

**THE GROWING  
MIRACLE**

**WILLIAM PRINCE AYLSWORTH**



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# THE GROWING MIRACLE

A PRACTICAL STUDY OF  
HEBREW PROPHECY

BY

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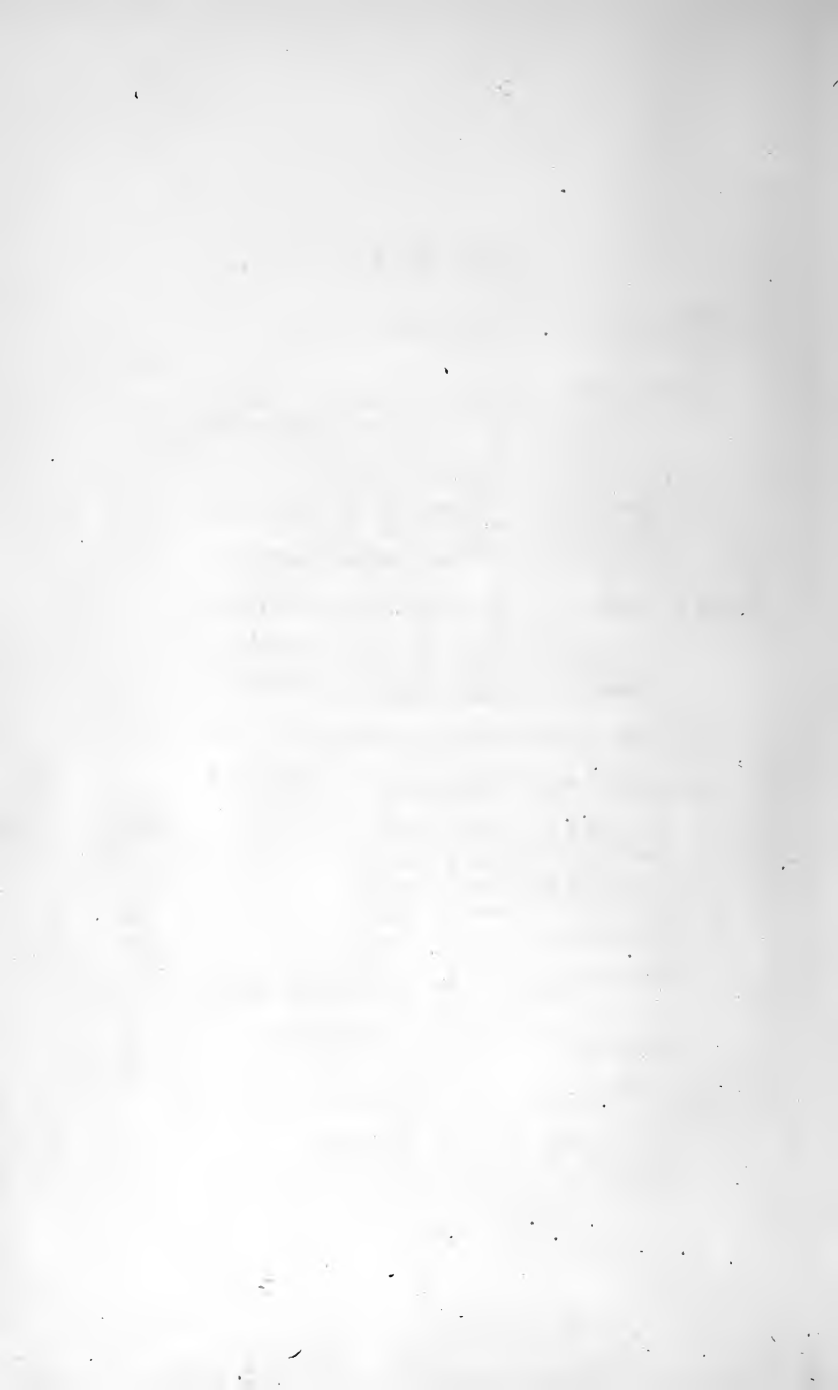
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**T**O my students in Biblical  
Literature, whose eager-  
ness for knowledge, kindly  
sympathy and appreciation have  
made twenty-five years of teach-  
ing a delightful memory, this  
book is affectionately dedicated



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## PREFACE

This book is designed as a practical introduction to the study of the Hebrew prophets and prophecies. It is an outgrowth of the work of a teacher and the greater part of the matter has been used in some form in lectures and instructions in the classroom.

In yielding to the requests of former students to place some of the work done with them in permanent form, I am aware that the close friendship existing between teacher and pupil may have prejudiced their judgment.

I am not without hope, however, that this effort to simplify and systematize this important Biblical subject may be helpful to students in Sacred Literature, Sunday School workers, and readers of the Bible in general.

No study of the prophets is complete which does not involve a close and sympathetic knowledge of the Scriptures themselves. The laboratory in scientific investigation opens the way for immediate knowledge. The same method should be used in the study of the Bible.

No attempt has been made to discuss critical questions except where they are directly in the line of practical treatment. It is possible to dissect a flower until its beauty and fragrance are destroyed and only

scattered fragments remain. Perhaps the lack of reverence and devout sympathy with the Bible today, is in part due to an excess of speculative criticism. Vivisection has its scientific use but it does not tend to a sympathetic knowledge of life.

In his recent book on "Biblical Criticism and Modern Thought," Dr. W. G. Jordan frankly says, "We must remember that criticism is still in process and whatever the final conclusions it is too early to expect them yet." Until something more definite and practical is produced the presumption must remain with the face value of the Scriptures. Doubtless we are indebted to reverent scholarship for adjusting the Bible to history and human life. What the trend of criticism may be in the future it is impossible to definitely forecast, but the present tendency of Christian scholarship appears to be toward rather than away from that which has come down through the ages with the sanction of both Hebrew and Christian scholarship and which was used as authority by prophets, by apostles and by Christ Himself.

I am aware that the distinction between the human and the divine, the natural and the supernatural, has been questioned. That the works of God should not be arbitrarily separated appears reasonable. So long, however, as the commonly accepted definition of the natural is confined to the idea of fixed laws and tends to rule out the transcendence of God in the world, it seems necessary to keep up the distinction to avoid misunderstanding. That God is a person is inferred



from human personality. This involves freedom of will. God is a father. The relation of parent and child is not always uniform and fixed. Each child requires a careful adjustment of culture and control to his individuality. Again, the presence of sin in the world calls for specific treatment. Life must not be judged from the standpoint of perfect moral health. That miracles should be wrought and direct revelations made, within the limits of divine wisdom and economy, is not only reasonable but to be assumed.

In preparing these pages the writer is indebted to a wide range of literature impossible to acknowledge in detail. In most cases, where direct use has been made, acknowledgment has been given in foot notes or in the body of the work.

In giving this unpretentious volume to the public it is with regret that time and strength, in the midst of the active duties of a teacher, have not permitted a more careful preparation of the work presented. It can hardly be hoped that mistakes have been avoided. There is at least a sense of satisfaction that it has been a labor of love and that much personal benefit has resulted from a careful review of this supremely important Biblical study.

Asking his readers to temper their criticism with the kindly consideration and charity which he has tried to show others, and with a prayer that these pages may be of some real benefit in awakening interest in Bible study and invigorating faith in its spirit-given message, they are most earnestly submitted by

THE AUTHOR.



PART ONE  
A PRELIMINARY VIEW



## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTORY THOUGHTS.

1. The Old Testament Prophecies have been aptly called the Growing Miracle. Their clear but gradual development of the truths of the Kingdom of God is one of the marvels of revelation. Their consistency and definiteness of purpose are unmistakable evidences of their divine origin. Whoever approaches the study of them diligently and reverently will have his faith strengthened and enriched.

Such a study is of more than ordinary value in a time when rationalistic thought, stimulated by science and philosophy, is dominant. While wholly legitimate in its own realm, it threatens to deaden spiritual ideals and paralyze faith. The twin truths, the immanence and the transcendence of God, must both be emphasized and kept in proper balance. A rejection of the supernatural, if it includes a denial of God's power and purpose to reveal Himself to men, is fatal to a vital Christian faith. That God is immanent in the world, is true. But He is also "before all things" and "by Him all things consist."

Doubtless He rules the world by law. He sets in action forces which operate by gradual process. But

### *The Growing Miracle*

these "resident forces" must not exclude His transcendent power to act upon the world from without. God is greater than His creation. To deny this is to open the way for Pantheism or Atheism.

2. The remedy for modern skepticism is not in falling out with the claims of science or its methods so far as they are legitimate. It is true much that passes for complete demonstration is still unproved, and a distinction must be drawn between fact and hypothesis. But a fact discovered in the natural world is revelation of the thought of God.

Nor may we always make the same use of miracles as a proof of God's direct dealing with men. In former times the testimony of miraculous deeds was the most convincing of evidence. To him whose faith is already grounded they are still full of assurance. But the rationalistic spirit of the times often makes this evidence less available for one whose faith is weak or wholly wanting.

3. To what then may we look to awaken and stimulate faith in the midst of a faithless generation? So far as pertains to a demonstration of God's presence in the world, the Bible contains its own proofs. The study of prophecy and its marvelous fulfillment is a powerful specific for doubt. Its facts challenge investigation. These facts do not relate wholly to the past. They constitute a living and abiding evidence. The same reason that compels us to recognize material

### *Introductory Thoughts*

facts and accept logical conclusions concerning them holds in the world of moral and spiritual phenomena as well. The spiritual is just as real as the material. God, in human life and society, is just as real as in matter. Its data must be reckoned with and the conclusions drawn must be accepted.

4. In approaching any department of study the proper attitude is necessary. This is a recognized condition of all investigation. There must be openness of mind, a readiness to accept reasonable conclusions. We never see that upon which we have turned our backs. We very rarely find what we are determined in advance not to find. The hidden treasure in the parable of our Lord was discovered by a man plowing in a field. He was diligently working. While the treasure was an unexpected piece of good fortune, it was the indirect result of his industry and faithfulness. Its discovery brought joy and a purpose to make it fully his own. The same attitude must be sustained toward all investigation whether it pertains to material or spiritual things.

5. But the study of the Bible requires not only a receptive attitude of the mind but also of the heart. It is a source of great moral truth. It is intensely personal and involves matters that pertain to our welfare both here and hereafter. It cannot be fairly treated as we treat a problem in Geometry or Chemistry whose solution has no moral bearing. Every realm

### *The Growing Miracle*

of study has its own conditions and limitations. The mind is able to perceive what the physical vision cannot. Spiritual perception demands the right attitude of the heart. "The pure in heart shall see God." "Without faith it is impossible to be pleasing unto Him; for he that cometh to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of them that seek after Him." (Heb. 11:6).

The most wonderful thing in God's revelation is not creative power, or miracles, or intelligent design; or beauty. The greatest thing in the world is God's love. It is this fact which makes the revelation of Himself in the Bible, especially in the Gospel of Christ, such a marvelous moral and spiritual force. It is this that should make the study of the prophecies especially interesting and profitable. They deal with God's care for His people in their times of trouble, and while they advocate a righteousness as white as the snow on the mountain-top, they blend with justice a richness of love and mercy which render to their messages an attractiveness and power all their own. Paul sheds light upon God's attitude toward the Children of Israel in their wanderings when he speaks of Him as a "nursing Father" tenderly leading and caring for them in all the terrible experiences in the wilderness.

"There's a wideness of God's mercy  
Like the wideness of the sea,  
There's a kindness in His justice  
Which is more than liberty."



### *Introductory Thoughts*

The strongest illustration of disinterested affection is that of a mother's care for her children. How often we have seen a mother amid her daily tasks with her children about her. They are perhaps playing in some dark cellar below her. How carefully she keeps open the door to the passage-way. When, frightened by some imaginary object or strange noise they cry to her for comfort and assurance, she quiets them. How tenderly she says, "Yes, my children, I am here, nothing shall harm you." Or it may be that she firmly reproveth them in their childish differences. In just this spirit God has dealt with His children. The revelations which He has made are like the mother's firm but tender words. He has spoken to them down the dark stairway of human life to reprove and comfort, to quiet their fears and quicken their trust in Him. Even the figure of a mother's love breaks down under the story of God's indescribable love. "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, these may forget, yet will I not forget thee." (Isa. 49:15). Such a conception of God opens the way for a new and a larger meaning in the inspired messages of the Bible. Critical difficulties and unexplained facts pass from the mind as clouds before the rising sun.

Such an attitude is especially helpful in the study of the Hebrew prophecies. They are messages of a just but loving Father to His children. His reproofs

### *The Growing Miracle*

are often stern but they are always righteous and always blended with the purest love. They contain principles of truth which apply to all ages of the world. There is a sense in which every devout reader may claim them as a personal message.

6. Rising before us then, is this sublime subject of Hebrew Prophecy. Like a lofty mountain range it stands against the horizon of history. Its heights are crowned with the snows of righteousness and truth. The outlines of divine purpose are clear-cut and unmistakable. The experiences and vicissitudes of human life sometimes obscure our vision of their greatness and value. The bitter opposition of evil, which resents and seeks to repel its exposure, may threaten, and at times seem to thwart the purposes of Jehovah, but like the afternoon storms that beat about the mountain crests they are harmless to defeat the divine will. Age after age the opposition of sin and unbelief has dashed against this mountain range only to be rolled back and shattered by its immovable strength. Such storms have continually arisen and having spent their force are succeeded by some other form of opposition. Yet each new morning it may be seen in perfect outline, its strength unbroken, its beauty unmarred. Surely we may trust that "the Word of the Lord endureth forever." We may say with the Psalmist "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills whence cometh my help. My help cometh from Jehovah, who hath made heaven and earth." (Psa. 121:1-2.)

## CHAPTER II

### THE HUMAN ELEMENT IN HEBREW PROPHECY

1. A clear and comprehensive view of the subject requires that we take note of the two essential elements that enter into prophecy. However much they may be merged, the human and the divine are to be reckoned with as joint factors in the result produced. This is not only apparent with the prophecies themselves, but it is clearly stated in the scriptures. (1 Peter, 1:21). To what extent each operates depends upon conditions not always the same. Nor are they to be measured and weighed as we estimate material quantities. Without discussion we may treat the question as one of fact rather than of philosophy.

That God has spoken through men is unquestioned. To admit it is not to compromise the claim of a divine message. It is rather to emphasize the truth that God has taken humanity into partnership with Himself in the grand affair of the world's redemption. "Our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ," (1 John 1:3). "For we are God's fellow-workers," (1 Cor. 3:9). Yet we are helpless

### *The Growing Miracle*

without His power, for "God giveth the increase." We are still further assured of our exalted relation to the Heavenly Father in the fact that Jesus Christ came to earth in human form and tasted every human experience.

After many revelations through the prophets in times past, He spoke at last, not through, but by His Son. God's last and greatest message was an incarnation; not words, but life.

2. The prophets themselves furnish for our study some of the noblest and loftiest characters of history. They were men, intensely human, not without faults. When we read the story of Jonah we are comforted to know that moral greatness may exist side by side with human weakness and inconsistency.

But the ruling thought of their lives was to heed the call of duty. They had a passion for righteousness. We may not doubt that much of their power of vision was made possible by their singleness of purpose and purity of heart.

3. As a body of literature the books of prophecy are of rare beauty and value. If no other benefit resulted from their study than that which tends to literary culture the student would be amply repaid. They have furnished inspiration for the best authorship and for the most powerful oratory. Their forms of expression have been examples for the most impassioned speech of preachers of righteousness, of patriots and

### *The Human Element*

reformers. Their use of figures and their striking and realistic illustrations are models of their kind. There are no loftier flights of eloquence than those found in the Hebrew Prophets.

Those who are able to study the Hebrew literature in its original tongue are deeply impressed with its directness, simplicity and spiritual power. No translation is able to convey its full strength and beauty. Yet even with the limitations of translation into other languages it has exerted a marvelous influence over the literature of the civilized world. In his *History of the English People*, Green pays a high tribute to the English version of the Bible. In this, the three hundredth anniversary of the translation known as the Authorized Version, his words are read with unusual interest. He says: "As a mere literary monument, the English version of the Bible remains the noblest example of the English tongue, while its perpetual use made it from the instant of its appearance the standard of our language. . . . The mass of picturesque allusion and illustration which we borrow from a thousand books, our fathers were forced to borrow from one; and the borrowing was the easier and more natural that the range of Hebrew literature fitted it for the expression of every phase of feeling. When Spenser poured forth his warmest love-notes in the 'Epithalamion' he adopted the very words of the Psalmist, as he bade the gates open for his bride.

### *The Growing Miracle*

When Cromwell saw the mists break over the hills of Dunbar, he hailed the sunburst with the cry of David: 'Let God arise and let his enemies be scattered. Like as the smoke vanisheth so shalt thou drive them away!' Even to common minds this familiarity with the grand poetic imagery in prophet and apocalypse gave a loftiness and ardour of expression. . . . Its effect, however dispassionately we examine it, was simply amazing."

The efforts of Professor Moulton, in his "Literary Study of the Bible" to reduce its use to literary form in order that its meaning may be better understood has greatly enhanced its attractiveness.

4. Their bearing upon ethical and sociological questions is especially striking. We are almost startled by the freshness and vividness with which they expose the social evils of our own times. This aspect of their writings suggests the solidarity of the race. Livingston said that nothing convinced him of the unity of the human family more than the fact of the universal presence of sin. Even in darkest Africa its power to destroy, its shadows of fear and its agonies for deliverance, are but distorted and intensified forms of experience in the most enlightened Christian lands.

It is instructive to note, in the reforms of three thousand years ago, that almost the same forms of evil existed as are extant today. Their results are clearly marked out. Selfishness found expression then as now, in monopoly and greed. Men were eager

### *The Human Element*

"to add field to field." They bought the needy "with a pair of shoes", taking advantage of the necessity of the poor. We read of the "balances of deceit", and of those who "do evil with both hands earnestly" and "who love to oppress."

The evils of the drink habit and the far greater sin of taking advantage of the weakness of those subject to its power, are centre shots at modern conditions. We are mistaken if we think of the temperance reform as of today only. Listen to Habakkuk in the closing days of the Assyrian Empire, almost three milleniums ago; "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink, that putteth the bottle to him, and maketh him drunken also, that thou mayest look on his nakedness" (Hab. 11:15). "Woe unto him that buildeth a town with blood and establisheth a city by iniquity" (Hab. 11:13). "How true, now as then, that Whoredom and wine take away the heart" (Hosea 4:11). What description of the brutality and loathsomeness of the drunkard is more real than the denunciation of the "drunkards of Ephraim" in Isaiah 28:1-8. To read these prophecies and note their terrible fulfillment in the ruin of the people who practised such sin is to verify every modern social problem. Not the least value of these writings, from the human side, is their application to modern reforms.

Even the subtle philosophies which we are accustomed to think wholly modern, and which give plaus-

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ibility to evil are clearly indicated. Nothing is so dangerous as that moral stupor which seeks to rob sin of its sting of remorse. The most fatal sickness is often painless. The most incurable moral malady is that which is complacent and satisfied. Often it is said, sin is but a "growing pain", a harmless stage of growth. All evil is but "undeveloped good." How appropriate is the denunciation by Isaiah of this sophistry, "Woe unto them that call evil good and good evil; that put darkness for light and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter" (Isa. 5:20). How everywhere as against pantheistic philosophy, which found expression in forms of idolatry, is the personality and transcendence of God asserted. Nor is He absent from this world. He is everywhere present. He is our dwelling place. "In Him we live and move and have our being."

5. But the climax of benefit is reached in the spiritual culture resulting from their study. Let us not forget that the spiritual is as truly a part of human development as the physical or intellectual. Spirituality is personality raised to its highest power. Scarcely in the New Testament writings are these ideals richer than in the Old Testament prophecies. Even the Sermon on the Mount might be gleaned from this marvelous literature. True, it was reserved for the Great Teacher to set their notes into a beautiful and harmonious chime whose music should ring in a new



*The Human Element*

age. Their value at the bar of Christian Evidence we shall see later. It will be found that they have laid the foundations for an edifice whose moral grandeur has never been equaled in the world's history. Beneath its walls have been piled rocks of law and prophecy which even from their human side, give it marvelous solidity and endurance.

## CHAPTER III

### THE DIVINE ELEMENT IN PROPHECY

1. An introduction to the study of prophecy would be incomplete without an inquiry into its claims of divine origin and authority. It must be admitted that the prophets assumed not only to teach but to command. Recognizing their authority whole communities were moved to repentance and obedience. Even kings trembled at their words. The profound impression produced by their messages, the part which these messages played in social and religious life of the Hebrew people, is one of the most striking facts of history. Frederick the Great, when asked for a proof of divine inspiration, answered, "The Jews." Certainly the phenomena of this unique people are to be reckoned with if the scientific method of investigation is to be used. The law of induction demands an impartial inquiry into the causes leading to such wonderful results.

2. It is a popular theory of the day that all distinction between the human and divine should be effaced. The natural and supernatural are no longer to be regarded as different manifestations. Akin to this, and perhaps in part, an outgrowth of it, is the

### *The Divine Element*

idea that authority is wholly from within our own consciousness. Truth is such to each of us as it appeals to us and compels our intellectual and moral recognition. Such a standard was announced by Coleridge when he asserted that he accepted the authority of the Bible only as it "found him deeper" than other writings. Such a view seems to open a way of escape from certain difficulties in fixing the source of authority. But it is only a half truth and the fatal result of its application is its best refutation. The principle if true in one case, holds in all. It must be the measure of the social and civil government as well as of the religious. If all men were morally healthy, if the avenues of the appeal of truth were always equally open, if we were intellectually and morally constituted alike, such a standard of authority might be effective. But facts are against such conclusions. It is doubtless true that the highest law in the home should be love and respect of the child for parents. But if children were to do only the things which appeal to their undeveloped tastes and judgements their education would be sadly defective. The lesson of obedience and respect for authority, is at the foundation of domestic order. Without it love degenerates into indulgence, law into license.

The application of this conception is well illustrated by certain socialistic theories of Civil Government. They would at least reduce the authority of the State

### *The Growing Miracle*

to the minimum, if not abolish laws and rulers altogether. With such a standard of authority, anarchy would ensue. Until human nature has been redeemed and purified, behind the appeal of truth and righteousness, will be the eternal MUST, which demands obedience to law. Behind all government is God Himself. The powers that be are ordained of Him. The truth of this view of authority is nowhere more clearly set forth than in the mission of the prophets. From any angle of observation of their mission, the transcendence of God is unmistakable in their consciousness. They were moved to speak what they did from a power operating through their own intelligence but higher than themselves.

3. The etymology of the original word for prophet clearly conveys the idea of the divine source of their power. The Hebrew word for prophet —*nabi*— is derived from *naba*, whose root idea is that of a fountain. Like a spring of water it comes from an unseen source and while it holds in solution something of the surrounding soil it is largely of foreign origin. The Saxon word *ghost*, from which comes our household word *yeast*, conveys a similar idea. Its force is hidden. Even more to the point is the word *geiser*, derived from the same Saxon word and exemplifying the same idea. How wonderful the phenomena of boiling water, shooting upward many feet, surrounded by ice and snow, and with the sharp contrast of temperature filling

### *The Divine Element*

the atmosphere with clouds of steam. David made reference to a source of inspiration higher than himself when in Psalm 45 he says, with a more literal translation, "My heart bursts and bubbles over with a good matter, my tongue is the pen of a ready writer." Like the river Jordan whose head waters pour forth in great springs at the foot of Mt. Herman, but come from the melting snows upon its lofty heights, cool and clear as their sources, so the messages of the prophets came from God Himself. Something of their nature was taken up in solution but their environment failed to account for the purity of their messages, their higher than human source.

Two other words in the Hebrew, *roeh* and *hozeh*, signify one who sees, or a seer. They exactly express the nature of his power, that his vision penetrates beyond that of other teachers, whether as relates to things present or future. As a commander, who scans his field of action with his magnifying glass, notes all parts of the battlefield which the soldier in the confusion and smoke of conflict cannot see, so the prophet sees and guides in the spiritual conflicts over which his vision extends. He is sometimes called a watchman (Isa. 21:11). Exactly this thought is expressed where a watchman in Mt. Sier is looking across the desolation of Israel to the captives in Babylon. It is that mental and spiritual quickening which lifts human powers above natural vision unaided by the Spirit of God.

### *The Growing Miracle*

The Greek word *prophetes* means in classical use, one who speaks for another and more especially for a God. Later, in medieval times, the idea of foretelling events became the dominant idea and is now its popular meaning almost exclusively. Yet it should be carefully noted that in the Scriptural use the idea of teaching and expounding, even more than foretelling events, enters into the prophecies of both the Old and New Testaments. But in every case must be recognized the guiding and elevating presence of God through the Holy Spirit.

4. What seems so clearly indicated by the meanings of the original words for prophet is fully expressed in the limits of the office of prophet, defined in the Scriptures themselves. When Jehovah appeared unto Moses and commissioned him to stand before Pharaoh he plead slowness of speech and Aaron was appointed to be his spokesman. "See", said Jehovah, "I have made thee a God to Pharaoh and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet"(Ex. 7:1). Again, "And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people, and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth and thou shalt be to him instead of a God"(Ex. 4:16). This comparison presents the idea of a prophet's relation to God and to the people with unmistakable clearness. The source of authority was not in the speaker but in Jehovah who inspired the message. The further study of their lives and words will impress

*The Divine Element*

this fact more fully. It leaves us in no uncertainty as to the fact that God has made a revelation to men and that he has chosen men to be the media through which he communicates. The manner of this revelation may be difficult to understand but the fact remains.

## CHAPTER IV

### MANNER OF REVELATION

The fact of a divine element in prophecy being recognized, important questions relating to the manner in which God has revealed Himself remain to be considered. No attempt is made to be critical or philosophical in this brief statement. It simplifies the question to remember that we are concerned at present with the Old Testament prophets and that questions relating to other parts of Scripture are only inferentially involved. Leaving out the question of Moses, who was lawgiver as well as prophet, the written prophecies of the Old Testament are its least disputed parts. Except in a few instances there is no serious question about their authorship or the time in which they were written. Certain critical questions which are raised about the historical parts of the Bible have little or no force when we turn to the prophetic literature. Yet it is true that satisfactory conclusions reached concerning the divine element in these writings illuminate difficulties relating to other parts of the Sacred Scriptures.

It is unfortunate that the subject under consideration has been sadly fettered by so many theories of inspira-



### *Manner of Revelation*

tion. It has been loaded down with burdens it was not designed to bear. The result has been confusion and doubt. With these theories, however good, we need have little to do in this simple inquiry into the divine element of prophecy. In this as in all other parts of these introductory studies it is desired to approach the subject at first hand. We cannot do better than to apply the scientific method. By first looking at the facts as they exist we shall be able to make a more satisfactory conclusion.

Turning to the Scriptures we find no single theory of revelation exclusively asserted. On the other hand we are led to understand that God has communicated with men in different ways. The opening words of Hebrews well express this fact. "God, Who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken by His Son"(Heb. 1:1-2). Going back to the earliest revelations in the Mosaic period we read in Numbers 12:5-8, "And the Lord came down in the pillar of cloud and stood in the door of the tabernacle and called Aaron and Miriam: and they came forth. And He said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so; he is faithful in all my house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently and not in dark

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speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against My servant Moses?" Again, Numbers 11:25, "And the Lord came down in a cloud and spake unto him and took of the spirit that was upon him and gave it unto the seventy Elders: and it came to pass that when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied and did not cease." Here are four different ways of revelation indicated, viz. through vision, in a dream, directly or apparently as to Moses, and by a giving of His spirit to the seventy Elders who were to be the teachers of the people. It is not asserted that these are all the ways in which God spoke to man, but such references are sufficient to show that He did speak and that He was not confined to any one prescribed method. Doubtless in His wisdom He selected that way which was best suited to the subject to be presented and to the people to be addressed. The culmination of all revelation came in His Son, "the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person." Here all words were merged into a life. Language grew weak before the presence of truth incarnated.

