THE BIBLE

AN OUTGROWTH OF THEOCRATIC LIFE.

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"The Life was the Light of men."

JOHN i. 4.

PREFACE.

THIS little book embodies part of the substance of lectures delivered to students for the Congregational ministry at Spring Hill College, Birmingham, and the Congregational Theological Hall, Edinburgh. It makes no pretence to be an exhaustive discussion of its theme; on the contrary, it aims at little more than explaining the point of view from which the Bible should, in my judgment, be approached. Nor does it claim to set forth anything absolutely new; on the contrary, I rejoice to know that many minds besides my own have been, and are now, moving in the same direction. What I do believe myself to have done is to have presented more distinctly and self-consistently a view of the Scriptures, after which many have groped, of which some have caught more or less complete glimpses, and which others probably fully appreciate. I wish the book were more worthy of its theme. Whilst passing it through the press, I have become so painfully sensible of its defects as almost to regret the resolution to publish. However, if it help to put plainly an issue which hovers indistinctly before many minds, I shall be

satisfied; for then I shall hope that thoughts which have been helpful to theological students may also prove helpful to ordinary Christian believers.

Were it practicable, I would honestly acknowledge all my indebtedness; but who that reads can tell how much he owes to his predecessors in the field; how much, if anything, is his own? I know I have been specially indebted to Rothe's "Zur Dogmatik," though I have drifted considerably away from some of its positions since I devoured it when first published in the "Studien und Kritiken;" further, to Tholuck's article on "Inspiration" in Herzog's "Realencyclopædie" (1st edition); and last, not least, to F. D. Maurice's works on the Old Testament, which led me, whilst yet a student, as they have led many besides me, to realise that veritable men and women, living real human lives, lay behind the Biblical books. I have been not a little indebted for information to Professor Briggs' interesting "Biblical Study," and to Professor Ladd's learned work, "The Doctrine of Sacred Scripture." How far Professor Ladd's point of view and mine agree I cannot say; for his method is so complicated, and his own opinions are so interwoven, *more Germanico*, with quotations, and implicit or explicit controversy, that I have been unable, in the time at my disposal, to get a clear notion of his position as a whole. The coincidences between his line of thought and mine are due probably to our having come under similar influences. I may make this latter remark also with regard to Dr. Newman Smyth's most suggestive "Old Faiths

in a New Light." The idea of my book formed the subject of lectures to students more than fifteen years ago.

My purpose is primarily expository, not apologetic; and I write less for those who doubt and do not believe than for those who believe and still doubt. Yet so far as the right putting of a case is its best apology, so far do I hope that my book may render apologetic service to the Bible. Should this venture meet with encouragement, I intend following it up by an apology written from the point of view here advocated.

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THE BIBLE

AN OUTGROWTH OF THEOCRATIC LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

I. IN the conduct of every inquiry, the selection of the right point of view is essential to a satisfactory result. Apart from this, what is advanced, though in itself true, is certain to evoke criticism and contradiction instead of assent; and even where assent is given, there will be an uneasy feeling that somehow a sound case has been badly presented. Those who agree in reality often disagree in seeming, because of the different lights in which they view, and therefore describe, the subjects which they discuss or expound. And those who differ from each other often fail to come to an understanding as to the real nature of their differences, because of the difference of their respective angles of vision or presuppositions.

What has been said holds good of all inquiries, whether strictly scientific or literary. Its application to the domain of literature is obvious at a glance.

To judge a poem from the point of view of a work in philosophy,—to try a popular discourse by the tests suited to a scientific treatise,—to look at a history or memoir as though it were a didactic treatise,—to measure a work on systematic theology by the standard of a book of edification, or *vice versâ*,—all will allow to be unwarranted. The *what* brought forward may be true enough; the *how* of its presentation will cause the truth to wear the look of untruth. Indeed the principle is one of universal validity.

II. If the point of view is to be a right one, it must be determined by the subject itself; not by considerations drawn from other quarters. A mathematical problem must be treated in a mathematical way; a physical problem in a physical way; a chemical in a chemical way; a biological in a biological way; a mental in a mental way; an ethical or religious question in an ethical or religious way. The bane of investigation is to take one's stand outside the subject investigated; to conduct it on principles which apply solely to a different domain. The cosmos is doubtless a unity; but it is the unity of the heterogeneous, not of the homogeneous. And each several domain has its own specific features, relations, activities, laws. It is a temptation to which students of theology and students of nature alike have succumbed; but which in these days especially besets the latter, and that because of the increasing one-sidedness of their training and culture.

III. What has been advanced holds emphatically true of endeavours to determine the true nature, significance and function of the Sacred Scriptures of the Christian Church. If they are to be properly understood and duly appreciated, care must be taken how they are approached, and that they themselves, not some supposed intellectual or moral or religious needs and perils, determine the method of their treatment.[1]

It may seem strange to speak as though the right point of view had still to be found, after all these centuries and after the numberless efforts made to determine the character of the Scriptures,—it may seem presumptuous. Yet in face of the uncertainty by which thousands of earnest Christian believers are haunted; of the vagueness and inconsistency which characterises the discussions of theologians;[2] of the scepticism of outsiders, who yet yield no stinted homage to their worth; and of the attacks of unbelievers; an earnest lover of the Bible may well be excused trying to find some platform on which all honest seekers may meet, and where they may at all events understand each other, even if they fail to agree,—which is scarcely the case at present.

[1] See note A in Appendix.

[2] See the symposium on Inspiration in *Homiletic Magazine* for 1883.

CHAPTER II.

THE TRADITIONAL POINT OF VIEW.

THE point of view from which the Scriptures have hitherto been approached is that of a *divine revelation.* This idea has dominated their treatment alike at the hand of friends and of foes. As such they have been admired and praised; as such they have been criticised and condemned. This has been the case from the third or fourth century before Christ down to our own day, with almost the sole exception of writers who have reduced them to the level of ordinary human literature.

The history of the "doctrine of Scripture" is mainly the story of the efforts to determine the sense in which, and the degree to which, they are a divine revelation; and to account for various phenomena which seem incompatible with the supposition.

I. The Jews before, about, and after the time of Christ undoubtedly looked at the Old Testament writings in this light. At first, indeed, the terms employed to express the belief were vague, and left room not only for freedom in the treatment of details, but also for the recognition of the possibility of the

inspiration of other writings. The writer of 1 Maccabees, for example, whilst lamenting the absence of prophets in Israel,[1] yet cherishes the hope that other prophets shall arise.[2] Sirach again, after using various comparisons, says, "All this is the book of the covenant of the most high God, the law which Moses commanded as the property of the congregation of Jacob, which overflows with wisdom like Phison and like the Tigris in the days of spring; which abounds in insight like the Euphrates, and like the Jordan in the days of harvest; which pours out instruction like the Nile and like the Gihon in the days of vintage."[3] Further, the warnings of the prophet Jeremiah are spoken of as "from the mouth of the Lord;"[4] and the prophets in general are styled His messengers.[5] Haggai and Zechariah are declared to have spoken "in the name of the Lord."[6] The messages of the prophets are designated "the words of God spoken by the hand of His servants the prophets."[7] An utterance of Jeremiah is quoted with the formula, *οὕτως εἶπε κύριος*.[8] And these are but samples of the manner in which the writers of the Apocrypha allude to the Old Testament and its writers.

Philo, though claiming a certain kind of inspiration even for himself,[9] uses a variety of terms to express his conviction of the divinity of the Scriptures;—as for example, *ἱεραὶ γραφαί*, *ἱερὰ βίβλος*, *ἱερὸς λογός*,

[1] ix. 27. [2] iv. 46; xiv. 41. [3] xxiv. 32. [4] 3 Esd. i. 28, 47.
[5] Esd. i. 51. [6] 3 Esd. vi. 1. [7] Bar. ii. 20, 24.
[8] Bar. ii. 21; cf. Jer. xxvii. 11, 12. [9] See Gfrörer's Philo, i. 60.

λόγος θεῖος, ἱερώτατον γράμμα, χρησμός, λόγιον τοῦ ἵλεω θεοῦ, τά ἐν βασιλικοῖς βίβλοις ἱεροφαντηθέντα.[1] How exalted was his estimate of the awful sacredness of the sacred books, may be judged by a story which he narrates, regarding an impious man, who made a mock of the "presents" which according to the account of Moses, the Lord of the world gave to His children; as for example, to one of them—viz., Abram, an additional letter A to his name, making it Abraam; to another, Sarah, an R, so that henceforth she was called Sarrah,—for which mockery he shortly afterwards died an unnatural death by the rope.[2]

The estimate formed of the Old Testament by Josephus, the contemporary of our Lord, who in this respect doubtless represented the general feeling of Jews who thought at all on the subject, will sufficiently appear from the fact that he speaks of the words of the Decalogue as so sacred, that it was unlawful to divulge them to Gentiles, save in the form of a brief summary;[3] and from a story which he relates, how, when the translators of the Septuagint had completed their version, and were asked by King Ptolemy Philadelphus how it happened that no poet or historian had made any mention of so admirable a work, one of them, Demetrius, replied that no one dared to touch the record of these laws, on account of its being divine and holy; and that some had

[1] See Lee, "Inspiration of Holy Scripture," pp. 52 ff. 56.

[2] See Philo, "De nominum Mutatione," Pf. iv. 346, quoted in Gfrörer, "Philo u. d. Alex. Phil." i. 67. [3] Antiq. iii. v. 4.

already been injured by God for handling these things.[1]

It need cause no surprise, therefore, that ere long, when the Spirit had departed from the nation, its teachers, the Rabbis, made almost an idol or god of their sacred books, especially of the law, and fell into extravagances such as the following :—

"If all the seas were ink, and all the reeds pens, and heaven and earth were linen, they would not suffice to write out the words of the Thorah which I have learnt—*i.e.*, the knowledge which I have derived from the Thorah, and I have not made it poorer any more than a man makes the sea poorer by dipping in it the point of his brush." So Rabbi Josua.[2]

Their general view of the Scriptures may also be inferred from such assertions as that Moses taught that the Thorah might be interpreted in forty-nine different ways ; and from the culmination of their principles of interpretation in the three Kabbalistic rules :—*Notariqon*, which consists in the reconstruction of a word, by using the initials of many ; or of a sentence, by employing all the letters of a single word as initial letters of other words :—*Ghematria*, the use of the numerical values of the letters of a word for the purposes of comparison with other words, which yield the

[1] Antiq. xii. 2, 13 ; cf. Contra Apionem, i. 8.

[2] Weber, "System der altsynagogalen Palæstinischen Theologie," p. 85. Compare also Henderson's Congregational Lecture on "Inspiration," for an account of the different degrees of inspiration according to the Jews, p. 41.

same, or similar combinations of numbers:—*Temura*, the permutation of letters by the three Kabbalistic alphabets, called 'Atbach, 'Albam, and Athbash."[1] Indeed, if the preliminary assumption be granted, do not consistency and reverence for the absolutely wise author of the Bible, necessitate its treatment "as a book containing miscellaneous information of a more or less curious character on all sorts of subjects, not merely on God, duty, the future life, and such moral and religious topics, but on the secrets of nature, the problems of philosophy, the constitution of the heavenly world, &c.?"[2] Nay more, must not everything in it be significant; not merely the sentences, but the words; not merely the words, but the letters; not merely the letters, but the very tittles?

II. No recognised teacher of the Christian Church ever went this length, though the tendency has ever and anon manifested itself, especially among untrained interpreters of the Scripture. As an example I may adduce the following use of Scripture to determine the exact locality of heaven. In the book of Job it is said:—"Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades?" Now sweet influences can come from God alone. God therefore must have His throne, the very seat of His glory, on the central star in Pleiades. In that star therefore heaven must be placed.

The *Swedenborgian* method of treating the Scriptures may be regarded as the modern equivalent of

[1] Dr. C. A. Briggs' "Biblical Study," p. 383.

[2] Dr. Bruce, "The Chief End of Revelation," p. 7.

that old Rabbinical or Kabbalistic method. The position of the "New Church," as formulated by itself, is this :—"As the works of God contain and display infinite wisdom and are seen to be infinitely perfect, when examined interiorly, so the Word of God is inspired and holy, and contains an interior or spiritual meaning, within, but distinct from that of the letter. . . . The literal sense of the word is holy, because it is the basis or foundation upon which the spiritual sense rests, and in which it dwells and is concealed, as by a cloud, even as the soul dwells in and is concealed by the body; therefore in the literal sense of the word, divine truth is in its fulness, in its sanctity, and in its power. . . . *Each name, number, event,* psalm, parable or prophecy, in the letter, in the spiritual sense relates to God's infinite love and care for man or to man's duty to God. . . . By the aid of the law of analogy, representatives or correspondence, that is, the law of the mutual relation existing between natural and spiritual things, and which exists between the works and the Word of God, *every sentence* in the sacred books which form the true Word of God, from Genesis to Revelation, is seen to teach spiritual and living truths."[1]

3. The Christian Church accepted without question the general estimate of the Old Testament Scriptures, which was entertained by the Jews, and naturally transferred it to the writings which eventually constituted the Church canon. The whole became a revel-

[1] Edmund Swift, "Manual of the Doctrines of the New Church," pp. 102-104.

ation from God. Its teachers did not at once give their belief the form of a dogma, deliberately thought or worked out by themselves, in the face of dissent or opposition; they simply took for granted that such was the nature of their sacred writings. Nor was there a complete absence of differences of opinion on the subject; still less was the general estimate extended to every individual detail. Yet there can be little doubt that any serious questioning of the full and complete authority of the Scriptures as a divine revelation, would have been resented and denounced as deadly heresy, by the vast majority of the Christian leaders and believers. The existence of a lofty conception of Scripture regarded as a whole, along with a certain recognition of imperfection in details, might be established by a long catena of quotations. But the following examples will suffice for my present purpose.

Justin Martyr, in the second century, says:—"Neither by nature nor by human conception, is it possible for men to know things so great and divine; but by the gift which descended from above on the holy men who had no need of rhetorical art, nor of uttering anything in a contentious and quarrelsome manner, but to present themselves pure to the energy of the divine Spirit, in order that the divine plectrum itself descending from heaven, and using righteous men as an instrument, like a harp or lyre, might reveal to us the knowledge of things divine and heavenly."

Athenagoras too, in the same century, in his "Plea

for Christians," uses the words :—"I think that you also, with your great zeal for knowledge and your great attainments in learning cannot be ignorant of the writings either of Moses or of Isaiah and Jeremiah and the other prophets, who, lifted in ecstasy above the natural operations of their minds by the impulses of the divine Spirit, uttered the things with which they were inspired, the Spirit making use of them as a flute-player breathes into a flute." The assumption that the Bible was God's Word rested on the conviction that the writers were, in a sense, passive instruments in the hands of the divine author. Even verbal inspiration is implied by the words of *Irenæus*[1] in the second century :—"Matthew might have said 'the birth of *Jesus* was on this wise;' but the Holy Spirit foreseeing corruptors and guarding against their frauds says through Matthew, 'the birth of *Christ* was on this wise.'" Yet the same teacher wrote a work on "The peculiarities of the Pauline style," in which he allows that Paul violates the rules of syntax in the formation of his sentences, which he attributes to the swiftness with which he wrote, and the native impetuosity of his mind.

Origen again (born 185), although he considers all the books of the Bible to be inspired by God, holding that the fulness of the divine majesty pervades all its parts, and that traces of the wisdom of God are discoverable in every letter of every inspired book, whence Christ Himself declared that not one jot or tittle of the

[1] Iren. Adv. Hær., iii. 16, 2.

law should pass away till all was fulfilled,[1] yet distinguished degrees of inspiration, characterises Paul's style in the epistle to the Romans as confused, and concedes the existence of an irreconcilable contradiction between Matthew and John in regard to the last passover journey of Jesus.[2]

Another view of the subject is, however, suggested, though clearly without any idea of contradicting the prevalent one, by John Presbyter (first century) when he says respecting Mark:—"He was the interpreter of Peter, and carefully wrote down whatever of his had *impressed itself on his memory*, without binding himself to order, in the discourses and works of Christ."[3]

A similar position to this was taken up also by Augustine, Chrysostom, Jerome, and indeed by almost all the writers of the Church down to the Reformation. For whilst here and there an approach is made to a freer mode of regarding the Scripture, as for example, even by Thomas Aquinas, by Archbishop Agobard of Lyon, in the ninth century, by Abælard and others;[4] yet on the whole the presupposition in question remained unassailed when Scripture in its entirety was spoken of, though as to details it might be neglected without any apparent sense of real incon-

[1] Redepenning, "Origenes," vol. i. 259.

[2] See Tholuck's Article, "Inspiration," in Herzog's "Real-encyclopædie," 1st ed. for such of the following references as are simply noted "Tholuck."

[3] Euseb. Hist. Eccl., iii. 39.

[4] See Tholuck.

sistency. This position of matters lasted substantially till the second period of the history of the Reformation.[1]

IV. *Luther's* point of view differed very little from that of such predecessors as Augustine and Jerome. When giving expression to his sense of the spiritual value of the Scriptures as the word of redemption, he seems unable to select terms too strong and comprehensive; yet, as is well known, at other times and in more critical moods, nothing could exceed the freedom with which he treats not only portions of books, but even whole books, all the time apparently unconscious of any real inconsistency.

Calvin approached nearer to a definite doctrine on the subject, speaking of the Scripture as having flowed to us from the very mouth of Deity;[2] yet even he did not hesitate to acknowledge historical and other inaccuracies in detail, treating them, however, as of no importance whatever.[3]

The *Lutheran Confessions* contain no formulated doctrine of Scripture, though they evidently take for granted that they are the Word of God; those of the Reformed Churches are more definite.

It was about the middle of the seventeenth century that the tacit presupposition of the previous Christian centuries first took definite doctrinal shape; one too of a rigidness that left no room whatever for even the slightest measure of the freedom that had hitherto been exercised towards details of the Scripture narra-

[1] Cf. Ladd, "Doctrine of Scripture," ii., pp. 153 ff.
[2] Inst., i. 7, 5. [3] See Tholuck.

tives. Lutherans and Reformed alike seemed resolved that in Scripture they would have a visible and tangible representative of the absolutely infallible God, whom they believed to be its author. Their view of the relation of the Bible to God, lagged in no wise behind that of the Rabbis; but they were restrained by Christian sobriety from either speaking of, or treating it, with the extravagance of which one or two examples were given above.

Independently of the desire for a clear apprehension and logical formulation of the position occupied, which Protestantism naturally awakened and fostered, two causes contributed to bring about this result. The first, was the taunt of Romanists that having rejected the guidance of the infallible Church, Protestants must be without any certain knowledge of God and the divine will.[1] The second, was the rise of enthusiasts, who, by asserting the equal, if not superior value and authority of the inner light, of the direct teachings of the Holy Ghost, threatened to produce individualism, disintegration, and finally complete confusion and uncertainty. The endeavour was accordingly made to meet both antagonists by teaching that the Scriptures are *verbatim et literatim* the Word of God, and therefore possess absolutely infallible authority. By laying stress further on their perspicacity, sufficiency, and so forth, the leaders of Protestantism flattered themselves that they had more than met the difficulties which had been raised.

[1] See Ladd, "Doctrine of Scripture," ii. 196, for examples.

What this their doctrine was, we will now illustrate by one or two quotations from prominent theologians, both of the Lutheran and Reformed Churches.

In the Lutheran Church, *Quenstedt* defines the nature of Scripture as follows:—"Not only the matters and opinions contained in the Holy Scripture, not only the sense of the words, these latter being supplied each in his own way by prophets and apostles, were inspired by the Holy Spirit, but the very phrases and words were all and severally supplied, inspired and dictated by the Holy Spirit to the sacred writers. Not merely the mysteries of the faith, or those things which appertain directly to saving faith, did the holy men of God write by the inspiration and impulse of the Holy Ghost, the rest, namely, historical, moral, natural, things being added by themselves without the aid of the Spirit; but all things without exception, that are contained in the Scripture." "All and several things which are contained in the Sacred Scriptures, whether they were naturally unknown before to the sacred writers, or naturally knowable by them, or not only naturally knowable, but even known by them whether of their own motion, or otherwise, or by experience and the ministry of the senses; all are to be ascribed to the particular suggestion, inspiration, and dictation of the Holy Ghost."[1]

So too, in the Reformed Church, Voetius, who died in 1676, maintains the verbal inspiration of Scripture

[1] Quenstedt. "Theol. didact. polem.," quoted in Strauss' "Glaubenslehre," vol. i. p. 124.

in its strictest sense. "Not a word is contained in the Holy Scriptures which was not in the strictest sense inspired—not even the punctuation is to be excepted. Even what the authors knew before was inspired afresh, not indeed *quoad impressiones specierum intelligibilium*, but as to formal conception and actual remembrance." In reply to the question whether ordinary study, inquiry, and premeditation were necessary to writing, he answers, "Nego—I deny it. For the Spirit moved them directly, extraordinarily, and infallibly to write, and inspired and dictated the things to be written."[1]

English theologians of this period are no less definite and rigid. Bishop Jewel, for example, writes, "There is no sentence, no clause, no word, no syllable, no letter, but it is written for thy instruction."[2] Not even the "judicious" Hooker takes up a freer position. He says, "They (the prophets) neither spake nor wrote any word of their own, but uttered syllable by syllable as the Spirit put it into their mouths, no otherwise than the harp or the lute doth give a sound according to the discretion of his hands that holdeth and striketh it with skill."[3]

In fact the prevailing doctrine of both Churches was that the writers of the Scriptures were passive instruments used by the Spirit of God—"amanuenses of God," "hands of Christ," "scriveners, notaries, writers

[1] Tholuck. Cf. Ladd, ii. 209.

[2] Treatise of the Holy Scripture, p. 37, 1607.

[3] Works (Oxford Ed. 1841), vol. iii., Sermon v. 4.

of the Holy Ghost," "pens," "such as a flute is to a flute-player" and so forth.[1] Nay, more, it was pronounced blasphemous to regard the Greek of the New Testament as in any way really inferior to that of the best classical writers; still more to charge its writers with reasoning illogically or confusedly.[2]

V. What was intended to provide a sure and clear support for the Christian mind, became one of the means of stimulating criticism, and shaking its faith. The problem of the precise nature of the Bible and its relation to God was now definitively raised—raised too by those who believed themselves to have finally solved it. The period of vagueness is past and gone for ever. Theologians who were not only reverential but candid, felt that the human element was too completely banished—that, as in the case of the humanity of Christ at an earlier period, so now the human side of Scripture was evacuated of reality, reduced to a mere appearance; whilst the more critical were aroused to positive antagonism. Accordingly a process set in, which Strauss, after the manner of too many critics and assailants of Christianity, has chosen to describe as the "disintegration of the orthodox doctrine." In the sense of a formulated statement, reasoned out, technically exact, and recognised as such by the Christian

[1] See Strauss' "Glaubenslehre," x. 125.

[2] Among modern advocates of this old view, who, however, are more modern in their presentation of the subject than they are willing to allow, may be mentioned Haldane, "Divine Revelation;" Gaussen, "Plenary Inspiration;" Cunningham, "Systematic Theology;" Wangemann, "Glaubenslehre."

Church, there never has been such a thing as an "*orthodox* doctrine" either of Scripture or of any other point of the Christian faith—at all events not outside the Romish Church. The *creeds* of the several Churches which constitute Evangelical Protestantism, express more or less definitely their belief; but an article of a creed is not *doctrine* save in a loose sense; certainly not in the sense required to give point to Strauss' statement. Theologies, systems of doctrine, have been and must be constantly changing; for each theologian in turn has sought and must seek to state more carefully, and explain and correlate more satisfactorily than his predecessor, the faith common to both. Instead, therefore, of speaking of a disintegration of some imaginary absolute standard, it would be more correct to speak of a continuation of the efforts to arrive at a view of the Scripture, which should do justice alike to the human and divine elements, whose presence in it, the creeds of the Church have always recognised, without attempting to explain.

A book rather than a chapter would be necessary to trace out all the modifications to which the doctrine laid down by successive Lutheran and Reformed divines, —the first systematic attempt, be it not forgotten, to settle the question,—was, and indeed still is being, subjected. I must therefore limit myself to brief notices of some of the chief variations, and that too rather in logical than in chronological order, though the two may in the main coincide.

CHAPTER III.

THE TRADITIONAL POINT OF VIEW—*continued.*

VI. VIEWS like those adduced under the last head have been becoming rarer and rarer; at the same time, there is at present little prospect of a positive agreement being reached amongst thinkers who are convinced of the untenableness of the old position.

1. As might have been expected, criticism fastened first upon the exaggeration in relation to what may be termed the *form* or *vehicle*, as distinguished from the *matter* or *contents* of the Bible. Absolute perfection had been ascribed to the text of the Bible, some even going the length of maintaining that the original text had been supernaturally preserved in infallible purity. The very letters and vowel points were held to have been inspired and supernaturally preserved intact. The style of the Bible was asserted to be free from all spot of solecism or barbarism; for to charge the Holy Spirit with having written bad Greek, was little short of blasphemy.[1]

Now many who held that the contents of the Bible

[1] See Ladd, ii. 177, 182, cf. 188.

were from God, felt themselves unable, besides deeming it unnecessary, to go the above length relatively to the mere text. From the recognition of defects in the former, they might and did shrink ; to the recognition of defects in the latter, intellectual honesty forced them.

One of the first steps was accordingly to allow that the Holy Ghost in no wise interfered with, or controlled, the individuality of the writers of Scripture in matters of style. Each one wrote as his temperament, special intellectual capability, previous circumstances and education naturally impelled him to write.

The next concession related to the question, as to how far the *words* were given by the Spirit? In view of the actual variations in the text of the sacred writings, it began to be felt that the individual words, the vocabulary, must have been determined by the writers themselves; whilst the fact that notwithstanding the enormous number of the various readings, the sense of Scripture is not affected, seemed to warrant the assertion that the combinations of words into wholes conveying a definite sense, must have been the work of the Holy Ghost. This view of the matter, which many have advanced with more or less clearness, has been most definitely formulated as follows :—"Not the single letters, syllables, and words, apart from context and connection, are to be regarded as directly inspired ; for Scripture contains not the *words*, but the *word* of God. In the former case, divine providence could not have permitted these sacred words to

be handed down with various readings, necessitating a special inspiration in order to determine the original text. *Word*-inspiration, on the contrary, God Himself has guaranteed by the very history of the text itself, inasmuch as the revealed contents of Scripture have remained, as is generally allowed, intact, notwithstanding the immense number of various readings."[1]

Others, again, held that the *vehicle* of the divine revelations,—in other words, the vocabulary, the sentences, the style,—was influenced by the Holy Ghost only in so far as, in virtue of the unity of the mind and its faculties, His revealing, enlightening, and quickening action could not but extend also to the language used. We all know that in our higher moments words present themselves in unusual numbers, variety, and aptness, and our own feeling for them and control over them are heightened.[2] Why should not this be in a special degree the experience of men whom the Spirit of God was inspiring?[3] Even those who hold this position might consistently grant, that where God actually spoke, the words recorded may be His words, *verbatim et literatim*,—as for example the ten commandments, or the words spoken of Christ, "This is my Son, my chosen; hear ye him."[4]

Those who deny that the Holy Ghost exercised any

[1] Philippi, "Glaubenslehre," i. 184 ff. Cf. Rothe, p. 258; Tholuck, p. 691. Compare also Burgon, Rawlinson, and others.

[2] Verbaque provisam rem non invita sequuntur (Matter foreseen, words will not unreadily follow) Hor. Ars. Poet., 311.

[3] Compare Martensen, "Dogmatik," 378. [4] Luke ix. 35.

direct and special influence at all on the sacred writers, must of course refuse to allow that He had anything to do with their words;—but with this school we are not now concerned.

2. But inquiry with regard to the *contents* of the Scriptures had not been finally put to rest. On the contrary, it was almost violently evoked by the extravagance of the assertion, that not only what was unknown or unknowable, but even what was or might have been known to the sacred writers, was suggested and dictated by the Holy Ghost. Attention was accordingly next concentrated on the relation of the contents of the Scriptures to God. The problem was approached first from what may be termed the human side, then from the divine.

(1.) It scarcely needs remarking that in the language just referred to there is at one and the same moment both a recognition and a denial of the distinction between a human and a divine element in the Scriptures,—a recognition in that it is actually mentioned, —a denial in that the human, no less than the divine element proper, is ascribed to the action of the Holy Ghost. This obvious inconsistency called for rectification; and the Church set to work to overthrow the monophysitism into which its teachers had fallen, by reasserting the reality of the human element. It did not, however, and could not be expected, to reach its goal at one bound. In this, as in other domains, human thought advanced slowly and often by circuitous routes. And we may say with regard to apparent

errors in the Christian Church what is said with regard to the nations which the Israelites had to drive out of Palestine: "The Lord thy God will cast out those nations before thee by little and little: thou mayest not consume them at once, lest the lands become desolate, and the beasts of the field increase upon thee."[1]

By the recognition of imperfections in the Scriptures, Præ-Reformation writers had of course implicitly allowed the existence of a human element in the Scriptures, but, as was remarked before, they did it naively, without appreciating the bearing of what they did on the presumption with which they started. In fact the occasion for the development of a theory regarding the Scriptures had not yet arisen. Thus, for example, Jerome says, when referring to the account of the standing still of the sun in the Book of Joshua, "Many things are spoken in Scripture according to the judgment of those times wherein they were acted, and not according to that which truth contained;" and again, "St. Paul does not know how to develop a hyperbaton or how to conclude a sentence, and as he had to do with rude uncultivated persons, he has availed himself of conceptions which (if he had not taken care to let us know beforehand that he spoke after the manner of man) might have given umbrage to persons of good sense."[2] So too Chrysostom, though declaring his conviction that every *enantiophony*

[1] Deut. vii. 22, and Exod. xxiii. 30.

[2] Jerome, "Comment. on Ep. to Gal.," iii. 1; Eph. iii. 1.

(contradiction) will turn out to be an *enantiophany* (contradiction in seeming), says with regard to Paul's discourse in Acts xxvi. 6, "He speaks after the manner of men, and is not always a partaker of grace, but is permitted to introduce something of his own."[1]

Indeed, thus writing, they went further than they themselves meant to do, in so far as they would, most probably, have been unwilling to follow their concession out to its legitimate results. They anticipated, in point of fact, the more advanced of the present day, and must consistently have counted the seventeenth century divines laggards.

The first step taken was to distinguish more carefully than had been done before, if not indeed altogether afresh, between *revelation* and *assistance.* In this way it was hoped to preserve the divine character and authority of the Scripture as a whole, whilst allowing that at all events a portion of its contents was supplied by the human organs of the Spirit of God.

Calixtus, following in the steps of Roman Catholic theologians, took up this position. He says: "Whatever presented itself to the senses of the writers, or was known to them from other sources, God did not strictly reveal; nevertheless He so governed them by His assistance that they should not write anything alien from the truth."[2]

[1] Chrysostom, Opp. T., vii. p. 51, in Tholuck. So also Thomas Aquinas.

[2] Calixt. Responsio, etc., de infallib. Pontif. Thes. 72 et 74, in Tholuck.

This suggestion bore an ample harvest. Theologians, both Continental and British, both Lutheran and Reformed, proceeded to work out the idea of the divine "assistentia," and to distinguish various kinds and degrees thereof.[1]

Amongst recent writers who have devoted attention to this point we may specially mention Dr. Henderson and Dr. Lee. According to the former there were the following operations:—"First, the sacred penmen were the subject of a divine *incitement* when they proceeded to commit to writing those matters which it was the will of God should be permanently preserved." "Secondly, there was an invigoration (or elevation) experienced by the inspired writers, by which their natural faculties were elevated above the imperfections which would have incapacitated them from receiving those communications of a higher order with which they were favoured; and by which also they were enabled perfectly to recollect, and infallibly to reason respecting truths and facts, with which they were previously acquainted, but which, owing to the lapse of time or the decay of mental vigour, they were

[1] Amongst these may be mentioned Grotius, "Votum de Pace"; Le Clerc, "Sentiments de quelques theologiens de Hollande, &c."; Lowth, "Vindication of the Inspiration of the Old and New Test.," 1692; Clarke, "Divine Authority of the Holy Scriptures," 1699; Baxter, "Methodus theol. Christ," 1681; Doddridge, "Dissertation on the Inspiration of the New Test." Doddridge distinguishes inspiration of "superintendency," "elevation," and "suggestion." Pfaff, "Institutiones Dogmaticæ," 1719. Also Stennett, Parry, Dick, J. Pye Smith, Horne, Wilson.

unfit, without such supernatural aid, accurately and fully to make known to the world." "In the third place, the divine influence enjoyed by the penman was that of simple, yet infallible *superintendence.* By this is meant the watchful care which was exercised over them, when, in performing their task, they made use of their own observation, or availed themselves of their previous knowledge of existing documents, or of other external sources to which they had access. In virtue of this divine guardianship they were preserved from all error or mistake, and committed to writing nothing but what was deemed proper by Infinite Wisdom."

