THE POETS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THE EARLY TRADITIONS OF GENESIS

"It has seldom been my privilege to read a book so carefully and charmingly written, and yet so brimful of really important matter."—Prof. T. WITTON DAVIES, in *Review of Theology and Philosophy*.

MESSRS. T. & T. CLARK.

THE POETS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

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To

MY PARENTS

PREFACE

A VAST amount of important work has recently been done on the poetry of the Old Testament. Thus far, however, no attempt has been made to bring home the results, as a unified whole, to the English reader. The present book seeks, within limits, to supply this want. A brief sketch is first offered of the general characteristics of Hebrew poetry. Then the growth of the literature itself is traced from its roots in the old folk-poetry of Israel to its full flower in the Psalter and Wisdom books like Proverbs and Job. The aim has been throughout to catch the heart and spirit of the poetry. Thus questions of Introduction are treated only incidentally, and by way of approach to the centre. Translations are also given of the most characteristic passages, as far as possible in the rhythm of the original.

The scope of the work might, indeed, have been wider. For much of the prophetic literature of the Old Testament is not merely charged with the true passion of poetry, but even falls into the

balanced movement and cadence of verse. But as the prophets were more than poets—men fired with a message from the living God, whose poetic rhythms were but the natural outflow of their enthusiasm—I have thought it better to leave them out of account in the present work. On the other hand, Ecclesiastes has been included among the poets. The bulk of that book is, no doubt, pure prose. But in its theme and spirit it belongs to the same category as the Book of Job and the more speculative parts of Proverbs. Thus it appears to fit well into the general purpose of the work. For the same reason, while no special place has been given to the Apocryphal books of Ecclesiasticus and Wisdom of Solomon, they have been frequently drawn into comparison with the other Wisdom books. The former has been rendered, where possible, according to the original Hebrew version; hence it is usually referred to under its Hebrew name of the Wisdom of Ben Sira.

In the poetical literature the text is peculiarly obscure, and often corrupt. The keen criticism of the past century has, however, helped largely to recover the original readings. The carefully sifted results of criticism are now available to the student in Kittel's *Biblia Hebraica*. As the present book appeals chiefly to English readers, I have not considered it advisable to load the pages with critical apparatus.

Where emendations have been tacitly accepted, therefore, the student is referred to Kittel's notes. In texts where I have followed an independent course, however, reasons have been invariably given.

For the cause just stated, Biblical verses are numbered as in the English version, while Hebrew words have been avoided in the page proper. The scheme of transliteration is that of Davidson's *Grammar*, which is so generally adopted in modern works. Perhaps the only difficulty emerges in the case of the Divine name, which is now usually transliterated as *Yahweh* or *Yahwe*. This, no doubt reproduces most nearly the original sound. To preserve harmony with names like Joshua, Jonathan, etc., which occur in other parts of the book, I have adhered to the older *Jahweh*. But no real difficulty will be felt if the reader bear in mind that the Hebrew *J*, like the German, has the same sound as our English *Y*.

The translations offered are all original. I must, however, acknowledge with gratitude the inspiration I have received from Principal George Adam Smith's renderings of Lamentations ii. and iv. in his *Jerusalem*, Vol. II, and certain other poetical passages in his *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, and articles in the *Expositor*. Many of Dr. Smith's cadences I have found it impossible either

to forget or to withhold; and I hereby desire to express my obligations. In translating Psalms I have been aided by the versions of Driver (in his *Parallel Psalter*), Cheyne (in the *Dryden Library*), and Wellhausen-Furness (in the *Polychrome Bible*). References to other literature will be found in the notes.

I have also to express my warmest thanks to my brother-in-law, Mr. James Georgeson, M.A., Aberdeen, who read the proof-sheets, and offered various helpful suggestions as the book passed through the press.

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CHAPTER I

General Characteristics of Hebrew Poetry

THE living spring of poetry is emotion. This is self-evident of lyrical effusions, which are 'the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings.' But the other species of poetry are fed at the same fountain. A fresh, strong thought or lofty imagination seizes the sensitive spirit. Or a world of radiant figures is born within him. But before it can emerge as poetry, the whole must be charged with the heart's own passion. This inward 'inspiration' of poetry has been recognized by the keenest critics from Plato onwards. And no less vital an influence can explain the power by which it holds captive successive generations of mankind, communicating something of its own rapture to those who sing or hear the strains even in the most distant ages. Poetry comes from the heart, and goes to the heart; and the deepest and most abiding appeals are always those of heart to heart.

The peculiar genius of the Semitic family lies in this region. These peoples were all the children of

passionate feeling. And the Hebrews shared to the full in the common race temperament. They loved intensely, and they hated intensely. To the patriotic Hebrew the love of home and country was a veritable fire in his bones. Jerusalem was counted 'above his chief joy;' and his heart was strangely moved whenever he was led to speak of her glory or her shame. The glowing ardour of his friendship almost equalled his love for Zion. And the hot flame of his hatred burned with as vehement a force. The Hebrew poets exulted with real savage glee over the downfall of the oppressor. They could even bless the hand that took their little ones, and dashed them against the rock; while no passion could exceed in fury that with which the Jews of a later age hurried the Prince of their people to the cross. Thus, even apart from the influence of religion, the Hebrew spirit contained within itself the potentiality of great poetry. And when we add to this natural endowment in feeling the inspiration of the pure and elevated faith committed to the Hebrews, there seems no limit to the heights that spirit might reach. The poetry of other nations may be arrayed in a robe of more exquisite beauty; but none is inspired by richer, nobler emotion.

The element of feeling is found, to some extent, in every human soul. Thus, as Carlyle fancies, there may exist a vein of poetry in the hearts of all

men. The distinction of the heaven-born poet is that he not merely feels, and that more keenly than other men, but likewise gives immortal expression to the feelings that thus well up within him. And perhaps no words can better convey the peculiar quality of poetic speech than Milton's oft-quoted remark, that it must be 'simple, sensuous, and passionate.'[1] Other ideals have, indeed, held sway in their time. But true poetry has always come back to the realities of Nature and life. Poetry being the language of the heart, that style is most appropriate which speaks directly and unaffectedly to the heart. For the same reason, poetic diction is 'sensuous' or pictorial. The sphere of cold abstraction is altogether alien to poetry. Its world is one of warm, full-blooded life, suffused with glowing imagination, and rich in figures of speech—metaphors and similes and pictures drawn or suggested. In like manner, poetry is passionate. Being inspired by feeling, it must also throb with feeling. The touch of passion is, indeed, the truest test of the feeling which is the very soul of poetry.

If we may judge by these standards, the Hebrew speech approves itself one of the fittest vehicles of

[1] 'To which (*i.e.* Logic and Rhetoric) poetry would be made subsequent, or, indeed, rather precedent, as being less subtile and fine, but more simple, sensuous, and passionate.'—*Tractate on Education.*

poetical expression. Like other Semitic languages, it is marked by great simplicity of form. The rigidity of its three-lettered root scheme, its lack of precise distinctions of time within the verb forms, its weakness in connective particles, and its general incapacity for abstractions, prevented its ever attaining the subtle logical effects of Greek or our complex modern languages. But this very failure in philosophical grasp enhances the pictorial power of the speech. In Hebrew all things appear in action. The verb is the predominant element in the sentence.[1] And, though the shades of time-distinction are blurred, the richness of the language in intensive forms throws the precise complexion of the act into clear, strong light. But even the simplicity of the tenses heightens the pictorial effect; and the paratactic connexion of the clauses gives the Hebrew sentence the appearance of a series of artistic strokes, often of gemlike brilliance. Hebrew possesses likewise a great wealth of synonyms,

[1] 'Since action and delineation are the very essence of poetry, and since the verb is the part of speech that depicts action, or rather sets the action itself directly before us, the language that is rich in expressive, pictorial verbs is a poetical language; and the more fully it can convert its nouns into verbs, the more poetical it is. . . . Now in Hebrew the verb is almost everything—that is, all is life and action. . . . The language of which we are speaking is a very abyss of verbs, a sea of waves, where action ever rolls surging into action.'—Herder, *Geist der hebräischen Poesie*, Suphan's edition, xi. 227.

especially in descriptions of the common scenes and interests of life, and in the region of feeling. The language is equally rich in imagery. The daring boldness and luxuriance of its figures are, indeed, almost oppressive to the modern mind. But the Hebrew poet himself was unconscious of any wanton riot of imagination. To him the bold, swift changes of metaphor were natural reflections of the play of passion in the soul. For Hebrew poetry is pre-eminently passionate. The 'simple, sensuous' speech is but a veil, which thrills and quivers with the poet's every passing emotion.

The fiery energy of Hebrew is often felt to be gained at the expense of beauty. The profusion of compressed consonants, sibilants and gutturals even conveys to Western ears an unpleasing impression of piercing intensity and harshness. But the sharper sibilants are mainly expressive of keen emotions of grief or triumph, and are thus in artistic harmony with the passionate genius of the language, while the purity with which the gutturals are breathed from the open throat tones down the harshness that might otherwise be felt.[1] Hebrew has its full share,

[1] 'The Northern speeches imitate the sound of Nature—but they do this roughly, and, as it were, only from without. They creak, rustle, hiss and jar, like the objects themselves. . . . The further South we go, the more delicate becomes the imitation of Nature. The words have passed through the finer medium of emotion, and are framed as it were in the region of the heart.

too, of the more liquid consonants, with a variety of vowel tones ranging from the rich broad *â* to the light *sh'wa*, yielding the possibility of a manifold interplay of sounds. The strength of the double letters, with the normal alternations of vowel and consonant, give the language also something of the tuneful flexibility of Arabic or Italian. The Hebrew poets were fully aware of the musical potentialities of their speech, and sensitive to the magical effects produced by harmonies of sound. The musical quality of Hebrew may be appreciated even by the Western student who listens sympathetically to the rendering of the Sabbath service in the Synagogues especially of the Spanish Jews. And the poetry of the Old Testament shows harmonious effects of surprising power. The reproduction of the furious gallop of the strong ones ' by the waters

They yield us, therefore, not coarse reproductions of sound, but images on which feeling has impressed its softer seal, thus modifying them from within. Of this tone-blending of inward feeling and outward representation in the roots of the verbs the Oriental languages are a model. . . . We make a point of speaking only from between the tongue and the lips, opening our mouths as little as possible, as though we lived among smoke and fog. . . . The Italians and still more the Greeks speak *ore rotundo*, not biting their lips together. The Eastern world draws its tones yet deeper from the breast—out of the very heart—as Elihu begins his speech (Job xxxii. 18ff.). The lips being opened thus clearly, the speech becomes a really living sound, an actual image of the object breathed forth in the atmosphere of emotion ; and this I judge to be the spirit of the Hebrew tongue.'—Herder, *op. cit.*, pp. 231f.

of Megiddo,' or the crashing of the fatal blow on Sisera, in the sounding notes of Deborah's great battle-hymn (Judg. v. 22, 26), the unmistakable suggestions of the 'surging of the peoples, that surge like the surging of the seas,' and the 'rushing of nations, that rush like the rushing of mighty waters' (Isa. xvii. 12ff.), and Nahum's brilliant picture of the flashing and raging of the war-chariots at the assault of Nineveh (Nah. ii. 3ff.), rank among the finest verbal effects in literature. But even apart from such obvious efforts of art, and the simpler musical charms produced by alliteration and assonance, the Hebrew poets display a true power in the wedding of sounds to tones of feeling. Many of the Psalms are real studies in harmony. The first, for example, opens with a play of sibilants gliding into easy liquids and labials, as the Psalmist passes from the dark and dangerous paths of the wicked to contemplate the joyous fortunes of the good. With *v.* 4 the duller sounds predominate, the tone only rising in sympathy with the expression of sure confidence in *v.* 6. The second Psalm offers a yet more remarkable example of tonal harmony. The tumultuous gathering of the nations is depicted in a series of rushing *sh*, *r*, and *m* sounds, supported mainly by heavy vowels. As the enemy take counsel together against the Almighty, the tone rises almost to a shriek through a succession of

compressed consonants, *ç*, *ṣ*, and *ḫ*, mingled with the sharper vowels *i*, *e*, and short *a*. In *v.* 3 the breaking of the chains is distinctly audible in the snapping notes of the verb *nᵉnattᵉḳāh*. The subsequent transition from the calm majesty in which the Almighty sits enthroned in heaven to His outbreak of stormy indignation against the wicked is equally well reflected in the sound of the verses. In contrast with the rage and tumult of this Psalm, the eighth offers a good example of the feeling of repose and confidence suggested by the quieter tones of speech, while through the pastoral beauty of the twenty-third an unmistakable effect is produced by the gently rustling *sh* sounds and the murmuring *m*s. The same aesthetic pleasure is gained from a study of the finer passages of the Song of Songs and Job. In the glad Spring-song (Song ii. 8ff.) the vowels and consonants seem to dance in harmony with the rhythm. The changing moods of Job are likewise reflected in the sounds. Thus the general tone of the picture of Sheol (iii. 13ff.) is grave and dull, the radiant vision of Job's past happiness (ch. xxix.) is pitched on a high, clear key, while the majesty of the Divine utterance is sustained by a rich variety of verbal harmonies.

In close relation to the musical quality of poetic speech is its rhythmical movement. This also reflects the play of the emotions. Under the influ-

ence of any deep passion, the heart heaves beneath the tide of feeling with a surging motion whose ebb and flow resemble the onward sweep of the breakers on the shore. Our quieter feelings find likewise their relief in rhythmical waves. And this is but part of a far wider movement; for Nature and life are one vast universe of rhythms. In giving utterance to his feelings in rhythmical form, the poet is no doubt directly impelled by the inward movement of his soul. But stimuli from without also bear upon him. In his classical study of *Work and Rhythm,* Professor Karl Bücher of Leipzig has traced the far-reaching influence of the rhythm of daily labour in primitive folk-poetry. But, even in these lower ranges of art, imitation of the sounds and movements of animal life makes likewise for rhythmical utterance. Arabic scholars are generally agreed in connecting the peculiar stride of the typical Arabic poem with the slow, steady march of the camel. The rider crooning his lay insensibly fell into the camel's swing, and so gave his poetry that particular movement, though even in Arabic the more rapid rhythm of the gallop may be caught at times. In the ascending scale of art, many other impulses touch the poet's imagination, causing his strain to

> 'modulate with murmurs of the air,
> And motions of the forest and the sea,

> And voice of living beings, and woven hymns
> Of night and day, and the deep heart of man.'

The qualities thus far dwelt upon are not, however, quite peculiar to poetry. In its more elevated moods, when inspired by a rapture of emotion resembling that of poetry, the less impassioned speech of prose may assume the 'simple, sensuous, and passionate' garb, the natural music, and even the rhythmical movement, so characteristic of poetry. Thus many writers have not hesitated to obliterate the lines, and to describe, for example, the melodious periods of Plato, the glowing outbursts of orators like Demosthenes and Burke, and the magical cadences of the Authorized Version of the Bible, as prose poetry. Such criticism is natural enough in days when the original connexion of poetry with song and dance has been largely forgotten. But in ancient times poetry was no mere literary art, to be cultivated for its own ends. The poem was a real song sung to the accompaniment of music and dancing. And even when poetry has forsaken its former affinities, the impulse to song remains. This of necessity involves a certain measure in the rhythm. In other words, poetry is *metrical*. The rhythmical measure may show wide variety in form. It may be marked by feet of regular quantity or length, as in the classical languages and Arabic, or by the number of accented

syllables within the verse, as in old Latin, Germanic, and English poetry. The fundamental principle of metre demands only that the rhythm should move in artistic harmony with musical time.[1] And this law is strictly observed even by poets who theoretically refuse to be bound by it.

The presence of a certain fixed measure in the movement of Hebrew verse was first clearly perceived by Robert Lowth in his epoch-making lectures *De Sacra Poesi Hebraeorum* (1753). In his vain search for a metre resembling that of classical poetry, he observed that ' the poetry of the Hebrews shows a peculiar conformation of sentences, . . . whereby the poets repeat one and the same idea in different words, or combine different ideas within the same form of words, like things being related to like, or opposites set in contrast to opposites.' [2] In other words, instead of pursuing a direct course onwards, the second half of the verse, as it were, doubles back on the first, reiterating the same thought, either with some play of variation in words, or by way of contrast. On the basis of this observation Lowth developed his principle of *parallelismus membrorum*—the parallelism of the individual mem-

[1] Cf. Sydney Lanier's admirable analysis in his *Science of English Verse*, pp. 97ff.

[2] *De Sacra Poesi Hebraeorum*, ed. Rosenmüller (Leipzig, 1815), p. 36.

bers, or *stichoi*, of the verse. The principle covers a wide variety of forms ; but for convenience Lowth distinguished three main species :—

(1) *Synonymous*, where the original thought is repeated or echoed 'in different but equivalent terms,' as in the opening bars of the Song of Deborah (Judg. v. 3),

Hear, O kings,
Give ear, ye princes !
I to Jahweh—even I will sing,
I will sing praises to Jahweh, the God of Israel ;

or in the first Psalm (*v.* 1), where we have an instance of what Lowth describes as a 'triplet parallelism,'

O happy the man
That walketh not in the counsel of the wicked,
Nor standeth in the way of sinners,
Nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful ;

(2) *Antithetic*, 'where a theme is illustrated by contrast with its opposite,' as in the closing verse of the same Psalm,

For Jahweh knoweth the righteous,
But the way of the wicked shall perish ;

and (3) *synthetic* or *constructive*, where the idea is completed in certain directions, as in Ps. ii. 6,

Yet have I set my king
On Zion, my holy hill ;

or in much fuller elaboration in Ps. i. 3,

He shall be like a tree
Planted by streams of water,
That yieldeth its fruit in its season,
And whose leaf fadeth not;
Even all that he doth he maketh to prosper.[1]

To the three varieties of parallelism thus distinguished by Lowth, a fourth is now generally added, namely, *climactic* or *ascending*, where the changes are rung on some key-word or phrase. A simple example of this species of parallelism is found in Ps. xxix. 1,

Render to Jahweh, sons of the Mighty,
Render to Jahweh glory and strength.

But much more complex illustrations are to be met with in the Songs of Ascents, as in Ps. cxxi. 1ff., where various catch-words are repeated,

To the hills I lift mine eyes:
O whence doth come my help?
My help (doth come) from Jahweh,
That made the heavens and earth.

Thy foot He'll not let slide;
Thy Keeper slumbers not.
He slumbers not, nor sleeps,
That keepeth Israel.

The principle of parallelism is by no means confined to the poetry of the Hebrews. Among Oriental nations, it belongs also to the Assyrians and Egyptians. But it had originally a much wider extension. Traces may be found in the earliest poetry of many

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 208ff.

different peoples. And, though more developed art has largely discarded the form, it still survives in hymnology and popular poetry. The songs of Burns, for example, are full of it. The best explanation of the principle is still that put forth by Herder as a complement to Lowth's more limited hypothesis—that it follows naturally from the *responsive* mode of primitive folk-song. And, however alien it may seem to our modern taste, a real aesthetic charm lingers round its simple symmetry. The parallel lines, as it were, come dancing to meet each other, like the singing choruses that gave them form. Thus, as Herder finely puts it, 'they sustain, uplift, and strengthen each other in their counsel or their joy. This result is obvious in songs of triumph. The effect aimed at through the mournful notes of sorrow, on the other hand, is that of the sigh or lamentation. As the very drawing of the breath seems to support and comfort the soul, so does the other half of the chorus share in our sorrow, becoming the echo, or, as the Hebrews say, the daughter, of our expression of grief. In didactic odes the one line strengthens the other. It is as though the father spoke to his son, and the mother repeated his words. The counsel thus becomes so very true, cordial, and intimate. In love-songs, again, we have sweet lovers' talk—a real interchange of hearts and thoughts. In fine, so simple a bond of family

affection is formed between the two parallel expressions of feeling, that I may readily apply to them the words of the tender Hebrew ode (Ps. cxxxiii.), *Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity,* etc.' [1]

Parallelism may thus be described as a kind of measured rhythm in lines, reflecting an inward rhythm of thought or feeling. It is widely assumed, indeed, that this is the only real measure Hebrew has to show. Kuenen has expressed this view with characteristic force in his round assertion: '*metrical* the poetry of Israel is *not*.' [2] The prevalent scepticism is naturally enough explained by the failure of so many theories on the subject. But the vital connexion of poetry with music and dancing in ancient Israel, as among other nations, seems to necessitate a metre of some sort. A mere 'rhythm of thought' cannot satisfy the demands of poetic art; for the poet's thoughts and feelings must be conveyed through the medium of sound. And the long quest of a metrical principle in Hebrew poetry has, at all events, brought us within sight of the goal. The first investigators sought for a metre of the classical type. But no real result could thus be arrived at. The decisive impulse in the contrary direction was given by J. J. Bellermann's suggestive *Essay on Hebrew Metre* (Berlin, 1813).

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 237. [2] *Historisch-critisch Onderzoek*, iii. 14.

Like his precursors, Bellermann proceeded on the assumption that Hebrew metre was quantitative. But, finding it impossible to determine the length of the syllables by themselves, he called in the help of *accent*. As the result, he was enabled to build up a metrical system which often strikingly anticipates the more recent work on the subject. A bold step forward was taken by Ernst Meier of Tübingen,[1] who came to Hebrew poetry fresh from the fields of Suabian folk-lore, feeling that 'his travels of discovery there contributed far more to the understanding of the Old Testament than he could possibly have gained from a journey to Jerusalem.' Influenced chiefly by his researches in folk-poetry, Meier frankly abandoned the quantitative standpoint, resting his theory of Hebrew metre on a purely accentual basis. In this he was followed by Julius Ley,[2] whose life-long labour at the problem raised Hebrew metrics to the dignity of a science. Both Meier and Ley made the metrical movement to depend essentially on the number of accented syllables. Of the weaker, unaccented elements, according to Meier, 'as many may precede or follow the accented syllables as can be pronounced within the given duration of time.'

[1] *Die Form der hebräischen Poesie* (Tübingen, 1853).

[2] Cf. especially his *Grundzüge des Rhythmus*, etc. (Halle, 1875), and the supplementary *Leitfaden der Metrik der hebr. Poesie* (Halle, 1887).

Against the freedom thus asserted, a remarkable *tour de force* was launched by the Roman Catholic scholar, Gustav Bickell of Vienna,[1] who insisted that Hebrew metre was both *accentual* and *syllabic* —that it rested, in fact, ' on the regular interchange of accented and unaccented syllables.' The carrying through of this hypothesis involved such wholesale mutilation of the text that it has been almost universally abandoned, though Bickell's brilliant work in textual criticism will long preserve his name in honour. The original position of Meier and Ley has been strongly fortified by the recent studies of expert metricists like Sievers[2] and Rothstein,[3] as the result of which it may with real confidence be asserted that Hebrew metre, like Anglo-Saxon and later English, is governed by the number of strong accents within the verse, the intervals being filled by a somewhat free choice of weaker elements, their number being limited, in fact, solely by the demands of musical time. The same principle has recently been established as regulative in Assyro-Babylonian poetry. And, in spite of the influence of classical Arabic, it still survives in the folk-poetry of Palestine, as elsewhere through the simpler strata of Semitic civilization.

[1] *Metrices Biblicae regulae exemplis illustratae* (Innsbruck, 1879); *Carmina veteris Testamenti metrice* (Inns., 1882); etc.

[2] *Studien zur hebr. Metrik* (Leipzig, 1901, and following years).

[3] *Grundzüge des hebr. Rhythmus* (Leipzig, 1909).

The prevailing foot in Hebrew is of the nature of the Greek anapaest, two weak syllables being clinched by a strongly accented one. But the transition is easy to the iambic or the paean. This lends to Hebrew verse more elasticity of movement than the Greek feeling for symmetry would tolerate. And the same freedom appears in the metrical structure especially of the older poetry. The most frequent measure in Hebrew is marked by three pulses, or strong accents, in each *stichos*. This type is predominant through the Psalter, as well as in poems like Job and Canticles, where the movement of feeling is normal. But often in the battle-poetry, and in certain of the more majestic Psalms, such as the forty-sixth and sixty-eighth, a broader rhythmical movement is gained by the breaking in of the four-pulsed type, analogous to our own ballad-metre. In the swift rush of battle, or the gaiety of the dance, this may resolve itself into short musical phrases of two pulses each, a variety which adds much to the life and energy of the poetry (cf. Exod. xv. 9ff.; Song ii. 8ff.). But the most interesting measure in Hebrew is the elegiac, which consists essentially in a combination of the three- and two-pulsed metres. The peculiarity of the elegiac type was first noted by Lowth, who in his study of Lam. i.–iv. observed that 'the verses are clearly longer by almost one half than those we usually meet else-

where.'[1] A more precise definition was given by Bellermann, who found the prevailing structure of Lam. iii. to be a hemistich of three feet followed by another of two, and proposed in consequence to name the measure 'five-footed.'[2] Ley also described it as the 'elegiac pentameter.'[3] But it was reserved for Budde to explain the real nature of the verse. As a sequel to his youthful assault on Ley's metrical system, he established afresh this 'one fixed metrical form,' which he found in evidence, not merely through the four related chapters of Lamentations, but wherever poet or prophet fell into the dirge-note for the dead. Budde characterized the measure as a 'limping' or broken one, finely expressing the choking of the voice in the hour of grief or agony, and peculiarly associated, as it is to the present day, with the laments of the mourning women. Thus he suggested for the verse the name of the *ḳînāh*, or lamentation, measure.[4] As the result of further investigation, Budde traced the *ḳînāh* measure through large sections of II Isaiah, in the Songs of Ascents, and even in Psalms like the twenty-third and twenty-seventh, where the note is distinctively joyous. The apparent contradiction he sought to explain by the theory that lamentations in Israel came to be associated mainly with the

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 260. [2] *Versuch*, etc., p. 137.
[3] *Grundzüge*, etc., pp. 52f. [4] *ZATW.*, 1882, pp. 1ff.

sorrows of Zion, and that 'songs of Zion,' and hence also lyrics of very different quality and motive, assumed the elegiac dress.[1] But one need not resort to so artificial an hypothesis. Under the influence of any keen emotion—of joy as well as grief—the voice will quiver and break. Thus the choking elegiac measure is equally appropriate to both extremes of feeling. And the transition is easily effected, not only in Hebrew poetry, but also in Greek and Latin, where the plaintive elegiac, the original accompaniment of the funeral dirge, has become a popular metre also for songs of love and pleasure.

The unit in Hebrew poetry is thus the verse, consisting normally of two *stichoi* in parallel relation.[2] That these units are often combined to form larger groups (stanzas or strophes) is evident from several indications, such as the phenomena of alphabetical poems, where two or more verses are linked together under the heading of successive letters of the alphabet, the appearance of refrains in a number of the Psalms and elsewhere, and the recurrence of the musical term *ṣelāh*, usually at the close of well-marked sections of the poem. But even apart from

[1] *ZATW.*, 1891, pp. 234ff., 1892, pp. 31ff., 261ff.

[2] Tristichs are occasionally found, *e.g.* in parts of the Song of Moses (Exod. xv.), a few Psalms like xxiv. 7ff., xlv. and c., and certain later elements of Job (xxiv. 12ff., xxx. 1ff.).

signs like these, clear divisions of thought may be detected in the movement of the piece. On these observations various theories of strophic arrangement have been built. The most elaborate is D. H. Müller's scheme of *Responsion*, based on parallelism of the strophes. On the other hand, Duhm and Rothstein bring virtually the whole of Hebrew poetry into simple quatrains, or two-versed stanzas. That many of the Psalms, and even the speeches of Job, and the bulk of the love-songs in Canticles, fall easily into such a scheme is obvious. But one cannot impose it on battle-songs, and national odes like the Blessings of the patriarchs or the Song of Moses (Deut. xxxii.), without doing grave violence to the text. And the refrains and selahs show that in the Psalms also the stanzas were by no means of the uniform length of two verses. Here again, therefore, we must allow for more freedom than rigid theory concedes.

The important place sustained by rhyme in Arabic poetry has naturally raised the question of its existence in Hebrew. It seems abundantly clear that it plays no regular or essential part. But that the Hebrew poets were sensitive to the aesthetic effects of rhyme appears from various sporadic proofs. Thus the old Song of Lamech, perhaps the earliest fragment of poetry in the Bible, has a distinct play of rhyme in *î* and *îm*. Other traces of the love of

rhyme may be observed in the folk-poetry of the Old Testament, one of the finest examples being found in the Philistines' rough satire over the blinded Samson (Judg. xvi. 24), with its constant harping on the sound of *ēnû*. But in the more deliberate art of Lamentations, Psalms and Job the same effects are aimed at. We are, doubtless, still far removed from the brilliant rhyming triumphs of Arabic poetry. In Hebrew verse the rhymes are but pleasing jingles of sound, like assonance or alliteration, introduced as an added decoration or grace, to enhance the beauty of the poetry. But even thus we may discern in them the workings of the same artistic impulse that carried the genius of the Arabs to such heights of attainment.

CHAPTER II

The Folk-Poetry of Israel

AMONG all nations the earliest manifestations of the poetic instinct are found in folk-song. Primitive people are invariably singers. At work or play, in the fields or by the hearth, in the excitement of the chase or the glow of battle, under the thrilling joy of victory or the hopeless sorrow of death, they give vent to their feelings in the moving rhythmical accents of song. In its crude beginnings folk-song appears to have been a communal concern, which consisted largely in a repetition of simple, expressive sounds, to a wonderfully exact rhythmical beat. Out of the primitive communal song was evolved, in due course, the women's chorus, with its responsive reiteration of some simple theme, varied by a refrain in which the whole singing throng took part. With the gradual emergence of the individual above the crowd, there came to the birth those early epics, ballads, recitatives and odes, which often show such real beauty and deep, haunting pathos. From this stage of adolescent art there is but a step to poetic genius. The poet is the thrice-blest

favourite of heaven, who to purity of feeling and range of imagination adds the supreme gift of expression.

It might be assumed, then, that folk-poetry was part of the natural inheritance of the Hebrews. And this is abundantly borne out by evidence scattered throughout the Old Testament. For, though the Book is pre-eminently a religious Anthology, religion is by no means at variance with the simple joys of human life. Thus it has preserved for us, not merely allusions to Israel's love of popular poetry, but not a few precious fragments, saved from the general wreckage of secular literature, which show that the folk-poetry of Israel covered as extensive a field as that of other nations.

Of songs of labour, those relating to the culture of the vine fill the largest place. The happy choruses of the vine-dressers are distinctly recalled in Isaiah's Song of the Vineyard (ch. v.), which no doubt takes its form from these. So also in Isa. xvi. 10 the stern shout of battle is pictured as breaking in upon the joyous singing of the labourers in the vineyard and the wine-press, making the vintage 'shout' to cease. In Jer. xxv. 30 the triumphal 'shout' with which Jahweh descends on the inhabitants of the earth is actually likened to the hilarious 'shouting' of those who tread the grapes; while in Jer. xlviii. 33 this 'shouting'

passes for ever from Moab before the fury of Jahweh's wrath.[1] It is most probable that the fragment—

Destroy it not;
For a blessing is in it,

associated with the finding of the new wine in the cluster (Isa. lxv. 8), is an actual snatch from some old vintage song. And the tune of this, or another nearly-related folk-song, would seem to be indicated in the familiar head-line, *'al-tashḥēth*, 'Destroy not' (Pss. lvii. 1; lviii. 1, etc.). In the passage already cited, Isa. xvi. 10, the 'joy of the fruitful field' is coupled with that of the vine-dressers, while in the great Messianic vision of Isa. ix. 3 the exultant joy of the re-born nation is compared with 'the joy of harvest,' equally with the more tumultuous joy 'of those that share the spoil.' The prophet has here before his imagination the glad shouts and songs with which the reapers celebrated the joy of harvest-home. In the Song of Deborah (Judg. v. 11, 15) we have almost certain references to the merry shepherd-songs that were heard 'beside the troughs,' accompanied by sweet 'flutings for flocks.' A charming little well-song, inspired by the finding

[1] In these passages the technical term for the 'shout' is הֵידָד (*hêdād*), doubtless the catchword of the old vintage choruses.

or digging of a well in the desert, has been preserved in Num. xxi. 17f.,[1]

Spring up, well ;
Sing in response to it—
Well that the princes digged,
That the rulers of the people delved,
With their sceptres and their staves,
A gift from the desert ;[2]

while songs more directly bearing on the beauties of Nature are suggested by those headings of the

[1] This song has been compared with the well-songs which Arab women still sing as they draw the water in their buckets (cf. Dalman's collection in his *Palästinischer Diwan*, pp. 45ff.). But Budde is more probably correct in finding here the festal celebration of the opening of a well in the desert. Thus Nilus speaks of the nomadic Arabs of his day dancing round a new-found well, and singing songs to it, as though it were a living being. From Musil's monumental *Kusejr Amra* (1907) T. H. Weir quotes a well-song of the present day almost identical with that of our text :—

Spring up, O well,
Flow copiously.
Drink and disdain not,
With a staff have we dug it.

In both cases the digging by the (princes') staff is a symbolical action, like the laying of foundation-stones or planting of memorial trees by distinguished men of the present. 'In what appears to be an absolutely waterless desert, water may be found by digging amongst the stones of the dry torrent bed. The stones are removed by the hand, though the process is described as digging. The chiefs rarely take part in the work, but the "well," when formed, is always said to have been dug by Sheikh So-and-so' (T. H. Weir, *Expos.*, July, 1910, p. 81).

[2] At the close of the song I have followed Budde in reading מִמִּדְבָּר מַתָּנָה, *from the desert a gift*, instead of the meaningless וּמִמִּדְבָּר מַתָּנָה, *and from the wilderness to Mattanah.*

Psalter which prescribe Psalms to be sung *'al-'ayyeleth hashshaḥar,'* to the tune of *The Hind of the Morning'* (Ps. xxii. 1),[1] *'al-shôshannîm,'* to the tune of *The Lilies'* (Pss. xlv. 1; lx. 1, etc.),[2] and *'al-yônath 'ēlîm rᵉḥôḳîm,'* to the tune of *The Dove of the Distant Terebinths'* (Ps. lvi. 1).[3]

But far more numerous than either of these classes are the songs of battle and victory. Israel sprang from a race that took the keenest delight in warfare. Thus the sword-song of the proud Bedouin chieftain Lamech (Gen. iv. 23f.) literally reeks of blood and vengeance. And long after Israel had passed beyond the Bedouin stage of civilization, the fierce joy of battle fired the hearts of the people, and inspired their most stirring strains. To a wild war-chant Deborah roused the hosts of Jahweh's people against Sisera (Judg. v. 12). In like manner, the defiant notes of Sheba, when he moved Israel

[1] The 'hind of the morning' is doubtless a poetical description of the dawn. In the same way, the Arabic poet Imru'l-Kais addresses Night as a 'slow camel dragging his hind-feet haltingly.'

[2] This would be a song in celebration of the beauty of the 'lilies of the field,' the brilliantly coloured poppies or anemones which still shed such a glory over the landscape of Palestine.

[3] With the old Dove-song we may compare the Swallow-song with which the Greek country-folk celebrated the return of spring. The popular Hebrew mind was evidently just as sensitive as the Greek to the charms of Nature and the real human interest of the wild life of the woods and fields.

to cast off its allegiance to David, are cast in the mould of a simple battle-song :—

No portion have we in David,
Nor lot in the son of Jesse :
Each man to his tent, O Israel (2 Sam. xx. 1).

Victory was hailed with songs of triumph. The victors themselves would break into shouts of ecstatic rejoicing ; [1] while the women went forth to meet them in singing, dancing bands. Thus Miriam and her sisters in Israel celebrated the destruction of the Egyptians with choruses of responsive song (Exod. xv. 21) [2] :—

Sing to the Lord, for great hath He shown Himself ;
The horse and his rider He hath hurled in the sea.

Of Jephthah's daughter, too, we read that she ' came to meet him with timbrels and dancing choruses,' to rejoice with him in his victory over Ammon (Judg. xi. 34). The glorious triumphs of David were likewise hailed by women's voices in the festive couplet that so roused the wrath of Saul :—

[1] The catch-note of these triumphal choruses would seem to have been *hal* (with a prolonged trill), verbalized in the Heb. *hallēl* (as in *hallelujah*, ' praise ye Jahweh ') and Ar. *halhal*. The modern Arabs still trill the syllable *li* or *lu* in songs of victory, as well as in their marriage festivities (cf. Littmann, *Neuarabische Volkspoesie*, pp. 87f.).

[2] עָנָה, *answer*, hence *sing in response*. It is unfortunate that the R.V. here adheres to the literal rendering *answered*, which conveys so little of the real significance to the English reader. In the parallel passage, 1 Sam. xviii. 7, it translates more adequately *sang one to another*.

Saul hath slain his thousands ;
But David his ten thousands (1 Sam. xviii. 6f.).

Out of these simple responses, at the touch of poetic inspiration, there rose more elevated strains. Thus the joyous verse of Miriam and her women-folk has provided a theme for the great 'Song of Moses,'[1] with its splendour of description, and swift, dramatic movement (Exod. xv. 1ff.) :—

I will sing to the Lord, for great hath He shown Himself ;
The horse and his rider He hath hurled in the sea.

My strength and my song is Jahweh ;
And He is become my salvation.
This is my God, and I'll praise Him—
The God of my father, I'll laud Him.
Jahweh, the Lord of battles,
Jahweh's His name.
The chariots of Pharaoh He hath flung in the sea ;
The flower of his warriors are sunk in the Sedge.[2]

---

[1] The later date of the 'Song of Moses' is suggested, not merely by its absence from the earliest sources, J and E, and the fine preservation of the text, as compared with the Song of Deborah, but likewise by its following the history of Jahweh's goodness to the establishment of His people on 'the mount of His heritage,' and by the developed art and language of the piece. A few commentators have brought it as late as the post-exilic age, on the assumed ground that *v.* 8 depends on the priestly account of the massing of the waters as a wall on either hand. But the description here seems rather like a bold poetic figure, the literalizing of which led to P's exaggerated account. The triumphant joy in Jahweh's guidance, and the feeling of pride in His 'heritage' of Zion, would accord better, we believe, with a date in the hey-day of the monarchy.

[2] The scene of the great deliverance is יַם־סוּף, 'the Sea of Sedge,' the shallow northern extremity of the Gulf of Suez.

The oceans cover them :
They went down in the depths like a stone.

Thy right hand, O Lord, is glorious in power ;
Thy right hand, O Lord, doth shatter the foemen.
By the might of Thine excellence Thou dost pluck down th' uprisers ;
Thou dost send forth Thy wrath—it consumes them as stubble.
By the blast of Thy nostrils the waters were massed ;
The floods stood up like a wall :
The abysses congealed in the heart of the sea.
Said the foe : 'I'll pursue, I'll catch up,
I'll apportion the spoil, I'll sate my soul on them ;
My sword I'll make bare, my hand will destroy them.'
Thou didst blow with Thy wind ; the sea did cover them :
They sank like a plummet in waters o'erwhelming.

Who is like Thee 'mong the gods, O Jahweh ?
Who is like Thee, glorious in holiness,
Fearful in praises, wondrous in deed ?
Thou didst stretch forth Thy hand : the earth did swallow them.
In Thy love Thou leddest the folk Thou redeemedst ;
With Thy strong hand didst guide them to the place of Thy holiness.

The peoples did hear it, and tremble ;
Pangs laid hold of the dwellers in Palestine.
All dismayed were the chieftains of Edom ;
The princes of Moab—trembling hath fallen on them :
Melted are all the dwellers in Canaan.
Falleth upon them terror and trembling ;
By the might of Thine arm they are still as a stone,
Till Thy people pass over, O Lord,
Pass over the folk Thou hast gotten.
Thou dost bring them, and plant them on the mount of Thy heritage,
On the place Thou didst make for Thy dwelling, O Jahweh—
The Holy Place, Lord, which Thy hands did establish.
Jahweh shall reign for ever and ever.

On a yet higher plane of poetic inspiration stands

the triumphal hymn of Deborah (Judg. v.),[1] a song that for force and fire is worthy to be placed alongside the noblest battle-odes in any language. Here every phase of the glorious battle for freedom, the ebb and flow in the surging tide of victory, the brilliant deeds of heroism displayed 'on the heights of the field,' and the undying shame of those who refused to come 'to the help of Jahweh among the heroes,' are painted in living, throbbing, heart-stirring words. The closing scene, too, with its vivid por-

[1] That the 'Song of Deborah' is practically contemporaneous with the battle of Kishon, and was composed by one who played a personal part in the great deliverance of Israel, is doubted by no serious critic. The only question raised is as to the actual authorship. From the reference to Deborah in the third person (very probably in *v.* 7, and certainly in *v.* 12), it is widely assumed that the heroine herself cannot have been the author. But poets, both ancient and modern, have not unfrequently affected such an impersonal mode of address. And there is no one of the age with whom the Song can be more fittingly associated than the heroic figure to whose zeal for God and people the victory was mainly due. None felt so deeply the thrill of the battle. None rejoiced more fervently in the triumph of 'Jahweh's people.' And none appears so richly endowed with the 'inspiration' which is the gift of poet and prophet alike. In early times, too, songs of victory were the peculiar concern of the women of the tribe or people. And in this Song the closing scene, at least, with its intimate insight into the thoughts and fears of the feminine heart, strongly suggests the authorship of a woman. The text has unfortunately suffered with unusual severity from the lapse of time. In certain parts, chiefly about the middle of the poem, it is almost unintelligible. Textual scholarship has, however, done much to restore a plausible sense. The following translation is based on what appear the most reasonable emendations (cf. Kittel, *Biblia Hebraica*).

traiture of character, and its sharp contrasts of fear, dismay, and hope, is one of real dramatic power, tragical in its suggestion of impending evil, suddenly broken off by ominous silence.

Hear, O kings,
Give ear, ye princes!
I to Jahweh—even I will sing,
I will sing praises to Jahweh, the God of Israel.[1]

Lord, when Thou wentest from Seir,
When Thou marchedst from the plateau of Edom,
Earth trembled, even the heavens were shaken,
The clouds also dropped water;
Rent were the hills before Jahweh,
Before Jahweh, the God of Israel.

In the days of Shamgar, the high roads were deserted,
And the way-farers went by winding paths.
Still lay the villages in Israel,
And hushed was the work of the country-folk.[2]
Ceased sacrifice to God,
Bread failed in the gates.
No shield was seen, or spear,
'Mong the forty thousands in Israel;
Until Debôrāh arose,[3]
Arose a mother in Israel.

---

[1] This verse has all the appearance of an opening address. I have, therefore, omitted the otherwise disputed *v.* 2 as a corrupt variant to *v.* 9.

[2] The introduction of Deborah's name in *v.* 7 seems premature. In the translation the verse has been reserved for the close of the picture of Israel's sorrow, while a new *stichos* has been inserted to complete the parallelism.

[3] For קַמְתִּי, *I arose*, LXX has the third person, which is more in harmony with the rest of the Song.

My heart to the rulers of Israel,
The people's willing leaders! [1]
Ye that ride on ruddy asses,
And couch on costly cushions;
Ye that walk along the highways,
Your praises give to Jahweh!
And hark! round the troughs the sound of the joy-makers!
There sing they Jahweh's righteous acts,
Righteous acts to His country-folk in Israel.

Rouse, rouse, Debôrāh!
Rouse, rouse, send forth the battle-song!
Up with thee, Barak!
Lead forth thy captive train, thou son of Abinoam! [2]

Then trooped down Israel in its might,
Down to him Jahweh's people—a band of heroes.
From Ephraim marched men to the plain,
His brother Benjamin in his ranks; [3]
From Machir marshals of the field,
From Zebulon wielders of the baton.
Men of Issachar marched with Debôrāh,
And men of Naphtali with Barak;
Through the plain they poured [4] *in his steps.*

---

[1] I have removed the disputed words בָּרֲכוּ יהוה from the close of *v.* 9 to the corresponding place in *v.* 10, treating יְשִׂיחוּ as variant to the יְתַנּוּ of *v.* 11, representing perhaps an original יָשִׂירוּ.

[2] The LXX has the interesting, and possibly original, variant:
Rouse, rouse, Deborah!
Rouse the myriads of thy people!
Up with thee, Barak! put on thy strength!
Lead captive thy captors, thou son of Abinoam!

[3] Instead of אַחֲרֶיךָ, *after thee*, LXX reads 'thy brother.' The third sing. would, however, be more in harmony with the context.

[4] The word שֻׁלַּח, in the sense of 'was poured out,' may be allowed to remain, if only we read the plur. שֻׁלְּחוּ.

Among the clansmen of Reuben
Were deep searchings of heart.[1]
Then why didst thou stay by the sheepfolds,
To list to the flutings for flocks?
Gilead abode beyond Jordan,
And Dan sat still by the ships.
Asher stayed on the sea-shore,
Quietly abode by his havens.
But Zebulon—he flung his soul to the death,
With Naphtali, 'long the heights of the field.

The kings came and fought;
Then fought kings of Canaan,
At Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo:
But spoil of silver they took not!
From heaven fought the stars,
From their courses they fought against Sisera.
Then pounded the hoofs of the horses,
With the gallop, the gallop of strong ones;[2]
And the river of Kishon swept them away,
The on-rushing river of Kishon.

Curse ye Meroz, saith Jahweh;
With curses curse its inhabitants.
For they came not to Jahweh's help,
To Jahweh's help 'mong the heroes.
But blessed above women be Jael,
Above women that dwell in the tent!
Water he asked, and milk she gave him:
Buttermilk brought in a lordly bowl.
Her hand she put to the peg,
Her right hand to workman's hammer;
Down smote she on Sisera, struck at his head,
Smashed on him, crashed through his temple.

---

[1] *V.* 16*b* is, doubtless, but an (improved) version of *v.* 15.

[2] The gallop of the strong ones is unduly protracted in the Mass. text. I have followed Budde in reading the verse before 21. The closing words of that verse are probably a mere liturgical addition.

At her feet he swayed, and fell;
Where he swayed, he fell down dead.

Through the window looks and peers
Through the lattice the mother of Sisera:
'Why stays his carriage its coming;
Why tarry the wheels of his chariots?'
Of her ladies the wisest answers,
She herself gives back reply:
'Do they not find and divide the spoil?
A wench or two for each warrior;
A spoil of dyed stuff for Sisera,
For his neck a meed of embroidery?' [1]

The scene of the stars from their courses in heaven joining in the fight with Sisera is a fine illustration of the boldness of Hebrew imagination. But an even more striking example is found in the battle-song of the great 'day of Gibeon' (Josh. x. 12f.), where Joshua commands the very sun and moon to stay their flight, until Israel shall wreak its vengeance on the enemy:—

Sun! stand thou still upon Gibeon,
And thou moon! in the vale of Ajalon.
So the sun stood still, and the moon rested there,
Till the folk had their lust on their foes.

As among other nations, songs of victory in Israel pass occasionally into satire. A good example is offered in the *māshāl* over Moab (Num. xxi. 27ff.) [2]:—

[1] At the close of the Ode the text is evidently overladen. Of the various possibilities I have adopted רִקְמָה רִקְמָתַיִם לְצַוָּארוֹ *one piece, two pieces, of embroidery for his neck*, as most in harmony with the context (cf. LXX).

[2] The song is introduced in Numbers as a satire of Sihon and the Amorites over conquered Moab. But the 'city of Sihon'

Go ye to Heshbon;
Let the city of Sihon be built and restored!
For fire went forth from Heshbon,
A flame from the city of Sihon;
It devoured the cities of Moab,
And consumed the heights of the Arnon.
Woe to thee, Moab!
Undone art thou, people of Chemosh!
His sons hath he given to be fugitives,
And his daughters captives for kings.[1]
We smote them (?) from Heshbon to Dibon;
We wasted their land (?) to Medeba.[2]

The curious little fragment in the earlier part of the chapter, remarkable chiefly for its list of place-names, might almost be regarded as the original

itself falls in the general ruin. The satire is almost certainly, therefore, that of the triumphant Israelites. It can thus hardly be as ancient as the Conquest of Palestine. The flame of devastation here spreads not northward, as on Israel's march to Palestine, but from Heshbon south to the water-courses of the Arnon. The satire is consequently related by Stade and Baentsch to the conquest of Moab by Omri. But the place it occupies in a collection of 'minstrels' songs,' and the highly corrupt state of the text, would argue for a considerably earlier date. We incline to connect it with David's conquests (cf. 2 Sam. viii. 2), in which the parallel fragment from the 'Book of the Wars of Jahweh' (Num. xxi. 14f.) would also find a suitable setting. The description of Heshbon as the 'city of Sihon' is no real objection to this view. We have only to assume that the name of Sihon continued to be associated with his former capital even after it had passed into the power of Moab.

[1] On the explanation given above, אֱמֹרִי סִיחוֹן must be a later interpolation. We should simply read לַמֶּוֹלֶךְ.

[2] The reading is corrupt, perhaps beyond hope of restoration. The translation given above is purely conjectural. The verse does, however, appear to describe the wide extent of the devastation of Moab.

sequel to the satire on Moab, were it not composed in a different metre, and drawn from a different source (cf. Num. xxi. 14f.). It appears to describe the pursuit of Moab, or the devastation of the country,

To Waheb in Suphah (?)
And the valleys of Arnon,
Even the cliffs of the valleys
That slope down to 'Ar,
And lean on the border of Moab.

A coarser species of satire appears in Samson's rough jest-song (Judg. xv. 16), with its grim play on the word *ḥămôr* :—

With the jawbone of an ass have I massed a mass;
With the jawbone of an ass have I slain a thousand.

But the Philistines also could retaliate on their fallen foe in the rude rhymes already referred to (Judg. xvi. 24) :—

Our god hath given to our hands our foe,
That wasted our land, and made many our slain.

A far nobler development of triumphal odes is found in songs of national hope and aspiration. The earliest of these, the so-called 'Blessing of Noah' (Gen. ix. 25ff.), runs back perhaps to the Tel el-Amarna period (*c.* 1400 B.C.), and shows the racial pride of the Hebrews already asserting itself against the degraded Canaanites :—

Cursed be Canaan!
Slave of slaves let him be to his brethren!

Jahweh bless Shem's tents;
And let Canaan be his slave!
God enlarge Japheth!
His dwelling be Shem's tents;
And let Canaan be his slave!

But Israel soon became conscious of its unique position and destiny even within the narrower circle of the Hebrew peoples. This dawning self-consciousness of the chosen race comes to its clearest expression through the age-long rivalry with Edom, the most nearly related of the three. In the old birth-song (Gen. xxv. 23),[1] the ultimate supremacy of the younger 'brother' is already presaged:—

Two nations are in thy womb;
Two peoples part from thy bowels.
People shall crush down people;
The elder shall serve the younger.

A richer poetic cast is given to Israel's hope in Isaac's Blessing (Gen. xxvii. 27ff.).[2] But the most glowing picture of its future prosperity is drawn in the four oracles of Balaam, the son of Beor (Num. xxiii., xxiv.)[3]:—

[1] The birth-song comes from the Jahwistic narrative, and thus represents the oldest tradition of Israel.

[2] The 'Blessing of Isaac' is a blend of J and E, and consequently shows the original tradition maturing in both the kingdoms of Israel.

[3] The proud consciousness of national prosperity and undimmed hope which pervades these poems, and the explicit allusion to the king in xxiv. 7 and 17, point to a date about the very dawn of the monarchy. The recent attempt of von Gall to bring

Balak brought me from Edom,[1]
Moab's king from the hills of the East.
Come, said he, curse me Jacob;
Come, prithee, damn me Israel!
How can I curse whom God hath not cursed?
Or how can I damn whom the Lord hath not damned?
From the top of the rocks I see him,
From the crest of the hills I behold him—
A people that dwelleth apart,
Nor is counted as one of the nations.

To this favourite of Heaven all goodness is promised (xxiv. 5ff.) :—

How lovely thy tents, O Jacob,
Thy dwellings, O Israel!
As valleys that stretch afar,[2]
As gardens watered by rivers;
As oaks that Jahweh hath planted,
As cedars beside the waters.
Waters shall flow from his buckets,
And his seed dwell by many waters.[3]

---

the whole four oracles down to the post-exilic age seems to the present writer to break down on this rock. At most, the Appendices (xxiv. 20ff.), with their very different outlook, arrangement, and style, may be assigned to the later period. Cf. G. B. Gray, *Numbers*, pp. 313ff.

[1] The אֲרָם of the Mass. text is evidently a mere penman's slip for אֱדֹם.

[2] The *stichos* is metrically incomplete. We might, with Holzinger etc., read נְטָה אֵל, *as valleys that God hath spread out*, which would bring it into fine harmony with the first *stichos* of the following verse.

[3] The reading here is very uncertain. Suggestions from LXX and elsewhere give us the following couplet :—

Peoples shall tremble at his might;
And his arm shall be on many nations.