To solve all difficulties, to explain all mysteries with respect to God's relation to men would be as impossible upon the human as on the divine side of the question. Who knows the spirit of man in its natural operations? Even as the influence of one human spirit over another is mysterious and intangible yet positively

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recognized, so may the presence of God's spirit be recognized and verified by its results. As well might the message of wireless telegraphy be denied as it brings tidings of help to the wrecked mariner who cannot see the force operating. The very appeal to his intelligence convinces him that an intelligence from without communicates with him. Yet such communications have a consistency and dignity commensurate with the purpose of a divine revelation. Not every sound of the sea, not every moan or sigh of wind is a message from the shore; nor is everyone competent to comprehend such a signal. Certain conditions must exist. The message itself must bear upon the central purpose of such a revelation. Dean Trench has said, if a circle is seen from any point except the centre it will not appear a true circle, it will assume the shape of an ellipse. So all divine revelation must be judged by its relation to its ultimate purpose. That purpose is the revelation of Jesus Christ as the Saviour of the world. It was not dogmatism but common sense that led John to say, "Hereby know we the spirit of God: and every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God" (1 John 4: 2-3). Every other view is out of the path of communication. Consistency and unity are the infallible tests of the voice of God in revealing Himself to men.

It follows therefore that the clearest and most em-

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phatic utterances will bear upon this supreme proposition. Inspiration is focalized here. The margin of "dark sayings" and of "similitudes" may shade off into more remote themes related directly or indirectly to it, but when the focus is determined there can be no mistake. Seen from this point the beauty and significance of that which is more obscure or less important becomes clearer to the understanding. Not every tint of pigment or stroke of the brush is equally important in a great picture. Its logical centre, its artistic conclusion must give meaning to its background.

The closing words of the chapter on Inspiration in Marcus Dodds' recently published work are at least suggestive. "Inspiration enables its possessor to see and apprehend God and His will and to impart to other men what he has himself seen and apprehended. Within this one great function of inspiration considerable variety exists. The inspiration of Isaiah or Paul is different from that of the compiler of the Proverbs or the annalists who drew up Chronicles. The work intrusted to one inspired man may be different from that entrusted to another and we are not to suppose that because their work is equally inspired it is equally profitable." This well expresses the fact of the varying character and importance of the inspired writings.

It would be unfortunate, however, to limit these utterances to what was fully comprehended by the prophets themselves. A striking fact, unexplained by

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those who deny divine inspiration, is that many things predicted were mysterious to those prophesying them who, had they lived to see their fulfillment, would have been surprised. (1Pet. 1:10-12). Among the methods of communication must be included a possibility of direct, even verbal revelation, however rarely this may have occurred. If the personality of God is accepted, if the foundations of Christian Theism are admitted, not only the possibility but the probability that the Heavenly Father would communicate with His children is evident. Psychology reveals the fact that one mind may take possession of another mind, controlling thought and action absolutely. Such a power is exceptional but it is not difficult to admit that the Spirit of God may do what it is possible for the spirit of man to do acting upon another intelligence.

In defining the various ways God has of revealing Himself through human agency, Professor Milligan says,\* "There are three elements in the Divine Administration—three ways in which God's power is exercised and manifested—with which every student of the Bible must be familiar. These are the Natural, the Providential, and the Miraculous. . . . God is the most exact and particular of all economists. He never uses superfluous means for the accomplishment of any purpose. If the natural is sufficient He never uses the providential; and if the natural and providen-

\* Pg. 275, *Reason and Revelation*.

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tial are sufficient He never uses the miraculous. But when these are not sufficient, when the natural and providential are both inadequate to His purposes and ends, then rising above all the laws and forces and formulae of nature, He simply effects by His own immediate and direct agency whatever is His will and His purpose."

Beyond question the supreme end of the Bible, and therefore of the prophets, is to reveal Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the Saviour of men. All the elements of the Divine administration have been laid under tribute to accomplish this end. There are many "by-products" of revelation but this is ultimate and above all. Seen from this standpoint even the difficulties of revelation justify our conception of the wisdom and benevolence of God. In much of the Bible the natural predominates. But beyond question the supernatural in which we see the hand of God directly, is needed to account for this marvelous revelation. Such a power has not been used to illuminate side issues, to reveal science, history or any other source of knowledge only so far as is needed to contribute to the supreme end. But like a searchlight it has illuminated a path straight to the Redeemer of the world. Incidentally other important truths are brought to light, but the direct object is the infallible revelation of "the Gospel of the Glory of Christ."

## CHAPTER V

### THE FALSE AND THE TRUE

1. In presenting the proofs of a divine revelation we are confronted with the fact that there have been and are other claims made of a direct communication with the supernatural. While it would be too much to assert that God has never spoken to man except through the writings of the Old and New Testaments and that He never will speak to the world again, it is necessary to carefully guard these assumptions.

In many instances such claims have been fully exposed as deceptions. Even where intended imposture is not evident the character of the messages and their results upon society exclude them from the class of the Hebrew prophets. If we are correct in assuming that the revelations already made in the Old and New Testaments are sufficient to sustain the claims of Christ as the world's Redeemer and to throw all needed light upon the way of righteousness, the "law of parsimony" would exclude them as needless messages. If we search the history of almost two thousand years we are unable to find any ethical or spiritual truth not already incorporated in the teaching of the Bible. A

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glance at some of these claims to supernatural communication is sufficient to illustrate the difference between the true and the false.

2. Every one conversant with classical literature is familiar with the fact that it is interwoven with so called communications with the unseen world. Dr. Geikie says, "The ancient world at large was marked by its eager efforts to penetrate the secrets of the higher powers which control human destiny. Nothing important was undertaken either in public or private life without inquiring into the will of the Gods through seers, diviners, augurs, oracles or prophets who claimed ability to satisfy their cravings. . . . The divine will was read in the phenomena and occurrences of outer nature and of the animal world, in the whispering of the oak leaves of Dodona, in the flight of birds, in the motion of the entrails of a sacrifice, in the sounds of birds or beasts, or in their unexpected appearances." In the mythologies of these peoples the human and divine are constantly associated in the events of both public and private life. They find expression in literature, in sculpture and painting. Many of these superstitions fascinate us with their beauty. Their mythologies have had a wonderful influence upon modern literature.

As representations of either moral or spiritual truth, however, they are radically defective. Their appeal is to the sensual. They tend to destroy rather than



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exalt moral ideals in society. It is significant that the strictest observance of their requirements from a religious standpoint produced no elevating effects. The decline in government and morals went on unchecked by its beautiful and stately ceremonies. No doubt the common people were held in superstitious awe but the better informed did not take religion seriously. It is said that the priests could scarcely restrain themselves from laughing as they met in public places. The ruins of ancient shrines and temples often expose the implements by which tricks and impostures were worked upon the unsuspecting. The emptiness and heartlessness of this religion is demonstrated by its weakness. It needed no bloody persecutions to destroy it. The chief cause of the fall of the ancient religion of Rome was withdrawal of its support from the public revenues. There was nothing about it for which men cared to suffer or die. It had no power to enter the sacred chambers of the soul where the inspirations of moral heroism reside. Its so-called revelations were but reflections of human life in which the beautiful was mingled with gross distortions. It debased rather than elevated society. In passing it left no permanent contribution to the world's betterment.

3. What is true of the religion of Greece and Rome in a measure may be asserted of every other pagan religion. While widely varying in characteristics they

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all make an appeal to the unseen world in their rites and ceremonies. Missionaries tell of the devil worship of India, the impostures of medicine men in Africa and among the American Indians. The strange music of the Chinese in a certain Festival is said to have for its purpose the frightening away of evil spirits. From its effect on western ears it would seem to be wholly adequate.

The effects produced by different forms of heathen worship are also various. In all of them doubtless, there are elements of good mingled with dark shadows of ignorance and moral corruption. They are at best "broken lights" of God. If they are judged by their influence upon the world they are found wanting. They demonstrate the need of a perfect revelation. This universal cry for some voice to guide the world in its darkness is most significant. It is a law of being that every phenomenon has an adequate cause. Vision without light, hunger without food, love without an object, worship without God—all these are inconsistent and unscientific. They may appear as exceptions but not as normal experiences. This universal longing to communicate with the supernatural implies a real source of satisfaction for these longings. It is certain that God speaks to men somehow and somewhere, else we live in a dishonest world. It is evident that the soul is constituted to know and communicate with God, aye, is "homesick" to hear His voice and to speak to Him.

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A study of the philosophers reveals the inability of man to find God by reason alone. Many wonderful efforts have been made to penetrate the mysteries of being and reveal Him to the soul. The result has been uncertainty and disappointment. The words of Seneca express the helplessness felt by the greatest of the philosophers. "No man can help himself; let some one give him a hand." Even in things pertaining to the present life, conclusions reached are conflicting. In the spiritual realm and concerning the future life impenetrable mists of doubt hang over all. All the philosophers have died "with a question upon their lips."

4. But of all perversions of the gift of prophecy the most marked are found among the chosen people of God. Where the light shines brightest the shadows are darkest. We read of the "lying prophets" of Israel. There are no greater examples of a willful misleading of the people, of turning blessings into curses, than in these false messengers. They were wholly selfish in their motives. For transient popularity and gain they prophesied only good things, crying, "peace, peace, when there was no peace." They drowned the words of reproof and warning of true leaders with their false and boastful clamor. Nor were they few in number. Their services were eagerly sought by corrupt rulers to ease their consciences and quiet the fears of the people. In some instances the surest defeat of false prophets

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seemed to be to abandon them and their victims and allow the full force of retribution to fall. Only after the most willful rejection of the truth was it said that God sent lying prophets, the more completely to break the spell of their deceptions. (1Kings 22:22). In the dark days of the downfall of Judah when Jeremiah was pleading with the people to turn from their evil ways before it was too late, his greatest obstacle was the false sense of security created by these impostors. Concerning them God said, "The prophets prophesy lies in my name; I have sent them not, neither commanded them, neither spoke unto them. They prophesy unto you a false vision, and divination, and a thing of naught and a deceit of their heart" (Jeremiah 14:14). The danger of listening to them was clearly marked out in Jeremiah 23:16-17. "Harken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you, then make you vain, they speak a vision of their own heart and not out of the mouth of the Lord. They say unto those that despise me, The Lord hath said, Ye shall have peace, and they say unto everyone that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you."

A further indication of the danger of these spiritual counterfeits is shown by the rigid laws against them. Jehovah commanded Moses, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live" (Exodus 22: 18). In Leviticus (chap. 19:31) the command is repeated with emphasis indi-

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cating that such practices were sinful and rebellious. "Regard not them that have familiar spirits. Neither seek after wizards to be defiled by them. I am the Lord, your God." In Deuteronomy (chap. 18:9-12) a very full enumeration of these practices is given. They are declared to be "an abomination unto the Lord and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee. Thou shalt be perfect (sincere) with the Lord thy God."

How true it is that most precious things are most basely counterfeited. In both ancient and modern times the peril of tampering with the sacred things of Jehovah is unmistakable. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

## CHAPTER VI

### TESTS OF GENUINENESS

1. The most rudimental of proofs of the divine presence in revelation is the test by miraculous power. The record of miracles in both the Old and New Testaments cannot be questioned without rejecting the credibility of all. The teaching and history of the Bible are interwoven with supernatural facts. Moreover it is difficult if not impossible to account for the results produced without their presence among the causes assumed.

In the nature of the case they were exceptional. They were intended to arrest attention and create confidence where an emergency demanded immediate action. They were used with economy, since their too frequent repetition would have destroyed their power. They were not designed or used to take the place of teaching or any other ordinary means of spiritual growth. They were always consistent with the larger purposes of the divine administration.

Among the examples in the Old Testament we may study with profit the miracles of Moses in the deliverance of the Israelites from bondage. Nothing short of these startling events could have awakened confi-

### *Tests of Genuineness*

dence among the Israelites or created respect for Jehovah in the mind of the Egyptians. They were not merely works of wonder. They were logical refutations of a false and idolatrous religion. Each miracle, as will be seen later, was aimed at some deity or element of Egyptian worship.

A similar case is the contest of Elijah with the priests of Baal at Mt. Carmal. Perhaps no other kind of evidence could have produced the result. Its appeal was necessarily to the lower motive of fear. No appeal to higher motives through teaching could have availed. Everything connected with the situation justified this miraculous proof of the supreme power of Jehovah. The death of Ananias and Saphira as recorded in the New Testament may be explained upon this principle. It had to do with an emergency in the establishment of the church. It needed to be settled once for all that God, represented by the Holy Spirit could not be deceived. Insincerity and hypocrisy must be stamped out lest the conflagration spread and involve the entire body.

The impartation of spiritual gifts in the apostolic age was designed as a temporary scaffolding to aid in the complete organization and establishment of the Church. They were adapted to the initiation of its work. That it was a temporary expedient is clearly stated (1 Cor. 13:6-10). The great trinity of Chris-

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tian graces, faith, hope and love, was to survive all miracles and afford the supreme proof of the divine origin of the Church.

2. When we reach the period of written prophecy the tests of divine authority are of a different character. Certain standards are raised by which prophetic claims are tried. It is because these tests are appeals to judgment that they are especially valuable. Indeed their force increases rather than diminishes with time.

The first that may be stated is the test of loyalty and consistency. It is of course applicable to those who were believers in the true God and who had already acknowledged Him. In the following passage Moses states the case clearly. "If there arise among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder and the sign or wonder cometh to pass, where he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods which thou hast not known and let us serve them; thou shalt not harken unto the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for the Lord, your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord, your God with all your heart and with all your soul" (Deut. 13:1-3).

Here, it will be noted, the standard of loyalty and love is placed above the signs and wonders of a false prophet, even though his deception cannot at once be exposed. Loyalty to the one God that is grounded in supreme love for Him does not admit of the possi-



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bility of following other gods. Before the force of a fully grounded moral conviction anything inconsistent with it must be rejected. Only until sufficient evidence was produced to revolutionize their entire conception of God and utterly destroy the foundations of their faith in Him could they entertain conflicting claims however shrewdly presented. One who has looked upon a mountain until its presence has been fixed upon the vision is not deceived by the clouds of a passing storm however black they may be. He will believe in the mountain still and wait for the clouds that obscure it to pass away.

It was exactly this test which John commanded by which anti-christ was to be detected. "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth not Jesus is not of God; and this is the spirit of anti-christ" (1 John 4:2-3). Such a test, grounded as it is in consistency and based upon love, is a great safeguard now as it has always been. It is the anchor that holds in all storms. It is in their perfect harmony with the loftiest ideals of God that the Old Testament prophets stand this test. Their teachings answer to the deepest and holiest experiences of the soul.

The second test may be termed the criterion of common sense and efficiency. "When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken, but the prophet has spoken presump-

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tuously. "Thou shalt not be afraid of him" (Deut. 18:22). (See also Jeremiah 28:9). In many cases the truth or falsity of the claims of a prophet was capable of almost immediate verification or exposure. In the cases of Moses and Elijah already cited we have striking examples. The counsel of prophets was often sought by Kings in matters pertaining to events about to take place. Their words could easily be put to test.

Acting upon the warning and advice of Isaiah the overthrow of Judah was averted in the days of Hezekiah. Failing to heed the words of Jeremiah, hopeless disaster fell upon the same people. Many false prophets persuaded them that no danger would follow a continuance in disobedience.

The fact that prophecy was conditional in many cases is an important element in its interpretation. God clearly stated His purpose to change His plans according to the conduct of the people. He said, "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck it up, and to pull it down, and to destroy it; if that nation against whom I have pronounced turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good wherewith I said I would

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benefit them" (Jeremiah 18:7-10). Even where such a condition was not stated it seems to have been implied. The hesitancy of Jonah to prophesy against Nineveh was in part on account of this conditional element. He said when the judgment had been stayed, "I knew that Thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest Thee of evil" (Jonah 4:2). The fact that such conditions were uniform and not capricious left no doubt as to the divine purpose.

The test of fulfillment is not exhausted in a single generation. A very large part of the predictive element of prophecy relates to the distant future. It deals with events which do not admit of the possibility of natural foresight. Because their fulfillment is gradual it is none the less wonderful. The providential purpose concerning nations and especially concerning the Kingdom of Christ in the world has been clearly foretold. This renders prophecy far more convincing now than when it was given. Its evidential value grows with the ages. The conditions are such as to preclude the possibility of imposture.

It is significant that no other form of religion relies upon prophecy as a permanent basis of proof as does the religion of the Bible. Instances of the use of predictive prophecy at the beginning have not been uncommon but the ordeal of time has been fatal to their claims.

## CHAPTER V

### HEBREW PROPHECY TESTED

The application of these tests forms an essential part of the present study. To discuss here at length the genuineness of Hebrew prophecy would be to anticipate what is more appropriately referred to elsewhere. It is entirely proper however that a preliminary statement be made in order that the contrast between the false and the true may appear in advance.

1. So far as these revelations are grounded in supernatural proofs they bear the marks of intelligent purpose in the use of miracles. As in the case of Moses and Elijah they were logical demonstrations of truth. Their end was to make way for benevolent results. Miracles, however, were used with economy and only as a preparatory step leading to faith in God and obedience to His commands. They were the scaffolding, temporarily used, in order to build the more complete structure of divine revelation. When their purpose had been fulfilled they ceased, reappearing only as some new emergency demanded their use.

2. Unlike the so called prophets of other religions, and most of all the "lying spirits" of the imposters of Israel, the Hebrew prophets were noble and heroic

### *Hebrew Prophecy Tested*

characters. They lived what they taught. No small element of their power was personal. They were not perfect nor free from faults and inconsistencies but they walked with God and lived in an atmosphere of purity. They were unselfish, shunning no sacrifices necessary to the welfare of the people to whom they were sent. Their messages as we have seen were on the highest moral plane of thought and motive. They rose above the ceremonial and formal and caught a vision of the loftiest spiritual conceptions. In no true sense can they be said to be the product of their times. They were almost invariably persecuted and rejected by their contemporaries.

With Longfellow we may say:

“The age in which they live will not forgive  
The splendor of the everlasting light  
That makes their foreheads bright,  
Nor their sublime forerunning of their time.”

3. They were harmonious and consistent in their messages. The unity of the prophecies is a growing marvel. This becomes more and more evident as we advance in the study of their writings. They spoke and wrote under widely different circumstances but no note of discord is heard. Above all they were supremely loyal to Jehovah. No appeal or temptation was able to swerve them from their fealty to the one God. Through all the mists that obscured the future they saw the light of the victory of righteousness

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and truth. They were sure that sometime God would triumph and His glory cover the earth "as the waters cover the sea."

4. The messages of the Hebrew prophets have come to pass. While the Roman oracle is silent and its words have no influence on the present time, Hebrew prophecy was never more powerful to move and convince mankind than today. The words of Mozley clearly set forth this fact.\* "Prophecy under paganism never grew into a practical and directing power, and even the great Roman poet, captivated as he was by its ancient utterance and the beauty of its promise, yet could do no more with it than convert it into a court compliment. . . . But as soon as prophecy found a receptacle in the chosen race, it grew strong, it became an architect and builder, it raised institutions, it enacted ordinances. In Abraham it founded a family, in Moses it framed a law, in David it erected a kingdom. The Hebrew people from the first gave prophecy a fixed home, and the nation became the regular and guarded depository of the sacred gift. The Jewish community was the fort of prophecy, maintaining and keeping up the inspired expectation, protecting it from outside blasts, and surrounding it with institutions and schools; so that, preserved as a directing influence among them, it prepared a practical reception for the Messiah, and founded that body of

\* Mozley's *Ruling Ideas in Early Ages*.

### *Hebrew Prophecy Tested*

thought in the nation which welcomed Him who fulfilled the promise when He came and in that welcome founded the Christian Church. Prophecy had thus the most striking practical result, and proved itself an instrument of real efficiency and power."

Nor is its wonderful fulfillment a matter of the past only. Age after age the outlines of its divine purpose are more clearly cut against the sky of history. It throbs with life and power. "The word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword" (Heb. 4:12).

The character of the prophets, their messages of living truth together with the story of their marvelous fulfillment give certain pledge of God's presence in the world. What has been wrought is but the dawn of a glorious day.





PART TWO  
HEBREW PROPHECY

## CHAPTER I.

### CLASSIFICATION IN HEBREW CANON.

The classification of prophecy in the Hebrew canon varied somewhat from the later arrangement found in our Bible of the present time.

1. The predictive element was rather an incidental than an essential characteristic. Prophetic literature had to do with "forthtelling more than foretelling" if we may judge from some of the books included among the prophets. Moses, though chiefly historian and lawgiver, was the type and forerunner of the "Great Teacher come from God", Jesus Christ. It is evident that the prophetic writings were classified according to the authority and inspiration of the writer without exact reference to the nature of the message. Certain books that are usually designated as historical were placed in Hebrew canon among the prophets.

The prophetic writings were classified in two divisions, viz., the Former and Latter Prophets.

They were arranged as follows:—

#### FORMER PROPHETS

Joshua

Judges

1st and 2nd Samuel (one book)

1st and 2nd Kings (one book)

## *Classification In Hebrew Canon*

### LATTER PROPHETS

#### Major Prophets

Isaiah  
Jeremiah  
Lamentations  
Ezekiel

#### Minor Prophets

Hosea  
Joel  
Amos  
Obadiah  
Jonah  
Micah  
Nahum  
Habakkuk  
Zephaniah  
Haggai  
Zechariah  
Malachi

The book of Daniel, though its author was counted one of the greatest of prophets, was placed by the Rabbis among the poetical books, called the Hagiographa or Sacred Writings. That he was ranked among the prophets in the New Testament time, is indicated by a quotation made by Jesus and also by reference to Him in the writings of Josephus in both of which he is referred to as a prophet. Dr. Barnes (see Introduction to Daniel) thinks the arrangement referred to was due to a later rather than an earlier period of the Hebrew canon.

2. The books called the Former Prophets were so designated probably because they were mainly written or compiled by members of the prophetic school.

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The books in their present form were no doubt compiled from existing sources with slight alterations or additions made by later writers.

The book of Joshua is generally assigned to himself though nothing is certainly known of its origin or authorship. The closing verses were obviously added by a later writer as the events recorded are supposed to have occurred after his death.

The books of Samuel, originally one book, are generally thought to have been written by Samuel, conjointly with Nathan and Gad. Dr. Smith says, "With respect to the authorship, the common opinion is, that the first twenty four chapters were written by the prophet himself and the rest by the prophet Nathan and Gad." Whether this traditional view is correct is not a matter of full agreement among scholars. These valuable writings are largely biographical and historical.

The books of Kings, also originally one book, contain the history of the chosen people from David's death to the death of Jehoiakin after his liberation from prison in Babylon. There is strong internal evidence to indicate that Jeremiah was the editor of these records. They may, however, have been written earlier and compiled by him. It is evident that the author used such authentic matter as was at hand in the preparation of these books. They have mainly to do with Israel as a Theocracy.

*Classification In Hebrew Canon*

Of the sixteen books which may more properly be called prophecy there is little doubt as to the authorship of most of them. They are named from their authors and are in most cases of clearly defined origin.

## CHAPTER II

### PERIODS OUTLINED

1. It will be seen that the plan of treatment is chiefly historical. The importance of keeping the correct settings and backgrounds of history is strongly emphasized. It in no way weakens the claim of divine origin to admit that the teachings of the prophets were closely linked with the history of their time. They were preachers of righteousness and often statesmen of worldwide vision. Not only should the events immediately connected with Israel be carefully noted but as far as possible the wider view of the world's contemporaneous history should be carefully studied. The great world powers should be kept in mind if the words of the prophets are to be studied with full advantage. Fortunately, critical study and archaeological discoveries have greatly aided us in making such preparation for Biblical study.

2. Preparatory to entering upon a study of the Hebrew prophets it is necessary to outline certain divisions or periods. These have been made in part for convenience as well as for logical reasons. The chronology of Bishop Usher is retained as most commonly used.

They may be stated as follows:

### *Periods Outlined*

1. Patriarchal Period, extending from the account of the Creation to the call of Moses, a period of about twenty five hundred years or B. C. 4004 to B. C. 1491.

2. From the call of Moses to the latter days of Samuel, B. C. 1491 to B. C. 1095. It includes the time of the Judges and reaches to the beginning of the Kingdom of Israel.

3. From the beginning of the Kingdom to the time of the written prophets, B. C. 1095 to B. C. 838.

4. The written prophets of the Northern Kingdom grouped about the fall of Israel and their captivity by Assyria, B. C. 721. They were Jonah, Amos and Hosea.

5. Contemporaneous prophets in Judah, viz., Joel, Micah and Isaiah.

6. Prophets grouped about the fall of Assyria, B. C. 625 viz., Nahum, Habbakkuk and Zephaniah.

7. Prophets grouped around the downfall of Judah about 600 B. C. Of those who prophesied around this critical period were Jeremiah at Jerusalem, Ezekial, Obadiah and Daniel in Babvlon.

8. The Post Captivity prophets who prophesied after the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity. Of these Haggai and Zechariah were contemporaneous. Malachi was the latest of the Hebrew Prophets, his brief but intense message closing the canon of the Old Testament Scriptures.

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### PERIOD ONE.

#### THE PATRIARCHAL PERIOD

The Patriarchal Period though longest as to time, contains but little strictly prophetic literature. It is suited to the childhood of the race in which the simplest and most direct language was employed. Jehovah did not speak so much through men as to them. Instances of special revelations with few exceptions were given directly or through angelic messengers. There was no order of prophets. The patriarch of the family or tribe filled the office of ruler, priest and prophet. The condition of such revelation depended largely on the piety of the one receiving it. We are told that "Enoch walked with God and God took him." It is written that Noah "was a just man and perfect in his generation and Noah walked with God." Abraham was called the "Friend of God." These expressions indicate the intimacy of these spiritual leaders with Jehovah. They shine as stars of the first magnitude through the mists of an obscure age.

We are not to suppose, however, that all the cases of divine communication are related in the few chapters that compose the record of this period. Doubtless much unwritten history has been buried with the traditions of forgotten peoples. Much that was written may never come to the knowledge of the modern world. We know that Abraham was called from Chaldea where archaeology reveals a high state of cultivation and a knowledge of writing. We are not



### *Periods Outlined*

at all sure, nor is it probable, that the first of the patriarchs was alone in his loyalty to the one God. We read a little later of Melchizedek, priest of the Most High God, to whom Abraham bowed as to a superior. (Heb. 7:4-7). Nor are we to assume that all divine revelations made to the patriarchs are transmitted to us in the brief accounts of their lives. It is sufficient to know that God did not leave Himself without witnesses in this faraway period of the world's history. There are striking evidences of His nearness to men and of His guidance of families and nations with a view to the fulfillment of His beneficent purposes.

2. The opening chapter of the Bible is very properly the arch through which other revelations contained in it enter. Since it refers to a period antedating human history it is truly a prophecy. As prophecy of the future is often revealed in visions in which great events move in panoramic procession, covering vast spaces of time which in the perspective appear brief, so it may be with this sublime vision of the past which lies beyond the horizon of history. While not intended to take the place of science it is interesting to know that it is in harmony with demonstrated facts. As literature it is sublime.

Dr. Moulton\* holds it to be a grand poem in which perfection of structure and fulness of parallelism are evident. He regards it "a logical classification of the elements of the universe, with the emphatic assertion of divine creation in reference to each."

\* Literary Study of the Bible.

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Similar traditions from Aryan, Turanian and Chaldean sources have been found in recent years, though much corrupted from the lofty spiritual conceptions in the Mosaic account. This fact points to a revelation more remote, a central fountain from which all streams may have descended, but which, unlike that of other nations, has been preserved in its sublimity and purity in the inspired writings of the greatest of Hebrew prophets.

