized on the surface of humanity in persons. But they are not strictly part of the person. They are involuntary to him—the poet, the artist, the moralist is born, not made. These gifts are impersonal; they are humanity's. They well up to its surface out of its profoundest natural depths. The artist and his art are distinct. It may be good, while he is bad. The person may be to be despised, while his work is for ever to be prized. No doubt, even the art itself may be corrupted; for though itself quite indifferent morally, being a thing quite unethical in its nature, it may be made the instrument of an immoral person, and its product be immoral. To be able to paint, or graphically describe, is a gift of humanity's, just as to be able to put forth physical force with the arm and strike is a gift and power. Neither of the powers is in itself moral. But he who paints an unclean picture commits a moral offence of the same kind as he who puts out his arm and strikes down an unoffending person.

Now, if we held these two things, the unity of humanity, and the neutrality, in an ethical view, of intellectual and artistic powers, or their impersonality,

and thus accustomed ourselves to distinguish between them and the person who, for the time, has the use of them, it might ease our position as ministers, and help us, seeing we are generally obliged to take up some position towards such things, to assume the right position. If we hold the ethical neutrality of these things, and yet view them as gifts of God, we shall see how lofty things they are, and what profound ethical uses may be made of them, and what a glorious plant that humanity is, which throws out such gorgeous flowers, even when the canker has gone to its heart, and what a brilliancy it might reach, if grafted into Him who is the true vine. All art and poetry is but an attitudinizing of the human spirit, but a throwing itself into endless poses, that it may catch the shadows of itself, and know what it is; and what inexhaustible deeps are in it may be inferred from the boundlessness of art.

I would even carry this unity further, and employ it to ease, in some degree, our ministerial relations to religious thought, although here the ground is more precarious, and the practical decision on each case must be left very much to the individual who has to decide. But the severity of the decision, or at least of the feelings that accompany it, may be somewhat modified, if we remember that humanity is a unity. Men do not think merely, man thinks. Men do not struggle with problems of existence and law, man struggles. There, as well as in purely artistic creations, the individual is, many times, almost involuntary. There is no tide that breaks on the beach, even of the little cove where some pleasure boat is moored, but has been caused by a movement of the whole ocean. Such great mysteries surround us, and press upon us, like a loaded atmosphere on one in sleep, that our unquiet motions may seem to deserve to be looked on with awe rather

than reprobation. The one individual whom we meet, and whose uneasy speculations and restless spirit we are called upon, as ministers, to pacify and direct, is little better than a buoy upon the bosom of a sea never at peace. The individual spirit, no doubt, has powers. I am not preaching a fate or a necessity, but a relationship and a sympathy that is very mighty.

The race has its problems, which Christianity, being a practical thing, does not supersede, nor altogether settle. And often the individual may not yet have succeeded in reconciling them. And the question arises, how to look at him, and how to treat him? I am recommending sympathetic regard. Might I venture to recommend simple treatment? If you could appear before him, as the apostolic men appeared in the world, with the awe upon them of a glorious presence which they had just left, and a fellowship, ceased in the flesh, yet for ever unbroken; with the fire of a new life within them fusing all their faculties, and giving them a flexibility more than that of men; laden with a few great ideas which they presented in every manner, to every man's conscience, God, sin, death, Christ, power of God, righteousness, life,—these things as gigantic entities, apart from all logical combinations of them, as forces,—then he might be won. Science is good in the schools, life in the world. It is the theological science that perplexes men.

