

MODERN SUNDAY SCHOOL MANUALS

CHARLES FOSTER KENT  
EDITOR

THE GREAT TEACHERS OF  
GOD AND CHRISTIANITY

CHARLES FOSTER KENT



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The great teachers of  
Judaism and Christianity





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**MODERN SUNDAY SCHOOL MANUALS**

Edited by Charles Foster Kent in  
Collaboration with John T. McFarland



# THE GREAT TEACHERS OF JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY

✓  
By **CHARLES FOSTER KENT**



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## PREFACE

THE nucleus of this book was a series of lectures on "The Aims and Methods of Israel's Teachers" given at Berkeley, Oakland, and San Francisco at the invitation of the Sunday School Commission of the Episcopal Diocese of California. The same course of lectures has also been given wholly or in part at the University of North Dakota, Washburn College, Yankton College, the University of Kansas, the University of Missouri, the Hebrew Union College, the University of Cincinnati, and the Syrian Protestant College at Beirut, Syria, as well as before many groups of Sunday-school workers. The original treatment of the subject has been enriched by the results of inspiring conferences with those actively engaged in the work of religious education. One fact has constantly come to the front: it is that the Christian Church at large and even the great majority of its active teachers are only partially acquainted with the deeply significant educational traditions which gather about the beginning of Judaism and Christianity. An intimate acquaintance with the character, aims, and methods of the great religious teachers who have recorded their work not only in the Bible, but also in the very bone and marrow of our modern civilization, is the first requisite in the practical equipment of a modern religious teacher. The wonderful

teachers of the past have a message full of inspiration and suggestion for those dealing with the same human problems. To present these historic facts briefly but clearly, and to interpret the message of these early teachers to their successors to-day, is the aim of this volume.

Westmore, Vermont,  
July, 1910.

C. F. K.

# I

## THE SECRET OF ISRAEL'S CONQUERING POWER

It is a profoundly significant fact that the roots of the two great expanding religions of today—Christianity and Islam—sprang from the soil of Judaism. The truths first enunciated by Israel's prophets, priests, and sages among the secluded hills of Palestine have permeated the whole world and molded the faith of nearly half the human race. What is the explanation of this mighty power which has not only preserved the Israelitish race intact through centuries of oppression and persecution, but also conquered the hearts and minds of the most advanced nations of the earth? The first reason is to be found in the character of Israel's faith as it unfolded under the influence of the remarkable experiences through which the nation passed. But the character and growth of Israel's faith only partially explain its conquering power. To retain its hold upon a race, as has Judaism, a religion must be effectively instilled into the minds of each succeeding generation. It must also be ever developing, so as to adapt itself to the needs of each age and individual. In the fact that the great founders and interpreters of Israel's religion have been from the first faithful and skilled teachers doubtless lies the reason why it still dominates, in ever-increasing measure, the ideals and beliefs of mankind.

Teachers the  
Founders of  
Israel's Religion

## 8 Teachers of Judaism and Christianity

Judaism's  
Emphasis on  
Teaching

Judaism has always been in the truest sense a teaching religion. It has depended primarily for its perpetuation and extension not upon preaching, or upon creeds, or upon the mere forms of worship, but upon the personal touch of the teacher and those taught. It has also strongly emphasized the supreme importance of the definite and continuous education of the individual, beginning with earliest childhood. "These words, which I command thee this day, shall be upon thy heart; and thou shalt impress them upon thy children, and thou shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. Thou shalt bind them as a reminder on thy hand, and have them as bands on thy forehead between thine eyes, and thou shalt mark them on the posts of thy house and on thy doors" (Deut. 6. 6-9).

Highest Honor  
Paid to the  
Teacher

Moreover, the religious teachers of ancient Israel were fully awake to the importance of question and answer: "When thy son asks thee in the future, What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which Jehovah our God hath commanded you? then shalt thou say to thy son, We were Pharaoh's slaves, in Egypt; but Jehovah brought us out of Egypt with a strong hand; and Jehovah performed before our eyes great and destructive signs and wonders, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his household; and he brought us out from there, that he might bring us in to give us the land which he swore unto our fathers" (Deut. 6. 20-23). The result was that among the Israelites

the practical science of education was developed as among no other ancient people, except possibly the Greeks. In no other nation was such high honor and respect paid to the scholar and teacher. The pictures of the rich and noble youth sitting deferentially at the feet of some famous rabbi, as he plied his humble trade and at the same time taught his disciples, are among the fairest and most significant that come to us from classic Judaism. To-day there still remains in the mind of every faithful Jew an instinctive and deep respect for the learned teacher and rabbi. The well-known zeal and skill of the Jew in the pursuit of learning are in all probability the fruits of this same hereditary instinct.

A further explanation of Israel's conquering power lies in the fact that its teachers sought not merely to instruct but to educate. Abstract theology was to them practically unknown. Their creed was expressed in laws intended to develop a right personal attitude toward God and man and to lead to worthy and effective action. As the Great Teacher truly said: to love the Lord with all one's powers and might and the neighbor as one's self was the essence of Israel's law. It was upon the development of the individual man that the ultimate emphasis was placed.

To make his development complete and rounded different classes of teachers were required to meet his many-sided needs. Three distinct types of teachers arose in early Israel, each with its distinct tasks and contributions to the development of the individual and the nation.

**Aim to Educate**

**The Three  
Classes of  
Teachers**

## 10 Teachers of Judaism and Christianity

In threatening the life of the prophet Jeremiah his foes incidentally brought these three classes into close connection and contrast: "For the teaching shall not depart from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet" (Jer. 18. 18). By specific instructions in regard to each man's obligations to God, to the state, and to his fellow men, by personal counsel and practical instruction and by authoritative message the priests, the wise men, and the prophets not only molded Israel's faith and ideals, but also guided the thoughts, the morals, and the acts of each individual. Their character and work alone explain how a mixed group of rude Semitic nomads in time became a prophetic nation at whose feet the most progressive races of the earth have learned the fundamental truths of ethics and religion.

Didactic  
Character of  
Israel's  
Scriptures

The scriptures of the Old Testament as a whole are the clearest indices of the character, aims, and methods of Israel's religious guides, for they are the notes from the classrooms of these early teachers. It is only in the light of the aims and methods of these teachers that the Old Testament writings can be fully understood. An intensely practical, didactic purpose characterizes them all. It was the educational *motif*, the desire to develop character by the presentation of truth in effective form, that gave rise to the Old Testament. If Israel's religion had not been a teaching religion and its guides teachers, there would have been no Old Testament.

Later Judaism, recognizing the true character of these writings, rightly designated them col-

lectively as "The Torah." This word, which comes from the verb meaning, *to guide, to teach*, is commonly translated, *The Law*, but it is better represented by the broader and more exact term, *The Teaching*. The word "torah" occurs more than two hundred times in the Old Testament. It is used to designate, (1) the counsel and instruction which the wise men or sages gave to their disciples (Prov. 13. 14; 28. 4, 7, 9); (2) the authoritative or the detailed directions given to the people by the priests (Hag. 2. 11; Mal. 2. 6-9; Psa. 37. 31; 40. 8); and (3) the teachings of a certain prophet or of the prophets as a whole (Isa. 8. 16; 42. 21, 24; Jer. 9. 13; 16. 11; Zech. 7. 12). To some one of these three classes of teaching belong all the writings of the Old Testament, and this basis of division furnishes by far the most satisfactory and illuminating classification of these earlier scriptures.

The same strongly didactic purpose characterizes the writings of the New Testament. It consists for the most part of teachings from the Great Teacher and from the lips of the apostles who followed in his footsteps. The oldest source found in the Gospels is held by modern biblical scholars, as well as by the traditions of the Church, to have been a collection of Jesus's teachings. With these were early blended the narratives regarding the Master that were told by his disciples in order to instruct their hearers concerning his character and work. The strong didactic purpose that inspired the epistles of the New Testament is plainly written on every page. Debarred for various reasons from speaking per-

The Different  
Types of  
Teaching

Educational  
Aim of The  
New Testament  
Writings

## 12 Teachers of Judaism and Christianity

sonally to the groups of disciples whom he wished to teach, Paul put in his letters what he would have said had he been present in their midst. Other disciples followed his example, and thus arose the earliest New Testament writings. The New Testament is the Christian *Torah* or *Teaching*, just as the Old Testament is that of the Jews. Paul brings out very clearly the teaching character of the biblical writings: "Every scripture inspired by God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect and perfectly equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3. 16, 17). The development of perfect and efficient manhood and womanhood is the supreme object for which the Bible was given to man. Doctrines, laws, creeds, and forms of worship are also of value simply as they conserve this divinest of all aims, the making of men. Jesus and his apostles unite with the earlier prophets, priests, and sages in declaring by word and lifework that it is more blessed to make men than to save men, and that the best, indeed, the only sure way of making men, and thus effectively uplifting mankind, is through the personal touch of the religious teacher.



## II

### THE REAL CHARACTER AND AIMS OF THE PROPHETS

THE prophets are the most familiar, and yet, in many ways, the least understood, of Israel's teachers. Unfortunately, the common usage of the English word "prophet" is misleading. It suggests that his chief function is that of a predictor. While the Hebrew prophets did at times predict, prediction was only a small and comparatively insignificant part of their work. Instead of being visionaries, intent only on the future, they were preëminently men of their day, in closest touch with existing conditions. Instead of idly waiting for some distant consummation, they put forth all their energies to realize in their own day, and in the life of their people, the practical ideals which filled their souls. They were, indeed, the great patriots of Israel, alert, efficient citizens not only of their own nation, but also of that larger commonwealth the founding of which was the object of their earnest endeavors.

A certain element of mystery envelops the personality of the Hebrew prophets, and yet their growth is no more mysterious than that of the plant or of the human being, whose development may now be traced at each successive stage. The foundation of the work of the earliest prophets was the innate, universal desire of the primi-

**The True  
Patriots of  
Ancient Israel**

**Genesis of the  
Prophet**

## 14 Teachers of Judaism and Christianity

tive peoples to know the will of the Deity in order to make it the guide in their individual action. Inasmuch as the ancients were ignorant of natural laws and of God's way of working, the future for them was filled with apprehension and dread. The result was that they always paid high tribute to the soothsayers, augurs, necromancers, prophets, and prophetesses who were supposed to be able, with authority, to interpret the various signs which were regarded as indices of the divine will. While these popular interpreters of the Deity were found among most, if not all, primitive peoples, the immediate forerunners of the Hebrew prophets arose, as might be expected, amid the peculiar life and atmosphere of the desert. The long, dangerous marches, the constant fear of attack, the sense of loneliness and dependence gave the ancient *kâhin*, or seer, a commanding place in that early nomadic world. This *kâhin*—the man with the veil—who was able to render an oracle and thus authoritatively proclaim the will of the Deity, was ever held in highest honor. Usually his oracle was cast in poetic, epigrammatic form. To him chieftains resorted, as did David to the priest Abiathar, before they went out to battle, that they might ascertain the outcome. To him, also, men went with their questions of private concerns, that they might through him receive a divine answer.

In the light of the very old narrative preserved in the ninth chapter of I Samuel, it is clear that originally Samuel, the seer of Ramah, was closely related to the ancient *kâhin*. To him Saul and his

servant went with a gift in order to learn where the lost asses were, and were not disappointed. This old narrative regarding Samuel also suggests the way in which the primitive seer was transformed into the prophet. The great crises through which Israel was passing as a result of the cruel Philistine dominance opened his eyes to the need of some one to rally and to lead forth to victory the scattered Hebrew tribes. Spurred on by his appreciation of this need, Samuel, the seer of Ramah, sought and found Saul, the son of Kish, and kindled within him a consuming zeal to become the defender of his people, when the favorable moment should arrive. In performing this task, with its far-reaching significance, Samuel not only became, in a sense, the founder of the Hebrew kingdom, but from being a mere seer became a true prophet. In the same way, the appreciation of the needs of her nation transformed Deborah, who enjoyed a popular local reputation similar to that of Samuel the seer, into a true prophetess who guided her nation through a great crisis to victory, thereby inaugurating a new era in the religious life of Israel.

Each of the great prophets gives clear indications of the way in which he was called to his great task. The personal experience of Amos is richly suggestive. Trained as a shepherd, accustomed to be constantly on the watch against the attack of wild beasts, quick to sound the note of alarm, skilled in putting his flock in a state of defense, ready to risk his own life, if need be, to protect those intrusted to him, it was

**Amos's Call to  
His Prophetic  
Task**

## 16 Teachers of Judaism and Christianity

a natural step which transformed him from the watchman over a flock of sheep and goats into Jehovah's watchman sounding the cry of alarm in the ears of the northern Israelites. Keen in scenting danger from afar, he had foreseen the ominous approach of the Assyrian armies. He had heard the growl of the Assyrian lion. The significance of the danger had suddenly dawned upon him, and, faithful to his training, he did not hesitate a moment in proclaiming aloud the coming danger. His own words reveal the impression that Assyria's advance made upon him:

Surely the Lord Jehovah doeth nothing,  
Unless he revealeth his purpose to his servants the  
prophets.

The lion has roared; who does not fear?

The Lord Jehovah hath spoken; who can but prophesy?

(Amos 3. 7, 8.)

### Isaiah's Call

Similarly Isaiah, the young noble of Jerusalem, in the critical year when the strong hand of Uzziah, the king, was relaxed by death, felt stirring irresistibly within him the divine call to rise from the ranks of the nation, "unclean of lip," and proclaim the inevitable judgment which he saw approaching. With this keen sense of the guilt of his people and of the magnitude of the danger which impended, there came to his open mind a new and nobler and larger appreciation of the real character and demands of Jehovah. Henceforth his task was to spare no effort to lead his race out of its guilt and to inspire it to rise to the full realization of Jehovah's righteous demands.

The influences which transformed Hosea, the poet-prophet of the northern kingdom, into a herald of righteousness came not so much through the experiences of his nation as through the pathetic tragedy of his own private life. The infidelity of his wife revealed to him the unspeakable pain which the sin of the one loved brought to him who loved. It gave him a new conception of the depth and breadth of human love toward the sinner; it made clear the need of stern discipline in order to arouse penitence in the heart of the wrongdoer; it disclosed the absolute necessity of true penitence as a basis for forgiveness and reconciliation. Through his own private experience Hosea also gained a new appreciation of the divine readiness and eagerness to forgive the penitent sinner. Thus upon Hosea's inner consciousness were branded the elemental, eternal truths which are the basis of life and religion. These truths he naturally employed in interpreting Jehovah's relation to his unfaithful nation Israel. Thus expressed they became a universal message, the foundations of the teachings not only of the prophets, but of Jesus himself.

The great Hebrew prophets were the conscience of their race. They were the men with open mind, the discoverers of new and eternal truths, Jehovah's willing and faithful heralds to all mankind as well as to their own nation. Instead of being passive mouthpieces of Jehovah, they were the most intelligent and best educated men of their day, the keenest students of political and social conditions, the most unselfish patriots and the most courageous heroes. According to

**Hosea's Call  
and Training**

**Many-Sided  
Activity of the  
Prophets**

their own peculiar gifts and the exigencies of their age, some of them were social reformers and others were practical statesmen intent upon guiding the nation safely through its great crises. Some, like Isaiah, combining all these many-sided attributes, were statesmen, social and moral reformers, and practical theologians. Usually they spoke not to the individual but to the people as a whole; they appealed not to party prejudice but to the conscience and reason of the nation; they set forth principles rather than policies.

**Their First Aim  
to Point Out and  
Counteract the  
Evils of Their  
Day**

Whatever was their individual method of work, all of the Hebrew prophets strove in common to attain certain definite aims. Their first aim was to hold up a mirror before their nation that its errors and its worst evils might be made perfectly clear. No pet crime or favored class escaped their keen vision and their fearless denunciations. By many of their contemporaries they were regarded as pessimists and muck-rakers. In the twenty-eighth chapter of Isaiah one hears the complaints of the rulers because he was constantly speaking of "the overwhelming scourge" that was coming. They ironically mimicked his continuous harping upon the social and political evils of his day and by their taunts roused him to a sharp retort. Owing to the willful blindness of the people, a large part of the recorded sermons of the prophets were devoted to making clear the menacing evils of that day and to pointing out, in dramatic and impressive form, the certain consequences that would overtake the nation unless those to whom

the prophets spoke heeded and fundamentally changed their policies and acts.

The second aim of the prophets was positive: it was to impress upon their countrymen those eternal principles of justice and mercy which had been gradually revealed to them in the stress of their national and personal experiences, so as to lead men to accept and apply those principles in their social and individual relations. Here the earlier prophets placed the great emphasis in their work. To lead their nation and their fellow countrymen to do what was right was their consuming ambition.

The third aim of the prophets was closely connected with the second. It was to give their hearers a truer and larger conception of the character of Jehovah and of his practical demands upon his people. Jehovah's character was to them the ultimate reason for right doing. Injustice, insincerity, and cruelty were, according to their teachings, disloyalty to Jehovah. Justice, mercy, and true reverence were the only valid evidences of true loyalty. Ceremonial forms and external acts of worship were by them esteemed but lightly. Thus the early Hebrew prophets ethicized religion and spiritualized ethics, and in so doing blended both.

The ultimate aim of the Hebrew prophets was to broaden and deepen the definition of religion and to make it a real and guiding influence in the daily life of men. Thus they sought to realize in their nation the will of God, and through that realization to touch and transform the aims and ideals and acts of all mankind. Even though

**Second: To Lead Men "to Act Justly and Love Mercy"**

**Third: To Make Clear Jehovah's Character and Demands**

**Fourth: To Have God's Will Done on Earth**

## 20 Teachers of Judaism and Christianity

not fully appreciated by the earlier prophets, the final goal of all their work was to establish Jehovah's eternal and gracious rule in every heart and to build up a spiritual kingdom which would be universal and eternal.



### III

#### THE PROPHETS AS STORY-TELLERS AND PREACHERS

INASMUCH as the aim of the Hebrew prophets was not merely to appeal to the feelings and intellect of their hearers, but to influence their will, these wise teachers employed every possible means whereby they might make clear and impressive their divinely given messages. The earlier prophets depended largely upon practical measures. They worked primarily through men. Thus Moses, in freeing his people, appealed directly to Pharaoh. Deborah, the prophetess, aroused the northern leader, Barak, to action and through him rallied the scattered Hebrew tribes. Samuel inspired Saul to rise and lead his people against their common foe. Nathan cooperated with Bathsheba in putting Solomon upon the throne. Ahijah, in seeking to deliver Israel from its grave religious and social dangers, kindled the ambition of Jeroboam. Elijah called and commissioned Elisha to take up his work; and Elisha, in turn, anointed the energetic and ruthless Jehu to carry through the revolution which overthrew the house of Ahab and its compromising policy. In the great crisis of 734 B. C. Isaiah turned first to the king and the nobles in order to influence them not to involve Judah in entangling alliances. Later the same great prophet inspired Hezekiah to undertake important reforms. Jeremiah constantly sought

Practical  
Diplomacy

## 22 Teachers of Judaism and Christianity

to guide the policy of his nation by advising kings like Jehoiakim and Zedekiah. Ezekiel appears to have ever been in closest touch with the elders of his people. Thus one of the most commonly used and effective methods of the prophets was to direct by wise diplomacy the influential men of their nation.

Being wise teachers, the prophets also appreciated the great value of story and illustration in impressing their teachings upon the mind of the child nation. The result is that much of the Old Testament consists of prophecy of the past as well as of the present and future. Amos, in his appeal to the people of northern Israel, recorded in Amos 2, recalls the past experiences of the people, using these experiences as powerful illustrations of the principle he was endeavoring to establish:

And yet it was I who brought you up from the land of  
Egypt,  
And led you forty years in the wilderness,  
And brought you hither to possess the land of the  
Amorites.  
It was I who destroyed from before them the Amorite,  
Whose height was like that of the cedars, and he was  
strong as the oaks;  
Yet I destroyed his fruit from above and his roots from  
beneath.  
Moreover, I raised up some of your sons to be prophets  
and some of your youth to be Nazirites.  
Is not this indeed so, O Israel? It is the oracle of  
Jehovah.  
But ye made the Nazirites drink wine, and upon the  
prophets ye laid a prohibition. (Amos 2. 10-12.)

Hosea, also, in seeking to emphasize the importance of the nation's loyalty to Jehovah's de-

mands, draws his illustrations from an earlier chapter in their national history:

Like grapes in the wilderness I found Israel;  
 Like the first fruit on a fig tree I saw your fathers;  
 But as soon as they came to Baal-peor, they consecrated  
 themselves to Baal,  
 And became as abominable as the object of their love.

Jacob fled to the territory of Aram  
 And Israel served for a wife,  
 Yea, for a wife he herded sheep.  
 In a man's strength he contended with God,  
 He contended with the angel and prevailed.  
 He wept and besought mercy of him.  
 At Bethel Jehovah found him  
 And there he spoke with him.  
 And Jehovah is the God of hosts,  
 Jehovah is his name.  
 Thus thou shouldst by the help of thy God return.  
 Keep true love and justice,  
 Wait on thy God without ceasing. (Hos. 9. 10; 12.  
 12, 3b-6.)

The vivid narratives that fill the historical books of the Old Testament give a full and faithful picture of Israel's national life; but they are more than history. No mere historian, for example, would have devoted—as does the author of Samuel—many chapters to the description of David's sins and their consequences and but two or three to the great political and military achievements of his brilliant reign. This predominant interest in men rather than in facts reveals the didactic purpose of the authors of these historical books. They realized that by seeing the disastrous effects of sin as well as the desirable fruits of right doing men could be led to reject the evil and choose the good. The keen popular interest in the narratives greatly en-

True Character  
 of the Old  
 Testament  
 Narratives

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hanced their teaching value. Through frequent repetition they had become exceedingly familiar to the people. The prophets by adapting these stories to their purpose made them a medium of teaching, which was all the more effective because the truths were conveyed unconsciously.

Didactic Value  
of Story and  
History

These stories are told simply, concretely, and dramatically. They appeal as strongly to the modern reader as to the hearer of olden time. The characteristics portrayed are true to human nature in any age or race. They vividly illustrate those elements of strength and weakness which are the inspiration and peril of all who are in the stream of life. The accounts of Israel's experiences in Jehovah's school of training reveal in marvelously clear, dramatic form God's eternal character and purpose and the consequences of ignorance and disobedience.

Larger  
Significance of  
the Biblical  
Stories

The question of whether or not these stories were historical in every detail did not concern the prophets. They took and utilized them as they were handed down from the past. The great and vital value of these narratives lay in the fact that they illustrated important and eternal principles. Instead of being mere records of past events, they thus became molding forces in the life both of the individual and the nation, revealing Jehovah's character and will, and shaping the religious and ethical ideals of the race. For the making of men to-day, they are among the most valuable heritages from Israel's teachers. Adapted as they are to the childhood of the race, they are preëminently fitted for use in primary religious education.

By taking illustrations that were familiar and of interest to the people the prophets adapted their methods to the point of view and capacity of their hearers. The prophetic forerunners of Amos and Hosea appear to have depended largely in conveying their moral and spiritual teachings upon this story method.

Use of Familiar  
Stories

The most characteristic method of the great prophets was, however, the direct address. In this way the prophet impressed by voice, by gesture, and by his own personality his God-given message upon the leaders and upon the entire nation. Sometimes he appeared in the court before the king and princes; sometimes he appealed from the rulers to the people. Often the temple court, where the people assembled, as they did three times each year for united worship, was the scene of the prophet's teaching. Sometimes he spoke to the many, and sometimes to the few gathered close about him. There is evidence in their recorded addresses that the great prophets frequently directed questions to their auditors and in turn were ever open to receive and answer earnest questions presented by their hearers. As in every Oriental audience, the relation between the speaker and those addressed was especially close and personal. The prophets were pre-eminently Israel's preachers, but they were more—they were also teachers.