3. But our studies of this prophetic period have chiefly to do with God's dealings with men. They have a special relation to the tragedy of sin. While the predictive literature of the Patriarchal dispensation forms only a small part of its records, it is exceeding precious. Its prophecies are gleams of hope that have kept alive faith in God which otherwise might have been lost. Like a sublime anthem whose beginning is expressed in notes soft and distant, growing fuller and richer with new harmonies until the cathedral vault echoes with a joyous tumult of voices, so has prophecy filled the world with its growing power. Only when the Messiah came was the triumphant climax reached.

The first of these revelations is the curse of Jehovah pronounced upon the serpent in the garden of Eden. "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; he shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel." (Genesis

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3:15). While vague and indefinite at the time, giving only a gleam of hope, in the light of later revelations and of the history of the race, only one meaning can be drawn. The descendants of our first parents were destined to wage a long conflict with evil, suffer many defeats but finally conquer. "The seed of the woman" finds a complete fulfillment in Jesus Christ. "For if, by the trespass of the one, death reigned through the one; much more shall they that receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one, even Jesus Christ." (Rom. 5:17).

Black clouds of sin settled more and more over the earlier generations of our race leading to the judgment of the deluge. Jehovah declared that His spirit should "not strive with man for ever, for that he also is flesh: yet shall his days be a hundred and twenty years." (Gen. 6:3). The exact meaning of this statement is not certain. Perhaps the most probable interpretation relates to the period of probation during which Noah was warning the people of their danger. Later the purpose of Jehovah takes definite form. "For yet seven days and I will cause it to rain on the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living thing that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the ground." (Gen. 7:4).

After the deluge a remarkable prophecy is recorded in which is outlined something of the future of each race descended from the family of Noah. (Gen. 9:25-

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29). In verse 25 it is said, "Cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren." This was literally fulfilled. After these tribes were sunken in the lowest moral degradation they were almost exterminated by Joshua. We know of the fate of the inhabitants of Sodom and other cities of the plain in the days of Abraham. Phoenicia was blotted from the list of nations. Egypt has for centuries been a land of ruins. From the descendants of Ham slaves have been taken in all succeeding ages.

In verses 26 and 27 it is recorded, "Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant. God enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant." The fact is here revealed that the great source of the religion of Jehovah should have its home in the "tents of Shem" or in other words be of Semitic origin. The descendants of Japheth should be enlarged or scattered over the world. How marvelously have these predictions been fulfilled. This prophecy has been studied with great interest, not only on account of its religious significance but as a striking foreshadowing of the dispersion of the races of men.

4. Another important stage of predictive prophecy relates to the family of Abraham. The covenants confirmed to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob not only formed the basis of the temporal institutions of Israel, but underlie the spiritual and eternal verities of the Kingdom of Heaven in Jesus Christ.

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When Abram was called from Ur of the Chaldees and bidden to go from his home and kindred to a land "that he knew not of," a promise was made to him which has borne a very important part in the foundation of both the Old and New Dispensations. Jehovah said, "I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and him that curseth thee I will curse, and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 12:1-3). While a temporal blessing, made clear in later promises, was implied, the spiritual significance of this promise must not be overlooked. That it referred to Christ is definitely settled by his comment in Galatians 3:16-19. In this passage he says, "Now to Abraham were the promises spoken, and to his seed. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to Thy seed, which is Christ." The law, "added because of transgression," must not obscure the far larger purpose of spiritual blessing in Jesus Christ. No greater or more far reaching utterance can be found. It is both promise and prophecy. Its confirmation and fulfillment furnish one of the strong defenses of the Christian faith. All other promises relating to God's dealings with the chosen family are the outgrowths of this covenant.

Again when Abram entered the land of Palestine he built an altar at Shechem and Jehovah appeared unto him and said, "Unto thy seed will I give this land." (Gen. 12:7). After his separation from Lot

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at Bethel, in which he had shown an unselfish spirit that approached the Christian ideal of brotherhood, Jehovah gave him a specific promise of a temporal possession. "For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth, so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then may thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it, for unto thee will I give it." (Gen. 13:14-17).

It was only natural that even the faith of Abram should waver when a direct natural heir was denied him. How could a promise which related to his descendants be fulfilled under these circumstances? It was to comfort him and stimulate his faith that Jehovah repeated the promise of temporal possession, giving an exact description of the boundaries of the land which he was to inherit. The fulfillment of this promise in the time of David and Solomon is one of the marvels of predictive prophecy. When he would have adopted Eliezer as his heir he was assured that he should have a direct heir and his seed should be as the stars in the heavens. In this same chapter, the fifteenth of Genesis, it is restated that Jehovah "cut a covenant" with Abram after the manner of an oriental contract and added some striking facts in the future of his posterity. This remarkable prophecy must have furnished hope for the Children of Israel in the dark-

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est hours of the bondage in Egypt. (See chapter 15).

Shortly before the birth of Isaac, Jehovah again assured Abram that he should be the father of a numerous posterity, that his name should no longer be Abram (exalted father), but Abraham (father of a multitude), that he would establish an everlasting covenant assuring him of the promised possessions. At this time the rite of circumcision was instituted and commanded as a perpetual ordinance to be observed by his descendants. (Gen. 17:1-21).

In connection with the great trial of Abraham's faith in the offering of Isaac the promise is again repeated with special emphasis placed upon the spiritual element. When he had stood the ordeal and God had delivered him, Jehovah said, "Because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore: and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice." (Gen. 22:16-18).

5. These promises made to Abraham were repeated to Isaac and Jacob. Isaac was warned not to remove into Egypt as a permanent home. He was assured that the promise made to his father Abraham would be completely fulfilled. (Gen. 26:2-5. See also Gen. 27:28-29).

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When Jacob was fleeing from the anger of his brother Esau he camped at Bethel. It was there that he saw a ladder connecting earth and heaven and heard the promise repeated in which both the temporal and spiritual elements are clearly stated. (Gen. 28:13-15). It is significant that this ladder is used as a type of Christ, the great pontifex or "bridge builder" between earth and heaven. "Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." (John 1:51).

Passing the display of prophetic power seen in Joseph, recorded in the fortieth and forty-first chapters of Genesis, in connection with his imprisonment and the great famine in Egypt, we are brought to a very remarkable series of prophetic utterances in the dying blessings of Jacob, found in the forty-ninth chapter of Genesis. His sons are called to receive his parting words. It seems clear that the blind eyes of the great patriarch were opened to see what natural vision could not have revealed.

Reuben, his first-born, was reminded of an event which had blackened his life, an act of shame which was no doubt an index of his character, of uncontrolled passion. "Boiling over as water thou shalt not have the pre-eminence."

Simeon and Levi were also reminded of their grievous faults shown in selfwill, cruelty and wrath. Their tribal future was strikingly foretold in the words



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of Jehovah through the dying father. "I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel." In both cases the prediction was literally fulfilled. Simeon, though given a large territory south of Judah, never conquered it and they were literally "scattered in Israel." The case of Levi was fulfilled in a different way. As the tribe chosen for religious service, they were given no allotment of territory and made their homes in various parts of the land. Without outlining each "blessing" we may study them with profit as clearly showing the divine foresight of a prophet.

There are two instances that are perhaps more remarkable than any of the others, those referring to Joseph and to Judah. In the case of the former, it is stated that "Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall." Though the archers had "sorely grieved him and shot at him and hated him, his bow abode in strength and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob." He was promised "blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts and of the womb. The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of thy progenitors unto the uttermost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren." (Verses 22-26).

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Though not last in order, the prediction made concerning Judah is the climax of this wonderful discourse. In verses 8-12, his warlike prowess was strongly emphasized. He is called a "lion's whelp." "He stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him?" "Thy hand shall be on the neck of thine enemies, thy father's children shall bow down before thee." But the brightest gleam of predictive prophecy is the clear Messianic reference in verse 10. "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." That this referred to the descent of Christ from the tribe of Judah, has been the judgment of both Hebrew and Christian scholars. Its meaning grows clearer and brighter with the unfolding of the history of Israel. It will again be referred to under the head of Messianic fulfillment.

## PERIOD TWO

### FROM MOSES TO SAMUEL:

#### CHAPTER 1—CHILDHOOD AND EDUCATION OF MOSES

The second period under which Hebrew prophecy is considered extends from the call of Moses to the establishment of the Kingdom in the latter days of Samuel. Because of its fundamental nature, as relates to both Law and Prophecy and because it introduces a leader of unrivaled greatness, "Moses, the man of

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God," a careful review of its facts is made. The very storms of attack that have raged about this character indicate that he is a mountain whose greatness and elevation are without rival among heroes of divine revelation.

1. The call of Moses inaugurates a new and supremely important era in Jehovah's dealings with the chosen people. Outwardly it was the darkest hour in the history of Israel. For more than two centuries they had been in bondage, mild in nature at first but in later years heavy with oppression. Shadows deepened until a veritable night settled over their prospects. Not a star of hope shone in its midnight blackness. No more comforting assurance that God never forgets His people or relinquishes His purpose to redeem them, can be found than in the events that open this period. Around the birth of Moses and his providential preservation in the household of the King of Egypt, gathered the earliest indications that deliverance was at hand. It was but a faint promise of dawn. Only the most faithful were inspired with the hope of coming deliverance. Indeed the most difficult barrier to surmount was the wall of a dead faith. The resurrection of Lazarus in whose body dissolution had already commenced was hardly more wonderful than the restoration of a nation dead to hope, bound about hand and foot with the atheism of despair.

The simple story of these preliminary events told in

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the first and second chapters of Exodus, is known to every child where the Bible is read. The directness and simplicity of these narratives transcend art. It is this openness which shuns to relate no inconsistency or sin of the greatest heroes of Hebrew history, that stamps it as not only beautiful literature but of unquestioned credibility.

2. The third chapter of Exodus gives in brief but clear statement the call of Moses as prophet, law-giver and deliverer of Israel. It is evident that Jehovah does not ignore natural causes in working out His plans. The supernatural must ever supplement, not displace the natural. The "law of parsimony" which holds to the strictest economy of causes is true in religion as in philosophy and in science. The call of Moses, of Isaiah and of Paul are ample instances from a fruitful field of illustration of God's dealings with men.

It was no accident that Moses was born and educated as he was. It has been said that all greatness in men can be traced to worthy parentage and especially to a mother who has inspired the dominating ideal. In the case of the greatest of human lawgivers this is doubtless true. The name Jochebed, which means "whose glory is Jehovah," well describes the spirit of this Hebrew mother. It is inferential proof also that her family had been true to the God of Abraham else they would not have given so significant a

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name. It is marvelous that after his education and exaltation in court society he still loved his people and was true to their cause. Comment in Hebrews shows the power of faith both in his parents and in himself to overcome the greatest obstacles in the service of Jehovah. (Chap. 11:23-28). What his training in "all the wisdom of the Egyptians" constituted, we may not know fully. Tradition affirms that he was educated in the chief University of Egypt, the great temple of the Sun at On. In such surroundings he must have acquired a superior education and have been associated with the greatest scholars of that age of splendid learning. Doubtless much of the wisdom there acquired was brought into use in the founding of his own nation. It does not lessen the sacredness of his writings to admit that his training especially fitted him for his great mission. Only divine aid could have kept him from contamination of the corrupt influence and false philosophy with which the good in his surroundings was mingled. No character made known to us either at an earlier or later period in Old Testament history was so well fitted for the work ascribed to him as prophet and lawgiver.

3. Not the least important part of his education was the many years spent in the wilderness. His exile was indeed providential in preparing him for his great mission. It gave him familiarity with the country through which he was to lead the Israelites in their

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wandering. He knew every mountain, every valley and every fountain in all that strange wild land. He knew every resource and every danger in his path. His simple life as a shepherd, his intimacy with the sublime scenes of nature, took away the artificial element of scholastic training so often resulting from the pride of learning, and opened his soul to receive a higher than human wisdom. His alliance in marriage with the tribe of the Kenites, descendants from Abraham by his wife Keturah, may have still further tended to enrich his character. The story of the Rechabites as recorded by Jeremiah (chap. 35), shows the simple fidelity of one of the families of this tribe which was made an object lesson to the faithless Jews more than eight centuries later.

Of the country Dr. Geikie says, "The region in which Moses was to spend many years—that of the Sinai Mountains—was singularly fitted at once to shelter him by its seclusion from the outer world, and to train him by its influences for the high duties which lay before him. The white limestone of Palestine and of the wilderness of the Tih stretches into its northern portion. Beyond this toward the south, come hills of sandstone usually of only moderate height but of wonderful variety and splendor of color and grotesqueness of shape. These however, ere long give way to the mountains of Sinai which fill up the lower end of the

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Peninsula—vast masses of primitive rock, rising in their highest summit 9000 feet above the sea.”

Together with this solitary grandeur must have been the bitter hardships, the scorching heat of the desert, the weariness and thirst, the loneliness and danger of a shepherd's life. Yet no more fit surroundings could have been chosen to prepare him for the lofty and heroic mission for which God had destined him.

Young beautifully says:

“This sacred shade and solitude, what is it?  
’Tis the felt presence of the Deity.  
Few are the faults we flatter when alone:  
By night an atheist half believes a God.”

It was this preparation that the divine Master, of whom Moses was a forerunner and type, sought in the wilderness of temptation and in the gloom of Gethsemane. It was after a night alone with God on a mountain that Jesus spoke the Sermon on the Mount. Truly no preparation for service is complete without this element of culture.

4. But the superior fitness of Moses in natural ability, education and experience fails to account for his greatness as a prophet and lawgiver. Conceding every reasonable claim of heredity and environment, the fact of his supernatural call is needed to solve the problem of his life mission. That he sprang from a pious home in which the name of Jehovah was exalted and that he carried the influence of these early teach-

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ings and impressions across its threshold into the corrupting atmosphere of Egyptian society need not be doubted. That much in the "wisdom" of the Egyptians was elevating in character has been asserted by scholars who have investigated most carefully the underlying principles of their laws and religion. Buried under the weight of corrupt and idolatrous practices beyond which the common people never rose, there may have been some traces of an earlier and higher culture. Belief in the supreme God seems to have been vaguely suggested by the ritual of the Book of the Dead. It is to Hermes or Thoth, the God of Wisdom, that the definition of God is ascribed as being "a circle whose centre is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere." The trial of the dead suggests some idea of a judgment and of immortality. But conceding the most that tradition offers, the fact remains that such ideals if they existed had but little influence upon society. Low social and religious practices prevailed. Tyranny over the laboring poor was degrading and cruel in the extreme. "Gentle and patient as they were, the Egyptians were also especially impure. With such a worship they gave the reins to the baser passions, for why should a man be better than his gods? Unnatural vices prevailed on every side." (Geikie). No surer proof of the degrading condition of society is needed than the dis.



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graceful scenes practiced at the very foot of Mt. Sinai in the orgies of the Calf Worship. If a religion is to be judged by its influence on society the worship of Egypt cannot be defended. Even the principles which tradition ascribes to the "wisdom" with its secret and exclusive learning were chiefly negative. They carried no inherent power to uplift and redeem society.

How then can that system of religion of which Moses was the supreme prophet be accounted for on the natural law of environment? Admitting his supernatural call, that God appeared to him as related in his account of the divine commission in the "burning bush," all becomes reasonable. The self revelation of Jehovah as the one only living God—the "I Am That I Am"—the unchanging source of all being, to whom purity is fundamental to all approach and favor, is not only infinitely above the conceptions of idolatrous nations but a marked advance on the former ideals of the Hebrew people. Whatever lapses into sin may have occurred among the chosen people in their wanderings, no shade darkened this conception in the life and teaching of Moses. Given the facts of his ability and training and admitting his own simple narrative of his direct call from Jehovah, the problem of his life and work is easily solved. Denying that God spoke to him, inspired and sustained him, the history of the Exodus remains an unsolved riddle.

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### CHAPTER 2—MOSES AS LIBERATOR

1. If greater attention is given to the call and mission of Moses than to those of other Old Testament prophets, it is because he stands pre-eminent among all as the forerunner and type of the Messiah. It was expressly declared to Israel by Moses that "Jehovah, thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren like unto me: unto him ye shall harken." (Deut. 18:15). "The law came by Moses but grace and truth by Jesus Christ." To understand the mission of this great prophet and leader is to better know and appreciate the splendid company of inspired teachers and leaders who were chosen to prepare the way for Christ's Kingdom.

2. The first work given Moses to accomplish was the deliverance of his people from bondage in Egypt. Two seemingly insurmountable obstacles were before him. The power of a despotic and capricious king was to be overcome. No ordinary means would avail. Warlike opposition was out of the question in the case of a nation of bondsmen. Diplomacy was equally impossible. The course pursued was the only logical one open. The Egyptians must be met on the field of their own pretensions. It is said that the name "black art" was derived from the black soil of the Nile Valley. Nowhere did its practice hold a greater sway than in Egypt. To confound works of magic with greater wonders would command their attention and respect.

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Another object to be attained was to arouse the courage and confidence of the Hebrew people. They must be made to feel that the power of Jehovah is superior to all other. They must also be led to confide in Moses as a fearless and victorious leader. No abstract appeal to their faith in Jehovah and his promises to the fathers would avail to arouse the nation as a whole even though a few of the more spiritual might have been so influenced. There was need of tangible and concrete proof. Nor must the ten plagues be understood as mere wonders in which Moses was able to excel other diviners. They were severely logical proofs of the sovereignty of Jehovah over all the forces of the world. Each miracle was in some way a challenge to an Egyptian god or essential of worship. The turning of the water of the Nile into blood was to defile the most beneficent god of Egypt. The plagues of frogs, of lice and of pestilent insects made ceremonial purity impossible, a condition especially abhorrent to the priests.

The fifth plague, the murrain of cattle, was a "blow at the worship of Isis and Osiris to whom the cow and ox were sacred." The helplessness of their deities to protect them from the plague of boils, the calamity of hail, the devastation of locusts called by Pliny "the pest of the anger of the gods," and finally the awful darkness which blotted out the face of the sun, the supreme deity of Egypt, must have wrought powerfully

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upon the hearts of the Israelites to quicken their faith in Jehovah. While it weakened the reliance of the King on his deities, still another argument was needed to complete the demonstration of Jehovah's power. Yet the end was certain.

The sacred feast of the passover was arranged. The Paschal lamb, the type of the great sacrifice "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world" was slain and its blood sprinkled on the doorposts of the faithful Israelites. All were to stand in readiness to begin the march to the land of promise. To ask for jewels and articles by which to adorn a place of worship was to seek but scant return for the unrequited service and extortion of years of oppression.

Suddenly like a bolt from a clear sky came the last terrible warning from Jehovah. Over all the land of Egypt went up the cry from stricken homes. The first born of man and beast of the oppressors of Israel had fallen before the death angel. This was not only a national sorrow but it smote the whole system of Egypt's religion. The heirs to the throne and to the priesthood, the sacred animals, all living objects of worship were destroyed. Munk says: "The first born were apparently (among others) the sacred animals, hence the tenth plague is regarded as a judgment on the gods of Egypt." The social and religious structure in that hour fell as a city devastated by an earthquake into shapeless ruins.

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Such a demonstration of power could no longer be resisted. The Israelites were not only permitted to leave the country but were entreated to do so.

3. Nor was the effect upon the fainthearted Hebrews less powerful. With renewed faith they turned to Moses as to a deliverer sent from Jehovah. No danger or difficulty seemed too great under such leadership. On that tragic night three million bondsmen began their march to freedom and to a destiny of whose greatness they little dreamed.

Of the events that followed, the passing of the Red Sea was most striking. Not only the wonderful deliverance from the Egyptians but also the fact, that in passing this boundary they were transferred from bondsmen into freemen, made a wonderful impression upon the Israelites. No circumstance is more frequently referred to in the patriotic hymns of Hebrew literature. It was fitting that it should be celebrated and ever after remembered as the birthday of the nation. The splendid ceremonial of music and dancing after the manner of oriental celebrations, indicates the culture which even at this early period marked the leaders of the Hebrew people.

The "Song of Moses," the Battle Hymn of the newborn nation is one of the most beautiful in Hebrew literature. It not only celebrates deliverance from the Egyptians but it is rich in inspirations of promise for

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the future. This act of Jehovah would strike terror to the hearts of the enemies whom they must encounter in their wanderings:

“Terror and dread falleth upon them:  
By the greatness of thine arm they are as still as stone  
Till thy people pass over, O Jehovah,  
Till the people pass over that thou hast purchased.”

With prophetic optimism the song pictures the glorious destiny which seemed assured to Israel as a nation:

“Thou wilt bring them in and plant them in the mountain  
of thine inheritance;  
The place, O Jehovah, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in,  
The sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established.”

The song closes with a burst of Messianic glory as the far away spiritual kingdom crosses the prophetic vision:

“Jehovah shall reign forever and forever.”

It is significant that for the first time in connection with this celebration, the name of Miriam is mentioned as “prophetess,” an omen that in this new order woman was to hold an honored place in carrying out the purposes of God in the world’s redemption.

“And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances, and Miriam answered them,

Sing ye to Jehovah, for he hath triumphed gloriously,  
The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.”  
(Ex. 15:20-21).

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Once again during this period we shall see the power of woman to inspire loyalty and courage among the people. Deborah, the Joan of Arc of the Hebrew people, one of the most famous of Israel's judges, shows that while the public leadership of her sex might have been exceptional it was by no means forbidden. God uses, and honors in such use, the fittest instrument with which to accomplish his purposes. The song of Deborah is a lyric of rare beauty. It is a poem of triumph. With fine literary art it narrates the muster of forces, the battle, the defeat and rout, the tragic death of Sisera and the pathetic anxiety of his mother as she awaits his return, each sentence leaving the imagination to fill the picture. Professor Moulton compares this poem (Judges V) to the morning sun gilding the spires of a cathedral, while the main structure is dimly seen in the shadows but vividly imagined. Not the less because Miriam and Deborah are exceptions in the prophetic line are they interesting for our study. They are forerunners of an element of power of Christ's Kingdom in which there is neither bond nor free, male nor female, but oneness in Jesus Christ.

#### CHAPTER 3—MOSES AS LAWGIVER

1. The third important element of the mission of Moses is that of Lawgiver. Deliverance from Egypt having been accomplished, the next task confronting him was to make Israel a nation. Their past life for

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at least two centuries, had been a condition of dependence on or submission to despotism destructive of the higher qualities of manhood. They had been surrounded and corrupted by gross idolatry. Tremendous responsibility rested upon the nation's leaders. One thing was favorable to their success. They had a matchless character in the person of Moses to guide and counsel them. His ability and courage had been tested. Already they felt that Jehovah was with them.

It was favorable too that they were secluded from distracting influences. They were alone with God and each other. The natural surroundings were well fitted to impress upon the minds of the people the solemnity and greatness of the situation. "The sacred mountain known as the Mount of God rose in awful grandeur before the whole camp, a stupendous height of granite rocks torn into chasms and precipices, shooting aloft in wild confusion of pinnacles, worthy the name they bore. Valleys cut off its stupendous form on all sides, from the heights around, so that it stood apart as if separated from all else for lofty honors now awaiting it. On the south the heights of 'Sinai' rose with overpowering majesty from the Sebaijeh plain, like a huge granite monolith, 2000 feet into the sky; the pinnacles of the central hill rent and shattered by natural convulsions towering still more sublimely aloft; while at the north end, or Horeb, a wall of naked rock 1200 to 1500 feet high rose in awful grandeur



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directly in front of the Hebrew camp. . . . Over the long and open sweep they could hereafter remove and stand afar off. But from every point the wall of rock rose into the sky in its lonely grandeur like a huge altar in front of the whole congregation, an awful throne from which the voice of God might be heard far and wide over the stillness of the great plain below." \*

2. The natural surroundings of the place in which the law was given were not only appropriate to the greatness of the event but also, as manifestations of divine power in convulsions of nature, tended to deepen and fix it in the attention and memory of the people. It is claimed by one who has witnessed a storm in these mountains that the conditions described are fully met. That the supernatural is not to be understood when the natural affords explanation is readily conceded. It is not improbable that many natural events in Bible history were looked upon by the Israelites as miraculous. True to their idea of the personality and universal power of Jehovah, everything providentially affecting their lives was looked upon as a direct act of His power. If such a rule of interpretation is not pressed to the exclusion of the miraculous altogether, where no natural cause accounts for the events recorded, it need not be questioned. The present tendency perhaps is to err upon the side of a dogmatic rationalism. Every event must be accounted for upon a

\*Geikie's Hours with the Bible.

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purely "naturalistic" basis. The transcendence of God is practically ruled out. The beautiful doctrine of divine immanence is brought into uses which do not belong to its province. Pressed too far it endangers the very personality of God and degenerates into the vagaries of Pantheism.

3. As recorded in the twentieth chapter of Exodus the "Ten Words" were first spoken to the people. It is distinctly asserted, "And God spake all these words, saying, I am Jehovah thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." In verses 3 to 17 are recorded the ten commandments written on tables of stone and received by Moses "by the ministration of angels." Added to these sublime fundamentals of the law are a number of accompanying commands. It is said (Ex. 4:7) that "Moses wrote all the words of Jehovah" and "took the book of the covenant and read in the audience of the people, and they said all that Jehovah hath spoken will we do and be obedient." This written statement is known as the "Book of the Covenant" and forms the basis of all succeeding legislation. It was solemnly and appropriately ratified. Its source from the human standpoint was Mosaic if the most positive statement of the sacred historian is to be accepted.

Out of this organic basis naturally grew a second body of laws having to do with the sanctuary and its various sacrifices and services. It is to be found in

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Exodus, chapters 25 to 31 and 35 to 40. The books of Leviticus and Numbers are largely made up of a statement of them in connection with historical matter. This is known in critical discussion as the "priest code." In the book of Deuteronomy, Moses is declared to have made a restatement of the law in "the eleventh month of the fortieth year" of the wanderings of the children of Israel. Leaving out of consideration for the present the modern critical views concerning the later origin of the "priest-code" and the restatement of the law, we may find in the Ten Commandments and in the "Book of the Covenant" sufficient proof of the marvelous ability of Moses as lawgiver and of the presence of Jehovah in the transaction. It is not denied that some of these sublime principles are found in the teachings of the past, but no application of the law of environment can explain the lofty idea of monotheism proclaimed. It is not found in the "wisdom" of Egypt and certainly was not inspired by the gross idolatry of the Egyptian people. In its rugged majesty it towered like an Alpine peak above the most elevated conceptions taught by the sages of the past.

That which creates the most profound impression is the representation of Jehovah as a deity of perfect holiness. He stands before the world absolutely pure and righteous. Henceforth this was to be the unchangeable conception of God, an ideal which floats a victorious banner above His people in all their con-

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flict with evil. That He was no longer to be localized or represented by image or physical likeness was a tremendous advance upon prevailing ideas of deity. No command was so explicitly stated as that, "Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any likeness of anything that is in the heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them." (Ex. 20:4.)

It does not weaken the force of this conception of Jehovah in the Mosaic law to admit that the people of Israel did not fully understand and appreciate its meaning. It might even be admitted that Moses himself did not comprehend all he uttered. This fact rather heightens than lowers its claim of a divine source. Nor must the motives appealed to in enforcing obedience to this law be overlooked. The first mentioned was spoken perhaps for its immediate effect. If Jehovah was jealous of His name and threatened dire consequences of disobedience "even unto the third and fourth generation," it was a danger signal of what would follow a willful disregard of His commands. Such sin was not of ignorance or carelessness but the determined purpose of false leaders to corrupt the holiness of His name in the hearts of the people. The far-reaching and fatal consequences of this sin were sadly exemplified in the later history of Israel.