His king shall be mightier than Agag,[1]
And his kingdom exalted on high.

The series concludes with a dazzling vision of the king rising in triumph over all his enemies (xxiv. 17) :—

I see him, but not now;
I behold him, but not nigh.
There gleameth a star from Jacob,
Ariseth a ruler from Israel.
He shall smite through the temples of Moab,
The crown of all children of Sheth.[2]

But the individual tribes not only shared in the glorious aspirations of the people. They had likewise their own clan-spirit and consciousness. A fine reflection of the character and destiny of the separate members of the commonwealth of Israel, as conceived by themselves or by one another, is found in the 'Blessing of Jacob' (Gen. xlix.), which is really a complex of different tribal oracles, ranging in origin from the rough period of the Judges to the final

[1] The allusion to Agag, the contemporary of Samuel and Saul, is certainly surprising, even if the poems date from the beginning of the monarchy. LXX has Gog, which may be a mistake for Og, the king of Bashan, a much happier comparison in an oracle bearing the name of Balaam.

[2] For וְקַרְקַר we must certainly read וְקָדְקָד, as the Samaritan Version does. The precise significance of שֵׁת is uncertain. In Jer. xlviii. 45, where the passage is quoted, it is supplanted by שְׁאוֹן, *tumult* or *confusion*. It is probably better, however, to retain שֵׁת, and to regard it as the name of some unknown people or district.

establishment of the monarchy.[1] The portraitures of character are here most happily drawn: for example, that of Reuben the first-born, 'first in dignity and power,' who, for his 'swelling lust,' should not be 'left the first' (*vv.* 3f.), or of Simeon and Levi, that 'well-matched pair of brothers,' who should be divided among their brethren for their 'cursed anger' (*vv.* 5ff.), that of Issachar the 'big-boned ass, crouching beneath the panniers,' who found a pleasant place to rest in, and so 'bowed his shoulder to the yoke, and became a slaveling' (*vv.* 14f.), or of little Dan, the 'fiery snake,' who could at least 'bite the horse's heels,' and thus 'bring down the rider backward' (*v.* 17). But the crowning glory is reserved for Judah, the lion tribe, who embodies in himself the hope of all the brethren :—

The sceptre departs not from Judah,
Nor the staff from between his feet,
Till He come whose right is to reign,[2]
Whose is the homage of nations (*v.* 10).

A collection of similar oracles of a more developed type, betraying the consciousness of the tribes in the North, at some period subsequent to the Disrup-

[1] Cf. Gunkel, *Genesis*, pp. 249ff.; Skinner, *Genesis*, pp. 510 ff.

[2] By far the most probable solution of the problem of שִׁילֹה seems to be found in the reading of practically all the versions, supported by the allusion in Ezek. xxi. 32, *viz.* שֶׁלּוֹ, *he to whom it is*. We should have here, then, an early expression of the Messianic hope of Israel. Cf. Gunkel, *op. cit.*, p. 436, where the oracle is regarded as a clear evidence of 'pre-prophetic eschatology.'

tion of the kingdom, meets us in the 'Blessing of Moses' (Deut. xxxiii.). Here the note is distinctively religious. The centre of national interest, too, has very considerably changed. Reuben has dwindled to but a 'few.' Simeon has altogether vanished from the roll. On the other hand, Levi has attained his high priestly dignity, while Judah is isolated and depressed. The only blessing sought for him is that Jahweh may bring him back to his people (*v.* 7). His once royal rank is now upheld by Joseph, or Ephraim, on whom all the best blessings are showered (*vv.* 13ff.). And the song closes with an outburst of praise to Jahweh, the God of Jeshurun (Israel), 'that rides through the heavens to his help,' and of rejoicing for Israel, who under His protecting wing 'dwelleth in safety,' in the good land He has given them, 'a land of corn and wine,' from which they shall go forth in strength to reduce the nations, and to 'trample down their high places' (*vv.* 26ff.).

But the sweeter joys of life found also their voice in song. A large part of other national anthologies is filled with lays of childhood, love and marriage. These have unfortunately vanished from the treasuries of Israel's song, the only faint survivals being found in the naive wedding-wish to whose strains Rebecca left for her new home (Gen. xxiv. 60).[1]

[1] The Song of Hannah (1 Sam. ii. 1ff.) is really a highly-developed hymn to Jahweh, in the style of the later Psalms. The

There is much more abundant allusion to the songs that increased the gaiety of social life. For the impulse to song lay very near the heart of the Hebrews. Under the bright sunshine of prosperity, men and their children together 'lifted up their voice to the music of the timbrel and the harp' (Job xxi. 11f.). The widow's heart 'sang for joy' when she found a friend (Job xxix. 13). The young men sang and played at the gates (Lam. v. 14f.). The happy hours of festal gatherings were passed in song and dance, jest and riddle (Judg. xiv. 11ff.) The parting guest was sped on his way 'with sounds of mirth and song' (Gen. xxxi. 27). In later times song was the recognized accompaniment of feasts. The court had its retinue of singing men and women.[1] And private houses increasingly aped the fashion of the palace. The prophets make frequent reference to the senseless songs that disgraced the festive joy at the tables of the rich (cf. Amos vi. 5f.; Isa. xxiv. 9; Jer. vii. 34, etc.). In the Apocryphal

one genuine example of a royal wedding-song we have in the Old Testament belongs to the Psalter (cf. Ps. xlv.).

[1] This practice appears as early as the reign of David, the aged Barzillai pleading exemption from attendance at court on the ground that he has no more pleasure in 'the voice of singing men and singing women' (2 Sam. xix. 35). It prevailed equally to the close of the kingdom; for among the gifts sent him by Hezekiah, king of Judah, Sennacherib enumerates 'his daughters and the women of the palace, singing men and singing women.'

Wisdom of Solomon we hear the actual words of the roysterers, as they encourage each other to ' fill themselves with costly wine and ointments, and let no flower of the spring pass by them ; crown themselves with rosebuds before they wither ; and leave tokens of their jollity in every place they pass ' (ii. 6ff.), in the very spirit, and almost the language, of the Persian epicure, Omar Khayyam.

These foolish drinking-songs might even degenerate into coarse jests at the expense of the poor and unfortunate. Thus in Job's ' crown of sorrow ' not the least cruel thorn was the reflection that he was now become the ' song and byword ' of those who once held him in honour (xxx. 9). And other suffering saints have the same lament to make; They are ' the song of drunkards ' (Ps. lxix. 12) ; even ' to all peoples a derision—their song all the day ' (Lam. iii. 14).

In Israel, too, the silence of death was broken by the mournful strains of lamentation. True pictures of Oriental mourning are preserved in such texts as Gen. l. 10, where the children of Israel ' lament for their father with a very great and sore lamentation ; ' Judg. xi. 40, where the virgins of Israel yearly ' lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite ; ' and 2 Chron. xxxv. 25, where the singing men and women of Judah celebrate the death of good king Josiah ' even to this day.' In the prophetic

anticipations of the sufferings of Judah, too, the mourning women play a large part (cf. Amos v. 16 ; Jer. ix. 17ff., etc.). These lamentations of the Hebrews consisted in the prolonged repetition of a certain catch-word, either *'ăhāh, 'ăhāh* (cf. Judg. xi. 35), or *hôî, hôî* ; *hô, hô* (Amos v. 16), usually conjoined with a word like *'āḥî*, 'my brother,' or *'ādôn*, 'lord' (1 Kings xiii. 30 ; Jer. xxii. 18, etc.), though the same effect of inconsolable sorrow might be produced by other repetitions, as in David's desolating lament over Absalom, 'O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom ! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son !' (2 Sam. xviii. 33).[1]

Out of these simple repetitions there emerged in this region also those more classical utterances of grief which long survive the shock that gave birth to them. In the Old Testament such immortal elegies are associated mainly with the great heart of David. The death of Abner, the captain of the enemy's host, moved him to poetic notes of indignant sorrow (2 Sam. iii. 33f.) :—

Was Abner to die like a fool ?
Thy hands were not bound,

---

[1] Among other nations, too, these repetitions constitute the essence of the simple lament. Cf. Gummere, *Beginnings of Poetry*, pp. 229ff.

Nor thy feet placed in fetters,
But thy fall was as that of a villain.[1]

Far more deeply, however, did the death of his friend Jonathan affect him; and this has inspired that most tender and true expression of manly sorrow (2 Sam. i. 19ff.):—

Thy glory, O Israel, is slain on thy heights;
Ah! how are the heroes fallen! [2]

Tell not the news in Gath,
Nor publish in Ashkelon's markets;
Lest the Philistines' daughters rejoice,
Lest the daughters of th' uncircumcised triumph!

Hills of Gilboa, no dew fall,
Nor rain on you, plateaus of death! [3]
For there lies defiled the buckler of heroes,
The sword of Shā'ûl, anointed no more.[4]

From the blood of the slain,
From the fat of the brave,
The bow of Jᵉhônāthān swerved not back,
Nor hungry came home the sword of Shā'ûl.

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[1] To bring this line into harmony with the first, we should omit לְפָנַי.

[2] The reading of the first stanza is somewhat uncertain (cf. LXX). But the suggestion offered in that Version appears to be no improvement.

[3] The Mass. תְּרוּמוֹת is rightly read by modern critics as a corruption of הָרֵי מוֹת, the הָרֵי being most probably an explanatory gloss on שָׂדֵי, *fields*, or *plateaus* (cf. Judg. v. 4). For other suggestions, cf. G. A. Smith, *Hist. Geog.*, p. 404.

[4] Here מָשִׁיחַ should at least be altered to מָשׁוּחַ, and the clause made to refer to the anointing of shields for the battle (cf. Verg., *Aen.* vii. 626, etc.). A more ingenious suggestion is to read כְּלֵי מָשׁוּחַ, *arms of the Anointed.*

Shā'ûl and Jᵉhônāthān, the loved and the lovely,
In life and in death undivided!
They were swifter than eagles,
They were stronger than lions.

Daughters of Israel, weep for Shā'ûl,
Who clothed you in scarlet luxuriously,
And with golden adorning
Decked your apparel.

Ah! how are the heroes fallen
In the thick of the fight!
O Jᵉhônāthān!
Thou art pierced to the death! [1]

Woe's me for thee, my brother Jᵉhônāthān!
Dearest of friends hast thou been.
Wonderful thy love unto me,
Passing the love of women!

Ah! how are the heroes fallen,
And perished the weapons of war!

It will be evident from such survivals of the old folk-poetry of Israel how simply and naturally the secular there passed into the sphere of religion. The battle-songs of Moses and Deborah might, indeed, with equal propriety be described as hymns of praise to Jahweh. For He was the real Lord of Israel's hosts. Those who trooped to the battle under Barak and Deborah came 'to the help of Jahweh among the heroes.' And the victory was His. For Jahweh it was who in Person 'plucked

[1] I have here followed the reading of the Lucian and other recensions of the LXX. But the text still seems to be incomplete.

down the uprisers.' Thus the ark, which symbolized His presence among His people, was carried in battle-array to the strains of a real religious hymn :—

Arise, Jahweh !
And let Thine enemies be scattered,
Let all that hate Thee flee ! [1] (Num. x. 35);

and when the victory was won, it was returned to its place amid equally sacred rites :—

Rest Thou, Jahweh !
And bless the myriads
Of the tribes of Israel ! [2] (Num. x. 36).

But the simple greetings of life had likewise their religious note. In the harvest-field master and man hailed each other with the kindly blessing—

The blessing of Jahweh be on you ;
In the name of Jahweh we bless you ! (Ps. cxxix. 8).

And no doubt in other spheres of labour similar devout wishes were extended.

The worship of Jahweh was naturally accompanied by songs of a more distinctively religious tone. Even such a perversion of worship as the adoration of the golden calf sent up to heaven its joyous ' noise of them that sing ' (Exod. xxxii. 18).

[1] Here also I have followed LXX in adding כָּל־ and omitting מְפָנֶיךָ—a reading which secures a finer rhythmical effect.

[2] The Mass. text is clearly defective. Budde's alteration of שׁוּבָה to שְׁבָה, with the insertion of וּבָרְכָתְ before the somewhat similar lettering of רִבְבוֹת, seems to yield the happiest emendation.

On the high places, too, the worshippers celebrated the goodness of their God with songs of almost boisterous mirth (Amos v. 23, etc.). From its inception, the purer worship of the Temple was likewise attended by songs of praise to Jahweh. By a happy fortune the Book of Kings has preserved for us the solemn Song of Dedication with which Solomon inaugurated this worship, a song whose accent of reverent devotion, combined with delight in the near presence of Jahweh, makes it a true forecast of the nobler hymns that were in after ages to exalt the 'house of Jahweh's habitation':—

In the heavens hath Jahweh set the sun,
But Himself hath chosen to dwell in darkness.
For Thee have I built an house of habitation,
A place for Thy dwelling to ages all [1] (1 Kings viii. 12f.).

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[1] The first *stichos* of the Song is wanting in the Hebrew text, but has been conjecturally restored from the Ἥλιον ἐγνώρισεν ἐν οὐράνῳ Κύριος of the LXX, ἐγνώρισεν representing an original הֵבִין, a textual mistake for יָכִין (cf. Wellhausen, *Comp. des Hexateuchs*[2], p. 271, followed by Robertson Smith, G. A. Smith, Skinner, etc.). Objection has recently been offered by F. C. Burkitt and St. J. Thackeray to the rendering of ἐγνώρισεν by הֵבִין (cf. *Journal of Theological Studies*, X. 439ff.; XI. 518ff.). But the results arrived at by these scholars seem to yield a less satisfactory sense. The LXX makes the last two *stichoi* imperative: thus, *Build me an house*, etc.—placing the words in Jahweh's mouth. The indicative, however, appears more in keeping with the context of the poem.

CHAPTER III

Musical Accompaniments of Hebrew Song

It has been shown how ancient folk-poetry was never a mere literary performance, but a real song to be sung by the popular chorus, with improvizations in solo. The earliest singing appears to have been a strongly rhythmical chant, with no musical modulation of tone. And even when a certain feeling for melody was developed, the art of music long remained in its simplest stages. A few notes covered the whole compass of the scale, though the smaller intervals then in vogue widened the range to some extent. The melody of the first bar or two was thus usually repeated through the entire song. The sense of harmony was equally rudimentary. Early singing was almost exclusively in unison. The only suggestion of harmony was found in the lower octave of the male voices. But often this, too, was avoided, an artificial unison being reached through falsetto.

The Old Testament contains but a few faint hints

as to the character of ancient Hebrew song. But these are enough to indicate that the Hebrews stood on the same musical platform as their neighbours. Here, too, the rhythm remained the predominant element. Early songs like the fierce lay of Lamech were no doubt chanted to a strongly marked rhythm. And to a much later age the battle-songs of Moses and Deborah were most probably recited in rhythmic chant, with but various unstudied modulations of voice, the immediate expression of the feeling. A certain development of melody is presupposed in the tunes of folk-songs already referred to (p. 27). But these were doubtless as simple as the popular melodies heard to the present day among the peasantry of Palestine, and in other centres of primitive Semitic ways. As has been noted, ancient Hebrew song was choral, and responsive. The one choir would break forth into a simple strain ; the other would catch it up, and ring a few slight changes on the same theme, no doubt to the melody of the original chorus. This simple responsion would often be kept up for hours together. Even after the primitive couplet had given place to far richer developments of folk-song, the old melodies survived, and were actually extended to the worship of Jahweh with no feeling of incongruity. As among other ancient nations, the choral singing of Israel was unisonous. In the

instrumentation of later times, indeed, an elementary form of harmony does appear to have been attempted through the striking of different octaves. But in the actual song this was avoided by the rigid separation of the male and female voices which still prevails in Eastern lands.

To the cultivated taste of modern times such primitive melodies must appear monotonous in the extreme. But sympathetic students of Oriental ideals have learned both to appreciate and to enjoy their peculiar genius. The more restrained and sonorous tones of the male voice they have found solemn, dignified, and plaintive ; and the piercing melodies of the women expressive in the highest degree.[1] The effect is largely intensified by the

[1] Thus Lane speaks of the ' small and delicate gradations of sound ' as giving ' a peculiar softness to the performances of the Arab musicians, which are generally of a plaintive character ; ' and adds, ' I must confess that I generally take great delight in the more refined kind of music which I occasionally hear in Egypt ; and the more I become habituated to the style, the more I am pleased with it ; though, at the same time, I must state that I have not met with many Europeans who enjoy it in the same degree as myself ' (*Modern Egyptians*, 5th edit., II. 58f.). And Cornill, who had the privilege of listening to selected illustrations of Arabic music at the Congress of Orientalists in Algiers (1905) says, ' The impression of the whole was very striking, presumably because of the difference between male and female singing. Never did both groups perform together in a mixed chorus, but each group sang by itself. The song and music of the men was very solemn and dignified, in slow time without a distinct rhythm or melodious cadence, but in a sort of recita-

dancing which is the universal accompaniment of ancient song. This, too, is no studied art, but a reflection of feeling as immediate, true and full as the song itself. In song the feeling is expressed through rhythmical language; in the dance by rhythmical movements of the body. Ancient dancing was an act of the whole man, the intensity of his feeling forcing itself through every member, and finding relief in varied gestures, accompanied by hand-clapping and the clashing of arms and ornaments. The dance was as significant a feature of musical utterance among the Hebrews as elsewhere. The singing choruses that went with Miriam and Jephthah's daughter to celebrate the victories of Jahweh welcomed the returning warriors 'in dances' (Exod. xv. 20; Judg. xi. 34). And the women who 'came out of all the cities of Israel to meet king Saul' rang forth the praises of David, 'singing and dancing' (1 Sam. xviii. 6). But many other occasions of joy were intimately associated with the dance. The boys and girls danced at their play (Job xxi. 11; cf. Matt. xi. 17). The young men and maidens danced at the annual

tive, which is now in vogue in the latest music. The music of the women was very different. In their performance all was fire and life. They sang in a pronounced melody with sharply accentuated rhythm in a passionate *tempo*, and they treated the instruments with which they accompanied their singing with incredible expression' (*Music in the Old Testament*, p. 17).

festivals (Judg. xxi. 21), and in their hours of mirth around the city gates (Jer. xxxi. 13 ; Lam. v. 15 ; Ps. xxx. 11). Households celebrated the return of their lost sons with ' music and dancing ' (Luke xv. 25). The dance was equally the expression of religious zeal. The prophets who swept down on Saul with their tabrets and flutes and harps (1 Sam. x. 5ff.) were no doubt dancing to the music in their frenzy of religious enthusiasm. King David likewise displayed his zeal for Jahweh by dancing before Him with all his might (2 Sam. vi. 14ff.). The religious dance was counted not unworthy even of the solemn worship of the Temple. For the Psalmist calls on men to praise Jahweh ' with the dance,' as they do with timbrel and harp (Pss. cxlix. 3, cl. 4).

In equally vital relation to song stood instrumental music. In modern times this has developed into an independent mode of expressing feeling. But among ancient nations it was a real daughter of song, and always remained in a position of dependence.[1] The simplest instruments were but

[1] Even to so æsthetic a people as the Greeks the melody was strictly subordinate to the words. Songs and hymns were *ἀναξιφόρμιγγες*, *lords of the lyre* (Pindar, *Ol.* ii. 1). A grave protest was raised by Plato (*Laws*, 669, E) against attempts to divorce the two. And even Aristotle, who recognized more fully the ethical quality of melody, apart from words, as a real expression of the ' movement ' of the soul, insisted on the suprem-

intensifiers of the hand-clapping, stamping, and clashing that accompanied primitive song and dance. The most widely used, and probably also the earliest in origin, was the drum, originally a mere strip of hide thrown over the lap or shoulder, though in later times its resonant power was increased by the round framework of wood, sherd, or metal on which the hide was stretched. The drum lent itself as an apt accompaniment to the rhythmic chant and dance that formed the earliest type of musical utterance. It yielded no melody, indeed, but it marked the time. As such, the instrument played a large part in the artistic life of ancient Israel. In the passages already cited (Exod. xv. 20; Judg. xi. 34; 1 Sam. xviii. 6), the women's choruses appear with *tuppîm*, 'timbrels' or tambourines—light hand drums, often highly decorated, which kept time to the rhythm of the song and dance. In the third of these passages (1 Sam. xviii. 6) the timbrels are associated with *shalîshîm*, probably a species of metal triangle, which added a pleasing tinkle to the pure rhythm of the drum. A still further development is presupposed in the account of the bringing of the ark to Jerusalem (2

acy of words as the most direct and adequate medium of expression (*Problems*, xix. 10). In like manner, the Hebrews described musical instruments as כְּלֵי הַשִּׁיר, *instruments of song*, and musicians as simply "singers." Their function was not to displace, but rather to heighten the effect of, song.

Sam. vi. 5), where the timbrels are borne in company with two other tinkling instruments: the *mᵉna'an'îm*, or 'shakers,' apparently metal rings suspended on cross-bars, like the Greek *sistrum*, or the modern Turkish bell-tree; and the *çelçᵉlîm* or *mᵉçiltayîm*, 'clatterers' or cymbals—brass plates struck vigorously together to produce a loud clang. The drum apparently continued to be used in religious processions, and other celebrations of a joyous or popular character (cf. Pss. lxviii. 25; lxxxi. 2; cxlix. 3); but alone of the percussion instruments the cymbals seem to have found a place in the actual worship of the Temple (cf. 1 Chron. xxv. 6).

The use of animals' horns as loud sounding instruments gave the impulse to a still richer musical development. In Old Testament history the ram's horn is expressly mentioned in the story of the capture of Jericho (Josh. vi. 5), and in the Chronicler's account of the institution of the Levitical services (1 Chron. xxv. 5). But as the *shôphār* or trumpet—a natural horn only gradually replaced by a metal imitation of the same—it played a much more conspicuous part among that people. The *shôphār* was associated especially with scenes of warfare. To its peremptory blasts the leader summoned his hosts to the battle (Judg. iii. 27; vi. 34; 1 Sam. xiii. 3, etc.). The sound of the trumpet was equally the signal for the fray (Job xxxix. 24f.).

To the same commanding notes the victorious general called back his troops from the pursuit (2 Sam. ii. 28 ; xviii. 16), or disbanded them to their homes (2 Sam. xx. 22). The *shôphār* likewise sounded forth the watchman's warning from the tower (Amos iii. 6 ; Hos. v. 8, etc.). It was used, too, for the summons of the people to such important national functions as the proclamation of the king (2 Sam. xv. 10 ; 1 Kings i. 34, etc.). Hence also it passed to the service of religion, and became the recognized instrument for the announcement of the 'holy convocation' on the first day of the seventh month (Lev. xxiii. 24 ; Num. xxix. 1), as well as the opening of the jubilee year (Lev. xxv. 9).[1] A significant place is assigned to the *shôphār* in the later eschatological literature. To the loud blasts of the trumpet the scattered Jews are brought back to worship Jahweh in the holy mountain of Jerusalem (Isa. xxvii. 13). According

[1] To the present day, at the New Year's service and other outstanding ritual occasions, a real ram's horn is used in the Synagogues. These horns are occasionally adorned with Hebrew inscriptions, though more generally plain. They are bent at the broad end, but otherwise straightened and flattened by heat. This ram's horn 'is not only the one ancient musical instrument actually preserved in the Mosaic ritual, but it is the oldest form of wind instrument in the world still retained in use. There seems to be little doubt that it has been continually used in the Mosaic service from the time that service was established until now' (Wellhausen, *Psalms*, p. 222).

to the apocalyptic Zechariah, the Lord God Himself blows the trumpet for the last judgment (Zech. ix. 14). And this idea has found its way into the New Testament, and become an essential element in the visions of the end (cf. Matt. xxiv. 31 ; 1 Cor. xv. 52 ; 1 Thess. iv. 16). But in the religious ritual of the Jews a larger *rôle* was filled by the nearly related *ḥăçôçᵉrāh,* which Josephus (*Antiq.* III. xii. 6) describes as a silver tube, almost a cubit long, somewhat thicker than a flute, 'with so much breadth as sufficed for the admission of the breath of a man's mouth,' but widening in front into a bell shape—that is, exactly the form of instrument with which the representations on the triumphal arch of Titus and the later Jewish coins have made us familiar, and which Christian art of the Middle Ages has placed in the hands of angels. In the earlier period of Old Testament history the *ḥăçôçᵉrāh* was used equally with the *shôphār* for secular purposes (cf. 2 Kings xi. 14 ; Hos. v. 8) ; but in the more ritualistic age after the Restoration it was *par excellence* the instrument used by the priests in the Temple. The most explicit directions for the use of the two silver 'trumpets' are found in Num. x. 2ff. ; while the Chronicler represents no fewer than one hundred and twenty priests as blowing these instruments at the dedication of the Temple (2 Chron. v. 12).

A wind-instrument in still more general vogue is the pipe or flute, whose origin is likewise to be sought in the mists of antiquity. The legends of various nations have associated the flute with the pastoral stage of civilization, attributing its invention to the gods of shepherd life. There seems little doubt that the shepherds of ancient days whiled away the weary hours of watching on the *veldts* by pipings on simple flutes cut from the reeds that grew around them, learning the art perhaps from the whistling of the wind on these same reeds. But other motives appear to have entered into the discovery. Thus Wallaschek has traced the origin of primitive bone-flutes to the love of decoration manifest even in the earliest stages of art.[1] The first flute was probably but a single pipe or tube, from which one unvarying note was produced. But a simple scale was soon secured, either by the bundling together of several reeds of different length, in the manner of the Pan's pipe, the prototype of the modern pipe-organ, or by the original device of cutting holes at different intervals of the same reed, through the opening and shutting of

[1] From the appearance of a holed flute of stag-horn among deposits apparently of the stone age, Wallaschek concludes that this was the earliest of all musical instruments (*Primitive Music*, pp. 81f.). On the other hand, it should be borne in mind, such an instrument would be more readily preserved than either the drum or the ordinary pipe.

which a similar effect was produced. In the East a combination of the two varieties is found in the shape of the double flute, in which two separate pipes are connected with the one mouth-piece.

The flute type was known to the Hebrews from very early times. Tradition ascribes to Jubal the invention of the *'ûghāb*, which was most probably the old pastoral Pan's pipe (Gen. iv. 21). Though little mentioned thereafter in the Old Testament, this instrument continued as a favourite accompaniment of the joyful songs of the people as late, at least, as the age of Job (cf. xxi. 12; xxx. 31). The most widely-used instrument of this type, however, was the *ḥālîl*, a holed flute, either single or double, probably in the beaked style so common on the Assyrian and Egyptian monuments. Thus the *ḥālîl* formed part of the orchestral accompaniment of the prophetic band that met Saul at Gibeah (1 Sam. x. 5). The popular joy at the installation of King Solomon was likewise expressed by loud pipings on the *ḥālîl* (1 Kings i. 40). The flute shared also in the licentious music of rich men's feasts (Isa. v. 12), as well as in celebrations of the joy of worship. To the accompaniment of the *ḥālîl* men went in procession to the house of the Lord (Isa. xxx. 29). If the *n^{e}ḥîlôth* of Ps. v. be another description of the flute, it played some part, as well, in the actual praise of the Temple. The

Talmud gives it a distinct place, not only in the torchlight processions of the Feast of Tabernacles, but even as the proper musical accompaniment of the *Hallēl* during Passover. The dulcet notes of the flute, however, made it the peculiar associate of mourning.[1] In Assyrian texts the word 'flute-lament' is the technical term for the death-dirge. And, though this expression is unknown in the Old Testament, the prophet's allusion to the sounding of his heart 'like flutes' for Moab (Jer. xlviii. 36) is sufficient evidence that in Israel, too, flute-playing was almost a synonym for mourning.

In the late list of musical instruments (Dan. iii. 5ff.) two of the names indicate varieties of the flute: the *mashrôḳîthā* (from *shāraḳ*, 'to whistle'), probably a more developed *'ûghāb*, or pipe-organ, and the *sûmphônyāh*, an Aramaic transliteration of the Greek *συμφωνία*, doubtless a bag-pipe, consisting of a goat-skin with two reeds attached, the one forming the mouth-piece, and the other the chanter, as in the familiar Highland bag-pipe.

The impulse to another type—the *n^{e}gînôth*, or stringed instruments—came from the use of the bow in hunting and warfare. The original harp

[1] It is interesting to note as one of the 'problems' raised in the school of Aristotle, why the flute should be the instrument alike of joy and sadness. The answer returned is that its soft, sweet notes alike soothed men's sorrow and heightened their joy (*Problems*, xix. 1)

was probably a simple one-stringed bow, like the *rabāb* on which the modern Bedouin still twangs his rude melodies. The addition of other strings correspondingly enlarged the musical compass of the instrument, until we reach the ten- or twelve-stringed harp of the Hebrews, and the yet richer developments of modern times. In the Old Testament two different styles are found. The more popular of these—the *kinnôr*—is already associated with the *'ûghāb* in the old tradition of Jubal (Gen. iv. 21). It appears to have been a small, portable lyre, enclosed in a square or rounded frame-work of sandal or other fine wood, and supported by a kettle-shaped sounding box, over which were stretched from three to six cat-gut strings—as represented in delineations of Semitic musicians on old Babylonian and Egyptian monuments, and in somewhat more advanced form on the later Jewish coinage,[1]—played either by plucking the strings with the finger, or striking them with a metal *plectrum*, as suggested by the two verbs *zimmēr*, 'to pluck,' and *niggēn*, 'to strike.' The instrument appears in connexion with prophetic excitation (1 Sam. x. 5), in religious processions (2 Sam. vi. 5; 1 Chron. xvi. 5), at the solemn dedication of the

[1] Cf. the reproductions of these in the articles on Music in the *Dictionary of the Bible* and *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, or in the Appendix to Wellhausen's edition of Psalms in the *Polychrome Bible*.

new wall of Jerusalem (Neh. xii. 27), and occasionally as part of the Temple orchestra (Pss. xxxiii. 2; xliii. 4, etc.). But it was peculiarly associated with secular music of a joyful character. It filled its *rôle*, for example, in family festivals (Gen. xxxi. 27), besides forming part of the orchestral accompaniment of licentious banquets (Isa. v. 12),[1] and adding to the seductive spell of the women of the streets (Isa. xxiii. 16). To the exhilarating strains of the *kinnôr*, likewise, David charmed away Saul's melancholy (1 Sam. xvi. 16ff.). But, unlike the soothing flute, it had no part in the mourner's grief. When the iron of sorrow entered men's hearts, they laid aside their harps, or hanged them on the willow-trees, as no longer beseeming their mood (cf. Ps. cxxxvii. 2; Lam. v. 14).

Alongside of the *kinnôr* appears another variety of harp—the *nebel* or 'psaltery'—the shape of which is said by Jerome to resemble the Greek letter Δ—thus most nearly representing the original bow-harp. The *nebel* had a richer compass than the more popular *kinnôr*. In Pss. xxxiii. 2; xcii. 3, etc., we read of ten-stringed instruments. And Josephus states that the 'psaltery' of his day had 'twelve musical notes' (*Antiq.* VII. xii. 3). The *nebel* was occasionally used in scenes of revelry

[1] Among the Greeks, too, the lyre was δαιτος ἑταιρη, *mate of the banquet* (*Odyssey* xvii. 271, etc.).

(Amos v. 23 ; Isa. v. 12 ; xiv. 11). But it was consecrated especially to the service of religion. Thus the instrument played its part in the prophetic orchestra that greeted Saul (1 Sam. x. 5), and the more elaborate musical accompaniment of the ark's triumphal progress to Jerusalem (2 Sam. vi. 5). Its characteristic place, however, was in the worship of the Temple. The numerous allusions to the *nebel* in Psalms and Chronicles, for example, are all in this connexion.

Of the remaining instruments enumerated in Dan. iii. 5ff., the *ḳîthārîs* and *p*ᵉ*santērîm* are simply transliterations of the Greek κίθαρις and ψαλτήριον, exact equivalents of the Hebrew *kinnôr* and *nebel*, while the *ṣabb*ᵉ*kā* is most probably the Greek σαμβύκη, a sharp-toned triangular harp of four strings, according to Strabo and other authorities of 'barbaric origin.'

In the earlier stages of art the various instruments were no doubt used separately, as accompaniments to different types of song. As each singer was then his own accompanist, the instrumental music would form a species of pleasing interlude in the song.[1] But with the development of the orchestra

[1] This remains the type of musical accompaniment in Palestine to the present day (cf. Schneller, *Kennst du das Land*, pp. 172ff.). We should not conclude, however, with Schneller, that historical Israel never advanced beyond this stage.

a musical accompaniment in the stricter sense became possible. That Oriental peoples were familiar with such accompaniments is obvious from musical representations on the monuments, where singers and players are seen to unite their notes. And the natural interpretation of the key-passage, 2 Chron. v. 13, is that the singing choruses lifted up their voices in praise to Jahweh *in time with* the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music. But even then the notes were in unison. 'The trumpeters and singers were *as one,* to make *one sound* to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord.' The only approach to harmony in the modern sense would be found in the different *timbre* of the instruments, and the occasional setting of these instruments to different octaves. Thus in another classical text, 1 Chron. xv. 20f., we read how one band of Temple musicians had their harps pitched *'al 'ălāmôth,* 'after the manner of maidens,' *i.e.,* most probably, on the soprano key, and a second their lyres *'al hashsh*ᵉ*mînîth,* 'on the eighth,' or the bass octave. Such modes of harmony were no doubt primitive in their simplicity. But they showed at least the awakening of the sense, and led the way to the marvellous developments of modern times.

CHAPTER IV

Golden Treasuries of National Poetry

THE folk-songs that formed the subject of the preceding chapters were inspired by no literary ambition. In some moment of warm personal feeling, or under the impulse of a thrilling national experience, the poets gave forth in song the feelings that stirred their own hearts. And for the most part these effusions passed away with the occasion that gave them birth. Only a few select gems found a lodgment in the hearts of the people—perhaps for the haunting beauty of the words or melody, though more usually, no doubt, for the theme that inspired them—and thus entered into the spiritual inheritance of the nation. As the generations rolled on, the treasury of popular poetry was continually enriched with the golden odes of more finely endowed souls that merited a real claim to immortality. With the dawn of literature there emerged also guilds of professional singers or minstrels—like the Greek ἀοιδός and the Arabic *râwî* or reciter—whose function it was to keep alive the poetic glories of their people. But as a rule it was not till the national

consciousness fully awoke that any attempt was made to give the old poetry greater permanence. A full century had to elapse, for example, from the Flight of Mohammed before the Arab Humanists began to count it part almost of their religion to rescue from oblivion, and commit to the security of the pen, the brave old songs of the Age of Ignorance.

The history of literary art in Israel passes through essentially the same phases. In the early days of national stress, when so hard a fight must be fought for land and home, the songs that celebrated the brilliant deeds of their fathers lived in the hearts of the people, firing them to emulate their courage and loyalty. In more peaceful ages wandering *môsh^{e}lîm* —reciters or rhapsodists—still kept aglow the light of poetic inspiration that shone from the past. But not till the fruits of victory had been gathered, and the kingdom was firmly established under David and Solomon, were more decisive steps taken to save the rich inheritance of national song.

In the historical literature of the Old Testament two separate Anthologies of folk-poetry are referred to :—

1. The short fragment in Num. xxi. 14f. is cited from the *Book of the Wars of Jahweh*, evidently a collection of battle-songs from Israel's Wars of Conquest and Independence. To the same source

we may plausibly assign Deborah's glorious battle-hymn (Judg. v.), and the verses to whose accompaniment the ark was carried to and from the battle-field (Num. x. 35f.). But many other songs now lost must have gone to form so distinctive an Anthology. If the first of these pieces (Num. xxi. 14f.) relate to the conquest of Moab by David, the earliest possible date for the compilation of the book will be the opening years of the monarchy. And no cogent reason seems to demand a much later origin. The brilliant reign of Solomon undoubtedly gave an impulse to literary activities. The people enjoyed a happy respite from the long wars that had won them the kingdom, and could now look back with pride and thankfulness to the heroic deeds that distinguished them. Thus a real desire arose to preserve the memory of these deeds. The beginnings of historical narrative in Israel—for example, the earliest consecutive accounts of David's reign (2 Sam. ix.–xx.)—belong to this period. It would, therefore, be in harmony with all we know of the spirit and purpose of the age to ascribe the first Anthology of Israel's national song to this birth-time of conscious literary production.[1]

[1] Budde ascribes to Solomon himself the plan and supervision of these early collections of folk-poetry, aptly comparing him with Charlemagne, who played the same part in German literary history (*Geschichte der Althebräischen Literatur*, p. 19).

2. A second collection of folk-poetry—the *Book of Jashar*—is quoted as the literary source of the battle-song of Gibeon (Josh. x. 12f.) and David's Elegy over Saul and Jonathan (2 Sam. i. 18ff.), and, in the Septuagint, of Solomon's Hymn of Dedication (1 Kings viii. 12f.) as well.[1] The meaning of *hajjāshār* has been much disputed. In all probability, it is simply the collective singular of the adjective. The Book of Jashar would thus be the Book of the Upright, in other words, the Book of Israel's Brave or Good Men. Such a title would well agree with the known character and scope of the Book, celebrating, as it does, various types of goodness—that of the loyal friend and lover, that also of the zealous worshipper of Jahweh, the builder of His Temple and inaugurator of His worship, together with that of the valiant soldier.[2]

The date of the Book of Jashar is likewise suggested by its contents. Even on the authority of the Hebrew text, it cannot have been earlier than the reign of David. But the very probable reading of the Septuagint in 1 Kings viii. 53 would bring the *terminus a quo* down to the middle of Solomon's

[1] According to the LXX (in 1 Kings viii. 53) the hymn was found ἐν βιβλίῳ τῆς ᾠδῆς, *i.e.* בְּסֵפֶר הַשִּׁיר, *in the Book of the Song*, an obvious slip for בְּסֵפֶר הַיָּשָׁר, *in the Book of Jashar*.

[2] One naturally compares the Arabic Collection of heroic poetry entitled *Ḥamâsa*, literally, *manly valour* (the Roman *virtus*).

reign. The Collection is perhaps later than the Book of the Wars of Jahweh, its outlook on life and character being wider in range. But probably no great distance of time separates the two. At all events, they preserve for us the oldest remains of Hebrew poetical literature. One cannot but regret the disappearance of the sources themselves. Had we their contents in full, we should have gained so much more vital a knowledge of the natural gifts and qualities of the race through whom God spoke to the world. But the genius of the Old Testament is so predominantly religious that the other poetic glories of Israel pale before the purer light.

CHAPTER V

The Sorrows of Death

It can hardly be doubted that the stream of national poetry which flowed so strongly in the early ages continued to enrich the historical period as well. But the glimpses we catch of its windings are of the faintest. Only with the Exile does it appear once more in full flood. To the close of this era is to be ascribed the splendid ' Song of Moses ' (Deut. xxxii.), a richly coloured poetical survey of Israel's history in the spirit of the greater prophets. But the characteristic outflow of the feeling of the age is found in the Book of Lamentations, a collection of five separate elegies, all save the last in the *ḳînāh* or elegiac measure, and likewise arrayed in elaborate acrostic form, preserving the memory of Jerusalem's death-agony. In our English Bible these lays are appended to the Book of Jeremiah, and are actually described as the Lamentations of Jeremiah, in harmony with the accepted tradition in Jewish and Christian circles, which is mainly responsible for the current conception of Jeremiah as ' the weeping

prophet.' The tradition dates back perhaps to the note in 2 Chron. xxxv. 25, where one at least of the elegies appears to be ascribed to Jeremiah.[1] But it finds its first explicit recognition in the Septuagint, where the lays not merely stand in close relation to Jeremiah, but are likewise introduced by the following words :—' Now it came to pass, after Israel had been led captive and Jerusalem made desolate, that Jeremiah sat down weeping, and lifted up this lament over Jerusalem, saying,' etc. From the Septuagint the tradition passed over to the Syriac and Vulgate Versions, and thence also to the Protestant Church. The Jewish Targums equally associate the Book with the name of Jeremiah. Later legend has even pointed out the spot where he sat and wept. And the poetic imagination of Christendom has delighted to linger on the scene.

There is certainly a fine dramatic fitness in the association. For how often Jeremiah did weep

[1] It might well seem inconceivable that by the lamentations of Jeremiah and the singing men and women over king Josiah the Chronicler had our present book in view. But this conclusion is rendered highly probable by the references of Josephus, *Ant.* X. v. 1, and Jerome, in his note on Zech. xii. 11, to lamentations written by Jeremiah on the occasion, which 'remain to this day,' and are 'read in the Church.' Jerome even appeals to the authority of Chronicles for the connexion of the book with Jeremiah. The idea probably arose through a mistaken identification of 'the anointed of the Lord' (Lam. iv. 20) with Josiah.

'for the slain of the daughter of his people.' Not unfrequently in his sorrow for Zion he broke into the choking *qînāh* metre found in Lamentations. The language, too, is largely reminiscent of Jeremiah. The lays are steeped in the feeling of the prophet, and turns of expression characteristic of his melting utterances meet us throughout. But weighty arguments bear against the traditional view. In the Hebrew Bible the elegies have no connexion with Jeremiah. They find their place, instead, among the Hagiographa or *Writings*, standing third in the list of Megilloth, or roll-books, read at the great festivals of the Jews. They have likewise no distinctive title, being described merely as *'Ekhāh*, 'Ah! how,' from the opening word of Lam. i. Though the Septuagint is mainly responsible for the tradition, its own version of Lamentations is evidently by a very different hand from that of the prophecies of Jeremiah. And the lays themselves show many undesigned distinctions in tone and feeling. Jeremiah poured out his conflicting emotions in keen, throbbing, heart-breaking words. In Lamentations the language is carefully studied and chosen, and artistically arranged in its acrostic moulding. The passion may be there—the awful sorrow of Jerusalem's last anguish. But it is subdued. In the later lays, especially, there is something of that sweetness which distils from the mem-

ory of 'saddest thought.' Jeremiah spoke out of the bitterness of his soul. The author or authors of Lamentations seek rather to soothe their sorrow by quiet meditation on the woes of Jerusalem, and searching out the purpose of God pursued through the wrack and ruin of His people. To Jeremiah the meaning of the whole direful calamity was plain. He had long forewarned Jerusalem that this was the inevitable end of their apostasy from their God. But to the authors of Lamentations it came with a painful shock of surprise that He could ever have abandoned His people to their foes. The lays reveal nothing of the prophetic outlook. The troubles of Israel, they feel, have come to them through trusting in the prophets' dreams of 'falsehood and folly' (ii. 14). And they no longer receive 'vision from Jahweh' (ii. 9). The authors of part of the lays, at least, belonged to the court circles of Jerusalem, those who long vainly looked for help to Egypt (iv. 17), till in despair they courted safety in ignominious flight, but were hunted over the mountains, and ambushed in the desert, and had the crowning sorrow of seeing 'the breath of their nostrils,' the Anointed of Jahweh, the much-loved king under whose shadow they had hoped to live among the nations, 'trapped in the toils,' and carried by the relentless enemy far off to Babylon (iv. 18ff.). The fortunes of Jeremiah during the death-throes of Jerusalem were very

different from this. Shut up in his prison-house, he was spared the awful horrors to which the lays bear such personal witness. Nor does any attempt appear to have been made to carry away the prophet in the king's wild rush for freedom. The truest friend the people of Jerusalem ever had, he remained with them, vainly imploring them to turn to Jahweh and live, making Him their Lord and King amid all their calamities (Jer. xl.ff.).

The unity of the Book is itself the subject of grave doubt. The differences in the order of the letters may first arouse suspicion.[1] But various other distinctions in date, view-point and style, enter into the question. Of the five chapters, two are charged full of the tragedy of Jerusalem's downfall, and are undoubtedly inspired by actual memories of the scene. The others carry us down to a considerably later period, when thoughtful spirits had begun to muse over the mystery of God's ways, and to trace His leading hand in sorrow, suffering and death. The tone here is no simple advance upon the mood of the earlier lays. The feeling and style and scene alike point us to different minds.

The oldest elements in the Book are unquestionably chaps. ii. and iv., whose vivid, moving

[1] In ch. i. the usual order appears. But in chs. ii.–iv. ם precedes ע, 'as though with us *p* were to stand before *o*' (Nöldeke, *Alttestamentliche Literatur*, p. 146).

pictures of the ruin of Zion clearly bespeak the eye-witness. The two are usually assigned to the same author. But the poignant religious note of ch. ii. is so far removed from the frankly secular mood of its fellow that the assumption is open to revision. At all events, the date of both elegies must run back close to the events they depict. The now generally accepted hypothesis would place them about the year 570 B.C., some fifteen years after the actual catastrophe, when sufficient time had elapsed for the toning down of the passion in the calmer region of reflection, but before any gleam of hope had yet appeared on the distant horizon. The author of ch. iv., at least, belonged to the *entourage* of King Zedekiah, and was no doubt one of the captives carried in his train to Babylonia. The origin of the two lays is thus most probably to be sought there.[1] And this hypothesis would best explain the reminiscences of Ezekiel that meet us in both.[2]

[1] From the allusion to Edom in iv. 21f., Budde concludes that the home of the lays must have been Judah. But one who threw himself so completely into the memory of the scene would naturally rouse the old feeling against the unbrotherly, inhuman Edom.

[2] Thus the phrase 'the perfection of beauty' (ii. 15) is a direct quotation from Ezek. xxvii. 3f. (though here applied to Tyre). The comparison of Zion with Sodom (iv. 6) is a crystallization of the thought in Ezek. xvi. 46ff. The 'trapping in the toils' (iv. 20) equally recalls Ezek. xix. 4, 8. Among other reminiscences we may note the phrases הָדַם רִגְלָיו (ii. 1), as com-

A second closely related group consists of chs. i. and v. The authors of these two lays stand at some little distance from the tragedy. In ch. i. the figure of the widowed, childless city herself raises the lament to heaven. The companion poem (ch. v.) is the prayer of the afflicted people. Although apparently of different authorship, both seem to date from about the middle of the century (*c.* 550–540 B.C.).[1] And the home of both was doubtless the old motherland of Judah—some village or blighted landscape near Jerusalem where the black crumbling ruins of Zion stood ever before the eyes in mute appeal.

The latest of the lays is found in ch. iii. The artistic form here shows a marked development. As in chs. i. and ii., three *ḳînāh* verses are assigned to each letter of the alphabet ; but the whole three are now introduced by the same key-letter. The tone of religious reflection is equally advanced. The veil that obscured God's ways has now been lifted

pared with Ezek. xliii. 7 ; מְחַמַּדֵי עֵין (ii. 4), found elsewhere only in Ezek. xxiv. 16, 21, 25 ; and the prophets' 'visions of falsehood and vanity' (ii. 14), against which Ezekiel protests as strongly (ch. xiii. 1ff., etc.).

[1] From supposed reminiscences of Deutero-Isaiah in ch. i., Budde and other scholars would bring its date down to a few years after the Restoration (*c.* 530 B.C.), or even later. The affinities with Deutero-Isaiah, however, seem not so close as to warrant this assumption. And the pathos of the piece is by no means in harmony with the joy of the Restoration.

a little; and the poet is able dimly to discern the glory of the light that shone even amid the darkness. The chapter is evidently to be dated some considerable time after the Restoration. And the scene here, too, is Judea, the poet being doubtless a son of the new spiritual community that had learned in the land of their exile how Jahweh saves through suffering and death.

The opening stanzas of Lam. ii. choke with sorrowing wonder that Jahweh should have dealt so hardly with His people. For the poet recognizes no secondary causes. It is Jahweh Himself that has 'beclouded the daughter of Zion, and hurled from heaven to earth the glory of Israel' (*v.* 1); Jahweh that has 'posted Himself as a foeman, His right hand to the shaft,' and has 'slain each delight of the eye in the tents of Mount Zion' (*v.* 4); Jahweh that has 'burst through His own hedge, and ravaged His trysting-place,' giving over the place of His holiness to the ruthless hands of the foe, so that 'they shout through the house of Jahweh, as on one of the feast-days' (*vv.* 6f.). And now temple and fortress and rampart alike lie 'racked and languishing' in their sorrow (*vv.* 8ff.).

9 *Sunk to the ground are her gates,*
Broken her bars.[1]

[1] For the Piel sing. אִבַּד read the Kal plur. אָבְדוּ, in the intransitive sense (cf. Bickell). וַיִּשְׁבַּר is doubtless but a variant.

Her king and her princes are exiles,
Reft of the Law.
Even her prophets no longer receive
Vision from Jahweh.

10 *Low on the ground sit speechless*
The elders of Zion;
Dust they pour on their heads,
They gird them with sackcloth.
Their heads to the ground bring down
Jerusalem's daughters.

11 *Mine eyes are wasted with tears,*
My bowels are moved;
My heart is poured on the ground
For the wreck of my people,
For the wastage of infant and suckling
On the streets of the city.

12 *They say to their mothers, 'Ah, woe!*
Where is our bread?' [1]
While they swoon, like those that are wounded,
On the streets of the city,
And pour out their souls in death [2]
On the breast of their mothers.
* * * *
15 *Over thee clap their hands*
All that pass by;
They hiss, and they wag their heads,
Over Jerusalem:
'Is this the city they called
The Perfection of Beauty?' [3]

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[1] The first *stichos* here is too short. I have followed Budde in inserting אַוֵּי לָנוּ, which might easily have fallen out before the following words. On the other hand, the second *stichos* unduly prolongs the *kînāh* note. The easiest emendation is to omit וְיֹנֵק, which is in any case hardly applicable in the mouth of 'infants and sucklings.'

[2] The first *stichos* is again too short. Insert probably לַמָּוֶת (G. A. Smith).

[3] The closing words of the Massoretic text, which mar the

16 *Against thee open their mouths*
Thine enemies all.
They hiss, and they gnash their teeth:
'We have swallowed her up![1]
Ah! this is the day we looked for;
We have found it, we see it.'

17 *Jahweh hath done what He planned,*
Hath accomplished His word.
As He ordered in days long gone,
He hath ruined unpitying.
He hath given thine enemies joy of thee,
Hath exalted their horn.[2]

The ruin of Jerusalem is so vast, her wound so deep-cut, that the poet has no comfort to offer her, no human healer to call for her (*v.* 13). Her only hope is to turn to Him who afflicted, if haply He may be moved by her sorrow to bring deliverance.

18 *Cry thou aloud to the Lord,*
Virgin of Zion.[3]
Tears let fall as a river,
By day and by night.

---

kînāh measure, are, no doubt, a mere reader's insertion from Ps. xlviii. 2.

[1] Read with LXX, etc., the fem. sing. termination בַּלַּעְנוּהָ. The prosaic אָמְרוּ may then be dispensed with.

[2] The last *stichos* of this verse is likewise overladen. G. A. Smith and others would omit קֶרֶן. But this word is so appropriate to הֵרִים that it seems better to omit צָרָיִךְ and read קַרְנוֹ (cf. Budde).

[3] For the meaningless words of the Hebrew text we must read either צַעֲקִי לְבַדֵּךְ or צַעֲקִי לִבְתוּלַת (cf. Ewald, etc.). In the second half I have followed Löhr in reading בְּתוּלַת, *virgin daughter of Zion*, Budde and G. A Smith prefer הֲמִי, *clamour, O Zion*.

No respite give to thyself;
Rest not thine eyes.[1]

19 *Rouse thee, sing out in the night,*
At the first of the watches!
Pour out thy heart like waters
In the presence of Jahweh!
Lift up thy hands to His face
For the life of thy children.[2]

20 '*Jahweh, see and consider*
Whom Thou hast treated thus!
Should women devour their own offspring,
The babes they have fondled?
Or slaughter o'ertake in Thy sanctuary
Prophet and priest?

21 '*Thick strewn on the face of the streets*
Are old men and boys;
My virgins and young men together
Are fallen by the sword.
In the day of Thy wrath Thou hast slain them,
Hast butchered unpitying.

22 '*Thou didst summon, as 'twere a feast day,*
All the dwellers around me.[3]

---

[1] Read probably the plur. עֵינֶיךָ, with many MSS. both of the Heb. and LXX.

[2] The fourth couplet in the Hebrew, which mars the general symmetry of the piece, is no doubt a later insertion.

[3] The Massoretic reading recalls Jeremiah's מָגוֹר מִסָּבִיב, *terrors on every side.* But it seems more in harmony with the context to regard מְגוּרַי as a derivative from גּוּר, meaning 'sojourners' (cf. Job xviii. 19). We should then have to understand the verse as referring to the gathering together of the surrounding populace into the city, as happened again during the siege of Titus, thus both intensifying the sufferings of the siege, and adding vastly to the number of the slain.

In the day of Thy wrath there was left
No remnant or fugitive.
Those whom I nursed and brought up
My foes have destroyed.'