Preaching should be pre-scientific. At least, be as scientific as you will yourself, but do not insist on imposing your science. Men deny it to be such a thing. They tell you preaching moves in a region and is engaged about things which defy science. It is theurgy. That alone is scientific which men experience. Let them have their way. They will confine you to that which Christ called to Nicodemus, *earthly things*, and

will not hear of the heavenly things. The earthly things included what men could see, and among them at least was Christ's appearance, the working of God's Spirit, such changes of men from one thing to another, that it may be called being born again. The age demands facts that are tangible and constant—Christianity has plenty of them. I do not inculcate hesitancy on one's own part, only reserve in forcing all you have upon others. "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong—let all your things be done with charity." Steadfastness is a great power with the generality of men; and if there should ever come moments of hesitation, it is to very few that you should own it. A few spirits you may have amongst you to whom you may show all, who know what histories human souls have, and to whom a victory gained when it was nearly lost is the surest victory. But to the mass of men the stone wall possesses a better firmness than the tree.

Do not press all your attainments on others. You may not just have hit the mark and normal gauge of humanity. Neither may your age. One stands amazed before its capabilities—their greatness and diversity. And according to these may be the measure of its combinations with Christianity. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Yet the Apostle conceives of very diverse buildings on the one foundation, some permanent, some to be destroyed, and yet the builder saved. The early Christian age was much exercised in reconciling the positions of those much, and those little, advanced in the faith. And in the face of this history, you cannot press any all-or-nothing doctrine, telling men that, if they do not hold all, they need not hold any. "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed."

I have been seeking to magnify the fact that every creature of God is good. That which Scripture calls the world is not things, but a certain use of things, a certain conception of things—things as fallen into the grasp of a Spirit adverse to God—things coloured through this medium. I have been seeking to advocate sympathy with the things, with men and matter and life and thought. They are all good, glorious works of God. I have taught that the rationale of a preacher is his love to them. But, though good, they are also evil. And the preacher's love to them impels him to seek their rescue from the evil. If there is no sin, there need be no preaching. And if there be no sense of it, there will be none. Only one in whom the miracle has been performed, in whom the good has been rescued from the evil, can go out, as a particle of light, into the world.

THE USES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT FOR EDIFICATION

THERE is a subject which at present has a great interest for many minds, the subject of archæology, in particular the archæology of Egypt and Babylon, considered as casting light on Biblical questions, and as corroborative of Bible history. Perhaps archæologists attach exaggerated importance to their favourite study. The antiquities of Egypt offer little help to the Biblical student. There are some things, however, in Babylonian thought, which show interesting coincidences with the thought of Israel. These coincidences appear chiefly in two departments of thought—that relating to the beginning of things, and that relating to the end of things; in other words, to creation and to the state after death. The Bible narratives of the creation and the flood have their counterparts in the Babylonian literature. The general cosmology is common to the two literatures; and the popular conceptions of death and the state of the dead, found in the Old Testament, are similar to those prevalent in Babylon.

These facts warrant an immediate conclusion, and, perhaps, a remoter inference. The conclusion is, that the creation and the flood narratives are not the inventions or imaginations of Hebrew writers; neither are they what might be called immediate

revelations to the minds of the writers. They are reproductions of traditions and modes of thought common to a large division of the human race. They are part of the heritage of thought which Israel brought with it from its cradle in the East; and which, lying in its mind, was afterwards modified by the religion of Jehovah, not obliterated, but shot through and illuminated with the rays of true religious light. And it is not for their own sakes that these old-world traditions are reproduced by the writers of Scripture; they are introduced, modified by the principles of the religion of Jehovah, in order that those who read them may take up a right religious attitude towards the world, find their true bearings, as it were, when contemplating creation and nature, and the beginnings of human history. And the remoter inference might be, that as these narratives are not pure creations of the Hebrew mind, but reflections of ideas common to a large division of the human race, so the strange traditions of early humanity recorded in the first ten chapters of Genesis, and much more the stories of the Patriarchs from the twelfth chapter onwards, have all a real historical basis, and are not mere ideal inventions.

