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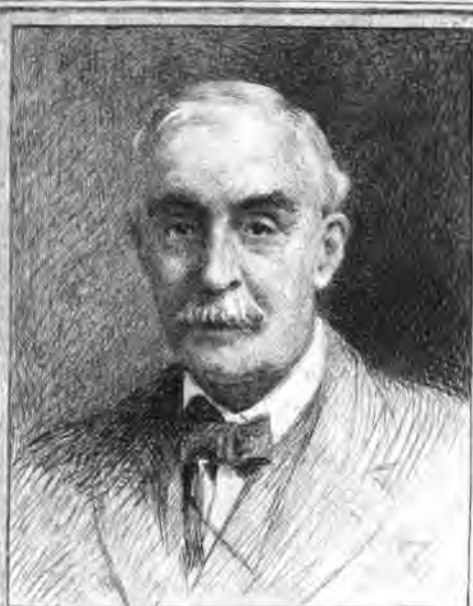
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THE MESSAGE OF ISRAEL

THE
MESSAGE OF ISRAEL

IN THE LIGHT OF MODERN CRITICISM

BY

JULIA WEDGWOOD

AUTHOR OF

"THE MORAL IDEAL," ETC.

Man meint die Bibel zu verstehen, weil man gewohnt ist sie nicht
zu verstehen.—STRAUSS, *Der alte und der neue Glaube*



LONDON
ISBISTER AND COMPANY LIMITED

15 & 16 TAVISTOCK STREET COVENT GARDEN

1894



*Printed by BALLANTYNE, HANSON & Co.
London & Edinburgh.*

3-29-38

P R E F A C E

THE following pages embody an attempt to bring the results of recent criticism before the reader of the Old Testament, so far as the message which the Bible contains is made clearer by such criticism. They must not, from any other point of view, be regarded as an analysis of its conclusions, or from any point of view whatever, as a justification of its methods. The latter object can be obtained only by an actual study of those methods; the former is realised in the excellent manual with which Canon Driver has provided the English reader—the only desideratum which an exacting reader can note in the work being a less bewildering system of typography in the references. The test by which Biblical criticism must stand or fall is its power to render the moral purport of the Old Testament intelligible. If under its analysis the history and literature of the most remarkable people of antiquity ceases to be an abracadabra from which here and there we derive edification, and becomes a coherent and rememberable chapter in the history of thought, then the Newer Criticism will mould our Bible, and in teaching us to read it will vindicate whatever is destructive in its own

work. If it fail in this respect all its arguments will be so much waste paper.

The book, as a whole, must be regarded as a supplement to one published in 1888 which aimed at delineating in faint outline the moral genius of the chief nations of antiquity. These suggestions were more fragmentary and incomplete in the case of Israel than of any other nation, and I have tried to fill the gap by this volume. Supposing the race of Israel to be (as we have conceived it) that race which was set apart for a mission concentrated in the work of their Messiah, all such suggestions must, in any form, be more or less fragmentary and incomplete. We may open a vista here and there ; to follow the path to its conclusion, and map out its relation to the main course of investigation, is an achievement forbidden not only by individual limitations, but by the very nature of a study which deals with the highest and the deepest that human conceptions can dimly mirror and faintly represent.

The two first chapters (and a few paragraphs elsewhere) have been published in the *Contemporary Review*, and are reprinted here by the kind permission of the editors ; but they are much altered, and the rest is new. The notes here (as in my former essay) are not addressed to exactly the same readers as those more especially addressed in the text ; but aim at justifying its purport, or suggesting its expansion, to a critic. One slight novelty may demand apology. The new nomenclature provided for students of the Bible presents so bewildering a variety that one is loth

to add to it, but I think we should be still more anxious not to break away from the work of the veteran leaders of criticism ; and in the work of the early critics, the Elohist means the writer of the Priests' Code. I have therefore spoken of the writer whom critics now call the Elohist as the Ephraimite. We shall never have any name for the writers of the Pentateuch but such as we invent ourselves, and should try to come to a consensus not only with our contemporaries, but with those who opened the difficult path and gave us our first clue to the labyrinth.

While these pages are passing through the press, an article in the *Quarterly Review* (April 1894) affords us an important landmark in the progress of conservative concession, the accepted analysis of the Pentateuch being substantially identical with that followed here. May we hope that such a decision appearing in such a quarter may be hailed as giving pause to the long and wasteful antagonism between the faculty which retains and the faculty which enlarges the dominion of Truth ?

J. W.

May 1894.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

[Prophetic dates, those in which prophecy begins.
Early dates approximate.]

	B.C.	LITERATURE.	B.C.	RITUAL.
UNITED KINGDOM (about)	1060-977			
DIVIDED KINGDOM	977-719	Jehovist . . .	800	
		Ephraimite . . .	?	
		Amos . . .	760	
		Hosea . . .	745	
		Isaiah . . .	740	<i>Reforms of Hezekiah.</i>
ASSYRIAN EXILE .	719			<i>Heathen reaction.</i>
SOUTHERN KING- DOM ALONE .	719-597	Jeremiah . . .	626	<i>Reforms of Josiah.</i>
MONARCHY ENDS WITH BABYLO- NIAN EXILE .	597	Deuteronomy . . .	621	
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FALL OF JERUSA- LEM	586			
RETURN	536			
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EZRA TO JERUSA- LEM	458	Priests' Code . . .	500-475	
		Pentateuch . . .	444	<i>Reforms of Ezra.</i>
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CHAPTER I

INSPIRATION AND CRITICISM

THE question, What is the Old Testament? is one that an average reader finds it more difficult to ask than to get answered. The blinding influence of familiarity takes various forms before it disappears; when the notion of a magically dictated volume has been discarded, that of a complete history of the Hebrew race presents itself with effective plausibility, and constitutes, at the present hour, an even more important barrier to impartial investigation than its predecessor. The series of writings which starts with an account of the creation of the world, and ends with a prophecy, written probably in the fifth century before our era,* unquestionably follows out the destinies of Israel as its main object, and treats it on the whole with a certain attention to chronological sequence; traditional association sometimes supplying a link even in manifestly unhistoric books such as the Song of Solomon or Proverbs. Those readers who in former days would have accepted the idea of a volume dictated by infallible authority, now substitute that of one created by careful accuracy, and regarding the Old Testament as a collection of Hebrew narratives, see as little scope for investigation now as then. And when such a reader hears of the results of "the newer criticism," and is told that all the earlier part of this history is pronounced the invention of

* Malachi (=my messenger) seems erroneously given as a proper name.

priests living about a thousand years after the most important events of the history they are supposed to narrate, all he can say about it will be that we have to make our choice between the value of the criticism and that of the volume criticised. It is not difficult to discard the notion that Moses himself wrote the Pentateuch, the difficulty there is rather to account for a belief which appears to have arisen without evidence; but to find the authorship of the volume suddenly shifted by the best part of a millennium—to accept the supposed work of Moses as that of some Jew who had much less facility for learning anything about the time he described than an Englishman would now have for describing the age, separated from him by about the same interval, of Edward the Confessor—this is a kind of change which may at first sight dispose a reader to believe that either the historic part of the volume we have most prized, or else the critical method which leads to such a judgment of it, must be absolutely worthless.

It might appear in view of some such state of mind as this that a Hebrew prophet* gave out the declaration, "If thou wilt take forth the precious from the vile, then thou shalt be as my mouth, saith the Lord." Those who have been brought up in a spirit of reverence for all that the Bible suggests, who hear its words in accents sharper on the ear than the utterance of yesterday, though the speaker's lips have long been cold, are slow to admit the need of this sifting process within the sacred volume; the precious seems taken forth from the vile in virtue of its inclusion there. Yet in truth the belief that inspired writing is above criticism leads us exactly away from the truth. Nothing else needs criticism quite so much as that work which is the result of inspiration. Utterance which is the expression of a man's whole nature,

* Jer. xv. 19.

which results from a rational application of all his intellectual powers, and forms a homogeneous creation, does need a critical judgment certainly, for all human work needs it; but we are, at any rate, in contact with a thought that is continuous; we have to distinguish better from worse, not gold from dross. But where the utterance breaks through the stratum of individuality, where the sense of truth is allied with moods that come and go, and the speaker declares what he discerns now and not then (a state of mind for which some other name must be found if that of inspiration be discarded), criticism must "take forth the precious from the vile" before the compound whole can be even accepted as a unity. The seer does not himself necessarily distinguish the imperiousness of a divine message from those "devices and desires of our own heart" which perhaps are the only things equally imperious; he may be less able to sift away from the message that which belongs to the mere fancy, than one who brings to the task only literary honesty and critical sagacity. Men who give their lives to studying the records of the past, on the other hand, do not necessarily enter into the divine lessons which it contains, but they know that anything built up on erroneous assumptions as to matter of fact, cannot be part of a message from the Omniscient. And even one who has no feeling for revelation but contempt, as long as he compares its contents with what he knows to be true, and points out unquestionable discrepancies between them, may, by separating "the precious from the vile," become, for that interval, a true exponent of the word of the Lord.

The keen pathos, the vivid dramatic interest, the profound spiritual teaching of the Old Testament, are all hidden from one who tries to read the whole of it with the same kind of attention. The Bible recalls to many persons dreary hours

of childhood, when the attempt to carry on into Leviticus the reverence with which the story of Joseph had at first been heard, ended by associating that also with tedium and disgust. Who that has ever experienced this vehement revulsion has not known also a certain relief when its echo was heard from the outside in the shape of even irreverent criticism, which brought deliverance from the oppression of a divine claim for what cannot be rated high as human work? The critic, in unveiling to us the Bible within the Bible, makes it possible really to read what is there. While we look upon all as equally historic we are almost as much cut off from its teaching as in that earlier stage when we looked upon all as equally inspired; we must discard any uniform framework of attention before we can take in what is under our eyes. We must be ready to recognise on one page the ritual precept which masquerades as ancient history if we would discern on another the divine message for all time; nay, we must be ready to find these elements side by side, like the fertilised land of the Nile overflow and the desert, which a knife may sever. If we begin by regarding it as all equally fertile soil, we shall end by regarding it as all equally desert.

We owe to the Semitic race, it has been often said, the truth hidden from the more various and dramatic intellect of its Aryan brethren, that unity belongs to the Eternal. For Israel this idea lay at the root of all others. It is not that in other religions there were many gods and for Israel there was one God; it is that to this people all unity was a shadow of His unity. The oneness which we must all recognise as beginning only with what we call life was seen by them as completed only in the source of life. The first stages of the evolution which ends here are evident to all. Gold and marble, till stamped with human purpose as in a

coin or a statue, are much or little, not many or few. With the vegetable world we first approach number ; but a rose parts with its grafts as a fire with its kindling light, and remains just as much a rose ; we know of no *one* which we may not at will render two or many till we quit the enclosure of plant life. A unity completely independent of human aim and anterior to human purpose is first revealed as we attain the level of sentient being ; but animal is as incomplete in view of spiritual life as inorganic is in view of organic existence. Till we reach the *plant* we find no unity which our own purpose has not created ; till we reach the *animal* we find no unity which our own purpose cannot ignore ; till we reach the *person* we find no unity which our own consciousness can fully represent. Under the guidance of the Hebrew we may carry on this progress yet further. As we discern a unity in the oak when we contrast it with the mere "muchness" of timber, and discover the incompleteness of this unity when we consider in what a different sense an oak is *one* from the smallest bird that sings in its branches :—so, if we listen to the voice which speaks in the Hebrew Scriptures, we may reach a unity as much more complete than that of man, as the unity of a man is more complete than the unity of a tree. The oneness which dawns in all life is distinct only in Spirit, and is complete only in God.

A truth is obscured less by any interposing antagonism than by its own distorted shadow. The enemy of the true unity is the false unity. If to modern Catholic or Protestant the Unity of the Divine has become a cold meaningless notion, hardly caricatured in the verse of a modern poet—

Thou shalt have one God only ; who
Would be at the expense of two ? *

* A. H. Clough : "The Latest Decalogue."

in the dim refraction under which it reaches the average mind, if it fail to co-ordinate difficult and peculiar phenomena, at least meets the demand for abolition of tests within a special domain by peremptory refusal, and sweeps away every hypothesis that will not fall into line with the sequence of elder and younger development. The claim on behalf of the literature of the Hebrew race for a different kind of attention from all other literature was seen to be impossible the moment it aimed at becoming reasonable; and in proportion as Churchmen have argued that the contents of those narratives bear scrutiny just as the records of Greece and Rome do, they have established that these records must be guaranteed by the same tests which are applied to the records of Greece and Rome. As they have sought to show that a peculiar character is revealed in the events narrated, they have been forced to concede that a common characteristic must be assumed in the narrative. They have not conceded that no exceptional element will be found in the events narrated. This, if it is to be so decided, must be a conclusion reached through a long path of historic investigation, not an assumption at its starting-point. But they have surrendered the claim that all apparent inconsistencies in the writer shall be treated in this book alone as misconceptions in the reader, for this claim is surrendered wherever it is clearly discerned.

The critical and sifting spirit of an age of research has thus set us free to understand the most important book that was ever written. We are no longer obliged to deaden our attention lest we should discover its inconsistencies, to lower our standard lest we should impair our reverence for its aspirations; we are free to recognise the errors which belong to this as to every other work of man; free to discern in it, for the first time, that

which is truly the work of God. The spiritual unity of a message need be no longer hidden by the outward unity of a book. In seeing that the most opposite lines of narrative may be discovered to be convergent radii leading us to a single centre we learn to apprehend the true inspiration of Israel. While we were forbidden to trace the variety of their starting-point, we could not measure the attractive influence of that which is their common goal. The generations who were educated to believe the book of Genesis a portion of a work written by Moses, and this again a portion of a series of similar works, all alike the result of some supernatural dictation, could never know the Hebrew history as they could know any other history. It was impossible to read with intelligent appreciation what is not one narrative, but the *débris* of many. But when we recognise it as the *débris* of many we see that through a confusion greater than that in which we find the record of any other history, we confront a race-personality as much more definite and coherent. The history of Israel is a biography, in a sense that no other history is. No other race approaches so closely to the unity of an individual, none other has left on the ear of humanity so definite an impression of a single voice.

The Republic of Plato, says the great pupil of Plato,* is founded on a mistaken endeavour to give to a State that kind of oneness which in its very nature is possible only to an individual. In those words we have a weighty truth, full of instruction even for the present hour. Yet the student

* *πλήθος γάρ τι τὴν φύσιν ἐστὶν ἢ πόλις, γινομένη τε μὴ μᾶλλον οἰκία μὲν ἐκ πόλεως, ἀνθρώπος δ' ἐξ οἰκίας ἔσται* (Aristotle, Politics, II. 2), is his own view. If there be any race of which we might say that it presented an exception to this seeming truism (which is actually a pregnant truth) it is Israel. But perhaps a deeper view would reveal the *Messianic* race as in fact its most striking illustration.

of history is continually impressed with the differing degrees in which different States and races do approach this definite unity. We must take as a key-note to all investigations of the Old Testament the conviction that the unity of Israel was closer than that of any other nation. The literature which sets forth the life of English tradition stands in some sense very near the actual life of Englishmen ; but we must enormously exaggerate that sense before we can make it a clue to the meaning of all history contained in the Bible. When our late Laureate takes up the Arthurian cycle and makes its great names household words, he is a conscious dramatist, gathering up the faded hints of ancient legend, and weaving them into a gorgeous tapestry, where the pattern to a certain degree, and the details almost entirely, are his own invention. If any reader were to fancy that he were following a work of literal accuracy in perusing the "Idylls of the King," he would be grotesquely mistaken so far as he supposed Britain in the seventh or eighth century to contain the civilisation there represented ; although even he, so far as he came in contact with the ideal of a heroic England, would entertain an illusion forming no bad introduction to a study of its actual history. But the unity of national life is a fact of different intensity and significance at different periods of the world's history and different spots of earth. The traditions of Arthur and his Round Table do not belong to an Englishman as the traditions of Moses and the Exodus belonged to a Jew. Our traditions are mere literature ; theirs are a part of actual life.

If our intellectual vision were keener, we should probably see the history of every nation as a path towards a certain goal, growing more and more distinct at each step. We do actually discern this progress, to some extent, in the case of every nation whose history we know and whose character

we understand. We feel that our own country has been led along other lines than its neighbours, that the course of its development is in a different direction. When we look backwards upon that phase of civilisation which we call ancient history we see this specialising tendency much more clearly. No one, for instance, could read the histories of Athens and of Rome, without discerning that the instinct which led Rome to conquest stood in a different relation to the ideal of its history from that which led Athens to conquest. It is not merely that Rome succeeded and Athens failed; it is that we see the aim of conquest to be appropriate to the mission of Rome and foreign to that of Athens. The Roman conquerors did things even more wicked and cruel than the Athenian conquerors, but when Athens was called the Empire City* it was in bitter reproach; when Rome was summoned to "bind the nations in her sway," † it was in loyal recognition of her legitimate supremacy. When we imagine Athens to have exercised her functions as teacher of philosophy, poetry, and art, without trying to annex Sicily, it is like imagining an individual career without its greatest mistake; when we try to imagine Rome to have exercised her functions as a model of government without annexing Italy, it is like imagining one person to be another person.

This distinctive mission, which a clearer vision would show us for all races, is unmistakably clear for the great races of antiquity. Roman law and Greek art remain as testimony that their authors were called upon to teach the

* As, e.g., by the Corinthian envoys at Sparta. Thucyd. I. 124, *τὴν καθεστηκυῖαν ἐν τῇ Ἑλλάδι πόλιν τύραννον ἡγησάμενοι ἐπὶ πᾶσιν ὁμοίως καθεστάναι*. But an even more striking testimony to the general sense of injustice may be found in the concession of Pericles, II. 63, *ὡς τυρρανίδα γὰρ ἤδη ἔχετε αὐτήν, ἣν λαβέω μὲν ἀδικον δοκεῖ εἶναι*, etc.

† Virgil, *Æneid*, VI. 851.

world the meaning of Law and the meaning of Art. The mission of Israel is as distinct as the mission of Greece or Rome ; the very fact that we impersonate this people whenever we think of it as a whole proves its individuality to come far nearer the individuality of a single human being. When we would compare the Greek race with the Hebrew race, we speak naturally of the first as the inhabitants of a particular country, of the last as children of a typical ancestor. The psalmists and prophets* who lament the calamities of their nation or prophesy its palingenesis seem to us to be foreseeing a Messiah. Perhaps the first conception leads very near the last, but the passages generally taken as referring to a Messiah are not for the most part conscious prophecies referring to an individual so much as accurate descriptions of the position of the nation in the midst of other nations. Israel is the oppressed servant of the Lord, the prophet of the nations, the victim and saviour alike of the world. The great personages of Hebrew history owe all their significance to the degree in which they symbolise the aims of their nation, and when a Hebrew pronounced their names he thought less of their actual history than of their prophetic shadow on the coming age.

Hence the great difference between the historic development of Israel and that of the other two great races to which Europe owes its education. The classical nations of antiquity exhibit a horror of individual pre-eminence which their destiny and their genius appear to justify. This instinct—at Athens a precaution against the temptations of moral wealth, at Rome a concession to the needs of moral

* "The conception of the Servant of Jehovah is, as it were, a pyramid of which the base is the people of Israel as a whole . . . the summit, the person of the Mediator of salvation who arises out of Israel." (Delitzsch on Isaiah, quoted in Cheyne's translation. See especially Is. xlii. 1.)

poverty—was in both a deep-seated national impulse, and finds its reflection in the facts of history. Athens and Rome proceed from monarchy to democracy, and, after they have cast out their despots, hold the name of king, and the influences which may lead to its becoming a reality, in a peculiar and often unjust abhorrence. The spirit justifies the letter of history, Athens and Sparta find their dread of personal pre-eminence ratified by the rapid intoxication of their noblest patriots when once the dizzy height of political power and fame has been secured ; and if Rome does not find this, the poverty of genius and monotony of character which preclude this elevation seem in connection with the mighty result effected by the “great nation of commonplace men,”* to bring the same testimony from an opposite quarter. The monotonous race, and the race dowered with infinite variety, are at one in their dread of a strong personality.

Israel is allied rather to Rome than to Greece in this respect. The rich variety of Greek literature has no counterpart in Hebrew. We pass from prophet to prophet, under every difference of circumstance which a common soil and a common language left possible, and are not sensible of any change of key ; one deep monotone is heard through all their music. The Eternal in the heavens—the claim on the fugitive dwellers on earth to keep fidelity to that alliance which binds them to Him in whom they may find a refuge from the chances and changes of mortality—this is the burden of every seer of Israel ; no individual genius breaks or even strongly colours the message passed on as the torch in the race ; the hand only different, the light and the scene identical. When we turn back from the nation to the family, we do indeed come upon individual characters of extraordinary vividness, and what we may call dramatic

* Mommsen, “History of Rome.”

power: no character in Shakespeare is more of a consistent whole than Abraham or Jacob. But a single type of character is discernible in both. By the side of Athens, Rome and Jerusalem might be called equally monotonous; alike in the race which is to mould the kingdoms of earth, and that which is to reveal the kingdom of heaven, we are kept mindful of a common mission, a common set of temptations. The Law is the dominant ideal of both Israel and Rome, and the uniformity which that ideal must always impress on the history of a nation characterises both races. The oneness of a common centre, the uniformity of a rigidly marked circumference, different as they are, seem to approximate when we contrast them with the play of artistic genius and the elasticity of catholic and readily reversible sympathies. Yet while the heroic figures of Palestine do not differ each from each in the same way that the heroic figures of Greece do, the impressiveness of a typical significance replaces, and more than replaces, the impressiveness of individual genius. Every prominent figure in Hebrew history represents and typifies Israel's endowments and vocations, and so expresses the national tendencies in some special direction, that biography gathers up in parable the memories or hopes of the race and a name becomes the most natural expression of a national ideal. The race stands to its typical specimens in a closeness of relation true of no other. No gifted Greek mirrors the ideal Hellas. No gifted Hebrew fails, in some sense, to mirror the ideal Israel.

It is in this direction we must look to fill the gaps made by the recent work of criticism. We shall find that it does much more than fill those gaps; that when we have exchanged the old for the new idea of authorship we have gained far more than we have lost. Only on the condition of never being steadily thought out could the notion that

the great heroes of national struggle or dominion expended half their energies on literary composition keep its hold on an intelligent mind ; while we imagine that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, or David the Psalter, we have to forget everything else he did. But the idea thus literally untenable in face of any steadfast examination is a distorted expression of a profound truth. If the unity of a race is a more dominant conception to the Hebrew mind than the unity of a person—if the first conception always glimmers through the last, and to a certain extent confuses it, it is because the unity of Israel consists in its witness to that eternal Unity of which it was the human reflection. The tests which have withered away the false oneness have revealed the true, and in losing the integrity of a compilation we discern for the first time the spirit of a message.

A critic* whose fine discernment in the domain of Science has not weakened his firm footing on the ground of Faith, has compared the functions of Science and Faith to the several vocations of the sisters of Bethany. The comparison indicates the true place of both. The busy employment of Martha is as much a vocation as the silent listening of Mary. The two would be united in an ideal humanity, and to "serve with loyal Martha's hands and loving Mary's heart," is the goal towards which Christian endeavour should be always pressing ; but we may reckon it a large advance towards that goal if grudge and scorn have no part in the division which comes in between these forms of service.

* Alexandre Westphal, an "able young French scholar," mentioned by Professor Cheyne in the preface to his "Founders of New Testament Criticism" (1893). His work on the "Sources du Pentateuque," 1892, beginning with this comparison, presents the results of German criticism with French grace, and with an earnestness and reverence which we may venture to call English. Some part of his work on Deuteronomy seems strangely retrograde ; but all he writes is instructive and eminently readable.

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There is no reason, apart from the limitation of human nature, why any one should not be familiar with every word that critics have written on the history of Scripture, and also enter into the fulness of meaning which that analysis does but bring into a clearer light. But in practice it will generally be found that the power of analysing a complex whole into the work of various writers tends to quench the vision of their common revelation. It is said that the very slightest power of hearing disables the deaf from the keenness of visual discernment needed for that interpretation of the movement of the lips which is the best substitute for hearing. Sight and hearing are no foes; up to a certain point the same persons usually are remarkable for keenness of both senses; and when we speak of quick observation we imply an habitual use of all the senses in their fullest perfection. Nevertheless, the abnormal development of one sense is possible only where there is corresponding loss of another. The principle has a wider range than those powers in humanity whereby we come in contact with the physical universe. It is applicable to all perception. Up to a certain point the discerning capacities of man grow together. Average intellectual generally implies average spiritual discernment, as average sight average hearing, but all arduous exercise of one sense blunts the capacity of another; and the critic cannot escape the disability, his office has its disadvantages like everything else that belongs to mortality. It is impossible for Martha to sit at the feet of the Teacher while she is occupied with the work of providing for outward needs. She is by no means forced to decry her sister's vocation, but she is debarred from sharing it, and the disability is mutual.

It is in the belief that the work of criticism is fitted to restore to us our Bible with the freshness of a new Reforma-

tion and the preciousness of an ancient faith, that one who has no pretensions to the title of critic here undertakes to set before the public the results of criticism, as they bear on the value of the Message of Israel. The critic has his part, and no mean one, in the work of revelation. His office is destructive, but what it destroys has hindered and disguised, not transmitted, the message of the Old Testament. He sets us free to read as the contemporaries of the prophets were free to hear. He can give no spiritual insight, can ensure no harmony between the inspiration of the seer and the aspiration of the learner ; but by the mere fact that he removes inconsistencies and repetitions, that he gives us the work of many instead of the work of one, he brings us nearer an appreciation which is made impossible by the endeavour to read as a single consecutive narrative the whole collection of a nation's legendary and mythical lore. The present attempt, so far as it is based on an inadequate study of the work of criticism is offered to the reader with diffidence and almost reluctance, but with the confidence that, so far as it transmits the result of patient and disinterested effort, and interprets the work of the student to the believer, it can prove only an aid to faith.

CHAPTER II

THE UNITY OF A TYPE

WE understand most truly the relation of the Hebrew race to the Bible and to the world, when we regard it as the race which for ever tends to concentrate itself in a typical specimen, wherein is realised some aspect of its ideal. Moses the law-giver, to whom it owes its national existence ; David the ruler, who gathered up that national life in the firm bonds of the Monarchy ; Solomon, the great king who carried out this rule into an imperial splendour, and associated it with a glow of literary and philosophic thought discernible from afar ; all these, and many more, stand out in the history of Israel as incomplete and fragmentary precursors of some ideal son of Israel who was to express *all* that was vital within his nation. The history of these typical heroes gathers up, it may be, fallacious desires as well as prophetic capacities, but on every side it expresses the genius and calling, if also the temptation of the race. The idea of an inchoate Messiah is the clue to all the dreams, as to all the facts, of Hebrew life and history.

By a misconception cognate with that which has replaced the vital unity of a race with the dead unity of a book, this impersonating tendency of Israel, refracted through the mists that follow the sunset of a living faith, has taken the aspect of a special relation to the sacred Scriptures. The heroic figures of Hebrew history, seen through this

mist, have become writers of the book which contains materials for their biography. It is an illusion which hardly needs the touch of criticism to be dispelled. The mere conditions of life with Moses forbid us to conceive of him as a contributor to literature; and the view which discovered his autobiography in Scripture is as destitute of venerable tradition as it is of rational probability. The remote past was as ignorant of it as the immediate present is incredulous of it; and as for its inherent *vraisemblance*, we may venture to bring it home to the reader by asserting that a similar opinion in the case of the only life of greater importance than that of Moses would not be more extravagant or baseless. There are, indeed, some difficulties in the ascription of the Pentateuch to Moses which there would not be in the ascription of the Gospels to Christ,* and if we could contemplate the notion without the influence of long association, we should see that no difficulty in the obviously absurd hypothesis is absent from the accepted tradition.

The strange fancy, at the present time, needs rather a date than a refutation. A comparison of two passages in the historic books will make it clear that between the composition of the earlier and the later, the belief that Moses was the divinely appointed channel for the *Law* was hardened and externalised into the belief that Moses was the author of those books which record the giving of the Law. The earlier writer having occasion to cite a passage from the book of Deuteronomy, quotes it as "that which is written in the book of the law of Moses"†—a

* Surely we may say this of the statement that "the man Moses was very meek" (Numb. xii. 3), whatever meaning we give to the epithet which both our versions thus translate.

† "And it came to pass, as soon as the kingdom was confirmed in (Amaziah's) hand, that he slew his servants which had slain the king his

notice certainly not incompatible with a belief that Moses was the author of the work thus quoted, but one which would not inevitably or naturally suggest such a notion. But when we turn to the parallel passage in the Chronicles, where otherwise the passage is simply repeated, we find the significant inversion "that which is written in the law in the book of Moses." A trivial, scarcely observable difference, but one which affords at once an explanation and a date for the theory of the authorship of Moses. The last event mentioned in the book of Kings is the release of Jehoiachin from his Babylonian dungeon in the year 561 B.C. The book of Chronicles is part of a record closing apparently at Jerusalem after the rebuilding of the walls. We must thus ascribe the rise of the distorted notion that Moses wrote a book describing his own character, and containing an account of his own death, to that mournful period of the Exile when the longing for a distant home and the recoil from a detested religion bestowed on every symbol of the racial faith a value which, severed from an actual discernment of the spiritual realities thus symbolised, degenerated into narrow and unintelligent superstition.

This slight change in a comparison of two parallel passages reveals to us, not only how and when the belief that Moses was the author of the Law was distorted into the belief that Moses was the writer of the book which the Jews always quoted as the Law, but what is the true meaning of that belief. We make a very poor use of our inherited experience when, looking back on any belief that we may associate with a nation, we label it

father (Joash, grandson and destroyer of Athaliah). But the children of the murderers he slew not, according to that which is written in the book of the law," &c., 2 Kings xiv. 5, 6. The parallel passage (in 2 Chron. xxv. 3, 4) has no other change than this transposition.

as false. If we would gain anything from those thoughts which have made a platform for us, whence we can see beyond them, we must give our attention as carefully to the views of the past which we can discern to be erroneous, as to those which we can discern to be well-founded. Strongly-held convictions are never false in the sense that all we have to do is to discard them. Moses, we see, was to the Hebrew a representative of the Law that created the Hebrew nation. When the Jew translated this belief into the theory that Moses was the author of the book that symbolised the national unity he did not lose all hold of the truth that lay at its basis. It is that truth which a study of the Bible has to disengage. We have to translate the fancy that a leader whose life was spent in the desert composed a volume, into the discernment that at the opening of the national life of Israel stands a hero and a prophet, whose influence is commemorated in the Law that gave the nation its coherence and its integrity.

It is important, in undertaking such a task, to begin with its easiest portion. In some cases the confusion of a central type with an author is dogmatic opinion, in others it is manifestly no more than a half-dramatic symbolism of a particular line of thought by a representative figure. It is in noting the lesser degrees in which the Hebrew ideal of a type is confused with authorship that we recognise the force and meaning of this symbolic membership. While we trace Solomon as representing the Hebrew wisdom with a significance appreciable only from its reflected glow on a foreign atmosphere, David echoing more adequately the lyric cry for God with which the nation awakes at once to the sense of its unity and its mission, while their great precursor stands forth as a complete and luminous embodiment of all that every member of the nation he had created was brought to

consider as the Law, we learn to understand that view which modern Europe has preserved in a form grotesquely unreasonable ; yet one to which, as we learn to understand it, we may accord a certain sympathy. The Jew ascribed the Pentateuch to Moses as he ascribed the Psalms to David and the Proverbs to Solomon. Many a Jew may have believed this in the sense that there was a particular day when Solomon sat down to compose the Proverbs, or his father the Psalms. But the Jewish association of their great kings with their great books was capable of a very different representation. Let us endeavour to follow it in its more intelligible aspect, let us begin our study by a glance at the latest and least sacred of the holy books, and thus, to follow out a Jewish comparison * between their Scriptures and their temple, take our start from the outer court, to advance, in company with the Jew, towards his Holy of Holies.

It has been well said that the course of Hebrew history would be clearer if it were for certain purposes read backwards.† We should contemplate its progress through its goal. In this preliminary review of the typical heroes of the nation who have been forced to masquerade as the principal authors of the Bible we will follow out this method. As we turn backwards, and let the heroes of Israel meet us in their true order and perspective, that idea of authorship, which at first seems to vanish, does in reality expand into a reasonable and coherent, because also a varying, relation towards those Scriptures which an unscientific impulse has ascribed to their pen.

Solomon, the great king, who, though he emerges into the

* See the learned treatise of Dr. Frants Buhl (Professor of Theology at Leipzig), "Kanon und Text des alten Testaments" (p. 4), 1891.

† In an interesting article in the *Edinburgh Review* for October 1892.

dawning light of history a millennium before our era, is yet the latest great figure of Hebrew (as distinguished from Jewish) tradition, and who, indeed, may claim an even wider fame, being distinguished also in Mohammedan legend, is the supposed author of two books in the Bible, and conceivably the hero of a third; but in his case this legendary fame is comparatively transparent to history, showing us the way in which late utterances gather round an early hero, representing their spirit to a later age. In one of the writings attributed to him,* this is so manifestly the case that his literal authorship is not defended even in the conservative camp; this is not, it is true, in our Protestant Bible, but when we set the whole "Wisdom" literature of the Old Testament and Apocrypha together, we perceive that we must apply one measure of authorship to all. Indeed, the only one of these writings which is not ascribed to Solomon,† so manifestly belongs to the same group, that we feel the name of its actual writer affect us almost as if, in a play of Shakespeare, we came upon the name of Kean or Kemble instead of the name of Hamlet. It seems to belong to another set of ideas, and to be included merely by an oversight. To make Solomon our starting-point is to take up the question of authorship at its most convenient point, and to confront a difficult problem at first in its simplest form.

The portion of the Old Testament which we thus confront is attributed to Solomon by the same authority of tradition

* "The Wisdom of Solomon," the composition (doubtful as to date) of an Alexandrian Jew. It is characterised by a curious mixture of fierce Jewish fanaticism and a pure catholic spirit breaking through it without in any way affecting its general character. Its description of wisdom strikingly recalls St. Paul's description of charity.

† "The Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach," known to English readers as Ecclesiasticus, the work of a Palestinian Jew, rendered in Greek by his grandson; further described on p. 65.

as that by which the whole Pentateuch is attributed to Moses, and quite recently this connection was as little subject to question in the one case as in the other. But its literal truth never greatly interested the ordinary reader of the Bible. Proverbs and Ecclesiastes belong to those out-works which would first be surrendered to the attacks of the critics, which perhaps the dwellers in the citadel might feel themselves stronger for losing. Wisdom is not a characteristic Hebrew word. When it replaces holiness we feel that we have crossed—not a barrier, but a division. The truest wisdom, in the Hebrew as in every other ideal, is one with the truest holiness; but in the Hebrew more than in any other ideal of wisdom its lower aspects are refracted through an atmosphere of worldly cleverness that of all things not positively evil is furthest from the spirit of holiness. Doubtless this is the most familiar aspect of wisdom in the writings associated with the name of Solomon; yet there are passages in which it gives way to that aspect in which wisdom becomes holiness—in which we feel that what hovered before the spirit of the writer was the *idealised aim of the Law*. At moments this Jewish conception, sinking so often into the idea of mere human shrewdness, approaches so closely to the source of divine law that the impersonation of Wisdom melts into that of the Logos as it was conceived by St. John.* Both views are Jewish—we must “take forth the precious from the vile” before we can reach that which is a part of the message of Israel, but we may allow that all is a part of the wisdom of the Jew. Perhaps it is not easy to say why Solomon should be a type of either. He represents the external aspects of Judaism, the side of the national character so familiar in later ages, so rare while Palestine was a kingdom, in which it enters into relations

* As Prov. iii. 11, 12, 13-20; viii., &c.

with the world, not in its ideal character of the Messiah of the nations, but in a spirit of cosmopolitan and catholic good sense; and this, joined with the story of his prayer for wisdom and the possible fact that a few of the Proverbs may have originated with him, seems to have been enough to blend the tradition of his splendour with that of philosophic thought, and make him the typical author of the "Chokmah," or Wisdom literature of the Old Testament and of the Apocrypha, to which it forms a valuable link. A glance at the writings attributed to him shows us how arbitrary is our division of Jewish literature.

When we turn to some of the writings attributed to Solomon, we perceive that the writers who made this attribution did not even attempt to pass them off as his in any other way than by adding his name to the title. There is a passage in Ecclesiastes where the writer actually divorces the Solomon of Jewish tradition, we might almost say carefully, from the Solomon of Hebrew history. "I have gotten me great wisdom," he makes Solomon say, "above all that were before me in Jerusalem."* Of course no Jew could forget that only David had reigned before Solomon in Jerusalem, or suppose that the author was alluding here to its Canaanite inhabitants. He merely chooses the philosophic monarch as the mouthpiece of his proverbial philosophy, with a general sense that the cosmopolitan spirit of observation and precaution which he is gathering up and expanding from his own stores found a natural symbol in the great king whose fame is reflected back from foreign nations. He uses the impersonation with the audacity shown by Shakespeare in putting a quotation from Aristotle

* Eccles. i. 16. Yet none of the writings attributed to Solomon make quite so definite a claim for him as author. "I the Preacher was king over Israel in Jerusalem," v. 12.

into the mouth of Hector.* Yet the assumption of Solomon's authorship of the Wisdom literature, both here and in the cognate writings of the Old Testament, is far more definite than that of Moses for its early history. If we suppose that a Jew could use the one name so seriously and yet with such merely dramatic sincerity, we cannot refuse to concede that the hypothesis might be extended to the other without, at all events, anything offensive to the Jewish conception of either history or religion.

To associate the lessons of mournful experience learned in the Exile, with the name of a great king who reigned at Jerusalem four centuries earlier—the Haroun al Raschid of Hebrew tradition—may have its difficulties, but it offends no sentiment of reverential association and jars on no tradition of holiness. When in our reverted progress we ascend from the son to the father, and are told that here too we must take the name of an individual as merely a type of one side of the national ideal, the case is different. How often has the perusal of a Psalm been interrupted by a pause of wonder that the heart's deepest emotions can be echoed across the interval of millenniums! Such a discovery gives a sense of intimate relation which we are ready to fill in with an individual life at the slightest hint from external information, and when we learn that "a man after God's own heart" wrote the words which express for us what we could not express for ourselves, we mistake the sense of a personal touch in the world of spirit for positive evidence. Or rather, we allow this sense to annul the strongest negative evidence. Generation after generation has read, as David's, Psalms which allude to the Temple,† not built till

* "Troilus and Cressida," act ii. scene 2.

† *E.g.*, Ps. xxiv. 3. The "hill of the Lord" in the time of David would be Sinai.

after his death, or to the Exile* carried out under his remote descendants; these difficulties being answered by some unconscious argument that the Hebrew scribe had these facts before him when he labelled the Psalm, and must have found some legitimate way of getting over them. Nevertheless, the moment attention is claimed for every word of a Psalm this ascription becomes impossible. Those which are not actually labelled as later in date than David by some mention of the Temple are seen, when once we read them with an impartial eye, to be utterly unsuitable to any circumstance in his life; and if we can say that here and there we meet one which by its absence of positive indication allows us to fit it into his history, that is as much as we can say. The Psalms, we come to see, whenever we give them real study, are the expressions of a Jew in altogether different circumstances from any that were possible to David; or rather, they are the expressions not so much of this or that Jew as of the ideal Israel.† Of course every Psalm must be written by an individual, none can be, like the Proverbs, the expression of the collective decisions of a people; but this individual utterance, we learn, is only that of a speaker who owes his inspiration to the fact of his being a mouthpiece of his race. He has no independent distinctness, his personality is merged in his representative character. The "I" of the Psalms is like the "I" of a Greek chorus, the unity of a mere choir leader. The true speaker is a multitude.

* *E.g.*, Ps. xiv. 7.

† Take, for instance, the following: "I will not be afraid for ten thousands of the people that have set themselves against me," iii. 6 (a Psalm the attribution of which to David flying before Absalom would empty that history of all its pathos); "And let the congregation of the nations compass thee round about," vii. 7; "The nations are sunk down in the pit that they have made," ix. 15, &c.; all expressions that are meaningless unless we suppose the object of the attack to be a nation.

These decisions must be accepted, in the main, not only by students of Hebrew and trained judges of historic evidence, but by any one who will open his eyes. Nevertheless, when devout readers of the Psalms are told that words which have expressed for them what they never could have expressed for themselves, are in fact not individual utterance, but the typical expression of a race, they are conscious of a deadly chill. The feeling is almost that of the Magdalen beside the tomb of the risen Christ. The critics seem to have taken away their most intimate companion and interpreter, and they know not where he has been laid.

In truth, the mistake is as great in one case as the other. It is by no delusion that the utterances of the ideal Israel have for ages satisfied the yearnings of those to whom everything else that could be called a national utterance would, for a similar purpose, prove cold and unsatisfying. When we are told that the Psalmist speaks as the mouthpiece of his nation, we are not learning that the words precious to hundreds of generations are less, but that the historic reality underlying them is more. Those who can revive in their imagination the longing of Israel for Zion, the deep-seated thirst of every individual in that "remnant" revealed to successive prophets as the true nation, for the unity of national life, discover in this fictitious bereavement an actual gain; those to whom such realisation is impossible come nearer the fundamental truth in conceiving such utterances to be the cry of the individual spirit for God than in taking the view which is sanctioned by criticism. If a solitary Englishman can appropriate the lament of a people as an utterance of his inmost heart, it is because the struggles of a soul battling with the powers of the unseen can express itself in the dialect of patriotic fervour, of national agony, more truly than in any merely individual utterance from other lips. Where it

is the perennial part of humanity which speaks, an expansive influence within demands large images and long vistas, the issues are all momentous. No solitary pilgrim, but the city of Mansoul, in the later work of Bunyan, forms the protagonist of the great drama of salvation. His genius had already found its blossom, he had expressed the longings, the woes, the rapture of a spirit alone with God under the guise of a pilgrimage, and that of a siege has not, in equal measure, riveted the attention of posterity. He had himself known warfare, but it is a significant fact that no historian can add to the record of his participation in the great Civil War that of the side on which he fought.* The difference which an attentive study of his autobiography leaves doubtful, cannot have appeared to himself important. Probably, indeed, it is not by one to whom images of actual war are familiar that the record of a struggle between imperfect human beings will be found suitable to typify the conflict of good and evil. But still the siege of the city of Mansoul remains, beside the "Pilgrim's Progress," a witness that the life of a State in some respects symbolises the inmost life of man, as no single specimen of individuality can typify it; and if it has not in like manner laid hold of the imagination of modern England and taken its place in literature, this may be in great measure because in our Old Testament we have this parable already writ large, and every other form of it is unsatisfactory in comparison.

Jerusalem is, in fact, the city of Mansoul for all generations. The expressions of emotion which find their appropriate centre in "the Holy City" embody, so far as the human

* Macaulay takes it for granted he fought on the Parliamentary side; Froude seems to me to establish the much greater probability of his having been engaged on that of the King. But the mere fact of having to set the two historians against each other shows that the problem is unsolvable.

race has yet gone, the loftiest aspirations and deepest yearnings of a human spirit. It is the fact that they are a national, which makes them a catholic utterance. We could not, in the same degree, accept for our own the expression of brother or spouse. The unity of the nation forms a meeting-point for human spirits unattainable in a mere interchange of individual experience. What we crave in a typical representation of our deepest emotions is never a mere echo; the truest sympathy has always an element of the ideal—an expansion of scope that, if it be taken literally, might often be represented as illusion. It is the cry of oppressed Israel, groaning under Pagan scorn and persecution and thirsting for vengeance, which becomes the true expression of meek spirits most alien to all that is fierce and vindictive, and craving only for peace with God and man. They can pass over indications of a corporate utterance* in the Psalms as they pass over those fierce imprecations which, in fact, only that corporate utterance made endurable; and as long as this evasion stops short of any historic judgment we need not question its legitimacy. Whoever wrote what *makes us known to ourselves* was inspired by Him who made us, and where there is inspiration there, in the imperfect condition of this mortal life, there is also intermission. The critic, as such, may be less likely to receive that which is eternal in the message than other men are, but as long as he truly interprets those portions of which he is the sole judge, he becomes a guide to the meaning of much which lies wholly beyond his ken, but to

* This description applies to the greater number of the Psalms of the fifth book—*i.e.*, from cvii. to the end. They all seem to point to the Maccabean struggle, and their true hero is Judas Maccabeus; they are thus much the latest writings of the Bible. The way David is mentioned in them shows that his name had become a symbol for all that was heroic in his nation.

which, though he be unable to enter on it, he alone holds the key.

The decision of criticism in our day, relegating the bulk of the Psalter to a period when the national life had become a mournful recollection and an almost despairing hope, and finding in that blended aspiration and regret an explanation of the passages which seem to utter the cravings of an individual spirit, shows us how such expressions have been connected with the hero in whom the national consciousness found its ideal type. David symbolised the unity of Israel to a fragmentary race yearning for its restored national life in its beloved home. He was the first whom the national imagination recognised as an actual king of Israel, and he was almost the last. His predecessor shows as the mere head of an army occupied in a war which, as we read it with the issue in our minds, we half fancy a rebellion against its lawful monarch. His son is an emperor familiar abroad, oppressive at home, advancing by sure though hidden steps towards apostasy to the national faith; and although this is only one side of the tradition concerning him, and another makes him the *wise* king, still under no point of view could he symbolise the unity of the nation. And after him all monarchs ruled over a mere fragment of the soil of Palestine, and commemorated in the very limits of their kingdoms the dissension which heralded national decay, and prepared foreign invasion. There is thus only David to represent the incarnate Israel, and enough in his history harmonised with the ideal of his people to fit him personally to fill the place. The way in which his aspect has been regarded "as through a cloud of incense,"* while it cannot give the countenance of a saint, conceals, to a certain extent, the lineaments of a hero; his greatest crime,

* Wellhausen, "History of Israel" (English translation), p. 182.

detestable as it is, is one not irreconcilable, in an Oriental despot, with magnanimous impulse and high aspiration; other instances of meanness and cruelty* suggest a possible explanation which might remove their greatest guilt. At any rate, we see that he was, to a Hebrew living 3000 years ago, an ideal king, that his image remained as a type of national hope when it grew dim as a record of national memory, and that the "Son of David" became the appropriate title of him who was in some sense to gather up and carry on the mission of the typical David. We can thus accept him as the chosen symbol of the national monarchy, and see, in his traditional association with the Psalter, a testimony to that close connection between the sense of a national bond, and the passionate yearning for God, which gave the Hebrew race its message for humanity.

When we turn to the third of the great figures looming through the mists of history which tradition has chosen as a focus to the influences of early literature, we have a simpler task. The glory of all heroes and patriots grows pale before that of Moses; others deliver, he creates a nation. With him, "this people" is, for the first time, recognised as a unity, the chaos of warring tribes is subdued into a cosmos, and the unity of a family expanded into the unity of a possible nation. But we shall have to note a bleaching influence on all the colouring of mythology as a characteristic of Hebrew tradition, and this is especially true of the great deliverer. When we have passed from that discovery of the infant in the bulrushes which presents itself in inseparable association with many an old-fashioned woodcut or recent photograph, and which is told of other

* His supposed directions to his son to destroy Shimei may surely be supposed the invention of Solomon.

legendary heroes,* we meet nothing else that is picturesque in the whole biography; we meet indeed a great deal that is unheroic. Where a hero of romance would shine in brilliant chivalry, we seem to detect a timid Jew, venturing to defend his oppressed brethren only as some mediæval descendant might undertake the dangerous task. Moses is distinguished almost as much from other Hebrew heroes by the extent of this bleaching process as they are from Greek heroes. The personal influence in his history is poor as compared with that in the history of the patriarchs; the adoptive mother, whose appearance seems the opening of a drama, speedily vanishes, hardly indeed keeping her place as a typical centre of Egyptian influence; and the rest of the story is impersonal. If his espousals remind us for the moment of the wooing of Isaac and Jacob, what we may call the romantic element disappears like a bubble, and we hurry on to that narrative of the origin and growth of the Law which throws everything personal into the shade. The wives and children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob stand out to us as personages in modern fiction; the wife and children of Moses fade into mere objects of historic research. We seem transported from the flowery slopes and green valley of the Promised Land to the granite peaks of Sinai or vast sweeps of Arabian desert, not only in geographic record but also in typical significance; all the scenery of the narrative, moral as well as physical, is austere and monotonous. We never meet any such expression as "O that Ishmael might live before Thee"; such utterances of tenderness as we do find are wholly for Israel. The wife, the children of the hero, fade into the background; it is "this people" which forms the exclusive object of every yearning in his heart—which

* It is given in identical terms of Sargon, the Assyrian monarch. See the "Records of the Past," V. pp. 3, 56; and "Hibbert Lectures" of A. H. Sayce.

seems, if we take literally the bold language of his intercessory prayer for Israel, to surmount in intensity even his love of God.

It is an instructive commentary on this part of the history to remember that the part of the Bible chosen by the Jewish synagogue to commemorate the deliverance from Egypt, is the Song of Solomon.* The language of ecstatic earthly passion seemed, to the genius of Israel, the only fitting expression for the emotions with which the chosen people looked back on their deliverance from foreign tyranny; the giving of the Law was, to the national consciousness, the marriage-day of Israel. A most inappropriate metaphor it appears to modern intelligence, familiar with that event as it is given in the narrative of Leviticus, with its wearisome and often repulsive detail, its narrow and timid superstition. But turn to the earlier narrative, read Deuteronomy for what it is, the earliest elaborate edition of the Law,† and that conception of an espousal will no longer appear one unsuitable to typify its deeper meaning. What is external is revealed as an envelope of protection for what is most inward.

That which should have been the mere husk and envelope of the precious seed was cherished in its place, the prescriptions which were intended to secure the national unity, and were necessary for that end, were expanded and enlarged to achieve their exclusive separate-

* "The deliverance from Egypt has been poetically conceived as the betrothal of Israel to God, and this idea has found expression in the habit of reading the Song of Solomon on the first Sabbath after the two days of Passover. . . . As Passover has been poetically called the day of Israel's betrothal to God, the Feast of Weeks would correspond to the wedding-day." (Friedlander's "Jewish Religion," 1891, pp. 390, 393, 394.)

† The title of "second law" is actually correct, the earliest Hebrew code being Ex. xx.-xxiii. But as ordinarily understood it is misleading. Deuteronomy long precedes Leviticus.

ness; and the Law, given as a guardian of fidelity to the unseen Lord, was turned into a principle of separation from the visible neighbour. We have the result in that part of the Bible which the latest criticism has labelled the Priestly Code, the kernel of which is the book of Leviticus. But the sifting touch of the critic permits us to turn, for the true ideal of the Law, to the book which was quoted by Christ at the most solemn moment of His history,* the book in which there is nothing priestly, but which on the contrary embodies the spirit of that prophetic teaching which is itself a reaction from priestly claim. Even in that sifted section now critically accepted as the first edition of the Code we discover much that speaks not of a union with the divine, but a separation from the human; we are reminded by the Deuteronomist here and there of the hatred of the non-Jewish human race which the historian † 700 years later attributes to the Jews; we feel from the first that the unity of Israel, as the unity of all ancient nations, but more than all others, was a hostile and aggressive unity, their peculiar closeness of relation within bought by a peculiar fierceness of antagonism without—their special bond to their heavenly guide bought by a special recoil from all but their earthly kindred. But even against this there are in Deuteronomy no uncertain protests, the injunction to the love of the stranger ‡ comes against this spirit as a waft from a higher sphere, forcing us to recognise with fresh distinctness the first canon for apprehension not only of our Bible, but of every Bible—that where there is inspiration there is also intermittence. And when we can seize the idea of a spiritual sifting within the critical siftings

* In all the citations—viz., Deut. viii. 3; vi. 13 and 16—with which the Tempter is answered, Matt. iv. 1-11, and parallel passages.

† Tacitus: Hist. V. 5.

‡ Deut. x. 19.

we are ready for the tribute given by Him to whose citations it owes its most hallowed associations for Christian ears, when He elicited from a student of the Law,* as a summary of the whole meaning of the Law, the command to love recorded in the book of Deuteronomy, as it is nowhere else so broadly and simply expressed in the Old Testament.

When we regard Moses as the mere type and expression of a divine influence to which he is perfectly transparent, tingeing it by no characteristics of his own, we discern a new meaning in the colourlessness of his individual history. He is the mediator between the Divine Saviour and the delivered Israel, the Law is the record and pledge of the bond thus created, and in this sense he is the giver of the Law. How little any rigid sense of authorship beyond this was included in the Jewish ascription to Moses is brought home to every one who reads the New Testament attentively, by the erroneous assertion attributed to our Lord: † "Moses gave you circumcision." Whether the correction which follows, "Not that it is of Moses, but the fathers," be from the speaker, or, as is far more probable, from the writer, in any case we have the name of Moses used, at a critical moment and in a serious argument, by a Jew addressing Jews, as a mere type of the Jewish Law, the literal accuracy of the ascription being an impossible belief even to a Jewish child. Surely the text should be enough, if it were the only argument a critic could produce, to vindicate the assumption that the Law was connected with Moses in the same way as the Psalms are connected with David: not, that is, that they were necessarily the authors of every word, or even of any word, which we find in the books associated with their names, but that in the cases of each an actual man embodied a real influence, and expressed a principle

* Luke x. 27.

† John vii. 22.

accepted by the nation. This assumption would give space to all criticism.