The horror of the scene is still more vividly portrayed in the companion elegy (ch. iv.), where the religious robe is dropped, and the only hope for Zion lies in the full paying of the guilt, and the consequent passing of the cup to the insolent Edom (*vv.* 21f.).

1 *Ah! how dimmed is the gold,*[1]
The finest of gold!
Poured are our sacred stones[2]
Down all the streets.

2 *The sons of Zion, the priceless,*
Worth weight in gold,
Are counted but earthenware pitchers,
The work of the potter.

3 *Even the jackals give breast,*
And suckle their young.
But my people's daughters[3] *are monsters,*
As ostriches wild.

4 *The tongue of the nursling cleaves*
To its palate for thirst.
The children are asking for bread;
There is none that doth offer them.

5 *Those that were fed on dainties*
Rot on the streets;
They that were nurtured in scarlet
Huddle on dung-hills.

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[1] יִשְׁנָה, *is changed*, probably a mere explanatory gloss.

[2] The 'gold' and 'sacred stones' here refer, not to the adornments of the Temple, but to the precious 'sons of Zion' (cf. *v.* 2).

[3] Read probably בְּנוֹת־עַמִּי, with Bickell, etc.

6 *The guilt of my people exceeded*
The sin of Sᵉdôm,
Whose overthrow came in a flash,
Ere a hand could be wrung.[1]

7 *Her princes were purer than snow,*
They were whiter than milk;
Their flesh was more ruddy than corals,
Their veins as the sapphire.[2]

8 *Now blacker than darkness their visage,*
Unknown in the streets,
Their skin is drawn tight on their bones,—
It is dry as a stick.

9 *Better the slain of the sword*
Than the slain by starvation,
That rot in blackening decay,
Like the fruits of the field.[3]

10 *The hands of delicate women*
Have sodden their children.
These are become their food
In the wreck of my people.

11 *The Lord hath accomplished His fury,*
Poured out all His wrath;
He hath kindled in Zion a fire,
Which devoured her foundations.

---

[1] The point of the comparison is doubtless that, judged by their respective sufferings, Jerusalem had been held more guilty even than Sodom.

[2] Instead of עֶצֶם, *bone, bodily framework,* we should probably read עוֹרָם, *their flesh,* or some similar word, with the sing. verb. Bickell reads אָדְמוּ מֵעֶצֶם פ׳, *they were ruddier than coral-bone,* perhaps an even happier emendation. I have followed Budde in translating גִּזְרָתָם, lit. *their cutting,* as *their veins.*

[3] The text is here evidently corrupt. The best emendation proposed seems to be Dyserinck's מוּקָדִים כִּתְנוּבוֹת שָׂדָי, *that rot burnt up* (*blackened*) *like the fruits,* etc.

12 *No kings of the earth had believed,*
Nor men of the world,
That assailant or foeman could enter
Jerusalem's gates.

13 *It was all for the sins of her prophets,*[1]
For the crimes of her priests,
Who shed in the midst of the city
The blood of the just.

14 *Through the streets they totter like blind men,*
Polluted with blood.
What they could not endure to cast eyes on,
They sweep with their robes.

15 *'Depart, ye unclean!' men bid them,*
'Depart, and avoid us!'
So they stagger and totter around,
Nowhere a shelter.

16 *Jahweh Himself hath dispersed them,*
Caring no more.
Respect hath He none for the priests,
Nor favour for prophets.

17 *How long strained our eyes in searching*
For help that was vain!
We looked, and still looked, to a people
That never brought help.

18 *Our enemies hunted our steps,*[2]
That we walked not abroad.
Our days were cut short and completed,
For our full end was come.

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[1] In the Heb. the third accented word has disappeared. We might, with Budde, add בָּאוּ or זֹאת. The above translation supplies the idea required.

[2] After צָדוּ we should doubtless insert the subject צָרֵינוּ, which might so easily slip out from such a context. The רְחֹבֹתֵינוּ in the second *stichos* probably means the open spaces in front of the gates, where they could no longer walk with safety because of the stringency of the blockade.

19 *Swifter were they that pursued us*
Than the eagles of heaven ;
Over the mountains they pressed us,
Laid their snares in the desert.

20 *The breath of our life, God's anointed,*
Was trapped in their toils,
Of whom we had said, 'In his shadow
We shall live 'mong the nations.'

21 *Be glad and rejoice in thy home-land,*
Daughter of Edom ! [1]
To thee, too, shall the cup pass round,
Till thou'rt drunk and dishevelled.

22 *In full is thy guilt paid, O Zion ;*
He will oust thee no more.
Edom, thy guilt will He visit ;
Thy sins He'll unveil.

The tone of Lam. i. is different. Zion still lies a mass of blackened ruins. But the stains of the carnage have been wiped away, and the healing hand of Nature has woven its tracery of flowers over the scars and rents of suffering. There is a real pathetic beauty in the picture of the desolate city lifting her hands in mournful appeal to those that passed by the way. The bitterness is not all removed. This elegy, too, closes with a piercing cry for vengeance on the enemy. But the city now knows why Jahweh has afflicted her thus (cf. *vv.* 5, 8f., 14, 17f. ; and to Him alone she turns for salvation.

[1] Read יוֹשֶׁבֶת בְּאֶרֶץ, the closing עוּץ being a simple gloss which has found its way into the text. In the translation the two final phrases have been transposed.

1 *Ah! how lonely she sits,*
That was full of people! [1]
She is become as a widow,
That was great 'mong the nations.
The queen city of provinces
Is now sunk to a slave.

2 *Sore doth she weep in the night time,*
The tears on her cheek.
No one is found to comfort,
Of all that loved her.
Her friends have betrayed her, all of them;
They are turned to be foes.

3 *Homeless is Judah through suffering,*
And soreness of travail.
In exile she dwells 'mong the heathen;
No rest hath she found.
All her pursuers have caught her
In the midst of the toils.

4 *The highways to Zion lie mourning,*
For lack of their pilgrims.
Her gates stand all of them desolate;
Her priests are distraught.
Her virgins are plunged in affliction,
Herself is in bitterness.

5 *Her foemen are now the head,*
Her enemies triumph.
For Jahweh hath swept her away
For the tale of her sins.
Her children have passed into exile
In front of the foe.

6 *Gone from the daughter of Zion*
Is all her glory.
Her princes are feeble as harts
That can find no pasture.

---

[1] The word הָעִיר unduly prolongs the second half of the *kînāh* measure, and is probably but an explanatory gloss.

Fainting they flee without strength
Before the pursuer.

7 *Jerusalem calleth to mind*
The days of her trouble,[1]
When her people fell by the foe,
With no one to help her,
And enemies saw her, and jeered
Over her downfall.

8 *Jerusalem hath grievously sinned,*
Hath become an unclean one.
All that honoured abhor her,
Seeing her nakedness.
Herself is distraught with sorrow,
Backward she turns.

9 *Her filthiness clings to her skirts,*
Her end she regards not.
Thus is she fallen fearfully,
With none to bring comfort.
O Jahweh! behold my affliction!
So proud is the foe.

10 *The assailant hath spread his hand*
O'er all her goodly things;
The heathen her eyes have seen
Pass through the sanctuary,
Even those Thou badest not
Enter Thy trysting-place.

11 *Plunged are her people in grief,*
Seeking for bread;
Their treasures all have they given
For food to revive them.
O Jahweh! see, and behold
How vile I am grown!

---

[1] The superfluous וּמְרוּדֶיהָ is doubtless but a marginal variant that has found its way into the text. The whole following line in Hebrew is equally alien to the context, diverting attention from the real thought.

12 ' *Ho!* [1] *ye that pass by the way!*
Look, and consider
If sorrow there be like this
That is wreaked upon me—
The sorrow that Jahweh hath caused
In the day of His wrath!

13 ' *Fire He sent from on high,*
And infused in my bones.
The net He spread for my feet,
Backward He turned me.
Weak hath He left me, and desolate,
All the day long.

14 ' *Watch hath He kept on my sins,*
To a yoke hath He twined them;
Over my neck have they passed,
Brought low my strength.
Into their power hath He given me; [2]
No more can I rise.

15 ' *Jahweh hath flung to the ground*
All the strong men within me,
He hath summoned a festal assembly
For the wrack of my warriors.
In His wine-press hath Jahweh trodden
The daughter of Judah.

16 ' *For these things I weep without ceasing;*
My tears flow down.
For no one is near to comfort,
None to relieve me.

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[1] For the meaningless לוא אֲלֵיכֶם LXX and other Versions have the direct appeal. We might read, perhaps, הוֹי לָכֶם, an elegiac note of grief, or simply לְכוּ, *come, hark!*

[2] The best sense appears to be gained from נִשְׂקַד עַל-פִּשְׁעִי of a number of MSS., to some extent supported by the Versions. The עַל might, however, be aptly inserted after עָלַי in line 2, thus giving the *stichos* adequate length and meaning. For the construct בִּידֵי in the last line read בְּיָדָיו.

My children around me lie desolate,
For the foe hath prevailed.'

The help of man is vain. And therefore the stricken city rests all her trust in her God.

20 *'See, Lord! for distress is upon me;*
My bowels are moved.
Turned is my heart within me,
For sore have I sinned.
The sword bereaveth without,
And plague[1] *in the house.*

21 *'Hear, O Lord! how I sigh,*
With no one to comfort me;
For my foes have all heard of my troubles,
They rejoice at Thy doings,
That Thou broughtest the day Thou proclaimedst
On all my sins.[2]

22 *'But let all their crimes come before Thee,*
That they be as I am![2]
As they have done unto me,
So do Thou to them![2]
For full is the cup of my sorrows,
And faint is my heart.'

In Lam. v., as has been noted, we have the prayer of the suffering people itself. Here the *qînāh* measure naturally yields to the normal three-pulsed verse. The acrostic garb is likewise dropped. If 'men do not write acrostics when their hearts are breaking,'[3] still less do they use such artifices in the sacred hour of prayer. The only reminiscence of the alphabetical mould appears in the number of the verses. And

[1] Read מָוֶת, in the sense of 'deadly plague.'
[2] These three *stichoi* have been transposed (following Budde).
[3] McFadyen, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 296.

even this may be the result of later redaction. For, as Budde has observed,[1] *vv.* 11, 12, and 18 stand in no real relation to the context. The prayer is a simple, sincere expression of the feelings of the people of Judah during the mournful years of Jerusalem's widowhood. All joy is gone from them. Their spirit is well-nigh broken with sorrow. Yet through all their distresses faith soars to God in His heaven. He abides for ever. His throne is securely established from age to age. If only He will hear their prayer, and return to them in His mercy, they too will be turned, and their days be renewed as of old. But this still seems a hope beyond expectation. He has forgotten His people so long, that He may well have rejected them utterly, so fierce is His anger against them!

1 *Remember, O Lord, what is come on us;*
Behold, and see our reproach!

2 *To strangers is turned our inheritance;*
Our homes are given unto aliens.

3 *Orphans we are, and fatherless;*
Our mothers are doomed to be widows.

4 *Our water we drink for money;*
Our wood we buy at a price.

5 *The yoke presses hard on our neck;*[2]
We are wearied, and find no rest.

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[1] *Kurzer Hand-Commentar*, pp. 104ff.

[2] The עֹל, *yoke*, has dropped out before עַל, but is preserved by Symmachus. Instead of נִרְדָּפְנוּ, *we are pursued*, a word like נִכְבַּד, *is made heavy*, or הִכְאִיבָנוּ, *maketh us sore*, seems required by the context.

6 *To Egypt we give the hand,*
And to Asshur, to sate us with bread.

7 *Our fathers sinned, and are not;*
And we have borne their iniquities.

8 *Over us slaves bear rule;*
From their might there is none to deliver.

9 *With our lives we get us our bread,*
In peril of sword from the desert.

10 *Our skins glow as an oven,*
Through the burning heat of famine.

* * * *

13 *Our young men must bear the mill;*
'Neath the wood our children stumble.

14 *Our old men have left the gate;*
And our young men have ceased from their music.

15 *The joy of our heart is gone;*
Our dance is turned into mourning.

16 *The crown is fallen from our head.*
Ah, woe! for that we have sinned!

17 *For this is our heart grown faint;*
For these things our eyes are dim.

* * * *

19 *But Thou, Lord, abidest for ever;*
Thy throne is from age to age.

20 *Oh! why forget us for ever,*
And forsake us a length of days?

21 *Turn us, O Lord, that we turn to Thee!*
Renew our days as of old!

22 *Unless Thou hast wholly rejected us,*
So fierce is Thine anger against us!

Yet another mood is reflected in ch. iii. That which the suffering people had hardly dared to hope for has been accomplished. The exiles have been

restored, and the ruined city upbuilt. The fortunes of Jerusalem are still, indeed, shrouded in gloom through the relentless hatred and persecution of the enemy. But the light that God has shed on His people is the forecast of the 'perfect day' that is yet to dawn. The poet of Lam. iii. reviews the history of his people under the rays of this gladdening light. The 'man' that forms the subject of the elegy is either the nation personified, or more probably the poet himself uttering the universal sorrow, as the transition to the plural in *vv.* 40ff. so strongly suggests. In either case, the theme is the Divine 'leading' of Israel from the days of its youth onward. The elegy may lack the vivid colouring of chs. ii. and iv. Its tone is that, rather, of quiet meditation on God's ways. But a singular sweetness pervades the whole. Its gracious phrases haunt the mind. And the poet enters more deeply into the heart of God than any of his fellows. In spite of the note of vengeance with which this lay also closes, the prevailing thought of God is that of a loving Father, who afflicteth not from the heart, but even when He woundeth hath compassion on His children 'for His fulness of love' (*v.* 32).

1 *'Tis I that have seen affliction*
By the rod of His wrath.
2 *I am the man He hath led*
Through murk without light.

3 *Surely 'gainst me hath He turned*
His hand all the day.

4 *He hath wasted my flesh and my skin,*
He hath broken my bones.
5 *He hath massed up troubles against me,*
He hath fenced round my head.
6 *He hath made me to dwell in darkness,*
Like the long-time dead.

7 *He hath walled me in hopeless imprisonment,*
He hath loaded my chain.
8 *Though I cry, and intreat Him to help,*
He shutteth His ears.
9 *He hath blocked up my way with hewn stones,*
He hath twisted my path.

10 *Like a skulking bear He laid wait for me,*
As a lion in its lurking-place.
11 *From my path did He drag me, and mangle ;*
He left me forlorn.
12 *His bow He bent, and did set me*
As a mark for His arrow.

13 *Through my reins did He drive His shafts,*
The sons of his quiver.
14 *To all peoples I prove a derision,*
Their song all the day.
15 *He hath sated my soul with bitterness,*
He hath filled me with gall.

16 *He hath broken my teeth with gravel,*
He hath heaped me with ashes.
17 *My soul hath He robbed of its welfare ;*
All good I forget.
18 *I said : 'My glory is gone,*
And my hope in Jahweh.'

19 *The thought*[1] *of my woe and forlornness*
Is wormwood and gall.

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[1] The imper. of the Mass. text unduly hastens the appeal to Jahweh. The poet is still bewailing the misfortunes of his

20 *My soul doth for ever recall them,*
And is cast down within me.
21 *But these things*[1] *I lay to heart,*
And find them my hope :—

22 *The kindness of Jahweh is constant,*
It fails not for ever ;
23 *His mercies are fresh every morning,*
Full is His faithfulness.
24 *I said, 'My portion is Jahweh.'*
Thus will I trust Him.

25 *For Jahweh is good to the trustful,*
Even all that seek Him.
26 *It is good in patience to hope*
For Jahweh's salvation.
27 *It is good for a man that he bear*
The yoke in his youth.

28 *Alone let him sit in silence,*
When Jahweh doth gird him !
29 *Let him lay his mouth in the dust—*
There may haply be hope.
30 *Let him yield his cheek to the smiter,*
And be filled with reproach !

31 *For Jahweh will not cast off*
The afflicted[2] *for ever.*
32 *Though He wound, He will yet have compassion,*
For His fulness of love.
33 *For not from the heart doth He humble,*
Nor wound mankind.

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people. Read, therefore, the noun זֵכֶר, *remembrance* (Dyserinck, Budde, etc.).

[1] The reference here is forward. The things he lays to heart are the mercies of Jahweh.

[2] The hiatus at the close is usually filled up by בְּנֵי אִישׁ or אָדָם. But a richer sense is gained by reading עָנִי, a word that might easily have dropped out after אֲדֹנָי.

In the following verses the righteousness of Jahweh's reign is strongly asserted. He cannot endure the sight of oppression and injustice—the 'crushing underfoot of the prisoners,' the 'wresting of a man's rights before the Almighty,' and the 'subverting the poor in his cause'—still less can His own ways be uneven. If He have laid His hand on Israel, then, it must be the due reward of her wrong-doing.

39 *Then why should mortal complain*
Of the toll of his sins?

40 *Let us search our ways, and try them,*
And return to the Lord!
41 *Let us lift our hearts on our hands*
To God in the heavens!
42 *'We have sinned, and rebelled, and Thou*
Hast not forgiven.

43 *'Thou hast veiled Thy face, and pursued us;*
Thou hast slain without pity.
44 *Thou hast veiled Thy face with a cloud,*
That no prayer could pass through.
45 *Thou hast made us th' offscouring and refuse*
In the midst of the peoples.

46 *'Against us have opened their mouths—*
Our enemies all.
47 *Destruction and terror o'erwhelm us,*
Wasting and ruin.'

To his people's mournful prayer the poet lends the support of his own tears for the fate of Jerusalem.

48 *Mine eye runs with rivers of water*
For the wreck of my people.

49 *Mine eye pours down without ceasing,*
Finding no respite;

50 *Till Jahweh look down, and behold*
My sorrow from heaven.
51 *For 'tis He that hath tortured my soul*
With the tears of my city.

Jahweh has heard and answered in days gone by. Surely He will not now be silent.

55 *I have called on Thy name, O Lord,*
From the depth of the dungeon.
56 *Thou didst hear my voice. Oh! close not*
Thine ear to my cry!
57 *In the day that I called, Thou camest;*
Thou saidst, 'Have no fear!'

58 *Thou didst plead the cause of my soul,*
Thou redeemedst my life.
59 *And now, Lord, my wrong Thou hast seen;*
Uphold Thou my cause!
60 *Thou hast seen all their vengeance against me,*
The plans they have formed.

61 *Thou hast heard their reproaches, O Lord,*
The shame they have hurled [1]—
62 *Even the words of my foes, and their thoughts,*
Against me for ever.
63 *Watch Thou their sitting and rising,*
Their counsels against me! [2]

64 *Thou wilt repay them, O Lord,*
For the work of their hands.
65 *Blindness of heart wilt Thou bring them,*
Thy curse on their heads.
66 *In wrath wilt Thou chase and destroy them*
From under Thy heavens.

[1] In the Hebrew text the second *stichos* is simply repeated from the previous verse. The translation supplies what may have been the thought of the original.

[2] Here again the second *stichos* has been filled up from another context (*v.* 14). The translation offers but a suggestion of the original sequence.

CHAPTER VI

The Psalter

THE national life of Israel has been found bathed in so pervasive an atmosphere of devotion that their triumphal battle-hymns, and in large measure also their popular songs, breathe the vital essence of religion. Their heart-broken Lamentations over the ruin of their city and Temple are equally infused with the spirit of humble resignation, prayer and trust. The main body of Old Testament poetry turns yet more directly on the praise of God, and the varying emotions of the devout soul in its relation to Him. In this region the poetry of Israel is unique. There is religious poetry among other nations—often far surpassing that of Israel in sustained reflection on the mysteries of life, and dramatic representations of the conflict of the individual with the inexorable decrees of fate—but in no other religious literature do we find ourselves in such close and intimate touch with God. The poets of Greece and Babylonia 'feel after God.' To the pure-eyed seers of Israel He was as luminously self-evident a Being as their own selves. In Him their poetry

'lives and moves,' and thrills and glows with fervid emotion. And this vital contact with God it is which gives that literature its perennial freshness and inspiration. We may know more of the Eternal than even the loftiest souls in Israel. But such was the immediacy of their feeling of God, and their power to express that feeling, that their lyrical utterances remain the classics of devotion. The Christian world still gives voice to its faith and hope and joy in God through the rapturous strains of the 'sweet singers of Israel.' And the best of our hymns have caught their glow at this altar.

Of this distinctively religious poetry of Israel the finest gems are found in the Psalter, which has been aptly described as 'the heart of the Bible'; for what the heart is in man—the welling fountain of his feelings and imaginations, his joys and griefs and manifold cravings and aspirations—the Psalter is in the Bible. Thus the Psalter has touched and held the hearts of the devout in all the ages. Here heart speaks to heart, deep responds to deep, on the great realities of spiritual life.[1]

[1] 'The human heart is like a ship on a wild sea, driven by winds from all corners of the world. . . . And what find we for the most part in the Psalter, but the earnest words of men tossed about by such winds? Where can one find nobler words of joy than the Psalms of praise and thanksgiving contain? In these thou mayest gaze into the heart of all the saints, as into lovely pleasure gardens, or into heaven itself, and see how fine, pleasant,

Jewish tradition has linked the beginnings of Psalmody with the name of David. A real basis of fact would seem to underlie the tradition. In the complex personality of David the emotional sensibilities that make the poet formed a rich element. He had a true genius for friendship, and celebrated the noblest of his friendships in immortal verse. But the soul that was knit to Jonathan's in such bonds of tender affection was inspired by no less pure a passion for his God. His zeal for Jahweh led him to dance in prophetic ecstasy before the ark. And the same ardent enthusiasm can hardly have failed at other times to express itself in song. But it is now impossible to distinguish with any certainty the Davidic element in the Psalter. The heading *l*^{e}*dāvîd*, 'of David,' is in itself no definite criterion of authorship, but, like the corresponding titles, *l*^{e}*'āṣāph*, 'of Asaph,' and *libbᵉnê ḳôraḥ*, 'of the sons of Korah,' a mere index of the primary collection

delightsome flowers spring up therein from all manner of beautiful, gladsome thoughts of God because of His goodness. And, again, where canst thou find deeper, more plaintive and heart-moving words of sorrow than in the Psalms of lamentation? There too thou mayest look into the heart of all the saints—but as into death, or hell itself. How dark and gloomy all things are when the heart is troubled by the sense of the wrath of God! And so also when they speak of fear or hope, they use words that no painter could approach in colouring, or even an orator like Cicero in vividness of description.'—Luther, *Preface to the Psalter*, 1528.

from which the Psalm was taken. And, though the original 'Davidic' Psalter—the main body of our present Book I [1]— no doubt preserves strains of the true Davidic melody, the older songs have been so thoroughly revised and adapted to the progressive needs of congregational worship, and later Psalms added to such an extent, that the prevailing note is that of a far later stage of religious development. There is no Psalm, for example, whose origin seems better attested, or whose spirit and accent are more in harmony with David's eager, enthusiastic, warlike temperament, than the eighteenth; yet the middle and closing sections of the Psalm clearly reflect the religious ideas of the late prophetic age. The fine Processional, xxiv. 7ff., strikes the same antique note as the martial strains of xviii. 31ff.; but this too has become a mere appendix to a later song of worship. Even the sweet pastoral (Ps. xxiii.), which imagination loves to associate with the shepherd-king, in its closing verse presupposes the existence of the Temple. It seems most reasonable to assign

[1] The first two Psalms bear no note of authorship or origin. They are evidently placed in the forefront of the Psalter as a species of Preface, suggesting the dominant ideas of the Book. Of the remaining Psalms in Book I, all are headed by the title לְדָוִד, except Ps. x., which is clearly connected with the preceding to form one alphabetical whole, and Ps. xxxiii., where the opening verse is otherwise confused. The original לְדָוִד, attested by LXX, has probably dropped out by mere accident.

this and other early Psalms that sing of the joy of worship, and the gracious character of the man whose right it is to ascend the hill of God, and sojourn in His Temple—*e.g.* Pss. v., xv., xxiv. 1ff., xxvi., and xxvii.—to some date during the flourishing period of the first Temple. And, on a natural reading of the text, the 'royal Psalms' of Book I—the prayer for the king in xx. 9, the celebration of the king's joy and trust in Jahweh (xxi. 1ff.), and the Psalm of salvation for Israel and Jahweh's 'anointed' (xxviii. 8f.)—fall within the age of the Monarchy. But a careful analysis of the contents of the Book carries us yet further down the stream of history. Thus the closing verse of Ps. xiv. directly implies the Exile. And the minor notes of Pss. vi., xi., xii., and xiii. are certainly most in harmony with the sorrow of that time. The cry of the 'forsaken' spirit in Ps. xxii. shows clear marks of dependence on II Isaiah. Of the Nature-Psalms, too, the language of both viii. 3ff. and xix. 1 suggests acquaintance with the Creation account in Gen. i., while the framework of Ps. xxix., that Song of truly elemental grandeur and tempestuous energy, is cast in a mould of quiet 'priestly' dignity and beauty. The acrostic form of Pss. ix., x., xxv., xxxiv., and xxxvii. points to an age of developed reflection on the ways of God and man. And the profound religious thought of 'problem Psalms' like xvi. 10f.,

xvii. 14f., and xxxvii., with the 'confessional' accents of Ps. xxxii., tend in the same direction.

The completion of the first 'Davidic' Psalter, then, must be dated somewhat after the Restoration under Ezra and Nehemiah. The Psalms included in the Collection are almost all described by the title of *mizmôr* or 'lyric.' [1] The description is apt. For these old 'Psalms of David' have the true lyrical ring. They are mainly the effusions of strong personal feeling. And they touch a wide variety of moods. In richness of compass, indeed, no later Collection approaches them. They range from the depths of almost despairing appeal to God against the persecutions of the wicked (v., vi., vii., etc.) to quiet confidence in the sustaining love of Jahweh (iii., iv., etc.), and trust in the leading of the good Shepherd and Friend (xxiii.), triumphant joy in

[1] The word *mizmôr* is derived from the verb *zimmēr*, 'play the harp,' and thus means literally 'a song with musical accompaniment.' It is the general term for Psalm throughout the Psalter. In addition to this title, however, Ps. xvi. is described as a *mikhtām*, probably 'golden ode' (from *kethem*, 'gold'); Ps. xvii. as a *tephillāh*, or 'prayer,' an outpouring of the heart to God; and Ps. xxxvii. as a *maskil*, most probably 'meditation' (from the verb *sākhal*, 'to consider'). These terms are to be met with repeatedly in later sections of the Psalter. A further title, confined to Book I, is the *shiggāyôn* of Ps. vii., which still awaits a satisfactory explanation. Ewald, Delitzsch, and other scholars connect the word with *shāghāh*, 'to wander,' and describe the Psalm as a 'dithyrambic poem;' but this is quite at variance with the character of the Psalm

Jahweh, the 'Lord of Battle-hosts' (xviii. 31ff., xxiv. 7ff.), and love for His house and Law (xv., xix. 7ff., xxiv. 1ff., xxv., xxvii., etc.), awe-struck reverence before the glory of God revealed in the starry heavens, the splendour of the sunshine, and the majesty of the thunder-storm (viii., xix. 1ff., xxix.), rapturous delight in God's forgiving love, and the 'height and depth' of His tender mercies and His faithfulness (xxxii., xxxiv., xxxvi. 5ff.), until we reach at length the mountain-tops whence are caught the first bright gleams of immortal glory (xvi. 10f., xvii. 14f.).

In the course of the next century a second 'Davidic' Collection was compiled—the so-called 'prayers of David' now incorporated as Pss. li.-lxxii. in the Second Book of the Psalter. The elements forming this Collection are drawn in part from the contents of the older Book, the portrait of the 'fool' in Ps. liii. being but a slightly-altered recension of Ps. xiv., and the cry for deliverance in Ps. lxx. parallel to the prayer that closes Ps. xl., while the opening bars of Ps. lxxi. are a simple variant of Ps. xxxi. 1–3. But the bulk of the Book consists of new Psalms, under various titles. On the whole, these Psalms are of later origin than those of the earlier Collection. Their note, too, is more uniform. Intermingled with others are a few bright 'lyrics' of the regal period (lxi., lxii.), with 'meditations'

on the mysteries of Providence that seem still to presuppose the existence of the Temple (lii., liv., lv.), and ' odes ' of triumphant confidence in Jahweh (lvii. 7ff., lx. 5ff.). But the general tone reflects the subdued and sorrowful mood of the Exile. The accents of penitence in that most searching of all Psalms of confession, Ps. li., remind us constantly of Ezekiel and Deutero-Isaiah. And the broken cries for mercy, and help against the swords of the enemy, blending with plaintive appeals to God to turn from His wrath, and restore the people He had ' cast off and ravaged ' (lvii. 1ff., lviii., lix., lx. 1ff., lxiii., lxiv., lxix., lxx.), are the natural utterances of the children of affliction these prophets sought to comfort. But the Book closes not without the ringing notes of joy that hail the Restoration and rebuilding of the Temple, and herald the still gladder day when God's saving grace shall be known over all the earth, and the nations shall unite in worshipping and praising Him (lxv., lxvi., lxvii., lxviii.), when the true King shall arise to hold dominion and shed blessing ' from sea to sea, from the river even to the ends of the earth ' (lxxii.).[1]

In the meantime fresh Collections of sacred song were grouping themselves round the priestly names

[1] In its original cast, Ps. lxxii. was perhaps an accession Ode in honour of one of the later kings of Judah. But this old Song has been expanded into a real Messianic Psalm.

of Asaph and 'the sons of Korah.'[1] These Psalms are distinguished by a loftiness and dignity of tone, and a joyous pride in Zion and its Temple, which well accord with this association. Of the songs and 'meditations' of Korah, Ps. xlv. is a royal marriage-ode, celebrating the nuptials probably of one of the later kings of Judah; Pss. xlvi., xlvii. and xlviii. are hymns of exultant praise to God in honour of some such act of 'salvation' as the deliverance from Sennacherib's *grande armée*; Pss. xlii., xliii. read like the 'last sigh' of a priestly exile swept in the train of King Jehoiachin beyond the 'district of Jordan and the Hermons' to the land that was unclean; Ps. xliv. depicts the full horror of the desolation of Jerusalem; and Ps. xlix. raises anew, and carries to a sharper issue, the great problem of the sufferings of the righteous. The bulk of the Psalms of Asaph strike yet deeper notes of sorrow. The mournful wails of the racked and

[1] Of these priestly Collections, the Korah group forms a connected whole (Pss. xlii.–xlix.). The Asaph Psalter, on the other hand, has become dislocated through the intrusion of the 'prayers of David.' Only Ps. l. belongs to Book II, the remaining members of the group (Pss. lxxiii.–lxxxiii.) opening the Third Book. The majority of scholars follow Ewald in supposing that the 'prayers of David' have been arbitrarily transferred from their original place in the forefront of Book II. The present order, however, may show an approach to the chronological relation of the groups, the Psalms of Korah and the first of the Asaph Collection being, on the whole, earlier than the 'prayers.'

ravished people, and their plaintive questionings of the Why? and How long? of their affliction (Pss. lxxiv., lxxvii., lxxix., lxxxiii.), ring in the ear like a death-knell. But major notes pierce through the grief. God had been good to His people in the days of old. Therefore He could not abandon them for ever. Only let Him put forth His hand, and smite the heathen, and all of them would be 'ashamed and dismayed for ever,' and the nations would learn that Jahweh alone was 'Most High over all the earth' (Pss. lxxvi., lxxviii., lxxxi., lxxxiii. 17ff.).[1]

A significant feature of these three groups is the predominance of the Divine name *'Elohim*, or 'God.'

[1] The four Psalms, xliv., lxxiv., lxxix., lxxxiii., have by a large consensus of opinion, both ancient and modern, been assigned to the Maccabean period. There are various features in these Psalms which are in striking harmony with the tragic circumstances of that age—*e.g.* the profanation of the Temple by the enemy's standards, the destruction of the synagogues, the cessation of prophecy, and the proud conscience of the afflicted nation. It is very difficult, however, to explain the appearance of 'Maccabean' Psalms in the Collections of Asaph and Korah. And the difficulty has been intensified since the discovery of the original Hebrew of the *Wisdom of Ben Sira*, with its almost certain allusions to Pss. xliv. and lxxiv. (cf. Sir. xlvi. 11 with Ps. xliv. 18 and Sir. xxxvi. 6ff. with Ps. lxxiv. 9ff.). Dr. Briggs has made it very probable that the main suggestions of Maccabean authorship are later elements in the Psalms. It seems best to regard them, therefore, as voices from the Exile, which have received certain 'Maccabean' tones in the course of the final revision of the Psalter.

It is evident, however, from a comparison of the various parallel Psalms in the two 'Davidic' Psalters, as well as from such combinations as *'Elohim 'elohênû*, 'God, our God,' and *'Elohim çᵉbāôth*, 'God of hosts,' and other dubious contexts, that the *'Elohim* is redactional, and no vital element in the original Psalms. As the name is equally characteristic of the Priestly Code, the Books of Chronicles, and Ecclesiastes, the formation of the Elohistic Psalter falls doubtless within the same general period. The distribution of the Psalms between Asaph and the 'sons of Korah' defines the date more narrowly. The only guild of Temple singers in the first century after the Restoration, as late as the age of Ezra and Nehemiah, consisted of the 'sons of Asaph' (Ezra ii. 41; Neh. vii. 44, etc.). In the subsequent period the Korahites were added; but by the time of the Chronicler these had become porters or doorkeepers, their former function as 'singers' passing to the families of Heman and Ethan (1 Chron. xv. 17ff.). The Elohistic Psalter would thus belong to the fourth century.

The rest of Book III is filled by a further gleaning of Psalms of David and the 'sons of Korah,' with a slight intermixture from Heman and Ethan (Pss. lxxxiv.–lxxxix.), all of them free from the Elohistic redaction. The tone of these Psalms is in close harmony with that of the preceding. Here, too, the

cry of the afflicted is heard. But hope has risen amid the darkness. To this small group belong the sweet Pilgrim Psalm on the loveliness of the restored Temple (Ps. lxxxiv.), the glorious hymn in which mercy and truth unite their voices, while righteousness and peace kiss each other, truth springing up from the earth, and righteousness looking down from heaven (Ps. lxxxv. 9ff.), and the dazzling prophetic vision of Jerusalem as the mother-city of a universal kingdom of God, with Egypt and Babylonia, Philistia and Tyre and Ethiopia, among those that know and worship Him (Ps. lxxxvii.).

Out of the mass of extant Psalmody a selection now appears to have been made, entitled *lam-m*^{e}*naççēăḥ*, the Precentor's or Choirmaster's Psalter. As the headlines show, the large majority of the Psalms of Asaph and the 'sons of Korah,' with fully half of the 'Davidic' Books, contributed to this Collection. The musical notes that distinguish so many of the earlier Psalms apparently came from the Choirmaster. In part, these suggest the tunes to which the Psalms were set. As has been already observed, the best of the old folk-songs were drawn to the service of religion, and hymns in honour of God were freely sung to the melodies of *The Hind of the Morning, The Lilies, The Dove of the Distant Terebinths,* and *Die for the Son*—in the same joyous spirit as revival songs are still sometimes raised to

the tune of *Auld Lang Syne* or *Robin Adair*. In part, too, the musical headings relate to the instrumental accompaniment of the Psalms. From these it is evident that Psalms were usually tuned to the joyous notes of 'stringed instruments'—harp or lyre—though Ps. v. was probably accompanied by the flute or pipe. The apparent references in Pss. xii. and xlvi. to the bass and treble octaves have been adduced as indications of at least the beginnings of harmony. But the whole subject of Temple music is still veiled in much obscurity.[1]

The *ṣelāh* which divides the stanzas of many such Psalms has been the subject of considerable discussion. *Ṣelāh* is most probably the emphatic imperative of *ṣālal*, 'raise' or 'strike up,' and apparently denotes some form of interlude in the rendering of the Psalms. The Septuagint translates by διάψαλμα, which is usually understood as a musical interlude. On the other hand, the tradition in Jewish circles, as represented by the Targums, interprets the term as equivalent to *le'ôlām*, 'for ever.' Aquila, Jerome, and other ancient translators follow the same line, Jerome further comparing it with the closing *Amen* of Jewish and Christian hymns. This would suggest that the *ṣelāh* was a liturgical note, marking the point where the worshippers raised the united ascription, 'Blessed be Jahweh, God of Israel, from everlasting to ever-

[1] Cf. ch. iii.

lasting, Amen and Amen' (Ps. xli. 13), or some similar burst of praise. If we must decide between the two interpretations, the latter is certainly supported by the balance of traditional evidence, besides being more in harmony with the ritual of the Temple. As we have seen, however, such ascriptions of praise were rung out by players and singers in unison. At the dedication of the Temple, according to the Chronicler (2 Chron. v. 13), all together made 'one sound,' as they blew the trumpets and sounded forth the Benediction, 'Praise Jahweh, for He is good; for His mercy endureth for ever.' The liturgical expression introduced by the *ṣelāh* may thus have been a full-toned Doxology, both vocal and instrumental, like the modern *Gloria Patri* or repeated *Amen* rendered by combined organ and choir.[1]

With the increasing interest in worship that followed the Restoration, fresh Collections of sacred song continued to be formed. The most attractive of these consists of the fifteen charming lyrics entitled

[1] The question is thoroughly canvassed in the various Commentaries on the Psalms, as well as in articles in the *Dict. of the Bible* and the *Ency. Biblica*. One of the freshest, fullest, and sanest treatments of the subject is to be found in Briggs' *Psalms*, I. lxxxiv.ff. (following up his earlier studies in the *Journal of Biblical Literature*, etc.). Briggs argues strongly in favour of the liturgical view. Haupt has recently worked out the original suggestion of Jacob, that *ṣelāh* is rather the summons to 'reverential prostration' (*Expos. Times*, xxii. 374ff.).

'Songs of Ascents' (Pss. cxx.–cxxxiv.)—most probably Pilgrim Songs sung by the joyful bands that wended their way to Jerusalem, to take part in the three great festivals of the people. These Songs are of different date and origin, though all tuned to the same sweet elegiac key. Here, too, voices are heard 'out of the depths' of suffering and anxiety (Pss. cxx., cxxiii., cxxx., cxxxii.). But for the most part they are full of the joy of redemption. The Psalms ring with laughter as they sing of Israel's escape from the fowlers' snare, and the wondering recognition by the heathen of the 'great things' Jahweh has done for them (cxxiv., cxxvi.). In a tone of quiet delight, again, they compare the security of those that trust in Jahweh with the impregnable strength of the mountains round Jerusalem (cxxi., cxxv.). As befits their name, the Pilgrim Songs touch their highest note when they proclaim the glory of Jerusalem, recalling the blissful moment when the pilgrims' feet actually stood within the holy gates, and invoking the blessing of Jahweh upon the city and her children (Ps. cxxii.). But with a tender joy they dwell likewise on the pleasures of family life, and the refreshing grace and fragrance of brotherly unity (cxxvii., cxxviii., cxxxiii.). The exquisite gems of imagery with which these Psalms are studded add to their winsomeness—the whole Collection yielding us the most pleasing impression

of the simple, gracious piety of the Israel of the later ages.

In addition to the Pilgrim Songs, the closing Books of the Psalter have preserved the *Hallēl* group (Pss. ciii., civ., cxi.–cviii.), chanted by the Jews at the festivals to which the pilgrim bands 'went up,' as well as on the night of the Passover; a further *Hallēl* or *Hallelujah* Collection (Pss. cxlvi.–cl.), whose liturgical place is more uncertain; a group of 'new songs,' somewhat loosely connected under the idea of Jahweh's righteous reign (xciii.–c.); the *Hôdû*, or 'Give praise to Jahweh,' Collection (cv.–cvii.); a third cycle of so-called 'Davidic' lyrics (cxxxviii.–cxlv.); with various isolated Psalms, like the 'prayer' to Jahweh the Eternal (Ps. xc.), the song of Jahweh's protective grace (Ps. xci.), the 'sweetly monotonous' acrostic in praise of the Law (Ps. cxix.), and the plaint of the heart-sick exile 'by the waters of Babylon' which breaks into such fiery indignation against the oppressor (Ps. cxxxvii.).

The general stand-point of these Psalms is late. There are no doubt survivals from an earlier date. Thus Ps. cviii. is a mere welding together of two old 'prayers of David.' And the hot flames of Ps. cxxxvii. 7ff. almost certainly burst from the very furnace of the Babylonian Exile. But the ritualistic colouring of the great majority of these Psalms, their highly spiritual conceptions of the Eternal,

their smooth and conventional phraseology, the numerous Aramaisms, and the general dependence on the earlier Books, stamp them as products of the piety of the late Persian and Greek eras. A few despairing utterances of grief like Pss. cii., cix., and the quartette cxl.–cxliii., may well belong to the dark period of Syrian oppression which immediately preceded the Maccabean age; the triumphal notes of Pss. cii. 12ff. and cxviii. may herald the glorious dawn of that new day of Israel's history; while the second *Hallēl* group (Pss. cxlv.–cl.) very probably owes its origin to the new enthusiasm for worship that followed the dedication of the Temple by Judas Maccabeus, after its desecration by the Syrian army (B.C. 165), though certain elements in the group may belong to a slightly older date.[1]

[1] The suggestion of 'Maccabean' Psalms was first made by Theodore of Mopsuestia, who, while adhering to the accepted dogma of Davidic authorship, regarded seventeen Psalms as 'prophetic' of the Maccabean struggles. His true exegetical successor, Calvin, directly assigned to the Maccabean era the three Psalms of suffering and bloodshed, xliv., lxxiv., and lxxix. The theory was taken up, and extended along bolder lines, by scholars like Rudinger, Bengel, Hitzig, and Olshausen. But the climax was not reached until Duhm, and more recently R. H. Kennett, in his article on 'Psalms' in the new edition of the *Encyc. Brit.*, pronounced practically the whole Psalter, even including Book I, to be an expression of the intense, though narrow, piety of the Maccabean age. That Psalms continued to be composed till long after the Maccabean struggles is evident from the existence of the 'Psalter of Solomon,' a Collection of religious lays voicing the troubles and sorrows of the persecution under Pom-

The completion of the Psalter appears to be connected with the same great awakening of the national spirit. The Son of Sirach, who flourished about the year 180, is no doubt acquainted with Psalms of David. In his Praise of Famous Men (xlvii. 8) he celebrates David as a singer of songs in honour of God Most High; while his Wisdom is largely steeped in the feeling and language of the Psalms. But the Book had not yet been elevated to a place

pey the Great (*c.* 63–48 B.C.), and the recently discovered Syriac 'Odes of Solomon,' which, on any view of their origin, bring us beyond the middle of the first Christian century. But the whole tone of these latter Collections is so different from the simple piety of the Psalms that a considerable gulf of time must separate them. The relation of 1 Chron. xvi. 8ff. to the three Psalms of which it is woven is still too uncertain to base reliable arguments upon. But the witness of the Wisdom of Ben Sira does appear to bear strongly against the extreme view. This evidence was forcibly urged in Ehrt's early thesis on the *Abfassungszeit und Abschluss des Psalters* (1869), and has certainly not lost in importance since the discovery of the original Hebrew of Ben Sira. In the Introduction to his edition of the Hebrew text, Schechter catalogues the various allusions he finds in Ben Sira to the Books of the Old Testament, including some seventy parallels with the Psalter, in all its parts. The impression borne in upon his mind by the study of these parallels 'is that of reading the work of a post-canonical author, who already knew his Bible and was constantly quoting it' (*Wisdom of Ben Sira*, p. 26). The whole question has been subjected to fresh, careful review by Kemper Fullerton in a series of 'Studies in the Psalter' (*Biblical World*, Sept., 1910, and following numbers), with the result that dependence is shown, not merely on Pss. xliv. and lxxiv., but even on cxlvii. The existence of Maccabean Psalms cannot be categorically denied. But the question should at least be handled with caution, and such Psalms sought only in the latest sections of the Psalter.

of honour alongside of the Law and Prophets. When Ben Sira's grandson, however, penned the famous Preface to his translation of the Wisdom, some few years after 132 B.C., the Psalter appears to have been not merely accepted within the Canon, but even translated into Greek. The Book will thus have been completed about the middle of the second century, most probably during the renaissance that marked the brilliant reign of Simon the Maccabee.

In their final form the Psalms are arranged in five Books—a poetical counterpart to the five Books of Moses, as Jewish tradition loved to regard them. The old Psalter of David maintained its place as Book I; the Elohistic Psalms were divided at the close of the 'prayers of David'; while the miscellaneous groups of the later period were gathered into two Books, by a sharp cleavage of the *Hôdû* Psalms. The titles which formerly stood at the head of separate Collections were then distributed over the individual Psalms, and various notices indicating the probable occasions of their inspiration added from the Books of Samuel. Other new headings relate to the liturgical associations of different Psalms. Thus the song of salvation (Ps. xxx.) is specially set apart for 'the dedication of the House'—doubtless the joyful restoration of Temple worship under Judas Maccabeus. Ps. xcii. is the Sabbath song. Two other Psalms, xxxiii. and lxx., are

assigned *l'hazkîr, i.e.* most probably, to the *'azkārā*, or offering up of incense, and Ps. c. *l'thôdāh*, to the sacrifice of thanksgiving. By the prefixing of Pss. i., ii.—which celebrate the happiness of the man who walks in the law of the Lord, and the impregnable might and glory of the kingdom of God—a key-note is given to the Psalter. The first four Books end with Doxologies ; and the complete Collection closes with the full outburst of praise in Ps. cl. The Book is thus fittingly described as *sēpher t'hillîm*—the ' Praise Book ' of the Jewish people. Our ' Psalter ' is a simple derivative of the Septuagint's ψαλτήριον, or ' Harp '—a metonymous term for Praise exactly parallel with the ' Harp of the Covenant ' or the *Lyra Apostolica.*

The Psalter is thus a rich Anthology of the purest expressions of Israel's prayer and praise. For the most part, the individual Psalms touch the chords of true personal feeling. But at times the poet identifies himself so completely with his people that the ' I ' is virtually the heart of the community uttering itself through his words. Even in the original ' Davidic ' Book, for example, the triumphant notes of Ps. xviii. rise towards the close far beyond the individual range of feeling, while the sorrows of the ' worm ' in Ps. xxii., combined with the world-wide glory that shines out upon his griefs, acquire a worthier meaning if read, like the corre-

sponding parts of Deutero-Isaiah, of the sufferings and future exaltation of the afflicted community. Of the later Psalms, the plaintive 'prayers' lix., lxi., lxii., lxvi., lxix., etc. virtually identify the sufferer with Israel. In the opening verse of Ps. cxxix. Israel is directly introduced as the speaker. But so easily did the imagination of Hebrew poets and prophets glide from individual experience to the larger life of the whole, that much else which appears distinctively personal to the Western mind, especially in the closing Books, whose interest is so largely national and Churchly, may be the real outflow of communal feeling.[1]

[1] The collective view is already reflected in the LXX, and openly taught by many of the Rabbis, including Raschi, Aben Ezra, and Kimḥi. The Church Fathers also interpreted the 'I' allegorically as the voice of the Christian community. With the restoration of sound exegetical methods under Luther and Calvin, the individual view came generally to prevail. Approaches to a wider standpoint were made by Rudinger, Hengstenberg, and Reuss; but the first to base the 'communal' idea on scientific principle was Olshausen, who introduced the now prevalent conception of the Psalter as the 'Hymn-book of the Jewish Community.' This gave Smend the impulse to his epoch-making article on "the 'I' of the Psalms," in the *ZATW.* for 1888, pp. 49ff. Here Smend examines each Psalm in detail, and arrives at the conclusion that the 'I' is invariably no mere individual, but the community expressing itself as a personified unit. The keenness and sweep of Smend's analysis made an extraordinary impression on the scholarship of the age. His conclusion was largely accepted without reserve. And scholars like Robertson Smith and Cheyne admitted that, to a considerable extent at least, 'the psalmists speak, not as individuals, but in the name of the Church-nation' (Cheyne, *Origin of the Psalter*,

The literary quality of the Psalter varies with its mood. There are utterances of gloom and depression that hardly rise from the depths. And many of the later Psalms are stiff and stereotyped in expression, often mere centos from older songs. In general, the language is simple and natural; for the Psalms represent mainly the feelings of the common worshipper. But when inspired by devout imagination or holy wrath, they are lit up by the glow of genuine poetry. The more lyrical parts of the Psalter—*e.g.* the many-toned 'Psalms of David,' the joyful Pilgrim Songs, and the lofty patriotic odes of Asaph and the 'sons of Korah'—are alive with spiritual freshness, vigour, and fire, and radiant with colour and imagery. Even the conventional notes of the later Books, the 'new songs' and Hallelujahs which proclaim the righteous reign of Jahweh, are sustained on a plane of calm dignity and majesty that no other religious song approaches.

Various attempts have been made to classify the Psalms according to their style or subject-matter. On the whole, probably the most successful, because

p. 261). A violent reaction against this view began with Duhm's *Kurzer Hand-Commentar* to the Psalms, where a distinct and often highly aggressive personality is attributed to the Psalmists. More recent scholars like Beer, Baethgen, Gunkel, Davison and Witton Davies approach the subject, not by sweeping assertions on either side, but by careful examination of individual Psalms, doing justice alike to the essentially 'subjective' character of lyrical poetry, and to the adaptation of the Psalms to congregational worship.

the simplest, scheme is Hengstenberg's three-fold division into (1) Psalms of Praise (the *t*ᵉ*hillôth* of the head-lines)—that is, 'such Psalms as proceeded from a spirit chiefly moved and actuated by joy, showing itself in lively admiration of God, or gratitude for His astonishing goodness in bestowing gifts on the people generally, or on individuals, declaring the sense inwardly cherished of His love, or celebrating in glowing terms the majesty, glory, and grace of God'; (2) Psalms of supplication (*t*ᵉ*phillôth*, or 'prayers'), such, namely, 'as proceeded from a depressed and mournful frame of mind—variations of the "Lord have mercy on us," which alternates with the hallelujah in the lives of the saints'; and (3) religious moral or didactic Psalms (*maskîlîm*), 'which proceeded from a more quiet reflective state of mind.' [1]

But it is really impossible to classify such a wealth of varied spiritual emotion as we find in the Psalms. In seeking to force them within our rigid *schemata*, we are only too apt to lose the spirit that gives them life. It seems better, therefore, to abandon any attempt at mechanical arrangement, and to seek instead to enter sympathetically into the religious world of the Psalmists, that we may catch glimpses, at least, of the glory that dawned upon their spirits, and thus be able to feel in some measure as they did.

[1] *Commentary on the Psalms*, E. T., vol. III., p. ix.

CHAPTER VII

The Psalmists' Thoughts of God

THE centre of the Psalmists' universe is God, the shining point round which all their faith and hope revolve, the living Source of their light and strength and joy. He is omnipresent in the Psalms. And that not as the end of patient search and striving. He is the first principle of life and feeling. Only the 'fool' said in his heart there was no God. The wise man was sure of Him. For he knew Him by innumerable facts of personal experience. His whole being was wrapped in God's. And his deepest thoughts and expectations were of Him.

From the central place God occupies in the Psalmists' world it necessarily follows that He is one. The poet who revels in the infinite realm of Nature's beauty may people the Universe with 'gods many and lords many;' but earnest spirits living in the immediate presence of the Divine could have no god beside Him they reverenced. In the Psalter, indeed, we meet with traces of the older henotheism. Thus God is represented as 'standing in the assemblage of the Mighty, holding judgment among the gods'

(lxxxii. 1). But these other gods are introduced only to exalt His supremacy. They are all but faint shadows or phantoms of gods, over against whom He stands in unapproachable splendour of light and majesty.

There is none like Thee 'mong the gods, O Lord ;
And no works are there like Thy works (lxxxvi. 8).

Through the whole circuit of the skies no god can be compared with Him—

A God feared in the assemblage of the holy ones,
Great and awful o'er all around Him (lxxxix. 6f.).

The contrast between the impotent gods the nations worshipped and the Almighty God of Israel is powerfully emphasized in the triumphant challenge :—

Why say the nations,
Where is now their God ?
Our God is in the heavens ;
He doth whate'er He pleaseth.
Their gods are gold and silver,
Work of the hands of men.
Mouths they have, but speak not ;
Eyes they have, but see not.
Ears they have, but hear not ;
Nostrils they have, but smell not.
Hands they have, but handle not ;
Feet they have, but walk not.
From their throat they give no sound :
No breath is in their mouth.[1]
Like them shall be their makers,
Even all that trust in them.

[1] The missing *stichos* is supplied from Ps. cxxxv. 17, which is a direct quotation from the present Psalm.

But Israel trusts[1] *in Jahweh ;*
He is their help and shield (cxv. 2ff.).

