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THE
RELIGION OF ISRAEL,

A Manual;

TRANSLATED FROM THE DUTCH OF

J. KNAPPERT,

PASTOR AT LEIDEN;

BY

RICHARD A. ARMSTRONG, B.A.

BOSTON:
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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

THE Appendix which will be found at the end of this little volume forms, in the Dutch original, the second section of a systematic catechism on the history of religion, drawn up by H. G. Hagen, W. Scheffer, R. Koopmans van Boekeren, and J. Knappert, pastors of the Reformed Church of Holland. The book here translated is a guide or key to that section of the catechism and to that section only, and was prepared by the last-mentioned of these associated authors subsequently to the catechism itself. Hence a certain baldness and angularity which unquestionably characterize it. Dr. Knappert has contented himself with simply following Prof. Kuenen in this work, without introducing the speculations or opinions of other scholars. A better guide through the labyrinth of Israelitish history he could not have found, had he searched the world through. Those who desire a fuller exposition of the literary and historical views here propounded will find it in Prof. Kuenen's

great work on the Religion of Israel, an English version of which has been published, by Messrs. Williams and Norgate, in the Theological Translation Fund Library.

The present translation is literal, except in one or two cases where I have made verbal alterations necessitated by the fact that, while the work appears in English by itself, in the Dutch it is but one link in the chain of manuals to the catechism mentioned above. This same fact has led me to add a very few explanatory foot-notes of my own. But I have, in each instance, signified that the note is mine by appending the letters [Tr.].

A compressed work of this kind necessarily confines itself chiefly to the mere statement of critical conclusions, without exhibiting the facts and arguments which have led to them. When we further reflect that the book expresses the convictions of a school of critics, who, however assured their ultimate victory, are still regarded by many with dislike and suspicion and branded as "destructive," we cannot but fear that there may be those who will be painfully startled by some of the statements made in the following pages. I have, however, undertaken the translation of this little book in the conviction that its

general position is absolutely unassailable, even though I may not concur in every opinion expressed in it, and that the immense majority of its statements are such as are every year becoming more indisputable. It appears to me to be profoundly important that the youthful English mind should be faithfully and accurately informed of the results of modern research into the early development of the Israelitish religion. Deplorable and irreparable mischief will be done to the generation now passing into manhood and womanhood, if their educators leave them ignorant or loosely informed on these topics; for they will then be rudely awakened by the enemies of Christianity from a blind and unreasoning faith in the supernatural inspiration of the Scriptures; and, being suddenly and bluntly made aware that Abraham, Moses, David, and the rest did not say, do, or write what has been ascribed to them, they will fling away all care for the venerable religion of Israel and all hope that it can nourish their own religious life. How much happier will those of our children and young people be who learn what is now known of the actual origin of the Pentateuch and the Writings, from the same lips which have taught them that the Prophets indeed prepared the way for Jesus,

and that God is indeed our Heavenly Father! For these will without difficulty perceive that God's love is none the feebler and that the Bible is no less precious, because Moses knew nothing of the Levitical legislation, or because it was not the warrior monarch on his semi-barbaric throne, but some far later son of Israel, who breathed forth the immortal hymn of faith, "The Lord is my Shepherd: I shall not want."

Works like the present are to be regarded by no means as substitutes for the study of the Bible, but as aids to it; and that study will only the more enlarge the mind and expand the soul, as a freer spirit of inquiry and a fuller information are brought to its pursuit.

It only remains to state that this translation has been undertaken with the kind sanction of Dr. Knappert; and that I have enjoyed the assistance of the Rev. Philip H. Wicksteed, M.A., so far as to give me some confidence that I have faithfully represented the original which I have had before me, but not so far as to fix on him any responsibility for inaccuracies which may, in spite of my care, still remain.

R. A. A.

Nottingham.

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THE RELIGION OF ISRAEL.

CHAPTER I.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION.

BEFORE we describe the religion of Israel we must consider the sources from which we get our knowledge of it. And of these the Old Testament is the first and most important that we must notice. We give this name to a collection of books which the Israelites wrote before the time of Christ. These books give us authentic evidence about Israel's religious condition in the days when they were respectively composed; so that, by their help, we can trace the religious development of that people.

The word "Testament" is not to be understood in its usual meaning here. The Fathers of the Latin Church used it to translate a Greek word which means "covenant" or "agreement;" and accordingly that is the sense in which we must understand the word here. This name has been given to the collection of the literature of the ancient Israelites, because their religion is regarded as a covenant or agreement

between God and their nation. The name of the religion was transferred to the books; first to the five which are called after Moses, because in these the terms of the covenant were described, and afterwards to all the rest. In the course of time, however, the Christians began to apply this name to a collection of their own religious writings; and then, for the sake of distinction, people were obliged to call one the "Old Testament" or "Covenant," and the other the "New." We call these both together the "Bible," that is, "Biblia," which is Greek for "books."