Direct Address

The addresses of the preëxilic prophets bear all the marks of careful preparation. To the form as well as to the content these great teachers of Israel gave careful heed. Following the example of the ancient seers, they cast their

Poetic Form of  
Their Addresses

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messages in poetic form. Poetry alone was fitted to convey the great truths which filled their souls. The result was that the form and sound of their words as they fell upon the ears of their hearers appealed powerfully to the senses of those who heard. Hebrew poetry in itself was uniquely adapted to this end. Its fundamental characteristic—the repetition of the same idea in succeeding lines in slightly variant form—drove home, as with repeated blows, the essential message of the poet-prophet. This parallelism, or repetition of idea, frequently extended to succeeding stanzas, thus making it possible by reiterating again and again the same vital message to appeal at the same time to the highly developed poetic sense of the Oriental audience. The prophets also chose with great care the meter best adapted to their theme. If it was a strenuous theme, a clarion call or a warning of some impending danger, they used the sharp, quick two-beat measure employed by the watchmen when they announced the sudden appearance of a hostile invader. Ordinarily they used the three-beat measure with its regular cadence, interrupted occasionally for the sake of effectiveness by a closing line of two beats. Thus the prophecy of Nahum, in describing the last decisive attack of Nineveh's foes, illustrates forcibly the use of these two meters:

Keep careful watch!  
Guard the way!  
Gird up the loins!  
Gather all thy strength!  
The shield of his heroes is colored red.  
The warriors are clad in scarlet.

The steel of the chariots gleams like fire.  
 In the day of preparation the horses are prancing.  
 On the streets the chariots rattle;  
 They go galloping across the squares.  
     Their appearance is like torches,  
     Like lightnings they dart to and fro.  
 He musters his nobles,  
 They succeed in their onset,  
 They rush to the wall,  
 They set up the covering;  
 The water gates are opened;  
 And the palace goes down in ruins!

(Nah. 2. 1-6.)

Sometimes in logical reasoning they used the more deliberate four-beat measure, as, for example, when Amos sought to appeal to the intelligence of the people of northern Israel:

**Meter of Logical Reasoning**

Surely the Lord Jehovah doeth nothing,  
 Unless he revealeth his purpose to his servants the prophets.  
 The lion has roared; who does not fear?  
 The Lord Jehovah hath spoken; who can but prophesy?  
 (Amos 3. 7, 8.)

More frequently the prophets used the effective five-beat measure, consisting of three beats followed by two, which suggested the strong tension under which the prophet spoke. It was the meter employed by the wailing women as they sang over the bier of the dead. It also expressed great joy, as for example that of the warriors when they came home triumphant from battle. In every case it was the meter which expressed deep emotion. Amos employed it when he sang the death dirge over northern Israel, whose fall he saw to be imminent:

**Of Deep Emotion**

Hear the word which I take up against you, even a dirge, O house of Israel:

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Fallen, no more to rise, is the virgin Israel!  
Prostrate upon the ground she lies, with none to raise  
her! (Amos 5. 1, 2.)

**Prophetic Oracle** In their appeal to the minds, hearts, and wills of men the prophets marshaled practically every figure of speech and of feeling known to the ancient writers. Frequently they presented their message in the form of the stirring oracle, which carried with it the time-honored authority attributed to the words of the ancient seers. The oracle was addressed to some individual or class in the community, or else to the nation as a whole. The personal element was strong, as, for example, in Amos's oracle addressed to the luxury-loving, cruel, heartless wives of the nobles of northern Israel:

Ye kine of Bashan, who dwell in the mountain of  
Samaria,  
Who oppress the poor and crush the needy,  
Who say to your husbands, "Bring that we may drink."  
The Lord Jehovah hath sworn by his holiness;  
"Behold, days are coming upon you,  
When ye shall be taken away with hooks, even the last  
of you with fish-hooks,  
And through the breaches shall ye go out, each woman  
straight before her,  
And ye shall be cast toward Harmon," is Jehovah's  
oracle. (Amos 4. 1-3.)

**Invective** Sometimes their message took the form of bitter invective; like a plaintiff or judge they formulated the charge against the guilty classes or crime-laden nation. A powerful example of this type of sweeping charge is found in the opening verses of the fourth chapter of Hosea:

Hear the word of Jehovah, O Israelites,  
For Jehovah hath a charge against the inhabitants of  
the land;



For there is no fidelity nor true love  
 Nor knowledge of God in the land;  
 But perjury, lying, and murder,  
 Stealing, committing adultery, and deeds of violence,  
 And acts of bloodshed quickly follow each other.

(Hos. 4. 1, 2.)

At times the prophets cast their message in the form of woes, which described the guilt of the culprits and the nature of the judgment which Jehovah pronounced upon them. For example, in the fifth chapter of Isaiah, these woes fall in succession, like sledge-hammer blows, upon the guilty classes in the nation:

Woe to those who join house to house,  
 Who add field to field,  
 Until there is no space left,  
 And ye dwell alone in the midst of the land.  
 In mine ears Jehovah of hosts hath sworn,  
 Surely many houses shall become a desolation,  
 Though great and fair, they shall be without inhabitants;  
 For ten acres of vineyard will yield but one bushel,  
 And ten bushels of seed but one bushel of grain.

Woe to those who call evil good and good evil,  
 Who put darkness for light and light for darkness,  
 Who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!  
 Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes!  
 And prudent in their own conceit!  
 Woe to those who are heroic in drinking wine,  
 And valiant in mixing strong drink!  
 Who for a bribe vindicate the wicked  
 And strip the innocent man of his innocence.

(Isa. 5. 8-10, 20-23.)

At times the prophets sang a doom song telling, by the aid of graphic figures, the inevitable disaster that would soon sweep, like a cyclone, over the nation:

Human pride shall be brought low,  
 And the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down,

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And in that day shall Jehovah alone be exalted.  
For a day of judgment hath Jehovah of hosts  
Upon all that is proud and haughty,  
And upon all that is lifted up and high,  
Upon all the cedars of Lebanon, the haughty,  
And upon all the oaks of Bashan, the lifted up.  
And human pride shall be bowed down,  
And the haughtiness of men brought low;  
And in that day shall Jehovah alone be exalted,  
And the idols—completely shall they pass away.  
(Isa. 2. 11-13, 17, 18.)

### Paronomasia

At times, not facetiously, but in grim earnest, the prophets employed solemn plays on the sound of words. In the names of the cities about his home in western Judah Micah found suggestions of the approaching devastation which would be visited upon them as they fell a prey to Jehovah's agent of judgment, Assyria:

Tell it not in Gath [Tell-town]!  
In Giloh [Exult-town] exult not!  
In Bochim [Weep-town] weep!  
In Beth-le-aphrah [Home-of-dust] roll in the dust!  
Pass away! O inhabitants of Shaphir [Fair-town]  
naked!  
The inhabitants of Zaanan [March-town] shall not  
march forth.  
Beth-ezel [Nearby-house] shall be taken from its  
standing-place.  
How do the inhabitants of Maroth [Bitterness] wait  
for good,  
For evil hath come down from Jehovah to the gates of  
Jerusalem.  
Harness the horse to the chariot, O inhabitants of  
Lachish [Horse-town]  
For in thee are found the crimes of Israel.  
(Mic. 1. 10-13.)

### Argument

Logical prophets like Amos depended at times upon close-knit argument, reasoning from effect to cause and cause to effect in order through the intellect to appeal to the wills of their hearers:

- Do two walk together unless they be agreed?  
 Does a lion roar in the forest when there is no prey  
 for him?  
 Does a young lion cry out in his den unless he has  
 taken something?  
 Does a bird fall to the earth if no bait is set for it?  
 Does a snare spring up from the ground without  
 catching anything?  
 Can a trumpet be blown in a city and the people not  
 tremble?  
 Can a calamity befall a city and Jehovah not have  
 caused it? (Amos 3. 3-6.)

Frequently, however, the appeal was not through the intellect but through the feelings of the people, as, for example, in Jeremiah's wonderful exhortations:

Exhortations

Return, O apostate sons, and I will heal your apostasy.  
 If thou wilt return, O Israel, thou mayest return to me,  
 And if thou wilt put away thy violence, thou shalt not  
 be banished from my presence,  
 And thou shalt swear by the life of Jehovah, in truth,  
 in justice, and in righteousness,  
 And in him shall the nations bless themselves and in  
 him shall they glory.  
 For thus saith Jehovah, to the men of Judah and  
 Jerusalem:  
 Break up the fallow ground and do not sow among  
 thorns.  
 Circumcise yourselves to Jehovah, and take away the  
 foreskins of your heart. (Jer. 3. 22a; 4. 1-4a.)

In powerful lyrical passages Jeremiah, in the form of a monologue, reveals the tempest which frequently raged within his own soul, and the deep grief that the people's guilt aroused within the heart of the prophet:

Monologues

Oh that my head were waters and mine eyes a fountain  
 of tears,  
 That I might weep day and night for the slain of my  
 people!

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Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging-place of  
wandering men,  
That I might leave my people and go from them!  
For they are all adulterers, an assembly of deceivers.  
And they bend their tongue as though it were their bow.  
Falsehood and not truth prevail in the land,  
For they proceed from evil to evil, and me they know  
not. (Jer. 9. 1-3.)

### Dialogues

The prophets also presented their teaching with dramatic effectiveness in the form of a dialogue. For example, in Isaiah 3 the prophet and Jehovah each speak in turn, thus setting forth the sweeping judgment which was about to overtake the impious heathen. Even so in Jeremiah 15. 10-21 the great prophet of Anathoth bewails his lot and Jehovah replies with words of comfort and assurance.

### Visions

At times the prophets abandoned the direct address and illustrated their messages by putting them in the form of visions. In this way they painted pictures which were so vivid that through the eye of the imagination their hearers could see a great scene spread before them which brought out in clearest outlines the vital truths inherent in the prophets' sermons. The seventh and eighth chapters of Amos contain a series of impressive pictures of this type:

Thus the Lord Jehovah showed me,  
And behold, a basket of summer fruit.  
Then he said, "What dost thou see, Amos?"  
And I said, "A basket of summer fruit."  
And Jehovah said to me,  
"The end has come to my people Israel,  
I will not again pass them by." (Amos 8. 1, 2.)

### Rhapsodies

Sometimes in imagination the prophets rose above the petty problems and sins which con-

fronted them and lifted themselves and their hearers high above earth in such wonderful rhapsodies as are found, for example, in the immortal lines of Isaiah 40-66.

Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of Jehovah;  
Awake, as in the days of old, the generations of ancient  
times.

Is it not thou that didst cut Rahab in pieces, that didst  
pierce the monster? (Isa. 51. 9.)

## IV

### THE TEACHING METHODS OF THE PROPHETS

Training  
Disciples

TRUE teachers that they were, the prophets fully realized that preaching was in many ways an ineffective method of imparting truth. It was the arrow shot at a venture which frequently fell short of its mark. In a significant passage found in the eighth chapter of his prophecies, Isaiah voices his conviction that his preaching had been largely in vain. The background was the great crisis of 734 B. C., when he had appealed in turn to king and people and had met only with rebuff. Then we hear him saying to himself: "Binding up the admonition and sealing up the instruction among my disciples, I will wait for Jehovah" (Isa. 8, 16, 17a). This significant passage reveals the fact that the great prophets gathered about them groups of disciples upon whose open minds they stamped their message and to whom they intrusted its preservation. Experience had taught the prophets the value of the personal, intimate touch, of the closer interchange of question and answer, and of the incarnation of the teacher's aims, ideals, teachings, and zeal in the life of the disciple.

Value of This  
Type of  
Teaching

To this method of teaching is largely due not only the preservation of the messages of the earlier prophets, but their influence upon their own, and especially upon succeeding generations. By most of their contemporaries the prophets

were persecuted and their messages spurned. It was only as their teachings sank into the minds of a few earnest hearers, like Jeremiah's faithful disciple Barak, that they were transmitted and became effective in the life and thought of the many. This important truth is well illustrated in the experience of Isaiah. The hope which he placed in his disciples was not disappointed. Even though the reactionary rule of Manasseh overthrew the work of the great prophets of the Assyrian period, their teachings survived in the minds and lives of the few to burst again into a flame which swept throughout Judah under the leadership of Josiah and the men who rallied about him. The book of Deuteronomy is the record of the fact that the great principles of these earlier prophets, at last embodied in detailed laws, became the guiding force in the thought and life of later generations.

In their zeal to appeal by every possible means to the men of their nation the prophets often resorted to what might be called, were they not so intensely in earnest, sensational methods. Thus Hosea gave to his children names which suggested the essence of his teaching, and were calculated to arouse curiosity and questions which would open the mind of the people still further for the understanding and acceptance of his doctrines. Lo-ruhamah (Unpitied) was a grim name to give to a baby girl, but it was richly suggestive, as Hosea interpreted it, of the divine judgment awaiting guilty Israel. Similarly the name Shear-jashub (A remnant shall return), which Isaiah gave to his little boy, suggested not

Names  
of Children

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only the distant hope of restoration, but also the coming conquest and exile which awaited corrupt, defiant Judah. With the same earnest zeal Isaiah gave the name Maher-shalal-hash-baz (Spoil speedeth, prey hasteth) to another child. He also wrote it on a tablet, setting it up in the temple before the eyes of the people that they might never forget that spoil was speeding and prey was hastening, as Assyria, the dread agent of Jehovah, was drawing nearer and nearer to their borders.

### Object Lessons

In teaching the child nation, the prophets also appreciated the great value of object lessons. In the earlier days Ahijah, the prophet, tore his garment into twelve pieces, giving ten to Jeroboam as a suggestion of the honors which awaited the young adventurer in the great crisis that was approaching. To make clear to his countrymen that captivity would surely overtake them if they persisted in rebelling against Assyria, Isaiah went barefooted about the streets of Jerusalem for three years, through summer and winter, in the garb of a captive. Later, to prevent a similar disastrous rebellion against the Babylonian rule, Jeremiah appeared in public with a wooden yoke about his neck, thus symbolizing the yoke of Nebuchadrezzar. When his rival, Hananiah, broke the wooden yoke Jeremiah forged one of iron, telling the people in this graphic way that there was no escape from the rule of the Babylonian conqueror. At another time he took the elders of Jerusalem one day to the south of Jerusalem, and in their presence shattered in pieces upon a



great rock an earthen vessel as a symbol of the way in which guilty Judah should be broken. On another occasion he brought the Rechabites, whose loyalty to the commands of their ancestor, Jonadab, was well known, into the temple and offered them wine, which they, of course, refused. On the basis of this signal example of the obedience to the commands of a human ancestor, the prophet turned to denounce the people for their infidelity to Jehovah's divine commands.

Brought up under the shadow of the temple and accustomed to the use of symbols, Ezekiel surpassed all the earlier prophets in his use of dramatic object lessons. Thus, for example, in order to prevent the Jews of distant Jerusalem from again rebelling against Nebuchadrezzar, the prophet, in the plastic clay, drew a plan of Jerusalem in a state of siege and before the eyes of his fellow exiles portrayed the inevitable consequences of rebellion. On another occasion he cut off his hair and scattered part to the winds. Another part he smote with a sword; then, gathering a very small portion, he declared that this represented the scattered few of his countrymen who should survive the consequences of their rash and guilty policy. On another occasion, dragging out his household goods, he dug in hot haste through the soft clay wall which encircled the Jewish colony in their exile home in lower Babylonia; then, carrying his possessions through the breach thus made, he aroused in superlative measure the curiosity of his people. In the soil thus thoroughly prepared he sowed the seeds of earnest warning and counsel which

Ezekiel's Use  
of Dramatic  
Illustrations

he hoped would bear fruit in a saner attitude toward the political problem upon whose solution depended the fate of Jerusalem and Judah. At a later time Zechariah, another priest-prophet, illustrated the strong hope within him that Zerubbabel, the scion of the house of David, would again be raised to the kingship by giving command that a crown be prepared and laid aside until the opportune moment should arrive when the Jewish community would arise and reassert its independence.

**Written Tracts  
and Epistles**

It was inevitable that in time the prophets should put their messages in written form. Amos appears to have been the first to take this step. That which influenced him was probably the fact that he was prevented by Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, from speaking in public to the men of northern Israel. The earlier prophets appear, like Paul of a later day, to have regarded writing as an inferior substitute for the direct personal address. Most of the preëxilic prophets seem to have given little attention to the collection of their prophecies. As in the case of Jeremiah, the preservation of their sermons in writing is due to the work of their disciples to whom they committed their message. At first these prophetic writings were cherished and appreciated by a limited few within the nation. When the exile, however, scattered the different survivors of the race throughout the then known world, the importance of the written message became paramount. Henceforth the prophets depended almost entirely upon this method of teaching.

As the prestige of the prophets waned, it became more and more the custom for them to issue their predictions anonymously. The predictive element also became much more prominent. The prophets again became seers. With this loss of the personal touch and the abandonment of the teaching method, prophecy began to lose its vital touch with life and to become more vague and therefore less direct. Their teachings were presented in symbolic form. The apocalypse took the place of the direct, simple address. The appeal was to the imagination rather than to the will of men, and with this decline from its earlier and nobler traditions Hebrew prophecy lost its hold upon the lives of men. The result was that the prophet almost entirely disappeared, and his place was filled by the priest and the sage.

In the light especially of the study of the great preëxilic prophets, it is possible briefly to summarize the prophetic method. Its first characteristic was an intense moral earnestness begotten by profound personal conviction. The prophets spoke not dogmatically, but out of the depths of their own and their nation's experience. Their one ambition was to reach the wills and transform the lives of their contemporaries. From beginning to end, the true prophets were also characterized by their complete devotion to their task. The lives of men like Hosea and Jeremiah were one long martyrdom, and yet they never flinched or turned back, however great the danger, however great the cost. Fearlessly they went about their God-given task, refusing to compromise their ideals.

Apocalypses

Intense Moral  
Earnestness of  
the Prophets

Their  
Superlative Tact

At the same time the prophets were practical in their methods. They even sought as far as possible to utilize existing men and measures. Confronted by hostile audiences, they used superlative tact in gaining the public ear. Thus, Amos, confronted as he was by the corrupt and cruel rulers of northern Israel at a great feast day in the royal sanctuary at Bethel, not only disarmed all opposition, but gained with marvelous skill and effectiveness a unanimous assent to the fundamental principles which he was seeking to establish. Instead of beginning with an attack upon northern Israel, he pointed out the crimes and brutality of their hated foes, and the certain judgment that Jehovah would bring upon these guilty peoples. While his hearers were still rejoicing over the just judgment that was about to overtake the heathen, like a flash the prophet set before them the even greater crimes that were perpetrated by them against Jehovah's own people, and pointed out, with resistless logic, the inevitable judgments that awaited them. Similarly the young prophet Isaiah came before the rich vineyard owners of Jerusalem with the story of a friend who carefully prepared and planted a vineyard. The story was cast in the fascinating form of a vineyard song. Even as Isaiah's hearers, charmed by the story, were nodding assent to the justice of destroying this vineyard which bore only bad fruit, he suddenly applied the parable to them, for they were Jehovah's carefully nurtured vineyard. With courage equaled only by his superlative tact, he pointed out the crimes of land monopoly, intem-

perance, skepticism, and disregard of public responsibility, the worthless fruits which Judah was bringing forth.

Characteristic of the prophets are their marvelous simplicity and directness, their dramatic emphasis on essentials, and their close, intelligent touch with the conditions and problems of their day. They were the heralds of divine truth who spoke not so much to the individual as to the nation, and through their nation to all mankind. They were the watchmen on the mountain tops whose keen eyes detected the significant movements within their nation and in the larger world without. With eyes open to the divine truth, they grasped the eternal principles which are the basis of all political, social, and moral life. Possessed of these great facts and principles, with equal devotion and skill and tact, they impressed them upon the consciousness of their own and succeeding generations. These men were the great pioneers in the field of moral and religious truth whose teachings make the Old Testament unique, for they molded the life of ancient Israel, and gave to the other teachers of their race that which is the essence of their message. Above all, they, like John the Baptist, were forerunners, who prepared the way for that larger and fuller interpretation of life and religion proclaimed by the Great Prophet of Nazareth.

*Résumé of the  
Work of the  
Prophets*

## V

### THE DUTIES AND AIMS OF THE PRIESTS

#### Role of the Early Priests

THE word "priest" ordinarily calls up a vision of a long-robed official presenting a sacrifice at the ancient altar. This, however, is only an imperfect picture of the real functions of the pre-exilic Hebrew priests. The early history of the order is veiled in much obscurity. The ancient story preserved in Judges 18 throws some light upon this early history. It tells us of a certain Ephraimite by the name of Micah who reared a family shrine and put it in charge of his oldest son. When his son tired of the task, Micah secured a wandering Levite, who took charge of the sanctuary and in return for his services received a definite salary. Later the Levite was consulted by the Danite spies when they sought a home far in the north. Subsequently he was carried off to the north by them, together with the paraphernalia of the ancient shrine. There he and his descendants presided over the temple at Dan, which, after the division of the Hebrew empire, became one of the two royal sanctuaries of the north.

#### Origin of the Levitical Priesthood

In connection with this narrative the significant statement is made that this Levite was a descendant of Moses. In the narratives of Genesis 34 and Exodus 32. 25-29 the Levites are distinguished by their zeal in preserving the purity of Jehovah's religion. Their zeal appears to have called down upon them a signal disaster at the

hands of the ancient Canaanite inhabitants of the land. This event is the most satisfactory explanation of the reason why the tribe of Levi, as in the days of the Judges, was only a remnant and had no permanent place of abode. The facts that Moses belonged to this tribe and that it had no definite place of abode perhaps explain why to the sons of Levi was intrusted the care of the local sanctuaries from the days of the settlement onward.

Even though many of the descendants of the early Canaanites probably remained at these ancient sanctuaries, all ministering priests were apparently in time designated by the common term *son of Levi*. In the book of Deuteronomy the terms *priest* and *son of Levi* are interchangeable. Like the kindred terms *sons of the prophets* and *sons of the field*, or the modern Arab *son of the way* (used to describe a traveler), the term *son of Levi* did not necessarily indicate lineal descent from a common ancestor, but rather described the class of officials who were associated with the different sanctuaries throughout Israel.

The centralization of all worship in Jerusalem in the days of Josiah, and the abolition of all other sanctuaries, doubtless gave rise to that distinction which was first made by Ezekiel between the priests and the Levites. With him the priests are the descendants of the old Jerusalem priesthood, while the Levites are the descendants of those who cared for the ancient sanctuaries outside Jerusalem. By Ezekiel, and still further by the later priestly writers, the Levites are as-

Broader Content  
of the Term,  
"Son of Levi"

Its Later  
Limitations

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signed to a secondary and menial position and the priests, the sons of Aaron, are alone regarded as fitted to perform the more important acts of sacrifice.

The Fourfold  
Duties of the  
Priests

The distinction between the duties and aims of the preëxilic and post-exilic priests is, therefore, clearly marked. In the light of the oldest references, it is evident that the preëxilic priests were more than mere custodians of the temples and ministers at the altar. In an obscure but suggestive passage found among the songs preserved in Deuteronomy 33, the fourfold functions of these early priests are clearly stated:

Thy Thummim and thy Urim are for the Holy One,  
They show Jacob thy judgments,  
And Israel thy instruction;  
They bring to thy nostrils the savor of sacrifice,  
And whole burnt offering to thine altar.

This passage indicates that, in the first place, they were the guardians of the oracle; secondly, that they acted as judges, teaching the people by means of the decisions which they rendered; thirdly, that they were the ordinary teachers of the people; and, finally, that they directed the presentation of the sacrifices at the altar.