In the old folk-poetry the home of Israel's God was the sacred mount of Sinai, from which He came amid thunder and storm to aid His people in their needs. Poetic survivals of this primitive conception still linger in the Psalter (*e.g.* lxviii. 7ff.). But the general thought of the Psalms is of a God near to save and bless. In the days of Zion's glory devout minds in Israel loved to think of Him as dwelling in their midst, enthroned 'upon the cherubim' within the Holy Place of the Temple, whither His people went 'to see His face' (xxiv. 6, etc.), and whence He sent them help and strength (xx. 2 ; xxvii. 4f., etc.). But alongside of this more limited view of His presence there meet us, even in the earlier Psalms, exalted conceptions of Jahweh as the King of heaven.

Jahweh is in His holy Temple ;
Jahweh's throne is in heaven (xi. 4).

In the ritualistic age after the Exile this was the dominant thought of God. He was the Holy One—infinitely exalted above human weakness and imperfection—the Eternal God—from everlasting to everlasting—

Before the mountains were brought forth,
Or the earth and world were conceived,[2]

[1] The context demands the perfect tense of the LXX, instead of the imperative of the Massoretic text.

[2] Read the Polal חֻחוֹלָל, with the majority of the Versions.

in whose sight a thousand years were but

As yesterday when it is gone,
Or as a watch in the night (xc. 2ff.)—

the King reigning in majesty on His throne above, 'wrapped about with light as with a garment' (civ. 2), watching all things that passed on earth, and by His almighty *fiat* directing the world, and turning the counsels of the nations to subserve His purpose (cf. Pss. xciii., xcv., xcvi., etc.). This thought of God's transcendent majesty and glory imparted to the Hebrew faith an elevation and sublimity of feeling that no other ancient religion attained. At the same time, it tended to remove God to heights of spiritual grandeur inaccessible to mortal man. Before Him the saints might humble themselves in prostrate reverence and awe, or seek to approach Him by sacrifice or prayer. To many there seemed no more 'living' way to His presence. Yet on the wings of faith and prayer the humble spirit could soar to God in His heaven. Or rather God Himself bent down to hear and answer His people's prayers. In the naive imagery of the earlier age, the storm-clouds that attended His march from Sinai became the chariot on which He descended from the clouds.

He bowed the heavens, and came down,
Thick darkness under His feet.
He rode on a cherub, and flew—
Swooped down on the wings of the wind.

Darkness He made His covert,
The veil encircling his presence.
Darkness of waters veiled Him,
A thicket of clouds without light[1] (xviii. 9ff.).

To the more spiritual vision of later days it was God's own love and sympathy that bridged the gulf, and brought Him down to help.

High above all nations is Jahweh,
Above heaven His glory.
Who is like Jahweh our God,
That dwelleth on high;
Yet stoopeth down to behold
The dwellers on earth?[2]
He raiseth the poor from the dust,
From the dunghill the needy,
To give him a dwelling with princes,
The lords of his people (cxiii. 4ff.).

But deeper knowledge found no spatial gulf between God and man. He whose presence filled both heaven and earth dwelt also with His people,

Nigh unto all that call Him,
Unto all that call Him in truth (cxlv. 18).

The very exaltation of God thus became the measure of His power and grace to help the humble.

[1] The text here has been somewhat mutilated. For סֻכָּתוֹ it is probably better to read כְּסָתוֹ. Before חֶשְׁכַּת־מַיִם the verb has fallen out; Duhm happily suggests כִּפָּתוּ. For עָבֵי read עֲבֵי, with various Versions; and close the verse with the מְנֻנָה, which has wrongly attached itself to the following (cf. Bickell, Duhm).

[2] The idea of 'heaven' has no place after God's 'stooping down.' בַּשָּׁמַיִם may be a mere slip for יוֹשְׁבִים.

Though Jahweh be high,
He beholdeth the lowly ;
But knoweth the proud from afar (cxxxviii. 6).

He who 'telleth the number of the stars, and giveth them all their names,' by the same great might

Healeth the broken in heart,
And bindeth up all their wounds (cxlvii. 3f.).

The great God, 'mighty in power,' of whose understanding there is 'no count,'

upholdeth the meek,
But the wicked brings low to the ground (cxlvii. 5f.).

This widening thought of God's universal Presence receives its grandest expression in that majestic Psalm (cxxxix.), which Aben Ezra regards as 'the crown of the Psalter' :—

O Lord, my God, Thou hast searched me,
Throughly Thou knowest my heart.[1]
Thou knowest my sitting and rising,
Thou readest my thought afar off.
Thou provest my walk and my couching ;
Thou'rt acquainted with all my ways.
There is not a word on my tongue,
But, Lord ! Thou knowest it all.
Behind and before me besetting,
On me Thou hast laid Thy hand.
Too wondrous this knowledge for me !
It is high—I cannot attain it.

Where shall I go from Thy spirit,
Or where shall I flee from Thy face ?
If I climb to the heavens, Thou art there ;
If I couch in Sheol, Thou art there.

[1] The opening verse is incomplete ; but the missing words are now irrecoverably lost. I have simply filled in the sense required.

If I take me the wings of the morning,
And dwell at the end of the sea—
Even there Thy hand will grasp me,
Thy right hand will hold me fast.
If I say, 'The darkness will hide me,
And the night throw its curtain around me,'
Even the darkness for Thee is not dark,
But the night shines clear as the day.

To the pure religious feeling of the Hebrew poets this 'besetting' Presence was a real, living Person. In its portraiture of the Divine character the language of the Psalms is often strongly anthropomorphic. God not merely 'sits' on His throne, seeing and hearing all things in heaven and earth, but He is moved by pity and sorrow, love and wrath, as His children are, and under the impulse of His feelings bestirs Himself to act. He stands by the right hand of the good, warding off the evils that beset them, and making their way prosperous (xvi. 8). On the wicked He 'rains out fire and brimstone' (xi. 6). He 'girds His anointed with strength for the battle,' subduing the peoples under him (xviii. 39ff.). He puts forth His hand, and draws the righteous 'out of the horrible pit,' planting his feet on a rock, and making his goings sure (xl. 2). But again He 'hides His face,' and thinks no more of the affliction of His people; He seems even to go to sleep, and abandon them for ever (xliv. 23f.). Then at the voice of their supplication and cries He awakes from His sleep, and shouts at the

foe 'like a hero overcome with wine,' beating them backward, and covering them with perpetual reproach (lxxviii. 65f.). In His contempt for the plots of the wicked, He 'laughs aloud' (ii. 4; xxxvii. 13; lix. 8), holding all of them in derision. He appears actually to change His countenance with the changing moods of men.

> *To the good Thou dost show Thyself good,*
> *To the perfect man perfect;*
> *To the pure Thou dost show Thyself pure,*
> *To the crooked man perverse* (xviii. 25f.).

The boldness of such thoughts of the Eternal may be sometimes even offensive to the Christian mind. But anthropomorphism was the very life of ancient religions. And the strength of the anthropomorphisms measured the vitality of the religion. A God robbed of all human traits of character, and spiritualized into pure passionless Being, would be 'hollow, empty, and poor,' an abstraction that simple souls could not contemplate or worship with joyful confidence. The anthropomorphic conception gave the bare idea of God its fullness of content, thus making religion both a possibility and a delight. And the richer the anthropomorphism, the fuller the good man's life and joy in God.

A study of the Divine names is often of supreme importance in reaching the heart of ancient piety. For to the primitive mind the name was no mere

appendage, but a real expression of character. In this respect, however, there is nothing distinctive about the Psalter. The Book but reflects the general viewpoint of the Old Testament. Thus the broad name for 'god' is *'El*, or 'strong one,' with the plural *'Elim* used of the general category of 'gods,' and *'Elohim*, a plural of eminence or majesty, of the One Supreme God of heaven and earth. The word *'El* is occasionally found in conjunction with *'Elyôn*, 'the Most High,' or *Shaddai*, the archaic name for 'Almighty.' But by far the most frequent of the Divine names—in harmony with the personal piety of the Psalter—is the personal *Jahweh*. As has been noted, this title predominates in Books I, IV, and V, while even in the Elohistic Psalter (Books II and III) the *'Elohim* is mainly redactional.

The original meaning of Jahweh is still involved in deep uncertainty. A convincing hypothesis would, no doubt, throw a flood of light on the earlier stages of Old Testament religion. This is less vital, however, for our present purpose. To the devout feeling of the Psalmists the name Jahweh suggested not its primal significance, but the whole content of the term, as enlarged by centuries of religious experience. And to this wider connotation their own utterances contributed no small share. It is essential, therefore, that we enrich the personality of Jahweh by the Psalmists' many-sided thought of

Him, and the fullness of spiritual emotion they lavished on His name.

In the Psalter one naturally expects to find deposits from the age-long stream of Israel's religious tradition. Thus the old conception of Jahweh as the storm-god has already been met with in xviii. 7ff. Survivals of the still more primitive thought of Jahweh as the conqueror of the mythical powers Leviathan and Rahab persist even in late Psalms like lxxiv. 13ff. and lxxxix. 8ff. He appears likewise as the war-god, 'the Lord of battle-hosts,' who defends His city and people against their enemies, or leads His armies to the conflict, 'girds them with strength' for the victory, and returns with them in triumph to the 'hoary' gates of Zion (xviii. 32ff., xxiv. 7ff., xlvi. 1ff., etc.). But the real Jahweh of the Psalms has long outgrown these cruder conceptions. He is essentially ethical, the good and gracious God with whom His people love to have fellowship. And only as we enter into sympathy with this thought of the Eternal do we touch the living spirit of the Psalter.

It is proverbially difficult to analyse character. The personality is one undivided whole. In analysing, therefore, we are apt to lose the whole in its parts. The difficulty is especially acute when we seek to define the character of God. It is not merely that He transcends our petty attempts to measure

His greatness. But in our analyses we incur the danger of setting the Divine Nature before our minds as a series of lifeless attributes, with which the soul can enjoy no real fellowship. The intense personal piety of the Psalmists raised them above this danger. They dwell, indeed, on aspects of the Divine character. But these are never abstracted from the fullness of His personality. It is the living God Himself, and not His mere attributes, that fill their spiritual horizon. And when they do centre their vision on separate qualities of His character, they seek to view them in harmony, and to relate them to the fundamental unity of His Person. For, unlike the gods of the nations, who are too often bundles of moral contradiction, Jahweh is not merely One God, He is a self-consistent personality, true to Himself and the moral principles by which He orders the Universe. This ethical unity of the Divine character receives just emphasis in the Psalter. The God of the Psalmists is *true*. The root quality of His being is *'emeth* or *'ĕmûnāh*—truth, consistency, fidelity to principle. And one manifestation of His truth is *çedheḳ* or *ç'dhāḳāh*, righteousness, or unswerving allegiance to that which is straightforward, upright, and honourable. In the Psalms the two qualities are vitally related. God and His judgments are 'true and righteous altogether,' moved by sole regard to goodness and

honour. This harmony of truth and righteousness is equally involved in the idea of God's *perfection*. The law and the ways of God are *t*^{e}*mîmîm*—perfect, complete, all-round in their goodness. And with God perfection is no superficial appearance. His word is *bar*, pure, sincere, true to the inmost heart.

There is no more significant evidence of the ethical principle of Old Testament religion than the intimate relation of *holiness* to the qualities just indicated. In itself, holiness has no essential bearing on morality. It might even become the handmaid of the vilest immorality. The idea suggests merely God's separation or transcendence. Holiness is that by which God rises above men. But in the religion of Israel this transcendence is distinctively moral. God surpasses His creatures in righteousness, purity, and goodness. And His rule over man is inspired by these ideals.

Thou art no God that hath pleasure in wickedness ;
No evil man shall sojourn with Thee.
Before Thine eyes no boasters shall stand ;
Thou hatest all workers of iniquity (v. 4).

His eyes look down on the world,
His eyelids try the children of men ;
Jahweh trieth both righteous and evil,
His soul doth hate the lovers of violence.

On the wicked He raineth coals of fire ;
And glowing wind is the portion of their cup.
For Jahweh is righteous, and loveth right things ;
The upright alone shall behold His face (xi. 4ff.).

Yet the God of the Psalmists is no inflexible Judge, dispensing the destinies of life on the basis of hard, stern justice. On its other side, truth is related to *love* and *mercy*. In the Psalms the two qualities are frequently united. 'The paths of the Lord are love and truth' (xxv. 10). In answer to His people's prayers He 'sends forth His love and truth' (lvii. 3). In the perfection of His character 'love and truth are met together' (lxxxv. 10). He is a God 'compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and full of love and truth' (lxxxvi. 15). There is no contradiction, therefore, between God's justice and His love. The two are complementary qualities—poles of the Divine character—alike essential to the full harmony of His nature. Thus in various passages of the Psalms they appear in true poetic parallelism. For example :—

He delighteth in right and judgment ;
The earth is full of His love (xxxiii. 5),

as though love were the twin-sister of judgment ;

His work is honour and majesty,
And His righteousness endureth for ever.
Remembered hath He made His wonders ;
Gracious and compassionate is Jahweh (cxi. 3f.).

Thus the saving mercies of God—His gracious deeds of help and deliverance—may be regarded as the perfect work now of His righteousness, and again

of His love, or even as the fruitage of love and righteousness combined.

By awful things in righteousness wilt Thou answer us,
O God of our salvation (lxv. 5).

Show us Thy love, O Lord;
And grant us Thy salvation (lxxxv. 7).

The Lord hath made known His salvation,
His righteousness unveiled to the eyes of the nations.
He hath remembered His love unto Jacob,
His truth to the household of Israel.
All ends of the earth have seen
The salvation of our Lord (xcviii. 2f.).

The same fine balance is preserved in the great symphony of the Divine goodness (xxxvi. 5ff.), where God's immeasurable love responds to His eternal justice, and the heart of the Psalmist goes out in joyful trust to this loving, faithful, and righteous Lord as the fountain of all his good :—

Thy love, Lord, soars to heaven;
To the skies Thy faithfulness.
As the mountains of God is Thy justice;
As the great abyss are Thy judgments.

Both man and beast Thou preservest;
O Lord, how precious Thy love!
To Thee draw the sons of men;[1]
In the shade of Thy wings they hide them.

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[1] The Hebrew text is here obviously incomplete. Duhm has ingeniously suggested אֵלֶיךָ יָבֹאוּ בְנֵי for אֱלֹהִים וּבְנֵי, thus giving a true parallelism.

They are filled with the fat of Thy house ;
Thou makest them drink of the brook of Thy pleasures:
For with Thee is the fountain of life ;
In Thy light do we see light.

The poet has here risen almost to the Christian conception of love as the full radiance of the Divine character. From not a few other spiritual uplands of the Psalter this light shines forth clear and pure. Jahweh's love to those that trust in Him is 'marvellous' (xvii. 7), beyond all power to tell (xl. 5) ; it has continued 'from eternity' (xxv. 6), and will equally 'endure for ever' (cxviii. 1ff. ; cxxxvi. 1ff.) ; it is the anchor of faith and hope when all else is lost (xxvii. 13) ; it is life itself (xxx. 5), even 'better than life' (lxiii. 3). For love is God's eternal nature, that which He cannot forget without being false to Himself (lxxvii. 7ff.).[1] And the words by which the Psalmists describe the Divine love show how very dear it was to them. The general term *tôbhāh*, 'goodness,' is occasionally used of the kindly, gracious acts of Jahweh. But by far the most

[1] 'The prophet deals justly with the question whether God will continue to be gracious ; for the fundamental law of the goodness that God extends to us involves its abiding to the end. Thus he does not exactly expostulate with God ; but rather in his self-communings he argues from the nature of God that He cannot but continue His gracious favour towards the good, to whom He shows Himself in the character of a Father. . . . It is as though he said, How can God interrupt the course of His fatherly goodness, seeing He cannot divest Himself of His own nature ?'—Calvin, *sub loco*.

frequent word is *ḥeṣed*, a noun derived from the Semitic root for softness, which emphasizes the warmth and constancy of the heart of God. As applied to Him, the word signifies 'neither more nor less than *paternal affection*.' [1] To the Psalmists God's love was like a father's—tender, loyal, true, unceasingly active, delighting to show itself in word and deed. A stream of still richer emotion is thrown into the current of Divine love by the nearly-related term *raḥămîm*, from the same root as *reḥem*, 'the womb,' thus suggesting something of the yearning passion of the mother's love. God thus united in Himself all that was purest and best in human love. His love even transcended the dearest of human affections. For

> *Should father and mother forsake me,*
> *Jahweh would take me up* (xxvii. 10).

This love of God, so boundless in height and depth, moves over the whole circuit of human life. His eyes are ever on the good, that He may uphold them waking and sleeping, and deliver them from all their troubles (iii. 5; iv. 8, etc.). He gives them victory over their foes (xviii. 16f., etc.); He saves them from fear and want (xxxiv. 9ff.); He compasses them about with His favour as with a shield (v. 12); He establishes them in all their ways (vii. 9). He keeps them 'as the apple of His eye'

[1] Cheyne, *Ency. Bibl.*, art. Loving-kindness, Col. 2826.

(xvii. 8); He hides them in the secret of His tent (xxvii. 5). He judges the fatherless and the oppressed (x. 18); He comforts the afflicted, and saves the contrite (xxxiv. 18). He delivers the souls of the righteous from the grave (xvi. 10; xxx. 3; lvi. 13); He turns their mourning into dancing, removes their sackcloth, and girds them with gladness (xxx. 11). He visits the earth, and gives men their corn in season (lxv. 9ff.). He guides the wanderers, and saves the captives; He heals the sick, and protects the voyagers amid the storm (cvii. 1ff.). He keeps them from perils of sun and moon (cxxi. 3ff.). But His crowning work is in forgiveness. Jahweh is a righteous God, 'that hath indignation every day' against the wicked (vii. 11, etc.). And yet His heart is moved with compassion for the sinful sons of men. His nature is to forgive; for His name is love and mercy (xxv. 7, 11). At the first impulse of repentance, in answer to the first stammering accents of compassion, He freely forgives the iniquity of men's sin (xxxii. 5), creating in them a clean heart, and renewing within them a steadfast spirit, immovably turned to the right (li. 10). For the forgiving love of God is still wedded to righteousness. With Him there is forgiveness, 'that He may be feared' (cxxx. 4),—that His children's hearts may be moved by reverent love to Him, and that they may do His

will with a free, glad spirit,—love being here, too, 'the fulfilling of the law.'

In none of the Psalms is the universal sweep of the love of God unfolded with such beauty of language, and unaffected delight and tenderness of feeling, as in the old Scottish Communion Psalm (ciii.) :—

Bless thou Jahweh, my soul,—
Even all within me, (bless) His holy name!
Bless thou Jahweh, my soul,
And forget not all His benefits!

Who pardoneth all thine iniquities,
And healeth all thy diseases;
Who redeemeth thy life from the pit,
And with love and compassion doth crown thee:

Who sateth thy soul with goodness,
That thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.
(For) a worker of right things is Jahweh,
And of judgment for all the oppressed.

He made known His ways unto Moses,
His deeds to the children of Israel.
Yea, gracious and tender is Jahweh,
Slow to anger, and plenteous in love.

He will not always contend,
Nor keep up His anger for ever;
Not by our sins hath He dealt with us,
Nor treated us by our iniquities.

For high as the heavens o'er the earth
Is His love o'er them that fear Him;
As far as the East from the West,
So far hath He put our transgressions.

As a father yearns o'er his children,
So yearns Jahweh o'er them that fear Him.

For 'tis He that knoweth our frame—
He is mindful that we are dust.

Frail man—his days are as grass;
As a flower of the field, he doth flourish.
When the wind passeth o'er, it is gone,
And its place doth know it no more.

But Jahweh's love is for ever,
To children's children His righteousness,—
When they steadfastly keep His covenant,
And remember His precepts to do them.

In the heavens hath He stablished His throne,
And His kingdom hath rule over all.
Bless Jahweh, all ye His angels,
Ye mighty ones, doing His word!

Bless Jahweh, all ye His hosts,
Ye servants, fulfilling His pleasure!
Bless Jahweh, all ye His works,
In every place where He rules!

But the Psalmists not only linger with joy on the thought of God's love. They visualize it also in image and symbol. Thus God is their 'shield,' to ward off the weapons of the enemy (iii. 3), their 'strong tower' or castle, whither they may flee for refuge in the time of distress (ix. 9), the 'rock' on which they can stand secure from danger (xviii. 2; xix. 14, etc.), their 'refuge and strength,' their 'ever present help in trouble' (xlvi. 1); He is the 'light' by which the righteous walk through darkness, and in whose radiance they also see light (xxvii. 1; xxxvi. 9); with Him too is 'the fountain of life,' the well-spring of all life's freshness and joy (xxxvi. 8f.); He is the 'portion of their inherit-

ance,' and the brimming 'cup' of their pleasure (xvi. 5), the 'sun' of the good man's heavens, the radiant centre of his light and hope (lxxxiv. 11), his 'strength and song and salvation' (cxviii. 14).

Still more deeply do we enter into the heart of the Psalmists' piety through the living and human images under which they body forth His goodness. Like our Lord Himself they occasionally represent God as a mother-bird, in the shadow of whose wings they nestle in perfect safety and joy (lvii. 1; lxiii. 7, etc.). They think of Him likewise as the *gô'ēl*, the 'redeemer' or champion, who receives His afflicted ones within the sanctuary of His tent, and defends them against the enemies that clamour for their life (x. 18; xv. 1; xix. 14, etc.). A figure suggesting to the Oriental mind the highest measure of loyalty and devotion—that of the good shepherd, 'that layeth down his life for the sheep'—is met with in various Psalms (lxxix. 13; lxxx. 1; xcv. 7; c. 3), where Jahweh appears as the Shepherd of Israel. But nowhere is this image so sweetly portrayed as in the immortal Shepherd-Psalm (xxiii.), where insensibly the figure of the Shepherd passes into that of the Host and Friend:—

> *The Lord is my Shepherd; nought lack I*
> *On fresh, green pastures.*[1]

[1] As the measure is elegiac throughout, it seems necessary to omit the superfluous יְרַבְּיצֵנִי.

By the gentle waters [1] *He leads me,*
Refreshing my soul ;
He guides me by paths that are right,
For His own name's sake.

Though I walk through the vale of deep darkness,
I will fear no evil ;
Thou art with me : Thy rod and Thy staff [2]—
They comfort me.

Thou spreadest for me a table
In the face of my foes ;
Thou anointest my head with oil,
My cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and love will pursue me
All the days of my life ;
And in Jahweh's house will I dwell
For length of days.

The thought of the love of God has thus brought us near to the cardinal teaching of Jesus Christ. For there is no vital contrast between Psalter and Gospel. Jesus but focussed in His own Person the rays of light that streamed through the older Covenant. To the devout spirit in both New and Old Covenants, God was essentially love. And His love was conceived under the purest images of human affection. We have seen how the Psalter anticipates even the thought of the Father-God. The lips of the Psalmists may not yet have learned to

[1] מֵי מְנוּחוֹת, lit. *waters of rest* or *repose*.

[2] The rod is the mace or club with which the shepherd defended the sheep against robbers or beasts of prey, the staff the crook by which he helped them out of hard or dangerous ground.

say, 'Abba,' *Father*; but they can at least think of the Eternal yearning over His people as a father over his children, and stooping to receive them when both father and mother have proved them false. They picture Him also as a 'Father of the fatherless' (lxviii. 5), and the 'God and Father' of righteous kings (lxxxix. 26f.). It needed but a fuller conception of God as the universal King and Lord, and the unveiling of His character in a true Son, to bring to the light His perfect Fatherly Being and to lead men to pray from the heart, 'Our Father which art in heaven.'

CHAPTER VIII

The Glory of God in Nature

THE chapter on folk-poetry has already evinced the Hebrews' love of Nature. In the Psalms this feeling receives much fuller expression. There may be nothing here approaching the plastic power of Greek art, nor any of the modern poets' delight in Nature as a joy in itself. The Hebrew spirit was too predominantly subjective to lose itself thus in objects of outward contemplation. But throughout the Book there flash upon us gleams of the most delicate appreciation of Nature's essential beauty, with piercing glances into the hidden 'life of things,' unobscured by the half-lights of more conscious art, which give the Hebrew poets a unique place in the spiritual interpretation of the Universe.

The Psalmists' feeling for Nature is almost modern in its range. Like other ancient poets, they find a deep delight in the sweeter scenes that haunt their vision: the tree planted by streams of water, that yieldeth its fruit in season, and whose leaf fadeth not (i. 3), the clinging vine, and the tender olive-stem, surrounded by its circlet of shootlings

(cxxviii. 3), the rich green grass, and the flower of the field, so delicate in its beauty, yet so soon withered and gone (xc. 5f.; ciii. 15f.), the furrows ridged and watered for the seeding (lxv. 10), the sower going on his way weeping, as he beareth the precious seed, and the reaper returning with joy, bringing his sheaves with him (cxxvi. 5f.), the valleys and the hill-tops 'covered with corn' (lxv. 13; lxxii. 16), the pastures also warmly 'clothed with flocks' (lxv. 13), the dew of Hermon descending in fresh glory to bless the thirsty ground (cxxxiii. 3), the springs that send their waters through the valleys, and into the desert places, to give drink to every beast of the field, and to change the deserts into fruitful pasture-grounds (civ. 10f.; cxxvi. 4), the snow that enwraps the earth like soft, warm 'wool,' and the hoar frost scattered abroad 'like ashes' (cxlvii. 16), the great mountains of Bashan and Hermon with their snowy summits, the symbols of eternal might and majesty (lxviii. 14f.; xc. 2), or by their cedary slopes suggesting the luxuriance of blessing that falls to the righteous (xcii. 12), and the lesser hills pregnant with thoughts of the good man's security, strength, and peace (cxxi. 1ff.; cxxv. 1f.). The Psalmists' sympathy with Nature embraces also the animal life that gladdens these scenes: the cattle browsing upon a thousand hills (l. 10), the sheep on the green pastures, or

resting beside the still waters, or foolishly straying among the rough places and into the dark valleys, where danger lurks (xxiii. 2ff.), the hind panting after the water-brooks (xlii. 1), the swallow seeking a nest where she may lay her young (lxxxiv. 3), the eagle soaring in renewed strength to the heavens (ciii. 5), the wild asses quenching their thirst at the streams along the valleys, the birds singing in the branches overhead, the wild goats and the conies among the rocks of the wilderness, the young lions roaring for their prey, 'seeking their food from God' (civ. 11ff.), the trembling dove (lv. 6), the poor captive escaped from the snare of the fowlers (cxxiv. 7), even the pelican of the wilderness, the owl of the waste places, and the lonely sparrow on the housetop (cii. 6f.). They feel the full spell, too, of the wonders of the heavens and the deep. The Psalmist 'wakes the morn' with the joyful notes of harp and lyre (lvii. 8); and the sight of the sun rising radiant as a bridegroom from his wedding canopy, and pressing forward with the eager delight of a strong man to run a race (xix. 5), moves him to strains of rapt devotion. And at night-fall, as he gazes on 'the work of God's fingers—the moon and the stars which He has established' in the heavens, he sinks his head in wondering adoration, feeling how 'resplendent' is God's name in all the earth (viii. 3ff.). The same reverent joy

in presence of the mighty works of God—a feeling which meets us in such purity nowhere else in ancient literature—moves the poets of Israel amid the raging of the storm, when the Almighty sends forth His hailstones and 'coals of fire' to discomfit the nations (xviii. 12ff.), or by the sounding cataract, where 'flood answers to flood in the roar of God's waterspouts' (xliii. 7),[1] and beside the great deep, when the abysmal waters 'lift up their voices,' and seem to bid defiance even to Jahweh's throne (xciii. 3). But the language of the Psalms nowhere reaches such heights of natural grandeur as in the sublime Song of the Thunders (xxix. 3ff.)[2]—

Jahweh's voice on the waters!
Thunders the God of glory.

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[1] The scene of the Psalm is placed at the sources of the Jordan, where, in the spring-time, after the melting of the snows of Hermon, the high cliff of Paneas becomes a mass of foaming cascades, and the river bursts 'full-born' from the base, the whole scene 'a very sanctuary of waters' (G. A. Smith, *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, p. 474).

[2] Various poetical storm-pieces have come down from Oriental antiquity, the most justly celebrated being the description of the oncoming flood in the second Deluge-Tablet, and Imru'l-Kais' brilliant picture of the lightning at the close of his Mu'allaka—

'Friend, thou seest the lightning. Mark where it wavereth,
Gleameth like fingers twisted, clasped in the cloud-rivers.
Like a lamp new-lighted, so is the flash of it,
Trimmed by a hermit nightly pouring oil-sesame,' etc.
(Blunt's translation).

But neither of these leads us so truly into the living spirit of the storm as the swift, crashing strokes of the Hebrew Psalm.

Jahweh's voice on the mighty waters,—
Jahweh's voice in strength, Jahweh's voice in majesty!

Jahweh's voice shatters the cedars,
Jahweh shatters the cedars of Lebanon.
He makes Lebanon skip like a calf,
And Sirion as a young wild-ox.

Jahweh's voice cleaveth the rocks,
Jahweh cleaves them with blade of fire.[1]
Jahweh's voice lasheth the desert,
Jahweh lasheth the desert of Kadesh.

Jahweh's voice shivers the oaks,[2]
Jahweh's voice strippeth the forests.

In this reverent feeling for Nature's sublimer moods we touch a chord that is almost modern. The Hebrew poets anticipate the deeper thought of the present likewise in their sense of a universal life pulsing through the heart of Nature. In the poetry of the Old Testament there are but faint traces of the mythological view which vivifies Nature, indeed, by its Divine fellowship of nymphs and graces, and gods of the woods and mountains and storms, but really robs her of her own essential life by transmitting her powers to these Beings that haunt her presence. To the Psalmists Nature throbbed with life and feeling. There was a spirit

[1] The verse in the Hebrew is unduly shortened, and the sense thus rendered dubious. I have followed Duhm in supplying 'rocks' as the object. The lightning is thus finely introduced as the 'blade of fire' wielded by the Thunderer.

[2] Read אֵילוֹת, *terebinths*, for אַיָּלוֹת, *hinds*, to secure a true parallelism.

in Nature that linked her close with humanity. In true brotherly sympathy with Nature—a sympathy that remained almost sealed to poetry till the child-like heart of Blake opened once more the flood-gates of 'innocent' imagination[1]—they pictured the pasture-grounds in the valleys 'shouting and singing' at the crowning of the year with God's goodness (lxv. 13), the heavens glad, and the earth rejoicing, the sea and all its fullness 'roaring' in joy, the fields and their increase 'exulting,' the trees of the wood 'pealing forth their notes of gladness' (xcvi. 11f.), the floods 'clapping their hands,' and the hills 'ringing out their joyful songs together' before Jahweh, when He came to judge the earth (xcviii. 8f.), the very mountains 'skipping like rams' and the hills 'like young sheep' in presence of His mighty works for Israel (cxiv. 4ff.).

Thus Nature on her part also can enter into spiritual sympathy with man. The Psalmists see the reflexion of their own changing moods in Nature. The ringing shouts of the pastures, hills and floods are heard only when the poet himself is filled with the gladness of the Lord. When the dark clouds

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[1] 'When the green woods laugh with the voice of joy,
And the dimpling stream runs laughing by;
When the air does laugh with our merry wit,
And the green hill laughs with the noise of it,' etc.
Laughing Song.

sweep over his head, and sorrows surge within him, Nature wears a different garb. The plaint of the desolate exile, torn from the sanctuary round which all his affections twine, and feeling the taunt of his enemies 'like a sword in his bones,' comes fittingly from 'the land of the Hermons,' where the cataracts of the Jordan appear like the 'waves and billows' of God's affliction that unceasingly 'pour over him' (xlii. 8f.). And if the gently flowing waters of Siloah harmonize with the peace of the hearts whose trust is in Jahweh (xlvi. 4), the canals of Babylon, with their stagnant waters banked by long rows of weeping willows, seem to sympathize no less deeply with their aching despair (cxxxvii. 1ff.).

This harmony of Nature and the human spirit reaches its fullest expression in the worship of God. Nature is but a humbler brother of man. For Jahweh is the common Father of both. It was He that in the beginning 'threw light as a garment around Him,' and 'stretched out the heavens as a curtain,' He that 'laid the foundations of the earth,' and 'covered it with the deep as a vesture,' He that called forth the mountains, and 'watered them from His chambers' in heaven, making

grass to grow for the cattle,
And herb for the service of man;
Causing bread to spring from the earth,
And wine to gladden man's heart;

Oil that his face may shine,
And bread to strengthen his soul (civ. 2ff.).

It is Jahweh, too, that daily upholds the world, and guides the course of Nature. Thus all things unite in the song of Praise: the sun and moon and stars, the darkness and the light (xviii. 7ff.), the thunder and lightning (xxix.), the mountains and the great deep (xxxvi. 6), the 'portals of morning and evening,' and the whole glad life of spring-time (lxv. 8ff.), the sea and its fullness, the field 'and all that is therein,' with 'all the trees of the wood' (xcvi. 11f.), 'the multitude of the isles' (xcvii. 1), the floods and the hills (xcviii. 8), all lands and their peoples (c. 1ff.), with the angelic hosts in heaven (cxlviii. 2). As it draws to a close the Psalter calls for a full diapason of Praise:—

Praise Jahweh!

Praise Jahweh from the heavens,
Praise Him in the heights!
Praise Him, all His angels,
Praise Him, all His hosts!

Praise Him, sun and moon,
Praise Him, stars of light!
Praise Him, heaven of heavens,
And waters above the heavens!

Let them praise the name of Jahweh,
For He spake, and they were fashioned.
He established them ever and for ever,
He set them bounds they should pass not.

Praise Jahweh from the earth,
Sea-dragons and all deeps!

Fire, hail, snow and ice,[1]
The storm-wind fulfilling His word!

Ye mountains, and all hills,
Fruit-trees, and cedars all!
Wild beasts, and all cattle,
Creeping things, and birds of wing!

Kings of the earth, and all peoples,
Princes, and judges all!
Young men and maidens too,
Old men and boys!

Let them praise the name of Jahweh,
For His name alone is exalted.
O'er heaven and earth is His glory,
His praise is for all His saints [2] (Ps. cxlviii.).

Thus the crowning glory of Nature is to radiate the light of the Eternal. To the Hebrews the face of Nature interposed no veil between the countenance of God and the hearts of those who sought Him. It was rather a shining mirror in which they could trace the very features of the Divine. On the open face of the starry skies the poet saw how 'resplendent' was the name of the God he worshipped (viii. 1ff.). For him, too, the morning heavens daily 'recounted' the tale of God's glory. Day 'bubbled over with speech' while it passed on the legend to the day succeeding, night also repeating the wondrous tidings to its

[1] For קִיטוֹר read קֶרַח (with LXX).

[2] The superfluous words which confine the Song to Israel are doubtless appended for liturgical purposes.

daughter night. And, though they uttered 'no speech and no words, no voice that was heard,'

Through all the earth went their voice,
And their words to the end of the world (xix. 1f.).

To the simple heart the majesty of the heavens spoke of God's eternal, immeasurable love, as the mountains and the depths proclaimed His righteousness (xxxvi. 5ff.). Even the thunders raised men's thoughts to His surpassing glory; for the roaring of the thunder was 'Jahweh's voice,' and the lightnings were His fiery arrows for the discomfiture of the wicked. Thus in the ears of the Hebrew poet the noise of the storm blended harmoniously with the song of the angels who in heaven ascribed unto Jahweh 'glory and honour,' and equally with the prayers of the saints who in the temple below sought the blessings of strength and peace for His people (xxix. 1ff.).[1] For him who had eyes to see the vision of God's glory, the whole earth was 'full of the love of Jahweh' (xxxiii. 5). He knew

[1] Here again Blake has looked out upon the Universe with essentially the same feelings as the Psalmist. 'I assert for myself that I do not behold the outward creation, and that to me it is hindrance, and not action. "What!" it will be questioned, "when the sun rises, do you not see a round disk of fire somewhat like a guinea?" Oh! no, no! I see an innumerable company of the heavenly host, crying, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty!" I question not my corporeal eye, any more than I would question a window concerning a sight. I look through it, and not with it.'—*A Vision of the Last Judgment.*

that the Mighty One who had made all these things had His eyes fixed on those that feared Him, to save them from evil, and bless them with goodness all the days of their life. The glad spring season was especially associated with thoughts of the goodness of Jahweh; for He it was that then 'visited the earth, and watered it' with rain from 'the river of God, which is full of water,' He that prepared the ridges, and blessed the fertile soil with abundance of corn, He whose footsteps 'dripped fatness' wherever He trod (lxv. 9ff.). Even when the floods raised their voices in wrath, the good man kept his soul in peace. For God's throne was established above the seas; His commanding voice rose clear above the tumult of the waters (xciii. 3f.). In His hand all things were held under firm control (xcv. 4ff.). Therefore His people might raise their 'new songs' of joy and confidence even in the darkest hour (xcvi., xcvii., etc.). For God's power and goodness were higher even than the heavens, —His love was eternal and abiding as Himself.

Of old hast Thou founded the earth,
And the heavens are the work of Thy hands.
They shall perish, but Thou shalt abide;
As a garment shall all of them fade.
They shall change as a robe that Thou changest;
But Thou art the same, and Thy years have no end
(cii. 25ff.).

CHAPTER IX

The Image of God in Man

It has been seen how nearly akin Nature is to human life. God is the common Author of their being, and His glory shines through both spheres. Yet man is far the greatest work of God. In the cosmologies of Genesis he is created last of all things. God's tenderest care is centred on him. The breath of God is breathed into his nostrils, and he becomes a living person after the image of God Himself, and capable of enjoying a life of intimate friendship with the Divine. The eighth Psalm is the poetical counterpart of these cosmologies. The language shows clear marks of dependence on Gen. i. But the whole feeling of the Psalm is poetic. The author builds up no systematic conception of human nature. His thought of man's exalted dignity is the precipitate of a dazzling impression of God's glory in Nature. He looks up to the starry skies, and is moved with holy awe as he sees the 'splendour' of the Divine name mirrored over the face of the heavens. In a sudden shock of reaction he feels how mean and

frail human nature is, compared with the Divine glory of moon and stars.

When I see the work of Thy fingers,
Moon and stars that Thou hast established,
What is man that Thou thinkest of him,
Or man's son, that Thou visitest him? [1]

Yet human nature asserts its Godlike dignity against the first humbling impression of its meanness. The wonder is, not that man is so frail a being, but that, in spite of his frailty and lowliness, God has been mindful of him, and visited him in His love and goodness; that God has made him but little lower than Himself, and crowned him with His own Divine glory and majesty, giving him dominion over all His works.

Thou hast made him but lower than God,
With glory and honour hast crowned him;
O'er the work of Thy hands Thou hast placed him,
Put all things under his feet.
The sheep and the oxen, all of them,
Likewise the beasts of the field;
The birds, and the fish of the sea,
All that pass through the paths of the water.

And now with far richer tones the poet sings anew the opening strain:—

Jahweh, our Lord, how resplendent
Thy name in all the earth!

Thus, to the Psalmist also, man is essentially the

[1] In the first *stichos* of the verse omit the superfluous and unmetrical יְשַׁמְתֶּנּוּ. The word for 'man' in the third *stichos* is אֱנוֹשׁ, implying weakness, etc.

friend of the living God, who reaches his true perfection only in the conscious enjoyment of this friendship. The same ideal is upheld through the Psalms in various other images. Man is the *gēr* or 'guest' of Jahweh, whose privilege it is to live near His presence (xv. 1), one of Jahweh's sheep, whom the good Shepherd desires to lead in the ways of right and truth (xxiii. 1ff.), a child of the everlasting Father, on whom He lavishes His love and pity (ciii. 13). The supreme moments in his life, then, are those in which he enjoys most fully the sense of the Father's nearness and love. To the ancient Hebrews God drew closest in the Temple, the home He had chosen for His own, and to which He invited the approaches of His faithful people. And, all along, the Temple remained the centre of their deepest affections and desires. The one thing they 'sought after' was

> *To gaze on the beauty of Jahweh,*
> *And delight in His temple* (xxvii. 4).

The crowning sorrow of the Exile was that they could no longer go with the joyful throngs to keep holy-day in the house of God. From the distant lands of their wandering many a thirsty soul 'panted after the living God,' as 'the hind after the water-brooks,' praying to God to send them 'His light and His truth,' to guide them back to His holy hill, where His dwellings were, that once more they might

visit the altar of God, 'the God of their joy,' and praise Him with song and harp, as in days of yore (xlii., xliii.). When Jahweh at length 'restored the captives of Zion,' their chief delight was to see the Temple rebuilt in its beauty, the earthly focus of their worship and aspirations. A swelling note of gladness rings through the 'new songs' of Restoration. And this joy was shared by the 'sons of Israel' throughout the land. From their village homes they thought with tender affection of the Temple of the Lord in Zion. The true home of their spirits, they felt, was there. As the birds had their nests, so had the people of Jahweh their spiritual resting-place around the altars of their God. How happy the lot of those who passed all their days in His house, ever praising Him, and worshipping at His altars! How happy, too, the pilgrim bands that enjoyed but one day in the courts of Jahweh! The very march to Zion was a constant renewal of strength. With the thought of their pilgrimage at heart, the valleys of weeping became places of springs, and the desert lands were gladdened with pools. And the day they spent in Jahweh's courts was better than a thousand common days. For then they looked on Jahweh's face, and saw, if for a moment only, the glory of the Eternal.

How dear is Thy dwelling-place,
Jahweh of hosts!

My soul longeth, yea, fainteth
For Jahweh's courts ;
My heart and my flesh cry out
For the living God.

Even the sparrow hath found an house,
And the swallow a nest,
Where she maketh a home for herself,
And layeth her young.

My home is by Jahweh's altars,
My King and my God.[1]
Happy they that dwell in Thy house !
Ever they praise Thee.

Happy the man whom Thou strengthenst,
In whose heart are the pilgrim-ways !
Passing through Baca's valley,
He makes it a well-head.

With pools,[2] *too, the early rain*
Covers the desert.
So march they from strength to strength,
They see God in Zion.

O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer.
Give ear, God of Jacob !
Jahweh, look on our Shield,[3]
Behold our Anointed !

Better a day in Thy courts
Than a thousand without,[4]—
To keep threshold in Jahweh's house,
Than dwell with the wicked.

[1] There is evidently a *hiatus* in the Hebrew text. The point of comparison is in the idea of home. In the translation this idea has been filled in.

[2] For בְּרָכוֹת, *blessings*, read בְּרֵכוֹת, *pools*.

[3] The ' shield ' is clearly parallel with ' anointed,' referring to the king, actual or ideal.

[4] I have followed Bickell in reading בַּחוּץ for בְּחַרְתִּי, and attaching the word to the clause preceding. This gives us a better sense, besides making the two lines normal.

For Jahweh's a Sun and Shield ;
Grace and glory He gives.
No good thing does He withhold
From them that walk upright.
O Jahweh of hosts !
Happy the man that trusteth in Thee ! (Ps. lxxxiv.).

But the presence of God was not confined to the Temple. Through the teaching of the prophets Israel had learned that He dwelt also with the pure and humble in heart. And the Psalms are full of this thought. The worship of the Temple was itself valuable only as it expressed the heart-felt gratitude and aspirations of the worshipper, and lifted him beyond the outward rites to the living presence of his God. The devout spirit delighted in the Temple because there he saw 'the face of God.' But the vision of God came likewise in the open courts of Nature, and in man's own heart and conscience. God was at all times near to those who loved Him. He stood 'at their right hand,' ready to help and save them ; His eyes were ever bent upon them in tender love and mercy, and His ears lay open to their cry. They too 'abode before God for ever' (lxi. 7), their eyes upturned to Him 'as the eyes of servants to the hand of their master' (cxxiii. 2). They were admitted even to 'the secret place' of the Most High, to share His deepest intimacies (xxv. 14 ; xci. 1). In a few Psalms there is found a real prophetic depreciation of ritual. The Lord

God desires not sacrifice or offering, but thanksgiving, obedience, sincerity, contrition, and prayer (xl. 6ff.; l. 8ff.; li. 16f.). For the soul of worship—the heart and life of religion—is prayer—the communion of the living spirit of man with the God who is spirit and truth.

The uplift of the heart to God is in deep reverence. For God is Holy, and the best of men are weak and sinful in His sight. Thus the attitude of 'fear' becomes the servant of God. That indeed which primarily distinguishes the good man from the wicked is 'the fear of God before his eyes' (xxxvi. 1). But in the Psalms fear blends with perfect confidence, love and joy. There is nothing here of that sombre gravity and sourness of spirit which good Christian people have often associated with piety. The Psalter rings throughout with the notes of triumphant gladness. Not alone amid the festal delights of worship, but in the home, and in the inmost sanctuary of the heart, Jahweh poured joy upon His people, 'more than that for the increase of corn and wine' (iv. 7). His love filled the whole round of life with gladness. Even His fear was the good man's delight (i. 2).[1]

And this joy in God is anything but evanescent emotion. The man whose delight was in the fear

[1] To avoid the double תּוֹרַת, most modern scholars read יִרְאַת יְ, *his delight is in the fear of Jahweh.*

of Jahweh likewise 'pored over His law'—His revealed will and purpose—'both day and night' (i. 2), that He might learn His precepts, and become more like Him in spirit. For God's desire was that His people should be moulded into His perfect image. The Psalmists shrink not from investing the good man with God's own attributes. The crowning 'glory and honour' that God has lavished on His children are found in moral personality. Thus the traits of the good man's character are a real transcript of God's. The root of his goodness, too, is 'truth in the inward parts' (li. 6), loyalty of heart and soul to what is noble and right. And in man also truth finds its fruitage in righteousness and love. The good man directs his steps on the straight, plain paths of honour and rectitude. 'He walketh uprightly, and worketh right, and speaketh the truth in his heart' (xv. 2). Like the Lord he serves, he is 'perfect' in thought and deed (xviii. 23; ci. 2ff., etc.). His hands are clean, and his heart is pure, set not on vanities, but on real worth and goodness (xxiv. 4). But above all he is gracious and loving. The Hebrew counterpart to the Greek ideal of ὁ καλὸς κἀγαθός, the finely polished gentleman, is *ḥāsîd*, the adjective derived from *ḥesed*, 'love,' that is, *the man of love*. As God is love, the good man is likewise a lover both of God and of his fellow-men. His love is, indeed, the pure reflec

tion of God's—tender and true and active as His is. For in no other ancient religion are the fear and love of God so indissolubly wedded to moral conduct, and the thoughts and ways of God so consciously made the pattern of His children's character. Yet nowhere is morality brought more closely to the touchstone of common life than in this same faith. The goodness of Jahweh's people is manifested not in the clouds, nor in some distant Utopia, but on the common paths of daily life, in their varied relations as friends and neighbours and business men. He alone is admitted to be Jahweh's *gēr*, His guest or friend—to sojourn in His tent, and enjoy His intimacies and affection—who

> *doeth no ill to his fellow,*
> *Nor lifteth reproach 'gainst his neighbour ;*
> *In whose eyes the vile are despised,*
> *But the fearers of Jahweh he honours ;*
> *He that swears to his hurt, and will change not,*
> *And puts not his money to usury* (xv. 3ff.).

The wicked man was full of deceit and cruelty, his heart hardened against the poor, his bowels of compassion shut upon the needy and suffering, even upon the friend who had rendered him sympathy and kindness, but was now fallen on evil days. The righteous was true and kind and charitable to all. In perfect sincerity of heart, he dealt honestly in the law-courts and the market. He was the constant friend of the poor, gracious in word, and will-

ing to lend in times of need (xxxvii. 21 ; xli. 1, etc.). With his neighbours in their trouble he was a true sympathizer.

In their sickness I clothed me with sackcloth,
Afflicting my soul ;
I prayed with my head in my bosom,
As 'twere for a brother ;
Downcast I walked in weeds,
As though mourning a mother (xxxv. 13f.).

The Psalmists' moral horizon is, no doubt, bounded mainly by the narrow limits of their people, or even the immediate circle of the righteous. And too many expressions of savage hatred and malice, and relentless vengeance against the enemy, escape the barrier of their lips. But there is found an approach, at least, to the Christian principle of love. For, while the wicked returned evil for good, the friend of God could raise his hands to heaven, and protest :

If ill I have done to my friend,
Or have injured my foe without cause,[1]
Let the oppressor pursue my soul,
Catch me up, crush my life to the ground,
And my glory lay low in the dust ! (vii. 4f.).

This elevation of human life to the spiritual plane where God reigned in righteousness imparted to it a wonderful freedom and peace. The secret of Jahweh was with them that feared Him ; thus their

[1] For the meaningless וָאֲחַלְּצָה read וָאֲלַחֲצָה, with the Peshitta and Targums. The closing word רֵיקָם, *without cause*, is connected with צוֹרְרִי, *If I have injured one that without cause was my foe*, etc.

soul could 'dwell at ease,' delivered from all other fears (xxv. 13). The good man knew that his times were in God's hand (xxxi. 15); therefore, even when wicked men pursued him, and seemed to hold his life in their hands, he could lay him down and sleep, for Jahweh made him to dwell in safety (iv. 8, etc.). In the midst of straits and dangers he yet felt that Jahweh had 'set his feet in a large place' (xxxi. 8). In darkness he looked to God, and was 'lightened,' and his face was no more put to the blush (xxxiv. 5). His burdens he cast on Jahweh, and found himself 'sustained' and kept from stumbling (lv. 22). From the worship of the sanctuary he returned with God's blessing in his heart, assured of acceptance (xxiv. 5). And the Law that in after days, when its real spirit had fled, proved so grievous a burden to earnest souls, was for him a very well-spring of refreshment and delight.

The law of the Lord is perfect,
Refreshing the soul;
The testimony of the Lord is sure,
Making wise the simple.

The precepts of the Lord are right,
Rejoicing the heart;
The commandment of the Lord is pure,
Enlightening the eyes.

The fear of the Lord is clean,
Enduring for ever;
The judgments of the Lord are truth,
They are righteous altogether,—

More to be desired than gold,
Yea, than much fine gold;
Sweeter also than honey,
Even the droppings of the comb (xix. 7ff.).

The one hundred and nineteenth Psalm is one long song of joy in the Law—celebrating the perfect bliss and enlargement of heart of those who keep it in sincerity.

O happy they that are perfect in the way,
That walk in the law of the Lord;
Happy they that keep His testimonies,
That seek Him with all their heart! (*vv.* 1f.).

For not merely are they preserved from evil ways, but they find in the Law a delight which 'all riches cannot give' (*vv.* 14, 16, 24, etc.). With His precepts in their heart, the servants of God reach their true spiritual freedom.

I shall walk in a broad place;
For I have sought Thy precepts (*v.* 45).

The word of the Lord is their comfort in affliction, their trust in the day of the wicked's triumph, their song in the house of their sojourning (*vv.* 49ff.). His law is their enduring peace and security.

Great peace have they that love Thy law;
For them there is no stumbling (*v.* 165).

This inward freedom and security are reflected in the good man's outward life. For it was the cardinal postulate of Israel's creed that goodness was the pathway to happiness and prosperity.

Who is the man that delighteth in life,
That loveth long days, to see good fortune?
Hold then thy tongue from evil,
And thy lips from speaking deceit.
Depart from evil, and do what is good;
Seek peace, and pursue it (xxxiv. 12ff.).

The Psalmists draw charming pictures of the prosperity of the good. The Book opens with the exclamation of wondering joy, 'O the bliss of the man . . . whose delight is in the fear of the Lord' (i. 1f.), and likens him to the tree planted by streams of water, that yieldeth its fruit in season, and whose leaf doth not fade. And the whole tenor of the Psalter is in harmony with this note of joy. The man who doeth God's will shall never be moved (xv. 5), nor ever left in want.

I have been young, and now am old,
But have not seen the righteous man forsaken (xxxvii. 25).

In days of famine and pestilence a thousand might fall by his side, and ten thousand at his right hand; but no trouble should strike on him, nor plague come near his tent: for Jahweh would give His angels charge over him, to keep him in all his ways (xci. 5ff.). The home of the good man was a true sanctuary of the Divine love and blessing. In joy of heart he ate of the labour of his hands, and saw around his table sons and daughters clustering like young olive plants (cxxviii. 2f.). With his brethren, too, he dwelt in the happiest harmony and affection

(cxxxiii. 1ff.). Thus to old age he experienced 'fullness of joy,' until in the ripe maturity of life he was gathered in peace to his fathers, feeling that God's goodness and love had indeed pursued him 'all the days of his life.' And though he dared not yet hope for personal immortality, his seed continued to inherit the land, and his name was had 'in everlasting remembrance,' a glory and blessing to all who came after him (xxv. 13; lxix. 36; cii. 28; cxii. 6, etc.).

