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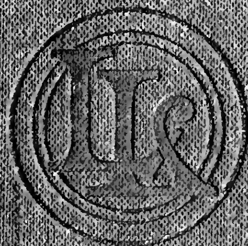

ALEXANDER NAIRNE

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The faith of the Old
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Edited by F. C. BURKITT, M.A., F.B.A.,
Norrisian Professor of Divinity in the University of Cambridge,

and the REV. G. E. NEWSOM, M.A.,
Professor of Pastoral Theology in King's College, London, Reader at the Temple Church.

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THE FAITH OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

BY THE REV.

ALEXANDER NAIRNE, B.D.

PROFESSOR OF HEBREW AND EXEGESIS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AT KING'S COLLEGE, LONDON

WITH A PREFACE BY

F. C. BURKITT, M.A., F.B.A.

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PREFACE

The *Layman's Library* is a series of which the present work is the First Volume, and it has been thought appropriate that one of the two Editors should commend it to the world with a Preface. My friend Mr. Nairne himself needs no commendation from me: it is rather the series that needs to be introduced.

Clerus Anglicanus stupor mundi. This familiar phrase was first used of the dispossessed clergy of the Church of England during the Protectorate. It was the day of Walton and Edmund Castell, of John Spencer, of Cosin, of Thorndike. The Church of England had seemed to be a mere historical accident, a creature of the State, and now historical accident and the State had swept it away. But the event proved that some of the Anglican clergy were more than State-paid officials. Whatever the origin of the Reformed English Church might have been, it had struck such deep roots in the soil of English life that silencing and proscription left these men still Anglican. The Caroline Divines were ready to give a reason for the faith that was in them, whether on the controversial points that

separated Anglican faith and practice from that of other Christians, or on matters that pertained to religious thought generally. Men realised that a religion which could breed such champions was a distinct and living faith: a teaching Church is never a dying Church.

During the last two and a half centuries great changes have come to the Church of England in particular, as well as to the world in general. Moreover we are not at an acute crisis such as befell the English Church during the fifteen years from 1645 to 1660: we should not be at such an acute crisis as that, even if a Disestablishment Bill for the whole of England were before Parliament. Nevertheless there is a sense in which it may be said that Anglicanism is really on its trial, that it has to prove its right to exist.

A teaching Church is never a dying Church. But how far is the modern Anglican Ecclesia a teaching Church? Does it teach anything distinctive except its own legitimacy? Is there an 'Anglican touch' that can be felt and recognised, even when the matter in hand has nothing directly to do with the validity of Anglican Orders or the essential requisites for interdenominational communion? Or is an Anglican merely a person who thinks with Roman Catholics on some questions and with Protestants on others? And—most important of all—what has he to say on the vast and complex

array of questions that have arisen since the age of the Caroline Divines ?

The question is worth asking, for if the Anglican, *qua* Anglican, has nothing to say, it means that after all he is only an antiquarian survival. During the last fifty years the Church of England, as still by law established, has abandoned many points of vantage from which it was wont in former days to teach. For good and for evil the Anglican clergy have become a class of parish priests. They have abandoned the career of the schoolmaster and the University don to laymen, who have to make no profession of communion with the Church of England. A change of similar import and equal significance is that the investigation of large tracts of inquiry, even on subjects that directly concern the intelligent Christian, have been given over to the specialist. Natural Science, Archæology and ancient History generally, Biblical Criticism, Philosophy, Psychology (or the study of man's mind), all these touch the Christian at vital points. The men who *know* in these subjects all claim autonomy in their own province, and if their province be found to overlap the Church's preserves, so much the worse for the preserves.

It is not that these specialists are hostile to Christianity in general or Anglicanism in particular. Some of them are, in fact, pious and loyal sons of the Church. But the 'authorities' which as specialists

they recognise are not the authorities set up by the Church. The specialists hold the keys of kingdoms of this world which Christians have to enter like little children who are taught, who receive instruction, who cannot carry their *a priori* likes and dislikes into school.

As matters stand, it is no wonder that the plain man sometimes wonders what real authority the Church of his fathers still wields, outside the narrow limits of the arrangements of 'services' in Church for such as like to go to them. And to this half-expressed question no direct answer can be given, for our conception of authority in these matters has widely changed in the course of ages. It is no longer found in the compulsion of ecclesiastical regulation, still less in the likes and dislikes of non-specialist Churchmen. I suppose that the modern man only ascribes authority to that which has irresistible power, or to which he gives his willing assent. In proportion as a belief is not inevitable it must be made attractive; in proportion as a belief is not attractive it must be shown to be inevitable.

For either of these alternatives the first necessity is clearness and comprehension, a sound knowledge of the points at issue and lucidity in presenting them, appropriate to the audience addressed. This is what we aim at in the *Layman's Library*. We use the word in the old English sense, as doctors and

lawyers use it. By a layman we understand a non-specialist rather than an ecclesiastically minded person not in Holy Orders. But we are thinking in the first place of the laymen of the Church of England, who are puzzled by the inroads of modern learning upon the Church's ground and wish to know what counsel and advice specialists who are also Churchmen can give them on the several subjects. For this reason the writers in this series are all Churchmen. They do not belong to any particular party or school within the Anglican Church, but it is our hope and intention that they will one and all be distinguished by a sound knowledge of the subject they treat of.

A sound knowledge—nowadays such a description looks perhaps rather uninviting, a quality to which the layman would perhaps prefer to give his approval rather than his attention. But to most men there comes a day when paradox, even brilliant paradox, falls flat. Sound learning is not necessarily either dull or spiritless. And it is our hope that the learning of the writers in the *Layman's Library* may be so leavened by their reasoned loyalty as Churchmen, that the Spirit which we believe still to inform our Church may render our work attractive.

F. C. BURKITT.

CAMBRIDGE, 22 *December* 1913.

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I

INTRODUCTION

The Old Testament to be enjoyed—Little criticism required—Hebrew Bible—Broad distinction of styles—Freedom regained by the critical movement—Religious value of the completed Old Testament—Its history varies in scientific accuracy—Semitic origins—Samuel and the historians' methods of composition—The prophets and the growth of Israel's creed—Post-exilic period of fuller faith; its variety and richness; its influence on the religious character of the Old Testament as a whole.

THE Old Testament is a collection of noble literature. Nothing really like it has come to us from the ancient world. Its authors used indeed the common inheritance of the old Semitic peoples, but literary creation springs out of spiritual action on given material and has nothing to do with the novelty of the material. Our modern comparative method is apt to obscure the supreme qualities of literature, and this tendency has nowhere done more mischief than in the Old Testament. A generation has passed away to whom the Old Testament had become a dull book because it had been too long used as a corpus of theology or devotion. A brief period succeeded in which criticism at first shocked then captivated the imagination, and the heroes of the Old Testament were seen anew as men of our own flesh and mind. Now criticism, progressing with more and more minuteness, has discovered fresh difficulties which shock no longer, but weary people. The Old Testament

has become (it almost seems) a matter of neither theology, devotion, nor enjoyment, but merely a text to be analysed. Dr. Johnson's advice on Shakespeare might well be applied to it: 'Notes are often necessary, but they are necessary evils. Let him that is yet unacquainted with the powers of Shakespeare, and who desires to feel the highest pleasure that the drama can give, read every play, from the first scene to the last, with utter negligence of all his commentators. When his fancy is once on the wing, let it not stoop at correction or explanation. When his attention is strongly engaged, let it disdain alike to turn aside to the name of Theobald and of Pope. Let him read on through brightness and obscurity, through integrity and corruption; let him preserve his comprehension of the dialogue, and his interest in the fable. And when the pleasures of novelty have ceased, let him attempt exactness, and read the commentators.' Thus read, Isaiah or Kings would afford intellectual interest at least as great as the Agamemnon or the history of the Byzantine empire.

Not but what some honey of the critics might be wisely stolen to flavour this enjoyment. Criticism is largely the attempt to arrange the documents in chronological order. Its battle is already half won when the reader turns from the English to the Hebrew Bible. The order there is more nearly chronological than ours, which we borrowed from the Latin Vulgate. The Hebrew Bible contains three collections of books, which became canonical one after the other, and of these three the later never attained quite the same sanctity or authority as the earlier. These collections are: the Law, or as we commonly style it, the Pentateuch; the Prophets, *i.e.* Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, and all those books—with the notable exception of Daniel—which we ourselves call 'prophets'; the Writings, which include all our other books except the Apocrypha. This arrangement shows or suggests that Kings is more ancient and more his-

torical than Chronicles; that Daniel is later than the Prophets and should be read in connection with the revolt of the Maccabees; and that the Psalter belongs to the post-exilic period and should be read as a monument of Israel's completed rather than primitive faith, and that therefore most psalms may be interpreted as having had an almost Christian sense ever since they have been used in worship.

The Hebrew Bible throws even more light than this upon the canonical origins. It has none of those elaborate titles which in our version make such definite statements about authorship. 'The first book of Moses commonly called Genesis' is simply 'In the beginning.' That quotation of the opening words is indeed the regular way of describing all the books in the manuscripts, though to some of them the printers have commonly affixed personal names (without further addition) for the sake of convenience.

Criticism however carries us a little farther. It has proved that the several books of the Old Testament are not simple units, but contain ancient and modern elements brought together in various manners. Thus Samuel is the work of a historian who has used older materials but has impressed the unity of his own judgement on the whole story as he retold it. The five books of the Law on the other hand, are a collection of laws and documents, ranging through Israel's life from the earliest times to the post-exilic period, and still preserved (at least in extracts) with slight change from their earlier forms. The book of Isaiah is a kind of 'gospel' of Isaiah, a record of the prophet's life and teaching combined with a good deal of later theology that sprang out of his teaching directly or indirectly, all composed into a book by the post-exilic scholars. This continuous literary activity should be recognised in reading an Old Testament book, just as a visitor to a cathedral or even to a village church recognises the continuous archi-

tectural activity of English churchmen. And as his enjoyment of the building is increased by his unprofessional knowledge of the styles and periods of architecture, so the reader's enjoyment is increased by learning from the critics, though not as a critic, to recognise the four styles in Hebrew literature which correspond to four well-marked stages in Israel's life; the early and poetical JE, the reformation age's D, the later and priestly P, and the eclectic renaissance scholarship of post-exilic days.

Let us make this a little clearer. When we read the narrative of the patriarchs we are conscious of a simplicity, vigour, directness and picturesqueness in the style which makes the story peculiarly interesting and enjoyable. As in the Old Testament throughout, we of course move continually in the divine presence, and deep truths of theology are therefore continually expressed. But these are expressed in a manner which we hardly know whether to call childlike or daring. It is in fact highly sacramental or poetical. The whole narrative indeed exalts our mind and feeling just as great poetry does. This is the JE style. Those symbols stand for 'Judean' and 'Ephraimite,' and mean that these narratives come from two early schools of literature in south and north Israel respectively, early schools which show perhaps their noblest character in the first great succession of prophets, Amos, Hosea, Micah, Isaiah.

But these interesting narratives are interrupted now and then by passages which, to confess the truth, do not interest us much. Such is the notice of Abraham's marrying a second wife, Keturah, and of the descendants who thus sprang from him, descendants who seem more like shadowy personifications of tribes than friends whom we know and love like Isaac, Jacob, Joseph. Then there are antiquarian notes on the names of places, or on the origin of institutions, all in a dry precise style

which (as indeed the subjects themselves) reminds us of the laws in Leviticus. This all means that to the narrative of JE notes have been added from P, or the priestly school of writers who come into prominence at the end of the exile, and from whom Leviticus no doubt did receive its final shape. Yet there is something more in Leviticus than legal rubrics, and in Genesis, Exodus and Numbers, we also find something more than antiquarian matter in the priestly style, sublime touches which remind us of that supreme example of the priestly theology, the Hymn of Creation in the first chapter of Genesis, where God transcendent, hidden, is confessed with awful reverence.

Turn now to the beginning or end of Joshua. Read the full, rolling sentences. If you read them aloud you will feel, even in the physical effort of the voice, how different they are from the patriarchal narratives, or from such a passage in Joshua itself as that in which the captain of the host of the LORD appears with drawn sword in his hand (Joshua v. 13-15). This is the rhetorical, sermonising style of D or Deuteronomy, and wherever it is found some touch is also found of that deep heart-religion of the LORD's love which is the main characteristic of that evangelical book. The history as told in Kings, and the progress of the prophets' teaching, seem to show that Deuteronomy (whatever the date and origin of its laws) first entered effectively into Israel's life in the reign of Josiah and the prophetic period of Jeremiah; Jeremiah is certainly the 'deuteronomic' prophet. That was the period of 'reformation' (as we read in 2 Kings xxii., xxiii.), when sacrifice was restrained to Jerusalem alone, and the romantic, but corrupt, worship of Israel's 'medieval' age was changed by command of the king Josiah.

This last paragraph might be challenged on some points by the exacter critics as well as by the conservatives. But the plain man needs not to trouble much

about those points. They are like the troublesome points of dating to which the professional architect must faithfully apply his best energies. What all can learn to do with a little practice is to recognise these three broad styles, to appreciate through them the variety of the documents, and (however roughly) the development of Israel's mind and conscience as expressed through them.

There remains the fourth style and period to consider. There are no easy, superficial signs for discerning it. Indeed it is only when we have pondered for some considerable time on the Old Testament as a progressive witness to the life of faith that we recognise the need for making room for this fourth style in our scheme. But by degrees we do recognise it as in no small measure the most important of all. Its importance is not artistic or even historical so much as moral. It means that the whole of the Old Testament comes to us from the Jewish Church. It is more than a collection of fragments from those earlier times when ancient Israel was in strife with its own paganism, painfully and vigorously forging a purer faith in the furnace which the divine Spirit made white-hot. It is not a book of fragments but an inspired collection. It is not a mere tradition but an interpretation. Our fourth style is the mechanism of that interpretation. It runs in and out of, and over, all the rest. It is in itself from a literary point of view, duller than the rest. Its presence often mars the freshness of the rest, and obscures the vestiges of history. But it gives the tone of instructed faith to the whole, and we must never forget that this 'instruction' came by way of martyrdom more than by way of erudition.

Of course this simplifying of critical results does mean that we recognise criticism as having really settled something. The disagreements and uncertainties of the critics do not prove that they have been guessing and

beating the air, but that Biblical like all other criticism is a progressive science. It tells us something already and it will tell us more. The great thing it has achieved is its recovery of a freedom never wholly lost, but certainly long obscured in the general mind. It is the freedom which is claimed in the Articles of the Church of England, to find, not all things necessary to knowledge, but all things necessary to salvation in holy Scripture, and to refuse to accept anything as an article of the faith which cannot be proved from holy Scripture; *e.g.* the Mosaic authorship of the five books of the Law, or the historical accuracy of the book of Kings, not to speak of Chronicles. This freedom has been popularly though hardly ecclesiastically encroached upon since the Reformation. It seemed to have been already lost in the Middle Ages, but the allegorical interpretation of those times counteracted their professed literalism. And when we get behind the domination of the rabbinic school of Judaism in the second century A.D. we find a variety of interpretation and a theology so far from uniform that we may fairly suppose that modern criticism would not have been shocking (though doubtless it would have seemed strange and unprofitable) to the Jewish Church taken as a whole in the time of our Lord. With that recovered freedom we now read the Old Testament, distinguishing its poetry from its prose, correcting its history when it is contradictory of itself or of any indisputable evidence that we discover elsewhere, and recognising—what is so natural—even in the 'things necessary to salvation' a record of progressive morality and progressive faith.

The Old Testament is great literature. It is also the record of a nation's life. It would be a mistake to separate these qualities from its religious value, for they are in fact part of its religious value. The religious mind of Israel was partly shaped by her national and

international struggles, partly by her genius for the art of speech and her dullness for almost all other art. Still it remains true that Israel's faith was her great achievement, and the chief interest of the Old Testament is in its religious character and influence. First-century Judaism was not entirely the 'religion of a book,' but it was largely such. Our Lord used the Old Testament—or at least the core of it—as a book of sacred authority. His teaching and His action were regulated by it. And His criticism of it showed His disciples how to trust its inspiration better than their fathers had done. The New Testament grew out of a Christian Church which was nourished and controlled by the Old Testament, and it is impossible to give any satisfactory account of the Christian faith without a knowledge of the Old Testament. It has other uses also for these days. Genesis is nearly as beautiful a presentation of the one faith as the synoptic Gospels. The early prophets speak directly to the conscience of an age in which riches are multiplied and idealism in politics 'is not so much as a subject of inquiry.' Still for a Christian the great thing remains this: it is impossible to learn the mind of Christ as we know Him in the synoptic Gospels, or to enter into His apostles' interpretation of Him, without study of the Old Testament.

But with that object in view the main direction of our study will be to the Old Testament as a completed whole; the Old Testament read as He read it. The Law, the Prophets and Psalms (S. Luke xxiv. 44) were what He chiefly considered; to the history, which is such a critical problem to us, He paid but little attention. His Old Testament was the Old Testament as it had taken form in the post-exilic Church of Judaism; the Old Testament for which the Maccabees laid down their lives. And it is upon that stage in the development of the Book that attention is being concentrated in the

latest school of criticism. The underlying documents, the origins of Israel's life and religion, the obstinate struggle of Israel's paganism, these remain legitimate subjects for a more or less antiquarian curiosity. But the living interest tends more and more to be in the question: what did the Old Testament say to the Jews in 'the fulness of time,' when the Lord Christ was born, and the Kingdom of God which it promised was at hand? If it be found that the earliest history can but faintly be discerned, and that firm ground for tracing development is not touched before the appearance of the prophets, and that even Moses becomes a shadowy figure better known in what he effected than in the manner of his effecting it, the loss is after all not very serious. When we recognise our imperfect knowledge we do but begin to read the Old Testament again as our Lord read it, and to concentrate our energy upon the Christian problems and the Christian doctrine which it enshrines.

Yet all things have a beginning, and the end is in some sort dependent on the beginning, and ancestry counts for something, and even the errors of youth go to make up the purified character of maturity. So that it is worth while to trace, as far as it is possible, even the earliest history of this people.

Their first father according to Scripture was Abraham who came to Canaan from Ur of the Chaldees. If we attempt to be wise beyond what is written, to identify Amraphel with Ḥammurabi, and to fix thereby Abraham's date, and to fill up the background of his life from the material of Babylonian documents, difficulties soon crowd upon us. Presently we get the Tel-el-Amarna letters and find in them a different Canaan from what is depicted in Genesis; a province of Egypt with an elaborately organised official administration, paying taxes to Egypt, and in a ferment of revolutionary excitement as the strong hand of the Egyptian government already

began to relax its control. It might be said that this relaxation came between the death of Joseph and the beginning of Exodus. But even so, much difficulty would remain, and this precision and co-ordinating is not at all what the earlier authors of these narratives aimed at. They had no reason to square their chronology with Babylonian inscriptions or with the later system of the priestly writers. In fact they give no chronology and little detail. They tell with naïveté the tradition of their nation's childhood, and they spend their genius upon portraying character and expressing (what was no doubt part of the tradition of their time) the religious dignity and simplicity of their nomad ancestors. Genesis breathes poetry rather than history, and when we tediously discuss how far it is or is not historical we lose our pains and confuse our religious instinct, besides doing injustice to the great religious artists who created this glorious tale.

Then comes the sojourn in Egypt and the Exodus. We trace in Egyptian history a dim coincidence in the rise and fall of the Hyksos dynasty. Certain calculations make it possible that Rameses II. was the Pharaoh of the oppression. But it is not possible to discover definite references to Israel's sojourn or Israel's escape in the Egyptian records known to us. But again all this is little to the point. There is no real improbability in such a sojourn or such an Exodus until we begin to insist upon the historical character of the sacred writer's secular details and to square them with Egyptian chronology. His story has come down to us with prosaic additions from the late priestly school. The earlier writer, we may be sure, wrote as the patriarchal narratives were written, in a poetical and religious spirit, not professing scientific history. He too recounted with naïveté the ancient tradition of his people, and the main point of that tradition was that at some indefinite, far-off time Jahweh, whom Israel worshipped, chose for

Himself a feeble tribe to be His people, redeemed them with His outstretched arm, inaugurated 'true religion,' and brought them into the land where in historic days they actually lived. Two men were His instruments in this divine act, Moses the judge or law-giver and Joshua the soldier. Tales had been told of Moses such as had been told before of Babylonian heroes; our author did not disdain their beauty, and, we may be sure, cared not to investigate cold evidence for them. What he could do he did. The outline of the tale he tells we shall be wise to accept as an outline of facts. Yet surely he reads most truly who drinks in the colours instead of measuring the outline. This is not history though it be fact. It is religious idealism, a profession of the Hebrews' faith in God's holy purpose being the beginning, as it would be some day realised in the end, of their nation's destiny.

How strange that destiny was! A spiritual impulse working itself indefatigably out through the inimical mass of the nations in their seemingly blind jostling; the divine mind animating brute force, or rather the divine heart transmuting empires into the several souls of the sons of God, through a tiny point of contact; the deepest creed the world has known springing out of the feeble movements of a petty clan of highlanders as it was pushed to and fro by the two contending dynasts of the ancient world and at last crushed between them.

Look at the map of the ancient East. See Babylon and Egypt already long established before history begins in their river-countries. The desert stretches between them. There is a thin connecting road of mountains and inhabited countries. Canaan is a dot on that road. Its position is such that sooner or later it must be affected by the advance of the great armies. It is so small that it might seem madness for it to choose any course but submission. Yet its hill country and the almost impregnable site of Jerusalem give it surprising chances even

against immense odds, and its distance from the imperial centres, the interplay of home-politics among other states larger or smaller round about it, and the overtures and promises of the great empires themselves which work against one another by intrigue as well as by arms, do induce Israel (who holds Canaan herself by virtue of more than one or two bold military enterprises) to take the risk of resistance and then of rebellion. Her kings were not afraid to fight and they had a passion for political intrigue. Politics, ancient and Eastern, were intrigues, and their ways were dark, dangerous and bloody—witness the engrossing history in Kings. It is that which explains to a large extent the seemingly unpatriotic attitude of some of the prophets; the 'evidence' of their faith in the invisible Protector was their simplicity in holding to the plain course of honesty.

It would be little use for one who has no first-hand knowledge of Egyptian, Babylonian and Assyrian documents to discuss the early history of those nations at any length. No romance of scholarship is more captivating than the story of the discovery of these monuments in all their variety, the prodigious antiquity of so many, the vast quantity which are now available to illustrate certain periods. It seems almost incredible that we should possess now so much of the library of an Assyrian king of the seventh century B.C., that Dr. Johns should be able to describe it thus particularly: 'There were tens of thousands of clay tablets arranged on shelves for easy consultation, and furnished with lists of titles or catalogues. Apart from the masterpieces of all ages in both Sumerian and Semitic Babylonian, the collections of omens, astronomical portents, the mathematical, grammatical, linguistic tablets of all sorts, forming dictionaries, lists of synonyms, comments or scholia, are still invaluable for the understanding of other texts. The library served also as a registry of

contracts, deeds and other documents relating to the transfer of property. There were stored hundreds of letters to and from the king, despatches from the governors of different provinces reporting public affairs, copies or fragments of ancient inscriptions, lists of eponyms. Long lists of countries, towns, rivers, mountains, with notes of their position, products and characteristics, formed a sort of geographical section' (*Ancient Assyria*, pp. 149, 150, Cambridge Manuals of Science and Literature). What a difference between the literary habits suggested by this account of Ashur-bânipal, and by that story in Jeremiah of the reading before king Jehoiakim of the roll which the prophet had dictated and which the king cut to pieces with his knife and burned in the fire upon the hearth. It was not in military resources only that Jerusalem must have appeared far inferior to Babylon or Nineveh. And yet, when all possible appreciation has been rendered to the literature of the great empires, it is still safe to say that the book of Jeremiah (as we read it) is infinitely finer than their best.

It will be noticed that Ashur-bânipal's library was rich in documents which had been rescued even then from an already distant past. Most remarkable is the knowledge which these ancient peoples seem to have gained of their own remote history, and astonishing again is the extreme antiquity of some of the monuments which we have ourselves recovered; for Babylon they go back to 3000 B.C., for Egypt even farther. And finally, besides these primeval relics and these royal collections, we have informal, once worthless scraps from daily life which show a use of writing as common as our own to-day; if a man sent his servant to buy something in the town, he would put it down for him on a piece of clay.

And yet with all this mass of salvage from the past, it is after all only for a few periods that we have anything like adequate illustration. The larger part of Egyptian,

but more especially of Babylonian and Assyrian history remains obscure.

This however we do know. Before anything that can be called history begins, these two empires of Babylon and Egypt are already there, powerful and civilised. The Sumerians, who first held the country of the Euphrates, are more than a name, for they left a tradition of art and a language which to a certain extent was always preserved for hieratic pomp. But they themselves disappeared and their place was taken by a Semitic race whose mythology Israel shared and whose laws were not unlike her own. In earlier times different cities one after another or side by side had pre-eminence in the country. At last Babylon became representative and so remained. Babylon was like Rome in this Eastern world. Tradition and prestige were hers, but her masters were a succession of neighbour peoples more vigorous and military than herself. Yet these barbarians, though they spoiled and even destroyed the venerable city, bowed before her name. An Assyrian or Chaldean king made himself King of Babylon but never substituted his empire for the ancient one, and when Nineveh disappeared Babylon under a new dynasty persisted. Egypt was perhaps even more ancient than Babylon but her influence over the Eastern peoples was not so wide or lasting. If Semitic blood had mingled there, it at any rate flowed less pure and strong. Egypt was the Hellas rather than the Rome of those days. Enthusiasts for Babylonian culture make much of her art. But the plain man who visits the British Museum feels that, fine though the realism of the Assyrian military sculpture may be, it is very different from the beauty which Egypt created. The brutal realism of Ashur-bânipal's lion-hunt would have displeased the Egyptian painters. The cuneiform script cannot be compared in grace with the hieroglyph of Ani's *Book of the Dead*. As we look at the Assyrian sculpture and script we understand why they won the

battles and administered the provinces. As we look at the Egyptian writing, carving, and painting, we seem to discern a subtle difference of moral temperament which accounts for the dislike of the puritan prophets; that plastic art and the solemn calm, as of acquiescence in fate (which again we feel to-day when we enter a gallery of Egyptian antiquities), were suspect to them. 'Religion and politics are a troubled element for art.' Assyria was idolatrous and cruel, yet akin to Israel in blood and even in religion. Neither of them cared for indoor things too much. Neither of them allowed that 'inactive contemplation' which later ages have associated with Oriental races in the lump. Egypt was just 'giant sit-still'; Assyria was 'the staff in the hand of the LORD.'

Some might judge this too subtle, content to point to the one broad tie of racial kinship. It is certainly obvious that Israel's connexion with the Babylonian kingdoms was early, close and far-reaching. Whether we assign most to early or late political influence, direct or indirect, it is equally clear that Israel was deeply imbued with Babylonian ideas of law and religion. We know the points of contact between the Mosaic codes and Ḥammurabi's, between the flood-legend of Babylon and of Genesis. But it is almost certain that Babylonian thought is far more subtly interfused than such isolated examples prove. In one sense the unique originality of the Old Testament vanishes. In a truer sense it becomes more valuable. But that does not so much mean that the sacred writers took this or that Babylonian legend and rewrote it with improvements from the 'true religion'; it rather means that both in life and in literature Israel used her ancient Semitic heritage of idea and phrase as the instrument of mind and conscience. On the one hand are the mass of the people shaping baser superstitions out of the comparatively harmless poetry of their ancestral myths. On the other

hand are the prophets, inimical to even the tainted phraseology, yet compelled in large measure to employ it themselves, and therefore filling old forms with continually truer meaning, and preparing from 'Babylonian' terminology the Christian faith in 'redemption,' or 'the coming of the Lord.' The primeval ideas of the Semites gave the language. In Israel where the language was used for more heart-searching debate and dispute than elsewhere, that language renewed a more wonderful life. For when sympathy or prejudice have urged all that can be urged, the difference between Israel and Babylon is the impressive fact. Dr. Johns, if any one, has good right to say: 'The people that achieved the maxim "To him that doeth thee an ill deed requite a gracious favour" scarcely lacked ethical perception to evolve a conception of God equal to any' (*Cambridge Biblical Essays*, p. 52). Yet no one can read any considerable collection of Babylonian writings without feeling the impossibility of the Psalter or Job or the prophetic books rising from among that people. 'It is the difference which polytheism and monotheism work out in their results.'

In the foregoing remarks we slipped from Babylon proper to Assyria in a scarcely logical manner. But this was perhaps less illogical than it might seem. It is in the ninth century, when Assyria comes into prominence, that the history of the Eastern empire really begins to be full and clear. And it is from that point, but more especially in the next century, that Israel enters into that history. The annals of Tiglath-Pileser, Shalmanezer, Sargon and Sennacherib, throw much light upon the Biblical narrative. That is the period of the great prophets. From their prophecy we get our first contemporary information on events. The rise of Assyria coincides with the opening of the really historical period of Israel's life.

That period begins with the prophets, but it may be taken somewhat farther back into the times of Samuel, whence (though the source is not too clear) the stream of regular prophecy was considered to take its rise. Israel in Samuel's day was under the power of the Philistines, and the book of Samuel tells a story not unlike that of the Italian *Risorgimento.* Hannah's song, ending on the anticipatory note of the LORD's Anointed or Messiah, at once suggests 'young Israel's' enthusiasm for a monarchy under which they might be a nation. The historian who wrote the book seems to have had two earlier writings before him which had already told the story of the time from the opposed points of view. One was a history of Saul, the hero of the 'young Israel' party; the other a history of Samuel and David in which the regrets and prejudices and more dogmatically religious ideas of the conservative party were expressed. Few tasks are more apt to cheat the labourer than the attempt to reconstruct documents from books in which parts of them have been embedded. And in Samuel this is a particularly hazardous enterprise, since it is pretty evident that the author only copied from his documents word for word when it suited him, and in the freedom of his method was really more like a modern historian than a 'redactor.' Yet the earlier documents may be discerned beneath the surface without much difficulty when we have learned to look for them. It may or may not be a matter rather of memory than of copying. The sutures may be hidden. Yet the difference between *e.g.* 1 Sam. viii. and ix. is very plain. The rhetorical style of ch. viii. is in marked contrast to the plain but vivid narrative of ch. ix.—some beginners in Hebrew who had doubted this were once convinced by finding their task of translation so much easier in ch. ix.; and the position of Samuel as judge of the whole nation in ch. viii. is very different from his position as the 'seer' of a country town in ch. ix. These

variations recur more or less distinctly in other places. In the later part of his book (2 Sam. ix.-xx.) the author seems to have used yet another document, a history of David's reign. And here it looks as though he had copied or extracted from his original with little alteration; but we cannot really tell. It may be noticed that at the end of 1 Sam. xiv., 2 Sam. viii., and 2 Sam. xx., summaries occur which might well be taken from the conclusions of the three books we have conjectured; we seem to be getting a real glimpse of the little library of this Hebrew student. At the end of his whole work an appendix is added which contains miscellaneous matter, among the rest a statement that the man who slew Goliath was not David but one of his captains. This might be—so many other explanations have been offered that we hesitate to say roundly, no doubt this was—the tradition of a particular family in Benjamin, which the author rejected from his history, yet considered it fair to record. This historian must have written before the reformation of Josiah. His point of view is 'pre-reformation,' 'medieval.' He records practices of religion without blame which the post-reformation author of Kings records with blame, and which the priestly author of Chronicles often ignores as his high-church tradition obliged. No doubt there are vestiges of later writing in Samuel but hardly of later authorship. Good histories are edited and re-edited, with notes and additions, in our own days, and such re-editing was part of the scholarly labour of post-exilic Judaism. No doubt too the rhetorical style we noticed above as characteristic of some passages might be classed as 'deuteronomic,' but we have no right to be sure that there were no beginnings of that style before Jeremiah, any more than we can pretend to know that Samuel could not have spoken, as the record makes him speak, of obedience and sacrifice before that simple theme had been elaborated by the prophets of the eighth century. Whatever

modifications were made for later readers, the book of Samuel itself remains a monument of the earlier time.

And as such the method of the author has a particular interest. The mere analysis of the text, the attempt to refer each division to its 'source,' was a necessary preliminary to further study. Now that it has been done we may (as usual) profit by the critics' labour by passing lightly over the details of it, and by deducing from the general result the author's principles not of composition, but of history. He had accounts of action and judgements of character before him which contradicted one another. He conceived it his duty to decide what was the real course of events; and this he did on the whole with fair mastery, but he has been honest enough to leave certain discrepancies. We ask, for instance, when and how David first entered Saul's service, and we get no clear answer from the historian's double account. This is his confession that he cannot clear everything up. In a modern book such confession would be plainly declared in preface, footnotes, etc. He used none of these printer's conveniences and left us to read between the lines. More important is the other duty he recognised of passing judgement on the characters of his heroes. This judgement is not read between the lines but in the whole development of his narrative. That Samuel was truly the prophet of the LORD, that Saul for all his great qualities was a failure as king, that David for all his evil deeds was a good king after the LORD's own heart; this has always been clear to the unsophisticated reader. That is to say, the unsophisticated reader has been impressed by the deliberate judgement of the author, marshalled and declared in his narrative; it is only the modern critic, who has sometimes passed a new judgement for himself, that has led us to forget how decided the author is.

A conscientious judgement; that is something in the plan of a historian. But in a great, an 'inspired' his-

torian more may be required; his judgement should also be reasonable. And the author of Samuel is exceedingly reasonable. He recognises the two views of Samuel's dignity—judge of all Israel or priest of a country town. He shows both views in what should be divided into separate chapters of his book, leaving us to read between the lines such notes as, 'Thus I find him represented by one authority; thus by another,' 'It is impossible to clear up the question of his official authority,' 'It is impossible even to be sure of his precise attitude towards the *Risorgimento*, whether a frank enthusiast or a cautious and half unwilling instrument in creating the monarchy.' But he meets all these difficulties by describing in his history an ideal of the prophet's vocation which we may suppose was higher than the popular one of his day, and which made the question of rank a very small matter, while it also accounted for seeming inconsistencies in political enthusiasm. His idea of a prophet is not that he is a dervish, a soothsayer or an intriguer, but 'one whose ear the LORD has uncovered,' whose dignity is wholly in his communion with God, and whose action is not privately willed or calculated but ordered step by step by divine revelation. Such a prophet was Samuel.

In like manner he simplifies the problem of Saul's nobility and failure, of David's degradation and favour. In the message of Nathan (2 Sam. vii.) the King of Israel is entitled 'son of God'; a general and ancient title among Semitic peoples, but invested by Nathan's sermon with new and deeper spiritual reality. Kingship is religious. The divine right of Israel's kings was in their character of sons to Israel's LORD. And in Saul's nobility, as this author not without sincere admiration depicts it, there was none of that mystical dependence, though there had been a promise of it in the very 'historical' but rather conventional manner in which the Spirit of the LORD fell on him after his anointing. But

in David that is just what is evident, not only in his repentance in the matter of Bathsheba—which seems to those who come to it with Ps. li. in their mind too Christian a repentance to be ancient, but which is in fact so much simpler than the psalm and full of early verisimilitude—not only in that but quite as clearly in his cheerful trust when flying before Absalom, though that is narrated in a section of the history which is by no means marked by religious phraseology.

Samuel is 'prophetic history' of an early type. The larger and most readable part of Genesis and Exodus is of the same type; the later, priestly parts are less interesting and in fact make less impression on most readers, unless they set store on the miraculous and extraordinary. But there is this difference. In Genesis and Exodus the writers are dealing with a shadowy past and are rather story-tellers than historians. There is a certain progress in this respect even within Samuel. Samuel, Saul and the early life of David do not stand out so firmly as does David the king. As he brings us nearer to his own day the author writes with more detail and assurance. Still, allowing for this, we perceive a more marked difference as to the whole; Samuel is really history. The book of Kings is prophetic history also, and helps to make a background for the prophets of the eighth and seventh centuries. But it is prophetic history of a later type, and we do not understand the book aright till we have also traced the progress of the prophetic doctrine and work.

These prophets were reformers who, like all reformers, appealed to the past but in reality went forward. Their task was to purge the true religion from pagan—largely Canaanitish—elements, which in the eyes of the people generally were the essence of religion. They were aided by the kings in two ways. Some roused sympathy for them and indignation against themselves by bringing

in foreign customs and ruling in a more high-handed manner than suited the clan spirit of the nation. Others were, like the prophets, really anxious to regulate worship which, left to the whims of country priests and squires, ran into excesses and was injurious to united national life. The prophets dealt in principles, the kings with institutions. Hence we find a more or less continuous attempt to organise the priesthood and to centralise worship, drawing it away, so to speak, from parish churches to the cathedral. And the religious instinct of the historians is right in recognising that success in this attempt was possible in the petty kingdom of David, not possible in the larger kingdom of the north with its wider and more varied interests. The historians express this instinct in a delightful fashion, investing the family of David with the same kind of romance as the Church of England has attached to the Stuarts. But there is a deeper faith in them than that. Consciously or unconsciously they side with the prophets in upholding the puritan ideal which runs through Israelite and Jewish religion and has been inherited from it by the Christian Church. Not the prosperity of the north but the narrower interests of the city of David; not success in politics but the Kingdom of God and His righteousness is the great thing. And, it should be added, both prophet and historian treat history as an exposition of that truth, not as a complete statement of scrupulously certified facts.

In their appeal to an ancient faith which they insist upon, bring out anew and interpret, the prophets built up a creed for Israel. Each contributed an article or two. Not till prophecy had ended, or at least changed its character, in post-exilic days was this creed completed. Amos or Isaiah must not be read as though they thought of God or salvation in the same fashion as Jeremiah or Malachi or the psalmists. And it must be remembered that when (following the Septuagint and Vulgate)

our English version gives 'the LORD' in capital letters, the Hebrew has the very personal, or as we might almost say, the family name of Israel's own God, 'Jahweh'; that name itself carries us back to a world of thought very different from our modern world.

Thus Elijah, in opposition to the priests of Baal and then to Ahab, the murderer of Naboth, established these two truths: that Jahweh alone is God in Israel, and that Jahweh is righteous and demands righteousness.

Amos proclaimed that Jahweh, the creator of all the world, is also judge and will judge His own people most strictly.

Hosea, that Jahweh loves His people with a love like a husband's or father's, invincible.

Isaiah's article was that Jahweh is holy, or as we might say, divine. But with the fall of Samaria and the imminent peril from the Assyrian, prophecy became in Isaiah far deeper and more complex. His conception of Jahweh was less naïve than his predecessors', more like the idea of 'God' in a mind which is modern yet scarce touched by philosophy, *e.g.* Ruskin's. Religion, politics, social problems were one complex whole in his mind. Thus he worked out a far-reaching doctrine of faith. Also of judgement; with perhaps new and more spiritual development of the ancient, popular ideas about 'the day of the LORD.' Yet perhaps not. Here a critical problem must be admitted. It is a question how far those passages in which such popular ideas are recognised may be attributed to Isaiah himself. On the whole these earlier prophets appear to stand against the people and against the professional order of prophets in solitary championship of the 'true religion.' The whole system and phraseology of the popular religion is suspect to them. Sheol, sacrifice and divination are nought or worse than nought to them. Their religion is a 'reasonable service,' and as being almost exclusively that, it has proved but one element in the

less simple but more pregnant faith of later Judaism, out of which sprang the Gospel.

