THE EVOLUTION OF OLD TESTAMENT RELIGION

W. E. Orchard

1908

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Title: The Evolution of Old Testament Religion

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Release Date: June 12, 2014 [EBook #45952]

Language: English

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BY
W. E. ORCHARD, B.D.

LONDON
JAMES CLARKE & CO., 13 & 14, FLEET STREET
1908

TO
My Wife

PREFACE

The substance of this book was originally delivered as a Course of Lectures to a week-night congregation. The Lecture form has been retained, and this accounts for the repetition of the leading ideas, while the practical interests of Church life account for the insistence on the religious value and lesson. It is hoped that this, which might be irritating to the professional student, may be helpful to the ordinary reader who is repelled by the technicality of critical works, and often fails to discern the devout spirit by which such works are inspired, or to discover what religious interest is served by them.

Where everything is borrowed from other writers, and no claim to originality is made, detailed acknowledgment would be impossible, but the resolve to attempt some such course in place of the usual form of a week-night service was formed in the Hebrew class-room of Westminster College, Cambridge, while listening to the Lectures on Old Testament Theology and Messianic Prophecy, delivered by the Rev. Professor Dr. Skinner (now Principal), in which accurate scholarship was combined with a deep insight into the present religious importance of these subjects. Grateful acknowledgment is also due to the Rev. J.R. Coates, B.A., who kindly read through the proofs and made many valuable suggestions.

W. E. ORCHARD.

ENFIELD, *August, 1908.*

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

It is a matter of common knowledge that within the last few decades a tremendous change has come over our estimate of the value of the Old Testament, and that this change is of the gravest importance for our understanding of religion. But what the exact nature of the change is, and what we are to deduce from it, is a matter of debate, for the facts are only known to professional students and to a few others who may have been led to interest themselves in the subject. With some, for instance, the idea prevails that the Old Testament has been so discredited by modern research that its religious significance is now practically worthless. Others believe that the results arrived at are untrue, and regard them as the outcome of wicked attacks made upon the veracity of the Word of God by men whose scholarship is a cloak for their sinister designs or a mask of their incapacity to comprehend its spiritual message. There is perhaps a middle course open to some who have found a message of God to their souls in the Old Testament, and who, on hearing that the authorship of this book has been questioned or the historicity of that passage assailed, are unmoved, because they believe that it does not matter who wrote the Pentateuch or the Psalms so long as through these documents they hear the voice of the living Word of God. Here then is a subject on which there exists a distressing confusion, and, moreover, a subject in which ignorance plays no small part. Save with a few devout souls who have made a long and continuous study of the Scriptures, it may be doubted whether there is any widespread knowledge of the actual message of the Old Testament, even among Christian people. There are certainly many people willing to defend the authority of the Bible who spend very little time in reading it. The favourite Psalms and the evangelical passages of Isaiah are probably well known, and beyond this there is but the knowledge gained in early days, from which stand out in the memory the personalities of Samson and Saul, David and Goliath, and Daniel in the lion's den, together with the impressive stories of the Flood, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the crossing of the Red Sea, and the fall of Jericho. A very little is probably carried away from the public reading of the Scriptures in places of worship. It cannot be said that this acquaintance conveys any real impression of the magnificent message that lies embedded in these thirty-nine books which go

to make up the Old Testament. Now whatever harm may be charged to the modern methods, it can at least be claimed that neglected portions have been carefully studied, the meaning of obscure passages discovered, and much of importance and interest brought to light; but more than this, it has been discovered that the essential message of the Old Testament lies largely apart from those narratives and personalities that impress the superficial reader, and rather in the record of a gradual development of the conception of God and of His purpose in calling Israel to be the recipient of His self-disclosure. It has been found that the striking figures of the landscape are of less importance than the road that winds among them along which revelation moves to its final goal.

It may be objected that the new inspiration, which so many who have studied the Scriptures by these methods claim to have felt, throws quite a new emphasis on our conception of the Old Testament and is revolutionary of all that we have been accustomed to believe concerning it; that the methods are such as could not legitimately be applied to the Word of God, and are the products of a criticism which is puffed up with a sense of its own superiority; and that the results are discreditable to the Old Testament, since they allege that some of the narratives are unhistorical, some passages and even whole books unauthentic, and traditions on which the gravest issues have been staked shown to have nothing more than a legendary basis. There is much in these objections that is natural, but much that is misunderstanding. It is true that the contribution which the Old Testament makes to religion is estimated differently from what it was fifty years ago, and it must be allowed that this brings a charge of having misunderstood the Scriptures against generations of scholars and saints. But it is admitted that all matters of knowledge are open to misunderstanding. It is no argument against the conception that the earth moves round the sun, that the contrary idea was held in other ages. We know that the understanding of the Old Testament has been obscured, often by those who ought to have been the greatest authorities on its meaning. Jesus read into the Scriptures a meaning unrecognised by the authorities of His day, and dealt with them in a fashion that was regarded as revolutionary. To some of the Scriptures He appealed as to a final authority, but others He regarded as imperfect and only suited to the time in which they were written. The Jews of His day venerated every letter of the sacred writings, and regarded the very copies of the Law as sacred to the touch, and yet on their understanding of the Scriptures they rejected the mission and message of Jesus. Christian scholarship has undoubtedly followed rather after the Rabbis than after Christ. The message of the Old Testament that the new methods have made clear certainly appears to be more in conformity with the Spirit of Christ than with

that of His opponents, and if this is revolutionary then it is no new thing; religion always moves along such lines.

Great offence has been caused and insuperable prejudice aroused among many by the name under which these methods have become known. The name, "higher criticism," conveys to most people a suggestion of carping fault-finding and an assumption of superiority. This is due to an entire misunderstanding of a technical term. Criticism is nothing more than the exercise of the faculty of judgment, and, moreover, judgment that ought to be perfectly fair. The sinister suggestion that is conveyed in the word is due to the fact that our criticisms are so often biassed by personal prejudices. But this only condemns our faults, and not the method. "Higher" criticism does not mean any assumption of superiority, but is simply a term used to distinguish it from "lower" criticism. The criticism that endeavours to ascertain the original text by a comparison of the various documents available is called *lower*, and that which deals with matters higher up the stream of descent by which the writings have been conveyed to us, namely, matters of date and authorship, is called *higher* criticism. It might well be called literary and historical criticism, in distinction from textual criticism. It employs historical methods, and uses the simple tests of comparison and contemporaneity. For the understanding of a particular age, it prefers those documents that describe the times in which they were written, and give indirect evidence, rather than those histories which were written long after the event and which reveal a purpose other than the strictly historical. Fortunately, we have in the Old Testament many such contemporary and indirect witnesses in the writings of the Prophets. They are not consciously writing history, but they tell us indirectly what the practices of their day were, and especially what religious ideas were prevalent; for it is these things that they feel called upon to attack. With these reliable standards we can compare the regular histories, which were necessarily written at a much later age, and very often to serve some religious purpose.

Now it is this method, which is surely a true and proper one, that has changed our estimate of the history and development of religion in Israel. Are we to condemn the method without examination because it destroys certain traditions about the Bible which we have received largely from Judaism?—the Judaism which could find no place for Jesus! But it will be answered that these methods yield results that are incompatible with the inspiration of the Bible, and are unworthy of God's revelation to us. But how are we to decide what is compatible with inspiration? We can only tell, surely, by seeing what these results are and by discovering whether they bring any inspiration to us. Can we

be certain, without examining the facts, to what lines the revelation of God is to be restricted? Is this not coming to the Bible with a theory which we have manufactured and which will surely distort the facts? It will be said that anything less than absolute accuracy makes void any claim to be a Divine revelation. Let us consider what this means. We know that the historical spirit, which endeavours to see history as it actually happened quite apart from our desires or sympathies, is an ideal which has only emerged with the general spread of education, and that in ancient times history was written largely with a view to edification, and especially for giving such lessons as would lead to right principles being adopted for the future. It was not the accuracy of the material but suitability for its purpose that weighed with the historian. Now, with these conditions existing, was it impossible for God to speak to men through their conceptions of history, or had He to wait until the historical spirit prevailed? Could He not use the early legends which they believed, and through them bring the truth to men? We know that the greatest of all religious teachers did not scruple to embody the highest truths in such parables as lowly minds could receive. We may demand that revelation shall be infallible, but this would need in turn an infallible person to receive it, and even then an infallible interpreter. An infallible revelation would mean that there could never be any progress in revelation; that it would have to be given perfect in one process; that it would have to be authenticated to men by authority, since it would be beyond the understanding of a fallible mind; that it would break in upon every other experience, remain isolated, and never be grasped by that strong conviction which we call faith; and this would entail a destruction of the mental faculties of man, and an acknowledgment that communication between God and man is really impossible. Could not God speak to man in his infancy, and with the growing understanding would there not be growing light?

Meanwhile, whatever we feel about these abstract principles, we ought to know the facts. In the pages that follow an endeavour is made to present the results at which a consensus of opinion has arrived. There will be no great time spent in argument for or against these facts. Such are to be sought in the scientific works and in the dictionaries, which alone can deal adequately with these facts, but since many altogether refuse to consider the facts because of the inferences which they think can be drawn from them, this book is an earnest plea for earnest men to consider whether it is not open to be shown that from these facts there comes to us a much clearer understanding of God's ways with man; a more certain conviction that in the past God has actually spoken through the Scriptures; a clue to a better understanding of the place Jesus occupies in the

history of revelation; and what we all need greatly to-day: a preparation of heart that we may follow the leading of that Spirit who ever has and who ever will guide into all truth those who are willing to follow Him. The aim of this book is that the reader may feel that the voice which speaks in his own heart and the voice which has guided man through all his strange history is One, and is of God.

THE SEMITIC RACES

Read, as Introduction to this Lecture, the Tenth Chapter of Genesis.

This is one of the most interesting documents in anthropology. It is an attempt at a scientific ethnology, and seems to have been expanded from the closing verses of the preceding chapter. It will be noticed that those verses are in poetical form (R.V.), and are likely to be very ancient.

Note the principles of classification:—

(1) Geographical. It is a very incomplete summary of the peoples of the earth. Only those nations are mentioned that fill the horizon of the writer's knowledge. That horizon will be found to correspond very largely with that of the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

(2) Prejudice. The evident kinship of some peoples is denied on the ground of dislike; for the same reason, Moab and Ammon, who are well known, are simply omitted.

The real test of kinship is language, which is here ignored.

The names are not to be taken as individuals. Of this the very form is witness: Ludim is plural, Mizraim is dual, Tarshish is the name of a place, and Amorite is gentilic.

Notes:—

Verse 2. Madai = Medes. Javan = the Greeks, or more particularly, the Ionians.

Verse 4. Tarshish is probably Spain. Kittim = the Cretans. Dodanim (read Rodanim 1 Ch. i. 7) = the inhabitants of Rhodes.

Verse 6. Mizraim: the name for Egypt. Canaan: here and elsewhere said to be descended from Ham. Beyond all doubt the Canaanites were a Semitic people and spoke a

language akin to Hebrew. Religious antagonism and the fact of their conquest demanded in the popular imagination a different ancestry.

Verse 14. "Whence went forth the Philistines" is misplaced, and should follow after "Caphtorim" (Amos ix. 7).

Verse 21. Eber: the name of the supposed ancestor of the Hebrews.

Verse 22. Elam = Persia. Racially the Elamites were quite distinct from the Semites. This inclusion may be a clue to the date of this Table of Nations; friendship with Persia dates from Cyrus (Sixth Century B.C.).

(See Driver's "Genesis.")

Lecture I

THE SEMITIC RACES

The Hebrew nation forms a branch of that group of the human family known as the Semites. Their relation to the other great racial divisions of mankind is far beyond the reach of our enquiry, and we cannot even penetrate to a period when the Semites formed an unbroken family. At the remotest date to which history can take us we find the family already widely dispersed, with distinct national characteristics well developed, and their common ancestry quite forgotten in their violent hatreds of their unrecognised kinsmen. Indeed it is only the test of language which still preserves for us an indisputable proof of their common origin. Their existence can be traced back to a very remote date, for fragments of their literature and other evidences of civilisation have been discovered that have been dated 5000–4000 B.C., and even at that period the language shows signs of phonetic degeneration that require a still further period for the process to have reached this stage.

The primitive home of the Semites cannot have been, however, where these ancient remains have been found, namely, in the Euphrates valley, for the records themselves show that they were only immigrants there and had replaced the original inhabitants, who came of Sumerian stock. Neither was it in Palestine, as

our own Bible will tell us; but it is probably to be sought in Arabia, where the purest Semitic stock is still to be found. In this desert home the race was bred that was destined to have such a tremendous influence on the history of the world, and it is largely to this desert training that we can trace influences which have made them what they are. The battle for life in that inhospitable land would mould a physique capable of extraordinary endurance, and to this we can perhaps trace the virility of the modern Jew, who has resisted for centuries the poisonous ghettos of European cities and remains far healthier than his indigenous neighbours. This hard training fitted them for an exacting life, and in the Phœnicians they became the traders of antiquity, and in the Carthaginians and Saracens, warriors not to be despised. Hardness easily becomes cruelty, and purely Semitic empires, such as Assyria, developed a barbarous cruelty, the story of which is told on their inscriptions and in the denunciations of the Hebrew Prophets. There is something in the Semitic character that is disliked by Western nations, and the Jews have been subjects of relentless persecution in mediæval times, and are still capable of arousing bitter hostility, as may be seen from those violent eruptions of anti-Semitism which occasionally burst through the cosmopolitanism of Western Europe. The well-defined limitations of their primitive home—crushed in between the continents of Europe, Africa and Asia, the neutral ground of the Eastern and Western worlds—seem almost to be reflected in the limitations of their mental development. The Semitic tongue is crude in its simplicity and incapable of expressing an abstract idea, and it is natural to find as a result that the philosophical faculty is almost entirely missing. Although they have given to the world an alphabet, a system of numeration which has made mathematics possible, and the beginnings of measurement and of the science of astronomy, yet their mind is not scientific in the modern sense. They possess, as perhaps no other race, the gift of telling stories of wonder and mystery, and for a simple tale of love and pathos they are unsurpassed. They have produced the finest lyrical literature of the ancient world, but have contributed hardly anything to dramatic or epic poetry, and their achievements in art have been cramped by their religious prejudices.

But in the realm of religion they are supreme, and have become the high-priests of humanity, for from them have gone forth three great religions, and one of these capable of development into the universal religion of mankind. These faiths have not been slowly evolved from the national consciousness, but have both sprung from and been embodied in inspiring personalities; for have they not given to the world Moses and the Prophets, Mahomet, and the Son of Man?

The Semites are divided by anthropologists into the following groups:

Southern Group—North Arabians, Sabæans, Abyssinians; Northern Group—Babylonians, Assyrians, Aramæans, Canaanites, Hebrews; and all these groups seem to have been formed from the original stock by migrations from their home in Arabia. The contracted area of the Arabian peninsula, the inability of the land to support a large population, coupled with their restless spirit and the constant feuds between the tribes, made emigration a necessity at a very early period. The exact history and order of these migrations it is now impossible to trace, but it would seem that the first great movement was eastward, whither they were drawn by the culture and wealth of the Sumerian civilisation in the Euphrates valley. It is quite possible that this movement commenced 6000 years before Christ. At a later date they seem to have invaded Egypt and left some traces upon the language and customs of that land.

The land of Syria would offer a near and easy home for the emigrants, and yet the first Semites to arrive in Palestine seem to have come from the Euphrates. The inhabitants they displaced were the Hittites, who probably came from Asia Minor; they were Turanians, and were akin to the present inhabitants of Armenia. It is only lately that excavation has revealed the remains of a Hittite Empire in Palestine. The first Semitic tribes to reach Palestine pushed down to the seaboard, where they developed a wonderful maritime civilisation and became the daring traders and explorers who are known in history as the Phœnicians; the other tribes occupied the hill country and became the Canaanites of Bible story. Of the next migration westward, the Bible preserves a popular account in the story of the journey of Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees. Now Abraham and his descendants were called Hebrews, and this name is traced to an ancestor who was called Eber or Heber. It is doubtful whether an *individual* so named ever existed. The name "Hebrew" means "one from the other side," and would therefore have been a suitable name for those who crossed the Euphrates, coming from Arabia; but of this movement the Bible knows nothing. Some have supposed that the name was given much later to the tribes who entered Palestine across the Jordan. The discovery of the Tel-el-Amarna tablets has somewhat complicated our understanding of these events. These tablets were letters written by the vassal-kings of Syria to their overlord Amenophis III., King of Egypt, and in them the King of Jerusalem calls for help against some tribes who are invading the country and whom he names *Habiri*. Now the date of this correspondence is about 1500 B.C., and if these are the Hebrews, we shall have to suppose that not all the tribes of Israel went down into Egypt or that the Exodus took place some two centuries earlier than the date given in the Bible; but the whole question of the identification of the Habiri is not yet certain.

It is, however, with those Hebrew tribes who were afterwards known as the children of Israel that we have to do; and however remote, and by whatever stages it is to be traced, their Semitic relationship is certain. Their own tradition of the birthplace of Abraham shows that they are conscious of their common origin with the Babylonians; the stories in Genesis acknowledge their kinship with Moab and Ammon, even though national hatred has coloured the account of their birth (Gen. xix. 30–38). They formed a brotherly covenant with Edom, and Ishmael is recognised not only to be kin but to be the elder. The Canaanites were disowned wrongly, for they were certainly Semites; but the Philistines rightly, for they came into Palestine over-sea from Crete.

We need always to bear in mind that our Bible is the product of Semitic thought, and whatever its universal message, it is expressed in the forms of Semitic genius; and yet that the Hebrews stand out from the other Semitic nations is indisputable, and the distinguishing mark is the purity of their religion. What is the cause of that difference? How came such a tender root out of such a dry ground?

Renan is responsible for the popular idea that the Semites have a natural tendency towards Monotheism. The idea should present no difficulties for a theory of Revelation, but it is certainly not true. It is not true of the general type of Semitic religion, and it cannot be claimed, in the face of the Prophets' record of their countrymen's lapses, that it was true even of the Hebrews. If it were said that there was that in Semitic history and character which, provided opportunity were given, would offer a congenial soil for the reception of monotheistic ideas, it would be the utmost that could be said. Neither is there more truth in the antithesis that contrasts the Aryan conception of God as immanent with the Semitic as transcendent; for in their primitive stages Aryan and Semitic religions are alike.

Primitive Semitic religion is indeed quite polytheistic; every tribe has its own god and this god is closely identified with a particular locality. Therefore, to be an outcast from the tribe meant to be an exile from the protection and service of the god. This idea can be found in the Bible as late as David, who thought that if he were driven forth from his own land he would have to serve other gods (1 Sam. xxvi. 19). The god is conceived to be the father of the tribe, while the land is the mother, and this in quite a physical and literal sense. The same idea is of course frequent in the Greek religions, and some such conception must be the original of the strange tradition in Genesis (vi. 1), which describes a union between the sons of God and the daughters of men. The connection of the god

with the tribe is therefore simply a matter of blood descent, and the blood becomes in consequence invested with sacred virtues. The blood of the tribe cannot be shed by one of the members without incurring the vengeance of the god; and the use of the blood of animals in various ceremonies may point to the belief in a common ancestry for men and animals; in some tribes the animal is regarded as a superior being, and is actually worshipped. The blood of animals even is thought to be too sacred for human consumption, and is therefore set apart by libation as suitable food for the god. Seeing that the connection between the god and man is only tribal, the shedding of the blood of any other tribe is quite allowable; for the tribal god cares only for his own people, and others cannot approach him (2 Kings xvii. 27). It is evident that a religion based upon such ideas can never be a factor in the moral development of a people. It only needs to provide for help against enemies, counsel in times of national affliction, and oracles for difficult problems of judgment; therefore, in times of national prosperity and security, it will play no part beyond that of custom; and custom often seems the stronger in proportion to its lack of meaning.

We may insist that the Hebrew religion is superior to all this because it owes its origin to the special revelation of God; but even that does not preclude us from enquiring through what natural causes this revelation came, if we believe that natural causes form some part of the working of the Divine mind.

Now these ideas common to Semitic religion persisted among the Hebrews and were only shaken by the earnest ministry of the Prophets, and eventually destroyed by the reflection which followed the national disaster of the Exile. The continued national trouble of Israel was therefore a factor in her advance in the truth, and she stands as a witness to the possibility of suffering being an educative force. Moreover, she found that her Promised Land was only a little strip hemmed in between the desert and the sea, where all dreams of world-empire were forbidden. Then it was that this nation turned her thoughts to a spiritual kingdom, and looking across the sea that she feared to cross saw a day when the distant isles should be her possession, because she had given to them the Law of Jehovah, and the knowledge of God.

THE PRIMITIVE RELIGION OF THE HEBREWS

THE STRATA OF THE PENTATEUCH

We give here for reference the proposed identification of the documents that critics say can be recognised in the construction of the first five books of the Bible. The theory has been developed so as to include the Books of Joshua, Judges, and some parts of Samuel, all of which are said to bear the same marks of composition from pre-existing documents.

"J." Jahvistic. Dated 900–700 B.C. This document is especially distinguished for using the name of Jehovah, or "Yahwè," and is anthropomorphic in its conception of God.

"E." Elohistic. Dated 750–650 B.C. The name for God in this document is "Elohim," and its conception of God is more spiritual and elevated than in "J."

"D." Deuteronomist. Dated 650–550 B.C. This document has the style and thought of the Book of Deuteronomy, where it is chiefly, though by no means exclusively found. The central idea of this document is *the one sanctuary*.

"P." Priestly Code. Dated 550–400 B.C. This document supplies the framework of the Pentateuch, and is distinguished by its interest in questions of ritual, and by its very legal and stereotyped style.

The dates given above are arrived at from a comparison of the ideas expressed in these documents with their emergence in the historical books of the Old Testament. Only for the last two can it be claimed that there are historical events which are said to confirm them. These are: the finding of the Book of the Law in the reign of Josiah, and the promulgation of the Law by Ezra.

Lecture II

THE PRIMITIVE RELIGION OF THE HEBREWS

We have seen from the last lecture that an examination of the general type of Semitic Religion gives us no explanation of the mature development of the Religion of the Hebrews; on the contrary, that development would seem to take place in spite of the common Semitic characteristics, for it is against these characteristics and the natural tendency to return to them that we find the Prophets continually at war. If this is so, can we penetrate to the first stage at which the new religious movement begins which was to reach such glorious heights in Jeremiah, the Psalmists and the Son of Man? It is certainly not to be found in the general character of Semitic religion; does it commence with the ancestor of the Hebrew race, the Patriarch Abraham?

To this question the editor of Genesis means to return a decided answer: the true religion of Jehovah existed from the earliest times, and all lower forms are deteriorations from that pure original revelation. The earliest stories in Genesis are made to bear witness to this; Abel offered the true worship of God in that he brought of the best of his flock, thus agreeing with the sacrifice of animals set forth in the fully-developed ritual of Leviticus as the only means of approach to God; Noah offers of "clean" animals; the Patriarchs offer animal sacrifices, and call upon the name of Jehovah; Rebekah goes to enquire of Jehovah and obtains an oracle. The author means to convey by this that the earliest religion was the religion which we find outlined in Leviticus and Deuteronomy, with the exceptions that a priest is not necessary, and that sacrifice is permitted at other places besides the one chosen sanctuary. This idea is enshrined in that favourite name for God which we find in the Old Testament, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

We have now to enquire whether this is a correct view of the history, or only the writer's speculations about an age long removed from his own. We are moved to do this because there are certain facts in this history that do not seem to fit in with the author's view. It is evident at the outset, that the writer, whoever he be, is dealing with subjects concerning which he can have at best only second-hand knowledge. This may have been conveyed to him in documents, or in popular tradition. If the object of the compilation of this history was not so much to produce an accurate and exact history as to interpret the past as a religious lesson for his own age, it cannot be instantly dismissed as improbable

that he may have altered some of his material so as to accord more closely with his own religious views. Now scholars say that they can detect the presence of various documents, which have been loosely combined and coloured with the editor's own ideas of what should have taken place. There is hardly any theory which has excited more ridicule from a certain class of Biblical students. The idea is dismissed offhand as utterly unworthy of a sacred writer; and even if he did adopt such a scissors-and-paste method of compiling history, it is denied that anyone could detect the various strata now. No defence of these claims of the critical school need be attempted here, for we are taking their theories as granted, with the idea of seeing what their acceptance as true would mean to our estimate of the Bible and Revelation; but it may be shown that the Evangelist Luke is not ashamed to confess that he used something like this method in compiling his Gospel. From the Table that faces this lecture, it will be seen that the critics give dates for these documents that lie very far apart, and if the dates are even approximately true, it is a fair conclusion that with such wide separation of time, and with the consequent difference both in language and idea, there should be sufficient criteria to detect the different strata. The critics who have attempted the disintegration of the original documents of the Pentateuch have been challenged to show their fitness for such a task by extricating the respective contributions in a joint authorship novel such as "The Chaplain of the Fleet," by Walter Besant and James Rice. Or, again, such claims are discounted on the ground of the known failures of professional literary critics to recognise under pseudonym or anonymity, the style of a well-known author, or even to guess correctly the sex of the writer. The analogy fails because the circumstances are entirely different. It would be on more equal terms to deny that it would be possible to distinguish, say, the personal opinions of the author of an English History from the passages quoted from the Doomsday Book, Chaucer, or an Act of the Long Parliament, if all quotation marks and references were omitted.

For according to the witness of the very documents themselves this conception of the early history must be set aside as not quite correct. The history in Genesis is conscious that some new start began with Abraham: he abandoned idolatry. Still more clearly is it seen that with Moses another epoch began, for according to one document, the very name of Jehovah was unknown before its revelation to Moses (Exod. vi. 2, 3). We are, therefore, faced with the necessity of enquiring how much of the stories of the Patriarchs can be called history in any true sense. The reasons for and against their historical value may be summarised:

Against: (1) The stories must have been composed long after the events took

place. (2) Tribal movements and personal incidents seem to have been confused. (3) The endeavour to explain the origin of personal and geographical names is often merely popular, and etymologically incorrect. (Compare with this the common errors of our own day; for instance, the explanation of the name of Liverpool from a supposed bird called the liver, now known to be entirely mythical.) (4) While the contemporary history of this period is now quite an enlightened field, and the life, character, and customs of the inhabitants of Palestine in this age of the Patriarchs comparatively well known, we look in vain for any mention of these persons themselves.

For:(1) The narratives of the Patriarchs are admitted by critics to have been taken from at least two documents of separate origin and of different dates. This should double the weight of the evidence. (2) The simplicity of the narratives in many places looks like a relation of fact. (But over against this must be placed the genius for relating a story of pure fiction which is so peculiar a distinction of the Semites. Some of the narratives are quite artificial; as the story of Isaac's lie to shield his wife, which follows a similar story related of Abraham.) (3) We might appeal to the memory of the Bedawin reciters, who can repeat almost incredibly long portions of the Koran.

The most likely solution of this conflicting evidence would seem to be that in the history of the Patriarchs we have a modicum of historical foundation which has been worked up into popular and idealised legends. If the stories of the three Patriarchs be carefully studied, it will be noticed that while the stories of Jacob are matter of fact, and do outline a conceivable character, the stories of Isaac produce only a nebulous character impression, while Abraham stands forth as a character which has been idealised. This would be an accountable psychological process: in the case of Jacob a good deal of detail is remembered, Isaac is almost forgotten, while in the case of Abraham, only the name and a few incidents are known, which serve to form the framework of a religious lesson.

It is, however, in the conception of their religion that idealisation has most plainly occurred, for it is mainly the religion of the Ninth Century, that is, of the age immediately preceding the great literary Prophets. In the documents themselves there is left to the careful reader ample indication in customs and narratives, the meaning of which has escaped the notice of the editor, that a more primitive form of religion prevailed. It would seem, as we have seen, that the name of Jehovah was unknown to them, while there are evident tokens of polytheistic belief (Gen. xxxi. 19; xxxv. 1–4). The crudity of the worship may be seen in the frequent reference to the erection of pillars and stones, which, it will

be seen later, have more than a merely memorial purpose. The ease with which we find idolatry always reappearing in later history points to some hereditary tendency at work among the mass of the people. If, however, we suppose that the primitive religion was entirely heathen we shall be faced with the problem of discovering some necessary point of departure to which the higher revelation could affix itself. We may suppose, therefore, that among the ancestors of the Hebrews there was held a faith that was relatively purer than that common to the Semites, a faith which contained in itself the guarantee of the possibility of advance, if only favourable conditions arose; that "El, the Mighty One (*Shaddai*)," was worshipped, but along with the retention of customs and ideas that are to be found in some forms of demon worship, that is, with the recognition of many other great spirits, not all of whom are thought of as inimical to man; very much as we find among the North American Indians the idea of a Great Spirit, existing side by side with heathen practices and beliefs.

So far our enquiry has not taken us on to very sure ground, and we must seek other methods. In the study of Comparative Religion the idea of a certain natural order of the evolution of religion predominates, but the actual origin of religion is still only a matter of speculation, as indeed it is bound to remain from the very nature of religion itself, since it is a vision of faith, rising in different ages and races through quite different processes. We propose now to take both the speculations and the assured results of the study of Comparative Religion, and using these as tests, see if they have left any traces in the evolution of the Hebrew religion or if they can guide us to its possible origins. The principles of such enquiry and application may be stated.

(1) The ascertained customs and ideas of other religions, especially those of the Semites, will form a working hypothesis, and if we then find any reference to these customs or ideas in the Old Testament, it will make towards reasonable proof of a similar origin.

(2) We must be careful, however, to exclude customs that are known to have been borrowed from the Canaanites, such as the practice of Baal-worship.

(3) At the same time we must beware of assuming, without further enquiry, that all the observances ordained by the religion of Jehovah whose origins are connected with some historical event are to be thought of as having their beginning then. It is more than likely that when a long-established custom was recognised to be heathen in its origin or tendency, it would be strictly forbidden, as in the case of the heathen practice of necromancy; others which had lost their original meaning would be baptised into a new significance under the new

religion. (With this phenomenon may be compared our own festival of Christmas Day, taken over from the Roman Saturnalia, and our mourning customs, which are survivals of heathenism, and can only with great difficulty be made to take on a Christian meaning.) Let us then examine the supposed origins of heathen religion, and first of all, that known as Totemism.

Totemism is a custom exceedingly common among savage tribes, in which some animal is chosen as the badge, or the name of the tribe, and a blood covenant formed, when the animal becomes the "totem" or god of the tribe. Popular instances may be given in the names of many of the Indian tribes of North America, or even in the crests and emblems of our now disrupted clans in Scotland, which can be traced back to a similar idea. In other cases the totem may be one of the well-known flora of the country or some other natural object. The custom is, of course, seen in the well-known worship of animals which has continued even among nations of advanced civilisation. Are there any traces of the influence of this idea at work in the religion of the Old Testament? There are one or two tribal names which are names of animals. Simeon is probably the name of a hybrid between a wolf and a hyæna. Leah means a wild cow, and Rachel is the Hebrew name for an ewe. The distinction between clean and unclean animals might be traced to this influence, but it does not altogether explain the lists in Lev. xi. and Deut. xiv.

Another theory of the origin of religion is that known as Animism. This is the belief in the existence of spirits,—a belief prompted by the phenomena of dreams,—which usually takes the form of belief in the activity of the spirits of the recently deceased, an activity which is sometimes thought to be harmful and therefore feared. Animism, as a belief in a spiritual activity behind natural phenomena, especially those of the fearful type, survives in some form or other in the highest religions, and was particularly active in the Hebrew idea that Jehovah controlled natural forces for the deliverance of His people and for His own wonderful manifestations. Animism generally survives among uncivilised peoples in the practice of ancestor worship, of which there is no trace among the Hebrews.

Nevertheless, the belief in Animism has left some customs behind it. Especially is this seen in the mourning customs which are designed to render the relatives unrecognisable to the departed spirit. This was effected by sprinkling ashes on the head, going naked or clothed in sackcloth. Cutting the flesh for this purpose is expressly forbidden (Lev. xix. 28). The ritual uncleanness of one who has come into contact with a dead body is also a relic of Animism, as is also the

strange idea in Num. xix. 15, which is intended to guard against the spirit taking up its abode in a position from which it would be difficult to dislodge it. The funeral feast is held with the idea that the dead can still partake, but in this case friendly feelings rather than fear operate. The conclusion is that Animism has played its part in the shaping of Israel's religion, but that the cruder forms of it were dropped at a very early age.

The religion of savage tribes is generally found to be polytheistic, and this is supposed to be one of the earliest stages in the development of religion. It takes the form of the deification of the forces of Nature or of striking natural objects, which are worshipped and generally feared, and is therefore a form of Animism. If the theories of the critics as to the composition of the early books of the Bible are correct, we should expect to find that, if any traces of Polytheism could be detected, they would be carefully obliterated from the original documents by the latest editor. There are indications discernible which show that this has been done, for although the worship of other gods is always severely condemned as the greatest of sins, yet at the same time we find no clear recognition of the idea of the One God until the time of the Prophets. The gods of the heathen are mentioned as if they were real beings who are to be feared. The evidence for this may be objected to in detail, but the accumulation of facts does press the reader to the unavoidable conclusion that until the Prophets, the faith of Israel was Monolatry rather than Monotheism, that is, the worship of one God rather than the definite belief that He is the Only God.

The very name for God in the Hebrew language has a plural form (Elohim), but this is explained by a grammatical custom by which things of exalted idea are spoken of in the plural, called by grammarians, *the plural of eminence*. The evidence for Polytheism quoted above from Gen. xxxi. 19; xxxv. 1–4, might be referred to the introduction of alien idolatrous practices; but this can hardly be claimed in the case of the practice mentioned in Lev. xvii. 7, which must be a reference to the cult of satyrs, or goat-like demons which were commonly supposed to inhabit the desert, to the discouragement of which the ceremony mentioned in Lev. xvi. 8, 10, 21 ff, would seem to be directed. This strange figure called Azazel is not elsewhere described in the Old Testament, but we learn from the Book of Enoch that this was the name for the King of the Demons, a kind of *djinn* who inhabited the wilderness and demanded toll of human life. (In agreement with what has been said before it will be noticed how this practice has been absorbed in the ritual of the Tabernacle, but with a different meaning.) Even the First Commandment does not explicitly deny the existence of other gods; it merely prohibits their worship by the Israelites. It may

be that this command led to the full monotheistic belief which we find in men like Isaiah, but that full conception cannot be fairly read into the First Commandment. Chemosh, the god of the Amorites, is mentioned in Judges xi. 24, as a real being who had given the Amorites the possession of their land, even as Jehovah had given Canaan to the Israelites. In the popular imagination these heathen gods would remain as real beings probably long after the monotheistic belief had been held by the more enlightened, being thought of as demon powers, in much the same way as the early Christians regarded the gods of Greece and Rome.

When we turn to the evidence from the customs of worship that owe their origin to heathen ideas, the supposition that the early religion of the Hebrews was hardly distinguishable from that of the Semitic races finds a full confirmation.

The most determinative of these ideas is that of the localisation of the god, who appears only at certain specified places with which he is inseparably connected. The appearance is generally in some form more or less human, and the site of the manifestation is either marked for posterity by the erection of a suitable memorial, in the shape of a stone or an altar, or else some natural object is taken to be the actual residence of the god. The god is therefore connected rather with the land than with the people, and it is this antagonism of the popular idea with that of the Prophets, who stand for the relation between Jehovah and Israel as not territorial but covenanted, which is the key to the history of Israel. Apart from this prevalent idea, which is in itself a sufficient proof, we have the frequent reference to the sacredness of certain memorials and objects whose original significance cannot be hidden from the careful reader. We shall examine first these objects of reverential regard and then proceed to notice some of the more outstanding customs whose origin is heathen.

