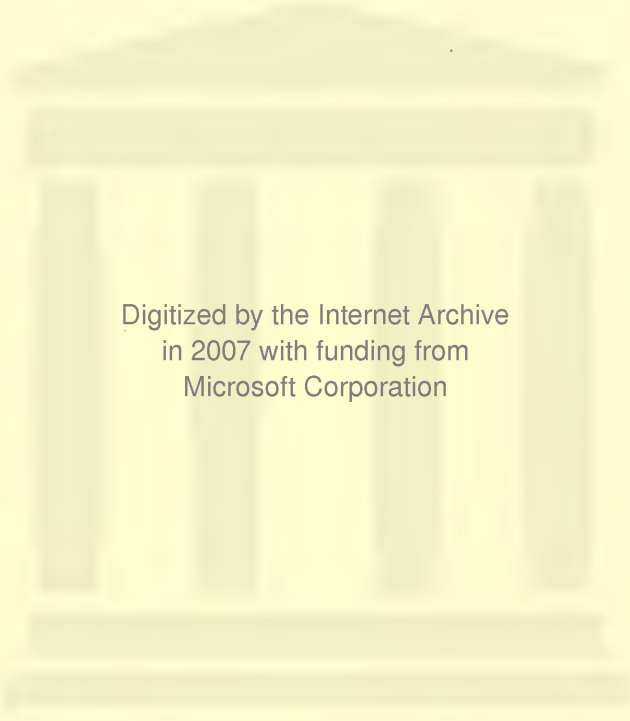
THE ROOTS OF CHRISTIAN TEACHING AS FOUND IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

GEORGE AARON BARTON



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The Roots of Christian Teaching as Found in the Old Testament

—BY—

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TO

MY WIFE

DEVOTED HELPER
LOVING AND INSPIRING
COMRADE

THE PURPOSE OF THIS BOOK.

This little volume has been written for those who would study the Old Testament devotionally. Many are puzzled to know how to use the Old Testament. They have an idea that modern knowledge and modern methods of study have wrought great changes in our conception of that part of our Bible, but just what these changes are they often do not know, and when they do know, often experience a vague sense of helplessness with reference to the use to which the Old Testament may be put.

Our forefathers found Christ in the Old Testament by a system of typology. The system was often fanciful and arbitrary, but it pointed in the direction of the right method. The roots of Christian teaching go down into Hebrew and Semitic soil, and to understand the whole tree, one must study the roots. Then, too, there is a real typology. Just as the biologist beholds in the skeleton of a fish of the far-off Devonian

age the type of a man, because it is the antecedent of the human skeleton, so the student of scripture may find in Hebrew and Semitic institutions real types of Christian truth. He finds the beginning of the form of that earthly body which afterward became the tabernacle of the Christian Spirit, and is helped to understand the expression of the Spirit better, because he understands the history of its instrument of expression. The study of Old Testament institutions and ideas is therefore often a great devotional help.

Many narratives of the Old Testament are powerful parables of Christian truth. Although differences of opinion now exist as to the historical character of some of these accounts, the significance of the narratives as vehicles for the expression of religious truth is in no way affected by such opinions. Like the parables of Christ, they are classic utterances of religious truth quite apart from historical considerations. The reader will therefore find in the following pages brief sketches of Old Testament ideas and institutions, mingled with character-

studies of a number of Old Testament heroes. In each case the Christian truth, of which the sketch presents a type or parable, is briefly set forth in such a way that a reader may enjoy its religious significance, whether he is accustomed to look at the Bible from the old point of view or from the new. It has been the writer's aim to fasten the mind on those things "which cannot be shaken."

While parts of the brief chapters are sometimes devoted to historical sketches, their chief aim is devotional. The writer would take the reader apart for brief meditations upon the great themes of Christian truth, Christian character, and Christian duty as these are foreshadowed in the Old Testament revelation. The meditations have been made short with the hope that they might thus be of service to busy men and women.

ASSYRIAN SACRED
TREE.

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THE ROOTS
—OF—
CHRISTIAN TEACHING
AS FOUND IN THE
OLD TESTAMENT

CHAPTER I.

THE UNITY OF GOD.

"Thou believest that there is one God," James, ii, 19.

> "That God, which ever lives and loves,
> One God, one law, one element;
> And one far-off divine event,
> To which the whole creation moves."
>
> —*Tennyson.*

THE germ of the oak as it pushes its way up through the clod does not closely resemble the gigantic tree which in later years it will become, and yet a naturalist who has watched the growth of oaks finds in the germ the promise and potency of the full grown tree. Something like this is true of the idea of God. The human mind in its childhood could not grasp the sublime thought that in all this complex world there is but one God, and yet in his childish and crude way primitive man unconsciously gave expression to the great principle of the divine unity. Not that primitive man was monotheistic,—for that can no longer be maintained,—nor can we longer think with Renan that the Semitic people even had a

genius for monotheism. The study of comparative religion has rendered both these views untenable. But primitive men, both Semites and others, were henotheists—they believed in one god only for their tribe. That god was its spiritual chief, its father, its cherisher, its defender. While the god was mainly thought to be interested in the tribe as a whole, each individual as an atom of the tribal unity shared in the god's interest and life. This tribe was the individual's little world. Within it life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness were assured him ; outside of it he had no rights and, if he found life at all, it was the agonizing existence of a slave.

Within the little world of primitive man, then, one god ruled ; under him all tribesmen were brothers, for in some rude sense one god was their father. Monotheism has but enlarged this conception and applied it to the world. We now see that one God is the father of all men, and that all men are brethren. The primitive tribe is expanded and has become coextensive with the human race ; its home is no longer some oasis in the

Arabian desert, some mountain fastness in India, some marsh in Babylonia, or some island in the sea, but the whole round world with all its variety of sea and land, frigid poles and luxuriant tropics, bleak mountain and fertile dale, all illuminated with sun, moon and myriads of stars. Its deity is no longer thought to be limited in power and activity to some insignificant corner of a small land, but is seen to rule the universe as far as the most powerful telescope can carry human vision or imagination wing the thought of man. The ancient unity of the tribe has become the unity of the universe.

The history of this expansion is the history of human progress and civilization. It has come through conquest, syncretism, polytheism; through sacrifice, devotion, deep thought, errors and revelation. Israel, at first a group of henotheistic tribes, was given before all others the practical conception of the unity of God and of the world, and began the work of teaching the great truth to others. The conceptions of Israel were completed by Jesus Christ, whose

followers are still engaged in the work of making all men realize that "God is one" and that He "hath made of one blood all nations of men."

Looking backward as we now can, it becomes apparent that the primitive tribal conception of God contained in germ these sublime conceptions. It was a type of the Christian conception of God, our Father, the ruler of the universe, "in whom we live and move and have our being."*

*For the details of this tribal idea of God, see W. R. Smith's *Religion of the Semites*, Lecture II.

CHAPTER II.

THE NATURE OF GOD.

"God is Spirit." John, iv, 24.

"Yea! In Thy life our little lives are ended,
Into Thy depths our trembling spirits fall;
In Thee enfolded, gathered, comprehended,
As holds the sea her waves—Thou hold'st us all."
—*E. Scudder.*

NEXT to the conception of the unity of God comes the conception of His spirituality. We are accustomed to think of this as one of the great facts about God which we owe to Jesus Christ, and He did set it before the eyes of men in a new perspective. The thought of the older time had, however, given some premonition of this lofty conception. It did not burst on the world full fledged at once, but appeared first in germ, then in a blade, and at last in the teaching of Christ in its full flower.

The early germ of this thought is found in those childish conceptions of deity, possessed by nearly all primitive peoples, who believe their god to be the genius, or spirit of a spring, a tree, a rock or other natural

object. To us, who are far removed from them in time and in culture, these conceptions seem childish and even gross, but the sympathetic observer must perceive that, after all, this primitive point of view referred the life manifested in the tree, or in the vegetation which the spring made possible, to spiritual sources, and was the beginning of the recognition of the spirituality of God. When, a little later, it was thought that these divine spirits could be persuaded to come and live in objects of the worshipper's selection or even of his manufacture, a great step forward was taken in the recognition of the spirituality of God. It is characteristic of spirit to be free, mobile and inspiring. If the god could at will go to live in an idol, he had shaken off the limitations of environment, exercised the power to change his abode, and thus proven himself to be possessed of the powers of spiritual freedom such as the worshipper was conscious that he possessed himself. These beginnings of the recognition that God is spirit can be traced among the Hebrews and their ancestors as well as among other peoples.

These ideas in the earliest stages of religious thought proved helpful to those who entertained them. They are on a par with the intelligence of their possessors in other matters, and proved not only innocent but inspiring. As intelligence increased these conceptions, perpetuated by that conservatism which always attaches to the sacred beliefs and practices of religion, became grossly superstitious. They were often united with ritual, which though once innocent, had become immoral. In order to eradicate these debasing ideas and practices, the Hebrews at an early time prohibited the use of images of Jehovah, and when the law of Deuteronomy was adopted as the fundamental religious law of the commonwealth, all the old sanctuaries except the one at Jerusalem were abolished. This was in its turn a great step forward. It had come as the result of long years of prophetic teaching and cost before it was completed much prophetic effort, but it was a great accomplishment to get the popular practice shaped in accord with its principles. Most people were too far from the sanctuary to visit it

often; their prayers had to be made directly to the Great Spirit without even the help of a sanctuary, so that more than of old they realized the spirituality of God.

After the exile came the unfortunate quarrel with the Samaritans and the erection of the temple on Mount Gerezim. While Jews and Samaritans alike believed that God could be approached in prayer by a believer whenever in need, they nevertheless both thought that in their own temple He could be approached better than anywhere else; and, indeed, that if one did not at times approach Him in His temple His favor could not be expected in the same degree as might be hoped, if God were duly worshipped in His chosen courts. It was at this juncture in religious thought that the Christ disclosed the great truth in all its beauty, stripped of all concealing husk, "God is Spirit;" "neither in this mountain (Gerezim) nor yet at Jerusalem shall ye worship the Father." Thus the great fact toward which men had for centuries been groping, shone out in all its brilliancy. God is Spirit; no lengthy pilgrimage to

Jerusalem, to Rome, or to Mecca is longer necessary to find God, or to come into His presence. Man is spirit; he can find God only in the recesses of his own heart.

"Spirit with spirit can meet."

The sailor on the sea, the farmer at his toil, the mother by the cradle of her child, the miner who quarries in the heart of the earth, the hermit in his cell, or the busy man of affairs in the world's most crowded mart,—all may come at all times into most direct touch with the great God. "If I ascend into heaven, thou art there. If I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there."

CHAPTER III.

THE MORAL NATURE OF GOD.

"God is Light; and in Him is no darkness at all."
—1 John, i, 5.

"God's in His heaven,
All's right with the world."
—*Browning.*

We may regard it as a general rule that a people's god is the embodiment of its highest ethical ideal. This statement is, broadly speaking, true, though there are apparent exceptions to it. These exceptions are easily accounted for.

In the most primitive circles of human society an idea of god is formed which expresses the loftiest conceptions of which such a people are capable. In order to give these thoughts of God reality in the minds of His worshippers, they are embodied in stories of His goodness as goodness is then conceived. In the lapse of time the ethical standard of such a circle advances; its morals become less savage, its ideals more human. The old myths, or

tales, or histories, in which the former conception of the divine is embalmed like some fly in the amber of the Baltic, remain, and for a time the anomaly is presented of a people whose morals are better than those of their god are supposed to be. But this condition is not enduring, and soon corrects itself. Such a people soon shapes its tales of the past so that they reflect its new standards of life; or if this is not possible, as when these conceptions have crystallized into an Iliad or an Old Testament, then new ways of interpreting the old narratives are found, so that they shall reflect the new image.

The antithesis between the God of the Old Testament and the God of the New was felt in the early days of Christianity. Marcion went so far as to declare that the two could not be the same. In one sense Marcion was right, but in another he was greatly mistaken. When we contrast the Jehovah, who brought bears out of the wood to devour little children, with the Father of Him who said, "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; for to

such belongeth the kingdom of heaven," we are contrasting the knowledge of God possessed by children in religion with the knowledge of One more than man. The children pictured their God as best they could. They were not very wise; their passions were very strong; like all their kind they thought of Jehovah as One like themselves, only greater and more powerful. Christ the spiritual Man,—the Son of God,—came to help us to put away childish things in our thought of the Father. We do wrong to let the childish idea of God's nature supplant in our minds that taught by Christ, but we also do wrong to deny our sympathy and respect to the children whose best thought seems to us (thanks to the Master) so imperfect.

And yet in the Old Testament there is many a germ or type of the spotless moral conception of God which is voiced in the words: "God is light". In one of these passages in the Old Testament which represents God most thoroughly as a man,—a passage in which a man talks with Him, and persuades Him to be merciful,—we

come upon the exclamation: "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Deeper than men's traditions of God, more profound than their creeds which have the sanction of age, is the conviction that God is just, that He is good, that on Him the soul, buffeted and distressed by the storms of circumstance, may rely for the realization of its rights at last. This thought, cropping out as it does here and there in the Old Testament, is a germ of the Christian conception of God.

The epistle of John was written to some who doubted the divine goodness. They feared there might be some darkness in the nature of God. Who has not at times shared this fear? The shadows on the Old Testament picture of Jehovah, nature "red in tooth and claw," or the dark annals of the human heart have led us to question whether God can be really good. The Christian message not only assures us that

> "Nothing can be good in Him
> Which evil is in me",

but that "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all."

It is only they who have gained this vision of God who can be really optimistic. One must be able to look at the spiritual, rather than the material values of life—able to see that there is in control of the universe one God, and He the soul of justice—able to discern the man within the man for whom the Father is working out an exceeding weight of glory, before he can sing :

"To one fixed stake my spirit clings ;
I know that God is good ".

"God's in His heaven
All's right with the world."

CHAPTER IV.

THE ESSENTIAL NATURE OF GOD.

"God is love." I. John, iv, 8, 16.

"Immortal love, forever full,
Forever flowing free,
Forever shared, forever whole,
A never-ebbing sea."

—*Whittier.*

THE simple sentence, "God is love," contains the profoundest thought concerning God of which the human mind is capable. The divine unity, the divine spirituality, and the divine justice are all fundamental truths; but God might be one, He might be recognized as the great spiritual Soul of the universe, and as the embodiment of absolute justice, and still seem to His creatures a cold, unfeeling self-centered being. This one declaration, "God is love," pierces to the depths of His nature like a shaft of light, and lays bare to us as the controlling element of the divine nature a Heart palpitating with tender, strong, and unselfish love.

This supreme conception of God did not drop from heaven all at once. It is not

without its foreshadowing type in the old Hebrew and early Semitic conception of God. The primitive Semitic conception of the supreme deity pictured her as a mother who was the life giver, and who manifested herself especially in the processes of production and reproduction in vegetable and animal life. She was thought to be most pleasingly served by men when they made themselves her agents in those acts of physical love from which new life springs. This idea of deity led them to institute gross services for the goddess, which, though innocent at first, became in process of time sources of social corruption and degradation. It is these services as they existed in Canaan which are vaguely hinted at in the Old Testament, and which form such a dark background to Hebrew social life.

Nevertheless, it was in this gross conception of deity that the germ of the great truth that "God is love," began to appear. Men were taught that the services of love are divine. We now know that through motherhood and fatherhood, the prolongation

of infancy in the human race, and the consequent necessity to struggle for the life of others, man has been led to become in some sense a social being, caring for the things of the spirit, and striving for unselfish ends. It was through these same physical channels that the germ of the thought that "God is love" first came to that race which has become the great religious teacher of the world.*

Imperfect as this germ was at first, it was a type of the perfect flower. The crude conceptions of physical love and all the gross practices to which it gave rise were gradually sloughed off. Hosea, the great prophet of the love of God, gave to the whole conception a tender, lofty and spiritual turn, picturing God as a faithful Husband, who, though wronged by His unfaithful spouse, lovingly follows her and seeks by all possible means to restore her to a life worthy of His love. At times he changes the metaphor, and God becomes to Hosea's thought a loving Father following prodigal Ephraim

*For further facts concerning this see the writer's *Sketch of Semitic Origins, Social and Religious*, chs. iii. and vii.

and seeking to guide his wayward steps. This thought of Hosea was echoed by subsequent prophets, but it never found full recognition, nor indeed adequate spiritual expression till it was transfigured and glorified in the teaching and work of Jesus Christ; and then it waited till the end of the first century for a writer to crystallize it into this gem of a religious definition.

This conception of God which thus struggled for expression through the gross ritual of primitive times, through the pangs of prophetic travail, and the sorrows of the Son of Man, is the final conception of God. Man must have some new faculties before he can form a higher conception of his Creator and Father. If God be love, through all the ages He has been living the unselfish life of love; He has been giving Himself. He is not the self-centered being, which we have pictured Him, sitting apart like some absolute monarch, and so shaping the course of human events that either the homage of worshippers, or the wails of the rebellious, should contribute to His selfish glory. Not so is His glory to be pictured.

His is the glory, not of possession only, but of impartation; not of having, but of giving; not simply of being, but of helping others to be. In a word, His glory is His goodness; "God is love."

Great as are the truths, "God is one," "God is Spirit," and "God is light," they are all crowned and glorified by the sublimest truth concerning Him, "God is love."

CHAPTER V.

GOD MANIFEST IN THE FLESH.

"We all with unveiled face see as if reflected in a mirror the the glory of the Lord." 2 Cor., iii, 18.

"Deep strike thy roots, O heavenly Vine,
Within our earthly sod,
Most human and yet most divine,
The flower of man and God!"

—*Whittier.*

THE conception that God has manifested Himself in human form, or in a human life, has been found among many peoples. It also existed among the early Hebrews as the Old Testament witnesses. In the earliest document, or collection of narratives, which the Bible contains there are several expressions of this conception. Thus, in Genesis xvi, Hagar was met by the angel of Jehovah who talked with her, giving her reassuring promises, and when he had gone she believed that Jehovah had been talking with her. In the eighteenth chapter of the same book, three men came to Abraham's tent and were entertained, and the traditions of after days asserted that one of them turned out

to be Jehovah Himself. Again, in the sixth of Judges, an angel of Jehovah appeared to Gideon, who seems in the sequel to have been Jehovah Himself.

All these instances indicate that back of these narratives there lay a time when it was thought that God manifested Himself to individuals upon important occasions in human form. A little later this view was superseded by the conception that He sent his angel or messenger upon such occasions to carry his messages. When the narratives were written, to which reference has been made, Israelitish thought hovered on the borderland between the two. An angel might come, but he might in the end turn out to be God Himself.

Another conception similar to these, and which either grew out of them or sprang from the same root, is the thought that God might impart to an angel His face or His presence (in Hebrew the two are expressed by the same term), and thus manifest Himself to men. At least, such is the thought expressed by the Hebrew text of Isaiah. (The earliest translation, the Greek, has a different

idea of it). In the thirty-third of Exodus we are told that Moses prayed that the presence of God should go with him and the people along the untrodden path, upon which they were about to enter, and that he received the promise: "My presence shall go with thee." The prophet, in speaking of it, in poetic strain, says: "In all their afflictions He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence moved them." *

That God could come thus into human form, or impart His presence in an angel, was a type of the Christian's conception of the manifestation of God in Christ. Like all types it appears in a crude form when compared to the great truth of which it was the rudimentary expression, but it helpfully embodied for a time the great truth that divinity comes into our humanity.

Kindred to the thoughts we have been pursuing is the conception that God could impart His name to an angel. The divine name was considered the embodiment of all the divine attributes; it was so holy that when it was blasphemed, he who had thus

* Isaiah lxiii, 9.

transgressed was executed as a criminal (Lev. xxiv, 11). Notwithstanding this, we are told (Ex. xxiii, 21), that God declared His name to be in an angel. It is a similar thought which Paul takes up in the epistle to the Phillippians, when he declares, in speaking of Christ: "Wherefore also God highly exalted Him, and gave him the name which is above every name."

These early Hebrew thoughts of the way God manifested Himself to men receive more than their fulfilment in Christ. In Him we have not a transient manifestation of the presence of God, but the permanent union of the divine nature with a human nature; not a mechanical impartation of a few divine qualities, but the indwelling of God in a human body and a human psychological organism. Such an indwelling was not to conceal the glory of the Father, but to reveal it so that men could understand it. God in Christ is seen not to be a cosmic vastness without a heart to care for the creatures which people the world; but a God of love, whom we, beholding in Christ as in a mirror, shall, by the transforming

power of the sight, come to resemble. "The incarnation was the eternal become temporal for a little time, that we might look at it." *

* Henry Drummond, *The Ideal Life*. p. 147.

CHAPTER VI.

CHRIST, THE REVELATION OF GOD.

"In the beginning was the Word." John i, 1.
"Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." 1 Cor. i, 24.

> "We faintly hear, we dimly see,
> In differing phrase we pray;
> But dim or clear, we own in thee
> The Light, the Truth, the Way."
>
> —*Whittier.*

OTHER half-blind, half-luminous premonitions, of what the writers of the New Testament saw in Christ are found in the personifications of "wisdom" and "word" in certain parts of the Old Testament and in other pre-Christian Jewish writings.

Israelitish writers frequently personify the spoken word of God, which, in the first chapter of Genesis, is said to have been so potent in the creation of the world. God's word, said Jeremiah, is like a fire and like a hammer which breaks the rock.[1] Another prophet conceived the divine word as capable of being sent on a mission, which it

[1] Jer. xxiii, 29.

would not return without accomplishing.[1] Similarly a psalmist thought the word of God could be sent on a mission of healing.[2] "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made," sang another,[3] while a later writer exclaimed, "O God, who hast made all things by thy word."[4] This latter writer represents the divine word as leaping down from heaven like a man of war into the midst of the Egyptians for their destruction,[5] thus making a very strong personification of the word of God.

Among the Greeks the term "word" had also been used for some five hundred years to denote a manifestation of God. It was first used by Heraclitus, and had been used by many philosophers after him. In the Gospel of John these two ways of describing the self-revealing power of God, the one Hebrew in its origin, and the other Greek, meet and unite, and the mind of the evangelist finds in Christ their full realization, and in them types of Him. "God," says another writer, "having spoken unto the

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[1]Isa. lv, 11. [2]Ps. cvii, 20. [3]Ps. xxxiii, 6. [4]Wisdom of Solomon ix, 1. [5]Wisdom of Solomon xviii, 14.

fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in His Son."[1] God had been speaking to men from the beginning; gradually they had perceived that the whole universe was an expression of His will,—that it was formed by His word,—that His word accomplished all things. After the Christ had come they saw that God's Word—the clearest expression of His thoughts and purposes for men—had actually been living in their midst. "The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us."

Somewhat similar is the way in which the word, "wisdom" became a type of Christ. In Job the preciousness and mysteriousness of wisdom is charmingly set forth;[2] as it also is in the third chapter of Proverbs. The climax is reached, however, in the eighth chapter of the same book where wisdom is made to declare in poetic strain:

"When He established the heavens, I was there:
When He set a circle upon the face of the deep,

[1]Heb. 1, 1-2. [2]Job xxviii.

When He made firm the skies above,

* * * * * *

"Then I was by Him as a master workman;
And I was daily His delight,
Rejoicing always before Him,
Rejoicing in His habitable earth."[1]

In the Wisdom of Solomon the same strain is continued. In the seventh and eighth chapters the author's fervid enthusiasm for his grand conception trembles on the verge of making wisdom an actual person. In a magnificent description he ascribes to wisdom all conceivable heavenly qualities and beneficent activities, so that she seems at times to be almost an independent being.

Thus the way was prepared for the apostle's declaration: "Christ is the wisdom of God." Wisdom to the Hebrew was not mere knowledge. It included all practical wisdom in the management of affairs and the conduct of life. It mounted to the religious sphere, beginning in the fear of God. More than the Hebrew sage thought he found in wisdom, the manifestation of the divine power and benignity, the Christian

[1] Prov. viii, 27-31.

finds in Him who said "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life."

"In Him again
We see the same first, starry attribute;
'Perfect through suffering,' our salvation's seal
Set in the front of His Humanity.
For God has other Words for other worlds,
But for this world the Word of God is Christ."

CHAPTER VII.

CHRIST, THE MESSIAH.

"I am the Messiah." John iv, 26.

"Strong Son of God, immortal Love."
—*Tennyson.*

ISRAEL'S conception of a Messiah in another way prepared for the coming of Christ. The way in which worldly and physical conceptions may in process of time be transformed into spiritual ideas is nowhere better illustrated than in the history of the Messianic idea.

This idea first found a home in Hebrew hearts after the beginning of the kingdom. In the earliest period of Israel's history only the kings were anointed, though afterwards it became the custom to anoint the priests also. The first to be called "the Lord's Anointed," (i. e., the Lord's Messiah, or Christ), was king Saul, who was thus designated by David. In due time David himself became the king, or "the Lord's Anointed." David, too, united Israel into a nation as she had never been united before, and by his

conquests over the surrounding countries, established an empire which held in subjection many vassal nations. This national glory lasted through the reign of Solomon, after which dissension and division within, and increased power on the part of neighboring nations without, caused Israel gradually to sink from the position of mistress to that of vassal.

It was under these circumstances that devout minds began to think of a Messiah, or an Anointed of the Lord, who could restore their old fortunes. It was natural that then they should look back to the reign of David and his kingdom as the pattern of all which they desired. Thus Hosea pictured the Messiah as "David their king";[1] Isaiah as a kingly warrior, supernatural in strength,[2] who should establish a kingdom of perfect righteousness and justice.[3] While this ideal continued to fill the hearts of prophetic enthusiasts with hope, the exile came and went, and the long years of the Persian supremacy dragged on without bringing apparently nearer the realization of their hopes.

[1] Hos. iii, 5. [2] Isa. ix, 6. [3] Isa. xi.

As one generation after another, which had shared in these expectations, died, the conceptions entertained of the kingdom gradually changed. At first it had been thought that only those who were fortunate enough to be alive at the appearing of the Messiah would share in it, but afterward it was thought that in connection with the coming of the Messiah the dead would be raised, that the pious Israelites who had died in hope might share in the joys of the kingdom, and that their foes, who had been permitted to die unpunished, might meet their proper reward.[1] At the same time greater emphasis was laid on the supernatural character of the kingdom. Men began to expect it to descend in some way from heaven, or to expect God to come down in some especial manifestation in order to inaugurate it. The great monarchies, at whose hands Israel had suffered, were typified by beasts; the emblem of this kingdom was a "Son of man." This term denoted at first that Israel's future empire was to be less savage and more noble in character

[1] Dan. xii, 3, 4.

than the great world monarchies which had preceded it; but in a little while it became a name for the expected Messiah himself.

The years, however, still dragged on, and the great empires, though they changed, seemed to grow ever more powerful. Naturally men asked themselves with increasing earnestness whence one could come who should be powerful enough to contend with these, and with gradually increasing clearness the answer seemed to them to be that he must be from heaven.[1] They, therefore, began to believe in the pre-existence of the Messiah, and to think of him as one whose destiny had been from the beginning more glorious before God than that of any of the angels. They called him the Son of God,[2] and expected him to be revealed from heaven.