Greater  
Prominence of  
the Teaching  
Function

Of these four functions, that of teaching was, in the days before the exile, by far the most important and significant. With this thought in mind Micah (3. 11) complains that the "priests teach for hire," implying that their chief duty was to teach, but that they were under obligation to do so freely rather than for mercenary motives. Hosea, who was the first of the Old Testament prophets to appreciate fully the importance



of teaching as a means of developing the religious life and character of the race, declares that Jehovah will destroy both priest and people because the priests have been faithless to their task as teachers. In Malachi 2. 6, 7 is found the clearest portrait extant of the early priest:

True instruction was in his mouth,  
 And unrighteousness was not found in his lips;  
 He walked with me in peace and uprightness,  
 And turned many from iniquity.  
 For the priest's lips should keep knowledge,  
 And men should seek the law at his mouth,  
 For he is the messenger of Jehovah of hosts.

It was not until after the exile that the priests gave up their important teaching functions, and became simply custodians of the oral traditions, guardians of the sanctuary, and ministers at the altar.

In the preëxilic Hebrew life the priests exercised an exceedingly important influence in developing the life of the nation. Their connection with the sanctuaries gave them a position of great authority in the community. They were the class who taught to the masses the great principles of the prophets and by word and symbol made them clear, intelligible, and applicable to the ordinary life of the people. The original text of Jeremiah 5. 31 makes this relation very clear, although the words are those of denunciation:

Importance of  
 Their Influence

The prophets prophesy falsely,  
 And the priests teach according to their directions.

The priests spoke to the individual rather than to the nation, and their authority was acknowledged by kings and people. Their opportunities for in-

fluencing the masses were, therefore, exceedingly great, but with these opportunities came equally strong temptations. The prophets often complained that some of these priests yielded to mercenary motives and thus betrayed their high office. There is reason to believe, however, that the great majority of the early priests were faithful to their task. Abiathar, in the days of David, Jehoiada, in the days of Joash, and Hilkiyah, under the rule of Josiah, are a few of the strong men who by their character and personality exalted the office of the priest. Inasmuch as the people came to the priests rather than the priests to the people, they stood in a unique relation to those whom they taught. Their contact with the people was also closer and more continuous than that of the prophets. Without these teachers of the common people it is clear that the great principles enunciated by the prophets would in a majority of cases have failed to reach their true goal.

Aimed to Guard  
Sacred  
Institutions

Briefly formulated, the aim of the early priests was, first, to guard the sanctuaries and to preserve the religious traditions and institutions which gathered about these ancient shrines. Doubtless through them originally many of Israel's earliest traditions were handed down, being retold from year to year at the great annual festivals, until, in time, they were collected by the prophetic and priestly historians and committed to writing. While the temple still stood, the priests also transmitted to their sons the detailed ritualistic laws which governed the ceremonial life of the sanctuary.

The second task of the priests was to teach the people how rightly to worship. The evidence, on the whole, indicates that the early priests rarely offered sacrifice. Even the comparatively late law of Deuteronomy provides that each man shall bring his offering to the sanctuary, slay it with his own hand, prepare it for the altar, and then participate in the family feast which he was to share with his household and dependents. The task of the priest appears to have been to instruct the people how to perform the sacrifice, and in general to guide them in the details of the ritual and in the different forms of worship. Ezekiel charges the priests of his day with having neglected this important duty: "Her priests have done violence to my law, and have profaned my holy things; they have made no distinction between the holy and the common, neither have they caused men to discern between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them" (Ezek. 22. 26).

**To Teach People  
How to Worship**

The third aim of the priests was to teach the people how to live rightly and to perform their duties one to another. This led the priests to apply the principles not only of ceremonial but of civil law to the individual needs and problems of the people who resorted to them. It made them teachers of the individual as well as of the nation, and led them, like the prophets, to define religion in terms not only of the ritual but of life, of love, and of service. Thus, in their early development, the aims of the priests and prophets were in many ways closely parallel. Both appear

**To Teach People  
How to Live**

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to have developed from the ancient Arabic *kâhin*. The same common Semitic root is retained in the Hebrew term *kôhên*, which is the common designation of the priests. The word means "minister." While the prophets broke away from the local shrines and the customs which had gathered about them and devoted themselves to large questions of political, social, national, and later of universal import, the priests ever retained their close connection with the sanctuaries and devoted their attention to the details of worship and personal conduct.

## VI

### THE TEACHING METHODS OF THE PRIESTS

THROUGHOUT their history the priests remained preëminently the guardians of the divine oracles. This appears to have been the chief function of the son of Levi employed by Micah in the ancient story of Judges 17 and 18. The early kings, like Saul and David, always kept within their court priests to whom they turned for an answer in the name of Jehovah before going out to battle. Thus, according to 1 Samuel 23. 8-12: "Saul summoned all the people of war to go down to Keilah to besiege David and his men. And when David knew that Saul was devising evil against him he said to Abiathar the priest, Bring here the ephod. And David said, O Jehovah, the God of Israel, thy servant hath surely heard that Saul is seeking to come to Keilah to destroy the city because of me. Will Saul come down, as thy servant hath heard? O Jehovah, God of Israel, I beseech thee, tell thy servant. And Jehovah said, He will come down. Then David said, Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul? And Jehovah said, They will deliver thee up." Again, according to 1 Samuel 30. 7, 8: "David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelech, Bring here to me the ephod. And Abiathar brought thither the ephod to David. And David inquired of Jehovah, saying,

Use of the  
Oracle

Shall I pursue this marauding band?  
Shall I overtake them?

And he answered him,

Pursue,  
For thou shalt surely overtake,  
And thou shalt surely rescue."

Nature of the  
Oracle

From these and other references it seems clear that the question propounded to the priest was put in a form so that it could be answered either by "Yes" or "No." Fortunately, the superior Greek text of 1 Samuel 14, 41b-42a throws clear light upon the nature of these ancient oracles: "If the guilt be in me or in Jonathan my son, Jehovah, God of Israel, give Urim; but if the guilt is in my people Israel, give Thummim. Then Jonathan and Saul were taken and the people escaped. And Saul said, Cast the lot between me and Jonathan my son. He whom Jehovah shall take, must die." From this passage it is clear that the ancient oracle consisted of some form of sacred lot. Apparently the ephod was a pouch in the garment of the priest in which were probably found two stones, the one marked Urim (which means *lights*), the other Thummim (which means *perfections*). The question was answered according as one or the other of these sacred stones or tablets was drawn forth. This was evidently the usual method of appealing to Jehovah by means of the lot. Even so to-day the Moravians in the South use the lot in deciding such serious questions as marriage or the choice of a bishop.

In interpreting the significance of the lot the priests were able to exert a great influence.

From Haggai 2. 11-13 it is clear that in later times the torah or decision depended upon the judgment of the priests: "Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: Ask of the priests a decision, saying, If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any food, shall it become holy? And the priests answered and said, No. Then said Haggai, If one that is unclean by reason of a dead body touch any of these shall it be unclean? And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean." Thus the popular belief in the authority of the oracle gave to the priests rare opportunities for guiding the life of the people.

Opportunity for  
Influencing the  
People

Another exceedingly important way in which the priests taught the people was by means of the judicial decisions which they were called upon to render. In the classic passage of Exodus 18. 13-16 light is thrown on the fundamental nature of Moses's earlier work and on his vital relation to Israel's later legislation: "Now on the next day Moses sat as judge to decide cases for the people, and the people stood about Moses from morning until evening. But when Moses's father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, What is this thing that you are doing for the people? Why are you sitting all alone while all the people stand about you from morning until evening? And Moses answered his father-in-law, Because the people keep coming to me to inquire of God. Whenever they have a matter of dispute, they come to me that I may decide which of the two is right and make known the statutes of God and his decisions."

Judicial  
Decisions

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Moses's  
Relation to the  
Laws

In deciding these difficult questions which presented new problems and involved new principles, Moses was thus able to establish precedents which became the basis of definite laws. Whatever is the final conclusion regarding the date at which the different Old Testament laws were committed to writing, they will always be recognized as truly Mosaic. Standing as Moses did at the beginning of Israel's national life, he left his mighty impress upon all its laws and institutions. As the first great prophet, priest, and judge, he taught the Hebrew race by word of mouth, by object lessons, and by just decisions, and thus established those fundamental principles which are the basis of Israel's legal system. Later Jewish tradition, therefore, is right in ascribing to Moses a place of commanding authority in Israel's legislation.

Judicial  
Functions of the  
Priests

According to Deuteronomy 17. 8, 9 all difficult cases were referred to the priests as a court of final appeal: "If a case involving bloodshed or conflicting claims or the plague of leprosy—subjects of dispute within thine own city—be too difficult for thee to decide, then thou shalt set out and go up to the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose; and thou shalt come to the Levitical priests and the judge who shall be in office in those days; and thou shalt inquire and they shall make known to thee the judicial decision." The priests were regarded as Jehovah's representatives: "If the thief be not found, then the master of the house shall come before God to prove whether or not he hath taken his neighbor's goods. In every case of breach of trust, whether



it concern ox, or ass, or sheep, or clothing, or any kind of lost thing of which one saith, This is it, the case of both parties shall come before God: He whom God shall condemn shall make double restitution to his neighbor" (Exod. 22. 7-9).

The opportunities thus offered to the priests not only for illustrating the principles of justice, but for educating the people, cannot be overestimated. As individual problems of daily life were laid before them, they were enabled to study the needs of the people, to apply in most practical form the high principles proclaimed by the prophets, and at the same time to lead the people to accept and follow them in their own daily life. Their position in the midst of a child nation, whose moral standards and religious ideals were only gradually being formed, was very similar to that of the wise and efficient judge in charge of a modern juvenile court. They became the specialists in dealing with social and moral ills. They were able to heal effectively those disorders which retarded the natural and normal development of the moral and religious health of society. They were in position to deal directly and personally with those who were a menace to the welfare of the community. Inspired by a strong religious impulse and by the spirit of the teacher as well as that of the judge, it is obvious that the faithful priests of ancient Israel were exceedingly powerful factors in the development of the national character and ideals.

The priests, however, did not merely admin-

**Opportunities  
for thus  
Teaching the  
People**

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The Catechetical  
Method

ister justice. There is clear and convincing evidence in the Old Testament laws that they formulated the essential principles governing the relation of man to man and man to God, and as teachers impressed these principles upon the consciousness and memory of the people. From Deuteronomy 27. 14, 15 it is also evident that they sometimes used the catechetical method: "And the Levites shall answer and say to all the men of Israel with a loud voice: Cursed be the man that maketh a graven or molten image, an abomination to Jehovah, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and setteth it up in secret. And all the people shall answer and say, Amen." Twelve important definite duties are thus impressed in the form of responses upon the minds of the people.

Memorizing  
Decalogues

Most students of the Old Testament are familiar with the wonderful prophetic decalogue in Exodus 20. Not all, however, have discovered the remaining nine decalogues preserved in Exodus 21-23. Of these, the first five decalogues contain civil and social laws. The last four (probably originally five) contain ceremonial and religious laws. The following titles are descriptive of the contents of these decalogues: CIVIL DECALOGUES: (1) Rights of Slaves. (2) Assault. (3) Domestic Animals. (4) Responsibility for Property. (5) Social Purity. CEREMONIAL AND RELIGIOUS: (1) Duty of Kindness. (2) Justice in Legal Matters. (3) Duties to God. (4) Ceremonial Duties. Each decalogue consisted originally of ten short sentences or words. Each law illustrates a fundamental prin-

ciple applicable to all kindred cases. These ancient laws were doubtless arranged in the form of decalogues as an aid to the memory. Each consisted of two distinct pentads, that is, two groups of five laws. Each law in a decalogue was, therefore, presumably associated with a certain finger or thumb of the hand, and in turn each one of the ten decalogues was likewise fixed in the memory of the learner. It takes little imagination, therefore, to see the faithful priests at the annual feasts—in fact, whenever the people came up to sacrifice—teaching them, old and young alike, these fundamental principles, and helping them to remember by association with the fingers of the hand.

The decalogue which defines the duties of witnesses and judges in legal matters is typical of the group, and possesses a perennial value as well as interest. The last law of the first pentad seems unusual, until it is remembered that the witnesses came from the ranks of the common people and that therefore their sympathies were with the poor. The first law of the following pentad, which deals with the duties of the judges who were drawn from the rich and ruling class, naturally emphasizes the importance of regarding the cause of the poor. The following is a modern interpretation of this ancient decalogue:

**A Typical  
Decalogue**

#### **First Pentad: Duties of Witnesses**

- I. Thou shalt not spread abroad a false report.
- II. Do not enter into a conspiracy with a wicked man to be an unrighteous witness.
- III. Thou shalt not follow the majority in doing what is wrong.

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- IV. Thou shalt not bear testimony in a case so as to pervert justice.
- V. Thou shalt not show partiality to a poor man in his case.

### Second Pentad: Duties of Judges

- VI. Thou shalt not prevent justice being done to thy poor in his cause.
- VII. Keep aloof from every false matter.
- VIII. Do not condemn the innocent nor him who hath a just cause.
- IX. Do not vindicate the wicked.
- X. Thou shalt take no bribe, for a bribe blindeth the eyes of those who see and perverteth the cause of the righteous.

#### Symbolism of The Ritual

The priests were fully aware of the value of objective symbolism in teaching a child nation. The principles underlying Israel's ceremonials are those of the prophets: the holiness of Jehovah, the importance of loyalty to him, the defiling character of wrongdoing, and the necessity of public confession. No one can read certain of the later psalms, which breathe passionate devotion to the temple ritual, and fail to appreciate how effectively the priests impressed these great principles upon the minds of the people. To the ordinary citizens the obligations of the ritual were not a burden but a joy. In the faithful performance of them and in the sense of harmony with their Divine King they found supreme peace and happiness.

#### The Temple Ritual in the Greek Period

Ben Sira has preserved a highly colored but vivid picture of the temple ritual in the later Greek period. The occasion was probably the service on the day of atonement led by the high priest, Simon:

How glorious was he when he looked forth from the temple,

At his coming forth out of the sanctuary!

As the morning star in the midst of a cloud,

As the full moon on the day of the passover feast!

When he put on the robe of glory,

And clothed himself with the splendid garments,

And ascended to the holy altar,

He made glorious the precincts of the sanctuary.

And when he received the portions from the priests' hands,

Himself also standing by the altar-hearth,

His brethren as a garland round about him,

He was as a young cedar on Mount Lebanon,

And as stems of palm trees they encompassed him about,

All the sons of Aaron in their glory,

With Jehovah's burnt offering in their hands,

In the presence of all the congregation of Israel,

Until he had finished the service at the altar,

And the offering to the Most High, the Almighty,

He stretched out his hand to the cup,

And poured out the blood of the grape;

He poured it out at the foot of the altar,

A sweet-smelling savor to the Most High, the King of all.

Then shouted the sons of Aaron,

They blew on the trumpets of beaten work,

They blew and sent forth a mighty blast,

As a remembrance before the Most High.

Then all the people together hasted,

They fell down with their faces to the ground,

To worship their Lord, the Almighty, God Most High.

The singers also praised him with their voices;

In the whole house was there made sweet melody,

And the people besought the Lord Most High,

In prayer before him who is merciful,

Until the service at the altar was ended;

And his due had been rendered to him.

Then the high priest went down and lifted up his hands,

Over the whole congregation of the Israelites,

To give blessing to the Lord with his lips,

And to glory in his name. (B. Sir. 50. 5, 6, 11-20.)

The priests were also fully alive to the importance of teaching through the eye as well as

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through the ear. They appealed effectively to the æsthetic sense and to the spirit of worship so strong in the early history of the race. To this end they bound themselves by certain ceremonial customs, such as the acts of purification and the wearing of spotless white garments, which illustrated effectively the holiness of Jehovah and the requirement that his people should be holy. By abstaining from certain kinds of food and from all that was unclean they became constant object lessons before the eyes of the people.

### Written Laws

In time also the priests took the pen and collected the laws of their race which had been transmitted from father to son, or else first impressed their teachings upon the minds of all through the concise decalogues, and then put them in written form. When the temple was destroyed there was great danger that the ceremonial customs, which had been transmitted from father to son and had received constant illustration in the temple ritual, would be forgotten. Therefore the priestly scribes recorded these customs in written laws, such as are found in the legal sections of Exodus and Numbers and especially in Leviticus.

### Traditional Precedents and Histories

They also collected the traditional precedents which, like the case law of other nations, became of binding value in guiding judges in deciding similar questions. To provide an introduction and a setting to Israel's laws, the priests followed the example of the prophets and, collecting the current traditions, wrote a priestly history of their race, beginning with the majestic story of the creation, found in the first chapter of Genesis,

and culminating in the accounts of the great covenants and institutions which they believed were established at different periods in their history. Still later, a Levite wrote a history of the nation parallel to the prophetic history found in Samuel and Kings. The interest in Chronicles naturally centers about the temple and the origin of Israel's religious institutions. Some of the later priests, with the spirit of the poet, voiced their intense appreciation of the law and devotion to it in the form of psalms. The result is that a large portion of the writings of the Old Testament come from Israel's priestly teachers.

The priests of ancient Israel, therefore, anticipated many of the principles emphasized in modern education. They expressed their thought concretely and objectively. They appealed to the eye and to the æsthetic sense, as well as to the reason. They were fully alive to the value of suggestion as a means of teaching. In their use of symbol and ceremonial they were the early exponents of the manual and illustrative method. They also put their vital teachings in clear, compact form, easily understood by the people, and then impressed them indelibly upon the popular mind by means of oral decalogue, written law, and stately ritual.

*Résumé of the  
Methods of the  
Priests*

## VII

### THE HISTORY AND AIMS OF THE WISE MEN OR SAGES

**Background of  
the Work of the  
Sages**

IN the primitive Semitic East there were apparently no distinct classes of lawyers, physicians, or philosophers. The needs, however, which these different classes to-day conserve existed in the past as in the present. The necessity for men to preserve the stored-up experience and wisdom of succeeding generations, and to impart it in practical form to all who might apply to them, was largely met by the ancient wise men or sages. For the sake of convenience and effectiveness this wealth of experience was ordinarily treasured in the form of proverbs.

**Sages in the  
Ancient East**

From the old Egyptian kingdom there comes a collection of such proverbs, popularly attributed to Ptah-hotep and Kegemne, famous viziers of their day. On the back side of one of the creation tablets is found a reference to a corresponding class of wise men among the ancient Babylonians:

Let the elder enlighten,  
Let the wise, the learned meditate together;  
Let the father rehearse, make the son apprehend,  
Open the ears of the shepherd and the flockmaster (the king).

First Kings 4. 30, in describing the wisdom of Solomon, alludes incidentally to the sages of other nations, for it states that his wisdom "excelled the wisdom of all the children of the East



and all the wisdom of Egypt." The book of Job likewise bears testimony to the presence of the wise among Israel's neighbors, for Job himself was of the land of Uz and his friends who conversed with him in the characteristic language of the wisdom school were Eliphaz, the Temanite, Zophar, the Naamathite, and Bildad, the Shuhite. The lands here described lay to the east of Palestine. Teman was an Edomite city famous in antiquity for its sages.

Among the Arabs, and especially those living far out in the desert, many men noted for their practical wisdom may still be found. The pointed proverb is to-day constantly and effectively used in ordinary intercourse throughout the Semitic world.

**In the Modern  
East**

It was in this favorable atmosphere and to meet universal human needs that Israel's sages arose. Inasmuch as their appeal was not to the nation but to the individual, and as their work was done quietly and unostentatiously, they do not figure prominently in the records of the Old Testament. Only rarely and incidentally are they referred to in the literature which comes from the earlier periods. In the post-exilic period, when their activity and influence reached the zenith, they are not once alluded to in the historical records. Their presence and work is evinced only by their writings. It is exceedingly difficult, therefore, to reconstruct their history with any degree of assurance.

**In Israel's  
History**

The earliest traces of the work of the sages are found in the words of the popular hero, Samson. After finding honey in the skeleton of the lion,

**Early Traces of  
Wisdom  
Thought**

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which he had earlier slain, he propounded at his wedding feast the following riddle, cast in the rhyme peculiar to early popular Semitic poetry:

Out of the eater came something to eat,  
And out of the strong came something sweet.  
(Judg. 14. 14.)

To this riddle his guests made answer:

What is sweeter than honey?  
What is stronger than a lion?

Samson, in turn, referring to the way in which they had extracted the meaning of his riddle from him through the agency of his wife, replied:

If with my heifer you did not plow,  
You had not solved my riddle now.  
(Judg. 14. 18.)

### Wise Women

The earliest representative of the wisdom school to figure in Hebrew history was not a man but the famous wise woman of Tekoa. According to 2 Samuel 14. 1-20 she was employed by the Hebrew commander, Joab, to bring about a reconciliation between King David and his banished son Absalom. It is significant that she came from the little Judean town which later sent forth Amos the prophet, who was famous for his clear, convincing logic and the terse, epigrammatic form in which he cast his powerful appeals. By the use of a skillfully prepared story or parable the woman influenced David to commit himself to a principle which she forthwith urged him to apply in the case of his own son. In a later period Joab again won his point through the services of a wise woman; it

was while he was besieging the town of Abel, in northern Israel, where the rebel Sheba had taken refuge. When the fate of the city seemed sealed, because of the obstinate resistance of its inhabitants, one of its wise women came forth to make terms with Joab. When she had secured favorable terms from the sturdy warrior, "the woman went to all the people in her wisdom" and persuaded them to cut off the head of the rebel and thus save their own heads.

Two wise men appear among David's trusted counselors. The one was Ahithophel, who cast his fortunes with the rebel Absalom and later committed suicide when his counsels were rejected. The other was Hushai, who remained loyal to David, and by his crafty counsel and effective acting undermined the influence of his rival Ahithophel and at a critical moment saved the cause of the king. While not yet recognized as a distinct caste or order, these wise men and women, even in the days of the United Kingdom, appear to have been regarded as a class by themselves, and like Solomon, the great representative of the wise men of early Hebrew antiquity, to have enjoyed great popular favor and a far-famed reputation. Their methods were those of the later sages, and are very distinct from those of the priests and the prophets. It is exceedingly probable that many such wise men and women were to be found in the cities and villages of early Israel.

By his contemporaries, and even more by later generations, King Solomon was regarded as the most conspicuous representative of this early

**Wise Men in the  
Days of David**

**Nature of  
Solomon's  
Wisdom**

wisdom school. His wisdom, however, was evidently very different from that of the later sages who have given us the majority of the proverbs now found in the Old Testament. His wisdom appears to have been of the clever, versatile type which might be more exactly defined as sagacity or cunning. The stories preserved by tradition to illustrate this quality reveal a brilliant, clever mind, like that of a keen modern detective, able quickly to interpret evidence overlooked by the ordinary observer. That he was lacking in the deeper qualities of wisdom is demonstrated by the signal follies which characterized his reign.

The majority of the Old Testament proverbs are written from the point of view of men of the middle class, and do not fit in the mouth of a tyrannical, splendor-loving king, who was chiefly famous for his disregard of the laws of the simple life, and for the magnitude of his harem. There is, however, in all probability, some historical basis for the statement in 1 Kings (4. 32) that "he spoke three thousand proverbs." That he embodied the products of his versatile wit in the form of proverbs need not be doubted, even though the tradition in the present form is exceedingly late. The added statement that "he spoke of trees, animals, birds, and fishes," probably means that he used these as illustrations in parables, even as did the later wise men. Solomon's fame as a proverb-maker doubtless explains why later generations were inclined, in ever-increasing measure, to attribute all ancient proverbs to him. In view of the well-known tenacity with which favorite proverbs are re-

tained in the popular mind and transmitted from age to age, it is exceedingly probable that certain of the maxims in the book of Proverbs came originally from Solomon. It is impossible, however, to distinguish these from the many which came from the lips of later sages, for the value of a proverb depends upon the fact that it embodies common human experience rather than upon the authority of the one who first formulated it.