"*Fourthly, Guidance* was another of the modes in which divine inspiration operated upon the penmen of Scripture. . . . By the influence thus exerted they were directed into truth of doctrine,—in the selection, order, and combination of facts to be narrated, arguments to be used, directions and admonitions to be tendered, decisions to be given, and so forth." "The last and highest species of inspiration with which we believe the sacred penmen to have been endowed is that of *direct Revelation,* by means of which conceptions were produced in their minds without the interposition of any human agency whatever."[1]

Dr. Lee is in so far clearer than the last-mentioned writer, as he tries—though not very successfully—to distinguish between Revelation and Inspiration before determining the nature of the influence exerted by

[1] Henderson on "Divine Inspiration," pp. 312-326.

the Spirit on the sacred writers. The following quotations will fairly set forth his views as to both points. By revelation, on the one hand, he understands a "direct communication from God to man, either of such knowledge as man could not of himself attain to; or of information which, although it might have been attained in the ordinary way, was not, in point of fact, from whatever cause, known to the person who received the revelation. By inspiration, on the other hand, I understand that actuating energy of the Holy Spirit, in whatever degree or manner it may have been exercised, by which the human agents chosen by God have *officially* proclaimed His will by word of mouth, or have committed to writing the several portions of the Bible."[1]

He then proceeds to determine the nature of the Spirit's influence on the sacred writers: "We may distinguish, in the first place, the stage in which the Holy Spirit *prevents*—that is, prompts—to the task of writing; the outward channel through which such suggestion was usually conveyed being the various occasions or motives which, in what men call the ordinary course of things, have led to the composition of most of the books of the Bible. The task having been thus undertaken, in the second stage the Holy Spirit *operates*—that is, selects from the mass of materials which were at the writer's command, whatever may have been their character, whether naturally known or supernaturally revealed, and so disposes the

[1] "Inspiration of Scripture," p. 27 ff.

course of his labours that St. Paul could say of certain parts of Jewish history that 'they are written for our admonition' (1 Cor. x. 11). In the third stage, the Holy Spirit *co-operates* with the natural faculties of the mind [in a dynamical manner]; the result of this co-operation being the different books which in their combination constitute the Bible, and which have been moulded into unity by the power of the Spirit."[1]

The distinctions thus drawn are, I believe, in the main correct. Operations or influences, too, such as those described, have been at work within the sphere to which the Scriptures relate; yet, partly owing to the faulty general point of view, and partly owing to defects of classification, the scheme as a whole is confused and unsatisfactory.

The movement accordingly has not stopped. Most Christian writers have gone on during the present century to allow that, at all events as regards matters of natural science, the Scriptures reflect the state of knowledge at the time when they were written. Some hold this to be the case also in relation to the science of mind, though others are still inclined to look to the Bible for a divinely-revealed system of psychology. And there is now a wide-spread disposition to maintain that whatever has no direct bearing either on the generation or the sustentation of the religious life, as such, is as human as the contents of any ordinary book written with the sympathy and conscientious care that must have characterised men

[1] "Inspiration of Scripture," p. 31 f.

intrusted with the sacred mission of witnessing for God and His Christ.

With many the distinction has found great favour, which was first drawn by Grotius (1641) and Le Clerc (1693-1708), between *containing* or *recording* and *being* a revelation. The former denies plainly that the Holy Ghost gave Himself much trouble about chronological and similar matters; maintains that for the histories both of the Old and New Testament inspiration was superfluous; and represents the inspiration of the Apostles as a devout movement of soul, which occupied, excited and strengthened their minds in their meditation and teaching of the doctrine of Christ. Revelations were received by inspiration; but new inspiration was not needed for their communication.[1] On this view, the vehicle or form, plus of course, what the writers could know of themselves, is the human; the revealed and inspired is the divine.

The view set forth by Professor Ladd in his work on the "Doctrine of Scripture" is akin to, if not identical with this—the "word of God" which is the divine element is contained or recorded in the "word" or human element.[2]

But a satisfactory presentation even of this side of the subject has not yet been effected; nor will it be, until the entire point of view from which the Bible is approached has undergone material modification.

(2.) This leads me to note that co-ordinately with the efforts to re-assert the reality of the human element

[1] Ladd, ii. 198. [2] See Note B.

in the Scripture, attempts were put forth to determine more exactly the nature of the divine element. The two processes, indeed, ran so into each other that it is impossible properly to separate them. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God,—this is the assumption :—but not all in the same sense. Concerning what portions must we say that they really were suggested, revealed, dictated by the Holy Ghost ? What are the specifically divine contents of the Bible ?

Thomas Aquinas amongst Præ-reformation writers already started this inquiry. According to him those things only are strictly revealed which concern redemption, and the safety of the human race.[1] Elsewhere he attributes the truths of faith to divine influence ; but distinguishes between what belongs to faith *directe et principaliter*, as the "articles of faith," and what belongs only *indirecte et secundario*, as those matters whose denial would involve the corruption of one or the other article of faith. Of the latter kind are, in his view, such historical facts as that Abraham had two sons, that the dead man who touched Elisha's bones was restored to life (2 Kings xiii. 21), and so forth.

This also was the general position taken up by the Protestant theologians. But the need for a more exact definition of the nature of these truths or articles of faith and their relation to or place in the midst of the human element of the Scriptures, made itself more and more felt, and efforts in great variety were put

[1] Tholuck.

forth to accomplish the task, both by Continental and British divines.

Richard Baxter (1615-1691) treats the subject with the freedom and reverence which generally characterised him. His remarks are as suggestive as they are interesting.

"The Scripture is like a man's body, where some parts are but for the preservation of the rest, and may be maimed without death; the sense is the soul of Scripture, and the letter but the body or vehicle. The doctrine of the Creed, Lord's Prayer, and Decalogue and Baptism, and Lord's Supper is the vital part, and Christianity itself. The Old Testament letter is that vehicle which is as imperfect as the revelation of those times was."[1] Elsewhere, with his usual boldness and freedom, he goes the length of maintaining that "if the Scriptures were but the writings of honest men, that were subject to mistakes and contradictions in the manner and circumstances, yet they might afford us a full certainty of the substance of Christianity and of the miracles wrought to confirm the doctrine." This is a position which many hold at the present moment, and which it is fair to urge over against those who doubt *a priori* the possibility or fact of inspiration. As he says afterwards in the same connection :—"The fathers when they disputed with heathens, did first prove the truth of Christian

[1] "Catechising of Families," ch. vi. 2. 11., quoted by Ladd, ii. 212. The comparison here employed may be found also in Philo, "De Vita Contempl," see Lee, "Inspiration," p. 54, note.

religion, before they came to prove the divine authority of the Scripture, not that we are at any such uncertainty as if the Scriptures were not infallible and divine."[1]

In the determination of the properly divine element of Scripture, theologians were and still are frequently influenced by a too intellectualistic conception of religion and Christianity. Hence the stress laid on the mysteries unveiled by revelation, on the truths above reason, on the prophecies of things to come.[2] It was this mode of treating the divine element in Scripture that helped to call forth the rationalism and deism of the eighteenth century, and supplies the key to Lessing's position that revelation anticipated for purposes of education what human reason would eventually have discovered for itself. Neither the defenders of revelation nor its critics and assailants fully understood what they were doing; but fragments of the truth are as usual to be found alike in the affirmations and denials of both sides.

In the first quarter of the present century ground was broken for what is coming to be designated the Christological or Christocentric mode of regarding the Scriptures by the German theologian *Twesten*,[3] who says :—"The nearer or more remote connection with Christ as the centre of our faith, offers a standard according to which we can distinguish what is more or less essential for the Christian consciousness, and

[1] See Note C in Appendix.

[2] See Pfaff in his "Institutiones Dogmaticæ," 1719.

[3] "Dogmatik der Evang. Luth. Kirche," 1826-37.

what therefore is to be considered as more mediately or more immediately under the influence of the Holy Ghost; and it is precisely hence that the difference between the Old and New Testaments and their various constituents, with respect to inspiration, may be deduced and justified." "Inspiration relates also to the words, but only so far as the choice and use thereof are connected with the inner life; also to the historical, but only so far as it is of significance for the Christian consciousness."[1] This may be regarded as a revival of Luther's principle that Christ, the centre of Holy Scripture, is the real test of canonicity; that any book—*e.g.*, like James, which does not directly or indirectly point to Christ is to be ejected.[2]

This view of the matter is most fully elaborated by Lange in a series of propositions of which the first runs:—"Every sacred writing is in its religious centre and vital kernel, thoroughly christological and inspired; towards the periphery of its view of the world it may be marked by a definite stamp of the human."[3]

The position of one of the most recent and able writers on the subject is the following:—"Revelation is one thing, Scripture is another, though closely related thing, being in truth its record, interpretation, and reflection."[4] "Revelation does not mean causing a sacred book to be written for the religious instruc-

[1] Quoted in Grimm's "Institutio Theologicæ Dogmaticæ," etc., 1869, p. 122. See Note D in Appendix.

[2] Dorner's "Geschichte der Prot. Theologie," p. 246.

[3] "Philos. Dogmatik," p. 548.

[4] Bruce's "Chief End of Revelation," p. 53.

tion of mankind. It signifies God manifesting Himself in the history of the world, in a supernatural manner, and for a special purpose, manifesting *Himself;* for the proper subject of revelation is God." "The revelation recorded in the Scriptures is before all things, a self-manifestation of God as the God of grace. In that revelation God appears as one who cherishes a gracious purpose towards the human race. The revelation consists not in the mere intimation of the purpose, but more especially in the slow, but steadfast execution of it, by a connected series of transactions which all point in one direction, and at length reach their goal in the realisation of the end contemplated from the first."[1] After referring to the more rigid doctrine known as Verbal Inspiration he goes on to say, "The conflicts in which this view has involved believers in revelation and science in its onward progress, are so familiar to all, that it is not necessary to speak of them particularly. Suffice it to say, that these collisions have gradually taught faith the necessity of caution in the claims which she advances in behalf of the Bible, and led to the general adoption of the position that the revelation contained in the holy book relates to distinctively moral and religious truth, that it is not intended to make known the secrets of the universe, and that when these Divine writings have occasion to speak of natural phenomena, they do so, not in scientific, but in popular language."[2]

The view thus expressed, is doubtless substantially

[1] Bruce's "Chief End of Revelation," p. 58. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 7.

that which is now most generally accepted. It bears, however, its share of evidence to the statement with which I set out, that the treatment of Scripture by those who at all recognised its possession of a divine character, has throughout been dominated by the idea of revelation, whether in the more intellectualistic form of an earlier period and of the Romish Church still, or in the more historical form, which, following in the steps of many eminent German theologians, Dr. Bruce has so aptly expounded.[1]

[1] Prof. G. F. Wright, of Oberlin, has recently published an excellent little book, entitled "The Divine Authority of the Bible," which summarises in a very clear way the evidences bearing on the subject. His theory of inspiration "simply involves the perfection of the Bible for its designed purpose, which is as already remarked to give to the world a permanent, adequate, intelligible, and authoritative written revelation of religious truth." Owing to the difference between my point of view and his, I am constantly compelled to criticise what, put in another way, I should probably accept.

CHAPTER IV.

THE HISTORICAL POINT OF VIEW.

I. ALONGSIDE of the point of view, to whose historical illustration the last two chapters were devoted, there has been from a very early period, if, indeed, not from the beginning, another, of a different kind, which may be designated the *historical* point of view. In other words, the Biblical books have been treated as sources from which to draw a knowledge of the life of the Hebrew nation. They were recognised therefore implicitly as having grown out of, and as representing the life of the people, very much as Greek literature grew out of and represented the life of the Greek people. *Philo*, for example, wrote a life of Moses, based, of course, on the Old Testament narratives, though his addiction to allegory deprives it of historical worth. *Josephus* too wrote a work on Jewish Antiquities, in the compilation of which he made use of the writings of the Old Testament, just as he made use of other sources which are no longer accessible to us in these days. Had he been treating of Roman or Greek antiquities, he would have made a similar use of Roman or Greek

writings. And this notwithstanding that he regarded Scripture as a divine revelation.

The Egyptian Manetho (280 B.C.), as well as the Greek writers Herodotus, Strabo, Diodorus of Sicily, and the Roman Justin and Tacitus, may have used the Old Testament for similar historical purposes, without regarding it as having had in any sense a different origin from the literature of their own peoples.[1]

Eusebius[2] (born about 260 or 270), called "The Father of Church History and the Christian Herodotus," gave an account of the history of the Jews as well as of other nations, in his Chronicle or History of the World, and of the life of Christ and His Apostles in the Ecclesiastical History. He must therefore have gone to the Scriptures for information, just as he went to the extant writings of other nations whose history he sketched.

From his time down to the present, there has been a long and ever increasing series of works of the same character.

For the most part, writers have placed themselves now on the one point of view and then on the other, according to the particular purpose they were pursuing, or subject with which they were dealing, without any apparent consciousness that the two were not one and the same. Accordingly no attempt was made to strike a bridge over from the one to the other. The

[1] Müller, "Die taciteischen Berichte über den Ursprung der Judea," in Stud. u. Krit., 1843.

[2] See his "Hist. Eccl.," "Præparatio Evangelica," and "Chronica."

critical school, indeed, of which Spinoza, Richard Simon, and Le Clerc may be said to have been the founders, has become increasingly aware of the difference; though it has also increasingly betrayed a disposition to eliminate altogether the element of revelation, and to reduce the Scriptures to the level of ordinary literature and historical documents. Indeed, the general tendency at the present moment is in the latter direction, and will doubtless go on increasing in force unless it can be shown that there is truth in each, and that the truth in the one requires to its full understanding the truth in the other.

II. In my judgment, the true point of view from which to approach the Scriptures is this historical one. The several writings of which they consist were the product of factors of the Jewish nation; expressed and set forth more or less the mind, or experience, or purpose, or will of the several factors and of the people; and were designed to subserve ends connected with the existence and mission of the nation, analogously to the writings which make up other literatures. Those of the Old Testament, with the possible exception of the early chapters of Genesis, stand in this relation to the Jews as a separate nationality, from the days when their founder, Abraham, was called to leave his own country and friends, to their restoration from captivity to their native land. Those of the New Testament hold this relation to the section of the Jewish people which founded and constituted the Christian Church.

This is surely, too, the natural impression which

these books make, with exceptions which, rightly considered, as I shall try to show, constitute no real exceptions,—I refer in particular to the prophecies. As to the rest, who would not take the historical books to be historical, just as Livy is historical for Rome, or our own early chroniclers William of Malmesbury, Geoffrey of Monmouth, and others, are historical for early English life? Or, again, are not Job, the Psalms, Canticles, Lamentations, poetical expressions of the experience, thoughts, emotions, and so forth of the Jewish nation after the manner of Homer and Pindar, or Chaucer, or the Psalter of Cashel, and other poetical productions, whether directly religious or not? And do not the Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Epistles of the New Testament remind us of similar productions of other nations, both heathen and Christian? Why the Prophecies and the Apocalypse form no real, though they are apparently, an exception, I shall explain further on.

Whatever peculiarity may attach to the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, considered thus simply as literature, coming into existence in a way analogous to that of other literatures, is *due solely to the differences between the Jewish people and its life,* and other nations and their life. The sacred literature is no less the vehicle of an actual life than are non-sacred literatures, but the life of which it is the vehicle is another life. Hence, whilst the point of view from which it is regarded may be the same as that from which all other literatures are regarded—not at all

different—the estimate formed of its nature, significance, and value, may possibly be as different as the first appearances are alike.[1]

III. As the position thus assumed may seem, however, to involve the rejection alike of revelation and inspiration, for the purpose of avoiding misunderstanding, I will here anticipate in a few words what I shall endeavour shortly to establish fully. I believe most fully both in revelation and inspiration, as those words have been understood by the best and greatest teachers of the Christian Church; I further hold that the application of these terms to the Scriptures is not only not excluded, but facilitated, by the adoption of the historical point of view. How, as already remarked, it will be my business to show. If this Jewish literature, including the New Testament, really do record and reflect Jewish life, a bridge can be found to the recognition of their divine significance, authority, and mission. What was true in the various positions successively taken up by the Church will come out more clearly than before, whilst what has been felt to be inconsequent and confused will, I believe, be avoided.

[1] See "Gottes Offenbarung durch heilige Geschichte," von Prof. H. v. d. Goltz, 1868; one chapter of which helped to set me on what I conceive to be the right track.

CHAPTER V.

THE HISTORICAL POINT OF VIEW ILLUSTRATED.

I. LITERATURE—using the word to describe not merely *belles lettres* or literature proper, but every sort of written composition—is the outgrowth, or product, or record, or monument of an already existent life. Behind every work, whether it be embraced in the compass of a few lines, or fill endless folios, there is some phase of thought, emotion, purpose, act, experience, in a word, life. What Taine says with regard to literature proper may be extended to literature in this wider sense :—"From the monuments of literature man's feelings and thoughts may be retraced for centuries back. . . . What is your first remark on turning over the great, stiff leaves of a folio, the yellow sheets of a manuscript, a poem, a code of laws, a declaration of faith? This, you say, was not created alone. It is but a mould, like a fossil shell, an imprint like one of those shapes embossed in stone by an animal which lived and perished. Under the shell there is an animal, behind the document there was a man. Why do you study the shell, but to represent to yourself the animal? So you study

the document in order to know the man. . . . It is a mistake to study the document as if it were isolated. This were to treat things like a simple pedant, to fall into the error of the bibliomaniac. . . . Nothing exists except through men." [1]

Take any form of literature. *Chronicles*, memoirs, histories tell what men, as individuals or societies, have done from day to day, or year to year, describe their battles and peace-makings, their marriages, births, and deaths, their uprisings and downfallings, in short, the manifold vicissitudes of their life; all which existed before being recorded. Orations, discourses, and the like, enshrine the thoughts, purposes, emotions, regarding religion, morals, the nation, the commune, the family, the fellow-countrymen, and the foreigner, and so forth, which already possessed the mind and soul of the speaker. It is the poet's own joys and sorrows, raptures and anguish, faiths and doubts, lights, and darkness, reflections and observations, imaginations, fancies, inspirations, that are clothed in the various artistic forms which we call lyrics, epics, dramas, and the various other species of poetry. There is no exception. The driest record and the purest creation of imagination, alike sprang up out of a life at once individual and social. Logically, if not temporally the one preceded the other.

To urge this may seem very like urging a truism; but obvious as it may seem when stated, and self-evident as it has been regarded in other connections,

[1] "History of English Literature," p. 1 f.

relatively to the subject under discussion, it has been too frequently, if not for the most part, ignored.

The books of the Bible have been, to use Taine's apt word, "isolated,"—isolated, *i.e.*, from proper connection with an actual life, analogous to that which other literatures are recognised as presupposing. Language, for example, is often used, which seems to imply that Christian faith and life absolutely presuppose the Bible. Now, though this may be true of us in these days; yet, originally, the New Testament Scriptures grew as truly out of Christian faith and life as Platonic writings grew out of the life of Plato and his disciples, which could not therefore be represented as the absolute presupposition of Platonism.

II. The reverse aspect of what has just been stated is, of course, that if we wish to know how the peoples, societies, and individuals in past ages lived, we must study the literature in which their life found expression. Literature is, at all events, the only source of accurate and detailed knowledge. Something may be learnt from works of art, buildings, aqueducts, monuments, instruments of warfare, tools, articles of rare or common use, from changes wrought for the better or the worse in the face of the earth, yea, even from the very absence of definite traces of influence; but it is scanty and vague. By means of the literature, however, we ascertain how men thought, felt, worked, loved, hated, hoped, feared, joyed, sorrowed, struggled, died; how their life was constituted, the course it ran, the

results it achieved, the aims it pursued, the laws by which it was regulated, and so forth. Again to quote M. Taine: "They are avenues converging towards a centre, and that centre is the man with his faculties and feelings. . . . If the historian's critical education suffice, he can lay bare, under every detail of architecture, every stroke in a picture, every phrase in a writing, the special sensation whence detail, stroke, or phrase had issue; he is present at the drama which was enacted in the soul of artist or writer; the choice of a word, the brevity or length of a sentence, the nature of a metaphor, the accent of a verse, the development of an argument,—everything is a symbol to him. Whilst his eyes read the text, his soul and mind pursue the continuous development and the ever-changing succession of the emotions and conceptions out of which it has sprung;"[1] or, as we may say more generally, of the life, whether inward or outward.

It is well to remember, too, that even what, in its immediate origin, may be the work of an individual is more than that. It never tells merely his tale; it tells also the tale of the society, or tribe, or nation to which he belongs. Is his language, with its grammatical forms, words, phrases, metaphors, and the like, exclusively his own? Are his thoughts solely his own? Nay, is not he and all that makes up his life, however expressed, a wonderful composition, of which but a small part is really original to himself? Still

[1] "History of English Literature," p. 4.

further, it is surely the rarest possible thing for a human being to undertake a composition or work of art unless he can reckon on the sympathy, appreciation, and intelligence of some portion of the great whole to which he belongs. The strongest stimulus to labour and the keenest pleasure afforded by it are the idea that he is expressing not only his own thoughts and feelings, but those of others. Could he not regard himself as to some extent a "prophet" for them—that is, as their mouthpiece—he would scarcely write at all.[1]

The knowledge we can get of the life is in direct proportion to the fulness, especially to the variety, of its literary reflex and record. Where it is very one-sided—*e.g.*, merely poetical, liturgical, philosophical, as in the case of the ancient inhabitants of India—there the picture we can now form for ourselves of the life lived is exceedingly vague and colourless. Nay, more, lacking particularly the properly historical element, it is to a very large extent beyond our power either to represent or understand.

He who proposes to write the story of the Greeks goes to Greek historians, orators, poets, philosphers, and other writers. Some help may be, perhaps, derived from the descriptions and accounts of foreigners; but in the main the Greeks themselves supply—yea, must supply—the material. So with the Romans and other peoples. In like manner, those of us who are interested in knowing the life of the Hebrew

[1] As Aaron was to Moses, Exod. iv. 16; vii. 1: "Aaron shall be thy prophet"—"instead of a mouth."

people must go to their literature—in other words, to the Scriptures and other works in which their life has been embalmed.

III. As the life can only be learnt from the literature, to which it gave rise and in which it found expression, so the literature can only be properly understood, be rightly appreciated, in connection with and in the light of the life which it reveals. We use the literature to elucidate the life; the life must, in turn, elucidate the literature. This may seem a strange, a roundabout process; yet it is the process by which we become acquainted with all concrete things, especially with all forms of past human life and all the modes of its expression. They have to be known through themselves; neither *à priori*, nor through other things, save to a very limited extent.

When we have reconstructed the chief features of the life of an individual or nation, we are prepared to answer the questions,—How came such and such works to be produced? What purpose were they designed to serve? What relation do they hold to each other? What is their real meaning? What influence did they exercise? Who can understand the orations of Demosthenes and Cicero that has no knowledge of their historical environment? or the plays of Æschylus, Aristophanes, or the satires of Juvenal and Lucian, save as part of a social life? or indeed most other extant Greek or Latin works? Yet the life itself must first be constructed with the help of these writings.

I need scarcely say that other things besides literature should also be taken into consideration, for example, the country with its climate, soil, physical configuration, productions, situation, the surrounding nations and the general circumstances of the age. To the recognition of this simple principle is largely due the attention that has of late years been justly given to the historical setting of the life of Christ, and the general life in which He and His apostles and disciples were cradled. In this particular case, indeed, much information is drawn from other sources besides the New Testament; but the general principle is not thereby affected. The Tübingen school of criticism has done service by efforts to assign to each New Testament writing its own proper position in the actual life and development of the Christian community; though they cannot be counted a great success.

The extreme of this principle is to reduce literature to the rank of a kind of spontaneous, involuntary product of the various natural and other agencies of the time. As though the life of humanity could be anything but a perpetual repetition of its earliest, simplest phases, if new elements did not enter into it, either through the rise of specially-gifted individuals, or in a supernatural way.

With obvious modifications, I may here again use the language of M. Taine. "Here as everywhere the law of mutual dependence comes into play. A civilisation forms a body, and its parts are connected with

each other like the parts of an organic body. As in an animal, instincts, teeth, limbs, osseous structure, muscular envelope, are mutually connected so that a change in one produces a corresponding change in the rest, and a clever naturalist can, by a process of reasoning, reconstruct out of a few fragments almost the whole body; even so in a civilisation, religion, philosophy, the organisation of the family, literature, the arts, make up a system in which every local change induces a general change, so that an experienced historian, studying some particular part of it, sees in advance and half predicts the character of the rest."[1]

IV. If our object is to write a history, in the usual sense of the term, and accordingly to relate events and so forth in their chronological succession, it will clearly be necessary to determine the order in which the writings arose through whose medium we approach the life. Whatever aspect of life may be thus historically treated, this will be requisite; but specially if it be the life of a nation or society or individual as a whole. I scarcely need say that it would be impossible to gain a correct view of the philosophical life of Greece, if Thales were to be placed after Democritus, or Heraclitus after Socrates, or Plato after Zeno, or Aristotle after Plotinus. Equal confusion will result if the order of writings in general be disarranged, though sometimes it may not so soon betray itself.

The chronological order of writings is sometimes

[1] "History of English Literature," p. 17.

easy to determine. Internal and external data of a very definite character supply landmarks. In other cases, however, it is settled only after long and elaborate inquiry. In still further cases, it remains doubtful after all means have been exhausted, and different investigators arrive at different results, according to the difference in their points of view. In some cases a philosophical, scientific, or other *à priori* principle unquestionably controls the results reached. Take as an example, the literature, which we call the Bible. If a critic start with the general conviction that all early religious development was from the lower to the higher, from fetishism, animism, or what not, through polytheism to monotheism; he will be under the necessity of, to a large extent, reversing the traditional chronology of the Scriptures:—either *that,* or his *à priori* conviction must give way. This is the secret key to many results of the so-called higher historical criticism.

V. What is true of history in general is equally true of Biblical history. A full appreciation of the Hebrew life and literature depends on our possession of a chronological history; and a chronological history is impossible unless we know the order and circumstances in which the literature was produced. Up to within a comparatively recent period the traditional view of the rise of the sacred books had been seldom questioned. At the present time, however, an important school of critics maintains that at all events some of the writings to which formerly an early date was assigned, were really written much later; and that the

conception of the early life of the Hebrew people based on them therefore needs revision, if it be not altogether mistaken. It is not my intention, if it were in my power, to enter here on the discussion of this complicated question. In fact I am writing for those who like myself believe that in the main the traditional chronology of the Scriptures is correct.

Few will be inclined to refuse to let it be an open question whether many of the books, for example, those which bear the name of Moses, contain parts which he neither wrote himself nor personally caused to be written; that other books are partially compilations from anterior sources; that in some cases books or parts of books may have had other authors than those whose names they have somehow come to bear. But the concessions in this direction required by actual evidence, will eventually be found, I believe, to be of a very harmless character.

VI. The point of view here adopted naturally involves the recognition of the right and, in fact, necessity of historical criticism. Such criticism, however, must not be controlled, either consciously or unconsciously by principles which settle beforehand what can be historical and what not. It ought to be animated by the spirit of candour expressed in Shakespeare's words—

> "There are more things in heaven and earth,
> Than are dreamt in our philosophy."

The canon of true criticism is the law of contradiction. But contradiction exists only when one and the same occurrence is narrated in two or more ways that disagree

with each other; or when it can be clearly shown that what is narrated violates physical or psychical possibilities. But whether such a violation actually exists in any particular case will frequently be very differently decided according to the presuppositions with which an inquirer sets out. It will make all the difference in the world whether one starts with the assumption that all history on earth is the product of natural, including human, factors, without any intervention or determining action of God either on the order of nature in the form of miracles, or on the spirit of man; or, with the assumption that such extraordinary and miraculous divine interventions are possible; and in view of the constitution of man, of the relation of man to nature, and of both to God, alike natural, probable, and fitting.[1]

[1] See Köhler, "Biblische Geschichte," pp. 4, 5.

CHAPTER VI.

FACTORS IN THE LIFE OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE.

IT is not my intention here to attempt even an outline of the history of the Jewish people; though such a history would most completely answer the purpose which I have in view. All that is really necessary for my purpose is to delineate its general features, that is, to present to view such points as in most cases constitute men's knowledge of the life either of an individual or a nation.[1] Acquaintance with the chronological relations of the life is doubtless necessary to a full understanding thereof. But surely there is a very real and vital knowledge which has comparatively little to do with chronology. Suppose we know the chief factors in a people's existence; the parts those factors severally and relatively played; their ruling ideas and principles; and the chief experiences through which they passed, will not our knowledge be very genuine? nay more, will it not be

[1] This and the following chapter will, I fear, to some appear too much like a handful of chips, whilst others may think that I have gone into unnecessary detail. I was anxious to take a middle course.

perfectly adequate for certain important purposes, and possibly more characterised by insight than much that is termed historical knowledge? I propose, therefore, merely to direct attention to such points as those just indicated.

I. The *factors* in the life of the Hebrew nation or people; in other words, the agencies which went to constitute their life and history, what their literature teaches it was. I shall here leave out of consideration the countries which they inhabited, with their situation, physical features, soil, climate, natural productions and so forth. It is with the personal agencies that I am concerned.

(I.) The human factors. These may be classed as native and foreign.

1. The native factors.

(1.) The race.

The founder of the Hebrew nation was Abraham, one of the sons of Terach, the eighth from Shem or Sem. Terach lived at Ur of Chaldæa, the modern Mukair on the Euphrates, between Babylon and the Persian Gulf.[1] When pretty far advanced in years Terach left Ur with Abraham, Sarai, Abraham's wife, and Lot, his grandson, for Charan northwards. After sojourning there a considerable time, Abraham, accompanied by Lot, left Charan and his father, and went to Canaan.

The direct descendants of Abraham constituted

[1] So Köhler, 97, after Schrader and Rawlinson, based on cuneiform inscriptions.

from first to last the great mass of the Hebrew people; though there can be no doubt that from time to time foreigners, both male and female, were incorporated with them. Indeed, express provision is made for such cases: "When a stranger shall sojourn with thee and will keep the Passover to the Lord [*i.e.*, become one with themselves], let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it, and he shall be as one that is born in the land; for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof."[1]

It is most probable that during their long residence in Egypt many intermarriages with the natives must have taken place. We know that, for example, Joseph married an Egyptian wife, and his example would influence others.[2] During the anarchical period depicted in the book of Judges, numerous alliances must have been formed with the aborigines who remained alive. The Gibeonites and Kenites were eventually absorbed.[3] Individual cases constantly occurred down to the Exile. During the Exile, many of all ranks, princes, Levites, and common people, "mingled themselves with the people of the lands by taking of their daughters for themselves and their sons."[4] In later days proselytes were frequently received; indeed, the words of our Lord, "Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, for ye compass sea and land to make

[1] See Exod. xii. 48 ff. Cf. Num. ix. 14; Lev. xvii. 34; Num. xv. 14; xxxv. 15, &c.

[2] On Israel in Egypt, see Kurtz, "Gesch. des alten Bundes," ii. 33. [3] Köhler, 89. [4] Nehemiah ix. 2 f.

one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more a child of hell than yourselves,"[1] warrant us in assuming that great anxiety was felt and great efforts made to secure them.

But allowing for all the intermixture of which we have either exact information or hints, the Hebrews were from beginning to end a separate people, of one race, who could say with truth "we have Abraham to our father."[2]

(2.) The natural characteristics of the race.

Were the Hebrews the sole representatives of the Semitic stock, we should be uncertain how much of, at all events, their later characteristics to attribute to their original constitution, and how much to their peculiar training. But there are others besides them, and, as the result of a comparative consideration of the Semitic branch of the human family, it is maintained by some that the fact of their having evinced no inclination, or at any rate given little or no proof of capacity for original production in the domain, either of natural or psychical science, or of philosophy, or of painting and sculpture, or of architecture, or of the higher and more complex forms of poetry, or even of theology, in the strict sense of the term, was rooted in their natural constitution.[3]

Ewald, indeed, maintains that Solomon wrote the "beginning of a complete natural history,"—that is, laid the foundation of natural science; but Josephus'

[1] Matthew xxiii. 15. [2] Luke iii. 8.