But the supreme motive appealed to, lifts the char-

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acter of Jehovah to a higher plain and stands out in distinct contrast to that of other deities. It is a beautiful transition from the lower motive of fear to the highest of trust and love. Jehovah is not only jealous for our sakes of the purity and power of His name, "visiting the iniquity of fathers upon children," but He gives assurance that He is a tender Father showing "lovingkindness unto a thousand generations of them that love me and keep my commandments." In an age when cruelty and vindictiveness prevailed this is indeed significant. It is an added proof that the ideal of Jehovah was not the product of environment but a heaven-revealed conception. It was a recognition of this side of Jehovah's character that gave Moses his supreme power as prophet and leader.

The second division of this code was equally striking in its contrast with existing ideas of religion and society. It exalted a perfect conception of the fatherhood of God and also of the brotherhood of man. It was upon supreme love of God and upon love of neighbor as self that all law was hereafter to depend. From this fact tremendous consequences were to follow. Indeed we are only beginning to understand its relation to the whole social fabric. Theories of social righteousness were rooted in selfishness. This law was a departure from all the past. Social equality was proclaimed, caste was condemned and the foundations of universal peace laid. The effects upon the

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Israelites was marvelous. It put iron into their blood. They had approached Sinai as a band of slaves trembling with fear. They marched away from it a nation; henceforth to fill a unique mission in the world.

These laws were not for temporary use. They were graven upon stone. They could not be repealed. They were to be deposited in the most sacred place possible to conceive—the Ark of the Covenant. On this spot the glory of Jehovah's presence perpetually rested and over it the cherubim spread their wings as a sacred symbol of His providential preservation of His recorded contract with His people.

It was needful that this brief constitution should be fully explained. As before noted, special laws to aid in their enforcement were made and proclaimed in the "Book of the Covenant." Slavery was abolished. A plan of redemption after six years made it impossible that bondage should be more than a lease of service. Chastity was protected by stringent laws. The helpless class was guarded against injustice and imposition. Widows and orphans were tenderly cared for. Even strangers among them were to be protected by law. The Israelites were admonished that they, too, had once been strangers in a strange land. They were to requite evil done them with deeds of justice and kindness. In the words of Geikie: "Such interrelations of earth and heaven bore in them for Israel and mankind the germs of loftiest national and indi-

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vidual character." Nor is it wonderful, that, as ages passed and trouble darkened over a race thus set apart by Jehovah as His own, there should gradually have developed in its sons an assured belief that He would reveal Himself as the Messiah, to effect for them a second still greater redemption than that from Egypt. Words of such human sympathy, coming from One so infinitely exalted and so absolutely holy, opened a new religious era, of which the incarnation of the Divine Son was only the pre-destined culmination.

#### CHAPTER 4—MOSES AS LEADER.

1. No study of the prophecies is complete without taking note of the personal element. The prime factor of inspiration pertains to men even more than to language. The real significance of all great movements must be understood by a study of the personalities under whose efforts and inspiration they were wrought out. Luther, not his doctrines only, made the Reformation of the sixteenth century. Great ideas were central in the movement but had they not been incarnated the outcome would have been like that of many other abortive efforts. More than we are accustomed to think, the great turning points in the world's history hinge upon problems of personality. Some of the greatest of the Hebrew prophets left no record of their writings. The greatest example of a personal revelation is found in our Lord Himself.

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His message was too great for speech. No word comes down to us of His own writing. Even the greatest of His teachings are so interwoven with personal life that they cannot be separated from it. The Sermon on the Mount without Jesus in the background would be comparatively powerless. He not only revealed but incarnated the Way, the Truth and the Life.

The study of Moses must take this element into account. Next to our Lord the personality of this great prophet was a creative force in working out the scheme of redemption. We scarcely realize how profoundly Moses as a man impresses and dignifies the sacred writings attributed to him. So remarkable are the events of his life relating to the deliverance of Israel and the founding of a nation in the face of what seemed prohibitive obstacles, that modern criticism has, in its more radical expressions, discounted their historical verity. While a bare nucleus might be admitted by them as true it is clothed with myths and floating traditions. Even the Egyptian bondage and the consequent deliverance of Israel are rejected as unhistorical.

Such conclusions must follow inadequate ideas of Moses as a Man of God. Even his great natural ability and learning do not account for the events of his marvelous mission. Yet the difficulty is not disposed of by rejecting the record of the origins of



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the Hebrew people. Their unique development is still to be accounted for. Even the critics who assert that the records of Moses' life are unhistorical, often make admissions that weaken if not destroy their conclusions. Stade, who is accounted a radical critic, makes this candid but significant admission: "If we had no legend concerning the work of Moses, we would have to conclude from the course of Israel's history that Israel's nationality and religion were founded in some such events as those which the religion relates, and that these produced the peculiar tone of Israel's religion. Hence it does not seem permissible to doubt the history of Moses."

2. The stream of history cannot be disposed of by damming its waters with dogmatic assertions. It must be followed to its sources if its outcome is to be accounted for. It is this fact that is too often overlooked by those who reject the divine element in Biblical history. The closing words of Deuteronomy furnish a key which unlocks the secret of his marvelous career. (Deut. 34:10-12). It was this intimate communion with Jehovah, "face to face," that makes it possible to understand his phenomenal powers of leadership and superhuman achievements. Yet the help which Jehovah gave him must not be understood as freeing him from the responsibility of using his own powers. His divine commission and qualification must not obscure Moses the man. Even the meager

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outlines of his life reveal a princely character. A single passage (Num. 12:3) suggests the secret of his greatness from the human side. "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men that were upon the face of the earth." The word meek must not be understood as implying a passive virtue. No Bible character was more positive and aggressive. It is better defined as equilibrium. He was a man of poise. His great faith in Jehovah acted as a balance wheel in controlling the forces of a great character. Isaiah (chap. 26:3) beautifully expresses the sustaining power of trust. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee."

The meekness of Moses was many sided. It found expression as occasion required in a dauntless courage. No case is given in which he sought to escape duty by retreat or compromise. He was reluctant to enter upon the leadership to which he was called only because he correctly estimated the greatness of the task, and underestimated his own ability. Once enlisted he sought no escape from his responsibilities. This quality stands out on almost every page of his history. As he moved among his people he inspired them with confidence. They took knowledge that he had been with God.

Recognizing God as the supreme ruler of the nation he enforced His commands without question and with the utmost decision and promptness. A few instances

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occur in which it seems that a merciless haste was shown in inflicting punishment. The stoning of the man who blasphemed "the Name," (Lev. 24:11-16); the penalty of death inflicted on a Sabbath breaker, (Num. 15:32-36); and the terrible judgment pronounced upon Korah, Dathan and Abiram, by which they and their followers suffered death for the sin of rebellion, (Num. 16), are cases in point. It must be remembered however that they were executive, not personal acts. Only by enforcing respect for the law of Jehovah could they be saved as a people. Mercy in the larger way rather than vengeance was their purpose. An incident that indicates that no act of his leadership was prompted by selfish ambition is recorded in Numbers 11:26-30. The two men who received the gift of prophecy in the camp instead of at the Tent with other elders were not forbidden or rebuked for the informality. When Joshua would have restrained them Moses answered, "Art thou jealous for my sake? Would that all Jehovah's people were prophets and that Jehovah would put His spirit upon them."

His sternness and severity in rebuking and punishing disobedience and rebellion were equaled only by his compassionate tenderness for the erring. After the disgraceful scenes of idolatrous worship, while Moses was in the Mount receiving the tables of the Law, and condign punishment had been inflicted he returned into

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the presence of Jehovah to plead for them that they be granted mercy and restored to the divine favor. (Ex. 32:30-35). With what passionate earnestness did he plead with Jehovah: "Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written." A similar case of intercession is recorded in Numbers 14:13-19. With the skill of a great advocate he plead the cause of those who had so recently scorned his counsel and trampled upon his authority. His thought went past the just judgements of Jehovah, and remembered that He is "slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, forgiving iniquity and transgression." How like that greater Leader, of whom Moses was a forerunner, are these characteristics.

But no stage of his career reveals his greatness as a heaven-inspired leader, more than the close of his life. Like a ship that had made a voyage amid many perils, narrowly escaping shipwreck upon the shoals and in storms, at last he neared the harbor in safety. Only once it is recorded that he broke faith with Jehovah in a momentary display of distrust and uncontrolled anger. (Num. 20:6-13). It is evident that the consequence of this sin would have weakened respect for the authority of Jehovah had it passed unpunished. Moses had been bidden "to speak unto the rock before their eyes that it give forth its water."

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Instead of obeying the divine command, in a burst of rage he asserted his authority as against a personal grievance: "Hear now ye rebels: shall we bring you forth water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand and smote the rock with his rod twice and water came forth abundantly and the congregation drank and their cattle." The people were not made to suffer for the sin of Moses. But this act of passionate disobedience was destined to be punished not only as a personal sin but because of its effect upon those who witnessed it. "And Jehovah said unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed not in me, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them." The impartiality of God could not have failed to impress the people. While it was a sad hour for these faithful leaders it did not mean a withdrawal of His favor. They were to die in peace with the consciousness of beautifully fulfilled missions of service. Alas, how few of God's servants drink of the "waters of strife" but once in life's pilgrimage!

3. There is a touch of sadness in the closing scenes of our hero's life. In the nearly forty years of wanderings, Moses, Aaron and Miriam had stood together, doubtless sustaining each other by mutual love and sympathy. The unfortunate incidents of the earlier years had been forgiven and forgotten. Long years of cooperation with Moses had atoned for misunder-

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standings at the beginning. The inevitable time of separation came at last. The account of the death of Miriam at Kadesh and her solemn and honorable burial, bespeak the respect which she was accorded as a prophetess of God. The brief story of her end leaves much to be filled by the imagination. We are simply told: "And the people abode in Kadesh and Miriam died there and was buried there."

A little later another separation was to take place. In Numbers 20:22-29, we are told that the people journeyed from Kadesh to the region of Mt. Horeb. With beautiful simplicity the death of Aaron upon its summit is recorded. "And Moses stripped Aaron of his garments and put them upon Eleazar his son; and Aaron died there on the top of the Mount." It requires no great effort of the imagination to picture the touching scene. Slowly the two brothers with Eleazar who was to succeed his father, climbed the mountain. Upon its lonely summit the simple but impressive ceremonial took place. There in the stillness of one of nature's grandest spots, God hushed His tired servant into the slumber of a peaceful death.

The closing events in the life of Moses crowd quickly upon each other. At last the people of Israel were encamped upon the borders adjoining the land of promise, the goal of all their hopes. A generation had fallen since their journey from bondage began. Unable himself to set foot upon the promised possession

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he was permitted to climb the peak Pisgah, from which he could feast his vision upon a landscape which had been dear to his dreams all the homeless years of the wilderness life. Nothing confirms the greatness of his leadership more than the activities of his closing days. His consecration and tact in making final arrangements and giving farewell counsel, fitly crown his work. In a very remarkable degree the mission of Moses was typical of that of the Messiah who came not to deliver a single people but a world from the bondage of sin.

His valedictory consists of an address of warning and instruction followed by a song. In a brief review of their wanderings in which they were reminded of their failures to rise to the emergency at critical moments in their career as a newborn nation, he sought to inspire them with courage for the final act of their deliverance. He said, "Behold I have set the land before you. Go in and possess the land which Jehovah swore unto your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob, to give unto them and to their seed after them." After this introductory statement he recounted (Deut. 4) the substance of the laws which had been given them as a basis of the covenant which Jehovah had made with them. This farewell address of instruction and counsel opens with an impressive appeal: "And now, O Israel, hearken unto the statutes and unto the ordinances which I teach you, to do them,

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that ye live and go in and possess the land which Jehovah the God of your fathers giveth you. Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish from it, that ye may keep the commandments of Jehovah your God which I command you." This impressive restatement of the law continues through twenty-seven chapters. Nothing could have been more appropriate as a farewell. It was interspersed with earnest words of warning against the dangers of sin and apostacy to which they had so often fallen victims in their past history as a people.

The song of Moses is divided into two parts. The first constitutes a beautiful message of hope. Nine times he uses the word rock as a symbol of Jehovah.

"Ascribe ye greatness unto our God.  
The Rock, His work is perfect;  
For all His ways are justice;  
A God of faithfulness and without iniquity,  
Just and right is He."

His tender protecting care is beautifully stated.

"Jacob is the lot of His inheritance.  
He found him in a desert land,  
And in the waste howling wilderness;  
He compassed him about, he cared for him,  
He kept him as the apple of His eye.  
As an eagle stirreth up her nest,  
That fluttereth over her young,  
He spread abroad His wings, He took them,  
He bare them on His pinions."

Chapter thirty-three contains Moses' blessings in



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which each tribe is mentioned with some prophetic forecast. The closing passages of this song were spoken from the deepest experiences of the singer:

“Thy bars shall be iron and brass;  
And as thy days, so shall thy strength be.  
There is none like unto God, Oh Jeshurun,  
Who rideth upon the heavens for thy help,  
And in His excellency on the skies.  
The eternal God is thy dwelling place  
And underneath are the everlasting arms.”

“Happy art thou, Oh Israel:  
Who is like unto thee, a people saved by Jehóvah,  
The shield of thy help,  
And the sword of thy excellency!  
And thine enemies shall submit themselves unto thee;  
And thou shalt tread upon their high places.”

His words of counsel spoken, his song of hope delivered, he was led to the top of Pisgah from which a view of the promised land was given him. It is a mark of his greatness that “though his eye was not dimmed nor his natural strength abated,” he submitted without murmuring to the program Jehovah had marked out. Another, perhaps more fit for the stormy period of conquest was to lead the people. Silently yet gloriously, as the sun goes down at the close of a stormy day gilding the clouds with its departing splendors, ended the stormy life of this hero of God. How simple and artless his obituary by the nameless writer whose words close the book of Deuteronomy. “So Moses the servant of Jehovah died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of Jehovah. And

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He buried him in the valley in the land of Moab over against Bethpeor, but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day. . . . And there hath not arisen a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom Jehovah knew face to face."

So passed from earth one of its greatest spirits. It is well that his grave was unknown. Over it would have been built a costly shrine at which his followers would have gathered in idolatrous worship.

"Oh lonely grave in Moab's land!  
Oh dark Bethpeor's hill!  
Speak to these curious hearts of ours,  
And teach them to be still.  
God hath his mysteries of grace,  
Ways that we cannot tell:  
He hides them deep, like the hidden sleep  
Of him He loved so well."

Once again, almost fifteen hundred years later, we meet him. When Jesus stood upon the Mount of Transfiguration there were with Him Moses and Elijah in all the radiance of immortal youth. In their faces we read something of the joy into which they had entered upon departing this earth life. The vision of their appearance was not a "cunningly devised fable" as some might think, for Peter assures us that the three apostles "were eye witnesses of His majesty."

4. What follows to the close of this period, while interesting as history has little to do with the study of prophecy. It is true that the Judges were inspired

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leaders and did valiant service in conquering the land of Canaan. But they were little more than scouts of the advancing army of which in spirit Moses was still the commander. They were as foothills beneath some lofty mountain. The times of the Judges were transitional. They performed heroic services and prepared the way for a new era in Israel's greatness, but they produced no great inspired leader who left a permanent impression upon the life of his people. Their heroic achievements were obscured within the shadow of the greatest character of the ages.

#### CHAPTER 5—MOSES AS A WRITER.

1. A complete statement of the characteristics of this great man of God cannot be made without at least a glance at his claims to authorship. If the facts of his life as given in this brief outline are correct we should be led to expect that some permanent record in literary form would have been made by himself. The recent discoveries in Archeology reveal the fact that in the age in which Moses lived, as well as centuries before, the art of writing existed. That he was a man of learning is asserted in the most unqualified way. While the Israelites were an oppressed people in Egypt they were not enslaved in such a way as to prevent them from receiving something of the enlightenment of the Egyptian people. That Aaron and Miriam were educated their qualifications of leadership clearly indicate. There is at least

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a probability that the tribe of Levi was advanced above the other tribes in this respect.

2. It is distinctly asserted that Moses wrote the "Book of Covenant." This important compend of the Law is found in chapters 24 and 25 of the book of Exodus. In chapters 24:3-4 it is recorded: "And Moses came and told the people all the words of Jehovah, and all the ordinances and all the people with one voice said: All the words Jehovah has spoken we will do. And Moses wrote all the words of Jehovah and builded an altar under the mount and twelve pillars according to the twelve tribes of Israel." Other appropriate ceremonies of ratification are recorded in connection. In Deuteronomy, chapter 31:9 are the words: "And Moses wrote the law and delivered it unto the priests and sons of Levi, that bare the Ark of the Covenant of Jehovah and unto all the elders of Israel." In verses 24 and 25 of the same chapter it is further stated: "And it came to pass when Moses had made an end of writing the words of the Law in a book, until they were finished, that Moses commanded the Levites, that bare the Ark of the Covenant of Jehovah, saying: Take this book of the Law and put it by the side of the Ark of the Covenant of Jehovah your God that it may be there for a witness against thee." In verse 22 it is stated: "So Moses wrote this song the same day and taught it to the children

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of Israel." The same is implied regarding the blessings of Moses recorded in chapter thirty-third.

Not only law and literature are ascribed to him but history also. In Exodus 17:14, after the battle with Amalek, it is recorded that Jehovah said unto Moses: "Write this for a memorial in a book and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven." In Numbers 33:2 it is stated that Moses wrote an account of the journeyings of the children of Israel "by commandment of Jehovah." Places and dates are mentioned very particularly as only one associated, as was Moses with the children of Israel, would be able to do. These references are submitted as direct evidence, not only that Moses was a writer of law, history and poetry, but that it was a duty divinely imposed upon him for which he was qualified by the spirit of Jehovah. It was clearly part of the purpose of God that these writings should remain "as a witness against" the people who should disregard them. Other portions of the Law were given from time to time to meet specific cases as recorded in Exodus.

Apart from these direct statements, references are made to Moses as the writer of the first five books of the Bible, known in the Hebrew canon as the Law, in many quotations and allusions found in most of the other books of the Old and New Testaments.

3. It is significant that until a comparatively recent

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date these five books have been universally regarded as written by Moses. All Jewish scholars and historians, including Josephus, Jesus and His apostles in New Testament use, and all theologians of the Christian centuries have accepted this as an unquestioned fact. It would seem therefore to be the part of wisdom, until clear and unmistakable evidence is secured and until sufficient time is taken to fully test the different hypotheses, to rely upon the *prima facie* evidence of the books themselves as to their origin and authorship. In doing so it is not necessary to deny that, in composing and compiling these books the author has used all available material. In this respect their composite character may be admitted without conflicting with their own statements. It is also evident that introductory and closing explanations, footnotes and perhaps comments made in later reductions, have been inserted by later editors of these writings. These, however, are usually so evident as not to be confused with the body of the work.

4. In hesitating to accept the so called "assured results" of modern criticism, there is no disposition to underrate the scholarship and intelligence of those advocating them nor to deny certain advantages that may result from these critical investigations. Nor does it come within the scope of this study to discuss at length the methods of modern criticism. It may not be out of place, however, to state a few reasons why, in view

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of all sides of this question, a conservative view is safer and more reasonable :

First. To the ordinary reader of the Bible many of the conclusions of modern critics appear speculative rather than practical. The ease with which the great mass of learning of the past is pushed aside and the dogmatic rejection of testimony that does not accord with its own hypotheses is inconsistent with the breadth and conservatism of true scholarship. Such a charge should not be understood as applying to all cases. It is almost as applicable to internal controversies between the same school of thought as it is to attacks upon conservative positions.

Second. The striking lack of harmony in conclusions reached and the constantly shifting positions of critics mark it as in a crude and unsettled stage. A mania for new and ingenious theories is too often indicated for safe leadership.

To illustrate this characteristic, a course of lectures on Job is remembered in which it was most dogmatically asserted that at least twenty writers must have contributed to the book as it comes to our age. Each changing mood of the suffering patriarch of Uz was assigned to a different writer. To doubt this position would have been to show a lack of appreciation of progressive scholarship. While modern critics unite in rejecting the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch they are far apart in their methods of dissecting it.

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Wellhausen and his school were certain that the book of Deuteronomy was written by some unknown author about the time of the reformation of Josiah. While others insist that much of it must have been written considerably later. Dr. Driver and others, in order to escape the implication of a "pious fraud," place the writing of Deuteronomy two or three reigns earlier and are charged by the more radical school with "timidity" and accused of making a "weak compromise." It was formerly held that other books of the law were written before Deuteronomy, now by almost universal agreement, later. Surely little that is positive and certain is offered. We may well raise the question whether we can afford to leave the face value of this story "until the mists have cleared away."

Third. The dominating use of the evolutionary hypotheses seems unwarranted. While the law of development is clearly operative in the world, the ultra ideas of evolution are still unproved and too great a use of them in Biblical criticism is illogical and unsafe. This fact is being recognized by critics themselves. Dr. Jordan in his defense of critical methods says, "We cordially confess that, when construed in a living intelligent manner, the word evolution has been found full of helpful suggestions and has embraced many elements of vital truth, but we are not prepared to make a fetich of it, or to recognize it as an exhaustive and final word." Again, the same author in discussing the



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message of the prophets truly says, "If there is such a thing as 'mere natural development' it is certainly not here; a severely critical investigation shows that the line of natural development is broken." Yet we are not unfrequently referred to the "final word" of this theory even where facts must be sacrificed in accepting it.

Fourth. There is much reason to fear that the agitation of speculative criticism has tended to weaken the influence and authority of the scriptures, in some cases to destroy faith in their teachings altogether. I am aware that a class of scholarly men claim to have been greatly helped by the conclusions reached in modern thought. In breaking away from the ultra conservatism of the past they rejoice in a new sense of freedom. Yet it must be admitted that the extreme and revolutionary tendencies of the time have left the practical student of the Bible little that is not uncertain and shifting. Beginning with the Mosaic authorship one after another of the foundations of faith in the "Old Book" have been attacked subjecting its claims to a sort of creeping paralysis. In a recent article in a German periodical devoted to liberal theology, the question of its practical utility is frankly raised.\* He says, "Let us honestly ask what results modern theology has attained practically. As far as the great masses of the working men are concerned practically nothing has been gained. They either do not understand it

\*Failure of Liberal Theology by Dr. Rittelmeyer.

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or they distrust it. There are whole classes of society among the educated who are antagonistic to liberal tendencies in religion." Among these he includes "almost to a man the whole world of business." What is true in Germany, the home of rationalistic theology, may not be exactly true in America but the tendency is similar. Here as elsewhere all the great, aggressive movements of the church tend to a practical and positive basis of faith. Very much modern religious thought is negative and destructive.

It is evident that a wholesome reaction is taking place. It is a time of "taking stock" of theories from the standpoint of their practical use. "Criticism tends more and more to become positive and constructive," is the admission of one of its latest advocates. Great Archaeologists such as Sayce of England and Hommel of Germany, have taken a positive stand upon the record of the monuments in behalf of the historical reliability of the Old Testament. Dr. Orr of Scotland, the peer of the most learned in the world of religious thought, stands with a host of scholarly defenders of the conservative view of the Bible. It is not a time for haste in deserting the faith in the "Old Book" which nerved our fathers to achieve the victories of the past. Nor is it well to cultivate a spirit of distrust of the motives of those who may honestly differ upon these questions. Openness of mind, a prayerful search for truth should be cultivated. Doubt-

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less new light will be needed for a complete solution of difficulties. Meanwhile let it be understood that nothing proves and clarifies truth like the practical activities of Christian service.

## PERIOD THREE

### AN ERA OF TRANSITION.

The period beginning with the call of Samuel and extending to the written prophets is clearly transitional. In many respects the prophetic messages resembled those of the earliest times. During the time of the Judges no marked instance of the prophetic gift is seen. The period of these rulers seems almost without plan or purpose. Seen in retrospect, however, it is clear that it was a stage in the education of Israel preparatory to later advancement. That such conditions should follow the great era of the leadership of Moses is difficult to understand. On the other hand it is impossible to see how the written prophets could have emerged from these crude and chaotic conditions without such a foundation upon which to build. While there were lapses into false ideas of God and the pure theism contained in the teaching of Moses, yet the truth was being implanted in the nation and under favorable conditions sprang into life. It is impossible to account for the kingdom at its beginning except by the Mosaic preparation for that stage of the development of the nation. (Deut. 17: 14-20). It was in

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connection with this more complex form of government that the order of prophets was instituted. It is noticeable that they continued until the kingdom ceased to exist.

#### CHAPTER 1—THE SCHOOL OF THE PROPHETS.

1. This period was characterized not only by a regular order of the prophets but also by the inauguration of a new system of instruction. It is true that the law required heads of families to teach their children its precepts. (Deut. 6:6-9). One use made of the ceremonies of the law was to encourage questions and inspire children to know the history of their nation. (Exodus 12:26-28). Provision was made for the reading of the law before the whole people upon stated occasions. (Deut. 31:10-13). But no provision had been made for a general system of education or for the training of teachers. Perhaps Samuel did nothing else so great as to inaugurate the school of the prophets. He found Israel in a state of discouragement. They had been nearly exterminated by the Philistines. They were without unity or organization. It is due to this expedient that the scattered tribes were cemented into a nation and prepared for the great developments of the future.

2. Those who attended these schools were usually young men called "sons of the prophets." (II Kings 5:22). It is not probable that ordinarily they were inspired or claimed supernatural power. They were

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under older and inspired teachers whom they called "Master." (II Kings 2:3). They appear to have lived in communities and had all things in common. (II Kings 4:38-41). They sometimes went abroad in companies. (I Samuel 10:5-10 also chapter 19:20). We infer that they were numerous attended. (I Kings 22:6). We read of them at Ramah (I Samuel 19; 19), at Bethel (II Kings 2:3), at Jericho (II Kings 2:5), at Gilgal (II Kings 4:38). Doubtless other places not mentioned were used as centers of instruction. (II Kings 6:1). They seemed to have lived by their own industries (II Kings 4:10-38), and to have been bound together by close fraternal ties.

3. The purpose of these schools has already been indicated. It is worthy of notice that all permanent social and religious advances have been grounded in education. This may be verified by referring to the history of religious reformations. Without it, Luther and the Wesleys could not have made lasting progress. Our own religious movement began with teachers. The decline in educational efficiency marks the retrograde of any nation or people.

4. A glance at the matters taught in these schools is necessary if we would understand their results. It is assumed that the Law of Moses held a very prominent place in the curriculum. That it was in use in the time of Joshua and the judges is evident from references to Mosaic institutions and precepts. Allusions

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are made to events of the Exodus and conquest (Judges 1:10-20), concerning the settlement of Hebron and (chapters 13:7-14 and 16:7) to the Nazarite vow as commanded in the Law. (Numbers 6:1-5). 1 Samuel 2:27-28 refers to the portion of the priests. Many other references clearly point to a knowledge of the precepts of Moses although the environment of the people was very unfavorable to the full practice of them.

These instructions were especially designed to exalt the spiritual in religion. This has already been emphasized and will become more apparent in the study of the prophets themselves. It must not be inferred that the practice of the ordinances of religion was discouraged but a more spiritual observance of them was required and the moral element was exalted.

A prominent place in the instruction imparted was given to music and literature. The prophets were frequently musicians. They were the chief poets and orators of the Hebrew people. They were the annalists and historians of their nation. It is evident that many of their writings are lost if we may judge from frequent references to books not in our Bible.

But apart from teaching the Law their mission was to prepare the way for the Great Teacher who was to come after them. They were deeply imbued with this idea. Dr. Jordan well says, "The great theological ideas, the striking predictions, the mighty hopes of

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the future, play a great part in giving to Hebrew literature its peculiar character, in forming the Jewish church and in preparing the way for Christian Theology."