Micah lived at the same time as Isaiah and faced the same problems, but from another point of view. The comparison of the two is instructive, for it shows how prophets may be at one in 'things necessary to salvation,' yet rather wide apart in their immediately practical application of faith. Isaiah was of Jerusalem and knew the difficulties of government. Micah was a countryman, and saw its corruptions from outside. Hence he appears more like a socialist as compared with Isaiah, the broader-minded statesman. Both looked to Jahweh as God of a new age that was coming. But Micah pictured the new age in a few simple lines; Isaiah saw deeper into its continuity with the present, and the paradox of God's unique act working itself out by natural means.

With Jeremiah, if not philosophy, at least mysticism comes in. For mysticism is philosophy felt but not thought out. He saw a reformation of religion but it did not satisfy him. Josiah, his reforming master, fell at Megiddo, and after that Jeremiah stood almost alone. Isaiah's doctrine had been hardened into a dogma of patriotism, and Jeremiah's faith in a communion with God which transcends nationality was condemned as treason and atheism. But he made new life possible for Israel when city and temple had gone, and he was reverenced as a martyr saint in those later days when saintliness and martyrdom were valued. Heart-religion is Jeremiah's article of faith.

Jeremiah saw Jerusalem taken and Ezekiel heard of it in Chaldea. Here were two men, each of priestly descent, yet so different. Ezekiel brought to the front what the earlier prophets had ignored or opposed, the priestly religion of Israel. Yet he did this in prophetic manner. He too was a reformer. He took that ancient ritual and idea, purified it and showed its truly spiritual

capacity as the religion not of simple repentance but of the cleansing of conscience. The Johannine doctrine of propitiation, as well as the high-church Judaism of the chronicler, springs from Ezekiel.

One other great prophet must be named; he who at the approach of Cyrus encouraged the exiles with the promise of speedy return, and who began his message with 'Comfort ye, comfort ye my people.' His prophecy has been preserved to us as part of that large collection of theology which was gathered together in course of time round the name of Isaiah. With him we reach what seems the highest spiritual faith in Israel. His doctrine of God is indeed the same as is presented in the first division of the Nicene Creed.

Nor is it the first division only of that creed which we may discover in the prophets. Already in Israel's conscience, as they educate it, a doctrine of the Holy Spirit appears which is far nearer the doctrine of the Christian Church than is sometimes remembered. There is a sense in which it might be said that even an early Israelite was fitter to receive that doctrine than a modern Christian. For 'spirit' is a word which has degenerated in course of time. To us it commonly suggests 'character,' 'intangible influence,' often something 'less than reality.' Throughout the Old Testament the Spirit of the Lord is a very real and definite power. See in Samuel how the Spirit falls upon anointed kings, and falls with visible, marked effect. The description explains the like descriptions in Acts. What the Church means by calling the Holy Spirit 'person' is hard for modern minds to grasp; the instinct of ancient Israel would scarcely have been at fault had the dogma been presented to it.

Yet there would have been difficulty on another side. For in the religion or statesmanship of the earlier prophets, such as Amos or Isaiah, there was so little care for 'persons.' They dealt with nations. And if their concep-

tion of Jahweh as the national God of His own peculiar people made their apprehension of His 'person' intense, it also made it difficult for them to advance to that larger view of the idea which promises to transcend cold limitations by a fuller recognition of particular affections. It may be remarked in passing that this habit of the times has a bearing on critical questions of authorship. There were prophets and there was the LORD's message by the prophets, but there was little care to claim even a written word for a particular person. Even in much later times the effect of this habit lasted, and when a book was called Isaiah, or a set of psalms were entitled 'to David,' this was in a more symbolic and less personal sense than ours when we put an author's name on the title-page of a book. Much of the bitterness of bygone critical disputes was due to people's unwillingness to imagine the intellectual machinery of past ages.

However with Jeremiah and Ezekiel the idea of persons, or the value of each separate soul before God, did rapidly develop; and one of the most beautiful qualities of the Levitical legislation is its pastoral exactness, its care for each several soul among the people.

With the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus we begin to enter upon a period which is in so many respects the most interesting of all. Of course all gain has its corresponding loss. We cannot have the best without letting go the second best, and the progress to the Gospel of Christ—that might be taken as a fair subtitle to the collection of Old Testament Scriptures—is a continuous process of letting go the second bests. The old, romantic, out-door life, when religion and politics were one; when prophets thundered in a large, free, poetic speech; when writers were few in number and markedly accomplished in their naïve, direct art; when the vast empires of a world long passed away which move like shadowy giants across the stage of history for us,

were very near and real and terrible to Israel—fearful ministers of Jahweh for the stern discipline of His people, while He compelled them to fight against their inherited cruelty and lust and superstition and to realise that other-worldly knowledge of Himself which He had implanted in their hearts from the beginning in peculiar intensity—all that has gone by now; we have reached what seems at first sight a more commonplace age. But other things have gone by also; the grosser forms of superstition, the harems of the kings, the coarse worldliness which made the rulers of the nation mere politicians and provoked the prophets to assert a faith which, in their own days, no one would accept. The faith those prophets thus built up becomes now the recognised faith of the nation. The nation is a church, and its kingdom, as it becomes the centre of a hope instead of an intrigue, becomes in the same measure a mystery of religion. The misery of poverty no doubt still exists, and it is not likely that social injustice is all at once removed. But the Law has made mercy and charity the every-day ideal, and it has fixed the ethereal dreams of the prophets' high morality in effective forms. The glories of the age of oratory have ceased, but the habit of prayer has risen in their place; reading and writing show the ameliorating influence on people at large which general education, though it may dull genius, always does introduce. And there is a 'new learning' as well as a diffused education. It produces new sacred literature of a more thoughtful, if perhaps less tremendously inspired, type; and it preserves the record of those very glories of the past; sometimes perhaps it weakens their vigour by editing and adding, sometimes perhaps it deepens their sanctity by daring selection and experienced reflection. We have begun to pass from the period of making history to the period of making the Old Testament; from the life of Israel to the times of Judaism.

We have begun to pass. The days of Cyrus were of course but the prelude to this new period. There has been much foreshortening in the last paragraph. And it is exceedingly difficult to get that prelude clear. When once a series of events has been set before us by a strong mind in a fairly orderly fashion we receive an impression which is not easily disturbed. That has been done by the author of Ezra and Nehemiah, and from those two books our notions of the return from the captivity and the thoroughly legal character of Judaism have been commonly derived. But when we compare Ezra and Nehemiah with Haggai and Zechariah, or again with 1 Esdras in the Apocrypha, or when we set the numbers given in Ezra and Nehemiah of the returning people with the numbers given in Jeremiah of the departing exiles, we begin to see how obscure the history really is, how many problems are suggested. And when we glance at the contents of the third and latest division of the Hebrew Bible and recognise the variety of theology which is represented by Job, Ecclesiastes, the Psalms, Canticles, Daniel, and when from the Apocrypha we add to these Wisdom and Maccabees, we cannot but suppose that there was a good deal beside dry legalism in the post-exilic Jewish church. What did Cyrus and his successors effect for Israel? Who came home from Babylon and who had never been there? Who built the second temple? Who and what were Ezra and Nehemiah and the historian who made the book about them? How did Deuteronomy and Leviticus come into being, and how were they combined? How is it that Jews had a temple in Egypt in the sixth century, and at the same time took oaths in the name of foreign gods? These are questions which it is easier to ask than to answer. Something at least may be said for Dr Kennett's account of the exilic and early post-exilic time. He thinks that the country was never by any means depopulated; that an 'Aaronic' priest-

hood was transferred from Bethel to Jerusalem to serve those who remained in Judean territory; that Samaria and Judah thus drew together in the home country; that Deuteronomy (not completed till long after Josiah's day) became the law-book of this amalgamated home population; that the missioners from Babylon brought (though not till a far later time than Cyrus) a select company of Babylonian Jews to Jerusalem as representatives of what they considered the true Church; that with their support they intended to stem the tide of new-fangled laxity; that they held by the Zadokite priesthood, and Leviticus the law-book of Babylonian Judaism; that the people at home looked upon all this as the real innovation; that a contest thus arose which ended in a good working compromise, an Aaronic priesthood and a law-book in which Deuteronomy and Leviticus were combined; but that this was not achieved without some tragedy, part of which was the inauguration of the Samaritan schism. This is elaborate. It tempts a comparison with Newman's letter to F. Capes: 'I don't think I could do it from history. I despair of finding facts enough—as if an imaginary tale could alone embody the conclusions to which existing facts lead.' Yet it is an honest attempt to take all the documentary facts into consideration, and the exclusive following of Ezra-Nehemiah is not. Another highly imaginative sketch is given by Professor C. Torrey in his *Ezra Studies*. And he says one thing at any rate which seems true and safe and important: that the exile was but one act, as it were, in a larger drama, the 'dispersion'; that there is no trench cut at any one time across the area of history; and that Israel's faith, so far from drying up, was developing, broadening, deepening, right on to Gospel times. That is indeed what S. Paul seemed to hold when he wrote to the Galatians about 'the fulness' of the time in which God sent His Son.

It may be worth while before concluding this introduction to set down briefly the main elements of this complex Jewish churchmanship, which no doubt gathered unprofitable accretions as it progressed, but which did progress toward that 'fulness of time.'

There was the high-church party of the Law. They have been severely judged yet highly estimated. They captivate our imagination by their late history book, Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah, and they were in fact the greatest party of their time in so far as they made the Law the comprehensive symbol of faith for which legalists and mystics were ready to die together.

There were the scholars who collected and edited laws, records, prophecies, poetry; who made in fact our Old Testament.

There were the critical, even to some extent sceptical, thinkers from whom such books as Job and Ecclesiastes came.

And in the Psalter we feel that spirit of devotion which ran through the whole life of Israel in those days; yet is so various.

Finally there was prophecy, changing however in so marked a manner from its ancient and authoritative form that some held true prophecy to have ceased. That was probably not quite the opinion of the scholars who were completing the books of the prophets. Yet in the main prophecy did take a new form in this period which might rather be considered a new thing. Prophecy gave place to apocalypse such as we read it in the canonical Daniel or the book of Enoch outside the canon. This apocalyptic inspiration draws from sources in the past. It transforms old thought. It consoles in evil times. It does not disdain to use the language of the people. It is powerful and can rouse the enthusiasm of soldiers and martyrs, as Daniel did in the revolt of the Maccabees. It is sometimes political. We may not fairly say that it despairs of this present world. Yet

its main business is elsewhere. It fashions 'saints.' It tells of a world to come. It has thoughts, very strange to common sense, of a heavenly Kingdom and a King who shall be divine, in quite another degree from that in which the family of David had been the LORD's Messiahs and His Sons.

Here is indeed a remarkable preparation for the Gospel, more 'synoptic' less 'Johannine' than the last generation's criticism of the prophets might have led us to expect. And most important is it to observe that here we meet once more what again and again recurs to the student of the Old Testament, that puritan, mystical, other-worldly strain which runs all through Israel's history, accumulates dominantly in Judaism, and through post-exilic scholarship has left so deep a character on the whole collection of Hebrew Scriptures.

It is plain that if this post-exilic scholarship be allowed to have made the Old Testament what it is, and if the post-exilic age was imbued with such sublime apocalyptic aspirations, our criticism, our interpretation of many passages in the Old Testament, once thought supreme passages, will be substantially affected. Our grandfathers applied these passages directly to our Lord Jesus Christ. Fifty years or so ago criticism warned us of the peril of such simplicity; inspired men would not have a less but more real message for their own contemporaries by reason of their inspiration; the words must have had a meaning for their own times which they would not have had if they were merely vaticinations of the earthly life that was to be eight centuries later. Hence a rather jejune style of interpretation came in. Strong words like 'Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee,' and 'Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God,' were referred to reigning kings. The interest of psalmists or prophets was held to be concentrated upon this present life, and scarcely anything that could be called a doctrine of immortality was recognised in the Old

Testament at all. But there can be little doubt that such remarkable passages were understood in a far more extraordinary sense when they were read in the synagogue. It is possible, or even often probable, that something of their astonishing grandeur is due to the post-exilic theologians. And though we may not pretend to distinguish sharply what they have done by addition or arrangement; and though, again, there may have been once an earlier, simpler sense which we might recover if we could trace the whole history of our documents to their origins; still we need not be too anxious in all cases to do this. We are chiefly concerned with the Old Testament, the completed sacred books of the Jewish Church; and those books have breathed the larger faith of Judaism ever since they became books.

The criticism of the seventeenth century broke up the allegorical system of interpretation which had become conventional. The criticism of the nineteenth century disturbed what might be called the simple, evangelical method, for it too had become conventional; those who used it scarce troubled to ask themselves austerely, In what way can this or that application be true? But there was a good deal in what Newman said of 'a certain law of Christian development, which is this,—a reference to Scripture throughout, and especially in its mystical sense.' And of the Articles of the Church of England still more important to the student of the Old Testament than the sixth (to which we referred above) is the seventh, which declares that 'The Old Testament is not contrary to the New: for both in the Old and New Testament everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and Man, being both God and Man.' This points to that 'mystical' sense which is more elusive than either the allegorical or the simple, unanalysed evangelical sense, but which is therefore nobler, deeper, safer. For 'mystical' in the Prayer-Book means 'sacramental,' and sacrament,

applied to literature, leads to the eternal essence through the actual and historical process of human expression, upon which, as its outward and visible sign, it insists. To such a renovated mystical interpretation of the Old Testament the criticism of the twentieth century is leading back.

In this introduction a general sketch has been attempted, not of history, chronology and criticism, but of a view of the Old Testament such as might be taken by an intelligent and fairly well read man who wished to use it as a collection of sacred books, and to use it both reverently and with natural enjoyment. In the chapters which follow no complete guide to the Old Testament will be found. They will but partly fill up some of the outlines already drawn. As far as possible repetition of what may be gathered from the many good handbooks already published will be avoided. On the other hand no striking originality is to be expected. The aim will be to extract from the critical studies which are active on all sides the essential principles which those studies are continually throwing off and establishing. Simplification of the truths that matter to a man who fears God, is the purpose of this essay. An ambitious purpose certainly, which allows no hope of anything like complete success and obliges the purposer to sincere modesty. But no lesser purpose would justify the undertaking to write such a book at all. It is not necessary to add one more to the short guides which have been so well composed during the last ten years.

From time to time modern books will be mentioned in which those who care to do so may pursue the subjects further, but there will be no attempt to furnish a systematic bibliography. It may however be as well to name at once a few books which will certainly be found useful. Driver's *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (T. & T. Clark) can hardly be dispensed

with as a foundation for serious study; a ninth edition has been lately published. England can never repay her immense debt to Dr. Driver for all he has done for her on the Old Testament. If in this essay we go beyond his lines in following new guides, that following would be itself impossible but for his preparation.

G. H. Box's *Short Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (Rivingtons) is a small and very good book which will suit light purses. *The Religion and Worship of the Synagogue*, by Box and Oesterley (Pitman), is valuable for post-exilic and later Judaism. Robertson Smith's *Prophets of Israel* (A. & C. Black) is still the best introduction to the prophets; its vivid picture of their human life and faith has made the Old Testament real history to hundreds who had lost all interest in it. Robertson Smith felt the impulse of Wellhausen. To an earlier generation Dean Stanley handed on the torch of Ewald, that spiritual historian of 'the true religion' in Israel; his *Lectures on the Jewish Church* (Murray) should still be read to rouse enthusiasm for the subject. For the newer view of the prophetical books, as records of, rather than written by, the prophets, Buchanan Gray's hundred pages of introduction in his edition of *Isaiah* (T. & T. Clark) may be read; also Kennett's *Schweich Lectures on Isaiah* (Frowde). But Dr. Kennett's book, like so many of the most stimulating books, must be used with neither caution nor credulity, but with an open mind which will pay its teachers the compliment of criticising them. That is always necessary in reading Dr. Cheyne, and those who do not read Dr. Cheyne will lose one of the greatest pleasures that Biblical study affords. His latest theories of textual criticism may be let alone. Of his earlier writings three must be specially recommended: *Job and Solomon* (Kegan Paul, & Trench), *Jewish Religious Life after the Exile* (Putnam); and best of all, his one-volume commentary, *The Book of Psalms* (Kegan Paul, & Trench, 1888—to be carefully

distinguished from the later two-volume commentary). Those who wish to learn more about the analysis of the Pentateuch will find all they need in the simple but scholarly *Introduction to the Pentateuch*, by A. T. Chapman (Cambridge Bible for Schools Series). *The Theology of the Old Testament* (T. & T. Clark) was the last work of that great master, Dr. A. B. Davidson; the more it is used the deeper will its truth be found.

Reminiscences of all these books will be recognised in the following pages. But particular mention should be made of an essay in *The Parting of the Roads* (Arnold, 1912), by Dr. Foakes Jackson. Its theme is much the same as that of our third and fourth chapters. Yet it is not directly from that essay that their thoughts have been drawn, but from the continual intercourse of a long and happy friendship which has been the source of far more than books can impart.

II

THE EARLY PROPHETS

Contemporary witness of the prophets—Yet they need a background, which is given in Kings—Contents and character of Kings as prophetic history; contrast Chronicles—The prophets contend for true faith and morals against superstition and materialism—Their inspiration, absolute trust in the LORD, supra-natural call which however works out by natural means—Isaiah, Hosea, Jeremiah—The books of the prophets not composed by themselves; they are 'gospels' with some later and more developed theology colouring them—This deepens the significance of some great passages—Yet the message of the prophets themselves is plain enough—They were puritans and idealists—Their puritanism needed its complement; their idealism has become the abiding characteristic of the Jews.

'AND it came upon me "Come stella in ciel," when, in the account of the taking of Amphipolis, Thucydides, ὃς ταῦτα ξυνέγραψεν, comes with seven ships to the rescue.' So Fitzgerald wrote to Cowell. The reader of the Old Testament feels a like thrill when he passes from Samuel and Kings to Amos and Hosea. He had been reading history weighed and arranged by men who lived later than the events. Suddenly he hears the very voice of actors in those events, of men who helped to make the history. That is what makes the prophets so valuable to us when we too go to the Old Testament as historians—historians separated from the events by many multiplied removes, and obliged to exercise the coldest criticism in trying to recover the facts. The

prophets, as contemporaries, are our most trustworthy witnesses. And yet we begin of late to recognise that contemporaries also had their point of view, that the old historians were not always more careless or misleading than the moderns with their scrupulous re-investigation, that after all the Acts is a good introduction to S. Paul's epistles, and Kings to the study of the prophets. Apostles and prophets have always held strong views; they saw one opened way to change the world and looked intently forward. S. Luke and the deuteronomic historian each had their heroes, but they were men of letters with the instinct of the scholar's honour; they did exercise and educate their faculty for contemplating the whole stream of action from without, and their comprehensive view has produced books of history which sometimes disturb our late learned prejudices, and which certainly tend to-day to grow in reputation.

And if we do not approach the Old Testament as historians or critics, but in quest of a simpler pleasure or in hope of disentangling the things necessary to salvation from the mass of things disputed, Kings proves a still more valuable introduction to the prophets. The prophets are difficult. They are allusive. Their style is grand but abrupt, like choruses in Aeschylus. Unless we know something of the history of their days beforehand we shall often be at a loss to make out their meaning. They rebuke with fearful energy something that was wrong with the people of Israel. Can we say definitely what that thing was? They urge faith in the LORD, the God of Israel. Do we understand at all precisely what this faith was, what it would cost Israel to venture upon it, what good it promised? It is the vagueness of the answers we give to such questions that dilutes our interest in these heart-searching books. We read them as if they were no more than imperfect echoes of the teaching of our Lord or of the Christian Church,

and we naturally feel that to those who have the perfect doctrine the imperfect is of minor importance. But to one who knows their times their words are very different. He sees how extremely real they were then, how bold, how true, and how intensely it mattered whether they persuaded their generation or not. He sees too that those days were in some respects more like our own days than the Gospel times were or the Apostolic times, and that the prophets are not merely imperfect echoes of the Gospel or merely a preparation for it. They rather give a particular interpretation of it which had poignant force for Israel and Judah in the eighth and seventh centuries B.C., when social order was breaking down, and idealism in politics was disappearing while politic relationships were becoming every day more perilous; when worship was splendid but unconsciously insincere; when religion was reformed but the reformation had not touched the springs of national life; when the nation thought itself acceptable in God's eyes, yet was partly corrupted by gross vice, partly dulled to the sense of things eternal; when there was an established teaching ministry, not malignant but commonplace, and tragically opposed to the eccentricity of those solitary reformers who made the disquieting claim that the LORD had spoken to them and put His words into their mouth and revealed to them His purposes of judgement. This is an interpretation of the Gospel which had specially appropriate force there and then; and it is difficult to deny that it has a rather specially appropriate force here and now.

Is the description given in the last paragraph fair? It may be compared with what is written in many modern histories of Israel or guides to the Old Testament. But it can only be tested by reading the book of Kings and the prophets themselves. The modern aids are real aids. They make things easier. But they are not authoritative. And the easiness is apt to cheat us of

more real joy. No one knows how enthralling the story in Kings is till he reads it right through as a story. There are some difficulties which may be cleared up in a commentary, if the reader likes, when he has finished the story. There are some dull passages which he may skip or pass over with a glance. He will need to devote the alert attention to the rest which he does to other great literature. But in return he will be uplifted as by great literature. And if, when he has read it through, he will carry the story about in his mind for a day, and then sit down and write out briefly his impression of it, he will find himself prepared for study of the prophets as he could have been in no other way.

The narrative begins in the last days of David. Adonijah's conspiracy is crushed. Solomon enters upon his magnificent reign. The fate of Joab, rudely faithful to his master through so many dangers but caught on the wrong side at last, is darkly tragic as real history so often is. The temple is built and Solomon's beautiful prayer is described in that deuteronomic or evangelic style which the author loves. We feel how great, how necessary, yet how regrettable is this innovation on the old prophetic ideal of Jahweh dwelling in the thick darkness, revealing Himself in the storm, and unconfined in temples made with hands. Yet the king's high-priestly intercession declares a faith in something deeper still which even this innovation may mediate.

Then comes the division of the kingdom, which in this history is nothing less than a national revolt. 'To your tents, Israel'; leave the son of David to be chief to his own clan. And so at first our interest is with the nation in the north. It is a tale of lust and luxury and blood and crime, of the intrigues of oriental palaces and the murdering of their masters by soldier adventurers. Even the prophets Elijah and Elisha are too much involved in these violences. But the author does not let us dwell on those imperfections in his

heroes. In a vivid narrative which he no doubt derived from living tradition and perhaps contemporary writings, he shows us Elijah in close communion with Jahweh, standing for His majesty and for His justice against a hostile nation and a dangerous king. It was for Jahweh he stood. Nowhere is it more necessary than in the story of Elijah to restore that ancient name. His God was Jahweh, that mighty national Person, dwelling in the wilderness, manifested in the storm—though part of Elijah's prophetic education was the deepening and refining of that last idea—to be worshipped with a mystical faith, not reasoned about. And if we use the term 'mystical' here it is not in its quiet modern association but rather to describe a direct inexplicable communication which obliged life to be risked and deeds of violence to be done and strange signs to be expected. The victory on Carmel is 'miraculous,' and as such a stumbling-block to us who have learned enough to acknowledge that 'the spiritual is the natural and what is most natural is most spiritual,' but are still too ignorant to be able to fit all that we would into that formula. However of Carmel this at least must be allowed: that, given time and place and persons, no other way of telling the story than that we have in Kings would be credible; any rationalising would destroy that essential meaning of the drama which however obscurely, at any rate is actually impressed upon us as the text stands.

The picture of Elisha is less vigorously drawn, but Jehu and his fierce, reforming seizure of the throne is a remarkable chapter in the story. The dynasty he founded reached high prosperity in the reign of Jeroboam II. But at the moment when all seemed so prosperous the downfall was threatening. The Assyrian army was moving westwards. The kingdom of North Israel whose 'high places' and the corrupt religion and morals, of which he held these to be the symbol and the cause, the

author of Kings had tersely but repeatedly condemned, was about to be overthrown by that grim scourge of God. And at this point Amos and Hosea come forward to warn and to plead. But warning and pleading were in vain. Submission and rebellion, new kings set up and again thrown down, intrigue, weakness and then stubborn resistance and a long siege, bring on the inevitable end. Samaria falls, and the northern kingdom disappears. It had been a scene of splendour, progress and full life. The author evidently felt the romance of its history. But he records its brutality also in his plain, objective manner. He writes with the impartial candour of a historian, yet he is a staunch disciple of the prophets—whose faith, we may suspect, was even when he wrote still far from popular, and he deliberately affirms his judgement that spiritual apostasy—we might translate it 'materialism' in our modern tongue—was the cause of ruin. 'They would not hear, but hardened their neck, like to the neck of their fathers, who believed not in the LORD their God. And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified unto them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and went after the nations that were round about them, concerning whom the LORD had charged them that they should not do like them' (2 Kings xvii. 14f.).

And now that Samaria and all Samaria stood for have been thus wiped out, Jerusalem and Judah come into sole prominence. The northern kingdom had indeed begun in a revolt that was no less than national. Yet the author, mindful of the supreme interest of the second part of his narrative, had by degrees brought the house and people of David more and more into view. He had shown the steadiness of the southern monarchy, its deep foundations in the real affection of the people and in the divine care which supported it, and once, when by Athaliah's *coup d'état* all seemed lost, wonderfully pre-

served it. Now our eyes are fixed upon it, and with remarkable skill he makes us feel that it too is on the razor's edge and that more is at stake than Samaria ever possessed. All through this part of the story we move under the shadow of the consecrated temple which is raised to peculiar sanctity by Isaiah, and then, as the sad finale draws on, becomes more and more evidently an object of mere formal reverence in the time of Jeremiah. Those two great prophets dominate the course of events, and wherever they appear their faith, so different in the tasks and methods assigned to each, rouses our conscience to apprehend the presence and the ceaseless working of the LORD. The kings are no longer shown from without as in the former chapters, but we are made to enter into their minds, sympathising, admiring, pitying, understanding their difficulties, but understanding too how much is demanded of a king of Judah who is really the LORD's Christ, and why the author therefore is bound to pass his stern sentence on their unroyal weakness.

There are two acts in this drama of Jerusalem. In the first the protagonist is Isaiah ; the adversary who comes at the LORD's bidding to put Hezekiah the king to the test, is the Assyrian. The choice is : simple honesty in politics, quiet necessary reform of social abuses at home, and such faith as will accept prosperity or loss at the hand of the LORD, secure of His protection from all that can be really harmful ; or the man of the world's rejection of such a merely religious dream, acceptance of the practical necessity of crooked policies if the state is to be saved, and meanwhile neglect of those measures at home which would relieve the oppressed and reform the vicious. Between these alternatives Hezekiah vacillates. All but irrevocably he takes the baser one. Then humbled as by a conversion he throws himself unconditionally upon the LORD. The prophet, in the face of apparently imminent destruction, promises deliverance ; and the deliverance comes.

In the second act Jeremiah is protagonist. The Chaldean Nebuchadnezzar is the adversary; the prophets Nahum, Zephaniah and Habakkuk come in here, as obscurely showing the downfall of Assyria and the rise of this new power. And Zedekiah, the last of the kings, has to bear the weight of an almost similar choice, but it is a weight which he is obviously too weak to bear. In these last chapters there is the same oppressive sense of certain ruin as in the tragedy of Samaria. But there is this great difference. Here there is no hopelessness. This division of the narrative opens with that reformation of Josiah's which corresponds so markedly with the injunctions of Deuteronomy that from S. Jerome's time Deuteronomy has always been supposed (in some form or other) to be the 'book of the law' which was discovered in the temple and read to the king. That reformation did not merely restrain sacrifice in future to Jerusalem alone. It must have really gone far to break the power of superstition with all the vice and cruelty that accompanied it. We may perhaps conjecture from some words of Jeremiah's that he was disappointed with the reformation; it seemed to him formally successful but ineffective in changing the heart of the people. To some extent that must have been the result; else Jeremiah's task would not have been so immediately hopeless as it seemed to be. But to some extent there must have been a better result; else Jeremiah's novel and (to those patriots who believed they were faithfully upholding the manly faith of Isaiah) offensive doctrine would not have inaugurated a new age in Israel's spiritual growth, as it presently proved to have done. Moreover the author of Kings was a thorough 'deuteronomist.' He may have learned his religion from Jeremiah, but he tells the story of Josiah's reforming acts as though he thankfully remembered them. In any case his reformed faith upheld him as he penned the tragic story of the fall

of Jerusalem. He knew what heart-religion was, and he did not believe that all was lost because the externals of worship and nationality had been removed. Nor did he confuse the chastising wrath of the Lord with false analogies from the vengeance of men. He will not even say, as centuries after the chronicler said when he re-told the story, that the evil grew 'until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy' (2 Chron. xxxvi. 16). On the contrary he brings his sad record to its end calmly and without comment, and on his last page adds the cheerful note that in the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, Evil-merodach king of Babylon lifted up his head out of prison and made provision for him as for a brother king in Babylon (2 Kings xxv. 27-30). This makes us think of S. Paul's imprisonment and the happy conclusion of the Acts. We expect a sequel.

It is plain that Kings was finished after this kindness had been shown to Jehoiachin; at least as late as the middle of the exilic period. Like Samuel, it may have had additions and modifications in much later times. And as in Samuel, the author no doubt used earlier material. But here again we need not for our purposes go painfully into those investigations. If the author had not been very different from a mere redactor of older books his history would not leave the strong impression it does upon us of a consistent exposition of certain theological truths by means of honest historical narrative. Assyrian documents confirm this narrative, but sometimes also correct it in part. Here and there our comprehensive study of the Old Testament may lead us to question the accuracy of particular statements. But these inaccuracies, if such there be, do not affect the result at which the author aimed, which was to give a general sketch of Israel and Judah under the monarchy, and to show the divine purpose working through a very human story, the spiritual reality which is partly hidden

but more revealed in a natural and even shocking course of historical events, the heart of a loving God striving very personally with the weakness and perversity of His people. His idea of God's present influence on men goes indeed farther than that. He is too instinctively a historian and too much imbued with prophetic theology to infringe upon the real free-will of men, yet it is in the spirit of the prophets also that he drives home to us all through his narrative the conviction that God is infinitely stronger than men's wills, that this conducts history to tragic issues, that it makes a stern view of life inevitable but at the same time keeps hope alive. This last point of hope is important. The author of Kings is a prophetic historian. All goes to prove this, his style, the effect of his work upon our conscience, the position given to it in their canon by the Jews. We shall not appreciate Kings unless we remember this. But we shall not appreciate the prophets either unless we remember that a hopefulness, stern but invincible—a disillusioned hopefulness—was of the essence of their faith.

But this introduces a further consideration. If the author of Kings was a prophetic historian he belonged to the period of the prophets, and that was the period of which he has written the history. He may have lived at the end of that period. It opened long before he was born. He had perhaps no means of obtaining precise information about many of the events he records. His brevity in some places, the broad general lines which he draws in some other places, prove that he would readily admit such criticism. But his belonging to the period is the great recommendation of his work as real history. What he professes to do we may trust him to have done in an honest, workmanlike fashion. When we turn to the later book of Chronicles we see the difference.

That book has a value of its own. It illustrates by means of a narrative the religious ideal of the priestly

school, an ideal which is well worth insisting upon. But Chronicles repeats Kings for the most part word for word, yet with conspicuous additions, omissions and alterations. And these changes plainly show that the author wrote at a time when the contemporary tradition had been transformed; its historical consistency had been lost; a new tradition had broken in upon it, changing the whole perspective, making the distant past of the prophets a confused continuation of the ritual habits and the priestly ideas of the times of the second temple. Chronicles may preserve some facts of history which Kings had omitted, but Chronicles is not history. Kings may be inaccurate in some respects. The account of that miracle on Carmel of which we spoke above may be, for instance, coloured by 'unnatural' ideas which were characteristic of the prophetic period. But the point is that they were characteristic of that period, whereas the chronicler's ideas of the Levitical organisation, the unrelieved badness of the northern kingdom, the orthodoxy of Judah, were not. Most critics of the New Testament—even though like the prophets they face what seem the sternest facts and build on a 'disillusioned' certainty—are satisfied that S. Mark's Gospel gives an historical account of the life of our Lord. Their main reason is that this Gospel is so consistent in what might be called the psychology of its history. Allow that our Lord knew Himself to be the Messiah, whom at that time and in a particular manner Jews looked for, and that He knew Himself ordained by His Father to save the world by dying; then the course of events might most properly be just as S. Mark describes them. The book of Kings can claim the same kind of confirmation from the psychology of its history.

Taking Kings then as a trustworthy background to the prophets, what in broad outline do we see? We see the struggle of two religions in Israel. The people

on the whole were almost pagan. They acknowledged Jahweh, but they also worshipped the Baals of Canaan. At their high places all manner of abominations went on. From time to time horrible fashions of cruelty broke out, such as burning their children in sacrifice to Moloch. Against all this the prophets set their faces. They claimed to be appealing to a purer religion which was Israel's ancestral religion and had been by these days corrupted. They never appeal to the Levitical law in proof of this, and we misunderstand the history even more than the chronicler did if we make the infringement of that law the sin of the people. We cannot really condemn them for such an offence without some unreality. Our own consciences, especially since they have been instructed by S. Paul, do not allow us to recognise the mere infringement of that law as a moral offence. It is not the high places that shock us, but what went on at them. It is not even idolatry in its formal sense that we think so wrong, but the vice, cruelty and cowardly materialism which idolatry involved. These natural motions of our conscience are exactly satisfied by the prophets. We never find them beating the air, but always engaged in a hand to hand struggle with sins that are horrid and ruinous. But on the other hand, the more closely we inquire, the more reason we find to believe that the prophets were right in their appeal to the purer religion of the past. How is it that in Samuel we hear nothing of abominations connected with the high places? An unprejudiced criticism of the Old Testament does not support the formal rule that Israel simply developed in religion. Not progress wrought out by men's united effort, but strange acts of God which often disturb the reasonable progress of the nation, is the idea which rules through these Hebrew books.

The paganism of Israel on the one side. On the other these few prophets who stand, each one by himself, delivering a message which they claim to have

received from the LORD Himself; each in his own day an apparent failure, yet each in the end leaving a truth behind him which does prevail. These prophets are the mediators of that true religion which we commonly call Israel's (though it never was actually so until the Israelites became the Jews), which is the religion of the Old Testament, and which was accepted by our Lord.

That is the situation roughly described. When we look closer we find that the opposition was not quite so simply defined. Elijah and Elisha were not quite alone with none to welcome their constancy. The revolution of Jehu showed how largely the army felt with the prophets. Some of the kings were decidedly on the side of reform. In Zedekiah as in Hezekiah we recognise goodwill combined with weakness. And in the prophets' days as in the Gospel days and in the various seasons of reformation or transition in the Christian Church, neither movement nor continuity can be accounted for without taking into account the 'quiet in the land,' the real 'catholics,' who have always known and always will know God, however that knowledge is denied, discussed, or newly expressed in the controversial world outside. As we study the prophets we find ourselves again and again compelled to recognise their kinship with other people. But the most obvious thing about them is their difference from other people, and the truest way of understanding them is to pay attention in the first place to that difference.

They were really—it might be almost safe to say, they were uniquely inspired. They claimed this by their formulae: 'The LORD hath said,' 'The word of the LORD came,' 'The oracle of the LORD.' But this by itself cannot be pressed. The ordinary prophets, who were a recognised professional order, not altogether unlike the priesthood in the Christian Church, made the same claim; Jeremiah once protested scornfully against

their readiness to do so, coining perhaps a verb for the purpose—'they go oracling the oracle' (Jer. xxiii. 31). A safer test appears when we notice that the word which came to the greater prophets was always an unpopular word, as that of Micaiah when all the other prophets promised success to the two kings (1 Kings xxii.), or that of Jeremiah throughout his misunderstood ministry. And this unpopularity was so intense that it called for extraordinary courage, brought persecution, even martyrdom. The description of the servant of the LORD in Isa. liii. is the most typical description of a prophet. He gladly perishes that salvation may come to his people by his death. It might be said: 'Why all this timid searching? We know the prophets were inspired because they foretold Jesus Christ.' But that short cut is inadmissible. Before taking it many questions would have to be faced as to the manner and intention of that foretelling. And it would not explain all the inspiration of the prophets or the inspiration of all prophets. There was nothing about our Lord Jesus Christ in Micaiah's prophecy just mentioned, nor was Amos foretelling Him when he declared at Bethel the overthrow of the house of Jeroboam. Yet this objection does give us a hint which is valuable for our present purpose. Nothing in the Gospels so much assures us of our Lord's real communion with His Father as the quiet determination with which He followed the guiding, or rather the indisputable command, that led Him step by step, taking no thought for the morrow, doing or suffering when 'the hour' came just what was given Him to do or suffer. He Himself points to this perfect trustfulness as the evidence of His mission, and He sometimes describes it in very intense words as 'losing life to find it,' and implies that it is not a matter of external compulsion but of self-transforming love. The Saviour's 'faith,' the theologian's 'inspiration,' the philosopher's 'intuition,' seem to be different names for one and the same power

which is the deepest and most essential act of real life, the act in which ordinary life reaches into real or eternal life. Our Lord set this act before His disciples as one which they should make their own. The Acts and Epistles show how far the apostles did make it their own. The Gospels describe (it seems unconsciously) how our Lord enjoyed it perfectly, not as an act or series of acts, but as a state in which He lived as in His natural home. Perhaps we might hazard the expression that we recognise in Him incarnation, and in the apostles inspiration. We may assert without hesitation that this condition of courageous trust is the conspicuous characteristic of the prophets. The records we have of their lives display it in the same unconscious manner as do the authors of the Gospels. In the prophets as in the apostles the condition lacks the perfect steadiness of the Lord. But in them as in the apostles it does appear legitimate to point to it as a proof of true inspiration. It is indeed in the prophets a very impressive proof, for nothing is so obvious about them as this sense of theirs of not being their own masters, as being beyond fear and hope, as speaking and acting because they must.

When men have approached such a state as that, it has generally been by the door of a marked conversion. So with S. Paul; so perhaps even in our Lord's earthly life, through His temptation. So too it seems to have been with these prophets. Isaiah has given us the account of his conversion or 'call' (Isa. vi.). Dr. H. F. Hamilton, in his book *The People of God* (Frowde, 1912; 2 vols., vol. i., 'Israel'), writes of this account: 'What causes Isaiah's apprehension is the very vividness of his consciousness, the nakedness with which he sees his soul contrasted against another Personality. If death is sometimes apprehended because consciousness is felt to be dying out, in this case death is apprehended because consciousness is passing the bounds of life in the opposite direction. It is becoming so acute and so intense, the

sense of strain and inability to cope with the situation is so severe, that the prophet feels that soul and body are on the point of being torn asunder.' Thus Dr. Hamilton brings out the intense, supra-rational character of the prophet's conversion, as if a blow had been struck in those deep springs of being of which we are all but ignorant in ordinary affairs, as if he passed to new life through death. And this of course was so supreme a change because its interest lies, not in the machinery of psychology, but in that moral sphere where the destinies of mankind are worked out by mutual activity. 'Just as Isaiah had experienced Yahweh's infinite power in his inner soul, and therefore knew it to be universal and irresistible, so also he had experienced Yahweh's holiness and knew it to be the very essence of His being.'