(a) *Sacred Stones.* Throughout the Old Testament we meet with numerous references to stones or circles that form convenient landmarks or natural *rendezvous* for national ceremonies. Adonijah strengthens his rebellion by a great sacrifice at the stone of Zoheleth—"the serpent's stone." The extremely important part which the serpent plays in all Semitic religion and mythology, together with the sacrificial act at this spot, points to its having been the ancient site of some idolatrous cult. Many of these sacred stones may have been the shrines of the Canaanites, and to some of these the invading religion attached its own meaning. The circle at Gilgal, which is said to commemorate the crossing of the Jordan, may be an example of this, for there is some contradiction in the

account which refers it to a memorial erected by Joshua for this purpose (compare Josh. iv. 2–6, 20 ff, with iv. 9), and it is more than likely that the circle of graven images mentioned in Judges iii. 19 (R.V. margin) is to be identified with it. Among this class of sacred objects must be mentioned the obscure *Mazzebah*, translated in the margin of the Revised Version, "Obelisk." The use of the Mazzebah is strictly forbidden in Exod. xxxiv. 13, as one of the idolatrous customs of the former inhabitants of the land, but in the Eighth Century the Mazzebah is reckoned by Hosea as one of the essentials of Hebrew worship, as if he knew nothing of this proscription in the Law (Hosea iii. iv.). These pillars were evidently used to mark the place of worship, and they are said to have been found at Shechem, Bethel, Gilgal, Mizpeh, and elsewhere. From their usage in primitive Semitic religion as well as from their prohibition in Exodus it can be seen that they had idolatrous significance, and it is thought that they were rudely carved to resemble the likeness of the god. The two pillars placed before the temple, called Jachin and Boaz, are probably connected with the Mazzebah.

(b) *Sacred Trees.* The continual reference to these in the Old Testament shows that they had some special and sacred significance. Such are the terebinths of Mamre (Gen. xiii. 18; should be singular according to the Septuagint), the tamarisk at Beersheba (Gen. xxi. 33), the palm of Deborah (Judges iv. 5), and the terebinth in Ophrah (Judges vi. 11). We can understand how to desert peoples trees naturally stood for objects of thankful reverence, and in the popular mind were regarded as the special seat and haunt of a deity. That they also served for the purpose of obtaining oracles may be seen from 2 Sam. v. 24; with which may be compared the practice of oracular decision by the rustling of the famous oaks of Delphi. With this species of tree-worship we must compare the use of the Asherah mentioned as a sacred symbol in Judges vi. 25; this is expressly forbidden in Exod. xxxiv. 13, Deut. xvi. 21. It used to be supposed that this was a wooden symbol of a goddess Asherah, but from the description in the passage quoted from Deuteronomy, and from Isa. xvii. 8, it would seem to be a tree-like post, and is more likely to be a remnant of tree worship, as our own Maypole may be. It came to pass that the tree or tree-like pole could therefore stand beside any altar as the sign of the presence of the god, and in the pre-Prophetic religion of Israel this was transferred to a sign of the presence of Jehovah until the Asherah was forbidden, in that great attempt to make return to idolatry impossible, the reform under Josiah.

(c) *Sacred Springs.* A similar origin may be supposed for the recognised sacredness of springs. From the names given to some of these it is evident that they were regarded as the special seat of Divine power, natural enough, as in the

case of the trees, to a desert-bred race and to dwellers in a land which never had too plentiful a supply of water. The proximity of the spring to an altar or sacred stone confirms this, as in the case of the stone Zoheleth near the spring En-rogel, the "spring of the fuller." The name of "En-Mishpat" (Gen. xiv. 7), "the spring of judgment," would seem to indicate that springs were used for the purpose of obtaining oracles, but by what signs this was effected is not known. The name of the spring in Gen. xvi. 14, where the angel appeared to Hagar, is significant in this connection: "the well of the living one who seeth me."

In the customs of worship, and in all customs to which there is attached a definite religious significance, we find analogies in the heathen religions which show that they must have had a common origin. Chief among these must be classed the custom of sacrifice. It is natural, therefore, to find that sacrifice, which has such an undoubtedly natural explanation in heathen religions as either the food of the god or a means of propitiation, is nowhere in the Old Testament explicitly defined as to its intent and meaning. The root idea is, however, clearly seen in such customs as that of the setting forth of the Shewbread, however much the meaning may have become spiritualised by a purer idea of the nature of Jehovah, while in Ezek. xliv. 7, 15, this seems to be quite explicitly stated. As the conception of Deity was spiritualised, the idea of material food would doubtless grow too repugnant to be retained in the bare offering of flesh, and so we get the burnt-offering, the smoke of which Jehovah can smell. The blood especially, forms the correct offering, since being the seat of life, it belongs altogether to God. On the idea of the sacrifice being used as a propitiation to the Deity, it follows naturally that the more costly the victim the more acceptable it will be, and of all sacrifices the most efficacious will be that of a human being. The story of Abram and Isaac in Gen. xxii. is made to serve as a condemnation of human sacrifices, but the origin of the story may very well have pointed the other way, as indeed the first part of the story does; and that the practice was common may be seen from 2 Kings xvi. 3; xxi. 6; Jer. vii. 31; xix. 5 (Delete the last words of Jer. xix. 5, as an evident gloss from vii. 31). True, in these passages human sacrifice is said to be in express contravention of the will of Jehovah, but no such comment is added to the story of Jephthah (Judges xi. 30 ff.), while in Micah vi. 7, the sacrifice of the firstborn is simply classed among other sacrifices as part of the common idea. A remnant of this horrible practice is probably to be found in the consecration of the firstborn to Jehovah, while the legality of human sacrifice is determinative in the common practice of the "ban," by which all captives were devoted to Jehovah, and any violation visited by the direst vengeance; as in the case of Saul and Agag. Another use of the sacrifice

was that of ratifying a covenant by cutting a victim in parts, between which the contracting parties passed (Gen. xv. 9–17; Jer. xxxiv. 18).

Much the same result will be found from enquiry into the origin of special feasts and customs that are said to have been instigated at the express command of Jehovah; for there is evidence which shows that they were often customs common amongst the heathen, and were only invested with a new significance by the higher religion of the Hebrews. Among these it is likely that we must reckon even the Passover, for the daubing of the lintels is said to be a common heathen practice, and it will be noticed in support of the pre-Mosaic origin of the ceremony that at its first mention in Exod. xii. 21, it is called *the* Passover. The meaning of the Hebrew word translated "Passover" is also capable of another meaning than that given in the story of its institution, a meaning which also points to its being the survival of a Semitic and heathen custom. Similar enquiry into ancient religions of the Semitic type shows that originally circumcision had no special religious significance, but was probably a sign of puberty and the right to marry. As manners softened it became a family rite and there was no need to postpone it till years of manhood. The practice of wearing special garments at religious rites is also found in heathen religions, and still maintains itself in our habit of wearing "Sunday clothes."

The results of these enquiries are sufficiently startling to those who have been accustomed to regard the religion of Israel as starting from some definite act of revelation which ordained these ordinances and their religious meaning for the first time. But it is common enough in history to find that customs persist long after their original significance has been forgotten, and that they are gradually invested with a meaning more appropriate to the spirit of the age. We are not, however, shut up to the conclusion, that, because we can trace much of the wonderful religion of Israel to common causes acting upon heathen religion, there is no real work of revelation in this gradual progress from lower to higher stages. It would be quite useless, from the point of view of this book, to enter on the fruitless discussion as to whether in the evolution of religion we have to deal with a natural process or with a supernatural revelation. Is any such antithesis necessary? Surely the one can come through the other. If revelation is to reach us it must come through the ordinary processes of our minds; the recognition that it is from God cannot be authenticated to us by any miracle or outward authority, but simply by the possibility of the mind, which God has made, being able to recognise its Maker. It may be more of a difficulty to others that we should have such erroneous conceptions of history in a Book that has been regarded as infallible on these matters. We have to face the fact, from which there is no

escape, that the historian may not have known the origin of the things of which he wrote, or may have intentionally obscured the fact of the heathen origin of customs that had become to all pious Israelites expressions of Jehovah's special revelation to Israel. If we are going to call this fraud, then it means that we are going to force on that early age a conception of historical accuracy which it certainly did not possess, and which, as a matter of fact, is only a late demand of the human mind. And after all, there was truth in this reference of all their religion to the revelation of Jehovah. It witnesses to the fact that behind even the crudest religion there is something which defies explanation, and that we have in heathen religions the slow dawning consciousness of God within man's soul. In Israel these things never stood still. That central idea of the localisation of Jehovah grew too small to contain the widening conception of Him as it was evolved through reflection and national experience, until the Prophets burst forth with the proclamation that He was the God of the whole earth, and His relation to Israel not tribal or territorial, but moral, and only to be maintained by righteousness and true holiness.

MOSAISM

The reader is recommended to make a careful study of the following passages, which are among the most important adduced by the critics as evidence for the non-Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch.

(1) Mosaic authorship is never claimed for the Pentateuch as a whole. Only in certain places is it noted that Moses wrote down special things (Exod. xvii. 14; xxiv. 4; xxxiv. 27; Num. xxxiii. 2; Deut. xxxi. 9, 22, 24). Moses is consistently spoken of in the third person, and it is hardly likely that this is a style purposely adopted, or the statement of Num. xii. 3 would be extraordinary in the circumstances. Obviously the last chapter of Deuteronomy was not written by him, nor is the common opinion that it was added by Joshua at all probable, for there is no difference in style from the rest of the book discernible, and, moreover, Dan is referred to (Deut. xxxiv. 1; cp. also Gen. xiv. 14), which was not so named until after the conquest. (Josh. xix. 47; Judges xviii. 29.) Would Moses need to authenticate his history of contemporaneous events by quoting from what are regarded as ancient books: from the Book of the Wars of Jehovah (Num. xxi. 14), wars which could have only just commenced, or from the poem which refers to the victory over Sihon (Num. xxi. 27 ff.), which took place at the very end of the forty years' wandering?

(2) The standpoint as a whole is that of an age later than Moses. The remark in Gen. xxxvi. 31 can only have had any meaning in the age of David when Edom was in submission to Israel. A late date is also needed for the following passages: Gen. xii. 6; xiii. 7; xxxiv. 7 ("in Israel"! cp. Judges xx. 10; 2 Sam. xiii. 12); Lev. xviii. 27; Deut. ii. 12; iv. 38. In fact, the whole geographical outlook is that of an inhabitant of Western Palestine, as may be seen from the use of the term "Seaward" to indicate the west, and of "Negeb," or the desert land, for the south. These terms are used even in the description of the Tabernacle, which, if taken from the site of Mount Sinai, would be altogether wrong and meaningless. Compare Num. xxii. 1; xxxiv. 15; Deut. i. 1, 5; iii. 8; iv. 41, 46, 49: "beyond the Jordan," showing clearly that the writer's position is in Palestine, west of the Jordan.

(3) There is no trace in the history of any observance of the Levitical ritual until after the exile; the day of atonement, the sin-offering, the high-priest, all are unheard of until this date. Nor can it be claimed that it was the ignorance of the common people, or their apostasy, that was responsible for this condition of things. The great leaders of the various reformations are apparently also quite ignorant that none but a priest could sacrifice, and none but a Levite take charge of the ark. Samuel, who was not a Levite, sleeps beside the ark and offers sacrifice. Elijah does nothing to recall the people to the ritual of Leviticus.

(4) The conclusion is that, while later ages were right in attributing to Moses the founding of their religion and some of their ritual, all the accumulation of law, which had only been the growth of many centuries, has been placed to his credit. What the actual contribution of Moses was it is now impossible to say, but the original of the Ten Words and of the Book of the Covenant (Exod. xx. 2–xxiii. 33) may well go back to that age, as may be seen from the relative simplicity of the laws and rules. For example, compare the simple regulations for the altar in Exod. xx. 24 with the elaborate altar described in Exod. xxvii. 1–8.

Lecture III

MOSAISM

The national consciousness of Israel goes back to a series of remarkable events in which the nation was born, and which are too deeply graven on the mind of the people to be mere legends without historical foundation. These events are the deliverance from the bondage in Egypt and the great covenant made with Jehovah at Sinai. The indispensable personal centre, round which these events revolve, is that of the great national leader, Moses. The fact that, outside the Pentateuch and the closely connected Book of Joshua, little is known of the work of Moses until after the exile, has given rise to doubts concerning his historical reality. If we take the writings of the Old Testament that are contemporary with the period they describe, there stand out in indisputable primacy the writings of the great literary Prophets. To these modern criticism has rightly turned to discover the opinions, customs, and religion, prevailing in the

Eighth Century; and it is claimed that by these writings we can test the historical value of the Pentateuch, and of the other historical books. Now it must be admitted that in the pre-exilic Prophets the mention of Moses is less frequent than we should expect from the position which is claimed for him in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. The Prophets do appeal with one consent to the original covenant of Jehovah with Israel, to the fulfilment of which they would recall the nation; but only rarely is the name of Moses associated with that covenant. There are only four references to Moses in the Prophets before the exile (Hosea xii. 13—Moses not actually named; Micah vi. 4; Jer. xv. 1; Isa. lxiii. 12—reckoned post-exilic by critics), and in none of these is Moses referred to as a law-giver, but as a prophet and national deliverer. We have to come to Prophets writing after the exile to find any reference to the legislative work of Moses (Mal. iv. 4; Dan. ix. 11–13). The purpose of the prophetic writings is moral rather than historical, and this forbids putting more evidential weight upon this argument from silence than it will bear; but in face of their continual appeal to the covenant of Sinai, this silence is at least significant. Evidently Moses was not a name to conjure with in their age. (Compare Jer. xxxi. 31, 32, where the mention of the name of Moses would have been most natural.)

We have, on these and other grounds, to disregard the later idea that Moses was the only law-giver of Israel and the author of the Pentateuch, although the fact that the later legislation could only find sanction as it was included under his name, points to him as in some way the initiator of Israel's great Code of Laws. While in addition to this, it must be admitted that a great deal of the story of his life is due to the growth of legend, there is no need to regard the figure of Moses as entirely mythical. The events by which a motley crowd of serfs became a nation and covenanted themselves to an almost new religion not only need for their explanation a great interpreter, but also a great leader; and this demand and need Moses fills. We may therefore safely regard Moses as one of the great Founders of Religion.

We have now to enquire how much of the marvellous story of his life can be safely reckoned as history. The document which gives the earliest, and therefore the most trustworthy, story of his life is dated by the critics in the Ninth Century, although it is not denied that it may, and probably does, go back for its material to a much earlier period. This document, known to the critics as "J," owes its origin to early prophetic influence. In this document, as might be expected from the analogy in similar cases (compare the absence of the birth stories in Mark), the story of the birth and finding of Moses is omitted; it is probably nothing

more than an effort to find a popular explanation of his name, as derived from *Mashah*, "to draw out." A much more likely origin of the name is found by modern scholars in the Egyptian word for "son" (*Mesu*). The important thing to be noticed is that in this early document he appears first of all in Midian, although there are indications which show that it is known that he had previously been in Egypt. Here, alone in the wilderness, or in intercourse with the strange Bedawin who still inhabit that region, there came to him a revelation of Jehovah and the call to deliver Israel from their bondage. He returned to Egypt with a message at once religious and national. He calls upon the Israelites to leave Egypt and to seek a covenant with Jehovah at His shrine at Sinai. During a plague, the passage of the Red Sea was effected under conditions that were interpreted to be due to the direct intervention of Jehovah; and, the returning tide cutting off the pursuing Egyptians who challenged their flight, the Israelites stood delivered from their enemies and their first trust in Jehovah was vindicated. It is not for us to enquire into the exact causes which proved so favourable to the Israelites and so disastrous to the Egyptians; we only need to know that they were interpreted religiously. Then around Mount Sinai, with its impressive solitude and its awful storms, Moses gathered the people, imparted the secret of the new worship, made a solemn covenant by which the people of Israel became for ever the people of Jehovah, and probably laid down some rudiments of legislation fitted for their primitive and nomadic condition. This much at least the after history demands as the irreducible minimum.

If this is at all an accurate view of the founding of the religion of Jehovah, then we are faced with the phenomenon of a nation practically adopting a new religion. We do not ignore "revelation" when we feel compelled to seek for natural causes which might prepare the way for this event; and this we may attempt by an enquiry into the meaning of the name "Jehovah."

It should be noted at the outset that "Jehovah" is a personal name, like that of Zeus or Poseidon, conveying the idea of some aspect of deity. The meaning of the name is exceedingly obscure. The general name for deity common to all Semites, and therefore belonging to the undivided primitive stock, is "El," meaning either "the Mighty One" or, and more in accord with Semitic conceptions of God, "the Leader." The meaning of the name "Jehovah" is difficult to discover, because in the first place the exact pronunciation of the word has been lost, probably beyond recovery.

The word "Jehovah" is a hybrid compound, and as a matter of fact was never used as a name for God until the Reformation. We can be certain only that

the consonants of the word were *JHVH* (or *YHWH*, Hebrew pronunciation). This extraordinary state of things is accounted for by the fact that for centuries the Hebrew Scriptures were "unpointed" or unvocalised—that is, the consonants only were written and the necessary connecting vowels were taught orally, and only retained in the memory for use when the Scriptures were read aloud. When in the Ninth Century A.D. it was likely that the pronunciation of the sacred language would be entirely forgotten, a device for its preservation was made whereby the vowel pronunciation was indicated by means of "points" placed chiefly underneath the consonantal text; very much like the dots and dashes used for vowels in Pitman's system of shorthand. When, however, it came to the "pointing" of JHVH, it was found that the pronunciation of this word had been entirely lost. Reverence for the name of God had become so exaggerated that, in reading aloud from the Scriptures, wherever the sacred name occurred another word had always been substituted. This word was one of respect, but of less marked exaltation—*Adonai*, equal to our word "Lord." The only course open to the punctuators was that of inserting under the consonants JHVH, the vowels (with suitable euphonic modifications) of the word *Adonai*, with the result that we get the conflate "Jehovah," a word which has become invested with so much solemnity to our ears, but which was certainly not the right pronunciation, and which has never been used by the Jews. Scholars have endeavoured, at present without any universally accepted result, to recover the lost pronunciation by linguistic enquiries, with the desire to discover what the word originally meant, in the hope that it would throw some light on the origin of the religion founded by Moses. In Exod. iii. 13 ff. (R. V. margin) we have the traditional explanation of the word, an explanation which is not altogether satisfactory from a grammatical point of view; the great Hebraist Ewald goes so far as to pronounce it highly artificial. It has been objected that the man who wrote this account, about 750 B.C., surely understood his own language. Probably; but that is not to say that he understood the etymology of it, for etymology is a new science, and has upset many popular derivations in the case of our own language. If the explanation given in Exodus is correct, and we cannot with certainty put anything much better in its place, then the meaning of the word "Jehovah" would be "He that is," perhaps an equivalent in Hebrew form to the Western idea of "The Eternal." Only one of the numerous guesses as to the meaning of the original name need be quoted here: that the word comes from a verb, *hawah*, meaning either "to fall," or "to blow." Similar ideas would seem to account for either of these meanings. "He who blows," looks like the name for the Tempest God, while "that which falls" has been taken to indicate a fallen meteorite, which may have been preserved as a symbol of Jehovah. When we remember the

thunderstorms at Sinai, and the common belief that thunder was a special theophany of Jehovah, these ideas are not to be hastily dismissed as altogether incredible. Nor should we be prevented from considering such an idea from the prejudice that it would make the origin of the religion of Israel a piece of Nature-worship and superstition. God has taken man where He has found him, and none can dare to define the limits of childish and crude conceptions within which the Spirit of God can begin His work in man's mind.

The conclusion derived from the examination of the meaning of the name "Jehovah" must therefore remain open until some further light is thrown on the subject. (Scholars usually adopt the pronunciation, *Yahwe,* as our nearest approach to the original.)

An endeavour has been made to discover the origin of the religion of Israel from the persistent connection of Jehovah with the locality of Mount Sinai. This idea continues long after in the Promised Land (Deut. xxxiii. 2; Judges v. 5), and Elijah takes a long journey back to the sacred spot, presumably to get into closer touch with Jehovah (1 Kings xix.). With the prevailing beliefs of that age in the localisation of the god, this connection must be thought of as of more than accidental significance. It is fair to assume that the seat of Jehovah at Sinai must have been known before the great covenant, and is indeed required by the narrative itself (Exod. iii.; iv. 27), while recent discoveries are said to prove that the traditional Sinai must have been a sacred place from the earliest times. Moses, however, is clearly represented as coming to know of Jehovah during his stay in Midian. The exact means of the revelation is said to have been the sight of a bush on fire, yet miraculously unconsumed. What actually lies behind this story—whether it is a creation of the religious imagination which sees "every common bush afire with God"—it is useless for us to try and discover. A natural explanation has been sought in the fact that Jethro, the Kenite, was the priest of Midian, and presumably of some shrine of Jehovah. Certainly Jethro knew the name of Jehovah, but apparently only regarded Him as one of the gods, until the marvellous deliverance of the Exodus proved Him to be the greatest of gods (Exod. xviii. 9–11). Jethro performs an act of sacrifice to Jehovah, in the presence of Aaron and the elders, that looks remarkably like an act of initiation by which Israel are introduced to the worship of Jehovah by the regular priest of the shrine (Exod. xviii. 12). The hypothesis is further strengthened by the fact that the Kenites are found later dwelling in Palestine (Judges i. 16), and are always remembered long after as the friends of the Israelites (1 Sam. xv. 6; xxvii. 10; xxx. 29). The inference from this is that Moses first learned of Jehovah from his father-in-law Jethro, but that he understood more of the character of Jehovah

than Jethro, and by his superior religious consciousness conceived of Him as in some way Supreme who to Jethro had been only one of the desert gods.

This theory would certainly be strengthened if Sinai could be identified, not with the traditional site of *Jebel Musa* in the southern part of the Sinaitic peninsula, but with some spot in the land of Midian, across the gulf of Akaba. This does indeed seem necessary from the narrative, for from the most natural interpretation of Exod. iii. 1, Horeb, the mount of God, was in Midian. It is generally taken for granted that Horeb and Sinai are identical; the respective names are used by different documents. It is said that, for some reasons, Midian would fit in with the record of the journey through the wilderness better than the Sinaitic peninsula. If the parallelism of Sinai with Seir in Deut. xxxiii. 2 can be taken to show identity, as is natural, we have a further confirmation, for Seir is in Midian.

The grave difficulty of all this is that it would make the religion of Jehovah a distinct importation. Is such a thing as its reception by the Hebrews credible on this account? The idea of a nation changing its religion is certainly repugnant to the Semitic mind (Jer. ii. 10, 11), and some more natural connection seems necessary, both from the narrative and from general considerations. Now the narrative hints that the religion was not entirely new (Exod. vi. 3), but was known to the Patriarchs under different forms; while the sanctity of Sinai would seem to have been already known to some of the tribes (Exod. iv. 27). There is nothing here definite enough for us to proceed to historical certainty, but it is fair to suppose that the shrine at Sinai was known to the Patriarchs in their wanderings, and that Jehovah would be worshipped; as would any other local god whose territory they happened to be in. Grant that this was partly known to the Hebrew slaves in Egypt; that Moses received the revelation of the power of Jehovah in his exile in Midian, and by a splendid leap of inspiration identified the actual shrine and the Person of Jehovah with the Mighty Spirit dimly known to the Patriarchs, and we have an explanation that is natural and is also true; for the Object of man's worship has been One through all history. When the successful passage of the Red Sea and the defeat of the Egyptians were interpreted by Moses as the direct intervention of Jehovah, the transition to the great covenant is made possible. All this may be very contrary to the traditional idea of how Moses received the revelation of Jehovah, but the facts do point this way; and it is not for us to deny that the Spirit of God could work through these natural events and through the mind of this commanding personality, and so bring about this identification of Jehovah and the Great Spirit of the Patriarchal thought, which was to lead to such great results for religion.

We are now free to investigate what the character of the religion introduced by Moses actually was.

(1) *General Character.* A careful examination of its character shows that while it is by no means identical with the religion taught by the Prophets, and while it retained many heathen ideas and customs, yet it contained within itself the promise and guarantee of development. We have already had occasion to notice that it is not pure Monotheism. Jehovah is not the only God; He is the only God for Israel. The heathen deities are still regarded as having a real existence. Neither can it be called a purely spiritual religion, for Jehovah is rather said to have a spirit than to be a spirit; He has a form which, though terrible in its effect on the beholder, by reason of its glory, can nevertheless be seen; He inhabits a special place, which is His sacred territory, and on this Moses stumbles all unwittingly in Midian.

Still more emphatically against the idea of a purely spiritual religion is the fact—which the editors have done their best to hide, but not successfully—that images of some kind were allowed, or existed unreproved. The Ephod, of which we hear so often, was evidently at one time an idol. The meaning of the word is of something "covered," as may be seen from Isa. xxx. 22, where the feminine form of the word (*aphuddah*) is used of the gold plating of images; but according to a later idea (Exod. xxviii. 6–14), the Ephod formed part of the dress of the High Priest, and was a kind of embroidered waistcoat. This explanation, however, does violence to a number of passages where the Ephod is mentioned. Gideon expended seventeen hundred shekels of gold on an Ephod which he "set up" in Ophrah (Jud. viii. 26 f.); this cannot be a waistcoat. Only the explanation that the Ephod was an image can do justice to the reference in Judges xvii. 5, and it suits the passage in 1 Sam. xxi. 9, if we think of the sword hanging behind an image. If the ephod was nothing more than a waistcoat by which lots were determined, we have to explain why it is so sharply condemned in Judges viii. 27, and why the text of 1 Sam. xiv. 18, which in the Septuagint reads "ephod," in the Hebrew text has been altered to read "ark"; an alteration which is quite impossible here, as the ark was at this time in Kirjath Jearim, and, moreover, was never used for the purpose of obtaining oracles. (The only explanation is that some scribe has made this alteration because he knew that there was something idolatrous about the ephod.) Even as late as Hosea (iii. 4) we find the ephod mentioned in a connection where it can only stand for an object of idolatrous worship. It is certainly strange that the same name should be in use for an image, and then later for a garment of the high-priest; but the likely explanation of this is that the image was at one time clothed with a dress, as was usual (Jer. x. 9),

and that in the pockets of this the lots were kept. When the use of the image became offensive the garment was retained as part of the high-priest's dress. The transition is made more natural if we can suppose that the Priest of the Oracle, in the early days, was accustomed to put on the garment of the image, under the customary idea that thus the divine knowledge of the idol would be communicated to him. In 2 Kings xviii. 4, we read of *Nehushtan*, the brazen serpent which Moses had made, being used idolatrously; but perhaps this has been wrongly ascribed to Moses. From the intimate connection of bull-worship with the worship of Jehovah, it would seem that the bull was regarded as a symbol of Jehovah; a similar idea may have instituted Aaron's golden calf. While admitting the force of this evidence, we must still keep open the possibility that the religion instituted by Moses was of a purer type, but was never strong enough to drive out the remnants of heathen practice.

More indisputable evidence of the materialistic conception of the Person of Jehovah is found in the reverence paid to what is known as "the ark of Jehovah," the making of which is certainly ascribed to Moses. The name "the ark of the covenant," was not the original name given to the ark, but is taken from the incident recorded in Deut. x. 1–5. The idea that the ark was built to contain the tables of the Law does not appear until the time of Deuteronomy, and is quite unknown to the older strata of the Pentateuch. In these older strata all mention of the actual making of the ark is omitted, although there is evidence that they did contain an account of its preparation and meaning. Enough, however, is told us of the reverential treatment of it, to show that it was a symbol of higher sanctity than a mere receptacle for the stones of the law would be likely to be. It is certainly very closely identified with Jehovah Himself, as may be seen from Num. x. 35. (This is in poetic form, and is therefore likely to be a very early fragment. It should be noticed that the ark apparently starts of itself.) Its presence in the battlefield ensures victory, while its absence brings about defeat (Num. xiv. 42–45; 1 Sam. iv. 3–7; v. 1 ff.). It can hardly be that the ark was taken for Jehovah Himself, but it must have contained something that was closely identified with Jehovah; a box is not built except with the idea of holding something. We have seen that it is unlikely that that something was originally the two tables of the law; was it something else of stone which made the transference to the tables of the law at once necessary and natural? Was it a stone image of Jehovah? It has been conjectured that it may have contained meteoritic stones, which would agree with the proposed derivation of "Jehovah" from the Storm God of Sinai. There is nothing in the Old Testament which gives any support to these conjectures, but in face of the fact that the original narrative of

the making of the ark has been omitted, and in view of the ideas of religion which were common in that period, we cannot say that they are absolutely excluded from consideration. The ark was certainly bound up with the idea of war, and would seem to have been kept in a soldier's tent. It was transferred to the dark inner temple till 586 B.C., and from that date all trace of it is lost. The Priest's Code ("P") makes provision for it in the second temple, but we have unimpeachable Jewish testimony that the shrine of the inner temple was absolutely empty (Josephus, *War of the Jews*, v. v. § 5). Jeremiah may have been aware of the original significance of the ark as tending towards idolatry, and hence his words in Jer. iii. 16.

(2) *Ordinances of Worship.* It remains for us to enquire into the character of the religion founded by Moses by an examination of some of the outstanding ordinances that regulated the idea of worship.

Here the traditional ascription of the fully developed ritual of the Book of Leviticus to Moses has to be set aside, on the consideration that we have no record of its observance until late in the period of the monarchy, and from then it can be traced as a gradual growth of custom and ideal until its complete observance after the Exile.

There does not seem to have been any priesthood of the exclusive Levitical order founded by Moses. The story of the Levites in Exod. xxxii. can only be a late story, for there is no record of their monopoly of the ritual service until the Reform under Josiah: Joshua, an Ephraimite, is the "servant of the tent"; Samuel, also an Ephraimite, sleeps beside the ark (1 Sam. iii. 3); David and Solomon assume a kind of chief priesthood (2 Sam. vi. 13; 1 Kings viii. 5, 62 ff.), and of course neither of them were Levites. The story in Judges xvii. gives what is perhaps the true position of the Levites: anyone could be consecrated as a family priest, but the presence of a Levite was reckoned propitious. Down to a very late age sacrifice seems to have remained largely a tribal or family act, and although a descendant of Moses' tribe (Levi) was regarded as possessing special advantage, there was no law by which Levites alone were reckoned capable of discharging priestly functions.

In the matter of sacrifice, it would seem that Moses simply adopted what was a very ancient and common practice. In face of the evident neglect of the Levitical ritual in matters of sacrifice, both by the common people and by such great reformers as Samuel and Elijah, together with the fact that in the teaching of the prophets doubts are cast on its divine origin (Isa. i. 11; Amos v. 25; Micah vi. 6–8), we cannot infer that the detailed and explicit commands concerning

sacrifice found in the Book of Leviticus are the work of Moses, or belong to an early age. To the Prophets, sacrifice is always reminiscent of paganism. The time when the change came in may be detected in the different value given to sacrifice by the post-exilic prophets (Mal. i. 13 f.), while the incompatibility of the two views, prophetic and priestly, can be seen from the addition which has been made to Ps. li., to bring it into accord with the later view.

Neither is it possible for us to believe that the elaborate shrine known as the Tabernacle owed its existence to Moses. The impossibility of transporting the cumbrous fixtures through the wilderness had been noticed before the modern era of critical study. A close examination of the details of construction shows that it is nothing more than an ideal projection from the mind of a priestly writer who believed that a tent-like counterpart of Ezekiel's temple was essential to Israel's worship in the wilderness. It is enough to recall that the tabernacle of the priestly writer's imagination is quite unknown to the historical books. In Exod. xxxiii. 7 ff., which may be seen to be only a fragment of an early document, since it starts abruptly by describing "the" tent, which is known as the Tent of Meeting, we have what has been taken to be the Tabernacle; but it is nothing more than a tent for keeping the ark in.

(3) *Legislation.* How much of the legislation of the Pentateuch is to be ascribed to Moses we cannot tell. Too many hands have been at work on it for the original to be discovered. A remarkable discovery was made in the year 1901 of some enormous *steles*, which bear in cuneiform characters what is now known as the Code of Hammurabi, the oldest code of laws in the world, the date of which is reckoned to be 2250 B.C. They presuppose an advanced state of civilisation and morality existing in the Euphrates valley at that period. The agreement between the Pentateuchal Code and the Code of Hammurabi argues dependence of the former on the latter to a very considerable extent, and supplies a still further testimony to the extent to which the religion of Israel is indebted to Babylon. The exact bearing of this discovery upon critical theories, and especially upon the date of the Pentateuch has perhaps hardly been estimated yet; it does not, however, refute the theory which denies that the Pentateuch as it stands is from the hand of Moses.

We naturally think of the Decalogue as the work of Moses, but here we are faced by the difficulty that the Decalogue appears to exist in three recensions (Exod. xx. 1–17; xxxiv. 14–28; Deut. v. 6–21). The account in Exod. xxxiv., which forms part of the document "J," is reckoned to be the oldest of these, and the original of this might well go back to the time of Moses. It has been objected

that the Decalogue is too ethical to suit the time of Moses, but is this not because we are inclined to read into the Ten Commandments far more than is to be found there? It can be shown that they are little more than ten laws of "rights." A special difficulty is found in ascribing the second commandment to this age, in view of its frequent uncensured breach; but perhaps there is some difference that escapes us between a molten image, which is prescribed in the first draft (Exod. xxxiv. 17), and the later prohibition of the graven image (Exod. xx. 4).

In the foregoing examination we have allowed for the most rigorous demands of advanced criticism, demands which may have to be modified as criticism becomes more of a science, but there remains the need to discover what there was, on these critical assumptions, in the Mosaic religion that provided the way for a further advance into the faith which became the glory of Israel. What is it that makes the difference between Mosaism and the heathen Semitic religions, a difference which was to make the gradual growth of a pure Monotheism possible?

The first important element which needs to be reckoned with is that it was a religion of choice rather than a religion of nature. We saw that it was difficult to conceive how the religion of Jehovah could have been adopted by Israel unless there had been some previous contact. What is so difficult to understand is nevertheless the one element that contained the possibility of progress. The relation of Israel to Jehovah was neither by physical descent nor through the connection of the god with the land, as with the heathen Semitic religions. Jehovah was at first conceived of as the God of the tribe only, but even this was not by nature, but by His gracious choice. Their land was given to them by Jehovah, but His natural connection was with a far distant shrine. This fact in itself must have rendered necessary some more spiritual conception of His habitation, and, though hard enough for the common people to realise, when they entered Canaan and found a full-grown cultus and religion in connection with the god of the land already in possession, it was this fact upon which the Prophets fastened and which could not be denied: the religion of Jehovah was a matter of choice and not of racial or local connection. That choice had been ratified by solemn covenant, to which the Prophets appealed. The relation between Jehovah and Israel depended therefore on the conditions of the covenant being faithfully kept. When we compare the religions of the other Semites, which made the relation of the god and his people one which nothing could break, and from which neither the god nor the people could escape, we can see how this difference constituted one of the ethical germs of the religion which was destined to grow into fuller power and life.

There was another important conception, which was intensified by the fact that the religion of Jehovah was a religion of choice: that of the jealousy of Jehovah. This was often interpreted, especially in the pre-prophetic period, in a very crude and in even a cruel way. The jealousy of Jehovah was very like the human passion: uncertain, arbitrary and irrational, manifesting itself according to the popular mind in outbreaks of fury for ceremonial mistakes, or for causes even less comprehensible (Num. iii. 4; 2 Sam. vi. 7). In all the religions it was thought to be a serious thing to depart from the allegiance to the rightful god, and sure to lay one open to his jealousy and vengeance; but something more is now found in this idea as it develops in Hebrew thought: it is that the jealousy of Jehovah is due to the great difference between Him and the other gods, a difference which came to be recognised as one of character. Something of this must go back to Moses himself.