In approaching the notion of the authorship of Moses through that of Solomon, we have, to a certain extent, broken away from the narrow literalism of its orthodox form. But if we would understand the view we reject, we should carry this process further, and confront the whole question of authorship as it is affected by the contrasts of ancient and modern, of eastern and western, and finally of Jewish and Gentile imagination.* If we could disengage ourselves from traditional ideas and bring an equally fresh attention to the Iliad and Genesis, we should, in turning from the one page to the other, feel ourselves breathing the same atmosphere, while the history and the criticisms of these books betray numerous and obvious analogies between them. Nevertheless, as the reader pursues this parallel into any detail, he discovers it to be applicable only to certain parts of the book of Genesis. Whether we accept the word Homer as the name of an individual, or take it in its etymological sense † as the description of a "combiner," who gathers and adapts similar fragments of poetry into a connected whole, in any case we must feel that what Homer symbolises is the work of a single creative impulse. It may

* "We are of opinion," says a writer of the present year (C. T. Cruttwell, "Literary History of Early Christianity"), in justifying some hesitating suggestions as to authorship, "that it is desirable to give, whenever possible, a human interest to every writing of antiquity, by connecting it with *some* writer's name." "When such a sentiment exists in the present critical age," adds a reviewer in the *Athenaeum*, "it is easy to see how early Christians delighted to attach to anonymous works the name of a famous apostle or martyr."

† A Homeric critic (F. G. Welcker) assigns to the name Homer the meaning of *arranger* or *distributor*. 'Ομηρέω, a word used in the "Odyssey," is to meet, to come together. The criticism on Homeric is in many ways curiously parallel to the criticism on the Pentateuch; it began later (starting with the great work of Wolf in 1795) and is still at an earlier stage.

be that we cannot assert the authorship of the two principal works ascribed to him, in the same strict sense that we assert "Paradise Lost" and "Paradise Regained" to originate with Milton, that between the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey" there may be such difference of authorship, for instance, as between the "Christabel" of Coleridge * and the "Lay of the Last Minstrel" of Scott. But if any one will read the two last-named poems consecutively, he will see that the opinion which should ascribe them to the same author would gather up a great part of the most important information we could give about them. The "Lay" owes its inspiration and its music to Coleridge; it is the second chord in that music of which "Christabel" had supplied the opening notes. The two poems belong to the same movement, ally themselves with the same set of ideas, insist on the same date. To assert that they emanate from the same author would be a blunder in a biographer of either Coleridge or Scott; in a historian of English literature belonging to the civilisation which is to succeed our own, it might be the nearest possible approach to a true description of the romantic movement of the beginning of our century. This kind of identity is almost all we mean by authorship, when we are dealing with productions separated from us by the interval of thousands of years.

If any critical telescope could reveal a double star, where the eyes of the student have discerned a single centre of radiance, in the authorship of the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey," this fact would be one of very great interest and importance for the historian of literature. But we cannot say that it would greatly help the student of Homer to read the two

* "The music of 'Christabel' had been fixed in his memory by the recitation of Sir John Stoddart a year or two before the publication of the 'Lay of the Last Minstrel.'"—Lockhart's "Life of Scott."

works associated with his name. They have differences which such a view would illustrate, they have no discrepancies which it is needed to explain. If it is only in this sense that we are invited to discriminate between the different writers in Genesis, the investigation, however important for antiquarians, would not change the aspect of the English Bible. But surely, whenever any one is willing to open his eyes to the existence of discrepancies in the writings which have been associated with the name of Moses, he must feel them as incompatible with a common movement of thought as with a single hand. To attempt any catalogue of these discrepancies would exceed the plan of a volume which aims at supplying hints for the student, not demonstration for the critic; but we will single out an instance which, because it is the most fundamental, is not, perhaps, the most obvious of these numerous inconsistencies. The relation between the Creator and the creature is not a subject on which we can imagine any writer on the Old Testament to have spoken at random. Let us set side by side two passages in the early chapters of Genesis containing different views of this relation, and inquire whether it is possible for any unprejudiced reader to ascribe them to the same author :

"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and the fowl of the air and over all the earth. . . . And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him; male and female created he them; and blessed them. And Adam lived a hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth."

Here we have an emphatic and reiterated statement that man was made in the image of God in the same sense that Seth was made in the image of Adam. In whatever degree,

therefore, a pious son will seek to resemble his father Adam might seek to resemble God. But now let us tear asunder our extract in order to insert the intervening portion, and ask ourselves how far it bears out the assertion from which it proceeds and to which it leads. In the interval between the first and second narrative of the text we have cited occurs the whole account of the Fall of Man. Let us take the central passage :

"And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. . . . And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil. . . . Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken."

It is impossible, surely, to ascribe these two passages to the same origin, in however vague or symbolic a sense we apply the idea. It would not be at all unnatural to conclude from a comparison of the two that one was written with a direct intention of criticising or correcting the other. What the one emphatically asserts, the other implicitly denies. These writers were apparently contrasted in their views and beliefs; at all events, they were different. When once we have detached them we find it impossible ever again to confuse them. In a different appellation for the Divine Being these two sources are labelled as separate documents for the least critical insight; and their authors are distinguished when they cannot be opposed. The discernment of so obvious a fact was not, to an earlier age, an action tainted with heresy. The distinctness of their work was pointed out more than 200 years ago by a Roman Catholic priest,*

* Richard Simon, born and died at Dieppe (1638-1712). His "Histoire Critique du Vieux Testament," was suppressed at the instigation of Bossuet, who seems, however, to have been much less hostile to the idea of a critical

who thus inaugurated Biblical criticism, not indeed without incurring much obloquy, but without encountering the storm of reprobation* which a brave Protestant bishop had to meet in our own day. We may perhaps note the contrast as exhibiting the advantages possessed by an infallible Church in dealing with an infallible book, a conclusion strengthened by the fact that the successor of Simon was his countryman and co-religionist. An eminent French physician† of the 18th century originated the nomenclature still used by which we separate the anonymous writers of the Pentateuch. Biblical criticism was born under the shadow of a liberal Romanism; it has been matured in the home of Protestantism; our own country, debarred from the honour of initial research, may claim and enjoy that of popularising, clarifying, and arranging the work begun by France and Germany, and of late has contributed much to its history. We do not here seek to pursue this work so as to follow out successively the territory rescued from the marshes of superstition and embanked within the domain of Science. Our aim is rather to detach from the analysis due to scholars and critics, that which concerns the interest of all for whom the Bible is in very truth "the

history than the reader would imagine. His preface has some excellent remarks on Protestant bibliolatry.

* He was expelled from his order, that of the "Oratory," but was allowed to retire to his curacy of Bolleville, in Normandy. Colenso would hardly have been equally favoured, had his opponents possessed equal power.

† Jean Astruc, 1684-1766. His work, "Conjectures sur les Mémoires Originaux dont il parait que Moïse s'est servi dans la composition de la Pentateuque," appeared in the middle of the eighteenth century (1753), when he was already 69 years of age, and had been physician to two kings, besides occupying a chair of anatomy. This book is generally considered the foundation of all Old Testament criticism. He wrote also a long series of medical works, which, in so far as they brought home to him a scientific standard of accuracy, must be considered a valuable preparation for that by which he is remembered.

Book." We would show that they who have delivered us from the material unity of so much paper and print have revealed to us the spiritual unity of a message. They have removed the impediments that have deadened the one Voice, speaking to England as it spoke to Israel, but speaking to Israel as the elect race of humanity, and through Israel to the world, in a sense in which it has not addressed any other race whatever among the sons of men.

CHAPTER III

THE FALSE UNITY

ALL history, we have said, should be read with a reference to its ideal goal, but even in that enclosure of the past where the ideal goal is unmistakable, this reference is not equally imperative. Rome, in its steady march towards the creation of a European unity ; Greece, in its rich contributions to the intellectual education of the human race, present obvious achievements to the eye of history, and hardly need the reminder that their achievements are vocations. But Hebrew history is unintelligible apart from a promise. Without the reflection of ideal aims its interest dwindles at every step. A people inhabiting a country about the size of Wales splits into hostile halves, one of which is blotted out of existence, while the other shrivels into a mere sect whose actual history may be included in footnotes to any record of the great empires of the world. We must take up the attitude of the Hebrews towards the future ; we must give a certain place to their anticipations as well as their memories, if we are even to remember, with any distinctness, the events that happened to them. It is a significant fact that their historical books are known in their own classification as "the earlier prophets." This is the proper Jewish title for the books of Kings and of Samuel. The history of the prophetic people is itself prophetic ; it looks to the future. It is a conscious growth, confronting an approaching maturity. To

ignore that ideal is to throw the whole history into confusion. You can no more study the history of Israel apart from what it was becoming, than you could describe the parts of a flower without reference to the seed.

“The strait and narrow way” is an expression that gathers up the whole meaning of the life of this people. It is true even in a geographic sense, the rocky path which leads from Egypt to Assyria is the promised land of the chosen people; between the two great empires of the ancient world they find their home. Chronology, as well as geography, echoes this description. As a member of the group of nations, visible on the stage of history to eyes looking for the external, their significance lasts but a moment. The condition of unity and empire, which was the subject of promise and of memory, existed only during a couple of reigns: before David and after Solomon their national existence is gathered up in a promise and a memory. Beyond that brief period we must interpret the spirit of their literature by the light of prophecy, or of that passionate national regret which melts into prophecy. Israel has been called to be the prophet among the nations, and life in the present, for the prophet, is necessarily hampered and compressed within brief limits. The father of the chosen people, promised a home in Palestine and gaining only a grave there,* is a true type of his race on the soil of the visible and the outward.

The recent decisions of criticism incorporate, as it were, this spirit of illusion and failure on the one hand, of far-reaching promise on the other, in the very structure of

* Compare the reference of Stephen in the Acts (vii. 5) with the account of the sale in Gen. xxiii., and note the elaborateness of the account (given with the vivid dramatic rendering of an Oriental bargain) relating to so small a property.

Hebrew literature. It is the conclusion of modern criticism, fortified by a practical unanimity among all who have qualified themselves to judge of its grounds, that the Hebrew projected his ideal goal on his shadowy past, and thought he remembered when he was in fact anticipating.* He imagined a past which was actually a future. When he described the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai he was throwing into a historic form his conviction that his Torah was a divine gift lying at the very root of the national existence. The conviction is his bequest to a world which could better spare any other national legacy. The historic rendering is a mixture of truth and error which criticism must divide. When the seer forgets his vocation he is a less instructive guide than an average narrator. The gaze that is focussed on the Eternal has no penetration when turned on the time-relations of events, and often brings to them the mere confusion of dazzled sight. That which belongs to the region of before and after must be always surrendered by the spirit of faith to the spirit of criticism; that which concerns the Eternal will first be distinct when the husk is sifted away.

To remember that Israel is the prophet among the nations is to combine all that is precious in the seemingly hostile views of tradition and of criticism; of the spirit which turns with reverence towards the past, and of that which looks with hope towards the future. If we keep a firm grasp on the conception of the prophetic vocation of the race, we can understand how the critical decision of our time has revealed, as the

* "What the new school of Pentateuch criticism undertakes to prove is that the Pentateuchal law grew up gradually from its Mosaic germ, and did not attain its present form till the Israelites were the captives of a foreign power."—Preface of Robertson Smith to his translation of Wellhausen's "History of Israel," 1885. This work is used here in almost every page.

autumnal product of a national literature, what had hitherto been taken for its vernal blossoming. We can thus, without bewilderment, exchange the conceptions of first and last. In a certain sense the distinction of first and last loses its importance. A history which depends for all its value on the revelation of the Unseen is comparatively indifferent to chronology. A parable has no date. The Hebrew expression of time, we are told, is imperfect and obscure as compared with the rich definiteness of the Aryan verb.* No fact is more full of suggestion for a true apprehension of the Hebrew genius. The seer stammers when he seeks to define between *is* and *shall be*; he often blunders when he seeks to define between *shall be* and *was*. His history is a part of his prophecy. He is not conscious of fiction in explaining his vivid consciousness of a national tendency as an event in the past for which no evidence can be produced, except the very vividness of this consciousness and its resemblance to a memory.

The belief, at first so repugnant to our traditional notions, that the spirit of the Exile breathes in the Pentateuch, gives a clue to all in it that is aspiring and lofty, as well as to all in it that is narrow and poor. The deported Jew on the banks of the Euphrates was nearer to Moses on the banks of the Nile than his ancestor at Jerusalem was. The yearning for the promised land, which breathes through the narrative of the Exodus and Joshua, records the feelings of the typical

* "Les langues Sémitiques sont peu précises, et ne disent les choses qu'à peu près. La conjugaison, qui se prête avec une merveilleuse flexibilité à peindre les relations extérieures des idées, est tout à fait incapable d'en exprimer les relations métaphysiques, faute de temps et de modes bien caractérisés. Par les formes diverses d'une même racine verbale l'hébreu pourra exprimer toutes ces nuances—être grand, se faire grand, rendre grand, déclarer grand, &c., et ne saura dire avec exactitude s'il s'agit du présent ou de l'avenir."—Renan, "Hist. Gen. des Langues Sémitiques," 4th ed., pp. 18, 19.

Jew more expressively than if it had been the utterance of the age it describes. That age was better understood in retrospect through the atmosphere of earthly failure than it ever could have been in its triumphant and hopeful youth. It is true that a hardening and narrowing process was going on side by side with this revelation; that the Scriptures which received their shape in the political blank of exile were everywhere marked by an attention to external ritual and priestly exclusiveness, and also by a hatred of the foreigner which were alike incompatible with their deepest lessons. But gleams of insight as to the true vocation of Israel shine through the Pentateuch in its actual condition as they never could have shone but for the experience of the editors. It needed the atmosphere of captivity to quicken the true spirit of Judaism. Those who were to be strangers and pilgrims* on the earth best understood their history as they reviewed and retouched it during a reluctant sojourn in a strange land.

The case for critical decision is very inadequately realised until we apprehend the weakness of traditional assumption. What, let us ask, is that unity which critics are undertaking to exchange for a plurality? Has the Hebrew Bible come down to us in a text guaranteed by immemorial integrity and accredited by venerable tradition? Let us delay for a moment on the answer to this preliminary question, that we may realise on what ground the opinion which critics are asking us to set aside has obtained its hold on the public mind.

The truth is, that there is no book known to all the world for the unity of which, so far as it is authenticated by external tests, we can speak with less confidence than in the case of

* The address, just referred to, of Abraham to the Hittites, "I am a stranger and a sojourner with you," was probably written at Babylon.

the Old Testament. We have not a single ancient manuscript of this ancient book. The earliest which has reached us (in a complete form) bears the date 1009 A.D.*; so that our oldest text is at least fourteen centuries younger than the latest events which it narrates,† and two and a half millenniums younger than the person who was till recently supposed to be the author of its most important portion. We must turn to other than textual grounds if we are to defend the authenticity of any portion, or the integrity of the whole. We possess a Greek translation of these Scriptures, which, if it had no other claim on our interest, would mark a new stage in literature as the first important attempt in the history of the world to give the thoughts of one race in the language of another, and in the lack of its Hebrew original we turn to this naturally as our earliest document.‡ It establishes the existence of a volume

* This is the date on a manuscript (Codex B) in the Imperial Library at St. Petersburg, but some doubt appears to attach to it. A Babylonian MS. of the year 916 A.D., containing only the prophetic books, is positively the oldest manuscript of the Old Testament the date of which can be ascertained with certainty. See the treatise mentioned above, Buhl's "Kanon und Text des alten Testament," pp. 87-89.

† *I.e.*, the second reform of Nehemiah, about 425 B.C.

‡ When we have described the so-called Septuagint as the first complete Greek version of the Old Testament, and added that it was made at Alexandria in the third century B.C. by writers varying greatly in competence for their task, we have given all our certain information about it. The Jews at Alexandria, as they forgot Hebrew, would of course need a Greek version, and it has been suggested that the "Seventy" may have been a Jerusalem council by the aid of which the work was set on foot. A legend, ascribing the work to the initiative of the second Ptolemy, who is said to have begged the High Priest to send a commission of learned Jews for this purpose to Alexandria, and to have received them with great honour, has in itself no improbability. Ptolemy Philadelphus was a patron of learning, he had just founded his celebrated library, and would of course welcome such an addition as the historical literature of the Jews, to whom he was consistently favourable. But the story has no evidence but a forgery (a letter from Aristees, a real officer of Ptolemy's court, who

substantially identical with the first portion of our English Bible, and its general reception among the Jews of Palestine and Egypt in the third century before our era; but when called upon to guarantee the accuracy of any detail it breaks down.* We can only say that the Jew of this date possessed a Bible in the sense that his records of inspired utterances were treasured with reverent care and rendered in the language of literature. But in any sense which would guarantee the volume translated as an authentic utterance of its supposed authors, and an exhaustive list of tested material which could receive no addition, we cannot adduce the Septuagint, and have no better witness.

For in truth there is no evidence before Christian times that the Jews either possessed or desired such a thing. There is some evidence to the contrary. In the time of Judas Maccabæus, although a hero led them who succeeded to the fame without the crimes of David, they still yearned for a teacher who should succeed to the influence of Isaiah or Jeremiah,† and anticipated the appearance of one whose utterances they might add to their list of the Prophets, as no Church has ever hoped to add to its list of apostolic

certainly did not write it), it is attended by improbable circumstances which by an instructive evolution afterwards became miraculous, and its origin may easily be accounted for apart from its truth.

* "For example, in Samuel there are considerable omissions; in Kings and Proverbs there are considerable additions; the prophecies of Jeremiah are arranged in a different order."—"Divine Library of Old Testament," p. 62 (1891, Prof. Kirkpatrick). Its readings sometimes give better sense than our version; *e.g.*, Jer. xi. 15, where the English rendering is unintelligible.

† When the Maccabeans pulled down the altar which had been defiled by Antiochus they put aside the stones "until there should come a prophet to show what should be done with them" (1 Macc. iv. 44-46); and somewhat later they accepted Judas's brother Simon only "till there should arise a faithful prophet" (ib. xiv. 41). The writer of the first book of Maccabees is accepted as a trustworthy witness in Jewish affairs, though very ignorant of others.

writers. In the time of our Lord, while the more important parts of the Old Testament were read in the synagogue, there is nowhere any sign that they constituted a Bible in the sense that a wall of special reverence shut them off from any possible successor, or that all the writings which were ultimately enclosed had already been accepted as sacred. From His own words* we should certainly imagine that a tradition rather than a book formed the object of superstitious reverence. Israel had a Bible only in the sense that England has a classical literature. The position of Shakespeare and Milton at the centre of this group of classics is not more assured than that of the "Thorah" at the centre of their group of inspired writings; the position of Ecclesiastes and Esther on the circumference is not more doubtful than that of many a claimant for fame which one generation accepts and another rejects; the possibility of a new prophet stood in Palestine on the same level as the possibility of a new poet in England. If, for instance, those prayers which, we are told, John the Baptist taught his disciples † had been committed to writing, the Jew might have added them to his scriptures, as we should add a new hymn to our hymn-books. The idea of a closed canon, which converts Scripture from "the books" to "the Bible" is ecclesiastical, not Jewish.

The very title by which we name the volume of which the

* See Matt. xv. 1-9; Mark vii. 1-13. A definite commandment could, it appears, be overshadowed by the claims of the Temple service under the influence of the unwritten tradition. No text could be cited from the Old Testament by which it could have been supported.

† "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples" (Luke xi. 1). It was in answer to this, according to the third Evangelist, that our Lord gave His disciples the prayer which according to the first was included in the Sermon on the Mount. John must evidently therefore also have given his disciples some such prayer.

Hebrew records are but a portion, contains for an intelligent ear a refutation of the view which ascribes to it in any external sense an absolute unity. "The Bible" is the Greek term for "the books" declined as if it meant "the book"; the Greek plural becoming, in the monkish Latin of the Middle Ages, a singular in defiance of grammar.* We can imagine a similar distortion of meaning if we suppose a person imperfectly acquainted with English, but aware that the English plural ended in the letter *s*, to treat the word "children" as a mere variant of "child." Every time we mention "the Bible" we commemorate an analogous mistake, every time we treat it as a single book we repeat that mistake. The most careless reader is aware that all references to the Old Testament in the New imply a literature, not a volume. We have sometimes the name of a single writer, sometimes the mere description of the Scriptures, sometimes a reference to the Law, the Prophets, or the book of Psalms. In no case have we any mention of a Bible. That word occurs first when the Christian Scriptures had been added to the Hebrew, and formed the more familiar portion of the volume which contained both. A language was no longer the distinctive bond of the Scriptures; they ceased to be a literature and became a book. The history of the word is an accurate reflection of the history of the thing. It is the history of a plural wrongly treated as a singular—a false unity, hiding from Jewish and Christian eyes the true unity to which it holds the clue.

It must be considered a loss to the English reader that the English Bible has discarded that threefold arrangement of the Jewish Scriptures† used by the Jews from their first

* See Reuss in Schenkel's *Bibel-Lexicon*, I. 435.

† Es würde unstreitig einen nicht geringen Fortschritt bezeichnen, wenn

that the process must have been completed some twenty or thirty years before Ben-Sira wrote, and we may take the year 200 B.C. as the very latest to which we can allow the fixation of this second canon to fall. Its mode of promulgation is equally uncertain; whether the library said in the (spurious) epistle from the Palestinian to the Egyptian Jews to have been founded by Nehemiah was an inchoate Canon,* is a matter of interesting but inconclusive conjecture; from a forgery we can infer no more than a possibility. But the doubtfulness attaching to this second portion of the Hebrew Scriptures does not preclude substantial certainty as to its contents; the only prophet as to the place of whom there is any doubt, Daniel, is not included within the Nebiim, though he is quoted as a prophet by our Lord.†

When we turn from the second to the third division of the Hebrew Scriptures, the Kethubim,‡ we add uncertainty as to a limit to uncertainty as to a date. The great-grandson of Sira makes no attempt to enumerate these other writings, and in his mode of citation would even suggest to us that this group of writings so little belonged to any sacred enclosure that any learned and judicious Jew might hope to add to them. While this third canon was thus conceivably incomplete, it must also be regarded as conceivably superfluous. "Ecclesiastes, the Song of Songs, Esther and Chronicles,"§ says Professor Ryle, "constitute what we may

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Perhaps we may, in an important sense, call the Old Testament the child of the New. The superstitious reverence with which Christian zeal has encrusted its scriptures had no parallel in the older form of Jewish religion. There came a time† when this superstition took an extreme form on Jewish soil, when the mistakes and erasures of a manuscript were carefully copied by a transcriber, and when idolatry of a book was carried to an excess not reached even in Protestant England. But this point had not been reached when the first germ of our New Testament appeared, and perhaps it is not too much to suggest that a connection of cause and

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possession of Scriptures to the present day, which we could not have adopted without realising the heterogeneous character of the Hebrew literature. The "Law and the Prophets" (titles familiar from New Testament citation) are the first two members of a threefold division, which in spite of a certain inversion of chronology in the case of these two groups, does set us on the track of the true growth of the Scriptures. The Torah, our Pentateuch, though as a completed whole later by some centuries than the books which follow it, yet contains the oldest portions of the Bible; and excels its successors as much in definiteness as in traditional sanctity. We can date its publication to a single year (444 B.C.), when the priest Ezra and the governor Nehemiah introduced it* to the assemblage of the returned exiles, and gave them a Bible as a companion to their restored Temple.

man die ursprüngliche Ordnung und Einteilung in die Bibelübersetzungen wieder einföhrte (Buhl. p. 74). This order is as follows:

- A. Torah = Law, our Pentateuch.
- B. Nebiim = Prophets, *i.e.*,
 1. Earlier Prophets Joshua to II. Kings.
 2. Later Prophets Isaiah to Malachi (excluding Daniel).

I.e., prophets as we understand the word.
- C. Kethubim = writings, *i.e.*, all other writings in our Old Testament (including Daniel). Five books, viz., "Song of Songs," "Ruth," "Lamentations," "Ecclesiastes," "Esther," were named collectively Megilloth = rolls, each being written on a separate roll, for convenience in the Temple service. This is an entirely heterogeneous collection, and should be regarded as a link with the Apocrypha.

* Ezra came from Babylon fourteen years earlier, in 458 B.C., but waited, apparently, for the arrival of Nehemiah as governor, in order to produce the Pentateuch and book of Joshua. These fourteen years were probably occupied in the preparation among the little colony re-settled in Jerusalem, for the publication of this complete body of the Law.—Wellhausen, pp. 495 and 496.

The Thorah, for the Jew, was always the Bible within the Bible, so much so that (as we see from citations in the Evangelist) it was sometimes named as a conventional title for the whole Hebrew Scriptures. We are more particular about titles than the Jews were, but may to some extent find a parallel for this usage in our analogous application of "the Gospel" to the whole Christian Scriptures. In either case a particular portion gives the whole its spirit as well as its name.

When we once quit the Thorah, all our information is vague. Our earliest mention of both the other divisions is in the apocryphal book known to the English reader as "Ecclesiasticus,"* being the Greek translation of the Wisdom of Jesus, the son of Sira, the date of which is itself not absolutely certain, but which falls at the latest within the last half of the second century before Christ, when the persecution of Antiochus, B.C. 168, had finally stamped with a sacred character the writings embodying the faith for which the heroic Maccabæans had taught their countrymen to conquer and die. How much earlier the Nebiim became what we should call canonical is not clear. It is at any rate certain

* This work, written in Palestine and in Hebrew, was translated into Greek by the grandson and namesake of the writer, and the preface which he appended to his translation is a main authority in all discussions on the date of the Hebrew Scriptures. He there alludes three times to the Law, the Prophets, and τὰ λοιπὰ τῶν βιβλίων, in a manner which shows that he is speaking of our Old Testament, but different views are taken of the bearing of this last phrase on the rise of the Canon. "The rest of the writings" may be taken to mean, "the other books in a particular collection sifted out as sacred," though it is more natural to take it as a mere "etcetera." This younger Jesus says that his grandfather (a person of whom we only know through this mention) after much study of the "Law, the Prophets, and the other books of our fathers," προήχθη καὶ αὐτὸς συγγράψαι τι τῶν εἰς παιδείαν καὶ σοφίαν ἀνηχόντων, and it would seem impossible to interpret these words otherwise than as implying that the elder writer hoped his essay might take its place beside the Psalms and the Proverbs.

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effect may be traced between the two things. When the Jews endeavoured to fix the list of their sacred writings they were driven to strange and cumbrous formulæ to supply the meaning of the term. The discussion, just referred to, which took place among the Jews at the close of the first Christian century, as to the canonicity of the books of Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon, ended in a decision that these books (against which a strong antagonism had been felt) "pollute the hands." That is, the reader at first supposes, they are *not* to be regarded as inspired Scripture. Quite the reverse; this is the Jewish equivalent for our expression "canonical." Sacred books, in order that they might be secure from careless and irreverent handling, could never be touched without a need of ceremonial purification. It would seem that the Israelite was to be fenced off from his Scriptures, as from the Temple which he had lost, by a platform of equally scrupulous reverence. This strange tribute to the sacredness of the books for which Rabbinical reverence, as Eve with the tree of knowledge of good and evil, supplied an imaginary prohibition,* may bring home to our minds the alien character and late date of a distinction which seems to have originated in Christian times, and which only a Christian dialect can simply name.†

* Gen. iii. 3: "Of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, *neither shall ye touch it*, lest ye die." Few readers note the preparation made for disobeying a command in this exaggeration of it.

† "The first Christians relied on the Old Testament as their chief religious book. To them it was of divine origin and authority." (S. Davidson, art. on *Canon* in the last edition of the "Encyclopedia Metropolitana"). We have seen that it was a little later than the time when Christianity began to exist that the Jewish Canon was formed. It is not meant, of course, that Christian would intensify Jewish reverence for the Hebrew Scriptures, but that the fact of their own sacred book appearing in a new character, and with a continuation they rejected, would cause it to be defined with a new attempt at accuracy.

The Hebrew Bible may be regarded as complete at the close of the first century A.D. Its origin, we have seen, must be dated seven or eight centuries earlier, at a time when the nation already drew near its decline. The Hebrew monarchy in its early splendour knew nothing of any germ of a Bible. Those who pressed for the first time into the courts, which, under the workmanship of Tyrian builders and the direction of Solomon, had given Jerusalem a different aspect, knew some parts of Genesis as we know the ballad of Chevy Chase; the story of Exodus was to them what fragments of British history before the Conquest are to us, "familiar to the most ignorant and obscure to the most learned;"* but of that photographic definiteness which would enable a well-taught Sunday-school pupil to rattle off the stations of Israel in the desert, they had no conception. They had not a single prophecy; it is much doubted by those best able to judge whether they had a single psalm. We must press downwards through the divided monarchy, and watch the fall of the northern kingdom before we can positively assert that the most learned and pious Hebrew held in his hands any portion of what a modern Jew calls his Scriptures. The discovery of the "Book of the Law"† in the reign of King Josiah first gave the bulk of Deuteronomy what we should call a canonical position, but it was not till nearly two centuries later, after the people who had quitted Palestine a nation returned to it a sect, that this first accepted fragment of Scripture was expanded by the incorporation of all fragments of early literature—song, precept, or proverb—

* Gibbon, "History of Rome."

† In B.C. 621. This is the portion of Deuteronomy contained within the chapters v.-xxviii. (omitting xxvii.). "C'est le vrai noyau de la législation dit mosaïque," says M. Reuss, to whose noble edition of the Old Testament embodying and illustrating the results of criticism which he also largely originated, any value in the present work is mainly owing.

into the Pentateuch as a whole. The political existence of Israel had entered on its last phase before this most important division of its sacred literature received official sanction as inspired writings ; and before the latest decision as to the limit of these inspired writings, this political life had been long at an end.

The idea of a Canon of Scripture must in the nature of the case be one that arises late in the history of a religion. To pronounce the words "a Bible" is to declare that a certain phase of truth has entered on a merely retrospective stage, that something which was once living must be regarded as dead. As implying a confession that nothing more is to be expected from the same source, it corresponds to the opening of a will. The belief in inspiration, while Palestine contained a *nation*, was a belief in a living voice, audible in a special sense to the sacred caste, but designed for the ear of all its members. The decay of the living unit prepared the rise of the dead unit ; as the nation perished, the Bible arose. But the object in which the Jew first saw a mystic unity, tending at once to symbolise and to obscure the true unity of the Unseen, was rather a holy place than a holy book. While the Temple was standing he possessed a religious centre which precluded the need of any other ; its fall was an occasion for the emergence of his Scriptures as a symbol of Jewish unity. And when the Holy Place had long been a dim tradition, the Holy Book having succeeded to the reverence and superstition it had inspired, the Jew, in the affliction of the Middle Ages,* sought to combine the two symbols of national unity in a fanciful analogy which, inasmuch as it represents an actual historic evolution, and gathers up many facts bringing out both the temptations and the strength of the race, may yet be accepted as a subject of rational attention.

* See p. 34.

The three divisions of the Jewish Temple—the Holy of Holies, the Holy Place, and the Outer Court—were thus compared respectively to the three divisions of the Jewish Bible, the Torah, the Nebiim, and the Kethubim. The book of the Law, our Pentateuch—the casket which enshrined that holy command in adhesion to which Israel still felt itself a member of an alliance, binding the human to the divine—this book was, by hardly a metaphor, compared to that inner inclosure of the Temple, containing only the Ark which enclosed the tables of the Law, known as the Holy of Holies, and only entered once a year by the high priest. The Torah was the Bible in the same sense as the innermost sanctuary was the Temple. The subsequent collection of the prophetic and historic writings, the Nebiim, took a secondary position, analogous to that of the Holy Place which contained the golden candlesticks and the shewbread, and was accessible to the tread only of the priest. And then again the third division—that which contained all the books not possible to class as either legal or prophetic, and which we may conveniently remember as a residuary legatee to the other two divisions, for it was not a division at all in the same sense as they were, was compared to that outer court which was even open to the Gentiles. The modern reader may both accept and complete this comparison. As the Holy City lay beyond the enclosure of the Temple, so did the sacred literature of Israel extend beyond the enclosure of its Bible. The gradual descent from the summit of inspiration enclosed within the Bible itself, is also carried on beyond the limits of the Bible, as they are known to Protestants and to the modern Jew. The Romish Church includes the Apocrypha within the Canon of Scripture, and the fact that of the two divisions of Christendom one collects in its Bible the whole remaining literature of Israel, and one selects from it,

shows that the principle of selection was a question of degree.

The Holy Book, in inheriting much of that reverence for the Holy Place which we must deem idolatrous, thus gained also a type of graduated claim in which we may discover a warning against some of the dangers of idolatry. The scale itself, indeed, is one that can be accepted neither by Christian feeling nor critical judgment. The first can as little enshrine Leviticus in the Holy of Holies while it relegates Isaiah and the Psalms to an inferior position, as the last can accord suggestions of primeval antiquity to the compositions of the Exile. Nevertheless the comparison is one full of instruction. The Pentateuch not only symbolises, but *is* the Ark containing the Law. It enshrines all that was most sacred in the Hebrew Scriptures in the eye of a Hebrew. It is the attestation of a meeting between Jehovah and His people, whereby the elect race is sealed to its vocation ; it may be sifted of idolatrous accretion, but must still remain the record of that covenant to which the Prophetic writings owe all their significance. The writings contained neither in the Pentateuch nor the Prophets, moreover, represent to us as well as to the Jew the court of the Gentiles. The book which contains the Psalms holds our best access to that record of Jewish worship which must always remain an object of profound interest and reverence to Christian faith. The "Wisdom" writings of the Old Testament form a link with Gentile literature from another point of view ; the name by which they have been designated—the Humanism of the Old Testament*—is of itself enough to show the appropriateness of a simile which from a Jewish

* See the interesting work by Dr. Cheyne on Job and Solomon. The word *Israel*, he reminds us (p. 119), does not occur in the book of Proverbs ; that of *man* is found thirty-three times.

point of view excludes them from the most sacred enclosure. In its fundamental conception the Jewish point of view is seen to share in that prophetic character profoundly characteristic of Israel. It was truer than those who originated it knew.

But had this Jewish division of the Sacred Scriptures been less inherently valuable than it is, the mere fact of their being subject to *any* graduated arrangement would be a great gain. To recognise a *Bible within the Bible* is to possess a safeguard against mechanical theories of inspiration. If there be a deep cleft within the book itself the boundary enclosing it loses something of its importance. It becomes impossible to establish any absolute division between what is included and what is excluded. If, on the one hand, we have a Bible within the Bible, and on the other a sacred literature which approaches very closely to the Bible, there can be no division between what the Bible accepts and what it excludes, except that of degree, and degree existing within the Bible itself, we may say that the only idea involved in its existence is that of a centre of supreme inspiration, fading at the circumference, and only distinguished from a lesser grade of inspired wisdom as dawn from twilight. The absolute division comes in between inspiration everywhere and that interruption, due to human zeal, prejudice, or fancy, by which, in varying proportions, it is everywhere diluted. We find that interruption not only within the Bible, but within every part of the Bible. Our light is extinguished in the middle of a page, in the middle of a sentence. The voice of the Lord is not in the earthquake or the thunder, but in the still small voice.* Does one in a thousand of those who recall that description as a clue to their deepest experience remember the actual message which is attributed to that voice? It is better to

* 1 Kings xix.; compare vv. 12 and 15, and 2 Kings viii. 8-15.

forget it than to attribute it to the divine utterance, but it would be best to remember it as a warning that the ear which distinguishes that utterance most clearly may lose it utterly, and merge in the vehemence of personal or party feeling the overwhelming claim of the voice of God.

No truth of wider range has been expressed by our great poet than the pregnant warning :

Take but degree away, untune that string,
And hark what discord follows, each string meets
In mere oppugnancy.*

Protestant Christendom has "taken degree away" from its idea of inspiration, and has, in consequence, lost the clue to the meaning of inspiration. It may learn of Judaism to recognise that idea of degree which brings inspiration from the realm of magic into that of spiritual dynamics. "The divine Light," says the Cabbala, "never descends unclothed."† So far as the garment is the veil of the light this doctrine admitted a single exception. Those images, which in lower forms of inspiration give at once vividness and illusion to their central teaching, were wholly absent from the vision of Moses. With the somewhat misleading definiteness, perhaps resulting from that sense of measure and proportion which fitted his race to become distinguished in monetary transactions, a Jew of the Renaissance ‡ mapped out four grades of inspiration, the highest, or "Gradus Mosaicus," being marked by a complete disappearance of the faculty which represents

* Shakespeare: "Troilus and Cressida."

† "Lumen supernum nunquam descendit sine indumento": quoted in the "Discourse of Prophecy" of John Smith, a learned and liberal divine who died in 1652, aged only 36. It is an interesting specimen of the learned seventeenth century theology, of which Jeremy Taylor is the best known example. The references to Jewish literature in this paragraph are derived from it. The Cabbala is a repertory of Jewish theosophy.

‡ Rabbi Joseph Albo, in a work composed, with a polemic aim, against Christianity, early in the fifteenth century.

to the eye the objects of pure thought ; the lower degrees proceeding towards a complete predominance of this faculty, so that "the enthusiasms spread themselves extremely in parables, similitudes, and allegories, in a dark and obscure manner." The inferior nature (in Jewish belief) of all such forms of inspiration is curiously illustrated by the complaint of Ezekiel, so difficult for one with Christian associations to appreciate, "Ah, Lord, they say of me, 'Doth he not speak parables?'"* as though this were a reproach. It is difficult for those who have been brought up with Christian associations to accept a scale which relegates to a lower level the method of the Parables ; yet a distrust of metaphor in dealing with spiritual realities is a feeling justified by all but its highest exercise, and even there exhibited, at times, as a concession to human weakness and infirmity. It was to the multitudes that Christ spoke "not without a parable." "As there is no corn without straw," say the Gemarist Doctors,† "so there is no dream without something that is void of reality and insignificant"—a warning illustrated not only by the varying inspiration of the Hebrew race, but also by the varying inspiration of almost every individual Hebrew. We may look for the "Mosaic grade" in the humblest countryman of Moses, and find in the utterance of the great prophet himself words that bear the stamp of feebleness and illusion.

* Ezekiel xx. 49.

† The Gemara, like all words significant of the Jewish law, is a symbol for instruction. It is the later portion of that great encyclopedia, the product of Jewish thought during a thousand years, which we know as the Talmud. The first part, the Mischna, was complete in the third century after Christ ; the Gemara is its explanation and illustration.

CHAPTER IV.

THE JEHOVIST AND THE FALL OF MAN.

IF the confusion which results from the amalgamation of the writings of different authors is not at once evident to every reader of the Old Testament, it is because the superstitious way in which the volume has been used has impressed upon us the notion that a large part of its contents was not intended to mean anything in particular. Even so, however, some of its repetitions have been impossible to ignore. Almost every one of Christian breeding, and a certain age, has listened to attempted explanations of the fact that Genesis contains incompatible accounts of an event which cannot have happened twice in the world's history, and the endeavour to explain away the inconsistencies in the two narratives of the Creation, entangling the study of the Bible on its very first page with distinctions where there is no difference, and identification where there is no similarity, has laid on its threshold that stumbling-block which has made its intelligent apprehension almost impossible. Our attention, spent on a jumble of inconsistencies, and then on a series of repetitions, is fatally blunted for any real power of apprehension; we have come to suppose a coherent narrative the appropriate form only for secular history. It is the newer criticism which has delivered us from the notion that a large part of sacred history should be meaningless.

The problem for the Biblical critic has been happily

described as an endeavour to restore the Gospels of the Old Testament.* Where an ancient editor has amalgamated all notices of a common hero, the modern student seeks to restore to two or three narrators their individual record, so as to reconstruct a series of accounts analogous to those of our Evangelists, from a jumble which we may compare to that of some imaginary harmony in which the separate headings had been lost, and the doublets thus read successively. The present stage of the work of criticism may be represented by supposing the analysis of such a harmony to have restored the text of St. John on the one hand, and left the Synoptics in their confused combination. The hopelessness of ever dividing the text of St. Matthew from that of St. Mark or St. Luke, if they had once become mixed, might represent the difficulty of analysing into its constituents what we are now taught to call the "Prophetic History."† But a certain analysis of the Pentateuch can be made without doubt or difficulty; intertwined with this Prophetic history we perceive a differently coloured thread in the strand, and its withdrawal is a simple matter. The narrative which it distinguishes, known as the Priestly History, is about four centuries younger than that with which it has been mixed up, and when it has been set on one side we have attained a natural starting point in the study of the Bible. The Prophetic history is the first attempt at the History of Israel. It embodies the earliest fragments of Hebrew literature and also expresses the ideas of a typical Hebrew on the dawn of his race.

* Hupfield, "Quellen der Genesis."

† The word is used conventionally to describe the combined work of at least two writers and more than one editor; it both suggests the probable origin of the history and represents a real antithesis to the spirit of the priestly history. It brings in, we must confess, somewhat misleading associations; in the ordinary sense there is nothing prophetic in the history, but in the deepest sense there is much.

By the labours of recent critics we are thus enabled to disentangle this earliest history from that later narrative which, as equally connected with an account of the origin of things, an early editor has endeavoured to compile with it into a single whole, although it was evidently written from a different point of view, and sometimes it might seem, even with a conscious intention of protest. This Prophetic history is itself a composite work, and when we reach the later chapters of Genesis we must distinguish between its main author and another whom critics believe themselves able, to a certain extent, to distinguish within it. In the earlier chapters, however, they detect the work of only one, and our study is simplified by starting with that portion of the Hebrew Scriptures which is the work of one known to us only through the modern critical appellation of the Jehovist. Nothing is known of the life and circumstances of this writer, not even with any certainty, when and where he lived. It is interesting to note that his probable date—the ninth century B.C.—corresponds with that which Herodotus assigns to Homer.* But the Jehovist has even less individuality of his own than Homer has; there is not a single mention in the Scriptures which we can attach to him ever so vaguely. He is but a voice, and in Hebrew utterance a single voice is always tending to pass into a chorus. The vagueness which M. Renan has noted in the Hebrew distinction of time may be equally discerned in the cognate distinction of number; whether it is *he* or *they* should never be absolutely fixed as a definite limit to our imagination. The Prophetic history is best remembered as emanating from “the schools of the prophets”; it breathes the spirit of a brotherhood.

* Her. ii. 53, Ησίοδον γὰρ καὶ Ὅμηρον ἡλικίην τετρακοσίοισι ἔτεσι δοκέω μὲν πρεσβυτέρους γενέσθαι καὶ οὐ πλείους. So evidently most authorities fixed it earlier.

The title of its main author is not more vague than that by which we must designate all the writers of the Pentateuch. In no case can we cite any one of them by the name by which he was known to his contemporaries. We know him only by that which is the invention of modern critics. There is, as we have said, some doubt whether something similar to this may not be also true of the great name which we have so often to use in comparison with the authors of Genesis. But there is the greatest possible difference in the effect of this common ambiguity. The doubt whether Homer be a proper name or a description must be admitted with regret by all admirers of the Iliad, as a barrier to sympathies which seek a personal object. The certainty that "the Jehovist" is a title invented by scholars may be noted with satisfaction, as an index to the right point of view for attention which is attracted by a national vocation. A definite individuality, buttressed by the claim of competing cities as a birthplace, and associated with other events than the narration of a history, would tend to veil from us that personality of the ideal Israel which we should regard as the true author of all in the Bible that claims our deepest attention. None come nearer to this ideal author than the Jehovist; he gathers up all in the early history of Israel that is fresh, vivid, and pregnant with typical significance. We know him, in a certain sense, as we know St. Paul. Across the interval of centuries their music blends, their voices often unite. From the early dawn and the late twilight of Israel's day they meet in a common aspiration towards the starlight. But when we look more closely the one figure emerges into distinctness; we make out the scarred, seamed countenance; the pallid features become almost distinct to us. When we look more closely at the other it disappears, leaving only a voice. A critic* who describes the Jehovist as the St. Paul

* Alexandre Westphal, "Sources du Pentateuque."

of the Old Testament gives us the true clue to his message to humanity. The singer of early legend, the painter of traditional character is also, and even more emphatically, a preacher of the great truth, that only in its dependence on what is above itself can humanity attain independence of what is below itself. He sets forth, with not less emphasis than St. Paul, the all-absorbing character of the duty of Faith.

What do we mean by Faith? From the standpoint of the logical intellect there is no other definition than "belief without evidence." Faith, from such a point of view, is *Aberglaube*,* the belief that remains unaccounted for after the legitimate sources of belief have been catalogued. To the logical man of the world, as to the mere man of science, faith is the faculty of delusion. "We are saved in this world by our want of faith" is a saying no less wise than witty; if it be not absolutely true for any one, it is because no one belongs exclusively to the world of mere *things*, and human, as much as divine relation, reposes on Faith. As far as all our bonds with *the outward* are concerned, the only scope for faith lies in that ascription to the outward world of a permanent order, which assumes that what is true of its succession yesterday will be true to-morrow. Perhaps we hardly realise how much faith is involved in this anticipation. Yet, on the whole, it is true that what we call *doubt* is the impelling force in our knowledge of the external, in our safety on the domain of the positive, the unquestionable. Those who have dwelt wholly within this world, or as nearly within it as human nature leaves possible, must reckon as mere delusion that which is the foundation of the message of Israel—the belief that humanity is complete

* *Aberglaube* is sometimes written *Ueberglaube*. "Der Glaube," says Rückert, "ist gleich entfernt vom Ueberglauben und Unglauben."

only in its consciousness of incompleteness, that its strength lies in confessed weakness, its integrity in confessed halfness; that as the one half of humanity only attains its true position in finding its bond with the other half, so the whole of humanity only attains its true position in discovering its bond with the divine.

This is the message of the Jehovist. The progress which he follows is that of a race summoned to trust its creator and guide, and owing all its disaster to the fact that it continually fails in this vocation. Its heroes are not the superiors of other men in being endowed with nobler qualities and agents in more distinguished actions than other men. They are marked for their place in the world's history, not by their richer completeness, but by their more conscious incompleteness. On the human side they are no braver or wiser than other men; they are, indeed, much less brave than their kindred among other nations. But they show us the true human attitude in relation to what is above humanity. They recognise that man is the fragment of a world only partially revealed to him, and discern that his first duty is a response to the inward voice calling upon him to abjure an imaginary independence which hides his true possibilities of achievement, and leaves him in darkness on the edge of a precipice.

In those words we sum up the great law of the spiritual world. But the claim on behalf of the Jehovist to be its prophet would be confuted by almost any quotation from his work, if it were understood to imply an ascription of a purely spiritual character to the being in whom trust is invited. His God is made in the image of man. He "walks in the garden in the cool of the day;"* he repents that he has called into existence a race incurably divergent

* Gen. iii. 8.

from his ideal ;* he aims at destroying them, and then illogically arranges for their perpetuation.† He is a weak, impetuous, changeable monarch, less like what we mean by God than many an imperfect man. Nevertheless the Jehovist joins in the message of St. Paul, that man is "set right by trust." Anthropomorphism does not oppose, at an early stage it may encourage, that lesson. Confused and erring human nature sometimes gives its trust more readily to a brother than to a father. The love of a brother is not as trustworthy as the love of a father, but it is more intelligible. The endeavour to impart a share in divine perfection—one that we still of necessity state in anthropomorphic and misleading language—is in the dawn of thought, conceived as a sympathy with and share in human imperfection. It may be that only in the fancy of a God made in the image of man can the infant race approach the truth that man is formed in the image of God. To discern in their inversion the remote heights of truth would appear the appointed preparation for a vision which shall reveal their actual forms ; the premature endeavour to lift the gazer's eyes from the reflection to the reality gives, instead of the inverted image, not the reality but a mere dazzle. He who would lead the downward glance above these blurred and fleeting, yet revealing images, should desire first that all they convey of the realities which they invert and obscure should be fully and lovingly known.

The Jehovist is so termed from his use of that appellation for the Divine Being which, consisting originally of only four Hebrew consonants, we have hitherto, it is said, known under an incorrect vowel formation, and which critics would now naturalise among us as Jahveh. The substitution of an unfamiliar form for one consecrated by supposed ages of rever-

* Gen. vi. 5-7.

† vi. 13-21.

ence* seems, at first sight, a needless disturbance of sacred associations. A name kept unspoken for many generations is necessarily somewhat uncertain; and the gain of a less inaccurate pronunciation would of itself hardly outweigh the inheritance of a devout tradition and the unity of reminiscence from generation to generation. This is the first impression of the reader on meeting the unfamiliar Jahveh; but as he ponders over the work of criticism, and returns to the familiar page under its guidance, he is led to confess that for a new conception a new name is needed. Names, though they do not alter things, have a wonderful power in veiling or revealing the meaning of things; and the association of a name with a spirit is imprinted on the Bible almost from its first to its last page. "Thy name shall no more be called Jacob, but Israel shall thy name be called," is a response to the insistence, "I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me," and surely symbolises some aspect of the blessing sought. The new Jahveh in place of the old Jehovah cannot in like manner express a change in a character; but a purified vision in him who beholds it equally needs some symbol. While we peruse or pronounce the unfamiliar

* In fact, however, only during the last three centuries. The reader will learn with surprise that the name Jehovah was first introduced by a confessor of Pope Leo X. That which it aimed at reproducing, and which in our Bibles is always replaced by "the Lord," was, according to Jewish tradition, too holy for lay utterance. Its employment was supposed to be forbidden by Leviticus xxiv. 16. "And he that blasphemeth the name of the Lord shall be put to death," the word which we translate "blaspheme" being taken by the Rabbis to mean simply "name" and being so translated in the Septuagint. This view is a characteristic development of the morbid ideal of holiness which grew up in the Exile. The meaning and etymology of the name seems doubtful; Ex. iii. 14 is supposed to give its etymology, and the Hebrew for "I am" is very like Jahveh. On this hypothesis the word would express absolute, underrived existence, as opposed to the contingent existence of every creature. Schrader, in Schenkel's lexicon (of whose article this note is an abstract), takes it to mean the Giver of Life.

name, we remind ourselves that we are returning to the conceptions of God held by a wild, fierce, superstitious people, who had an ear for the voice of the Eternal, but mixed the lessons of inspiration with the prejudices of bigotry and the impulses of crime; and in preparing ourselves for that admixture we prepare ourselves also to "take forth the precious from the vile."

The new name at least releases us from the bondage of old associations. We need no longer ascribe to the Father in heaven feelings which an earthly father would remember with remorse; and, on the other hand, we are set free to recognise that the Hebrew faith, so dim and distorted in its origin, became in the process of ages a true revelation of the Father in heaven. The love which enfolds humanity shows itself to the chosen race, we must confess, as a partial and exclusive affection for itself, shadowed by hatred and injustice to its foes. The justice which can endure to inflict pain, if it be the medicine of sin, took to the authors of the Pentateuch the aspect of vengeance, exacting a cruel penalty with a fierce satisfaction; the claim which enforces purity on passion, and condemns the feelings which spring from what is deepest in humanity if they flow in wrong channels, appeared to them as a poor and petty jealousy, grudging every expression of reverence to anything beyond the self. But these misunderstandings are also common in human relations, which do yet reveal to us real virtues. Justice is almost always called cruel by some one, but we do not therefore admit that human justice does not exist. We see human virtue as a ray of sunlight struggling through and tinged by the mists and smoke of earth, but we do not therefore doubt its reality, or suppose the question to lie between a justification of the aspect which a particular character has taken to narrow and prejudiced minds and a

condemnation of that character itself. Why should it be otherwise with the character revealed to us in the Pentateuch? Perhaps the change of the name by which we have known that character may enable us to answer that question. The Christian may, in all reverence, speak of the God of Israel, as He is supposed to have addressed Israel. "His name shall no more be called Jehovah, but Jahveh shall his name be called," may be repeated as a similar milestone on the path of religious progress, symbolising the purified vision of the divine. We may well accept with a new conception of the message of Israel, a new name for that imperfect conception of the divine ruler which shrouded and coloured the awful thought of God.

In the God of the Jehovist we have a supernatural being differing from man only in power; his emotions, his weaknesses, are all human. In contrast to the account of creation contained in the other narrative, we seem called upon to follow, not (as there) the fiat of omnipotence, but the struggle of genius, and the incompleteness of mortal achievement. The Creator works as a sculptor at the formation of his creatures, he plants the garden for human abode,* leaves to human decision the choice of a comrade among the animals, or at all events appears to watch their introduction as a disinterested spectator; and when none suffice for a mate,† his further work of creation is described with the same curiously human imagery, so that the well-known designs of Michael Angelo do but transfer to visible form the conceptions of an earlier artist who would seem to have beheld them under a no less material aspect. Jahveh is a Hebrew Prometheus ‡ moulding men

* Gen. ii. 7, 8.

† ii. 20, 21.

‡ "La légende de la formation des hommes par Prométhée," says François Lenormant, "Les Origines d'Histoire, d'après la Bible," 1880-84

out of clay, not an Almighty Being calling them into existence by the mere fiat of His will. The analogy is full of instruction. Prometheus is the foe of Zeus; his care for humanity brings upon him the enmity of the Supreme. That he is actually the creator is a legend emerging into importance in the art of a comparatively late period; we may perhaps regard it as an emphatic declaration, echoing and varying the original conception implied in the name, that it is providence which raises the savage into manhood. But this further development seems but the completion of an idea latent from the first; and whether Prometheus creates man or brings him that divine spark which creates civilisation, he would seem equally to stand between the mortal and the immortal as an intermediate power conferring on humanity its true existence. The jealousy of the higher being who feels his pre-eminence endangered by the work of a subordinate seems to imply that men have been made equal to the gods, and from this point of view we may say that the Greek hero unites the parts distinguished on the Hebrew page as those of the Creator and the Tempter.