When Christ came the Jewish world was deeply stirred by the expectation of this Messiah. When Jesus had been accepted by His followers as the long-expected "Lord's

[1] Ethiopic Enoch xlviii, 1-3; xlix, 2-4; li, 1-3; and Apocalypse of Baruch xxx, 1. [2] Eth. Enoch cv, 2. 4 Esd. xiv. 9.

Anointed," it is easy for us to see why they thought of Him as having had a pre-existent life with God, and why they so readily recognized Him as the Son of God.

The nature of the kingdom which Christ announced was, however, very different from that which His contemporaries expected. They looked for one who would make Jerusalem a new Rome; He labored to establish a kingdom of truth. They longed to conquer the world and wreak vengeance on their enemies; He taught the conquest of one's own spirit and the forgiveness of enemies. They longed to rule the world; He taught them to serve the world. They dreamed of a kingdom of force; He established a kingdom of love. The Messianic conception prepared the way for the work of Christ, but He so transformed it that it has become an ideal, first of Spiritual life with God, and then of a human society in which all shall recognize that they are brethren because all look upon God as Father.

CHAPTER VIII.

CHRIST, THE CAPTAIN OF SALVATION.

"He Himself hath suffered being tempted. Heb. ii, 18.

"Where now with pain thou treadest, trod
The whitest of the saints of God!
To show thee where their feet were set,
The light which led them shineth yet."
—*Whittier.*

How Christ transformed the current views of the Messiah and the Messianic kingdom will come more clearly to our view, if we study carefully the narrative of His temptation.

His inner nature we cannot fully comprehend. We do not understand fully the inner life of the great geniuses of our race, much less can we hope to understand all the workings of His mind. The Gospels make it clear, however, that He had not only a human body, but a human mind. He grew in wisdom as well as in stature.[1] This implies that at first He was not conscious of His exalted mission as the Messiah.

[1] Luke ii, 52.

Without doubt He was conscious of God's fatherhood as no other had ever been, for He felt as a mere boy the duty and the delight of being occupied with the things of His Father.[1] But at the time of His baptism an illumination, unique even for Him, convinced Him that He was none other than the long expected Messiah. The voice which said to His heart, "Thou art my beloved Son," was the divine assurance of the Messianic calling.

Conscious as He had long been of the spiritual significance of the Fatherhood of God and of the higher aspects of relationship with Him, conscious too of the marvellous nature and role which the Messiah was expected to possess, He retired to the wilderness to think over His lofty opportunities and responsibilities. Lifted at first above the notice of ordinary necessities, His exalted meditations were at last interrupted by the rude demands of hunger. This seems to have brought about a crisis in His thought. Could the Messiah hunger? His reign, the Jews believed, was to be inaugurated by a

[1] Luke ii, 49.

great feast. Could the heavenly Being, who was popularly believed to have had such an exalted and glorious career before God from the beginning, really be subject to the laws of the physical life as ordinary mortals were? If He were really the Son of God should not supernatural power enable Him to put away at once the clamorous demands of this earthly nature?

No! was His reply; it is far more important to obey God's will than to escape from the sufferings and the limitations which He has appointed! Messiahship means, not exemption from the common lot of men, but the ability to take up that lot and do God's appointed work in it; not selfish ease, but unselfish service. Thus He put aside one of the temptations which the prevailing Messianic expectations brought to Him.

But this was only the beginning. If He could not use the power which men expected the Messiah to possess for His own ease, was He really to be the king for whom they were looking? [1] He could not help knowing how gladly His countrymen, groaning

[1] Luke, I believe, gives the temptations in their true order.

as they were under the hated yoke of Rome, would rally to His standard, were He but to proclaim Himself their heaven-sent deliverer. Worldly power and magnificence, the glory and the adulation which accompany empire, for one brief moment tempted even Him; then He put them resolutely aside. He had not lived those thirty years of unique communion with the Father without knowing that the real service of God was not thus performed. The real kingdom of God he knew to be in the hearts of men; the real conquest of men by God must be not a conquest of arms, but of love; the weapons of the war must be the implements of loving service, not the deadly arms of martial force; accordingly the alluring vision of the popularly expected empire was calmly dismissed, and the way of toilsome self-sacrifice and of the cross was deliberately chosen.

One other temptation, however, came to Him. Were all these fervid descriptions of the Messiah's supernatural nature to have no outward fulfilment? Might He not at least make some external display at Jerusalem before the eyes of assembled thousands

of the exalted nature which was His. No! That, too, would be wrong; it would be an attempt to test God, or to force Him to display His intimate connection with the Messiah. The only right way was to take the path of duty, to assume the burdens of service and the lowly place of a servant, and leave God to manifest the divinity and majesty of it all as He might see was best.

Thus, in the mind of the Master the old conceptions of the Messiah and the Messianic king were forever put aside, and His life was devoted to the establishment of the spiritual kingdom of love. The roots of the Messianic idea go back to the natural soil of the earthly and half-barbarous empires of Saul and David, but its flower which appeared on earth in the life of Jesus Christ, is multiplying more and more and is the ideal for the highest life of earth and the perfect life of heaven.

CHAPTER IX.

THE HOLY SPIRIT.

"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall bear witness of me." John xv, 26.

"Speak to him thou for He hears, and Spirit with spirit can meet—
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet."

—*Tennyson.*

In very early times man perceived that it was the inner, impalpable part of him that thought, planned, and aspired. This led him to suppose that his God was possessed of a Spirit analogous to his own. As a great man could inspire others with his courage or spirit in great crises, such as important battles, so it was thought that God could impart to men on such occasions the courage and might of His own spirit. Thus it happens that in the early days of Israel's history we hear of the Spirit of God chiefly in connection with the warlike exploits of military heroes, such as Samson and Saul.[1]

[1] See Judges xiv, 6, 19; 1 Sam. xvi, 14.

This was, however, the lowly beginning of the entrance into men's minds of the sublime truth that the Spirit of God enters into the hearts of men and communes with them.

A few centuries later, when the inward and spiritual nature of religion was more clearly perceived, the spirit of God was believed to enter into communion with the hearts of His prophets, to inspire, to illuminate, to instruct them, and to impart to them His will.[1] One of the Psalmists,—that one who most clearly perceived the inward and spiritual nature of sin,[2]—grasped the truth that the joyful communion of the Divine Spirit is conditioned upon the possession of a pure heart.

In the period represented by the Old Testament Apocryphal books, some noble conceptions concerning the Spirit of God were entertained. One writer sang of it as the Spirit which fills the world, and is in all things.[3] Another speaks of it as the image of God, and the indivisible source of

[1]Cf. Isa. xlviii, 16, Ps. li, 12, Dan. iv, 8. [2]Ps. li, 12. [3]Wisdom of Solomon i, 7, and xii, 1.

understanding and knowledge.[1] None of these pre-Christian writers regarded the Spirit as a distinct person of the Godhead; but their conceptions, which advanced steadily from the crude germ of the days of the Judges, prepared the way for the lofty conceptions of Christianity.

At the beginning of the Synoptic narrative of Christ's ministry[2] we are told that the Spirit descended as a dove and abode upon Him. This means, as we have seen, that then a new illumination came to Him, which made clear to Him what His exalted mission and work were to be. Thus we are taught by His experience to look upon the Spirit as the source of inspiration for lofty duties, and the guide into the deeper experiences of life.

According to the Gospel of John,[3] Christ, in His last discourse with His disciples, promised to send the Spirit to be a Comforter and Guide,—to take the place in their thoughts and hearts which He had Himself occupied, and to lead and inspire them as

[1] Viz :—Philo. See Toy's *Judaism and Christianity*, p. 92. [2] Mk. i, 10; Mt. iii, 16; Lu. iii, 22. [3] John xv, 26, xvi, 13.

He had done. A later record tells us of the great experience when that promise began to be fulfilled, as that experience was gratefully remembered by a later generation.

Paul, in the eighth chapter of Romans, teaches that it is the function of the Spirit to commune with, inspire and guide the regenerate nature of man. This regenerate nature he terms spirit, in part to distinguish it from the natural unregenerate soul, and in part to indicate its kinship to the Divine Spirit, with which it holds communion. He here portrays the ideal experience of every Christian. To possess a purified spirit, to walk through life's hard paths under its control rather than under the hateful control of the passions which spring from the flesh, to be led and inspired by the Spirit of God continually,—this is to be a Christian—a child of God. How exalted the privilege! How few live on these lofty table lands!

Though few attain to the highest experiences to which the Spirit would lead them, in some degree He comes to every believer. To every Christian, says Paul in another

[1] Acts ii. [2] Vs. 4-9.

passage,[1] is given a manifestation of the Spirit of God. He gives to each his own peculiar gifts, and inspires each to his own peculiar work. No other can do that work, but by the harmonious union of all gifts, great and small, the great work of God will make progress in the world.

More than this, the Spirit visits every man, strives with him, teaches him to "deny irreverence and lust" and to live a life of righteousness and peace.[2] Not the possession of a privileged few is the Spirit of God. The heart of every man, black or white, high or low, rich or poor, at times is conscious of the presence of this heavenly Visitor. Those who heed His promptings experience a lasting peace and an eternal joy. "Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, patience, meekness, kindness," and all other "fruits of the Spirit" adorn and make glorious their lives,[3]

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[1] 1 Cor. xii, 7. [2] Titus ii, 12. [3] Gal. v, 22.

CHAPTER X

MAN.

"Thou hast made him but little lower than God." Ps. viii, 5.

"For we are also His offspring. Acts xvii, 28.

> "All that hath been majestical
> In life or death, since time began,
> Is native in the simple heart of all,
> The angel heart of Man."
>
> —*Lowell.*

THERE are two sides to human nature, an animal or savage side, and a noble godlike side. The consciousness of every man bears witness to this. Under some circumstances man seems to be a demon incarnate; in others, an angel of God. The dual nature of man is recognized in the oldest Biblical narrative of his origin, the second chapter of Genesis. God, we are told, moulded the form of man from the dust of the ground, and "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Kindred on his bodily side to the lowly and material earth, man is here conceived to be in spirit akin to God Himself. His inner

nature is declared to be an afflatus from the Eternal Spirit.

Some centuries later another writer put on record his conception of the creation of man. We now have his version of it in the first chapter of Genesis. His conception of God was far more exalted than that of the earlier writer; God is no longer represented as moulding the form of man from the dust of the ground as a potter might do, but in sovereign majesty speaks the creative word and man becomes man. This writer had, however, the same conception of the higher nature of man as that set forth by his predecessor, although he expressed it in a different way. God, he declared, made man in His own image. Perhaps he was thinking in some degree of the bodily form of man, but probably also of his inner nature, in which man yearns for God, thinks in some measure God's thoughts, and aspires to be like Him.

Man is a child of God. He was given at his creation a spark of the Father's own nature. This truth is in various ways expressed in both the Old Testament and in the New. The psalmist sang:

"Thou hast made him but little lower than God,
And crownest him with glory and honor."

Christ taught in the Parable of the Prodigal Son, that man was still God's child no matter how degraded he might become or how far he might wander from the Father's house. God is his Father in spite of all, and, prompted by a Father's love, God longingly waits for the prodigal's return. Paul echoed the same truth at Athens in language borrowed from a Greek poet. We, he said in substance, are of divine descent; children resemble their parents; we ought not, therefore, to entertain unworthy thoughts of God, to think of Him as a silver or golden image, but to learn from our own higher natures something of what our Eternal Father must be.

These, then, are the two inspiring aspects of the Biblical view of the nature of man, the lofty conception of man's origin and destiny which it affords, and the worthy conception of God.

"The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar;
Not in entire forgetfulness,

> And not in utter nakedness,
> But trailing clouds of glory do we come
> From God, who is our home."

With such a nature there is no satisfaction for man except in God and a godlike life. "Thou hast created us for thyself," said Augustine, "and the heart is restless till it rests in thee;" or as Whittier puts it:

> "To turn aside from thee is hell,
> To walk with thee is heaven."

Man, too, from his own higher nature may learn something of the real nature of God. In endeavoring to do this he may easily go astray, and may merit the divine rebuke which a psalmist conveyed to Israel: "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself." Nevertheless, it is this pathway which leads man up to the heart of the Infinite. To this goal he is guided, not alone by the conviction, that

> "Nothing can be good in Him
> Which evil is in me,"

but by the teaching of Jesus Christ, who took man at his best, as in the sacred relations of father and husband, and made him a parable or type of God, the Heavenly Father.

CHAPTER XI.

SIN AS TRANSGRESSION.

"When the commandment came, sin sprang into life and I died." Rom. vii, 9.

"Sin hath broke the world's sweet peace—unstrung
Th' harmonious chords to which the angels sung."
—*Dana.*

SIN is the transgression of law; it is the deliberate abandoning of our ethical ideals; it is the conscious violation of some standard, either outward or inward, which conscience recognizes as imposing upon us an obligatory *ought*. Until such an ideal imposes the duties of such an *ought* upon us, no sin is possible. This is what Paul means when he says: "When the commandment came sin sprang into life."

This truth is in germ embodied in the narrative given in the third chapter of Genesis. That narrative was originally shaped to explain to early men many other things than the origin of sin,[1] but it nevertheless sets forth in a form perpetually

[1] For the other aspects of the story of Eden see the writer's *Sketch of Semitic Origins, Social and Religious*, p. 93 ff.

valid the real beginnings of sin. It pictures the divine command which the conscience of man recognized; it sets forth vividly the temptation to present indulgence, the reasons which lead man to prefer immediate advantage to the course which conscience approves, and the dire consequences and the disillusionment which sin brings. In this respect it is a mirror of the universal experience of mankind. Ideals, which we have admired and praised, are abandoned in the stress of temptation. We know the fruit is forbidden, but it is pleasant to look upon and promises to be sweet, so we abandon our standard, take the sinful course, the promised joy turns to ashes in our hand, and our Eden is lost.

One of the psalmists recognized that this experience is universal. "They are all gone out of the way", he sang, "there is none that doeth good, no, not one." Centuries later Paul, as he looked over the Jewish and Gentile world, could find no better language than that of the psalmist in which to express the oppressive fact, that sin is universal.

The heart of every man and woman recognizes the truth of this Biblical teaching. The imperative demands of our loftiest ideals have laid upon us divine duties. These we have so often abandoned, that it needs no labored proof to convince us that the first men and women did the same. We have inherited from the past weakened moral natures, but we have so often abandoned our ethical standards, that our sins are definitely our own.

It is sometimes thought that there is an irreconcilable contradiction between the evolutionary theory of the origin of man, now universally accepted by thinking men, and the story of man's fall as given in Genesis, but this is a great mistake. The narrative of Genesis, and the traditions of a golden age, which come from many ancient peoples, picture to us one side of a shield, of which the doctrine of evolution gives us the other. If man was developed from the lower orders of life, there must have been a time when he possessed a good degree of intelligence and an overflow of animal spirits, but lacked almost entirely anything that could be called

a conscience. At such a period the world would seem to him a paradise. He would take as much delight in life and be as free from care as a lamb gambolling in the springtime. Soon, however, increasing intelligence would give him a conscience; it would enable him to put himself into the place of another whom his acts might injure; it would enable him to perceive how that other would feel, and to grasp the elements of a moral standard of conduct. The moment when conscience came, and its behests were violated, as they would be sure to be at first, the primitive paradise was gone. The world which had seemed so blissful, and so full of glorious sunshine, began to be haunted with the dark spectres which spring from an uneasy conscience. Man seemed to himself to have fallen; he could tell the story as he recollected it in no other terms. He told, too, his inner experiences truthfully, and we even now find them true to our own experiences. We are able to see that man's fall was in the end a step in advance, because it became possible only in consequence of powers which opened to him

the possibilities of the highest life, but it was nevertheless a real fall from innocence and from happiness.

In this broad sense the old Hebrew narrative is true as history, while it is also true because it reproduces in parable a part of the inner history of every man. Whenever we deliberately do what we know to be beneath the highest standards which our hearts approve, we live over again the story of Eden, and sadly go forth from peace and from God.

CHAPTER XII.

SIN AS SEPARATION FROM GOD.

"Your iniquities have separated between you and your God." Isaiah lix, 2.

> "O, may no earth-born cloud arise
> To hide Thee from Thy servant's eyes."
> —*Keble.*

THE conception of sin, expressed in the story of the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Eden, involves the idea that it separates the one who commits it from God. This view is confirmed by the universal experience of mankind. The face of God, which seems so bright to the pure in heart, is enveloped in darkness for him who has indulged in sin; however near God may seem to the righteous, the sinner thinks of His presence only to fear it.

It is probable that the early Semitic ancestors of the Hebrews had no conception of sin that we would consider worthy of the name, and yet they possessed physical notions of union with God and of the possibility of separation from Him which were real types of the spiritual phenomena of sin

and atonement. It will make the spiritual clearer, if we think for a little of their physical antecedents.

Kinship was regarded as a physical bond; it had its basis, of course, in a common birth, but was renewed and kept alive by partaking of common food. Eating of the same material was thought to make really kindred for a time bodies which had originally no real kinship. This latter idea lies at the basis of the covenant formed by eating salt, which is still potent in the East, even at the present time. Such covenants of kinship were binding, however, only while the physical food, of which the contracting parties had partaken, was actually in their bodies. It would soon wear away, if not renewed, and even real kinship would become somewhat attenuated, if not renewed frequently in the common meal.

At this period of civilization the god was thought to be a member of the tribe, related to his worshippers by physical bonds of kinship. It was thus that the Semitic ancestors of the Hebrews pictured to themselves the truth that man is a partaker of

the divine nature. In the stress of life they thought that this physical bond might be worn away and weakened like the similar bonds which bound them to their brethren. Their whole conception of life had regard exclusively to the physical; they could, therefore, have little conception of the inward or spiritual nature of sin. Sin, as they conceive it, was a weakening of the bond of physical kinship, which bound them to their god. It was, nevertheless, truly conceived as separation from him, and was thus a real type of later and better conceptions.

Man, as we saw above, is a child of God; there has been given to him a spark of the divine nature. However germinal and undeveloped this may be, it is nevertheless present in the breast of every human being. It may be distorted and defaced almost beyond recognition, but it is still there; the prodigal may have lived long in degradation, and all the outward marks of his sonship may be gone, but until the conscience is utterly seared and the soul made wholly insensible to higher impulses, this divine

image remains, even though a wreck, and is the basis of the hope of the man's restoration and redemption.

Sin, which, in one aspect, is a violation of our best standards of life, is, in another aspect, doing violence to our divine descent. It strikes a blow at the divine image within us; it attenuates our kinship to our Father; it interrupts our communion with Him; it is separation from Him. Could man live entirely as a child of God, he would not sin; he would be true to his higher nature. But the clamorous voices of appetite lead him into the devious paths of selfishness and wrong, where with shrunken heart, darkened soul, and despairing spirit he learns that he is separated from God, from peace, and from happiness, and there rises in his heart a longing for forgiveness, for restoration to his Father, and for a better life.[1]

[1]For fuller statements of the facts given in this chapter, see W. Robertson Smith's *Religion of the Semites*, Lecture II, and H. Clay Trumbull's *Salt Covenant*.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE SACRIFICIAL ELEMENT IN ATONEMENT.

"As thou, Father, art in union with me and I with thee, so that they also may be in union with us." John xvii, 21.

"The healing of His seamless dress
Is by our beds of pain;
We touch Him in life's throng and press,
And we are whole again."

—*Whittier.*

In the seventeenth chapter of John expression is given to the highest spiritual conception of the purpose of Christ's work. It is there declared to be the bringing of men into a union with Himself such as He enjoys with God, His Father. This is the spiritual fruitage, the germ of which we find in primitive Semitic and early Hebrew conceptions of atonement.

As we have seen the early Semite thought that the bond of kinship, which bound him to his God, might become attenuated. When it was thus weakened he naturally thought that the success of his life

depended upon its renewal. The way in which he conceived its renewal to be effected has a direct bearing on our subject. A victim, kindred both to his god and to himself, was sacrificed, and was then consumed in a meal, of which both he and his god, according to his conception, partook. That victim, supplying to both the god and his worshipper a common life by means of material drawn from their common source, bound god and man together in a new unity.[1]

This conception of the meaning of sacrifice was entertained by the Hebrews in the early days of their history, and underlay the sacrificial ritual of the Jewish church of later days. Thus the sacrifices at Shiloh, which were attended by the parents of Samuel,[2] were festival meals, as was also that which Saul attended at Zuph with Samuel.[3] Since such sacrifices were thought to bind the worshippers together in a kindred life they were used to seal solemn covenants. Thus in the oldest account that we have

[1] For details and proof see W. Robertson Smith's *Religion of the Semites*, Lectures vi-xi. [2] 1 Sam. i. [3] 1 Sam. ix, 13 and 22-24.

of the covenant, which Jehovah made with His people at Sinai, (Ex. xxiv, 1, 2, and 9–11), the covenant is sealed by a sacrifice, which is simply a meal eaten by Moses and the elders of Israel with Jehovah. By this time it was realized that Jehovah was of too spiritual a nature to eat viands like a man, but He was thought to partake of the sacrifice in a more refined way by smelling its odor. It is for this reason that we read so often that "Jehovah smelled the sweet savor of the sacrifice."

As time passed on the thought underlying this ritual was expressed in a different way. The altar was taken as Jehovah's representative, and the blood of the victim was sprinkled both upon it and upon the people. The blood was to the Hebrews the life of the victim, and thus it was thought that God and His people were bound together in a common life. In the account of the covenant at Sinai, which is second in point of date, (Ex. xxiv, 3–8), it is thus that the covenant is said to have been sealed. Similar ritual often appears in other places with a similar meaning. For example, the

real sacrifice on the day of atonement [1] was of this character, its blood was sprinkled on the altar to bind the people to Jehovah. The goat, which was sent into the wilderness for the demon Azazel, had nothing to do with this; that sacrifice belongs to a more superstitious stratum of thought, and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in using this ritual to illustrate the work of Christ, ignores the portion of it, in which Azazel figures, confining himself to the portion which symbolizes the union of the worshipper with God.[2]

This conception of atonement is the complement of that conception of sin, which pictures sin as separation from God, for it heals the breach which sin had caused by binding God and man together again in a united life. That this was Christ's conception of His work, appears not only from the Gospel of John, but from the synoptic narratives as well. When at the last supper He said: "This is my blood of the new covenant,"[3] He suggested that He was doing

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[1] Lev. xvi. [2] Heb. x, 1 ff. [3] Matt. xxvi, 28; Mark xiv, 24; Lu. xxii, 20.

a work similar to that which the sacrifices at the solemnization of the first covenant performed. As they bound God and man together in a renewed life, so He would bind His disciples to God in a new and living bond.

This, then, is the substance of the Gospel message; and it was anticipated in a rude type or germ in early Semitic times. Man is by nature in some degree akin to God, but he does not live the highest life; he is often false to his better nature; he sins, and his sins separate him from God; they weaken the life bond, which united him in some degree to his maker; but Christ the Son of God has come into human life to unite man again with God; He comes in Spirit still into every heart which will welcome Him; He renews the higher nature, kindles heavenly ideals, strengthens the will to achieve the best, introduces into communion with the Father, enables one to live in accordance with his better nature, and the man is saved by union with God.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE FUNCTION OF SUFFERING IN ATONEMENT.[1]

"By his knowledge shall my righteous servant make many righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities." Isa. liii, 11.

"For humanity sweeps onward; where to-day the martyr stands,
On the morrow crouches Judas with the silver in his hands;
Far in front the cross stands ready and the crackling fagots burn,
While the hooting mob of yesterday in silent awe return
To glean up the scattered ashes into History's golden urn."

—*Lowell.*

KNOWLEDGE in this world involves pain. The power to know is included in the power to suffer. Sensation through which knowledge comes conveys both painful and pleasurable impressions. From a comparison of these, intelligence comes. The simplest things we know have come to us through our own pain or that of our predecessors.

[1]A large part of this chapter was published in the *American Friend* in 1898.

Pain has been the great motive power by which the race has advanced. The animal and the savage bask in the sunshine, idle and thoughtless, till the sun moves on and cold compels them to seek protection. Hunger is the motive power of industry. Civilization has directly sprung from pain, and pain is the door through which those deeper problems of life and its meaning enter,—problems which compel the soul to cast itself upon God.

It is, then, neither an accident nor a false analysis of life which leads the prophet in this great poem on the Sufferer to couple knowledge with suffering; for a moment's reflection makes it clear that with knowledge the power to suffer is increased. The sensitive ear of the musician, taught to detect harmonies which to our duller sense are obscure, is harassed by a thousand discords which are powerless to give us pain. The eye of the trained artist, skilled to detect beauties which we pass unnoticed, is also pained by uglinesses of which we remain ignorant. The sensitive soul, capable of catching some glimpse of immortal joys,

may be tortured with visions of exquisite woe which the gross have no power to appreciate.

But suffering, though so beneficent, is universally misunderstood. The savage thinks it the penalty of an angry divinity, and abandons the sick and suffering because his god is offended with them. Our very word pain comes from this conception of penalty. Many a thoughtful Christian misunderstands it almost as much as the savage. The prophet confesses that he and his contemporaries misunderstood it. As they looked upon the ideal Servant—whether he was to them an individual or the righteous kernel of the nation we do not know—they thought God was punishing him. "We did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted." But as the prophet gazed there dawned upon his soul the great truth that suffering is redemptive: "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed,"

The redemptive power of suffering is one of the marvels of life. A noble soul catches

some gleam of truth not before known—it may be only a discovery in mechanics, but a discovery which will greatly aid the processes of human economy. He declares his knowledge, but the world doubts; he insists on his message, but men scoff; he becomes to them a fanatic, a crank, or an insane enthusiast. The man passes his life in bearing the pains of misunderstanding and poverty, and it is often not till he is gone that men learn to appreciate and utilize his knowledge. Because of the dullness of humanity the inventor must, as a rule—happily our age is reversing this—suffer long to teach the world his truth and raise humanity even a little. It is thus that our common comforts and appliances have been purchased. Purple with the life-blood of some of earth's best spirits is the pathway over which our daily conveniences have come to us.

In the spiritual and moral realm this is pre-eminently true. The reformer and prophet come with their vision of a higher life, but their message is received with scorn by those who are wedded to the flesh-pots or

shibboleths of the present order. Truth is trampled upon; its messenger bleeds; his life is passed in a living martyrdom till at last the message burned into men's hearts by his patient suffering is welcomed, and a race steps forward to a higher plane of life.

All this reaches its highest exemplification in the life of Jesus Christ. It does not detract from the divine character of His suffering that it conforms to this universal type; that suffering is God's own seal upon the law of life's progress which He himself established.