These are the books which belong to the Old Testament:—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. They are written in Hebrew, all except a few short passages, namely, Ezra iv. 8 to vi. 18; vii. 12 to 26; Jeremiah x. 11; and Daniel ii. 4 to vii. 28. These are written in Chaldee. Hebrew, the language of the ancient Israelites, is the same as that of the Canaanites, and pretty much the same as that of the Phœnicians. Like every other language, Hebrew has its history. This history may be traced in sundry words and forms, which have undergone changes or have dropped out of use altogether. After the

Babylonish captivity, Hebrew got more and more mixed with Chaldee, till at last it died out entirely. This circumstance makes it possible for us to settle the dates of the different writings with more or less accuracy.

These questions of date are of the very utmost importance to us, if we wish to understand the religious development of Israel. Each book of the Old Testament contains evidence for us about the opinions and the ideas entertained by its author and the men of his day. If, then, we are to become acquainted with the manner in which the religious ideas of the Israelites grew up one after another, we must first find out when each of the books was written; then, by comparing these same books together, we shall be able to show how the Israelites advanced from one way of thinking to another. If we could not do this, we might at once give up the idea of any history at all in the proper sense of the word, and we should wander about at random without discovering any process of development. Happily, however, the ages of these books are now known with sufficient certainty, and we can arrange them with tolerable accuracy in chronological order. Of course this does not prevent doubt and difference of opinion from still existing among learned men about certain books, and above all about many shorter sections of some of the writings; but still we can get at the truth in the main. It is only within the last hundred years that men have

devoted themselves earnestly to the investigation of the age of these books. Before that time people did not pay enough attention to it. They simply accepted whatever tradition had handed down about the age of the writers; and if only a book had once had some name attached to it, they relied on it without a second thought. The consequence was that people got a totally wrong conception of Israel's religion, and ascribed to ideas of comparatively recent date a much higher antiquity.

It is not only with the religion of Israel that we gain acquaintance from the Old Testament, but it also teaches us the political history of this famous nation. Indeed, for a vast proportion of that history it is actually the only authority we have to go to. In this connection we must take especial notice of the so-called historical books, from Genesis to Esther. The other books contain, it is true, scattered historical information, but they do not give us any regular narrative of Israel's fortunes. In the books just now alluded to, we find narrations about the most ancient period of Israel's national existence. These stories go right back to the creation of the world, and then run down almost continuously to the time of Nehemiah, in the fifth century before Christ; while here and there in the later books we come upon many records of the following centuries too.

We shall see by and by what we are to think about

the value of all these narratives. All that we have to do with at present is the connection between the history of the people and that of its religion. In the first place, it is obvious that the latter must be fitted into the frame-work of the former; but, on the other hand, Israel always regarded its history from a religious point of view, and the course of its fortunes exercised great influence over its religious ideas. Every Israelite believed that his people was led by God with peculiar love as the chosen people, and that everything that happened was intended either to bless it or to punish it. This is why it is impossible for any one to form a just conception of Israel's religion without knowing its history.

For the knowledge of the last period of Israel's national existence we have authorities of more or less importance in the Old Testament Apocrypha, the Judæo-Alexandrian literature in which the writings of Philo are conspicuous, Flavius Josephus, the books of the New Testament, and the Talmud. As we shall have to speak more at length about most of these writings by and by, we shall say very little about them at present. The Apocryphal books are in part of great importance, especially for the war in which the Israelites threw off the yoke of Antiochus Epiphanes in the first half of the second century before Christ, and for their subsequent fortunes, the first book of Maccabees containing very trustworthy records concerning the war itself and the events which succeeded

it. Philo, a Jew of Alexandria, and a contemporary of Jesus, devoted himself to religious and philosophical compositions, rather than historical; and we have hardly any one else to go to if we wish to know the opinions of the Greek Jews of that time. Flavius Josephus, a Jew of priestly family, who lived in the second half of the first century after the birth of Christ, wrote a work in seven books on the Jewish War; and as he himself played an important part in that war, his book is of great value to the historian. In another work in twenty books on Jewish Antiquities, he relates the history of the Jews from the creation of the world down to his own day. The writings of the New Testament, too, can be used with great advantage for the times in which they were written; while the oldest parts of the Talmud, a collection of the oral tradition current among the Israelites, contain some particulars which help to fill up our knowledge of the history of Israel. Finally, a few works of Gentile origin belonging for the most part to later times, together with sundry monuments, inscriptions, and coins, both Israelitish and otherwise, furnish us with contributions of more or less weight towards a knowledge of various periods of Jewish history.

Of all these authorities, by far the most important for us are the books of the Old Testament; not merely because there is a good deal of Israel's history which we cannot learn anywhere else, but also because

it is only by reading them that we can come to know what were the peculiarities of its religion, and how excellent it was. Were it only on this ground, they would deserve a special and more detailed examination; but such examination is still more needful, inasmuch as many mistaken ideas still prevail about the origin and historical value of these books, and because we must form, at any rate, an approximately correct conception on these points before we pass on to consider the history itself.

