

REASONABLE
BIBLICAL CRITICISM



WILLIS J. BEECHER

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REASONABLE BIBLICAL
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Reasonable Biblical Criticism

By
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PREFACE

Plenty of books and articles have been published in defense of the orthodox ideas concerning the Bible, meaning by defense the confuting of the arguments that are urged against them. Some of these defenses are impregnable, and do not need to be supplemented. There is another need, however, that has not been so adequately met, the need described in the fourth chapter of this book, the need of so setting forth the orthodox ideas that they shall appeal to the thinking of the present generation, and shall make the study of the Bible a live study. The present little volume is an attempt to meet this need.

The matters treated are too extensive to be dealt with completely, save in a work of many volumes. The attempt now made is to give a concise treatment that shall be at once comprehensive and concrete; instead of presenting a logically complete outline, it presents a succession of topics that are typical in their character. The first six chapters establish a point of view, and call attention to recognized principles; the remaining chapters discuss selected instances illustrative of these facts and principles. The instances have purposely been taken from

different regions in the field of Bible study. It is hoped that by this plan it may be possible to make an interesting use of details.

Chapters VIII, IX, XII, XIII, XVII, XVIII have been rewritten from articles published in *The Sunday School Times* or other periodicals.

PART I
POINT OF VIEW AND PRINCIPLES OF
REASONABLE CRITICISM

CHAPTER I

AGNOSTIC AND CRYPTOAGNOSTIC CRITICISM

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PART I

THE POINT OF VIEW AND THE PRINCIPLES
OF REASONABLE CRITICISM

CHAPTER I

AGNOSTIC AND CRYPTOAGNOSTIC CRITICISM

Agnosticism defined. Cryptoagnosticism defined. These terms not intended opprobriously. Agnosticism and cryptoagnosticism as related to the so-called Modern View. The criterion. No individuals here classified as agnostic or cryptoagnostic. The matter, however, concrete and real. Instances for illustration: From Cornill's "Prophets of Israel." From Baldwin Lectures of 1909. From Wellhausen. From Encyclopedia article. Discussion of the instances. The term "Etiological." Amateur cryptoagnosticism. Practical importance of the subject. Literature of the subject.

From the point of view of the men who take pride in being agnostics, an agnostic is a person who is conscious that he does not know the things which he has no means of knowing. An agnosticism that really conformed to this definition would be commendable. Great mischief is done by persons who think they know, or pretend they know, in cases when the evidence does not justify knowledge. Sincerity is a virtue, and being conscious of ignorance is sometimes a virtue.

The term is commonly used, however, with a specifically religious application. An atheist **Agnosticism** affirms that there is no God; an agnostic affirms that we do not know whether God exists. The Century Dictionary defines an agnostic as "one of a class of thinkers who disclaims any knowledge of God or of the ultimate nature of things"; one who holds that concerning these "we have no right

to assert anything whatever." The opinions of agnostics range all the way from "a state of suspended judgment" to the positive holding that God is "not merely now unknown, but must always remain unknowable" (Romanes, cited in *Cent. Dic.*). Of course, an agnostic is precluded from regarding the Scriptures as an especial revelation from Deity. His position on that question is necessarily either that of agnosticism or of denial.

There are many who avowedly take a strictly agnostic position in regard to the Scriptures. There are others who are in a greater or less degree agnostic, though they try to conceal the fact, and in some cases are themselves doubtless unconscious of it. In what they publish they are less bold, less pronounced, than the more thoroughgoing and consistent agnostics. They try to hold many of the agnostic positions without parting entirely from the traditional ideas of the sacredness of the Bible. They have much in common with the conservative lovers of the Bible. This, however, renders their attacks the more dangerous, coming thus from enemies concealed within the camp. Using an obvious and well-known process of compounding words, I venture to call such men "Cryptoagnostic."

I do not intend the term as one of opprobrium. In certain quarters such terms as Methodist or Presbyterian are used opprobriously, but all the same a true Methodist is proud of the name, and a true Presbyterian is proud of the name. The large majority in Christendom believe that we have genuine knowledge both concerning

God and concerning the Scriptures as a revelation from him, and that the contrary opinion is erroneous and deserving of disapproval; but that does not change the fact that if a person holds the said contrary opinion, and claims to hold it honestly and conscientiously, he ought to be proud of being called by the name that correctly designates his position. For honor or dishonor the name belongs to him; if he flinches from it, that is a confession that he is not quite satisfied with his position.

Agnostic or cryptoagnostic criticism are not of necessity precisely the same thing with what is currently called the newer criticism or the Modern View; but unfortunately the Modern View is saturated with agnostic elements.

Agnosticism and the Modern View Many of the important articles in the "Encyclopedia Biblica" are from the point of view of men who would not shrink from being called agnostic. In the articles in several other recent books of reference, in such a volume as Driver's "Introduction," and in a multitude of other books and articles, there is an element of agnosticism less outspoken, less sustained, less consistent. This is true even of many works which are relatively so conservative that the bolder advocates of the Modern View regard them as mere compromise. In this little volume I am not attacking the Modern View as such, but only the agnostic or cryptoagnostic elements in it.

The criterion of agnosticism or cryptoagnosticism in connection with the Scriptures is the denial of their truthfulness. If men know anything concerning God, they know that he is true. That the Supreme Being falsifies is unthinkable. If a person consistently believes that God

has given the Scriptures as an especial revelation of himself, that person must, irrespective of all theories of inspiration, hold that the Scriptures are truthful. It is not

necessary to hold this in any finical or mechanical way. The ideas of truthfulness set forth in the next chapter are certainly reasonable. Any criticism which unduly assumes or affirms the lack of truthfulness in the Scriptures is thereby marked as either agnostic or crypto-agnostic.

I do not classify individuals. I do not say of any person that he is either agnostic or cryptoagnostic. On the contrary, I have coined this latter word in order to relieve myself of the responsibility of making a classification. It is peculiarly true of living critical scholars that no two hold precisely the same views. A man may be agnostic or cryptoagnostic in some points, and evangelical in other points. I have to deal with agnosticism or cryptoagnosticism in the utterances of men, but I abstain from characterizing the men. If their utterances classify them, I have no responsibility for that.

This disclaimer does not imply that the matters under discussion are merely academic or hypothetical or imaginary; they are as concrete as anything can be. The cryptoagnostic criticism is one of the great phenomena in the thinking of the present generation. It is being pushed by a propaganda that is wonderfully effective. It is thoroughly real; its opponents regard it as a calamitous reality.

Few volumes on the newer criticism have wider cir-

culuation than Professor Cornill's "Prophets of Israel." In this book, page 31, Dr. Cornill thus states the view

held by men of his class: "The Israel-
Instances itish narrative, as it lies before us in the books of the Old Testament, gives a thoroughly one-sided, and in many respects incorrect, picture of the profane history, and on the other hand an absolutely false representation of the religious history of the people, and has thus made the discovery of the truth well-nigh impossible."

Note this statement carefully. Dr. Cornill does not say that the Old Testament writers may here and there have inadvertently made a mistake, or that there may be elements of fiction or of figure of speech in the Scriptures, which men have mistaken for literal fact. What he says is that the secular history is exceedingly untrustworthy, while the religious history is utterly false.

In the *Brooklyn Eagle* for June 7, 1909, is a review of the Baldwin lectures for the year, delivered at the University of Michigan. It makes the following quotations among others:

"The patriarchs are legendary beings. . . . As yet, we have no evidence of Israel's sojourn in Goshen. . . . The popular idea of the exodus has no foundation in fact. . . . The Gospels contain 2,899 verses; of these only about one hundred furnish strict biographical details. . . . Our information about Jesus . . . is scanty in the extreme. . . . We do not know what Jesus' descent was. . . . We do not know his birth-place for certain. . . . We do not know his age at the time he undertook his mission. We have no absolute

certainty that any single saying in the Gospels was uttered in that precise form by Jesus. . . . We do not know when or where he was crucified. . . . We do not know exactly what claims he made with respect to his mission on earth."

The great German critic, Wellhausen, is commonly reported to have compared his own teachings with those of certain Scottish scholars, in the following language:

"I knew the Old Testament was a fraud, but I never dreamt, as these Scotch fellows do, of making God a party to the fraud."

One of the writers of the article on Jesus Christ in the new Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia says that the Gospel according to John has only "a slender modicum of underlying historic tradition." He says that the account in the Gospels of the events that followed the Lord's supper "is relatively vague and self-contradictory." Of what actually happened he says:

"The four canonical Gospels have uniformly canceled the story of this fundamental event in the history of the Christian religion in favor of more concrete, more tangible and marvelous tales of the empty tomb and reappearance of Jesus in palpable form."

Do not mistake the meaning of this assertion. It is that the four Evangelists have "uniformly" suppressed all account of what actually took place, substituting for it the "marvelous tales," now found in the Gospels, concerning the burial and resurrection of Jesus.

I have purposely taken one of these four instances from a newspaper, and one from a source which I have not verified, so that I present it merely as common

report. It would be easy to copy authentic instances by the hundred; but it is more important to observe that these ideas are public property—not the lucubrations of some scholar in a closet, but strenuously taught and generally discussed. The person who calls attention to them, and sounds an alarm, is not thereby marked as a narrow and panicky conservative; he is simply an observer who sees what is visible.

The utterances just quoted are not particularly extreme, and are far from being exceptional. Such utterances abound. And many who refrain from being thus outspoken yet follow practices that are not less derogatory to the truthfulness of the Scriptures. When they are treating subjects they reject scriptural statements of fact, one after another, to an extent that utterly discredits the Scriptures as a source of information. They do this not in the case of miracles only, but in the case of ordinary historical facts; not in regard to the pentateuch only, but in regard to the whole Bible; not for the Old Testament only, but also for the New. They declare that the actual early history of the religion of Jehovah was something very different from that recorded in the Old and New Testaments—different in its outline, different in a large portion of its details. Their rejection of biblical statements of fact is not merely incidental and exceptional; it is an essential part of the theories they defend, and without it the theories collapse.

Among critics of this type the term “etiological” has come largely into use. An etiological narrative is one which has been invented in order to account for some existing fact or phenomenon. The Gospels and the Book

of Acts, it is said, are collections of etiological stories—not authentic narratives concerning the founders of Christianity, but narratives that were invented for the purpose of accounting for the Christian doctrines and

Etiology practices that had become prevalent in the early centuries. Similarly, they say, nearly all the Old Testament narratives are directly or indirectly etiological—stories invented to explain the origin of usages that were familiar to the inventors. Etiological narratives, they tell us, may range all the way from those which approximately give sober facts to those which are absurdly fanciful; but they are not history, though it may in some cases be possible to infer historical truth from them.

In a civilization like ours the public discussions of a subject are not carried on exclusively by persons who are familiar with the subject. Often the

Amateur Crypto-agnosticism major part of the discussion is by the editors or correspondents or contributors who begin their articles with the formula, "The present writer is not an expert in these matters, but." This has been decidedly the case in the discussions on biblical matters; they have been in the hands of amateurs on the one side or the other. No one should complain of this fact; it is a wholesome thing that amateurs should be interested. But the fact should lead some persons to be more careful than they are as to the statements they accept. For some years past scholars have been relatively reticent on the questions concerning criticism that are most before the public; most of the articles, and even some of the volumes, have been written by the amateurs.

For some reason a person sees fit to take a stand on these subjects, though he has not given them careful attention.

When one does this he has to take sides. If he were qualified to decide the questions on the evidence he might stand by himself, but he is not so qualified. All he can do is to adopt or attack some existing view. Some of the amateurs are on the conservative side; those who are on the other side are there for various reasons. One has taken offense at what seemed to him the unreasonableness of certain orthodox persons or organizations, and has deemed that a sufficient reason for lining himself up on the opposite side, without taking the trouble to find out what the teachings on that side are. Another is full of the idea of the superiority of the present over the past; he professes allegiance to certain critical views, not because he has investigated and found them true, but because he has been told that they are up to date. Then, again, there are persons who really do not seem to feel that they are grown up until they have proved their prowess by shying stones at what they suppose to be the glass windows of orthodoxy. The best prescription for one of these cases of amateur cryptoagnosticism might be that the patient take a course of reading before he again rushes into print, and thus learn what the teachings he advocates really are. Meanwhile, we all need to be very careful in the use we make of the printed statements we find.

Probably the most harmful vice of the amateur cryptoagnosticism is its treating the issues at stake as if they were not very important, as if they were mere cases of hair-splitting. All well-informed persons know the con-

trary; the questions are vital, and the situation serious. Our confidence in the Bible as a source of information determines our confidence in most of the teachings which we are accustomed to regard as the great truths of religion; concerning many of these the knowledge we have from other sources than the Bible is mere speculation. It is not by accident that agnosticism concerning the Scriptures is accompanied by agnosticism concerning the fundamentals in morals and religion.

The Issues not Frivolous

The recent decades have been a time of wonderful progress in many matters connected with Christian study and work; and yet it is a disputed question whether Christianity is now slowly advancing, or is at a stand, or is actually retrograding. How can we account for this strange fact? There is just one answer to this question: the current trend toward agnosticism is so strong that it mainly neutralizes the push of the forces that make for advance. Our struggle with agnosticism is a life or death struggle.

A concise sketch of the critical thought-movement of the past two and a half centuries is "The Elements of the Higher Criticism," by Prof. A. C. Zenos. Good information, compactly given, may be found in "The Study of Holy Scripture," by Prof. C. A. Briggs. The literature of the subject, however, is voluminous, amounting in bulk to whole libraries. All the recent Bible Dictionaries and Religious Encyclopedias have articles on all the important critical topics, with references to volumes and articles—to those on both sides of the subjects that are

in controversy. Some of the matters presented in this chapter are treated more fully in "Recent Developments in Biblical Criticism," *Homiletic Review*, June, 1900, and in "The Old Tradition and the New," *Congregationalist*, March 7, 1903, and *Bible Student and Teacher*, January, 1904.

CHAPTER II

THE GREAT PRESENT-DAY QUESTION: ARE THE SCRIPTURES TRUE?

Introduction:—In what sense is this the great question? The dividing line. I. Points in definition of truthfulness. 1. Ideas may be true, equally with facts. 2. Human elements in the Scriptures. 3. Points in which there is room for difference of opinion. 4. Need of drawing the line correctly, and maintaining it. II. Illustrative instances. 1. Naturalistic explanations of incidents. The Red Sea. Sodom and Gomorrah. Joseph's seven years. 2. Naturalistic elements connected with inspiration. 3. Elements of fiction or figure of speech. 4. Inadvertent errors of fact. 5. Responsibility in cases of quotation. 6. Inexcusable procedures: Gratuitous rejection of statements. Interpretations that discredit. Preferences that discredit. Biblical testimony to authorship. Biblical account of the history. Conclusion: Accepting the ordinary truthfulness of the Scriptures will result in the acceptance of their higher truthfulness. Historicity not an unimportant detail. Literature.

To-day the most pressing question concerning the Scriptures is whether they are normally truthful. I do not say that this question is in itself more important than the question whether they are divinely inspired, or the question in what sense they are inspired, or whether inspiration guarantees to them extraordinary truthfulness, or more important than questions concerning their spiritual power or their appeal to human experience. One question may be more important at one time, and another question at another time; the question now more to the front than any other is simply whether, in fact, the statements found in the Bible are ordinarily true.

Here lies the boundary line between existing schools of criticism. Critical opinions which regard the biblical statements as ordinarily trustworthy lie on one side of the line, while those which regard the biblical statements as pretty generally untrustworthy lie on the other side of the line. This constitutes the great distinction. Other distinctions are of minor importance.

**Division Line
in Criticism**

This seems very simple. It is really not so simple but that it needs definition.

1. Ideas may be true, equally with facts. One who holds that the Scriptures are truthful should hold that what they present as fact is true to fact, and what they present as parable or proverb or figure of speech or fiction in any other form is true as a presentation of true ideas.

2. The Scriptures, however divine, are professedly given to us through fallible human persons—authors, translators, copymakers and others.

**Errors of
Inadvertence**

Therefore, if there exist in them such minor errors as honest and competent witnesses are liable to make, that does not necessarily detract from their truthfulness. One who holds that the Scriptures are truthful should be conscious of these limitations. This will not prevent his holding that the original text was remarkably free from mistaken statements, or his insisting that no part of the existing text is to be discredited except for sufficient reasons.

3. In the case of many clauses and passages there is room for honest difference of opinion as to whether they are literal or figurative, fact or parable. Also there is

in many instances room for honest difference of opinion as to whether errors have found their way into the text which we use. One who holds the Scriptures to be truth-

**Honest
Differences**

ful should not regard a person as on the side of the enemy merely because the two differ on many points of this kind. But if any one habitually, and without proof, takes it for granted that statements made in the Bible are untrue, that shows that he belongs in the opposite camp.

4. The line thus drawn is important. We who believe in the truthfulness of the Scriptures should welcome as on the right side many whose opinions **The Conflict Real** differ, and even differ importantly, from ours; but we should not forget that there is also a wrong side. We need not be bitter to those who are on the wrong side, but we should take pains to have it understood that the conflict between their views and the truth seems to us to be irreconcilable.

Clear as these distinctions seem, there is actually nothing in regard to which the minds of people are more confused. In order to be sure that we understand, let us apply the distinctions in certain illustrative details.

1. One who accepts the Scriptures as truthful is not necessarily inconsistent if, treating the Bible text fairly, **Naturalistic Interpretations** he explains by natural law some events that have commonly been regarded as miraculous; though he is inconsistent if he rejects or distorts Bible passages in order to get rid of miracle.

Seventy years ago Dr. Edward Robinson called attention to certain physical phenomena connected with the Red

Sea, and showed how remarkably these fit into the statements made in Exodus concerning the crossing of the sea by Israel. In this he was not impugning the truthfulness of the Bible narrative. If one holds that the withdrawal of the water can be accounted for by natural causes, that does not discredit a sentence of the biblical account; he

simply has a different understanding of the account from that of the person who thinks that the water was withdrawn by miracle. The event still remains, as wonderful a divine interposition as any miracle could be. Similar statements might be made concerning Sir J. W. Dawson's explanation of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah as due to the sinking of a large tract of territory into subterranean deposits of bituminous products; or concerning Dr. G. F. Wright's explanation of Joseph's seven years of famine as due to the Nile's becoming obstructed, with the flooding of tens of thousands of square miles of territory up the stream, and the consequent diminishing of the rise of the river in Egypt. Such explanations, if made in good faith, are not attacks on either the truthfulness or the superhuman character of the Scriptures. They have the contrary effect. There is room for difference of opinion as to whether the men who give the explanations have made out their case; but if they have, they have set the seal of modern science to the truthfulness of these parts of the Bible, proving conclusively that they are not untrustworthy legend, but are reports of actual events, correct and graphic from the point of view of the persons who saw the events.

This view maintains the truthfulness of the Scriptures

equally with the view that the events were miracles. The men on the wrong side are those who insist that the narratives are accounts of miracles, and therefore are not credible; or those who carelessly reject or neglect the narratives as being of the nature of folklore. There is no peril in seeking naturalistic explanations of Bible events, provided one reverently and truly follows the record. The element of miracle will remain wherever the record justifies it. This is a very different process from that in which one assumes that miracles never occur, and then manipulates or discredits the record in order to validate that assumption.

2. One is not necessarily on the wrong side if he goes as far as the evidence will permit in giving naturalistic explanations of the origin of the Scriptures, and even of the divine element that entered into them. There are analogies between the way in which God has given us the Scriptures and the way in which he gives other blessings. One is on the wrong side, however, if in the interest of such an explanation he rejects or distorts parts of the testimony, or if he bases his contention on the idea that God is the slave rather than the master of natural law.

**Natural Factors
in the Scriptures**

Inspiration implies the influence of the Spirit of God upon the inspired author. But, as we shall see in the next chapter, it also implies that that author is the subject of ordinary providential leadings; and that providential leadings and divine spiritual influences have alike entered into the events with which the inspired author has to deal. The divine element has come into the Scriptures in all these ways. Some of the experiences con-

nected with inspired authorship are analogous to other human experiences. It is possible for one to find the Scriptures very human without thereby finding them any the less divine. There is room for honest difference of opinion in the framing of doctrines of inspiration. The man on the wrong side is the man who fails to recognize inspiration as a fact, a fact differentiating the Scriptures from all other writings.

3. One is not necessarily on the wrong side if he interprets as fiction or as figure of speech some parts of the Bible which we have been accustomed to interpret as fact. But he is on the wrong side if he bases such an interpretation on the assumption that miracles never occur; or if he fortifies it by alleging that the passages so interpreted are untrue in their details; or if he confuses religious parable with meaningless folklore; or if in any way he treats the passage as falsified fact rather than as a story constructed for teaching purposes.

If we hold that Jesus taught by parables, we are precluded from denying that the prophets who wrote the books of Jonah and Daniel may supposably have intended to teach by parables. As to the question how far the element of fiction has actually entered into the Old Testament, there is room for reasonable difference of opinion. The man on the wrong side is the man who says that these stories were intended to be taken as fact, but are untrue.

4. One is not necessarily on the wrong side if he finds some actual errors of fact in the Bible, even though some of these errors may have a degree of importance. The

**Fiction and
Figure in the Bible**

principle applies to supposable errors in the autographs, as well as in copies or translations, though an error in the autograph would be a more serious matter than one in a copy. In the nature of things, it seems impossible to prove that any particular error existed in the autographs, but even if it did, the record might nevertheless be remarkably truthful.

**Errors of Fact
in the Bible**

Our book of Chronicles says that Ahaziah was forty-two years old when he began to reign, and that Jehoiachin was eight years old (2 Chron. 22 : 2; 36 : 9). The corresponding numbers in Kings are twenty-two and eighteen (2 Kings 8 : 26; 24 : 8). No one doubts that two of these four numbers are erroneous. But such errors are rare, and do not affect the character of the record for truthfulness. Indeed, there is a respect in which they have a positive value in attesting the truth of the record; for they indicate that copyists have copied the records accurately, not yielding to the temptation to change them so as to make them agree. If errors were so numerous or so important as to indicate that the records have been unscrupulously or carelessly made or transmitted, that would be another matter. But such kinds and degrees of error do not exist; and one may be on the right side of the question of the truthfulness of the Scriptures, and yet have his mind open to any genuine proof that they contain some errors of detail.

One is on the wrong side, however, if without cogent reasons he rejects or changes what seem to him intended statements of fact found in the Bible.

5. A more complex question is that concerning errors

of fact or of teaching found in documents that have been copied into the Scriptures.

Some cases of this kind are clear. For example, we find in the book of Ezra (4 : 7-16) a copy of the letter written by Bishlam and his companions
Bishlam's Letter to the Persian king. The letter contains false statements. Its falsity is one of the reasons for its being preserved by being incorporated into the Scriptures. Guided by the Spirit the Scripture writer saw that this was the right way to make up his record. He does not indorse the falsehood he reports, and he is in no way responsible for it. This and similar cases present no difficulty.

How is it with the one hundred thirty-seventh Psalm, and with some of the other imprecatory Psalms? Do these belong in the Bible through the
Difficult Psalms inspiration of their authors, or through that of the men who collected and arranged the book of Psalms? If you put the worst interpretation on the meaning of these Psalms, if you regard the temper displayed in them as far from saintly, they none the less vividly teach historical facts and ethical lessons that are vital. They teach by way of warning as well as of example. May we hold that it was for these reasons that they were incorporated into the Scriptures, and not because the divine Spirit prompted the original utterance of them? Is the finding of fault with their contents necessarily a finding of fault with the Scriptures?

Or again, no one doubts that the writers of our existing Bible narratives drew their materials in part from

earlier written sources. Probably no one would claim that the original sources were in all cases guided by inspiration. If we suppose that there were errors in some of the sources, how far are we to hold the inspired writers

**Responsibility
for the Sources** responsible for discovering and correcting the errors? If they wrote under the influence of the Spirit, they of course dealt with their sources intelligently and in good faith; does the Spirit guarantee their work beyond this?

The answer to these questions depends on a simple principle. The Scripture writers are responsible for the statements of their sources so far forth as their using them may fairly be regarded as an indorsement of them. The practical application of this principle would not always be simple.

These questions are not utterly unpractical. For example, the biblical and the Assyrian chronologies, as the two are commonly understood, are at variance for a period extending over several generations; and if the Assyrian chronology is correct the Bible account of many of the events is wrong. The evidence seems to me to favor the biblical numbers, but most Assyriologists hold the opposite opinion. Is it open to one who holds their opinion still to regard the writers of the Scriptures as truthful? May he be permitted to say that the errors were probably in the sources which the Scripture writers used, that the sources were mainly reliable, that the Scripture writers followed them in good faith, and that they are therefore blameless for their mistakes, and that there is here nothing derogatory to their inspiration? There are persons for whom this question is vital.

6. These distinctions are important. We who believe in the truthfulness of the Scriptures wish to claim as many allies as we can. Nevertheless we are compelled to recognize the fact that we have antagonists as well as allies.

One is on the wrong side if he prefers interpretations that make Bible statements contradictory or incredible, rather than equally feasible interpretations that make them true.

One is on the wrong side if he needlessly prefers interpretations that bring the statements of the Bible into conflict with facts known by means of evidence from other sources.

One is on the wrong side if, finding an apparent discrepancy between a biblical statement and evidence taken from some other source, he takes it for granted that the other source is to be preferred to the Bible.

One is on the wrong side if he prefers mere guesses, or suggested inferences from theories, to the testimony found in the Scriptures.

One is on the wrong side if he rejects the testimony of the Scriptures concerning the date and authorship of

Testimony to the various parts of the Scriptures, particularly in the cases where this testimony is abundant and clear. Of some

Authorship

importance in themselves are such questions as whether Moses is in some feasible sense the author of the pentateuch, or whether David is prominent as an author of the Psalms; though if this were all, differences of opinion on these questions might not be utterly vital. But there is another question connected with these which is

absolutely vital. Are we to regard as false the congruous testimony concerning Moses and David which extends, in hundreds of passages, throughout the Old and New Testaments? We could get along with the mere fact that some one says he does not know who wrote the pentateuch and the Psalms, provided that fact terminated in itself; but if his saying so implies that the prophets and apostles and evangelists and Jesus were in the habit of making assertions which they did not know to be true, that is another matter.

Finally, one is on the wrong side if he rejects in its general outline and main sweep the history of the religion of Jehovah as it is given in the Old and New Testaments. These teach that Abraham was a monotheist; that he became possessed with the idea that he and his descendants were to be Jehovah's own people, chosen that all mankind might be blessed in them; that Moses gave form to the institutions of the Abrahamic people, including civil laws and the ten commandments and an elaborate ritual; that God trained them afterward for centuries, giving them a succession of prophets to interpret to them his dealings; that as a part of their training he scattered them among the nations; that the great movement culminated and took a new departure in Jesus. One who substitutes for this an outline which is inconsistent with it at every point should be honest enough not to claim that he accepts the Scriptures as truthful.

In this chapter a line has been drawn. The position of those who stand near the line on one side is not very far distant from that of those who stand near the line on

**Testimony to
the History**

the other side. But those who have taken their stand, on one side or the other, are not going to remain stationary. The person who honestly accepts the Scriptures as ordinarily truthful, and who from this point of view studies them reverently, will not fail later to accept their testimony to their own inspiration, and their claim to the higher truthfulness that results from inspiration.

But is it important to insist that the statements which the Bible makes as historical are true history? There are

Why Insist on Bible Historicity ? persons who say: "Why bother with all this? What difference does it make? Even if the Bible were all fiction, would that necessarily affect its religious teachings? Make the supposition that the Church of the future should come to regard the Scriptures as wholly made up of myths and legends and the teachings based upon them, that would not preclude its regarding the Scriptures as also the great literature of human religious experience, presenting religious ideas which we know to be true, because they appeal to our judgment. Suppose the Church of the future should take this position, would that necessarily lessen the value of the Scriptures? The Bible gives us religious ideas anyhow; if we get these, does anything else matter?"

The answer to this question is not difficult. First of all, we want to know the truth in the case. We want to know the truth, even if the case is such that we might possibly make shift to get along in ignorance. And the truth is that the Old and New Testaments purport to give us the history of the religion of Jehovah, and that there is every reason to believe that they give it correctly.

Certainly, many of the religious truths of the Bible are self-evidencing. Men may be sure that these are true, even if they disbelieve in the facts with which the Bible connects them. One who denies the facts may nevertheless find in the Bible a wonderful body of religious truths. But it is only in very exceptional minds that the truths would retain their vitality after being dissected from the facts. It would be like cutting twigs from a tree and putting them in a vase with water; they might keep green and might grow, but only for a short time. As a matter of experience, the persons who deny the facts commonly drift into the rejection of the religious ideas. The Church of the future might conceivably take the position just supposed, but it could not remain there in equilibrium. Its neglect of the facts would result in its losing the ideas, or else its appreciation of the ideas would result in the fresh study and the acceptance of the facts. The facts and the religious teachings are bound together, and cannot be permanently separated.

See "Historicity," in *Auburn Seminary Review*, October, 1902. For Dr. Robinson's ideas concerning the

passage of the Red Sea, see his "Biblical Researches," ed. of 1874, I. 56 ff.

Literature

For parallel instances, read Dr. G. F. Wright's "Scientific Confirmations of Old Testament History."

CHAPTER III

INSPIRATION: HOW GOD GAVE THE SCRIPTURES

Introduction: The subject defined. Old doctrine of inspiration. Dictation. Starting from an agnostic point of view. I. Subordinate questions: What is verbal inspiration? Inspiration in details. Inspiration and human freedom. II. Two ways in which the Supreme Power influences men: by providential leadings and by spiritual impulses. These two methods used in giving the Scriptures. "Inspiration" in the sense of spiritual impulse, and in wider sense. The Scripture-giving process. Agnostic and theist alike must believe that it occurred. The national mission of Israel. The place of miracle in the process. The giving of the Scriptures by the Supreme Power differentiated from the giving of other literatures. This view explains the divine process without discounting it. Literature.

As we have already seen, criticism has principally to do with the ordinary truthfulness of the Scriptures, and not with their alleged peculiar divine origin. But the problems concerning truthfulness are closely connected with those concerning divine origin, and may be greatly simplified by our having a proper view of the latter. Supposing a person holds that the Scriptures were in a unique sense given by God, what ought he to mean by this statement? What must he mean, provided his meaning is thinkable and consistent? A partial answer to this question will help to clear away certain obscurities from the questions concerning truthfulness.

I hold substantially to the doctrine of inspiration which has been handed down in the Church from ancient times,

though I do not intend to argue that doctrine in the present chapter. When I say that I hold to it, the statement does not mean that my views are the same with those of every other person who ever taught it. When we speak of the Scriptures as coming from God we need to use

What is the Old Doctrine of Inspiration? discrimination. We need to eliminate bugbears. On a subject that has been discussed for centuries by hundreds of millions of persons, innumerable different views have been advocated. You could hardly define a view so absurd but that it has been taught by somebody. It is not uncommon to speak of some extreme and absurd view as if it were the view that has generally prevailed in the churches; and it would be difficult to devise a meaner form of lying than this. The essential, sane idea of the old tradition is that the Scriptures are a unique body of literature, provided by God as an especial revelation of himself to men, with the use of whatever super-human means were needed for the purpose, and having the authority—that is to say, the value as evidence—which properly belongs to such an especial communication from God.

Necessarily most of our statements concerning the Supreme Being are more or less anthropomorphic. We cannot speak of God except in human language, and human language is based on human ideas. This has always been so, and doubtless will always remain so. Intelligent people make allowance for it in their thoughts, when they speak of God. When we say that God gave the Scriptures through human authors, it is natural to picture the

Dictation to Human Writers

matter as God's dictating thoughts or words to the human author, just as a business man dictates to his stenographer. I fancy we shall never be able utterly to eliminate this idea, though the theologies all repudiate it, and every thinker tries to divest himself of it.

In many cases a term which it is difficult to make clear by definition may be made clear by observing the facts included under it. There are certain facts, or alleged facts, included under the statement that God gave the Scriptures, facts on which I think that persons of all opinions will agree, which seem to me to clear up a good deal that would otherwise be obscure. Let us attend to some of these facts.

To the end that our argument may be binding upon agnostics as well as upon theists, let us start from the agnostic point of view. Instead of saying "God," let us speak of the "Supreme Power." To us the Supreme Power is our personal Father in heaven, while to the agnostic the Supreme Power is an unknown someone or somewhat, or perhaps a mere supposable term for reasoning, an algebraic x ; but we can all alike use it as a term for reasoning. As the Scriptures are in existence, no agnostic doubts that they came into existence as the product of the Supreme Power. Do we know anything as to the processes by which the Supreme Power brought them into existence?

**Why Use
Agnostic Terms?**

I. First, let us touch certain subordinate questions.

The term "verbal inspiration" is to many an occasion of scoffing. They persist in thinking of verbal inspiration as if it were equivalent to God's mechanically dic-

tating words to the writers of Scripture. But that is not the natural meaning of the term. That meaning is repudiated by the churches and the theologians who profess to believe in verbal inspiration. And no one doubts—no agnostic, even, can possibly doubt—that the Supreme Power has so wrought that human thought and expression are inseparably connected, so connected that whatever affects one affects the other. If inspiration is a fact, it necessarily touches the words as well as the ideas.

Again, ridicule has been heaped on certain statements, made by men who have been regarded as theological extremists, to the effect that the divine influence in the Scriptures extends to the minutest details—to such matters as the crossing of a t or the dotting of an i. It is supposable that some men may have made this statement absurdly, making it from a wrong point of view. But from the point of view of natural law, the statement is simply and obviously true, and every scientist holds it—the agnostic scientists as well as the theistic. From this point of view the production of the Scriptures is a series of events like any other series; and every detail is minutely provided for beforehand, under the principle of the persistence of force. No one doubts that the Supreme Power has predetermined the contents of every copy, even to the dotting of an i or the crossing of a t.

The Church beliefs concerning inspiration, however, are not formulated from this point of view, but from the different point of view which recognizes human freedom. Even if we remain in bondage to the mental picture

**Inspiration
and Details**

of God dictating words and the human author writing them down, even this does not entirely exclude our recognizing the personal peculiarities of the human author.

**Inspiration and
Human Freedom**

Most stenographers, writing letters for a business man, have to correct words and supply grammar, as well as furnish spelling and punctuation. It is a fortunate thing for some business men that a business man's literary style changes when he changes his stenographer. All the formulated doctrines of inspiration teach that there are human elements in the Scriptures, as well as divine elements. They affirm that while the Scriptures were in a unique sense given by God, they were given through human authors, each having his own characteristics. They unanimously reject the idea of mechanical dictation. Whoever, in attacking old-fashioned views, neglects these facts, is guilty of foul play.

II. These details lead up to a wider view. According to the witness of general human experience there are

**Providential
versus**

Spiritual Leadings

two ways in which the Supreme Power deals with men. One way we may call providential; it is through our heredity and environment. The other way we may call spiritual; it includes impulses and illuminations that come to us as individuals.

Of course, every theist accepts this distinction. The theist believes in heredity and environment, and he also believes in spiritual impulse and illumination as facts. He holds that a human being may have experience of these facts in prayer and in the matter of guidance by the Spirit of God. And an agnostic cannot deny the ex-

istence of the phenomena of spiritual impulse and illumination, as experienced in some human minds, though he may minimize the value of such experiences, and his explanation of them may be different from that of the theist.

The reality and distinctness of such experiences are not affected by the question whether, ultimately, they may be resolved into forms of heredity and environment. At all events, they are a class by themselves. If they are regarded as a part of our heredity and environment, then they constitute a species under that genus, distinguishable from all the other species, and are just as distinctive as if they constituted a different genus.

When we speak of inspiration in connection with the Scriptures, we should not permit ourselves to forget that the word is customarily used in two quite different meanings. In the meaning suggested by the etymology, and by the definitions commonly given, inspiration is an impelling force introduced into our being. We have the conception of the Spirit of God taking possession and control of the faculties of the writer of Scripture. But we also use the term inspiration to denote the sum of all the divine influences which enter into the product made by the Scripture-writer; and we shall presently see that the contents of the term, when used in this sense, include much more than its contents when used in the other sense. No fault is to be found with this double use of the word, but it requires us to guard with unusual care against ambiguity.

Speaking generally, the Supreme Power, in giving men

the Scriptures, has dealt precisely as in other matters. The process of originating the Scriptures may be described thus: By providential and spiritual

**The Scripture-
Giving Process**

influences the Supreme Power caused men to perform actions, and by like influences caused men to record the actions performed. Of course, the making of the record included not merely the taking down of memoranda, but all the subsequent literary processes. In their final form the records thus made are the Scriptures as we have them.

If we follow the record, the Supreme Power brought it about that Abraham existed and came to Palestine. The Supreme Power brought this about partly through Abraham's heredity and environment, including processes of nature and human historical movements up to that date, and partly through ideas and impulses that operated in the mind of Abraham. Like statements might be made concerning Isaac and Jacob and Moses and Samuel, and all the other men and peoples of the Old and New Testaments. The theist says that the Supreme Power brought all this to pass as a part of his infinite purpose; the agnostic is uncertain as to the purpose, but he agrees with the theist in regard to the fact. Again, if we follow the record, the Supreme Power brought it about that other men existed, such men as Moses and Samuel and Jeremiah and Matthew and Paul, men of certain heredity and environment and character; and that certain ideas and impulses came into their minds; and that they were led to write records concerning themselves and others, these records ultimately assuming the form of our existing Scriptures.

If one accepts the scriptural account, he must believe that these were the processes by which the Supreme Power gave the Scriptures to men; and if one does not accept the scriptural account, still he cannot help believing that these were the processes. If the events that made up the processes were not those described in the Bible, then they were other events, transacted by other men; but in any case, it was by such processes that the Scriptures came from the Supreme Power.

Under the description just given we may include much more than the narratives of external events. Considering that a sermon or a song or a proverb or a mental experience is each just as really an event of history as is a battle or the accession of a king; all parts of the Bible are included in the process indicated.

This is reasonable, is it not? No idea is more generally accepted than that the Supreme Power of the universe brings it about that certain nations or persons accomplish each a certain mission. We all believe that ancient Egypt made its own definite contribution to human progress. So did Greece and Rome. So do Great Britain, France, Germany, Japan. This is part of the law of the continuity of the universe.

If other peoples have each its mission, so has Israel. Israel's great contribution has been the revealing of a certain type of monotheism to mankind. The Supreme Power caused it to come to pass that certain things were experienced or done by the founders of Israel and by the Israelite nation and the nations that came into contact with Israel, and by Jesus and John and Paul and

other persons and peoples; and that the prophets and evangelists and others made records of the events thus occurring; and that these became differentiated from other writings. Through these processes the tremendous monotheistic fact known as the religion of Jehovah has come to be a widespread force among men. The records thus produced are our Scriptures. Alike in the events and in the making of the records, the influences which we call providential were operative, and these were supplemented by especial spiritual impulses in the minds of individuals, who were thus made leaders.

Thus far, surely, even the agnostic must go along with us, though he will, of course, part company when we insist that some of the men through
Miraculous Gifts whom the Supreme Power gave the Scriptures possessed superhuman gifts which served to authenticate their claim to be God's messengers.

If our statement of the matter closed at this point it would be fatally defective. Is it not true that other literatures also owe their origin to the
The Scriptures Differentiated from Other Literatures Supreme Power, and that they came into existence through similar processes? Yes, of course that is true, barring, perhaps, the element of miracle. Does it not follow that the Scriptures are simply on the same footing with other literatures? No, that does not follow. The footing is the same so far as the general description goes, but no further. When you look at the differences you see that the Scriptures are separated by a wide interval from all the other literatures. The historical movement of which the Old

and New Testaments are the record is the only one of its kind. In the separate incidents of the history no people is more typically human than Israel, but Israel's history as a whole has no parallel. The Israelitish people is unique. Other religions present no phenomena like the preaching of the gospel among the nations. The Jesus of the evangelists, however completely human, stands alone among historical characters. The prophets and apostles, typical men all of them, intensely like other men in their human character, are nevertheless to be classed by themselves. The ethical superiority of the Old and New Testaments is unquestionable. In their character as a worthy revelation from the Supreme Power they are without a rival. Our Scriptures have such power over their adherents that they have been led to translate them into hundreds of languages, for missionary purposes; in this they are alone among the sacred writings of the earth. Tens of thousands of men who disbelieve the Bible are compelled to pay it the tribute of making it the subject of their studies. The religion of Jehovah is confessedly the one religion that has some possibility of becoming universal. Whatever similarity there may have been in the processes of production, the Scriptures as a product are fully differentiated.

The view of the giving of the Scriptures which has been presented does not make them any less divine than
No Discounting if they were directly dictated by God to
of the their human writers. It is just as com-
Divine Element petent for God to operate through many
 persons working in various ways, as through one person
 working in one way. In the view that has been presented

there is precisely the same room for the personal divine element, or for the element of miracle, as in any other view. It is likely that a person who disbelieves in the superhuman might infer its absence, holding that the processes that have been described sufficiently account for the Scriptures as a product; but such an inference is merely the expression of his own view; it has no logical validity. In recognizing the processes in which the Scriptures originated, we do not estimate them as any the less divine, or any the less unique, or, indeed, as any the less a miracle; but we do obtain a position for a clearer understanding of many things concerning them. We make no concessions to the agnostic, though we go as far as possible in claiming his allegiance to the truth as we see it.

We who think of the Supreme Power as our heavenly Father find him revealed everywhere, but we particularly find in the Scriptures the memoranda which he has caused to be made to teach us the things that we most need to know.

For a fuller treatment of the functions of the authors of the Scriptures see "The Prophets and the Promise," especially Chapters VI and VII.

Literature One may read up on Inspiration, Revelation, and similar topics, in the formal works on Theology, or in encyclopedias or Teachers' Bibles or other works of reference. These will refer the reader to other literature.

CHAPTER IV

HOW TO ACCOUNT FOR THE EXISTING SITUATION

Introduction: The rapid advance of the Modern View. Does this prove it to be valid? Can the movement be otherwise accounted for? Such a movement arises in a situation.

1. The older views needed supplementing. Inadequate rather than incorrect. This has been neglected by their defenders.
2. The older statements of truth needed to be transposed into the forms of modern thinking. The Protestant creeds antedated the conscious acceptance of the inductive philosophy. Specialization and its consequences. Change in religious thinking. Our attitude toward the superhuman. The Modern View an unsuccessful attempt to meet these needs.
3. The older tradition held by some in a mechanical way. For example, Adam's rib, or the book of Job. Truthfulness as defined in Chapter II. The law of deteriorating tradition. The allegation that the Modern View makes the Bible "a new book." Conclusion: What the old tradition now needs is not so much a defense as a constructive exposition.

Current literature is full of such terms as "higher criticism," "the higher critics," "the Modern View." These terms are commonly used to designate a certain type of opinion concerning the Bible, and the men who hold such opinions. All well-informed persons understand that, properly speaking, higher criticism is simply the use of critical method in investigating the origin and the structure of writings; but they keep on using the term as if it applied only to a certain line of critical theories. The opponents of these theories claim to be themselves higher critics, as expert as others; and yet they join with the crowd in designating as especially higher critics the men

whom they regard as very uncritical. They claim to be as thoroughly up to date as the men whom they oppose, and yet they habitually speak of those men's opinions as "the Modern View."

During the past forty years the movement designated by these terms has advanced rapidly in the Protestant world. It has taken possession of colleges and universities and theological schools that were founded to teach views the opposite of those which it teaches. It has come into the control of religious newspapers and of denominational publishing houses. It is pushing its way into Sunday-schools and Christian organizations of all kinds. It is active in the foreign mission fields, antagonizing what the older missionaries have taught concerning the Scriptures.

Do these facts prove that the movement is a good one? Does its success demonstrate that further opposition to it is unreasonable? The question in the present chapter is not whether the movement is actually good, but whether the progress it has made proves it to be good. In other words, could this progress be accounted for, supposing the movement to be bad?

Such a great movement in human thinking always arises in a situation, and can be more or less perfectly accounted for by the situation. Generally such a movement is an attempt to secure something better than the situation in which it starts. It is an effort toward shaking off conditions that have become obsolete, and reaching an improved condition. There is seldom a revolution except

Prevalence of the Modern View

The Product of a Situation

when there is something evil to revolt against. This is true even in cases when the revolution results in a worse condition than that against which it is a protest.

We must be brief in dealing with the conditions in which this so-called Modern View movement has achieved its successes during the past few decades. We will look at it in only one aspect, and will note just three practical points.

I. First, the views formerly held concerning the Scriptures were at many points inadequate and incomplete, and at some points incorrect; there was a real need for modifying them.

The defenders of the older views have been largely to blame for the successes of their adversaries. The Protestant doctrine has never been that the creed formulas were infallible. The defenders of the creeds should have been the first to recognize their imperfections when these became apparent; and they should have provided the remedy. They should not have waited for their adversaries to discover the weak points, and use them for purposes of attack. In the making of the revised translations, in many languages, these same old-fashioned scholars displayed strong scholarship, and appreciation of current needs; they should have shown the same qualities, so far as these were needed, in the revision of current ideas concerning the Bible. They have failed here, leaving this work of revision to be done by their opponents; and the failure has been disastrous.

The real objection to the older views is mainly not that they are incorrect, but that they are inadequate. To illus-

trate, take any of the earlier Teachers' Bibles published about the middle of the last century. Those Bibles were improvements on anything that had preceded them. They were admirable in themselves, and a large part of their contents is of permanent value. But turn the leaves of

Incomplete one of them, and notice at every opening
Rather than its inferiority to helps that are now avail-
Incorrect able. Men were asking a thousand
questions concerning the Bible. Scholars and others, through travels and explorations and geographical surveys and studies of nature, and yet more through linguistic and bibliographical investigation, were accumulating the facilities for answering these questions. Some of the men who held the older views were alive to the opportunities; but taken as a whole they have not shown themselves alive, but have left these opportunities to be utilized by their assailants. From this their assailants have derived large advantage.

2. Further, since the forming of the Protestant creeds, with the doctrines concerning Scripture therein contained, men's habits of thinking have greatly changed. Supposing those doctrines to be perfectly correct, there is still the need of transposing them into the forms of modern thought; for lack of this the people of our generation misapprehend them.

In saying this I do not refer particularly to certain recent philosophical discussions, but to the whole great movement of change from the time of
Modern Inductive Francis Bacon till now. Whether Bacon
Thinking discovered the inductive philosophy, and
Isaac Newton the law of gravitation, is a question that

depends in part on definition. Men always reasoned inductively, and always had a practical knowledge of gravitation. Such men as Bacon and Newton merely formulate knowledge which men previously had, and in formulating it make men more conscious of it, and vastly extend its scope. This effect has been exceedingly marked in the centuries since the rise of Protestantism. The creeds of the churches were framed on the basis of the older philosophical methods. Since then men's habits of thinking have greatly changed. Our point of view is different from that of our predecessors. We are liable to understand a statement of theirs as meaning something very different from what they intended.

These differences, arising from our different ways of looking at things, are intensified by our modern trend toward specialization in thinking. Our **Specialization** range of objects of thought has widened; ever increasingly we pay attention to details; less and less is it possible to be intelligent on all subjects; through these and other causes our thinking has become specialized to an unprecedented extent.

The differences in our mental habits affect our methods of investigation, and affect in various ways the general quality of our thinking. On the whole, doubtless, our modern thinking is superior, but it is not so at all points. Leaving exceptional individuals out of the account, a present day specialist in any region of thought may do better thinking in his specialty than men ever did before; but this is accomplished in part at the cost of the neglect of all-around thinking. If this generation in some respects surpasses preceding generations in its mental work,

it also outdoes them in plausible thinking that is utterly superficial and futile. For instance, there are a million persons who confidently tell us just how the Constitution of the United States should be amended, though they could not, if called upon, correctly state the provisions which they say need amendment.