[3] See Grau., "Semiten und Indo-Germanen," pp. 20-37.

view of the scope of the allusion, "And he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is on Lebanon, even to the hyssop that springeth out of the wall; he spake also of the beasts, and of the birds, and of the creeping things, and of the fishes,"[1] seems the truer one,—namely, that he spoke of them in proverbs similar to those which are still extant. With this would agree, too, the Arabian tradition that he "conversed with the birds, both on account of their delicious language, which he knew as well as his own, as also for the beautiful proverbs which are current among them."[2] Besides, if the scientific impulse had really awakened, is it likely that it would have left no further traces of itself?[3] Frequent attempts have been made to find a psychology in the Scriptures; but though they contain facts and hints which deserve consideration, there is no system. Nor, though the chief problems of human life—those of sin, suffering, sorrow, the prosperity of the wicked, and the afflictions of the righteous, the foolishness of men, the rise of idolatry,[4] and the like—attracted attention and received solutions, was there any attempt at such a systematic view of the world as a whole as would deserve the name of *philosophy*. Where are the remains of Jewish art? Even Solomon would seem to have employed Phœnician builders and art workmen to design and superintend the erection of the great temple in Jerusalem, and its furniture.[5]

[1] 1 Kings iv. 33. [2] West's Legends, quoted by Stanley, "Jewish Church," ii. 237. [3] See Job xxviii. [4] Romans i. [5] See 1 Kings v.-vii.; 2 Chron. ii. 11 ff.; iv. 11 ff.

Music, if we may judge from the many general allusions to it in the Old Testament, the numerous musical instruments mentioned, and the large choirs of singers, both male and female, employed in the temple services, must have been largely cultivated and highly developed ;[1] and it is, perhaps, more just to estimate the musical capacity of the race by its modern productions, than as some have done by the specimens handed down by the Synagogue, which may rather reflect the general spiritual death which befell the nation after its rejection of Christ.[2] Whilst the dramatic element is far from absent in Hebrew poetry,—both Job and Canticles contain dialogue, and even in many of the Psalms there is something resembling it—neither the Jews nor the Semites generally have produced epics or tragedies, still less comedies. The poetry of the former is essentially didactic or lyric. To the mind of the Arab, lyrical poetry is pre-eminently poetry, as witness the answer of Abd Allah to the question, "What is a poem ?" "They are feelings which fill the human heart, and are clothed by the tongue in verse."[3]

As to theology proper, the nearest approach thereto is to be found in the Epistles of St. Paul; and yet Ewald, who elsewhere ascribes philosophy to the Jews,

[1] See 2 Sam. vi. 4, 15 ; 1 Chron. xiii. 8 ; xv. 16, &c. Ezra ii. 65 ; Neh. vii. 67 ; vii. 44. See Leyrer's article, "Musik bei den Hebr.," in Herzog, vol. x.; also Saalschütz, "Musik bei den Hebräern."

[2] So Leyrer, p. 129. Cf. Stanley, ii. 143 ff. Grau., "Semiten," 22, is of a contrary opinion.

[3] See Grau., p. 25. Compare Stanley, 240.

on the ground that "wherever men are impelled to inquire into the riddles of things, and an unwearied zeal for their solution awakens amongst the most vigorous minds, there we have the beginnings of philosophy,"[1] says regarding them: "All his epistles were veritable business letters, using the term in its apostolic sense, children of the moment and of pressing needs. Scarcely does that to the Romans, which was one of his later ones, constitute a real exception. In the midst of what outward unrest, difficulties, deprivations, tribulations, and often most painful sufferings they were written, we all know."[2] Rich and true materials towards the construction of a theology,—nay, even of a philosophy are there—but of neither is there a system; and philosophy, or theology without system is neither the one nor the other.

In one direction, however, special endowments are claimed for the Semites in general, and the Jews in particular,—that direction is religion, specially of the Monotheistic type. One of their own number says: "The Greeks had no patterns or teachers in art and science, they were their own teachers and masters; and they soon attained to a perfection which made them for all time the teachers of humanity. It is as though a higher, living feeling for the beautiful, the harmonious; for that which is well-articulated and

[1] Grau., 29.

[2] Ewald, "Sendschreiben des Apostels Paulus," p. 5, quoted by Grau., 41.

lovely in form, had been born with them; it was the genius of the people that fitted them to play the part of masters of art and science. . . . Was not the Jew, too, born with a similar genius for religion? Was it not an original power that enlightened his eyes so that he penetrated further into the higher life of spirit; recognised more livingly, and felt more keenly, the close relation existing between the spirit of man and the Universal Spirit (Allgeist); and had a clearer and stronger vision of the higher claims of human life, of the deeper nature of morality, all which he set forth in the form of knowledge?"[1]

Renan, again, conceives the religion of the Old Testament to be a direct outgrowth of the natural monotheistic tendencies of the Semitic stem, and asserts that it was preserved in a purer form among the Jews by its aristocracy, and the religious zealots of whom it partly consisted.[2] He speaks of the Semitic consciousness as being clear, though restricted; of its having a marvellous appreciation of unity, conjoined with an incapacity of grasping multiplicity; and represents all its characteristics as summed up and explained in its monotheism."[3]

A certain modicum of truth underlies these statements. The Jew, as has been observed, has not a

[1] Geiger, "Das Judenthum," &c., p. 34. Cf. Stanley, "History of Jewish Church," iii. 30.

[2] "Nouvelles considerations sur le caractere générale des peuples semitiques," &c., quoted in Herzog, "Volk Gottes," p. 247.

[3] "Histoire des langues Semitiques etc.," quoted by Grau., 88.

little of the woman in his mental constitution and habits. He is strong in emotion, liable to sudden heats of passion, apt to jump to conclusions, attentive to practical details, persistent and conservative. This is the temperament which shows itself in religiosity. As the woman is more disposed to religion than the man, so the Jew than the Aryan. But as has been well said, "There is scarcely a page of their literature which does not bear witness against the notion of an inborn inclination to monotheism, and show clearly enough what would have become religiously of Israel had he been left to the sole guidance of nature."[1] The natural characteristics above noted, under the perverting influence of sin, sufficiently account for the apostasies conjoined with stiff-neckedness, the separation of religion from morality, the violent defiance and quick repentance with which the Israelites are so frequently reproached in the Scriptures.

Isaiah rightly describes them in the words, "Because I know that thou art obstinate and thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass; so I declared it unto thee long ago; before it came to pass I showed it thee; lest thou shouldst say, Mine idol hath done them; and my graven image, and my molten image, hath commanded them."[2] And if at last after multiplied experiences of the bitterness of apostasy from God they did become tenacious monotheists, it was as the result of a training of which the prophet says, in the

[1] Oehler, "Volk Gottes," in Herzog, 247.

[2] Isaiah xlviii. 4 f.

divine name, "Thou hast caused me *labour* with thy sins, thou hast *wearied* me with thine iniquities."[1]

Such were, briefly, the natural characteristics of the Hebrew people.

(3.) The national organisation.

Like other nations, the Hebrew nation had its organisation, which underwent a variety of developments in the course of the centuries. At first, under Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, it was probably almost identical with that of the Bedouins of the present day, the patriarchs being the sheykhs.

In Egypt,[2] as they grew in numbers, the several families of the sons of Jacob seem to have developed into tribes, the headship of which was successively assumed by eldest sons,—those whom we afterwards meet in the Exodus as princes or heads of tribes;[3] perhaps, too, the captains of Numbers iii., who wielded a certain authority, though supreme power was naturally in the hands of the rulers of Egypt. During the Exodus, things remained as they were, save that Moses led and ruled; that he delegated the lighter duties of his office to "able men chosen from among the people;"[4] and that he established an

[1] Isa. xliii. 24. Cf. Exod. xxxii. 7; xxxiv. 9; Num. xiv. 1; Deut. ix. 6-24. See Oehler, as above.

[2] See Kurtz, "Geischichte, d. A. B.," 2, 33. Cf. Josh. vii. 14; xvii. 18; Num. i. 4, 16; Deut. xxix. 9; Exod. iii. 16, 18; iv. 29; xii. 21; xvii. 5, 6; xviii. 12; xix. 7; xxiv. 1-14, &c.

[3] Exod. ii. 14: "Who made thee a prince over us?" Num. vii. 2, 10; xvi. 2; Josh. ix. 15.

[4] Exod. xviii. 17-26.

ecclesiastical organisation. Joshua succeeded him, and brought his work to a sort of completion. After Joshua's death, disintegration set in; "every man did what was right in his own eyes,"[1] save when some great calamity threatened or befell them, and a prophet or judge arose who led them in war, and afterwards judged them in peace. This state of things continued till Samuel arose, and as prophet and judge revived the sense of national unity, and welded the tribes together.[2]

With the election of Saul to be king a complete organisation was initiated, which was further developed under David and Solomon, and, as to its main features, continued probably down to the double exile. Military, civil, and other offices were created in great variety, and the laws for the priests, Levites, and worship enacted by Moses were carried out with such modifications as circumstances suggested.[3]

The people at large were naturally divided into various classes, pursuing manifold occupations, as elsewhere.[4]

One human factor alone may be said to have been peculiar to the Hebrews—that known as Prophet. In the broader sense, Moses was the first and chief

[1] Judges xvii. 6; xxi. 25.

[2] 1 Sam. iii. 20; vii. 5 f., 15.

[3] Cf. Stanley, ii. 90 ff., and the following passages:—1 Chron. xxvii. 1-15; 2 Sam. viii. 4; xii. 26 ff.; 1 Sam. xxii. 14; 2 Sam. xxiii. 8-39; 1 Chron. xi. 9-47; 1 Chron. xxvii. 25-31; xxvi. 29-32; xxvii. 16-22, &c.

[4] 2 Chron. iv. 17; cf. ii. 7 ff.; iv. 11; xxiv. 12 ff; xxvi. 9 ff.

prophet;[1] Miriam and Deborah are termed prophetesses;[2] a "man of God" is mentioned in 1 Sam. ix. 9; but the full and connected work of the prophets began with Samuel,[3] who seems to have founded those Schools of the Prophets from which, doubtless, many subsequently proceeded, and in which many were trained, but of which it was by no means necessary that all should have been members. A constant succession of them arose till the return from the exile; but then they ceased, till the appearance of John the Baptist; the advent of that greatest of all Prophets, foretold in the words, "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me: unto Him ye shall hearken;"[4] and the calling of the apostles, who after their Master, were in the fullest sense the "mouths of God."[5]

2. The foreign factors.

The chief of these foreign factors were the Egyptians; the Aborigines of Palestine; the neighbouring peoples —the Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians; and the Greeks and Romans.

The *Egyptians* came into contact with the Hebrews, both at the formative stage of their history, and at

[1] Deut. xxxiv. 10; Hosea xii. 14.

[2] Exod. xv. 20; Judges iv. 4.

[3] See Oehler's "Prophetenthum," in Herzog's "Realencyclopædie," 1st ed.

[4] Deut. xviii. 15.

[5] See Exod. vii. 1; cf. iv. 16, where Aaron is appointed to be the prophet or mouth of Moses. Oehler, *ibid.*

various times and in various ways, as friends and foes, from the days of Solomon onwards.

From the book of Judges and from incidental notices occurring elsewhere, we learn that remnants of the original inhabitants of Canaan were left, that "by them Israel might be proved, that it might be known whether they would hearken unto the commandments of the Lord, which He commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses;" to wit, Philistines, Canaanites, Sidonians, Hivites, besides Gibeonites, Kenites, and others.[1] We learn from 2 Chron. ii. 17, that Solomon numbered all the foreigners that were in the land of Israel after the numbering wherewith David his father had numbered them, and there were found "a hundred and fifty-three thousand six hundred;" but whether these were aborigines or immigrants or both, we are not informed.

(II.) The divine factor.

God was in a special sense a factor in the life of the Jewish nation. He was as really, veritably a factor in its life as Moses, or Samuel, or David, or Josiah, or Paul. Apart from a recognition of His special presence and activity, that life becomes as unintelligible as it would become apart from the recognition of the existence and influence of any of the mere men whose names have just been mentioned. In this fact, and the reasons thereof, is rooted the value of the history of the Jews, and of the Scriptures which they produced. Strike the fact out and over their

[1] Judges iii.

literature we shall have to write Ichabod, "its glory has departed."

1. Not that God has not been a factor in the life of other nations. Nowhere is this more distinctly recognised than in the very books which claim special privileges for Israel. Nay more, the very men whose great business it was to mediate this privilege, the prophets, are the men to see the feet of God elsewhere. Out of many confirmatory passages, I will quote only the following. Isaiah says, "Ho, Assyrian, the rod of mine anger! Yea, the staff in their hand is mine indignation. I send him against an impious nation, and against the people of my wrath I give him a charge; to take the spoil and to take the prey, and to make them a downtreading like the mire of the streets. Howbeit he thinketh not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy and to cut off nations not a few."[1] Jeremiah, again, says, "Lo, I will bring upon you a nation from afar, ye house of Israel, saith the Lord; it is a mighty nation, a nation from of old; a nation whose language thou knowest not, neither understandest thou what they say."[2] Listen also to Habakkuk, "For lo! I raise up the Chaldeans, the bitter and impetuous nation which marcheth through the breadth of the land to take possession of dwelling-places not their own."[3] These

[1] Isaiah x. 5 ff. What is said here about the Assyrian may help to explain the statement in Gen. vii. 3 and elsewhere, that God hardened Pharaoh's heart. He used and controlled Pharaoh, though Pharaoh was certainly controlling himself.

[2] Jer. v. 15.

[3] Hab. i. 6.

nations, with their princes and mighty men were not dreaming of fulfilling the divine purpose, of being as clay in the hands of a divine potter. God, however, was using them, was controlling their own self-conceived designs, self-formed purposes, and self-directed movements, for the accomplishment of His plans, and that all unknown to themselves. But the fact I am referring to is most strikingly expressed by the Apostle Paul in his address to the Athenians: "God who made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is He served by men's hands, as though He needed anything, seeing that He giveth to all life, breath, and all things; and He made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after and find Him, though He is not far from every one of us. For in Him we live, and move, and have our being."[1]

2. Accepting the Scriptures as representing Hebrew life, it can scarcely be necessary to adduce proofs of the fact, that God both claimed to be, and was recognised as, one of its factors. So obvious is this, that many writers accuse the Jews of regarding Jehovah as in a narrow, exclusive sense their national God. Yet a few references may be of value and interest.

The call to Abraham to leave his country and

[1] Acts xvii. 24 ff.

kindred was accompanied by a promise, whose inner significance the subsequent history of both Abraham and his descendants did but bring out into view,— "I will make of thee a great nation; I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee."[1] It is made still clearer in the repetitions and expansions of the promise afterwards given to Abraham, his son Isaac, and his grandson Jacob.[2] Joseph confesses the fact when he tells his brethren that "God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So, now, it was not you who sent me hither, but God."[3]

From such hints as that "God dealt well with the midwives" because "they feared God," and did not kill the males that were born, as Pharaoh had commanded;[4] and that in their sorrow and oppression the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, we gather that even then there was a recognition, however fitful and faint, of the special relation between themselves and Jehovah.[5]

The Exodus itself, from its inception to its completion, was one long testimony to the fact under consideration. What had gone before was but a preparation for that which God announced to the children of Israel through Moses: "I am the Lord: I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God; and I will bring you in unto the land concerning which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac,

[1] Gen. xii. 2 f. [2] See xvii. 3 ff; xxvi. 3 ff; xxviii. 13 ff.
[3] Gen. xlv. 5 ff. [4] Exod. i. 20, 21, 16. [5] Exod. ii. 7, 9.

and to Jacob, and I will give it you for a heritage."[1]

The closing address given by Joshua to the people whom he had led into the possession of their God-given country, is full of testimony to the relation between God and Israel. They are reminded of what God has done for them, and in return they vow, "We will serve the Lord."[2]

Even during the period of the Judges, marked as it was, by self-will, apostasy, anarchy, when the hand of the Lord was against Israel for evil, "because they forsook the Lord and served Baal and Ashtaroth," the relation was ever again and again recognised, and when their hearts were filled with penitence for their sins, "the Lord raised up judges who delivered them out of the hands of those that spoiled them," and in other ways showed that He was in their midst, and as it were one of their number.[3]

How forcibly does Samuel remind the Israelites of the relationship in the address delivered to them regarding their demand for a king,—"The Lord your God was your King." "The Lord will not forsake His people for His great name's sake, because it hath pleased the Lord to make you His people."[4]

Even Saul, whom "it repented the Lord to have made king over Israel,"[5] "inquired of the Lord,"[6]

[1] Exod. vi. 6 ff. Cf. Ch. xv.; Lev. xxv. 23; Num. ix. 18; Deut. ix. 3; xxiii. 14.

[2] Josh. xxiv. [3] Judges ii. 13 ff. [4] 1 Sam. xii. 12, 22; cf. xv. 23. [5] 1 Sam. xv. 35. [6] 1 Sam. xxviii. 6.

and in other ways confessed, though reluctantly, the relation between God and the nation.

The lives of David and Solomon and of the nation during their rule were full of the idea that they belonged to God, and were called to serve and glorify Him, and that God was their refuge, and strength, their guide, and ruler. The Songs of David, the Proverbs of Solomon, and the prayers of both, sadly as much of the life of the two men conflicted therewith, testify to a strong sense of the reality of the interest God took in them, and of the strength of the claims God had on them.

The later history of the chosen people is full of evidences of the fact under consideration, though those evidences are predominantly of a sad and dark character, culminating in the national ruin and exile.[1] The restoration was the last special proof and sign that God was a factor in the life of the Hebrew people under the old dispensation. "The Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, the King of Persia, to make a proclamation that God had charged him to build for him a house at Jerusalem and to suffer the Jews to return to their native land." [2]

After the restoration came a long period during which the relation of God to the Hebrews ceased to be marked by any special features. There was a close analogy between their position and that of the Christian nations at the present day.

[1] Cf. 2 Chron. xiv. 11 ; xx. 6 ff.

[2] Ezra i. 1 ff. ; cf. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 22 f.

With the advent of the Son of God, God again entered into special relationship to Israel, but on a higher platform, so to speak, in that Christ became bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh; took upon Himself the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of sinful men; lived with men their life, sharing their toils and sorrows; was crucified; experienced even the hiding of God's countenance, which a sinful race deserves; was buried; rose again; and is now interceding at the right hand of the Majesty on High.

CHAPTER VII.

PARTS TAKEN IN THE NATIONAL LIFE BY THE SEVERAL FACTORS—THE HUMAN FACTORS.

TO treat of the subject of this and the following chapter satisfactorily would involve the writing of the history of the Hebrew people; but as this is altogether beside the object of this work, I shall restrict myself to such features as have a more direct bearing on the problem of inspiration.

I. The part taken by the human factors. Here I will refer, first of all, to those which I have designated foreign.

(I.) There can be no doubt that the various peoples mentioned in a previous paragraph did exercise a considerable influence on the Hebrews; but how far that influence was internal or chiefly external is a question which is variously answered according to the varying points of view of investigators.

1. The original inhabitants of the Promised Land, both before and after possession was taken of it, were in the main "snares and traps unto them, and scourges in their sides and thorns in their eyes,"[1]

[1] Josh. xxiii. 13.

and that alike religiously, socially, and politically. By their oppression, however, during the period of the Judges, they drove the Hebrews to take refuge in their God, and thus themselves counteracted the moral and religious seductions the yielding to which would have brought down on the chosen people the threatened punishments of their God.[1] Under the Kings they lost power as political enemies; but probably continued to be a source of religious corruption till the Exile thoroughly established the Jews in the belief that Jehovah was God alone, and all the gods of the nations idols. We must not forget, however, that from Tyre, at all events, the Israelites drew help in the erection, equipment, and adornment of their Temple and public buildings.

2. The *Egyptians* before the Exodus helped, by their very antagonism and tyranny, to weld the Hebrews into a nation, and thus contributed to the accomplishment of the divine purpose. Their idolatry, however, was a source of temptation, as we find even after God had given them wondrous proofs of His might, and in presence of the thunders of Sinai; though one very significant fact seems to show that Israel was not otherwise much indebted to them,—the fact, namely, that there is in the Old Testament no trace of the remarkably-elaborate and, in some respects, elevated system of the future world, and its rewards and punishments, which had been worked out by the Egyptians. The family and political alliances of the

[1] Josh. xxiii. 5 ff.

period of the Kings also tended to keep alive the tendency of Israel to apostatise into idolatry; but further influence is not discernible.

3. The Assyrians and Babylonians or Chaldees, and Syrians seem to have held towards the Jews in the main merely the relation indicated in the words of Isaiah, "O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger! Yea the staff in their hand is mine indignation. I send him against an impious nation and against the people of my wrath. I give him a charge, to take the spoil and to take the prey and to make them a down-treading, like mire in the streets."[1] They were the axe and the saw in the hands of God, the fire sent to consume His people for their sins and apostasies.[2]

4. The Medes and Persians, on the contrary, being the enemies and conquerors of Babylon were naturally regarded by the Jews as friends and allies. In fact, they showed themselves as such, by restoring them to their native land. As a natural consequence, an interchange, especially of religious ideas is asserted by many to have set in between the two peoples. The story of creation in Genesis, for example; the idea of angels constituting a heavenly host; that of the "seven eyes of the Lord which run to and fro upon the earth;"[3] that of Satan as an accuser and seducer;[4] that of the Fall, specially of the serpent; and even that of the resurrection, if not actually straightway borrowed from, yet are held to have been suggested by the Zoroastrian

[1] Isaiah x. 5. [2] Isaiah x. 15. [3] Zech. iv. 10.
[4] Zech. iii. 1; 1 Chron. xxii. 1; 2 Sam. xxiv. 1.

religious system held by the Persians,[1] The differences, however, between the Bible and Zorastrianism are so fundamental, especially the idea of two primeval, antagonistic forces or spirits which is essential to the latter,[2] that the utmost that can be conceded is that, whilst there is "a close affinity between the forms which the two religions assumed, it is the affinity, with the exception of a few details, rather of a common atmosphere of lofty truths, of a simultaneous sympathy in their view of earthly and heavenly things, than the affinity of direct lineage and relationship;"[3] or that "the germs which lay hidden in Judaism were fertilised by contact with a religion in which they had arrived at maturity."[4] In view, however, of the uncertainty hanging round not only the age and activity, but the very existence of Zoroaster,[5] and of the extent to which Judaism must have been known eastwards, what is there to hinder us from taking up the reverse position, and saying that the Jewish religion fertilised and fructified germs lying in the traditional religion of the Medes and Persians, perhaps also of the Babylonians and Assyrians? Have we not a parallel case at the present day in the Brahmo-Somaj of India?

In the course of trade and commerce the Israelites came into contact with a variety of other peoples; but

[1] Pfleiderer "Die Religion," ii. 340 ff. [2] See Isa. xlv. 1-7.

[3] Stanley "Jewish Church," iii. 186.

[4] Kuenen, iii. 63, quoted by Stanley, iii. 187; also Hardwick, "Christ and other Masters," pp. 545-570.

[5] See Tiele, "History of Religions," 164; and Canon Cook's "Origins of Religion," &c.

any modification in their life thence arising can only have been of a most general and external nature.

5. The Greeks and Romans brought the Jews within the sphere of their influence during the interval between the dying out of prophecy and the advent of Christ ; but, save indirectly through Alexandria, and externally, and incidentally, they do not seem to have done much to colour or modify the life under consideration, either as expressed in the Apocrypha of the Old Testament, or in the writings of the New Testament.

(II.) The part taken by the native Jewish factors.

The limits imposed by the design of this work preclude any idea of dealing completely either with the whole, or, indeed with any one important section of the subject which we are approaching. The life of Israel, at all events after its birth as a nation, embraced within itself a manifold variety of functions and activities. Of the most of these I can take no notice whatever. It is not even necessary that I should consider the elaborate religious institutions and organisation whose great features were foreshadowed and sketched in the books of Moses, and which gradually attained to realisation under the kings. What I am specially concerned with is the literary activity of the nation, especially that part of it whose surviving products constitute the Old and New Testaments.

1. It would be opposed not only to general analogy but also to particular hints given in the extant literature itself, to suppose either that the Jews wrote only on religious subjects ; or that they treated the subjects on

which they wrote solely from a religious point of view; or that the Bible comprises all that their writers wrote.

With regard to the first point, namely, that the writings of the Jews were not exclusively religious, I cannot do better than quote the words of a recent writer:—"Notwithstanding that the most ancient poetry of Assyria, Babylon, and Egypt is likewise religious, we yet have abundant evidence from the poetic lines and strophes quoted in the historical books, as well as from statements with regard to other poetry not included in the collections known to us, that the Hebrews had an abundant poetical literature, relating to the everyday life of the people, and to national, social, and historical phases of experience not strictly religious. Reference is made to the 'Book of the Wars of Jehovah,'[1] and to the 'Book of Jasher,'[2] which were probably anthologies earlier than any of those now in existence; as also to a great number of songs and poems of Solomon relating to flowers, plants, trees, and animals.[3] The mention of Ethan, the Ezrahite; Heman, Chaleol and Darda, the sons of Mahol, in connection with the wisdom and poems of Solomon opens a wide field of conjecture with regard to the amount and variety of the poetry that may have been lost."[4] And another eminent authority writes:—"All that moved the souls of the multitude was expressed in song; it was indispensable to the sports of peace; it was a necessity for the

[1] Num. xxi. 14. [2] Josh. x. 13; 2 Sam. i. 18. [3] 1 Kings iv. 32 f.
[4] 1 Kings iv. 31. Briggs' "Biblical Study," pp. 248 f.

rest from battle, it cheered the feast and the marriage ;[1] it lamented in the hopeless dirge for the dead.[2] Young men and maidens vied with one another in learning beautiful songs, and cheered with them the festival gatherings of the villages, and the still higher assemblies at the sanctuary of the tribes. The maidens at Shiloh went yearly with songs and dances into the vineyards ;[3] and those of Gilead repeated the sad story of Jephthah's daughter ;[4] the boys learned David's lament over Jonathan ;[5] shepherds and hunters at their evening rests by the springs of the wilderness sang songs to the accompaniment of the flute.[6] The discovery of a fountain was the occasion of joy and song ;[7] the smith boasted defiantly of the products of his labour.[8] Riddles and witty sayings enlivened the social meal.[9] Even into the lowest spheres the spirit of poetry wandered and ministered to the most ignoble pursuits."[10] The estimate of the literary activity of the Hebrews formed by the two writers just quoted, may be pitched too high. I am inclined to think it is ; but still it was not so exclusively religious, at all events, in the region of poetry, as is often vaguely assumed.

Many allusions, in addition to those already mentioned, show that in other domains besides poetry, the extant literature is far from complete. Besides the

[1] Isa. v. 12 ; Amos vi. 5 ; Judges xiv. [2] 2 Sam. iii. 33.
[3] Judg. xxi. 19. [4] Judg. xi. 40. [5] 2 Sam. i. 18. [6] Judg. v. 11.
[7] Num. xxi. 17. [8] Gen. iv. 23. [9] Judges xiv. 12 ; 1 Kings x.
[10] Isa. xxiii. 15 ff. Reuss in Herzog's "Encyclopædie," quoted by Briggs, p. 249.

public documents alluded to under the title of "the Books of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel, or of Judah," which are quoted in the first and second books of Kings thirty-one times, down to the history of Jehoiakim inclusive;[1] and to which Nehemiah appeals in the words,—"The sons of Levi, the chief of the fathers, were written in the book of the Chronicles, even until the days of Johanan, the son of Eliashib;"[2] private writings of a historical nature are mentioned, such as "the book of Samuel the Seer, and the book of Nathan the Prophet, and the book of Gad the Seer;"[3] —unless, indeed, the first and second books of Samuel are the writings here specified. Further allusions are as follows:—"The rest of the acts of Solomon, the first and the last, are they not written in the words of Nathan the Prophet, and in the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and in the visions of Iddo the Seer, concerning Jeroboam the son of Nebat;"[4] "the acts of Shemaiah the Prophet, and of Iddo the Seer, concerning genealogies;"[5] "the story or commentary of the Prophet Iddo;"[6] "the book of Jehu, the Son of Hanani, who is mentioned in the books of the Kings of Israel;"[7] "the acts of Uzziah written by Isaiah the Prophet,"[8] which seems to be a different book from that which is elsewhere spoken of as "The Vision of Isaiah the Prophet,"[9]

[1] 2 Kings xxiv. 5; cf. 1 Kings xi. 41; xiv. 19; xv. 7, 23, 31; xvi. 5, 14, 20, 27; xxii. 39, 45, &c. See especially 1 Chron. xxvii. 24. Cf. 2 Chron. xvi. 11; xxiv. 27; xxv. 26; xxxiii. 18.

[2] Neh. xii. 23. [3] Chron. xxix. 29. [4] 2 Chron. ix. 29.

[5] 2 Chron. xii. 15. [6] 2 Chron. xiii. 22. [7] 2 Chron. xx. 34.

[8] 2 Chron. xxvi. 22. [9] 2 Chron. xxxii. 32.

where the acts of Hezekiah are said to be recorded—as is actually the case. In view of the frequency of the references to books of the Kings of Judah or Israel, it seems warrantable to assume that those just mentioned were separate works no longer extant, or only, so far as they are quoted in the Books of the Chronicles.

From the following words—"written in the book of Samuel the Seer, and in the book of Nathan the Prophet, and in the book of Gad the Seer, with all his reign, and his might, and the *times that passed over him, and over Israel, and over all the kingdoms of the countries,*"[1] it would seem, too, that certain writers treated also of the history of other nations besides their own. For, that the expression, "the kingdoms of the countries," refers to nations other than the Hebrew, is pretty clear from 2 Chron. xii. 8, where Jehovah says by Shemaiah the Prophet,—"My wrath shall not be poured out upon Jerusalem by the hand of Shishak; nevertheless they shall be his servants, that they may know My service, and the *service of the kingdoms of the countries.*"

"No fewer than twenty-three prophets, besides those whose writings are preserved in the canon of the Old Testament, are mentioned by name; large numbers of nameless ones are introduced at different periods of Hebrew history,"[2] and surely it is more

[1] 1 Chron. xxix. 29 f.

[2] Ladd, i. 119; Winer, "Realwörterbuch," ii. 283; Clem. Alex. mentions 35, others 48, and 7 prophetesses. See Judges iv. 4; 2 Kings xxii. 14; Neh. vi. 14; Ezek. xiii. 17, a false prophetess. For list see Lee, "Inspiration," appendix.

than likely that many of them produced writings resembling those which have been preserved.

As to the New Testament, we know from the prologue to the gospel of Luke that "many had taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration concerning those things," which were most surely believed by the Church of Christ, and yet these essays at a life of Christ have probably all perished. It is believed also by some that at least one of the Epistles written by Paul is not included in the New Testament.

2. The extant products of the literary activity of the Hebrew people may be assigned to the following classes :—

(1.) History, including biography.

A considerable part of the literature is, at all events in form, historical. It professes to narrate parts of the life of the nation. None of the books, however, pretend to completeness. Some of their writers refer to sources from which they have drawn some, if not the whole, of their information. To a certain extent, therefore, the materials are selected, but on what principle does not seem to me so clear as to those writers of the present day who classify the historical books of the Old Testament as priestly and prophetic, the former embracing Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and the Elohistic portions even of the Pentateuch ; the latter, including the books of Samuel and Kings, with other sections of the Pentateuch, namely, the so-called Jehovistic. The former are said to be "characterised by the annalistic style, using older sources, such as

genealogical tables, letters, official documents, and entering into the minute details of the Levitical system and the organisation of the State, but destitute of imagination, and of the artistic sense." The latter, "by the descriptive style, using ancient stories, traditions, poetic extracts, and entire poems. They are graphic in delineation, using the imagination freely, and with fine artistic taste."[1]

Analogous to this division for the Old Testament would be that commonly associated with the School of Dr. Baur, of Tübingen, for the New Testament; but both views strike me as rather read into, than read out of the actual words before us, and as the result of an undue exercise of subtlety.

Biography, in the narrower sense of the word, is confined to the New Testament—to the life of the Lord Jesus Christ; but numerous biographical details are interwoven both with the histories of the Old Testament, and with the one history—the Acts of the Apostles—of the New Testament.

The only characteristic of these books to which my design requires me to call attention is this—the perfect naturalness with which the action of the divine factor is described. In special circumstances, indeed, expression is given to the consciousness that the relation between Jehovah and Israel is one of a most extraordinary character;[2] but the divine interventions are ordinarily spoken of without surprise, and as though they were a matter of course. The writers

[1] Briggs' "Biblical Study," 230. [2] See Deut. iv. 32 ff.

see God and His acts just as they see David or Hezekiah and their acts, and record both in the same tone and manner, so far as their purpose requires them to do so. At the same time there is a remarkable absence of moralising, spiritualising, religious reflection, or of deducing of lessons of history.