This moral direction of the force which so astonishingly worked upon the prophets is important. At first sight all seems supernatural, and we might be prepared to expect any inexplicable marvel in their acts and sayings. Might not men thus supernaturally visited have spoken in the language and thought of generations far removed from them, even though scarcely a word of what they said would have had a meaning for the people among whom they lived? Why should we doubt that Isaiah, in the days of Hezekiah, delivered a prophecy of comfort for the captives at Babylon in the time of Cyrus? Why should we seek for a contemporary application of the poem of the Suffering Servant (Isa. liii.), instead of simply believing that its author foretold the death of the Lord Jesus Christ?

Much might be said in answer to that. The greater part of the prophecies do show an intense interest in the fears, hopes, sins, temptations, political circumstances of the prophets' own generations. Isaiah, and still more Jeremiah, appeal to the LORD's constancy in the unchanging laws by which He rules nature; and an abrupt interference with the regular laws of human life and reason

would stand in puzzling contrast with this. The style of these prophets is for the most part so admirable just because it is the natural flower of the speech and thought of their own times; we are almost shocked to think of this style being no part of the man himself, but merely a robe to be put off and on as supernatural necessity compels. And the more constantly we read these books the more deeply the conviction holds us that the prophets' course was never supernaturally deflected, but was always supra-naturally directed; that reason was carried in them to a higher plane, and was never atrophied. The word we can hardly help applying to the prophets is 'mystical.' Some years ago that would have been inadmissible; the word was so loosely used, so often abused. It is still possible to misunderstand it. Yet it does represent so much of that trend in modern philosophy and religion towards life itself as the immediate experience instead of the ultimate ground of truth, that it may be adopted without much fear of misprision. If explanation be demanded no better can be found than Hooker's description of man's aspiration after good 'beyond the reach of sense; yea somewhat above capacity of reason which the mind with hidden exultation rather surmiseth than conceiveth' (cf. Dean Church on Fénelon's Mysticism, in his *Occasional Papers*, I. xvi.). The word so understood will be really useful here. The mystical goes beyond what is superficially recognised in nature. It is 'supra-natural,' if that rather arbitrary distinction in phraseology may be repeated. It belongs to nature when nature is contemplated as defined and ordered, but, because ordered, therefore divine. It never contradicts nature. To believe in the supernatural instead of in the mystical is the tendency of all vulgar religion. We see traces of this in that Canaanitish religion of Israel which the prophets opposed. We see traces of it again in the traditions of the late, priestly school of Jewish theologians. But though these

traces are visible in the Old Testament, they are but traces. The Spirit of the whole transcends them. They are part of the daedal richness which makes the harmony of its colour; only when isolated do they cause difficulty, and the ambition of the rising generation of critics is to pass beyond the isolating of analysis to the interpretation which appreciates the harmony.

And for this purpose they still find their best allies in the earlier prophets. Those prophets were indeed idealists who made no truce with superstition. But they were idealists who strove at every step to apply their ideal practically. If their supra-natural inspiration is remarkable, so is the natural variety of its operation. Isaiah has left us the account of his tremendous call in ch. vi. It was as tremendous as S. Paul's ecstasy in which he heard unspeakable words; yet Isaiah has attempted to describe what happened, and his attempt is marked by consummate art. If we read the preceding chapters we seem to hear him telling us how, not unnaturally, he was prepared for the decisive call. He sees the magnificence of Jerusalem in the prosperous days of Uzziah and dreams of her splendid future. That dream is shattered by a closer view in which he perceives the corruption of a society which has grown unconsciously, but cruelly unjust; external worship which but covers pitiful materialism; a dangerous political situation and no religious or patriotic idea to meet it. And then at last he foresees ruin, and a new life not of material splendour but of holiness rising from the ruin (cf. Isaiah ii.-iv.). He had indeed thought out in his own mind the main lines of the theology that was to be revealed to him. What remained was the shock which should reach to the very ground of the heart when he heard the divine voice asking 'Whom shall we send?' and he answered, 'Send me.' So to Amos a moral summons transformed the shrewd observer of the nations round him into the prophet sent to save his neighbour Israel.

So Hosea, heart-broken by his wife's unfaithfulness, learned thereby to love her with a love divinely deepened just because it was 'natural' in a good husband. The whole of his message to Israel turns upon the naturalness of the analogy between his and the LORD's invincible love, invincible in each because it is the natural love of a husband or a father. And in Hosea's supranatural call we hear less of the initial impulse, and are chiefly struck with the persistency of his continued ministry. He hoped against hope and declared that the LORD did too. And all through we are at a loss whether to call the motive power inspiration or affection.

But nowhere is this naturalness so marked as in Jeremiah. Like Isaiah, he too had his premonitions. And as to Isaiah, so to him there came a definite moment when the divine prepotency mastered him and he was constrained to act. But how different was the setting of his revelation. No vision of celestial ritual, but the flowering of an almond tree changed his whole life. The natural sign of the beginning of spring compelled him to delay no longer. The LORD was waking; he too must wake and no longer excuse himself as 'a mere child' for delaying to save his people (Jer. i. 6, 11, 12). That is the astounding thing in all these prophets. They see their world going to ruin and they determine to save the world; for it would be a rash criticism that even confined their burning love of men to their own nation; it means at least something, that nearly all their books contain prophecies for the nations, and in the pieces which certainly belong to the old prophetic period the nations, like Israel, are rebuked with sympathy not hate. But this runs into criticism which shall come later. For the present let us notice a few more of these 'natural' signs in Jeremiah. A pot boiling over on the fire rouses his assurance of imminent judgement by invasion (Jer. i. 13 ff.). The work of the potter, the craft of the scribe—handicrafts are full of interest to this lover of his

brother men—clear the theological truths which are obscurely jostling in his mind. When he was in prison and the Chaldean army was encamped upon his family property, his cousin came to him to sign a deed of sale. Jeremiah seized this curious preoccupation in the midst of peril with the use and wont of business, as a divine guidance for his own spiritual hope of Israel's future (Jer. xxxii. 6 ff.). It is tempting to make a rearrangement of the chapters at this point and to see in the prophecy of the new covenant (xxxi. 31-34) the outcome of this sign of Hanamel. Thus again a natural sign from outside would have cleared the conflicting notions in the prophet's mind, so that finally he sees neither blank ruin, nor such material restoration as the vulgar prophets round him insisted was certain, but a real restoration, assured indeed yet spiritual. Or again notice the exceedingly natural growth of Jeremiah's character through discipline. One of the charms of his book is its frequency in prayer. Here for the first time in the Old Testament do we find frequent, intimate prayer. That intimacy is the essence of Jeremiah's prayers. He pours out his hopes and disappointments. He asks for hardly any boon except—too often—something sadly like vengeance on his fellow-citizens who have returned him evil for his good intentions. Yet he has a formula: 'O Lord, thou knowest.' And after one of these fierce prayers the answer came: 'if thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth' (xv. 19). And the whole career of Jeremiah is a continued process of taking the precious from the vile, until he attains that height of self-forgetting which he expressed in an answer to Baruch, who, having just escaped with his life from the reading of one bold roll of prophecy before king Jehoiakim, rather excusably shrank from doubling the risk with another roll. But Jeremiah, through misunderstanding, abuse, imprisonment, and all but death at the hands of the people he serves, has

learned another view of life. 'Seekest thou great things for thyself?' he said, 'seek them not: for, behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the Lord' (xlv. 5). Of all the heroes of the Old Testament Jeremiah, made at last perfect by suffering, is perhaps the most beautiful type of our Lord Jesus Christ. This character of his is so far above the common that direct and special inspiration is the most reasonable way to account for it. But it is also evident that inspiration worked in him by thoroughly natural means, and that the work was not completed at one blow, but by a gradual process. Indeed something of the old man remained in him to the last, and in his denunciation of the remnant who insisted on going to Egypt after the murder of Gedaliah (xliv.) we cannot help suspecting a touch of personal resentment. However if it was so, we may be sure that his fierce words did not interrupt his devoted service, and wherever his unhappy countrymen were, there Jeremiah was still found—saving them. The Jewish scholars who composed the Hebrew book of Jeremiah showed fine insight in appending the words to Baruch (xlv.) to this half-angry speech, though they broke the chronological order to do so.

But this operation of the Jewish 'composers' brings us face to face with a serious question. How were these books of the prophets composed? How far can we trust the order of events which they indicate, or trace from their statements the development of the prophets' minds? How far indeed may we believe that we have the prophets' own words at all? Who wrote these books? What material had the authors? What purpose guided them in the use of their material?

It will at once occur to us that these are exactly the kind of questions that a student of the Gospels is compelled to ask. Does not that parallel help us? Suppose that these books are, as it were, Gospels of Isaiah,

Jeremiah, etc. Suppose that we have the same difficulty in deciding what they actually said and did, as we have in the study of our Lord's life. If we have the same difficulty we may also expect to have the same kind of certainty in the end. And if so, modern criticism which has conducted us to this extreme point of view, will perhaps have done us no injury. It shows us how to simplify, to select essentials. And essentials are really none the worse for being set 'in a large room' of obscure surroundings. Thus reality is everywhere distinguished from artificial system. If we can set out the broad doctrine of Isaiah and show where it stands on the line of faith that runs through the Old Testament into the New, we should gain little more by determining precisely how much of his book comes directly from him, the chronological order of all his extant prophecies, and the connexion of all his political allusions with the events of his day.

Yet after all facts are facts. There can be no history without settling a good many. And the doubt will recur whether we know enough facts about these prophets and their books for setting out even their broad doctrine. A conspicuous point on which this doubt must be felt is their Messianic doctrine, their hope for the good time coming. Did Amos add to his prophecy of judgement that picture of a joyous restoration with which his book ends? Can we trace a development in Isaiah from a clear-cut view as in the near future of a divinely righteous king in ch. ix., through the vaguer but more Spirit-filled expectation of ch. xi., to the large but quite indefinite prospect in ch. xxxiii., seen as from the summit of the mountain he has been climbing all his life—a prospect with a 'far horizon' which cannot in itself satisfy, but promises a fulfilment in times still hid from the prophet's vision? That is a beautiful interpretation. It seemed satisfactory when critics were treating this book as a book written by Isaiah with additions from a later age.

But is it satisfactory now when it begins to be thought that this book is a 'life and theology of Isaiah'; containing records of things he said but perhaps never wrote down himself; these scanty records of the primitive era of prophecy being combined with other far more extensive collections of later prophecy which, in one way or another, were considered by the late Jewish scholars to be dependent on, or illustrative of Isaianic thought?

It may be objected that this later criticism is extravagant. No doubt everyone now allows that Isa. xl.-lxvi. comes from a prophet or prophets of the exile. Those who take interest in such research are perhaps further persuaded that some passages in Isa. i.-xxxix. do not suit the times and circumstances of Isaiah. But why doubt that Isa. i.-xxxix. is substantially from his pen, and that with this book of Isaiah a later one (xl.-lxvi.) has been, so to speak, bound? So in libraries we still find manuscripts from different authors bound in one volume and the volume is named after the first writer. Why seek a more complicated explanation? The answer is that the book of Isaiah is far more complicated than such a volume. The very dissatisfaction of the plain reader with the old and simpler criticism is a proof of this. He had no quarrel with the critics. He was ready to be instructed. But he knew the book himself, and he knew that if difficulties were to be faced at all, there were more of them than such clear-cut distinctions accounted for. Of course if he turned to the larger works of the original leaders of criticism he found them well aware of this, and still busy collecting facts and correcting hypotheses. Much as we owe to those who have given us 'results' of criticism in an easy form, we must continually remind ourselves that such 'results' are from the nature of the case few; for the most part they only establish broad principles; the science of criticism must always be progressive; and the worst compliment we

can pay a critic is to accept him as a dogmatist whom we may obey at our ease instead of criticising him in our turn while we learn from him. All this applies also to the latest critics, who hold that the prophetic books are the product of late Judaism; preserving an uncertain amount of matter that comes from the prophets directly; but preserving this in a large setting of other matter from very various ages and sources. So far as they condescend to details of analysis, and undertake to prove for instance that just these or those passages of Isaiah belong to the time of the Maccabees, we shall be wise to suspend judgement about their accuracy. So far as they simply give us the broad principle that the book of Isaiah was written (like most of the prophetic books) in the later age of Judaism, it is rather different. A little consideration will probably persuade us that there is a good deal in the idea. Then the best plan is to read the books ourselves with this idea in our head, and see whether it does not make them more intelligible.

In Isaiah, to keep to that book, we find that in the latter half of xl.-lxvi. we are no longer reading of the days of Cyrus, of the high hopes, and free spiritual idealism of the 'Comfort ye' prophecy. There is a marked change to disappointment, severity, and new stress on institutional religion. Yet it is difficult to say exactly where the change begins. The words just used do not describe all the shades of thought that run in and out in these chapters. There is a complication of ideas in them. In chapters i.-xxxix. there are certainly some passages which refer to the Babylonian empire and to its downfall. There is one long piece, xxiv.-xxvii., which both in vocabulary and in thought is very different indeed from those chapters which we are agreed to accept as representing the mind of Isaiah. And there are some chapters which are obviously not prophecies at all but narratives; and they are mainly taken out of the book of Kings. These are but hints of what may be noticed

at every turn. Surely however it is already evident that things begin to point to a book written by some one else about Isaiah, rather than to a book written by Isaiah to which some one else has made additions. And presently we notice that nothing is ever said which suggests that Isaiah left any written prophecies. The only writing of his which is mentioned is the placarding on a board of a few striking words which form the text of spoken prophecies. So Jeremiah dictates to Baruch and does not write himself. So Habakkuk is bidden to write his vision indeed, but in the same fashion as Isaiah's placards. He is to 'make it plain upon tables that he may run that readeth it' (Hab. ii. 2). We begin to wonder whether these early prophets were writers at all. Perhaps we think of Lord Rosebery's *Life of Chatham*, and remember that the effect Chatham made upon his generation was by his spoken words. Little or nothing remains written of what he said. It is often difficult to decide precisely what he did say. Yet, in spite of obscure and contradictory reports, the effect of those vigorous speeches does remain. We do know what principles Chatham stood for, and how he defended them. His speeches, though so impossible to reproduce, are still in their way more to us than the volumes of Burke which are printed from his manuscripts. There is little doubt that Ezekiel did write his book. That is a great book too. To have just what he wrote is a valuable possession. Yet does it help us far towards recovering what he said, and is it not our impression that the peculiar glory of Isaiah's oratory compared with Ezekiel's comes just from that difference? Isaiah was a speaker, careless of the preservation of his exact words, and his speech was the great thing; Ezekiel was a writer who put his heart into his book.

But these dry arguments of criticism are not to be pursued here. There is another direction in which this question touches us more closely. Look at Isa. ix. 1-7,

and especially the last two verses ('for unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given,' etc.), and ask yourself what these magnificent words meant when they were first written. Some have been content to say that they are a prediction of our Lord Jesus Christ. But though they are without doubt a prophecy which is fulfilled in Him, it is not a real answer to say they were, to Isaiah's contemporaries, a simple prediction of Him. Nor indeed are they to us a simple prophecy of the birth at Bethlehem. When we read them on Christmas Day we bring to our interpretation of them a multitude of memories and hopes that centre in the exalted Christ who has taken up our manhood into God, and who is fulfilling Himself (as S. Paul and S. John have taught us to believe) in the still advancing history of the world. But what did those think of them who first heard these words? A little while ago many would have answered that Isaiah spoke them to the people of Jerusalem when the Assyrian was threatening them, and that they must have understood Isaiah to mean something like this: judgement indeed is about to fall upon this wicked and faithless city; but the judgement will purge us; and after it has purged us a righteous king, the near descendant of our present king, will rule over us; He will be what Israel's kings ought to be, what Nathan told David they should be, truly a Son of our Lord God, a sacrament of God's presence with us. Such an explanation does give a meaning to the passage; not altogether an unworthy one, for it expresses a very noble conception of the divine right of Israel's kings; and it is consistent with much that we read in the Old Testament. But is it consistent with all the facts we can observe? Is it quite easy to suppose Isaiah counteracting the force of his denunciation by this bright picture? 'Behold distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish. . . . But there shall be no gloom to her that was in anguish.' Would that kind of contradiction be the wise, kind way of

dealing with a nation obstinately set upon its ruin, whom the prophet is straining every nerve to convert? And is the explanation quite a worthy one even? 'And his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.' Do not such astounding titles after all imply quite another kind of king than Hezekiah or his son or grandson could possibly be? Suppose that this passage does not come from Isaiah at all. Or suppose that the full form in which we read it is due to a modification of some less daring utterance of Isaiah. Look at Daniel vii., or the book of Enoch, and see how in the late Jewish time some pious hearts at any rate were expecting, however dimly or strangely, a Messiah King from heaven who would bring the end of all oppression and give rest or triumph to the 'saints' after their 'anguish.' And then consider whether this passage might not have a deeper and a more natural sense, if it represents, not the precise words of Isaiah, but Isaiah as read in the synagogue a few centuries before the birth of Christ?

A striking suggestion but pure conjecture, may be the comment. But it is not quite pure conjecture. The Septuagint gives the translation of Isaiah into Greek which was made probably in Egypt and probably in the third century B.C. The Septuagint has a different ending to verse 6. Those who know the Introits of the Roman Missal are familiar with it in its 'Old Latin' form. It runs: 'His name shall be called messenger (or angel) of great counsel. For I will bring peace upon the rulers and health to him.' This certainly shows that there was a time when the Jewish text of this passage was uncertain. It seems to imply that an older form of the prophecy was modified for synagogue reading. And such modification appears the more probable when we take a comprehensive view of all the prophetic books. So many passages in them look like words of comfort suitable to an oppressed, but repentant and faithful

people, whereas the gist of the early prophecy is warning and remonstrance addressed to a faithless and obstinate people. When we think of our own church services, and how we sing Te Deum at the end of some severe reading from the Old Testament, or give a Christian meaning to a fierce psalm by adding the Gloria, it does not seem unreasonable to fancy something of the same kind being practised in the synagogue.

That in some way or other these additions and modifications have been made is also shown to be probable by examining the language of the passages in question. Sometimes, as in Isa. xxiv.-xxvii., the difference of style is quite plainly marked; sometimes the characteristics are minute and therefore more disputable. But we need not go into such details. For our present object is simply to show that it is worth while to read the prophets for ourselves with this idea in mind and see whether it does not enable us to read them with more uninterrupted understanding, and especially whether we shall not find that it allows us to give a deeper meaning to many great passages than we should otherwise venture to do. The primitive theology of the early prophets has its own conspicuous merits. It is bold, simple, poetic; above all it goes direct to its moral purpose. But it has its limitations. Even the morality sounds strangely limited to a Christian ear. With Jeremiah and the deuteronomic school an approach is made to the Christian feeling for motive rather than for works. But even in them there is little of the Christian desire for cleansing. And in Amos, Isaiah, Micah, little more is demanded than to do justly; if the sinner would be right with God let him simply turn from his evil way. The force of these prophets is not in the depth of their sense of sin, but in their unflinching insistence on faithfulness to a plain moral standard in spite of the apparent and generally acknowledged necessity of making terms with a baser fashion. Again there is the limited, still

mainly national, conception of Jahweh, Israel's God. This limitation makes for intensity. There is something in it which a later, wider-thinking age ought not of course to lose but is too apt to lose. But at any rate these limitations, whatever their compensating possibilities, do make it difficult to credit those early prophets with certain great and almost Christian thoughts which seem to be expressed in some parts of their books, yet are not expressed with such absolute clearness as to forbid dilution of their significance. But those who allow a post-exilic influence to be permeating these books will never dilute such significant passages. Isaiah, in all his sublimity, was separated from the Christian Church by seven centuries and more. His early faith and passion, when we succeed in isolating them, blow like a refreshing gale upon a more complex age. But the book of Isaiah, though it confuses the primitive directness of the prophet, is a sacred book already prepared for the Christian Church to use.

It seems then reasonable to admit the general principle that the prophetic books are Lives of the prophets, composed in the Jewish Church. But it will be wise of us to be cautious in settling details, making sharp analyses, assigning this or that event in history as the source or impulse of particular passages. The principle alone will help us to study the book in a fresh manner, though we confess our ignorance about special applications of it, or even our scepticism about the possibility of discovering very much of the history of any ancient book. But we shall be cautious too in the applications we do make. Not one only, but several counterbalancing considerations must often be admitted. This question of Messianic prophecy opens a whole vista of possibilities. The later expectation of the heavenly Messiah seems after all to have been the revival on a higher plane of some of the most ancient ideas of Israel, or of the Semitic world. It is plain from Amos as well as from Isaiah that

the people in their time used the phrase 'the day of the LORD' as a favourite religious formula. Amos repudiated Israel's idea of this 'day' (Amos v. 18 ff.). But is it not possible that he, or at any rate Isaiah, adopted the idea and played themselves no small part in transforming it? May not Isaiah ix., xi., xxxiii., be successive transformations of this idea which later generations received from Isaiah, and used to guide them in their own fuller transformation? May not something of the same kind be said about those gorgeous chapters in Jeremiah, in which he pictures a return from captivity, and a splendid kingdom for the son of David? They seem at first sight impossible from the mouth of Jeremiah. They seem in unexpected agreement with those prophets, such as Hananiah, whose hopefulness Jeremiah opposed. One or two of them perhaps cannot on any terms be explained as expressing the mind of Jeremiah. Yet figurative language has its place in him. Some of these passages might be highly concrete methods of recommending the spiritual hope of the new covenant to dull people. The 'seventy years' of xxix. 10 might have meant in Jeremiah's prophecy a different thing from the plain measurement of the duration of the captivity which later readers understood them to mean.

That might be urged, and much more of like character; and though it would probably not carry us far, still it would suggest several points on which it would be prudent to acknowledge our ignorance of what it is possible or impossible for Jeremiah or other early prophets to have said. But yet another characteristic of these prophets needs to be noticed which may tend to excuse us from paying too much attention to their dependence on early Messianic influence. Amos mentions the 'day of the LORD,' but he mentions it only to reject the popular notion of that day. He treats the whole idea nearly as he treats sacrifice. And of course the treatment of sacrifice by these prophets is surprising.

If the book of Leviticus had been received in their days; if even it had been received yet generally neglected, their treatment of sacrifice would be inexplicable. If Jeremiah knew Leviticus as a sacred book, there is no means of explaining his words in vii. 22, 23: 'For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices: but this thing I commanded them, saying, Hearken unto my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people.' There can be little doubt that Jeremiah did not read Leviticus. But it is generally supposed that he knew some form of Deuteronomy, and it is at least probable that the germ of the Levitical ordinances was already conserved by the priests. Yet Jeremiah and Amos, and indeed all the great prophets of that period, are so suspicious of sacrificial religion that it would not be wrong to call them hostile to it. The fact is these prophets have one strongly marked characteristic in common. They are 'puritans.' They set their faces so sternly against all forms of popular superstition that they oppose ceremonial which lends itself to superstitious abuse even though it has its good side. And the sacrificial system did so lend itself. The worship at the high places was sacrificial and the worship at the high places was tainted with many abominations. The worship of the temple too was sacrificial and the worship of the temple tended to be formal and insincere; 'temple-treading' Isaiah called it in his trenchant way (Isa. i. 12). And so to these prophets, who are so extreme in their convictions, sacrifice is not real religion at all.

This puritanism shows itself in other parts of their teaching. It has often been observed how little they say about life beyond the grave. It would be absurd to infer that they did not believe in immortality. It is putting the truth perversely to say that they are so full of the thought of God's presence on earth with men in this life

that they do not care to think of a life to come. The truth is rather this: Sheol was a prominent article of the popular superstitious faith, and the prophets wished to stamp out that superstition; hence they avoided all language which might suggest it. The popular idea of Sheol was that after death men passed to a dim half-life in that gloomy abode which lay outside the sphere of Jahweh's dominion. But the prophets had a nobler conception of Jahweh, which we may imperfectly indicate by using 'the LORD' in capital letters for the Hebrew name when we are quoting them; that is the good device of our English versions, an improved imitation of the Septuagint and Vulgate. The prophets insisted that there was no place where the LORD had not dominion; therefore there was no such place as Sheol at all. They sometimes use the word, but rarely and always with a touch of scorn or to give a kind of brutal edge to their indignation. So Isaiah says (v. 14), 'therefore Sheol hath enlarged her desire and opened her mouth without measure.' So too with other words or ideas from the popular, half-heathen mythology. The prophets eschew it, yet to point his bitter irony Amos breaks through decorum and says: 'though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them out thence; and though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea, thence will I command the serpent, and he shall bite them' (Amos ix. 3). The serpent, Rahab, leviathan, etc., are fabulous monsters of the old Semitic mythology, which these prophets will not so much as name except in outbursts of passion where they choose to make their language horrid. It is just possible that Isa. xiv. may be explained in that way. But one reason for doubting whether that passage comes from Isaiah is the elaborate and sustained treatment of the imagery of Sheol; and when we notice that the king who is there greeted by the other shadowy kings in Sheol is the king of Babylon, our doubts are strengthened. Other pro-

phets might not be so scrupulous. At a later time when the puritan victory had been won, and men no longer believed seriously in Sheol, the old language might be repeated as metaphor. But as far as we know the mind of Isaiah and his companions in prophecy, we are not apt to think that they could have talked like that. To them Sheol was false doctrine, cruel to men and derogatory to the Lord. In order to clear it quite away they were reticent about life beyond the grave altogether, just as modern puritans deprived themselves of loving mention of their dead in their prayers, that they might not countenance superstitions about the state of those who had fallen asleep in Christ. There is however not a single word in the prophets which should lead us to suppose that they did not hold with perfect happiness the ancient and perpetual belief of true Israelites: we go to God and that is enough; the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, is not the God of the dead but of the living.

They were puritans, and perhaps puritanism even in prophets has the defect of its qualities. This prophetic religion did need something more to complete it. The sermons of Deuteronomy are the ultimate expression of their faith; but those sermons are combined with a formal law, and Ezekiel, himself a prophet, carried out their purposes by reviving a purified system of ritual and law. But these early heroes of the faith had their own supreme quality—idealism, of which their personal heroism was one manifestation. For they were heroes, whose likeness we do not quite find again in Israel's history. Those who trusted or supported them during their ministry were so few that we may justly describe them as standing each one alone against a hostile world. If the deliverance of Jerusalem brought Isaiah a brief popularity, it was but brief. In the reigns of Hezekiah's successors reaction against his doctrine set in triumphantly. And the impression left upon us by Isaiah

i.-xxxix. is that his career closed in disappointment. A century later his teaching gave a watchword to a short-sighted patriotism. But the heart of his teaching was lost; and when Jeremiah renewed it and enlarged it he was persecuted as a freethinker and a traitor. Their courage was the fruit of an idealism just like our Lord's which made them 'seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.' There is the great, eternal message of these prophets. They uphold to every timid age idealism in politics. Foreign empires, overwhelmingly powerful, threatened Israel. The nation fluctuated between indolent blindness to its peril and feverish bellicose conceit. Kings and statesmen dared not believe in any safety but what might be secured by intrigue with Egypt and the neighbouring states. The prophets declared that the Lord was really living and near and able to save, and that all would be well if they simply put themselves into His hands. But the prophetic faith was shrewd and practical. By putting themselves into the Lord's hands they did not mean inertness but an active and difficult trust. Social relationships were at an evil pass. The prophets said the injustice and immorality of the times were horrible. Other people seem to have thought things were not really so bad. We shall probably understand the situation best if we use our own social problems to explain it. Advancing civilisation has smoothed the surface; we are less inconsiderately brutal than men were in Isaiah's days, or perhaps in the Middle Ages; it would show lack of faith to doubt that there has been real improvement in the course of twenty-seven centuries. But the essential likeness probably remains. Most men then, as most men now, were kind-hearted and would have liked to make the poor less wretched and to let justice rule in all relationships of life. The advance that Christianity has worked is to be recognised in this: Isaiah was content to think of justice; we know that moral sacrifice is also right. But the same

difficulty confronted him as confronts us: the complications of life being what they are, how is the straight way to be found through them? And again: the excuses of apparent necessity being what they are, how can the fortunate people dare to be logical and admit that their insensibility is a crying sin? Isaiah and those other prophets detached themselves from the web of commonplace interests. They said that this insensibility was unjust, cruel, shameful. They said that things could be put right by drastic measures, and that the trust in the LORD which would be real safety in the perilous times meant absolute honesty in politics, whatever the immediate consequences of such honesty might be, and the employment of the leisure thus gained on domestic reforms. They were shrewd and practical. If one like Micah seems too revolutionary to be really a safe guide to the abiding welfare of a people, that part of his teaching is corrected by the larger and more patient labour of Isaiah. And the very limitation of their moral ambitions within the bounds of plain justice saved them from mischievous interference with the beneficent commonplaces of civilisation. Perhaps they sometimes indulged in poetic dreams of a Messianic future, but in the path of duty they went wisely and warily enough. Only they would not be content with anything unworthy of the ideal, and they were wholly for generosity, wholly against selfish caution.

That was the first chapter in their teaching. Be honest in politics; restore justice at home; then trust the LORD who will certainly keep His people safe. But they were all compelled to open a second chapter. Kings, statesmen, people, refused to be persuaded. Intrigue still went on in politics, and injustice still made misery at home, and national ruin became more and more imminent. Then the prophets said: prosperity, even safety, is a little matter compared with holiness and the peace of God's favour; trust the LORD even at the

eleventh hour; put all in His hands, but do His will, do simply right; He may cause us to stand or He may cause us to fall before our enemies; let Him do as He judges best; be sure that what He does will be best for us. That is a hard doctrine, not learned easily even by prophets. It seems as though Isaiah preached it to Hezekiah, and when at last Hezekiah accepted it, he was delivered from the necessity of testing its truth in all its severity. Only with Jeremiah do we find it fully and absolutely upheld. The people of his day would not endure it from his lips, but he—perhaps gradually—certainly by a real inspiration, received it from the Lord who knew him better than he knew himself. Timid lingerer as he was by nature, he never faltered in proclaiming it when it had entered his own heart. He did prepare Israel also to accept it when stern experience gave them another chance. In their apparent ruin they learned the secret of this deeper salvation. And though the nation in after centuries may not always have been faithful to this glorious truth, it did become part of their continuous life. It has never been so in anything like the same degree with any other nation, until the Lord Jesus Christ made the essential spirit of Judaism a common inheritance for all mankind.

III

EZEKIEL AND THE LAW

Ezra's book of the law compared with Josiah's; it is priestly instead of prophetic—Priestly religion inaugurated by Ezekiel—The earlier prophetic impulse dies away at the fall of Jerusalem—Yet runs out into the 'Comfort ye' prophecy of Isa. xl. ff.—Character of that prophecy, especially of the 'Servant' passages—Difference apparent in lv.-lxvi. which are touched by the new priestly influence—Ezekiel and the law—He revives ancient theology of sacrifice on a higher plane—His plan for legal and effective reformation—Development of law and priesthood sketched; Exodus, Deuteronomy, Leviticus—At each stage the Old Testament asserts religion against formalism.

In the eighth chapter of Nehemiah we are told that Ezra the scribe and priest brought 'the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded to Israel,' and read it before the congregation of the children of Israel in Jerusalem 'before the broad place that was before the water-gate.' A book had once before been read to the people in Jerusalem. In the reign of Josiah, when the temple was repaired (2 Kings xxii.) Hilkiah the high priest 'found the book of the law in the house of the Lord.' Shaphan the scribe read it, first himself, then to the king. The king rent his clothes in horror, as we may infer from the sequel, at the idolatry of his land and the denunciation of that idolatry which the book contained. The book was taken to Huldah the prophetess, who confirmed its words. Then 'the king sent, and they gathered unto him all the elders of Judah and

of Jerusalem. And the king went up to the house of the Lord, and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, both small and great: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the Lord. And the king stood by the pillar, and made a covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord, and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, with all his heart, and all his soul, to confirm the words of this covenant that were written in this book: and all the people stood to the covenant' (2 Kings xxiii. 1-3). And after that a reformation was carried through which followed the ordinances of Deuteronomy so exactly that it has always been supposed that this book which was found was Deuteronomy. So S. Jerome said, following Jewish tradition. In later times the further questions have been asked: whether it was the whole of the Deuteronomy we read, and when and by whom the book had been written. Into those questions we will not go now. What we have to notice is that this reading of a book of law to the people may be compared with Ezra's reading in post-exilic days, and that the contrast between the two is very marked.

Ezra's book was evidently much larger than Josiah's. That seems to have been read by Shaphan and the king and Huldah in quick succession, and there is nothing to suggest that the meeting in the temple lasted a very long time. But Ezra read from early morning till midday, continued his reading on a second day, and, still continuing as we may suppose, 'day by day, from the first day unto the last day, he read in the book of the law of God.' This fits the new title which Ezra's book bears. The other was described simply as 'the book of the covenant'; this has a name which has dominated the history of Israel ever since, 'the book of the law of Moses.' If Josiah's book and its effect make us think

of Deuteronomy, Ezra's book and its effect make us think of the great first division of the Hebrew canon, 'the Law.'

We notice too how closely the earlier reading was connected with prophecy. A priest found the book, and a scribe read it, but priest, scribe, and king, seek explanation and advice from a prophetess. The gravity of its contents was felt because they coincided with what the prophets had long been vainly urging, not stricter attention to ritual or the observance of a completer civil code, but the abolition of heathen abominations. 'Thus saith the LORD,' was Huldah's answer, 'Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read: because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the work of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be kindled against this place, and it shall not be quenched' (2 Kings xxii. 16, 17). Huldah repeats the strain of all the prophets and evidently found the book in thorough harmony with that strain; the whole episode breathes the spirit of early prophecy. But in the later reading no prophet appears. Ezra, the scribe and priest, rules throughout. A different spirit breathes through the whole of that narrative.

This is just what an attentive reader of Israel's history might expect. With the fall of Jerusalem the older prophecy reached its climax and began to cease. At the same moment another religious impulse began to operate. Jeremiah completes the one movement: Ezekiel introduces the other. Jeremiah is almost the last of the prophetical prophets. Ezekiel almost brings in the Law. It is a transition, not an abrupt cleavage. There had been a law before Ezekiel took it up and gave it new vigour. There is prophecy after Jeremiah, and

Ezekiel himself was a great prophet in whom the spirit of the earlier prophets was by no means quenched. He changed men's thoughts. Circumstances—as we say, though the writers we are studying would say more philosophically, God—were also fashioning the change. Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi, the prophets of the second temple, are still prophets; but we cannot read them without feeling that they scarcely continue the old tradition of their calling. The temple, the institutions of religion, are more to them; the soaring idealism of Isaiah or Jeremiah is beyond their inspiration. We can understand them more easily, in the same way that we can understand other parts of the New Testament more easily than the most Pauline epistles of S. Paul.

Yet there is one prophet of this age who cannot be thus classified. The unnamed author of those chapters in Isaiah which begin 'Comfort ye, comfort ye my people,' stands in the same line as Isaiah and Jeremiah. He came with a message of encouragement to the exiles. About forty years had passed since the fall of Jerusalem. Rumours—'voices in the wilderness'—of the victories of Cyrus the Persian were heard. He bids the exiles be of good courage. Their LORD has not forsaken them. He is directing this new conqueror; He will come and set them free. They have received double for all their sins. They shall return to Jerusalem and begin a new life of holiness.

As the prophet works out this theme he seems to be proclaiming that the victory of the earlier prophets is won at last. They strove against the idolatry of Israel and strove in vain. But now there is no more need for that. This prophet heaps contempt upon the idols because his people are inclined to fear them as the gods of their powerful oppressors; they have no longer any wish to use them as their own gods. The earlier prophets urged repentance and urged it in vain. But this prophet

cheers a repentant people with the assurance of forgiveness. They tried to deepen Israel's faith in the LORD as the one true righteous God, before whom the gods of the nations were as nought. This prophet proclaims to a sympathetic people that the gods of the nations are not merely as nought but are absolutely nought—things of nothingness, and that the LORD is the one and only God —'one God, Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.' 'I am he; before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour. . . . I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God. . . . Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no Rock; I know not any' (Isa. xliii. 10 f., xliv. 6, 8). So the refrain goes sounding with varied repetition, as of music, through this Te Deum. It is the Catholic faith established at last for Judaism, Christianity, and the whole of the thoughtful world of the future: 'that we worship one God.' And that allusion to the Athanasian Creed is even more justified than might appear at first sight. Whether all comes from one prophet, or whether the complex subtlety, which lies beneath the surface of this smoothly running poem, be due to a final reunion of many minds in one more than personal utterance, is another of those critical problems that we may leave to minute scholars. At any rate this prophecy, as we read it, is far more than a hymn of bare monotheism. Its God is indeed transcendent; the glory of Jewish theology is that it never dilutes that difficult truth of the more far-reaching philosophy. But He is immanent also; He who (as the repeated present participles indicate) is 'still creating,' and who inspires all history and speaks to the secret heart of Cyrus as well as of Israel, is certainly immanent. But the immanence of God is one form of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. And indeed that doctrine is directly expressed in words which passed

quite easily into the gospel life: 'The spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek. . . . In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them. . . . But they rebelled, and grieved his holy spirit. . . . As the cattle that go down into the valley, the spirit of the Lord caused them to rest: so didst thou lead thy people' (Isa. lxi. 1, lxiii. 9, 10, 14). Still more striking is the adumbration (to content ourselves with too cold a term) of the Mediator who takes up manhood into God. In the first fifteen chapters of this prophecy a title 'the servant of the Lord' is often repeated. At first it seems a mere name for Israel. Then its significance seems to deepen as it becomes obscure and mysterious. This servant is to convert Israel, and to give the gospel of the Lord even to the heathen. He is to meet with discouragement and persecution which becomes fiercer and fiercer. At last, in lii. 13-liii., the servant finds life in losing it for the sake of men. He bears their iniquities, he makes intercession for the transgressors, and in their salvation he sees his seed, he prolongs his days though he has died a martyr's death. That is far more than the deepest possible answer to the problem of pain. It is part—and the essential part—of the one and only solution of the problem of salvation. Some have supposed the prophet of the exile was thinking of Jeremiah when he drew this picture. Others, that a prophet of the Maccabean age described the martyred 'saints' who by their death brought new life to Israel, and through Israel to the world with which Israel was then coming into closer contact. How can we tell? The mechanism of the composition has been worn away and lost in the long course of ages. The prophecy itself remains, and the lyric passion of its author has so concentrated his once perhaps vague thought, that its essential meaning stands out clearer for being stripped of all minor associations. As a rule we

rightly desire historical background for the understanding of a written word. This is one of those rare and supreme utterances which do not require it. Even to the first hearers of these words their eternal, universal sense must have been the thing that mattered. They met, for them as well as for us, the whole problem of God and man, loss and gain, the one and the many, by the principle of sacrifice. The truth was made universal just because it was gathered in from the indefinite sphere of nations, saints etc., and made to live in a particular person—that is the genius of lyric poetry; that person willed to lose his life for his Master's sake and the Gospel, and so found the real life in which he no longer lived alone and separated. The problem is the problem of 'individuals,' the solution is the love of a 'person.' If the words were spoken in the days of the exile it may well be that many who heard them thought of Jeremiah. In the time of the Maccabees, and in all times since, those who hear them have thought of different friends and 'saviours.' It is no contradiction, but the confirmation of such affectionate thoughts, if the Christian Church feels that no better summary of critical opinions about the passage can be given than the sentence: 'the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.'