The preëxilic prophets refer occasionally to the wise. In condemning the spirit of his age Isaiah declared:

References to  
the Wise in the  
Days Before the  
Exile

Jehovah saith, Because this people draw near with  
their mouth,  
And honor me with their lips, while their heart is far  
from me,  
So that their fear of me is nothing more than a precept  
taught by men,  
Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a thing so  
wonderful and astonishing,  
That the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, the  
discernment of their discerning ones shall be  
eclipsed. (Isa. 29. 13, 14.)

The reference in Jeremiah to the teaching of the priest, the counsel of the wise, and the word of the prophet has already been quoted (p. 10). Ezekiel in a closely parallel passage substitutes *the elders for the wise*: "They shall seek a vision of the prophet; but the teaching shall perish from the priest, and counsel from the elders." The book of Job also contains many references to the accumulated wisdom which the wise men have transmitted from their fathers. The presence of proverbs and parables in the preëxilic literature gives an additional basis for the con-

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clusion that a class of wise men or sages flourished in the days before the exile and exerted a quiet but powerful influence in shaping the ideals of the race, especially in molding the character of the individual.

Their  
Prominence  
After the Exile

The wise, however, first come into prominence in Israel's life in the days following the Babylonian exile. The destruction of the nation brought the individual and his problems to the front. The passing of the prophet threw added responsibilities upon the wise men or sages. The failure of the ancient Hebrew state spurred on the faithful priests and sages to new and more strenuous efforts to realize Jehovah's will in the life of the restored community. The enforced leisure of the exile and of the periods which followed gave ample opportunity for meditation on the problems of the individual. Contact, even though indirect, with the thought of other nations turned the minds of Israel's teachers into new channels and thus brought to the front the class which corresponds most closely to the philosophers and the ethical teachers of Greece and Rome.

Portrait of a  
Later Wise Man

Ben Sira (in 39. 1-11) has given us the most vivid picture extant of the wise man of the later day:

He seeks out the hidden meaning of proverbs,  
And is conversant with the subtilities of parables,  
He serves among great men,  
And appears before him who rules;  
He travels through the land of strange nations;  
For he hath tried good things and evil among men.  
He applies his heart to seeking earnestly the Lord who  
made him,  
And makes supplication before the Most High,

And opens his mouth in prayer,  
 And makes supplication for his sins.  
 If the great Lord will,  
 He is filled with the spirit of understanding,  
 He pours forth the words of his wisdom,  
 And in prayer gives thanks to the Lord.  
 He directs his counsel and knowledge,  
 And in his secrets doth he meditate.  
 He shows forth the instruction which he has been  
     taught,  
 And glories in the law of the covenant of the Lord.  
 Many shall commend his understanding,  
 And so long as the world endures, it shall not be  
     blotted out.  
 His memorial shall not depart,  
 And his name shall live from generation to generation.  
 Nations shall declare his wisdom,  
 And the congregation shall tell out his praise.  
 If he continue, he shall leave a greater name than a  
     thousand,  
 And if he die, he addeth thereto.

This description is a true portrait of Ben Sira himself, whose thought and character are clearly revealed in the remarkable collection of practical and philosophical teachings found in the book which bears his name. He was evidently a man of wide experience, of broad sympathies, was possessed of a keen insight into human nature, and had a large fund of practical information. He was thoroughly familiar with the scriptures of his race, as well as with the vital problems of his day. Above all, he was inspired by an intense desire to make his knowledge and experience of practical service to all, especially to the young. His references to the law and his emphasis upon its careful study and observation reflect the spirit of his age; but in other respects he may be regarded as a type of the wise of the post-exilic period.

Character of  
 Ben Sira

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Usually Men of  
Mature Years

From the allusions in the books of Proverbs, Job and Ecclesiastes it is possible to gain a very definite idea of the real character of these wonderful teachers of Israel. Usually they were men of mature years. As has already been noted, Ezekiel uses the term "elders" as a synonym for wise men or sages. Elihu's elaborate apologies for speaking in the council of the elders because he was young further illustrates this point:

I am young, and you are very old;  
Therefore I held back, and did not show you my  
opinion. (Job 32. 6.)

Spoke to the  
Individual

Like the prophets, they came from many different classes. The recognition of the needs of humanity and the consciousness of a message tested by personal experience and fitted to meet those needs constituted their divine call. In general their ideals and their doctrines were those of the great ethical prophets of the preëxilic period. In addressing their message directly to the people they stood squarely on the platform of the prophets; but while the prophets spoke for the most part to the nation as a whole, they spoke also to individuals. In this connection it is significant that the word "Israel" is found nowhere in the book of Proverbs. The wise do not appear to have concerned themselves with the political problems of their day. The problems, the possibilities, and the development of the individuals with whom they came into personal contact apparently demanded all their attention.

They were the custodians of the practical ex-



perience gleaned from the past as well as from their own personal observation. This treasured experience they were able to impart in clear and practical form:

**Practical  
Teachers**

The tongue of the wise uttereth knowledge aright,  
But the mouth of fools poureth out folly.  
(Prov. 15. 2.)

They were also inspired by an ardent desire to impart their knowledge:

The lips of the wise disperse knowledge,  
But the foolish have no desire to do so.  
(Prov. 15. 7.)

Association with them meant to their disciples knowledge and power:

He who walks with the wise shall be wise,  
But he who associates with fools shall suffer for it.  
The teaching of the wise is a source of life,  
That one may depart from the snares of death.  
(Prov. 13. 20, 14.)

The sages of Israel were true lovers of men and winners of souls (Prov. 11. 30). Amid the changed conditions of a later age they were the real successors of the earlier prophets. In their close touch with the individual and in their zeal to influence by personal instruction and direction the youth with whom they came into contact they resembled more closely the faithful priests of the earlier days. They were bound together by common aims, teaching, and methods of work. The book of Job contains a suggestive picture of the sages reasoning together upon certain universal human problems (12. 2; 13. 1, 2; 32. 1-6). It also illustrates the fact, which is further confirmed by the book of Proverbs, that

**Comparison  
With the  
Prophets and  
Priests**

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they did not always agree with each other; but regarding the great practical questions of life they were in evident accord.

Aims of the  
Wise

The preface to the book of Proverbs clearly defines the aims which this class of teachers set before themselves:

To acquire wisdom and training,  
To understand rational discourse,  
To receive training in wise conduct,  
In uprightness, justice, and rectitude,  
To impart discretion to the inexperienced,  
To the young knowledge and insight;  
That the wise man may hear and add to his learning,  
And the man of intelligence gain education,  
To understand a proverb and a parable,  
The words of the sages and their aphorisms.

To Develop a  
Receptive Mind

Briefly recapitulated, their aims were, first, to inspire in the minds of their disciples a right attitude toward learning and practical instruction. They placed great emphasis upon the importance of a receptive mind:

The way of a fool is right in his own eyes:  
But he that is wise gives heed to counsel.

(Prov. 12. 15; cf. also Prov. 10. 8.)

Ben Sira insists equally upon this fundamental requirement for practical education:

My son, if thou wilt, thou mayest be instructed,  
And if thou wilt yield thyself, thou shalt be ready to  
do anything.

If thou love to hear, thou shalt receive,  
If thou incline thine ear thou shalt be wise.  
Stand thou in the multitude of the elders,  
Whoever is wise—cleave thou to him.  
Be willing to listen to every excellent discourse;  
And let not the proverbs of understanding escape thee.  
If thou seest a man of understanding, bestir thyself  
and go to him,

And let thy foot wear out the steps of his doors.

(B. Sir. 6. 32-36.)

The second aim of the wise was to inculcate practical knowledge and wisdom in the minds of men, especially the young and inexperienced. Personified wisdom, speaking in behalf of the sages as a whole, cries out in Proverbs 8. 4, 5:

To Teach  
Practical  
Wisdom

To you, O men, I call,  
And my appeal is to the sons of men;  
Learn, O ye simple, to know understanding,  
And ye fools, to understand wisdom.

The wise felt that their first great task was to transmit to every individual the heritage of practical, ethical, and religious experience which had come down to them from the past. They realized that knowledge was necessary for right action, and they therefore spared no effort to make the truth inherited from the past appear attractive to their disciples, whether young or old.

The third aim of the wise was to develop in the minds of men a right attitude toward God. Like the prophets, they were both ethical and religious teachers. One of their fundamental doctrines was that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." In Proverbs 14. 2 the sense in which the word "fear" is used is clearly defined:

To Create a  
Right Attitude  
Toward God

He that walks in his uprightness fears Jehovah;  
But he that is perverse in his ways despises him.

Fear in the language of the sages contained no suggestion of terror, but meant reverence and loyalty expressed in right acts. The familiar proverb,

Trust in Jehovah with all thy heart,  
Lean not upon thine own understanding;

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In all thy ways acknowledge him,  
And he will make plain thy paths.

(Prov. 3. 5, 6),

voices one of the chief aims of these earnest wisdom teachers. The small collection of proverbs found in Proverbs 22. 17 to 24. 34 opens with the suggestive quotation:

Incline thine ear and hear the words of the wise,  
And apply thy heart to my knowledge.  
That thy trust may be in Jehovah,  
I have made them known to thee this day, even to thee.

To Inspire  
Noble Acts

The fourth aim of the wise was to inspire right and noble actions. Their ultimate appeal was not to the feelings or to the reason, but to the will. All their instruction was but a means to this practical end:

Let not kindness and truth forsake thee;  
Bind them about thy neck,  
Write them upon the tablets of thy heart;  
So shalt thou find favor and good repute  
In the sight of God and man.

(Prov. 3. 3, 4.)

The wise men sought to define the duty of the individual in all his social relations. The right use of the ear and tongue, the duties of children to parents and of parents to their children, the responsibility of a king to his subjects and of subjects to their king, the evils of falsehood, pride, cruelty, and intemperance, and the value of truth, honesty, courage, and charity are but a few of the practical subjects which they discussed from many different points of view.

To Develop  
Individual  
Character

In general the aim of the wise was to make sane, happy, efficient men and women. Their aims, therefore, were practically identical with

those of the modern progressive Sunday school teacher and educator. By example, as well as by precept, they defined the aims and laid down those fundamental educational principles which we are to-day again striving to apply. Historically they are the forerunners of the present world-wide movement for a broader, deeper, and more effective religious education.

## VIII

### THE METHODS OF THE WISE MEN OR SAGES

**Breadth and  
Practical  
Character of  
Their Teachings**

THE wise men, like the Hebrew prophets, recognized no distinction between that which we to-day call secular and religious. They were fully aware that education is a unit and that everything which vitally concerns man or influences his conduct is of real ethical and religious value. Nothing of real interest to the individual was too petty for their consideration. In their teachings they aimed to touch life on every side. In the same sections in which they defined men's duties to God they discussed man's legal obligations and that which affected his business. Thus they blended closely ideal and utilitarian questions and motives. While the reasons that they urged for right doing were often selfish and material, they were clearly adapted to the intellectual and moral culture of the classes whom the wise were seeking to influence.

**Their Theory of  
Education**

In the vocabulary of the wise folly stood for the lack of knowledge or of the desire to acquire and use it. Wisdom was the opposite of folly and represented not only knowledge but also the ability to apply it practically in life. In the thought of the wise it included all the practical virtues, from the fear of God, "which is the beginning of wisdom," to moral courage and temperance in eating and drinking. The aim of education, therefore, according to the wise, was to

deliver the individual from the evils of folly by enabling him to acquire insight (that is, the open and intelligent attitude), knowledge, and wisdom (that is, not only knowledge, but the ability to apply it practically in life).

The wise men also fully appreciated the importance of primary education. A great majority of their teachings are addressed to the young. Here they found their most promising sphere of influence.

**Emphasis on  
Primary  
Education**

Train up a child in the way in which he should go,  
And even when he is old he will not depart from it.  
(Prov. 22. 6),

was the guiding principle in all their activity, even as it is the watchword of modern educational psychology. They also strongly emphasized the responsibility of parents in the education of their children:

The father hath shame, having begotten an uninstructed  
son,  
And a foolish daughter is born to his loss.  
(B. Sir. 22. 3.)

The wise depended entirely upon personal counsel and teaching for the attainment of their aims. There are a few references which indicate that at times they were consulted regarding questions of state. The famous counselors in David's court, Ahithophel and Hushai, belonged to this class. No important policy was adopted by the king without consulting them, and their counsels were received with great respect. In Proverbs 20. 18 is found the suggestive maxim:

**Public  
Counselors**

Every purpose is established by counsel,  
And by wise guidance make thou war.

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In Proverbs 8. 14-16 personified wisdom is made to declare in behalf of the wise as a class:

Counsel is mine and sound knowledge;  
I am understanding, I have might.  
By me kings reign,  
And princes decree justice.  
By me princes rule,  
And nobles, even all the judges of the earth.

Personal Advice  
and Instruction

As a rule, however, the wise taught the small groups of disciples which gathered about them. To these they gave the familiar name of sons. The place of these ancient religious schools was usually just inside the city gate. Here were held the primitive courts, and here the people gathered for the discussion of public and private questions as well as for purposes of barter. This place gave a good opportunity for the wise to come into close personal contact with the people; here also the youthful learners could readily consult their teachers. Question and answer probably figured largely in the teachings of the wise. In the light of similar usage in the East to-day, especially at the great Mohammedan school at Cairo, it is easy to reconstruct the scene. An aged sage, with a long flowing beard and a face which expresses the love and interest which he feels for the young, as well as the pleasures and the sorrows which have come to him in his long life-experience, sits cross-legged on the ground. About him in the same posture are his disciples. Their faces express varying degrees of interest and appreciation of the words of counsel and exhortation which fall from the lips of the ancient sage. In the form in which he puts his teachings and in his attitude toward those taught



is revealed his intense zeal to attract and help the ignorant and foolish.

The book of Proverbs as well as the writings of Ben Sira show how eagerly the wise sought to draw within the circle of their influence the youth who most needed their teaching:

**Zeal to Reach  
and Help Those  
Intellectually  
and Morally  
Destitute**

Neglect not the discourse of the wise,  
And be conversant with their proverbs;  
For of them you shall learn instruction,  
And how to minister to great men.

Hear, O children, the instruction of a father,  
Give heed that ye may comprehend wisdom.  
For good counsel I give you,  
Forsake ye not my teaching.  
When I was of tender age,  
Beloved by my father,  
He used to teach me and say to me:  
"Let thy mind retain my words.  
Keep my commandments and live;  
Get wisdom, get understanding.  
Forsake her not, and she will preserve thee,  
Love her and she will keep thee.  
Prize her and she will exalt thee,  
She will honor thee if thou embrace her;  
She will encircle thy head with a chaplet of beauty,  
Bestow on thee a crown of glory."

(Prov. 4. 1-9.)

From the vivid description of wisdom's banquet it may also be inferred that the wise were inspired by missionary zeal and went forth in quest of disciples:

Wisdom has built her house,  
Set up her seven pillars,  
Killed her beasts, mixed her wine,  
And prepared her table.

She has sent forth her maidens to cry  
On the thoroughfares of the city:  
"Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither!"  
To him who is void of understanding she says:

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“Come, eat of my bread,  
Drink the wine I have mixed!  
Forsake folly and live,  
And walk in the way of understanding!”  
(Prov. 9. 1-6.)

### Reception of Their Teachings

Sometimes the wise met with rebuff and ridicule from a class in the community known as the scornors, but as a rule their counsels were highly appreciated. Like the priests, they probably received remuneration for their counsels, especially in regard to questions of personal and economic nature. One proverb contains the exhortation:

Buy the truth and sell it not;  
Yea, wisdom, and instruction and understanding.

In another the scornful yet suggestive question was raised:

Why hath the fool money in his hand to buy wisdom,  
Seeing he hath no understanding?

Ben Sira's picture of the later wise men is also indicative of the high esteem which these moral specialists and practical counselors enjoyed in his day.

### Their Use of the Written Word

Throughout their history the wise, like the scribes, depended almost exclusively upon the spoken word as the means of reaching and teaching their disciples. They were fully alive to the importance of the close personal relation between themselves and the ones taught. There came a time, however, when they felt compelled, like the other teachers of Israel, to resort to the written word, as a means of preserving and conveying their teachings. The product of this method of teaching is the so-called wisdom liter-

ature of the Old Testament and Apocrypha. It is found in the books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Job, portions of the Psalter, in the Wisdom of Ben Sira or Ecclesiasticus, and in the Wisdom of Solomon.

This literature reveals the great attention which the sages gave to the form in which they presented their teachings. It reflects the influence of long oral transmission, as well as careful literary revision. It reveals the intense eagerness of the wise to make their teachings so attractive that they would prove irresistible even to the foolish, ignorant, and inattentive. They are well fitted to arrest the attention, to appeal to the imagination, to provoke question and thought, and to make a deep impression upon the memory.

**Their Attention  
to Literary  
Form**

The literary unit throughout all the wisdom literature is the proverb. In its simplest form it is a couplet, repeating in the second line in a slightly different form the thought contained in the first. Thus by reiteration the essential thought is made clear and fixed in the memory. This characteristic of Hebrew poetry added greatly to the effectiveness of Semitic proverbs. It enabled the teacher to bring out his truth by means of strong comparisons or sharply drawn contrasts or to introduce a number of parallel figures and illustrations. The proverb itself is the embodiment of crystallized experience, expressed in the most concise and vivid form. It is like a barbed arrow which sticks in the memory. By virtue of its brevity it is especially adapted to the moral instruction of the young. By an

**The Proverb**

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apt use of figures it appeals to the imagination, which is so responsive in the minds of children and of a child-nation. By the use of familiar figures drawn from the everyday life of the people it also enabled the wise to utilize the power of association. Moreover, the proverb, like the words of a decalogue, was admirably adapted to memorization, and it is probable that this method of teaching was much used by these early teachers.

### Similitude

Closely related to the simple proverb is the similitude, of which there are many examples in the book of Proverbs:

The door turneth upon its hinges,  
So doth the sluggard upon his bed.  
Fervent lips and a wicked heart  
Are like an earthen vessel overlaid with silver dross.  
(Prov. 26. 14, 23.)

The similitude was probably one of the earliest forms of teaching employed by the wise. Pedagogically, it was one of the most effective, for it associated the most important truths with the commonest objects and experiences of life.

### Riddles

Among early peoples, as among children today, riddles were greatly enjoyed. The element of mystery and the appeal to the love of competition and of achievement attracted the attention and held the interest of the young. The value of this form of teaching was appreciated and appropriated by the wise. Most of their riddles have been lost, but in the thirtieth chapter of Proverbs and in a few passages in Ben Sira, remnants of these have been preserved, together with their answers. They are also cast in the

poetic form, which characterizes practically all of the wisdom literature. A question would be propounded, as for example:

For what three things doth the earth tremble,  
And for four which it cannot bear?

and the answer would be:

For a servant when he is king,  
For a fool when he is filled with food;  
For an odious woman when she is married;  
And a handmaid that is heir to her mistress.  
(Prov. 30. 21-23.)

The question is simple, almost childish, and yet one cannot fail to realize its superb adaptation to the mental limitations of the ones taught and to the didactic end desired. It is easy to imagine the spontaneous discussion that would arise regarding the correct answer, and the impression, all the more effective because unconscious, which would be made upon the sage's disciples.

Akin to the riddle was the paradox. Its thought-provoking value was fully appreciated by the wise and was probably frequently used by them. It was developed by placing two antithetic proverbs side by side, as, for example, in Proverbs 26. 4, 5:

Answer not a fool according to his folly,  
Lest thou also be made like him.  
Answer a fool according to his folly,  
Lest he be wise in his own conceit.

The parable was used by the prophets, as, for example, by Nathan in his condemnation of David's sin. Isaiah also used the parable, when he appeared before the corrupt rulers of Jeru-

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saalem, as recorded in the fifth chapter of his prophecy. But the parable appears to have been even more characteristic of the method of teaching of the wise. Many such parables have been handed down from the classrooms of the later Jewish wise men. In its form and content the parable is closely connected with the similitude, for it represents the use of something real in life or nature for the purpose of moral instruction. Like the riddle and paradox, it appeals strongly to the imagination, curiosity, and power of association, and provokes independent thought on the part of the learner.

### Gnomic Essay

In dealing with the larger questions of life and morals the wise made use of their primary literary unit, the proverb. By combining a variety of proverbs, dealing with the same subject, they were able to treat it on many sides. The result was what may be called the gnomic essay, of which there are several examples in the book of Proverbs and many more in the writings of Ben Sira and in the Wisdom of Solomon. In some of these the wise teachers appeal effectively to the sense of the ridiculous, as, for example, in Proverbs 26. 13-16:

The sluggard says: "There is a roaring beast without,  
A lion is on the street."  
The door turns on its hinges  
And the sluggard in his bed.  
The sluggard dips his hand into the dish—  
To bring it to his mouth costs him an effort!  
The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit  
Than seven men who can answer intelligently!

In the elaborate gnomic essay regarding the drunkard, found in Proverbs 23. 29-35, the effect-

ive method of question and answer is combined with the dialogue, making it the strongest treatment of the subject to be found in the Old Testament. The most beautiful example of the gnostic essay is the noble and elaborate description of personified wisdom found in the eighth and ninth chapters of Proverbs. The late book of Ecclesiastes is a collection of similar essays dealing with the more fundamental problems of the meaning of human life and suffering and the relation of God to his universe. The large body of reflective psalms found in the Psalter are also written from the point of view of the wise.

The highest product of the literary art of the wise is the philosophical drama found in the book of Job. Taking an ancient prose story, the great poet-sage, who was the author of the present book of Job, has introduced, in a series of powerful dialogues between Job and his friends, a fundamental treatment of that most difficult of all philosophical questions, the reason why the righteous are allowed to suffer. In a series of dialogues the friends are made to rehearse the current solutions of this vexed problem, while Job, in his replies, points out the insufficiency of these popular explanations. The hero of the book then goes on to present the problem of suffering in its most perplexing form and to struggle with the larger question of how a God who thus allows his innocent children to suffer can himself be just and loving. The transcendent poetic power of this unknown wisdom teacher has been recognized by all ages. The frankness and scientific accuracy with which he

Philosophical  
Drama

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presents the problem assures him a place among the greatest philosophers of the world. It is, however, his consummate didactic skill that commands our highest admiration. The book of Job stands as the supreme example to the religious teacher of the absolute importance of recognizing frankly the grave and perplexing problems of life and of meeting them, not by dogmatic assertions but, if need be, by a confession of inability to give a final and satisfactory answer. It is significant, however, that although the author of the book of Job offers no final solution of the problem of innocent suffering, he does far more: he leads his perplexed, baffled, and at times intemperate hero out into the great world of nature. There confronted by the marvelous phenomena of God's universe, Job's spirit is soothed, his problem is almost forgotten, and his faith rises triumphant over his doubts, until at last he declares:

I know that thou canst do all things,  
And that no purpose of thine can be restrained.  
Who is this that hideth counsel without knowledge?  
Why have I uttered that which I understood not,  
Things too wonderful for me which I knew not?  
Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak;  
I will demand of thee, and declare thou to me.  
I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear;  
But now mine eye seeth thee;  
Therefore I abhor myself,  
And repent in dust and ashes. (Job. 42. 2-6.)

It is clear, in the light of the study of their aims and methods, that the wise men of ancient Israel are, in a very true sense, the fathers of the present religious educational movement. That for which the modern Sunday school stands is



new only in certain details of its organization. Every religious teacher also has much to learn from these early lovers and teachers of men. They were keenly alive to the importance of a close sympathetic touch with those whom they aimed to teach. They recognized and applied the great truth that the early impressionable years of childhood and youth present by far the most promising opportunities for shaping ideals and habits and for molding character. They realized that the aim of their work was not only instruction but education, and that true education was the development of the whole man. Therefore all that concerned and influenced the individual was of divine significance. They were keenly alive to the importance of appealing to the interest, imagination and curiosity of their disciples. They also utilized with remarkable skill the power of association. They possessed the rare art of putting their teachings in simple, vivid, and yet universal form, so that they became the teachers, not only of their own age, but of all generations. Finally their zeal to reach out and help the simple and inexperienced and tempted and to make strong, efficient men and women is a perennial guide and inspiration to all who would undertake the divinest of tasks, the making of men.