These changes in our habits of thinking are very marked in the regions of religious thought. Saying nothing now of false opinions held in the past or the present, and saying nothing of exceptional men, the average intelligent theist of past generations conceived of God as an infinite person, and then found this infinite person controlling all things, existing in all things, upholding all things; the average intelligent theist of to-day thinks of God as the supreme energy existing in all things, upholding all things, and manifesting personal characteristics. The two conceptions may perfectly coincide, or they may differ in a degree, but at all events they have different points of view.

The change in the realm of religious thought is especially marked in the case of miracles. Our problem of the relations of miracle to natural law did not exist for the writers of the Scriptures. They used natural laws, and in using them recognized them. To some extent they formulated natural laws; witness the book of Ecclesiastes, for example. The whole doctrine of the persistence of energy was latent in their conception of God as the universal Creator and Upholder. But they had no such consciousness of natural law as we have. When they found

Differing Religious Conceptions

Ideas of the Superhuman

a nest in a tree they knew that the mind of a bird had been using the forces of nature. When they found the limb of the tree lopped with sharp iron, they knew that the mind which had been using the forces of nature was that of a man. Precisely in the same way, when they perceived a use of the forces of nature that was otherwise unaccountable, they inferred from it the operation of the superhuman Mind. On the one hand, they recognized the wonderful works of God as wrought in the storm and the earthquake and the sunshine and the daily gifts to men and the ordinary course of nature, and, on the other hand, those different wonderful works by which God authenticated Moses or Elisha or Jesus Christ and his followers; they made a difference between these two classes of wonderful works, but both were alike to them the using of the forces of nature by the superhuman Mind.

When, in these later centuries, the idea of natural law came to be dominant in men's minds, there arose the problem of the relations of natural law to miracles. Many accepted the idea that a miracle is a violation or a suspension of natural law. With this conception it is theologically important to affirm that God can work miracles, that is, that he is the master and not the slave of nature; but the modern mind is not hospitable to the idea that God does in fact ever suspend the continuity of nature. And why should one think of an alleged miracle as a suspension of natural law? A miracle is, at furthest, an occurrence which our finite minds cannot account for under natural law; whether the infinite Mind can so account for it is another question.

**Miracle and
Natural Law**

The statement is frequently made that we ought no longer to distinguish between the natural and the supernatural. The statement is true so far forth as it means that we ought to recognize God as a reality in ordinary events; it is false to the extent to which it discredits the idea of extraordinary manifestations of God.

The problem of miracle includes the problem of the Bible itself, in its claim to be a superhuman revelation from God.

In fine, the men who seriously believe in miracle have different ideas on the subject from some that have been held in the past. Formerly men recognized God in the uniformities of nature, but emphasized the extraordinary manifestations of him; now we emphasize the ordinary manifestations, no matter how sincerely we accept the extraordinary as real. Good men in the past have gone as far as possible in interpreting miracles into the Bible, because they thought that they were thus doing honor to God; the more miracle, the more glory. In our generation we are disposed to go to excess in interpreting miracles out of the Bible.

**Differing
Emphasis**

In these and other ways the thought-habits of the European races have so changed as to call for changes in old statements of opinion. Even one who holds that the old statements are perfectly correct ought to be able to see that they need restating, in order to render them intelligible. The so-called Modern View owes much of its success to the fact that it is an attempt to meet this need. I do not think that it is a successful attempt. In it good and bad are mingled.

3. A third point along the same line concerns the mechanical way in which many persons have come to hold the older opinions on the Bible.

Illustrate this by an instance or two. From childhood I have been accustomed to think of the account in Genesis of Jehovah's making the woman out of the rib of the man as being, not a literal report of an actual occurrence, but a picturesque way of stating the fine and intimate relations that exist between husband and wife. This meaning was as intelligible to the boys and girls and older people of the past as it is to us. I am not sure that I know of any person who seriously holds a different idea of the matter. But several times a year my eye falls upon some printed article in which conservative people are sneered at as thinking that the story in question is a literal account of an actual event; and commonly the sneer draws a reply from some conservative; and the reply virtually confesses that the sneer is due, for it accuses the sneerer not of misrepresenting the conservative view, but of denying the truthfulness of the Scriptures. That is, the man who replies is not sufficiently on the alert to know what he himself thinks of the Scripture passage.

All the old-fashioned people regard the book of Job as a poem. They have much to say concerning its excellence as a poem, and concerning its poetical peculiarities. Ask them whether they think that the author of the book of Job intended us to understand that Job and his friends actually talked in metrical lines and strophes, and they

will reply, "Of course not; the author of the book put what they said into the poetical form in which we find it." But there are those who have never thought so far as this concerning the book of Job. They have an idea that the Bible says that each person in Job spoke precisely the words that the poem puts into his mouth. The men of the newer traditions habitually speak of this last view as being that held by conservatives, and very commonly the reply consists in accusing these men not of misrepresenting the conservative opinion, but of denying the truthfulness of the Scriptures.

Very few advocates of the older tradition will fail, in defining the idea of the truthfulness of the Scriptures, to accept the positions laid down in Chapter II of this volume; and yet the printed articles of conservative men largely ignore those distinctions. It is especially true that their opponents charge them by the wholesale with a mechanical dead-level view of the truthfulness of the Bible, and that they do not take the trouble to repudiate the charge. This has been the great weakness in the conservative propaganda. Further illustrations need not be given here, for the point will be illustrated in every one of the following chapters.

This weakness of the conservative side is itself an instance under a general law that governs human thinking.

Correct Ideas of Truthfulness When discussions arise concerning a matter, men get to thinking in regard to the matter. As long as the disputes are acute the mental activity continues. When a large body of men regard the question as settled, they accept the

Law of Deteriorating Tradition

results reached, and no longer take the trouble to think them out. The accepted result becomes a tradition, and immediately men's ideas of the meaning of the tradition begin to deteriorate. Men come to accept the tradition carelessly, mechanically, with inert minds. There comes a time when there is need of new discussion—something that will wake up the mental energies that have become dormant, so far as any particular region of thought is concerned. A condition of this kind had become prevalent in our attitude toward the Scriptures. In the case of our great-grandfathers the condition was in part inhibited by their habit of thoughtfulness toward God and theology. There came a generation in which theology was largely submerged, in the alleged interests of practical religion, and then the mechanical ways of understanding the Bible became more exclusively mechanical. The so-called Modern View regards itself as the substituting of something better for the old tradition concerning the Scriptures and theology. So regarded, it seems to me a failure; but it was greatly needed as a protest against widely prevalent mechanical ways of holding that same old tradition.

Many of the advocates of the newer tradition claim that their critical view has made the Bible a new book to them—immeasurably richer than it was before, and spiritually more nourishing. **What Makes the Bible a "New Book"?** There is no reason for questioning the sincerity or the truth of this statement, though in estimating the fact stated we should place it alongside of other facts. If these opinions concerning the Bible have led some to find greater spiritual excellence in it, they

have led others, probably a much larger number, to shipwreck of faith; while still others, doubtless a majority of the adherents of the new tradition, regard the Bible as a mass of folklore and other literary remains, on the whole of high quality, which may safely for the present be allowed to retain the conventional precedence to which it has attained as the sacred book of the religion of Jehovah. Those to whom the prevailing type of criticism has made the Bible spiritually a richer book cannot be relatively very numerous. In most of the cases it will be found that they were brought up on the old-fashioned views, and that they had attained to certain stages of spiritual experience before the change of view came; and almost uniformly it will be found that the views from which they changed were of the ultra-mechanical sort. The change that came to them was a mental awakening, as well as the accepting of a new opinion; the higher appreciation of the Bible was not due to the new opinion, but to the mental awakening that accompanied it.

What we need is a critical view that shall succeed where the so-called Modern View has failed. The Modern View attempts to discredit the older

**A Better
Critical View**

tradition without having anything adequate to offer as a substitute for it; what it offers would constitute a change for the worse, and not for the better. But something is needed besides a defense of the conservative position in the sense of the confuting of the arguments of those who assail it. Plenty of such defenses have been made, and some of them are impregnable. The thing needed is such a view as shall retain in full the truths of the older tradition, correcting

and supplementing that tradition when necessary, presenting it from the changed point of view of modern thinking, and so presenting it as to arouse mental activity, substituting actual and vital study for the mere lethargic acceptance of a tradition—in short, a constructive presentation of it, and the live study of the Bible in the light thus afforded.

CHAPTER V

VIEWS THAT ARE HELD CONCERNING THE BIBLE

Introduction: Average views. Outline of treatment. I. The hexateuch. 1. The question of the literary unit. 2. The question of composite authorship. 3. Theories of composite authorship. J, E, D, P, R. Criteria. Estimate. 4. The question as to work done by Ezra and his associates. 5. The question of post-Mosaic elements. Older tradition. Newer tradition. Instances, and the results from studying them. 6. Questions of date and authorship. The older tradition as intelligently understood. The newer traditions. Disproof of them. By testimony. By literary phenomena. By post-Mosaic elements. 7. The question of historical truthfulness. The older tradition. The newer tradition. Legend and fabrication. Relative historicity. Historical nucleus. II. The rest of the Scriptures: Their testimony, and how they are treated. 1. The rest of the Old Testament. Judges and Samuel. Kings and other books. Hosea for example. The testimony, how disposed of. 2. The New Testament. Conclusion: The importance of a clear understanding of the case. Literature.

No two genuinely thoughtful persons hold precisely the same views concerning the Scriptures. The men who accept the older tradition differ among themselves, and the agnostic and cryptoagnostic theories differ according to the minds that hold them, and are constantly changing. It is possible, however, to give an average outline that shall indicate the nature of the more important differences of opinion.

The most convenient and intelligible form for such an outline is one that is derived quite as much from the history of the discussion as from the nature of the subject

discussed. Let the outline start with the first six books of the Bible and then extend to the other books.

I. In the first place, take up certain points concerning the first six books of the Bible.

First, consider the question of the literary unit. The older tradition held, or at least negatively assumed, that the first five books are a literary work by themselves, the pentateuch, Joshua being a different literary work. Nothing in the older views depended upon this; it was simply taken for granted without much examination. The men of the newer traditions commonly hold, on the other hand, that the proper literary unit is the first six books, the hexateuch, the six having been compiled from the same documents. Whether or no we accept the reason assigned, the hexateuch is certainly the literary unit. It has one subject, the history of Israel in the formative period. It has one point of view. The narrative in Joshua is directly continuous with that in Numbers and Deuteronomy, while it is separated from that of Judges by certain summarizing and explanatory sections which constitute an unmistakable literary break between the two books.

Second, consider in general the question of what is called composite authorship. The older tradition has held, or negatively assumed, that the pentateuch is mainly a continuous composition by one author, though admitting that he incorporated earlier pieces of writing. Nothing important depended on this. It was simply a hasty interpretation of a matter in which disputes had not yet

**Pentateuch, or
Hexateuch?**

**Composite
Authorship**

arisen to lead men to careful study. The newer tradition is correct in observing that the man or men who gave the hexateuch its present literary form had in their possession a mass of written poems, addresses, legal documents, narratives, and composed the work largely by the process of putting these papers together. Observing the phenomena presented by the hexateuch, one ought to recognize this, even if he holds that Moses was both the writer of all the parts of the pentateuch that were thus put together, and also the man who put the parts together.

Third, the case is different in the matter of particular theories of composite authorship. Many men are not

**Theories of
Authorship**

content with affirming composite authorship in general; they attempt the solution of the problem of the sources. No two of the solutions are alike, and for good reason; in the nature of the case they are largely guesswork. The men of the so-called Modern View present, however, a fairly general agreement as to certain outlines.

They hold that the hexateuch was compiled mainly from four earlier documents, each of them the product of still earlier compiling and rewriting. One was a Judahite document, designated by many scholars as J, using prevalingly the name Jehovah. A second was E, an Ephraimite document, prevalingly speaking of God as Elohim. In process of time some one put these two together, forming JE, which included most of the legislation connected with the ten commandments, together with narratives therewith affiliated. In the course of centuries, they say, a third series was produced, the Deuteronomic laws and addresses, D being the symbol for these,

and JED the symbol for the combination of these with JE. The fourth series, called P, is made up of the priestly laws and narratives. The various layers in each series may be designated as J¹, J², J³, etc., or P¹, P², P³, etc. The Redactor or redactors who put the several writings together, thus forming the hexateuch, are designated by R, and those who made earlier combinations of the parts are designated by R with limiting symbols.

This partition is based in part on theories of religion and of history, and in part on linguistic and literary phenomena, the latter being avowedly regarded as subordinate. Long lists of criteria have been made out for each of the alleged documents. If, however, you divide the narrative into natural sections, the criteria will directly apply to not more, probably, than ten percent of the sections; in all the others the criteria will be inconsistent, and it is only by conjectural changes of the text, or by the use of harmonizing hypotheses, or by other processes, often drastic, that any critic reaches plausible results.

**Criteria of
Composition**

The scholars who have made these analyses deserve to be admired for their industry and their acuteness, and they have done some valuable study of Bible phenomena; but their inductions are precarious, and their deductions are at every point affected by the logical vice of the drawing of conclusions from particular premises only. It is no wonder that new theories of partition are constantly emerging.

A fourth point concerns the work done, or supposed to have been done, on the hexateuch by Ezra and his associates. Different writers of the older school provision-

ally and uncertainly attribute to Ezra a good deal of work of this kind—work in preserving and transmitting the text, and work in revising the text, some of them going so far as to speak of Ezra as the second author of the law, dividing the honors of the authorship with Moses. According to the so-called Modern View, Ezra and his associates are the original authors of more than half of the contents of the hexateuch, and are the proper authors of the hexateuch itself in its present form.

The recent discoveries of papyri in Egypt go far in confirmation of the traditions which attribute to Ezra and his associates important work in the preservation and transmission of the hexateuch and the other Old Testament books (see Chapter XVIII). But the truest view is the one which attributes the least to Ezra and his associates in the matter of making changes in the contents or the literary form of the hexateuch.

A fifth point concerns the post-Mosaic elements in the hexateuch. The older tradition has not denied the existence of such elements. Some persons have accounted for some of the passages as predictive. Others have been accounted for as scribal changes made in the text. In the interest of the doctrine of inspiration some of the older scholars have pointed out that the changes may have been made by Samuel or by Ezra or by some other inspired person. In this region the conclusions reached by the older scholars were not always impregnable.

The agnostic or cryptoagnostic treatments magnify the post-Mosaic incidents, real or alleged, and assign extrava-

gantly late dates for some of them, and then use them in proof of the late dates which they allege for the production of the various parts of the hexateuch.

The true way to deal with these phenomena is to study them carefully. For example, the hexateuch mentions

that certain men captured Laish, or
Instances Leshem, and named it Dan, and this
 place Dan is mentioned elsewhere in the
 hexateuch (Josh. 19 : 47; Deut. 34 : 1; Gen. 14 : 14).
 This could not have been written till after the event took
 place, and that was a good while after the death of Moses
 and Joshua (Judg. 18 : 29). But it was within the life-
 time of Phinehas, the grandnephew of Moses (Judg.
 20 : 28), who was associated with Moses in public affairs
 (Num. 25 : 7 ff.; 31 : 6). Men of the age of Phinehas
 may well have been the literary executors of Moses.

As another instance, until some time after the death of Joshua there was a Canaanite city called Luz, the name Bethel being applied to the Abrahamic place of worship in the vicinity (Judg. 1 : 23; Gen. 28 : 19; 35 : 6; 48 : 3; Josh. 16 : 2; 18 : 13). But certain narratives in Genesis and Joshua use the name Bethel without comment, as if it were already the accepted name of the city (*e. g.*, Gen. 12 : 8; 13 : 3; Josh. 8 : 9, etc.). Different explanations have been offered, but in any case there is here nothing to indicate a point of view later than that of the contemporaries of Phinehas.

In the forty-ninth chapter of Genesis there is put into the mouth of Jacob a poem, in which some of the tribes are alluded to geographically, as in the regions which they occupied after the conquest under Joshua. If one

assumes that this is not superhuman prediction, he must regard it as written not less than two or three decades after the death of Moses, but there is nothing in the phenomena to indicate a date much later than that.

In Genesis (17 : 6, 16; 35 : 11) it is promised that kings shall descend from Abraham and Sarah and Israel. In Deuteronomy it is implied (17 : 14, 15; 28 : 36) that Israel will some time have a king. In Genesis (36 : 31) kings are spoken of as reigning in Edom "before there reigned any king over the children of Israel." This passage is often quoted as implying that there were kings in Israel before it was written, but that is not a necessary implication. If the author was a contemporary of Moses he would be interested in the fact that the fulfilling of this part of the promise had already begun in the Edomite branch of Abraham's family, although it had not yet begun in the Israelite branch; and he would use language accordingly.

The last chapter of Deuteronomy gives an account of the death of Moses, and says: "There hath not arisen a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses." Men say that whoever wrote this must have been looking back over an interval of many centuries to the times of Moses. There is no certainty in this inference. An interval of a few decades is sufficient to account for the writer's using this expression. Forty years after the death of Abraham Lincoln people were already saying that we have not since had an American statesman like him. Less than forty years after the deaths of Henry Ward Beecher and John B. Gough men were saying that there have arisen since no English-speaking orators like them.

There are a large number of these instances. They show beyond a doubt that literary work was done on the hexateuch after the death of Moses and of Joshua. There are no clear instances later than a few decades after the death of Moses. It is true that some men allege later instances; but in all the alleged later instances it will be found that the alleged lateness of the instance is a matter of inference from the theory to be proved, and not a fact based on evidence.

A sixth point concerns questions of date and authorship. According to the older tradition Moses is the author of the pentateuch, and Joshua of the sixth book, with some difference of opinion concerning Joshua. Many have understood this in a meaning that is mechanical and untenable, but that understanding of it is not a necessary part of the tradition. To understand the matter we should have in mind the conditions. If Moses wrote such literature as this, he probably did it in the way in which other busy public men do similar work—employing not amanuenses only, but assistants and secretaries; gathering older documents; causing reports and papers to be drawn up by heads of departments and others; more likely than not leaving a mass of written matter to be edited and supplemented after his death. If he did this, he would still be the proper author of the work, since he would be the person distinctively responsible for its existence as literature; though there would be a great difference between this and writing as a scholar in a closet writes. That Moses was in the sense thus indicated the author of the hexateuch, with Joshua and others for

coadjutors, is the conclusion justified by the evidence in the case.

In conflict with this the agnostic and cryptoagnostic criticism teaches that it is uncertain how much Moses had to do with even the early history and legislation, to say nothing of written materials. The most common opinion of this class is that J and E were compiled, one after the other, about the time of the prophet Amos, several centuries after Moses, out of traditions which had accumulated at Bethel, Dan, Shechem, Hebron, Beersheba, and other sanctuaries; that the nucleus of D was the book of the law found in the temple in Josiah's time, B. C. 621, our present book of Deuteronomy having been later built up around this nucleus; that the several strata of P were written still later, at different times, mostly after the exile; that the hexateuch as a whole was produced in the times of Ezra and Nehemiah, about 400 B. C., though parts of it are still later. These are the moderate views of the matter. There is a more extreme agnosticism which regards Moses as a mere myth.

There are many considerations which conclusively disprove all these theories of the extremely late date of the several parts of the hexateuch. Look briefly at three of these considerations.

First, there is a large body of testimony in the case, and it is all against these theories. Nearly all the contents of the last four books of the pentateuch either are narratives in which Moses speaks in the first person, or else claim either to have been written by Moses or uttered

**Dates Assigned by
Modern View**

Testimony

by Moses or to be messages given by Deity to Moses. The books of Judges and First and Second Samuel, as we have them, presuppose all parts of the hexateuch, the D and P parts as well as the J and E parts, and testify that the hexateuchal narrative and legislation was then in existence and claimed obedience from Israel. Even the men of the Modern View, if well informed, no longer deny this. In the Hebrew text of the Polychrome Bible more than six percent of the book of Judges is printed in green, as having the characteristics of D, and about fifteen percent in yellow, as having the characteristics of P. In dozens of places the books of Kings mention or otherwise presuppose the contents of the hexateuch, the D and P parts as well as the J and E parts, referring the legislation to Moses, and speaking of its use in Israel from the time of David on. Moses and the law and the specific contents of the hexateuch are similarly mentioned, or otherwise presupposed, in nearly every one of the major and minor prophets, and in the Psalms, and in the wisdom books, and in other books of the Old Testament. And the testimony of Jesus and his disciples and their opposers, in the New Testament, is abundant and unmistakable. We shall presently see how the men of the Modern View attempt to break the force of this testimony. For the present it is sufficient to note that none of them dispute the existence of the testimony, nor its abundance, nor the fact that it purports to be continuous from the time of Moses, nor the explicitness with which it assigns the authorship of the hexateuch to the time of Moses and his associates.

Again, the testimony is confirmed by the literary phe-

nomena in the writings. It would take a series of volumes to discuss these fully, but look at a single group of facts which is by itself well-nigh conclusive. The parts of the Bible that deal with the last decades before the exile exhibit marks of Babylonian influence—Babylonian words, for example, and the mention of contemporaneous Babylonian persons and events and usages. The parts that deal with post-exilian events are full of similar Persian marks. The instances are hundreds in number; they crop out on nearly every page. There is no dispute about them. You may find convenient summaries of instances in Driver's Introduction, in its treatment of the later books. Now, if the alleged D and P parts of the hexateuch had been produced, as the Modern View asserts that they were, in these Babylonian and Persian times, they would certainly have been marked with these same Babylonian or Persian peculiarities; but they are not so marked, even in the slightest degree. The inference against their having been produced in these late times is really so strong that one has no right to doubt.

Yet, again, we have seen that whoever wrote up the hexateuchal records—some of them records of events centuries before Moses—was in the habit, by way of explanation or otherwise, of occasionally mentioning later events. There are a good many instances of this kind. But this usage has a limit of time; there are no clear instances of it later than a few decades after Moses. There is just one reasonable explanation of this. The writer connected ancient events with recent events up to

Babylonian and Persian Marks**Post-Mosaic Marks**

his own time; the limit of date for this habit indicates the time when the hexateuch was completed.

These reasons are intelligible. They do not depend on hairsplitting distinctions made by experts. They settle the question, even if there were no other considerations bearing on it. A more complete induction would result in reinforcing these reasons by a multitude of others.

A final point concerns the truthfulness of the hexateuch in matters of fact.

The older tradition affirms that the hexateuchal legislation is genuinely Mosaic, and that the narrative as a whole is historical and trustworthy. If

Is It History? it recognizes possible elements of allegory or of personalized history, it does this within limits that leave untouched the veraciousness of the complete account. The Modern View, on the other hand, ranges from that of the men who count Moses a myth to that of the men who concede to him a limited direct influence in the legislation, and a more extended indirect influence; it is not hospitable, however, to the idea that he gave any of the legislation in the form in which it now exists.

The Modern View teaches that the traditions out of which J and E were compiled were largely legendary; and that the various D and P writings are mainly fabrications, made in the interest of a religious propaganda.

At this point note carefully a distinction. These men do not teach that the D and P writings are avowedly religious fiction, parables, stories framed for religious teaching, and so understood from the first. The very different thing which they teach is this: that the D and P

writers deliberately published what purported to be history, but that this alleged history was largely invented

**Or Legend or
Fabrication ?**

by themselves for the purpose of making it appear, falsely, that certain religious ideas and practices of their own in-

vention had existed from ancient times, and had been handed down to them.

According to the Modern View, the J and E writings in the hexateuch, being older than the others, come nearer to being authentic history. This does not mean that we have a right to accept their statements as fact; it means that if we had these writings as their authors wrote them, we should know from them not, indeed, the true ancient history of Israel, nor even the true form of the oldest Israelitish legends, but the form in which these legends were current in Israel in the eighth century before Christ. But in fact, they tell us, we have not so much as this. They say that some generations after J and E were written the D writers changed and annotated them, interpolating into them a new set of religious ideas; and some generations still later the P writers repeated the process. What we have, they say, is the ancient legends so reshaped and reset as to make them teach ideas that are less ancient.

They do not say that all this entirely excludes all historical elements from the hexateuch. It must be the

**A Nucleus
of Fact**

case, they say, that many of the legends formed themselves on a nucleus of facts.

But the general consensus of the men of the so-called Modern View is to the effect that the hexateuchal narrative is untrue in the outline it gives of

the early history of Israel, untrue in its accounts of the most important events, generally untrustworthy in details, and especially untrue in what it says of the beginnings of the religion of Jehovah. They say, for example, that there was no such sojourn in Egypt, no such exodus, no such conquest of Canaan, and especially no such tabernacle worship, as the hexateuch describes. Out of the scantiest and flimsiest materials they reconstruct the history, making it utterly different from that outlined in the hexateuch.

The views thus sketched are not those of extremists only, but are the usual teachings in the current theories concerning the hexateuch. Of course any one who regards the Scriptures as ordinarily truthful has to repudiate them.

II. If a person accepts such views as these concerning the hexateuch, that necessarily affects his view of all parts of the Old and New Testaments.

When he finds, for example, that the books of Judges and of First and Second Samuel presuppose the contents of the hexateuch, and affirm that these were current in Israel from the time of Moses, he must make some disposal of this testimony. The older tradition does this easily, saying that it proves that the literary contents of the hexateuch were in existence in the times of the Judges. Formerly some of the advocates of the newer tradition denied or minimized the fact that Judges and Samuel presuppose the hexateuch; but this position they have been compelled to abandon. The explanation they now give is to the effect that Judges and Samuel were

**Judges and
Samuel**

produced in much the same way as the hexateuch, and perhaps by the same persons; that the earlier strata of these books were compiled by J writers and E writers, from traditions, largely legendary, and that these compilations were afterward changed and annotated by D writers and P writers, who falsified the account in order to make it appear that their own religious usages were ancient.

They deal in the same way with the other parts of the testimony. When the books of Kings testify to the

**Kings and
Other Books**

existence and the Mosaic origin of the hexateuchal laws and facts, the Modern View has no reply to make except by asserting that the testimonies are fabrications by the D and P writers. When it appears that each prophetic book presupposes the hexateuch, presupposes the D and the P parts as well as the J and the E parts, presupposes them as authoritative in Israel at the time when the prophet lived, the Modern View can reply only by saying that the prophetic book in question originated still later than the hexateuch; or by saying that it has been changed and annotated in order to make it teach the D or P ideas.

Take the book of Hosea for example. As it stands it purports to be a record of prophecies uttered in northern

**Hosea, for
Example**

Israel between the last years of Jeroboam II and the downfall of Samaria. It presupposes all the parts of the hexateuch, particularly denounces the violation of the D legislation in the case of the northern sanctuaries, advocates the reunion of the two kingdoms under the dynasty of David. In all this it is clear and consistent, and is sup-

ported by all that we know concerning the times, either from the Scriptures or from the Assyrian records. If one believes this testimony he must believe that the hexateuch was already ancient in the time of Hosea. In order to avoid this conclusion the author of one of the articles on Hosea in the new Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia says that the first three chapters of Hosea, and forty percent of the contents of the remaining chapters, are made up "of presumable additions." This author treats Hosea just as do the other authors of the school to which he belongs. And the case of Hosea is not exceptional, but typical. Every section of Isaiah and all the ostensibly pre-exilian minor prophets are subjected to the same treatment.

Similar statements might be made concerning the rest of the Old Testament books. They presuppose the hexateuch; some of them are saturated with

The Testimony: the presupposition of it. Where their
How Treated presupposition of it extends to details, they almost invariably presuppose all the parts of it. The persons who testify in these writings lived at all dates from the times of the judges on. They testify that hexateuchal precepts were binding in Israel from the time of Moses, giving details generation by generation for a large part of that time. The only way of breaking the force of the testimony is by discrediting the Bible characters and the Bible authors who give the testimony. The way in which men actually try to break the force of the testimony is by saying that the earlier of these witnesses were incompetent to distinguish between legend and history, while the later witnesses deliberately and by the

wholesale falsified the record in order to make it teach the ideas which they thought it ought to teach.

Agnostic or cryptoagnostic criticism cannot and does not confine itself to the Old Testament, leaving the New untouched. It enters the New Testament region in two ways—first, in the way of discrediting the New Testament as evidence concerning the Old Testament; and second, in the way of applying to the New Testament the same destructive treatment as to the Old.

The New Testament teaching throughout bases itself upon the Old Testament. Take a printed New Testament

How the and clip from it all the quotations from
New Testament the Scriptures, and all the allusions to
is Involved them, and all the mention of Old Testament events and persons, and you will perhaps not have an uncut leaf left; a large part of your printed New Testament will be in tatters. Jesus and his followers and their opponents habitually refer to the Old Testament, and base their teachings upon it. Their testimony concerning the Scriptures, and concerning Moses and David and Isaiah and other scriptural authors and books, is abundant and explicit. It is impossible to discredit the Old Testament without discrediting Jesus and his contemporaries.

Further, he who would be consistent must apply to the Gospels and Epistles the same critical methods which he applies to the hexateuch and the prophets. Plenty of men have done this, and are doing it, and the results are as discrediting in the case of the New Testament as in that of the Old.

If a person wishes to be intelligent and fair-minded in

regard to biblical questions it is of the utmost importance that he take the pains necessary to understand the differences between the old and the new traditions. In particular one needs to understand firmly the fact that the newer tradition regards the men of the Old and New Testaments as habitually untrue in their statements of fact, and that this is the one essential difference between the older tradition and the newer.

The Need for a Clear Understanding Some of the men who write popular editorials and articles will deny this, and will accuse the person who affirms it of being mossbacky and sour and prejudiced. But the scholarly advocates of the Modern View will not join in this accusation. They will recognize, I think, the fairness of the statements I have made. They will attempt to meet the difficulties not by denying the facts which I have stated, but by arguing that human religious instincts naturally express themselves in folklore, and that the religious men who committed forgeries in writing the Bible belong to a lower stage of evolution than we, and should be tried by a different ethical standard; or by other arguments of that kind. In fact, they claim to be doing a great service along the line of the historical truthfulness of the Bible by distinguishing the relatively scanty historical elements in it from the mass of unhistorical material in the midst of which they are found.

If there are advocates of the Modern View who do not join in the wholesale depreciation of the Scriptures as repositories of fact, the men of the older tradition should welcome them as so far forth on the right side. Our protest is not so much against the so-called Modern View

as held by this or that scholar, but rather against the agnostic or cryptoagnostic criticism by whomsoever held; against such a theory of the hexateuch as necessitates the view that David wrote none of the Psalms, that Isaiah and several other books are mere collections of fragments, that a woof of false pretences is woven into every part of the fabric of the two Testaments, that Jesus and Paul were either mentally or morally so incompetent that they acquiesced in false opinions concerning the Scriptures, and used these as foundations for the gospel they preached.

By a careful study of Driver's Introduction one may learn the ideas held by the more conservative men of the current critical schools in regard to the structure and date and authorship of the books of the Old Testament, and the reasons given for those ideas. The different volumes of the Polychrome Bible give the same materials exhibited in color, so as to be palpable to the eye. For the hexateuch a similar presentation may be found, with the alleged work of the various authors differentiated by different type, in the two volumes entitled "The Hexateuch," by J. E. Carpenter and others; or in "The Documents of the Hexateuch," by Addis; or in numerous other works. In defense of the older views read the volumes published by Professor William H. Green, of Princeton Seminary, in particular "The Unity of the Book of Genesis," and "The Higher Criticism of the Pentateuch." Or read Dr. Orr's "Problem of the Old Testament." Certain volumes and articles recently published by Mr. Harold Wiener are a successful attack on the

critical views now current. The books of reference and their bibliographical lists mention other books and articles by the hundred. See "Does Jesus Teach a Doctrine Concerning the Scriptures?" in *Bible Student and Teacher*, September, 1908, and "The Old Tradition and the New," in same, January, 1904.

CHAPTER VI

ACCEPTED PRINCIPLES OF CRITICISM

Introduction: We ought to accept the Modern View if it is true. Uncritical opinions sometimes legitimate. Being critical sometimes obligatory. 1. To be truly critical one must think for himself. Criticism versus authority. Crypto-agnosticism viciously traditional. Common experience as important as erudition. 2. To be truly critical one must avoid undue assumptions. Prejudgments to be excluded. Fundamental assumptions by conservative men and their opponents. Their differences of procedure. Some bad assumptions. 3. Criticism and the original sources. The object under observation. Certain wrong processes. 4. Criticism requires that we attend to all the evidence. The whole and the parts mutually interpretative. Ignoring parts of the evidence. Instances. 5. Mention of additional points. Favorable presumptions. Prefer interpretations that are popularly intelligible. Use all the faculties; avoid merely mechanical study. Get the author's point of view. Induction of facts versus definition. Sane processes of filling in. Literature.

The views presented by the agnostic or cryptoagnostic criticism are startling to persons who have been brought up with old-fashioned ideas concerning the Bible, but all the same we ought to accept them, provided they are true. Their advocates claim that criticism is a science, and that it scientifically determines their views to be correct. Intelligent persons ought to decide for themselves concerning this claim, and ought to act in accordance with the decision.

Within limits it is reasonable to believe what we have been taught to believe, provided we find it confirmed by

experiential use. The larger part of our beliefs have no other ground than this. If you could prohibit beliefs of this character, that would block all human thinking and activity. A person who has been accustomed to think that the Scriptures are divinely truthful, and who finds by experience that this idea is beneficent and is consistent with the course of things—such a person is reasonable if he continues in his belief, even without critically examining it. The same would be true of the person who regards the Scriptures as untrustworthy, provided it were also true that experience proves his view to be beneficent and consistent with the course of things.

**Legitimate
Uncritical Beliefs**

Or again, if a person has investigated and reached conclusions in regard to the truthfulness and the authority of the Scriptures, he has a right to base his further studies on those conclusions; with the understanding, however, that the results he reaches will be accepted only by those who agree with him in his premises.

**Validity of
Opinions**

For many persons, however, and for all persons when they wish to convince those who differ with them, there is need to go deeper than to what we are accustomed to believe. This process of going deeper is the function of critical study. Scientific criticism has its principles and methods, and in regard to these there is no great theoretical difference between conservative scholars and their modern opponents. Of course, this brief chapter makes no attempt either to present all the principles of criticism or to present these principles systematically.

**When We Need
to be Critical**

All it can do is to mention a few points by way of illustration.

1. To be truly critical one must think for himself. No mere acceptance of views from tradition, whether ancient or contemporaneous, can be genuinely critical. We cannot be rightly critical except as we are active minded.

To state this in another way, our truly critical results are those which we reach solely on the basis of the evidence in the case, as we ourselves have examined or otherwise tested it.

Men have sometimes been uncritical in the theories of authority which they have accepted; for example, in their theories of the authority of the church, the authority of ancient tradition, the authority of the Scriptures. If one believes the church or the tradition or the Scriptures as a substitute for the evidence in the case, not using his own judgment, that is uncritical; but it is quite another thing if he believes one of these having settled it in his mind that this is the best evidence accessible to him. It is eternally and indisputably true that each of these, according to its value as evidence, is entitled to exercise authority over the human mind. The person who does not submit to the authority of evidence is abnormal, both mentally and morally. The true Protestant doctrine concerning the Bible is that it is of the highest possible character as evidence, being the word of God. If any Protestant teaches that we ought to believe the Bible against the evidence in the case, that shows that he has become confused; what he means is that we ought to believe the Bible against such *other* evidence as there may be in the

**Criticism versus
Authority**

case; and we ought to believe it because, being the word of God, it is stronger evidence than the other.

This position that the human mind ought to be free except as it bows to evidence is the position of conservative Bible scholars, as it is of all critically-minded men, though some may not have maintained it consistently.

Some conservative scholars have doubtless been open to the criticism that they have depended upon authority as a cheap way of settling questions, that they use authority as a substitute for investigation. Study is laborious and sometimes painful, and often doubtful in its results. It is sometimes easier to accept a solution that is handed to us ready made. This is not necessarily bad. For many uses cheap goods are preferable. Inexpensive commodities may be as good of their kind as costly commodities. But there are cases in which it is a very unworthy practice for one to accept a teaching on authority rather than work out the problem for himself.

This leads up to the point that one of the most prominent vices of the current cryptoagnostic criticism is its **Cryptoagnosticism** hidebound traditionalism—its helpless **Viciously** dependence on authority as differing **Traditional** from evidence. It is accustomed to charge this against its opponents, but it is regularly more guilty than even the extremest men among its opponents. The authority to which it appeals is indeed not that of ancient tradition, or of alleged divine revelation, but that of contemporaneous tradition, that of alleged experts, that of men whom it is fond of describing as “eminent scholars.” It cites the opinions of these instead of citing the evidence. Most readers of this chapter are in shape to

verify this statement from their own experience. When people argue these subjects with you it is commonly the old-fashioned ones who ask you to look at the Bible text, that is, to look at the object under investigation, and see for yourself that they are right. The men of the new tradition regularly tell you that their view is that of eminent scholars, and therefore you ought not to have the face to think differently.

Nothing in the Roman Catholic church is more objectionable to Protestants than its assumption that the Bible is not for Christian people except as officially taught them through the Church; but this is a trifling assumption compared with that which demands that I conform the results of my study of the Scriptures to the ideas of certain alleged experts, on penalty of being condemned as a holder of obsolete views.

It would be difficult to imagine anything more mischievous than this notion that experts in scholarship are the only persons qualified to pass on biblical problems. Into these problems enter questions that depend on one's knowledge of Hebrew or Syriac, or of Oriental antiquities; but into them also enter even more importantly questions of practical arithmetic, questions of ordinary living, questions of sentiment, all sorts of questions of human experience. A learned man who lacks religious sympathy, and lacks shrewdness and experience in the commonplaces of human living, is less well equipped for Bible study than the unlearned person who has these qualifications. Not the experts alone, but every person, should have an ambition to be in some degree a Bible critic.

**What Constitutes
an Expert ?**

2. To be truly critical one must avoid undue assumptions. Genuine critical method takes nothing for granted save the object under observation, the observing mind, the evidence, and the laws of evidence.

When you enter upon a critical study of the Bible, it may be that you already have a fixed opinion in regard to its truthfulness and its inspiration, an opinion in which you either accept or reject the common views on these subjects. Critical method does not require you to divest yourself of these opinions antecedent to your examining the evidence. Persons sometimes misstate the law, and say that it requires this, but such a requirement would be idiotic. What it requires is that you perfectly refuse to admit your preconceived opinion as a part of the case, that you exclude it from among the premises of the investigation.

Nothing is more common than to charge conservative men with making undue assumptions in their Bible studies. They are charged, for example, with assuming that inspiration renders the Scriptures errorless, instead of leaving this question to be settled by the evidence, and with a long list of similar sins of uncritical procedure. So far forth as it is true that conservative men thus beg the questions which they ought to prove, they are inexcusable. They understand as well as their opponents that they are not to assume beforehand the truthfulness and the inspiration of the Scriptures, when these are the questions at issue in the investigation. They have no right to assume the affirmative any more than their

**Excluding Our
Prejudices**

**Undue
Fundamental
Assumptions**

opponents have to assume the negative. The scientific position is that in which one neither affirms nor denies until he has examined the evidence.

Whatever may be true of conservative scholars, the current cryptoagnostic criticism is characteristically marked by the habit of false fundamental assumptions. Instead of not assuming that the Scriptures are uniquely inspired, its advocates assume that the Scriptures are not uniquely inspired. Instead of not assuming that the text is correct, they assume that it is not correct. Instead of not assuming that the testimony is true, they assume that it is not true. Instead of not assuming that the biblical statements are trustworthy, they assume that they are not trustworthy. Instead of not assuming the reality of miracle, they assume the unreality of miracle. Instead of not assuming that Christianity is on a different footing from the other great religions, they assume that it is not on a different footing. They hopelessly distance their opponents in this matter of making undue assumptions.

**Cryptoagnostic
Assumptions**

Many of the differences between sound criticism and agnosticism are differences of procedure rather than of principle. The two begin to part company when they begin to study the evidence. They find, for example, the statement that King Nebuchadnezzar gave three years of training to Daniel and his companions, terminating in the second year of his reign. The cryptoagnostic says at once that here is a contradiction, showing that the account is carelessly written and is untrue; while the conservative scholar notes that the three years intended are Nebuchad-

**Differences of
Procedure**

nezzar's accession year and his first year and his second year, and he therefore finds no contradiction. They find in Genesis two reports of Abraham's saying that his wife is his kinswoman. The cryptoagnostic assumes that the two are reports of the same event, and therefore pronounces them contradictory and not to be depended upon. The conservative scholar, on the other hand, observes that the two accounts purport to refer to different events, and he therefore finds no contradiction. Repeating processes like these many thousands of times, the one scholar forms the habit of treating the biblical statements of fact with contempt, while the other forms the habit of regarding them as so remarkably truthful that their truthfulness must be accounted for as the product of their inspiration.

To these fundamental wrong assumptions the various schools of pseudo-criticism add others that are less general. They take for granted not only the general theory of evolution, but conjectural particular theories of evolution.

Other Vicious Assumptions

They deny biblical statements on the basis of hypotheses concerning comparative religion, instead of using the biblical facts to correct and complete the hypotheses. According to the trend of our prejudices we should all be on our guard against saying that the old is better than the new, or the new better than the old. Many are not thus on their guard; they assume that certain innovations are up to date, and are therefore the thing, when in fact they are not up to date, and are very far from being correct. The cryptoagnostic criticism extends its habit of making undue assumptions so as to touch a vast number of details. This might be illustrated by the matters men-

tioned in the remainder of this chapter and in the following chapters.

3. To be truly critical one should go as near the original sources as possible.

For the large majority of Bible students the object under investigation is the Bible in the vernacular. Those who can should of course go back to the copies in Greek and Hebrew, and from these all the way back to the Scriptures as originally written. When one interprets the Bible by the aid of geography or natural history or archeology he should take the trouble to verify his facts, and not content himself with conjectures or opinions.

The Object Under Observation

In violation of this principle much alleged text criticism and improved translation is the substituting of modern notions for ancient facts. If we could really get back to the autographs—to the original writings in the script of the men who wrote them—and could substitute these for our existing copies, that would be fine. So far as we can sanely approximate this, text criticism is legitimate. But it is a very different thing to take some man's guess concerning the original contents, and substitute such guesses for the texts which we have.

Violations

In violation of this principle, a good deal of alleged Bible study is the study of what men have said about the Scriptures, rather than of the Scriptures themselves.

A prevalent vice in the older forms of Bible study is the habit of following what we have been accustomed to think that the Bible says, instead of actually looking up what it says; and this vice has been taken over by those

who attack the older ideas, and is by them practiced on a magnified scale.

4. To be truly critical one must attend, in any case, to all the evidence that is within reach.

If an important matter is mentioned in some passage of Scripture, you want to make sure that you understand all which that passage says or fairly implies concerning the matter. To this you should add whatever information you can gather from other parts of the Scriptures, or from sources outside the Scriptures. It is only by looking at all the accessible evidence, examining and comparing and sifting, that you come to understand the matter adequately.

Often it is only through these processes that you can be sure of the meaning of the separate parts of the evidence. Most human statements have to be understood as limited by the circumstances in which they were uttered. No human sentence expresses all that the speaker had it in mind to say. We understand one another's remarks through our knowledge of what preceded the remark and what followed, and through our insight of what the speaker intended to accomplish by his remark. And so it happens that, other things being equal, an interpretation which makes an account consistent is to be preferred to one that makes the account inconsistent. A favorable interpretation of a statement is in some degree to be preferred to an unfavorable interpretation.

Much of our current biblical criticism viciously neglects this law. It deliberately ignores parts of the evidence. It minimizes the bearings of the evidence in one

direction, and exaggerates its bearings in the opposite direction. It refuses to let the different parts have their natural effect in limiting and interpreting each the other. On the basis of this refusal it needlessly resorts to text emendations and other methods of modifying the facts as given in the evidence.

Cryptoagnostic Ignoring of the Evidence

For example, the record mentions that the Canaanite and the Perizzite were in the land of Canaan when Abram migrated thither (Gen. 12 : 6 and 13 : 7). Of course, they were still there when the writer wrote, provided the writer was contemporary with Moses. The writer thinks that his readers will be interested in the fact that they were already there when Abram came. All the parts of the narrative are consistent with this understanding of the matter. But certain critics are not content with this. They insist that the statements imply that the Canaanites and Perizzites were no longer in the land when the writer wrote; and from this they infer that the time of the writer was centuries after Moses, and they also infer that the narrative as we have it is self-contradictory. All this is a vicious substitution of an unnatural meaning for a natural.

Or again, many critics insist that the prohibition of the *matstseboth*, the memorial stones (Deut. 16 : 22 and elsewhere), brings the Deuteronomic law into conflict with other parts of the pentateuch and with passages in the other Scriptures (*e. g.* Gen. 28 : 18; 35 : 14; Ex. 24 : 4; Isa. 19 : 19); and they absolutely refuse to take notice that the prohibition is by its terms limited to Israelites residing in the land of Canaan after its con-

quest under Joshua, and that specific reasons are assigned for it, and that it applies neither in letter nor in spirit to the earlier memorial stones in Palestine or to those in Egypt. See "Homiletic Review" for May, 1902, page 397.

These two well represent practically all the detailed instances that are adduced in proof of the excessively late dates of the sources from which it is alleged that the Old Testament books were compiled, or in proof that these sources contradicted one another, or in proof that the biblical history of Israel and of the religion of Jehovah is untrustworthy. The groundlessness of these propositions appears when one simply gives fair attention to the evidence in the case, allowing each part to interpret the other parts.

5. We may barely mention a few other principles.

In the study of an object the presumption is that the phenomena which are obvious are also genuine and important. This presumption may be only slight, and it is liable to be overcome by evidence, but it exists. Other things being equal, and in the absence of some degree of proof to the contrary, we are to take each part of the Scriptures for what on its face it claims to be. A different and less correct statement of this rule is that one ought to believe every statement of the Bible until the contrary is proved. There is a difference between "some degree of proof" and full proof.

In the interest of correctness in our Bible studies we should remember that the several parts were written for the understanding of common people—not exclusively or

principally for the understanding of philosophers or experts, but for that of persons of intelligent, ordinary good sense. Artificial or finespun interpretations are more or less suspicious.

**The Bible a
People's Book**

Inasmuch as the Scriptures are literature, true critical method requires that we study them by word analysis and parsing, but at the same time with the use of all our different mental powers.

**Avoid Wooden
Interpretations**

A vast amount of alleged Bible study is a mere mechanical going through the motions. Not to delay at present for illustrations, there is no worse foe to live Bible study than the habit of being content with merely wooden ideas. We must use the laws of language in determining the meaning of what is expressed in language, but in studying literature we need also to have our sympathies on the alert, our picture-making faculties active, our whole soul awake.

To be truly critical in the study of a literature one needs to have the habit of putting himself at the point of

**The Point of
View of the
Author**

view of the people for whom the author originally wrote. But nothing could be more uncritical than to seek to obtain this point of view merely by reading a manual that some one has written on the subject. Get acquainted with the sacred writer through what the sacred writer himself says. Verify for yourself the alleged facts which indicate his surroundings and his point of view. To start with a theory of the development of religion, to manufacture from that theory a point of view for a sacred writer, and then to interpret his writings from this

manufactured point of view—this is a common procedure of cryptoagnosticism, and it is as vicious as it is common.