CHAPTER X

Life and Immortality

In the pictures just drawn of the good man and his blessedness, there is a certain youthful *naïveté*. It is obvious that the Psalmists include themselves among the ' perfect ' men who walk before Jahweh in integrity. Their assertions of innocence sometimes even startle us by their boldness. But there is nothing as yet resembling the self-righteousness of the Pharisee who thanked God he was not as other men. The conscience of the Psalmists was simple and transparent, their hearts open and guileless as those of little children, who sincerely love the Lord their God, without any deep conviction of sin and redeeming grace. Their world, too, was like that of children, to whose eyes all things are painted in golden glory, and for whom the Father in heaven dispenses goodness and mercy in the way they wish and ask.

In two different ways this child-like confidence is broken through. And the Psalmists thereby rise to nobler thoughts of the Divine love, and wider visions also of man's immortal destiny.

The one shock came from the awakening sense of sin. In their exposure of the hidden canker of evil, the Penitential Psalms of the Old Testament cut deeper into the heart than even the most piercing religious poetry of other nations.[1] But from their very depths they soar to regions of spiritual rapture undreamt of by more tranquil faith.

The first great utterance of sinful conscience is found in Psalm xxxii. The poet has fallen into gross sin. And at once his joyful friendship with God passes into dark distrust and shrinking dread. For a while he seeks to bury his sin in silence. But the voice of God in conscience goads him almost to madness. All this time, too, God's hand lies heavy on him through a feverish sickness that changes the fresh, sweet sap of life into burning drought and pain.

While I kept silence, my bones did moulder
Through my groaning all day long;
For day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me;
My moisture was turned into summer's drought (*vv.* 3f.).

In his anguish he was moved to confess his sin; and at the first stirrings of his better self, when he had now resolved to lay bare his heart, but the words

[1] These Psalms have often been compared with the Penitential Hymns of Babylonia. But even in the most spiritual prayers of Babylonian poets the sense of guilt is inspired not by the ethical struggle for a purer life, but by the presence of misfortunes attributed to the anger of the gods.

were as yet hardly on his lips, the dry fevered frame was bathed in a sudden inrush of joyous feeling—the sweet bliss of forgiveness.

My sin I acknowledged to Thee,
And my guilt I covered no more.
I said, I'll make known my transgression to Jahweh;
And Thou didst remove the guilt of my sin (*v.* 5).

Thus the Psalmist learned that God's love was revealed in its boundless perfection through the very sins and failures of His children. And the Psalm opens and ends in bursts of triumphal music:—

O happy the man whose transgression is removed,
Whose sin is covered!
Happy the man against whom Jahweh reckons no guilt,[1]
In whose spirit is no deceit.

* * * *

To the wicked are many sorrows;
But he that trusteth in Jahweh—love shall encompass him round.
Rejoice then in Jahweh; exult, ye righteous;
And sing loud for joy, all ye that are upright of heart!

In that most searching of all the Psalms of penitence (Ps. li.) still deeper notes are sounded. The Psalmist has sinned almost beyond redemption. And, however he may try to shut his eyes to his sin, it stares him ever in the face, haunting him sleeping

[1] Of the three terms here used for 'sin,' פֶּשַׁע, *transgression*, is literally 'rebellion,' חֲטָאָה, *sin*, 'a missing of the way,' and עָוֹן, *guilt*, 'perversion of the heart' (from right). In like manner, the three words for 'forgiveness,' נָשָׂא, כָּסָה, and לֹא־יַחְשֹׁב, imply severally the *lifting of a burden*, the *covering over* of uncleanness and the *wiping out of a debt* from the ledger.

and waking. So thoroughly has the poison of sin infected his being that he feels himself soaked in sin from his very conception. There is no hope for restoration save in the love and compassion of the God against whom alone he has sinned. And the Psalm is one unwearying prayer for forgiveness, cleansing, and newness of life. We hear not yet the major tones of Ps. xxxii. The Psalmist is still struggling through the depths of contrition. But he has a richer sense of all that forgiveness implies than even his brother poet.

Purge me with hyssop, that I may be clean ;
Wash me, that I may be whiter than snow !
Make me to hear gladness and joy,
That the bones Thou hast crushed may exult !
Hide Thy face from my sins,
And blot out all mine iniquities.
Create me a clean heart, O God ;
And a stedfast spirit within me renew.
Cast me not off from Thy face,
And Thy holy spirit remove not from me.
Restore me the joy of Thy salvation ;
And with a willing spirit sustain Thou me.
So shall I teach transgressors Thy way,
And sinners shall turn unto Thee.
From bloodshed, O God, do Thou save me,
That my tongue may ring out Thy righteousness.
O Lord, open Thou my lips,
That my mouth may declare Thy praise !
For no delight dost Thou take in sacrifice ;
Should I give Thee burnt-offering, Thou would'st not accept it.
The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
The contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise (*vv.* 7ff.).

But actual lapse into sin was not the only experi-

ence that awakened the consciousness of sin. It is usually the best of men who feel themselves 'the chief of sinners.' With the growing vision of God's infinite holiness, their knowledge of their own weak and erring natures is deepened, and they become continually more sensitive to the 'plague of their hearts.' Thus the very Law that was so rich a fountain of delight and quickening of life proved from another side the revelation of sin. As pure sunshine throws the darkness into blacker relief, the clear radiance of God's law exposed the 'hidden faults' of the soul, and unveiled the full enormity of the 'presumptuous' or 'swelling' sins of the proud (xix. 12f.). Thus also in Ps. xxv., the quiet meditations of a trustful spirit, the glad notes of steadfast faith and integrity are blended in minor harmony with the accents of humble confession and entreaty.

Remember Thy mercies, O Lord,
Thy loving deeds from of old.
Recall not the sins of my youth;
But after Thy love do Thou think of me.
Good and upright is Jahweh;
He will teach sinners the way.
The meek will He lead aright,
And the humble instruct in His way.
All His paths are love and truth,
If men keep His precepts and covenant.
For Thine own name's sake, O Jahweh,
Pardon my guilt, for 'tis great! (*vv.* 6ff.).

The same reaction of quickened knowledge upon the

sensitive conscience is felt in the noble Psalm of God's Eternal Presence (xc.), where over against His exalted, everlasting holiness are set the shortness and frailties of human life.

For we are consumed in Thine anger,
We are benumbed in Thy wrath;
Thou hast placed our iniquities before Thee,
Our secret sins in the light of Thy face (*v.* 7f.).

But the Psalm ends not in minor thoughts like these. Here, too, we may miss the note of triumph that breaks through the anguish of Ps. xxxii. But the Psalmist knows that the Eternal God is Love, and though meantime he is oppressed by the sense of man's weakness, sin and mortality, he feels that God will yet scatter the shadows, and make His light shine full upon His servants' faces.

Return, Jahweh! How long?
And repent Thee concerning Thy servants.
Satisfy us early with Thy love,
That we may sing, and be glad all our days.
Make us glad by the days Thou hast humbled us,
And the years in which ill we have seen.
Let Thy work be seen of Thy servants,
And Thy glory shine out on their children.
Let the sweetness of Jahweh brood o'er us;
And establish the work of our hands (*vv.* 13ff.).

If the conflict of conscience with the torturing sense of sin and guilt thus raised the Psalmists above their old self-confidence to the spacious heavens of a Father's love, their moral horizon was equally

widened by fierce struggling with the darker mysteries of Providence. The fond imaginings of childish faith had pictured the moral world as a sunny Paradise where good men lived and walked together in perfect honesty and trust, enjoying the favours of Jahweh in unstinting fullness. But, with the growing complexity of life, keen questionings oppressed them. Over against their innocent Paradise rose the dark realm of evil. If the good man's delight was in the fear of God, there were wicked men around them who said in their hearts there was no God, and pursued their evil purposes irrespective of moral issues. With no conscience in their breasts —an 'oracle of wickedness' whispering evil counsels [1] instead of the sensitive regard to Jahweh's will that upheld the righteous—and no fear of God before their eyes, flattering themselves there was no one to expose and requite their wickedness, they scorned the paths of wisdom, finding their pleasure in sinful words and ways, and brooding over their iniquities even in the watches of the night, on the bed where the good man thought of God (xxxvi. 1ff.). As long as this world of wickedness lay apart from their sheltered sanctuary, the righteous might comfort themselves with the assurance that evil would

[1] Read, with a few MSS., and the best Versions, נְאֻם־פֶּשַׁע לָרָשָׁע בְּקֶרֶב לִבּוֹ, lit. *to the wicked there is an oracle of transgression in the midst of his heart.*

not come near to them, and that the wicked themselves would be scattered as chaff before the righteous wrath of God. For it was the other side of that simple confidence which saw the good man happy and prosperous all his days, that God would requite the evil with misery and cruel suffering, and swift, relentless death. But the problem could not long be warded off. For into the very heart of their Paradise the besetting foe forced his way, trampling down the righteous in his malice, and exposing God's loyal ones to insult, ignominy, and constant oppression. So completely, indeed, was moral order subverted that the wicked became the lords of the world, and the righteous who trusted in God were known as *'ānî* or *'ānâw*, the poor, needy, meek or humble of the earth. And so far was Jahweh from helping His suffering saints, that often He seemed to add to their miseries. As though the oppression of the wicked were not enough to wring their souls, He laid His hand in added affliction upon them, torturing them with cruel sickness and pain. The problem of righteous men suffering, and the wicked flourishing ' as a green tree in its native soil ' (xxxvii. 35), was all the harder that no hope shone from the life beyond. To the Hebrews, as to other ancient nations, this life was literally a narrow span of light between two eternities of darkness. For a few short years they enjoyed the goodness of God in the land

of the living. Then they were gathered to their fathers in the dark and dismal land of the dead, where they spent a dull, joyless, shadowy existence, not worthy of the name of life. The *Sh^{e}'ôl* or Hades of the Hebrews was a vast darksome pit, in which rich and poor, wicked and good, were herded together, cut off for ever from the bright, full-blooded life of this upper sphere, and equally removed from the thought and the fellowship of God.

In death there is no remembrance of Thee;
In Sheol who shall give Thee thanks? (vi. 5).

What profit in my blood, when I go down to the pit?
Shall dust praise Thee? Can it declare Thy truth? (xxx. 9).

Wilt Thou do wonders for the dead;
Will the shades rise up to praise Thee?
Shall Thy love be told in the grave,
Or Thy faithfulness in Abaddon?
Shall Thy wonders be known in the darkness,
And Thy righteousness in the land of forgetting? (lxxxviii. 10ff.).[1]

This absence of eternal hope from the religious life of Israel is all the more striking as their near neighbours, the Egyptians, so consciously shaped

[1] Various features in the description of Sheol recall Greek conceptions of the under-world (cf. especially Odysseus' descent to Hades, *Od.* xi. 1ff.). But the nearest analogue is found in the Babylonian *arallû*, or *kigal*, the 'house of darkness,' the 'land without return,' whose inhabitants 'are deprived of light,' and 'dwell in dense darkness,' their nourishment dust, and their food clay—the land so far removed from the power of the heavenly gods that they must strip themselves of all the emblems of their godhood before they can enter (cf. *Descent of Ishtar*, etc.).

their conduct by the thought of future bliss and misery. The deepened religious feeling of the Greeks and Romans, too, evolved its Elysium and Tartarus as the eternal dwelling-places of the righteous and the wicked. But Israel had to learn the lessons of eternal life first on this earthly plane; and only through their victories on the moral battle-fields of the present did they win the prize of a blessed immortality beyond. And it was mainly from the conflict with suffering and doubt that the larger faith was reached.

It was not, however, till every other ground of hope had failed them that, oppressed and bewildered, hemmed in by fear and despair on every side, they raised their eyes above the encircling darkness, and found God in His heaven—their everlasting Refuge and Friend.

The first look of harassed saints was backward. They cried to God in the day-time, but He answered them not; in the night season, too, but they found no respite. In their perplexity, then, they turned to the past, and recalled how

Our fathers trusted in Thee;
They trusted, and Thou didst deliver them.
To Thee they cried, and escaped;
In Thee they trusted, and were not put to shame (xxii. 4f.).

It seemed impossible that the God who had saved and blessed their fathers should prove false to them-

selves. Yet the facts belied their faith. The righteous suffered, while the wicked grew more proud and insolent day by day, and Jahweh stood afar off, hiding Himself in the time of trouble (x. 1ff.). The poor sufferers next sought salvation in the forward view. This stage of the conflict is most fully represented in the long acrostic Psalm xxxvii. The Psalmist had been 'fretting himself because of evil-doers.' But he came to see how foolish this fretting was.

For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be;
Thou shalt search his place—he is there no more.
But the meek shall inherit the land,
And delight themselves in abundance of peace.

The wicked man plotteth against the righteous,
And gnasheth upon him with his teeth;
But the Lord laugheth over him,
For He seeth that his day doth come (*vv.* 10ff.).

Often with his own eyes had the Psalmist seen the wicked 'uplifting himself in triumph as a cedar of Lebanon.'

But when I passed by, behold, he was not;
When I sought him, he could not be found (*vv.* 35f.).

On the other hand, the righteous flourished from more to more. They might fail, but they could not be utterly cast down; for Jahweh upheld them with His own right hand.

The salvation of the righteous is of Jahweh;
He is their stronghold in time of trouble.
Jahweh doth help and rescue them;
He saveth them, since they trust in Him (*vv.* 39f.).

The Psalmist thus threw the problem forward. But the doubts continued to return. The tangled skein of life was not unravelled. The wicked flourished to the end. Their outward estate prospered; and they seemed to escape the common lot of mortals. They had no pains as other men, but were firm and strong in frame, their eyes standing out with fatness, and their hearts overflowing with proud imaginations. At such a sight it was hard to refrain from bitter thoughts of God and His ways. Why did He stand off thus? Why hide His face in such times of moral disorder? Why not put forth His hand, and right His children's wrongs? But the heavens above were as brass. Amid such disheartening silence there were those who sought to flee from the trouble. Had they but wings like a dove, they would fly away, and be at rest in some distant wilderness, where no one could vex them more (lv. 6). Others broke into impassioned invectives against the wicked. Let God destroy them for ever, plucking them out of their tent, and uprooting them from the land of the living! (lii. 5). Let their eyes be darkened, and their loins smitten with weakness; their habitation be desolate, and their tents forsaken! (lxix. 23ff.). Even upon their innocent children let the curse of God work itself out in unrelenting fury! (cix. 8ff.).

But braver spirits fought out the fight, and lifted

the problem to a region where the troubles melted away in the eternal sunshine of God's face.

The first ray of immortal hope appears to be met with in Ps. xvii. The Psalmist here pours out his soul to God for help against his deadly enemies, who compass him about like a lion greedy of prey, and hungry for his life. He has kept stedfastly to the ways of truth, while they have been travailing with evil all their days. Yet he is poor and afflicted, and they are 'sated with substance' all their lives long, and able to leave an abundant portion to their children (*vv.* 10ff.). But, in a bold leap of faith, the Psalmist sees all this worldly prosperity counterbalanced by what he shall inherit at the end.

As for me—in righteousness shall I gaze on Thy face ;
I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thine image (*v.* 15).[1]

The problem is, however, far more seriously grappled with in Ps. xlix., where the prosperity of the proud is put forth as a 'riddle' to be faced and answered.

[1] The 'awaking' has been interpreted as the mere 'arousing from sleep' in the morning (Hengstenberg, Duhm), or as happy deliverance from the surrounding gloom (Baethgen, Davison, etc.). But, as the prosperity of the wicked is continued to the very hour of death, it seems necessary to regard the 'awaking' as a joyous experience *beyond death*. Cheyne has related the thought to the image of 'sleep' in Ps. xc. 5, and taken death itself as the awaking out of sleep, 'when life's short day is past' (*Comm. on Psalms*, p. 44). It is easier, however, to find in the context a bold expectation of awakening from the sleep of death. In Greek poetry death is often pictured as the 'sister' of sleep. And

Hear this, ye peoples all ;
Give ear, ye dwellers on earth—
Sons both of high and low,
Together rich and poor !
My mouth shall utter wisdom,
And the thoughts of my heart be with insight,
While I tune mine ear to a parable,
On my harp give forth a riddle.

Why should I fear in the days of evil,
When my treacherous foes surround me with wrong,
Even such as trust in their riches,
And boast of their plenteous wealth ?
Not one may buy himself free,
Or give God the price of his soul,
That he should live continually,
And never see the pit.
For even wise men die,
With the fool and the brutish together ;
Yea, all of them perish alike,[1]
And leave their wealth unto others.
Graves are their homes for ever,
Their dwellings from age to age—
Even those who gave their names
To fields for a lasting memorial.[2]
For man in honour abides not ;
He is like to the beasts that perish.

This is the lot of the proud,
And their end that trust in themselves ;[3]
Like sheep they are led to Sheol,
And Death shall shepherd them there.

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the same idea meets us in Ps. xiii. 3 ; Job iii. 13 ; Matt. ix. 24 ; John xi. 11.

[1] and [2]. The text has been slightly expanded, in the interests of sense and parallelism.

[3] I have followed Wellhausen, etc., in reading אַחֲרֵיתָם, and have further taken בְּפִיהֶם reflexively, *such as are pleased with their own mouths* (or *sayings*).

Straight down shall they go to the grave,
And their form shall be wasted away.[1]
But God will redeem my soul;
From the power of Sheol He will take me.[2]
Fear not, then, though a man groweth rich,
And the pomp of his house be increased;
For nought will he take in his death,
His pomp will not follow him there.
Though he blessed his soul while he lived,
And praised himself for his well-being,[3]
He must go to the ranks of his fathers,
Who shall never again see light.
For man in honour abides not;[4]
He is like to the beasts that perish.

A number of recent scholars have found in this Psalm no more than the hope of long and happy life for the righteous. But the whole contrast is between the proud rich whose well-being is bound up with this present world and the good man who may have little possessions here, but finds a rich compensation beyond the grave. Elsewhere in the Psalter immortality is regarded as the full fruitage of faith. Thus in Ps. xvi. the good man's fellowship with God is so close and intimate that he can hardly conceive of its interruption even by death.

[1] In this very difficult passage I have followed Buhl's text (in Kittel, *Biblia Hebraica*).

[2] On the 'taking' (to Himself), cf. Gen. v. 24; 2 Kings ii. 1, 9f.

[3] Read probably the third sing. fem. וַיּוֹדָה and לָהּ, the object being the rich man's 'soul.'

[4] The refrain should, no doubt, be identical with the preceding (*v.* 12).

The Lord have I set continually before me ;
With Him at my right hand, I shall not be moved.
Therefore my heart is glad, and my reins[1] *rejoice ;*
My flesh also shall dwell in confidence.
For Thou wilt not leave my soul to Sheol,
Nor suffer Thy saint to see the pit.
Thou wilt show me the pathway of life ;
In Thy presence is fullness of joy,
In Thy right hand there are pleasures for ever (*vv.* 8ff.).

There is here, indeed, no explicit hope of immortality. The Psalmist clings rather to the thought that the greedy maw of Sheol will not open on him prematurely. But the very protest against the indignity of death led to surer faith in eternal life for such as walked in friendship with the Eternal God. This is the note that rings so clearly through the third of the great problem Psalms (lxxiii.). The author of this Psalm, too, had his struggle with the dark question of moral inequalities. So keenly had it pressed upon him, indeed, that his feet were almost gone, his steps had well-nigh slipped. It seemed to him vain to cleanse his heart, and wash his hands in innocence. For all day long was he smitten of God, tortured and 'chastened' every morning, while those who defied God were fat and flourishing, their hearts 'always at ease,' as they increased in riches, and lived in luxury and pride. As he thus wrestled with his soul, bitter in heart,

[1] Read כְּבֵדִי, *my liver*, regarded by the Hebrews as a special seat of intelligence.

yet afraid to express his doubts, lest he might subvert the faith of the simple, he went to the sanctuary of God, and viewed the problem in the light of the Eternal. At once, then, his doubts dissolved. The troubles that vexed him belonged to the passing present. But God was for ever. And in Him the Psalmist possessed an abiding Good. Whatever the inequalities of life,

> *Yet God is good to the upright,*
> *Our God to the pure in heart* (*v.* 1).

With all their firmness of heart and step, the wicked were set in slippery places ; and in a moment they would be cast headlong to destruction, and all their boasted wealth would be powerless to help them.

But I am continually with Thee ;
Thou hast hold of my right hand.
By Thy counsel dost Thou lead me,
And in after days Thou wilt take me to glory.
Whom have I in heaven but Thee ?
And with Thee I seek no joy on earth.
My heart and my flesh may fail ;
Yet God is my portion for ever.
For, lo ! those far from Thee shall perish ;
Thou destroyest all that whore from Thee.
But for me—to be nigh unto God is my good ;
In Jahweh my Lord have I made my refuge (*vv.* 23ff.).

The glad hope of immortality here rests, not on speculative arguments from the nature of the soul, but on the sure ground of religious experience.

Immortality is, in fact, a necessary implicate of personal religion. The man that lives with God is immortal as He is. Thus again does the Old reach forward to the New. For Jesus also based immortality on faith in the living God, and Himself whom God had sent. 'God is not the God of the dead, but of the living' (Matt. xxii. 32, etc.). 'I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth on Me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on Me shall never die' (John xi. 25f.).

CHAPTER XI

The Kingdom of God in the Psalms

THE dominant note in religious poetry is personal. The poet pours forth the rapture or the plaint of his own soul to God. Yet the individual can neither live nor die, rejoice nor sorrow, to himself alone. In our own complex society we are touched and influenced in innumerable ways by the impact of the spiritual life around us. The poets of Israel were still more vitally affected by their environment. In the earlier period the nation was the real spiritual unit. And, though the individual emerged to full personal consciousness from the fiery discipline of the Exile, his spiritual life was still wrapped up in that of the community. He shared the same faith and hope as his people. His heart was upborne on the tide of their joys and triumphs, and equally sunk to the depths by the crushing weight of their griefs. Thus in the Psalms the personal note easily passes to the national. The two may even blend. As we have seen, it is often impossible to decide whether the poet's 'I'

relate to his own personal Ego or to the larger soul of the community. The individual singer has entered so deeply into the spiritual life of his people that in what appear to be expressions of the most intense personal emotion he is really giving utterance to the feelings of all.

The two spheres being thus intimately related, the same moral principles govern the wider life of the nation as obtain in the individual.

Jahweh sitteth enthroned for ever;
His seat hath He stablished for judgment.
He shall judge the world in righteousness,
He shall rule the peoples in equity (ix. 7f.).

But, though right and judgment are 'the foundation of His throne,' His justice is here also tempered with mercy. Love and truth 'go before His face,' as the gracious heralds of His approach (lxxxix. 14). Therefore

Happy the nation whose God is Jahweh,
The people He chose as His own inheritance (xxxiii. 12).

Happy the people that know the glad sound,[1]
That walk, O Lord, in the light of Thy face (lxxxix. 15).

For all good things shall be theirs. They shall dwell securely. They shall inherit the earth. Their horn shall be exalted over their enemies. They shall trample them down in the day of battle. And

[1] תְּרוּעָה, the loud shout of triumph, raised by the heralds for the approach of the King (cf. *v.* 14).

within their borders all shall be well. Their sons shall grow up like fresh plants in the garden of the Lord, and their daughters shall shine as polished statues fit for a palace. Their ground also shall yield its increase. Their barns shall be full. Their sheep shall bring forth their thousands and ten thousands. Their oxen shall be laden. And there shall be no outcry in their streets for famine or pestilence (cf. Pss. lxv., lxvii., cxliv., etc.).

Although these principles have the widest possible sweep, their special application is to Israel. Jahweh was the God of Israel. Thus the blessings of the people whose God was Jahweh belonged peculiarly to Israel. The Psalms delight to celebrate the blessedness of Jahweh's people. They dwell with a tender joy on the beauty of Zion, which He had chosen as the earthly home of His glory, so lovely for situation, 'the delight of all the earth' (xlviii. 2), the very 'perfection of beauty' (l. 2), whose stones were precious to her children even in their ruin (cii. 14). Or, in the proud confidence of their trust in Jahweh, they sing aloud of her impregnable strength in the face of the direst danger.

God is for us a refuge and strength,
An ever present help in troubles.
Thus will we fear not though the earth be upturned,
Though the mountains be sunk in the heart of the seas.

The waters thereof may roar and foam,
And the mountains quake at the swelling thereof,—
Jahweh of hosts is with us,
Jacob's God is our Fortress high.

A river—its streams make glad the city of God,
Whose dwelling-place there the Almighty hath sanctified.
God is within her : moved shall she never be.
God shall help her when morning dawns.
The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved ;
He uttered His voice, the earth did melt.
Jahweh of hosts is with us,
Jacob's God is our Fortress high.

Come, behold the works of the Lord,
Who stayeth wars to the end of the earth.
He breaketh the bow, and snappeth the spear ;
The chariots of war He burneth with fire.
'Be still, then, and know that I am God ;'
I will rise o'er the nations, I will rise o'er the earth.'
Jahweh of hosts is with us,
Jacob's God is our Fortress high (Ps. xlvi.).

In the shadow of Zion, then, the people of Jahweh enjoyed abiding security and peace. And over them God placed kings of David's line, who should lead them in the sure paths of righteousness and prosperity. To Israel the king was the earthly representative of Jahweh Himself—the 'anointed of the Lord,' with whom the covenant rested generation after generation. For him their tenderest prayers were offered (xx. 6ff.). In the goodness with which Jahweh had satisfied his heart they rejoiced with abounding joy (xxi. 1ff.). To celebrate the marriage of the king they raised their

sweetest 'love-song' (xlv.). And they dreamed their dreams of a righteous people dwelling in unbroken peace and blessing under a long line of righteous kings, ruling in the name of the good God of Israel, and extending the sway of righteousness to the remotest regions of the earth (cf. Pss. xlv., lxxii., lxxxix., 19ff., etc.),

As the naive self-confidence of the individual was broken down by the stern experience of life, this fair ideal of national glory was shattered by the rude blows of remorseless fate. The course of Israel's history was by no means the bright unclouded path of splendour its poets had fondly dreamt of. There is perhaps no more tragic drama of real life than the working out of that people's destiny, through disruption and inward decay, moral and spiritual corruption, devastation by foreign invaders, to the last crushing stroke—the downfall of the city, the humiliating captivity of the people to a land that was unclean, and the ruin of the Temple that was the chosen dwelling-place of their God, and the visible sign of His presence in their midst.

It is hardly possible for the modern Christian mind to realize the despair which fell upon the people when the stunning blow struck them. It was not merely that the city which was more to them than their 'chief joy' lay in ruins, or even

that the house where they were wont to 'see God's face' was now for ever closed against them—but God Himself seemed to have played them false. Jahweh was their God, who was morally bound to save and prosper them. But He had given them over to the cruel will of their enemies. He had even abdicated His throne by standing idly still while the heathen sacked and burned His city and Temple. It seemed as though Jahweh were powerless to defend His Kingdom against the mightier gods the nations served. Thus the captives had no more heart to sing the songs of Jahweh, but, hanging their harps on the willows, they sat down and wept in dull stupor of despair by the cheerless canals of Babylon. Or, goaded by the taunts and jeers of the triumphant enemy, they turned upon them in volcanic fury :—

Remember against Edom's children
The day of Jerusalem,—
Those that said, 'Rase it, rase it,
To the very foundation!'
And thou daughter of Babel, that laid her waste![1]
Happy be he that deals thee
The dole thou hast dealt to us!
Happy he who seizeth and dasheth
Thine infants against the rock! (cxxxvii. 7ff.).

But at times they raised their reproaches against God Himself. Their fathers had told them of His

[1] I have followed the Jewish Targum and other Versions in reading הַשְּׁדוּדָה.

wondrous works in the days of old, how He had driven out the nations, and planted His own people in their goodly inheritance, and defended them against all their enemies around. But now He had cast them off, and dishonoured them ; He had turned their backs to the adversary ; He had given them up like sheep appointed for meat, and scattered them among the nations ; He had made them a reproach to their neighbours, a scorn and derision to all about them. All this had come upon them ; yet had they not forgotten Him, or dealt falsely by His covenant ; their heart had not turned back, nor their feet swerved from His way. How long, then, they asked in tones almost of indignation, how long was He to remain silent while the heathen trampled upon His heritage ?

Awake, Lord ! Why sleepest Thou ?
Rouse Thee, cast us not off for ever !
Why dost Thou hide Thy face,
And forget our distress and affliction ? (xliv. 1ff.).

The silence of God was so intolerable to many of His exiled worshippers that they felt they should like to usurp His place, and themselves execute judgment on their oppressors. Thus through certain of these Psalms of Jerusalem's agony there glows a white-hot flame of hatred.

O my God, make them as whirling dust,
As stubble before the wind !

Like fire that consumeth the forest,
Or a flame that kindleth the mountains,
Do Thou with Thy whirlwind pursue them,
With Thy hurricane throw them in terror!
Fill Thou their faces with shame,
That they seek Thy name, O Lord!
Be they shamed and confounded for ever,
Abashed, and brought to destruction,—
That they learn that Thou, Jahweh, alone
Art Most High over all the earth! (lxxxiii. 13ff.).

These songs of despair and fury have often been a real stumbling-block to the Christian reader of the Psalms. They do, indeed, stand self-condemned before the Master's command to love one's enemies. Yet, as the burning effusions of sensitive spirits to whom all that was dearest in life was lost, and for whom the very foundations of God's throne were upturned, they are certainly more fitting than the attitude of callous indifference. Those patriotic poets of Israel had in their blood the stuff of which religious heroes are made. Their passion needed to be controlled, and turned into purer channels. But such intensity of feeling was the best proof that the heart still beat true to God and righteousness.

Thus we find in the Psalms of the Exile other notes than those of hatred and vengeance. In the 'alien land' the people of Israel began to read aright the lesson of their history. It was for no light cause, they saw, God had abandoned them

to the enemy. In their prosperity they had prided themselves on their privileges as Jahweh's people. But they had thought little of the responsibilities thus laid on them. They spoke of righteousness, indeed; but on their lips righteousness was rather the favour they sought of God than the moral conduct He expected of them. In this respect they were no better than their neighbours that knew not Jahweh; and they had as yet made no real effort to make His name known to the nations, and to show themselves a blessing to all the families of the earth. But now they came to themselves. They felt how grievously they and their fathers had sinned against their God, and how just all His ways had been. They began to understand, as well, how very gracious He was, how full of compassion and forgiveness, and how ready even now to save and bless them.

O that my people would hear me,
That Israel would walk in my ways!
I should soon subdue their enemies,
And turn my hand on their foes.
Those that hate them would cringe before them,
But their hour should last for ever.
With the fat of the wheat would I feed them,
From the rock would I sate them with honey (lxxxi. 13ff.).

Amid the darkness of the Exile, too, light fell on the mystery of their sufferings. The great singer in Deutero-Isaiah had related the sorrows of Israel

to the salvation of the world. And the same thought breaks through the prevailing gloom of Ps. xxii.

All ends of the earth shall bethink them,
And turn unto Jahweh;
Before Him shall worship
All families of nations;
For the kingdom is Jahweh's,—
He ruleth the nations (*vv.* 27f.).

Thus through the discipline of sorrow the people were raised from their old self-complacency to a new sense of their national destiny as the prophet of God to the nations. And, when the almost unhoped-for deliverance was come, and the first singing bands found themselves once more beside the sacred stones of Zion, visions of Jerusalem as the centre of a world-wide Kingdom of the living God swept before their imagination. The noblest expression is given to this hope in that strangely fascinating Ps. lxxxvii., the mood of which harmonizes so truly with this hour of wondering expectancy :—

On holy mountains is Jahweh's foundation,
And the Almighty Himself will upbuild it.[1]
For Jahweh loveth the gates of Zion
More than all the dwellings of Jacob.

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[1] The first verse is obviously incomplete. Buhl has happily provided a second *stichos* in the closing phrase of *v.* 5, which is clearly out of touch with its present context. A subject is almost necessary for the possessive case at the opening of the Psalm. For יְסוּדָתוֹ, therefore, we might read יְסוּדַת יְ, the יְ being the common Massoretic contraction for יְהוָה.

Glorious things are spoken of thee,
Zion, the city of God :
' Rahab and Babel I mention among those that know me,
Philistia, likewise, and Tyre, with Cush ;
But Zion—she shall be called Mother,[1]
For each and all were born in her.'
Even Jahweh shall count, while enrolling the peoples,
' So was born there, and that one was born there.' [2]
Thus shall they sing, as they dance,
' All my springs are in thee.' [3]

These notes are witnesses to the indestructible vitality of Israel's faith. Other nations had dreamed their dreams of world-Empire, in which their gods naturally assumed the spiritual supremacy. But such hopes were bound up with military glory and success. Thus the downfall of the people saw the ex-

[1] The LXX reads Μήτηρ Σείων, 'Mother 'Zion.' This bears indisputable witness to the falling out of אֵם before וְאָמַר, the original reading being וּלְצִיּוֹן אֵם יֵאָמַר, which yields an excellent context.

[2] The phrase זֶה יֻלַּד־שָׁם is quite out of place in *v.* 4, and is thus rightly omitted by LXX (א). But in the original Psalm it may have had its position elsewhere ; and Wellhausen has ingeniously inserted the words after the corresponding phrase in *v.* 6, giving the two together a distributive sense. This conjecture not only adds to the force of the verse, but also explains the present dislocation, the words having been first omitted through a *lapsus oculi*, then inserted in the margin, and finally incorporated in their present position in the body of the text.

[3] The text is here again concise to the point almost of enigma. There is perhaps some disorder. But the general sense is sufficiently clear. The Psalmist breaks into a short, quick note of joy, the rhythm of which is probably an imitation of some popular dance measure.

tinction of their dreams. But the faith and hope of Israel not merely survived the shock of national ruin; out of the blackness of desolation that people entered on its true career of glory as the spiritual guide and teacher of the world. There is still a certain externality in the Psalmist's dreams. He cannot picture a Kingdom or Empire of God without its earthly centre. Yet his ideal of Jerusalem as the Mother-city imparts to his thought of Israel's future glory a freedom and universality of range that not even the broadest sweep of prophetic vision had yet reached. The prophets had foreseen the Gentile races streaming to Jerusalem to receive the instruction of Jahweh, bringing rich tribute of gold and silver in token of allegiance. The Psalmist has here risen to the grander conception of a world-wide Empire in which Israel's bitterest enemies, and those most widely removed from her influence —the persecutors Egypt and Babylon, the old enemy the 'uncircumcised' Philistine, with the proud commercial city of Tyre, whose ambitions seemed all for worldly wealth and splendour, and distant Cush, the land of darkness and terror— were together embraced in the knowledge and fear of Jahweh, all of them counted among the children, and each enjoying the citizen-rights of Zion. The light was thus broadening to the perfect day when in God's Kingdom there should be 'neither Jew

nor Greek, neither bond nor free, for all are one in Christ Jesus' (Gal. iii. 28).

In the later Psalms there are found many expressions of intense national feeling. But Jahweh is no longer regarded as the God of Israel alone. Even when His arm is extended to save His people, He is the Lord of heaven and earth,

Who stablished the hills by His strength,
Being girded with might,
Who stilleth the roar of the seas,
And the noise of the peoples (lxv. 6f.),

and whose saving grace is known through all the nations, and His fear and praise go forth 'to the ends of the earth' (lxvii. 2ff.). The universal reign of Jahweh is the special theme of the majestic group of 'new songs' (xciii.–c.), in which the whole earth lifts up its voice in praise of His marvellous honour and majesty, glory and strength, as revealed alike in His works of creative power, and in His righteous, loving judgments.

Jahweh is King; let the earth rejoice,
Let the coast-lands many be glad!
Clouds and darkness are round Him,
The base of His throne is righteousness
Fire marcheth before Him,
And blazeth about His steps.

His lightnings lightened the world,—
The earth beheld it, and writhed;
The mountains melted like wax
Before the Lord of all the earth.
The heavens declared His righteousness,
And all peoples beheld His glory.

Ashamed are all that worship idols,
That pride themselves in vanities;
But Zion heard, and was glad,
And the daughters of Judah rejoiced.[1]
For Thou, Jahweh, art High over all the earth,
Exalted far above all the gods.

Jahweh loves the haters of evil;
He keepeth the souls of His saints.[2]
Light shineth out for the righteous,
And joy for the upright of heart.
Rejoice then in Jahweh, ye righteous,
And praise His holy memorial! (Ps. xcvii.).

In prophetic pictures of the coming Kingdom the central figure was the ideal King, the glorious Messiah of later Jewish expectation. The hope of the Psalmists turns so directly on God Himself that before His pure radiance even the light of the Messiah seems to pale. It is Jahweh who here assumes the sovereignty, and reigns in love and righteousness. Only in three of the later Psalms is the great King represented by an earthly Viceroy. But so deeply had the expectation of the Messiah cut into the heart of Jewish piety that one of these Psalms has been singled out from its older context, and placed in the forefront of the Psalter, as a fitting sequel to Ps. i., the key-note

[1] In this stanza the closing *stichoi* of *vv.* 7 and 8 have been omitted as standing outside of the metrical scheme of the Psalm. They are probably mere exclamations or glosses of a reader.

[2] The closing *stichos* of *v.* 10 is likewise but a variant in thought to the preceding phrase.

of the whole. The Psalm depicts a tumultuous gathering of the nations against Jahweh and His people. In words full of life and passion they hiss out their fury, while He remains seated on His throne in heaven, 'laughing' in sheer contempt of their vain clamourings. Then He rises in His wrath, and speaks the word of discomfiture:

But I have set my King
On Zion my holy hill.

I have said to Him, 'Thou art my Son:
This day have I begotten Thee.
Ask of me, and I will give
The nations for Thine inheritance.
With a mace of iron shalt Thou crush them,
As a potter's vessel Thou shalt shiver them.

Now, therefore, ye kings, be wise;
Be admonished, ye judges of earth!
Serve Jahweh with fear,
And with trembling bow down to Him,[1]
Lest He break forth in wrath, and ye fall in your way;
For His anger will soon flame out [2] (Ps. ii.).

The Messiah is here the Divinely anointed agent of Jahweh's wrath against the heathen who challenge His supremacy. And essentially the same conception meets us in Ps. cx., where the priest-king marches at Jahweh's right hand over the stricken

[1] I have followed Duhm in treating the hopelessly perplexing words נַשְּׁקוּ בַר as a broken variant to וְגִילוּ בִּרְעָדָה, representing perhaps an original וּשְׁחוּ לוֹ בִּר', *bow before Him with trembling.*

[2] The closing phrase אַשְׁרֵי כָּל־חוֹסֵי בוֹ, *happy all they that trust in Him,* is no doubt a liturgical addition.

bodies of the enemy to His throne of righteousness. This thought of a warlike Messiah, who should save His people from their oppressors, plays a large part in the eschatology of the Jews, both in religious odes like the seventeenth 'Psalm of Solomon' and in the apocalyptic literature. But alongside of this conception runs the purer ideal of a King ruling in mercy and love. The original nucleus of Ps. lxxii. may have been a joyous accession Ode in honour of one of the later kings of Judah. But in its present form it soars far beyond the earthly range. One can hardly do justice to the bold expectations of the Psalm except on the assumption that it describes the glories of the Messianic reign.

O God, give the king Thy judgment,
The king's son Thy righteousness,
That He judge Thy people in justice,
And Thy poor with judgment!

That the mountains may bring forth weal,
And the hills yield righteousness;
That He judge the poor of the people,
And save the sons of the needy!

That He reign as long as the sun,
While the moon shines, age by age;
That He fall as rain on the meadow,
As showers that water the earth!

That in His days right may flourish,
And well-being abound without measure;
That He reign from sea to sea,
From the River to the ends of the earth!

Before Him bow His foes,
His enemies lick the dust!

The kings of Tarshish and the isles offer gifts,
Kings of Sheba and Seba bring tribute!

Before Him let all kings bow,
Let all nations serve Him!
For He saveth the poor when he crieth,
The needy, and him that hath no helper.

He pitieth the weak and the poor,
And saveth the souls of the needy.
Their souls will He rescue from violence,
For dear is their blood in His eyes.

Long may He live;
And gold of Sheba be given Him!
Prayer too be made for Him ever;
And daily may He be blessed!

Plenty of corn may there be in the land,
To the top of the hills may it rustle;
May the fruit thereof flourish as Lebanon,[1]
And they of the city blossom like herbs of the earth!

May His name be blessed for ever,
His renown endure as the sun!
May men be blessed in Him!
All nations call Him happy!

[1] On the recovery of the verb in this *stichos*, cf. Kittel. If the text be sound in the closing *stichos*, the 'fruit thereof' (*i.e.*, of the land) is most easily understood of the people, the natural parallel to which will be 'they of the city.' The reading, however, is somewhat uncertain.

CHAPTER XII

The Book of Job

In the Psalter we have already been brought into touch with great souls in conflict with the mysteries of Providence. But the most heroic of these struggles is waged in the Book of Job. Here the poetical genius of Israel reaches its noblest height. In range of imagination, and sustained splendour of diction, the Book not merely stands alone in the Old Testament, but takes a foremost place also among the masterpieces of the world's literature. Tennyson but expresses the common feeling of literary critics when he pronounces it 'the greatest poem whether of ancient or of modern times.'

With this general judgment perhaps all would concur. But when we pass to a closer study of the Book, we are bewildered by the endless diversity of opinion that meets us. Even on the question of the literary character of Job, it is almost *quot homines, tot opiniones*. According to some scholars, it is an epic; according to others, a drama, or more specifically, a tragedy; and according to still others, a didactic poem. As if to comprehend

all possible varieties of opinion, Dillmann calls it 'an epic-dramatic didactic poem' (*ein episch-dramatisch Lehrgedicht*).[1] On the other hand, there are those who refuse to class the Book in any of the recognized literary forms. 'We cannot,' it is said, 'force this splendid piece of Hebrew wisdom into a Greek scheme, and it is really futile to discuss whether it is a drama or an epic. It is itself.'[2] If possible, still more diverse are the judgments pronounced on the theme and purpose of the Book—the 'problem of Job.' Here, again, all possible rubrics and formulæ have been adopted. The sufferings of Job are described as the trial of his piety, the test by which God revealed the sterling reality and invincible strength of his faith; or as the discipline through which He purified his heart from its unbelief and impiety, thus perfecting his faith and character.[3] Other authorities have found the tendency of the poem to be purely negative—to clear the ground of outworn theories of sin and suffering—or even sceptical and pessimistic.[4] And

[1] *Hiob*, p. xxiii. [2] Peake, *Job* (Century Bible), p. 41.

[3] German scholars have drawn up quite a table of categories under which Job's sufferings may be classed: *Prüfungs-*, *Bewährungs-*, *Zeugniss-*, *Züchtigungs und Läuterungs-*, and *Förderungs-Leiden*.

[4] Thus Dr. E. J. Dillon classes Job among his *Sceptics of the Old Testament*, while Fried. Delitzsch describes the poem as 'The Song of Songs (*das Hohelied*) of Pessimism.' The most extreme advocate of this theory is Eugen Müller, pastor in Rostock, who in

others read it simply as the dramatic representation of a heroic soul's struggle towards light and peace.[1]

Our view of the character and purpose of the Book must turn largely on the relation conceived to exist between the Prologue and the poem proper. The former not merely sketches the scenic background, and introduces us to the different *dramatis personae*, but is governed by a clear and consistent motive. The sufferings of Job are the direct result of the Satan's challenge (i. 9). If the Prologue be an integral part of the poem, we have here the key to the interpretation of Job. In the incisive words of A. B. Davidson: 'This question —Doth Job serve God for nought?—is the problem of the book.'[2] But the difficulty is just to read the poem in this light. And the learning and insight which Davidson and his great *confrères*, Delitzsch and Dillmann, have applied to the problem throw the difficulty into still clearer relief. It is not merely that the bearing of Job is different. But the whole centre of interest changes. In the poem, the Satan and his cynical assaults on human goodness vanish. It is no longer Job's piety, but God's justice, that is in question. As even Godet admits,

a recent monograph, *Der echte Hiob* (1902), describes the poem as atheistic, setting forth 'the absolute unrighteousness of God as the solution of the problem.'

[1] Ewald may be regarded as the first great exponent of this view.

[2] *Comm. on Job*, p. xvi.

'The Being who is brought to the bar of judgment is in reality not Job, it is Jehovah. The point in debate is not only the virtue of Job; it is, at the same time, and in a still higher degree, the justice of God.'[1] And Job is now the Prometheus who boldly joins issue with the Almighty. The problem of the poem is to reconcile faith in God with the inequalities of His Providence. And it ends in God's appearing, not to reveal to His steadfast servant the meaning of his sufferings, but to vindicate His own character as worthy of trust and love.[2]

It is equally difficult to relate the spiritual viewpoint of the Epilogue to the general tenor of the poem. In His dazzling revelation of His majesty (xxxviii. 1f.; xl. 1f.) Jahweh describes Job's passionate speeches as 'words without knowledge,' which 'darken counsel' and 'cavil' against the Almighty and His ways. But in the Epilogue (xlii. 7f.) the supreme Vindicator of the righteous approves Job as having consistently spoken of Him 'the thing that is right,' while He hotly re-

[1] *Old Testament Studies*, p. 186.

[2] The latest and most elaborate attempt to prove the integral unity of Prologue and poem, Dr. Karl Kautzsch's *Das sogenannte Volksbuch von Hiob* (1900), evades the real difficulty. According to this scholar, the Prologue merely sets forth the general facts of the case, the appearance of Satan and his impeachment of Job's piety being but picturesque staging. This is, of course, to cut the heart out of the Prologue.

proves the friends for their 'foolish' or 'impious' words.[1] The Epilogue appears, in fact, to be the original sequel to a series of speeches in which the 'impious' counsel of Job's wife, to 'curse God and die,' is followed by similar advice on the part of his friends—still more irreverent, perhaps, in tone—to be rejected by the patient sufferer with the same abhorrence as before.

On these grounds we seem irresistibly led to the conclusion first suggested by Wellhausen in a review of Dillmann's *Hiob*,[2] but worked out most elaborately by Budde and Duhm, that the prologue and epilogue formed the main part of an older prose tale of Job's sufferings, which the poet has adopted as the framework of the present Book. One can hardly follow these critics, however, in their idea that this prose tale was an early, pre-exilic *Volksbuch*. The materials were, no doubt, drawn from the old tradition of Job known to Ezekiel (xiv. 14, 20), who classes Job with Noah and Daniel as ideal types of piety in the hoary days of old. But the advanced idea of the Satan points unmistakably

[1] נְבָלָה, as usual, of practical or moral 'folly,' that is, 'impiety,' or 'godlessness.' The same word is used by Job to describe his wife's attitude. To him she speaks כְּאַחַת הַנְּבָלוֹת, 'like one of the godless women' (ii. 10). One can hardly be wrong, therefore, in supposing that the tenor of the friend's speeches in the original tale was similar to hers.

[2] *Jahrbücher für Deutsche Theologie*, 1871, p. 555.

to the Persian era, while the whole tendency of the story appears too strongly marked for a mere *Volkssage*. The idea of the Satan as a searcher of human wickedness is first met with in Zech. iii. (B.C. 520). And the problem of personal suffering became most acute in the immediately succeeding generations. The nearest analogy to the problem as it confronts us in the Prologue of Job appears in the prophecies of Malachi (probably just before the happier age of Ezra and Nehemiah), where we read of many forsaking the fear of Jahweh because, as they said, 'every one that did evil was good in the sight of Jahweh, and He delighted in them,' while He left the righteous languishing in poverty and sorrow; wherefore 'it was vain to serve Him, and there was no profit in keeping His charge and walking mournfully before Him' (Mal. ii. 17; iii. 14).[1] This first draft of Job, then, we regard as a pious prose tale or epic—somewhat resembling the narrative parts of Daniel—written to cheer the downcast hearts of the people of God in those troublous times that followed the Restoration, when the righteous suffered, and the wicked saw long and prosperous years, and devout souls were often

[1] The later date of the chapters has been convincingly proved by Karl Kautzsch (*op. cit.*, pp. 22ff.), and accepted by later scholars like Cornill (*Einleitung*[5], p. 270) and Nathaniel Schmidt (*Messages of the Poets*, pp. 97ff.).

sadly tempted to renounce their faith, for it seemed so profitless to serve God in sincerity. By the picture of Job the upright suffering the loss of all things, and even the extreme of personal agony, yet holding fast his faith in God, and even blessing the hand that smote, the writer encourages the suffering saints of his own day to bear their afflictions bravely; for these are not, as they imagine in their heaviness of heart, the outpouring of the Divine wrath because of their sins, but the test by which God is even now revealing before angels and men the sterling purity of their faith and piety. Thus if they hold fast their integrity, as Job did, they too will be witnesses for God to their generation; and soon He will arise in His glory to champion their cause, and will bless their latter end more than their beginning.

The poem of Job was apparently written at no distant date from the older prose epic.[1] But it

[1] The poem is evidently later than Jeremiah, whose passionate cursing of his birth-day (xx. 14ff.) is imitated in Job iii. 3ff., and also the eighth Psalm (itself later than the Priestly Code), which is parodied in vii. 17f. The Aramaic colouring of the poem fully bears out this conclusion. But the date is not far removed from the Restoration, as the language is much less decadent than in the Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes. We may reasonably place it about 400 B.C. The objection that II Isaiah contains a deeper solution of the problem, and is, therefore, subsequent to Job, has no real weight, inasmuch as that prophecy deals with national, and Job with personal, suffering.

sounds far profounder depths. The Prologue is retained, indeed, as a general introduction to the piece. But the poet can no longer rest content with its simple, cheerful view of suffering as the Divine trial of faith, to be made good by double prosperity. Nor does he represent Job any more as the type of the patient sufferer. Instead, he brings him to the lowest abyss of despair, and makes him break out into the most blasphemous invectives against God and His judgments. We cannot doubt that he thus gives expression to his own personal feelings. The poet is one who has felt the iron of suffering pass deeply into his own soul, and has been driven by the cold consolations of well-meaning, though unsympathetic, friends into open revolt against the God of popular imagination, but has fought his way through despair and doubt, if not to clear light on the problem of suffering, yet to a freer and nobler faith in the living God. And in the poem he has opened his heart, and spoken out all the feelings that passed through his soul in his agony of grief, till he found rest again in God.

There is thus a distinctly lyrical element in the poem. The component parts are often pure lyrics —the immediate outflow of the feelings of the heart. But the form of the poem is dramatic, the theme being developed in a series of dialogues between Job

and his friends, and the poem as a whole leading forward to a real dramatic *dénouement.* It is true, Job was never intended for the stage. And the dramatic movement is far less certain and swift than in a Greek tragedy. The characters, also, lack the strong, clear-cut profile of great dramatic heroes. One may distinguish the grave, courtly Eliphaz, with his awesome revelations of the Divine, from the more timid and shrinking Bildad, who can but rely on the traditions of the fathers, and the rough, coarse-grained Zophar, seeking rather to brow-beat than to argue with his friend. Yet all three are rather mere lay figures, to whom has been committed the defence of rusty maxims, and who repeat the same old saws to the increasing embitterment of Job's racked and tortured soul, than the imposing personalities whose wills clash in deadly conflict on the Greek or Shakespearian stage. The real action of the poem is within the hero's own soul. If we are to describe it as dramatic, therefore, we may term it a psychological or spiritual drama—the poetical reflexion of one of those dramas of real life which involve 'more daring plots, deeper passion, more glorious and more mournful issues than ever were witnessed in representation.' [1]

The argument develops in three distinct Cycles.

[1] Davidson, *Comm. on Job*, p. xvii.

