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THE PREACHER'S OLD TESTAMENT

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*Delivered at Princeton Theological Seminary, 1923,
on the L. P. Stone Foundation*

The Preacher's Old Testament

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WITH INTRODUCTION BY
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To
LENORE
*Whose Comradeship
Brings
Joy and Strength*

Introduction

SINCE the Levi P. Stone Lectureship was established in Princeton Theological Seminary more than forty years ago, illustrious scholars of America, Great Britain and Holland have discussed important and timely "topics kindred to theological studies" as the founder of this lectureship stipulated. Some of the topics have dealt with the Old Testament, e. g. "*The Assyrian and Babylonian Inscriptions with special reference to the Old Testament*," "*The Beginning of Hebrew History in the Light of Recent Archæological Research*," "*The Prophets and the Promise*," and "*The Historical Character of the Old Testament Interpreted and Supported by Recent Scientific Investigation*." As this last course was given by Dr. George F. Wright nearly twenty years ago, the Faculty of the Seminary felt that the lecturer selected for 1922-23 should be a specialist in the Department of Old Testament study. Their choice fell upon the Rev. Edward Mack, D.D., Professor of Hebrew and Old Testament Interpretation in the Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Va. Dr. Mack was graduated with distinction from Princeton Seminary in 1889, and was awarded the George S. Green Fellowship in Hebrew. After

pursuing special courses of study in the University of Berlin, he took up the regular work of the pastorate and rendered faithful service in churches of North Carolina, Missouri, Virginia and Louisiana. From the active work of the ministry he was called to the professorship of Hebrew and Old Testament Literature in Lane Theological Seminary. From this position he was transferred to his present chair.

In accepting the appointment for the Stone Lectureship, Dr. Mack very wisely and appropriately selected for his topic *The Preacher's Old Testament*. The neglect of the Bible in the home, the school and the church is giving earnest Christian leaders marked solicitude, and it would seem as if the Old Testament were fast becoming an unused and almost forgotten book. Some ministers give it no place whatsoever in the pulpit, and generally speaking, only a few texts, here and there, from the better known portions of the Old Testament furnish themes for popular sermons. It is generally conceded that modern criticism is largely responsible for this turning away from the "Law and the Prophets." As one writer puts it, the present eclipse of the Old Testament is due, in part at least, to the higher critics who have persistently applied to the ancient Scriptures the generally accepted canons and methods of modern history and literary study, and in their scientific zeal their work has seemed to be only destructive.

"Sinai appeared to be enveloped in a murky fog instead of the effulgence of the divine glory; Moses seemed to become a vague, unreal figure on the distant horizon of history; David's voice only faintly echoed through the Psalter; and the noblest messages of prophet, sage and psalmist were anonymous." To overcome this "eclipse," so-called, and convince the Church that, in spite of the dark shadow which has been cast upon its sacred truth by the wisdom of this world, the Old Book still shines as the light of our dark sky, a number of treatises have been written by those who represent the modern viewpoint, in proof of the permanent and unimpaired value of the Old Testament. Programs of religious education and conferences for church leaders have been arranged by this same class of scholars to demonstrate to bewildered believers' that it is still possible to study and apply with real spiritual profit the same Scriptures which Jesus used.

But the results are not as reassuring as they had hoped. A recent article in one of our religious journals on the modern attitude towards the Bible, comments on the service of modern scholarship in subjecting the Scriptures to the ultimate tests in the very crucible of criticism, and claims that this has given the Scriptures back to us with their greatness as literature fully recognised, with the nature of the Divine revelation they contain understood as never before, and with their moral author-

ity enhanced. Then this article goes on to record that the public is indifferent and makes this startling statement: "It is probable that at no time since the Protestant Reformation placed the Bible in the hands of the people, and bade them find in it the charter of their political, as well as their religious liberties,—at no time during the past four hundred years has the Bible been so generally neglected by Christian people as it is today." The present demand for Bibles, the profit to publishers of new and varied editions and the large output of Bible Societies would indicate that this statement made by an advocate of advanced modern criticism is somewhat exaggerated, at least so far as communities where the Bible is still accepted as an inspired book are concerned. But it reveals a problem which modern theology having created finds itself impotent to solve. Having estranged a people from the Bible by hostile criticism, it is a difficult task to win them back by pleasing overtures of friendship.

The strongest plea for the faithful study and more general use of the Old Testament can be made by a scholar like Dr. Mack who still believes that, since the Bible is the word of God and needs to be known most thoroughly as the preacher's authority in the Christian religion, it should be studied in the original languages. He approaches his subject not only from the point of view of the expert research worker and teacher, but from that

of the preacher and pastor. He brings to his task ripe scholarship, a rich Christian experience and long contact with the problems of education in the ministry and in the Church.

In this course of lectures he does not first bewilder his audience by breaking up the books of the Bible into multitudinous parts, and seeking then by skillful orchestration to bring about a new harmony that may prove more delightful to modern demands. He takes the Old Testament as Jesus knew it and as the Church has always believed in it, and shows the wholesome, soul-satisfying nourishment which the prophet of our day dare not overlook if he is to be faithful to his commission and declare the whole counsel of God. A prominent layman, greatly perplexed by present-day discussions of the Bible, followed with keen and lively interest this whole series of lectures as they were delivered, and with the result that his faith in the Bible was re-established and his soul richly fed. All who had the privilege of hearing Dr. Mack in Miller Chapel gained a new interest in the Old Testament and were inspired to take up its study with real determination and large expectations. The publication of the course of lectures will undoubtedly serve the most worthy end of securing a more faithful use of the Old Testament in pulpit discourse and private reading.

J. ROSS STEVENSON.

Princeton, N. J.

Author's Preface

CERTAIN things can be taken for granted in a series of addresses of this nature. It may be assumed that the Theological Seminary is not merely a "School of Religious Education," but a place where candidates for the Gospel Ministry are taught to preach.

We also agree that "to preach" can mean only one thing: To preach the Gospel, to give good tidings, the only real "good tidings." The command to Jonah is still in full force: "Preach the Gospel that I bid thee." "Thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear." "They that were scattered abroad, went everywhere, *preaching the Word.*"

Yet another point of agreement is that the sermon is the important element in a minister's life-work for Christ. Nothing else has been found, nor can ever be found, to take its place. All introduction and exegesis, all history and doctrine, point toward the sermon, and are void of meaning until they find fulfillment in the Gospel sermon. By his sermon the minister will be justified; or by his sermon he will be condemned. Here lies the distinction between the sacramentarian and the reformed churches. The liturgical minister is a priest and

offers a sacrifice; the Protestant preacher is a prophet, and delivers a message.

A sermon is not a lecture, nor a discussion, nor a discourse. It is a thing of life, a conception in, and a birth from, the preacher's heart. I cannot use better words to convey my meaning than those so often quoted: "Every great sermon must contain three things; a smile, a tear, and a vision of beauty."

Therefore not to a critical and connected study of the Old Testament, but to its use in the making of sermons, these chapters are addressed.

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I

INTRODUCTORY

THIS is not to be taken as a series of lectures on Biblical Criticism. It is our purpose to leave the so-called "Scientific Method" to rest, or work, quietly in its own place and way.

Nor are these lectures expected to deal with any other technical phases of Old Testament Studies, or of Homiletical exercises. The speaker has no desire to invade either the Department of Old Testament Introduction and Interpretation or the Department of the Theory and Practice of Preaching. His wish is to tell something of the meaning to him of the Old Testament as a direct message from God to man, and as a treasure-store of devotional and sermonic material. He almost fears he is presuming, as he attempts to tell here in his simple way the story of a student's and a preacher's experience with the Old Testament.

We must not think that all the riches of the Old Testament have been discovered, charted and exhausted by the long and persistent study of centuries. This is a false impression, which is unfortunately too common. Young ministers are too much given to the notion that, so far as the Old Testament is concerned, all of its fields have been

ploughed and reaped to exhaustion, its veins of ore all mined, its flowers of rhetoric all catalogued, and its islands of fragrant spice charted and appropriated. The return of world interest to the Near East makes every page of Bible History more valuable to all mankind.

There are fallow fields of Scriptures, which will yield rich fruits for the working. There are great psalms in the Song Book of the Hebrews, which are practically unknown, and from which treasures of truth and experience are yet to be drawn. I take up, for example, an Old Testament Psalm. I turn to Briggs and Delitzsch, then to MacLaren and Spurgeon, for interpretation and application, only to find that all of them often fall short of the mark and leave me to break paths for myself, and gather fruits for myself from the virgin soil of this psalm.

No preacher can preach another man's Bible. Campbell-Morgan, Hastings and others may analyze and suggest, but they cannot furnish all that the preacher must have in hand and heart for a great sermon. Every man must devour and digest the Bible for himself. It must be his own Bible. He must know all of its paths and turns, its currents and eddies, its journeys and its resting places. It must be new and real to him. He must master and possess it. The Old Testament is not exhausted. It remains the richest source of sermonic suggestion, material and illustration, and he that

works this field has the guarantee of harvest a hundred-fold.

The young preacher must not think that the last word has been spoken on Old Testament criticism and interpretation by the radical critics. There is a certain amount of noise and there is much assurance in their professions, but when all has been said by them, it still remains true that the issues raised by radical criticism are far from settled. *Their* way is only *one* way of interpreting the Old Testament. There is room for honest doubt as to the certainty and reliability of critical conclusions.

For myself, I have grown weary of that prolific "Deuteronomic School of Editors," who altered the national narrative as often and as much as they pleased; of the second, third and fourth J or P, as if a modern Western mentality could reduce to infinitesimal fractions the flowing and highly figurative narratives of the spiritual soul of the ancient Semite; of the wilful violation of the honest and outspoken dating and setting of every legal section of the Pentateuch; for if the book of Deuteronomy, for example, must be taken as a forgery of the days of Josiah, rather than the noble farewell oration of a dying patriot and hero to the people he had loved so well and served so long, then the book is untrue to its own colour and atmosphere, and belies dozens of positive affirmations found on its own pages. If the Psalms *must* be assigned with exactness to particular dates of the Macca-

bean period, just because they seem to meet the sentiments of such historical occasions, then poetry is robbed of its universalism and its capacity for expressing similar emotions of a dozen ages. If the history of a nation is to be reconstructed to suit various individual preconceptions, then historical literature loses its value, and conscious, conscientious witnessing, its sanctity. After years of honest doubting and honest returning to belief, after many opportunities and suasions for easy radicalism, I find myself often caught in a surge of strong reactions, of conviction that the Old Testament has suffered a frame-up at the hands of its scientific friends.

There is quite a difference in the two fields of Old Testament criticism and New Testament criticism. In the latter there is no great latitude for uncertainty from the side of its literary criticism. The material of the New Testament is practically assured, leaving no large range or reason for radical reconstruction. Most of its problems are in interpretation, not in criticism. We have the text attested, how then shall we interpret it? A student is bound to be fairly conservative in dealing with the text of the New Testament. In the Old Testament there is more range for radicalism because there is more of uncertainty, more of the unfixed, in dealing with its materials and form. But this very uncertainty should the rather incline us to conservative and well balanced views as to its literary

and historical contents. When I read or hear that the criticism of the Old Testament is well established, and that there is consensus of opinion, I am inclined to think that there is thus represented a certain shallowness of conception, and lack of appreciation of the real problems at issue.

As a matter of fact there are few "assured conclusions" of Old Testament radicalism, which confessedly might not be inverted either by a single great archaeological find, or by an inward change of philosophical attitude. Professor Peake has expressed his experience with New Testament Criticism in these words: "In the study of the New Testament he (i. e. the author himself) has reached more conservative results than many will approve, but without, as he trusts, any disloyalty to sound principles of criticism." Now what has been Professor Peake's experience after all the years and pretensions of New Testament Criticism, has been the honest experience and the abiding conviction of many others with reference to Old Testament Criticism. There is an unsatisfying hollowness, there is a destructive vandalism, there is ever an obtruding, ulterior naturalistic motive, which shocks our sense of fairness. In the treatment of some moderns, the Bible is the last book to be believed and to be taken at its face value. They intend not to allow the Bible to testify to the life and truth of its own times, but to shape and fit it into the framework of modern hypotheses of life, religion and God.

But after having stated so emphatically my own attitude toward advanced Old Testament reconstruction, I am in conscience bound to say that in reality there is no great matter and no serious issue between radical and conservative attitudes toward the Old Testament in so far as the discussion and the purpose now in mind are concerned. At the very worst, the materials are only displaced or, if you will, replaced. When the process of reconstruction is over, we have the same material in general left to us. In the end it is only a matter of interpretation in the Old Testament as in the New. The radical applies his "scientific" method to the literature, history and laws. Just so, I apply my conservative and believing method. And I have as much right to mine, as he has to his interpretation. Neither of us can be mathematically sure of his position from philosophical, scientific or historical proofs. The God-given material is there to be believed and to be used. The critical student may have taken from me my confidence in the unity and trustworthiness of human methods of interpreting ancient literature, there remain to me however the facts and the messages of God's revealing grace.

There has been altogether too great neglect of the Old Testament both in ministerial study and preaching. The clamour of modern political and industrial crises, and the rise and exploitation of new themes and departments of study, such as the

physical psychology, the sciences of teaching and the vast reaches and deep sympathies of social studies, have turned pulpit thought in other directions, and furnished such rich material that Biblical studies for sermon purposes have been depreciated. The unrest and uncertainty of critical methods and results have contributed no little to this neglect. Why labour with and preach a Book at disagreement with itself? If Paul perverted the simple evangel of Jesus, then half of our New Testament is under suspicion, and to be used in a limited and cautious way. If Isaiah and his great associates are not the real men of blood and action we have supposed them to be from the face value of their books, but pale and biased redactions of postexilic and apocalyptic-visioned editors, what profit have we in them? If they are not the great moral and spiritual messengers of Israel's best ages, but only hectic flushes of frantic and bigoted Jews, of what moral meaning and use can they be to us? I must confess that a psalm of noble David or a vision of spiritual Isaiah loses its grace and glory for me, when it becomes the outburst of a narrow Pharisee of Persian or Macbean times.

This attitude of neglect may be the attitude of your mind toward the preaching of the Old Testament. But the case is not so extreme as that. I have found comfort and assurance in the conviction that the radical reconstruction of the critic is

not a final and satisfying settlement of the Old Testament contents, but only an interpretation of those contents. This modern and critical analysis and redistribution of the Old Testament books is only one of many methods of arranging and interpreting them. First, the Jews made a threefold arrangement of Law, Prophets and Sacred Writings; then the Greek translators changed the order to Law, History, Poetry, Prophets and Apocrypha; then the Latins distributed the Apocrypha through the canonical books; and finally the English dispensed with the Apocrypha altogether. Each one of these historic arrangements is a method of literary criticism in its way, as truly as our modern "scientific method." Besides these, there are other interpretations which are nearer to accord with facts, and more satisfying. One of these is more in accord with the facts, because it represents the face value of the literature, and is in accord with the conviction and intent of the editors of the Old Testament Canon. This is the conservative, or believing, view which you and I hold, and it has just as much standing-ground of right and reason as a radical reconstruction.

After all differences of critical opinion, the material which we study and use remains the same after more than a century of wilful and changeful manipulation. Parts may be dislocated, but none are lost. We may feel some disappointment, even resentment, that the Book of the Law committed to

Joshua as the guide and fructifier of his life, was a mere fraction of the five books which precede the book of Joshua, or that the real Isaiah was a woe-ful, dooming pessimist and not the man of faith and vision, who beheld the wonderful King and His Glorious Kingdom. The loss is indeed great, but not hopeless. The forward look upon the New Testament is much the same in faith and hope, whether we hold a completed Law in 1200 B. C. or 450 B. C. or a published Isaiah in 700 B. C. or 500 B. C. Messianic doctrine and human expectant yearning are there and much the same. Do not understand me to say that the issues of criticism are of no consequence, and that I look with equanimity on such riotous unjointing and resetting. But what I do say is, that no young preacher need hesitate to use the Old Testament as it was once delivered to us by the saints, without any critical qualms. It is not necessary to raise questions of a criticism, which is neither creative nor decisive, but at its best only interpretative and opinionated. The materials of flawless moral law, of victories of faith, of transcending emotions of fellowship with the Divine, of visions of glory, are all there, and at your command.

I recall an incident of Seminary experience in these halls of many years ago. In answer to a question concerning the necessary acceptance of a change of view about a certain Old Testament statement, Dr. William Henry Green replied that

it was not necessary we amateurs should worry greatly over the matter. Eminent scientists were tunneling through that mountain of difficulty, and until they came through to the light, we needed not to concern ourselves greatly with the issue. So, as ordinary and unexceptional heralds of the Divine Message, we are not directly involved in questions of technical interpretation. You need not hasten to accept the latest critical view of the Old Testament. The end is not yet. There are doubtless many other *final* views yet to come. Be prudent; wait and take advantage of a wide range of choice. Meanwhile use with confidence the great book already committed to your trust.

There seems to be a receding tide of radicalism in America and Western Europe. "In Bible study there is, at the present moment, a strong current, almost threatening to become a flood, toward the rehabilitation of older views." (Peters' "Bible and Spade," page 5.) The boiling point of Biblical controversy is not now in the Occident, but in the distant Orient. In the New Orient, Modernism is asserting itself most vigourously, seeking to win to liberalism the young mission churches of Asia. It always has been the way of heresy to sow its seed in the virgin and responsive soil of newly converted peoples. The modern movement in the far East is the repetition of the tactics of unbelief in the early Christian centuries and during the Reformation. But in our own land we may

assume the literary and historical outlines and contents of Scripture, without critical bias or discussion. These books of the Hebrew people are not cunningly devised fables. Whether maintained in their present form and order, or reconstructed by a Criticism which at least intends well, they are to be revered and used as the genuine outpourings of the Hebrew soul's experience, yearnings and ideals. The Hand of God is in them. The Divine Message is there. Questions of historical criticism are of some importance and of great interest; but the main fact is that either way, or any way, these books are the Books of God.

For my own part, I do not propose to withhold from honest, although often misguided, criticism the share of gratitude which is its due. Without controversy these many decades of relentless and exhausting study,—and I stress the *latter* adjective,—have been of invaluable aid to Bible study and interpretation. I cannot think that any reasonable man will deny this claim. Historical and literary criticism with attendant archæological research, have done much to humanise the Old Testament. In other days it was a formal book, and treated in a formal way. It was a record, a chronicle, the cold annals of the colder dead. But whether with the aid of criticism, or in the struggle against it, the Bible has been vitalised and visualised; it has become the story of a life. Nay, better, it is itself a living, moving reality.