If you are truly critical you will often seek the meaning of a statement rather by making an induction of the facts included under it than by defining its terms. When you find a record of events, actual or supposable, take the trouble to think out the nature of those events, including that of the facts that are necessarily implied in them—facts geographical, topographical, biological, facts of human nature, facts that limit the movements of men in masses, other pertinent facts. Doing this you may find that you have a new apprehension of the meaning of the words in which the writer describes the events. Be careful not to substitute your ideas for those held by the author whom you are interpreting; use these processes exclusively for determining what the author means. For illustrations of this point see the next chapter and the chapters that follow.

If you are truly critical you will appreciate the fact that a certain process of filling in by the reader enters into most of our reading of literature, and that it makes a great difference whether our filling-in processes are intelligent. If you have not observed this, give it some attention; it is worth observing. In telling Bible stories very few persons give them precisely as they are printed; each narrator fills in with matters drawn from tradition or from his own imagination. This is inevitable, and is not necessarily vicious. But when questions of truthfulness are at stake it is important that the filling in shall be done

**Induction of Facts
versus Definition**

**Filling-in
Processes**

sanely and legitimately. In some of the following chapters we shall have our attention called to instances that do not meet this requirement.

Questions concerning authority in religion have been much discussed in late years, and by no one more ably than by Principal John Oman, of Eng-

Literature land, author of "Problem of Faith and Freedom in the Last Two Centuries," and "Vision and Authority." All treatments of the subject are misleading so far forth as they fail to distinguish between authority in the sense of evidence that compels assent, and authority as demanding assent independently of the evidence. To reject authority in the first of these two senses is as bad as to accept it in the second.

PART II

REASONABLE CRITICISM AS AFFECTING PARTICULAR
OLD TESTAMENT NARRATIVES

CHAPTER VII

THE FIRST NARRATIVE IN GENESIS

- I. The older ideas concerning this narrative. Six clock-measured days. God working by means. Patristic interpretations. Ideas of evolution. Nebular hypothesis and geological days. Babylonian and other versions. II. The cryptoagnostic view of this narrative. III. The reasonable view. A hypothetical viewpoint. A narrative by itself. Its subject. Creation. Its religious purpose. Its artificial structure. Events and framework. The events. Supposing them to be real, what were they? The events are facts, and correctly stated. The contrast with the other versions of the story. How can the narrative be accounted for? Literature.

In one of our cities there exists what is known as the "Borrowed Time Club," made up of persons who are seventy or more years of age. Report says that this club is to a remarkable degree alive and enjoyable. When the members of the Borrowed Time Club were little children they were taught, from the first chapter of Genesis, that God created the earth and the skies, some six or seven thousand years ago, in six successive days of twenty-four hours each, as measured by the clock. Many of them, however, knew more theology than is now known by most little children. They were told that God is infinite; that God is not a mere magnified man, though we can talk about him only in human words; that when the account says that God "rested," that is a way of speaking, and was not intended to imply that God ever gets tired;

that when it says that God spoke, it does not mean that he has lips and tongue. In a general way they understood that the processes of creation were a series of impulses of the divine will.

They were also taught, however, that the same infinite God who created the world also keeps it in being. The

**God Working
by Means**

boy was taught, for example, not only that God originally made the universe, but that God made him—made his body and his soul. It did not occur to him that this was inconsistent with his having been born and his eating food and his growing. If he was thoughtful enough he got the idea that God made him by the processes of birth and nourishment and growth. He thought of God as the maker of all things, and as making most things with the use of natural forces as a means. His idea of the matter was of course a child's idea, but it was not as mechanical as many persons now seem to imagine. His mind was hospitable to the thought that God may supposably have used means even in the events recorded in the first narrative of Genesis; though he was taught that this chapter is a history of beginnings, and that the beginnings differed from the subsequent course of nature in the fact that God originally made all things "of nothing."

Being a child, he was not aware, as some of his elders were, that in the early Christian centuries a different

**Allegorical
Patristic
Interpretation**

interpretation had by some been given to this narrative—an interpretation which recognized certain difficulties, and attempted to remove them by regarding the passage as allegory rather than fact.

Most of the present members of the Borrowed Time Club, when they were little children, were more or less familiar with the idea of evolution, though they may oftener have heard it called "development." The change wrought by Darwin and Spencer and their associates was not the introducing of the idea of evolution, but that of particular doctrines of evolution. Religious people of past generations have recognized the phenomena of evolution, though not as a substitute for God's activity in bringing things to pass.

Great changes, however, occurred in the popular scientific beliefs of men, and there was great activity in publishing these changes during the years when the members of the Borrowed Time Club were passing through school and college. On the basis of generations of geological study men reached the conclusion that the earth was not suddenly made about six thousand years ago, but that it has been formed by gradual processes, extending through uncounted ages. On the basis of biological and other investigations they came to think that evolution has played a much more prominent part in the history of the universe than was formerly supposed; that, with proper definition, we may even regard evolution as a universal law of nature.

These changes in human thinking had very specific bearings on the question of the character of the first narrative in Genesis. While the present members of the Borrowed Time Club were children or young people, Mr. Herbert Spencer attracted attention to the so-called nebular hypothesis as a way of accounting for the earth and the

**Evolution as
Held by Our
Grandfathers**

**Are the
Genesis Days
Long Periods?**

solar system as products of evolution. The nebular hypothesis had previously been held by Laplace and the Herschels and perhaps by Kant, and by the followers of these men; but it was Mr. Spencer who brought it to the front. The question of the relations of the first chapters of Genesis to the nebular hypothesis and to geology became a practical one. Such men as Hugh Miller of Scotland, and Professor Guyot of Princeton, and President Hitchcock of Amherst, and Professor Tayler Lewis of Union, published their solutions of the problem. Attempts were made to prove that each of the six days of the first chapter of Genesis is a long geological period. Others thought that the long geological ages are covered by the first verse in Genesis, and that the rest of the chapter describes a miraculous fitting up of the earth in six ordinary days, at a comparatively recent point in geological time. The men who framed these theories were careful and scholarly, and many still accept the theories. It does not seem to me that they made out their case.

Up to this stage it was not clearly known among scholars that several of the pre-Abrahamic Bible stories exist in other versions than the Bible version. It was known that stories somewhat similar had been handed down among the Phœnicians and other peoples, and for a long time nothing more was known in the matter. At length Assyrian copies of Babylonian documents were discovered, showing that the stories of beginnings which we have in the Bible were also current in Babylonia, though with details different from those found in the Bible. More recently there have been discovered Babylonian

**Babylonian and
Other Versions**

fragments of some of these stories, dating from times long before Abraham. The earliest narratives which we have in the Bible are stories which were widely circulated in very early times, among different peoples, and with differences in details. Either the Bible writers copied and changed the Babylonian stories, or the Babylonians copied and changed the biblical, or both obtained them from some more ultimate source.

These being the elements of the problem, the crypto-agnostic criticism first of all insists on the ultramechanical interpretation of the first narrative in

The Genesis—the making of the sky and the
Cryptoagnostic earth and its inhabitants in six clock-
Interpretation measured days, with no appreciation of the anthropomorphic character of the expressions used. Then, with a great swing of contempt, it scouts the idea that there is any element of true fact in the narrative. It is particularly scornful of all the attempts to bring the account into harmony with science. It not only finds no fact in this narrative; it refuses to seek for any.

“To seek for even a kernel of historical fact in such cosmogonies is inconsistent with a scientific point of view.” (“Creation” in *Encyclopedia Biblica*.)

With some differences among themselves its advocates affirm that this Genesis narrative was written after the Babylonian exile. They say that the descendants of the Jews whom Nebuchadnezzar carried away found the Assyrian copies in Mesopotamia, reconstructed the story so as to eliminate the polytheistic elements, and thus made of it the narrative which we now have, which is therefore merely a reworked piece of Babylonian folklore.

In discussing the views thus presented, we need have just one question before us. What is the truth in the case? If it were true that the account is merely a myth, of no value as fact, good only for certain religious ideas which it presents, then we ought to believe this truth. Why should not Holy Scripture use this form of fiction for teaching purposes? Let us accept this view of the matter if the evidence justifies it; but also let us not accept it if the evidence is against it.

Suppose the case of a person having some familiarity with the nebular hypothesis and with geology, and also having a good habit of literary appreciation and some degree of religious knowledge and insight, but who has never heard of this first narrative in Genesis; and suppose this person to read the narrative as a literary product to him entirely new; what would such a person make of it?

**A Hypothetical
Viewpoint**

To begin with, he would have no hesitation in pronouncing that this first narrative is a literary product by itself, closing with the third verse of the second chapter. It differs from the narrative that follows, in its subject, its point of view, its type of anthropomorphism, and in many points of literary form. If he were told, however, that the two narratives are in contradiction and have nothing in common, he would pronounce the statement erroneous. The second narrative is consistent with the first, and supplements it.

**A Narrative
by Itself**

He would presently ascertain that the subject of the narrative is God's originating the earth and its products

and inhabitants, the heavens coming in only for subsidiary mention. He would note the technical word "create."

Creation Finding it defined in some dictionaries as meaning to make out of nothing, he would perhaps verify the definition by looking up the passages where the word occurs. If so, he would find that in the Bible this word means to originate divinely, whether from pre-existing materials or not. No being except God creates; but God creates, for example, the successive generations of men and animals that are born (*e. g.*, Psa. 89 : 47; 104 : 30; Isa. 54 : 16; Ezek. 21 : 30; Mal. 2 : 10), and not their original progenitors merely. You may hold it to be true that ultimately all which God makes is made of nothing, but the Bible often uses the word "create" where there are mediate processes. We speak of God as the Creator of the persons and things that now exist. We may think of any product as the last term of a series of second causes, the divine energy being the first term; or if we prefer we may concentrate our attention on the first term and the last, withdrawing it from the intermediate terms, and regard the product only in the aspect in which it results from the divine energy. The subject of this first narrative in Genesis is the divine origination of things, whatever mediate processes may or may not have entered into the origination.

Without hesitation our supposed reader would decide that the principal purpose of the narrative is to impress religious lessons—lessons concerning the character and works and supremacy of God, and concerning the sabbath. This, and not

Religious Purpose

the giving of information, is the great aim of the narrator. Whether he teaches these lessons through events that actually occurred, or through events that have been invented for the purpose, is a question to be settled by examining the events themselves.

Our investigator would observe that the narrative is highly artificial in its structure. Whether he called it poetry or prose, he would observe that it consists of several series of statements, similar in form, with recurring repetitions of phrases. He would observe its recurrent presentation of God as the sovereign of the universe, who gives orders and is obeyed. Not least he would notice the idea of a week's work of Deity, followed by a sabbath rest. He would inevitably recognize two elements in the narrative—a series of events, and an artificial framework devised for making vivid the presentation of the events. The days in the narrative are a part of the framework; whether they have any other relation to the events is a question to be determined by study, and not by antecedent assumption.

Among the events are first the orderless earth, in watery darkness, but with the Spirit of God operating upon it; then light alternating with darkness as day and night; then a water surface for the earth, with the open expanse above it, and other waters above that; then the emerging of the land surface; then the making of the sun and moon and stars to be luminaries to the earth; then the animals of the water and the air; then the land animals, with man as the highest.

**Artificial
Structure**

The Events

We are not yet ready to decide whether these events are fact or are fictitious. If, however, for the sake of reasoning, we suppose them to be fact, then **Supposing these Events to be Real** they are not a complete account of all that occurred, but only a few events selected from among myriads. And the selection was made, presumably, not with the view of making the information given complete, but with the view of filling out the framework, and of giving force to the religious teachings. Nothing could be more inept than to reason from the silences of the narrative—from the matters it has omitted to mention.

Further, supposing these events to be fact, then the work of each of the six creative days is still in process. The light still exists, with alternating day and night. We may see the earth's water surface with the open expanse above it, and the waters of the clouds above that; and the process is still incomplete, for the surface of the earth is still liable to change. Similar statements might be made concerning each of the other great events. All this interprets the fact that the author of the narrative is silent as to the close of each of these events. We have no right to infer that he intended us to understand that each event terminated before the next began; we should rather understand that they all overlap.

Yet further, supposing these events to be fact, we should allow each one to interpret the others as fact. For example, the earth had properly no surface before the interposing of the "expanse" on the second day, and its "waters" were largely vaporous, and its periphery not fixed. The alternating day and night of the first creative

day was due to the rotation of the mass, the sun being then in existence, though it did not till long afterward become the visible luminary of the earth.

Again, supposing these events to be facts, they are facts as appearing to a supposable observer, and not as adjusted to the theories of geology or of mathematical astronomy.

Once more, supposing these events to be of the nature of fact, they are processes which have occupied uncounted thousands of years. This is very different from saying that the creative days were periods of many thousands of years. The events, provided they are fact and not fancy, occupied the whole range of geological time, no matter what conclusion you may reach concerning the days.

In fine, supposing this narrative to be a narrative of facts, it begins with the earth as an immense vaporous, inorganic, rotating mass. It is surfaceless, its constituent materials reaching out in every direction into space, but it is under the influence of a divine cosmical force which is reducing it to order. In process of time the rotating mass becomes approximately delimited; and then, at any point where the future surface will be, there is alternation of day and night. The sun is not visible through the overhanging vapor, but there is dim daylight during half of each rotation of the mass. In process of time the water surface of the planet becomes differentiated. It is one vast ocean, and over it the open expanse, but with water in the form of vapor above the expanse, so thick that the sun is still invisible. As time rolls on, the land surface

**What the Events
Were, if Real**

emerges from the water. Like any modern geographer the narrator here speaks of the earth's ocean system as a unit, made up of the many seas. The beginnings of land vegetation follow, the narrator not mentioning marine vegetation at all. Then the sun and moon and stars become visible luminaries, and animal life begins.

If the Genesis narrative deals with facts, these are the facts with which it deals; and if anyone will take the trouble to obtain this correct idea of them, he will then be sure that the narrative deals with facts, and that it states the facts correctly. The events it uses are not mythical or fanciful; they are the same great cosmical facts which science now sets forth in its astronomical and geological and biological generalizations. There is no question of reconciling Genesis and science; there is instead the unmistakable fact that science verifies the outline and the important details of the account given in Genesis.

Of course this showing is remarkable. This narrator was doubtless ignorant of the scientific discoveries of the centuries, and yet he has somehow got hold of certain permanent facts, which were true in the light of whatever knowledge men had in his time, which have remained true to whatever knowledge men have since acquired, and which will remain true in the future, no matter how far science may outgrow its present generalizations.

The Contrast with the Other Versions The thing becomes more remarkable when we contrast the biblical version of this ancient story with the other ancient versions of it. They all alike start in the conception of primeval chaos. So far, they might all claim to be in

agreement with the nebular hypothesis. But the others at once become grotesque. There is not in any of them a trace of an orderly cosmical process, much less of the particular cosmical process which makes the narrative in Genesis parallel with the course of events as defined by human discoveries.

Of course there are those who will say that the writer of the Genesis narrative cannot possibly have known the facts that we have found in his production, and that we must therefore give some other meaning to what he says. **How Can this Narrative be Accounted for?** This is illegitimate reasoning. How can you tell what he knew, except from what he says? If the thing was beyond his knowledge, how can you account for his saying it? Some old-fashioned person will account for the Genesis writer's having and uttering this knowledge by saying that God gave it to him by special revelation; can you give a better account of the matter? Suppose we state it a little more cautiously, though perhaps without any real difference in the meaning. There have been cases in which religious earnestness has given men remarkable insight into the nature of things. Can this be explained as one of those cases? Whether you can account for it or not, careful study vindicates the concrete truthfulness of the first narrative in Genesis.

George Smith's "Chaldean Account of Genesis, Etc.," originally published in 1876, is still good reading. Accounts of the Babylonian stories, with partial translations from them, are found in many Teachers' Bibles, and other books of reference. A series of compact translations, well up to date, may be found in Kent's "Beginnings of

Hebrew History," pages 360 ff., and in the earlier part of the same volume may be found a typical presentation of the so-called modern critical views of

Literature the matter. Find other presentations in the articles on "Creation" in the Encyclopedias and Bible Dictionaries, and in commentaries on Genesis.

"The Earth's Beginning," by Sir Robert Stawell Ball, is a good presentation of the nebular hypothesis. Numerous and good volumes have been published on the relations of science to the account in Genesis. Distinctly the best is "The Panorama of Creation," by the Rev. David L. Holbrook, published by The Sunday School Times Company in 1908. See also such articles as "The Interpretation of Bible Word-Pictures" (*American Presbyterian Review*, January, 1869), and "The Six Creative Days" (*Westminster Teacher*, July, 1901).

CHAPTER VIII

THE FLOOD NARRATIVE

Introductory: The P and J sections in Genesis. The flood narrative as an illustration. Does the Bible say that Noah's flood was universal? I. Is this narrative composite? 1. Analysis of sections. 2. Accounting for the phenomena on the P and J hypothesis. No objection on theological grounds. Critical objections. The hypothesis not agreed upon by all scholars. In conflict with some of the phenomena. Other supposable hypotheses. Groundlessness of the alleged late dates. II. Is this narrative self-contradictory? 1. The importance of the question. 2. Allegations. Clean and unclean. Worship by sacrifice. Twos and sevens. Forty days and other time data. 3. Reasons against interpreting discrepantly. The natural presumption. The supposed redactor saw no inconsistencies. III. Is this narrative untruthful? Truthfulness versus historicity. Consistency proves truthfulness. Babylonian folklore as an alternative. IV. Is this narrative historical? Numerical difficulties. A year-myth? Widespread traditions. Soberness and minute details. The whole evidence indicates historicity. Literature.

Any one can see that there are marked literary differences between Genesis 2 : 4 to 4 : 26 and the section that precedes. The second section is more **Literary** picturesque in its details, deals more with **Differences** particulars and less with generalizations, **in Genesis** presents God less as the Supreme Being and more as an approachable person, mentions God as accomplishing re-

NOTE.—This chapter is rewritten from the article "Is the Deluge Story Self-Contradictory?" published in the *Homiletic Review*, October, 1903.

sults through means rather than by fiat. It has a different vocabulary from the first section, and sentences differently constructed. It is less given to serial statements, and to the repeating of phrases. It is less stately, and has more of emotional interest. And quite apart from particulars, the literary feeling of the two sections is different.

It has been customary to specify as one of the important differences the fact that the first narrative denotes the Supreme Being solely by the word *Elohim and Jehovah* *elohim*, translated "God," while the second narrative uses the proper name *Jehovah*; but this fact is less significant than some have supposed. In Hebrew the word *elohim* approximates an abstract meaning, like our word "Deity." *Jehovah* is a proper name. A third word, *el*, Power, is strictly the word corresponding to "God." It is used in Genesis especially in compounds, such as God Almighty, God Most High. If you will examine carefully you will see that these words are used in Genesis with great exactitude, according to their respective meanings. In most instances it would be inaccurate to substitute one of them for the other. In the generalized statements of the first narrative, "Deity" is strictly the correct word to use; while the personal name *Jehovah* is the proper word to use in describing the intimacies of the garden and the personal relations of the Supreme Being to Adam and Eve and Cain and Abel.

If you examine you will find that some of the literary characteristics of the first narrative reappear in the lists of names in Genesis 5 and 11 : 10-26, and in the account

of the covenant of circumcision in Genesis 17; while the characteristics of the second section may be found in various other passages. These differ-

Other Sections ences and groupings of differences are observed facts, however you may account for them. The so-called Modern View accounts for them by saying that the first narrative and others like it were copied into Genesis from a priestly writing, now commonly designated as P, while the second section and others like it were copied from a different source called J.

In many passages it is alleged that composite authorship is indicated by repetitions, the compiler of Genesis having made up his narrative by copying short sections alternately from two or more sources. Probably the account of the flood (Genesis 6 : 5 to 9 : 29) is the most obvious and intelligible of all the instances of this kind, and therefore the most available for investigation.

We have been accustomed to think that the Noah flood covered the whole surface of the round earth; but the account does not say that it did. “All
Was it a Universal Deluge? the high mountains that were under the whole heaven were covered” (Gen. 7 : 19). The natural meaning of this is that all the mountain tops within the entire horizon were covered, so that a spectator from the ark saw no summits, saw nothing but water. It is likely enough that at some time or other every region of the earth may have been submerged in great catastrophes, one region at one date and another region at another date; and this may account for aqueous remains everywhere, and for flood traditions among all races; but it is not easy to think of a simultaneous sub-

mergence of the whole planet. The account in Genesis, however, is inconsistent with the idea of a merely local flood in any narrow sense. It was wide enough to involve the whole human population of whom the writer in Genesis is speaking. It is called by the technical name *mabbul* (Gen. 6 : 17 ff; Ps. 29 : 10), implying that it is the one event of its class in history, and not a mere ordinary inundation.

We have four questions to ask concerning the flood narrative.

I. First, is it composite? In particular, can we be certain that it was composed by transcribing alternate sections from two preceding documents?

By the words "These are the generations of Noah" the final writer of Genesis indicates that he enters upon a new topic in Genesis 6 : 9, but that need not prevent our

**Analysis of this
Narrative**

noticing that he has anticipated the new topic in the verses immediately preceding. The following division into sections has no value except to mark the repetitions which, it is alleged, indicate the process of transcribing alternately from J and P.

1. God's purpose to destroy the corrupt earth, and his favor for Noah (J 6 : 5-8. P 6 : 9-12).

2. God's revelation to Noah (P 6 : 13-22. J 7 : 1-5).

3. Noah entering the ark (J 7 : 6-10. P 7 : 11-16).

4. The rise of the water and the extinction of life on the earth (J 7 : 17 and 22-23a. P 7 : 18-21 and 7 : 23b to 8 : 2a).

5. The subsidence of the water (J 8 : 2b-3a and 6-12. P 8 : 3b-5).

6. The earth dry (P 8 : 13a. J 8 : 13b).
 7. Coming out of the ark (P 8 : 14-19).
 8. God's blessing mankind (J 8 : 20-22. P 9 : 1-17).
- In J the blessing is connected with Noah's altar and sacrifice. In P it consists of two sections, the second being that of the rainbow covenant.
9. Noah's sons (J 9 : 18-27).
 10. Summary for Noah (P 9 : 28, 29).

Beyond a few general observations it is useless to try to make the argument in this matter intelligible except to those who will go to their Bibles with **Is the P and J Hypothesis Proved?** it, and work the matter out clause by clause. In seven of these ten sections the writer, after making certain statements, has gone back on his path and repeated the statements, with variations of language, and with additional details. To some extent the variations of language are uniform as between the P and the J sections, and conform to those which mark the alleged P and J sections elsewhere in Genesis; though there are a large number of instances in which this is not the case. In the third of the numbered sections in particular the criteria are very much mixed, and there is hardly a section in which they are not mixed to some extent.

What conclusion are we to draw from these phenomena? Do they prove that the author of our present narrative had before him two earlier narratives of the flood, and that he did his work by copying first from one and then from the other? Have we here really two independent narratives put together by a later writer?

There is nothing in any current doctrine of inspira-

tion to forbid our answering these questions affirmatively. The Spirit of God is as competent to produce a writing by inspiring for the purpose two or more men in different

Not Excluded by Doctrine of Inspiration centuries as by inspiring one man. Orthodox theologians have commonly accepted the idea that the inspired writers

of Scripture may have drawn from literary sources. If we regard the differences presently to be mentioned simply as differences, not as contradictions, they may very naturally be accounted for as coming from two accounts of the flood, written by men of different habits, with different specific objects in view. And there are various items that would go to confirm this explanation.

As long as one regards this P and J theory merely as a hypothesis, which may aid in classifying the phenomena, it may be a harmless and useful hypothesis; but when one treats it

A Hypothesis and not a Fact as a fact, on the basis of which he is

authorized to change the text of Genesis, and to affirm that the narrative is inconsistent and untrue, that is another matter. It is a hypothesis not universally accepted. Conservative scholars very generally reject it. Some agnostics are dropping it in favor of newer theories. The men who hold it differ among themselves. The usual theory makes the assumption that the writer of P thought that the name of Jehovah and the worship of him by sacrifices were unknown till the time of Moses; while the idea that he thought so is absurdly in conflict with the testimony and with the phenomena. How could he, with the J writings in his possession, doubt that sacrifices were offered to Jehovah in the patriarchal times?

Further, in the flood narrative as it stands a large number of alleged J peculiarities are found in the alleged P sections, and P peculiarities in the J sections. The details have to be adjusted by text emendations or by harmonizing processes, before the parts of the narrative can be made to fit the theory. In this the flood narrative is typical. The final verdict will doubtless be for the modification of the theory, and not of the phenomena.

You will find a further reason against the current theory if you will read the alleged J sections by themselves, and the alleged P sections by themselves, and contrast the richness of the existing story with the bareness of either of its alleged sources. The existing flood story is the work of a person eminently gifted in the art of narration; it is not the patching together of two relatively inferior productions.

A final objection to treating the P and J hypothesis as if it were fact is in itself sufficient: there may sup-
Other Supposable possibly be other hypotheses equally
Hypotheses plausible. For example, one might sup-
 pose the repetitions to be matters of
 mental habit with the narrator; he being a man who, having made a statement, was in the habit of repeating it in order to locate additional particulars. Or if the problem is to be solved on the assumption that the narrator used sources, the future may give us some hypothesis which shall be far more satisfactory than those now current.

It is not illegitimate to hold that the writer of the Bible flood narrative drew his materials from sources, or even to try to analyze his writings with reference

to the sources. But the cryptoagnostic criticism is not satisfied with going so far as this; it dates the J sections mostly in the reign of Manasseh, king of Judah, and the P sections some centuries later. These dates are reasonless and uncritical.

**No Proof of
the Alleged
Late Dates**

II. We take up a second question. Is the flood narrative self-contradictory?

At this point we come sharply into conflict with the agnostic and cryptoagnostic criticism. In itself considered, their idea of the human processes by which Genesis was written need not offend us overmuch; but it is a more important matter when, with endless reiteration, they connect these processes with alleged inconsistencies and incredibilities in the contents of the Scriptures. They have wonderful eyes for the discovery of alleged inconsistencies and incredibilities; and when they have discovered them they marshal them three times over, and compel them to perform threefold service. First, they allege the inconsistencies in a passage in proof that it came from different sources. Second, they adduce the alleged inconsistencies and incredibilities in proof that the testimony of the Scriptures cannot be depended upon. Third, they adduce them again with the charge that the errors made by the Scripture writers prove that they lived a long time after the events which they narrate.

At this point in our discussion let us separate the question of consistency from other questions, not asking whether this flood narrative is historical or true or original or inspired, but whether it is self-contradictory. Sup-

posing it to be an account of actual events, is it a congruous account? Or, supposing it to be fiction, has it verisimilitude? This is the simplest question and the easiest to answer with **Consistency** exactness. When one has answered it by **versus** itself its bearing on other questions will be obvious.

It is alleged that the J sections contradict the P sections in that they affirm that Noah distinguished between clean and unclean animals, and that he worshiped by sacrifice. This alleged **Instances** contradiction is not really between statements made in the account, but between notions based on them; and it therefore does not count. No part of the narrative denies that Noah distinguished between clean and unclean animals, or that he worshiped by sacrifice.

It is alleged that the J parts say that Noah took the clean animals into the ark by sevens, while the P parts say that he took them by twos. But there is no contradiction in that as long as seven times two are fourteen. It is nowhere denied that he took them by sevens. It is not said of any animals that Noah took only a single pair of them. A large number of the animals suitable for food and sacrifice would be needed. No difficulty is presented even if one understands that in the case of such animals as cattle and sheep the ratio of males to females was different from that in the case of the mating animals. Look at it as you will, there is no contradiction.

Again it is alleged that according to J the flood lasted forty days (7 : 4), while according to P the waters increased for a hundred and fifty days (7 : 24; 8 : 3), and

the whole time of living in the ark was a year and ten days (7 : 11; 8 : 14). But the forty days is spoken of in P also, for there is no sense in tearing 7 : 12 and 17 away from their context merely for the purpose of making out a case of contradiction. The fact is that the account mentions two sources whence came the water of the deluge; namely, the rain and the breaking up of the fountains of the great deep (7 : 11). It says that after the forty days of rain the water continued to rise in the region where the ark was. It is not certain that the account says that the ark was really afloat till the close of the forty days (7 : 17). In all this there is no contradiction between the differing parts of the narrative.

There is no need of mentioning other allegations in detail; the same result would emerge in every case. There are no two statements in the narrative that may not easily be so understood as to be in agreement.

Granting, however, as every intelligent person must grant, that there are no necessarily contradictory statements in this narrative, are there not reasons why we should understand the statements as having inconsistent meanings? Against so understanding them is the natural presumption in the case. And certain serious facts are also against it. Assuming that we have here the narratives of two authors put together by a third, it is evident that this third author saw no contradiction in those parts of his sources which he used; and his judgment in the matter is worthy of respect. That he was a man of ability is vouched for by the fact that his work

Inconsistencies by Interpretation

still survives and commands attention. We have only those parts of his sources which he copied out for us, while he had the sources in more complete form. Doubtless he had other sources not now accessible. These are reasons for not forcing upon the narrative an interpretation contrary to his, and contrary to the natural meanings of the words. But without such forced interpretation there are no contradictions to be found in it. If it is history, it is congruous history. If it is fiction, it is perfect in verisimilitude.

III. Our third question is whether the flood narrative is true.

Separating the question of its truthfulness from the question whether it is history, is the narrative true in the sense in which it was intended to be understood? It is important here to recognize three alternative views, and not two only. The account may supposedly be either true statement of fact, or false statement of fact, or religious fiction. Here is a bit of common ground where persons of differing views may stand side by side. We all hold that the great value of the narrative is its religious value. If we take the story just as it stands, and look for its religious and ethical values, we shall so far forth mainly agree, even though some of us count the story as fact and others as parable. Divided as we are on certain important points, here is a *modus vivendi* which we ought not to neglect.

The Babylonian and Israelitish flood stories have too much in common to be wholly independent. The usual order in the reworking of religious stories is from the

simple to the grotesque, and from the grotesque to the more grotesque, and not the contrary. Under this law

**Babylonian and
Israelite Stories**

one would infer that the biblical form of the stories is more original than the Babylonian. But even if we suppose the contrary to be the fact, if a prophet took the grotesque polytheistic Babylonian stories and reduced them to the sober monotheistic simplicity of the biblical narrative, he accomplished a work worthy of one inspired by God. Call the account what you will, if you regard it as designed, like the parables of Jesus, for religious teaching, it is not absurd to say that the Holy Spirit may have inspired the writing of such a story, or may have inspired a writer of Scripture, having found a suitable story, to incorporate it as a part of the Scriptures.

With this definition of truthfulness, the recognition of the consistency of the flood narrative necessitates our

Consistency

Implies

Truthfulness

accepting it as true. Fair dealing requires that we take into the account the extreme brevity of the narrative, not holding the writer responsible for facts that he has omitted, nor for ideas that we supply by inference. All alleged proofs of falsity vanish when we deal with them fairly. The charge of untruthfulness will not stand. The story is not falsified fact or aimless folklore. Either it is a true record of facts or it is religious parable, true in the meaning in which it was intended. Surely the cryptoagnostic is inexcusable if he fails to see this.

IV. We have one more question to ask: Is the flood narrative historical? Is it a correct account of events that actually occurred?

There is a chronological difficulty that is genuine. The account says that Noah was six hundred years old when the flood began, and lived afterward three hundred and fifty years (Gen. 7 : 11 ; 9 : 28). These numerals, with those in Genesis 5 and 11 : 10-26, have been commonly regarded as a chronological scheme for the world's history before Abraham. On this scheme Ussher dates the flood B. C. 2349. If the names in these tables are simply those of individuals, their longevity is not an easy matter to explain. And further, it is now commonly held that we know enough of the history of the flood region to make us sure that no such catastrophe occurred there within some thousands of years of that date.

I should not reply to this by conceding that the numbers in Genesis are false. In the present state of our information, however, it seems to me probable that these lists originally had a meaning which we have now lost. There are reasons for thinking that they were not intended to be understood biographically and chronologically, but rather as tabulations of ethnical movements. If we some time recover their meaning, they will probably not stand in the way of our regarding the flood as historical.

The flood story presents an elaborate scheme of dates by months and days. Some regard this as proving that the story is a year-myth, and therefore not historical. The phenomena might supposedly have this significance; that they actually have it is a baseless assumption.

On the other hand, in view of the well-nigh universal

prevalence of traditions concerning the flood, and in view of the agreement of these with the geological history of our planet, perhaps no one will dispute the probability of an original nucleus of fact lying back of the traditions. If one admits this, and then observes the consistency and verisimilitude of the Bible narrative, comparing it with the other flood stories of the nations, he will hesitate before denying that in this particular account the facts are correctly given.

There is nothing very incredible in the idea that the biblical form of the story may be more original than the Babylonian, or even may have been handed down from Noah himself. It is sober and circumstantial, and apparently from the point of view of one taking observations from the deck of the ark. The difficulty of thinking that so ancient a writer would invent fiction of just this type is greater than the difficulties of regarding the story as fact. If from archeology and physical geography we should some time obtain additional information concerning the great catastrophe, it will probably not contradict the information given in Genesis. Judging from the evidence, one must pronounce the flood narrative not only true but historical.

Concerning the Bible account of the flood, see the literature mentioned at the close of Chapter V. For the parallel Babylonian accounts, see at close of Chapter VII. For a collection of ethnical traditions concerning the deluge, or deluges, see "The Book of Genesis in the Light of Modern Knowledge," by Dr. Elwood Worcester.

**Complete
Historicity**

Literature

CHAPTER IX

THE NARRATIVE CONCERNING ABRAHAM

Introductory: Sources of the narrative. Different opinions. Our common inadequate understanding of the narrative. The magnitude of the patriarchal events. Other points that are misunderstood. The account of Abraham given in Genesis is biographically true. 1. There is no one plausible opposing theory. 2. The narrative is free from grotesque elements. 3. It is free from soberly incredible statements. The ages of the patriarchs. Their communicating with Deity. Personalized history. 4. It is free from inconsistencies. 5. Abraham as a character is genuinely realistic. 6. The Hammurabi environment for Abraham. The chronology cleared up. Contemporaneous Babylonian events. Semitic migrations. Order of synchronism. Abraham and the laws of Hammurabi. 7. Testimony of the final authors of Genesis, and of the witnesses in the Old and New Testaments. Literature.

The old-fashioned idea concerning Abraham is that he was a historical person, and that the account in Genesis is correct biography. Agnostic criticism counts him a mere myth. Between these two limits range the various cryptoagnostic theories.

Under the older tradition students noticed differences in the different narratives concerning Abraham, but did not study the differences very carefully. The men of the new tradition hold that our present account was made by piecing together four or more earlier writings, each of them already more or less composite.

**Sources of the
Narrative**

The four alleged sources are those which they designate as J and E and P, together with an additional document used in the fourteenth chapter of Genesis. As has already been said more than once in the present volume, this analysis is not so objectionable in itself as it is on account of the impugment of the Scripture statements by its advocates. They allege that the record is full of inconsistencies and misrepresentations, and on this they base the proof of their three propositions—that the record was made from conflicting sources, that it was made so late that its authors could not know the facts in the case, that in fact the record is unhistorical.

In some of their aspects the differences of view concerning Abraham are exceedingly important. If we take the wrong side we shall have a wrong **Appraisal of these Differences** view of the whole history of the religion of Jehovah. It is true, however, that the Spirit of God may supposably teach us through fiction as well as through fact. Many of the lessons from the story of Abraham do not depend on the question whether the story is fact or fiction. It might be a mistake for you to exhaust your energies in trying to settle this question. It may be wiser to leave the question open and begin by mastering the contents of the narrative as it stands. By this procedure you will accomplish two things. You will get for yourself the lessons taught by the story as a story, and you will make the best possible preparation for settling any questions that arise as to its character.

The mastery of these contents may require more intellectual effort than some imagine. Do not rest content

with the notion that you already understand them. I do not believe that they were transmitted to the biblical writers in the form of folklore; but they have been transmitted to many of us in that form. Very few of us learned them originally from our printed Bibles. We received them orally, and with much ornamentation, when we were little children, from persons who had received them in the same way back through untold generations. When we came to read them we read into the text the meanings we had learned through the oral transmission. In more respects than we imagine our traditional understanding differs from the printed account.

For example, we picture the course of events wrongly if we start with a wrong conception of the scale of the movement when Abraham migrated to Canaan. If we think of him as coming with perhaps a score of servants and retainers we shall have ideas of the affair which will presently become confused. The Bible account is that Abraham had dependants, "those born in the house and those bought with money of a foreigner" (Gen. 17 : 27 and elsewhere), that is, inherited retainers and servants acquired by purchase. From his homeborn followers, as distinguished from those whom he had purchased, he raised at one time 318 men for a military expedition (Gen. 14 : 14). It follows, according to the Bible account, that he was at the head of a population of several thousand people. If you accustom yourself to thinking of the experiences of the patriarchs on the scale thus indicated, you will find the accounts much more intelligible.

The Bible account declares that all these were united with Abraham in the covenant of circumcision (Gen. 17).

Other Points that are Misunderstood They were ancestors of the Israelitish people. The Bible does not say that Abraham was their father in the sense of being the lineal progenitor of them all. Many persons delight to think of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob as "nomads"; then they somewhere get ideas as to the habits of nomads, and import those ideas into their interpretation of the biblical narrative. It is important to observe that the Bible does not say that they were nomads; it represents them as combining agriculture with the raising of cattle and sheep (Gen. 26 : 12 and 30 : 14; cf. 21 : 33), as having in many particulars a somewhat advanced civilization. In the revelations made to Abraham we are prone to think of God as uniformly assuming a human shape. We have in detail (Gen. 18) an account of one manifestation of this kind. Was this one instance exceptional or typical? The narrative gives no answer to this question.

Lay aside your baby ideas of the matter, and your theories, and learn from the Bible text just what the story of Abraham is. This is worth doing for its own sake, and until you have done it you are not qualified to discuss other questions concerning Abraham.

That the account in Genesis of Abraham is a truthful collection of materials for genuine biography appears from such considerations as the following:

1. There is no opposing theory that holds the field. Those who deny that the narrative is fact are not agreed as to what it is. Some hold that it is strictly mythical,

Abraham being originally the name of a tribal god. Others make it a personified tradition of prehistoric movements of tribes. Cheyne says (*Encyc. Bib.*, I. 26) that there are those who "would throw aside that story as an outworn and useless myth." He thinks that there may possibly be "a kernel of tradition in the narrative," to the extent that there may perhaps have been a legendary hero named Abraham, in some way connected with Hebron, but having no relations "with Jacob or Israel." His own theory is that with the earliest Hebrew writers Abraham "was not so much a historical personage as an ideal type of character." "A school of writers . . . devoted themselves to elaborating a typical example of that unworldly goodness which was rooted in faith, and fervently preached by the prophets." Dr. Ryle says (*Dic. of Bib.*, I. 15) that the accounts now found in Genesis "have preserved the historical facts of the remote past in a form in which personal details are inextricably intertwined with racial movements, and . . . the destinies of a future nation are anticipated in the features of family experience."

**No Opposing
Consensus**

These several views are as contradictory each to the other as they are to the view that the story of Abraham is biographical. If the story is a myth of the moon-god, then it is not a personified legendary history of early Semitic tribes. If it is either of these it is not religious parable for the presentation of prophetic ideals. The fact that these differing theories are held proves that the men who hold them do not know of any type of folklore with which the story of Abraham can properly be classed.

There is good reason for this. The story has not the marks of folklore; it has the marks of fact.

2. The narrative in Genesis bears the marks of fact and not of folklore in its freedom from grotesque elements.

The Account Every one is familiar with folklore in
Free from some shape—Mother Goose, Uncle
Grotesqueness Remus, the tales of the Greek and Roman classics, Tanglewood Tales, the Nibelungen Lied, the latest translation of the legends of Finland, the stories in Professor Fiske's "Myths and Mythmakers" or other works of the kind. Think them over, fairy tales, children's tales, myth, saga, legend, or what not. Is not the grotesque an unfailing element in them all? Can you reduce them to the form of simple and sober statement of fact without emptying them of their interest? Many of them are exquisitely human in places, but presently they yield to the natural tendency to distortion. The story of Abraham lacks this fundamental characteristic of folklore; there is humor and pathos and the marvelous in it, but it is at no point grotesque.

3. Equally it is free from soberly incredible statements.

The affirmations which give rise to the most difficulty are those concerning the ages of Abraham and the mem-

The Ages of the Patriarchs bers of his family. The account says that he lived to be 175 years old, and Isaac to be 180, and Jacob to be 147. Isaac and Esau were each 40 years old at his marriage, and Jacob still older. Abraham raised a second family of children after he was 137 years old. Sarah was a fascinating woman at the age of 65 and older. The idea of the writer who gives us these numbers evidently is that

the stock of Abraham was exceptionally robust, long-lived, and slow-maturing. Why should we deny the possibility that he is correct? And even if one fails to satisfy himself in regard to the numerals, that is not sufficient to invalidate the whole history.

Even the most extreme agnostic will not count it incredible that Abraham may have regarded himself as conscious of having revelations from Deity, or even of having interviews with Deity manifested in human form. No phenomena are better attested than those in which men regard themselves as being in communication with the Supreme Being. And a person is very extreme in his agnosticism if he doubts that phenomena of this kind, however he may account for them, sometimes have a basis in reality. It follows that when the Genesis narrative represents Abraham as frequently conscious of communication with Deity, that is no argument against its truthfulness to fact. At most it indicates that the narrative deals with facts concerning which there is a difference of understanding between agnostics and believers.

Those who deny that the biblical statements concerning Abraham are true to fact make much of certain theories of personalized history. They say that the statements are distorted traditions concerning the relations of tribes and clans, put into personal form. That the narrative includes traditions concerning the early movements and interrelations of various peoples is of course true. It is further true that the traditions express the

**Communicating
with Deity**

**Personalized
History**

Israelitish sense of the inferiority of the Aramæans and of Ishmael and Moab and Ammon and Midian. But even if one should admit that these ethnical matters are partly romance, that would not compel him to regard the biography of Abraham as also romance. Our American Pocahontas was an actual woman, notwithstanding all the romancing about her Indian relatives. The biography of Abraham is as easily detachable from the alleged romance as that of Pocahontas. It is not true that the "racial movements" "are inextricably intertwined with" the "personal details."

What proof is there, however, that even the traditions concerning kindred clans are unhistorical? Abraham is presented to us as belonging to a stock distinguished for the ability of its members. Is there anything incredible in that? Why should it not be true that one or more of the members who remained in Haran were heads of clans? Why should it not be true that Ishmael, with the help of his distinguished father, gathered around him a following, and became the "father," that is to say, the founder, of a tribe or tribes? Why should it not be true that Moab and Ammon and Midian, being actual persons, did the same? Once get rid of the babyish idea that the "father" of a clan is its lineal progenitor, and there is no reason for denying that the racial traditions connected with Abraham are essentially authentic, the coloring in them being only that which belongs to Oriental habits of speech.

4. The freedom of the narrative from inconsistencies is a further mark of its being fact and not folklore.

Inconsistency is a characteristic mark of folklore

stories. The story of Abraham as told in Genesis has not this mark. The attempts to place the mark upon it by interpretation are both unfair and exegetically bad. On the theory that the existing narrative was made by combining four earlier narratives, the absence of contradictions is natural provided the earlier stories were true to fact, but if they were not true it is so remarkable as to be well-nigh miraculous.

**Cogency of this
Argument**

Of course there are charges of inconsistency. In support of the folklore theories strenuous efforts are made to prove that the alleged earlier stories were in conflict, and that the present narrative is self-contradictory, but the confliction is in every case merely conjectural. It is said, for example, that P affirms that Abraham came from Ur (Gen. 11 : 31), while J affirms that he came from Haran (Gen. 12 : 1, 4; 24 : 4; cf. Deut. 26 : 5; Josh. 24 : 2-3, 14-15). But none of these passages deny that Abraham came from Ur to Haran; and his coming from Ur is twice mentioned in the present text of Genesis, in sections that are assigned to J (11 : 28; 15 : 7). In this and other instances the parts of the evidence are not in contradiction until they have been manipulated in order to make them so. Not one of the alleged inconsistencies remains if you interpret the narrative in the same kindly way in which you expect men to interpret your own statements of fact. Test the instances for yourself, and you will be sure.

5. The narrative shows itself to be fact, and not folklore, in its representation of Abraham as a human character. He appears as a man, with human weaknesses and

also with manly strength, natural yet many-sided, persistently and consistently human. As a character in litera-

Abraham a ture he is among the few that are
Realistic greatest. He is not in the least like the
Personality characters in folklore. They are originally either grotesque or merely mechanical or narrowly one-sided. We must abstain from details, but this consideration is in itself conclusive. The petty processes of folklore never created such a personality as Abraham. Such a personality gets a place in literature only in one of two ways; either he actually existed, or he is the product of the creative imagination of some great genius. No one, not even Dr. Cheyne, regards Abraham as the creation of some great genius. He is certainly a person who actually lived.

6. Of comparatively recent date is the recovery of certain historical facts which give reality to our ideas concerning the environment of Abraham. These facts center in the name of Hammurabi, who is commonly identified with the "Amraphel king of Shinar" of the fourteenth chapter of Genesis.

Until the publication in 1907 of Dr. King's "Chronicles Concerning Early Babylonian Kings," our knowledge concerning the relations of Abraham and Hammurabi was blocked by
Clearing Up chronological difficulties. According to
the Chronology the biblical data Abraham came to Canaan somewhere about B. C. 1900, while the Assyrian chronology dated the long reign of Hammurabi three and a half centuries earlier. There was a theory for harmonizing the facts, but it was only a theory. Dr. King has proved by facts

that the theory was substantially correct. Among the data is the record of the so-called "second dynasty," which reigned in Babylonia 368 years, and along with this record certain Assyrian long numbers. It is now known that the "second dynasty" was contemporaneous with other dynasties. Deducting the 368 years, the date of Hammurabi is brought down from the twenty-third century B. C. to the twentieth.

This agrees with the biblical data, but many are saying that this agreement is purchased at the cost of a sharp disagreement later on. The Assyrian long numbers call for 700 years between Hammurabi and Burnaburiash, a Babylonian king who was in correspondence with Egypt some generations before Moses; while the biblical data as traditionally interpreted make the interval between Abraham and Moses only 430 years. This alleged contradiction, however, vanishes when you observe that the "second dynasty" came within these 700 years, so that the 368 years are to be deducted here as well as in determining the date of Hammurabi.

There is no longer room for doubt that the date assigned by the Scriptures to Abraham corresponds with that assigned by the Assyrian chronologers to Hammurabi. (See Chapters XIV and XVII.)

We first find Abraham in Ur of the Chaldees. The data for exact synchronisms are lacking, but it is probable that his migration to Haran and his migration from there to Canaan both occurred within the long reign of Hammurabi. In the earlier part of that reign an Elamitic power held Ur in subjection, and claimed suzerainty over

**Abraham and
Babylonian
Events**

Canaan. Later, Hammurabi made himself suzerain to Elam and all its dependencies. Ur was the seat of an elaborate civilization and a magnificent religious cult. There, as in Canaan later, Abraham and his kindred were doubtless men who combined agriculture with the keeping of cattle and sheep. His kindred, and possibly Abraham himself, were polytheists in Haran (Josh. 24 : 2, 3, 14, 15), and therefore probably in Ur.

Migrations were a common thing with the Semites of that time. To his contemporaries the migrating Abraham, seemed to be doing only what many others had done. His movement differed from others mainly in its motive.