Such a union conceals that Unity, testimony to which marks the distinctive current of Hebrew thought. The rainbow hues of a various divine world vanish in the single white ray when we turn from the Hellenic to the Hebrew conceptions of the divine. Perhaps the difference becomes more significant as it tends to disappear. Jahveh knows no jealous over-lord, he faces his creatures as the sole claimant for their devotion and fidelity. Yet when we

(pp. 47, 8), "a joué d'une grande popularité à l'époque romaine, et elle a été plusieurs fois retracée sur les sarcophages. Mais elle semble être le produit d'une introduction des idées étrangères, car on n'en trouve pas de trace aux époques plus anciennes."

read that "it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth and grieved him at his heart" * we almost feel that some hostile Zeus, thwarting the intentions of creative beneficence, would render the narrative more intelligible. The work of the Hebrew Creator appears as a series of blunders. "It is not good for man to be alone," † Jahveh has said when he created a companion for the first man, and to judge from the result it would have been far better for man to be alone than to have had Eve for a companion. "I have gotten a man with the help of Jahveh," is the glad exclamation of Eve at the birth of Cain, ‡ and the man is the first murderer. "Unto thee is the desire of sin, but thou shouldst rule over it," § is the appeal made by Jahveh to the mind troubled with the first stirrings of hatred, and the warning would seem to have accelerated the development of sin into crime. The race in whom the Creator watches the first growth of civilisation is the race in whom he sees the heritage of evil increase: the discovery of iron is an opportunity for an extension of the fierce passion of revenge. || The daughters of Eve carry on and extend the evil function of Eve, they lure not only man but angels to sin. ¶ The Deluge, in commemorating the mistake of Creation, would appear to repeat it. The remnant saved from destruction

* Gen. vi. 6. There are two truths concerning God, says Philo boldly, in commenting on this passage—one that He is not as man, one that He is as man. 'Ἀλλὰ τὸ μὴν πρῶτον ἀληθεῖα βεβαιωτάτη πεπιστωται. (Quod Deus sit immutabilis.) This fearless antinomy is very instructive as to the course of Hebrew thought.

† Gen. ii. 18.

‡ An exclamation which, according to Reuss, expands an erroneous etymology of the Hebrew *Kanah*.

§ Gen. iv., 7, marginal reading.

|| I kill a man for a wound

And a youth for a blow (Gen. iv. 23),

in the excellent translation of E. I. Fripp, "The Composition of the Book of Genesis," 1892.

¶ Gen. vi. 1-4.

turns again to evil, the sifted remnant again needs sifting, and this process is repeated throughout the whole course of Hebrew history. Supernatural seems as wasteful as natural selection. The bulk of every family is cast away to save the chosen seed, and the chosen seed is disappointing. That sifting process which sweeps away men on the human side destroys hopes on the divine. The sense of disaster is common to both worlds. Such a view suggests a mythological background, but Jahveh remains the Supreme. The Hebrew sense of the Unity lies deeper than any demand for logical coherence, and while it accepts a conception of the divine stamped with the fallacies and futilities of the creature, yet refuses to allow of a rival or a comrade near his throne.

We have compared the Hebrew Creator, as he appears on the page of the Jehovist, with the Hellenic demigod as he appears in the later form of the Prometheus legend, which represents the hero as a semi-divine Phidias, creating statues endowed with life. We may carry on the comparison yet further; and pass thereby into regions where anthropomorphism becomes a clue to eternal truth. In the dialogue where Lucian represents Prometheus as pleading with the agents of Zeus against his cruelty, he makes especial mention of his creation of man, justifying the action for which he is about to suffer. "In the beginning," he says, "there was nothing but gods, the earth was rude and without form—when I, who am always thinking of something for the common good, began to consider with myself what I could do to promote the honour of the gods, and concluded that the best method was to take a portion of clay and make creatures like ourselves: *as thinking that the divine nature lacked something, not having its opposite.*"* In that sentence the Voltaire of

* καὶ γὰρ ἐνδεὴν τι ὤμην τῷ Θεῷ, μὴ ὄντος τοῦ ἐναντίου αὐτοῦ. . . . Καὶ δὴ

polytheism surely rises above his raillery into a higher region. The idea that "the divine nature lacked something, not having its opposite," is a specially Greek one. But it is also the clue to what is most characteristic of the Hebrew Scriptures. The link between Jahveh and his creatures is mutual; it was not good for the God to be alone, any more than the man; he called Adam into existence for himself, as Eve for Adam. "The Father *seeketh* such to worship Him."

Those words carry us away from the parable to the truth it enfolds; but do not escape its perplexity. Although the disappointment of a father is so common a phase of human experience and futility, we are bewildered at having to extend it to the heavens. Yet the acceptance of facts, of which that divine disappointment is a figurative expression, is no matter of choice to whoever will open his eyes. The development of humanity is, to human vision, a continual disappointment in this divine aim of creation; what it is on the divine side finite beings may not seek to comprehend. This only we may securely conclude—but this is more than we have yet discerned in its fulness—the noblest man is he who feels constrained to share with some other whatever is most precious to himself; and nothing true of men in proportion to their nobility can be false of God.

We speak of the work of the Jehovist as the second account of the Creation, and the description is so far accurate

. . . . "γαῖαν ὄδει φύρας" καὶ διαμαλάξας, ἀπέπλασα τοὺς ἀνθρώπους. . . . ταῦτ ἐστίν, ἡ μεγάλη ἐγὼ τοὺς θεοὺς ἠδίκηκα. οὕτω γὰρ καὶ ἀγανακτεῖ ὁ Ζεὺς. The whole speech should be read as a commentary on Gen. vi. 6, 7; it does not even seem impossible that Lucian may have had in mind the assertion of Jahveh *ἐνεθυμήθην ὅτι ἐποίησα αὐτόν*, though the Septuagint, a little softening the strong anthropomorphism of the Jehovist, would be less to his purpose than the Hebrew.

as that his narrative includes the Creation. But his true theme is not the creation of the world but the fall of man. His interests not only centre in humanity but appear hardly to transcend it. Nature, so distinct and prominent an idea in the other narrative,* here dwindles and almost vanishes; between the appearance of man, which opens Creation, and that of woman, which closes it, we have a mere parenthetic allusion to the rise of the vegetable and animal world, a trivial interlude, we might almost say, in that drama of human completion which hurries from the appearance of the individual to the existence of a family. The disappointment of Jahveh is the theme of the Jehovist; the continual failures, whereby a sifted seed is prepared to fulfil the ideal which was meant for the race, seem to fill his horizon. But these failures in humanity do but prepare the mission of Israel, and the whole course of the race, from Adam to Abraham, must be looked on as a prelude to that covenant between the chosen people and the Lord which we best understand when we accept the imagery of the Hebrew writers and see it under the form of an espousal.

M. Renan,† in that history of the people of Israel which a perfect style and consummate scholarship have not been able to preserve from a certain atmosphere of premature obsolescence, remarks on the contrast between the Aryan and the Semite ideal of marriage, and the different directions

* Compare Gen. i. 1-26 with Gen. ii. 4-6. Both these divisions are occupied with what we should call science—twenty-six verses in one case, a verse and a half in the other; and of this verse and a half the purport is mainly negative.

† "La stricte monogamie fut la loi de l'aryanisme primitif. . . . Chez les Sémites homme respectable put connaître plusieurs femmes à la fois. En religion, le contraste n'était pas moindre. La religion primitive de l'Aryen fut un polythéisme effréné. Dès les temps les plus anciens, le patriarche sémite eut une tendance secrète vers le monothéisme."—"Hist. du Peuple d'Israel." 1887. Vol. I., p. 8.

in which the two races sought the principle of unity. The Semites, he says, sought this principle of unity in their worship, and in marriage surrendered themselves to the instinct which seeks variety; the Aryans inverted these desires, and combined monogamy with polytheism. As a matter of fact, whatever be the testimony of intermediate Hebrew history, early Hebrew myths give as little countenance to the view that polygamy is the Hebrew ideal as do the precepts of mature Judaism. The saying of the Jehovist, "therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother and cleave to his wife," is meaningless for the possessor of a harem. The ordinary reader takes these words for a continuation of the speech of Adam,* but in referring to their repetition from lips that must give them their deepest significance for Christian attention, we find them quoted as the decision of the Creator. The Saviour, when Pharisaic intrigue sought to draw from Him an implicit condemnation of Herod which should involve Him in the fate of the Baptist, seems to have even intensified the witness which the Jewish Scriptures bear to the ideal of marriage. John himself had not so absolutely declared the license of a harem to be an offence to the purity of the Law. The condemnation is given with a definiteness attaching to no other external action condemned by our Lord. "From the beginning it was not so." The idea of Hebrew espousals is the ideal of Christian espousals in its utmost purity, and even what might be called its rigidity.

In Christ's quotation from the Jehovist we hold a clue to the history of Israel. Traced to a single family with a definiteness unknown in other history, that race is called on to show forth the principle of family life, the mutual and exclusive fidelity of those who share the divine prerogative of creating new life. The lesson is written, as are all such

* Gen. ii. 24. Compare Matt. xix. 4, 5.

lessons, in the experience of failure and transgression. The first expression of revenge recorded in the Bible proceeds from the first man whom we learn to have taken more than one wife.* Whatever be the symbolic meaning of the espousals of Lamech to "Light and Darkness," it is plain that the very fact of this mention alone among this line of the patriarchs shows that polygamy had begun; and the suggestion of its association with hatred and revenge is in harmony with all the succeeding development of the race. We are taught vividly throughout that history how, when different households recognised the same father, a seed-plot of envy and jealousy was cultivated in every family. The first man who took two wives did indeed wed light and darkness, for he grafted the principles of love and hatred on one stem. The cowardly abandonment of Hagar by Abraham, the envy and hatred among the sons of Jacob,† the crime of David, the rebellion of one of his sons,‡ and the apostasy of another, all set forth in varying directions the influence of the ideal presented on the first page of our Bible—that one man should have one wife. The Old Testament is such a picture of the wretchedness of polygamy as we meet nowhere else in consecutive history. The myth standing at its opening, by which the unity of a married pair is the unity of a single body, and either alone is but a fragment, is a warning against all that is to follow from deserting this unity. The grotesque account of the creation of Eve would appear the unintelligent expansion of the declaration of Adam, "This is bone of my

* And Lamech took unto him two wives, the name of the one was Adah (beauty), and the name of the other Zillah (shadow). Gen. iv., 19. See Lenormant, "Origines de l'Histoire," 183.

† Note especially Gen. xxxv. 22, xxxviii. 15, 16, compared with xxxix., and remark the inheritance of lust from a loveless union as compared with the proverbial purity of the son of the beloved.

‡ Read the piteous story of Tamar (2 Sam. xiii.) as a prelude to Absalom's rebellion, and a sequel to David's own crime.

bone, and flesh of my flesh"—the translation into an outward and materialistic legend of some such myth of pristine unity as Plato* has imagined in his dream of the primæval human being, of which man and woman are each but fragments. The unit of humanity is not man alone or woman alone, but man and woman in a nearness so close that they might seem to have but one body between them.

The Jew whose study of the records of his nation was cross-fertilised by an infusion of Hellenism, finds in the relation between woman and man a type of the relation between humanity and God.† He connects this view with very far-fetched and fanciful sources—the gender of words, the ritual precepts of sacrifice; but a great truth may be supported by trivial reasoning, and the view of Philo, that the human race, in its relation to God, is best represented by its weaker portion, is echoed by the whole history of the Old Testament. The yearning of the human for its divine completion was to the Hebrew imagination a mutual impulse. The incompleteness of the woman without the man was the incompleteness of the human without the divine; but the superior without the inferior was incomplete also. A truth too large for the mind of man to grasp cannot be expressed without admixture of error. It is through successive cracks,

* Plato has appropriately given this description of the original double-sexed human being to Aristophanes. "Symposium," 189-193. The speech is an extraordinary mixture of the grotesque and the poetic, but the former is not more grotesque than Gen. ii. 21, 22, and in some portions of the latter we may not unworthily imagine an expansion of Gen. i. 27. Might we not imagine *ἡ ἀρχαία φύσις ἡμῶν ἦν αὐτὴ καὶ ἦμεν δύο . . . Ἐν ἡμεν, νυνὶ δὲ διὰ τὴν ἀδικίαν διωκίσθημεν ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ, καθάπερ Ἀρκάδες ὑπὸ Λακεδαιμονίων* to be actually a fanciful expansion of the latter text?

† The idea of the contrast of sex as typical of the contrast between the divine and human occurs more than once in the writings of Philo. The most apposite expression may be found in "De Sacrificiis Abelis et Caini," 30, 31. A discussion of the gender of *σοφία* in the "De Profugis" also bears on this point, but brings out a good deal of what is merely fanciful.

as it were, in the structure of logic, that the finite catches its glimpses of the infinite.

The parables by which the Hebrew intellect sets forth its creed are an attempt not so much to illustrate these convictions, as to discover their only appropriate method of expression. It is not that the truths were conceived in an intellectual form and then expressed in metaphor; the language that we call metaphor is the only way of conveying what the Hebrew meant to convey. The Hebrew seer, whose parable we are seeking to interpret, surrendered himself fearlessly to that impulse towards paradox which prepares the inward eye for the opposite directions in which are to be sought these partial glimpses. When we pass from his narrative of the Creation to his narrative of the Fall, we find the anthropomorphist keenly apprehensive of the dangers of anthropomorphism. The vision that glimmered before his eyes revealed, in successive flashes, aspects of the divine that seem mutually contradictory. Having made God in the image of man, he warns man against the temptation to share a knowledge possible only to God.* It was the oblivion of that dependence, that inevitable incompleteness marking the contrast of humanity with the divine, which in his view led to man's expulsion from Paradise and closed the Golden Age. The endeavour to be as God, knowing good and evil, destroys the true manhood; the expected revelation of the divine nature turns out to be a mere discovery of the poverty of human nature. Through a fragmentary form of symbolic narrative, in which we cannot give to every detail its moral equivalent, we may follow the course of the Hebrew revelation in that deep sense of the antithesis of the divine and human which prepares the way for an equally deep sense of the union of the divine and human. The one truth is the complement of

* Compare Gen. iii. 5 and 7.

the other, but as set forth in the parable of finite understanding, they sometimes take the aspect of contradiction. A true humanity is the reflection of the divine, yet a true humanity does not seek to be as the divine—we cannot comprehend these truths in any single intellectual grasp, we can but apprehend them in successive movements of attention, swaying in each direction to the very verge of intellectual error. And perhaps the writer who has transcended those limits in one direction is for that reason the best fitted to lead us towards its opposite. He who has depicted the Creator as a Prometheus, moulding man out of clay, who follows the work of Providence, and tracks the course of regret, who sees a vast plan foreshadow disappointment, and the fulfilled desires of the Creator, like those of so many of his creatures, crystallise into his bitterest regrets; he who transfers to God the irresolution, the failure, the continual mistake of imperfect mortals, he at least is not speaking from any personal bias when he tells us that the voice that invites us to become as God, knowing good *and evil*, is that of the Tempter.

The story of the Fall of Man is rather a parable than a legend. It bears the aspect less of an account of events taking place in the infancy of humanity than of a crisis in the development of an individual spirit; it is a hidden chapter in every biography, not an ascertainable event in the dawn of history. We may bring home to our minds the naturalness of the parable to a Jew by glancing at what we may call another edition of it, separated from this earlier version by nearly a millennium, but clearly revealing its kinship by common features which it is impossible to consider the work of chance.

The Emperor Marcus Aurelius reckoned among those to

whom he listened with attention a great Jewish Rabbi,* from whose discourse it is interesting and natural to fancy that an expression here and there in his "Meditations" may contain an echo; and of which the fragment of conversation actually remaining to us certainly contains a valuable if somewhat disappointing record. The Rabbi Jehuda brought to this imperial conference the traditional memory of persecution, he had been circumcised when the ceremony was a capital offence, and must have incorporated in his teaching all that devout reverence for his Law which would be derived both by inheritance and precept from parents willing to imperil their lives for such a cause. A discussion between such a Jew and the Emperor Marcus Aurelius raises anticipations which hardly any actual record is likely to satisfy, and which our present extract can meet only if it is read with a true historic instinct and liberal historic imagination. The Jew seems to have spoken, like Paul to Felix, of "righteousness and judgment to come," and the Roman seems to have answered with a rather poor jest. Body and soul, he said, would, when the time of judgment came, each manage to shuffle off the blame upon his fellow. The Rabbi answered him with a parable. "A mortal king," he said—suggesting, apparently, that the difficulty here contemplated would not baffle even mortal contrivance—"had a most delightful garden, and when the fruits were ripe he set over it two keepers, one lame, the other blind," by which we must suppose the speaker to typify respectively the body and the soul. "On seeing the fruit the lame man urged the blind to take him on his shoulders, so that they might both gather and both eat alike. So the lame man sat on the blind man's shoulders, and gathered the fruits, and they both devoured

* See Joannes Cocceius, "Duo Tituli Talmudice Sanhedrin et Maccoth, cum excerptis ex Gemara," 1629.

them." When some time afterwards, the lord of the garden came and asked for his fruit, each guardian endeavoured to establish his innocence by his incapacity. The blind man "pleaded that he had no eyes to see the trees, and the lame man that he had no legs to approach the trees. What did the lord of the garden? He ordered the one to be taken on the shoulders of the other, and then judged both at once. In like manner will God do; the soul will be attached to body, and both shall be judged together."

Nothing is better fitted to revive in the mind of the student of the Bible a belief in its essential inspiration than a comparison of the Jewish parables which it does and does not contain. When we set this account of a garden where (as in the malignant suggestion of the serpent) *all* the fruits were forbidden, and the two inhabitants of which were alike incapacitated from dressing and keeping it, beside the garden where the inhabitants found in such a charge their natural vocation, and where the prohibition was the single exception in a liberal endowment, we are surely led to realise the degree in which the Spirit of God enlightened and quickened the intelligence of those whose work it was to select among a lavish growth such plants as were suited for transplantation to the garden of the world's childhood. But we do not here quote this parable of the Rabbi Jehuda to exhibit its poverty as compared with that of another teacher (although it is impossible to observe the contrast without pointing it out), but rather to bring forward the common character of both. We cannot conceive that a great Jewish teacher would allow himself thus to allegorise the myth which stands at the portal of his Scriptures, unless it were already received as an allegory; that he could speak of a garden, of forbidden fruit, of a judgment, of casuistical self-excuse, and *forget* the first chapters of Genesis.

A Jewish teacher could thus allude to the parables of the Jehovist only as a Christian teacher could allude to the parables of Christ. The account of the Garden of Eden must have taken some such place for the Jewish Church as that taken for the Christian Church by the narrative of the "sower who went forth to sow."

The narrative of the second chapter of Genesis is a sublime allegory of the birth of Conscience. It is the description of an event that comes to every one, in some sense, once for all. The voice which says "It is wrong," has a moment when it *begins* to speak. Most rarely does it happen that an individual memory records such a moment, the experience, for the most part, passes into the very structure of our moral nature, and leaves no trace in any reminiscence which the intellect may detach and set over against the self, as an independent reality. But a vividly depicted incident of Theodore Parker's fourth year, with which his fragment of autobiography breaks off, provides so relevant and illuminative a comment on the Jehovistic narrative that we give it here in all its pathetic simplicity. "One fine day in spring," he tells us, "my father led me to a distant part of the farm, but soon sent me home alone. On my way I saw a little spotted tortoise sunning himself in the shallow water at the root of a rhodora. I lifted the stick I had in my hand to strike the harmless reptile, but all at once something checked my little arm, and a voice within me said, clear and loud, 'It is wrong!' I held my uplifted stick in wonder at the new emotion—the consciousness of an inward check upon my actions—till the tortoise and the rhodora both vanished from my sight. I hastened home and told the tale to my mother, and asked her what it was that told me it was wrong." That question can be asked only once in a lifetime; it is a rare happiness to keep to life's last hour (which Parker had

almost reached when he attempted to write his biography) the memory of an answer from a parent. The Jehovistic account transfers the record to the childhood of humanity, and gives us for the race a typical expression of that first moment in every complete moral development when it confronts and recognises the invitation to evil. To many natures the very recognition of evil is allurements. The warning is a temptation. "A new emotion" is a keener delight than any tested enjoyment. To forego it seems, for the moment, the consent to a smaller existence than that opened by the possibilities of our human nature. All which retrospect reveals as sin was seen in prospect as something that may be described as the desire to be as God, knowing good and evil. The instinct which spurns limit, creates crime.

The process of recent discovery, exhibiting the early traditions of Israel in comparative relation with the early traditions of its close kindred, has opened a window upon that special meaning of the Hebrew message which at first sight it may appear to obscure. We may, it is well known, find almost all the narratives of the Jehovist in the legendary lore of other nations; the revelation of Babylonian cylinders has made unquestionable that common element which while it was discernible only in the fainter resemblances of Hebrew parable to Greek mythology, it was possible to consider the creation of fancy or the result of accident. But in gathering up the dim traditions common to the Semitic race, or indeed almost to the human race, the Hebrew author has set upon all the ineffaceable stamp of Hebrew conviction. His stories meet us in Chaldea, in Egypt, in Greece; we find his lessons only in Palestine. Mythology withers at his touch, the colouring of dramatic fancy fades as the light of moral intuition strengthens. The one replaces the many. The

Fall of Man recalls Greek legends of a dragon, of a sacred tree, of divine jealousy guarding its treasures ; but we forget the resemblance, for we find these familiar ideas, elsewhere than in the Holy Land, apart from the warning which haunts them as its melody haunts the words of a familiar song. The Jehovistic story of man's fall is in Greece the story of a man's * heroic victory ; the aspiration to be as God, knowing good and evil, which is to one race the human duty, is to another the human temptation. What to the Greek is a low spirit of grudge, setting the gods below heroic men, is to the Hebrew a clue to the true meaning of God's love for man ; the emphasis on their distinctness prepares the declaration of their union. The envy of a rival, as it becomes the jealousy of a spouse, passes into a symbol of a love that desires to share with its creature all except that which to finite being is inevitably evil.

In truth, the knowledge of good and evil, apart from sin, must be the prerogative of the Omniscient, for human beings to know good and *evil* is to sin. When a man sets himself to understand a temptation in the sense of apprising and measuring that which he has to renounce, he has made renunciation impossible ; to attend to the promises of the Tempter is to find them irresistible. We must recognise from the first that the voice which promises is the voice which deceives, or we shall end by obeying it ; if we wait to let the pleadings complete themselves, it is not hard, but

* The theft of the apples is the eleventh task of Hercules. The dragon who guards them has "every kind of voice"; a hint at some nearer approach to the serpent of Eden than the ordinary form of the story (according to which the 100-headed monster would not need a voice) would suggest. The statement that the apples had to be replaced because *δτιος ουκ ην αυτα μεταρεθιρα του* (Apollodorus) also seems to imply a common element in the two legends. The story is evidently a widespread one, the different localities assigned to the garden testifying to various editions of the legend. A Scandinavian version of it comes nearest to Genesis.

impossible, to withstand them. No one can, as it were, photograph the allurements to what is wrong, and then turn away from them. It is not necessary that the temptation should be one of that supreme character which we label *crime* in order to secure its victory by the mere fact of its enforcing attention. The poorest whispers of spite or envy will be registered as the promptings of a manly spirit, the lowest suggestion of self-interest will fade into the non-moral assumptions of common-sense or deepen into the just considerations of the claims of those dearest to us, if we once determine to listen to it. "Il faut qu'il échappe autant à vos yeux qu'à vos mains." This exhortation from one of the holiest of those whom an ancient Church has permitted to discipline conscience in the practice of confession, is a mere translation of the warning, "In the day when thou eatest of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt surely die." Fénelon is not here thinking of Genesis; he is only considering the need of those souls for whom he has undertaken the office of the physician. But for that very reason he is here a true interpreter of the Jehovist in the narrative of the Fall.

To ask—as we are naturally inclined to ask—why the Tempter should have been allowed a place in Paradise, is to misconceive the scope of that which the parable undertakes to explain. Its symbolism is not all on one plan. In the account of the animals being brought to Adam and not one found a help meet for him, the writer has, we may almost say, carefully explained that the story of the serpent is not to be taken as that of a real event. Adam would have found no lack of companions among them if the dialogue with Eve represented their ordinary capacities. The serpent, as we see from the reference of our Lord,* is an incarnation (it is

* "Be ye wise as serpents." Matt. x. 16. "There are," says Fergusson,

hard to see why) of that keen-eyed cleverness which in Scripture is always associated with guile, while elsewhere it becomes the symbol for healing wisdom ; if an apologue needed some incarnation for this spirit of shrewd worldly wisdom, the serpent, apparently, was a natural choice to fill the place. As a dangerous and hidden foe to man it has a double symbolism ; it becomes a dragon, a mighty adversary, needing supernatural force to repel, and then again a whispering tempter, gliding into the neighbourhood of all that is alluring and forbidden, to suggest audacious disobedience. It is impossible not to associate the serpent who, in the garden of Eden, suggests the theft of the apples to Eve, with the dragon who, in the garden of the Hesperides, would prevent the theft of the apples by Hercules ; but the resemblance, like all mythological suggestion in the Bible, is superficial, and to a certain extent misleading. The Jehovist is his own best commentator ; the serpent of Paradise is most akin, not to the dragon of the Hesperides, but to the ass of Balaam. The kind of apologue which we associate with the name of Æsop is common in the East, the Jehovist twice makes use of it,* and with a curiously impartial ascription of character to the animal creation thus dramatised. In one of his two instances of speaking beasts the creature is the channel of temptation, in the other, of warning against temptation. The serpent in Paradise is opposed to the ass in Chaldea ; the prophet would have been saved by listening to the voice of an animal, as the woman would have been saved by refusing to listen to it. Would

("Tree and Serpent Worship," p. 3), "so many features common to serpent worship all the world over, that it seems reasonable to suspect a common origin for it."

* Gen. iii. 1-15, and Numb. xxii. 23-33. See Buttmann, "Mythologus," p. 146. He suggests an Indian kindred for the story.

the writer insinuate that the animal nature is itself an indifferent thing, equally poised towards good and evil? Perhaps it is ascribing too subtle an insight to these naïve child-like representations to imagine this as a conscious design on the part of the writer, but as a lesson inevitably resulting for the reader we may surely accept this as one moral of his fable, itself doubtless occupied with deeper issues, and pre-occupied rather with spiritual than animal temptations.

We should better understand the triumphant temptation which opens the history of the Old Testament if we read it in connection with the baffled temptation which opens the history of the New Testament;* it is interpreted most clearly by the narrative of its repetition and defeat. The appeal of the Tempter to the ideal man is identical with his appeal to the first man; "if thou be the son of God" is another version of the promise, "ye shall be as gods." "Command these stones that they be made bread" echoes the whisper, "what, hath God said ye shall not eat of any fruit of the garden?" The stones of the Jordan represent a limit that was accepted, as the fruit of Eden represents a limit that was spurned. The first temptation is given us in the form of a parable, the second has all the appearance of a simple autobiography; since it refers to events which could be known to none but Him who had experienced what He narrated, yet in some sense it is a parable still. Under what form the Tempter made his appearance we are not told. Perhaps in that early phase of the career of the Son of Man, as at its close, the voice of Satan was heard through that of a trusted disciple. The reverent earnestness of a John or Nathaniel may have conveyed to the ear of the Master as much an invitation to abjure the filial attitude of trust, and test His position towards the Divine,

* Matt. iv. 1-11; Mark i. 13, 14; Luke iv. 1-13.

as did later the worldly protest of a Peter,* and the treacherous self-will of a Judas,† urging or endeavouring to force upon their Lord His escape from that which to their eyes took the aspect of degradation. Perhaps we are not more ignorant of the circumstances which are in the Synoptic Gospels translated into the parable of the Temptation than were the Evangelists who recorded it. Temptation, for the great souls of humanity, is always a mystery. We may say of the voice of the Tempter as of that which it leads us to mistrust, that it comes not in the storm or the earthquake, but in the still small voice. Who knows when a great man is tempted? Who knows when he is not? The treasures of earth glitter before him, and he passes them as the closet that holds a child's toys; a path opens towards some arduous or dangerous goal, and his whole strength is taxed in resistance. That "the serpent is more subtle than all the beasts of the field" remains a perennial truth, the Tempter glides upon us undiscerned, his step is noiseless, his form eludes the eye; only this we know, that he follows on the track of aspiration, as shadow follows light.

The position which this comparison would join with the traditional theology in conferring on Adam's temptation might appear to be that of transcendent consequence transmitted to his successors for ever. That the sin of the father is the temptation of the son is indeed a common decision of theology and science. Where the parent is allured by the unknown, the child is dragged downwards by an inherited familiarity. Nevertheless, as we follow the narrative, we find that many of those associations which have

* Matt. xvi. 21-26; Mark viii. 31-33.

† Compare Matt. xxvi. 14-16 and xxvii. 3-5. It is evident that he did not expect the actual result of his betrayal.

been stamped upon the words by the genius of a great poet and the spirit of a popular theology, are later additions, against which the further development of the story would appear almost in the light of a protest. The first pair have been driven out of Paradise, but not out of Eden: the garden was *in* Eden, and it is the garden only from which they are banished; we find them still in Eden when Cain makes it a subject of remonstrance at the prospect of expulsion that it is a sentence of banishment from the divine presence. "From thy face shall I be hid," he says when sent forth to be a wanderer on the earth—words which recall those of David when sent forth from the soil of Palestine, and forced, in consequence, he imagines, "to serve other gods."* He has not then been hid from the face of God in Eden, even after the banishment from Paradise; nor is there that wish to be hidden which his father has felt in Paradise.† With a profoundly revealing influence we are reminded that any disobedience in Paradise was more separating than the worst crime beyond its borders.

This passage seems also to open another ambiguity, relating to God instead of man. Jahveh is still a local God, his presence is confined to a small space on the face of the earth, and at the same time a mighty being whose "sign" enforces obedience from all beyond this enclosure. We have here an apparent inconsistency, which closer attention does not altogether remove. Two views of Jahveh seem to meet without mingling, he is both the member of a Pantheon, and the God of the whole earth. Must we allow

* Gen. iv. 14; compare 1 Sam. xxvi. 19.

† The reader will recall the striking picture of Cain's endeavours to escape the divine gaze, in Victor Hugo's "Légende des Siècles." The poem is a vivid presentation of the power of conscience, but it seems strange that the poet should invert an explicit statement in his text that this escape was not Cain's wish but his dread.

that the inconsistency is absolute? that we have here two conceptions of Jahveh, united by the genius of a poet who has gathered up all fragments of Hebrew tradition? or a representation of various relations of Humanity to the Divine, a prefiguring parable of the selection of a chosen people for the sake of the education of all? It is not possible to answer this question if it be formulated as referring to the condition of mind in a particular writer, but if we take the point of view of a student of inspired Scripture, finding in the whole narrative one purpose, however little the separate narrators may have been aware of it, we shall find no difficulty in deciding that it is only to the imagination of Cain that the presence of Jahveh is confined to a favoured spot of earth. There is no sign that at any time of his existence Cain is in a less favourable position towards Jahveh, *independently of his own actions*, than his father was. He is born after the expulsion from Paradise, but so is Abel; the inheritance of evil which turns to ungovernable passion in one brother does not appear to have had any appreciable influence on the character of the other. In some respects it might indeed appear as if he stood towards Jahveh in a more favoured position than any of his family, just as the prodigal in the parable may appear the best loved son. "Why art thou wroth, and why is thy countenance fallen?" pleads the divine voice with accents of remonstrance surely echoed in the tenderest recollections of those who have known parental love. "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?" And when the fatherly voice has spoken in vain, the banishment from Eden, so far from implying a banishment from Jahveh, seems in some sense to bring the erring fugitive under his special protection.* We may indeed say

* Gen. iv. 15, according to the Revised, an unquestionable improvement on (it is said) the Authorised Version.

that the remonstrance of Jahveh to Cain presents us with an image of spiritual aid and fatherly guidance more nearly approaching the revelation of the New Testament than any other utterance which the Old Testament ascribes to the Supreme.

It is the voice of conscience, "impossible à méconnaître, facile à étouffer,"* which we hear in the address of Jahveh to Cain. It is an appeal to one endowed with the full freedom of moral choice, not to the slave of sin. "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin coucheth at the door. And unto thee is its desire, but *thou shouldst rule over it.*" "Thou shouldst" implies "Thou canst." Doubtless there is an inheritance of temptation, the opening towards sin does not now come in the subtle form of a desire for knowledge; the spirit of grudge and revenge shows itself undisguised, and obtains immediate victory. But far from that fatal declivity towards evil which a recent theology implies, we have in this case an **emphatic** testimony to moral freedom, restored by the work of our revisers, at least in that marginal reading which almost always contains the preferable version of a difficult passage. In the sin of Cain, more than in any recorded by the same writer, it is made clear to us that the guilt incurred is no fatal heritage but the choice of a free will.

It is inevitable that the fall of Cain should present an image of temptation more consonant with ordinary moral feeling than the fall of Adam. Every son of Adam who has known temptation has encountered it as an inherited tendency to some form of evil; the solicitation to sin as a *mere* form of experiment in the unknown—its only conceiv-

* Madame de Staël. "If you turn a deaf ear," said Mrs. Parker to her child, "the voice will fade out little by little, and leave you in the dark." It is interesting to note that the brilliant Frenchwoman and the simple American differ only in the power of condensation.

able aspect to the first who encountered it—is no part of the inheritance of humanity, though some admixture of the allurements of the unknown mingles with other temptation. But expressions, full of significance, recall the earlier narrative. We have here quitted the form of parable, Cain knows temptation not in any symbolic representation, but in that inward whisper which brings the spirit of man in contact with the Formless. Nevertheless, such expressions as “Sin coucheth at the door,” “Unto thee is its desire, but thou shouldst rule over it,” recall the subtle appeal of the serpent, the victorious importunity of the woman; the last words indeed are an exact repetition of the sentence pronounced upon her. Imagination suggests some lost link, of which more than one hiatus testifies the existence elsewhere, but no remaining sentence supplies any material for conjectural restoration. We shall find that throughout those narratives of the Jehovist in the book of Genesis (to which this sketch is mainly confined) woman is mostly the tempter, but the fall of Cain is the one instance in which we can trace no connection between the sin and any female influence whatever. If a female influence intervenes here, it must be purely symbolical—a suggestion of all temptation through the medium of that which is most vivid and most common. The human relation to the Divine was, as we have seen, typified by Hebrew imagination as the female relation to man; it would seem as if we had here a hint that sin consisted in an inversion of that relation. If the true position for the human race be symbolised by an espousal, the false relation finds its symbolic truth in that region also, nor can the Tempter find any inlet to the will of man in which there does not appear to be some echo of the voice of God.

But the voice of the Tempter is again triumphant, and

earth drinks the blood of the first murder. In that spirit of sympathy with the Creator which is ascribed to it throughout the Pentateuch, its fruits are again proportionally withdrawn from the murderer; he is driven from Eden to till a soil bringing forth thorns and briers, as his father was driven from Paradise to till a soil yielding its corn only to laborious culture;* the change from the light culture of the garden to the hard labours of the plough is repeated in the change from a favourable to an ungrateful soil, and we find ourselves again on a downward path. The allegory of Cain is less simple than the allegory of Adam. We are no longer following merely the crises of an individual soul; we see clearly that we have reached the development of two peoples. Cain's fears betray a peopled world, he builds a city, he evidently represents the advanced agricultural race, naturally hostile to its elder brother in the path of civilisation—the pastoral people. The tillers of the field must look with suspicion on the owners of roving and predatory flocks; the peaceful security of farm life belongs to a late stage of civilisation, when the tillage is securely enclosed. While roving shepherds had to be warned by rough methods off the seed plots of their more energetic and industrious neighbours, the furrows of earth must have been stained by many a murder. As we move westward, indeed, we find the legends of the wheat-givers all gracious and bloodless, Ceres and Triptolemus are benefactors of humanity; but the dawn of civilisation shows us the agriculturists under a different aspect. They have deserted what appears to the early races the true life for man—the wild roving life of the pastoral peoples—they are about to build cities, they have set them-

* Compare Gen. iii. 17, 18 with iv. 11, 12. "Adam's Uebertretung," says Buttmann, "hatte die Nothwendigkeit der Arbeit zur Folge; Cain's raubte auch der Arbeit ihren Erfolg."

selves towards all the corruptions of civilisation. They are naturally, from this point of view, the people whose offerings are less pleasing to the Divine, and among whom we find the first murderers.

Can we follow out this double line of symbolism? Can we see in Cain at once a type of inherited guilt and of advancing civilisation—the first to stain his hands with brother's blood, the first to teach the beneficent arts of agriculture and of civil life? It is doubtless somewhat difficult so to follow the narrative of the Jehovist as to decide where he is a mere gatherer up of tradition, with all its inherent shades of suggestive significance, and where he makes narration a vehicle of truth in that form which to Jewish imagination is rather its incarnation than its clothing. The difficulty increases as the history advances. The story of Cain does not appear to belong to the same region of purely ideal truth as the story of Adam. We seem following a legend as well as a parable. We are reminded of another legendary hero who also built a city and slew a brother; and the fratricide of Romulus, in suggesting a certain relation to the fratricide of Cain, establishes the kindred of both to a common stream of tradition, bearing witness to a truth which we might independently be sure of, that the first city builders must have had blood on their hands. We cannot pretend to decide where we cease to follow a spiritual history, true for all time, and enter on the records of early humanity. The parable and the legend blend and mingle, it is impossible to say where either begins or ends.

But must the parable vanish as it touches the legend? Surely not. The great principles of moral growth are not set forth only in fictions. No doubt they are set forth more simply in fictions than in any fragment of human

experience. Every life teaches many lessons, and he who would detach one clothes it more readily in a garb of external fact that is the product of imagination. But to suppose, therefore, that when our narrator begins to remember he ceases to interpret, is a mere interpolation of obstacles created by pedantry into the path of history. In reading of murderous strife between a tiller of the soil and a keeper of sheep, we are evidently following the history of two races rather than two individuals; but the student of Hebrew history must from the first discard any rigid distinction between the two. We find the subject of a sentence an individual at its opening and a people at its close. Perhaps the words may have meant one thing to the first narrator and another to the editor, or the story may have passed with varying shades of meaning through many hands. The meaning which is revealed to the seeker for spiritual law does not vanish when he discovers it beneath the garb of history; rather it thus acquires its deepest significance.

The death of Abel is a striking instance of that tragic evolution by which Jahveh appears at every step entangled in colossal mistake. In those fraternal dissensions of which Cain's grudge against Abel opens the series, we have a progressive sifting whereby the right brother is chosen out for the transmission of the elect seed; in the murder of Abel, on the other hand, Jahveh allows the wrong brother to perish. It is the father of a race sufficiently numerous to found a city, who bequeaths to all an inheritance which it needs the Deluge to sweep away; while an ideal father of the faithful leaves no posterity. The murder of Abel has to be avenged on every descendant of his brother, the Ark holds no son of Cain. The few and mutilated notices which remain of the doomed race carry out the suggestions both of inherited

crime and inherited tendency towards civilisation among this family. But we find here also hints of their kindred with the sons of Seth. When we reach the fifth generation we find a bifurcation* between the impulses of a quiet pastoral life and that of an advancing civilisation, suggesting, in faint echo, a renewal of the pristine fraternal divergence ; and the names of the first shepherd and the first city builder are recalled by their descendants. We could almost fancy that in the story of Lamech and his sons we have a fragmentary second edition of the story of Cain, told of a family instead of an individual. The pastoral *rôle* is split up into two personalities bearing slightly different names — Jabal and Jubal, both strongly resembling Abel, while the smith's name, Tubalcain,† repeats that of Cain with a prefix. The discovery of iron, apparently kept secret for a time in a particular family, seems to raise all its members into the immunity of a practical omnipotence, and we catch a faint glimpse of some revolution in the arts of war exceeding that caused by the discovery of gunpowder. Again the spirit of inventive and civilising industry betrays a deep connection with evil ; the father of this Hebrew Vulcan profits by the discovery of iron to indulge a fierce triumphant spirit of revenge ; and we seem to come upon the trace of a new impulse given to hatred with a new facility in its achievement. The connection of knowledge and evil, visible from the first, seems again emphasised ; the impulses which profit most by the gain of civilisation, it would seem, are those which end in crime.

This lesson, conveyed through expressions so mutilated and so fragmentary that our interpretation may appear at first sight the work of fancy, would appear authenticated by

* Gen. iv. 19-21.

† Note also that Cain would mean a smith in Arabic.

the reference of our Lord.* When in answer to Peter's enquiry as to the limits of the duty of forgiveness (which the Rabbis, it is said, had fixed at the third offence), he gave an answer virtually condemning the search for a limit, he used the same expression, with reference to forgiveness, that is here used by Lamech with reference to revenge. The discovery of a new facility for slaughter was, in its influence on hatred, a natural parable for the influence of Christ on the spirit of love and pardon. The son of Cain, in his shriek of vengeance, supplies the exhortation to the true spirit of brotherhood as it is expressed by the Son of Man.

The song of Lamech—one of the oldest fragments of the Old Testament—refers us backwards to Adam, as it refers us forwards to Christ. It suggests, in a broken hint, the story of the first temptation;† and prefigures, in dim inverted parable, the voice of deliverance. The tree of knowledge is again the tree of death. The life of pastoral simplicity is once more exhibited as the life of innocence. Yet it has its own innocent lore, the shepherd appears with his pipe, the long leisure of his mid-day watch charmed by an imitation, at first in some cut reed, then on some strained chord, of the songs of invisible birds; and while the swords forged by Tubalcain remind us that his ancestor bequeathed to him his own deadly impulses, the harps and pipes constructed by Jubal convey to us the assurance that this heritage was no fatal imposition, but an opening from which the recipient was at liberty to turn to mild and gracious employment and inven-

* Matt. xviii. 21. The expression *ἐβδομηκοντάκις ἑπτὰ* (about the exact meaning of which there is a certain hesitation, some making it = 490 and others 77 times) only occurs in the speech of Christ and of Lamech.

† "The sword in his hand counts for more with Lamech than a threat in the mouth of God, and he breathes out murder though Cain, his ancestor, had fallen under the curse on account of it."—Delitzsch, "Commentary on Genesis."

tions that cheered, instead of threatening, life. To the sons of Cain, as to Cain himself, it is repeated, "If thou doest not well, sin coucheth at the door." And note that the forger of swords and the framer of the lyre are only half-brothers. The ally of vengeance is the son of "Darkness," the giver of music is the son of "Beauty." The allegory, as we thus follow it out, becomes almost transparent.

If the song of Lamech, on the one hand, takes us to the teaching of Him whom we know as the ideal Israel, on the other hand it leads us with hardly doubtful indications, if at least we may follow the suggestions of nomenclature, toward some cognate source in Gentile mythology. We can hardly regard as a mere accident the fact that while the names of Tubalcain and his brothers recall those of Vulcan and Apollo, their functions are identical in the first case and in many respects similar in the second. We cannot prove or even imagine a direct connection between the Hellenic and Hebraic lines of tradition, but we may here conceive of some reference to a common stock of traditions busy with dim memories of dawning civilisation; and recording a stage when the lives of peace and war had alike their newly-found lore, and the names of great inventors were on Hellenic soil raised to the realms of the divine, and on the Hebrew domain carefully distinguished from it. The main interest of such approximation will be found in their revelation of a vital contrast between the faith of a race set apart to testify to the unity, and that which mirrored in heaven the difference of earth with only brighter hues and a richer variety. The Hebrew Vulcan and Apollo have a mortal father; if the genealogy of Cain (which the editor has here broken off) were pursued, we should certainly find that they had also mortal children, and were themselves mortal.

The next chapter to that which contains the reference

to Lamech and his wives and children would appear to contain a closer approach to classic mythology than that which we may discover or imagine in the name and functions of Tubalcain and his brothers. "When the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bare children to them, the same were the mighty men which were of old, the men of renown,"* is evidently from the editor, not the originator, of the Jehovistic story, but it fits in exactly with the purport of the text on which it comments. Beyond that Hebrew horizon where the creature confronts the Creator across a chasm bridged by no gradation of the demi-god and the hero, the writer seems to discern a dim region where vast shadowy forms loom before his eyes, hardly to be ranged on either side of this chasm, beings whose existence he can but trace to some abdication in heaven. Some illicit union of semi-divine with mortal beings appears to haunt his imagination as an explanation of the fact that other races worshipped other gods than Jahveh, while on Hebrew soil this union seems recorded in the existence of a race of giants, whose relation to the "Sons of God" it is difficult to make out, because our text, brief as it is, embodies apparently inconsistent views as to the origin of these giants. The connection with Gentile mythology seems clearer. No fact from the records of either the Hellenic or the Hebrew race could be brought forward to prove even their mutual knowledge at such a date; but words which appear to describe the gods of Greece and their progeny, which hint at a vision of Zeus and Hercules, cannot but suggest to the reader some inchoate attempt at an interpretation of classic mythology, made by a writer to whom all mythology was

* Gen. vi. 4 seems to betray an inconsistent combination of text and comment; the last clause makes the giants the offspring of this illicit union, the first declares their existence at the time it took place.

abhorrent, as a confusion of the primal antithesis of God and man.

In this brief and obscure fragment we come upon the track of a widely spread legend, leading up, by more than one similitude,* towards the conceptions of polytheism, and rendered indistinct and confused by the reluctance of the Jehovist to admit any such views to his record.

Hardly a shred of the narrative remains on the Biblical page, and the fragment there is as much annotated as it is mutilated, but a late literary development enables us to expand the brief and hardly intelligible mention in Genesis into the fanciful story which seems before the time of Augustine to have supplied the place of the Fall of Man in the later theology. Its influence on early Christianity is attested by a long list of references in the works of the early Fathers and in Josephus; the most interesting is that of Origen,† who regards the legend as an allegoric reference to that descent of souls into bodies held by him to be subsequent to the Creation, and in some sense equivalent to the Fall. From a reference of Tertullian it appears that Satan was one of these fallen angels; indeed it would seem impossible to admit the legend, and find room for him anywhere else. It evidently belongs, as we know it, to that late apocalyptic literature which expresses at once the aspirations and the disappointment of Judaism, its visions of mystic splendour in the future being here woven in, not very skilfully, with this record (which, however, would naturally suggest such visions) of superhuman abdication in the past.

The Fall of the Angels is one of a series of myths of a

* For instance (Dilman notes), the fate imagined for these fallen angels in the extra-Biblical version of the story—their imprisonment beneath the hills—suggests a connection with such legends as those of Enceladus.

† Quoted in Hoffmann's "Book of Enoch," p. 114.

Fall of which Eden is the characteristic specimen—a narrative of temptation bridging the interval between the perfect creation and the present disastrous condition of humanity, or, at any rate, that which led to the Flood; and it would appear that the importance of the two events was much more nearly equal in late Judaism and early Christianity than we are now inclined to consider it.* The conditions of Adam's fall were inverted in the case of the "Sons of God"; they were tempted to become as men, knowing good and evil. Their fall was a manifest and literal descent. The mystic serpent which must have presented itself in heaven as well as in Eden, took to the angels an aspect more homogeneous with all we know of sin than the desire of knowledge which is represented as its source for the first man; they were allured by the beauty of women, and tempted to quit a spiritual for a carnal existence. It is remarkable and not altogether explicable that the sonorous echo which this verse awakens in the mind of all English readers tends to conceal its purport for English ears. When Shakespeare makes Wolsey say of ambition "by that sin fell the angels," he is inverting the purport of this scriptural hint; the sin of the angels was the exact reverse of that against which the great Cardinal warns his followers as the source of his own fall. Their temptation was to a shameful abdication, his to a presumptuous encroachment. The legend, to judge from its echoes in the works of both our greatest poets, had little hold on the meaning of its main incident. In spite of the expansion given to this incident by an author† perhaps only half a cen-

* Irenæus, for instance, mentions, "the Angels who had transgressed" in a way that seems to ignore any other fall than theirs.

† Or rather a series of authors. "The Book of Enoch," says its latest editor (R. H. Charles, Clarendon Press, 1893), "is a fragmentary survival of an entire literature that once circulated under his name" (a description which we might almost append to the name of every Hebrew author). It

ture earlier than that quotation in the Epistle of St. Jude * by which he is best known, the subsequent course of catholic tradition must have blotted out this special significance altogether, and infused an opposite meaning into the story. This course of tradition is surprising, as one might have expected the echoes of mediæval feeling rather to have emphasised than obliterated its hint of a connection between the desires of the flesh and all other evil; and we find that such a connection was even invented by ecclesiastical speculation in the case of the earlier story of the Fall.

The scene in which Milton depicts the new attractiveness of Eve to Adam after eating the apple, brings home to the English reader the natural association of this view with any parable of a fall; and if we could make any impartial comparison between works as unequal in literary power as the "Paradise Lost" of Milton, and the anonymous "Book of Enoch," we might find a more reasonable solution of their common problem in the prosaic fiction than in the great poem. The impulse which leads to parentage is there depicted as a necessity for those whose transient duration, without it, would leave the world unpeopled, and is justified only by this fact when, shared by immortal beings, it becomes a deadly sin. Death and Lust are thus presented as correlatives, and the fact that love is entangled in the physical, appears to commemorate some moral catastrophe of wider bearings and deeper source than that which can be traced to an individual will. The conception was taken up by the spirit

is an elaborate account of the descent of these angels on Mount Hermon, their communication of forbidden mysteries to their mortal spouses (a link to the earlier temptation), and the miseries and disorders which sprang from the illicit union. Its title is to be understood as an actual ascription of authorship to Enoch, who is addressed as "thou scribe of righteousness" — a curious mark at once of the late origin of the book, and of the strange notion which made it antediluvian.

* Jude 14 and 6; cf. 2 Peter ii. 4.

of early Christianity, and worked out with logical consistency into a rigid system of which the ruins have subsisted almost to our own day. In the elaborate theory of Augustine, the impulses of the flesh began to exist only when the obedience of the spirit ceased; an idea which lies at the root of mediæval asceticism, and of the Calvinistic view of original sin.

As a theological system, casting discredit on the holiest of human bonds, and entering into conflict with the most irresistible of human impulses, this theory is as alien to the spirit of that which is truest in Christianity as it is to everything in Judaism. As a dim myth, holding broken hints for the answer to a problem which, however unsolvable, human beings have for ages striven to solve, it may be accepted as a statement of some profound truth, refracted through a distorting medium. That the sons of God see the daughters of men that they are fair, is the history of many a fall, and we may sometimes fancy that, this temptation once removed, the path of humanity would be almost clear; directly or indirectly it is the source of all the heaviest evil that afflicts the sons and daughters of men; and pondering over its wide ramifications and irresistible sway, we might well be tempted to believe that we have here not merely an important specimen of human sin, but the source of all.

The results which ensue upon the victory of this temptation, in the case of the sons of God, are most significant as to the unvarying tendency of Hebrew inspiration towards the emphasis on the distinction of God and man. It seems to have been a change which, instead of blending the divine and human, tended rather (so far at least as a diminished duration on the temporal side can sharpen the antithesis between the finite and the infinite) to intensify the distinction between them. If we find any meaning in a difficult

and obscure verse, we should gather that the alliance between the Hebrew kindred of Zeus and Apollo and the daughters of men, far from communicating the immortality of the former, led to the shortening of human life. "My spirit shall not abide in man for ever by reason of their going astray"* would appear, as far as we can attach any meaning to words so obscure, a sort of repetition of the idea of the earlier narrative, "and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take of the tree of life, and live for ever—therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden." The Jehovist has indeed not yet mentioned a single date; the definiteness of chronology which we ascribe to the narrative belongs wholly to the other narrator. But the latest critics give to our author the last clause of verse 3, "and his days be but a hundred and twenty years,"† and it is impossible to understand this sentence otherwise than as a concession of a length of days curtailed from their original span. The narrative, which a very little expansion converts into an account of the rise of Gentile mythology, ends with an emphatic declaration of the root principle of Hebrew religion, endangered for a moment by this approach to Greek legend—the distinction between the Eternal, and the succession of transient creatures only raised by his breath into existence, and sinking into nothingness when that is withdrawn.

The narrative of the Fall of the Angels, as it stands in our Bibles, closing the genealogy of the race destined to perish in the Flood, is evidently torn away from all its natural surroundings, and protests against the neighbourhood alike of its predecessors and successors. It is not possible to read

* These words appear the most comprehensible translation of Gen. vi. 3.

† So the words are taken in Fripp's admirable arrangement, and the marginal reading of the Revised Version would sanction this rendering.

it in any coherent relation either with what goes before or after it. It is inserted between the account of the birth of Noah and the Deluge, while the opening words show that it should come at the very start of the race. It seems to ignore the Fall, and introduces us to a new divine race, in an intercourse with mankind, which the expulsion from Eden would seem to have rendered impossible. It would equally appear to ignore the Deluge; there is no sense in telling us that God determined to shorten the life of man, and then, immediately afterwards, that the life of man was to cease. It seems an isolated legend, found by the Jehovist, and wedged in at the end of the Cainite genealogy with some difficulty, as containing a possible clue to that mystery of evil to which the whole antediluvian history of the Jehovist aims at suggesting some solution. It was evidently only one among many, and not the most characteristic. It needs a large expansion to find its place in any orderly sequence of the narrative; its Jewish continuation is misleading as to the main tendencies of Jewish thought, its true inheritance is mediæval, yet its purport in mediæval tradition is inverted. In many portions of his narrative, but here most especially, the Jehovist seems to repeat the confession of his great spiritual kinsman, "We have this treasure in earthen vessels." The voice of God is heard by the readers of Genesis, as it was declared by Isaiah that He intended it should be heard through "stammering lips and a foreign tongue."*

We naturally combine the Fall of the Angels with a legend separated from it in our text by the catastrophe which destroyed a world. The story of the Babel builders would, for several reasons, find a more appropriate place among the dim mysterious records of the race which was to be utterly swept away. Its *dramatis personæ* seem akin to those "giants"

* Isaiah xxviii. 11.

whose physical and moral inheritance alike suggests a fantastic attempt to regain a heaven forfeited by their progenitors. Such a repetition of the temptation of Paradise, man being once more tempted to become as God, would be conceived more intelligibly on the further side of an event which should be a beginning of actual history. A mixed race, whose existence commemorated a guilty union and mingled impulses towards the high and low, moreover, would supply the natural *dramatis personæ* for such a drama; the degraded impulse of the fathers would thus, by a law which no observer of life and history can fail to discern, explain the presumptuous impulse of the children, and the vague magical character of their aims would fit in with the moral scenery of a mysterious world that had passed away.