The Old Testament has not been forgotten in the absorbing interests of modern science and discovery. Biblical Criticism has served to keep the attention of men fixed upon it, bringing about that the Old Testament is better known today than ever before. The advance of science and the speculations of philosophy have brought to light new and deeper soul needs, and to these the better-known Old Testament has ministered. Social Science has brought into view civic and social problems, for which the Old Testament prophets have given a direct and satisfying answer. The student of ethnology or archæology or ancient history now often turns to the Old Testament for guidance and suggestion in traversing the dim paths of the past, over which he must pass to find his facts. The Old Testament has kept its position of value in the councils of men of science, and has lost none of its meaning for the deeper needs of men's souls. "We are finding," says John P. Peters, "not only that those Bible documents(i. e. the early chapters of Genesis) are of the greatest value as historical records but that the traditions incrusting them have an historical importance which has been overlooked. By means of the Bible, studied with its traditions, plus the spade, we are now restoring the very ancient history in a rather wonderful way." ("Bible and Spade," p. 5.)

In our study of the Bible we are always finding it a book of many and different approaches. It is

living, it is a life, and therefore it has its many sides. As a life, it can never mean the same thing to one man as to another. Each will find in it the messages, ideals and glories which appeal to him and seem to have been designed for him. An illustration of this may be seen in the varieties of paraphrases of the Psalms, no two ever agreeing closely. We may have the scholarly and classic paraphrase of George Sandys, which could only be sung in the days of the elevated and high-sounding speech of Elizabethan days. Or there are the verses, culled from identical Psalms, of the prosy and liturgical Rouse, or the mystic Cowper, or the ecclesiastical Montgomery, or best of all the devotional Watts. These identical Psalms have breathed the air of their music into different souls as into different instruments, to give us either plaintive cry, or rolling resonance, or sweet symphony.

Old Testament history and story will appeal in different ways to differing minds. Jacob and Joseph and David will appeal to the sympathetic elements in each soul, which studies them. These are men of life; their passions are like unto ours, and will strike different responsive chords in our hearts, which differ, one from another. We are not Jacobs, but there is something of Jacob in each of us, and that something in each of us will "tune in" to the universal, radioed out from that human Jacob. No two eyes ever see the same glory-laden

clouds in an autumn sunset, but the same never-wearying glorious is there. There are visions of glory also for all who look upon the many-hued splendour of the Prophets.

Let us remember, again, that the Old Testament can never be exhausted. It has a gate and a highway, countless diverging paths, quiet coves, and glory heights for everyone who wills to enter its pages. We may believe that a thousand sermons have been preached out and preached from the annals of David. But no other of these sermons will anticipate or invalidate yours. You also may have your day of interpretation of Old Testament story, with its freshness of the morning, its splendour of the noon, and its radiant glow of the evening. The lifelike human realities of the Old Testament have always challenged the powers of the mightiest preachers. They have stimulated the eloquence of Chrysostom, the passion of Whitefield, and the vivid imagination of Spurgeon.

An old preacher said to me in my youth: "My son, use the powers of your imagination in the days of your youth, while they are still with you. The evil days will come, when you must say, 'I have no pleasure in them.'" Where is there a book to stir and to feed the imagination like the Old Testament? Its people are real people, its tenses and moods are present, its words are words of life. The reader scarcely needs to have travelled in Bible lands, in order to appreciate its

scenes and people. They are readily visualised. We think of the motion picture as of modern invention, and this is true, except that in a higher and spiritual sense we have its prototype in the ever-living, real, vivid, thrilling pictured life of the Old Testament.

Now this many-sided and versatile book might be approached in many fashions, to suit any taste or mood. We might discuss it as a student's companion and thesaurus. Or the modern fashion of book-study, keynote studies in keynote books, or its transcendent literary excellencies which have influenced many modern languages, and molded some, might make us risk another journey over much-travelled roads. We decided that we would not occupy these hours with scientific and technical criticism. My purpose is to speak from some experience, and out of love, of the teaching and preaching values of the Old Testament. In this sense it is a preacher's ready and invaluable handbook. Let us think of the Old Testament, as well we may, as a Gallery of Art. There are a thousand beautiful pictures of real life and of the finest art in this book, which have not yet been seen by men. You can guide men through this gallery, and charm them and help them as you show them its treasures.

I do not think that any man can see these pictures for himself and display them to others satisfactorily unless he has some knowledge of them in

their original setting. These books were written in a language, which in itself is a fine pictorial art. A preacher must be a student of the original languages, if he expects to possess himself of the rich treasures of the Scriptures. This does not mean that every theological student should become a specialist in Hebrew or New Testament Greek. That would be a genuine misfortune for the Church, for there are so many other important fields of study and service, "many diversities of gifts and ministrations, but the same Spirit and the same Lord."

From personal experience, however, I am not seriously disturbed by any overproduction of masters of Hebrew in any Seminary class. The number of specialists and the amount of Hebrew acquired to date are not alarming. Nor does it matter greatly, if a man forgets his Hebrew. That would be unfortunate, but not fatal. There are some things he can never forget: the subjective mind once opened, the passing glimpses of great exegetical glories, the first-hand vision of the heart of David or of the soul of Isaiah through the very words of their lament or exultation, these are treasures we never lose. There comes an appreciation of the Bible with some acquaintance with its languages, which is impossible otherwise, and it is to be desired above rubies. If I were preparing for the Gospel Ministry, if for no other reason than for pious curiosity, I should make it

my business to study the languages of Revelation. I should crave to know, in a degree, for myself the very languages in which lawgiver, prophet and psalmist, evangelist and apostle, are trying to give to me the secrets of eternity, the hidden wisdom of God. Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman, in his annual visits to his Alma Mater, Lane Seminary, always pressed upon the students the first importance of the study of Biblical Languages. I have heard him say more than once, that if he were again a Seminary student, Biblical Languages would be his chief concern. With confession of my limited range and my narrow vision, I still make bold to say that there can be little real expository, Biblical preaching without some knowledge of the Hebrew and Greek. Without it such preaching is little more than a great canvas without colour, a spring garden without fragrance, a summer landscape without the radiant touch of light. In my first pastorate, I found a dear old saint, who gave her leisure to the acquisition of Hebrew and Greek, the languages to which her minister was always appealing for the very words Divine. And old age had become for her aglow with the light that never failed. She rises to rebuke the supineness and indifference of many an unequipped minister of the Word.

In concluding this preliminary discussion, I shall only mention, expecting to take it up again, how the ways of the Old Testament always bring

us to one and the same destination, the New Testament. The New Testament would not be intelligible to us without the Old Testament, as the Old, like the restless, unsaved, modern Jew, can never be complete without the New Testament. How easy it is to approach the New from the Old! One of the most eminent and successful preachers of our Church has exemplified this to me. I have heard him preach often, and always with power. I cannot recall ever to have heard him take a New Testament text. We may believe that he did. But habitually beginning with some Old Testament person or scene, sorrow or need, he instinctively led the hearer to Bethlehem of Judea and Calvary and Olivet. It is so easy to find in the Old Testament the path well-worn by the weary feet of longing saints. The arrows and the index fingers all point in the right direction, and echoes of the songs those pilgrims sang, are still lingering in the vales through which they went. This way is the highway of Isaiah, the way of holiness, where walk the redeemed, those ransomed ones of the Lord coming to the New Zion with singing, and the joy everlasting upon their heads.

II

LITERARY VALUES AND INFLUENCE

HAVING spoken in the preceding lecture on the general purpose and spirit of this course of lectures, it is necessary now to state something of the plan according to which this rich sermonic material is to be classified for our consideration of it. We shall consider at this time the Old Testament as a book of the greatest literature known to man.

In subsequent lectures we shall consider the Historical Interest and Value of the Old Testament, Its Moral Message, Its Fundamental Principles of Philosophy and finally Its Messianic Heart. Each of these themes is not to be pursued in itself and for its own sake, but as it is related to the preacher's use of the Old Testament. Each would be in itself a subject for such prolonged discussion as to make requisition upon every hour at our disposal in this series. Many books have been issued in the discussion of every one of them. But such is not our aim. Many true and interesting things must be taken for granted, while we limit ourselves to the one query: "how may the Old Testament in all its phases and

features serve the purpose of the Preacher of the Word?"

It has been stated already that the Old Testament is a versatile and many-sided volume. If these studies serve to emphasize this versatility, to bring into view new elements of its beauty, richness and power, to make us feel anew its place in human life, and to increase in any degree our love for it, our purpose will be achieved.

In our modern theological education the literary element in the young minister's equipment is the neglected element. Too often in this particular a discerning congregation can say: "one thing thou lackest." The unfortunate break which occurs between College and Seminary studies in English is in part responsible for the minister's lack of literary fitness for his great pulpit opportunities. The majority of students leave such studies behind them with graduation from college. Some bade farewell to work in English as far back as the Sophomore year. This Seminary may be among the very few fortunates, which have met the demands for such a course. But in your sister institutions it is conspicuously absent. The Jewish Synagogue puts us to shame in this respect. Its young Rabbi must be an accomplished rhetorician and a master of assemblies. The Roman Catholic Pulpit often shines in the literary excellence of its delivered message. It sometimes happens in our towns and cities that the modern prosy, business-

like, Protestant minister is severely discounted as a preacher by the superior qualities in this respect of Jew and Catholic.

We are all agreed that the message itself is the most important factor in the minister's work as preacher. But second only in importance is the manner in which he delivers that message, the attractive language in which he clothes the message, as well as the dignified and forceful delivery. The wondrous glory of the Gospel Message and the chaste beauty of its presentation are forever joined together in the pulpit service of the true preacher.

The power of intelligent speech is the high prerogative of man alone. We do not appreciate our God-given possession as we should. It may be possible that some animals can be taught the imitation of the human voice, but this has never been known to go beyond crude imitation. There are no conscious forces of perception and feeling behind the mere repetition of human words by bird or beast. Even the angels, if they speak to earth, must borrow this high and exclusive privilege of man. The art of speech is the highest art. It gives its possessor the privilege of entering into the sacred circles of the greatest artists. Not many of us can be painters or sculptors or musicians. These fine arts, reserved by birth or nature for the chosen few, elude our covetous grasp. But we need not despair, while the finest of all arts is within reach of us all. In a day of rough thoughts

and words, when men forget the holy duty of noble speech, we need to think on this. Uncouth and brazen utterance may challenge the attention of some, but simple, pure, beautiful speech will move the hearts of all.

How rarely one finds this art in its perfection! Beautiful speech today arrests attention anywhere, at home, in the street, or on the platform. It is a crime to neglect it, a tragedy to lose it. One mars and mutilates the highest of arts, when he uses improper speech, just as if he were to break with hammer-blow the perfect lines of Michael Angelo's David, or to draw across the face of the Sistine Madonna a brush daubed with hideous colours. With beautiful speech one can play upon all the keys and chords of the human soul, producing lovelier harmonies than ever came from mechanical musical instrument.

It is unfortunate, therefore, that we slight this art in any wise in our ministerial training. But even if the college fails and the seminary neglects, the great literature of the Old Testament will serve a high purpose in shaping with beauty the speech of its lovers and users. This is one of the excellencies of the Bible, that it is an unsurpassed textbook of style and expression. It has power to develop simple and beautiful expression. There are no involved sentences nor high-sounding phrases in the original language of the Old Testament. Its language is the simple, direct, beautiful

language of the heart and home, and those who read and use it, find unconsciously the drawing and molding power of its language upon their own thought and expression.

There are many witnesses to this mighty molding influence of the Bible on our thought and expression. Charles Dudley Warner wrote these words: "The Bible is the one book that no intelligent person, who wishes to come in contact with the world of thought, and to share the great ideas of the great minds of the Christian era, can afford to be ignorant of. All modern literature and all art are permeated by it. There is scarcely a great work in the language that can be fully understood and enjoyed without this knowledge, so full is it of allusions and illustrations from the Bible. This is true of fiction, of poetry, of economic and philosophical works, and also of the scientific and even agnostic treatises. It is not at all a question of religion, or theology, or of dogma, it is a question of general intelligence."

And it is the great opportunity of the preacher to go firsthand to this wonderful book, which has supplied suggestion and illumination to the greatest minds of the ages in literature and art, as well as in religion and morals. It seems to have its own way of firing men's minds and transforming to its own fine forms their way of thinking. John Ruskin answered the query as to the origin of his clear and masterful style, that it must have come

to him as he learned the Old Testament at his mother's knee. A recent editorial page of the leading daily paper of America contained dozens of allusions to Bible language, with scarcely a draft on, or an allusion to, any other work of classic or modern literature.

The enlightening and transforming influence of the Bible on human ideals and expression is attested by the part it played in the formation of our language. An authority has called attention to the greater facility for the translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into English than into either Greek or Latin. This is not a matter of mere chance, but of age-long preparation. The first British Bibles were not the English translations of Wycliffe and Tyndale, but the old Saxon renderings of Cadmon, Bede and Alfred. And doubtless the Celtic churches in still earlier centuries had their versions in part of the Sacred Scriptures. These ancient languages were affected in a marked way by the Old Testament in particular, so that the very foundations of our English speech are in large measure Biblical. And when Wycliffe in the fourteenth century made his translation from the Latin into English, he avoided as much as possible the Latinised English of the Norman influence and returned to the simple English, which was the natural heir of the old Anglo-Saxon. This in turn had once been the vehicle of Bible translation as it had been itself profoundly affected by Bible vocabulary,

idiom and syntax. No other literature, no other guide can so powerfully affect for good the style of the young preacher as that literary masterpiece, the Bible.

What has just been said is pre-eminently true of the Old Testament. From the literary point of view there is a marked difference between the Old and the New Testaments. The latter is not a great literature in the same sense that the former is. The New Testament is the product of a single generation, all of its books having been written between 46 A. D. and 100 A. D. But the Old Testament covers a thousand or more years, and from this millenium of vigorous activity, in one of the world's busiest and most aspiring eras, the finest gems of its literature have been gathered into our Bible. The New Testament is a group of books of similar nature and with a single purpose. Twenty-four of its twenty-seven books are in letter form. It is a message rather than a literature. But the Old Testament embraces every type of literature: narrative, poetry, drama, and philosophy. In it we find the best that the past had to bequeath to succeeding ages, from the days of the glorious empire of Egypt down to the classics of Athenian supremacy. Besides the main purpose of this book as a Revelation from God, there are many corollary and tributary values, and one of these highest values is its influence as great literature on our thought and speech, through its

thought and speech, to kindle our imagination, to clarify our thought, and to mold our speech into forms of artistic beauty.

SIMPLICITY OF THE LANGUAGE

The directness and facility of the language, in which the Old Testament messages were delivered, deserves consideration. It was exquisitely adapted to the purpose of both immediate and permanent revelation. Being designed for daily, practical life, it was never encumbered with the school-man's technicalities of speech, but appears to have been drawn and formed immediately from nature. Out of the physical world of rich beauty, which surrounded those ancient orientals, this language has caught the song of the brook, the roll of thunder, the desert's weird hum, the twitter of birds, the babble of children, and transformed and articulated them into the music of human speech. The Hebrew word for "psalm" suggests the vibration of a chord, which in turn suggested the vibrating insect's wing. The word for a babe is the melody of its own prattle.

In addition to this, an inflection, which is rich in art and symmetry, lends grace of thought and mobility of expression to this language. A single dot of the pen is sufficient sometimes to convey a paragraph of meaning. A single prefixed consonant may lift a word from indefinite and irresponsible happening into the realm of intelligent causation.

Even a casual acquaintance with the Hebrew Verb will warrant the assertion that there is no shade of thought nor stretch of time which can escape its flexible fitness and its vast reach. Dan Crawford has told us that he was in despair of ever seeing the flexibility and versatility of the tenses of Bible languages reproduced in modern speech, until he found an African tongue with thirty-two future tenses, and even that was put under severe requisition to meet the emergency fully. Oh that the veil of aversion might be lifted, and that *bete noir* of our Junior Year, the Hebrew Verb, appear in its noble forms as a gracious revelative dispensation of God! For example, in the Second Psalm the Son does not say merely "I will declare the decree," but "I will *recount*," or "I will tell over and over again the decree of Jehovah." David said not "I shall dwell," but "my dwelling (now and always) is in the house of Jehovah."

POPULAR PSYCHOLOGY OF THE LANGUAGE

By its use of practical, everyday, current phrases with reference to the nature and life of man this language shows its fine adaptation to the ends of revelation. No technical, scientific involved terms are to be found, but a vocabulary taken from the life of the common man and from his rather sensuous way of perception and expression. The organs of the human body are uniformly regarded as the seats, or symbols of the functioning, of

mind, soul and spirit, a view by no means alien to the ways of diagnosis and pathology today. In the loins strength is located. Certainly you remember the eloquent gesture of Matthewson, mightiest of baseball pitchers, in the thrilling crisis of full bases and no outs, when, drawing up his belt a notch or two he girded up his loins with might. "Gird up thy loins, O Job, be strong; to stand before Jehovah, thou must be a man, marshalling every reserve of strength!" The reins, or kidneys, are the seat of the will, for in them is as it were a second nerve center, and they first give way under nervous overstrain. The very midst of the body is the home of tender compassion and yearning pity. The spirit is the symbol, and also the agency, of power, taking its name and meaning from the might and majesty of the wind, than which nature has no mightier element. So that, in both Old and New Testaments, the words for wind and spirit are the same. The heart of man is the true home of his mind, and of his higher and moral nature, no account being taken of the head in this respect. A man "says," "considers," "purposes," "is wise," "believes," in his heart, and this Biblical representation is near akin to our modern conception and expression. We are accustomed to speak of a good or bad heart, of a change of heart, of the wise-hearted. We give our hearts to causes and to those we love, although these may really be the acts of our intellectual nature.

Again, as in the preceding chapter, I must put emphasis upon the importance of a knowledge of Bible languages. There is nothing, absolutely nothing, which can be substituted for such knowledge. If you take it from the minister's equipment, you have made a fatal subtraction. The language of the Old Testament is not doomed to oblivion. Every great revival age of the Church has been preceded and attended by revival of the study of Hebrew. What need in such a place as this is there for more than mention of the times of Origen, Augustin, Luther and Calvin, the English Reformation, and the Missionary Awakening of the Nineteenth Century! An evangelistic Bible age must be also an age of Hebrew study, naturally since nearly three-fourths of the Bible revelation are contained in it. There may be days of indifference, like the present, in some measure superinduced by the hurried rush and wide range of lay activities in the Church, but we may look for a coming day, when not ministers only, but teachers of the Word also will seek the helpful knowledge of those artistic and adequate languages, provided in the wisdom of God as the vehicles of Divine thought.

Hebrew is not the technical, formal speech of rabbis and schoolmen, nor the coarse jargon of the alley or the close. It is rather the simple, chaste and expressive speech of pure homes and gentle comradeship. So much like our own English, it

grew along with the growing life of its people. It became vocal of their contact with nature and their quick perception of its beauties. This similarity may be the reason for the fact that the Hebrew is more easily translated into English than into the classic languages. Marcus Dods, in "The Bible. Its Origin and Nature," has stressed his point, one might think with extravagance, if the facts of the case did not justify extravagant statement. The Old Testament books have been easily, and almost literally, poured out of their original language into our English speech. And as a necessary result, the English Old Testament has become a great world classic, like unto its original.