**Semitic
Migrations**

Somehow he had become convinced that Jehovah desired him to move to the far west on the Mediterranean, and that if he did so consequences would follow that would benefit all men. We have no details as to how the message came to him. Providential indications, the local situation and politics, may have entered into the revelation by which the mind of Deity was made known. At all events, so the record says, he first joined in a large migration of his kindred across the Euphrates and up the river to Haran, and at a later date went from there to Canaan.

Concerning Sodom and its neighbor cities we are told that "twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and thirteen years they were in rebellion, and in fourteen years came Chedorlaomer and the kings that were with him" (Gen. 14 : 4). Among these kings Amraphel is mentioned first, having the precedence of even Chedorlaomer.

**An Order
of Events**

If we take the text as it reads, not changing it to "the thirteenth year," it gives us certain suggestions. The thirteen years of rebellion may have been made possible by the breaking of the Elamite power by Hammurabi. Now that Hammurabi is suzerain to the Elamite king, he has an interest in reinstating his vassal in Palestine. Possibly Abraham waited in Haran until the Elamite power in Canaan was broken, and then resumed his journey. At all events the time came when he parted with his kindred, recrossed the Euphrates, and reached Canaan; while they remained in Mesopotamia, and became the Aramæan clans and kingdoms of later history.

Hammurabi has become one of the best known of ancient lawgivers. We have much of his legislation in detail. It gives a distinct color of reality to the account to find Abraham, in certain incidents, minutely following the code of Hammurabi. Such incidents are those connected with Hagar, and others.

In fine, we now know something of the historical environment of the story of Abraham, and we know that the environment fits the story. Our details are incomplete, but we know much concerning Hammurabi and his laws, and something of the relations then existing between Babylonia and Elam and Ur and Canaan and Haran, and something concerning Egypt, and something concerning Semitic migrations. The political world in which Abraham appears is a real world, and not a mere creation of fancy. This does not by itself prove that Abraham was a real person, and the account of him a true account, but all its bearings are in that direction.

7. Finally, the direct testimony in the case is too abundant and respectable to be neglected.

No one doubts that the final authors of Genesis regarded Abraham as a real person, or that the Old Testament writers generally take the same view. No one holds a theory that the story of Abraham was written in good faith as a piece of religious fiction, for the sake of the lessons it teaches. The denial of its historical character is a part of the general denial of the trustworthiness of the statements of the Bible.

**Consensus as to
the Testimony**

Abraham is mentioned nearly seventy times by name in the New Testament, nearly twenty times in the recorded words of Jesus. Any one who will take a concordance and look up the passages will be sure that Jesus and his first disciples and their opponents all alike thought of Abraham as a man, and not as a myth. It is upon Abraham as a historical person, and upon God's promise to mankind through Abraham, and upon the rights accruing to men through that promise, that Jesus and Peter and Stephen and Paul build the whole structure of their history of the religion of Jehovah.

An illuminating volume on the conditions into which Abraham came in Palestine, and on the part which the east Mediterranean coast played in early civilizations, is "Amurru," by Prof.

Literature

Albert T. Clay, published by The Sunday School Times Company in 1909. See "Literature" at the close of Chapter XVII.

CHAPTER X

THE CASE OF JACOB

Introductory: Critical theories. Jacob-el. Ethical difficulties. Humor. A sociological interpretation. The story of Jacob. It will take effort to understand it. Traditional misinterpretation. Time data. The numbers misunderstood. Their true meaning. The character of Jacob. Imagination and feeling. Business qualities. His view of the birthright. God's purpose for Jacob. Jacob's wrong attitude. God and Jacob in controversy. The pottage and the blessing. Jacob's experiences with Laban. God's kindness while chastising. Jacob's surrender of the controversy. His restitution to Esau. His subsequent relations to Esau. Israel. The consecutiveness of the biography, as thus sketched. To understand the story is to solve its difficulties. Jacob a repentant sinner.

The partitioning critics regard the account of Jacob (Gen. 25 : 19 ff.) as made up mainly of transcriptions from J and E, with brief annotations from D, and more extended annotations and additions from P and from other late editorial sources. In this part of the narrative they are not so sure of the lines of partition as in some other parts. Here as elsewhere they have the bad habit of so interpreting statements as needlessly to make them contradictory. With great unanimity they refuse to regard the narrative as properly biographical. Some hold that it is a nature-myth, a personalized sketch of the struggles and the victory of the sun-god. Generally, however, they regard it as a collection of personalized and distorted inci-

dents illustrating the relations and the racial characteristics of the Israelitish and the neighboring peoples—imaginary incidents, though some of them may have had a nucleus of fact. Cheyne says (“Jacob” in *Encyc. Bib.*) that Jacob “is the name not of an individual, but of the imaginary ancestor of a tribe.” Even von Orelli (“Jacob” in new Schaff-Herzog) says that “whether and in what sense Jacob is historical may be a subject of debate.”

The finding of the name Jacob-el in Egyptian and Babylonian documents has been regarded by some as proving that the biblical Jacob is historical, and by others as proving that the biblical narrative is false; but no connection that would justify an inference has yet been made out between these finds and the Jacob of the Bible. The Egyptian records contain interesting parallels to the case of Jacob’s descending into Egypt. We have some knowledge of proper names and of geography and of antiquities that may throw incidental light on the biblical account of Jacob. But except to a very limited extent we are here dependent exclusively on the materials found in the Bible.

This makes the less difference because the principal difficulties in the case of Jacob are ethical. The critics who regard the story as legendary claim for their view a great apologetic advantage. They say that inasmuch as Jacob is mainly an unreal person, we need not trouble ourselves over his misconduct. But that does not necessarily follow. If you hold that Jacob is an unreal person, invented by the prophets of Israel for purposes of

Jacob-el

**The Ethical
Difficulties**

moral teaching, you make them responsible for the character they have invented, and this may supposably make his misconduct more objectionable than if you regard him as an historical person.

Some recent scholars have something to say in regard to the element of humor in these stories concerning Jacob.

**The Humor in
these Incidents**

This point is well taken, and is important. Doubtless these stories were told orally among the ancient Israelites, and in a form much more ample than that in which we have them; and doubtless the auditors laughed uproariously at the ways in which Jacob outwitted the men opposed to him, even though he was sometimes outwitted by them. If we recognize the humorous element, that makes our understanding of the account more vivid, and thus more correct.

In the case of Jacob the theory that the incidents are personalized sociology is unusually fascinating. If you

**A Sociological
Interpretation**

count Jacob as standing for the flock-keeping stage of civilization, and Esau as standing for the more primitive hunting stage, you will find that this idea fits several points in the story remarkably well. The trouble is, however, that there are many other points in the story which it does not fit. All the points fit the idea that the account is biographical—not that it is a complete and balanced biography of Jacob or of any one else, but that it is made up of events that actually occurred in the experience of actual persons. That it is of this character is proved by considerations like those which prove the same thing in the case of Abraham.

If you have doubts in the matter, do not begin by assuming either that the narrative is biographical or that it is not; begin by making sure that you understand the story in the obvious meaning which it presents on its face.

**Begin by
Understanding
the Story**

There is no part of the Bible which more emphatically illustrates the principle that the first thing to do in the case of a narrative is to master its contents. In the case of Jacob this is not very difficult, but it seems to be a thing which few persons care to attempt. When the missionaries told the story to our uncivilized European ancestors, they accepted it in the light of their own ethical ideas. To them Jacob's successful trickery was the most admirable thing in it. No one knows to what extent their view has been orally transmitted to us, but most of us somehow have the idea that Jacob is our man, and that we are bound to defend him. And so some persons defend Jacob by calling attention to the fact that he had certain profound and lofty ethical and religious ideas—just as if this were not an aggravation of his bad conduct, instead of a defense! And others defend the men who told the Jacob stories by saying that they lived in times that were morally less advanced than ours, and that we ought not to judge them by our own higher standards. There is an element of superficial truth in this, but it covers only a small part of the case.

Let us, then, make an effort to understand the story as it is told in our printed Bibles—not as we happen to remember it, but as it is told. We shall find that it contains some illuminating points which most of us have been in the habit of neglecting.

For the sake of making other matters more intelligible, look first at certain time data. The account says that Jacob was 130 years old when he went to Egypt (Gen. 47 : 9). Joseph was then about 39 years old (Gen. 41 : 46, 53 and 45 : 11). It follows that Jacob was about 91 years old when Joseph was born. The account says that he served Laban 20 years; that he served 14 years for his two wives, and 6 years for wages in cattle (Gen. 31 : 41 and 29 : 20, 27); and, apparently, that the 6 years began about the time of the birth of Joseph. It is commonly inferred that the 14 years closed when the 6 years began; the inference, though not logical, is a plausible conjecture. It is usual, subtracting the 14 years from the 91, to infer that the narrative represents that Jacob was about 77 years old when he came to Paddanaram, and fell in love at sight with his cousin Rachel. On the basis of this computation men have gone into the details, and have pronounced the story grotesque and self-contradictory from beginning to end.

But, in the places where it gives the numbers, the narrative does not say that the 6 years of service began when the 14 years ended; it leaves open the question whether there may not have been an interval of many years between the two. And in other places it gives details which positively settle this question, proving that there was such an interval. It says that Jacob married Leah 7 years before the close of the 14 years of service; and that between that time and the birth of Joseph Leah had children at seven or more different births, with an interval of time when she was not bearing children. It

says that before the last three births her son Reuben was old enough to go out into the wild country and bring home mandrakes. It says that her youngest child, Dinah, was a woman grown when Jacob returned to Canaan at the age of about 97, and that Dinah's brothers, Simeon and Levi, were then warriors. There are other similar details. If we take the statements as they read, they indicate that between Jacob's two periods of service there was a time when his relations to Laban were undefined, that he was many years younger than 77 when he went to Laban, and that most of his sons were of fighting age when he returned to Canaan. With this understanding all the strained features disappear from the narrative, and its naturalness and verisimilitude throughout become unimpeachable.

Jacob is presented to us as a man of strong feeling and imagination. He fell in love with a young girl, and waited for her seven years, "and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her." The vision at Bethel took such a hold of him that he never forgot it. Note the affectionateness of his prayer at the Jabbok, and his deep tenderness for Joseph and Benjamin (Gen. 29 : 20; 28 : 16-17; 32 : 9-12; 37 : 3 ff.). But for the balance of other qualities he might have been a romantic idealist, not superficially, but in the depths of his nature.

On the other hand, he was a man of remarkable business abilities. He could grasp an enterprise as a whole, and he had endless skill in details. He had the ability and the willingness to endure hardship. He had such tenacity of purpose that even the vision at Bethel did not

**Character
of Jacob**

lead him to desist from his predetermined wrong course. He had wonderful skill in handling men and making them serve his plans. He could be an artist in this, if need were; witness his dramatic skill in the incident of the blessing he gained from Isaac.

There is no indication that Jacob was wholeheartedly religious till comparatively late in life. Of course, the chief value of the birthright was really its religious value, but there is no evidence that the young man Jacob thought much about this. His point of view was certainly the business point of view. Whichever of the two brothers had the birthright was, next to Isaac, the chief of the tribe, and would become chief when Isaac died. Whichever had the birthright would be "lord," and the other would be his "servant." This certainly was the main thing with Jacob, though a man of his temperament cannot have been utterly indifferent to considerations that were more ideal.

God had purposes concerning Jacob and Esau. Before the boys were born he had made it known that "the elder shall serve the younger." We may assume that Jacob knew this. Further, he knew that he was qualified to administer the affairs of the tribe, and that Esau was not. He cared for it while Esau did not, and he had the abilities for it, of which Esau was destitute. These facts may palliate his wrong-doing, though they cannot excuse it.

**God's Purpose
for Jacob**

God had made Esau the firstborn, and had thus put him into possession of the birthright. Jacob was intelligent enough to understand that the only thing for him to do was to wait till God, by some equally providential

act, transferred the birthright from Esau to himself. Jacob was not willing to wait. Perhaps he got confused over the idea that the gods help those who help themselves. He took the matter into his own hands, and bought the birthright from Esau in an extortionate bargain. Under that bargain he claimed title, while he knew and God knew that his alleged title was a fraud.

In that act Jacob entered into controversy with God. Isaac, foreseeing calamities from the rivalship for the birthright, made his arrangements for recognizing Esau's right by pronouncing a blessing upon him. Jacob contrived, by trickery that was as bad and mean as it was skilful, to have the blessing pronounced upon himself. Neither Isaac nor the narrator express approval of Jacob's conduct, though they recognize the inevitable trend of affairs, including the fact that Jacob will ultimately have the birthright blessing.

But God permits him no possession under this title. He has to flee for his life. Rebekah, his mother and his accomplice, expects him to be absent but a few days, but the two never meet again. Jacob spent a night at the old family place of worship, near Luz. He had been taught that God was in that place, but that night he came to know the fact as he had never known it before. His vision of angels ascending and descending made a deep impression upon him, but he was stubborn; he did not give up his contention with God and his false claim against his brother.

Many years before, an ambassador with a princely retinue had gone from Abraham's tribe to Paddan-aram

to bring back a wife for Isaac. Jacob's experience was in contrast with this. By reason of his wrong-doing he went to Paddan-aram a fugitive, helpless in the hands of his unscrupulous kinsman Laban. He had preferred his way to God's way, and God let him have enough of it. He was duped into polygamy. His children were brought up by idolatrous mothers. The fourteen years of service for his two wives expired, and then Jacob let himself drift on. The children of the wives whom he did not love were growing up around him. Apparently Laban had dragooned him into submission, and Jacob did not care much for anything. He maintained his claim to the birthright as against that of Esau, and God kept him in discipline for it. In particular God made him feel, through Laban, how fine a thing it is for kinsmen to take advantage one of another.

God disciplined him, but did not forsake him. Through it all Jacob maintained, however inconsistently, his attitude as a worshiper of Jehovah. He maintained also his reputation as a business man of ability. He extended his acquaintance, and commanded the kind of respect which men pay to the person who can accomplish results. And the remembrance of the vision at Bethel remained with him. And when at length God gave him Joseph, the son of the wife whom he loved, Jacob yielded to the loving kindness, and became in certain ways a changed man. We need not decide whether he at once in his own mind surrendered his controversy concerning Esau and the birthright, or whether he gradually came to that in the

**Jacob's
Experience
with Laban**

**God's Kind-
ness while
He Chastises**

years that followed. At all events, Jacob rallied from his drifting. He compelled Laban to make terms with him. He cared for the property of Laban, while his sons (Gen. 30 : 35-36), of course under his supervision, cared for his own estate. His ability and reputation were such that in the course of six years he gathered a large property, and surrounded himself by a considerable tribe. Then he started on his long delayed return to Canaan.

And now we reach a part of the narrative which, most strangely, has been commonly overlooked, though it is the part which is most specific and unmistakable. Jacob surrendered his lifelong controversy with God. He formally acknowledged that the birthright still belonged to Esau, that Esau was lord, that he was Esau's servant. Out of his property which he brought from Mesopotamia he made a tribute-gift to Esau (Gen. 32 : 13, 18, etc., the word being the same as in 2 Sam. 8 : 2, etc.), thus recognizing Esau's superiority, with possibly also some idea of restitution for wrongs done in the past. The account tells us that when Jacob reached the Jabbok, still several days' journey away from Isaac, he halted and sent messengers to Esau, acknowledging Esau as lord and himself as servant; that when Esau responded by coming against him with four hundred men Jacob contrived, in the most masterly way, to have his message of submission repeated to Esau several times while he was on the road; that when the two met Jacob prostrated himself before Esau, and every person who might claim title from Jacob joined him in the acknowledgment that Esau was lord. Words could not be more specific than these

**The Restitution
to Esau**

which describe Jacob's surrender of all claim which he had acquired to the birthright.

The account of the subsequent relations of the two brothers is less specific. We learn, however, that Jacob dwelt at Hebron (Gen. 37 : 14), presumably caring for the property and retainers of Isaac; while Jacob's own flocks and retainers were cared for by his sons in the regions farther north; that when Isaac died "Esau and Jacob his sons buried him," the statement thus giving Esau priority over Jacob; that Esau after Isaac's death was at the head of a large tribe, and had great possessions, doubtless his birthright inheritance from Isaac, and that he removed with these "into a land away from his brother Jacob." And so, when the time came, it was Jacob's tribe and not Esau's that went to Egypt, and multiplied there, and came under divine training and inherited the promise. Providentially at last Jacob came into possession of the pre-eminence which God had designed for him, and which he had done so much to forfeit.

One other point in the narrative must not be neglected. When Jacob had made all his arrangements for acknowledging Esau as lord, when so far as his intention was concerned his act of reparation was complete, Jacob crossed the ford, and the Angel wrestled with him all night, and disabled him with a touch in the morning (Gen. 32 : 22 ff.). It was a symbol of his past life. God had patiently wrestled with him, when he might at any time have disabled him with a touch. Then and not till then

**Later Relations of
Jacob and Esau**

Israel

he received the changed name Israel, in token of his changed attitude and character. From that time, so far as the account shows, Jacob was exemplary, though his repentance did not exempt him from some of the evil consequences of his evil past.

Very likely you may heretofore have cherished a conception of the career of Jacob different from that which has thus been sketched; but if you will **Test the Correctness of this Sketch** read the account carefully, you will probably accept the sketch as correct. With this idea of the Bible account of Jacob, observe how consecutively the topics arrange themselves. The subject is God's purpose with Jacob, and how he accomplished it.

First, the subject stated and explained (Gen. 25 : 19-26).

Second, Jacob's unrighteous bargain with Esau (Gen. 25 : 27-34).

Third, Jacob and Rebekah fortify the unrighteous bargain (Gen. 27 : 1-40).

Fourth, the prime of Jacob's life: the evil effects of the unrighteous bargain, and the means by which he was providentially kept from utter perdition (Gen. 27 : 41 to 30 : 21).

Fifth, Jacob's repentance—repentance in the large, New Testament sense (Gen. 30 : 22 to 32 : 32). First, his resumption of self-respect, at the birth of Joseph (30 : 22 to 31 : 55); second, his renouncing of his claim under the unrighteous bargain, with such reparation to Esau as was possible (32 : 1 to 33 : 17); third, his self-surrender, and the name Israel (32 : 24-32).

Sixth, Jacob's subsequent exemplary life, hampered and made tragic by the bad consequences of his unrighteous bargain and his stubborn persistence in it (Gen. 33 : 18 to Gen. 50).

Such is the biblical story of Jacob, provided one takes the pains to grasp it in a single view. We began by trying to understand the story, but in doing that we have done much more. We have found that in this story the prophet authors relate with approval nothing which deserves our disapproval. So far as this story shows, the polygamy and idolatry and quarrels in Jacob's family are evils that came in the train of wrong-doing. After long procrastination Jacob at length surrendered wholly to God; through that procrastination he and Rebekah, the principal offenders, suffered miserably, and the wretched consequences extended to a wide circle, some of them persisting after his procrastination itself ceased.

No mere human being is morally good enough to be pleasing to God, but God is pleased with a sinner who repents. The Jacob whom the prophets approve, and expect their readers to approve, is the repentant Jacob, who has made reparation for the wrong he did, and whose renewed character is represented by the new name Israel. Of Jacob so long as he remained unrepentant, and of God's kindness to him and God's plans for him while he was unrepentant, we are to judge or abstain from judging on the same principles as in the case of other unrepentant men. In any case the ethical difficulties of the story have vanished. As for Jacob himself, he is just a sinner saved by grace.

CHAPTER XI

THE NARRATIVE CONCERNING JOSEPH

Introductory: The story values. Certain points. I. Personalized history. The "father" of a people. He is the ruler or the founder. The secondary Abrahamic peoples. Ishmaelites, the senior clan. Midianites and Medanites and others, the junior clans. The relations between them about ninety years after Abraham's death. II. Critical treatments of the Joseph story. The partition. "Seams" and their phenomena. Inconclusive reasonings. Patchwork versus literature. The real objection to some critical positions; their charge that the story is self-contradictory and untrue. Conclusion: No reason for crumbling the Joseph story into inconsistent details.

The Bible narrative concerning Joseph (Gen. 37-50) is surpassed in interest only by those concerning Jesus.

**Seek First the
Value as a Story**

In the case of this narrative, as in other cases, it would be the greatest of mistakes to begin by arguing the question whether the story is true to fact. The true way is to begin by understanding the story, as a story. Without this you are not equipped for deciding whether it is fact. Whether it is fact or not, its greatest value lies in the life-lessons it teaches as a story.

Be sure that you know the story. Do not be content with lazily stirring up in your mind such recollections of it as you may happen to possess. The idea you now have of the story may be inadequate or incorrect. Get it exactly, as it is in the printed Bibles, and along with it get the life-lessons which it properly teaches.

However different our views may be at other points, we cannot differ much on the question as to what the printed Bibles say concerning Joseph. If you regard the events as imaginary while I regard them as actual, still we ought to receive from the narrative the same mental impression of them, and of the religious lessons they teach. This is the first thing to do, and the most important.

In considering the case of Jacob we have found that the Bible narrative implies that there was an interval of a good many years between the fourteen years when Jacob served Laban for his two wives and the six years when he served for cattle. When Joseph at the age of six years came to the land of Canaan with Jacob, all his older brothers were of fighting age. This difference of age between him and them is one of the elements of verisimilitude in the story.

Soon after Jacob's return to Canaan he seems to have established himself at Isaac's headquarters near Hebron (*e. g.* Gen. 37 : 14), while his own flocks and herds were cared for by his sons in the regions farther north. Joseph was his favorite son, and became an object of envy to his brothers. When he was seventeen years old they sold him into Egypt, and the rest of the events of the story followed.

In preceding chapters we have given some attention to the habit which certain persons have of interpreting the Bible stories as folklore. The form of folklore known as personalized history is to the front, directly or indirectly, in the interpretations of the Joseph story. In this and other

**Personalized
History**

narratives some regard the events not as incidents that occurred in the lives of certain persons, but as a figurative way of expressing certain traditions that were then current concerning the relations between clans or tribes of men. People had the habit, they say, of speaking of clans as though they were persons, and of using personal experiences such as birth, marriage, and the like, as figures of speech to denote the changes that occurred among these peoples.

We need not deny that usages of this kind have existed among men. If we should admit that instances of it occur in the Bible, that would not necessarily imply that the Bible is any the less truthful, or any the less divinely inspired. Why should not the Holy Spirit use this picturesque way of setting the truth before men? But in fact most of the Bible narratives are certainly not personalized history. When it is affirmed that any story or group of stories are personalized history, that challenges the question whether they really bear the marks of being so.

In the Joseph story we find Jacob and his sons, in particular Joseph, Simeon, Judah, Benjamin, the sons of Bilhah, the sons of Zilpah, these all included in the central group of the Abrahamic peoples; and also Ishmaelites, Midianites, Medanites (Gen. 37 : 36, where the English versions have "Midianites"), a secondary group of Abrahamic peoples. Either directly or by analogy the Bible represents that Ishmael was the "father" of the Ishmaelites, and Midian of the Midianites, and Medan of the Medanites, and each son of Jacob as the father

**The Fathers
of Peoples**

of the tribe that bears his name, and Jacob himself as the father of all these tribes, and Abraham as the father of both Israel and of the others.

What do the Bible narrators mean when they use the word "father" in this way? Many understand them to mean that all the members of the clan or tribe mentioned were lineal descendants of the person who is called their "father." Old-fashioned people understand it in this way, sometimes with the most mechanical literalism. Persons of newer views understand it in the same way, and then resolve the "father" into a mere "eponym," a creation of the fancy, located in the dim past.

Careful study will convince you that this is not the way in which the Bible authors ordinarily use this term. The father of a people is ordinarily, in the Bible, its ruler or its founder. It was Hammurabi's ambition that persons who should read his laws should regard him as a true father to his people. We are expressly told that the people to whom Abraham was father were largely retainers born in his house or bought with his money (*e. g.* Gen. 17). Essentially, in these early narratives, the "father" of a tribe is its founder.

Many persons dearly love an interpretation that brings scandal on one of the good men of the Bible. You may find plenty of comment on the incident in Genesis 21, to the effect that Abraham here displays his heartlessness toward Hagar and Ishmael, turning them out into the wilderness to shift for themselves. But the narrative does not say that he turned them out to shift for themselves. It makes the circumstances sufficiently distressing. It rep-

**Secondary
Abrahamic
Peoples**

resents Abraham as grievingly and reluctantly taking the course which discipline and the safety of the tribe demanded. But there is nothing in the account to forbid our thinking that Abraham, either then or subsequently, made ample provision for Ishmael. And the narrative expressly says that this was the case.

We read that "unto the sons of the concubines that Abraham had Abraham gave gifts; and he sent them away from Isaac his son, while he yet lived, eastward, unto the east country" (Gen. 25 : 6).

Who could these "concubines" be but Hagar and Keturah? Who could these sons of theirs be but Ishmael and Midian and Medan and the others? Abraham saw that it was best to set these sons up in business for themselves, rather than have them remain in the home tribe as subordinates to Isaac. Out of his large property he gave each of them enough for a start in life. From Abraham's tribe each of them received followers enough to constitute the nucleus of a new band. In this way each became the "father" of an incipient clan. Abraham had a wide influence, and the branch clans may have grown rapidly. This understanding of the matter is intelligible and clear cut; there is no justification for obscuring it into a confused tradition of indistinctly remembered clan movements.

Another item should enter into the account. Ishmael was several decades older than the sons of Keturah. His able and ambitious mother had an influence in determining his fortunes (Gen. 21 : 20-21). Presumably his tribe had much the earlier start, and the others for a

**Ishmael and the
Junior Tribes**

time bore a junior relation to it. Very likely the bands of the Keturah group were sometimes known by the Ishmaelite name, as well as by their own junior clan names. According to the Bible numbers the taking of Joseph to Egypt occurred a little more than 90 years after the death of Abraham. There is no improbability in the idea that at that date the secondary Abrahamic clans, however numerous, were still often thought of as a group, under the name of the senior clan.

The consideration of these matters has prepared us for considering the current critical theories of the Joseph narrative. They regard it as made up, like the Flood narrative, of alternating parts copied from earlier narratives. In this case, they say, the two main sources are J and E. As in the case of the Flood story, when the phenomena do not conform to the alleged criteria of J and E they are cared for by hypotheses of later additions to J or of editorial changes, or of additions by writers of the P school, or of annotations; or the text is conjecturally changed, and is thus brought into conformity.

More distinctly than in most of the other narratives, it is alleged, this narrative shows the seams where the parts have been pieced together. For example, notice that the word "Midianites" in Genesis 37 : 28 has no article. The statement "and there passed by Midianites" ignores what the preceding sentences have said concerning the Ishmaelites. Directly afterward the name Joseph is used three times, instead of substituting the pronoun the second and third times. These are rather marked phenomena.

**The Partition
of the**

Joseph Narrative

**The Seams for
the Partition**

They indicate, it is said, that the writer had before him one account which read: "And his brethren hearkened unto him . . . and sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver"; and had another account which read: "And there passed by Midianites, merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, . . . and brought Joseph into Egypt"; and that he put the two together thus:

"And his brethren hearkened unto him," "and there passed by Midianites, merchantmen, and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit," "and sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver," "and they brought Joseph into Egypt."

If you look till you see for yourself you will perceive that these assertions are plausible, but also that the proof of them is indecisive. There are other similar places in the narrative. It is claimed, in virtue of these phenomena, that there was an Ephraimite story of Joseph, in which Reuben was named most prominently among Joseph's brothers, and in which he did most of the talking, and also a Judahite story, in which Judah was most prominent and did most of the talking, and that some one combined the two to form the story which we now have.

In dealing with inferences like these we should not forget that reasoning of this kind is always inconclusive.

**The Reasoning
Inconclusive**

First of all comes the fact that there may be other ways of accounting for the phenomena—for example, in this case, the hypothesis of certain mental habits of the author of the story—and that one of these other ways may

account for it better than the way now proposed. Add to this that no hypothesis of two or more earlier documents has yet been framed that will account for all the phenomena as they exist. In order to make any hypothesis of this kind fit, it has to be supplemented by harmonizing hypotheses. As a single instance, our story says (Gen. 37 : 21): "And Reuben heard it, and delivered him out of their hand." The critics tell us that this sentence is from the Judahite document, in which Reuben does not appear; and so they drop the name "Reuben," or replace it by "Judah," in order to make the hypothesis of the two documents applicable.

There is a general consideration that bears strongly against the theories which regard the story of Joseph as piecework. The story which we have is vivid and picturesque and human beyond most other stories that exist in literature; while each of the alleged earlier stories is relatively bald and uninteresting. Test this for yourself. Take the Polychrome Bible, or one of the other works of the kind, mentioned at the close of Chapter V, and read the J story of Joseph, as there separated from the rest—just the J story, and nothing else. Then do the same with the E story. Then turn to a copy of the Bible, revised version, and read the story that we have. If some man combined those two relatively inferior stories into the matchless story which we have in the Bible, he was a literary genius. Being such a genius, is it likely that he preferred patchwork to original composition? At all events, it is impossible to think of our Joseph story as mere patchwork mechanically done by scribes.

**Can Patchwork be
Fine Literature?**

But although the partitional theories lack proof, it may also be difficult positively to disprove them. They are not in themselves particularly objectionable, provided one could hold them without otherwise discrediting the narrative.

Why Object to Partitional Theories?

It is supposable that a person might regard some form of the partition theory of the composition of the Joseph story as more probable than any other theory known to him; and might hold this theory and yet believe in the truthfulness and the divine inspiration of the story; and might use it to the full for the spiritual values it contains. It is further supposable that one might find the story true and spiritually nourishing, even though he regarded it as largely parable rather than history. It is supposable that we might all here find common ground, where we might keep silence in regard to our differences, and all alike attend to the spiritual values of the story.

The current partitional criticism, however, refuses to permit us thus to occupy neutral ground. It insists on so analyzing the story of Joseph as to make it self-contradictory and untrue. It forbids our finding therein either connected fact or congruous fiction. It spoils the story as well as the history. By insisting on interpretations which reduce the narrative to a haphazard combination of legends, it suppresses the most important of the spiritual values.

The Story Charged with Falsity

Note some details. It refuses to take into the account the character of the Ishmaelites and Midianites as secondary Abrahamic peoples, then of such recent origin that the Midianites are likely to have been called also by the

generic name of Ishmaelites. It insists that one of the original accounts said that the men who took Joseph to Egypt were Ishmaelites, while the other said that they were Midianites, and that in this they are flatly contradictory. It so interprets as to make one account say that the Midianites came along, and found Joseph in the pit, and drew him out and made a slave of him; while the combined account says that some of his brothers drew him out and sold him to the Ishmaelites. From the beginning to the end of the narrative the details are so interpreted as to make them contradictory; all the alleged contradictions are thus lugged in by processes of interpretation. And apart from this, many of the interpretations are of the kind that takes all the brightness out of a vivid expression, and leaves to it only a wooden meaning.

The idea of our grandfathers was that the Joseph narrative correctly presents facts that actually occurred.

**Picturesqueness
is not Untruth**

With the understanding that the presentation is not mechanically scientific, but is from the point of view of an observer who thought and wrote in pictures, and whose picturesque presentation is as really true as if it were mechanically scientific, this idea of our grandfathers concerning Joseph cannot be proved to need any modification. Least of all does it need to be modified by crumbling it into unpicturesque and inconsistent details.

CHAPTER XII

“SHEPHERDS IN THE WILDERNESS”

Introductory: The baby-story interpretation. Its prevalence. Especially where the movements of men in masses are concerned. I. The phrase “shepherds in the wilderness” (Num. 14 : 33). The word in the Hebrew, the Greek, the Latin. The old traditional understanding of it. II. The fact described in the phrase. As understood by many. As correctly understood. The population as a whole. The camp and the tent of meeting. The filling in of the narrative. The manna and the quails. The marches. The disciplinary purpose. Conclusion: The phrase is the key to this part of the history. Its bearing on historicity.

Most of us had the Bible stories told us when we were little children. We then understood them with such a grasp as little children have of such things. In riper years we are more apt than we ought to be to limit our idea of the meaning of passages by the idea we have had from childhood. This has been said before in this volume, but it is one of the things we need to have impressed upon us by repetition. Through the neglect of it we make bad failures. Instead of using our mature judgment to determine what the Bible says, we assume that it means just what, from babyhood, we have supposed it to mean. To an unsuspected extent many of us hold babyish ideas of the Bible that are quite in contrast with our “grown up” ideas of other things.

I should be sorry to be understood as speaking con-

temptuously of the baby-story use of the Bible. It is one of the glories of the Old and New Testaments that they are capable of this use. They are suited to the needs of very little children as well as of older people. Equally from the point of view of the scientific scholar and from that of the religious worker, it is desirable that the Bible should be studied by babes. That is what the Bible is for. The fact that a little one understands as a child is no reason why the sacred writings should be withheld from him; they are profitable, even with a child's understanding of them. God's revealing of his word to babes is not contemptible.

But I am not treating it with contempt when I apply to it the apostle's saying: "When I was a child I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child; now that I have become a man I have put away childish things" (1 Cor. 13 : 11).

It is simply a fact which we all know that children have children's views of things. For an adult to take a child's view of a matter is often very absurd. A child's knowledge of something is on the scale of a gill cup, while a grown person's knowledge of the same thing may be on the scale of a bushel. If we cling to our gill cup notions of the Bible after we have come to take bushel notions of other things, we spoil the proportion; we dishonor the Bible by this narrowing process; we discredit our own intelligence.

Probably all of us make this mistake to some extent. We have been familiar with the Bible stories from childhood. Very likely we at first understood them as well as we were then capable of doing. We have been ac-

customed to suppose that we know all about them. We are not conscious of ignorance, or of any need to improve our knowledge. And so upon this foundation of sand we build the whole superstructure of our adult knowledge of the Bible. This is made worse by the fact that the element of oral tradition entered so largely into our childish knowledge. All this does not prove that the child's knowledge of the Bible is false or worthless; but it does prove that the child's knowledge is utterly inadequate to the purposes of mature thinking. It proves that we need, in this as in other cases, after we have grown up, to restudy the things which we studied as children.

The Prevalence of It

Perhaps there is no part of the Bible where the inadequacy of childish ideas is more apparent than in the account of the exodus and of the life of

The Exodus Narrative for Example

Israel in the wilderness. Little children and ill-informed people are particularly apt to form distorted ideas of the movements of large numbers of persons in masses. They read of the march of armies of hundreds of thousands of men, like those of Japan and Russia in the recent war, and they picture the movement to themselves as if there were but a few dozen of the men. They form a similar mental picture when they read of the migrations of the great hordes in northern and central Europe. Not children and ill-informed persons alone, but all of us, form inadequate ideas in such matters.

Consider an illustrative instance. In Numbers 14 : 33 is a sentence which describes the condition of the Israelites during about thirty-seven and a half of the forty

years after they left Egypt. In the King James version it is translated: "Your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years." In the revised versions "wander" is changed to "be wanderers," with the marginal note "Heb. *shepherds*." That is, the revisers hold that the strictly correct rendering is: "Your children shall be shepherds in the wilderness forty years."

It is a change of only a single word, but it may supposedly revolutionize one's whole conception of the life of Israel in the wilderness. If you have been accustomed to think of the Israelites as all the time massed together in one enormous fourfold camp around the tent of meeting, subsisting mainly on manna given by miracle; and of their wandering as the occasional movement of this great camp from one horrible place to another, please compare your idea for a few seconds with that expressed in the clause "shepherds in the wilderness." There could not be a greater contrast.

As the matter is important, notice that this marginal translation of the revisers is the only correct translation.

The Word for Shepherd Words of the stem occur about three hundred times in the Hebrew Bible, and always with this one meaning or with closely related secondary meanings. Intransitively the word is used of cattle or sheep pasturing. Transitively it describes men taking care of pasturing cattle or sheep. Words of this stem describe pasturage land, or the act of pasturing. The comradery of the life of shepherds furnishes one group of derivative meanings, and the misery of a pasture eaten bare furnishes another. No

word of the stem is ever used to denote roaming or roving or wandering, though of course the shepherd life may be in itself a roaming life.

The Greek translation of the word, in this verse, is as definite and unambiguous as the Hebrew—*nemomenoi*, “pasturers.” The Greek word is not the most common word for shepherd, but it specifically denotes graziers—men whose occupation it is to pasture cattle and sheep. There is in it no idea of wandering, except in the sense in which shepherd life is in itself field life.

The Vulgate translation, made some centuries later, renders the word by *vagi*. This Latin word is the ancestor

**The Latin
Rendering**

of such English words as vague, vagabond, and perhaps vagrant. Perhaps the Latin translators had in mind the idea that the life of shepherds in the wilderness is an unsettled life, that shepherds move from place to place. Or possibly an element of the marvelous had already entered into the interpretation of the passage, so that they thought of the Israelites as a vast horde massed together, wandering from place to place wherever the tent of meeting might lead them.

When our Teutonic or Keltic or Scandinavian ancestors were evangelized they received these stories orally from men whose Bibles were in Latin. These early missionaries could not make the stories too marvelous for the taste of their barbarian auditors. Their interpretation of them has been handed down to us in an uninterrupted stream of oral transmission. Most of us heard the stories before we could read, and when we began to read them

we gave them the meaning with which we were already familiar.

The correcting of our inadequate ideas is one of our most important lines of experience. Unfortunately, we do not always see the need of correcting our inadequate ideas of Bible history.

Of course we do not all form exactly the same mental picture of Israel in the wilderness. But I am afraid

**Do You Picture
It in this Way?**

that many hold a view which may be fairly stated as follows, however the statement may differ, verbally, from those which they are accustomed to make; that the Israelites were at least as numerous as the present population of Philadelphia; that most of them had flocks and herds; that they were massed together in one camp all the time for thirty-seven and a half years; that they had no many-story buildings, but all lived on the ground floor, and had room somewhere for their flocks and herds; that all of them, every morning except the sabbath, without subways or trolleys, found their way to the region outside the camp, and gathered manna for the day's subsistence, spending the rest of their time no one knows how; that in these years, though they all lived in sight of the smoke of the sacrifices at the tent of meeting, they lost their sacrificial system, and even the custom of circumcision (Deut. 12 : 8 and context; Amos 5 : 25; Josh. 5 : 2-9); that their wandering consisted in the frequent removal of the great camp from one place to another; that these were the processes which Jehovah chose for training them to self-reliance and responsibility and courage.

Contrast this with the instantaneous photograph flashed

before us in the phrase "shepherds in the wilderness." Numberless bands of a few scores of people each, some of them as many hundred miles away as they needed to go in order to find pasture, subsisting mainly by their flocks and herds and by the temporary cultivation of patches of soil, the older people dying off by hardships and the newer generation becoming toughened in the struggle for existence, the nation gaining in resoluteness while losing in the externals of civilization and religion, scattered, but with a consciousness of unity spreading itself through all the bands, and with an expectation that Jehovah would some time call upon them to resume their progress to the promised land.

**The Correct
Picture**

This conception is consistent with all that is said concerning the tent of meeting and the fourfold camp and the manna. According to the Bible account the tent of meeting was in existence. We are told or we naturally infer that its ritual, once established, was maintained in the daily worship and the set feasts throughout the forty years of the wandering; that the fourfold camp was around the tent of meeting, within hearing of its signal trumpets, marching when the tent marched (Num. 2; 10 : 1-7, 14-28); that the whole population was counted as belonging to the fourfold camp in some of its divisions (Num. 1, 2, 3, 4); that each of the tribes and families was actually represented there; that the camp moved from place to place on signal given by the pillar of cloud, sometimes remaining one night in a locality, and sometimes remaining much longer (Num. 9 : 15-23);

**The Camp and
the Tent of
Meeting**

that when the manna was given it was on the ground around the camp (Num. 11 : 7-9; Exod. 16).

But all this is very different from saying that the whole population was all the time present in the camp. They were all there representatively, whether the number actually present at any time was small or large. Whenever a shepherd came in from the wilderness he presumably had his appointed place in the camp, determined by his belonging to such and such a tribe or family. There may have been ways of making sure that each tribe constantly had its quota in the representative camp. Presumably the camping body was more numerous at some times than at other times. What is said concerning the quadruple camp is entirely intelligible without the hypothesis that the whole population constantly resided there.

For the idea that they were all permanently there is a hypothesis. The account does not say that they were.

**Which Filling-in
is Correct ?**

That notion is a bit of filling which we have inserted into the account, to make it intelligible and interesting. It is equally legitimate to fill in with the different idea that the great body of the people were not in the camp, but were scattered through the regions west and east of the Elanitic Sea, living the life of shepherds. The difference between these two ways of filling in is that the second is sober inference from the facts, while the first is not.

If you are in the habit of thinking that the Israelites in the wilderness subsisted mainly on manna and quails, miraculously given, you may have to think that they were all continually in one camp, the camp around which the manna fell. But the accounts do not say that they

subsisted mainly on manna and quails. Many have inferred this from the accounts, but the accounts do not say it. They speak of other resources—

The Manna flocks and herds, fish and game and agricultural products, money and manufactured products. Rightly understood they inform us that the manna, throughout the forty years, was God’s special provision for his people when emergencies arose.

The accounts affirm the miracle of the manna, but no one understands them to say that the cattle and sheep subsisted on manna, or subsisted in any way by miracle; they lived by finding grass and eating it. It is therefore impossible that all the men who tended them lived all the time in one camp; they must have been scattered over immense stretches of territory.

No one understands the accounts to say that the marches were ordinarily miraculous; the people went step by step on foot. A study of the marches

The Marches described, with the topography, convinces every one that the marching column was always one limited in numbers. Like other great moving bodies of men, they marched in relatively small divisions; not with millions of persons and animals all closely packed together.

The purpose of the training of the thirty-seven years was to transform the enervated, cowardly Israel that came out of Egypt into a hardy, bold,

The Disciplinary Purpose resourceful people. Jehovah saw that this was desirable even at the cost of temporary retrogression in the externals of civilization and religion. Nothing could be less fitted to accomplish

this purpose than shutting them up for decades in a camp, where children would grow to adult age seeing a crowd of neighbors every day and never seeing anything different, and there caring for them by miracle, without effort on their part. Nothing could be better fitted to accomplish the purpose in hand than throwing them upon their own resources, in the precarious shepherd life of the region.

The phrase "shepherds in the wilderness" is therefore the key for interpreting the whole history of the period.

It excludes a certain element of marvelousness which has been strongly accentuated in the past, and which many are loath to surrender; but it also excludes nearly all the difficulties that lie in the way of accepting the narrative as historical, and it wonderfully intensifies the graphic verisimilitude and the human interest of the narrative.

If the view thus presented seems to any one to be a novelty, that is no reason either for accepting or for rejecting it. It should be considered on its merits, and it is important enough to be worthy of consideration.

If one regards the biblical story as mere myth or legend, he may have an interest in rejecting the interpretation just given. His view is based on the proposition that the accounts are incredible as history, and he has a quarrel with anything that goes to show that they are credible. If the phrase "shepherds in the wilderness" really implies what we have found that it seems to imply, then it further implies reality in the events; that the narratives are narratives of facts, and are not mere stories.

CHAPTER XIII

THE NARRATIVE CONCERNING SAMSON

Introductory. Our superficial ideas concerning Samson. Is Samson a sun-myth? The narrative. One of six detached stories. Speaks of Samson as judge of Israel. Samson: His physical strength, and his humor. His ability as a leader. Before the battle of Lehi. That battle and its consequences. His morals. His religion. The Spirit of Jehovah. Samson's long hair. His weaknesses. Delilah. The great moral: Take warning from the man who would keep fooling with temptation.

Very likely it is true that the majority of those who read the Samson narrative in the book of Judges (13 : 2 to 16 : 31) feel the same kind of interest in him that they feel in a first-class circus performer. In the circus the clown and the gymnast exhibit side by side. The spectators laugh and they wonder; it is the combination of surprise and fun that makes the interest so intense. The story of Samson makes an appeal of the same sort. His exploits are as amusing as they are marvelous. Perhaps it is because our interest in him is of this sort that we rest content with having very superficial notions concerning him.

There are those who would have us understand the story of Samson as a sun-myth. The name Samson means "little sun." Samson's strength lay in his hair, and the sun's strength lies in its rays; does not this prove

that the man Samson never existed, but that certain fancies concerning the sun ultimately shaped themselves into the story which we have? The

A Sun-Myth? alleged proof of this is purely fanciful, and I am not so credulous as to accept it.

If, however, anyone thinks that the story is a myth he ought to be so appreciative and fair as to count it unique among myths for the high and distinct ethical lessons which it teaches. But a person of literary insight ought to be able to see that the narrative we have is not a myth, but a character sketch with a great moral.

The Samson narrative is a detached story—one of six stories, the only ones of their kind in the Bible, which

**One of the
Six Stories**

begin with a certain formula (Judg. 13 : 2; 17 : 1-2; 19 : 1; Ruth 1 : 1-2; 1 Sam. 1 : 1-2; 9 : 1-2). This fact bears

in several ways upon our understanding of the incidents. These belong several decades later than the events of the two stories that follow, and some decades earlier than the latest events mentioned in Judges 12. They are concerned with the Philistine oppression mentioned in Judges 10 : 11, and not, as many imagine, with the later oppression of the time of Eli.

The narrative professes to give incidents in the life of a man who was judge of Israel—not a merely local judge, though some think this, but one

Samson as Judge who “judged Israel twenty years” (Judg. 15 : 20; 16 : 31). But it records

none of his acts as judge. It gives some account of his birth and of his wild youth, perhaps up to the time when he became judge; and then it mentions certain non-official

deeds of his, done in the last few months of his life, when he seems to have relapsed into the follies of his youth. Yet it gives us the ground for inferring that his career as judge was successful. It was promised beforehand that he should "begin to save Israel out of the hand of the Philistines" (Judg. 13 : 5). This promise was made good. In Samson's youth the Philistines were "rulers over" Israel (Judg. 15 : 11), and came into Israelitish territory at their pleasure; in his later years they keep on their own side of the border. His twenty years as judge came between the exploits recorded in Judges 14, 15 and those recorded in Judges 16; there is no reason to doubt that they were years of sober and effective service.

Samson is represented as a man of marvelous bodily strength. All readers are familiar with this phase of the matter. He is represented as also a man of humor, a practical joker. This is equally familiar. We all think of him, I suppose, as big and jolly, mischief loving, beaming with fun and laughter.

Less attention has been paid to the fact that the account represents him as a man of mental ability, and particularly as a leader of men. Some commentators have even spoken of him as able-bodied and weak-brained. But in many of his recorded exploits muscle would have been useless without mind. In telling the story some seem to fill it out in ways like these: "And Samson was so strong that he went all by himself and slew thirty Philistines, and took their garments to pay the bet that he had made.

**Samson's Strength
and Humor**

**His Gifts for
Leadership**

And he was so strong that all by himself he caught three hundred foxes, and with them set on fire the corn of the Philistines. And he was so strong that all by himself he slew a thousand Philistines with the jawbone of an ass." Note that in these statements the "all by himself" is of the nature of filling. It is not in the Bible text. And it is not the natural or correct filling for the narrative. Samson's great strength would be of no particular use to him for exploits like these except as it attached men to him as their leader. The natural understanding is that he had followers as reckless as himself, who joined him in slaying the thirty Philistines, and in catching the three hundred foxes. When he made his attack at Lehi, with the jawbone of the ass, and the surprised Philistines began to give way before him, his excited countrymen of course joined in the fight in crowds, and helped in the slaughter and the victory.