The first two are complete. But the third has suffered considerable disorder. Alike in sentiment and poetical form, the larger part of ch. xxiv. is out of all harmony with Job's usual replies to Eliphaz. The chapter is thus, probably, a substitute for some daring attack on the Almighty, which wounded the feelings of a later age. The three following chapters present yet graver critical problems. Bildad's closing speech (ch. xxv.) is surprisingly short and broken, while Zophar's is missing. On the other hand, in xxvi. 5ff. and xxvii. 7ff., there are placed in Job's mouth expressions of wondering adoration before God's infinite majesty, and lurid forewarnings of the fate of the wicked, which vitally conflict with his whole attitude through the poem. The current explanations—that the arguments of the friends are now exhausted, and that, before his final appeal to the Almighty, Job wishes to concede the justice of their case ' in the main '—are mere evasions of the difficulty. In the interests of literary art a certain reconstruction of the speeches is necessary. As early as the twelfth century, the Jewish scholar Raschi suggested that xxvii. 11ff. really belonged to the friends ; and since Kennicott's bold adoption of this hypothesis, the disputed passage, with the exception of *vv.* 11f., has been generally assigned to Zophar, the poem thus recovering its full artistic harmony. The parallel verses, xxvi. 5ff., have with

equal plausibility been viewed as the sequel to Bildad's broken sentences; and if Peake be right in regarding xxv. 4–6 as a redactional stitch in the rent vesture of the poem, a fine sequence is thus gained. As the brilliant monologue in ch. xxviii. moves altogether outside of the orbit of Job—being a choice fragment of Wisdom poetry which has found an accidental lodgment here—the third Cycle may be disposed as follows: Eliphaz (xxii.), Job (xxiii., xxiv.), Bildad (xxv. 1–3; xxvi. 5–14), Job (xxvi. 1–4; xxvii. 2–6, 11f.), Zophar (xxvii. 7–10, 13–23), Job's final reply being found in the great *Apologia pro Vita Sua* (xxix.–xxxi.), in which he leaves his friends behind him, and presents his plea direct to the Divine Antagonist of his rights. Even the *Apologia* has not escaped without certain evident dislocations. Thus, into the dismal picture of Job's present misery there has been worked a patch of alien matter (xxx. 1–8), closely resembling the portraiture of the naked outcasts in ch. xxiv. And the majestic approach to God, xxxi. 35–37, is now followed by the sad anti-climax (*vv.* 38–40), in which Job protests that his fields and furrows have no reason to cry out against him, for his work has all been marked by the strictest integrity and human kindness. These verses are clearly a misplaced section of the chapter, having fallen out, perhaps, before *v.* 35. The context being thus restored, the

stage is cleared for the heroic contest of man with God.[1]

At the very moment, however, when we wait with breathless interest for the Antagonist to appear, a new disputant thrusts himself forward. Elihu's name is absent alike from the Prologue, and from the main movement of the poem. In the Epilogue, too, Jahweh takes no account of his appearance. Nor do his speeches contribute anything vital to the unravelling of the plot. He does, indeed, dwell with reverential dignity on the greatness, power, and love of God, and he lays especial stress on the influence of suffering as the Divinely-appointed means of chastening and perfecting the faith of the most faithful. But even in these respects his words are but laboured expansions of the earlier speeches of Eliphaz (v. 17ff.), and the great utterance of Jahweh (xxxviii. 4ff.), while the strong Aramaic tincture of the language irresistibly suggests a later origin. The scholarship of the past century has, therefore, with remarkable unanimity, pronounced chs. xxxii.–xxxvii. an accretion on the original poem, intended to provide an intellectual solution of the problem of Job. A chivalrous attempt has been made by Budde, however, to rescue Elihu from his fate. In this reading of the poem, the balance of truth

[1] An excellent survey of critical opinion on these points is given in Peake's *Job*, pp. 33f., 223ff.

lies not with Job, but with his friends, especially Elihu, who gives 'pure and unadulterated expression' to the poet's own thoughts. Job was, indeed, 'a perfect and upright man.' But in his earlier days there were germs of spiritual pride and self-righteousness latent within his heart; and God designed his sufferings to purge him of this leaven. The first result of his afflictions was to drive him into passionate attacks on the Almighty for His supposed injustice. But the friends gradually softened his bitter feelings. Then Elihu revealed to him the true meaning of his sufferings. And Jahweh Himself appeared to drive home the truth. Whereupon Job withdrew his blasphemies, and repented in dust and ashes.

Budde has submitted the language of Elihu's speeches to careful study, and thus helped to rehabilitate them in the estimation of fair-minded scholars. But his general interpretation of the poem can hardly commend itself to our judgment. Job is the real hero of the piece; and our sympathies are all with him. The friends may pour forth their truisms —for their observations on life are true enough to common experience; Job may shock us by his profanities; yet it is he that holds our interest, and that all the more as he girds himself for his Titanic contest with the Almighty. Our dramatic instincts cannot, therefore, tolerate such an intrusion as the

long, diffuse arguments of Elihu. Job has presented his case, and challenged God to arraign him. By all the rules of art, Jahweh must now appear to explain the mystery of Job's sufferings, or at least to vindicate His own character as honourable and just. And this fine climax is gained if we pass directly from Job's dignified appeal in xxxi. 35ff. to the burst of glorious music with which Jahweh opens His reply from the whirlwind.[1]

It is now almost universally agreed that the brilliance of Jahweh's words has likewise been tarnished by an overlay of baser metal. The heavy, sensuous art of the descriptions of behemoth and leviathan (xl. 15–xli. 34) stands in broad contrast to the swift, imaginative beauty of the preceding pictures of natural life and order. Their effect is, further, to divert attention from the main issue of the poem.

[1] The arguments against the originality of Elihu's speeches are fully presented in the Commentaries of Davidson, Peake, etc., and in such Introductions as Driver's, or McFadyen's. The contrary view was maintained by Hengstenberg and the strictly conservative school; but not till Budde's spirited defence did it find much favour with more advanced critics. Budde's case was first set forth in his *Beiträge zur Erklärung des Buches Hiob* (1876), and has since been re-stated in his *Handkommentar* (1896) and *Geschichte der althebräischen Literatur* (1906). His views have been accepted by Wildeboer and Cornill, the latter of whom describes the speeches of Elihu as the 'crown of the Book of Job,' offering, indeed, 'the only real solution of the problem' (*op. cit.*, p. 265). But, with a few exceptions, recent scholarship has pronounced against Budde's interpretation of the poem.

Both sections are, therefore, to be eliminated from the original words. This leaves the second utterance of Jahweh deprived of any real substance. But, as the words which introduce this speech (xl. 6f.) are clearly a variant to the original introduction (xxxviii. 1–3), and as Job's reply in xl. 3–5 shows equally evident marks of dislocation, recent criticism seems justified in reading chs. xxxviii., xxxix., and xl. 2, 8–14 as Jahweh's *one* overwhelming speech from the whirlwind, and xl. 3–5, xlii. 2–6 (excluding the stray variants from Jahweh's speech in *vv.* 3a, 4) as Job's *one* awestruck reply.[1]

The modern reader is often disappointed with the words of Jahweh. He may be struck dumb with wonder before their sheer splendour of light and power. But he searches them in vain for any direct solution of the problem of suffering. A number of recent scholars have, therefore, read the chapters as another noble piece of Wisdom poetry—somewhat earlier than the speeches of Elihu—exalting the greatness and glory of the Eternal, while leaving the problem of Job 'an inscrutable mystery, to be treated with reverence by man.'[2] This theory of

[1] On this question, also, the English reader will find in Peake's Commentary, pp. 329ff., an illuminating presentation of the whole case.

[2] The chief exponents of this view are Studer, Cheyne (*Ency. Bibl.*, art. Job), Nath. Schmidt (*Messages of the Poets*, pp. 90f.), and Buchanan Blake, in his recent interesting study of *The Book*

the Book not merely reduces it to a magnificent *torso*, but appears to shift the real centre of dramatic interest. The problem that confronted the poet was far less speculative than practical. He had lost his faith, and was painfully struggling towards an ampler faith. And for victory in this good fight he needed, not so much light on the mystery of suffering, as a new and richer revelation of God Himself. This revelation is objectified in the Divine Voice from the whirlwind. Stripped of its poetic dress, we have here no other than a real vision of God in the works of His hand. The poet who thus unveils his spiritual history had sought to regain God in the feelings and cravings of his own stricken heart. But there he found, at the best, only the reflex of his struggles—not the living personal God. Now he rises out of himself and his self-centred questionings to contemplate the great Universe around him ; and there he sees all things luminous with the light of God's presence. In the same way—if we may compare modern philosophy with ancient poetry—for

of Job and the Problem of Suffering, pp. 185ff. On the other hand, the profound religious significance of the speech of Jahweh has been emphasized by Davidson in his great *Commentary on Job*, pp. xliv. f. (cf. *Cambridge Bible*, pp. 258ff.), W. T. Davison in his *Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament*, pp. 95ff. (cf. *Dict. of the Bible*, II. 668f.), Peake, *Job*, pp. 16ff., 312ff., etc. But perhaps the most illuminating modern discussion of the question is to be found in Duhm's brilliant *Kurzer Hand-Commentar*, pp. 180ff.

the heart of man is essentially the same in all ages—the restless soul of Kant found salvation from his speculative doubts in the immediate intuition of God in 'the starry heavens above and the moral law within.'

The appearance of Jahweh thus effects the *κάθαρσις* —the healing of the troubled and distracted spirit—which Aristotle regards as the true moral end of the drama. Job is, no doubt, at first overwhelmed by the vision of the Divine, and he bows before Him in humble reverence and awe. But as those who saw the fuller vision of God in Jesus Christ were drawn by the spell of Eternal Love, above their first crushing convictions of sin, into happy fellowship with that Love, so is Job also raised from his fears to newness of life with God. Hitherto he has learned of Him only by tradition, 'by the hearing of the ear.' Now he knows Him in actual spiritual experience. 'Mine own eye seeth Thee' (xlii. 5.)[1] And the God in whom he will thenceforward live and move is One in whom his spirit can rest in perfect confidence. For the revelation from the whirlwind is no mere series of ironical questions, calculated only to bewilder and confuse the mind they dazzle by their

[1] 'The poet leaves it open to us to animate Job's repentance with love as well as awe and compunction. With fine feeling Blake in his seventeenth illustration almost fills the margin with passages from the Johannine writings.'—Cheyne, *Job and Solomon*, p. 56.

brilliance. It gives majestic impressions of the beauty and harmony of the Universe, and of the blended glory and gracious kindness of the God who made these things all so lovely and good, and who of His bounty provides even for the wild creatures of the desert, who live so far apart from human life. Thus, while the inference is not directly drawn, the moral is clear. In the universe of human life, as well as in the boundless Universe without, there is much complexity and much mystery, many things that are far beyond our power to comprehend. But the God of wisdom, power and grace rules in both worlds. And though often we cannot trace even the outlines of His purpose, we can yet trust Him to rule our lives wisely, lovingly and well. There is the same appeal to immediate intuition, and the same moral, in the Sermon on the Mount. 'Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? . . . Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of them. Wherefore, shall God not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?' (Matt. vi. 26ff.).[1]

[1] An interesting analogue to Job's solution of the problem may be found in Sophocles' ripest tragedies. Aeschylus had regarded misfortune as the penalty paid for wrong-doing, with the view of

The high poetical tone of Job is sustained throughout. The speeches of the friends may be marked by a certain coldness of feeling; and the coarse spirit of Zophar may descend at times to the mire. But in their nobler moods they rise to the spiritual uplands of great poetry. The first speech of Eliphaz is a real masterpiece of art. His amazing vision of the Unseen Presence has appealed especially to the kindred imagination of Milton and Blake. But every sensitive reader has been awed by its weird, mysterious breathings. And the closing picture of

working out the sinner's moral discipline (cf. his frequently repeated *πάθει μάθος* or *παθήματα μαθήματα*, 'by suffering men learn'). On the other hand, Sophocles views suffering *sub specie aeternitatis*, in the light of the eternal harmony of things. Thus the grievous sorrows Philoctetes had to bear are conceived to have been laid upon him 'by the care of one of the gods,' that he might be held in reserve, and braced in character, for his appointed task in the overthrow of Troy; and when Heracles at length reveals the purpose of the gods, he accepts his destiny with courage and joy (*ll.* 1452ff.). The tragedy of Oedipus ends in the same atmosphere of peace. The sorely-afflicted hero finds himself now reconciled to heaven, surrounded by the love of devoted children, and honoured by the friendship of kindly Athens and its chivalrous king, and gently yields his life to the touch of the gods, his destiny thus finding 'a perfect end' (*Oed. Col.*, *l.* 1779). In both these dramas, then, Sophocles 'views the problem of human suffering with the eye of faith, and in proportion as he sets before him an ideal of an all-powerful divinity, who is merciful, loving, and gracious, so does it become easy for him to bear patiently with the evil and suffering in the world, in the serene belief that, were man's vision wide enough, he would see joy and sorrow to be parts of one harmonious whole' (Mrs. Adam, in *Early Ideals of Righteousness*, p. 42).

the good man's happiness is idyllic in its tenderness and grace. Even the rough heart of Zophar is moved to sweet poetic notes when melted by sympathy for his friend, or hushed in reverence before the Almighty. And the last embittered speech of Eliphaz ends with the same fair vision of peace and joy in God (xxii. 21ff.). But, though he thus lavishes the rich resources of his art on all parts of the dialogue, the poet throws his full strength into the struggle of Job. In imaginative feeling these speeches are equalled only by Shakespeare—if indeed even by him. The poet passes with his hero through the darkest valleys of religious doubt, and even defiant unbelief. With withering sarcasm he rends the poor figments of popular faith. In the proud consciousness of his own integrity he hurls his bolts against the Almighty Himself. But then, at the thought of his hopeless sufferings and his swiftly approaching end, he turns to Him in plaintive appeal for sympathy. He looks forward to death, now with a wistful pleasure, and again with horror and indignation. Out of the darkness he rises at times to the Delectable Mountains, from which the gates of the Celestial City are seen with a clearness of vision that startles and bewilders him. With the Almighty Friend he ascends to heaven itself, and surveys the Universe with the eyes of the Divine. The whole poem is studded with exquisite pictures

of natural life and scenery. But in the speech of Jahweh the poet's genius reaches its loftiest height. For beauty and truth—perfect truth to the living heart of Nature—these visions are unsurpassed in literature. As Carlyle says, 'There is the seeing eye, the understanding heart. So *true* every way: true insight and vision for all things; material things no less than spiritual . . . . Such living likenesses were never since drawn.' It is all as great 'as the summer midnight, as the world with its seas and stars! There is nothing written, I think, in the Bible or out of it, of equal literary merit.' [1]

[1] *Lectures on Heroes*—'The Hero as Prophet.'

CHAPTER XIII

The Patience of Job

In its opening scene the Prologue introduces us to Job, a man that was 'perfect and upright, one that feared God and eschewed evil,' surrounded with all the prosperity that, according to the religious axiom of the day, belonged of right to the good—a wealth of substance that made him 'the greatest of all the children of the East,' and a family of loving sons and daughters, for whom life was one long round of social mirth. Even in those days of simple faith increase of worldly treasure was wont to draw the heart from God. But Job's prosperity made him the more scrupulous in his regard for His honour. Thus not only did he eschew open evil in himself, but he sought to guard against even the subtlest appearance of unconscious sin in his children's hearts. He was, indeed, no morose Puritan. He rejoiced in their innocent enjoyments. But he knew how easily pleasure may lead to forgetfulness of God. And therefore, week by week, when the cycle of their feasting was gone round, he sent and sanctified them, and offered burnt offerings according to the

number of them all; for Job said, 'It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed [1] God in their hearts.'

The scene now shifts from earth to heaven. Jahweh is revealed seated on His throne, receiving the reports of His ministers of State, the heavenly beings who do His royal business. Among them appears the Satan, a sort of Prosecutor-General, whose function is to search out men's character and works, to detect their sins and failings, and so oppose their claims to a righteous standing before God. He has been scouring through the earth, gathering up his tale of ill report, and he comes with a certain malicious glee to pour it into the ears of the King. But the God who has no pleasure in evil meets him with at least one clear case of goodness. 'Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil?' The Satan's knowledge of frail mankind has given him such a contempt for human virtue that he will make no exception even of Job. He does, indeed, admit the fact of his exemplary piety. But he raises the fiendish suggestion: 'Doth Job serve God for nought?' Is not self-interest the root of all his

[1] The בֵּרַךְ, 'bless,' of this and following verses, is most probably a euphemism for 'curse.' In any case, with fine dramatic effect, the temptation of Job is made to centre round the very sin he feared his children might be unwittingly lured into.

fine piety? 'Hast not Thou made an hedge about him, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.' Then he throws down the gauntlet, and challenges God to a test of His servant's piety. 'Put forth Thine hand now, and touch all that he hath; and see whether he will not curse Thee to Thy face!' Jahweh instantly accepts the challenge. He knows His servant Job is 'a perfect and upright man,' who will hold fast his faith through fortune good or ill. But suspicion has been cast on the sincerity of his motives. And the servant of God must be above suspicion. Therefore He hands him over to the Satan's power; and 'he goes out from the presence of Jahweh.'

In the next scene we have the terrible sequel. It is the day when Job's children are eating and drinking in their elder brother's house. That very morning their father has 'sent and sanctified them,' making atonement for all possible guilt incurred by thoughtless sin, and his heart now rests in peace within him, trusting his lot and theirs to the Almighty Love, when suddenly, with tragic swiftness, messenger after messenger brings tidings of disaster, utter and irreparable. His oxen, sheep, camels and servants, and—last crushing blow—his sons and daughters have been swept away, and Job is left

with nought but his piety. The Satan had confidently counted on his casting that also from him, and 'cursing God to His face.' But loss and sorrow unveiled the full splendour of Job's faith. In the midst of his desolation, notwithstanding his belief that God had afflicted him thus, he 'imputed no wrong to God,' but fell to the earth, and worshipped Him. 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord!'

Again the heavenly Court is convened. The heart of Jahweh is filled with quiet exultation because of His servant's victorious faith. 'Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil? And still he holdeth fast his integrity, though thou movedst me against him, to ruin him without cause!' But the Satan is as cynically suspicious as ever. Talk not to him of human goodness! It is all mercenary, a matter of profit and interest, 'skin for skin,' measure for measure. Yes! Job can bear easily enough the loss of goods and children. But touch himself, 'his own bone and flesh,' and see whether he will not 'curse Thee to Thy face!' And anon we find Job seated on the village ash-heap, smitten with a slow and fatal disease, the most loathsome and painful of all, a disease whose very name marked it out as God's peculiar 'stroke' for sin.[1] To add to

[1] נֶגַע, *leprosy*, lit. *stroke*.

his misery, his wife assumes the *rôle* of the Satan's advocate. 'If this be all the reward of thy piety, have done with it! Curse God, that He may slay thee outright, and release thee from thy sufferings!' But Job's faith can stand the last extremity of trial. Thus his answer is the classical expression even of Christian resignation. 'Good shall we receive of God, and not also evil (when He sends it)?'

In due course the three friends cross the stage. They have heard of the evil that has come upon Job, and are gathered to comfort him. Nothing could be finer than their first manifestation of sympathy. 'When they lifted up their eyes from afar, and knew him not'—his countenance was so marred—'they lifted up their voice, and wept; and they rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads; and they sat with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, no one speaking a word unto him, for they saw that his pain was very great.' But this very sympathy for their friend appears to have betrayed them into reflections on God's just rule, that might well have seduced the purest heart into impiety. Yet out of this trial, too, Job emerges as gold from the furnace. And now the great Reconciler comes to vindicate His servant's faith. His wrath is kindled against the friends 'because they have not spoken of Him the thing that is right,' as Job has consistently done. He can accept them

only when they have offered sacrifice for their 'impiety,' and Job has interceded on their behalf. But his bearing throughout He approves as perfectly right and good. And in token of His approval He 'changes Job's fortune,' restoring him twice as much as he had before. Thus Job lives in honour and respect among his fellows, having the joy of seeing his sons and his sons' sons, even four generations, until at last he dies, 'being old and full of days.'

CHAPTER XIV

The Spiritual Drama of Job

THE prelude of the poem shows Job in the midst of his desolation, dark thoughts of God's inscrutable Providence surging in his soul, and his friends gathered around to comfort him, but speechless in their sympathy—his pain was so great. Seven days thus pass in silent sorrow. But the warm touch of friendship unseals the fountain of the heart; and the sufferer opens his mouth and pours out his pent-up feelings. With consummate art the poet leads up to the inevitable crisis. A long-drawn wail, in which Job curses his day, because it brought him forth to all this agony, and longs wistfully for death and Sheol, where 'the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest,' a hushed allusion to the unnamed One who has 'given light to him that is in misery, and life to the bitter in soul,' and at length Job musters courage to address God as the One who has 'hid his way,' and 'set an hedge about him,' so that he can turn neither this way nor that (iii. 23).

The reverent spirit of Eliphaz is wounded by Job's impatience, and still more pained by his contempt

for God's wise rule. A man like Job, who has strengthened and comforted others in their affliction, might surely be expected to endure with courage when it touched himself. Was not the fear of God his confidence, and his hope 'the integrity of his ways?' And who ever heard of the innocent man perishing, or the upright being cut off in the midst of his days? (iv. 3ff.). No one, indeed, is perfect before God. The very angels of heaven are impure in His sight—how much more they 'that dwell in houses of clay!' (iv. 12ff.). But God is piteous and kind, eager to save the poor and needy. Let Job but seek unto Him, and despise not His chastenings; and He will deliver him from all his troubles. 'He who has made sore will likewise bind up; the hands that have wounded will also make whole.' And no evil shall henceforth be permitted to touch the friend of God. In famine and war he shall be saved from death. When pestilence comes, he shall be free from fear. His tent will have peace, and nothing shall be missed from his fold. His seed will be great, his offspring even 'as the grass of the earth;' and he shall come to the grave in a ripe old age, 'like a shock of corn in its season' (v. 8ff.).

These glowing words are as full of tender sympathy as they are devout in tone. Eliphaz has sought to avoid all that would hurt his friend's

feelings. For he loves him, and longs to help him in his troubles. But he lacks the breadth of mind, and that full, deep understanding of the heart, so necessary to the true comforter. Thus the only effect of his speech is to drive Job into fierce remonstrance with God for His inexplicable cruelty. His words have been rash, forsooth! But if only his sorrows were weighed, and his sufferings laid in the balance, this rashness might well be excused; for his griefs would be found 'heavier than the sand of the seas.' God's arrows are within him; their poison his spirit has drunk. God's terrors have 'marshalled themselves against him,' and he has no strength to resist them (vi. 1ff.). His life has thus become a weary round of unrelieved misery.

As a servant that longs for the shadow,
Or an hireling that looks for his wage,
I am heir to long months of affliction,
And nights of distress are doled out to me.

If I lie down to sleep, I say:
'O when will the day come for rising?'
If I rise, 'O when comes the night?'
And I'm wearied with tossings till dawn.

Clothed is my flesh with worms;
My skin heals, and opens afresh.
My days pass swifter than shuttle;
They are spent without ray of hope (vii. 2ff.).

And God will not leave him alone for a moment, but sets a watch over him, as though he were a sea-monster, or the dragon of the deep, and even when he

seeks some ease on his couch by night, scares him with dreams and terrifies him with visions, so that a death of strangling were better than pains like these. In bitter parody of the eighth Psalm he asks :—

What is man that Thou honourest him,
That on him Thou settest Thy thought ;
That Thou visitest him each morning,
And triest him every moment ?

O when wilt Thou look away,
And leave me to swallow my spittle ?
Why set me up as a butt for Thee,
As a burden in Thy path ?

Why not forgive my sin,
And make my wrong-doing to pass ?
For soon shall I lie in the dust ;
And Thou'lt seek me, but find me no more (vii. 17ff.).

The second of the friends, Bildad, is horror-stricken at Job's impiety, and appeals in awed tones to God's inflexible justice. But this only rouses him to more daring invectives against the Almighty. God is supreme Arbiter of justice, indeed. But what if He be partial, or actually unjust, in His judgments ? Who then can put himself in the right with Him ? If they went to court together, there was no daysman to stand between them, and see justice done. And if God plied him with His deep questions, how could he answer even one of a thousand ? God is so great and terrible that, however innocent he might be, he must yet bow prostrate before Him, and plead guilty.

God holdeth not back His wrath,
'Neath Him bow the helpers of Rahab ;
How can I answer Him then,
Or choose out my words against Him ?

Were I right, no answer I'd find,
But must kneel before my Judge ;
If I called Him to court, no answer He'd give,— [1]
No hope I have He would hear me (ix. 13ff.).

But Job is determined to fight the matter out. Therefore in one burst of desperate defiance he arraigns his almighty Antagonist. He has no regard for his life. He spurns it as a hateful thing. Let God therefore slay him, if He please ! He will speak his mind. 'I am innocent ; but it is all one. God destroyeth the innocent and the wicked alike.' There is no justice in His rule. Injustice prevails throughout the world. When plague comes, the innocent are slain equally with the wicked ; and God mocks at their despair. 'The earth is given over to the power of the wicked ; and God blindeth the eyes of its judges,' so that they can no longer distinguish between right and wrong. And God cannot deny the charge. 'If it be not He, who then is it ?' (ix. 21ff.).

It is useless for Job, therefore, even to attempt to purify his ways.

[1] Job here presents an alternative. If God summon Him to court, he cannot answer ; if he summon God, He will not. (On the reading, cf. Kittel, *Biblia Hebraica.*)

Though I wash me white with snow,
And cleanse my hands with lye,
Thou wilt plunge me anew in the mire,
That my very clothes abhor me (ix. 30f.).

There seems no limit to Job's reckless defiance of the Almighty. God is not merely unjust, but He is devoid of all dignity and honour. He has not the generosity to forgive his sins, and forget them ; but like a petty inquisitor He spies on his minutest actions, and delights to search out his faults (x. 3ff.). He even rakes up the ashes of the long dead past, and brings against him the sins of his thoughtless youth. In his wild frenzy, Job imputes to God the most exquisite refinement of cruelty ; for, as he broods over his past happiness, the terrible thought occurs to him that God fashioned him, and crowned him with favour, and made his past life so joyous and good—only to hurl him into these calamities and so to aggravate his pain (x. 8ff.).

Job has thus declared war *à l'outrance* against the theology of his age. He has not merely challenged the orthodox doctrine that suffering is the sure accompaniment of sin, but has even pronounced God's reign unjust and dishonourable. If this were Job's last word, or if the poem were logically consistent, its tendency might well appear atheistic. For an unjust or immoral God would be no real God. But the life which poetry reflects is more than logic.

In times of darkness and doubt the feelings oscillate, often from one extreme to the other. The poet has depicted Job in such a state. He has lost his old moorings, and plunges hither and thither on a 'sea of troubles.' Now he sinks to the trough of the wave. But again he rises on its crest to heights of faith unknown to the unruffled orthodoxy of his friends. And the movement of his soul is no vain tumult of the waves. The current sets steadily forward to God and faith; and herein lies the real interest of the poem.

Even in the earlier chapters Job begins to recoil from his doubts. He has looked to his friends for pity; but they have failed him like the brooks that come down full in spring-time when the ice and snow melt, but dry up in the heat of summer, when men most need their refreshing draughts (vi. 15ff.). His only hope thus lies in God's mercy. In the frenzy of his pain he has pictured Him as a very monster of cruelty, who shows His hapless creatures favour, only to add to their grief. But, in his craving for a friend to pity him, he turns to God with a new longing. He feels that the God with whom he once walked so lovingly cannot abandon him to never-ending misery. His present wrath will pass away, and He will again have mercy on His friend, before He lay him in the dust, where He shall find him no more. Or even if He leave him to perish in his

misery, He will in after days remember him, and repent, and come down to do him justice (vii. 21, etc.).

For the injustice of his friends drives him back likewise on the justice of God. Innate courtesy and affection have kept Eliphaz and Bildad from direct assaults on Job's sincerity. But Zophar has no such scruples, and aims a rude, stinging blow direct at the heart. Job is wounded to the quick, and turns upon him with biting sarcasm. No doubt, he and his friends are 'the people,' and wisdom will die with them! But they are all three mere 'daubers of lies' and 'patchers of vanities,' who meanly 'respect God's person,' and seek to justify His ways by 'maxims of ashes,' from which the life has gone, and defences no more impregnable than 'breastworks of clay' (xiii. 4ff.). And he warns them that, if they continue in this course, God will break out upon them in His dreadful excellency; for He is a God that respecteth truth and straightforwardness alone (xiii. 10f.). With this new sense of God's justice, Job longs to bring his case before His judgment seat. For if he could but win his way to God's presence, he is persuaded, that fact alone would prove his salvation; inasmuch as no godless man can come before Him (xiii. 16). And, if he once succeeded in laying his case fairly before the Judge, he feels sure he must be justified, for he is innocent of all grave transgression. In spite of God's terrors,

therefore, Job is determined to appear and plead his case. God may slay him for his presumption; nevertheless, he will take his life in his hand, and will maintain his ways before Him.

Silence, that I may speak;
And come on me what may!
I will take my flesh on my teeth,[1]
And my life will I hold in my hands.
He may slay me—I hope for nought else!—
Yet my ways I'll maintain to His face (xiii. 13ff.).

Two conditions only he lays down: that God will remove His terrors, so that he may be able to state his case calmly; and that He will be frank with him, and tell him plainly wherein he has sinned.

But two things do not with me,
Then from Thy face will I hide not,—
Thy hand move far from my presence,
And let not Thy terror affright me!

Then call Thou, and I will answer;
Or if I speak, do Thou reply!
What is the tale of my sins?
My transgressions unfold to me! (xiii. 20ff.).

If Job's mind be thus in a state of flux, his friends are rigid as ever. His daring utterances make them the more convinced that he is concealing some grievous sin in his heart. And they seek now to

[1] The עַל-מָה, 'wherefore?' which introduces *v.* 14, arises by mere dittography from the immediately preceding עָלַי מָה. The verse is no question, but an expression of almost superhuman daring.

awaken him to a sense of his guilt by lurid descriptions of the fate of the wicked. In this second Cycle the gentle Bildad is as merciless as Zophar.

Shall the earth be forsaken for thee,
Or the rock removed from its place?

Nay, the light of the wicked goes out,
And the flame of his fire gleams no more.
The light is dark in his tent,
And his lamp is extinguished above him.

The steps of his strength shall be straitened,
And his counsel shall bring him low.
For his feet plunge into a net;
He walketh over a pitfall.

A gin lays hold of his heel,
And a snare grippeth him fast.
A noose is hid in the ground,
And a trap is set in his way.

On every side terrors affright him,
And press him hard at his heels.
Ruin doth hunger for him,
And destruction awaiteth his falling.

Death's first-born shall prey on his members,
To the King of terrors shall drive him.
Belial shall live in his tent,
O'er his dwelling shall brimstone be scattered.

His roots underneath him shall rot,
And his branches above shall be withered.
His remembrance shall fade from the land,
And his name be forgotten abroad.

From light he is driven into darkness,
And out of the world is he chased.
No son, nor son's son, shall be left him;
Where he sojourned, no remnant abides.

Confounded are those that come after,
As those before were affrighted.
Lo! such are the homes of the wicked,
This their place that know not God (xviii. 4ff.).

But warning and exhortation are equally in vain. Job now moves on another spiritual plane from his friends. He may at times turn to them, like a hunted creature, in piteous appeal for sympathy (xix. 21f.). Or, smarting under his wounds, he may strike back, in savage fury, scorning their 'miserable comforts' (xvi. 2), or traversing their whole airy scheme of life (ch. xxi.). But his mind is increasingly pre-occupied with God Himself. His friends treat him and his dead children as signal examples of sinners brought to judgment. But God knows he is innocent.

Even now in heaven is my Witness,
And my Voucher is there on high (xvi. 19).

And with hot tears in his eyes he implores God to have pity upon him, and plead his cause with Himself, seeing that Job cannot yet approach His presence, and thus vindicate his innocence.

My friends scorn their friend,[1]
But to God mine eye flows out,
That He plead a man's cause with God,
And take man's part 'gainst his Friend;[2]

[1] The *stichos* is evidently mutilated in the Hebrew; but it seems better simply to expand the reading as above than to alter the text fundamentally.

[2] We must here follow the minority of MSS. which read

For a few short years will pass,
And I go the way whence I shall not return (xvi. 20ff.).

Or if God must delay his vindication till the distant future, when he is there no more to witness it, let Him only 'deposit a pledge with Himself,' for no man can 'strike hands' with God, and Job will die in peace, assured that the victory will be his (xvii. 3ff.).

This strange thought of God as man's Witness, Advocate, and Surety against Himself bears Job up on one of the loftiest flights of spirit in the Old Testament. In his first sense of desolation he had longed for death as his only release from misery. Again and again he returns, fascinated, to the thought.

O that I had my request,
That God would grant me my wish!
That God would be pleased to crush me,
To let loose His hand, and destroy me!
Lo! this [1] *would be my comfort;*
And I'd glory in ruthless pain (vi. 8ff.).

But as he gazes into the misty depths of Sheol, the horror of death seizes him. The place of the dead is

a land of darkness and murk,
A land of thick darkness and chaos,
Where the light itself is like pitch [2] (x. 22).

וּבֵין־אָדָם, 'between man and his Friend,' the parallelism identifying the Friend with God.

[1] For עוֹד read זֹאת, with a few MSS. and the Targum.

[2] The last line is overladen, but כְּמוֹ אפֶל צַלְמָוֶת is evidently mere dittography.

It is a land, too, whence there is no return. Therefore in Sheol Job can no longer hope to see the vindication of his rights, but must go down to posterity as a godless man. The thought is intolerable, and he revolts against it. The first gleam of a hope beyond breaks from ch. xiv.—a passage of almost midnight gloom. Job is mourning over man's brief and troublous life and swift, untimely end. There is hope of the tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again. Its root may be old and decayed, and its stock cut down to the ground; yet at the scent of water it will bud, and put forth boughs like a fresh, young plant.

But man dieth, and is laid in the dust;
He yieldeth his breath, and is gone.[1]
As the waters fail from the sea,
And the river dries up and is vanished,
Till the heavens be no more, he shall not awake,
Nor be roused out of his sleep[2] (*vv.* 10ff.).

But the hope of the tree suggests to the despairing soul a possible hope for man as well. 'If man too may die and live again!' (*v.* 14).[3] God may per-

[1] I have here followed the Versions in reading וָאָיִן.

[2] The opening *stichos* of *v.* 12 is evidently misplaced. Duhm has ingeniously suggested its transposition to *v.* 19, the closing *stichos* of which is missing. This suggestion is followed in the translation above.

[3] This reflection is surely not 'a momentary interruption of doubt' (Davidson), but the theoretical principle of the hope expressed in the following verse. If only Job could be sure that

chance bring him down to Sheol, to hide him there till His wrath is past, and then 'appoint him a set time and remember him.' If he could only entertain this hope, he should wait patiently, and endure the cruellest pains, all the days of his warfare, till his release came; and when at last God called, he would answer joyfully, and forget the misery of the past in the bliss of his new life with God (*vv.* 14f.). It is a hope, however, too high for him to grasp; and he is plunged into deeper darkness than before.

The waters wear the stones,
The floods wash off the dust;
So Thou destroyest man's hope—
He sleepeth, and riseth no more.
Thou prevailest against him for ever;
Thou changest his face, and dost banish him (*vv.* 19f.).

And the lot of the dead man in Sheol is utterly miserable. He knows nothing more of what passes in this upper sphere. He cannot follow the fortunes even of his dearest ones.

His sons are honoured, but he knoweth it not;
They are brought low, but he marketh it not (*v.* 21).

Nor is the sleep of the dead unbroken rest. He sleeps—'perchance to dream!' Though he knows nothing of his friends on earth,

man died and rose again, he would bear all things bravely, expecting the time of his release.

Yet his own flesh hath pain,
And his own soul mourneth (*v.* 22).

But again Job rises on the wings of faith and hope. The main part of ch. xix. is perhaps the most pitiful passage in the whole poem. Bildad has just drawn his terrible picture of the wicked man's fate. And the sorely wounded sufferer seeks to move his friends to pity by the spectacle of all his accumulated woes: his glory stripped away, his hope plucked up by the root, his path enshrouded in darkness, his dearest friends estranged from him, and no one to hear his cry and bring him redress, for it is God that hath 'subverted his rights' (*vv.* 6ff.). But the friends are cold and pitiless as God Himself (*v.* 22). In his despair Job turns for his vindication to posterity. If only he could write his defence in a book, or engrave it on the rock with iron stylus and beaten lead, future generations would read it, and judge justly, and attest his righteousness (*vv.* 23f.). But the record on the rocks is impossible. Thus he turns once more to his Witness in heaven.

But I know that my Goel liveth,
And as Afterman on my dust
He will stand as Witness before me,
And lift up His voice in my cause.

Then God shall I see in spirit,
Mine own eyes will look on His face;

No more estranged shall I see Him.
My reins are consumed at the thought[1] (*vv.* 25ff.).

In this great expression of faith the action of the drama reaches its height. It is not, indeed, the hope of a blessed immortality with God that floats before Job's vision. But he does cherish the confidence that he will rise from Sheol, and see God in person, if it be only for a moment, on the day when He stands upon the dust to vindicate his cause. And though Job has not followed the gleam to fuller light—the vision is so dazzling that he reels, and falls back exhausted—he points other harassed saints along the pathway of life eternal, and helps them to see that 'the sufferings of this present

[1] These verses present many difficulties in detail, and the best translation can only be approximate. From the context, however, three things seem clear—(1) Job expects no other end of his miseries than speedy death; (2) he looks to God to be his Goel, the champion of his cause after death; and (3) he cherishes the hope that he will rise from Sheol to see the vindication of his rights. Thus Duhm is probably correct in finding עֵדִי, 'my Witness,' underlying עוֹרִי, 'my skin.' He has observed, too, that for the meaningless נִקְפוּ־זֹאת LXX suggests a 'lifting up' of something. Duhm supplies 'His mark,' that is, the recognized sign that God has accomplished the obligations of the Goel. But it seems more in harmony with Job's desire to render 'lift up His voice'—to testify to his innocence. It is with reluctance I have left וּמִבְּשָׂרִי, 'apart from my flesh,' translated as 'in spirit.' So pure a thought of man's future existence seems quite in advance even of Job's daring hopes. Buhl's suggestion, וּמַשְׂהֲדִי, 'my Voucher' (cf. xvi. 19), is attractive. But no certainty can be reached on the point.

time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.'

But for himself, too, a real and decisive change is effected. He has not yet reached peace with God. Still less has he solved the mysteries of Providence. The most sustained impeachment of God's ways is found, indeed, in these later chapters (xxi. 7ff.). But the victory he has won over Sheol gives him new courage to press his suit against the Almighty. For Job seeks not merely the vindication of his rights, but the restoration of personal friendship with God Himself. And he is now assured that the God he has learned to trust with his cause will not for ever elude his search. Thus in the third Cycle of speeches he moves still further from his friends. His only concern is where to find his God, and how to reach His judgment-seat. The unworthy charges of Eliphaz (ch. xxii.) thus fall on heedless ears. If his friends continue to misjudge him, the heavenly Vindicator will listen the more attentively to his plea (xxiii. 6). And, as He knoweth all his way of life, whatever test He may apply, he shall come forth from the trial as gold (xxiii. 10). He may still be troubled at heart when he thinks of the afflictions the Almighty has laid on him (xxiii. 15ff.). But no such threatenings of the Divine holiness and wrath as Bildad and Zophar still urge (xxv. 1ff.; xxvii. 7ff.) can induce

him to put away his integrity from him. As long as he lives he will hold fast his righteousness; for his conscience has nothing against him.

God forbid I should justify you!
Till I die will I yield not mine innocence.
My right I hold fast, and will not let it go;
My heart hath no shame for my days (xxvii. 5f.).

The full statement of Job's case is finally made in the great chapters already referred to as his *Apologia pro Vita Sua*: ch. xxix., in which he draws that most glorious picture of a good man happy and honoured; ch. xxx., in which he depicts the intolerable miseries of his present state; and ch. xxxi., a passage that touches the high-water mark of Old Testament morality, in which he sets forth his claim of righteousness. He has done nothing, he asserts, to merit these calamities. For he has not merely kept his hands clean from gross sins, but he has never even admitted the thought of such things into his heart. He has nowhere walked with vanity, nor let his foot hasten after deceit; at no time has he allowed himself to be seduced into idolatry, or made gold his confidence. No cruelty or inhumanity can be laid to his charge. From his fields there rise no cries of those that are pressed to work without money, or whose lives are involved in hardship and peril. In the market-place and the courts he has acted towards all men

with perfect honour and uprightness. He has consistently respected the cause of the poor, and even of his servants, when they contended with him at the gates, regarding all men alike as brethren whom the one God fashioned in the womb with himself. He has been the steadfast friend of the needy, the friendless and the stranger, for whom his door and hand were ever open. While the light of God still shone within his tent, the stranger did not lodge in the street, nor had the wayfarer to search for a shelter. The loins of the needy blessed him, for they were warmed with the fleece of his sheep. The fatherless and the widow also blessed him ; for he upheld their rights, and shared with them his morsel. Even his enemies were not beyond the range of his sympathies. For he never rejoiced at the troubles that befell them, nor allowed his heart to be lifted up with pride when evil found them out. Nor did he seek to hide any secret sin in his bosom, for fear of the vengeance of the multitude, or the open contempt of his clansmen. This, he triumphantly declares, is his case, duly drawn up, and attested by oath. And here he affixes his *tau*—his cross or sign-manual. Let his Antagonist now present his indictment ! Let him bring together the full catalogue of his transgressions ! Then Job will carry it on his shoulder, and even twine it as a chaplet around his forehead—so radiantly

conscious is he of his innocence. And in this sublime confidence he draws near as a prince to the Divine presence (xxxi. 35ff.)[1]

In fine dramatic harmony with Job's stupendous confidence, the storm-clouds gather, the thunder roars and the lightnings flash, and Jahweh Himself swoops down on the whirlwind to answer His servant's challenge. In vision after vision He unrolls before him the whole panorama of creation: the heavens and the earth, and the place of the dead, the home of light and darkness, the treasuries of the snow and hail, the path of the lightning, the mists and floods that refresh even the desert places and the lands where no man is, the constellations in their ordered march, and the living creatures in their native freedom. Then with magnificent irony He invites him to ascend the throne, and himself assume the government of the Universe.

xxxviii. 2 *Who is this that darkeneth counsel*
By words without knowledge?
3 *Gird up now thy loins like a man—*
I will ask thee, and thou shalt inform me.

4 *Where wert thou when I founded the earth?*
Declare, if thou knowest at all?
5 *Who set its measures, thou that knowest!*
Or who stretched the line thereon?

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[1] It has been shown above (p. 212) that Job's *Apologia* ought really to end with this majestic approach to God.

6 *On what were its columns sunk,*
Or who laid the corner-stone—
7 *When the morning stars sang together,*
And the sons of God shouted for joy;

8 *When the sea was poured out in birth,*[1]
When forth from the womb it burst,
9 *And I made the cloud its garment,*
And thick darkness its swaddling-band;

10 *When I fixed a limit thereto,*
And placed on it doors and bar,
11 *And said, 'Thus far, but no further;*
Here shall thy proud waves rest!'

12 *Hast thou ever commanded the morning,*
Or shown the dayspring its place,
13 *To lay hold of the skirts of the earth,*
And change it as clay 'neath the seal? [2]

19 *Where is the way to light's dwelling,*
And the darkness—where is its place,
20 *That thou lead it back to its borders,*
And show it the path to its home? [3]

16 *Hast thou gone to the springs of the sea,*
Or walked in the depths of the ocean?

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[1] The reference to 'doors' in *v.* 8 is certainly premature. The context demands rather a parallel to the 'bursting from the womb' in the second *stichos*. Beer has rightly found in בִּדְלָתַיִם a transposition of letters for בְּלֶדֶת, followed by the dittography יִם. As a verb he suggests סָגַר, *shut up*; but וַיִּפַּץ בְּלֶדֶת, *and was poured out in birth*, would be both an easier and a more natural reading.

[2] I have followed Duhm, etc., in omitting the pointless stanza regarding the scattering of the wicked.

[3] As *vv.* 19f. clearly continue the thought of *vv.* 12f., and in their present position in the Hebrew almost harshly intervene between *vv.* 18 and 21, I have followed Duhm in transplacing them.

17 *Have the gates of death been shown thee;*
Hast thou seen the warders of darkness?

18 *Hast thou ranged o'er the breadth of the earth?*
Tell, then, if thou knowest, its greatness!
21 *And thou knowest, for then wast thou born,*
And the years of thy life are so many!

22 *Hast thou gone to the treasuries of snow,*
Or seen the store-chambers of hail,
23 *That I've kept for the time of trouble,*
For the day of battle and conflict?

24 *By what way parted the vapours,*
Or scattered the showers o'er the earth?
25 *Who cleft for the floods a channel,*
And a way for the flash of the thunders,—

26 *To give rain on the desolate land,*
On the desert where no man dwells,
27 *To slake the waste and the wilderness,*
That the thirsty land may yield verdure?

29 *Out of whose womb issued the ice?*
Who begat the hoar frost of heaven,[1]
30 *That like stone are the waters congealed,*
The face of the deep is frozen?

31 *Dost thou link the chain of the Pleiades,*
Or loose the bonds of Orion?
32 *Dost thou lead out the Mazzaroth in their season,*
Or guide the Bear with her young ones?

33 *Hast thou laid down the laws of heaven,*
Or established its power o'er the earth?
34 *Dost thou lift up thy voice to the clouds,*
That the flood of waters may answer thee?

35 *Dost thou send forth the lightnings on journeys,*
And they say to thee, 'Here we are!'?
36 *Who inspired the clouds with wisdom,*
Or endowed their dark masses with insight?

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[1] The prosaic *v.* 28 is almost certainly a gloss on this *stichos*.

37 *Who spreads out the clouds in wisdom?*
Who pours forth the bottles of heaven,
38 *When the dust runs into a mould,*
And the clods cleave fast together?

39 *Dost thou hunt the prey for the lioness,*
Or sate the needs of her young ones,
40 *When they couch together in lairs,*
And lie in wait in the thicket?

41 *Who provideth their food at even-tide,*[1]
When their young ones cry unto God,
When they roar in distress for hunger,[2]
And wander in search of prey?

xxxix. 1 *Hast thou taught the wild-goats their season,*
Or watched the throes of the hinds?
2 *Dost thou count the months they fulfil,*
Or appoint the time of their calving?

3 *They bow, they open the womb;*
They cast forth their labour-pangs.
4 *Their young ones grow strong, they wax great in the field;*
They go forth, and return no more.

5 *Who sent out the wild ass free,*
Or loosed the bonds of the onager,
6 *Whose home I have made the desert,*
And the salt land his lodging-place?

7 *He scorneth the din of the city;*
The shouts of the driver he hears not.
8 *He scoureth the hills for his pasture;*
After every green thing he searcheth.

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[1] As the picture of the lions is manifestly continued through this stanza, it seems necessary to read לָעֶרֶב, *at evening*, for לָעֹרֵב, *to the raven* (cf. Wright, Duhm, etc.).

[2] A line is here wanting in the Hebrew. The translation may represent something like the original text.

9 *Will the wild-ox be willing to serve thee ;*
Will he spend the night in thy crib ?
10 *Wilt thou bind the cord on his neck,*
And he plough the furrows behind thee ?

11 *Wilt thou trust him—his strength is so great—*
And leave him to do thy labour ?
12 *Hast thou faith he will ever return,*
And bring thy seed to the threshing-floor ? [1]

19 *Hast thou given the horse his might,*
And clothed his neck with the mane ?
20 *Hast thou made him to leap as a locust,*
With the dread of his terrible snorting ?

21 *He paws in the valley, and neighs ;*
In his might he goes forth to the fray.
22 *He mocketh at death, and fears not,*
And turneth not back from the sword.

23 *The quiver rattleth upon him,*
The flashing lance, and the javelin.
24 *In his raging rush he swallows the ground,*
And he swerves not to right or left.[2]

25 *He starts at the sound of the trumpet ;*
At the blast he sayeth, 'Aha !'
From afar he scenteth the battle,
The hurrahs, and the shouts of the captains.

26 *Doth the hawk soar aloft by thy wisdom,*
And spread her wings to the South ?
27 *At thy word doth she set her nest high,*
28 *And lodge on the tooth of the rock ?* [3]

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[1] The description of the ostrich (*vv.* 13–18) is quite unlike the other pictures, and is significantly omitted from the original LXX. In common with most modern editors, I have treated the section as a later element.

[2] On the text here followed, cf. Beer (in *Biblia Hebraica*). For the sake of the connexion the verb 'starts' has been inserted.

[3] By the omission of a few irrelevant details, the whole passage

29 *From thence she spieth her prey,*
Her eyes behold it afar.
30 *Her young ones suck up the blood ;*
And where slain are, there is she.

xl. 2 *Will the caviller then contend with the Almighty ?*
He that censureth God—let him answer !
8 *Wilt thou discredit my judgment,*
Making me wrong, that thou mayest be right ?

9 *Hast thou an arm like God ?*
Canst thou thunder with voice like His ?
10 *Put on now thy glory and majesty ;*
In pomp and splendour array thee !

11 *Then pour out the floods of thine anger,*
And all that is proud bring thou low !
12 *All that is lofty abase,*
And tread down the wicked beneath thee !

13 *Hide them together in dust ;*
Their faces bind up in the darkness !
14 *Then will I also acknowledge*
That thy right hand winneth thee victory.

Job had asked of God that He lay aside the terrors of His majesty, and meet him as Man with His friend. God has not listened to this prayer. For, to the reverent thought of the poet, God could not be God without His glory. But amid the thunder and lightning with which the Almighty is encircled, there may be caught the ' still, small voice ' of the friendly God. And Job hears it, and is saved. Thus the drama closes in the peace of God, which the world can neither give nor take away.

becomes an integral part of the picture of the hawk (cf. Bickell, Duhm, etc.).

xl. 4 *Behold, I am small; and what can I answer Thee?*
My hand I lay on my mouth.
5 *Once have I spoken, but will not repeat it—*
Yea, twice, but will add no more.

xlii. 2 *I know that Thou art all powerful,*
And that nought is too high for Thee.
3*b* *I spoke of things that I knew not,*
Things all too wonderful—beyond my wisdom
5 *By the hearing of the ear had I heard of Thee;*
But now mine eye doth see Thee.
6 *Wherefore I remain in silence,*
And repent in dust and ashes.[1]

[1] On the arrangement of the verses, cf. *supra*, p. 216.

CHAPTER XV

The Book of Proverbs

We have found song to be a natural and spontaneous expression of the human spirit, the origins of which must be sought on the misty mountain-tops of antiquity. But the simplest mental life is no mere bundle of feelings. It consists equally of observation and judgment. And as men have given universal voice to their feelings in song, they embody their judgments also in those terse, sententious sayings we call proverbs. Struck out in some hour of quiet meditation on life and its problems, or amid the strife of tongues around the camp-fires or by the gates, and constantly polished by the attrition of daily use, these sayings are real crystallizations of the practical wisdom of peoples. The individual proverb cannot indeed reflect the whole universe of truth. But to maintain its place in tradition, it must be a genuine mirror of experience, holding forth one aspect of life in brief, pointed, memorable language, that will appeal to the understanding even of the simplest of the people.

In its original impulse, therefore, the proverb has

no kinship with poetry. It wholly lacks the passion which is the heart's blood of the poet. Yet, to win its way into the imagination, the proverb is compelled to use the simple, sensuous language of poetry. Abstractions are alien to the spirit of proverbs. Instead of inculcating general principles of timely thrift and prudence, for example, they urge concrete examples, 'A stitch in time saves nine,' or 'Make hay while the sun shines.' Thus proverbs are almost as rich as poetry in figurative language. And often the proverb passes the borderland, and assumes the rhythmical form, the balance of lines, and even the rhyme of poetry. In the proverbial treasure-store of all nations are found numerous examples of such prudential maxims that can be distinguished from pure poetry only by the slower pulse of feeling.

The near kinsmen of Israel have been justly celebrated for the wealth and brilliance of their proverbs. In the Old Testament the wisdom of the Bedouin is alone held worthy to be matched with Solomon's (1 Kings iv. 30), while Edom is honoured as the true homeland of wisdom (Jer. xlix. 7; Obad. 8). The extant literature of Arabia is singularly rich in proverbial lore. And so fertile a mother of wisdom is the keen, shrewd Semitic mind that to the present day, when more civilized nations have lost the art of coining proverbs, the common speech

of the Bedouin sparkles with gems of polished wit, and incisive criticisms of life and manners. The people of Israel enjoyed a full portion of the racial inheritance. From the long distant past there flowed among them a perennial stream of pregnant aphorisms, continually enriched by the sententious contributions of wise men like Solomon, until it reached the dimensions of a broad flood, from which our Book of Proverbs has been mainly drawn.

The generic name for proverb in Hebrew—*māshāl*—implies likeness or comparison. The typical proverb is allied, therefore, on the one side to the riddle, and on the other to the parable. The riddle may be described as a veiled proverb, and the proverb as an open riddle. Both are really pointed similes suggested or unfolded. The story of Samson's wedding-feast (Judg. xiv. 12ff.) shows how easily one form may pass into the other. And no doubt many popular proverbs owe their origin to riddles put forth on just such festive occasions as this. The essence of the parable is the same. For the point of the parable lies equally in comparison. 'The kingdom of heaven is *like unto* a man that sowed good seed in his field,' etc. Thus the Hebrews describe both proverb and parable by the common term *māshāl*. The parable is simply an elaborated proverb; and the proverb on its part is a real parable in germ. The Book of Proverbs

yields on every page material for the fully developed parable. And in certain sections of the Book—for example, the portraits of the sluggard (xxiv. 30ff.)—the transition is clearly to be traced.