This difference is also expressed in the idea that He is a God of righteousness. The word "righteousness" does not always have in the Hebrew Scriptures the absolute meaning which it has for us. It was rather equal to our word "rights," which we often employ quite unethically. Jehovah was one who gave right judgments when questions were submitted and answered by the lot, and One who brought victory to the right. It was undoubtedly Israel's right that was chiefly considered, but there was hidden in it an ethical germ which was to bring forth notable fruit when man's sense of right was widened.

This at least was the mark of the new religion which Moses impressed on the people, impressed with such a force that it could never be quite forgotten. It had new thoughts pregnant with meaning for the mind of man and for the future of religion, and these became the fulcrum of the Prophets' appeal. From the bosom of this people was to come forth One who was to reveal the Father as perfectly righteous and impartial, and who demands for His service a righteousness that must far exceed that of the straitest observers of external religion.

It would be easy for us to despise this day of small beginnings, or to refuse to see in it any real revelation of God at all. Doubtless this enquiry may necessitate a change in our conceptions of the work of Moses, but it is one that we are forced to by a multitude of facts, and we must find a theory of inspiration wide enough to fit them. Crude as we may make the beginnings of Israel's faith, natural as we may feel are the laws by which it worked towards its growth, we have not been able to get any nearer to some of those ultimate questions which ask how religion begins, what the nature of revelation is, and how it comes to

man's mind. We need not think that God had to break in on the mind of Moses, so that the personality of the man was in abeyance while God worked through him. When God wishes to bring men to a higher truth He does not supernaturally communicate it; He makes human nature to produce personalities whose minds come naturally to the truth. There can be no separation of natural and supernatural here; wherever that separation is to be made, we certainly cannot make it. There can be no meaning in revelation, and no possibility of it, unless God has made man's mind to be growingly in touch with Him and to be capable of receiving His revelation by the natural working of thought, so that it seems to spring up within his own consciousness.

Deeper into this question we are not called upon to go at present, but no one can object that it is less reverent, or that it shows signs of a decay of faith, if men can see God to-day not only in the extraordinary and the supernatural, but also in the ordinary and the natural. If the recognition of God depends on spiritual vision, then those who refuse to narrow the limits within which God can be seen, and who therefore welcome all truth with gladness and without fear, are not to be called godless and unspiritual.

We should learn to be thankful for Moses, for he was faithful as far as he knew; if we were as faithful in proportion to the fuller light which has come to us, religion would be a very real and inclusive thing. We should also learn to take heart, if from these beginnings such mighty movements have sprung. The mistakes inevitable to the human mind do not destroy the possibility of revelation, the error cannot everlastingly obscure the truth, nor in the long run will evil triumph over good. It was possible in that far off age, it was possible in all ages, it is possible now, for a mind still far from the true conception of the ultimate nature of God to yet grasp something, and by a supreme faith in the leading of a Mighty Power to lift a whole nation, and through it the world, one stage further on in goodness and truth.

THE INFLUENCE OF CANAAN

As an introduction to Lecture IV. the reader is advised to make a careful study of Judges i. 1–ii. 5, a mutilated fragment of a very early and reliable account of the invasion of Canaan. The opening words (verse 1) refer the events which follow to the period after the death of Joshua; but the Book of Joshua has already recorded the complete conquest of Canaan, so that there can be no place for this further invasion on a far less ambitious plan, and apparently with less successful results. It will be noticed, however, that this account easily falls away from the main body of the narrative; Judges ii. 6 follows naturally after Joshua xxiv. 28, and ignores what comes between. We have, therefore, in this account another history of the conquest of Canaan, which contradicts altogether the impression—which we get from reading the Book of Joshua—that the conquest of Canaan was effected by the tribes acting in unison, that it was complete, and that the conquered were exterminated; it records a movement of tribes acting independently, there is no "conquest" in the ordinary sense of the term, but a footing is obtained alongside the original inhabitants of the land.

This account of a gradual immigration of tribes is confirmed by the discovery of inscriptions, which seem to show that there were some tribes of the Hebrews in Palestine before the traditional date of the Conquest, and even before the Exodus.

Until quite lately the history of Egypt has thrown no light on these events. It has not even been possible to identify with any certainty the Pharaoh under whom the Exodus took place. One identification is now fairly certain. The Pharaoh who enslaved the Israelites was Rameses III., for discoveries have proved that it was he who built Pithom (Exod. i. 11); the Exodus has therefore been referred to the reigns of Merneptah or Seti II., his immediate successors. The objection to this is that in these reigns both the peninsula of Sinai and the land of Palestine were under full Egyptian control, and therefore the Exodus must be put later on, when this control slackened. This would bring the Exodus to the date of 1200–1180 B.C. and the Conquest some fifty years later.

The latest discoveries tend to throw this result into confusion. Names, which it is proposed to identify with tribes of the Israelites, have been found in inscriptions belonging to earlier reigns. On an inscription of Rameses II. the name of Asher is found as dwelling in North Palestine. In a list of Thotmes III. (still earlier, Sixteenth Century, B.C.) we find the names Jacob and Joseph in the significant combination, Jacob-el and Joseph-el, used to describe the Dan-Ephraim district of Palestine. This makes it more likely that the Tel-el-Amarna tablets (dated Fourteenth Century, B.C.) refer to the Hebrews. In these letters, addressed to Amenophis IV., the King of Jerusalem appeals for help against an invasion of the *Habiri*, who are led by Abd Ashera. The invasion is not by a large force, as may be seen from the fact that it is thought thirty or forty Egyptian soldiers will be sufficient for the purpose of resisting their attacks. More certain than any of these references is the occurrence of the name of Israel on a Stele of Merneptah, in connection with a recital of his triumphs in Syria. The form in which this reference is made leaves no doubt that, by this period, Israel was already settled in Palestine. ("Israel is laid waste, its corn is annihilated.") There is no confirmation of a Syrian campaign under Merneptah, and it may be that in accordance with the fashion of the age, he is including among his victories the exploits of his predecessors; this would agree with the earlier date for the occupation of Canaan by Israel which the previous references seem to require.

The exact bearing of these discoveries has yet to be determined, but they either require us to put the date of the Exodus earlier, which would in itself be difficult, or, what would bring light on many problems, assume that not all the tribes were in bondage in Egypt, and that the invasion of Canaan by various tribes, only long after welded into a nation, was spread over a long period.

Lecture IV

THE INFLUENCE OF CANAAN

If the nation of Israel may be said to have been born in captivity, baptised in the Red Sea, and awakened to national consciousness at Mount Sinai, then the settlement in Canaan corresponds to the no less critical period of adolescence, when, training and tutelage being over, youth must choose its own path and fight its way in the world. Certain it is that the entrance into Canaan largely determined the future of this people, for it must have profoundly modified the national character, turning as it did nomadic tribes into a settled and civilised people; but above all, and what more concerns us, it proved extremely critical for the fate of that as yet untried revelation of Jehovah, which had still to win its way against the heathenism of the common people, and was now by this new experience called upon to measure its strength against the attraction of a competing faith.

The peculiar and pathetic love of the Jews for Canaan is largely due to the remembrance that it was not their own land but the long promised gift of Jehovah, standing therefore to all time as the material proof of His love for Israel; while their estimate of it was intensely deepened by the wilderness experience which preceded. That estimate seems to us somewhat exaggerated, for to-day Palestine has almost given up the struggle against the always threatening advance of the desert. It has certainly changed for the worse under neglect and misrule, but it can never have been a too indulgent land; only comparison with the bare and awful desert can have called forth the description, "a land flowing with milk and honey." With the long memory of restless nomadic life and the bitter thought of bondage, any land would seem welcome that offered them freedom and safety; while to those approaching it from the desert it seemed as fair and fruitful a land as men could desire.

All lands have contributed largely to the character of the nations they have reared, and the wilderness ancestry and the character of Canaan have played their part in the development of Israel.

The very geographical position of Canaan helps us to understand the Hebrews, and even to see how it was that in this land it was possible to nurture from such unpromising beginnings the wonderful development of religion that was to make this smallest of all lands one of the most sacred spots on earth, and this strange and limited people among the greatest contributors to the moral and religious ideas of humanity. Crushed in between the sea and the desert, hemmed in by great military powers, the little buffer state itself the very crossways of East and West, its roads never long at rest from the tramp of armies; here was a land in which all dreams of fame and empire were hammered out, and nothing left possible save an empire of spiritual power and the fame of a unique religion. A people strangely proud and passionately exclusive, they could never rest under the dominion of their great neighbours, however light the burden imposed; and since sustained resistance was out of the question by reason of their inferior numbers and lack of military power, they resorted to irritating acts of rebellion, or intrigued with the enemies of their overlords, and so brought down on their land frequent vengeance. Such was their untameable nature that the only practical policy open to Babylon, if she wished to insure the loyalty, or at least, the neutrality of Palestine, was to deport the Jews bodily to where they could be under observation.

So we find the greatest heroes of Jewish history—from Moses, through Gideon and Samson, to David and Judas Maccabæus—are those who deliver the nation from oppression; while Israel's prayers are largely cries for succour against enemies, or for Divine vengeance on the oppressor; only too eloquent a witness of the sense of their own impotence. Yet it was precisely this experience that forced their religion to rise above the common type, to conquer its natural tendencies, and to become the most magnificent faith in God that the world has seen. Of this they themselves were not ignorant; for one of their writers points to the easy lot of Moab as the cause of their irreligion (Jer. xlviii. 11), and one of the Psalmists says that it is the men who have no changes who fear not God (lv. 19). We need not consider the utterly feeble objection that all this makes the religion of Israel the outcome of natural necessity, rather than of Divine revelation; for God made the land that made Israel.

The entry into Canaan was therefore one of the most critical periods in the history of this people and in the development of the religion of the Old Testament. It is, however, extremely difficult to discover from the means at our disposal just how or when that entry was effected. The sources for this period are found in the Books of Joshua and Judges, but, from comparison with much in the history that follows, it is clear that they do not present us with absolute history;

yet a critical examination of these books enables us to recover the essential facts.

A study of the preface to this lecture will show that the story of the Conquest is obscure in its details and difficult to reconcile with modern discoveries. A careful examination of our sources shows that the description of the entry of the Hebrews into Canaan as a "conquest," which was settled by a few decisive battles, is at least rather fanciful; and as a matter of fact we have quite another picture in the first chapter of Judges, which partakes more of the character of an "alien immigration," a method of "conquest" in which the Jews have always been remarkably successful. The history in Joshua certainly represents the Conquest as striking, complete, and followed by a ruthless extermination of the defenders of their native land. In view of the relations that were for long maintained between the Canaanites and the Hebrews, the representation in Judges i. must be regarded as nearer to the facts than the story of the Conquest according to the Book of Joshua. The children of Israel dwelt side by side with the Canaanites, simply because they were not able to drive them out; and as a result the tribes were frequently divided by strong belts of Canaanitish territory. Right through the time of the Judges we get warfare between the Israelites and the inhabitants of the land; sometimes in pitched battles between the Canaanites and the united tribes of Israel (Judges iv. v.), but more generally in guerilla warfare or in the sudden surprise of a Canaanitish garrison (Judges xviii.). The result of the conflict seems to have been the gradual absorption of the two elements into one nation. The records definitely admit that it was not until the time of David that the Jebusites were driven from Jerusalem (2 Sam. v. 6, 7), and not until Solomon that the superiority of the Israelites was finally established (1 Kings ix. 20, 21). It surely is an immense relief to think that the huge slaughters recorded in the Book of Joshua are, to say the least, exaggerations.

The history in Judges also clearly shows that there was little cohesion between the tribes. They filtered across the Jordan only by degrees, and there is evidence that this process may have extended over a considerable time. We have records of quarrels between Gideon and Ephraim (Judges viii. 1), and between Jephthah and Ephraim (Judges xii. 1). These inter-tribal conflicts might have been serious, were it not for the circumstance that the Israelites were no sooner settled in the land than other tribes of desert invaders began to press upon them, and they had to sink family differences in order to combine against the common enemy.

The song of Deborah (Judges v.) is one of the most valuable documents we possess for the light which it throws on the conditions of religious and national

life in this period, for it is probably the only document in the Old Testament, earlier than the founding of the monarchy, that is contemporary with the events it describes. It shows that the tribes had somewhat improved their position, for they now seem to be in possession of the highlands of Ephraim, although the plains are still in the hands of the Canaanites. The growing power of the Israelites and their threatening predominance moved the Canaanites to a united effort to repress Israel. It is to face this danger that the Prophetess Deborah calls the tribes; but from the way in which the praise and blame is meted out we can see that a strong sense of national unity was still lacking. The important point to be noticed is that the bond of unity to which Deborah could appeal was the name of Jehovah. It should be noted also that in the enumeration of the tribes, Judah, Simeon, and Levi are altogether omitted. In the case of so important a tribe as Judah this is significant, for it agrees with the fact that until the time of David this tribe does not come into prominence. It has been conjectured that Judah was only a small tribe, and may have invaded Canaan from the south, for it is difficult to conceive how it could have crossed the strong Canaanitish territory which separated it from the other tribes. At any rate, at this time it was not regarded as one of the tribes of Israel; it may have been that this tribe embraced a strong Canaanitish element (Gen. xxxviii.), and this fact may have contributed to the resentment which broke out among the other tribes when Judah assumed the hegemony in the time of David, and which led in the end to the disruption of the Kingdom.

In our sources the history of this period has attached to it a religious interpretation: apostasy, and disobedience to the commands of Jehovah were the causes of the people being sold into the power of their enemies; when they returned to the worship of Jehovah and penitently pleaded for His forgiveness then deliverers were raised up who vanquished their oppressors. This can be nothing but a late interpretation, for the religion of the Book of Judges is of quite a fixed order, and many of the stories recorded in it will not lend themselves to any such interpretation. The hand that supplied this reading of the history of this period has been identified with the author of Deuteronomy, or, as some would prefer to say, with the school of thought that produced that work. There is a religious lesson in this history, as in all history; but it is hardly to be found in a series of apostasies and returns. There are really four separate endeavours to account for the undoubted fact of the Canaanites being spared. (1) Israel was not able to drive them out (Judges i. 19, 27). (2) Israel was only commanded to drive them out by degrees, "lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee" (Deut. vii. 22). (3) It was a providential arrangement to keep the Israelites practised in war

(Judges iii. 1, 2). (4) It was due to direct disobedience to the command of Jehovah (Judges ii. 20).

The history does not entitle us to assume that the judges were officials who exercised kingly rights over a united Israel. The word translated "Judge" more often means "Deliverer," and this is certainly the part that they play. Of some of the so-called minor judges we know nothing beyond their names, and there is evidence that they have simply been used to fill out a traditional period of 480 years (1 Kings vi. 1). Whenever the "Judges" assumed kingly or judicial functions trouble and rebellion always followed. The figure of Samson displays little fitness for ruling a nation or guiding it in religion, but the stones of his life are illuminating for the understanding of the morality and interests of that age.

With this revised conception of the history of the Conquest, and of the events which followed, we are in a better position to estimate the effect of the change from nomadic life to a settled existence, and to understand how critical for the future of the religion of Jehovah this change was.

We see tribes possessing little national unity, but bound together by a religion in which lay the germ of a mighty future, entering a land where the inhabitants had reached a higher stage of civilisation, and possessed a religion that drew its power from the fact that it was the worship of Baal, the possessor and owner of the land. In face of these conditions it was almost inevitable that many of the customs of the original inhabitants should be gradually adopted, and that the religion of Jehovah should borrow something from the religion indigenous to the land. This was certainly the result which followed. For a considerable period we find a religion prevalent among the common people, which is simply a conflation of the two religions. There were certain elements common to both, and certain advantages in the one, together with corresponding weaknesses in the other, that prepared the way for this syncretism.

We shall now turn to examine the religion of the Canaanites, which we shall find to partake largely of the common elements of Semitic religion. Their deities were personifications of natural forces, and among these there is no one which is supreme, and nothing that tends to Monotheism. The gods are friendly and destructive by turn, and of unreliable character. It is nothing more than an undeveloped Polytheism. The religion, as it is seen in the Old Testament, groups itself around three names: Baal, Ashtoreth (often written in plural form Ashtaroth), and Molech (otherwise written Moloch, Milcom, and known to the Phœnicians as Melkart).

The name of Baal has a hateful memory in the pages of the Old Testament as the Canaanitish deity to whom Israel constantly apostatised. The exact significance of Baal in the Canaanitish religion is a matter of dispute. He has been identified with the sun, and by the Greeks with Zeus; so that it has been inferred that Baal was the President of the Canaanitish Pantheon. This view is no longer generally accepted, for it certainly fails to fit in with the records of the cult preserved in the Old Testament. The word "Baal" is not a proper name, but signifies "the Possessor"; it is used in Semitic language for "husband," as the possessor of the wife, and is used as the name for deity, as the possessor of the land. Every land, and indeed every locality, will therefore have its own Baal; so that in the Old Testament we hear of the "Baalim" (the Hebrew plural), and these local Baalim are further distinguished by the addition of the name of their locality or of some event with which they were connected, as Baal-Peor, Baal-Berith, Baal-Zebul. The "Baal" is especially responsible for sending rain and sunshine, and for giving fruitful seasons. He is, therefore, the god of agriculture, and the great events of the agricultural year, such as harvest and vintage, are observed as his festivals. It is natural to find the uncertainty of the weather reflected in the character of the Baalim, with the result that we get a religion alternating between intoxicating joy and the deepest gloom. To appease the fickle god or to win his favour sacrifices, even of human lives, are presented, and if Baal continues unheeding, scenes of the most unrestrained fanaticism prevail. It is this gloomy religion which darkens the times of the later Kings of Judah.

The Canaanitish Baal should be distinguished from the Baal of Tyre (Melkart) whose worship was introduced by Ahab. Here the introduction of an alien Baal, with probably different rites and ceremonies, awoke the resentment of the prophetic party under the leadership of Elijah, but the worship of the Canaanite Baal was maintained for long unchecked.

Closely connected with the worship of the Baalim we find the worship of the Ashtaroth (Judges ii. 13). The pronunciation of this word is obscure; it was probably *Ashtart*, and the singular form, Ashtoreth (1 Kings xi. 5), has been formed by inserting the vowels of the word *bosheth* (shame), a common device in the Old Testament for expressing contempt. Ashtart is the female counterpart of Baal, and is spoken of in the plural for a similar reason. Monuments of the worship of Ashtart are still to be found, and from these it is evident that we have here the worship of the goddess of sexual passion, as common in polytheistic systems, and best known in the Greek worship of Aphrodite. The whole conception of Ashtart can be traced to the famous goddess *Ishtar* of Babylonian

religion, and there is only too certain evidence that in Canaan as elsewhere the degrading rite of religious prostitution was used in this worship of female divinity (Hosea iv. 13). The identification of Ashtart with the "Queen of Heaven" (Jer. vii. 18; xliv. 15–25) is not so certain. As far as the worship of the latter is described to us, it looks like an importation of the Babylonian worship of Ishtar, who was identified with the planet Venus or sometimes with the moon. The "cakes to pourtray her" (Jer. xliv. 19) may have been crescent-shaped cakes.

Of a similar character was the worship that gathered around the name of Molech. We have here simply the word for king (*Milk*) with the vowels of *bosheth*. Of this name, Moloch, Milcom, and Melkart of Tyre are variations. Molech is not to be distinguished from Baal, as may be seen from Jer. xix. 5, where the practice of passing children through the fire, which was certainly connected with the worship of Molech, is a part of the worship of Baal. This burnt-sacrifice of children evidently belonged to the Canaanitish religion (2 Kings xvi. 3).

This then was the religion of the Canaanites: in times of prosperity and fruitful seasons, one of rejoicing and festivity; but in time of famine, drought or national danger, one of the most hopeless gloom and of the most fearful fanaticism. In conflict with this religion, the purer worship of Jehovah yet presented certain weaknesses; these are found chiefly in points of possible identification, which in the course of the history actually took place. This may be difficult for us to understand until we remember that Baal and Molech, to Semitic ears, simply meant "Lord" and "King"; and Jehovah was the "Lord" and "King" of Israel. If the character of Jehovah was not clearly apprehended as moral by the common people, we can see how easy it was for confusion to take place.

The great weakness of the religion of Jehovah was that He was not the God of Canaan. His home was in distant Sinai, and the only symbol of His presence was the ark, a symbol bound up with the idea of war. As the people settled down to a peaceful agricultural life, the need for Jehovah, the warrior God, would not be keenly felt. There was certainly a party from the very first who recognised the difference between Jehovah and Baal and fought against their identification, but so long as Baal was believed to be a real being the danger of his secret worship at least was never far away. Every land had its own god, and although the people knew that Jehovah was their God, yet they might think it necessary, and not inconsistent, to pay their respects to the local Baalim on whom they were dependent for the fruits of the earth (Hosea ii. 8). Nothing therefore but a

national calamity could revive the old religion in face of the attractions of the new; if peace had been continuous it is hard to see how the religion founded by Moses could have persevered. Such dangerous peace the Children of Israel were not to enjoy. We soon hear the rousing call to the help of Jehovah in the Song of Deborah, and it was the threatened domination by the Philistines that called the monarchy into existence and revived the religion of Jehovah.

Meanwhile, however, a process of syncretism was gradually taking place, which it was to be the task of the Prophets to unravel; and how far it had gone may be seen from the difficulty they found in making the character of Jehovah and the moral demand made upon His worshippers clear to the people. "Jehovah," it must be remembered, was a name largely personal. Baal was a general name for deity, and could be applied to Jehovah quite truthfully. That this actually took place may be seen from a number of passages in the Old Testament. The most instructive instance is to be found in Hosea ii. 16; but the names given to places point in the same direction: David calls the spot where Jehovah broke his enemies, Baal-perazim; the same god is called indiscriminately, Baal-berith (Judges viii. 33; ix. 4) and El-berith (Judges ix. 46). This practice accounts for the names of Saul's son, Eshbaal, and of Jonathan's son, Meribbaal (1 Chron. viii. 33, 34), both of which have been altered in the Book of Samuel to "bosheth." (In obedience to the command of Exod. xxiii. 13, *Bosheth* was substituted for *Baal* in reading the Scriptures. The written text was altered in many places at a later period; the Chronicler must have found *Baal* in his text of Samuel; that is about 200 B.C.) The names of Jehovah and Baal therefore came to have the same significance, and the distinction began to be missed; Jehovah was still the God of Israel, but the moral elements of His religion were gradually diluted with the naturalistic conceptions of the worship of Baal. Jehovah becomes the Baal of the land; that is, the relation between Him and Israel is conceived in a natural and even physical way. It is therefore no longer a covenant relation, which depends on the observance of moral obligations, but one of nature which cannot be broken by either party. Naturally the sanctuaries of the Canaanites are taken over by the Israelites, and Jehovah is worshipped in "the high places." All through the history worship at these local sanctuaries is condemned, but only from a later standpoint, for the earliest Book of Laws permitted an altar to be erected anywhere where Jehovah had manifested Himself (Exod. xx. 24). Around some of these undoubtedly Canaanitish sanctuaries the stories of the Patriarchs gathered, but from the practices which prevailed at such places as Bethel we can see that heathen rites were used, for here Jeroboam set up the golden calves, which seem to have been

used in the worship of Jehovah, for neither Elijah nor Amos condemns them. Jehovah is now worshipped all over the land, but there is the same tendency to regard each separate place as having its local deity, and so Jehovah is multiplied (perhaps, Jer. xi. 13) and needs to be further identified by the addition of place names, as in the strange name El-bethel (Gen. xxxv. 7), El-elohe-Israel (Gen. xxxiii. 20), in a way that is very like the multiplication of the Baalim. So deeply was the worship of Jehovah mixed up with Canaanitish ideas that in the reign of Josiah the only possibility of reform lay in forbidding the worship at the local sanctuaries altogether and concentrating all worship at the central sanctuary of Jerusalem.

Nothing but this process of syncretism can explain the condition of religion in the subsequent history, and it is needed to enable us to understand both the difficulty of the work of the Prophets and the form their message takes.

Nevertheless, there must have been from the earliest times elements that made for a purer faith, and that never acquiesced in this confusion between Jehovah and Baal, which certainly prevailed in the popular mind; otherwise the Reformation of the Eighth Century would be an isolated and inexplicable movement, and without that historical support the Prophets claimed. There was a party against Baal altogether, although they do not emerge until the monarchy. This party may have consisted of the "priests" of Jehovah. At mention of these we must not think of the sacrificing priests described in the Book of Leviticus. No such persons are known until after the exile; during this period anyone could sacrifice. The story of the priest in Judges xvii. gives a good idea of this class; his chief duties seem to have consisted in keeping the oracle and obtaining decisions by the lot. These decisions became the basis on which there was gradually built up the *Torah* (the Law), which, as the word implies, was a collection of decisions obtained by casting lots. For the purpose of obtaining these decisions the priests seem to have used an idol of some kind; for this is the most natural explanation of the Ephod and its use in the early history. There would be different degrees of intellectual and moral capacity found in the ranks of the priests, and many of them may have had higher ideals of their duties than the one mentioned in Judges. It would be likely that those who were in charge of the Sacred Ark possessed a superior dignity and maintained a purer tradition. Gradually the magical accompaniments to their oracular decisions may have given way to more judicial deliverances, although in the time of David and Abiathar they were apparently still used (1 Sam. xxx. 7). At any rate the priests kept alive the idea of Jehovah as the dispenser of justice, and helped to build up that system of laws for which Israel is so justly famous.

This "higher critical" view of the history is simply one to which we are driven by the records that stand nearest to the times they describe. It certainly alters considerably the ordinary conceptions of the type of religion that prevailed in those early days, before the coming of the Prophets; but that such was the type is only too clearly shown by the writings of the Prophets themselves. Nevertheless this view of the period, while it shuts out a somewhat stiff and mechanical religious interpretation of the history which has been forced upon it by a later age, is still not without a valuable lesson, which is perhaps not taught elsewhere in the Bible, and yet is one that we need to have always before us. It is one, the possibility of which always exists and often threatens a spiritual religion: the danger of a gradual encroachment and assimilation of pagan ideas until the original purity is lost almost beyond recovery. If this has happened anywhere it has happened in Christianity. It was the awakening to this paganisation of Christianity that provoked the struggle of the Reformation, not yet decided. Many of the conceptions that are still popularly identified with Christianity are the remnants of paganism. It is not necessary to enumerate the common customs which wear only a thin veneer of Christianity; but many of the ideas in connection with Christian Doctrine certainly owe more to pagan philosophy than they do to the New Testament. The syncretism between Paganism and Christianity has not been destroyed by the Reformation. Many of the popular ideas of the Atonement, for instance, rest on a pagan conception of God and a materialistic idea of Christ's work which are so deeply involved in the common presentation of Christianity that to present the actual New Testament teaching would seem to many like a denial of the foundation truths of the Gospel. Still more dangerous is the localisation of the god as the peculiar patron of the land, which justifies many unholy wars and makes such a thing as a national repentance almost impossible. There is a god of the British Empire who is remarkably like the Jehovah-Baal of the old syncretised religion that ruled in the period which we have been studying, and whose worship begets equal indifference to the claims of true religion, and equally cruel treatment for the prophet who strives to call men to a purer faith.

It is a relief to turn to a more comforting lesson. It is that which assures us that man's thought of God is not entirely his own, that it cannot be destroyed and is never wholly forgotten, but ever makes its way to higher truth and greater power. The way in which the higher religion comes is through the pure minds of those who wish only to live up to the fulness of the truth, and however mistaken they be, wish only to know and to do the will of God. A similar task lies equally before every honest man and every true Christian. The lesson is plain: beware of

a stagnant religion that dreads progress, and keep the mind open as a child's to God's further revelation of Himself, which has yet many things to tell us.

PROPHETISM—EARLY STAGES

The reader is recommended to investigate for himself the origins of Prophetism by a careful examination of the following passages:—

I. There were originally Guilds or Schools of Prophets; from which it would appear that Prophetism was a kind of profession (1 Sam. x. 5; xix. 20; 2 Kings ii. 3, 5). There is nothing in the records that we possess that marks these bands of prophets as possessed of great spiritual power; they were devoted to the cause of Israel and Jehovah, and the way in which this was manifested was taken to imply that they were filled with the spirit of Jehovah; it inclines somewhat to the Dervish order of enthusiastic devotion (1 Sam. x. 5; xix. 20–24). It is significant that wherever these schools are found there is known to have existed a "high place," *i.e.*, an old Canaanitish sanctuary, now used for the worship of Jehovah-Baal. A similar order of prophets was connected with the worship of the Tyrian Baal (1 Kings xviii.).

II. Samuel (1 Sam. xix. 20) Elisha (2 Kings ii. 15; iv. 38; vi. 1–7) and in much less degree, Elijah (1 Kings xviii. 4; xix. 10) had some connection with these schools.

III. The later Prophets did not claim descent from these guilds of "prophecy," and even repudiated any connection with them (Amos vii. 14). This conflict between the "called" prophet and the professionals is revealed in the fierce denunciations of Isaiah (xxix. 10) and Jeremiah (v. 31; xiv. 13, 14; xxvi. 7, 8).

IV. The identification of these prophets with priests and seers probably gives a clue to their origin (1 Sam. ix. 9; Isa. xxix. 10; Jer. xxvi. 7, 8; Amos vii. 12).

V. Certain individuals who are called prophets or seers had official court connection (2 Sam. xxiv. 11; 1 Chron. xxv. 5; Amos vii. 10).

Between these "prophets" and the great writers who bear the same designation, we cannot fail to recognise an immense difference; Samuel and

Elijah are connecting links between the two classes. Elijah is rather a hero than a prophet in the later sense, for he gives us no new doctrine, and Samuel is a seer who has risen to political power, rather than a religious ruler. Critics have discovered evidence of a double narrative in our documents.

(Earlier) 1 Sam. ix. 1–x. 16; xi. xiii. 2–xiv. 52.

(Later) 1 Sam. i. ii. iii. iv. vii. 3–17; viii. x. 17–25; xii. xv.

If these be examined and contrasted, it will be found that Samuel is more allied in the earlier narratives with the "priest-seer" than with the Prophet of the type of Amos. A confirmation of this double narrative is found in the different accounts of the origin of the monarchy which they give. Samuel, according to the earlier sources, is just the type we need for the intermediate stage in the development of the Prophet.

For the different historical conceptions of the work and character of David the narratives in Samuel should be compared with the representation given in Chronicles, and with that inferred by the ascription of various Psalms to his authorship.

Lecture V

PROPHETISM—EARLY STAGES

We have seen that in the time of the Judges the religion of Jehovah became so mixed with elements taken over from the Canaanites that the original revelation gained through Moses was in danger of being lost. We have now to trace the steps by which this syncretism was broken up, and the advance made to the purely monotheistic conception and the lofty morality of the great literary Prophets. However this came about it is certain that it was not due to any gradual movement among the mass of the people, for the type of religion which we have been considering remains largely unaltered in its hold upon the popular mind. Through the teaching of the earlier prophets certain reforms were attempted, but none of them seem to have touched the heart of the nation. Hezekiah and Josiah attempted to reform religion by centralising the national worship, but, from whatever cause, it left the people still in opposition to the prophetic type of

religion, a conflict that was only ended by the calamity of the exile. It is, therefore, to the prophetic band themselves that we must turn. Can we trace within this more limited circle a movement that shall in any way prepare us for the appearance of men of the type of Amos?

To answer this question we must turn to the Books of Samuel and Kings. These present us with a history of the period which, like most history, has been written, or over-written, from a later standpoint and made to conform with later ideals. On the whole, however, and by contrasting it with the still later conceptions of the Books of Chronicles, we can form an accurate impression of the state of religion at this time; and incidentally we have a valuable account of a movement that evidently gave birth to those great conceptions of religion which were to be voiced with such power and force by the great Prophets. The writers who, apart from the value of their religious teaching, have by their distinctive style made the Old Testament a contribution to the literature of the world, are known to us as "Prophets." This name they share, however, with others who have left us no first-hand record of their religious opinions, and who, as described to us in the early sources, bear only the slightest resemblance to Prophets as we conceive them. Our task will be, therefore, to investigate the origins of this movement which embraces such diverse elements, and this we may commence by examining the meaning of the word "Prophet" (*Nabi*).

Like many other words in the Old Testament that lock up important secrets, the origin of the word Prophet is obscure and its meaning disputed. The conception which is most natural to our word "Prophet" is of one who sees into the future; this is not even the main characteristic of the writing Prophets, nor does it embrace all the phenomena connected with the movement, especially in its early stages. All that can be said of the word from an etymological standpoint is that it has no origin which can be traced in historical Hebrew, and the inference is that it is either a very ancient word, or one borrowed from some other language. The word can, however, hardly be ancient, for it is not common to Semitic tongues, as is the word "priest," for instance, while we have a definite statement that within historic times it superseded the older word "seer" (1 Sam. ix. 9). The name was also used for certain devotees of the Tyrian Baal, whose worship was imported by Ahab; but it can hardly be that the name would be adopted directly from a phenomenon that was so repugnant to the Israelites, although the common name hints that there was a common ancestry somewhere. It seems fair to assume from the facts mentioned that the word is, at least, not older than the entry into Canaan, and while it cannot be definitely proved that it was borrowed from the Canaanites, there is some confirmation of this in the fact

that the earliest occurrence of the name is in connection with the "sons of the prophets," who are always found in places where it is known that there were Canaanitish sanctuaries.

The word *Nabi* has been variously connected with the root, *nab'a*, "to bubble," and so one inspired; with the Arabic word, "to speak," and so a speaker or herald. The word seems to exist in Assyrian in the form *nabu*, "to announce," but this is probably from the name of the Babylonian deity, Nebo, the God of Eloquence, so that the word might mean one possessed by Nebo. Some have even looked to this as the ultimate derivation of the word. The investigation of the word really gives nothing satisfactory, and we must therefore turn to examine the character of the persons to whom it was applied.

In various passages in the Old Testament, Seer and Prophet are so used as to lead us to infer that they embraced identical ideas (Isa. xxix. 10; Amos vii. 12), and in one passage, which has only the authority of a late annotation of the text, we learn that they were identical in their application (1 Sam. ix. 9). The other name with which Prophet is frequently bracketed is that of Priest; they are placed together in the denunciations of Jeremiah (ii. 8; v. 31). Our previous studies showed us that these classes were all somewhat akin in their origins; the duties of the priest were discharged in keeping the oracles, while the Seer is evidently akin to the Soothsayer, a type that has appeared in all religions. We have a concrete example of these classes being combined in Samuel. In the early story of Samuel's first meeting with Saul, we find Saul turning to consult the famous Seer in order to discover where his father's lost asses are to be found; and even the question of the Seer's usual fee is mentioned (1 Sam. ix. 8). This picture, which makes Samuel a notable Seer, is earlier and more authentic than that which makes him nearly a ruler over Israel. Although he is nowhere called a priest, yet he himself sacrifices, and his presence at a sacrifice is reckoned an advantage (1 Sam. xiii. 8–13); while we have the story of his sleeping by the ark in his youth. The Seer is, therefore, an exalted type of priest who has obtained renown by the success of his prognostications, and so we read of Seers attached to the courts of the Kings (2 Sam. xxiv. 11; 1 Chron. xxv. 5); but the later sources have recognised that there is something heathenish about the word, and have covered it up with the name Prophet. From the early descriptions of the bands of prophets in the books of Samuel, it would seem that they are more allied to the priestly order than to the Seers, for it is certain that down to the middle of the Ninth Century the name Prophet stands for something different from its use as applied to Moses and the literary Prophets. The name is applied to bands of men who "prophesy," but this prophesying is entirely unlike the

methods associated by us with the prophetic spirit. It is evidently something which is done, not individually, but in companies, and apparently in solemn procession to the accompaniment of noisy music. It must have been a species of violent incantation, leading to acts of fierce fanaticism, in which the clothing might be stripped off, and often ending in complete mental prostration (1 Sam. x. 5, 6; xix. 23, 24). The connection of music with religious exercises is almost universal, and it always had a conspicuous place in the worship of Jehovah (2 Sam. vi. 5; Isa. xxx. 29), while music has often been used to induce the prophetic vision (2 Kings iii. 15). These prophets seem to have lived together in schools, semi-monastic orders, or guilds, and to have been found where there were high places, or Canaanitish sanctuaries; and from their behaviour we are forced to admit that we have here a common manifestation in the history of religion, where companies of men devote themselves to fanatical outbursts that are taken to indicate possession by the Spirit of God. To the accompaniment of music and frenzied dancing they work themselves into a state that approaches madness—always among uncivilised peoples taken to be a sign of the hand of God (Hosea ix. 7). We cannot fail to be reminded of the greater excesses of the prophets of Baal, the extraordinary performances of the dervish bands, and the fanatical excesses that have always disfigured monastic institutions.