His exploits imply that he had followers. He fell in love with the Timnathite woman. His parents objected, but the young man would have his way. Evidently he liked the company of the roystering youths, her neighbors. He bet them a suit of clothes apiece that they could not find out his riddle. They gave his wife her choice between discovering his secret and being burned up. She discovered it for them. He paid his debt at the expense of their countrymen. Doubtless he had Judahite chums who helped him pay it. Having paid it he abandoned the woman who had betrayed him. Afterward he was vexed because of her being given to another man. By way of revenge, and of course assisted by his pals, he sent a hundred and fifty pairs of torch-bearing

foxes through the Philistine grain-fields. In their turn they took vengeance by burning his wife and her father. Then Samson, of course with the help of reckless young men like himself, "smote them hip and thigh." Called to account for this he submitted to arrest by his countrymen of Judah, but on being handed over to the Philistines he made the fierce and unexpected onslaught which resulted in the battle of Lehi.

What, according to the Bible account, happened at Lehi? A difficulty arises in answering because the word *lehi*, used eight times in this short passage, means "jawbone," and you have to decide in each case whether it is used as a common noun or a place name. Clearly, the fountain from which Samson drank was in Lehi, and not in the jawbone. Translators have labored hard to give sense to Samson's outcry in celebration of his victory; but apparently it is intended nonsense, like a college yell.

"At Lehi of the ass,
O an ass, a couple of she-asses!
At Lehi of the ass
I smote a thousand men!"

Or the first and third lines might be,

"With the jawbone of the ass."

We get no complete idea of what occurred except by supplying some of the omitted particulars. If in supplying these we are guided by probabilities, and not by the love of the marvelous, we shall picture Samson's countrymen as joining him in the attack, after he had first thrown

the enemy into a panic. It is not an unheard-of thing for the leader in a battle to be credited with the total loss of the enemy, and we need not worry if some one thinks that the thousand men spoken of by Samson includes those smitten by his followers as well as by himself.

The writer in Judges is here telling a personal story, and he leaves to inference the important political results which followed the battle of Lehi. As we have already seen, it probably made Samson judge of Israel. From the situation and the silences of the narrative we may infer that the man gave up his reckless habits when he found grave responsibilities resting upon him. After a public career of twenty years, however, his vigilance relaxed, and he fell back into his old ways.

**Its Political
Results**

In addition to Samson's physical strength and his gifts for leadership, he is represented as irreproachable in some matters of conduct. So far as we know, for example, he was true to his obligations as a Nazirite. If he were now living he would not be a drunkard, or self-indulgent in matters of luxury. People would be saying that there is nothing mean about him.

His Morals

He is also presented to us as a religious man. In his religious experiences two points are pushed to the front but we need not doubt that back of them in his consciousness lay such dispositions toward God and the world as mark the inner life of other religious men.

One of the points made prominent is that he had remarkable gifts of the Spirit of Jehovah; and in particular that his seizures of extraordinary strength were of the

nature of gifts of the Spirit (Judg. 13 : 25; 14 : 6, 19; 15 : 14). It does not follow either that he was a high-minded man morally and spiritually, or that he was not.

“ The Spirit Came Mightily Upon Him ” With all the spiritual uses which our generation is making of athletics we need find nothing strange in this phase of the biography of Samson. Such a man in our day might be a gifted evangelist or reformer or worker in the Y. M. C. A.

Samson's long hair is the other peculiar fact that is made prominent in connection with his religious character. This was the outward sign of his being a Nazirite, the sign of his personal relations with Jehovah, and so it had its

His Long Hair significance in connection with the gifts of the Spirit of Jehovah. We ought not to shrink from miracle as accounting for his feats of strength, but we may also accept certain psychological explanations as far as they will go. Imagine Samson's powerful muscles as sometimes affected by a religious excitement that had the force of frenzy. That would account for some of his wonderful efforts of strength. And then imagine his overpowering sense of guilt when he discovers that his hair is gone, that through his own fault he has lost the outward symbol of the relations between Jehovah and himself. Imagine his dismay, his depression, his consequent weakness. And when he has thus brought punishment upon himself, it is natural to think of him as repentant, and as gradually returning to normal spiritual and bodily conditions.

The narrative thus characterizes Samson physically, mentally, morally, religiously, and it also pictures his characteristic weaknesses. He had two passions which

he indulged recklessly—the passion for exciting adventure, and a certain form of passion for women. Perhaps it does not appear that he was sensual in the ordinary

Samson's Two Weaknesses

sense of that term. But he had a keen admiration for a certain Philistine type of beauty. He dearly loved to be coaxed and flattered by a woman of that type. Such a man, in our civilization, would be a male flirt; and he might be a speculator or a sporting man, a rough rider or an aviator; or, more objectionably, a gambler or a filibuster.

These characteristics exhibit themselves in his relations with his Timnathite wife, but more decidedly in his relations with Delilah. The narrative does

Delilah

not inform us whether Samson and Delilah were married. However this may have been he risked fame and life and usefulness and public justice in being thus intimate with a Philistine woman. But the risks made the thing exciting, and the greater the risks the more intense the excitement, and the temptation conquered him. Probably he found his daily routine unexciting and monotonous, and he had a craving for change.

He risked the more in visiting her at Sorek, instead of taking her home. But this was part of the fun. He liked the sensation of risk, and grew foolish in enjoying it.

When she bound him with the withes it became clear that either she too was playing with fire, or else was treacherous to him. He saw that the sport had become dangerous, but that made it the more exciting and alluring. The danger became the more evident with each of

her successive attempts; but it was delicious to see the cheek with which Delilah carried it off. And then the poor thing was really so dead in love with him! As a sportsman he could not stop now, in the middle of the game. Indeed the game was so fascinating that he did not wish to stop.

This leads us to the great moral of this character sketch of Samson. From the beginning to the end of the narrative he is pictured to us as a typical instance of a certain tendency in human conduct. He is typically the person *who will keep fooling with temptation*. In this character he stands to every one of us as an example and a warning. The physical interest of the story is such that we cannot fail of perceiving the points on which the moral depends. And the moral is one that is serious beyond measure.

We human beings are greatly given to the folly of fooling with temptation. We are like little children who will play with fire. You know some child that has a morbid habit of making the acquaintance of every strange dog or other animal that comes along, often to its own hurt, and constantly to the terror and discomfort of its friends. We are prone to treat temptations in that way, and some of us persist in spite of severe lessons, and never learn better. Samson is a typical instance of this form of human weakness. You ought to let him warn you against fooling with temptation, even if you regard the narrative as fiction; though if you accept his warning you will probably see no reason for denying that we have in this narrative the actual experiences of a historical person.

Samson became infatuated with the game which he and Delilah and the Philistine lords were playing. He kept on fooling with temptation. Perhaps he said to himself that he was safe because he would never for an instant think of giving up his hold on the Divine Spirit. But his playing with temptation gradually weakened that hold until it failed. Its failure was followed by the loss of its outward emblem, his long hair, and by the outward fall of the man himself.

**Samson's Loss
of the Game**

All this is typical, is it not? and replete with wholesome warning. How it pictures the folly of bad beginnings, the dangers that beset the boy of promise, who knows the right, but is disposed to think that the right is slow, and that he wants a more spicy life! It illustrates the persistence of the grip of bad beginnings upon their victim. Persons of exceptional strength and good fortune may, like Samson, accomplish a career in spite of bad beginnings, but even with them the danger never ceases. It illustrates the peril of being reckless for fun, and the folly of deliberating when you ought to say "No." There is a glory in the final victory of a man like Samson, who has dallied with temptation, and has been entrapped, and has gone wrong, and has repented—the man who illustrates the grace of God even in extremities; but more glorious is the victory of him who promptly says, "Get thee behind me, Satan." Jesus is a better example than Samson.

PART III

REASONABLE CRITICISM AND ARCHEOLOGICAL
DISCOVERIES

CHAPTER XIV

CRITICISM AND CHRONOLOGY

Introduction: Confusion concerning Bible chronology. Repudiation of Bible numbers. I. The Bible way of counting units of time. The Bible year. Other supposable years. Calendar units versus mere units of measurement. Korean counting. The differences important in some cases. Accession year versus first year. These points as affecting the Bible numbers. II. The successive chronological methods in the Bible. 1. For the time before Abraham. 2. For the time from Abraham to the exodus. 3. The forty-year periods of and after the exodus. 4. The time-record in terms of the reigns of the judges and early kings. 5. For the times after the death of Solomon. III. Views that are prominently held. "The Dated Events of the Old Testament." The Ussher chronology. Its carefulness. Its defects. The Assyrian chronology. Its materials. Its high character. The conflict between it and the Bible. Hints in regard to the comparing of dates. The Egyptian chronology. Literature.

When one wishes to date a biblical event in terms of the Christian era, he commonly does not work out the date for himself from the statements of the Bible, but goes to some book of reference for it. The books of reference contain conflicting schemes of Bible chronology, and often fail to distinguish between them. In the circumstances it is not surprising that men's ideas of the chronology are exceedingly confused.

The more courageous and consistent of the advocates of the prevailing schools of criticism have here no hesitation. They hold that most of the chronological numbers

found in the Bible come from the writers whom they regard as the latest, and that they have little or no value.

Repudiation of the Biblical Numbers Many who would not state the matter so boldly, none the less reach practically the same result. They begin by saying that the spiritual lessons do not depend on the chronology. They speak of the difficulty of being absolutely correct chronologically, and of the unimportance of slight inaccuracies. They speak of the likelihood that such a number as forty may be used as a round number, or of the ease with which the letter that stands for two might be mistaken for the letter that stands for twenty. And then, on the basis of such facts as these, they practically reject most of the numerals. Thus we have a condition of things in which our books of reference date biblical events, in many cases, by numbers which contradict those of the Bible; and these dates, being accepted by conservatives as well as by their opponents, cause endless confusion and difficulty. From this confusion there is at present no escape except for those who will take the trouble to work out the dates for themselves. All others should regard all the dates of the earlier centuries as provisional, and should be cautious in building inferences upon them.

Fortunately, the greatest values in chronology are those that depend on synchronisms, and not on dates in an era. In many cases where you cannot be sure of the date B. C. at which an event occurred, you can nevertheless be perfectly sure in regard to the contemporary events and their interrelations.

This chapter will touch upon three topics, attention to

which will help one in deciding on chronological questions. First, the biblical way of counting units of time.

The ordinary year of the Bible is practically the interval between one spring equinox and another. For most purposes it is sufficiently accurate to say

The Bible Year that it began with a new moon in March.

It contained twelve months, perhaps approximately lunar months, with a thirteenth month whenever this was necessary in order to keep the beginning of the year from getting too far from the equinox. The beginning of the year must have been determined by some kind of observation of nature, no one knows what. The Babylonians and Assyrians used the same year, perhaps with differences in details. It is the year of which our month-names September, October, November, December (seventh-month, eighth-month, etc.), are a monument. (*Dated Events of the Old Testament*, Chapter III.)

Other kinds of years have been in use among peoples both ancient and modern, but for ordinary purposes of biblical chronology it is not necessary to consider the others.

In ancient chronology, biblical or ethnical, the way in which you take your units of time is important. In counting how many years an event occupied, you may take the calendar year as your unit, inquiring how many calendar years were wholly or partly covered by the event; or

Time Units you may use the year simply as a measure of time, and apply your measure at the point of time when the event began. We moderns commonly use the latter method, and

measure time by years and fractions, just as we figure out the value of nine and a half pounds of sugar at five and three-fourths cents a pound. For the moment let us call this the grocery method. But there are instances in which we count our units differently. We do not put a stamp and a half on a letter that weighs an ounce and a half. We do not assign nine and one-third representatives to the state that has nine and one-third units of population. In mileage books the conductor does not tear off fractions of a mile. There are plenty of these instances in which we so assume our units that we count a fractional part as either negligible or else as a complete unit. Call this, if you please, the post-office method. Then you can put the matter thus: the Bible counts units of time by the post-office method, and not by the grocery method.

This is probably the way in which the vast majority of mankind still counts units of time, for most purposes. In Japan and Korea they count a person's age in this way. Mrs. Underwood says of her boy: "He was not six years old, Korean count. . . . In that country ages are counted in quite a different way from ours. . . . You are at once, as soon as you are born, one year old, . . . One is just as old as the number of years during any part of which one has lived, and a baby born on the thirty-first of December would, one year and a day later, on the first of January, be three years old." (*Tommy Tompkins*, 1905, pp. 61, 62.)

In most instances the differences between these two ways of counting neutralize one another, so that the two methods reach the same results. But in some instances this

is not the case. If a king began to reign the tenth day of June, 1842, and died the eighth day of April, 1852, his reign was, by the grocery way of counting, one of nine years, nine months, twenty-nine days. I suppose that most persons now living would be content to say that he reigned ten years. But by the post-office way of counting he reigned nine years if you neglect both of the fractions of a year, ten years if you count one fraction, and eleven years if you count both. The eleven years would be the calendar years 1842 and 1852, with the nine intervening years.

An incident of this way of counting is the difference between the accession year of a king and his first year.

Year of Accession, versus First Year By the grocery method, the accession year of the successor of our supposed king would be the same with his first year, and both alike would be the year beginning the eighth of April. By the post-office method his accession year would be the calendar year 1852, and his first year, probably, the calendar year 1853. With people who had no era number by which to designate a year, who designated their years by saying that it was such and such a year of such and such a king, the calendar year within which a king died was already named for that king, and the following calendar year was, ordinarily, the first year of his successor. In the Bible, in such instances the broken year is invariably counted to the outgoing king, and is in some instances counted also to the incoming king, being thus counted twice.

In such cases one is of course compelled to compute

by processes of tabulation, either written or mental; mere arithmetical processes of addition or subtraction or averaging will not answer the purpose. But this makes no real difficulty; in all save a few exceptional cases the data for understanding the numbers are unmistakable.

Very few persons who have studied the subject will disagree with what has thus been said, though unfortunately many neglect these points when they engage in practical work. In particular, men ignore these facts when they attack the numerals of the Bible. As a familiar example, the reigns of the kings of Israel from Jeroboam to Jehoram, as given in the books of Kings, aggregate 98 years; those of the kings of Judah for the same period aggregate 95 years. This is often quoted in proof that the numbers are unreliable. But if you tabulate the numbers, allowing the ordinal numbers to interpret the cardinal numbers, you will find all the data clear and consistent, and will find that the whole number of years is neither 98 nor 95, but just 90. (See *Dated Events of the Old Testament*, pp. 126-134.) Or again, some persons find difficulty with the statement (Matt. 12 : 40) that the Son of man shall "be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." The writer thought of the three calendar units which we call Friday and Saturday and Sunday as each a period of twenty-four hours; and thought of Jesus as in the grave for at least some part of each of those three periods; and he imputes to Jesus the same way of computing time.

If you will simply accord to the Bible numbers the fair play of honestly trying to understand what the Bible authors mean by them, taking into account the ways in

which they were accustomed to compute time, you will find that the numbers stand the test. And you will decide, in the circumstances, that this amounts to more than a mere removal of difficulties, that it is a strong positive accrediting of the biblical chronology.

As a second topic, note the forms assumed, in the successive periods, by the biblical chronological numbers.

1. The tables in Genesis 5 and 11 : 10-26 have commonly been regarded as chronological. On this basis

Pre-Abrahamic	Ussher counts 1655 years from the creation
Biblical	to the deluge, and 2083 years from
Chronology	the creation to the migration of Abraham.

In this he follows the Masoretic Hebrew text. Other texts lengthen these periods by a few centuries. But it is now commonly held that we have traced back the authentic history of Egypt and of Babylonia to dates much earlier than these, even if we accept the larger numbers as correct. Some scholars still dispute this, but it seems to me that these tables were not intended to be understood as chronological; that they are among the relatively few genuine instances of personalized history found in the Bible; that at present they are unintelligible to us through our lack of data; that we may at some time obtain additional information which will render them intelligible; that meanwhile biblical chronology properly begins with Abraham.

2. For the period from the migration of Abraham to the exodus the chronological numbers appear in terms of the lives of the leaders, supplemented by certain "long numbers."

Abraham was 75 years old when he came to Canaan,

100 years old when Isaac was born. Jacob was born when Isaac was 60 years old, and was 130 years of age when he went to Egypt, and 147 years of age when he died. Every one is familiar with the data of this description. In addition to these the long numbers come in. Israel was in Egypt exactly 430 years (Exod. 12 : 40-41). The Greek copies say that this is to be counted from the date when Abraham migrated to Canaan. Josephus had copies that said the same (*Ant.* II. xv. 2). Paul apparently held the same view (Gal. 3 : 17). If this is the correct view, then the 400 of Genesis 15 : 13, 16 is a round number of approximately the same value. The coming back to Canaan "in the fourth generation" is to be explained by the instances that actually appear in the record—such a succession, for example, as that of Levi, Kohath, Amram, Aaron, Eleazar (look them up, by concordance). If this is the correct view, the 430 years was about equally divided between the actual residence in Egypt and the preceding residence of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in Canaan.

I regard this as the correct view, but there are differing opinions, many regarding the residence in Egypt as covering the entire 430 years.

3. From the exodus to the death of Gideon the chronology seems to be counted in five periods of 40 years each, the other numerals that are given being included in the forties.

No one questions that the Bible attributes 40 years to the wanderings of the exodus. As to the time record for the judges there is great diversity of opinion, both old and

new. The record says that 480 years intervened between the exodus and the founding of Solomon's temple (1 Kings 6:1). This, with the forty years **Five** Kings 6:1). This, with the forty years **Forty-Year** of the exodus, the three forties of **Periods** the life of Moses, the forty years of the reigns of Saul and David and Solomon, and other recurrences of the number forty, suggest the question whether there existed a system of counting in periods of forty years. If you look up this question your attention will fix itself on three forties and a double forty (Judg. 3:11; 5:31; 8:28; 3:30), which are distinguished by the formula attached to them, "The land had rest forty years." For the time covered by these forties we are not told, as we are for the time that follows, how many years the administration of any judge lasted. These phenomena lead me to think that these particular forties are consecutive periods, covering the two hundred years after the exodus. There is something more to be said on this point in connection with the point that comes next.

4. From the death of Gideon to that of Solomon the time-record is made mainly in terms of the reigns of the judges and the kings. For the whole time from the exodus to Solomon there are supplementary round numbers (1 Kings 6:1; Judg. 11:26; Acts 13:19).

Reasons have already been given for regarding the forty-year periods concerning which it is said that "the land had rest" as belonging to a different **Chronology of** chronological method from the forties **the Later Judges** that follow. Making this distinction it is easy to understand the numbers so that they will total the 480 of 1 Kings 6:1. With this reckon-

ing, Samuel died 434 years after the exodus, having continued all his life to be judge (1 Sam. 7 : 15), though from the accession of Saul the judge was outranked by the king. This is near enough to Paul's round number 450 (Acts 13 : 19). On this reckoning Jephthah's contention with Ammon occurred about 250 years after Moses conquered the Ammonite territory (Judg. 11 : 26). His 300 years is probably a correct round-number date for Ammon's loss of the territory to the Amorites from whom Israel captured it. On this basis every number given in the Bible for the period of the judges falls into place. At least six of the forties are shown to be exact, and though some of the other forties are round numbers, none of them are very far from being exact.

Men of all schools, however, take different views from this. The conservatives test their ingenuity in devising ways of understanding and adding up the Bible numbers so as to make them agree; their opponents frankly reject the Bible numbers. At present there is a trend toward making the period much shorter than the Bible makes it.

5. From the death of Solomon the Old Testament record of chronology is made up mainly in terms of the

Chronology	reigns of the kings of Israel and Judah,
After Solomon	and of the Babylonian and Persian kings,
	supplemented by certain long numbers.

That in the New Testament appears mainly in the form of scattered information. For this period differences of opinion depend on questions concerning the acceptance and the interpretation of particular data.

As a third topic, note very briefly certain views that are held in Bible chronology.

My own individual view may be found in my volume on the "Dated Events of the Old Testament," in which these various topics are more fully discussed.

The view which has had the field for many generations is that of Archbishop Ussher. It is mainly based on a

**The Ussher
Chronology**

conscientious and exact study of the materials found in the Old Testament. A large part of it is correct, and will never be superseded. There are some inaccuracies due to his using the grocery method of computation instead of the post-office method, but these are mostly matters of not very important detail. Ussher makes what seems to me the nearly universal mistake of counting the pre-Abrahamic numbers as chronological. Correctly, as it seems to me, he counts 430 years from Abraham to the exodus. For the times of the judges he ignores the distinction concerning the forty-year periods when the land had rest, and his details thus become very different from mine; but he accepts the 480 years from the exodus to the temple. For the remaining Old Testament chronology his work, in addition to the slight inaccuracies already referred to, suffers apparently from the millennial theory which he held.

Ussher believed that the earth was created just 4,000 years before the birth of Christ, and that Solomon's temple was dedicated just 1,000 years before the birth of Christ. But the biblical data, in their most obvious meaning, give 1,007 years as the time between the dedication of the temple and the birth of Christ. To eliminate the excess of 7 years Ussher first counts the first 11 years of Jeroboam II of Israel as overlapping the reign of his

father, thus shortening the interval by 11 years. This is plausible, provided there were sufficient reasons for it. Having thus made the interval 4 years too short, Ussher puts back the 4 years, one at a time, in connection with the subsequent events. Thus it happens that in a large number of instances his dates differ by either 11 years or 7 years or 4 years from those obtained by the most natural interpretation of the biblical data.

The scheme of Ussher is essentially biblical. In the field against it is what we may denote in a general way by the term "the Assyrian chronology,"

**The Assyrian
Chronology**

though this exists at present in the form of many schemes more or less conflicting. From as early as the time of Solomon the Assyrians kept an official chronology, in which the years were designated by the names of officers appointed for the purpose. In addition to this they dated events by the regnal years of their kings. The Babylonians of earlier ages had lists of kings, with the years of their reigns, possessed dated papers, and in various ways had made notes of the time when events had occurred; so that the Assyrian chronologers of the time of Sennacherib and later possessed much material that had been handed down to them from more ancient times. Their chronological products and habits were of course inherited by the later Babylonians who succeeded them. It is beyond doubt that the Assyrian chronology is in the main correct; and equally beyond doubt that its custodians sometimes made mistakes.

Some details will be given in the following chapters. The one fact which one must fix in memory, if he would

compare dates intelligently, is that the Assyrian and the biblical chronologies seem to be sharply in conflict for the period from the accession of Jeroboam II to the downfall of Samaria. By its most natural interpretation the biblical count of years for this period exceeds the Assyrian by 51 years. Conservative scholars attempt to reconcile the two by schemes in which the biblical numbers are made to overlap one another. Their opponents offer the simple solution which consists in rejecting most of the Bible numbers and events. My individual opinion, subject to revision in case new evidence shall be discovered, is that the biblical dates are essentially correct and the conflicting Assyrian statements mistaken.

However you settle this, you need to be on your guard when you compare dates. From the capture of Samaria back to Jeroboam II your dates for biblical events are merely confused conjecture in case you follow the Assyrian chronology. For all time before that you need to make fixed corrections whenever you compare an Assyrian date with a biblical. Add 51 to an Assyrian date to make it correspond with the biblical date as most obviously computed; add 40 if you agree with Ussher in shortening the reign of Jeroboam II; add 44 to make the date correspond with an actual Ussher date.

Less need be said concerning schemes of Bible chronology based on Egyptian data. The distinctive Egyptian data are of two kinds —year-cycles and the maximum regnal years found on the monuments. If one finds on a monument the mention of a certain year of a certain king, that

**Egyptian
Chronological
Data**

is very conclusive proof that the king named reigned as long as that, and no one knows how much longer. In the case of a succession of kings we may be sure that their united reigns amounted to a good many years more than the aggregate of the maximum dates that explorers have happened to find. This is one very important source of information.

The other source, sometimes called astronomical, is from the year-cycles. The Egyptian year of 365 days was about a quarter of a day shorter than a true astronomical year. If a year began at the heliacal rising of a certain star, then the fifth year from that the star would appear the second day of the year, and the ninth year it would appear the third day, and so on till it had appeared in every day of the year. The star, and with it all the heavenly bodies, and with them the crop-seasons and the season of the Nile overflow, would wander through the entire year, or, if you prefer, the beginning of the year would wander through all the seasons. It would take 1,461 of these years of 365 days to equal 1,460 years as marked by the stars and the seasons.

It follows that if we have records of the months and days in which astronomical or seasonal phenomena occurred in Egypt, that may enable us to **Their Weak Point** compute dates with mathematical exactness. Many schemes of this kind have been devised, and with successive new discoveries the schemes have become more and more plausible. It is still true, however, that the experts contradict one another, and that the alleged astronomically fixed dates are largely inconsistent with the results from the maxi-

mum dates found on the monuments, and with the Babylonian and Assyrian data, as well as with the statements of the Bible.

My views on the chronology are presented in "Dated Events of the Old Testament" (The Sunday School Times Company, 1907). Possibly the clearest

Literature presentation of the Assyrian official chronology is still that found in George Smith's "Assyrian Canon," or in the "Assyrische Lesestücke" of Friedrich Delitzsch. For the Egyptian astronomical chronology, study the first volume of Breasted's "Ancient Records," noting, however, that it is no part of his scheme to call attention to what many regard as the insuperable difficulties inherent in his chronology. For practical use, however, no treatment of the chronology as a whole will supersede the necessity of looking up particular dates in detail in the records that give accounts of the events.

The literature of archeological exploration includes an immense number of meritorious books and articles. The best work in the recent Bible Dictionaries and Encyclopedias is found in their articles on subjects of this kind—for example on Assyria, Babylonia, Tiglath-pilezer, Sargon, Sennacherib, the Moabite Stone, Egypt. These articles refer to sources of information which amount to whole libraries. Especially good is the work of such men as King and Pinches and Johns in the *Encyclopedia Biblica*.

Among books that give the texts of writings that have been discovered, the "Altorientalische Texte und Bilder zum Alten Testamente," by Doctors Gressmann, Ungnad,

and Ranke, is probably the best for those who read German. King's "Annals of the Assyrian Kings" is fine for the period which it covers. Breasted's "Ancient Records of Egypt" is an admirable collection of one class of Egyptian documents. Exceedingly good is Pinches' "The Old Testament in the Light of the Historical Records of Assyria and Babylonia," and King's "Chronicles Concerning Early Babylonian Kings." Schrader's "Cuneiform Inscriptions and the Old Testament" is still useful. And one cannot yet dispense with the "Records of the Past," the old series and the new series, published by the Bagsters. George Smith's "Assyrian Discoveries" is not entirely out of date. And there is a whole library of archeological works of greater or less merit.

CHAPTER XV

A LINE OF SYNCHRONOUS HISTORY

Introductory. I. A standard for comparison. List of dated Assyrian events. II. Bible events as tested by this standard. 1. Cryptoagnostic view of the matter. 2. General comparison. The events are historical, not fabricated. The Assyrian record affords background and key to the biblical. 3. Particular incidents. Before the Sennacherib affair. Tiglath-pilezer. Pekah. Hoshea. Shalmanezer. Capture of Samaria. Ahaz. The Sennacherib affair. Analysis of the Bible narrative. Common misapprehensions. The dates of particular incidents. "That night." The particulars. Hezekiah and the Philistines. Sargon's Ashdod expedition. The fourteenth year of Hezekiah. Hezekiah and Merodach-baldan. The great invasion by Sennacherib. The subsequent events from a contemporary point of view. Literature.

No archeological discoveries are more important for Bible criticism and interpretation than those concerning historical events which synchronize with events mentioned in the Scriptures. In dealing with these, two opposite mistakes are to be avoided: first, the claiming of exact synchronisms where they do not exist; second, the being content with a general comparison in cases where the synchronism might be made exact.

In this chapter we take up a prolonged period—that from the biblical Tiglath-pilezer to Sennacherib.

To obtain a time standard, note first a few dates, in calendar years beginning with the spring equinox, taken from Assyrian documents.

B. C. 763. Tenth year of Asshur-daan III of Assyria. An eclipse of the sun June 15, fixing this and subsequent dates.

B. C. 755. Death of Asshur-daan and accession of Asshur-nirari II.

B. C. 745. Tiglath-pilezer succeeded Asshur-nirari in April. He was a usurper, and must have been for many years previous a distinguished general and public man. In this year he made a hard-fought and successful invasion of Babylonia.

In B. C. 744 he again invaded Babylonia. Possibly he at once adopted the title of king of Babylonia (Schrader, *Cuneiform Inscriptions and the Old Testament*, 1885, Vol. I, p. 241).

In each of the four following years he was fighting at Arpad, not quite 200 miles north of Damascus, and thus within striking distance of Syria and Palestine. Dr. Johns says ("Arpad" in *Enc. Bib.*) that he "finally subjugated and Assyrianized Arpad."

In B. C. 739 he was in Ulluba, far from the Mediterranean.

In B. C. 738 he captured Kul-unu, probably the biblical Calno, and probably in the same region with Arpad.

In B. C. 737, 736, 735, he was far from Palestine, but presumably maintained his forces in the Arpad region.

In B. C. 734 he invaded Philistia. In B. C. 733 he invaded Damascus. In B. C. 732 he was again in Damascus as an invader. About that time the reigning dynasty in Babylon was displaced by the Chaldean Ukin-zer.

In B. C. 731 Tiglath-pilezer invaded Babylonia. In B. C. 729 he became king of Babylonia. In B. C. 727, late

in December, his son Shalmanezzer IV succeeded him as king of Babylonia and Assyria.

In December in B. C. 722 Shalmanezzer died, and the usurper Sargon became king of Assyria. He credits himself with many and great exploits during this, his accession year, though he was on the throne less than three months of it. Apparently he does not distinguish carefully between the exploits which he performed in his own name and those which he performed, earlier in the year, as the general of Shalmanezzer. Among the exploits of the year was his capture of Samaria.

In B. C. 720 he defeated the Samaritans, in alliance with other nations, in the decisive battle of Raphia.

Merodach-baladan, a man of ambition and ability, had submitted to Tiglath-pilezer; but at the death of Shalmanezzer he made himself king of Babylon. He and Ummanigash, king of Elam, and others kept Sargon busy in the far east from B. C. 720 to 712. It was characteristic of the methods of Merodach-baladan that he sent envoys everywhere to stir up rebellion against Assyria.

In B. C. 711 occurred Sargon's celebrated expedition against Ashdod.

In B. C. 710 he overthrew Merodach-baladan, and became king of Babylon.

In B. C. 705, on the twelfth day of the month that began in July, Sennacherib succeeded his father on the throne of Assyria. Merodach-baladan disputed his right to the throne of Babylon, and others made trouble for him. A temporary settlement was reached by Sennacherib's making Bel-ibni king of Babylon. These events kept him busy in the east for three or four years.

In B. C. 701 occurred his great invasion of the regions on the Mediterranean.

In B. C. 700 he invaded Babylonia. The Babylonian leaders fled in ships to the Elamite coast of the Persian Gulf, taking their gods with them. Sennacherib made his son Asshur-nadin-shuma king instead of Bel-ibni.

In B. C. 698 he built vessels on the Tigris, invaded Babylonia and Elam, and brought back the fugitive gods. In B. C. 697 the army which he was leading against Elam was crushed by a winter storm. This is the one remarkable exception to the rule that the Assyrian records omit disasters. In B. C. 696 Sennacherib was still fighting in Elam and Babylonia. In B. C. 694 the Elamites dethroned Asshur-nadin-shuma. In B. C. 693 Sennacherib devastated Elam and Babylonia. In B. C. 691 the fighting was on a tremendous scale, and both sides claim the victory. In B. C. 689 Sennacherib sacked and nearly destroyed Babylon. From that time he seems to have reigned over Babylonia for eight years, leaving the sovereignty to his son Esar-haddon.

Have these dates before you, so that you can refer to them, while you study the record in the Bible (2 Kings 14 : 23 to 20 : 21; 2 Chron. 26-32; and parallel passages).

I cite a single instance as fairly representing a vast amount of current assertion concerning the biblical narrative for this whole period. "The only historical accounts of the campaign of Sennacherib against Judah are to be found in the cuneiform inscriptions of Sennacherib and in the short extract" in "2 Kings 18 : 13b-16." . . .

**Cryptoagnostic
Estimates**

“the rest of the Hebrew narrative is to be accounted for” as “imaginative and didactic.” (*Enc. Bib.* Col. 4369). To the contrary of this I venture to affirm that a fair comparison of the biblical accounts with the Assyrian proves that the biblical record is minutely true to fact, as well as didactically true.

To begin with, some dozens of the persons and places and events mentioned in the Bible are also mentioned in the Assyrian records; and their interrelations as presented in the two records are essentially the same. As a single typical fact, the Bible vividly sets forth, as characterizing Tiglath-pilezer and his successors, their policy of deporting populations as distinguished from the taking of captives. This policy, with numerous instances and details, is conspicuous in the records of these kings. A large number of similar points might be made. The Assyrian documents prove beyond dispute that the Scriptures are a presentation of historical materials, whether you regard the presentation as true, or false, or fictional.

Further, the Assyrian records provide a background for the biblical events, enabling us to put them together consecutively, in a way that was formerly impossible. Some generations before Tiglath-pilezer northern Israel, under Jehu, had become tributary to Assyria. Then the Assyrian supremacy waned, making possible the brilliant successes of Jeroboam II, the last real king of the dynasty of Jehu. Probably, however, the dynasty remained at least nominally loyal to Assyria. As the Assyrian records are commonly translated, they have something to say

concerning Azariah (Uzziah), king of Judah. They say that the whole Mediterranean region, under his leadership, revolted against Assyria. This revolt is not explicitly mentioned in the Bible, but it is an event which dovetails into the biblical account. Near the time of the death of Jeroboam, Amos tells us, the Assyrian power was reviving.

The Bible numbers indicate that there was an interregnum in Israel after Jeroboam died. The prophet Hosea had a program to the effect that the nation should "abide many days without king and without captain," until Israel and Judah could unite under a king of the house of David (Hos. 3 : 4-5). Meanwhile the land was full of Assyrian intrigue (*e. g.* Hos. 5 : 13; 7 : 11; 8 : 9). At length the pro-Assyrian party prevailed, and placed on the throne Zechariah of the line of Jehu (2 Kings 15, 16, cf. the situations sketched in the successive chapters of Hosea). The anti-Assyrian party presently overthrew him, and made Shallum king. In a month he was overthrown by the pro-Assyrian Menahem; and at this point the Assyrian-Israelitish synchronisms become expressly matters of record. Each record illuminates the other, both in outline and in matters of detail. Proof of the correctness of the dates here assigned may be found in my "Dated Events of the Old Testament," pages 140-150.

Tiglath-pilezer is mentioned (1 Chron. 5 : 6, 26; 2 Kings 15 : 29 and 16 : 7, 10; 2 Chron. 28 : 20) as deporting northern and eastern Israelites, and as receiving the submission of Ahaz of Judah. He is also mentioned under the name Pul as taking tribute from Menahem, and as deporting eastern Israelites (2 Kings 15 : 19;

1 Chron. 5 : 26). Note that the Menahem events are presented as a different group from those in which Ahaz and Pekah are concerned. Parallel to

Tiglath-pilezer this there is one set of records, attributed by Assyriologists to Tiglath-pilezer, in which he speaks of tribute from Menahem and of the overthrow of the anti-Assyrian combination under Azariah; and a different set of records in which he speaks of Ahaz and Pekah.

If we accept the Bible numbers we must hold that Uzziah and Menahem both died several years before the accession of Tiglath-pilezer; and therefore that Tiglath-pilezer was Pul, a general of Asshur-daan, when he fought Uzziah and made Assyria an expensive ally of Menahem. This is not an unlikely inference. It is confirmed by the use of the earlier name Pul in Kings. There is nothing to forbid the idea that this part of Tiglath-pilezer's own record is retrospective.

According to the Bible numbers Menahem reigned ten years, and was succeeded by his son Pekahiah. After two years the anti-Assyrian party in Israel

Pekah was strong enough to overthrow him and make Pekah king. This was perhaps due to the feebleness of Asshur-daan in his closing years. His successor, Asshur-nirari, reigned ten years. His reign was weak enough so that Tiglath-pilezer was able at its close to overthrow the dynasty. In these circumstances Assyria was not prompt in interfering with Pekah. According to the Bible numbers he reigned twenty years. He and Rezin of Damascus were in alliance against Assyria. The four years when Tiglath-pilezer was oper-

ating against Arpad must have been anxious years for them. When he was away from the region in B. C. 739, the year when Ahaz succeeded Jotham in Judah, Rezin and Pekah invaded Judah, purposing to enthrone there a king of their own political stripe (Isa. 7 : 6 and parallels in Kings and Chron. and Isa.), and thus strengthen the anti-Assyrian coalition. Ahaz, refusing Isaiah's counsel, placed himself under the protection of Tiglath-pilezer, who gave him no real help, though he marched into the region and chastised Rezin and Pekah. Presumably these operations of his began in B. C. 738, the first year of Ahaz, the year when Tiglath-pilezer captured Calno. In the years directly following we may be sure that his forces and his intriguers were still in the Mediterranean region, though he himself was in the far east.

The author in Kings follows his account of Tiglath-pilezer's capture of Israelite cities with the statement that Hoshea conspired against Pekah, **Hoshea** "and slew him and reigned in his stead, in the twentieth year of Jotham the son of Uzziah." The statement of the date is peculiar, but it can have only one meaning, and in that meaning it agrees with the other biblical data in making the reign of Hoshea begin not directly, when he slew Pekah, but nine years later. This has always been regarded as puzzling.

Tiglath-pilezer's account of the matter is: "Pekah their king . . . slew; Hoshea I put in command over them." Owing to mutilation the record does not inform us who slew Pekah. Tiglath-pilezer does not say that he made Hoshea king, though he put him at the head

of affairs in some capacity. The hypothesis which naturally combines all these statements is that Hoshea was Assyrian viceroy till the death of Tiglath-pilezer, and then assumed the state of king, and attempted to throw off the Assyrian yoke; being viceroy nine years and king nine years.

“Against him came up Shalmanezzer king of Assyria, and Hoshea became his servant and rendered him tribute” (2 Kings 17 : 3). This may possibly refer to an expedition of which we have at present no Assyrian account, made early in the reign of Shalmanezzer; but if it refers to the invasion in B. C. 722 it agrees with what the Assyrian records say was done in that year; though the Assyrian record gives additional particulars, and in it Sargon does not distinguish between what he did as general of Shalmanezzer and what he did in his own name after he succeeded Shalmanezzer.

The Bible record says that Hoshea conspired with So, king of Mitsraim, and that the Assyrian king “came up throughout all the land,” captured Samaria after a siege of three years, and then

**Final Capture
of Samaria**

and subsequently deported the inhabitants of the region, and imported others to take their places. The biblical date for the final capture is B. C. 718, not the Ussher date “about B. C. 721.” This is easily proved to any one who cares to look the matter up. The first year of Nebuchadnezzar, B. C. 604, was the fourth year of Jehoiakim, king of Judah. Samaria was taken the sixth year of Hezekiah, and Hezekiah reigned twenty-three years after that. Now 604 plus 3 years of Jehoiakim, plus 31 years of Josiah, plus 2 years of Amon, plus

55 years of Manasseh, plus 23 years of Hezekiah, equal 718 B. C., the year when Samaria was taken.

In this matter the biblical and the Assyrian accounts differ much in their details, but all the details without manipulation harmonize into a complete account. Sargon dates the defeat of the Samaritans, in alliance with "Sib'e, sultan of Mitsri," and others, in B. C. 720. He says nothing of the three years' siege of Samaria, but he would naturally begin the siege soon after the defeat of the allies, so that the three years would be B. C. 720, 719, 718. He emphasizes greatly the business of deporting and importing inhabitants. That his Sib'e is the So of the Bible is believed even by those who dispute the identification of this king with Shabaka of Egypt.

As we have already seen, the early part of the reign of Ahaz, king of Judah, when he sent in his submission to Tiglath-pilezer, coincides in time with
Ahaz Tiglath-pilezer's operations when he captured Calno, B. C. 738. The Bible account emphasizes the going of Ahaz to Damascus to meet Tiglath-pilezer. Perhaps the most natural date for that is in B. C. 733 or 732, after Tiglath-pilezer's expedition to Philistia, and during one of his two expeditions to Damascus, that is, in the sixth or seventh years of Ahaz. What the Bible says concerning the capture of Damascus and the deportation of its people (2 Kings 16 : 9 and parallels) may be understood as a summary, including events of differing dates. The punishments inflicted upon Damascus are also mentioned in the Assyrian accounts.

The king whose relations with Assyria are most fully set forth in the Bible is Hezekiah; and he is also the one

Israelite concerning whom the Assyrian accounts say more than concerning any other. There is no case in which we more need to distinguish between what the Bible actually says and what people commonly think that it says. The Bible speaks with evident commendation of Hezekiah's rebellion against Assyria, but it does not say that the rebellion was a success from a worldly point of view. The details it gives show that the rebellion was not in that sense a success. It does not represent that Judah became permanently independent of Assyria. The great deliverance of which it speaks consisted in Sennacherib's being unable to carry out his purpose to deport the whole population; up to that limit it represents that Judah suffered all manner of defeat and distress and humiliation.

A glance at the literary structure of the Sennacherib-Merodach-baladan narrative (Isa. 36-39, duplicated in 2 Kings 18-20 and referred to in 2 Chron. 32) will help us in understanding its contents. It is a narrative in which are imbedded three short poems (Isa. 37 : 7, 22b-29; 38 : 9-20), together with certain predictions of Isaiah that have a less pronounced poetical form. The purpose of the narrative is to preserve these imbedded materials, and to make them homiletically effective. To effect this it gives an account of the circumstances in which they were uttered. Presumably it was written on some particular occasion. As it assumes throughout that the events it mentions are familiar, the occasion was not much later than the events. For the sake of being concrete let us make the hypothesis that it was written, by

Hezekiah

**The Sennacherib
Narrative**

Isaiah or some disciple of his, when the news of the death of Sennacherib reached Palestine, twenty years after the great invasion. The alternative is that it was written on some other like occasion.

The writer dates the sickness of Hezekiah in his fourteenth year (2 Kings 20 : 6 ; cf. 18 : 2). He gives the same year for an invasion by Sennacherib (Isa. 36 : 1 ; 2 Kings 18 : 13), the invasion being earlier than the sickness (Isa. 38 : 6 ; 2 Kings 20 : 6). In this lies a difficulty, since the Assyrian date for the great invasion is nine years later. Either the two are in contradiction, or else there were two invasions, and the Bible omits the date for the second. The second of these alternatives is not inadmissible. To be sure there is nothing in Isaiah 36 : 1 and 2 Kings 18 : 13-16 to suggest that they refer to events different from those described in the verses that follow ; but equally there is nothing that forbids this interpretation. There would be the less occasion for dating the second invasion, inasmuch as the prophet is dealing with events which he and his hearers remember. We will provisionally assume that there were two invasions, the alternative being that the Bible date is an inadvertence.

The common idea seems to be that the Bible says that there was a miraculous destruction of the Assyrians in Palestine, resulting in the immediate rehabilitation of Judah, so that the last years of Hezekiah were years of crowding and happy prosperity. That is as far from correct as possible. The Bible says that those who escaped were a mere remnant, and that the recession of the calamity was so slow that agriculture was not fully resumed till

**Particular
Misinterpretations**

the third year (2 Kings 19 : 29-31). Judah came out morally victorious, but stripped and exhausted and barely surviving. Hezekiah's years of wealth and prosperity (2 Chron. 32 : 27-30) were mainly years that preceded the great invasion.

Many imagine that the Bible says that Sennacherib returned from Palestine a defeated man, and was directly afterward assassinated. It does not say so. It makes sharply the point that Jehovah compelled him to leave Judah with his purpose unaccomplished, and that Jehovah brought him to a violent death; but it makes no intimation as to whether the interval was one of a few weeks or of many years. In fact, his death occurred about twenty years after he left Judah.

The Bible accounts speak of "that night" when Jehovah inflicted judgment on the Assyrian, when 185,000 perished, including "leaders and captains" (2 Kings 19 : 35; Isa. 37 : 36; 2 Chron. 32 : 21), but they do not say whether this happened before Sennacherib left Palestine. Nothing could be more flimsy than the attempt often made to identify this occurrence with mice gnawing bow-strings somewhere to the southwest of Judah. The prophetic writers attribute Assyria's calamity to Jehovah, but they do not specify when and where it occurred.

These matters being presupposed, the narratives need not delay us long. Hezekiah inherited from Ahaz the

Sargon's Expedition to Ashdod	position of vassal to the king of Assyria. He rebelled, and in the Bible account this is coupled with his smiting the
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Philistines (2 Kings 18 : 7-8). We may be sure that he did not rebel during the first six years of his reign, while

Sargon's armies were in the land, defeating allied nations and besieging Samaria. Hezekiah had his opportunity in the years that followed, when Sargon's hands were full warring with Merodach-baladan and the Elamites and Medes and Armenians. That we are correct in this inference we learn from Sargon's account of his celebrated expedition against Ashdod (see Isaiah 20), in B. C. 711, his eleventh year and the thirteenth year of Hezekiah. He says that "the people of Philistia, Judah, Edom and Moab . . . were speaking treason," and he describes his thorough subjugation of the Philistines.

If we understand from the Bible that there were two invasions of Judah by Sennacherib, the first of the two occurred the year after Sargon was at Ashdod. The Assyrian records do not formally mention it, but it is astonishing if, in the circumstances, Sargon let Judah go entirely free. If his son Sennacherib led the expedition, the credit of it might be ascribed to either. It is not easy to give a better explanation of Sargon's title, "subjugator of Judah." The book of Kings mentions the fine which Hezekiah paid on this occasion, and it is different from the fine which the Assyrian accounts say that he paid at the time of the great invasion. The outcome was that Hezekiah found his fortresses surrendering, and himself unable to resist, and therefore made his submission.

Later in the year, however, Hezekiah showed cordiality to the ambassadors of Merodach-baladan. It is a comment on Isaiah's displeasure at this that within the same year Sargon captured Merodach-baladan, and made himself king of Babylon.

Sargon, however, was kept busy in the east, and when he died Sennacherib had to fight hard to maintain himself in Babylonia. This opened the way, through a series of years, for Hezekiah to renew his revolt. This time he exercised, the Assyrian records show, a controlling anti-Assyrian influence over the Philistines. It was not till his twenty-third year, B. C. 701, that Sennacherib was able effectively to meet the situation. His accounts of what happened are full, and have been unusually well preserved. Barring a few details that are mere brag on his part, his record and that of the Bible are mutually illuminative and confirmatory, though his record claims an unbroken series of successes. He says that he shut Hezekiah up like a caged bird in Jerusalem. That is not a bad description of the situation in which the biblical account begins. The Bible account does not even forbid our thinking that, at this stage of the affair, Jerusalem may have been besieged. It was not to be expected that Sennacherib would record the fact that his plan was to deport the whole population of Judah, and that it failed; or that he left Judah under compulsion. What he says is that he deported immense numbers, that he defeated Hezekiah's Egyptian allies at Eltekeh, that he permitted Hezekiah to buy peace on humiliating terms, that he returned from Palestine and was presently fully occupied with revolts and wars in the far east. What the Bible says is that he would hear a rumor that would draw him away from Jerusalem; that he would not thereafter be able to lay siege to the city; that Jehovah, the God of nations, would put a hook in his nose and lead him back

by the way by which he came; that finally he would die by the sword in his own land; that Judah, now at the point of extinction, would slowly recuperate. The records are complementary, and both are true to fact.