The actual position of the legend, on the hither side of the Deluge, might perhaps be accounted for by some vague desire to rationalise the story, and represent the survivors of a devastating flood as seeking to create some elevated structure in which they might be secure from its recurrence. Such an event is as natural as it is blameless, and some such actual endeavour may possibly have mingled its shadowy remembrance with the myth commemorating the presumption of a race of demigods. In the narrative of the Jehovist, however, all such rationalising tendency would be out of place, and if we have to connect the tower of Babel with Babylon we gain a surer clue in remembering the terraced pyramidal "Ziggurats,"* whence the Babylonian studied the stars, with all their associations of idolatry. We should look on their astrology as an ideal endeavour to mount to heaven, and once more to "become as gods." But it would be a far more appropriate

* These Ziggurats, the foundation of the mounds of ruins whence so much of our knowledge is derived, may be regarded as the Chaldean version of the Pyramids.

issue of such an attempt that no actual dwelling-place of men were connected with it in any way, and we give it a position more fitting its magical and fairy-like character in letting it follow the story of the Fall of the Angels, as human analogy to that catastrophe, whereby a semi-divine race confused themselves with the children of earth. By ambition fell—not the angels, but the Babel builders—and from the Shakespearian allusion we have quoted (which must surely have some ground in tradition) we might imagine that the two events became confused.

The account of the Deluge stands in a relation to history somewhat different to anything that has preceded it, and in endeavouring to adjust the story to what goes before and what follows we detect a certain confusion of cross lights, as when morning breaks in upon candlelight. A great physical catastrophe breaks in on a series of events belonging wholly to the order of a moral evolution, and although its moral aspect is not lacking, it being a judgment on a corrupt world, still, on the whole, the effect is an interruption of one sort of narrative by another. We quit a series of fragmentary parables and encounter a tradition. The Deluge, says Lenormant, is the universal tradition *par excellence*; it is known to many races and commemorated in many legends, and its occurrence in the Bible marks, in a certain sense, the dawn of history. Before it, all is vague and fragmentary; after it (with the exception of the legend just mentioned, which seems to have lost its way) the story is consecutive, and leads on directly to that of the chosen race. The Flood itself appears as a prelude to the call of Abraham, a righteous man being in both cases saved from a corrupt world, and the first event may appear, in some sense, a prefiguring type of the last. To Israel the moral aspect is always pre-

dominant even when the event recorded is itself evidently physical.*

In our own day, by an impressive coincidence between the inward and outward education of the race, the earth has opened her secret places as the human mind has been liberated from the prejudices which would have rendered the revelation useless; the records of Chaldea have been placed side by side with the records of Palestine, and in their account of the Flood we have found not only an identical event, but to some extent a common account of it. The Chaldean narrative differs only from either of the accounts of the Deluge which the editor of Genesis combines as much as they do from each other. The details in common are too numerous to be supposed the result of coincidence, many phrases indeed are identical. "For six days and seven nights," we read, "wind, flood, and storm reigned supreme, but at dawn of the seventh day the tempest decreased; the waters, which had battled like a mighty host, abated their violence," and at dawn of the seventh day the hero (who takes the place of Noah, and himself tells the tale), "took out a dove and sent it forth, but the dove went to and fro, finding no resting place, and returned. Then," continues the Chaldean Noah, "I took out a raven and sent it forth, and when it saw that the waters had abated it did not return"; and the narrative ends with a sacrifice offered by the hero after quitting the Ark. In comparing the account in which he is both hero and narrator with that of Genesis, we cannot feel merely that we are reading two accounts of the same event; we have evidently two editions of the same account. Nay, we may even say that remote allusions to this account in Genesis, preserved only in the

* We see this strongly brought out in Philo's treatise on the Deluge. It contains some of his most striking symbolism on the nature of evil.

New Testament, are lighted up by the account on the clay bricks of Babylon. When we read that "as it was in the days of Noah . . . they did eat, they drank, they married wives . . . until the day that Noah entered into the ark," that "as it was in the days of Lot, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded, but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone out of heaven and destroyed them all"; and, when turning to the account of this latter catastrophe, we learn that Lot in his attempted warning to his sons-in-law "seemed to them as one that mocked,"* we are almost inclined to fancy that the Chaldean tradition, which represents the righteous man as pleading with God, "If I construct the ship as Thou biddest me, the people and their elders will laugh at me," was known to the Jews. Of course it would be pure fancy, yet surely the fact that the Chaldean account of the Deluge would supply a link with Christ's reference to the Deluge, is an important testimony to its close kindred with the account of the same event in the Hebrew Scriptures.

But here, as always when the traditions of any other race approach those of Israel, we find the similarity is but a medium for bringing out a contrast. The Chaldean account is the fragment of a mythology; the Hebrew account is the expression of a profoundly monotheistic faith. The gods in Chaldea partake the terror of man, "they seek a refuge in the highest heaven—as a dog in its lair they crouch by the railing of heaven," a picturesque image linking the Chaldean heaven with Olympus, and widely severing it from the abode of Jahveh. The account of the divided counsels of the gods, the vivid sympathy of Ishtar, the Assyrian Venus, with the perishing race of man, the reproaches addressed by her to the divine author of the

* Luke xvii. 26-29; cf. Gen. xix. 14.

calamity—all combine to bring out the contrast between the spirit of a religion which saw in God the One, and any other. In Chaldea we have more to do with gods than men. The hero of the story, who is also its narrator, and reunites the personages of Noah and of Enoch, is practically a divine being. After his voyage in the Ark he is saved from the common lot of mortality, and transported to a Chaldean Garden of Avilion, a hidden Paradise, where he lives with the gods, at the mouth of the rivers (a legend we might almost imagine to have been known to Dante when he makes the mouth of the Tiber the starting point for Purgatory). According to some accounts he is identified with the Assyrian god Maroudouk, while Lenormant sees in him a version of Aquarius.* In Genesis he becomes a mere man, who has no other distinction from his fellows than that he "found grace in the eyes of the Lord." We contemplate the catastrophe on Hebrew soil through that atmosphere of Hebrew reference to the invisible as a world of Unity which gives all recorded fact a new significance.

It is true that the narrative only escapes the multiplicity of polytheism by the multiformity of inconsistent impulse in the Divine Being himself. The Lord saw (so the Jehovist tells us with a peculiar emphasis and insistence) "that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart." Yet immediately afterwards we hear of an elaborate preparation to save the race which Jahveh had determined utterly to destroy. The vacillation, the impetuous inconsistency of

* The Chaldean legend is taken from Zénaïde Ragozin's "Story of Chaldea," in the "Story of the Nations" series. See also "Assyrian Discoveries." G. Smith. Pp. 185-193.

Jahveh is in character with all that has gone before, but we feel in it the presence of a new element. We see that the writer is accounting for an event which in its very failure to achieve its ideal aim, would appear to belong to the world of external fact. And its result is very like the disappointing course of actual human experience. We can discern no purification of the race after that deadly baptism. The very first incident which follows the emergence from the Ark would appear to exhibit the failure of the selection which filled it; the man who has found grace in the eyes of the Lord yields at once to the lowest temptation known to men, and the first gift of the renovated earth brings drunkenness into the world. The men of Sodom are descendants of Noah; the necessity for the rain of fire is indeed far more obvious than that for the rain of waters. The picture of foul and hateful relation which follows the latter paints the habits of mind which called for both judgments rather than any purifying effect from either.

Nevertheless the Deluge, for the Hebrew, is a moral event, a divine judgment on an evil race, the expression of a single divine will. Such a protest as that to which the Chaldean narrative owes its pathos, would be a confusion of vital opposites, an enthronement of the Tempter in heaven. We might, it is true, omit the whole story and not detect a gap otherwise than by finding ourselves once more in a world peopled by a family. But it remains true that what is narrated is an endeavour at a moral sifting; and if it seem to result in failure, this is but the aspect of all history to the race called forth to testify to the true ideal for humanity, so long as its achievement and completion is supposed to lie on this side of the grave.

The varied editions of a Fall, beginning with the Creation

and ending with the Deluge, form a succession of attempts to explain the inexplicable fact that the first event should be followed by the last. These varied attempts are not to be regarded as a progressive deterioration of the race, a Hebrew edition of the four races of humanity, but rather as independent representations of a single idea, recurrent in all its first sense of incoherence and strangeness, renewed attempts, as it were, to find some fitting parable symbolising the strange metamorphosis by which the creature of the Divine has become a rebel against him. The expulsion of Adam from Paradise, of Cain from Eden, of the Angels from heaven, and finally the obliteration of all but a single family from earth, must be regarded as in each case a vivid expression of what we may almost call perplexity at the marvel which we touch on in the name of Sin. We must keep that word if we would understand the problem thus presented to the Hebrew mind. If we look on the aberrations of humanity as *imperfection*, if we see in Sin, with the non-moral Greek, a falling short from an ideal to which the race was continually making an approach, these repeated allegories of explanation are needless. Man struggles upward; he began in imperfection and will end in perfection; there is no need to imagine a Fall. And yet the idea of a Fall haunts the imagination even of the race* to which it was uncongenial. Legends of an Eden, of a Fall of the

* It is strongly impressed on the theogony of Hesiod. The account of the Four Ages in the "Works and Days" should always be read in connection with the account of the Fall in Genesis, in some respects even the details seem too similar to be accidental. This at least may surely be said of the only advantage possessed by the men of the silver age over their successors (if it be an advantage): viz., their childhood of a hundred years, which seems to stand in some confused relation to the long lives of the patriarchs. The four ages of Hesiod, in fact, are four only in name. What we have in actual fact is a Paradisal existence and a sudden degeneration, just as in Genesis.

Angels,* are found in the Hellenic Genesis, left as it is in its unedited, unharmonised condition, and we are forced to recognise, as we compare the two, that the truth which occupied the horizon of the Hebrew seer found a place even in that of the race least inclined to ponder on or accept it.

The scientific thinker of our day is more alien to these conceptions than even his Hellenic predecessor. That man *can* sin is an admission belonging to the recognition of a supernatural order of things, and alien to the ideas belonging to the domain of physical science. We cannot translate the language of such an order into any intelligible to the mere physicist. The facts it chronicles speak to him in another tongue. It is not that the facts themselves are strange, it is that they are perfectly familiar and differently explained. But he who studies the Hebrew Scriptures, and especially he who studies the book of Genesis, endeavouring to translate all narratives into the dialect which represents human error as imperfection, will find himself landed in mere incoherence. As a provisional hypothesis, at any rate, the student of the Hebrew Scriptures must admit that it is possible to imagine a relation between God and man, in view of which certain actions should be not merely error to be corrected by increased enlightenment, not merely faults to be punished by the legislator, but that repudiation of an implied bond of mutual adhesion between God and man which revolutionises the whole order of creation—a moral earthquake which changes, as it were, the course of rivers and the place of mountains. It is no valid criticism on such a view to say that it is involved in confusion. This is what we should expect. We must imagine, in some sense, a mutual bond between a finite

* The fall of the superhuman beings mentioned in the fragments of Empedocles is a vaguer and more mysterious conception than that of the angels, but also the penalty for superhuman crime.

and infinite being before we can conceive it possible that man should sin, but we cannot construe this relation to the logical understanding. We have to accept an associated imagery of anthropomorphism which, in rendering the idea more natural, also removes it from the order of ideas which we can receive as appropriate to the Divine. He who would enter into the spirit of the Hebrew Scriptures must begin by accepting the belief that truths too vast for human grasp throw their shadow on the early imagination of mankind, and, to some extent, on his mature understanding, in the form of parable, for which no analysis can substitute their rational statement. That "Jahveh repented that he had made man, and that it grieved him at his heart," is written by one who thought that God was altogether such a one as himself; yet, unless we are prepared to disentangle from his confusion a record of some real moral catastrophe, we may close our Bibles as chronicles of obsolete superstition, useful only to antiquarians, and a mere embarrassment to struggling men.

Our review of the brief fragmentary series of narratives leading to the Deluge which was needed to overwhelm the sinful and set the world free for a purified race, may be thought to have read too much between the interpolated and mutilated lines. It is impossible to put forward any coherent interpretation of their purport which should not be open to that criticism. Every part of the history is a fragment, and an annotated fragment. The first speech of the Tempter is an answer to some omitted speech of Eve, and every narrative that follows marks with expressive hiatus the rough edges which speak of a rent. If we may not make some attempt to supply the meaning of these gaps the greater part must remain almost meaningless. The attempt must be justified by its consonance with the broad human sense of a possible meaning in these fragments, it can have no other justification.

When we compare the Hebrew Scriptures with their most natural object of comparison—the Homeric poems—we are struck by the great difference in this respect between the literature of a people of writers and a people of singers. The work of various hands is as evident in the Hebrew story as the work of one in the Hellenic. If touches have been added here and there to the “Iliad,” or some small fragment has been lost, the change is in either case imperceptible. In Genesis the story bears the token of many revisions, it is told several times, and always imperfectly. We come upon as much repetition as omission. We have constantly to pass over something that has been told before; we have constantly to supply something that is not told at all. The singer bequeaths his song, guarded by its very form from interpolation and, in a less degree, from omission. A stanza may possibly be lost, but a stanza is not readily added. The song invites no gloss; the commentator cannot be confused with the singer. With the work of the pen all is different. A glance at an old circulating library novel, in this respect, is an instructive lesson in Biblical interpretation. No one is too stupid to jot down a criticism or suggestion on the margin of the page he is perusing; and before the period when printing defended the text from the invasion of the annotator, critical acumen was necessary to keep the two separate. Rhythm and print have, in fact, much the same result in this respect, and those Scriptures which know nothing of either were a prey to inevitable corruption. The result is not pure loss. As a literary monument, the Hebrew Scriptures have no doubt suffered indefinitely from their lack of conservative form. But as an ally of Faith the work, thus stamped at once with redundancy and incompleteness, gains, perhaps, almost as much by what it lacks as by what it enshrines. The annotated, mutilated text has

not indeed escaped that superstitious reverence which veils its true meaning from our eyes, but how eloquently does every gap, every insertion, protest against such superstition! We have known the blinding influences of Bibliolatry, but we are saved from them the moment we really open our eyes to study the book we have made an idol.

The history of Israel is appropriately a collection of fragments. It is the expression of truths communicable only in language which, if its fragmentariness be forgotten, inevitably distorts their meaning. The narrative concerning itself with races whose mission is to reveal the greatness of man, is distinct and coherent; that which follows the race called on to reveal the nearness of God is necessarily a succession of glimpses, scanty and confused. The truth which admits of coordination with all below it, is not the highest attainable by man. The word which we shall have to apply to the Hebrew race might almost seem applicable to the Hebrew Scriptures; they may be regarded, from some points of view, as almost equally a Remnant. The word must be indeed taken rather as applied to the spirit than the outward bulk of these writings, as far as the latter goes, they have suffered more from accretion than loss. But while in their entangled and retouched condition they contain but a remnant of their original force, the loss of completeness is the gain of promise. The Remnant pointed to the Christ: the fragmentary records of Revelation are a pledge that the voice recorded there is speaking still for whoever has ears to hear.

CHAPTER V

THE SIFTED RACE

WE naturally regard the Deluge as opening a new stage in the world's history, and this view must have been accepted by the editor or editors to whom we owe the present form of the Pentateuch. Noah is a second Adam, starting the race anew; his three sons divide the world as the three sons of his predecessor, and a grandson almost bears the name and receives the curse of Cain, in such a way as to suggest a repetition of the Cain story in a different form. The genealogy separating Noah and Abraham corresponds to the genealogy separating Adam and Noah, and we could fancy the brief fragment of history which precedes the call of Abraham a mere imperfect repetition of that which precedes the Deluge, with a wider horizon, and a lower starting-point. But when we come to a careful examination of detail, we find the aspect of the Deluge somewhat heterogeneous with the rest of the narrative; and we gain a surer clue to its place in the story if we compare it with some sound or touch which partly interrupts and influences without concluding a dream. The true break in the narrative, the change of focus bringing us into a clearer view of our *dramatis personæ*, and substituting vivid definite features for the shadowy outlines previously visible, is not at the Deluge but at the call of Abraham. The Deluge comes in as an interruption in a series of myths; it is the call of Abraham which opens a new chapter in the history of the world.

From him we follow the progress of a single race, and learn to know a family as we know no other men and women but our contemporaries, or the creations of first-rate genius.

If Noah may be called a second Adam, it may be said in a deeper sense that Abraham is a second Noah. Ten generations would appear the appropriate interval for those periodical siftings of the race whereby the true seed is separated from its admixture. Such an interval brings us from the first father of humanity to the only descendant who was to be saved from the flood, and then again from the father of the saved race to the only descendant who was to be saved from a world of idolatry. A new sifting brings out a family renovated in a deeper sense, supernatural selection takes a new scope. Noah found grace in the sight of the Lord; but Abraham, in a greater fulness of significance, is known as the Friend of God.* The title extends beyond the limits of Palestine,† and Abraham is as much a Muhammedan as a Jewish saint. Yet the representation of a character so widely celebrated is by no means coherent; his history, till criticism lent its disentangling hand, was a hopeless combination of inconsistencies; and it is only to those of our own generation that this first vivid character in the records of the past has been distinctly visible.

* Twice in the Old Testament (Is. xli. 8, and 2 Chron. xx. 7), and once in the New (Jas. ii. 23). 'Αβραάμ, ὁ φίλος προσαγορευθεὶς, says Clemens Romanus (i. 10 and 17), almost repeating the words of St. James *καὶ φίλος Θεοῦ ἐκλήθη*, and supplying a link to modern Arabic usage, according to which Abraham is El-Khalil (the Friend).

† "Who has a better religion than he who does good, and follows the faith of Abraham? . . . for God took Abraham as his friend," Koran, iv. 120. The name of Abraham occurs almost as frequently in the Koran as in the Old Testament; he is indeed as much an Arab as a Jewish hero, and a stone is still shown on which he is said to have stood while restoring the famous Arab temple known as the Kaabah. (See introduction to the Koran by E. H. Palmer in the "Sacred Books of the East.")

It would appear as though under the name of Abraham two personalities had been confused, strikingly contrasted in all respects except that of a deep and intimate relation to the Eternal. Within the Hebrew Scriptures, if we withdraw a single page, he appears as a timid, wary owner of flocks and herds, kindly and beneficent, but unscrupulous, and with a horror of conflict exhibited in every grade of dishonourable surrender. But his history is not confined to the Hebrew Scriptures. His figure, like that of his descendant, Solomon, emerges into an eminence visible beyond the boundaries of his own nation : each is a legendary hero on other soil than that of Palestine. The "Friend of God" is known to the Arabs ; the whole Semitic race seems to recognise in him its type of communion with the Divine. And when we turn to the Abraham of non-Hebrew tradition we find the devotee of peace at any price has become a grand military hero, a fearless martyr, a heroic saint. He starts from Chaldæa with an army, he conquers and reigns at the great city Damascus,* he fearlessly confronts the terrible Nimrod, and is thrown by his order into a dungeon or a furnace, whence he comes, as Daniel from the lions' den, a living testimony to the divine power which has rewarded his trust by a miracle.† A previous discourse with the tyrant reminds us of the scornful address of Elijah to the priests of Baal.

* According to an extract given by Josephus ("Ant." i. 7) from Nicolaus Damascenus, a friend and flatterer of Herod, at whose request he undertook his history ; it is now known to us only by a few quotations. Abraham is also mentioned (says Josephus) by Berosus and Hecatzæus, the latter of whom devoted an entire work to his biography.

† The "Leben Abraham's nach auffassung der judischen Sage," Leipzig, 1859, of Dr. B. Beer (cited by Ewald and the source of most references in this paragraph) gives, in an interesting and convenient form, the legends belonging to Jewish tradition. Nimrod plays a large part in them, and seems to prefigure every tyrant by whom the descendants of Abraham were to be persecuted.

The command that he should worship the god of the terrible Nimrod—Fire—is met with fearless sarcasm. "Were not the triumphant foe of fire a fitter object of worship?" he asks the great monarch, who feels himself, apparently, in the presence of an intellectual superior. "Well, then, worship water," is the concession of Nimrod. Abraham has no difficulty in carrying on his scornful argument, and pursuing this idea of a limited and contingent existence throughout that cycle of the forces of nature which were the objects of idolatry. Nimrod ends the discussion by an impatient exclamation that the question should be tested by experiment. By his commands Abraham is surrendered to the flames that it may be seen whether any other god is able to deliver him from the terrible divinity worshipped by the tyrant. From this point the legend follows exactly the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, the impression made on Nimrod by Abraham's deliverance being parallel to that on Nebuchadnezzar, and resulting, in the same way, in the conversion of the monarch to the true religion.* A faint allusion to this event is sometimes suspected in the expression of Isaiah, "the God who redeemed Abraham."† We would read the legend, which appears a comparatively late one, rather as a testimony to the experience of many a true Jew in the fires of persecution.‡ The noble Akiba may have remembered it when, in the tortures under which he perished, he was asked whether he had any spell which prevented his

* The furnace is suddenly extinguished, and a charming garden takes its place. Here, as with Daniel, the flames, amid which the martyr passes three days unharmed, destroy every one else who even approaches them.

† Isaiah xxix. 22. Some think the name is here a mere synonym for the race, as that of Jacob in the following clause. A Hebrew writer, probably, was always ready, almost unconsciously, to blend the two ideas.

‡ See note to p. 67. The address of the Roman to Akiba is almost identical with that of Nimrod to Abraham.

feeling them. We may trust that many a victim of cruelty throughout the ages has discovered that God can change the fiery furnace to "a pleasant garden." Certainly the history of Judaism contains such a testimony; its appearance in the biography of the Father of the Faithful is evidently a refraction from the later experience of the race upon its early cloudland. But it could have found no place there were not a heroic figure, the centre of a mass of legends and myth, already supplied by tradition.

A single fragment from this epic, as we may call the mass of heroic legend which clusters round the name of Abraham, has found its way into the Hebrew Scriptures—the account in Genesis xiv. of the defeat by him of a Mesopotamian army which had carried off his nephew. If we could receive this account from the hand of the Jehovist, we might say that he gives us at once the portrait of a hero and a saint. His hero would thus renounce, in favour of a selfish kinsman, the fairest portion of a territory to which we should have thought he had most right; and when that kinsman was the victim of superior force, would prove by a deliverance carried out against overwhelming odds that this surrender had been an act of pure magnanimity. This combination of unselfish sacrifice and brilliant heroism seems a fragment from some Christian romance. Gladly should we make room for such a union of opposite forms of goodness in the delineation of the Father of the Faithful. But what, then, must we think of the twice-told surrender of Sarah to a royal harem? The chivalric victor over five kings, whose pursuit scatters the invaders as the defeat of an Alexander or a Cæsar, to appear, as we turn the page, a trembling coward yielding a treasure which an ordinary man would rather die than surrender, and this not even under the pressure of importunity, but in the mere selfish anxiety for security in a

conceivable danger! Impossible. We may be grateful to the critics who have restored a portrait where blended inconsistencies had left a mere blur. The heroic figure, scattering a multitude by his warlike energy, and appearing as an equal or superior of kings, needs a different background. Nothing in the Abraham of the Jehovist is lofty or aspiring but his trust in God.

The clue to all that is most characteristic of Abraham—to his strength as well as to much of his weakness—is given in his name, according to an etymology, not indeed found in the Jehovistic narrative, but illustrated by its whole course. He is the “Father of a Multitude.”* The unselfish indulgence which we find less uncommon in the parental relation than in any other, regulates with him all relation that is not dominated by mere personal cowardice—a larger tribute than it sounds. The feeling seems at once to raise all in him that is low, and to bar his approach to what is highest. We see, at the most solemn moment of his history, the craving for posterity, so characteristic of his race, in alliance with that curious bargaining spirit which is also its distinctive characteristic even to the present day. “Lord God, what wilt Thou *give* me?”† is his appeal in answer to a revelation which we should have expected to satisfy every yearning of humanity. The spirit that seeks to possess is strong in him as it is in all his race. The declaration, “I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward,” cannot satisfy his cravings; he must gain something beyond that supreme revelation wherein God gives Himself.

Yet how wonderfully does this self-centred impulse dwindle when brought into collision with the fatherly part of his nature. “Let there be no strife between me and thee,

* See Gen. xvii. 5, but the etymology is said to be doubtful.

† Gen. xv. 2.

for we are brethren," he addresses Lot ; disclaiming the rights of the elder, when the question of pasturage originates disputes among their herdsmen : "If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right ; or if thou take the right hand, then I will go to the left."* Lot shall have the first choice—a choice evidently predetermined to a Garden of Eden over which the fiery sword, however imminent, was as yet invisible. When he takes the fair and smiling valley of the Jordan and leaves Abraham the comparatively barren heights of Palestine, we hear nothing of remonstrance or attempted compromise. The flocks of the elder kinsman are driven to their scanty mountain pastures, those of the younger to the wealth of another Delta.† The comparison is inadequate for the Jehovist. For the first time, as he remembers how soon a fiery sword was to drive forth the inhabitants in this fair region, he remembers Eden ; the land which invites Lot is as "the garden of the Lord," and his narrative pictures the Father of the Faithful renouncing another paradise in favour of one who seems to have had no claim on him but that of blood, and not to have been altogether ready to take the part which the natural blood-relationship of an uncle and nephew would assign him. We may remember the unselfish surrender of Abraham side by side with his base surrender, as an instance of the complexity of human temptation, and the mysterious nearness of all human virtue to what is evil.

When we consider the sequel, the story takes the aspect almost of an allegory of temptation. The path that leads to "the garden of the Lord" ‡ is literally the broad road that leadeth to destruction. Abraham's was no character to resist the evil of Sodom ; a divine beckoning was hid beneath the selfishness of Lot, and he who met it with sacrifice renounced

* Gen. xiii. 8.

† xiii. 10.

‡ xiii. 11-13.

at once a seeming paradise and an actual hell. The hope of humanity is that this is the character of all unselfish sacrifice. It is only in the inspired history of the chosen people that we see this hope translated into narrative, and there only in a few instances, but these are enough to vindicate for the narrative a special place in the history of the world.

Lot's debt to his uncle exceeds this allotment in a terrestrial paradise, it may be considered to include his deliverance from the ruin of Sodom. Abraham's fearless pleading with Jahveh, disappointed of its hope of the "ten righteous men" in Sodom, is successful (so we may surely interpret the narrative) in bringing salvation to one man worthy of the epithet, and the summons to Lot at Sodom to "escape for his life" recalls the summons of Noah into the Ark, as the repulsive history of his drunkenness and its results repeats and exaggerates the lesson of Noah's drunkenness, both narratives warning us that the ark of salvation does not necessarily contain a saint.* The kindly impulses which this relation develops are not confined to the object which calls them forth. It seems as if, through the mere interest in a younger kinsman, there arises in the heart of the elder that yearning pity for the alien sinners of Sodom who are connected with his nephew merely through neighbourhood. The feeling is wonderfully modern, in the sense in which modern life is most in advance of the ancient world. We might range through the whole of antiquity, and a great part of the space that divides us from antiquity, and find nothing remotely approaching that earnest pleading for men threatened with divine vengeance, and lacking any bond of kindred with him who would fain be their saviour. This

* Gen. xviii. and xix. Compare xix. 12-17, with vi. 11-vii. 13, and xix. 30-38 with ix. 18-23. We seem almost following different versions of the same story.

tendency to pass its own limits is the essential characteristic of a true fatherhood. It may be, no doubt, the most exclusive of all relations, but a narrowly limited paternity is contrasted with that of the Father of a Multitude. It is in its deepest nature expansive ; and if it pass the bounds of mere vicarious selfishness it knows no other. The father who truly pities his children is ready to pity all the sufferers of earth.

The narrative records no rebuke of the narrowness which, in the very moment of a profound unveiling of the Father in heaven, prevents Abraham from forgetting that he does not possess a son. On the contrary, the craving is encouraged, even strengthened. The promise is made in the strongest form, we might say it is made even in an exaggerated form. He is to possess a posterity which is as the stars of heaven, nay, as the sand on the seashore. His trust in that promise is spoken of by St. Paul* as his appropriate righteousness. One who approached the narrative with an unbiassed mind would hardly, we should have thought, have thus regarded it. Abraham cannot wait patiently for the fulfilment of the divine promise ; and his impatience is the key to all that is most disastrous in his history. He yields to the craving of his wife† for offspring that may be called hers, and if we follow out the consequences of his action, as an example as well as a spring of inheritance, we might say that once again the woman plays the part of the Tempter, and ruins a world. He becomes the father of a son he is unable to protect from her jealous rage ; he, the "Father of a Multitude"—the utterer of the longing prayer, "Oh that Ishmael might live before Thee"—sends the dearly loved son into the wilderness to perish, with his mother, by one of the most fearful of deaths. The impatience which would anticipate a divine promise

* Rom. iv. 3.

† Gen. xvi. 1-6.

passes into cowardice, disloyalty, cruelty. The Father of a Multitude is no father to the son, however dearly loved, whom he has snatched, as it were, from the hands of the Father in heaven.

The hope dearest to the heart of a Hebrew is not delayed without reason. A deep teaching lies in the Hebrew idea, recurrent in so many forms, and haunting the world of fairy-land and legend, that the most precious gift of heaven must be long waited for. The late born child is always the best beloved, the wondrously gifted, the miracle of strength,* or the seer,† who is to decide the fate of a nation. More or less, we see that the late-born is the precursor of the Virgin-born. But the long deferred hope is a grievous trial to faith; and moreover this long waiting, in the case of Isaac, is but the prelude to a harder trial. The testing of faith is continued, after as well as before the satisfaction of hope, and an isthmus of secure possession seems to divide two oceans of hardly tried trust.

The drama of Genesis reaches its climax in the sacrifice of Isaac, and no part of the sacred history is more familiar to the reader, the polemic of antagonists having done as much to familiarise us with every detail as the reverent comments of those who see in it a symbol and prophecy of the greatest event in history. And yet there is no part of the narrative in which the mist of superficial familiarity has settled down with more obscuring veil, and over which the sudden breeze of criticism moves with more beneficent revelation. Let us endeavour to avail ourselves of it.

No reference to the sacrifice of Isaac is found in St. Paul's description of the faith of Abraham. "What saith the scripture? Abraham trusted God, and it was imputed

* In the case of Samson, Jud. xiii.

† In the case of Samuel, 1 Sam. i.

to him for righteousness," is the Apostle's reference to the history of the first father of the chosen race. To many a modern reader this might seem, as apparently it did to at least one of St. Paul's contemporaries, an inadequate account of the faith of Abraham. "Was not our father Abraham justified by works when he had offered his son Isaac upon the altar?"* asks St. James, in an implicit criticism, apparently of this reference. It could not be that the narrative of that sacrifice as it stood in the Hebrew Bible, failed to suggest to any other Jewish reader what it suggested to St. James. The narrative of that intended sacrifice, in all its dramatic vividness and pathetic beauty, must have arrested St. Paul's attention as it has since then arrested the attention of hundreds of generations; its typical significance must have been much more irresistible to him than to any of them. When he wrote, "He who spared not His own Son, shall He not freely with Him give us all things?"† he is almost saying of God what the Jehovist makes Jahveh say of Abraham. Yet in preaching the lesson of faith, he passes over what he might have brought forward as the most astounding instance of the power of faith. He sees the faith of Abraham in his trust in a *Father*; all fatherly instinct was a river to that ocean. To imagine the Father a Destroyer would have been to invert its course.

St. Paul could not, apparently, think of the sacrifice of Isaac as the command of God. He can hardly have been prepared to deny that it was the command of God; he seems to have turned his attention away from it. "Abraham trusted God" is his summary of the life of his ancestor. He does not illustrate that assertion as we should expect. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" would be to our view the typical expression of faith; it is a passage

* Jas. ii. 21.

† Rom. viii. 32.

nowhere cited or referred to by St. Paul. The great teachers of our kind would have spoken to very little purpose if they had failed to open to us a wider horizon of truth than their own. St. Paul does not turn to what we should have called the true picture of Abraham's faith, but he seems to have turned away from that which we are tempted to call the false. Yet let us listen also to St. James, and see if in following his indications we may not also pass beyond his limits, and find that the intended sacrifice of Isaac did indeed contain a picture of the true faith, and of the faith of a father.

The portion of Genesis we have hitherto been studying is altogether from the writer whom critics have named "The Jehovist." The narrative on which we enter with the biography of Abraham is not capable of so simple an analysis. The Jehovist continues his narration, which slips away from the Priests' Code at a mere touch. But an editor has combined it with another work, from which it cannot be so easily separated. In the first analysis we are dividing the work of two writers separated by at least three centuries, by a great national catastrophe, and a complete change of national ideal and religion. In the second analysis we are dividing the work of possible contemporaries, and must speak with a much lower degree of certainty. The distinctness of the Prophetic History and the Priests' Code (under whatever nomenclature) was obvious about two hundred years ago—that of the Jehovist and the so-called "Second Elohist" has been seen only by the critics of our own time. There is even something to be said against the attempt to make any distinction at all between them. "Is it probable,"* asks Canon Driver, "that there should have been two narratives of the Patriarchal and Mosaic ages, independent, yet largely resembling each other,

* "Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament," p. 109.

and that these narratives should have been combined together in a single whole at a relatively early period of the history of Israel (approximately in the eighth century B.C.)?" The answer given by this candid critic to his own question is that, on the whole, the weight of evidence is against the superficial aspect of probability. We may bring the case home to the uncritical reader by returning to the comparison with which we started. Imagine an endeavour to break up a harmony in which the first and third Gospels had got mixed up together. We should find exactly what is described by Canon Driver—two narratives of the same events, independent, yet largely resembling each other, with a certain amount of repetition and inconsistency; and—what we would here especially bring forward—we should find, in one important respect, exactly the same kind of difference between the two. The supernatural occurrences at the opening and close of the life of Christ vary just as they do in the lives of Abraham and Jacob. The heavenly messengers who bring the mysterious announcement to the parents of the Lord are conceived with different degrees of objectivity by the two Evangelists. The first tells us that an angel appeared to Joseph *in a dream*, the third narrates the visit of Gabriel to Mary in exactly the same tone as he proceeds to speak of Mary's journey to visit Elizabeth, and seems to conceive of the messenger as a being visible to any one who had eyes to see.* Exactly the same kind of difference is discernible when we turn from one part of Genesis to another. In one chapter the Divine Being is conceived as manifested in a material form visible to all, in another as speaking to the chosen spirit when outward sights and

* See also Luke xxii. 43. This and the following verse are wanting in some important MSS., and noted as doubtful in others, but they seem more likely to have been omitted than inserted.

sounds are curtained off by slumber.* The Jehovist must be classed with St. Luke; he narrates visible appearances which might have been seen by all who were in the same place. The other writer, like St. Matthew, regards such revelations as made directly to the mind of an individual; they are given in dreams, and in either case an approach is made to what is called rationalising the narrative. Of itself this is not enough reason for ascribing these two portions of Genesis to different authors; † the same person might have taken both points of view, but when we find inconsistencies and repetitions in the narrative, it becomes a strong additional reason for tracing it to different hands. On this and other accounts, the critics have proceeded to their second analysis of Genesis, and have broken up the "prophetic narrative" into two portions, known respectively as the work of the Jehovist and the Second Elohist.

In the attempt to discriminate between these two writers, and then again between both and an editor who has combined them, it seems possible that the new science of Biblical criticism has shown some of the arrogance of youth. It endeavours to distinguish, with an amount of detail which is somewhat startling, between writers of almost or quite the same age (the middle or end of the ninth century before Christ), the same way of feeling, and possibly even the same nationality, both writing nearly three millenniums ago. But the attempt is made by learned and able men, who have given their lives to the study they are

* As Gen. xx. 3. In the parallel Jehovistic passage xii. 17-19 we have evidently the first account of the plagues of Egypt. All Divine communications are made to Joseph through dreams.

† It must, indeed, be allowed—and the fact is surely an excellent warning for the critics—that this method would sometimes lead us wrong in the study of the Gospels. We should thus ascribe St. Matthew's account of the temptation to St. Luke.

expounding, and while we must surely confine our acceptance of their decisions to the broadest outlines and the simplest results, in this degree the acceptance is a necessity.

Even so we must protest against their forcing us to speak of a writer who lived at least 300 years before the other Elohist as the "Second Elohist." By this expression they mean only that they discovered him after the other—an inadequate reason, surely, for affixing a positively misleading label to any part of the Scriptures, and loading the memory of their readers with a title which must be remembered for one purpose and forgotten for another. We shall venture to replace this expression by that of "the Ephraimite," a title* not wholly unknown to criticism, and one which gives accurately the critical decision as to his nationality, he being universally regarded as an inhabitant of the northern kingdom. Opinion is less decided as to his time than his native country; he is generally regarded as rather later than the Jehovist, but the date of both is vague.

From a moral point of view, their separate characteristics are not sufficiently salient to prove their distinctness, but they provide it, when independently established, with expressive illustration. All that is most *intime* in the book of Genesis—most revealing on the merely human side—is traced to the pen of the Ephraimite.† He brings

* In this title we keep an advantage which is not so trivial as it looks. Critics now refer to this writer simply as E, and to the narrative in which his work is combined with that of the Jehovist as JE; the title suggested in the text thus keeps the right initial. The reader will remember that the title Elohist alone is correct, but as, by elder critics, it is applied to the Priestly writer, it is sometimes bewildering.

† "On dirait que plus d'aucun autre, il a vécu dans l'intimité de ses héros, et que nul ne s'est plu comme lui à chercher des couleurs pour peindre leur sentiments."—Westphal, "Sources," ii. 3. M. Westphal notes here this author's strong local interests, shown in the numerous topographical notices of his History, as Gen. xxi. 31, xxviii. 19, xxxiii. 19, 20, &c.

into the light of an imperious distinctness that vindication of God's care for the Gentile world, which in the greatest prophets we see from time to time as an under-current breaking through the main stratum of their thought, but which for the most part flows hidden beneath it. He begins his narrative (so we are taught by the decision of critics) with the twentieth chapter of Genesis, verses 1-17, the second account (as Genesis is at present arranged) of Abraham's strange surrender of his wife in fear for his own safety, the rival in this case being Abimelech, the Philistine king of Gerar. Now observe how emphatically the narrative vindicates the righteousness of a nation known to later ages only as the foes of the Israelites. When Abimelech is warned in a dream that he has taken another man's wife his vindication is emphatic and accepted. "Lord, wilt thou slay even a righteous nation? Said he not himself unto me, she is my sister? and she, even she herself, said, He is my brother: in the innocency of my heart and the integrity of my hands have I done this." And God said to him in a dream, "Yea, I know that in the integrity of thy heart thou hast done this, and I also withheld thee from sinning against me!"* What more could be said to any son of Israel? And note in the rebuke of Abimelech to Abraham how decidedly the moral advantage is with the Gentile. See the faithlessness and cowardice of Abraham. "I thought surely the fear of God is not in this place, and they will slay me for my wife's sake. And then" (note the quibble) "she is indeed my sister, the daughter of my father but not the daughter of my mother; and it came to pass when God caused me to wander from my father's house that I said unto her, This is thy kindness which thou shalt show unto me at every place whither we shall come, say of me, He is my brother." Contrast that

* Gen. xx. 3 seq.

pitiful confession of baseness with the manly rebuke of Abimelech, "Thou hast brought on me and my nation a great sin; thou hast done things that ought not to be done," and it will be impossible to deny that the opening note, at all events, of the Ephraimite historian is sympathy with the Gentile.

In the next fragment from this writer,* the second sending forth of Hagar into the desert, it is not equally impossible to assert that the sympathies of the writer are against the Egyptian slave, for we are told that God said unto Abraham, "In all that Sarah saith unto thee, listen to her voice, for in Isaac shall thy seed be called." But let the reader follow Hagar's journey with her fainting child through the desert towards her home, watch her casting him into the shade of a shrub to die of thirst and withdrawing that she might not witness the last agonies of her infant, and then read of the heavenly vision, the wonderful revelation of the well, and the promise, not less welcome even than that exquisite discovery, that of Ishmael was to be made "a great nation," and say whether we can study this account and not feel that the sympathy of the historian is with the fugitive Egyptian slave, even though he feel her dismissal the intention of heaven, as Virgil the defeat of his hero's countrymen.†

The Ephraimite, if we have rightly deciphered his narrative, shows a truer sympathy with this Gentile spouse of Abraham than does the great apostle of the Gentiles.

* Gen. xxi. 1. The end of this fragment seems doubtful. It appears a doublet of the Jehovistic narration, Gen. xvi. Evidently it cannot be fitted on to the previous narrative, according to which Ishmael would be about sixteen (children not being weaned before three years among the Hebrews); here he is an infant in his mother's arms.

† Virgil, "Æn." ii. 427. "Dis aliter visum." See also i. 530-533: words apparently conveying a reflection on the barbarous policy of the third Punic War, but, as the whole plan of the poem shows, stopping short of a protest against it.

When St. Paul quoted the unfeeling and imperious demand of Sarah, "cast out this bondwoman and her son,"* as though it had been the command of God, we must confess that in his impatience to find scriptural authority for the great reform he was urging, he betrays the evil influence which the slave-system of antiquity left upon its noblest minds. He seeks for an allegory where he should have found only a warning. We may turn from the Epistle to the Galatians with a thankful sense of contrast to a beautiful addition to the history of the Egyptian slave, preserved in the Talmud,† according to which Keturah, the wife whom Abraham married after the death of the imperious Sarah, was in truth no other than Hagar. She had always remained true to her disloyal spouse, and the name of Keturah, signifying *bound*, was given to her as a tribute to her fidelity. Surely the writer who recorded this ending to her pathetic history was a worthy successor to her early biographer! The same pen might have traced the narrative of her frantic rush from the sight of her fainting infant, followed by the revelation of the well and promise of the "great nation," and this sweet record of patient love rewarded, and long endurance requited with secure possession. It is in such glimpses beyond the limits of the Bible that we learn to appreciate the true bent of its hidden tendencies and the revelation of its deeper meaning.

We might almost call the Ephraimite the Hellenist among the authors of Genesis. He shows a readiness to represent both sides of every question, and to give a certain prominence

* "Howbeit, what saith the Scripture?" Galatians iv. 30. A comparison of the words which follow with Gen. xxi. 10, shows that St. Paul must have made this confusion, but perhaps he thought that he was justified in this by v. 12. It is even more difficult to imagine that he called Ishmael's jeers at the little Isaac "persecution," but one does not see what else he could mean by the words.

† See Beer, p. 83.

and distinctness to that which we may call the other side, which is as characteristic of the dramatic people *par excellence* as it is uncharacteristic of Israel. The dramatic spirit, in truth, is always antagonistic to the preacher. The monotone of the Hebrew prophets is essentially contrasted with the varied harmonies of the Greek tragedians; we see their antagonism whenever we detect a common element in their utterance. Yet we may discover something of this Greek elasticity in a Hebrew writer. The narrator, who puts a deserved rebuke of the Father of the Faithful in the mouth of a Philistine, and tells the story of his harshness to an Egyptian slave with manifest sympathy for its victim, has something in him akin to Greek tragedy, while he is yet a true son of Israël.

It is mainly from the Ephraimite that we learn of the sacrifice of Isaac; if it were exclusively from him, the story would gain greatly in coherence with its background. The blessing on the action of Abraham from the pen of the Jehovistic editor with which it concludes is inconsistent with much that has gone before. "*Because* thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thine only son from me, I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore," is an implicit contradiction of several preceding passages according to which the promise was made with no conditions. We must not, perhaps, assume that a narrative begins to be spurious the moment it ceases to be consistent. But we may urge that this one would be complete without a fragmentary allusion which includes repetitions and suggests difficulties, and that the attention of the reader may legitimately be directed towards the work of that writer who leaves the story a dramatic picture, rather than the brief appendage of one who finds in it a moral lesson.

In any case we may remember the Ephraimite as the

narrator of the sacrifice of Isaac, and if the epithet were not too cumbrous it would be that by which we should choose to designate one whom the critics have named so unfortunately. His strong dramatic bent, his sympathy with the victims of the world's progress, his vivid appreciation of what we may call the disinterested element in the narrative—all come out most forcibly in this picture of filial submission and fatherly sacrifice, so rich in a wide human significance. Yet nothing of the Hebrew element is lost. As we compare the story with cognate legends of the Greek race, we may discern in those pictures of life which come nearest the ideal of Hellenism a peculiar expression of the faith of Israel. The shrinking horror of Iphigenia on the one hand, the absolute submission of Isaac on the other, bring out the vivid contrast * between the genius of two peoples called forth to set forth side by side the conflict of many wills, the supreme and penetrating predominance of the One.

The attempted sacrifice of Isaac is an incident peculiarly difficult to approach with a mind open to new views.† Its typical significance for the Christian reader, enforced by those dim memories of our Church services which make an atmosphere we can neither ignore nor altogether allow for, seems to interpose a barrier to any rationalising interpretation as does the music of a song. It is with difficulty we disturb associations so venerable and august. Yet a different view is not without literary justification. Abraham, says M. Renan, must have been remembered as one who *refused* to sacrifice his son. Let us look at it from this side, and

* See the indication of struggle in the Agamemnon of Æschylus, 220-230, as compared with the absolute submission in the inchoate sacrifice of Isaac.

† Of course it is not intended to imply that the suggestions given here have any originality. The epithet is used simply in contrast to the conventionally orthodox view.

ask ourselves if a larger proportion of Scripture is not made coherent and significant by conceiving of the faith of Abraham as a trust in the Heavenly Father, overcoming the claim of that bloody worship which for so long remained the characteristic of the people among whom he was dwelling, and (however inexplicably to our minds) the temptation of his own race.*

It was not far from this spot, many centuries later, and about the time that these legends were gathered into their present shape, that the descendants of that incestuous union narrated by the Jehovist witnessed another sacrifice of a son by a father. The reigning king of Moab, when attacked by two Hebrew kings † (the first time we hear of such a union in the divided kingdoms), "took his son that should have reigned instead of him, and sacrificed him upon the walls of the city" which the Hebrew army was at that time besieging; and to judge from the confused and incoherent issue of the story, the horrible rite was followed by success in its object—an unexplained retreat of the invading forces being its apparent consequence.‡ Over a century and a half later, in the disastrous days of Assyrian ascendancy and the

* Compare Jer. vii. 31, which has almost the aspect of a protest against this very account. "The children of Judah . . . have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, *which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart, saith the Lord.*" Ezekiel, xvi. 20, has an even more emphatic protest: "Thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, whom thou hast borne unto me [saith the Lord God], and these hast thou sacrificed under them to be devoured. Is this of thy whoredoms a small matter, that thou hast slain my children, and delivered them . . . to pass through the fire?" Here it seems carefully explained that the prophet is not alluding to a mere ceremony.

† 2 Kings iii. 27.

‡ A reference to the "Speaker's Commentary" exhibits the bewilderment created by the account. It seems actually supposed that an invading army in the ninth century B.C. would abandon a siege in horror at the extremities to which they had driven their enemy.

approaching fall of the kingdom of Israel, we come upon a more expressive testimony to the strange fascination of this hideous worship for a people oppressed with fear of a great national calamity. We learn of Ahaz, the father of Hezekiah, and contemporary of Isaiah, that he sacrificed to Moloch one of his children in that valley which, under its later form of Gehenna, has fitly (so far as such associations are concerned) passed into our type of hell. It seems strange that we know so little of this sacrifice * which must have taken place about the time of the founding of Rome, at a period which, in comparison with that on which we have been dwelling, we may call one of historic daylight. But from the denunciations of the prophets we must evidently regard this hideous act (repeated by Manasseh, the grandson of Ahaz) as a consummation of some recurrent temptation, characteristic of an age of bloodshed. We must keep in mind these sacrifices of Gehenna side by side with the sacrifice of Moab, if we would understand the sacrifice of Moriah.

The story of Moab presents us with a nearer parallel to the story of Abraham than that just cited—with one so close, indeed, that it seems to afford the true interpretation of the legend which it echoes. "Shall I give my first-born for my transgressions, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" asks the Moabite king, and the Mesopotamian seer answers

* The writer of the article on Ahaz in the last edition of the "Dictionary of the Bible," makes the sacrifice a mere ceremony, such as in all cases is likely to supersede so hideous a rite, the passing of the infant between two fires. It seems a strong argument for such a view that Isaiah, who denounces the predilection of Ahaz for idolatrous religion, makes no allusion to such horrors. Grätz, on the other hand, takes the account as of an actual sacrifice, and does not even notice the opposite view. "Dort," i.e., in the valley of Hinnom, "liesz Achas einen seiner Söhne, taub gegen das herzzerreissende Jammern des unschuldigen Wesens, im Feuer verkohlen."—"Geschichte der Israeliten," ii. 152.

in words which no prophet of Israel could improve, "What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly before thy God?"* The dialogue of Balak and Balaam is, to our mind, another version of the conflict of the faith of Abraham with the superstition of Moab. "Shall I give my first-born for my sin?" asks the Father of the Faithful, who was surely conscious of sin needing expiation, though perhaps it was very different from those parts of his conduct which strike us in that light. And may we not say that the voice which answered him is rather that of God than of Jahveh? Assuredly when the Chaldean seer brought to curse Israel warned the king of Moab that the demands of the King of heaven were justice, and mercy, and reverence to the source of both, he was not bringing a message unknown to Abraham, as the misgiving which it answered may have been known to him also. If what the Jehovist had before him was some legend in which this Moloch element was dimly shadowed in the far past, and absolutely forbidden in the present, we can understand how the conflicting impulses of reverence for the traditional view of the commands of God, and reverence,† yet more deeply rooted, for the inward commands of God, were regarded by him as alike divine, and their inconsistency accepted as a part of that change which the revelation of the Eternal takes in its refraction through the atmosphere of mortality.

We must concede that neither on the perennial nor the temporary side are we justified in speaking of the sacrifice of Isaac as if it imported some difficulty into our

* Micah vi. 5-8. He was a younger contemporary of Isaiah.

† There is an interesting account in the Talmud, according to which a doubt of the righteousness of the sacrifice is suggested to Abraham by Satan. The ascription could hardly have been made but for some latent doubt whether it might be after all the voice of God.

conception of the divine government which otherwise we might escape. To speak of the demanded sacrifice of Isaac, as if it were something to which human experience presents no parallel, is a strange forgetfulness of actual fact in a world where every newspaper brings the record of some only child snatched away from clinging arms, and from hearts that find comfort only in the thought that the removal is the act of a Father. And it is equally unreasonable to deny that Jahveh may well have repented of his decision to destroy Isaac, since he repented of his decision to destroy the whole human race. No change of intention is improbable in such a being; he is the saviour and the destroyer alternately. Nevertheless we are not obliged to imagine that for the historian of Israel he was the destroyer and the saviour equally. Such an experience as that of a father called on to sacrifice a son is not a *revelation* of the divine character. If Abraham, called on by that bloody ritual of Moab, which as we know survived in Carthage in historic times,* to sacrifice to his God his best beloved, felt himself arrested on the very brink of this moral precipice by the voice of a heavenly Father, and found in a new revelation of the Divine a new sanction to all that was truly human, we can understand best the view of the Jehovist by accepting it in the mutilated form under which it has reached us, and recollect only that Abraham released his son from imminent sacrifice and received the blessing of heaven. He, the Father of a Multitude, has shown his people how to trust in the Father in heaven.

* In the war against Agathocles, at the end of the fourth century B.C. (see the horrible account in Diodorus Siculus, xx. 14), it is said that 300 infants were offered to this dreadful death by their own parents. The historian thinks that Euripides is referring to this custom when he makes Orestes say that his tomb shall be a gulf of fire. Eurip. "Iph. Tauris," 625, 6.

He who is truly the Father of a Multitude must be akin to the Divine. As the Friend of God, all the strength of Abraham's nature emerges. Towards his human kindred he is cowardly even when he is loving. He lacks the physical courage to protect Sarah against Pharaoh, and the moral courage to protect Hagar against Sarah. He surrenders the beloved child and the mother to the most miserable death rather than encounter the anger of a woman; he is willing to surrender this woman to what he should have dreaded more than any death, in order to avert an imaginary danger to himself. But in turning from the human to the Divine, we emerge from darkness into light. Abraham distrusts righteous men, but he trusts God. When the wickedness of Sodom threatens the destruction of the city, he pleads with the Supreme. "That be far from Thee, to destroy the righteous with the wicked. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" He is more fearless in presence of Jahveh than in presence of Pharaoh. He could not do right himself, but his God must do right. His morality is behind that of the Egyptian monarch when it concerns his own actions, but as a spring of faith in God it is above that of many a Christian. "Thou hast done things that ought not to be done," says Pharaoh truly to Abraham. "Thou wilt do nothing that ought not to be done," says Abraham confidently to Jahveh. There he speaks the lesson of faith for all his race and for all mankind.

The distinctive appellation of the Friend of God, as applied to Abraham, is justified by the contrast of his history with all that follows. No succeeding patriarch takes the sublime position which he occupies in the defence of Sodom. Moses indeed approaches it in his plea for his people in the desert, and inasmuch as he is successful, may appear to go beyond his ancestor. But no other history admits us, as it were,

behind the scenes in the divine councils. "Shall I hide from Abraham this thing that I shall do?" is a sentence not recalled to us in any subsequent utterance ascribed to Jahveh. No successor is chosen out for the same close and intimate intercourse. Moses, where he approaches nearest to such a position, is the representative of his race. It is as their deliverer that he is elected to stand before Pharaoh and before God. Abraham comes into that relation individually. This is the aspect under which he seems to have struck St. Paul. "He received the seal of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised, that he might be the father of them that believe though they be not circumcised." He alone, of the Hebrew people, stood in the position of those who were beyond the pale of the Hebrew people. He is chosen out from a world; he does not succeed to the inheritance of a race. As such he is the representative of the soul chosen by God everywhere, in a sense in which this could hardly be said of any one of his descendants. The divine choice is not attracted to him by eminent virtue, in that he is inferior to the Egyptian and the Philistine; if he be regarded as a saint or a hero, every step in his career has to be either distorted, forgotten, or enormously exaggerated. This Divine choice is attracted by that spirit of trust which pleads for Sodom, which holds firm to the confidence that the Judge of all the earth was just. This it is which fits Abraham to be the father of a chosen race, called forth to testify to the reality of the Unseen. The appropriateness of any individual to such a position is found not in genius or virtue, but in the confidence that the instincts of love, of justice, of purity are a revelation to humanity of that which lies beyond itself.