(2.) *Oratory.*—This word must be understood in a very general sense to denote every species of discourse, and not merely what is sometimes vaguely regarded as properly an oration; indeed, also, prayers addressed to God. I may here, again, quote the words of Dr. Briggs:—"Rare models of eloquence are found in the historical books, such as the plea of Judah;[1] the charge of Joshua;[2] the indignant outburst of Jotham;[3] the sentence pronounced on Saul by Samuel;[4] the challenge of Elijah.[5] The three great discourses of Moses in Deuteronomy are elaborate orations, combining a great variety of motives and rhetorical forms, especially in the last discourse, fitted to impress upon Israel the doctrines of God, and the blessings and curses, the life and death, involved therein."[6] Many others, too, might be mentioned, as, for example, the addresses of David and Solomon.[7]

The prophetical books of the Old Testament, which must here be regarded from the point of view of their human authors, form a species of discourse, or oration,

[1] Gen. xliv. 18-34. [2] Josh. xxiv. [3] Judges ix.
[4] 1 Sam. xv.; see also Samuel's charge to Israel in chap. xii.
[5] 1 Kings xviii. [6] Briggs, p. 234.
[7] 1 Chron. xxviii.; 2 Chron. vi.

or address, peculiar to Israel, or, at all events, to the Semitic race. "For unction, fervour, impressiveness, grandeur, sublimity, and power, they surpass all the eloquence of the world, grasping, as they do, the historical past and the ideal future, and entwining them with the living present, for the comfort and warning, the guidance and restraint, of God's people. Nowhere else do we find such depths of passion, such heights of ecstacy, such dreadful imprecations, such solemn warnings, such impressive exhortations and such sublime promises,"[1] and, I may add, such amazing insight into the laws and movements of the moral cosmos.

The longer prayers recorded in the Old Testament, as, for example, that of David in 1 Chron. xxix., of Solomon in 2 Chron. vi., and of Nehemiah in the Book of Nehemiah, chap. ix., are marked by wonderful intensity, elevation, and breadth, and, considered even as compositions, merit all admiration.[2]

What has been said with regard to the Old Testament applies in its measure also to the discourses, prophetical and otherwise, recorded in the New Testament. What simplicity and depth, loftiness and persuasiveness, characterise the discourses of Him who spake as never man spake;[3] and where could be found addresses to excel those of Peter and Paul, recorded in the Acts of the Apostles? Nor does the Apocalypse

[1] Briggs, p. 234. [2] See list in "Helps to Study of the Bible."
[3] Comp. Briggs, 235 f.; A. B. Bruce's excellent work, "The Parabolic Teaching of Christ."

fall far behind the prophecies of the Old Testament in moral insight, force of admonition and dissuasion, glory of promise, fearfulness of threatenings, intensity, fervour, even if it do not surpass them in a certain lurid grandeur, and in tenderness.

(3.) *The Epistle or Letter.*—In the Old Testament there are repeated allusions to letters written for official and other purposes, in the name of royal and other personages.[1] But the only one of importance now extant, is that addressed by Hezekiah to the children of Israel :—"Ye children of Israel, turn again unto the Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, that He may return to the remnant that are escaped of you out of the hand of the kings of Assyria. And be not ye like your fathers and like your brethren which trespassed against the Lord, the God of their fathers, so that He gave them up to desolation as ye see. Now be not ye stiff-necked, as your fathers were ; but yield yourselves unto the Lord and enter into His sanctuary, which He hath sanctified for ever, and serve the Lord your God that His fierce anger may turn away from you. For if ye turn again unto the Lord, your brethren and your children shall find compassion before them that led them captive and shall come again into this land ; for the Lord your God is gracious and merciful and will not turn away His face from you, if ye return unto Him."[2]

[1] See 1 Kings xxi. 8 ; 2 Kings xvi. 1 ; xx. 12 ; 2 Chron. xxxii. 17 ; Neh. ii. 7 ; vi. 17 ff. ; Jer. xxix. 25. [2] 2 Chron. xxx. 6-9.

Alike in this case and in that of the letters of the New Testament, the term connotes characteristics not found in letters of the ordinary stamp. The epistles of the New Testament differ from those, for example, of Cicero and of modern correspondents, so greatly as scarcely to seem to belong to the same class. Indeed, with one exception, apart from unimportant details, the only common feature is the personal element.[1] Otherwise, by far the larger part of the matter might be cast just as it stands into the mould of a discourse—a discourse of the type which would be natural to the Jewish or Semitic mind. Just as the letter quoted above might be a quotation from one of the prophets —it was perhaps written for Hezekiah by one of them—so the epistles of the New Testament might be the Christian equivalents of the prophecies of the Old Testament, owing the differences in their tone, style, matter, to the different circumstances in which they arose, and with which they had to deal. The present-day representatives of the epistles are pastoral letters, encyclica and the like. The latter, however, owing to altered circumstances, are much more restricted in their scope and narrower in their range than the former. There is scarcely a phase of human thought, emotion, feeling, conduct that is not touched upon by the New Testament writers; and their letters teem with speculative glimpses, doctrinal statements, ethical injunctions and warnings, practical advices, and prophetic outlooks.

[1] See Briggs, p. 237. Grau., "Schriftthum des Neuen Test."

(4.) *Philosophy.*—In the wider and more popular sense of the term philosophy we may regard the Books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes,—perhaps also the earliest chapters of the Genesis, which give an account of the origin of the world,—as philosophical ; whilst what may be termed philosophical problems, in other words, those problems of life and destiny which stare every earnest and thoughtful man in the face as he passes through life, are being constantly touched upon even in the Psalms, but especially in the Prophets and in the Book of Job.

The Book of *Proverbs* consists of several collections. The first nine chapters form a complete whole, whose chief burden is the praise of wisdom. Then follow two great sections extending respectively from the 10th to the 24th, and from the 24th to the 29th chapters, described as sayings of Solomon, the latter being introduced by the words, "These also are the proverbs of Solomon which the men of Hezekiah King of Judah copied out." Chapter 30 contains the sayings of Agur, another wise man, and 31 the "words of King Lemuel, which his mother taught him." After the manner of proverbs generally, though on a far higher plane than even that on which the proverbs of Christendom move, the book deals mainly with modes of conduct, right and wrong, and with the rewards and punishments, external and internal, therewith connected. At the same time the reader must lack insight who does not feel that the moral injunctions and dissuasions, promises and threats, are bathed in

an atmosphere of religion; and that the minds of the writers are in contact with, though they have not yet, at all events after our modern manner, grasped the metaphysics of life.

With regard to *Ecclesiastes*, I cannot do better than quote the words of Prof. J. Stewart Perowne. "It is," says he, "the one attempt made by a Hebrew writer, whose works have been comprised within the canon, to face the problems of life in a philosophical spirit. It is true this is not done in the manner of a formal treatise. The Jewish mind was naturally averse from speculation. Jewish literature in its earlier form is wholly wanting in that keen and subtle analysis which is characteristic of the Greek. Jewish thought delights itself in the dramatic incidents of history and in the strong and passionate forms of poetry, rather than in metaphysical disquisitions or the keen fence of dialectics. . . . The book is simply the actual record of the struggles, fears, hopes, perplexities, griefs, sins of a human heart. A man of ripe wisdom and mature experience gives us what may be called his "Confessions."[1] It records plans, doings, hopes, disappointments; and but for hints dropped here and there and for the conclusion, one might imagine the writer to have been a *blasé*, sceptical, and cynical man of the world.[2]

[1] Perowne on "Ecclesiastes," "Expositor," vol. ix. 411 f.

[2] "Its characteristic feature is resignation," says Zöckler, "Handbuch der Theol. Wissenschaften," 161. Cf. Delitzch, "Apologetik," 427.

The portions of the New Testament which may, perhaps, be thus classed, are the prologue to the gospel of John, the hints touching the nature and origin of heathenism in Paul's Epistle to the Romans; and passages in the Acts of the Apostles and in the Epistles to the Corinthians, Ephesians, Colossians, and Hebrews. There is this difference, however, between the Old Testament and the New, that whilst the writers of the former are groping after a key of whose existence they feel they have dim and intermittent glimpses, those of the latter hold the key in their hands, and rejoice in the intellectual and spiritual liberty its possession has given them.

(5.) *Poetry.*—Both in the form of prose and verse.

a. The class of prose poetry is represented solely by *riddles* and parables. The still extant riddles are Samson's to the Philistines :—

> "Out of the eater came forth meat,
> And out of the strong came forth sweetness."[1]

Those attributed to Agur :—

> "Two daughters (cry) give, give !
> Three are they which cannot be satisfied ;
> Four say, not enough."

Answer—

> "Sheol, and a barren womb ;
> Land cannot be satisfied with water ;
> And fire says, not enough."[2]
>
> "Four are little ones of earth,
> But they are wise exceedingly."

[1] Judges xiv. 14.

[2] Prov. xxx. 15 f.

to which the answer is given in the following verses.[1] And further, that of the great eagle put forth in the name of Jehovah by Ezekiel.[2] It is supposed also that some of the questions interchanged between Solomon and the Queen of Sheba took the form of riddles.[3]

Most of the parables are found in the New Testament; but a few are preserved in the Old :—the chief of the latter are, that of Jotham regarding the trees who sought a king;[4] and Nathan's of the poor man's little ewe lamb taken away by the rich owner of flocks and herds.[5]

Those of the New Testament, however, are chiefly worthy of attention—an attention, too, which they more and more secure. Some of them are models even from an æsthetic point of view, and all are instinct with life and meaning.

(6.) Poetry in the stricter sense is confined to the Old Testament. Whatever of the poetical element may be found in the New Testament, is rather high and poetically pitched oratory than poetry proper.

Opinions differ as to the range of Hebrew poetry, some needlessly narrowing it to the lyrical and didactic;[6] others again unduly expanding it so as to

[1] Prov. xxx. 24-28.

[2] Ezek. xvii. 1 f.

[3] 1 Kings x. 3.

[4] Judges ix. 8.

[5] 2 Sam. xii. 1-4. Compare also 2 Sam. xiv. 1-11; 1 Kings xx. 35-40; 2 Kings xiv. 9 ff.; Isa. v. 1-7; Ezek. xxiv. 3-5; to which some add also 1 Kings xxii. 19-23.

[6] Reuss in Herzog, "Hebr. Poesie," 1st ed.

embrace most of the chief forms.[1] Without entering on vexed questions with which I neither need nor am competent to deal, I would venture for myself to adopt the classification into lyric, didactic, and dramatic. In the view of some, the *gnomic* forms a species of itself, and includes even such books as the Proverbs and Ecclesiastes; but, beautiful as is much of their language and poetical as are many of their thoughts, images, and comparisons, it seems to me better to let their characteristic design, which clearly is to instruct with regard to conduct, determine their literary position.[2] It must be confessed, however, that the task of distributing Hebrew poetry under rubrics, like those to which the poetry of classical and modern times lends itself, is very difficult, if not impossible.[3]

(*a.*) Lyric poetry.

Lyric poems are scattered through the various historical and prophetical books, though most of them are collected in the Psalter. They are chiefly hymns, with various themes, representing various moods—of exultation at victory; of depression after defeat; of thanksgiving for manifold blessings; of deprecation of troubles and dangers; of lamentation, penitence, faith, assurance, doubt, fear, despair; of meditation, reflection, forecast; of prayer, special and general, individual

[1] Ewald, "Hebr. Dichtung" has the rubric "Sagendichtung (Epic)," because the Hebrews, he thinks, like other peoples, had sagas which were, so to speak, the raw material of epics.

[2] See Briggs. [3] Reuss, as above.

and social: indeed there is not a phase of human emotion and experience, so far as it touches religion, that has not found expression in these unique productions. The so-called Lamentations of Jeremiah may be described as a dirge over the moral and religious degradation of Israel and the griefs and sufferings which it has brought in its train.[1] Here and there we find what seem to be fragments of old songs, unless they are to be termed complete *distichs*, *tristichs*, and so forth;[2] have been embalmed in other books, such as the Sword Song of Lamech;[3] Noah's curse on Canaan and blessing on Shem and Japheth;[4] Sarah's Song at the birth of Isaac;[5] the oracle concerning Jacob and Esau;[6] Isaac's blessing on Jacob;[7] and on Esau;[8] Jacob's blessing on the sons of Joseph;[9] the Song of the Well;[10] the dirge of David over Abner;[11] the strophe on the standing still of the sun;[12] and others.

(*b.*) Didactic poems.

In this class may be included such as Psalm cxix. and others, which take for their theme the history, or law, or institutions of the nation. If Proverbs and Ecclesiastes are to be treated as poetry at all, they might also be placed here.

If the view recently put forth by Dr. Briggs, of New York, regarding the early chapters of Genesis, be correct,

[1] Compare Briggs, p. 285. [2] Briggs, p. 268.
[3] Gen. iv. 23 ff. [4] Gen. ix. 25 ff. [5] Gen. xxi. 6 f.
[6] Gen. xxv. 23. [7] Gen. xxvii. 27 f. [8] Gen. xxvii. 39 f.
[9] Gen. xlviii. 15-20. [10] Num. xxi. 17. [11] 2 Sam. iii. 33 ff.
[12] Josh. x. 12 f.

they too might be ranked as didactic, or philosophical, or scientific poems, after the type of Erasmus Darwin's "Botanic Garden," or "Temple of Nature." Speaking of his investigations and their results, he says :—"The first passage to disclose itself as poetry was the Elohistic narrative of the creation. This led us to examine the narrative of the flood, and it proved to be a poem of the same essential structure as the story of creation. We next examined the Jehovistic narrative of the temptation and fall, and found it to be a poem of an entirely different structure from the poems of the Elohist. We further found that the Jehovistic story of the flood was a poem of the same structure as that of the fall. The stories of Cain and Abel and the dispersion of the nations from Babel resolved themselves into the same poetical structure. Thus it has become manifest that the earlier chapters of Genesis are a series of real poems, which have passed through the hands of several editors in the earlier collections of the Elohist and Jehovist, until at last they were compacted by the redactor of the Hexateuch into their present form."[1] This is a startling theory ; and the evidence thus far adduced in its favour is but scant—I think all too scant—yet, in view of the parallels supplied by the old Accadian account of the creation and so forth, it may be well to refrain from pronouncing too decided a judgment. Even if these chapters be poetry rather than prose, the great facts and truths lying behind them may be none the less of

[1] The "Poem of the Fall of Man." By Prof. C. A. Briggs, D.D.

divine communication; and were they really poetical in form, it would be easier than at present to draw a distinction between shell and kernel, and thus to render conciliations with natural science a needless undertaking.

(*c.*) *Dramatic Poems.*—The dramatic element enters largely into the substance of the lyrical poetry and the prophecies; but only two whole poems can be fairly described as dramatic in their structure—namely, Job and the Song of Songs. Nor are they dramatic in the sense of having been written for representation, though Ewald thinks this to have been the case with the latter;[1] but because the development of the thought or action is distributed among and is effected by means of various persons. Ewald is inclined to regard the Song of Songs as a kind of comedy, many parts of which were meant to be sung. Job, on the contrary, he compares to a Greek tragedy; for example, the Philoctetes of Sophocles.[2] An interesting comparison has also been drawn between the book of Job and Dante's "Commedia Divina."[3] Dr. Robertson Smith regards the book as "the highest utterance of that characteristic form of Hebrew literature, the Chokma; that is, wisdom or practical philosophy in parabolic, epigrammatic, and poetic form."[4]

The true purpose of the *Song of Songs* is still matter of dispute, though there is a general agree-

[1] Hebr. Dichtung, p. 64. [2] Hebr. Dichtung, p. 80.
[3] G. Baur in "Studien u. Kritiken," 1856.
[4] Encycl. Brit. "Hebrew," vol. xi. 599.

ment that its subject is Love—Love's yearning and Love's happiness. The reasons in favour of the Talmudic idea, that it is to be allegorically interpreted of the relations of God and Israel, are stronger than many are willing to allow.[1]

The purpose or idea of the book of Job seems to be to show how a godly man, on whom the wise and merciful providence of God has brought sore afflictions and temptations, passes victoriously through them all, notwithstanding the antagonism of evil spirits and the provocations of unsympathetic and dogmatic friends.[2] Its basis is probably an old tradition of the misfortunes of a pious nomadic chief or prince of the name of Job.[3] It falls into three parts—prologue, epilogue, and dialogue, of which the first two are written in prose, the last in poetry. The kernel of the whole is, of course, the dialogue, though the problem to be solved is stated in the prologue, and its practical solution in the epilogue.[4]

[1] See Zöckler's "Handbuch der Theol. Wissenschaftten," p. 160, 1st ed.

[2] Schlottman's "Hiob," p. 40.

[3] Cf. Ezek. xiv. 14, where Job is praised, along with David and Daniel, as an example of righteousness.

[4] Kurtz, "Bibl. Gesch.," p. 142.

CHAPTER VIII.

PARTS TAKEN IN THE NATIONAL LIFE BY THE SEVERAL FACTORS—THE DIVINE FACTOR.

GOD is represented as having identified Himself —using the word with the reverential modification naturally suggested by the connection—with the Jewish people and its history. To them His concern for and participation in all that interested and affected their life was as real, as certain, as open to observation as that of Samuel, or David, or any other prominent man. It was not, of course, the same either in quantity or manner; but it was no less real. This is not the place to marshal the evidence for the truth of the conviction which the Israelites cherished, and which expressed itself in their literature; but one thing is certain, to revert to an observation already made in another shape, if it were not a fact, their history is one long chain of the most extraordinary delusions that have ever befallen a branch of the human race.

I. God gave the Hebrews their separate national existence. He it was who called Abraham, the human father of the nation, out from the rest of his connec-

tions. But for this, his descendants would have become amalgamated with the surrounding peoples or would have formed themselves into so many distinct tribes. "The Lord thy God," says Moses to them, "hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself above all peoples that are upon the face of the earth. The Lord did not set His love upon you or choose you because ye were more in number than any people, for ye were the fewest of all peoples; but because the Lord loved you."[1] Of this fact they are constantly reminded in a great variety of ways, especially by the prophets.

II. God gave them the land in which they dwelt.

When He called Abraham, He promised to give the land, saying, "Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward; for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever."[2] And, again:—"I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession."[3] Whilst the descendants of Abraham were still in the wilderness, or on their way to the Promised Land, God assigns as a reason for the law that the land they were to inherit as individuals should not be sold for ever,—"the land is *mine; ye are strangers* and *sojourners with Me.*"[4] They are

[1] Deut. vii. 6 ff.; cf. Exod. xix. 5; Deut. x. 22; viii. 17 ff.; ix. 4 ff. [2] Gen. xiii. 14. [3] Gen. xvii. 18.
[4] Lev. xxv. 23.

warned by Moses, in God's name, not to say in their heart, when they have settled in the land of Canaan and are prosperous, "My power and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth."[1] And throughout their history, as reflected in the Scriptures, especially, as was natural, at its earliest stages, the fact is constantly recognised either explicitly or implicitly. But what more solemn witness thereof could have been given than through the exile of the people, when they turned their back on Him from whom they held their country as it were in fief? And through their dispersion when they rejected their King Messiah? Ever since, they have been a landless nation, trying, though in vain, to make for themselves homes among the nations in whose midst they have lived.

III. God appointed their chief institutions and the men whose business it was to carry out their provisions.

It was He who called Moses to carry out the divine plan for transplanting the people from Egypt to Canaan; who invested Joshua with authority; who raised up Judges; who set up and dethroned the Kings. The political constitution of the nation was fundamentally his work; and the first thing required of its chiefs, judges, and officials of all ranks, was that they should recognise Jehovah as the source of their authority. He always acted as the real King of the nation, and treated the men who bore the title as his representatives, viceroys, satraps, governors. The

[1] Deut. viii. 17

religious institutions with their officers were also emphatically of His ordination. The books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy are largely occupied with the instructions given by Him to this end. It is by no means necessary to assume that the details there recorded were all settled at one time, or even under and through one man, Moses. Whilst it is highly probable, though not certain, that to him are to be ascribed the main outlines and features—for which reason the arrangements as a whole bear his name—there need be no hesitation in allowing that, subsequently to his days, nay, indeed, down even to the exile, modifications were introduced, either with the divine sanction or at the divine command, to suit the changing circumstances of the nation. Indeed, we know that, at all events, as far as the musical part of the temple worship is concerned, great changes, or rather developments, were introduced by David and, probably, by Solomon.[1]

The institution of prophets was one of the most special of God's appointments; and He called the men who were to discharge its duties according to His own pleasure, either from among priests or laymen, high or low, educated or uneducated, from the city or field, the school or common vocation.

The rite of circumcision, the great festivals, religious and political, cities of refuge, and various other features of the life of the nation, owed their origin to Jehovah.

And it is scarcely necessary to refer, last of all, to

[1] 1 Chron. vi. 31, 48; ix. 33; xv.

the mission of our Lord, or to His own appointment of apostles and establishment of His Church, with its two rites, the Lord's Supper and Baptism.

The life and character of a nation are determined by the institutions which are either given to it, or grow up in its midst. They generally, or, at all events, very frequently, owe their existence to the wise foresight of monarchs, statesmen, or other leaders—factors of the nation. Nor was it otherwise among the Jews. God, the great and supreme Factor, originated the chief, the most important institutions; though great men did their part either in carrying out the divine provisions, or applying the principles involved therein, or introducing minor institutions adapted to local or passing requirements. Such was, for example, the procedure of David and Solomon in relation to the army and other branches of the service of the state.[1]

IV. God was the great lawgiver and moral instructor of the nation.

Jehovah spoke to the Hebrews as He spoke and speaks to all other men, through conscience, and natural and social relations; but He also gave special individual commands, issued codes of law, and took care that His will should be ever afresh explained and enforced.

The first command of which we read in connection with Israel, was that to Abraham; but such individual injunctions were given in great numbers of cases, down to the cessation of prophecy; as also afterwards,

[1] 1 Chron. xxvi., and following chapters; 1 Kings iv.

when the Lord Christ appeared to finally establish the divine kingdom. Their occurrence was determined, as we should say, by circumstances—by the necessities of the case. They came most frequently during the exodus from Egypt to Canaan. When the life of the nation was flowing on in a normal channel, the divine will was left to be discovered in the ordinary way.

Codes of laws for the regulation of the political, civil, and religious conduct of the people are preserved in the Books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. As was remarked, however, in connection with institutions, it is not necessary to suppose that every detail of these laws was given through Moses; though there can scarcely be a reasonable doubt that the great outlines and most important features originated with him.

For the elucidation and enforcement of national and even individual duty of various kinds, on the basis of the institutions and laws which had already been given, God further cared by sending prophets. The divine procedure is forcibly described by Jeremiah. Referring, first of all, to the inclination of the people to substitute the outward for the inward, he says, "I spake not to your fathers, nor did I command them concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices; but this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey My voice and I will be your God and ye shall be My people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you. But they hearkened not nor inclined their ear, but they walked in the counsels, in

the stubbornness of their evil hearts, and went backward and not forward. Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day I have even sent unto you all My servants the prophets, daily rising early and sending them."[1] Last of all, came the great prophet who exactly defined the mission of all who had preceded, when he said, "I came not to destroy the law but to fulfil;" but whilst all others could but explain, apply, enforce, he transferred the law from the tables of stone to the fleshy tables of the heart.

V. God gave promises and threats, conferred rewards, inflicted punishments, bestowed honours, and plunged into shame.

The writings of the Old Testament are full of promises and of threats to Israel,—promises opening out the grandest and most ravishing prospects, near at hand and far, far off, if they should be faithful to their Lord; threats that they should become a byword, a hissing, and an abomination, and be scattered among all peoples, if they were unfaithful. And their history as recorded by themselves bears full testimony to the fact that the rewards and honours promised by God became theirs when they obeyed the divine voice; that He delivered them over and over again with His mighty arm when they repented and cried unto Him; and that He visited them with terrible punishment and degradation in proportion as their apostasy became open and complete.

[1] Jer. vii. 22 ff.

The last, most fearful, and saddest outcome of their rebellious spirit, namely, the rejection of Him who was the fulfilment of God's most glorious promises, who came to seek and save them and the world, who would have been their exceeding great reward, and whose acceptance would have crowned the nation with glory and honour, brought in its train their final destruction as a nation, and their degradation from the lofty position of elect representative of God among the peoples.

VI. God instructed the Hebrews at sundry times and in divers manners regarding Himself and His purposes.

The principal channel through which the Hebrews learned to know God was His activity as a factor in their life. God lived and moved among them, and so they were constantly brought face to face with Him, and enabled to appreciate to some extent His nature, attributes, character, mind, will, even as the knowledge most of us gain regarding our fellow-men, especially regarding our rulers, statesmen, leaders, is through their life and activity, not through positive declarations or instruction given by them. Still at certain great epochs Jehovah condescended to instruct regarding Himself. For example, in answer to the request of Moses, He said: "I Am that I Am. Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel—I Am hath sent me unto you."[1] Further, "I am Jehovah; and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob

[1] Exod. iii. 14.

in the name of God Almighty; but as to My name Jehovah, I made not Myself known to them."[1] So, likewise, the various declarations made to Pharaoh, as, for example, "There is none like Me in all the earth;"[2] "I am the Lord;"[3] "The earth is the Lord's;"[4] "The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation;"[5] "The Lord is a jealous God;"[6] "Ye shall be holy, for I am holy."[7] Other declarations of a similar nature occur at intervals, called forth, as one may say, speaking after the manner of men, by the necessity of the occasion, and finding their consummation in the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Many hints are given also by God regarding His purposes with Israel and the world at large;[8] though as they constantly interchange with promises and threatenings whose fulfilment was conditional on the conduct of those to whom they were given, it is not wise to press them in any particular case. The clearest intimations related to and arise out of the mission of Christ the Messiah and His redeeming

[1] Exod. vi. 2. [2] Exod. viii. 10. [3] Exod. x. 1.
[4] Exod. ix. 29. [5] Exod. xxxiv. 6.
[6] Exod. xxxiv. 14; cf. Deut. vi. 15; Num. xiv. 18. [7] Lev. xi. 45.
[8] Amos iii. 7, "The Lord doeth nothing without revealing His secret to the prophets."

work. But neither as regards the divine nature nor the divine plans is the intimation or the revelation given by God of a kind to satisfy merely intellectual curiosity. Its sole end and aim was the furtherance of a right practical relation to God Himself, and of readiness to do His will in the world.

VII. The methods which God employed in the discharge of these functions, as a factor of the life of the Jewish people. The human factors did their work in various ways, either themselves or through agents; by signs, by words, by deeds, by their personal presence, and by unconscious influences, giving rise to feelings, thoughts, and other movements of the inner man. So do human factors always fulfil their parts. And if we examine the history with which we are now occupied, we shall find that God adopted analogous modes of co-operating with the other factors in the determination of the life of the Hebrew people,—modes strictly analogous, though naturally different, in conformity with the difference between the divine and the human, between visible and feeble man and the invisible and omnipotent God.

(I.) God acted specially on and through the natural environment of the nation, including in the natural environment also the human body. In an ordinary way, God is always acting on nature generally, and on the natural environment of the nations; and save when His personal relation to a nation becomes special, He does not act otherwise. A special spiritual

relation demands speciality in the external relation; and speciality in the external without speciality in the internal would only give rise to superstitious hopes or fears.[1] But the two correspond, supplement, interpret, and aid each other. This special action of God is commonly termed miraculous; but I purposely use a vaguer term, because the boundary line between what is obviously miraculous and what seems to be merely an intensified or peculiar form of the action of what is spoken of as the laws of nature, or, as it would be more correct to say, of the force or forces whose ordinary working constitutes the course of nature, is not very clearly marked; nor, if the point of view from which the divine relation to Israel is here regarded be correct, should this be the case.

1. A distinction may be drawn between special divine action without, or with and through human agents; between special action, in which no human agent is either really or seemingly interposed, and that which is mediately directed or commanded by a human agent. In the former class might be placed interventions, such as the destruction of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram; of the army of Sennacherib; the deliverances of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego; and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. To the latter class belong nearly all the signs and wonders wrought in the course of the long history.[2]

[1] See Rothe, "Zur Dogmatik."

[2] So Rothe. See article "Wunder" in Herzog's "Realencycl.," vol. xviii. p. 317; cf. 308.

2. The special action of God termed miraculous may be said to be of two kinds.[1]

(1.) Special control of natural forces, so that, without ceasing to be natural, they act in a special manner or produce special effects.[2] Of this kind were, perhaps, the enabling of Sarah, Rebekah, and Hannah to bear children when apparently too old; the plagues of frogs, lice, flies, murrain, boils, and blains, thunder, and hail, and locusts, in Egypt; the supply of manna, quails, and water[3] in the desert; the thunders and lightnings of Sinai; the sending of the fiery serpents; the destruction of the mocking children at Bethel; the feeding of Elijah by the ravens;[4] Jonah and the whale; and some of the miracles of our Lord, as, *e.g.*, that of the stater in the fish's mouth, and the draughts of fish. Of this nature also was, perhaps, the enabling of Moses to spend forty days and forty nights on Mount Sinai without food,[5] and the strengthening of Elijah when, through the hand of the Lord upon him, he ran before Ahab's chariot to the entrance of Jezreel.[6]

(2.) The production of effects, changes, or phenomena without the employment of any visible or known natural forces. These are the miracles proper, miracles in the narrower or stricter sense of the term.

[1] See on "Epochs of Miracles," Herzog, vol. xviii. 308.

[2] The Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah; the Flood, &c., before the time of Abraham.

[3] Water from the rock at Rephidim.

[4] 2 Kings ii. 23 ff.

[5] Deut. ix. 9.

[6] 1 Kings xviii. 46; Ezek. iii. 12; ii. 2, &c.

Amongst them may be mentioned the turning of Aaron's rod into a serpent, the conversion of water into blood, the darkness, and the slaying of the firstborn in Egypt; the parting of the Red Sea; the death of Nadab and Abihu; the swallowing up of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram; the healing by the brazen serpent; the stoppage of the waters of Jordan; the fall of the walls of Jericho; the death of Uzzah for touching the ark; the withering of Jeroboam's hand; the raising of the widow's son of Zarepath, and of the son of the Shunamite; the dividing of Jordan by Elijah and Elisha; the curing of Naaman's leprosy, and the smiting of Gehazi; the destruction of Sennacherib's army; the smiting of Uzziah with leprosy, and of the Philistines; the sending of fire down on Elijah's sacrifice; the translation of Enoch and Elijah; the deliverance of the three Jews from the fiery furnace, and of Daniel from the den of lions; and, in fact, nearly all the wonders recorded in the Old Testament. Most of the miracles recorded in the New Testament, so far as they affect the natural world and the human body, belong to this class.[1]

(II.) God acted specially on the human mind. Of this mode of intervention we may distinguish three kinds.

[1] As to the classification of one and another of the miracles, opinions may differ, but the distinction drawn seems to me real.

1. The *first* had the effect of heightening, or quickening the normal mental energy and activity. Examples of this are the influence on Bezaleel and others referred to in Exodus :—"See I have called by name Bezaleel and have filled him with the spirit of God in wisdom and understanding and in knowledge and in all manner of workmanship, to devise curious works, to work in gold and in silver and in brass, and in cutting of stones to set them, and in carving of wood, to work in all manner of workmanship. And I, behold I have given with him Aholiab, and in the hearts of all that are wise-hearted I have put wisdom that they may make all that I have commanded thee."[1] In this case men are specially energised for the more external work intrusted to them.

Another example is this :—"And the Lord said unto Moses, gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel, and I will come down and talk with them there, and I will take of the spirit which is upon thee and will put it upon them ; and it came to pass when the spirit rested upon them that they prophesied."[2]

Again, it is said of Joshua, that "he was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands upon him, and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the Lord commanded Moses."[3] No

[1] Exod. xxxi. 1 ff. ; cf. 1 Chron. xxviii. 12.
[2] Num. xi. 16, 17, 25 ; cf. Isa. xi. 2.
[3] Deut. xxxiv. 9 ; Num. xxvii. 18.

new faculties were given to Joshua; but his native capabilities were quickened and invigorated, in order to his discharge of the great duties imposed upon him.

So too of the judges on whom, we read, the spirit of the Lord came, fitting them to judge and deliver His people; as is said, for example, of Othniel,[1] of Gideon,[2] of Jephthah,[3] and of Samson, whom "the spirit of the Lord moved."[4]

Saul also experienced this special action of the spirit,[5] though we are not informed for what specific purpose or with what specific results. The prophets are repeatedly said to be stirred and invigorated by the power of the Spirit of God. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me."[6] "I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord, and of judgment and of might."[7]

2. By the *second*, dormant or latent faculties—faculties which men are not ordinarily capable of exercising, still less conscious of, and which indeed they are apparently not meant to have under control in the present life—were called into temporary activity. Under this head may be classed Joseph's power to interpret Pharaoh's dreams;[8] Daniel's ability to read the writing seen by Belshazzar on the wall of his palace;[9] the opening of the inner eye to see what was otherwise invisible, as in the case of Elisha's

[1] Judges iii. 10. [2] Judges vi. 34. [3] Judges xi. 29
[4] Judges xiii. 25. [5] 1 Sam. x. 10; xi. 6. [6] Isa. lxi. 1.
[7] Micah iii. 8. [8] Gen. xli. 14. [9] Dan. v. 1-13.

servant,[1] or Paul when Christ appeared to him on the way to Damascus;[2] the unstopping of the inner ear, as when Paul in ecstasy "heard unspeakable words;"[3] the power of speaking in strange languages, as wielded by the Apostles at Pentecost, by those who met at the house of Cornelius to hear Peter, and by members of the Corinthian Church;[4] the ability to interpret the unknown tongues exercised by the Corinthians;[5] the spirit of prophecy promised in Joel;[6] perhaps also the gifts of the Spirit coveted by Simon Magus;[7] possibly, too, some of the experiences of John recorded in the Apocalypse; and finally, our Lord's ability to read the thoughts and purposes of the men who were around Him.