We sometimes think of the suffering of Christ as though it were the suffering of the crucifixion only. That was, indeed, the climax, but His whole life was a life of pain. How could it be otherwise with one who brought to man such new and momentous knowledge as He did? Men had here and there ventured to guess that God was a Father, but the practical knowledge of the Fatherhood of God as Christ taught it was quite new. How could one who taught that God is Spirit fail to win the hate of those who desired to confine God to

their little sanctuary that they might have a monopoly of Him? When He declared that God is light must He not offend those whose hearts were dark with ecclesiastical deceit? When He said that God is Love, He must range against himself those who were full of hatred, and wished to serve a God who would justify their hate. But especially when He told men who were looking for a Messianic kingdom, of which Jerusalem should be the capital, and to which the treasures of the world should flow— a kingdom which should satisfy their greed, their love of power and revenge, that the kingdom of God comes not with observation, that it is within, that its magnates are not rulers, but servants, is it any wonder that His heart was pierced with the hate of these men? Conscious of the Fatherhood of God as man had never been, His life revolved about a centre unknown to others. What suffering the hateful discords of earth must have caused that ear attuned to the harmony of heaven! He was never understood. His brethren thought Him mad. The crowds which for a time followed for

loaves and fishes forsook Him when He refused to proclaim Himself a king. Rabbis, who fattened on the patronage of a system grounded in a this-worldly theology, soon perceived that there must be eternal warfare between their system and His, and ultimately secured His condemnation. The three disciples who seem to have been most able and most desirous of understanding Him, failed Him in Gethsemane and went to sleep when He most longed for sympathy. It was then, when He faced this world of misunderstanding, hatred and incompetence, each aspect of which seemed to render His task hopeless and to fling back His love upon itself, that He "began to be greatly amazed and sore troubled." Surely His suffering was not confined to the cross! Such suffering as His was only possible in One who possessed such knowledge, and it was life-long, though it culminated in Calvary.

But how often has this suffering been misunderstood! We have "esteemed Him smitten of God"—have thought the Father was imposing penalty on Him, while "He

was wounded for our transgressions," and the chastisement of our peace was upon Him." The stripes came from us, not God, but by them we were healed. Hearts unmoved by all else have responded to the suffering of Jesus. It has convinced men of the love of God, and drawn them unto Him. "By His knowledge He has made many righteous; and borne their iniquities."

The sufferings of Christ have been as a window through which men could catch a glimpse of the long-suffering love of God. In God is the perfect and unlimited knowledge; in Him, the spotless purity; in Him, the blending of all high qualities and delicate powers. His must the infinite suffering be, in view of the sin, the insensibility and the beastliness of man. The power of that suffering love over the hearts of men, as it is revealed in the suffering Son, is the heavenly power which melts hard hearts, and brings the prodigal home.

CHAPTER XV.

THE TEMPLE OF THE HEART.

"Know ye not that ye are a Temple of God." 1 Cor. iii, 16.

> "Invisible and silent stands
> The temple never made with hands,
> Unheard the voices still and small
> Of its unseen confessional."
>
> —*Whittier.*

In ancient times the gods were not thought to be everywhere, but were localized. Certain spots, where vegetation grew luxuriantly or some other circumstance persuaded men that the divine was especially manifested, were believed to be the dwelling places of gods. In other places man could do much as he pleased, but when he approached the temple of God he must do as God pleased. If it were necessary to approach an earthly potentate with ceremony, much more was it necessary to approach with proper form the dwelling place of God. His home was believed to be surcharged with his presence as a kind of divine electricity. If any were so bold as to approach

this sanctuary in a way displeasing to its divine inhabitant, this supernatural power might be discharged as it was in the case of Uzzah, (2 Sam. vi), and the man might be instantly destroyed; but if he came in the right way, the inexhaustible strength of the indwelling deity was lavished upon his prosperity.

It is these ideas, universal in the time of Paul, that he applies mystically and with such moral effect in the Corinthian Epistles. He employs for spiritual edification the old idea of the taboo as it had been raised to its highest power by the Jew. The principle underlying it is, when translated into terms of the spirit, true. God is Spirit; man is spirit. The one is the dwelling place of the other. If "in Him we live and move and have our being," so He would live in us; He has designed the spirit of man for His temple. That spirit is intimately associated with, or is a part of, a mind; it dwells in a physical body. It cannot be pure if the mind delights in the impure, or if the body makes its animal passions the master of the whole. If the Spirit of God

cannot keep the human spirit so pure that it has power to keep the mind on themes which are elevated—if the mind has not power to make the body its servant rather than its master, then the temple of God is defiled,—destroyed; then the man too is defiled,—destroyed. No law in all the universe is more sure or inexorable than this. The drunkard and the debauchee afford its worst examples, but wherever stunted lives and dwarfed consciences are to be seen, there we may be sure the temple of God has been devoted to profane uses. The destruction is not completed, but it is going on.

On the other hand real prosperity goes with purity. Of such Paul declares God's word to be: "I will dwell in them and walk in them, and I will be their God and they shall be my people." It was thus that Paul translated the old unreasoning and half-superstitious taboos of the primitive sanctuaries into spiritual values. The heart a temple for God! The life interpenetrated by His love, moulded by His spirit! This is the supreme privilege of life! No wonder

that he who casts it away is by that very fact dwarfed, defiled, undone, destroyed!

Inspiring as these suggestions are there are others which come to us of which Paul did not dream, because he did not know the evolution of the temple as it is known to-day. Men thought at first that their deity dwelt in some natural object, a tree, a spring, a crag, or something of that kind. Such had been the belief of the early Hebrews and their ancestors. Then they conceived the idea that God could be persuaded to reside in a stone of their own selection; thus Jacob set up a stone at Bethel and called it God's house. These monoliths, or heaps of stones as they sometimes were, served at first as temple, idol and altar all in one. To come into contact with them was to come into contact with the god who dwelt within. Sacrifices were offered on them, blood poured out over them, and other gifts cast on them. In course of time they were carved into various idol forms or houses built over them. The houses, rude at first, in course of time gave place to temples like those of Solomon and Herod,

elaborately adorned with gold and precious stones, into which God, though inhabiting the heaven of heavens, which could not contain Him, nevertheless deigned to come.

Is not the development of the temple from the uncarved and rude pillar up to the magnificent building, radiant with all that is precious, a parable, too, for our encouragement? The heart that has welcomed its heavenly Master is a temple, but how poor a temple it knows itself to be! It is like the rude pillar naked to the sky. It lacks the sheltering power of the character which is to be, it lacks the beautifying power of the Christian graces which are yet to grow. The years of Christian experience, however, produce their effect. The divine Indweller of his temple transforms the rude, stony heart into His own image; He adorns it with graces like unto His own, graces which are the fruits of His own spirit, till, by-and-by, it is not only a temple in some sense fit for its heavenly Inhabitant, but like the ancient temple it has made its environment holy, and sanctified and purified as much of life as it can influence. It

is only the Christian who knows the power of this mystic experience who can realize the poet's dream :—

" Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift season's roll !
Leave thy low-vaulted past !
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea ! "

Another parable, too, suggests itself as one broods over Paul's mystic figure. The temples of ancient times had no windows. They were little chambers for the deity, not churches for the accommodation of the worshippers. The deity within dwelt therefore in thick darkness. In time this came to be symbolic of the mystery which enshrouded God and all His ways. It was thus that the thick darkness of Solomon's temple, (1 Kgs. viii, 12 ; 2 Chr. vi, 1), is to be understood. In the New Testament God no longer is thought to dwell in darkness, but in the light which no man can approach unto, (1 Tim. vi, 11). God is as before enveloped in mystery, but Christ has now

come and the mystery is no longer one of darkness and gloom, but a mystery of light and of hope. Is not this, too, a parable of Christian experience? The world with all its wondrous order, life with all its pain, bereavement, disappointment, and suffering are always a mystery, but, whereas at the first, the Heart of the mystery is enveloped in the gloom of hopelessness and the fear that God may be unjust and unlovely, when the soul has welcomed its heavenly Guest and has become accustomed to His presence, the mystery remains, but it is a mystery of light, hope and love, the deep things of which "eye hath not seen or ear heard."

CHAPTER XVI.

PRIESTHOOD.

"Ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests." Ex. xix, 6. "A royal priesthood, a people for God's own possession." 1 Pet. ii, 9.

> "Not on one favored forehead fell
> Of old the fire-tongued miracle,
> But flamed o'er all the thronging host
> The baptism of the Holy Ghost."
>
> —*Whittier.*

In early Semitic tribal life no domestic animals were killed except in sacrifice, and every man was his own priest. In other words, every occasion when meat was eaten had a sacrificial significance, and every man could prepare his own meat. The memory of this primitive custom is preserved in the ritual of the Hebrew Passover, the lamb for which was slain, not by a priest, but by the head of each family. The introduction of the Levitical priesthood was a later occurrence, and in the lapse of time that priesthood so transformed the simple life of early times, that almost all priestly functions were denied to the ordinary man. The

primitive ideal, nevertheless, was cherished in the heart of the writer of Exodus xix, 6, who looked for a time when all God's people should be priests as they were of old. When the Old Testament was translated into Greek, the translators could not understand this primitive ideal. They were thinking of legendary families, like that of Cinyras in Cyprus, who combined the functions of both king and priest, and they accordingly translated "a kingdom of priests" by the words, "a royal priesthood." As Peter quoted from the Greek translation of the Old Testament, his Epistle is made to favor that idea.

Suggestive as the thought of a royal priesthood is, the primitive Christian ideal was a revival in a spiritual form of the ideal of early times, when every man was his own priest. The Master instituted no priesthood; He held personal relations with every disciple. He did not institute two standards of holiness, one for the priesthood and one for the laity, but placed all on an equality: "One is your Master and all ye

are brethren." As Lightfoot declared:[1] "This is the Christian ideal; a holy season extending the whole year round—a temple confined only by the limits of the habitable world—a priesthood coextensive with the human race;"

Such is the infirmity of human nature that this ideal was not long maintained in organized Christianity. The history of Hebrew religion repeated itself; a priesthood intervened so that the primitive ideal was almost, if not quite forgotten. During the Reformation period various attempts were made to restore to each believer his primitive privileges. The most thorough and successful of these was that of George Fox, which resulted in the organization of the "Society of Friends."

We are not, however, now concerned with the perplexing problems of the Christian ministry, but with the primitive Christian conception of priesthood, of which the early Semitic conception was a type. The meaning of that ideal is that no one can

[1] *The Christian Ministry*, N. Y., 1883, p. 10, also his *Philippians*, Macmillan, 1890, p. 183, ff.

come between a soul and its Savior and God. Each one must tread the sacred places of life's highest experiences for himself, if they are to have any meaning for him; each must intercede for himself, must partake personally of the life which unites man to God, and must receive for himself the power to rise to life's higher plane. The secrets of righteousness cannot be learned vicariously; it is the duty and the privilege of each member of our race to tread the narrow pathway, which will lead him to the heart of God, and make him in the temple of his own heart a priest to God. When each man does this, then the Church of Christ will become a kingdom of priests, and the Master's ideal will be realized.

The duties of this Christian priesthood extend also beyond the bounds of one's own life. There are others who stand nearer to God than we do, and it is often a comfort to have them intercede for us. The privileges of intercession for those who are weaker belong to all Christians; the duty of affording to those who have beheld less of the heavenly vision an inspiring example rests also upon

all. Through lives of purity, hearts abounding in sympathy, and words touched by the inspiration of the diviner life, we may help to bring others to appreciate their privileges, and to enjoy the rights of their priesthood with God.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE INVENTIONS OF THE SONS OF CAIN.

"Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;
Ye wives of Lamech hearken unto my speech:
For I have slain a man for wounding me,
And a young man for bruising me:
If Cain shall be avenged seven-fold,
Truly Lamech seventy and seven-fold."

—Genesis iv, 23, 24.

THIS bit of poetry from a dark and revengeful past now forms a part of the story of Cain's sons, as that story is told in Genesis. The narrative belongs to the oldest stratum of Pentateuchal writings. Its author held a very definite point of view with reference to the culture of civilized men. He himself admired the simplicity of the life of the wandering nomads. Their life he believed to be comparatively pure, and free both from enervating luxury and the harsher forms of revenge.

In contrast to this he pictured the life of more civilized man. Civilization, according to his conviction, sprang from Cain the

murderer, who gave birth to a race of murderers. These men were ingenious; they discovered the process of working iron and bronze; they found out the art of producing the harmonious strains of music; but, though wise above their simpler brethren of the steppe in both the sterner and the more esthetic sides of life, they were still a race of murderers. Their superior knowledge and added skill only gave them greater power to gratify the spirit of revenge, and to pander to all that was unworthy and degrading.

In the thought of this writer, the innocent man is the ignorant man, and the happy life, the uncultured life. In this view he does not stand alone. Many noble spirits in many different ages have looked upon life with the eyes of this old nomad, and have believed that purity could not exist apart from asceticism, and that "misery is the thermometer of holiness."

This point of view finds a certain degree of justification in the fact that new power is almost universally first used by men for selfish or base ends. Wherever intellectual

advancement outstrips the growth of the moral sensibilities the result is to make man the meanest of animals; he has intellectual ability to be more diabolically cunning and revengeful than any other living thing. It always happens, too, that each newly acquired power or bit of knowledge is used by man for selfish and hurtful ends, until, led by experience of the harmful effects of such a course, and by the growth of his moral sense, he turns his new abilities to unselfish or elevating pursuits. This is sure to come in time, if not to the individual, at all events to the race; and thus in this fact the hope of progress in things material or spiritual lies.

The Biblical writer was looking upon the earlier stages of this process, and like many others in similar situations, he was disheartened. Lamech and the descendants of Cain, like Cain, their ancestor, surpassed their more rustic brethren in the knowledge of many things but gloating selfishly in their superior power, they gratified by it the appetites of their dark hatred and bloody vengeance.

This point of view is, however, too narrow. An increase in intellectual power will ultimately produce an increase in moral sense, and lead to higher ideals and better aims than would be possible without it. Sometimes, it is true, there are individuals in whom this does not happen ; they harden in their selfishness before the new moral sense can burst the shell of self. This need not happen, if education is properly conducted ; and the only hope that the race will ever slough off the animal in it completely, and become sons of God indeed, lies in the promise that we shall

> "Let knowledge grow from more to more,
> But more of reverence in us dwell ;
> That mind and heart according well,
> May make one music as before,
> But vaster."

We need not, then, take the gloomy view of the old nomadic writer, even though we can see enough of the reasons which influenced him to sympathize with his mood. The Lamech of his narrative, like some individuals we may have known, serves as a sad warning of the ruinous consequences

of a one-sided development. Salvation from such a fate is to be found not in ignorance, but in a symmetrical growth, in which the intellect is satisfied with truth, the sensibilities with beauty and affection, and the moral nature with goodness. Man is still imperfect and selfish; too often still he makes knowledge the handmaid of brutal desire; but the attitude of a believing heart is well described by Whittier:

"I have not seen, I may not see,
My hopes for man take form in fact,
But God will give the victory
In due time; in that faith I act.
And he who feels the future sure,
The baffling present may endure,
And bless meanwhile the unseen Hand that leads
The heart's desires beyond the halting steps of deeds."

CHAPTER XVIII.

ENOCH.

"And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him." Gen. v, 24.

"Cold in the dust this perish'd heart shall lie,
But that which warm'd it once shall never die."
—*Campbell.*

"He said, 'What's time?' Leave Now for dogs and apes!
Man has Forever."—*Browning.*

Among the ancient Semites as among the ancient Greeks, there was no clear conception of a happy immortal life.[1] It was thought that the dead went down to the underworld where they lived a colorless and unhappy existence, longing continually for the life of the world which they had left. Among both Greeks and Semites, however, it was thought that here and there a remarkable individual who had been able in some unusual way to obtain the favor of the gods might escape the abode of the dead in the world below the earth, and go directly to

[1] For the Greek view see Homer's Odyssey, Bk, xi; for the Semitic, Jastrow's *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, Ch. xxv.

the happy abode of the gods themselves. Such was Herakles among the Greeks, Parnapishtim, the Noah of the Babylonians, and Elijah and Enoch among the Hebrews. Most men were thought to go to the world below. From that world Samuel was brought up for a little while,[1] there Isaiah and Ezekiel [2] believed the dead to be, and the unenjoyable life there some of the Psalmists commemorated.[3]

In the later Jewish literature, Enoch played a most significant part. He was the first of those who, in the Hebrew traditions, was said to have been sufficiently fortunate to escape the underworld. Visions of the mysteries of the universe, which he was supposed to have seen, were recounted by several different writers,[4] and were held in such high esteem by the early Christians that one of them is quoted in the New Testament Epistle of Jude. [5]

The idea of immortality, as we understand it, was not held by the Hebrews until after

[1] Samuel xxviii, 11-14, [2] Isa. xiv, 9-20, and Ex. xxxii, 13-31. [3] Psa. lxxxviii, 10, and cxv, 17. [4] See Charles's *Book of Enoch*, and *Book of the Secrets of Enoch*. For the rise of the Enoch traditions, see Worcester's *Genesis in the Light of Modern Knowledge*, Appendix III. [5] See v, 14.

their contact with the Greeks, when their thinking became colored by the Platonic or neo-Platonic philosophy. The germ of the thought was, nevertheless, entertained by them long before, and had found expression in the belief that Enoch and Elijah had been translated, i. e. taken directly to the abode of God. After the Platonic ideas had begun to influence them, they still thought that all who died went to Sheol, or the underworld, to await a general resurrection at the coming of the Messiah. This was the view of the Apostle Paul when he wrote his earlier Epistles,[1] but in the fifth chapter of second Corinthians he shows that he had abandoned it, and was looking forward to immediate union with God when released from the body. He also gives expression to the same view in the Epistle to the Philippians.[2]

Viewed historically, therefore, the belief in the translation of Enoch is the germ or type of the New Testament teaching of immortality, and a most suggestive type it

[1] I. e., those to the Thessalonians. See my article in the *New World*. March, 1899, p. 119 ff. [2] Phil. i, 23.

is. Enoch, as the Epistle to the Hebrews delares,[1] had the testimony that he pleased God; God, accordingly took him to His abode that he might live in a closer union and walk with Himself. This story teaches in another way, the same lesson that the accounts of man's creation teach, and which is taught also by the primitive conceptions of sacrifice. Man is by his nature and by God's favor destined for God's own companionship. To attain this is his highest felicity; to lose it, his greatest misfortune and severest punishment. This destiny, too, is not for a day, but for the aeons of eternity —aeons of unimaginable length. Could we but keep always in mind the truths for which the story of Enoch stands what a different perspective life would have! Many little things, which now cause us so much worry, would take in our minds the insignificant position which is theirs by right, and other things, which now are often crowded into the background of our thought and activities, would assume their proper place as of supreme significance.

[1] Heb. xi, 5, 6.

Some aspects of this great truth we of the twentieth century are in a better position to appreciate than any of our predecessors. We are compelled by the science of our time to believe in a God who is immanent in His world. We know that He is not far from every one of us; "in Him we live and move and have our being." We do not need to wait for translation to another abode in order to walk with Him. His spirit is here; it is the atmosphere of all noble lives, the inspiration of all goodness and excellence. The immortal felicity which we long for has its roots in the present, and may begin here. The walk with God will never be enjoyed in the other world unless it is begun in this. Other-worldliness must spring from the right kind of this-worldliness. The soul, which walks with God faithfully in a pure and unselfish life on earth, will, with all the faithful of former ages, be welcomed into a closer walk with the Father, when the "earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved," and we enter the house which is "eternal in the heavens."

CHAPTER XIX.

SONS OF GOD.

"There shall they be called sons of the living God." Romans ix, 26.

"The lives which seem so poor, so low,
The hearts which are so cramped and dull,
The baffled hopes, the impulse slow,
Thou takest, touchest all, and lo!
They blossom to the beautiful."

—*Susan Coolidge.*

From the earliest times men have felt that no man could rise above the commonplace average of human life, and do the noblest work of man, unless there dwelt in him a spark of the divine nature. Among early men this belief was expressed in very crude forms. These forms were, however, the only ones suited to their state of intellectual and spiritual culture, and, though they are crude, they, nevertheless, positively express the faith that the best in life can be achieved only by those who have a kinship to God.

Among the Greeks we know that men like Herakles were thought to be able to do

their great works because they had a god for their father. One trace of a similar conception among the Hebrews has survived. In the beginning of the sixth chapter of Genesis we are told that the "sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all that they chose," (v. 2); and further we are told (v. 4), that "when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children unto them: the same were the mighty men that were of old, the men of renown." In this passage the "sons of God" are angels.[1] The Hebrew writer was a monotheist. He could not, like a Greek, represent a god as consorting with a human wife; he therefore conceived that an angel, or a group of angels, had done so. Later, shortly before the beginning of the Christian era, it was thought by the author of a part of the book of Enoch[2] that these angels had fallen or they would not have done this, and that by doing it they had introduced

[1] For proof of this see Toy's *Judaism and Christianity*, pp. 147, 159, Ryle's *Early Narratives of Genesis*, pp. 93–95, and Worcester's *Genesis in the Light of Modern Knowledge*, ch. xv. [2] See the Book of Enoch, chs. vi–x.

sin into the world. In this opinion many others shared, including the authors of two of our New Testament Epistles.[1] This view was, nevertheless, a later interpretation. It was certainly not held by the original writer of the story. To him the only adequate explanation of the fact, that certain men of olden time had risen above their fellows and accomplished noble and daring deeds, was that they were of heavenly ancestry,—angels were their fathers.

In presenting this conception the primitive writer gave expression to a great truth. Human life is flat and insipid, if not corrupt and debased, except when it has by birth an inheritance of the heavenly nature, the God-begotten genius, the angelic inspiration, or the divine spirit. Men thus regard still those who have achieved the greatest work for the race. If we look upon Washington in a different way from that in which the Roman looked upon Romulus or the Hebrew upon Moses, the difference is a difference of degree, rather than a difference of kind. We recognize him as the man raised up and

[1] See Epistle of Jude, 5, 6, and 2 Pet. ii, 4.

prepared by God for the great task which he achieved. Liberty has been secured to men by sons of God, among whom we thankfully count Abraham Lincoln. The great geniuses in literature, like Homer and Shakespeare, compel men to stand before them in awe and confess that such power can only come to man as a gift from above. But more nearly akin to the meaning of our primitive story than any of these is the source of the power exhibited by the great religious heroes of our race. Whence came the power of Elijah, of Amos, of Hosea, of Isaiah, and of the other prophets? Whence, that of Paul, of Ignatius, of Clement, of Augustine, of Luther, of Savonarola, and of George Fox? Men were they, of like passions with us, but, born from above, they had the power to hew out for us the highways of religious liberty. They are among the heroes of old, "the men of renown."

But God is not partial. The same heavenly ancestry awaits each one of us. Similar power, if not similar work, is offered to us all.

"The world sits at the feet of Christ,
Unknowing, blind and unconsoled;
It yet shall touch His garment's fold,
And feel the heavenly Alchemist
Transform its very dust to gold."

"The earnest expectation of the creation," says Paul, "waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God,"[1] and he remarks in the same connection, "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.[2] Nineteen centuries have past and still the world waits and groans. The world in our times teems with herculean tasks, each awaiting for its accomplishment the coming of some son of God. May that birth and anointing come to each of us which will fit us to take up the work of these heaven-sent heroes, who lift the burdens of mankind!

[1]Romans viii, 19. [2]Romans viii, 22.

CHAPTER XX.

NOAH.

"By faith, Noah, being warned of God concerning things not seen as yet . . . prepared an ark for the saving of his house." Heb. xi, 3.

"Hide me, O my Savior, hide,
Till the storm of life be past;
Safe into the haven guide,
O receive my soul at last."
—*Charles Wesley.*

THE story of the flood, of the building of the ark, and the survival of Noah and his family, is one of the most familiar in the Old Testament. In recent years it has received much illumination from archæological research, and has accordingly attracted public attention anew. The foundation of it turns out to be a part of an old Babylonian epic.[1] Study of the Biblical narrative itself has also made it evident that the story was independently written by two different Hebrew authors, whose narratives were afterward combined by an editor into the

[1] See Jastrow's *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, p. 494 ff., Worcester's *Genesis in the Light of Modern Knowledge*, ch. xvi, and *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature*, Aldine ed. p. 350 ff.

form in which they now appear in our Bibles.[2]

When we put these Hebrew narratives into comparison with the older Babylonian story from which they were in a way derived, the real inspiration of the Biblical narrators stands out most clearly. In Babylon the tale was told in such a way that divine things seemed quite trivial, and their gods, mean men of gigantic power; in Israel it was told in a way to exalt one's conception of God, deepen one's sense of the terrible nature of sin and the surety of its punishment, and to mirror to after generations the hope that God would preserve and reward the righteous.

The lesson thus set forth is of perennial value. Our age perceives, as our forefathers did not, the instruments by which God does His work. We call them secondary causes, but we too often permit our vision of these to obscure our consciousness of the first and primal Cause. God still controls our life. No storm or flood over-

[2] See J. E. Carpenter and G. Harford-Battersby's *Hexateuch* Vol. II, p. 10 ff.

takes us without His knowledge and permission. "Not a sparrow falls to the ground without your Father." We should see God in everything. Back to this living faith an age which professes to believe in an immanent God needs to be recalled.

A generation, which has moved away from many beliefs which were formerly thought to be the safeguards of morality, is in danger of losing its power of making clear moral distinctions. There is a tendency to laxity in moral judgments. We need to learn again the lesson which the Hebrew writers saw in the deluge, and let the primary truth, that while the world stands sin will inevitably bring ruin, burn itself into our hearts. If the Biblical writer's interpretation of external events does not appeal to us, there are still passing before our eyes every year myriads of illustrations of his point. "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people;" and, "the wages of sin is death."

Earth's floods are not all past. Floods of barbarism, of drunkenness, and injustice in the social order still roll about us.

Prophetic spirits perceive that these floods bid fair to ruin our modern life, unless some ark can be prepared in which society can ride upon the fierce tides, which are now threatening to submerge her. Like Amos and Hosea of old, like Garrison and Whittier in the anti-slavery days, it is given to them to see the right, to obey it, to seek to lead others to acknowledge its sway, and to build for the future. These men are the Noahs of the present generation. They are misunderstood, misbelieved, misrepresented, and scoffed at, but they are the saviors of mankind, the founders of the society of the future. The story of Noah is a parable of encouragement to such as these; it assures them of the triumph of right, of principle, and of faith. Noah is said to have been so named because he was destined to give comfort to men,[1] so our modern prophets and reformers, in so far as they perceive the truth and labor for it, are destined to comfort mankind, and give rest to lives now tossed upon the feverish tides of unrighteousness and injustice.

[1] See Genesis v. 29. The name, Noah, comes from a Hebrew root which means "to rest", causative, "to give rest."