This servant poem (lii. 13–liii.) interrupts a strain of joyous praise which is resumed in the next chapter. Some peculiarities in its vocabulary and style may indicate that it has been inserted in a hymn of praise which once proceeded continuously. If so the insertion has but improved the art of the whole. It comes like a more serious movement in a piece of music which adds to the complexity and interest of the composition. And this latter half of the book of Isaiah is a finished, almost musical, composition. Its art is so unlike the ruder, though even greater, style of the older Isaiah; it is so accomplished, that it gives the reader a feeling of ease and smoothness which tempts him to forget how

strenuous the thought is. But the thought is really strenuous. Many of the difficulties of the earlier prophets were past and gone when this author wrote. But he had new ones of his own. Men were beginning to look back; and history, in which God seemed so often to have been absent, made a trial for faith. The exiles had been transplanted into a richer civilisation than their own. The science of the ancient world was not contemptible, and Babylon knew the best of it. When the nineteenth century began to awake to the claims of science the first chapter of Genesis became a difficulty. Then it was argued that this Hymn of Creation was not intended to settle scientific questions but only to proclaim the divine principles of creation. But as knowledge became calmer, it was recognised that, after all, this Hymn was more scientific than might have been expected. If critics are right in holding that it was written after the exile, this would not be astonishing. Babylon knew a good deal, and had taught intelligent Judaism much. But science always has brought, and always must bring some trial to faith. And as we read Isaiah xl.-lxvi., and especially xl.-lv., we seem to hear a prophet, who is also a thinker, meeting this intellectual trial with intellectual help. Tennyson's *In Memoriam* belongs of course to a very different order of inspiration. Yet it may illustrate the position and character of this prophet if we say that he stands to Jeremiah in somewhat the same relationship as Tennyson stands in towards Browning. Jeremiah is more of a mystic; he is more of a philosopher. Jeremiah is rougher in language and has more appearance of wrestling with thought, yet is in reality an emotional rather than a severe thinker; he conceals his austere thought by the smooth flow of his language; he employs passionate imagery quite often; but he is really doing his best to face the whole of the intellectual difficulty of his generation. What could be better selected as a

modern type of the religious feeling of Jeremiah than those lines of Browning?

> 'The very God! think, Abib; dost thou think?
> So, the All-Great, were the All-Loving too—
> So, through the thunder comes a human voice
> Saying, "O heart I made, a heart beats here!"'

But there are some stanzas in *In Memoriam* in which Tennyson speaks of the frailty of faith in the face of nature; appeals to feeling to beat down doubt; then answers 'No,' and once more sets himself to think out the whole tangle of the new knowledge, only more modestly, under guidance till the whole shall be discovered:

> 'If e'er when faith had fall'n asleep,
> I heard a voice "believe no more"
> And heard an ever-breaking shore
> That tumbled in the Godless deep;
>
> 'A warmth within the breast would melt
> The freezing reason's colder part,
> And like a man in wrath the heart
> Stood up and answer'd "I have felt."
>
> 'No, like a child in doubt and fear:
> But that blind clamour made me wise;
> Then was I as a child that cries,
> But, crying, knows his father near;
>
> 'And what I am beheld again
> What is, and no man understands;
> And out of darkness came the hands
> That reach thro' nature, moulding men.'

This corresponds to the prophet of the exile who wrote: 'I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil; I am the LORD, that doeth all these things. . . . Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour' (Isa. xlv. 7, 15).

The latter part of these chapters, xl.-lxvi., differs in some notable respects from the former. In some passages the temple and its ordinances of worship seem presupposed. The stress laid upon keeping the Sabbath in chapter lvi. shows another kind of religious interest from the soaring ideas of the earlier chapters which scarcely condescend to rules of life. There is an air of disappointed hope in some places as though rules of life were proving after all only too much needed. The last chapter ends with such terrible severity that a direction is added in many Hebrew Bibles telling the reader to repeat the words which precede these, and so to conclude on a happier note. Yet much of the tender beauty of the opening chapters does mingle with all this, and it is not easy to draw a hard and fast line of division. Still the change cannot but be felt and, whatever be the historical secret of the composition of the whole set of prophecies, the change means that the new influence of law is operating. This influence may have entered in force when Ezra read to the people, but the man who prepared the way for it was Ezekiel.

Landor writes somewhere of Lucretius as 'the authoritative and stately man who leads Memmius from the camp to the garden of Epicurus,' a phrase which rises appositely to the memory of the reader of Ezekiel. For it was Ezekiel's mission to lead Israel from the camp of war and politics to the hallowed and secluded life of Judaism, and the vision with which his book closes is (as in the vision of S. John the Divine) a vision of a garden-city. Still more appropriate is the personal description, 'the authoritative and stately man,' as will readily be felt when the majestic ardour of Isaiah, or the passionate heart of Jeremiah, is compared with the restrained force of Ezekiel's prophecy and its measured advance, as though of impersonal law. Yet these qualities are not merely Ezekiel's own. He, like all strong thinkers, is the product of the class he moulds. What has just been

said amounts to this; he belongs to the priestly type of Israel's faith. We have already referred to those three styles in Israel's earlier literature, which are so plainly to be discerned by attentive readers of the Old Testament. They seem, to speak roughly, to succeed one another in order of time, and it may be said that the three prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, are representative of the three styles.

Isaiah represents JE—for the subdivision may be disregarded; Isaiah gathers up in himself the bold vigour of J with the reverence of E. Here is poetry, and the top of pure art unspoiled by philosophy. The LORD of hosts rules Israel as king, marches to battle at the head of His nation, demands righteous dealing and chastises iniquity; and He translates for the ear of His prophets the deepest truths of theology, 'unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter,' into vivid and infinitely sacramental images.

Jeremiah represents D. Philosophical reflection has begun, but (as might be expected among the Hebrews) it expresses itself in the mystical religion of the heart rather than dialectically. The direct, terse poetry of youth develops into a noble rhetoric, and sometimes into a copious unadorned speech in which the writer strives to utter his exact meaning. And often he does succeed in being clearer than his predecessors, but he misses their penetrating reach; it is like Plato's dialogue compared with his myths. Yet always there is that great gain, heart-religion, spiritual touch, as in the 'new covenant' of Jeremiah.

Ezekiel represents P. Once more there is loss and gain, but the development is rich. Here is authority. No longer does the solitary prophet fight splendidly against his generation. The voice in Leviticus is the voice of a dominant society, and Ezekiel in the latter part of his book anticipates that secure judgement. But the authority is God's, not man's. These priestly writers

concentrate all that has been felt in earlier times of the LORD's nearness and of His spiritual communion, into the one simple yet inexhaustible thought of His sublimity; thus perhaps we may understand the repeated address to Ezekiel, 'thou son of man,' as though he were meant to feel the utter weakness of mere manhood in the presence of God. Here again is a precision of symbolic detail in language, different from the earlier imaginative style, but combining its unconscious aim with the mystical passion of D into a defined expression which deliberately limits itself in order to effect just so much as language might properly effect. It is almost a transition from poetry to prose, yet not quite. There is poetry in Ezekiel, and the first chapter of Genesis is poetry of the deepest tone. Perhaps P, by economy in poetry, manages at the appointed season to educe its profoundest capabilities. Still more important is the doctrine of holiness, with its complement of atonement or cleansing, which runs through this literature. 'When the wicked man turneth,' etc., says Ezekiel, as Micah or Isaiah might have said before him; but that is not his characteristic teaching. He, like S. John, speaks rather to those troubled souls who feel the stain more than the chain of sin, and who pray: 'O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy.' This is the word of the LORD which Ezekiel brought: 'I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.' And again, this is not a repeating of the older message but a fulfilling, for he goes on with the very faith of Jeremiah: 'A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgements, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be

my people, and I will be your God' (xxxvi. 25-28). The other verse, 'When the wicked man,' etc. (xviii. 27), is not by itself characteristic of Ezekiel, but the context is; and not only of him, but of all this priestly literature. For it sets forth God's care for each several soul of men. The priestly writers are in themselves authoritative, stately, impersonal; but for the people they are tenderly pastoral. They deal with souls, not with nations; their mission is to reconcile men, not simply man, with God. A characteristic phrase in Leviticus is *'îsh 'îsh*, 'man by man,' 'each several one'; and Ezekiel (who also uses that phrase) writes: 'Behold, all souls are mine, saith the Lord God.' This pastoral care for every member of the flock is then a mark of P, as well as those others, authority, the divine sublimity, precise symbolism and economy in poetry, and the doctrine of cleansing or atonement.

This priestly man, Ezekiel, was one of the exiles who went to Chaldea with Jehoiachin in the first deportation. After he had been in exile more than twenty-five years, Jerusalem having again rebelled against her suzerain Nebuchadnezzar, and having fallen at his hands, Ezekiel wrote a book in which he recorded events and his own prophecies as he delivered them year by year to his fellow-exiles. He gives dates as though he had kept a diary. Yet his book is no diary. It is an ordered retrospect. The reader does not gather together scattered notes as from a newspaper, and form his judgement upon them. Ezekiel has drawn his own picture and imposed his own idea upon his recollections, and has moulded the whole into the unity of an impressive piece of art. Only a simple effort of mind is required to read his book, but the effect of it is tremendous. This 'authoritative and stately man' moves us as his determined will directs.

It is almost a drama that he has written. There are four acts. The first, i.-xxiv., is 'the Lord's removal.' Jerusalem is still standing. The prophet rebukes the

abominations of her leading men, and pleads for sincerity and repentance with his fellow-exiles. And in a vision he sees the cherubim lift up their wings in the sanctuary when 'the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city' (xi. 22, 23). The second, xxv.-xxxii., is 'the passing of the nations.' The curtain, as it were, has fallen upon the doomed city, and while the horror of her ruin takes place unseen, the empires that insulted or seduced her, notably Tyre and Egypt, pass across the stage; their pomp has the mark of death upon it. The third, xxxiii.-xxxix., is 'the new hope.' In xxxiii. 21 a Judean who has escaped from Jerusalem brings news of its destruction. That is the turning-point of this *Divina Commedia.* The hope of the prophet rises invincible. He recognises the repentance of the nation, and sees the Lord GOD raising them from the dead to a new, united, holy life (xxxvii.). And in xl.-xlviii., 'the LORD's return,' he depicts this life in the distinct lines of a vision of the native land, city, and temple, in which the LORD who had removed His presence returns gloriously to His house (xliii.). The holiness of the nation is inaugurated by sacrifice, and the Golden Age is confirmed for ever by the divine influence of law.

The vision in the fourth act is most important for our present purpose. The first and obvious point is that it is a vision of Jerusalem and Canaan, of the exiles' native land. There are other visions of that kind in the book, and they combine with a few words dropped here and there in Ezekiel's reticent manner (cf. *e.g.* the scenery of Canaan in vi. 3, xxxiv. 13, xxxvi. 4) to show that he felt strongly that love of country which is so marked in other parts of the Old Testament, notably in Psalms, Deuteronomy, and Canticles. This is the more to be remembered because Ezekiel, like Jeremiah, entertained no unfriendly feelings toward Babylon; in the 'passing of the nations' Babylon has no place,

and her immunity increases the marvel of the prophet's restoration-hope. He dwells within the old horizon upon which Cyrus has not yet risen. The outward sign which encouraged the second Isaiah, and woke in him that exultation over falling Babylon which was to become a fierce recollection in still later ages, had not been vouchsafed to Ezekiel. For him, as for Jeremiah, the light shone out of darkness itself; to Jeremiah it revealed mystical communion with God, to Ezekiel the reign of divine law.

Then we notice that the vision is full of symbolism, and conscious, literary symbolism. This partly explains the difficulty most readers find in realising to their own mind's eye the temple and city which Ezekiel discerned so plainly 'framed' upon the hill. No doubt he did discern them plainly, but he has complicated his rendering of what he saw by adding symbolism to material fact. So Dante's scenery is the scenery of Italy, but is obscured or illuminated, according to his reader's mood, by the symbolic values which he gave to it. The impression Ezekiel leaves upon us is that he could have construed his own symbolism with as much precision as Dante used in explaining his sonnets. None but the symbolist himself may do that. If others attempt it they contract the symbol to allegory or to dogma; they must accept the indistinctness cheerfully as the necessary medium of unconfined truth. Yet Ezekiel's symbolism may be mischievously exaggerated. It is a real restoration that he sets forth, not a fancy. And the main object of his exact record of measurements is to convince of reality. He is not very lucid. He is describing an architect's plan, and the Hebrew language, so visual in narrative, is ill fitted for such description. Those who had seen Solomon's temple could follow him better than we can. Yet the main features of this plan are not hard to catch: the sanctuary, the house, the courts, the city, and the widening country round it;

circle within circle of deepening sanctity. And all is firm and measured, a practical design; there is to be no more neglect, innovation, ruin, as there had been in the reign of kings like Manasseh and Amon.

Nor are there to be kings any more like them. Under the new *régime* there will be a prince and nobles, but they are to be restrained by law, receiving honour, and bearing the proper burden of nobility. All oppression of poor and weak by strong and unscrupulous is to cease. Trade is regulated, and weights and measures shall be inspected. The abuse of landed property, which had caused so much evil in the past, shall be checked by fair distribution to the prince and the tribes; and the LORD's own hallowed ground, under the administration of His priests, is to be the centre of a really national life. The old prophets had denounced abuses and declared the spiritual principle of reform. This legalist will take practical measures to carry out effective and permanent reform.

The new life is to be inaugurated by cleansing sacrifice, and since even regenerated nature is frail, a continual renewal is also provided for by sacrifice. No one who has approached these chapters by the legitimate road of the earlier sections of the book, can suppose that these repeated sacrifices are to be mere formalities. Some have supposed that they are only provided to meet ritual or accidental error, and that no cure for moral guilt is supplied because Ezekiel's ideal is that no Israelite will fall back into such sin. But that is perhaps read into the vision from Leviticus, and it would be fairer to compare Ezekiel's New Testament counterpart, S. John, who does hold up that ideal in his epistle, and yet does also point to the means of forgiveness if any man should fall away from the ideal of the community. At least there is no vain formality here. Not only would that be impossible from the prophet of the earlier prophecies, but the glorious entrance of the returning LORD, and the

word of His message which follows it (xliii. 1-9) invest the whole section with immense seriousness.

And lastly, the living waters which proceed from the holy house and carry healing throughout the land testify to the grandeur of the prophet's reforming hope. Once more we are induced to ask how far the passage is symbolical, how far literal, and once more it will be wise to attempt no answer to the question in that form. We may however ask how far Ezekiel is literal in another sense, *i.e.* how far he really expected his reform to work. The Septuagint closes with a mistranslation: 'And the name of the city—from the day in which it is realised shall its name begin.' A mistranslation; but it puts into words the misgiving which some of the original readers, and the regret which most of the later readers of the vision must have felt: 'Is this a practical scheme, or is it the dream of a Utopia?' The answer to that will be: that Ezekiel was truly a prophet, and was therefore not dreaming but speaking of realities revealed to him; that the revelation allowed the play of the prophet's mind upon its impulse, and therefore Ezekiel may have worked out his firm hope with some of the freedom with which all designers of the true republic draw their preliminary plan; but that if holiness be given the first place in his mind, and only a second to material prosperity, then no abatement in his distinct foreknowledge need be made. On the one hand, he looked for his fulfilment far beyond the next few years or centuries; on the other, he did not doubt that sooner or later God would indeed 'take away the sin of the world,' and that this salvation would spring from Jerusalem. In Judaism, as in Christianity, there are two strains of faith. One looks for no general betterment of things in this world, but for a peace of God in the midst of continual tumult. The other—and this is Ezekiel's, and on the whole the priestly expectation—looks for the winning of the whole world to Christ. Neither hope is quite

intelligible, and they seem contradictory; yet in holy Scripture their substance is assured, and their reconciliation is anticipated.

For the accomplishment of his hope Ezekiel trusts in law. If we would understand his idea of law, we shall get more help from the first book of Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity* than from criticisms passed upon rabbinic legalism. Law is for Ezekiel the Spirit of God continually expressing God's loving purpose through man's fidelity in details. And since in his day it was 'under priesthood that peoples received law,' he trusted also in priesthood. But Ezekiel's priesthood is essentially mediatorial, under God not instead of God. His priests would gladly have used the Mozarabic prayer: *Da humilitatem quam placatus inspicias et accipe confessionem ut peccata dimittas,* 'give humility on which thou mayest look in mercy and receive confession that thou mayest forgive sins.' And part of the charm of his book is its sacerdotal mildness and sympathy. There is so little in it of the old 'hewing by the prophets,' so much of the larger humanity of Genesis and the synoptic Gospels.

He set store too by ordinances of worship; the earlier prophets were puritans, he is a ritualist. And those ordinances being sacrifices (in the Old Testament sense) are strange and even repugnant to our notions. But it must be remembered that the space between ritualist and puritan is not a gulf but a very little rift. All who are 'in the body' approach God by some ritual, and there is no ritual which has more than temporary value. The real importance of Ezekiel's ritual lies in the deep idea of propitiation that runs through it. His ritual wore out as ours must, but his doctrine of sacrifice is the Johannine element in the Old Testament.

This doctrine however was no new one. It was a very old one lifted to a higher plane. Something of the same kind took place in Greece at a somewhat later time,

when the 'reasonable' cult of the Olympian divinities was superseded in many serious minds by the more 'religious' mystery-rites. For these 'mysteries' were but the re-emergence with deeper significance of the crude propitiatory rites which had been the earlier expression of faith and had never lost their attraction for the multitude. It is possible that something of the same kind was going on in Egypt and in Babylon in Ezekiel's own time, and there is a faint parallel in the reaction against 'liberal Christianity' in England to-day. The idea of propitiation, much of Ezekiel's legal ordinance, and his peculiarly priestly style of language, emerge at this time in the Hebrew literature that has descended to us, but there is a probability that all this had run side by side with the earlier prophetic teaching for a long time. This earlier ritual, and even law, seem to have been so bound up with Canaanitish superstitions that the earlier prophets set themselves against the whole system. Ezekiel recognised its divine worth, 'took the precious from the vile,' and availed himself of the organisation which had gradually developed in priestly functions, and filled it with a pure and far-reaching theology. What he thus started grew into Leviticus and the high-churchmanship of the chronicler, then into the legalism which S. Paul opposed. But that was a side-issue; the true direction of Ezekiel and Leviticus was the doctrine of the Cross. And still through the midst of other modes of service the priestly faith of Ezekiel flows on, continually accumulating worthless matter, and as continually sifting it out—cleansing its streams as it runs to the sea.

This priestly faith emerges in the times of Ezekiel. We can however trace its earlier progress to some extent from the Old Testament. Ezra called his book 'the law of Moses,' but Hilkiah and Josiah say nothing of their law-book being connected with Moses; it was simply

the book of the law, or of the covenant. But the narrative in Exodus shows that long before their time Moses was looked upon as the author of the law. Author in a broad sense, or mediator as S. Paul called him. God imparted certain laws to him. Some of these he wrote down. Some he did not, for God Himself 'wrote' them —we must remember the figurative, sacramental style of the early Hebrew writers. What Moses wrote, according to this first account in Exodus xx.-xxiv., was a short code or 'book of covenant.' It contains first, a few simple rules for worship allowing freedom to meet God at many altars and giving no directions as to who shall perform the priestly service; so in the service of inauguration which follows (xxiv. 5-8), 'young men of the children of Israel' offered the burnt offerings and sacrificed the peace offerings unto the LORD. Then there are some civil laws for order and honesty. They are remarkable for the spirit of kindliness which breathes through them. This kindliness is expressed in a very natural manner by a few words here and there which form integral parts of the laws themselves.

When we turn to Deuteronomy we find these same laws in the main repeated. There are additions and there are alterations. The most striking of course is the repeal of the permission (Ex. xx. 24) to meet God at many altars, and the reiterated even passionate restraining of sacrificial worship to the one place which the LORD shall choose (Deut. xii.). It is its noble passion which gives Deuteronomy its character and makes it a new book. The actual law in Deuteronomy is the old law, the covenant, of Exodus, modified indeed but substantially the same. But it needs rather attentive reading to disengage a code in Deuteronomy. The code is embedded in, almost interwoven with, a sermon which recommends it. And the sermon is almost altogether directed to breaking down the cruel and impure customs of idolatry which, as we learn from Kings, had grown

rampant during the monarchy. There should be no prejudice against considering this sermon (which is far the larger part of the book) a product of the late monarchical period. Its language, so very like Jeremiah's, obliges us so to judge if there be any history of the Hebrew language at all. To call Deuteronomy as a whole the work of Moses would be not less unreasonable than to call Coleridge's *Aids to Reflection* a work of the seventeenth century because of the extracts from the old English Divines which provide texts for it. The author of Deuteronomy made no such claim. He introduced Moses in the third person, and he put his own sermon dramatically into Moses' mouth. If some moderns have fancied he did this in order to cheat a simple king, court, and people, into allowing a false authority to his words, that is but a fancy which certainly cannot be proved, and is surely quite unlikely. No doubt he considered his doctrine to be Mosaic, the faith of the fathers, and not new. And no one will be apt to dispute that who is not obsessed by the idea that all early religion was superstitious; and such a person will need to be thoroughly sceptical about the history in Samuel as well as about the history of the patriarchs in Genesis. As to the actual laws in Deuteronomy, the author represents them as being what they evidently are, a revised edition of the old code. He represents Moses as author of the revision; the Israelites are on the point of entering Canaan and these are the ordinances which shall rule them when they are settled there. Perhaps in the nature of things there is nothing against the literal accuracy of this account of the matter. To the diligent reader of the Old Testament certain difficulties will soon occur in squaring it with the rest of the history he reads. But will he not also conclude that this literal way of taking things is unnatural? Just as the narrative of the patriarchs is a broad handling of tradition and not exact history, so what is written about the law asserts its

derivation from the Lord, the God of Israel, through Moses the founder of Israel as a nation. It does not mean that people or historians undertook to say exactly what Moses had written. They cared more, we must again insist, for the colour of their picture than for a sharp outline. That this may not remain a mere vague assertion, notice one indication as an example of many that each reader may easily discover for himself. The ten 'words' of Exodus xx. are spoken, and in Deut. iv. 13 the ten 'words' are written upon tables of stone. In Deut. v. the ten 'words' are quoted, but the fourth ends with a different reason for obedience from the reason given in Exodus. In Exodus xxiv. Moses is summoned to the mountain to receive the tables of stone on which 'the law and the commandment' are written. In Exodus xxxii. Moses breaks those tables, and in xxxiv. he receives other tables on which a different set of 'words' are written; and if the former tables had been broken this second set of words ought in strictness to be the ten commandments which Israel kept in later times. Finally, we are told in Deut. v. 22 that the Lord spoke the ten 'words,' and added no more, as though the earlier accounts were to be corrected, and it were to be understood that while the ten words are the direct revelation of God, the rest of the law is not. It may be possible to reconcile these various statements; with a little ingenuity it might be even easy. But that kind of reconciliation is not obvious or natural, whereas it is natural to suppose that the writer or writers did not care about such verbal precision. They referred the origin of their law, whatever its later modifications, to Moses, and they believed his wisdom divinely inspired. They possessed also ten 'words' or 'commandments,' simpler, deeper, more universal, more religious, than any code of law. These they considered divine in a special sense. There were vivid traditions about them; we should say 'symbolic,' spoiling their religious charm. But that

charm or 'grace' is at least as important in religion as any ritual can be, and the Hebrew writers refused to spoil it by either philosophical explanation or scholastic scruples about consistent narrative.

Passing from Exodus xx.-xxiv. and Deuteronomy to Leviticus, we find ourselves in another world. The language is different, still more different is the minute attention to the ritual of worship. But something quite like it is to be read in other parts of Exodus (xxv.-xxxi. and xxxv.-xl.), in some parts of Numbers, and in Ezekiel xl.-xlviii. There are notable differences in Ezekiel. His priests are called 'sons of Zadok' instead of 'Aaron and his sons'; he says nothing of a high priest, but he does give a prominent position to a 'prince' who is a layman; he says nothing of a day of atonement, but he does order atoning sacrifices. The most natural way of describing the relationship of Ezekiel to Leviticus would be to call his chapters a first sketch of Leviticus. This at least would seem natural to a reader who had no prepossessions about the authorship or date of Leviticus. We may again content ourselves with one example to illustrate the possible course of development. In Exodus xx.-xxiv. nothing is ordered about a special priesthood. From the end of Judges it is plain that 'Levites' were in early times looked upon as specially suitable for priestly functions. From Samuel we learn that priests (not necessarily of the tribe of Levi) served, like Samuel, at country shrines or high places. In the account of Josiah's reformation (2 Kings xxiii. 9) we read this note: 'Nevertheless the priests of the high places came not up to the altar of the Lord in Jerusalem, but they did eat unleavened bread among their brethren.' This is explained by Deut. xviii. 6 f. where it is ordered that Levites (whose country shrines are all to be abolished) may come to 'the place which the Lord shall choose,' and shall minister there with their brethren 'which stand there before the Lord. They shall have like

portions to eat.' This shows that in Deuteronomy an organisation of priesthood is contemplated which is well defined by the phrase (xviii. 1 etc.) 'the priests the Levites, all the tribe of Levi'; all 'Levites' are to be regular priests in Jerusalem. But Josiah, when he carried out the rest of the ordinances of Deuteronomy, did not carry out that. Whatever the difficulty was Ezekiel faced it anew. But he met it by separating the 'Levites' of the high places from 'the priests the Levites, the sons of Zadok' (Ez. xliv. 15). Those are to be regular priests as they always have been; the other Levites are to be servants, 'Levites' in the later Levitical sense. This rule holds in Leviticus, but the priests there are the sons of Aaron. That is a larger term and—though here of course we stray into conjecture—it seems as though in the end Ezekiel's division were accepted, but not quite so stringently drawn; the Levitical priesthood admitted more from the earlier priesthoods than Ezekiel had intended.

Something has here been read between the lines, yet not much. If it be thought that even that little is irreverent, the question might—with no intended irreverence—be asked, whether the words in which the history of the priesthood has been written are more sacred than the priesthood itself was. S. Paul in Romans and Galatians sets the whole law aside, and in still more peremptory fashion the author of the epistle to the Hebrews abolishes this particular part of the law, the Levitical priesthood; he does not allow it to be even a type of the true priesthood which our Lord fulfilled. If, as he says, the thing itself be but a shadow, can it be wrong to examine its still more shadowy records, noting their inconsistencies, and trying to reach a more historical account of the facts? Perhaps it is not the most profitable task most of us could engage upon, and we may be satisfied if the result of our short excursion into criticism is to persuade us that the mere ritual of Canaan, Israel,

or Judaism, is as unimportant as its history is obscure. The passage just referred to in Judges (xvii., xviii.) is one of many which show what this ritual was apt to become in the early popular religion; the Gospels and S. Paul at least give hints of its aptness to degenerate in later Judaism. What we find in all the legal writers we have been considering is the attempt to make the ritual pure, and to distinguish its religious meaning from its unimportant form. In Exodus xx.-xxiv. we have the simplest regulations possible. The civil laws are above all kindly. The laws of worship are expressed in this heart-touching formula: 'in every place where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee' (Ex. xx. 24). The spirit of the whole is gathered up in those ten 'words' which sufficed our Lord for expansion into His sermon on the mount. Deuteronomy lays down rules for checking the serious abuses of worship which were rife during the monarchy. That is the importance of them. They may have been devised by some prophetically trained legalist during the monarchy, or such a person may have reduced to form the experimental regulations of reforming kings and the suggestions of prophets and statesmen. Or we may prefer to think that Moses with inspired prudence wrote these laws, and that they were providentially lost till the season arrived in which they could at last be promulgated with effect. Such differences of opinion are not unworthy of attention. Real history is worth establishing whenever it is possible, and those who investigate the critical problems of the Old Testament do so with pains because the solutions seem to open larger views of divine truth and righteousness than the rabbinic tradition allowed. But for the immediate study of Deuteronomy these differences of opinion do not very much matter. And they matter even less when we perceive that the laws themselves are but a minor element in that deep book. If, as some suppose, Jeremiah refers to it in Jer. xi. 1-8, he

seems to feel just as a sincere and simple reader might feel to-day who heard of the critical disputes about it. 'The law of the one sanctuary,' such a reader might say, 'I have scarcely noticed it. I thought Deuteronomy was all about the love of God.' In Ezekiel and Leviticus we do get elaborate rules of ritual. They fill but one short section of Ezekiel's book; indeed they do not fill that section. It is evident that Ezekiel is restraining the ritual he selects and orders, that he has practical reforms of civil life in view, and that the great thing he is doing in this revival of priestly religion is the proclaiming of the doctrine of cleansing or atonement as the eternal element in that religion. Leviticus is at first sight drier. It is a book of rubrics, a prayer-book with the prayers left out. But it is after all a good deal more than that. There is a core to it, chapters xvii. to xxvi.—the Law of Holiness it has been entitled—which stands with Ezekiel half-way, as it were, between the prophets and the priests. This contains some very tender pleading, some fine things about God's presence with His people, and much of that kindly generosity which had already been expressed naïvely in Exodus, and repeated in Deuteronomy. But it attains a fuller expression here, and no doubt from here it passed into the Wisdom books and Tobit and has indeed become characteristic of true Judaism to the present day. Here are a few of these flowers of ritualism: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself' (xix. 18); 'If a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not do him wrong. The stranger that sojourneth with you shall be unto you as the homeborn among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself' (xix. 33, 34); 'If thy brother be waxen poor, and his hand fail with thee; then thou shalt uphold him: as a stranger and a sojourner shall he live with thee. Take thou no usury of him or increase; but fear thy God: that thy brother may live with thee' (xxv. 35, 36); 'And I will walk among you, and will be your

God, and ye shall be my people. I am the Lord your God, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, that ye should not be their bondmen; and I have broken the bars of your yoke, and made you go upright' (xxvi. 12, 13); 'And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the Lord am holy, and have separated you from the peoples, that ye should be mine' (xx. 26).

There are two places in Leviticus where we see the crude or even superstitious ritual of early priestcraft, taken up and transformed before our eyes. One is chapter xvi., the service of the day of atonement. Every one feels the beauty and solemnity of that service as it is described in Leviticus. Holman Hunt's picture of the scapegoat rather shocks our feeling for its beauty. Every age has its own callousness to some of the things which dumb animals suffer for men; but this suffering, as Holman Hunt imagined it, is appalling. But it surprises us in another manner to find, when we turn to the Hebrew or to the Revised English Version, that the 'scapegoat' is really the goat 'for Azazel.' This goat was sent out as a prey or offering to the demon of the wilderness, in whom we may be sure no one disciplined by the early prophets believed. Yet there stands the old pagan name in this ritual of solemn penitence.

In chapter xvii. we find the ancient pagan idea of the blood being the life, and the ancient taboo against eating blood. This is repeated word for word as it might have been handed down from prehistoric times among the Semitic tribes. 'And whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel or of the strangers that sojourn among them, that eateth any manner of blood; I will set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people. For the life of the flesh is in the blood' (xvii. 10, 11). So far the primitive taboo. Now hear the Jewish theology that transforms it: 'And I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your

souls: for it is the blood that maketh atonement by reason of the life' (xvii. 11). 'I have given it to you.' There is the doctrine of atonement which runs throughout Old and New Testament; which is laid down perhaps in no other sacred books, certainly in no other with like clearness; and which even in the Christian Church men are always apt to pervert. The second of our Articles of religion speaks of Christ's reconciling His Father to us, but holy Scripture never so speaks and modern commentaries always have a note to prevent misunderstanding of the words. Here in Leviticus the scriptural thought is already enunciated: that God's will to man is always good, His wrath is love, His forgiveness is at work even before our penitence. The verb 'atone' or 'propitiate' takes various accusatives after it in the Old Testament, but it never takes the accusative 'God.' He provides atonement for men's souls; they do not make atonement to His displeasure.

And a glance at the margin of the R.V. will show that the Hebrew word for 'soul' and 'life' is the same. The blood is life. God gives life to make atonement for life. To the old pagan the life was no doubt thought of in a somewhat vague fashion; the visible blood was the tangible thing to his mind as well as to his senses. But to the Jewish theologian this is reversed. The blood, the symbol, had to him the value of a symbol, no less and no more. Atonement, forgiveness, salvation, were ideas of life. So, and so only, could this ancient language be transferred to the New Testament and become interpretative of the work of the Redeemer of the world.

IV

THE WISDOM BOOKS

The creed and church of post-exilic Judaism—Its lines laid down by Ezekiel and drawn out with much diversity in unity—'Wisdom' one element; its connexion with philosophy—In the Hebrew canon it remains strongly Hebraic—Three divisions of the wisdom literature; (1) Job and Ecclesiastes, intensely Hebrew, (2) Moral theology of one part of Proverbs and its continuation in Sirach, etc., (3) Approach to metaphysical theology in another part of Proverbs and its continuation in Wisdom of Solomon, etc.—Job, the problem of suffering and the vindication of mystical communion with God—Ecclesiastes, a record of scholastic discussion and the triumph of Jewish faith over intellectual difficulty—Agur and the extravagances of 'wisdom.'

When Mattathias, 'zealous for the law,' slew at Modin the Syrian king's officer and the apostate Jew, he cried, 'Whosoever is zealous for the law, and maintaineth the covenant, let him come forth after me,' and so he and his sons fled to the mountains forsaking all that they had in the city, and the Maccabean revolt began (1 Macc. ii. 27, 28). What did Mattathias understand by 'the law'? Was it the sacred book of Moses, or simply the established rules of food, sacrifice and worship; or was it the Jewish faith, 'the covenant,' in a larger sense? It must have been the faith and not merely the legal customs, but no doubt he and his companions held the faith in a well-defined, unyielding sense. He summoned them 'to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all

delivered unto the saints.' Plain loyalty to a final form of faith is the battle-cry for martyrs, and we honour the Maccabean heroes and admire, though it little becomes us to share, their indignation against the cravens who refused to join their venture. And yet perhaps some held aloof who were not altogether cravens. By the second century B.C. there may have been Jews, and good ones, who saw that 'the faith once delivered' was intended by God to enlarge its boundaries, who wished to be more clear as to what the Maccabeans were fighting for, who even entertained curious misgivings as to whether it was right to use violence in defence of religion, who thought of a church rather than of a nation as the home of faith, who were more anxious about venal high priests and the subtle infection of their own souls by moral laxity than about the persecution of Antiochus, and who dreamed—perhaps too vaguely—of a 'blessed company of all faithful people' throughout all the world. And it is possible that among these eccentric people there were some who, Erasmus-like, believed in the gradual effect of education, would gladly learn and teach, were jealous of disturbances which interfered with 'wisdom,' and were not themselves the stuff from which martyrs could be made.

Men like these in all their variety were the spiritual descendants of Ezekiel as much as were the Maccabees with their simple zeal for the law. Ezekiel inaugurated the post-exilic age of Judaism. He introduced the reign of law, and the most obvious, perhaps the most important feature of that reign was reverence for 'the Law,' 'the law of Moses.' But law does mean something larger than that; it did to Ezekiel, and it did also to the synagogues in which men sang, 'The heavens declare the glory of God: and the firmament sheweth his handywork. . . . Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever the earth and the world were made: thou art God from everlasting, and world without end. . . . Yea, like

as a father pitieth his own children: even so is the LORD merciful unto them that fear him. For he knoweth whereof we are made: he remembereth that we are but dust. . . . All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship thee, O LORD: and shall glorify thy name. For thou art great, and doest wondrous things: thou art God alone. . . . Let everything that hath breath: praise the LORD' (Ps. xix. 1, xc. 2, ciii. 13, 14, lxxxvi. 9, 10, cl. 6). One law throughout nature and history, and the law of worship part of that unity, was an assurance which helped the faith of post-exilic Judaism to grow broad and healthy.

Then there was the strain of scholarship. The post-exilic time was a time of writing history, of collecting psalms and prophecies, of editing venerable documents. It has left the mark of its matured faith on almost all the books of the Old Testament as they passed through its hands, and the student of the Old Testament styles finds his task complicated by the addition of this later, eclectic, imitative, in a word scholarly style of post-exilic Judaism. Almost the only book it has left untouched is Ezekiel's own; his workmanship was too complete for others to improve upon; he has been justly called the first of the scribes. Still more worthy of notice is that critical view of conventional theology which appears in Job and Ecclesiastes—the books of 'Wisdom' which we are to examine in this chapter. This too springs from the solvent influence of scholarship, and this too was anticipated in Ezekiel, who innovated on the traditional lines of prophecy, and denied the ancient dogma of the sins of the fathers being visited on the children.

There is also the strain of apocalypse, so important as a link between Judaism and the Gospel, and as an explanation of so much in the Old Testament which seems almost too Christian to be ancient, and of so much that is startling in the Gospel. If apocalyptic doctrine

meant despair of this world it would certainly be hard to find anything like it in Ezekiel. But the apocalyptic spirit took many forms, and in the two great canonical examples—Daniel and the Apocalypse of S. John—despair of this world is by no means a characteristic. In Ezekiel the most remarkable apocalyptic passage is the doom of Gog and Magog (xxxviii., xxxix.), but the conclusion of the vision of the city, with its most beautiful picture of the healing of nature, has formed a model for some of the best features in later apocalypses; these have in their turn been transmuted into purer gold by S. Paul in Romans viii., and by our Lord in His parables and the sermon on the mount.

This last point however will be taken up in the next chapter. It is mentioned here in order to complete our study of Ezekiel by gathering together all the lines of his multiple influence. The reign of law, the worth of scholarship, the redemption of nature—these are noble ideas which the modern world may gratefully trace back to him. But we trace them back through the theology of the later Jewish Church. And another reason for bringing them briefly together at once is that we may the better realise, even at the cost of reiteration, the breadth and variety of that theology. This is one of the vitally religious ideas which may be called the true result of a century of criticism. The Old Testament is the Bible of the Jewish Church. It is not an annalistic record of the nation of Israel, but the Church's interpretative history of the nation. The Church was the outcome of the nation's chequered past. Through long and varied discipline the Church had attained to a pure faith, deep but also broad. Nothing could be more mistaken than to suppose that the whole of later Judaism was a petrifying legalism. The Gospels and S. Paul, and we may add, the book of Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah, show that there was an element in it which tended to degenerate in that direction. But the Gospels and S. Paul, and the

New Testament read as a whole, and the Old Testament and Apocrypha read throughout, show that this element was but one of many, and that this element itself had its eternal value as well as liability to abuse.