3. The special control of the purposes and plans of individual men, and through them of whole tribes and peoples, for the accomplishment of some divine end. Amongst illustrations of this kind may be adduced the "hardening of Pharaoh's heart that he should not let Israel go;"[8] the stirring up of the spirit of Pul, King of Assyria, and the spirit of Tiglath Pileser, King of Assyria, to carry away the Reubenites and others captive;[9] the action of Amasai, the chief of the thirty, in saying, "Thine are we, David, and on thy side;"[10] the stirring up of the spirit of Zerubbabel, the gover-

[1] 2 Kings vi. 17. [2] Acts ix. 3. [3] 2 Cor. xii. 4.
[4] Acts ii. 4; x. 10; 1 Cor. xii. 10, 30; xiv. 2 ff.
[5] 1 Cor. xii. 10, 30; xiv. 4 ff. [6] Joel ii. 28. [7] Acts viii. 18 ff.
[8] Exod. vii. 3. [9] 1 Chron. v. 26. [10] 1 Chron. xii. 18.

nor of Judah, and of Joshua, the high priest, and of the remnant of the people, to come and do work in the house of the Lord of Hosts;[1] the stirring up of the spirit of the King of the Medes to execute the vengeance of the Lord;[2] and other cases of strange kings and also peoples, who "not thinking to do the will of God,"[3] were controlled so as to work out His designs.

Under this same head, though at a long distance, we may mention the case of our Lord's being "led up of the Spirit to be tempted in the desert;"[4] and similar occurrences in the life of His apostles.

(III.) God indicated and expressed His mind and will in special ways. In the wider sense all the divine interventions were indications of God's mind and will, especially revelations of *Himself.* Particularly was this the case with miracles, properly so termed; but the distinction drawn between the acts which a man performs for the benefit of others, and the expression he gives to his thoughts, may be applied to the divine interventions, as compared with the divine communications.

1. *Signs* were employed.[5] The term sign is variously applied—at the one end, to things and events which, though remarkable, are perfectly

[1] Haggai i. 14. [2] Jer. li. 11; cf. 2 Kings xix. 7.

[3] See Isa. x. 5; Isa. xliv. 28, "Cyrus is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure," &c.

[4] Matt. iv. 1.

[5] See Ladd on "Signs," p. 132; "Miracles," p. 127.

natural; at the other, to miracles; and it is not easy to determine where the one passes into the other. The supernatural is a sign; and the extraordinary natural is a sign.

Isaiah says, "Behold I and the children whom the Lord hath given me, are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of Hosts."[1] The rainbow was to be a sign or token of the covenant from God.[2] The censers once used by Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, were to be signs unto the children of Israel.[3] The death of Eli's two sons on the same day was a sign.[4] The curses and desolations brought on Israel were to be a sign.[5] The rending of the altar and the pouring out of the ashes upon it, are set as a sign.[6] As a sign to Gideon, the angel of the Lord touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and caused them to consume.[7] So, too, the going back of the shadow of the dial ten degrees, was a sign to Hezekiah that he should recover.[8]

We may further mention the smoking furnace and lamp;[9] the burning bush;[10] the Shekinah in the temple;[11] the prophets are instructed, or instruct others, to regard as signs, or use for the purpose, the destruction of the Assyrians and the assassination of

[1] Isa. viii. 18. See Isa. xx. 3, Isaiah walking barefoot. So Ezek. xii. 6.
[2] Gen. ix. 12 ff.
[3] Num. xvi. 38.
[4] 1 Sam. ii. 34.
[5] Deut. xxviii. 46; Jer. xliv. 29.
[6] 1 Kings xiii. 3.
[7] Judges vi. 20.
[8] 2 Kings xx. 9 f.
[9] Gen. xv. 17.
[10] Exod. iii. 3.
[11] 1 Kings vi. 16; cf. 8, 6 f.

Sennacherib; Hosea's taking to himself a wife;[2] locusts, fire, fruit, &c.;[3] the tempest, the sudden growth and decay of the gourd that happened to Jonah;[4] the death of Ezekiel's wife;[5] and the almond tree and the seething-pot.[6]

Perhaps, too, we might include under this general head the phenomena connected with the Urim and Thummim;[7] and, so far as it was done with the divine sanction, the casting of lots.[8]

2. *Dreams*[9] and *Visions*, with and without explanatory words. Here, too, again, the line separating dream from vision, is not very distinct; though in general there are two features that distinguish them. Dreams come generally by night, during natural sleep, and are constituted of materials furnished to hand by experience. Visions come either by day or night; either in a waking state or in one of trance; and may be constituted by new materials.

Amongst what appear to be *dreams* proper, may be mentioned that of Jacob when he saw the ladder up to heaven;[10] those of Joseph;[11] of Pharaoh and of Pharaoh's butler and baker;[12] of the Midianite soldier,

[1] Isa. xxxvii. 36-38.
[2] Hosea i. 2; iii. 1.
[3] Amos vii. 1-4; viii. 1.
[4] Jonah i. iv.
[5] Ezek. xxiv. 18.
[6] Jer. i. 11 f.
[7] Num. xxvii. 21; Ezra ii. 63.
[8] Josh. xviii. 10; Judges xx. 9; 1 Sam. xiv. 41; 1 Chron. xxiv. 7; Isa. xxxiv. 17; Acts i. 26.
[9] On Dreams. See Winer's "Realwörterbuch," article "Traum;" also Herzog's Encycl. *sub voce.*
[10] Gen. xxviii. 12 ff.
[11] Gen. xxxvii. 5.
[12] Exod. xl. 1; iv. 1 ff.

whose telling thereof was overheard by Gideon;[1] the dreams interpreted by Daniel;[2] and Daniel's own dream.[3] These were unattended by words.

The following are examples of dreams, which are said to be accompanied by verbal communications:—that of Abimelech;[4] of Jacob when he was with Laban;[5] of Solomon;[6] and of Joseph with regard to Mary and Jesus.[7] Dreams are frequently alluded to as sent by God, in nearly all the books of the Bible, especially, however, in the prophecies.[8]

Visions occur, likewise, with and without the accompaniment of words and explanations.[9] They are of the most varied kinds. The word is very frequently applied to communications through the ear, as for example in the case of the divine message to Samuel regarding Eli and his house:—"Samuel feared to show Eli the *vision;*"[10] and frequently by the prophets.[11] Words are accordingly said to be "seen," when in reality they were heard.[12] I understand the word here of what is *seen.*

Visions in the narrower and stricter sense of something presented to the inner eye, are described most vividly by Balaam. "Balaam the son of Beor saith,

[1] Judges vii. 13.
[2] Dan. ii. 3. [3] Dan. vii. 1. [4] Gen. xx. 3.
[5] Gen. xxxi. 11 ff. [6] 1 Kings iii. 5. [7] Matt. i. 20.
[8] Cf. Jer. xxiii. 25; xxiii. 28; Zech. x. 2; Joel ii. 28; Deut. xiii. 1 ff; xviii. 21.
[9] Cf. Ezek. i. 24; ix. 1; xxvii.; xl. 4; xliii. 6, with voices.
[10] 1 Sam. iii. 15.
[11] Cf. Isa. xxi. 2; Obad. i. 1; Nahum i. 1; xxii. 7-26, &c.
[12] Isa. ii. 1; Amos i. 1; Micah i. 1.

and the man whose eye was closed saith: he saith which heareth the words of God, which seeth the vision of the Almighty, falling down and having his eyes open."[1] Balaam saw the future of Israel pass before him in a series of pictures, as it were, a panorama. Isaiah describes a vision of the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, with train filling the temple;[2] Ezekiel had visions of various kinds;[3] Daniel too;[4] Peter had a vision before going to Cornelius;[5] visions came also to Paul;[6] and John's Apocalypse consists to a large extent of visions.

3. Words audible to the outward ear. Cases of this kind seem to be the following:—God, or the Angel of God, spake audibly to Jacob during the wrestling;[7] in the ears of the children of Israel at Sinai;[8] to Moses from above the mercy seat, that was upon the ark of the testimony, from between the two cherubims;[9] also, when the Lord came down in the cloud;[10] to Samuel when he was as a boy in the temple of the Lord;[11] to Balaam through the Angel, as he was riding on his ass; and elsewhere in the Old Testament.[12] In the New Testament audible voices were heard from heaven at the baptism of our Lord,

[1] Num. xxiv. 3 ff.; cf. Henderson on "Inspiration," p. 136.
[2] Isa. vi. 1 ff. [3] Ezek. i. 4 ff.; xliv. 4.
[4] Daniel vi. 2; viii. 1 f. [5] Acts xi. 5. [6] Acts xvi. 9.
[7] Gen. xxxii. 24. [8] Exod. x. 19. [9] Num. vii. 89.
[10] Num. xi. 25. [11] 1 Sam. iii. 4.
[12] Cf. Num. viii. 1; Exod. xxv. 22; xix. 16; 1 Kings xix. 11; Deut. iv. 12; Dan. iv. 3; also Gen. xv. 8 ff.; xviii. 13, 17; xxv. 23; xxxv. 1; probably, too, many conversations with Moses "face to face" were audibly conducted.

at His transfiguration, and at the grave of Lazarus; also by Paul, when he was arrested on the way to Damascus.[1]

There are many narratives in which it is not quite clear whether voices audible by the outward ear are intended, or words spoken to the inner ear.[2]

4. Inwardly audible or perceptible words. This seems to me to have been one of the chief modes by which God communicated with men; and examples occur frequently through the history of Israel—so frequently, indeed, that it is scarcely necessary to refer to any in particular. As I remarked under the last head, there are many cases in which it is doubtful whether it was externally or merely internally audible speaking. When the prophets speak of the word or burden or message of the Lord coming to them;[3] or of things being revealed in their ears;[4] or of God revealing His secret to the prophet;[5] or when Elijah hears the still small voice;[6] or Philip the injunction to go to meet the eunuch;[7] or Paul the exhortation to go to Macedonia,[8] and so forth—it was probably in this way. So too the words spoken in connection with, and elucidation of, visions.[9]

5. Suggestions. By these I mean thoughts arising within the mind, either during, or independently of, conscious effort or co-operation; but not expressed in

[1] The words spoken through incarnations were thus audible.
[2] On the Bath Col., see Henderson, 146.
[3] *Passim.* [4] Isa. xxii. 14; xxx. 21; l. 4; lxii. 2.
[5] Amos iii. 7. [6] 1 Kings xix. 12. [7] Acts viii.
[8] Acts xvi. 9. [9] See references under Visions.

words to the inward ear. Of this kind was probably to a large extent the action of the spirit of God in and on the prophets. Sometimes they heard their message, oftenest perhaps it came as the result of an influence acting below consciousness, but whose results they were able to differentiate from their own proper work. Of this nature, too, was the action of the Spirit promised by Christ :—"It shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak ;"[1] "He shall guide you into all the truth ;"[2] and the consciousness which Paul expresses, and the other writers of the New Testament probably had, of speaking and writing the mind of Christ, was rooted in this mode of the divine action.[3]

6. *Incarnations*—whether of departed men or of angels, or of the Son of God. Under this head must be included appearances of the dead, whether momentary or more lasting, as for example, that of Lazarus, that of Samuel, through the witch of Endor, of Moses and Elias on the Mount of Transfiguration, of our Lord Himself after His death ; angelophanies, such as are mentioned in the Old and New Testaments, in the latter those to Mary, to Zechariah, to Peter in the prison, and so forth ; theophanies or Christophanies as in some cases of the Old Testament—perhaps the Maleach Jehovah was a Christophany—and finally the Incarnation proper.

7. Such were the chief modes in which, or channels

[1] Matt. x. 19. [2] John xvi. 13.

[3] Cf. Mark xiii. 11 ; Luke xxi. 14 ; xi. 11 ; Acts iv. 6 ; 2 Tim. iv. 16 ; cf. Exod. iv. 11 ; Jer. i. 9 ; John xiv. 26 ; xv. 26.

by which, God entered into special communication with the other factors of the Jewish nation. To repeat what I hinted at before:—just as, we will say, David established institutions, legislated, wrought works, influenced men's bodies and minds, and conveyed to his fellow-countrymen what he wished, proposed, felt, thought, by various channels; so did Jehovah the great divine factor. The several channels or modes which He selected were determined by the special relation He holds to men in general, and by the special mental and other conditions of those whom we may term His co-factors in the life of the nation.

Everything that God did and spake was done and spoken in discharge and fulfilment of His part, as a factor of the chosen people; to the end that that people might become for itself and for other peoples what He intended it to become. As was remarked before, every divine act told something about God; but that was rather the accident, or at all events the secondary purpose, than the substance or primary purpose of the acts. On the contrary, the primary end of God in the use of the vehicle or channels we have been considering was to let the Israelites know something about His mind or will or feelings towards themselves or others, though this, too, almost if not quite invariably, as was remarked before, had a distinctly practical, never a theoretical or merely intellectual purpose.

CHAPTER IX.

THE MISSION OF THE JEWISH NATION.

I. THE idea or law and purpose of the life of the Israelites as a nation.

The Israelites betray from beginning to end a more or less distinct consciousness of the fact that they exist as a nation for a particular end; and that their life is subject to a definite law. It may be taken for granted by every one who believes that God rules the world, that some idea or other underlies and pervades the life of every nation. But whatever the divine view of the matter may be, it is certain that no other nation has shown itself to be clearly conscious of the fact. They all live out their lives as nations with little more sense of having a special vocation to fulfil or end to serve, than the beasts of the fields, or the fowls of the air. Occasionally, perhaps, where there is a literature, a great orator or poet or historian may have had and given expression to, a glimpse of the rôle which the nation as a whole was playing; but even if it were confessed for a moment, and excited a passing enthusiasm, or pride, or other emotion, it never became an abiding conviction of the national mind,

colouring its whole view of life and the world, and swaying its conduct at every important epoch.

This was, however, the case with the Jews. What then was this idea and law? Analysed, the several elements may be described as follows:—

(I.) They conceived themselves to be witnesses for Jehovah to the whole world, and their mission to be to bless the whole earth. This keynote of their life comes out with wonderful clearness in the narrative of divine intercourse with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; but the idea recurs again and again in a variety of forms, especially at great crises. They fought, it is true, against it; nay, more, they twisted it into the notion that they were special favourites of Jehovah, to the exclusion of all other peoples; and had consequently to be visited with sore tribulations, to be exiled, and finally, after rejecting Christ, to be scattered to and fro on the earth; yet it was present more or less distinctly to the higher and nobler minds of the nation. It comes out in passages like the following:—"Jerusalem shall be called the throne of the Lord, and all nations shall be gathered unto it;"[1] "If thou reform—the nations shall bless themselves and glory in Him;"[2] "Thou shalt rule over many nations;"[3] "All the peoples on earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the Lord."[4] "Every one that is left of all the nations that came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of

[1] Jer. iii. 17. [2] Jer. iv. 1, 2. [3] Deut. xv. 6.
[4] Deut. xxviii. 10; cf. Ps. cxvii. 1; xcvii.; Psalm ii.

Hosts, unto Jerusalem;"[1] "All nations shall call you blessed;"[2] "This is Jerusalem: I have set her in the midst of the nations and countries that are round about her;" "I shall be sanctified in you in the sight of the nations;"[3] "Known in the eyes of many nations."[4] The allusions to the terrible chastisements inflicted on Israel, and to the consequent mocking of the Gentiles, point in the same direction.[5] "I will set my glory among the nations, and all the nations shall see my judgment which I have executed. And the nations shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity;"[6] "O Lord, unto Thee shall the nations come from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Our fathers have inherited nought but lies. Behold, I will cause them to know mine hand and my might."[7] Sometimes, in fact, they had to be reproved for ascribing to themselves this special function among the nations, when their conduct was out of accord with it, as for example by Jeremiah:—"Trust ye not in lying words, saying the Temple of the Lord are these."[8]

In connection herewith, and as the means thereto, should be mentioned the idea of the Messiah, the

[1] Zech. xiv. 16.
[2] Mal. iii. 12.
[3] Ezek. v. 5; xx. 41; cf. xxviii. 25.
[4] Ezek. xxxviii. 23.
[5] See Ezek. xxii. 5; xx. 48; xxxvi. 4.
[6] Ezek. xxxix. 21, 23; cf. xxxvii. 26 ff.; xxxviii. 21.
[7] Jer. xvi. 19; cf. Deut. ii. 25; iv. 5; vii. 6; xiv. 18; xxviii. 10. xxvii. 28; Zech. viii. 13, 20, 22, 23; xii. 2. See the prophecies against other nations in Isaiah and Jeremiah. Cf. specially Simeon's words on Christ, Luke ii. 29 ff.
[8] Jer. vii. 4. See context.

servant of the Lord who was to be the leader and commander of the people, and to realise the divine plan. The belief of the section of the Israelites which constituted the Christian Church, was that Jesus Christ was the promised Messiah ; that He was the Saviour of the whole world, and that the great mission of His followers was to proclaim the Gospel of the kingdom to every creature. In fact, the true idea of the history of Israel came out into clear consciousness in and through Jesus Christ. As to this matter He brought nothing new :—He came not to destroy but to fulfil the law and the prophets. Owing to the weakness of Jewish human nature, it would not have been wise for God to have set before them their real mission, with full clearness and distinctness, at the early stages of their history. They would not have understood it; still less have been willing to fall in with it. To us Christians of the nineteenth century, the idea of a nation having a mission for others seems easy ; we have been educated into it; but in old times nothing could have been more alien from men's thoughts. Foreigners were as such enemies—men to be used or misused ; not to be served and loved. Accordingly it was presented to them gradually—more gradually and slowly indeed than the essential nature of the case required, because of their special perversity and hardness. The higher minds, however, caught fuller and fuller glimpses thereof as the years rolled by, and at last it arose in all its brilliance and beauty on the horizon of the nation in and through Jesus

Christ the incarnate Son of God, the desire of all nations.[1]

The apostles of our Lord, and the Church of which they were the beginning and leaders, had a very distinct consciousness of this mission. They believed themselves to be intrusted with a divine message, which men could only disregard at their eternal peril—a message which should be a "savour of life unto life or of death unto death"[2]—a message concerning which the greatest of their number could use the strong words: "I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ and be found in Him."[3] The same apostle, speaking forth the deepest conviction of the Christian Church, declared himself to be a "debtor both to Greeks and barbarians," to preach the Gospel which is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."[4] And these men believed themselves to be fulfilling the idea of the nation to which they belonged; they regarded themselves as the true seed of Abraham, the genuine successors of the prophets.

(II.) They believed that their own history, and that of the world with it and through it, tended towards a great final goal. We read, for example, even in Deuteronomy, a promise that the Israelites should be

[1] Haggai ii. 7, now rendered "desirable things."
[2] 1 Cor. ii. 16. [3] Phil. iii. 8. [4] Rom. i. 14-16.

gathered from all the peoples whither their God had scattered them.[1] "In those days shall the house of Judah walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north, to the land that I gave for an inheritance to your fathers."[2] "Behold in those days and in that time when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will gather all nations and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and I will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage, Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations."[3] "Wait ye for me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms to pour upon them my indignation . . . for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy. For then will I turn to the peoples a pure language that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve Him with one consent."[4] "It shall come to pass in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem . . . and the Lord shall be King over all the earth; in that day shall the Lord be one and His name one."[5] "The new heavens and the new earth which I will make, saith the Lord."[6]

This thought dominates the New Testament, and finds distinct expression especially in the eschatological

[1] Deut. xxx. 3 ff. [2] Jer. iii. 18.
[3] Joel iii. 1, 2. [4] Zeph. iii. 8, 9. [5] Zech. xiv. 8 ff.
[6] Isa. lxvi. 22. See also Amos ix. 14; Obad. xxi.; Mal. iv.; Ezek. xxxvii. 26 ff.; xxxviii. 21; Haggai ii. 7 ff.; Zech. ix. 9 ff; Ezek. xx. 40; xxxiv. 24.

discourse of Christ, in the Epistles to the Thessalonians, and in the Apocalypse.[1]

(III.) They held the conviction that the condition of the well-being of the nation was obedience to the law of Jehovah; the sure source of misery, apostasy from God and committal of the moral abominations of the heathen nations around. This is expressed in the Bible in a great variety of ways and under a great variety of circumstances. The keynote was struck in Deuteronomy, in the words, "And it shall come to pass if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all His commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all the nations on earth, and all these blessings shall come upon thee and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God." "But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes which I command thee this day, that all these curses shall come upon thee and overtake thee." "The Lord shall bring thee and thy king which thou shalt set over thee unto a nation which thou hast not known, thou nor thy fathers, and thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a bye-word among all the peoples whither the Lord shall lead thee away." "As the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good and to multiply you, so the Lord will

[1] See Dorner's "Christliche Glaubenslehre" on the Teleology of the Bible, "Theil." ii. p. 960 ff.

rejoice over you to cause you to perish and to destroy you."[1] And alike in the historical books and in the prophecies attention is repeatedly directed to exemplifications of the fulfilment of the law thus emphatically enunciated — exemplifications both in the way of reward and of punishment, of blessing and of curse.[2]

In other forms, the law is also recognised in the New Testament. Loyalty, both individual and collective, to Christ the King and Saviour; loyalty shown alike in loving concern for those who are fellow-subjects and for those who are without; or, in other words, in the preservation of the purity of the Church and the fulfilment of the Church's evangelising mission; is explicitly and implicitly confessed to be the secret of prosperity and of peace. Owing to the difference of the New from the Old Dispensation, it is not set forth with legal distinctness and formality; but it is none the less there. As the New Testament writings are addressed to those who are renewed in the spirit of their life, who have consciously taken sides with Christ, who have come out from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light, who are no longer under law but under grace, they contain few of the promises and threats which were appropriate and necessary in appealing to men who, though born to be

[1] Deut. xxviii. 1, 2, 15, 36, 63.

[2] Cf. 1 Sam. xxviii. 6; 2 Sam. xxiv.; 1 Kings xi. 9, 33; xiii. 21; xxxiv.; xv. 29; xvi. 3; xxi. 20; xxii. 53; 2 Kings xvii. 14 ff; xviii. 11 f.; xix. 7; xx. 5; xxiii. 26. See especially Ps. cvi. 34 ff.

faithful subjects of God, might and often did turn away from Him to idolatry and sin.[1]

II. One thing seems at all events clear, that the idea under consideration was immanent in the national life, was its regulative principle; that therein its continuity was rooted; that in its light it becomes intelligible. Individual Israelites, with comparatively few exceptions, may have had but dim and fitful glimpses thereof; even the exceptions may have been unable to grasp it in all its breadth and import; that import is still largely overshadowed, notwithstanding all that has been done for the world by Him who, whilst the very Son of God was also a Jew of the Jews; but a survey of the completed story from Abraham to Christ and Paul cannot but impress with the conviction that however much may yet await explanation, it gives consistency to what otherwise would be incongruous and unity to what otherwise would be disconnected. We, in these days, are in the position of a man who studies a plant after it has begun to take definite form, or a machine that is on the highway to completion, as compared with one who has only the root or the imperfect beginnings before him. Men who make history do not always know what they are making; and the wonder in the case of Israel is that they should have so distinctly discerned the nature of their mission.

[1] Cf. Col. iii. 23; Rom. xii. 1; Eph. v. 1 ff.; vi. 20; Phil. i. 27; Heb. xiii. 16; 1 Cor. ix. 16; Rom. i. 14; Gal. vi. 14.

CHAPTER X.

THE CHARACTER OF THE HEBREW LITERATURE.

THE question now presents itself for examination —Suppose it to be true that, as this Hebrew literature tells us, the life of the Hebrew people was the result of the co-operation of two great factors, the one human, the other divine; and that the course taken by the life was directed by the indwelling idea and law to which attention was called;—granted for the moment the objective reality of the life enshrined in the literature;—what follows with regard to the literature itself? It is not my intention to adduce reasons in favour of the actuality of the life. What I propose to consider is—Whether the literature itself must not also be the product of the two great factors which constituted the life?—the literature regarded as literature. This is clearly to raise, in another form, the problem of inspiration. In other words, will not a theocratic literature be also theopneustic?[1]

I. One thing is quite clear, that if it truly and duly reflect, embody, enshrine, record, the life out of which it grew, its contents must be divine as well as human, human as well as divine; these elements will be

[1] See Note E in Appendix.

present, too, in varying proportions and modes, corresponding to the varying proportions and modes of action of the several factors.

More or less distinctly—more distinctly of late—all candid inquirers have confessed that there was a human as well as a divine element in the Scriptures. As has been interestingly pointed out, two extremes have to be guarded against in the doctrine of the written Word, as well as in that of the personal Word of God—the extreme of Ebionitism, or as we may term it, Humanitarianism, on the one hand, and of Docetism, or of deification, on the other. As in treating of the person of Christ, so in treating of the Scriptures, monophysitism, or the theory of one nature alone, seems at first sight the freer from difficulties, and the easier of apprehension, but it does not reckon with all the facts of the case. No, there is a human and a divine element. In other words, the Scripture as truly as Christ is divine-human. According to the writer whom I just quoted, the divine elements are, the testimony against sin, and the proclamation of forgiving grace; the enlightening, comforting, admonitory, reproving, correcting, renovating power which dwells in it; the fact of its setting forth truths which, seeming to contradict, really supplement, each other; and the wondrous unity and harmony of spirit and aim which pervade it. The human elements, on the other hand, are the veritable human experiences recorded;[1] the individuality of mind, culture and life

[1] See *e.g.* Rom. vii. 7; viii. 31 ff.

which characterises the writings ; the defects which in some cases mark the mode of reasoning; the occasional want of mastery over the languages employed, as in the case of the Apostle Paul ; historical discrepancies, mistakes, errors ; and the various readings in the text.[1]

It is not, however, quite in this sense that I speak of divine and human elements being contained in the Bible; and that because of the difference between my point of view and that of the writer in question, his being that of "revelation," mine, as I have already stated, the historical one. What I mean is, that as the constituents of the life were divine and human, its factors having been divine as well as human, the contents of the literature which enshrines the life must needs also be divine as well as human, human as well as divine. Were this not the case, the literature would be no true reflection of the life, it would rather resemble a romance. This follows necessarily on the supposition that the literature really is what it professes to be—that it is, in part or whole, a national literature. Whether the divine elements that have passed from the life into the literature were objectively real is another question. But even those who deny the objectivity referred to, must allow that if the people had beliefs or illusions regarding divine interventions, these beliefs or illusions would be reflected in their literature; and accordingly its contents would be *to that extent* divine as well as human. Indeed

[1] See Riehm, "Ueber den Gottmenschlichen Character der h. Schrift," Stud. und Kritiken, 1859, pp. 308 ff.

to this extent the remark may equally be made with regard to the Greek and Roman literatures, as with regard to all known literatures.

(I.) There are *human* elements—nay more, human of the kind that then existed in the world. The men whose inner and outer activity, whose life, is recorded, were men of the time; characterised naturally by all the weaknesses, follies, shortsightedness, ignorance, errors, and sinfulness of their contemporaries. In itself, the Jewish nation was no better than any of the neighbouring peoples; indeed, some go so far as to say, that God became a special factor in their life, partly because they were unusually stiff-necked and prone to idolatry and wickedness. Even the agents whom God generally employed for working on their fellow countrymen were, with one exception, throughout the long history marked by manifold imperfections and sins; how much more the great mass of the nation, whose life he was helping to colour and determine. We cannot, therefore, be surprised to find in the Bible evil characters as well as good; characters in which the evil and the good battle constantly for the mastery, victory now siding with the one, then with the other; men who, whilst commissioned and endowed for special work are, apart from that work, frail and foolish, like, if not to so great a degree as, the rest; events and doings, some in accordance with the divine will and mind, others the outcome of human perversity, caprice, passion, malice—some even that were given out for divine

commands,[1] though really dictated by the evil or self-deluded heart of man; error and truth running alongside of each other or even more or less subtilely combined and interwoven. All these things too must present themselves in the forms peculiar to an early, little cultured, little disciplined, little reflective period of the world, varying, however, as the ages ran on from the days of Abraham, the sheikh of his tribe, down to the days of Christ, and the elaborate and mighty organisation of the Roman Empire. Considered from the point of view here occupied, all this may seem very obvious—so obvious indeed as scarcely to deserve stating. Yet it is not very long ago, since, under the influence of the rigid conception of the Bible as the very writing or book of God, directly brought into existence in all its parts by Him, and handed down under His care for our guidance and instruction, both theologians and preachers felt it incumbent upon them either to explain away or somehow to justify such things as the falsehoods told by Abraham, the deception practised by Jacob, the murder and adultery committed by David and so forth. For did not these things form part and parcel of the divine revelation? And if so, must they not be good, and must not the men of whom they are recorded be altogether saints? It is profoundly true that all these things were written for our instruction, correction, edification; but in a somewhat different sense.

[1] Comp. the false prophets referred to in Jer. xxix. 9; Ezek. xii. 24; xxi. 29; Micah iii. 7, 11; Zech. x. 2; xxii. 28.

(II.) There must be *divine* elements. In a sense the whole used to be regarded as divine—divine in the direct sense. There is a sense in which the Bible considered as literature is divine ; to this I shall refer further on. But it is impossible to regard its contents as all divine. Yet there are divine elements ;—divine commands ; divine encouragements and promises; divine warnings and threats ; divine rewards and punishments ; divine consolations and tribulations; divine instructions, teachings, foretellings. But the part taken by God in the life of the Israelites is scarcely exhausted by what can, as it were, be separately considered or isolated. On the contrary, it is often so interwoven with the human that an untutored, unsympathetic eye, may either not discern its presence, or discerning something higher and purer, yet pronounce it simply human ; or even judge it to be delusion or pretence. As in Christ it is not always possible to put one's finger on the point where the human ends and the divine begins ; so in Scripture. Or rather, whereas in Christ *πάντα θεῖα ἀνθρώπινα πάντα*, all is human all divine ; in the life of the Jews, owing to their perversity and weakness, this is only partially the case. But even where it is the case, the two elements often blend and are inseparable. For God frequently condescended so to identify His activity with that of His servants, that though they were certain of His special presence, and we too may discern it, neither they nor we can separate the one from the other. This was probably the case, to a

large extent with the prophecies, it was almost entirely the case with the epistles of the New Testament. There was a living co-operation between the Spirit of God and the human minds, varying in its proportions, doubtless, according to mood, circumstance, and subject; but never actually ceasing.

(III.) We can easily conceive that a literary reflex of Hebrew life might have been produced either by natives or by foreigners, that ignored the divine element altogether, even as histories of the Christian Church have been written by men, who had no eye for anything but the working of the human factors, with their mistakes, follies, and perversities. It is quite possible, if not probable, that most of the poems, proverbs, histories, that have perished, were of this character. In the view of some, the Bible does include at least two books, which may be thus described, namely, the *Song of Songs* and the Book of *Esther*—in which latter no mention of the name of God occurs. Even were this the case, we need not be surprised. There must have been considerable tracts and phases of even Jewish life which were touched by God, at all events in the special sense, only, as it were indirectly; and which might be described without special reference to Him and His activity. The presence of the two books just named might be taken as evidencing a consciousness that there were differences in the life of the Jews in relation to God, and in so far as a proof, that where special references are made to His action, such action was an objective

reality. But a reflex written in this spirit would have been untrue to the life as a whole, and would lack the interest and value that attach to the Bible.

(IV.) Again, we can easily conceive that God might have given a revelation of truths relating to Himself, man, and the rest of the universe which are undiscoverable by the human mind, in a systematic form, by the hands or lips of men specially fitted and called. In this case, however, we should surely expect to find in the books or treatises nothing but the pure truth—truth expressed, indeed, so as to be intelligible to the generation by which it was first received, and, therefore, clad in a garment that must wax old, yet still free from any admixture of error. The business of later generations would have been to separate the kernel from the shell, the substance from the form, the spirit from the letter. This is the conception of revelation which seems to have hovered before the Rationalists and Deists of the last century. So far as mere *form* is concerned, the religious books of Parseeism, and Brahmanism, and even the Koran, approximate far more closely than our Scriptures to this notion of revelation.