May the righteousness, the prophetic insight, the lofty faith, and the untiring labor of the hero of the deluge be emulated by us all! It is natural to seek a refuge for one's self from sin and all its consequences; and it is right so to do. The great Master of righteousness and Savior of men will not let us seek this for self alone; He bids us work for the salvation of all.

CHAPTER XXI.

BABEL.

'Canst thou by searching find out God?'' Job xi, 7.

"How silently, how silently,
The wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of His heaven.
No ear may hear His coming,
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive Him still,
The dear Christ enters in."

—*Phillips Brooks.*

THE fact that different nations or tribes speak different languages, and that their speech is unintelligible to those outside their own borders, made a deep impression upon early man. He, like his later descendants, sought to understand the cause of so striking a phenomenon. The story of the confusion of tongues at the tower of Babel contains the early Hebrew explanation of this important fact. It is an explanation which satisfied a primitive mind, but which we have no right to expect will satisfy the conditions of the larger knowledge of modern

times. Indeed, we are compelled now to recognize that in many respects the explanation is faulty.[1] For the purposes of this meditation, however, we shall dwell on its religious rather than its scientific aspects.

The story is told us in the book of Genesis by the same writer who penned for us the story of Lamech, and to his mind it taught the same lesson, viz :—that knowledge is dangerous, and should not be sought, even if it be knowledge of God. The element of truth in this position we have already recognized and appreciated.[2] Knowledge without moral purpose is irreverent and wicked. When curiosity outruns spiritual insight and selfishness dominates the man, superior knowledge makes of him a superior demon.

Another aspect of this story of Babel should also claim attention. Its author has pathetically pictured an incident in the universal search of man for God. Laboriously

[1] For example, there were different languages in the world long before the date he mentions, and long before men were civilized in Babylonia. His etymology of "Babel", too, is now known to be erroneous. See Ryle's, *Early Narratives of Genesis* p. 137 ff., and Worcester's *Genesis in the Light of Modern Knowledge*, p. 512 ff.
[2] See above, ch. xvii.

erected towers, weary pilgrimages, the distance of which is measured off by repeatedly stretching the length of the pilgrim upon the ground, forms crushed under the car of Juggernaut, and eager saints, standing in filth for years on the top of lofty pillars, attest the reality of the cry of the human heart: "Oh, that I knew where I might find Him!"

This aspect of the story of Babel, which is voiced in so much of the Old Testament, and rings so pathetically through the book of Job, is only adequately met and satisfied when we come to the New Testament and hear its message. There we are taught that man is not engaged in a fruitless quest for a God who ever escapes him, but that God is as eagerly seeking man as man is seeking God. This truth is expressed in many parables: that of the woman seeking her lost coin; that of the shepherd seeking the straying sheep; that of the father watching for the prodigal son. God has been engaged in the search much longer than man; His Spirit broods over each heart seeking an entrance into it. Man has missed Him

because he sought Him wrongly. No one has to ascend up into heaven to bring Him down, nor to descend into the deep to bring Him up, nor destroy the body with ascetic excesses to discover Him, nor to compass the secrets of the universe to gain knowledge of Him. "Raise the stone and there thou shalt find me, cleave the wood and there am I," says Jesus in the long-forgotten verse recently recovered in Egypt.[1] But we learn the lesson slowly. God comes to us in common things. He reveals himself in familiar faces, in the daily routine of life, in its little details, in its prosaic drudgery, in its little joys, and even in its sorrows. The still small voice of His Spirit speaks, and wherever one will listen, will bid Him welcome and will heed His voice, there God is found. Not the supreme effort of a Babel-like tower, but the silent surrender of the life to God, is the one requisite.

> "Where meek souls will receive Him still,
> The dear Christ enters in."

His presence is manifested in the fact that there the confusion of Babel is replaced by harmony, love, and a heavenly peace.

[1] See Greenfell and Hunt's *Sayings of our Lord*, p. 12.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE CALL OF ABRAHAM.

"By faith Abraham, when he was called . . . went out, not knowing whither he went . . . for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Heb. xi, 8, 10.

"Our Friend, our Brother, and our Lord,
What may thy service be?—
Nor name, nor form, nor ritual word,
But simply following Thee."

—*Whittier.*

THE narratives of the life of Abraham are somewhat puzzling to the archæologist and the historical student. The reason for this is that while Ur of the Chaldees has been identified, and some discoveries made there, and while many documents have been found which bear upon the general period of Abraham, these documents not only do not mention Abraham himself, but raise some knotty questions concerning the historical period in which the Bible places him. Others[1] have discussed these problems

[1] For discussions of these see the articles "Abraham" in Hasting's *Dictionary of the Bible*, the *Encyclopedia Biblica*, and the *Jewish Encyclopedia*. Also ch. iii, of Paton's *Early History of Syria and Palestine*.

however, and in this little study we turn to a pleasanter task.

No narrative in the Old Testament more strongly portrays in parable the high qualities and noble career of the idealist and the spiritual mystic than does this story of Abraham. He saw the vision of God, he heard the divine call to leave the rich valley of the Euphrates for a far-off land, and he obeyed. In that land he was a wanderer; for years the hope with which he started out, —the hope of founding an ideal state,—found in the outward circumstances of his life no objective support. Nevertheless he still held his faith, and pursued undaunted his high purpose. This picture is attractively presented, notwithstanding the fact, that there is here and there a crude moral touch, which partakes of the nature of the age in which the narrators of the story lived.[1]

The call of God comes to all. To the heart which has not yet found God, and which is tempted to live in accordance with the ideals of selfishness and expediency, the

[1] Such, for example, as Abraham's denial of Sarah. Gen. xii, 12, 13, and xx, 2.

call comes in the form of a summons to find its satisfaction and its home in the Father's love, and its rule of life in the pure example of Jesus Christ. Born in an animal body and reared in a selfish world, such a call seems to the natural man a summons to an unknown country,—a great leap of faith. Peace can, however, come in no other way than by obedience. The heart will never rest except in the Father's service. Outward prosperity may not come to the obedient; he may, like Abraham, be all his life a pilgrim and a sojourner; and yet the future is his; he is building in the "city which hath foundations."

Often the call to enter upon some self-sacrificing service for others, comes to hearts already possessed of God's peace. It means hardship, but it portends blessing to others. Such are the calls which have come in every age to the prophets, the reformers, and the missionaries. The illumination of a dark continent, the uplifting of the down-trodden, or the prosperity of generations yet unborn, depend upon the response which a few individuals give to such calls.

Obedience involves the leaving of home, or friends, or ease, or the esteem of contemporaries, but it also means fellowship with God in labor, and the founding of some new gate into the holy city. Similar calls to similar, though less conspicuous, service come to us all. How seldom we are faithful as was Abraham!

There are periods when the divine call comes to all men to move from the old regions of their thought and beliefs into new intellectual worlds. Such a period came to Europe at the time of the Renaissance and the Reformation, and another has come to the modern world within the past century. We have been called upon to leave the old intellectual paths which had grown familiar to our ancestors, and had been hallowed to us by the footsteps of many whom we loved and revered, and to go out, not knowing whither we should be led. Many have hesitated; many have gone unwillingly; some have refused to go at all. A few, with Abraham's faith and with the spirits of prophets have gone with trustful and buoyant hearts, confident that God

was thus leading to a better intellectual and spiritual future. The next generation will recognize their moral heroism.

As we near life's boundary,—and it is often much nearer than we think,—the summons comes to us all to go out into the great unknown country of the other life. Can we go calmly and trustfully, confident of the Father's goodness? The spiritual children of Abraham are able to sing with Whittier:

> "I know not where His islands lift
> Their fronded palms in air;
> I only know I cannot drift
> Beyond His love and care."

CHAPTER XXIII

JACOB AT BETHEL.

"Surely Jehovah is in this place; and I knew it not." Gen. xxviii, 16.

"Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing Boy,
But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,
He sees it in his joy;
The Youth, who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended;
At length the Man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day."

—*Wordsworth.*

Of all the characters in the Old Testament Jacob is the most human, and is most humanly pictured.[1] Many features of his portrait are such as to delight the Oriental mind both in ancient and in modern times. He was rightly named the "Supplanter." Cool, self-controlled, and wily, he pushed his way, snatching by trickery that which

[1] For critical and historical discussions, see the articles "Jacob" in Hasting's *Dictionary of the Bible*, and in the *Encyclopedia Biblica*.

birth and natural advantages had given to another. Though uniformly successful in his strategy, like all such characters he attracted the hatred of his victim, and that hatred endangered Jacob's life. In the opening years of his dawning manhood this pushing trickster was therefore obliged to flee from home and go out into the world to seek his fortune. Alone and defenceless, harried by the pangs of an evil conscience, but also filled with the light heart and high hopes of youth, which did not fully perceive all the consequences of his double dealing, Jacob, we are told, camped for the night at Bethel.

Now the Hebrews, like the ancient Semites in general,[1] did not understand the omnipresence of God as we do, but thought that He dwelt in certain places, and manifested Himself most remarkably there. In accordance with this idea, an old law [2] provides that in every place where God manifested Himself an altar for his worship might be erected. The thought, which underlies the

[1] See W. Robertson Smith's *Religion of the Semites*, 115 ff., and the writer's *Semitic Origins*, p. 96, and 112. [2] See Exodus xx, 24-26.

law, is that man does not know all the places where God dwells, and that it is right for him when new knowledge comes to him, to recognize it by a permanent religious organization.

Jacob, as he lay down that night, dreamed a dream. Heaven seemed to be open above him, the angels of God were ascending and descending on a ladder. At the top Jehovah Himself appeared and seemed to promise to Jacob and his posterity a noble and glorious future. In the morning Jacob awoke deeply impressed. Feelings of awe filled his breast. "Jehovah is in this place," he exclaimed, "and I knew it not. How terrible is this place! this is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." [1] He was impressed and accordingly vowed a vow, or made a covenant with his God; but his old habit of thought asserted itself, and his covenant was a selfish bargain. "If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my Father's

[1] Accordingly, in later time, Bethel was a sanctuary.

house in peace, then Jehovah shall be my God." He had had his heavenly vision. and it had stirred his heart, but he was not ready to surrender to his God unless he could gain some material advantage by doing so.

We often judge Jacob too severely, forgetting to make allowance for the crude and this-worldly standards of the age from which this story comes. We ought, however, to judge ourselves through it, for it is an admirable parable of the experience of many a young man. He is a child of prayer and of promise. Heaven lies about him in his infancy. As he grows, cupidity, avarice, and ambition tempt him. He finds that the world has praise only for success and possessions, and, with moral distinctions confused, he rushes after these regardless of the means by which they are to be attained or the consequences of the pursuit. Long is he attended on his way by visions splendid, but he does not abandon his strife for the earthly and the material things of life. In some great crisis a supreme vision comes, bringing a message which he cannot mistake,

but if he heeds at all, it is, like Jacob, in a bargain which stipulates that earthly prosperity shall be the condition on which the homage of his soul shall rise to God. This is the spiritual biography of many a man. No wonder that

> "The man perceives it die away,
> And melt into the light of common day."

Happy are such as have Jocob's later experience and become at last princes with God!

CHAPTER XXIV.

HOW JACOB BECAME ISRAEL.

"I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. Gen. xxxii, 26.

"Ill that He blesses is our good,
And unblest good is ill;
And all is right that seems most wrong,
If it be His sweet will."

—*Faber.*

Another picture in the life of Jacob portrays him somewhat more attractively. He had spent his years in Aram, his family was about him, he had acquired wealth, and was on his way back to his native land. His departure from Aram was signalized by trickery similar to that, the consequences of which had originally driven him from Canaan. At last his peace was made with Laban, his family and his flocks had passed on before, and he was spending the night alone. To-morrow he must meet the brother whom years before he had so deeply wronged. What will the greeting be? How will Esau receive him? As he thought on this with some foreboding a man attacked him in the

darkness, with whom he wrestled long. In the wrestling Jacob was finally hurt, so that he could do little but cling, but, as the night passed, he became convinced that his hurter was more than human, and declared to him, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." To this resolution he clung until the blessing was obtained, and as morning dawned his old nature vanished. He was no longer Jacob, the "Supplanter," but Israel, "a Prince with God." In the light of the next day, as he passed over the trans-Jordanic hills, we are told that he named the place Peniel, or "Presence of God," because there he had come face to face with his Maker. This tradition is, as Dr. Gannett has pointed out,[1] a parable of many a life. We are all born with the nature of the supplanter within us. Like Jacob, we spend much of our lives living it out. Like him, too, we find much in life to hurt us,—much to wrestle with; and often, like him, we wrestle long in darkness and cheerless night.

One class of the things with which we wrestle consists of inherited tendencies and

[1] See his sermon, *Wrestling and Blessing*.

limitations. We do not choose our parentage; we are born into circumstances over which we have no control. The powers, the nature, or the poverty, which we inherit, painfully limit our success. Many a one patiently pushes on in the darkness of a hopeless struggle, outstripped by those who have a more fortunate inheritance than he. But these very limitations may become a blessing. Not to supplant others in the strife after earthly position or possessions, but to gain the spiritual power to turn the limitations, which defeat, into the instruments of heavenly blessing, makes one a prince with God. Limitations are often the conditions of the birth of character. To recognize these conditions, and to seek the divine blessing from them, is to turn the painful night of wrestling into the bright morning of Peniel.

At times there come into life experiences which render the whole world dark. Some overwhelming calamity brings to the heart a darkness which may be felt; some crushing bereavement gives it a pain that seems unbearable. Life seemed to be made for

love, and, that the loved one should be snatched from our embrace, appears to be an irreparable and an inexplicable calamity. If the meaning of it, and the blessing in it, be sought, even such an experience will prove a source of blessing. Love, which simply dotes and enjoys, has never sounded the profound depths of loving; it plays upon the surface.

> "The heart must bleed before it feels,
> The pool be troubled before it heals,"

and as the sorrow is seen to be God's will and is accepted as such, the lineaments of the Father's face begin to shine through the darkness, the Father's peace spreads over the heart, and the life, though scarred and maimed, enters upon a new plane of happiness and felicity on the plains of Peniel.

Often in the present age our hurter comes in the form of a hard despair, which arises in our night of doubt. Old conceptions of how God created the world have been taken away; our former conception of how He caused the Bible to be written is snatched from us; or some other cause compels a growing mind to abandon something of its

childhood's faith, and, in the darkness which succeeds, that soul seems to be maimed for life. Not so need it be. Even doubt may be but the gateway to larger faith. If the spirit, which animated Jacob in his night of wrestling but animate us, and we seek the meaning of the painful experience, we shall find that that, which seems to be aimed at the symmetry, if not the life of our faith, will, when manfully faced and struggled with, lead to better faith, to loftier spirituality, and to clearer vision of God.

The lesson of this story of Jacob is, then, to bear manfully life's limitations and hardships, to seek their divine meaning, to commune with God in the midst of them, and thus in character and bearing to become God's prince. At the centre of the universe beats a Heart of Love. The blows, which fall upon us in life, are those by which He would chisel our characters into His own image.

CHAPTER XXV.

JOSEPH.

"They forced his feet into fetters. Into iron came his soul." Ps. cv, 13.

"O Will, that willest good alone,
Lead Thou the way, Thou guidest best;
A silent child, I follow on,
And trusting lean upon Thy breast.
And if in gloom I see Thee not,
I lean upon Thy love unknown;
In me Thy blessed will is wrought,
If I will nothing of my own."

—*Tersteegen.*

Among the stories of the patriarchs that of Joseph [1] exemplifies silent, unselfish suffering for others. As a youth the unmerited envy of his brethren secured his expatriation and enslavement; as a slave, faithful in all things to his master's interests, the unholy love and the heartless accusations of his mistress accomplished his imprisonment; as a prisoner he was forgotten by one whom he had cheered and helped, and so was left to languish in fetters for weary months. But

[1] For critical and historical discussions of the Joseph narratives see the articles "Joseph" in Hasting's *Dictionary of the Bible* and the *Encyclopedia Biblica.*

his spirit kept sweet and true, and the time came at last when the great work, for which all these years of endurance had been preparing him, was ready for his guiding hand, and then his hand and head and heart were found ready for his lofty task.

The story of Joseph is first of all a parable of the way to bear adversity. Trouble often comes upon us through our own incompetence or negligence; of such troubles we have no right to complain. But in this world the faithful heart, the unselfish spirit, and the sweet-tempered life are no guarantee against adversity. Slander, envy, and self-seeking will surge around such a life and will give it keenest pain. So according to the accounts in Genesis, was it with Joseph. As the Psalm forcibly puts it, "into iron came his soul," [1] a phrase which is strikingly like ours: "the iron entered his soul." It suggests to the English reader the keenness of the sufferings of a sensitive spirit, its gloom, and its temptations to despair. Joseph is pictured as bearing

[1] The English suggests this more strongly than the Hebrew. In the latter language the word for "soul" is used in the sense of "self."

all most heroically and with undaunted faith. He was always cheerful, and always ready to be of service to those about him. In the end, too, it appeared to all that these sufferings had been, in the ordering of a wise Providence, the preparation of the man for a high destiny, and for a lofty service to two important nations. Without the chain of misfortunes he would neither have been at the point where he could be of service, nor qualified by experience to undertake his gigantic labors.

As the foundations of a lofty building must be laid far under the ground, so the preparation for the noblest work of man must be laid in humbling and painful experiences. Happy those who learn with Paul to rejoice in tribulation, that thus they may learn to comfort others with the comfort with which they themselves have been comforted of God. [1]

In the character of Joseph, too, we have pictured many of those traits which shine out so brilliantly in Jesus Christ. Truly Joseph may be said to be a type of Christ

[1] See 2 Cor. i, 4.

The Master's purity and unselfishness, His readiness to serve, the envy and hatred which burned in the hearts of those who should have welcomed Him and which hounded Him to His death, His uniform kindliness even to His enemies, and His conquest of those enemies by the power of love,—all find exemplification in the Old Testament picture of Joseph. Though these awaited their full manifestation till the coming of the Son of Man, the story of the life of Joseph, fondly repeated or read from generation to generation, was preparing the world for His advent, and for His matchless work.

CHAPTER XXVI.

MOSES.

"Moses . . . refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to share ill treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." Heb. xi, 24, 25.

"Faith's meanest deed more favor bears
Where hearts and wills are weighed,
Than brightest transports, choicest prayers,
Which bloom their hour and fade."

—*J. H. Newman.*

THE life of Moses as portrayed in the Old Testament [1] presents some important parallels to the life of Joseph, and affords similar suggestions; but it has also important features of its own. Moses, like Joseph, suffered exile, but unlike Joseph his exile was voluntary. It is a noble thing to bear uncomplainingly crosses which come to us unbidden, but it is even nobler to deliberately choose the unpopular path from principle, knowing well the meaning of that pleasure and luxury upon which one turns his back.

[1] For historical discussions of the work of Moses see the article "Moses" in Hasting's *Dictionary of the Bible*, Budde's *Religion of Israel to the Exile*, ch. i, and the writer's *Semitic Origins*, pp. 267–296. The religious lesson of the narratives is quite independent of such discussion.

This was the merit which the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews saw in the flight of Moses from Egypt, and the author of that Epistle was right.

Like Joseph, Moses, we are told, spent years in solitude, but it was in some ways a less trying solitude. The open air of heaven and the companionship of flocks are less trying than the hard lot of the slave, or the stifling atmosphere of the dungeon. As Moses led his flocks about, he came to the mount where Jehovah was thought to dwell,[1] and received a revelation from Him. The highest spiritual experiences and the new visions of God ever come to those who, like Moses, turn their backs upon selfish ease, and take the rugged pathway of duty, even though that pathway leads to exile and to solitude. Moses's new vision of God gave him new hope for Israel. He saw that a new religion was possible for her, and that through the faith of that new religion a new national life would become hers. The vision burned itself upon his heart; it amounted to a call to go and inaugurate the new era

[1] Compare the statement on this point in chap. xxiii.

of which he had had a glimpse; he hesitated, but at last yielded; and forth from the retirement of the wilderness came the diffident, but mighty champion of the oppressed, the herald of a new religious era. The right and pure choice of Moses as a young man, his fidelity in solitude, the mystic unfolding of truth which came to him there, and his obedience to the heavenly vision, are all most suggestive of helpful guidance to those in any age who come to the parting of the ways in life.

Moses mediated the covenant between God and Israel. That covenant was afterward interpreted in different ways by different individuals, but the fact of the covenant is one of the epoch-making facts in the religious history of the world. Next to the New Covenant established by Christ it has been most influential upon the highest destinies of man. Little did the youth who fled from Egypt, because he chose to share the ill-treatment of the people of God, dream of the noble mission to which the path of self-denial would lead. At the end of the path he found the privilege of talking with God "face to face," and of working with God to uplift the world for all time. The way of

the cross still leads to mystic communion with God, and to similar, though perhaps less conspicuous service.

Not as the mediator of a covenant only, but also in the manner in which he repelled a temptation to self-aggrandizement,[1] is Moses a type of Christ. In both these ways he is represented as exhibiting something of the same virtues which were so conspicuous in the Master. Once, we are told, when Jehovah was exceedingly angry with Israel, He proposed to destroy the people and to make of Moses a great nation. No passage in the Old Testament breathes a more beautiful spirit than the intercessory prayer, in which Moses pleaded for the pardon of the offenders. He could not bear to think of the destruction of those for whom he had labored, notwithstanding their ingratitude and rebellion, even when that destruction meant his own aggrandizement. It is through such spirits as these that God is revealed to the world. Christ is the Chief and the Master of them all, but of that number we may be, if we will.

[1] The analogy suggested is with Christ's temptation to secure all the kingdoms of the world.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE PASSAGE OF THE RED SEA.

"I will sing unto Jehovah for He hath triumphed gloriously :
The horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea." Exodus xv, 1.

"The sea saw it, and fled ;
The Jordan was driven back.
The mountains skipped like rams,
The little hills like lambs."
—*Ps. cxiv, 3, 4.*

THE exodus from Egypt was the first great deliverance which Jehovah wrought for Israel. It was a deliverance of such a vital character, and was so signally accomplished, that it was ever treasured in the memory of the nation. It was more than a turning point in their history ; it was a perpetual monument of the power and the goodness of their God, and, as centuries passed and national misfortunes multiplied, the memory of the people turned to this great event with ever increasing wonder and thanksgiving. Psalmists celebrated it,[1] and the collectors of tradition fondly preserved its memory.

[1] See Psalms lxvi, 6 ; lxxviii, 53 ; cxiv, 3, 4.

Three different traditions of it are now woven together in the fourteenth chapter of our book of Exodus.[1] In the oldest and most accurate of these, there is a remarkable conception of nature, and of Jehovah's relation to nature, which not only explains the event itself, but points an important lesson to the men of the present generation. This writer tells us that "Jehovah caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land."[2] Their God controlled the winds, through those He controlled the sea, and made a way of escape for His despairing people.

Later poets connected this event with the crossing of the Jordan, because of the similarity of the two occurrences, and sang of them together. It is probable that the stopping of the waters of the Jordan was due to a landslide such as the Arabs tell us, occurred in the year 1266 A. D., which stopped the water and gave them an opportunity to build a bridge. The river was at flood and the high water had rendered their

[1] See Carpenter and Harford-Battersby's *Hexateuch*, Vol. II, p. 100 ff., and Bacon's *Triple Tradition of the Exodus*, pp. 71-72.
[2] Exodus xiv, 21.

work impossible.[1] Such an event, like the driving back of the water by the wind, would seem to the Hebrews an interposition of their God. They saw God in everything. No opportune event, they thought, could aid His people without His will, and in this they were right. His wind had driven back the Red Sea for their deliverance; He had stopped the waters of the Jordan that they might enter into the land of promise. It is little wonder that in the later generations the agencies which He had employed were forgotten, or were believed to have been priestly implements. The fact of His deliverance was, nevertheless, most gratefully remembered.

"What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou fledest?
Thou Jordan, that thou turnedst back?"

gleefully exclaimed the psalmist, confident that but one answer could be given: "God was aiding His chosen ones."

The suggestions of these Old Testament narratives are obvious. God, our Father, controls His world; we are His children. Life is a continuous miracle. Though we

[1] See the Arabic text and translation in the Palestine Exploration Fund's *Quarterly Statement*, for July 1895, pp. 253-261.

live in an age when the processes of nature are understood as never before, these processes are but God's way of working. No complex accumulation of difficulties can surround us, except by His will or permission; no pain can come to us without Him, even through the agency of one of His rebellious children; we should accept all as His ordering, look for the lesson He would teach us in it, and await the deliverance which He wills, whether it be the deliverance of relief from suffering, or the impartation of strength to endure. "Heaviness may endure for a night, but joy will come in the morning." As our difficulties disappear and the goodness of God brings joy to the heart, we shall be able to join in Miriam's pean of triumph:

"I will sing unto Jehovah for He hath triumphed gloriously:
The horse and his rider He hath thrown into the sea."

If, as our Christian experience advances, the deliverance be, like the crossing of the Jordan, not so much relief from danger as the gift of liberty to labor or to enter into a fuller life, the thanksgiving will be as spontaneous and the joy as real.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

JOSHUA.

"Only be strong and very courageous." Joshua i, 7.

"Foremost captain of his time,
Rich in saving common sense,
And, as the greatest only are,
In his simplicity sublime."

—*Tennyson.*

THE character and career of Joshua, as they are pictured to us in the Old Testament, [1] give forcible expression to the dignity of simple manhood and the dynamic force of faith and courage. From the time when he appears in the narrative as Israel's captain and Moses' minister, up to the final farewell, when, having as we are told [2] conquered the land for Israel, he laid down the burdens of life, having pledged his house to serve the Lord, the dominant note of his career was faith, and its prevailing atmosphere the courage which springs from faith. As a spy, he believed that Israel could take

[1] For critical and historical discussions see the articles "Joshua" in Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible* and the *Encyclopedia Biblica*. [2] Judges I gives a different account of the conquest which does not attribute it to Joshua.

the land; as a general, his courageous strategy made the conquest of impregnable fortresses like Jericho [1] and Ai possible even by his smaller forces; as a moral leader, he would yield to no temptations to gain illicit wealth; as an impartial ruler, he is represented as justly dividing the land.

The life of faith and courage was not, however, necessarily free from error. What life is? Acting too hastily he made his league with the Gibeonites, [2]—an act which, we are told, long crippled his people. One or two mistakes cannot ruin a life of faith. If the persistent attitude of the heart is right, and its needle points faithfully to the polestar of the moral and spiritual world, its victories are sure. So it was with Joshua. An old Hebrew poet, a bit of whose song was copied from the lost book of Jashar into our book of Joshua, so strongly believed that heaven itself was interested in the struggles of this noble, manly life, that he represents in poetical hyperbole the sun as standing still to watch and aid his victories, for he sings:

[1] The oldest narrative, which is now embedded in Joshua vi, so represents it. See Carpenter and Harford-Battersby's *Hexateuch*. Vol. II, pp. 328-330, and *Joshua* in the *Polychrome Bible*, pp. 8, 9,
[2] See Joshua ix. 3 ff.