It cannot be dismissed, therefore, as incredible that this phenomenon was derived from the Canaanites, and developed a zeal for Jehovah that was manifested after a fashion common to the devotees of other religions.

Down to a very late date in the history of the Kingdom, the literary Prophets found themselves in conflict with bands of prophets, who to their judgment prophesied falsely; and from the way in which these are often associated with the priests, it seems probable that they represent the deteriorated—or perhaps simply the stagnant—remnant of this earlier movement. It is, however, necessary to assume that even in the earlier movement there were purer elements than those which we have noticed, and that it embraced individuals who were led into a real fellowship with the mind of God, of which Samuel and Elisha are conspicuous examples. Religious movements of the "revival" type, which have undoubtedly inspired and produced great ethical changes and resulted finally in sane religion, have often been accompanied in their earlier stages by these frenzied outbreaks. It would be in response to some of those strange mental movements which modern psychology is endeavouring to understand, but also whenever danger threatened the nation or the national religion, that these enthusiasts would take the field. As the movement shed its purely hysterical elements, it may have been occupied in the compilation of the records of Israel's

history, for many of these hardly reflect the higher prophetic standpoint, or in writing down such stories of their great heroes as we find connected with Elijah and Elisha. A connection with the literary productions of the great Prophets may be thus indirectly traced, as it also most certainly can in the prophetic *style*, which in its fierce rhythm of denunciation or its sobbing sweeps of passionate appeal recalls something of the incantation of the prophetic bands. Samuel, Elijah and Elisha, by their connection with this early phenomenon of prophetism and by the approximation of their work to the ideals of the later Prophets, are the true links between the earlier and later stages of the prophetic movement. It is both credible and natural that, when the movement had spent itself in some wonderful advance into ethical power and religious insight, the less noble elements should have still remained and continued to claim divine inspiration, and yet have been found in open conflict with its own nobler productions.

It would seem that the obscure sect known as Nazarites were connected in some way with the early prophetic movement, for they are mentioned side by side with the prophets (Amos ii. 11, 12); and it is probable that Samuel was both a Nazarite and a prophet (1 Sam. i. 11), while Samson, in whom the Spirit of Jehovah seemed to produce these strange outbursts of savage frenzy, was certainly a Nazarite (Judges xiii. 4, 5, 7, 14). It would appear that the Nazarites were men who devoted themselves to the service of Jehovah under certain vows of abstinence from wine and ceremonial defilement. The vows might be taken for life or for a limited period, but while under the vow the hair was left unshorn. There is evidence that this is an old Semitic custom, and that when the vow was accomplished the hair was made an offering to the god (Num. vi. 18); to this day the pilgrims to Mecca are forbidden to cut their hair until the journey is completed. The law of the Nazarites (Num. vi.) is only a late attempt to legislate for a custom that had existed independently of the institutions of the religion of Jehovah, and so to secure a place within the official religion for a custom that would have been difficult to suppress by prohibition. Similar in many respects to the Nazarites, but even more obscure, were the Rechabites, who abstained from wine (Jer. xxxv. 2–10), but who seem also to have protested against the adoption of any of the arts and customs of settled life, especially as these customs were typified in the cultivation of the vine. They chose these methods in order to resist the influence of Canaan, which was threatening so dangerously the integrity of the nation and the national religion. They probably hoped by these conservative manners to destroy the syncretism between Baal and Jehovah; for the only other mention of the sect in the Old Testament is in connection with the extirpation of the house of Ahab (2 Kings x. 15–17).

It may appear repulsive to those who have made up their minds as to the methods by which the Spirit of God can work to trace back the supreme genius, the impassioned ethical ideals, and the practical statesmanship of the great Prophets of Israel to movements bordering on insanity; yet it is from enthusiasm that most of the great saving movements of the world have come. Certainly the great religious revival which was soon to come in Israel owed almost as much of its success to these bands of enthusiasts as to the personality of Elijah.

It falls now to our task to trace the movement from bands to individuals, from Prophetism to Prophecy, from a phenomenon to a teaching. We have records of men who seem to have moved beyond the mantic stage and who prepare the way for the great Prophets. We can conveniently call these "transition prophets." We shall find that they bear some resemblance to the old style of Seer, or to the guild prophets, or to both. Of some of these we have only the merest mention, so that they may be called the *minor* transition prophets.

Two stand together by their connection with David and from the fact that they both seem to have been Court officials (2 Sam. vii. 2; xxiv. 11; 1 Kings i. 10). There is no word here of the mantic fury of the early prophets; although in Gad, who makes known the best way to escape the anger of an offended Deity, we have a survival of the ancient seer; but in Nathan we have a truly noble example of one who, although he may have been dependent on David for his daily bread, yet faced him with the unsparing denunciation of his sin. Here is a man who regards right in Israel more than the smile of princes, and who has a higher conception of his office than that of a convenient manipulator of oracles for the flattering of a King. Nathan is a true ancestor of Amos and Jeremiah.

Ahijah the Shilonite is famous because he foretold the disruption of the Kingdom (1 Kings xi. 29–31), and we may see in this the beginnings of that political judgment which was to become notable in the later Prophets; although a partisan motive might be suspected in this particular case, when Jeroboam, in later years, sent his wife to consult Ahijah, accompanied with the usual fee (1 Kings xiv. 2), the message he received shows that in Ahijah we have no party politician, but the impartial judgment of the later Prophets.

There is a pathetic and somewhat mysterious story of an unnamed man of God who delivered the word of Jehovah to Jeroboam at the altar at Bethel, and who, refusing the accustomed hospitality due to a prophet, afterwards accepted the invitation of the old prophet of Bethel, and paid the penalty with his death. We have here a story, the moral of which may be obscure enough, but which certainly illustrates the growing conflict between the two prophetic ideals. Here

is a prophet who travels from his own land to rebuke the sin of a King to his face, afterwards yielding to the blandishments of one of the official prophets. The new Prophetism, tempted from its superior position by the old, fell; yet not many years were to elapse before these two orders, in the persons of Amos and Amaziah, were again to face one another at this same spot, and this time the new Prophetism was to maintain its integrity (1 Kings viii.; Amos vii. 10–17).

Before we pass on to the *major* transition prophets, it will be well to consider here the effect which the foundation of the Monarchy had on the development of the religion of Israel.

Of the inauguration of the Monarchy we possess two accounts; one extremely unfavourable, written doubtless after Judah's experience of some of her notorious Kings, and in the light of a somewhat ideal conception of the Theocratic government that was supposed to have flourished before the time of Saul (1 Sam. x. 17–24); the other account, in which Samuel himself at the revelation of Jehovah initiates the movement towards the Monarchy (1 Sam. ix. 15–x. 1) by anointing Saul, is the one that is placed earlier by the critics. The Monarchy was an inevitable stage in the social development of a settled people, and it was the policy of Samuel to make the Monarchy the organ of the Theocracy. For all this Saul does not seem to have had any influence on religion, or to have ever realised the needs of his times, and under the sense of failure he became a prey to fear and depressing influences which eventually wrecked his reason.

Round the name of David have gathered the national ideals of heroism and sainthood so often found in combination in early story. They had a true origin in David, if we judge from the standards of piety and rulership that were natural to his age. Outlaw, hero, poet, saint—David is the darling of Israel's history. It would be unfair to David to picture him as the saintly author of some of the tender Psalms that bear his name, although others of a more robust character might well be from his hand. That David was a poet seems to be certain, and the songs of lament over Saul and Abner, which have strong claims to be genuine, bear witness to his true poetic gift; but they are deficient in any display of deep religious feeling. We may have also to reduce somewhat the conception of the extent or the absoluteness of his kingly rule. He was rather one of those freebooters who by their heroism and rough manly courage are able to gather round them men of their own nature and to inspire in their followers a loyal devotion. To this pleasant adventurer the early Kingdom fell, but for long it was only a kingdom of personal followers; nor does he ever seem to have been

enthusiastically acknowledged by the whole nation, or to have established his claims absolutely beyond dispute. His heroic defence against the Philistine invasion was sufficient to give him a great place in the affection of the people, yet he never assumed the imperial rule in the manner of his successor Solomon. With all this necessary allowance for the idealising process of a later age, David was the indispensable centre round which the early ideals and legends of the Monarchy could collect. His work was of immense importance for the future; especially his conquest of Jerusalem, now for the first time wrested from the Canaanites and destined to become in the future the centre of the national life, to be bound up with his name, and above all to be the peculiar dwelling-place of Jehovah. To make Jerusalem his capital was a very diplomatic stroke, for it was neutral territory to both Ephraim and Judah, and this fact quietened the mutual jealousy of these tribes. It was also a great work of David that by his rough piety he definitely connected the Kingship with devotion to the cause of Jehovah. This devotion found expression in his care for the sacred palladium of the Tribes, although it was policy as well as piety that brought the Ark to Jerusalem; for we are forced to admit that in matters of religion David was not greatly in advance of his times. He regarded the jurisdiction of Jehovah as not extending beyond Palestine (1 Sam. xxvi. 19), and although he himself may have abandoned idols, yet he allowed them in his house (1 Sam. xix. 13), while he retained the old custom of consulting the will of Jehovah by the Ephod (1 Sam. xxx. 7) or by the movements of trees (2 Sam. v. 23–25). His conception of Jehovah was that of a Being of uncertain temper, who would take vengeance for any acts of ceremonial violation (2 Sam. vi. 9) or whose anger might be aroused for reasons beyond human discovery (2 Sam. xxiv. 10–17).

But it would be equally wrong to blame David because he does not come up to the ideals of a later age. So far as it went, we may believe that his piety was real; he was a man after Jehovah's own heart, *for those times*. He certainly did his best to found a Kingdom on personal affection and to establish some kind of impartial justice. In the matter of Bathsheba and Uriah David has been judged by impossible standards, and especially by the religious ideas of the 51st Psalm, which bears in its every line evidence of a morality far too deep for the age of David, and which is quite unsuitable for a confession of murder and adultery. It was no crime in the eyes of an oriental monarch to take his neighbour's wife, and it was novel doctrine that David heard from the lips of Nathan; it is to be laid to his everlasting credit that he listened to this prophetic judgment, was convicted of the sinfulness of his act, and repented very profoundly.

When we pass to Solomon we come to a character altogether different, but

one that is very difficult to estimate from the portrait presented to us in the Old Testament. The writers allow themselves to be carried away by the tradition of his magnificence, and by the external evidence of his piety preserved in the splendid Temple which he reared to the glory of Jehovah; but they cannot produce much evidence for the depth of his personal religion. He attempted to build an empire on the lines of the barbaric and superficial glories of his greatest neighbours; but its splendour and certainly its significance have been rather overdrawn by the later historians. It was a reign of splendour, but for the religion of Israel it was unimportant, for it was in the main irreligious. Save for the presence of Nathan at his coronation, the prophetic ministry almost disappears in this reign; what prophets remain are opposed to his policy. Solomon was little more than a worldly cosmopolitan; his empire was magnificent in comparison with the achievements of his predecessors, but it rested not as David's on the devotion of the people to a popular hero, but depended for its strength on a system of taxation and a false imperialism: forced labour was employed and the loyalty of the tribes was strained. It was an endeavour to change the government from a natural and tribal system to that of an Eastern despotism; and it ended in failure. The building of the Temple was only a part of this policy, and it was a policy resented by the prophetic party, who were all for simplicity in matters of worship (2 Sam. vii.; omit verse 13). The Temple did not occupy too outstanding a place in the block of royal buildings, and there is no evidence that in this age it was anything more than Solomon's private chapel built with the desire to rival the splendid royal shrines of other countries. It was evidently designed largely on heathen models, and contained heathen symbols which the later religion absorbed with difficulty. The adoption of the Temple as the supreme centre of Israel's worship was not the work of Solomon, but the effect of the teaching of Isaiah of Jerusalem and the consequence of the reforms of Hezekiah and Josiah. The harem and the strange worship were similarly parts of an international policy. Solomon was certainly the first to give to the worship of Jehovah an imposing splendour and regularity, but it was not a splendour that appealed to the Prophets. The beautiful prayer of the dedication can hardly be the composition of Solomon, but is more likely to have been the production of a later age which endeavoured to give to this display a piety which the original did not possess. In time the Temple was to become of enormous importance, but in this period it remained only a magnificent shrine for the Ark. The fact that two of the prophets sided with Jeroboam may point to a revolt against this religious splendour. The bulls of Jeroboam were a counterblast to the Temple, and although his name is ever afterwards connected with the introduction of this idolatrous worship, and the succeeding Kings of Israel condemned for their

participation, it is evident that these strictures are somewhat intensified by the conception that in the quarrel between Israel and Judah, Judah was in the right, and by the refusal to allow for the fact that this method of worship had not been condemned by any contemporary. The calves were most likely ancient symbols of Semitic divinity, and were certainly intended as symbols of Jehovah. Nevertheless, the future lay with the Temple and the South, for the revolution was based on a merely conservative impulse and contained no ideal. In the South, Jehovah was never worshipped with such an excess of heathen symbolism, and thither the voice of Prophecy soon transferred itself to find in Judah its greatest sphere.

We are brought now to one of the most pregnant movements of this time, known as the northern prophetic revolt, and to the work and personalty of the major transition prophets, Elijah and Elisha. The introduction of the worship of the Tyrian Baal by Ahab was the signal for revolt. Here was a violation of the commonest conceptions of religion: the transplantation of the worship of another god, Melkart, the Baal of Tyre, into the territory of Jehovah, who was regarded as the Baal of Canaan. It opened the eyes of the schools of the Prophets to the danger of the use of the name of Baal, and was the cause of its complete disuse as a name for Jehovah (Hosea ii. 16, 17). In the revolt against the worship of this heathen Baal there stands out as its chief inspiration and leader the magnificent figure of the prophet Elijah. It is evident that in the story of his life we have much that is legendary and probably some confusion with the work of Elisha, but the religious significance is sufficiently clear. We have noticed that Elijah is remotely connected with the prophetic schools, and they share with him the persecution organised by the devotees of Baal; the old mantic accompaniments of prophecy are still found in Elijah; he seems to charm the rain (1 Kings xviii. 42), and he certainly hears it coming. With all his courage and insight he does not fully comprehend the true methods by which the religion of Jehovah is to win its way; conviction is to be brought by thunder and fire; if these fail there remains the sword. It may be difficult to decide whether Elijah actually conceived the wonderful revelation at Mount Horeb, but it is more than likely that to this man there came in the hour of failure the discovery that there were other ways more to the mind of Jehovah whereby men should realise His presence; a discovery which has been dramatised in the theophany on Horeb. Revelation by the still small voice of inner conviction certainly gained greater recognition after the ministry of Elijah.

If we seek to understand the meaning of Elijah's stand for Jehovah, we shall see that it was first of all a protest against the syncretism of the Baal and Jehovah

religions. This protest may have been founded initially on conceptions not too exalted, namely, that Jehovah and Melkart could not be worshipped in the same land, but there are evidences that Elijah had advanced further than that. His daring taunts to Baal amount to complete scepticism as to his existence, or at least of his power to injure the true follower of Jehovah. If that is so, then we have in Elijah the first monotheist. He clearly perceived that in character Baal and Jehovah were utterly different. The cruelty connected with the religion of Jehovah still persists under Elijah, but the incompatibility between the true religion and heathenism is recognised and affirmed. We may sum up Elijah's religion in his own phrase: "I have been very jealous for Jehovah."

There is another aspect of Elijah's work which certainly forms a true transition to the teaching of the later Prophets; he denounces the murder of Naboth almost as much as the worship of Baal. We trace here the rise of the ethical conception of the service of Jehovah and the protest against social wrongs which was to become so great a part of the burden of such men as Amos and Micah.

With Elijah we can see forming, however dimly, the thought of a Kingdom of God, and the peculiar patriotism of the Prophets: he desires an Israel independent of all heathen alliances; it is a conception of a Kingdom which shall be great in intension rather than wide in extension. It was this conflict of the prophetic and the so-called patriotic ideals that was to contribute largely to the final overthrow of the State. It may have been that the Prophets could never have built up a strong State on the lines they indicated, and their very protest may have weakened the arm of statesmen and contributed to the destruction of the Kingdom founded by David and Solomon. We can only feel that we side with the Prophets. If the prophetic voice had been silenced we might have had Israel with a kingdom as mighty as Assyria, although that is highly doubtful; but it would have been a kingdom as useless for its contribution to religion as that proud, vain, and cruel empire.

The theophany at Horeb, therefore, whatever its embellishment and however symbolical its dress, is the true history of this period. In the development of the prophetic religion, magic and mystery are failing, display and external glory are passing away, and there enters from this time the conception of the religion of the inward voice on which the work of the later Prophets is built. Elisha is but a pale reflection of his master, and makes little contribution to religion; but we soon hear of Micaiah (1 Kings xxii. 8), whose message reveals the still widening gap between the professional prophet and the new order of men who hear with

greater clearness the true voice of Jehovah. But sixty years have to pass, and Northern Palestine awakens to the echoes of a new voice, and listens to the new message of the first of that prophetic band who have enriched literature while they have exalted religion—Amos the herdman of Tekoa.

Where elsewhere in history has there been a religion that, starting in comparative heathenism, almost lost in conflict with a fully-developed paganism, has yet moved steadily upward, breaking away from its origins, shedding the false charms of magic and sorcery, and rising by gradual ascent into fellowship with the Will of God? It is this *movement* that constitutes the inspiration of the Old Testament and that makes it still a Word of God to us.

Many of these conclusions, which have been put forward and established by critical methods, especially in reference to the religious feeling of those times, and in the different conception of the piety of men like David and Solomon, may strike the reader as startling and disturbing. That may well be, but that is no excuse for our reading into Bible story more than can be legitimately found there, while it will be sure to obscure some of its highest teaching, which is to be found not in isolated "texts," but in great movements. It is the facts that we have to face, and the facts are obscured not so much by the corrections of the history by the later historians, as by our forcing into them the still later conceptions of our own times. We have not given detailed proof of many of the positions here taken up; they may be sought in detail by the reader in the works of Biblical scholarship. Our object is to discover whether these things being so, we can still find a true revelation in the history of this people, and hear in it the Voice of God. Do we not get from this corrected view of the history, a sense of the splendid onward movement of this religion, which in itself is so much more inspiring than the monotonous conception, which is only the product of later Judaism, that the history of Israel's religion is nothing but a series of apostasies from a pure and perfect faith? That late conception is not borne out by a careful and critical study of the sources, and it rather owes its strength to-day to a certain dogmatic conception of human nature that is needlessly pessimistic, and to an idea of the weakness of the Spirit of God in His dealings with man that nearly approaches atheism.

One or two lessons of the period stand out in strong relief. One is that better things come of enthusiasm, even when it is mistaken, than from indifference. The reference of all the institutions of Israel to the definitely revealed Will of Jehovah may seem to some, after these investigations, a mistake. This can only arise from too narrow a conception of the working of God and the means

through which His Spirit reaches man, for it is this very reference to the Will of God that is responsible for the advance in Israel's faith. To believe in the Will of God, and to refer all to it, does gradually increase the knowledge of that Will, and so leads to a true revelation.

Another lesson is, not to despise the accompaniments of the first movements of the Spirit of God in man. It is not within the scope of this work to enquire why it is that when a man is moved by the Spirit of God such strange phenomena as we have been studying in the prophetic bands, which still accompany many revivals, should be the immediate results. There must be patience with these things as beginnings; but equally must there be impatience with them when they elevate themselves into a permanent claim to recognition as the only signs of a true religious life, and when they refuse to recognise as higher the sane and ethical movement to which they themselves have given birth. One of the chief difficulties in things religious is to recognise the offspring of a great movement, to discover the time when the child must be allowed its new-found freedom, to know when symbols may be dropped and the reality brought in. Protestantism has given birth to wider thoughts about God and deeper appreciations of the extent of His working, which are the logical outcome of Protestantism, and yet which are often repudiated by those whose Protestantism is of the aggressive type. A progressive movement of any kind always has these strifes. They are as constant in Science as in Religion, only in Science they are more easily overcome by the greater readiness to accept new revelation. Christianity is a religion that moves, and, as Christ Himself foretold, it causes the son to rise up against his father, the new generation to come into conflict with the old. Ours it is never to forget that the Kingdom of God is on the side of the child; except ye receive the Kingdom of God as a child, in the spirit of enquiry and growth, except ye never grow old, ye cannot enter therein.

THE RELIGION OF THE LITERARY PROPHETS

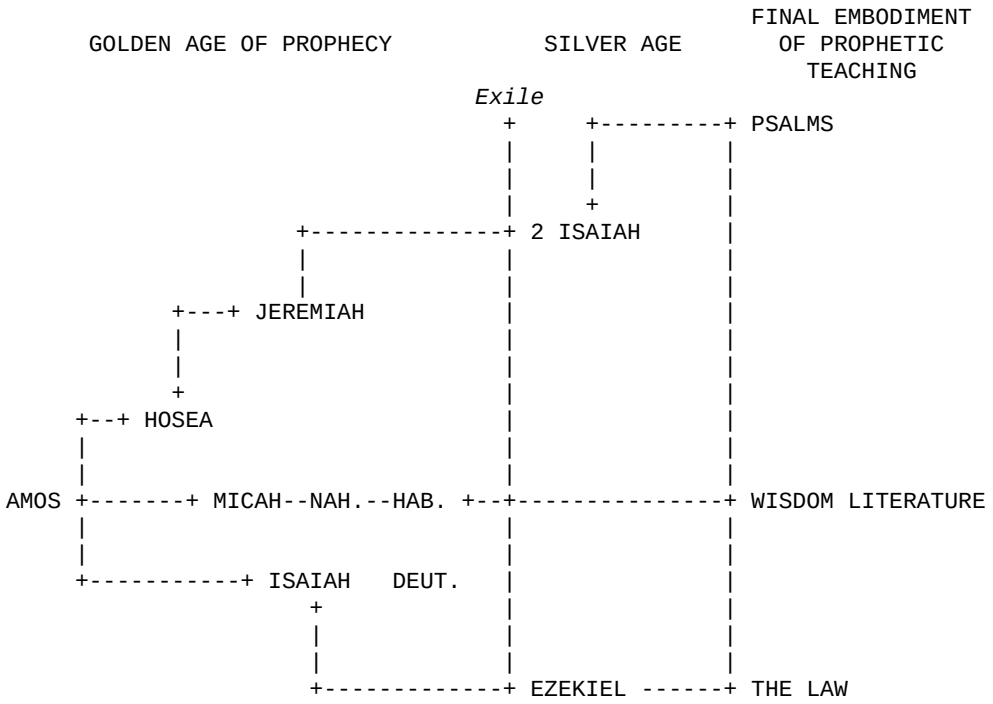
THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE PROPHETS

	Assyrian Period.		
Amos	760–750		
	B.C.		B.C.
Hosea	750–737	Accession of Tiglath Pileser III	745
Isaiah	740–700	Invasion of Sennacherib	701
Micah	724–	Fall of Samaria	722
Zephaniah	*circa* 627	Western Palestine invaded by Scythians	
Nahum	610–608?	Fall of Nineveh	607
	Chaldæan Period.		
Jeremiah	626–586	Deuteronomy discovered	621
Habakkuk	605–600?	First Great Exile	597
Ezekiel	593–573	Second Great Exile	586
	Persian Period.		
Isa. xiii.-xiv.; xxi. 1–10; xxxiv., xxxv.		(Date uncertain, but definitely after the Exile.)	
Isa. xl.-lv. (The "Second" Isaiah)	*c*540.	Cyrus takes Babylon	538
Isa. lvi.-lxvi. (Various prophecies, to be dated after the return.)		Return of the Exiles	537
Haggai	*c*520		
Zech. i.-viii.	*c*520		

Mal.	460–450	Promulgation of the Law	444
Zech. ix.-xiv.	322		

There is nothing to enable us to decide the dates of Jonah, Joel, and Obadiah with greater definiteness than to say that they were written after the Restoration.

Diagram representing the religious significance of the Prophets:—



Judging from the standard of New Testament religion and their contribution to it, the Prophets may be roughly classified in the above order. The higher tendency seems to vanish from the historical works which were composed after the Exile, save in many of the Psalms, where religion reaches its highest expression outside the New Testament. The tendency represented by the middle and horizontal line ends in the somewhat superficial ethics of such works as the Book of Proverbs. The lower tendency *is only to be judged so from comparison*; it served its purpose, and it was an honest endeavour to reduce the Prophetic ideals to a definite system. It is in line with the spirit of many of the Psalms that the religion of the revelation of Christ takes its rise, and we may see in the Sadducees and the Pharisees the degenerate effect of the other lines of development.

Lecture VI

THE RELIGION OF THE LITERARY PROPHETS

Among the writings of the Old Testament, the Prophetical Books, whether considered as literature or religion, are acknowledged to stand out as unsurpassed. If the Psalms claim to rival them it is to be remembered that the Psalms are probably to be traced to the Prophetic teaching. The Prophets themselves begin a new era; they are creative and owe but little to their past. That for so long a period, in unbroken continuity, there should emerge from a tiny nation a succession of men of differing temperament, training, and social position, who should with remarkable unity voice truths of religion not only hitherto unrecognised but rarely surpassed or apprehended in subsequent history, is in itself a unique phenomenon in comparative religion. Equally notable is the fact, that in the majority of the Prophets we have not only the gift of religious intuition, but that this is found in combination with great oratorical power, true poetic genius, and practical statesmanship. They remain for all time an indisputable witness to the Divine revelation in the development of Israel's religion.

Previous stages which we have been able to recognise in the development of Israel's religion do not carry us on to Amos by so inevitable a movement, that his message could be predicted as the next stage to be reached. When we come fresh from the investigation of the religion held by the leaders of the people in the times of David and Solomon, we recognise the immense strides made when we open the Book of Amos. We can trace a likeness between Elijah and Amos in their denunciation of wrong; but, in the sphere of religion, there is a great gulf between them which no records of the intervening period quite help us to bridge over. We cannot think of Amos taking part in the great vindication of Carmel; it is probable that he would have recognised it as useless. In Samuel, Elijah and Elisha we undoubtedly have the religious ancestors of the Literary Prophets, but while they stood at the head of popular movements which they led in triumph against the intrusion of alien faiths, the Prophets that we are now to study stand in decided antagonism to the popular faith, and the conceptions of Israel's religion which they reiterate with such passion and insistency were never acceptable to the people. Their religion has to make its way against the national religion.

The importance of the Prophets is the natural starting point for the modern study of the Old Testament, and it is from the earnest perusal of their writings that modern Biblical science has been forced to take up a rigorous criticism of the entire literature of the Old Testament. Under the old methods, the Prophets had only a secondary position in the history of the ancient revelation, since their message was conceived as rather concerned with an age yet to come than with

their own times and needs. The Divine Law had already been given to the people, constituting a perfect norm of religion. When the people failed to obey the Law, then the Prophet appeared, enforced its principles, and condemned the people's apostasy. If that message was rejected, as it often was, then nothing was left for the Prophet but the proclamation of vengeance, or the prediction of a time when the Law should be ideally fulfilled by the revelation of the Gospel. Between the Law and the Gospel, therefore, stood the Prophets, but they acted only as a bridge from the one to the other. The natural method of studying their writings was to search for the fulfilment of their predictions in history. With these aims it was perhaps inevitable that their words should often be interpreted in a quite unwarrantable manner; events were read back into their prophecies, or the fulfilment was found in such ordinary coincidences that the dignity of prediction was itself lost, the study became puerile and morbid, while a fancied necessity as to what they must mean prevented any scholarly and unbiassed interpretation. Their works have consequently been largely used as mysterious oracles from which the future history of the world could be accurately predicted. To read the Prophets in order to obtain a picture of their own age was regarded as a secular occupation, while every attempt to recover the original application of their words was regarded as an endeavour to discountenance the proofs of Divine revelation. Many of their words bear remarkable likeness to the gracious invitations of the Gospel, so that they have been used equally with the New Testament for Gospel preaching, but it was never dreamed that they were real invitations to the people of their own times, founded on the eternal laws of God's forgiveness afterwards made clear in Christ; they were simply words spoken under mental effects which transferred the speakers to the time of the New Testament. Whatever the final results of the application of historical criticism may be, it has already laid religion under a permanent obligation in its discovery of the hitherto unrealised importance of the Prophets. At first attention was directed to their exalted ethical and religious standpoint, appearing as it did in an age that neither produced nor responded to it; minute study then showed that they gave first-hand and incidental accounts of their own times. Their messages bear witness to the contemporary state of the religion of Jehovah and the people's morals, and although it may be that they sometimes judged these from their own high standard, which caused them to paint them somewhat darker than an absolutely historical judgment would demand, yet on what the prevailing religious opinions of the day really were, they are the best evidence. The startling but unassailable deduction made from the Prophets' accounts of their own times is, that in matters religious they were proclaiming doctrines that seemed to their contemporaries entirely novel. The Prophets do not, however,

acquiesce in the charge of novelty. They profess to go back to the original and inner meaning of Jehovah's choice of the nation. They refer to this choice, as a "covenant," and to the religion demanded by it, as the law of the Lord. The first inference is that they refer to that which *we* know as the Law, the Pentateuch, or Law of Moses. A comparison with the Prophetic teaching with the ordinances of, say, the Book of Leviticus, shows that this cannot be the case, for they do not correspond. Many things there commanded as essential are passed over in silence by the Prophets; but the force of the argument is not wholly drawn from that, although it has a weight here which the argument from silence cannot usually carry, because both Leviticus and the Prophets' teaching set forth the essentials of religion, and there can be no possibility of doubt that the conceptions of the essentials have an altogether different outlook. It is chiefly, though not by any means entirely, from the standpoint of the Prophetical writings that modern criticism is forced to revise the conception of the progress and decline of religion that Jewish tradition has embodied in the arrangement of its Scriptures, and especially in the ascription of the Pentateuch as a whole to the age and authorship of Moses. The verdict from this comparison between the Prophets and the Law is, that the five Books of Moses either did not exist in their present form at the time of the Prophets, or, if they did, remained entirely unknown to them.

The historical value of the Prophets is therefore to be rated very high, not only because of their transparent sincerity, but also because the historical data which can be secured from them are given indirectly, and are valuable for the same reason as the remarks of a contemporary diarist. They are unaware that they are writing history, and are consequently free from the almost unescapable tendency of the historian to make the facts fit into preconceived theories. Modern criticism, therefore, does rightly in making the Prophets of paramount importance for the understanding of the Old Testament, and when the Prophets are thus made the test, much in the history that was either completely hidden or difficult to understand, becomes visible and clear, and the progress of Israel's religion is displayed in all its grandeur and movement.

We can now turn to examine the extent of the sources from which we may draw, in order to estimate the religious opinions and influence of the Prophets, and to examine the peculiar character of the literature for which they are responsible.

First in importance stand the Books of the Prophets proper. In the ancient division of the Hebrew Bible into, (1) The Law, (2) The Prophets, (3) The

Hagiographa, or the holy writings, "The Prophets" included, beside our Books of the Prophets, such historical Books as Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings. Significantly enough, however, Daniel is not grouped with the Prophets, but with the Hagiographa, either because it was not classed as prophecy, or more probably because the Canon of "The Prophets" had been closed by the time it was written.

Therefore, in addition to the writings ascribed to the Prophets, there is a literature which has been influenced by their teaching, and this is found largely in those historical Books which have thus been rightly included in the Prophetical division of the Hebrew Bible. That is to say, however, that Books dealing with history prior to the rise of the Prophets, show traces of an influence that can only have emerged later. It is here that criticism seems to the ordinary reader to enter very debatable ground, although among critical students of the Bible the question is no longer an open one. They claim that the peculiar conditions under which Hebrew history was compiled allow us to discern, and to separate with ease, this later prophetical editing, whereas in other literatures such would be impossible. History was compiled among the Jews largely from pre-existing documents, much as it is everywhere, with the difference that in the Old Testament the records have been simply pieced together with whatever corrections and reductions were rendered necessary, while the conceptions of the later times, when this re-editing was accomplished, are often simply superimposed; this method has been ridiculed as an invention of the critical mind, but it is simply an indisputable if tiresome fact which has to be taken into account in any serious study of the literature. The narratives of the documents that have been named "J" and "E" bear the marks of having been combined under the influence of prophetical teaching, since this teaching, it is to be noted, is recognisably incompatible with other parts of the stories which have been left untouched.

It has been suggested that criticism seems to assume that religion progressed until it reached a certain height in the Eighth Century, and to enable this theory to stand all marks of this supposed later type appearing earlier are classed as interpolations. It is usual to trace this theory to "Evolution gone mad." Even on the critical theories this cannot however be legitimately shown to result, since critical reconstruction shows that the supreme height gained in the Prophets was never maintained, but suffered a perceptible decline. Whatever the guiding idea of criticism may be, it cannot be an endeavour to make the history of Israel's religion confirm some theory of the natural development and evolution of religion. The critical theories leave us with the problem of moral lapses to

account for and with the failure of vision to explain, and demand still a moral insight to detect the cause. But it is clear to many that the moral causes do stand out more clearly discoverable by this method.

The critical theory of the priority of the Prophets is not based only upon the emergence under their teaching of certain theological ideas for the first time; but also on the difference of style and vocabulary which can be recognised after only a slight acquaintance with the language; and on the general outline of the history that the Bible itself forces upon us. It is a fact which the reader can soon discover for himself, that the historical Books are compilations from the records of various ages, and these various ages can be as easily discerned as the conflicting styles of an oft-restored church, or the disturbance of the normal geological strata that demands some upheaval for its explanation. It must be remembered that all this is made possible from the fact of the remarkable uniformity of ideas that characterises the various stages of Hebrew religion.

The Prophets' teaching can therefore be traced outside their own writings; mainly in fragmentary comments added to the narratives; or in a superimposed colouring, which easily falls off, leaving the original outlines in view; but it is supposed to be found grouped into one great mass in the Book of Deuteronomy. The critics' theory of this Book is that it is an endeavour to reduce the teaching of the Prophets, more especially that of Isaiah, to a code, and to secure reform by the centralisation of worship at Jerusalem. This idea of a central worship, which leaves no record of its actual observance until the time of Josiah, or perhaps an attempt in the reign of Hezekiah, is so unmistakable and is so uniformly expressed that the work of this author (perhaps we should say, this school) can be easily detected, and many of the Books, such as Judges and Kings, can be seen to have been subjected to a "Deuteronomist" redaction. In all these phenomena we have teaching that presupposes the Prophets, and that stands in contrast and often in conflict with the general tone of the original. It is remarkable that with such redactions of history any clue to the earlier conceptions should have been left to us, especially that there should have been left in the records anything that would be in disagreement with the editors' ideas, but the Jews, like the other nations of antiquity, did not possess modern notions of exactness, and their notions of history prevented them from understanding things that were removed only a short distance from their own times.