In other ways the antiquities of Babylon and Assyria corroborate the historical narratives of the Bible, and particularly help us to understand the chronology. But the light which archæology sheds on the Bible is mostly superficial. The time has long gone by when it could be said that religion was the invention of interested priests. The time has also gone by when it could be pretended that the histories of the Old Testament were fictions or fables. Archæology may confirm these histories, but in our day its confirmation is scarcely needed. Other and more fundamental

questions have now arisen : the question, whether there be a living God, and whether He has come down into the history of mankind to purify them, and lift them up into fellowship with Himself, and whether there be an eternal hope for the individual and for the race ; and on these questions archæology has little to say, unless, indeed, its limits be so extended as to include the history and contents of the ancient religions.

For a period now of about 150 years, what is called criticism has occupied itself with the Old Testament; and results have been reached which, though not universally, are generally acquiesced in, particularly in regard to what might be called the history of the ritual worship of Jehovah in Israel. And it might be supposed that the time had come to make an estimate of these results, to sum up the profit and the loss, for we may assume that no general and earnest movement of the human mind can be without its profit, real and permanent, and that the loss, if there be any, will be but partial and temporary. But the right person to make such an estimate is not easy to find. The ideal person ought to be one with all the modes of thought of fifty years ago suddenly confronted with all the conclusions of the new learning in their completeness. Such a mind would be at once sensible of the differences; the antitheses would stand out vividly before him, and the general bearing on religious faith of the two different views would be apparent. But one who has lived during the process, and who has successively accommodated himself, step by step, to each new conclusion as it arose, is not in a position to contrast the new and the old with anything like the same sharpness. Such a person may remember his own early perplexities, and the efforts required to assimilate each new discovery, and to effect a readjust-

ment of his mental state ; but knowing that the history of his mind was the history of hundreds of other minds, and not supposing that a record of his successive mental movements would be of any use or interest to the world, he would not keep any record of them. All that he would be able to say, after a readjustment had been effected, and he had attained to equilibrium, would be that, so far as the doctrines of the faith are concerned, criticism has not touched them, cannot touch them, and they remain as they were. This conclusion was stated many years ago by Prof. Robertson Smith, in these words : " Of this I am sure, that the Bible does speak to the heart of man in words that can only come from God—that no historical research can deprive me of this conviction, or make less precious the Divine utterances that speak to the heart. For the language of these words is so clear that no readjustment of their historical setting can conceivably change the substance of them. Historical study may throw a new light on the circumstances in which they were first heard or written. In that there can only be gain. But the plain, central, heartfelt truths, that speak for themselves, and rest on their own indefeasible worth, will assuredly remain with us."

Starting from the irrefragable testimony of experience that the Bible was the word of God, the Church has, in all ages, theorized upon the general conception " the word of God," and hazarded *à priori* judgments regarding what must be found in it, or what must certainly be absent from it. But how few of these theoretical opinions, formed beforehand, have stood the test of experience ! and how many of them have disappeared before historical and scientific investigation ! And while one generation has trembled for the Scriptures, thinking the loss of something which was

threatened involved the loss of all, the following generation has acquiesced in the loss with perfect composure. At one time, for example, it was contended that the Hebrew punctuation or vocalization must be considered an integral part of the Old Testament, and must be as ancient as the autographs of the Scripture writers. From the point of view of a perfect word of God, absolutely complete in meaning, this was anything but a foolish opinion. And yet historical investigation showed conclusively that such a word of God had not been given to men, and that the vowel signs in our Bibles, so far from being as old as Moses, were not so old as Jerome and the Talmud, four or five hundred years after the Christian era. At a later time it was contended that the Greek of the New Testament must be classical, and free from all grammatical solecisms. This was a far less sensible contention, for thoughts may be as accurately expressed in an impure or non-literary dialect as in a classical one; and I daresay there are few of us who have not heard our Scotch dialect used by good men in prayer with a power and pathos, which to us at least was more touching and impressive than the purest English would have been.