Or God might have clothed the truth to be revealed in the form of story, romance, imaginary biographies and histories, ballads, lyrics, epics, dramas, with a view to meet the universal love of the concrete, as opposed to the abstract, in all its varieties and degrees. The Scriptures would then have been as a

whole what certain parts of it actually are; for example, the parables of our Lord.

Indeed, a hostile critic might accuse certain apologists of the Bible, who argue that the employment of the historical element is a proof of divine wisdom, and, therefore of the divine origin of the Scriptures, of implicitly taking up this position.[1] At all events, they approach perilously near to it. The ground chosen is, to say the least, dangerous, though, if the Bible is to be spoken of in the way in which most writers still speak of it, I know not, for my part, how the inference can be logically evaded.

(V.) As has been already hinted, the divine element, having been present in varying degrees and modes in the objective life, varies correspondingly in the literary reflex. In the life of Israel, as in the life of all nations that can be said to have life, there were epochs, crises, when the ordinary level course was quitted, and upheavals, revolutions, great movements of thought or emotion in politics, or society, or literature, or religion, or art took place. At these times God revealed Himself, or worked more manifestly or mightily, than at others. Ordinarily, God condescendingly suffered the part He bore in the national life not only to be conditioned and determined, but even to be, as it were, covered over and absorbed, by the action of the human factors, even as, to resort to a natural analogy, the forces called gravitation, cohesion,

[1] So Rogers' "Superhuman Origin of the Bible proved from itself." See note F in Appendix.

affinity, and the like, work in, with, under, but in subordination to, that of life in the plant, and that of mind in man. He did not overbear them by His omnipotence or by His wisdom; He left them free play alike in good and evil. On the contrary, He accommodated His movements to theirs; nay, He even lent them the use and control of His energy, so far as was compatible with His own holiness and wisdom. At other times, He Himself acted, and that unmistakably; He gave commands; He sounded forth warnings; He wrought wonderful works; He revealed His mind and purpose, and the people knew that their divine Lord had made bare His arm. Now, if all the important phases of the life of this theocracy—of this people whose invisible King was Jehovah—are reflected in the Scriptures, clearly, some portions of them will be, if I may use the expression, fuller of God than others, and, therefore, of greater importance and authority than others.

II. But the question we are more immediately concerned with is the literature as a vehicle—the literary form which enshrines the substance. The contents—the thoughts, feelings, acts, events—must clearly be divine and human, unless the former are inventions or illusions; but what about their clothing? Does that owe its existence entirely to the human factor? or entirely to the divine factor? or did the divine factor co-operate in its production with the human? And did the co-operation vary here, even as it must be confessed to have varied in the life, with a pre-

dominance now of the divine, then of the human factor? In putting this simple question, I have really raised the question as to the inspiration of the Scriptures—as to their theopneustic character. When Paul speaks of γραφὴ θεόπνευστος, "inspired writing,"[1] he evidently means writings, or Scriptures, or books. I question whether he means their contents; at all events, in practically dealing with their contents he discriminated between human and divine elements, even though he may not have formulated the problem of their relation to each other, as the Church of Christ has since His time been compelled to do. Much ridicule has been thrown in these latter days on the notion of inspired literature, as though there were something inherently absurd in the idea of a co-operation of the Spirit of God with human minds engaged in recording or otherwise reflecting either their own life or that of others. This is not the place to enter on this subject; but for myself I have no hesitation whatever in maintaining that, so far from such action of God in, with, and through a human intellect, tongue, and pen being either unworthy of God and impossible to Him, or somehow inconsistent with the freedom, independence, and dignity of man, it is normal to God and necessary to the truest intellectual activity of man. The notion in question is in reality one of the most lamentable evidences that the human intellect, as well as the human heart and will, has suffered from the entrance of sin into our world.

[1] 2 Tim. iii. 16.

If under any circumstances it be permissible to indulge in *à priori* reasoning anent what God is likely to do and not to do, we may surely argue here that He would scarcely have entered into the life of the Jewish nation to the extent to which the literature itself represents Him to have done, and for the ends there assigned, and yet have left those who produced the literary record and reflection of the life to themselves. It is not a question of a sort of *deus ex machinâ* production of books, which are to serve as a revelation of the mind and will of God to future ages; no, it is a question whether He who was helping to mould the individual, social, national life, in its political, moral, religious aspects, should also help to mould the literature.

And there is the further question, whether a life of the nature handed down to us in these Biblical books could have been duly represented without that aid from God which we call inspiration?

But let us look at these questions in connection with the books themselves.

For this purpose we may distribute them into three classes, the first embracing those which express the mind and will of the divine factor regarding the life of the people,—viz., the prophecies and epistles; the second, the histories, which record the life actually lived by the people; the third, the books which embody the thoughts and feelings of the human factors of the life, regarding and awakened by, their life as individuals or as members of a theocratic society.

(I.) Let us look first at the books which record the life actually lived, which, as we know, are partly general, partly individual, or partly historical, partly biographical. Their contents are divine and human ; —what about the vehicle? Is it purely human or also divine-human? We may leave on one side the alternative of its being purely divine.

1. Consider the matter in the light of the general law which has found expression in the popular saying, "The eye sees only what it brings with it." Poetry, art, philosophy, music, science, scenery, the beautiful and sublime,—each and all can be discerned and appreciated alone by the man who is imbued with their spirit. In others they awaken no response, and therefore no understanding : "No man can learn what he has not preparation for learning, however near to his eyes is the object. A chemist may tell his most precious secrets to a carpenter and he shall be never the wiser—the secrets he would not utter to a chemist for an estate. God screens us evermore from premature ideas. Our eyes are holden that we cannot see things that stare us in the face, until the hour arrives when the mind is ripened,—then we behold them and the time when we saw them not is like a dream." [1]

Still less can they be adequately and truly set forth in literary form by men who lack discernment. Discernment, indeed, is not always enough. There must be also the gift of representation, but the prime

[1] See Emerson, "Spiritual Laws."

condition is the eye to see things as they are. "A painter told me that nobody could draw a tree without in some sort becoming a tree, or draw a child by studying the outlines of its forms merely,—but by watching for a time his motions and plays, the painter enters into his nature and can then draw him at will in every attitude. So Roos entered into the inmost nature of a sheep! I knew a draughtsman employed in a public survey who found that he could not sketch the roads until their geological structure was first explained to him." [2]

So it is impossible for any one to give true literary expression to any form of either individual or natural life, unless he have in some sense lived the life, at all events, by entering sympathetically into its spirit, motive, aims; nay, more, a knowledge thereof is necessary, beyond that which may be possessed by the ordinary, commonplace observer. He who would adequately reflect German life needs to be pre-eminently a German, or English life pre-eminently an Englishman. Not the less but the more he is steeped in its spirit, the better can he delineate its movements. A foreigner may have a quicker eye for peculiarities, eccentricities, abnormalities, and so forth, but even of them he only describes the outward appearance, their inner roots and causes escape him. For the secret of the ordinary life he is blind.

The experimental acquaintance with the life thus desiderated must relate specially to its higher and

[1] Emerson, "History."

highest aspects or forms ; and in the case of a nation, to its highest factors and their activities. Judgment even of the lower sides of a nation's life is partial and defective whenever the judge is out of sympathy with the higher. Indeed, the law of all intelligence is that the lower is best understood in the light of and by the higher, not the reverse. So is it in nature. The higher sphere explains the lower ; not the lower the higher.

If this be true, what follows regarding the literature which enshrines the life of the Jewish people and of the Christian Church ? Its writers must needs surely have understood the Jews—that is clear. But if God were veritably a great factor in their life, and co-operated both openly, by means of personal manifestations, verbal communications, wonderful works, the mission of His Son and of the Comforter, as well as in other ways, and also subconsciously in moulding and directing its course, must not those who gave it true literary embodiment have been specially imbued with and influenced by the Spirit of God ? Unless they lived the divine as well as the human life, unless they saw the divine elements in their divine light as well as the human in their human light—nay, more, the latter in the light of the former,—how could they represent both, and each in its relation to the other, truly and adequately ? And what is this but to say in another and more general form that the books we are considering were given by inspiration of God ? And that holy men of God wrote, even as they spake,

as they were moved by the Holy Ghost? For my own part, I can no more conceive of this history being truly written, whether as to its human or divine elements, without the guidance of God and the insight given by His Spirit, than I can understand the life of the English nation for the last quarter of a century being truly written save by a man who is able to look at it with the eyes, and to interpret it with the special aid, of the two men in whom were incarnated as it were, its ruling tendencies, motives, aims—namely, Beaconsfield and Gladstone. In one word, then, the literary vehicle, as well as the contents thereof, must be regarded as divine-human. The nature and manner of the co-operation of God with the human writer of the history is a question for separate inquiry.

2. That such aid would be rendered to the writers of the history of the Jewish nation, we should be led to expect, by the express injunctions given by God, that certain critical phases and events of the national life should be recorded. Moses is enjoined to write an account of the battle of Rephidim for a memorial in a book, and to rehearse it in Joshua's ears.[1] By the commandment of the Lord, Moses wrote an account of the journeys of the children of Israel when they went forth out of the land of Egypt.[2] If such things were recorded by the divine command we may be sure that the book of the covenant[3] which "contained the words spoken by Jehovah to Moses, rehearsed to the

[1] Exod. xvii. 14. [2] Num. xxxiii. 2. [3] Exod. xxiv. 7.

people, accepted by them as the basis of the covenant,[1] and read in the hearing of the people at the celebration of the covenant offering,[2] owed its origin to the same authority. The same divine injunction to write occurs in other connections also, as, for example, in Exodus xxxiv. 27, where we read, "Write thou these words, for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and Israel;" and in Deut. xxxi. 19, where God says, "Now, therefore, write this song for you, and teach thou it the children of Israel: put it into their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the children of Israel."[3] We are surely also warranted in concluding that where Moses is elsewhere said to have written the law of the Lord, he did so by divine command.[4]

But these express injunctions,—let them cover as much ground as they possibly can, for example, the whole of the Pentateuch,—cannot be extended to the other historical books; and these other books supply us with no direct information as to the reason why they were written. We may fall back, however, on four considerations, which, taken in conjunction with each other, and with what has just been advanced, are, to say the least, striking and suggestive.

(1.) The first is the duty imposed on all Israelites of making their descendants fully acquainted with the works and law of the Lord. We read, for example,

[1] Exod. xxiv. 3. [2] Exod. xxiv. 7. [3] Deut. xxxii.

[4] Deut. iv. 44; xxix. 1; xxviii. 58, 61; xxxi. 9, 24; cf. xxvii. 1-8; xxxi. 9.

"Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes saw, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life; but make them known to thy children, and to thy children's children."[1] Still more emphatically are they warned to teach the words of the law "diligently unto their children, and to talk of them when they sit down in their houses, and when they walk by the way, and when they lie down, and when they rise up: to bind them for a sign upon their hands, and to let them be for frontlets between their eyes; and to write them upon the door-posts of their houses, and upon their gates."[2] It is further provided that the law, with naturally what preceded and accompanied it, should be read at the feast of tabernacles before all Israel, and even the stranger within their gates, that the children which have not known may learn to fear the Lord their God.[3] Elsewhere, too, we are told that it was a duty of the priests to "teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the Lord hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses."[4] The immediate reference of these passages is a restricted one; but in view of words like the following:—"I will open my mouth in a parable, I will utter dark sayings of old, which we have heard and known, and our fathers have

[1] Deut. iv. 9 f.; cf. Gen. xviii. 19.

[2] Deut. vi. 7 ff.; cf. Exod. xiii. 9; Prov. vi. 21; vii. 3; see Ps. lxxviii. 4.

[3] Deut. xxxi. 10 ff.; Neh. ix. 3; xiii. 1; Zech. vii. 12; cf. Ps. i. 2, 3; xix. 7-14; xl. 7 f.; cxix.

[4] Lev. x. 11; cf. Deut. xxxiii. 10; 2 Chron. xxxi. 4.

told us; we will not hide them from their children, telling to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and His strength, and His wondrous works that He hath done,"[1] and of the further considerations to be adduced,—we may surely believe that the duty in question was extended to the entire past history of the chosen people as it was successively lived. In support thereof we may adduce also the fact that festivals and fasts were ordained by the nation to keep up the memory of and celebrate the great deliverances and tribulations of their history. So, for example, Purim in remembrance of the deliverance by Esther, and fasts to commemorate the siege and the capture of Jerusalem, the burning of the temple and its complete devastation.

(2.) Accordingly collections were made of books relating to their history, beginning with those ascribed to Moses, and mention is made of their being read in the hearing of the people. Joshua "read all the words of the law, the blessing and the curse, according to all that is written in the book of the law. There was not a word of all that Moses commanded which Joshua read not before all the assembly of Israel, and the women, and the little ones, and the strangers that walked among them."[2] David charges his son Solomon, "Keep the charge of the Lord thy God and His testimonies according as they are written in the law of Moses."[3] Here and

[1] Ps. lxxviii. 3. [2] Josh. viii. 35; cf. xxvi. 26-28.
[3] 1 Kings ii. 3; cf. Jer. viii. 8.

elsewhere the book of the law means, probably, not merely the law as such, but the books of the Pentateuch with their intermingling of law and narrative.[1] Other books, however, were also collected. Mention is made of the "Book of the Wars of Jasher;"[2] of the "Book of the Wars of Jehovah;"[3] the "Book of the History of Solomon;"[4] the "Book of the Kings of Judah;"[5] and the "Book of the Kings of Israel;"[6] and Zechariah's words,—"They refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear; yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the Lord of Hosts had sent by His Spirit by the hands of the former prophets,"[7] seem to warrant the inference, that in his days a collection existed embracing at least two constituents, the Law of Moses and some of the prophetic writings. The formation of the canon at a later period, too, may fairly be assumed to have rested on, and at least been suggested by, previous essays of the same kind. It is scarcely likely that it would have been undertaken as an entirely new thing.

[1] Cf. 2 Kings xi. 12; 1 Chron. xvi. 40; xxii. 12; 2 Chron. xii. 1; xxxi. 3, 4, 21; Ezra iii. 2; vi. 18; Neh. i. 7; x. 29; viii. 1; cf. Ps. i. 2 f.; xix. 7-14; xl. 7, 8; cxix.

[2] Josh. x. 13; cf. 2 Sam. i. 18.

[3] Num. xxi. 14. [4] 1 Kings xi. 41. [5] 1 Kings xiv. 29.

[6] 1 Kings xv. 31; cf. 1 Chron. xxvii. 21.

[7] Zech. vii. 11, 12, 7; see Hosea viii. 12, "Though I write for him my law in ten thousand precepts, they are counted as a strange thing."

(3.) The estimate formed of the books of the Old Testament by the Jews, and especially by the Lord Jesus Christ, points in the same direction. The Jews, alike before the close of the canon, between that event and the advent of Christ, during the life of Christ, and ever since, have believed the Scriptures of the Old Testament to have arisen under special divine superintendence and with special divine aid. Of the part taken in their composition by God, they formed indeed, as we have previously seen, an altogether exaggerated conception.

Our Lord Jesus Christ treated them as having divine authority. His own exposition of the things they contain concerning himself, taken in connection with the belief of His disciples, that all Scripture was given by inspiration of God, seems to imply that not only the contents, but the vehicle also, was divine as well as human.

What was true of the Old Testament, must surely have been pre-eminently true of the writings of the New, whose contents in even a still higher degree were an interweaving of the divine and human.

(4.) And lastly, the idea of the entire history, in other words, the divine purpose in condescending to become a factor in the life of the Jews, could not have been realised or accomplished without a true and adequate record. Hence the provision to which reference has already been made for recounting the wondrous deeds of the Lord to children and children's children. Without this, how could the Israelites them-

selves have been brought into and kept in the relation to God, which was the end of the divine dealings with them. Still less could they have discharged their function to the rest of the world. Accordingly, when we are assured that "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord;"[1] "I am the Lord, and there is none else, beside me there is no God: I will gird thee though thou hast not known me: that they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me;"[2] "All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Thee;"[3] and consider, that when the Israelite spoke of the knowledge and remembrance of Jehovah, he meant not abstract formulæ, but the concrete knowledge which had become his possession through the divine interventions in his individual and national history, we are justified in concluding that the history was designed to be written—written, too, in the light of Him whose great purposes it was meant to serve. All this may be applied with still greater emphasis and truth to the New Testament, with its history of Him who was in all things truly divine and ideally human, and of the beginnings of the society which was entrusted with the mission of proclaiming the kingdom of God to the very ends of the earth.

(II.) The books which embody communications from God touching the life and destiny of the Jews, or of

[1] Isaiah xi. 9; cf. Num. xiv. 21. [2] Isa. xlv. 5 f.
[3] Ps. xxii. 27.

other peoples, or of the Church. These are the Prophecies, and the Epistles of the New Testament, including the Apocalypse.

1. Let us first consider the case of the prophecies. There can be little doubt that in many cases they give us the *ipsissima verba* of God Himself. The frequent "thus saith the Lord," may not indeed all imply that the words that follow are God's words; they may be the natural outflow of a consciousness that the "burden," or message is really the Lord's, though not *verbatim et literatim* issuing from Him; but such a consciousness itself would have been impossible had not some of the communications of the prophets literally and truly deserved to be thus announced. Here there is verbal inspiration in the strictest and narrowest sense. For such cases, it was conceded even by Coleridge,[1] nervously anxious as he was to eliminate any appearance of reducing man to a mere instrument of God:—The thoughts, feelings, or facts, are expressed in words chosen and dictated by God Himself. As already hinted, it is impossible, in the vast majority of cases, to determine where these *ipsissima verba* end, and the words that are not simply and solely divine begin. They are imbedded in the rest; but a man who believes at all in special divine interpositions, that is, in the so-called supernatural element of the Bible, has every ground for recognising their existence. But what about the rest? At this point, if indeed not prior to the remarks just made, the

[1] "Confessions of an Enquiring Spirit," &c.

question forces itself on our attention,—"How did the books before us originate? What is their relation to the prophets? In other words,—did the prophets deliver their prophecies by word of mouth, and are our books mere reports handed down by hearers? Or did the prophets themselves write or dictate them?" Let us look for a moment at these two alternatives. In some cases, we know the messages were spoken. Jeremiah, for example, tells us, "Thus saith the Lord, go forth into the valley of the son of Hinnom, which is by the entry of the gate Harsith, and proclaim there the words that I shall tell thee."[1] Whether it was the rule, we are not distinctly informed. It depended probably on circumstances.

The circumstance that of so many of the prophets who are said to have prophesied, no prophecies are extant, may seem to imply that it was rather the exception than the rule for them to write.[2] But it is susceptible of more than one other, equally, if not more, satisfactory explanation. There may too have been many prophets who never wrote a word, just as there have always been preachers who never wrote a word; and yet the prophecies which are extant may have been originally written; besides, the Bible makes no claim whatever to be a complete collection of even the religious writings of the Jews; though we are nowhere informed why are just those books included which it does include, and none others.

Were they, however, originally delivered by word of

[1] Jer. xix. 1 ff.; cf. Ezek. xxxiii. 22. [2] See p. 78.

mouth, and have we, as a matter of fact, only reports, by whomsoever furnished, then the question drops of itself.[1] For even if the spoken words were from God, we have no reason to suppose that those who heard or reported them were inspired; and, good as may have been the memories of men in those old times, it is utterly improbable that they should have been able to retain with exactness, utterances of the character of the Hebrew prophecies. The fact would be without a parallel in the known history of the human mind.

Were the prophecies then originally written? It would seem so. Indeed, in some cases, their writers are expressly enjoined to write,[2] a circumstance which might, however, be interpreted as implying that without a special injunction they would not write. For those who take this view of the matter, our question naturally drops of itself. But other considerations point in the direction of the prophets having themselves penned the messages received from God, even though they may furnish no stringent proof of the fact. For example, the repeated instances of quotation from one prophet by another. Compare Isa. ii. 2-4 with Micah iv. 1-4; Isa. xi. 9 with Hab. ii. 14; Isa. xiii. 19-22 with Jer. i. 39 ff.; Isa. xiv. 4, 13 with Hab. ii. 6, 9; Isa. lii. 7 with Nahum i. 15; Jer.

[1] Compare 2 Sam. vii., "According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David."

[2] See Isa. viii. 1, 16; Jer. xxix. 1; xxx. 1; xxxvi. 1 ff.; Ezek. xxiv. 1; xliii. 10; Dan. vii. 1; Hab. ii. 2; Zech. vii. 12; Apoc. i. 10, 11; xxii. 18 ff. See especially Ezek. iii. 1.

xlix. 7-22 with Obadiah 1-4; Amos ix. 13 with Joel iii. 18. Which is the quoter and which the quoted depends of course, on the chronological arrangement adopted, a matter as to which there are very great divergencies of opinion amongst the learned. These quotations are without name, as are also others of a less distinct nature, and which may rather perhaps be termed echoes than distinct quotations. Such echoes, however, suggest the thought that not only the prophets in whose writings they occur, but also those to whom they delivered their messages must have been familiar with the prophecies of their predecessors; and how could that be if they had not been written? But there are at least two cases in which the prophet quoted is mentioned,—namely, Micah, the Morasthite, by Jeremiah;[1] and Jeremiah, by Daniel.[2]

Then, again, allusions occur which seem to imply that it was customary to collect and preserve the writings of the prophets, as having divine authority. Isaiah, for example, referring to prophecies, says, "Seek ye out the book of the Lord and read."[3] According to Daniel also, Jeremiah's prophecies were, in his day, included in "the word of the Lord."[4]

Besides it would seem that the messages were intended not merely for those who formed the immediate environment of the prophets, but also for such as were at a distance, if not in some cases for

[1] Jer. xxvi. 18; cf. Zech. vii. 7, 12.
[2] Dan. ix. 2. [3] Isa. xxxiv. 16. [4] Dan. ix. 2.

the whole people. Judah and Israel were treated as a unity, and the prophets were the mouthpieces of Jehovah to them. Is it probable then that the communications of the great invisible King would be left altogether to the chances of spoken speech?

Assuming, then, that the prophets themselves wrote or dictated their writings, we have now to ask whether they were specially aided by God in the apprehension and presentation of the words, visions, burdens, He sent to them?

The necessity for the exercise of some divine control arises from two sides—the prophet is a *seer* and *hearer* of divine things; and he is also an *utterer forth*, a *speaker* of divine things.[1] In both aspects special help is needed. Let us look for a moment at each.

As one who is clearly to behold, distinctly to hear, lovingly to apprehend, firmly to grasp what God shows or tells him of His mind and will, he needs more than moral sympathy with God, and a natural, constitutional fitness. Those, indeed, he must also have. God's unconscious instruments are often men to whom His yoke is galling, and His burden heavy, and both odious; but His conscious servants, though practically very imperfect and inconsistent, must recognise and approve of His will and ways as good and noble. Nay more, they must possess by nature the necessary fitness of temperament and ability. Of one of the greatest of the prophets it was said, "Before I formed

[1] Orelli, "Die Altest. Weissagung," &c., p. 6 f.

thee in the belly I knew thee, and before thou camest out of the womb I sanctified thee. I have appointed thee a prophet unto the nations,"[1]—words which express in the very strongest way the fact that *prophetа nascitur non fit.* Apart from these conditions —conditions whose fulfilment was due to God Himself, working in another way,—and He always works towards His ends from various points, on various lines, and in various degrees at the same time,—His work through the prophets would have been of a magical, mechanical kind—not of the kind that hovered before the mind of Paul when he spoke of the " spirits of the prophets being subject to the prophets."[2] The novelty and strangeness of their position must not be overlooked. Men brought face to face with Jehovah, the Lord of heaven and earth! We are familiar with the idea, and therefore underestimate the significance of the thing. What means this opening of an eye other than the bodily eye? What is this new ear that has been unstopped? Who sends these visions? Whose are these voices, heard yet not heard? How shall they be discriminated? In new circumstances, even on earth, we are all apt to lose ourselves, to get confused, if totally new subjects, belonging even to this world, are broached to us, we fail at first to understand and make mistakes — we have to be educated up to our changed position. What then must the prophets have felt? One of their own countrymen describes the prophetic state during an

[1] Jer. i. 5. [2] 1 Cor. xiv. 32.

illapse, or revelation, as follows:—"While our own intellect shines with full effect, pouring into our soul a meridian splendour, and we are in a state of self-possession, we are not the subjects of inspiration; but in proportion as it disappears, a divine ecstacy and prophetic phrensy falls upon us. For when the divine light shines, the human sets; and when the former goes down then the latter rises. Thus it usually happens in prophecy. Our own intellect departs on the arrival of the divine spirit, and on his departure it again returns; for it is not proper that the mortal and immortal should dwell together. On which account the disappearance of reason and the darkness which surrounds it, is followed by an ecstacy and divine fury."[1] "For a prophet advances nothing whatever of his own; he is merely the interpreter of another, by whom he is actuated all the time he is speaking; and while he is the subject of divine enthusiasm he is in a state of ignorance (or mental alienation); reason has retired; the citadel of the soul has capitulated; the Spirit of God coming into and occupying it, acts upon the whole mechanism of the voice and imparts to it those sounds by which there shall be a clear enunciation of the things predicted."[2] In this description there is certainly much exaggeration; there is no reason for thinking that the prophets actually did thus completely lose possession of themselves; but

[1] Philo, "Quis rerum div. Hæres?" i., 511, quoted by Henderson, p. 36.

[2] Philo, op. cit. ii. 343.

why? Not because the new position in which they found themselves was not enough to overmaster and confound them; but because God, whilst manifesting and revealing Himself to them from without, at the same time energised in them, so that they should receive His communications with calmness and insight. This is according to the divine method everywhere. What is natural science itself, which has so much now-a-days to object to phenomena of this kind, but the result of man energised by nature to see and understand nature? And to him who refuses to be thus aided by nature to know nature, nature remains an unintelligible mystery. So, too, God must dwell in man, if man is to understand God. This is true of us now in an ordinary way. It was true of the prophets in an extraordinary way, and would be again true if the need should arise for special divine revelations and manifestations.

But the prophet was a "speaker" as well as a "seer;" nay, he was a "seer" in order to be a "speaker,"—that is, also a writer, yea, a speaker or writer for God. Did he need special help for this part of his task? If we may take Jeremiah as a fair interpreter of the feelings of his class, we shall have to acknowledge that they at any rate confessed it. When Jehovah said to him, "I have appointed thee a prophet unto the nations," he said in reply, "Ah! Lord God! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child. But the Lord said unto me, Say not I am a child; for to whomsoever I shall send thee thou shalt go, and what-

soever I shall command thee thou shalt speak."[1] He felt the responsibility resting upon him,—responsibility to God on the one hand, on the other to the nations,—he felt also his own insufficiency; God therefore assured him of divine help according to his need, help surely, not merely in the matter, but also in the form of his message. What he felt they probably all felt; and the need was a real one. God's interference scarcely went as far as was indicated in the closing part of the extract given above from Philo; but He doubtless did aid the prophetical writers from within. When we remember, too, that the language which they used had to be moulded and transfigured, if not created, for the purpose of expressing the divine thoughts, we shall be ready to allow that in all probability God exercised effective control alike over tongue and pen. Their words may be described as the resultant of the joint action of God and the mind of the prophets,—a joint action in which now the one factor predominated, then the other.

To the Apocalypse in the New Testament applies in some respects with intensified force what has been said regarding both the *ipsissima verba* of God in the prophecies of the Old Testament, and those parts which are, so to speak, the joint product of a divine and a human factor.

2. The case of the Epistles of the New Testament, which next falls to be examined, seems at the first blush to differ well-nigh *toto cœlo* from that of the

[1] Jer. i. 6 f.

prophecies. Yet, after all, the difference is on the surface rather than in the depths. The function of the writers of the New Testament was essentially the same as that of the writers of the Old. Their mission indeed was to the Church, not to the nation; but it was the same mission of interpretation, application, warning, promise, foretelling that was discharged by the prophets, only that whereas the former had to deal with types and shadows, with yearnings and hopes, with the form and letter, the latter were called to proclaim a Messiah come, a redemption accomplished, the spirit and the substance,—in a word, the fulfilment.

They, too, were seers and speakers. It could be said of them indeed, "Blessed are your eyes for they *see*, and your ears for they *hear*: for verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men desired to see the things which *ye see*, and saw them not, and to hear the things which *ye hear*, and heard them not."[1] He in whom the law and prophets were fulfilled was in their midst, and they could see with their outward eyes, and hear with their outward ears, and handle the Word of Life, of which their great predecessors had only got dim and fitful glimpses; yet, as the example of their fellow-countrymen showed, yea, even their own words and conduct, they too needed to have their eyes opened and ears unstopped by the Spirit who dwelt without measure in Him whom they were called to understand, else "hearing

[1] Matt. xiii. 16 f.

they would have heard, and yet not have understood; and seeing they would have seen, and yet not perceived," even though their hearts were not gross, nor their natural faculties unfitted.[1] Accordingly they received the Spirit to lead them into the truth; and not till He came did they really see what they had seen, and hear what they had heard.

But did they also need and receive divine co-operation in the discharge of their duty as *speakers* for God by voice and pen? The literary features of their discourses and letters are, it must be confessed, as a rule, less suggestive of inspiration than those of the prophecies. Judgment, reflection, reasoning seem to have been more active, as indeed was natural in the case of men to whom divine truth presented itself through outward and visible media. Yet notwithstanding, in view of the permanent importance of their words to the life of the Church, and to the progress of the kingdom of God, whatever reasons could be urged on behalf of the divine co-operation with the prophets may be urged now, though the co-operation differed, as divine co-operation always does, in accordance with differing temperament, faculties, work, and circumstances.

There would seem, indeed, to some to be a sort of incongruity, if not improbability, in the idea that the Spirit of God should have exercised any sort of controlling co-operation in the production of writings like those now under consideration—writings in which memory, judgment, argument, practical wisdom, ethical

[1] Matt. xiii. 14 ff.

precept, bursts of exulting gratitude and praise, prayer, remonstrance, entreaty, reproach, humour, satire, personal greetings,—in short, everything that we count characteristically human finds so obvious a place; yet where is the real difficulty? If God can have access at all as an indwelling energiser to the human spirit, shall He who made us capable of all these forms of activity leave them unaffected? No; the divine Spirit can as truly condescend to become a co-reasoner, co-judger, co-adviser, co-entreater with man as He can become our co-worker in the moral and spiritual struggles for which we constantly entreat His aid. And if ever men needed such aid, if ever it were fitting, surely it was needed by and fitting in the case of men whose business it was to watch over and direct the launching of the Church of Christ.

III. We now come to the books which may be described as embodying the thoughts and sentiments awakened in the higher minds of the nation by the environment and phases of their individual and collective life, especially that part in which the divine factor more peculiarly manifested Himself. These are, to mention them in the order of their significance and importance, the Sacred Songs, most of which are included in the Psalter and Lamentations; the moral, philosophical, or Chokma — *i.e.*, Wisdom, Works, namely, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes; the book which combines poetry and wisdom, namely Job; and lastly, the Song of Songs.

Special divine aid or co-operation would seem here

to be least of all necessary. There must be, of course, the poetic faculty, insight into the laws and constitution of the moral cosmos, sympathy with humanity in its failures and successes, its joys and sorrows, its heights and depths; but surely this is not enough, especially as both poets and moralists alike devote all possible attention to the vehicle by which they seek to convey their thoughts and feelings, words and the arrangement of words being indeed almost of the essence of their productions. First of all, it behoves us never to forget that genius, talent, gift of expression, moral sympathy, however real they may be, are as unable as water to rise much above the level of their source. Now there is no reason for supposing that the general level of thought and sentiment among the Jews was high; on the contrary, the intellectual, moral, and religious condition of the people was low. Nay, more; in some cases—notably, for example, in that of David and Solomon—there was frequently a painful contrast between the personal conduct and the works of the writers. But if God were specially working at other points in order to redeem the nation, and through it the world, would it have been natural for Him to leave it entirely to itself in the production of its poetry and writings on duty and religion? Poetry and other writings doubtless did spring up which were the unaided utterance of the Jewish mind and heart. It is not necessary to conceive of God as interposing in each and every form of literary activity, any more than He interposed in every other form of activity.

As I remarked in another connection, He respected the freedom alike of the individual and the nation, not merely in one, but in every direction. But the poetry of a nation—especially its songs—and the proverbial wisdom, are such important factors in its life, that to have left them out of the sphere of His special influence would have been to render well-nigh purposeless the use that was being made of prophets, and the control wielded over the historians. "Let who will make the laws, if I may write the songs and proverbs" may be truly said.