#### CHAPTER 2—PROPHETS OF THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD.

The first of this new order was Samuel. According to current chronology his long term of office extended from B. C. 1141 to B. C. 1075. Besides inaugurating a system of education he was a statesman and political leader. He achieved three important things. He consolidated Israel into one people. "All Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of Jehovah." (Sam. 3:19).

He was providentially raised up to deliver the nation from the Philistines. To his piety and courage it owed deliverance from complete destruction. He was specially commissioned to inaugurate the Kingdom. Both Saul and David were anointed to the Kingship by him. His wisdom and courage at this critical time were masterful indeed. No dark sin or shameful weakness blotted the fair page of his record.

Passing Saul who is mentioned incidentally as among the prophets, we may name David as Samuel's real successor. This great Hebrew character was versatile, winning greatness in several ways. He was a brilliant military leader and statesman. He was an accomplished musician. Though not the author of

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all the Psalms he was, no doubt the writer of many of them. They are studded with gems of predictive prophecy. They have been the vehicle of devout expression in all succeeding ages. It is impossible if we would, to leave out this great character. His life and teachings permeate all that comes after him.

Though little is known of him it is evident that Nathan was distinguished both as a writer and as a fearless advocate of righteousness. The well known rebuke of David marks him as a man of not only superior decision and courage but of splendid tact. In this respect he is truly a model for teachers of all ages.

Passing several names whose mention shows the close succession of prophets, we record one of the loftiest characters of Hebrew history, Elijah the Tishbite. From the death of David to his appearance was about one hundred years. The Kingdom had been divided more than fifty years. Both factions had fallen into shameful idolatry. In the northern kingdom Baal worship had been introduced from Phoenicia. It was one of the most debasing of heathen religions. Suddenly Elijah, "the grandest and most romantic character Israel ever produced," stood forth as the champion of Jehovah. We know little of his origin. We are simply told that he came from Gilead on the east of Jordan. He was of a wild, uncultured, pastoral race. He wore a girdle of skin and a cape of sheepskin. He appeared about the tenth year of Ahab's reign, the



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darkest hour of the apostasy, and predicted three terrible years of drouth as a divine judgment. We are familiar with him as a fugitive, with his deeds of mercy and with his power in prayer. (James 5:17-18).

The scene on Mt. Carmel is one of the most spectacular proofs of God's hand in the affairs of men. His successor, Elisha, can hardly be separated from him in our thoughts. Though equally bold and consecrated he owed his career to the leadership of Elijah. They were devotedly attached. The scene of their separation, when he was taken up in a whirlwind of fire, is one of the most touching in literature. One is struck by the use made of this event by Tennyson in the farewell words of King Arthur to his faithful knight, Sir Bedevere. The boat that sailed out upon the mystic sea—

“With oar and sail moved from the brink like some  
full breasted swan,  
That fluting a wild carol ere her death,  
Ruffles her pure, cold plume and takes the flood  
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedevere,  
Revolving many memories till the hull  
Looked one black dot against the verge of the dawn,  
And on the mere the wailing died away.”

Beautiful as is this conception it falls short of the simple rugged grandeur of Elijah's ascension. Centuries later we shall meet this lofty character on the Mount of Transfiguration. He fitly opens the way for a new era.

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### PERIOD FOUR

#### THE NORTHERN PROPHETS.

##### CHAPTER I—PREPARATORY SUGGESTIONS.

In approaching the era of the written prophets it is necessary to have in mind certain preparatory studies leading up to it. We must not overlook the facts that the prophets were to a large extent the product of their environment although always more than their surroundings.

Perhaps the most important preparatory study is the Old Testament itself. A familiarity with contemporaneous history of a Biblical nature is very essential. A ready knowledge of the Kings in their comparative relation is almost indispensable.

It is always well to know about the author, the purpose of writing and the circumstances which give rise to each prophetic book. This is not always possible, however, nor do these conditions always determine the importance and authority of the message.

The era of written prophecy no longer deals with an isolated people. They have already passed out upon the stage of world influences and policies. This fact has much to do with their successes and misfortunes. For instance the division of the Kingdom of Israel was largely the result of the influence of Egypt. Jereboam, trained in Egypt and married to an Egyptian princess, brought both social and religious customs

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to Israel. The "Calf Worship" in the Northern Kingdom was instituted as a sort of compromise with the worship of Jehovah.

Later, a close affiliation with Phoenicia brought into Israel the even more corrupting worship of Baal. It was against this that Elijah and Elisha directed their tremendous prophetic power. The usurpation of Jehu and the cutting off of the princess in Israel and Judah were aimed at the extermination of Baal worship. On the north and east Syria held sway. It was within the dynasty of Jehu that great territories were lost and afterward regained as predicted by the prophet Jonah.

Passing the mention of relationship with the smaller kingdoms adjacent, we must not overlook the influence of a world power which had more to do in shaping the messages of the prophets than any other outside influence. Assyria had expanded her dominion to almost world-wide limits. From her capital, Nineveh, armies poured forth making a multitude of smaller kingdoms tributary and subservient to her greed and tyranny. It was at the climax of this peril that the prophets appeared upon the stage of action. It is the old story of divine interposition in times of stress.

#### CHAPTER 2—INTRODUCTORY TO JONAH AND AMOS.

1. Jonah was probably the youngest and his mission the earliest of the Northern prophets. He was a native of Gath-hepher, probably the same as Gittah-

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hepher mentioned in Joshua 19:13 which was situated in Zebulon. The dates of events recorded in the book of Jonah and the period of his prophetic mission are determined by inference. In 2 Kings 14:25 it is stated that Jereboam II restored the coast of Israel from the entering in of Hamath unto the sea of Arabah according to the word of the Lord God of Israel which he spake by the hand of His servant Jonah, the son of Amittai the prophet which was at Gath-hepher." The loss of the country spoken of as reconquered took place in the time of Jehu. Two reigns, Jehoahaz and Joash jointly covering about thirty years, were between Jehu and Jereboam II. Somewhere in this period between the loss of the territory and its restoration, the prophecy must have been made. The presumption is, considering the condition of Assyria, that it was in the reign of the latter king.

The authorship of the book is uncertain. The tradition that it was written by Jonah himself is not an improbable one. The language is that of a simple, straightforward narrative referring to the experiences of the prophet which no one could so well have portrayed as himself.

Those who assign a later time to the book, question its value as history and regard it as a sort of parable written by another author.

Whatever else may be in doubt the uses of the book in the New Testament are very pointed and clear. In

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Matthew 12:41 Jesus cites the case of the repentance of Nineveh as a standing rebuke to the bigoted Jews who turned a deaf ear to the words of "one greater than Jonah." Not inappropriately the prophet has been called the first foreign missionary. Certain it is that his mission so reluctantly fulfilled, is proof that God's universal sympathy is not an after thought.

In Matthew 12:39-40 and 16:4, Luke 24:46 and 1 Cor. 15:4 Jonah is represented as an important type of Christ and especially of His resurrection, after being "three days and nights in the heart of the earth." The repeated and emphatic references of Christ to this prophet point strongly to the historical character of the events in the story. The strong typical bearing which it has to the Gospel, mark it as one of the most important of the Old Testament writings.

2. Amos may be named next in the order of the prophets of the Northern Kingdom. He was no doubt contemporaneous with Hosea during much of his prophetic ministry. His name which signifies burden or burdensome, well expresses the responsibility which he felt in delivering his message to a rebellious people.

His home was at Tekoa (chap. 1:1), a small village about six miles south of Bethlehem. It was but a cluster of shepherd's tents. It's name is probably derived from Teka meaning to strike, probably in allusion to driving tent pins. It is also spoken of as a defense city. (2 Chron. 11:5-6).

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The occupation of Amos was that of herdsman. (Amos 7:14). We also learn that he was a "dresser of sycamore trees. He must have been of a very humble class. Thompson says, "Only the very poor at this day gather sycamore fruit and use it." It seems certain that he was not educated in the school of the prophets. (Chap. 7:14-15). "God took me as he found me," are his own words.

His style is full of rugged grandeur. It abounds in rustic figures and in the abrupt transitions of one terribly in earnest.

The date is clearly stated (chap. 1:1) as in the days of Uzziah in Judah and of Jereboam II in Israel "two years before the earthquake."

The prophecy has remarkable unity. In chapter 1 to 2:5, "the storm of God's judgments roll successively over Syria, the Philistines, Tyre, Edom, Ammon and Moab. Judah does not escape, but it bursts with all its force on Israel. Chapters 2:6 to 6:14 she is rebuked unsparingly for her manifold sins. In chapters 7 to 9:10 a series of prophetic symbols are given.

The closing is like a glorious sunset after a day of clouds and tempest. In chapter 9:11-15 are words of comfort and hope. Unconsciously, perhaps, he uttered one of the most striking of the Messianic foregleams. In Acts 15:15-16, Paul quotes this beautiful passage applying it to the Messiah's reign. "I will raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen and I

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will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up, that the residue of men may seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord who maketh these things known from old." Surely "at evening time it shall be light."

#### CHAPTER 3—INTRODUCTORY TO HOSEA.

Hosea is probably the third in order of time of the northern prophets. We know little of him personally. He was the son of Beerī. (Chap. 1:1). Internal evidences indicate that he was a native of the Northern Kingdom. Many references to places and scenery show the familiarity of home impressions. It is evident that he lived near to nature's heart. "The poetry of Hosea clings about his native soil like its trailing vines." "With Hosea we feel all the seasons of the Syrian year; early and later rains, the first flush of the young corn, the scent of the vine blossoms, the first ripe fig of the fig tree in her first season, the bursting of the lily, the wild vine trailing on the hedge, the field of tares, the beauty of the full olive in sunshine and breeze, the mists and heavy dews of a summer morning in Ephraim, the night winds laden with the air of the mountains, the scent of Lebanon." \* If for no other benefit this beautiful writing in Hebrew literature is commended for meditation and critical study. It is a classic of literary beauty.

\*Dr. George Adam Smith in his *Study of Minor Prophets*, from which much inspiration and assistance is acknowledged in preparing these outlines.

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The period of his ministry like that of Isaiah, was in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah in Judah and Jereboam II in Israel. It is noticeable in this opening statement how close was his sympathy with the Southern Kingdom and how little respect he felt for some of the rulers immediately connected with the downfall of his own nation. Only one, Jereboam II, is mentioned though several stormy reigns intervene before the final overthrow of Israel. His ministry, perhaps the longest of all the prophets, had to do with the most thrilling events of the history of Israel. Like Jeremiah he witnessed the breaking in pieces of his country and its final eclipse in captivity by Assyria. Only a sympathetic understanding of the tragic events of this period can help us to appreciate his scathing denunciations of national sins and his tender and piteous pleading with his countrymen to turn to God before it was too late. But the crash came. Israel was forever buried under the ruins of her shameful apostacies.

The book naturally divides itself into two parts. The first three chapters consist of three short but exquisitely beautiful poems, representing a home, broken and desolated by a faithless wife. The story is very realistic and by many able exegetes it is taken as a real scene in the domestic life of Hosea. Dr. Smith, above quoted, makes a strong argument for this view in his study of Hosea. Others regard it, with good



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reasons, as an allegory. To command the prophet to marry a harlot appears incredible. The use of the names given to the characters mentioned is an argument in itself that it must have been premeditated with the end of the lesson in view.

However we may decide this matter the meaning is perfectly clear. The faithless wife is Israel. The longsuffering and injured husband is Jehovah. The children, whose names one after another represent the progressive power of sin and its consequences, are the fruits of Israel's alliance with idolatry and sin in its resulting forms. No picture could be drawn of more heartbreaking sadness. Through it all are the tear-blistered pages of deepest loss and sorrow. But the scene changes. Repentance brings reconciliation and hope. The storm clears away and the light of Heaven's peace falls upon a day that opened in darkness and shame. What warnings, what reproofs, what grounds for hope for lost souls are bound up in these beautiful chapters!

The remaining portions of the book are not easily divided. "All the rest is the noise of a nation falling to pieces, the crumbling of a splendid past." The certain decay of the people is predicted in chapters 4 to 7:7. Priests and princes are brought under his scathing rebuke. Wickedness in High Places is denounced. In chapter 7:8 to chapter 10, the political confusion of the nation is exposed. "Ephraim has become as a cake not turned." All the pride and

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strength of patriotism are spent. "Ephraim among the nations, he lets himself be poured out." Both their gods and kings are artificial. In chapter 11 the Fatherhood of God is exalted. "When Israel was a child I loved him, and from Egypt I called him to be my son." In chapters 12 to 14:1 is the final argument and appeal. "How can I give thee up, Ephraim? how am I to let thee go, Israel?" Such was the "anguish of love" which filled the prophet's soul.

The closing verses (chap. 12:2-10) are beautiful words of hope. The face of Jesus Christ looks out through natural symbols. It is the face, down which tears of sorrow and traces of sacrificial blood are falling, but it is a vision of ineffable love. "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely." "They that dwell under His shadow shall return, they shall revive us the grain and blossom as the vine; the scent thereof shall be as the vine of Lebanon."

So ends this wonderful fragment from the words of the prophet whose name like that of Jesus meant Saviour. If Amos is compared to John the Baptist, Hosea may be compared to John the Apostle. Each fitted the place assigned him and fitted it nobly.

## PERIOD FIVE

### THE CONTEMPORANEOUS SOUTHERN PROPHETS.

#### CHAPTER I—INTRODUCTORY TO JOEL AND MICAH.

1. This group of the prophets of Judah had a mission very similar to those already referred to in the

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previous period. They had a common purpose. Over both hung the same war-cloud, the invasion of the Assyrian armies. The influence of Egypt on the south was also common. The temptation to rely upon some alliance instead of seeking the help of Jehovah by true repentance was their pitfall.

That a purer worship and a more stable government existed in Judah was in her favor. The awful captivity of Israel was a wholesome warning. In the outcome, the appeals of the prophets of this period prevailed and for a time Judah was saved.

2. Joel was probably the first of the minor prophets of Judah. This is, however, much in dispute. Internal evidence has led scholarly critics to widely different conclusions as to the time of its writing. There is very little known of him except that he was the son of Pethuel. He most likely resided in Judah. His commission was to that people. This is indicated by frequent mention of Jerusalem and Judah in his writings.

The prophecy is divided into three parts:

The first (chap. 1 to 2:27) refers to a period of trouble and calamity, "a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness." While no enemy is specified there seems to be a dimly outlined foreshadowing of the great Assyrian invasion. The fierceness and terribleness of the destroying power is vividly pictured. "A fire devoureth before them and

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behind them a flame burneth." A plague of locusts, which perhaps actually took place near the time of writing, is pictured with wonderful realism. The passage marks the author as a writer of great descriptive power. The warning breaks upon the people with sudden fury of a terrific storm, but the close is one of peace and blessing. "Fear not, O land, be glad and rejoice, for Jehovah hath done great things."

The second division (chap. 2:28-32) consists of the prophecy of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit beginning on the day of Pentecost. Its interpretation by the Apostle Peter at the opening of his great discourse definitely fixes its application. It was doubtless regarded by the Jews as Messianic, hence its powerful effect.

The third and last division (chap. 3) refers with terrible force to the Day of Judgment. Of its Messianic bearing there is little doubt. The outcome shall be victory and peace. "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down sweet wine and the hills shall flow with milk and all the brooks of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth from the house of Jehovah and shall water the valley of Shittim. . . . Judah shall abide forever and Jerusalem from generation to generation."

It is noticeable that Amos begins his prophecy with almost the same words with which Joel closes. (Comp.

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Joel 3:16 and Amos 1:2). In the former case the passage stands out abruptly as if used as a text while in the case of Joel it seems to form a part of the context. This would indicate that it was probably original with the latter. If so, it has a bearing upon the order of time of the two prophets.

3. Micah, a native of Moresheth which is about seventeen miles from Tekoa the home of Amos, prophesied in the days of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah. He must, therefore, have been contemporaneous with Amos and Hosea on the north and with Isaiah on the south. We know little of his personal history. Various divisions are made of the contents of the book. There are three discourses each opening with, "Hear ye," and with threatenings and rebukes, and closing with words of hope and promise. The first includes chapters one and two, the second chapters three to five and the third, chapters six and seven.

The book contains several remarkable predictive prophecies. Chapter 1:6-8 is a striking vision of the fall of Samaria. Chapter 1:9-16 foretells the peril of Jerusalem through the Assyrian invasion. In chapter 3:12 and 7:13 prediction is made of the overthrow of Jerusalem at the time of the Babylonian captivity. How wonderfully literal are his words when compared with facts of history! "Therefore shall Zion, for your sake, be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high

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places of a forest." In chapter 4:1-8 the captivity and return of Judah are distinctly foretold. In chapter 5:2 the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem Ephrathah is predicted and the passage is used in Matt. 2:5-6 in announcing its fulfillment. The ethical and spiritual ideals in his teaching are of the highest order. In chapter 6:8 is an expression which might be mistaken for a quotation from the Sermon on the Mount: "He hath shown thee, O man! what is good and what doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God."

#### CHAPTER 2—INTRODUCTORY TO ISAIAH.

The first and greatest of the major prophets is definitely located in the height of the Assyrian period. As is the case with most of the prophets we know little of him personally. It is a tribute to their greatness that their individualities were lost in their messages. Each, like John the Baptist, was "a voice crying in the wilderness."

We are told that Isaiah was the son of Amoz and that he prophesied in the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah. His wife was known as a "prophetess." His name, Yesha-Yahu, meaning, "The salvation of the Lord," was strongly suggestive of the evangelical nature of his mission. He was evidently a man of great learning and influence. He seems to have been an official recorder of the "acts"

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of national history as indicated in II Chron. 26:22. "The rest of the acts of Uzziah, the former and latter, did Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, write."

From his own statement we learn that the "vision" which he recorded was granted him "in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah." His prophetic mission may, therefore, have extended over more than sixty years and could not have been less than forty-nine years. He lived and wrought in the most thrilling period of the Kingdom of Judah and indeed in the history of the ancient world. In the history of the chosen people he stood upon the very "divide" of Israel, using the term in its largest sense. The destruction of Sennacherib's army took place B. C. 710. This date is just midway between Israel's complete occupation of Canaan B. C. 1445 and A. D. 26, when John the Baptist announced the Kingdom of Heaven at hand. Standing upon this storm-swept summit he spoke with such power and foresight as only divine wisdom could have made possible. It is not strange that his words were full of wonderful predictions and that he should have seen as no other prophet the glories of the Messianic hope. Perhaps no book in the Old Testament has furnished so many passages which are quoted in the New Testament and which have been and are being so grandly fulfilled in history.

The proper analysis of the prophecy of Isaiah would

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require larger space than can be given in this outline. From a historical standpoint, a division is suggested by internal reference.

If the prophecies were given consecutively, the first five chapters may be assigned to the reign of Uzziah. (Chap. 6:1). Certainly the sixth chapter, which contains the call of Isaiah, belongs to the reign of Jotham. The opening of the seventh chapter is assigned to "Ahaz, the son of Jotham" and therefore his prophecies refer to that period. In chapter 14:27, a series of "burdens" are delivered in the year that King Ahaz died, hence in the opening of the reign of Hezekiah. The remainder of his prophetic mission was located in this reign.

While such division seems historically correct, it is not conclusive that his visions occurred exactly in this order. It is probable, however, that his greatest work was done in this latter period. It was then that the Assyrian Empire was making its greatest assault upon the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah. Israel fell and Judah was only saved by the powerful ministry of Isaiah who guided Hezekiah to a safe issue in this perilous crisis. Viewed from the subjects treated a different analysis may be profitably made. The opening chapter is general in its contents. As a musician strikes the keys of his instrument preparatory to more elaborate execution, so the prophet sounds the key notes of his message. He announces the ground of



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Israel's undoing in one of the most striking passages of the book. The entire prophecy can be better appreciated and understood with the condition of the nation clearly before us. These words were spoken before the danger of their spiritual condition had developed. Yet they clearly forecasted the consequences that were certain to follow their continued disobedience. "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for Jehovah hath spoken: I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-doers, children that deal corruptly! They have forsaken Jehovah, they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they are estranged and gone backward. Why will ye be still stricken, that ye revolt more and more? The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the soul of the foot even unto the head there is nosoundness in it; but wounds and bruises, and fresh stripes: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with oil. Your country is desolate; your cities are burned with fire; your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate as overthrown by strangers." (Chap. 1:2-7).

In verse 18 he announces his method of teaching. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith Jehovah. Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white

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as snow, though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land, but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword, for the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it." No words could make plainer the basis of the masterly arguments and appeals which constitute the body of the book.

Chapters 2 to 5 enforce with fuller illustration the opening sentiment quoted above. Chapter 6 describes the ecstatic vision that fell upon the prophet in the year of Uzziah's death. It is different in style from any other of his writings and shows his literary versatility. Like Moses, Isaiah felt the sacredness of his call. He was overwhelmed with a sense of his unworthiness. "Then he said, Woe is me for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of Hosts." (Verse 5). Yet his willingness to undertake the mission has formed a precedent for all to whom a call of duty comes. It is symbolized as a live coal from off the altar. When it had touched his lips he was assured that his iniquity was taken away and his sin forgiven. Only by such preparation was he fit to transmit his message to a sinful people. It was then that he answered the inquiry of Jehovah, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" by his willing consent to undertake the task, "Here am I, send me." With such an opening of his ministry great things were to be expected.

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Chapter 7 introduces us to certain definite historical conditions and is the real opening of his mission as a guide of his people in the perilous period of their history now rising before them. He meets Ahaz, a faithless and disobedient king, and bids him ask a sign of Jehovah "either in the depth or the height above." When he refuses to avail himself of the opportunity, the prophet utters that marvelous Messianic statement. "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign. Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."

In chapters 8 to 9:7 is indicated the growing danger that threatens from the encroachments of Assyria. The prophet strongly opposes the popular sentiment which favors an alliance with the Assyrian power. He sees no hope in compromise. "Fear none but Jehovah only! Fear Him, trust Him. He will be your safety." It is significant that as clouds darken about them the predictions of the Messiah become more clear and definite.

In chapters 9:8 to 10:4 is a prophecy against the Kingdom of Israel. Its purpose appears to be to break the influence of that corrupt power in order to save Judah from a like condition. Later events proved the wisdom of Isaiah.

Chapters 10:5 to 12:6 contain what probably is a single message. It seems to be disconnected from what has gone before and cannot be definitely located

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chronologically. It is one of the most highly wrought discourses in the book. The eleventh chapter is very full of the ideals of the Kingdom of Christ. What could be more striking than the reference to the "stock of Jesse" in the opening verses. "Righteousness shall be the girdle of His waist and faithfulness the girdle of His loins." The glorious peace of the Messianic reign is vividly forecasted. Verses 6-10 contain the striking words, "And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fating together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters cover the sea. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the root of Jesse, that standeth for an ensign of the peoples, unto Him shall the nations seek; and His resting place shall be glorious."

In chapters 13 to 23 is a series called "burdens." They contain a powerful arraignment of various nations around and including Judah. Some of the most passionate and eloquent words of the prophet are found in these discourses. In the burden of "the valley of vision," Jerusalem is no doubt indicated. That

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city is pictured in a state of invasion. Chapters 24 to 27 are essentially connected with the preceding "ten burdens," in effect a general summary of them. Chapters 23 to 35 predict the Assyrian invasion and warn the people against seeking help from an alliance with Egypt as against Assyria. Chapters 37 to 39 have to do with the crisis in which Judah was saved from overthrow by the Assyrian power. "So the servants of king Hezekiah came to Isaiah. And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say to your master, Thus saith Jehovah, Be not afraid of the words that thou hast heard, wherewith the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. Behold, I will put a spirit in him, and he shall hear tidings, and shall return unto his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land." (Chap. 37:5-7).

This vague but positive prediction was soon to find a wonderful confirmation in events already at hand. In verse 36 it is said, "And the angel of Jehovah went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and four score and five thousand, and when men arose, behold, these were all dead bodies." The fate of Sennacherib on his return to Assyria is mentioned, showing how completely the prophecy was fulfilled. As he was worshipping in the house of his god, "his sons smote him with the sword." So ended his brilliant and at first victorious assault upon Judah. This may well be regarded the climax of the prophecy so

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far as it relates to its historical bearings. "A divine interposition so marvelous, so evidently miraculous, was in its magnificence worthy of being the kernel of Isaiah's whole book." (Smith). In order to get the full benefit of these masterly discourses, it is necessary to keep the passing events of history constantly before us.

The last 27 chapters are known in critical discussions as the "second Isaiah." On account of the difference in style and the fact that the subject seems to relate mainly to the exile it is thought that it must have been written by some one living at that time. That it is a sublime "Rhapsody of the Redeemed" is evident. There is no good reason why such a vision should not have been given to Isaiah unless we doubt the power of the spirit to reveal it to him. The fact that the analytical theory has insisted on many other divisions, leaves the matter in a state of growing uncertainty from a critical standpoint. The unity of the book was not questioned until recently. It appeared as one book in the Septuagint and in the Hebrew canon. It was always referred to as a single book in the New Testament quotations and references. The Bible student will find ample literature at hand with which to thoroughly inform himself upon this mooted question. After all whether Isaiah was "sawn asunder" by king Manasseh or cut in twain by Biblical critics, need not disturb us. The inspiration and au-

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thority of the book is little questioned. It carries its own storage battery of spiritual power. The fulfillment of his prophecies prove that he spoke with authority from on High. It is commended to the earnest and prayerful thought of all who would prove its greatness and worth. No words about it can do it justice or take the place of devout personal study.

As we leave these early periods of written prophecy it is evident that they could not have emerged without preparation having been made for them. All that has gone before is required to pave the way for their coming. The ideas of God and His righteousness are the same as those promulgated by Moses, Samuel and David. They were building upon foundations already laid, and grandly and successfully did they build.

The very magnitude of their tasks, the sweep of opposing forces, gave them greatness of vision and courage. They were not stirred by local and circumscribed issues. Their thoughts moved among worlds and ages. All conditions were present for large things. God stooped to touch the lips of heroic men. The greatness of their achievements is beyond comparison with the tramp of victorious armies or the fortunes of nations. The utmost limits of time shall feel the throbs of this era. It stands as a monumental demonstration of God's care for His world and of His directing and saving power among men.

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### PERIOD SIX

#### PROPHETS ABOUT THE FALL OF ASSYRIA

##### CHAPTER I—THE DOWNFALL OF ASSYRIA

At the fall of Samaria, Assyria was at the zenith of her greatness. In war, in trade, in art and literature, she had forged to the front. Almost the whole world then known was tributary to her power. There seemed no reason why that power should not continue to hold sway indefinitely. The fall of the Northern Kingdom had alarmed Judah. The eloquence of Isaiah had aroused the patriotism of the people and reinforced the courage of Hezekiah. At last they realized that their safety lay in a reliance upon Jehovah. The cloud of danger passed over. The reign of Hezekiah was characterized by loyalty to the God of his fathers. The long rule of Manasseh was a return to the worst conditions of idolatry and national shame, a sad reaction from the pious reign of his father.

During this period, except in the overthrow of Thebes, we hear little of Assyria. Her prestige was waning. It was in the good reign of Josiah that the invasion of the Scythians, as recorded by Heroditus, took place. It threatened to change the condition of the countries tributary to Assyria. Egypt, however, purchased a retreat and saved Judah from the new danger. But Assyria, like a monster of the jungle,



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worried by many attacks, grew weaker. The Medes on the North and the Chaldeans on the South watched for an opportunity to spring upon her. "The lion, though old, was not broken." In his lair he was still terrible. It was while Pharoah Necho of Egypt was marching on the Euphrates that Josiah attacked him and lost his life. It was in these stirring times, when the map of the East was being made over and the hand of God was moving among the nations, that the brief but intense prophecies of this period were written. They were no doubt mere fragments of what was delivered in this important era of change. Dr. Geo. Adam Smith, says, "The two prophets with whom we have to deal at this time are almost entirely engrossed with the fall of Assyria. Nahum exults in the destruction of Ninevah. Habakkuk sees in the Chaldeans nothing but the avengers of the people whom Assyria had approved."