It is hardly surprising to find that this Prophetical literature was in turn liable to redaction, though in a different degree and for a different reason, since it has been preserved to us under peculiar conditions. This at first may seem terribly

confusing to the bewildered student, and it is here that tired men reject criticism and all its works. To such the reminder cannot be spared that in any branch of Science the same conditions have to be overcome, and if he would understand the Old Testament and reap the magnificent reward that its earnest study gives, he must be prepared to face the facts and labour at their solution.

First of all then, it must be noted that the Books of the Prophets are not so much literature, in the ordinary sense of the word, as reported rhetoric, with the qualification that the reporter and the speaker may be usually assumed to be the same. In most cases the speeches were written out by the Prophet himself soon after they were delivered, although sometimes this was done by others long after, and expanded or altered, as is actually reported to have been the case with the prophecies of Jeremiah (Jer. xxxvi.).

In the second place, the literature reveals the fact that there does not seem to have been in that age any conception of literary property; ideas are borrowed directly from one Prophet by another, and sometimes direct quotation is made without any acknowledgment or indication of the source. The Prophet's scribe, his school or followers, could amend or paraphrase; later generations could evidently insert a qualifying phrase, temper a threat with a qualifying condition, or to the doom of exile add a promise of restoration. When it is noticed that messages like those of Amos or Hosea end unexpectedly in hopeful words, and when it is recollected that these Prophets have been used as Service Books in the Synagogue and may have been therefore altered to suit the purpose, then we shall understand the problem that faces us and why a shadow of suspicion should rest on promises of restoration that are to be found in pre-exilic writings. Let it be remembered however that it is no true critical canon to assume that prediction cannot be made; but what are we to do when such a prediction fits ill with the context, breaks the sense, is foreign to the outlook of the speaker, and is in later style?

Finally, there seem to have been many prophecies circulated anonymously, and since a place had to be found for these they were inserted in other writers, on no principle that we can discover, or more often were grouped together at the end of some notable Prophet's works. In Zechariah we have to suppose three strata of different authorship and date, or give up the rational study of the Book altogether; and in the famous case of the Book of Isaiah we have to suppose that some of the early chapters are the work of a post-exilic author, while chapters xl.-lxvi. are a heterogeneous collection by a number of writers, of which chapters xl.-lv. are recognised to be by one hand, and that, one of the most

wonderful personalities which has contributed to the Old Testament; about that grand figure we only know one thing, that he was not Isaiah of Jerusalem. This has been called "sawing Isaiah asunder" and making the Bible a piece of patchwork and the critics are blamed; but if they are right, these complaints are not directed at them, but at the Bible itself, a proceeding which to say the least, is not pious. When a writer could say many years later that revelation came of old time in many fragments (Heb. i. 1), others beside critics fall under these hasty condemnations.

It is refreshing to turn from this less interesting part of our subject, which nevertheless demands serious study from anyone who would be informed where ignorance has done and still is doing so much harm, and to examine the features which distinguish the work of the literary Prophets. We have already spoken of the novelty of their message. Whatever theory is chosen for the study of Old Testament history, nothing quite prepares us for the message of the Prophet Amos. What an inspiration we miss because he does not stand in our Bibles in his rightful place, at the head of the Prophets! His bravery and ruggedness remind us of Elijah, but he brings something that Elijah is far from giving us. Elijah was very jealous for the due recognition of Jehovah as the only God for Israel; Amos is jealous for the recognition of the true *character* of Jehovah. That is to say, we receive from Amos definite teaching concerning the character of Jehovah and His relations to the people of Israel, and these doctrines are startling to Israelitish ears.

Almost the first thing that strikes us as an outstanding characteristic of the Prophets is that they are conscious of a call to which they often appeal. Five of them definitely refer to the circumstances of their call (Amos vii. 14; Hosea i. 2; Isaiah vi.; Jer. i. 4–10; Ezek. i. 1–ii. 3). The same is true of their predecessors, but in a different way; they stand as defenders of the national religion because they belong to the prophetic guilds or possess certain gifts of vision. On the other hand the literary Prophets are against the national religion as a perversion of the true, and to this weary and warlike work they are called by immediate and special summons of God. This call is not self-originated nor can it be evaded (Jer. xx. 9), and in some cases there has been no preparation for the office (Amos vii. 14, 15), and even positive unfitness (Jer. i. 6). They are very careful therefore to distinguish themselves from the schools of prophets. Professionalism has disappeared, and in Jeremiah the official idea also vanishes.

The peculiar mental condition of the Prophets has of late years attracted a great deal of attention. The rapture and holy frenzy into which they are

sometimes thrown remind us of the phenomena accompanying the early Prophetism, studied in our last lecture; but this is now accidental and is becoming rare. The Prophets often speak of this as "the hand of the Lord" upon them (Isa. viii. 11); in the visions of Ezekiel the effect is often described as overpowering (Ezek. iii. 14 ff.). There is a similarity between the accompaniments of these states and the trances which have been found in so many religious movements, and which are now attracting the attention of the scientific world so seriously. Only the results differ remarkably from the effects obtained in hypnotic and sub-conscious states, with which the prophetic gift has sometimes been compared. The Prophet still exhibits his natural style when under the influence of the Word of the Lord. Yet it may be that there is something to be learned along the lines of modern research; we know that if certain states of mental passivity can be induced, there lies open a new realm of knowledge, which, although it can be accounted for, cannot be summoned under ordinary mental conditions; add to this the superior moral constitution which seems to be missing from the mediums of spiritualistic phenomena to-day, and the prophetic consciousness becomes more comprehensible. The Prophets often speak of visions, but it is difficult to gather their actual character. It can hardly be objective; it is more like the artistic vision which creates within the mind in perfect detail and objectivity, so that what is seen has greater reality than any reproduction on canvas or in stone. The mind would seem to project its vision by the strength of its imaginative powers, so that, owing to the emotion aroused by the nature of the truth perceived, the revelation appears to come from an entirely external source. Sometimes it would seem to be an actual beholding of some natural object, which induces a train of thought, as the case of Amos's vision of the plumb-line may well be. We cannot think either of any organic hearing of their message, since they sometimes also declare that they "see" it.

Their predictive power has been exaggerated, chiefly because it was thought that this was the only office of the Prophet. Where it occurs it is mostly a natural deduction from their insight into the movements of their age, their conception of the unchangeable character of Jehovah, and their belief in His providential government; the emphasis is never upon details, and it may be added that the prediction is by no means always fulfilled. Their vision of the future usually takes a certain outline, or order; a national calamity is immediately impending, in which they recognise the punishment of the people's sins and the complete triumph and vindication of Jehovah; this will result in a purifying of the nation, and in the immediate succession there will come the Messianic or ideal era. Still there are predictions which cannot be explained on any theory yet broached,

such as the prediction by Isaiah of the destruction of Sennacherib's army, or Jeremiah's prophecy of the Restoration. If this is ordinary second sight, then it is strange that it should have occurred in so many cases at this time when prophecy was dropping its mysterious accompaniments. Yet it may be recalled that in the history of all nations there has been, in times of great national affliction, a tendency to prophecy of this order, which can sometimes claim a remarkable fulfilment. The distinguishing glory of Israel's prophecy is, however, to be sought in its ethical character, and it is perhaps to the writings of men like our own Carlyle, where we often catch the old prophetic ring, that we are to look for its analogy.

Among the things that separate Amos from his predecessors is the use of a literary channel for the dissemination of his teaching, which was of course primarily preaching. This in itself marks a great change. What was it that led the Prophet to write down the message which he had delivered? It may have been that there was a tendency towards literature at that particular period, but even before this the habit of keeping records must have commenced, while there is evidence of collections of poems or sagas, such as the Book of Jasher, or the Book of the Wars of the Lord, being in existence from a very early period. It is evident therefore that we need some particular occurrence to account for the adoption of literature as the vehicle of Prophecy. It has been suggested that the cause is to be sought initially in the rejection of the message of Amos by those to whom it was delivered: he was aware of the permanent application of the truths that he had delivered, and since his own times would not hearken he resolved to commit them to the verdict of posterity. The example once set, it was natural for the succeeding Prophets to wish to give something more than the fleeting character of the spoken word to teaching that was new and that had been rejected, and therefore to adopt this form (Isa. viii. 16 f.). Whatever the cause, we are thankful for the results.

The channel chosen for the preservation of their messages was not purely literary; the form is not that of the essay, or thesis; it has not the studied elegance of poetry, yet it rises above prose, and rhythmic verse is found scattered throughout their writings. These reports of passionate oratory fall naturally into poetic form as the Prophet is carried away by his message. Especially do we find a very extensive use of symbolism, which has proved a trap into which the literalist has hastened to fall.

The relation of the Prophets to the State is difficult for us accurately to appreciate. Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha headed what were practically popular

revolutions; in them nationalism overshadows the universally religious, or the purely moral ideal. To appreciate the contrast that the literary Prophets present to this, a careful study should be made of 2 Kings ix. 7–10; x. 30, and this compared with the verdict of Hosea, which rises above the standard of State interest to a judgment of universal morals (Hosea i. 4). The literary Prophets have no office at court and receive no fee (Micah iii. 2); but they have an official connection with the nation, which they regard as the chosen instrument for the establishment of God's reign; they have no conception of a secular state for Israel. It became therefore a tragedy for Jeremiah to be so completely rejected by the nation, for then he felt his prophetic office really ceased. It was this that drove him into a personal relationship with God that is not reached by any other of the Prophets. It is not correct to say that the Prophets were social reformers or practical politicians. Their sole concern is with religion, but it is a religion that goes very deep, and that must express itself in social and national ethics.

It is however upon their distinctive message that the chief interest centres, not only for the understanding of their age, but for their permanent contribution to religion.

It is a declaration of pure ethical Monotheism. Jehovah is not simply the tutelary deity of Israel; He is the Only God. The gods of the other nations are not real beings; this truth is vividly expressed in the scorn which is poured on idols and their worship. Jehovah is a spiritual Being; therefore the crusade against the idols that had been used in the worship of Jehovah is an outcome of prophetic teaching. This condemnation of idols in the worship of Jehovah is not actually met with until Hosea (xiii. 2), but that any visible form of Jehovah is derogatory to the true conception of His glory is the only possible deduction from prophetic teaching. We still get the naïve terms that refer to Jehovah as if He had bodily parts; but this is nothing more than the necessary imagery which all spiritual conceptions have to employ, and which are not mistaken by any save the most ignorant. This purely spiritual Being fills the whole universe (Deut. x. 14; 1 Kings viii. 27; Jer. xxiii. 24; esp. Isa. xxxi. 3, which implies more clearly than any other statement in the Old Testament the spirituality of God, and thus anticipates the declaration of Jesus to the woman of Samaria). But it is with the *ethical* character of Jehovah that they are mostly concerned. He is righteous; which means more than the early conception that He simply defends Israel's right. They insist on His complete impartiality, which no choice of Israel for His own can turn aside: "You only have I known of all the families of the earth, *therefore* will I visit upon you all your iniquities." They fall back again and again on His absolute fidelity and truthfulness. The arbitrary character which is ascribed to Jehovah in the Books of Samuel has completely disappeared; the Prophet can say: "Come and let us reason together, saith Jehovah."

Universalism is the necessary corollary to Monotheism, but the strong sense of Israel as His chosen instrument hinders the clear statement of this truth by the Prophets. A particular regard for Israel still colours their vision; but they are altogether against the popular estimate in maintaining that this choice was made solely as a means for reaching the whole world. Universalism is seen forming in the idea that Jehovah is concerned with the punishment of other nations, since He it is who will punish them for their sins; not only for their hatred of His chosen, but for their cruelty to other nations: He will punish Moab for his inhumanity to Edom (Amos ii. 1). This is a great advance. Even when the surrounding nations afflict Israel it is not because the Lord has no control over them, but it is He that raises up the hostile powers as instruments of His

chastisement. Even kinder views are to be found in Amos, in whose tiny book we find nearly all the characteristic ideas of the Prophets; for Jehovah is said to have been concerned in the early migratory movements not only of the Hebrews, but of the hated Philistines and Assyrians (Amos ix. 7). The grand universalism of Isaiah xix. 19–25 only needs us to recall the part that Egypt and Assyria played in the history of Israel, in order to appreciate its magnanimity. Yet in spite of these passages, the outlook as a whole is centred on Israel, and works of a definitely universalistic nature could hardly have found a place in the canon. This spirit probably made it necessary for the writer of "Jonah" to embody his universalistic doctrines in the form of an obscure parable about a Prophet and a whale. It was the same national bigotry that led to the rejection of the Son of man.

It is in the idea of the conditions of the covenant between Jehovah and Israel that the teaching of the Prophets stands in such contrast to the conceptions of the people. That relation was conceived of, as we have seen, as tribal; the Prophets declare it to rest on a covenant of choice, which is to be maintained by the adherence of the parties to the original terms. They love to place in contrast the unwearied faithfulness of Jehovah and the fickleness of the people; while they alternate between threats of Jehovah's complete rejection and the recurring thought that despite all He can never change, and against all known custom will even welcome back the harlot nation. Jehovah's requirements from Israel, for the proper maintenance of the covenant, are simply the full allegiance of the people; but how this is to be displayed is not so definitely described. There must be a pure worship of Jehovah, but this is not to find expression in accurate ritual or great sacrifices. Indeed it cannot be claimed that the Prophets are at all concerned about ritual. The Book of Deuteronomy distinctly lays down that the true worship of Jehovah is to be performed at one chosen central spot, while Leviticus provides an elaborate method of approach, which can only be neglected at the peril of the worshipper. On the other hand, it is certain that the Prophets found the people worshipping at the "high places," the old Canaanitish shrines, with many customs which would be a direct infringement of the Code of Leviticus, yet they are entirely unconcerned with these faults. The principle of sacrifice as a means of worship had existed from ancient times, and is to be found in nearly all religions; yet there is an overwhelming verdict from the pre-exilic Prophets that shows that they are doubtful of its Divine appointment or of its necessity. (These passages should be carefully examined:—Amos v. 25; Hosea vi. 6; Isa. i. 11–17; Micah vi. 6–8; 1 Sam. xv. 22; Jer. vi. 20; vii. 21–23; and Jeremiah may have been a priest!) There is only one conclusion possible;

these Prophets had never seen the Book of Leviticus.

The ritual which the Prophets seek is that of an upright life. They base all their morality on religious ideas. The great incentive to moral conduct is the recognition that the whole nation and land is the property of Jehovah; any social wrong is wrong against Him. So we find that the earliest attempt to formulate this teaching in a code contains many regulations which are purely humanitarian (Deut. xiv. 29; xix. 2 ff.; xxi. 10–17; xxii. 1–3; xxiv. 6, 10–15). Ritual is turned into ethics. Against the inequalities and injustices of their day the Prophets set their faces, with an utter disregard for consequences: they hurled their accusations at the nation with tremendous energy, in public, before kings, as men went up to worship; fiery denunciation mingling with a patriot's tears; for the time, all unavailing. Yet they have had their harvest, and to-day they are among the voices that call men to social reform.

It will be well to endeavour to show, in the briefest possible outline, the historic setting of this mighty message.

It was shortly after the opening of the Eighth Century that threatening indications began to gather on the horizon of Northern Israel. The situation called for a Prophet's message. Amos, the herdman of Tekoa, comes like a whirlwind from Judah, utters his message at Bethel and returns. He is the first and in many respects the greatest of that meteoric band who illumine the dark night of Israel's history; later Prophets repeat his words and share his ideas. Hosea, from the Northern Kingdom, follows in his steps, but with a message made the more tender from the fact that the whole drama of Israel's unfaithfulness to her husband Jehovah had been brought home to him in a personal domestic tragedy. The tender heart which led him to forgive his unfaithful wife, wondered if Jehovah would not be equally forgiving, and through this experience he almost penetrates to the thought of God as Love. A few years later, a voice is heard in the villages of Judah proclaiming the message of Amos with the same call to simple reality: Micah pleads for simple life, simple worship, simple justice. With this transference of the prophetic voice to the Southern Kingdom there falls an awful silence on the North. In 722 B.C., Samaria fell before the arms of Assyria, and Israel ceased to exist. For centuries that land was to remain silent and despised, until there should come from Galilee of the Gentiles He of whom all the Prophets spake. One would expect that the awful doom which had overtaken the Northern Kingdom would not have been without effect on Judah. Its only visible effect was the strengthening of her belief in her own inviolability, and the acceptance of the idea that Israel's fall was due

to her separation from Judah. If a Prophet could have turned the people's thought in a saner direction, then it would have been accomplished by Isaiah, the most princely and the most literary of all the Prophets. His work was not indeed without effect. He was the means of lifting prophecy into popular favour, and a revival followed his teaching. The chief cause of this favour was the events of the memorable year, 701 B.C. In face of the demands of Assyria, Isaiah had all along counselled submission and the avoidance of all intrigues with Egypt. But the violation of the treaty by Sennacherib, who demanded the surrender of the city after he had been bought off, roused the anger of Isaiah. In answer to the insulting message of the Rabshakeh, while the army lay round the city, in obedience to the word of Jehovah he counsels resistance. Nothing seemed more improbable than that there could be any escape for Jerusalem; nevertheless he declared that the holy city should be inviolable. The great host with their insolent captain lay before the gates, but in the morning

"The Gentile, unsmote by the sword,
Had melted like snow in the glance of the Lord."

Whatever the actual cause of the raising of the siege may have been, there can be no doubt that something did happen to the Assyrian army which Isaiah was able to attribute to the intervention of Jehovah, for from this time Isaiah became famous. To those who see in the fulfilment of prediction the chief end of prophecy this event will naturally seem of profound importance. To another view of the function of prophecy this is the least thing that Isaiah did, for while it lifted his name into popular favour, that same deliverance proved a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. For his declaration of the city's inviolability was remembered long after, and quoted as if it had been of universal, instead of temporary application, while his moral teaching was forgotten. To that trick of national memory the exile was largely due.

From this time the sacrosanct character of the city obsessed the popular mind, and in consequence the Temple became, for the first time since its erection, of supreme significance in Jewish eyes. Following Isaiah, there was a movement, commenced probably by his disciples, that strove to bring the Temple into prominence as the one authorised place of worship. Possibly during the reactionary reign of Manasseh, when their master is said to have been martyred, they worked at this idea, and driven into silence by the persecutions of the king they employed their pens in producing a code of laws, which undoubtedly gathered into legal form many of the customs which had existed for centuries, and endeavoured to give them the religious interpretation of the

prophetic teaching. Its chief injunction was the suppression of the high places as no longer authorised for the worship of Jehovah, hoping to centre thereby the whole of the nation's worship at the Temple. This code was probably laid up for publication in brighter days, and was discovered in the reign of Josiah, in the year 621 B.C. There can be but little doubt, from the reforms instituted, and from the total disregard of them until this time, that this code was our Book of Deuteronomy. Since it was published under the name of Moses, many moderns have looked upon its compilation as a pious forgery. This is to read into a past age the legal conceptions of Western civilisation. It must be remembered that many of these laws could be legitimately traced back to Moses or to his influence, and there was no idea of deception in using his name. The hand of the School which produced this work can also be traced in the compilation and redaction of other historical works, which were undertaken with this idea of making the past history teach the value of the reforms they wished the people to adopt. This was not only regarded as legitimate, but as a sacred duty imposed upon them. The modern historical ideal, which instigates research with the sole intention of discovering the facts, is only the product of our own age, and is still unsuccessfully striven after. The reformation under Josiah is therefore known as the Deuteronomic reformation. From this time the Temple becomes the only spot where God can be publicly worshipped, and the local shrines are forbidden. This may seem an arbitrary action, and it is possible that for some time it called forth loud complaints; but it was certainly for the benefit of religion. It had been proved to be impossible to dissociate the local shrines from the customs and ideas which had descended from the original Canaanitish worship carried on there. With a central worship it was found possible to check practices that were not in accordance with the religion of Jehovah. The teaching of the Prophets finds then in the Book of Deuteronomy its first-fruits of reform.

The relation of one young man to this new movement is full of peculiar interest and difficulty. It was at this very time that Jeremiah began his ministry, and it is possible that he took some part in the movement (Jer. xi. 8). He also lived to see the reaction and to prove that the reform was only superficial. There is one passage which seems to point to a change of view and even to the suspicion that the new code was not authoritative (Jer. vii. 8). When Jeremiah attacked the sin of the people, and warned them that the presence of Jehovah's Temple would not suffice to protect them if they persisted in their iniquity, his message was rejected and eventually he was imprisoned and silenced by a coalition of the priests and prophets. Jeremiah ceased therefore to be the Prophet of that nation. In his loneliness and sorrow, his thoughts turned in an hitherto

unexplored direction. He complains to God in words which sound almost blasphemous, and pours forth expostulations that are the reverse of the submissive spirit usually thought proper to religion; but it is through this agony that Jeremiah discovers that God can be something to him, not only as the Prophet of the nation, but for himself. He discovers personal religion. His next discovery is equally momentous; for he is led to see that no promulgation of laws can save the nation: ordinances do not change the heart. He sorrowfully pronounces the doom of the nation, but as he stands by its open grave he sings of its resurrection. When purged by trial the nation shall return, and the New Covenant shall be set up, in which Jehovah shall write His laws in their hearts. It is a long far-off look that he gives, and the picture is not complete until One sits at a last supper and says: This cup is the New Covenant in my blood.

THE EFFECT OF THE EXILE

Dates for reference:—

B.C. 597.	Jehoiachin and 10,000 captives deported to Babylon, and Zedekiah made king in his stead. FIRST CAPTIVITY.
587–6.	Jerusalem besieged, Zedekiah taken to Babylon, Jerusalem and the Temple destroyed, and the whole population, save the very poorest, deported to Babylon. SECOND CAPTIVITY.
538.	Cyrus issues edict for Return.
	Return under Sheshbazzar (?) (Ezra i.).
537.	Return under Zerubbabel (Ezra ii.).
458.	Arrival of Ezra.
445.	First Mission of Nehemiah.
433.	Second Mission of Nehemiah.

There is a good deal of uncertainty about the above dates, and the condition of the documents in Ezra-Nehemiah offers difficulties which have not, so far, found acceptable solutions. Some have sought to identify Sheshbazzar with Zerubbabel, and to bring down the date of the Return to 522–21.

It will be seen from the above Table that Jeremiah's prophecy of Seventy Years was not literally fulfilled.

* * * * *

The student would receive a clear idea of the growth of Israel's institutions and the way in which they have been incorporated in the successive documents, by tracing the development of the Sabbath in the following passages.

Some claim that the Records of Babylonia show that the observance of the seventh day as sacred goes back to the origins of primitive Semitic religion.

(1) In "J-E" (which may be prior to Amos in oral form, and perhaps slightly later as documents): Exod. xxiii. 12; xxxiv. 21; xx. 8.

(2) In historical books: 2 Kings iv. 22, 23; Amos viii. 5; Hosea ii. 11; Isa. i. 13.

(3) In "D": Deut. v. 14.

(4) In Jer. xvii. 19–27. (Jeremiah is the first writer to show traces of the influence of Deuteronomy.)

(5) In "H," The Code of Holiness (Lev. xvii.-xxvi.): Lev. xix. 3, 30; xxvi. 2.

(6) In Ezek. xx. 12, 13.

(7) In "P": Gen. ii. 1–3; Exod. xx. 10, 11; xxxi. 12–17; xxxv. 1–3; Lev. xxiii. 3; Num. xv. 32–36; Exod. xvi. 5, 22–30.

(8) In post-exilic observance: Neh. xiii. 15–22; Isa. lvi. 2, 4, 6; lviii. 13, f.; lxvi. 23.

Lecture VII

THE EFFECT OF THE EXILE

In the year 597 B.C., a catastrophe long foretold befell the Kingdom of Judah. Nebuchadrezzar invaded the land, took Jerusalem, and robbing the land of every person of importance or usefulness, transported them together with King Jehoiachin to Babylon, hoping doubtless to prevent any further trouble with Judæa. In what a conflict of emotion must the exiles have left that city which they had fondly imagined inviolable! for even in Babylon they continued to believe that so long as Jerusalem stood, Jehovah would have a citadel, and the holy city would remain a symbolic witness to their unconquered religion. With the captives there went a young man who was destined to leave a deep impression upon the future of his nation—the priest Ezekiel. Arrived in Babylon, he felt himself called to a prophetic ministry to the exiles, and his first message was directed to the crushing of their remaining hopes; for with dramatic symbolism he predicted that Jerusalem would be utterly destroyed. The suicidal policy of Zedekiah, whom Nebuchadrezzar had left to carry on the government

as his vassal, soon fulfilled this prophecy; for sedition and intrigue soon compelled Nebuchadrezzar to adopt still stricter measures. He again marched into Judæa and besieged Jerusalem. This time the Jews expected no mercy, and resisted with such tenacity that the siege lasted for nearly two years. On the ninth day of the Fourth month, (our July) 586 B.C., a day still kept with solemn fasting by the Jews, a breach was made in the walls and the city capitulated. A month later the entire destruction of the city and Temple was ruthlessly carried out, and the whole population, with the exception of a few husbandmen, was deported to swell the company of exiles now at Babylon.

This was the inevitable culmination of the policy of the Kingdom of Judah under her latest monarchs. The position of their land laid them open to conflicts with the powers of Assyria and Babylon. The wise and peaceful policy of Solomon had been departed from, and indeed rendered impossible by the disruption of the Tribes. A period of national decadence seems to have followed, in which luxury and corruption undermined all political sanity, and both rulers and people became blind to the dangers that threatened. Such religion as existed, only expressed itself in bursts of fanaticism, and filled the people with the fatal idea that Jehovah would never suffer the Temple to be violated or the holy city to be taken.

The disaster of the Exile is charged by the Prophets to the unrepented sins of the nation, and while this is a religious interpretation it is not unsupported by a review of the history. The people had set their hearts upon a glorious kingdom of material prosperity, presided over and protected by a mighty national deity; the Prophets wanted a kingdom of righteousness, which would reflect the character of Jehovah and be a witness to the nations of His reality and power. While they saw in the Exile a calamity which meant the destruction of the nation, and an evidence that Jehovah had broken His covenant because of disobedience, they clung to the belief that the end for which Jehovah had chosen Israel might still be attained. That nation might be destroyed, yet from its ruins there would arise a Kingdom of God; a remnant would return, weaned from a false religion, to work out a new ideal of holiness and service.

The period which follows is one of great obscurity and the records which are actually dated from this time are scanty. Literary criticism however throws great light on this period because it believes that it is from the Exile that we are to date many institutions and writings that have been referred to a previous age. This may seem at first sight a desperate device, since so little is known of the actual conditions; and yet unfettered investigation can arrive at no other conclusion, the

exilic stamp being often unmistakable and even showing itself in geographical outlook (1 Kings iv. 24). If we take the Bible as it stands, it presents us with the story of an early legislation given by Moses, neglected however by the entire people, including the Reformers and Prophets, until it suddenly appears after the Exile as the acknowledged code for the regulation of religion and common life. It would be quite possible to conceive that the shock of the Exile drove the Jews to examine the details of the neglected covenant of Jehovah and to restore the authority of the Law of Moses. Such however is impossible, not only from that fact that there is no mention of the Law of Moses in the records that can be dated between the Conquest of Canaan and the Exile, but that in this period we can discern customs and ideas *gradually* growing up that find their full and final embodiment in the Pentateuch as we now possess it. From the lawless condition of the Judges and the early monarchy, we advance to the teaching of the Prophets. It is Isaiah who contributes the ideas which lie at the basis of the Deuteronomic Code, and the time of Josiah is the first to show the influence of that code. Ezekiel is the first to show any trace of the ideas which we find embodied in Leviticus, but these, as we shall see, have to be explained as anticipations of, rather than as an acquaintance with, the finished Levitical Code.

When we consider what effect the Exile would have upon the more thoughtful of the Jews, we can imagine that conscience would be shocked into activity, and a new interest would be taken in their strange history, especially in its prophetic interpretation. It is common in history to find that repentance rarely goes so deep as to grasp the inner meaning of its discovered sin, but is apt to content itself with somewhat superficial methods of showing its sincerity and securing future compliance with religion. So at least, the records of Israel's history assure us, happened in this instance, and one of the resolutions of their penitence took concrete form in the writing or editing of their history so that it should be a warning to the future, and in codifying customs and drawing up regulations which should make apostasy for ever impossible. Many references in the ancient records or in the oral tradition which savoured of idolatry or of a too anthropomorphic conception of God were corrected, as those references, the tendency of which was not detected, have remained to bear witness; and the whole history was fitted somewhat clumsily into a mechanical scheme, which was rather what they thought ought to have happened than what really did happen. One example of this may be seen in the condemnation which is naïvely passed on king after king because he had allowed sacrifice to be made at the high places; the fact being that this was not made illegitimate until the reign of Josiah. In this way external offences were marked and abandoned, while the

deeper incongruity between the national religion and the teaching of the Prophets was missed.

If we seek in this period for the rise of ideas which shall bridge over the change from the popular religion on the one hand, and the religion of Jeremiah on the other, to the complete unity of the national religion under Nehemiah and Ezra, we shall find a most important link in the Book of Ezekiel.

The Book of Ezekiel is said to be the least read book in the Bible, yet its author plays a most important part in the history of Israel's religion, and to grasp the position which he occupies is to have a focus point from which the whole development may be conveniently grasped. The Prophet probably got a better hearing from his contemporaries than any of his predecessors. He accompanied the body of captives who left Jerusalem for Babylon in the year 597, and his works date from soon after that year and go down to about 570. The men to whom he was called to speak were therefore his fellow captives, and he had not to look far for a text for his sermons. His hearers were in Babylon for their sins, and they knew it. His style of preaching is difficult, and his method of embodying his message in visions marks a new phenomenon in Israel's religion. He states truth in strange and fanciful figures, a method which was to form an example for the later works of Judaism, and if we detect in Ezekiel a return to the extravagance of the earlier prophecy, we must make allowance for the tragic times in which he lived; especially must we do this where we trace a falling off from his predecessors in moral insight and in the ritualistic influence which his work undoubtedly left behind him.

Ezekiel continues the work of the pre-exilic Prophets in that he proclaims their characteristic doctrines, and naturally he shows distinct traces of the influence of Jeremiah. What is new, is that he gives to those doctrines a more fixed and somewhat pedantic form, and a greater self-consciousness is discernible; the prophecies are accurately arranged, and the language is marked by precision; rhetoric is less frequent, and the prophecies look more fit for reading than for delivery. The idea of God is the same as in the earlier Prophets, but in Ezekiel it is elevated and rarified; especially is great emphasis laid upon the attribute of holiness, which is however a ceremonial rather than a purely ethical conception. The characteristic idea of the Prophets, that Jehovah chose Israel not for their own sakes, becomes the idea that Jehovah did this for His own sake alone, and this is so often repeated that it almost looks like arbitrariness. The cause of Judah's punishment is still traced to the sin of the people, but that sin is now definitely determined to be idolatry; and this is

insisted on almost to the exclusion of the social and ethical wrongs assailed by the earlier Prophets. While, however, Ezekiel enforces the bitter lessons of the Exile, he carefully distinguishes the true interpretation of that disaster from that which rose readily to the popular mind. He disposes of the conception that the Captivity was due to the inability of Jehovah to defend His own land (xxxvi. 20); it was a punishment for sin (xxxix. 23), and in His own time He will prove this by restoring them to their land again (xxxix. 25). Neither will he allow them to rest in the flattering thought that they were only suffering for the unvisited sins of a former generation; he insists, probably with greater rigour than experience would sanction, that each man bears his own sin, and never suffers for the sins of others. But to those who admit the justice of his charges, and who therefore regard the future as hopeless, he preaches a tender doctrine of forgiveness and the possibility of cleansing from sin. From the events of his times, he seeks to draw lessons which should redeem the mistakes that had been made in the past: the teaching of the Prophets must be kept before the people in definite rules and religious ceremonies. Old customs, whose original significance had long been forgotten, were invested with new interpretations worthy of the true religion of Jehovah, and were made not only customs, but religious commands. In the book which bears his name, and especially in chapters xl.-xlviii., he outlines a policy in which the whole of national life is comprehended in its religious significance, and thus the calamity of future apostasy prevented. The new State is to centre round the idea of worship: the Temple with its services and appointments is to be the expression of the national life. Now in this scheme there is little doubt that we have the beginning of the Levitical system, for Ezekiel is related to Leviticus as the rough sketch to the finished plan. If Leviticus in its present form existed in Ezekiel's time, then the work of the Prophet was not only entirely unnecessary, but careless and presumptuous. Some of the facts which point to the priority of Ezekiel to the Levitical Code may be noticed. In the Levitical Code we find that a distinction is made between priests and Levites. This is not found in Deuteronomy (xvii. 9, 18; xviii. 1) but is first found in Ezekiel (xliv. 10–15), where it is explained to be due to the degradation of the Levites as a punishment for leading the people into idolatry; in Leviticus we reach the final stage, where the distinction is accepted without explanation. In Ezekiel we have no mention of the high-priest or of the Day of Atonement, both of which figure so largely in the Priest's Code, although we can find *foreshadowings* of the Day of Atonement (Ezek. xlv. 18–20). Indeed we meet with no mention of the Day of Atonement, apart from the Priestly Code, until Zechariah (vii. 5; viii. 19). The general conclusion may be safely drawn, that during and after the Exile, Ezekiel's ideas were stiffened and developed into the full legislation now preserved for us in

Leviticus.

We may rightly claim Ezekiel to be the founder of Judaism, with its transcendent conception of Jehovah and its great attention to ceremonial detail, and we are bound therefore to recognise in Ezekiel a falling off from the ideals of the pre-exilic Prophets; he is a prophet in priest's clothing. Yet it may be questioned whether the idealistic teaching of the Prophets could have been preserved through the periods of the Exile and the Restoration, without this formal process. An outer husk of formality had to develop in order that the living kernel might be protected during the critical years when Persia, Greece, and Rome were to press their alien ideas upon this people. It has been well for the world that Ezekiel clothed the Prophets' teaching in the resisting garments of Judaism.

The Exile could not fail to leave upon the Jewish nation an imperishable mark, and they emerged from that trial a different people. It was a shock that brought a repentance the Prophets had often laboured for in vain, and this repentance was marked by the initiation of many new movements in thought, and by a more stringent and solemn observance of their peculiar institutions. Probably in that alien land many of the Jews adopted the customs of their conquerors, since it is estimated that not more than a small fraction returned to Palestine. This defection would impress upon those who remained faithful the necessity for a strict policy of separation, and from this time certain institutions which had been inherited from ancient Semitic practice received a new meaning. Chief among these may be noticed the observance of the Sabbath, and the rite of circumcision. The observance of a certain day as sacred to the gods is a custom that is found in nearly all early religions, and there are traces of such an observance in the Babylonian religion. We do not find however in the historical books of the Bible that mention of the Sabbath which would be expected, if it was observed with the strictness common after the Exile. There are traces of an observance, not strictly defined, save that it is in association with the new moon feasts, and is combined with social relaxation (2 Kings iv. 22, 23; Hosea ii. 11; Amos viii. 5; Isa. i. 13). Even before the Exile however a more religious conception had arisen (Jer. xvii. 19–27), and is even then referred to as an earlier command. The change after the Exile was towards an ever increasing strictness (Isa. lvi. 2, 4, 6; lviii. 13; lxvi. 23; Neh. xiii. 15–22).

The rite of circumcision was by no means peculiar to the Jewish religion (Jer. ix. 25, 26), except perhaps in so far as it was performed in infancy: its origin and growth are very obscure. Its original significance was early lost and

its interpretation was probably due to the Prophets themselves, who often referred to a spiritual circumcision, and thus made possible the full ceremonial interpretation which became so important a feature in later Judaism.