"And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed.[1]"

The conquest which Joshua made is suggestive of that which may be made by every man of faith. Life lies before him as a promised land. Its physical frame and earthly environment are the rich valleys which are capable of bearing plentiful harvests; its mental and moral powers the mountain peaks which are capable of bearing upon their sides the exhilarating vine, and of affording from their summits broad prospects and inspiring visions. These are at the beginning of life under the sway of the selfish propensities inherited from the past and bound up in the bodily frame. The work of life consists in bringing this land of promise into subjection to the Highest, so that the harvests of its valleys and the inspiring vintage of its hills shall support the unselfish life of the ideal Christian disciple. At times it is an arduous work. The enemy often seems to have all the advantage; but faith, courage, and persistence in the right way may bring the victory in the end. The conquest is not completed in a

[1] See Joshua x, 13.

moment; it is the work of years. Here and there in life's mazes one makes an alliance with an appetite or a propensity to which he should give no quarter; but if the heart is right, such errors will be ascertained and corrected. "If in any respect you take a mistaken view, God will make that also plain to you. Only we must order our lives by the standard which we have already reached." [1] The Father in heaven watches over such a life and will faithfully reward its faith and courage. Its victory is sure.

[1] Phil. iii, 15, 16, as rendered in the *Twentieth Century New Testament*.

CHAPTER XXIX.

DEBORAH.

"I Deborah arose,
I arose a mother in Israel."
Judges v, 7.

"Maiden, when such a soul as thine is born,
The morning stars their ancient music make."
—*Lowell.*

THE poem which constitutes the fifth chapter of the book of Judges is thought by many to be the oldest poem in our Bibles. It is one of the purest and strongest bits of Hebrew verse. It is the poem of women. It celebrates a victory accomplished by women, and toward the end pathetically pictures the sorrows of a woman. Deborah inspired Israel's general; it was her prophetic voice which called the disunited tribes together, and welded them into an effective force. It was Jael who, when the hated oppressor fled from the victorious army, delivered her people by taking his life. It was a hard and savage deed, but we must not forget that it was a hard and savage age. It was a deed which appealed to her compatriots, and

secured for her a place in this immortal song. When all was over and the poet had told his tale, it was to the mother of Sisera that the reader's thought was directed. As women were the inspiration and the achievers of the action, so its blow fell heaviest on a woman.

This poem records an incident in an epoch when Semitic women held an important place in the social and political economy of the time.[1] From that place the social forces which made polygamy possible thrust woman so long ago, that it is hard for us to realize that she ever held it, and yet it is true. The civilization of that time was crude, and the women which it produced, like the men of their time, would not appear attractive to-day, but, like so many of the institutions of that early age, the position accorded to women then was in germ a promise of the destiny to which Christian civilization would call them.

The place given to women in the friendships of Christ, and the part accorded them as the first heralds of the resurrection, have

[1] See the writer's *Semitic Origins*, pp. 53–57.

often been noted. The spirit and genius of Christianity as well as the action of the Master gave them an equal place with their brethren. Paul declared that sex has no place in Christianity,[1] and tacitly took it for granted that women had the same gifts for spiritual service as men.[2] The effort of one of his followers to prevent untrained women from making undignified interruptions of the religious exercises of the church,[3] were afterwards misinterpreted so as to deprive them of all right to public service.

The Society of Friends were the first to return to the Christian basis of equality in all things. With them women have for two hundred and fifty years enjoyed the same spiritual privileges, and engaged in the same spiritual duties as men. Their ministry has gained thereby, and into their religious life there has come a strain of purity, tenderness, and of lofty spirituality, which otherwise would have been impossible. Others are now realizing the justice of this, and are gradually striving to accomplish in the life of their

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[1] Gal. iii, 28. [2] 1 Cor. xi, 1-16 [3] 1 Tim. ii, 1-15. The opinion is now prevailing that Paul did not write this epistle.

organized Christianity this simple Christian justice.

It may seem strange in this age of the "emancipation of woman" to call attention to these things, for there are those who fear that we are returning to the unwomanly type of women of the days of Semitic antiquity, rather than approaching the realization of the ideal society of which that antiquity was a prophecy in germ. Such a result we need not fear.

Woman, freed from the trammels of ignorance and the limitations of artificial religious restraints, will bring to the civilization of the future the power to inspire and to achieve which Deborah and Jael exhibited, at the same time that she forms the centre and heart of the home and feels, as she always has done, like the mother of Sisera, the keenest of the family's sorrows.

Who that has been helped in his faith by the sympathy and insight of a Christian woman, or that has shared the comradeship of a noble wife, or had occasion to treasure the memory of a sainted mother, could fail to rejoice at the coming of that time when every woman should be a "mother in Israel?"

CHAPTER XXX.

GIDEON.

"How should one chase a thousand,
And two put ten thousand to flight?"
Deut. xxxii, 36.

"To do is to succeed—our fight
Is waged in Heaven's approving sight—
The smile of God is victory."
—*Whittier.*

THE story of Gideon is a good example of the victories which may, with the divine blessing, be won by insignificant instruments. Gideon belonged to one of the lesser tribes; his clan was one of the least significant in the tribe; he the least of his family. In hordes the Midianites were pouring down on the land; the force which Gideon could muster against them was comparatively small; but with faith and courage combined with consecrated skill he won, even with this force, a victory which set his people free from the marauding invaders.

Indeed, this lesson was so impressed upon Israel in later times that some of the traditions concerning the matter represented

Gideon's army as having been artificially reduced so as to purposely make it small. This shows that, to the ancient Hebrews as to us, the religious point of the story was that, where there resides in human breasts a high courage born of faith, God can do great things with feeble instruments or with obscure persons.

The victory won by Gideon was so notable that it was long remembered as a day of marvellous slaughter of Israel's enemies. Isaiah twice refers to it,[1] and of it the author of the eighty-third psalm sang.[2] Like some notable historic events of recent years, different traditions existed concerning it, and different versions of its details were current. According to one of these[3] the slaughter took place on the east of the Jordan, and the names of the Midianite chieftains were Zebah and Zalmunna; according to another it occurred on the west of the Jordan, and their names were Oreb and Zeeb.[4] Although the traditions varied, and though in later times its salient points were somewhat

[1]Isa. ix, 4 and x, 26. [2]Ps lxxxiii, 11. [3]Judges viii, 4-9. [4]Judges vii, 22-35. See Moore's *Judges* in the *Polychrome Bible*, and his *Judges* in *International Crit. Com.* pp. 204-223.

heightened, the event itself is one of the sure events of Israelitish history, and the lesson pointed by it has been recognized from the earliest times.

Visions of God come to all. They come in the form of illuminations of conscience, calling to victory over some little sin or weakness and pointing out the way to a strong and noble life; they come in the form of impulses to generous helpfulness to others, indicating the way to a life of beneficent service. The private sin which is thus condemned, or the service for others which is made possible, often seems so small that it does not seem worth while to apply ourselves to it, and thus the opportunity for blessing passes. Often, too, the noble life and the helpful service seem utterly beyond us. So conscious of our weakness are we that either to be or to do that which the vision calls for is, we are sure, a task too arduous. The story of Gideon is an historical parable summoning us to faithful endeavor with surety of victory. The great heroes of faith—Paul, Martin Luther, George Fox, Abraham Lincoln, and many others—

were simple men; they had strong faith in God and courage to do the next duty, so like Gideon they put to flight the hosts of darkness. Such is the work which will ever be accomplished by those of like faith.

CHAPTER XXXI.

SAMSON.

"The child shall be a Nazarite unto God."
Judges xiii, 7.

"O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon,
Irrevocably dark, total eclipse
Without all hope of day!
O first created beam, and thou great Word,
Let there be light, and light was over all;
Why am I thus bereaved thy prime decree?"
—*Milton.*

To the devotional student no character is more puzzling than Samson. One is tempted to wonder why he is in the Bible. He was apparently without religious sensibilities as we understand them, and, as Professor Toy has said, he was a moral idiot. Some have doubted his historical character and endeavored to regard him as a sun-myth.[1] There can be little doubt that there was such a person as Samson, though it may be that before the stories concerning him were written down they had acquired some additional elements in passing from mouth to mouth.

[1] See the discussion in Moore's *Judges* in *Inter. Crit. Com.*, pp 364, 365.

Deeper reflection soon discovers that the story of Samson is a parable of the way in which the noblest opportunities of birth and the largest endowment of personal power may be prostituted, and how accordingly a life which begins with the fairest prospects may end in the deepest gloom. The age in which the life of Samson was lived was one of the darkest and least civilized in the history of Israel. The story of his life partakes of the rough and unmoral character of the times. Some of its features, too, which seem to us immoral are but parts of a once extensive,[1] but now obsolete, social order. But in the light of whatever age we look upon Samson, he holds before us a warning as an impressive example of the dark end which awaits those who devote to selfish ends bright talents and golden opportunities. Endowed beyond his fellows with all that his age considered desirable, he devoted his life to the pleasures of appetite and passion. Those pleasures led then, as now, to slavery and to blindness. Milton makes Samson describe most accurately the

[1] See the writer's *Semitic Origins*, ch. ii, esp. p. 56.

moral condition which comes from such a course :

"Myself my sepulchre, a moving grave."

Such was the end of this marvellously gifted man. Angelic words had heralded his birth and pointed to a high destiny for him. He had been the recipient, as his compatriots believed, of a genuine inspiration of the spirit of God to enable him to accomplish wondrous deeds for God and for Israel, and yet his end found him :

"Eyeless in Gaza at the mill with slaves,"

Two sayings of the apostle Paul are pointedly illustrated by his fate : "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die," and "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

CHAPTER XXXII.

SAMUEL.

"A little child shall lead them." Isaiah xi, 6.

Ah! well may sages bow to thee,
Dear, loving, guileless Infancy!
And sigh beside their lofty lore
For one untaught delight of thine,
And feel they'd give their learning's store
To know again thy truth divine."

—*Mrs. Osgood.*

THE story of Samuel presents a striking and pleasing contrast to the story of Samson. Like Samson he was a child of prayer, but unlike him the promise of his birth and parentage ended in light, not darkness.

Hannah, the devout mother of Samuel, consecrating her son to God and placing him in the tender years of childhood in the sacred precincts of the temple, is an example to the parents of all ages. Now that we realize that the temple of God is in the heart, it is not so easy to follow her example, but the great ideal for which her example stands should appeal strongly to every parent.

The little Samuel, too, dwelling in the temple of Jehovah, sleeping in its holy of holies,[1] hearing, heeding, and obeying the voice of God, presents an ideal of the religious life of the young which is not only attractive, but possible.

"Heaven lies about us in our infancy."

The little Samuel, receiving and delivering his prophetic messages, brings to our thoughts that other, diviner boy, who reminded His elders that He must be occupied "in the things of His Father."[2]

We have here not only a type of a normal religious childhood, but of a normal religious life. Jesus said: "Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." To have the teachable, trustful spirit of a child, to live with a temple of God about us, to hold "mystic, sweet communion" with Him, and to engage in His service, is the normal religious life for all. For that life the story of Samuel stands as an object lesson.

[1] This is the real meaning of the language used. He was not in a tabernacle, but a temple, (1 Sam. iii, 3, R. V.), which had doors, (v. 15). Samuel slept where the ark of God was. (v. 3). That this was contrary to the Levitical law is true, but that law was unknown in the time of Samuel. [2] Luke ii, 49.

That such a life is not incompatible with practical service to one's people and country, the after career of Samuel abundantly testifies. The model religious boy became the faithful judge, and the far-seeing statesman. On him his nation depended in the great crises of its fate. Though they did not always heed his advice, if we take literally the accounts which have come down to us, his influence, nevertheless, was spread over them as a canopy of light, illuminating them, guiding them, and elevating them. Such holy, practical men are the hope of the nation,—the salt of the earth.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

SAUL.

"To obey is better than sacrifice." 1 Sam. xv, 22.

"He spoke not, but slow
Lifted up the hand slack at his side, till he laid it with care
Soft and grave, but in mild settled will, on my brow: through my hair
The large fingers were pushed, and he bent back my head, with kind power—
All my face back, intent to peruse it, as men do a flower.
Thus held he me there with his great eyes that scrutinized mine—
And oh, all my heart how it loved him! but where was the sign?
I yearned—"Could I help thee, my father, inventing a bliss,
I would add, to that life of the past, both the future and this;
I would give thee new life altogether, as good, ages hence
As this moment,—had love but the warrant, love's heart to dispense!"

—Robert Browning in "Saul."

THE story of Saul impresses the reader with the same perplexity which the fate of many in modern times brings to him. The noble young giant of his earlier days, who

could inspire his warriors and deliver the oppressed,—the strong statesman-king, who could weld the ever disintegrating tribes of a Semitic federation into a united nation, fills us with admiration. Why, then, was his the dark fate which met him on Mount Gilboa, when, deserted by all the ordinary religious guides of his age, he hopelessly sought the shade of Samuel, the guide of his youth, only to receive a cheerless message of coming doom? Probably the real explanation is that upon which Browning has based the plot of his poem "Saul," *i. e.* Saul became insane. The strange moods of a lunatic, especially in an age when the lunatic was thought to be possessed of an evil spirit, would alienate his following and bring upon him his pathetic end. But even this is not a final explanation. "Why," we ask, "must such things as insanity be in our Father's world to blight fair and noble lives;" and the answer is not yet given; we can only trust, believing that "He doeth all things well."

Hebrew historians felt the weight of this problem too. It seemed necessary to them

that this mystery of the life of Saul should be explained. One of their number,—a man endued with the prophetic spirit,—found the explanation in Saul's disobedience. A tradition had come down to him, that Saul had not fully obeyed the divine directions in his war with Amalek, and that he had thought, as so many others have done since, to buy off God by sacrifice. The reply of Samuel, which this tradition contained, "To obey is better than sacrifice," deserves to ring through the centuries. The sin attaching to ill-gotten gain is not atoned by endowing churches or colleges, nor the mockery of a selfish, worldly life, by ostentatious devotion to elaborate ritual. The blessings of the Master, and the knowledge of His mysteries are opened only to those who "do His will," while those who "obey not the Son shall not see life."

Browning, in his beautiful poem, imaginatively pictures the love which David felt for Saul, and hints that even love has its limits of blessing. God seeks to redeem the world by revealing to it His love. That love, as manifested in Christ, reaches and

changes all who really appreciate it. For those who are insensible to its real purposes, as the insane Saul was insensible to the purposes of David, love,—even God's love,—can do nothing. This is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit,—the one unpardonable sin,—to be insensate to the power of love and light.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

JONATHAN.

"Thy love to me was wonderful,
Passing the love of women,"
2 Sam. i, 25.

"Angels from friendship gather half their joy."
—*Young*.

THE story of the life of Jonathan, the son of Saul and the friend of David, is pathetically beautiful. From what is told of him in the Bible he appears as a fine, generous, brave and chivalrous spirit, upright in his bearing toward all, gentle and beautiful in character. Such a prince would seem to have been born for a brilliant career, but the melancholy fortunes of the house of Saul involved him also in its ruin. There is an indefinable and inspiring charm in his attitude toward David. Few friendships have been more true and strong than that of these two men, the one the representative of a waning dynasty, the other the founder of future power. Both were characters of the highest excellence that the world of that period knew. Such friendship can exist

only between noble souls. It is at once the finest flower of social intercourse, and one of the greatest forces to elevate and develop the spirit and character of man.

When the divinest Being who has ever walked our planet wished to express the intimate relationship between Him and His disciples He said: "I have called you friends."[1] Into the intimate relationship of love, of trust, and of communion He invites the Christian to enter. In that communion lies our one hope of learning clearly the nature of God and the real meaning of life. The Word was not made flesh in Jesus to conceal the glory of God, but to reveal it. "All things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you," He declared; and again, "I have manifested Thy name unto the men whom Thou gavest Me." Thus He offers to us all the privileges of that friendship which has power to unveil the heart of God, purify, quicken, and inspire, until it transforms us into the divine image.

In lesser degree the friendships of earth's noble intellects, its unselfish martyr-souls

[1] John xiv, 15.

and saints, have the same power. They interpret to us the deepest in life and in God in so far as they have woven it into their thought and characters. They, in bodily presence, come often more sensibly near to us than the ascended Master, and it is a part of their function to interpret Him to us, as He interprets God.

One denomination, the Society of Friends, recognizing the divine significance of friendship, when it exists on its highest level, has by its name consecrated itself to the service of this ideal. The vow of consecration has, perhaps, not been so well kept as it might have been, but it represents a noble endeavor to prove worthy of the friendship of the Highest, in purity of soul and in cleanness of life.

CHAPTER XXXV.

DAVID.

"I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, who shall do all my will." Acts xiii, 22.

"Who lends mighty aid to His King,
Shows favor to His anointed,
To David and to his descendants forever."
Psalm xviii, 50 in Polychrome Bible.

It is not easy to bring ourselves to form in our minds a correct picture of the historical David. His reign and his personality appeared so glorious and strong to the succeeding generations of reverent Israelites, that an idealizing tradition gradually attributed to him much which should be credited, as we have now learned, to the noble and inspired men who came after him. The real David we have reflected, not in the psalter, but in the books of Samuel.[1] He was a man of strong character, possessed of a personality wonderfully attractive and inspiring. True, it has some dark aspects, if

[1] See the articles "David" in Hasting's *Dictionary of the Bible* and the *Encyclopedia Biblica*, also "The Historical David" in the *New World*, September 1895, pp. 540-560.

we judge it by the standards of our own time, but these grew out of the rough age in which he lived. They prevent us from regarding him as the ideal saint which tradition has delighted to paint him, but, unless he had so transcended his time as to have been quite useless in it, he could not have escaped such faults. Apart from these he was a healthy, brave, generous and attractive character.

An Old Testament writer,[1] who is quoted in the book of Acts, described him as "a man after Jehovah's own heart," which meant, as the context shows, that he possessed the necessary qualities of warrior and organizer to bring Israel into a position where she could fulfill the destiny as a nation, which Jehovah designed for her. It was not the inner qualities of heart, such as we now conceive that man to possess whom we regard as most closely representative of the divine purpose, but the more external qualities of general and king of which this was said. At a time when Jehovah was considered the God of battles the man

[1] 1 Sam. xiii, 14.

"after His own heart" must naturally be a merciless warrior. Such a man could not be the author of the most spiritual psalms, but he could weld the disorganized Israelitish federation into a compact empire.

This was the real work of David, and it was this that made him the genuine type of Christ. It is an historical fact that David made the Messianic idea possible in Israel. "Messiah" is but the Hebrew word for "Anointed one." In the early time it meant king, for then kings only were annointed.[1] David completed the work of making Israel a nation, which was begun by Saul. He united the tribes; he conquered and made tributary the enemies by which they had been surrounded; he established an empire which extended from Egypt to the Euphrates, and which became in all subsequent generations the ideal of the Hebrew dominion. In days of national disaster, when the dominion of Israel had been diminished or destroyed, prophetic and believing hearts turned longingly back to the figure and the

[1] See 1 Sam. xii, 3, 5; etc., and the writer's article "Anointing," in the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, and above, ch. vii.

reign of David, and their imaginations were kindled by the memory. He became the ideal of the Messianic king, and his kingdom, of the Messianic kingdom. David the conqueror,—the founder of an empire of the faithful,—is thus the physical germ,—half-barbarous as his rule may now seem,—from which our conception of Christ, the Son of God, the king of the truth has been gradually made by God to grow.

This warrior, then, who subdued and united Israel is the type of Him who subdues and unites our hearts. As David made Israel free from her oppressors, so the Christ makes free from old, besetting sins. As David made those oppressors tributary, so He makes tributary to the spiritual life of His followers those appetites and passions which inhere in the body, and those circumstances of environment which tend to destroy the spiritual life. The kingdom of David thus becomes the type of that kingdom to which we all look forward, and which will be established when the spirit of Christ has permeated all so that the "kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our lord and of His Christ."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

SOLOMON.

"Behold, the half was not told me." 1 Kings x, 7.

"Fell luxury! more perilous to youth
Than storm of quicksands, poverty or chains."
—*Hannah More.*

SOLOMON stands, as the Bible tells us the story of his life, for the enervating and demoralizing power of excessive luxury. He was a man possessed of rare natural powers, who in his youth felt the inspiration of high aspirations and noble impulses. The record of his choice of wisdom rather than wealth bespeaks for the young Solomon a rare spirit. Too often the glamor of wealth blinds the hearts of the young to the value of wisdom. The fame of the wisdom of Solomon, like David's fame as a warrior and poet, was such that in later generations it attracted to his name the work of many others; but notwithstanding all this the life of Solomon does not, on the whole, stand for wisdom, but for the deleterious effects of extravagance and luxury.

Solomon beautified Jerusalem with magnificent buildings. His own palaces were the marvel of his time; the palace of his Egyptian queen was gorgeous; the temple, which was probably built quite as much to increase the splendor of his capital as to advance the worship of Jehovah, was believed by later Hebrews to surpass in splendor anything the world had ever seen. The size of the royal harem and the extensiveness of his court rivalled those of the most luxurious monarchs of Egypt and Babylon. The system of taxation necessary to support such extravagance became very burdensome to his subjects and was the direct cause of the disintegration of his kingdom on the accession of his son.

Later generations blamed Solomon for his worship of foreign gods, but so far as we know this was not the judgment of his contemporaries. We have no record that a prophet ever rebuked him for it, or that any one else found fault with him in his lifetime because of it. The religious conscience of his age seems to have detected in this no wrong. The time for such perception was

not yet come in Israel. His age, too, gloried in his magnificence even while it writhed under his oppressive taxes, but the end of such extravagance and sensuality was disastrous to the character of the man, and destructive of the prosperity of his state.

Herein lies the instructiveness of the account of Solomon's life. Luxury is debasing; extravagance is destructive of character; excessive riches undermine the national life; in Christian simplicity alone is the guarantee of individual and national prosperity. There is here a warning for the present generation. The industrial and social changes which are producing so many multimillionaires need to be carefully watched, lest they become a social menace. As wealth multiplies, the spur of necessity and the restraints of poverty are removed from the children of an increasing number, and loss of energy and of moral fiber is almost sure to result. It is well to pray the prayer of Agur: [1]

"Give me neither poverty nor riches;
Feed me with the food that is needful for me:

[1] Prov. xxx, 8, 9.

Lest I be full and deny thee and say, Who is Jehovah?
Or lest I be poor and steal
And use profanely the name of my God."

But wealth is sure, in our present industrial order, to come to some. A genuine Christianity, an earnest endeavor to keep before the mind the true aims and purposes of life, due regard to those forces which make for character as well as the pitfalls which luxury presents for its destruction, make it possible for these to live in Christian simplicity, to grow in all good things, and to minister of their riches to the world as "good stewards of the manifold grace of God."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

ELIJAH.

"In the spirit and power of Elijah." Luke i, 17.

> "Stern Daughter of the voice of God!
> O Duty!"
>
> —*Wordsworth.*

In striking contrast to the luxury and magnificence of Solomon stands the figure of Elijah, the prophet of the uncultivated steppe. We know little of his antecedents. He comes suddenly to view in our Old Testament narratives, introduced by no biographical sketch. Into luxury, the splendor and the oppression of the court and capital of King Ahab, who aped the magnificence of Tyre, the mistress of the world's commerce,[1] came the gaunt, unkempt figure of this champion of justice and of Jehovah. He perceived, if others had not, that the worship of Jehovah was incompatible with the worship of foreign gods; he realized also that Jehovah required justice to be done toward all His people, and that sacred

[1] See Ezekiel xxvii, and xxviii.

personal rights could not be violated with impunity even by a king.

At the time of Elijah's appearance at least one foreign cult was very popular. Through the influence of Ahab's Tyrian wife, Jezebel, all the power of the court was exerted to make popular the worship of Baal. This worship was calculated to appeal strongly to the people because it blessed with the sanction of religion the most sensual passions of human nature. To champion single-handed the cause of the unpopular, ascetic, and rustic worship of Jehovah against the combined forces of royal influence and popular approval, which supported the worship of Baal, required a heroism of the highest order.

That Elijah possessed the requisite courage, the dramatic narrative of his struggles which we have in the book of Kings[1] amply proves, and yet even his spirit sometimes fainted. He knew, however, the secret of communion with God. He withdrew to Horeb, where at that period Jehovah's home was thought to be, and in sympathy with

[1] Kings xvii-xix.

the storm, the lightning and the whirlwind breathed out the feelings of his passionate heart, after which, in communion with the still, small voice of God, his spirit was cheered, his heart revived, and he himself prepared for new and noble work. Such communion and inspiration were the source of Elijah's success, and are open to us all.

His insistance upon justice between man and man, even when the one man was a powerful king and the other an insignificant individual, gave him, notwithstanding the popularity of Baal-worship, a strong hold upon the popular heart. This insistance resulted from his perception of the moral nature of God. Most men of his time thought—and the idea is still in the world—that whatever they did God could be cajoled into forgiving them. Elijah understood and taught that righteousness and justice are the only conditions on which the divine blessing can be received. God can neither be ignored nor bought.

Such a conception of God came like a draught of fresh air into a poison-laden vault. It conflicted with vested interests;

it met with opposition; its champion could have no easy life; but it signified the dawning of a new era of religion and morality in Israel.

Israel herself perceived the true significance of Elijah's life; she realized that in him a most unusual man of God had been in her midst. It is said that God honored him as he had none other, except Enoch, by permitting him to escape the underworld and by taking him directly to Himself in heaven.

The work of Elijah did not die. It was taken up in succeeding generations by a succession of prophets, as we shall see, and carried on to the culmination in the coming of the Christ. The story of Elijah's life illustrates what one life, even though it be insignificant, poor, and alone, may accomplish for God and the world, if it is only lived in communion with God and in complete obedience to Him,—*i. e.* if it is lived "in the spirit and power of Elijah."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

AMOS.[1]

"The Lord will roar from Zion,
And utter his voice from Jerusalem;
And the pastures of the shepherds shall mourn,
And the top of Carmel shall wither." Amos i, 2.

"It often falls, in course of common life,
That right long time is overborne by wrong,
Through avarice, or power, or guile, or strife,
That weakens her, and makes her party strong;
But justice, though her doom she do prolong,
Yet at the last she will her own cause right."
—*Spenser.*

THE book of 2 Kings gives us but scant information of the reign of Jeroboam II of the kingdom of Israel. One would infer from its brief reference to Jeroboam that his reign was unimportant, whereas just the opposite appears to have been the truth. This impression results from the fact that it was unimportant from the point of view from which 2 Kings was written, whereas from the point of view of a modern student, who would take into account all the forces which enter into a great creative epoch in a people's life, its importance is very great.[2]

[1] On Amos, see George Adam Smith's *Book of the Twelve Prophets*, ch. vi. [2] See ch. iii. of G. A. Smith's work cited in n. 1.