## IX

### THE HISTORY AND AIMS OF THE SCRIBES AND RABBIS

The Preëxilic  
Scribes

THE earliest reference in the Old Testament to the scribes as a class is found in Jeremiah 8. 8:

How can you say, "We are wise, and the law of Jehovah is with us"?  
But, behold, the deceptive pen of the scribes hath rendered it deceptive.

The Hebrew word interpreted "scribes" means, literally, *men of books*, that is, the editors and interpreters as well as the copyists of the writings of Israel's earlier teachers. In this important passage Jeremiah condemns those who, in the name of Moses, set the law, which they have freely revised, above the spoken words of the prophet. This reference, as well as the existence of the preëxilic writings, shows clearly that scribes were found in Israel before the days of the Babylonian exile. Like the scribes of Babylonia and Egypt, they probably belonged to the priestly class and their work was purely literary.

Influence of the  
Exile on the  
Scribes

The Babylonian exile wrought a great revolution in Israel's internal organization, as well as in its life and thought. Contact with the intense literary activity of the Babylonians and the constant use of writing as a means of communication between the scattered exiles and their new

appreciation of their ancient writings transformed the Jews into a literary people. The destruction of the temple and the overthrow of the nation not only left the priestly class without occupation, but also called for a written formulation of the customary laws and institutions which had hitherto been transmitted orally and constantly illustrated by practice. Hence the work of the scribe suddenly became of the highest importance, for Israel's inherited traditions, laws, and institutions constituted the strongest bond that, during this period of severe stress and trial, kept alive the faith and preserved the integrity of the race. The result was that many of the more faithful priests became scribes and devoted themselves to the task of copying, unifying, and codifying their inherited laws and traditions. The changed conditions which followed the destruction of Jerusalem and the nation also made necessary new laws, fitted to meet these needs. The task of expanding the older laws and of applying the principles of the prophets to the altered life and point of view of the people fell naturally to these priestly scribes.

When the canon of the written law was finally closed, some time after 400 B. C., the expansion of the law continued, but in the form of oral traditions, which were transmitted by word of mouth from generation to generation, until they were ultimately committed to writing about the end of the second century of the Christian era. They were then known as the *Mishna*, or second version of the law. Thus there arose in the centuries immediately following the Baby-

Extension of the  
Influence and  
Functions of the  
Scribes

lonian exile a large and powerful class of scribes, whose influence in the Judean community overshadowed that of the prophets and the priests. Probably the majority of the scribes still came from the ranks of the priests. The high priest, Simon the Just, who lived about 300 B. C., was one of the most famous of these earlier scribes. But as time went on laymen were to be found more and more in their ranks, and the distinction between the priestly class and the scribes became more clearly drawn. In this reorganization the scribes largely assumed the teaching functions of the earlier priests. As the written law grew in importance and in public esteem, its custodians were naturally regarded as its interpreters. The scribes were also keenly alive to the necessity of inculcating the truths in the minds of the people as well as of interpreting the specific laws.

Ezra the Typical  
Scribe

The portrait of Ezra, found in the seventh chapter of the book which bears his name, is typical of the class: "He was a scribe skilled in the law of Moses, which Jehovah the God of Israel had given. . . . And he came to Jerusalem, since the good Lord was with him, for Ezra had set his heart to seek the law of Jehovah and observe it, and to teach in Israel its statutes." The account of his work which follows illustrates clearly the aims and methods of these early scribes. He is represented first as appealing in powerful exhortation to the feelings and consciences of the people, and then as arousing the community to adopt the new law-book which he brought with him, even though it meant great sacrifice. In carrying through this sweeping

reformation, the law-book was read before the people and interpreted to them. The account of this ancient synagogue service also contains a long and fervent prayer in which the lessons taught by Israel's earlier experiences as a nation are reviewed and the people led to make a common confession of their guilt.

It was almost inevitable, as a result of the increasing emphasis which Judaism placed upon the written law, that the wise men or sages should ultimately be drawn into the ranks of the scribes. In his description of the typical wise men Ben Sira (about 200 B. C.) furnishes clear evidence that in his day this process was far advanced. He significantly remarks that:

The wisdom of the scribe comes by opportunity of  
leisure,  
He that is relieved from business shall become wise.

He then goes on to point out how impossible it is for the farmer, the ox-driver, the artificer, and the other manual workers in the community to acquire the learning of the scribe. He concludes:

All these put their trust in their hands;  
And each becomes wise in his own work.  
Without these a city cannot be inhabited,  
And men cannot sojourn or walk up and down therein.  
They shall not be sought for in the council of the  
people,  
And in the assembly they shall not mount on high;  
They shall not sit on the seat of the judge,  
And they shall not understand the covenant of judgment;  
Neither shall they declare instruction and judgment;  
And where parables are they shall not be found.  
But they will maintain the fabric of the world;  
And in the handiwork of their craft is their prayer.  
(B. Sir. 38. 31-34.)

Transformation  
of the Wise into  
Scribes

By the beginning of the Christian era the wise had completely passed over into the ranks of the scribes. Henceforth the term *wise* is constantly used as the designation of the famous scribes or rabbis. This fusion of the earlier wise with the scribes greatly enriched and broadened the thought and methods of the latter. In the reported teachings that have been handed down from the scribes and rabbis there is a large didactic element relating to the common problems of humanity. In the epigrammatic, gnostic form in which many of the later scribes put their teachings it is also easy to recognize the powerful influence of the sages. This broader human element remains the permanent contribution of the scribes to the world's religious heritage.

Influence of the  
Scribes in the  
Maccabean and  
Roman Periods

Under the later Maccabean rulers the scribes became so numerous and their influence so strong that they were granted representation in the Sanhedrin, the great legislative and judicial body of the Jewish state. From the reference in 1 Maccabees 7. 12, 13, it is clear that the scribes from the first were closely associated with the Pharisees. Doubtless there were Sadducean scribes, but most of these later interpreters and teachers of the law belonged to the more popular party of the Pharisees. In the New Testament the terms are used almost interchangeably. It is probable that the great majority, if not all of the Pharisees, were also scribes. The fidelity of the scribal class to the law, as is illustrated by the story of the martyrdom of the aged scribe, Eleazer, in 2 Maccabees 6. 12-31, endeared them to the people and gave them that

position of commanding influence which they enjoyed during the New Testament period. This influence was increased by the zeal with which they devoted themselves to the task of instructing the people in the details of the law. The great majority of them were doubtless inspired by a noble purpose. Their aims and ambitions became those of the nation. In realizing these aims in the lives of the people their work was certainly crowned with success.

Jewish writers recognize three distinct stages in the history of scribism. The first, beginning with Ezra and extending to the Maccabean period (450 to 150 B. C.), is represented by the *Sôphërîm*, or scribes. Very little is known about the personality and work of these early teachers. A few characteristic teachings attributed to them are found in the opening sections of the Mishna, known as the *Aboth*, or *Sayings of the Fathers*. Their great task was the completing and editing of the written laws of the Old Testament and the closing of the legal canon. From them also comes the suggestive precept, "Raise up disciples," indicating that they were teachers as well as revisers and interpreters of the law. To this early group belonged the high priest, Simon the Just, to whom is attributed the characteristic teaching: "On three things the world is stayed: on the Torah, and on worship, and on the bestowal of kindnesses." He was followed by Antigonos of Socho, who lived late in the Greek period. He is the author of the noble teaching, "Be not as slaves who minister to the lord with a view to reward, but be as slaves who minister

The Early  
Sopherim

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to the master without a view to receiving a reward" (Aboth 1. 3).

The Pairs of  
Teachers

The second period is represented by the *Zûgôth*, or Pairs, who labored during the later part of the Maccabean and the earlier part of the Roman age (150-10 B. C.). The names of five such pairs of teachers are preserved in the rabbinical literature. Many precepts and sayings are attributed to them. Each appears to have gathered about himself a large following of disciples.

Hillel and  
Shammai

The most famous pair was Hillel (the Elder) and Shammai (The Elder), who flourished a little before the beginning of the Christian era. Hillel was born in Babylon and, although, according to tradition, a descendant of the royal house of David, he was forced to struggle with poverty during his earlier years. It is said that he was forty years of age before he came to Jerusalem for the purpose of studying the law under the great teachers of his day, Shemaiah and Abtalyon. It is related that on one occasion, lacking the fee required for entrance to the rabbinical college, he climbed up on the window sill in order to hear the lectures. There he became so interested in listening that he did not notice the snow which fell upon him. At last the attention of those inside was attracted by the early darkening of the room. On investigation they found him insensible with the cold and with difficulty restored him to consciousness. Hillel became the founder of a famous school which was very influential in the development of Jewish national character and faith. He was noted for



his meekness, tolerance and breadth of view, while his rival, Shammai, was exceedingly conservative and possessed of a hasty temper. To him is attributed the saying, "Make thy Torah a fixed thing, say little and do much, and receive every man with a cheerful countenance" (Aboth i. 15). Hillel was the author of the famous summary of the law which is so often compared with that of Jesus: "What is hateful to thyself, do not to thy fellow-man; this is the whole Torah, the rest is only commentary" (Shabbath 30b). The discussions between these two great teachers and the schools founded by them fill many pages of the Talmud and reflect the widely different beliefs and points of view of the Judaism of the day.

The third period is represented by the *Tān-nāim*, or teachers, who flourished during the first two centuries of the Christian era. To these for the first time was given the title *Rabbi*, my Master, or simply, *Rabban*, Master. The rabbis, therefore, were the great teachers who rose from the ranks of the scribes. It was a term of honor and distinction, being derived from the Hebrew word meaning *great*. The best known rabbis were Gamaliel (the Elder), a son or grandson of Hillel, Johanan, also of the school of Hillel, who founded the famous rabbinical school at Jamnia, and Gamaliel II, who succeeded Johanan.

The activity of the scribes was so many-sided that it is difficult briefly to formulate their aims. Their first aim was to interpret and to apply the teachings of Israel's earlier teachers to the life and needs of their own day. Their second aim,

**The Later Teachers**

**Aims of the Scribes**

akin to the first, was to rear up a nation which should conform in every detail to the demands of the Torah, which they held to be the full and complete expression of the will of Jehovah. To this end they aimed, in the first place, to regulate in minutest detail the conduct of each individual, and thus to make servants of God by producing servants of the law. Finally they aimed to train up disciples who as teachers would carry on this work and realize in the life of the nation the will of Jehovah, as defined by the law. While the scribes were interested in the individual, they were preëminently interested in attaining their ideal through the nation. This ideal was concrete and definite, yet from its very nature impossible of complete realization; for an extreme emphasis upon law obscures fundamental principles and arrests the development of that individual moral and spiritual sense which is the essence of all religious progress and growth.

## X

### THE METHODS OF THE SCRIBES AND RABBIS

THE scribes, like the earlier wise, depended almost exclusively on teaching for the realization of their aims. They occupied a unique vantage ground for performing their tasks. They enjoyed the highest respect and regard of the people. They were the custodians of the law and its authoritative interpreters. They were fully represented in the Sanhedrin, the great administrative, legislative, and judicial body of their nation. They were thus able as legislators to enact laws, as lawyers to interpret them, as judges to apply them, and as the chief rulers of their people to execute them. To this was added the even more potent function of teacher, in that they were able to inculcate the laws into the minds of the people and thus through the will to control the springs of action. Powerless in the grasp of imperial Rome, spurred on by contact with the great civilizations of the ancient world, the Jewish race was in a uniquely receptive attitude toward the message of its great teachers. The interest and belief in educational methods was never stronger in any other age or race except possibly among the civilized Christian races of to-day.

The scribes, heirs of the earlier wise, showed themselves masters of most of the so-called "modern" pedagogical principles. That they did not fully realize their aims was not because of

**The Great  
Opportunity of  
the Scribes**

**Their Weakness  
not as Teachers  
but as  
Interpreters**

the defects in their methods. The causes lay deeper. It was as interpreters of the law that they suffered from the lack of the as yet unborn historical and scientific spirit. The loose, allegorizing methods, inherited from the Greeks through Alexandria, led them far afield from the true meaning of their scriptures. Fanciful conjecture—a characteristic Oriental heritage—too often took the place of logical reasoning. It was as interpreters, therefore, and not as teachers, that the Jewish rabbis failed.

**Their Direct  
Instruction of  
the People**

As teachers the scribes and the rabbis appear to have touched the mass of the people directly in three ways. The first was as readers and interpreters of the law in connection with the synagogue service. Mark 1. 22 contains a suggestive reference to this practice. Although the service in the synagogue was thoroughly democratic, when a learned scribe was present, he, like Jesus at Nazareth, was undoubtedly asked to read and explain the passages from the law and the prophets which were read each Sabbath in connection with the synagogue service. Thus a rare opportunity was given them to teach the young as well as the leaders of the community. The second means was through the primary synagogue schools which, according to tradition, were established near the close of the Maccabean period. The third opportunity was through their disciples who came to them in great numbers and in turn went forth as teachers of the people.

**Public  
Discussion**

In teaching the young disciples, the scribes, especially the great rabbis, showed remarkable

skill and versatility. One common method was by public discussion between the masters of the different schools. These discussions were exceedingly free and the most varied opinions were expressed. Often, the subjects considered were trivial, but frequently they dealt with the most fundamental principles of faith and practice. By this method a theme was treated from many points of view and the individual was obliged to use his own judgment in arriving at the final conclusion.

The rabbis also depended largely on the method of question and answer. Seated upon a raised platform, usually within the temple precincts, with their disciples gathered about them, these skilled teachers of Judaism always held themselves open to questions and frequently in turn presented concrete cases for discussion and treatment by their disciples. Many illustrations are found in the Talmud of this seminar method. A disciple once inquired of his teacher, "What is real wisdom?" The teacher replied, "To judge liberally, to live purely, and to love thy neighbor." Another teacher, possibly influenced by the Socratic philosophy, answered, "The greatest wisdom is to know thyself." The following are some of the typical questions propounded and the answers given by the members of this school: "Who gains wisdom? He who is willing to receive instruction from all sources. Who is the mighty man? He who subdues his temper. Who is rich? He who is content with his lot. Who is deserving of honor? He who honors mankind. How can you escape sin?"

**Question and  
Answer**

Think of three things: whence you come, whither you go, and before whom you must appear."

#### Memorization

The rabbis depended wholly upon oral instruction. Until near the close of the second Christian century, the rabbinic authorities were all opposed to committing the oral law to writing. The result was that the rabbis cast most of their teachings in brief, often epigrammatic form so that they could be easily remembered. They placed great emphasis upon memorization. Their ideal disciple was one "quick to hear, and slow to forget" (Aboth 5. 18). "When a scholar of the wise sits and studies and forgets a word of his Mishna, they account it to him as worthy of death" (Aboth 3. 12) was one of the favorite maxims of the rabbinical school.

#### Exact Verbal Reproduction of the Master's Teaching

The disciples were also strenuously warned not to teach, in form or content, anything different from what they had learned from their masters. In this latter injunction is found one of the chief defects of the rabbinical teaching. It destroyed all originality and checked the expression of personal conviction, which constitutes the great charm and power of a real teacher. It explains the surprise of the multitude that Jesus "taught with authority and not as the scribes." This rule was well calculated to preserve intact the heritage of the past, but it was fatal to the development of the true religion, which must be constantly adjusted to the point of view and needs of each succeeding generation. It was because the great rabbis themselves disobeyed this injunction that Judaism is to-day a living and developing religion.

To aid the memory and the imagination the scribes frequently illustrated their teachings by means of stories. These were most commonly used in connection with their explanation of the historical and didactic books. This blend of doctrinal teachings, exhortations, parables, and stories is called *Haggādā*, and constitutes a large part of the Talmud, which, with its twelve huge volumes, is a compendium of rabbinic teachings.

Stories, or the  
Haggadic Type  
of Teaching

The rabbis put a large part of their teachings in the form of concise precepts. By their contemporaries and later generations these oral laws were regarded as supplemental to the written law and of equal authority with it. These precepts and legal traditions were known as the *Halāchā*, literally, *way*, that is, *usage, rule*. This was the fence, or hedge, which the rabbis sought to construct about the written law. By means of these oral laws they endeavored to answer every possible question that might arise in regard to conduct, so that an infringement of any of the written laws, in spirit or in letter, would be impossible. The aim was excellent, but in practice this method broke down with its own weight. It loaded the race with a mass of enactments which obscured the really vital principles and blunted the individual's sense of right and wrong.

Oral Laws, or  
the Halachic  
Type of  
Teaching

In the midst, however, of a mass of petty rules there are found many noble moral precepts, some legal and some embodying the fruits of universal human experience. The latter are the product of the fusion of the wise men and the scribes. In depth of thought, in beauty of form, and in perennial value many of them are comparable with

Precepts

the teachings of the Old and New Testament. "Three friends," said the rabbis, "has man: God, his father, and his mother. 'He who honors his parents,' saith God, 'honors me, even as though I lived among them.'" Again they taught, "The place honors not the man, it is the man who gives honor to the place." "He who mixes with unclean things becomes unclean himself; he whose associations are pure becomes more holy each day." "Despise no man and deem nothing impossible; every man has his hour, and everything its place." "Men should be careful lest they cause women to weep, for God counts their tears." "He who possesses a knowledge of God and a knowledge of man, will not easily commit sin." "The best preacher is the heart; the best teacher is time; the best book is the world; the best friend is God." "He who is loved by man, is loved by God." One of these precepts vividly recalls the teaching of Jesus: "Man sees the mote in his neighbor's eye, but knows not of the beam in his own."

## Proverbs

The proverb was also a favorite form of teaching of the rabbis. In this respect, as in many others, they showed themselves the faithful disciples of the earlier wise. Thus they taught:

If a word spoken in its time is worth one piece of  
money,  
Silence in its time is worth two.

Another voices that high appreciation of industry and honest labor which has always characterized the Jew:

Rather skin a carcass for pay in the public streets,  
Than lie idly dependent on charity.



Another proverb reveals a keen appreciation of human nature, and recalls the brilliant aphorism of the book of Proverbs concerning the fool:

The foolish man knows not an insult,  
Neither does a dead man feel the cutting of a knife.

Also:

There are three crowns: of the law, the priesthood, and  
the kingship;  
But the crown of a good name is greater than them all.

The following proverb also expresses that high estimate of primary education which was the glory of the Jewish race:

The world is saved by the breath of school children;  
Even to rebuild the temple, the schools must not be  
closed.

The scribes were also adepts in putting their thought in epigrammatic form. Thus they taught: Epigrams

The ass complains of the cold even in July.

A small coin in a large jar makes a great noise.

The sun will set without thy assistance.

Commit a sin twice and it will not seem to thee a  
crime.

What is intended for thy neighbor will never be thine.

A thief who finds no opportunity to steal, considers  
himself an honest man.

The rabbis also appreciated the value of prayer Prayer  
as a vital factor in the education of their disciples. They not only taught their disciples certain prayers, but gave many wise teachings concerning the nature of prayer:

Look not on thy prayers as on a task;  
Let thy supplications be sincere.

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To pray loudly is not a necessity of devotion ;  
When we pray we must direct our hearts toward  
heaven.

One need not stand upon a high place to pray,  
For it is written, "Out of the depths have I called to  
thee, O Lord."

Prayer is Israel's only weapon,  
A weapon inherited from its fathers ;  
A weapon proved in a thousand battles.

### Woes and Beatitudes

To make their teachings impressive, the rabbis  
sometimes put them into the form of woes and  
beatitudes, as did the Great Teacher of Naza-  
reth :

Woe to the country which has lost its leader ;  
Woe to the ship when its captain is no more.

The Rabbi Johanan also taught :

Happy are you, O, sons of Israel ;  
As long as you perform the will of God, naught can  
conquer you ;  
But if you fail to fulfill his wishes, even the cattle are  
superior to you.

The following beatitude is of profound and prac-  
tical significance :

Blessed is the son who has studied with his father,  
And blessed is the father who has instructed his son.

### Parables

The scribes and rabbis made a large use of the  
parable as a means of illustrating their teachings.  
Many of them are suggestive of Jesus's use of  
the similar literary form. Rabbi Levi, in illus-  
trating the meaning of the proverb, "Wisdom is  
too high for a fool" (Prov. 24. 7), related the  
following parable: "A man once hired two serv-  
ants to fill a basket with water. One of them  
said, 'Why should I continue this useless labor?  
I put water in on one side, and it immediately

leaks out of the other; what profit is it?' The other workman, who was wise, replied, 'We have the profit of the reward which we receive for our labor.' It is the same in studying the law. One man says, 'What does it profit me to study the law, when I must ever continue it or else forget what I have learned?' But the other man replies, 'God will reward us for the will which we display, even though we do forget.'"

The famous Rabbi Jehuda, who lived between 136 and 217 A. D., to illustrate the fact that a man must be judged alike for the acts of his soul and the acts of his body, gave the following parable: "There was once a king who had a charming park in which were beautiful fruit trees. He placed in charge of this park two watchers; one was lame and the other blind. Then the lame man said to the blind: 'I see beautiful fruit in the park. Come, take me up on your shoulder and we will get some of the fruit and eat.' Then the lame stood on the shoulder of the blind man and they brought down some fruit and ate it. After some time the owner of the park came. He said to them: 'Where are the beautiful first fruits?' Then the lame man said to him: 'Have I any legs with which to climb?' The blind man said to him: 'Have I any eyes with which to see?' What did the owner of the park do? He made the lame man stand on the shoulders of the blind man and thus judged them both together."

Another favorite form of teaching with the rabbis was the allegory. Each factor in the story symbolized some phase of truth. While it

commanded the interest and aroused the thought of the pupils, the allegory usually required interpretation. The following is an example of this literary form of teaching: "A traveler upon his journey passed through the forest upon a dark and gloomy night. He journeyed in dread; he feared the robbers who infested the route he was traversing. He feared that he might fall into some unseen ditch or pitfall on the way, and he feared, too, the wild beasts, which were about him. By chance he discovered a pine torch, and lighted it, and its gleams afforded him great relief. He no longer feared brambles or pitfalls, for he could see the way before him. But the dread of robbers and wild beasts was still upon him, nor left him until the morning's dawn, the coming of the sun. Still he was uncertain of his way, until he emerged from the forest and reached the crossroads, when peace returned to his heart.

**Interpretation**

"The darkness in which this man walked was the lack of religious knowledge. The torch he discovered typifies God's precepts, which aided him on his way until he obtained the blessed sunlight, compared to God's holy word, the Bible. Still, while the man is in the forest (the world), he is not entirely at peace; his heart is faint, and he may lose the right path; but when he reaches the crossroads (death), then we may proclaim him truly righteous, and exclaim: 'A good name is more fragrant than rich perfume, and the day of death is better than the day of one's birth.'"

No one can deny the value of the teaching methods of the scribes, nor the sincerity and de-

votion of many of their number. Their weaknesses are equally patent. Their eyes were turned too much to the past rather than to the present and future. Their teachings lacked that note of authority and originality which comes from a close touch with the vital problems and needs of mankind. Forgetting the teachings of the earlier prophets, they exalted the ritual and ceremonial acts above character and deeds. They exemplified their own aphorism: "Unhappy is he who mistakes the branch for the tree, the shadow for the substance." Many of them, however, placed a strong emphasis upon moral acts and character, as is well illustrated by the teaching: "He that has more learning than good deeds is like a tree with many branches but weak roots; the first great storm will throw it to the ground. He whose good works are greater than his knowledge is like a tree with fewer branches but with strong and spreading roots, a tree which all the winds of heaven cannot uproot." They made the further mistake of defining religion, not as the personal relation of the individual toward God, but as conformity to certain detailed laws. Above all, they made the mistake common to the teachers of many religions, of not distinguishing clearly between that which was vital and eternal and that which was trivial and ephemeral.