The readiest way to test what has just been asserted would be this. Consider what sources of information you have for recovering the whole faith of the Jewish synagogue in the three centuries that led up to our Lord's ministry; two of such sources will be what our Lord said about the testimony of the Scriptures to the Son of man and His resurrection, and what S. Paul said before Felix and Agrippa about the faith of the Pharisees. Then repeat the Nicene Creed, and ask yourself at each clause whether or no it could have been received by the synagogue. It will appear that the synagogue would accept every word of the first part concerning God the Father: that in the second part everything must be omitted which refers to the 'days of the flesh' of the Lord Jesus: that however the name 'Jesus,' *i.e.* 'Saviour,' would have a most significant meaning to these Jews who knew the Old Testament and were expecting 'the Christ': that the titles 'Christ,' 'our Lord,' 'only Son of God the Father' would be well understood: that 'coming down from heaven,' 'sitting on the right hand of God the Father,' 'Coming again—or at least "in the last day"—with glory to judge quick and dead, with a kingdom that shall have no end,' would express the very faith of those who were full of apocalyptic hope drawn from Daniel, Enoch and the popular apocalypses. As to the third part, we have already noticed how familiar even to early Israel, much more therefore to the later Jews, was the thought of the Spirit of God as 'holy' and 'person,' and the whole of their belief in the inspiration of Scripture might be summed up in the phrase 'who spake by the prophets.' We have plentiful evidence for the practice of baptism among the Jews. The one master truth which runs through the whole of the Old Testament is

that God gives 'remission of sins.' S. Paul and Daniel show that Jews believed not only in 'the life of the world to come,' but definitely in 'the resurrection of the dead.' Few can read the later parts of the old Testament without feeling that an even passionate affection for the 'Church,' the 'Congregation,' the company of 'Saints,' is characteristic of Judaism. And if in some places the narrower national exclusiveness still obtains, in others (proof of true church 'unity in diversity') there is a missionary zeal and a bold sympathy with the nations which would allow full weight to the epithet 'catholick' —'from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name is great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense is offered unto my name and a pure offering: for my name is great among the Gentiles, saith the LORD of hosts' (Malachi i. 11). To restrain those brave words to dispersed Jews seems a jejune interpretation; it certainly would not have satisfied all members of a synagogue in which the Psalter was recited.

Yet some (who have good right to an opinion) have taken the passage thus. It is but one more instance of the frequent difficulty we meet in seeking the absolutely original intention of the prophets. We do not even know the name of this prophet. 'Malachi,' 'my angel,' is a quotation from his book. It may have been his name, but it may quite as probably have been the descriptive title which the Jewish scholars who made the collection of 'the Twelve Prophets' prefixed to this section of what they produced as one book. We can sometimes reach beyond their work; we have tried in an earlier chapter to do so. Still, when all such effort has been made, we are obliged to confess that these Jewish scholars have left the impress of their own mind upon the whole of our books of the prophets, and upon the other early books of the Old Testament too. But the impress of their mind is another way of saying the inspiration of the faith of their age. And if that faith was so close a preparation

for the Christian faith we need not complain of that. On the contrary we may read our Old Testament again as the Jewish Old Testament, and not as a collection of fragments from an imperfect faith, mingled with vestiges of antique mythology which we can scarcely understand or profit from. The synagogue looked back upon that period of beginnings, selected from its remains, told its history with the understanding of experienced believers, interpreted all by their own instructed faith, 'so that what is seen hath not been made out of things which do appear.' And it looked forward to the Gospel, and being itself diverse in unity it looked forward to the Gospel in all its length and breadth. The old times have their own supreme interest, their vigour and romance, their outdoor epic life, their history-making and faith-forming progression. The post-exilic age is far less exciting. It is an age of literature and recollection and thought and discussion, and being removed from political eddies, it exercised itself in a kind of other-worldly asceticism, which nevertheless nourished the eternal sympathies, and fitted it for its quiet task of gathering up the indissoluble life of the true religion in readiness for bursting forth again to renew the whole world. The Old Testament is after all not primarily an epic tale, or a political history, or a guide to Semitic origins. It is great literature soberly edited in a sober age of scholarship, and it is the voice of a great faith from an age whose faith was all but Christian.

But now to the proper subject of this chapter, the Wisdom books. These are Proverbs, Job and Ecclesiastes in the Hebrew canon. Some of the more philosophical Psalms may be associated with them. And in the larger Alexandrian or Greek collection of Scriptures, from which we draw our Apocrypha, there are Ecclesiasticus or the Wisdom of Sirach, and the Wisdom of Solomon. These all represent that strain of scholarship

noticed above which induces criticism of thought or life. They are philosophical books so far as it is just to apply that Greek term to any product of the Hebrew mind.

To a limited extent it is just to do so. In the comparison just made between Jewish faith and the Nicene Creed those clauses were left unnoticed which might be described as metaphysical: 'Very God of very God . . . of one substance with the Father.' The earlier phrase 'Light of light' is more metaphorical than metaphysical, and the metaphor is one which the Jew would not have thought strange. But these others are terms of Greek philosophy, and it may well be doubted whether in any circumstances they would have had much meaning for him. To the author of the Wisdom of Solomon they might have been intelligible. But that is a Greek book, written little if at all before the Christian era and not on Jewish soil. Its author and Philo the Alexandrian Jew, who may have been contemporary both with him and with S. Paul, had undoubtedly come under Greek influence. Yet they remain astonishingly Jewish in spite of it. So does S. Paul though he had probably been at a Greek university, and so (at least in the eyes of some of his readers) does the author of the epistle to the Hebrews. Not till we reach the Johannine writings do we find Greek thought working at all freely in a Biblical writer, and even there the Hellenism is by no means undiluted.

In the 'Wisdom' of the Hebrew canon at any rate there is nothing akin to the Greek mind. In Ecclesiastes there are a few expressions which some readers have considered Stoic or Epicurean, and 'Epicurean' is a general description of the book which any one would think of after a first detached or languid reading. But when we have read the book again and again, and let its passionate gravity enter into us, we seek more careful words with which to define the serious impression it has made, and we begin to mistrust resemblances to Greek systems which may perhaps be plainly enough

observed, as though these touched the inmost mind of the author so slightly that it is not worth while to find out how he happened to fall into them.

The one obvious difference between the mechanism of Hebrew Wisdom and Greek or any other genuine philosophy, is that the Hebrew starts from the belief in God, while the philosopher starts by questioning everything. He may be—Plato was—a very religious man, but *qua* philosopher he uses the open question as his tool. But that is little more than the formal difference. So far as these Hebrew men of wisdom are great in their own quality, they do far more than start from the belief in God. They hold that belief with an energy as impassioned as the prophets' energy. In the prophets it is conspicuous to sight, in them it is restrained and hidden. But it is there. They are not philosophers, dialecticians, but men with hearts on fire. It may be objected that the division breaks down, and that in Plato and Hegel and all the philosophers whose work—or rather who—continue to move the world this fire has also burned. It may be so; and if so, we should draw the inference that God has chosen the weak things of the world that He might put to shame the things that are strong; there is no such thing on earth as pure reason, and what goes by that name changes and passes; but the Hebraic fire is an abiding force wherever found. It may be so; yet that is probably not the whole truth. It is the fashion of the decade through which we are now passing to see this fire, *élan*, intuitive vigour, as the one medium of real life or inspiration everywhere, and, as compared with it, to rate mere logical reason low. All feel the charm of this fashion, but perhaps we should be suspicious of its exclusive claim. There is after all a difference between Plato and Job. Plato has more reason (which need not be defined as merely logical), and Job more fire. Some might say that Plato is dialectic while the Scripture writers are one and all Gnostic. They do not

argue; they teach. At any rate we may worship the Holy Spirit in each without confounding the different modes of His operation.

In the Wisdom books this fire does burn, but in unequal measure. They might be arranged in three classes. First come those which are most characterised by that strange, antique energy, Job and Ecclesiastes. Job comes early and Ecclesiastes late, but they are in the same line of life. Then Proverbs offers itself as a collection of early and late material. It is a collection, not an original work, and it is in consequence tamer. But being a collection it contains various elements, and these may be brought together and arranged on two lines which are afterwards continued. On the one hand (this gives our second class) the mass of this book's aphorisms are shrewd generalisations on conduct, picturesque, deeper than they appear at first sight, *e.g.* 'Where no oxen are, the crib is clean: but much increase is by the strength of the ox' (xiv. 4). This runs out into the homely thoughts of Sirach on practical religion, to the didactic psalms, to the precepts of the rabbis, and at last rises to unexpected height in the sermon on the mount. On the other hand (our third class) there are proverbs which express in lively images the indwelling of God, the spiritual source of life, the mystery of personal function; as a type that text of the Cambridge Platonists might be quoted: 'The spirit of man is the lamp of the LORD' (xx. 27). These run out into such a psalm as cxxxix. ('O LORD, thou hast searched me out, and known me'), to those sayings of the rabbis which Dr. Abelson has lately collected in his book *The Immanence of God in Rabbinical Literature* (Macmillan, 1912), to the Wisdom of Solomon or the allegorising of Philo. Simplified again and marvellously deepened by divine events, they become part of the impulse to the Johannine doctrine of the Word. The allusion to the Cambridge Platonists is worth returning to for a moment. They were church-

men with a broad outlook. Men of another school have called them latitudinarian or rationalistic. They used philosophy with a fine manly understanding, yet cared not to be philosophers themselves; another business occupied them. They kept ways of tradition open which some parties were for closing, and they refreshed the faith by recognising the wide diffusion of the Holy Spirit. Analogies must not be too much pressed, especially from a brief and definite period like that of the Cambridge Platonists to a long and vague one like that of the Wisdom literature; but so far as it goes, this analogy does illustrate the relation of the Hebrew wisdom to philosophy.

These then are our three classes. (1) An essentially Hebraic wisdom however superficially disguised: Job and Ecclesiastes. Then an eclectic wisdom branching into (2) a theology of conduct turning back to Judaism: Proverbs, Sirach, didactic psalms, rabbinic precepts; and (3) a theology of the schools, coming at least to speaking terms with Hellenism, and producing the Wisdom of Solomon, Philo, and a certain mystical strain in rabbinic teaching. Both these theologies become rather diluted as they flow on. Yet both burst with new strength into the Gospels, the former in the sermon on the mount, the latter in the prologue to S. John.

It would be almost as difficult to put a date to Job as it would be to the tale of Pelops' line. When Ezekiel spoke of Noah, Daniel and Job (Ez. xiv. 14, 20), was he thinking of any books or merely of typical heroes of old time? When S. James wrote of the patience of Job (James v. 11) can he have been thinking of our book of Job in which Job's impatience shocks his friends and is so obvious a characteristic of his speeches? We cannot even say that our book stands in the same relation to the immemorial story as Aeschylus' Agamemnon does to the Greek one. Doubtless there had been Jobs before our Job and Agamemnons before Aeschylus'.

And both our Job and Aeschylus' Agamemnon are great truth-searching dramas built upon the stories. Job is of course no strict drama; it was not written to be acted. Yet it is so dramatic in character that there is little impropriety in applying that term to it. But the Agamemnon is one whole, planned and composed by Aeschylus as it stands. In Job there seem to be unmistakable signs of the piecing together of various earlier material. If at last one master mind has impressed unity upon it, he has done this by a different process from Aeschylus.

And yet—perhaps by indulging fancy rather than by sober reasoning—the two might be brought fairly close together. After the main dialogue between Job and the friends is ended in chapter xxvi. certain soliloquies of Job ensue in xxvii. and xxix.-xxxi. In xxvii. Job seems to turn round upon himself and contradict all he had said about the unjust prosperity of the wicked; he says in fact just what Zophar ought to have said if he had spoken in the third round, which (as the text stands) he does not do. Zophar is so unpleasant that all readers rejoice to find him thus silenced before the end, and one is tempted to conjecture that an editor has taken his speech away on purpose. But it hardly mends matters to give it to Job, and the easiest explanation is that one of those dislocations has taken place which are so common in the transmission of manuscripts, and that we need not trouble any further about this addition (which proves no addition) to the dialogue.

Chapter xxviii. is the famous praise of wisdom. It does not fit closely with the context, but it does fit fairly well with the idea of the whole book; it is very beautiful, and few readers would not regret its omission. An Aeschylean chorus does fit more closely to the context and movement of the play. But a Greek dramatist was more logical than a Hebrew poet, and the rough comparison with the Greek chorus may help us. Between the close of the dialogue in xxvi., and the answer

of the Lord in xxxviii., a resting-point is interposed with choric song and monologue, as between two acts.

But something else, and a very considerable something, is also interposed. Chapters xxxii.-xxxvii. give the speech of Elihu, a young man who is mentioned nowhere else in the book. He says he has been standing by during the dialogue, but no one has noticed his presence. He claims to have something to say which will put both Job and his friends in the wrong and show them the true solution of their problem. But when the Lord gives judgement at the end, He says the friends were wrong and Job was right, and He pays no attention to Elihu at all. There can be no doubt that the Elihu speech is an insertion into a book that was once complete without it. Yet we need not allow that even this insertion quite breaks up the (so to speak) Aeschylean unity of our Job. The Agamemnon is part of a trilogy. In the other two plays of the trilogy the same story goes on, but ideas just sketched in the first play are carried further; some ideas not heard of at first are introduced. That is what the Elihu speech does in Job. The friends had said suffering is punishment for sin. Job had protested against so cruel and false a doctrine. Elihu said that suffering is rather education than punishment—the sort of commonplace that would always be popular. There indeed is the weak point in our comparison. There are many technical difficulties—of style and vocabulary, of minor inconsistencies and so on—in the way of making the Elihu speech part, though a subsequent part, of the one author's design. But the broad objection is that the Elihu speech is on an inferior level of thought, faith, piety and revelation. It is very different from the addition of the Choephori and Eumenides to the Agamemnon.

The same objection does not apply to the descriptions of behemoth and leviathan (xl. 15–xli.). These may seem to us far inferior to the pictures of the wild ass,

horse or hawk in xxxix., but this is a question of art, almost of ornament, not of things necessary to salvation. And though we may be surprised that the same author should have written so gloriously of nature in other places, and so mechanically here, we may be well content to remember that more influences direct taste than any one person understands, and that behemoth and leviathan are so nearly mythological monsters that both their introduction and the manner of describing them may be in obedience to archaising motives which were once an integral part of every treatment of the story of Job.

As to the prologue and epilogue, there is little reason to separate them from the main poem. They are in prose, but that is natural since they tell but the plain story. There is a simplicity in their style, which however is rather the conscious simplicity of a thinker than the naïve simplicity of one whose proper business was story-telling. We feel that Job's restoration to temporal prosperity is hardly consonant with the deep secrets of spiritual pain and joy which have been probed. But an answer to that objection might be drawn from another analogy in the Greek dramatists. As Euripides concluded the new theology he ventured upon in his plays with a *Deus ex machina* to give the turn to events which old-fashioned orthodoxy loved, so this bold questioner of traditional dogma ended his drama with the more commonplace justice that piety demanded. There would be something in such an answer. Yet it would be a better way to quote our Lord's 'Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not.' The 'little children' of God's family still care for the plain story of patient Job, and this deep, baffling book is valued by labouring men quite as much as by theologians. If the author dared to improve something in the tradition of faith, there was something also which he had no wish to disturb. This charity, this wisdom without conde-

scension, this reverence for the child-like mind, lives throughout the Old Testament. The priestly scholars cultivated it as much as did psalmists and wisdom-writers; we owe the garden of Eden to it, and the ten plagues, and the burning bush, and the limpid freshness of the lives of the patriarchs.

Our Job would indeed be the poorer for its banishment. All the same our Job is in the main a book for grown men who have felt the terrible realities of this mortal state, and the apparent meaninglessness, injustice and cruelty of pain. For that problem of pain is the main theme of the book in the complete, elaborated form in which we read it now. Job, the good man, was delivered into the hands of the Satan or adversary. This was not the Satan of the New Testament, the prince of evil, but that one of the obedient angels of the LORD, whose function was to try the children of men. Job's trial was for good not evil. Nevertheless it was bitter and seemed for evil. His three friends, who came to comfort him, were agreed it was not for evil, but their solution was the simple one that all suffering is the result of sin, and Job therefore must have sinned, and should repent. Job protests against that cruel suspicion. They, shocked by his vehemence, credit him with worse and worse sin. Three rounds of dialogue take place, Job answering each friend in turn as they repeat their accusing consolations. Out of this clash of mind with mind an amazingly deep theology is drawn. The form of the dialogue is poetry, which allows far-reaching suggestion of truths that cannot be precisely defined. It is dramatic too. The characters of the interlocutors are distinct. Eliphaz is the large-hearted man of the world (in the best sense of that term). He is really sympathetic, and one element of pathos in the controversy is the pity we feel that so kindly and right-minded a person should be confined and at last perverted by his loyalty to an imperfect form of orthodoxy. Bildad is the scholar. He appeals

to the wisdom of the ancients. He has the scholar's terse phrase, and nothing could be more impressive than his last short speech (xxv.), 'Dominion and fear are with him; he maketh peace in his high places,' etc., unless it be the almost savage parody of his words with which Job answers them; a parody which however passes quickly (as is Job's way) into a sublime but troubled meditation, in which Bildad is forgotten, and Job presses inwards, alone with God. Zophar is the popular orator, with a wind of words. In the gust of his onset fine things are sometimes uttered, but he cares not to understand Job and he disappoints us in a very different manner from the wise and tender Eliphaz.

But Job is different from them all and far greater. He indignantly rejects the old dogma that suffering means sin, which, as applied to him, must mean that his particular suffering is the punishment of some particular sin. But he does far more than that; he is wrestling with new ideas that have scarcely come within the ken of his friends. Scarcely; yet we dare not say they have not come at all. The whole dialogue is subtle. The breath of a new age infects all four men, only in Job it is shaping itself into an articulate spirit. All the speakers lift the fringe not of one but of many of the mysteries of life. Job raises objections and aspirations so modern and far-reaching that, in passing from the friends to him, the reader seems to be transported from one century to another—sometimes indeed from the ancient world into the twentieth century. There is so much passion too in the whole dialogue, alternating with and transmuting the play of intellect; so fresh a delight in external nature relieves the gloom and charges the darkest corners with sparks of momentary light. Job himself, defiant, ironical, bitter, vaster than other men in mental power and capacity for suffering, yet not untouched by the weakness of man's craving for sympathy —who can forget his cry, 'Have pity upon me, have

pity upon me, O my friends, for the hand of God hath touched me' ?—is rendered yet more wonderful to all who try to read the riddle of his character by that reticent piety of his, that struggling sense of a more mysterious intensity of sin and holiness which is at last brought to expression, that invincible claim to communion with God which is at last satisfied, though the secret of how it is satisfied still remains half told and half concealed.

Such as it is that satisfaction comes in the answer of the LORD out of the whirlwind. The LORD bids Job contemplate His inexplicable power as He works throughout the whole of His creation. Job bows before such magnificence confessing, 'I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.' This gives no clear cut explanation of the problem of suffering. It is more like the still baffling suggestion of larger solutions with which Plato concludes his dialogues. And it seems to belong to the nice art of the author that he places the Elihu speeches, the soliloquies, and the praise of wisdom, between the opening discussion with the friends and this divine answer. The pause prepares us for the further putting off of the plain declaration our hasty intellect demands. Whatever may be the actual history of the book's complex growth, this final form is the artistic unity; it seems waste of time to seek the earlier stages.

That must be a common opinion, at least among those who are not professed critics. And yet if any who held that opinion saw Miss Amherst's performance of 'the drama of Job,' as it was given during the last twelve months in Norwich, Stratford, or London, they perhaps changed their mind. Miss Amherst, using the Revised Version, adding not a single word to it, but making large omissions and some rearrangement in order, so as to produce what might be acted instead of read, made indeed a most solemn and impressive piece. It had all

the seriousness of a medieval Morality and was quite free from that sense of artificial interest which such revivals of the old Moralities can hardly avoid. But one remarkable thing about it was that Miss Amherst, no doubt unconsciously, seemed to have recovered just that earlier stage in the progress of the poem which is really worth recovering. The shortened dialogue restored the intensity of the action. Not what Job thought, but what happened to him became the main business. His noble bearing under the first trial of bereavement provoked the watching Satan to exclaim—not malignly, but with enthusiasm for the courage of a saint and with daring for the increase, through tremendous risk, of the glory of God—'I would that Job were tried unto the end' (cf. xxxiv. 36). The trial proceeds. The friends say their brief says. Job answers, makes his appeal to immortal vindication, then calls on his God to come and plead with him. And in the twinkling of an eye the LORD speaks. Job falls flat on the ground. The thundering voice of the LORD rolls over him. None cares to ask how he is satisfied. The act of GOD has brought conviction, and though in the performance there was another scene, of restoration, the true drama had ended with that climax. The rest touched the sympathetic spectator no more than the epilogue in the finished book touches the intellectual reader.

Of course Miss Amherst's refashioning was not 'critical.' No one supposes that this acting edition gives the actual words of an earlier book of Job. But it does, by its vivid propriety, make us believe that there was some earlier book which was less intellectual, more directly religious, less philosophical and Hellenic, more emotional and Hebraic. Its theme was not the problem of suffering but the reality of communion with God.

'Ye have heard of the patience of Job,' said S. James, referring perhaps to the primeval story, not to our book

of Job. In our book there is more than the lesson of patience. There is a discussion of the problem of suffering. The friends took suffering to be chastisement. Job rebelled against that view, which was perhaps the orthodox view when the book was written. The problem of suffering seems to be the theme of the book. Elihu's speeches, which seem an addition to the main poem, illustrate that judgement. For Elihu plays upon the same theme; on the whole he elaborates the idea of suffering as remedial.

But S. James also said, 'And ye have seen the end of the Lord.' The climax of the drama is the answer of the LORD out of the whirlwind, and that is not an answer to the problem of suffering, but to Job's sense of desolation. Job's suffering was not what his friends thought. It was a prefiguring of our Lord's cry on the cross, 'Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani.' He was ready to endure all loss and pain if only his communion with God which seemed broken might be renewed. The book ends with no solution of the problem, but it does end with satisfaction to Job's yearning for communion. That satisfaction came partly through his eyes being opened to the largeness of God's presence. While God was caring for all nature the obscuration of His presence in one man's heart did not mean that He was really absent from that man. Let him think largely, naturally, divinely of God, and he would not be impatient. Job learned what Hort learned from nature: 'As we can seldom bathe ourselves in the freshness of living things, without coming forth with purified and brightened hearts, even such let us believe may be the effect of the truth of nature on our thoughts of God Himself' (*The Way, the Truth, and the Life*, p. 84). This is an aspect of the book of Job which is of peculiar interest in these days of ours. Our theology has perhaps been too long confined to the isolated aspirations of mankind. A while ago man was chiefly contemplated as being very far gone from righteousness

and in need of rescue. Of late his state is beginning to be rather glorified than deplored, as though it were already lifted high in Christ. A truth indeed, but a perilous one; and difficulties increase as schemes are reformulated. And many of these difficulties arise from the larger and exacter science of nature which is characteristic of the age. Yet that new science brings new reverence, new possibilities of faith with it. The hour is coming when we shall invigorate theology by recovering the Alexandrine doctrine of Christ as the Word of God, as being not merely the Saviour of men but the Redeemer of the whole creation which has been created through Him. When that is done the mystery of the person of Christ will become more intelligible again and more dominant in the general mind, and salvation will again be sought and accepted by all men as it includes men and nature in its vaster sweep (cf. Rom. viii. 18-25).

And yet Job's satisfaction did not come wholly or even chiefly in that way. Before his vision of the majesty of nature he had already received the tremendous shock of the LORD's first words and entry. It was an entry not merely upon the scene but into Job. That was itself the renewal of communion. Job was a mystic (as nearly all the Hebrew saints were); one that is who felt God's presence within more than he heard His voice from without. His bodily and mental sufferings had brought upon him that far more awful suffering which the great mystics have all known, when their consciousness of God's indwelling was interrupted and turned to darkness. Job's words, strange and shocking as they sounded to Eliphaz and as they still appear to students of the poem, will be more fairly understood by one who comes to them from reading the life of William Cowper. His restoration will be better understood if we have read the account of the call of Isaiah and have realised the life and death intensity of what Isaiah suffered then.

Job's darkness was dispersed and his former communion was restored in profounder sort than before. But that was not effected easily, by a calm process. It was life out of death for him. To him the whirlwind was but a small whisper; it was the thunder of God's secret power that overwhelmed his inmost soul and left him weak but new-born.

Job has a wider outlook than the old prophets. Scene, characters, even language carry us beyond Palestine. That is indeed a common thing in the wisdom literature; to some extent it is a mark of most of the post-exilic literature. But here again (if the fancy may be indulged) Miss Amherst's drama made one feel that it was no modern enlargement that produced this effect, but rather the persistent tradition of the people who had never forgotten their nomad ancestry in the desert. We feel something like this as we read Genesis, and by a happy coincidence Dr. G. A. Smith's *Early Poetry of Israel* (Frowde, 1912) was published soon after the London performance of the drama, and in that book the same persistence of like traditions was asserted. The antique character of the earlier Job was impressed upon the spectators by several little touches. In one performance the actor made a slip and recited those famous words according to the Authorised instead of the Revised Version: 'I know that my redeemer liveth, and in my flesh shall I see God' (xix. 25). The 'in' struck a jarring note at once; not that dogmatic faith of Maccabean times but the older undefined hope of Abraham was natural to the Job who was speaking. Again an angel of healing was introduced. Certain words in Elihu's speech were the justification for this (cf. xxxiii. 23, 24), but all must have felt how modern it seemed, how incongruous. This Job and his author knew 'the sons of God,' and among them one who served as 'adversary,' but further distinctions in the heavenly host had not yet been ventured upon. Again it is in Daniel and Maccabean times that

these appear; the 'early' Job belonged to a simpler stage of piety.

When we take up Ecclesiastes we have travelled far from that simple stage in point of time. There are a few verses in this book which are spoken in the person of the son of David, king in Jerusalem. But that literary fiction is not kept up in the book generally, and it is difficult to suppose that it was ever understood as anything but a literary fiction till long after the days when it was first published. The language in which it is written does not fix its precise date, but does show plainly that it belongs to a late post-exilic period. As time went on Hebrew, like all languages, underwent natural change. By the time of our Lord it was no longer the spoken language in Palestine. Aramaic, a kindred dialect, had taken its place, almost as Italian took the place of Latin. The words quoted above, 'Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani,' are the Aramaic form of the Hebrew psalm (xxii. 1) 'Eli, Eli, lamah azabhthani.' In the book of Daniel and in Ezra-Nehemiah, we find Hebrew and Aramaic used side by side. But the Hebrew in those books is the old classical Hebrew, awkwardly handled indeed, yet still classical. In those books, and even more markedly in the original Hebrew of Sirach, the authors write with conscious attempt at correctness, somewhat as a renaissance scholar wrote Ciceronian Latin. But no such attempt is made in Ecclesiastes. Here we have the natural language of a Jewish scholar who writes as he spoke at a period when Hebrew was half-way on its journey from the old classical style to the later rabbinic. He writes Hebrew as S. Augustine wrote Latin.

And this is just as it ought to be in such a book. We call it Ecclesiastes, continuing the Greek title from the Septuagint, and we translate this in English by 'the preacher.' But the Hebrew title is Koheleth, a feminine participle with a quasi-abstract sense, meaning the

typical 'collector of sentences.' The book is in fact anything rather than a sermon addressed to the general public. It is the record of the conversational teaching of some beloved master of the schools, edited by a friend or pupil. He has incorporated in his volume the sayings of other masters who perhaps used to discuss things with his hero, and who sometimes took easier, more cheerful views of the problems of faith which he faced with uncommon audacity (see *L'Ecclésiaste* by E. Podechard, Paris, 1912; an excellent commentary). Many critics hold many opinions about the composition of Koheleth, and hardly a word in this last short paragraph would pass unchallenged if it were offered as a contribution to exact criticism. Yet it agrees roughly with the general trend of criticism, and for our present purpose it is precise enough. Any one who looks at the last verses of the last chapter will see that some other person has put the utterances of the speaker together and written them out. And it is difficult to account for the variety of sentiment in the rest of the book without allowing that more voices than one are heard there. What needs to be insisted upon is the academic character of the whole. This gives a tone to the doctrine which may be missed if the book is thought of as a public address. Newman used to contend that the Church had suffered from the silencing of the schools of theology, such as the famous one in Paris. In those schools, he said, free discussion went on, and so the way was prepared for authority to speak, not at first but at last, when different views had received full and fair consideration. In our own day a work like *Encyclopædia Biblica* has been sometimes judged prematurely, as though it offered erroneous dogma and not (which was its intention) proposals and arguments for scholars to discuss among themselves. Such discussions did go on in those Jewish meetings of the 'wise' which are mentioned in Sirach, and which in later days developed into the rabbinical schools. In such a meet-

ing-place as that we may imagine the 'author' of the wisdom of Koheleth talking with his peers while juniors listened. He was one who knew something of a modern style of learning, felt the importance of the questions which intercourse with foreign, perhaps Western thought was rousing in the younger generation. Yet he hardly needed that stimulus, for he himself felt only too heavily the apparent disappointment of life and the difficulty of faith. What he might have said had he been a prophet with a message to the nation, or a parish priest commissioned to instruct, correct, and cheer simple folk, we cannot tell (yet see xii. 9). As things were he did not shrink from giving to his friends and pupils the whole of his mind, his uncertainties as much as his certainties.

For he did feel huge uncertainties. He was a scholar with the scholar's passion for truth. That peculiar passion is not perhaps the best means of getting near to truth. The practical man puts truth into action, and approaches truth in action, and gets on the whole a fair approximation that way. He is not daunted, for instance, by the misery of the world. He sees that it is widespread and no one person has to bear it all. He knows too that it may be lessened by mutual effort, and his philosophy bids him be up and doing, and he knows the joy, a joy of battle, in such effort; hence too he believes in the general joy as well as the general sorrow of the world. This is impossible for the Hamlets and Koheleths. Life is no equal-tempered clavichord for them. They concentrate upon one key and play in it with abstract fidelity. Thus Koheleth sees to the full the vanity of labour, pleasure, learning, government. He looks the several facts as honestly as he can in the face and finds them terrible. He forgets that in their interaction there is a way of escape, and so God suffers not any one to be tried above what he is able. He is set on that absolute truth which is beyond man's reach, and his melancholy comes from the misgiving which

grows upon him that it is beyond man's reach. No one perceived the beauty of life more intensely than he. Even when he says in his cynical way that man is no better than the beasts, he betrays the undercurrent of his sympathy with the beasts and all the divine and marvellous creation. But it is in ch. iii. 11 that he opens the secret of his heart, his aspiration and his disappointment. There is a difficulty in the language here; considering the depth of the thought we should expect one. But those who credit Koheleth with strenuous and thoughtful piety, will be willing to accept the margin of the Revised Version, and to make the sense sharper by omitting a 'yet' which the translators have interpolated. Then the verse runs as follows: 'He (*i.e.* God) hath made every thing beautiful in its time: also he hath set eternity in their heart (*i.e.* in the heart of things), so that man cannot find out the work that God hath done from the beginning even to the end.' It is that something hidden in the very substance of all creation which causes Koheleth's bitter longing. From one point of view that something is an endless monotony. Things pass and repass, but they are not new; all you can do, the best you can do is to take things as they come and enjoy them. It seems as though the one impossibility is just that which the Christian faith insists upon as possible and real—a new beginning. But there is another point of view which Koheleth scarcely holds, but which he does vaguely feel. That monotony may be the hint of a very different quality which we call 'eternity.' Our translation reads into the Hebrew word a little more than is natural to a Semitic mind. Yet Koheleth is feeling after that grander idea. He chafes at his confinement within the flaming walls of space and time wherein he sees 'all the oppressions that are done under the sun: and behold, the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power, but they had

no comforter' (iv. 1). Yet it was also his happiness, for this quest of his, for all his cloistered languor, was indomitable. We may call him an Epicurean, if by Epicurean we mean a poet like Lucretius who filled the creed of materialism with spiritual *desiderium*. But he is more than Lucretius, more intense, more direct—he could never have spent his energies in perfecting the hexameter metre—and he had a creed to start from which was neither materialism nor the religion of the Roman state.

His yearning to see a meaning in life is not quite the essence of pure philosophy. But if he spoils the purity of his philosophy in one sense, he heightens it immensely in another sense, by his naïve Jewish faith that after all God is there, and what man knows not He knows, and man's wisdom is to leave the issue in His hands. Other voices besides Koheleth's speak in this complex record of his wisdom. We may perceive that clearly enough and yet shrink from drawing the hard line between his words and the others. But in any case there seems no good reason to doubt that Koheleth may well have given the simple teaching of ch. v: 'Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God,' etc. What could be more in harmony with his proud humility than 'God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.' There is a touch of his cynicism in vii. 2: 'It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart.' But throughout this book the cynicism is upon the surface, faith—only it is a 'faith unfeigned'—burns beneath. The Jews of Venice understood their master better than the austere critic does, when they made that adaptation of his sentence for the gate of their cemetery: 'This is the end of every man; it shall give rest to his heart.'

'Faith unfeigned.' That was the faith of Timothy, whom S. Paul loved and trusted though he prayed God

to give him mercy as well as grace and peace. It is perhaps the faith of thousands to-day who are in exile from the Church because the eternity of created life seems too large for any creed, and the terrible facts of life seem stronger than the promise of grace. Here is Koheleth in the same line which undoubtedly runs from and back to God. 'Old Testament piety,' says Carl Cornill, 'has nowhere enjoyed a greater triumph than in the book of Koheleth' (*Introduction to the Canonical Books of the Old Testament*, p. 451; Williams and Norgate). That judgement is to-day unfashionable, but surely it is just. For triumph means risk run, difficulty overcome. And we notice that this bold and learned critic does not say Koheleth himself enjoyed the triumph, but that Old Testament piety did so. Koheleth's trial and final hope are witnesses to the church life of post-exilic Judaism; to its breadth and toleration, to its united strength —'if a man prevail against him that is alone, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken' (iv. 12). That final hope is supremely expressed in the last sentences of the famous hymn in ch. xii. Whether Koheleth was the sort of man to compose so elaborate a piece of poetry is a legitimate question for critical minds. But there can be little doubt that these last words are true to his teaching: 'or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the . . . wheel broken at the cistern; *and the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit return unto God who gave it.*' How 'unfeigned'! He will not go a step beyond what the truth he knows allows him to say. How scriptural! As modern men, ashamed of the noise of controversy about sacred and ineffable marvels, come to firm rest on the few words of the creed 'And the third day He rose again,' so Koheleth contents himself with the phrases of Genesis. Does 'spirit,' 'breath of life,' in Genesis mean just 'breath,' 'wind,' or 'the personal Spirit of God'? Does Koheleth mean here 'the breath,' 'the

life,' or some spirit more divine in man? Would a Jew of his day have been careful to distinguish? Did the psalmist distinguish, or if distinguishing, did he separate the twain which God in His 'wonderful fashioning' of man's being had made one? Did our Lord Himself—who spoke so simply elsewhere of flesh and spirit—separate the two ideas of 'spirit' when He used the psalm as His last evening prayer (Ps. xxxi. 5; Luke xxiii. 46)? 'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.' So Christ prayed, and who would ask more? Which approaches nearer to His prayer; the half-hellenised doctrine of immortality in Wisdom, or the definite prophecy in Daniel xii. 2, or this imperfect but most reverent faith of Koheleth?

It is imperfect elsewhere. 'The dust return to earth as it was' is no merely convenient form of words for him. He had a melancholy horror of death. Its physical reality was very real to him. Its 'vanity,' the hindrance it is to the plans and labour of men, was very evident. And sometimes he, as sometimes psalmists also, spoke despondently of the mystery. 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest' (ix. 10). This is perhaps capable of quite a Christian interpretation. 'Devices,' even 'wisdom,' might be considered as belonging to the logical conditions of this bourne of space and time; when God shall be all in all what need for them? But if that be too subtle, at least we may say this. Koheleth's friend or pupil has left us a record of his master in various moods, and has preserved his tentative as well as his completed utterances; we who believe in the resurrection of the body and in life everlasting, say things in stress of pain which are not worthy of our faith; and it is fair to seek Koheleth's mind in its noblest expression, while we learn from these less happy phrases how hardly his nobler faith was won.

Some have fancied that there is no need to recognise more than one voice throughout the book. They would press still further this variation in mood, as though we had here the confessions of a troubled soul which was tossed between two extremes, now sceptical, now pious. It is the necessity of allowing that in some cases the moods are not merely different, but extremely opposed, that makes this explanation so difficult. And those who read the book most often and most sympathetically will be the least inclined to accept it. The Koheleth they know is not tossed weakly from one opinion to the other. He is hemmed in by uncertainties, but that makes him reticent not loquacious. He is no waverer but an intense, cautious, reverent thinker. Others have gone in another direction. They have in a manner exaggerated his strength, and have argued that he has been edited as the Port Royal editors treated Pascal. All his strong sayings have been watered down. Only they would imagine this as much more drastically done than the Port Royal editors did it, and they would describe him as a much more shocking person than Pascal. The original Koheleth, according to them, was almost entirely sceptical and pessimistic. His audacity has been transformed for general reading, partly by additions of sentiments exactly opposite to what he felt, partly by alteration of what he actually said or wrote.

This is too conjectural to be worth discussing here. But its possibility is just confirmed by analogy from the book of Job, where the same kind of assertion has been made, and in that case with a certain amount of external support. For we know that Origen read the Greek translation of the Septuagint (which he himself enlarged in conformity with the current Hebrew text) in a much shorter form than the book now has. That shorter form did perhaps in some degree make Job's language, which so shocked his friends, still more abrupt and bold. It would be a possible inference that the shorter Greek

represented a shorter Hebrew; that the shorter Hebrew was more ancient than the accepted Hebrew text; and that this original Hebrew was toned down by enlargement in order to avoid a titanic protestantism which seemed improper in a collection of sacred books. This goes a little beyond the Koheleth conjecture in probability. Yet not much. We only guess what Origen's short Greek book may have been from a Coptic version of it, which after all represents it but imperfectly, and perhaps not even imperfectly; Dr. Burkitt thinks there is too much Elihu in the Septuagint Job for it to represent a really earlier Hebrew recension. And even granting that it does, some imagination must be brought to bear before we gain a distinct picture of this very violent Job. Yet good scholars have taken up these notions, and in all competent criticism—even in its vagaries—there is generally something about which it is worth while to keep an open mind. And if these conjectures were to prove right, or partly right, would they spoil the Old Testament or rather broaden its interest? There is a scepticism still which is too fierce, too one-sided, yet is allied with courage, purity, charity and honesty. The Old Testament, especially in its wisdom books, does show sympathy with the better side of this scepticism. But its devotees want more than that. They are in the toils of suffering, and they demand of religion that it should share their rebellion and their indignation. True religion cannot do quite what they demand, for the essence of true religion is love and humility. It takes its part in rebellion and indignation only when it transforms those potent spirits by love and humility. Thus Job and Koheleth work as we now read them. Yet it might attract and cheer those not ignoble recusants if they could suppose that generosity which, like theirs, stopped short of saintliness had at least gone to the making of the Old Testament. Not Job or Koheleth, but some shadowy prototype of Job

and Koheleth, was really one of themselves, and without that fundamental discord the harmonies of the ancient Scriptures could never have emerged.