At another time, the strict conception of the word of God was held to imply that everything in Scripture, which seemed to be historical representation, must be regarded as a record of actual facts. A distinguished German theologian said of the events narrated in the first two chapters of Job, and of the speeches in that book, *nisi historia sit, fraus scriptoris*. But this rigid conception of the "word of God" has been greatly relaxed by a better acquaintance with the actual Scriptures. It is now recognized that there may be dramatic representation in Scripture; that speeches may

be put into the mouths of persons, which were never actually spoken; and that even a situation may be idealized, or created, so as to present the conditions of a moral problem more vividly to the mind; in a word, that the kinds of literary composition usual among men may be expected in Scripture. This general principle is at least recognized, though some may still be unwilling to carry it very far; for example, to apply it in any degree to a prose composition like Deuteronomy, though they may acquiesce in its application to poetical books like Job, or semi-poetical books like Ecclesiastes. The conception of the word of God strictly taken continues, in many quarters, to be held in regard to Scripture statements about nature; and many are loath to part with the idea that, when Scripture speaks of the earth or the heavens, it will speak in a way not to conflict with the sciences of geology or astronomy. Being the word of God, and nature being the work of God, it is thought that the two cannot but be in harmony, and that whatever ancient Scripture writers themselves thought of the world, and however ignorant they might be of science, they must have been so guided as, at least, to say nothing that could conflict with the certain results of science reached in our day.

There is, perhaps, left in the general mind a certain vague feeling or dread that, in consequence of recent historical investigations, the Old Testament cannot now be used as it has been used in all generations in the Church for edification, that it cannot be handled with the same firmness and assurance in public teaching as was formerly the case. Were this fear justified, it would be a serious misfortune. For there is in the Old Testament such a singular graphicness, such a variety of human situation and experience, so much pathos and

joy and sorrow all irradiated with the hues of religion, such a powerful sense of God, such a practical assurance of His presence and power and sympathy and enlightenment, and such a broad hope in Him as having a gracious purpose towards the world and men, which amidst all present confusions He is working out, and will yet make clearly to appear and realize—in a word, such a religious reality, touching the life and mind of men on all sides, that the Church, especially the great mass of believers, who are less moved by abstract principles, have at all times found in it great quickening to their faith and sustenance to their religious life. The loss would be very great if this meaning of the Old Testament for Christian minds should be imperilled, or even in any way impaired. But the fear of this has little foundation. Whatever changes in the historical disposition of some parts of the Old Testament have taken place, their religious substance remains unimpaired and untouched. The prophets and Psalms cannot be lost, because their truth is self-evidencing; they awaken and find their response in the religious mind of men, and so long as this mind remains—and it will always remain—the witness to their truth will remain.

There are, perhaps, two points in which there may be a fear that the use of the Old Testament has been impaired for the purposes of edification; first, its morality, which has been impeached; and second, the historical character of its early portions, which, it is feared, has been undermined. And there are two classes which these fears or suspicions may affect—those who hear it preached from, and those who preach from it. The latter class, those who use it in public ministrations, may have a latent feeling that what they are reading to men as history, is really not so; and they may have

great conflicts in their own minds, and feel themselves hampered or even paralyzed.

i. Now with respect to the first point, there are some considerations which we might keep before us in regard to the Old Testament. (1) The great use of Scripture in our day, and for many ages, as a means of moral and religious instruction, has tended to make us forget how Scripture originated, and to regard it as a direct revelation given to us and in our circumstances. Now the word of God was spoken to us, but not immediately. It is ours, because we are part of God's historical Church which He founded long ago, and still guides by His Spirit in us, and by His word spoken to His Church in past ages—"God spake of old time in many parts and in many ways unto the fathers by the prophets" (Heb. i. 1). Being spoken to men long ago, it was spoken to them in their circumstances and conditions of mind, which in many things may have been unlike ours. The colour, the circumstances, in a word the relativity, of the Old Testament belongs to the Church of the past, and the relativity includes the *amount* or *degree* of truth spoken on any given occasion—for "God spake in many parts."