The greatest distinction which attaches to the name of Abraham—the fact that he alone of all the heroes of the Old

Testament finds a place in the parables of the New Testament—is somewhat veiled from Christian eyes by a natural reluctance to dwell upon the part there ascribed to him. The dialogue between him and the rich man in some respects strangely recalls, while it also appears to invert in purport the conversation between Jahveh and Abraham. The rich man pleads for his brethren as Abraham for Lot, but Abraham in heaven seems to have lost the high ideal of Abraham on earth, and answers without apparent sympathy a plea which is fundamentally identical with that which he had formerly brought with such fearless confidence to the divine ear. Something of this is the result of that strange perversity by which every allusion to a future life in the New Testament has been twisted into agreement with the dogma of an endless hell. Every word of this parable is either irrelevant or hostile to such a dogma. To describe the interval separating the abode of the rich man and Lazarus as one which cannot be passed at will, is not to declare that their inhabitants are for ever to remain separate. To speak of the pains of hell as correlative to the pains of earth, is to pronounce them transient; to exhibit them as issuing in unselfish care for others, is to deny that they are merely penal. But, even after discarding this confusion we still have to remind ourselves that we are perusing a mutilated and perhaps interpolated record of words written long after they were spoken, and remembered through a mist of prejudice. It is only to that devout inattention which a belief in mechanical inspiration has instilled into readers of the Bible that the parable could be taken as a warning against the dangers of material wealth, or the lack of liberality in its disposal; but it is not impossible that this common delusion in the reader began with the writer. To escape it we need only observe that if the crumbs on which Lazarus desired to

feed had not been granted him, the answer of Abraham would lose all its point. Supposing the rich man had withheld all relief from the sufferer at his gate he would not have been informed that Hades inverts the experience of this world, but reminded that he could receive no drop of water in hell from one to whom he had refused a crumb of bread when on earth. We must look for some other teaching here.

In the parable of Lazarus and Dives we have evidently the expansion of a few words which our Lord had spoken at an earlier period.* The second miracle of healing, according to the first Evangelist, was performed at the demand of a Gentile, and accompanied with expressions of special sympathy not at first sight entirely explicable. This appeal from a Roman soldier for help to a paralytic slave seems to have awakened in the Saviour some longing sense of a faith lacking to His countrymen, and to have drawn from Him the mournful augury that while many, like this centurion, should come from the east and from the west, and sit down with Abraham in the kingdom of heaven, the children of the kingdom should be cast into outer darkness, where should be weeping and gnashing of teeth. The parable simply repeats that foreboding in a concrete form, and it seems strange that two expressions so exactly equivalent have not been more often connected. They who come from the east and the west to sit down with Abraham are well symbolised by the beggar desiring to be fed with the crumbs that fall from the table of the son of Abraham; the outer darkness is given in a somewhat different figure as the quenchless thirst of one who had deemed himself the possessor of a wealth the Gentile sought to share, and awakened to the discovery

* Matt. viii. 5—13; Luke vii. 1—10. Note that both Evangelists connect the appeal with the Sermon on the Mount. Luke has the expression quoted in the text elsewhere (xiii. 28—30).

expressed in the awful warning—"Ye are they who justify yourselves in the sight of men; but that which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination with God." What things are they which are highly esteemed among men and an abomination with God? Not surely purple and fine linen or sumptuous fare in the literal sense of the words; it were an extravagant absurdity to imagine that in the light of the Eternal one kind of external equipment is better or worse than another. That which man highly esteems and God abhors must be a possession belonging wholly to the moral world.

Let us turn to another Jewish expression of this warning. We are told in the Talmud of one who died and quitted the sphere of earth, but was permitted to return to it and give his impression of heaven and hell. "What hast thou seen in the other world, my son?" asked the Rabbi Levi, his father. "I have seen an inverted world; they who here are highly exalted were abased in the depths, they who are last here take there the highest place." "It is the true world thou hast seen, my son," said the elder Rabbi. It is most improbable that we have in this parable from the Talmud a Jewish echo from the parable of Lazarus. We may accept it as an independent testimony to this declaration of our Lord, that the vision of the Eternal inverts the estimate of the temporal. The despair of the rich man who beyond the grave finds himself in the utmost need, would describe the awakening of the Pharisaic spirit to its own poverty. The seeming wealth of wisdom, the treasures of the Law, have become the whitewash on the sepulchre; the hoarded tradition of distinctive precept, sanctioned by memories of heroism and an object of yearning to the Gentile at the gate, under its alliance with hard-heartedness and greed, turned to mere empty words; and he who had fancied it his

exclusive possession awakens to the discovery that the spirit which *desires* to be fed with the faith of Abraham is nearer Abraham than those who have imagined themselves to be its exclusive possessors.* To seek to *possess* a faith is to hoard up wealth which must remain on this side the grave. To awaken to the discovery that we must lose this possession on the threshold of Eternity is to be tormented by quenchless thirst.

Our Lord, adopting a prevalent Jewish belief, assigns to Abraham † the same place in the realms of the dead as that which Dante, borrowing from Virgil, has assigned to Cato : that of an ideal representative in the domain of the Eternal of the divine justice to which he had appealed on earth. He is an embodiment and type of the fatherhood which extends to Ishmael as well as Isaac, while he accepts the progeny of Isaac as emphatically his son—an address which of itself should have been enough to preclude the ordinary interpretation of the parable. There is no harshness in his reminder that the experience of need which Lazarus had known on earth must be known by Dives elsewhere. There does, it must be confessed, appear some harshness in the repulse to his desire to send Lazarus from the realms of the dead to the

* A passage from Juvenal, xiv. 100-104, strikingly illustrates this view :

“ Romanas autem soliti contemnere leges,
Judaicum ediscunt, et servant, ac metuunt jus,
Tradidit arcano quodcumque volumine Moses.
Non monstrare vias, eadem nisi sacra colenti :
Quæsitum ad fontem solos deducere verpos.”

It is the combination of this spirit of grudge with that of zealous orthodoxy which the parable describes as wealth that vanishes away.

† “Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, when we shall have suffered” (the various tortures inflicted by Antiochus Epiphanes), “shall receive us into their bosoms,” says one of the seven brethren who are represented as martyrs to their fidelity to Jewish law, Fourth Book of Maccabees (xiii. 14). The general opinion as to the date of this book may be best given by saying that it used to be ascribed to Josephus.

brethren on earth. How that repulse was connected with the narrative given elsewhere of a Lazarus who was recalled from the realms of the dead, and who is represented as testifying in vain of the Power which had revived him, we are not concerned here to inquire. We are investigating the parable of Lazarus and the rich man only so far as it throws light on the character of Abraham. Abraham trusted in the justice of God, and remains as the ideal embodiment of that justice in the world of reality.

In pursuing our combined narrative we pass almost directly from Abraham to Jacob. The life of Isaac is but a bleached and pallid reflection of that of his father. Or rather he reflects only its timidity and its yieldingness. It is a significant token of his place in tradition that Jacob, in the moment of his parting with his father-in-law, and concluding a solemn covenant between them, swears by the God of Abraham and the *fear** of Isaac. May we trace in this expression a record of the uncompleted sacrifice? Was the bloody ritual of the land of Moab a medium through which the imagination of Isaac always contemplated the Divine even when his intellect had been assured of its error? All the little we know about him would be made more vivid by this view. He "trembles with a great trembling" when he discovers the deception of Jacob; agitation and fear in the blind and bedridden man (who would not be past maturity, according to all indications of date) seem to take the place of any righteous indignation, and a helpless lament is all he has to give the son whom his easy-going credulity has wronged. It is the fear of Esau's vengeance which drives Jacob into exile; the notion of any displeasure from Isaac seems never to occur either to him or his partial mother. The fear which he is so ready to feel, it appears that he cannot inspire either in

* Gen. xxxi. 42, repeated 53.

friend or foe. The story of Abimelech and Rebecca is evidently a mere doublet of the story of Pharaoh and Sarah, and except in that story, the yielding and uncontentious spirit of Abraham shows itself in his son more for good than for evil. Abraham has yielded the best of the land to a kinsman ; his son makes the same surrender to men of a different race and faith, even withdrawing from the Philistines who grudge his flocks their pasturage, and twice recommencing the arduous labour of digging a well when the herdsmen of Gerar lay claim to the precious waters which he might have defended as his own property. We may take the passivity of Isaac in his inchoate sacrifice as a clue to his whole history, and see in him a blameless heir of Abraham and father of Jacob, inheriting and passing on their common timidity, but not their common guile.

In Jacob the family type emerges into a dramatic vividness unparalleled, we may almost say, in any other record ancient or modern. The nearest parallel to his character, though drawn by the hand of Homer, does not exceed the Hebrew portrait in vividness. The deceiver of father, brother, and brother-in-law, seems a Hebrew reproduction of the Hellenic ideal of craft and astuteness ; nor are the fairer features in the portraits of Jacob and the wily Ulysses dissimilar ; parental and conjugal affection is an equally important factor in both narratives, and the reunion with Telemachus has much of the pathos of the reunion with Joseph. But here, as elsewhere, we find the common elements in Hebrew and Gentile legend bring out only the more forcibly the distinctively moral heritage of Israel. Ulysses is a triumphant deceiver. His wiles are the apparatus of glorious achievement and of victory over disasters which in no case appear as their punishment. Jacob, on the other hand, is a living exhibition of the calamities that beset the deceiver. Driven

into exile by the fear that dogs deceit, he becomes a prey to trickery like his own ; the deceiver of his father is deceived by his father-in-law ; the impersonator of his brother is cheated with an unloved bride who impersonates her much-loved sister, and after this curiously exact requital of his own perfidy the rest of his "few and evil days" are all darkened by the results of the double marriage into which he has been entrapped. His cheat of his father is commemorated in the disastrous fact that with him we encounter the first harem.

It is strange that the judgment on Jacob's perfidy is so constantly forgotten. No professedly moral tale could delineate a more exact requital than that meted out to him. When the morning light reveals that the veiled figure given to his arms was the unloved elder sister, we seem to see the shadow of Esau pass before the deceiver more vividly than his actual presence in the meeting when Jacob cowers before him and receives his forgiveness. The subsequent series of wives is inevitable. Rachel has been his choice from the first, and the mutual jealousy of the rival wives forces on the perhaps reluctant husband other women, who reduplicate the part of Hagar ; he, like Abraham, being apparently a mere tool in the hands of his wives, as he had previously been in those of his mother. The subservience of the men to the women appears a characteristic of the family. Abraham and Jacob both repeat the part of Adam in the acceptance of direction from a wife who represents the Tempter, and of Isaac we learn almost nothing that is not traceable to the initiative of mother or spouse. This subservience has a curiously modern aspect. But if the female half of mankind be its representative in regard to the divine, a certain importance given to that sex in the actual business of life, to the detriment of those who thus abdicated the distinctive

part of man, is not unnatural. The sense of dependence which prepares a man to seek control from a right source, is remote from the lack of independence which prepares a man to accept control from a wrong source ; but in that tangle of good and evil which makes up this world we do find those who feel the weakness of humanity inclined to accept the direction which they should originate, and give a place to the weak which should be kept for the strong.

The inheritance of expiation fills the "few and evil days" of Jacob. . But it is especially discernible where it is ordinarily most forgotten. The story of Joseph is known to every Christian child, yet its true moral eludes the notice of many a Christian sage. The stupid gloss of some editor, that Jacob loved Joseph because he was the son of his old age, has hidden from many generations of Christian readers the obvious fact that it was only the sons of Rachel to whom Jacob, in any true sense of the words, was a father at all. Envy and hatred from the sons of the unloved to the sons of the loved spouse is an absolute necessity ; no man can mete out an equal fatherhood to the children of a wife he has chosen and the children of one he has been tricked into accepting. And we may say with very little exaggeration that not a single fact is told us of all the sons of Jacob except Joseph and Benjamin which does not recall a loveless marriage, brought about by fraud and endured with reluctance. Resentment on the one hand, deceit on the other, seem woven in with the very existence of the sons of Leah and the two slaves. They are a living commemoration of loveless fraud, and their actions bear out the record of their origin. Their father's lament over the crime of Simeon and Levi in a lesser degree applies to all.

As Jacob's trick upon his father is, as it were, mirrored in his deception by his father-in-law, so, but with a deeper

significance, inasmuch as it is the result of a natural law of inheritance, is that unbrotherly act of hostility avenged in the dissensions of his sons, and its results on the life of the son he loves best. In the relations of Joseph and his brothers that idea of hostile brethren which took its start with the sons of Adam, emerges into an elaborate drama. The rôle of Cain is multiplied, the rôle of Abel is transfigured. Raised from the pit which should have been his tomb, Joseph emerges into a new life, and appears, like the risen Saviour, "in another form" to the brethren who had plotted his death, and to whom he is at once a victim and a redeemer. Nevertheless, the hatred thus exhibited in its true light against his magnanimity and wisdom is not entirely gratuitous. The partiality of which Jacob has been the object he has apparently carried on, and we hardly need aid from the text to feel certain of a difference of treatment between the sons of the loved and unloved spouse : of the union with the kinswoman and the union with the slaves. This co-existence of beloved and unbeloved children of the same father is an inevitable result of polygamy ; its most familiar illustration is in the story of Joseph, but it is the least clearly apprehended lesson of the familiar tale.

In turning to the individual history of Joseph our business is again with the writer in whom we have ventured to detect an element of Greek elasticity and dramatic expansiveness. Of all the characters of the Old Testament Joseph is the only one in whom it is hard to discover a fault. We see nothing of the cowardice of Abraham, the weakness of Isaac, the fraud of Jacob. He is a spotless hero, a prefiguring type of the true Israel to whose history, in some ways, his own is curiously similar. No other character from the first page of the history to the last could be chosen out as such a type. And yet when we give the narrative of his misfortunes and his exaltation a careful study, we cannot but perceive that the

narrator from whom we learn them has, in faint shades and touches here and there, done something to provide his prosecutors with a certain amount of excuse. The picture of the youthful Joseph bragging of his visions,* and announcing to the sons of the unloved spouse that they will have to do homage to him, the son of the loved, seems to present a certain apology for the fierce resentment of men whose earliest recollections were of that cold shadow which encircles partiality, who would learn from their mother's lips the careful arrangements which at critical moments gave *them* the post of danger and *him* the shelter of security,† and which throughout their whole career must have associated all tenderness for the only parent whom they could truly reckon theirs with a grudging jealousy towards the pampered brother on whom was concentrated the favour of the father. These suggestions are latent, they have to be sought out. But they are characteristic of what we have called the Greek element in the Ephraimite writer, which is the same as saying that they are wonderfully true to the deeper experiences of life.

The life of Jacob is one of expiation; no part of his dealings with mankind, before his reunion in old age to his beloved son, fails in some way or other to commemorate and rebuke the perfidy which had made him an exile. Yet in his visions of the Divine he seems to escape from this shadow. As in the case of Abraham, we find the true aspect of the character emerge only in friendship with God. His sojourn in Mesopotamia is begun and ended by a revelation given in the visions of the night; the first communicates a promise identical with that which he

* Gen. xxxvii. 5-11.

† "And he put the handmaids and their children foremost" (when he was expecting an attack from Esau) "and Leah and her children after, and Rachel and Joseph hindmost," Gen. xxxiii. 2.

must often have heard repeated as made to his grandfather.* As in that case, the bargaining spirit of his race comes out even in the solemn moment of a profound and inspiring revelation. If Jahveh will make his service remunerative to him, it shall be faithfully given. A purifying discipline separates the revelation thus received and the next. When he sees once more the face of God, he is not occupied with the thought of food and raiment.† He seeks a blessing from his mysterious antagonist, not as he has sought it from his father, by lying devices, but by persistent endeavour, by arduous struggle, by entreaties and tears. So we may complete the narrative of the Jehovist by that of a prophet who wrote about 740 B.C., and seems to have read the history; and whose expansion lights up the legend with a wonderful force and depth of meaning. Hosea is the prophet of sorrow, of compassion, of repentance. His own history, or some series of events which he represented as an autobiographic parable (for surely a chapter of true experience is given us in the story of the faithless wife and the compassionate husband),‡ had taught him a peculiar sympathy with the life of repentance, and when we turn from the Jehovist's narrative of supernatural struggle to Hosea's picture of prayer, we feel almost as though we were turning from a parable to its interpretation. "He had power over the angel, and prevailed"; but how? "he wept and made supplication unto him." It is another form of the narrative, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me." Surely the blessing is reiterated when on the following day § "Esau ran

* Gen. xxviii. 11-22 almost a repetition of xiii. 14, 16, and xviii. 18. The promise to Jacob, however, is an interpolation from E, and throws the story into some confusion. See the admirable arrangement in Addis, "Documents of the Hexateuch."

† Gen. xxxii. 24-32; cf. Hosea xii. 3, 4.

‡ Hosea i. 2-4.

§ Gen. xxxiii. 4 and 10.

to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept." "Receive my present, forasmuch as I have seen thy face *as one seeth the face of God*, and thou wast pleased with me," might seem to hold the clue to the parable. Have we not all felt that there, where the estranged brother has taken us to his heart, we have seen the face of God? Through man's forgiveness he who has ever consciously received it is sensible of the embrace of the Divine.

In concluding the biography of Joseph, we finish the first chapter of the history of Israel. We pass from the life of the family to the life of the race. The transition naturally suggests some questioning as to the relation between the two. In what relation, we cannot but ask, does this series of vividly individual figures stand to history? All which is said in the book of Genesis of a person is meant (we are told) of a tribe. Abraham is no more an individual than John Bull is. When we read that he was called on to leave his home and migrate into Palestine, what is intended to be conveyed is that the descendants of a mythic ancestor accomplished such a migration; his journey into Egypt is another version of the sojourn there of his descendants, and so on. Are we committed to this conclusion in accepting the decisions with which it is associated as to the form of the Mosaic narrative? This is the question with which we would conclude our review of the history of Genesis, for in truth it seems to us one of those problems of which the full and clear statement is the only possible solution.

We must allow that we do sometimes find on the page of Scripture confusion between a person and a tribe. The Hebrew mind hardly aims at any exact discrimination between the two, and so far as such a distinction is intended, it is constantly missed. We come upon an unquestionable

instance of such confusion in the account of the selling of Joseph to *Ishmaelites*; who would be the second cousins of Joseph and his brothers, while the whole mention is that of the meeting, not of two groups of the same family, but of alien tribes. We must perforce acknowledge here the collision of diverse views of history. Jacob is an individual, while the member of his race removed from him only one generation has become a people. Are we to look upon this as a clue to the meaning of the whole history? This no doubt is the critical view, and it may be thought impossible to accept part of the critical view and not the whole.

Any answer to this question, we have said, must consist mainly in an exhibition of its scope. Brought out with special significance in the history of Israel, it concerns all early myth and legend. We find in the classical example of all early legendary history—the “*Iliad*”—a vivid naturalness which could not be exceeded if we had to accept every portrait as a photograph, just as we do in the portraits of Genesis. All later specimens of either history are dim in comparison with them. We do not know even the originals of the portraits drawn by Thucydides as we know the creations (if creations they be) imagined by Homer, nor are David and Saul, though both are distinct conceptions, nearly so intimately familiar with us as Abraham and Jacob. Of course the difference is not to be explained by saying that the writers had richer material for the earlier characters than the later. The truth must be the reverse of that, in both cases alike. One thing is quite clear, whatever explanation we give the vividness of Genesis must apply to the vividness of Homer. In distinctness these two stand alone amid all legendary delineations of history, and we can hardly come to any decision as to one set of characters

which will not to some extent affect our views as to the others.

But there is between the Hellenic and Hebrew representations an important difference. Jacob, we are told, is a mere synonym for the collective tribes of Israel, as Esau for the kindred race of Edom. But nobody has picked out one of the *dramatis personæ* in the "Iliad," and pointed to him as a personification of the tribes of Hellas. When we do come to such a personification we find a lifeless name. Hellen, father of Æolus, Dorus, and Xuthus is for Greece what Jacob is for Palestine, as far as genealogy goes ; but when we turn to the true Greek representative of Jacob—Ulysses—we cannot from any point of view make him an embodiment of a tribe. The Greek genius was averse to any creation which could be confused with any such mere type. It was not only too individual—we can hardly say that any character in Greek poetry is more individual than Jacob—but it was too various. Its wealth of suggestion, its elasticity of sympathy, prohibited alike the growth or the portraiture of any character which might be taken as a type of the race. Such a type has been imagined by modern historians in Achilles,* but we feel at once that the comparison is mere metaphor, the symbolising of a heroic race by a heroic youth, not an actual exhibition of the characteristics of a race, as Jacob is. The ideal of Israel constantly tends to incarnation in an actual Hebrew as no Hellenic ideal tends to incarnation in an actual Greek.

Here we have the contrast of the dramatic race and the Messianic race. On the one hand we follow the quick glance of genius, the infinitely varied light and shade of an artistic sympathy, elastic as nature. On the other, we follow a

* Hegel ("Philosophy of History") sets Achilles and Alexander side by side, as the youth who opens and the youth who closes a national life which might be regarded as an ideal youth.

piercing, steadfast gaze, riveted on a single type, following out the evolution of a single character. The fact that the contrast is striking, renders the similarity far more remarkable. The dramatic people has not left characters more vivid and definite than the Messianic people. Perhaps in deep-cut sharpness of characterisation even the Greek does not equal the Hebrew portraiture.

It is rather one character than three, or even two, which is set before us in Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; we often thus perceive one character in different members of the same family. We might compare the strong resemblance and faint contrast between Abraham and Jacob (Isaac may be left out of account) to a somewhat similar relation between the first and second William Pitt. Either of these great men may be regarded in some sense as a type of the country beloved by both; from the distance of many centuries the same name might be referred to a single personality with hardly any blurring of the main outline; yet, standing near their age, we see differences which bring out the idiosyncrasies of individual character the more forcibly from this common basis, and while we feel that each was a man, we also find in the pair a single type. But the typical Englishman does not, any more than the typical Greek, represent his nation as does the typical Hebrew. The Messianic nation, we have said, is for ever tending to incarnate itself in an individual. A man starts the career of Israel, a man concludes it, again and again a man seems to identify himself with it. Israel rejected its Messiah, but its yearning for a Messiah is the clue to all its history, and interprets its memories as well as its hopes.

In our endeavour to throw ourselves into the state of mind of narrators and hearers living in an earlier stage of the world's development from our own, we should be willing to

follow out analogies here and there, and then again to stop short where our light fails. It is not impossible even in our own day, to discover a delineation of character which is at once historic and imaginative. A dialogue in *Punch* a hundred years hence may be a valuable contribution to the narrative of our time; the fact of its root being the imagination of a journalist does not prevent the soil from which it grows being that of history. That free play of imagination in connection with actual character, which survives among us only in connection with the absurd and grotesque, was in early ages the natural penumbra of every brilliant figure. To recall the delineations of caricature as a clue to the problems of genius would seem to many readers irreverent and childish. But it is such refusal to follow out Biblical ideas to their modern successors which has made the Bible a sealed book to us. If we really determine to find some parallel to such vivid and yet, as we believe, historic portraiture, as that which gives us the character of Ulysses or Jacob, we must enter the region now given over to caricature.

Mankind changes from age to age in its conceptions of the relation between truth and fiction. That fanciful illustration of truth in dramatic fragments which suggests itself to us only as avowed caricature was at an early date felt appropriate to the most solemn truth that language can convey, and if we would group similar endeavours to blend truth and fiction from ancient and modern times we must turn from a copy of *Punch* to the parables. When Abraham appears in a parable, the most rigid believer in traditional inspiration does not suppose that our Lord is giving us any contribution to literal history, yet hardly any one would deny that we have in such a parable an account of the conception of Abraham current among the Jews which throws an actual

light on his life. And the illustration of history by parable, which we may accept here, need not begin here. It began from the first moment, probably, that anything was written down about Abraham at all.

It is somewhat curious to mark the different fortunes of the words *myth* and *parable*, each of which represents an alliance of truth and fiction, though in the first we remember only the fiction, in the second only the truth. The fact that so large a part of our Lord's teaching is conveyed through parable has been sometimes remembered too exclusively; it has led to an association of this form of teaching with solemn and sacred truth which is misleading as to its actual range. Of course no one supposes that He originated the practice; but in confining our attention to the parables of the New Testament, where there is never any chance of their being confused with actual history, we somewhat conceal from ourselves the varying proportions of truth and fiction in the parable which make it shade off into actual history. Turn, for instance, to an account given by Jeremiah of an incident supposed to take place on the banks of the Euphrates, and you find a riddle which no commentator has been able to solve.* Jeremiah surely did not twice travel 600 miles in order to show that linen spoils when buried in damp earth, but the incident is narrated in exactly the tone of real history. The truth of parable haunts the Hebrew genius throughout its whole career. We watch it moulding the utterance of the prophets, sometimes in utterances full of obscurity for our apprehension, and which we are apt to dismiss as not meaning anything particular, because we have been all our

* Jer. xiii. 1-7. An unprejudiced reader, who considers all that would be implied in this journey, will find the notion of its literal truth almost grotesque. The mention of "a rock" on the banks of the Euphrates (much the smallest difficulty) is of itself enough to confute it.

lives familiar with them without discovering any sense in them. Yet no serious student of the Bible can doubt that these parables meant something quite as definite as those later utterances which lose something of their effect upon us from a precisely opposite cause. The truth of parable to the Eastern mind is perhaps more real than the truth of history. May we not say that in this respect the East has a lesson for the West? An accurate narration of facts embodies, in most cases, much that is incidentally misleading. A true parable has nothing in it that is not true.

The whole course of parable in modern literature has tended to an alliance with avowed and conscious fiction rather than history. Modern feeling even regards any historic portraiture characterised by extreme vividness with a certain amount of suspicion, as betraying the method of an art different from that of the historian. Where the imagination is so active the receptive powers, we conceive, cannot have stored up their share of objective fact. Yet the quality which "gives to airy nothing a local habitation and a name" is not debarred from exercise when its material is the actual experience of men and women. We do not lose from history the characters made vivid to us by Shakespeare. The early singers of humanity were born before the separation of the arts. Their imaginations were possessed by the names and records of the heroes of a past that was at once near and primitive; and to animate these records with the full expansion of all those suggestions which it contained was to them at once an exercise of memory and of imagination. To make the men of old times live as objects of lively personal feeling, to repeat the lore of tradition with vivifying touch under which it inevitably expanded—all this may be regarded as a contribution to history or to poetry according to our point of view, for it belongs to a stage when *these were one*.

Perhaps between the time of the Jehovist and ours there is an actual change in the vividness of transmitted recollections ; we can hardly interpret unquestioned fact without a belief in some lost alliance between memory and imagination, comparable to the dulled senses of the citizen as compared with those of the savage. The reader of Homer or Shakespeare, though he knew nothing of history but what he found in their poems, would know some very important aspects of history. It is possible to believe that the race remembered in the dawn of history as only the individual remembers now ; that Genius had then the power to discern where now it can only illustrate. Something of the same change, perhaps, we might still find if we turned from the West to the East. A traveller in the neighbourhood of the Tigris about a generation ago was attracted by a mournful chant, sung at night by a company keeping watch round a fire. On asking the subject of this plaintive song he was informed that it was a lament for a British resident at Baghdad,* who had been a protector of the people under the oppressive Turkish government, and had died many years previously of the cholera. If electric telegraphs and newspapers had kept away from the neighbourhood of Baghdad, this elegy might still keep alive the memory of a short life ended more than seventy years ago, and not commemorated by any document known to those who thus created a monument to one they may never have seen. Who can define the limits of such a traditional fame in the days when a memory was as a printed page ? He who refused to give some such indefinite extension to inherited recollections must be content to leave the relation to fact of such poems as the "Iliad" and Genesis an insoluble problem.

* The person thus lamented, Claudius James Rich, was the first to explore the ruins of Babylon ; he died in 1820.

If pictures which are vivid must necessarily be the work of mere imagination the claims of history and the gifts of dramatic literature lose the keystone which makes all literature one.

If these considerations have any force it is possible to accept the decisions of critics as to the documents of Hebrew history without allowing that the first vivid character in Hebrew literature or any literature is an invention. We have in the first father of the Hebrew race a picture which the longer it is studied will the more impress the reader as a portrait. If we might have doubted of its reality when we imagined that the same writer who painted Abraham a cringing coward, willing to sacrifice his wife's honour to his own safety, also depicted him as an Achilles scattering a royal host at his onset, the severance of these incompatible statements sets us free to recognise the common elements in the sifted version of the story. The work of the critic, separating the original legend from later accretion, restores to us a figure full of historic significance, though bright with the hues of dawn. In those chapters of Genesis which contain the Jehovist's narrative of his history we discern a lofty figure by the light of that glow which precedes sunrise. When the sun is just below the horizon we often see the outline of objects more clearly than when they are broken up by the lights and shadows created by his direct radiance ; something of the same kind seems true of the legends which precede definite history, and the characters which emerge into distinctness just before its first rays.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PROBLEM OF DEUTERONOMY.

THE composite history of which we have attempted to set forth the main characteristics, cannot have been combined and edited, as we know it now, later than the middle of the eighth century before our era, that is to say, about the time of the building of Rome, and the fall of the northern kingdom in Palestine. These events are not here associated at random. We may discover in them a clue to the meaning of the history to which they give a background. The chosen people gathered up its records of the past as its present darkened. The phrase so familiar to us in the prophets begins to be appropriate. Israel becomes a *remnant*. The life of a nation passes from its horizon; it is known to history henceforward either in connection with vast and mysterious national hopes, or else as a mere sect. And, on the other hand, we mark the birthday of that great empire in a mysterious collaboration with which Israel taught the world the meaning of the word Law, and in resistance to which many of the characteristics of Israel were to be developed. The world and the Church each gain an enduring type. The nation which is to represent to all posterity the supremacy of the formless, the life of the invisible, loses that political framework which always provides the spiritual life with its most potent rival; while the antagonistic influence, which is to incarnate itself in a world-empire, starts

on its long career. The dwindling nation is led towards its true life, and its mighty rival begins to exist.

The study of this second chapter of our sifted and re-arranged Bible brings us to a different kind of investigation, in which our progress is tangled with perplexities. For the first time we reach a definite date, but with this definiteness we open a problem. Deuteronomy is identified with the "Book of the Law" discovered in the Temple in the eighteenth year of Josiah, 621 B.C., and was thus, to speak in our own dialect, canonical from the first moment of its existence, or at least of its public recognition. It does not grow up from fragmentary beginnings as does the combined narrative of the Jehovist and the Ephraimite; it was afterwards increased and expanded by such additions, but it is from the first a *sacred book*, recognised as authoritative Scripture, and the first elaborate code of Israel. It is not unworthy of such a position. We ascend, as we peruse it, into the highest moral region attained by any ancient people, and discover a sympathy with the weak and the helpless not exceeded by the most advanced philanthropy of our own day.* Its protection is extended to those whom the ancient world blotted out from legal existence, nay, to some whose claim the modern world hardly yet recognises, since even the animals † share with other classes of the helpless its all-embracing and beneficent care. The spectacle of need, naturally alienating to the sympathies of an early race, and little favoured by any other people of antiquity, was, under the influence of this code, everywhere to awaken the sense of claim. The love of man had never been so earnestly preached before.

But even in this elevated and purified form, where the

* Deut. x. 18, 19, xv. 7-18, xxi. 10-14, xxii. 1-4, xxiii. 15, &c.

† xxii. 6, 7. xxv. 4.

stranger and the bondsman were to be sharers in it, the love of man—enjoined with as much earnestness as though it comprised the whole of duty—was not to be the supreme love. It is hard for us to conceive of the idea of God's love being a new thing; and in truth it was latent in His covenant with Abraham, but with regard to a race it emerges in Deuteronomy, for the first time into clear expression, both as a promise and a claim. The declaration—"Know therefore that the Lord thy God He is God: the faithful God, which keepeth His covenant and mercy to them that love Him and keep His commandments to a thousand generations,"* carries on the spirit of the Jehovistic narrative into exhortation: translating the history of Abraham into the duty of a race descended from him, and finding in him its original type; and so far as the relation to God is concerned, its example. The exhortation—"Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Eternal One; and thou shalt love the Lord with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy might: thou shalt do what is right and good in the sight of the Lord; *that it may be well with thee,*"† does but expand the promise to Abraham, "I will make of thee a great nation, and will bless thee and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing."‡ The declaration, oblivious of logic (since it makes a fact its own cause)—"The Lord did not set His love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than all people; for ye were the fewest of all peoples: but because the Lord loveth you,"§ seems to express the spirit of that concession, "I will not destroy Sodom for the ten's sake," || and recalls again the idea of a vision which in a vast multitude discerned the few in whom might be found the salvation of a world.

* Deut. vii. 9.

† Deut. vi. 4 and 18.

‡ Gen. xii. 1, 2.

§ Deut. vii. 7, 8.

|| Gen. xviii. 32

Those words carry us to the deepest interest of Deuteronomy for Christian ears. No other book of the Old Testament has such an attestation in the New. That part of the history of Christ* which, since it could otherwise be known to no human being, must have been told in His own words, bears witness that to Him the Thorah was concentrated in this book. All the citations introduced by His emphatic "It has been written" are taken from it; whatever was the mysterious event which we know as the Temptation, it was from the Deuteronomist that He drew the weapons with which the attack was repelled. Deuteronomy may be connected with His history from another point of view; we may call it the St. John of the Old Testament. It professes to give the last discourse of Moses, as St. John that of Christ, and there is a kindred character in both utterances which seems to many readers an attestation to the earlier work. It is just this confusion of the provinces of criticism and of faith which we aim at opposing; but we would allow that if there be any book in the Old Testament where the last of these were excusable in invading the province of the first, it would be in the book that is quoted by Christ, and recalled by the narrative of His last hours.

The book of Deuteronomy also suggests another comparison, which brings out the characteristics of Israel in contrast with those of another race. We may compare it with the "Phaedo" of Plato. Both works profess to give us the last utterance of a seer, spoken in immediate view of death, and both under this form embody the deepest thoughts of a race to which Europe owes its education. In the "Phaedo" we have a vivid drama, solemn indeed and deepening towards the close into tragedy; yet to the very last bright, various, and full of humour. In Deuteronomy we have a solemn exhortation,

* Matt. iv. 1-11, &c.

unrelieved by any dramatic touch, any picturesque image, or any fragment of narrative. On this side all is various, picturesque, animated; on that we have the monotone of a single voice, pitched to the same deep key throughout, or only varying from the tenderness of earnest pleading to the austerity of a bitter foreboding which deepens into denunciation. The dramatic and the Messianic race bequeath their best treasure in each, and the contrast gathers up the anti-thesis of all that is highest and all that is most wide-reaching in the thought of the world. The most surprising part of this contrast is the different aspect presented by the two discourses with regard to the future life. The Athenian sage turns to a future beyond this world, he leads his mournful disciples to forget their sorrow in an ideal participation in the new experience opening upon him; he seems to hold the door ajar and invite their contemplation of the path he is to traverse. The eye of the Hebrew seer is fixed on the future of Israel; in his own future he expresses no interest whatever. Not a word in his last address touches on the problem to which the "Phaedo" owes its perennial hold on us. His problem belongs wholly to the fate of his people in this world.

It was not the Hellenic, but the Hebrew race, which was ultimately to fortify in the heart of humanity the hope of an infinite future for every son of man. But again we see the deep meaning of the *late-born*, as a parable of all that is best in the spiritual progeny of the soul. The hope brought to mankind by the true Israel was, to all appearance, more lacking in early phases of the spiritual life of Israel than in that of races which have had a much lesser part in such influence. It is a striking blank, and one full of significance. The existence of a deep sense of national permanence, a profound interest in the destiny of the race apart from any

definite anticipation of an individual future beyond the grave, is very common in all stages of the world's history. But this response to the claim of an Eternal Being, apart from any sense of or apparently any desire for an individual share in His eternity, is hardly known elsewhere than in Israel. It is perplexing to turn from Hebrew preoccupation with the interests of a national life in this world to the Egyptian "Book of the Dead," and to remember that the anticipations in which Christian Europe joins hands with ancient Egypt must have been perfectly familiar to the Hebrews and apparently ignored by them. The difficulty is present in the whole Old Testament, but we feel it afresh as we see the promised land through the eyes of the dying leader. His vicarious interest there shuts out every other, and the fact that with eye undimmed and natural force unabated he looks on the home of his people, never to be entered by him, brings into prominence the lack of all reference to an eternal home. The Deuteronomist so vividly realised the presence of an unseen judge and ruler with the nation that he had no attention for the individual vista of the mightiest member of his race; and we feel him here a faithful interpreter of his hero's latest utterance. Tradition would have preserved, across the seven or eight centuries which separate them, any message of such deep import. It is an eloquent expression of the Hebrew sense of God's presence in this world that, apparently, it was not possible to conceive of it elsewhere. Till the national life was ended there was no practical belief in any other sphere of His government.

The claim of an Eternal Being must always imply a relation which, as it becomes individualised, opens an infinite future. In the belief in a God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the belief in immortality, as we see in the reference of

our Lord, is always latent.* The Eternal, in entering into connection with the transient being, bestows on him something of His own permanence. A covenant, we feel, must be between beings who have some relation that is impossible to the *merely* transient with the Eternal. But the permanence of the nation, while it or any expectation of it endures, satisfies this demand for permanence. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob perish, but Israel endures; and the name identified with the last of these three, and thus transfiguring his individuality with a typical significance, is in some sense that of every true member of his race. No other immortality is desired while that of Israel is present to the national imagination. It needed a national experience comparable to death to awaken in the heart of the Israelite the individual instinct of immortality. "So teach us to *number* our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom" is the utterance of Hebrew aspiration. The future that was not measured by the number of days seemed shared with the Divine by the *nation* of Israel. When this faith drooped and withered the seed within the husk showed itself as a living growth. If Israel must pass from the roll of nations, a share in the eternal must be found elsewhere than in its national existence.

If the narrative recording the arrival of the chosen people on the sacred soil, and the last discourse of the great leader, suggest comparisons with St. John and with Plato, where (it may be asked) is the *problem* of Deuteronomy? Why should it suggest any problem? We must, we are told, accept it as a writing far later than the time of Moses; but that is what we have had to do in the case of the previous writings, which deal with events and characters as far behind *them* in time, perhaps, as Moses is be-

* Matt. xxii. 32.

hind the age when *Demeterodomy* was written, and yet the problem which we discover in them is no specific difficulty in these narratives, being a characteristic of all early literature; and rather, therefore, a fact to be remembered than an enigma to be solved.

In the connection of a religious reform with a work professing to embody the last discourse of Moses, there would in itself be nothing surprising or perplexing. We have seen how naturally all Hebrew literature found expression gravitate to an ideal personal centre—how Solomon and David, living in circumstances which rendered the literal fact impossible, yet became the typical authors, the one of the Wisdom literature of the Old Testament, the other of its lyric poetry, without any idea of deception in the minds of those who propagated this idea. Moses was, in this sense, the author of the Torah: any fresh revelation of the Torah naturally connected itself with his name. We might have rested this conclusion on broader grounds if we had taken in a wider range than Hebrew literature and noted the significance, for instance, of the name either of Orpheus or *Æsop*. It would seem as if a proper name, in ancient literature, was not so much a profession of authorship, as the acknowledgment of a model. And on the other hand it is not impossible to discover, even in our own age, some forms of literature which may help to explain confusion of authorship. Such a book, for instance, as the later editions of Southey's life of Wesley, where Coleridge's marginal pencillings have been printed as notes, teaches us how the book of Genesis has taken the form in which we read it now. The first chapter in our re-arranged Bible is the production of writers who work together for a common aim, and have no desire to pass themselves off for anything but what they are; though, as it has been often retouched and

edited, it is in its actual condition sometimes misleading as to authorship. But the study of Deuteronomy leads us into another region. It is stamped with the impress of an individual mind; while it is impossible to believe this the mind of the person whose utterance it professes to be. All critics are agreed that it was written in the age when it was found, all readers must agree that it was accepted by those who found and published it as an ancient book. We have somehow to reconcile these facts, and to reconcile both with the character of a book which bears comparison with the Gospel of John and the "Phaedo" of Plato.

Deuteronomy is a book in a sense in which we cannot apply the words to any other part of the Pentateuch. We have to withdraw interpolations here, as almost everywhere else in the Old Testament; but after this sifting preparation we possess, in its integrity, the work of a single writer.* The attempt of Colenso to identify him with Jeremiah, though not successful as a literal statement of fact, gives a clue to his position in history. The writer of Deuteronomy is the spiritual brother of Jeremiah. He must, at all events, be associated with those voices of the seventh and eighth centuries before our era which utter forth the true history of Israel through the dialect of myth and parable, and have made it the keynote of all that is deepest in the history of mankind. The authorship of Moses is here more obviously impossible than anywhere else in the Pentateuch, for the book concludes with an account of his death which has no appearance of being an appendix from a hand other than that to which we owe the rest of the work. We must

* We can never say this of a Hebrew writer without reminding ourselves of the strong corporate impulse of the race; and the Deuteronomist, as indeed every Reformer, is to be regarded as the founder of a school (see Addis, p. xxxii.), but the assertion is good on the whole.

think of the author as the successor of the Jehovist and predecessor of the evangelical prophet—another great Un-named, like so many in Hebrew literature—"the voice of one crying in the wilderness," to whom we can attach no outward likeness, nor any name but such as we choose to invent ourselves. It was enough for such writers to pass on the inspiration of Israel; they cared not to stamp their individuality on the message as it passed through their lips; nor, if they thought the message might be a gainer thereby, were they concerned to obliterate such an ascription, though they knew it to be fictitious.

The discovery of Deuteronomy in the Temple by Josiah was as important for the history of Judaism as the discovery of a Bible in the monastery at Erfurt by Luther in the history of Protestantism. This king is mentioned in a striking legend told of a prophet who bore witness, at least three hundred years earlier, against a worship which he regarded as idolatrous—a legend including, in its present form, the name of Josiah as that of the destined reformer who should pollute the altars of Samaria with the bones of their attendant priests. While we have no difficulty in tracing such a mention to the pen of a late editor, we are not obliged to suppose him to have inserted it otherwise than in perfect good faith; he hardly added to his account of the prophecy more than an expression of his belief that the vision of the early seer was fulfilled in Josiah. The figure of the king he named must have stood forth to the national imagination as the type of a reformer, in the same way that Moses was the type of a deliverer, and David of an ideal ruler; and Josiah's reputation is the more striking because it was not, according to the ancient point of view, borne out

* 1 Kings xiii. 1-32.

by his ultimate fate. To fall in battle * before an Egyptian king whose attack his own unwisdom had provoked, was a destiny that might well have thrown back a shadow of doubt on the divine approval of his attempted reforms. As it did not do so, some strong qualities in himself, we should imagine, must have thrown his defeat into the shade. He remained, to the editors of the books of Kings, a ruler whose wise reform might have saved the State had it been seconded by worthy successors.

To us the name of his great grandfather and predecessor in the path of reform is more impressive than his own. Under Hezekiah the kingdom of Judah was delivered by a mysterious intervention,† which at this hour we can neither doubt nor entirely explain, from subjugation to the great Power which had just blotted out for ever the sister kingdom from the roll of nations; under him also the race heard for the first time a voice which has found an echo in all that is deepest in the poetry of the world. The monarch under whom Isaiah's strain of promise and aspiration was inaugurated has an elevation for the modern world not attained by any of his predecessors since David. But to Jewish eyes it would appear that the descendant was the more impressive figure of the pair separated by two generations. The assertion inconsistently made of each, that "Like unto him there was no king before him; neither after arose any like him," ‡ is repeated of Josiah in a more emphatic form; and from the account of the great Paschal feast in which his reforms issued it would appear that they

* See 2 Chron. xxxv. 20-24. Josiah's attack upon Necho was unprovoked and unnecessary, and the Chronicler seems to imply that Necho was in the right in his declaration that God was with him.

† 2 Kings xix. 35, apparently a very heterogeneous chapter. 7 and 35 must be by different hands.

‡ 2 Kings xviii. 5, and xxiii. 25.

took a hold upon the nation wholly lacking to those attempted by his ancestor.

It is surprising, but seems unquestionable, that the king slain in disastrous defeat was more successful than one whose reign was illustrated by so marvellous a deliverance. These earlier reforms seem to have had little enduring influence. Hezekiah bequeathed his throne to a son, Manasseh, who followed the hateful worship of Moloch ; of his son, Amon, father of Josiah, we know nothing but that he followed foreign modes of worship, and was assassinated by a conspiracy of his servants.* Perhaps we might represent to ourselves most vividly the shifting influences of these two reigns if we remembered what we have termed the Jewish reformation in connection with that of the sixteenth century in modern Europe. Hezekiah "removed the high places and brake the pillars and cut down the Asherah : and he brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made, and called it a piece of brass." † We should translate the narrative into its modern equivalent by recalling some account given by Latimer of the destruction of relics or crucifixes in the England of Henry VIII., and in neither case should we forget that the righteousness of this destruction was one as to which there were two opinions. But to carry on the analogy we must imagine a strong wave of Romanist ascendancy sweeping back upon the land after its first recoil and before its final exclusion. From 696, when Hezekiah died, till about 630, when Josiah may be supposed to have entered on the virtual exercise of his government, a heathen reaction possessed the land, so that the Hebrew reformation was cut in two by a long interval during which it must have appeared doomed to utter failure.

The great event which gave this reformation a Bible was

* 2 Kings xxi. 6. and 19-26.

† *Ib.* xviii. 4-7.

the result and not the cause of its progress. The neglect of the Temple service during the prevalence of polytheism having brought the sacred building into a ruinous condition, a public subscription was made with a view to its thorough repair; and in the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign, 621 B.C., the king's secretary, Shaphan, was sent to Hilkiah, the "high priest,"* in order to take charge of the funds collected. Hilkiah took this opportunity to make a communication which we should have expected to throw pecuniary matters entirely into the background. In the preliminary investigations pending the repairs of the Temple he had found, he said, the "Book of the Law"; it was sent back with the messenger and read by him to the king. The perusal filled Josiah with horror. The newly discovered roll awakened a sense of national guilt and impending judgment, which found expression in a burst of reforming and persecuting zeal. A severe and searching inquisition was carried on throughout the limits of Josiah's dominions, and even beyond them (for it took in Bethel in the semi-deserted northern kingdom), the idolatrous or heretical worship was put down with a stern hand, and when at last the great national feast commemorated in our Easter was celebrated the reign of orthodoxy in Jerusalem was evidently inaugurated for the first time.†

To the first question suggested by the account—what was the book thus discovered?—there is no uncertain answer. Critics all agree that the description given of the discovery exactly fits the bulk of Deuteronomy, and the reader who will intercalate the portion from chapter v. to chapter xxviii. (omitting xxvii.) in the Second Book of Kings, between the account of the public recital to the people by Josiah and his reforms, will have all the evidence which any one can

* So-called, but in the strict sense of the words there was no high priest before the Exile.

† 2 Kings xxii. and xxiii.

need to convince him of the justice of this decision. The two writings fit like two halves of a torn sheet of paper. The book of Deuteronomy supplies the animating spirit and the legislative framework to that reformation which closes the history of the monarchy and inaugurates Judaism.

The narrative of Josiah's fate perhaps embodies the crushing bewilderment brought to the heart of every true Jew by the fact that a reformation announced a vast national calamity. A promise given by the "prophetess" Huldah is recorded, with the fearless inconsistency of a Hebrew editor, on the page which we have only to turn to come upon the event by which it is falsified. "As touching the words which thou hast heard" was the answer of the seeress to the anxious inquiry of the king—"because thy heart was tender, and thou didst humble thyself before the Lord—I also have heard thee, saith the Lord. Therefore behold, I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace." The next chapter to that containing this promise informs us that Pharaoh-Necho "went up against the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates, and King Josiah went against him; and he slew him at Megiddo."* How the editor of the book of Kings reconciled Josiah's being killed in a disastrous defeat with the divine promise transmitted through Huldah it does not appear, but the inconsistency is an impressive witness to the religious character of the king, and perhaps to a vague protest against his fate.

Let us turn now from the facts to their bearing on what we have called the problem. Why should not the book discovered in the Temple be, as it professed to be, a record

* 2 Kings xxii. 19 and xxiii. 29. May we imagine that the promises of Deuteronomy, and its allusions to the plagues of Egypt, had filled the heart of the king with the hope of miraculous help? It is, however, not clear, anyhow, why he should wish to attack Necho.

of the last discourse of Moses? What is the difficulty in the hypothesis recorded on the page of Scripture and accepted till lately by all the world? The present hour is a convenient one to ask the question, since a manuscript, more than twice as old as the utterance of Moses would have been in the time of Josiah, has just been discovered, and is accepted by all the scholars of modern Europe, as, at all events, a production of the remote epoch to which it appears to belong. Why, it may be asked, should not the papyrus which may have contained the last words of Moses and was found in the Temple have had the same fate as the papyrus which contained a lost treatise of Aristotle and was found in the British Museum?

Because every one of the tests which authenticate the "Constitution of Athens," deciphered in 1891 on the reverse side of some Egyptian bailiff's accounts, fail when applied to Deuteronomy. The "Constitution of Athens"* is fixed to the fourth century B.C. by its pure Attic dialect; it is connected with Aristotle by our knowledge that one of his lost works was the account of the constitution of 158 cities, which must certainly have included Athens; it refers to the persons and events of the time it professes to describe in the tone of one who is perfectly familiar with the history known to us from other sources, and it fits in exactly with every independent piece of information we possess as to its subject-matter, to which it brings some homogeneous addition. While these positive grounds are enough to prove it of the date and the general character which it professes, the negative fact that it furthers no interest but that of history almost converts the presumption of its Aristotelian authorship to certainty. In the "Book of the Law," every

* Scholars are not absolutely unanimous in ascribing it to Aristotle, but not a single writer doubts it being of his school.

one of these guarantees is wanting. The book might easily have been hid by those who professed to find it, its dialect gives no chronological limits, its appearance is not prefaced by any announcement of a loss, its correspondence with the history independently known needs much explanation and a great strain on many hardly doubtful inferences. And lastly, it cannot be said that the question of its archaic authenticity touches no interest but that of history. The questions at issue may be very much higher than that of historic accuracy, but certainly they are different from it.

The attempted identification of the author with Jeremiah might afford a refutation of the antiquity of Deuteronomy if it stood alone. Imagine some poem which could be plausibly attributed to Tennyson being claimed as a work of Chaucer! The two poets are separated by an interval considerably less than the lowest estimate of that which divides Moses from Jeremiah. Seven or eight centuries do not make an equal chasm in all series of national development, but there is none in which such a gap could be simply ignored. But to take a perhaps more convincing point of view, suppose (we quote in substance the words of the first critic* who can be said to have made the new view of the Pentateuch literary) that copies of the Law had been known to exist, and that in consequence of the disastrous character of the last few reigns these copies had disappeared, what would have been the natural feeling of the king and people on hearing that one had been discovered? Should we not expect to see joy and gladness everywhere find expression? The worship of Jahveh had never wholly ceased. How was it that in default of the lost code, those that must have been brought up in its spirit failed to proclaim its principles? that the reform

* Reuss, "L'Histoire Sainte et la Loi," pp. 156-7.

was not initiated by an eager search for the lost treasure by delighted alacrity at the first intelligence of its discovery? by the triumphant satisfaction at the perusal which would, on that hypothesis, condemn only the manifest opponents of a cherished faith? Instead of that the functionary of the court returns from the Temple with the nonchalant remark that "The priests have given me a book." The long-lost, bitterly lamented words of Moses have been discovered, and that is all he has to say about them! And the king exchanges nonchalance for terror; he meets the testament of Moses exactly as Hezekiah had met the message of Sennacherib and tears his clothes at the announcement of laws which, if they had been known seventy years previously to a school of priests and prophets, of which the continuity was uninterrupted, would have been, in substance, the ideal which he was endeavouring to restore! How is it that he can thus greet the goal towards which we should have thought he would have welcomed direction, and enter thus the path he might have rejoiced to see fenced from a precipice? Why should the perusal of Deuteronomy have affected him with horror? The volume certainly condemned the policy of his father and grandfather, but to all his own endeavour it should have come as encouragement. Its awful denunciations, it is said, came to him as a doom passed on his country, which his reforms were powerless to arrest.* We cannot thus adequately explain his consternation, unless we suppose all which was original in the book to be to him an absolute novelty. The writing which came as a thunderbolt to the second reforming monarch, cannot have existed under the first.

Can we make the references of Deuteronomy fit the earlier portions of Exodus, as we can make passages in the

* An absolute sentence would not inaugurate an energetic reform.