Look from the point of view of a subject of Hezekiah. In the latter part of the vernal year corresponding to

From a Contemporary Viewpoint	B. C. 701 he witnessed the withdrawal of Sennacherib and most of his forces from Judah, because Jehovah had stirred up wars against the Assyrian in the east. Thenceforward he watched for news, and was disappointed when the news came that the Babylonians, instead of putting up a stout resistance, had fled with their gods to Elam. Things were still in disorder in Palestine, and it now seemed that Sennacherib might soon return to carry out his plans for deportation. In the circumstances the people of Judah had no heart for industry, and their agriculture languished. By another year, however, they were reassured, and the condition of their industries became more encouraging. They looked in vain, however, for Jehovah's threatened vengeance on their enemy, Sennacherib. He seemed successful. He maintained his son upon the throne of Babylon. He created a navy, and sailed to the shores of the Persian gulf, and brought back the fugitive Babylonian gods. But when four years had passed the news came to Judah that Sennacherib with a vast army had been overtaken in the mountains by cold and storm, and his army so nearly destroyed that he was obliged to desist from his expedition and return to Nineveh. The Assyrian records do not say that those who perished were 185,000 men. I cannot
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prove that the people of Judah thought of this event as "that night" when the Angel of Jehovah avenged them of their great enemy. But at all events the news came to them, and they had their thoughts concerning it.

In the succeeding years they heard of military successes on the part of Sennacherib, but Jehovah's hook was still in his nose to prevent his resuming operations against Judah. Six years after he left Palestine, Manasseh succeeded Hezekiah, and reversed his religious policy, but his people were still interested in the news from Sennacherib. His violent death occurred while men who had listened from the Jerusalem walls to his insulting envoys were still warriors in their prime. What better opportunity could a contemporary prophet have for emphasizing the lessons taught by his career?

See "Literature" at the close of Chapter XIV. In the works there mentioned, or in other works, read all

Literature the translations you can find of the records of the biblical Tiglath-pilezer, Sargon, and Sennacherib. From these and from George Smith's "Assyrian Canon," or some equivalent work, verify for yourself the order and the dates of the Assyrian events. Compare your results with those printed in the several articles in the *Encyclopedia Biblica* and in "Dated Events of the Old Testament." Then work out the biblical dates and the synchronisms for yourself.

CHAPTER XVI

A FEW ADDITIONAL SYNCHRONISMS

Introduction: The principles under which independent records are mutually confirmatory. I. Shalmanezer II and the dynasty of Omri. The records of the Bible and those of Shalmanezer. The data that fix the synchronism. Coincidences in details. Coincidences in the outline of the history. Shalmanezer's earliest years. His fourth year. His sixth year. His subsequent years. II. The Moabite stone. What does Mesha mean by the "son" of Omri? Questions concerning numerals. Mesha's defeats by Israel some years earlier than the victories he claims over Israel. The Moabite stone compared with 2 Kings 10 : 32 and 13 : 20. III. The "Burden" in Isaiah 14 : 28-32. "A nation's messengers" and the reply to them. Illusive expectations. Differing interests of Philistia and of Zion. How these points fit the date, the fourth year of Shalmanezer IV. Summary. Literature.

Certain principles touching synchronous events were illustrated in the preceding chapter, though not there distinctively mentioned. Note some of these principles.

Consider the mutually corroborative value of two independent records. We have an account of some event, handed down to us in the Bible. Unexpectedly another account of the same event is dug up in the valley of the Nile, or of the Euphrates or Tigris. The two accounts are absolutely independent, and that gives them decisive value for testing one another. If the two essentially disagree, that proves that one or both are incorrect. We

must either choose between them or disbelieve both. Even in this case, however, they corroborate one another to the extent of completely proving the existence of the fact or idea which constitutes their original common basis.

If the two records ordinarily disagree, but agree one time in a hundred, they still discredit one another; the one agreement may be explained as a remarkable coincidence.

But if they essentially agree they corroborate one another decisively, and not merely in some lower degree. You cannot account for their telling the story alike except on the hypothesis that both tell it correctly. It is supposable that the thing in which they agree might be merely the contents of some ancient legend, but in most of the cases it is clear that, actually, the agreement concerns matters of fact. Other things being equal, the more minute the agreements the stronger the confirmation.

If the new record throws light upon the old, and compels a new interpretation of it, that may awaken suspicion and require scrutiny; but if the case endures the scrutiny, that strengthens the corroboration.

It is a mistake to confine the argument from synchronisms to the particular events which the two records mention in common; one should interpret these by the whole line of the history.

There has been a great deal of mistaken reasoning from synchronisms by both the assailants and the defenders of the biblical record; but that does not in the least change the value of the argument when properly used.

With these principles in mind, look at a few instances in addition to those mentioned in the preceding chapter.

I. We begin with the records of Shalmanezzer II, of Assyria, as compared with the biblical record of the times of the dynasty of Omri (1 Kings 16 : 15 to 2 Kings 10 : 36).

The Bible narrative does not mention Assyria in connection with these times. Until the recovery of the records of Shalmanezzer no one suspected Assyrian interference with Israel at this date excepting as some scholars inferred such interference from the contents of the eighty-third Psalm. And yet the truth is that Assyrian interference was the great political issue of the time, dwarfing all other issues. We have here a particularly significant instance of the fact that, however truthful may be the historical materials preserved in the Bible, they were never designed to be taken as in themselves a complete history.

The recovered records of Shalmanezzer are full, and describe his exploits year by year. Among them is the celebrated "black obelisk," with its portrait of Jehu bringing tribute. In the absence of proof, let us gratify ourselves by regarding the portrait as authentic. Accounts of these records, with illustrations, may be found in current books of reference. In reading them, work out the dates for yourself when you can, and distrust all dates which you cannot verify. Remember that the years, in both the biblical and the Assyrian records, are not mere measures of time, but calendar years.

The Assyrian date for the sixth year of this Shalmanezzer is B. C. 854. The biblical date, according to the

most obvious understanding of the numbers, is B. C. 905 (see Chapter XIV). It is possible, however, to define the

**Data Independent
of Theories** synchronism exactly, without settling the date in the terms of an era. Shal-

manezer says that in his sixth year he fought the allied kings Benhadad of Damascus, and Ahab of Israel, and that in his eighteenth year he received tribute from Jehu. The Bible says that Ahab reigned 22 years, and his successor Ahaziah 2 years, and his successor Joram 12 years, Jehu coming to the throne the twelfth of those years. It follows that Shalmanezer's eighteenth year was not earlier than the twelfth year of Joram, and his sixth year therefore not earlier than the year before the first year of Joram. The Bible gives checking numbers which show that Ahaziah's 2 years were the twenty-first and twenty-second years of Ahab, Ahaziah reigning only a fraction of a year after the death of Ahab, and being succeeded by Joram before the year closed. The year before the first year of Joram cannot have been earlier than the twenty-first year of Ahab. That is to say, the sixth year of Shalmanezer cannot have been earlier than the twenty-first year of Ahab. Also the sixth year of Shalmanezer cannot have been later than the twenty-first year of Ahab; for the following year was Ahab's last, and in it he was at war with Benhadad (1 Kings 22 cf. 16 : 29), and therefore not in alliance with him against Shalmanezer. This justifies two conclusions. First, the synchronism is exact; second, in this group of numbers both records are correct.

Of course, it is supposable that a closer examination of particulars might show that this interfitting of data

is merely a wonderful coincidence, and not a genuine mark of reality. In fact, however, the particulars sustain the synchronism. For instance, the Bible

**Additional
Particulars**

says that Ahab died in his twenty-second year, the seventh year of Shalmanezzer; this is in keeping with the fact that Shalmanezzer does not mention Ahab after that, though he several times mentions the coalition to which Ahab had belonged. If you ask why Ahab should associate Ahaziah with himself on the throne in his twenty-first year, the Assyrian invasion in that year offers a plausible answer. The Bible says that Hazael succeeded Benhadad not many months earlier or later than the beginning of Joram's twelfth year, which was the eighteenth year of Shalmanezzer. This fits Shalmanezzer's claim that he fought Benhadad and his coalition in his sixth, tenth, eleventh, and fourteenth years, while in the record of his eighteenth year Benhadad and the coalition have disappeared, some of the former allies are paying tribute, and Hazael appears. Such coincidences are not accidental; they indicate that both narratives are true to fact.

The course of the history as a whole indicates the same. From very early times it was the custom of the numerous petty kings on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean to combine their forces, in case of invasion from Egypt or Assyria, under the leadership of some one king, to resist the invader. Shalmanezzer says that he fought such a coalition, with Benhadad at its head and Israel as one of the allied nations. Such a coalition was fine. The trouble was that in the years when the great invader did

**Outline of
the History**

not press these nations, they broke out into local wars one with another. The few political incidents found in the books of Kings mostly concern these local wars.

During his first four years Shalmanezer did great fighting in conquest of Akhuni, the son of Adini, whose domains lay on both sides of the Euphrates. In his first year he marched to the Mediterranean. In his second and third years he crossed the Euphrates, capturing towns, exacting tribute, devastating, in the regions just north and east of Damascus and Hamath and Israel. The peoples of the region were alarmed, and took measures for combining, in accordance with their old traditions. In order to render their resistance to Assyria effective, one king must be leader, and he must temporarily have dictatorial power. If any nation refused to join the coalition, it must be compelled. Presumably Benhadad and Ahab both aspired to the leadership. Ahab may have been sulky when Benhadad was preferred.

With this situation in mind study the events which the book of Kings (1 Kings 20 cf. 22 : 1-2) assigns to the nineteenth year of Ahab—the fourth year of Shalmanezer. Benhadad with thirty-two kings besieges Samaria. His

**1 Kings
Chapter 20**

authority is such that he can displace the kings and put captains in their stead over their forces (20 : 24). Ahab and his advisers are willing to make an absolutely unconditional surrender, but they will fight to the death rather than submit to a slight indignity in connection with the surrender. The record is perplexing, but Shalmanezer has cleared it up for us. They see the need of a dictator, for purposes of resistance to Assyria, and they

consent to accept Benhadad in that capacity. For those purposes they belong to him, silver and gold and wives and children; but that gives him no liberty to treat them as anything less than allies and equals. Benhadad's folly led to the slaughter of tens of thousands of good men whom he sorely needed, later, when he met Shalmanezzer in battle.

The fifth and sixth years of Shalmanezzer and the first part of his seventh year were "three years without war between Syria and Israel" (1 Kings 22 : 1). The first of these years of peace was due to Ahab's victories over Benhadad; in the second Ahab was under Benhadad fighting against Shalmanezzer. In the third, Shalmanezzer's seventh year, he was fighting near the sources of the Tigris; and Ahab and Benhadad, finding themselves free from immediate danger from him, entered upon the war at Ramoth-Gilead. In his eighth and ninth years he operated in Babylonia, while Syrian armies worried Israel. In his tenth and eleventh years he fought the Benhadad coalition again. Agriculture in the northern parts of Israel became precarious, and the Shunammite woman went to the land of the Philistines (2 Kings 8 : 1-6). There came a time when Benhadad again besieged Samaria, but no longer at the head of thirty-two kings (2 Kings 6, 7). Among the nations of the coalition distrust had taken the place of confidence, and Benhadad suspected that Israel and the Hittites and the Egyptians had formed a counter coalition. It became evident that when Shalmanezzer came again Tyre and Sidon and Israel would escape invasion by the payment of tribute. The Shunammite woman returned to her home in the north.

In the eighteenth year of Shalmanezar, when Jehu had exterminated the house of Omri, he hastened to enrol Israel among the tributary nations. Syria-Damascus, with Hazael for king, still held out. Shalmanezar gained victories over the Syrians in his eighteenth and his twenty-first years, but Hazael so far held his own as to be formidable to the neighboring nations which had become tributary to Assyria.

II. As another instance, study the celebrated Moabite stone. You may find full accounts of it, with illustrations, in the Bible Dictionaries and other books of reference. It is an ancient stone inscribed with a record of the exploits of the king Mesha who is mentioned in the third chapter of 2 Kings. It contains the following passage, as translated by Dr. Driver in the *Encyclopedia Biblica*:

The Moabite Stone

“Omri, king of Israel, afflicted Moab for many days. . . . And his son succeeded him; and he also said, I will afflict Moab. In my days said he [thus]; but I saw (my desire) upon him, and upon his house, and Israel perished with an everlasting destruction. Omri took possession of the land of Mehedeba, and it (*i. e.*, Israel) dwelt therein, during his days, and half his son’s days, forty years; but Chemosh [resto]red it in my days.”

The rest of the inscription is made up of accounts of building operations by Mesha, alternating with accounts of cruel exploits performed against regions in Israel.

In these lines what does Mesha mean by the “son” of Omri? Does he refer exclusively to Ahab? Or is he thinking of the line of Omri, including Aḥaziah and Joram as well as Ahab? There is nothing forced in this

question. When Mesha says that he saw his desire upon the son of Omri, "and upon his house, and Israel perished with an everlasting destruction," it is more natural to refer the words to the extinction of the dynasty under Joram than to the violent death of Ahab.

How Mesha is to be Understood

Mesha says that the forty years' occupation of Medeba extended through half of the days of Omri's son, that is, through a part of his days, the word "half" indicating a division into two parts, but not necessarily two equal parts. If Mesha refers exclusively to Ahab, the numeral is in conflict with those of the Bible, which assigns less than thirty-four years to the combined reigns of Omri and Ahab; but the conflict vanishes if we understand that Mesha has in mind the line of Omri to the end of the dynasty.

There have been dozens of published treatments of this subject, and many of them emphasize certain alleged discrepancies between the Bible record and the Moabite stone. They insist that its "forty years" is in conflict with the Bible numbers, or else that it must be understood as a virtually meaningless round number. They count it as a contradiction that the Bible represents Israel as victorious over Moab, while the Moabite stone represents Moab as victorious over Israel.

Alleged Discrepancies

Instead of skipping to conclusions like these, let us see what we can make of the matter on the supposition that both records are correct. That, surely, is the reasonable way of dealing with such a problem. According to the Bible numbers the dynasty of Omri lasted forty-four

years. There is room for the forty years of the occupation of Medeba, if it began early in the reign of Omri, and closed an appreciable time before the death of Joram. The room is wider if you count the forty as a round number, and the actual number of years as somewhat less.

The Bible says that in the early part of the reign of Joram he and Jehoshaphat were victorious over Moab. Mesha says nothing in contradiction with this. He says that some years later in the reign of Joram the Israelitish occupation of Medeba ceased. It is presumably significant that he does not claim that he himself had any hand in bringing it to an end, or in overthrowing the Omri dynasty. He claims no successes over Israel till several years later than his defeat that is mentioned in 2 Kings. He leaves it uncertain whether any of his successes occurred before the change of dynasty in Israel.

Whether before or after, we may be perfectly sure, even without information, that Mesha made common cause with Damascus against Israel.

Mesha

Synchronous

with Jehu

Some of the exploits recorded on the Moabite stone may be included in the

following biblical summary concerning the time of Jehu:

“In those days Jehovah began to cut off from Israel; and Hazael smote them in all the borders of Israel; from the Jordan eastward, all the land of Gilead, the Gadites and the Reubenites and the Manassites, from Aroer, which is by the valley of the Arnon, and Gilead and Bashan” (2 Kings 10 : 32-33).

Interpret this by the incident, a few years later, when “the bands of the Moabites invaded the land at the coming in of the year,” and a frightened burial company

slipped the corpse into the grave of Elisha (2 Kings 13 : 20). It is with these biblical items, and not with those of the time of Jehoshaphat, that most of the contents of the Moabite stone are parallel. And the results of comparing these records confirm alike the historicity and the correctness of both.

III. In Isaiah 14 : 28-32 is a little poem, there designated as a "Burden," and dated "the year that King Ahaz died."

In verse 32 is the question, "And what shall one answer a nation's messengers?" The implication is that some nation has been sending envoys, with proposals that call for an answer. From the answer given we infer that some of Jehovah's people are in affliction, and that the proposals made are ostensibly for their benefit. The answer to be given declines the proposed plans, whatever they may be. It says that Zion, founded by Jehovah, is a sufficient refuge for the afflicted, and there is no need of considering any other help.

We have a basis for inferences as to the nature of the proposals made by the envoys. "The rod that smote" the region is broken. The rod thus spoken of can be nothing else than the great oppressing power of the Euphrates-Tigris region. The prophet says that the hopes from the breaking of the rod will prove illusive. If you compare the oppressing power to a serpent, its successor will be a worse serpent. It will still pour its armies into Palestine from the north, disciplined armies of which it is true that "there is no straggler in his ranks."

In this matter the poem represents that Philistia has

an interest different from that of Zion. It is Philistia that especially rejoices over the breaking of the rod. Concerning the sequel the poem says of the afflicted ones of Zion, "The firstborn of the poor shall feed, and the needy shall lie down in safety," while it says of Philistia, "I will kill thy root with famine, and thy remnant shall be slain. Howl, O gate! Cry, O city! Thou are melted away, O Philistia, all of thee."

The little poem does not say whether the "messengers of a nation" have brought the news to Jerusalem, or whether it has reached Jerusalem through some other channel. Whether they brought the news or not, we are compelled to infer that their errand is to invite Judah to take action in view of the news, probably to invite Judah to enter into an alliance against the oppressing power, which now shows signs of being broken. Now, they say, is Judah's opportunity. The writer of the poem takes the contrary view.

How do these points fit the date assigned to the poem? In the year when Ahaz died, the accession year of Hezekiah, we may be sure that Judah was accessible to the religious feeling which manifested itself the following year in the great passover of Hezekiah. So far, clearly the fit is complete. Is there also a synchronism with foreign events?

The year when Ahaz died was the fourth regnal year of Shalmanezzer IV, king of Babylonia and Assyria, the son of the great conqueror Tiglath-pilezer. The close of the year was a few months before the death of Shalmanezzer. We have no information as to what occurred

**Does the Date Fit
these Particulars?**

in those months, but we know the general character of the events by inevitable inference; certain movements were in progress that ripened immediately on the death of Shalmanezzer. On his death his vassal Merodach-baladan seated himself on the throne of Babylonia, and Sargon usurped the throne of Assyria. We are ignorant of the details. But we know that the little Palestinian nations must have been on the alert for news. Months before the denouement they doubtless had some knowledge of the plans of Merodach-baladan, and of the conditions which rendered the usurpation of Sargon practicable. It was, from their point of view, a great thing that the terrible smiting rod, the dynasty of Tiglath-pilezer, was broken or about to be broken.

The "messengers of a nation" spoken of in our little poem may or may not have been from Merodach-baladan. From the Assyrian records, as well as from the Bible (2 Kings 20 : 12 ff), we know that he had the messenger-sending habit.

In the year when Ahaz died, Judah and Philistia differed in their relations to Assyria. Ahaz had become the vassal of Assyria by voluntary submission, and was under certain obligations of good faith, however these may have been ruptured later; while the Philistines had been subdued in war by Tiglath-pilezer a dozen years before the death of Ahaz, and were bitter by reason of the cruelties of the conqueror. Later the two peoples made common cause against Assyria, but nothing can be more natural than that the rejoicing of Philistia over the downfall of the Tiglath-pilezer dynasty should be much more pronounced than that of Judah.

In these and many like instances the points of coincidence between the biblical records and those on the monuments are exceedingly minute and

Summary exact. In other instances the coincidence is more general. The confirmations are innumerable, and in a large majority of the cases are undisputed. When contradictions are alleged they commonly vanish on careful examination. If, however, in the present condition of the records, there are some genuine contradictions, that need not trouble us; it would be a miracle if there were not. As long as the evidence is not all in, the parts that are first examined may seem to be in conflict. But a truly critical and open-minded person will avoid such interpretations as needlessly render any part of the evidence adverse to the other parts.

See the references to the literature of the subject, at the close of Chapter XIV.

CHAPTER XVII

THE LEGISLATION OF HAMMURABI AND THAT OF THE PENTATEUCH

Introduction. I. General view. Questions that are raised. Ancient codes are formulations of usages. Institutions brought in by Abraham. Cryptoagnostic explanations. Sinai and the Abrahamic usages. II. Comparing the two bodies of legislation. Description of the Hammurabi laws. Non-significant resemblances. Significant resemblances in particulars. Laws concerning slaves. Concerning the sexes. Concerning personal violence. Concerning property. Resemblances and differences in characteristic features. 1. In their character as literary products. Classifications, etc. 2. In the subjects legislated upon. Alike in dealing with general matters of human conduct. Pastoral matters more prominent in the pentateuch, urban and commercial matters in Hammurabi. Inferences from the comparison. 3. In the matter of religious sanction. Claims to divine origin. Imprecations versus threats. 4. As to the ethics of legislation. Equality and fraternity. Class legislation. Humane legislation. Penalties. Safeguarding public justice. The ten commandments and the law of love. Literature.

When Hammurabi, the contemporary of Abraham, came to the throne of Babylonia, his was one of several small kingdoms, and seems to have been feudatory to an Elamite power. During his long reign she absorbed some of the other kingdoms, including Ur, whence Abram came, and became suzerain to other regions, including the eastern coast of the Mediterranean. Hammurabi is one of the great names of history. He was a warrior, a constructor of public works, a statesman; but his crowning claim to distinction is based on

the great code of laws which he promulgated. Of this code there were more copies than one. The copy which during the past few years has attracted so much attention was discovered in Susa in A. D. 1901. It is inscribed on a large block of black diorite. Many volumes and articles have been published concerning it.

I. Our interest in Hammurabi is due to the fact that the laws promulgated by him illuminate for us the moral,

Ethical and	social, and political ideas of his time ; also
Sociological	all this has bearings on the question of
Interest	the divine sanction of the biblical legisla-

tion. Suppose we introduce our discussion by two extracts from a letter written in 1907, and referring to the Hammurabi laws and to Egyptian documents in which the dead are represented as claiming merit for having abstained from certain wrong acts.

“It seemed to me that at least seven of the ten commandments were in” the Hammurabi code. “Not indeed in the words of Moses, but in the norm are they to be found there. . . . The Judgment of the Dead and the Negative Confession wherein six of the ten commandments are given in substance. Yet this writing as well as the Code are prior to the age of Moses.”

Following this the letter refers to biblical instances before Moses in which a recognition of some of the precepts of the decalogue is implied, and then adds :

“Now did not Moses know before he went up into the mount *all* the ten commandments? Have they not come to the Hebrew lawgiver from sources outside of his own people and their traditions? Are not the Code Hammurabi and the Negative Confession prior documents?”

. . . Does not the promulgation from Sinai mean that then for the first time they received special divine sanction, and not that then for the first time were they a revelation? My old faith is sorely wrenched and tried in these days."

I think that this writer is not alone in this matter of finding that his faith is wrenched and tried by the discovery of moral ideas in the literature of the world centuries and centuries before Moses. But in such cases the wrenching and trying of faith results from the habit of misunderstanding what the Bible and the older traditions teach concerning the giving of the commandments from Sinai. Men who attack the old tradition sometimes represent that tradition to be that God gave the ten commandments as a miraculous new revelation, no one having previously known of any of them. It is possible that some persons have unintelligently had this idea of the matter, but this is not the idea which the Scriptures present, not that which the churches hold. The promulgation of the ten commandments from Sinai implies that God then especially called attention to them, and laid emphasis upon them, making them the basis of his covenant with Israel; it does not imply that they were previously unknown to men, nor even "that then for the first time they received special divine sanction."

Few persons would dispute the statement that among the Babylonians, Aramaeans, Arabians, and other early Oriental peoples there existed legal usages, in effect a body of common law, long before Moses or Hammurabi. The legislation of Hammurabi was mainly the formula-

**Current Wrong
Ideas**

tion of such of these usages as seemed to the king's publicists suited to the purpose in hand. In the processes of formulation some of the usages may have been modified, and new precepts may have been added, but mainly the code was a defining of existing usages. The legislation of the pentateuch is likewise mainly a formulation of usages already in existence, with such modifications and additions as were deemed desirable. This is our natural understanding of the matter if we believe that Moses formulated the laws by divine inspiration, and it remains the natural understanding on any other theory. To say this is not to belittle the divine element or the miraculous element in what occurred at Sinai; it is simply to recognize the testimony of the Scriptures concerning the pre-Sinaitic history, and the usual methods in which God reveals himself.

**Formulations
of Usages**

The Bible represents that the Babylonians and Hebrews were ethnically related, and we should therefore expect

**Institutions
Brought in
by Abraham**

that they would have traditional usages in common. We are not surprised to find that some of the Israelite written laws are nearly the same with the Babylonian. Whether the Israelitish legislation obtained these from the Hammurabi code or formulated them for itself from usage is not a question of great importance. The most obvious explanation is that Abraham brought them with him from the east. The biblical account is that the Abrahamic tribe came from the regions which Hammurabi very soon afterward consolidated into a strong political power, that it remained for a time in Mesopotamia, and that then a

branch of the tribe came to Palestine with Abraham. If this is history it justifies the inference that most of the usages which, later, were common to Israel and to ancient Babylonia, came with Abraham from Babylonia. This is corroborated by the instances, that of Hagar for example, in which the conduct of Abraham and his family is precisely that required by certain quite peculiar laws of Hammurabi.

All this strongly supports the historical reality and correctness of the Bible narrative, and it is therefore unwelcome to the cryptoagnostic criticism. It might be a relief to the critics of that type if they could hold that these parts of the pentateuch were added during the Babylonian exile; they are precluded from this because they had already assigned most of these materials to J and E, which they hold to have been written some centuries before the exile. Their only recourse seems to be to say that these laws may have been imported into Israel in the times of Assyrian conquest, and through the medium of Assyria—an explanation which is in the highest degree forced and improbable.

The question is raised whether, in times more remote, these usages were not indigenous to Palestine or Arabia, migrating thence to Babylonia. However this may be, the natural understanding of the record is to the effect that the Abrahamic people maintained its usages, of course modifying them from generation to generation, until it became the Israel that left Egypt; and that then, under Moses, these usages were formulated, with such selection and

The Crypto-agnostic Opinion

Sinai and Abrahamic Usages

changes and additions as God directed Moses to make, thus becoming the legislation of the pentateuch. This is a simple and probable account of the matter, and it should not be rejected without sufficient reasons.

II. The laws of Hammurabi as we have them are in 282 sections, some of these being double sections. From the middle 35 sections are missing, and parts of other sections are mutilated. There are a prologue and an epilogue in the name of Hammurabi, each long and boastful and religious, the epilogue containing imprecations on any who fail to honor the laws.

Some of the resemblances between the laws of Hammurabi and those of the pentateuch have but little significance for determining the historical relations between the two. For example, certain regulations concerning cattle and sheep are due to the nature of the subjects treated rather than to the historical relation between the codes. Similar usages have arisen among other races that kept cattle and sheep. It is of no great account that Moses is said to have received his laws from Jehovah, and Hammurabi his from the Sun-god, for it has been claimed for other legislators that they received their laws from the gods. The two codes are strongly alike in that each precept of either code reads like a decision in a case that has been actually adjudicated. Doubtless decisions of this kind were remembered and recorded, and served as precedents in future cases. But in this there is nothing distinctive.

Our task of comparison is made simpler by the fact that Hammurabi's laws are civil, not ceremonial. They

deal with religious matters, but from a purely civic point of view. So they are to be compared only with pentateuchal legislation of the same kind.

Historically significant resemblances between the two meet us on every page. For example, both discriminate against slaves. In Hammurabi the penalty for maiming a gentleman is the maiming of the offender, that for maiming a freeman is a fine, that for maiming a slave is damages to the amount of half his price (196-199). For causing miscarriage in the cases of women of the three classes the penalties are respectively ten shekels, five shekels, two shekels (209-213). Striking a man is punished by a flogging or a fine; but if a man's slave strike the man's son his ear is cut off (202-205). A surgeon's fee is ten shekels for a gentleman, five for a freeman, two for a slave (215-217). If a bull gore a man it costs half a mana, but one-third of a mana if the man be a slave (251-252). Similar discriminations against a slave, though with very different details, appear in Exodus 21 : 20-21, 32.

The two codes alike punish with death the stealing of a man to reduce him to slavery (14 cf. Ex. 21 : 16; Deut. 24 : 7), though Hammurabi perhaps confines this to a minor, the son of a gentleman. There is some resemblance between the provision that if a man in debt sell his wife or son or daughter the term of service shall expire in three years (117) and the pentateuchal provision that the term of a Hebrew slave shall expire in six years. Hammurabi prescribes that the slave who denies his master's ownership shall be punished by the cutting

off of his ear (282). Is this related to the boring of a slave's ear (Ex. 21 : 6) in token of his having accepted perpetual servitude?

But note the superiority of the Mosaic precepts in point of justice and humaneness. When the Hebrew slave goes out at the end of six years the master must provide liberally for him (Deut. 15 : 12 ff; Lev. 25 : 39 ff; Ex. 21 : 2 ff). Hammurabi provides that if a man sells a woman servant who has borne him children, he may redeem her by paying the money (117-119); the pentateuchal precept is that a slave wife, whether Hebrew or alien, must be either treated as a wife or set free (Ex. 21 : 7-11; Deut. 21 : 11-14). Hammurabi has no parallel for the Mosaic precept which frees a slave who has been maimed by an ill-tempered master (Ex. 21 : 26, 27). In contrast with the prohibition (Deut. 23 : 15) against returning fugitive slaves to their masters, Hammurabi requires that they be returned (15-20), in some cases under penalty of death.

In laws concerning marriage, divorce, dowry, inheritance, concubinage, slave wives and their children, the code of Hammurabi is very specific, and in some particulars admirable. It includes many of the provisions which the

**Laws Concerning
the Sexes**

Israelitish legislation has in common with that of mankind in general. It gives regulations which closely fit the case of Sarah and Abraham and Hagar (144, 146, 147, 170, 171 cf. Gen. 16 and 21 : 8-21; 25 : 6). It lacks provision for writing in cases of divorce (Deut. 24 : 1-4). It agrees with the pentateuch in punishing fornication with death in certain cases (129, 130), but cancels

a wife's obligation to an absent husband unless she has maintenance from him (133-136). Its standard of marital ethics is purely utilitarian.

The extant parts of the Hammurabi code contain no law concerning intentional homicide in any degree. Its precepts concerning unintentional homicide or lesser injuries have certain similarities with those in the pentateuch. **Injuries to Persons** For example, the cases of a bull goring a man or a slave, with or without fault on the owner's part, are presented essentially as in Exodus (250-252 cf. Ex. 21 : 28-32), though the penalties are different. Striking a woman so as to cause miscarriage is treated of in six topics (209-214 cf. Ex. 21 : 22), the penalties not being the same as in Exodus. As in Exodus, a penalty may include the payment of a physician's bill (206 cf. Ex. 21 : 19).

The two legislations have in common many principles and precepts concerning rights of property, with differences as marked as the resemblances. **Laws Concerning Property** Injuries resulting from carelessness are represented in Exodus by the leaving loose a goring bull, the leaving of a pit open, the kindling of a fire that does damage (21 : 33-36, 22 : 6); in Hammurabi by carelessness with one's canal dykes (53-56); in both by domestic animals in another man's field (57-58 cf. Ex. 22 : 5). So with matters of theft and robbery, the hiring of labor or animals or implements, loans and interest, goods committed to the care of any one, agency, the care of animals or other property, the claiming of something as lost, business transactions in large variety (9-13, 100-126, 253-277; Ex. 22 and parallel places).

The truest comparison, however, of these two bodies of legislation is not that based on detailed resemblances and differences, but that of certain broad characteristic features.

1. Compare them in the form of their presentation. As literary products the Hammurabi laws are crude by the side of the Mosaic laws. Professor **Differences of Literary Quality** Lyon has shown (*Jour. of Am. Or. Soc.* XXV, pp. 248-278) that the Hammurabi code has an elaborate classification; but it is so blind that most scholars have failed to recognize it, and is so because it is based on very crude ideas of sociology and jurisprudence. In contrast with this, the two pentateuchal codes (Ex. 21-23 and Deut. 12-26) have implied classifications less elaborate and complete, but so much riper that the English common law, for example, is built on the same lines. The biblical legislation is much narrower in its range than the other, but it comes far nearer to being typical and fit for universal use.

A considerable part of the Hammurabi document is the wordy prologue and epilogue in praise of the human lawgiver; there is nothing of this in the pentateuch. In its place there is a good deal of narrative and homiletical matter. Accompanying many of the laws in the Bible we find statements as to the ethical or the humane purpose of the law; such statements are lacking in Hammurabi.

2. The study of the subjects legislated upon respectively by Hammurabi and in the pentateuch should yield sharper results than some have made it yield.

Certain matters of conduct which do not depend es-

essentially on environment are perhaps equally prominent in the two—crimes of violence, crimes against property

Matters of Universal Conduct	in general, crimes growing out of the relations of the sexes, regulations concerning marriage, concubinage, divorce, and the like. Of these kinds are the larger part of the instances in which the two codes have the same or similar provisions.
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The two have some precepts in common in regard to sheepkeeping and cattlekeeping, but here the Israelitish laws are much more full and specific.

Pastoral Life and City Life	The contrary is emphatically the case in regard to laws for city life and for permanent agricultural and commercial pursuits. This difference is particularly significant, by reason of its implications concerning the civilizations for which the two codes were respectively designed.
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One of the few rather plausible arguments by which the cryptoagnostic criticism attempts to prove the late date of the pentateuchal legislation is based on the fact that that legislation contains some provisions for a permanent agricultural condition and for city life. For example, it uses the urban phrase "within thy gates." It provides for protecting a houseroof by a battlement (Deut. 22 : 8). It assigns various duties to the "elders" of cities. It requires the setting apart of cities for the Levites and of cities of refuge. It includes laws for real estate in country and city, and for buying and selling and loans and interest. If you make the false but not unheard-of assumption that the Israelites under Moses were mere nomads, and had no ideas of life beyond that, you can

very plausibly draw the inference that these laws must have come in at a later date.

In fact, the pentateuchal laws purport to have been given during the forty years in the wilderness, to people who were then living in tents, as their remote ancestors had done, but who combined some practice of agriculture (*e. g.* Gen. 26 : 12) with their keeping of cattle and sheep; to a people which had recently for some generations known city and agricultural life in Egypt, and which expected soon to resume that type of life in Canaan. The legislation is universal in principle, but its details are exclusively those which belong to simple conditions. Its laws for cities and for real estate are few, and are mostly either connected with the national religion or deal with matters of humane precaution or of crime (*e. g.* Lev. 19 : 9, 10; Deut. 22 : 8, 23, 24). Its laws concerning finance are almost exclusively in the interest of humaneness to debtors.

In contrast with this the Hammurabi legislation has scores and scores of precepts concerning city life and permanent agriculture and settled usages of commerce—laws which imply a civilization that has become complicated. It regulates methods of business, the matter of witnesses and of written instruments in contracts, the responsibility of agents in buying and selling and collecting, the obligations of contractors in building houses or boats, the conditions for hiring boats or other means of transportation, and the liability for losses, the transferring or leasing or mortgaging of lands or houses, the rights and duties of landlords and tenants, the risks from storms or bad seasons or unskillful cultivation, the mat-

ter of dykes and irrigation, the obligations and risks of warehousemen and public carriers, the conditions for loans and interest, the fees of surgeons and veterinaries, wineshops and the women who keep them and the men who loaf there. It protects men in the public service, declares what shall be done with their houses and gardens and families in their absence, forbids their hiring substitutes. Under Hammurabi, king of kings, life in the great cities of the empire was different from that to which the rural tribes under Moses looked forward. The Babylonian civilization was perhaps less truly cultured than the Israelitish, but it was more splendid and luxurious and intricate.

In fine, the Hammurabi laws indicate with great distinctness what the pentateuchal laws would inevitably have been if they had been formulated after the Israelites became permanent dwellers in cities in a thickly settled agricultural country; and they thus strongly confirm the record in its testimony to the effect that the pentateuchal legislation was framed in the time of Moses, and not in the later times assigned by some of the critical theories.

3. In the matter of religious sanction the unlikeness of the two legislations is much more marked than their similarity.

Some stress has been laid on the fact that both claim to have been received from Deity. But it is to Hammurabi that Shamash gives the laws, not to his subjects. Obedience to the laws is no part of the religion of his subjects. The king expects that men will stand before his monument and read, and be grateful not to Shamash, but

to Hammurabi. He hopes they will say: "Hammurabi indeed is a ruler who is like a real father to his people."

**Claim of
Divine Origin**

It is a noble ambition, and we in this distant age and land accord to him the homage he desired. But his attitude is very unlike that of Moses, who obliterated himself that the message he gives may come directly from Deity to the people. In Babylonia, as in Israel, there were doubtless elaborate religious laws. The significant difference is that in the Babylonian civil laws there is no dominant religious motif; while the great thing in the religion of Israel is the obeying from the heart the laws of conduct given through Moses, and the teaching of these in the religious bringing up of the children.

Some have found a point of contact between the two legislations in the imprecations appended to the Hammurabi code, as compared with the threatening chapters of Deuteronomy and Leviticus (Deut. 27-31; Lev. 26), but the resemblances are very superficial. An imprecation is a different thing from a threat of punishment. The threatenings in question are against a people in its collective capacity, while the Hammurabi imprecations are individual.

4. When we look from the point of view of the ethics of legislation we still find resemblances between the Babylonian code and the Israelitish, but the latter has higher levels which are not in the same class with anything in Hammurabi.

We have already noted that the biblical laws are often accompanied by explanations as to the moral or the

humane purpose of the law, and that the religious sanctions presented are in the form of exhortation and warning, and not in that of calling down curses on the offender. Similar differences appear at every point in the comparison.

The Israelitish legislation is based on two ideas: that of equal justice to all persons of all sorts, rich or poor, home-born or foreign (*e. g.* Lev. 19 : 33, 34 and 24 : 22 and 25 : 35, 47 cf. 22 : 18; Ex. 12 : 17; Num. 9 : 14 and 15 : 15, 16), and that of fraternal kindness, especially to Israelites and to the needy (Deut. 15 : 1-3; 23 : 20; Lev. 25 : 44-46; 19 : 10; 23 : 22). In dozens of places, with unswerving emphasis, it insists on the former of these two ideas; it discriminates in favor of Israelites only in cases where the second of the two ideas has place. The two ideas are clearly those expressed in the words equality and fraternity. In the Hammurabi code these two features are only incidental, not dominant.

The Hammurabi laws are decidedly class legislation. They recognize three grades in society, the wealthy or otherwise influential upper classes, the common free people, and the slaves. There is no provision for protecting the weaker against the stronger. There are repeated discriminations in favor of the more fortunate classes as against the less fortunate. The thief who has property may escape by paying; the thief who has none is put to death. The rank of the person against whom an offense has been committed is the one aggravating circumstance; a thief must restore tenfold to a common person, but

thirtyfold to a temple or to the court (8 cf. 265, 112). From the penalty of drowning for adultery a husband may save his wife, or the king may save his servant (129). It was a safe crime when committed by a royal favorite.

The humane features of the pentateuchal legislation have already been touched upon, and these are not paralleled in Hammurabi. In some of these, for example in the case of slavery or of interest on loans, the laws discriminate in favor of an Israelite as compared with a foreigner, and the person who studies the discriminations most carefully will not be the readiest in finding fault with them. But the sojourner is a sharer in some of them (*e. g.* Lev. 23 : 22). The Mosaic provisions for kindly treatment to the poor, to widows and the fatherless, to strangers, to persons who are peculiarly situated, are too well known to need citation. In some cases these provisions approximate a sentimental character, for example the exempting of a newly married man from military service (Deut. 20 : 7).

**Humane
Legislation**

The one biblical provision as to the specific relations between capital and labor is to the effect that wages shall be promptly paid (Lev. 19 : 13; Deut. 24 : 15). The Hammurabi code lacks this provision, though it has a long list of regulations concerning employers and wage-workers.

Among the many humane provisions in the pentateuchal laws, the sabbath is conspicuous and unique.

The two legislations can be very concretely compared through the penalties they prescribe. Some particular

punishments are the same in both, and some principles of punishment are the same; and these serve to emphasize the accompanying differences. In-

Penalties instances have already been given, but a few others must be added.

Both legislations use the death penalty more freely than do our modern codes. Leaving out purely religious offenses, inasmuch as the Hammurabi code does not consider these, the pentateuchal laws prescribe death for perhaps half a dozen offenses, including murder; the Hammurabi laws, as we have them, do not mention murder, but prescribe death for about forty offenses. These include theft in a dozen forms, aiding the escape of a slave, deceiving a slave-brander, the hiring of a substitute by a person employed by the king, and so forth. In some cases the mode of death is specified—by burning or by impalement or by drowning (110, 157, 153).

**Capital
Punishment**

In the Bible there is no provision for the death penalty except on reasonable proof. In Hammurabi a man accused of sorcery must, if the proof be insufficient, throw himself into the river. If he drowns, his accuser takes his estate; if not, he receives the estate of the accuser, who is put to death (2). A woman under suspicion must throw herself into the river (132). Throwing into the water or binding and throwing into the water are favorite methods of disposing of cases (108, 133, 143, 155).

In the Bible the usual penalty for theft or other offenses against property is to restore twofold (*e. g.* Ex. 22 : 4, 7, 9), or to restore the principal with one-fifth

added (Lev. 5 : 16 and 6 : 2-7; Num. 5 : 7), plus a fine in the shape of a guilt-offering. The more enterprising and successful the thief the heavier the penalty. If he gets away with his booty and disposes of it he pays four sheep

**Penalties
for Theft**

for one, and five oxen for one (Ex. 22 : 1). To punish theft by death is prohibited except in resisting a night attack (Ex. 22 : 2-3). If the thief cannot pay he is to be sold. The Hammurabi law punishes offenses against property by compulsory restitution, twofold, threefold, fivefold, sixfold, tenfold, thirtyfold; but it also in many cases punishes them by death (*e. g.* 6, 7, 9, 10, 11), and in other cases by death in default of a penal payment.

The Hammurabi laws throw light on the maxim "eye for eye, tooth for tooth" (Ex. 21 : 24 and parallels).

Lex Talionis The pentateuch gives no cases in detail under this generalization, though in a single exceptional case it provides for

punishment by maiming (Deut. 25 : 12). Nowhere in the Bible are there any instances of actual Israelitish judicial punishment by maiming, though there are some non-Israelitish or non-judicial instances (Jud. 1 : 6-7 and 16 : 21; 1 Sam. 11 : 2; 2 Kings 25 : 7). In contrast with this the Hammurabi laws have a long list of horrible specific penalties by maiming—cutting out a tongue, destroying an eye, breaking a bone, cutting off an ear or fingers or a woman's breast (*e. g.* 192-200, 205, 218, 226). The absence of such details in the pentateuch is significant. Is the maxim as there given a command to be executed? or is it rather just a strong way of saying that the penalty must be suited to the offense?

The Mosaic laws are emphatic in providing that penalties shall not extend to the relatives of the criminal

**Punishing a
Criminal's
Relatives**

(Deut. 24 : 16). Observe in contrast the Hammurabi provisions for putting to death the son of a creditor who has caused the death of another man's son, or the son of a builder whose work has collapsed, causing the death of another man's son, or the daughter of a man who has caused the death of another man's daughter (116, 230, 210).

In many cases the Hammurabi code recognizes the principle of commutation of penalty. In the case of

**Commutation
of Penalty**

brigandage the locality is liable for the damage to property, and, at the rate of a mana of silver, for each life taken.

For the conditions then existing these provisions may perhaps have been laudable. Less so are some other forms of commutation. As we have seen, the rich could substitute a money payment for the death which the law adjudged to them for their crimes. The pentateuchal laws are set against the commuting of penalties for money. In a case of homicide the elders of the nearest city may purge themselves by sacrifice, but immunity for the slayer may not be bought (Num. 35 : 31, 32; Deut. 21 : 1-9).

**Safeguarding
Judicial
Proceedings**

The safeguarding of judicial proceedings is not so conspicuous in the Hammurabi laws as in the Mosaic. The two have similar provisions for guarding against false accusations or false testimony or the bribing of witnesses (*e. g.* 1-4, 13, 127 *cf.* Deut. 19 : 16-19). Both prescribe

that a false accuser or false witness shall suffer the penalty which he sought to bring upon the accused. The pentateuchal laws provide with more care than the other for the ascertaining of the truth in such cases.

In addition to this the pentateuchal laws are even more emphatic against malfeasance by a judge or magistrate or other public officer, "Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; ye shall hear the small and the great alike" (Deut. 1 : 17). Bribe-taking, wresting of judgment, partiality to a litigant, are prohibited with almost endless reiteration (*e. g.* Ex. 23 : 2-9; Lev. 19 : 15; Deut. 16 : 19 and 27 : 19). In these and other passages the rights of the transient resident and of the widow and the fatherless are especially insisted upon (Ex. 22 : 21-24; Deut. 10 : 17-19 and 24 : 17). Further, these laws guard justice by a certain limited privilege of appeal. "The cause that is too hard for you ye shall bring unto me" (Deut. 1 : 17 *cf.* 17 : 8 *ff.*). And throughout the Old Testament the responsibility of the men who administer justice is the one note that is endlessly repeated.

All this is conspicuously absent from Hammurabi. The one provision in this line is that the judge who shall "deliver a verdict duly signed and sealed and afterward alter his judgment" is to be fined twelve times the amount of the penalty in the case, and is to be permanently deposed (5). Indirectly this provision may be aimed at judicial carelessness or corruption, but strictly the offense defined is mere confession of fallibility.

The pentateuch is characterized by its two summaries of human duty—the ten commandments (Ex. 20; Deut. 5), and the law of love (Deut. 6 : 5; Lev. 19 : 18, 34).

You may say that the decalogue is not a complete record of human obligations; but it is intelligible and typical and

The Two practically sufficient, and has come to be
Summaries so accepted by mankind; and no one
for Conduct doubts the all-comprehensiveness of the law of love. Some of the contents of the separate precepts of these two summaries may be found in Hammurabi and in other pre-Mosaic works, for example, the Egyptian Book of the Dead. One who is already familiar with the Mosaic summaries might by taking pains gather from these more ancient writings instances which he could put together into something very like the summaries themselves. But the fact that one can do this renders more significant the fact that, so far as the records show, no one then had any idea of doing it. The meaning of the decalogue consists not more in its separate precepts than in their being combined into a single conspectus. The pentateuchal summaries mark a new era in human thought. And even if some one should discover in the earlier literatures a similar conspectus, it will still remain true that the conspectus given by Moses is the only one that has had the vitality to persist and become universally known; and further, that the religion defined by Moses is the only known ancient religion which had this conspectus of conduct as its heart.

In fine, the Hammurabi laws betray no trace that there was in the consciousness of the lawgiver any such generalization of human rights and duties as that presented in the ten commandments, or any conception of human conduct as dominated by supreme love to God and equal love to man. Of the two legislations the one claims to

be the work of a great ruler, and justifies its claim. The other equally justifies its claim to an origin that is uniquely divine.

See the notes on the literature at the close of Chapters IX and XIV. Many different volumes and articles have been published on Hammurabi. There

Literature is a full illustrated treatment in Professor A. T. Clay's volume "Light on the Old Testament from Babel." The references in this chapter are to "The Code of Hammurabi," by Professor R. F. Harper, of the University of Chicago. A good treatment may be found in Gressmann.

CHAPTER XVIII

ARAMAIC PAPYRI FROM EGYPT

Introductory: The papyri from Syene and Elephantine. Contents of the Elephantine papyri. The Jewish worship there. Points of contact with the Bible. I. Argument from the papyri in support of the cryptoagnostic criticism. Discrediting Jeremiah. Discrediting the Deuteronomic laws. II. Argument from the papyri against such criticism. 1. View of the older tradition. Concerning Ezra and the men of the Great Synagogue. The traditions respectable in spite of mechanical interpretations. Witness of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. Josephus agreeing with Nehemiah. The Old Testament aggregate about B. C. 400. Josephus concerning Bagoses. Josephus in conflict with Nehemiah. 2. The opposing critical view. The issue square and comprehensive. 3. How the papyri come into the case. Dates of Johanan and Jaddua and Bagoses. The Aramaic of the papyri and that of Ezra and Daniel. Conclusion: Net results that affect the whole range of Bible criticism. Literature.