But now what does this word of God appear to be, when regarded thus as spoken to men of the past? Can we suppose that, as written, it has other or higher qualities than it had, when spoken? Less lofty qualities it cannot have; but must we not form our opinion of the written word from the spoken word? Indeed, we plainly perceive that they are identical. Such a prophet as Amos or Isaiah used writing precisely as he used speech; his writing was but a condensation, or an expansion, as the case might be, of his speech. To what objects then, did he direct his speech? His objects were to enable men to live unto God in their

day, and to show them from God how to live. The word of God was at all times practical, and at all times related to life and conduct. If we go back to any one of the religious teachers from God, do we see him pursuing any other end than religious ones? Does he seek to correct men's notions of nature or history, or any other subject on which they had the opinions of their day? Does it not rather appear that the men to whom he spoke were left by him to think on every subject as they thought before, except in regard to God and living to God? If such a teacher refer to nature, it will be to say that nature is the work of God and is in His hand, just as mankind, men, or nations are in His hand; if he refer to history, it will be to show how God's moral providence is visible in it.

But to come closer to Old Testament morality. It is manifest that the work of God in Israel took the people as it found them. It did not revolutionize their ideas. Certain practical things, such as the worship of Jehovah alone, and morality, it insisted upon—morality at least so far. Especially it put morality under the shield of Jehovah. Morality was part of religion, it had Divine sanction—moral duties were the commands of Jehovah. But this was all. The people were begun with on these lines just as they were found, precisely as an individual is begun with now, who has been impressed by religion. Their modes of thought on all things except God and duty were left; their superstitions, their credulities, their hereditary customs—their general views of things—these were not interfered with, except when they might embody false thoughts of God or life. When taken in hand, the people, judged by modern standards, might be in a backward condition. Practises prevailed which Christianity has abolished, such as polygamy and others.

Now the dispensation was one of redemption; and, for that end, one of education. But education cannot be given by the enunciation of abstract principles at one time; men must be trained. Now such practices as polygamy and slavery were treated in two ways: their use was mildened and circumscribed; and secondly, they were then left to come under the influence of other principles directly taught, which acted upon them, and gradually resolved them. This problem of polygamy is one which faces missionaries at the present day, and different courses are recommended by different men, practical men, in regard to it.

In the Old Testament, monogamy was left to be introduced by a gradual rise of moral tone. To whatever it was due, it was certainly the case in Israel that monogamy came to prevail without any express enactment. All the prophets, Hosea, Isaiah, Ezekiel, are represented as the husband of one wife; and so are saints like Job; and the general higher teaching of revelation had led by the time of the Christian era, or long before it, to what was virtually a universal practice. That monogamy is the ideal of the relation of man and woman is suggested by both the creation narratives, Genesis i. and ii.; and so our Lord interprets them (Matt. xix. 8). In dealing with nations a certain opportunism is inevitable. Revolutionary changes cannot be imposed on a people all at once. Even the New Testament does not legislate on slavery; it leaves it to be acted on by the general principles of Christianity,—the idea that in Christ there is neither bond nor free, that all alike are children of God and brethren, and the worth of each individual soul,—and these principles have wrought out the emancipation of the slave. Even our Lord felt the necessity of conceding something to the condition

of men's minds—"I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now"; and He recognizes that certain things in the Old Testament, such as the law of divorce, were a concession to the hardness of men's hearts.

There is a difference between the moral idea and the details of morality, as there is between religion or devotion and the compass of one's creed. Judged by our more extended creed, even David or Isaiah would come short. Their faith, for example, in the Trinity, if they had it at all, would be very far from explicit. Yet we never think of blaming them. But we are slower to apply the same reasoning to morals. But these ancient saints had also the moral idea, and their life corresponded to their idea; at least, revelation enjoined that it should. That which they felt to be right, they strove to fulfil; and if the details of right doing were less explicit than now, and particularly if it was conduct rather than a state of mind that was considered, we should hardly, on that account, call them immoral men.