We have seen that there is evidence to prove that the religion of Israel had not always been averse to the use of idols as part of the legitimate worship of Jehovah. The Prophets began the protest against this, not so much because of its principles, but because of the immoral practices with which idol worship was connected. But after the Exile, idolatry was for ever separated from the worship of Jehovah, and in the later Prophets idolatry becomes the target for their most scornful invective. It has been suggested that this new abhorrence accounts for the non-return of the Ark, which in this period disappears from history.

Among the most important of the new institutions that can be traced back to the period of the Exile is the founding of the Synagogue. In the land of Exile, away from the one spot where sacrifice was permitted, worship had to be carried on without the aid of sacrificial or ceremonial rites, but there was nothing to prevent the people from gathering together for prayer or to hear read their newly reverenced prophetic books. It is quite possible that this led to a collection of the Prophets' writings being made, and perhaps to some editing to meet their present needs. This movement was of profound importance for the future development of religion, for it was in the Synagogue rather than in the Temple that Christianity was to find the readiest medium for its dissemination and the earliest model for its worship. The Synagogue itself prepared the way for the more spiritual developments within Judaism, for away from the Temple sacrifices and their always dangerous suggestions men learned that the sacrifice of the broken heart was more acceptable to Jehovah; and so the way was prepared for that magnificent collection of prayers and songs which we call the Psalms, which were afterwards to be used as an accompaniment to a form of worship that they frequently condemn. The external and legal conceptions were, however, to be the most visible results gained from the Exile, and they were to mould religion for many a year.

The materials for an exact history of the return from Exile do not exist in our Bibles; the accounts found in Ezra and Nehemiah raise questions which have not yet been satisfactorily answered. The Prophets who had foretold the destruction of the kingdom of Judah had never been able to rest in the thought that this was the final chapter in Jehovah's dealings with His people, and their faith forced them to peer through this impending disaster and dimly discern a purpose yet to be disclosed. This is often pictured in merely general terms, but in Jeremiah and

Ezekiel these hopes issued in the definite prophecy of the restoration of the Jews to their own land within a certain period. When political changes brought this on the horizon of possibility, the times wakened the "voice of one crying in the wilderness," in some respects the most wonderful of all that noble band we have been studying. The name of this herald has not been preserved, but he is known to criticism as the Second Isaiah. This does not of course mean that he bore that name, but it is a convenient designation for the writings that occupy the second half of the work included under the name of Isaiah. The separation of chapters xl.-lxvi. from those which precede, as from different hands, is one of the most universally accepted results of criticism. The preceding chapters end with a historic survey of events that happened in the lifetime of the great Isaiah of Jerusalem, and then suddenly the whole outlook and atmosphere change. Critics claim that the test of language and style is itself decisive, but while this must remain a question on which only Hebrew experts are qualified to pronounce, the difference of theological ideas, and the change of situation cannot be missed by any attentive English reader. Indeed that the situation has changed is a fact which has never been challenged. From chapter xl., the audience addressed consists no longer of the proud and scornful peoples of the time of Hezekiah, but of penitent captives far from their native land some 150 years later; the accepted explanation used to be that Isaiah transported himself to this later time by a miracle of prophetic inspiration. But there is really only one adducible reason for attributing this prophecy to Isaiah: it is bound up with the book that bears his name as the title. This reason is of little value when we admit our ignorance of the method by which the Old Testament was finally edited, and when the internal evidence entirely contradicts the traditional theory. For it must be borne in mind that the explanation that this is due to a prophetic transportation is only a hypothesis framed to fit the conditions, and has no claim to acceptance if there can be found one that does equal justice to the facts without appealing to such an unusual method. Moreover, the hypothesis of prediction does not fit the facts, for while some parts of the prophecy have predictive form, others have not. For instance, the picture of Cyrus and his conquests, complete even to the name of the hero, is not only presented as if he were on the stage of actual history, but his appearance is adduced as a convincing evidence of the fulfilment of prophecy. What fulfilment would it be if Cyrus was yet a figure of the unknown future? If it is claimed that this presentation is due to what is known to Hebrew grammarians as a use of the *prophetic present tense*, in which things future in fact, are stated as present, owing to the vividness of the prophetic consciousness, then we must ask why it is that Cyrus is presented as a figure of contemporary history, while the fall of Babylon is still spoken of as future. This distinction would be meaningless

if the whole of this period was seen from some anterior time.

The "settled results" of criticism were greatly ridiculed when further investigation pronounced that only chapters xl.-lv. can have come from this great Prophet, and that the remainder of the book is of a composite character, extending at least to the time of the Second Temple. To have to bring in a third author, or even more, to explain this book is quoted as an example of the foolishness of criticism. Now the critics *may* be wrong, but their theories are simply endeavours to understand these prophecies by setting them in their exact historical surroundings. Surely this is a task worthy of any reverent student of the Old Testament, and if it brings, as many believe, wonderful light on these messages, and thus sets free their eternal significance, then these men should earn gratitude rather than ridicule, when the difficulty of their task calls for a continual rearrangement and a finer adjustment.

The critical reconstruction of this prophecy therefore places chapters xl.-lv. among the scenes it depicts, and in the very history whose movements called it forth. The exact conditions can be discerned. After the death of Nebuchadrezzar the kingdom of the Chaldæans began to decline, and when Cyrus succeeded to the throne of Persia its fate was determined. His victorious campaigns, culminating in the fall of Sardis in B.C. 547, could not fail to reach the ears of the exiles in Babylon, and many a whisper of hope must have been exchanged, and many a prophecy handed on. Babylon itself fell before the conqueror in 538 and between these two dates, and perhaps nearer to the latter, the internal witness of the prophecy demands that it should be placed.

When we turn to examine the work of this unknown messenger we cannot help noticing the difference in style, which even the translation cannot obscure. The great Isaiah writes in terse, closely-packed sentences, with all the authoritative manner customary with the Prophets. This writer, on the other hand, is rhetorical, and loves to dwell on his favourite ideas. The sharp word of the prophetic deliverance here gives way to a reasoning exposition and a pleading tenderness that makes this prophecy a Gospel before the Gospels. The distinctive religious ideas can be easily marked. Absolute Monotheism is insisted on with a fulness and repetition which shows that it is in some degree a new truth. There is none beside Jehovah; He is alone, unique; and description is exhausted in the endeavour to picture His glory and power. He is now constantly referred to as the Creator of the world, the framer of the stars on high, the maker of both darkness and light, both good and evil; so that no room is left for the dualism that the Prophet may have learned to despise in the Babylonian religion.

His finest scorn is reserved for the conception that an idol can have any claim to divinity. He depicts the process of their manufacture, their utter helplessness; it may be that he had seen them borne in to the capital as the suburbs fell before the invader.

Universalism struggles for expression in this writer, but it is not always so clear and definite as in the writings of the great Isaiah. This arises however, not so much from the racial prejudices that have so clogged the Hebrew mind, as from a reading of Israel's history which the prophet was well entitled to make, namely, that she was to be the premier nation in the instruction of the world in righteousness and the knowledge of God, the priest-nation of humanity. This conception of the nation's history and destiny is embodied in a personification known as the Servant of Jehovah. Israel has been chosen as the Servant so that the light may be brought to the nations. In this mission the Servant meets with persecution, yet turns not back from those who pluck off the hair nor hides his face from shame and spitting. The slightest retrospect of Israel's history shows that the Servant of Jehovah was trained for his task only through suffering. Israel had suffered for her sins of presumption and disobedience; but were the nations who punished her any more righteous? Moreover, many of those who sat down by the waters of Babylon and wept when they remembered Zion must have been pious and righteous, and innocent of the causes of their nation's calamities. As the prophet broods over the meaning of the Exile, as it affected the godly remnant, he begins to see that this suffering, undeserved though it might be in particular cases, would become a supreme lesson in righteousness to the world. This assumption is embodied in the astonishing drama of the suffering Servant; one who suffers from a disfiguring disease, which marks him out to all beholders as the afflicted of Jehovah, and who is therefore despised and rejected of men. But the day comes when the idea slowly dawns upon men that this servant-nation suffered for the sake of the world, bore the consciousness of sin when other nations lived in carelessness and flourished on cruelty. The Prophet believed that this patient suffering would be an awakening force and would be the means of bringing the world to the knowledge of God. It is a marvellous reading of Israel's history; but it is true, for that little nation despised and rejected by Empires, battered by the armed forces which surrounded her, has made the whole world her debtor. But indirectly this interpretation is a revelation of the meaning of all history, and especially of that strange law of vicarious suffering which binds all the world one and makes every new age in debt to the past. This unknown writer has contributed one of the most fruitful ideas to the philosophy of history.

It is not surprising that most early commentators have tried to read in the 53rd chapter a picture, not of a nation, but of some definite person; although the Prophet definitely identifies the Servant of the Lord with Israel (Isa. xli. 8). But when did Israel embody such a conception? It can only stand for an ideal of what Israel ought to have been; and there have been many things which have entered into the composition of the picture. It has been suggested that one of the Prophets sat for this picture, just as sometimes an artist painting a symbolical picture will get one of his friends to sit for the model; and who could be better for this purpose than Jeremiah, the rejected of the nation? The interpretation that finds in this picture a minute prediction of the life and passion of Jesus is not sanctioned by a careful study of the passage; but the instinct that has led to this is right in the main, for as we travel down the ages looking for the fulfilment of this ideal, we only rest with complete satisfaction on the story of the life and death of One who stepping out from this very race, by His uninterrupted communion with God, His hatred of sin and His profound sympathy with mankind, bore away the sin of the world on the red flood of sacrifice, and brought in for ever the true Kingdom of God.

An increasing number of Old Testament scholars believe that another of the Prophets contains an interpretation of the Exile, conceived in the same spirit as that of the Second Isaiah, although veiled under such a strange allegorical form that centuries of Jewish and Christian interpretation have entirely missed its meaning. The book of the Prophet Jonah belongs to a later age, and should probably stand last of all the Minor Prophets, but the critical interpretation of the prophecy falls naturally to be considered here. The character of the Book reveals on close inspection that it was never intended for history; as its inclusion among the prophetical writings perhaps recognises. It is not only the improbability of the whale episode that has led to this conclusion, but the whole character of the events narrated: the sudden growth and withering of the gourd, the instant repentance of the Ninevites, which included a forced régime of fasting even for the cattle! Moreover, the closing words of the book breathe a spirit of universalism and humanity that is almost the high-water mark of Old Testament inspiration, and this encourages the reader to look for some deeper meaning in the rest of the book. The story as interpreted by critical methods is that Jonah is the nation of Israel, chosen to be a missionary nation to the heathen. On refusing the task which Divine selection had marked out for her she is thrown into exile, and has been restored for the purpose of carrying out her original mission. This is here symbolised by the whale swallowing Jonah, who on being cast up proceeded on his neglected commission, though still with little love for his work.

The imagery is crude and may strike the reader as exceedingly improbable, until his attention is drawn to the fact that the whale or sea-monster plays a great part in Old Testament imagery and is once actually used as a symbol of the Exile. "Nebuchadrezzar the King of Babylon hath devoured me, ... he hath swallowed me up like a dragon, ... he hath cast me out.... I will do judgment upon Bel in Babylon, and I will bring out of his mouth that which he hath swallowed up" (Jer. li. 34, 44). With this interpretation as a clue, the book becomes luminous. It is an apology for the Gentiles who are shown to be capable of repentance; Israel is blamed for her grudging estimate of the heathen, for her refusal to convey to them the light which she enjoyed, and for her fear lest others should share the favour of Jehovah. Perhaps the symbolic character of the book was adopted, because the author knew that if such truths were boldly stated they would never be received by his age; and so he hoped that the truth might enter in through an interesting story of wonder and adventure. It can hardly be claimed that the author has been successful; for the Jews resisted the universalism of the Son of Man and the propagandist methods of the Apostle Paul, while Christendom has been far more concerned in proving that a whale can swallow a man, than in carrying out the command to evangelise those who know not their right hand from their left.

THE WORK OF THE PRIESTS

The following passage (Exod. vii. 14–25) illustrates the attempt to disintegrate the various documents ("J" is indicated by roman type, "E" by *italics*, and "P" by CAPITALS).

"And Yahwe said unto Moses, Pharaoh's heart is stubborn, he refuseth to let the people go. *Get thee unto Pharaoh in the morning; lo, he goeth out unto the water; and thou shalt stand by the river's brink to meet him; and the rod which was turned to a serpent shalt thou take into thine hand.* And thou shalt say unto him, Yahwe, the God of the Hebrews, hath sent me unto thee, saying, Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness: and, behold, hitherto thou hast not hearkened. Thus saith Yahwe, in this thou shalt know that I am Yahwe: behold, I will smite ... *with the rod that is in mine hand upon the waters which are in the river, and they shall be turned to blood.* And the fish that is in the river shall die, and the river shall stink; and the Egyptians shall loathe to drink water from the river. AND YAHWE SAID UNTO MOSES, SAY UNTO AARON, TAKE THY ROD, AND STRETCH OUT THINE HAND OVER THE WATERS OF EGYPT, OVER THEIR RIVERS, OVER THEIR STREAMS, AND OVER THEIR POOLS, AND OVER ALL THEIR PONDS OF WATER, THAT THEY MAY BECOME BLOOD; AND THERE SHALL BE BLOOD THROUGHOUT ALL THE LAND OF EGYPT, BOTH IN VESSELS OF WOOD AND IN VESSELS OF STONE. AND MOSES AND AARON DID SO, AS YAHWE COMMANDED; *and he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river; in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood.* And the fish that was in the River died; and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink water from the river; AND THE BLOOD WAS THROUGHOUT ALL THE LAND OF EGYPT. AND THE MAGICIANS OF EGYPT DID IN LIKE MANNER WITH THEIR ENCHANTMENTS: AND PHARAOH'S HEART WAS HARDENED, AND HE HEARKENED NOT UNTO THEM; AS YAHWE HAD SPOKEN. *And Pharaoh turned and went into his house, neither did he lay even this to heart.* And all the Egyptians digged round about the river for water to drink; for they could not drink of the water of the river. And seven days were fulfilled, after that Yahwe had smitten the river."

Notes:—The account in "J" evidently had nothing about the water being turned into blood. Yahwe himself will smite the river (*Ye' or*; the Nile) so that the fish will die. "The river" probably stood after "smite ..." in "J."

In "E" Moses is commanded to smite with his rod, and the Nile will be turned into blood. In verse 17 *thine* must have stood in the original and was altered to "mine" when the documents were pieced together.

In "P" Aaron is to take the rod, and now all the rivers of Egypt, and even the water in the houses, is to be turned into blood.

Notice the formal repetition in "P."

Lecture VIII
THE WORK OF THE PRIESTS

We have seen that the Exile produced two important prophetical works. The one is a vision of a restored Jewish state, contemplated under the guise of a Church rather than as a Nation; the work of the priestly Prophet Ezekiel. The other is incorporated in the second half of the prophecies ascribed to Isaiah; the author is unknown, but the work is an attempt to interpret the calamitous history of the Exile in such a fashion that the nation might be led to take as its ideal for the future, the Servant of Jehovah, the bearer of light to the nations of the world. The outlook in these two works is entirely different, yet both seem to have called forth a school which endeavoured to work out their ideals, but the school of Ezekiel obtained a more immediate recognition and exerted the greater influence on the nation. For the first time in Israel's history a prophet is found who is concerned with matters of ritual, the regulation of a priesthood, and the details of ecclesiasticism. Ezekiel endeavoured to secure the reforms demanded by the Prophets, not only by the effect of his own preaching, but by the formation of definite organisations and the establishment of certain customs. The priestly school which followed Ezekiel and developed his conceptions, possessed sufficient prestige to persuade the nation that their scheme was of Divine authority. Their work was carried on during and after the Exile, but with the exception of Ezra, the names of the authors have not been preserved. In the Bible history their work suddenly appears under the name of "the law of Moses" in 444 B.C. The first certain mention of the recognition and observance of this law is found in Nehemiah (viii.), where a memorable scene is described. Ezra the Scribe, "the writer of the words of the commandments of the Lord and of his statutes to Israel" (Ezra vii. 11), has come from Babylon, bringing with him the law of Moses. The people are gathered together on a certain day, and from morning to noon, the law is read in their hearing, with such comments and explanations as seemed necessary. The immediate result of this publication was the discovery that important provisions had been neglected and commands very seriously transgressed, and there followed such grief and alarm among those who listened, that it was difficult for the authorities to persuade the people to

abandon their mourning and rejoice in the fact that the law had now been made known to them. On the morrow a further reading took place, when they discovered that on that very day they ought to be keeping a feast of tabernacles. The feast was therefore observed for the appointed time of eight days, and it is expressly noted that this had not been done since the time of Joshua. Other reforms were immediately set in motion; marriage with those not of pure Jewish blood was not only forbidden but, where such had actually been contracted, an immediate dissolution was enforced; a tax of one third of a shekel was levied for the upkeep of the Temple Services, and the law of the Sabbath was rigorously enforced. Now this picture was not written by a contemporary, and critics have found such difficulty in discovering the exact historical facts that considerable doubt has been aroused, not only concerning the historicity of this event, but even concerning the existence of Ezra himself. But it is certain that in the Fifth Century B.C., laws were obeyed and institutions were recognised, of which we have no record, outside the Pentateuch, in the earlier historical books. The question to be answered is: What was that "law of Moses" which Ezra brought to Jerusalem and read to the people? Later Judaism calls the first five books of the Bible "the Law of Moses," and for centuries both Jewish and Christian scholars have identified Ezra's law with these books, have supposed that they existed from the time of Moses downwards, but were entirely neglected by the Jews until this time. Modern research is compelled to dissent altogether from this tradition. Our purpose in this book prevents us from discussing the details of this controversy, but in addition to what has been already said in an earlier lecture, the main results of critical study on the origin of the Law may be outlined.

From the time occupied by Ezra in reading his law it is inferred that it could hardly have been our first five books of the Bible; and since to carry out the laws contained in them would involve endless discussion because of their contradictory character (compare for example the directions for keeping the feast of Tabernacles in Deut. xvi. 13, 15, which commands seven days, with Lev. xxiii. 39, which adds an eighth day for a solemn assembly; compare also the account in 1 Kings viii. 66, with 2 Chron. vii. 8, 10), it is thought that this law of Ezra must have been much smaller than the Pentateuch, and much more homogeneous. The Pentateuch not only contains more than "laws," but even the legal sections bear the marks of such widely different aims and conditions that we are compelled to assume a gradual collection, with continual redaction and codification, in order to account for the various phenomena. The earliest strata may go back to a great antiquity, and the customs themselves must often be primitive Semitic survivals, but the critical contention is that, as a whole, the

"Law of Moses" owes its present form to an age later than the Exile, and somewhat later than Ezra himself; for Ezra's code has itself been revised (compare Neh. x. 32, where a third of a shekel is appointed, with Exod. xxx. 13, where it has increased to half a shekel), before it was amalgamated with the Pentateuch in its existing form.

The critical basis for this theory of the gradual formation of the law is found first in the fact that the legislation of the Pentateuch is not homogeneous: it is so contradictory that to carry out the law as it stands would be found impossible. It is claimed that the presence of the various strata can be detected by the numerous repetitions (*e.g.*, the commandments exist in three recensions: Exod. xx. 1–17; xxxiv. 17–28; Deut. v. 6–21); by the use of different names for God, by the difference in language and style, and by the change in theological conceptions; and moreover, that these different strata can be roughly assigned to various ages, which can be actually confirmed by the record of their observance in the historical books (compare the provisions made for the Ark in Exod. xxv.-xl.; Num. iii.-iv., with its actual treatment in 1 Sam.).

The different strata of the laws, and the ages to which they may be roughly assigned, are as follows:—The earliest code of laws is said to be that of the "Book of the Covenant" (Exod. xxiv. 7), found in Exod. xx. 20–xxiii. 33. The primitive character of this code can be discerned, by the comparison of its directions for worship with those of later ages. It sanctioned the erection of rude altars at any place where Jehovah had been revealed, whereas in later codes no place except the one chosen spot can be used for worship, and the altar must be of highly specialised construction (compare Exod. xx. 24–26 and Deut. xii. 4–24, with Exod. xxvii. 1–8). Now it is precisely this informal worship, which could be performed by any one and at any place, that appears to have been the custom until the time of the reformation under Josiah; and in his times, and as the cause of his reform, the critics place the Book of Deuteronomy, v.-xxvi.; for it presupposes the teaching of the prophets and is the programme followed by Josiah. Then next follows "the Law of Holiness" (Lev. xvii.-xxvi.); which is either the outcome of Ezekiel's work or is shortly prior to it; anyhow, the connection is close. Then in 444 B.C. appears the code of Ezra, which was afterwards developed and set in a brief narrative describing the historical preparation for the law and its actual deliverance by Moses; this document of history and laws is known for convenience as the Priestly Code, and is denoted by the letter "P." The editorial framework of the completed Hexateuch (the first six books of the Bible), is of the same stamp as the Priests' Code, and the date of its final compilation must not be put very much later than Ezra, since the

Samaritan Pentateuch probably goes back to the Fourth Century, from which date it can claim an independent existence. It is this work of the Priests that we are now to examine. "P" is to be found at present scattered throughout the Hexateuch, and embraces nearly the whole of Leviticus, Numbers and a good portion of Exodus; is found in many scattered passages in Genesis and in a small portion of Joshua and Judges, especially, in the latter case, in the closing chapters; there is only a very little in Deuteronomy. Although not the work of one hand, these passages can be detected by their unity of motive, the uniform phraseology, the priestly outlook, and their concern with legal and ritualistic regulations. The style is stereotyped, measured, and prosaic, and is rendered somewhat monotonous by the repetition of stated formulae. The theological ideas are dominated by the thought of the awful holiness of God and the danger that there lies in approaching Him in any other than the ordained way.

What were the sources from which this code drew its material? It is not suggested that the code was simply *invented* during the Exile. Many of the legal commands concerning uncleanness, leprosy, and marriage are really ancient customs, and only owed their *codification* to this late age; for they reflect a low stage of culture, and their rites of purification are primitive. Again sacrifice had been performed as far back as Semitic history can be traced, and customs which had persisted were now simply tabulated and their form fixed. Many of the sacrificial rites prescribed in the code still bear the marks of their early origin, especially in the case of the burnt and the peace-offerings, but the law of the sin-offering shows artificial elaboration. Undoubtedly when Solomon's Temple was built a new sacrificial ritual would be developed more in keeping with the splendour of the edifice, and as the Temple increased in prestige, and when under Isaiah's influence it became the one spot at which sacrifice could be performed, the priestly caste would keep the rite in their own hands and perform it with more care; and all this would become the basis for a new ritualistic legislation. The minuteness of the Priestly Code often gives the impression of a record of exact history, but a careful examination of such measurements as are given in the case of the Ark or the Tabernacle do not confirm the historical accuracy; for the Tabernacle cannot be made exactly as described, and if it could be, would neither stand up, nor be suitable for the purpose for which it was intended, nor be able to be transported through the desert. It is simply a tent-like model of the Temple projected into the early history on the theory that the worship which existed in the writer's time was that which had always existed. The artificial conception of the history which "P" follows can of course be seen, if we separate the various strata of the first six books in the Bible, but it can be

seen without this difficult and controversial method by comparing the history of Kings with Chronicles: the one written largely before and the other entirely after the legislation of "P" had been accepted. The law of the Day of Atonement is almost entirely late, and originated in the deepened sense of guilt produced during the Exile; neither is there any trace of its observance until that time.

A difficult question has arisen concerning the date of this legislation since the discovery of the Code of Hammurabi. Hammurabi was a Babylonian king who lived somewhere about 2,250 B.C., and who has been identified by some with the Amraphael of Gen. xiv. His code reveals a fairly advanced stage of civilisation and morality existing in Babylon at that time, but its chief interest for us is found in the fact that many of the laws concerning common life, marriage, etc., are not only like the laws of the Bible, but in some cases are verbally similar. This phenomenon demands some theory of contact between the two codes, but no theory has yet been found that explains all the facts. The idea of direct borrowing on either side can hardly be taken seriously, and the correspondence between the two codes hardly requires that; so that the question is narrowed to one of influence. This influence would seem to be most natural in the time of the Exile, were it not that the strictly exclusive spirit then developed by the Jews makes it unthinkable. There remains either the explanation of a common basis for the two codes, traceable to their Semitic origin, or what has received the greater support from scholars, the idea that the influence of Hammurabi's laws on Israel's legislation is to be traced through the former inhabitants of Canaan. To understand how this is possible, we must remember that it is now known that Babylon had predominating influence over Western Palestine before the conquest of Canaan by the Hebrews; that the inhabitants of the land were much more civilised than their conquerors; and that the invaders did not exterminate the inhabitants, but quietly effected a settlement among them and adopted many of their customs.

While on the subject of the influence of Babylon it will be convenient to notice here that this influence is not confined to legal matters, but can be traced in certain legendary elements in the Old Testament. The ideal of the Priests' Code would not tolerate heathen mythology that could be detected as such, to appear in its work, and yet there are definite traces of such mythology to be found in "P"s account of the creation in Gen. i. The discovery of the libraries of Assurbanipal has brought to light records of a mythological cosmogony which, while utterly different in conception and spirit from Genesis, is sufficiently similar to suggest some degree of connection. This Babylonian Epic of creation deals not so much with the remarkably scientific idea of a gradual creation of our

earth out of chaotic materials, but with a conflict of gods and monsters which is supposed to have taken place before the creation. In the opening verses of the Bible there is a reference to the partition of the deep, which is here called by the non-Hebrew name *Tehom*, into two parts: the waters above and the waters under the firmament. Now in the Babylonian story the actual creation of the earth is preceded by a mighty struggle between *Marduk*, the sun-god (the Merodach of the Bible) and a great dragon symbolical of the primeval waters, which bears the name *Tiamat*, the Babylonian form of *Tehom*. The influence of this myth is the more certainly to be traced in Genesis, because it appears elsewhere in the Old Testament under the form of a legend of a conflict between Jehovah and Rahab, a mighty dragon; and this legend is generally in some way connected with creation (Job ix. 13; xxvi. 12; Isa. li. 9; Ps. lxxxix. 10). There is also a Babylonian story of the flood which keeps even closer to the Bible narrative, and it may be seen from the Babylonian version that this is more probably another form of the dragon myth than a common memory of a tremendous deluge. A Babylonian seal cylinder in the British Museum bears the picture of a man and woman standing one on each side of a sacred tree, from which they are picking fruit, while a serpent coils around the tree; but no written explanation of this very suggestive picture has been discovered. These mythical stories have come down from primitive Semitic times, but we cannot fail to notice that while their ancestry is undoubtedly common, there is a tremendous difference between the stage reached under the inspiration of the Hebrew genius and the crude Polytheism of the Babylonian stories. Their connection in some way is unmistakable, but still more certain is their different ethical and religious level. The fact of the borrowing does not deny the inspiration; it rather reveals how powerful that inspiration was.

To turn now to a consideration of the work of the Priests. We must doubtless concede to the workers a very lofty motive: it was nothing less than an endeavour to include the whole of the nation's life under the conception that God was dwelling among His people, and that the nation must be holy because He is holy.

But in the working out of this purpose the ideal is neither secured nor maintained. The holiness of God is insisted on with much reiteration, but it is conceived of as a physical rather than a moral attribute. It is really only a conception of the unapproachability of God unless certain purely ritual and physical conditions are observed. For the enforcement of this idea the old custom of sacrifice was elaborated and strictly defined, but strangely enough, without explicit teaching as to its meaning. This is peculiar, and it seems to have

remained largely unnoticed, for many Biblical expositors have adopted without inquiry the idea that the sacrifices were substitutionary, piacular, and typical of the sacrifice of Christ. The piacular meaning suggests itself at so many points that it is startling to find that it cannot be borne out by careful examination. The sacrifices are in most instances only efficacious for the forgiveness of unintentional sins, or for the atonement of ritualistic mistakes made in ignorance or through inadvertence. The ceremony of laying the hands of the offerer on the head of the intended victim, suggests that a symbolical transference of guilt is taking place, and yet only in one case is this accompanied by a confession of sins, and there the victim is not slain, but led away for Azazel. The sin-offering involved the death of the animal, but an animal was not absolutely necessary for the purpose, and flour might be substituted; and even where we have the slain animal, the idea that the animal has taken the place of the sinner seems to be excluded by the fact that its flesh is regarded as "most holy." The offerings are said to make atonement, but we are not told how this is affected unless in the passage that states that "it is the blood that maketh atonement, by reason of the life." The word translated "atonement" means simply "a covering," and of course may mean that the blood, which is symbolical of the offered life, either covers the eyes of God from beholding the sin, or covers the sinner. We are left then, either with the deduction that the exact significance of the sacrifices was not mentioned because everyone knew what it was, or that it has not been told because it was too mysterious, or that there was no definite meaning attached to them. Originally sacrifice did not bear a piacular significance, but it would be unsafe to argue from this that no substitutionary value was attached to the Levitical sacrifices by these priestly lawyers; indeed the only safe conclusion seems to be that the priests adopted these sacrifices, which were time-honoured, as the proper ritual for the approach to God, without any definite inquiry as to their meaning. But taking the Levitical system as a whole there seems to underlie it the theory of symbolical, although not piacular substitution. God owns man entirely, and that by right: his time, possessions, flocks, and lands; and demands from him the completest recognition of this ownership. Now in practice, this absolute demand can only be recognised by substitute and proxy; and so we have the recognition of God's claims by the observance of one holy day in seven, by the ransom of the first-born, by the sabbatical and jubilee years, by the tithes, and especially by the sacrifices. His dwelling in the land is symbolised by the respect paid to one symbolical holy place; and the continual service He demands is represented by the daily service carried on by the Levitical caste. But even if this be the intention of the system, it is nowhere so defined, and therefore it is not surprising to find that people soon forgot the symbolical meaning, and

treated the symbol as a thing sufficient in itself; with the result, that the service of God came to be restricted to a performance of rites that had lost all significance. One explanation would soon silence any criticism of this scheme that might arise, namely, that God had so ordained that men should worship Him. But deeper still there lay a radical misconception of the very nature of God and of the service He seeks. God was conceived as inimical not so much to man's sin, as to man himself; and this danger was averted by the use of protective rites which needed to be performed with scrupulous care, lest a mistake might bring down on the worshipper immediate and awful destruction, quite irrespective of his moral condition. Doubtless the nation might be impressed by these means with the awful aloofness of God, and there must often have accompanied this some notion of the ethical character that was expressed in this separateness; but the means taken for satisfying this character and demand in the nature of God could never have had any other result than it did, namely, the conception that attention to details of ritual could be a substitute for the much more difficult service of repentance and righteousness. It is possible that we may be under-estimating the real motive of the Priests' work and its actual success in preserving religion under these forms; but the radical evil is clearly exposed when we come to the time of another calamity, that which befel the nation under Antiochus Epiphanes, when no other method of averting the anger of God seems to have been thought of, except that of increasing the rigour of this ritual law and fencing it round with still further restrictions, until it became a burden too heavy to be borne.

Such a régime utterly failed to understand the teaching of Jesus and could only regard His religion as impious and lacking in all that was essential, reverential, or good, and it was "the Law" which put Jesus to death. It is much to be deplored that the Sacrifice of Christ has in turn been explained to the conscience touched to penitence and tenderness by the story of the Cross, rather by the analogy of the Old Testament sacrifices than by its complete superiority to them as based upon a different and ethical order; for the rags and tatters of the Levitical system still impede the religious life; allowing men to think that God is content with substitutes, can be placated with blood, and is more concerned with abstract regulations than with moral change. And so there still hang about religion the same inconsistencies, the same slaughter of the prophets, the same blindness to the eternal demands of personal and social righteousness. The motive of the work of the Priests may have been to enforce the prophetic repentance, but to gain this end they compromised with unspiritual ritual, and on that compromise Christ was, and is still crucified.

THE RELIGION OF THE PSALMISTS

Titles of the Psalms, descriptive of their contents:—

(1) Song, Heb. *Shirah.* A lyrical poem for singing. Probably the earliest title, which in some instances may have belonged to the original composition.

(2) *Michtam*, perhaps, "a golden piece." The title indicates their artistic form and choice contents. They were probably all taken from a previous collection.

(3) *Maschil*, a meditative poem, from a collection made perhaps in the late Persian period.

(4) Psalm, Heb. *Mizmor*. The name given to a collection used for public worship, probably in the early Greek period.

(5) *Shiggaion*, (Ps. vii.; also in plural, Hab. iii. 1.) Some take this to mean a wild, passionate composition, but this Psalm hardly bears that character. Perhaps we may expect a textual corruption from *Neginah*: a song accompanied with musical instruments.

(6) A song of Ascents: used in the processions to the Temple.

(7) A prayer.

On the question of the Davidic authorship of the Psalms, the following passages should be examined; they would appear to be in hopeless disagreement with the life of David as depicted in the historical books. Ps. v. 8–10; vi. 7, f.; xii. 1–4; xvii. 9–14; xxii.; xxvii. 10, 12; xxxv. 11–21; xli. 5–9; liv. 2–6; lxii. 3, f. The Psalms which are ascribed to some definite occasion in David's life are not on the whole any more suitable to the situation, although there is generally some single phrase which probably gave rise to this identification.

The great commentator Ewald, on literary grounds ascribed the following Psalms to David because of their originality and dignified spirit: Ps. iii.; iv.; vii.; viii.; xi.; xv.; xviii.; xix. 1–6; xxiv. 1–6; xxiv. 7–10; xxix.;

xxxii.; lx. 6–9; lxviii. 13–18; ci.; cxliv. 12–14.

Briggs would not go so far as to indicate Davidic Psalms, but would put as far back as the Early Monarchy, Ps. vii., xiii., xviii., xxiii., xxiv. b, lx. a, and cx.

Lecture IX

THE RELIGION OF THE PSALMISTS

The principles of Biblical criticism have often been traced to a vigorous application of the theory of evolution to the growth of religious ideas. Such an application, if without the support of facts, would discredit all critical results; but as a matter of fact, the critical readjustment of the Old Testament does not give a perfect progression in religious development. Indeed, it leaves us with a perplexing story of decline from high attainment. The Law follows the Prophets, and no theory can recognise the Law as an advance upon prophetic teaching. The national rejection of the Prophets is the central tragedy of Hebrew history and prepares us for the national rejection of Jesus. Yet between the Prophets and the religion of the Gospels we are able to trace an almost continuous link in the religion of the Psalmists. This connection is somewhat obscured by the early date assigned to the Psalms by uncritical tradition, by the heterogeneous character of the collection, and by its continual redaction in the interest of the purpose to which they were adapted. In adopting this collection of religious poems for the purpose of public praise, it is more than likely that additions were made, in order that they might more fitly express the need of the time, while reverence for the writings, by the time at least, of the final edition of the work, operated to preserve the original; as may be seen, for instance, in the addition made to the fifty-first Psalm (ver. 18, 19), which in its original form condemns the very worship in which it was used. Moreover the collection is as much a prayer-book as a hymn-book, for many of the Psalms are really prayers, and five of them are actually so entitled. The book was certainly used in the Temple services, but on the whole it must have seemed more fitted for the non-sacrificial and non-ceremonial worship of the synagogue, or for the private devotions of pious men and women. However and wherever used, it must have nourished a deep personal religion and kept alive hopes to which Christianity afterwards

appealed.

No other single book of the Old Testament has had such an influence on Christian piety and worship. From ancient times to the present day the Psalms have been chanted, and in Churches of widely differing ritual they have been considered the only fit vehicle for Christian praise.