Such is the language of the splendid book committed by the Spirit and the Church to the minister as his message to men. But it is more than the source and content of his message; it is in itself an educator and refiner. In his loyal and diligent use of it, there is promise that his own thought and speech will in time be fashioned after the image of its power and beauty.

In Upper Egypt, in the Valley of the Kings, diligent and confident search has brought to light a sealed and long hidden tomb. The opened doors of Tutankhamen's long concealed resting-place have revealed to the world much of the ancient story of our race. Gold and gem and rich drapery and the touches of exquisite art, entombed and forgotten for three thousand years, now exposed to

view, tell eloquently of the glory and grandeur of old Egypt, queen of the ancient world. But in our Old Testament are contained richer treasures and fairer gems than these. Time can never make these glorious beauties of the Bible fade, nor can they crumble and turn to dust. They live and shine forever, and they give life and light.

GRAPHIC AND VIVID DESCRIPTION

We cannot do justice to the great service which the Old Testament, as literature, renders the preacher, without some reference to those graphic and picturesque passages, which rank highest among the admirable classics of all languages. The chapters in Exodus narrating Israel's triumphant crossing of the Red Sea and the burial of Pharaoh's pride in a watery grave; Carmel, the field of spiritual warfare, where the hosts of carnal Baal and sensual Venus were overwhelmed by the one heroic prophet of Jehovah; the thrilling picture of that Babylonian banquet, at which late in the evening Daniel appeared as an emergency guest; the profound epic of the Creation; the pathos of the story of Abraham's journey to Mount Moriah for the offering of his son, his only son Isaac; these and many other chapters need but to be read in order to grip the attention and to stir the consciences of men. It is to be deplored that these great literary and moral masterpieces are not oftener read from the pulpit with understand-

ing and appreciative feeling, to wield their own power in the hearts of men. In an early pastorate it was my custom to secure the occasional assistance of a talented reader of the Scriptures, and to give a church service over entirely to the reading of these famous chapters. I cannot recall that any other devotional service was used more effectively to move and feed the souls of those who heard.

The metaphors and figures of speech of the Old Testament are incomparable, and because of their power to arrest the mind, and their grace to charm it, they have passed into the daily use of all ages and languages. Excepting the Gospels of our Lord, I suppose Isaiah has furnished more striking phrases for adoption into the literature of all ages than any other author, certainly more in proportion to the amount of his writings. The "Lion and the Lamb," the "blossoming desert," "springs in the wilderness," the "Virgin Birth," the "Voice of one crying in the wilderness," "all flesh is grass" and countless other phrases of daily use are from his book.

In his second chapter Jeremiah supplies two illustrations of the Bible use of striking metaphors. Speaking of Israel's ungrateful desertion of Jehovah after the marvels of the Exodus and the Wilderness, the prophet describes those wilderness days as Israel's honeymoon: "I remember concerning thee the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals; how thou wentest after me in the

wilderness, in a land not sown." Then again, what can be more worthless than a leaky cistern? Yet, says Jehovah, "My people have forsaken me the living fountain of waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, which can hold no water." So the prophet pictures the foolish apostacy and the base ingratitude of his people. And these are not isolated instances. The books of Isaiah and Jeremiah are filled with such eloquent and descriptive figures. The book of Isaiah is a great art gallery, every chapter like a room or hall, hung with masterpieces of imagination and description.

Amos, the shepherd poet, describes sinful pride and religious indifference in a way never surpassed and never to be forgotten, when he denounces those who are at ease in Zion, and put their trust in the mountain of Samaria, who lie upon beds of ivory, and sing idle songs to the sound of viols, drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the best oils—but they are not grieved for the affliction of their own land. Hosea in gentler mood describes the Exodus and Wilderness days as Israel's childhood, those tender years, when father and child were so near to each other, and love was so warm and responsive: "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt. I taught Ephraim to walk, I took them in my arms." And all the prophets are radiant with such gems of thought and description. No other literature is so luminous.

Another quotation, however, from the prophets must suffice. No other man has ever seen and sung the hand of God in Nature, as Isaiah has. A dozen chapters of his book clamour for utterance, in witness to the prophet's eloquence. We can use only that one in which he calls upon all nature to rejoice with man in redemption:

“As the rain cometh down and the snow from
heaven,
And returneth not thither, but watereth the
earth,
And maketh it bring forth and bud,
And giveth seed to the sower, and bread to the
eater:
So shall My word be that goeth forth out of My
mouth
Ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with
peace:
Mountains and hills shall break forth before
you into singing,
And all the trees of the field shall clap their
hands.
Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree,
And instead of the brier shall come up the
myrtle tree:
And it shall be to the Lord for a name,
For an everlasting sign that shall not be cut
off.”

The Book of Psalms, viewed merely as literature, would be a book-theme or a lecture-theme in itself. Its religious elements, satisfying the needs of souls ahungered and athirst, have made it the most beloved of Old Testament books; its literary

beauties have made it the most quoted book of the Bible. One of the ever-present characteristics of the Psalms is the personal element. The personal pronoun is everywhere on the pages of this book. That "I," which is the same yesterday and today and forever, is the speaker in the Psalms, and makes possible the appropriation for our soul needs of every message in this book. Another of its elements is the abiding consciousness of the Divine presence. "I have set Jehovah always before me." Psalms are not written today, possibly because we are lacking in this personal assurance of the immediate Divine presence. How could this lofty ideal, this overcoming faith be voiced better than in the words of a psalm:

"The Lord is my light and my salvation;
Whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the strength of my life;
Of whom shall I be afraid?
Though an host should encamp against me,
My heart shall not fear;
Though war should rise against me,
In this (i. e. God's presence) will I be confident."

"Be Thou to me a rock of habitation, whereunto I may continually resort." "Jehovah is my shepherd," He leads me, feeds me, guides me. He instructs me, anoints me, and pours my cup full. I can never be forsaken of Him, for I dwell in His presence always. These psalms strike the note of

conscious nearness to God. We cannot permit them to drop from the memory of our generation, or from the lives of men.

David also, like the prophets, sang of nature in such a way that anthem and oratorio take over his golden words and rhythmic lines almost without variation. In one of his hymns he bands together orchard, field, hilltop and valley, sunrise and sunset, dew and rain, cloud and sunshine, into orchestra and chorus, which render an oratorio of harvest joy:

“Thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice.

Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it:

Thou waterest its ridges abundantly: . . .

Thou makest it soft with showers:

Thou blessest the springing thereof.

Thou crownest the year with Thy goodness;

And Thy paths drop fatness.

They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness:

And the little hills are girded with joy.

The pastures are clothed with flocks;

The valleys are covered over with grain;

They shout for joy, they also sing.”

The Ninetieth Psalm is unique in literature. In the sacred text it has been put in a class by itself, being placed at the head of the psalms of the Fourth Book and followed by a group of orphan (or anonymous) psalms. No other psalm seemed worthy to be classed with this great prayer-song of Moses. It has never been equalled, nor even

approached by poetry of its kind, and so it has passed over into the liturgies of all churches and the ritual of all lodges. It voices the loneliness, the desolation and the pitiful frailty of a soul in which and over which sin has wrought its cruel work. But it sings also of refuge and comfort in Jehovah the Eternal, who was here before ever the hills were born. Solemn rolling notes, plaintive keys and mellow major chord of faith are here blended into a song of trust in God and of assurance of life forevermore.

There, too, in this literary treasure-store are the Proverbs of Solomon; or shall we call them epigrams? These thirty-one chapters are rather difficult to read, and continual reading brings a sense of weariness. The thread of sequence is broken; each verse passes to another subject, like some wild mountain goat, leaping from cliff to cliff, and crag to crag. They must be read with deliberation and much meditation, for each in itself may be a full chapter in human experience. No literature is more difficult to produce than the proverb. Our modern daily papers make their brave attempts at this kind of literature; but their quick and sharp sayings are mere passing emotions. They are not true proverbs. A proverb is often the expression of the experience of a long life, or even the experience of many generations, gathered up into a fine statement of universal truth. Men of rich and varied experience recorded the experience of un-

numbered years in written proverbs. A proverb is the crystallisation of wide experience, or of universal truth, into a shining gem of expression, which never loses its lustre. It is like the mighty pressure of the earth masses upon the carbon, pressing and compressing until the black opaque lump becomes clear as light and radiant as a star. It is the statement of greatest truth in simplest phrase.

Some years ago a smart college youngster arose in class to say to his professor: "I can write a better book than the Bible." The wise old instructor answered: "I am delighted to hear it, my young friend. Suppose you begin your work of writing your new Bible now, and in order to a good beginning write for us *three* proverbs, and report them in a week or two." The report never came in, and that Bible is still unwritten. His mind had no power, nor his hand any skill, to frame such lines as these:

"Boast not thyself of tomorrow,
For thou knowest not what a day may bring
forth"—

"As snow in summer and as rain in harvest,
So honour is not seemly for a fool"—

and many other gems of truth, to tell of which time would fail us.

The narrative of the Old Testament, apart from

its historical interest and value is priceless as literature. Its dramatic character, its thrilling interest, its vivid portraiture, its artistic choice of word and phrase, have made it immortal. The Book of Genesis has achieved the practically impossible in sketching vividly and dependably the course of human affairs through thousands of years within the compass of a few pages. We see in these pages the origin of things, the development of civilised life, the movement of a chosen family through three empires: Babylonian, Amorite and Egyptian. And not only the evidence of truth is there, but the very colour of the actual life itself. But all of this in detail remains for another chapter.

Enough has been said to show that the Old Testament is a book to educate the taste and to ennoble the ideals of the minister. It does more than supply materials for sermons. It is an educator in the art of preaching, and a refiner of thought and expression.

III

HISTORICAL VALUES

FOR a century Science, which is interested in the origin of people and things, has been scrutinising the Old Testament closely, and by its interest has stimulated the interest of others in Old Testament studies. And now those who are ignorant of this book are uninformed in one of the principal fields of scientific and philosophical history. To the question, for example, of the origin and nature of man the Old Testament has an authoritative and consistent answer. Therefore for such information the study of it is of greatest importance.

But the Old Testament is not, merely or primarily, a book of history. Nor is it a textbook of science, nor a system of philosophy. It is not to be regarded, moreover, as a collection of Hebrew national literature. Certainly it is a reliable record of certain men and events; it supplies the satisfactory solution of many scientific problems; it presents the soundest philosophical basis for practical and happy living; and without controversy it is unequaled as literature. It is the most credible witness to the origin and development of the Divinely

ordained religion. It answers, not the questions of science, but the anxious queries of the soul. It is a life-story, and the life of which it is the story is soul-life. History, science, philosophy, when drawn upon, as they often are, are used accurately, but incidentally. Here are the annals of the religious life of man, in its beginning, its growing, and its redemption.

We must not suppose, then, that the Old Testament is merely a school-book of history. The recording of the acts and growth of the Hebrew nation was not the prime purpose of the authors of the separate books, or of the collectors of the whole canon. Each book, or group of books, was written with its peculiar purpose, and under the influence of the pervading spirit, or existing crisis, of its time of origin. A thousand years are covered by the literature gathered together in the Old Testament. Undoubtedly much of the historical literature which the nation produced during this long period, was omitted because it did not contribute to the purpose entertained by the collectors of this volume. It is a book with a religious purpose to which history and other kinds of literature contributed. It was not intended to record history for its own sake, but rather with reference to the progress and unfolding of Divine truth.

As an illustration that the Old Testament was never intended to be merely a matter of history, there are no great era dates or outlines, such as we

expect in our ordinary conception of history. Events are dated by persons, or by reference to well-known local and temporary interests, and only rarely, as in the chronology of the Exodus (Ex. 12:40-41) or in Jephthah's statement of the lapse of time since the Exodus (Judges 11:16), or in the dating of the foundation laying of Solomon's Temple (1 Kings 6:1), are long periods mentioned, or great epochal events used to fix time. For this reason the chronology of the Old Testament, to a large degree, is uncertain, and must always remain so. And we may safely conclude that every book of the Bible was written with a particular motive, a teaching purpose, the history being an incident, or a means to an end.

But we are not to think that such history is either untrue or unimportant. It has rather the higher value and the surer testimony of an impartial and unprejudiced witness. Although it is not specifically history, yet it is true every whit. I believe it is to Archdeacon Farrar we owe the declaration that no error in statement of historic fact has ever been proved against the Bible. And we may go to it with confidence that the records of facts and events in its pages are to be received as authoritative. With such assurance the minister, who is to use its statements of history for the purposes Divinely intended in their giving and in their use, may receive them with a holy and joyful boldness. And I desire now to consider

some special values for the preacher in the Old Testament History, always bearing in mind that in the Old Testament Scriptures we have sure witness to what is most important for us to know in the far distant antiquity, for it is a clear outline of the vast stretch of human life across the centuries.

Other nations contemporary with Israel, and even older, had a richer literature and a more elaborately recorded history. For two thousand years Egypt chiselled the story of her great career upon her tombs, her temples and her cliffs; but it was lost for the next two thousand years, because men had lost interest in her story, and had not even kept the key to the hieroglyphics in which it was locked fast. The same is true of the vast literature of the empire of the Euphrates and Tigris, lost to the world for nearly twenty-five hundred years. When Clearchus and Xenophon with their Greek armies marched down the western bank of the Tigris River, and saw the mounds that rose high on the opposite bank, they did not even know that those were all that had once been Nineveh, and that underneath those mounds were the rich treasures of Ninevite art and literature buried less than two centuries before—there to remain buried and forgotten until nearly twenty-three hundred years more had past, only to be uncovered in our own generation. That which kept the Hebrew narrative ever in the mind and memory of mankind when Egypt's records in stone, and the story of

Babylon burned imperishably into clay, had been forgotten, was the confidence of men in its truthfulness. Men were so satisfied with its way of telling the story of man's life, they discarded and forgot the more pretentious and indelibly written stories of other nations. It was never cut into enduring stone, nor burned into clay. But it could not die, because in every age it was believed and cherished for its evident and satisfying truth.

Let us take as an illustration from the Bible record of the past what has been called the most important book in the world, the book of Genesis. It is not proposed to give an introduction to this book in detail, nor to follow its outline and contents for their own sake; but to show its value as a study and as material for the preacher, who must appeal to man from his past history as well as from his present duties and his future destiny. The Book of Genesis does not purport to be a comprehensive history of all the past of earth and man. But in what it does present it is the most remarkable book in the world. It has persisted through a vast extent of time with the chances of survival always apparently against it. I must repeat that it was never inscribed on monumental stone nor burned into enduring clay, as were the records of other religions and civilisations, but was ever committed to the fickle fate of perishable materials. It was the product and the charge of the most cordially despised and most bitterly persecuted nation

the world has ever known. Nevertheless, with all the chances against survival, it lived and kept its unique place as the faithful record of the early era of the earth, while Egypt's dramatic story and Assyria's triumphant march through empires were entombed for thousands of years. Yet never for a single year has this Genesis record of the past dropped out of sight or mind. The sufficient reason for this must of necessity be its own inherent excellence and its evident credibility. Fancies and notions absorb only the flying moment; but abiding truth claims the ages for its own.

There have been many naturalistic theories invented to explain the marvels of this book. One says that its early chapters are late copies from Babylonian originals, with Jewish colouring. Another says that they are taken from the same great reservoir of nature myths from which Greek and Roman drew their fables of early beginnings. Yet another maintains that we have in Genesis a general and loose collection of Hebrew folklore, sometimes its parts paralleling one another, sometimes contradicting. But the measure of none of these theories begins to meet the extent and details of the book. Professor Clay has proved to us that the Hebrew Deluge story is older than the Babylonian. The characters of Genesis are not for a moment to be classified with solar and season myths. They are presented on the pages of the book as part of a connected historical record,

which grows always clearer and more detailed as it draws nearer to us in time, but never more real as fact nor more genuinely human. The early chapters of Genesis are the first section of a world story, the later sections of which have been proved to be dependable by the witness of comparative history, just as soon as they came within the field of accredited history. Is one part worthy and the other worthless, simply because we have not yet been able to apply to it comparative tests? Certain it is that all later Hebrew history accepted the early Genesis records as part of the true story of the nation's origin.

The range of this book in time is suggestive of its great value to students of man and his life on earth. Its tremendous reach in time makes us approach it not only with interest, but with a sense of reverence. No other book tells us so much of ancient man and primitive nature, and of man's and nature's God. Within the compass of its few, brief chapters is found the story of more than half of the life of historic man—if we accept the chronology of the Septuagint, and the probability is that even the Septuagint reckoning of time stops short of the ages covered by the dramatic, though severely abridged, story put on record by the author of Genesis.

There have been many ways of analysing and arranging the contents of this book, as for example the fifty English Bible chapters, or the twelve li-

turgical sections for Sabbath readings, or the original ten divisions each with its "generations" headings. But the most suggestive, and satisfactory for setting forth its historical character and purpose is a division into two main parts, running the line of cleavage near the end of chapter eleven. According to this division, there are two ages recorded in the book, one before Abraham and the other after Abraham, or, as some will have it, the prehistoric and the historic ages. The first of these sections includes five of the ten primitive "generation" chapters, the other five coinciding with the second or Abrahamic section, suggesting the early use of the decimal memory device, the five digits of one hand for one great history division, and the other five for the other division.

The first, or Pre-Abrahamic division, contains a group or sequence of strange narratives which arrest attention in an imperious way. Here are found many of the questions which thrust themselves upon the consideration of the young preacher, and hold him with an iron grip, like Jacob's at Peniel, until he give them answer. These questions have to do with the fundamentals of the universe, of life, of sin, of faith, of God. They have furnished the torn and scarred battlefield of much Biblical and ecclesiastical controversy. Here we read of the origin of the universe, the nature of primitive man, his first home in the earth, the age of the world as related to ancient

chronology, the origin of evil, the great deluge, the distribution of the human race over the surface of the earth, primitive customs and faith, and many other problems of prime religious significance. With the discussion of these we are not now directly concerned. We are interested, however, to know that the minister must turn to these chapters to find the oldest satisfying account of these matters of prime interest to ever-inquiring religious minds.

There are various ways of interpreting these important chapters. They may be taken literally at their face value as real and exact history, declaring the creation of the earth in six days, an actual garden, a woman built from a real bone, a serpent with a voice, and visible flaming cherubim with turning and flaming sword. They may be understood as preservation of the picturesque, devotional folklore handed down by word of mouth from very dim and long-past ages. Or they may be accepted as dramatic and symbolic description of actual events, or of world and race movements, in the earliest centuries, or milleniums. But whatever historical interpretation we may choose to put upon the form of these narratives, they still remain our most interesting, most trustworthy and most deeply spiritual record of the beginnings of life and faith. We may not be able always to interpret them in the formal and literal manner, to which we have been accustomed, but we cannot dismiss them

as pure legend. There have been too many confirmations of the statements made in these chapters to permit us lightly to dismiss them as of little historical value. Whether literal or pictorial these chapters record essential and evident truth. The great fact-foundations of man and his God are there. Whatever else these chapters may be, they are anti-evolutionary, anti-naturalistic, anti-rationalistic, anti-agnostic. They are parts of a great and a true theistic system of the Universe. They are a reverent presentation of the true God, as Creator, Father, Friend, to the minds and souls of men. Whether these chapters be poetry or prose, picture or formal record, the foundations of the true faith are there and God is in them, the same true and living God as of Bethel and Sinai and Jerusalem and Calvary and Olivet.