(2) And this suggests another important consideration. The legislation of the Old Testament was a code made for a State; it was civil and social law. In other words, it was a legislation regulating conduct primarily, and not a law of the mind or the thought. The fact, however, that all law, civil and moral, was regarded as the command of Jehovah, brought conduct under the religious feeling, and thus made the law more and more inward, more and more a law of the mind. And in later books, such as Job and many of the Psalms, this is clearly apparent. In the 31st chapter, which shows the high-water mark of Old Testament morality, Job repudiates not only wrong external actions, but also those inordinate motions of the mind and heart which

Christianity condemns. But in the New Testament the State idea disappears, and the idea of the individual takes its place. The Sermon on the Mount is not a law of conduct, but a law of the mind; and its principle is love to all around. What might be called justice is sublimed into something higher. What might be called personal rights are abrogated; at least, the individual is invited to hold them in abeyance. God is his example, who makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good. But such a principle as this is only for the individual who can rule himself by it; such a principle could not be made the law of a State or civil organism. No Christian State has attempted to embody such a principle in its legal code. The principle, indeed, is the antithesis and the abrogation of law. It is a rule for the individual, free to renounce what might be called personal rights, and to rule himself by the principle of love—"I say unto you, that ye resist not evil."

Now this national, State character of Hebrew law is often forgotten, and the Old Testament is contrasted with the teaching of our Lord, to the detriment of the former; and His authority is even invoked for making the contrast—"Ye have heard that it has been said to them of old time, an eye for an eye; but I say unto you." It is not quite clear who it is that He refers to in the words *it has been said*—who it is that said it. Considering our Lord's habitual deference to the Old Testament, one may be pardoned for doubting any reference to Moses, as if he opposed His own authority to his. It is, probably, not to Mosaic law that He opposes His own; it is to the interpretations of Mosaic law current among the doctors of His day. It is the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, to which He opposes a righteousness which exceeds it. These teachers made the law a mere rule of external conduct; He showed it to be

a law of the mind. However this be, the law "an eye for an eye" is part of the State law of Israel, administered by the judicature. It was not a law giving sanction to private revenge. In Deuteronomy xix. 17 it is said, when one man has a complaint against another: "Both the men shall stand before the priests and the judges, and they shall make diligent inquiry, and thine eye shall not spare; life shall go for life, eye for eye." Such a law is but the simplest expression of justice, and it is common to all primitive peoples; it may be rude, but unjust or immoral it cannot be called.

And the principle, that law in the Old Testament was, under one aspect, State law, has a hundred ramifications. The whole of the Old Testament is coloured by nationality. Even in later times, though Israel was no more an autonomous State, it continued to be a distinct people or nation; and this consciousness had always great influence upon the thoughts and words even of pious minds. The person or personality, who imprecates God's judgments in the Psalms, is the community; and the personality, on whom they are imprecated, is often persecuting heathen powers or apostate parties, traitors both to God and His people. It is doubtful if anywhere there be imprecation by an individual against another individual. The introduction of the idea of nationality complicates the question of conduct, as Christians whose country is at war with another country feel. Is it wrong to pray for victory to their country's arms, seeing victory implies the defeat and destruction of the enemy? At any rate, Old Testament morality must be taken as a whole. One may not be able to open the page anywhere that happens to find a perfect morality any more than a perfect religion. But in both respects, along with things said, along with the degree reached, there must always be

observed the *tendency* manifested to move forward to what is more perfect.

ii. On the other point, the historical character of the early narratives, there is room to say but little. It is to be observed how small a part of the Old Testament is involved in the question. But here the plain fact, which it did not need criticism to reveal, is that the early history was not written by contemporaries of the events recorded, but by writers living many hundred years later. Apart, therefore, from theories about Scripture, what view of these narratives does the nature of the case suggest ?