“Constitution of Athens” fit independent references? So far is this from being the case that we cannot bring into harmony with our previous notices that decision which forms the only absolute originality of Deuteronomy. Moses, it tells us (xii. 2-6), bequeathed to his people the command to destroy “all the places wherein the nations which ye shall possess served their gods, upon the high mountains, and under every green tree. Ye shall not do so unto the Lord your God” (*i.e.*, you shall not simply replace altars to foreign gods by altars to Jahveh), “but unto the place which the Lord your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put His name there thither shalt thou come, and thither ye shall bring your burnt offerings and your sacrifices.” The peril, inseparable from ancient worship, that many altars should come to mean many gods, was to be obviated for Israel by the exclusive ritual sanctity of Jerusalem, and a prohibition of all sacrifice elsewhere. A natural, perhaps a desirable, result of ages of religious development, a possibly wise decision by a set of reformers in the age of Hezekiah or his great grandson. But how does it suit the moral atmosphere of the leader who had never known any centre except the portable ark, or any need of a local centre other than that identified with the leading-staff, as it were, of a nomad people? We are not reduced to any imaginary conditions in discussion of this problem. Turn back to Exodus xx. 24, and we find a text in harmony with all we should expect of the legislation of the desert, and totally out of harmony with this centralising edict of Deuteronomy. “An altar of earth thou shalt make to me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings in every place where I cause my name to be remembered I will come unto thee and I will bless thee.” If this passage (which is older than Deuteronomy) be not an implicit sanction to the many altars distinctly forbidden in Deuteronomy, it has no

meaning. It is impossible to keep the two as parts of a consistent whole.

Lastly, can we say that none but historic interests were involved in the discovery of the "Book of the Law," as none others are involved in the discovery of the "Constitution of Athens"? There is probably no one who would say this. The book was of vital influence on the fortunes of the priesthood at Jerusalem, setting them on a pinnacle of eminence; and the work which thus elevated their caste was also discovered by priests and promulgated under their influence. In any analogous case in modern times the whole *onus probandi* would be thrown on them, and if they could not disprove the presumption of forgery it would almost stand by its own weight.

Perhaps the initial difficulty of the theory we are considering is enough, to unprejudiced attention, to disprove it—the impossibility, that is, of Deuteronomy ever having been lost, if it were what it professed to be. For the last sixty-seven years, no doubt, the book may be conceived to have slumbered in its hiding-place: the capital had been given up to a kind of religion which might explain the neglect of all those quarters where it could be found. But how shall we suppose that under Hezekiah's reform so precious a document could have been overlooked? The difficulty of a book being lost within the Temple may have been sometimes exaggerated. Although within the Temple itself, strictly so called, such a loss was as impossible as that of a Bible in a small parish church, in the surrounding chambers used by the priests and attendants the loss of a bulky parchment, though not probable, cannot be called impossible, so long as the whole place was neglected. It would be easier, however, to suppose that some ecclesiastical manuscript of the second

century had lain hidden at Oxford during the High Church movement of fifty years ago, than that the last discourse of Moses should have had a like fate anywhere near the Temple during the reforms of Hezekiah. We may surely assume its non-appearance at that time to imply its non-existence.

It is as clear as daylight that the book of which only a single copy was in existence, and that copy a roll left neglected in some deserted corner of the Temple, which came to a pious king as an astounding discovery, could never have been *public* property. To give any *vraisemblance* whatever to the notion of its authenticity it would need to be conceived of as esoteric doctrine kept secret in a corporation of prophets or priests. But to regard Deuteronomy as the possible secret doctrine of a college is to stultify every word it contains. It is a manifesto to *Israel*: a code for the nation. The Israelite, or corporation of Israelites, who kept it for an exclusive circle, denied the whole spirit of its exhortations. If the only tenable theory of its influence at a particular epoch be that it was not intended for the nation, the book, as we know it, cannot have been in existence.

Here, then, lies our problem: how can a book written after 696 B.C. have been produced thirty years before the conclusion of the century as a legacy from hoar antiquity without trickery? The writing and discovery of Deuteronomy cannot be divided by as much as seventy years. Seventy years would divide the reader of this page (1894) from (*e.g.*) the death of Lord Byron; if we extend our limits by a decade, from the field of Waterloo; if we similarly contract them, from the independence of Greece, the passing of Catholic emancipation, the introduction of the first Reform Bill. Few persons now living can remember any of these events. But not a few, even in our days of

crowded print and impoverished tradition, possess a certain vicarious recollection of them. Dim secondhand memories, recalling a world close to us, yet seen across a chasm, remain still, which would provide any literary expression of that date with its appropriate background. Nothing so recent could come upon us with a shock of surprise. And if this is true of us, with our railways and newspapers and general hurry of life, far more is it true of the dwellers in Jerusalem six centuries and a half before our era. Their past was not curtained off as is ours by a noisy, hurrying, richly laden present. Men living under Josiah must have been perfectly well aware whether men living under Hezekiah had kept any tradition of a lost discourse of Moses. Such a tradition could have no more been forgotten within the schools of the prophets or among the priests of Jahveh than the indication of a hidden spring could be forgotten by the inhabitants of a besieged city,

It seems, thus, impossible to give the book of Deuteronomy any position which brings it into harmony with accredited history, without believing that its introduction was an occasion on which the genius of Israel again used guile in its search for a blessing, and spoke with the simulated voice of an elder brother. In neither case can we say that the fraud was unsuccessful, but in neither case can we say that it was unpunished. The blessing that was obtained by fraud was haunted in both cases by the penalty of fraud; and the story in both cases conveys, while it at first conceals, that penalty. We see that the writer had an ideal of truthfulness quite different from ours, but that the facts he transmits are explicable only when we apply a theory of retribution which his ideal does not sanction and which his apprehension would never suggest.

Doubtless this view suggests a whole cluster of questions

to which it supplies no answer. Was the writer of the book a partner to the device by which it was to be passed off as ancient? Can we exonerate Jeremiah himself from a share in it? Must not the whole body of priests and prophets have been aware of the real state of the case, and have sanctioned a representation at variance with the truth? These are questions which critics living two and a half millenniums after the persons whom they concern, can never answer. We can but remind the reader that, according to the Hebrew point of view, variance from fact was not an offence against truth, and also that even an offence against truth was not necessarily a sin. A great prophet who founded a nation, and remained as the representative of that national life in the national imagination, might in a certain sense be regarded as the true author of injunctions and directions which found their inspiration in his teaching, even though they were first written down hundreds of years after his death. A great poet living in the seventeenth century of our era has, there is no doubt, been able to throw back the influence of his genius on words set in writing thousands of years before his birth. We read "Paradise Lost" into the third chapter of Genesis, and greatly confuse the latter thereby; yet assuredly Milton believed himself to be bringing home the teaching of Moses to the England of his day. It is vain to exaggerate modern parallels in order to obliterate moral discrepancies. Yet we err alike in not giving them their place and in not recognising frankly where the analogy stops short.

It is difficult to bring forward the degree in which virtues change in national acceptance from age to age without seeming to make morality a mere fashion, like the habit of men's raiment or language; all the more difficult because we cannot look at morality as growth only. We have to make room

also for a process of decay; to recognise, however we explain it, that some forms of goodness flourished more vigorously in an earlier civilisation. But none will deny truthfulness to be in a special sense the product of modern life. We may even call it the product of modern science. It is the whole teaching of modern science, writ large in all the achievements which add to the comfort and capacities of life, that accurate knowledge is one of the duties of all who have any power of attaining to it; and in the long run, and taking society as a whole, the habit of acquiring is a habit of imparting. There is a long way between recognising a standard and conforming to it; but we are nearer performance when we admire an action than when we admire its opposite. The truism covers a larger space than those whom its obviousness repels are wont to acknowledge.

If science has supplied a large part of the intellectual discipline for teaching the modern world veracity, a still larger portion, probably, must be traced to modern ideas of legal justice. The ancient theory was that the State should undertake to punish all bad men. The modern theory is that the State should undertake to punish some wrong actions. The law thereby commits itself to a kind of exact and careful investigation of which the ancient world had no conception. The process of every criminal trial in England is such a lesson in the meaning of the word *evidence* as we should vainly seek in the writings of the best and wisest men of antiquity. This is a kind of lesson which no one can escape who ever glances at a newspaper—that is to say, no one who can read. We do not mean that every one who reads the police reports learns from them the importance of accurate statement; but in proportion as men reflect upon what they read that is the lesson afforded by

modern courts of justice, and in the long run it has some influence even on the minds of the thoughtless.

Before we can measure the interval which separates the modern and the ancient ideal of truth we must forget the accuracy belonging to modern systems of justice, to modern ideas of science, and enter in thought that world of parable, of symbolic prophetic action, which is alien to our whole framework of conceptions. The book of Deuteronomy was composed in the age when Jeremiah wrote an account of a journey to Mesopotamia, which has every appearance of being literal narrative, and has not much meaning for a modern reader from any other point of view; yet it is evidently fiction from beginning to end. No one would call it falsehood: the strange prosaic parable was in the mind of the author a vehicle of truths that it imported his countrymen to ponder with awe and fear. There is a wide interval between the introduction of fiction read as fiction by all contemporaries, and the pretended discovery of a work supposed to have seen more centuries than it had really seen decades; but the two things have a certain connection. We understand the composition and production of the Pentateuch most truly when we remember it in connection with the quaint parable of Jeremiah; we misunderstand it utterly when we look at it side by side with events in our day outwardly resembling it. If the priests under Josiah first hid and then found the book of Deuteronomy they still were not forgers in the sense in which we must apply the word to the modern Jew who, some years ago, offered for sale a supposed Codex of the Old Testament. To seek to recommend large and important truths by means of fiction becomes self-defeating error the moment the truth and fiction are confused; but it does not, even then, enter the order of moral conceptions which we label as deceit. The Jews who

set forth Deuteronomy as the last words of Moses were trying to bring home to the minds of their countrymen what they felt to be a vital and fundamental truth. Thus Moses would have spoken, they felt—thus the Prophets had spoken. Their endeavour to state perennial truth as historic fact came far nearer the state of mind in which the Parables were spoken than to any production of a contemporary as an ancient document possible in our own day. The mind of the writer was occupied with truth, the fiction was secondary and insignificant.

Our difficulty in understanding the ancient sense of truth is much increased by a certain unreality in our whole dialect concerning truthfulness. We pretend to believe that all men who are not liars are trustworthy, thus arranging mankind on a plan which we see to be fallacious the moment we apply it to any other part of duty. We may point out to the most honourable of mankind that his conduct has been unjust; we may not hint to the most dishonourable that his words have been untrue. On the same theory it is often urged, in arguments on this very subject, that the motive must have been disinterested, and then conclude that the method must have been straightforward. Yet every one knows how constantly the eagerness to enforce a truth leads to the desire to conceal a fact. Political life is full of such endeavours, but forms by no means their exclusive field. No amount of reticence just avoiding direct falsehood is blamed by the modern standard; and the distinction between some ingenious equivocation and that direct denial or assertion which the ancient standard would have permitted is not really the distinction between truth and falsehood.

The Jews of the seventh and sixth centuries B.C. were at a stage when only injurious untruth was seen to be wrong, and not all untruth was seen to be injurious. The best men

among them saw it to be a crime to bear false witness *against the neighbour*; untruth which might bring gain to the neighbour or injury to the foe was permissible in their eyes. The experience of ages has made plain to us that the propagation of error does not in the long run benefit those we wish to benefit; but falsehood within certain limits is still an admitted engine of warfare, and we shall better understand the standard of antiquity if we set it beside that which in modern life holds between hostile armies. The highest ideal of the claim of veracity among ancient nations was one which admitted of many and various forms of deceit, so long as they did not injure the neighbour, nor violate that sacred declaration which must bind even the foe.

“We may see in the history of Socrates and his *Dæmon*,” says Gibbon when he is trying to make explicable the supposed trickery of Mahomet, “how a wise man may deceive himself, how a good man may deceive others.” Few persons would now decide with the glib certainty of the eighteenth century that the history of any great man may be explained in this way, certainly not the history of Socrates. Yet it remains true that wise men do deceive themselves, and good men do deceive others. We shall find the combination of reverence for truths with disloyalty to truth in all ages, but those who thus sinned in earlier ages did not, as their successors do, offend against the stored-up warnings of the ages, and hurt the progressive conscience of mankind.

The discovery of Deuteronomy is not an event we can isolate, a solitary invasion of something inexplicable into a historic sequence elsewhere coherent. It cuts in two that book which is for the Jew the Bible within the Bible. On one side we have a literary growth—a natural evolution of thought and faith, accrediting itself by its own internal harmony, and its harmony with all its true environment.

On the other side we have literary manufacture. The "Priests' Code" is manifestly a spurious account of something supposed to happen in the deserts of Arabia about the fifteenth century before our era, which was really the invention of priests living at Babylon some eight or nine centuries later. We cannot escape the belief that *they* passed off on the congregation a contemporary fiction as an ancient narrative. That they so far believed the story as to feel it an embodiment of vital truth and an actual development of the testament of Moses we do not doubt, but that the congregation of Jews who listened to the first reading of the Pentateuch believed it to be more than this, we cannot doubt either. We must interpret the discovery of Hilkiah by the production of Ezra. They are both, considered as literary events, evidently on one pattern.

Both the Jehovist and his Ephraimite brother performed for their countrymen (allowing for a different stage of civilization and intellectual development) what Tennyson has performed for ours: they each wove the varied fragments of national legend into a continuous narrative, and when these narratives were combined, the process merely carried a stage further that which they had brought up to a certain point. There is nowhere any break of continuity, any profusion which the whole texture of the work does not bear out and expand. Their work gives in its clear, naïve freshness the impressions of tradition as they linger in the minds of a primitive people. When we turn from the narratives of Genesis to those of Leviticus we breathe a different atmosphere and find ourselves on a new soil. The work is as definite as if it were published yesterday, but relates to matters in which such definiteness is, from our point of view, an announcement of fiction. It is not, indeed, answerable for the fiction which traces its

authorship to Moses: that is the invention of an age much later than itself. But it assumes a kind of intimate familiarity with remote events quite as incompatible with fact, and by its very chronological definiteness and careful elaboration of detail claims a relation to the events it describes which we cannot qualify as otherwise than fictitious. It is not true either as a parable or as a newspaper report is true; a large part of its assertions deal with subject-matter in which each kind of truth is out of the question. The Priestly Code can be called true only in the sense that it embodied important decisions which its authors sincerely believed, and incorporated such decisions in a historic framework which commended itself to their imagination as a worthy conception of the history of Israel. A sense which we must not altogether reject when we consider the antithesis of truth and falsehood; but which, when we consider the distinction of truth and error, we must guard ourselves from accepting for a moment.

Between these two works: the growth of Hebrew literature in its native land: the manufacture of a priestly caste in exile and discouragement—we have a book which to some extent (but by no means equally) incorporates both elements. In its impression of individual authorship, of a single fount of expression and a sole animating idea, it is unlike either work, but less unlike the first than the last. The Deuteronomic Moses joins hands across the ages with the Jehovistic Abraham. He carries on the faith of Abraham into the code of Israel. But as we read we feel that what the writer describes is not a fresh hope, but a promise recalled through bitter memories of failure. The passages described as divine warnings are manifest history. The ideal given as history is manifestly the aspiration of the present.

Before we turn onwards to the full development of this

passionate insistence on finding an ideal in a record, let us turn outward, and ask whether we can find any instance of a confusion between the aspiration and memory elsewhere than in the Old Testament. We shall look in vain for any equally striking and perplexing instance in secular history of a nation projecting images of the foreground upon the dim horizon; but we may discover, in the only case which we could set side by side with that of Moses, something of the same kind. As a less puzzling example of what we may call intellectual refraction, it is a good commentary on one which we seek to render credible. Another race, which the Jews, by a baseless but not uninformative fancy, imagined to be related to themselves, was endowed with a law almost as pregnant with the influences which mould character as that which created Judaism.* The institutions which history associates with the name of Lycurgus have something in common with the institution which history associates with the name of Moses: although here, as elsewhere, the Messianic nation keeps its personal pre-eminence. We speak of the Mosaic, not usually of the Lycurgan law, and it is a significant feature of the contrast we would suggest that the Hebrew law is older than the State and the Spartan law is younger. Moses creates, Lycurgus only renews the institutions of his race. The very existence of Israel is founded on the covenant with Jehovah, while the Greek city accepted the system of law and education to which it owes its fame at a period when it had already a past, and could mark a decadence which it sought to repair. The difference is a significant one. For the Greek the divine and human, blending their limits, were both subordinate to the idea of

* See 1 Maccabees xii. 21. The notion of a connection between the Spartan and Jewish races seems one of which there is neither explanation nor doubt.

the State ; for the Hebrew there was no room for any supreme object of reverence beside the Eternal. But the tradition according to which the Pythian prophetess hailed Lycurgus with a confession of doubt whether she should greet him as a man or a god,* while a sober historian records a somewhat similar belief,† justifies our recognising him as the only claimant for a possible comparison with Moses. When we say that the fame of Sparta is the monument of his legislation we have described only half his glory ; an immortal beside a mortal republic commemorates his fame and exhibits his aims to the gaze of all races and all periods. For when Plato gave forth his political ideal, and originated the political speculation of modern Europe, it is evident that his eye was upon Sparta ; and Lycurgus may thus be regarded, in a sense, as the first author of one of the most important and fruitful group of ideas which has occupied the great intellects of civilisation. Such an intellectual paternity brings the Spartan within the same range of ideas as the Hebrew lawgiver, and it were hard to find another single figure in history of which the same might be said.

It is a strange chance—if it be a chance—that these two colossal figures, so totally disconnected in external history, so closely allied in their function as makers of a nation, are also centres of a similar fiction. Each is associated with endeavours made centuries after his death, and the supposed author of regulations which, so far as they were carried out at all, were the result of a secular development of which their labours were but the seed. It is, at any rate, the conclusion of our latest historian of Greece that the same kind of refraction which modern critics believe themselves to

* ἀλλ' ἔτι καὶ μάλλον θεὸν εἰπομαι, ὡς Λυκὸργε. Herod., i. 65.

† ὥστε θειοτέρων τῆν ἐπίνοιαν ἢ κατ' ἀνθρώπων αὐτοῦ νομίζειν.

Polyb., vi. 48.

have discerned in the institutions attributed to Moses is unquestionably to be found, to a certain extent, in that of the institutions attributed to Lycurgus—that to him also were attributed the aims of a later age; and that in his case also the ideals of his successors, as they were cast backward into a remote antiquity, were also transformed into achievements, so that the aspirations of the present, seen in the glow of a strong reverence for the past, were actually mistaken for its positive enactments, and presented in this form as its legacy.

The basis of all the regulations of Lycurgus, we are told by the learned and judicious Bishop of St. David's, "was a new distribution of property which removed the principal causes of discord, and facilitated the correction of other abuses."* Surely one of the most important statements ever made concerning any legislator, ancient or modern. Where, the reader asks, is the authority for ascribing an action which would have taxed the resources of a conqueror to a person who had no other resources for carrying it out than moral genius and high connection? As we pass in review all the greatest historians of antiquity we may note opportunities for some mention of this communistic legislation, had it been familiar to them; but we find no such mention. Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon have plenty to say about Sparta, but never mention any measure for equalising property there; and they sometimes mention "the rich" in a way which implies that there was just the same difference between rich and poor at Sparta as there was anywhere else. The eldest author who makes any allusion to this division of property is Polybius,† two centuries later than

* Thirlwall's "History of Greece," vol. i. p. 302.

† He tells us (VI. 45, 3) that "the special characteristics of the Lacedæmonian constitution are said to be its land-laws, by which no citizen possesses more than another, but all have an equal share in the public land; and the possession of money, which is discreditable among

these three classic historians, and his reference to it merely implies that in his time, 600 years after Lycurgus, there was a general opinion that the great lawgiver had made some such regulation, the only other mention before Plutarch being apparently a mere echo of this. It is Plutarch's account which was, till quite lately, the unquestioned source of all modern narratives; so that modern historians referred for their account of a measure which needs the most exact and accurate authority to an author who lived as long after the fact he chronicles as Queen Victoria after King Alfred. The moment we realise that a statement need not be true because it is contained in Plutarch's "Lives," the notion of this communistic legislation vanishes like a vapour.

No one, we should have thought, would be less under the influence of any uncritical belief than Dr. Thirlwall. His own mind was not only critical, but essentially sceptical; his first work, a translation of Schleiermacher's "Essay on the Gospel of St. Luke," was felt by the orthodox as an attack on the principles to which the Scriptures owe their unique authority; and the same critical feeling is manifest in many pages of his "History of Greece." But remembering the period at which he wrote, we may say of him that he that is least in the hierarchy of criticism is greater than he. His history was published in 1835, just before the opening of the critical era, and belongs to what we may call the Biblical period—for the habit of regarding statements in the Bible as fenced round with some peculiar and supernatural guarantee of accuracy has had an influence far beyond the study of

them"—the latter statement being at variance with all we know about the Spartans. When he adds (VI. 46, 7) that Lycurgus removed covetousness from his people, he gives a clue to the method in which the idea of moral influence might be transformed into that of legislative enactment, both in the case of Lycurgus and in that of the greater lawgiver with whom we have compared him.

the Bible. Plutarch is an unquestionably honest historian, interested in the past, and with resources for studying it which are lost to us ; but when he makes a most improbable statement about a person who lived a thousand years before him, we are no more obliged to believe it than if we found such a statement in the columns of a newspaper. Writers of history would never have thought they were thus absolved from all critical responsibility, unless they had been in the habit of checking investigation into the facts chronicled in the Bible by the reminder that this particular book had undertaken to give an exhaustive and accurate narrative ; and that students of its subject-matter had nothing more to do than to make themselves master of its contents. It was not that any one could suppose because we treated one book in this way that we were logically bound to treat others in this way ; but the habit of orthodoxy, in this respect, was encroaching. Even a keen sceptical thinker like the Bishop of St. David's, when he came in contact with memories which antiquity had hallowed by traditional respect, abjured all critical acumen, took up the position of the child at its mother's knee, and simply transcribed the most astounding statements, for which no evidence whatever was brought forward, if these statements were found in a particular book which traditional respect had associated with "ancient history."

When the critical spirit awakens, all such works as this become obsolete. It is provoking, but it is instructive, to find learning, thought, and literary power all neutralised by a date. If we compare the history of Greece by Dr. Thirlwall with that which has, in general attention, entirely superseded it, we shall be inclined to decide that, so far from manifesting an obvious inferiority proportionate to the neglect into which it has fallen, the earlier work is literary

in a sense in which that epithet cannot be applied to the later one. The work of Mr. Grote has superseded that of a predecessor who in most respects surpassed his successor, because it comes on the right side of the critical movement of our day ; its author wrote when the current of European feeling was turning in the direction of criticism, when Niebuhr had lectured, when Ewald was writing, when younger and bolder critics were preparing to go far beyond him. All students of history felt the strong and deep current of a new impulse, linking learning with science, and using scholarship as an instrument of research. Receptivity to the new influence was increased even by prejudices, if they did not actually conflict with it. Grote was animated by the strongest antagonism to anything that bore the impress of a belief in the invisible. Of itself this characteristic is no qualification for writing history, it is a disqualification for comprehending the most important periods of history. But it prepared for a writer, coming at the date when he wrote, a vacuum into which the spirit of investigation could at once rise, thus producing a force before which all obstacles were swept away, and the field left clear for construction.

No study could be proposed fuller of luminous suggestion for a student of Biblical criticism than that portion of Grote's history of Greece which deals with the legend of the communism of Lycurgus. In both the Hebrew and the Dorian race we find history gain fulness and elaboration as its objects recede ; the later sources vague and dim, the earlier rich in confident detail. That Sparta owed her peculiar laws to one who was marked out by the Pythian Oracle as rather a god than a man, is almost all we can glean from the historic notices of Lycurgus until, a thousand years after his death, these faint and faded sketches are replaced by an

elaborate portrait. Plutarch begins his narrative with the candid confession that he has almost nothing to say about his hero that somebody has not contradicted ; but, nothing-daubed, proceeds to give an account almost as elaborate and undoubting as his biography of Julius Cæsar. To relegate material thus prefaced from the mint to the smelting-furnace was, to a writer delivered from the associations of orthodoxy, not difficult, but it is more especially Grote's constructive criticism of the legend which we would commend to the Biblical student. We may, Grote thinks,* trace the genesis of the belief in the communism of Lycurgus to the ardent reforming zeal of Agis and Cleomenes, two kings of Sparta who lived in the third century before our era. Their aspirations after an ideal Sparta created a fictitious past in that dim realm where imagination blends insensibly with tradition. The actual condition was the extreme opposite of this ideal. "The citizens had become few in number, the bulk of them miserably poor, and all the land in a small number of hands. . . . It was insupportable to a young enthusiast like King Agis to contrast this degradation with the previous glories of his country, nor did he see any way of reconstructing the old Sparta except by redividing the lands, cancelling all debts and restoring the public mess and military training in all their strictness. Agis attempted to carry through these subversive measures with the consent of the senate and public assembly and the acquiescence of the rich." He tried, that is to say, to copy the supposed achievement of Lycurgus. He fell, like the Gracchi, a martyr to his attempted reforms ; but the imperfect attempt was enough to associate the past glories of Sparta with an ideal, and when the biographer of the second century

* "History of Greece," Part II. ch. vi. The extract (II. 537 in the edition of 1854) is much abbreviated.

of our era looked back to its origin through the mists of time, he projected backwards, on the cloudland of antiquity, these aspirations after an actual communism which met his gaze at a nearer point of time. "The Lycurgan discipline tended forcibly to suggest to men's minds the *idea* of equality among the citizens, inasmuch as it assimilated the habits, enjoyments, and capacities of the rich to those of the poor: and the equality thus existing in idea and tendency, which seemed to proclaim the wish of the founder, was strained by the later reformers into a positive institution which he had at first realised, but from which his degenerate followers had receded. It was thus that the fancies, longings and indirect suggestions of the present assumed the character of recollections out of the early, obscure, and extinct historic past."*

The last sentence might, according to the latest critical theories, be transferred unchanged from the history of Greece to that of Judæa. Here also the present idealised was mistaken for the past, and the goal of endeavour confused with its starting-point. This does not necessarily imply any conscious deception; we are not told that Agis or Cleomenes tried to circulate any statement as to the decisions of Lycurgus. But we may be sure that neither of these kings would have discouraged the rise of some legend which should make the great legislator their collaborator in their social reforms, or would have failed to avail themselves even of a forged writing if it seemed likely to further so desirable an aim.

We must accept the paradox that we explain the problems of history to a large extent when we multiply them. Experience proves, against rational anticipation, that a large part of these problems do find in the mere fact of their range

* "History of Greece," II. p. 539.

and recurrence something that affects the mind as their solution: that for many of these problems there is no other solution. It may seem inexplicable to us that a nation should mistake its ideal for its history. To repeat a difficulty is not to explain it; but in this repetition we must accept, at times, the only material for explanation that history vouchsafes. If the mere fascination of an ideal of equality has created, without evidence, a legend to which popular tradition contributes absolutely nothing, so that generations of scholars have transcribed an incredible theory merely because it happened to be written for the first time in Greek, why may not the same thing have happened where the desire to believe was infinitely greater, while the equal difficulties (they could not be greater) were concealed beneath the opaque veil of miracle? If Sparta possessed two kings* who could die to restore a fictitious past, Zion has had thousands of sons who, in defence of a similar aspiration, have been able to endure a life, in comparison with which the death of Agis and Cleomenes was an easy thing. The ideal was bound up with the fiction, and to the famished hearts that craved a national centre the two became inseparable.

* Cleomenes, though not literally a martyr to his reforms like Agis, may be here reckoned with him.

CHAPTER VII.

EZEKIEL AND THE CHURCH OF THE RESTORATION.

THERE is, in the Gospel of John, a passage which if the Bible were read as attentively as any other book, would rouse surprise in every one.* A Samaritan woman, we learn, was prepared, by communications which led her to recognise the speaker as a prophet, for the announcement that the general anticipation of a Messiah was realised in the person of the traveller whose thirst she had assuaged from her pitcher. She was thus awakened to her possession of an opportunity which had not been open to any dweller in Palestine for four centuries, and hastened to ask a question, with the desire of obtaining an oracle on a subject of debate between her countrymen and the Jews. What was the right place of worship? Was it on the "mountain" of Gerizim, or within the Temple of Jerusalem, that the Father in heaven appointed as His meeting-place with His children? We read the words with a dim feeling that only extreme superstition could suggest to any worshipper of the invisible Father that either Gerizim or Zion had advantages over any other spot of earth as a place of prayer. But when we turn to the Scriptures common to Jews and Samaritans (*i.e.*, the Pentateuch) we see that this narrow superstition, as it seems to us, was exactly the state of mind which it was the aim of the writer who formulated the Deuteronomic

* John iv. 19.

legislation to produce. The earlier Hebrew was, in this respect, on a level with a modern Englishman. The belief which startles modern was unknown to the more ancient faith; this localisation of worship, to our minds a backward step in religion, was itself the creation of a reform.

A reform has always a double aspect—generally a mixed character. That which, in suppressing the many altars of Palestine, ended the polytheism of Israel,* must have borne to many a pious Israelite exactly the same aspect which more than 2000 years later the word bore to many a pious Catholic. How surely must Rabshakeh have reckoned on Hebrew sympathy when he shouted to the trembling Jews on the wall of Jerusalem his triumphant reminder that Jahveh their god was “he whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah had taken away, saying to Judah and Jerusalem (as if in a narrow limitation of his worship) ‘Ye shall worship before this altar in Jerusalem!’”† Jerusalem must have contained a large body of men to whom the destruction of these local altars must have seemed an action of national impiety; and if we look back on the reform in the light of subsequent history, we may discern in it both an approach towards an ideal of worship “neither on this mountain nor at Jerusalem,” but everywhere where worshippers in spirit and in truth turned to the Invisible Father—and also an association of that worship with narrow and superstitious bigotry.

The centralising edict of Josiah, by the mere fact of forbidding all sacrifice except at Jerusalem, prepared for abolishing sacrifice altogether, and in approaching this aboli-

* The prayer of Louis XI. to our Lady of Cléry, in “*Quentin Durward*” (no invention of Scott), and the belief of the king that he was addressing in her a different person from our Lady of Embrun, will bring home to every reader a modern parallel to this Hebrew polytheism.

† 2 Kings xviii. 22.

tion paved the way for a more spiritual religion. But in doing this it destroyed the connection between worship and family life. Worship to the Hebrew, as to the whole ancient world, meant sacrifice, and the Deuteronomic code changed the whole character of sacrifice. What had been a family or tribal feast, a cheerful meeting between the worshippers and an unseen being who was supposed to partake with them of the conviviality, a divine sanction on human enjoyment, became a priestly rite. It had been the meeting-point between "the members of a family, the associates of a corporation, the soldiers of an army, generally speaking of any society permanent or temporary."* It was, after the publication of the code, a solemn ceremonial, needing for all but dwellers at Jerusalem a long and toilsome pilgrimage. In losing its connection with varied spots of which each had its human cluster of interests, it must have seemed to separate human life from God. There must have been some who were taught by the change to find Him everywhere, but others, and these perhaps the majority, who felt the loss of familiar reminders of His presence equivalent to a belief that He was gone to live at Jerusalem and could nowhere else be found; and we see by the whole subsequent history, especially if we take in the life of our Lord, that this is the view which more and more prevailed, dating from the time when Samaria as a State ceased to exist, and the Deuteronomic code was discovered in the Temple.

This double character in the Jewish evolution of religion may even be admitted to a certain extent, in the view which connects it with Moses. In any literal sense that is not only incredible but almost inconceivable. The leader who died before his people reached the promised land; who looked for the home of his people at a long distance from

* Wellhausen, p. 76.

the one holy centre which he knew—Mount Sinai—he to have foreseen Jerusalem as a centre of worship! Such a notion is out of harmony with all our knowledge. And nevertheless it is not impossible to look upon the regulation which ordained this ritual centre as a true development of Mosaism. It may be said to belong to that region of “conservative addition” (to borrow the expression of Cardinal Newman)* which tracks the course of an idea through the progress of the ages, and buttresses it with such inference as the progress of opinion demands and the course of logical thought permits. The leader of a wandering tribe in the desert would not conceive of the question arising whether any particular spot of earth should be chosen as a symbol of the Unity of the Eternal. But if the founder of the Hebrew State had foreseen that to the sensuous Israelite a multiplicity of altars suggested a multiplicity of gods, we can feel no doubt of his sympathy with the decision made in his name, and truly embodying his aims. All ordinance as to worship must have been to him a mere language for expressing this fundamental idea of Hebrew religion. Any exclusiveness in the region of the transient would have appeared to him not so much a concession of temporary illusion in order to express eternal truth, as a revelation in the light of the Eternal concerning the actual conditions of all that was temporary. If the multiformity of human impulse opposed itself to any clear symbolism of the Eternal Unity, then this multiform impulse was by this very fact convicted of error. When we look at the reform from this point of view we can understand its connection with Moses. To those who felt it as

* “A true development may be described as one which is conservative of the course of development which went before it, which is that development and something besides.”—J. H. Newman: “An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine,” p. 87.

a re-assertion of his teaching in a form suited for the age in which it was carried out, the voice of the original prophet of the nation was heard in it, like that of Elijah from his home in the invisible.* His spirit seemed to the preachers of the new reformation to be their source and inspiration, and it was undertaken as at his direct command.

The course of history justifies the precaution, and at the same time emphasises the warning which we associate with such a movement. The outward idolatry, connected with so much immorality and cruelty, which had been the persistent temptation of Israel, did not survive the sojourn at Babylon. The race which had been the object of incessant reproach from the prophets for its infidelity to its unseen Lord, returns from its exile a fanatic for all that symbolises the bond with Him. It is as if an unfaithful wife suddenly awoke to an intense and superstitious devotion in which her wedding-ring became her most important possession. Some change came over the nation with its adversity which resulted in a faith seeming to the men who welcomed it no more than a true understanding of the old, but discernible by us who look back upon it as markedly if not fundamentally different. Judaism is born in the Babylonian Exile as Mosaism in the Sinaitic wanderings; though we do not in the last case, as in the first, name a faith from its prophet. What Moses was in a supreme degree to the nation of Israel, Ezekiel was in a much lesser degree to the Church of Jerusalem.

How close was the connection between his inspiration and the atmosphere of exile is brought home to us by the fact

* The "writing" which comes from Elijah to Jehoram (2 Chron. xxi. 12) is subsequent to his mysterious disappearance; the Chronicler has possibly forgotten this fact, but it is not out of harmony with his mystic fame that he should be supposed capable of such a communication.

that his greater contemporary, Jeremiah, virtually belongs to the first period. The prophet who declares "According to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Israel,"* must doubtless have welcomed the reform, but his name is not mentioned in connection with it, nor does he allude to it; and in circumstances where we should expect application to have been made to him, Josiah turned rather to a person of whom we have no other knowledge, "the prophetess Huldah."† Jeremiah may be called the prophet-priest; as his great twin brother Ezekiel may be called the priest-prophet. His denunciations are for moral offences, ritual shortcomings seem treated by him with indifference.‡ He is a witness against the vice, the formalism, the political treachery of his nation; and he bore the crushing reproach of sympathy with his country's foes, always the bitterest trial of those who see true patriotism in submission to a foreign power. He was a Jewish Phocion, urging submission to a power no less irresistible than Macedon, and offending a patriotism as passionate as that of Athens; but his fate was harder. He was carried off to the land against alliance with which he had vainly protested, and we must imagine his last years spent among those bitterest foes who are always found among estranged compatriots. His martyrdom has elevated him to the position of prefiguring, for all time, one who is especially the Man of Sorrows.§ The writing which suggests this title || was probably associated with his name

* Jer. ii. 28.

† 2 Kings xxii. 13, 14. Jeremiah's first prophecy was five years earlier.

‡ vii. 22, 23, a passage very bewildering to the commentator.

§ "Seul, entre les grands prophètes d'Israël, il sera pour son époque ce que Jésus a été pour le sien; un énigme et un scandale." Westphal, "Sources," II. p. 303.

|| The Lamentations do not contain the name of Jeremiah, and much of their pathos is destroyed if we imagine such imprecations as iii. 65 to be

rather by accidental and superficial resemblance than by any authentic evidence, but the Lamentations well express the crushing experience of one who was held a traitor to his country because he loved her wisely, and thus describe his fate, though not in his own words.

The interpreter of the spiritual meaning of the Exile is the prophet Ezekiel, and in that description we mark him out as the prophet of Christianity. We would call him the greatest victim of the Exile but for the supreme position of the unnamed prophet who has been confused with Isaiah. The priest-prophet of the Exile must be placed beneath the prophet of the Messiah, yet in several passages we discern their kindred, and in one he* rises to an equal height. He is the first to bring out clearly that hope which broadens and deepens into the central idea of Christianity—the idea of Redemption. Hosea has had a vision of one who would “bring Israel into† the wilderness and speak comfortably to her.” Ezekiel gives that hope a deeper meaning. The idea of a covenant between God and man seems with him to lose itself in that of a continual creative relation between God and man. God is again, and in a fuller sense, to breathe into Israel the breath of life. He Himself must work His own will; the changed heart must be the effect of a new creation. In that hope we almost inevitably escape the limits which shut in the chosen people. The “new heart” given to Israel must be given to every Israelite. The idea of an elect race passes into the idea of a Remnant, and then the fragment of a nation expands to include a world.

provoked by individual and short-lived sufferings. Moreover, ii. 9 could hardly have been written by him.

* xxxvi. 24-28. But vv. 22, 32 and the like strangely betray “the vile” beside “the precious.”

† Hosea ii. 14.

Ezekiel stops short at the first half of this progress. In the despair of a national collapse, and the discovery that the vision of the Lord was possible on Babylonian soil, the thought of an individual relation to the Divine comes out to his mind with that distinctness with which every thought is seen at its dawn. "The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the teeth of the children are set on edge,"* moaned his fellow exiles, cut off from all that had made life valuable, and conscious that they had had no part in the idolatry which had provoked the penalty. "No," Ezekiel declares, "it is not so. The sanctuary is in ruins, yet I still hear the voice of the Lord. The remnant of His people is as dear to Him as Israel itself, and if the remnant then every member of it."

Thou art as much His care, as if beside
Nor man nor angel moved in heaven or earth.

That postulate of all faith for modern thought was a new thing to Ezekiel. Except the later Isaiah there is perhaps no prophet who so much recalls the promises of the Gospel. The lessons of the Exile were indeed fitted to awaken hopes to which those promises are the perennial response; hopes which rise into the heart wherever the vacuum of others leaves room for them. None are so much their rivals, because none so much approach them in dignity, as the emotions which belong to political life. When these are cast into the shade a place is made for the development of individual aspirations, and a sense of all that is most profound in individual capacity and experience. The withering of political life supplies the richest loam for the growth of individual

* Ezekiel xviii. 2. It must have been a very common proverb (see Jer. xxxi. 29). We should gather from v. 3 that the Exile marked an actual change, as though it completed an expiation, and the inheritance of calamity came to an end.

life, and in that loam the seeds of the withered life also lie hid. We see in Ezekiel the first stirrings of this awakening. Hitherto the object of denunciation, of warning, of promise or encouragement, has been a people or a city—*Israel* in those early periods of the history to which the corporate imagination always returned and in which it loved to prefigure the future; *Jerusalem* when the disintegrating influence of racial strife had substituted warring tribes for a united nation. Now the people was crushed, the city was destroyed. All government was a secular thing, all civil life was allied with the idea of hostile dominion. But Jahveh yet remained the Eternal, and perhaps in the loss of precious but narrowing associations He was felt nearer the individual spirit than He had been at Jerusalem. He had not been left on the soil of Palestine; the exiled priest discovered the Eternal Voice to be as audible in the land of idolatry as within the holy temple, and by that very fact the voice became more significant. The Remnant was as much the object of His care as the nation had been; the soul of every Israelite was in direct communion with Him still. If this had been the centre of Ezekiel's revelation, and his countrymen had received it, we can believe that the Messiah might have found a nation to welcome instead of an order to renounce Him. It is true that in such a case we can imagine no exhibition for His character or scope for His office. We must imagine the whole course of the world different to allow us to pursue the speculation. Yet we must keep hold of certainties irreconcilable by logic, and the thought of a Christ welcomed by His nation surely opens a vision that realises what we mean by heaven, however little we can conceive of it on earth.

We see that the prophet dwelt in a circle of doubters. Among the little communities in Babylonia, as among the

little communities of early Christianity, the plaint was heard "Where is the promise of His coming?"* It is at first somewhat surprising to come upon passages of so modern a strain. All the denunciations of Israel's treachery to Chaldea had been fulfilled in the second siege of Jerusalem, the most crushing event in the national history till the siege under Titus. We should have expected the prophetic promises to have been authenticated by the tested validity of the prophetic denunciations. We see that it was not so. The exiles displayed the querulous and rigid temper of the *émigrés*; by the Chebar as by the Rhine a demand for restored past eclipsed the promise of a better future. A great English statesman, amid the shortsighted French nobles who demanded when Fortune was to give them back their own, had the courage to answer "Never." Ezekiel had not the keen vision of Burke,† or else he failed in the moral fortitude to declare his vision. Burke, we must remember, though his heart was with the exiles, was not an exile himself. The Hebrew prophet saw far more into the depths of the future. But he seems to have turned, when his true insight failed, to the hard and narrow recollections of the past for practical suggestions. Hence the poor and exclusive constitution of Ezra and Nehemiah—hence the Priests' Code—hence Calvary, and a desolate Jerusalem to our own day.

In the mysterious tangle of good and evil which makes up this world we see often that the same thinker opens a path and erects barriers in its course. We have called Ezekiel the priest-prophet, as Jeremiah the prophet-priest. In that change

* "Le temps passe et toutes ces prophéties sont vaines": Ez. xii. 21. I give Reuss's translation as more expressive than either of ours.

† See the interesting account in the "Reminiscences" of Charles Butler (1822). Jeremiah (ch. xxix.) spoke very much in the sense of Burke, but that was by letter.

of order lies the clue to the character of each. Both are prophets and both are priests, but Jeremiah is above all a prophet; Ezekiel is above all a priest. And yet a large part of what we have to learn of him appears to contradict this view. His pages breathe the anticipations of a new birthday for the nation,—a resurrection from its chrysalis slumber to a more vivid life.* His patriotism is no less enlightened than it is glowing; he joins with the prophet he can never have seen after the first deportation,† in a common note of warning and deprecation of the plausible and hopeless policy which would break the yoke of Babylon and assert the freedom of Zion.‡ The Jew at Jerusalem and the Jew in Babylonia, alike discern the divine intention in the subjection of Jerusalem to Babylon, and to many a sincere and earnest Israelite it must have seemed that the prophetic was hopelessly opposed to the patriotic impulse. Doubtless the tone of denunciation, while it was powerless to infuse a wise submission, must have done something to quench the spirit of a vigorous resistance. Yet nowhere do we find a more yearning sense of the hope of Israel than in those utterances which denounce the hopes of many an Israelite.

It is an important fact in his history that he belonged to the first deportation from Jerusalem. He and his companions were victims of an invasion; their successors were rebels against a monarch to whom they had promised allegiance. The first siege of Jerusalem, at the beginning of the sixth century, ended in a submission of the king and people on no hard conditions, and an establishment of Zedekiah on the

* Chs. xxxvi., xxxvii.

† Unless the improbable hypothesis be adopted (mentioned above) that Jeremiah really travelled to Mesopotamia to bury his girdle.

‡ Ez. xvii. 11-21. Compare xxxii., especially 11, 12. We may profitably remember the contemptuous repression by Hannibal after Zama of protest against the harsh terms of Rome.

throne as a vassal of Nebuchadnezzar. In a faithful adherence to the oaths then sworn lay the true policy of the nation; but at such a crisis fidelity to a pledged allegiance and adherence to a wise policy are capable of an equally ignoble construction at the hands of anything that may call itself patriotism. An aristocratic section of the people were fiercely resolved on resistance, Jeremiah's Chaldaism being to them what Medism would be two hundred years later to the Athenians, and the persecution which endangered his life measures for us the fierce and natural indignation roused by advice which seemed to ignore the sanctity of Zion.* Such advice was opposed by that spirit of keen, passionate race assertion which will almost always prove victor in any strife where it is able to enlist the sympathies of a patriot party, and which was buoyed up by hopes of foreign aid. "Pharaoh-Hophra," the Apries who was according to Herodotus† "almost the most prosperous of the kings that ever ruled over Egypt," seemed to bring the nation hopes of deliverance from Nebuchadnezzar. Apries was not so successful but what captivity and violent death were in store for him, but this was unexpected at the second siege of Jerusalem; his intervention roused the hopes of the besieged to a high pitch, and we can imagine the bitter wrath occasioned by Jeremiah's warning at the apparent crisis of deliverance: "Behold, Pharaoh's army which is come forth to help you shall return to Egypt in their own land. And the Chaldeans shall come again and fight against this city, and they shall take it, and burn it with fire." The filthy dungeon in which the Jews

* Compare Jer. xi. 18-23, xiii. 15-19, xv. 15-21, xvii. 15-16 (one of the few similar passages where the first person singular is evidently the individual writer, and not the symbolised nation), xix. 18-23, an outburst of fierce revengeful feeling swallowing up all patriotism and almost justifying his enemies, xx., xxi., and xxvi. to xxxviii. almost entire.

† Herod. II. 161.

sought to stifle that warning voice was doubtless less terrible to their victim than the accusation, so plausible and so false : "Thou fallest away to the Chaldeans."* Jeremiah, like the Persian in the host of Xerxes, was doomed to the bitter experience of the keen-eyed among the blind ; condemned to a clear discernment he was forbidden to translate into vigorous achievement, "meditating much and accomplishing nought." †

While Jeremiah almost escaped by death the persecution of his countrymen, Ezekiel, in the secure dominion of a foreign power, heard of the horrors and miseries of Zion from afar, and only from the tardy messages of survivors. To him, dwelling among a colony including the most distinguished and important of his contemporaries, and gradually taking root in Babylonia as in a new home involving no separation, apparently, from his most intimate friends and kindred, it must have been even clearer than it was to Jeremiah that submission to Babylon was the true policy of his nation. His gradual acclimatisation in his new atmosphere would be uninterrupted by any bitter and passionate sympathy with the countrymen whose sufferings were neither unprovoked nor excessive. Chaldea rarely repeated the cruelties of Assyria ; we hear nothing, even after that treacherous revolt avenged in the blinding of Zedekiah, of the wholesale massacres by torture which would assuredly have closed any such rebellion against Sargon. Doubtless the new exiles would find a less friendly atmosphere than the old. But even they do not seem to have met with any hardship except what is inseparable from exile in a foreign land.

* xxxvii. 7-9, and 15.

† *ἐχθίστη δὲ ὁδὸς ἐστὶ τῶν ἐν ἀνθρώποισι αὕτη πολλὰ φρονέοντα μηδεὶς κρατέειν.* Herod. IX. 16. The whole scene should be read as a commentary on the history of Jeremiah.

Thus detached from any indignant memories of a calamity which he recognised as a divine chastisement, Ezekiel was free to absorb, in some degree, the influence of the grandiose civilisation in which he found himself. His style bears token of this influence ; his images are gorgeous and somewhat mechanical ; his elaboration of detail seems to paint a newly roused interest in external magnificence, almost like that of a countryman in a great city. His picture of the departure of Jahveh from his temple,* for instance, loses something by the elaboration of detail in the chariot ; we grow weary in the endeavour to give every detail its value, and feel that if our attention were less occupied with the external, the material—we may say the Babylonian—element in the parable, we should be freer to take in its meaning. The thought that there are crises in a nation's history where the voice of an invisible Lord is heard from its inmost sanctuary, pronouncing the awful words, "Let us depart hence," comes to us overloaded with symbolism and muffled in its imagery. Yet the imagery is itself full of meaning, forcing us to realise the way in which the civilisation of Babylon had already impressed the imagination of the prophet, and as it were stolen into the background of the distant Temple so soon to be laid in ruins. This gorgeous heathen civilisation has no attraction for his heart, yet it colours his imagination, and appears traceable in his designs for that new Temple which was (he hoped) to prove a centre to a united Israel, and renew the dominion and the hope of David.

We have often wondered that the striking parallel of Hellenic and Hebrew destiny has not been brought forward to throw its illumination on the history of either race. In each case, it seems to us, the historic imagination is invited

* Ezekiel x. 1-18.

to conceive of a possible fusion of two races and the adamant strength hence given to a nation ; in each case the historic memory records an obstinate separateness in those races. Conceive that Athens and Sparta should have extended to the span of a national lifetime that moment of harmony in which they united to hurl back the might of Asia, that a victorious and harmonious Greece should have arisen to foster the aspirations of Athens and the aspirations of Sparta, and deliver them in that glow of a mutual embrace and the expansion of a common fatherland from all that was narrow and all that was poor in their separateness ! Imagine how different would have been the progress of humanity. Greece, not Rome, one fancies, might have supplied the mould of the world's history—a spirit of harsh, narrow positivism might have been exchanged for one of genial and various sympathy, a hard monotone for a rich harmony. The world might have escaped some of the gloomiest eras of its history.

The picture of a united Greece opens almost the widest vistas that history approaches ; but they dwindle beside the promise of a united Palestine. If the aspiration of the prophet had been realised—if Judah had ceased to vex Ephraim, and Ephraim to envy Judah—we might inhabit, even now, a different world. We may surely say that a united Palestine would have precluded an Assyrian or Babylonian captivity, that it might have meant a far grander and more permanently successful Maccabæan insurrection, that it would have led to no Idumæan sovereignty, and that when engulfed beneath Roman dominion the nation would have been ready to emerge at any subsidence of the irresistible tide. As it was, there was no nation to emerge, only a race to be submerged ; and the race, though indestructible, was no longer an organism. Its period of growth was passed. It lived upon

a memory ; it cherished a hope, and the two were blended in an ideal past. But the expansive element had departed, and with it the loftiest hope of the world.

Some dreams of such a possible future we cannot doubt, filled the minds of the exiles "by the waters of Babylon." They must have vividly realised their loss of shelter in the destruction of the northern kingdom ; a common calamity must have created a new sense of kindred. The vision of a return which never ceased to hover before their eyes, was associated with the hope of a reunion of the tribes : "I will make them one nation in the land, upon the mountains of Israel, and one king shall be king to them all, and they shall no more be two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all." Hear the yearning in that pleonasm ! Though nothing could be added in the repetition, it seemed to make the expression of so vast a hope less inadequate. "And my servant David shall be king over them, and they all shall have one shepherd ; they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, and David my servant shall be their prince for ever. Moreover, I will make a covenant of peace with them : it shall be an everlasting covenant ; and I will place them, and multiply them, and set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."* The words belong to that region of vast soothing hope which seems akin to the influence of music. All that is pathetic, all that is tragic in history seems gathered up in the mere existence of such aspirations, and the consciousness that they were futile as far as human eye can see. But national aspirations soar into

* xxxvii. 21-27. Note the prosaic symbolism of the two sticks in the first part of the chapter.

the region where they become as it were luminous, and cast their glow even on the fate they have not had the strength to mould. "Desire of heaven itself is heaven,"* says a poet of our own day, and the vision of a united Israel seems almost to justify the exaggeration, if exaggeration it be.

The glowing hopes expressed in this passage are evidently as the bow in the cloud—a gleam upon a gloomy background. The words we have quoted follow immediately on that vision of the dry bones which perhaps is the best known passage in the Old Testament. "Son of Man, can these dry bones live?" must have often been the self-questioning of Ezekiel, and when he thought on the shattered nation he could give no answer more confident than the conviction, "Oh Lord God, Thou knowest."† The thought of an individual resurrection, not explicitly contained in that passage, is yet irresistibly suggested by it to us. But it was a national resurrection which it symbolised to Ezekiel. He looked for a nation in a new sense, or, at least, in a sense which had not been applicable since the time of Solomon. The remembrance of the long fratricidal strife was to be left behind, a common capital was once more to unite a harmonious people, strong in the divine protection which they were never to forfeit more. Like Jacob in his mysterious wrestling, the holy city in the hour of its revival and transportation takes a new name. "Her name shall no more be called Jerusalem, but Jehovah-shammah shall her name be called. The Lord is there."‡ Ezekiel, taught to feel the divine nearness on a foreign soil, applied the words with a new meaning, and found in them a new measure of what was implied by the divine nearness. And the new city which was to declare to all "the Lord is there" was to bind

* Richard Monckton Milnes.

† xxxvii. 1-14.

‡ The concluding words of the book of Ezekiel.

man to man as well as man to God. The new Jerusalem was to express the unity of that kingdom of which it is to be the capital. The holy land was to be again divided among the tribes, on an entirely new system. The central city—the new Jehovah-Shammah—is not, like the old Jerusalem, on the territory of any single tribe; it stands as a protest against any possible further division of the nation, a common possession of “the whole house of Israel,” the property of none, the true “mother city” of all.* This stately metropolis, separate from the multiplicity of the tribes, was to be a true centre; all the tribes enter it on an equal footing, its relation to them is not local, but regal.

The land was to have one ruler as well as one centre. A Son of David was once more to stand at the head of a united Israel. But the ruler is the mere officer of the nation. His modest revenues are definitely fixed,† the ritual claims upon them are onerous: one does not see how such a ruler would ever be in a position to conduct even a defensive war. He is a president of the republic rather than a king.‡ His business, it is true, seems entirely sacerdotal; it does not appear that the secular concerns of his kingdom are to make any claim on him whatever, or rather they cannot be said to exist. But still he is to be a son of David, not a son of Levi. It is a prince, not a pope, who is to be the defender of the faith.

In these ideal regulations for the restored state we see

* xliv. It is somewhat difficult to grasp the exact scheme, it being both so definite and so magical (at least, if we keep it at Jerusalem), and critics are not entirely agreed about it. I have followed the plan of Stade, with his interpretation. As the city and the Temple have to be separated, I should have thought it more natural to suppose Jerusalem moved to the north, so as to make a slightly better centre for the united kingdom (the whole scale being so small), and this is how Westphal seems to understand it.

† Ez. xlv. 16.