Without this background, however inadequate, the meaning and force of these brief but brilliant productions cannot be understood and appreciated.

#### CHAPTER 2—INTRODUCTION TO NAHUM, HABAKKUK AND ZEPHANIAH

1. Nahum. All that is known of the author of this prophecy is found in the opening sentence: "The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite." Various suppositions have been made regarding the location

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of this place. It has been identified with Alkush, near the modern Mosul where the prophet is thought to have lived in exile. Some have placed it in Galilee. At best the location is uncertain. As to its date we know only that it was written late in the Assyrian period.

The prophet addressed Judah mainly and uttered needed words of encouragement. He said for Jehovah: "Though I have afflicted thee I will afflict thee no more. For now will I break his yoke from off thee and burst thy bonds in sunder." (Chap. 1:12-13). All allusions to the condition of Judah agree with the time fixed as the date of the prophecy. They also accord with the facts so far as known, of the condition of Nineveh at that time. Utter destruction was predicted: "He will make an utter end of the place thereof." (Chap. 1:8). "There is no assuaging of thy hurt, thy wound is grievous: All that hear the report of thee clap their hands over thee, for upon whom hath not thy wickedness passed continually." (Chap. 3:19). "She is empty and void and waste." (Chap. 2:10). With what terrible exactness were these predictions fulfilled!

2. Habakkuk is supposed to have delivered his prophecy about the twelfth or thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah, although the date is uncertain. We know nothing of his personal history. The book called by his name appears to have been written

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after the fall of Assyria and during the rapid rise of the Chaldean Empire. He predicts with great clearness the triumph of Babylon. (Chap. 1:6). The hope of Judah is pointed out. (Chap. 1:12-17). This power is raised up to discipline and correct the people of God. "O Jehovah, thou hast ordained him for judgement, and thou, O Rock, hast established him for correction." (v. 12). Paul's thesis of the book of Romans (1:16) is found in chapter 2:4: "The righteous shall live by faith." The student of this book is struck with its insight into the fundamental evils of society. Some of its words seem to point out conditions in modern terms. A hint at the abuse of municipal government is made in chapter 2:12. "Woe unto him that buildeth a town with blood, and establisheth a city by iniquity." Nor are the dangers of the drink habit and its social perils a new thing. In chapter 2:15 are words which are as fresh in application today as they were when written by the prophet. "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink and putteth thy bottle to him and maketh him drunken also."

What is more beautiful or fit for our use today than the admonition in chapter 2:20? "Jehovah is in His holy temple, let all the earth keep silence before Him?" What ray of missionary hope is brighter than the often quoted passage? (Chap. 2:14). "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea."

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In vividness and sublimity this fragment of the prophecies of Habakkuk is unsurpassed in Hebrew literature.

3. Zephaniah. Unlike other inscriptions, in which genealogy is very meager, Zephaniah gives his pedigree to the fourth generation. He was "the son of Cushi, the son of Ged-aliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hezekiah."

In chapter 1, the utter destruction of Judah is predicted. In chapter 2:3, a call to repentance is made. In verses 4-7 the ruin of the cities of the Philistines and the restoration of Judah is foretold. Perpetual destruction of Moab and Ammon is threatened in verses 8-15.

In chapter 3: 1-7, the prophet reproves Jerusalem for vice and disobedience and concludes with a series of promises whose complete fulfilment is Messianic in character. (Verses 8-20).

Zephaniah was very general in his view of peoples and nations. He makes frequent use of earlier scriptures. He has been called, "The compendium of all prophecy." Dr. Geo. Adam Smith says of him: "No hotter book lies in the Old Testament. Neither dew, nor grass, nor tree, nor any blossom lives in it, but it is everywhere fire, smoke and darkness, drifting chaff, ruins, nettles, salt pits and owls and ravens looking from the windows of desolate palaces." His key note

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was, "I will sweep, sweep away everything from the face of the ground." He characterized the day of the Lord with terrible vividness. "A strong man, there, crying bitterly!" He heard the voice of God saying, "And it shall be at that time that I will search out Jerusalem with lights, and I will make visitation upon the men who are become stagnant upon their lees, who say in their hearts, Jehovah doeth no good and doeth no evil."

While a wierd mystery hovers about the words of the prophet in which the transcendence of God seems to out-weigh His immanence we do not fail to recognize a great messenger of God. It is a cry that breaks out from the darkness of an impending crises. His words are of reproach and warning rather than of hope.

Yet the closing (verses 14-20) is a jubitant epilogue of triumph. "Sing out, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O Israel! Rejoice and be jubilant with all thy heart, daughter of Jerusalem! Jehovah hath set aside thy judgments, He hath turned thy foes. King of Israel, Jehovah is in the midst of thee, thou shalt not see evil any more!" With such words this troubled vision closes. It was the "battle hymn" of a people whose future, under the championship of Jehovah, was assured. Yet only in the far glow of Messianic promise was it fully realized. "It was as the sun shining through clouds on distant waters."

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PERIOD SEVEN

FALL OF JUDAH, BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY

CHAPTER—I INTRODUCTION TO  
THE PERIOD.

No very definite separation can be made between this time and the one just preceding it. The prophets whose chief message related to the fall of Assyria were no doubt contemporaneous in part with the group considered in this period. But as a whole they were later and their discourses had a distinctly different purpose. The circumstances surrounding them were peculiarly depressing. They were voices "crying in the night" of an awful crisis in the history of their nation. Misfortunes follow one after another indicating hopeless disaster.

The reign of Josiah, whose efforts of reform had revived the hopes of the faithful, had ended in his untimely death in the battle of Megiddo. This pious and patriotic ruler seems to have had plans for the restoration of the whole of Palestine to the throne of David. He was anxious that no part of it should be diverted to another power. This may have been his motive in attacking Pharaoh Necho who was on his way to be present at the overthrow of Assyria. The death of Josiah took away the chief support of the reformation so nobly begun. The four Kings that followed him, Jehoahaz, Jehovakim, Jehoiakin and Zedekiak were hardly more than rulers in name.

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They lacked the moral stamina to stay the tide of final ruin that threatened Judah at this critical hour. Two of the greatest of the prophets, Jeremiah in Jerusalem and Ezekiel in Babylon used their utmost ability as messengers of Jehovah to avert the impending calamity. Had Josiah lived they might have been successful as was Isaiah in the days of Hezekiah. But their words were treated with scorn. Lying prophets were not wanting "crying peace, peace where there was no peace." A starless night settled down upon the fair history of the chosen nation. The end came in their captivity into Babylon. In this school of discipline they were preparing for a greater future in the centuries to come. While intensely sad it was a time rich in lessons of experience and in prophetic messages. Of the four Major prophets, three are found in this period. It was destined to be an epoch of great creative power in the life of Israel as a people.

#### CHAPTER 2—INTRODUCTORY TO JEREMIAH.

The first and perhaps greatest prophet of this period is Jeremiah-ben-Hilkiah. His home seems to have been at Anathoth, a suburb of Jerusalem, about three miles north in the territory of Benjamin. It is rather significant that it was a residence of priests. Hilkiah, his father, is thought by many to have been the priest who discovered the Law in the temple. (II Kings 22:8). While such a conclusion has no certain authority to

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sustain it, it is not improbable. His uncle, Shallum, has been supposed to have been the husband of Hulda, the prophetess. He was evidently a man of recognized rank and ability. Baruch, the scribe, was a grandson of a governor of the city (II Chron. 34:8), while Seraiah, the brother of Baruch, was the King's chamberlain and also a servant of Jeremiah.

On account of his great tenderness and intense sadness he has been called the "weeping prophet." This must not lead to an idea that he was weak or sentimental. He rather fills the figure of Zephaniah, "a strong man weeping bitterly." As a true patriot and prophet of Jehovah "he wept for the slain of his people." He saw the impending crisis with such vividness and certainty that it had all the gloom of reality. Had he not been profoundly moved he would not have been worthy of the place he was called to fill as a leader of the people. True, he beheld in the perspective the dawn of a brighter day for a faithful remnant but the immediate prospect like Byron's dream of darkness, was "A lump of death—a chaos of clay."

Dr. Geikie has condensed the situation in the following admirable statement. "No one so far as we know, bore so dauntless and persistent a testimony against the sins of his countrymen as Jeremiah. The relapse into heathenism under Jehoiakim roused him to the uttermost. Timid, shrinking and sensitive by nature, love of his country and enthusiasm for Jehovah



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gave him a courage and constancy which no dangers appalled. He might in his bosom feel the humility of a child and think himself unable to speak in public. (Chap. 1:6). He might wish his 'head were waters and his eyes a fountain of tears that he might weep day and night for the Daughter of his People.' (Chap. 9:1). He might 'sigh for a lodge in the wilderness' to escape the sin around him. But all this passed away when he appeared before his fellow citizens. In the presence of king or prince or priest or populace he was as God had predicted, defiant as a fortified town, and immovable as a pillar of iron or walls of brass."

As we approach his writings we note the marked characteristics of his strong and positive nature. He distinctly claimed inspiration, that he was speaking for God. He had the intense earnestness of a true man of God. The genuineness of his writings was attested by Josephus and Philo as well as by quotations in the New Testament. (Matt. 2:17, 16:14 and Hebrews 8:12).

His writings as they come to us appear to be in much confusion. It is evident that it was his purpose that they should be preserved. When a part of them was destroyed, cut to pieces and burned by the king to whom they had been sent, they were rewritten by his scribe. Why the writings of a scholar and a man of literary ability should be in such disorder seems hard to explain. It is possible that his death might

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have been unexpected and his work left incomplete. The last authentic word about him was of his removal to Egypt. In the confusion of flight his prophecies may have been collected without regard to order and transmitted to posterity in that condition.

Many critics have taken in hand the work of setting his writings in order, but their lack of agreement except in a few points leads us to fear that the task is wellnigh a hopeless one. The student will find many of them excellent for study and reference. Dr. Wm. Smith in his *Old Testament History* makes a simple analysis, which, without solving the difficulties is a good working basis for the study of Jeremiah. It is as follows: Chapters 1 to 21, contain the substance of the "book" mentioned in chapter 36:32, and includes prophecies from the thirteenth year of Josiah to the fourth of Jehoiakim. Chapters 22 to 25 contain shorter prophecies, delivered at different times against the kings of Judah and the false prophets. In chapters 26 to 28 are prophecies of the fall of Jerusalem and the history connected with it. Chapters 29 to 31 contain a message of comfort to the exiles in Babylon. Chapters 32 to 44 give a history of the last two years before the capture of Jerusalem. The position of chapter 45 seems disconnected and bears reference chiefly to the part taken by Baruch. Chapters 46 to 51 are against foreign nations, ending with

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the great prediction against Babylon. Chapter 52 is a supplementary narrative whose origin is not known. While much confusion is about the order of the writings of Jeremiah they are among the least questioned and most highly prized of the prophetic messages.

CHAPTER 3—INTRODUCTORY TO EZEKIEL  
AND OBADIAH.

1. Ezekiel, who clearly belongs to this period, was a captive of the first deportation, a member of a community of exiles settled on the banks of the river Chebar in Babylon. The exact location is not known. It was here in the fifth year of the captivity of Jehoiakim, B. C. 595, and in the thirteenth year and fourth month of some unknown event, that the call from Jehovah came to him. It is strongly probable that he was of the priesthood of the house of Zadoc and therefore among the higher class of which alone this captivity consisted. Incidentally we learn that he was married and of the death of his wife (chap. 24: 18), and that he had a house in which at one time he called together the elders of Israel. (Chap. 8:1). The last date mentioned is the twenty-seventh year of the captivity, hence his ministry must have extended through twenty years at least. He was contemporaneous with Jeremiah and Daniel. There is reason to think that he may have been a pupil of the former in

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Judea. There is a tradition that he was murdered by some Jewish prince whom he had convicted of idolatry, and that he was buried in the tomb of Shem at Arphaxad on the banks of the Euphrates.

His language was not of the purest Hebrew and does not indicate the culture of Jeremiah and other earlier prophets.

His predictions are wonderfully varied. They abound in sublime but mystical symbols, in visions, in similitudes, in parables, in proverbs and poems, in allegories and in open and definite predictions. His writings were ranked among the "Treasures" whose difficulties prevented their reading by those under thirty years of age.

He seems to have been humble, preferring the title, "son of man." The symbol of eating the roll (chaps. 2:8 to 3:3), upon which was written on both sides, "lamentations, mourning and woe," which became to his taste "like honey for sweetness," indicates both the difficulty of his mission and his consecration to it. His meat and drink was to do the will of Jehovah. His task was hard and ungrateful. He was sent to a people whom he designated as the "House of Disobedience." They were "hard of forehead and stout of heart."

The book may be variously divided according to its chronological arrangement or with reference to sub-

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jects treated. Perhaps that adopted by Dr. Smith in his Old Testament history is as helpful as any for general use:

First. Ezekiel's call. Chapters 1 to 3:15.

Second. The general carrying out of his commission. Chapters 3:16 to 7.

Third. The rejection of the people because of their idolatrous worship. Chapters 8 to 11.

Fourth. Sins of the age rebuked in detail. Chapters 12 to 19.

Fifth. Nature of the judgment and the guilt which caused it. Chapters 20 to 23.

Sixth. The meaning of the punishment commencing. Chapter 24.

Seventh. God's judgments on seven heathen nations, viz., Ammon, chapter 25:1-7; Moab, verses 8-11; Edom, verses 12-14; Philistia, verses 15-17; Tyre, chapters, 26 to 28:19; Sidon, verses 20-24; Egypt, chapters 29 to 32.

Eighth. Prophecies after the destruction of Jerusalem concerning the future condition of Israel. Chapters 33 to 39.

Ninth. The glorious consummation. Chapters 40 to 48.

This latter section, related to the distant future, is clearly Messianic. An interval of thirteen years between it and the last recorded prophecy, intervened. It has been compared to the "second Isaiah" and to

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the closing chapters of Zechariah, although its genuineness as a production of Ezekiel has not been questioned. In many respects Ezekiel deserves his rank as a major prophet. He did much to correct the evil of his time, quickened the faith in the heart of a broken and almost hopeless nation, and best of all, kept bright the star of Messianic hope.

2. Obadiah, a fragment of but twenty-one verses, has been variously placed in the chronological order of its writing. It has been fixed by some among the earliest written prophecies and with equal positiveness by others among the latest.

We have little certain knowledge of the writer. Some have thought him identical with the governor of the house of Ahab, others that he was the one who presided at the restoration of the temple in the reign of Josiah. The name was of common occurrence and does not indicate the time of historical connection. Internal evidence seems to point to the Babylonian captivity. The burden of the prophecy was the overthrow of Edom after the fall of Jerusalem under the Chaldeans. It was a "rumor from Jehovah," which must have caused rejoicing among the remnant in Judah. It is probable that the prophecy sprung from one who had witnessed the heartless cruelty of that related people and who spoke from his own experience. Obadiah may have been among those carried away to Babylon. The prophecy had a terrible ful-

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fillment in the days of John Hyrcanus who utterly crushed them. Edom ceased to be a nation afterward. The closing words, "And Saviours shall come upon Mount Zion to judge the Mount of Esau and the kingdom shall be the Lord's," is Messianic in its sweep of significance.

#### CHAPTER 4—DANIEL THE STATESMAN PROPHET.

1. In the darkest hours of national calamity and disgrace two prophets are clearly located, Ezekiel and Daniel. While different in character their mission was identical. They were commissioned to comfort and guide Israel and prepare for the greater future before her. Ezekiel was of a priestly line and his message bore mainly upon ecclesiastical phases of the downfall and restoration. Daniel, coming as he probably did from among the princes of his people or at least from the nobility, dealt with a larger element of the governmental and political. He may truly be called the statesman prophet. His education, like that of Moses, favored his preparation for the part he filled. He not only guided and encouraged his own nation but brought honor and respect from Babylon.

2. Apart from an interest in the history contained in the book, two benefits have resulted from its study. The first is the high moral tone which is felt in reading it. Attractive as his talents and his person were, greater beauty was found in the moral stamina of a

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youth who refused to defile himself with his surroundings even for a gain partially good. No doubt this commended him more than any other quality to even his heathen associates and superiors.

The second great benefit has resulted from the effect of his prophecies in their bearing upon the Kingdom of Heaven. No doubt they kindled the hopes of the Jews and stimulated patience and loyalty. But they have been especially helpful as a source of Christian evidence. As this is considered under the head of Messianic fulfillment it need not detain us here except as relates to the question of the genuineness of the book.

The opening words bring us at once into the midst of the events of its historical setting. "In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, came Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon unto Jerusalem and besieged it. And the Lord gave Jehoiakim, king of Judah into his hand with part of the vessels of the house of God, and he brought the vessels of the house of God, and he carried them unto the land of Shinar to the house of his god." The first seven chapters are mainly historical. The story of Daniel and his three companions is rapidly traced.

In the third year, perhaps the same as their graduation from the "palace school," came the first great test of his ability and nobility of character. Beginning with the latter clause of the fourth verse of the second



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chapter, for some reason unknown to us, the language changes from the Hebrew to the Syrian or Aramaic tongue and continues through the seventh chapter where the Hebrew is resumed to the end. In the second chapter is the account of the king's vision of the great image representing the four great nations finally to be destroyed by the "stone cut out of the mountain" that should fill the whole world. It is followed by the wonderful interpretation of Daniel and forms one of the marvels of revelation. Passing a narration of events in the third, fourth, fifth and sixth chapters in which are related stories familiar to every child, we are brought in the seventh chapter to Daniel's vision of the four beasts whose meaning seems almost identical with that of the Great Image. Chapter 8 recounts the vision of the Ram and the He-goat, foreshadowing the conflict between the Grecian and Oriental powers. It has been thought to have a special bearing upon the rise of Mohammedan power and its overthrow by Christianity. In chapter 9 is the remarkable vision of the seventy weeks, to be considered later. Passing chapters 10 and 11 which appear to refer to events of history more obscure, perhaps relating in part to the Maccabean times, we find in the twelfth chapter a wonderful closing of this great book. It is like a bow spanning the horizon of the future, rich in blessing and bright with promise.

3. It remains to briefly glance at the critical con-

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troversy relating to the genuineness of the book. Did Daniel write it at the time purported or was it written fictitiously by a later writer? This is the question whose solution is so closely involved in a practical study of Christian evidence that it can scarcely be passed without notice. However unprofitable its discussion in the pulpit and in popular Bible classes, the student who is preparing to teach should at least be familiar with the arguments for and against the genuineness of this very important part of the Hebrew canon.

It may be asserted that until recent critical discussions, it has been taken at its face value. It was accepted by both Jewish and Christian scholars. It is found in the Greek translation of the Old Testament supposed to have been made about two and a half centuries B. C. It is recognized as genuine by Josephus. It is quoted by Christ. (Matt. 24:15, also Mark 13:14). Dr. William Smith asserts, "Externally it is as well attested as any book of Scripture."

4. In contrast with the traditional view is the very general position taken by advocates of modern critical methods, that Daniel was written by some unknown writer about the time of Antiochus Epiphanes B. C. 164, and that it was so skillfully passed off as the genuine account written by Daniel, that the fictitious nature of the book was never suspected by even Jewish scholars. There is at least no intimation in any writing extant indicating that its genuineness was ever

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doubted. This position was first taken by Porphyry, an infidel scholar of the third century A. D., in his writings against Christianity. So far as known his arguments produced no change in the faith of the Christian world. This view was again advocated by English Deists of the seventeenth century, and lastly with some variations, by the liberal school of criticism of recent times. It ought in fairness to be admitted that not all who accept this view deny the predictive element in prophecy or question the supernatural in revelation. On the other hand, it is evident that it has sprung mainly from rationalistic sources and is a part of a general system of interpretation which rejects the traditional view of the Bible. The reasons for this position can only be mentioned in the briefest way.

5. It is claimed that the use of the miraculous and the definiteness of prediction put belief in the supernatural to a "startling test" and in this respect the book is unlike other prophetic writings. In answer to this it is urged that the question of the miraculous must have already been settled in relation to other books whose genuineness is not questioned. As to definite predictions they are not more so than that of seventy years of captivity foretold by Jeremiah, nor predictions made by Ezekiel concerning the destruction of Jerusalem. The genuineness of these contemporaneous prophets is not in critical dispute. The difference in style grows out of the fact that Daniel was not a "professional" prophet

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and that he used a style well befitting his surroundings in Babylon as also did Ezekiel. The fact of its bilingual character also best fits a time when both languages, Hebrew and Aramaic, were in common use. It is urged that there are some discrepancies which are inconsistent with the traditional view. The Chaldeans are spoken of as a class of soothsayers which was not a fact until after the exile. On the other hand it is plain that Daniel used the term in a very general sense. Nebuchadnezzar is called the king of the Chaldeans. It is evident that as a people they had long been adepts in astrology. The objection is made that some statements concerning Babylonian kings are incorrect and would not have been made by one living at the time. But it must be remembered that only fragments of history come down to us from outside sources and these are so obscure and often conflicting, that there is little certain ground upon which to build an objection. The latest developments in Archaeology tend to confirm the historical correctness of Daniel. No doubt more light will yet be cast upon these questions. Perhaps the argument most relied upon is the use of certain Greek words supposed to be of later introduction than the time of the exile. At first as many as fifteen were pointed out. Later examination reduced this number to three musical instruments which are called by Greek names. Were there no other answer to this argument, it would seem wonderful indeed at a time

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when great changes had taken place in the Hebrew, when the language of literature was Greek and that of common speech Aramaic, that only three words could be found betraying its environment. It would seem more probable that unknown to critics, these words may have been introduced into Babylon at an earlier date than supposed. At best the argument is based upon ignorance rather than upon positive evidence. Dr. Orr says,\* "The striking evidence, e. g., that has come to light of the early date and wide diffusion of a high Greek civilization and of the continuous intercourse of the Greeks with other countries from remote times, renders nugatory any objection based on the alleged names of Greek instruments in the account of Nebuchadnezzar's music. Readers of Prof. Flinders Petrie's 'Ten Years' Digging in Egypt,' may think they find in connection with the discoveries of Taphanes, what seems a sufficient answer to that objection." Belshazzar is called in Daniel "king of the Chaldeans" but, it is objected, by no other historian is he so mentioned. The "contract tablets" show that Nabonidus had a son who bore the name Belshazzar and imply that he was associated with his father in the government.

6. The effort to adapt the visions of Daniel to any other interpretation than the traditional one as to the four kingdoms, is admittedly strained and unsatisfactory.

\*Orr's Problem of the Old Testament.

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Nothing fits the case so well as that which makes the Roman the last kingdom and no facts account for the "stone cut out of the mountain," except those furnished by the Kingdom of Christ. But even admitting a late origin of Daniel there are wonderful facts to be explained which the critical innovation cannot remove.

In view of the far-reaching revelations of Daniel, we may still pray with confidence of a triumphant answer:

"Thy kingdom come,  
Thy will be done,  
In earth as in heaven."

## PERIOD VIII

### BUILDING THE WASTE PLACES.

#### CHAPTER I—RETURN FROM EXILE.

1. There are no sadder words in the vocabulary of a people than bondage and exile. The tie of patriotism is almost as strong as that which binds the family together. The "man without a country" has at best a joyless life. Such had been for two centuries the sad condition of many thousands of Israelites, if we include the people of the northern kingdom. Seventy years had elapsed since the first deportation from Judea, in which the flower of her youth had been taken. They were no doubt treated kindly. They seem to have been permitted to occupy and own their homes. As in the case of Daniel they were promoted

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to places of honor and trust. Many grew rich in their enforced surroundings. But over all their lives hung the clouds of the shame of an outcast and homeless people.

Added to the sorrows of exile was the consciousness that their condition was a just judgment for their disobedience to the God who had wonderfully favored and honored them. No punishment which a parent can inflict upon a sensitive child equals that of cutting off communication. The climax of the divine displeasure in the opening of Hosea's prophecy was expressed in the words "*Lo ami*", meaning you are no longer my people.

2. At last the long night was breaking. Isaiah had predicted that Cyrus the Persian would conquer Babylon. Perhaps he was aware that he had been called "the anointed whom Jehovah had called from the east." It is significant that one of his first acts was to free the Jews and make provision for the rebuilding of their city and temple. What joy must the news of this act of Cyrus have caused. The report seemed too good to be true. In Psalm 96:10 their feelings are expressed:

"We were like them that dream;  
Then was our mouth filled with laughter,  
And our tongue with singing.  
Then was it said among the heathen,  
Jehovah hath done great things for them."

3. But their joy was tempered with great sadness.

### *The Growing Miracle*

Their country was desolate, their city and temple in ruins. They were compelled to begin their new national life under very depressing circumstances.

The edict of restoration was not confined to the Jews of Babylon but extended to all Israelites scattered in many lands. Only comparatively a few braved the hardships and privations of return. Many grown wealthy and prosperous preferred to remain in alien lands leaving the hardships of a restoration to their more heroic brethren.

4. Of those who returned from Babylon at the first were a few more than 50000, including 7337 slaves and also including in the census male children above twelve years of age. Of this number 4000 were priests. They represented only four of the twenty-four courses which had gone into captivity. Only seventy-four of the Levites were enrolled among the pioneers.

By the Kings decree the sacred vessels of the temple were restored to their possession.

They were furnished 420 camels and 6270 asses. It is evident that most of the people must have made the journey on foot.

It is significant that this new exodus took place in the same month as the flight of Israel from Egypt, almost nine hundred years before. Their leader, Zerubbabel, was a prince of the house of David, the son of Shealtiel. Jeshua, a descendant of Jozadak, filled the place of a priestly leader.



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Their journey which continued four months led through desert sands and rough, desolate regions.

5. No doubt many of their countrymen, who had escaped captivity, awaited their coming with intense interest. Some had been true to their faith but lacked intelligent leadership. Others had contracted mixed marriages and corrupted the stream of Jewish descent. The Edomites who had treated their unfortunate kinsmen so cruelly had settled in the country and were in possession of places of importance. They were compelled to release some of these to make place for the returning Jews.

The center of the land was occupied by the mixed races with which it had been peopled by the Assyrians after the captivity of the Northern tribes. Many Jews had inter-married with this mongrel race and together formed what was afterward known as the Samaritans.

6. Six months after leaving Babylon and two months after their arrival, the feast of Tabernacles was celebrated with elaborate ceremonies. On the spot where the brazen altar formerly stood there was reared an altar double the former size.

It must have been a gathering of intense interest, calculated to greatly encourage the Jews who had so long been deprived of these advantages. Many of the surrounding peoples may have gathered to witness

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this event. Knowing the favorable auspices of their return they doubtless viewed with respect and awe the solemn and splendid ceremonies. But it was not until the second month of the second year that the foundation of the new temple was laid. Preparations were at once begun for its erection. But dissensions arose. The Samaritan feud was re-opened by the refusal to admit them to a share in the building of the temple and partnership in the restored worship. Wearying years of vexation and delay follow.

It was in the year 522 B. C. on the accession of Darius that the enterprise was revived. It is to this period of restoration that the three post captivity prophets, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi belong. It was largely on account of their efforts, particularly the two first named, that success was finally attained in the rebuilding of both the city and the temple.