Now we may ask, Who were the writers of the primitive history ? on what principles did they write ? and with what aims ? The writers of the history were prophetic men, who wrote with the same principles that animated the prophets, and for the same ends as they pursued. All Hebrew history, not only the primitive, but the later, is written from one point of view, the two presuppositions being that God is in all history of mankind, that He is the one Causality, and His communication of Himself to men the source of all good in them ; and that He has from the beginning a purpose to found a perfect kingdom of God upon the earth. God rules the history ; it is He that makes history ; and this is at once the explanation of it, and the reason for recording it. It is not written for the sake of the mere events, but for the sake of their meaning. History is written in order to display the religious philosophy of the history.

Now, this being the view of history, the prophet's eye might see more and other things in it than the ordinary eye. He always saw God in it, and His redemptive movement on from more to more, and he might see the end in the beginning in a way not understood even by

the original actors. For how differently do the events of the life and the history of a person look to him, when he places them in the light of God's special providence with him, and judges them from some advanced point in his experience. In so judging, he does not import anything into the past; he merely interprets it. No doubt such a person, looking back over his life, might colour its early part with some hues from his riper experience; and the prophetic writer may have reflected back on the early history something of the light amidst which he himself stood. This is a possibility which must be admitted in every case. Still one must assume a continuity even in the individual life, and much more in the religious life of Israel; and the principles of the prophetic age were the fruit of the seed sown in the age of the patriarchs and the time of the Exodus.

The tendency of Hebrew writers to throw back the development attained in their own day into the most distant past is greatly insisted on by modern scholars, and to a certain degree justly. The writers are thus, in some measure, false to history. But, on the other hand, they are true to the purpose of God and His operation. He is the first and the last; He inaugurates, and He consummates. From the beginning He sees the end, and His thought embraces it. The first movement contains in it the perfect issue; the crescent, by necessity, broadens into the full orb. The Priests' Code contains one of the most conspicuous of these retrojections. In this writing, there are some laws whose written form is, probably, almost as old as anything in Scripture. Other laws were committed to writing all down the history; and some may have been written only after the exile, when the whole was codified. But the writer who codified the laws has thrown a general conception over the whole. In his day, the *sacra* of Israel

had reached the end of their historical development. The idea of the sacred institutions was Jehovah dwelling among His people and sanctifying them by His presence. This idea was realized in His house, and the institutions connected with it. In the author's day, the idea had received perfect embodiment; and this perfect embodiment, though, historically, all the ages of Israel's life had been contributing to its growth, he throws back to the day of its birth in the wilderness. The acorn sown by Moses had become a great tree, and the tree is transplanted back to the time of sowing the seed.

But this tendency to see the end in the beginning, to overlook actual history, and to locate all in the mind of God, is not peculiar to the Old Testament. It dominates the New Testament also. St. Paul discovers Christ and Christianity in the Abrahamic covenant, and beyond the side institution of Law there is, in principle, nothing else in all the religious history of Israel. The author of Hebrews says that Moses endured "the reproach of Christ," that the patriarchs sought the heavenly country, and that the saints' everlasting rest was offered to Israel in the wilderness. More than that: he says that Christianity is eternal, just as it shall be everlasting, and that all else is only this, that the true heavenly things of which it consists thrust themselves forward on to this bank and shoal of time, and took cosmical embodiment, in order to suggest their coming everlasting manifestation. The whole apostolic exegesis of the Old Testament is but an application of the principle of finding the end in the beginning. The end was Christ and Christianity. He who spoke in the Old Testament was God; and, from the first, that which He spoke about was the consummation which filled His thought.