The quintessence of the *māshāl* is preserved in the old proverb of Gen. x. 9—'Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before Jahweh'—the rudimentary structure of which may be closely paralleled in many Bedouin sayings of both ancient and modern times. An approach to the poetical distichs of the classical proverb is found in the popular saying quoted by Ezek. xvi. 44—'as the mother, the daughter'—while from the primitive simile there emerges also such clean-cut ethical apothegms, or terse illustrations of general principles, as the 'proverb of the ancients' cited in 1 Sam. xxiv. 14—'out of the wicked cometh forth wickedness'—or the grave moral maxim urged against the prophets' words of cheer and counsel (Jer. xxxi. 29; Ezek. xviii. 2):—

The fathers have eaten sour grapes,
And the children's teeth are set on edge.

But comparison may be drawn by contrast as well.[1] Thus the simile leads by another path to the antithetic type of proverb so widely in vogue during the more literary age. Under this head may be subsumed the simple monostich of 1 Sam. x. 12,

[1] 'Contrar thingis evermair
Discoverings of the tother are,'—Barbour's *Bruce*.

repeated in xix. 24, 'Is Saul also among the prophets?'—the point of which lies in the shock of pained surprise with which Saul's friends saw so distinguished, sane, and prosperous a young man give way to prophetic frenzy. But the full force of the antithetic proverb was reached only when it assumed the couplet form. A certain stage in this development is marked by the barbed arrow shot by Ahab:—

Let him not boast that girdeth on (*his armour*)
As he that putteth off (1 Kings xx. 11).

A further step in advance may be noted in that other pathetic proverb quoted by Ezekiel from the lips of his contemporaries:—

The days drag on;
Yet the vision faileth (Ezek. xii. 22).

But only by sedulous cultivation in the school of 'the wise' did this latter type acquire the perfect balance of thought and finely polished mould that we associate with the Proverbs of the Bible.

The father of Hebrew wisdom is Solomon. In Israelite tradition he is accredited with no fewer than five thousand proverbs. His name thus became a symbol for wisdom; while proverbs of a certain literary stamp were technically known as 'proverbs of Solomon.' His wisdom apparently consisted in refinements of the more popular proverb

—acute reflections on life and conduct, passing perhaps, like the later wisdom of Aḥiḳar, into moral fables or apologues, lit up by striking illustrations from many fields of Nature (1 Kings iv. 32f.). The wisdom of the classical period was more self-conscious in its aims and methods. On the pages of the greater prophets 'the wise' appear as a separate guild of spiritual advisers, whose 'counsel' ranked in influence with the 'law' of the priests and the 'word' of the prophets (Isa. xxix. 14; Jer. xviii. 18; etc.). In the post-exilic age the 'wise men' virtually replaced the prophets as moral guides and teachers. Thus the proverbs which formed one part of their equipment are cast in a distinctively ethical mould, for instruction in 'righteousness, judgment, and uprightness' (Prov. i. 3). But the wise men of Israel versed themselves not in proverbs alone. They played the part of moral preachers as well. Taking their stand in the market-place, or at the corners of bustling streets, or by the gates where the people congregated, like the majestic figure of Wisdom herself, they appealed to the simple ones to embrace wisdom, and to fools to turn from their folly and live (Prov. i. 20ff.). Their text-book was 'the law of the Most High,' to the study of which their whole mind was given, and from which they drew the cardinal principles of life. But the wise man had likewise his personal revela-

tion of truth, as he 'prayed before the Most High, and made supplication for his sins.' And other wisdom he learned in the school of experience, as he wandered about the world, 'travelling through strange countries,' mingling with kings and princes, and 'testing the good and evil among men' (Ben Sira, xxxix. 1ff.).

The original type of proverb is most faithfully preserved in the first three chapters of the 'Hezekiah' collection (ch. xxv.–xxvii.).

Even in outward form these chapters stand out clear from their context. The main body of the Book of Proverbs consists of antithetic couplets. But in this small group the older style of *māshāl* prevails. Some of these similes are exquisitely cut and finished, *e.g.* :—

As apples of gold on baskets of chased silver
Is a word in due season (xxv. 11).
As silver overlaying an earthen potsherd
Are flattering words and a wicked heart (xxvi. 23).

Others are diamonds in the rough :—

A whip for the horse, a bridle for the ass,
And a rod for the back of fools (xxvi. 3).
The door turneth on its hinges,
And a sluggard on his back (xxvi. 14).
Though thou bray a fool in a mortar,[1]
His folly will not depart from him (xxvii. 22).

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[1] The additional words of the Mass. text, 'with a pestle among bruised corn,' are an evident gloss, marring the symmetry of the proverb.

But in spirit also these proverbs differ from the general tenor of the Book. For the wisdom here inculcated is mainly shrewd worldly prudence, couched in homely maxims that remind us of Hesiod, often with a touch of real pathos, as in the comparison of a faithless friend in time of trouble with 'a bad tooth and a tottering limb' (xxv. 19), or a man that wanders from his home with 'a bird wandering from its nest' (xxvii. 8), sometimes also expanding into broad humour, as in the pictures of the sluggard :—

Saith the sluggard, 'There's a roarer in the street,
A lion among the highways' (xxvi. 13).
The sluggard burieth his hand in the dish ;
He is too slothful to lift it to his mouth again (xxvi. 15).

In these respects the proverbs bear a close resemblance to the popular wisdom of other nations. It is significant, as Davidson has pointed out, that these three chapters 'comprise almost all the proverbs that we still use,' *e.g.*, 'iron sharpeneth iron,' 'as face answereth to face in water,' 'the dog is returned to his vomit,' 'thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head,' and the joy of 'good news from a far country.' [1] The conditions of life reflected in this section are also relatively simple. Various grades of social rank are recognized. And the

[1] A. B. Davidson, art. Proverbs, in the *Ency. Brit.*, Ninth Edition.

ambition to 'go up higher' is held to be honourable and right. But the ideal state is still found in each one cultivating his own fig-tree, and looking well to his flocks and herds (xxvii. 18ff.). The chapters appear, therefore, to have formed an originally independent collection of miscellaneous proverbs, the beginnings of which run back probably to the regal period, though in its present complete form the collection presupposes a considerably later date. For intermingled with more primitive elements we find, even in the three opening chapters, lofty moral apothegms (*e.g.* xxv. 21f.), in which the influence of the greater prophets is evident. And the rest of the collection (ch. xxviii., xxix.) bears the genuine stamp of 'the wise.' The older comparative mould here yields to the pointed antitheses of deliberate art. The temper of these proverbs, too, is distinctively ethical. The great issues of life are those of good and evil. And the standard of moral judgment is the Law. The wise are they who keep the law; the foolish such as despise the law (xxviii. 4ff.). However diverse, then, the age and origin of the various component parts, the 'Hezekiah' collection as a whole must be dated after the promulgation of the Law—somewhere in the course of the fourth century.[1]

[1] The relative antiquity of the proverbs in ch. xxv.–xxix. was first clearly recognized by Davidson in the article alluded to.

The main body of 'proverbs of Solomon' which form the real kernel of the Book may reasonably be assigned to the same general period. These proverbs show still more distinctive marks of 'the wise.' The collection is composed exclusively of couplets,[1] the first half (x.–xv.) mainly in antithetic parallelism, and the remainder (xvi.–xxii. 16) in the more easily flowing synonymous or synthetic measure adapted to moral exhortation. The spiritual tone of these chapters is likewise that of developed wisdom. The controversies of the prophetic age are past, and the vital principles of ethical monotheism assumed as the basis of faith and life. Jahweh is the one righteous Lord and Ruler of the Universe, before whom all must bow in humble reverence and 'fear.' While the Law

His position has been accepted in general by later scholars like Driver, Cornill, Frankenberg, and Nowack. The objection raised by Kuenen—that the poetic rhythm of these chapters shows 'a less degree of purity and beauty' (*Hist. crit. Onderzoek*, III. 73)—seems to the present writer to point still more strongly in the direction suggested. Toy finds 'the more human and pointed tone of the second group' to accord more closely with the style of Ben Sira (*Inter. Crit. Comm.*, p. xxvii.). But the prevailing synthetic mould of the proverbs in Ben Sira recalls rather the latter half of the first group (xvi.ff.), and the appended 'sayings of the wise.'

[1] The only exception is found in xix. 7, where the text is evidently mutilated. For the third *stichos* of the Mass. text, LXX reads the complete couplet:—

He that works much mischief brings about harm;
And he that useth provoking words shall not escape.

is set forth as the standard of conduct, the privileges and hopes of the people of the Law are no longer confined to Israel. The view-point of the proverbs is universalistic in the fullest sense of the term. Religion is a real ethical relation between God and the soul that 'fears' Him. In details of moral life, these chapters show close dependence on the prophets. The wisdom they enshrine is largely, indeed, an application of prophetic principles to the daily round of life. But the sphere within which they move is the broad world of the more liberal spirits of later Judaism. The centre of this world is naturally Jerusalem—but a Jerusalem watered by many streams of influence from other regions. The holy city is now the theatre of a rich and varied civilization, with all the comforts, luxuries, social distractions, and vices that accompany such development. But the sympathies of the wise reach far beyond the narrow circle of their city and people. They mingle freely with foreign kings and princes, enjoying their hospitality, and offering them sage counsel for the welfare and prosperity of their domains.[1] To the sages of Israel

[1] The frequent references to kings and princes is often held to prove the pre-exilic origin of these collections. But the same phenomena appear in undeniably late sections of Proverbs (*e.g.*, in the praise of Wisdom, viii. 15f.) and throughout the Wisdom of Ben Sira, *i.e.* as late as 180 B.C. The latter book bears witness to the knowledge of the wider world possessed by the sages as the result of travel, reading, and reflection.

the whole circumference of human life is God's; and their ambition is to bring all within the influence of the Divine.

In these two collections, then, we have a compendium of Jewish wisdom at its purest and best. The value of such is priceless. As crystallized deposits of religious reflection, they help to fill in the background of poetry and prophecy, revealing to us the essential unity of religious life in Israel. But the proverbs have their own intrinsic worth. For spiritual insight and enthusiasm they cannot, indeed, be compared with the splendid visions of the prophets or the inspired devotion of the Psalmists. We move here on the common planes of life. In general, the motive of the proverbs is prudential, and even utilitarian. They show an undisguised appreciation of the good things of this world—its prizes, honours, riches, and pleasures—and point us to the best ways of winning these. But the tone of the Book is honest and true. The proverbs have a due sense of the Divine dignity and glory of life. Man's chief end is found, not in the abundance of his possessions, but in the fear of the Lord. And all other good things are related to this. For only as he governs his life by the fear of the Lord can man attain to true happiness. In this respect the proverbs of the Old Testament outshine all other prudential literature. At their highest levels

they draw very near to the pure standard of Christ. The proverbs were evidently a favourite study with Him and His apostles. And not a few of the choicer maxims of the Book have been woven into the texture of Christian teaching. As the broad principles of moral conduct remain essentially the same in both Old and New Testaments, the proverbs are still a true *vade mecum* for the man who wishes to lead an honest and fruitful life. Nowhere is sound wisdom more pithily commended; and nowhere have we such powerfully drawn pictures of the ways and the end of folly. The proverbs lead us on the straight, clear path of righteousness. And even while they draw us aside to reveal the beauties of the journey, or to give us glimpses of the joys that await us at the end, they may be more winsome in their appeals than the pure persuasion of more abstract principles.

These earlier collections are governed by no fixed design. Occasionally proverbs bearing on the same subject are strung together. But for the most part the methods of the collector are quite arbitrary. One chapter may embrace the most heterogeneous sayings. And not unfrequently the same proverb is repeated in different sections of the Book, now in identically the same form, and again with some slight difference in detail. To read through the proverbs is thus almost like

wandering in a trackless forest, or sauntering through the mazes of an ill-assorted picture gallery. A certain approach towards methodical arrangement may be observed in the two groups of 'sayings of the wise' appended to the nucleus of the Book (xxii. 17–xxiv. 22; xxiv. 23–34), where a series of weighty moral maxims is gathered into little clusters resembling the moral homilies of Ben Sira. A somewhat similar collection of expanded proverbs has found its way into the heart of the Introduction (iii. 27–35; vi. 1–19). The hortatory style is here still more developed, while the second part of the collection (vi. 16ff.) offers an interesting example of the numerical proverb so characteristic of the 'words of Agur,' and certain chapters of Ben Sira and the Sayings of the Fathers.[1] But the movement of thought reaches full volume and strength only in the sustained exhortation of the introductory chapters (i.–ix.). The style of this section is that rather of rich rhetorical prose than of finely polished poetry. With a grave sense of the solemnity of life, the wise man urges his youthful hearers, now in the affectionate tones of a father graciously counselling his children, and again by lurid pictures of Folly and her ways, to choose wisdom, and cleave to her in sincerity and truth, that their path through life may be as that of the

[1] Cf. *Ben Sira*, xxv. 1ff.; xxvi. 5ff.; *Pirke Aboth*, v. 1ff.

shining light, 'that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.' The climax of the whole splendid piece is reached in ch. viii., where Wisdom appears at the right hand of God in heaven, His loved companion and associate when He wrought His mighty works of old, and now, as she stands at the gates, and implores men to come unto her and live, the very Word of God and the Light of God.

The two former groups are clearly subsequent in date to both collections of 'proverbs of Solomon,' and may be assigned to the end of the fourth century. The introductory chapters are still later in origin. The decadent language, the highly rhetorical style, and such long-drawn syntactical periods as ii. 1ff., point to the middle or end of the third century B.C., when Greek influence swept over the thought and life of Israel. The speculative interest of the chapters also strongly suggests contact with the spirit of Greece. To the same fertilizing influence we may most reasonably ascribe the curiously enigmatical, bitter, and sceptical 'words of Agur' (ch. xxx.), which are saved from pure agnosticism only by the robust Hebrew faith that survived all the shocks and strains of circumstance. The grave, yet kindly counsel of the old Queen-mother of Lemuel (xxxi. 1–9) is an interesting specimen of Arabic wisdom transplanted to Palestine. And the Book closes with the famous alpha-

betical poem in praise of the virtuous woman (xxxi. 10–31), a picture whose colouring is unmistakably Oriental, but which is cherished equally by the daughters of the West, as embodying for all time the ideal of the good and loyal housewife.

These three sections form an Appendix, added soon after the introductory chapters. As a whole, therefore, the Book can hardly have been completed before the close of the third century. A later date is precluded by the Wisdom of Ben Sira (*c.* 180 B.C.), which shows clear dependence on Proverbs in all its parts.

CHAPTER XVI

The Good Man of the Proverbs

In even the choicest anthology of proverbs it is vain to search for any consistent philosophy of life —a moral universe centring round some fixed principle—as in Aristotle and modern ethical systems. The world of proverbs is rather a cluster of shining points of light, with no discoverable order or harmony. A certain unity is given to the Proverbs of the Bible, however, by their vital relation to wisdom. Their authors are 'wise men,' who seek thus to instruct their readers in the ways of wisdom. And the wisdom of Proverbs is not the mere intellectual subtlety of the Greeks, nor yet the worldly shrewdness, sagacity, and *savoir faire* of early Hebrew sages, but the practical moral principle of the good. The wise man is he who directs his life worthily and well. His wisdom is thus virtually identical with goodness. And the roots of both lie in religion. The keynote of the Proverbs is struck in the opening chord. 'The fear of Jahweh is the beginning of wisdom' (i. 7). The same note rings through the whole Book,

One may be treading the commonest paths of duty, adjusting the balances in the bazaar, or following the oxen at the plough, or again tasting the cups of pleasure in the banquetting-hall or at home, when the angelus bell sounds out its heavenly peal, recalling one's thoughts to the great end of human life—the 'fear of Jahweh,' which is alike 'the beginning of wisdom' and the eternal 'fountain' of all good (ix. 10; x. 27; xiv. 26f., etc.).[1] For in Proverbs religion and daily life are linked in the closest wedlock. The soaring piety of the Psalms raises us often far beyond the world and its myriad interests. But the wise men of Proverbs have their feet firmly planted on mother earth. With them religion is rather a duty than a joy, a motive principle of honourable conduct than delight in God's love and truth. The aim of the Proverbs is, in fact, to inculcate on the minds of the young the vital principles of duty, that by walking on the paths of righteousness they may make the most and the best of life.

The most conspicuous part of life is played on the open stage of business. And the tone of the Proverbs in this whole region is singularly sane and strong. There is here nothing of that maudlin piety which counts worldly success a matter of

[1] In the Wisdom of Ben Sira, the 'fear of the Lord' is not merely the 'beginning' or the 'root,' but also the 'crown' and the 'perfect fullness' (πλησμονή) of wisdom—it is really the whole of wisdom (i. 14ff.).

moral indifference. To the wise men of Proverbs business is a Divine calling, and riches and honour are the just rewards of diligence. At the very beginning of the collection this healthy tone is set :—

A slack hand bringeth poverty ;
But the hand of the diligent maketh rich.
He that reapeth in summer is a wise son ;
But he that sleepeth in harvest is a shameless one (x. 4f.).

The same principle is suggested in the quaint picture :—

Where no oxen are, the crib is clean ;
But much increase cometh by the strength of the ox (xiv. 4).[1]

The duty of unremitting diligence is urged again in the short eclogue appended to the 'sayings of the wise' (xxvii. 23ff.) :—

Look well to the state of thy flocks,
And give good heed to thy herds ;
For riches last not for ever,
Nor is wealth from age to age.
When hay-time is over, and aftermath shorn,
And the herbs of the mountain are garnered,
Lambs shalt thou have for thy clothing,
And goats as the price of thy field ;
Abundance of milk for thy food,
And living enough for thy maidens.

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[1] This fine saying has stimulated one of Walter C. Smith's noblest *Thoughts and Fancies*, as well as tender proverbs among various nations. It is possible, however, that we should give בָּר its usual interpretation of 'corn,' and read אֲבֻסִּים for אֲבוּסִים, thus:

Where no oxen are, no corn is got ;
But much increase cometh by the strength of the ox.

But wealth is valued also for the position it gives men, and the opportunities it brings of influence and helpfulness.

The rich man's wealth is his strong city ;
But poverty is the ruin of the poor (x. 15).
The poor man is hated even by his neighbours ;
But the rich hath many friends (xiv. 20).
Seest thou a man skilled in his business,—
In the presence of kings shall he stand,
He shall not stand in presence of the obscure (xxii. 29).[1]

To bring its blessing, however, wealth must be justly gained. For the world of business is Jahweh's, the balance and scales are His, and the weights in the bag (xvi. 11). Therefore ' justice and judgment are more acceptable to Him than sacrifice ' (xxi. 3), while meanness and dishonesty are an abomination.

Divers weights, divers measures—
Abominations to Jahweh are both of them (xx. 10).

Far better poverty, therefore, than unjust gain.

Better a little with righteousness
Than great revenues with injustice (xvi. 8).
Better the poor that walketh in his integrity
Than the man crooked in his ways, though rich (xxviii. 6).

For character is more than riches.

[1] The usual distich form is here departed from. It has therefore been suggested that the second *stichos* should be omitted. One would rather believe that the original parallel to the first *stichos* has dropped out, and that the second and third fit into each other.

A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches ;
And to be held in favour is better than silver and gold (xxii. 1).

Character abides ; but ill-gotten gains take wings and fly away (xxiii. 4f.), or lead but to sin and ruin.

Treasures of wickedness profit nothing ;
But righteousness delivereth from death (x. 2).
Wealth gathered in haste grows small ;
But that which is gradually amassed increaseth (xiii. 11).
He that getteth treasures by a lying tongue
Pursueth a bubble to snares of death (xxi. 6).

Thus, while they commend the diligence that maketh rich, the Proverbs warn men, as gravely as Jesus did, against trust in riches.

He that trusteth in his riches shall fall ;
But like a green leaf shall the righteous flourish (xi. 28).
An honest man will be blessed abundantly ;
But he hath hasteth to be rich shall not go unpunished (xxviii. 20).

The fair picture of the good man prosperous and honoured is set in vivid relief by a series of brilliantly drawn sketches of the contrast, which are as true to life to-day as when they were drawn by the wise men of Israel. The most effective, perhaps, is the inimitable portrait of the sluggard, lying lazily in bed, when he should be up and doing, praying for ' a little more sleep, a little more slumber,' until suddenly ' poverty cometh upon him as a robber, and want as a man in arms ' (vi. 9ff.), or ' burying his hand in the dish, too slothful to lift it to his mouth again ' (xix. 24 ; xxvi. 15), afraid to

plough by reason of the cold in winter, and finding nothing when he looks for harvest (xx. 4), or kept from business by fears of danger in the streets, thus allowing the prizes of life to slip from his grasp (xxii. 13; xxvi. 13). Other fine portrayals of character are those of the fool whose eyes are 'in the ends of the earth,' too engrossed in utopian schemes to attend to the duties of the near and present (xvii. 24), the lover of pleasure, who gives to indulgence in 'wine and oil' the precious hours of business, and thus never can be rich (xxi. 17), the thoughtless man who becomes surety for a stranger he knows nothing of, and must one day 'smart for it' (xi. 15; xvii. 18, etc.), the litigious who hurries his case to court, reckless of the loss and shame he must suffer 'in the end thereof' (xxv. 8f.), and the busybody who meddles with other people's affairs, only to find he has 'caught a dog by the ears' (xxvi. 17). Into pictures like these a strong dash of humour is often thrown. But the Proverbs assume a darker tone when they paint the portraits of the sharp dealer with his 'Bad, bad!' while he haggles in the market, and his proud boasting when he strikes his bargain, and returns home with his capture (xx. 14), the remover of the ancient landmark, who schemes to bring the whole world under his control (xxii. 28), the monopolist, who holds up the corn, regardless of the sufferings

he inflicts on the needy (xi. 26), the disinheritor of the fatherless (xxiii. 10), the oppressor of the poor, who thus reproacheth his Maker (xiv. 31), and the open bandit, who preys upon the simple and the helpless, counting wrong-doing but sport for himself and his comrades (iv. 16; x. 23; xxii. 22f., etc.).

But man's duties to his fellows are not confined to business honesty. Jahweh has made all men alike (xxii. 2). And He means them to live together in friendship and harmony. Thus the wisdom of Proverbs embraces also the courtesies and civilities of polite society. The good man of the Proverbs is a 'very perfect' gentleman.[1] He not merely avoids the least appearance of evil, but he puts far

[1] Toy has noted among the more conspicuous qualities omitted in Proverbs the virtues of courage, fortitude, moderation in thought, self-sacrifice, and intellectual truthfulness, which fill so large a place in Greek ethical systems. He justly observes, however, that 'the silence of the sages (and of Old Testament generally) respecting these traits is doubtless to be interpreted as indicating not that they did not exist among the Israelites, but chiefly that the moralists attached more importance to other qualities as effective forces in the struggle of life; the last-mentioned virtue, further, belongs to a mode of thought which was foreign to the Jewish mind. The obligation to seek truth is recognized in i. 2; iii. 3, etc., but the "truth" is that law of conduct obedience to which secures prosperity and happiness. Of beauty as an element of life nothing is said; the failure to mention it is due not to the religious character of the Book (for much of the material of Proverbs is non-religious), but to the fact that the Jewish sages had not been trained to distinct recognition of the value of the beautiful in the conduct of life' (*Inter. Crit. Comm.*, p. xiii.).

from him all vulgarity and forwardness, ostentation and self-advertisement, sharp speaking, scandal-mongering, scoffing and winking at sacred things, and whispering and sowing seeds of discord behind the scenes. The wise man is restrained in spirit, believing that he who masters his spirit is stronger than he 'that taketh a city' (xvi. 32); he is peaceful and humble, 'slow to anger' (xiv. 29, etc.), guarding his mouth as the very citadel of the life (xiii. 3), silent when that is fitting, but master of the pleasant word that is 'sweet to the soul and healing to the bones' (xvi. 24). He thinks not evil of his neighbour, but rather believes and hopes the best of him. Instead of harping on offences, to the separation even of the chief of friends, he covers up transgressions, letting bygones be bygones, thus restoring affection (xvii. 9). He is no flatterer, for he that flatters but 'spreadeth a net' for the ruin of his neighbour (xviii. 8; xxix. 5). But he knows full well the influence of the 'gentle word' to pacify anger (xv. 1, 4, 18, etc.), and does not even disdain the persuasion of the 'gift in secret' (xxi. 14). He will not withhold from his neighbour the good that is due him, nor put him off by vain promises for the morrow (iii. 27f.). He is a lover of friendly visits, though his foot is not too often to be found in his neighbour's house (xxv. 17). And, realizing the power of the 'merry heart' to gladden

the countenance, and so to flood the world with sunshine, he enjoys the pleasures of the banquet betimes. But he avoids all excess and display. At table he takes a modest place, feeling how much better it is to be called up higher than to be degraded from the seat of honour (xxv. 6f.). He is temperate in eating and drinking. There is nothing in the Proverbs of that spirit of riot and licence which runs through the banquetting-songs of the Greeks. The wise man 'puts a knife to his throat,' if he be given to appetite (xxiii. 2). He is especially careful of the cup. He knows what evil strong drink has wrought, and not merely restrains himself, but urges upon his readers the deadly perils of intemperance :—

Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler ;
He that erreth thereby is not wise (xx. 1).

Who have woe ? Who have pain ?
Who have strifes ? Who complaints ?
Who have wounds without cause ?
Who have redness of eyes ?
They that stay long over wine,
And give themselves oft to the mixture.
So look not on wine when 'tis red,
When it gleameth bright in the cup,
And goeth down smooth in the mouth !
At the last it bites like a snake,
And stings like an adder (xxiii. 29ff.).

Thus the wise man is a centre of gracious influence to the whole circle of his acquaintance. But far beyond that his goodness flows. His heart reaches

out in loving sympathy to all God's creatures. He is a true friend and comforter of the suffering, though he will not intrude upon the heart's secret bitterness or joy (xiv. 10), nor 'pour vinegar on a raw wound' by singing songs to a heavy heart (xxv. 20). Those in danger of death from oppression or unjust judgment he exerts himself to save, offering no pleas of ignorance or inability to help (xxiv. 11). On the poor and needy he freely bestows his kindness, believing that to show kindness to the needy is really honouring his Maker (xiv. 31), and actually 'lending to Jahweh,' in the confidence of a rich return (xix. 17). The wise man is equally considerate of his dumb brothers in the field.

The righteous regardeth the life of his beast;
But the heart of the wicked is cruel (xii. 10).

His kindness extends even to his enemies. The motive of personal reward may still linger in the background. But there is a real approach to Christian ethics in the good man's refusal to recompense evil, but rather to 'wait on Jahweh' for salvation (xx. 22), and still more closely in his warning against *Schadenfreude,* and the encouragement to requite one's enemies with good for evil :—

Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth,
Nor let thy heart be glad when he stumbleth;
Lest Jahweh see it, and be displeased,
And turn His wrath from him (xxiv. 17f.).

If thine enemy hunger, feed him ;
If he thirst, give him water to drink :
For coals of fire shalt thou heap on his head,
And Jahweh will bring thee reward (xxv. 21f.).[1]

This kindness which is the cement of ordinary courtesy and respect is still more truly the bond of friendship. In the moral world of Proverbs friendship is an essential part of wisdom. And they enshrine the glory of worthy friendship in memorable figures. They know how pure and elevated a joy the affection of a true friend adds to life, and how richly it enlarges the nature, giving keenness of edge to the intellect, and the fine touch of sympathy to the heart.

As iron sharpeneth iron,
A man sharpeneth the face of his friend (xxvii. 17).
As in water face answereth to face,
So answereth the heart of man to man (xxvii. 19).

[1] The principle of ' Love your friends, and hate your enemies,' which has been described as the Golden Rule of paganism, and which finds so frequent expression in the Greek gnomic poets, for example—though Plato and Aristotle both occupy the higher ethical platform (cf. *Apol.* 30; *Crito* 49 ; *Nic. Eth.* II. vii. 15, etc.)—is the prevailing ideal of the Old Testament too. Approaches to the Christian standpoint have been met with in Ps. vii. 4f. and Job xxxi. 29. Ben Sira also warns his readers against malicious joy over an enemy's death (viii. 7), and even counsels forgiveness of injuries as the only sure means of winning forgiveness from God in prayer (xxviii. 1ff.). But in general he moves within the limitations of the older view, advising good to be done to the godly, but no help to be given to the sinner (xii. 2ff.) ; he even reckons it among his nine chief joys ' to live to see the fall of his enemy ' (xxv. 7), or at least to leave behind him ' an avenger against his enemy ' (xxx. 6).

To the good man of Proverbs friendship is a never-failing support. A friend is a real brother in affection and sympathy.

A friend loveth at all times ;
As a brother is he born for adversity (xvii. 17).

In times of trouble a neighbour or friend at hand is better even 'than a brother afar' (xxvii. 10). In the kindly touch of his hand there is comfort and joy. Even in his wounds there is healing.

Faithful are the wounds of a friend ;
But treacherous the kisses of an enemy (xxvii. 6).

Thus the very preciousness of the gift should make a man the more careful in the choice of his friends. For there are few found to stand the fullest test.

There are friends that play the part of friendship ; [1]
And a friend (lit. *lover*) *there is that sticketh closer than a brother* (xviii. 24).
Many a man will profess himself friendly ;
But a faithful man who can find ? (xx. 6).

And there are friendships that lead but to ruin. For just as good friends lift our natures Godward, evil friendships drag us swiftly to the pit.

Walk with wise men, and thou shalt be wise ;
But the companions of fools shall come to grief (xiii. 20).[2]

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[1] I have here followed LXX, etc., in reading יֵשׁ רֵעִים לְהִתְרֹעֵעַ.

[2] To such sayings parallels may be found in the proverbial lore of many nations, as well as in systematic treatises like Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, Books VIII and IX. But perhaps the nearest analogies are offered in the Wisdom of Ben Sira :—

The good man shows the finest side of his nature, however, to those of his own flesh and blood. The ideal of happy home-life upheld in Proverbs is singularly attractive. At the thought of home, the habitual reserve of the Proverb-makers is broken through. The idyllic grace of 'love in a cottage' touches the hidden chord of music in their hearts.

Better a dish of herbs where love is,
Than a fatted ox and hatred therewith (xv. 17).
Better a dry morsel and quietness therewith,
Than an house full of feasting with strife (xvii. 1).

And in singing the praises of a good wife, their

A faithful friend is a strong defence ;
He that findeth him, hath found a treasure.
A faithful friend is beyond price ;
Nothing can outweigh the blessing of him.
A faithful friend is the medicine (?) of life ;
He that feareth God shall gain such an one (vi. 14ff.).

Exchange not a friend at any price ;
Nor a true brother for gold of Ophir (vii. 18).

Let not an old friend go ;
For a new one is not to be compared with him.
A new friend is like new wine ;
Only when it is old, canst thou drink it (ix. 10).

Every friend saith, I am a friend ;
But there are friends that are friends only in name.
There is a friend that keepeth his eye on the table,
But in the time of trouble turneth against one.
A good friend fighteth against one's enemy,
And in front of the foe holdeth up a buckler.
Forget not thy friend in the fight ;
And leave him not when thou findest thy spoil, etc. (xxxvii. 1ff.).

words are charged with the joyful enthusiasm of true poetry.

He that findeth a wife findeth a good thing ;
'Tis a favour from Jahweh he winneth (xviii. 22).
House and riches are an inheritance from fathers ;
But a prudent wife is a gift from Jahweh (xix. 14).
A good wife who can find ?
For her price is far above corals (xxxi. 10).[1]

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[1] We may again compare the Wisdom of Ben Sira :—

Happy the man that hath a good wife ;
For the number of his days shall be doubled.
An honest wife gladdens her husband's heart,
And fills his years full of peace.
A good wife is a good portion ;
She shall be given in the lot of those who fear the Lord.
Be a man rich, then, or poor, his heart is glad ;
His countenance is always cheerful (xxvi. 1ff.).

A gracious wife delighteth her husband ;
A wise one fattens his bones.
A quiet wife is a gift of God ;
And nothing is worth more than a disciplined spirit.
A modest wife is grace upon grace ;
And a chaste spirit is beyond all price.
As the sun when it riseth on the heights of heaven,
Is the beauty of a good wife in the fair realm of her home (xxvi. 13ff.).

A wife's beauty gladdens the countenance ;
It surpasseth all the delights of the eye.
And if thereto she be kindly in speech,
Her husband is no more like other men.
He that winneth a wife hath the best of gains—
A stronghold fortified, and a pillar of support.
Without a fence, the vineyard is destroyed ;
And without a wife, man is a restless wanderer (xxxvi. 22ff.).

The high-water mark of poetic beauty in the Book of Proverbs is reached, indeed, in this closing chapter, where the gracious features of the good wife's character are lovingly dwelt upon—her loyalty, industry, and intelligence, her care for herself and her family, her prudence, dignity, and kindness of heart, her charity to the poor, and her sweetness of countenance and speech (xxxi. 10ff.). And the home where such love and goodness preside is exalted as a sacred focus of honour and blessing :—

Her husband is marked in the gates,
When he sits with the elders in council.
* * * *
Her children rise, and bless her,
Her husband also extols her :
' Many daughters have done well,
But thou hast excelled them all ' (*vv.* 23 ff.).

It is true, the ideal of the Proverbs is still based on the old-world conception of marriage. But the spirit of love that sanctifies the tie raises us far beyond the common ethnic standard. In the proverbs of Israel wedded love involves mutual trust and loyalty. And on this foundation the family life reposes. The wise man's delight is to see his children growing up around him in wisdom and honour. And his sorest trial is to find them give way to folly and disgrace. The very first proverb in the main ' Solomonic ' Collection points the contrasts :—

A wise son maketh a glad father ;
But a foolish son is a grief to his mother (x. 1).

And the same sharp antitheses are drawn in various other proverbs (*e.g.* xv. 20 ; xvii. 21, 25, etc.). Thus the importance of early training is duly emphasized. For, according to the sane outlook of Proverbs, the child's future lay largely in the hands of his parents.

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

The discipline of Proverbs may be somewhat severe. For folly seems to the wise men of Israel to be 'bound up in the heart of a child,' to yield to no less powerful a persuasion than the rod (xxii. 15). Therefore they encourage timely application.

He that spareth his rod hateth his son,
But he that loveth him visiteth him with chastisement (xiii. 24).
Chasten thy son while still there is hope—
And set not thy heart on his destruction (xix. 18).
Withhold not correction from the child ;
If thou beat him with the rod, he will be saved from death (xxiii. 13).[1]

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[1] The same stern principles pervade the Wisdom of Ben Sira :—
He that loveth his son plies him with many stripes,
That he may have joy of him at the end.
He that chasteneth his son shall have good by him,
And shall be able to boast of him among his acquaintance.

* * * *

An unbroken horse turns out stubborn,
And a child left to himself grows up headstrong.

But with all its apparent sternness the home training of the wise is governed by a spirit of warm, deep affection for the children. Their aim is consistently to win their tender hearts to the love of wisdom. And they do so by painting her attractions in the brightest of colours. One of the later sages affectionately recalls the gracious influence of his old home life :—

I was a son to my father,
Tender and only beloved in the eyes of my mother ;
And he taught me, and said to me :
'Let thine heart retain my words,
Keep my commandments, and live ;
Swerve not from the words of my mouth.
The first thing is wisdom—so get wisdom ;
And with all that thou gettest, get understanding.
Forsake her not—she will preserve thee ;
Love her, and she will keep thee.
Prize her, and she will exalt thee ;
She will raise thee to honour, if thou wilt embrace her.
On thy head will she place a chaplet of beauty ;
A crown of glory she will bestow on thee (iv. 3ff.).

And he feels he can best express his gratitude to the old father who taught him the ways of wisdom by handing down the same gracious precepts to his children and all besides who will hear him :—

Coddle a child, and he will bring thee to trouble ;
Play with him, and he will cause thee grief.
* * * *
Bow down his neck, while he is young ;
And smite his loins, while he is small.
Why should he grow stubborn, and disobey thee,
And sorrow be brought to thy soul? (xxx. 1ff.).

Hear, ye sons, the instruction of a father;
And attend that ye may know understanding.
For counsel good I give you,
So forsake ye not my teaching (*vv.* 1f.).

This picture is in full harmony with the general temper of the Book. The whole tone of family life is honest, upright, healthy, because the foundations are surely laid on the fear of Jahweh, and the great desire of parents is to train their children in this fear—to make of their homes real sanctuaries of reverence and love, and happy nurseries of noble men and women.

Over against this bright and joyful scene stands the dark shadow of the home whence love is banished, and where contention and discord prevail. The proverbs that depict so miserable a state seem wrung out of bitter experience.

As a gold ring in a swine's snout
Is a fair woman that lacketh discretion (xi. 22).
A good wife is a crown to her husband;
But a shameless woman is as rottenness in his bones (xii. 4).
Better to dwell in a garret on the housetop,
Than with a quarrelsome woman in a spacious house (xxi. 9).
Better to dwell in a desert land,
Than with a quarrelsome and nagging wife (xxi. 19).

To destroy the peace and comfort of the home

A constant dripping in a rainy day
And a quarrelsome woman are alike (xxvii. 15).

But still more tragic is the fate of the home that shame has entered, or whose young men have des-

pised instruction, and gone after folly. No blacker pictures have ever been drawn of the seductions of 'the strange woman,' who lieth in wait at the corners of the streets, to lure young fools into the perfumed chambers, which are but the trap-doors to death and Sheol (cf. v. 1ff.; vi. 20ff.; vii. 1ff.; xxiii. 26ff., etc.). The young man's only safety is steadfast resistance to every form of evil.

My son, if sinners entice thee,
Consent thou not (i. 10).

Let thine eyes look right on,
Thine eyelids be directed straight before thee;
Make level the path of thy feet,
And let all thy ways be firm;
Turn not to right or left,
Thy feet keep far from evil (iv. 25ff.).

This love of home which sheds such lustre on the Book of Proverbs extends to the larger life of the people. The Jews have been proverbial for their wanderings. Yet their heart is ever toward Jerusalem. Thus in a foreign land the wise man felt himself lost, 'like a bird that wandereth from its nest' (xxvii. 8). And when his sons went forth to seek their fortunes in distant places, there was nothing that brought him greater refreshment of spirit than 'good news from a far country' (xxv. 25). The outlook of Proverbs may be humanistic. Yet the roots of the wise man's affections are twined around the hills of Judea. And his

desire is to see his own city prosperous, happy, and honoured among the nations. There is nothing in Proverbs of the eager, cultured democratic feeling of the Greek sages. The powers that be are established of God Himself. And the wise man cares not to contemplate rash innovations.

My son, fear thou Jahweh and the king,
And meddle not with such as are given to change ; [1]
For suddenly cometh ruin at their hands,
And who knoweth the destruction that both of them bring?
(xxiv. 21ff.).

Yet the political sympathies of Proverbs are not with unreasoning conservatism. Great ideals of what a city ought to be float before their vision, and they urge all legitimate means to make their ideals effective. The true citizen should be law-abiding, one that fears God and honours the king; he should be peaceable, prudent, restrained in speech and conduct, and not given to disturb the social order. But he should likewise exert himself to raise the tone of the city. For long-established prestige, and outward power and splendour, are not enough as bulwarks of the state.

Righteousness exalteth a nation,
And sin is the ruin of peoples (xiv. 34).

In the Oriental world the king was all-powerful. And the wise man's counsel is chiefly directed to him. A wicked king was like 'a roaring lion, and

[1] Or, according to LXX, *lift not thyself up against both of them.*

a ranging bear,' making havoc of his people (xxviii. 15), corrupting his servants too (xxix. 12), and making the land to groan under his oppression (xxix. 2ff.). The true foundation of the throne was righteousness, with its blessed results in gracious kindness, mercy and truth (xvi. 12; xx. 28). It should be the aim, therefore, of those to whom God had given influence, through their age, position, or wealth, to be good counsellors of the king, that the land they loved might flourish in righteousness. And the Proverbs have enough of the democratic spirit to see that even apart from the king and his counsellors the city might prosper through the righteous lives of its common citizens.

By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted;
But by the mouth of the wicked it is overthrown (xi. 11).
When the righteous triumph, there is great glory;
But when the wicked rise to power, men hide themselves (xxviii. 12; cf. xxix. 2, 16, etc.).
Godless men set the city in a blaze;
But wise men turn away wrath (xxix. 8).

In such sayings may be seen already at work the civic leaven which was yet to leaven the world.

The moral outlook of Proverbs is substantially that of ancient Israel. The good are blessed with all worldly prosperity, honour and happiness; the wicked are involved in life-long misery, and swift, painful death. To those who seek and find her,

Wisdom holds out the most alluring hopes of future glory :—

O happy the man that findeth wisdom,
And he that gaineth understanding ;
For the profit thereof is better than silver,
And her revenue richer than fine gold.
More precious is she than corals,
And nought that men desire is comparable with her.
A length of days is in her right hand,
And in her left are riches and honour.
Her ways are ways of pleasantness,
And all her paths are peace.
A tree of life she is to those who grasp her ;
And happy are they who hold her fast (iii. 13ff.).

But for those who despise her there is nothing in store but hopeless sorrow and despair.

Because I have called, and ye refused,
I stretched out my hand, and none regarded—
Ye set at nought all my counsel,
And would have none of mine admonition—
I too will laugh at your calamity,
I will mock when trouble comes to you ;
When like a storm your trouble comes,
And as a whirlwind your calamity (i. 24ff.).

The same dramatic contrasts appear throughout the Book.

He walketh safely that walketh uprightly,
But he that twisteth his steps shall come to grief (x. 9).
When the tempest sweepeth, the wicked is no more ;
But the righteous is rooted for ever (x. 25).
A stronghold is Jahweh to the man that is upright,
But destruction to the workers of wickedness.
The righteous shall never be moved ;
But the wicked shall not abide in the land (x. 29f., etc.).

The principles of God's rule are thus simple and consistent. The sententious style of the Proverbs would of itself forbid the high-wrought struggle with Providence which inspires a book like Job. But even the sense of Divine inequality is wanting. If Jahweh chasten the good, it is only the loving discipline of a Father (iii. 11). There is no example of a good man afflicted to the end. His light may be dim and flickering at times; yet

The path of the righteous is as shining light,
That shineth more and more unto the perfect day (iv. 18).

On the other hand, the pathway of the wicked leads surely to darkness and death.

There is no good end for the evil;
The lamp of the wicked shall be put out (xxiv. 20).

We are here still far removed from the Gospel of a Father's love that embraces both good and evil, and is actually made perfect amid human frailty and sin, almost equally far removed from the Psalmists' experience of God's forgiving mercy. In but one proverb have we an approach to the Christian evangel :—

He that covereth up his sins will by no means prosper;
But he that confesseth and forsaketh them shall obtain mercy (xxviii. 13),

though there is also held out the possibility of 'atoning for one's sins' by deeds of 'kindness and truth,' and thus through the fear of Jahweh escaping

from evil (xvi. 6). The whole temper of the Proverbs, in fact, is that of the moralist, for whom character is determined even from youth. 'Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.' He that soweth righteousness, therefore, hath 'a sure reward' (xi. 18); but he that soweth iniquity 'shall reap a harvest of misery' (xxii. 8).

CHAPTER XVII

The Thoughts of the Wise

In even the late sections of Proverbs we have found no consciousness of discord in the moral government of the Universe. The path of the righteous leads to honour and glory; that of the wicked to misery and death. Thus the wise man's persuasions are aimed directly at the winning of the simple to the fear of the Lord, as the first principle of wisdom and prosperity. But in another direction his thoughts take wing. And in the prologue to Proverbs we have the germ of what among other nations would take the shape of speculative philosophy.

As has been noted, the wisdom of Hebrew sages is practical moral inspiration—that by which the good man moulds his conduct. Thus wisdom is the hidden source of all that is worthy in life. Wisdom is likewise the vital spirit of all just government.

> *By me kings reign,*
> *And rulers determine justice;*
> *By me princes rule,*
> *And nobles govern the earth* (viii. 15f.).

And all this because wisdom is the principle on which God Himself based the Universe.

Jahweh by wisdom founded the earth,
By understanding established the heavens ;
By His knowledge the abysses were broken up,
And the skies drop down the dew (iii. 19f.).

The wisdom that illumines the lives of the good is thus a reflection of the full-orbed wisdom of God. But as the Hebrew mind avoided abstractions, she is represented as a fair virgin, the counterpart to Madam Folly, with her house and table furnished and provided with all good things, which she invites the sons of men to come and enjoy, pointing the appeal with a glowing revelation of her intimacy with the Eternal :—

Jahweh formed me first of His creation,
Before all His works of old.
In the earliest ages was I fashioned,
Even from the beginning, before the earth.
When there were no depths was I brought forth,
When there were no fountains brimming with water.
Before the mountains were sunk in their bases,
Before the hills was I brought forth—
Or ever He had made the earth and the fields,
Or the first clods of the world.
When He established the heavens I was there,
When He drew the circle over the abyss ;
When He made firm the skies above,
And set fast the fountains of the deep ;

When He gave the sea its bounds,[1]
And fixed the foundations of the earth,
Then was I by Him as a foster-child,[2]
And daily was I His delight,
As I played continually before His eyes,
Played o'er all the habitable world.
So now, my children, hearken unto me,
Receive my instruction, and be wise
For happy is the man that heareth me,
Happy are those that keep my ways,[3]
Watching daily at my gates,
And waiting at my door-posts.
For he that findeth me findeth life,
And winneth favour from Jahweh ;
But he that misseth me wrongeth himself—
All that hate me love death (viii. 22ff.).

In this majestic conception of Wisdom it seems hardly possible to deny the fertilizing influence of Greek thought. Yet the picture is Hebrew in its essence. Wisdom is no archetypal hypostasis emanating from the Divine. She is still a true impersonation of a moral quality, endowed with life by the One Eternal Being, whose place in

[1] The commandment laid upon the sea is a redundance which mars the parallelism of the piece (cf. LXX).

[2] I have here without hesitation followed Aquila in reading אָמוֹן, *ward,* or *foster-child,* the subsequent verses demanding such an idea. With the figure of Wisdom playing before Jahweh we may compare Heraclitus' description of the world-creating spirit as a child playing at draughts (frag. 79).

[3] The closing phrases of *vv.* 31 and 33 have been omitted as redundances, and *v.* 32*b* placed after 34*a* (with LXX).

creation she nowhere usurps. She is merely by Him while He carries through His work, learning of Him, and enjoying His affection, that she may teach mankind the ways of wisdom and peace. And from heaven she easily descends to the streets and market-places of common life, to invite the simple to her banquet (ix. 1ff.). The distinctively ethical character of Wisdom is equally evident in the great Song of Praise in Ecclesiasticus, where Wisdom is ultimately identified with the Law of Moses which found its resting-place and seat of authority in Israel :—

I came forth from the mouth of the Most High,
And like a cloud I covered the earth ;
I had my dwelling in the high places,
And my throne was in the pillar of cloud ;
I alone compassed the circuit of heaven,
And walked in the depth of the abysses,
In the waves of the sea, and through all the earth ;
And in every people and nation I got me a possession.
With all these I sought for a resting-place :
'In whose lot shall I find a lodging ?'
Then the Creator of all commanded me,
Even He that formed me pitched my tent,
And said, 'In Jacob be thy dwelling,
And in Israel thine inheritance.'
In the beginning, before the world, He fashioned me ;
And to all eternity shall I fail not.
In the holy tabernacle I ministered before Him,
And thus was I established in Zion ;
Yea, in the beloved city He gave me a resting-place,
And in Jerusalem was my dominion.

* * * *

All this is the book of the covenant of God Most High,
Even the law that Moses commanded
For an inheritance to the congregations of Jacob (xxiv. 3ff.).[1]

A decided advance is evident in the Wisdom of Solomon. Here the concrete imagination of Israel has been caught up in the full sweep of Greek influence. And we seem to be actually moving within the inner circle of neo-Platonist speculation.

All things that are either hidden or manifest I know;
for Wisdom, the artificer of all things, taught me.
For in her is a spirit intelligent, holy,
only-begotten, manifold, subtle,
mobile, pure, undefiled,
clear, inviolable, loving the good, quick,
unrestrained, active in good, a lover of men,
steadfast, sure, free from care,
all-powerful, all-seeing,
permeating all intelligent, pure, and subtlest of spirits.
For wisdom is more mobile than any motion;
she penetrates and permeates all things by reason of her purity.
For she is a breath of the power of God,
and a pure effluence of the glory of the Almighty;
therefore can no impure thing insinuate itself within her.
For she is an effulgence of the everlasting light,
and an unstained mirror of the power of God,
and image of His goodness.
Though but one, she can do all things;
and while remaining within herself, she maketh all things new,
and in all ages, entering into holy souls,
she maketh them friends of God and prophets;
for God loveth none but those that dwell with wisdom.

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[1] Unfortunately the original Hebrew of this section has not yet been recovered. The Greek appears, however, to be a sufficiently exact reproduction of the original.

For she is more beautiful than the sun,
and above all the order of the stars;
if compared with light itself, she is found before it,
for night follows the light,
but no evil thing can prevail against wisdom (vii. 22ff.).

This gradual blending of Hebrew wisdom with Greek idealism—a process which reaches its final result in Philo's doctrine of the Logos—is of profound significance in the history of religion. The Greek thinkers, in their own brilliant way, were feeling after God. But as they approached Him mainly by intellectual speculation, and conceived Him in consequence as pure rational Being, He remained to the end, as Plato says, 'difficult to find, and, when found, impossible to impart to all.' The Platonic ideas were, indeed, a bridge to the Divine, but a bridge by which only the enlightened could pass. To the Hebrew wise man, on the other hand, God was not the end of a speculative process, but the first principle of thought, the axiom from which all their reasoning started. Hebrew wisdom was, in fact, the explication of the idea of God, as known from the revelation He had made of Himself, and the actual experience of religious life. Thus wisdom remained always in vital contact with practical faith. Only as the sense of God's immeasurable greatness dawned upon the imagination of the wise, they too found it increasingly difficult to bring God down to the planes of

human life. The need for some Mediator between the transcendent God of heaven and His weak and ignorant children on earth became ever more keenly felt. The speculative conceptions of Wisdom in some measure supplied the need. But if God were to be known as He really is, He must manifest Himself through a more personal Mediator. In this respect also Jesus Christ 'fulfilled' the older Revelation. The Jews had been asking for signs, and the Greeks seeking wisdom; but to those that were called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ was now found 'the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God.' In the very words of the Wisdom of Solomon, He was the personal 'effulgence' of the Divine glory (Heb. i. 3). Even the Logos doctrine of Philo was baptized into the new Name. In Jesus of Nazareth the Logos took flesh, and 'tabernacled among men,' revealing unto them in all its purity the glory which the wise men of Israel had seen but in image and symbol—'glory as of the only begotten of the Father' (John i. 14). But it is not in the Johannine writings alone that we trace the influence of Philonic speculation. The mystical piety of the Odes of Solomon is equally touched with this spirit. The saints of God are here too 'penetrated by the Word,' which is to them both Truth and Love; the Lord is the 'mirror' in which the beauty of God's face may be seen, and which

likewise reflects His glory into human hearts and lives (xii. 9ff.; xiii. 1ff.; xvi. 9ff.; etc.).

In other parts of the Old Testament there is a decided protest against all such gnostic tendencies. The most brilliant poetic expression is given to this feeling in the Song of Wisdom incorporated in the Book of Job (ch. xxviii.). The poet has sought wisdom in the depths of the earth, where miners dig for silver and gold; in the heights of heaven, whither the eagles soar in flight; and in the desert places, where the proud beasts roam in solitary majesty. But nowhere is wisdom to be found of man. Only God knows her dwelling-place. And even from Him was her face at first concealed. For wisdom is no longer the associate and 'ward' of the Almighty, still less the Mediator of His will to men. She dwells alone in her glory, fulfilling her own ends, and nowhere entering into the purposes of God with men. He discovered her when He founded the earth, and set its laws in order, thus exposing the hidden mysteries of things. But He has no thought of revealing the secret to mortals.

Wisdom—whence cometh it,
And where is the place of intelligence? [1]
For silver there is a mine,
And for gold a place to refine it;

[1] I have followed Duhm in inserting here, and before *v.* 7, the opening note of the remaining stanzas. On other changes, cf. Kittel.

Iron is drawn from the dust,
And the stone is molten to brass.
Man pierceth the dark to its bounds,
And searcheth for stones through the murk.
He breaketh a shaft underground,
Where they hang and swing upon ropes.
The earth—from which cometh bread—
Is upheaved below as by fire.
Its stones are where sapphires are found,
And the dust thereof yieldeth gold.