#### CHAPTER 2.—INTRODUCTION TO POST CAPTIVITY PROPHETS

1. Haggai. Of the three prophets that belonged to the period following the Exile, Haggai and Zechariah were contemporaries. Both had to do with the rebuilding of the temple at a time when discouragements threatened failure. The prophecy of Haggai was begun in the second year of Darius on the first day of the sixth month, B. C. 521. The tide of enthusiasm had ebbed. The returning exiles had suffered many

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determents. Fifteen years had passed and the altar on Mount Moriah and the foundation stone of the temple were all that were visible. True, the more wealthy had built fine houses among the ruins of Jerusalem. They still insisted that the time had not arrived to build the house of God. Jeremiah had predicted seventy years of captivity which they seem to have dated from the destruction of the temple instead of the first deportation. During the earlier years many discouragements had befallen the poorer classes. Accustomed to a more fertile soil, the stony ground of Palestine must have been a disappointment to those who had idealized it as the land of promise. They had suffered severe drouths. "The heavens had been stayed from dew and the earth from her first fruits."

It was at this juncture that the prophecy was made. In chapter first, the prophet sternly rebuked the rich for their selfishness and love of ease and admonished the poorer classes for their lack of faith.

The second prophecy (chapter 2: 1-9) was a message of encouragement. About seven weeks had elapsed during which marked progress had been made. A new feeling of discouragement grew out of the prospect of their being able to erect only an inferior building. The prophet assured Zerubbabel and Jeshua that Jehovah would stir the nations and "cause the wealth of all to come hither" and predicted that "The

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glory of this house will be greater than that of the former." The latter statement would seem to imply that the prophet had seen the former temple. If so the force of his words would be heard with increased emphasis.

The third prophecy (chapter 2: 10-19) came three months after work had been recommenced. They were encouraged to go on and assured of a divine blessing. "But from this day" when the building was recommenced, "I will bless you."

On the same day another message was delivered to Zerubbabel in which he was assured of the favor of Jehovah, that He would make him "like a signet ring on his hand" for "I have chosen thee says Jehovah of Hosts." (Chapter 2:20-23).

The brief record of the ministry of Haggai can lay little claim to literary beauty. It is the rugged and timely speech of a practical man, deeply in earnest, who seeks to accomplish the "duty at his feet." Results justified his efforts.

2. Zechariah. It has already been stated that Zechariah was a colaborer with Haggai in stirring the people to rebuild the temple. He was the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet. (Chapter 1: 1-7).

He probably entered upon his office in early youth. (Chapter 2: 4). He was a preacher of courage. He assured the people that they should surmount every

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obstacle. Much of his language like that of Ezekiel and Daniel, was highly symbolical. Even the Jewish Rabbis admitted that it was very difficult to understand. Tradition declares that the prophet died in a good old age and was buried beside his colleague, Haggai.

The book in its present form may be divided into three parts.

First. Introduction (chapter 1: 1-16) and a series of nine visions communicated to the prophet in the third year of his ministry. (Chapter 1: 17 to chapter 8).

Second. The second division (chapters 9 to 11) consists of various predictions concerning surrounding nations, with assurance that Jerusalem should be protected.

Third. The third division is entitled "the burden of the word of Jehovah for Israel." It seems to be a message for the nation at large as distinguished from Judah alone.

We do not enter the critical discussion which assumes that the last six chapters were written by some other author than that of the first eight chapters, which are generally regarded as genuine. The earlier opinion was that they must have been written much before the time of Zechariah. Later critics are equally positive that they are post-exilic but differ widely as to their unity. While interesting to scholars the subject cannot be discussed in this brief outline.

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The value of the book is indicated by frequent references to it in the New Testament. How familiar and comforting are the words in the thirteenth chapter, "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and uncleanness." The book of Revelation continually echoes its symbolic teachings.

It has entered into devotional literature and Hymnology. It breathes the spirit of comfort and hope. "And it shall come to pass in that day that there shall not be light, the bright ones shall withdraw themselves, but it shall be one day which is known unto Jehovah, not day and not night; but it shall come to pass that at evening there shall be light."

3. Malachi. The brief message of Malachi is the last of the prophecies and he the last writer in the Old Testament canon. Nothing is known of his personal history. Some incline to the conclusion that the book is anonymous and that its name, which means "my messenger," has reference to the one striking prediction concerning the coming of John the Baptist. Ezra has been thought by others to be its possible author. The view more generally taken regards Malachi as a person and the author of the prophecy.

The exact date may be uncertain but circumstances referred to seem to fit the time immediately after the return of Nehemiah to Persia after the rebuilding of

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the walls of the city and the reforms of his administration. According to Bishop Usher he was a contemporary of Nehemiah, B. C. 416. The conditions indicated and the evils denounced were the same as those of the reforms of Ezra and Nehemiah.

The prophecy opens with a statement of God's love for his people (chap. 1: 2-5). The condition of Israel was compared with that of the Gentile nation Edom, whose fall had been predicted.

He reproached the priests for their faithlessness. They had debased their office and misled the people. (Chap. 2:1-9).

Heathen marriage and divorce were denounced. (Chap. 2:10-16).

He admonished those who had grown skeptical asking, "Where is the God of judgment?" or as they put it, "Everyone that does evil is good in the eyes of Jehovah and he delighteth in them." His answer was decisive, "Behold, I will send My angel to prepare the way before Me, and suddenly he shall come to the temple. The Lord whom ye seek, and the angel of the covenant whom ye desire. Behold, He cometh! saith Jehovah of Hosts." (Chaps. 2:17 to 3:6). A charge was made against the people for neglecting their tithes. "Let them be paid and prosperity shall return." (Chaps. 3:13 to 4:3)

A call was made to keep the Law and a prom-

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ise that Elijah shall come "before the great and terrible day comes." It was appropriate that the closing words of the Old Testament should be a description of that personage with whose coming one of the Evangelists begins his history.

So the volume of prophecy was closed. Four centuries later another prophet, John the Baptist, by privilege the greatest born of woman, suddenly appeared on the banks of the Jordan and proclaimed the Kingdom of God at hand. The "Desire of the nations," the "Hope of Israel," "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the World," had come. In Him all the Law and the prophets passed into final and glorious fulfillment.



**PART THREE**  
**MESSIANIC FULFILLMENT**



## CHAPTER I

### PRESENT USE AND APPLICATION OF PROPHECY

1. In its application to the person and work of the Messiah the subject of Hebrew prophecy clearly reaches its climax. The mass of revelations made at different times and in various ways may appear without unity when read separately, but seen in their fulfillment they reveal a new meaning and coherence. All roads of divine revelation lead to Jesus Christ. In applying prophecy to the great end for which it was given we are drawing close to the heart of God. The spirit which should animate the student of this theme is not one of mere speculative interest. It is rather an intensely personal matter. It should be approached with the reverence felt by Moses as he drew near the Burning Bush. Not alone with a sense of awe and fear should we follow the footsteps of the Master in His word but with sentiments of gratitude and love for His gracious manifestation to us. It is not a light privilege to live in the "last days" when God "has spoken unto us by His Son." The writer once heard a distinguished mathematician say that when he realized some great law of his science he

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felt that God was in the classroom. It moved him to kneel in the midst of the solution and worship its Author. How much more should the study of truth that deals with the problems of the soul fill us with a sense of divine presence. When Newton had so far completed his demonstration of the law of gravitation that the result was certain he was so overcome with the greatness of the solution that he called an assistant to end the calculation. His emotion was too intense and his hand too unsteady to perform the last step of the discovery which has revolutionized science. The fulfillment of prophecy in Jesus Christ is the last step in the problem of divine revelation. In Him all the tangled threads are wrought into a glorious consummation.

2. But there are other reasons why this subject is very important. The study of prophecy, as compared with its relation to history, is of special use in the realm of Christian evidence. While always a valuable proof it is of peculiar force today. As a skillful commander scans the field of battle and masses his forces where there is greatest need, or makes timely use of his reserves, so must the defenses of the Christian faith be suited to time and occasion. Probably no opposition will be brought against it which it has not already sustained. Perhaps every argument in its defense has also been used in the past. But new combinations are continually appearing which demand

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specific treatment. The arguments of a generation ago may not have the same force if used today. The student and especially the teacher, if he is successful, must not draw from stagnant waters, but from a running stream. It is not that any element of proof should be abandoned. What is old to-day may reappear in a new garb tomorrow.

Each age has its fashion of thought. It is by no means certain that the same alignment of facts confidently relied on in the present, will be made in the future. Dr. Creighton,\* Professor in Cornell University, places emphasis upon this fact. He says, "Each new age as well as each individual may be regarded as governed largely by current presuppositions and prejudices. . . . The eighteenth century, for example, was greatly under the influence of mechanical ideas. Newton's discovery made it possible to regard the world as a great machine, the parts of which were all fitted together according to the laws of mechanics. This view led to such a vast extension of knowledge in the realm of physics and astronomy that the conceptions upon which it was based were applied in every possible field, to psychology, to ethics, to political science. The world itself, as well as religious creeds and political and social institutions was supposed to have been deliberately made and fashioned by some agent. Again, in these later years of the

\*Elements of Logic.

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nineteenth century we are dominated by the idea of evolution. The biological notion of an organism which grows or develops, has been applied in every possible field. . . . It is easy for us to realize the limitations and insufficiency of the notion of mechanism as employed by the thinkers of the eighteenth century. But it is not improbable that the twentieth century may be able to see more clearly than we are able to do, the weaknesses and limitations of the conception which has proved so fruitful in this generation." These wise suggestions which relate to science and philosophy may well be pondered by the student of the Bible. It is true here as elsewhere that a single idea is made to dominate all others until superseded by an emphasis upon some other thought. The sovereignty of God as emphasized by Calvin almost eclipsed freedom of the will. The opposite extreme is equally fatal to a perfect development of theology. Over emphasis upon a verbal inspiration has led to the mistaken reaction which rejects inspiration altogether. Such extremes should be carefully guarded. These observations should lead to a careful adjustment of the arguments used in grounding our faith in Christianity. Formerly miracles were an end of controversy. Today attention is directed to the laws of matter and the underlying principles of society. History is studied as a unit. It is legitimate to apply the law of induction to this realm of fact and ask for an

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accounting. In this relation a study of God in history is a most timely element of Christian Evidences. In this field the Messianic fulfilment of prophecy shines most brightly and clearly.

## CHAPTER II

### PROPHECY AS CHRISTIAN EVIDENCE

1. At no time of the Christian era has there been greater need for an intelligent basis for faith than today. The age of mysticism is passing, and as never before facts are demanded in every form of investigation. No department of knowledge is excepted. Men will not take Christianity on a weaker basis than they do other systems of truth. It is both a very practical age and an age of doubt. The great achievements of science, revealing the operation of natural law in new and wonderful spheres of action, have led many to reject any other than fixed causes. Everything must be accounted for on a naturalistic basis. The supernatural in revealed religion is either doubted or discarded. Much of this sentiment is passive and leads to no open opposition to Christianity but is a barrier to faith.

2. On the other hand whoever accepts the claims of Jesus Christ sees God not only in the fixed and uniform phenomena of nature but also recognizes Him as a divine person able to act from without as well as through "resident forces." He is both immanent and transcendent. He is not alone Creator and Ruler



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but Father. He has not only intelligence and power but exercises infinite love. The fact of human personality capable of free self-expression, independent of the limitation of physical causes, suggests a higher personality which presides over the universe. That such a Being should have limited freedom, that His hand should be restrained by His own laws from accomplishing directly His will, or that He should be unable to reveal Himself to creatures able to understand Him—these are views not only destructive to all revealed religion but they are contrary to reason itself, and tend to rule out moral responsibility. It is often assumed to be unscientific to assert the supernatural basis of Christianity. It is a fact, however, that the true scientist has no opinion upon anything except facts. Too often the philosophy of the investigator passes for a logical conclusion. Many scientific students are firm believers in the supernatural claims of Jesus Christ. In a recent article in a popular magazine,\* the supernatural is strongly affirmed on scientific grounds. The writer says, "All attempts at explaining away the miracles of the Bible as merely natural occurrences wrongly supposed to be miraculous by those who witnessed them, are now so justly regarded as failures that we need not waste time with them. The supernatural enters too deeply into the very essence of that which a Christian must believe for it to be appreciably

\*Article in *Everybody's* by William Hanna Thompson, M.D., LL.D.

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affected by details concerning any particular miracle. Without the supernatural the Christian religion is nothing. . . . The strongly logical mind of John Stuart Mill led him to say that if once we admit that God is a personal God miracles become as possible as anything else can be."

Supernatural manifestations are not only to be expected if the personality of God and His kinship to humanity is admitted, but we must also infer that they have been and will be used economically. God does only that for which a definite need is indicated. To think otherwise is to under-rate His greatness and wisdom. So far as we are able to know, His revelation in the Bible is complete. With Jesus Christ introduced to the world, with His kingdom established and with the way into it and the path of Christian living marked out, no new written revelation need be expected. In the past miracles were used with the strictest frugality. Long periods passed without any such manifestations. They were used at the opening of Dispensations or at critical transitional periods and then ceased until some unusual demand required their agency. The reaction in our day against the miraculous is perfectly reasonable so far as the present is concerned. While not impossible, their use at this time is not indicated by any great need in carrying out the divine plan of redemption. Dr. Thompson further says, "Miracles are impossible, cries Renan. We would

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agree with him in this statement if he had added the word now. God would not be the just judge of all the earth if He permitted a miracle in our time."

Moreover, advocates of Christianity need have little fear of open opposition. The grosser forms of attack, such as were waged by Julian the Apostate, by Paine and by Ingersol have ceased to command the influence formerly exerted. The very coarseness of their assaults upon what the world has long tested and found morally wholesome is their best answer. It would be easy to fill many pages with eulogies of Jesus as the world's foremost teacher of morals, by those who deny His claims of divine authority. Many who question His supernatural power, readily admit that He was a perfect man. The eloquent interest of Ernest Renan is a well known example. He calls Him, "A matchless man, so grand, that, although here all must be judged from a purely scientific point of view, I would not gainsay those who, struck with the exceptional character of His work, call Him God." He concedes the claim, that Jesus "founded the eternal religion of humanity, the religion of the soul," but denies the record of His deeds. His assumption of miracles was an intentional deception to meet the expectations of His superstitious followers. To such inconsistency men are driven who deny His divinity. From this subtle skepticism the advocates of Christianity have

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most to fear. Its influence prevades literature. It has open advocates in seats of learning and even in the pulpit.

3. What then is the remedy for these tendencies which threaten to undermine the foundations of a positive faith in Christianity? Certainly not a weak compromise. If the assumptions of the supernatural power and authority of Jesus were vain and false, it is difficult to see how his moral greatness can be saved. It is better to meet the issue openly. A negative attitude, a hiding behind the sacredness of our faith, a plea for an armistice,—none of these things are worthy of the spirit of boldness of those “who have been with Jesus.” It was the method of the Master to challenge investigation. We may be assured that if on earth today He would demand that His claims and teachings be tried by the same laws as those used in other fields of investigation. He would insist that spiritual facts and moral phenomena be recognized as well as physical. He would demand of those who deny the supernatural origin of the Christian religion, that they find some more reasonable solution of its phenomena. It should be made clear how a system of falsehood has been the cause of the most beautiful and wholesome things of the world, while its opposite has congealed or sterilized everything it has touched. Here is clearly a problem of history. It is strictly reasonable and scientific.

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As this chapter is being written the ter-centennial celebration of the translation of the Scriptures authorized by King James I in 1611, is being held throughout the English speaking world. Eloquent tributes have been spoken, not by ministers only but by men of affairs. Statesmen and business men have gladly made expression of their estimates of its uplifting power among men. They may have fallen short of theologians and philosophers in critical analysis but they have brought us a verdict from the great jury whose decision is final. A renowned statesman and orator in a recent address on the Bible,\* puts the question in the same direct way he would an important political issue. He says, "Atheists and Materialists declare the Bible is merely the work of man and that it was written under the limitation that applies to human wisdom. Taking this position they necessarily must contend that, unless man has degenerated in ability and declined in wisdom he now can produce a book equal to the Bible. Let them produce it." Such a challenge in kind Jesus made more than once in the presence of those who questioned his claims. Such expressions create confidence in the stability of Christianity as a great, redeeming social power. Until something better is given, the Bible which furnishes practical guidance and hope to a world in need, will refuse to convict it of falsehood.

\*Hon. W. J. Bryan's address on the Bible, at Chicago.

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4. It is in the power of the Bible to keep pace with the world's history and in the marvelous fulfillment of its messages both in fact and in spirit, that Hebrew prophecy becomes a powerful witness for the truth of Christianity. Its specific predictions spoken centuries ago, cannot be accounted for on the ground of fraud or collusion. Their fulfillment is unexplainable on rationalistic grounds alone. But even greater than these is the world's uplift through the power of its teachings. It is a grand sight to witness the ocean agitated by a storm, its waves rising like mountains, lashing the shore with their fury, but it is grander still to see the whole sea lifted by an unseen power and dashed upon the beach when the tide comes in.

Another fact must not be overlooked in the study of Messianic fulfillment, namely the perfect accord which exists in Old Testament prophecy, not only in the deeds of Christ but in the spirit that always actuated His life. Truly, "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." It was because He was above His environment and not the product of it that He was misunderstood by His closest friends. Even to the last they expected a great worldly power. His enemies said He had a devil. Nicodemus did not understand the conditions of citizenship in His kingdom. The woman of Samaria could not see how worship could be acceptable that was not localized. His

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disciples were as much in the dark as she was in regard to the spiritual harvests which He was preparing them to reap.

It was this idea of a great spiritual dominion which the world did not perceive that marks Him as divine. The consciousness of His mission never left Him. While intensely human in sympathy He was compelled to live in the world alone. He seemed as one dreaming of impossible things. That this dream has grown into sublime reality proves that He was not a social product but what He claimed, a messenger from God. It is this phase of prophetic fulfillment that is most convincing. The mysteries of the centuries are revealed in Him. The tragedy of it all was that when He came to His own, attested by all the prophets, they rejected Him and cruelly took His life. Age after age as His power and glory emerge, the miracle of His life becomes more attractive and convincing.

## CHAPTER III

### PROPHECIES VERIFIED IN NEW TESTAMENT.

1. It is asserted by those who reject the Messianic proofs contained in Old Testament prophecies that such an application was an after thought, that our Lord and His apostles made no such use of them. Fortunately such an objection may be easily tested by reference to New Testament records. It will be seen that not only incidental reference was made, but that they were relied on as a chief source of evidence. It may be assumed also that such claims were put to a critical test at the time they were spoken. The Rabbis and even the common people among the Jews were keenly alive to this use of the Scriptures. Any misapplication, especially as to the Messiah, would have been detected and repudiated. There is a strong presumption that the passages referred to were those usually regarded as Messianic. The supernatural endowment of Jesus and the apostles aside, we may at least accord them the weight of intelligent and well informed Jews.

But we may go farther. Many who question the final authority of the apostles accept the words of Jesus



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as an end of controversy. Even His contemporaries who bitterly resented His assumption of divinity, regarded Him as a teacher of unusual power. Enemies admitted that He spoke "as never man spoke." The wisest among the doctors of the Law treated His words with respect. All are familiar with His notable interview in the temple at twelve years of age. His parents found Him "in the midst of the teachers both hearing them and asking them questions." It is stated that "all that heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers." At the close of the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew says, "The multitudes were astonished at His teaching: for He taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes." A similar admission is made regarding His reception at His home in Nazareth after His baptism.

It was the custom of the Jews to rebuke any violation of the law or its traditions. They were peculiarly sensitive in regard to the observance of the Sabbath. Even healing the sick or plucking grain to eat as He passed through a field was sharply criticised. These facts show that whatever reference was made by Jesus and His followers to the Scriptures must have been carefully weighed and tested at the time it was spoken.

2. What then was the attitude of Jesus to the Old Testament Scriptures? Certain conclusions are unmistakable. He recognized Moses as the lawgiver

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of the Old Dispensation. It is at least strongly implied that he wrote the books assigned to him in the Hebrew canon. He is always referred to as a prophet inspired of God. In the Sermon on the Mount He said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law till all be fulfilled." (Matt. 5:17-18). Many specific references are made to the Law in which it is always ascribed to Moses. Concerning divorce "He saith unto them, Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives." Inculcating parental respect, He said, "For Moses said, Honor thy father and thy mother; and whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death." (Mark 7:10). In the parable of Dives and Lazarus he said to the rich man, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." Again he spoke to the opposing Jews, "There is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me." (John 5:45-47). It is true that Jesus was not intending a critical discussion of the books referred to in these and other like passages. The question does not appear to have been raised in any form. That so vital a matter should have escaped the knowledge of the great teachers of that and previous centuries seems incredible.

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3. Again, prophecies definitely applied to the Messiah are numerous used in the ministry of Jesus. He made a constant appeal to these writings in confirmation of His claims. "Ye search the Scriptures," He said, "because ye think that in them ye have eternal life, and these are they that bear witness of me; and ye will not come to me that ye may have life." (John 5:39). "The Son of Man goeth even as it is written of Him, but woe unto that man through whom the Son of Man is betrayed!" (Matt. 26:24). On the way to Emmaus the day of His resurrection in revealing Himself to the two disciples He said, "O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Behooved it not the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into His glory? And beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." (Luke 24: 25-27). Not only the facts of His death and resurrection were predicted but the universal spread of His kingdom was set forth in advance. In giving His last commission He said, "Thus it is written that Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name unto all nations beginning at Jerusalem." (Luke 24: 44-47).

These selections from many references to the proph-

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ecies fulfilled in Him, are clear proof of His positive reliance upon the Scriptures to prove His Messianic claims.

4. The use of the prophecies by other New Testament writers is equally certain and definite. Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, a man profoundly learned in the Law, makes these writings his chief instrument of defense in presenting Christ to the Jews. We read that at Thessalonica he went into the synagogue "And for three sabbath days reasoned with them from the Scriptures, opening and alleging that it behooved the Christ to suffer and to rise again from the dead, and this Jesus I proclaim unto you is the Christ." (Acts 17:2-3). It is further stated that he did this "as was his custom." Peter said, "To Him bear all the prophets witness that through His name everyone that believeth on Him shall receive remission of sins." (Acts 10:43). Again he said, "Yea and all the prophets from Samuel, and them that follow after as many as have spoken they also told of these days." (Acts 3:24). Such references could be greatly multiplied. These are sufficient however to prove that the use of the Old Testament Scriptures as direct and positive proof of the claims of Jesus to be the Messiah, was no after thought. The application of these Scriptures was the burning question that appealed to every Jewish hearer. The tremendous power with which the Gospel moved in its victorious spread over

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the entire world in an almost incredibly short time was due to this cause more than to any other.

5. It has already been stated that Christianity stands alone among systems of religion in its reliance upon prophecy as a chief element of proof. It is true that the oracles of Greece and Rome assumed to foretell events of the very near future. Their practices were not unlike Palmistry in our day or current folklore concerning the weather. Much was made of Astrology by the Chaldeans. Many other instances could be shown of gropings after the supernatural. In modern times Mormonism produces the most striking example of prophecy as a human invention. Though successfully used with the uninformed, its conflicting "revelations" stamp it with weakness and falsity when brought to the light of intelligent investigation. How utterly insignificant the greatest of these efforts to forecast the future appears, compared with the prophecies of the Bible. In the one case lapse of time brings certain oblivion or confusion. In the use of Hebrew prophecy, its meaning, its far reaching forecast of events and its wonderful fulfillment grow more striking and powerful with the lapse of time.

## CHAPTER IV

### TYPICAL ELEMENT OF MESSIANIC PROPHECY.

1. Before further considering prophecy in its more direct form it is proper to give some attention to Old Testament types, fulfilled in Christ and the institutions of the New Dispensation. A popular conception of Typology is, that it is an incidental form of revelation of little better than secondary importance. By many it is looked upon as erratic and obscure. These estimates have been the result of at least two causes. In the first place it must be admitted that Typology has been greatly overworked and misused by a certain class of interpreters. Strained and fanciful conclusions have been drawn. Biblical persons and events have been used without warrant of Scripture. This excessive and unwise application of an important method of revelation has brought it into disrepute with many practical Bible students. On the other hand, those who question the unity of the Bible, who see in it only a collection of documents of human origin, reject the typical element as frivolous or absurd. This form of revelation emphasizes the unity of the Bible. With those who are skeptical as to its divine origin, who

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apply to its study analysis rather than synthesis, types have little weight. The proper attitude toward this form of revelation is at neither extreme. To avoid an over use of the allegorical, it is best, especially where a question of doctrine is involved, to use as types only those which are designated as such in the Scriptures themselves. It will be noted that these are never trivial or fanciful. They usually involve great generalizations of truth whose value is at once recognized. It is not necessary, however, to discourage the use of Biblical comparisons in teaching where no type is indicated in the Scriptures, but these taken alone should not be pressed as conveying authority.

The use of types is not confined to revelation but finds abundant illustration in nature. We hear much of types in plant and animal life. Every seed contains the embryo or type of what it is to be in maturity. This line of investigation forms one of the most fascinating studies in Biology. If, then, God is the author of the Bible; if, as we assume, He has superintended the growth of this great book from the beginning; if, indeed it is really the word of God, why should we not expect this law of nature to be manifested? Seen from this point of view the Old Testament types furnish some of the most striking instances of Messianic evidence.

3. Before giving examples from the Scriptures of this form of revelation, it is well to have as clear an

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understanding as possible of the meaning of the term type. Fairburn\* says, "Understanding the word type in the theological sense, or with respect to the relations between the Old and New Testament things—for the word itself is undoubtedly used with greater latitude—it is admitted by general consent, first, that in the character, action or institution which is denominated the type, there must be a resemblance in form or spirit to what answers to it under the Gospel; and secondly, that it must not be any character, action or institution occurring in the Old Testament Scriptures, but such only as had their ordination of God and were designed by Him to foreshadow and prepare for the better things of the Gospel." Prof. Everest in his *Great Demonstration* makes clear in a brief way the sense in which the term type may be understood. "A type is some material thing, an institution or observance, or a person having a definite use under the Old Testament economy but also designed to picture, symbolize or foreshadow some person or thing under the New Dispensation."

4. A more satisfactory way in which to study types is by considering their use in unquestioned Scriptural examples. While all types are directly or indirectly related to the work of Christ there are a number whose Messianic application is clear and definite. Their purpose is unmistakable. From these we select

\*Fairburn's *Typology*.



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a few examples. Some are personal and others are institutional.

First. One of the most striking of the former class is that of Adam as a type of Christ. "Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned:—for until the law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression, who is a figure of Him that was to come. But not as the trespass, so also is the free gift. For if by the trespass of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God, and the gift by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abound unto the many." (Rom. 5:i2-16). As federal head of the race Adam sinned through unbelief and on account of his transgression death entered into the world. Christ, "the second Adam," also stands at the head of the race and by His righteousness which cost His life, He has conquered sin and made possible the removal of the penalty of death. So that, "As in Adam all die so in Christ shall all be made alive."

But death has fallen on the entire race on account of its sinful condition, even upon those who had not personally committed sin, including infants. Justice demands a race salvation from a race sin, and deliverance from its consequences. This is assured in the

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death of Christ. Hence only our personal transgressions need trouble us. For these our personal acceptance of Christ through faith and obedience is the remedy. Thus in a few sentences a great problem of redemption is set before us.

Second. Another important type is that of Melchizedek, "King of righteousness and priest of the most High God." (Heb. 7:4-10). In the dual office of king and priest and in the fact that he was inducted into his office by an oath, he represents Christ whose claims rest upon "two immutable things," the promise and oath of Jehovah.

In that he did not inherit his office through a priestly line he typifies Christ who grounds His right upon the "power of an endless life." He is thus of a superior line of priesthood, the order of Melchizedek rather than that of Levi.

Third. Moses was a type of Christ as a prophet and deliverer. "Jehovah thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken. (Deut. 18: 15). Peter affirms this passage to be a prediction of Jesus. (Acts 3:22). There are a number of striking points of likeness.

Moses gave the law, Christ the Gospel. Moses left a royal court to save his people. Jesus, though rich in the honors of heaven became poor "that we through His poverty might become rich." Both were

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deliverers from bondage. Moses was mediator of the Old Covenant, Christ of the New.