Strength and  
Weakness of the  
Teaching of the  
Scribes

The great need of Judaism, therefore, was for some one to distinguish between the gold and the dross in their inherited teachings, to adapt these ancient teachings to the lives of the masses, to shake off the clouding casuistry of the schools,

The Great Need  
of Judaism

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and to present the teachings simply and directly. A great teacher was needed to speak positively and with authority, to arouse within the hearts of men a deep love for God and an unselfish enthusiasm for his service, to inspire the common people with faith in their own powers and to set before them definite and practical ways in which they could express their religious devotion. Most of all, the race and age needed one who would teach not merely by word but by deed, demonstrating in his own character and life the vital, eternal truths hidden in Israel's sacred writings. In Jesus of Nazareth that ancient Torah found its complete expression and fulfillment.

## XI

### THE TRAINING AND AIMS OF THE GREAT TEACHER

To the men of his day Jesus was known under three different titles. By many he was addressed as The Physician, and in his work he certainly proved himself a healer of men's bodies as well as men's souls. This healing ministry, however, was only a means to an end, and that end was religious. By many he was called a Prophet, and this title truly describes the spirit with which he taught and the content of his message. He stood on the platform of such great prophets as Amos, Isaiah, and Jeremiah, and, like John the Baptist, during the first part of his ministry preached with great success and effectiveness. It is evident, however, that Jesus preached simply that he might attract to himself those with whom he might enter into the more intimate relation of teacher and disciple.

**Jesus's Different  
Titles**

Rabbi, or Teacher, is, therefore, the most exact and distinctive title which Jesus bore, and the one most frequently on the lips of those closely associated with him. Its counterpart is disciple or learner, the word constantly used to describe those whom he taught. Even the so-called "Sermon on the Mount" is introduced by the significant statement that "when Jesus had sat" "and his disciples had gathered about him, he taught." The words which follow are the words of a teacher rather than of a preacher.

**Preëminently  
the Teacher**

His Emphasis  
Upon the  
Teaching  
Method

Jesus fully appreciated the importance of an intimate acquaintance with those whom he taught. His work illustrates the value of that personal contact and close adaptation of the message to those receiving it which distinguish the method of the teacher from that of the preacher. The record of Jesus's brief ministry bears strong testimony to the fundamental emphasis which he placed upon his work as a teacher. During the closing days of his lifework he turned aside almost completely from the multitudes, and, abandoning the method of the preacher, devoted himself to teaching the small group of disciples who gathered about him. By this act Jesus practically said to all the world, "My method is pre-eminently that of the teacher." The history of the opening Christian centuries is the vindication of the superlative wisdom and effectiveness of Jesus's method. The small group of disciples upon whose minds he impressed his spirit, teachings, and personality went forth as teachers and within three or four centuries conquered the great Roman Empire. It is also important to note that in the later history of Christianity the periods of great advance have come when the Church, as at the time of the Protestant Reformation, has placed the Bible in the hands of the masses and laid its supreme emphasis on the teaching ministry.

Gospel  
Testimony  
Regarding  
His Youthful  
Training

The Gospels devote only a few verses to the account of Jesus's training as a teacher. Their testimony, however, is exceedingly valuable and suggestive, for it states that "he advanced in wisdom and stature, as well as in favor with God



and man." This testimony leaves no doubt that Jesus's growth in knowledge, experience, and skill as a teacher was gradual and progressive, even as was his physical growth. This conclusion is confirmed by the rare portrait of the boy when at the age of twelve he went up with his parents to worship at the temple. It reveals not an egotistical youth, as some careless interpreters would suggest, but a thoroughly normal boy, keenly intent upon acquiring knowledge, improving to the fullest extent the opportunity offered by asking questions of the accepted teachers of his race. The insight and interest revealed by his questions alone excited surprise. His zeal for knowledge was so intense that in pursuit of it he even called down upon his head the reproof of his parents.

It takes little imagination, in the light of the records of Jesus's later work and teaching, to trace the different influences which, in keeping with God's good purpose, entered into the training of the Great Teacher. Nazareth, situated in the midst of one of the garden lands of Palestine, furnished a fitting background. Here he was in closest touch with nature and the exquisite revelations of God's divine care and love for his children. The height just above the town commanded a view of the wide, level plain of Esdraelon, of Mount Gilboa, of the hills of Samaria, and of Mount Carmel, jutting out into the great sea at the west. To a loyal student of Israel's past, this view suggested many of the great battles and crises in Israel's unique history. Nazareth itself, instead of being a provincial

Influences of  
Nazareth

little town, was one of the larger cities of Galilee. It was intersected by the great highways which ran across Galilee from the north and east, and was only a few miles from Capernaum, the metropolis of the north. In Nazareth, the different currents of Semitic, Greek, and Roman life and culture met and blended. The town, with its teeming life, was like Galilee, a type of the larger world to which it belonged. The town itself still possessed the characteristics of an oriental village, in which the affairs of all its members were common property and the book of life, revealing the various human motives, temptations, ambitions, and needs, was spread out wide before the eyes of him who would read.

**Of the Home at Nazareth**

The home at Nazareth also presented even greater opportunities for the intimate study of the heart of man. Apparently the early death of the father brought the oldest son, Jesus, to a position of responsibility, and through the lips of his brothers and sisters, and his strong love and loyalty to them, he gained a perfect and unique knowledge of the psychological characteristics of man, so that, as one of the gospel writers truly states, there was no need that anyone should tell him what was in the heart of men, for that knowledge was his already.

**Of the Synagogue at Nazareth**

The Sabbath services at the synagogue introduced him from early boyhood to the great writings of the prophets and the priests, and brought to him the illuminating interpretations of resident and visiting scholars. It is probable also that at this time the synagogue schools were al-

ready established throughout the more important cities of Galilee, so that when Jesus at twelve went up to Jerusalem he was accustomed to sitting at the feet of the teachers of the law and the prophets and of asking those questions which aroused the admiration of the bystanders.

Jesus lived in a literary age, and there is little doubt that he was able to read and had access to the scriptures of his race. At every point he shows thorough acquaintance with these ancient writings. It is the acquaintance not merely of the hearer, but of the student. Jesus was so familiar with the contents of Israel's law, that in answer to the sudden question, "Which is the great commandment in the law?" he was able to synthesize the entire ancient system by singling out two laws, one in Deuteronomy 6. 5 and the other in Leviticus 19. 18, which embodied all that was most vital in the legal literature of his race.

With the events of Israel's history he was intimately acquainted. The words and messages of prophets, like Isaiah and Jeremiah, were on his lips and in his heart. Although there is little direct evidence, it is clear that the marvelous ideal of service contained in the fortieth and following chapters of Isaiah exerted a great influence in shaping the ideals of the young man of Nazareth. In all his lifework and teaching he illustrated that conception of unselfish, unflinching service which hesitated not in the face of misunderstanding, opposition, and shame, but was ready to give all in order to touch the hearts of men and so lead them into intelligent love and service of the Divine Father.

**Of Israel's  
Laws**

**Of the Historical  
and Prophetic  
Writings**

Of the Psalms  
and Wisdom  
Books

In the great crises of his life his feelings were expressed in the language of those psalmists who had, like himself, passed through the shadow of the valley of death. The sages, also, exerted a powerful influence upon the one who described himself as "the greater than Solomon." In many of the Old Testament proverbs are found those figures and germinal ideas which are so exquisitely developed in the familiar parables of the New Testament.

Of the Methods  
of the Sages

It was, however, in the form of his teachings that Jesus drew most from the sages of Israel's past. Like them, he spoke not to the nation but to the individual. His appeal was to the young as well as to the old. He endeavored by the literary form as well as by the content of his teachings to arrest men's attention, to kindle their imagination, and to shape their ideals.

Use of Proverbs

During the early part of his ministry most of his teachings were cast in the form of proverbs which stick forever in the memory. Thus he declared:

If any one would be first,  
Let him of all be the last,  
And of all the servant.

Salt is good, but if salt lose its saltness  
Wherewith will ye salt it?

Have salt in yourselves,  
And have peace with each other.

Question and  
Answer

The stirring figures of speech which he used, as, for example, "the leaven of the Pharisees," or, "sounding the trumpet before thee," or the "lost sheep of the house of Israel," suggest the pregnant symbols employed by Israel's sages.

Like the sages and rabbis, he also frequently flung a question into the midst of his disciples to arouse their interest and to make them think. "Who do the multitudes say that I am?" is followed by the still more suggestive question, "But what say ye that I am?"

Like the sage who has given us the first psalm with its opening beatitude, Jesus also endeavored to set definite goals before his disciples, and, like the ancient decalogue-makers, to embody in a few vivid statements the essential truths of life. A beatitude was in its original form an exclamatory sentence which left little opportunity for difference or discussion. It simply called attention to a fundamental principle of life, as, for example, "Oh, the blessedness of the pure in heart, for they shall see God," or (as it may more properly be read in the original), "for they, indeed, are seeing God"; or, "Oh, the blessedness of the whole-makers, the harmony-makers, the completeness-makers (developing the original meaning of the Aramaic verb), for they shall be called, and indeed are, the children of God."

Beatitudes

Sometimes, like the rabbis, Jesus taught his disciples prayers to guide them, to inculcate the spirit of worship, and to embody the essence of his teaching.

Prayers

During the latter part of his ministry he commonly employed the parable, which was really an amplified comparison and contained a story intended to set forth a definite spiritual lesson. Its aim was not to conceal but to reveal truth. It is important to note that a parable is not an allegory with all parts equally symbolic and signi-

Parables

ficant, but that it simply emphasizes one central teaching. Thus, for example, in the story of the sower who went out to sow, the whole emphasis is on the importance of the right disposition and use of true instruction.

**Allegories**

It is only in the Fourth Gospel that the reader gains the impression that Jesus at times used the allegory, as, for example, that of the true vine with its branches, in which a definite significance is attributed to each element.

**Paradoxes**

Like the sages, Jesus also appreciated the value of the paradox as a means of arousing men's curiosity and compelling them to think. Thus, he declared, "Whoever wishes to save his life will lose it," and "Whoever for my sake and for the sake of the gospel will lose his life shall save it"; or, "If anyone wishes to be first, he must be last of all and servant of all."

**Hyperboles**

Finally, in his zeal to emphasize that which was vital, Jesus did not hesitate to use the hyperbole, as, for example, the figure of the camel passing through the eye of a needle, or of cutting off the hand if it proved a snare. He trusted to his teaching at other times to correct the wrong impression that might be conveyed through the use of the hyperbole.

**Debt to Earlier Teachers**

Thus, while Jesus blended all that was vital and eternal in the teachings of prophets, priests, and sages and brought their imperfect teachings to perfect expression, he employed most frequently the methods and literary forms of those quiet, earnest lovers of men, the sages of ancient Israel.

In formulating Jesus's aims as a teacher one

is impressed with the absence in the oldest records of any allusion to certain aims which have in the past been given a central place in the thought and creeds of many of the Christian churches. There is no suggestion, for example, of an endeavor to appease an angry God. The God of Jesus's teaching was the Father revealed in the parable of the Prodigal Son, intensely eager to receive back and pardon the sinner if only he turned in the attitude of sincere repentance. As Jesus himself distinctly declared, his mission was primarily to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." These were the humble, common people of Judea and Galilee, who because of their occupations and lack of knowledge and training were unable to conform to the rigorous, almost impossible demands of the ceremonial laws of later Judaism. His mission, therefore, was not something abstract and impersonal, but to teach and help certain men and women whose great moral and spiritual needs appealed to him and whose lives he was able to transform, and through their transformed lives to teach and so reach humanity.

**Definiteness  
and  
Concreteness  
of His Aims**

Hence Jesus's first aim was to save certain men and women, some of whose names we know, from the pain and physical suffering which handicapped them in the quest of that greater happiness which he declared to be one of the supreme goals of life.

**Aimed to  
Deliver Men  
from Pain**

In the second place, he aimed to save them from that ignorance of God's character and purposes which could be dispelled only by true knowledge. As a result of the changed political conditions amid which they found themselves

**To Give Them  
the Larger and  
Truer Idea of  
God**

in the days following the exile, the Jews, and even their acknowledged teachers, had largely lost sight of the God of the earlier prophets. Jehovah, like the monarchs who ruled from distant Persia or Rome, was conceived of as living apart from his people and communicating with them only through his angelic messengers. His demands were also interpreted largely in the terms of form and ceremony and ritual, so that ordinary men and women had little hope of entering into the presence of this Divine King of popular belief. Jesus aimed, therefore, to sweep aside this barrier and, again like the ancient prophets, to introduce each individual to the Divine Father. He sought to present God as the embodiment of truth and love, the one supreme personality seeking to express himself not merely in the realm of external nature, but through the hearts and lives of faithful men and women.

To Inspire a  
Serene Trust in  
God

Jesus's third aim was to save men from false and paralyzing fears, to teach them to take no anxious thought of the morrow, to recognize the harmonious purpose which guided all life, ever to trust implicitly the all-wise and loving Father, and thus to find peace and harmony and strength.

To Help Men to  
Overcome Their  
Individual  
Temptations

His fourth aim was to save men from yielding to the temptations which come thick and fast to every man and woman; to help them to overcome the passions which swept over them; to save the haughty tax-collector from his greed; the woman of the streets from those influences that had laid an almost irresistible hold upon her, and to enable strong men, like Judas Iscariot, to listen



to the higher and diviner ideals that were struggling within them against the lower ideals and tendencies. He sought to save men from that selfishness and pettiness which was characteristic of the life of the fishermen, and of the men who tilled the fields, and to implant within them nobler and transforming ideals, that thus they might have life, and that abundantly.

In the fifth place, Jesus sought to arouse those whom he taught to an appreciation of the duty and the beauty of serving not themselves, but their fellow men; of striving not for their own wealth, but for the commonwealth; of finding their life by losing it. In these definite ways he aimed to train up citizens for the kingdom of God, that world-democracy, that universal fellowship in which all should be bound together by the common love and service of a common Father.

To Make  
Effective  
Citizens of the  
Kingdom of God

Finally, Jesus sought to train, as the active agents in realizing his aims in the life of the individual and in the life of society, teachers like himself, inspired with his spirit, possessed of his teachings, stirred with his enthusiasm, and endowed with his courage to go forth as the incarnation of all for which he lived. He gave his life that they might in turn, by the quiet yet invincible methods of the teacher, win those with whom they personally came into contact, and thus through an ever-widening circle teach and transform all mankind.

To Train  
Teachers Like  
Himself

## XII

### JESUS'S WAY OF MAKING MEN

**Jesus' Supreme  
Skill as a  
Teacher**

THE study of Jesus's work as a teacher confirms the conclusion that he gave careful attention to the methods which he employed. His skill was the result of no chance, but of a deliberate choice of methods. In his knowledge of what was in the heart of man and in his superb adaptation of his teachings to individual needs and possibilities and to the ultimate ends which he wished to accomplish, he was indeed a great pioneer in all that is best in the modern educational movement. A study, therefore, of his teaching methods is supremely suggestive and illuminating.

**His Refusal to  
Commit His  
Teachings to  
Writing**

At first glance the student is surprised to note that, although he was undoubtedly familiar with writing, Jesus apparently never employed this means of imparting his message. Most of the earlier teachers of his race had trusted largely to the written word. The contemporary philosophers and teachers of Greece and Rome, through the services of slaves who acted as copyists, published thousands of copies of their works and scattered them widely throughout the great empire. The age in which Jesus lived was pre-eminently a literary era. He, however, deliberately refrained from trusting his message to stereotyped literary molds. In so doing he followed the methods of the Jewish rabbis of his day. His action was clearly not due to imitation but to deliberate intention. He knew, by

observation and hearing, how easy it was to misinterpret the written words even of the earlier teachers of his race. He probably also knew how often the written text had suffered corruption or else had been made the medium in the hand of later scribes and teachers for establishing the creeds and doctrines current in his own days.

Jesus's reason, therefore, for not committing his teachings to writing is perfectly evident. It is also clear that Jesus himself did not feel that he was promulgating a new system of teaching. Rather his purpose was to give a fuller and more complete expression to all that was of vital and lasting value in the teachings of the earlier prophets, priests, and sages. In the minds and hearts and lives of men he wrote down his message to humanity, and upon the disciples whom he gathered about him he stamped the ideals which he sought to impress upon the sons of men. Set forth in living forms, incarnate in human lives, the teachings of Jesus were imperishable. Even if the early Christians had not at a later time collected the memorabilia and sayings of Jesus, those teachings and the fruits of his lifework would still continue to touch and transform the life of humanity. Long before the child born in Christian homes to-day is able to read the written word, the ideals and the teachings of the Great Teacher shape the unfolding life, and stamp the fundamental principles of Christianity upon the impressionable spirit of the child.

The first characteristic of Jesus's method as a teacher was the result of his unique insight into

Teachings  
Inscribed on  
Human Hearts  
and Lives

the divine possibilities latent in those men and women whom he in time gradually transformed into disciples and ultimately into teachers. To the other men of their day, James and John seemed but rude, commonplace fishermen, who had reached a period of life when habits and ideals are ordinarily crystallized. Simon the Zealot, with his dreams of a great uprising against Rome and his eagerness to resort to violence, was the anarchist of his day. No other man would have seen in him aught besides the possibilities of revolution and ultimate self-destruction. For the fallen woman of the street there seemed no hope. Zacchæus the tax collector, who held the same place in public opinion as does the saloon keeper of to-day, seemed only bent on attaining his own selfish ends at the expense of society. Yet Jesus saw the possibility that all these outcasts might become martyrs for a great cause. In others he recognized teachers of such efficiency that they would conquer the seemingly impregnable Roman world. More than that, Jesus was able to impress upon their unawakened consciousness the possibility and the glory of thus finding life by losing it. By his simple yet marvelous method of training he was also able to prepare them for their great lifework—to transform the mercenary James and John into fishers of men, the fiery Simon Zelotes into a conqueror by the sword of the Spirit, and Zacchæus, the corrupt tax-collector, into a man whose supreme ambition was to discharge his obligations to his fellow men.

The second characteristic of Jesus's method as

a teacher of men was to establish between himself and those whom he would teach a close personal relationship of simple trust, friendship, and love. With superlative wisdom he never attempted to reach the hearts of men when physical and mental barriers made that attempt impossible of realization. If a man or woman was afflicted by some mental disorder, the first step was to bring sanity and harmony into the disordered mind. If a physical trouble clouded the mental and spiritual vision, Jesus exerted all the powers of his own personality to remove this obstacle and, in removing it, to establish that relationship of trust and gratitude which was essential to his healing ministry.

**The Basis of  
Personal Trust  
and Friendship**

In the light of this higher aim in all of his work, it is easy to appreciate the real significance of the miracles attributed to him in the Gospels. The variations between these different narratives leave little doubt in the mind of the careful student that they have often been modified in the process of oral transmission or by the mistaken popular interpretation of Jesus's actual work and aims. Yet back of these variant traditions lie historical facts whose reality cannot for a moment be questioned. In the light of modern psychology and mental hygiene, the scientific world, which a generation ago was inclined to reject the gospel miracles, is beginning to discover the deeper foundations upon which they clearly rest. The fundamental principles of which they are but the illustration, as, for example, the mighty power of a commanding mind over one mentally disabled, are to-day widely accepted facts. Clearly

**Meaning of His  
Acts of Healing**

one of Jesus's primary aims was to gain the confidence of the men and women whom he would help, and thus, in the language of psychology, to render them suggestible. In accomplishing this end, his knowledge of the characteristics and the possibilities of the human heart and mind, his commanding love for all his fellows, and his own unique personality gave him a mighty power over both the mental and the physical ills of men. It is important, however, to note in this age, when so much emphasis is being placed, and not without reason, on physical and mental healing, that Jesus always regarded this work simply as the first essential in setting right men's souls. His recorded acts and teachings always carried with them the implication that the only absolute essential was the righting of men's attitude toward God and their fellow men.

A third characteristic of Jesus's method is that he always adapted his teachings to the point of view of his hearers. By keen observation and deep personal experience he knew what was in the hearts and minds of men. He always felt keenly the individual needs of those to whom he at the moment was speaking. He met universal needs primarily by devoting himself to meeting the immediate needs of the men and women before him. The greater the height to which he wished to carry his disciples, the more careful he was to start on their own level and to impress his teachings in language both familiar and intelligible to them. If they were fishermen, he began with a figure drawn from the ordinary life of a fisherman. If they were tillers of the soil,

he told them the story of the man who went out to sow. If it was an oriental woman, with her narrow, constricted vision of life, he began with the home, and told of the anxiety and sorrow caused by the loss of a piece of money and the zeal expended in its quest. Thus from everyday experiences he led his hearers to the grasp of eternal and universal principles. The "point of contact" is rightly a shibboleth in modern education; but its value is not a new discovery, for it was fully appreciated by the Great Teacher, as is shown in all his work.

Jesus also realized the superlative importance of expressing spiritual truths not in abstract but in concrete form. The notes which come from his classroom are illustrated on every page with simple, graphic, suggestive pictures. Instead of emphasizing in abstract terms the value of forgiveness, he commanded his disciples, when they were about to go up to the temple, first to turn back and forgive the brother who had wronged them, that they might be able to worship God truly, in spirit and in deed, as well as in form. Instead of emphasizing the beauty of humility, he told his Jewish hearers, who were more familiar with the synagogue than with any other institution in their midst, always to take not the higher but the lower place. From a concrete illustration like this, he frequently rose to the statement of the underlying principle. Even so he here declared that everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled and he who humbles himself shall be exalted. Like the ancient priests in their definite laws, he embodied the specific principle in a con-

Putting Truth  
in Concrete  
Form

crete case, frequently leaving it to his hearers to formulate the principle itself and to apply it to the similar problems and conditions of life.

Like the prophets and priests, Jesus was always keenly alive to the value of the objective method of teaching. He realized that truth could often best be conveyed not through the ear but through the eye. Many of his acts of healing were clearly intended to be vivid object lessons, appealing to the curiosity and imagination and wonderment of all classes. When he desired to teach the necessity and beauty of simple trust, he set a child in the midst of his hearers. When he wished to stir the conscience of the nation and to rebuke the grafters of his own day for desecrating the temple, he did not content himself with mere words, but with scourge in hand overturned the tables of the money-changers. When the disciples of John the Baptist came to him with the question, "Who art thou?" he did not make the mistake of giving a spoken answer which would be misunderstood, but invited them to listen to his teachings, to watch his deeds of helpfulness and healing, and thus through their eyes as well as their ears receive that message which he wished them to bear back to the intrepid herald of the new era.

Another striking characteristic of Jesus's method is the fact that he always put his teachings in positive form. The teachers of ancient Israel had largely used "Thou shalt not"; but this phrase is very rare among the recorded words of Jesus. Only once or twice did he resort to denunciation, and by some modern scholars the

Objective  
Illustrations

Teaching  
Always Positive



authenticity even of these passages is questioned. With superlative skill, he always presented the larger and fuller truth, and trusted that the errors and the half-truths would as a result find their rightful place. His great watchword was, "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." This characteristic of Jesus's method is one of the greatest sources of his surpassing skill as a teacher. Maurice has truly said, "One is usually right in his affirmations and wrong in his negations." In the attitude of the acknowledged teachers of Judaism and in the content of their teaching, there was a vast amount of error, and much to provoke attack and criticism. But, with eye intent only on the vital needs of the men and women whom he wished to reach, Jesus had little time or desire merely to destroy or tear down. He himself plainly declares that his aim was not to destroy the Torah, the teachings of Israel's prophets, priests, and sages, as well as of the rabbis of his own day, but to substitute perfection for imperfection, and thus to bring to its natural and complete fruition that divine revelation which had gradually unfolded through the enlightened consciousness of his race. It is this strong positive note which characterizes Jesus's teachings from beginning to end, and distinguishes him from the rest of the world's teachers. It is one of the chief reasons why Christianity's message is universally, perennially, and supremely effective.