Let us look a little more in detail into one of the chapters of this early Genesis record. A problem of universal interest is the origin of evil. It is a problem with which the entire Bible is concerned. Sin is the most important issue in the life of every man every day of his life. The early chapters of Genesis undertake to answer this, the hardest question of philosophy and religion. Evil did not begin as a merely physical or material thing. It was not a matter of evolving consciousness; a higher, expanding degree of a lower and duller physical sensibility. But sin began in unbelief, in distrust, in doubting the word and goodness of

Jehovah God. It could not have begun in a pure mind by an immoral impulse. It could not have been a material matter over against immaterial, for in the Creation God made every physical thing good. The third chapter of Genesis gives the only logical and satisfying account of the problem. Sin began in distrust of God, or jealousy of Him, and in disobedience to a Divine command which had to do with a matter of non-moral significance, the eating of the fruit of a particular tree in distinction from other fruit trees. And so there came into the world assertion of the will of man against the will of his Creator, and man's alienation from God by his act of self-will. This may be stated in childlike and pictorial language, but it remains a profound and sane conception of a great fact, of early human life.

This account of the origin of sin is in harmony with the whole of Bible teaching on the subject: "For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the one shall the many be made righteous." As sin and ruin came through unbelief, so pardon and salvation came by faith. "If thou shalt believe in thine heart thou shalt be saved; for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness." "Kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." The problem, which no philosophy nor theology nor individual reason can evade, we find best set forth in our Old

Testament. It contains no nonsense about falling upward toward God through the evolution of conscience, but does tell us how into a heart created by God in purity, and made to live in happy fellowship with Himself, sin entered by selfish unbelief. So also contrariwise by loving belief in God's Son, sin will be overcome and banished from the heart.

The second part of the Book of Genesis is the beginning of modern history. Abraham's descendants are on the earth today, literally as numerous as the stars of heaven and the sands of the seashore. The three great world religions trace their beginnings back to him, claim him as their own, and call him "Father of the Faithful." The life of Joseph recorded here is an accurate and lifelike picture from the Egypt which is being made so real to us by modern discovery. There are three different historical atmospheres in the Book of Genesis, the Babylonian, Amorite (or Canaanite) and Egyptian. This division of the book illustrates what has been called the photographic character of the Bible, how it has caught with minute accuracy the life and spirit of the ages through which it passed, and has brought them down to us.

In the first eleven chapters, we find records of events, which in a degree are paralleled in Babylonian literature: creation, paradise, temptation, flood, and confusion of tongues. The life of the

race as we view it in these chapters seems to center in Babylonia, and the atmosphere of every episode is Babylonian. At the end of the section Abraham, the central character of the whole book, comes out of Ur of the Chaldees.

In the second section of the book, chapters twelve to thirty-eight, we pass into quite a different atmosphere. As Abraham leaves Babylonia so we leave behind the Babylonian life, not again to return to it in the Old Testament until after many centuries it comes back to us with Merodoch-Baladan and Nebuchadnezzar. Abraham moved to Palestine, lingered not on the outskirts of that land, but went straight to its very heart, and pitched his tent first at Shechem. We find ourselves in a different world. Every scene is Palestinian. Every ancient city is given its right name, and all the several customs described are accurately and distinctively Palestinian. Unmistakably we are in Canaan now, not Babylon. And so Abraham buried his dead as the Canaanites have always buried their dead. With no means of preservation in a hot clime, before the day passed they "buried their dead out of their sight." When the Sons of Heth began to dicker with him about the purchase of the Cave of Machpelah, he broke through the bargaining with the pathetic cry: "set your price and I will buy, that I may put my dead out of my sight."

In the last chapters of the book we move into

another civilisation and breathe a different atmosphere. We have gone down with Joseph into Egypt, and now everything around us is Egyptian. As we read paragraph after paragraph, we find that every part corresponds with amazing accuracy to what we now know of Egypt from her own prolific records. The demand for Syrian slaves, the conduct of agriculture and economics, the social customs, the ways of the royal court, burial of the dead, meaning of dreams, prominence of the Nile, relations of King, priest and people, are given with the accuracy of delicate photography. A recent ultra-critical writer has suggested the possibility of the composition of this part of the book in Egypt in the seventeenth century, because of the striking concurrence with Egyptian life and manners, and even unmistakable allusions to the Egyptian calendar. Here then we have an ancient story, which not only tells its tale with unimpeachable accuracy, but exhales and diffuses upon us the very atmosphere of the civilisations and ages through which it moves. It is such marvels as this which make us feel that the Bible is not a record, but a life.

Exodus is a book fundamental to the Old Testament revelation, and to the true knowledge of human institutions. Some of the most important events in Biblical and indeed in universal history are found on its pages; the triumph of Jehovah over the ancient gods of Egypt; the national covenant at Sinai; the moral law in its highest expres-

sion in the Ten Commandments; the Tabernacle as a pattern of the Temple of Solomon and a type of the eternal house not made with hands; and the institution of the Passover, celebrated ever since by Jews, and furnishing the background and occasion for the institution of the Lord's Supper. One cannot think of a faithful preacher of the Word of God, who is not informed about these Bible fundamentals, and who does not use them.

Another of the Pentateuchal books is a veritable store-house of sermonic suggestion and illustration. The Book of Numbers takes its name from the two numberings of Israel in the Wilderness, one in the early days at Sinai, the other in the last days in the Plains of Moab. But the title is accidental and not descriptive, and was not in the purpose of the editors of the Pentateuch. Nor did they intend to group it with Exodus and Leviticus as a part of the Code of the Priests. Its contents suggest that it was rather the account of the Law in operation as the Israelites journeyed onward from Sinai. Certain revisions of the preceding laws became necessary. Emergencies arose, and the way in which they were met is recorded in this book, such as provision for the support of the Tabernacle and its elaborate ritual, means for moving the Tabernacle and its furnishings on the constant journeyings, special sacrifices for festal occasions, the Second Passover for those excluded from the first for ceremonial reasons, preparation of the

ashes to be used in the ceremony of leper cleansing, and other ceremonial cleansings, inheritance of daughters, cities of refuge, and other necessary additions. The book is the record of a nation's experience in wilderness wanderings. We might call it "The Law in Operation," or "The Book of Supplements to the Law." We Americans know a great deal of a similar thing in our multitudinous amendments to a great original Constitution.

And that wilderness march, with all of its emergencies and backslidings, is suggestive and profitable as a story of individual spiritual experience. Its rich values as history of a nation's critical period are eclipsed by its worth to us in our experience with sin, doubt and discontent on our Christian pilgrimage through life. If a man at some Kadesh-Barnea of spiritual crisis rejects Christ and refuses to enter into His rest, he must go out to wilderness wanderings in the flesh. And if in the after years he turns again to Christ, he finds himself, like Israel after thirty-eight years of exile from God and home, again at the same old Kadesh-Barnea of crisis and choice. The keynote of the book spiritually is the word "murmur." And, sad but true, this is the normal state of the average professing Christian. From this point of experience we might give the book this title: "The Book of Discontent"; as one of the New Testament writers puts it: "they entered not in (to Canaan) because of unbelief."

"Some murmur when their sky is clear
And wholly bright to view,
If one small speck of dark appear
In their great heaven of blue.
And some with thankful love are filled,
If but one streak of light,
One ray of God's good mercy gild
The darkness of their night."

We cannot fail to be impressed with the frequency with which Psalmist, Prophet, Apostle and our Lord appealed to the national and individual experience of this book. Behold the Master Himself, as He opens this book, and says from its pages: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up."

It is deserving of passing comment at least that in this book we have one of the most luminous presentations of the religion, customs and practices of the ancient Wise Men of the East in the history of Balaam, the prophet of that eastern cult.

The Book of Judges is filled with lessons of the soul's experience with life, which are of especial value to young people in the early conflict between the spiritual and the sensual. It has been called the story of the adolescence of a nation, brought out of the bondage of Egypt, delivered from the perils of the wilderness, possessing at last the land of promise, and settled in their own homes to make or mar their own destiny. John Fiske has written of the first years of American Independence as the

“Critical Period in American History.” So the days of the Judges were the critical period in the life of the young nation. Will the people put into daily life the ideals of their Divinely-given religion; or must they fail of God’s high purpose for them and be drawn down into the pit of Canaanite corruption? Will their God be Jehovah, Lord of Hosts, or the vain gods of the sensual high places? It is the story, in pictorial form of the struggles of a young faith, of a new convert. And so this book has always been replete with warning and with incentive for the young Christian in his hard fight with world, flesh and devil. The book closes in a most dramatic way with three fine, lifelike pictures from those days of conflict for the faith: Micah the idolater, to guard against a selfish and materialistic idea of religion; the wicked Benjamites, to warn against class hatred and unbrotherliness; and Ruth, to show the triumph of a great faith and the reward of fidelity.

In the very heart of the books of Kings, forming as it were the core of these two books, is the story of Israel’s great prophets, Elijah and Elisha, in a group of chapters which seem to stand out and apart from the preceding and following chapters. Its archaic and distinctive language and the central position of the two prominent prophets, seem to set it apart as an original compilation. However, this may be, it is true that no part of the Old Testament history affords richer field for

homiletic purposes. Here the highest and the worst in Israel have met in a warfare which is to be to the finish. On the one side is organised paganism with royal backing, vindictive and revengeful, Baal and Astarte intent on retrieving the defeats of the past and rebuilding the infamous shrines destroyed by Israel. On the other side is a spiritual prophet fighting single-handed for the supremacy of Jehovah, and for a pure faith in Israel. This conflict has always been on, it is being fought now in every community; and the inspiring lessons of the Elijah history help us as though written for our own age in particular. It is also a matter of special interest in these chapters that they parallel in so many ways the narratives of the Synoptic Gospels: the hungry fed, the dead child raised to life, and the ascending Elijah.

The Prophetical books are filled with graphic pictures from the life of the Old Testament people, giving corroboration to the narratives of the historical books, as well as furnishing most useful supplemental information. There is much narrative in many of these books; as in Jeremiah, where we find our only information for the tragic months during which Jerusalem was besieged by the Babylonian army, and for the sad days immediately following the capture and destruction of that city (Jeremiah 37-43). Few historical sections of the Old Testament furnish more food for serious thought, more useful lessons for life among the

temptations of the world, than these chapters from Jeremiah. All of the prophets portray the civil and moral state of the nation in such glowing and human pictures, that they are easily transferred to our own time, with all their real spiritual meaning and their strong appeal to the conscience.

You may ask the reason for this extended review of the Old Testament narrative. It has not been given with the thought of adding anything new to the discussion of the literary and historical material; but merely to indicate the inexhaustible supply of character sketches, thrilling stories and life experiences, from which the preacher may always draw. They do not need to be fashioned and fitted in order to meet modern needs. They are transcripts from real life, and they fit exactly into the spiritual needs and purposes of every age. Such men as Jacob, David and Peter are not local and temporal, but typical and universal. A bare allusion to the stories of these men or a chance quotation from them serves to open up the whole outline of character or to throw a penetrating flood of light upon a moral or spiritual situation.

There are some special phases of the historical values of the Old Testament history for sermon uses which must be considered in another chapter. The kindling of the imagination and the dramatic element deserve some detailed consideration.

IV

DRAMATIC AND IMAGINATIVE ELEMENTS

IN the preceding chapter we considered the Old Testament history in a general way, and somewhat in outline. But there are certain peculiar features of this history which constitute its real and distinctive character, and set it apart from other records of antiquity into a unique place by itself. It is to the study of these that the present chapter will be given.

One of the outstanding features of this history is its photographic reality. It is not a record which we feel on reading was finished long ago. The times concerned are ancient, but the persons and scenes are to us as if they came from yesterday. Rather, in reading or hearing them we feel that we are being transported to those days, to have all of its things made real and living to us. This is the peculiar charm of the Old Testament. It is an ageless, never-dying book. Its yesterday is also its today. Some people would revise and abridge it vigourously, taking out of it many things which they consider useless or inconsequential. But this book is like a living body. You cannot cut away

its parts, nor remove its features, as you cannot at will remove hands or feet or eyes or ears, and still have a complete body. The reading of this book brings before us vividly the people and events of its day. We see them living and moving before us, and it seems as though we were actually following them with our eyes.

THE PERSONAL ELEMENT

One of the features which produces the effect of reality and immediacy in the narratives and literature is the individual element, the ever-present "I." The Old Testament has an assertive consciousness, as though it were a living being. The personal pronoun is found everywhere, as if in persistent self-assertion. Behind the national, collective or social in this book there is always the conscious and persistent person. Sometimes the presence of a faith in immortality has been denied to the Old Testament. But it is passing strange how such denial can ever be made in the face of this persistent, outcrying soul, this "I" which can never be eliminated. This conscious individualism cannot be dissuaded from uttering its cry of faith: "Thou wilt not leave *my* soul to Sheol; Thou wilt receive me to Glory." Just as well try to hush the outcry of a blind Bartimaeus, when Jesus passes by.

The occurrences of the personal pronoun are so many, no concordance can attempt to specify them.

An enterprising German has written a book on "Das Ich"—"The I"—of the Old Testament, but one volume could not exhaust the theme. While found throughout the Old Testament, this intense personal element abounds particularly in the Psalms, and other emotional literature. In the book of Job it is a clear ringing note. This book affects us like a majestic oratorio. The major motive running through it is the meaning of suffering, or stated in other words, the problem of righteousness. But there are other and minor motives, which are always and insistently blending like plaintive and appealing notes into the greater harmony. One of these minor motives is the soul's desire for fellowship with God: "Oh, that I knew where I might find Him. I would come even into His presence." Another of these motives is the yearning for immortality: "If a man die, shall he live again? I know that my Redeemer liveth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, then without my flesh shall I see God." Here the intensely individualistic asserts and reasserts itself, and the reader, caught by the insistence on personality, finds his own soul responding to the sufferer's plaint and plea.

But this individualistic insistence, this soul-consciousness comes to its true and universal expression in the Psalms, for nearly every psalm is a transcript from the heart-experience of a seeker after God. The men who wrote the Psalms

seemed to have God right before them, and without reserve to be exposing the secrets of their hearts to His gaze, and to ours also. One of these psalmists said: "I have set Jehovah always before me. 'The Lord is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.'" And so they seem to us to be opening up the inner recesses of our own hearts, to be telling the needs and yearnings of the human heart, as it is in all the ages, in its real and unchanging nature. Listen to that plaintive, aspiring and immortal "I" of the Psalms:

"Keep me as the apple of 'Thine eye; hide me under the shadow of 'Thy wing."

"I will fear no evil, for 'Thou art with me."

"I love the Lord, because He heard my voice and my supplications. I was brought low and He saved me."

"My soul thirsteth for God; when shall I come and appear before Him?"

"The Lord is my light and my salvation; the Lord is the strength of my life. One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life."

"Hide not 'Thy face from me."

"But I trusted in 'Thee; I said 'Thou art my God."

"I flee unto 'Thee to hide me."

Such personal messages of exceeding grace and sweetness bring us also, like the psalmist, face to

face with God, our Father and Friend. We immediately know them to be the expression by some man, in some age, of that which is common to every pious soul, as though the speaker in the Psalms were the "I" in each of us, which I confidently believe the Spirit of God designed that he should be. Such assertive individualism, such insistent personality is the true premise of which immortality is the necessary conclusion. The assertive "I" has also made the Old Testament a book of individuals, of free men, and those who read it and love it have claimed its privileges and obligations of individualism and its institutions of liberty for them and theirs. It is not strange that the book of Psalms, particularly, has been held in grateful appreciation in all the generations of the Church. Such spiritual material is always a means of grace to our souls. It is also an inexhaustible homiletic quarry, from which the preacher may cut and build and decorate his sermons. We cannot exhaust the Old Testament for homiletic purposes. It has virgin forests for sermonic timber, and fallow fields which yield quickly and richly for those who plough and sow and reap.

THE IMAGINATION

The imagination, that necessary faculty in all successful preaching, is kindled and sustained by the vivid and living message of the Old Testament narrative. This faculty suffers sad neglect in

modern preaching, having given place to the didactic, experimental and utilitarian. We should restore it to its place in the sermon, where it serves to arrest thought and to maintain interest. The Old Testament is a tonic to imagination; it stirs the flame of enthusiasm so necessary to the kindling of imagination. Among great modern preachers none excelled T. DeWitt Talmage in vividness of imagination and power of description. And to those who heard him, it seemed that his genius in this respect rose to its highest when he gave himself to portrayal of Old Testament characters and scenes. Spurgeon and McLaren excelled in the same power of imaginative presentation.

It is seldom that the modern preacher makes use of the parable to adorn and enforce his message. Yet this use of imagination in the service of truth is common to both Old and New Testaments. Even a genealogical table is made to radiate light and warmth, when the imaginative pen of the Old Testament narrator records it. Into the catalogue of antediluvian Sethites there steals the victorious cry of immortality in Enoch. The list of Ruth's descendants leads to great King David. and the roll call of David's mighty men blends into a chronicle of heroes and their illustrious deeds. The giving of the Law at Sinai is not a matter of legal prose, but gives occasion for one of the finest scenic effects in all literature. The Old Testament does not allow its great characters to fall into ob-

livion through mediocrity and dullness. It paints its pictures of Jacob and Joseph, Joshua and Gideon, Elijah and Job in the graceful lines of Raphael, with the colours of Titian. The life-story of the rugged country preachers, Elijah and Elisha is told with thrilling interest and has become a gem of literature. And Ezekiel utilises the hard, sad days of Babylonian exile to draw pictures and to develop symbols now famous for their beauty of style, through which he forecast the life of his people in the days that were to come. There is nothing dull or monotonous about the Old Testament. It is always provoking high thought and giving wings to plodding mind and light to dull vision. It is the playground for the soul, in which one seeks and always finds recreation and invigoration for every faculty of the mind.

THE DRAMATIC ELEMENT

Among all its high values as history the most remarkable is its dramatic nature. To some extent practically all of the Old Testament has dramatic characteristics. The nature of the language serves this purpose, for every brief sentence has its verb, and often these verbs are in the present tense, producing the effect of vivid and present reality. Vigour, motion and lifelikeness are on every page. In these pages we are reading of no dead, dull past, but of real, exuberant life, moving immediately before us and absorbing us, as we gaze on it, into its

incidents and interest. It is not the book of the dead, but of the living.