A particular group of discoveries, made in the first decade of the twentieth century, is of exceptional importance for settling questions in Bible criticism. Syene in Egypt, now Assuan, is located on the bank of the Nile, not far from the island Elephantine in the Nile. Both Elephantine and Syene were once important centers of business and of culture. Among the discoveries recently made on these sites are original autograph writings in Aramaic, on papyrus and on earthen ware. Some of these writings are on matters of business and domestic affairs,

**These Papyri
Described**

and some are on public matters. They are written by Jews, or to or for Jews. They contain many dates, ranging from B. C. 471, in the reign of Xerxes of Persia, to the 17th year of Darius Nothus, B. C. 407. They indicate that there was a large and influential Jewish population at those dates in that part of Egypt. A particularly interesting group of these documents, from Assuan, was edited by Sayce and Cowley in 1906, some of them having been published earlier. Another interesting group, from Elephantine, was published by Sachau, of the Prussian Academy of Sciences, in 1907. These publications are accepted as authentic by scholars everywhere, and they have been republished and noticed and commented upon in numberless periodicals and papers.

The Berlin publication contains, first, a complete papyrus, the letter of one Jedoniah and his associates to Bagohi (Bagoas or Bagoses), Persian
The Jeb governor of Judah; second, a fragmentary
Correspondence, duplicate or variant of the same; third, a brief memorandum of an order given in the way of a favorable response to the letter.

The letter sets forth that Jedoniah and his associates represent the interests of a certain Jewish temple for the worship of Yahu (Jehovah) in Elephantine. "Already in the days of the kings of Egypt had our fathers built this temple." "When Cambyses entered Egypt he found this temple built; and though the temples of the gods of Egypt were then all overthrown, no one injured anything in this temple." But "in the month Tammuz, in the 14th year of King Darius," certain Egyptian priests, taking advantage of the absence of Arsam, the

Persian satrap, had procured from certain officials the plunder and destruction of the temple. The letter says that the men who wrought the destruction have been condignly punished. Its writers now ask leave from Bagohi, "the 20th of Marchesvan in the 17th year of Darius," to rebuild the temple. Mentioning the date of its destruction, they say that "neither from that day to this . . . have meal-offerings, frankincense, or burnt-offerings been offered in this temple." They say: "Arsam also has no knowledge of all this that has been done to us." Perhaps this means that Arsam refuses to take official cognizance of the matter; if Bagohi is willing to interfere there will be no conflict of jurisdiction. Or possibly what they desire is that Bagohi will use his influence with Arsam.

As an inducement they promise that they "will offer meal-offering and frankincense and burnt-offering" in behalf of Bagohi; and they also mention gold, and a pecuniary interest in the sacrifices that shall be made on the altar, "in the value equivalent to a sum of 1,000 talents."

In connection with the request they mention certain personages whom the Bible also mentions. Early in the letter, in stating their case, they say that **Bible Persons in the Jeb Letter** "before this, when this evil was done," they wrote to Bagohi and "Jehohanan the high priest, and his companions the priests in Jerusalem, and to Ostan his brother, who is Anani, and the nobles of the Jews, but they sent us no answer." Near the close of the letter they say: "We have also sent the matter in a letter in our name to Delaiah and Shelemiah, the sons of Sanballat the governor of Samaria."

Concerning the answer to this letter Mr. Stanley A.

Cook says (*Expositor*, Dec. 1907, p. 502), that "the third of Professor Sachau's papyri, a small but apparently complete text which is undated, . . . is styled a record or memorandum." He says that the writer is instructed by Bagohi and Delaiah to tell Arsham in Egypt that the "altar-house of the God of the heavens that was built in the fortress Jeb from aforetime, before Cambyses," was to be rebuilt "in its place" (cf. Ezra 6 : 7) as it was formerly, and that meal and incense offerings should be offered "upon this altar according as was done in former times."

"The fortress Jeb" is Elephantine. The Sanballat mentioned in the letter is the one who appears in the book of Nehemiah as the great opponent of the interests of Jerusalem, and in Josephus as the founder of the Samaritan religion. Hanani, the brother of Nehemiah, was one of the Jewish leaders, especially spoken of as "a faithful man" (Neh. 1 : 2 ; 7 : 2, cf. 12 : 36). He was given "charge over Jerusalem" about B. C. 444. The high priest Jehohanan is mentioned in Nehemiah as Johanan or Jonathan, and in Josephus as John. Nehemiah gives the succession of high priests as Eliashib, Joiada, Johanan, Jaddua. Josephus says that John was in relations with Bagoses, "the general of another Artaxerxes' army." In the Jeb letters are mentioned sons of Sanballat, with names compounded from the name of Jehovah, and one of them at least is associated in authority with Bagohi. Apparently the Samaritan worship of Jehovah is recognized by the Persian authorities.

I. Strenuous efforts are made to press these papyri into the service of the current Sadducean criticism.

For instance Jeremiah (42-44) threatens extermination to the Jews engaged in a certain migration to Egypt, after the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. A recent writer cites Jeremiah's declaration that these Jews should die by the sword, and says: "The papyri show that they did not die. . . . Here again the contention of the critics has been sustained, for they have long held that the prophets were not infallible in their warnings of future events." There is no ground for this inference. The men who wrote to Bagohi were not the men whom Jeremiah threatened 180 years previously, and there is no proof that they were descendants of those men. There were other migrations of people of Israelitish blood to Egypt, both before and after the time of Jeremiah.

It is true that some of Jeremiah's statements are very sweeping. For instance, he represents Jehovah as saying: "My name shall no more be named in the mouth of any man of Judah in all the land of Egypt" (44 : 26). But even in this his auditors may naturally have understood him to refer exclusively to the Jews of that migration, and not to those who went to Egypt in earlier or later generations. And however this may be, he certainly did not intend to be understood to mean that Jehovah's name would never again be mentioned by Jews in Egypt, but only that there would be a time when the mention of it would cease. If Jehovah was mentioned at Jeb half a century afterward, in and before the time of Cambyses, that is in no way contradictory to Jeremiah's prediction.

The same writer says that the existence of the Jeb temple was in violation of the pentateuchal laws that re-

quire one central place of sacrifice for all Israel. He says this with the implication that it therefore proves that

The Jeb Temple and Deuteronomy those laws are not authentic, and that the testimony of the pentateuch and the historical books concerning them is false.

He speaks of certain laws to the effect "that there should be but one central sanctuary, and that there alone sacrifices and offerings should be brought"; and concerning these he says: "There is passage after passage in the pentateuch and in the historical books which would make these servants of Jehovah in the fortress of Jeb transgressors of the most explicit commands of Israel's God." His reasoning is as clear as it is fallacious. He says that the successive books of the Bible say that from very ancient times Jehovah forbade certain kinds of sacrifice in Israel save at one national place of sacrifice; that from the time of the building of Solomon's temple, that was the one place of sacrifice, and the law forbade these sacrifices elsewhere. And then he says that the case of the Jeb temple proves that such sacrifices actually were offered elsewhere than at Jerusalem, and therefore proves that the Bible representation of the matter is mistaken.

The same reasoning appears in numberless other articles that have been published. But could any reasoning be more superficial? There are three simple considerations, each of which decisively disproves it.

First, the reasoning has not a particle of force except on the assumption that the sacrifices at Jeb were legitimate, and were so regarded at the time by the religious leaders of the Jews. The record does not sustain this assumption, but indicates the contrary. The Jeb interests

applied first to Bagohi and the Jerusalem priesthood. They recognized that priesthood as the legitimate authority, and that authority turned them down. The acknowledged religious leaders refused to recognize them. It was only when they made common cause with the schismatic Samaritans, and backed up their application by bribery, that Bagohi made terms with them. Whatever else may be true of Jehohanan and his associates, they are in line with the pentateuch and the other Scriptures in refusing to recognize any other than the one place of sacrifice.

Second, the reasoning has no force except on the assumption that the laws mentioned in the pentateuch and the other books are such as would forbid the sacrifices at Jeb; and this assumption is groundless. The single sanctuary laws expressly limit themselves to the land of Canaan (*e. g.* Deut. 12). As to temples or worship on any other territory these laws are silent. They nowhere prohibit a place of sacrifice in Egypt.

Third, every one of these article-writers believes that the central sanctuary laws had been publicly known at least from the time of King Josiah, more than 200 years before the Jeb letters were written. As the Jeb instance does not prove the non-existence of the laws during those two centuries, it no more proves their non-existence for the preceding centuries.

In fine, if the Jeb temple had existed in the promised land, before Josiah's time, with undoubted legitimacy, it might serve the purpose of these reasoners; but it is lacking in all three points.

These considerations are decisive from any possible

point of view. As a fact, however, the participants in the Jeb affair were less interested in the old issue concerning Jerusalem as the religious center for the land of Israel than in the new issue concerning Jerusalem as the Jewish religious center for the nations. This new issue, of course, does not enter into the question now under discussion.

II. We have thus seen that the alleged evidence from these papyri in favor of certain critical theories vanishes on examination. On the contrary, the evidence from them against those theories is decisive.

The especial value of these documents lies in the fact that they date from the time of Nehemiah and the latest Old Testament events, and so give contemporary evidence concerning the situation at that date. The older church tradition takes one view of that situation, and the newer critical traditions take a contradictory view. The papyri essentially confirm the older tradition, and conclusively refute the adverse criticism.

The earlier traditions, some of them dating from the early Christian centuries and earlier, ascribe the com-

The Men of the Great Synagogue	pleting of the Old Testament to men who are described as "the men of the Great Synagogue." The term is applied to a succession of men which covered a period of nearly 300 years, beginning with Daniel and his companions and ending with the high-priest Simon the Just, whom the traditions represent to have been a contemporary of Alexander the Great. About midway in the succession are Ezra and Nehemiah. The earlier forms of the tradition do not speak of Ezra as the beginner of the succession,
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though they make him the great man of the succession. Many heedless statements to the contrary notwithstanding, the traditions regard Nehemiah as the man who completed the Old Testament. They assign no writing of Scripture to any man later than Nehemiah. Counting the men of the Great Synagogue as a succession of men later than that of the prophets, they also count the two successions as overlapping, many of the men of the Great Synagogue being prophets. They assign no writing of Scripture to any of the post-prophetic men of the Great Synagogue. The term "Great Synagogue" is perhaps a monument of the epoch-making convocation held under Ezra and Nehemiah (Neh. 8-10).

These traditions have been very mechanically interpreted by some, transforming the succession of men into an ecclesiastical organization, surrounding the person of Ezra with unauthentic details, and thus weakening the evidence by confusing it with matters that are incredible. Nevertheless the traditions are of the nature of testimony, and when freed from accretions and mistaken interpretations they are credible testimony. This testimony is to the effect that the Old Testament was completed within the lifetime of Nehemiah, not later or not much later than the close of the reign of Darius Nothus, B. C. 405.

**Ezra, Nehemiah,
and Josephus** The books of Ezra and Nehemiah distinctly support this view. They say (*e. g.* Ezra 3) that the priestly law was in detailed operation under Zerubbabel, two generations before Ezra, and that it came from Moses. Further, they make statements and present phenomena which indicate

that the whole Old Testament was in existence before the death of Nehemiah. Josephus presents the same view as true, but also presents a view inconsistent with it. Notice a few details in illustration of these statements.

In Nehemiah distinguish between the narrative and the genealogical note by which the narrative is interrupted (Neh. 11 : 3-12 : 26, partly duplicated in 1 Chron. 9). The latest event in the narrative is the expulsion of a young man of the family of Joiada, the high priest, for marrying a woman of the family of Sanballat (Neh. 13 : 28). Josephus mentions apparently the same incident, and more in detail (*Ant.* XI. vii, viii). He says that the man's name was Manasseh, that he was the son of Johanan (and therefore the grandson of Joiada), that he was excluded from the high-priesthood in favor of his brother Jaddua, that Sanballat procured for him the founding of the rival temple on Mount Gerizim, that the contemporary Persian king was Darius.

Fitting into this, the latest item in the genealogical note in Nehemiah is a certain enrolment (Neh. 12, especially verses 10-11, 22-23, 26). It is dated "in the reign of Darius the Persian," and "up to the days of Johanan," though Jaddua, Johanan's son and successor, is included in it. It is also connected with "the days of Nehemiah the governor, and of Ezra the priest, the scribe."

Johanan
and
Bagoses

Josephus adds an item concerning the high priest Johanan. He says that Johanan had a brother named Jesus, who was the friend of "Bagoses, the general of another Artaxerxes' army," and that Bagoses intended to make

Jesus high priest. Johanan killed Jesus in the temple. Bagoses made this a pretext for polluting the temple, and exacting a tax of fifty shekels on every lamb offered in sacrifice. Bagoses thus operates in Jerusalem the financial methods which he has learned from the priests of Jeb. In characterizing him Josephus and the Jeb letters agree strikingly.

Josephus and Nehemiah agree that the high priest Johanan was contemporary with a Persian king named Darius, and Josephus also says that he was contemporary with "another Artaxerxes." By the most obvious identifications the Artaxerxes who commissioned Nehemiah was Longimanus, B. C. 465-424; the Darius in question was Nothus, B. C. 424-405; the "other Artaxerxes" was Mnemon, B. C. 405-359.

If these identifications are correct the Old Testament narrative terminates not later than the earliest decades of the fourth century B. C., within the probable lifetime of Nehemiah. As the latest **Old Testament Completed about B.C. 400** books bear marks of being written up to date, this confirms the tradition that Nehemiah completed the Old Testament. This is confirmed by such very significant phenomena as that the books of Ezra and Nehemiah are written largely in the first person in the names of these two men; and that they are full of Persian words and proper names and objects and incidents, while they are correspondingly free from Greek marks. The case is a remarkably strong one.

There is something to be said in opposition, however. Josephus also says that Jaddua, the son of Johanan, was high priest in the time of Alexander the Great. It is not

strange that many have followed this statement to the neglect of the rest of the testimony. Josephus confuses his Persian kings. He seems to assume that the Darius who appointed Sanballat was not Darius Nothus, but the Darius whom Alexander the Great defeated 90 years later. He says that Sanballat obtained a permit from Alexander to build the Gerizim temple, and that Jaddua, the son of Johanan, was then high priest in Jerusalem. Josephus was prejudiced against the Samaritans, and wanted to discount their claim to antiquity as much as possible. His prejudice got the better of his somewhat limited arithmetical abilities. His dating Sanballat and Jaddua as late as Alexander is of course an absurdity. In it he contradicts himself as well as Nehemiah, and is contradicted by the Jewish traditions, which say that the high priest of Alexander's time was Jaddua's grandson, Simon the Just. Various other considerations show that this opinion of Josephus is simply impossible.

Yet there are those who accept this impossible opinion. The acceptance of it is an absolute necessity for the agnostic and semiagnostic critics. With them it is an essential doctrine that Deuteronomy originated in the reign of King Josiah, that most of the pentateuchal priestly laws date from the times of Ezra and Nehemiah and their associates, and that the completed pentateuch dates from the same time and later. But they and their opponents would agree in the statement that more than half of the varied writings which constitute the Old Testament presuppose Deuteronomy and the pentateuchal priestly leg-

Josephus

Concerning

Jaddua

The Opposing

Critical View

isolation. It follows that if this theory were true the Old Testament aggregate could not have been completed in less than five or six generations after Nehemiah. In fact, the more moderate advocates of the theory assign the latest Old Testament books to dates ranging from B. C. 250 to B. C. 150, and those who are more consistent assign them to dates still later.

The issue thus made is square and comprehensive. If the aggregate was substantially completed before Nehemiah died, then the larger half of it was

The Issue not written during the generations after Nehemiah, but was written centuries earlier; and all parts of the pentateuch were written many centuries earlier. The issue extends along the whole line from the latest Old Testament prophets back to Moses.

For settling this issue the Egyptian papyri furnish proof that is of the utmost importance. They reinforce

Where the Papyri Come In the proof that the latest Old Testament events occurred not later or not much later than B. C. 400, reinforce it in such a way that this fact will now have to be accepted even by those who have heretofore disputed it.

Unless the advocates of the newer tradition can break down this fact their case is lost. They recognize the situation, and make strenuous efforts to meet it. In particular they resort to two lines of argument. First, they attempt to prove that these latest Old Testament events occurred much later than about 400 B. C.; and second, they resort to elaborate linguistic research in proof that the Aramaic parts of Ezra—and likewise of Daniel—belong to a date

much later than the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. In both these lines of evidence the recently discovered papyri completely prove them to be in the wrong.

First, they argue that the latest Old Testament situations include events later than the possible lifetime of Nehemiah. To make this out, they follow Josephus when he counts Jaddua as contemporary with Alexander. They claim that the Darius of Johanan must have been Codomannus, B. C. 336-332. They identify Bagoses with an official of Artaxerxes Ochus, B. C. 350 or later. They even deny that the biblical Artaxerxes was Longimanus, and try to think that he is one of the later kings of that name. By these processes they put the facts into utter confusion, and then regard the confusion as indicating not that they are in the wrong, but that the records are in the wrong.

In view of these claims it is interesting to find contemporary documents which show beyond dispute that the

The Biblical Darius in question was Nothus; that the
Facts Vindicated Bagoses in question was an official of
Darius Nothus, and may also have held
office under Artaxerxes Mnemon, but certainly not under
the later Artaxerxes; that Sanballat and his sons belong
to the time of Nothus and not to the time of Codomannus,
90 years later; that Johanan was high priest under
Nothus, and therefore that his son Jaddua cannot have
been the contemporary of Alexander. The papyri settle
these points, settle them so that they can hardly be raised
again, and settle them in favor of the view which counts
the Old Testament as trustworthy.

Yet more important, if possible, are the linguistic data

furnished by the recently discovered papyri. The great proof alleged for the late date of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah (and therefore one great alleged proof of all the other critical conclusions that depend on this) has been derived from the character of the Aramaic in which parts of Ezra are written. Dr. Driver and many others have accumulated point after point in proof that just such Aramaic was not in use till several generations after the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. Heretofore there have been insufficient data for comparison; the proofs have been based on theory rather than on fact. Now we have facts by which to test them. Our papyri are actual specimens of the Aramaic that was used by Jews in the Persian empire in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. By them we may try the linguistic arguments in the case. Professor Robert D. Wilson, of Princeton, has conclusively shown that the Aramaic used by these Jews in their correspondence with Jerusalem is of the same linguistic type with that of the books of Ezra and Daniel.

The results obtained from these papyri are not merely a few items of detail concerning an obscure period of history; they are far-reaching, and cover the whole range of Bible criticism. In dating a biblical writing a critic does not, as a rule, explicitly argue to the effect that he is convinced that certain parts of the pentateuch were written after B. C. 400, and that the writing in question, since it presupposes those parts of the pentateuch, must have originated still later. Advocates of critical theories should see perfectly well that to argue thus would be to base

**Light on Biblical
Aramaic**

Net Results

their theories upon their theories. Some of them at least see this, and attempt to obey critical laws. When they perceive that their theories imply certain conditions they go hunting for proof that those conditions actually existed. They have hunted laboriously for proofs that the several parts of the Old Testament were written late enough to make their theories possible. These Egyptian papyri, either directly or by inevitable analogy, wipe out so large a proportion of their attempted proofs that they now have the work to do all over again.

The current critical views appear in Driver's "Introduction" and in other books of reference, in the treatments of Ezra and Daniel and other late Old

Literature

Testament books. On the papyri note the following among other titles: "Aramaic Papyri Discovered at Assuan," Sayce and Cowley, 1906. Articles by Cowley in the "Proceedings" of the Society of Biblical Archaeology, 1903. "Drei Aramäische Papyrusurkunden aus Elephantine," Sachau, 1907. Two of the papyri are printed in Gressmann's "Texte und Bilder zum Alten Testamente." The principal Jeb letter is given in the Appendix to Toffteen's "Historic Exodus," with a pretty full list of the literature of the subject, which see. Among the numerous reprints and articles may be mentioned those in the *Expositor*, December, 1907; the *Independent*, December 5 and 26, 1907; *The Sunday School Times*, February 15, 1908; the *Bible Student and Teacher*, February, 1908. See also Chapter XXII.

PART IV

REASONABLE CRITICISM AND SOME OF
THE BOOKS

CHAPTER XIX

THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY

Introduction. I. The book itself. Divisions and structure. Mosaic authorship as claimed in the several parts. The great Deuteronomic law. Opposing views. A supposable fictional hypothesis. Current defective arguments. The denial of the central fact. II. Deuteronomy and the whole history of the religion of Jehovah. The other books presuppose Deuteronomy. For example, Joshua. Judges and Samuel. Kings and Chronicles. The histories emphasize the great Deuteronomic law. Attempts in contradiction of this. Value of the testimony. Its bearings. Conclusion: The two alternatives. Literature.

There is not room in this little volume to give separate consideration to all the books of the Bible. We must select a few, giving the preference to those that are typical in character. From the point of view of the question whether the Bible is truthful, Deuteronomy stands in the foreground, because the question of its truthfulness is bound up with that of all the other books of the Old and New Testaments. We will first briefly study Deuteronomy as a book, and will then study it as presupposed in the history of the religion of Jehovah.

**Investigate
for Yourself**

I. First, the book of Deuteronomy itself. You might supposably read some thousands of pages, advocating various views, and try to balance the opposing arguments. But there is a shorter and more decisive way. The important phenomena are accessible to you; make your own

examination of them, and draw your own conclusions. Please to open your Bible at Deuteronomy, and observe certain phenomena. If you see for yourself you will be more sure of the facts, and you will understand them more clearly.

Observe that the first two verses appear to be a general descriptive title to the book. They say that it consists

Divisions and of utterances by Moses, made while Israel
Structure of was encamped east of the Jordan or on
Deuteronomy the route thither from Horeb. Glance

the book through and you see that its contents perfectly fit this description. Then observe that verses 3-5 are a second long title, the title of an address which they designate as "this law," and which they affirm that "Moses spake," mentioning the place and the date. The place is "across the Jordan," and the date is the first day of the eleventh month of the fortieth year. Read this address. You observe that it deals with reminiscences of the speaker and his hearers, experiences which they have shared during the forty years when Israel was in the wilderness. These are arranged and commented on homiletically. You have no difficulty in perceiving that the address comes to a close in the fourth chapter, the fortieth verse. It is followed by three verses of narrative, which mention the setting apart by Moses of three cities of refuge east of the Jordan. The implication seems to be that the address was connected with the occasion of the setting apart of those cities.

Following these three verses is another title, long and circumstantial, introducing another address which is described as "the law" "which Moses spake," dated from

the same place, and, by implication, from about the same time as the first discourse. Read and you will find that this "law" extends to the close of the twenty-sixth chapter, though it is sharply divided at the close of the eleventh chapter. The first of these two parts is mainly the repeating, with much added exhortation, of laws and narrative from Exodus. There are some variations. Practically all these may be accounted for by the view that the speaker in Deuteronomy assumes that his hearers are familiar with the facts recorded in Exodus, and will understand him accordingly. The second part of this second discourse in Deuteronomy consists of a series of laws, some of them found elsewhere in the pentateuch and some not. The laws are moral, civil, ceremonial, but they are those which the rulers and the people would need to know, and not such as were intended especially for the priests.

With chapter 27, you will observe, begins a third paper (chapters 27-28) supplementary to the second, a paper which deals with blessings and curses conditioned on obedience or disobedience to the law. Chapters 29-30 are "the words of the covenant which Jehovah commanded Moses . . . in the land of Moab." The remaining chapters are a narrative incorporating two poems (32 : 1-43 ; 33) each purporting to be by Moses.

Emphasis Upon Perhaps you are familiar with all this.
the Mosaic If not, read and reread until the literary
Authorship divisions of the book, and its contents
as defined by its literary divisions, stand out clearly before your mind. It will pay to do this. The book is a magnificent piece of literature, and is worth master-

ing in that character. And if you thus give it due attention you will not fail to see not only that every separate part of it claims to be of the time of Moses and by Moses, but also that throughout Moses is presupposed as the speaker in the details that are mentioned. As one line of instances, observe how often the speaker in Deuteronomy uses the pronouns of the first and second person, and speaks of the events of the time of the exodus as coming within the experience of himself and his hearers.

Now begin again at chapter 12, and read the legislation observantly. You will find one dominant idea (12 : 2 ff.

The Great and parallel places), namely that Israel,
Deuteronomic after taking possession of the promised
Law land, shall have one place of national sacrifice, and only one. A part of the law is that they shall destroy all the Canaanitish highplaces with the "pillars" and asherahs beside their altars. The law is sweeping, but it is explicitly limited (Deut. 12 : 10, etc.). It is for the future only. It does not reflect upon the "pillars" beside the altars of Jacob or of Moses (*e. g.* Gen. 35 : 14; Exod. 24 : 4). It is operative only in the territory of Canaan, not in Egypt or other countries. It forbids only the "pillars" of the highplace altars, not memorial pillars elsewhere. It exempts private sacrificial feasts (Deut. 12 : 15, 21, where the Hebrew is "thou mayest make a sacrifice" rather than "mayest kill"). This law, thus carefully defined, is the heart of Deuteronomy. If Deuteronomy is true history this law was in existence (though not necessarily in effective operation) from the time of Moses.

On the face of it, therefore, the several parts of Deu-

teronomy, and in particular the great Deuteronomic law, claim to have originated in the time of Moses, and to be especially the expression of his mind and of divine inspiration through him.

In contradiction with this is the opinion stated by Dr. Ryle in the article on Deuteronomy in the Hastings Bible

**The Opposing
View**

Dictionary. "It is generally agreed that the book may have been written in the reign of Manasseh, or in the early part of the reign of Josiah."

The idea is, of course, that the book found in the eighteenth year of Josiah, B. C. 621 (2 Kings 22-23), was Deuteronomy, or perhaps some of the contents of Deuteronomy in an earlier form, and that it was written and placed in the temple not long before it was found there.

If there were good reasons for holding that our book of Deuteronomy was written a good many hundred years

**A Fictional
Hypothesis**

later than Moses, it might perhaps be possible to frame a hypothesis that would not be discrediting to the book. You can suppose, if you please, that a prophet of Manasseh's time had in his possession a mass of Mosaic materials, and that it occurred to him to make an effective book by casting his materials into the form of a series of addresses and poems by Moses, with a thread of connecting narrative. If you regard his materials as genuine, and his use of them as competent and truthful, and the fictional form as open, with no intent to deceive, you may thus make of the work a religious parable, from beginning to end, and may assign to it a worthy character, even though you do not regard it as properly historical.

This hypothesis, however, is purely academic. No one actually holds it, though such a man as Dr. Ryle makes some approximation to it. It illustrates, however, the fact that if you could separate the question of authorship by Moses from other questions it would be a much less serious question than it is.

The gravity of the question makes itself apparent when you study the arguments which are claimed as proving that Deuteronomy was not written till near the time of Josiah. There are no conclusive arguments to this effect. You will be struck by this if you read the articles advocating this view, in the current Bible Dictionaries, or in the books from which these articles draw as sources. In most cases there are signs that the writer received this view as a tradition, and is hunting for reasons to sustain him in a position which he has already taken. Nine tenths of the points made are strained, and the remaining tenth are insufficient to make out a case. All the unreasonable processes mentioned in chapters V and VI of this volume enter into these arguments. Most of them may be promptly disposed of by giving a reasonable definition to the idea of authorship by Moses, or by applying to the case the ordinary laws of criticism.

If you could segregate the question you might innocently hold to a late date for the book of Deuteronomy in its present form. But if you undertake to prove this late date by groundless allegations of contradiction and mistake in the account, at a hundred different points, if by way of proving late authorship you impugn the veracity of the account at a hundred points, you make your

**Mischievous
Reasoning**

position objectionable by the reasonings you use, quite irrespective of the results you reach.

But the argument to prove the late date of Deuteronomy is not based on details only, but on the alleged falsity

**Denial of the
Central Fact**

of the central facts of the history as presented in Deuteronomy. It is alleged that the idea of a single place of national sacrifice did not exist in Israel until near the time, in Josiah's reign, when the book was found. The alleged fact that this idea did not exist is pushed to the front as the one principal proof that Deuteronomy was not written till then. That is to say, the theory holds that the book of Deuteronomy is not merely an invention, but is a falsehood from beginning to end. Of course this assertion excludes the idea that the book is justifiable fiction of any kind. "Forgery" is the term commonly used by those who argue that Deuteronomy dates from Josiah's reign. They say that the book is not merely fiction, but a fiction intended to give an idea of the past which its authors did not know to be true, and which was in fact false.

Among those who hold to the Josiah date of Deuteronomy there are various degrees of frankness in uttering the conclusions just mentioned, and there are various ways of defending or palliating the conduct of the men who, they say, thus published Deuteronomy. But the unavoidable basis of the whole theory is the alleged fact that these men deliberately promulgated an untrue history of the religion of Israel, with the intention of having it accepted as true.

One has got to choose between this and the opinion that the Scriptures are truthful; he cannot hold both.

II. In this, Deuteronomy does not stand by itself; the question involves all those parts of the Old and New Testaments which deal with the history of the religion of Jehovah. The field is so wide that we cannot now traverse the whole of it. We will look only at a relatively narrow part.

No one disputes that the book of Joshua presupposes Deuteronomy, with its central sanctuary laws and its other institutions. It affirms that under **Witness of Joshua** Joshua the central sanctuary was established at Shiloh. Joshua is a part of the hexateuch. Those who hold to the Josiah origin of Deuteronomy dispose of the testimony of the book of Joshua in the same ways in which they dispose of that of Deuteronomy itself.

The Polychrome Bible prints the following parts of the book of Judges in green, to indicate that they are Deuteronomic in character: **Witness of Judges and Samuel** 2 : 7, 11-15, 18-19, 22 and 3 : 1, 3, 7-15, 29-30 and 4 : 1-4, 23-24 and 5 : 31b and 6 : 1-6 and 8 : 27b-28, 33-35, and 10 : 6-9, 17-18 and 13 : 1 and 15 : 20. Look up these passages, and you will see that the editor is correct in the idea that the book of Judges as it stands largely presupposes the contents of Deuteronomy. The same is quite as decidedly true of the two books of Samuel (*e. g.* 1 Sam. 8; 2 Sam. 7 : 1 ff.). These books presuppose Deuteronomy as well known at the time when they were written. They also testify to the Deuteronomic institutions and to Deuteronomic phraseology as being known in Israel during the whole period from Joshua to David.

Turning to the books of Kings and Chronicles the testimony concerning Deuteronomy is even more abundant, and is more explicit. It concerns **Witness of Kings and Chronicles** "the law" as a whole, and concerns particular precepts, referring these to the authorship of Moses (*e. g.* 2 Kings 14 : 5-6 and scores of other places). And apart from all details, the one lesson which these books constantly push to the front is that of the existence and the obligation, in the times of which they treat, of the law which required one national place of sacrifice for all Israel, and prohibited all places but the one.

In the account of Jeroboam I all the stress is laid on the fact that he violated this law. The Jerusalem temple was the one chosen place, and he established other places in Bethel and Dan; and further, he recognized the local highplaces as legitimate. The condemnation of his wickedness in this is made vivid by details, and is made emphatic by reiteration. And his successors are condemned one by one for practicing "the sin of Jeroboam the son of Nebat wherein he sinned and made Israel to sin." This sin is represented as a heinous one. For it the successive dynasties of northern Israel are exterminated.

The same standard is set up for the southern kingdom. These accounts speak of the kings of Judah as doing the right or the evil according as each one does or fails to do all in his power to abolish the highplaces and centralize the national sacrifices in the temple in Jerusalem. It would not be true to say that these writers regard this as more important than doing justice and loving kindness, but they keep it more to the front, as being an

obvious and practical way of showing allegiance to Jehovah.

No critic of any school denies the facts as thus stated, or denies that the laws for a central sanctuary thus emphasized are those found in Deuteronomy.

The men who say that Deuteronomy was written late attempt to show that these parts of the record are contradicted and discredited by other parts.

**Testimony in
Rebuttal**

They say, for example, that Elijah's adherents worshiped Jehovah at plural altars (1 Kings 18 : 30; 19 : 10, 14). But there is no proof that they offered at these altars any of the sacrifices prohibited in Deuteronomy, and in any case these altars seem to have been an emergency provision. They cite often and conspicuously Isaiah's mention of an altar and a "pillar" in the land of Egypt (Isa. 19 : 19-25). But these would not be contrary to the law in Deuteronomy, for that law expressly limits its prohibition to the land of Canaan. They insist on certain passages which mention institutions, for example the following (Hos. 3 : 4) : "For the sons of Israel shall abide many days without king, and without captain, and without sacrifice, and without pillar, and without ephod or teraphim." They say that the "pillar" is here mentioned as legitimate, and that this proves that the law forbidding it was not yet in existence in Hosea's time. But the "pillar" is here mentioned as one of several existing institutions; there is no ground for saying that it is mentioned with approval. Just to mention an institution is a different thing from sanctioning it as legitimate. Probably no competent person who has really examined the matter will deny that all the

alleged passages are capable, without strain, of being so understood as to be consistent with the view that is made prominent in Kings and Chronicles and Amos and Hosea. The opposite understanding is at most mere opinion.

For fairness in weighing this evidence let us remember that no scholar of any school doubts that the narrative

**Weighing the
Testimony**

books of the Bible were largely made up from sources previously existing. The question is as to the trustworthiness of the sources, and the good faith of the men who used them. The books of Kings in their present form were not written earlier than the closing years of the life of Jeremiah, and the books of Chronicles not earlier than the closing years of the life of Nehemiah. All known evidence indicates also that they were respectively written not much later than the lives of Jeremiah and Nehemiah, though nothing in the present argument would suffer if one should suppose them to be some generations later. But however this may be, the books as they stand represent that this idea of one national place of sacrifice for all Israel was a familiar idea at every stage of the history from the time of Moses. They do not say that the law was constantly in effective operation, but they say that men knew of it. They say that the contemporary prophets preached it in the times of Jeroboam and Asa and Jehoshaphat. This is the testimony of Kings as well as of Chronicles. They represent that the prophets of every later time also preached this doctrine. In the exile the author of Kings is insistent in impressing it upon his fellow-Israelites, and after the restoration the author of Chronicles equally felt its importance.

The question is not whether the narrative books contain inadvertences. It is not whether some of the stories may have been made picturesque by dashes of imaginative coloring. It is whether the narrative is false in its essential features. If the discovery made in Josiah's time was the original publication of the law for one place of sacrifice, then that law did not exist in Israel till three centuries after Jeroboam I, and every statement which affirms or implies that it existed in these earlier times is a fabrication. Whoever holds that the great Deuteronomic law was first published in Josiah's time is thereby compelled to count as false the proposition that the law was well known and obligatory some centuries before Josiah. He has to do this. He cannot help himself. It is not a matter of personal consistency, but of the laws of human thinking.

**The Real
Question**

The theory is that the men of Josiah's time and later possessed the legislation concerning the central sanctuary, and believed in it; that when they found no account of it in the history of the past, they invented accounts of it, and inserted these into the older records which were in their possession; that they made these invented facts concerning the central sanctuary to be the dominating idea in the books of Kings; that men of the same type reworked the writings of Amos and Hosea and other prophets, interpolating the central sanctuary into all parts of them; that the books of Judges and Samuel were subjected to a like reworking; that the books of Chronicles are a product of similar processes at a more advanced stage.

In other words, the theory is that all that is most characteristic in these parts of the Bible is the product

of deliberate and deceiving falsification, intended to lead men to believe important statements which their authors did not know to be true, and which were **The Alternative** in fact untrue. It is not a question of a few unintentional mistakes, but of the falsity of the things that are most important in the record; not a question of incidents made picturesque by the play of imagination upon them, but of serious deception in matters that are vital.

No one defends the theory by claiming that the character which it assigns to the Bible writings is that of any legitimate form of fiction. "Forgery" is the term which they most commonly apply to the processes by which they allege that these writings were produced. Those who are disposed to palliate the charge of forgery plead that in those centuries scientific criticism and the idea of literary property were not so well developed as now, and that we must not judge the men by our more advanced standards. This defense concedes the facts as charged in the indictment; namely, that the person indicted holds that these parts of the Bible were written to propagate a view of the history which is in fact false, and which their writers ought to have known to be false.

The alternative is to accept the contents of Deuteronomy as historical, and as true when correctly understood, and therefore to accept Deuteronomy as in a legitimate sense the work of Moses. It is not necessary to claim that in his lifetime he completed the book in its present form. In the last chapter we are told that "there hath not arisen a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses." Such a phrase would hardly be used earlier

than three or four decades after the death of Moses. Other instances similar in effect may be found in different parts of the book. In completing Deuteronomy something was left for the literary executors of Moses to do. But Moses is the man who is especially responsible for the existence of Deuteronomy as a literary product, and this fact establishes his claim as the author of the said product.

The literature of the subject is voluminous. In the recent Bible Dictionaries read the articles, and consult the lists of books given, under such titles

Literature

as Deuteronomy, Pentateuch, Hexateuch, Kings, Chronicles, Amos, Hosea, History of Israel, Scriptures. Most of these works assume that Deuteronomy was written in Josiah's time; but its Mosaic origin is defended, more or less thoroughly, in the Davis, the Piercy, and the Temple Bible Dictionaries, and in some of the articles in the new Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia. Among the volumes or series of volumes that advocate the theory of the late date of Deuteronomy one may mention Wellhausen's "Prolegomena," Driver's "Introduction," Addis' "Documents of the Hexateuch," Carpenter's "Hexateuch," the Polychrome Bible. Among those that advocate the opposite view are Green's "Higher Criticism of the Pentateuch," and "Mosaic Origin of the Pentateuchal Codes," Bissell's "The Pentateuch. Its Origin and Structure," Bartlett's "The Veracity of the Hexateuch," Gladstone's "Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture."

CHAPTER XX

THE BOOK OF DANIEL

Introductory: Our ideas concerning the book. The object under observation. Daniel as the subject. The stories and their contents. The visions and their contents. The real values of the book of Daniel. I. Questions of date and authorship. Possible theories under the laws of permutation. Is Daniel the author? The conditions in the time of Nehemiah. The alleged Maccabean date. Driver's arguments from historical facts. From language: Persian, Greek, Aramaic, Hebrew. From the theology of the book. From independent considerations: Antiochus Epiphanes; the world-view in Daniel. Maccabean use of the book. A hypothesis. II. Questions of historicity and truthfulness. Do not confuse the two. Two ways of thinking consistent with maintaining the truthfulness of the book. Other ways of thinking that are not consistent with this. Conclusions.

In the minds of most persons, doubtless, the book of Daniel is that part of the Bible which contains the wonderful stories of the men in the fiery furnace and the man in the den of lions, and the writing on the wall, and the king who ate grass like oxen; and which also contains forecasts of the future, made specific by numerical dates. The most voluminous study of the book has been along the line of the attempts to write from it the future history of mankind; next to that, probably, have been the investigations concerning its date and authorship and structure. In this chapter we shall omit the first of these lines of study, and shall have to be brief in dealing with the second.

**Prevalent Ideas
as to the Book**

The book of Daniel is before us as the object of our observation; therefore observe it. Read it in the Hebrew and Aramaic, if you can; if not, use the best translation available. The Greek copies of Daniel are so variant, and so unlike the Hebrew, that they constitute a problem by themselves. You will at once observe that the divisions of the book are obvious. It consists of two parts. In the first part, the first six chapters, Daniel is spoken of in the third person; in the second part, he speaks in the first person. The first part consists of a narrative introduction and five wonderful stories; the second part consists of four apocalyptic visions. As the first wonderful story (chap. 2) includes an apocalyptic vision, the book has five of these forecasts of the future. In the first part the first chapter and the first three and a half verses of the second chapter are in Hebrew, and the remainder in Aramaic; in the second part, the seventh chapter is in Aramaic, and the remaining chapters in Hebrew.

Observe, further, that the subject of the book throughout is the experiences of the man named Daniel, and of other persons in various ways associated with him. Daniel is pictured as many-sided, and as a very great man; but his principal characteristic is his possession of intercessory gift; he can mediate between men and Deity. He is represented as living in the time contemporary with the prophet Ezekiel, and he is mentioned in the writings of that prophet (Ezek. 14 : 14, 20; 28 : 3) as a person distinguished for saving men by intercession. In the books of Ezekiel and Daniel, in expressed statements

The Object Under Observation

Daniel as the Subject

or by clear implications, we have a pretty full biography of him, including dates in the accession year of Nebuchadnezzar, the second year of Nebuchadnezzar, the first and the third years of Belshazzar, the first year of Darius the Mede, the first and the third years of Cyrus. In these biographical notices his character is sketched, clearly and congruously and differentially.

Three of the stories are capable of being described as stories of combat, built on the same model with the stories of Jonah and of Esther. In the first (Dan. 2), a Hebrew boy, with Jehovah for helper, is pitted against the world empire of his time. The result proves the correctness of our modern maxim that "one with God is a majority." In the second story three men (Dan. 3), and in the fifth one old man (Dan 5 : 31 to 6 : 27) are respectively pitted against the world empire and with the same result. The third and fourth stories (Dan. 4 and 5 : 1-30) illustrate the folly of not taking God into the account. Along with these central lessons are others not less valuable. The literary and ethical and religious values are of the highest order, and their value is of an enduring type. The element of the marvelous in them gives grip to the truths which they present. They are a triumph of literary art.

**Contents of
the Visions**

In the five apocalyptic visions there is set forth a conception of human history terminating in the manifestation of the everlasting kingdom of Jehovah. We cannot here discuss the specifications, nor even the question whether they look forward to the Roman and post-Roman times,

or terminate in the times of Antiochus Epiphanes. In any case, they present the idea of God's having a plan in the history of mankind—working in and through the great empires, the wars, the intrigues, the apparent defeats of the right, the turmoils, the miseries, making all subservient to his great and beneficent purpose.

Do not make the mistake of thinking that the book of Daniel is valueless to you in case you cannot solve its critical and apocalyptic problems; and do not delay, pending your solution of the problems, to appropriate the values which the book thus offers. Whatever else may be true of these stories and apocalypses, they are in any case a wonderfully vivid and strong presentation of ideas that are true and great and practical. If you get hold of these ideas you accomplish that which is worth most, whether you succeed in your attempts to solve the problems or not. And the presentations of these ideas are in themselves a part of the facts in the case; if you neglect them your solutions of the problems will be so far forth vitiated.

I. We take up, first, the question of date and authorship, though many of the facts that bear on this question bear also on the questions of historicity and truthfulness.

Under the laws of permutation the number of possibly plausible hypotheses concerning the authorship of the book of Daniel is without limit. Did one author write the whole book? Did one write the first part, and another the second part? Did the several stories, or the several visions, come from different authors? Were the Hebrew parts translated from Aramaic originals? Were the Aramaic parts translated from Hebrew originals? The

**Possible
Hypotheses**

answers to these questions are capable of numberless combinations into numberless theories of authorship.

It is likely that most persons who regard the book as historical have taken for granted that Daniel is the author of the whole. This, however, is hardly probable. The book, as a whole, does not claim that Daniel wrote it.

**Is Daniel
the Author?**

That he is the author of the second part is a natural and obvious inference. The visions are narrated in the first person, and the matter of writing is mentioned. "He wrote the dream" (7 : 1). "Shut thou up the words and seal the book" (12 : 4). Compare 8 : 26; 9 : 24; 10 : 21; 12 : 9. If one is convinced that the visions are fiction, he will, of course, hold that their author was not Daniel, but a later man who writes in the person of Daniel. Unless one is so convinced, he will naturally find in these visions the literary style of Daniel himself.

If one finds this, it will be a reason for his not believing that this same Daniel wrote the first part of the book,

**Written in
the Time of
Nehemiah?**

and put the parts together. The Hebrew of the last five chapters is crabbed, in contrast with the fluent narrative of the first chapter. In the matter of Persian marks Parts I and II are in contrast. In the last six chapters are found three Persian words, the words for law, dainties, palace (7 : 25; 11 : 26, 45), each occurring once. In the first six chapters are found fourteen or more Persian words, occurring in all several dozen times. They are used, used particularly in designating public officials and functions, for the times of Nebuchadnezzar as well as for the times of Cyrus (see Driver's Introduction, ed. of 1897, p. 501).

So far as Persian marks are concerned, the four vision narratives may well have been written at the very beginning of the Persian period, while the writing of the introductory narrative and the five stories (the Belshazzar story excepted) was possible only after the Persian official terms and other Persian words had become naturalized in current Israelitish speech.

In the Hebrew bibles the books of Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Chronicles, come together at the close of the collection. There is reason to regard this order as indicating that the men who formed the collection thought that the completed book of Daniel was of about the same date with Ezra and Nehemiah and Chronicles. That date I believe to have been about B. C. 400 (see chapters XVIII, XXII). Many phenomena might be cited in detail in confirmation of this view. For example, the books just mentioned are those which are marked by their containing Persian words. Or, again, Daniel's contemporaries, Ezekiel and Jeremiah, commonly spell the name of the Babylonian king Nebuchadrezzar, while the book of Daniel agrees with Ezra and Chronicles in the less correct spelling Nebuchadnezzar.

To make clear the views held in opposition to this let us examine the treatment of the subject in Dr. Driver's Introduction. Dr. Driver at this point shows himself to be the most conservative of all the scholars of the Modern View, and one of the ablest. He is appreciative of the book of Daniel, and has a worthy idea of it. Expressly or by implication he repudiates many of the slighting statements that have been made concerning it. If his

**Alleged Macca-
bean Date**

arguments in proof of the late date of the book will not stand, much less will the arguments of other men who are less cautious.

He says (pp. 497 ff.) that the book was certainly written later than B. C. 300, and probably about B. C. 168 or 167. He uses the first of these dates, however, only in a precautionary way, his real opinion being expressed in the second. He regards the book of Daniel, the whole of it, as a religious fiction, based, however, on historical traditions, written for the purpose of inspiring the adherents of the Maccabees in their struggles with the Seleucid kings. In support of this he argues from "facts of a historical nature," from "the language of Daniel," from "the theology of the book," and from "independent considerations."

In regard to four of his eight arguments from historical fact Dr. Driver would not claim that they have any direct bearing on the question of date and authorship. They are simply **Driver's Arguments from History** allegations to the effect that the book is so incorrect in its statements of fact as to prove that it "is not the work of a contemporary." These will be considered later in the present chapter. Glance briefly at the other four.

First, he says that if Daniel had been written before the collection of the earlier and later prophets was made, it would have been classified with the prophets, and not with the Hagiographa. He therefore infers that it was written after that date. This argument is really to the effect that inasmuch as a prophet is a predictor, and Daniel is especially a predictive book, it has an especial

claim to be ranked among the books of the prophets. The argument loses its force when we note that the prophet is a forthteller rather than a foreteller. Quite irrespective of questions of date, the book of Daniel is of a different literary character from most of the books of the major and minor prophets, and it is for that reason that the scribes did not put it in the same class with them. Dr. Driver himself well says that its author "does not claim to speak with the special authority of the prophet" (p. 513). In addition to all this, nobody knows when the prophetic books were collected. If they were collected before the whole book of Daniel was written that would not prove a date later than about B. C. 400.