In the minds of his own contemporaries, the distinctive characteristic of Jesus's method was its ringing note of authority. It was not the

**Clear,  
Authoritative  
Statements**

authority which rested simply on the testimony of the past, giving to the ancient teachings the commanding position in the thought and life of the present and future; nor was it the authority of dogmatism which ordinarily conceals doubt in the mind of the hearer and provokes suspicion in the minds of those who hear. Rather it was an authority based on a profound knowledge of life and of human needs, on keen personal observation, and on a rich and varied personal spiritual experience. Jesus's authority was akin to that of the ancient prophets and sages, but superlative in degree. He frankly declared, regarding the future, "no man knows save the Father," but of the great vital truths of life, as they had been revealed to his wide-open mind, he spoke with that calm, commanding authority which suggested the eternal foundations upon which it rested. To the rabbis, who exalted to a position of supreme importance the words attributed by tradition to Moses, he declared, in speaking of certain laws, "Ye have heard that it has been said . . . but I say to you." Calmly, without discussion, Jesus thus substituted the whole for the part, the great underlying principles for their earlier incomplete expression. From the open-minded among his hearers the authority of his message commanded immediate and complete acceptance, not only because of the personality back of it, but because it rang absolutely true to the most enlightened experiences and met the eternal and universal needs of the human heart.

Again, one is profoundly impressed by the fact that Jesus never contented himself with

appealing to the reason alone. His logic was simple, clear, and irresistible. The scribes, the most skillful dialecticians of his day, came to him with very carefully prepared questions intended to entrap him, but they always went away vanquished by his clear, powerful reasoning, even though the battle was waged in their chosen field and with their chosen weapons. He who knew what was in the heart of man, with his strong commanding love for the individual, with his unstinted services in meeting the needs of those who came to him, was able to appeal to the deepest feelings and to play with marvelous skill upon the strings of the human heart; yet he was never content with merely arousing the emotions. With him the appeal to the intellect and feelings was but a means to an end, and that end was to command the wills of men.

He taught men many truths, but his aim was not primarily to make men learn, but to teach them how to live and act. With him impression was intended simply to lead to expression. The rich young ruler, with his large knowledge of truth and his well-developed emotions, was met with the simple command to go out and do. Jesus's aim in sending out his disciples that they might preach the word was clearly not that he might simply extend a little further the circle of his influence in Galilee, but that they who had heard his teachings might have the experience of doing and might thus perfect their training as disciples. Although their work was not altogether successful, the joy on the part of the Great Teacher as they came back with a report of real

Character and  
Acts the Goal of  
all His  
Teachings

achievement, was clearly because he saw in their work evidence of the success of his teaching. In all Jesus's work as a teacher, his supreme criterion was not what people thought or felt or said, but what they did. "By their fruits ye shall know them" was with him the ultimate test of all character and life.

Directness and  
Simplicity

Another striking characteristic distinguishes all that Jesus taught and did, namely, the rare and all-important quality of directness and simplicity. Pascal quaintly says, "Jesus Christ speaks things so simply, that it seems he had never thought upon them." His earliest advice to his disciples was to be simple: "Let your words be simply yes and no." This characteristic of the world's greatest teacher is illustrated by all that he himself said and taught. Later transmission and translation have in a few cases obscured the clarity of his original utterances, but through all his teachings there is a simplicity that ever discloses the profoundest depths of his teaching and methods. He never wasted himself with long introductions. He first established a personal point of contact and then led his hearers on at once to the highest spiritual vantage point. In their complete absorption in the theme his hearers lost themselves, later to find themselves mastered by a commanding ideal and purpose, and launched upon their great lifework.

The  
Embodiment of  
His Teachings

Above all, Jesus proved himself the great teacher of men because he did not merely proclaim truths, as did Israel's earlier teachers, but was himself the embodiment and the complete illustration of all that he taught. "Be ye perfect

even as I am perfect" was one of the new and strong notes which stirred the world. "Follow me" was his constantly implied, as well as expressed, command. Jesus himself was the supreme demonstration of all the truth that he taught. It was this complete demonstration that mankind needed as the crowning and convincing proof of all that the earlier teachers had proclaimed. Jesus became the Saviour of men, and established his right to that highest of titles, not only because he was the greatest teacher that the world has ever seen, but also because he showed by his own acts and life that men with human limitations could attain to the divine life. In the light of this great truth, Paul's unequivocal declaration that Jesus "was tempted in all points as we are" becomes one of the most significant statements in all the New Testament. It throws a clear light, not only upon the character of Jesus, but also upon his work as a teacher. It reveals Jesus as the one normal man among all the sons of God. He was torn by real temptations, yet victorious; he was joyful in the face of opposition and unjust malignant persecution; he was true at every crisis to the highest and divinest ideals of life and service. In discordant Palestine he lived serene and happy and in perfect harmony with God, as well as in loving and helpful touch with every human being with whom he came in contact. The oldest records reveal a mind unclouded by sin, ever open to the divine message, and a personality developing from day to day into the unique, the divine man, the goal and crown of God's creation.

Saviour Because  
a Teacher of  
Men

Jesus himself clearly felt that it was God's purpose that he should not stand alone, but that he should in turn be the Teacher and Saviour of men. While he claimed unique divine sonship for himself, he declared plainly that the ultimate goal of all his work was that his disciples and those who followed him should become indeed "one with God even as he was one." Furthermore, he proclaimed without hesitation that they should do greater works than he had done. To realize this supreme and larger ideal of developing the divine qualities in every man Jesus devoted himself completely and with God-given tact and skill to the task of the teacher. By virtue of his own work as a teacher and that of his faithful disciples, he stands in all ages as the universal Saviour of mankind.

### XIII

#### THE AIMS OF THE EARLY CHRISTIAN TEACHERS

It was inevitable that the followers and disciples of the Great Teacher would give the teaching ministry a central place in their work. Most of the leaders in the early Christian Church, like Paul, sat at the feet of the Jewish rabbis. The example of their Jewish teachers intensified still further the tendency to depend almost entirely upon teaching as a means of extending the influence of the Master and of spreading abroad his teachings. The significant title "disciple" or "learner" long continued to be used in the early Church as the most common designation of a follower of Jesus. The early Christian literature, such as the Epistles, the records in Acts, and the Didachè or Teachings of the Apostles, are all the products of the teaching motive, and all bear testimony to the prominence of the teacher and his work. The marvelous spread of Christianity in the early centuries, when the emphasis on the teaching ministry was strongest is undoubtedly largely due to this prominence given to teaching.

**Reasons for the  
Emphasis on  
Teaching**

Paul, the earliest writer in the New Testament, distinguishes four or five different groups of leaders. In 1 Corinthians 12. 28 he speaks of apostles, prophets, and teachers. In Ephesians 4. 11 he refers to five distinct classes—apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers—

**Teaching Work  
of the Apostles**

as having been appointed by Jesus to "fit his people for the ministry and for the building up of the body of Christ." The exact character and functions of each of these classes of teachers are not entirely clear. In its narrower definition the term "apostle" was applied only to the twelve disciples selected by Jesus himself. Paul, however, by virtue of having seen the Christ, claimed a place in this limited group, and his claim was universally recognized by the early Church. The term is also applied in Acts 14. 4, 14, to Barnabas, as well as to Paul. Paul called other missionaries like himself apostles, as, for example, Andronicus and Junia, in Romans 16. 7 (see also Gal. 2. 7-9; 1 Cor. 9. 1). In the *Didachè* or *Teachings of the Apostles*, the term is equivalent to itinerant teachers. They are instructed not to stay in one church more than two days, not to receive money, not to have more than a day's rations for their services. Paul, however, constantly called himself a teacher as well as an apostle (for example, 2 Tim. 1. 11) and designated his work as teaching (1 Cor. 4. 17; Rom. 16. 17). In Acts 2. 40-42 Peter's preaching is called teaching. According to Acts 4. 18 John and Peter were publicly ordered not to speak and teach. It is evident from these references, as well as from reports of their utterances, that not only were the apostles teachers as well as preachers, but that their public preaching was influenced, both in content and in form, by the aims and methods of the teacher.

The evangelists, like the apostles, appear to have been traveling teachers and preachers.



## Aims of the Early Christian Teachers 133

Philip the evangelist, whose work is recorded in Acts 8, is the best example of this class. The prophets in the early Church were really preachers and exhorters. This form of service also appears to have been performed by many different members of the Christian communities and to have been a blending of emotional and didactic elements. Paul's treatment of the subject in 1 Corinthians 14 is exceedingly illuminating. He concludes with the counsel of the prophets [or preachers], let two or three speak and let the others weigh what is said. But if a revelation is made to another sitting by, let the first keep silence. For you can all preach in turn, that all may learn and all be comforted. And the spirits of the prophets [or preachers] are subject to the prophets, for God is not a God of confusion, but of peace (14. 29-33).

Of the  
Evangelists and  
Prophets

The pastors, or early bishops, were connected with the local churches. According to 1 Timothy 3. 2 one of their most important qualifications was that they must be "apt to teach." In the epistles which bear their names, Timothy and Titus, who are typical bishops or pastors, are constantly urged by Paul to teach and in turn to train their successors for this work (2 Tim. 2. 2).

Of the Pastors

Furthermore, in 1 Timothy 5. 17, the great apostle lays down the principle that the presbyters or elders, "who labor in word and doctrine," are to receive double remuneration for their services. According to the Didachè (15. 1), even the deacons in the early Church were expected to perform the work of teachers. Thus it is evident that all the different classes of leaders in the early

Of the Lay  
Workers

## 134 Teachers of Judaism and Christianity

Church were especially trained and consecrated to the ministry of teaching.

### The Professional Teachers

In addition to this organized teaching army there was in the early Church a special class which bore the title of teachers. They enjoyed, together with the apostles and prophets, a position of the highest honor in the community. It is probable that, in contrast to the itinerant teachers, they resided permanently in the local churches. The author of the Epistle of James identifies himself with these teachers, and this epistle doubtless clearly represents the content and form of the teachings which they inculcated in the minds of their disciples. In the same connection the author of the Epistle of James advises that there "be not many teachers, knowing as you do that we who teach shall be judged by a more severe standard than others" (3. 1). The author of the Epistle of Barnabas modestly states that he does not presume to write as a teacher (1. 8; 4. 9).

### Their Duties

In function and methods these professional teachers in the early Church corresponded to the teaching scribes in the Jewish communities. Their first task was to interpret the Old Testament scriptures in the light of the new revelation. Their second duty was probably to instruct the members of each church, and especially the new converts, in the teachings of the Master and in the laws and doctrines of the Church. The First and Second Epistles of Timothy and that of Titus are manuals for the guidance of pastors in their work of teaching. The *Didachè*, or *Teachings of the Apostles*, is evidently, from its

contents as well as from its title, a text-book to be used in instructing disciples. The public services of the early Church were apparently modeled after the services of the Jewish synagogue. If so, teaching was made more prominent than preaching, and it was in connection with the public services that the teachers probably did much of their work. There is no direct testimony, but it is probable that they gave personal instruction and also taught small groups of disciples, as in the modern Sunday school.

Because of their honorable and influential position in the Christian community, the teachers, like the prophets, were exposed to the temptation of presenting misleading doctrines. Paul, in his injunctions to Timothy, endeavored to guard against this danger to the faith of the Church: "What you have learned from me in the presence of many listeners, intrust to reliable men, who will be able in turn to teach others." The *Didachè* (11. 2), as well as the Second Epistle of John (10), intimates that some of these teachers were spreading heretical views. That, as a rule, the teachers of the early Church proved true to their high calling is convincingly demonstrated by the marvelous spread of Christianity throughout the Roman world.

Their aims, as well as that of the larger group of teachers who were associated with them, are clearly stated in the Epistles. They first sought to make clear to the Jews that Jesus was the fulfillment of the noblest Messianic hopes of the race. Acts 9. 20 states that Paul, after his conversion, began immediately at Damascus to pro-

The Danger of  
False Teaching

Aims of the  
Teachers: (1) To  
Demonstrate  
That Jesus was  
the Messiah

## 136 Teachers of Judaism and Christianity

claim Jesus the Son of God. This truth is the basis of most of the popular sermons found in the first part of the book of Acts. It is also the main thesis in the Epistle to the Hebrews, which, as the title suggests, was addressed especially to the Jews.

(2) To Teach the Facts Regarding Jesus

Their second aim was to teach Jew and Gentile alike the facts regarding the character and work of Jesus in order to inspire personal faith and devotion to him. These facts constituted the Gospel, the Good News, which the early Christian missionaries carried to the ends of the known world. Its basis was definite instruction. Its goal was the extension of the faith in the Master. The Jewish officials at Jerusalem, in the familiar story of Acts 5. 17-32, charged Peter and the apostles with having flooded Jerusalem with their teachings. To this charge the apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than men; the God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you put to death by hanging him on a cross. It is this Jesus whom God had exalted to his right hand, to be a guide and a saviour, to give Israel repentance and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses to the truth of this, and so is the Holy Spirit—the gift of God to those who obey him." As faithful witnesses to a great transforming truth the apostles went forth in quest of disciples, some to their Jewish kinsmen, and others, like Paul, to the needy Gentile world. In Galatians 1. 16 and 2. 7 Paul plainly declares that the latter was his especial field. In 1 Corinthians 2. 2 he states that while at Corinth he had determined that he would "know nothing save Jesus Christ

and him crucified." In 1 Timothy 2. 7 he calls himself a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

The third aim was to transmit and inculcate the teachings of Jesus in their simplicity and purity. The author of the Second Epistle of John is explicit on this point: "Every one who goes beyond and does not keep to the teaching of the Christ has not God. He who keeps to the teaching has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house nor welcome him, for the man that welcomes him is sharing in his wicked work" (9-11).

(3) To Transmit the Teachings of Jesus

The fourth aim was to inspire in men a deep and commanding love for God. This aim is formulated clearly in 1 Timothy 1. 5: "The object of instruction is to call forth that love which comes from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith."

(4) To Inspire Love for God

The fifth aim was to make noble, happy, and efficient men and women through faith and devotion to Jesus. To the Corinthians Paul declared: "What we pray for is, that you may become perfect" (2 Cor. 13. 9). To the Colossians he wrote: "Since therefore you have received Jesus, the Christ, as Lord, walk in him, rooted in him and building up your characters in him, growing stronger through your faith, even as you were taught" (Col. 2. 6, 7; see also 3. 12-16). Again to Timothy he wrote: "Aim at righteousness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness." Throughout all the epistles there is the same powerful emphasis on character and individual

(5) To Make True Christian Men and Women

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efficiency as the ultimate goal of all Christian preaching and teaching.

(6) To Train  
Effective  
Teachers

The sixth aim was to train disciples who would, in turn, become successful teachers. In Ephesians 4. 12 Paul states that Jesus gave to the Church the different classes of teachers "in order to fit his people for the ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ." He also exhorted the Colossians to "teach and admonish each other with psalms and hymns and sacred songs, singing to God with grace in their hearts" (Col. 3. 16).

Ultimate Aims:  
The Making of  
Men

Thus the aims of the early Christian teachers were closely identical with those of the Great Teacher. As was natural they placed greater emphasis than had he upon personal devotion to him. While they gave more attention to faith and articles of belief, they did not make the mistake, so often committed by the Church in later ages, of failing to appreciate the fundamental importance of personal character and deeds. Their consuming desire was not to propagate a doctrine, but to make men. To the accomplishment of this divine task all else was purely secondary.

## XIV

### THE METHODS OF THE EARLY CHRISTIAN TEACHERS

IN realizing their aims the early Christian teachers at first trusted little to the written word. From his epistles it is clear that Paul resorted to the use of letters only when unable to go and speak in person to his disciples in the various cities which he had visited. Then he wrote as he would have spoken had he been present in their midst. As the circle of his influence broadened, he was obliged to depend more and more upon writing. The noble epistles which constitute so large a part of the New Testament are the result of this necessity. Other apostles followed his example, putting in this permanent form the teachings which they wished their disciples to emphasize. As the horizon of the Church widened in the succeeding centuries, the Church fathers depended more and more upon the pen as the means of conveying and perpetuating their teachings.

The earlier Christian teachers were fully alive to the importance of the personal touch and the influence of their own personality upon those whom they wished to reach and instruct. As a rule, they dealt with the vital questions of faith and practice which directly concerned those whom they were teaching. Their instruction was therefore always direct and practical. On the basis of this close touch with the needs of the

Limited Use of  
the Written  
Word

Importance of  
Oral Instruction

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individual, they built up a body of teachings which they committed to their disciples, instructing them in turn, as did Paul, to transmit them to others. Central in all their instruction were the teachings of the Master, which were at first handed down orally. Later these were collected, as, for example, in Matthew's so-called "Sayings of Jesus," which was the chief and probably the oldest source from which the authors of our present Gospels of Matthew and Luke drew their teaching material. This strong emphasis upon oral instruction in the early Church, strengthened as it was by the example of Jesus and the great teachers of Judaism, explains why a long period elapsed after the death of the Master before any attempt was made to prepare written records of his life and teachings.

It is also evident that, like Jesus, each great Christian teacher sought to train a group of disciples. Among this inner group of followers who gathered about Paul were John Mark, Luke the physician, Timothy, and Titus. Between himself and these young men Paul established a close bond of affection and friendship. At the same time he inspired them with confidence in their own powers. He expected much of them, as he plainly declared, and this expectation was not disappointed. He gave especial attention to their training, followed them with his letters, and was careful to open to them as far as possible the door of opportunity. Not only did he take them with him in his journeys, and thus instruct them by actual experience and under his personal direction, but also, as they entered upon their inde-



pendent work, he gave them minute directions as to what and how they should teach. This systematic, thorough, practical training of its teachers contributed largely to the invincible conquering power of the early Church.

Preaching was also a prominent factor in the early history of Christianity, especially in the initial missionary work. As in the early ministry of Jesus, it was the net spread broadcast to draw the responsive into the closer relation of discipleship. Paul called himself both a preacher and a teacher, but in all the sermons of the great apostle to the Gentiles, as well as those recorded in the opening chapters of the book of Acts, there is a strong teaching element. There was ever a close personal touch between the preacher and those addressed. He was keenly alive to the problems which concerned them. Questions were constantly interjected by him, as well as by his hearers. In the Christian communities public preaching in the modern sense was apparently less common. The traditions of the synagogue still dominated the public services of the church. The prophets, who corresponded to the modern preachers, came largely from the ranks, according as each man was gifted; and preaching never overshadowed the teaching ministry.

Another characteristic method of the early Christian teachers was the public interpretation of the Old Testament scriptures. Thus, according to Acts 8. 32-36, Philip led the Ethiopian treasurer to faith in Jesus through his interpretation of the great servant passage in Isaiah 53. The apostolic sermons recorded in the second

Teaching  
Element in the  
Preaching

Interpretation  
of the Older  
Scriptures

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chapter of Acts are simply interpretations of the earlier prophecies in light of the new faith. In Acts 17. 2 we are told that Paul, following his usual custom, met the Jews in their synagogue at Thessalonica and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them, drawing his arguments from the scriptures. The Jewish synagogues, scattered throughout the Roman world, were the scenes of most of Paul's early teachings (see Acts 9. 20; 13. 5, 15). In Philippi he sought out the Jews at their place of prayer by the river. In every case the ancient scriptures of his race were the common ground on which he met his Jewish hearers and, in interpreting these, he led them to the acceptance of the new and larger truths.

As was natural with men completely filled with their subject and inspired with a deep love, exhortations and earnest warnings were often used by these early teachers. Through these they appealed to the emotions and wills of those whose confidence and love they had already won. The New Testament epistles are shot through with these fervent appeals, which reveal the affection and noble purpose of the apostles. Thus Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, stand firm, unmovable, always diligent in the work of the Lord, for you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain" (1 Cor. 15. 58). In the same spirit the author of the First Epistle of Peter exhorts his readers: "Beloved, I beseech you as sojourners and pilgrims to refrain from indulging fleshly lusts which war upon the soul; make your behavior among the Gentiles so upright that, whenever they malign you as

evildoers, they may, because of your good works which they behold, praise God in the day of visitation" (2. 11, 12).

Being wise teachers, these early makers of men were fully aware of the value of judicious commendation. Thus Paul, in the beginning of his letter to the Romans and in his second letter to the Corinthians, speaks at length and in strongest terms of their virtues before he goes on to consider questions of conduct or to censure his readers.

**Commendation**

The Christian teachers constantly used questions and answers in developing and presenting their teachings. They appreciated the value of this method of fixing the attention of their disciples upon the subject under consideration. In the first part of the ninth chapter of his first letter to the Corinthians Paul asked fifteen questions in ten short verses. In the Epistle of James, which illustrates most clearly the methods of the early Christian teachers, questions are constantly asked, sometimes with a view to fixing the thought in the mind of the disciple and sometimes to present vividly a question for their consideration, even as the Jewish scribes outlined possible cases to test the skill of their pupils. It is clear from these indications that the question method was much used wherever the early Christian Church was trained.

**Questions and  
Answers**

These questions often led to discussions which were encouraged by the wise teacher. The Epistle of James (2. 14-25), in its treatment of the relation of faith to deeds, contains a good example of the value of discussion as a means of

**Discussions**

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bringing out truths. The presentation is so clear that the questions can still be heard as they came from the lips of the religious teacher, as well as the conclusions advanced by the different members of his class. As in modern classrooms today, these discussions sometimes ceased to be profitable, so that the wise counsel is given to Titus to "have nothing to do with foolish discussions, or with controversy, or with disputes about the law, for they are useless and futile" (3. 9, 10).

### Arguments

Sometimes the Christian teachers employed logical arguments to convince their disciples. The first part of the Epistle to the Romans and the Epistle to the Hebrews are excellent examples of this method of teaching. As with the sages and Jesus, the appeal was always through the reason to the will, and the ultimate aim of each argument was to develop faith or to arouse action.

### Summaries

Another characteristic method of the early Christian teachers is the frequent introduction of comprehensive summaries of their previous teachings. They appreciated the importance of fixing the vital truth in the minds of their disciples by means of clear restatement. A good example is found in 1 Corinthians 10. 31-33. After discussing at length what should be the attitude of Christians toward the things offered to idols, Paul embodies the heart of his teaching in the pregnant words: "Whether, therefore, you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no occasion of stumbling either to Jews or Greeks or to the

church of God, even as I also please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of the many, that they may be saved."

In the literary form in which the Christian teachers put their message there are many indications of the influence of Israel's early sages. The teaching was universal, adapted alike to all ages and races. All traces of the nationalistic thought of the earlier priests and prophets had disappeared. They dealt simply and directly with the problems common to all mankind. They put their teachings in a form adapted to this end. One of the most frequently used forms was the precept, which could be easily memorized and readily applied. Examples of this form of teaching appear on every page of the epistles. That of James contains the greatest number of examples. Thus in 1. 19 he teaches: "Let every man be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to get angry." Again in 5. 12 he commands: "Above all things, my brothers, take no oath, either by heaven, or by earth, or by anything else. With you let 'Yes' suffice for yes, and 'No' for no, so that you may not fall under condemnation." Paul's familiar words: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so carry out the law of Christ," (Gal. 6. 2) well illustrate the use of the precept.

Many of these precepts were also cast in poetic, proverbial form, as, for example, Paul's aphorism in Galatians 6. 8:

Precepts

Proverbs and  
Similitudes

He that sows to his own flesh shall of the flesh reap  
corruption;  
But he that sows to the spirit shall of the spirit reap  
eternal life.