This dramatic feature of the Old Testament has always been recognised. In the Middle Ages, when learning was the prerogative of the few, and reading was possible to one in a thousand, the masses and children were taught Bible history and doctrine through dramatisations of the Bible commonly known as miracle-plays. Until comparatively recent times the great squares in front of and around the old cathedrals were used to stage these Bible plays for days at a time, particularly the days just before Easter. We are told that in the spacious piazza in front of the beautiful Milan Cathedral, a stage was erected across the whole west front of the cathedral every year during Passion Week, and on this stage the Old Testament narrative was told in drama to those who assembled from the surrounding province. The Passion Play of Ober-Ammergau remains to us today as a survival of that ancient school of instruction. No other book lends itself so easily to dramatisation. In the varied literature to be found within its pages there are notable specimens of actual dramatic literature, such as the dramatic dialogue of Job and the Song of Solomon, and even some of the Psalms. But most of the narratives also have the dramatic elements of reality, movement and picturesqueness. It is a noble book to read and memorise. It seems to move and

rejoice with life, and lends itself to enthusiastic reproduction.

In our age of universal education we do not need the actual dramatisation of the Bible for purposes of instruction; but our churches need preachers who can read and teach such a book with sympathetic appreciation, quickened imagination and awakened enthusiasm. The book of Judges, for example, closes with three lifelike pictures from those days when there was no king in Israel, and every man did that which was right in his own eyes.

The first of these stories is that of Micah the Idolater. He lived in a fertile, prosperous section of Ephraim on one of the chief north-and-south roads, over which caravans and tourists were wont to pass. In such an advantageous position the family prospered. Micah's mother stored up wealth, which she intended using for the advancement of her dear son. But the dear son anticipated the fond mother's purpose, and appropriated before time for selfish ends his mother's savings. With real insight into human nature the narrative shows how even a rascal's heart relented before a mother's tears, and restored the stolen money. The two together then set to work to accomplish the original purpose, to make Micah great in Israel.

It is of interest to see that they chose religious prominence and influence as the high road to fame.

Micah should have his own well-furnished shrine, and be a religious chief in Israel. So gods and ephod, and a priest none other than Moses' grandson, were provided, and on the highway in north-west Ephraim, Micah's shrine gained renown. Passing travelers halted there. Nearby neighbours worshipped there, and brought in their offerings, until Micah could cherish visions of wealth and fame. It is true that Jehovah's sanctuary was over the hills at Shiloh, and there were prohibitions of false gods and strange shrines. But what mattered this to Micah, if he prospered and made himself a name! Did not every man do that which was right in his own eyes?

His consuming passion was to be the prominent man of his community. First he tried the path of high finance, but abandoned that for the highway of religious importance. In all his sordidness there was an amazing contradiction of high and low motives. He was thievish and selfish, pagan and idolater, yet he craved the favour of God and the goodwill of men. You ask why the man did not throw over his hypocrisy, deny God, be the atheist he logically was, and then go straight and clear on his godless way. But that would not have been human nature. Why does not the modern idolater give up his religious pretense, and go calmly on his pagan way? Micah's smug mixture of religion and greed, hypocrisy and assurance, comes to its climactic expression in his outburst of

joyful satisfaction at securing an aristocratic priest for his idolatrous shrine: "Now know I that the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest."

But Micah's awakening from his fine dream of prestige and gain did not tarry long. The end of that fair dream soon came. They that do wrong may expect the certain day when others will do them wrong. He robbed God, then why should not others rob him. Is this the man into whose sanctuary the offerings and shekels used to pour, the man to whom everybody looked up as the man with a god, a shrine and a priest of his own, this man running and wailing after those who robbed him and the priest who betrayed him, like a spoiled but helpless child: "Ye have taken away my gods, which I made, and now what have I more?" Such must be the wail of the modern hypocrite, when in the searching recompense of God's righteousness the idols of his soul are gone, and he is left bereft and desolate.

Another of these pictures from the times when the Judges ruled is the book of Ruth, existing now as a separate book, but possibly an original part of the book of Judges. There is a sweetness and delicacy of sentiment in the narrative, a simple beauty of thought and expression, which have made it a rival of all other stories for the fame of being the best short story ever written. A foreign maiden has faith not found in Israel. Her great

faith leads to the Messianic line and hope in Bethlehem, as our faith leads us and the Wise Men also to Bethlehem. The happy romance of old Boaz, until that time a homely Israelite, for whom none cared, is given in fine colours. Into this story of faith and hope and love there are woven happy customs of harvest and home, and the colloquial of the old Bethlehem people. The background is fair skies, yellow fields of grain, kindly hearts, and heroic devotion to Jehovah, the Lord of all.

Samson has been a fine specimen for literary and sermonic description. But no modern portrayal has ever excelled for interest and naturalness the story itself of a muscular, brawny hero, who achieved great physical victories for his people, but fell short of real greatness for lack of moral brawn. The story of his life must have been told with both pathos and gusto by every campfire and in every gate. Wit flashes from every paragraph of the story. One sees the real life of a border-town, with Israelitish ideals and Philistine sensuous life in a struggle for mastery. It is a story of a great man, who however failed of the true greatness, which makes character and ennobles others. Samson might have been a deliverer, but the mighty has fallen. All literature has no more appealing and warning picture of the power of sordid materialism to stain the soul, and to pull down holy faith, as well as temples.

Esther was a fortunate girl. Usually a very

little adorning or a quite simple background makes a fine setting for beauty. But this maiden had one of the most wonderful stages of all history for her first appearance. She was not unworthy of the royal setting. Her beauty was the more enhanced by the gorgeous background of royal park and palace, sparkling fountains, flowers and garlands, and courtiers in rich array. Here is a drama, staged in an earthly paradise of surpassing beauty. Upon such a stage as could be furnished only by imperial Persia, an empire rich beyond compare, was the heroic drama of a brave Jewish maiden to be played, who dared death to save her people, saying as she went against law and custom into almost inevitable death: "If I perish, I perish." In the words of Professor C. A. Smith, "it was not Esther's beauty which has sent her name down through the ages; but her hospitality to the great question put by Mordecai: 'who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?' The question was an habitual one with Mordecai and Esther. It represents an attitude rather than a gesture, a bit of Palestinian sky still visible from Persian soil, a strain of Judæan music still heard amid the discords of pagan captivity. Esther is more than a short story. It is a bit of constructive idealism faultlessly conceived and faultlessly embodied."

While Esther presents a more dazzling and vivacious drama, the book of Job is no less dramatic

in its way. The royal scenic property and effects and the music of orchestras are now substituted by the ash-heap and the weird silence of sorrow on the edge of a desert, both physical and spiritual. Who ever conceived of turning the misery of a leper, his wails, his pitiable plight, and his fast approaching dissolution into a drama which has caught the ear and held the admiration of the ages! But the grief which is in a human heart, its own sorrow, which each heart knows so well, this tragedy of the every day, has been taken by inspiration in the book of Job, and made the classic of all the dramas of the suffering soul.

David is the ideal hero of the Old Testament writers. No other character of the Old Testament has so much space devoted to the story of his life and achievements. Part of 1 Samuel and all of 2 Samuel, part of 1 Chronicles and many of the Psalms tell his life-story. The book of Ruth also has David in view, as the descendant of faithful Ruth. All succeeding generations looked back to him as the highest type of kingliness and a prophecy of the expected Deliverer. Blind Bartimeus, sitting by the way, as Jesus passed along, cried out in words which could not be hushed: "Thou Son of David, have mercy on me."

It was David's genius and personality which brought together the jealous tribes of Israel and organised them into a compact people. History tells us that he introduced the golden age of his

nation. Now one would expect that the narrative of his life would be concerned with wars, taxes, organisation, and with other matters connected with the affairs of church and state. But through all the record of military achievement and civil organisation there runs the story of a man's own heart.

David, the shepherd boy of Bethlehem, with music on his lips and courage in his heart, beloved of everybody, the readiest and the truest boy in all the community, has come to man's estate. He must leave the old home, go out into the world, and make a way and a name for himself. He went out with the same light and glad heart, which he had carried with him in his shepherd life. His country was at war with a merciless enemy and he went to the camp where battle was imminent, no doubt to give what service he could. His shrewd old father had put in with the good things for the older soldier-boys some presents for the captain of their host, that the lad might find favour with those in power. And so David broke the home ties, and went out to face and conquer the world, at seventeen.

We can well imagine what was in his mind as he journeyed from Bethlehem to the war camp at Elah. He was dreaming of the day when he would be commander of a host, and would win as his bride the fair daughter of some prince in Israel. But when he reached the camp all the lovely day-dreams were dissipated by noise and tumult in the

army of Israel. The scornful rebuke which he received from his eldest brother Eliab, when he tried to pry into the cause of the tumult is intensely human. Here was something new for David, that an alien, a hated Philistine, should defy the armies of Israel and curse Jehovah the God of Israel. It was never so done in Bethlehem. In zeal for his God and his nation he forgot his own dreams of glory, and that first day of his career offered the best he had, his life, in defense of God and country. The reward came quickly. Victory brought him the rewards he had been dreaming of, a captaincy in the king's army, and the hand of the king's daughter. But the elder daughter Merab was not attractive to David, and he would not be married to her. However his soul delighted in the younger and beautiful Michal. Her he won again by deeds of valour to be his bride, only to have her torn from him in the happiness of their honeymoon, and given in marriage to another, while David fled into the wilderness to be a refugee and to be hunted for years to come. In the after years, when Abner came to Hebron to offer to David the crown of united Israel, you remember the one condition which David imposed? "I will not except thou first bring me my bride, Michal." And so the golden threads of a man's love and a woman's faith run through the annals of a great and growing kingdom. Twenty years had passed, but the old love was still there. And to the narrator this

seems to be of greater importance than empire building. So it is that God, the friend of our everyday life, our Heavenly Father, is mindful of the happiness of His children, and has made the romance of human hearts to be woven into the inspired chronicles of thrones and kingdoms.

Archæology is now providing a proper stage-setting for these beautiful dramas of real life in the Old Testament. We need not expect that portions, or even fragments, of these ancient books will be found on clay or stone. But it is a more adequate service, which archæology is rendering. It is making the atmosphere and the environment for the Old Testament narrative. From Egypt and Babylon and Syria are coming discoveries, which reveal the genuineness and naturalness of the life which the Old Testament records. It is not an exaggeration to claim refinement for Abraham who came out of the highest Babylonian life in the days of Hammurabi. It is not an impossibility for a Moses to give laws, when he had availed himself of all the privileges of the Eighteenth Dynasty, whose splendour a broken tomb has just revealed. The early chapters of Genesis have their Babylonian correspondences. But Exodus and Leviticus have the atmosphere and detail of the ancient Egyptian life, not one whit Babylonian. Archæology has related these books, in corroboration of their own claim, not to Exilic Babylon, but to Egypt and its influence. David

and his kingdom fit exactly into the known world of that day.

The greatest drama of the Old Testament we might call the Drama of the Soul. This book is more than the history of individual men, more than the annals of a nation. It is the story of the Soul. Its persons, scenes and messages cannot be divested of their significance for each of us. In that record of a growing revelation, and of a deepening and widening soul-consciousness, we feel ourselves drawn into the strain of it, and ourselves mirrored in it. It is this personal and unescapable element in the Old Testament which gives it its power over our hearts. These men are not merely Jacobs and Samsons and Ahabs. They are living and dramatic presentations of our life-failings, life-struggles and life-ideals.

By faith humble shepherds and lowly maidens became world-heroes. There is just one Niagara, and its fame is in all the earth. But its avalanche of water irrigates no deserts and makes no fruitful fields. The little brooks and creeks, uncharted and unhonoured, are they on whose banks fields of grain wave golden in the sunlight, soon to fill garners and feed a hungry world. So God sends heaven down into the hearts of His every-day children, and makes the annals of His poor the noblest literature of all time.

V

THE MORAL MESSAGE

THE Old Testament is a book of morality. The God of the Old Testament is a moral being. When we consider the antiquity of this book and the severe limitations of its people this is a remarkable fact. Its predominant and insistent moral element is a distinction which sets it in contrast with other ancient religions. That not one of these approaches the Old Testament in the spiritual and moral character of its precepts, practices and ideals, will be denied by no one. Babylon, Egypt, Greece and Rome all surpassed the Hebrews in literary and artistic culture, all will agree. But the religion of none of these is comparable for an instant with the religion of the Old Testament as a moral religion.

Nor is this moral excellence a late development or attainment in the Old Testament life. Right and wrong are always separate categories in its pages, and are never confused. The earliest traditions of the Hebrews present the choice of the Good and not the Evil, as the duty of man. Nor is this good merely relative or opportune. It is always absolute, fundamental and universal. The

will of God is presented as both beneficent and holy. The two great moral words of the Old Testament are "righteousness" and "holiness." While these words have their legal or relational significance, yet in the use of them the moral ideal is always involved. The moral requirements of the Old Testament are scarcely less prominent than those of the Gospels and those of the Epistles. They are of the same quality and force. Indeed there are more details and more occasions for emphasis in the Old than in the New. And the preacher who must face the problems of our life today is fortunate to have such a rich vocabulary of moral phrases, and so wide a range in the practical application of the fundamental principles of morality, as are to be found in the Old Testament. In the emphatic precepts of the Law and in the living exemplars of right or wrong he has always his text, and along with it the illustration for his message. The lessons of Esau and Jacob, of Saul and David, of Ahab and Elijah, of Ahaz and Isaiah, of Jeremiah and Zedekiah are so plain that he that runneth may read.

Our Lord gives His witness to the moral perfections of the Old Testament in its very beginnings. When put to the test by the Scribes on the question of divorce, just as much a burning issue in the first century as in our own, He did not make His final appeal to the law given by Moses but went beyond that to primeval law as set forth in

the earliest stage of revelation. Jesus said unto them, for your hardness of heart Moses wrote you this commandment (Deut. 24:1-3). "But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh; so that they are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Mark 10:2-9).

While the rationalistic critic dissects the Law into various documents, and distributes these along the later ages of Hebrew history, even he does not claim that there is a radical change in moral precept and practice. The moral heart of the earliest codes is as pure as that of the latest. Even if the early chapters of Genesis be late as literary productions, they still record early traditions. And in these the highest moral values are emphasized, sometimes in the faithful record of the moral delinquencies of the nation's heroes, Abraham, Jacob and Noah for example. The noblest statement of moral precepts and sanctions is found in the earliest Hebrew code, the Ten Commandments, which is Mosaic by common consent. The Priest Code does not present a higher moral standard than Deuteronomy. The moral teachings of Samuel and Nathan are not inferior to those of Haggai and Malachi. An American attorney, Roger S. Galor, in a recent publication has this to say of the

Book of the Covenant (Exodus 21-23), earliest of the Mosaic codes: "even here we note some refinements in legal classification, and in the various classes of crimes. The distinction between different degrees of murder, Exodus 21:13-14, is identical in principle with modern codes." Of Deuteronomy the same author writes: "Very justly Deuteronomy may be regarded as being the high-water mark of ancient law, superior in its religious and humane conceptions not only to all former Jewish law, but to the laws of any other ancient peoples of that period." To those of us who believe in the great antiquity of Deuteronomy, these words will take on added force.

Renewed emphasis is required in our modern preaching on this phase of the Bible message. In our modern formal, utilitarian, and even credal conception of the Christian religion, we are in danger of losing sight of the moral requirements and emphasis of the Divine Law. A large factor in the power of the preacher is his moral life and his moral message. That is a noble title which the apostle Peter gives to Noah, who both witnessed and spoke against the iniquity of his day: "a Preacher of Righteousness." The Bible fails as a book of God, if its moral character and message be taken away from it. The preacher of righteousness is in a sad plight, unless the book of his faith speaks in no uncertain terms against unrighteousness. It is the purpose of this chapter to direct attention to

the high ethical value of the Old Testament as a message to the moral crisis of our own time.

Two *caveats* must however be uttered at the beninning of such a discussion. In the first place, the actual historical record must not be confused with the ideal contained in the record. There are many sayings and incidents in the Old Testament, which are not moral precepts or examples, but merely records of facts. Such of course are not to be received and taught as morally binding. In the book of Job, for example, the words of false comforters are not to be quoted as of moral excellence, simply because contained in the Sacred Writ. They may or may not be true. A discriminating knowledge of the context will set such things at their proper valuation. It is quite possible that a good man will utter such impassioned and embittered words in the heat and agony of wrong and suffering, as would not be possible in times of calm and balanced judgment. I can conceive of the possibility of such an expression as that which is found in Psalm 137: "Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against a rock," the outcry of a soul wrung with the agony of the cruel horrors of Jerusalem's fall, being much softened by the same speaker in calmer and more meditative moments. The primary lesson of these words may indeed be to set forth the bitter agonies through which Jerusalem had just passed. Immoral or unethical incidents and emotions may be on record,

not for commendation, but as salutary warnings and safeguards on our behalf. As for this whole matter, ordinary intelligent interpretation will show that such criticisms of Old Testament righteousness have been overdone.

In the second place, we must recognise a growing moral consciousness in the Bible. Such a simple and obvious conclusion is not in conflict with the most conservative view of inspiration. I take for granted that there is universal acceptance of the fact that the conscience became more enlightened and more active as revelation advanced and grace was more abounding. Our Lord could not commit all truth to the untried faith and limited experience of His disciples. Much time must elapse before the Spirit could lead them into all truth. The spiritual history of Jacob has been given not that we may live as Jacob lived, but that in the light of his experience and by true faith we may avoid his errors and live more nobly than he. In the Law there are eternal verities, which are of unchanging worth. But there are many temporary incidents for an age of weakness and immaturity. "For whatsoever things are written aforetime, they were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope" (Romans 15:4).

HIGH STANDARD OF THE MOSAIC CODES

The legislation of man in all ages has nothing

higher to offer in the way of moral conception than the Ten Commandments. And this sublime expression of the highest morality comes from a primitive people of an ancient time, when Criticism puts Israel in a condition less than semi-civilised. These "Words," or commands, read like transcripts both from the will of God and from the deepest nature of man. They express universal and eternal right. They are brief and bare outline, but they penetrate with their searching requirements every relation of man: to God, to neighbour, to self. They carry in their wording no physical, judicial penalties, because the penalty of their violation is primarily and unescapably in the violation itself. There is something in them which tells the wrongdoer that the breaking of them means his own undoing, physically, morally, spiritually. He that covets or lusts, puts the spreading, eating gangrene into the core of his own heart. They come to us as the voice of God, as they also bring to articulation the deepest yearnings of our hearts for righteousness.

The Book of the Covenant, Exodus 21 to 23, is the oldest legal code in the Bible. According to radical views it is assigned to the early period of the Kings; by more discerning critics it is the product of the days of the Judges; according to its own witness and the setting which is given to it in Exodus, it belongs to the earliest days in the Wilderness, and contains temporary and emergency

legislation for a people recently escaped from serfdom, and just organised as a nation. Under the circumstances such legal direction was imperative, and with Exodus 20 these chapters form the primitive moral and civil legislation of Israel. Under any theory, these are ancient enactments. Some modern critics, as Taylor in the one-volume Hastings Bible Dictionary, rightly accept this code as originating in the Wilderness Wanderings.