Nothing more clearly demonstrates their proximity to the Christian view of things, although the modern spirit in Christendom is finding it increasingly difficult to express itself in the language of all the Psalms, on account of their imprecatory wishes. Perhaps still more, the predominant tone of the book, which is one of crying for deliverance from overwhelming enemies and oppression, hardly suits the safety of our times, or meets the demand for a joyful religious spirit. Many of the Psalms become real only in times of severe spiritual trial, and where there exists a deep sense of contrition; still better do they express the emotions which arise in times of national calamity or religious persecution; and most of all when men are constrained to take arms in the cause of religion and righteousness. They have never sounded so fitting as on the lips of the Reformers, Cromwell's Ironsides, or the Scottish Covenanters. And yet their great breadth of appeal, their touching of every possible note in religious experience—penitence and joy, questioning and trust, longing and satisfaction, defeat and victory,—their majestic literary form, and their poetic inspiration will preserve them for ever as sublime utterances of universal religion. But our work is not to appraise their eternal value, but to estimate their significance, influence, and position in the development of Old Testament religion; and to do this we must endeavour to trace the origin and compilation of the Psalter.

The criticism of the Psalter is faced by a peculiarly difficult and complex problem, arising from the lack of historic connection, the possible obliteration by editorial redaction, and the difficulty of interpreting with certainty even those data which the text presents, and it has by no means yet reached settled conclusions; only general and tentative results can be noted here. That, however, the book is the result of a gradual process, may be seen from the presence of doublets (liii. = xiv.; lxx. = xl. 13–17; cviii. = lvii. 7–11 + lx. 5–12), and from the subscription at the end of Book II., which displays ignorance of the fact that further Psalms, ascribed to David follow. It will be more convenient to start from the final position and work backward; and that final position is undoubtedly this, that the Book of Psalms as it stands in our Bible is the hymn-book of the restored Second Temple. It is a book prepared for musical accompaniment; this may be seen from the titles still preserved at the head of many of the Psalms. These titles

are of three kinds: they describe the nature of the poetic composition; they give the names of the authors and sometimes the circumstances in which they were composed; and the third kind are most probably to be explained as instructions for musical setting. These last-named titles are in most cases very obscure; the Revised Version has simply transliterated the Hebrew words. On the assumption that these are musical terms, we have three classes of them in the Psalms. One class apparently gives directions for the tune to which the Psalm is to be sung, and this tune is named, like some modern hymn tunes, after the words with which the tune had been originally or customarily associated; these appear to have been popular songs, not necessarily of an entirely religious character (Ps. lvi., R.V. title: "set to Jonath elem rehokim"; mar. translates: "The silent dove of them that are afar off"; Ps. lvii., lviii.: "set to Al tashheth," which means: "Do not destroy." In the Septuagint the setting of Ps. lxx. has been altered to: "Save me, O Lord"). Other titles seem to direct the voice to be used in singing, as either falsetto or bass (Ps. xlvi., "set to Alamoth"; probably maiden-like voices, and as women took no part in the service of the choirs, this must refer either to tenor, or male falsetto; Ps. vi., xii., "set to the Sheminith." R.V. mar., "the eighth." This is probably the octave or bass voice). Two references are to be found to the instrumental accompaniment to be used, as either stringed or wind instruments (Ps. iv., vi., etc., "on stringed instruments"; Ps. v., "with the Nehiloth," mar., "wind instruments"). The much discussed meaning of *Selah* is most probably to be sought in a musical direction. The word means: "lift up." The Septuagint translates, "interlude," but many other versions (Version of Aquila, Syriac Peshitto, Jerome and the Targum) translate, "for ever." This duplicate translation suggests the very possible clue that at the places where *Selah* appears, the Psalm might be ended, if desired, and the "for ever," or the doxology, which was usually sung at the end of the Psalm and which is found at the end of each book, could be taken there. As completed, the Psalter is therefore a book with directions for a fully organised and choral worship, and we have to seek for a time when such a worship was in existence. The difficulty is that these musical directions are somewhat rare and are not found in the later books, but only in connection with those Psalms entitled, "for the Director." As the instruments mentioned are only of the simplest kind and not of the varied character used in the ornate worship of the Temple (cxlix. 3; cl. 3–5), and as by the time the Greek translation was made (150 B.C.), their significance was forgotten, we have to put the final edition long after the founding of synagogue worship, in which the Director's Psalm Book was first used, and at some period when there had been a complete change in musical practice. This demands a time when Hellenistic culture had moulded even the Temple worship. (The Jews were under Greek

influence and rule from B.C. 333 to B.C. 63.) The time from which a full choral service was in use in the Temple is to be carried back, according to the Chronicler, to the time of Solomon and David, but a comparison with the earlier history contained in the Books of the Kings does not confirm this. The Chronicler, who from his interest in these matters seems to have been a member of one of the Levite choirs, really gives us the customs current in his times, and infers that they went back unchanged to the time of the building of the first Temple and to the preparatory work of David. These considerations, together with the admitted lateness of many of the Psalms, some of them undoubtedly belonging to the times of the Maccabæan wars, bring us down to that late age and perhaps more precisely to the time of the rededicated Temple (165 B.C.), and demand that the final edition of the Psalter is to be placed somewhere about 150 B.C.

We might expect to find traces of the growth of the Psalter in the division into five books (at xli., lxxii., cvi., cl., see R. V.), but there seems no real division necessary between Books IV. and V. and the five-fold division may be due to the desire to imitate the divisions of the Law; the other divisions however contain more hopeful suggestions. The first book, for instance, is almost entirely ascribed to David (Ps. i. is an introduction to the whole book, composed for the final edition, and Ps. ii. may have been also placed in front as part of the introduction. Ps. xxxiii., which is very late, may have been added as a kind of doxology to Ps. xxxii. The rest are ascribed to David). The second book is largely Davidic and it concludes with the statement: "the prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended." In spite of this notice Psalms are found ascribed to David in the books that follow, so that the remark must have been found appended to a collection that the final editor took over; it cannot be due to his own hand. Further evidence of compilation is to be found in the strange occurrence of the different names for God: Elohim and Jehovah. In the first book the name of Jehovah preponderates. In Book II. the name Elohim is found most frequently. Then in Book III. Psalms lxxiii.-lxxxiii. use Elohim only, and lxxxiv.-lxxxix. Jehovah mainly; and in practically the whole of Books IV. and V. Jehovah is almost solely used, The reason for this phenomenon must be sought in editorial redaction, for in the duplicate Psalms, xiv. and liii., xl. 13–17 and lxx., Jehovah is found in the first recension and Elohim in the second. The Elohistic character of lxxiii.-lxxxiii. may be due to the original compiler since they are all ascribed to Asaph and otherwise bear marks of common production. The Elohistic redaction may have been made in a period when the name Jehovah sounded tribal and almost heathenish; but a similar test leads to the conclusion

that the first collection enjoyed by this time a liturgical familiarity, which did not permit of alteration. The reversion to the name of Jehovah in Books IV. and V. might be explained by the fact that in later times the name was written but never pronounced. On the line of these suggestions we should expect to find that Book I. contained the earliest Psalms and Books IV. and V. the latest; this is roughly correct, if we allow for the possibility of minor insertions being made for various purposes in the last edition. In Book V. there is a group of Psalms (civ.-cvi., cxi.-cxiii., cxv.-cxvii., cxxxv., cxlvi.-cl.), which are distinguished by either commencing or ending with "Hallelujah," and are known as the "Hallels." From their contents, it may be observed that they are suitable for use at the Great Festivals, and it is known that they were, and are still so used by the Jews. They imply a highly organised musical service (Ps. cl.), they require a time when the festivals were regularly observed and when the worship of the Temple could be carried on without fear. Such conditions are to be found together only after the Exile, and then only during the period of Greek rule; and to this late period the composition of these Psalms is to be referred. An even later date is demanded for some Psalms that are said to reflect the rebellion against the Hellenizing movement enforced by Antiochus Epiphanes, in which the Maccabees played such a heroic part. This date is confirmed by the references to: the "assembly of the saints" (Ps. cxlix. 1, Heb. *hasidim*, the purist party formed in that time); the cruel persecution for religious opinions (Ps. xliv. 17–22; lxxix. 2; lxxxiii. 3, 4); the defiling of the Temple, the burning of the synagogues, and the silence of the Prophetic voice (Ps. lxxiv. 7–9; lxxix. 1). Other Maccabæan Psalms are said to be: cx., where there is a reference to some priest who is not in the legitimate succession, which entirely describes the Priest-Kings of the Maccabæan dynasty (other scholars would put this Psalm very early; on the other hand there are alleged traces of an acrostic that would spell Simon, the first of the Maccabæan Priest-Kings); cxv. cxviii., which celebrate successful wars in which the leaders have been the house of Aaron, to which house the Maccabees of course belonged. This is the latest date that is demanded for any of the Psalms, and in the present condition of criticism we can only say that between this and some earlier period the book is to be placed. It must now be our task to discover the earliest date that any of the Psalms demand. We have seen that Book I. seems to be the earliest collection, and tradition assumes that this was the work of David and was the Psalm Book used in the First Temple. To discuss this point it is necessary to enquire into the reliability of the titles that ascribe the Psalms to definite authors. These titles give: one each to Moses, Ethan, and Heman; two to Solomon; eleven to the Sons of Korah; twelve to Asaph; and seventy-three to David (it is doubtful whether Jeduthun is a person; if so he is probably the same

as Ethan: Ps. xxxix., lxii., lxxvii., titles; cp. 1 Chron. vi. 44 with 1 Chron. ix. 16). Now it should be noticed that none of the authors are later than Solomon (Ethan, 1 Kings iv. 31, 1 Chron. vi. 44; Heman, 1 Kings iv. 31, 1 Chron. vi. 33, xv. 17, 19, xxv. 5; Asaph, 1 Chron. vi. 39, xxv. 1f, Neh. xii. 46; in Ezra ii. 41, Neh. vii. 44, Asaph seems to mean a guild of singers rather than an individual). If any of the Psalms ascribed to authors might be expected to yield confirmation by internal evidence, it would be Ps. xc.; but there is nothing in its language or thought that points to extreme antiquity. There is also nothing in the Psalms themselves that confirms the authorship of the contemporaries of Solomon, Ethan and Heman. The title of Ps. cxxvii., "of Solomon," is missing in the Septuagint and is evidently a late gloss, and the title of Ps. lxxii. is translated in the Septuagint: "a psalm *for* Solomon," which certainly describes the contents better. The Psalms ascribed to the Sons of Korah (xlii.-xlix., lxxxiv., lxxxv., lxxxvii., lxxxviii.; 2 Chron. xx. 19, 1 Chron. xxvi. 19; but 1 Chron. vi. 33–38 shows that Kohathite and Korahite are the same), have common features, as have also the Psalms ascribed to Asaph, which imply that they are at least guild collections; but their exalted conception of God, their consciousness of national righteousness, the reference to synagogue worship and the cessation of prophecy (lxxiv. 8f) point to a time subsequent to Ezra.

The chief interest of the titles is found in the ascription of so many Psalms to David. It was long thought that David was not only the author of the Psalms ascribed to him, but that he was also editor of the entire Psalter. (When as early as Theodore of Mopsuestia it was recognised that some of the Psalms were Maccabæan, it was supposed that David wrote them in the spirit of prophecy.) Our enquiry may be narrowed down to those Psalms that are ascribed to David in the earliest collection, Book I. Do these reflect the conditions and development of his times? It must be replied that there is nothing in the Davidic Psalms as a whole to distinguish them from other Psalms, and what historical connection they betray seems everywhere to belong to an age later than David. The Temple is spoken of as already in existence (Ps. v. 7; xi. 4) and the name for Jerusalem, "my holy hill," seems to demand a time subsequent to the mission of Isaiah. The general conditions of life reflected are clearly those in which a godly minority is oppressed and wickedness is established in the land; a condition which finds no parallel in the Books of Samuel. Moreover, the religious ideas are far in advance of those that seem to have been prevalent in the time of David or that can be traced to him. The general tone of the Psalms is one of a chastened piety that hardly existed in the time of the kingdom, and the religious ideas everywhere show dependence upon the teaching of the Prophets. There is hardly

a verse of the fifty-first Psalm which cannot be paralleled in Jeremiah, but there is almost nothing in the Psalm that makes it a fitting confession for an adulterer and murderer. These considerations lead us to enquire whether the Hebrew preposition translated "of" David denotes authorship; its accurate signification is "belonging to," and from the analogy of the other titles we infer this to mean that the editor found these Psalms in a collection ascribed to David. What gave the name of David to that collection? Some of the Psalms may be pre-exilic and may even go down to the early monarchy; Ps. xx. may belong to the Old Kingdom, but it can hardly have come from the lips of David; it is Ps. xviii. that has perhaps the greatest claim to Davidic authorship. This Psalm is also found in 2 Sam. xxii., but there it seems to be an interpolation, for it breaks apart verses that apparently once stood together (2 Sam. xxi. 22 and xxiii. 8). Yet we meet with a reference to the Temple even in this Psalm (2 Sam. xxi. 7); at the same time several of its passages would come very fittingly from the Warrior King, and would be suitable to his barbarous times. In this Psalm, if anywhere, we may possess some original Davidic fragments. We must conclude therefore, that the Davidic Psalter was so called because its origin was somehow due to David, or because it contained some Song of David which must have been considerably altered to suit liturgical purposes. The early tradition of David ascribes to him a poetic and musical gift (1 Sam. xvi. 18; Amos. vi. 5), and of this the lament over Saul and Jonathan (2 Sam. i.) is a sufficient confirmation, but it should be noticed that it is remarkably free from any religious sentiment whatsoever. It must be due to the later tradition of the Chronicler that David has been credited as the saintly author of the whole Book of Psalms. The conclusion is that the titles are not, strictly speaking, a claim to authorship, but are names given, for various reasons, to pre-existing collections; that the earliest of these collections may contain pre-exilic Psalms, but that everything points to the collection being made for use in the time of the Second Temple. The references to a king do not necessitate any re-consideration of this verdict; they may be personifications of the nation in the light of Messianic conceptions.

This position has been steadily resisted by some in the interests of tradition, but without any real religious reason being adduced; for the idea that this decision denies the authority of Christ and His Apostles is disposed of by the simple fact that in the New Testament, David is simply a name for the Psalter (Ps. ii. is ascribed to David in Acts ii. 34; it is anonymous in the Psalter. Heb. iv. 7 has "in" David; this does not refer to authorship, for the author of this Epistle never quotes the Scriptures save anonymously). To others it will perhaps come as a great relief to feel that the writer of some of the most spiritual utterances of

personal religion need not be identified with the historical David. There are awful possibilities of failure in the most religious men, but the problem here is more difficult than that: it would compel us to think of David as displaying in public no hint of the secrets of his inner religious life, but very much that contradicts them. The traditional idea of the authorship of the Psalms has done grave injustice to the sincere if passionate character of the historical David. The origin of such a tradition is due as much to the spiritual blindness as to the careless historic judgment of later Judaism, and its acceptance by generations of Christian students speaks a greater reverence for tradition than for religious insight. To be compelled to date the great majority of the Psalms within the period 500–150 B.C., is indeed a comforting interpretation of Jewish history; for it shows that the barren ground of post-exilic times was not without its tender flowers of piety and an appreciation of the prophetic religion far beyond that of the Prophets' contemporaries. The gloss of legalism, which can be traced in the Psalter, and which was inevitable when these private devotions were adapted to the Levitical worship of the Temple, has not succeeded in obscuring, but rather brings into greater clearness the spiritual elements in the Psalms.

It is welcome to turn from this task of literary criticism, which finds in the Psalms its most difficult field, and which perhaps yields here less help than in other branches of Bible literature, to an endeavour to appreciate the religion of the Psalmists. There is difficulty here also; but now it is in the splendour of the composition, the magnificent breadth of experience they embrace, the classic utterance of the eternal religion of the heart. We have recognised the heterogeneous character of the collection, and it is only to be expected that this should be reflected in the variety of religious ideas. A theology of the Psalter is as impossible as it is mistaken. The quality of poetic genius varies, the heights of religious inspiration sometimes reached are not consistently maintained, and there are many lower levels. And yet there remains a sufficient unity to leave a very definite impression; that unity owes little to similarity of circumstances, to contemporaneity, or to the influence of a theological school; it is rather due to the unreflective simplicity of the human mind in the realised presence of God. In that position all unfettered religion speaks one tongue: the only mother tongue of humanity. The inspiration of the Psalmist owes its beauty to the absence of self-consciousness. There is nothing here of the prophetic claim to speak in the name of God; in the Psalms God does not speak to men, men speak to God, but it is just because of this that the revelation in the Psalms reaches so far beyond the limits of Old Testament religion and seems to grasp that religion which was to be personified in the consciousness of Jesus. We are compelled to recognise that

men's prayers are themselves a revelation of God, and that when men seek to voice their highest aspiration we catch the sound of a deep undertone, the supplication of the Spirit that intercedes within.

As an expression of eternal religion the Psalms have one serious defect, which really unfits them, without careful selection, for use in Christian worship —their awful imprecations upon enemies. There are hardly to be found in the whole realm of literature more fearful desires for vengeance than in the Psalms (cix. 6–15. cxxxvii. 9; cxl. 10). To date the Psalms from the comfortable times of the monarchy, under the martial supremacy of David and Solomon, is to make them cruel without meaning; but imagine the sufferings of the Israelites in Exile, or in the still worse times when the pious remnant were persecuted by their own irreligious and apostate countrymen, which was so often their lot in post-exilic times, and these expressions can be explained, even if they cannot be justified. The desire for vengeance does not arise from personal motives, but is doubtless due to the complete identification of the Psalmist with the cause of God and righteousness, and to his burning indignation against the cruelty, injustice, and craftiness of the impenitent wicked. Thus understood, there is a moral element in this anger, which is not only to be condoned but even admired. This deep moral revulsion has been one of the greatest factors in moulding history along righteous lines. But when all this has been said, it remains to be acknowledged frankly that this is not the religion of the Sermon on the Mount. The anger at sin is right, but the desire for vengeance is no real cure for sin. It is far from the deep wisdom of the Son of Man; but we have to remember, when we judge the Psalms from that standard, that His wisdom is still unaccepted, not only by the world, but by many who profess His name.

It is in the Psalms that personal religion receives its clearest exposition in the Old Testament, and this spirit owes much to the personal experience of Jeremiah. There has been an endeavour to find the speaking subject of the Psalms not in the individual but in the nation. There are national Psalms, but many others cannot be successfully interpreted save as the expressions of personal devotion. National religion could never reach these heights; it is bound down to the average level, it is always open to unethical movements and ideas. The personal element is not to be confused with the individualistic; the personal is wider than the individual; it realises the things that lie at the base of all human life, and when it is most personal it speaks the most universal language. It is in the deep sense of sin and the assurance of forgiveness that the Psalms are the classics for all who know the secrets they utter; and the sense of sin can never be felt save under the searching light of God's very presence. To be deeply

conscious of sin is the first step towards any high revelation of God, and of this the fifty-first Psalm is the most perfect expression; there we see the sense of inward sin, opening up the possibility of a separation between the self and that higher self, the holy spirit, and bringing about the severest mental pain and anguish. Naturally, the Psalms hardly rise to the Christian ground of forgiveness, but the thirty-second Psalm vibrates with the joy that the Christian knows and, when mere figures of speech are discounted, it springs from the same reason: the acknowledgment of one's sin and the consciousness of its forgiveness in the newly realised communion with God.

In dealing with the problem of the providential order of the world, the Psalms hardly reflect any higher conceptions than those found elsewhere in the Old Testament, if they even rise as high as the conception of the Second Isaiah. The idea that goodness is rewarded by long life and prosperity, and that wickedness is always marked by outward disaster is the root idea; and the fact that this is not confirmed by observation is the cause of the complaint of many a Psalm. This problem receives no conscious solution throughout the book. The revelation given through the worship of the sanctuary only shows that the prosperity of the wicked is temporary (Ps. xxxvii., lxxiii.); but how often even this must seem to be untrue, for in many cases there are no bands in their death. Nothing higher is reached than pride in one's integrity and the assurance that somehow and somewhere retribution is sure. There is no conception of the principle of vicarious suffering, and the values set upon righteousness and prosperity never attain to those words of Jesus: "Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness sake."

The pressure of this problem of Providence is supposed to have driven the Psalmists to pierce the veil and to descry beyond the grave a compensation for the inequalities of this life, and passages are frequently adduced to prove this (Ps. xvi. 10, 11; xvii. 15; xlix., 15; lxxiii. 23–26). The current belief of Israel embraced an existence after death, but only in the form of unconscious and shadowy life in the under world, *Sheol*, and this is most explicitly expressed in many of the Psalms (vi. 5; xxx. 9; xlix. 14; lxxxviii. 10–12). What then is the significance of the expressions which seem to point to something more? An accurate translation and a correct exegesis dispose of nearly all of these passages as in any sense explicit evidence for a definite belief in immortality; but there remains a witness of much greater value. It is through communion with God, and because of the significance with which it invests conscious life that the Psalmists are led to feel that their experience can never be interrupted by death. To those who know the reality of personal communion with God, this has more cogency

than any other argument for immortality. The experience of communion throws a new value on personality and gives a deeper meaning to this life, and in face of this discovery death becomes nothing more than a passing shadow. While therefore the application of Ps. xvi. 10 to the resurrection of Christ is foreign to the methods of modern interpretation, that passage does show the real significance of the resurrection of Christ; for it is the person of Christ in communion with God that has brought life and immortality to light. The Psalmist shared this vital experience whether he was able to infer immortality of the soul from it or not.

But the glory of the Psalms is found in their realisation of the presence of God. This expresses itself in the vivid consciousness of a present and helpful Personality rather than in intellectual concepts or theological definitions. The transcendence of God receives full appreciation, but it is never in terms of spatial distance, but in an inward realisation of His moral excellence (Ps. xxxvi. 5–7). To the discerning soul the presence of God is inescapable and is absolutely omnipresent (Ps. cxxxix. 7–10). Right alongside of the recognition of the might of God and His holiness, there is found the sense of His fatherly pity, His gentleness, and His understanding of us (Ps. ciii. 13; xviii. 35).

It would be altogether mistaken to look in the Psalms for that conception of Nature which has become one of the greatest gains of modern culture. To the Psalmist Nature has no meaning apart from God, and it is merely the sphere of His activity. But the beginnings of a poetic delight in things is felt almost on every page (Ps. xxiii. 2; lv. 6; lxv. 8, 9; xciii. 3; cvii. 24; cx. 3b; cxxiv. 5; cxxx. 6; cxxxix. 18b); while the so-called Nature Psalms (viii., xix., xxix., lxv., xciii., civ., cxlviii.) yield a conception of creation and of the relation of God to the world that has not sufficiently shaped theology, and as a consequence has made it possible for us to think of a conflict between religion and science.

The consciousness of God as of a present living Personality is the great contribution of Hebrew religion, and of this the Psalms are the supreme expression. All conception of a merely unconscious, all-pervading essence is transcended by the intense experience of communion; He is "an ever present help in time of trouble."

The Hebrew Psalmist may be a child beside the Hindu sage or the Greek philosopher, but no one has ever sounded the human heart as he. The experience he has bequeathed to the world is that of a God who is infinite, mighty and all-present, and yet One who can be known in the experiences of temporal life and felt in the limitations of the human mind; One who shepherds and guides men,

and who can take the place of human friend or nearest relative. This is in the direct line with Christ's consciousness of the Father. Without this we may have a mysticism that must perforce remain silent, or a philosophy that loses itself in the endeavour to reconcile the antinomies of thought, but without this we cannot have a religion that can satisfy the craving of the human heart for an infinite, holy, and helping Companion.

THE RELIGION OF THE WISE

In determining from internal evidence whether Job is later or earlier than Proverbs, the following comparisons should be examined:—

Job	v. 17		and	Prov.	iii. 11.
"	xi. 8		"	"	ix. 18.
"	xv. 7		"	"	viii. 25.
"	xviii. 5,6	}	"	{ "	xiii. 9.
"	xxi. 17	}	"	{ "	xxiv. 20.
"	xxii. 28		"	"	iv. 18.
"	xxviii. 18		"	"	iii. 15; viii. 11.
"	xxviii. 28		"	"	i. 7.

In these examples, it might be noted, it is the friends of Job who quote the Proverbs; except in Job xxi. 17, where Job questions the Proverb already quoted by Bildad, rather than quotes it with approval; and in the case of xxviii. 18, 28, the whole chapter is regarded by critics as suspicious, on the ground that the sentiments here expressed by Job are in contradiction to his general attitude. These passages would seem somewhat to confirm the idea that the Book of Job is intended to be a criticism of the theory of Providence found in Proverbs.

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On the suggestion that Ecclesiastes owes its disjointed character to some disarrangement of the original sheets of the MS., Bickell proposes to read the book in the following order:—

(1) i. 1–ii. 11. (2) v. 9–vi. 7. (3) iii. 9–iv. 8. (4) ii. 12–iii. 8. (5) viii. 6–ix. 3. (6) ix. 11–x. 1. (7) vi. 8–vii. 22. (8) iv. 9–v. 8. (9) x. 16–xi. 6 (10) vii. 23–viii. 5. (11) x. 2–x. 15. (12) ix. 4–10. (13) xi. 7–xii. 8. Bickell would regard the Appendix, xii. 9–14, as a later addition.

Lecture X

THE RELIGION OF THE WISE

Certain books of the Old Testament have a marked resemblance both in their subject-matter and in their religious and ethical outlook. They stand out from the other classes of the literature, for they are neither prophetical, like the writings of the Prophets or the histories written under their influence, nor legalistic, like the great codes of the Pentateuch, nor liturgical and devotional, like the Psalms; and for convenience they are designated: "the Wisdom Literature." These writings deal chiefly with "wisdom," or the practical ordering of life, and we frequently find a reference to "the words of the wise," as if there was a school of teachers who were devoted to the discussion of these problems. The chief contributions of this school are, in our Bible, the Book of Proverbs, and in the Apocrypha, Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus. Job and Ecclesiastes are occupied with the same problems, but their attitude is critical and their method of treatment peculiar.

No one can fail to feel the almost perplexing difference of this literature from the rest of the Old Testament; unlike the prophetic it has less a message to the conscience than a problem for the mind; unlike the historical books it is perfectly timeless, and utterly detached from the national hopes; it is not occupied with ceremonies or ritual, but with religion as a matter of conduct. The nearest approach to this is to be found in some of the Psalms, which, passing from the emotions of the devout spirit, become engaged with the problems and injustices of life. Its religion is more universal than that of the Prophets or even of the Psalmists, but it is less emotional; the religion of the heart has given way to the wisdom of the mind. We have here the beginnings of a philosophy, a mental activity strangely absent from the Hebrew race; it is not however a speculative philosophy, but one purely concerned with practical life; and yet there is a direct progression traceable from the chapters in Proverbs (i.-ix.), which are devoted to the praise of wisdom, through the work known as the Wisdom of Solomon, to Philo, the great Jewish philosopher, who endeavoured to interpret Moses by Plato and to reconcile Hebrew religion with Greek speculation. Although in this literature we have the beginnings of a philosophy it is rather that of the street than of the academy; a cultivation of a philosophic attitude towards life, its problems and duties, rather than any speculation on metaphysical reality or the absolute origin of things. The wisdom we hear so much of is an intellectual virtue, although it embraces neither speculation nor

learning, but is limited to mean sagacity, shrewdness, prudence in the conduct of life. This is the main theme of the Proverbs, but the problem of the correct ordering of life unearths a deeper and darker one—the problem of the existence of evil, the injustice of life as revealed in the blind indiscrimination of trouble, pain, and death. With this problem some of the Psalms and the Books of Job and Ecclesiastes especially deal.

In seeking to place this literature, we are met with an even worse difficulty than in the case of the Psalms; for the entire absence of historical allusion, and the spirit of detachment in which religious questions are discussed, leave no trace of date or age. The three books in our Bible belonging to this literature are ascribed to very early authors; two to Solomon and one traditionally to Job or Moses, although the Book of Job is really anonymous. Now it is exceedingly difficult to gather from the prophetic or historical books any trace of the opinions that are found in the Wisdom Literature. The problem of evil certainly began to occupy the minds of men like Jeremiah even before the Exile; but in the picture which the Prophets give us of the Jewish state under the late monarchy, we get no glimpse of a people who looked on life and religion as do the writers of these books. In the Wisdom Literature we find references to "the wise" as to a special class in the community (Prov. i. 6; xxii. 17; xxiv. 23; Job xv. 18); in the historical literature we find the "wisdom" of certain men extolled (Solomon, 1 Kings iii. 16–28; iv. 29–34; x. 3 ff.; Joseph, Gen. xli. 39; the four wise men, 1 Kings iv. 31, the wisdom of Egypt, the East, 1 Kings iv. 30, and of Edom, Ob. 8; Jer. xlix. 7), and in the prophetic writings "the wise" are mentioned as a class distinct from the prophet and the priest (Jer. xviii. 18) and often in a depreciatory way (Isa. xxix. 14; Jer. viii. 8; ix. 12). It seems almost impossible to identify the wise men of Proverbs with this class who receive so little praise from the Prophets. The wise men of Proverbs do not speak as if they needed to defend themselves against the claims of the prophet (Prov. xxix. 18; the reference to "vision," which can only mean a communication to the prophet, is not found elsewhere in Proverbs and is doubted by many scholars), nor can we understand the need for the message of the Prophets if this practical religion of "the wise" was current in their times. This religion may lack passion and be without national consciousness, but Isaiah and Micah would surely have found something to their heart's desire in its pure ethical character. Indeed, the religious thought seems to be dependent on the teaching of the Prophets, but only at a distance, for it is ethically advanced and has become somewhat rarefied and unemotional. The literary character seems also to point to a later age; for it is academical, sophistical, and polished. The polish of the Proverbs might be due to constant

use among the common people, but they are not like popular sayings (cp. 1 Sam, xxiv. 13; 1 Kings xx. 11; Jer. xxxi. 29; Ezek. xviii. 2), and their evident kinship with Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus indicates a late post-exilic origin.

We shall first devote some time to an examination of the Book of Proverbs. The Hebrew "proverb" (*mashal*) means "a representation," and may be used of a fable or a taunt, but is more especially confined to any generalisation from experience or observation on life and character expressed in a rhythmic and polished form. The most usual form of the proverb is a couplet in which a common fact of Nature is placed beside a common fact of human life: "Where there is no wood the fire goes out, and where there is no talebearer strife will cease."

The book as a whole would seem to be ascribed to Solomon (i. 1), but this is only the tradition of the final editor; for, as in the case of the Psalter, Proverbs shows every trace of gradual compilation, and the names of other authors are given.

The main divisions of the book are as follows:—

A. (i. 1–6). The prologue, by the final editor, either ascribing the work to Solomon or else praising his proverbs.

B. (i. 7–ix.). This seems to be the latest addition to the book; it is not a collection of proverbs at all, but is a continuous discourse in praise of Wisdom. In viii. 22 Wisdom is personified as a creature of God present at the creation of the world. This hypostatization of an attribute of God is one of the latest developments of Hebrew thought, and is so unusual to its genius that we are compelled to seek for some possibility of infiltration from foreign sources. The idea is still further developed in Ecclesiasticus (xxiv.), and in the Book of Wisdom has become quite a Platonic speculation (vii. 22–viii. 1). The appearance of this idea in Hebrew thought seems to be most explicable in the period of Greek influence, when Plato's doctrine of the Idea might become known in Palestine; somewhere about 250 B.C. seems a likely date. The identification of virtue with knowledge, which we find in the book, is also due to Greek thought. It was along this line of development that the conception of "the Logos" was welcomed into Jewish thought, to have through Philo such a profound influence on some of the writers of the New Testament.

C. (x.-xxii. 16). This collection of proverbs is ascribed to Solomon and is generally thought by critics to be the oldest main collection; many would even be willing to assign it to the golden age of the monarchy. The Solomonic

authorship is, however, unthinkable; the sentiments expressed are unsuitable for a luxurious and polygamous monarch (xv. 16, xxi. 31; xxii. 14; xiii. 1; cp. 1 Kings iv. 26; xi. 1, 4, 5–13; xii. 10, 11), and the ascription to Solomon is probably due to circumstances similar to those which operated in the case of the ascription of the Psalms to David. There are many objections to any pre-exilic time as a suitable historic background for this collection; there is no mention of idolatry, whereas we learn from Ezekiel (vi., viii., xxiii.) that idolatry was practised in Jerusalem down to the time of the city's destruction; monogamy seems to be taken quite for granted, whereas it would appear that polygamy was general before the prophetic reforms; and of the great upheaval that these reforms involved, this collection shows no trace. The national religion has here given place to universalism, a development that seems to demand some experience of contact with other nations and especially some acquaintance with foreign culture. The references to the king neither require Solomonic authorship nor demand an age when the monarchy was established; for they are only general sentiments concerning the duties of the king in the State, and are of such a nature that they show very little reminiscence of Israel's actual experience of a monarchy.

D. (xxii. 17–xxiv. 22) and E. (xxiv. 23–34) are two collections of the sayings of "the wise," whose ascription, together with the reference to "instruction," points to an advanced stage of reflection and teaching, and perhaps to the existence of philosophic teachers who had schools and pupils.

F. (xxv.-xxix.). "These also are proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah, King of Judah, copied out." This title has an air of circumstantiality about it which looks like a genuine historical note, and it has been observed that there is a change of tone, in this collection, in regard to the monarchy, as if some actual experience of kingly tyranny had been lately borne; so that if we were to refer this collection to the age mentioned in the title we should have to ante-date the collection, C. But in view of the state of society here portrayed, which is similar to that of Ecclesiasticus, we have no alternative but to regard the title, as in the case of some of the Davidic Psalms, as due to later Jewish scribes, and as without authority.

G., H. and I. are three small collections (xxx.; xxxi. 1–9; xxxi. 10–31), the first by Agur: a very obscure passage, apparently quoting a declaration of reverent agnosticism, with a reply to it by some more believing scribe. The second is ascribed to King Lemuel, and the third is in praise of a virtuous woman, by an anonymous writer.

The religious teaching of the Proverbs would seem to be a refinement of the prophetic religion, standing quite apart from the legal and ritual development. Religion has become entirely a matter of ethics; the creed is wonderfully colourless and simple, and the inducement to virtue remains almost entirely on the plane of utilitarianism and prudence. There is a good deal that is quite worldly wisdom, but pure religion is by no means wanting (xxi. 3; xiv. 34); the fear of the Lord is not slavish fear, but is a guiding principle for life and the beginning of wisdom. Men are divided somewhat roughly into the foolish and the wise; and although no book in the world has ever depicted the foolishness of men with greater variety and reality, yet there seems no hope that folly may be overcome, or that wicked men can be turned from their ways; Wisdom knows no forgiveness and can only mock when men turn to her too late (i. 24–28). Yet the ethical level is high; woman especially is highly estimated, and the home life is held sacred; kindness to animals is inculcated (xii. 10), and there is a real approach to absolute ethics in such sayings as: "Say not thou, I will recompense evil"; "Say not I will do so to him as he hath done to me" (xx. 22; xxiv. 17, 29; xxv. 21, 22). The writers have been called "humanists," and this rightly describes their position; it is the highest level rabbinical religion ever reached; it has its parallel in some of the aphoristic teaching of Jesus, but it has no message for the outcast and fallen; it knows no secret whereby the fool may be made wise and the heart be changed by a great emotion; it is the religion of the sage, not the religion of the Saviour. The doctrine of retribution is still thought to be quite satisfactory in its working (ii. 21 f.; x. 25; xi. 21). In an earlier and less reflective age this idea would not have been unexpected; but it is remarkable that it should be acquiesced in by the wise men; and yet it is an idea of life that seems to persist against all experience: it is found in the time of Christ and it still obtains, especially in the judgment of the cause of poverty. Perhaps its persistence is to be traced to an ideal of justice so strong as to obscure accurate observation of the facts.