And shadowy though this particular prototype may be, the general development is a fact. In the Jewish, as in the modern Church, wisdom, philosophy, criticism, did sometimes go beyond the bounds of charity and truth. And in the Jewish, as in the modern Church, those extravagances did play a part in the achievement of breadth and health and reality. And no doubt then as now some of the rash thinkers lost the fellowship and happiness of their religion while they served it in so strange and dark a fashion; 'the fire shall prove each man's work of what sort it is . . . if any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as through fire'—how deep S. Paul looked into the intricacies of divine growth. We have a curious glimpse of one of these Jewish heretics in Prov. xxx. 1-6. So at least Dr. Cheyne thinks. He has a translation of his own in *Jewish Religious Life after the Exile*, p. 174, but the margin of the Revised Version gives much the same sense:

> 'The words of Agur the son of Jakeh, of Massa.
> The man saith: I have wearied myself, O God,
> I have wearied myself, O God, and am consumed:
> For I am more brutish than any man,
> And have not the understanding of a man:
> And I have not learned wisdom,
> That I should have the knowledge of the Holy One.
> Who hath ascended up into heaven, and descended?
> Who hath gathered the wind in his fists?
> Who hath bound the waters in his garment?
> Who hath established all the ends of the earth?
> What is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou knowest?'

Those are the words of the sceptic Agur. He professes the sceptic's humility. He ironically disclaims

the profound knowledge of the theologian. Wearied with controversy he asserts that man can have no knowledge of God at all.

His impious words are quoted by an orthodox follower of wisdom, who adds his comment :

> 'Every word of God is tried :
> He is a shield unto them that trust in him.
> Add thou not unto his words,
> Lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.'

V

THE APOCRYPHA AND DANIEL

Further widening was going on—Jews in Egypt; Elephantiné and Alexandria—Sirach—The Septuagint; its origin, language and value for correction of the text of the Old Testament—Its connexion with the Apocrypha—The vague canon of Alexandria and of the early Christian Church—Strictness of rabbinic Judaism introduced by S. Jerome—The rule and practice of the Church in England about Apocrypha; suggestion for revising its contents—Comparison of unhistorical stories in Apocrypha and in the Old Testament proper—Strength and weakness of Wisdom of Solomon—The importance of 1 Maccabees as history of a heroic defence of faith connected with an outburst of apocalyptic hope—The character of apocalypses; their connexion with the Gospels; examples of apocalyptic writing in prophetical books—Daniel.

THE wisdom books which we have examined are an argument for the catholic character of the later Jewish Church. They look forth beyond the boundaries of Canaan, beyond the law, beyond the ordinary limits of Jewish thought. They are not cosmopolitan, forgetting the distinction of nations in the unity of mankind. But they go far to annul the separation of nations. They use the faith of Israel as a promise of larger union. And they do this differently from the way of the prophets. Speaking roughly and anticipating more modern expressions, we may say that the prophets looked for the submission of the world to the LORD God of Israel, the wisdom writers 'bow their knees unto the Father of

whom all fatherhood in heaven and earth is already named' (Eph. iii. 14, 15). But this wide view was being opened in various ways. We cannot read the prophets without being struck by the manner in which they promise the gathering of the dispersed portions of the nation. Not from Assyria or Babylon alone, but from all parts of the world they are to come. That language is not mere rhetoric, nor is it to be explained only by later scatterings and emigrations. These had already begun before the great captivity; that was but part, though of course a momentous part of a more continuous dispersion. This is forcibly brought out in a book (mentioned in our introductory chapter) by Professor Charles Torrey of Yale University called *Ezra Studies* (Chicago University Press, 1910). This is one of those fresh, bold books which are learned, yet the very opposite of academic; an invigorating wind from out of doors seems to blow through it. Such books are generally open to much questioning and to some correction, and Professor Torrey certainly says a good many startling things for which he adduces no sufficient reasons. But few books are more stimulating to readers who can appreciate yet hold their own, and on the point before us he has some remarks which are worth quoting.

'In modern Biblical science the Babylonian exile has been given the central place, and made the dominating factor, in both the religious and the literary history of the Hebrews. . . . Straight across the face of Israelite history is drawn a heavy line, *the exile*, which is supposed to mark a very abrupt and complete change in almost every sphere of the people's life. . . . This is a mistaken theory. . . . The wider influence of Babylonian (or Assyrian) life and literature was potent in Judea long before the sixth century, and the tr nsition to the Persian rule brought no marked change in this regard. The development of life and letters and religion in Jerusalem after the great calamity continued to be a genuinely native development, in which foreign elements played—as they always had—a relatively small part. The outlook of the

people was not growing narrower, it was becoming broader all the time. The religion of Israel—meaning that of the whole people—was more liberal and more spiritual in the fourth century than it had been in the fifth, more so in the fifth century than it had been in the seventh. The ceremonial law played no such part in the thought and activities of the people in general as the modern theory has assumed. The catastrophe which included the destruction of the temple and the extinction of the monarchy was indeed a crushing blow, which left its deep and permanent imprint on the religious literature of the Jews. But the Dispersion was a calamity which was far more significant, and whose mark on the heart of Israel was much deeper. The dissolution of the nation began even before the fall of the kingdom, and continued at an ominously increasing rate, even after the building of the second temple. It was the influence of this fact, more than anything else, that revised the theology received from the old prophets, and gave it a broader scope: Israel, the savior of the world, even through its suffering. The monarchy was not necessary (1 Sam. 8), and the community could, and did, recover from the catastrophe of 586. But the scattering of Israel to the four corners of the earth meant the death of the nation, and only the miracle of a second "return from Egypt" (Is. 43: 16 ff., 48: 21, etc.) could restore the dead to life. . . . The destruction of the temple was a turning-point, partly for evil, but more for good, seeing that the nation as a political entity was doomed in any case. At all events, it was this catastrophe not the exile, which constituted the dividing-line between the two eras' (pp. 287-289).

On the whole the Old Testament, when Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah are not allowed disproportionate authority, supports as much (at any rate) of the passage as is here quoted. If not strict propriety, still convenience induces us to keep the terms 'exilic,' 'post-exilic,' etc., to mark a certain step in Israel's progress. The persistence of the native Hebraic genius in spite of increasing foreign influences becomes more and more evident to all sympathetic readers of the documents. Foreign elements from time to time come in, only to be

rejected again, like the apse in English architecture; and they are never really assimilated. Yet they do come in, and it is impossible to accept Professor Torrey's bare *dictum* that 'every part of our Old Testament was written in Palestine'; impossible, even if we confined our attention to the Palestinian canon; far more so, when we take into consideration the Apocryphal books.

For they carry us to Egypt, a country which played a notable part in the broadening of later Judaism, and in preparing it to pass into Christian churchmanship. The earlier connexion of Egypt with Judaism has been so tersely sketched by Dr. Swete that it would be affectation to attempt it again in other words. And no apology for the quotation is needed: Professor Torrey's breezy language is delightful, but the finished accuracy of a classical master is better still.

'Long before the time of Alexander Egypt possessed the nucleus of a Jewish colony. Shashanq, the Shishak of 1 K. xiv. 25 f., 2 Chr. xii. 2 f., who invaded Palestine in the tenth century B.C., may have carried into Egypt captives or hostages from the conquered cities whose names still appear upon the walls of the temple at Karnak. Isaiah (xix. 19 f.) foresaw that a time must come when the religious influence of Israel would make itself felt on the banks of the Nile, while he endeavoured to check the policy which led Judah to seek refuge from Assyrian aggression in an Egyptian alliance (xxx. 1 ff.). Jewish mercenaries are said to have fought in the expedition of Psammetichus I. against Ethiopia c. B.C. 650. The panic which followed the murder of Gedaliah drove a host of Jewish fugitives to Egypt, where they settled at Migdol, Tahpanhes, Noph, and Pathros, i.e. throughout the Delta, and even in Upper Egypt; and the descendants of those who survived were replenished, if we may believe Pseudo-Aristeas, by others who entered Egypt during the Persian period.'

Then Alexander's victory at Issos ended the centuries of Persian domination in Jewish history and began the Greek period.

'His genius discovered in the Jewish people an instrument well fitted to assist him in his purpose of drawing East and West together. Jews served in his army; and such was his sense of their loyalty and courage that when Alexandria was founded (B.C. 332), although the design of the conqueror was to erect a monument to himself which should be essentially Greek, he not only assigned a place in his new city to Jewish colonists but admitted them to full citizenship. . . . The premature death of Alexander (B.C. 323) wrecked his larger scheme, but the Jewish colony at Alexandria continued to flourish under the Ptolemies, who succeeded to the government of Egypt' (*Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek*, pp. 3-5).

Dr. Swete adds notes on the one or two points where his statements might be modified by some scholars, but it is not worth our while to consider these. What is of interest to all is the discovery, since he wrote, of Aramaic papyri at Assuan and Elephantiné which witness to a Jewish community dwelling in that district of upper or Southern Egypt in the sixth and fifth centuries B.C. Indeed they do much more than that. They show us a picture of the life of this community; their business, their private affairs, their religion, their relations with the Egyptian government and with the Jews at Jerusalem. In some points they illustrate and confirm the narrative of Ezra and Nehemiah. In one important point they surprise the readers of those books, of Deuteronomy and of Kings. We should suppose from all those books that after the time of Josiah and Jeremiah no good Jew countenanced sacrifice in any place but Jerusalem. Yet these papyri tell of a temple in Egypt where Jews had offered sacrifice to the LORD from the sixth century onwards, of its destruction by Egyptian violence, of the Egyptian Jews' appeal to Jerusalem for help to restore this worship. Yet this is hardly evidence for the emigrants' orthodoxy or the Mother Church's toleration. When the temple at Elephantiné had been destroyed, the 'Jewish army' wrote to

Jehochanan the high priest, and also to the sons of Sanaballat. No answer came. After some time a favourable message came from Bagohi and Delaiah (Sachau, *Drei Aramäische Papyrusurkunden aus Elephantiné*, Berlin, 1907, 1908). Bagohi was the Persian governor, perhaps not a Jew at all, and Delaiah was the son of Sanaballat. True, he was nephew or great-nephew of the high priest, but just about then came the 'Samaritan' schism, and it is by no means clear that the high priest would approve of his kinsman's message. However the episode is a symptom of the general broadening of Judaism at a comparatively early time, and as we study it we muse on that Isaianic 'altar and pillar to the LORD' in Egypt.

Even more interesting is the glimpse here given of an Aramaic-speaking Judaism in Egypt. What Professor Torrey said about the native character of the Old Testament books was too absolute to be lightly extended to the books of the Apocrypha, nearly all of which have come to us in Greek. Yet even to the Apocrypha the principle may be applied more largely than seems likely at first. For it is becoming more and more safe to say that most of these books are translations or adaptations of Semitic originals. Some, *e.g.* Sirach, were in Hebrew, the classical language of the Church; some, as S. Jerome says of Judith and Tobit, were in Aramaic or the vulgar tongue of the later Jews. Yet, true though that be, these books have come to us in Greek form; we take them from the Greek Bible; it is with Greek-speaking Judaism that Alexandria is mainly associated.

The book we call Ecclesiasticus is a good illustration of both points of view. Ecclesiasticus, *i.e.* the Church book *par excellence*, is the Latin title used in the West as early as Cyprian (cent. iii). Its real name is The Wisdom of Sirach, or The Wisdom of Jesus the son of Sirach. It was written in Hebrew by Jesus (Joshua)

the son of Eleazar the son of Sirach (l. 27), no doubt a Jew of Palestine as the Greek version in that place states. One of the most interesting events of late years was the discovery of a large part of the long-lost Hebrew original. The verse just referred to is one of many places where the discovery enables us to correct the Greek version, and our own Revised Version which was made from the Greek. The Hebrew is the work of a scholar who wrote easily in the classical style which was no longer the language of conversation; it is not artificial, and the author was not concerned to avoid a few expressions which reveal to our curious eyes the period in which he lived. He was a rabbi whose 'house of instruction' (li. 23) is an early example of those schools of ancient learning which received that technical name. And he looked backward to the good old times of 'famous men,' and did what he could to check the Greek notions which were gaining ground among the Jews of his day.

Was it an irony of providence which made his grandson translate his book into Greek and publish it in Greek-speaking Egypt? In that Greek dress the book has descended, through the primitive Greek-speaking Church, to us. The grandson tells us in his prologue that he came to Egypt in the eight-and-thirtieth year of Euergetes the king, and there made his translation. This is generally supposed to mean the eight-and-thirtieth year of the only Euergetes who reigned so long. The date of the translation would thus be about 130 B.C., and the date of the Hebrew original about 180 B.C.; and these dates fit well with the character of the work, and its relation to other matters. For in his 'praise of the fathers of old' (xliv. ff.) the grandfather shows that he had read not only the Law and the Prophets, but also Chronicles, Nehemiah, and perhaps Ecclesiastes; but makes no allusion to Daniel. That is just what might be expected at the beginning of the second century B.C.

And in his prologue the grandson speaks of 'the Law, the Prophecies, and the rest of the books,' as already translated into Greek. That implies an advanced stage in the formation of the canon, though 'the rest of the books' is no doubt a loose expression, very different from 'the Writings' with a capital letter. And, more than that, it implies an advanced stage in the making of the Septuagint, that Alexandrian Bible which we must presently consider.

First however a word must be said on another point concerning Ecclesiasticus. Mr. J. H. A. Hart in his edition (*Ecclesiasticus, the Greek Text of Codex 248 with Commentary and Prolegomena*, Cambridge, 1909) argues for 247 B.C., the thirty-eighth year of Ptolemy Philadelphus and the first of Euergetes I., as the date of the grandson's coming to Egypt. The peculiar turn of the Greek allows this; it is the difficulty of harmonising the consequences with what we think we know of the growth of the canon and the Septuagint which chiefly makes the suggestion unacceptable. This is not the place to go into such details of criticism and we may, with some possible reservation of judgement, content ourselves with the conventional explanation. But Mr. Hart has something else in his prolegomena which affects all readers of Ecclesiasticus and should be noticed and accepted by them. Those who knew the book in the English Authorised Version may have been surprised to find quite a considerable part of what they were accustomed to read omitted in the Revised Version. Such and such a verse, or line, 'is omitted by the best authorities' is a frequent note in the margin. This means that the Authorised Version rests upon certain late cursive manuscripts which contained these lines and verses; the Revised Version on the uncials of the fourth century which do not contain them. Yet these additions were not made in the late Christian centuries. 'They are fragments of the Wisdom of a Scribe of the

Pharisees and contain tentative Greek renderings of many of the technical terms and watchwords of the Sect. As Jesus ben Sira dealt with the earlier Scriptures, so some unknown disciple dealt with his master's composition. He received the deposit and added to it. His speech bewrays him.'

A notable instance is in ch. xix. After verse 17 the longer text has two verses which are partly founded upon Prov. xi. 30, but the adaptation distinctly expresses faith in the life eternal: 'The knowledge of the commandments of the Lord is the doctrine of life: and they that do the things that please him shall receive the fruit of the tree of immortality.' This is good Pharisaic doctrine, but quite different from the creed of the son of Sirach. For him good men live in virtue of their children, and no doubt he believed what perhaps pious Israelites at all periods believed, that at death men go to God and that is enough to know. His latest editors (Box and Oesterley in Charles' *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, 2 vols., Oxford, 1913) say 'In the main Ben-Sira's belief concerning the Hereafter was that of the normal teaching of the Psalms; such passages for example as Ps. vi. 5 ("For in death there is no remembrance of Thee: in Sheol who shall give Thee thanks?"), and cxx. 17, 18, cvi. 2, cp. Isa. xxxviii. 18, 19, are clearly the pattern on which he bases his teaching in xvii. 27, 28.' That is true in a manner and as far as it goes, but it is too exclusive and literal an interpretation of both Psalter and Ben-Sira. Yet it is certain that Ben-Sira would not have expressed himself as his Pharisaic successor does in xix. 19. But S. Paul might have done so before his conversion, and it is very remarkable to recognise a large part of the Pauline vocabulary in the list of Pharisaic words which Mr. Hart collects from these interpolations, each word standing for a great idea. Such words are 'patience,' 'boldness,' 'righteousness,, 'tradition,' 'reception,' 'rejection,' 'repentance,' 'pro

mise,' 'hope,' and the very term S. Paul used before Agrippa: 'after the *straitest* sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee' (Acts xxvi. 5, cf. xxii. 3). 'The doctrines,' Mr. Hart concludes, 'common to Philo of Alexandria and Saul of Tarsus, disciple of Gamaliel, apostle of the High Priest and of the risen Jesus, demonstrate the existence of a far-away ancestor, who taught as did this masterful translator. His legacy is as far removed from the hypocrites of the Gospels, who abused it, as from the docile and dependent expositors of the Talmudic era, who codified it. But within its limits it explains all the evidence which can be accumulated from all these sources: it makes it intelligible, and therefore true. The degenerate and the casuist, the Hellenist and the Christian conspire with [Josephus] the friend of Vespasian, who did not share the passionate yearning for Liberty of his neighbours, to confess that they received from such a Master.'

A 'masterful translator' was that Pharisee, but there had been a still bolder one before him. How delightful it would be if we could recover the words and accent of the first man who ever essayed to render the Hebrew scriptures into the unsophisticated vernacular of Greek Judaism. Such attempts were probably never written down, and no version of Old or New Testament exists which is absolutely in the vulgar tongue. All are more or less like our Authorised English Version, or like Dante's Italian, works of scholarly art in which the language of common life is reduced to order and ennobled by its limitation. Nor should we complain of that, but rather be glad. A readable book cannot be written in the loose ungrammatical style of even educated conversation, and if the version were thus made it would be quite unlike the sacred original. All the same the version will be the more like the original and altogether the better, the nearer it can keep to the real vernacular

without losing thereby its simple dignity and lucidity. Examples of such successful adaptation may perhaps be found in parts of the old Latin of the New Testament, which are unconsciously true to vernacular genius ; and quite lately the Roman Church has produced a translation of 1 and 2 Thessalonians in which conscious learning has worked back to a parallel result. But nowhere do we come so near the fresh and natural speech of the people as in the earlier parts of that Alexandrian version of the Old Testament which is commonly called the Septuagint, or the book of the Seventy Jewish translators.

That title indeed implies something rather different. The story went that Ptolemy Philadelphus (285-247 B.C.) brought seventy Jewish rabbis from Jerusalem who made a grand translation of the Law for his library. It is told in a letter which bears the name of Aristeas. Dr. Swete (in the quotation made above) refers to it as 'Pseudo-Aristeas,' and no one doubts that the letter is not quite what it professes to be. It was not really written in the reign of Philadelphus, and it mingles fancy with true tradition. It may well be true that the Law (the letter does not speak of the other books) was translated in the time of Philadelphus, and in Alexandria. But it is most unlikely that it was done by elect doctors of Jerusalem for the king's library. The 'pseudos' or pretence of the letter on some obvious points allows us to criticise its other statements, and the character of the version (which is its glory) proclaims the 'popularity' of the work. It is the language of the Alexandrian streets broken into a simple literary purpose. The parish priests of Alexandria made it, and their parishioners heard it in church and read it at home. As in Palestine the Law was read to the people in the synagogue in Aramaic, and at last these Aramaic paraphrases or Targums were written down, so it happened also in the Greek synagogues of Egypt.

At least that is a reasonable guess, if it be not pressed

beyond a guess. The precise course of this piece of literary history we do not know. The letter of Aristeas gives a likely place and date. The language and style of the version makes it probable that the needs of the synagogue in Egypt led to the same sort of thing being done there as was done for the same reason in Palestine. But there was also a notable difference. The Septuagint sometimes adds to the text such stories as Susanna, and Bel and the Dragon, but the Targums embroider more freely. The Targums are paraphrases, the Septuagint is a conscientious translation. The Targums (*pace* Semitic enthusiasts) are hardly literature, the Septuagint is great literature. In the days when it was made Greek was dying pompously. It revived indeed with a grand, classical, academic resurrection. But the Septuagint inaugurated a better resurrection. It braced up the languid literary style with the vigour of everyday speech. It followed naturally the short sentences of its Hebrew original and carved a terse utterance which could be easily read aloud and easily followed by the simplest hearer. And at the same time it never lost the decent state of a book language any more than Burns did in his Scots poems. It was the rude beginning of a new form of noble art. The writers of the New Testament learned their craftmanship in this vigorous and sincere school, and thus carried forward the tradition to something like perfection. They proved it capable of very varied application, and the variety of New Testament writing is no small part of the charm of that monument, not only of religion but of art. But in the excellent music of the synoptic Gospels what Aristotle said of Greek tragedy was again proved true; having changed many changes it attained its proper form and then it soon ceased. Some reminiscence of this manly new Greek lingers in the Christian Fathers, and in the prayers of the Greek liturgies. Then it wholly disappears.

The Septuagint led the way to all that missionary

scholarship of the Church out of which a thousand versions have since sprung. It remains a model of language for those whose business it is to rough-hew versions in new dialects. But it has a further interest to the student of the Old Testament. It witnesses to ancient variations of text in the Hebrew scriptures. Our English versions, R.V. and A.V., are made from the text which is still printed in Hebrew Bibles. This is called the Massoretic text from the word Massora or tradition. We can trace it to the second, or possibly the first century A.D., and we have all but no manuscript evidence for any other text. Thus the text of the Old Testament is in a very different condition from that of the New Testament where abundant and early manuscript authority has enabled us to get behind the medieval text which our Authorised Version represents, to the text which our Revised Version represents, the text, at least approximately, of the apostolic age itself. Hence there are places in the Old Testament where the Hebrew is certainly corrupt; *e.g.* in 1 Sam. xiii. 1 the Hebrew says that Saul was one year old when he began to reign, and in Ps. xxii. 16 the Hebrew has 'like a lion' for 'they pierced.' We cannot get any help from the Hebrew manuscripts since they all give the same text. Some resort to conjectural emendation, and sometimes very startling and even wild conjectures have been made which can never satisfy those who have been trained in the exact methods of New Testament textual criticism. But some approach to those exacter methods is afforded by the Septuagint. It often differs from the Massoretic Hebrew in such a way as to show that the translators followed another Hebrew text; it stands for an ancient line of Hebrew manuscripts now lost. There are complications in this use of it. Some variations may be mere imperfections of rendering, some (as in 1 Sam. xiii. 1) conjectural emendations made by the Greek translators; sometimes the true text of the Septuagint

itself has suffered alteration in course of its transmission. But those niceties of criticism lie beyond our purpose. The broad result of all which has been said is that the Septuagint shows a freedom in the choice of text and of interpretation which was once allowed in the Jewish Church but after the first century A.D. was no longer allowed there.

It also witnesses to a freedom once allowed but afterwards restrained in drawing the limits of the canon. To speak roughly, our Apocrypha represents the excess of the Alexandrian over the Palestinian Bible. These books or parts of books have come to us—an exception will be noticed presently—in Greek. They have come to us through the primitive Church which was mainly Greek-speaking. The primitive Church took over the Greek Bible of the Jews, though by that time the Jewish rabbis were drawing their lines more strictly round sacred things. They excluded from their authoritative collection of writings both the Greek additions of the Septuagint and the Aramaic embroideries of the Targumic paraphrases. This is to speak roughly however. There was no Greek canon in the sense that there was at last a Hebrew canon. The margin of the Septuagint was vague. Some copies would have this, some that book. Not chance indeed, but rather liturgical fitness decided which books should be privileged in the end. We only keep two books of the Maccabees, but 3 and 4 Maccabees are Septuagintal books, and Dr. Charles says that Enoch was quite a canonical book to the early Church. On the other hand The Prayer of Manasses was not in the Septuagint at all. It is an early Christian writing which cannot be traced beyond the third or second century A.D.; and if canonicity is to be settled by appeal to antiquity, it is less canonical than Enoch.

It might be objected that canonicity does not come into the question. The Apocrypha are not canonical. These 'other books (as Hierome saith) the Church doth

read for example of life and instruction of manners; but yet doth it not apply them to establish any doctrine.' So runs the sixth of our Articles of Religion. But it is not clear that the primitive Church would have quite understood that article. Before Hierome's, or S. Jerome's, day there was no widespread interest in exact lists of the sacred books. On the other hand S. Jerome, who lived in Palestine, and learned somewhat more than merely the Hebrew language from Jewish instructors, did import into the Christian Church some of the strictness of rabbinic Judaism. Before his time there was little idea of a hard and fast division between the right 'Hebrew' books and the 'others.' He fought hard for the distinction and said stronger things about it than the Article quotes. He would perhaps have preferred something more than distinction; he might have gone so far as total exclusion. As things turned out, the medieval Western Church paid little attention to his protest, but the reformed English Church has, until lately, come near to fulfilling his austerest advices. We have indeed continued to read a small part of the Apocrypha in church, but in Bibles printed for home use these books have generally found no place. Of late however this has been altered, and Bibles are now commonly published with the whole Apocrypha included.

This fashion, whether it be a new one or an old one revived, cannot but rouse some misgiving. To cut out the Apocrypha altogether is to separate ourselves from the primitive Church on a most important part of the rule of faith; it would also deprive us of some books of almost first-rate importance to religion, and of one (1 Maccabees) which is of quite first-rate importance to religious history. But there are some parts of the Apocrypha which scarcely do seem fit for a place in the modern Church's collection of sacred books. Bel and the Dragon is an obvious example. Part of the story of

Tobit is almost as embarrassing, though other parts of that book are exceedingly beautiful and eminently fitted 'for example of life and instruction of manners.' It is difficult to be whole-hearted for the inclusion of the fierce story of Judith or even of Susanna. And yet these have played so large a part in Christian thought and Christian art that it would be intolerable to cast them aside. To these tales of the Apocrypha most Englishmen would be quite ready to apply the term 'legend'; hardly any one takes them as matter-of-fact history. There are in the Old Testament proper some stories which many, though perhaps not most, would say were also of the nature of legend. Yet there is a difference. In the Old Testament these stories are interwoven in contexts which lend them solemnity. It might be argued that we should be more ready to interpret these aright if we were accustomed to see this apocryphal border-land shading off into the common light of outside literature. But in reality this argument is less convincing than that other argument from contexts. The fact is, this is no mere modern scruple. S. Jerome may have introduced a certain prosaic stiffness into the interpretation of the Scriptures. He probably did; the Church of the Vulgate did lose some of that instinct for poetry and variety and the sweet mystery of language which the Church of the Septuagint still enjoyed. But such loss is the condition of gain, and what S. Jerome created for us was that sense of the unique purity and grandeur of Scripture which, with all our perverse literalism, we hold firm to-day; and which, once given, cannot be parted with again, any more than a grown man can become a child.

Might not we, who stand in some sense 'at the end of these days,' venture to adopt something from all who have gone before us; from S. Jerome his jealousy for purest Scripture, from the early Church their freedom to give and take books in the margin of the canon, from

the Septuagint translators their boldness in selecting and re-selecting the actual text of these peculiar books? 'New theologies' are not safe in our handling; this age of ours is no creative age. But a rearrangement of the Apocrypha might seem just the task we are fitted for. We might publish one edition of the apocryphal books by themselves. This should be a full edition in which nothing should be lost, and to which perhaps something might be added, *e.g.* The Psalms of Solomon with the 'Odes,' and part at least of Enoch. Then in the smaller edition which would be bound with the rest of the Bible, everything should be included from the present collection which is appointed, or might be appointed in a revised lectionary, to be read in church, or might seem suitable for reading in church on special occasions even though no definite provision were made for such occasions in the lectionary. This smaller Apocrypha should contain not only certain books—Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch (with perhaps the epistle of Jeremiah), The Song of the Three Holy Children, The Prayer of Manasses, 1 Maccabees, but also selections from other books; parts of Tobit would certainly be included, and some verses from the prayers in 'the rest of Esther' could hardly be omitted. It is hard to leave out 2 Maccabees; the famous passages about Heliodorus and the martyrs are necessary to those who would enjoy Christian art and the epistle to the Hebrews. Yet they really are scarce suitable for our devotions. That parallel yet astonishingly divergent account of the return from the Captivity and its sequel which we have in 1 Esdras was no doubt the account which the early Church accepted in preference to Nehemiah and Ezra. It is another recension of the narrative which begins with Josiah's passover, 2 Chron. xxxv., and extends through Ezra and Nehemiah. In the main it seems to be a Greek translation from a parallel Hebrew recension of Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah; one recension was preserved at Alexandria, the other by the Palestinian

rabbis. If this were made popular again it might help us to remember the uncertainty which surrounds the records we possess of this period of the return, but there would not be much gain in that, especially as the better known Ezra-Nehemiah really is the better history. And perhaps the chief cause of the popularity which the Greek book so long maintained was the story of the three guardsmen who disputed about the strongest thing in the world, and the victory of Zerubbabel—one of the three and the hero of this recension—who stood for Truth; 'and all the people then shouted, and said, Great is truth, and strong above all things'—'*magna est veritas et praevalet*' as the familiar quotation from the Vulgate has it (1 Esd. iv. 41). Perhaps one lection, selected with large omissions from ch. iv., would be enough from this book. For fine as the climax of this story is, the rest is hardly level with the dignity of the Bible. The story seems to have an origin separate from the main body of the book. It is translated from some popular tale in Aramaic. It cannot pretend to be history. Yet in its context it seems to make that claim; and if read in full without any context at all it would have an awkward ambiguity about it. The point might be illustrated by contrast with a story in the prophets where the context makes all clear. The book of Jonah seems rather out of place among the prophets for it is throughout rather a story than a prophecy. Like Habakkuk however it also contains a very noble psalm, and that psalm indicates how one incident in the story at any rate is to be understood. The psalm is a thanksgiving of a servant of the Lord who has learned to trust Him by terrible experience which is pictured as being 'compassed about with waters, even to the soul,' as 'going down to the bottoms of the mountains,' and as being 'brought up again from the pit.' The story tells of one who bears the name of an early prophet mentioned in Kings; who was entrusted with a mission of mercy to the heathen oppressor of

Israel, the Assyrian at Nineveh; who mistrusted the LORD and tried to escape his duty; and who was converted to faithfulness by being thrown into the sea, swallowed by a sea-monster, and at last saved by that fearful means. The Hebrew of this story is quite obviously far later than the time of Jonah of Amittai, the prophet of the book of Kings. The psalm in fact pictures a spiritual experience in the fashion of the psalmists, the story pictures a like spiritual experience in the simple parabolic fashion of many of the later Jewish teachers. Our Lord did not disdain to refer to it, and it should be read by no one who has not the holy childlike mind which He specially commended. Less disciplined readers however may delight in the charitable lesson of the concluding chapter: 'And the LORD said, Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night: and should not I have pity on Nineveh, that great city; wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?' (Jon. iv. 10, 11). Here then is a story which might seem, and indeed does to many readers seem quite as light and legendary as the story of the guardsmen. Yet when taken as part of the whole to which it belongs, it grows in beauty and meaning. It will still remain an example of that grave kindliness to the little children's mind which is so frequent and so delightful in the Old Testament. But rightly and wholly understood it loses no depth thereby. We cannot say the same of the story of the guardsmen, and though it would be rash to draw a line and put everything in the Apocrypha below it, nevertheless the general distinction holds; the Old Testament proper shows this capacity for exalting the humble and meek parts of its literature, and the apocryphal books do not. Even Esther, which academic piety rates low, has a directness and a natural ring which is

unlike Apocrypha ; and the simple souls of schoolboys find the story extremely interesting.

Indeed the Apocrypha sometimes betray even an opposite tendency. The finest of them all in many respects is the Wisdom of Solomon. Its great hopeful doctrine of immortality, its poetic imagery, its almost philosophic 'idea' of wisdom, its still more beautiful mingling of that idea with a religious consciousness of the universal movement of the Spirit of God, its phrases so often happy and sometimes so magnificent—how admirable all this is. Yet there are languors even in the best parts of the book, and in the latter chapters the grand language becomes almost bombastic. It is the most ambitiously Greek book of the Old Testament and sometimes we cannot help feeling that the author's literary ambition spoils his really noble thoughts, and that by a kind of reaction he becomes not only Jewish again at the end, but narrowly, fiercely Jewish. Still the book is beautiful, often most beautiful. No Bible could be considered complete without it. Yet the Western-minded people who are most enthusiastic for it on a first reading, do generally acquiesce at last in the judgement of the Church, which puts Sirach higher, naming his 'the church book'—Ecclesiasticus.

A book which certainly must be included in this smaller collection we are vaguely dreaming of, is 1 Maccabees. Antiochus Epiphanes, King of Syria, 175-164 B.C., determined to make his whole empire thoroughly Hellenic. The Jews of Palestine were his subjects. There was a hellenising party among them who were not altogether averse from his design, and a good deal of place-hunting was going on which led to disturbances and at last to insolent interference from Antiochus. A regular persecution set in. The whole observance of the Jewish law was proscribed. An altar for pagan worship, 'the abomination of desolation,' was set up in the temple

precincts. But Jewish obstinacy was too stiff, and Jewish zeal too hot, for the fierceness of the oppressor or the acquiescence of the worldly or timid majority to overcome it. God raised up 'a little help,' and in three short years what seemed impossible was accomplished. The 'saints' who rallied round the Maccabean brothers wore out the armies of the great king, and in 165 B.C. the temple was purged and re-dedicated, and the true religion was made firm for ever. When, two centuries later, Titus destroyed the temple, or when, a century later still, Barcochba's revolt brought absolute ruin to all the external ambitions of Judaism, there was no question of the survival of the religion. The party of the Law only planted their hedge thicker and closer, and strict rabbinic Judaism continued to guard the sacred deposit —in readiness for the larger day of S. Paul's vision.

In 1 Maccabees we have a good history of those stirring times. It is a Greek translation from a Hebrew original, as S. Jerome tells us, and Dr. Oesterley (who has edited the book in the Oxford corpus of Apocrypha already referred to) says that 'one of the chief sources of information utilised by the writer seems to have been the accounts given him by eyewitnesses of many of the events recorded.' This appears the more likely when we contrast the imperfect knowledge he shows of the constitution of republican Rome. But that comes in the latter part of the story, when the religious fervour of the warrior 'saints' is already beginning to mingle with politics. If our select collection is to be purely first-rate in literary and devotional interest, the first seven chapters of the book are as much as we shall need. And if the omission of the rest would make this brief extract thoroughly well known, the omission would be almost justified. As things are, this matchless piece of history is embedded in a mass of writings which are little read, and in consequence, the character of the late Jewish Church and of some other parts of the Old Testament

is hardly understood. Theodore of Mopsuestia at the end of the fourth century A.D. showed how well a number of psalms fit the Maccabean period, and of late it has been often argued that many psalms of persecuted (and sometimes, too militant) 'saints' were actually composed then. There are difficulties in the argument and we need not press it. But we may reflect that these 'saints,' with their thorough-going unworldliness, show a side of the Jewish Church which probably reaches beyond Maccabean days both before and after. They represent the heroism of faith, supra-rational aspirations, thirst for the Kingdom of Heaven and its righteousness alone, an idealism more popular than that of the early prophets, and more akin to that of the people in our Lord's day when they were expecting and all were reasoning in their hearts concerning John whether he could possibly be the Messiah (Luke iii. 15). In a word the Maccabean struggle witnesses to the strong apocalyptic spirit of the post-exilic Jewish Church, and it is rather remarkable to find that spirit working there among staunch defenders of the Law. We have heard much of this spirit during the last few years, and we are inclined to separate it from 'legalism' rather sharply. The history of the Maccabees may teach us to enlarge our idea, and to remember that the apocalyptic hope was, and is, manifold and elusive.

We must think largely of it therefore; but we are bound to think much of it; for, as Dr. Headlam says in his study of S. Paul, apocalyptic is religion. And the significance of the latest criticism in both Old and New Testament is really the significance of a 'revival'; rationalising thought is being transformed into religious thought, and the aims of progressive civilisation are being invigorated by ideal morality; and strange to say, academic criticism has had much to do with this change. What has happened about the New Testament is this. S. Mark has been proved to be the earliest Gospel, and

to have been used in the composition of S. Matthew and S. Luke. Moreover the consistency of the narrative in S. Mark shows that it is an historical document which, even on strictly critical grounds, may be trusted. But this document shows that our Lord believed Himself to be, and acted as the Christ or Messiah whom the Jews of His day were expecting; this is the main theme and interest of the narrative. So far there is nothing new to plain readers, though critical readers have for many years been apt to assume that our Lord's teaching about the fatherhood of God, and His own example of love, were the heart of the Gospel, while the more particularly Jewish and Messianic parts, which are less intelligible to the reasoning piety of these days, were the colour that a later generation added to the pure simplicity of His actual life and speech. The new critics refuse to allow this arbitrary separation. They recognise the strangeness of these Messianic ideas, but they point out that these ideas are no added touches, but run through the whole narrative, explain the willing death upon the Cross, and explain too the apostolic doctrine of the Godhead of the Lord; a divine Christ who should in a wonderful manner bring in the Kingdom of God, and coming with that Kingdom judge the quick and dead, was the Christ whom the Jews of that time expected; the death of our Lord was the predestined, world-transforming act, which He performed in His conscious Messiahship. The apostles' faith was the Jewish faith completed by their conviction that their Master who had died and risen again was the Messiah.

All this is a confirmation of the ordinary belief of the Church, and the novelty is that criticism, instead of altering, establishes it. Less welcome at first sight is the complementary argument that our Lord seems, when due weight is allowed to the whole of the record, to have taught and expected that the Kingdom of Heaven would come at once, and that this did not happen. As

to this difficulty, it will be enough to say here that we cannot tell the secret workings of His mind; that if He really did expect an immediate fulfilment of what proved to be a long-continuing process of which the end is not even now seen, this might be a condition of (that most important part of the catholic faith) His real and therefore limited manhood; and that the rest of the New Testament is an expression of the Church's gradually expanding faith from the early expectation of His simple 'coming' to the more complex idea of His 'manifestation.' The force of this last sentence will be felt if Acts i. 6 be compared with 1 John iii. 2. No doubt the difficulty of this line of criticism is great, though to reverent and patient students, who will follow it out with the modesty of churchmen, its promise is greater than its difficulty. In a study of the Old Testament it is enough to say that it points to an equal recognition of the true Godhead and true manhood of our Lord, to the general integrity of the New Testament writings, to belief in a new beginning and a final act of God as the essence of the Christian faith, and to the acceptance of the ideal morality of the sermon on the mount as the essence of Christian morality.