But mark well its evident moral excellences. No later legislation either nullified or excelled the simple but lofty standards of these primitive laws, in which we find simplicity and spirituality of worship; a high and equitable standard of right; tender consideration for the weak and the poor; humane treatment of dumb animals; a high standard of purity for all the relations of life; the spirit of brotherhood; and a simple and praiseful life. In these chapters are texts for our day. We who live among hosts of aliens, pressing with gratitude and new hopes into our land, may well hear and heed the message of this old code: "Thou shalt not oppress a stranger; for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt."

The Levitical Code has been laid aside by the sermoniser, because he considers it a collection of purely ritual and now obsolete injunctions. But the books of Exodus and Leviticus, which constitute the largest part of the Priestly, or ceremonial,

Code, have a heart of their own. 'There is a great central principle in these laws, which has a hundred illustrations in the various ceremonial precepts, but one unvarying meaning for all ages. That principle is Holiness. "Ye shall be holy, for I am holy." "Holiness becometh Thine house." "Worship the Lord in the beauty of Holiness." "And Holiness without which no man shall see the Lord."

These words, which phrase the spirit of Leviticus, seem to us an unknown tongue. That spirit is almost gone from us. The solemnity of the old cathedral is gone, and not altogether for worse; the quiet close of the worshipful hour, with its impressions of a holy message, is broken by a riot of salutations; the deepest emotions of the religious nature, to be reached only by the noblest and purest chords, are driven to hiding in the inner recesses of the soul by these modern lighter strains, taken over from the jazz of the Great White Way, and which play only on the cutaneous sensitivity of the soul. The holy motives and the solemn grandeur of Leviticus have their message of rebuke for the shallow noise of our modern devotions. They apply the supreme test of worship to every act and attitude of life: "Holiness unto the Lord." When a later prophet would proclaim the complete consecration of our life, he represented this great principle of Leviticus not as engraved on priestly mitre or golden vessels, but as stamped upon the humblest vessels of clay, and written upon the

bells of the horses, "Holiness unto the Lord". (Zech. 14:21.)

MORAL MESSAGE OF THE PROPHETS

But it is in the preaching of the Prophets that the Old Testament ethical message gathers the force with which it speaks most emphatically to our age. The prophets were preachers of justice and truth. From their writings a text book of modern social service could be prepared. They proclaim the same principles of right to man and faith in God as are found in the words of our Lord, and in the letters of His apostles. Amos and Hosea in Israel, and Isaiah and Micah in Jerusalem, addressed themselves directly and fearlessly to the moral questions of their day. In their eyes the great social sin was *hāmās*, "oppression," the unbrotherly and merciless grinding down of the poor and helpless in order to personal gain. These men counted not their lives dear unto themselves, when they courageously denounced the crimes of the influential sinners of their day.

The scene and the words of 1 Samuel 15 impress us with the sense of the heroic, as the old prophet stands before Šaul the victorious and popular king and condemns him for his disobedience: "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou rejected the

word of the Lord, He hath also rejected thee from being king. And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent; for He is not a man that He should repent." I doubt if any higher appreciation of the moral values in life and religion has been expressed in our own or any other time.

The prophets spoke to the dull consciences of their fellow-citizens in tones which might almost wake the dead. They adorned their appeals with figures of such gleaming light and radiant beauty as to arrest the most careless mind. They poured out their yearning love in such tender eloquence that they might well have thrilled the coldest heart. You remember those unforgettable words of Micah:

"Wherewithal shall I come before Jehovah,
And bow myself before the Most High
* * * * * *
He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good;
And what is Jehovah seeking of thee,
But to do justice and love mercy,
And to walk in secret with thy God?"

These lines are described by George Adam Smith as "the beautiful words, that express an ideal of religion to which no subsequent century has ever been able to add either grandeur or tenderness. This is the greatest saying of the Old Testament; and there is only one other in the New Testament which excels it: 'Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'"

SOUND WISDOM OF THE PROVERBS

A friend, who was active and successful in business affairs of some magnitude, once told me that he made it a rule of his life to read the book of Proverbs every month, and that no one thing had contributed more to the success of his undertakings than this rule. The wholesome and optimistic morality of this book is a tonic to any honourable, upright soul. It teaches that wrong cannot stay forever on the throne, that right and truth and kindness must in the end have the victory, as already in the exercise of them they bring the immediate inner triumph of peace and joy to the soul. But this book is not exclusively the privilege of the business man. It has its message for the preacher and its rich materials for his message to men. In an age of despairing philosophy, of utilitarian morals, of shifting chicanery, the minister needs to assure and stay his wavering heart on the solid, unequivocal morality of the Proverbs, which always assert the defeat of injustice and the victory of right. How healthy and heartening is the spirit of those words of true wisdom! I love, for example, that quaint and true saying:

“He that is of a merry heart,
Hath a continual feast.”

And again:

“Righteousness exalteth a nation;
But sin is a reproach to any people.”

THE HOME IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The place of the home in the Old Testament is of the highest significance. It is quite true that it was not unknown to other ancient peoples, but it appears at its highest and best in the Bible. In the Old Testament it is the Holy of Holies of human society. It, not the individual, is the unit of human society. The earliest beginnings of the human race are represented, not as isolated barbarism, but in terms of the family. When the Hebrew family did expand into the Hebrew State, even there the family organisation and spirit were to remain in the state as a greater brotherhood. The Decalogue and every other group of laws emphasised the home. This family bond held for ill as truly as for good; for Achan's family perished with him in his sin, as on the other hand faithful David's was blessed with himself. On the family the Nation was founded, in the family the Church began. A believer's blessing became multiplied in terms of his home. To “build a house,” or family, in Israel was the highest aspiration, whether the aspirant be midwife in Egypt or King in Jerusalem. There is reason enough today for turning back again to the Old Testament for that fine old pattern of the home, and along its lines to reform and rebuild the weakened home of our

times. From such a high conception of the home it is easy to pass over to the New Testament ideal destination of the Heavenly Father's house of many mansions.

But the ancient home, like the modern home, had its enemies and sometimes its disasters. The story of these is told so graphically in the Old Testament, we can use its lessons to save and sanctify our homes. The problems of marriage and divorce, of polygamy, of the training of children, of family religion enter deeply into the Old Testament experience. Marriage was honoured, and divorce, at first not contemplated, was always discountenanced. It is altogether probable that the one passage dealing with divorce (Deuteronomy 24:1-3) did not in the least contemplate the divorce of a Hebrew wife, but the putting away of captive concubines. When Hebrews victorious in war, in the hardness of their hearts, took the captured young women as additional wives, like the other nations, a law was given for the protection of these often hapless captives. Well might the Lord say of such conduct: "For the hardness of your hearts Moses wrote you this precept." The Old Testament was written in an atmosphere of polygamy but there is no taint of such paganism in its precepts. Dual marriage was never contemplated in its laws, which always refer to a single wife. The indissoluble nature of marriage is declared at its original institution: "they (two) shall

become one flesh." And "no man ever hated his own flesh." The Divine plan for the home was one husband and one wife, which is the only home in which purity can dwell, and which is fit for Christian civilisation.

Childhood is sacred in the Old Testament. It is given prominence in the amount of narrative devoted to children, and in the abundance of promises made to parents in behalf of their children. Training of children was a duty of prime importance; for it was expected that the glorious hope of the nation was to be realised in the next, or in some succeeding, generation. It is just and right therefore for us to acknowledge gratefully how much our modern civilisation, as well as our Church, is indebted to the Old Testament home. We go to its pages to find the sweet sanctity of the family altar, and to get inspiration for supreme sacrifice in the education of the childhood of today, that it may be the conquering generation of tomorrow.

It is not possible nor necessary to speak in detail here of the State and the Church, their organisation and their apparent coincidence. It is of interest that the Old Testament reader may there see human society in the making, and may study its dangers and its safeguards, from the patriarchal family with its simple reverent life under the father as king-priest up to the elaborated monarchial system of Solomon. It is not easy to

distinguish between Nation, or Kingdom, and Church. Their sphere and nature were often the same, and this union of the two in the Old Testament gives form to the New Testament Messianic message: "the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." The ideal of this Church-State was a great family of brothers, with Jehovah as Father-King. In such a nation injustice and oppression were infidelity and iniquity, because they violated the sacred obligations of sonship and brotherhood. This fact gave power to the moral message of the prophets.

PERILS OF HUMAN SOCIETY

Human Society in the Old Testament days had its abuses and perils very much like those of our social order. Slavery was an established and legalised institution throughout the whole course of Bible history, from Abraham to Paul. It is instructive to observe how the Old Testament will deal with this negation of its great social axiom of brotherhood. Slavery could not be abolished, but its hardships could be softened by humaneness of the highest degree, and by the infusion of the redeeming factor, love. Every Old Testament code protects the slave and seeks to ameliorate his servile condition. In Deuteronomy Moses interprets the Fourth Commandment in terms of consideration and brotherliness for the slave: "that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as

well as thou. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a slave in the land of Egypt, and Jehovah thy God brought thee out thence by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; *therefore* Jehovah thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath Day." The principles of the Old Testament followed to their necessary conclusion assured the eventual striking of every shackle from every slave, and the establishing of a social and civil order in which all men should be neighbours and brothers. The application of these principles to the inequalities and the hard servitude of our industrial life would mean the inauguration of our Lord's plan for human society: "thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." In the Old Testament slaves were never "heads" nor "hands," as on the old plantation, but always "souls."

The horrors of war are fresh in the memory of this generation. We esteem ourselves as civilised and humane. But our practices are far short of the consideration for invaded territory and conquered enemies required by God's command in the book of Deuteronomy. The Old Testament has a sure specific for that destroying malady, war. It is the first advocate of universal peace on a sure and sane foundation. Read Isaiah's plan for world-wide peace (Isaiah 2:1-4). Let men, in accordance with it, have faith in Jehovah, and bring their troubles to Him, to abide by His law. Let them submit to His arbitration. Let them

learn His ways, and walk in His paths. Then they may scrap their battleships, and dump their poison gases into the heart of the sea. For never again would nation lift up sword against nation, and they should not have to learn war any more. If only our preachers had preached this preaching, and all peoples had believed it years ago! Then the earth had not been sown with death and ridged over with graves from Paris to Petrograd.

Every age has its crimes and curses of social injustice. And this is a vice which seems to flourish most in days of greatest prosperity when men instead of showing gratitude to God for His benefits, give free rein to greed and multiply oppression. In its struggle with injustice the Old Testament, in law and prophecy, maintains the essential principles by which righteousness, and therefore peace and good-will, may be established in our industrial order; or shall we not call it disorder? The voices of Isaiah, Micah, Amos and Hosea, and also of Moses, deserve a hearing in our day. Their precepts are identical with those of Christ and Paul. But they have the interest and force of being seen in actual life. We are inclined to yield to panic in the moral confusion of our social life. But the Old Testament does not become panicky. It has faith in the triumph of its eternal principles of right. "Glory *may* dwell in our land. Mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other."

There are some social evils of our own times, which are particularly insidious in their attack upon the vitals of society and are also exceedingly difficult to remove. One of these is extravagant use and display of wealth. This vice has its defenders, who claim that the free and wasteful spending of money is the best way to keep it in circulation; a first premise true enough, if the second premise in the argument were not feasts, fine raiment and fast living, but a spendthrift heart for the multitudes of starving brothers, and for the great missionary task of sending the good tidings of Christ to the whole world. As we turn the pages of the Old Testament our eyes fall on many chapters, which rebuke this pagan and unbrotherly vice, and none in more stirring sentences than those spoken by the Herdsman of Tekoah: "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria; that lie upon beds of ivory, and are stretched out upon their couches, to eat lambs out of the flocks and calves out of the stall; that improvise idle songs to the accompaniment of the harp, and invent for themselves instruments of music, like David; that drink bowlfuls of wine, and anoint themselves with the most costly oils,"—but they are not grieved over the wounds of their nation and their world. "Therefore they shall lead the procession of those that go into exile, and the revelry of those that stretched themselves shall pass away."

An evil of Old Testament times was a misunderstanding and consequent perversion of essential and all-glorious womanhood. When we have in mind the true glory of womanhood, one of the most amazing and disastrous perversions in the social order is a thoroughly selfish and altogether worldly woman. It matters not so much whether this perverted being operate in social affairs, in political life, or in religious enterprises. We have no certain definition of the "flapper." An authority has defined this being as one who excites attention. But I feel confident that if we could go beneath the surface, it would be found that the flapper and the ambitious political or ecclesiastical woman have underground connections. It is also said that the hummingbird and the bullbat belong to the same family of birds. If one were yet unborn and could consciously look forward to existence with one of these strange and vain creatures for his mother, well might he cry out beforehand, with Job and Jeremiah: "Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night which said, a manchild has been born. Let that day be darkness, neither let the light shine upon it. Wherefore should I be born to see labour and sorrow, that my days be consumed with shame!" Amos met this evil with uncompromising words: "Ye kine of Bashan" is his description of the "wealthy ladies of Samaria, because they live a life of purely animal existence, proudly and contentedly going

their own way, resenting interference, and intent solely upon their own food and enjoyment." Isaiah puts the ambitious, worldly and sensual woman at the climax of the nation's iniquity. How lovely and gracious and tender the "daughters of Zion" should be! But the "daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with outstretched arms and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet." Such womanhood is more devastating morally than oppressive princes or corrupt judges. Therefore, said Isaiah, Jerusalem's gates should lament and mourn, her palaces be forsaken, and the populous city deserted.

A constant danger in every age and with every class is a wrong estimate of temporal possessions on the one hand, and the eternal riches on the other. The Old Testament teaches us not to stay our hearts on the uncertain riches which at any time may take to themselves wings and fly away; but upon the blessing of the Lord, which makes rich, and agonising toil addeth nothing thereto. When all such insinuating and deceiving evils lifted their heads in olden time, the Old Testament prophets met them with the stern, rough handling, which they deserve today.

The idea of sin in the Old Testament is too large a theme to be entered upon here. But a single reference is necessary. We live in an age of dulled sensibilities so far as the consciousness of

sin is concerned. But the Old Testament allows no delusions about the reality of sin, and the danger of the sinner. Sin is an insult to God and a menace to society. From these Old Testament pages a modern Paul may well reason before the modern Felix of righteousness and judgment to come.

The sanction of moral law in the Old Testament is perhaps its supreme point of excellence. All right and truth rest in the Being and Nature of God. They are His holy will, in accord with which we are obligated to act. Morality must have a motive higher than self. The highest values of morality must have the highest sanctions. None can be higher than the holy nature and righteous will of God. "Against thee, thee only have I sinned," is a view of sin that leads to repentance and amendment. A grievous trouble with our moral order is our low conception of God and our ignorance of sin. It is an age in which God may truly rebuke our illusions in those ancient words of His Book: "thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself. Now consider this, ye that forget God." In reality, then, the moral message of the Old Testament is the preacher's old, old story: faith in the personal God, and a vision of His holiness.

We cannot better conclude this discussion than with the words of that American prophet, Woodrow Wilson:

“The opinion of the Bible bred in me, not only by the teaching of my home when I was a boy, but also by every turn and experience of my life and every step of study is, that it is the one supreme source of revelation, the revelation of the meaning of life, the nature of God and the spiritual nature and needs of men. It is the only guide of life which really leads the spirit in the way of peace and salvation. If men could but be made to know it, intimately and for what it really is, we should have secured both individual and social regeneration.”

VI

A SOUND PHILOSOPHY

OUR world today is in need of a sound philosophy. Morbid introspection on the one hand and mental shallowness on the other, despairing fatalism here and flippant *laissez-faire* there, are playing havoc with the belief and conduct of men. A recent writer has said: "Man is facing a serious moment in his intellectual history." I recall how President McCosh was accustomed to claim large service to our Church as a theologian; for, said he: "there can be no sound theology without sound philosophy, and *I* teach a sound philosophy."

The very word philosophy often proves enough to repel or prejudice the over-practical mind. As we hear it, we think of the ponderous and uninspiring tomes, which serve chiefly to fill the unfrequented alcoves of technical libraries, and known to us only by the hearing of the ear. Or it may always have suggested to us the dry discussions of scholasticism, or the endless chain of mental speculation. But the word "Philosophy" deserves to be divested of such unhappy associations. It is a thing of interest and value, and indeed of beauty.

Their deserved praise should be given to the men, whom the world calls "philosophers." They have not all been dry and homely. Among them have been statesmen, courtiers, heroes. Socrates was a strong character; Aristophanes never found him an uninteresting theme. Cicero led no humdrum life; his fervid eloquence is the warm glow of a life of enthusiasms. Descartes in his dilemma between the hot fires of the Catholic and the savage invective of the Protestant had all the thrills of the first-trench life. Bacon, the gigantic and comprehensive intellect of England, and many others like him, brought the charm of romance into the field of philosophy. Some of us may remember, for instance, with what misgivings we may have opened Locke's great Essay; then our delight to find it neither dull nor abstract, but a wonderland of fact adorned with beautiful illustration.

There have always been two warring extremes of philosophy in unceasing conflict, Realism and Idealism. And the conflict between them has not always been a mere display of words. Often the battle of the pen has been concluded with the naked sword, or with stake and faggot. Possibly the conflict has been bitter and unceasing, because there is an element of truth on each side. For example, Dogmatism is emphasis on formulated truth for purposes of clear understanding and of defence; but Pietism stresses the emotional reaction of truth for benefits of subjective experience.

And each has its mission in the name of Truth. Likewise Rationalism is emphasis on the relations of truth to the practical needs and issues of daily life; while Mysticism is the use of subjective experience as an avenue of approach to truth. There may be the virtue of some happy results, if there be no logic, in a wise Synthesis of Philosophies.

At any rate, Philosophy is not a dull territory of bleak crags and desert stretches. Often romance has woven her brightest colours into the somber hues of thought. We may be sure that the philosopher's pen has quivered sometimes with the pain of a breaking heart, and the calm and flawless syllogism has been blurred by falling tears. The Old Testament has a philosophy, and I find this one of its most interesting and blessed phases of consideration. The conflict of opposing theories, or philosophies of life, has been fought out in the pages of this great world-book.