As far as the Psalms in particular are concerned—at all events the greater number of them—the need of divine inspiration is heightened by the purpose for which most of them were probably written, and the use to which they were actually put. "The Psalter," says Ewald,[1] "might easily be taken for a simple anthology of the best songs known to the collector—an anthology, too, made without any ruling principle. But when we come to examine their general character, we find that, both as to subject and tone, they are all alike. All relate unmistakably, though in the greatest variety of ways, to the divine—prayer, thanksgiving, praise; simple thoughts and bodements; descriptions of divine things and truths; admonition to divine works. Even when a king is addressed, as in Psalms xxi., lxxii., and cx., it is rather the majesty and glory of the divine than of the human that is

[1] "Hebräische Dichtung," p. 239 ff.—a free quotation. Cf. "Psalms by Four Friends," App. A. B.

expressed. Psalm xlv. seems to form an exception, in so far as it does not take the divine for its point of departure; and yet even it is a beautiful example of the influence exercised on merely human poetry by the higher spirit which pervaded Hebrew life. A very characteristic feature is, further, that the divine subject of the songs is presented in a general rather than in a personal relation; many of them have, in point of fact, no personal reference whatever; and where there is a personal reference, it admits of a wider application, and the song may be adopted by others in similar circumstances. There is an obvious avoidance of poems with a strong personal colouring. Whilst doubtless many of the Psalms, especially those of the first part, were intended to be used by individuals for their private edification, there can be no question that their primary destination was the public services of the Temple, though whether they were all regularly sung, or sung in order, cannot now be determined." If this were the case, what an incongruity if Jehovah should have ordered the rites, ceremonies, sacrifices, not to mention even less important external surroundings, and have left men to their own unaided, unguided impulses relatively to songs that could not but wield a mighty influence over intellect and heart.

What was the purpose of the affecting dirges designated "The Lamentations of Jeremiah"[1] we are not

[1] Comp. 2 Chron. xxxv. 25, where mention is made of Jeremiah's dirge at the death of Josiah.

informed; but we may fairly conjecture that they were intended, at all events, for the private edification, consolation, warning, and so forth of those members of the nation who confessed that the visitations of the Lord in the destruction of Jerusalem and the captivity of its inhabitants were righteous. As such, they will have shared divine influence, though, perhaps, in a less direct and marked measure and manner than most of the Psalms. Indeed, at the time when they were probably written, Israel was in a mood of intellect and heart that rendered him more susceptible of what may be termed the normal or ordinary action of the Spirit of God.

Still less clear is it what, or whether, indeed, any, special design was meant to be served by Job and the Song of Songs. But the fact of their admission to the Canon shows that, in the estimation of the Jews, their writers had been under the influence of the Spirit of God. Their relation to the life of the nation and the divine purpose in it could never have been so intimate and important as that of the Psalms; but, knowing as we do, from the conduct of other Oriental nations, and even of Southern Italians at the present day, how common it is for such poems to be publicly read or recited, and how they fascinate hearers of all ranks and classes, we may well believe that the same God who concerned Himself for the welfare of the Shunamite, and punished Gehazi, would also extend His influence to poetical productions like those to which we are now referring. As to the harmony

between the book of Job and the general purpose of Jehovah with the Jewish nation, there can be no doubt. It contains wonderful glimpses into and hints of the very highest and profoundest truths; and, studied by those to whom its language, local colour, and mode of thought were familiar, must have done much to give steadiness to faith in God and His righteousness, as well as to lighten the darkness and scatter the doubts of the innocently afflicted.

With regard to the Book of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, Ewald says: "Whilst it is probable that the first composers of proverbs did so from the pure love of literary production, we may be sure that thereupon soon supervened a desire to teach others by their means. They then turned their attention to the people as a whole, and sought to write what would be commonly intelligible, especially to the young and inexperienced, seeking to give insight and guidance for all the moral relations of life. It must not be supposed that they made collections of proverbs already current among the people; such proverbs merely supplied the pattern or literary mould into which they cast their own thoughts."[2] The passages in which the writer or writers use the direct address, "My son," or "My sons," confirm this view of the books. The difference between Proverbs and Ecclesiastes which here calls for notice is, perhaps, one rather of form than of substance. In Proverbs, precepts, promises, warnings are set forth in a didactic

[1] "Hebr. Dichtung," 55 ff.;—a free quotation.

form; in Ecclesiastes, the same truths appear in the guise of the confessions of one who has tried everything for himself, and has proved that the ways of sin are ways of misery; those of righteousness, ways of peace. The writers of both books would agree in giving as "the end of the matter, Fear God, and keep His commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every hidden thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."[1] But if these writings were thus a kind of lesson-book of duty, a guide to conduct in the various relations of life, more particularly for the young, is it extravagant to argue, from the general relation of God to Hebrew life, that their writers wrote under an inspiring influence from on high?

(IV.) From the importance of the function discharged by literature in general in the life and growth of nations, we may fairly conclude that the writers of the Jewish nation would not be left entirely to themselves.

1. Literature is the great means through which a nation possesses itself, becomes conscious of its life, realises what it actually is. It subserves for society the purpose which language subserves for the individual. We know not what we really are, we never come really face to face with ourselves, we do not possess ourselves and are therefore not completely men, until what we *are* becomes thought, and in the act of becoming thought, clothes itself in words. So is it

[1] Eccles. xii. 13 f.

with a nation and literature. The thinkers and writers—*i.e.*, the historians, philosophers, and poets of a people, are the organs through which it knows itself. Such self-possession is necessary alike in the case of the individual and of a people, to the full utilisation of its powers and riches, and to the realisation of its destiny. For man is constituted to have the conscious control of his own activity, and not like the rest of creation, to be unconsciously controlled from within and from without. A people without a literature, remains in a state of nature, that is, continues to be swayed and controlled, even as the forces of nature are swayed and controlled. And only in proportion as literature permeates its life, and is, not merely the privilege of the few, but the daily food of the many, does a nation arrive at that conscious self-control, which is one of the essential conditions of its accomplishment of the work entrusted to it.

2. Literature is the chief vehicle through which the higher life of a people is handed on to the next generation, in accordance with the law of heredity. Certain mental qualities, some slight portion of the intellectual acquisitions of a generation, a measure of its modes of feeling, may be handed down by natural descent, by language, by oral tradition, by custom, and in other ways; but without literature, by far the larger portion will be lost. The differences between civilised and uncivilised, barbarous and uncultured peoples, is mainly due to the existence or non-existence of literature—literature taken in the broad sense to

which I previously referred. Without it and the knowledge it conveys, each generation has to start afresh in the race of life, and leaves off therefore pretty nearly where the preceding generation ceased; and so there is no real progress. The life of a nation neither broadens nor deepens. This is true, not only of the intellectual life and all that depends directly on it, but also of the spiritual life. It was partly in consideration of this fact, that God ordained that every succeeding generation of the Israelites should be carefully instructed in their previous history. Not merely that they might have a dead knowledge of what had happened, but that the past might serve as a foundation for the building which was to rise in the future.

3. Literature suggests new fields of inquiry and activity, stimulates to new efforts, and qualifies for new conquests and attainments. Not merely as so much property with which to sustain life is literature of use, but as the basis of further undertakings, higher achievements. It does not indeed necessarily exercise this influence; for in connection with man there is no such thing as necessity. The Chinese are an illustration to the contrary. They have inherited an enormous literature, and have taken care that the inheritance should be entered upon; yet progress has not been made. For centuries they have been content with simply living on inherited capital—not of course diminishing it, though of course losing hold upon it; but not increasing it. Why, this is not the place to

inquire. But whilst an inherited literature does not necessarily generate progress, progress is impossible without it.

4. Now, if such be the relation of literature to a national life, and if God really had constituted Himself a factor of the Hebrew nation, and really were co-operating with and using it for the establishment of His kingdom in the world, how very improbable that He should not directly stimulate to literary activity, that He should not make literature one of the forms of His own direct activity, and that He should not exercise indirect control over it, by acting upon the producers in every way that was open to Him.[1] We need not suppose that He concerned Himself about every form and degree of literary production. The freedom He left to the Israelites in other spheres He would leave to them in this. But that He should refrain from exercising special control and influence in this direction whilst He was exercising it in that of legislation, institutions, and the like, would scarcely have been in harmony with divine wisdom.

Specially necessary must such influence appear in the light of the consideration that the soil of Israel had to be prepared for the planting and ripening of the Messiah, the Son of God. He could not appear till the times were full, that is, until the Hebrew people in particular had developed to the point when they could appreciate His mission ; when they could understand His words, His works, His sufferings, His

[1] Compare "The Symposium" in *Homiletic Magazine.*

death, His resurrection. And one of the chief means of furthering this development was a literature that should truly and adequately enshrine the life of the nation with its divine and human elements. Unless their life had been enriched as it was enriched by the treasure of knowledge, insight, trust, reverence, handed down in their literature, Christ could not have come at all, or if He had come, would have found a world deaf to the music of His voice, and blind to the glory of His grace. Still less would they have been capable of ripening the new fruitage from the apparently-decayed and dying stem which constitutes the New Testament. With modifications in the mode of expression, necessitated by the difference in my point of view, I would say in the words of Dr. Chalmers:—"Strange that with the inspiration of thoughts it should make pure ingress into the minds of the apostles; but, wanting the inspiration of words, should not make pure egress to that world, in whose behalf alone, and for whose admonition alone, this great movement originated in heaven and terminated in earth. Strange, more especially strange, in the face of the declaration that not unto themselves, but unto us they ministered these things; strange, nevertheless, that this revelation should come in purely to themselves, but to us should come forth impurely—with somewhat, it would appear, of the taint and the obscuration of human frailty attached to it."[1]

(V.) I have only incidentally touched upon the

[1] Quoted by Given, "Revelation, Inspiration, the Canon," p. 124.

nature and compass of the influence which the Spirit of God exercised on the writers of the Hebrew nation. It is clearly impossible to determine it with anything like exactness in the individual cases. We may reasonably doubt whether those who were most sensible of divine action could have given more than a very vague account of what they had experienced. One may know for one's-self that one has been the subject of an illapse from the invisible world—an illapse either for good or evil, for darkening or enlightening, for quickenment or enfeeblement, for encouragement or depression, for temptation or deliverance,—and yet one may be unable to convey a true notion thereof to others, save and unless they have been in like circumstances. Only the scantiest hints have been left on record by those who were most affected—the prophets; and they do not throw much light on the subject, besides that they refer rather to their state whilst *receiving* divine communications, than to their state whilst *uttering* or *writing* them. Thus Elisha said, "Bring me a minstrel. And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the Lord came upon him."[1] Isaiah: "The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the taught . . . he wakeneth mine ear to hear as they that are taught."[2] Ezekiel: "Then the Spirit of the Lord lifted me up, and took me away, and I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit; and the hand of the Lord was strong upon me."[3] Micah: "But I truly am full of power by the Spirit of the

[1] 2 Kings iii. 15. [2] Isa. iv. 1. [3] Ezek. iii. 14.

Lord."[1] Of Samson it is said: "The Spirit of the Lord began to move him in Mahaneden."[2] Peter uses the words, "Moved or borne away by the Holy Ghost;"[3] and according to the Acts, the effect of the descent of the Spirit upon the Apostles was to make them speak in a manner that suggested the thought of their being "filled with new wine."[4]

Judging by analogy, we may be sure that the divine action would vary according to the men, the subjects, the circumstances, alike in degree and manner. The great matter, however, is not so much the *how*, as the fact;—the former is of interest primarily to the scientific inquirer, the latter is of practical concern for every man.

[1] Micah iv. 8.
[2] Judges xiii. 25.
[3] 2 Pet. i. 21.
[4] Acts ii. 13.

CHAPTER XI.

THE RELATION OF THE BIBLE TO SUBSEQUENT AGES.

VARIOUS hints have been already thrown out on this subject; but it may be well to look at it a little more closely from the vantage ground which we now occupy.

The position I have taken up and sought to expound is this: that the Scriptural books are the outgrowth, record, reflection of an actually-lived national life; that according to their testimony, that national life was constituted what it was, not only by the activity of human factors, but also by the special activity of a divine factor; that consequently the contents of the books are both divine and human; and finally, that in view of the peculiar character of the life, and of the end which the divine factor purposed in taking part in it, as well as of other considerations, the writers of the books must have been specially stimulated, quickened, guided, enlightened, inspired by the Spirit of God: in one word, that the Scriptures are theopneustic.

What relation, then, are they designed to hold to subsequent ages,—for example, to ourselves?

I. They subserve in a religious respect the general

function above attributed to literature. Indeed, they do so in other than religious respects. Wherever the Hebrew Scriptures have been well known they have enriched and fructified the whole mental life. It is too commonly allowed by all whose judgment is worth considering, as far as Britain is concerned, to need any urging. But the Bible is so emphatically a religious book; its various parts are so permeated by religion, that we may here deal with it solely from this side. Now, even if we were to suppose that all the references to special divine interventions, both by word and deed, are to be understood as we understand the references made by believers at the present day, to divine interventions in word and deed, the Scriptures would still hold a unique position and possess unique value. This is a view to which many now-a-days incline. They do not doubt that God existed, and was actually interested in the Israelites; that He guided, enlightened, and helped in answer to prayer and otherwise; this was really the case, they would say, as really as with us in these days; their experience was as objectively genuine as ours now, but not more so. The difference between them and us, or between us and them, is that, whilst they with their lively Semitic and Oriental fancy clothed their experience in an externally objective garb, and expressed it in vivid, highly coloured forms; we, after our Western, Aryan manner, express ourselves more soberly, refraining from the introduction of the miraculous, the supernatural. Viewed even thus, the Scriptural books

are incomparably richer in all that is fitted to quicken, elevate, and invigorate the religious nature, than all the other sacred books of the world taken together; and have, therefore, an incomparably higher value.

I venture to maintain, however, that no branch of the human race, whatever its natural endowments, could ever have held the relation to God which is reflected in the Bible and in the literature of the Christian Church, unless God had first entered into human life in a special, or as, in my opinion, it is unfortunately termed, supernatural way: in other words, unless He had specially manifested and revealed Himself. The reverence, confidence, and love which were cherished towards God, and the peace, blessedness, joy and deep satisfaction which were experienced in God by the pious among the Jews, and by the followers of Christ, had these and no other roots, could have arisen and lived under no other conditions.

II. The primary function of the Scriptures is to bear *witness to the life* out of which they grew. In this regard they stand on the same footing as do other literatures. Greek literature testifies to Greek life—to the thoughts, feelings, words, acts of the Greek people; Roman literature to those of the Romans. The life of which these literatures testify is past and gone. Our interest in it therefore, is in the main, one of curiosity. Not so with the life of which the Scriptures bear witness. But why? As we have seen, it was the life of a people into which God had entered into a special relation for a special purpose. That

purpose was that in them all the nations of the earth might be blessed. In the carrying out of this purpose God intervened by word and deed at sundry times and in divers manners, sending at last His only begotten and well-beloved Son into the world, that all men through Him might be saved. For the life of the Jews, apart from these facts we need care no more than we care for that of the ancient Greeks: scarcely indeed as much. If this be not the meaning of their literature it must needs be, in these sceptical, agnostic days, a source rather of bitterness of soul, than of pleasure. Why torment me with David's certitudes and raptures, Isaiah's strengthening visions, Christ's testimony to a Father in heaven, and the thousand other glorious phases of the religious life of the Hebrew and Christian saints, if they had no objective real foundation. Rather should we exclaim—A curse on such literature! The sooner we can banish and forget it the better! How eminent Agnostics of the present day can praise the Scriptures and cling to them, is to a Christian believer a most puzzling logical riddle.

Now our knowledge of the blessed realities just touched on, comes to us through the Scriptures; even as our knowledge of the wars of Julius Cæsar, or of the life of Mohammed comes to us through certain parts of the Latin and Arabic literatures. Cæsar's contemporaries did not get their knowledge of Cæsar's wars through Cæsar's "Commentaries," but either from Cæsar himself or Cæsar's companions and subordinates. Nor were the Jews and post-Christian

believers dependent for their knowledge of what God did and said on what we now call the Old and New Testaments. We, however, have no other source of knowledge.

In a certain very general sense all literatures are a "revelation:"—they reveal, unveil, make known, life lived long ago: without them we should be ignorant of it; where there is now knowledge there would otherwise be a blank. But as the word "revelation" has come to be employed technically and specifically to denote that which makes *God* known, we apply it exclusively to the Scriptures among literatures. In this secondary and derived sense, therefore, the Scriptures are a revelation *of God;* but though they contain communications which in some cases are "revelations" *from* God, they themselves, as a whole, cannot be correctly described as a *revelation from* God.

Nature bears its own witness of God: human history in general witnesses of God: other religious literatures witness of God: but nowhere else do we find a witness to a redeeming God—a God gracious, merciful, slow to anger, plenteous in lovingkindness and in truth, forgiving iniquity, and saving the world from sin and death. It testifies of God as a living Saviour, because it shows us Him in the very act of saving, whilst it also records His assurance that in Him there is no "variableness neither the shadow of a turning."

Now such a witness-bearer or revelation the Bible

would remain, even were we to concede to the critics the presence of historical and other errors, of mythical and legendary elements. A history as a whole cannot surely be discredited because here and there contradictions are discovered—because certain parts of the record thereof have been coloured by the popular imagination. What reasonable man would think of throwing doubt on the entire part played in the life of China by Confucius, or in that of India by Buddha, or in that of Greece by Socrates, or in that of Rome by Cicero, simply because legendary elements had crept into the literature relating to them? Equally unreasonable would it be to reject *in toto* the testimony of the Scriptures regarding God, because there may seem to be reason for doubting some things said to have been done, or spoken, or thought, or intended, by Him. Whether on other grounds, this testimony should be rejected is an altogether different question. From the point of view here taken up, what I have just stated might be safely allowed: from the other points of view, to which attention was directed, it would be logically impossible.

Indeed, one might go even a step further. Could the life we have been considering have been truly and adequately reflected and recorded, without any inspiration whatever, the literature in which it was enshrined would have served the purpose of witness to the relation of God to men even as a merely natural production. What we are chiefly concerned with is the *fact* of a veritable objective divine intervention for saving

ends, in the life of Israel.[1] If that be true; if God was the Saviour, and if He be still the same, do we not know the most important thing we need to know? Has not the most wonderful and precious revelation been made to us that heart of man can imagine? This was a great truth, even before Israel's history was consummated by the advent of Christ? What was it sustained the moral energy and life of the Jews during the period covered by the apocryphal books of the Old Testament, when, as they themselves confessed, direct and special divine interventions in their life had ceased? It was the memory of what God had done—of His great and marvellous works wrought on their behalf? They trusted Him when He did not work specially, because of what they knew of Him from His special workings in old time. And the faith of the Christian Church during the last eighteen centuries has been kept alive by the knowledge of what God did through Israel, and especially in Christ. It is even so in our relations to men. What they once did is taken as a witness to what they were, and are, and can still do. This is their "character," as we term it. The life reflected in the Bible, so far as its divine factor is concerned, is, so to speak, the character of God; and the Bible is the medium through which we are made acquainted with it—the transcript whose

[1] The particular modes of the intervention have after all but secondary significance, with the sole exception of that of Christ; for they were adapted to or conditioned by the peculiar character and circumstances of the Jewish people.

production he has himself superintended. It continues the work of those who were called to be specially God's agents. As in the Old Testament they came with a burden from the Lord, so in the New, they style themselves His "witnesses"—"we are His witnesses of these things;" and now that their voice is hushed by death, they continue to speak through the writings which they wrote.

The primary function of the Bible is to be an abiding special witness for God.

III. The Scriptures serve further as a *guide to conduct*, alike religious and moral. Whilst they tell what the mind, and will, and conduct of God have been towards men, they also tell what the mind, and will, and conduct of men should be towards God, each other, and their fellow-creatures. They do this—to repeat a remark too often made already—indirectly through the medium of the laws and institutions, commands and prohibitions, promises and threatenings, encouragements and warnings, rewards and punishments, which proceeded from God in the discharge of His function as a factor in the life of the nation through which He was seeking to bless and save mankind. In its measure every literature, so far as it truly reflects life, does the same thing. It is full of precepts and dissuasions. In one sense the lessons of history are good and divine; but, in the sense now referred to, the teachings of literature generally, what it supplies for the guidance of conduct, is of a very mixed character. Nor, considering that imperfect, short-

sighted, erring, ignorant, and even corrupt human nature is their source, can we be surprised at the fact. The Scriptures, however, bring us face to face with a life which God Himself undertook to guide. Even He failed to educate into righteousness; but the indications of His will are marked by His own perfection. The chief features and lines of an ideal life are drawn with clearness and vigour. Nay more, the perfection of religion and morality was set before the Hebrew nation in the person and life of Jesus of Nazareth.

The commands and prohibitions are, it is true, temporary in their form; and, naturally so, for the simple reason that they were issued and intended for men who lived at a particular time, under particular circumstances. But, with rare exceptions, their substance is abiding; for the principal relations, deepest needs, and chief activities of man remain the same under all changes of time, clime, colour, language, and environment. Moreover, to a large extent, their form is as general as their essence is eternal.

IV. The Scriptures subserve finally another purpose, which may be briefly designated the scientific or philosophical purpose: that is, they supply materials for the construction of a view of the world as a whole. According to the conception of the Bible, whose history was briefly reviewed, its primary design was to instruct men on this point. It was treated at all events as though its books had been brought into existence for the express purpose of teaching what

reason could not discover regarding the mysteries of existence; and so it is still largely treated.[1]

But though this may not be the right point of view from which to approach the Scriptures as a whole, it is certain that they do supply invaluable philosophical or theological material, and that in two ways.

(I.) Simply as the source of knowledge of an objective life, in other words, as documents.

All history—using the term history to denote the life rather than its record—does the same in its measure. The play of human caprice and perversity in history must not be ignored; but neither must the fact of an overruling providence be ignored. "There 's a divinity that shapes our ends; rough-hew them how we will." This applies to nations as truly as to individuals. Paul also recognised this in the remarkable words which he spoke to the Athenians:—"He made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation."[2] A method, a law, an end, a reason underlies every life,—individual or national; and he who discovers it has made a contribution to the philosophy of the world.[3] The philosophy of history, when it understands itself, has this aim. Few tasks, however, are more difficult than that of the philosophical historian, even as

[1] Even by so able a writer as Bishop Temple; see his "Bampton Lecture."

[2] Acts xvii. 26.

[3] See Professor Flint's remarkable "History of the Philosophy of History," Introduction.

ordinarily viewed; how much more difficult still if his aim be to discover the particular purpose of God in the life of any particular nation or group of nations.

At this point, the history of the Jewish people, as reflected in the Bible renders invaluable help. The law and meaning of their experiences are exhibited in and along with those experiences with startling clearness. Whilst the nation is acting, enjoying, suffering, men arise in its own midst who tell them what God thinks thereof, how far God is concerned therewith, what His designs are therein. What the Greek chorus aimed to be to the action in the Greek tragedy, that the prophets actually were, though in a deeper and fuller sense than Greek poet could ever have deemed possible, to the Hebrew life. Whilst thus interpreting Hebrew life, they interpreted also the life of other nations; for the special brought out the regular and normal,—it was not a substitute for it. Hebrew life furnishes a key to the deeper secrets and mysteries of the life of other and very dissimilar peoples.[1]

But light is at the same time thrown on the life of humanity as a whole. We get in the Scriptures glimpses of its divine idea, for Israel lived not merely for itself, but also for humanity. It suggests where it does not distinctly state the principle on which other histories may be correlated to its own. It supplies a key to the course of the world. It fur-

[1] See F. D. Maurice's "Prophets and Kings," &c., and works generally.

nishes the significant member of the great organism of history, by means of which the whole may in certain respects be reconstructed, and therefore understood. We cannot say this of any other history; for whilst other histories mainly hinge on some point of the periphery of human life and destiny, that of Israel touches the very centre, namely, man's relation to God. What a wonderful light is thrown, for example, on the life of humanity at the beginning of the history, by the election of Abraham, that "in him and his seed *all the nations* of the earth might be blessed;" and at its consummation, by the mission of the Son of God to live, suffer, and die for the salvation of the whole *world*.

(II.) It comprises, however, not merely facts, events, and the like, which throw light on the plan of the world, but also direct hints and statements. The Scriptures are full of suggestions, more or less clear, towards a philosophy, or as it is ordinarily termed, a theology. Hence the Biblical theologies that have been constructed directly from the Scriptures; and the systematic theologies, professedly based on them. It has long been seen that the Bible is not itself a system of theology, or of anything; though, as far as the point of view is concerned, which I have advocated, it might comprise among its books a more or less complete outline of such a theology; even as the literature of Britain or Germany or France, were it bound up in one volume, would comprise such systems. But it does not do so. Still, there is not

a problem of philosophy proper—*i.e.*, of the system of the world, on which more or less direct light is not thrown by the sacred writings ; whilst elsewhere, we search for any but the vaguest and most uncertain hints on most of the problems. The nature of God, the origin of the universe, the true constitution, position, and destiny of man, the origin, history, and goal of evil, its cure—these and other problems remain utterly dark apart from the Scriptures. Ethics, religion, theology, anthropology, cosmology, and so forth, all alike get help in the Bible ; though it can scarcely be said to contain a page that bears a strictly scientific character.

The treasures of the Bible have thus far not been exhausted. It is like a mine in which he who digs deepest finds ore the most valuable. But the material there stored up must not be used in a mechanical and soulless manner. There is not a little force in Mr. Matthew Arnold's denunciation of the habit of taking terms which the Biblical writers use "in a fluid and passing way, as men use terms in common discourse, or in eloquence and poetry, to resemble approximately, but only approximately, what they have present before their mind, but do not profess that their mind does or can grasp exactly or adequately, in a rigid manner, as if they were symbols with as definite and fully grasped a meaning as line or angle" —against the employment of terms which are literary, as though they were scientific.[1] He, however, runs to

[1] "Literature and Dogma," p. 8.

the other extreme, and treats the terms employed in the Bible as if they had no definite meaning whatever. Still, in the broad sense, it is quite true, that the Scriptures are literary, not scientific; literature, not philosophy or science. But they none the less supply ample material for the construction of philosophy to him who has the eyes to see, and the intellect to grasp.

Such then is the relation of the Scriptures to us—First, they witness concerning God, telling us what He has done for the redemption of the world, and that He is still able and willing to save; secondly, they furnish us with guidance to conduct, and show us how God would have us to behave towards Himself, each other, and the world; and, finally, they put into our hands the means of understanding the course of the world, and the history and destiny of humanity.

CHAPTER XII.

CONDITIONS OF THE DISCERNMENT OF THE DIVINE ELEMENT IN SCRIPTURE.

THE due appreciation of literature, and of the life which it enshrines, is in all cases subject to certain conditions. The remark made in another connection—"The eye sees what it brings with it"—applies here. Neither Greek literature, considered simply as literature, nor Greek life, can be understood or assimilated or enjoyed, without preparedness in him who studies it. It is not otherwise with the literature and life to which our attention has been directed.

Hebrew literature and life, like the literature and life of other nations, have several sides, to the appreciation of each of which a specific attitude or preparation is necessary. Take the *life*. Its political aspects can best be interpreted by a man of political discernment; its social aspects by one who is interested in and acquainted with the movements of society; its ecclesiastical aspects by one who is familiar with the management of Church affairs; and so with the various other aspects. This is equally true of *literature*. It has

its philological and æsthetic sides, neither of which can be rightly estimated by any one who does not fulfil certain obvious conditions.

The more peculiar the life and literature, the more special the qualifications of him who would properly judge them.

Now the Hebrew life and literature are differentiated from every other life and literature by their *religious* quality; or to speak more exactly, by their divine-human character. There is a very true sense, indeed, in which this twofold character belongs to every other national life and literature. God is not far from any individual or nation; in Him all live and move and have their being. Of them, however, it holds good in a very special sense.

This immanence of the divine in the human, and of the human in the divine, this blending of the two in human history, ordinarily escapes the observation of historians and philosophers, owing to their lack of the inner fitness and preparation. They see the human, and more or less appreciate its various activities and manifestations, because their mind is ἀνθρωποειδής (manlike); they miss the divine because it is not in the same degree θεοειδής (Godlike). Some of the aspects of this co-operation of God with man in common human history were very clearly discerned by the great men of the Hebrew nation; others were hidden even from them. In their light, we in our measure may now see light.

The co-operation of God with Israel, both as to life

and literature, was special; and the speciality was in part meant to open our eyes to the true meaning of the ordinary. Yet even the special, or as it is generally termed, the supernatural, does not force its significance on the human mind. It too will remain hidden, unless it be approached in the right spirit, looked at in the right light. Nay more, it may even deepen the obscurity which hangs round the ordinary action of God in the world. It seems, in fact, to have had that effect on many modern minds. No literature and no life repels them so much as the literature and life of the Hebrew people; in none do they apparently find less of the divine.

How can we know that this Hebrew life and literature are what they profess to be? In other words, inasmuch as our concern here is with the divine, not with the human element, in the *Scriptures*—using this term to denote both *the life enshrined* and *the enshrining vehicle*—how can we assure ourselves that their witness concerning God, the guidance they offer for conduct, and the hints they give about the ways of God are true—that is, divine? In putting this question we approach the wide domain of apologetics; but I shall only refer in a general way to the practical or moral conditions of certitude, not to those which are more properly intellectual. What I thus designate practical or moral conditions are of supreme importance, partly because they are open to all men, whatever their intellectual culture and discipline, or lack thereof; and partly because they really determine

the attitude and action of the intellect, consciously or unconsciously.

I. The surest means of testing the truth of the Scripture testimony to God as the living Saviour is to try Him. What is needed is loyal experiment. Here all can begin—the sceptic no less than the man who has never been troubled by a doubt. By way of testing the matter, take the case of a sceptic.

The Scriptures, be it again remarked, are from the beginning to the end witness-bearers, in a thousand different ways, to one great fact or truth—the truth that God can and will save from sin, darkness, and unrest all who are willing and ask to be saved. They take for granted that all men are more or less conscious of moral imperfection, intellectual ignorance and perplexity, and restlessness of heart, not to mention other forms of misery. They narrate how God has actually wrought deliverance, and assure us that He always will and can deliver. They mention various modes in which He has accomplished His saving work, or shown His willingness to do so. Suppose a man doubts the accuracy of some of the stories, regarding them as either fictitious, or coloured, or exaggerated, especially where miracles are in question, yet the mass of the testimony will scarcely be materially diminished. Man's need of help, if he is to be truly, blessedly man; God's constant readiness to give the help man needs in order to be truly and blessedly man—the first is what Scripture *takes for granted;* the second is the substance, the essence, the kernel

of its *testimony.* Salvation by a living God: that is the chief uniting, harmonising element in this strange collection of the literary remains of a strange nation.

"But what if it be so?" a doubter may reply. "What is their testimony to me, even if I grant that this actually is the burden of their literature?" It is nothing to him if God only saved men in the days of old, to which these books relate; or, if he be among "the whole who need not a physician." But suppose he be sensible of need, and be compelled to exclaim with Ovid, "I see and approve the better, but follow the worse;" suppose he agree with Sophocles in saying, "Be assured, the gods regard the evil no less than the good, and that a godless man hath never escaped them;" or that he have to lament with Theocritus, "Behold! calm is the sea and calm the stormy wind, but into my inmost soul rest never comes;" suppose that he know himself to be often weak for good, strong for evil, ignorant of that which the soul most yearns to know, without confidence, brightness, gladness at the deepest. Suppose, further, he lend a candid ear to the millions of men who throughout the Christian ages, and at the present moment, testify that "God is now nigh at hand, and not afar off;" "that He still saveth them that put their trust in Him;" "that wherever there is loyal willingness to let Him work, no matter what intellectual uncertainty and perplexity men may be conscious of, there He saves from darkness, sin, misery:" then

the case is a different one; the Bible is for him to that extent an authority. And if he enter into it through this doorway, he will soon begin to find out that it is in other ways an authority, till at last it will become the sweetest and freest exercise of his intellect to look to it for divine instruction, and believe where he cannot see.

Whether there be a still simpler and lower form of the authority of the Scripture than this I am scarcely able to say. At all events, I know of none that is at once so simple, so comprehensive, and yet, as it must needs be, so searching. For surely Bishop Blougram's condition is quite too easy and indefinite—

> "'What think ye of Christ,' friend? when all's done and said,
> You like this Christianity or not?
> It may be false, but will you wish it true?
> Has it your vote to be so if it can?
> Trust you an instinct silenced long ago
> That will break silence and enjoin you love
> What mortified philosophy is hoarse,
> And all in vain, with bidding you despise?
> If you desire faith—then you've faith enough:
> What else seeks God—nay, what else seek ourselves?"[1]

As I remarked before, the burden of the Scriptures is their witness to a saving God. This, too, is what distinguishes our sacred books from those of other religions. There may be found in other sacred books beautiful petitions, prayers; beautiful ethical sayings, injunctions, warnings; impressive confessions of sin and guilt and fear; wonderful gleams of insight into truth; mysterious fore-reachings towards judgment,

[1] Browning's "Men and Women."

immortality, and heaven; but you will search in vain for any but the most fragmentary, vague, and inefficient testimony to God as the Saviour of men.