It was a time of peace, and one reason why the chronicler of Israel's history found so little in it to record was that it presented no deeds of martial valor,—no records of battles.

It was an era of peace. Assyria was once more a weak power, the Syrian state of Damascus had been subdued for a time, Israel and Judah between them had extended their dominion almost to the limits of the old Davidic boundaries, trade revived, wealth accumulated, the national hopes and the national spirits ran high, and the oppression from the wealthy was keenly felt by the poor. The increase of wealth produced a leisured class, and luxury gave them time for self-indulgence. To these the Baalized worship of Jehovah, against which Elijah and Elisha had protested, appealed as affording opportunity for the indulgence of passion. Even if they transgressed the known laws of their God, they thought he could be bought off by sacrifices.

Meantime there grew up in the village of Tekoa in the wilderness of Judah a simple

shepherd. He was poor and eked out his living by gathering the coarse sycamore figs which were eaten only by the poor. But his ear was open to the voice of God, and in obedience to that voice he appeared one day in the streets of Bethel, the capital of Jeroboam's kingdom, with the cry of doom upon his lips which stands at the head of this chapter. As the people gathered about him he made the threat of doom more specific. The sins of Damascus, Edom, Moab, and other neighboring nations were not only to be punished, but the sins of Israel herself. With many an eloquent illustration did he set forth the truth, that violated law was sure to bring doom. Sacrifice was, he declared, no part of the primitive religion; it could not put away sin. Justice must "run down like water and righteousness as a perennial stream,"—moral obliquity must give place to moral rectitude,—or ruin was sure. God was by nature a moral God; He would destroy all who were immoral.

For some days Amos proclaimed this truth till his words were reported to the

king as treasonable, and he was expelled from the kingdom. Uttering a warning message, couched in the narrative of some visions he had had, he departed to his highland shepherd's home, and we lose him in the obscurity from which he came. Thanks to the new literary era, which the prosperity of the reign of Jeroboam had made possible, his prophecies were written down, and have been transmitted to posterity for the edification of the world.

There is something inspiring in the picture of Amos. This humble peasant, leaving his rustic calling to hurl the anathemas of God against the injustice, the oppression, the rottenness and the sham religion of a wealthy and cultivated capital, faithfully proclaiming his message day after day, though so far as we know not one disciple was found to cheer his preacher's heart, and still holding such faith in its truth notwithstanding its apparent failure, that he returned home to put it in writing for future generations, was an ideal embodiment of the mysticism and the heroism of the highest religious service. He reminds us of

a greater one, who "trod the wine-press alone."

Amos did much to give the world a right conception of God. He is one of the first clear monotheists. God,—Israel's God,—controlled, he declared, all nations. Then, too, he re-echoed with great clearness the message, which Elijah began to utter, that God is a Being who is uncompromisingly moral, and who will inevitably punish sin. None of the messengers of the olden time proclaimed more clearly the reign of law, and the moral basis of religion. How moral decay was to be overcome, Amos did not tell. His picture of God was, it is true, somewhat cold and unfeeling, but these defects in his message were remedied by those who came afterward, and should not blind us to the aspects of his theology, his work, his character, and his heroism which are inspiringly beautiful.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

HOSEA.

"As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride,
So shall thy God rejoice over thee."
Isaiah lxii, 5.

"Love divine, all love excelling,
Joy of heaven to earth come down,
Fix in us thy humble dwelling,
All thy faithful mercies crown."
—*Charles Wesley.*

As Amos was the prophet of the divine law, Hosea, who came soon after him and took up his work, was the prophet of the divine love. If the message of Amos awakened in a fallen sinner longings to enter upon a pure life and to know a real communion with God, that of Hosea pointed out how all the energies of the great Father were directed by the divine love to help into the new life.

The way in which Hosea was prepared to receive this great truth and to proclaim it contains in itself a most important lesson for all who suffer. A man of pure life and affectionate nature, he married the woman of his choice. Gradually it dawned upon

him that she was unworthy of him, and that she violated her vow of wedlock. Soon she left him altogether and entered upon a life of public shame, in which she sank lower and lower until she was sold into slavery. In spite of her shame, however, and in spite of the blight she had cast upon his life, Hosea's love followed her. As he brooded over the cause and the meaning of this, it dawned upon him that just as he had been put to shame by his faithless wife and yet loved her, so Jehovah had been put to shame by Israel, who had ruthlessly broken her vows to Him, but that nevertheless His heart yearned for the faithless nation.

At last Hosea could endure his wife's ruin no longer. He purchased the now degraded slave, separated her from all others, and tried by patient attention to win her back to virtue and to life. As he did this he also grasped the truth that God would do the same for Israel,—would in His providence separate her from her temptations and so unfold to her the depths of His love as to win her heart.

This story of Hosea's is most significant. The sublimest truths lie unperceived around us until some bitter experience opens our eyes to see them; they knock at our hearts in vain until some pain compels us to open the door for their admission. This is the divine cause of sorrow, of pain, and of disappointment. God does not permit these things to come upon us because He is indifferent to us, but just because of His love He sends them to open our lives to the glorious heights of the moral and spiritual life. The spikenard of human life must be beaten in order to produce its fragrance. It is because of this that the "afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out their exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

Long had the Semitic world thought of God as love, but they had held the thought in a gross and debasing way. Hosea made the thought spiritual; he elevated it to the pure atmosphere of heavenly spotlessness. Such a conception of the divine love as he presented made social life pure, and raised the thoughts and affections of the worshippers to heights only less elevated than those to which they were lifted by Jesus Christ.

Hosea's message is still the message which moves the world and raises up the fallen. God cares for me, however fallen I am. His heart yearns; in suffering He labors to make me appreciate His love; patiently He waits to welcome the penitent home. The marvel is that we can withstand that love so long!

CHAPTER XL.

ISAIAH.

"And I said: Here am I; send me." Isaiah vi, 9.

"Righteousness exalteth a nation,
But sin is a reproach to any people." Prov. xiv, 34.

ISAIAH was the type of a Christian man in public life. His prophetic activity extended over forty years of most eventful history. Beginning to prophesy in 740 B. C., the year that King Uzziah died, he continued his work through the short independent reign of Jotham, the reign of the weak Ahaz, and the good Hezekiah. Under the last of these monarchs he held the position of a confidential adviser,—a position which made him the most important political figure in Israel after David. Hezekiah no doubt accorded him this position on account of the strong utterances which Isaiah had made at the time of the Syrian war in the reign of Ahaz.

These forty years of Isaiah's life were most eventful ones; they covered a period which called for the highest talent in

statesmanship, and which severely tested the sagacity of the wisest and the faith of the most devout. First there came the coalition of Syria and Israel against Judah in the reign of Ahaz, when the overthrow of Jerusalem was threatened. Ahaz and all his people were greatly terrified; their hearts, we are told trembled "as the trees of the forest, tremble before the wind." Isaiah alone retained his courage, and uttered upon this occasion some significant prophecies which will be considered in subsequent chapters.[1] He foresaw that the new and powerful king of Assyria, Tiglath-pileser III., would soon give Judah's neighbors on the north enough to do to defend their own dominions and that thus Judah would be relieved, but in spite of his brave and hopeful utterances others remained hopeless. The event justified Isaiah's faith; the Assyrian king made his expedition into the West; chastised Judah's enemies, and saved Jerusalem. All this was about 735–733 B. C.

The next great event was the destruction of Samaria and the captivity of the kingdom

[1] See Isaiah chs. vii, 1-ix, 6, and also below chs. xli, xlii.

of Israel in 722 B. C. Tiglath-pileser had changed the Israelitish dynasty, putting Hoshea on the throne. After the death of Tiglath-pileser in 727 and the accession of Shalmaneser IV. to the Assyrian throne, Hoshea rebelled. The armies of Shalmaneser beseiged Samaria for three years. During the siege Shalmaneser was succeeded by Sargon, whose armies finally captured Samaria and deported 27,290 of its inhabitants.[1] Judah was all this time subject to Assyria. The temptation for her to rebel with her northern neighbor must have been strong, and it was doubtless owing to Isaiah that it was resisted. Other nations in Palestine and Syria rebelled also, and in the year 720 another great battle was fought at Raphia in which they were defeated.

Some years of quiet followed, when the Philistine city of Ashdod rebelled against Assyrian rule. The armies of the powerful Sargon came clamoring by Judah's very doors again as they marched in 711 to subdue the rebels.[2]

[1] The number is taken from an inscription of Sargon's.
[2] Cf. Isaiah xx, 1, and Roger's *History of Babylonia and Assyria*, vol. ii, 169.

In 705 Sargon was succeeded by his son Sennacherib. This event was the signal for another revolt on the part of all of Assyria's western subjects. In all these petty states there were two political parties, one which favored making Assyria their suzerian, and the other of which advocated the expulsion of Assyria from the West by obtaining the aid of Egypt. Isaiah had all along belonged to the first of these parties, and had felt that he had the guidance of Jehovah in so doing. Up to this time he had also been able to persuade the king to adhere to the Assyrian policy. Now, however, the king chose to act in accord with the Egyptian party and joined them in their rebellion against Assyria.[1] This brought against Jerusalem the armies of Sennacherib in the great siege of 701 B. C.,—a siege in which, though the armies of the Assyrian suffered disaster and withdrew,[2]—resulted in the resubjugation of Judah to Assyria. Several of Isaiah's most important prophecies were

[1] We now know this from Sennacherib's own statement. See Price's *Monuments and the Old Testament*, p. 181 ff.

[2] See 2 Kings xix, 35, and the reference in n. 1.

uttered in connection with this last crisis,[1] soon after which he probably died.

One important lesson of Isaiah's life is that public affairs demand the devoted service of the holiest and most consecrated men. In our great republic God is crying out through many a glaring wrong: "Whom shall I send?" but how few have the faith of Isaiah to answer: "Here am I; send me." England has had her Gladstone and her John Bright; America, her Washington, Lincoln and McKinley; the latter country has also now her Roosevelt and her Seth Low, but how few of those who, like Isaiah, are blessed with the keenest spiritual vision, the highest moral sense and the sublimest faith are now willing to serve Christ by serving the state!

Not all are called to public service, but from Isaiah each citizen should learn the religious importance of the faithful performance of civic duties. In our English-speaking countries all voters are sovereigns, and are in part responsible for all civic or national sin.[2]

[1] Chs. x, xi, xviii, xxii, xxiii, xxix, xxxi, etc.
[2] See Kent's *History of the Hebrew People*, for fuller account of Isaiah.

CHAPTER XLI.

IMMANUEL.

"Immanuel; which is, being interpreted, God with us." Matt. i, 23.

"Who like Thyself my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, Lord, abide with me."
—*H. F. Lyte.*

It was at the time when the rumor of the approaching attack of the kings of Israel and of Damascus had carried terror to the heart of King Ahaz, and to the hearts of the people of Jerusalem, that Isaiah met Ahaz and encouraged him to ask a sign from God that he and his people would be delivered from this impending danger.[1] Ahaz, covering his lack of faith under a cloak of pretended reverence, refused to do so, saying that it would be tempting Jehovah. Isaiah then declared that Jehovah Himself would give a sign: a young woman[2] would bear a

[1]See Isaiah, vii. [2]The Hebrew word used does not signify "virgin," but "a young woman." The word implies nothing as to whether she be married or unmarried. Probably Isaiah was thinking of a married woman. The Greek translation of the O. T. mistakenly renders it "virgin," and the author of the Gospel of Matthew, who used the Greek version, naturally quoted it that way. It fitted in with the story of the virgin-birth of Christ which had come down to him.

son, and, in her confidence that God would deliver Israel, she would name him Immanuel, "God is with us," and before a time sufficiently long had elapsed so that the child could become old enough to discern between good and evil, her faith would be vindicated,—God would interpose and cripple the two monarchies which were then threatening Judah. How Tiglath-pileser came and fulfilled this prediction of Isaiah, we have seen in the preceding chapter.

To understand this prediction, we need to turn back a little. In the early Semitic tribes, when they held the conception of God described in chapter I, they thought their God was bound to deliver them whatever they might do and into whatever straits they might come. They were therefore always saying in time of danger: "We shall be saved, for our god is with us."[1] Although Jehovah was united to Israel by covenant instead of by kinship, there were nevertheless many Israelites who indulged in this same heathen confidence. Amos had

[1]The underlying thought was that the god had no existence apart from the tribe, and must save the tribe or perish himself.

sought to enforce the truth, that God is not on the side of the wicked, and will not deliver them. "Seek good, and not evil," he exclaims, "that ye may live: and so Jehovah, the God of hosts, shall be with you as ye say."[1]

Isaiah was speaking under different circumstances. The faith of the nation was so shaken that they were in despair; they hardly dared to ask for help. He encouraged them to believe that Jehovah would succor them by the manifestation of His divine aid, in order to revive their faith. In his mouth the name Immanuel had both a backward and a forward glance. It reminded them of the old faith so familiar to all, while it contained the suggestion of a larger and more spiritual consciousness of the presence of God.

Our first evangelist has, by his quotation of the passage made it evident that he and his generation recognized that in Jesus Christ God had been with them in a new and fuller way; and we gladly recognize the truth of this fact. In no other being

[1] Amos v, 14.

who ever dwelt upon earth has God been so clearly manifested. In the centuries which had elapsed between Isaiah and the coming of Christ the old consciousness of the presence of God in life had nearly vanished. Men thought of God as afar off; they were looking and longing for Him to come in His messiah. That God was come in Jesus was, therefore, a new and clear message of hope and cheer.

Jesus taught His disciples that God would be with them as the Spirit[1] after His own departure; that thus He Himself would also be with them always.[2] In the light of that truth we may live. "Closer is He than breathing, nearer than hands and feet." "He is not far from any one of us." We may be as ignorant of His presence as the blind man is of the quality of light, if we have not eyes to see Him. As it is only the clear pools which reflect the stars, so it is only the "pure in heart who see God." God is with us, but just as surely as the atmosphere, upon which all healthy beings live, is the source of corruption to all dead

[1]John xiv, 16, 17 and xvi. 13. [2]Matt. xxviii, 20.

tissue, so surely is the presence of God the earnest of the destruction of all that is sinful. To find consolation in the great truth of the immanence of God, one must be conscious that his heart has been purified, and that his life consists of a definite purpose to conform to the fundamental laws of righteousness, which are the expression of the nature of God, and are the basis of the universe.

To have God consciously with us to heighten every joy, to share every pain, to heal every wound by the balm of His love, to guide us in the right way, to disclose to us brighter and better ideals, and to help us to attain them,—this is a privilege unspeakably great, but it is the privilege of the Christian.

CHAPTER XLII.

THE PRINCE OF THE FOUR NAMES.

"For unto us a child is born,
Unto us a son is given,
And dominion is on his shoulder:
And his name is called Wonder-Counsellor,
God-of-a-warrior, Father-of-Booty,
Prince of peace."
Isa. ix, 6, according to the Hebrew.

"A fairer paradise is founded now
For Adam and his chosen sons, whom thou
A Savior art come down to re-install
Where they shall dwell secure."
Milton's Paradise Regained.

THE prophecy quoted at the beginning of this chapter has long been regarded by Christians as a prophecy of Christ. It was a prophecy of the Messiah, and as Christ fulfilled the Messianic prophecies better than even the Jews expected them to be fulfilled, it was in that sense a prophecy of Him. We cannot now think of the prophet as looking forward through the centuries and beholding Christ, as we behold Him in looking back. We are compelled to recognize that Isaiah was holding an ideal before the

men of his time, which would be helpful to them, and should first look to see what meaning his words had for the men of his own generation.

This prophecy forms a part of the same series of utterances as the prophecy of Immanuel. Like that prophecy it was spoken when the prophet foresaw that Tiglath-pileser would march into the West and begin those wars, which would crush the enemies of Judah. The gaze of Isaiah went beyond that. He looked forward to a time when Israel would have a king greater than Tiglath-pileser. It was a hard age. The inner spiritual nature of the kingdom of God had not been disclosed to even the best of men. Isaiah could think of no more fitting picture of the Messiah who would, he felt sure, come, than that he should be a glorified warrior. Assyria was then the supreme nation in war; her king was the model warrior; but the Messiah would out-do even him. If before his battles Tiglath-pileser planned his struggle, Israel's Messiah would be a Wonder-Counsellor, far surpassing the Assyrian. If the Assyrian monarch fought

strenuously his fights, Israel's king should be a very god of a warrior,[1] If Tiglath-pileser spoiled the conntry of his enemies and carried off his prey, Israel's prince would be an abundant possessor of booty. That would be one of his chief characteristics. After his conquests the Assyrian monarch took measures to keep his new territory in peace; so the Messiah would be a very prince of peace. It was, however, to be a peace won by the severest struggle and the most glorious victories.

All this, as the church has long perceived,[2] is really a parable of the work of Christ. The events of the inner struggles and the spiritual victories of the soul have long been pictured in terms of the battlefield. The soul has its enemies. If it does not overcome them, they will accomplish a most disastrous conquest over it. Jesus Himself faced such a battle at the time of His temptation. The attitude which He took toward the struggle was practically unique. The teaching which He gave to others concerning the

[1] The word "god" in Hebrew is more widely applied than in English, being sometimes, as in this passage, used of human beings.
[2] I do not mean to say that the church has understood it as here set forth.

struggle of life was of the same quality, and was marvellous indeed. The Sermon on the Mount, if it stood alone, would entitle Him to the name "Wonder-Counsellor."

But Jesus was also the ideal spiritual warrior. Not only in the way in which He repelled temptation,[1] but in the way in which by word and deed throughout His ministry He withstood evil at the greatest sacrifice of personal ease, and most of all in the supreme gift of Himself upon the cross. None other is to be compared to Him! How much more appropriate do the prophet's words seem to Him than ever Isaiah could have dreamed,—"God of a warrior!" Most fittingly does the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews describe Him as the "Captain of our salvation."

He is also the "Father of booty" in that He brings all those passions, appetites, and powers of life, which seem to be hostile to the spiritual life, into subjection to Himself. They are not eradicated, but,—better than that,—they are made to contribute material upon which the spiritual life can feed. He

[1] See above ch. viii.

can make passions—which, if they ran riot, would make the man a beast, contribute the energy to take him to heights of saint-hood and spiritual experience which would otherwise never be reached.

He, too, is the "Prince of peace." Peace can only come to the spirit, all of whose powers are brought into harmony. The warfare into which He leads produces that harmony. It takes the soul into fellowship with God; He gives dominion over all the sources of life's felicity. He unites the powers of the life for harmonious, healthful, spiritual living. When He says: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you," it is, for the soul which listens aright, no idle utterance.

CHAPTER XLIII.

JOSIAH'S REFORM.

"The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul,
The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple." Psalm xix, 7.

"And the low chancel side-lights half acquaint
The eye with shrines of prophet, bard and saint,
Their age-dimmed tablets traced in doubtful writ!
But only when on form and word obscure
Falls from above the white supernal light
We read the mystic characters aright."
—*Whittier.*

About thirty-five years before the Babylonian exile, in the days of king Josiah, Judah's last good and noble king, a great commotion was created in the religious circles of Jerusalem by the discovery in the temple of a law-book previously unknown. It professed to be the law of Moses. It was read before the king, and he was profoundly impressed by it. He commanded that its genuineness should be tested, and they applied to it the only test they knew, the religious test. It was submitted to Huldah, the prophetess, and she, finding it in harmony with what she conceived the will of

Jehovah as expressed through Moses to be, pronounced it genuine. It was very apparent that the life of the nation was by no means organized in accordance with the will of Jehovah, if this law expressed His will; Josiah, therefore, instituted a reform in which he sought to bring the kingdom into conformity to this law. It is clear when we compare the account of this reform in Kings [1] with the Pentateuch, that the law-book then found was the legal kernel of our book of Deuteronomy. This is the almost unanimous view of modern scholars. The abolition of the high places, which Josiah accomplished, is prescribed in Deuteronomy; the exclusion of Asherahs and pillars is likewise enjoined by the Deuteronomic code, and there are a number of such coincidences.

The appearance of this code at this time was most opportune. From the time of Elijah prophets had labored to purify the worship of Jehovah from foreign and unworthy elements, but had labored with little success. In the time of Isaiah they had

[1] See 2 Kings, xxii, xxiii.

almost succeeded, but the reign of Manasseh brought a disastrous reaction, which seemed to turn the tide of progress back indefinitely. None of these prophets had known such a law as this, for they never appeal to it. Could they have done so, it would have been a great aid to their cause. Their work, had however, prepared the way for it, and the time had come when it was possible to eliminate many of the old corrupting elements from the current forms of worship. This law came, as did the Greek Testament to the devout men of Europe at the time of the revival of learning, to profoundly stir the conscience, and to awaken new ideals. King and people accepted the law and bound themselves to keep it, and the prophets devoted the following years to a ministry calculated to help the people to keep this resolution.

This is the historical beginning of our Biblical canon. Sacred narratives had been known before, and a little code of laws, but they had never been formally accepted by the people as the basis of their religious life. The laws, too, which they had known were

largely secular,[1] while the new laws, not only regulated much more closely the ritual, but breathed a more gentle spirit into the common relationships of life.

One cannot reflect on this first step in the canonization of our Bible without feelings of reverent thankfulness. It was the beginning of a recognition that God has stored up in the records of the experiences of the saints and heroes of the past laws for our guidance, words of warning for our sins, and messages of cheer for our difficulties. In the course of the centuries other books were added, until the "divine library," as Jerome used to call it, includes not only the records of the history, the polity, the aspirations and the tribulations of the Jewish people, but the portrait of "the one ineffable Face," and the thoughts of those who were inspired by it. Since then it has circulated over the world, revealing the heart of man to himself, holding before human eyes the law of God, awakening the conscience, unfolding the story of the

[1] It was the so-called "Book of the Covenant," Ex. xxii, 24-xxiii, 19.

Father's forgiveness in Christ, and forming by its lofty teaching the characters of the saints.

Can one really measure his life by its best standards and not follow Josiah's example by instituting a reform?

CHAPTER XLIV.

JEREMIAH.

"My grace is sufficient for thee." 2 Cor. xii, 9.

"When sorrow all our heart would ask,
We need not shun our daily task,
And hide ourselves for calm;
The herbs we seek to heal our woe
Familiar by our pathway grow,
Our common air is balm."

—*Keble.*

FEW biographies are sadder than that of Jeremiah. Beginning his prophetic work when a mere boy, six years before Josiah undertook his reform, Jeremiah threw himself most earnestly into the work of lifting his compatriots to the ideal which the new-found law set before them. The untimely death of Josiah in the year 608, transformed what had seemed a hopeful task into a most hopeless one. The kings who followed were not enthusiastic for the new movement, and were unwilling to follow consistently the only policy which could prolong the life of the Jewish state, and which Jeremiah, like Isaiah before him, continually advocated. Babylon had now taken the place of

Assyria as a world power. Israel's safety depended on an alliance with Babylon, but the monarchs were always trying to unite with Egypt and other states in the West to throw off the Babylonian yoke. The result was a series of national disasters. Jerusalem was besieged and taken by Nebuchadnezzar in the year 598, and a large number of the nobility taken captive along with the king. A new king, the creature of Nebuchadnezzar, was placed on the throne, but he in turn rebelled, and in 586 the Babylonians completely destroyed Jerusalem and razed its temple[1] to the ground.

These were trying years for Jeremiah. A consistent advocate of the Babylonian policy, he was often suspected of treason, and his life was more than once in danger. But with brave and faithful heart he remained true to his divine message, though all men seemed to turn against him. At last he was carried against his will to Egypt, a country against which he had prophesied all his life, and we lose sight of him there.

[1]For details see Kent's *History of the Hebrew People*, Vol. II., pp. 183-204.

Throughout his life every evil which he opposed seemed to prosper, and every good which he advocated was trampled upon. At times he was greatly discouraged; who would not be? But, in spite of everything, he was loyal to the truth, and, though events seemed to go most persistently as he wished them not to do, by cheering the hearts of a few faithful men and women he did much to establish the Israel of the future.

In this life of sorrow Jeremiah found, as Hosea had done before him, that God was teaching him new and important truth. Before his time it had been thought that God dealt with the nation rather than with the individual; the individual was of importance only as his conduct affected the nation. The family had been thought to be the unit; children suffered punishment for the sins of their fathers, and fathers, for the sins of their children. Jeremiah was the first to learn that God deals with the individual, and that moral responsibility is personal. He, too, perceived before others of his time, that religion is a matter of the

[1] Jer. xxxi, 29, 30.

heart, and that it can exist without ritual or outward aid. Other prophets had apparently believed that the gods of other nations had a real existence;[1] Jeremiah is the first to recognize them as mere vanities.[2] He also first grasped the fact that Gentile[3] as well as Jew may come and worship Jehovah, and find salvation and peace. To grasp four great and fundamental religious truths which other men have not grasped is no small privilege. To add these truths to the common stock of religious knowledge, is no small contribution for one life.

Herein the life of Jeremiah teaches us its lesson. It is the lesson of the life of Hosea, and the lesson which Paul learned in the hour of his affliction. Adversity, if borne in the right spirit, leads to mountains of transfiguration; sorrow, if the soul seeks the grace which is sufficient, opens the eyes to new visions of God.

> "Go, then, earthly fame and treasure!
> Come disaster, scorn, and pain!
> In thy service pain is pleasure
> With thy favor loss is gain."

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[1] See Micah iv, 5. [2] Jer. xvi, 19 ff, and xiv, 22. [3] Jer. xvi, 19, 20.

When the life of Jeremiah ended, all the powers against which he had striven seemed triumphant, but the spirit of the heroic prophet lived and animated the Jewish church in the later centuries. In this respect the life of Jeremiah resembles the life of the Son of man. When He was crucified and buried, His enemies thought they had triumphed over Him forever, but His spirit animates and inspires the Christian world. Love conquers by suffering, by surrender, and by the cross. It is still God's way of advancing the kingdom. May we prove as faithful in the work as was Jeremiah !

CHAPTER XLV.

HABAKKUK.

"The righteous shall live by his faithfulness."
Habakkuk ii, 4. R. V. Margin.

"Though the fig-tree do not blossom,
And no fruit be on the vines,
Fail the produce of the olive,
And the fields yield no meat,
Cut off be the flocks from the fold
And no cattle in the stalls,
Yet in the LORD will I exult,
I will rejoice in the God of my Salvation."
—Habakkuk iii, 17, 18. Version of G. A. Smith.

ANOTHER prophet, who lived in the sad days of Jeremiah, and who shared Jeremiah's hopes and doubts, was Habakkuk. The little prophecy of his, which has survived, is mainly devoted to a problem, which at that time pressed heavily upon the heart of every Jew: "Why do the righteous suffer?" After the reform of Josiah the nation was conscious as never before that it was making a noble effort to do the will of God in so far as that will was known. Now, too, they had the external standard of a written law by which to measure their

fidelity or their defection. It was accordingly possible to see to what degree the divine ideal of their life was realized. But the more nearly they seemed to approach the appointed goal, the more numerous became the national misfortunes. What did it all mean? The national theology had always taught that prosperity would attend the righteous, but now adversity was their constant portion.