Every man is a philosopher. Every life is an individual system of philosophy. In order to succeed in any work or calling a sound philosophy is a prerequisite. The farmer, who understands the seasons and the soil, and sows and reaps accordingly, is a true philosopher. A merchant, who watches the ways and changes of the markets, and knows how to apply the laws of supply and demand in his business, is a sound philosopher. Anyone is a philosopher of the best type, who has a reasonable and working plan of life. Philosophy is the

Philosophy has to do with the great facts of life, and the greatest of these is God. The central and fundamental fact of the Old Testament is God. The Bible has made a larger contribution to our knowledge of God than all other books ever written. In the Old Testament the knowledge of God is the beginning of all knowledge. The supreme effort of modern rationalistic science seems to be to eliminate the personal, conscious God from His universe. There are reasonable grounds for doubting the sincerity of much of the boasted "Scientific Method" which professes to be seeking facts and investigating natural phenomena, while its main purpose in reality appears to be to dispose of the Living God of Christian Faith. It would be a dismal world left to us after the elimination of God. The New Testament well describes a soul or a world which has banished God as "without God and without hope." The Old Testament also gives a gloomy picture of a world from which unbelief has driven God:

"The covetous blesseth himself,
 But revileth the Lord
 All his thoughts are, 'There is no God.'
 He saith in his heart 'I shall not be moved,
 To all generations I shall not be in adversity.'
 His mouth is full of deceit and cursing and
 oppression,
 Under his tongue is mischief and iniquity.
 In the secret places doth he murder the
 innocent;

He lieth in wait to catch the poor
He croucheth, He boweth down,
And the heedless fall by his strong ones.
He saith in his heart God hath forgotten;
He hideth His face; He will never see it.
Arise, O Jehovah; O God, lift up Thy hand;
Wherefore doth the wicked revile God."

There are certain distinctive features of the Old Testament teachings about God, which make its message always welcome and full of meaning. One of these is the unity and uniformity of the idea of God throughout the entire book and through the one thousand or more years of revelation and experience which it records. There is expanding vision, and there are added characteristics or attributes, in the progressive revelation of those centuries; but there is no change in the essential character of the great, and universal Being, whom men should worship as Maker, Providence, and Redeemer. He is always a Spiritual Being, to be worshipped intelligently and with holy reverence. There are various stages in the growth of a grain of corn, first the blade, then the stalk, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. But the grain of corn, which was planted at the first, to pass through all of these phases of manifestation, is identical in essence and form with the grain of the completed harvest. The great God of Genesis, who called the world into existence and adorned it with order and beauty, is the same glorious God of the book of Revelation, enthroned and wor-

shipped as controller of the world, guide of history, and the just judge of both the evil and the good. One of the miraculous features of the whole Bible is this unity of its revelation of God.

The intuitional nature of the Old Testament teaching about God is one of its chief spiritual values to both student and preacher. And this attitude of mind in the Old Testament is both novel and needed in our day. We are the heirs of Greek education. As we have taken over our grammar and rhetoric from the Latins and Greeks, so also have we appropriated their mental attitude toward God and religion. In our pagan way of thinking religion must be proved, and God needs a demonstration of Himself in order to be accepted by the proud mind of man. Our university curricula of a generation ago always included courses in Theism and Christian Evidences.

Now this is our heritage from Greek pagan philosophy. The Greek came to consciousness, like a keen-witted growing boy in *cosmos*, a world of order and beauty. Curious about the unity of these wonderful phenomena and their possible central source, he began to wander about in his quest for beginnings and unity, feeling after God if haply he might find Him. So began the Greek Philosophy. Usually its end was confusion and a lost way in the intricacies and apparent disorder of a complex world. And so originated the labyrinth, the fitting symbol of a mind entangled and

lost in the million crossings of a diversified universe. The end of Greek philosophy of necessity was one or the other of those widely separated extremes of speculation, either a highly-coloured and vivacious materialism or an attenuated and despairing mysticism, as it is to this day with the heirs of this pagan attitude of mind.

But with the Hebrew it was not so. That great Hebrew Paul, as he thought on the frantic effort of the Greek to find an absent, faraway God, added those blessed words of Old Testament theism: "though He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and have our being." The Old Testament makes no effort to prove the existence of God; its great endeavour is to make Him better known and more glorious in our hearts. It assumes that at the heart of the universe God is. That is beyond question. And from this fundamental and undisputed fact it then goes forth to see and understand a physical world of a thousand wonders. Because God is, there must be a world of order, a life of faith, love, service and happiness. The first chapter in Old Testament philosophy is simply this: "In the beginning God."

This major premise in the syllogism of the soul makes the Old Testament religion one of authority. It is the message needed for our day. The shock of war has exploded many laboriously constructed systems of human reasoning. Defeat and loss and suffering have driven men's minds from

the ocean deeps of speculation into the shoals near the shore, where they may easily be reached. They are not asking to have God proved to them; they know that He is. But they wish to know His way and will, to have a message of authority from Him. An American soldier in the First Division, which went so early into action in France, and who himself had known day after day the terrors of the first-line trenches, was sent back to this country to speak in the nation-wide appeal for one of the Liberty Loans. This was his testimony: "In the trenches there were no infidels. All knew that there is a God. What men wanted was how to find Him and how to know more of Him." This is the Old Testament way of presenting God to men. And it is the best and only way. It brings us to that goal for which Job yearned in his pathetic words: "O that I knew where I might find Him!" From the Old Testament intuition of God, its clear consciousness of His presence, and His supreme authority in life we have the ready approach to the supreme revelation of Him in the New Testament.

But this innate knowledge of God, which is the largest factor of our life, and without which our whole nature is riven and undermined, is not a mere theoretical knowledge. It is the most practical of life's realities. And the most real and most blessed element is the idea of fellowship with God, which always attends the true knowledge of

God. Dr. A. B. Davidson has stated this so well, we can do no better than quote his words:

“This knowledge on the part of men is man’s fellowship with God. At least, if it be not accurate to say that Scripture identifies knowledge of God with fellowship with Him, it considers the two inseparable, and so allied that the one may be put for the other. Scripture does not present God as an object of abstract contemplation, or anticipate His being made such. It is rare that Scripture deserts the region of revelation, the very idea of which implies that God can be known; or the region of experience, which is but another name for fellowship. Thus, what Scripture means by knowledge of God is an ethical relation to Him; and on the other side, when it says that God knows man, it means He has sympathy and fellowship with him. All Israel’s history is filled with this reciprocal knowledge, rising up from strength to strength, till One came who knew the Father, and whom the Father knew in fulness: ‘No man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him’ (Matt. 11:27).”

The Old and New Testament are alike in this respect. The purpose of such knowledge of God is never abstract nor metaphysical. Its goal is always friendship and communion. “The friendship of the Lord is with them that fear Him.” “This is eternal life, that they should know Thee,

the only true God." "That I may know Him . . . and the fellowship of His sufferings." "No longer do I call you bondservants; for the bondservant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends; for all things that I heard of My Father, I have made known unto you." "Hide not Thy face from me." "Cast me not away from Thy presence; and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me." "Leave me not, neither forsake me, O God, thou God of my salvation." The deepest hell with the keenest anguish in the Old Testament is alienation from God, everlasting separation from Him, in whose fellowship only is there fullness of joy, and pleasures forevermore. This is a blessed message for an age, the soul of which is both hungry and lonely. This is the full meaning of our word "communion," and the answer to our constant prayer for nearness to God; for the true God is the God, not of our reasonings and disputings, but of our prayers.

But the most characteristic and most emphasized feature of this Old Testament knowledge of God is His Personality. And just here this Old Testament fact brings us face to face with the most serious problem of our modern religious philosophy. What is the temper or bent of our modern mind? Are we bound for pantheism, or mere idealism, or Eddyism, or Blavatskyism? Is the immortality of the soul "a sheer illusion"? Is there no evidence for the existence of a Personal

God? Is the universe a mysteriously and inexplicably organised force, and only a force? Is man a physical accident and a moral variant? These are the questions which the Old Testament meets with its bold assertion of the personality of God. Its authors were not unmindful of these dangers. All through the ages they had to set their course between the shallow banks of gross materialism on the one side and the wild rocks of pagan pantheism on the other. But they kept a straight course, and brought their precious cargo of faith safe to us.

One might say that those old Hebrew teachers ran heroic risks in emphasising personality as essential to the being of God, since thereby questions of the unity and spirituality of God would at once assert themselves. Some have charged them with holding low and material ideas of the Deity, since in their persistent and deliberate running of this risk they so often made use of the so-called anthropomorphisms and anthropopathisms of the Old Testament. But we should think again before ascribing for this reason low and unworthy ideas of God to those old saints, who in reality have proved their knowledge of Him to be higher than ours. They were addressing messages of profound importance to men of simple life and mind, who saw only immediately present forms and states, just as some great modern teacher, whose own spiritual vision may be least fettered by the conventions of thought and speech, will often surprise himself with the

amazingly crude symbolism, with which he presents profound truth to little children. Moreover, all language is constituted of pictures and symbols, this picturesqueness of speech characterising in special degree the rich language of the Old Testament. How can any man convey his own thoughts to the mind of his fellow-men except through the physical figures which the mind must make its external vehicle of thought!

But the Old Testament teachers took also such pains to guard their highly figurative language, we cannot doubt that they saw clearly both the need and the risk. Do they say "God repented"? Yet they also affirm "God is not a man that He should repent." Has God eyes and hands? Nevertheless He is a spirit, and there is no likeness on earth with which He may be compared. There is a noble passage in the Old Testament in which these apparently conflicting extremes are harmonised and blended. This is Psalm 139, in which the spiritual and omnipresent being of God is described in physical and local figures. "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit; or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend into Heaven, Thou art there; if I make my bed in Sheol, behold Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy *hand* lead me, and Thy *right hand* shall hold me."

However, the Old Testament faced the danger

of being misunderstood, and of being charged with sensuous ideas of God, in order to send home to our hearts its cardinal and comforting truth, the existence of God as a person. "God is, and He is a rewarder of them that seek after Him." There is nothing just like this in any other religion, and it is the glory of our religion. Even the Old Testament language is conformed in a measure to this ideal, for its verb does not begin, as ours or the Greek verb, with the first person, present tense,—the assertive and selfish "I," but with the third person, perfect tense,—the objective, personal God. This insistence on God's personality has done more than any other element to make it a real, reasonable and comforting religion. It keeps our faith from the despair and decay of Buddhism, Greek speculation and modern pantheistic perversions. This message of personality came to its fulness in the New Testament revelation of God in His Incarnate Son, who could speak these assuring and comforting words: "he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."

OLD TESTAMENT PSYCHOLOGY

The Old Testament presents a commonsense and satisfactory view of man, in himself, in his duty to God, and in his relations to men. It is supposed that psychology is a modern science, and that our physiological laboratories and our sociological investigations have discovered man, explored his

latitudes and longitudes, and spoken the last word about his make-up. But when as yet there was no mechanistic psychologist there existed an old book, which knew all about man, and told him of himself with more candour and more scientific accuracy than modern psychology ever can. We are not interested here to enter the large field of Old Testament Psychology; but there are certain remarkable features of it, which are characteristic of the Bible and seem Divinely intended for the needs of today.

One of these is the practical way in which the Old Testament describes and distinguishes the constituent elements in man. There is no use of technical, metaphysical language, but the simple, everyday terms of ordinary speech. And the physical figures, or symbolism, used bring them within the range of the average man's comprehension. The Old Testament, in a word, has a way of describing our human nature which is accurate and uniform, but is always easily understood. Organs of the body are regarded as the seats, or symbols, of the faculties of thinking, feeling and will. In the loins strength is centered. The reins, or kidneys which give way first under nervous overstrain, are the seat of the will. Man consists of flesh, spirit and soul, not in the technical sense of the trichotornist, but probably because these represent to the practical man the various phases of man's being. The flesh represents man's weak, frail nature. The

spirit is the faculty or agency of power, and so takes its name from that mightiest force in nature, the wind which can prove its might by cyclonic sweep and desolation. The prophets were filled with power by the Spirit; we pray for the Spirit; we are upheld by the Spirit. The soul, the third element, is the conscious, experiencing part of us, which feels, suffers, grieves; the personality which never dies. These elements are referred to without confusion and with consistent uniformity throughout the Old Testament; and this usage is exactly that of our own popular speech. This psychology is most satisfactory, and not far distant from that of modern teachers, like William James, although altogether without effort at, or evidences of, technicality.

The use of the heart is the most interesting of the representations of spiritual faculties through physical organs. The heart holds a unique place in the Bible. It is the organ of intelligence and of all the higher spiritual and intellectual forces. It is the center of the total of our mental, moral and spiritual self. As the physical heart is the pulsing fountain of life-blood, so the moral heart is the determining source of intelligence, character and conduct. And we find that this Biblical usage is identical with our modern conception and phrasing. We speak of a good or bad heart, of a change of heart, of the wise-hearted. We give our hearts to causes and to people, although these may

be acts of our intellectual nature. This is an important discrimination for the preacher, who must emphasise the supremacy of the heart in religion. With no thought of robbing the intellect of its high and honourable place in the apprehension and defence of revealed religion, it is nevertheless true that in the Bible view of life the heart holds the supreme place. The head is not, as with the Greeks, the Acropolis of our being. It is little more than an animated periscope, through which the heart looks out upon the world around it. Professor Dorner was accustomed to state the relationship of head and heart thus: "In intellectual matters light descends from the head to the heart, but in spiritual matters light ascends from the heart to the head; if a man would know God, he must live God."

It is just this message of the heart which the world needs now. While religion requires the loyal service of the intellect, it must not allow itself to become the pliant tool of a cold and selfish intellectualism. We do not trust sufficiently to our intuitions, which are often the higher and nobler mandates of a nature redeemed by grace, and also the heir of centuries of covenanted redemption. Often we catch our intellects in the act of erring. Our philosophies change with every generation. Our better impulses are often frustrated by the sophistries of a selfish and utilitarian reasoning, and we are blown from our course by every pass-

ing wind of doctrine. Intellectual genius may be the torch of God to guide men safely through a world of danger, or it may be only a blaze to reveal their own baseness. In our religious life today we are needing more of that Old Testament conception, more of the heart, more close walking in the deep and quiet places of our being with Him who said: "Son, give Me thy heart."

Another of the helpful features of the Old Testament psychology is its faithful and vivid exposure of sin. It is a great highway to the Cross. It seems easy to lead men through its plain and practical teaching about sin to "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." It reveals the origin, rapid development, hideous deformity and devastating fury of sin, which hates all and spares none. There is no foolishness in the Scriptures about falling up through evolution toward God. After its sad story of man, and of man at his best, there is only one way out of the mire and dungeon of sin; and that way is the way of the Cross.

Solidarity as a principle or means of both mutual benefits and common accountability is another of the marked elements of the Old Testament philosophy. We are wont to see and to stress the dark side of this truth in the destruction of his whole family with sinning Achan. But the better side is just as prominent, for in faithful Abraham all his seed were blessed; and the covenant blessings ex-

tend to a thousand generations, while the transgression blights through only its third and fourth. The unit of society is exactly that which the Old Testament maintains, that is the family. If this were realised today we should be saved from many vagaries and menaces in the social and political order. The idea of solidarity is the everyman's practical way of seeing through to the New Testament principles of a Covenant Christ and an imputed righteousness. It is also the nerve of Foreign Missions. We go from home and kindred, into long distance and great danger, not from humanitarian and educational purposes, but because we know that we are a part with the pagan nations in the common bundle of life, and we are accountable for their sin, and will be held responsible for their rescue. The Old Testament solidarity of the nation, or family, is the New Testament background for oneness in Christ, and the mainspring of modern missions.

The Old Testament natural philosophy is a beautiful conception of God in His world. A part of its service is to make the Old Testament pages beautiful with nature illustration and imagery. Second causes are minimised, and we are always brought into the presence of the Divine First Cause in all the great events of life and nature. Each mighty occurrence in nature is ascribed to God without taking note of the mediation of second causes. All natural phenomena, as they truly may,

take on Divine significance. Consequently the Old Testament throughout is a book of the miraculous, but the miraculous in a highly refined sense. It is not crowded with the petty marvels of apocryphas or the purposeless wonder-workings of magicians. There are specific instances of marvelous happenings, but these are not the great miracles nor the chief supernatural element. There is another greater and all-comprehending miracle, of which the Divine presence in all nature and the Divine hand in all phenomena are suggestive and preparatory; this miracle of miracles is the real and personal presence of Jehovah always with His people and in His world. Here is a needed and stirring message for the preacher to bring to an age bound fast to the formal, cold and half-infidel notions of second causes.

In conclusion, the Old Testament has many a suggestion for the modern philosopher, that champion wrestler who has to tackle the problem of knowledge. We must have certain postulates in our search for truth. We cannot think absolutely. Knowledge cannot be hung securely on the thin air of speculation. The Old Testament suggests a remarkably accurate and acceptable group of postulates or assumptions. This is the function of education, not to cram the mind with a mass of isolated facts, but to furnish it with sound premises and true postulates. The Old Testament offers a working psychology. Its soul analyses are the

very best. Its postulates in a true philosophy of life are those of common sense, rich experience and wide usefulness. Its first great postulate is this: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." It began with the objective fact of a knowable and personal God; therefore a world of reality and order. God is, therefore I am, and I know.

But this philosophy is not merely intellectual in content and meaning. Its highest significance is its moral worth and power. "Behold, to depart from evil, that is understanding." It is the true knowledge which leads to righteousness and life.

VII

THE MESSIANIC HEART

THE light which irradiates and surrounds the Old Testament, and makes all of its beauties visible to us, is the shining presence of the Son of God. Not only in Nebuchadnezzar's superheated furnace, but everywhere in the Old Testament "One like unto the Son of God" is always appearing. Its Messianic message is constant and unevadable. There is a Divine Name, found on nearly every page, which with every use is reminding us of the Messianic hope: "Jehovah," "He will be." Even the first dark shadow of sin in Eden served as a proper perspective for the clear vision of the Redeemer.

Some seem to think that the fulfilment of prophecy in Jesus Christ rendered the Old Testament useless thereafter. But this is a false view. If the New Testament gives the clear positive image of the Christ, then the Old Testament is still the original negative, from which that image was constantly reproduced to New Testament minds, as also to our own. The Old Testament is the background of the New Testament. It is the stage-setting, in the midst of which may already

be seen the Christ who speaks to us in the New Testament. It is the way which leads to the New Testament goal. Christmas Evans said: "I find a way to Christ in every Bible text. If the way does not seem to lead directly to Him, then I climb the fences and break through the hedges, until I find Him." So all Old Testament paths lead in one direction: to Jesus Christ the Saviour. The Old Testament was "not fulfilled and exhausted, but fulfilled and illuminated" (Kirkpatrick's *Doctrine of Prophecy*).

Let us look into the New Testament minds, to see how they kept turning to the Old Testament for the message of the Christ. It rather startles us to meditate that Paul, who has given such a true representation of Christ to the world, did not have our written Gospels. We are not altogether sure that he ever saw Jesus. How then did he have such a clear understanding of Him? Certainly he had the witness of the disciples, who had seen, and probably some of the recorded sayings of Jesus. But these he was able to test and prove by the sure witness of God's Word, the Old Testament of Paul, wherein the Christ was unmistakable. For "Paul, as *his custom was*, went in unto them, and for three sabbath days reasoned with them from the Scriptures, opening and alleging (making clear and setting before them) that it behoved the Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead; and that this Jesus, said he, whom I preach unto

you, is the Christ " (Acts 17:2-3). And again he said: " Having therefore obtained the help that is from God, I stand unto this day testifying both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come, how that Christ should suffer, and that He should be the first to rise from the dead, and to show light both to the people and to the Gentiles " (Acts 26:22-23).