The bearing of the whole matter on our present subject is this. The Messianic idea in the Gospel is not simply the fulfilment of the ancient prophecy of Isaiah and the earlier prophets; it is the fulfilment of that ancient prophecy as continued and in large measure transformed by the apocalyptic prophecy of the late centuries of Judaism. On the whole the ancient prophets dealt with their own times, proclaimed in the political troubles of their own times the LORD's judgement on His sinful people, and promised the establishment of righteousness and true happiness when the purging of that judgement should be finished; as Isaiah said, 'a remnant should return.' On the whole the later apocalyptic prophets encouraged a persecuted but faith-

ful company of saints by telling them of the end of this present world and the coming of 'new heavens and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness' (cf. 2 Pet. iii. 13). It is a mistake to draw the line of distinction too sharply. Both in time and in thought the two kinds of prophecy shade into one another, but on the whole the distinction is just. The terms themselves point to the distinction. 'Prophecy' means 'proclaiming,' and the message of the prophets was 'thus saith the Lord.' 'Apocalypse' means 'revelation,' 'discovery,' and the theme of the apocalypses is the showing of things that are about to happen. The word is Greek and perhaps implies the discovery of that which is veiled though it is already here. But such a conception was not very natural to the Hebrew mind. There probably was no Hebrew word to describe this kind of literature, and the Jews were content with the simple notion of an event which should happen in the future; as we say still, 'at the end of the world.' It is this Hebraic simplicity about the time idea which causes the difficulty in the apocalyptic reading of the Gospels; S. John's term 'manifestation' is a step towards the translation of the Hebraic picturesque thought into the Greek philosophical thought. Of course both modes of thinking are but modes of man's limited intellect, and the reality they aim at still lies out of reach.

But it is a reality, and this later Jewish literature is in some important respects an advance on the older prophecy. As art its language is inferior, and its appeal to the heart is therefore less triumphant. It is more dogmatic and has the advantages and disadvantages of that quality; and it is saved from narrowness by its variety, and by its faculty for continual renewal, as simple piety again and again rescues its ideas from political ambition—the Gospel is the record of a supreme rescue of that kind. But its chief distinction is what S. Teresa called 'glorious folly,' 'heavenly madness,' an

enthusiasm which indeed is perilous, but without which 'the new life' is never lived.

Prophecy shades into apocalyptic. Nevertheless the difference can generally be discerned. Isaiah may be read many times without the reader noticing how strongly marked a character of its own the section xxiv.-xxvii. has. But that is like the unbotanical countryman never noticing the differences in brambles. As soon as the distinct species have been pointed out to him, he can never confuse them again. As clearly in these chapters may the marks of apocalyptic be pointed out and then be plain for ever. Zechariah, like Haggai, was a prophet of the 'Return.' Both warned and encouraged the 'remnant' in Judah at the time of the building of the second temple. But the latter half of the book of Zechariah is quite distinct from the first. Here this apocalyptic expectation appears, of the ruin of the world as it is and the creation of a new heaven and new earth upon its ruin. Jerusalem shall indeed be the name of the happy city of the new world (Zech. xiv.), but it is a Jerusalem which has passed through an unearthly change: 'And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be with brightness and with gloom: but it shall be one day which is known unto the LORD; not day, and not night: but it shall come to pass, that *at evening time there shall be light*' (xiv. 6, 7). That is one of many magnificently consolatory phrases in this second part of Zechariah. They cannot be fully understood. They are the antithesis of rationalism. Apocalyptic writings offer them freely to simple piety. Haggai and Zechariah have their own strength, wisdom, inspiration, but this 'unexpressive nuptial song' of the heart of the people was not theirs to sing. Even so Milton knew something when he wrote *Lycidas*, which he had forgotten when he composed *Paradise Lost*. There are other things in these later chapters of Zechariah which indicate their later date; *e.g.* ix. 13,

'I will stir up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece.' That could hardly have been written at the beginning of the Persian period. This prophet knows Greece and speaks apocalyptically. As usual with such critical observations, one hint confirms another; so called 'subjective' conjecture is reduced to a minimum in the end.

Two other short prophetical books, Obadiah and Joel, are suffused with this apocalyptic colour. But they have other characteristics also. It is not surprising that various opinions have been held about their date, and we shall be well advised if we refuse to accept any definite statement. Obadiah refers to the fall of Jerusalem and to Edom's cruel behaviour at that time. Judgement is prophesied upon Edom. This passes into a larger view of almost world-judgement and of final restoration for Zion and her scattered people. The last verse shows the strange fashion in which national fierceness is mingled with a great spiritual hope: 'And saviours shall come up on Mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the LORD's.' The problem of date and composition is complicated by many close resemblances to the book of Jeremiah. It is perhaps still more profitable to compare the way in which Edom is denounced in Isa. lxiii. and Ps. cxxxvii. A mere allusion to these passages has of course the appearance of arguing in a circle. But the allusion is worth making as at least a hint to students who care to pursue the subject. They may consider whether it be not justifiable to say that most of the harsh references to Edom (and to Babylon also) are a good deal later than the fall of Jerusalem. At that terrible time prophets were more occupied with penitence than with vengeance. That first. But secondly it may be considered whether these references, when they were made, were not more religious than crudely national; whether Babylon and Edom had not begun to be symbols of spiritual foes—

as Sodom, Egypt, Babylon are in the Apocalypse of S. John, or as we sing in the hymn 'Zion in her anguish with Babylon must cope.' If that should be so, this prophecy of Obadiah gains in spiritual beauty. Joel begins with the description of a plague of locusts. That seems to pass into a description of an invading army, so that in ch. ii. we can hardly tell whether locusts or soldiers are meant. Then the vision takes a wider sweep and culminates in the glorious promise of the outpouring of the LORD's spirit upon all flesh 'before the great and terrible day of the LORD come' with its portents of blood and fire. From this point the apocalyptic colour becomes strong, and in iii. 6 (as in the second part of Zechariah) the mention of 'the Grecians' makes a late date probable. Yet the opening of the book is different, and it almost seems as if a prophecy of the old style, starting from a contemporary visitation, had been combined with a later apocalyptic vision. Such newer applications of earlier warning or consolation may have been not unusual. Something of the same kind may account for the difficulty which has been felt in the New Testament about the date of its Apocalypse. Was the war with Rome, which ended with the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., its occasion, or some later trial? It is possible that an earlier book of divine encouragement was republished when a later trial called for inspired words both old and new.

One book in our Apocrypha (not in the Septuagint and only in an appendix to the Vulgate) is an apocalypse which belongs to the trial of 70 A.D. This is 2 Esdras. It is only known to us in versions and is translated in our Bible from the Latin, but it was originally written in Hebrew. It consoles the Jews after that fall of Jerusalem. The use of an ancient name (here Esdras or Ezra) is so common a feature in apocalypses that it might be called the accepted literary device for them. Sometimes this book promises the overthrow of the

Roman conqueror, sometimes a spiritual joy at the end of the world. This variety may indicate a variety of material used by an author who composed his book in the second century A.D. Chapters i. and ii., xv. and xvi., are only found in the Latin version. They are later additions; the two first chapters are Christian additions. This apocalypse should be compared with the Baruch in our Bible, and with an extra-canonical apocalypse of Baruch, both of which offer a like consolation to Jews on the same occasion. This book must be read in the Revised Version; it contains a long passage in ch. vii. which is wanting in the Authorised Version. This passage was recovered to the Latin version by the late Professor Bensly in 1875 from a manuscript at Amiens. The earnest, thoughtful religion of 2 Esdras is very noble. It helps to explain S. Paul, and shows that a movement of faith, not unlike his, was at work within the Jewish Church. 2 Esdras must certainly be included in our select Apocrypha, and its readers should deepen their appreciation of it by studying Mr. Box's introduction, either in the Oxford corpus or in his separate edition of the book (*The Ezra-Apocalypse*, Pitman, 1912).

A great number of these apocalypses seem to have been produced in the centuries immediately before and after the ministry of our Lord. They were something like our hymns; founded on Scripture but containing elements of extra-scriptural tradition, and expressing popular religion. The most famous of those outside the canon was Enoch, or rather a whole series of Enochs of various dates. But the greatest of all was Daniel. This was of a less frankly popular character, more purely scriptural; at least it was such in the form which gained a late entrance into the writings of the Palestinian canon. And after our long digression, Daniel brings us back to the Maccabees in whose heroic resistance this book seems to have played a notable part.

Few passages in the Old Testament leave so vivid a picture in our mind as the stories in Daniel, yet when we examine them we wonder perhaps why this should be. They lack detail; they have none of that fresh actuality of life which we enjoy so much in 2 Samuel or in S. Mark's Gospel. Further consideration however explains their power. In the broad lines there is skilful drawing of character. Nebuchadnezzar appeals to our sympathy in his lonely greatness; his rage and fury are but the waves which disturb the surface of a strangely deep mind, apt for piety and yearning for faith. Again, we are made to feel the contrast between the apparent strength of these oriental monarchs and the real mutability of their fortunes; of their short-sighted plans and the steadfastness of Daniel whose eyes are fixed on eternity; and all through we realise the presence of the omnipotent Ruler of the world. His arm is ever stretched out and we expect His intervention; His voice is ever sounding above the royal decrees and the courtiers' jealousies and the noise of heathen worshippers. These are in fact no mere stories of strange events, they are symbols through which a powerful mind compels us to perceive the real meaning of history. Kings and nations rise and fall and are scattered 'like the chaff of the summer threshing floors.' Brave men endure and are delivered when things are at the worst. And all through the course of ages the God of Heaven is establishing 'a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people.' Line after line is added to the picture, and not a line but tells, until the reader suddenly takes the meaning and knows 'that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men and giveth it to whomsoever He will.' Then he is fit to go on to those curious visions which do not at first impress us nearly so forcibly as the stories. With this clue however in our minds, we find that all through their varied imagery the same principle is being brought

out. In one and all the same scene is unfolded. First there is a confused jostling disorder of violent powers in conflict, then the absolute unchanging authority which works behind them comes into view, and the earthly powers drop to pieces and fall into nothingness, while He that sits upon the throne of everlasting dominion establishes in their place His kingdom upon earth.

But when we have gone so far we find ourselves led farther. A principle is set forth in stories and visions alike, but it is impossible to read the visions carefully without perceiving that this principle is being applied to certain particular circumstances. Again and again the same succession of world powers is symbolised. They begin with the Babylonian empire and they end with a particular king, who arises when the last empire has been divided into parts, over one of which he reigns. He is a tyrant, a fierce but subtle politician, a blasphemer who lifts himself against all that is called divine, and chiefly against the saints of the Most High; he lays waste 'the glorious land,' interrupts the sacred worship, and defiles the temple. It is evident that the whole book is written on account of this king. The author's purpose is to encourage his countrymen in the oppression under which they suffer, to arouse in them both penitence and hope, to assure them that God still protects them, is raising up help for them, and will in a short time overthrow the oppressor and establish on the ruins of his pride the divine everlasting kingdom which shall be the kingdom of His own saints.

Many explanations of these successive empires have been proposed, but if we lay prepossessions aside, we can hardly avoid the conclusion that the explanation which the author himself gives in ch. viii. of one vision is suitable for them all. The last empire mentioned there is, he says, that of Greece, *i.e.* of Alexander the Great. It will be broken up (as Alexander's was after his death)

into four kingdoms, 'and in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. And his power shall be mighty, and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper and do his pleasure: and he shall destroy the mighty ones and the holy people. And through his policy he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and in his security shall he destroy many: he shall also stand up against the prince of princes.' When we compare this with the details which are given in other visions of this king's alliances, wars, and action against the worship of the Jews, and when on the other hand we read in the books of the Maccabees the history of Antiochus Epiphanes, King of Syria, and the struggle of the Jews against him, there can remain no doubt in our minds that this Antiochus is the person meant. He came to the throne of Syria 175 B.C., having passed some time as a hostage at Rome, where he conceived the ambition of bringing all his dominions to uniformity of worship and manners under the pattern of the West. Western ideas had already penetrated into Palestine, and there were many Jews who were willing to fall in with his plan. Not all however; the party of the 'saints' or orthodox was bitterly opposed to such innovation, and when in 168 B.C. stringent laws were enforced against Jewish worship and observance of the Law, a champion was found to lead the resistance. This was Mattathias of Modin, the father of the Maccabees, a priest who slew an apostate Jew when he was about to offer pagan sacrifice in obedience to the king's officer. The officer was also slain and the revolt began (1 Macc. ii.). Further repetition of what has been already told is unnecessary. It is enough to say once more that in three years the Maccabean party gained all but complete success. The war indeed continued, but with political rather than religious purposes thence-

forward. Religious liberty had been gained, the desolate sanctuary restored. The heathen altar or abomination had indeed been set up (Dan. xi. 31, 1 Macc. i. 54); there had been in the course of those troubled times shocking losses such as were never forgotten—one of them, the murder of a certain high priest of blameless life and steadfast faith, seems to be alluded to in Dan. ix. 26, as affording a date from which to count the periods of the contest (cf. 2 Macc. iii., iv. and xv. 12), but the cleansing of the temple and dedication of the restored altar in 165 B.C., ever afterwards commemorated in the yearly feast of Dedication (1 Macc. iv.), was the deliverance promised by the author of this book, which with truly prophetic boldness he had predicted would come to pass in three years and a half (Dan. vii. 25, xii. 7).

A tradition of the Jews was that Daniel himself wrote the book during the Babylonian captivity, but this can hardly have been their original tradition, or it would surely have been placed in the prophetical division of their Bible. No such date or authorship is claimed in the book itself. The stories are narrated about Daniel by some one else, who also introduces the visions in which Daniel speaks in the first person. Of course Daniel might have written about himself in this manner, but when either stories or visions are examined it becomes impossible to suppose that he did. There are perhaps touches which show knowledge of Babylonian life, but not many, and some knowledge of the kind would have been within reach of a later writer, especially of one so interested in historical research as (on the theory of later authorship) the writer of the visions was. On the other hand some things are said which one who lived in those times could hardly have said. What siege of Jerusalem took place in the reign of Jehoiakim (Dan. i. 1)? Is not this a confusion between Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin (cf. Susanna 1)? Who was

Darius the Mede? No such king is known in history. The 'Chaldeans' were in the time of the captivity simply the ruling people of Babylonia, but in these stories they are a special caste of wise men. What the author of the book seems indeed to claim is not that he is Daniel, but that he is in possession of some records of visions, seen and written out by Daniel, and sealed up for the use of that future generation to which he himself belongs (Dan. viii. 26, x. 14, xii. 4, 9). But this again is hardly possible. On any theory of prophecy it is difficult to suppose that Daniel would have foretold the course of several centuries of history as we find it unfolded in these visions. First comes a long period of which the information is vague and inaccurate—the kingdoms of Media and Persia are treated as separate and successive; the numbers which are so elaborately calculated can hardly be explained except on the supposition that the early chronology is imperfectly understood. Then comes part of the reign of Antiochus which is presented with remarkable detail and exactness, *i.e.* down to the year 168, when his insult was offered to the Jewish religion. Then there is a brief prediction, more than once repeated, definite and almost but not quite exactly correct, that in three years and a half the trouble shall be overpast. Lastly, the death of Antiochus is foretold in a vague manner which does not correspond with the facts. The analogy of prophecy would not lead us to expect that Daniel should foretell in full and accurate detail the events of a far distant age, but much less should we expect this to be done for one short period of a distant age, while the years which precede and follow that period are treated inaccurately.

And the evidence of language seems decisive. The book is written partly in Hebrew (i.-ii. 3, viii.-xii.), partly in Aramaic (ii. 4-vii.). In the margin of the Authorised Version the latter language is called Chaldee, which suggests that it was the language spoken in Babylon

during the captivity. That however is not the case. So much more is known now about these ancient oriental languages than was known sixty years ago, that we can decide with a certainty which was impossible even to a scholar like Dr. Pusey, that the Aramaic of Daniel is the western Aramaic, used by the people of Palestine when, a good while after 'the return,' Hebrew had begun to die out as a spoken language. The Hebrew of Daniel fits in with this. As Hebrew decayed it came to be written by scholars in two forms. On the one hand it degenerated into rabbinic Hebrew. The book of Ecclesiastes is (as we have already seen) an example of Hebrew undergoing that change. On the other hand classicists, like the authors of Chronicles and the original Hebrew of Ecclesiasticus, imitated the ancient style. The Hebrew of Daniel is of this imitative, 'renaissance' style. This may account for the book being written by one author in two languages. Just at that time such a combination of the vulgar tongue with the classical would not be altogether unnatural. It is possible that the Hebrew sections are translations. The original Aramaic of these parts having been lost, the loss was supplied from the version which had remained complete. In either case Daniel, apart from its other great qualities, is interesting as an early and successful experiment in the use of the vulgar tongue for a dignified literary purpose. For the Aramaic part is the best. Even the English reader can perceive that. His classical fetters cramp the writer's mind; freed from them his thought is richer and more active.

All this must be held to prove a comparatively late date, at least for the present form of the book. And when we find further that it contains Greek words—'dulcimer' (iii. 5) is in the original *symphonia* written in Semitic letters—we feel at once that this answers to the other evidence which leads us to assign it to the time of Antiochus.

But if so, the question will be asked, why did the author choose this curious mode of uttering the message God had given him; why should he not have spoken in his own person as the old prophets did; why does he represent Daniel as foretelling history instead of himself plainly interpreting history? Why, again, is he never plain in his utterance, but so bent upon wrapping everything up in this remarkable disguise? The answer is that such was the fashion of the time. A psalmist (whom some would put at about this time, Ps. lxxiv. 9), and the historian of the Maccabees (1 Macc. iv. 46, ix. 27, xiv. 41), confess regretfully that the period of prophecy is finished. The message, if given at all, must be given now by way of teaching, not by authoritative enunciation, 'Thus saith the LORD.' Hence this literature of apocalypses. Daniel is greater than most apocalypses. But it is one. Its imagery, its interest in the closing of the present age and the coming of the heavenly kingdom, its supposed connexion with a hero of old time (cf. Ez. xiv. 14, 20), all prove this. When we recognise that, we are relieved from suspicion of dishonesty in the author. No doubt since the time when 'grace and truth came by Jesus Christ' such a fictitious form as he has employed might seem hardly fit for the solemnity of a message from God. But if we could imagine the author among us now, and hearing that objection raised, we might suppose him to answer: Yes, I see what you mean, and I partly agree with you, but I wrote then in the way which seemed to me and my readers most reverent. I did not mean to deceive them and they were not deceived. The inspiration which I believed myself to have received was not of such a kind as to warrant my speaking plainly and authoritatively like one of the old prophets.

We may consider then that he suggested rather than proclaimed truth; he was a poet of a temporary fashion but great in that fashion, and we cannot doubt that

his book, if it moves us now, moved those who first read it far more. In that tumultuous time, when men's hearts were failing, and it seemed as though God had forsaken His people; when on the other hand a new spirit was beginning to stir among those patriots who were about to rise in arms and defend their faith against such odds; what an impulse must have been given by the appearance of this magnificent work, with its examples of courage and fidelity drawn from the ancient traditions of Israel, its keen discernment of the significance of past history, its deliberate and assured promise of speedy deliverance now that the 'little help' (Dan. xi. 34) was arising—'And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was above the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half' (Dan. xii. 7); three years and a half, no longer, shall the oppressor hold his power; then deliverance is determined. How hearts would thrill as the refrain was repeated, 'the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will.' Above all, when they read the seventh chapter and saw the brute beasts of worldly empire striving and pushing and destroying, and then beheld the veil lifted and the Ancient of days on His throne with His ten thousand times ten thousand ministers about Him, the judgement set and the books opened. And then once more the mist gathers, and the blasphemous horn is heard speaking, till the beast is slain; and again the heavenly scene shines out, and Israel approaches God, not figured as a brute among the brutes, but as a man coming with the clouds of heaven and receiving an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away.

We know of course that the 'Son of Man' here celebrated, though in the following verses the author distinctly tells us that he stands for 'the people of the

saints of the Most High,' does also stand as a type of One greater than Israel but into whom Israel grew. This is perfectly natural and eminently scriptural. The true connexion between Jesus Christ and the Christs of the Old Testament is obscured in the English versions. The Jewish, Greek or Roman churchman knows how literally the Old Testament is full of Christ, for in their Bibles the proper title is kept wherever a king, a priest, or the whole people is termed 'the anointed.' In our versions this is lost except in Dan. ix. 25, A.V. And there the exception, being so absolutely an exception, was misleading and has been rightly corrected in the Revised Version. But though 'Christ' thus stands in the Old Testament for the imperfect national Christs, the idea is one that needs its completion in the Christ of Christs, the inheritor (as the epistle to the Hebrews puts it) of all this ancient Christship and Sonship. And still in the New Testament the large idea rules. 'Christ' (in Ephesians especially) means, not Jesus our Lord by Himself, separate from men, but Jesus the Lord and Saviour in growing union with the men whom He has redeemed. This doctrine of the Christ 'who is being all in all fulfilled' is what the Dean of Wells brought out so forcibly in his edition of Ephesians (Macmillan, 1903; the 'exposition,' which sufficiently explains this doctrine, can now be had separately). It was an apostolic doctrine which had been generally forgotten, but Tennyson had used it in his *In Memoriam*—'Ring in the Christ that is to be.' And this apostolic doctrine was a direct continuation of the Old Testament doctrine. The expected Messiah and the Messiah-nation were to the Jews one divine person not two. The godhead of Christ was to the apostles a means of real union with men, not a separation from men. In Enoch the Messianic King is pictured more 'separately'; this is one of the points in which Daniel appears more properly canonical than Enoch. Those who would pursue this subject further

will find much help in Dr. E. A. Abbott's *The Message of the Son of Man* (A. and C. Black, 1909), a small and delightful book which he wrote as preliminary to his larger *The Son of Man.*

We certainly do feel throughout Daniel that Christ is strangely near, as in the passage where the Babylonian king sees walking with the three men in the furnace the fourth whose aspect was 'like a son of the gods.' Our Lord Himself seems to have recognised this quality in the book, for from it He took His language when He wished to speak on those subjects which will least bear to be described in precise terms, His own bond of relationship with the whole of mankind, the mystery of the invisible world and those who dwell therein, His own second coming and the judgement. The large and awful poetry of the vision in which He saw himself so grandly prefigured was full of suggestion to His quick ear, and would suggest to others what could not be defined more exactly in human speech. The book of Daniel, when it first appeared, must have answered to, and drawn out into clearer faith, much which was vaguely stirring in men's minds about immortality and resurrection and things to come. Then after nearly two centuries our Lord gave new life to its symbols, while at the same time He availed himself of them to 'half reveal and half conceal' the answer to those dark questionings which exercise every generation.

This then is what the book of Daniel appears to be; a message from God modestly yet boldly delivered by some unknown author; a book which served a definite purpose when it was first read, and contributed not a little to save the faith of Israel in the living God at a time when that faith was seriously endangered. Again in our Lord's time it enabled Him to utter and men to receive some of the deepest truths He came to reveal. Perhaps we might venture to add that its faith is the faith of martyrdom and it may have been one of the

means which His Father used to point the way to His heroic sacrifice of love upon the Cross. And in our own day it still stands as a monument of how God has dealt with His people in the past, while like the other prophetic books of the Old Testament, it also speaks directly to us, encouraging, warning, instructing, reaching the conscience. It does this because it is in fact God's voice, living and answering all those appeals and questions which it is right for us to put to God. We know that it is God's voice by our own experience and by the experience of our brethren. And criticism has confirmed the voice of experience by showing how the writer really did come forward with a message from God to men who sorely needed just such a message.

That Daniel, in the proper sense of the word, prophesies of our Lord is certain. But the prophecy is not different in kind from that of the older prophets. It does not foretell details of His work and sufferings and of the events which have followed or are still to follow in their train, nor does it afford the means of making exact calculations of dates for such events. That is not the way Isaiah or Ezekiel or our Lord Himself predicted the future. This prophet, like the other canonical prophets, is the bearer of the idea of the Christ, and in his immediate concern for the people of God in his own times he shadows forth the great development that is to be. This book, like other books of prophecy, can be interpreted in its deepest sense by Christ's incarnation and victory. It does not contain a residuum of mystery which the Gospel is not competent to clear up. The more we study prophecy in general the more distinctly we perceive how closely its divine and human elements are intermingled. All that is wisest, bravest and most practical in the prophet is trained and used by God. God's way is not to startle us by unintelligible interruption of that course of events which He has chosen shall be natural; His rule is beyond, not contrary to

our intelligence; He elevates that which is natural by means which our reason most admires. He adds a remarkable, but not incredible, insight to the wisdom, courage, piety, which the prophet has already received, and which he uses with diligence worthy (as far as may be) of the gift. In such a scheme of man's obedience answering to divine prompting the book of Daniel has its proper place. It does not stand, like some other apocalypses never admitted into the canon, as an unnatural marvel, the contemplation of which might tempt thoughtful readers to doubt of the ordered and unchangeable wisdom of God—the very truth which the book is chiefly designed to establish.

A word perhaps should be added about the stories. These, we may be sure, rest upon tradition; the author did not invent them. Whether they give us plain facts we cannot either assert or deny, except in so far as there certainly are some details, already alluded to, about which the author has made historical mistakes. That these wonderful trials and deliverances did take place there can be no definite reason to deny, except the *a priori* reason that they seem to us unlikely. It is not honest to pretend that this reason is a weak one. Only it must be remembered that the ultimate difficulty about miracles is not that they lie outside the path of our experience, for our experience is continually expanding; but that it is sometimes hard for us to be satisfied that such or such a miracle is morally worth while. We cannot say that the miracles in Daniel are so well attested, or are so morally worth while, as the works of power and the resurrection of our Lord. But the questions which it is important that we should put to ourselves about Daniel are these—Is there anything mischievous in the idea that the Old Testament should contain some examples of imaginative work? Is it necessary that in such a book as Daniel the narrative should be composed with the same conscientious search

after accuracy of facts as we justly expect in a historian like the author of Samuel or of Kings? If this author made no such careful search, was the message which he delivered to his oppressed countrymen less truly on that account a message from God?

VI

THE PSALTER

The manifold faith of the Jewish Church was bound into one by the Spirit of martyrdom and the Spirit of worship—Of this latter the Psalter witnesses—Its composition; whatever the date of the several psalms the completed Psalter is late and must be interpreted in the light of mature faith—This principle applied to its doctrine of eternal life; apparent inconsistencies do not detract from its fulness of immortality—And to its doctrine of forgiveness, which is a doctrine of forgiveness rather than of sin, and is nearer to the Gospel than to the prophets—Apparent self-righteousness in the Psalter is generally the expression of the martyr spirit of loyalty—The psalms are poetry—Character of Hebrew poetry—The Song of Songs; its simple delight in nature—Lamentations; the peculiar structure of laments—Gladness of the Psalter, especially its joy in nature—This joy less naïve than in the Song; its sacramental character—Scenery of Canaan; its influence on Israel's theology; mythological tradition purified by nature-poetry—The large Messianic doctrine of the Psalter.

THE last two chapters have shown how much variety there was in the church life of later Judaism. If Judaism became narrow and formal it was not in these centuries but after the final breach between the synagogue and the Christian Church which followed the revolt of Bar-cochba in the latter half of the second century A.D. The Gospels and S. Paul show such a tendency at work, but the response of Galilee to our Lord's ministry shows that other impulses were still felt in His day. And 2 Esdras

shows how long the broader spirit, which the Gospel received from Judaism and fostered, still breathed in its old home. The high churchmen of the Law; the critics of the Wisdom schools; the disciples of the early prophets who collected their utterances and composed their memorial books, who sometimes perhaps added to their venerable teachings pieces of prophetic writing of their own which were not unworthy of a place near their models; those other successors of the prophets who burst forth into the fiery strain of apocalypse; all this went to the formation of a great post-exilic literature which was the expression of a faith very nearly approaching the faith of the Christian churchman. What the Christian added was: the Christ we expected has come; He has been among us as a man on earth; He has died for us and has risen; it is He, this Jesus, who will come —Christ evident—with the kingdom, in those last days which have already begun.

As those 'last days' lengthened out, and as the Church expanded in the Gentile world, this faith unfolded though it did not change. At last the various companies of Christians were bound together by a creed in which the substance of the common faith was briefly expressed. Some historical facts were plainly stated. Some transcendent truths were figured in symbol or poetry. The early name for the creed was 'symbolum'; the earliest sketch of a creed (1 Tim. iii. 16) was in rhythmical, poetic form; this symbolic or sacramental method was part of the tradition of the Church. But the Jewish Church had never adopted a formal creed of even that character. Her creed was the Shema, Deut. vi. 4. That expresses two truths of the utmost simplicity: that God is one, and that God is Jahweh the beni-Israel's God. It is the primitive faith with no unfolding. And more; these words have no verb in the Hebrew. They are a battle cry rather than a creed. 'Hear, O Israel. Jahweh our God, Jahweh one!' Such a battle-cry

might well have been heard when the Maccabean heroes closed with the enemy.

It is well worth while to study the literature of faith. Yet the Spirit which makes the faithful one, and binds them so close together that controversies and parties are mere instruments of healthy growth, can never be confined within the limits of literature nor fully illustrated by the faculties of literature. Beyond and above the literature of the Jewish Church this bond of peace and virtue was forged by the heroism and martyrdom of struggles like that of the Maccabees, and by prayerful and praiseful devotion such as the Psalter witnesses to.

No doubt the Maccabean struggle was an appeal by the sword. Our Lord has shown a more perfect way. The sequel of Maccabean history may prove that violence is inconsistent with religion. That is how Mr. E. R. Bevan points the final moral in his book *Jerusalem under the High Priests* (Arnold). He points it after telling the story of the war with gusto. If any history book is 'as good as a novel' this book—quite admirable in all ways—is. His moral is perfectly true also. The apocalyptic courage, which inspired the revolt, itself leads inevitably to the high ideal of peace. But that admission may be gladly made. The faith of Judaism approached as nearly as possible to the faith of our Lord; yet He remains unapproached in personal majesty. The ideal morality of the sermon on the mount is far beyond the vision of the Maccabees; the mystery of the Cross is a fulfilment of apocalyptic hope which none could have anticipated. And we must remember that after all we can only get beyond literature by means of literature; we only know the Maccabean spirit by what remains written about it. Soldiers like Havelock and Outram were not men of violence, modern statesmen have been idealists in the midst of affairs. No doubt there were still simple 'saints' even in the later days of Hasmonean intrigues, and the 'quiet in the land' among whom our Lord was

born were the descendants in unbroken line from exalted patriots who fought in faith yet without hate.

So when we turn to the other bond of Jewish churchmanship, the bond of devotion, we are again obliged to seek it through literature; the Psalter is its monument. And in the Psalter too we find fierce words sometimes. It has its moral imperfections; it still leaves something for the Gospel to correct and complete. These are truths indeed; yet more remarkable is the satisfying character of the Psalter's witness, and its capacity for deepened meaning. When we read the Psalter we can hardly imagine that we should know more of how the Jews prayed if we could ourselves attend a post-exilic synagogue; and there are hardly any Psalms which will not yield a quite happy sense to the Christian who repeats the Christian 'Gloria' at the end, and applies to harsh particulars the solvent of spiritual imagination.

Yet that is weak, if not dishonest, some would answer. Is it? Are we sure that a good deal of that kind of interpretation was not applied to the psalms in their original using? For the psalms as we know them are already set in the Psalter. And the Psalter was the hymn-book of the late Jewish Church. And the late Jewish Church was not far removed from primitive Christian habits of devotion; a 'mystical' interpretation of the psalms is almost certain to have been accepted to some not inconsiderable degree in the synagogue. Something not unlike this conclusion is pointed to by Dr. W. E. Barnes in his studies of the Psalter, *Lex in Corde* (Longmans, 1911). He would on the whole give up the search for special historical backgrounds for the psalms and would rather attend to their general religious meaning. Dr. Cheyne in *The Origin of the Psalter* (Kegan Paul, & Trench, 1891), and elsewhere in his earlier writings, reached the same end by another path. He argued that all the psalms, with one possible exception, are post-exilic and many of them as late as the Maccabees; hence

he was able to give the full significance of developed faith to passages which other critics had interpreted more austerely.

Dr. Cheyne laid much stress on the need of search for historical backgrounds, and we must admit that they are valuable. We may also hope that patient co-operative study, freely criticised and welcoming correction, may discover more of these backgrounds than are visible at present. At present we are bound to confess that for the most part the primitive background remains obscure. In 2 Sam. xxii. we find the eighteenth psalm written out in full and assigned to David. It is obvious that this might be a later addition to the original book of Samuel, and if so, that the ascription of the psalm to David as author might be due to a late and mistaken tradition. The psalm is certainly very different from the two laments of David, for Saul and Jonathan and for Abner, which are preserved in this same book of Samuel. That does not prove the psalm not to be David's. The silence about life beyond the grave in the laments is perhaps not inconsistent with the temper of the Psalter, and Dr. G. Adam Smith in his *Early Poetry of Israel* gives some reason for supposing that such reticence was traditionally characteristic of laments. We may be content to say that Ps. xviii. may perhaps be David's, and may very probably be early, but that it is the only psalm for the date of which we have any good evidence at all. Our Lord's reference to Ps. cx. was clearly not made for the purpose of settling a point of literary criticism, but with a deeper intention ; He was neither confirming nor correcting popular language about date and authorship. If the titles prefixed to many psalms be considered to have been intended to indicate authorship, they must nevertheless be late, and the variety which appears in the Septuagint suggests that they represent critical inferences about which a good deal of freedom was allowed. But the Hebrew

particle translated 'of' is a vague one, and when we find 'of Solomon' prefixed to Ps. lxxii., and 'the prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended' at the end of the same psalm, we cannot but wonder whether it was ever meant to assert authorship, whether some looser connexion was not the original idea.

The subscription just quoted points indeed further in this direction. These titles help us little in deciding the ultimate derivation of psalms, but they do help us to discern some smaller psalters, out of which the complete Psalter was composed. Five of these are easily discovered. There may be traces of more than five, but it will be enough for our purpose to look at these five, to see the general principles on which the complete Psalter was made, and so to pass to the inferences which more closely concern us than these critical inquiries.

In Book I. of the Psalter, as now arranged (i.-xli.) nearly all psalms are entitled 'of David.' In Books II. and III. (xlii.-lxxxix.) a group of such Davidic psalms stands between two groups of Levitical psalms ('Of the Sons of Korah,' 'of Asaph' etc.); there has been a slight rearrangement in combining these three groups, but this will do for a rough description. Ps. lxxii. has the subscription noticed above, and we may at this point begin to suspect that it does not belong to that psalm alone but to a collection of psalms, once a little psalter by themselves, called 'The Prayers of David the son of Jesse.' The other groups we have noticed may also have been separate psalters, called 'David's,' 'Asaph's,' 'Of the Sons of Korah.' 'Sons of' is the Hebrew way of expressing 'company,' 'guild' etc. Thus 'Sons of Korah' would not signify any degree of nearness in time to a particular person named Korah, but 'the choir of Korahites'; these 'Levitical' titles at any rate are quite impersonal. To finish this brief analysis: Books IV. and V. (Pss. xc.-cl.) are marked by the very large number of anonymous psalms which they contain, by

the absence of all musical titles or prefaces, and by the artificiality of the division between them. Books I., II. and III. end with doxologies which belong to their psalms and seem to indicate in each case an original conclusion to a real book. The doxology which divides Book V. from Book IV., at the end of Ps. cvi. is different; it is a brief hymn by itself, and is emphasised by a rubric at the close: '*let all the people say*, Amen.' Thus it appears that Pss. xc.-cl. make a collection together. They may once have been a separate psalter. They may be simply the new psalms which were taken into the great collection, when it was formed on the basis of the earlier psalters. The completed Psalter is in fact the *Hymns Ancient and Modern* of the Jewish synagogue. As in *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, earlier collections have been drawn upon, and 'modern' psalms have been also included.

Can we say anything about the date at which these earlier collections were themselves made? There are certain tests which may be applied. One is an easy test that every reader is competent to appreciate. Ps. xiv. ends thus:

> 'Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion!
> When the LORD bringeth back the captivity of his people,
> Then shall Jacob rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.'

Here is a reference to the 'captivity.' If we agree with what Professor Torrey says about the dispersion (cf. *supra* p. 133 f.) we shall be cautious in assigning a precise date to this 'captivity'; and indeed the more searchingly we read the Old Testament the more cautious we shall become of our own accord in claiming precision about dates, analysis etc. But we do at least recognise a rough indication of date here. This psalm must be (in the broad sense) 'post-exilic,' and therefore the collection in which it is included must have been formed in post-exilic days. Allusions of the same kind will be

found in some psalms of each collection. Readers will probably come to the conclusion that the first book (the 'first Davidic psalter') is the earliest of these smaller prior collections. The inference is that all of them are of post-exilic formation, and that the completed Psalter (which we now use, having received it from the synagogue) is of late post-exilic formation. If it contains, as many think, some psalms which were originally composed in Maccabean days, it cannot have taken final shape till as late as 150 B.C.

But though this be allowed, nothing is thereby proved about the date of the original composition of each several psalm in these collections. A post-exilic psalter may contain psalms of any earlier age. Ps. xxiv. for instance comes to us through the first Davidic psalter which is itself post-exilic. But this particular psalm may have been composed for the festival of the bringing of the ark to David's newly won city of Jerusalem (2 Sam. vi.). Yet if so, it is strange that the chronicler (1 Chr. xvi.) does not quote it in his account, but gives a hymn composed of selections from many psalms in which there is but one slight and ambiguous reference to this psalm. We must in fact be content with recognising the possibility of one psalm or another having been originally composed at this or that early date. We shall say, as Origen said about the popular tradition in the Alexandrian Church, that S. Paul wrote the epistle to the Hebrews—if any people think they have good reason for so dating a psalm, they are right to do so; no one who holds a different opinion should quarrel with them. On the other hand they must not quarrel with those others. The question does not concern 'things necessary to salvation,' nor can any answer to it be really proved by holy Scripture. But the point on which we can all come together is this. The completed Psalter, as we read it, has the form which the later Jewish Church gave it, and it has the sense which they read into it. Criticism

establishes that, and it is historical as well as reverent to interpret it according to that full, deep sense.

We shall see presently how much this reasonable and charitable agreement helps us in theological exegesis. Let us however notice in passing how it relieves us of scruples about the ascription of so many psalms to David in the titles. Hardly any one would contend that David wrote Ps. cxxxvii., 'By the waters of Babylon.' Many must feel it unlikely that David, who fought, ruled, administered so well, would have also written so very many psalms of such various character as are assigned to him. The difficulties about Davidic authorship multiply swiftly in the mind of every questioner among the readers of the Old Testament. It may be in one manner reverent to listen to God's words without asking questions when they puzzle us, but it is not filial. And when the words are no part of the sacred text itself, but only titles added to explain it, the human medium becomes insistent and the reader's intelligence is all but bound to be exercised. 'The spirit of man is the lamp of the LORD. . . . The thoughts of the diligent tend only to plenteousness: But every one that is hasty hasteth only to want' (Prov. xx. 27, xxi. 5); the Wisdom of Israel is certainly on the side of the questioner. Is it not allowable to suppose that these titles express the 'mystical' interpretation of the Jewish Church? We interpret 'mystically,' and find the Psalter richly illustrative of the life and work, the manhood and the Godhead of our Lord Jesus Christ. We could not possibly use the Psalter better. But our 'mystical' use is no arbitrary invention of our own. It is the natural continuation of the use of the Jewish Church who found their Psalter richly illustrative of the life and work of David. And David did not mean to them simply the son of Jesse, once king of Israel. The name was a sacrament. It gathered round itself a multitude of associations and aspirations. The earthly king, the

series of 'Christs of the LORD,' led on to a larger hope of 'The Christ' who was yet to come. The Psalter illustrated the immense variety of David the 'type.' And yet—this is the beauty of the idea, a beauty which we can so well understand—this type was impressed on the actual life of David the man. The illustrations are truly 'sacramental.' What the Jewish Church saw was what we see in the light of new heavens and new earth now that the Word has been made flesh—Godhead through manhood, sacramentally. Do the titles, thus understood, lose or gain in sacredness?