Again, Dr. Driver infers a late date for Daniel from its not being mentioned in Ecclesiasticus (chapters 44-50), along with Isaiah and Jeremiah and others. But it is also true that Ezra is not mentioned in that list. The silence is not one that counts for much.

Again, it is stated that Daniel knew of Jeremiah's prophecy concerning the seventy years "by the books" (Dan. 9 : 2). Dr. Driver says that this implies that there was then a collection of the Jewish sacred books, and that no such collection existed as early as B. C. 536. He cannot prove that the expression implies such a collection; and he cannot prove that such a collection was not then in existence. His premises are mere guesses.

Again, he says that the "Chaldeans" (Dan. 2 : 2, etc.) "are synonymous with the caste of wise men," and that this use of the term is unknown in the Assyrian and Babylonian languages, and "formed itself after the end of the Babylonian empire." Who knows that the next

bulletin of excavation may not give us an instance of this usage in Babylonian? At all events, the usage was common before B. C. 400.

Under the head of "the language of Daniel" Dr. Driver cites compactly the facts concerning the use of Persian words. As against the idea that Daniel himself wrote the whole book these phenomena appear to be decisive, but they have no force to prove for the book a later date than that of Ezra and Chronicles. If they have weight to prove that the first six chapters of Daniel were written several generations after the Persian domination began, they have nearly equal weight to prove that these chapters were not written in the Maccabean times, 160 years after the Persian domination had been displaced by the Greek.

He further cites the Greek words in Daniel. Those which are in point are some of the names of musical instruments in Chapter 3, with, perhaps, the word for "herald" (3 : 4), and "made proclamation" (5 : 29). Most of the alleged Greek words are in dispute, but let that pass. Nothing can be less improbable than that a luxurious monarch like Nebuchadnezzar may have had a Greek band, with Greek names for their instruments and their conductor. The use of this group of technical terms, confined to the narrative of a single incident, is in contrast with the distributed use of the Persian terms. The Greek phenomena in Daniel are such as might have appeared centuries before Alexander the Great; they have not an atom of weight for proving a late date for the book.

Dr. Driver cites the Aramaic of Daniel as "all but identical with that of Ezra," and as belonging to a stage of the language much later than that of Ezra's time. This argument always was theoretical and tenuous. Recently it has been utterly wiped out by the discoveries of Aramaic documents in Egypt and elsewhere (see Chapter XVIII). It is now certainly known that the Aramaic of Daniel and Ezra is of the type that was current among the contemporaries of Ezra.

Dr. Driver would not claim that his argument from the Hebrew of Daniel has much strength when deprived of these outside supports.

His argument from the theology of the book is to the effect that certain theological ideas are in it attributed to Daniel and others; that these ideas did not exist in Israel till some generations later than Daniel; and therefore that the book containing them cannot have existed till that later date. Even if this argument were perfect, it would not prove a later date than the time of Nehemiah. But it is imperfect. The premise to the effect that these theological ideas did not exist in Israel at an earlier time is a negative, impossible to prove. If the book of Daniel is authentic, it proves that they existed as early as the exile.

Dr. Driver's argument from "a number of independent considerations" includes the affirmation that the predictions in Daniel bring the history up to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, and at that point cease to be specific, the inference being that this phenomenon indicates that the writing was composed in the time of Epiphanes. Here

**Argument from
Theology**

**From
Independent
Considerations**

Dr. Driver is handicapped, because he is not willing to "deny the possibility of predictive prophecy." One who denies that possibility will, of course, feel sure that the book was written after the latest events predicted in it; whereas Dr. Driver has to limit himself to interpreting the forecasts as being retrospects in the form of predictions. His reasonings are far from decisive.

As another consideration he argues that the world-view which appears in Daniel belongs to a later stage than that presented in most of the prophetic books. He says that it is remarkable that Daniel takes "no interest in the welfare or prospects of his contemporaries," that his "Messianic visions should attach themselves not . . . to the approaching return of the exiles . . . , but to the deliverance of his people in a remote future" (p. 509). Read the ninth chapter of Daniel and you will see that these representations concerning him are incorrect. The other differences between his world-view and that of the other prophets may easily be accounted for by the times in which he lived, and by the outlook he had as a member of the government of the Babylonian and the Medo-Persian empires.

There is no doubt that the heroes of the Maccabean struggle found the book of Daniel an inspiring book (*e. g.*

**Maccabean Use
of Daniel** 1 Mac. 2 : 59-60, or the phraseology of 1 : 41 ff.). That, however, does not imply that they thought of the book as a

novelty. It seems clear that they received it as a part of the ancient Scriptures. They classify Daniel and his three friends with Abraham and Joseph and Phinehas and Joshua and Caleb and David and Elijah. The in-

spiring effect of the book was greatly increased by their belief that the apocalypses were prophetic utterances from a past that was then remote.

There are still those who think that the predictions in Daniel reach on indefinitely into the future, instead of terminating in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. It might be somewhat plausibly argued that they do not refer to specific events, but rather to the generic process of reciprocal invasion which has been repeating itself in that region ever since the dawn of history. But if we refer the predictions to the Maccabean events, that need not prevent our thinking that Daniel uttered them, provided we believe that the prophets sometimes made predictions. Can we imagine a worthier use of the predictive gift than that of providing encouragement and inspiration for the men of such a crisis as that?

We should also remember that the comrades of Ezra and Nehemiah needed an inspiring message as really as did the men of the Maccabean times.

A Hypothesis Interest in Daniel would naturally be felt by the great-grandchildren of his contemporaries and by their families. Copies of his visions would be in circulation in Hebrew and in Aramaic. Traditions concerning him would be abundant. In the minds of the Jews of that generation he would be a great figure, picturesque and interesting. At that date what should hinder some prophet, or prophets, either following the traditions or devising forms of parable, from writing great religious stories with Daniel and his companions for the heroes? What should prevent some inspired man from gathering such of the stories and visions as were

suitable, and writing an introductory sketch, and combining them into our book of Daniel? Why not think that this was the way in which the Spirit gave us the book?

II. We turn to the questions of historicity and of truthfulness.

Do not make the mistake of confusing these two questions. There are two ways of thinking, in the case of such a story as that of the fiery furnace, which are consistent with the truthfulness of the story. One is the way of thinking of those who regard the story as historical, provided they also see that its chief value consists in its being a presentation of ethical and religious ideas. The other is the way of those who frankly think that the narrative was not intended to be understood as a record of facts, but was devised for the purpose of presenting the ethical and religious ideas. A parable is as true in its own sphere as if it were perfect history. And what is thus true of this story is substantially true of some of the other parts of Daniel, and of the book of Daniel as a whole. Of course, no narrative is at once both parable and history. One has to choose between these two ways of thinking. But neither of them attributes untruthfulness or unworthiness to the book of Daniel or to its parts.

There are other ways of thinking which are less deserving of hospitality. Such is the way of one who gives all his strength to determining the question whether the narratives are history or parable, so that he has none left for appropriating their great ideas. Such is the way of those who try to account for the record as the product of folklore processes rather than of a mind that had a prophetic

**Objectionable
Ways of Thinking**

message to give. Such is the way, at present so common in works on Daniel, of putting strained interpretations on details in order to make it appear that the several parts are a faulty record of facts.

If the writer of any part of Daniel intended his work as didactic fiction it might be legitimate for him to sketch his pictures on lines different from those of the historical events. If this has been done, it is competent for criticism to attempt to point out the instances, providing the criticism also indicates the true bearings of the instances it points out. It is not proper to manufacture such instances by processes of interpretation; and it is not proper gratuitously to put them in such shape that they discredit the truthfulness of the statements made in Daniel. For example, there is no ground for the sneer over "the improbability that Daniel . . . suffered himself to be initiated into the class of Chaldean wise men," for the book of Daniel does not say that he was so initiated. Other alleged mistakes may be similarly disposed of. Concerning Belshazzar and Darius the Mede, it is perhaps true that the guesses on one side will balance those on the other.

In fine, the book of Daniel is truthful, even if it includes an element of didactic fiction. And whatever

such elements it may include, there are

Conclusions sufficient reasons for affirming the existence of Daniel as a historical person, and for affirming the correctness of the sketch given of him. Unless one denies the reality of predictive prophecy, he has no reason for denying that Daniel's visions occurred as the record says they did. If one holds that

some of the stories are of the nature of parable, and if he desires to be reasonable in so holding, he must base his view not on the idea that a record of miracle is incredible, and not on nagging criticism concerning details, but on literary principles; that is, ultimately, on the way in which the composition makes its appeal to the mind and the picture-making faculties.

CHAPTER XXI

THE BOOK OF ESTHER

Introductory outline: Vashti succeeded by Esther, Haman's plot, Esther's cowardice and her daring, the gallows and the pageant of honor, the victory of the right. The feast of Purim. Ethics of the book of Esther: revenge, ambitious marriages. The religious character of the book, its omissions, its recognition of God as the unseen Reality. The great truths of the book, and some of its minor lessons. Early misapprehensions concerning it, including the Greek variations and additions. Literary characteristics: humor, marks of composition, Persian marks, ornate style. Date, within the Persian period. Discussions concerning canonicity. Truthfulness. Historicity: traditional opinion, verisimilitude, a true presentation of the times. Were the events actual? Is the story a parable? Compromise notions. Bad theories and worse details. The true theory.

The reason for selecting the book of Esther as the subject of one of these chapters is this—that it is perhaps, as we shall see, the book which has been more attacked and sneered at than any other book of the Bible.

Look up the contents. Unlike most of the books of the Bible it is not a collection of tracts, but a continuous story. It is the story of a beautiful Jewish girl, at the outset vain and superficial and faulty, though with reserved strength of character, who becomes the wife of the sovereign of the Persian empire. The characteristic of this king is that he is conscious of doing things on a more magnificent scale than had ever been known before.

Outline of the Story

The story opens with an account of a royal feast given on such a scale. In the course of the feast he makes an unreasonable demand of his queen, Vashti, and she refuses. The king magniloquently regards her refusal as a great public question. In order to protect the men of his realm from the perils of wifely disobedience, which he sees impending, he deposes Vashti. After a while he misses her, and wants a queen. They establish a magnificent system of candidacy in order to obtain one worthy of him. The Jewish girl, backed by her keen-minded cousin, becomes a candidate, and wins. She thinks it unnecessary to mention that she is a Jew, and that fact remains a secret. Possibly people think of the Jew as her business manager and not as a relative. Meanwhile the cousin and the queen have a chance to save the life of the king. They do it, and the deed is put on record, and forgotten.

Apparently the king did not cease to love his young wife, but he did not devote himself so exclusively to her as to make the thing monotonous. He greatly appreciated the society of one Haman, who played into his idea of doing large things such as no one else would have thought of. Haman worked him for a scheme of getting fabulously rich and popular by killing all the Jews in his kingdom and confiscating their property. The queen's cousin with much difficulty persuaded her to attempt to interfere. She dressed as charmingly as possible, and then risked her life by coming unbidden into the king's presence. Her audacity was successful. But she had too much tact to run the risk of preferring her request then and there. She merely invited the king and Haman to

a banquet which she had prepared for them; and at that banquet she refused to tell the king what she desired, but only asked him and Haman to come to another banquet the next day.

Haman thought that this was the greatest success that he had yet scored. He seemed to himself to be at the pinnacle. One little thing, however, made him angry. There was a Jew who looked him defiantly in the face, instead of crouching before him. That Jew was the queen's cousin, though Haman did not know it. He had a gallows made, intending next day to ask the king that the disrespectful Jew might be hanged. Haman was an imaginative man. A gallows eight feet high would have been sufficient, but he gratified his fancy by having the gallows made about eighty feet high.

Meanwhile something occurred. The king did not go to sleep promptly that night. Perhaps he was kept awake by his curiosity, or even, possibly, by his anxiety, as to what his wife wanted; or his wakefulness may have been due to indigestion, or to some other cause. He had them bring the public records and read to him. Perhaps he wanted to be put to sleep, and thought that reading of that kind would make him drowsy. Perhaps he was trying to think out some matter, and expected that the records would furnish him with hints. Anyhow, the records that were read related that a certain Jew had saved the king's life, and did not relate that he had received any reward for it. The king did not know that this Jew was the queen's cousin.

The next morning when Haman came to ask leave to hang the Jew, the king got in ahead of him with the

question, "What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honor?" Haman was sure that he himself must be the man to be honored. He and the king devised a scheme for a public pageant such as no king had ever before made in honor of a subject. Then the king, to Haman's surprise, commanded him instantly to put into operation the pageant they had devised, in honor of the Jew who had saved the king's life. This was a different thing from hanging the Jew on the gallows, but Haman had the grit to do as he was commanded. He, the well known favorite of the king, humbly attended the Jew in his triumphal ride, with the proclamation, "Thus be it done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honor." But when it was over he hurried home, and there gave vent to his chagrin. Apparently he forgot his engagement to dine with the king and queen, and had to be sent for.

The king was not stupid when once he really gave thought to a matter. Before he went to the banquet that day he probably knew, without having been told, that the Jews were the best subjects he had, and that he had been a fool to acquiesce in their destruction. At the banquet Haman, craven that he was, lost his presence of mind, and contributed to his own overthrow and to the queen's success. The peril to the Jews was changed into wonderful prosperity, the queen's cousin was elevated to an influential position in the empire, and the greatness of the empire was thereby enhanced.

Prominent in the story is the casting of "Pur, that is, the lot" (3 : 7; 9 : 24), and the religious feast of Purim (9 : 26-32). The story purports either to be a historical

account of the origin of that feast, or to be in some other way characteristically related to the feast. We have no

Purim information as to whether it was written on purpose to be read at the Purim feast, but at all events it came to be so read.

The spiritual note which it strikes is one peculiarly fit to be the dominant note on that occasion. So it is important to observe that the feast of Purim is the one group of ancient Jewish religious observances that is extrapentateuchal. It arose in the countries of the exile, and made no claims to have originated with Moses or with David.

In the matter of its ethical teachings the book of Esther is savagely attacked. If you will examine the attacks,

Ethics of the Book of Esther however, you will find that they are mainly based on inferences from the book, and not on teachings that are either

expressed or necessarily implied in it. If the spirit of revenge attributed in it to the Jews were set forth as a matter of good example, an example for us all to follow, that would be objectionable. It is not so set forth. It is simply mentioned as a part of the events of the story, leaving the reader to approve or to condemn as his own judgment dictates. Their bloodthirstiness was wrong of course, however the element of self-defense may come in to palliate it, and however it might be defended by parallel instances even in recent times.

The book does not say that the conduct of Esther in seeking marriage with Ahasuerus was exemplary. It leaves that to the judgment of the reader. Her conduct was exactly as commendable as the conduct of other persons who sell themselves in marriage for the sake of at-

taining to fortunes or to careers or to rank. Let us hope that your ideals of marriage are so fine that you are compelled to condemn Esther. She suffered bitterly. But at least she was splendidly true to herself in the situations that arose after the irretrievable step had been taken.

The book is also attacked on the side of its religious omissions. It does not mention the Supreme Being under any name. Even if the attempts to find some name of God cryptically hidden in some part of the text are regarded as successful, that counts for very little. Further, there is no mention of prayer or of religious observances, except as these may be implied in the fasting (4 : 16), no mention of Jerusalem or of the religious element in the separateness of Israel, no mention of prophets or of priests. Men hotly declare that the book is a secular story, having no proper place in an aggregate of religious literature.

**Its Religious
Omissions**

The charge is sustained provided we assume that pious talk is the same thing with religion. Nevertheless the book is saturated with profound religious ideas. Whatever may be the significance of its omissions, its contents are deeply religious.

It represents that all human beings are so bound together that whatever affects one affects all. The queen in the palace cannot escape from her kinship with the most obscure trafficker on the street. The despotism of the conditions that dominate any age is as absolute as was that of the Persian monarchy. Under it some of our race are condemned to poverty and wretchedness and temptations such as render virtue well-nigh impossible, and all

suffer from spiritual imperfection. In these conditions what shall be the choice of one like Esther, one who belongs to the fortunate class in society, one who, because of his good fortune, has ability to help those who need help? The lesson implied is the same whether you ask this question concerning the spiritual needs of men, or their physical needs, or their social needs. The ideas that connect themselves with this question are both religious and moral, and the book of Esther is full of them. Men of all classes and conditions are in one bundle; each is involved in the fate of others; it is no more safe than it is kind for the highest to neglect their duties to the lowest.

If the name of Deity is absent from the book of Esther, the reality is not absent. No men in history ever had more occasion than the Jews in exile to raise the cry which Mr Lowell has formulated in his poem, "The Present Crisis":

"Truth forever on the scaffold,
Wrong forever on the throne."

The conditions in which they lived were such that at any time a Haman might arise and plot their extermination. They had need of the consoling truth that—

". . . Behind the dim unknown
Standeth God within the shadow,
Keeping watch above his own."

In the book of Esther if God is in the shadow and invisible, he is none the less keeping watch.

In our modern religious phraseology no words are more familiar than the maxim that "one with God is a

majority," or than Matthew Arnold's saying in regard to "an unseen power, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness." The story in Esther, with that of Jonah and some of those in Daniel, are stories in which one or a few Israelites come into conflict with the whole power of Assyria or Babylonia or Persia, as the case may be, with only Jehovah to help them, and come off victorious. In Esther the moral is accentuated by the fact that the one Israelite is a woman whose record has been in part marked by vanity and selfishness and other weaknesses. In spite of my badness I am in the majority if God is with me. And the story of Esther is a story of God's purpose with Israel and the nations, illustrating the truth that in all events, including all human efforts great or little, fine or mean, there operates the unseen power that makes for righteousness. The avoiding of religious terminology has the fine effect of making the presentation of these great truths unusual and fresh, and such as to appeal even to a mind of agnostic tendencies.

These are the great things in the book of Esther—the things that chiefly appeal to a serious and intelligent reader. Critics have not failed to appreciate this, but many have failed sufficiently to emphasize the great things.

**The Great Things
in the Book**

They have called attention to them partially and incidentally, but have not used them as the key to the critical questions that arise. For example a distinguished scholar gives as an explanation of the scantiness of "specifically religious phraseology" that this "is not a fault in a book read at a joyous feast." As if all the

Jewish religious feasts were not joyous! As if religion were not conceived of as the most joyous thing in them!

In addition to these lofty truths, the book is crowded with minor lessons—lessons so important that in some other connection they might well stand at the front; lessons, for example, concerning the influence of women over men; the influence of women in public affairs, and their responsibility therefor; dress as a factor in influence; the value of a sweet disposition and of engaging manners; the importance of adaptation and of tact in our efforts to accomplish things; the wisdom of being loyal to a tried adviser; the hollowness of friendships that are based on mere interest—such as that of the friends who advise Haman to make the gallows for Mordecai, and then, when the tide turns, hasten to tell the king about the gallows.

From very early times the book of Esther has been the victim of misapprehension and misinformation.

Early

Misapprehensions

There is no room for doubt that the Persian king who figures in the book is Xerxes. But if you turn to a reference Bible with the Ussher chronology you will find that the dates given in the margin are those of the reign of Darius Hystaspis. Ussher thought that the marriage of Esther was nearly contemporaneous with the completing of the Zerubbabel temple. Copies of the Greek translation call this king Artaxerxes, instead of Ahasuerus, and, like our English copies, place Esther last among the historical books. Dr. Prideaux accepted this and made the marriage of Esther synchronous with the mission of Ezra. Josephus calls the king Artaxerxes, but counts

the events of Esther as later than those of Ezra and Nehemiah, probably inferring this from the order of the books in his Greek copy. So he attributes the commissions of Ezra and Nehemiah to Xerxes. He tells us what Nehemiah did in the twenty-fifth and twenty-eighth years of Xerxes, quite unmindful of the fact that Xerxes reigned only twenty-one years. His translator, Whiston, agrees with him, and is supercilious in his expressions concerning the Hebrew text of Esther. The opinions of Ussher and Josephus on these points are now counted as obsolete and eccentric. It is rather fashionable, however, to speak of the Greek account as in some respects preferable to the Hebrew, but when one does this it is presumptive evidence that he has not read the account in the Greek form, and does not know what he is talking about. But our interpretations of Esther still suffer from this atmosphere of traditional misinformation.

Our ideas of Esther have been affected by the internal changes that have been made, as well as by the traditions that have been circulated. We have some of these changes in the additions to Esther which appear in our Apocrypha.

**Greek Additions
to Esther**

Others appear as variants in the text. Others are alluded to in ancient books in passages that mention the contents of Esther. For example, Origen has an allusion in which demons figure prominently. The story-tinker began early to get in his work on Esther. The charming simplicity of the narrative did not appeal to the translators and commentators who made the Greek version; they thought the story ought to have more color.

Its moral code seemed to them defective, and they were offended by its lack of religiousness; and so in the additions they made they undertook to supply these deficiencies.

The story in the Hebrew permits us to think that Esther loved her magnificent husband, and that he loved and respected her, and was amenable to just and wholesome influences coming from her. The additions represent her as loathing him because he was not a Jew. This gives to the connection a malodorous character which does not really belong to it. The Hebrew story leaves us free to think that Xerxes was man enough to be pleased with the audacity of his beautiful wife when she dared to come unbidden before him. The additions give an embroidered account of her being so overcome that she fainted away, making him very anxious about her. And in these apocrypha the reader will find prayers, and the name of God, and plenty of religious words, some of them well spoken, but he will find far less of a deep religious spirit than in the book as it stands in the Hebrew.

The humor in the book of Esther is prominent among its literary characteristics. The story is tremendously serious, in places tragic, but it is not blind to the ludicrous aspects of life. Its humor is not of the type which expresses itself in uproarious external laughter; it is rather of the kind in which you hold your face straight, while you are convulsed internally. Among the funniest things in the world are the big-headed estimates which some men form concerning women. Read the account of the king and

**Literary
Characteristics**

his sophomoric statesmen in consultation concerning Vashti (1 : 13-22). Read it slowly, and taste it. It is inimitable. Or read appreciatively the sketch of the incident when Haman goes to the king expecting to ask leave to hang Mordecai, and finds one more boost for his vanity in imagining himself to be the man whom the king delighteth to honor, and is then sent through the streets in attendance on Mordecai, and goes home and tells his wife.

The book presents few marks of having been drawn from sources, though verses 29-32 of the ninth chapter are mainly a briefer duplicate of verses 20-28. The book is more full of Persian marks than any other Old Testament book. For details see Driver's Introduction or other books of reference. The Hebrew has more vivacity and color than that of Nehemiah and Ezra, and is a shade later in its syntax. The differences are such as may be accounted for by the differences in the subject, and by the personality of the author.

The phraseology of the first verse seems to imply that the reign of Xerxes was past, and was a matter of history when the writer wrote. Some one

Date says that the book of Esther was written late enough so that the reign of Xerxes had already become enveloped in a mist of imagination. In any sense in which this statement is true, three or four decades would be sufficient to meet these conditions. In the Hebrew bibles it is grouped with Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Chronicles, as one of the latest books. Its date is probably before B. C. 400. It is entirely absurd to think of it as having been written after

the Persian domination in Jewish affairs was displaced by the Greek.

There were discussions concerning the canonicity of Esther among the Jews of the first and second centuries

**Canonicity
of Esther**

A. D., and the Christians of those and the centuries immediately following. It is misrepresentation to say that the question was raised whether Esther should be admitted to the aggregate known as the Holy Scriptures. The discussion invariably assumed that the book was already recognized as scriptural; the question was whether this verdict ought to be reversed, and this question was uniformly decided in the negative. The reason for raising the question was not that Esther was then an unknown or an unprized book. Few books of the Old Testament were in those centuries as much used or as much admired. But Esther was the book of the feast of Purim, and Purim was not a Jerusalem feast. Purim and its book were in a class by themselves.

The important truths in the book of Esther are not those which concern historical events, but those which concern human living. This is the case

Truthfulness

if the book is history, and it is equally the case if the book is not history. The events are of small account compared with the great ideas and lessons already mentioned in this chapter. Beyond dispute the book was intended as a presentation of these ideas and lessons. And in this character there can be no question of its splendid truthfulness.

Is the book historical as well as true? We have no information as to whether the generation among whom it

was published regarded it as history, but most of the generations since have so regarded it. Xerxes is a well-known historical character. Mordecai

Historicity may or may not be the Jewish leader whose name is in a list with those of Zerubbabel and Nehemiah (Ezra 2 : 2; Neh. 7 : 7). The character of Xerxes is correctly drawn, both in respect to his genuine greatness and his foibles. It is interesting to note that in his third year, when he is raising the biggest of all armies in order to invade Greece, he is very lofty in dealing with Vashti; but he misses Vashti dreadfully in his sixth year, when he has come back defeated from Greece (1 : 3; 2 : 1 ff; 2 : 12, 16). The events of the story are so dated as to give them a definite position among the events of Jewish history (3 : 7, etc.), the twelfth year of Xerxes being 64 years after Zerubbabel came to Jerusalem, 42 years after he completed the temple, 16 years before the coming of Ezra. In the twelfth year of Xerxes Ezra was probably in Babylonia, pursuing the studies which afterward made him famous as the ready scribe of the law of Jehovah. There is no reason to doubt the correctness of the details concerning governmental administration, or concerning the situation of the Jews, scattered in all parts of the empire. Those in Palestine were at that date only an unimportant part of the Jewish world. They would have perished with the others if Haman's plans had succeeded. At these and other points the story is perfect in verisimilitude. If it is fiction it is at least correctly set against a historical background.

A record may be historical in the sense that the

recorded events actually occurred, or in the different sense that it is a correct presentation of the times of which it treats, or in both these senses. Historicity in the second of these meanings is often more important than in the first. As we have seen, the book of Esther presents a historical situation vividly and truly. This is its principal historical value. Is it also historical in the sense that the events of the story actually occurred?

The Jewish secondary sacred literature abounds in religious stories which have been built up around the names of historical persons. For example, the Apocryphal books of Judith, 1 Esdras, 3 Maccabees, contain stories of this kind. The story of the debate on Wine and the King and Women and Truth (1 Esd. 3-4) is particularly fine. There is no doubt of the superiority of the Esther story to these others—its superiority both in point of verisimilitude and in the greatness of the truths it sets forth. But is it, in its literary character, a story of the same kind? May it be the prototype from which the others were modeled?

In the case of Esther no question of miracle arises, and this fact renders the case less complicated than those of Jonah or of the Daniel stories. But one might supposably say that the imaginative phraseology of this narrative suggests to him that the narrative itself is imaginary; that in view of the abundant information we have concerning the times of Xerxes we might expect, in case the Esther events really occurred, to find some mention of them in other writings that deal with those times;

**Stories in
Apocrypha**

**Is this Story
a Parable?**

that while the numerals enable us to figure out other events contemporaneous with the events of Esther, the story itself betrays no consciousness of being connected with these other events, but presents its events in isolation, as if they belonged to a different world from the others. In view of these and like impressions one might supposably think of the book as didactic fiction, invented for the purpose of presenting the great truths, historically valuable not for the events narrated, but for the picture it gives of the times; in short, that Esther is a parable, true in the sense in which it was intended to be understood. No person counts the parables of Jesus as untruthful. The Esther parable, if it is a parable, is on the same footing, except that it is set against the background of a definite historical situation.

Strange to say, this view is not generally presented, save in ways that are hazy and uncertain, by the scholars

**Compromise
Notions**

who deny the proper historicity of Esther. Many of their views seem to be of the nature of compromises between the idea that the book is correct history, and the idea that it is falsehood. In the new Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia the distinguished scholar, Conrad von Orelli, cites the opinions of fifteen or more scholars. The opinions cited fall into three classes: first, that the story is "pure fiction"; second, that it is an elaboration of a Persian or Babylonian folktale; third, that it has a "historical kernel." This last Dr. von Orelli seems to accept, regarding it as the majority opinion.

If one thinks of Esther as parable it is of no great consequence whether it is pure fiction or has a historical

kernel. It belittles the book to call it pure fiction, if you mean thereby a yarn spun for entertainment, or anything less than a true parable. It belittles it to call it a folktale, or an outgrowth from folktales. It is worse than either to speak of it as having a historical nucleus, if that means that the book itself is an incrustation of falsehoods formed upon that nucleus.

Some writers support these hazy theories by bad details. "According to Esther 2 : 6-7, Esther and Mordecai had been deported with Jehoiachin." This is selected as a statement too absurd to be true, the deportation of Jehoiachin having occurred about 120 years before the time assigned for the marriage of Esther. Turn to the passage and observe that what it really says is that Mordecai's greatgrandfather was deported with Jehoiachin.

It is said in Esther that "the city of Shushan was perplexed" when Haman's decree was published, and that it "shouted and was glad" when Mordecai came to power. A recent writer regards these statements as accretions upon the historical nucleus. He says that they "are too strong to be true." He would not think so if a crisis one-tenth part as serious arose in the city where he lives. Surely it is not extravagant to say that the city "was perplexed" when the government had authorized the murder of a large group of business men and their families, nor to say that the city shouted for gladness when the danger was averted.

"Haman having had a dispute with . . . Mordecai because the latter would not bow down to him." This

statement belittles the high and mighty Haman. The idea in Esther is that Haman "thought scorn" of getting into an altercation with so plebeian a person as Mordecai.

There is a style of criticism which gets together details like these, puts forced meanings upon them, and then proceeds to account for them as untrustworthy accretions. "These narratives were certainly orally transmitted with delight, and moreover passed through a noteworthy literary redaction. In this way inaccuracies and exaggerations might easily creep in."

The author from whose work these citations have been made says that "the narrative is harmonious, and

**True Theory
Concerning
Esther**

written with dramatic skill." He speaks in high terms of its ethical and religious seriousness. He shows appreciation of

its great ideas. Can he not see that the details ought to be interpreted in the light of the serious purpose and the great truths? Can he not see that, so interpreted, the instances which he cites are either not to the point, or are too trifling to count? The book is the work of one gifted author, and not a mere accretion of chance materials taken from popular stories. It is not a legendary outgrowth, but a record with a purpose. If not historical it is genuine religious parable.

CHAPTER XXII

THE BOOKS OF EZRA, NEHEMIAH, AND CHRONICLES

These books a single work, or series. Closing books of the Old Testament. Twenty-four books or thirty-nine? Different order in the translations. Contents of Ezra-Nehemiah-Chronicles: narrative of Zerubbabel, of Ezra, of Nehemiah, of the whole past history. Sources and authorship: Ezra in the first or the third person. Nehemiah in the first or the third person. Biblical sources for Chronicles. Extra-biblical sources. The purpose of the books. Nehemiah's library. Historicity. That of Ezra and Nehemiah. That of Chronicles: inadvertences, genealogical matters, detachable stories, the narrative as a whole. The final processes in making the Old Testament aggregate. Ezra and the scribes. No information as to canon-making. The different kinds of work done. Earlier aggregations. Processes of growth. After 400 B. C. The New Testament.

These three books, in this order, stand at the close of the Hebrew bibles. The Jewish tradition is to the effect

The Latest Old Testament Books that "the men of the Great Synagogue wrote Ezekiel, and the Twelve, and Daniel, and the roll of Esther"; that "Ezra wrote his book and the genealogy of Chronicles until himself." The commenting tradition asks, "And who did the completing?" The answer is, "Nehemiah, the son of Hacaliah." This tradition agrees with the Hebrew bibles in placing Ezra and Nehemiah and Chronicles latest among the books.

The consensus of opinion to the same effect is nearly universal. There are many who think of Esther and

Daniel and some of the Psalms as written later than Chronicles, but even they think of the proper Old Testament aggregate as closing with Chronicles, and regard these other writings as supplementary. And no one doubts that Ezra and Nehemiah and Chronicles are a single piece of composition, or perhaps, rather, a series of writings, by one author or school of authors.

Certain important considerations concerning the date of these writings have been presented in Chapter XVIII. Our further discussion of them connects itself with their character as the closing part of the Old Testament.

The Hebrew bibles follow an old tradition which counts the Old Testament as consisting of 24 books, or of 22 books, the twelve minor prophets being counted as one book, and Ezra and Nehemiah as one book, and the double books of Samuel and Kings and Chronicles each as one book. It is the fashion to infer that some of these 24 books have been cut up into smaller books, thus increasing the number to 39. There is no ground for this inference. The separate existence of the 39 books can be traced back as far as we can at all trace the matter. The present Hebrew bibles clearly assume that the number of the books is for some purposes 39, and for other purposes 24; and this has been the usage from the earliest times concerning which we have information.

Most of the translations, following the lead of early Greek copies, place the books in a different order from that in the Hebrew Bibles. They arrange the narrative books by themselves, and place Ezra and Nehemiah and Esther after Chronicles, as dealing with later events.

Read these books, in the order in which the Hebrew bibles place them, with sufficient care to have a good idea of their contents. First comes the record of the migration under Zerubbabel, and the building of the temple, B. C. 538-515 (Ezra 1-6). Into this record is inserted a certain list of immigrants, duplicated with variations in Nehemiah and in 1 Esdras (Ezra 2; Neh. 7 : 5-73; 1 Esd. 5 : 4-46). Apparently it includes men of later migrations, as well as those who came with Zerubbabel. Into the record is also inserted an Aramaic document (4 : 8-6 : 18), which purports to consist of excerpts from state papers, connected by a few sentences of narrative. There are six of these excerpts in the Hebrew or the Aramaic of these six chapters (1 : 2-4; 4 : 7-16; 4 : 17-22; 5 : 6-17; 6 : 1-12; 6 : 2-5).

Second, we find the record, covering a year and a day, of the migration under Ezra, B. C. 458-457 (Ezra 7-10). This includes one official document in Aramaic (7 : 12-26). Eighty years had elapsed since the beginning of the return from exile, and thus far the return had proved a comparative failure. Ezra expected to give it new life by improving the temple service and by enforcing the ancient laws of Israel, especially those against intermarriage with foreigners.

Third, we find the narrative concerning Nehemiah. It implies that Ezra has not been successful. Nehemiah, using business methods, changes the failure into success, while Ezra still remains at the front. First, we have a record of the first administration of Nehemiah, B. C. 445-433 (Neh. 1-11 : 2; 5 : 14; 13 : 6), all but a few

sentences being devoted to the first year. Second, we have a genealogical note (11 : 3-12 : 26), interposed between the two parts of the narrative. Third, we have the second part of the narrative. It consists of just a few items concerning the second administration of Nehemiah (12 : 27-13 : 31), which began at an unknown date after B. C. 433, and lasted many years.

Fourth, in the two books of Chronicles the record goes back to the beginning, and makes a review of the entire history up to the point of time where the record itself began. First, it groups together a quantity of fragments of genealogies, with incidents interspersed (1 Chron. 1-9). The closing chapter of this section is in part a duplicate of the genealogical note in Nehemiah (Neh. 11 : 3-12 : 26), and brings matters up to the same date with that note. Second, the record reviews the history of David, beginning with the battle in which the death of Saul and his heirs opened the way for David to become king (1 Chron. 10-29). Third, it reviews the history of the dynasty of David—Solomon and his successors (2 Chron.), and closes (2 Chron. 36 : 22-23), by repeating the words with which Ezra begins. By means of this repetition the author of the record announces that he has finished his work, having arrived again at the point whence he started.

**Sources and
Authorship**

Now observe certain phenomena bearing on the questions of the sources and the authorship of this series of writings.

Distinguish between the narrative proper, the inserted documents (*e. g.* Neh. 7 : 6-73; 11 : 3-12 : 26), and the quoted passages (*e. g.* Neh. 9 : 5b-38). Then in

one section of the narrative (Ezra 7 : 27-9 : 15) Ezra is represented as speaking in the first person. Except in this section he is spoken of in the third person.

The larger part of the narrative in Nehemiah consists of sections in which Nehemiah is the speaker (1-7 : 5; 12 : 27-13 : 31). The use of the third person in giving a date (12 : 47) is not inconsistent with this, that being such an expression as Nehemiah himself might naturally use. The remaining narrative section (Neh. 8-11 : 2) begins in the third person, and even mentions Nehemiah in the third person (8 : 9, 10; 10 : 1). But it makes a transition to the "we" in the quoted passage (9 : 9 ff), and from that to "we" in the narrative (10 : 30, 31, 32 ff). So it would not be misrepresentation to say that in the main narrative of the book Nehemiah is the speaker throughout.

The first nine chapters of Chronicles draw largely on the Old Testament books, beginning with Genesis, both for facts and for phraseology, but they also draw upon other sources. The tenth chapter of 1 Chronicles is a duplicate, with changes, of the thirty-first chapter of 1 Samuel. From that point to the close the books of Chronicles consist of passages copied from the books of Samuel and Kings, with slight abridgments and other changes, and with the addition of other passages. The passages taken from Samuel and Kings are those which contain the history of Judah. The history of northern Israel is omitted, and so are most of the personal stories. The added matters include small incidents, interesting items, messages of prophets who are not mentioned in Kings, genealogical and other details, and, in particular,

information concerning the preparations for the temple, and concerning the temple worship at different periods, including many priestly and ceremonial matters. The Hebrew of these added passages is of a later type than that of the passages copied from Samuel and Kings, and has some Persian marks.

Besides their copying from the narrative books and the Psalms, the books of Chronicles contain several dozen references to literary sources, a large proportion of which are sources not preserved in our existing Bibles—many references to several different books of Kings; references to writings by Samuel, Nathan, Gad, Ahijah, Jedo, Shemaiah, Iddo, Jehu, Isaiah; liturgical writings of David, Gad, Nathan, Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun; and other writings. Take a concordance, and look them up.

In fine, it seems clear that the man or men who wrote the books of Ezra and Nehemiah and Chronicles had a library at command; that they possessed most or all of our Old Testament writings, with many others; that it seemed to them that the information given in the sacred books then existing was not sufficiently full in regard to certain matters; that they wrote for the purpose of preserving facts that might otherwise be lost, of supplying the information that was lacking, of making the record complete up to date. The Greek translators did not miss the mark when they titled the books of Chronicles as the books "Of the Things that Had Been Omitted."

Observe that the extrabiblical literature mentioned or quoted in this work consists mainly of writings of four

classes: books of kings, of prophets, of David and his associates, and the state papers (mostly letters to or from the Persian kings) quoted or referred to in Ezra, and Nehemiah. There is a tradition to the effect that Nehemiah gathered (and by indubitable inference, that he used) just such a library (2 Mac. 2 : 13):

**Nehemiah's
Library**

“And the same things were related both in the public archives and in the records of Nehemiah; and how he, founding a library, gathered together the books about the kings and prophets, and the *books* of David, and letters of kings about sacred gifts.”

Scholars have cited this passage, not successfully, as an account of the making of the canon of some part of the Old Testament. It stands in a context in which are matters that appear fabulous to most readers. But its interfitting with the phenomena of Ezra-Nehemiah-Chronicles is beyond question. The references in this work imply Nehemiah's library, and the description of Nehemiah's library exactly fits the references. The correspondences can be accounted for only by regarding the library as a historical fact, and the use made of it in the work of the Chronicler as also a historical fact.

The books of Ezra and Nehemiah say that the ceremonial laws of the pentateuch were in full operation eighty years before Ezra, and testify that these laws came from Moses (*e. g.* Ezra 3, but also all parts of these books). Further, they testify in detail to the effect that the temple service, including its music and song, its

Historicity

gatekeepers and Nethinim, originated with David and his advisers (Ezra 2 : 41, 42, 65, 70; 3 : 10; 7 : 7; 8 : 20; Neh. 10 : 28; 11 : 17, 22; 12 : 24, 27, 35, 36, 45, 46; 13 : 5, etc.). The criticism which denies these facts is compelled to deny also the historicity of these books from beginning to end. There is no reasonableness in such denial. The books bear the marks of being true to fact throughout.

It is fashionable to charge the books of Chronicles, beyond all the other books of the Bible, with being untrue to fact. In dealing with this charge there is need of discrimination. See Chapter II of this volume.

The text in Chronicles is not in as good shape as that in most parts of the Old Testament. There are some errors of inadvertence. For example, compare 2 Chronicles 22 : 2 or 36 : 9, with the parallel places in Kings. These errors, however, are not so numerous or so important as to affect greatly our confidence in the trustworthiness of the books.

The genealogical matter in Chronicles, it is clear, is largely made up from fragmentary sources. If the contents of each fragment were printed separately from that of the others, and if the lacunae were indicated by dots, or by some other device, that would help us to see the true state of the case. It would separate some names that now seem to be put together. It would account for some of the different spellings of names by showing that the names came from different sources. It would enable us better to differentiate the instances in which such terms as "father" and "son" are used to denote more remote ancestors or descendants. A study of this aspect of the

case sustains the claim that the Chronicler has here followed sources, and has used his sources in good faith.

There are some detachable stories in Chronicles, which stand by themselves (*e. g.* 2 Chron. 13 : 3-17 or 20 : 1-30). One of these stories says that Abijah had 400,000 men in a certain battle, and that Jeroboam had 800,000, of whom 500,000 were slain. If any person should say that these numbers are used for the purpose of warning the reader that the account is not history, but is a story told for the purpose of teaching lessons, you might perhaps object to that view of the matter, but at all events it is not an impugment of the truthfulness of the books of Chronicles.

It is alleged that at many points the books of Chronicles contradict the books of Samuel and Kings. It is further alleged that the books of Chronicles are characterized by extravagant estimates of the ancient glories of Israel. Most of these instances vanish on examination. Among the few that remain are a very few that present real difficulties.

Of course a person who holds to the falseness of all the parts of the Scriptures that testify to the early origin of the pentateuchal institutions must hold that the Chronicles are false throughout (see Chapter XIX). There is no sufficient reason why any other person should doubt that these books are substantially true history.

On the basis of these facts work out for yourself a conception of the circumstances in which the Old Testament was completed. One tradition counts Ezra and Nehemiah and Chronicles as the latest Old Testament

books, and dates them not later, or not much later, than B. C. 400. Another tradition dates these books much later, and teaches that some other Old Testament writings were produced in times still later. For the purposes of the present study leave these questions open. Somebody at some time did this final work. In regard to some points concerning the work we may be sure, no matter who did it, or when.

All agree that Ezra the scribe and the other scribes of his time—Ezra and Nehemiah and their associates—did something very important in this matter. The older tradition teaches that they received the various writings now known as the Scriptures, and edited and combined them, putting them into final shape. The newer tradition attributes to them the writing or rewriting of nearly the whole, leaving the completion of the work to succeeding centuries. Leave this question open for the moment. Somebody at some date completed the Old Testament. Without deciding who did it, let us look at the work that was done.

Most men who treat this subject start with the assumption that some authoritative person or organization “formed the canon,” in the sense of selecting from accessible literature the writings that should henceforth be regarded as Scripture. But we have no information that any such process ever occurred. Neither for the time of Nehemiah nor for any other time have we any account of an official making of a promulgated canon. All the official promulgations come from late centuries, and

Picture the Situation

No Information as to Canon-Making

merely authenticate what they declare to be immemorial fact. It is not necessary to hold that there ever was any canon-making process other than the receiving of the books as Jehovah's word from the time when they were written.

The term "aggregate" is a simpler term to use in this connection than "canon" or "collection." To the term "canon" many attach the idea of formal and official sanction. The scriptural writings may supposably have existed as a collection before they became officially a canon. And they may supposably have existed as an aggregate, may have been distinguished in thought from other writings, before any one brought them together as a collection of writings.

In part from the information at which we have glanced, and in part from the nature of the case, we know that

**The Different
Parts of the Work**

the men who completed the Old Testament aggregate, whoever they were, had to do several varieties of work. As we have seen, they gathered literary materials—such writings or fragments of writings as they could find bearing on the history and the sacred institutions of their nation. Further, they made written studies on subjects of this sort; witness the "commentaries" mentioned in 2 Chronicles 13 : 22 and 24 : 27, and perhaps some of the other works that are mentioned in Chronicles. Further still, they wrote the latest books of the Old Testament, whichever these may be. Yet further, they gave form to the aggregate made up of the books which they wrote combined with those which they received already written. In addition, they probably did a work of re-

vising, annotating, and otherwise changing the writings which compose the Scriptural aggregate. There is nothing in any doctrine of inspiration to forbid this, the idea being that these men were duly inspired for this work. The tendency now is to go to an extreme in attributing to them much work of this kind; but the truth certainly lies nearer the opposite extreme. Finally, they did something (not all that the traditions assign to them, but something) in the way of making arrangements for the uncorrupted transmission of the writings.

The men who completed the Old Testament did not receive their aggregate merely in the form of separate books or sections of books. The work of aggregating had been done in part by their predecessors. Take the Psalms, for example. Our book of Psalms includes certain lesser collections; the Psalms of Ascents (120-134), the Psalms of Asaph (73-83), the Psalms to the Sons of Korah (42-49, 84-88). It also exhibits other traces of earlier collections (72 : 20, for instance). The men who completed our book of Psalms, with its present arrangement in five books, were men who possessed these older collections, and they incorporated them into the final collection which they made. Their work consisted partly in this, and not merely in the selecting and arranging of particular Psalms.

Earlier Aggregations There were other previous aggregations. A very early one is spoken of as "the book" (Ex. 17 : 14; 1 Sam. 10 : 25)—not "a book," as in the versions. There was the Mosaic law book (Deut. 31 : 9-13, 24-26, and 17 : 11, 18), and the law book of Josiah's time (2 Kings 22 : 8,

etc.), and the literary work of the men of Hezekiah (Prov. 25 : 1), and the books to which Daniel had access (Dan. 9 : 2), and the book read by Ezra (Neh. 8 : 1 ff). The word "law," in a large number of the places where it occurs, denotes an aggregation of sacred writings.

In fine, what information we have is to the effect that from early times there existed in Israel an aggregation of writings which were received as a record from Jehovah; that this aggregate was augmented from time to time, particularly in the times of Moses, of Samuel and David, of Isaiah and Hezekiah, of Jeremiah, of Ezra and Nehemiah. It was a growing aggregate, and thought of as such. There came a time when it ceased to grow, and by that fact it became complete. Its final authors received the growing aggregate, augmented it by such writings of their own as properly belonged to it, and arranged the writings; for example, grouping the three books of the major prophets and the twelve books of the minor prophets, and gathering and arranging the Psalms.

Our information, either expressly or by necessary implication, attributes this aggregate in all its stages to men who had the prophetic gift, but it is silent as to the details. There is no early tradition of any vote in an ecclesiastical council, or of any pronouncement by some person in authority, defining this body of sacred writings. All that we know is that it was an aggregate which had been growing through the centuries, and had been regarded as sacred during the successive stages of its growth. We have no information as to any "closing

of the canon" other than the writing of its last book and the arranging of the books.

In Chapter XVIII we have looked at some of the many reasons for believing that the Old Testament ag-

**The Aggregate
After B. C. 400**

gregate became complete within the lifetime of Nehemiah, not later or not much later than 400 B. C. We cannot prove that from then a copy of it was kept in the temple, carefully distinguished from all other writings, but the probabilities favor this idea. Presumably there may have been complete collections of the aggregate elsewhere, but the circulation of it was mostly in manuscripts of the separate parts. The aggregation was more a matter of general knowledge than of juxtaposition of manuscripts. But somehow or other the aggregate was regarded as a literature by itself. This is presupposed in all the discussions which arose, some centuries later, in regard to the limits of the canon.

In the century in which Jesus lived his disciples wrote the New Testament books. These came to be recognized as a growing sacred aggregate precisely in the same way as in the case of the Old Testament, except that with the New Testament the process covered only a few decades instead of many centuries. In due time, Christian opinion placed the new aggregate on the same footing with the old. Entirely apart from all questions of official canon-making, the double aggregate thus formed stands before mankind as in a unique sense the word of God, and it will so stand forever.

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