As Habakkuk brooded over this he gained a new insight into the meaning of life. He saw that in the last analysis it was not prosperity and present victory which counts, but character. The insolent enemies of Israel should be finally overthrown, because their prosperity was not founded upon justice and uprightness of heart. If Israel could but be patient, and keep her fidelity to her God and to right intact,[1] her reward was sure. Wrong might triumph for a time, but in the ultimate shock of things all would be swept away except the strong and pure character. The same truth is taught

[1]The English versions wrongly translate "faith." See G. A Smith's *Book of the Twelve Prophets*, Vol. II. p. 140.

under another figure by Paul; it is only the gold, the silver, and the precious stones which will survive the fire; the wood, hay and stubble shall be destroyed.[1]

How prone the world is to forget this lesson, first taught by Habakkuk, but repeated many times since his day. The spirit of the present age praises success, however it may have been won. Young men are taught, not by word but by the standards of the market place, the college, and the church, that at all hazards success must be achieved. No matter about the man's ideals, if only he be rich. Character is a secondary matter in many circles, if only one be brilliant. But success is only for a day, while character abides. In the testing moments of life—in the shock of worlds—it is the just who survive. "Character is destiny."

The third chapter of Habakkuk is a poem. It once stood in our psalter, or in one of the psalters from which ours was compiled, for it has the musical notes attached to it, which we find in the psalter. Some one must

[1] 1 Cor. iii, 11-15.

have transferred it to its present position in the book of Habakkuk, because it harmonized so beautifully with Habakkuk's spirit. It exemplifies the fact that the man of faithfulness and of justice is also the man of faith. No more sublime picture is presented in literature than the rural poet contemplating the utter desolation of all that the men of his class counted of worth, and still able to exclaim :

> " Yet in the LORD will I exult,
> I will rejoice in the God of my salvation.
> Jehovah, the Lord, is my might;
> He hath made my feet like hinds',
> And on my heights He gives me to march."

In hours of bitterest sorrow these manly and devout words from the distant past are still our solace, giving us faith to look beyond present darkness to the coming light. The faith of this poet was like the faith of Paul, who could say : " Most gladly, therefore, will I suffer, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

CHAPTER XLVI.

JOB.

"Ye have heard of the patience of Job." Jas. v, 11.

> "If a man die—might he live again?
> All the days of my service would I wait,
> Until my renewal came."
> —Job xiv, 14, Genung's Version.

THE book of Job is another piece of literature which grew out of that great period of stress from which the book of Habakkuk came. From a literary standpoint it is greatly superior to Habakkuk. It is one of the world's great poems, artistic, strong, and profound. Genung has happily called the book the "Epic of the Inner Life." [1] a name which most aptly describes it. The author of the book felt the perplexities which the problems of the age imposed upon those who held the old theology, and set himself in this work to depict them. He was a sage, and sages stood somewhat apart from the prophetic and priestly aspects of life.

[1] Genung's Translation of Job, "*The Epic of the Inner Life*," Houghton & Mifflin, 1895, is the best rendering of Job in English though his treatment of critical questions is not, as in the case of the Elihu speeches, always satisfactory.

They allowed themselves a greater range of thought, and greater freedom of speech in treating divine themes.

The author of Job selected a tradition, which had come down from the far past, of a series of calamities that had happened to an old patriarch. On the basis of these he constructed his imaginative poem, in which the friends of Job present the out-worn arguments of the old Jewish theology, while Job himself exhibits in his replies, in his cries of pain, and in the aspirations to which he gives utterance, the growth which such perplexities and such pain make possible for the devout spirit. The poet has done his work with such skill that we may actually see the growth of the soul as it takes place before our eyes. It is an epic such as may be enacted within the breast of any man, who comes face to face with the problem of evil and of suffering in this world.

We have in previous studies become familiar with the divine function of suffering. We have learned how some of the choicest spirits, such as Hosea and Jeremiah, were made able, in the school of suffering,

to contribute some of the most important truths to the world's religious knowledge. With them we must place the author of the book of Job, for in the furnace of affliction he learned that the present life is all too short for the realization of a divine theodicy of perfect justice, and that there must be a life beyond. This was the truth to which pain opened the gates of his spirit.

In order to appreciate the real value of his contribution to religious thought, we should remember the general view of the future life, which his contemporaries held. It has been already outlined in these pages.[1] It was thought to be a colorless existence, into which the blessing and the justice of God never came. Centuries before the contact with Greek thought had given to the Hebrews the clear conception of immortality which they later entertained, the thought of it sprang up in the mind of our poet. It came first as a faint hope:

"If a man die—might he live again?"

But as he continued to strive with his suffering, it grew to a firm conviction. Man

[1] Above in ch. xviii.

must come face to face with his Maker. This world and this life, with all their tribulations and disappointments, are too small and insufficient for the satisfaction of the human heart. God must have more in store for us or he would never have given us the natures which he has. Thus the confidence of the poet arises until he can sing [1] :

"I know that my redeemer liveth ;
That he will stand survivor over the dust ;
And though when my skin is gone, they will rend this body,
Yet, I without my flesh shall see God ;
Whom I shall see, I, for myself ;
Whom mine eyes shall behold a stranger no more.
Oh, for this my reins consume within me ! " [2]

Here again suffering led to the perception of most sublime truth. It is the lesson often found in the Old Testament and often dwelt upon in these pages. It is God's way to disclose His truth to hearts thus prepared. These examples well illustrate the Master's words : "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."

[1] The writer does not agree with those critics who regard these words as a later interpolation. [2] Job xix, 25-27, according to the Hebrew.

CHAPTER XLVII.

EZEKIEL.

"The heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God. Ezekiel i, 1.

"He felt the heart of silence
Throb with a soundless word,
And by the inward ear alone
A spirit's voice he heard.

And the spoken word seemed written
On air and wave and sod,
And the bending walls of sapphire
Blazed with the voice of God."

—*Whittier.*

EZEKIEL was preeminently an idealist. He was a man of visions and mystic communion. His lot was cast in circumstances which would have crushed the spirit of many, but the heavenly vision lifted him above the baffling present, and filled his soul with courage and hope. With a fine disregard of the sacred traditions of the past, he dared to utter the visions which he saw, and thus he became one of the founders of the future greatness of his people.

Ezekiel was born of a priestly family. He was taken to Babylonia with king Jehoiachin in the year 598 B.C., when Nebuchadnezzar took the first body of captives thither. Ezekiel was attached to a group of captives which was settled on the river Chebar—a river which has recently been shown to have been near Nippur, about sixty miles southeast of Babylon. It was a lonely place for a devout young priest. Another youthful Levite, who was forcibly taken away from his native land in the same way, has recorded his feelings for us in that plaintive psalm:

> "As the hart panteth for the water brooks,
> So panteth my soul after thee, O God." [1]

His first feeling was that he was separated from his God in being separated from the temple and the land of Israel. But just as the psalmist was comforted with the thought that God could be with him where he was going, so Ezekiel, brooding over the mysterious fortune which had overtaken him and his people, found God by the river

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[1] Psalm xlii, 1.

Chebar. Five years after his captivity began, he thus became a prophet.

For seven years before Jerusalem finally fell, he united his voice with that of Jeremiah in an endeavor to keep the nation faithful to the right, in order that, if possible, the final catastrophe might be averted. When all this was of no avail, and the final calamity was over, Ezekiel did not despair. The divine vision sustained him. Contrary to all analogy, he had faith to believe that the captive nation would be restored, and, prompted by the divine voice, he proceeded to lay new plans for the future civil and religious polity of the nation.

In doing this we must not think of Ezekiel simply as the recipient of an ecstatic vision which superseded his mental power of activity. It is clear that the record of his visions has been carefully thought out. Ezekiel was an original thinker, but his thought is made all the more valuable by being tinged with the emotion of the mystic devotee.

In outlining the future polity of his people he illustrated the principle which Lowell has so well expressed:

"New occasions teach new duties; Time makes
ancient good uncouth;
They must upward still, and onward, who would
keep abreast of truth."

The Deuteronomic code, which had been hailed only a generation before as the law of God, he planned to supersede, and drew up a new code of laws, a new plan for the temple, a new scheme for the division of the land among the tribes, as well as a new scheme for the government of the land,[1] What a sublime act of faith! The captive bending over his scroll and recording the laws for a nation that is blotted out is an example for the ages. His influence on the future is an encouragement to all disheartened reformers.

The work of Ezekiel partook of the character of the work of all pure idealists. Some of its features were exceedingly practical, while others were utterly impracticable. It also served the purpose and met the fate of the work of the idealist in every age. It inspired and encouraged many others; its

[1] See Ezekiel xl-xlviii. [2] I refer to his scheme for redividing the land. See the chart of it in Davidson's *Ezekiel* in the *Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, p. 355.

practical features were taken up and embodied in the code which in the next century became the fundamental law of the nation.[1] Its impractical features were ignored and did no harm. It is given to no man to see the truth in all its relations with perfection. It is enough if by his vision he lifts the age a little.

God is calling for Ezekiels now. Old systems are passing away. If the future is to be as good as the past, thoughtful men with hearts aflame with visions of God must think and speak and plan for the future. The heavenly vision hovers above many a head. Oh, that we might see it and be obedient to it!

[1] Such is the case in the matter of the Levites as separate from the priests. Ezekiel legislated them into existence (ch. xliv, 8–13). In the Levitical code, which was adopted in the time of Nehemiah, they are a prominent feature of the organization.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE GREAT UNKNOWN.

"He waketh morning by morning, he waketh mine ear to hear as the disciples." Isaiah l, 4, (according to the Hebrew).

"That low man seeks a little thing to do,
Sees it and does it:
This high man, with a great thing to pursue,
Dies ere he knows it.
That low man goes on adding one to one,
His hundred's soon hit:
This high man, aiming at a million,
Misses an unit."

—*Browning.*

SCHOLARS are wont to call the great prophet who lived near the end of the Babylonian exile, and whose work has been accidentally bound up with that of the prophet Isaiah, "the great Unknown," because his name has not come down to us. In one way this is a misnomer, for we know his thought, his faith, his conception of God, and his conception of the ideal life, far better than we know the inner life of most of the men to whom we can attach the label by which they were known to their contemporaries. To thus know this prophet, and

to appreciate his work at its real value, is in itself a religious experience.

That the chapters which follow the thirty-ninth of our book of Isaiah, were composed in the Babylonian exile, is now a generally accepted fact. They presuppose an environment when Jerusalem and the temple were in ruins,[1] when Babylon and not Assyria was the dominant power of the world, and when Cyrus was a well known political figure,—a conqueror, who was narrowing the circle of his conquests nearer and nearer to Babylon.[2] The literary style and the theology of these chapters also differ[3] from the literary style and the theology of Isaiah the son of Amoz. The analogy of prophecy in other parts of the Old Testament also leads us to the same conclusion.[4]

This conclusion, so far from detracting from the inspiration of the prophecy, or from its religious value, increases our recognition of both. Here was a man who took up the work of Ezekiel with a faith greater, if

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[1]See Isa. xliv, 26; lviii, 12; lxi, 4; lxiii, 18; lxiv, 10, ff. [2]See Isa. xliv, 28; xlv, 1. [3]See Driver's *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, p. 224 ff. [4]See the reference to Driver in the preceding note.

possible, than Ezekiel's, and certainly with an eloquence and a poetic power to which Ezekiel was a stranger. He foresaw that God was shaping events so as to present an opportunity for captive Israel to return to her land. He beheld the mass of his compatriots, who had been seethed in the Babylonian melting-pot of the nations, faithless, spiritless, despondent, and utterly unprepared to profit by the coming opportunity. Morning by morning his ear was wakened with messages calculated to arouse and inspire them; day by day the messages were eloquently delivered. Fortunately for us the substance of these messages has been preserved, and forms one of the most attractive parts of the Old Testament,—a portion, which has been not inaptly called, the fifth Gospel.

The first feature of the work of this great prophet, which claims our attention, is his use of the intellect. His faith is an intellectual faith,—a reasoned faith; it does not spring from mere feeling. He had read the history of the world, had thought upon it, and had found in the works of God in

creation and in the history of His people an irrefutable argument for the being and the goodness of God. This argument he presents with a power and a beauty unequaled in the religious literature of the world. This prophet is the prophet of the educated, thinking man. He also is a fine example of a man who sees God in contemporary events, and who realizes that he is living and working where God is making history.

Another important feature of his work is his great faith in what God will do for His people, and the consequent effort which he makes to persuade the gross-hearted, this-worldly multitude to cast themselves upon God, and to undertake to build up the ideal state. Like One greater than he, he believed that "all things are possible to him who believes." It is for this reason that his chapters abound in those exquisite assurances, which are still the choicest promises to the Christian pilgrim, such as: "Fear thou not for I am with thee," and "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee." Then, too, he saw reason for that which had puzzled Habakkuk and the

author of the book of Job; he caught a glimpse of why the righteous suffer. It was opened to him that that suffering was God's appointed means of diffusing the knowledge of Himself and of lifting careless and stupid men up to the level of faith and of nobility. But of this we have already treated.[1]

Insensate indeed is the spirit of him who can read the work of this prophet understandingly and not experience a sacramental meeting of his soul with God; faithless is he who can turn away from these utterances and continue to live a sordid and materialistic life![2]

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[1] Above, ch. xiv. [2] The best exposition of these chapters is in George Adam Smith's *Book of Isaiah*, Vol. II.

CHAPTER XLIX.

NEHEMIAH.

"Except Jehovah keep the city,
The watchman waketh but in vain."
—Psalm cxxvii, i.

"Then faint not, falter not, nor plead
Thy weakness; truth itself is strong;
The lion's strength, the eagle's speed,
Are not alone vouchsafed to wrong."
—*Whittier.*

In the year 444 B. C., almost exactly a hundred years after "the great unknown" prophet had begun his ministry in Babylonia, we catch a glimpse of Nehemiah, a princely young Hebrew at the court of Artaxerxes in Susa, who was cup-bearer to the king. During the hundred years which had passed Cyrus had conquered Babylon, and the Persian empire had taken the place of the Babylonian. Cyrus had reversed the policy of the Assyrians and Babylonians, and had permitted captive peoples to return to their respective countries. This gave the Jews the opportunity which the great prophet of the exile had foreseen. A few had taken

advantage of it, had returned to Jerusalem and erected an altar on the site of the old temple. Twenty years had rolled by, and then through the labors of Haggai and Zechariah the temple had been rebuilt. But seventy years more had rolled away and the walls of Jerusalem were still in ruins, and its poor, struggling inhabitants were plundered by every powerful marauder who passed by.

One day the princely Nehemiah in Susa had an opportunity to learn from a passing Jew the desolate condition of Jerusalem. The sad story so preyed upon his mind that the king soon noticed his gloom. Upon learning the cause, Artaxerxes appointed Nehemiah governor of Jerusalem, and sent him thither with full authority to build the walls. The story of his arrival at Jerusalem, of the opposition which he encountered from the Jews themselves, of the plots which were laid by others to frustrate his work, of the energy with which he overcame all obstacles, devoting his fortune to the enterprise and persuading others to do the same, is vividly told in the early chapters of the book

of Nehemiah. It was a herculean task. The picture of the courtly Nehemiah, accustomed to the soft apparel of the imperial court, working like his men armed with trowel and bow, the implements of building and of defence, sleeping on his arms, and inspiring a hopeless nation to accomplish the impossible in the face of great dangers, presents us with a noble example of what can be done when one, possessed of the finest powers and blessed with the best of opportunities, presents all to God in humble consecration, and receives back the gift touched with the emotion of a heavenly inspiration.

When the outward walls were erected, Nehemiah, with the help of Ezra, proceeded to erect walls for the protection of the faith. Unknown men had taken up the work of Ezekiel, and had drawn up what they regarded as ideal laws for the regulation of the religious life. They were all endeavoring to shape the religious polity so as to realize the ideal for which the Mosaic religion stood, and thus regarded the laws which they collected as the expression of

God's will through Moses. By the time of Nehemiah these various codes had been combined into a Levitical law, nearly resembling that in our Bibles, and Nehemiah and Ezra made a great convocation of the people in Jerusalem and induced them to bind themselves to observe this law. Within a very few years this code was combined with the previously known laws to form our Pentateuch.[1] This was the second step in the canonization of our Bible. Ezra had endeavored to accomplish this in vain; the deed waited for Nehemiah's courtly tact and consecrated skill. Lovers of the Bible therefore have cause to bless Nehemiah still. Who can estimate the uplifting influence which the first five books of our Bible have had on the jurisprudence and the science of the world? No matter if some of their laws are now superseded by better expressions of the spirit of Christ; no matter if science now is able to present a more exact picture of the beginnings; we owe the vantage ground, which has made these things possible, largely to the preparation of thought to which these books helped.

[1] One proof of this is the fact that the Samaritans who finally split from the Jews in the time of Nehemiah have the Pentateuch. It forms their whole Bible. On the Samaritans, compare Price, the *Monuments and the Old Testament*, ch. xxiv.

CHAPTER L.

THE LEVITICAL RITUAL.

"And according to the law, I may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and apart from shedding of blood there is no remission. Hebrews ix, 22.

"Oh how I love thy law!
It is my meditation all the day."
—Psalm cxix, 97.

CHRISTIAN students formerly regarded the various features of the Levitical ritual as types of the work of Christ. The blood of the victims represented to them the blood of Christ, as did badger skins dyed red, and other crimson elements of the ritual. This method of reading Christ into the ritual was arbitrary and superficial. That the method secured, so far as the sacrifices were concerned, a certain degree of truth has been pointed out already,[1] The blood sprinkled on altar and congregation was a later application of ritual which most naturally represented in its original form the work which Christ accomplished — the

[1] Above, Chapter xiii.

binding of the heart of the believer to God in a real community of life.

By the time that the Epistle to the Hebrews was written, it appeared to a devout Jewish Christian, that, according to this law, no sin was forgiven without the shedding of blood. As a matter of fact the law does not provide for sacrifices for all sins. A few ceremonial sins, which can hardly be regarded as sins except from a superstitious point of view,[1] and a few cases of false dealing,[2] are the only individual sins for which sacrifices are provided. The day of Atonement[3] was a sacrifice for national, not for individual sins, and the goat, on which the sins of the people were confessed, was sent out alone to propitiate the wilderness demon, Azazel. No sacrifices are provided for the sins of the inner life. If the ritual is a type of Christ's sacrificial work, it is a most imperfect one.

On the whole the Levitical ritual is a type of ritualistic Christianity. Early Christianity, like the early religion of Israel, knew no elaborate ritual. Just as we can

[1] See Lev. iv and v. [2] See Lev. vi. [3] Lev. xvi.

first trace the Levitical ritual in Israel's settled life in the time after the exile,[1] so Christians first used an elaborate ritual some centuries after the departure of the Master. As the Levitical ritual contained some superstitious elements, such as the conception that contact with a dead body is sin, and that the demon Azazel must be propitiated, so ritualistic Christianity has its superstition of transubtantiation. Each ritual sought by means of outward forms, some of which were hoary with antiquity, to kindle the imagination of the worshipper, and to uplift his heart. The weakness of each system, the Jewish and the Christian, lay in the fact that it interposed a priesthood between the worshipper and his God, making him believe that God is far away. The worshipper was thus robbed of some of his highest personal privileges, and of the conception of the essential sacredness and priestly function of every good life.

[1] From the days of the Judges to the exile, no trace of the Levitical ritual appears in any really historical book, and there is much to show that it was not observed. On the origin and date of the Levitical code, see the article "Leviticus" in Hasting's *Dictionary of the Bible*, Carpenter and Harford-Battersby's *Hexateuch*, Vol. I, pp. 121-157, and Driver's *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, pp. 118-150.

And yet both in Judaism and in Christianity the ritualistic element performed a useful function. In those hard and trying centuries between the exile and the Christian era, it was because the Jew had an objective, well organized worship for which to strive that he survived to prepare the way for the mission of the Son of Man. So in those centuries of ignorance and strife, which we call the dark ages, it was the definite, well organized ritual of the church which held men to Christianity. Here was something definite to be fought for, or to adhere to, or to die for. The ritual was a husk for the preservation of the true faith, until its kernel should be ready for the harvest.

It must not be forgotten, too, that there are souls who are greatly helped by ritual. It uplifts their thought and fills them with moral and spiritual enthusiasm. Such were many of the later psalmists, who chant the praises of the law. If it could create such pure religious enthusiasm in such devout souls, it must have had some useful religious function. We must not, therefore, deny to those who still need the external aids of

incense and solemn pomp the help which they find in them. God comes to different souls through different avenues. None should be satisfied with any form, however, but should know that God really visits the heart, and finds expression in the life.

"Thy litanies, sweet offices
Of love and gratitude;
Thy sacramental liturgies,
The joy of doing good.

In vain shall waves of incense drift
The vaulted nave around,
In vain the minster turret lift
Its brazen weights of sound.

The heart must ring Thy Christmas bells,
Thy inward altars raise;
Its faith and hope thy canticles,
And its obedience praise!"

CHAPTER LI.

JONAH.

"They repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, a greater than Jonah is here." Luke xi, 32.

"I must go send some better messenger."
—*Shakespeare.*

ISRAEL in the early days had thought of Jehovah as the God of that nation only. As late as the book of Micah we find the gods of the heathen recognized as real deities.[1] Even earlier than that, however, the best spirits among the Hebrews had caught the great truth that one God controls all nations, and that He is Jehovah. Amos is the first to distinctly express this view. Down to the time of the exile even the prophets continued, nevertheless, to think that God cared chiefly for Israel. They represent other nations as existing chiefly as appendages to Israel. The exile brought to the chosen people a closer acquaintance with other nations, and it gradually dawned upon the Hebrew mind that God cared for

[1] Micah iv, 5.

other nations on their own account and for their own worth, and that Israel was chosen, not that she might be the exclusive recipient of the divine favor, but that she might be a missionary among the nations.

The result of this was the organization of an extensive missionary propaganda on the part of the Jews, for the prosecution of which a considerable missionary literature was created.[1] Naturally there were many of the Jews who looked askance at this whole movement; in its early stages there were many who opposed it. They thought it was degrading to the supreme position of the chosen people to suppose that anything but destruction could await the heathen. As a satire against this class, the book of Jonah was written.

The author represented Israel as a prophet, because he intended to hold before the nation the idea that God would have them carry His message to the world. He selected the name Jonah, because it meant "dove" and would be eaily understood as an allegorical

[1] See Schürer's *History of the Jewish People in the time of Jesus Christ*, Div. II. Vol. II. p. 220 ff, or Thatcher's *Apostolic Church*, ch. ii.

allusion to the nation.[1] Babylon was represented as a monster which swallowed and cast up Jonah, because the book of Jeremiah had already made that figure familiar to the Hebrews as a picture of the exile and the return.[2] So this writer wrote his parable to teach, that Israel was carried captive for not doing her proper missionary work, and that after her escape from captivity she did it sullenly and in anything but the right spirit.[3] When interpreted from this point of view the book becomes a most interesting missionary tract. It portrays well what a missionary or a missionary people should not be, and by contrast sets forth the ideal missionary character.[4]

It was this feature—the missionary preaching of Jonah—upon which our Lord seized as a sign or type of His own work,[5] and we

[1] That it was also the name of a prophet, may have influenced him too, see 2 Kings xiv, 25.

[2] See Jeremiah li, 35, 44.

[3] No one with literary feeling can read this book in connection with Amos and Hosea and not be convinced that it comes from a very different age. It resembles Esther, Judith, and Tobit much more closely in style.

[4] The fact that Christ refers to it does not prove that it is not an allegory. He often, as in the parable of the prodigal son, used imaginative material as parables.

[5] Scholars generally recognize that Luke gives Christ's real teaching in this matter, and that Matthew is mistaken in making it refer to His entombment.

therefore have His example for regarding it in this light. It presents as the ideal that spirit of loving service for all the world which was so characteristic of Christ. It caught a little of the spirit of that great commission: "Go ye therefore and make disciples of all the nations," and is a type of that Christlike missionary impulse, which in the last century has heard the cry for release from error coming

> "From Greenland's icy mountains,
> From India's coral strand,
> Where Africa's sunny fountains
> Roll down their golden sands,"

and has sought to meet the great need in the Master's way,—an impulse which must go forward until "the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ."

CHAPTER LII.

THE PSALTER.

"Sing us one of the songs of Zion." Psalm cxxxvii, 3.

"And so the shadows fall apart,
And so the west-winds play;
And all the windows of my heart
I open to the day."

—*Whittier.*

THE Psalter was the hymn-book of the second temple. While it contains here and there psalms which were composed in the days before the exile, those psalms were selected because they expressed the hopes and fears, the aspirations and the faith of the post-exilic days. Compilers of hymn-books always allow themselves some editorial liberty. For example, Whittier wrote for election day, 1842, a poem entitled "Democracy," beginning:

"Bearer of Freedom's holy light,
Breaker of Slaverys' chain and rod."

If I remember rightly, it was Samuel Longfellow who introduced extracts from it into a hymnal under the title "Christianity," and

with various editorial changes it has since found its way under this title into many hymn-books. Probably the editors of the psalter allowed themselves similar editorial liberties, but they secured a work which is capable of expressing the religious emotions of the world, because it so faithfully expressed their own.

Readers of the Revised Version will have noticed that the psalter is divided into five books. These books were collected and edited at different times as the Moody and Sankey hymns have been within the memory of many now living. The first of these collections seems to have been made in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah and was named after king David. The second and third were composed by putting together and rearranging three previously existing hymn-books, which were entitled "The Prayers of David," "The Psalms of Asaph," and "The Psalms of the Sons of Korah," and were completed by the end of the Persian period, about 330 B. C. The fourth and fifth books were completed by about 130 B. C., and include some Psalms

from the Maccabaean time.[1] The last two books have incorporated in them previously existing smaller hymn-books. Thus "The Songs of Ascent,"—Psa. cxx-cxxxiv,—is a little collection of songs concerning the return from Babylon.

While modern study of the psalms has made it clear that we can trace few of them back to David in their present form, it has also made it very clear that the rich religious life of the ancient Jews produced many more inspired psalm-writers than we had supposed. God still speaks to us in these stirring lyrics. Through them He teaches us how to speak to Him. We know them to be inspired, not because we can connect them with the pen of this or that heroic figure, but because they still bring inspiring messages to our spirits.