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When we turn to the Book of Job we come to a work not only the greatest product of the wise men, but the supreme literary production of the Hebrew nation. The grandeur of its language has somewhat obscured the real meaning of the book; for the opinions that the book was written to controvert are stated with such vivid power and poetic grace that they are now often quoted as Biblical truths of equal value with the opinions apparently supported by the author. It is our task, not so much to admire the literary talent of the author, as to estimate his contribution to the religion of Israel.

The Book of Job has been referred to almost every age from Moses to post-exilic times. There is certainly an endeavour to reproduce the conditions of the patriarchal age, in the avoidance of the name Jehovah (Exod. vi. 3), and in the money standard adopted (Job. xlii. 11); but there is no desire to deceive the reader, for this archaic atmosphere is adopted merely as the appropriate setting of the dialogue, and is not maintained: the name Jehovah slips from the author's pen, he takes no pains to conceal his knowledge of the Law and his interest in the questions of his own times. The question of age is not to be complicated by the question of authorship; there was a person named Job, known to Ezekiel (xiv. 14), but there is nowhere any assumption that Job himself wrote the book; and the mechanical and symbolical character of the disasters which befall Job, and the nature of the compensation, show that we have here only dramatic settings for the speeches and not actual history. It is likely that there was a well-known tradition of a man named Job who had suffered overwhelming troubles and eventually had been restored to his former prosperity, and this is made the basis for a discussion of the problem of suffering. It has been suggested that in the Prologue and Epilogue we have fragments of that old tradition, since these passages are in prose while the body of the book is in semi-poetic rhythm; but the prose form is best explained as that always adopted by the Hebrews for narrative, for we find ideas in these parts that betray as late a date as anything in the body of the work. Considered on internal evidence, everything seems to point to the age which produced the rest of the Wisdom Literature; and more precisely, a date shortly before or shortly after Proverbs, seems indicated. The material for deciding more particularly is such that different conclusions may be drawn from it. For instance, the personification of wisdom in Proverbs seems to be in advance of the idea of wisdom in Job; and if we could think of the development of an idea always coinciding with chronological progression, then Job would need to be placed earlier than Proverbs; but this is complicated by the

fact that the main body of the book of the Proverbs may have been in circulation before the earlier chapters were added. Yet there are apparent quotations from the Proverbs in the Book of Job (xv. 7 f. = Prov. viii. 22–25), and the reference to the lamp of the wicked being put out (Prov. xiii. 9; xxiv. 20) seems clearly to have Proverbs in mind (Job. xxi. 17). Dependence might, of course, be taken to lie the other way, but on the whole, it would appear that the problems dealt with in Job have not yet emerged for the writers of the Proverbs, and indeed Job seems rather an indictment of the superficial idea, which we find everywhere assumed in the earlier work that prosperity and goodness are inseparable. The most satisfactory order seems therefore to be: Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes. The idea that Job is to be understood as a personification of the nation, such as we were led to conceive in the allegory of Jonah and in the Servant of the Lord, can hardly be maintained in face of the perfect detachment from the history and the national hopes that characterises the book.

The book deals with a problem already stirring in the minds of the Prophets and the theme of many of the Psalms, but here stated with an awful daring and intensity and as the subject-matter of an entirely new form of literary composition. The Book of Job is not a drama, in the sense that it was ever intended, or would be suitable, for presentation on the stage; but it is a poem with dramatic elements and it has a dramatic movement.

The endeavour to understand the message of the book is rendered difficult because different points of view are presented, and this has suggested different authors. The book certainly has well-marked divisions, and they appear to yield distinct and different solutions of the problem of suffering. The Prologue shows us what has taken place in heaven, and seems to infer that the trials came upon Job to establish his faith and righteousness; but the speeches between Job and his friends, in the second division, if by the same author as the Prologue, skilfully avoid this explanation, and the drama pursues its course with the actors remaining in complete ignorance of the solution that has been disclosed to the audience. The third division is taken up with the speeches of Elihu: these break the continuity of the poem, Job makes no reply to him, and Elihu is not mentioned in the Epilogue. An examination of these speeches shows that they fall somewhat below the level of brilliance and originality maintained in the rest of the book, and the idea that they proceed from another writer of the same school, who felt that the arguments of the three friends had not been presented in the best possible way, is worthy of consideration. The speeches of Jehovah are by the author of the main portion and are wonderfully impressive and grand, although the exact contribution that they make to the discussion of the problem

is difficult to discern. The Epilogue falls back into prose, and was certainly written by one who had the entire work before him; but it so misses the meaning of the whole argument, and is content with such a superficial solution of restoration, that it has been thought by many to be an addition to the original work. Whatever may be thought of the idea of plural authorship as a solution of these divergences, the divergences themselves must be borne in mind in any attempt to estimate the message of the book. But are these different points of view incompatible with a single author? With an author of such extraordinary talent in voicing opinions with which he evidently does not agree, it cannot be said to be impossible; and it may be that he only wished to state the problem and to give those answers which were current in his age, leaving it to the reader to discover whether these answers were really solutions; the Prologue and Epilogue may have nothing to do with the didactive motive, but only be due to dramatic and artistic demands.

The theology of Job certainly demands a late age and an advanced stage of reflection. One interesting point is raised by the employment, in the Prologue, of the figure of Satan. This personality, so fruitful a factor in speculation on the cause of evil, demands a careful study. It should be noted, first, that he is referred to as *the* Satan, that is, "the Adversary"; it is a generic, not a proper, name. This creature is represented as appearing together with the angels in the presence of God, and although his designs are sinister and his suggestions unworthy, he is still a minister doing the will of God. This delegation of evil advocacy can be traced, from the idea that it is due to God Himself (2 Sam. xxiv. 1), to the work of the separate spirit who offered to entice Ahab (1 Kings xxii. 21), and then to the greater definiteness of our author. Beyond this book, again, the adversary is a darker character who has to be rebuked by God (Zech. iii.), and in the history of the Chronicler *the* Satan has become "Satan," a proper name (1 Chron. xxi. 1; cp. 2 Sam. xxiv. 1); but we have to go outside the Old Testament Canon to get a completely dualistic opposition of God and Satan (Wisdom ii. 24).

The conception of God has passed, in this book, entirely beyond the tribal Deity Jehovah, and even beyond the ethical Personality known to the Prophets, to One who is felt to be unknowable; and yet withal Job clings to the idea that he shall one day see the face of the Redeemer who now hides Himself. As in the Psalms, the alleged idea of immortality (xix. 25 ff.) is not very definite, and so contradicts the general expectation of the book (vii. 9 f. x. 21 f. xiv. 10 ff. 20 ff. xvi. 22; xxi. 26; xxx. 23), that it must be taken to refer to Job's conviction that some vindication of his cause will be made here in this life. At the same time the idea of a future judgment which shall proclaim his innocence and the ill-desert

of his sufferings, is so strong, that it sweeps death out of vision, and the hope of the future life hovers in the thought if it does not break into language.

A dispassionate examination of the solutions here offered to the problem of suffering shows that nothing really beyond a negative position is reached in this book. The speeches of Job must be taken to convey the author's opinions, and they are a most emphatic repudiation of the doctrine of Providence expressed by the three friends. They can only repeat the accepted notion that suffering is everywhere the cause of sin, and with scorn and indignation Job repudiates the charge, so far as he is concerned; he maintains his innocence and appeals to God as his witness; but the Witness is silent and there is no daysman betwixt them. Job's protest is not concerned with mere innocence, for in one magnificent passage he appeals to his beneficent life spent in the service of the poor and needy (xxxi.). The answers of Job leave the little system of Providence supported by his friends, completely discredited, and in this particular Jehovah sides with Job. The theophany and speeches of Jehovah do not, however, seem to convey any further contribution to the problem than perhaps the idea that for man it is insoluble, because he does not and cannot see the whole; and so nothing is left for man but to bear his griefs in silence and maintain his trust in God.

Job remains, not only the finest contribution of Semitic genius to the realm of literature, but a classic for all those who feel the anguish of the world and the unintelligible perplexities of life. If it conveys no real solution, it at least disposes of one long accepted as adequate, and its complete overthrow removes one of the worst mistakes of human observation and refutes one of the cruellest judgments of men. The idea that prosperity always follows goodness has been a most disastrous bequest of Hebrew thought, and has more than anything else obscured from men's eyes the real meaning of life, prevented an accurate judgment of character, and done much to turn aside the expression of sympathy and obscure the duty of pity and forgiveness.

That a solution was not within the limits of Israel's faith cannot be affirmed with Isa. liii. before us; but that it had never been rightly understood and had never taken deep hold of even noble minds is driven home with a telling force, in a further contribution of the Wisdom Literature, the Book of Ecclesiastes.

The name Ecclesiastes is borrowed from the attempt to translate the Hebrew term *Qoheleth* into Greek. Of this name a variety of interpretations have been put forward (Qoheleth, from *qahal* an assembly, is the active feminine participle and means, one who calls, or addresses, or is merely member of, an assembly;

A.V., "the Preacher"; R.V. "the great Orator"), but the one that perhaps best describes the term is that of "the debater." The work is put forward in the name of Solomon, and of all the works ascribed to him there is none that would come so suitably from the pen of that monarch, if he ever reflected deeply on his career; but this ascription is not kept up with any idea of deceiving the reader, but is simply one of the literary customs of the time and a way of honouring a great name, for there are biographical statements impossible to Solomon ("I *was* king," i. 12; "above all that were before me in Jerusalem," i. 16), while the reflection of society and the stage of thought, but most notably the extremely late language, betray what is one of the latest of the Old Testament writings.

Ecclesiastes is a work that has held an unusual fascination for certain types of disposition, Renan declaring that it was the only lovely thing that ever came from a Hebrew mind. The presence of the book at all in the Old Testament is strange, and there were strong opinions against admitting it into the Canon; it was perhaps only eventually sanctioned because its contradictory statements made it possible to interpret the book as a work written to controvert pessimistic ideas, which are brought forward only to be refuted. For the intention of the work is difficult to gather owing to its disjointed and incomplete character, which makes the book as it stands a mass of contradictions. Some passages profess utter pessimism and unbelief in God's providence, while others, like the closing chapter, seek to inculcate religious fear and trust. Various theories have been proposed to explain these phenomena occurring in one book. It has been suggested that the work is a dialogue between a doubting scholar and an orthodox believer. With a view of straightening out the argument it has been conjectured that the sheets of the original have somehow become disarranged, and others have thought of a series of interpolations in an originally quite unbelieving work; first by a writer who wishes to defend Wisdom from the author's charges of unprofitableness, and then by a writer who wishes to defend the providence of God. If interpolation is to be thought of at all—and it should only be a refuge of despair—it is to be sought in the opening and closing verses of the last chapter (xii. 1, 13, 14), which may have been added to correct the influence of the work; but even they are not impossible from this strangely vacillating author. Certainly no explanations can remove the gloomy tone of the book. The writer seems to have come into contact with Greek pessimism, and from this standpoint he sees nothing true in the Hebrew doctrine of retribution, and especially does he reject the too optimistic doctrines of the Wisdom school. The problems that are solved so simply in Proverbs, stated and left unanswered by Job, are by this author answered in entirely negative fashion: nothing is

profitable in this life, nothing is new; nature and man move in an endless cycle without hope or meaning. The pursuit of Wisdom is just as foolish as the pursuit of folly: the end of the fool and the end of the wicked is the same; life is not worth living; vanity of vanities, all is vanity. In this book we at last come upon a clear recognition of the doctrine of immortality, but only to find it explicitly denied by our author (iii. 19–21). The only solution that the writer proposes is a sad Epicureanism: make the best of a bad world. And yet in spite of this conclusion the author still believes in God (iii. 11, 14; viii. 17); but He is a God who has hidden His purpose from man and whom man can do nothing to turn from His ways. This is more like the inscrutable Fate of the Greek tragedians than the Jehovah of the Prophets: indeed the word Jehovah is never once used throughout the book. If the concluding chapter comes from the original author, then it recommends a religious attitude towards these mysteries; but there is no revelation of anything that gives assurance of the reasonableness of this position or of the goodness of God.

What are we to learn from this Book? Are we to refuse to read it and to reverse the judgment that included it in the Canon? Hardly that. It is well that man's doubts should find a place in the same sacred collection with his surest beliefs, for doubt may be but a stage in a process from an inadequate to a fuller faith. The book shows that the common appreciation of Israel's faith could not satisfy the mind that had its attention fixed upon the facts of life; and especially does it show that the hope of immortality, apart from which Israel's faith had largely developed, is not the one thing that is lacking. That hope, with its promise of retribution in a future and better world, will always appear too speculative to some minds to relieve the burdens of the life that now is, and even if believed in, it would offer no real clue to the meaning of our trials here, but only tend to take men's eyes off this life where perchance they might find the solution they have missed. For there is an attitude to life that solves its darkest problems, a disposition which transmutes its pain and failure, finding it no enigma, but an opportunity for learning the will of the Father; our presence here not a thing to be reluctantly borne, but a task to be joyfully accepted as the commission of God. The book of Ecclesiastes shows us, therefore, that the revelation through Israel is not yet complete; for it voices the unsatisfied need and stretches out hands of faith for something not yet made known. It is the deep dark of the night; the next hour will see the Morning Star of Bethlehem above the horizon, the fleeing shadows and the breaking of the day.

MESSIANIC EXPECTATIONS

The prevalence of the expectation of a personal Messiah reflected in the Gospels, and the clearness and consistency of the idea, are not to be explained solely from the Old Testament prophecies.

In the Apocrypha the Messianic expectation has almost died out (Ecclus. xlix. 11; 1 Macc. ii. 57), but after the Maccabæan revolt it revived, owing doubtless to the disappointment caused by the deterioration of the Hasmonæan dynasty, of which so much had been expected. The Pharisees, who resented the policy of the Hasmonæans, made the idea of a restoration of the Davidic line the peculiar property of their party, and from this time until the appearance of Jesus, Messianic expectation reached a point never before attained. The following summary shows the emergence of the idea in the literature of the period:—

(1) The Dream-Visions of Enoch. B.C. 166–161. The Messiah appears under the figure of a white bullock, and the saints are changed into His image. The Messiah has only an official function in the world-drama, and a human though glorified personality.

(2) The Sibylline Oracles. In a passage assigned to B.C. 140, the Messiah is represented as a God-sent King, who is expected to arise from the East, and whose appearance will be a signal for an attack upon the Temple by the Gentiles.

(3) The Book of Jubilees. B.C. 135–105. The writer is concerned more with the Messianic Kingdom, which he conceives of spiritually, than with the Messiah, who is only alluded to once, and who is expected to arise from Judah.

(4) The Similitudes of Enoch. B.C. 95–80. This part of the Book of Enoch is much occupied with the person of the Messiah. He is definitely named "the Messiah," and also bears the titles "the Elect One," "the Righteous One," and "the Son of Man." He is a Prophet and a Teacher, "the light of the Gentiles," all judgment is committed unto Him, and He will sit

on the throne of His glory. He will raise again to life all the righteous who have died.

(5) The Psalms of Solomon. B.C. 70–40. The Messiah is to be sinless; He is the Son of David; He will not adopt the ordinary methods of warfare, but will smite the earth with the rod of His mouth.

The following works all belong to the Christian era, but they may reflect ideas that had an earlier origin:—

(6) The Assumption of Moses. A.D. 7–30. The hope of an earthly Messiah is abandoned and it is God Himself who is expected to take vengeance on His enemies.

(7) The Apocalypse of Baruch. *c.* 70 A.D. The Messiah will appear after Israel's enemies have been destroyed. His Kingdom is likened to "the bright lightning," and at the end of His reign He is to return in glory to heaven.

(8) 2 Esdras. A.D. 81–96. The Messiah, although more than earthly, dies after a reign of 400 years. He is pictured as a lion rebuking an eagle (the Roman power), and "as it were with the likeness of a man" arising from the midst of the sea, and flying with the clouds of heaven.

Lecture XI

MESSIANIC EXPECTATIONS

In all the stages through which the Old Testament religion passed there seems to have existed a consciousness of their imperfection, and this produced a tendency to gaze into the future, in which it was thought the ideal religion would exist, and where could be descried the perfect realisation of God's dwelling among men. It is natural that this characteristic should find its clearest expression in the Prophets. When their eyes are upon the present, they condemn; when they look to the immediate future, they utter grave warning and the shadows deepen upon their faces; but when they lift their eyes to the distant hills of time, the light is on their faces, and they break into songs of the days that are yet to be. It is this vision of the future and the endeavour to give it a definite outline that runs like a thread through the Old Testament and forces us to look

beyond its borders for the ultimate issue of its religious development. This subject may best be studied under the general head of Messianic expectations.

The immediate difficulty in understanding this subject is found in the circumstance that it has received from Bible students an exaggerated attention, and has been pursued with methods that the best modern scholarship cannot sanction. The eager hunting for Messianic prophecy, and the desire to find literal fulfilment, has often stretched the meaning of passages unwarrantably and made a sane exegesis appear tame and uninteresting. But more disastrous has been the effect upon the understanding of the Old Testament as a whole. The literature has been treated as a mysterious typology, in which some indirect picture of the Messiah was to be discovered, or a series of exact predictions of His life and work. This has destroyed the sense of perspective, it has ignored the message of the Prophets to their own age, and it has been responsible for the idea that the religion of the Psalmists was simply a pious expectation of the Messiah, instead of a real communion with God.

It is difficult to gain a right appreciation of this subject after it has suffered such abuse, but a serious effort should be made; for it is in the understanding of the Messianic expectation that we shall find a key to the New Testament and more especially to that conflict of soul which the acceptance of the Messiahship seems to have brought upon Jesus.

The method of study followed will be an endeavour to read all alleged Messianic predictions, first of all in the light of their actual meaning for the age in which they were uttered; but more particularly it will embrace the general ideas of the future of which the conception of the Messiah forms only a part. We shall find that the conscious prediction of the Messiah is somewhat reduced in bulk, and that the Messianic expectation includes something more than a figure of the Messiah himself, and is indeed sometimes found without any such feature.

The Messianic ideal involves the whole conception of the religious future of Israel. The Hebrew religion receives much inspiration from its tradition of the past, but infinitely more from its hopes for the future: the golden age is not thought to lie far back in history, but in a time yet to come. It seems likely that this idea was widely dispersed even among the common people, and it is therefore only natural that it should often have been held in an unspiritual manner and expressed after a material fashion. This hope was seized upon by the Prophets, and by them elevated above a merely material expectation; they enriched it by the wealth of their creative genius, and from their time it receives a definite content. Standing far above their contemporaries in their conception of

the meaning of Jehovah's covenant with Israel, the Prophets were forced to realise the failure of their message to win immediate acceptance, and sometimes they witnessed its entire rejection by the people; and therefore it was inevitable that they should look to the future to yield what the present seemed unable to produce: a religion pure, simple, and free from all limitations. If we inquire the reason of this hope, we find it in their trust in Jehovah's covenant and in their conviction of the ultimate triumph of truth. Now it was not unnatural, with the peculiar character of their national history, for their hopes to group themselves around some commanding figure; for all along Israel had been moved by splendid personalities. They were accustomed to the appearance of men whose power and genius marked them out as fitted by Jehovah for some mighty task; so that whenever they think of the future and come to a detailed description of their vision they descry one dominant figure, the symbol and representative of the people, but also the symbol and representative of the power of Jehovah dwelling among them. This figure receives his peculiar outline largely from the needs of their immediate times, and any person of whom great things are expected may be hailed as the Messiah (Cyrus, Isa. xlv. 1; Haggai ii. 20–23, seems to suggest that Zerubbabel is the expected Messiah; and Zech. vi. 12 uses Messianic language of Joshua the High Priest).

We should have expected that the figure of the Messiah, as conceived by the Prophets, would partake largely of the prophetic office idealised and accepted by an obedient people. This however is not the case. There is a promise of a prophet made through Moses, which in the New Testament has been interpreted as a Messianic prophecy (Deut. xviii. 18; Acts iii. 22, vii. 37), but an examination of the passage, which follows a denunciation of the practices of divination, necromancy, and sorcery, out of which primitive Prophetism arose, shows that it is a promise of the establishment of the prophetic office rather than of any one person. Elsewhere Moses is made to exclaim: "would that all the Lord's people were prophets" (Num. xi. 29). Both these passages are due to prophetic teaching, and this is the Prophets' conception of their office: they do not rejoice in their splendid isolation and their unique relation to God; they are grieved that the people do not share their possession of the Spirit of God and their hearing of His word, for to them these things are the essence of all true religion. So they look forward to a time when their office will no longer be necessary (Jer. xxxi. 34), and when the Spirit of the Lord shall be poured out on all flesh (Joel ii. 28f). It is not in any contradiction to this that the picture of the Servant of the Lord, delineated by the Second Isaiah, is largely drawn from the prophetic office (Isa. xlii. 1–4, xlix. 1–6, l. 4); for the Servant is the Nation of Israel fulfilling her

prophetic role among the nations of mankind. In the late prophecy of Malachi the figure of Elijah the prophet is seen in the future, but only as the herald of the coming of the Messianic era (Mal. iv. 5).

The Priest contributes little more than the Prophet to the picture (Zech. iii.; vi. 12; Psa. cx.); for to the prophetic conception of things the Priesthood is hardly a necessary office in a true religion. It is from the office of the King that the Messiah is largely drawn. This conception could only have arisen after the founding of the monarchy and only when the real David had faded far enough into the past to be idealised. It was in their experience of the imperfection of the Kings of Israel and Judah that the Prophets saw the need for a true kingly head; and in the oppression of military kingdoms, the need for a mighty warrior. And yet it is not a king who fills the picture of the future, so much as a kingdom.

Outside the Prophets and the Psalms we find little expectation of a personal Messiah, but we find almost everywhere the conception of an ideal or Messianic age. What has been called the Protevangelium, the promise to the woman that her seed should bruise the serpent's head (Gen. iii. 15), does not point explicitly to any one person, but simply promises that in man's eternal warfare with temptation he shall at length gain the victory. The prophecy of Balaam (Num. xxiv. 17–19) involves nothing more than the future supremacy of Israel. Jacob's blessing on Judah (Gen. xlix. 10) promises a stable dynasty to that tribe, and the reference to Shiloh is so obscure that nothing can be built upon it (*Shiloh* may mean peace, but in the Septuagint the phrase is translated: "until that which is his shall come." Another ancient reading is: "till he come whose it is." Shiloh might refer to the town of that name, but this would give no help to the interpretation. The text must be corrupt).

It will be necessary for us to examine the circle of ideas which form the background of the Messianic hope and from which the idea of the Messiah emerges. When the Prophets speak of the future they often use a strange phrase: "the day of the Lord." This is found first in Amos (v. 18), but its occurrence there shows that it was already a term in use among the people, for Amos had to dissent from the popular idea of its character. The term comes from the Hebrew idiom of the "day" of battle, and it comes to be used of the great conflict in which Jehovah will entirely overthrow the enemies of Israel; it is therefore looked for with expectant hope. Amos points out that the manifestation of Jehovah will be fatal to sin, whether in Israel or in other nations: *dies iræ*, *dies illa*. Thus modified by Amos this is the conception which, with varying details, becomes the prophetic idea of the Day of the Lord. It may therefore come in

some threatened invasion; later, it is conceived as a gathering of all the nations against Jerusalem, from which we get the picture of Armageddon, the last great war before the establishment of peace; and finally it becomes the world assize, and so the "day" of judgment of the New Testament. This "day" is to separate the history of God's dealings with men into two distinct periods, and will be the dividing line between the perfect and the imperfect; so that all the bright visions of the future are to be "after those days." The Prophets believe that reconstruction can only come after destruction, that history will reach its ideal over a precipice; they believe in a reform by cataclysm rather than by evolution. Every threatening of political change or national disaster may herald the coming of that day; it is always at hand; to their vision, they are living near the finality of things. There is a great deal in this imagery that fails to appeal to modern ideas of history and progress. It was part of the prophetic scheme and as such was a limitation of perfect vision; but shorn of its mere form it remains a witness to their consciousness of the activity of God in human history and of His judgment in the crises of the world. The form was a limitation essential to their stage of mental evolution and to its intelligibility to their age; its spirit is an eternal message to mankind.

Immediately after the Day of the Lord, the Messianic Age is ushered in, and in depicting the conditions of that time the lyrical genius of the Prophets reaches its supreme expression, and these passages still inspire the reformer and move men with their ideals of peace. The picture of that age is composed by projecting into the future their own institutions and especially their religious conceptions. They picture a condition of human society which is best described in the phrase, "the kingdom of God"; for although such an expression never breaks forth from their lips, its contents are obviously in their minds. It is to be a community in which the will of God is perfectly realised, when religion shall no longer consist in statutes and commands, but in the recognition of an inner law. Absolute righteousness, individual and civil, will prevail, and the nations shall learn war no more. The animal and natural creation will share in this beneficent order: the lion shall lie down with the lamb, and the wilderness shall blossom like the rose; the veil shall be torn from men's vision, all tears shall be wiped away, and death shall be swallowed up in victory.

When they come to depict the subjects of this kingdom they fail to attain to the inner and ethical requirements enunciated by Jesus, for national hopes and ambitions still cloud their outlook. There are two streams of thought—one frankly particularistic, where the future of the heathen is ignored, or where they are simply to be exterminated; and the other universalistic, where the conversion

of the whole world is expected (Isa. xlv. 22; Jer. xii. 14 ff, xvi. 19; cp. Isa. xi. 14–16 with xix. 18–25). It is somewhat surprising, in view of the subsequent development of these ideas under Christian thought, that the sphere of this tremendous change is conceived to be this present earth; and even when the necessity of a new earth and a new heaven is considered, it is still earth that is to be the chief theatre of events. Heaven is conceived of as the dwelling place of Jehovah, but there is no idea that this great change is to be postponed or relegated to some heavenly condition; heaven is to come down to earth and Jehovah is to dwell among His people and be their God.

It is from the ground of these ideas that there arises the conception of the person known as the Messiah, who shall be the Divine instrument in bringing about this blessed condition. Messiah is from the Hebrew, *Mashiah*, and means "anointed one." The actual phrase, *the* Messiah, without further qualification, is not found in the Old Testament (Dan. ix. 25, A.V. "The Messiah" is incorrect; it should read: "an anointed one, a prince," as R.V. mar.); but after the closing of the Canon the phrase was constantly used to denote the Jewish hope of the appearance of a singular person, of Davidic descent, who should be superhumanly endowed, and who should overturn the enemies of the Jews and place their nation at the head of the world. The title recalls the mode of consecration used for priests and kings by anointing them with oil (Lev. iv. 3, 5, 16; vi. 22; 1 Sam. ii. 35; xii. 3), and "the anointed of Jehovah" is the common title for the kings of Israel. The origin of this idea of the Messianic King may certainly be traced to Nathan's promise to David of a perpetual seed which should occupy his throne and be the special delight and care of Jehovah (2 Sam. vii. 2–17). In the presence of a weak or unworthy occupant of the throne this promise would come to mind, and would gather new meaning as the Prophets saw in the troubles of their times the imminence of the Day of the Lord. It is to the prophet Isaiah that we owe a striking conception of a monarch who not only fulfils his promise but transcends it in a way that is hardly conceivable in a merely human king. The first emergence of this hope in the mind of the prophet occurs when he attempts to restrain Ahaz from joining the fatal confederacy of Syria and Ephraim against Assyria. When Ahaz demands some confirmation, the prophet promises the sign of a young woman who shall bear a child named Immanuel (Isa. vii. 14–17). Following Matthew, Christian expositors have taken this to be a prophecy of the virgin birth of Jesus; although it is difficult to see how this could be a sign to Ahaz. The subject is obscure to the last degree. The Hebrew word rendered "a virgin," although capable of such a special application, means simply a young woman. The translation "virgin" was first made by the

Septuagint, and this may point to the fact that at the time this version was made the Messiah was expected to be born of a virgin. The prophecy seems to have arisen from the conviction that the Assyrian invasion would bring into existence some person who should represent the active presence of God with His people; and beyond this explanation there is nothing but mere speculation. But in a later oracle of Isaiah's (ix. 6f), the conception has grown in definiteness, and this expected person is crowned with such honorific titles as "Wonder of a Counsellor, Hero-God, Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace." To our ears these titles convey the sense of absolute Divinity, but it is questionable whether they meant that to Isaiah. Eastern monarchs have always been addressed with high-sounding titles, and Isaiah's language may have been coloured by foreign court customs; but still it would remain that the titles lead us to expect an unexampled figure who possesses attributes that mark him out as specially equipped by God. Once more Isaiah returns to this figure (xi. 1–12), and now definitely asserts that he shall spring from David's line; only now the majesty of his person is conceived as due to his seven-fold possession of the Spirit of Jehovah, and his character fits him rather for administrative and prophetic work. Micah, a contemporary of Isaiah, has much the same figure (v. 2–5) of a mighty prince of Davidic lineage and of mysterious birth (Bethlehem simply stands here for David's line, and "whose outgoings have been from eternity" probably means nothing more than that his descent shall spring from this ancient ancestor). There is an inexplicable element in these predictions, but they have been found elsewhere, outside Israel, in times of great national danger or expectation. In Israel, the idealisation of David, the personal element in her history, and the increased possibilities discovered in human personality when under the complete dominion of the Spirit of Jehovah, have contributed to the creation of this figure. It cannot be said that it was a mental vision of the person of Jesus that shaped the prophecy, for it must not be forgotten that it was an immediate fulfilment that they expected; and indeed their picture so utterly misled the Jews, that, when Christ claimed to be the Messiah, they treated His claim as blasphemous. While we can see that Christ was indeed a King, it is only by a spiritual conception of kingship, and only after the verdict of history has crowned Him as a true ruler of men; not by any actual resemblance to the external magnificence of the Messianic King. When the Messianic call came to Jesus He found in these passages a difficulty, for they outlined a programme He could only reject; but it was other and indirect allusions of the old Testament, some of which had never been considered as Messianic, that Jesus took for His pattern. This meant a reading of prophecy very different from that of the Jews of His time, and it is surely here that the views we have found ourselves forced to accept in regard to

Old Testament prophecy can claim the support of Jesus Himself. It is important to grasp this point: the argument from predictions definitely fulfilled in Jesus has failed to convince the Jews, who ought to understand their own Scriptures best, and we must recognise that it is only a spiritual interpretation of prophecy and a valuation of Jesus which owes nothing to flesh and blood that can see in Him One of whom all the Prophets bore witness.

It is to these other conceptions, to which the spiritual intuition of Jesus led Him in His search for support for His Messianic ideals, that we must now turn.

The first of these in importance is undoubtedly "the Servant of the Lord." We saw when examining this idea that it was an ideal of a nation rather than of an individual, and yet it was upon this that Jesus fixed, and it was this idea that seemed to mould His whole conception of His mission. According to Luke, the first discourse of Jesus took place in the Synagogue at Nazareth, where He set forth His programme and policy, and stated them to be identical with those the prophet had outlined for the nation centuries before (Luke iv. 16–21; Isa. lxi. 1, 2); and the evangelist Matthew sees in the methods of Jesus a fulfilment of the prophecy of the Servant (Matt. xii. 18–21; Isa. xlii. 1–4). It was probably as Jesus saw the clouds gather about His life and disaster began to threaten that He was led to study the career of that Servant and see that it involved suffering, being despised and rejected of men; and so He came to find the key to the mystery of His Cross in that classic of the vicarious life, the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. Jesus was probably the first to interpret that passage in a Messianic sense.

His reason for adopting the title of "the Son of Man" is exceedingly difficult to trace; it may be said that no completely satisfactory explanation of the origin or meaning of the term has yet been discovered, and in the present state of research on the subject it would be folly to commit ourselves to any of the theories that have been propounded. We can only keep in mind the various facts, which the use of this title in the Gospels presents to us. It is clear that Jesus did not intend the title to be a declaration to the world that He had accepted the Messianic call; for all along it was His deliberate purpose to conceal His Messiahship, and for reasons that are obvious, when we consider the difference between His conception of Messianic function and that of the Jews of His day. Again, although there is a slight difference between Daniel, where we only hear of "one like unto a son of man," and Jesus who calls Himself "*the* son of man," yet when challenged by the high-priest Jesus certainly quotes from Daniel (Dan. vii. 13; Mark xiv. 62). Now in Daniel it is not a person who is figured by this title, so much as a humane kingdom which is to replace the kingdoms that were

more like beasts in their character. It is only in the Book of Enoch that the Son of Man is definitely identified with the Messiah. Did Jesus ever read that Book, or were its ideas at all commonly known? If so we should have to concede that the Son of Man meant the Messiah, both to Jesus and to the people, and yet this is an apparent contradiction of His general motive in keeping the Messiahship secret.

Perhaps, and the suggestion is made with the knowledge that in the present state of the problem it can be nothing more than a suggestion, there is a line that has not been exhausted, and along which help may yet be found. It starts from the fact that Jesus seems to have adopted the *character* of the Servant of the Lord under the *name* of the Son of Man; and we have seen that both these are ideals of a community or a nation rather than of a person. Again, that somehow the title "the Son of Man" had Messianic significance, and in the mind of Jesus was connected with the figure in Daniel, is seen from His confession before Caiaphas. The contradiction between these facts and the purpose of concealing His Messiahship can perhaps be solved by noticing that Jesus never explicitly identifies Himself with the Son of Man; and if all the passages where this title is found in the Synoptics are examined, they seem to separate themselves into three distinct groups: (1) where the reference might be not only to Jesus Himself but to Man fulfilling his ideal; (2) where the reference is to the suffering which the Son of Man must undergo; (3) and most important, this term is always used when Jesus speaks of that mysterious return on the clouds which is known as the Second Advent. The conclusion to which it is suggested all these facts point is that although Jesus believed Himself to be the personal centre on which the Messianic hope converged, it was not to Himself personally, but to the new humanity which His Spirit should beget, that He looked for the complete fulfilment of the Messianic hope. Thus at least are linked together the fact that the Prophets are occupied rather with the Messianic community than with the Messiah, and the fact that Jesus made the centre and aim of His teaching the Kingdom rather than its personal embodiment in Himself. Jesus certainly read these Prophets more according to their real inwardness than any of His contemporaries or than many generations of Christian scholars; and there is no better preparation for the serious study of the Gospels than a careful examination of the growing revelation of the Old Testament religion, and the inner meaning of the Messianic hope.

Of this wonderful growth and moving revelation, it can be said, in a way deeper than the old typological and prophetic methods of study could understand, that Christ is the aim and the goal; not only Jesus of Nazareth with His unique Personality, but that still more transcendent mystery, the Christ

within the heart, Christ the head of every man. If we have learned nothing else, surely we have learned this: that behind the hopes of mankind, behind their misty dreams, their gropings after truth, their struggles for righteousness, are the eternal thoughts of God; and although these may transcend their poor reflection in the mind of man, as the heavens the earth, yet this remains: that for every hope implanted, there is an answer beyond our expectation; for every desire Godward, the revelation of the Father-friend; for every ideal of the human heart, the Christ; and for every effort after human progress, the ever nearer coming of the Kingdom of God.

INDEX

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Transcribers' Notes

Punctuation, hyphenation, and spelling were made consistent when a predominant preference was found in this book; otherwise they were not changed.

Simple typographical errors were corrected; occasional unbalanced quotation marks retained.

Ambiguous hyphens at the ends of lines were retained.

Missing periods at the ends of the Roman numbers of Biblical citations have been added.

Index not checked for proper alphabetization or correct page references, but on page 285, reference to page 295 under "Isaiah" should be to page 195. The correct link is used here.

Page 208: "how this is affected" perhaps should be "effected".

Page 288: "BRADBURY, AGNEW, & CO. LD." was printed that way, as "LD."

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