Philip's method with the Abyssinian treasurer was the same, for after the reading of Isaiah 53, he began with this Scripture, and brought unto him good tidings of Jesus. And the Old Testament text in the light of the New Testament revelation was effective to salvation, for the man believed, was baptised and went on his way with a heart of joy. The intelligent reading and interpretation of this chapter should today raise questions in every mind, which can only be answered by leading the inquirer to the fulfilment on Calvary and Olivet.

One of the most remarkable passages in the New Testament, in this and many other respects, is the first chapter of 2nd Peter. Like Paul in 2 Timothy 4, so here Peter is giving his farewell and making his last will and testament. This makes the passage of high and solemn significance. He writes: " We did not follow cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were

eyewitnesses of His Majesty." Then follows a vivid description of the scene on the Mount of Transfiguration. Surely this must be the strongest appeal and the surest testimony. But not so; for hear what follows: "But we have a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts; Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any special interpretation. *For no prophecy ever came by the will of man:* but holy men of God spake borne by the Holy Spirit." This passage leaves no doubt in our mind about the value of the Old Testament prophetic message to the New Testament preachers.

Our Lord's preaching during His last days on earth (Luke 24) gives to us the highest example of the meaning and use of the Old Testament prophecies. To His disconsolate fellow-travelers on the road to Emmaus He said: "O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe after all that the prophets have spoken! And beginning from Moses and all the prophets, He interpreted unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." And again in the presence of all the disciples in Jerusalem He said: "These are my words, which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me. Then

opened He their mind, that they might understand the Scriptures." Earlier in His ministry, in the Nazareth Synagogue, having read as the lesson of the day the sixty-first chapter of Isaiah, He interpreted it thus: "Today is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears," signifying that the promise of Isaiah concerning the coming of the suffering and saving Servant of Jehovah was being fulfilled in Himself. Mark also begins his Gospel with the ascription of Isaiah's message of the Redeemer to Jesus Christ: "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, even as it is written in Isaiah the Prophet, the Voice of one crying in the wilderness, make ye ready the way of the Lord." And in the sermons of the Apostles in Jerusalem on and after Pentecost there is the same appeal to the Christ of the Old Testament as the Lord Jesus Christ of the New: "The God of Abraham hath glorified His Servant Jesus." In their prayer recorded in the fourth chapter they speak of Jesus in terms of Isaiah's Servant of the Lord: "Thy Holy Servant Jesus." Peter's Pentecostal sermon was a setting forth of Jesus as the Christ of the Prophets and the Psalms.

Probably the most interesting of all the passages of this class is found in John 5. As a result of the healing of the impotent man, a controversy arose about Jesus' Sonship and equality with the Father, which He claimed, stirring His opposers to fury. He then made a defence of His claim on these

grounds: First, the Father has committed the Divine prerogatives of judgment and resurrection to the Son. Secondly, oneness with His Father in will and work. Thirdly, the testimony of that burning and shining light, John. Fourthly, the witness of the mighty works which He had accomplished. This was clear and conclusive reasoning indeed; but the strongest and climactic argument remained to be advanced: the witness of the Old Testament. "Ye search the Scriptures, because ye think in them ye have eternal life; and (the fact is) these are they which bear witness of Me; and ye will not come to Me, that you may have life. . . . There is one that accuseth you, even Moses, on whom ye have set your hope. For if ye believed Moses, ye had believed Me also; for he wrote of Me."

The force of these New Testament appeals to the Old Testament are convincing proof of the high value of the latter as the book of the Messiah. We do not need to worry about textual quibbling as to whether Christ's use of Jonah does or does not determine the historical character of that book, or if Jude's quotation from an Apocryphal book canonises that book, or what to do with Paul's manner of free quotation from the Old Testament. These are matters of incidental consideration only. The fact remains evident everywhere in the New Testament, that our Lord and the Apostles looked with reverence and absolute conviction to the Old Testa-

ment as the book of the Messiah, making appeal first and last to its teachings. They were imbued and saturated with its very words, and trusted absolutely in its authority. They did not have our New Testament books. But they held and used their Bible, the Old Testament books, very much as we hold our New Testament, finding everywhere in it the promise and proof of Christ, "bearing testimony to high and low alike—without adding a word to what the prophets, as well as Moses, declared should happen—that the Christ had to suffer, and that He was to be the first, by rising from the dead, to bring the glad news of light to our nation and to the heathen" (Acts 26:22-23; Twentieth Century Testament). Behold Paul at last in Rome itself, expounding and testifying the Kingdom of God, and trying to convince the Jews there about Jesus," both out of the Law of Moses, and out of the Prophets, from morning till evening" (Acts 28).

There are two other New Testament passages which show us how the first Gospel preachers looked to the Old Testament for their message, when they preached Jesus as the Christ. The first of these is found in Peter's sermon in the home of Cornelius. Furthermore, he said, "Jesus of Nazareth charged us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is He who is ordained of God to be the Judge of the living and the dead. *To Him all the prophets bear witness.*" The other passage is

found in Revelation 19:10, "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." There may be some doubt as to the exact exegesis of this text. We might interpret it as Simcox: "Martyrdom like thine involves in it the grace of prophecy; therefore making you and your Christian brethren like the prophets in spirit." The simpler and more direct interpretation of Milligan is to be preferred. The angel said to John when he was about to fall down and worship him: "I am fellow-servant with thee and with thy brethren (the prophets) that hold the testimony of Jesus; for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Whatever the details of exegesis, the main purpose is the same; the testimony of the New Testament preacher and martyr is the same with that of the Old Testament prophet, that Jesus is the Christ.

So then there are two sources of testimony to Christ; the New Testament witness and the Old Testament prophecy. And their message is one. We have, therefore, the example of its use by Christ and the Apostles as testimony to the meaning of the Old Testament as His witness and messenger. All the riches of its witnessing have not been exhausted. As patterning after those first heralds of the Gospel, we turn to the Old Testament, we find in its pages rich treasures of texts, themes and illustrations, through which to preach Christ.

It is not intended here, of course, to consider

the whole vast subject of Old Testament prophecy, nor to attempt any enumeration and interpretation of the almost countless Messianic passages of the Old Testament. There are volumes, written on this theme, which are always accessible. But I wish to turn again to that current of thinking and hoping, which runs steadily all through the Old Testament, at last finding its way into the New Testament, where like some silt-laden Nile, it makes the richest deposits of truth. I wish we might feel for ourselves that yearning, which was in the heart of all the Old Testament saints, never satisfied except with the vision of God and with His reiterated promise of the coming of the Day of His Salvation; a yearning which grew in intensity as the unfulfilling centuries rolled on, until an Anna, a Simeon, a Nathaniel could think of nothing else. If we could grasp the meaning of their pathetic attitude, and feel the solemn import of that word: waiting, waiting, "waiting for the consolation of Israel"! Let us see for ourselves the eager, anxious urgency of John's words, with which he sent his disciples to Christ: "Art Thou the Coming One, or must we wait for another?" This message of his is the longing spirit of the Old Testament. And in answer to John's anxious query Jesus sent back the glowing words in which Isaiah had uttered his hope: Go tell John (what Isaiah said), "The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf

hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good tidings preached to them."

Throughout the Old Testament the Messianic hope appears to us, just as it appeared to the early Christians, and we may turn to it with the same assurance as they. It is not a casual occurrence, nor found only in a few scattered texts, but pervades the whole and gives life to it. Every kind of type, character and figure of speech is used by this expectation in order to emphasis and perpetuation. It appears as the seed of the woman, seed of Abraham, scepter, star, sun, prophet, priest and king, son of man, son of David, root, branch, holy one, righteousness, Servant and atoning redeemer. There is no age of the Old Testament into which this expectation of a coming Saviour does not enter. There is no office or personage which it does not use to proclaim and maintain itself. The richest and most expressive figures are made its vehicles. Ceremonials and precepts of the Law, scenes and persons in the history, glad psalms of praise and visions of prophets, all serve the one great purpose to make the Messiah known. The Old Testament has a Messianic Heart.

No prophet could preach without finding his way in the end to Christ, and so the books of the prophets usually find their peroration in an outburst of Messianic assurance. The words with which Paul brings to climax his great Resurrection chapter are from such an outburst in Hosea.

Hosea can think of the Messianic age only as the restoration of the Davidic Kingdom. The divided kingdom will be reunited; with its watchword, "Jehovah their God and David their king." Amos, the shepherd-farmer, went to Israel with a message of judgment; but even he could not conclude his mission without putting into the finest figures of field and seed-time and harvest the glorious and undying hope of Israel: "In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David, that is fallen. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. And I will plant my people upon their land, and they shall no more be plucked up."

Micah was a peasant villager, of whom no grand vision or golden speech would have been expected. But even he has written in words of glowing beauty, not surpassed in all literature. It was the promise of the Coming One, which stirred his soul and filled his message with strange sweetness. In the fulness of the times it was to this peasant-prophet that the wise men of the nation turned for the message of the place of His birth; for thus it is written by the Prophet, "And thou Bethlehem in the land of Judah, art not least among the princes of Judah; for out of thee shall come a Governor that shall rule my people Israel." It was always in this way that the early Christians would

turn to the Old Testament for each detail of the life of the Messiah.

David's place and experience in this Messianic expectation is so phenomenal, and became such a glorious part in the National hope, it deserves special mention. David had one ambition in life, to magnify his God, Jehovah of Israel. In his special psalm of praise (Psalm 145) he begins his stanzas of gratitude with the declaration of his life-purpose:

"I will magnify Thee, O God, my King,
And I will praise Thy Name forever and ever."

With this thought ever before him David lavished upon himself none of the great wealth, which he had gathered, but kept it for building to Jehovah a house worthy of that Majestic Name, until thousands increased to millions, and millions became billions. The reader of his history is forcibly impressed by the absence of building and other money-consuming enterprises from the undertakings of David. He had one ambition, one life purpose: to build a house for Jehovah. Well might he be called the "man after God's heart." No other king of all ages is like unto him. But Jehovah sent Nathan to tell David, that having been a man of war and blood, he could not build His House; but his son Solomon should build it. And as for David, Jehovah turned the figure back upon him, saying "I will build *thee* a house. I

will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be His father and he shall be My son." Through this incident in the life of faithful David the promised seed of Abraham became the son of David, and was identified with the Coming Son of God. Ever afterwards the Messianic hope was understood and awaited in terms of David's Son.

The book of Psalms is Messianic to the core. One of its prefatory or introductory psalms, intended to give a general forecast of the contents of that beloved book, declares that it will tell and sing of Jehovah's Messiah, who will have the nations for His birthright and the ends of the earth as the right of His redemptive work.

I think we can confidently say that in Isaiah the vision of the Messiah is clearest, and his revelation in the Old Testament is at its fullest. Although we ourselves seem to have so much more than Isaiah had, in the written Gospels and in long and rich Christian experience, yet he surpasses us in vision. For our vision of the King and His Kingdom is so narrow, so limited by the horizon of our community and our need and our prejudice. But he in the distant "aforetime" beheld in an amazing and glorious manner the unity and the eternity of the Messianic hope. It reached everywhere and touched everything. His dominion would be universal, as wide as the world. The inaccessible desert and China, so remote as to be little more than a fable, would come bowing down to Him.

Everlasting and world-wide peace would come with His righteous and gentle reign. Even Africa's wild beasts of the jungle, feeling the blessed influence of His reign on earth, would fear and devour no more. The ills of life would be healed. Nature and humanity would alike be transformed, and the whole world be partaker of the blessings and glories of His Coming. It is good for us that we can go to Isaiah and the Old Testament for this unifying and cheering vision of the Christ. It is indeed and in truth the Gospel in the Old Testament.

But Isaiah's vision was not one of generalities and attributes. We miss the meaning of his message if we get no further than these. The splendour and the priceless value of his vision is the Person whom he saw. Isaiah's book is a book of a person, not an idea nor a nation, but the Person of the Redeemer. He gave to the New Testament and to all ages two of the most familiar and significant names, or figures, of the Redeemer, Immanuel and the Servant of Jehovah.

Isaiah lived in a time that tried men's souls. The fast approaching overthrow of the nation by the Assyrians turned to despair the carnal hopes of Israel, but the immanent disaster served to strengthen Isaiah's faith and to quicken his mind for the vision. The present offered no solution for the problem. Therefore with the vision of a prophet he looked off into the future for the royal

deliverer. What he saw was a Person, so wonderful that He became the central theme of his book, a Person in two forms: Immanuel in the first part of the book, and the Servant of Jehovah in the second. In the first of these forms, the prophet presents the Davidic Ideal of the Coming One, God's Son and a King of Righteousness, in whose day the longing of man's war-worn heart for peace would be realised. In Isaiah's time national disaster was threatening, internal corruption sapped the life of the people, and the king was an apostate. Therefore the prophet for comfort and courage threw himself upon the ancient hope of his nation, the sure promises of God, the coming of a true King. As we read his description of this Messiah, we think at once of the confession of that Old Testament Jew, Nathanael, when he became a Christian, "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God, Thou art the King of Israel." And we are sure that under his figtree he had been reading Isaiah's message of Immanuel.

The place which the "Servant of Jehovah" passages hold in the New Testament preaching deserves some consideration before our theme is concluded. This remarkable person is the central theme of the second part of Isaiah, and binds it into a unity which resists the persistent efforts of skeptical analysis. Here as in the Immanuel passages, there is clear evidence of development, of progress in the clearness of perceiving the form of

the Servant, as for example from general to particular, from national to individual, from external and formal to spiritual and redemptive. The first Servant passage, in Isaiah 41, presents a purely nationalistic conception of the Servant, "Jacob, my Servant," which is in harmony with the earlier periods of the history of Israel, a nation "holy to Jehovah." In chapter 42 the national name is not used, and the conception is clearly individual, and is so quoted of Christ in the Gospels (Matt. 12:18-20). Chapter 43 seems to react to the national idea of chapter 41, the national name, Israel, being used. But there is progress; for here it is not the nation, but a redeemed nation, the saved remnant so characteristic of Isaiah's prophecies. The culmination of the national conception is found in chapter 48, where the sinful and obstinate nation is shown to be unfit to be the Servant of Jehovah.

Then comes the transition to the higher and truly Messianic form. The distinct emerges from the nebulous, the national yields to the individual. For immediately, in Chapter 49, the Servant for the first time speaks for Himself, in the first person, and is clearly distinguished from the national Israel, becoming objective to Israel as his Redeemer, and also the Saviour of the Gentiles, which Israel never has been and never can be. This is the pivotal and crucial passage in the whole development. Never again does the prophet return to

a pure, unmixed nationalistic use of the term. Ordinarily henceforth the redeemed in Israel will be spoken of in the plural, and never again as the Servant of Jehovah. And in the light of this we are prepared to advance to the greatest Servant of Jehovah passage, chapter 53, which in all reason and by all contextual and textual exegesis cannot be national, but must be individual. The Servant must become the Redeemer, for it has been proved that Israel cannot save himself or others; and as Redeemer, He must Himself suffer for the salvation of His people. No wonder that the efficacy of His bitter sufferings is followed by those psalms of rejoicing, those transports of joy in chapters 54 and 55. Then comes the chapter (61) of the anointing of the Servant, who has suffered and redeemed, for His mission of proclaiming the glad tidings, opening prison doors and comforting broken hearts. And chapter 63 completes the splendid process of development by the glad acclaim of the Servant, victorious over death, as the one mighty to save, the only one who can save; also harmonising the forms of Immanuel the King of Righteousness and the Suffering Servant, now seen as one, the Servant who poured out His soul to death in order to redeem, now returning in righteousness to reign.

We cannot believe that it is right to divide these successive Servant chapters at will into various periods and under various authors. They have a

right to their own order, in which appears their unfolding and beautiful harmony. Franz Delitzsch has represented this progress in conception and representation of the Servant of the Lord by the figure of a pyramid; its lowest course being Israel as a nation, the second the spiritual remnant in Israel, and its apex the Person of the Mediator, the Christ who rises out of Israel to be the Saviour of the World.

Here in these noble chapters we may see genius like unto that of the great Florentine sculptor, who in the Di Medici Chapel represents the figures of Dawn and Twilight, Day and Night as slowly struggling to emerge from the formless blocks of marble, each one in a different stage of breaking away from the mass of stone. So here do we behold the form of the individual struggling to free itself from the national mass, and to emerge in clearly defined personality. If we disarrange the chapters, or if we pause midway in the progressive development we have only an indistinct and undefined form like Michaelangelo's Dawn or Twilight. We must press on to the last chapter in order to see the ideal of the prophet's vision realised in the perfect form of the Messiah of Israel, and the Saviour of the World. Isaiah saw a Person, the Person of all the ages, the Divine Redeemer, the King in His Beauty. And it is not strange that the New Testament preachers turned to him for the message of the Christ, which moved and

turned the hearts of men to Him. It is the vision of Isaiah as it anticipates and illustrates the Gospel, that we are needing today.

There is a longing worldwide for peace among men and nations. Every year of diplomacy seems to put the bright vision further and further off, and to bring more of despair into peace-loving hearts. The supreme duty of governments today is to bring concord and unity into distracted and despairing continents. But governments with one accord are failing in their holy task. Will it never be that mercy and truth will meet together, and righteousness and peace will kiss each other? Let us not forget that the first great advocate of peace is none other than the golden-hearted and silver-tongued prophet of the Old Testament, Isaiah, who made the first suggestion of a Hague Tribunal, and who established in vision a World Supreme Court of law and order. He laid down the only principles by which this hope of mankind can ever be realised: the Lord of Hosts supreme in the hearts and consciences of men; His Holy Zion the spiritual center of all truth and service; His Law the rule of all conduct; and His righteous Will the decisive solution of all problems. Then no nation will ever need to learn war any more.

I have heard somewhere of the many and wonderful bells of Moscow. I hope they are still there, and ringing out their messages of hope and cheer to a distraught Russia. I have heard how these

various bells of various towers and steeples ring out their separate tones; sometimes major, sometimes minor, sometimes jubilant, sometimes plaintive notes, each in its time. But there is one great, central, massive bell, too great to be raised to any height, too resonant to be confined in any tower, with tone so mellow, and yet so vibrant and pervading, that when its glorious notes roll through the air, the responsive metals of all the other bells catch its vibrations, and then all ring out together in one grand harmony of sounding joy. It is just so whenever we read the Gospel of the New Testament. The vibrations of that glad gospel stir anew all the prophetic tones of the Old Testament from Moses to Malachi. And then the gospel melodies of all the Bible ages blend together into that rolling, ringing harmony of praise: "Alleluia, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigns." "And He shall reign, King of Kings and Lord of Lords!"

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