Fourth. The redemption of Israel under Moses is a clear and instructive type of Christ's emancipation of the world from the bondage of sin. In both cases miracles were wrought that the people might believe. Both were personal leaders. The Israelites were "baptized unto Moses in the cloud and the sea." Likewise the believer is baptized into Christ. This act marks the final step in escaping from the dominion of sin. Compare, "For I would not, brethren, have you ignorant, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual food; and did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of a spiritual rock that followed them; and the rock was Christ," (1 Cor. 10: 1-4) and "Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried therefore with Him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life," (Rom. 6:3-4).

The trials and experiences of the wanderings of Israel are compared to those of the Christian. The crossing of Jordan has been thought to beautifully foreshadow the Christian's death. The land of Canaan is a type of the "rest that remaineth for the children of God."

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Fifth. The sacrifices of the Law typify Christ in His death, "who died for our sins according to the Scriptures." He was called "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." The fearful danger of continuing in sin and the fact of the atonement are presented with remarkable clearness and force.

Sixth. The tabernacle is one of the most wonderful, suggestive and lucid types of the church. The ordinances belonging to the world are clearly indicated by the brazen altar and the laver. The duties and privileges of the Christian are represented by the appointments and services in the Holy place, while those of the heavenly state are typified by the most Holy place. The interpretation of this type is most explicit as recorded in Hebrews 9:1-7. "Now even the first covenant had ordinances of divine service, and its sanctuary, a sanctuary of this world. For there was a tabernacle prepared, the first, wherein were the candlestick, and the table, and the showbread; which is called the Holy place. And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holy of holies; having a golden altar of incense, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was a golden pot holding the manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; and above it cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat; of which things we cannot now speak severally. Now these things having been thus prepared, the priests go

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in continually into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the services; but into the second the high priest alone, once in the year, not without blood, which he offereth for himself, and for the errors of the people.”

Seventh. An eloquent comparison between Mount Sinai and Mount Zion is made in Hebrews 12:18-26. Words of interpretation are scarcely needed to make clearer the meaning of these types. Almost the entire book of Hebrews is devoted to the enforcement of the symbolic significance of the Old Testament.

5. This brief glimpse of the typical element of Messianic prophecy must suffice to show its character and value. It may be admitted that the Christian world owes much to the clear distinction between the covenants in this element of teaching. It fully justifies the dignity and value of typical presentations in the Bible. Before leaving the subject of types, their use may be briefly summed up as follows:

First. They show the marvelous unity of thought running through divine revelation. We are forced to the conclusion that one master mind has superintended this revelation from beginning to end.

Second. It is evident some of the Old Testament prophecies, notably those of David in the Psalms, were based upon a typical conception when made. This explains certain passages which have a local application but which are made use of in a typical

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way in the New Testament. (Comp. Hosea 11: 1 and Matt. 2:15). Here Israel prefigures God's greater Son, Jesus Christ.

Third. Types are of special value as they fix the meanings of language. Words change in shades of thought. We are in danger of losing their clear import. Types, built upon personal and historical facts do not change. In their monumental nature the ordinances of the New Testament have more than mere ceremonial significance. In both baptism and the Lord's supper the Gospel is so proclaimed that its simple facts can never be wholly obscured.

The use of sacrifice as a type of Christ's atonement for sin may not explain all the mysteries of the divine purpose, and should be used only within the limits of the interpretation of the Scriptures themselves, yet it stands guard over this great fact of redemption.

To use the words of the sainted Isaac Errett, spoken with tears coursing his cheeks, "We may not know why Jesus Christ need die for the sins of the world but we believe that somehow God reached His hand through the broken heart of Jesus and clasped the hand of humanity."

## CHAPTER V

### SPECIFIC MESSIANIC PROPHECY

1. In the last analysis all prophecy is vitally related to the mission of Jesus Christ. He came to fulfill the Law and the Prophets without exception. He is the center of revelation. An understanding of this is essential. But there are certain statements made in the messages of the prophets which have a direct bearing upon His person and mission and may profitably be considered apart from those more remotely related to them. The Messianic predictions have already been noted in many instances in the general study of Hebrew prophecy and only a brief summing up of this class of prophecies is here needed. There is, however, a benefit resulting from a prophetic retrospect made from the standpoint of their fulfillment. In a few cases also a fuller and more emphatic statement of them in their bearings upon the mission of the Messiah is required to complete the study of the prophecy.

2. At the outset of this retrospect we are impressed with the presence of a divine purpose running through thousands of years having a single end in view. What is clearly suggested in the study of types is more

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fully impressed in the larger view of other forms of revelation. That this fact was well understood by the apostles is clearly set forth in their own words. Two or three references taken from many, will suffice to show how unmistakably they saw the unity of purpose underlying all dispensations and revelations. Paul, writing to the Ephesians in view of the mysteries of redemption, says, "That now unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus, our Lord." (Eph. 3:10-11). Peter in his sermon at Pentecost charges that "He was delivered up by the determinate council and foreknowledge of God." (Acts 2:23). Jesus says, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16). In Revelations (chapter 13:8) Jesus is spoken of as the "Lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world."

Not only foreknowledge is asserted but a progressive unfolding of His purpose has been shown. The first prophecy, "And Jehovah God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, cursed art thou above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed:



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he shalt bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel," (Gen. 3:14-15), states in the most rudimental form the hope of a redemption in Christ. It was to be through the seed of the woman. A bitter conflict was predicted but victory over evil assured. Only a knowledge of the dread contagion of sin could have led to such a statement. That the deliverance predicted could have referred to any other than that from the curse of sin would have been to mock the world's blackest despair. While indefinite at the time given it has grown clearer in the light of the history of the race each succeeding age. It is in perfect harmony with later revelations.

Centuries pass before we find any statement recorded in which the promise is repeated and enlarged. It must not be concluded, however, that no words of hope and courage were spoken to the patriarchs. It is said concerning Abel that, "He had witness borne to him that he was righteous, God bearing witness in respect of his gifts." (Heb. 11:4). Of Enoch it is said, "For he had witness borne to him that before his translation he had been well pleasing to God." (Chap. 11:5). In verse 39 of the same chapter we are told that, "These all having had witness borne to them through their faith received not the promise."

Two thousand years later the next important step was taken. God calls Abram and places him at the head of a great family through which the chosen seed

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should come. While remarkable for its economy of words it has a most comprehensive scope and far reaching significance, "And I will make thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing. And I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse; and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 12:2-3). It contained the elements of both temporal and spiritual fulfillment. It included the whole world in its scope of blessing. As explained by Paul, "Brethren I speak after the manner of men: Though it be but a man's covenant, yet when it hath been confirmed, no one maketh it void, or addeth thereto. Now to Abraham were the promises spoken, and to his seed. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." (Gal. 3:15-16). The word seed has a special significance as applied to Christ. This great promise undergirds all dispensations and looks on to the world's complete redemption. As we have seen, it was afterward limited to Isaac, to Jacob, to the tribe of Judah and last to the family of David. Jeremiah writing of the Messiah says, "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch and a king shall reign and prosper and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In His days Judah shall be saved and Israel shall dwell safely and this is the name whereby He shall

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be called, the Lord our Righteousness." (Jer. 23:5-6). There can be no doubt that Isaiah refers to the same person, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulders, and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (Isa. 9:6). Malachi declares that the "Messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in shall suddenly come." (Mal. 3:1). Haggai says, "The Desire of all nations shall come and shall fill all this house with glory, saith the Lord of Hosts." (Hag. 2:7). The climax was reached when Zechariah's son stood on the bank of the Jordan and said, "Behold the Lamb of God!" The starlight of Hebrew prophecy was lost in the greater splendor of the "Light of the World."

3. Passing a number of Scriptures of a typical nature or of the character of literary coincidence, we turn to certain specific references to the life and work of the Messiah.

First. A striking foreshadowing of the Virgin birth of our Lord is found in Isaiah. "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." (Chap. 7:14). The passage seems to be associated with the Immanuel references in chapters eight and nine leaving little doubt of its application to the Messiah even without the definite interpretation in

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Matthew's Gospel. "Now all this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying,

Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son,

And they shall call his name Immanuel." (Matt. 1: 22-23).

Second. The place of the birth of Christ was foretold in the words of Micah, "But thou Bethlehem Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel whose goings forth have been from old from everlasting. (Micah 5:2). From the account in Matthew (chap. 2:4-6) this passage was well understood as applying to the Messiah's birth.

Third. The time of His appearance was approximately foretold in the words of Jacob, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet until Shiloh come and unto him shall the obedience of the people be." (Gen. 49:10). That the rather obscure name Shiloh refers to the Messiah is indicated by the context and has been so interpreted by both Jewish and Christian scholars. When Jesus was twelve years of age, Jewish citizenship, the last vestige of Jewish rule, ceased with the passing of Archlaeus from power.

Fourth. The exact times at which Christ should

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begin and end His ministry are foretold in the prophecy of seventy weeks. "Seventy weeks are decreed upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy. Know therefore and discern, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem to the anointed one, the prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: it shall be built again, with street and moat, even in troublous times. And after the threescore and two weeks shall the anointed one be cut off and shall have nothing: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall end with a flood, and even unto the end shall be war; desolations are determined. And he shall make a firm covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease; and upon the wing of abominations shall come one that maketh desolate; and even unto the full end, and that determined, shall wrath be poured out upon the desolate." (Daniel 9:24-27).

Using a year for a day which seemed the prophetic measure for time ("each day for a year have I appointed unto thee," Ezek. 4:6), and beginning at 457 B. C. the date of the decree under which Ezra

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returned, and by reducing sixty-nine weeks to years, we have A. D. 26. Allowing for the mistake of four years in the chronology of the Christian era we are brought to A. D. 30, or the time at which Jesus began His ministry. In the midst of the remaining week the anointed was "cut off" and "sacrifice and the oblation ceased". The three and a half years of Christ's ministry is indicated by the four passovers which are included in it. So exact does this seem that some have found it difficult to fit it to the prophetic style of foretelling events. But it is not more exact than the prophecy by Jeremiah of the seventy years of Babylonian captivity which is not questioned by critics. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion strengthened as it is by our prophecies, that the interpretation of this remarkable vision is substantially correct.

Fifth. The coming of John the Baptist was predicted in Malachi, "Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, will suddenly come to his temple; and messenger of the covenant, whom ye desire, behold, he cometh, saith Jehovah of Hosts."

Sixth. The Messianic force of this Scripture is recognized by both Christian and Jewish interpreters. It is quoted by three synoptics and applied to this event. The unique character of the ministry of Jesus was the subject of a very definite prediction. On His return

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from the scene of His temptation to Nazareth He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath day "as was His custom." Invited to take part He read the words at the opening of the sixtieth chapter of Isaiah, "The spirit of the Lord is upon me because He hath anointed me to preach good tidings. He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." As He sat down He said, "Today is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." (Luke 4:18-20). His ministry exactly filled the prophetic outlines. It has ever been a distinctive type unlike that of any other teacher.

Seventh. A remarkable cluster of Messianic allusions is found in the closing chapters of Zechariah. (Chaps. 9-14). Whatever difference there may be among critics in regard to the date and authorship of these chapters there is little question as to their Messianic bearing. The author seems to have impersonated the anointed one as a shepherd of the people. Like Jesus he was heralded as a king, "lowly and riding upon an ass even upon a colt the foal of an ass." He was humble but triumphant. In His efforts to save the people from false shepherds He was rejected and His hire weighed out as "thirty pieces of silver," the price of a common slave. The rejection culminated in His murder. "Smite the shepherd and the sheep shall be

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scattered." (Comp. chap. 13:7 and John 10:11). Cruel remorse followed, "And they shall look unto me whom they pierced." (Chap. 12:10). The sequel is one of hope, "And it shall come to pass that at evening it shall be light." (Chap. 14:7). "In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, Holy unto Jehovah." (Chap. 14:20). Difficult as is this mystical Scripture it is impossible not to see shining through its symbols unmistakable gleams of the Messianic day.

Eighth. Similar in sentiment but more clearly defined and connected is the prophecy in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. Here also the two sides of the Messiah's mission are contrasted. His sorrow and humility are placed over against His final triumph. After He was cut off "He shall see His seed. He shall prolong His days and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hands." Unexplained it stands as a complete paradox. Little wonder the Etheopian ruler could not understand its application. Explained by the life of Christ it is luminous with meaning. His humble birth and lowly life, His loneliness and sorrow ending in a cruel death upon the cross, are brought into striking contrast with His life prolonged by His resurrection, that He might bear "the sins of many and make intercession for the transgressors." A clear illustration of the use made of this prophecy is found in an incident recorded in Acts 8:32-35. "Now the passage of the Scripture which he was reading was this:



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He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and as a lamb before his shearer is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth: in His humiliation His judgment was taken away: His generation who shall declare? for His life is taken from the earth.

And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself or of some other? And Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture preached unto him Jesus."

4. Another class of prophecies relates to history. While not so striking in specific fulfillment they reveal larger areas of divine purpose and power. The rise and advancement of the Kingdom of Christ is indeed a growing miracle.

God chooses the fittest instruments to do His work. And so it is not strange that Daniel the statesman-prophet of the exile was called to reveal visions which have to do with problems of national life. He was closely allied with the makers of history. He moved as a mighty leader in the courts and councils of two of the world's greatest empires. His soul was opened to the world's problems of all the future.

Two prophecies have a direct bearing upon the Kingdom of Christ in relation to the nations of the earth. In the second chapter of his prophecy four

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great powers are symbolized by the four parts of the image of a man, each part composed of a different metal, viz., head of gold, arms and breast of silver, belly and thighs of brass, legs of iron, feet part of iron and part of clay. A stone "cut out of the mountain without hands," smote the the image upon its feet and brake them in pieces. "And the stone that smote the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth." (Chap. 2:31-35). A second prophecy which seemed to foreshadow almost the same events of history is found in the seventh chapter. (Chap. 7:2-14). In this vision the four empires are symbolized by four great beasts which "came up from the sea diverse from one another." The first was like a lion, the second like a bear, the third like a leopard and the forth "terrible and powerful and strong exceedingly, and it had great iron teeth." The interpretation of these great political powers is begun by identifying the first with Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. It is reasonable to suppose that the great world empires that succeed in order of historical supremacy, viz., the Medo-Persian, the Greek and the Roman are those referred to. This view has been generally held and seems by far the most reasonable.

We are most concerned, however, with the vision of the Son of Man. Its time of beginning in the days when the Roman empire was weakened by its imperial and colonial policy, exactly fits the circumstances

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of the inauguration of the Messiah's great spiritual reign in the days of Augustus Caesar. It was indeed the "fullness of time." The military roads made it possible for the soldiers of peace to penetrate the entire world then known, with a rapidity before impossible. The Greek language was at its height of excellence and the most fit of all tongues with which to convey great spiritual truths. A little later it became a dead language. The agitation of the philosophers had broken up the spirit of dogmatism and opened the way for free investigation. The great civilized world was hungry for spiritual food. It was time for a new force to be manifested. That Christ's Kingdom should have had a beginning at this time is a most reasonable presumption to one who accepts the conclusions of Christian Theism. Then did the stone cut out of the mountain without hands smite the image on its feet, crushed it to powder and grew in power until it filled the whole earth. Then did the Ancient of Days stand forth in his majesty before Him who is "like unto the Son of Man." "And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the people, nations and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and His kingdom shall not be destroyed. (Dan. 7:13-14). By these striking symbols is the great spiritual reign of the Messiah set before us. Already enough has come to pass to inspire

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faith in its sublime program. Yet the complete fulfillment is a miracle whose greatness is growing each day before our eyes, a factor in the evidences of Christianity which no impartial student can gainsay. It is full of the ozone which quickens missionary zeal and inspires loyalty to our King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

5. Before leaving this element of Messianic prophecy we may note certain characteristics which mark it as wholly unique.

First. Unlike any other institution the Kingdom of Christ contains elements of universal influence and power. Such a claim was not an after thought but was implied in every stage of its development. We have seen the universality in the covenant with Abram through whose posterity a blessing was to extend to "all the families of the earth." The messages of all the prophets sounded this note. Isaiah said, "The earth shall be full of the knowlegde of Jehovah as the waters cover the sea." David said, "The Kingdom is Jehovah's and He is the ruler over all the nations." Zechariah said, "And Jehovah shall be King over all the earth, in that day shall Jehovah be one and His name one." It was the key note of Christ and His apostles. It has been difficult for the church to grasp this great fact of the Kingdom of Heaven. It is doubtful whether it is even now accepted in its fullest meaning.

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Second. The character of the conquest of Messiah's Kingdom is also unique. Ambition for universal power is not confined to the spiritual dominion. But all worldly power contains the elements of weakness which sooner or later bring about its destruction. The image in the vision of Daniel stood for selfishness reigning incarnate. The spirit that inspired and dominated its every act was the principle that might makes right. The welfare and happiness of the individual was lost in the shadows of the absolute power of the ruler. Cruelty and oppression of every kind were unchecked and even justified. The helpless were trampled under the feet of the powerful. To rectify this sad condition seemed almost impossible.

It is the most marked fulfillment of Messianic prophecy that His kingdom was founded to meet this, the greatest social need of the world. Not might makes right, is its motto, but right makes might. Not selfishness but love is the motive of action in this new world force. Nor has it been simply a theory. Its success has been the growing marvel of Christendom.

The three classes which have been the victims of cruel oppression, children, women and slaves, have received a marvelous emancipation as a result of the Christian ideal. "The power of the Roman father over his children was absolute. He might expose, scourge, mutilate, marry, divorce, sell as a slave or

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kill his own child according to law. Roman fathers according to records actually slew their own sons and daughters."

Woman under the Roman law was "a chattle rather than a person. The husband had absolute power over her person and property, including the power of life and death." Illustrations of such practices may be found today in lands where Christian ideals are unknown.

Slavery was a most revolting institution of the ancient world. The power of life and death was in the hands of the master. No thought penetrated the minds of men that such relation was wrong. It was not even apologized for by teachers of philosophy and ethics.

How strange and incredible all this sounds in our Christian lands. Wrongs exist, it is true, but those who practice them become social outcasts in the end. It is asserted that three fourths of our legislation is for the education and protection of children. Woman has steadily risen to her rightful place beside man. In the home and in the social realm she moves as a queen whose power and influence are universally acknowledged. Slowly but surely slavery has disappeared in every Christian land. As the law of love prevails the existence of this hideous and unnatural form of injustice is made morally and socially impossible. Nor does this exhaust the facts of the remedial and social

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forces of Christianity. Every form of suffering and misfortune has been befriended. The cause of education, care for the diseased and demented as well as a helpful regard for the poor have been fostered in Christian communities.

Among the nations the day of the absolute rule of selfish power has forever passed. War still exists but its advocates admit that it must give way to arbitration. In the not distant future the spirit of Christ will drive it from the face of the earth.

Even the social unrest of our time is a hopeful indication. As never before questions of right and wrong are discussed. Conclusions reached may not always be sane and right but more and more the Christian ideal prevails. Let no one be discouraged. The past gives ample pledge of the future. "For the vision is yet for an appointed time, and will not lie. Though it tarry, wait for it, it will surely come." (Hab. 2:3).

Third. Another fact remains to be noted. The stone cut out of the mountain was not the result of worldly forces. It was not the product of human hands. It was not wrought out by its environment as are other institutions. Causes relied on for the success of carnal powers are not used in the conquest of Christ so far, at least, as principles of action are concerned. The beatitudes in the sermon on the mount reverse every law of political and social progress apart from the influence of Christianity. "The successful

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conflict of Christianity forever baffles every attempt to explain the former on grounds of naturalistic evolution." \*

The Kingdom of Christ in prophecy finds wonderful fulfillment in the social and spiritual progress of our time. The cause of world wide missions is rightly the most popular note of gospel advocacy. We are upon the eve of tremendous advances of spiritual enlargement. "The Christian religion throbs with a life and power today such as it has not known for centuries."

\*Why is Christianity True? by Mullins.



## CHAPTER VI

### THE BOOK SEALED.

1. In the middle of the thirteenth century in a city on the beautiful Rhine a great cathedral was begun. A master architect was employed and afterward pensioned for his splendid service. Not until the last years of the nineteenth century was it completed. In the presence of kings and venerable ecclesiastics it was dedicated. Multitudes from every part of Europe witnessed the stately ceremonies that opened to the world a sanctuary which is the pride of the ancient city of Cologne. During the more than five hundred years in which it was being built it underwent many changes. Much of it stood in unsightly incompleteness. At one time it was used as a military stable by the army of Napoleon. What would have been the result if it had never been completed? The architect would have been forgotten, treasure and toil would have been wasted. It was the finished work that brought honor to all that went before.

Let this illustrate the relation of Jesus Christ to the structure of divine revelation. It is evident that it is the conception of a single architect. Its unity of plan, its progressive development, its artistic proportion, all

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indicate this fact. Many wrought in its construction and passed away without a knowledge of the complete design. Only the Master Workman, God Himself, knew the end at the beginning. If left incomplete its meaning and beauty would have been lost. Until Christ came much of the Old Testament was a mystery even to those most familiar with its writings. At last, surmounted by the cross, its design was made clear.

The Hebrew prophets furnished convincing proofs that Jesus was the Messiah. He has done even more in lending meaning and authority to the prophets. Only by a knowledge of Him have the mysteries of incarnation and redemption been revealed. Much has already been made clear by His advent and much is yet to be unfolded of the greatness and beauty of His ultimate designs. It remains to briefly consider some of the ways in which Jesus has placed His seal of confirmation upon the testimony of the prophets, and, in a larger sense, on the entire Bible.

First. We have seen in the use made of the Old Testament by Christ and His apostles how fully He recognized it as the Word of God. Admitting His claim of divinity we have a wonderful confirmation of the sacredness and value of these Scriptures. By quotations and allusions practically all the books of the Hebrew canon are acknowledged. Upon authority of Dr. Kitto it may also be stated that no quota-

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tions from any apochryphal or spurious writings are found in His teachings. The New Testament conveys His personal message to the world. The apostles were taught by Him and the Holy spirit which He sent was commissioned to bring to their remembrance all things that He had said unto them. In a very precious way the entire Bible has been ratified by Jesus Christ. Henceforth a new meaning and sacredness attaches to its revelation.

Christianity receives very important confirmation from history. Its power to meet all its changes and vicissitudes and turn them into benefits is evident in every age. When the Roman Empire fell the church was buried in its ruins. All seemed lost in hopeless darkness. Yet this proved its opportunity of greatest service. The historian Prescott has said that Christianity saved the world from going back to barbarism. Throughout the "night of a thousand years" it was leavening the nations with its saving power. The reformation had its defects. Even these were used for the the larger victories of the future. The stern fatalism of Calvin was needed to stay extreme ideas of freedom. He has been called the policeman of his age, saving it from an utter disrespect for the sovereignty of God. Out of every crisis the Kingdom of Christ has emerged with a new strength and beauty. With the passing of each storm the sun has broken through the clouds

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a little nearer the zenith of its glory. In all this the Bible has been the incomparable instrument of progress.

Third. Christ has given a new meaning and force to the sacred writings. We are slow to see that the highest form of expression is more in acts than words. Life is greater than language. It is perhaps best that Jesus left no writings to obscure His personality. He incarnated the spirit of prophecy and forever set His seal upon its truth. He gave a vital demonstration of every great doctrine of the Bible.

The supreme effort of the ages has been to make God real. All arguments, appeals, warnings and entreaties of the inspired word were to this end. Yet how slow men have been to act as if they really believed in the presence of God in the world. Jesus came not to tell us about Him. He did not cheapen His message with words. He was Immanuel, God with us. He revealed not only the power of God but above all His kinship with humanity. As He moved among men, healing their diseases, comforting their sorrowing hearts, rebuking sin and exalting righteousness, He was showing us how God felt about the things of this life. The death of Jesus takes on new meaning from this point of view. It is difficult to harmonize this event with the wisdom and goodness of God. Why should He permit such cruelty and suffering? Seen alone the doctrine of the atonement is a

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tragic mystery. But as a part of the revelation of God in Christ all is clear. Even in our own lives there are depths of meaning which words cannot express. There are times when tears, even tearless silence, mean vastly more than any words we can utter. Is it irreverent to say that when the hour came to make a final expression of His love for the race that God's heart was too full for words? So Christ, the Only Begotten, died. The drops of blood on His pale face told a story that language could never express. When He cried from the cross, "It is finished," He reached the climax of the expression of love. The sorrows of the Suffering Servant glowed with a glorious meaning not understood before. The resurrection was a revelation of the power of an endless life. No wonder that the graves were opened and that the prophets arose and walked among men. Their words henceforth took on a new and greater meaning. The wonder would have been, in view of all the facts, if Jesus had not risen from the grave. His ascension and coronation were also matters of prophecy but they were but dimly perceived until they were shown to be events in His great plan of redemption. It was this use of the prophecies that become such an irresistible power in the preaching of the apostles.

Finally, Jesus Christ has placed His seal of confirmation upon the Bible in the fact of human experience. By this is not meant some mystical effect wrought in

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the soul, but rather its answer to our deepest spiritual needs. Though faith comes by hearing, knowledge is reached by actual participation. Jesus said, "If any man willeth to do His will he shall know of the teaching whether it is of God or whether I speak of Myself". (John 7:17). That the Bible leads to Christ and finds its complete fulfillment in Him needs no further demonstration. But when Christ has been formed within the soul through faith in Him our experience in His service verifies the source of authority. It is here that rationalism underestimates one of the greatest proofs of divine revelation. So long as the Bible rings true to the needs of the soul we need not fear its overthrow. "The real and terrible test of the word of God is applied by the sinner who cries out for forgiveness, by the spirit crushed with the consciousness of moral infirmity in the presence of eternal ideas, by the heart under the shadow of a great sorrow, by the soul looking in bewilderment into worlds beyond time. When one sees men going to the Bible with an awakened conscience, turning its pages in the hope that they may inspire a purpose that will hold in the moral struggle with temptation, listening for its voices of comfort that they may weep no more, and looking for its light in the thick darkness of death, then one begins to tremble for the fate of the great book. If it can bear the strain of the intensest and no-

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blest life it can smile at all other tests."\* Fortunately this test is not under the monopoly of learning. No laboratory other than the human heart is needed. It is a significant fact that the more Christlike we live the truer and more precious the Bible becomes. In every perplexity it is the "man of our counsel," in every dark place "a light to our feet." Its words are wrought into the most sacred associations of our lives. No legacy is more precious than "mother's Bible" whose tear stained pages were read in childhood at her knee. When loss and death entered the home it was the dear old book that brought comfort to breaking hearts. It is the Bible that nerved patriots to fight for a nation's liberty. Around the first liberty pole erected in this country was piled an embankment of Bibles. It is at the basis of our system of education. The great agnostic, Huxley, admitted that the schools of England could not do without the Bible "as an essential basis of conduct." To destroy respect for its authority is to endanger our liberties and check our progress toward higher moral and social ideals. Its greatness grows with every test of experience. An aged philosopher who sat absorbed in the study of his Bible, when asked what he was reading that so greatly interested him, replied, "I am reading the news."

It is no morbid sentiment to say that the Bible is an incomparable source of support in the hour of death.

\*Gordon, in "Christ of Today."

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When the great Sterling, who had drifted from his childhood faith into fogs of doubt, lay dying, he seemed to be groping after something. His sister asked what was wanted. He answered, "Only the old Bible I used to read to the cottagers." How little did his brilliant intellect and profound philosophy help him as his soul passed out into the great darkness.

We do well to confirm in our lives the prophetic treasures of the word of God. It may be men will continue to question its authority. Clouds of doubt will still cross the sky of faith. They will not avail. "Many shall run to and fro and knowledge shall be increased" but God "has shut up the words and sealed the book until the time of the end."













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