‡ “Das Wort (nasi) würde noch besser mit Vorsteher ubersetzt werden als mit Fürst.” Stade, II. 39.

the fervour of a true patriot. But we have also to trace another element in Ezekiel: he shows also the growth of the priestly spirit which is the deadly enemy of patriotism. It is this which renders his book a stepping-stone from the Deuteronomic to the Priests' Code, and a herald of the later Judaism. The prosaic chapters which describe the new temple at a renovated Jerusalem owe their main interest for the modern reader to the fact that they record the preoccupations of an exile. No exile, indeed, could be lighter than Ezekiel's. He lived in his own house,* his neighbours were his kinsmen. It seems, from the mention of "elders," that the civil organisation of Jerusalem was transplanted to the banks of the Chebar, and that only the buildings and scenery which surrounded them would remind the Jews who came together in Ezekiel's house that Zion was afar off. But in that reminder we imply a void of all that made up, to them, the life of life; and to fill that void with memories of the holy hill, and precise, measurable anticipations of its renewed glories, so that everything should be ready for an immediate setting to work when once the blessed day of return should dawn—this, we see, was the only conceivable solace for the hearts that craved for a new Zion. The betrothed who delight themselves with planning the home they are to share together would settle every detail with a less loving elaboration than the exile who thus in spirit revisited his native city, and trod the courts of a new temple. To measure its walls and plan out even the outhouses that surrounded it was the pastime of weary hours which the ebb of inspiration left empty and chill, and no civil duty or hope intervened to cheer and occupy. The Temple lay in ruins, but in the imagination of the prophet a statelier temple extended its noble courts and massive walls before him, and his dry and tedious

* viii. 1.

measurements were a "Song of degrees" to his heart, as in thought he moved onward on his pilgrimage to the new Jerusalem.

The last nine chapters of Ezekiel are at once absolutely prosaic and profoundly pathetic. Few ordinary readers of the Bible read them through. They are a series of measurements for the ideal temple; they form the rigid framework for pictures with which the priest-prophet beguiled the dreariness of exile. The scheme is evidently a perfectly literal one. "Of all the three temples mentioned in the Old Testament," it has been said, "that described by Ezekiel would be most easy to realise in an actual construction."* If any one would read the account in chapter xl., taking the trouble to substitute for "cubit" the probable equivalent in our measurement—*i.e.* a foot and a half—he would feel that an interpretation which allegorises it is possible only to those who are determined that no detail in the Bible shall be without a spiritual meaning. The whole chapter is devoid of spiritual meaning as a builder's estimate.

The new temple which Ezekiel imagined was, it seems, to arise on the site of the old temple, and, so far as the actual building was concerned, to be much the same. But the whole scene was to be so marvellously transformed that practically the site was new. It appears that the return of the exiles was to coincide with a literal "new earth"; the Judea in which they would find themselves was to be one of wonderfully expanded scenery; where that little group of hills and ravines had stood which they had known as Jerusalem, was to be a lofty platform, centring in a solid and imposing structure, bearing a distant resemblance to the "Ziggurat" of Babylonia, consisting of two terraced courts, rising one above each other, and crowned by the temple. The sacred

* Westphal, II. p. 335.

building itself must have been perfectly familiar to the imagination of the exiled priest, and was reproduced without much difference, but its whole surroundings were totally dissimilar. Instead of the crowded streets which had encircled the edifice on Mount Moriah, there was to be a vast enclosure, spreading a margin of sacred quiet around the holy building, this again being surrounded by the houses of the priests, shutting in, we may imagine, a kind of conventual calm over the terraced square, which was to be entirely separated from the city, as a symbol of the new sanctity to take its start with the new temple. The sanctuary of the united kingdom was to be cut off from all contact with secular life, the sacred and profane city (for the temple, with its lofty *emplacement* and priestly suburbs, would have the aspect of a city) were to be permanently and absolutely separate.

The vast and massive structure which the temple was to crown, akin to those which surrounded him in the country of his involuntary adoption, and which the enterprise of Nēbuchadnezzar was daily increasing, was an erection needing labour which Judæa had never even in the days of Solomon been able to provide, and which in future it could not aim at carrying out on the most reduced scale. The grand formal square on the top of the mountains was well fitted to embody the splendid and definite hopes of a glorious restoration cherished by the first colony, cherished perhaps by all while the memory of Zion was fresh. But when the edict of Cyrus permitted their return, and the "dream"* which the Psalmist recalled "when the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion," gave way to the disappointing reality, the few ruins on Moriah and Zion, with the separating ravines just as they were, instead of the "lofty mountain" which was to form the throne of the new Jerusalem, must have been to

* Ps. cxxvi. 1.

the handful of returned exiles a symbol of the discovery that the proud national hopes which the city of Ezekiel was to commemorate had passed away. The expansive national embrace of Jehovah-Shammah was as unreal as its narrow sacerdotal rules were potent and enduring. The actual growth was based on an ideal of exclusion instead of expansion, and a monument not of a united nation but of overtures rejected and strife converted to permanent enmity.

The division of a sacred and secular Jerusalem with its strange jumble of magical transformation and prosaic literalness, sober economy* and apocalyptic miracle, was a dream of which their restored city was to retain the trace in a new view of holiness. There is in all the arrangements of the prophet an elaborate scrupulous attention to holy *things* which impresses upon us that the prophetic is conquered by the priestly spirit. When the priests go into the outer court they are to "lay aside their sacrificial garments wherein they minister, and lay them in the holy chambers, and they shall put on other garments, *that they sanctify not the people with their garments*. And they shall teach my people the difference between the holy *and the common*, and cause them to discern between the clean and the unclean."† The secular life has lost its nearness to God.

The prophet who was swept off from Jerusalem in the third year of the seventh century B.C. could hardly have lived to see the melancholy and disappointing return within thirty-five years of its conclusion. If he had, the failure of his visions, perhaps, would have grieved him less than their success. For his ritual precepts were directly opposed to his national aspirations. He, the prophet who would have made a new partition of the holy land among a united Israel, ended by founding a narrow and bigoted sect. He is the successor of

* Ez. xlvii. 10, 11.

† xlv. 19-23.

Hosea and Amos, but he is also the precursor of the Priestly writer. His love for his order was as strong as his love for his nation, but its movement was in a different direction, and unfortunately was more successful. He would have expanded the nation; he did contract the order. Israel and Judah were in his ideal to be combined in one powerful and united nation; but an equal or greater portion of his attention is spent on regulations which would break up one of its tribes into an arrogant minority and an oppressed majority. A particular group of the descendants of Levi were to be erected above his brethren as masters above servants, as privileged above excluded members of a clan. How much easier in this world is it to disintegrate than to unite! The nation Ezekiel would have founded remains a hope of the future; the caste he succeeded in rendering exclusive became the rulers of his people and the agents in the great tragedy of the world.

We find in the previous stage of the Thorah—the Deuteronomic code—that the two words, priests and Levites, are synonymous.* The priests are Levites; the tribe of Levi has been set aside for the priesthood, and has no other function; there is no group of privileged Levites whom we have to know by another name. The consecration of one particular tribe to the priesthood is itself an innovation on earlier practice. The king was never of the tribe of Levi, and the king was in former days at liberty to sacrifice.† The shrinkage of sacerdotalism has begun from the first. But till the time of the Exile the whole tribe of Levi was priestly. It is Ezekiel who first brings the distinction of sacred and profane into a fuller development, and applies the principle of exclusion

* *E.g.*, Deut. xvii. 9, 18; xviii. 1, &c.

† “Ni Gidéon, ni Manoah, ni Saül, ni David n'étaient lévites. L'origine lévitique de Samuel est sujet à caution.” Westphal, II. p. 333.

within the sacred order itself. The order is changed from a democracy to an aristocracy;* instead of "the priests the Levites," as everywhere in Deuteronomy, we have henceforward the priests *and* Levites. All priests are Levites, but all Levites are not priests; the greater part are servants of the priests. A portion of the sacred caste,† never sullied by the guilt of idolatry, is set apart for the service of the altar by certain rules of ritual purity and by material privileges almost lifting them to the position of the wealthier English clergy. This hierarchical process, which has made such large progress in the fifty years separating Ezekiel from the discovery of Deuteronomy, stops short of completion. To hear of a high priest we must turn to the Priestly Code. He is not only *omitted* from the programme of Ezekiel, he is rendered impossible. The minute and definite directions as to trivial matters of costume and ritual purity, which we find in the last chapters of the book, forbid us to accept the whole as a vague and suggestive sketch of possible institutions, or an ideal with a spiritual clue, a parable to be interpreted with a large latitude according to our view of some hidden meaning. We have a set of definite rules for a positive institution, and if an important element in it is passed over in silence, it is because to the writer it was utterly unknown. The omission belongs to the national side of Ezekiel's aspirations, it secures Palestine by the authority of a son of David, as a non-priestly State. Yet it must be confessed that the addition of the high priest in the Priestly Code does but carry on the narrowing process to its logical conclusion, and pass in exact coin-

* See 2 Kings xxiii. 9. The suppression of the local worship would naturally flood Jerusalem with the priests who had thus lost their sphere of influence and source of livelihood; and the orthodox priesthood would as naturally refuse to admit them on terms of equality. This distinction was thus a record of Josiah's reformation, but was not recognised by it.

† Ezekiel xl. 46, xlii. 13-14.

cidence with the pregnant passage we have quoted from Aristotle, "through a tribe to a family, through a family to a man."^{*}

We may appear to be laying too much stress on a matter of detail. Why, it may be asked, should the change be regarded as so important? The tribe of Levi was already set aside to represent the race at the service of the altar; why should not a family be chosen out, on the same principle, to represent the tribe, or a man to represent the family? The one arrangement might be more convenient than the other, but why speak as if it committed the race to a fatal principle? Because the only hope for the race lay in the opposite impulse to that which it sanctioned and stimulated. The antagonism within the nation itself needed an expansive principle as its healing influence. The spirit of separation was there already; to give it development and material, to let it find scope at the very heart of the national interest—this was to turn aside from the upward path, to set the feet of Israel on that fatal slope where it is almost impossible to pause or to turn, and the precipice becomes inevitable.[†]

^{*} See quotation from the "Politics" on p. 21.

[†] The process which successively sets apart, as endowed with a peculiar sanctity, a *tribe*, a *family*, and an *individual*, may in some respects be compared with that which ends in the creation of a Pope, but its stages are more distinctive, and more analogous among themselves.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PRIESTLY CODE.

IF we ask why patriotism should provide a spring of elevating impulse, while the analogous devotion to an order is narrowing and perilous to sympathy, the answer is to be found in the belief that the nation is the work of God and the order is the work of man. The glory of a nation escapes, and the glory of an order invites, whatever in corporate aims is akin to selfishness. The man who loves his country cares for "all sorts and conditions of men." The man who loves his order cares for those who are in exactly the same position as himself. This principle explains even its own apparent exceptions. When the seeming patriot becomes a criminal the object of devotion is only nominally a nation. The Roman, who was ready to let the whole world groan in order that Rome might be glorious, identified the State with a narrow and selfish oligarchy in which every member mirrored his own tastes and vices; the Republic to him was a multitudinous self—a self often far poorer and narrower than the individual self. And alas! as we bring our study to its close, this is the decision we have to make also concerning the Jew.

Jerusalem, in the time of David, was the centre of a nation. In the time of Christ it had become the home of an Order. We, looking back on the whole history of Israel, speak of Palestine as the Holy *Land*. To the Jew that

expression would record an earlier phase of national life; from the time of the Exile it was Jerusalem which was the Holy City. The expression seems out of place as we read it in St. Matthew, in close proximity to the denunciations of our Lord against all that was characteristic of the Jerusalem of His day. Yet it records the spiritual history of Judaism in its double aspect. The process by which the home of Israel shrivelled up into an adjacency of the Temple must never be regarded as a mere dwindling, it was in ideal and aim a centralisation. Though it ended in the Pharisaism denounced by Christ, it began in an endeavour to realise the faith inspired by Moses. The prophet and the Pharisee, fatally opposed as they are, yet have affinities in the consideration of which they do, from some points of view, fall into line, and succeed each other.

The long evolution which resulted in what we know as Judaism, took its start from a vague monolatry, always tending to pass into polytheism, woven into the web of family and village life, and disconnected with any sense of a priestly caste. The people described in the early part of the books of Kings, and addressed by the prophets, were worshippers of Jahveh, and in that sense were monotheists, but they worshipped him under various symbols; they recognised other divine beings, all insignificant in comparison with him, but still present in some dim vision as possible rivals to their true Lord. His influence expanded, theirs dwindled and tended to disappear; but the idea of a covenant is in the early stage of the history always allied with that of a possible though illegitimate alliance with other beings. Between *Hebrew* religion, idolatrous, domestic, non-ritualistic; and what we know as *Judaism*, with its centralised worship at the Temple of Jerusalem, and its sacred hierarchy culminating in the High Priest as the sole

head of the State, there intervened the religious development which gave Israel a sacred literature, and the political decay whereby a nation dwindled into a sect. The nation itself endured but for a brief space; before Saul it is a chaos of warring tribes, after Solomon it is a people whose secular and sacred elements are fatally divided;* the fall of each is certain from the moment it ceases to be the half of a united kingdom. The exiles never return from Assyria; and the handful who return from Babylon bring with them no possibility of political development. Solidified into an order by passionate devotion to their religion, they are cut off from the life of a nation by the narrowing impulses of priestcraft. The successive stages of this process, which takes its start from the so-called Prophetic History, are recorded by the discovery of Deuteronomy, the prophesyings of Ezekiel, and lastly the composition and publication of the Priestly Code.

The writings which give us the intermediate stages of this evolution are in a much simpler condition than either of those which form the terms. Ezekiel is perhaps the prophet whose work has least been subject to interpolation or bewildering revision, and Deuteronomy, though we may find in it, here and there, those contradictions which a Hebrew editor could leave on the same page, is a single book in a sense in which we can apply the words to no other part of the Pentateuch. But we can distinguish the Priestly Code from any other part of the history only as we can sever the matrix of a conglomerate from the stones embedded within it. It has flowed in around the other history, and when detached and read apart is discerned as a supplement to an independent narrative.† It gives the

* Speaking roughly, we may thus describe respectively the kingdoms of Israel and Judah.

† This must be understood of the work in its last recension. The Priestly

stiff framework of chronology to a drama which it thereby often embarrasses, but which it evidently aims at following, and to which it professes to supply additions that are merely interpretative and expansive, even when they are such as to our minds seem inconsistent with it.

The general limits of the Priestly Code may be briefly suggested as being identical with the book of Leviticus, together with all that prefaces or recalls it.* The work supplies a statistical and chronological commentary on the early history of Israel, made in the interest of the priesthood, and constitutes a ritual directory of worship in all its branches. Wherever, through the Pentateuch and Joshua, these interests come into prominence we recognise the hand of the Priestly narrator, but we do not thus give an exhaustive analysis of his work; he sometimes tells the story of the Jehovist over again, occasionally (as in the first chapter of Genesis) from a more spiritual point of view, and with what might appear the design of correcting the crude anthropomorphism of his forerunners. His work gathers up the progress of Jahvehism to Judaism, with its double elements of gain and loss, into a symmetrical narrative; it repeats the history of Israel in accordance with that hard narrow monotheism which culminates in the books of Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah, and passes into the Pharisaism of the New Testament. But the glorious history of the Maccabean wars equally belong to it, and the two should be remembered together.

Code is believed to have been originally written as a separate work. But none of it can have been written by a person absolutely ignorant of the Jehovist.

* If the reader will also peruse the Priestly account of the Deluge given on p. 125, and remember that Deuteronomy contains only half a dozen verses from the Priestly writer, he will be almost able to complete the Priestly Code for himself. Professor Driver gives it in its entirety, but his avoidance of Roman numerals makes the references bewildering.

We have spoken of the Priestly narrator in the singular, but it is always necessary to remember that when we speak of a Hebrew author the word is liable to be taken as a vague plural. The attempt at interpretation here made does not aim at any distinction between the writer and the editor, and perhaps a certain indistinctness on this point may finally be decided to be as much more historic a representation as it is more convenient. The Priestly Code, like every other part of the Pentateuch, is an anonymous and annotated work, and the strong corporate genius of Israel must be traced here as elsewhere. The individual feels himself a mere channel for the influence of the race, and in this particular instance it appears to us that those idiosyncracies which give so much interest to the distinction of writers in the earlier work vanish altogether, and leave us nothing but the voice of a caste, speaking through one of its members.

It is in this latest division of our rearranged Pentateuch that the touch of the critic, distinguishing the work of the scribe at Babylon or in the little community of the restoration from the original records of the race, may be welcomed with most gratitude.* Where interest slackens, where the sense of naïve, fresh life dies away, and an oppression as of some stiff official presence falls on our attention, there we may recognise the hand of the Priestly narrator. The breath of national life has passed, we are listening to the preaching which emanates from a sect. But the work which affects us with constant tedium and occasional repulsion when we try to peruse it as a trustworthy narrative of events may be studied with interest and profit as the record of an

* This mainly applies to Wellhausen, as far as the general reader is concerned. He seems to me somewhat one-sided, but most critical decision in this chapter is taken from him.

important development of belief. The scrupulous ritualism, the narrow, hard, elaborate outwardness, which here regulates worship, is altogether incredible, regarded as an incident of the life of the tent. Read it as a record of the return from Babylon, and it becomes intelligible and coherent. See the tabernacle as the *forerunner* of the temple, and you are confronted with a perpetual and meaningless miracle. Look upon it as an ideal *copy* of the temple, and you detect an interesting expression of the passionate devotion with which the Jews returned to a centre of worship on their own soil, after a generation spent in a foreign and idolatrous land. What we have to accept is by no means a mere invention. The archives of the nation must have formed the most precious treasure of the exiles at Babylon; every scrap of tradition, written or recorded in inherited memories, must have been conned over with brooding attention and yielded up its teaching to the loving study of exiles who sought to distil a hope from a memory. The creation of a sacerdotal system, with an elaborate ritual furniture, among a nomad tribe in the desert of Sinai, merely absurd as an authentic narrative, becomes conceivable and expressive when we learn to regard it as an artificial memory distilled from a hope.

The confusion, we have tried to show, is not entirely without parallel. The ideal of Sparta was reflected back on antiquity as the ideal of Jerusalem, and crystallised from an aspiration to an enactment. But we may take a broader, and more familiar, view of this change. As we recede into a remote past all indications accessible to us speak of increased difficulty and diminished enjoyment in life, yet the most remote past of all, as it is figured by the legendary imagination of the race, knows no arduous toil, and pictures scenes of unbounded enjoyment. .After contemplating these

pictures we turn to the evidence of promiscuous hostility and perennial danger implied in those lake-dwellings where our ancestors sought security at the price of comfort and freedom ; but the fancy is more potent than the record of fact. Even in individual memories the illusion is not wholly unknown. Piercing the web of unpleasing recollections in the long ago, a backward glance may often discern some mystic glow which lies beyond, without suffusing them ; at times a dream-like doubt may steal upon the mind whether the vague longing be not a truer guide than the definite recollections by which it is confuted. At all events we must recognise such a dualism in the records of the race. The principle that vivid and persistent hopes cast reflections into the still waters of memory is as certain as any fact in history.

Our real difficulty in accepting this picture of Mosaic legislation as the invention of a late age is less that we disbelieve this transformation than that in this case we can hardly recognise it. What we have to accept as so congenial to the aspirations of a people as to slip into the portal of tradition the moment the door was left ajar, is a system of tedious and arduous ritualism, such as we naturally imagine to be enforced on a race only by ancestral initiation or else by some coercion from without. Yet there is no doubt whatever that this tedious system became at last an object of passionate devotion. When we reach that struggle by which a handful of patriots emancipated themselves from the yoke of an empire, we find devotion to the Jewish Law a fact as clearly written on the page of history as devotion to the cause either of Romanism or Protestantism in the narrative of modern Europe. It should not be incredible that a system thus cherished with a growing superstition and remembered with associations of national triumph might be reflected backwards on the mists

of antiquity, and the whole development figured as a return to an original condition of things; that the strong momentum by which the race was borne onwards to its completed ideal, was mistaken for a conservative reversion towards the customs endeared to the race in its infancy, and sanctioned by national achievement. Thus we may conceive how books composed after the fall of both kingdoms slipped as it were by their own weight into the position of ancient documents handed down from remote antiquity, and became associated with the authorship of that great hero and prophet who stood forth as a sort of incarnation of the hope and the unity of Israel. The antiquity of the Jewish Law, we see, was as natural an imagination to the Jew as the Golden Age is to humanity.

The account of the wilderness legislation, impossible and unnatural as it is when we once conceive with any serious attention of the actual condition of a wandering tribe in the peninsula of Sinai, has a profound significance when we regard it as the work of priests at Babylon, weaving in early records of the race with impressions of the splendour around them, and returning to those early wanderings with a certain sense of continuity in the midst of the contrast. It expresses, even in its most glaring inconsistencies, such as confuse the barren solitudes of Sinai with the elaborate civilisation of Babylonia, that profound yearning for the promised land which obliterates all differences in different stages of absence from it; and embodies what we may call the ancestral memories of the tent, even in descriptions and narrations by which such memories are defied. The chosen race in Babylon, as in the Sinaitic peninsula, is called on to remember that they are "strangers and pilgrims on the earth." The Jewish race embodies in that unconscious recollection which belongs

to the deepest part of character the record of a time when the tent was the home, when the stars above were the true scenery of habitual neighbourhood, when the only aspect of Nature at once familiar and definite was the heaven above, and all which spoke of earth was indistinct or strange. "I am a stranger with thee and a sojourner, as all my fathers were," says the Psalmist; "As a shadow* are our days upon earth,"† says the chronicler. The history of Israel gathers up that reminiscence, its main events repeat the lesson, its unforgettable history echoes the warning that on earth it should have no abiding city; its true home was elsewhere.

The Priestly Code becomes luminous to us when we read it as a composition of that exile life which, in its deepest meaning as in its most characteristic manifestation, was to endure for the whole subsequent experience of Israel. Henceforward the true life of the race is in "the dispersion;" and in some senses the Jews are exiles even at Jerusalem. The Mosaic constitution, as it is represented in Leviticus, gives no hint of the organisation of national life. We hear nothing of a people, only of a congregation. We have no such thing as a civil code. While pages are given to the description of a priest's costume, we hear nothing of any ordinance concerning civil or criminal offence, financial regulation, or, in general, anything that appertains to the government of a nation. And naturally, for the governor is no longer a Jew. Government is Babylonian; it is to become Persian, Syrian, Edomite, and Roman; it will never again, except in brief moments of national exaltation, belong to the holy race. The very idea

* cxix. 19.

† 1 Chron. xxix. 15. The most curious instance of this unconscious memory of the tent may be traced in the odd expression of Ezra ix. 8, "And now for a little space grace hath been showed us from the Lord our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a *nail* in his holy place": that is evidently a pin for the tent. See also Is. xxii. 23.

of a *nation* is lost; the nation is Babylon, Syria, Rome. The chosen people is a *church*. The two ideas confront each other as opposites—almost as contraries. Doubtless the secular arrangements of law are necessary, the regulations of the foreign government have a certain convenience of which the Jew may take advantage. But all his interests are elsewhere, and the record which reflects them on an ideal past faithfully portrays the preoccupations of the exile.

The contrasted spirit of the earliest and the latest writer of the Pentateuch emerges on the very first page which confuses them, the moment the confusion is removed. The first chapter of Genesis, which is also the first of the Priestly Code, has been bound up with so heterogeneous an account of the same subject-matter that we have taught ourselves to attend to neither in order to be able to fancy that we believed both. A jumble of parable and science became inevitably a stumbling-block in the way of science. If the parable had been associated with its successors in the New Testament, and the science had been preserved among the treasures of Rabbinical lore, modern students might have welcomed the latter as an interesting first sketch of the theory of evolution. It is the work of some premature Lyell or Darwin, living under the shadow of an aged civilisation, and melting into his picture of the dealings of God with man such views of Nature as were current among his surroundings. It should be studied in the same spirit as that in which we turn to those chemical treatises which embody the belief in Phlogiston. To read it with unprejudiced attention and then peruse some commentary where holy and earnest men have taught us that it was no part of the inspired writer to communicate any truth except such as belonged to the revelation of the Divine, is to receive a fresh measure of human capacity for self-deception. We

might fill a library with scientific books belonging to exactly the same category as this chapter—volumes which were science only to their first generation of readers, and to every other valuable, if valuable at all, as material for the history of scientific thought. This stands out of relation to the message that Israel has to bring to mankind. But to suppose that it can have been an aim to no Hebrew writer to give the world his views on a subject on which the world is not particularly anxious to learn them, is to confuse the special relation of each race to truth with such an insight in each member of that race as should guard him from exceeding it. As long as readers of Scripture kept that notion they were obliged to make a large part of the Bible mean nothing at all.

The views of the Priestly writer were much the same as those of the learned Oriental world in which he found himself. The Assyrian account discovered by the late George Smith preserves the separate acts of creation in the same order as that of the document we are now studying; and the narrative has, in some respects, a deeper tone than that of Genesis. Ea, the creator, is "the God of supreme intelligence," the "god of pure life," "he *who gives life to the dead*," "who brings to greatness him that is of small estate," "the compassionate one, with whom is life."* We must gather up many utterances of Hebrew faith from other portions of its history to rival this Pagan conception of creative power. What then, it may be asked, does the message of Israel add to the legendary lore of the Semitic race? We might, from some points of view, describe its characteristic as rather that of subtraction than of addition. Other races dropped the seed of legendary cosmogony into a fertile soil where it blossomed into a rich mythologic growth; on the soil of Israel it

* See (*e.g.*) Sayce's Hibbert Lectures, p. 140.

shrinks at once and deepens into the root of a single idea—the Unity before all and beyond all. The early Semite believed that “In the beginning gods created the heavens and the earth.” Ea is *a* god and not *the* God. The Hebrew gathers up all in that preliminary declaration, “In the beginning *God* created the heavens and the earth.” A single will lies at the basis of creation; the one antithesis of the source and the result of all creative power colours every conception involved in the story of creation, or rather deprives it of the colour which we find elsewhere in fanciful intermingling of the parts of God and man. The Priestly writer has laid to heart the command, “Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image”; under his guidance we quit the world of crude anthropomorphism. Where Jahveh plants a garden, breathes into his statuary, breaks into one image to gain material for another, God creates by His fiat. So far as the distinction of Creator and creation is characteristically Hebrew, he is even a truer type of his race than the Jehovist.

But the idea of a central Unity, characteristically Hebrew, is not exclusively Hebrew. It is the meeting-point of all science, and of all theology. What is it that has so profoundly impressed on our own century the stamp of a scientific era? It is the strong centralising tendency of our science. The very word Evolution is an expression of this tendency. Take two phrases characteristic respectively of the science of the early and late nineteenth century — “the imponderable agencies” under which name many elderly persons can remember making their first acquaintance with light, heat, and electricity, and the “conservation of energy” under which phrase we have learnt to find a clue to the one central principle of the Cosmos; and you have a scientific translation of the worship of primitive Israel and Judaism. There was an equally vague pluralism

in the first stage, an equally definite unity in the last. What has embittered the conflict of religion and science in our day is that the Jewish principle has been, as it were, unconsciously annexed by the men of science—that their “Cosmic emotion” is essentially a religious principle, and that this latent force has made itself felt, on the one hand as a rival to the true religion, on the other as an effective substitute for it. The struggle was not between opposing principles, but between opposing applications of one principle. It had the virulence of a civil war.

Whenever the time comes for the hostile brethren to embrace, it will be discovered that nowhere has the theory of evolution a more definite forerunner than in that first chapter of Genesis which has been represented to the popular imagination as its main antagonist. This account of creation might be exactly expressed in the formula of evolution—the separation of an indefinite homogeneity into a definite heterogeneity.* During the first triad of the six days of creation the work of the Creator, like the evolution of Nature, is manifested rather in separation than in fresh production. God separates light from darkness; evolution proceeds from a whirl of all physical existence to definite centres of light and heat with a surrounding void. More or less, the analogy might be continued. Geology reflects the work of the second day, as astronomy the work of the first. We must interpret every term vaguely to find any analogy, but the analogy is real. The achievement of the writer may from a modern point of view be erroneous,

* “Evolution is an integration of matter and concomitant dissipation of motion, during which the matter passes from an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a definite, coherent heterogeneity.”—Herbert Spencer, “First Principles” (2nd ed.), p. 396. The work of the first three days of creation might be described in precisely these words.

but even from a modern point of view it may be discerned that his aim is scientific.

Let us, for instance, take the lines *—poetic, though they are not the work of a poet—with which Professor Tyndall prefaced his celebrated "Discourse on the Scientific Uses of the Imagination," and ask ourselves whether they be more applicable to the theories of science or the narrative of Genesis. To us they seem impartially sympathetic with both points of view. Let the reader judge :

If thou wouldst know the mystic song
 Chaunted when the sphere was young,
 Aloft, abroad, the pæan swells.
 O wise man, hear'st thou half it tells?
 To the open ear it sings
 The early genesis of things ;
 Of tendency through endless ages,
 Of star-dust and star-pilgrimages,
 Of rounded worlds, of space and time,
 Of the old flood's subsiding slime,
 Of chemic matter, force and form,
 Of poles and powers, cold, wet, and warm.

The reader who omitted the last couplet might find some difficulty in deciding whether these lines were more applicable to the first chapter of the Bible or the last of modern physics. The "tendency through endless ages" is not excluded by a narrative which begins by telling us that "the earth was without form and void" and may have continued thus for æons ; the "star-dust and star-pilgrimages" seems to belong to the separation of the light from the darkness. The general spirit of the whole seems to us more realised in the poem of Genesis than in the treatises of Darwin and Spencer, but to be manifest in both.

The true kinship of the Priestly writer has been first brought out clearly by that analysis whereby the critics have

* Of Emerson.

enabled us to distinguish him from the Jehovist. The work of each is intelligible only when detached and studied from a separate point of view. The Jehovistic account of the creation belongs to the realm of the Eternal, it stands out of relation to time, it belongs to that order of truth in which human conceptions cannot be accurate. The Priestly account of the creation, on the other hand, is conceived altogether in terms of time; and if it be not accurate it is in some sense false. The Jehovistic writer speaks of a day "when the Lord made the earth and the heavens," but all the stages of creation might from his words equally be conceived as hours or as millenniums. The Priestly writer fits the stages of evolution into an exact week—two triads of creation: the first lifeless, the second animated, bound by the repose of the seventh day into a sacred whole. On the first three days light is divided from darkness and earth from water, so that an environment is prepared for living organism; "earth" including the vegetation which covers it, and separate from which it was no more conceived than the body of an animal from its fur or feathers. On the last three days of the week each of these domains was fitted with its appropriate inhabitants. On Wednesday the realm of light received its brilliant rulers, the stars being considered living inhabitants of the heavens. On Thursday the water and the air—cognate antitheses of the dwelling-place of man—were peopled with the inhabitants whose movements have so much analogy, and who are thus divided by a like facility, rapidity, and mystery from the slow manifest progress of man and quadrupeds. On Friday these latter emerged into existence, and on the next day a profound repose solemnised the conclusion of the week of creation. The series, in a certain rude order, does embody the idea of development, and the definite-

ness and measurement which make it erroneous, make it also scientific in aim. Everywhere we have that definite chronology and distinct limit which all accurate science must possess, though inaccurate science may possess it also. The week of creation is exactly mapped out, the Sabbath of repose separates a seething chaos from a world of measurable progress; and the second Sunday in the world's existence initiates the order of things under which we are living now.

We use purposely the most familiar dates of every-day life to bring home to our readers this peculiar love of limit in the writer of the Priestly Code. "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day,"* says a Jew, expanding a quotation from a Psalm, and apparently applying it equally to a reminiscence of this very account of creation, and to anticipations of "new heavens and a new earth," in which many of his race were tempted to think that the Lord was "slack concerning His promise." The suggestion, apparently, is that the new creation and the old creation may both appear an age in experience, and a day in retrospect. It would appear as though the Priestly writer foresaw that interpretation and provided against it. "The morning and the evening," he tells us, "were the first day." He appears to use this formula to impress upon us that by a day of Creation he meant no vague suggestion, as in the Persian substitution of an age for a season,† but that he really conceived the week of creation to have been a

* 2 Peter iii. 8; cf. Ps. xc. 4: "A thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday."

† The Persian creation occupies one season of a year, in which every month is replaced by a millennium. The twelve millenniums constitute the whole series of mundane existence; and the four divisions of this vast period suggest the year as its model. The Persian account of the creation (the Bundelesh) is comparatively a modern book, but it is believed to embody ancient material.

definite, sharply marked-out portion of time, wherein successive acts of divine volition brought order into that world of chaos regarded either as an eternal opposite to God, or as the first product of His will. The successive acts of separation may even to a certain small extent be brought into relation with successive stages of evolution, according to modern theories. The separation of light from the darkness might be compared with that process whereby the solar system was evolved from an eddy of all material existence, and the "firmament in the midst of the waters" with the formation of a solid crust about the earth; we could not go far in either case, but quite as far as we could go in accepting from the past much else which yet must be called in its way science. The exact determination of measure and limit which marks out the aim as scientific, may also mark the achievement as erroneous. A nearer approach to truth in this case doubtless loses this definiteness. With the student of cosmogony, from the modern point of view, one hour is as a thousand years. Yet still it remains that measure and limit mark the progress of completed science, however often the limits of a premature and inadequate decision have to be destroyed before this complete structure can arise on their débris.

When we speak of Hebrew science we do not use the word in the same exclusive sense as modern dialect would suggest. Hebrew thought did not separate the law and the lawgiver as modern science does; to stop short with assertions as to the first, and leave everything concerning the second an open question, would have been, from the Hebrew point of view, a mere incoherence. From the modern point of view it is the opposite proceeding which is incoherent. The day of rest which ends the week of Creation, forming as it were the keystone to an arch, and

gathering up the double series of environment and organisms in a measured whole, binds the work of man to the work of God. The Sabbath shines through the very beginning of terrestrial existence as a divine ideal. It is no mere concession to human weakness, but an element in the life that is common to God and man. "In the image of God made He them," in this as in other respects. Labour, for the Hebrew, almost alone among ancient races, was dignified by divine participation; rest thus became sacred also, for there is no rest without labour. The toil which slavery degraded by associating it with a hateful and brutal institution, was taken up by Hebrew cosmogony into the very life of God. The Decalogue, already old when the Priestly writer set down this account of Creation, enjoins no task on man which had not its pattern in the Divine. "Six days shalt thou labour," say both versions* of the ten commandments, and the Priestly narrator adds "six days did God labour." From the first the pattern for the life of man is the life of God. It is from this sense of divine partnership that an institution common to the Semitic races was regarded by one member of the group with a devotion forming ultimately a distinction by which this race was marked off from every other. We read in the legendary lore of Persia of a blacksmith's apron which became the standard of a victorious army. The symbol of repose became for Israel what the symbol of toil was for Iran. It found its standard in the Sabbath.

But even the way in which the Sabbath rest incorporates the characteristic institution of Judaism in the very dawn of terrestrial existence, while it gives a theologic conception as a keynote to a scientific treatise, still suggests an analogy between Hebrew thought and modern science, however much

* Exodus xx. 9 and Deut. v. 13.

it be disguised by a different set of associations. The idea of rhythmic progression is common to both points of view. It appears to the Hebrew as an alternation of divine labour and production ; * it is wrought in with our modern conception of all the forces of Nature as alternation between expansive and contractile force. The modern scientist would say that the idea of divine exertion and repose is inconceivable ; the ancient thinker would have found that of a vibrating ether unintelligible, but the great law of periodic alternation finds a common expression in both. The Hebrew discovers the law in its human aspect, but he traces it back to a source of humanity ; labour is divine because rest is divine ; man is called to both because his Creator has sanctioned each by His actual participation. The rhythm of man's life falls into a larger rhythm ; the duty of labour, the yearning for repose find a higher sanction than is supplied by human need and impulse. There is a sense of divine sympathy in both, and therefore a fresh emphasis on the command to what is arduous, and an added holiness in the promise of that which all sentient beings crave, and in which humanity discerns a clue to the meaning of deeper yearnings. "There remaineth a rest for the people of God"—for God Himself has known rest.

If in his picture of the preparation of the earth for man the Priestly narrator has assumed the definiteness of limit which he delights to assign to every created being, his con-

* "What we may call the elementary motions going on throughout the world of phenomena are all rhythmical or oscillatory. The phenomena which are present to our consciousness, as light, heat, electricity, and magnetism, are the products of a perpetual trembling, or swaying to and fro of the invisible atoms of which visible bodies are composed." Fiske, "Outlines of Cosmic Philosophy," I, p. 301. The chapter on Rhythm, from which this extract is taken, is an interesting exhibition of the scope and variety of the great law which the author brings forward under this title.

ception of the conditions of nascent humanity, so far as we can gather from brief allusions, is far nearer the vagueness of our own than that of his elder brother. The Jehovist shuts the newly created man into a garden;* the command "to dress and keep it" appears to close the gates on the world beyond; the stamp of human arrangement and labour is on the whole scenery which fills our horizon. In the narrative now occupying us these narrow limits are exchanged for the widest accessible to man. Instead of a garden to be cultivated, we have a world to be subdued; in place of the command to cultivate a plot of fertile land already prepared for its occupant, we have that which sends him forth to "replenish and subdue" an earth apparently teeming already with those obstacles the victory over which constitutes civilisation. On the one hand we have the scenery of a fairy tale; on the other, that of any wild region open to an actual explorer. Man is a child in the garden of the Heavenly Father, endowed with a child's possessions, liable to a child's temptations; and then again an emigrant in a world untouched by axe or plough, needing the arduous destructive processes of colonisation before anything remotely approaching a garden could be conceived as possible. We see here, surely, that we are confronting, not two views of the original condition of humanity, but a view of the original condition of humanity set beside something totally different, and quite out of relation to it. We follow an attempt to suggest the actual endeavours of primitive man, and then we turn to a parable, describing the ideal position of man as a son of God.

* It is interesting to remember that the Priestly writer must have had before him those frequent references to the Garden of Eden which occur in Ezekiel alone among the prophets. It seems as if he carefully avoided the fairy-like vision of young humanity, which commended itself to the glowing vision of the seer in Babylonia.

We must to a certain extent turn back to the Jehovist to understand his later associate. We may gather up the characteristic differences of the two by saying that the Jehovist starts from Man and ends with Woman,* and the Priestly narrator starts with a chaos and ends with a cosmos.† With the Jehovist the creation of woman is an afterthought; it seems almost implied that some demand from Adam, some expression of the unsatisfactoriness of non-human companionship, lies at the root of her being. The animals seem, according to this account, to have been created with a view to providing man with that "fit help," which he was only to find in Woman, after they had been tried as companions and failed. She is far more closely related to him; they are made of the dust of the field, she is literally "bone of his bone"; but her creation, as much as theirs, is subordinate to his. Milton's line, "He for God only, she for God in him," is an accurate reflection of the feeling of the Jehovist. It is to a different order of conceptions we are carried by the story of the Priestly writer. Mankind is male and female from its first existence, the sexes are coeval. It would appear, indeed, that this writer recognises sex as older than humanity. "In the image of God created he him, male and female created he them," seems ‡ to suggest that the divine nature embodied this dual element as well as the human. Sex, in some mysterious form, would seem embodied in the divine nature. At any rate it is a primeval fact in human nature. Woman is no afterthought, no postscript, as it were, to the work of creation, but shares with man the first thought of God, and derives her being directly from Him.

The different sense of sex in the two writers would

* Gen. ii. 7, and 18-24.

† Gen. i. 1-ii. 4a (the first fragment from the Priestly writer). ‡ Gen. i. 27.

appear associated with a different feeling with regard to that creation of new life which gives the deepest significance to the fact of sex. "Be fruitful, and multiply and replenish* the earth,"† says Elohim to the newly created pair. "In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children," says Jahveh to Eve. The two speeches are hardly made in circumstances sufficiently comparable to be called inconsistent. The injunction is given to unfallen human beings who are looking forward into a wide world which they are to "replenish and subdue"; the penalty announced to Eve succeeds the Fall; it is not logically impossible to arrange the two speeches in a single narrative. And yet, taken with their context, we may say that their effect is inconsistent. There seems a sympathy with the desire for offspring in the Priestly story which we fail to discover in its predecessor, in this respect marking the later narration with a far more Hebrew tinge of feeling than the earlier one. But we are reminded, in this particular as in all others, that the Jehovist is giving us a picture of a soul's temptation, and the Priestly historian is giving an account of the protoplasts of humanity. The aims of the two writers are not only different, they are totally heterogeneous. The Jehovist need not consider the life of man in any other aspect than that of his relation to God. The Priestly writer is consciously starting a history of the world, and must lay some foundation for whatever is of importance in all subsequent history. If the two accounts are not inconsistent, it is because they are incomparable.

When we come to the Fall of Man, the two views do approach sufficiently to admit of comparison bringing out their essential divergence; thereby Man, according to the Jehovist, lapsed from his pristine innocence and purity

* Gen. i. 28.

† iii. 16.

because he aimed at that independence of the law above him which becomes dependence on the things below him. Man, according to all indications of the Priestly view, lapsed from primeval innocence by a gradual degeneration. The Creator looked on his work at the end of the six days and lo! it was very good. He looked at it again at the end of ten generations, and, lo! it was altogether evil. That being a natural picture of the change from very good to very bad, it renders the story of Adam's disobedience superfluous. The divine influence, we are to suppose, was weakened with successive removes, as heat at a distance from its source. The ideas of the Priestly writer on the corruption of mankind seem to have been more in harmony with those embodied in the "four ages" of Greek thought than that suggested by the parable of temptation which we read as we turn the page. The idea of degeneration, suggested by many various lines of experience and speculation, is naturally allied with that of a difficult and arduous ritual system. Inevitably the sons decline from the ideal of the fathers. We do not mean, of course, that the ritual law was conceived as existing for the antediluvian world. But the influence of that ritual law, in the conception which it infuses of virtue, would extend beyond its own boundaries, and influence even the representation with which it had no logical connection. Side by side with Jewish zeal for the Law, the Jew must have known in every age disgust to and weariness of the Law. Whatever aspect the divine claim on man in these early days had taken it was natural to conceive of it as something to which successive generations responded with ebbing zeal. The divine claim would be naturally imagined as something arduous, the human response as something fugitive. Man's virtue is worn out, God's claims remain, unalterable and

inexorable. The confession of sinfulness is the normal, almost the inevitable, condition of humanity.

The conception of sinfulness is not only different from that of weakness, to a certain extent the two are mutually hostile ; they may coincide in their lesser degrees, but as the one increases the other tends to disappear. The command to leave one tree untasted in the Garden of Eden symbolises a law that is to form the shelter of weakness, not its inevitable conversion to crime. Such a law does not impose a perpetual strain as the condition of righteousness ; it removes that strain by a definite prohibition which encloses a domain of relative liberty. "Of all trees of the garden thou mayst freely eat," is alien to the spirit of the Priestly Code. This law takes its start from a series of prohibitions. It regulates and prescribes everywhere, it loads every moment with a claim. The human weakness which fails to respond is human sinfulness. Hence we have to observe, in the development of the Code, a preparation for a continual confession, a periodical atonement. Sacrifice, originally dissociated from any idea of sin, becomes its habitual expression. The claim of the Divine is something man is not expected to satisfy ; he must be always filling up the gap with confessions of guilt and symbolic utterances of propitiation. Nothing can be more unlike the spirit alike of the Jehovist and of St. Paul. The natural attitude of the weak being is trust in the source of strength. The attitude by this weakness, this incompleteness, is itself confused with the choice of evil, is utterly artificial, it leaves no room for the real exercise of the conscience.

We trace this growing artificiality through the legislation of the Exodus and the subsequent history, creating a standard of puritanism rather than purity, and blurring moral by its insistence on ritual distinction. But the ritual

law is not given at the start of the history, and where the two narratives follow the first progress of the race we may note a resemblance instead of a contrast.

We have noted, in the Jehovistic account of the Creation, that swift pulsation of thought by which the inspired writer passed from the anthropomorphism of his conception of the Divine to his conviction of the dangers of anthropomorphism. We have to note a similar pulsation of thought in the case of the Priestly writer. His emphatic and reiterated assertion that man is the son of God seems to have awakened within him, as a sort of precaution against mythology, that peculiar love of limit and measure which forms the most obvious characteristic of his style. The early figures of myth and legend, everywhere else than on Hebrew soil, pass by insensible degrees into the divine world. Here they are sharply marked off against it. The historian tells us again and again that man is made in the image of God, but he never for a moment forgets that man is the shadow and God the substance. We see dim figures flit across the scene, we recognise their kindred with the demigods of other nations, but the Hebrew writer seems to discern that kindred only to protest against it. "Kenan lived seventy years, and begat Mahalaleel, and Kenan lived after he begat Mahalaleel, eight hundred and forty years, and all the days of Kenan were nine hundred and ten years, and he died."* What interest can we find in a page of the Bible of which this is a sample—a page filled with names of which we learn nothing of him who bore each of them except that he was son of some man, father of other men, and then died? Much, if we see in this insistence that every member of the genealogy is himself mortal and had a mortal son and a mortal father, a fence against the

* Gen. v. 12-14. This is from the genealogy of Seth.

confusion of Creator and creature. In the case of Enoch, it is said, the story makes a slight approach towards mythology. His three hundred and sixty-five years, coinciding with the days of the year, suggest an astronomical myth to the commentators; he has escaped the ordinary fate of mortality, and is translated to some Hebrew Olympus. How remote is this nearest point from the legendary lore of kindred nations! When the story of Enoch was woven into an elaborate history the writer had to invent all his material. The Bible gave the patriarch a name, a couple of dates, and an announcement of his translation so brief as even to admit of a natural interpretation; and then hurried on to successors from whose biography even this hint of such an expansion is withheld. All nascent mythology is withered in the neighbourhood of the Eternal.

It appears established by the course of recent discovery that in this negative quality consists all which is truly Hebrew in the record of early humanity. The ten patriarchs, in the allied legends, are divine or semi-divine; the Hebrew alone insists on the fact that their days were numbered, and for the most part has nothing else to say about them. We find ourselves, in these early pages of Genesis, on the track of obliterated records; these dim figures, whom we see here as mere mortals and make out nothing about them except the fact that they were mere mortals, had elsewhere, we are sure, an illustrious career; the Hebrew contributes nothing to their history but their transference from Olympus to earth. In this meagre information we have a protest against the mythological instinct which in all allied early history uses such names as material of legendary narrative; where the Hebrew appropriates any branch of the common historic inheritance he cuts away all such growth, men are born and perish, the Eternal remains. The Hebrew literature

gains its most impressive individuality from its emphatic omissions.

We have already tried to show (pp. 125-6), in the story of the Deluge, how emphatically the Hebrew account disentangles itself from the polytheistic elements woven into the very web of that Chaldean narrative with which it is substantially and almost verbally identical. The comparison brings out the complex character of the Hebrew by the contrasted simplicity of the Chaldean story. The editor of Genesis has evidently combined two Hebrew narratives, differing about as much from each other as they do from this foreign parallel. We will now bring this home to the reader by detaching the Priests' history of the Deluge and pointing out the absolute continuity we obtain when we detach it from the additions of the Jehovistic writer. What follows is simply the Priestly story of the Deluge extricated from our Revised Version of the Bible and broken up into paragraphs instead of verses. We read the story for the first time when we thus detach it from the bewildering inconsistencies of its associate—inconsistencies which are perhaps the more bewildering in proportion as they are less obvious than those which have hitherto occupied us.

“These are the generations of Noah : Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God. And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. And the earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God saw the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.

“And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.

Make thee an ark of gopher wood ; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. And this is how thou shalt make it : The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. A light (or roof) shalt thou make to the ark, and to a cubit shalt thou finish it upward ; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof ; with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it. And I, behold, I do bring the flood (waters) upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven ; every thing that is in the earth shall die. But I will establish my covenant with thee ; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee. And of every living thing of all flesh two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee ; they shall be male and female. Of the fowls after their kind, and of the cattle after their kind, and of every creeping thing of the ground after its kind, two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive. And thou shalt take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and thou shalt gather it to thee ; and it shall be for food for thee and for them. Thus did Noah ; according to all that God commanded him, so did he.*

“And Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth. In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. In the selfsame day entered Noah, and Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons with them, into the ark ; they and every beast after his kind, and all the cattle after their kind,

* Gen. vi. 9-22.

and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind, and every fowl after his kind, every bird of every sort. And they went in unto Noah into the ark, two and two of all flesh wherein is the breath of life. And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him: and the flood was upon the earth forty days, and the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters. And the waters prevailed and increased greatly upon the earth; and all the high mountains, that were under the whole heaven, were covered. Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered. And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both fowl, and cattle, and beast, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: and Noah only was left, and they that were with him in the ark.*

“And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark: and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters assuaged; the fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped.† And after the end of one hundred and fifty-three days the waters decreased. And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat. And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month: in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, were the tops of the mountains seen. And it came to pass in the six hundred and first year,‡ in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from the earth. And in the second month, the seven and twentieth day of the month, was the earth dry.

“And God spake unto Noah, saying, Go forth of the ark,

* vii. 6, 11, 13-16a, 17-21, 23b (some add 24).

† viii. 1, 2a, 3b-5.

‡ *i.e.*, of Noah's life.

thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons' wives with thee. Bring forth with thee every living thing that is with thee, of all flesh, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth ; that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth. And Noah went forth, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him : every beast, every creeping thing, and every fowl, and whatsoever creepeth upon the earth, after their families, went forth out of the ark.* And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, with all wherewith the ground teemeth, and all the fishes of the sea ; into your hand are they delivered. Every moving thing that liveth shall be food for you ; as the green herb have I given you all things. But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat. And surely your blood, the blood of your lives will I require ; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man ; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed : for in the image of God made he man. And you, be you fruitful, and multiply ; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein.

“And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you ; and with every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you ; from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth. And I will establish my covenant with you ; neither shall all flesh be cut off any

* viii. 13-19.

more by the waters of the flood ; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth. And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you, and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations : I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud : and I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh ; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. And the bow shall be in the cloud ; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant, which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth.”*

If the reader will peruse this account consecutively, and then turn to its interpolated condition as it stands in our Bibles, he will grasp some of the most distinctive characteristics of the Priestly narrator. A righteous man in a wicked generation is commanded to construct a vessel, the dimensions of which are exactly prescribed ; he is forewarned of an inundation from which he is to save a couple of all known animals and take them with him into the vessel. The appointed day brings the inundation, the waters increase for rather more than a month, then remain stationary for about five months,† and with the complete drying of the land the inhabitants of the Ark quit their prison, and look upon a renovated world. Every event is given with its date and with the

* ix. 1-17.

† This seems the more probable view, but Reuss finds the trace of a third narrator in the hundred and fifty days.

exact measurement of everything capable of measurement that it describes : we learn how large was the vessel which was to form a floating Zoological Garden ; how high floated above the tops of the highest mountains ; how long its inhabitants remained imprisoned ; how long an interval separated the hope of deliverance from its fulfilment. The story, made tedious by this endeavour to give it a historical aspect, finds its soul in the idea of a covenant. The word is repeated seven times in a few lines. We grasp the clue to the whole narrative as we take in its import, and recognise in this belief the idea of a divine element in humanity, and a human element in God.

We have said that the Deluge introduces a historic element into the narrative ; we have traced in the Jehovistic writer a certain sense of incoherence in the endeavour to weave traditional memories into a series of parables. We find such incoherence in the Priestly writer. Everything with him is part of a systematic plan. The destruction of a generation of mankind is not, with him, an outburst of passionate disappointment ; it is a sifting measure, preparing the first stage of the great object of creation, the alliance between the divine and human. The Flood is, in some sense, the true creation. Till then we have had no covenant. The previous generations of men and animals seem to stand in a different relation to the Divine. The expressions which mark the emergence of the world from the subsiding Flood recalls those which record the emergence of a cosmos from a chaos ; we see the solid earth first appear, then the token of vegetation. Time is given for the expanse of mud to put forth its first green leaf, and this period may be regarded as corresponding to the first triad of creation whereby an environment was prepared for living organisms. The emergence from the Ark represents the

second triad, the animal and human world is called on to inhabit a renovated world, as it had been called to a newly created world. We begin the history afresh.

The blessing on life and reproduction, which is now repeated, takes a certain added fulness of material encouragement, the permission to eat flesh being now added to that of all vegetable produce, and the rite of sacrifice being thus initiated. For sacrifice is no more, at first, than the participation of the Divine in the social repasts of man, the smoke which arises towards the heavens conveying in some etherialised form the share of human nourishment appropriate for the Giver. For the Priestly writer the sacrifice of Noah begins the whole institution of sacrifice; he knows nothing of the sacrifice of Cain and Abel, and though the editor has worked up this account into a consecutive whole with his text, we must not, here or elsewhere, suppose that this implies any acceptance of one particular side of an inconsistency.

Where the two narratives approach as closely as is inevitable when both reach an actual external event we see most clearly their divergent spirit and genius. The Priestly writer is consciously and consistently approaching the focus of Hebrew history—the giving of the Law, and seems to secure every step by his precise measurement. The poetry, the picturesqueness of the other narrative has vanished. We see no window open on the wide waste of waters—no dove put forth with trembling hand through the open window and returning to beat against it again when her weary flight had revealed only a welter of turbulent waters; we follow no raven in a more successful quest, nor join the dove in a second journey whence she returns with the first green leaf, pledge of Nature's renewed round of growth and decay. But we must not say that *all* the

poetry is gone. One fragment remains in which this writer rises into the highest poetry. His stiff measurements are forgotten when he speaks of the rainbow; he has an eye to see that evanescent beauty, a heart to gather up the significance of that gorgeous parable, and preserve it for all time. No race can have ever failed to notice this phenomenon so beautiful and so striking, and the dream with which the fancy of men have connected it may be counted up among the deepest realities of life. But this is a message of hope and encouragement, which we have been taught by the Bible to associate with the fair vision, and put into it by human feeling. It is not in itself a promise either of sunshine or storm, only an announcement of a battle between the two. It depends on the genius of the race, and its sympathy with the power manifesting itself through Nature, whether the omen of conflict should be taken to mean that it should not prove the hope of victory, and the associations of Greece and Rome seem to have joined the rainbow with the beginning rather than the end of the storm. Never, says Virgil,* can rain take the prudent husbandman unawares; Nature announces it, "and the immense arch." Iris is, it is true, a messenger from the gods, but she is a messenger commissioned with their cruellest behests,† and is herself a member of the Titanic family which preceded the rule of Zeus, and which seems a type of the abnormal and destructive powers of Nature; she is the sister of the Harpies, those monstrous creatures which Virgil paints with such repulsive character, and Dante transports to "Inferno." For the Hebrew, on the other hand, the rainbow chronicles a new creation, recalling the Sabbath

* In describing the signs of rain ("Georgics," I. 380). The epithet "ingens" betrays a curious indifference to the beauty of the rainbow.