The psalter is a type of the varied religious life of modern Christendom, just as it is

[1] On the composition of the Psalter, see an article by the writer in *The American Journal of Theology*, Vol. iii, pp. 740-746, and W. Robertson Smith's *Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, 2 ed. N. Y., Appleton's 1892, ch. vii. The titles of the Psalms were added by editors, and in most cases were hasty guesses, which are often inconsistent with the contents of the Psalm. Thus, Ps. li, is ascribed to David by the title, while v. 18 shows it to come from the exile. The real value of the titles lies in the fact that they give us the history of the compilation of the psalter.

a mirror of the religious life of these centuries of post-exilic Judaism. Here and there human passion speaks plainly and without disguise, as in "Happy shall he be, who taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the rock,"[1] giving us a pure cry for unsanctified revenge. We cannot, however, judge the author too harshly, for, though the sentiment is certainly unchristian, it has often found historic expression among those who have professed Christianity, and frequently flames up unbidden in the breast of many a Christian still. The same must be said of other imprecatory psalms; they are imperfect, but they are still types of our imperfect Christianity.

On the other hand the psalter is the mirror of a religious faith, a sensitiveness to sin, a yearning after God, and a joy in forgiveness, which the best spiritual life of Christendom as yet scarcely equals, and this Jewish expression of which we are often glad to make our own. In our hours of doubt we still find courage in the self-exhortation:

[1] Ps. cxxxvii, 9.

"Why art thou cast down, O my soul?
Why art thou disquieted within me?
Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him."

In our hours of faith no words express our serene confidence so well as:

"The Lord is my Shepherd,
I shall not want."

When conscious of inward guilt no prayer, unless it be that of the publican, springs more spontaneously to our lips than the psalmist's cry:

"Create in me a clean heart, O God
And renew a right spirit within me."

And when the happiness of forgiveness breaks upon the soul one loves to sing with another psalmist:

"Oh, the happiness of him whose transgression is forgiven,
Whose sin is pardoned!" [1]

And as one closes his eyes on life, no more sublime expression of that faith which conquers the grave can come to his lips than:

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of death-shade,
I will fear no evil; for thou art with me."

To live up to these highest expressions of the old Jewish hymn-book is to be a pure Christian.

[1] According to the Hebrew.

CHAPTER LIII.

SATAN.

"I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven."
Luke x, 18.

"Him the almighty Power
Hurl'd headlong flaming from th' ethereal sky,
With hideous ruin and combustion, down
To bottomless perdition, there to dwell
In adamantine chains and penal fire,
Who durst defy th' Omnipotent to arms."
—*Milton.*

THE problem of evil is one which has attracted the thought of saints and sages in all ages, and has received many different answers. We are so accustomed to think of Satan as the originator of evil, that the fact that a considerable course of the Biblical narrative had passed before the figure of Satan appears in it, does not strike many a reader of the Bible at all. We are accustomed to identify the serpent of Genesis with Satan, but the Hebrews of the Old Testament period did not do so. To them the serpent was merely an unusually acute

animal.[1] This serpent was first identified with Satan in the apocryphal book, "The Wisdom of Solomon," which was written in the first century,[2] B. C.

The earlier Hebrew thought had no need for Satan. The sovereignty of God was so absolutely accepted that He was believed to be the author of both good and evil. Thus King Saul was thought to be troubled by an evil spirit from Jehovah;[3] Jehovah was thought to have tempted David to sin;[4] Jehovah sent, it is said, a lying spirit to tempt Ahab to his death;[5] Amos exclaimed: "Shall evil befall a city and Jehovah hath not done it?"[6] while the great prophet of the exile pictured Jehovah as saying to Himself: "I make peace, and create evil."[7]

It was not until about the time of the exile that it began to become inconsistent with the Hebrew thought of God, to think of Him as the author of evil. It is then that the figure of Satan begins to appear in the Biblical books. It is first found in the book of Job.[8] Satan is there represented as

[1] See the writer's *Semitic Origins*, pp. 93, 96. [2] Ch. ii, 23, 24. [3] 1 Sam. xvi, 14. [4] 2 Sam. xxiv, 1. [5] 1 Kings, xxii, 20-23. [6] Amos, iii, 6. [7] Isa. xlv, 7. [8] 2 Chs. i, ii.

still an angel in the heavenly court, but he is a dissatisfied, an unhappy, a disgruntled angel. He doubts human virtue; he believes that every man has his price; and receives permission to worry Job. In the book of Zechariah Satan appears as the opponent of Joshua, the high priest; and in the narrative of David's census, where Samuel says that Jehovah incited David to number the people, Chronicles says it was Satan.[1] No other mention of him occurs in the Old Testament.[2]

In the book of Enoch evil is thought to have been introduced into the world by the angels, who, in the sixth of Genesis, are said to have come to earth and married human wives.[3] It is one of these, Gadreel by name, who was thought to have tempted Eve.[4] The Wisdom of Solomon, as we have noted, represents Satan as the tempter in Eden, and this view seems to have prevailed among the writers of the New Testament. The view of Enoch, that the tempter was a fallen angel, has been widely accepted in

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[1] 1 Chron. xxi, 1. [2] In Ps. cix, 6, the word refers to a human adversary. [3] See Enoch vi-xi. [4] Enoch lxix, 9.

Christian theology, and has received immortal expression in the great poem of Milton.

At the time of Christ it was generally believed that Satan was the author of evil in the world, and just as Christ spoke the language of the people in referring to the insane as possessed of demons, so He used their language in speaking of Satan.

The belief in one, or in many, evil spirits, does not, however, solve the problem of evil, or relieve God of responsibility for it. Unless one believes with the Persians, and with the early Christian Gnostics, that Satan is a second God, and is independent of God, it must be recognized that he exercises his baneful activity by divine permission. No one can be a Biblical Christian and not recognize God as the one supreme, all-powerful Being. He must permit evil in the world, because He sees that somehow greater good will in the end result from the conditions which make evil possible. He has disclosed to us His heart of love in Christ. Though we may not be able to understand His ways in this matter, we can trust Him, can believe

that He is wise, can seek to get the best out of the conditions in which He has placed us, and can thus become possessed through Christ of a positive character, godlike in its quality.

The words of the Master, quoted at the beginning of this chapter, hold before us the Savior's promise that evil will be overcome. God, not Satan, is supreme; goodness, not sin, is to prevail; truth, not falsehood, is eternal. "Fight," then, "the good fight of faith." "He that overcometh, I will give to him to sit down with Me in My throne."

CHAPTER LIV.

INTERNATIONAL PEACE.[1]

"Love your enemies." Matt. v, 44.

"Peace, thy olive wand extend,
And bid wild war his ravage end,
Man with his brother man to meet,
And as a brother kindly greet."

—*Burns.*

In the actual world warfare and struggle seem to be perfectly natural. Biologists teach us that it is by means of these that animal life has been pushed forward to its present degree of perfection. Man is from one standpoint a member of the animal kingdom. In the earlier stages of his development he has necessarily been pushed forward by the same processes which have moulded all animal life. He cannot be led forward by the lofty ideals which inspire by their brightness and purity until he can appreciate something of their beauty and sublimity. Until then, like his fellows in the animal realm, he must be pushed

[1] Part of a paper read at the Friends' Peace Conference in Philadelphia in 1901, and afterward published in the *Friends' Intelligencer* and the *Biblical World.*

forward by the blind forces of struggle and survival. To discover the elements of a peace doctrine in the Old Testament, we must discover the power to appreciate the great religious truths on which it rests. Those truths are the Fatherhood of God, and the brotherhood of man. Until men have clearly understood that God is the God of all men, and that it is as wrong to injure a stranger as a brother, because both are the children of the same Father, no peace doctrine is possible to men.

Now, in the early days of Israel's national life the necessary religious foundation for this truth had not been laid. Each tribe, or, at the most, each nation, had its god. Each nation thought it must worship its own god, but it in no wise denied the reality of the gods of other nations. These gods were thought of as larger men, ready to fight with one another, or to overreach one another in all the ways which men would do. This applies to the early history of Israel as truly as to that of other ancient peoples. When David was temporarily driven from his native land and had to take refuge in

Moab, we hear him complaining: "They have driven me out this day that I should not cleave unto the inheritance of Jehovah, saying, Go serve other gods," (1 Sam. xxvi, 19). Jehovah's power was, he seemed to think, limited to Palestine, and, when on foreign soil, he naturally supposed he must worship a foreign god. This accounts for the fact that David practiced such barbarities upon conquered enemies (2 Sam. xii, 31). From his religious point of view these enemies had no rights. Obviously in such an age the peace doctrine could find no root.

In Amos, the first of the literary prophets, we find a broader outlook, both as regards the extent of God's rule over the nations, and as regards the barbarities of war. He perceived that Jehovah controlled all nations; Jehovah brought the Philistines from Caphtor and the Aramaeans from Kir, as well as Israel from Egypt, (Amos ix, 7). It is Amos, too, the possessor of this breadth of religious vision, who condemned that violation of treaties, that barbarity to women, and that disregard of the sacredness of death,

which are so characteristic of war, (see Amos i, 9; i, 13; ii. 1).

It takes in any age a long time for a higher ideal to win its way, and that was true of Israel as well as of others. Isaiah sang of the birth of the "Prince of peace," but in a language which is much obscured in our common versions of the Bible, and which is so enshrined in the affections of the Christian world, that one hesitates to disturb it even in the interest of the truth. When Isaiah's language is really understood, however, it differs but little from the hard standards of the age of war. That Prince, as Isaiah conceived him, was to be a "Wonderful plotter, a very god of a warrior, and a father of booty," before he was "prince of peace." In other words, Isaiah's conception is still the conception of a conqueror; the peace which this passage pictured was such as Kitchener is making in South Africa.

At another time Isaiah had a more attractive vision. In the eleventh chapter of his prophecy, when describing the Messianic kingdom, he sang of a time when

"The wolf will lodge with the lamb,
The leopard lie down with the kid,
The calf and the young lion graze together,
And a little child will lead them."

This language is no doubt figurative. The prophet pictured under these animal forms the way in which human passion was to become harmless. It is not clear, however, whether his thought embraced the world in this Utopia of peace, or whether he confined it to the kingom of Israel. The words which immediately follow favor the latter view.

Such religious conceptions as those of Amos were, nevertheless, bound to bear fruit. Under the influence of the prophets the old laws were recast and king Josiah instituted a reform on their basis. We now possess this work in our book of Deuteronomy. It is characterized by a large humanitarian element.[1] It sought to soften the rugged features of the hard life of ancient times. It instituted laws in behalf of the poor, in behalf of slaves, who were usually the captives taken in war, and even in

[1] See Kent's "Humanitarian element in the Old Testament legislation" in *Biblical World*, for Oct., 1901.

behalf of animals. In its treatment of war itself there is a milder, more human and reasonable note than one is accustomed to find in antiquity.[1] Of the Levitical code which came into its present form even later, though many of its laws are old, the same may also be said.[2] If it seems to limit the sympathies of Israel at times by enforcing kindness towards members of that race particularly, it also commands the Hebrew to love the resident alien as himself, (Lev. xix, 17, 18). When we remember that the resident alien was usually a captive of war, we can see how beneficently the teaching of prophets like Amos was taking effect. The idea that there was but one God and He the God of all men, was producing a new conception of humanity fatal to the spirit of war.

In no book of the Old Testament does this leavening doctrine, that God cares for all men, and its corollary, that mercy is due to all, shine out more clearly than in the book of Jonah, but we have been so occupied in quarreling about Jonah's whale that

[1] See Deut. xx, and cf. Goldwin Smith in *Independent* of Aug. 22, 1901, p. 1959 ff. [2] See Kent in *Biblical World*, Nov., 1901.

the significance of the message of the book has escaped us. The book was written to enforce the great truths that God's care extends to all men, that He chose Israel not for her own sake merely, but to bear His message of warning, of righteousness, and of mercy to the world, and that even the worst of Israel's enemies who become His people may find mercy with God. The kindliness of God extends to all nations; the spirit of helpful sympathy should prevail toward them in the hearts of His worshippers,—this is the message of this unique book, and it is a message calculated to extirpate the spirit of selfishness and narrowness from which all war springs.

The climax of Old Testament thought in this respect is reached in that little prophecy, found both in the second chapter of Isaiah and in the fourth chapter of Micah, the origin of which is a puzzle. Was it composed by Isaiah, by Micah, or by some unknown prophet? Perhaps the latter is the correct view, and from this unknown seer it may have been introduced by editors into the positions in the books of Isaiah and

Micah, where it now stands. Be that as it may, in its inspired utterance we have for the first time an adequate expression of what a real monotheism means for the world. "The mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains and exalted above the hills." "Many nations shall give Him their allegiance; His word shall rule them; He shall judge between many peoples and decide concerning strong nations afar off: and they shall beat their swords into plow-shares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." One God for all nations, hence one brotherhood among men, and a universal peace on earth. This is the only logical view for a monotheist, and is the inevitable result of a belief in one God. Such is the strength of old custom, especially of custom consecrated by religious sanction and rooted in human passion, that this prophetic vision did not make a deep impression on the prophet's contemporaries, but nevertheless the beautiful picture of international amity, clearly drawn against

the dark background of a savage antiquity, anticipated by two millenniums the vision of our modern poet, who sang:

"Evil shall cease and Violence pass away,
And the tired world breathe free through a long Sabbath day."

Viewed in the manner here indicated, the Old Testament affords a basis for the peace doctrine, both because it exhibits the fact that war springs from the animal side of human nature, and is fostered only by a conception of God so limited as to be but little removed from heathenism; and because it reveals the fact that the doctrine of monotheism cannot be really held without creating in mens' minds an abhorrence of the barbarities of war, and inspiring visions of a universal peace. The former element, though painfully apparent, is a waning or diminishing element; the latter, as revelation in its progress nears the Central Figure in human history, clearly appears as the increasing and triumphant element, preparing the way for the teaching of Him who not only prohibited killing, but even the hatred of a brother, and who enjoined upon His followers the love of enemies.

CHAPTER LV.

THE COMING OF THE KINGDOM.

"Thy kingdom come." Matt. vi, 10.

"Come, in this accepted hour;
Bring Thy heavenly kingdom in;
Fill us with Thy glorious power,
Rooting out the seeds of sin,"

—*Charles Wesley.*

THE remark of the Apostle Paul, that "That is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; then that which is spiritual," is aptly illustrated by the unfolding of many phases of spiritual life and thought, but by none more aptly than by the conceptions concerning the coming of the kingdom of God. In prophets, like Hosea and Isaiah, an expectation is expressed that a Messianic kingdom, glorious as that of David, and in which perfect justice shall abound, will come. The kingdom, which they expected is clearly an external, earthly monarchy. This ideal continued for some centuries to be the hope of the pious Israelites. The faithful of these generations were content to endure hardships themselves, if

only their descendants could enjoy the blessings of the kingdom of God.

As the centuries dragged themselves along, however, and the realization of the hope was deferred, it gradually came about that the hearts of the faithful were not satisfied that they themselves should suffer, while all the felicity was to be reaped by generations yet unborn. By this time the doctrine of immortality had grown up among the Hebrews, and this came to the aid of these devout souls. They might die before the coming of the kingdom, but they would be raised to share in its blessings.[1]

During these centuries another influence had also been at work. Hebrews had learned from Babylonians the art of picturing their history in the terms of the conflict of Bel and the dragon,—that conflict by which the Babylonians believed the creation of the world had been made possible.[2] Under the influence of this method of conceiving

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[1] This hope is expressed in Dan. xii, 2, 3. [2] The writer has outlined this in more detail in the *New World*, March, 1899, p. 120 ff., the *American Journal of Theology* Vol. II, p. 782 ff., and the *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. xvii, p. 80 ff. See also the articles "Apocalyptic Literature" in Hasting's *Dictionary of the Bible* and *the Encyc. Biblica*.

history, the coming of the Messianic kingdom gradually assumed for the Jew the aspect of a supernatural conflict. God took the place of Bel[1] in the allegory, and the evil world which was united against the Hebrews, the place of the dragon which was to be conquered. One of the earliest representations of this is in the seventh chapter of Daniel, where the kingdom is pictured as coming supernaturally in the clouds. Another is in the second of Daniel, where it is represented as a stone cut out of the mountain without hands. When once this supernatural conception had taken hold of the imagination, the marvellous elements in it were gradually heightened, as they are in the book of Enoch[2] and the Psalter of Solomon.[3] The central thought was still the hope of earthly empire, but that empire was to be introduced by such a supernatural cataclysm that none of Israel's enemies could escape slaughter.

When Christ began to teach, this was the prevalent Messianic conception. The attitude which He took towards it, has already

[1]Also called Marduk and Merodach. [2]See Enoch, chs. xlvi-liv. [3]Especially Psalter of Solomon xvii.

been described.[1] He was to be King of the truth; His kingdom, a spiritual kingdom. In speaking of it to His disciples He used some of the old terms, but in doing so He gave them a new meaning. That meaning the disciples did not understand; they understood His words, which were really freighted with a spiritual meaning, to refer to the external kingdom, of which their ancestors had been accustomed to think. Although He declared: "The kingdom of God is within you,"[2] they repeated His utterances as though they referred to an external empire, and, in the opinion of many modern scholars, confused some of them with a Jewish apocalypse.[3] When He ascended they, therefore, thought that He had simply been taken up for a time, and that He would afterward return to earth again to destroy the enemies of Israel, and to establish this earthly empire. Indeed, one of the Jewish traditions concerning their Messiah was that He should be born on the earth and caught

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[1] Above ch. viii. [2] Luke xvii, 21. [3] The passages in question are parts of Matt. xxiv, Mark xiii, and Luke xxi. See Charles, *Eschatology, Hebrew, Jewish and Christian*, p. 323 ff., and Briggs, *Messiah of the Gospels*, ch. iv.

up to heaven for a time, until the hour for His revelation should come. Their Jewish training had accordingly prepared the disciples to hold just the view of the second coming of Christ, which we find reflected in parts of the New Testament.

Paul, who had been trained as a Jewish rabbi, when he wrote the epistles to the Thessalonians still held this Jewish view. Jesus had been taken up for a time, he taught, but would return soon to establish this kingdom. Paul's conception differed from the current Jewish conception only in the fact that he held Jesus to be the Messiah, while they did not.

Riper experience in the Christian life, however, led Paul to abandon this view. In 2 Corinthians, the conception that the dead sleep in the underworld until the second coming of Christ, which he entertained at the time he wrote to the Thessalonians,[1] was abandoned.[2] When he wrote to the Romans a little later, he had apparently given up the conception of an external kingdom,

[1] See 1 Thes. iv, 13-18. [2] See 2 Cor. v, 6-8. Compare *New World*, March, 1899, p. 123.

and declared: "The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." [1] This faith continued to abide with Paul.[2] It was thus a Christian experience of years in length, which finally convinced him of the spiritual nature of the kingdom of God, and of the spiritual nature of its coming.

The Gospel of John reports discourses of Christ in which He Himself teaches the spiritual nature of His coming. There is in this Gospel no picture of a violent coming to destroy enemies, in a way which it would be sinful for men to imitate, but the Master several times equates His return to them with the coming of the Holy Spirit. He passes back and forth in His language from Himself to the Holy Spirit in such a way as to make it clear that His return to comfort them —the return which the world is not to behold, but which will make Him manifest to the disciples—is His return in the Holy Spirit.[3] In Paul, then, and in the Gospel of John, we reach at last Christians who are capable of grasping the Master's

[1] Rom. xiv, 17. [2] Philippines i, 23. [3] John xiv, 16-18, and xvi, 7-21

thought upon this point. The Jewish husk they have shaken off; the spiritual flower is revealed.

This, therefore, is the great truth concerning the coming of the kingdom: Christ will make the kingdoms of the earth His just as rapidly as men will let Him make their hearts His. Every heart purified and vitalized by Christ, is a step taken in advance in the coming of the kingdom. When we pray: "Thy kingdom come," our prayer is a mockery unless we are really willing that the divine Spirit shall come and rule our hearts. The prayer: "Thy will be done," is vain unless we are willing to do the will of God, which enjoins eternal right and justice toward all. When men have been won to Christ, so that the world is filled with brave, pure, tender, Christlike hearts, the kingdom of God will have come. Social injustice will then disappear. Violence will pass away. "The wolf and the lamb will lie down together."

"Amen: come, Lord Jesus!"

CHAPTER LVI

THE CITY OF GOD.

"He looked for the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Hebrews xi, 10.

"O sweet and blessed country,
The home of God's elect!
O sweet and blessed country,
That eager hearts expect!"
Tr. *J. M. Neave.*

As the early Semites wandered across the Arabian desert, where a scorching sun parched the sandy wastes, and approached an oasis, they felt that they were approaching a place where a god had his dwelling. In a land so arid they believed that only supernatural power could produce such verdure, such refreshing shade, and such fruitage. From these Semites the Hebrews were descended, and the oasis of more primitive times became their Eden, or garden of God.[1] From that Eden man had been expelled by his disobedience to God.

As the hope of an immortal life and of a kingdom of God grew in Israelitish hearts,

[1] See the writer's *Semitic Origins*, pp. 93-96.

they often tried to picture to themselves the land where that hope was to be realized. It was then very natural that the thoughts of men should return to the garden of God, from which man had fallen. It was not, they came to think, a thing of the past altogether, but might be attained by the righteous in the future too. "They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor the sun smite them: for He that hath mercy on them will lead them, by springs of water will He guide them," [1] sang the great prophet of the exile. He had in mind the striking contrast presented by a shady, fertile oasis with the burning desert. So also in the book of Enoch, when it was thought that the good would be raised for a future life of five hundred years,[2] their home was pictured as a garden containing a palm tree.[3]

In the days after the Babylonian exile another conception of the heavenly abode arose. The love of the pious Jews had centred so long upon Jerusalem, that they

[1] Isaiah xlix, 10. [2] Ethiopic Enoch x, 10 [3] Ethiopic Enoch xxiv, xxv.

conceived of the abode of the blest as a new Jerusalem more splendid and beautiful than the old, but patterned upon it. This is the view expressed in the psalms of the Pharisees, called the "Psalter of Solomon."[1] In the new Testament book of Revelation, to which we instinctively turn for impressive imagery of heaven, both views are combined. In one passage the picture of the transfigured oasis is borrowed from the book of Isaiah and is still further transfigured. Neither sun nor heat is to smite the saved, but the lamb is to guide them to living waters, and God is to wipe away all tears from their eyes.[2] In another passage the New Jerusalem is pictured. It is a city, each gate of which is a splendid Jewel.[3] A little further on we are told that the garden is in the midst of the city, for it contains the old tree of life, which yields its fruit every month.[4] Eden and Jerusalem are here blended into one picture. The two best abodes the Jews ever imagined are united and glorified to express the unutterable.

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[1] Psalter of Solomon xvii. [2] Rev.vii, 15, 16. [3] Rev. xxi. [4] Rev xxii, 1, 2.

All these conceptions are the foreshadowings of spiritual facts. The city of God is really in the character of His children. Eden is in the heart. It is not so much the place to which we go in the future, as the character we carry with us which determines our happiness. God no doubt has a proper abode for His departed saints, but we can form little conception of it from the barbaric splendor of oriental symbolism.

"The mind is in its own place, and in itself
Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven."

The spiritual significance of this symbolism is this: God will give His faithful children a life in which the burning heat of passion shall not wither the life on the arid sands of sin, but in which the heart shall be refreshed by the living spirit of the Master, and shall make its own Eden within it and about it. The soul, trusting in the Savior, and becoming like Him, makes a new Jerusalem in itself; its virtues crystalize into the jewelled foundations of the heavenly gates of the personality. The powers of the life become adequate to the demands of the life; the soul's beauty and peace are abiding.

Thus the Christian Eden and the New Jerusalem may begin in this world, though their full fruition will be reached in that great beyond, where we shall "know even as we are known."

CHAPTER LVII.

HOW CHRIST FULFILLED THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS.

"I came not to destroy, but to fulfill." Matt. v, 17.

"I know not what the future hath
Of marvel or surprise,
Assured alone that life and death
His mercy underlies."

—*Whittier.*

THE united yearning of the Hebrew people centred in the expectation of a great Deliverer, who should establish the kingdom of God. Prophets caught glimpses of the great ideal, and each spoke of it in the best terms in which it could be conceived in his age. The various codes of the law were designed, each in its day, to help on the coming of the glad time. Sages strained their mental vision into the future, and laid down precepts for that wise life, which would bring in the kingdom. Psalmists, as their imaginations were kindled with the attractive ideal, sang of it.

As the centuries passed, and the time of the birth of Christ approached, the whole

energy of the religious minds of Israel concentrated itself upon this one longing. No doubt there was much in the Jewish thought of the Messiah which was imperfect and unworthy, but on the whole it is an inspiring spectacle to which the literature of these centuries introduces us. It is a great thing that the whole genius of a nation should have devoted itself through hundreds of years to such an ideal.

The history of the Messianic hope in Israel is like the history of a plant. It had one appearance when it first sprang up as a tiny shoot, quite another when its branches were well spread to the air of heaven, and when finally its flower came the gentle beauty of the petals, and the heavenly perfume which they exhaled, surpassed anything which the stalk and the leaves had seemed to promise. The Jewish plant exhibited the thorny leaves of an earthly kingdom; Christ unfolded the beautiful petals of a kingdom of the spirit. He came, not to perform certain ceremonies, and thus fulfill the law, but to help men to the realization of that for which the law stood.

The law sought to secure a righteous life by external rules; He made a righteous life possible for the renewed spirit. Prophets dreamed of an empire which should rule provinces; He established a kingdom which controls passion. He did not destroy the law, but fulfilled it. For just as the flower fulfills the purpose of the bud, His teaching fulfilled the old Jewish hopes. The bud passes away as the flower comes, but it is not destroyed, because it has fulfilled its destiny.

If, then, we cannot select here and there a detached verse in the Old Testament, as our fathers and mothers used to do, and say: "This was spoken directly of Christ," we may find in the whole course of Hebrew history, with its lines of thought converging towards the Messiah, and its highest hopes centering with increasing intensity in the Messianic kingdom, a far stronger prophecy of the Christ than a few detached texts would be. The nation itself was a prophet; its yearnings were a divine oracle.

The fulfilment, too, is most instructive. It illustrates the way God leads His people on from goal to goal and height to height

in the ascent of life. The boy has his childish ideas of the manhood he longs to reach, but when he becomes a man the things which possessed such charm for him interest him no more. New interests dawn upon his mind,—interests which before he could not appreciate, and childish things are put away. Thus God ever leads us on. The realization of old ideals is approached, only that a new and higher ideal may be presented to the soul. A theology is crystalized and does its work, only that it may give place to another, newer and better. The reform which seemed to promise the millennium is accomplished, only to reveal the fact that it has made ten other reforms necessary.

> "I know not what the future hath
> Of marvel and surprise."

In spiritual things, too, the standard is under the leadership of Christ ever moving forward. He leads on from experience to experience. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be," but, "we shall be like Him." The whole course of revelation points to the fact that heaven itself will not be a life of

stagnation, but an ever delightful advance in the knowledge and the experience of spiritual things. Its delight and its joy will be that the soul shall live in the presence and in the power of Him who continually makes all things new. The full meaning of that life, the quality of its felicity, and the height of its love "eye hath not seen nor ear heard."