The Bible primarily a witness to God as our Saviour —that, I think, may be allowed by any man; that, all may agree on, however widely they differ in other respects.

But suppose a man says, "The witness is there, but the witness-bearers were themselves deluded. I don't dispute the witness, I only dispute its objective validity." I would answer: Accept it provisionally; deal with it as men of science deal with hypotheses they have not yet been able but are anxious to verify; act as though the witness of the Bible, sustained as it is by the confirmatory witness of Christian believers of all ages and lands, were true; try God as a Saviour; you need not fear to go to Him with the cry, "I believe, help Thou mine unbelief." And as sure as God is true, your experience will be, not perhaps in a moment, but certainly in due season, all that I have already described.

II. Whether the guidance offered by the Scriptures for conduct, is of God or no, will be learned by him who is genuinely willing, that is, straightforwardly ready, to do the will of God. Nay more, I might say, if a man is straightforwardly ready to be and do the right, and straightforwardly resolved to avoid the wrong, he, too, will not fail to discern the mind of God in the moral system which in many parts and many ways is laid down in the Scriptures. Is the

right in the abstract, confessed by him to be sacred, to be absolutely obligatory? Does he say within himself —Yes, to the right I must, I will bow? Then assuredly he shall discern whether individual commands are right or not. And in discerning that, his inner eye will gradually become capable of distinguishing in the commonest duties the "still small voice" of God; still more shall he know that through the Scriptures God is verily speaking to him. Whereas, if a man is disloyal to right in the abstract, he will soon become sceptical as to right in the concrete; still more sceptical as to the right of the Scriptures to guide him. This does not mean that willingness to be and do God's will will enable us to *discover what* that will is: all that it means is that, given the concrete claim, or duty, or command, or injunction, and we shall be able to discern whether it be of God or not. Not, indeed, all at once; but according to our needs will it be given to us. This experience presupposes the acceptance of God as Saviour; and the certitude that He is a Saviour will grow upon us through the experience that he energises in us to do His will. The process is something like this: We are ready to do His will whatever it be; then we see more or less distinctly that the particular thing asked from us is His will; then we find ourselves energised to do what we, perhaps dimly, see; and, as we do it, the conviction becomes firm that what we have done is verily the divine will. The energising vouchsafed to us is the work of the Holy Spirit who, whilst invigorating for

the resistance of temptation, the vanquishment of evil, and the performance of duty, concurrently opens our eyes to see. So far all alike can advance—foolish and wise, ignorant and learned, weak and strong—each in his measure; but each in the measure sufficient for his own particular needs.

III. To the proper appreciation of the hints contained in the Scriptures relatively to the divine plan of the world are necessary on the one hand, an intellect capable of correlation and construction, and on the other, an intellect quickened and guided by the Holy Spirit. Then, and then only, can full certitude be attained. Passing over the question as to the exact kind of intellectual activity which is necessary for this work, two things need to be urged. First, that there must be as perfect and absolute loyalty to *truth* in the abstract, as was demanded towards *right* in the abstract. He who either consciously or unconsciously is ready to prescribe what shall be true, or to bend it till it fits his system or his interests, will fail to discern the concrete truth when presented to him—nay, more, he may even count it error. But, secondly, the aid of the Holy Ghost is required; and that aid will be given to him who has fulfilled the two conditions first considered. As we read in the Epistle to the Corinthians:—"The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak,

not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth ; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God ; for they are foolishness unto him ; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But He that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man." If the Bible contain the things of the Spirit of God, no man can become assured of the fact until, through the aid of the Spirit and spiritual experience, he becomes capable of spiritual discernment.

This position is in harmony not only with the letter and spirit of the Scripture itself, but also with the best teaching of the Christian Church, especially with that of the most spiritual leaders and theologians of the Reformed Churches. From a very early period a distinction was drawn between general and special assurance, between historical or human and divine assurance, or confidence, or conviction, or faith, with regard to the authority of the Scriptures. The former was held to be producible by considerations such as were referred to before ; namely, prophecy, miracles, moral and religious elevation of the Biblical teachings, the Person of Christ, the remarkable progress of Christianity, the martyrs, and so forth ; the latter was held to be produced alone by experience of the power of Christian truth and the inward witness of the Holy Ghost. Generally speaking, indeed, the witness of the Spirit alone is expressly mentioned ; but as that witness was believed either to come

through or to accompany spiritual experience—never otherwise—such experience is always implied.[1] Constant stress is laid on the need and value of the Spirit's witness ; the merely human assurance is always depreciatively contrasted with divine assurance. "God Himself," says a Lutheran theologian,[2] "seals the certitude (given by other arguments) in the hearts of His saints by the earnest of His Spirit. And this argument is of all others at once the safest and most efficacious for the confirmation of faith in the Scriptures. Its weight, however, cannot be perceived by unbelievers, but only by the believing and godly." Another speaks of "the divine assurance produced by the inward witness of the Holy Ghost, showing itself in the legitimate use of the Word of God, as far stronger and surer than that which results from the arguments ordinarily adduced."[3]

Calvin expresses himself very distinctly and strongly on this subject :—

"Many things might be adduced which certainly evince, if there be any God in heaven, that He is the Author of the Law and the Prophecies and the Gospel. . . . Yet it is acting a preposterous part to endeavour to produce sound faith in the Scriptures by disputations—*i.e.*, proofs, reasons, and so forth, which of themselves are insufficient without the internal persuasion of the Holy Ghost. . . . Religion

[1] See Hollaz, Gerhard, and others, quoted by Klaiber, "Die Lehre der altprotestantischen Dogmatiker von dem testimonium Spiritus Sancti," &c., in Dorner's "Jahrbücher," &c., 1857, p. 17.

[2] Hunnius, "De Majestate et Certitudine Scripturæ Sacræ," see Klaiber.

[3] Buddeus, "Institut.," § xiii., quoted by Klaiber, p. 14.

appearing to profane men to consist wholly in opinion they wish and expect it to be proved by rational arguments that Moses and the prophets spake by divine inspiration. But I reply that the testimony of the Spirit is superior to all reason. For as God alone is a sufficient witness of Himself in His own Word, so also the Word will never gain credit in the hearts of men till it be confirmed by the internal testimony of the Spirit. It is necessary, therefore, that the same Spirit who spake by the mouths of the prophets should penetrate into our hearts, to convince us that they faithfully delivered the oracles which were delivered to them. . . . Let it be considered, then, as an undeniable truth that they who have been inwardly taught by the Spirit of God feel an entire acquiescence in the Scripture, and that it is self-authenticated, carrying with it its own evidence, and ought not to be made the subject of demonstration and arguments from reason; but it obtains the credit which it deserves with us by the testimony of the Spirit. Being illuminated by Him, we believe the divine original of the Scripture not from our own inferences or the judgment of others; but we esteem the certainty to be equal to that of an intuitive perception of God Himself in it. We seek not arguments or probabilities to support our judgment, but submit our judgments and understandings as to a thing concerning which it is impossible for us to judge."[1]

So far Calvin, who is surely clear enough as to the one thing, the true and full certainty regarding the divinity of Scripture can come only by experience of the power of its truth and the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart, whatever preliminary assurance may be attainable through arguments of the ordinary kind.

Not less clear and emphatic is John Owen.

[1] Calvin's "Institutes," vol. i. pp. 84 ff. Translated by Allen.

"A man may believe that which is true, infallibly so, and yet his faith not be infallible. That the Scripture is the Word of God is infallibly true, yet the faith whereby a man believes it so may be fallible, for it is such as his evidence is, and no other; he may believe it to be so on tradition, or the testimony of the Church of Rome only, or on outward arguments, all which being fallible, his faith is so also, although the things he assents unto be infallibly true. . . . There are sundry cogent and external arguments for Scripture that evince it on rational grounds to be from God. Only we do not judge them to contain the whole of the evidence which we have for faith to rest on or be resolved into; yea, not that at all which renders it divine, supernatural, and infallible (p. 250). These arguments, with the evidence in them, are such as nothing but perverse prejudice can detain men from giving a firm assent unto—*i.e.*, a *moral* assurance, which should lead us to endeavour to yield obedience unto God accordingly (p. 280). Above and beyond that natural human faith and assent which is the effect of the arguments and motives of credibility, there is and must be wrought in us, by the power of the Holy Spirit, faith supernatural and divine, whereby we are enabled so to do, or rather whereby we do so. *This work of the Spirit of God, as it is distinct from, so in order of nature it is antecedent unto, all divine objective evidence of the Scriptures being the Word of God* (p. 291)."[1]

Quotations to the same effect might be brought from many other writers, both of the formative and later periods of the history of Protestantism. As was observed before, a marked distinction is always drawn between the certitude that could be produced by arguments *before* spiritual experience, and the certitude generated *by* spiritual experience, and, indeed,

[1] Owen, "The Reason of Faith," Works, vol. iii. p. 246 ff.

even by arguments after or on the back of such experience.

In fine, to him whose inner eye has been purged by the indwelling Spirit of God, in whom, as another Puritan writer says,[1] "the Holy Spirit creates a light receptive of the light without," the Scriptures will increasingly seem full of divine energy and light—a revelation in many parts and many ways of the purpose of God in nature and history alike, whose several portions will grow under his steady, disciplined, speculative gaze into a vast system reflecting the system that lies back of the world, and which we call its divine plan or idea.[2]

[1] F. Roberts' "Mystery, &c., of the Bible," p. 141, 2.

[2] Part of this chapter consists of quotations from a paper of mine published in the *British Quarterly Review* for October, 1884.

NOTES.

Note A to page 3.

By way of illustration of two very different ways of approaching the Scriptures and the problem of Inspiration, I will quote, first, from an American Congregationalist, Professor Austin Phelps, D.D., and then from an English Episcopalian, the Rev. Harvey Goodwin, D.D., Bishop of Carlisle.

Professor Phelps says:—

"Ours is the religion of a Book. The inspiration of the Book is, therefore, to the popular faith especially, a necessity. No other Christian truth so poorly bears tampering with. . . . What, then, do we need to find in the doctrine of Inspiration to make it effective in the theology of the people?

Inspiration Intelligible.

"First, we need a theory of inspiration *which is easily understood*. A theory packed full of critical distinctions, and of qualifications not easily intelligible, except to educated minds, is not the theory needed by the common mind. It will not long hold the common mind. It is not a practicable theory, therefore, for the uses of the pulpit. All Christian history shows that the masses of a Christianised nation must have the idea of inspiration, if at all, in clear forms of statement, and supported by obvious methods of proof.

Inspiration Imperative.

"We need also, in a working theory of inspiration, something *which makes the authority of the Scriptures imperative.* We must have the doctrine in a bold and decisive form. Plain men must be able to carry it from the pulpit to their homes, and trust it with a sense of assurance in their devotional reading of their Bibles. On such a subject men will not long believe a doctrine which they cannot *use.* . . . The plain Christian believer, who feels the need of a revelation from God which is authoritatively God-*like.* Plain men, when in earnest in religious inquiry, incline to believe much rather than little. They are by stress of necessities believers, not doubters. They need a conception of inspiration which shall make the Bible resonant with the very voice of God. It must be something which the soul can hear in the far distance, when conscious of estrangement from its Maker. It must give visions of truth which men can see in the dark. Nothing less authoritative than this is the inspiration needed to commend the religion of a Book to a lost world. Lost men need a voice which can find them. . . . We need an obvious authority, an imperial authority, an authority from which there is no appeal. We need a clear light shining in a dark place. We need something which shall illumine blinded eyes, and be audible to deafened ears. A revelation which in the very groundwork of its claims multiplies our questionings, and reduplicates our doubts, is *not* the revelation we need. Therefore the presumption is conclusive that it is not the revelation we have received.

Comprehensiveness of Inspiration.

"Another element needed in a working theory of inspiration is that it shall be one *which shall comprehend in its scope the entire Scriptures in their moral and religious teachings.*

"The assertion that 'the Bible *contains* the Word of God' is amphibious. It belongs to two widely diverse realms of thought. It is true or it is false, according to its occult meaning. The Bible is a unit. In its unity lies the climax of its purpose and its power. That unity cannot be broken with impunity to the fragments. The whole or nothing is the Word of God. A revelation supported by *intermittent* authority, inspired in patches and parentheses, we may be very sure is not a revelation either of God or from God. Its structure is not God-*like*. . . . To teach effectively the religion of a Book which shall be world-wide in its sway, we must have a volume which is *one* in its system of moral ideas. It must be a *structure* in which every part gravitates to a centre. It must be written by men who knew that whereof they affirmed, and who, consciously or unconsciously, wrote under the direction of one controlling Mind. In their religious teachings they must have made no mistakes, nor written by guess-work. They must not have contradicted each other or themselves. The earlier writers must have been forerunners to the later, and in the end there must be a *fulfilment* of divine plan which shall throw back a light upon the beginning. An epic poem or a tragedy is not more truly a structure, compact and one, than we have reason to expect a progressive revelation to be which shall express to men of all ages the mind of God.

"On the other hand, a theory of inspiration of which the final outcome is that Moses contradicted Christ, that the imprecations of David conflict with the epistles of St. John, and that St. Paul could not even repeat himself correctly, abrogates all claim of the Scriptures to imperative and divine authority. God has not thus contradicted God. He has not given to such a world as this a volume through which runs no golden thread of truth unbroken. That He has given to a lost world a book inspired here and not inspired there, historic now and mythic then, blundering sometimes and by

hap right at other times, and that He has left it to man's infirm intuitions to divine whether it is oracular anywhere, is absurd. It is not like God to build such a rickety structure. . . . Socrates, when he prayed that a teacher might be sent from God, craved no such revelation as this. In all soberness, would not Cicero be as valuable a teacher of immortality? Would not Marcus Aurelius be a better guide to a manly philosophic life? The book of nature surely would be infinitely superior to such a Book of God.

Inspiration Fitted to a State of Trial.

"Once more, we need in our theory of inspiration to find *an adaptation to men who are undergoing the discipline of probation.* One thing seems to be often strangely overlooked in discussions of this and kindred doctrines. It is, that man here is in no ideal world. Life is too severe a strain upon his physical and moral nature to leave him mental force enough to settle for himself the interminable questions to which scholastic theories of such doctrines give rise. We need in such a life a revelation from God and of God which shall speak its own authority."—*Article in the Boston "Congregationalist" for 10th Sept.*, 1885.

The following are Bishop Goodwin's words:—

"Attention does not seem to have been duly given to the fact that the word inspiration must, in the nature of things, be a word used to express a certain quality of a book, known upon other grounds to exist, and cannot rightly be regarded as a word from which, by a deductive process, the qualities of the book can be determined. A writer starts, for instance, with the principle that the Bible is inspired—is the Word of God—is the message of God to man—or the like; and from this principle undertakes to assert that certain propositions concerning it must be true. He says, for example, that it cannot contain any statements contrary to the truths of

science, or that it cannot contain historical errors as to matters of fact, or that it cannot contain internal discrepancies. Now, I do not say that any one of these characteristics, declared to be impossible, does in reality belong to the Bible; but I wish to know upon what principle any one can venture to assert positively, that the discovery of their existence strips the Bible of its Divine character? If we had any other instance of a Divine record, from the examination of which we could deduce a knowledge of the general features which belong to such utterances of God's Spirit, we might then perhaps be in a state to say whether the Bible satisfies the necessary conditions or not; but seeing that by hypothesis the Bible stands by itself—that its very name asserts for it a unique existence, as the Book κατ' ἐξοχήν—it seems manifestly contrary to all sound principles of reasoning to undertake to say, *à priori*, what it must or must not be, to make its name the rule for judging of its contents, instead of an expression descriptive of contents whose quality is otherwise determined. Yet this is the principle upon which the question of inspiration is frequently argued; and so it is that writers fret themselves, for instance, to show that the Mosaic cosmogony can be brought into harmony with modern science, and that many who read their writings feel an anxiety about the issue, or that some speak unworthily of scientific results, because it is assumed that a discrepancy established would damage the claim of the Scriptures to Divine inspiration. And the notion of the possibility of historical inaccuracies, errors as to matters of fact, is combated upon ground of the same kind. Now, of course, the Mosaic cosmogony is a fair subject for examination; any one who reverences the Scriptures will believe there are good reasons why it should be such as it is; so also is the historical character of the various sacred books, and our faith must be small if we fear the results of the study of them; but I submit that it is contrary to all sound principles to examine either the one or the other with

the foregone conclusion that certain results will destroy the claim to inspiration, when we have no other means of knowing what the inspiration of a book means, besides the examination of these very writings. Let me illustrate, by reference to a somewhat parallel case, the danger of asserting *à priori* what inspiration must or must not imply. I say, a somewhat parallel case, because there are obvious distinctions. Of man we read, that God *breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man* became a living soul—an inspired [theopneustic] work of God this, if ever there were one. Now suppose that we should take our stand upon the assertion of man's inspiration, and pretend to declare what must be the character and properties of a being created in God's image, and inspired by His Spirit; what attributes should we consider to be too exalted? And should we not shrink with instinctive horror from the thought that this inspired work of God would rebel against his Maker on the first temptation offered? . . . If we are deceived in the case of a man, why should we dogmatise positively in that of a book."—Hulsean Lectures for 1885, pp. 84-87, quoted in "*Brief Examination of Prevalent Opinions on Inspiration*," 1861.

Were I undertaking a criticism of other views than my own, I should have a good deal to say on both the above extracts; especially on the position assigned by Professor Phelps to a *theory* of inspiration in the genesis, sustenance, and development of the Christian life.

Note B to page 29.

Professor Ladd's own statement of his position will be found in the following quotation from his *Doctrine of Scripture.*

"The title 'Words of God' belongs *specifically* to certain truths which have been revealed during the historic process of divine self-revelation in redemption by inspiration of the subjects of this revelation. Those

moments and items of revelation, which have come to the members of the believing community by supernatural illumining, elevating, and purifying of their spiritual activities, are all worthy to be called words of God. Pre-eminently worthy are the divine self-communications to prophets and apostles. There have been, then, many words of God to men through the process of His self-revealing in redemption. . . . But a number of disconnected words of God cannot make up the true divine Word. Since, however, the objective and historic process (revelation), and the subjective and spiritual process (inspiration), have been connected with each other organically, the past course of revelation has resulted in something more than the preservation of a number of disconnected words of God. . . . They are set in that sacred history, which is itself an abiding and developing word; we have an organism of the words of God. The many words thus organised by the same divine Spirit which procured their utterance, have become one word of God. It was previously said in a provisional way (chap. i. p. 279), 'The Word of God comprises all those ethico-religious facts and truths, which taken together in their organic unity, and regarded in their historic relations, give us the true history and essential ideas and principles of the kingdom of redemption.' . . . 'In a more nearly final way, we may now say: The Word of God is that organism of truth, consisting of both fact and doctrine, which has been made known by the historic process of divine self-revelation in redemption, to men whose spiritual activities were for that purpose supernaturally illumined, quickened, and purified.'[1] 'The essential relations between the Word of God and the accepted canonical writings, are those between the content of truth and the form of its preservation and presentation.'"[2]

In this connection I may further quote what the same writer says regarding the subject of "Inspired writings."

"Certain portions of the Biblical writings may be

[1] Vol. ii. 495 f.

[2] Vol. ii. 513.

called inspired, because they contain in written form those ethico-religious ideas and truths which the divine Spirit has revealed through the selected and inspired souls who were the authors of the writings. In all such cases we apply the term 'inspiration' to both the author and his writing, because of an assumed or obvious connection between the two. The quality of the author's mind and heart determines the character of his writing. If the author be inspired, and express himself in writing upon the subject to which his inspiration extends, the written form of his inspired thought and feeling may also be called inspired. If, on the other hand, the contents of any writing which is by an unknown writer, when examined by the appropriate tests, appear to possess those qualities which we know in other cases to have resulted from an inspired mind, it may be assumed that such writing also is by an inspired mind; a writing by an unknown author may, therefore, be spoken of as inspired. Considerable portions of the Old and New Testaments make in this form a direct or an implied claim to inspiration. They claim to give in written form the ideas and truths of revelation which have come to mankind through the media of selected and inspired minds. Of such inspired writings, the prophetic and apostolic stand in the first rank. The genuine prophetic and apostolic writings of the Bible claim to contain, scripturally fixed, certain ethico-religious ideas and truths which the Holy Spirit revealed to their authors. But inspiration is the inseparable accompaniment and correlate of revelation. Such writings, therefore, claim to be inspired. The Word of God to Israel when lodged, as it were, in sacred writings, imparts such a quality to those writings that they may fitly be called inspired. In contradiction of such a claim for these portions of the Biblical writings, critical and historical research has nothing valid to urge. On the contrary, all research tends to confirm and illustrate the claim. Critical research does indeed disprove many of the claims which have been made for

the historical and critical accuracy of the Biblical writings; but such disproof does not also disprove the inspiration of the writings, until it is shown that historical and critical accuracy is an indispensable quality of inspired writings. The elements of error, however, may be most reasonably ascribed to the nature of the second causes through which the Spirit of revelation has accomplished His work. Certain elements of error have plainly been eliminated from the writings by the inspiration of their authors. Certain elements of imperfection and fault, belonging to other writings, have been excluded from the inspired. For inspiration has so operated as to make for itself, to a considerable extent, its own peculiar form. But the merely historical and human elements have not all been excluded by revelation and inspiration; neither have they all been so transformed and purified as to remove the limitations of human history, and the imperfections of human nature."[1]

A somewhat different presentation of the view set forth in the first passage, is given by Dr. Daniel Schenkel, late Professor of Theology in the University of Heidelberg, in his *Die Christliche Dogmatik vom Standpunkte des Gewissens aus dargestellt*, 1858-59.

"Scripture is the Word of God only when regarded as an indissoluble whole, as the most genuine representation of the divine redemption, closely cohering, and culminating in the knowledge of the Redeemer's perfect personality. Hence it is only Scripture, and not individual Scriptures, not sections, sentences, words, that constitute the Word of God. And it is thus that the other proposition also, that the Word of God is contained in Scripture is justified. For, as we have shown, the human and imperfect individuality of the writers cleaves to the Scripture, and to assert that this individuality was the Word of God, would be more than an error, it would be a sin. Hence the Scripture can only be regarded as the Word of God on condition that

[1] See Vol. i. 757 f.

it shall be interpreted with the key of an enlightened conscience; that in this way all that is human in it shall be separated from what is divine, and that the kernel of salvation shall be discriminated from its mundane husk. We may, therefore, further say, that it is Scripture rightly interpreted from the standpoint of conscience which is the Word of God. But, as both of these propositions are true only in their connection with one another, it is not permitted to us to separate the one from the other, and to say either that Scripture is purely the Word of God, or that the Word of God is only contained in Scripture. Experience itself shows that the one statement is not true without the other. The attempt to sever the Word and the Scripture from each other has never yet succeeded; the precise external line has never been pointed out where Scripture ends and the Word of God in it begins. The human and divine are united in it in a similar manner as the human body is with the Spirit of which it is the instrument. . . . It is necessary that the theologian should be constantly conscious of the distinction between the two factors in Scripture, and that while he retains an unwavering confidence in the redemptive substance (*Heilsubstanz*) of Scripture as a whole, he should reserve to himself the right of examining every single part, with the view of determining how far it contains a divine revelation or a mere communication of human thoughts."—Quoted in *Brief Examination of Opinions on Inspiration, &c.*, p. 234 f.

Note C to page 32.

Bishop Burnet, at a later period, takes up the following position: — "In these writings, some parts are historical, some doctrinal, and some elenchtical or argumentative. As to the historical part, it is certain that whatsoever is delivered to us as a matter truly transacted, must be indeed so. But it is not necessary

when discourses are reported that the individual words should be set down just as they were said; it is enough if the effect of them is reported; nor is it necessary that the order of time should be strictly observed, or that all the conjunctions in such relations should be understood severely according to their grammatical meaning. It is visible that all the sacred writers write in a diversity of style according to their different tempers, and to the various impressions that were made upon them. In that the inspiration left them to the use of their faculties, and to their previous customs and habits. The design of revelation as to this part of its subject is only to give such representations of matter of fact as may both work upon and guide our belief. But the order of time and the strict words having no influence that way, the writers might dispose them and express them variously, and yet all be exactly true. For the conjunctive particles do rather import that one passage comes to be related after another than that it was really transacted after it.

"As to the doctrinal parts, that is, the rules of life which these books set before us, or the propositions that are offered to us in them, we must entirely acquiesce in these, as in the voice of God; who speaks to us by the means of a person, whom He, by His authorising him in so wonderful a manner, obliges us to hear and believe. But when these writers come to explain or argue they use many figures that were well known in that age. But, because the signification of a figure is to be taken from common use, and not to be carried to the utmost extent that the words themselves will bear, we must therefore inquire as much as we can into the manner and phraseology of the time in which such persons lived, which, with relation to the New Testament, will lead us far; and by this we ought to govern the extent and importance of these figures.

"As to their arguings, we are further to consider that sometimes they argue upon certain grounds, and at other times they go upon principles acknowledged and

received by those with whom they dealt. It ought never to be made the only way of proving a thing to found it upon the concessions of those with whom we deal; yet, when a thing is once truly proved, it is a just and usual way of confirming it, or, at least, of silencing those who oppose it, to show that it follows naturally from those opinions and principles that are received among them. Since, therefore, the Jews had at the time of the writing of the New Testament a peculiar way of expounding many prophecies and passages in the Old Testament, it was a very proper way to convince them to allege many places according to their key and methods of exposition. Therefore, when divine writers argue upon any point, we are always bound to believe the conclusions that their reasonings end in as parts of divine revelation; but we are not bound to be able to make out or even to assent to all the premises made use of by them in their whole extent, unless it appears plainly that they affirm the premises as expressly as they do the conclusions proved by them."—*Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles*, on Art. vi. Quoted in *Brief Examination, &c.*

Note D to page 33.

Dr. Schenkel describes as follows his peculiar view of the Christological conception of Scripture:—"The importance of any particular part of the Bible depends on the closeness of its relation to Christ: and from this point of view the erroneousness of that mechanical conception of Scripture which regards the different books as documents of equal rank, and all equally inspired by the Holy Ghost, becomes apparent. The highest place is occupied by the gospels, which present a vivid, historical picture of the life of Jesus, founded on authentic documents; and, among the gospels, the highest rank belongs to that of St. John, which most distinctly testifies, and most unequivocally guarantees, the perfect harmony of the self-consciousness of Jesus

with that of God. In the second rank stand the apostolical epistles, containing conceptions of the person of Jesus, which proceeded partly from the more intimate band of His disciples, and partly from the wider circle of the apostolical community; and among these epistles the highest position must be assigned to those in which the sense of the harmony of the human and the divine nature in Christ has been expressed with the deepest conviction. Thus the epistles of St. Paul and St. John will stand before those of St. Peter, and these again before those of St. James and St. Jude. In the third rank comes the Apocalypse, &c."[1]

Note E to page 128.

It scarcely needs remarking that, according to this method of treatment, he who would establish the inspiration and divine authority of the Scriptures by argument must first establish the objective reality of the life out of which they grew, more particularly that of the divine element therein. The first and great aim of Christian apologists usually is to establish the correctness and inspiration of the writings. The object of defence—or, in other words, the defendant—in this case is the *document;* in the case as I have put it, the document becomes itself a chief *witness* to something else—namely, a peculiarly constituted life. To argue, for example, that "certain *bas-reliefs* exhumed from the palace of Koyunjik supply the Assyrian report of the same occurrences as are mentioned in Isaiah xxxvi. and xxxvii., and 2 Kings xviii. and xix.—namely, the invasion of Judah by the Assyrians, and their imposition of a tribute on King Hezekiah—testify surely though silently to the *truth of God,* and afford the most marvellous verification of Scripture, corroborating, as scarcely anything else could do, the accuracy of its statements and the perfect trustworthiness of its

[1] See the "*Christliche Dogmatik, &c.,*" quoted above.

venerable and *everlasting verities*,"[1] is right and legitimate enough, in a sense; but I question whether it is the best way of arguing. Instead of straightway saying, These bas-reliefs prove the Scriptures to be correct, it would be more natural and forcible to reason: The Scriptures testify to certain facts; these exhumed bas-reliefs give independent testimony to the same facts; other evidence is also forthcoming: therefore the supposed facts are real facts. Having established those facts, we have done something towards the establishment of the rest of Hebrew history, whose objective reality is the thing about which we ought to be chiefly concerned. In point of fact, we have no right to reason that, because document x contains substantially the same reports as document y, therefore document y or document x is true. Each would thus be made a witness to the other, which is not allowable, unless the credibility of one of them is safe on other grounds. But it is perfectly in order to bring both into court as independent witnesses to certain facts to which both alike refer. The usual mode of procedure really, though unwittingly, confuses by constantly interchanging the "Revelation" and the *historical* points of view.

It is thus men reason in other domains. In dealing with the facts of Greek history, the first witnesses adduced are the Greek writers; then come, say, Roman writers, monuments, and the like. Historians do not begin by reasoning that, because we find in a Roman writer—if this were the case—certain things which confirm the Greek writers, therefore the Greek writers are true. They argue that, because two independent witnesses testify to the same event or fact, therefore the event or fact really happened.

This change of *venue* will be found, I believe, to be attended with great advantages. The Hebrew literature is, after all, a fact. Why should we not reason from it to the life behind, even as we reason from Greek literature

[1] See Given, "Revelation, Inspiration, and Canon," p. 161 ff.

to Greek life? Besides, many things which now occasion perplexity, when viewed as parts of a book revelation sent down from God, or otherwise brought directly into existence by God, become intelligible, and more, if not quite, credible, when seen to be links in the life of an individual, society, or nation.

Another service, too, it will render: it will help to free the Christian Church from the fatal notion that the Biblical religion, objectively considered, consists primarily in ideas, and help it to realise that its true essence is a history.[1]

Note F to page 136.

The following quotation from the chapter headed, "Reply to Some Objections Founded on the Form and Structure of the Bible," will illustrate the meaning of the statement in the text. "If a man of large and cautious mind permitted himself to speculate on what form a revelation might not unnaturally assume, I am by no means sure that he would not anticipate, on a survey of all its requirements, a very great complexity and variety of form. He might conjecture that, to answer so many diverse and complicated ends, it must not be simply a perspicuous, logical abstract of the *great truths which constitute its essential value as a* revelation, but an exhibition of those truths in the most versatile and flexible forms, adapted to minister to the spiritual wants and aspirations of universal humanity; that being the book of all time, and of "every land," it would be suited to all the faculties of human nature, and all the intellectual and moral varieties in individual men; capable of arresting, not the intellect alone, but the memory, the imagination, the affections, and the heart. . . . Assuming for argument's sake, the Bible to be a revelation, I

[1] I am glad to find myself in agreement with Professor Ladd in laying stress on this; though I cannot say that I endorse either his method or all his affirmations, negations, and dubieties,—that is, if I understand them aright.

apprehend that our supposed critic, on inspection of the principal elements of which it consists, their proportions, and the different purposes they seem adapted to answer, would say that it met, in a high degree, the conditions of his speculation. I have no space to enter into such extended investigation here; but I am tempted to take a single illustration from the manifold adaptations to the surmised ends of such a revelation, presented in that element of the Bible which is by far the largest and most important,—I mean *narrative*.

The staple of the book is history and biography. This alone sharply discriminates it from all other sacred books, from which the historic element is almost wholly absent. . . . Now, in the first place, this form of composition is one of the most easy and impressive vehicles of conveying moral instruction. . . . We all know that history has been called "philosophy teaching by example;" in the case of the Bible, it may be truly called, "Theology teaching by example," for everything is regarded in the light of those great principles which characterise the entire book, and which subordinate everything to the claims of God as the Creator and Sovereign of the universe. It constitutes therefore a perpetual commentary on God's providential government, and shows us, by innumerable examples, how to interpret those lessons which the varying events of life, its joys and sorrows, its temptations and trials, are calculated to teach us. There is hardly an event, hardly a character, that has not its parallel in that immense picture gallery of historic and biographic sketches which the Scripture opens to us. The whole of life seems mirrored there; nor can the attentive and candid reader fail to be struck with the fact, that such a panorama, in which all the conditions of human life seem exhibited, should be painted in so small a compass. The examples range through all the ranks of social life, embrace all varieties of character, and illustrate by analogous case, almost every conceivable combination of circumstances in which men can be placed. It is hardly possible to imagine ourselves in

any situation, in which that immense repertory and storehouse of monitory or touching examples will not furnish a precedent either for our warning, consolation, or guidance."—Pages 189-194.

All which would be admirably said if the Biblical histories and biographies were of the nature of historical tales. Yet nearly everything that Mr. Rogers says, not only, indeed, in this chapter, but throughout his most suggestive work, would have remarkable force, if it were differently set,—set, as from the point of view advocated in these pages, it naturally would be set.

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