† See the "Hercules Furens" of Euripides, 822 seq.

repose after the six days' toil, and is equally a pledge that henceforward a universe of order is to endure. The bow in the cloud was to be as it were the hieroglyphic to Israel on the heavens to which their eyes were ever raised in the darkness of earth, no less a record than a promise of deliverance "in the dark and cloudy day." Its significance was legible to Israel in a peculiar sense, but its scope was not confined to Israel. The bow is the pledge of a covenant between God and not only His chosen people, not only Him and the whole human race even, but between Him and "every living creature, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth." Three times is this statement repeated,* so that we feel the divine promise, of which the Hebrew was to read the pledge in those faint pure colours on the background of the cloud, is emphatic in its inclusion of all sentient nature and its grant of stability to an orderly world.

We may gather up the significance of the rainbow for Israel, together with the deepest meaning of all its history, if we remember the striking fact that the only two prophets who allude to it are the two who were least likely to be familiar with it—the two who spent their lives in the sultry plains of Babylonia—Ezekiel and his greater brother, the anonymous prophet whom we have confused with Isaiah. It is a wonderfully instructive thought that it was in the darkest hour of Hebrew history, when the promise of God seemed to have been tried and found wanting, that this bright pledge of His promise was remembered. We cannot imagine anything happening to an Englishman which would have the utterly desolating influence of the deportation to Babylon. If we suppose that England had been conquered by Russia and that Tennyson had written his poems in

* Gen. ix. 10-16.

Siberia, we shall have a very faint picture of what it was to the prophets of the Captivity to look back to their home on the Hill of Zion. The sense of a triumph in a power opposed to what we should call civilisation was far greater with them than it would be with the English exile in Siberia; they were tempted to feel that the hope for the world was gone as much as it was when the waters of the Deluge closed over the inhabitants of all the world. And see how out of that despair the bow in the cloud seems to gleam on the eyes of both; "as the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain"* so was the appearance of the glory that dawned on Ezekiel when he was "among the captives by the River Chebar," and "the heavens were opened, and he saw visions of God." The evanescent gleam symbolised the divine nearness; what was most transient spoke to him of what was eternal.

But the prophet who most brings home to us the significance of the rainbow is one who does not name it. Recall the well-known words which speak of a mystic rainbow after the storm, seen not in the heavens but on earth, in the walls and pinnacles of the New Jerusalem: "In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord, thy redeemer. For this is as the waters of Noah unto me; for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee nor reprove thee. Oh thou afflicted, tossed with tempest and not comforted, behold I will set thy stones in fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy pinnacles of rubies, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy border of precious stones. And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord,

* Ezekiel i. 28.

and great shall be the peace of thy children."* All the meaning of this passage dies out unless we think of the rainbow. "This is as the waters of Noah's flood unto me," says the exile, speaking in the name of Jehovah. What comfort would there be in that? Evidently what is meant is that while this calamity is as the waters of Noah's flood, the black cloud was streaked by a bow of fairer promise than that which gleamed before the eyes of Noah. The prophet does not mention the rainbow; perhaps at Babylon he had never seen one, but he sees the new Jerusalem invested with its hues; sapphires and rubies form its walls and pinnacles, and around it sparkles a radiant circle of gems. The Flood is spoken of, but the token of the covenant which followed the Flood lay too deep in the heart of the prophet to need any words. He sees the bow in the clouds, and it heralds a richer covenant, and holds a dearer hope. The loss of Zion to the chosen people was comparable—from a true point of view even equivalent—to the destruction of all flesh from off the face of the earth; there was no disproportion when the two were mentioned together. But the calamity is not the chief object of the prophet's thought; in making the comparison he hurries on to the promise sealed by the rainbow. Israel emerging from a desolating experience of exile, as Noah from the subsiding waters of the Deluge, is greeted with a promise equivalent in its scope. The chosen people may rejoice in a promise as much more valuable than that made to Noah as its scope was seemingly less extensive—only seemingly, for Israel was to manifest its possession to all nations. The prophet's hope is for an emergence into a serene atmosphere of which that rainbow glory was the prefiguring type. The earlier limits shrivel away before that expanding thought. The

* Isa. liv. 8, 9, 11-13.

THE ABOLITION OF ISRAEL IS IN THE GIFT OF THE VOICE
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The meaning of the Hebrew symbolism of the tower will be clarified by the comparison with a legend of the kind that is the subject whose work we are now studying. In following it in the same arrangement of the covering, the languages passing is a sort of materialistic attempt to do. The legend of Babel, we have said in 111, seems to be that of our Bible, it have its way: its association seems with the immediate fact, in which such was magical, mysterious is a tower reaching to heaven was material, appearing as narrative in the story of the desert of the signs, and commemorating a like endeavour made to overstep the divinely appointed limits of being, from an opposite starting-point. It may have been (as we have already suggested) transferred to this side the Deluge from some possible act of radicalising the myth. And if we read the narrative, as we should read all such narratives, with a consciousness that the inspiration of Israel may be felt through the mistakes and confusions of individual writers, we may surely discern that the typical significance of the Babel-builders is to be found in a direct antithesis to the promise of the rainbow—a materialistic security sought by man as against a heavenly sign granted by God. The attempt is a sign of distrust in the promise of Jahveh marked by the radiant arch connecting heaven and earth and the laborious and futile erection of bricks and bitumen beside the evanescent gleam unchanged through the ages appear as contrasted symbols of God's promise and man's distrust. The laborious stages of the Babel erection, ascending towards the heaven they could never reach, are contrasted with the brilliant vision joining heaven and earth, and swallowed up by the jaws of darkness "before the voice of man

can say, Behold," as the pledge that satisfies the self-centred and independent intellect of man, and that which speaks to his spirit through the ear of faith.

To apprehend the true meaning of the Priestly account of the Deluge we should continually look back on the story of Creation and forward to the story of the Exodus. For it is part of a symmetrical plan; as it remembers the story of Creation, so it anticipates the construction of an ark in which was found, not the salvation of a single family from a world-wide flood of waters, but that of a single race from a world-wide flood of idolatry. The Priestly account of the Creation is recalled by the Priestly account of the Flood. We are reminded that the inhabited earth is only, as it were, a thin stratum interposing between the waters below and the waters above, to overwhelm it in a deluge needs no vast floods of rain; if the "great deep" find channels to the upper air, what seems to us the world may be submerged as easily as a thin layer of ice in a rapid thaw. As we detach the Prophetic from the Priestly history, even where they appear to approach most closely, we discover that we are breaking up a confused jumble, consisting of the dim memories of a youthful race with the definite and systematic theories of its late maturity. The dim memories may be mixed with fancies, the elaborate system may incorporate trustworthy history. But the aim of the one is to remember, the aim of the other is to systematise. We can learn from each when we refuse to combine them.

The object towards which the Priestly writer hurries on is the giving of the Law. This event is to him as full of significance as the creation of the world. The story of the Deluge—common to him with his Jehovistic brother and to the ancient writer at Nineveh—gains to him especial meaning as an expressive parable of the crisis in

Israel's history towards which he hastens. The ark in which Noah is to be saved is described with the same kind of detail as the ark which is to contain the treasure of Israel, and we feel that this huge floating vessel, laden with the whole ancestry of the human and animal worlds, owes much of its importance in his eyes to the fact that it typifies and, as it were, magnifies the tiny Egyptian or Assyrian casket which was to contain the Law of Israel. His goal is manifestly and unforgettably the legislation of Mount Sinai.

The Hebrew noun *Thorah* is connected with the verb *horah* to hear, and might perhaps be better translated *instruction* than *Law*. Our associations with the word Law are for this purpose mostly misleading; at least we should remember its Jewish sense rather in connection with its scientific than its judicial associations. To expound a law of nature is to enounce a precept. To teach that oxygen is necessary for health is to prohibit windows that will not open; to expound a theory of combustion is to forbid the introduction of a lighted candle into a powder magazine. If the moral law seem to need something more extrinsic before it can be said to exist, it is because of that dislocation which enables human beings to live as if they were *not* members one of another. Dishonesty and cruelty have results similar in certainty and in character to the defiance of such natural laws as we have instanced, but as far as we can discern consequences here and now the cause may originate with one person and the effect be felt by another. What we emphatically call *Law*, therefore, steps in to remedy this dislocation. So far as a nation is to be considered a *natural* being, "thou shalt not steal" is as much a natural law as "thou shalt not breathe without oxygen." National life is as impossible without honesty as natural life without oxygen. But the thief is not the nation, is not consciously any part of the nation. Therefore the law of

the nation undertakes to teach by artificial penalties what natural penalties would suffice to teach men who were alive to the bonds that make human beings one. Law, in the sense of a command enforced by a penalty, marks in fact the failure of Law in its wider sense. The ideal completion of natural law, so far as we can conceive it, would cause what we know as positive Law to vanish from the earth.

Now what the Jew meant by his Torah was something deeper than the difference of these two kinds of law. It did, to Jewish belief, fulfil itself. It needed no sanction but its own unquestionable agency in guarding the separateness of Israel. The Torah was the covenant between the Lord and His elect people. To ask what were its sanctions would be like asking why an individual should avoid the conditions of suffocation or of an explosion. There are unquestionably persons who wish to commit suicide. But still to announce certain conditions as necessary to life is practically to enforce on intelligent hearers an acceptance of these conditions. You do not need to add penalties to their neglect if you are speaking to those who understand and believe you. Nor to the true Jew was there need for any penalty in the breach of the Torah beyond the consciousness that he was thereby cut off from that ideal Israel which drew its mystic unity from the covenant with Jahveh. A participation in that unity was at least as obvious and magnetic an aim as life is to any ordinary individual.

The covenant between God and Israel, latent in the account of the Creation, emerges into distinctness with that blessing on a renovated world which is to succeed the Flood. The whole progress of the world is conceived as a progressive sifting till we reach the nation ideally fitted for this covenant. The Deluge sweeps away all the progeny of Cain and the vast majority of that of Seth ; the call of Abraham separates a

single member of the family saved from the Flood from the heathenism which in the tenth generation has submerged the descendants of Noah ; and then again a single grandson of Abraham is selected to carry on the vast and precious burden of co-operation with the Divine. To this work there are attached indeed large rewards ; the home in the "pleasant land" ever glimmers before the eyes of the exiles as a pledge of God's renewed favour, but the one vast reward for fidelity to the covenant is the covenant itself. And indeed, if we could conceive of the possibility of a covenant between God and man, we should realise that nothing so large could be imagined beyond it ; that all endeavour, all aspiration, must here find its goal.

The idea is one that emerges gradually with the development of the race. It appears in its earlier stages in a more external and limited form.* The covenant with the Father of the Faithful recalls a treaty of alliance between separate peoples, in the later version it has become the most intimate bond uniting individuals. An alliance between the Eternal Being and the fugitive creatures whom His will has called into existence, is one that to the logical intellect seems to involve a contradiction, yet the paradox must be accepted by all who listen to the voice of Israel. It involved to the Hebrew mind no sense of any abdication of God's prerogative of immutability. If Israel was to attain any unity of its own, it must be by alliance with Him. That in some strange way the need was figured as mutual, was not to the Hebrews a dilution of the truth of God's omnipotence. They held both ideas in their distinctness. The Creator—the One—the Eternal—was drawn towards His creatures by something more than a response to their need of Him. The mortal confronted the immortal in a sharpness of contrast unknown to the classical

* Gen. xv. (Jehovistic).

nations of antiquity, and in a certain equivalence of relation that was equally unknown to them. We may feel the two elements of Hebrew belief logically irreconcilable; but whether we ascribe their union to the blunders of an intellectual childhood, or whether we see in it a prophetic grasp at truths too large to be formulated with the coherence of logic, we must equally admit that as a fact the Hebrew believed both with an intensity that gave the keynote to all his life.

The Christian recognises both an unconscious and a voluntary relation between man and God. He feels that while the whole human race has its root in the Divine, the individual human spirit is yet called on for its special response to that divine relation: so that in some sense the race cannot abjure what, in another sense (which language is too poor adequately to distinguish from it), the man may choose. To the religion of antiquity the first conception would have seemed too wide and the second too narrow. Ancient faith did not contemplate the human race in its entirety as an object of paternal care to the Divine; nor, on the other hand, did it conceive of every individual as called upon to enter singly into a relation with the Divine. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, is not in the same sense the God of Pharaoh, of Ishmael, of Esau. We have seen how the prophetic spirit of Israel continually broke through the limits which we thus suggest; we have even found it the characteristics of one of the writers of Genesis, that he is always ready to keep a place for the Gentile who trusts in God. But still these limits do exist on the whole. To Hebrew imagination they suggested that bond between human beings which all who have felt its sanctity feel also to depend for its sanctity on a reverence for limit which no other bond should need or accept.

Our now almost discarded use of the word "infidel" to describe an unbeliever in the Divine, in its connection with the idea of unfaithfulness to the marriage vow, is or was, a survival from Hebrew belief; and when we seek to understand that belief we should always recall that which the expression symbolises. We think of God as the Father in heaven. "Like as a father pitieth his children," so the Lord pities those, in Christian belief, who do *not* fear Him. But a single human relation provides an inadequate type of that which binds humanity to the Supreme. It is not the love even of a parent which stirs most profoundly the heart of man. By so much as the union of chemical combination exceeds in force and permanence the union of cohesion, by so much does the love of contrast exceed the love of likeness. As much as it is easier to break iron than to analyse water, by so much is the love of sex more potent than the love of kindred. Between these two kinds of love on human ground there is a certain antagonism. It is true that the love of brothers may be rendered more tender and intimate by a certain dissimilarity; true that the love of husband and wife may be rendered more wide-reaching and human by a basis of common interests and pursuits; but brothers may easily be too dissimilar, husband and wife may easily be too much alike. While we are clothed in this garb of flesh, the love of kindred and the love of selection stand in a certain antagonism, and cannot in their strongest form be innocently united in the same personalities. Yet, as we turn to what is most sacred in the Hebrew records, we are led to feel that the purest love which man can feel needs both expressions as its type; that these records owe their perennial influence and their universal applicability to the fact that they have associated this deepest love with the keenest love, and taught that human beings are the children

of God in a sense which leaves it possible that humanity should be the spouse of the Divine. That vision of a "new Jerusalem descending out of heaven *as a bride*,"* which closes the New Testament, is the unceasing inspiration and hope of the Old.

It is in the form of an espousal that we must confront the idea of a covenant if we would understand its spell for the heart of Israel. All that an espousal is to individual life the completed covenant was to be to the race called forth to typify the true position of humanity. This idea gives a soul to what is otherwise external and trivial. A scrupulous observance of rules in themselves unimportant is of the very essence of that symbolism which expresses the fidelity of a spouse in a world of adultery. It is the national safeguard in the time of danger, the ceremonial which barricades, as it were, the chosen race in its needed separateness. The gods in other religions love women, and the fleetingness of earthly relation is cast back upon the Divine. God, in the Hebrew religion, loves Israel, and the eternity of the Divine is impressed, in some sense, on a race taken as a typical specimen of humanity. If this conception should appear as a fantastic interpolation in the Hebrew Scriptures, it can be only because familiarity has dulled our apprehension of their contents. It moulds the phraseology of all reference to idolatry, and there are very few important divisions of the Old Testament which do not explicitly embody it, as an expression of the Divine claim on Israel. The imagination of the prophets is haunted by this symbolism. By one of the earliest it is worked out into a strange pathetic parable, where the indestructible love of an injured husband for a faithless wife is represented as a revelation of the close, unalterable bond that unites Jahveh to his people. Perhaps

* Rev. xxi. 2.

Hosea* is giving us his own history, perhaps the history of some other espoused pair; possibly the whole is a vision of the prophetic imagination, a symbolic drama, embodying many memories, like every work of genius, but not definitely transcribing any experience. Hosea may have spoken of the husband as both John the Baptist and Christ of the bridegroom; † he is evidently describing a series of events which in the same way transmit to him an idea larger than their selves. Or he may be reading these truths through the medium of his own most poignant experience. The voice of God, he seemed to say, had led him to the choice of a spouse who had made the marriage bond hateful to him and loaded him with charge of children whom he could not recognise as his own, in order that he might be taught thereby how no infidelity on the part of the chosen people could alienate from them a love they had not earned and could not forfeit. Whether he is giving a mere parable, or a parable brought home to him by the most intimate facts of experience, in any case the truth he seeks to convey concerns the union of the true Israel with the Unseen.

It is interesting to turn from this prophecy to an expression of the same idea from an opposite point of view, the apocryphal book of Judith. This Jewish fiction, perhaps the earliest expression of prose romance in familiar literature, is an evident allegory of the sorrows and triumphs of Jerusalem. The story of the beautiful widow by whose charms, and her clever and courageous use of them, the Assyrian general Holofernes, is drawn to his destruction, manifestly translates the struggle of the Holy City with one of the vast empires of the world, and embodies the hopes of some final and wonderful triumph which arose with Maccabean ascendancy. Judith is simply "the Jewess"; her very name proclaims

* Hosea i.-iii.

† John iii. 29; cf. Matt. xxii. 2-12; xxv. 1-13.

her a typical incarnation of the race; the very fact that she lives, not *at* Jerusalem, but at some city which cannot be found on the map, seems to make her a more fitting impersonation of Jerusalem. But how, it may be asked, can she be figured as a *widow*? We can only answer that the parable is incoherent. The spouse of Jerusalem is indeed one who knows not death, but his aid is temporarily withdrawn from her, and the mixture of type and reality by which, in spite of this, she is enabled to triumph, is a kind of confusion constantly found in the metaphors of the Old Testament. Her own death at an advanced age is another instance of this confusion. The careful precautions by which, in the agonies of a protracted siege, she secures herself against the pollution of any impure diet spoil the story as a dramatic representation, but enhance its meaning as an expression of Judaism; its elaborate ritual puritanism marks it as a product of that spirit which animates the Priestly Code. Judith is an emergence into the realm of direct allegory of an idea which, haunting Jewish literature, creates romance long before it is known to the literature of Greece or Rome. Hence the Song of Solomon derives, not indeed any of its own poetry, but surely its position in the Canonical Scripture, and much of its influence.* We may say the same of the hard, cruel, immodest Esther, the place found on the sacred page for a tale which omits the sacred name, and glorifies so much that every sacred influence would oppose, must surely be due to some dim sense that the Jewish bride of a king must be a typical personage. Whether a romance was written or was canonised as an

* "Mehr als irgend eine Schrift setzt dieses Buch (*i. e.*, das Hohelied) eine frühere Verbreitung und Beliebtheit voraus, sonst wäre es gewiss keinen Pharisäer eingefallen, es als kanonisch zu betrachten. Dass es seinen Platz behaupten konnte, verdankt es ohne zweifel der von Rabbi Akiba (oder sonst wem) angedeuteten allegorischen Deutung." Buhl, p. 75.

expression of this idea makes little difference, the idea is equally expressed by it in either case.

The impersonation of Zion as a bride leaves other texts on the page of Scripture, more expressive as they are, obvious. It originated that curious slip by which the readers even of our Revised Version are led to suppose the women assisted at the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. It is quite evident that the daughters who appear in the passage thus translated are simply villages; Jerusalem being symbolised as a woman, the dependent villages are women also. The elevation of some tiny hamlet to the dignity of this abstraction marks the strong influence of the root idea of the Holy City first as a bride, and then as a mother. The pangs of travail seem to haunt the imagination of Jeremiah as a sort of type of all other sufferings; "a travail woman" is the ideal sufferer, the image arises wherever much has to be endured, even where (as in his allusion to the siege of Jerusalem †) this image brings in associations dissimilar as possible to those which have suggested it. Perhaps the experience of a prophet brought home to him the truth which we imply in the double meaning of the word conception; he may have to be led to realise with especial force the burden and pain of bringing forth to the multitude those truths which are the offspring of the soul, and also the hopes with which those travail pangs are not less inseparably connected.

How remote seems this mystic symbolism from the legal spirit of the Pharisee! And yet the parable of Hosea, rightly understood, gives the keynote to the deep meaning of the Priestly Code. We must light up its outwardness, its rigidity, its tiresome detail, with this mystic ideal of an espousal, in order to understand any vi-

* Nehemiah iii 12.

† Jer. iii. 1, 14, 20; iv. 31, &c.

element within it. We must concede also that the whole development of Judaism is characterised by a tendency to lose this clue, to exchange the inward unity for an outward unity, and to make a holy day, a holy place, a holy law, and lastly a holy book, not expressions of a bond with the Invisible, but independent objects of devotion, obscuring the meaning for which they were given, and expressing earthly arrogance instead of divine selection. The outward unity hid the inward unity it should have symbolised, and the lifeless commands of men came to be substituted for the living instruction of God.

It is thus that the spirit of Jewish legalism appears to the modern reader by flashes of such strangely varying association. In the ancient records of the Jewish race it is illustrated in some of the most glorious exploits of Israel, and allied with that patriotic character which gathers up all that was heroic in ancient life ; yet in turning to those Christian memoirs which carry on the history thus illustrated we discover this vehement insistence on national distinctness, this devout adherence to a ritual law designed to preserve the national integrity, as objects of denunciation to One whom we have been wont to consider our guide to all truth ! The sublime fanaticism with which in the Maccabean wars invincible heroes died on the Sabbath like sheep beneath the knife of the butcher, preludes the Pharisaic hatred for One who on that day turned to works of healing. The spirit of the Pharisee represents the consummation of the spirit that dictated the Priests' Code. Some danger lurking in the magnetism of the Law led one who came to fulfil the Law, confronting men who were ready to die for it, to doubt whether they could yet escape the damnation of hell.

The Priestly Code is a wonderful exhibition of the way in which the precautions given to a nation to preserve its

individuality pass insensibly into barriers which impede its growth. It shows us how perennial is the instinct towards idolatry in the heart of man ; how vain is the hope that any useful means towards the Divine education should be secure from becoming a dangerous aim. We have seen that the reforms of Josiah closed a period of idolatry ; they had not indeed of themselves power to withstand the national temptation, but they marked a transition which becomes definite and complete during the Exile. The idolatry which was associated with lust and cruelty became hateful to a people called on to testify to the God of Love ; the worship of the Formless the Invisible, gathered to itself all the aspirations of the race and the spiritual "adultery" which had been the object of prophetic denunciation was left for ever behind. And lo the spirit of idolatry passed into the sphere of the invisible and the formless. No graven image might be worshipped then a special division of Time, a special division of Space were secure from the condemnation of idolatry. The "forms of the understanding" were untainted, it seemed by the dangers of the sensuous world ; but in truth they presented those dangers in a guise infinitely more subtle and were commemorated in a far deeper tragedy.

All that was loyal, all that was patriotic in the Jewish race, rose up in defence of the Jewish Law. All that was narrow, all that was exclusive rose up also. The enthusiasm that absorbs the highest and lowest impulses of a race has a strength lacking to either alone. Hence arose a new idolatry, more spiritual than the old, and therefore more dangerous. It opposed a less opaque barrier to the light of the Invisible Unity that shone on the true path of Israel. It supplied a far more distorting medium for the transmission of that light. In dismissing false conceptions of the aspect of the Divine, it introduced deeper and therefore less

obvious confusions as to the character of the Divine. "Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image," was an injunction at last laid to heart; the Jew was ready to die a thousand deaths rather than that the majesty of the Invisible should be insulted by the neighbourhood of images which only a narrow and scrupulous fanaticism could have brought into any connection with an invisible presence.* But the spirit of idolatry passed into the Invisible, and made God in the image of fanatical man.

The Priestly element in the Old Testament is a rising tide throughout the chief part of the history. Vitally opposed as it is to the prophetic spirit, we may in a certain sense say that it is itself prophetic. We can explain it, that is, only when we look back on its dawn from its noontide. Both the institutions which give Judaism its deep impress, are dimly visible, on the one hand, in the dawn of Hebrew history; clearly intelligible, on the other, only at a late stage of the evolution which produced Judaism. That extraordinary fanaticism by which fearless patriots withdrew their aid from their country at its utmost need rather than strike a blow on the Sabbath,† is manifestly the result of a development, not of loyalty to a traditional observance. A race in the position of the Hebrews would never have attained the place it did if there were fifty-two days in every year when its numerous enemies might massacre its troops with impunity, and the fact that this ruinous superstition was solemnly renounced after a short experience of its fatal effect is an unquestionable proof of its late origin. The renunciation must obviously be as old as the experiment which led to it. There is not the slightest trace of such a superstition in Jewish history before the time of the Maccabees—a time, that is, when the last prophetic voice had been silent for

* Josephus, *Antiquities*, xvii. 3, 1.

† *Ib.* xii. 6, 2.

nearly three centuries. So long was it after the closing of the Canon of Scripture before this sign of supreme devotion to one characteristic institution of Judaism was given by Jews.

So was it with the other distinctive practice of Judaism. In like manner it exists from the first, and becomes intelligible in the latest stage of the history. The ritual development by which circumcision became a characteristic *Jewish* rite, separating the chosen people from neighbouring and cognate tribes, is manifestly a late one. In early ages circumcision would not have distinguished the chosen people from neighbouring races. The practice took its historic importance from the period when the Jews became a race of exiles; and the sentiment which demanded, and lacked, a fatherland, found nourishment and stimulus in every symbol that secured distinction of race. The religious history of circumcision is a reflex from the circumstances of the Exile on the legendary history which preceded national existence. Without this distinctive mark the race of Israel would long since have been absorbed into the nations among which it has been condemned to sojourn. A painful rite, we might have thought, impressing indelible distinctness on the members of an oppressed and persecuted race, would sink into abeyance the moment any penal legislation from without was directed against it. Strange paradox of human nature: it is these legal prohibitions, these severe penalties, which seem to have the power of evoking enthusiasm and rousing heroic courage. Weak mothers could confront death with their infants sooner than omit the rite which marked them out as sons of Israel; the posterity which to Israel took the place of a blessed immortality was not to be gained at the price of a sacrifice which would have left these children mere subjects of the Syrian or Roman empire. Such a

martyrdom * (in which the death of the mothers seems hardly worth mentioning) throws into the shade that by which Jewish soldiers, at a time when martial ardour was at its height, passively fell beneath the sword of, or perished in the flames kindled by, their foe, rather than draw the sword on the day of rest. The rite, traditionally originating with Abraham, seemed thus in its very origin to imply a forward glance towards a time when Israel, a wanderer among the nations, would need some such distinctive and indestructible barrier as a protection to its national existence ; or even yet further to the time when the very national existence of Israel was to change its meaning, and the true Israel should be revealed as an adoptive and therefore a spiritual corporation, marked off from the world by an external sign, but drawn within that mystic unity by an inward vocation. We may call circumcision a prophetic rite, like all that belongs to Israel. Its meaning is explained only in the consummation of the national existence, or rather in that succession to national existence which, lasting to our own day, is so much more enduring a phase of the life of Israel than that which found its centre at Jerusalem. However great its antiquity, we must come down to late times to learn its significance, and learn from the community of the dispersion the true significance of legends referring to an age that was separated from the Jews of the dispersion by millenniums.

There is a passage in the records of the post-Exilic life of Israel which every one who has sought to accept the Bible as the Word of God can probably remember reading with bewildered protest when for the first time he took in its exact import—that in which the narrow and superstitious Ezra narrates his dissolution of the marriages of the returned colonists with the strange women of the peoples of the land, and his casting out these artificial widows with their

* Josephus, Ant. xii. 5. 4.

children to penury and disgrace, as an act of obedience to God.* The excesses of modern missionary zeal have sometimes brought home to the hearts of Englishmen what defiance to the true spirit alike of Judaism and of Christianity is involved in such a perverted ideal of purity, and it is an instructive reflection that the same brave bishop who first taught the ordinary English reader to accept the criticism of the Old Testament as a necessity, also had the courage to make a protest on behalf of the true spirit of conjugal faith against an apparent attempt to enforce its sanctity.† The coincidence is one of those guide-posts to the permanence alike of temptations and of the spirit that resists them through the shifting vicissitudes and changing garb of the ages, which bring home to us both the historic meaning of the Bible and its teaching for all time.

The incident seems to sum up the tendency of the Priests' Code. We have seen how the idea of conjugal fidelity is wrought in with the whole structure of Hebrew faith and history—how it emerges with the first existence of human life on the earth, recording in ever-widening tragedy its first in-

* Ezra ix., x. It is a great disappointment to me to find that the vigorous expression which Malachi (ii. 16) puts in the mouth of Jahveh, "I hate putting away," cannot be read as a protest against these Ezra divorces. The writer of this prophecy is supposed by Stade to have lived earlier. It appears from Ezra x. 15 that there were found only four Jews to oppose this iniquity, who are named there. According to the most probable interpretation, the repudiation of the children was not universal. It is quite impossible that the author can have thought it worth while to say (in the last verse of the book) that out of one hundred and fifteen marriages *some* were fruitful; this is all the sense our translators allow him, and we naturally supply some such assertion as that some did, and some did not, repudiate their children.

† Bishop Colenso had the courage, at the time when the cry of heresy had already been raised against him, to protest against the dissolution of polygamous marriages which cast out innocent African women to misery and starvation.

fringement, a tragedy passed on from father to son with a weight of temptation increased by the surrender of every successive generation, and finally commemorated in a severed Israel and a loss of the strength only to be found in union.* We may well close our brief review with the hateful exhibition of priestly arrogance and cruelty betrayed in this particular disloyalty to the ideal of Israel. It speaks of a final defeat of the unity imaged by Ezekiel ; it introduces, instead of that large expansive centre, a narrowing principle of exclusion, and heralds the fall of a State that has found in that principle its strength. The strength is real for the moment. To a single generation Puritanism no doubt gives hardness and force. But what its enduring influence was we see when we turn to the Gospels and meet it as the spirit of the Pharisee. It is in that spirit that the tendency of the Priestly Code is exhibited for all time.

* Note how in Hosea i. 11 the idea of a united kingdom intrudes, as it were, into a parable which it somewhat confuses by its insistence on that ideal of unity to which the Prophet returns from separate points of view.

CHAPTER IX.

JUDAISM AND THE CHRIST

THE Priests' Code does not actually commemorate the final stage of that process whereby the Hebrew Bible was formed. The "Ecclesiastical Chronicle of Jerusalem,"* in the threefold shape which it has assumed in our Bibles, repeats the later history and gives it its last touches from the point of view of the Priestly narrator. But it adds no fresh conception, and a student seeking to gather up the positive results of criticism need not follow out that last chapter in the history. We need here only cast one backward glance at our progress, and sum up the results of modern inquiry, so far as we have followed them, in a few concluding words.

It is not probable that any reader would have accompanied us thus far, unless he could welcome the new classification as a clearer medium than the old for understanding the Scriptures. We have aimed at no other argument in favour of the critical theory than in pointing to the coherent and intelligible view of the Old Testament which it presents.

* This title is given by Reuss to the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles, which must all have been written at Jerusalem after the return from Babylon, about the close of the fourth century B.C., and subsequently divided by some unknown editor into three unequal parts. The author was probably a priest. The work evidently embodied extracts from the memoirs of Ezra and Nehemiah, and the fact that these memoirs were accessible to the general reader in a compendium probably led to the originals being lost.

Of course there is plenty of argument besides this ; here and there we have tried to indicate its character. But for the general reader the question will be decided not by critical dissertation, or the weighing of evidence for and against a particular system of chronology, but by simply reading the Bible under the new light, and perceiving that it becomes more easy to take in and remember. Read the Pentateuch as the work of four or five authors instead of one, let their supposed dates arrange the sequence of their writings, and you have the main grounds for accepting or rejecting the innovations of critical decision. The arguments of critics can add but little to the result. To one who finds the change no improvement, argument is futile ; one who finds it open his Bible will be inclined to regard all argument as superfluous. Does the new arrangement give a cosmos for a chaos ? That question sums up the effect of all argument ; the answer is the verdict.

But when the new views are discerned to possess all the *primâ facie* validity which comes from their power of substituting a definite outline for a blur, it still remains to ask how they tell upon the history itself ; and in what light we are to regard this process of formation as a record of national development. Would it not be more truly designated degradation than development ? Are not its stages marked by delusion, by contracted national sympathies, by growing fanaticism ? And how can we reconcile a process which we must thus describe with the idea of a divine selection of a particular race from all humanity, in order to typify the relation of God and man, and exhibit the education of man by God ? Unless we can give a satisfactory answer to these questions the whole issue, for the Christian, loses its interest. If the national history, which the literary history sums up and explains, is to stand out of relation to Christianity, then it

will lose the special elevation we have been wont to give it, and yet cannot be left on the level of ordinary secular history. Athens and Rome realised their ideal with a miserable shortcoming from its true height ; they mixed it with what was low, base, evil, but still their declension from it does not make up their history. We do not measure their progress towards maturity by their gradual infidelity to what is highest in their legacy to the world. Must we say this of the progress of a race to which modern Europe owes much—none can say how much—of that which has made it a unity ?

This surrender of all that is most precious in the history of the past is not the goal of criticism. The evolution of Judaism produced the Pharisee, but also prepared a way for the Christ. He is not more the ideal Israel than the ideal Jew ; He came to fulfil, not to abrogate the Law of the Jew, and there is nothing in His denunciations of the Pharisees to show that their aims were condemned by Him, so far as they were the aspirations of Judaism. So far as they were bound up with the idea of a separate rather than a truly representative race they ceased to be aspirations, and where a Jew made this substitution he became of necessity a hypocrite. His race was called on to be for humanity what the Sabbath was to be for the rest of the week—a revelation of its true meaning ; and if the distinction needed for a *type* passed into the separation needed for a *contrast*, he lost the idea that gave his race vitality, and asserted himself in realms where his history was to become a blank.

The process which changed Mosaism to Judaism, while from an outward point of view it must be described as contraction, and was temporarily that even from an inward point of view, was also a preparation for an infinite expansion. Judaism begins with the idea of a remnant ; but the remnant was to be a seed. The experience of crushing

calamity revealed to the great minds of the race that to be a glorious *nation* was by no means the destiny divinely planned for Israel. In that shattering revelation the faith of many perished, or was transformed into a narrow and exclusive fanaticism, but for some it expanded and deepened into that spirit of profound trust, at once catholic and individual, which we know in the Psalms. In them we have the blossom and the fruit of Judaism, in them the seed of Christianity. If we followed the critical re-arrangement of the Old Testament, we should read it all as a prelude to the songs which have passed into Christian services, and which our Church has appointed to be read twelve times in the year. They represent, according to this re-arrangement, the latest phase of the Hebrew literature, and gather up the lessons of vast national calamity and disappointing restoration.* Not a glorious ecclesiastical Jerusalem, such as was dreamed of by Ezekiel; not a triumphant Maccabean monarchy, such as must have been the sober anticipation of many among the contemporaries of the Psalmists; but a sifted remnant—a spiritual heir to promises which deepen and expand as they pass on to spiritual ground—this is the true consummation of Hebrew thought, first revealed to us by the critical study which has seemed to obscure it. For the remnant, though it seem a narrower conception than a united

* The arrangement of Reuss (which has been followed here throughout) ascribes the majority of the Psalms to the Maccabean period, and there is no point on which his argument seems to me more convincing, though it must be confessed that it does not appear in that light to Driver. I think, however, that his summary of Reuss (p. 365) is a substantial tribute to the argument of the latter, which his partial dissent fails to invalidate. That (at the time of the Psalmists) the loyal servants of Jehovah—the "meek" or the "afflicted"—found themselves engaged in a struggle, not only with their heathen masters, but with a powerful party composed of their own renegade brethren, is surely both undeniable and incompatible with any other epoch than that of the Maccabees.

Israel, is in truth an infinitely wider one. It begins with a selection, but expands to include the world. It reveals the true Israel as present wherever the human spirit recognises a divine at its root, and discovers its separation from that root in all that sets up separation from anything but evil. The fivefold volume* which would thus conclude the rearranged Old Testament would be the transfigured expansion of the fivefold volume which now begins the Old Testament, containing a new Law which shall explain the old, and defining a new Israel which shall contain the old and unite it to a redeemed world.

Doubtless even this ripest utterance of the faith of Israel bears the trace of its origin in the imperfect and temporary phases of humanity. The expressions of deadly hatred and aspirations after revenge which interrupt what we may call the Christianity of the Psalms, though they lose some of their virus when we trace them to a great national struggle instead of personal and individual antipathies, do yet cloud the revelation of divine love and human trust by their side. But by that very fact they find their place in a progressive and gradual revelation. The criticism which gives them a place in history detaches them from the aspirations and yearnings which they weaken by their neighbourhood, and leaves us free to read them as the historic and separable framework of inspiration. So far as they express a passionate race-unity we need not turn from them; England may well copy the zeal and the fervour even of a mere fragment of Israel. This zeal and fervour is not to be transplanted from the nation to the Church; in that transplantation its virtue is

* Our Revised Version has happily restored the arrangement of the Hebrew Bible, which gives the Psalms in five books. The arrangement is indeed not in itself a very illuminative one, but its imitation of the five-fold division of the early literature is a fact of much significance, which comes out when we read it as the latest utterance of the Old Testament.

lost. It is always to be an aspiration after, if it be not an expression of, a national life. But the race which is called out to symbolise a blessing on all humanity cannot utter imprecations on its foes without weakening its own message, and as we see that message as a dawn, the clouds which obscure it melt into the growing light.

The greatest difficulty in accepting the new view of the Scriptures has been thought to be its influence on the interpretation which we must thereby put on the quotations from these Scriptures by our Lord. None should disturb without a deep and even solemn sense of responsibility such associations as the Old Testament derives from His references.* Nevertheless, they are after all no more than associations, lying indeed in that deep stratum of our being where everything seems sacred, but in themselves misleading. We have already (p. 48) given one such quotation† in which, as we have said, the literal meaning of our Lord's words would be quite inadmissible. The question which seems to us so momentous was to the Jews insignificant. A careful study of all the quotations from Scripture by Christ will bring home to the reader the truth that inspiration was to Him a heritage of the race whose vocation He came to sum up and fulfil, that its individual channels had as little importance as that of the cup filled at a running stream.

The true difficulty of the new view, in relation to Christianity, is that of reconciling a process of divine education of the Hebrew race with the gradual development of the spirit which rejected Christ. This is a difficulty present in all history, but especially in the Hebrew

* A letter on this subject in the *Spectator* of April 5, 1890, from Dr. Liddon, written in the last six months of his life, may be referred to as an expression of the perplexity entailed on a reverent and holy mind by the new views, such as it is impossible to contemplate without the deepest sympathy.

† John vii. 22.

history, and it is accentuated and somewhat increased by modern criticism. We have to take up the same changed view of the Scriptures as we have already been led to take up with regard to the outward world ; as we have expanded the week of Creation into the millenniums of a still incomplete evolution, so we have to expand the one primeval giving of the Law on Sinai for a development of the Law prolonged through the whole history of the race. The progressive revelation seems to have coincided with a progressive degradation. If the Law was given once for all under Moses, we might imagine that the race fell away from its high standard in the ages between Moses and Christ ; but if the Law was the gradual manifestation of the divine ideal for Israel, how can we account for its ending in the rejection of Christ ? How can we regard as the evolution of a particular ideal a process which ends in the rejection of One in whom that ideal was incarnate ?

We find it a general law of evolution that when vitality is to come to its climax at a particular point it is withdrawn from some portion of the environment ; the sheath withers as the seed sets. Judaism was the sheath to a seed : if it ceased to enfold transcendent hope, it lost all meaning. What found its expression in the rejection of Christ was that renegade Judaism in alliance with the world which we know as Pharisaism. For Judaism to ally itself with Rome, with Herod, with any earthly dominion, is for a race called on to uphold trust in God to confess that in any real stress of need the recourse must be to material springs of power.

It is not that the holy race must never submit to the world. This was the martyrdom of Jeremiah, that he saw this necessity and was deemed a deserter and traitor because he interpreted his country's most pressing needs in accordance with the verdict of history. There may have been many a

mute, inglorious Jeremiah in the struggle with Rome. In the submission to supreme worldly power there is no disloyalty to the vocation of Israel; the belief in an invisible source of all power does not involve any denial of power in a visible source; the might of Rome is no more to be ignored or defied than the might of the earthquake and the storm. But when it is invoked—when the steward* of God's law lowers its claims to adapt it to the complaisance of those whose laxity it condemns, when trust in the Invisible is supplemented and buttressed by such an attempt to secure the favour of the tyrant and the oppressor—then the message of Israel is emptied of all its meaning, and those who assert it in words do their utmost in all action to render its purport a lie.

The combination is one we know in all ages and all countries. There is no form of faith it has not poisoned, for there is none which has not at some time yielded to the temptation which, in striving to rationalise faith in the Invisible, renders it impossible. But there is no other form of faith quite so hopelessly polluted by this combination as Judaism is, for there is none other in which the distinction

* The difficulty of interpreting the parable of the dishonest steward (Luke xvi. 1-18) as a representation which makes the Jewish race a steward of the moral law to humanity (an interpretation to me unquestionable) is that we have therefore to make the "certain rich man" mean something different in verses 1 and 19. "How much owest thou to my Lord?" as a question from the ideal Israel to the Gentile races, can refer only to God, while in the second parable of this chapter we have interpreted the rich man who is opposed to Lazarus as the actual Jewish race (see back, p. 159). I do not think the difficulty will be felt insuperable by any one who will consider—(1) how close the conception of a race called out to exhibit the Divine Will to humanity stands to the conception of a Divine Will itself; (2) how readily, on the other hand, the conception of the ideal Israel passes into that of the actual Israel; (3) how impossible it was for such a reference as that in verse 18 not to recall to the Jews the laxity of Antipas and the martyrdom of John for his protest against it.

is so absolute between its root principle and any such alliance. The idolatry from which the history of Israel was a slow extrication returned in its worst form when Israel adjusted her life and law to suit the world, and at the same time insisted on her separateness from the world. The Hellenising Jews who turned their back on the Law, and whom we see by the imprecations of the Psalms* to be felt as the deadliest enemies of Israel, were less unfaithful to all that was divine in the Law than those who used its precepts as a hedge of separation and opened doors in it at any prompting of worldly interest. This was the spirit denounced by Christ, and that to which He fell a victim.

This is the spirit which animates disinterested men when once they have accepted both a priestly and a political position—when they consider how they may at once further the interests of their country on the plane of worldly policy and rationalising compromise, and also assert the spiritual vocation of their order, and divine sanction on their work. This is that “giving of the holy to the dogs,” that “casting of pearls before swine,”† against which our Lord made so passionate a protest. Energetic selfishness deceives no one; it is hateful to all the selfish except him who profits by it. The spirit which allies the noble and the base, on the other hand becomes a seed of delusion and a heritage of poison from generation to generation.

We do not enough realise the utterly unpatriotic aspect which the attitude of Christ must have taken in the eyes of

* *E.g.*, Ps. lxxiii.

† Matt. vii. 6. We have only to compare this text with verse 1 of the same chapter to discern the impossibility of the ordinary interpretation. We are not to judge, but immediately afterwards we are to decide that some of our brethren are dogs and swine, from whom precious truth is to be withheld. To avoid the alloy of “the precious by the vile” is an arduous effort, which is to be avoided by classifying different human beings under these two headings!

such of His countrymen as had entered into this compromise. His agonised reference to the coming struggle with Rome (Luke xxiii. 28-30) shows how misleading was this aspect. But it was inevitable. At great political crises he who opposes the patriots is not so likely to be considered their worst foe, as he who ignores them. It was not that our Lord preached submission to Rome, though no doubt the decision as to the tribute money was capable of being represented in that light—it was that He roused a spirit which moved in another plane than that of resistance or submission to imperial power. He created a weapon (it would seem) and withheld it from the service of the State. It will be found, in general, that no other treason is felt so deadly as this. To use power *against* the State is penal;—to hold power, and not use it *for* the State is, to the zealot for the State, far more hateful. Christ would neither join the alliance with worldly power, nor the fanaticism of revolt against worldly power. Nor, on the other hand, would He join in Essene repudiation of family and civil duties, so as to abdicate all claim to influence them. He remained essentially a Jew, while separating Himself from the party of Judaism.

He thus cut Himself off from those who considered themselves, and were considered by others, the true representatives of the Jewish nation. Just because Pharisaism was Judaism in a transient and reluctant alliance with the world, a failure of zeal against the world was the offence it could least pardon. It is the same spirit which compromises with overwhelming power, awaiting its opportunity to strike, and which resents with deadly hatred the averted attention that neither compromises nor plots, but draws off interest elsewhere. The spirit of the Pharisee, whether it winked at the laxity of Herod or prepared the last deadly struggle with the power that set up and pulled down the Herods, was a disbelief in that

Unity for all external symbols of which many a Pharisee was ready to perish.

The Jews looked for some manifestation on the part of their Messiah that Rome could at once understand; they expected Him to assert the claim of His race against the oppressive dominion of Rome, as Jeremiah should have asserted it against the threatening dominion of Chaldæa. And then again His disciples looked for the assertion of His own claim against the dominion of the Pharisees. The attributes of the world were reflected back on the spiritual realm and formed the test of every claim for loyalty. The Divine Guardian of Israel must show His power in a language intelligible to the world apart from any discernment of the moral character of that power. The denunciation, by Christ, of the rulers of Israel must have encouraged hopes which His ultimate attitude cast down as from a precipice. The records of His life paint an atmosphere of eager anticipation which He disappointed at every step; possibly it may have actually distorted the facts we see through it. His mother evidently hoped * for some manifestation of His miraculous power at a moment when it would have been evident to an assembled company of wedding guests; His answer, "My time is not yet come," shows this result to be just what He determined to avoid. It is the same with the bread as with the wine; the Jews who have partaken of the loaves and fishes distributed by Him in the wilderness, and afterwards ask Him for some sign equivalent to the giving of the manna, have evidently no notion that their repast has been produced by miraculous power. So prevalent is this overshadowing of a supernatural element that it is possible for those who dis-

* John iii. 3.

believe the miracles to represent the very histories which narrate them as containing their complete refutation. The "seeking for a sign" on the part of His countrymen was evidently that which most depressed and discouraged Jesus. "There should no sign be given to this people but the sign of the prophet Jonah."* No one will now accept the gloss adopted into the text according to which the escape from the whale was the sign of Jonah; evidently, if it be supposed a literal fact, it could be no sign to the people of Nineveh. The sign was that quality in the preaching of Jonah itself which is represented as producing repentance in his hearers, The appeal of Jesus to His race must, He said, be judged by itself. It accepted no testimonial from any external result, even when such external result was present.

In that refusal our Lord gathered up the lesson of *Judaism*. He was a representative of the Remnant. Mosaism was the calling forth of a nation to bear witness to the Eternal, and necessarily implied a promise of external and manifest strength to the nation thus unified. *That* promise did not pass on to the remnant of Israel. The Exile confuted for ever the hopes which belonged to a united and victorious nation; whatever aspirations survived that eclipse must either ally themselves with dreams of apocalyptic splendour and miraculous restoration, or else must learn the lesson only half received, it seems, by the prophet who uttered it, "not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."† Israel means no longer a set of individuals marked out by birth, but an inner group formed by spiritual conditions, and thus ready for an infinite increase. The true progress of Judaism was thus the true preparation for

* See Matt. xvi. 4 for the true expression, and xii. 40 for the evident distortion.

† Zech. iv. 6.

Christianity ; and not Christianity alone, but every form of faith which turns to the Invisible and seeks a Father.

Doubtless the temptations of Judaism were rooted in its glorious past. The spirit that produces a Judas Maccabeus prepares the temptations of his namesake, for fervent zeal and heroic triumph pass away, and with the ebb of success comes the chill sense of failure and whisper of doubt. And when once that whisper is heard the magnetism of worldly power is increased tenfold, for here at least is something that is not doubtful. The power of Rome is continuous, progressive, visible throughout the past, vividly colouring men's anticipations of the future. The power of Zion, if it fail to possess these characteristics, must lean on one to which they do pertain. Judaism implies a *progressive* revelation, a perennial, though not an uninterrupted, channel of communion between the Divine and human, a homogeneous sequence of divine government. It is the result of a spiritual evolution ; the idea of a sudden spiritual revolution is abhorrent to it, but not more abhorrent than it is to Christianity. The coming of Christ, as an isolated event in the course of the ages, heterogeneous with most of what precedes and with all that follows it, is a conception antagonistic to the whole spirit of either faith. The "evangelical prophet," as we have learned to call the second Isaiah, applies to Cyrus the name by which we distinguish Jesus of Nazareth. The Persian monarch was the Messiah to the Jews of the Restoration. To how many a successor of Cyrus has the Lord of Israel said since the return from the Exile, "I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me" ? It would be vain to attempt to enumerate those who have received such a call—vain to attempt to decide who has failed to respond to it, except by the decision that only One has responded to it perfectly.

This only we know—that wherever a Deliverer has arisen, and a new Temple has united the forlorn and the desolate in a common worship, there has the spirit of Messiah found its incarnation, and the promise of a completer revelation found its renewal and its guarantee.

That yearning for the second coming of the Lord which has been allied with so much that is extravagant and disloyal to the secular course of nations, has a deep root in the human heart, penetrating to a stratum below the difference of opinions and creeds. A dim response is made to it by many who would be able neither to join in any of the definite anticipations which have been associated with it, nor to substitute any analogous views of their own. The lesson of Judaism answers the perennial aspiration of the human race. The belief in a *growing* revelation which lies at the root of the message of the Jew embodies the mature yearning of humanity.

The change whereby Mosaism passed into Judaism is the prophecy and type of a change always discernible in the eye of faith, but perhaps (for such a comparison can be made only doubtfully) it may be said to be specially manifest in our own time. The alteration whereby the idea of a united nation, with its centralised worship and its grand external symbolism, was exchanged for an expansive Remnant, witnessing to a wholly spiritual worship, seems mirrored in the development of Christianity which is taking place among us now. A change has been felt by all whereby the Church has lost something and gained something. There has been an outward surrender—an inward accession of strength. We are taught to feel that the sifting which makes us a Remnant makes us also a seed; we are encouraged to look for a new dispensation, as we are obliged to lose those outward guarantees and testimonials which seemed a part of the old.

The temptation of those who discern a new revelation is that plunge from the Temple which Christ refused to take. Though the building seemed associated with the system against which His whole life was a protest, He continued to make it the scene of His teaching. He left His disciples advice to observe the rules of the Pharisees side by side with injunctions to avoid imbibing their spirit. We may feel our loyalty not less claimed by the Church of our race than was His by the Temple of His race. Whatever form the spirit of faith is to assume in the future, we may trust that loyalty to the past will be stronger as faith becomes more fearless. We must never expect to see it in like measure more externally impressive. The change from the religion of a nation to the religion of a Remnant is always outwardly despicable, but it is a change from second hand to first hand—from trust in an Order, a Temple, a Book, to trust in God. If this is not visible in history, it is because, when the group is broken up, the individual revelation that comes to every thirsty soul is a hidden thing. It is visible in a healing like that imagined by Ezekiel, so that "everything shall live whither the river cometh." But the course of that river is hidden from every eye that turns to the outward. It is discernible only to those who can wait and watch for that kingdom of God which is within.

THE PRIESTLY CODE

The following references (a complete list for Genesis) are given as a specimen of the new arrangement. They are taken from the above-mentioned excellent little work by E. J. Fripp on the "Constitution of Genesis" (David Nutt). His analysis differs slightly from Driver's, and is a year later.

GENESIS

<p>I. 1-11, 4^a</p> <p>V. 1-28, 30-32</p> <p>VI. 9-22</p> <p>VII. 6, 11, 13-16^a, 17^a, 18-21, 23^b, 24</p> <p>VIII. 1, 2^a, 3^b-5, 13^a-19</p> <p>IX. 1-17, 28, 29</p> <p>X. 1^a, 2-7, 20, 22-24, 31, 32</p> <p>XI. 10-27, 28^b, 31, 32</p> <p>XII. 4^b, 5</p> <p>XIII. 6, 11^b, 12^a</p> <p>XVI. 1, 3, 15, 16</p> <p>XVII.</p> <p>XIX. 29</p> <p>XXI. 1^b, 2^b-5</p> <p>XXIII.</p> <p>XXV. 7-11^a, 12-20, ** 26^b</p>	<p>XXVI. 34, 35</p> <p>XXVII. 46</p> <p>XXVIII. 1-9</p> <p>XXXV. 22^b-26</p> <p>XXXI. 18^b</p> <p>XXXIII. 18^b</p> <p>XXXIV. 1, 2^a, 4, 6, 8-10, 13-18, 20-25^a, 25^c, 27-29</p> <p>XXXV. 6^a, 9-13^a, 14, 15, 27-29</p> <p>XXXVI.</p> <p>XXXVII. 1, 2^a</p> <p> XLI. 46^a</p> <p> XLVI. 6-27</p> <p> XLVII. 5, 6^a, 7-11, 27^b, 28</p> <p> XLVIII. 3-7</p> <p> XLIX. 1^a, 28-31, 23, 33^a, 33^c</p> <p> L. 12-13</p>
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