It might be asked; is not the language of the psalms an indication of their dates? To some extent it is. To the reader of Hebrew Ps. cxxxix., 'O LORD, thou hast searched me and known me,' is recognised by its very language as late. This psalm makes us think of Isa. liii. In both places the language is degenerate, in the same sense that the language of Tennyson or Coleridge is a degeneration from Elizabethan English. And in each piece there is a depth and complexity of thought such as was well-nigh impossible for the glorious tongue of early Hebrew. And again, it is possible to distinguish in the Psalter a certain parallel to the broad styles we noticed in the Old Testament generally. There are 'early prophetic,' 'deuteronomic,' and 'priestly' psalms. Yet a difference is also apparent. Take for instance Ps. cxix. as a 'priestly' psalm. How different after all is its praise of the Law from the chronicler's. Naturally so perhaps, since the psalmist is a poet at his prayers, and the chronicler is a historian composing a view of history. Yet there is more than this to distinguish them. In a childlike yet profound story called *The House of Prayer*, by Florence Converse (Dent, sixth edition, 1912)—a book which ought to be in every liturgiologist's library—a quite boyish little boy is described who learned a good many things about prayer, partly from his grandfather, a student of liturgies, partly from his guardian angel.

Among other exercises of discipline the angel had to check the boy's precociously growing taste for ancient liturgical language. It is a good fault even in a child. In a psalmist it is perhaps not a fault at all. At any rate the student of the Psalter who is also a student of the Old Testament will before long begin to catch—and to enjoy—something of this imitative accent in its language, and he will in like measure learn that the test of language in the Psalter is a very delicate one. He will also notice another peculiarity. Though some differences in language may be observed, the general similarity of language, as well as of metrical craftmanship, is much more obvious. Indeed it might be added that in spite of the continually satisfying response of the Psalter to our manifold desires and moods, still it is marked by one general tone of devotional thought. *Hymns Ancient and Modern* recurs to our mind. In that book Latin, Greek and German hymns, Wesley, Heber, Watts and Faber, have all been tuned to the same key. The book is popular not academic. Liberties have been boldly taken with texts in order to make the whole serviceable to the Church in England at a particular period. 'Hark! how all the welkin rings,' and 'Where the young Prince of glory died,' have taken another form; and 'Art thou weary, art thou languid' has been so freely dealt with by its translator that the original Greek cannot now be identified. Something like that has happened in the Psalter, and even those psalms which have most claim to an early date, appear in it harmoniously adapted to their new home.

We cannot but observe also that there has been a good deal of thoughtful arrangement. Pss. cxx.-cxxiii. show an ascending scale of faith.

> 'In my distress I cried unto the LORD.'
> 'I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help.'

'I was glad when they said unto me, let us go unto the house of the Lord.'

'Unto thee do I lift up mine eyes, O thou that sittest in the heavens.'

The best comment on this is Bacon's confession: 'Thy creatures have been my books, but thy scriptures much more. I have sought Thee in the courts, fields and gardens, but I have found Thee in Thy Temples.' Notice too the juxtaposition of Pss. lxxxviii. and lxxxix. Ps. lxxxviii. has been called the saddest psalm in the Psalter. It is indeed so sad that, if it were taken by itself, it might seem almost to deny hope. 'Shall thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave? Or thy faithfulness in Abaddon? Shall thy wonders be known in the dark? And thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness? Thy fierce wrath is gone over me; Thy terrors have cut me off.' Such language, absolutely taken, contradicts the hope of Christian, Jew, and all good men. But the composers of the Psalter do not allow it to be taken absolutely. Directly after this psalm they have placed the exultant 'I will sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever: With my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations.' This sequent psalm also ends with a certain sadness. But every one who has recited the two psalms together has thereby learned to believe in spite of bitterness; and if that were not enough, the doxology at the end sanctifies both psalms and the whole book in which they come.

But Ps. lxxxviii. raises a larger question to which this principle, of interpreting the Psalter according to its liturgical background, may help us to give a satisfactory and true answer. Does the Psalter teach faith in eternal life? Let us be sure of what that question means. If it means, 'Does the Psalter teach faith in the resur-

rection, or in a life beyond the grave ?' the answer will be, No. It is not in a new life beyond the grave, but in one unbroken life in God, that these psalmists believe. If the question means, 'Did all the several psalms from their first appearance teach this ?' the answer will be that very likely they did not. But that the Psalter, as used in the Jewish Church, is full of immortality, there surely should be very little doubt. Ps. lxxxviii. seems to contradict this. Its connexion with Ps. lxxxix. corrects that seeming to some extent. The use of the mythological pagan word 'Abaddon,' in verse 11, carries the correction further. We have already seen in our study of the early prophet that 'Abaddon,' 'Sheol,' and other like words, represented pagan superstition against which those prophets sternly set their faces. There is no 'Hell' outside the reach of God's love, though Israelites and Christians have pathetically feigned it. But, whatever remnant of gloomy mistrust still lingered in the later Jewish Church, such mistrustful superstition was not the Church's faith. And in those later days the old picturesque words were freely used in an innocent sense; they meant no more than 'Titan,' 'Rhea,' 'Saturn,' meant to Milton. But Milton used those names with emotional effect, and not without religious sincerity. So in Job or in the Psalms those old Semitic titles of gloom are abundantly employed when a soul, overwhelmed with dread or sorrow, would find expression. We may go further and say that such souls do sometimes play, and even perilously play, with the ideas themselves which such words had stood for. Even the faithful worshipper in the synagogue, even the faithful Christian, sometimes feel the shadow and the doubt of death. True prayer conquers that weakness by sharing it with God (who ordained Calvary and the cry Eloi, Eloi), not by Stoical repression. It is possible that Ps. lxxxviii. was once an antique lament from the lips of an Israelite who knew not the peace of

the true religion. It is not improbable that it was the half-despairing cry of some Jewish churchman who, in the moment of his bitter suffering, doubted of the brethren's faith. It is certain that in its place in the Psalter this psalm was intended to make one music with the rest; its discord was part of the completeness of the whole, a discord to be soon resolved. If it be not impertinent to say it, the history of Israel's faith in immortality still remains to be written. Dr. Cheyne has thrown out pregnant hints of how the task should be undertaken. A clear distinction must be made between vestiges in the Old Testament of pre-Jewish paganism (the discovery of which is of great antiquarian but little theological interest), and the repetition of antique mythological phraseology as a means of expressing strong emotion. And again, the distinction must be observed between clear-cut definition of a restored life after death such as we find in Dan. xii. 2, 3, and the less definite conviction that life in God is not interrupted by physical death; and it must not be assumed that this latter form of faith is less near to our Lord's faith than the former. And yet again, it must not be taken for granted that the development of men's several, personal consciousness is uniformly late in time. Because those public speakers, the early prophets, concerned themselves with the sin, repentance and hope of the nation as a whole, it does not inevitably follow that no Israelite of their day had his own personal consciousness of God, or even that no earlier Israelite would have been unable to respect our Lord's argument for immortality, namely that He who said, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, is not the God of the dead but of the living. Tried by such principles as these the Psalter will yield a deep and satisfying doctrine of immortality. Those who have found signs of poetic faith in Jewish literature, and are willing to take the Psalter as they find it, *i.e.* as the

synagogue book, will scarcely be afraid to hear a promise far more than temporal in Ps. xvii.:

> 'As for me, I shall behold thy face in righteousness:
> I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.'

Another point on which the Psalter shows its deepened Jewish church character is the doctrine of forgiveness. The early prophets were instant to rouse the people to consciousness of their sins. They dealt little with sin in the abstract, nor did they say much about forgiveness. The people were faithless, unjust, luxurious. The prophets denounced those sins, urged the people to trust the Lord and to walk again in His ways. If they would do so all would be well; if not, the Lord would purge them with fiery judgement. The standard of righteousness was simple. The ten commandments in their literal sense might suffice to express it. Jeremiah and the deuteronomists, with their heart-religion, mark the transition to the priestly idea which is introduced (in the literature) by Ezekiel. Here a people already penitent begins to be dealt with. Cleansing is provided for the troubled conscience. Sin for a while comes into the foreground. In the Psalter sin again as it were recedes. With the prophets righteousness, with the psalmists holiness is the great thought; sin the disturbing shadow is mainly shown that it may be lost in light; there is no doctrine of sin, but a most consoling doctrine of holiness. But this doctrine in the Psalter presupposes all that has gone before. The prophets roused conscience; the exile ratified their effort. The Psalter, like the Gospel, is little concerned to awake the sense of sin. It takes conscience for granted in all who use it, and provides prayers for the burdened sinner—'Be merciful to my sin, for it is great'; and assurances of forgiveness—'For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our trans-

gressions from us' (xxv. 11, ciii. 11, 12). Ezekiel and the priestly writers had transformed the thought of righteousness to the thirst for holiness, and throughout the Psalter that nobler aspiration rules. Perhaps it is one sign of the comparative earliness of the first Davidic collection that this is not always so clear in it. Yet even in its passages of simplest morality there is generally a warmth of affection that carries us beyond the mere statement. In the Psalter generally we are far beyond even prophetic morality. With this thirst for holiness the trouble of conscience naturally becomes more complicated, and in some psalms this maturity of conscience is carried further than it is in any other part of the Old Testament. Some have argued for the Davidic authorship of Ps. li. from its likeness to the narrative of David's repentance in 2 Sam. xii. Others have used the converse argument, that the narrative is so like the psalm as to be thereby proved unhistorical. But careful comparison shows how precarious is either argument. The narrative is an exquisitely simple account of the awakening of an untrained conscience. Penitence, forgiveness, penalty, all belong to the earliest stage of religious discipline. As far as that consideration goes, the narrative bears the strongest mark of historical accuracy. But how deep and passionate is the psalm. The terse, concrete Hebrew blinds us to the immensity of the thought and emotion. So perhaps does the Gospel style in the parable of the Prodigal Son. But psalm and parable are close together, separated by centuries of the Holy Spirit's influence from the narrative in Samuel.

In another respect too the Psalter is akin to the Gospel. In both there is denunciation of just one kind of sin—cruel, self-righteous pride. In the Gospel this is attacked by that love burning its way against opposition which the Apocalypse calls 'the wrath of the Lamb.' In the Psalter there is sometimes a fierceness which is too near to hatred. But it will be found that

most of those difficult and painful psalms are directed against that one form of sin—'Because that he remembered not to shew mercy, but persecuted the poor and needy man, and the broken in heart, to slay them' (cix. 16). Such proud souls are 'brutish'—if we may so press the rendering of the Hebrew in Ps. xlix. 10; but the weak, animal nature of man is in all other connexions used by the psalmists as a ground of hope:

> 'But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity,
> and destroyed them not:
> Yea, many a time turned he his anger away,
> And did not stir up all his wrath.
> And he remembered that they were but flesh;
> A wind that passeth away, and cometh not again'
> (lxxviii. 38, 39).

This makes us think of our Lord's word, 'The spirit is willing but the flesh weak.' We remember how in S. Paul that becomes 'the flesh lusteth against the Spirit,' and we feel the difference between the divine trust of the Son of God and the necessary severity of even the great apostle. As the Gospel is to the Epistles, so, we might almost say, is the Psalter to the Prophets.

Yet if such a thing be said it must be said with careful limitation. The Gospels too are severe, but their severity is gathered up in the Cross. The passage in the Old Testament which most resembles the Psalter in its doctrine of forgiveness is Exodus xxxiv. 6, 7:

> 'And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, the LORD, a God full of compassion and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy 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, upon the third and upon the fourth generation.'

Like Sam. xii. this passage is separated by a great tract of time from the Psalter. This accounts for the mode of expression in the last lines. But though they are not in psalmists' language, their severity is found in many places of the Psalter. That severity seems almost to spoil the graciousness of the passage in Exodus. It takes a shape now and then in the Psalter which we can hardly bring ourselves to approve. Yet we cannot remove it without changing the character of both from an honest treatment of the facts of life to a sentimental religiosity. And the divine utterance is always honest to the facts of life ; we know God in His visible working, and it is not merely the interaction of man's perversity that makes far-reaching consequences of sin inevitable. Part at least of our repugnance to such utterances is due to confusion between forgiveness and removal of consequences. The petition in the Lord's prayer, 'Forgive us our *debts*, as we forgive our *debtors*,' does declare that even a removal of consequences is possible within the family where the children interact reciprocally with the 'lovingkindness' or 'pity' of the Father. This is already in Hosea a Hebrew idea, and it often appears in the psalms. But so long as the proudly cruel, the self-righteous, linger outside the family, the stern law of consequences (which is one aspect of the doctrine of 'original sin') still works, and the psalmists would proclaim no real message of forgiveness if they shut their eyes to that fact.

But such a phrase as 'original sin' takes us far away from the temper of the Psalter. 'Behold, I was shapen in iniquity ; and in sin did my mother conceive me,' is not the language of an Article of Religion but of poetry. There is little of system in the Psalter, little of legalism. Ps. l. is typical of the psalmists' attitude to sacrifice and religious institutions. Angels of evil are just mentioned, but there is no Satan in the Psalter. The means of forgiveness is God's power and love. This

becomes effectual when man's humility responds to it:

> 'LORD, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty;
> Neither do I exercise myself in great matters,
> Or in things too wonderful for me.
> Surely I have stilled and quieted my soul;
> Like a weaned child with his mother,
> My soul is with me like a weaned child.
> O Israel, hope in the LORD
> From this time forth and for evermore' (cxxxi.).

Beautiful however as this little poem is, it does just remind us of some other psalms where humility is the very excellence which seems lacking. These are not psalms of cruel self-righteousness, but they have the self-righteous tinge. In some this defect must be simply recognised, and corrected by the worshipper's personal act of humility. The Psalter, for all its glory, is not the Gospel, and the recitation of the Psalter always demands a spiritual alertness. This defect is found as a rule in the 'deuteronomic' psalms, such as Ps. i. The deuteronomists were preachers and noble ones. But no preacher, no one who ventures to teach other people morality, is quite safe from this grave peril; even inspiration leaves him open to it. Yet there is no need to exaggerate the matter. Ps. cxix. is typical. It is didactic, yet how affectionate; and with what true humility it concludes.

There is a much larger class of psalms where the language that offends us is not didactic. It is no quiet feeling of superiority, but a passionate assertion of innocence which can hardly be distinguished from a passionate loyalty to the LORD. It is a clinging to communion with Him in the face of immense hindrance. It often recalls Job. Moreover we must remember that the psalms are lyrical. They concentrate and vivify generalities in the single person of the speaker. And

often the psalmist, though he speaks vividly and lyrically of himself, has a band of brethren in his mind. Sometimes he says so, and from what he sometimes says we may infer what he often thinks. Here is the key to this language of innocence. It is not so much the whole nation that he stands for ; it is a little group of brothers, a little group who are persecuted and steadfast in persecution. This language is their mutual encouragement, their quite sincere appeal to the LORD for whom they are witnesses. Since early Christian days 'witnesses' of this kind have been entitled 'martyrs.' In the Psalter the corresponding title is 'saints'; it is impossible to read the Psalter without noticing how often that term 'saints' occurs. And the Psalter would gain intensity if we remembered what courage its 'saintliness' implies, just as the New Testament does when we remember that 'temptation' means in its pages resistance unto blood or even braver endurance than that.

So we come back to what we considered in our last chapter and at the beginning of this. 'Saints' was the title of the noble army who rallied round the Maccabees and fought for the true religion when all were failing. Critics are inclined to make an ever-growing number of psalms Maccabean, mainly because they cannot but recognise this spirit of martyrdom in so many places. It is a spirit which binds the faithful few close together. It is the prefiguring type of S. Paul's 'in Christ.' It does actually set men free from common sin ; those inspired by it, risking their lives daily for it, may claim even an innocence which the rank and file of Christian churchmen dare not claim. They dare not claim it for themselves; they will not be offended at it in their spiritual princes—'As for the saints that are in the earth, they are the excellent in whom is all my delight' (xvi. 3). 'Maccabean' is quite a good name for these psalms. Only it should be understood as a

description of character, not as defining a date. If we knew more of the whole history of post-exilic Judaism we might perhaps find that there were other, now unrecorded, resistances not unlike that of the Maccabees. Brave deeds not unlike theirs were done even in earlier times—'Behold, I and the children whom the LORD hath given me,' said Isaiah, and the writer to the Hebrews saw something like 'Maccabean' significance in the words (Isa. viii. 18; Heb. ii. 13). And martyrdom shades off in the Psalter into the less conspicuous peace of all those faithful whose treasure is in the kingdom—'Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than they have when their corn and their wine are increased,' 'Happy is the people, that is in such a case: yea, rather happy is the people, whose God is the LORD' (iv. 7, cxliv. 15, cf. Septuagint). The 'quiet in the land' and the 'saints' with 'the high praises of God in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand' make one company in the Psalter; the common badge of both is that they are strangers on this earth with God, and sojourners as all their fathers were (see xxxv. 20, lxxvi. 9, cxlix. 6, xxxix. 12).

We noticed just now that a certain verse in Ps. li. must be read as poetry, not as a term in systematic theology. That of course must be always remembered in the Psalter. To some extent it must be remembered throughout the Old Testament. Our Revised Version has helped us much by printing Psalms, Proverbs, Job, and some other books or parts of books, in lines of poetry. Those who read Hebrew and use Kittel's Hebrew Bible (*Biblia Hebraica* . . . edidit Rud. Kittel, Lipsiae, 1905, 1906), know that he and his coadjutors have printed a great deal more of the text in this fashion. In large parts of the prophets this was certainly right; the prophets are often misunderstood because we forget that their oracles are poetry, with all the craftsmanship

of poetical rhythm as well as the largeness of poetical idea; they are anything rather than matter-of-fact speakers. But sometimes perhaps Kittel has gone too far. The Hebrew language is not only poetical in its picturesque dramatic way of expressing thought. It is that. The best Hebrew hardly uses abstract terms, nor does it attempt to express such things as the working of conscience in an abstract manner; it sets people talking—*lêmor*, 'saying' is the Hebrew equivalent to inverted commas, and even indirect quotation is regularly avoided. How naturally and beautifully is the dialogue of Balaam with his ass understood when this is remembered. But Hebrew is not only poetical in this way. Its brief sentences, especially when they give a person's speech, fall almost inevitably into rhythmical balance. This can often be perceived even in translation, and in the Greek of the Gospels (which has a somewhat obscure but certainly real Semitic pedigree) the same peculiarity may be observed. Hence the line between prose and poetry in the Old Testament is not always easy to draw, and even in its regular poems there is often a freedom from mechanical rule which by no means detracts from their excellence. Hebrew poetry (of the Biblical periods) seldom smells of the lamp; it is out-of-door work. Yet there are regular poems. There is a regular craftsmanship. Prose and poetry may touch on their border-line, but most of the poetry of the Old Testament belongs unmistakably to its own proper class. Robert Lowth in his *Oxford Lectures* (*De Sacra poesi Hebraeorum*, Oxonii, 1763) pointed out in his quiet manner, as little more than a passing remark, the principle of parallelism. He has laid the foundation for all discussion of Hebrew poetry since then, and has increased the enjoyment of all readers, even the most unlearned. There is no one to-day who does not feel the waving wings, the ebb and flow, the pulse of answering thought, as they repeat the double or treble verses

of the psalms in which the idea is developed by varied repetition:

> 'O come let us sing unto the LORD:
> Let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation.'

What more there may be of regular rule in the making of Hebrew verses is still discussed. Mr. W. H. Cobb's book (*A Criticism of Systems of Hebrew Metre, an Elementary Treatise*, Oxford, 1905) gives the history of such discussion in a style which is as readable as it is scholarly. A rather curious recurrence appears. Inquirer after inquirer approaches the problem with a prejudice in favour of the large, untrammelled freedom of Hebrew versifying. But each ends by changing his mind and joining the ranks of those who try to discover the stricter rules which they are convinced do govern the poets. We must not wander into these discussions here. Enough to say that this at least seems clear. Hebrew poetry is (like English, unlike ancient Greek) accentual. The responding lines have generally the same number of accented syllables, and the number of unaccented syllables intervening does not matter. Three is the commonest number. In fact the Prayer Book version of the Psalter gives a rough, but by no means bad idea of the Hebrew rhythm; in Ps. lxxx., 'Hear, O thou Shepherd of Israel,' it is particularly well marked. And as in that version, so in Hebrew poetry throughout the Old Testament, there is (at least to modern and foreign ears) a difference between the smoothness, and obviousness of the rhythm in different poems. One of the reasons for saying that the Psalter, as we have it, belongs throughout to one and the same period is the equable character of its rhythm throughout; where exceptions occur there is nearly always a special reason to account for them; often there is justifiable uncertainty about the text.

Job, Psalms and Proverbs are commonly called the 'poetical' books. This term however refers mainly to a peculiarity in the Hebrew pointing. In these books the Hebrew accents are so ordered that verses may, when so required, be divided into threes instead of twos. As we have already seen, there are other books which deserve to be called poetical. If such a group were made according to the ordinary meaning of the term, it would be certainly hard to exclude Canticles or The Song of Songs from it. For pure beauty of poetry nothing surpasses this little book. It tells a story in which Solomon is one of the actors; it is mere confusion of thought to refer the piece to him as author. Readers differ in opinion as to what the story precisely is. On the whole it seems possible to follow the action consistently if we suppose the Shulammite maiden to have been carried to Solomon's court where she is wooed by the great King; she remains faithful to her shepherd lover, and is in the end restored to him. Some such idyllic progress of the love of man and maid was no doubt part of the meaning of the poem, nor should we feel anything but gladness that such simplicity finds a place in holy Scripture. Yet it must be confessed that the story thus taken is obscure. What is at once plain to every reader is the poet's delight in outdoor nature, 'a love of the country,' which as has been said of an English writer, 'is neither the sportsman's love, nor the naturalist's, nor the poet's (and we might add, nor the psalmists'), but passion for the country as such.' The English churchman, who reads this book in the Easter days of awakening spring, will agree with that. When we notice that the Jews too have long read it at Passover, we cannot but wonder whether after all the book did not enter the canon on its primitive merits, not because of its capacity for allegoric interpretation; in like manner Ruth was and is read by the Jews as a harvest idyll, at the harvest festival of Pentecost. But, it may be

added, if this pure sympathy with all created life be indeed the main impulse of the poem, then interpretation, not allegorical but mystical (or sacramental) in the best sense of the term, becomes exceedingly natural and fitting. Comparison with the Song does not help us about the date of psalms. Its own date is so uncertain. There are peculiarities in its language which have at first sight a late appearance. But they fall short of proof, and the latest editor makes out at least a fair case for its pre-exilic origin in the romantic country of Northern Israel (*The Song of Songs, edited as a Dramatic Poem* by W. W. Cannon, Cambridge, 1913).

One other poem outside the Psalter may be noticed in passing, especially as it illustrates a particular form of rhythm different from that of the psalms in general. This poem is Lamentations. That is the title in the Greek and Latin Bibles. The Greek adds an introductory note: 'And it came to pass after Israel was made captive and Jerusalem laid desolate, that Jeremiah sat down weeping and lamented with this lamentation over Jerusalem, and said——' But that account of the origin of the book was not admitted into their text by the Jewish scholars, who placed it far away from Jeremiah in the Writings. The title there is simply 'How!'—the first word of the poem. There is nothing in the poem itself which would lead us to ascribe it to Jeremiah. There is perhaps nothing to forbid that ascription, but it seems to rest on a later tradition than that which marked the poem as anonymous. The mechanical form is strict. Like some of the psalms, *e.g.* cxix., it is alphabetical; the verses in each of the first four chapters begin with successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet. But the distinctive point is that a special rhythm is employed. It is the rhythm which is called *Kinah*, a 'keen' or 'dirge' (cf. 2 Sam. i. 17, Jer. ix. 10, 19, Ez. xix. 1, 14). Its characteristic is a long line with a shorter cadence, and it commonly begins with 'How!'

The pathos of this heart-breaking lament is known to all. Its affinity should be noticed with other parts of the Old Testament which treat of suffering, *e.g.* Ps. lxxxviii., Job, Isa. liii. The personal note in i. 12 etc., and throughout ch. iii., is like the lyric fashion of many psalms, and fits it for the wider application which both the Jewish and the Christian Church have practised.

The psalms are poetry, and poetry is a supreme form of art. Art has been defined in various terms, but the best description is his who said that the aim of art is joy. The Psalter is always serious and sometimes sad; yet it is sad only to transform sadness into joy, and its main characteristic is gladness. In no direction does this appear more clearly than in its delight in nature. This delight is not the simply, innocently sensuous delight of the Song of Songs. What the poet there did unconsciously is done consciously by the psalmists. They glorify nature as the vision and language of God. Sometimes they are content to give a picture in a few lines, like that of the strong sun running his course in Ps. xix. No application is made; the poet trusts the sacramental power of the mere natural beauty of the thing. Ps. xix. does indeed end with a moral reflection. It is a beautiful one, but surely forms a separate piece from the first half of the poem. The juncture of the two is just what would be approved in a popular hymn-book; the artist and the sacramentalist (if the twain be not one) might wish the two psalms were still given separately. Sometimes there is a magnificent theophany—the Lord manifesting Himself in the thunderstorm, as in xviii., xxix., and the conclusion of lxxvii. Sometimes the theophany is rather suggested than described, as in xcvi. where the coming of spring is the advent of the Lord to judge. There is a famous addition in some copies of the Septuagint of this psalm; 'Say among the nations, The Lord reigneth *from the tree.*' This is

thought to have been added in Christian times, but as far as the context comes into the argument, the words may be taken in a sense which is quite in harmony with the psalmist's sacramental vision of the awakening forest. Sometimes, as in civ., we have an elaborate description of all the daedal life of nature in which ascription of praise to the Creator, Guider and Provider is continually interwoven; through and over all runs the melody of simple joy. Sometimes a more solemn psalm declares how God who is in and through nature is nevertheless transcendently eternal above it; so xlvi., xc., cii. And yet other psalms tell of man's own special place in the harmony of nature; so viii., xxxvi. 7, xxxix. 12, cxv. 16, cf. civ. 14, 23. But nature is never a mere background to man in the Psalter; man and nature serve together in the universal temple of the LORD (cf. xxix. 9). And that last phrase 'universal temple' reminds us that it would be a jejune interpretation which made 'the house of the LORD' merely Solomon's temple in the Psalter. The psalmists are nearly always in sympathy with that older feeling of Israel, which Solomon had (as it were) to propitiate when he built his temple: 'The LORD hath said that he would dwell in the thick darkness. I have surely built thee an house of habitation' (1 Kings viii. 12, 13).

Of course some psalms do refer to the builded temple. The 'Songs of Ascents,' cxx.-cxxxiv., do so. Perhaps their temple is not Solomon's, but that temple which 'the remnant' restored after the captivity. 'Jerusalem that art builded,' cxxii. 3, perhaps means 'that art rebuilded.' And Ps. cxxvi. speaks plainly of the captivity and the return (verses 1-3). Still more interesting is its continuation in which the psalmist prays for yet another 'turning of captivity' (verse 4). As so often in the poetry of the Psalter the outward and visible touches the inward and spiritual; 'to turn' becomes a

devotional phrase exactly like our 'convert,' cf. xxiii. 3. These festal 'ascents' to Jerusalem (whatever be the precise significance of that Hebrew word) were harvest thanksgivings and anxious farmers' rogation litanies, but they were besides the unlading of troubled consciences from the country side.

The country side and hills of Canaan—the Old Testament is full of the Israelite's love for his 'glorious land.' Think of Deuteronomy, and especially of that poem in which 'Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death' (Deut. xxxiii.):

'Blessed of the Lord be his land;
For the precious things of heaven, for the dew,
And for the deep that coucheth beneath,
And for the precious things of the fruits of the sun,
And for the precious things of the growth of the moons,
And for the chief things of the ancient mountains,
And for the precious things of the everlasting hills,
And for the precious things of the earth and the fulness thereof,
And the good will of him that dwelt in the bush:

. . . . . .

There is none like unto God, O Jeshurun,
Who rideth upon the heaven for thy help,
And in his excellency on the skies.
The eternal God is thy dwelling place,
And underneath are the everlasting arms.'

The scenery of the Psalter is mainly Canaan. Ps. xlii. has been thought the lament of a departing exile—'O my God, my soul is cast down within me: Therefore do I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and the Hermons. . . . Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts: All thy waves and storms are gone over me.' Notice once more the sacramental turn; the visible and audible torrents of the mountains are all one with the divine torrents which overwhelm and yet console the poet's soul. Some psalms express the

longing of absence, the home-sickness which no nation ever felt like Israel except the Italians, both dwellers in lands of promise and of foreign domination. But for the most part the highlanders of Canaan are singing of and in their native hills and valleys and farms and bare wildernesses. Notice how little there is about the sea; how little (and that in derogation) about the horse, which these highlanders did not much use.

This prevailing sense of the mountains must be sympathetically felt by all who would enjoy the Psalter intensely. If we cannot visit the Holy Land, the next best preparation is to read Dr. Adam Smith's *Historical Geography of the Holy Land* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1894; eighth ed. 1901). The second chapter with its maps is the indispensable one. The wise student will make a rough, swift map for himself and so try to realise, as though he were in the country himself, the variety of its scenery and climate, the mountain masses, the rare but fertile plain, the austere desert of the south. Then he will respond to all that physical imagery with which the psalmists so naturally and vividly express their emotions and their theology. The LORD is a 'rock,' a 'fortress'; a 'narrow place' is pain, sorrow, temptation; 'enlarged steps' are freedom of heart, conscience, life; 'a good wind in a plain land' (cxliii. 10) is the Holy Ghost the Comforter; the issues of life and death are recognised in mountain gorges where mountain foes lie in wait; and who can tell which way the struggle will go? The soul flies for refuge from the world 'as a bird to the hills,' and in the silence of the hills (lxii. 1, see R.V. margin) is peace. As Joshua drove the enemy down the pass of Beth Horon, when the day began to dawn behind Gibeon, and he prayed for an hour more of storm and darkness to complete the rout; so Jahweh, called upon by His servant hard pressed in spiritual conflict, takes shield and spear, comes down, hurls His

spear, then stands between the failing soldier and the foe, shouts His battle-cry, and drives the adversary down the dark and slippery way like chaff before the wind (Joshua x. 12, 13, Ps. xxxv. 1-6).

Such illustrations might be multiplied indefinitely. Every one will think of that description of the barren Negeb, or southern land, with its astonishing sacramental application to worship made all the deeper by the failure of its outward ritual: 'O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee, In a dry and weary land where no water is. So have I looked upon thee in the sanctuary, To see thy power and thy glory' (lxiii. 1, 2). Compare that collect in the Mozarabic Psalter, a mystic's prayer in his dark hour: 'Though the gate of heaven open not to prayer, or the living bread denying Himself afford not life; still for the redemption of Thy heritage and for the praise of Thy glory, what Thou didst grant to the type Thou dost grant to the reality' (Mozarabic Psalter, Ps. lxxvii., *oratio*). Every one will remember too the frequent imagery of light and shadow and covering wings; or how the mountain path with its hindrances and dangers, its stumbling-blocks, and the lantern to light the feet that travel along it, is variously applied to the course of man's life and the right way marked out for him by God. Dr. Hatch in his *Essays in Biblical Greek* (Oxford, 1889) pointed out how the Galilean Gospels keep this mode of speech, and how in S. Paul it changes to the townsman's metaphor of 'conversation,' or 'going up and down' the streets. There are a few city psalms in the Psalter—notably that lovely one in which 'there is a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God' (xlvi. 4)—but hills, open country or desert make the large scenery of the Psalter in general. Isaiah and Jeremiah dwelt in Jerusalem, Micah and the psalmists with the sons of Rechab in the open country dreaming of their nomad ancestors.

These parables of nature affect or even direct the theology of the Hebrews. The tempest is the manifestation of God. Hence His angels are winds and fire (cf. civ. 4, Heb. i. 7); the thunder is His voice, and the Lord 'speaking' had for them an intenser meaning that we, with our machinery of abstract expression, can easily understand. And the terror of the storm shaped their idea of divine justice or vindication. The idea thus shaped sometimes offends our feelings; yet it may be questioned whether our own tendency to think of the divine in human imagery be not more mischievous; the fury of the mysterious storm is a fitter adumbration of the burning love of God—*qui salvandos salvas gratis*—than is the too intelligible anger of men. And this natural imagery is an aid to the acceptance of some vast truths, such as the height of God above the changing things of man's experience. His seat is on high; He humbleth Himself to behold the things that are in heaven and earth; so it is that He is such a friend to the poor and lowly (cxiii. 5-9)—as Elihu said, God is mighty, and therefore despiseth not any (Job xxxvi. 5). And it deepens our silent awe in the face of some divine qualities; when Lancelot Andrewes was asked to frame articles of religion about predestination he refused, appealing to the psalmist who had said that God's judgements were a great abyss (xxxvi. 6). It throws some light too on the Hebrew utterances about life, death and immortality. 'Breath,' 'gates of death,' 'pit,' 'destruction,' are physical illustrations, not exact terms of theology. Most of the language used of these immeasurable realities is language of metaphor; it moves to and fro among those 'intellectual perplexities which haunt us in that dim region where mind and matter meet.'

Some of these metaphors remind us of what we have already noticed; in the Psalter there are a number of nature pictures which reflect an ancient mythology; and that mythology was not always pure. Such are

the passages about the strange fairyland of the north (xlviii. 2); Jahweh marching from Sinai, and shaking earth and heaven with His horrific tread, as He came to put Himself at the head of the army of His people (lxviii. 7, 8, cf. Judges v. 4, 5); and the allusions to Rahab, the sea-serpent etc. (lxxiv. 13, lxxxix. 10). Such revivals are cleansed and elevated in the Old Testament whenever they occur, but in the Psalter especially; there the fresh nature-poetry in which they are set is a solvent of the associations of superstition; love of nature makes even the dark places of nature divine.

A few brief remarks ought perhaps to be added on the Messianic character of the Psalter. This is but part of the character of the whole Old Testament, and if this little treatise has not altogether failed in clearness, the reader will not wish for a longer discussion here. The Messianic character of the Old Testament is not found in special and direct predictions, but in the whole yearning of its heart for perfect union between God and man.

The student of the New Testament may be inclined on first thoughts to object that the apostolic writers did use the Old Testament as a repertory of special and direct prediction. It may be answered that at any rate the Lord Himself did not so use it; and also that the bare, literal application of texts in Acts and Epistles is not so common as our uncorrected memory sometimes makes us suppose. The quotations are not so very numerous, and they are generally made more reasonably than a hasty glance shows. In Acts ii. 25-31, for instance, the quotation from Ps. xvi. 8-11 was not applied with quite the same effect as the words produce now among people who have meddled with controversy about the miraculous nature of the resurrection. It was not a strict settlement of one or two controverted points, but a large vaticination of Messianic resurrection. Acts ii. 17 ff. shows, in its application of Joel ii. 28-32, the

general principle of the New Testament quotation more simply. Details such as those in Ps. xxii. 16 are not the points to be generally considered. The use of this psalm by our Lord on the Cross, the remembrance of it in S. John xix. 24, bind it by deeper ties with the Saviour's victory, and are truer examples of Messianic interpretation.

The psalms which are apparently most definite in their Messianic significance are the psalms of the King, ii., xx., xxi., xlv., cx. etc. Most of these would seem however to be best explained as composed in honour of some reigning king of Israel. But it is difficult to trace them back to such a primitive intention, and we may at least be sure that they were used in post-exilic times in a grander sense. As with Isa. ix. 6, 7, so with these psalms, and especially ii. and cx., we seem compelled to recognise in them the mystical language of a synagogue which was already looking for a divine King in the coming Kingdom of Heaven. If so, a certain embarrassment is caused. How are we to understand those words in the contexts which express fierce hope of the overthrow and bruising of enemies? It is perhaps enough to admit that this is part of the natural reality of the type; remove all such marks of human frailty and 'the nature of a sacrament is overthrown.' But it is at least as important to notice how such phrases are after all subordinate to the more generous spirit of the whole Psalter.

In the broader sense of the term even a suffering Messiah may be recognised in the Jewish faith. As time went on and the nation was more and more broken and humiliated, they set their hope more constantly on the victory which should follow suffering, and the suffering was seldom dwelt on; 'their passion was present but they put it from them when they looked ahead.' But when the Psalter was being composed this had not become the rule. Hence Ps. lxxxix. 51 is truly Messianic;

the persecuted people are the Christ-bearing people, cf. Heb. xi. 26. And so again Ps. lxxxviii. is Messianic in spite of its dreadful gloom ; it has the hope of longing—*tendentesque manus ripae ulterioris amore.*

For we must always remember how unbroken is the line between the kings, priests and people, who are called the LORD'S Christs (or anointed ones) in the Old Testament, 'the Christ' whom a few late apocalyptists proclaimed, and our Lord as inheritor and fulfiller of this ancient manifold office. But we must also remember that the Messianic hope was broadly and primarily the hope of the Kingdom. Neither in Old Testament nor in the extra-canonical apocalypses is the person of the Messiah a constant feature in the picture. That, rightly considered, may throw light on some parts of the New Testament which are not written quite as we might have wished to write them ; on the elusive language of our Lord's tremendous claims, on the large interpretation of those claims in S. Paul—'Then cometh the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father. . . . And when all things have been subjected unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subjected to him that did subject all things unto him, that God may be all in all' (1 Cor. xv. 24, 28). It certainly helps us to appreciate better the pervasive Messianic colour of the Psalter. The direct language about the Son, the King, the Christ, is not the most important thing ; more still to be pondered is the whole of its religious longing.

For that religious longing is extraordinarily wide. Strictly national in form, it runs out beyond its native time and place. As in the highly Jewish synoptic Gospels, so in the Psalter there is an inexplicable instinct for the universal. From the Jewish point of view the salvation of the Cross is explained by the hope of the Kingdom. From the Greek point of view the incarnation of the Word is explained by the hope that the

invisible God would perfectly manifest Himself. The Psalter with its Jewish intensity, its sympathy with the whole natural creation, and its simple all-embracing 'goodness' (cf. cxix. 65-72), effects even in the Old Testament a conciliation between these movements.

And here this little sketch must be broken off. The reader will discover its more serious faults. Of its incompleteness no one can be more aware than the writer. In particular he knows that he has been carried far by the current of the day, and has laid perhaps disproportionate stress on the other-worldly, 'Maccabean' character of the Old Testament. And yet, that does but mean its idealism, its constancy to ideal morality and ideal hope. In spite of the imperfections of its childhood the Old Testament is at one with the disciplined youth of the New Testament. It is all one record of men who, in spite of their own failures and the apparent impossibility of living on earth in perfect union with the will of God, did nevertheless refuse to recognise any peace less absolute. At last in Jesus of Nazareth they found a friend and master who held this ideal and never fell short of it. Therefore they were convinced that He was nothing less than the light of all their lights, and that in Him was the source and renewal of the true life of all the world.

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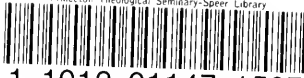
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