The tendency to retroject is greatly the result of a

religious idea, the idea that revelation and redemptive history is but the clothing of Divine thoughts; the true arena of it all is the Divine mind, and it is this arena into which the writer delights to ascend. A most instructive passage in this view is the 11th chapter of Romans. But though the tendency to throw back the present into the past be a peculiarity of Hebrew writers, there is risk of misusing the principle in exegesis. The promise to Abraham, that his seed should inherit the land, need not be a reflection back into Abraham's time of the fact that Israel did possess the land, and that it owed the possession to God, for undoubtedly the Hebrews were in Canaan, and particularly in its southern region, before their migration to Egypt, and Canaan seemed to them their natural goal immediately on their deliverance. And much else of the same kind might be cited.

With regard to the early history, what has been said has to be remembered, viz. the religious use which the oldest writers make of it. The early history is their Bible, in which they find the texts for their homilies. The early history was current long before it was written. The oldest writers did not invent the stories the moral of which they point. The stories came to them in the form of traditions living among the people. They transcribe a national history, long written on the consciousness of the people. And it is not one writer who does so, but many, both in the north and in the south. Scholars have been able to trace out certain early documents in the Pentateuch, but these documents probably embrace many earlier efforts. Just as many took in hand to set forth the sayings and miracles of Christ, so many, all over the nation of Israel, set forth the *magnalia Dei* in its history. A nation does not forget. But neither does it remember accurately.

The events are remembered for their significance. The conception of what the history meant is born, and the *idea* is creative, and instinctively fashions a perfect body for itself.

That the early history of Israel is a perfectly accurate record of bare facts need not be supposed. The body is more than the raiment, and the idea more than the fact. Nevertheless it was the fact, or event, that suggested the idea, though the idea once born, with vital energy transformed details, in order perfectly to express itself. But, whatever may be the case with details of the history, its great significant turning-points may be regarded as certain. Yet it is strange how ignorant the Bible leaves us of the early history of mankind; we sometimes feel like orphans, hardly knowing anything of our birth or parentage. It is of God, not of men, that the Bible speaks. It begins by showing us His hand in the creation of all things. From Creation to the Exodus it gives us a few signal illustrations of His moral rule of the world. But what a broad world of mankind is hardly referred to! What a human vitality and energy during four or five millenniums in the valleys of the Euphrates and the Nile is passed over, as if it deserved no mention! Only one thing it tells us—that God has been in the history of mankind from the beginning.

Attempts to give a definition of Scripture may be regarded as futile. Our Catechism asks, What do the Scriptures *teach*? The systematic theologian regards revelation as "the delivery of doctrine" —revelation meaning the communication, from an intellectual Divine mind to an intellectual and otherwise empty human mind, of some abstract and universally valid religious idea. Such catechetical and systematic uses of the Old Testament

may be quite legitimate, but they fail to correspond to its idea. They omit the historical, which is of the essence of the Old Testament. They omit also the personally religious in the writers, which is also of its essence. In a word, they omit this, that the Old Testament was religious experience, before it became Scripture. And it is this experience, or the human mind with this experience, not merely intellectual, but as broad as the mind itself, which is the thing we should like to see, because it is, in each instance, an example of that ineffable coalescence of the Divine mind with the human all through history, which is the only thing of importance, whether in past ages or at the present time. We cannot get this, but Scripture is more than a record of it; it is a reflection of it—an expression of it. It is precarious even to draw a distinction between its thoughts and its words, for the Oriental thought in words.

Now the aim of historical exegesis is to read the Old Testament, in its various parts, in the historical circumstances and conditions of men's minds in which it originated, just that we may trace God's historical fellowship with mankind. Criticism is part of historical exegesis. Criticism is the effort of exegesis to be historical. The effort can never be more than partially successful. But, though there may be many failures, the idea of historical exegesis is valuable, because it gives us the right idea of Scripture, which is the reflection of the presence of the living God in human history. Historical exegesis strives to unite all the lights emanating from this presence: Abraham in his call, Jacob at Bethel, Moses at the bush, the vision of Isaiah, the piety of Jeremiah and the Psalmists—to dispose all these points of light in one great line of light running down all history, the track of the presence of the living God in the life of mankind.