But wisdom—whence cometh it,
And where is the place of intelligence?
No eagle knoweth its path,
The vulture's eye hath not seen it.
The proud beasts have nowhere trodden it,
Nor the fearsome lion passed over.
With his hand man graspeth the flint rock;
From their roots he upturneth the mountains.
Through the rocks he cutteth channels;
He exploreth the springs of the rivers.
All that is precious he seeth,
And the secrets he bringeth to light;
For he looks to the ends of the earth—
Scans all things under the heaven.

But wisdom—whence cometh it,
And where is the place of intelligence?
No man knoweth its way,
'Tis not found in the land of the living.
The deep saith, 'It is not in me,'
And the sea saith, 'Not with me.'
No gold can be given for wisdom,
Nor silver weighed as its price.
No gold of Ophir can buy it,
No precious onyx, or sapphire.
No gold or glass is its equal,
Nor jewels of gold its exchange.
No crystal or pearls can be thought of;
Yea, far beyond corals is wisdom.

But wisdom—whence cometh it,
And where is the place of intelligence?
It is hid from the eyes of all creatures,
And concealed from the fowls of the air.
Abaddon and Death acknowledge:
'But a rumour thereof have we heard.'
God alone hath perceived the way to it,
He knoweth the place thereof,—
Even He that made weights for the wind,
And meted the waters by measure.
When He made a law for the rain,
And a way for the flash of the thunders,
Then did He see it, and mark it—
He established, and searched it out.

A very different accent is heard in the 'words of Agur, the son of Jakeh' (Prov. xxx.). He, too, has applied his mind to the facts of life. He has observed and studied, and pondered over the problems of the world. Like the daring spirit who saw Wisdom playing by the side of the Almighty, he has even tried to ascend to heaven, and penetrate the veil that enshrouds the presence of God. But he falls back exhausted. With all his strivings, he cannot grasp the Divine. He feels God's presence, indeed, in all the movements of Nature. For it is He that ranges over the Universe, controlling all things in heaven and earth, gathering up the wind in His fists, and in due season sending it loose again, wrapping the waters in His cloak (a bold image for the clouds), to pour them forth as rain, and ordaining the complex issues of life. But he

cannot 'name' Him; still less can he tell His 'son's' name. He can neither raise his spirit up to God, nor find any personal Mediator, in whom he can assuredly trace the lineaments of His glory.

I am wearied, O God, I am wearied;
I am altogether spent.
I am but a brute, and no man;
I have nought of human intelligence.
No wisdom have I learned,
No knowledge I have of the Holy One.
Who is He that hath mounted to heaven, and come down
That hath gathered the wind in His fists,
The waters hath wrapped in His cloak,
And established all ends of the earth?
What is His name, and His son's name,
If thou dost know? (xxx. 1ff.).

The speculative knowledge of God which seemed so sure to other thinkers here crumbles into dust. In Agur's wearied utterances we might well be reading the reflections of a modern agnostic. And his general view of life is in perfect harmony with his creed. This too is all a mystery—a riddle that cannot be read. There are three things, yea four, that never can be satisfied: the grave and the barren womb, the desert soil and the devouring flame; three things, yea four, that are too wonderful for him to follow: the eagle beating its way through the air, the serpent gliding through the clefts of the rock, the ship storm-tossed and buffeted, yet ever mastering the waves, and the insinuating, invincible power of love (*vv.* 15ff.). Every other aspect of life leads

but to the same conclusion—that the problem is insoluble. And the only practical counsel that emerges from the general uncertainty is the easy, unambitious 'golden mean':

But two things I ask of Thee,
Withhold them not before I die:
Vanity and lies put far from me;
Give me neither poverty nor riches,
Feed me with food sufficient for my wants (*vv.* 5f.).

Were we here moving in the realm of pure Greek thought, this would doubtless have been Agur's whole philosophy of life. But the Hebrew agnostic could not so easily cut himself off from his people's faith. For to the Hebrews, as we have seen, faith was no final result of philosophical speculation, but the root from which all that was noble and true alike in thought and conduct sprung. Thus, tested and tried amid the storms of centuries, it still held fast when other supports of life had gone. The agnosticism of Agur is anything but the 'scathing criticism of the theology of his day, and sweeping scepticism as to every form of revealed religion,' that the cavalier modern *littérateur* has found in it.[1] His words are rather the subdued confessions of the restless thinker who has been baffled in his quest of God, for he has found this knowledge too wonderful for him, too high to attain unto. He does not deny the

[1] Dillon, *Sceptics of the Old Testament*, p. 133.

possibility of more fortunate or pure-hearted natures winning the prize he has failed to grasp. For his agnosticism never touches the existence of God Himself. However unable man may be to reach a satisfying knowledge of the Divine, He remains the great energizing Force behind all the phenomena of Nature. And to Agur this Divine presence is not the inscrutable First Cause of the modern agnostic. He is a real personal Being, with a Name, if only the sons of men could learn it ! But there is yet more positive faith in the words of Agur. If God be inaccessible even to the boldest flights of speculative reason, He has nevertheless unveiled His mind and will through the visions of prophet and Psalmist. And on this revelation Agur finds a resting-place amid the surging waters of his doubt. Even if the brave notes of Ps. xviii. 30,

> *Every word of God is tried ;*
> *He is a shield unto them that trust Him,*

be a later insertion in the ' words of Agur ' (*vv.* 5f.), the sequel shows how God was still his refuge and strength. The request that he be kept true to the golden mean is a prayer addressed to Heaven. And the reason explicitly given is lest earthly riches and enjoyments tempt him to deny Jahweh, or on the other hand stress of poverty lead him to steal his neighbour's goods, and thus ' profane the name of his God ' (*v.* 9).

Thus, as wisdom based her speculations on God, so does the fear of God remain the sure ground of the wise man's confidence to the end. His efforts to penetrate the final mysteries may drive him back bewildered on the thought of his own utter ignorance. Yet God is God for ever. And in Him there is salvation. The mind is, no doubt, left with an unsolved antinomy. But the very strength with which faith is maintained in the face of difficulty and doubt is the prophecy of its ultimate victory. In darkness itself the light is broadening ' unto the perfect day.'

CHAPTER XVIII

The Song of Songs

THE scanty survivals of the old folk-poetry of Israel were found strangely lacking in love-songs. It can hardly be doubted, however, that here, too, the heart-strings of man and maiden were touched by the golden bow to sweetest music. In the more literary age the tender grace of human affection gave even to the quiet wisdom of Proverbs the true feeling of poetry. But far richer strains are drawn forth in the series of exquisite lyrics entitled *shîr hash-shîrîm*, 'the Song of Songs,' that is, the sweetest of all songs. Through the whole Book there breathes a fresh delight in Nature, and a joyous rapture of affection, that reminds one rather of the idylls of Theocritus and the Greek Anthologists, or the more passionate love poetry of modern times, than the grave religious tones of Scripture.

Our wider views of inspiration lead us to welcome the presence of love-songs in the Canon. We may even subscribe to Niebuhr's judgment, that 'the Bible would be lacking in something if one could not find in it expression for the deepest and strongest

sentiments of humanity.'[1] But the Book had its struggle for admission. Its frank naturalism, and highly sensuous imagery, raised persistent suspicion against its sanctity. Not indeed till the Synod of Jamnia (A.D. 90) was the question finally set at rest. And even then the prohibition was laid down that no Jew must read the Book unless he had reached the mature age of thirty. But having finally secured its place in the Scriptures, the Song speedily captured the hearts of the most devout. The famous Rabbi Akiba, writing about the year 120, says, 'The whole world does not outweigh the day on which the Song of Songs was given to Israel; all the Writings are holy, but the Song is the holiest of all.' And he pronounces a solemn anathema against any who should dare to sing the Song at banquets, as was apparently still done, in the manner of secular songs: 'Whosoever sings from the Song of Songs in the wine-houses, making it a common song, shall have no share in the world to come.' The Song was thus no longer read by orthodox Jews as a human love-song, but as a profound allegory of spiritual love, Solomon being identified with God, and the beloved with the Jewish people He had chosen for His own, and the sweet interchanges of affection being translated into passionate effusions of the heart of God and His people in mutual love. In the Targum and

[1] Renan, *Song of Songs*, *E.T.*, p. 106.

Midrash *Shir rabba* this mystical interpretation of the Song blossoms into wonderful luxuriance. And from the Synagogue it passed to the Christian Church, where it enjoyed still greater vogue. Traces of the influence of the Book may be noted as early as the Odes of Solomon.[1] But it was Origen who gave the decisive impulse to allegorization. In his ten-volumed Commentary on the Song he is said to have surpassed even himself. He recognized the literal significance of the Book as an *epithalamium,* or marriage drama ; but his real strength he gave to the elucidation of its mystical sense as a true love-song of Christ and the soul He had redeemed, or of Christ and His Church.[2] Reading the Book in this sense, devout natures, whose souls were starved by the hard, dry bones of Scholasticism, found in the warm feeling of the Song the refreshment and nurture their spirits craved for. The mystics naturally revelled in its fresh welling fountains of emotion. Saint Bernard of Clairvaux has no fewer than eighty-six sermons on the first two chapters of the Song. And its influence is transparent in his own spiritual hymns. But even so sternly logical a thinker as Thomas Aquinas felt the spell of the Book. In his last illness, uplifted by visions of God's love that

[1] Odes, iii. 5ff.

[2] Cf. Riedel, *Die Auslegung des Hoheliedes in der jüdischen Gemeinde und der Griechischen Kirche.*

made all he had written on scholastic theology seem as of no account, he is said to have turned lovingly to the Song, on which he actually dictated a few chapters of Commentary. Among Protestants also mystical spirits have found in the warm outpourings of Canticles the purest expression of their love for the Redeemer. Works like Samuel Rutherford's Letters are steeped in the feeling of the Song. And till recent times it was for many devout Evangelicals almost the heart of the Bible.[1]

These mystical interpretations of the Song are not so unnatural as they appear to our modern taste. God is the fountain of all love. And that human love which is stronger than death itself does enable us to understand and express something, at least, of the love of God that passeth understanding. In the imaginative East the lower love glided easily into the higher. Persian love-poetry, for example, has been found a real channel of mystical feeling. And on several occasions the poets and prophets of the Old Testament use human love as a symbol or parable of God's. Thus Hosea can boldly transfer

[1] In the vestry of the McCheyne Memorial Church, Dundee, may be seen the Pulpit Bible of the Scottish saint, Robert Murray McCheyne. It is quite black at the Song of Songs and the earlier chapters of Romans; the rest is comparatively white. McCheyne's faith evidently supported itself on the solid substance of Romans; while his warm love for his Saviour luxuriated in the glowing passion of the Song.

to God his own heart-broken affection for his poor, sinful wife, Gomer. In the New Testament, too, the love of Christ is frequently compared with the love of the bridegroom for his bride. But in its original sense, at all events, the Song is one of purely human affection. The very fact that it could be sung by frivolous youths in the wine-houses reveals its essential character. It is significant, too, that in the New Testament, where all the rays that stream from the Old are focussed upon Christ, the Song is nowhere quoted or alluded to. And with all the rapture it inspires, the mystical interpretation is liable to gross extravagance and abuse. The allegorists find simply what they seek in the Song. Thus the literature of its interpretation is like a dense jungle of luxurious vegetation, through which no clear path can be traced.

In the ancient Church the only serious attempt to read the Song by its own light was made by Theodore of Mopsuestia, whose naturalistic methods were subsequently condemned by Oecumenical Council. Even the Reformation failed at first to liberate the Book from its allegorical shackles. But in the course of the following centuries its fresh, sweet beauty made its own impression. The Song thus came to be read as a simple drama of love triumphant in marriage. Origen's suggestion of the *epithalamium* was taken up by Bossuet and Lowth,

who found in it the dramatic celebration of Solomon's nuptials with the daughter of Pharaoh (cf. 1 Kings iii. 1). The pastoral atmosphere of the piece appealed strongly to the artistic taste of an age whose *élites* delighted to play the *rôles* of the Gentle Shepherd and Shepherdess. But the more natural feeling of the Romantic age revolted against such artifice. In his charming *Lieder der Liebe: die ältesten und schönsten aus dem Morgenlande* (1778), Herder, the prophet of Romanticism, with remarkable prescience of the trend of recent criticism, read the Book as a collection of forty-four independent love-songs, held together 'by no closer link than that of a bunch of fine pearls on one string,' but all of them most worthy of their place in the Bible, as the sweetest and purest expressions in ancient literature of the most Godlike of the emotions.[1] And where the dramatic theory was still adhered to, a new character was introduced in the person of the Shulamite's country lover, to whom her heart remained true amid all the blandishments of her royal wooer, who sought to win her as one of the prizes of his harem.

The latter view, which is associated chiefly with the name of Ewald, has gained wide acceptance among scholars. For a full generation it virtually held the field, and is still maintained, with

[1] Herder, *Werke*, VIII. 541, 554ff.

modifications, in Driver's *Introduction* and Rothstein's article in the *Dictionary of the Bible*. Of all the modern theories, it offers the noblest interpretation of the Song as a drama of pure love tried and proved in the furnace of temptation. But grave difficulties confront the dramatic theory in all its forms. The plot is anything but self-evident. It is rather read into the text than suggested by the sequence of the whole. The characters are elusive; the scenes continually shift; and some of them belong to the realm of dream-land. Moreover, there is no definite progress in the plot—no real dramatic movement or *dénouement*. The great panegyric on love (viii. 6) may no doubt be regarded as the climax of the Song. But as the consummation of love in marriage is already presupposed in the luscious odes i. 2ff., 12ff.; ii. 1ff.; iii. 1ff., etc., the *dénouement* is purely imaginary. The Song appears, in fact, to celebrate various phases of love, not one closely-knit romance.

Of recent years scholars have looked increasingly to the East for light on the baffling problem of the piece. This way of approach was already indicated by Renan, who referred to Schefer's accounts of wedding festivities at Damietta and other districts of Syria, and suggested that the Song was an old Palestinian wedding play, in which the young men of the village acted the part of Solomon's body-

guard, while the maidens impersonated 'the daughters of Jerusalem,' the play being arranged in acts designed for separate days of the wedding *fête*.[1] The suggestion was thrown out afresh in Wetzstein's famous article on the 'Syrian Threshing-board' (1873), where the curious revelries of the marriage or 'king's week' were described in detail, and a modern specimen of the *waṣf*, or sword-song in honour of bride and bridegroom, offered for comparison with the *waṣfs* of Canticles iv.–vii.[2] Apart from a brief note by Stade, the article called forth no comment, till Budde's enthusiastic *Eureka* in the *New World* (1894), followed by his detailed Commentary in 1898, raised the suggestion to the dignity of a well-established hypothesis. According to Budde, the Song is a repertoire of *waṣfs* and other wedding songs covering the seven days of the 'king's week,' and having no other link of connexion than their common praise of wedded love. Thus many difficult knots are cut. A strict dramatic unity in the Song is no longer required. The literary similarities of the different lyrics are explained by unity of feeling and motive. Above all, the troublesome names of Solomon and the Shulamite (the fair Abishag) become mere *sobriquets* for the 'king and queen' of the festal week. It is true, neither Wetzstein

[1] *Song of Songs*, *E.T.*, pp. 62f.
[2] *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, vol. v., pp. 270ff.

nor Budde could point to any such use of royal play-names. But more recent research in Arabic folk-poetry has filled up the gap. For in certain texts published by Enno Littmann (1902) popular bridegrooms are not merely likened to kings in their slow, majestic march, but are actually invested with the title either of the reigning Sultan (Abdul Hamid) or of famous sovereigns of old (Chosrau and Nu'-man).[1] It can hardly be doubted, therefore, that Wetzstein has led criticism along true lines of investigation. Whatever be the ultimate fate of Budde's theory, the Song must henceforth be studied in the light of modern Syrian love-poetry.

But our comparisons must not be confined to marriage songs. Dalman has brought to light many Arabic *waṣfs* that celebrate the beauty, not of brides alone, but of loved ones generally.[2] This would suggest that Budde has unjustly narrowed the theme of Canticles. And in reality, while various parts of the Book have a direct bearing on the marriage-rite, the majority of the songs are better understood as the effusions of a young and ardent, fond, yet often heart-sick, lover. The Book may thus be regarded as a choice Anthology of ancient Hebrew love songs, the main part doubtless from

[1] Littmann, *Neuarabische Volkspoesie*, Texts A IV. 52, 98, 100 B I. 31.

[2] Dalman, *Palästinischer Diwan*, pp. xii., 100ff.

one and the same sweet singer, and all inspired by a common sentiment.[1] The Aramaic colouring of the whole, and the appearance of Persian and Greek words like *pardēṣ* (iv. 13) and *appiryôn* (iii. 9), point decisively to a date in the Greek era, probably in the earlier half of the third century B.C. The spirit of the Book is fresh and sunny. Its singers are all of the open air. The choral-like appearances of the 'daughters of Jerusalem' would, indeed, suggest that the Book assumed its final shape there. But the general scenery is that of the North, with its blossoms reddening in the spring-time, its flocks of sheep swarming from Gilead, its parks full of all pleasant fruits, watered by 'running streams from Lebanon,' and its villages nestling in the bosom of scented fields and vineyards.

The Song opens with a love-dance in which the rustic heroine expresses her ardent longing for the favours of her 'king,' coupled with a modest apology for her dark beauty, inasmuch as the sun has beamed too kindly on her face, while she kept her brothers' vineyard (i. 2ff.). This is followed by a tender elegy, in which, in the guise of a fair shepherdess, she seeks the loved of her soul, and is bidden to follow him up by the tracks of the sheep :—

[1] The wider view is taken by the most recent students of the Song, *e.g.* Haupt, *Biblische Liebeslieder*, pp. xiii.f.; Schmidt, *Messages of the Poets*, pp. 225ff.; and Wheeler Robinson in the new edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

i. 7 *Tell me, thou loved of my soul,*
Where thou tendest thy sheep ; [1]
For why should I wander in vain
By the flocks of thy comrades ?

8 *' If thou know not thy loved one's pastures,*
Thou fairest of women,
Go forth in the tracks of the sheep, [1]
By the tents of the herdsmen ! '

And now, as bridegroom and bride, they pour their endearing flatteries, in true Oriental luxuriance of imagination, into each other's ears.

9 *' To a filly in Pharaoh's chariot,*
My love, I have likened thee.
10 *Adorned are thy cheeks with spangles,*
With stringed jewels thy neck.
11 *Spangles of gold will I make thee,*
With pendants of silver.'

12 *While my king reclines on his diwan,*
My nard yields its fragrance.
13 *A scent-bag of myrrh is my loved one,*
Reposing between my breasts.
14 *My love is a cluster of henna-flowers,*
In the gardens of Engedi.

15 *' Behold, thou art fair, my love ;*
Thine eyes are as doves.'
16 *Behold, thou art fair, my loved one ;*
So beauteous thy form !

' Our bed is spread in the forest ; [2]
Yea, green is our couch.

---

[1] The two redundant phrases, ' where thou makest them rest at noon,' and ' there feed thy kids,' have been omitted in the combined interests of sense and rhythm.

[2] This line has been conjecturally filled in to complete the parallelism.

17 *The beams of our house are cedars,*
Our rafters are fir.'

ii. 1 *I am a rose of Sharon,*
A lily of the valleys.
2 *' As a lily among the thistles*
Is my love among the daughters.'

3 *As an apple-tree in the forest*
Is my loved one among the sons.
In his shadow I rest with delight,
And his fruit is sweet to my taste.

4 *To the house of wine hath he brought me,*
The banner o'er which is love ;
5 *He hath stayed me with cakes of raisins,*
And with apples revived my strength.[1]
6 *His left hand under my head,*
His right doth embrace me in love.

7 *I adjure you, daughters of Jerusalem,*
By the roes and the hinds of the field,
That ye rouse not love, nor disturb it,
Until it be pleased to awake !

From the sweet bliss of wedded love we are carried back, in an exquisite lyric, to the glad spring season when youthful affection first awoke in the maiden's heart, and her lover came to woo her even in her dreams by night.

8 *Hark, my beloved !*
See, he comes,
Leaping over the mountains,
Skipping over the hills ![2]

---

[1] The closing phrase, ' for I am sick with love,' no doubt comes from v. 8.

[2] The comparison with roe and fawn is prematurely introduced from *v.* 17.

9b *Lo! there he standeth*
Against our wall!
I look through the lattice,
I peer through the panes.
10 *Then answers my loved one,*
And speaks to me thus:
'Arise, my love;
My fair one, come!
11 *For, lo! the winter is past,*
The rain is over and gone.
The flowers appear in the land,[1]
And the voice of the ring-dove is heard.
13 *The fig-tree ripens its fruit,*
And the vines give forth their fragrance.
Arise, then, my love;
My fair one, come!'

A few verses tremulous with mutual affection (ii. 14ff.) lead to another dreamland scene, in which the love-struck maiden goes boldly out to search the city streets for the loved of her soul.

iii. 1 *On my bed by night I sought*
The loved of my soul.
2 *'I will rise now, and range the city,*
Its streets and its squares.
There I'll seek the loved of my soul.'
I sought but I found him not.
3 *I found men ranging the city:*[2]
'Have ye seen the loved of my soul?'
4 *Scarce had I parted from them,*
When I found the loved of my soul.
I held him; I let him not go,
Till I brought him home to my mother.[3]

[1] The middle *stichos* is probably a mere variant to the last.

[2] The scene with the night-rangers has been expanded by features from the similar scene in *v.* 7.

[3] The closing line of *v.* 4 has been influenced by viii. 2. Dal-

The brilliant song of Solomon's palanquin is most easily understood as an idealized representation of the bridegroom's procession on the festal 'board,' surrounded by his bodyguard of village youths. This is followed by a fine example of the *waṣf*, or sword-song, in which the lover celebrates the beauty of his love with a lavish display of that sensuous imagery in which the Oriental delights.

iv. 1 *Behold, thou art fair, my love,*
Thine eyes are as doves ;
Thy hair like a flock of kids,
That swarm down from Gilead ;

2 *Thy teeth are like shorn ewes,*
Fresh from the washing,
All of them ranged in pairs,
And none of them lacking.

3 *As a scarlet thread are thy lips,*
And sweet is thy mouth ;
Like a piece of pomegranate thy temple,
Shining out through thy veil ;

4 *Thy neck like the tower of David,*
Built for an arsenal,
With a thousand bucklers therein,
All the shields of the heroes ;

5 *Thy breasts like a pair of fawns,*
The twins of a roe.[1]
7 *Thou art all of thee fair, my love—*
No spot is in thee.

With all this beauty the lover's heart is bewitched.

man would therefore expunge the whole. But the retention of the nucleus, at least, seems essential to the sense.

[1] The following phrases of the MT. come from another context (ii. 16f.). On other omissions, cf. Kittel,

9 *By one glance from thine eyes hast thou ravished me,*
By one turn of thy neck hast bewitched me.[1]
10 *How sweet is thy love, my sister,*[2]
How much better than wine thy caresses!

11 *With honey-drops trickle thy lips,*
And milk lies beneath thy tongue.
Thy garments are fragrant as Lebanon,
Thine ointments are sweeter than balsam.[3]

To him she is a garden full of all precious fruits, 'enclosed' but for his enjoyment, a 'fountain of living waters' sealed and preserved for himself alone (iv. 12ff.). And at her invitation he comes, eats and drinks, and is blessed.

16 '*Awake, North wind,*
And come, thou South!
Blow on my garden,
That its spices may spread!
Let my loved one come to his garden,
And eat of his precious fruits!'

v. 1 *I am come to my garden, my sister,*
I have gathered my myrrh and my balsam;
I have eaten my comb with my honey,
I have drunk my wine with my milk.
Come, friends, eat and drink,
Yea, drink ye deep draughts of love!

---

[1] The Hebrew text here is somewhat redundant. In the translation I have sought to preserve the essential ideas.

[2] The word 'sister' is here an endearing name for the loved one. In Egyptian love-poetry examples of the same usage are found.

[3] In the Hebrew text the closing *stichos* appears in *v.* 10; but there it is quite out of place, while *v.* 11 lacks its necessary parallelism. The transposition of the phrase restores order to the verses.

A still more moving night-scene, in which the fond maiden returns home weary and wounded from a vain quest of her lover, adjuring the 'daughters of Jerusalem,' if they find him, to tell him how 'sick of love' she is (*vv.* 2ff.), introduces us to a *waṣf* in praise of the beloved one's beauty, in the same fulsome style as its fellow in ch. iv.

10 *My beloved is radiant and ruddy,*
The chief of ten thousand;
11 *His head is as gold most pure,*
His locks like the raven.[1]

12 *His eyes are like doves*
By brooks of water,
Washed as with milk,
Perched by the floods.

13 *His cheeks are like beds of balsam,*
Like banks of sweet herbs;
His lips are as lilies,
Dripping with myrrh.

14 *His hands are like tapers of gold,*
Finished with topaz;
His belly an ivory plate,
O'erlaid with sapphires.

15 *His legs are as pillars of marble,*
Set on sockets of gold;
His form is like Lebanon,
Lordly as cedars.

16 *His mouth is most sweet—*
He is all of him lovely.
This is my loved one, my friend,
Ye daughters of Jerusalem.

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[1] The two redundant words תַּלְתַּלִּים שְׁחֹרוֹת have been omitted.

With a passion more in harmony with our modern taste, the poet sings the praises of his love. To him she far surpasses in splendour all the beauties of Solomon's court (vi. 8). The flash of those dazzling eyes he can hardly even endure to face.

vi. 10 *She looks out like the dawn,*[1]
Fair as the moon,
Pure as the sun,
Awful as army with banners.

In the next canticle a maiden of Shulem sings of her capture by her 'prince,' amid the vain appeals of her kinsfolk to return.

11 *I went down to the garden of nuts,*
To see the green shoots of the valley—
To see if the vines were in bud,
Or the pomegranates had flowered.

12 *Or ever I knew, on his chariot*
The prince of my people had placed me.[2]
* * * *

13 *'Turn back, turn back, maid of Shulem;*
Turn back, turn back, that we see thee!'
But why would ye see the Shulamite
With the dancers dancing in pairs?[3]

---

[1] To introduce the stanza as a question (מִי־זֹאת) spoils its whole force.

[2] This verse is one of the most uncertain in the book. The simplest and most satisfactory text appears to the writer to be got by transposing the last two words, and reading שָׂמַנִי מֶרְכַּבְתּוֹ נָדִיב עַמִּי, *the prince of my people placed me on his chariot.* A verse seems to have dropped out at this point, the *hiatus* being too marked for the context.

[3] Here I have followed the MSS. which read בְּמָחֹלַת. If we

A sword-song in praise of womanly beauty, still more full of *abandon* than the last, carries us onward to a luscious lyric of rural love.

10 *I am my loved one's,*
And to me is his longing.
11 *Come then, my love, let us go to the field,*
'Mong the henna-flowers let us lodge!

12 *Then at dawn let us out to the vineyards,*
To see if the vine be in bud,
If the grape's tender blossom have opened,
Or the pomegranates have flowered![1]

13 *For the mandrakes give forth their fragrance;*
At our door are all precious fruits.
All of them, new and old,
I have kept for thee, my beloved.

This is followed by perhaps the frankest utterance of love-sickness in the whole Song.

viii. 1 *O that thou wert my brother,*
Nursed at my mother's breasts!
I would kiss thee whene'er I met thee;
And none should hold me in scorn.

2 *To my mother's house would I bring thee,*
To the chamber of her that conceived me;[2]
I would make thee to drink of the spiced wine,
And the must of the pomegranate.

---

take הַמְּחֹלָת in its literal sense of 'the two bands,' we have a reference to the country dances from which the maiden would henceforth be missed.

[1] The additional phrase of the MT. is a mere prosaic gloss, which disturbs the regular measure of the song.

[2] I have completed the parallelism from the corresponding passage (iii. 4).

From the meadows of intoxicating delight we soar to the high mountain-peak of the book—that great paean of triumphant love, the blended purity, tenderness and strength of which can hardly be matched in the poetry of passion.

6b *For love is strong as death,*
And jealousy hard as Sheol.
Its flashes are flashes of fire,
Its flames are flames of Jah.

7 *No waters can quench love,*
Nor can the deep floods drown it.
If a man gave all that he hath for love,
He would surely be despised.

Thus the Song ends in the peace and joy of love requited. The maiden's brothers had asked what they should do for their sister in the day men spoke for her, and had resolved :—

9 *If she be a wall,*
We shall build her a turret of silver ;
If she be but a door,
We shall fence her with boards of cedar.

But through all the temptations of youthful impulse, she had kept herself true to honour.

10 *I was a wall,*
And my breasts were as towers ;
Thus I appeared in their eyes
As one that found peace.

And she and her bridegroom could repose in each other's love with perfect satisfaction and delight, envying not even Solomon his silver and his pleasures.

11 *Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-hamon ;*
He let out the vineyard to keepers.
Each one for its fruit was to bring
A thousand shekels of silver.

12 *I have a vineyard—mine own ;*
And its fruit is before me.
I leave thee the thousand, O Solomon,
And the fruit to the keepers thereof.[1]

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[1] On the reading, cf. Kittel.

CHAPTER XIX

Vanity of Vanities

OUR study of the speculative wisdom of Proverbs has shown the radiant faith of Israel 'sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought.' This blanching influence of reflection is still more evident in Ecclesiastes, where faith has sunk almost to inanition. One is not surprised, therefore, that the Book shared the same fate as the Song of Songs, and won full recognition only at the Synod of Jamnia. Even then its dark, depressing views of life, and its unconcealed Epicurean tendency, caused deep searchings of heart among the Jewish Rabbis. But while it pained and shocked devout spirits, the transparent honesty of the Book, and the classical expression it gives to certain recurring moods of humanity, exercised a strange fascination, which has increased with the ages. Over our modern world it has thrown a peculiar spell. Not only have brilliant wits like Heine and Renan found it 'the most charming book' in the Old Testament, but grave philosophers have adopted its melancholic refrain as the keynote of their own systems, and other thoughtful minds

have caught in its haunting phrases the rich undertones of their more serious reflections. It is astonishing how many quotations from Ecclesiastes have passed into current use. And not a few of its brighter gems shine with fresh lustre on the palace walls of English literature.

The writer speaks in the name of Solomon, king of Israel. But the garb thus assumed is very lightly worn. The personal allusions scattered throughout the Book point to a wise man speaking, not from the throne, but from the ranks of the people, and that, too, in an age wholly unlike the golden days of King Solomon—one of political upheaval and social disorder, when Israel had fallen under the tyrannous rule of weak and upstart monarchs, who farmed out the provinces to cruel and rapacious satraps, under whom 'folly sat in positions of dignity, and the rich and well-born had to take the lowest place, slaves rode on horseback, and princes walked as slaves upon the ground,' justice was perverted, and the land was honey-combed with spies and tale-bearers, bent on ruining the upright (iii. 16ff.; v. 8f.; x. 5ff.). The earliest possible date for Ecclesiastes is thus the later Persian period (*c.* 350 B.C.), when the strong Empire founded by Cyrus had become the happy hunting-ground of political exploiters and adventurers. But the general picture of anarchy and oppression still more strongly suggests

the Greek *régime* of the second century B.C., when the national spirit of Israel lay crushed and broken, till the fiery patriotism of the Maccabees roused it to fresh enthusiasm. And the linguistic argument bears almost irresistibly in the same direction. If we except the Aramaic sections of Ezra and Daniel, no book in the Old Testament shows more unmistakably the passing of pure Hebrew. In phraseology and idiom, indeed, it reminds us rather of the Mishna than of anything else in the Bible.[1]

The historical allusions in iv. 13ff. and x. 16f. are too vague to be relied on for evidence of date. But both passages are most plausibly related to the victory of Antiochus the Great over the degenerate King Ptolemy V (Epiphanes) of Egypt, and the enthusiasm with which he was welcomed as overlord of Palestine (198 B.C.). A *terminus ad quem* for at least the original cast of the Book is found in the Wisdom of Ben Sira (*c.* 180 B.C.), which is full of clear reminiscences of Ecclesiastes.[2] We may date

[1] The arguments for the late date of Ecclesiastes are detailed in the various Commentaries and standard works of Introduction. For the linguistic peculiarities, cf. especially the Commentaries of Delitzsch and Siegfried.

[2] The relation between Ecclesiastes and Ben Sira has been carefully worked out by Plumptre in his charmingly-written Commentary in the *Cambridge Bible* Series, pp. 56ff., and more recently, in direct dependence on the Hebrew original of Ben Sira, by McNeile, in his most valuable *Introduction to Ecclesiastes*, pp. 34ff., and Barton, in the *International Critical Commen-*

it then about the beginning of the second century, most probably just after 198 B.C., thus allowing sufficient time for its influence to be felt in later literature.

The Book is stamped with the impress of strong personal character and experience. Its prevalent tone may be ashen grey; but underneath the hardening lava the fires have burnt, the intensity of their glow being revealed in the sparkling crystals of thought that flash out upon us. The author was evidently a man of high position, wealth, and culture, who had drunk deep draughts of the cup of life's enjoyments, though he suffered bitterly in the sorrows of his people and city, and was wounded also 'in the house of his friends' (vii. 26ff.). The cynicism which runs through the Book may be partly the result of *ennui*, but the sharpest thrusts of the sting are impelled by disappointment and vexation of spirit. The author is no voluptuary who seeks to drown the thought of the 'unborn Tomorrow, and dead Yesterday' in the 'ancient Ruby' of the vine. He is a serious thinker, proud of his 'wisdom,' who has sought thus to wrest from

tary, pp. 53ff. From the rich material laid under contribution, the latter arrives at the conclusion 'that Ben Sira knew the work of Coheleth and used his words as a modern writer might weave into his work the words of Browning or Tennyson or any other well-known author' (*op. cit.*, p. 55).

life its secrets, and rebels against the Divinely appointed limitations of wisdom. Of all the writers of the Old Testament, he has caught most of the Greek spirit. And in his judgments of life he often reminds us of the Greek thinkers, though at heart he remains a Hebrew of the Hebrews.[1] Thus his Book is didactic throughout. He introduces himself as Ḳoheleth, *the* Preacher or Teacher.[2] And all

[1] The hypothesis of Greek influence both in language and thought was suggested by older scholars like van der Palm, Zirkel, and Graetz, but was first fully elaborated by Tyler in his *Ecclesiastes* (1874), and definitely adopted by E. Pfleiderer, Plumptre, Wildeboer, Siegfried, and Cornill, who have sought to establish the Preacher's dependence either on the philosophy of Heraclitus or more generally on the later Stoic or Epicurean schools. The theory has been carefully canvassed in the recent Commentaries of McNeile and Barton, and a thoroughly negative conclusion reached by both. 'The book of Ecclesiastes represents, then, an original development of Hebrew thought, thoroughly Semitic in its point of view, and quite independent of Greek influences' (Barton, *op. cit.*, p. 43). While agreeing with these and other scholars that the Preacher is at heart a Jew, the tone of the Book, its frank materialism, and its almost cynical commendation of the 'golden mean' as the only course of wisdom, with its thought of the endless flux of Nature reducing life to mere 'vanity,' seem to the present writer clearly to suggest that he was influenced by the general currents of Greek culture that were then sweeping over the Eastern world.

[2] קֹהֶלֶת, fem.partic. of קָהַל, denom. verb from קָהָל, an *assembly*, hence *caller of assemblies*. The Greek Ἐκκλησιαστής (our *Ecclesiastes*) thus comes close to the original meaning of the term. The fem. is no doubt that of official status, like סֹפֶרֶת, *scribeship* or *scribe* (Ezra ii. 55), etc. Examples of the same usage are found in other languages, *e.g.* Ar. *chalifa*, Chalif, Greek ἡ ἐξουσία, *the powers that be*, and modern English *Your Majesty*, *Your Lord-*

his reflections are couched in a vein of grave seriousness, calculated to impress upon his readers the profound significance of his counsel.

The arrangement of the Book has caused much difficulty to its students. Through the first four chapters the argument is closely developed. But thereafter the thought is warped and broken, the sequence of the argument being interrupted by a wealth of proverbial lore, and occasional reflections wholly at variance with the real philosophy of the author. We cannot, indeed, look for perfect consistency in a Book like Ecclesiastes. As a transcript from life, it must needs reflect the author's changing moods. And if the Book be of the nature of a *Journal Intime*, the latter chapters of which were penned at intervals during some little lapse of time, the broken structure may be readily explained. One can hardly resist the feeling, however, that Ḳoheleth's original treasury of wisdom has been enriched by various alien elements, the presence of which is most easily detected in chs. vii. and x., and that his pronounced Epicureanism has been toned down by a series of pious annotations from some orthodox Jew, who sought in this way to remove occasions of offence.[1] The Epilogue (xii. 9–14) is also with in-

ship (the fem. appearing in the German, *Eure Majestät, die Obrigkeit*), etc.

[1] The strange contradictions in the Book have long been noted

creasing unanimity recognized as an editorial appendix to the original Book, the closing verses (*vv.* 13f.) being probably the latest element of all.

At the outset the Preacher throws into full light his general view of life. 'Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, all is vanity' (i. 2). And this judgment is deduced from the constant flux of Nature and life. Things ebb and flow. The sun rises and sets, then 'pants' wearily backward to the place from which he came. The winds turn continually upon their circuits. The waters pour down to the sea, which yet is never full. The generations come and

by commentators, who sought to explain them by the theory of conflicting moods, or by such an analogy as Tennyson's 'Two Voices.' But the contrasts are too strong, and often too abrupt, to be thus dissolved away. Bickell and Haupt attempted to solve the problem by the hypothesis of radical dislocations in the text; and Siegfried followed them up by his remarkable theory of interpolations, according to which the work of the original pessimistic Preacher (Q^1) was overlaid successively by an Epicurean Sadducee (Q^2), a 'Wisdom' and a 'pious' glossator (Q^3 and Q^4), besides certain other glossators (Q^5) whose work cannot be individualized. Although such extreme hypotheses have failed to carry conviction, the presence of later interpolations is now generally admitted. Both Peake and Davidson recognize qualifications of Ecclesiastes' view in iii. 17; xi. 9*c*; xii. 1*a*, as well as in the Epilogue. McFadyen goes somewhat further; while the latest commentators, McNeile and Barton, in addition to 'Wisdom' enrichments, trace the hand of the orthodox annotator also in ii. 26; vii. 18*b*, 26*b*, 29, and viii. 2*b*, 3*a*, 5, 6*a*, 11–13, most of which passages, in direct contrast to the general tenor of the Book, emphasize the certainty of Divine judgment. The elimination of these verses offers a simple solution of the difficulties, while preserving the essential integrity of the text.

go. The past are forgotten, and the present must in their turn also pass into oblivion. Thus man has no profit of all the labour at which he laboureth under the sun. For no result can come of his work. 'There is no new thing under the sun' (i. 3ff.).

The same depressing conviction is borne out by the writer's varied experience of life. The search for wisdom to which he devoted the enthusiasm of his young manhood is 'a sad toil that God hath given the sons of men to toil thereat' and as vain and profitless as it is hard. For with all man's wisdom the crooked cannot be made straight, nor that which is wanting filled in and numbered. 'I perceived that this also was but striving after wind'—a quest that brings one nowhere near the goal, and has no return but that of increased pain. 'For in much wisdom is much grief; and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow' (i. 12ff.). To a soul thus wearied with thought the rewards of pleasure seem doubly attractive. Thus Ḳoheleth gave himself with zest to the enjoyments of the banquet and the vine, and all that wealth could purchase of social comfort and delights. But the end was the same. Surfeit brought satiety, and that *ennui* and disgust of pleasure. 'I said of laughter, It is mad, and of mirth, What is the good of it?' And when he looked on all his possessions and enjoyments, 'behold, all was vanity and a striving after

wind ; and there was no profit under the sun ' (ii. 1ff.). As the wise man then quietly surveyed the diverse courses he had followed, it seemed to him that wisdom excelled folly, ' even as light excelleth darkness.' For the wise man had eyes in his head, while the fool stumbled along in the darkness. But again his joy in wisdom was short-lived. For there was no difference in the end. ' The same event happeneth to both of them.' The wise man died just like the fool. And after death there was no remembrance of either of them, ' inasmuch as in the days to come both will have been forgotten ' (ii. 12ff.). The highways of duty lead to the same result. Man may toil and strive, and give of his finest wisdom and skill to his works ; yet he must leave it all behind him, perhaps to a fool who shall squander his inheritance. ' This also is vanity.' Thus there seems nothing better for a man than ' that he should eat and drink, and find enjoyment in his labours.' And this, the Preacher feels, is the end of life ordained by God Himself, who has made everything ' beautiful in its time,' yet has imposed fixed barriers on human interests and activities, and therewith also implanted the sense of ' eternity ' in men's hearts, ' so that man cannot find out the work that God hath done from the beginning to the end.' It is useless, therefore, for man to struggle against his fate. ' What God doeth, it is for ever ;

nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it.' Let every man, then, 'eat and drink, and enjoy good in all his labour,' seeing in this 'the gift of God' (ii. 18ff.).

If we cast our eyes over the broader stage of life, the same weariness and vanity appear on every hand. In the place of judgment stands wickedness triumphant. On the high roads of life are violence and oppression, made more poignant by 'the tears of such as are oppressed,' and have no comforter to uphold them. And even where happiness is found, it is for so short a time. Inevitable destiny strikes down the righteous and the wicked, the happy and the miserable alike. 'For that befalleth the sons of men which befalleth the beasts; the same thing befalleth them. As the one dieth, so dieth the other. They have all the same breath. And man hath no advantage over the beasts; for all is vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all return to dust again' (iii. 16ff.).[1] Life is so uncertain and

[1] 'The life of the great majority is only a constant struggle for this existence itself, with the certainty of losing it at last. But what enables them to endure this wearisome battle is not so much the love of life as the fear of death, which yet stands in the background as inevitable, and may come upon them at any moment. Life itself is a sea, full of rocks and whirlpools, which man avoids with the greatest care and solicitude, although he knows that, even if he succeeds in getting through with all his efforts and skill, he yet by doing so comes nearer at every step to the greatest, the total, inevitable, and irremediable shipwreck, death; nay, even steers right upon it: this is the final goal of

miserable, indeed, that the Preacher is inclined to praise the dead that are already dead and gone more than the living that are yet alive ; and better than both he counts the untimely birth that has never been in this miserable world to see the evil that is done under the sun (iv. 2f.). Many other instances he accumulates of the vanity of life : the rich man who has no son or brother to whom he may leave his wealth, ' yet is there no end to all his labour, neither are his eyes satisfied with wealth ' (iv. 8), the instability of position, and the fickleness of the mob (iv. 13ff.), the impossibility of securing justice in the State (v. 8f.), the carking care that accompanies all increase of worldly goods (v. 11), the nakedness in which the richest must return to the earth's womb that gave him birth (v. 15), the difficulty of knowing what is really good for man during ' the days of his vain life ' (vi. 12), the oblivion that sweeps away the righteous and their works, for how often has the wise man seen the wicked buried in honour, and their names handed down for perpetual praise, while it happened to the righteous according to the just reward of the wicked (viii. 10ff.), the uncertainties of fortune, the race falling not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither bread

the laborious voyage, and worse for him than all the rocks from which he has escaped.'—Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Idea*, E.T., I. 403.

to the wise, nor riches to the prudent, nor favour to the skilled, for 'as the fishes are taken in the net, and the birds caught in the snare, even so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them' (ix. 11f.), the base ingratitude of men to the saviours of their city and homes (ix. 13ff.), the misery of unjust or weak government (x. 5ff.), and the heavy, weary weight 'of all this unintelligible world,' for 'as thou knowest not the way of the wind, nor the growth of the bones in the womb of her that is with child, so canst thou know not the work of God, who maketh all things' (xi. 5). And the Book ends as it began: 'Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher; all is vanity' (xii. 8).

The general tone of Ecclesiastes, then, is pessimistic. We might almost be reading Schopenhauer's judgment that 'life presents itself as a continual deception in small things as in great,' that the conviction inevitably borne in upon us from every side is 'that nothing at all is worth our striving, our efforts and struggles, that all good things are vanity, the world in all its ends bankrupt, and life a business which does not cover its expenses.'[1] The more rigid critics have not hesitated, therefore, to class the two thinkers under the same category. In Dr. Dillon's words, 'Ḳoheleth's conception of life, its pleasures and pains, is as clearly and emphatically

[1] *Op. cit.*, III. 382f.

expressed as that of the Buddha or of Schopenhauer. He is an uncompromising pessimist, who sees the world as it is. Everything that seems pleasant or profitable is vanity and a grasping of wind; there is nothing positive but pain, nothing real but the eternal Will, which is certainly unknowable and probably unconscious. . . . When all has been said and done, the highest worldly wisdom is but a less harmful species of folly. Existence is an evil, and the sole effective remedy renunciation.' [1]

In connexion with Agur's riddles, however, we have noted that the very agnosticism of the Hebrews is religious. The baffled thinker may despair of ever knowing God's ways; yet God Himself remains the eternal Rock of the good man's faith and life. The pessimism of the Hebrews was equally religious. The Preacher might find life vanity and disillusionment; and yet his belief in God would stand the shock. There is certainly no enthusiasm in his faith. Thought and satiety have chilled the warmer impulses of devotion. God is no longer the gracious Friend, near to comfort and bless the thirsting soul, but a great Monarch on His throne above, whom men can only reverence and 'fear' (v. 2ff.). But even such pale and cheerless faith may keep one clean in heart, and true to the compass of honest duty. Koheleth's moral principles read like undiluted Epicur-

[1] *Sceptics of the Old Testament*, pp. 113ff.

eanism. But when touched by the fear of God, his Epicureanism becomes, not indeed the heroic virtue of the prophet or saint, but at all events decent moderate morality. For Ḳoheleth the true course of wisdom lies in the avoidance of extremes on either side. 'Be not righteous overmuch'—strive after no impossible ideals of goodness; 'neither make thyself overwise'—struggle not to penetrate mysteries that are too high for thee; 'for why shouldest thou destroy thyself?' But, on the other hand, 'be not overmuch wicked, neither give way to folly (or, godlessness); for why shouldest thou die before thy time?' (vii. 16f.). And this principle reduces itself in practice to the steady pursuit of sanctified common sense on the beaten track of life. Ḳoheleth's practical philosophy is perhaps best summed up in the following paragraph: 'Go, eat thy bread with gladness, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for already hath God accepted thy works. In every season let thy garments be white (or, festal), and let not oil upon thy head be lacking. Enjoy life with the woman thou lovest all the days of thy vain life that He giveth thee under the sun; for this is thy portion in life, through all thy labour at which thou labourest under the sun. All that thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work nor reckoning, no knowledge or wisdom, in Sheol, whither thou goest' (ix. 7ff.).

To the man who pursues this principle Ḳoheleth can promise a real measure of happiness. For, after all, life is good, if only men use it worthily. Though God has imposed on life its resistless round of time and season, 'He hath made everything beautiful (or, fitting) in its season.' And the man who accepts his destiny in a calm and thankful spirit will find abiding joy in life. The Preacher will have none of the pessimistic croakings that the world is growing steadily worse. 'Say not thou, How is it that the former days were better than these? For not in wisdom dost thou ask this question' (vii. 10). As the winding current of his reflections draws nearer the end, he seems even to feel something of his old delight in life returning. 'Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun' (xi. 7). And at the close he rises clear above the prosaic temper of his preaching to a rapture of fine Oriental poetry.

Rejoice, young man, in thy youth,
And be glad in the days of thy prime;
Yea, walk in the ways of thy heart, and the sight of thine eyes.
Put sorrow from thy heart,
And evil remove from thy flesh—
For youth and ripe strength are but vanity— [1]
Ere the evil days be come,
Or the years draw nigh when thou sayest,
'No pleasure I find in them';

[1] On the omissions from the text, cf. p. 335, *n.*

Or ever the sun be darkened,
The light, and the moon, and the stars,
And the clouds return after rain ;
In the day when the keepers tremble,
And the men of might bend downward ;
The grinding-maids cease because they are few,
And the ladies that look from the windows are darkened ;
And the doors are closed to the street,
And the sound of the mill is low ;
And the voice of the sparrow is faint,
And the daughters of song are laid prostrate ;
When man shrinks from all that is high,
And terrors are in the way ;
And the almond-tree is in bloom,
And the grass-hopper draggeth, and the caper is fruitless ;
For man wendeth his way to his everlasting home,
And the mourners move through the street ;
Ere the silver cord be snapped,
And the golden bowl be broken ;
And the pitcher be shivered over the spring,
And the draw-wheel fall broken into the cistern ;
And the dust return to earth as it was,
And the spirit return to God who gave it (xi. 9ff.).[1]

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[1] The poem pictures the decaying powers of old age under a variety of images. The darkening of the sun, moon, and stars clearly suggests the falling light of life ; the keepers of the house are the once strong hands and arms, and the ' men of might ' the legs and feet ; the grinding-maids are as evidently the teeth, and the ladies of the window the eyes ; the closed doors are most probably the tightly compressed lips of old age, and the mill is the mouth. In the next couplet we should read a word like יִקּוֹד, *bow, grow faint,* for יָקוּם *he ariseth,* both lines suggesting the thin, unmusical utterance of the old. The following verse depicts the fear with which he faces difficulties on the way. The bloom of the almond-tree is a metaphor for the whitening hair, and the grass-hopper probably figurative of the once alert joints and springs, while the caper-berry is a favourite Eastern stimulant,

Thus Ecclesiastes leaves us involved in the same antinomy as Agur. Neither has been able to round the circle. Their speculative world may be likened rather to an ellipse revolving round two separate foci. Such antinomies are no doubt grave defects in a speculative system. But the besetting sin of philosophers is to round the circle at the expense of vital facts. The Hebrew thinkers are loyal to different aspects of truth. They may not be able to reconcile faith in their fathers' God with the perplexing problems of life. But they refuse to yield to the temptation of a premature or one-sided solution. The tenacity with which moral realists like Agur and Ḳoheleth held fast to faith amid all that was dark and depressing in life is a striking proof of the invincible hope of Israel. In Cornill's judgment 'the piety of the Old Testament never celebrated a greater triumph than in the Book of Ḳoheleth.[1] But the world of faith cannot remain forever an ellipse. A just conception of God must harmonize with the facts of life. And already in the additions

which now fails to excite the appetite. The silver cord, the golden bowl, and the pitcher and draw-wheel are other symbols for the life which vanishes with the severance of the spirit from the dust. In this latter verse there is no real hope of immortality expressed. Death is conceived in terms of Gen. ii. 7, where life is given through the 'breath' or 'spirit' of God, and comes to a natural end when God takes back His 'spirit.'

[1] *Einleitung*[5], p. 280.

to Ḳoheleth the attempt is made to reach this higher view. The problem is still more resolutely attacked in the later Wisdom of Solomon (*c.* 100–50 B.C.). The second chapter of this Book is a direct protest against the Preacher's low, materialistic theory of life. But the real advance of Wisdom starts from one of Ḳoheleth's own most pregnant thoughts. The impossibility of knowing God's works 'from the begining to the end' he had connected with the sense of 'eternity' that God had implanted in the heart. To Ḳoheleth, indeed, this feeling but induced

> 'obstinate questionings
> Of sense and outward things,
> Fallings from us, vanishings;
> Blank misgivings of a Creature
> Moving about in worlds not realized.'

But to deeper reflection these same misgivings are real 'intimations of Immortality.' This inevitable outcome of the sense of 'eternity' is clearly perceived by the author of Wisdom. Even for the bravest of the Psalmists immortality had been a leap in the dark. In Wisdom it is an assured hope.

For God created man to be immortal,
and made him an image of His own Being (ii. 23).

The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God,
and there shall no torment touch them.
In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to die,
and their going was counted an evil,
their departure from us destruction.

But they are in peace.
For though in men's sight they have suffered the penalty,
yet is their hope full of immortality (iii. 1ff.).

There is still, no doubt, an antinomy in the world of faith. The glories of the life beyond are rather set in contrast with the troubles of this present time than viewed as the full fruition of faith. In another passage of Wisdom (viii. 17) immortality is directly involved in the good man's spiritual alliance with wisdom. But the ripe development of this thought is reached only in Christian mysticism. For here 'eternity' is not merely projected into the future, but made a real abiding inheritance of all the sons of God. 'This is life eternal, that they should know thee, the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ' (John xvii. 3).

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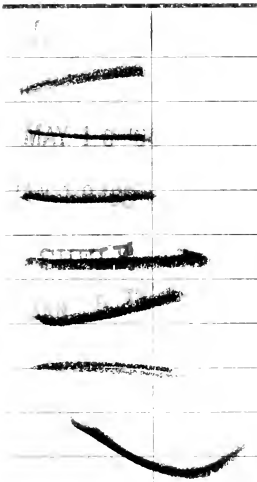

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