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Sometimes the similitude was also used, as in James 2. 26:

Even as the body apart from the spirit is dead,  
So faith without works is dead.

Beatitudes and  
Allegories

Like their Master, the Christian teachers appreciated the value of the beatitude. A noble example is found in James 1. 12: "Blessed is the man who remains firm under temptation, for when he has stood the test he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to those who love him." In Galatians 4. 21-27 Paul employs an extended allegory.

Clearness, not  
Literary Form,  
the Aim of the  
Early Teachers

As a rule, the literary forms used by the early Christian teachers were exceedingly simple. Their one aim was not to embellish the truth but to make it clear and effective. The literature which comes from them is barren compared with that found in the older Jewish scriptures. Their writings were not the product of leisure or of the spontaneous literary vigor of a primitive people, but rather of the burning desire to instill practical and helpful truths into the minds of men who, burdened with sin and ignorance, were struggling amid mighty temptations and bitter persecutions. In his wonderful apostrophe to love in the thirteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians, Paul reveals a masterly literary style. It is the spontaneous expression of the experience of a lifetime. It reveals the literary possibilities of the great apostle. Ordinarily he had no time to give attention to the form in which he expressed his teachings. In most of his utterances the thoughts rushed upon him so rapidly as he meditated upon the needs and problems of those

to whom he was writing, that he could scarcely stop to finish one sentence before beginning another. As he wrote, so he probably taught, expressing by face, gesture, and intonation what he did not put into words.

Above all, Paul, and the class of early teachers which he represents, knew that the supreme success of the teacher depended upon the personality back of the message. The author of the Epistle of James surely had this great truth in mind when he said that teachers must be judged by another standard than that by which ordinary men were tested. Paul often, not boastingly, but in order to appeal to his hearers, held up his own character and life and work as the ultimate proof of the truth of his teachings. To the Corinthians he declared: "Truly the marks of an apostle were exhibited among you in constant endurance, as well as by signs, by wonders, and by mighty works" (2 Cor. 12. 12). When Titus was about to enter upon his work as pastor and teacher, Paul's concluding injunctions were: "In all things show thyself an example of good works. In your teaching show sincerity and a serious spirit. Let what you say be sound and above reproach, that the enemy may be ashamed, having nothing bad to say of us" (2. 7, 8). Thus in aim, spirit, methods, and life the early Christian teachers proved faithful followers of the Master, leaving to the Christian Church a clear example of how it also can follow in his footsteps and perform its God-given task, not only of saving but making men.

Importance of  
the Personality  
of the Teacher

## XV

### THE LARGER PROPHETIC AND CHRISTIAN CONCEPTION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

#### Misleading Definitions of Religion

ALL ages, races, and individuals have their own definition of religion. Early races defined it as loyalty to the Deity expressed by certain ceremonial forms of worship. The theologians of the past generation and many to-day define it as a dogma, and make its primary demand the acceptance of a creed. Some put the emphasis solely on the emotions and states of mind; others, on character and deeds. Each and all of these definitions are narrow and incomplete. They fall far short of the requirements of the great teachers of Judaism and Christianity. Religion is a union of all these varied elements. Because they have been defined so narrowly the words "religion" and "religious" have become wayworn. To many they suggest only sectarianism or the creeds of a church. Inasmuch as no newer and fresher term is to be found in the English language, the word "religion" must again be given its original meaning.

#### Its Larger Content

Defined objectively and simply, religion is the individual's attitude toward God and man, expressed in faith, in worship, in life, and in service. It is the impelling force in all that a man thinks or feels or does.

#### Its Normal Development

Religion in some more or less complete form is the possession of everyone. In its richness and completeness it is the result of the normal de-



velopment of the divinely implanted impulses found in every human soul. The difference between the pagan and the true Christian is primarily a difference in the degree of development. The normal man is one whose religious impulses have been naturally and fully developed under the influence of the proper training and environment. The growth of religion is as mysterious and yet as natural as that of the plant or the human body. Men who seem to be totally without religion are those whose normal spiritual growth has been arrested through unfavorable environment or lack of the proper teaching and direction. As physical strength is developed, so spiritual health and vigor come through proper exercise. They are the product of action and experience, as well as of study and meditation. Hence the personal application of religious truths is as essential as instruction; in fact, expression and impression are the complements of each other.

Inasmuch as religion is something inherited as well as personal, its primary inspiration is the message and life and work of the great heroes of the faith. Our individual faith to-day represents the united efforts of countless millions to know the character and will of the Deity, and God's response to that effort. This cumulative religious knowledge corresponds to the inherited wealth of observation, experience, and experimentation in the fields of art, science, and practical invention. The prophets of the race were the great spiritual inventors, who with open minds and intense zeal sought first to know the

**The Religious  
Heritage**

divine truth and then to transmit it in intelligible form to their fellow men. Faith in God, in his love, in his revelation of himself through the lives of men and in his guidance of the individual, is the rightful heritage of every human being. Hence the first duty of the enlightened is to transmit this inestimable heritage, in its simplest and most impressive form, to each new, unfolding life. Moreover, only as the truths won by the experiences of the race are reincarnated in the life of an individual can religion be made an abiding, effective force.

Growth of  
Personal Faith

In the normal child faith is a natural growth. It rests on the bedrock of common human experience and belief, and is the result of normally developed human impulses. With this naturally developing faith comes a corresponding growth of character. As Emerson has said, "Man is a part of all with which he associates." As in the chemical world, certain agents produce certain reactions. If the individual comes only into contact with the errors or crude beliefs of heathenism, or with the barbarous practices of savages or of the criminal class, the religious impulses within him remain undeveloped; the egoism and selfishness of the child continue to rule in the life of the man, even though he be physically mature. On the other hand, wholesome contact with the heroes of the faith and careful instruction in the vital truths inherited from the noblest religious teachers of the race are the forces that make strong religious character, as well as steadfast faith.

The contributions of modern psychology are

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beginning to throw light on that most intricate of subjects—the development of the human mind and soul. It has been demonstrated beyond question that to insure desired results the teaching must be thoroughly adapted in both content and form to the mental and spiritual capabilities of the child, the youth, and the man in each stage of his development. In the light of this principle religious education is ceasing to be a groping in the dark. Here the laws of cause and effect apply as rigidly as in any field of human experience. Through the great door which has been but recently opened, we can now see clearly that the fully rounded religious character is neither a miracle nor the product of a moment. It is rather the result of growth. Beginning with the earliest years of infancy, it gradually unfolds until in the case of the normal man and woman it reaches its richest development in the later years of life after the bodily and mental powers have reached their culmination. Certain periods, as, for example, the ages from six to thirteen, are characterized by their rich receptiveness. At another period, that of early adolescence (from thirteen to sixteen), the reason and the emotions unite under the right influences in leading to great and important decisions, which determine the individual's relations both to God and his fellows.

The larger conception of religion and the recent contributions of practical psychology have revealed the real significance of religious education. It is not mere instruction in certain doctrines or in the forms of worship. Its ultimate goal is to develop individual character and effi-

Light from  
Modern  
Psychology

The Larger  
Definition of  
Religious  
Education

ciency. It seeks to create the Christlike attitude toward God and man, which comes from a simple clear faith, a spirit of true reverence, a normally developed character, and trained powers, entirely, enthusiastically consecrated to the service of one's fellows. It is the education not of a part but of the whole man. It is the task not of a moment but of a lifetime. It is the work not merely of parents or teachers or pastors, but the united product of all the influences that affect the physical or mental powers, the habits, the beliefs, and the ideals of the individual. One of the supreme tasks of religious education is to coordinate all these influences so that they will harmonize in producing the highest results. The object of all religious education is not conformity to arbitrary standards, but to train the individual child in harmony with his divinely unfolding possibilities. This broader conception of religious education emphasizes the profound importance of a scientific study of the impulses, the tendencies, and the possibilities of the child at each stage in his development. It demands a careful weighing of our religious heritages with a view to ascertaining the relative values as aids in religious culture. It also clearly reveals the necessity for a thorough grading and adaptation of this material.

Rediscovery of  
the Bible

Instruction in religion is to-day easier and more definite than ever before because our knowledge of the great religious teachers of the past and of their message is more exact. As the result of the work of careful, consecrated biblical scholarship the late Jewish and Christian tradi-

tions, which have hitherto obscured the records of the faith, are being set aside. What many faithful Christians feared was to be the destruction of the Bible has already proved to be its rediscovery. Again the early heroes of the faith stand forth and speak to us almost as distinctly as they spoke to their contemporaries. Their messages, which come from hearts aflame with love for God and their fellow men, are evoking a new response in the hearts of men. That which is of secondary value is being turned over to the historian and archæologist; while the vital, abiding truths stand forth in their original strength and beauty. Never before in the world's history were men consciously or unconsciously reaching out with greater eagerness for that divine heritage.

In a sense it is a new Bible which is being revealed to the present generation—not new because any of its truths have been changed or set aside, but because our attitude toward it is fundamentally different. Beauties hitherto unnoticed are now clearly perceived. Truths overlooked or only half appreciated are transforming the life and faith and ideals of mankind. The example as well as the words of such a prophet as Isaiah are inspiring thousands of men and women to study the social and economic conditions of their day and to unite with the devoted spirit of the Hebrew prophets in an heroic endeavor to realize in the life of the community the divine ideals of justice and fraternity.

Of all the many astounding discoveries which have made glorious the century just passed, none

**Its Large Place  
in Modern Life**

**The Rediscovery  
of Jesus**

in its effect upon the world's civilization will compare with that of the discovery of the real Jesus. To-day the misinterpretations of early Christian tradition, the powerful influence of Greek thought upon the beliefs of the early Church, the effects of the ignorance and barbarity of the Middle Ages, and the crudities of the philosophies and theologies of the past generations are being set aside with the spirit of reverence but of fidelity to the truth. The result is that Jesus as he was known to his daily companions and revealed by the earliest records is clearly seen by the present generation. Instead of being borne further away on the current of time, the Great Teacher to-day speaks to men more distinctly and directly than ever before.

**The Simpler  
Theology**

In the light of Jesus's teaching and example, the faith of his followers is becoming wonderfully simple. Instead of the transcendental God of post-exilic Jewish theology, far removed from the everyday life of his children, they behold one supreme personality pervading the entire universe. Above all, he is a God who is ever seeking to reveal himself in and through the lives and hearts of men. The one supreme problem of religious education, therefore, is to open the mind of each individual so that God's personality, which is truth and love, may find full expression, even as it did in the spirit, character, and deeds of the divine Son of man.

**The New Social  
Sense**

With this simpler and truer conception of God and his relations to men, there is to-day dawning upon the consciousness of the Christian world a new social sense. In place of the prevailing over-

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accentuated individualism is coming a fuller recognition of the unity of the race. Through study and keener observation, men are beginning to perceive how closely the well-being of the individual is bound up with that of the community and state. They are realizing that it is far better to strive for the common good than for the individual good, for the commonwealth than for personal wealth. Practical sociology and kindred sciences are revealing, as never before, the rights and needs of the dependent classes and the obligation of the strong to the weak. They are also making clear the scientific methods whereby the needs of society may be satisfactorily met. The result is that the spirit of service, the noblest and ultimate expression of religion, no longer wastes itself in mere feeling or blind effort, but bears rich and practical fruits.

With this larger definition of religion, with this new and broader interpretation of the Bible, with this clearer vision of Jesus, and with this vastly enlarged field of service, it is inevitable that the Church, which is the recognized agent for the development of religion in the life both of the individual and of society, should enter upon a new and nobler mission. Its first task, as of old, is to transmit to the individual the messages of the great religious heroes and teachers of the race and thus to aid in the development of personal faith. Its second task is to foster the spirit of reverence and worship. It is also called to proclaim the good news "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" and to lead them back into the way of truth and service. But in the light of

The Enlarged  
Field of the  
Church

modern psychology and the example of the Great Teacher its larger task is not merely to save men, but above all to make men. Thus its great mission is to coöperate with God himself in developing by right environment and wise teaching the divine potentialities latent in each individual.

Importance  
of the Teaching  
Ministry

Doubtless in the future, as in the past, preaching will always occupy an important place in the life of the Church, for it is by no means anti-thetic, but rather supplemental, to the ministry of teaching. If, however, the Church is true to the traditions of its founders and to the needs of the present situation, it will give to teaching at least an equal place with the ministry of preaching and of worship. In America to-day, direct religious instruction is left almost entirely to the Church. Here lies its great responsibility and opportunity; for the development of the ideals and character of each rising generation is the noblest and most important task of all. If through its Sunday school and other educational agencies the Church meets this great need of our modern civilization, it will win thereby greater honor and more loyal support than ever before in its history.

Adjustment of  
the Church to  
Its Great Task

Before it can discharge this divinest of missions there must be a fundamental readjustment within the Church itself. The membership of the Church must awaken to the magnitude of its responsibility and to the transcendent importance of religious education. Its officers must not only give liberally of the Church funds, but also of their influence and energies in perfecting the equipment and standards of the Sunday school,



the great teaching body of the Church. They must also reorganize the other agencies of the Church on an educational basis. Through trained Sunday school superintendents and directors of religious education they must raise its teaching ministry to a far higher degree of efficiency. The Church must again sit at the feet of the Great Teacher and learn to apply more perfectly his methods of making men. At the same time, it must build on the established results of modern psychology and education. It must meet the alert, critical youth of to-day with a constructive, modern interpretation of the Bible and with standards and doctrines that will guide them in the hour of doubt and temptation and satisfy the cravings of their souls. Furthermore, the Church must draw to itself and feed with life-saving bread the millions of children who are still untouched by its influence. These great tasks call, as never before, for a united Church of Christ to minister to the religious needs of each community, even as does the public school in the field of secular education. To do its real work the Church must become what now it is not—a communal institution. Thus through the peculiar needs of the present age Jesus is calling to his Church and to his faithful ones to find their life by losing it in the most fruitful and noble of services—the making of men.



APPENDIX  
QUESTIONS FOR STUDY



## APPENDIX

### QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

#### I. THE SECRET OF ISRAEL'S CONQUERING POWER

1. What two great religions are rooted in Judaism?
2. Why did the religion of the Israelites make so deep an impression on the faith of mankind?
3. In what sense was Judaism a teaching religion?
4. What was the standing of the teacher among the Jews?
5. What is the attitude of the modern Jew to education?
6. What was the chief aim of Israel's teachers?
7. What three distinct classes of teachers were found in ancient Israel?
8. What purpose led the authors of the Old Testament books to write?
9. What three types of teaching are found in the Old Testament?
10. What was the purpose that led the authors of the New Testament books to write?
11. Formulate your own definition of the Bible.

#### II. THE REAL CHARACTER AND AIMS OF THE PROPHETS

1. What was the real character of the Hebrew prophets?
2. Were they primarily predictors?
3. What universal human desire gave rise to the prophets?
4. Describe the ancient kâhin.
5. What national crises called forth Samuel and Deborah?
6. Describe the way in which Amos became a prophet.
7. Isaiah's call.
8. What personal experiences gave Hosea his message?
9. Did any great prophets arise in Israel unless called forth by some political, social or religious crisis?
10. In what different ways did the prophets perform their work?
11. Define their four great aims?

#### III. THE PROPHETS AS STORY TELLERS AND PREACHERS

1. Cite examples of the use of practical diplomacy by the prophets in realizing their aims?
2. What illustrations drawn from Israel's history were used by Amos and Hosea?
3. For what purpose were most of the stories in the opening books of the Bible introduced?
4. Why are they of great teaching value?
5. What are some of the important prophetic truths that they illustrate?
6. What was the most common

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method by which the prophets appealed to the people? 7. Picture in imagination the way in which Amos addressed the people assembled at Bethel. 8. Why did the prophets put their messages in poetic form? 9. What was the significance of the different meters that they used? 10. In what different literary forms did they present their teachings? 11. Give illustrations. 12. Why did they give so much attention to the form in which they expressed their messages?

### IV. THE TEACHING METHODS OF THE PROPHETS

1. What evidence is there that the prophets aimed to train disciples? 2. What is the especial value of this method of teaching? 3. What symbolic names did Hosea and Isaiah give to their children? 4. What object lessons were used by the prophets? 5. Describe some of Ezekiel's dramatic illustrations. 6. What led the prophets to write down their messages? 7. Compare the prophetic apocalypse and the direct address. 8. What are some of the indications of the moral earnestness of the prophets? 9. On what occasions did Amos and Isaiah show great tact? 10. What were the chief characteristics of the teaching methods of the prophets? 11. How far are these characteristics important to-day?

### V. THE DUTIES AND AIMS OF THE PRIESTS

1. What evidence regarding the position and duties of the preëxilic priests is found in the early narrative in Judges 18? 2. Why were the Levites probably at first intrusted with the care of the ancient shrines? 3. What was the early use of the term *son of Levi*? 4. How was the term later used? 5. What were the fourfold duties of the priests? 6. Which was their most prominent duty before the exile? 7. Why was the influence of the priests upon the people especially strong? 8. What were the distinct aims of the priests?

### VI. THE TEACHING METHODS OF THE PRIESTS

1. How prominently did the priestly oracle figure in early Hebrew history? 2. What was the oracle and how was it probably used? 3. What opportunities did the priests have to influence the people in connection with the oracle? 4. How as judges? 5. In what way was Moses Israel's great lawgiver? 6. What evidence

is there that the priests used the catechetical method? 7. How many decalogues are found in Exodus 20 to 23? 8. With what subjects do they deal? 9. What was the value of the decalogue as a means of teaching? 10. What was the real significance of the ritual? 11. Describe the growth of ceremonial and written law. 12. What were the characteristic teaching methods of the priests?

#### VII. THE HISTORY AND AIMS OF THE WISE MEN OR SAGES

1. What needs gave rise to the class of the wise? 2. Among what other ancient people were the wise found? 3. Where in the East to-day? 4. Why is so little known about the Hebrew wise? 5. What are the earliest traces of their thought in the Old Testament? 6. Describe the work of the two wise women who aided Joab. 7. Of the two wise men in the court of David? 8. What was the real character of Solomon's wisdom? 9. Cite illustrations. 10. Why was the book of Proverbs later attributed to him? 11. What pre-exilic prophets refer to the wise? 12. Why were the wise especially prominent after the exile? 13. What are the characteristics of the wise man described by Ben Sira? 14. What was the source of the authority and teaching of the wise? 15. What were the five distinct aims of the wise? 10. Compare their aims with those of the modern Sunday school teacher.

#### VIII. THE METHODS OF THE WISE MEN OR SAGES

1. What subjects especially interested the wise? 2. What was their theory of education? 3. How far did they appreciate the importance of primary education? 4. Is there any evidence that they ever spoke in public? 5. What was their ordinary place and manner of teaching? 6. What classes did they seek especially to reach? 7. How did the people of their day express their appreciation of their work? 8. What Old Testament and Apocryphal books are from the wise? 9. Define a proverb and indicate its value as a means of instruction. 10. Give examples of similitudes in the book of Proverbs. 11. What advantages did the riddle and parable possess as a means of instruction? 12. How did the wise deal with the evils of laziness and drunkenness? 13. What is the problem and the great

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teaching of the book of Job? 14. What pedagogical principles may be learned from the example of the Hebrew wise?

### IX. THE HISTORY AND AIMS OF THE SCRIBES AND RABBIS

1. What is the nature of the earliest reference to the scribes in the Old Testament? 2. How did the Babylonian exile affect the work of the scribes? 3. What methods did Ezra use in teaching the people? 4. What transformed the wise into scribes, and what effect did this transformation have upon the scribes? 5. How were the early scribes regarded by the people? 6. What was the work of the *Sôphërim*? 7. Contrast the character and teachings of Hillel with those of Shammai. 8. What were the chief aims of the scribes?

### X. THE METHODS OF THE SCRIBES AND RABBIS

1. What great advantages as teachers did the scribes possess? 2. What fatal weakness lay at the foundation of their work? 3. In what three ways were they able to reach and teach the people? 4. How far did they depend upon public discussion and question and answer? 5. Upon memorization? 6. Upon didactic stories? 7. Define *Häggädä* and *Hälächä*. 8. Quote some of the nobler precepts and proverbs of the scribes. 9. What was their teaching regarding prayer? 10. Discuss their use of beatitudes, parables, and allegories. 11. What were the chief defects in their teachings and what was the great need of Judaism?

### XI. THE TRAINING AND AIMS OF THE GREAT TEACHER

1. Under what three titles was Jesus addressed by the men of his day? 2. Which is the most exact title and why? 3. What was the supreme vindication of Jesus's emphasis upon teaching? 4. Describe the influences of Jesus's home at Nazareth. 5. What opportunities did he have for studying the scriptures of his race? 6. With what different parts of the Old Testament was he intimately acquainted? 7. What books made the deepest impression upon him? 8. What class of Israel's teachers influenced Jesus's method most deeply and why? 9. Give examples of Jesus's use of proverbs and questions. 10. What were the special advantages of beatitudes as a method of teaching?



11. When and why did Jesus use parables? 12. What was his purpose in employing the paradox and hyperbole? 13. What were Jesus's aims as a teacher? 14. To which would you say he gave the central place?

## XII. JESUS'S WAY OF MAKING MEN

1. What were Jesus's unique qualifications as a teacher? 2. Why did he not commit his teachings to writing? 3. What was his chosen way of perpetuating them? 4. What fundamental characteristic of a truly great teacher did he illustrate? 5. What was the object of his acts of healing? 6. Cite illustrations of Jesus's adaptation of his teachings to those whom he wished to teach? 7. Did he present his teachings in abstract or concrete form? 8. How far did he employ objective illustrations? 9. Why did he always put his teachings in positive form? 10. What was the basis of the note of authority which characterized all his teachings? 11. To what in man did he ultimately appeal? 12. What was his test of each man's religious life? 13. Discuss the effect of Jesus's character and life upon his disciples. 14. In what sense is he the universal Saviour of mankind?

## XIII. THE AIMS OF THE EARLY CHRISTIAN TEACHERS

1. Why did Jesus's disciples go forth as teachers? 2. What were the teaching functions of the apostles? 3. Of the evangelists and prophets? 4. Of the pastors and lay-workers? 5. What were the character and duties of the professional teachers in the early church? 6. What was the primary aim of the early Christian apostles, as illustrated by the opening chapters of Acts? 7. How did they transmit the facts regarding Jesus's life and teachings? 8. In what respects were the aims of the early apostles identical with those of Jesus? 9. In what respects did they differ?

## XIV. THE METHODS OF THE EARLY CHRISTIAN TEACHERS

1. Why did the early church place strong emphasis on oral instruction? 2. What led Paul to write his epistles? 3. How far did Paul devote himself to training disciples? 4. Was Paul preëminently a preacher or a teacher? 5. Cite examples of Paul's use of exhortation, warning, and commendation. 6. How far did

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the early Christian teachers employ questions and discussions? 7. Cite examples of the use of arguments and summaries. 8. What types of teaching characteristic of the wise were used by the apostles? 9. What New Testament book has sometimes been called the Christian book of Proverbs? 10. What importance did Paul attach to the personality of the teacher?

### XV. THE LARGER PROPHETIC AND CHRISTIAN CONCEPTION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

1. What are some of the current false definitions of religion? 2. In the light of the example and teachings of the prophets and Jesus formulate your own definition of religion. 3. How does the religious life of the individual normally develop? 4. What is the nature of the common religious heritage of the race? 5. How far does environment affect the growth of individual faith? 6. What are some of the practical contributions of psychology to our knowledge of religious growth? 7. What are the chief aims and methods of religious education? 8. In what sense has the Bible been rediscovered? 9. How is its value to the present generation thereby increased? 10. What obstructions that have hitherto obscured the true character and work of Jesus have been removed? 11. What is meant by the new social sense? 12. What is the teaching mission of the Church? 13. How is it to meet this responsibility? 14. How can your individual church adjust itself to its special task?