CHAPTER II.

THE SAME CONTINUED.

ACCORDING to the arrangement in vogue among the Jews, the Old Testament contains, first, the Law, secondly, the Prophets, and, thirdly, the Writings. This arrangement did not originate in any simultaneous collecting of the books after they were all completed, or in any very precise system of division; though, in a general way, it is based upon differences in character and in date. It was only by degrees that men began to collect and arrange the books already in existence. One division was already closed before other writings appeared; and then these in their turn

were subsequently admitted as a constituent part of the whole. But we shall have more to say on this subject when we are telling how all the books of the Old Testament came to be collected together.

Christians generally follow the arrangement given above.* They borrow it from the Latin version of the Old Testament called the Vulgate, which took it with hardly any change from the Greek translation known as the "Septuagint." On this basis, we, too, divide the books of the Old Testament into three classes, grouping them, however, not in relation to the time when they were written, but according to certain rough analogies of character. We thus have, first, the Historical Books, from Genesis to Esther, then the Poetical Books, from Job to Solomon's Song, and lastly, the Prophetic Books, from Isaiah to Malachi.

The first division of the Old Testament, according to the Hebrew division, the Law, comprises five books. We follow the example of the Greek translators, and name each of them after the chief thing it relates. Thus we call them Genesis (which means beginning or origin), Exodus (or departure), Leviticus (or Levitical legislation), Numbers, and Deuteronomy (or repetition of the law,) because they tell us of the creation of the world, the departure of the Israelites from Egypt, the laws for the priests and Levites, the numbering of the people in the wilderness, and the

* See page 2.

repetition of the law by Moses before the invasion of Canaan. The whole Law, which the Jews call "Thorah," or teaching, is known to us also by the name of Pentateuch, which means "the book in five parts."

The Jews who lived after the Babylonish captivity, and the Christians, following their example, ascribed these books to Moses; and for many centuries the notion was cherished that he had really written them. But strict and impartial investigation has shown that this opinion must be given up, and that nothing in the whole Law really comes from Moses himself except the Ten Commandments. And even these were not delivered by him in the same form as we find them now. If we still call these books by his name, it is only because the Israelites always thought of him as their first and greatest law-giver, and the actual authors grouped all their narratives and laws around his figure, and associated them with his name.

There is a greater variety of elements, and those, too, belong to a greater variety of periods, in these books of Moses than in any other book in the Old Testament. We can trace three principal redactions of the Pentateuch; that is to say, the material was worked over and re-edited with modifications and additions by different people, at three distinct epochs. The first redaction was made about 750 years before Christ. We generally call its author the "Yahwist," because, from the very beginning, he calls God

“Yahweh;”* while the third author tells us that God was only known in the beginning as “Elohim,” that, later on, the Patriarchs called him “El-Shaddai,” and that Moses was the first man to whom he revealed himself as Yahweh. For this reason, this third author is called the “Elohist.” The first, the Yahwist, was a prophet, who was able to use and weave into his work, certain documents that existed even before his day, such as the so-called Book of Covenants, which is pieced in at Exodus from chapter xxi. to chapter xxiii. He had certain laws and precepts also; but it was with the history of Israel that he concerned himself most. He begins at Genesis ii. 4, with a short account of the creation; and then he carries the story on regularly till the Israelites enter Canaan. It is to him that we are indebted for the charming pictures of the patriarchs. He took these from other writings or from the popular legends. The principal idea which we find standing out in his work is that Israel is Yahweh’s chosen people.

The Pentateuch remained in this, its first form, till 620 years before Christ. Then a certain priest of marked prophetic sympathies wrote a book of law which has come down to us in Deuteronomy iv. 44 to xxvi., and xxviii. Here we find the demands which the Mosaic party of that day were making, thrown into the form of laws. It was by king Josiah that

* Through an error, we pronounce this name “Jehovah.” See pages 42, 43; also “The Teachers’ Manual,” Vol. II. No. 4, (Oct. 1873) pages 155 to 158. [Tr.]

this book was first introduced and proclaimed as authoritative. Very soon afterwards the author himself wove it into the work of the Yahwist, and at the same time added a few new passages, some of which related to Joshua, the successor of Moses.

Finally, the third redaction of the Pentateuch was published 444 years before Christ. At that time Ezra added to the work of his two predecessors a series of laws and narratives which had been drawn up by some of the priests in Babylon. These he himself revised to some extent. The elements thus introduced were of a priestly character and comprised many instructions for the guidance of the priests and Levites, for offerings, and for feasts, as well as regulations concerning clean and unclean.

Later still, a few more changes and additions were made; and so the Pentateuch grew into its present form.

The second division of the Old Testament, according to the Jewish arrangement, contained the prophetic books. They were divided into two parts. The first subdivision comprised the "former" prophets: Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings, which were reckoned in this class because they were written by prophets and regarded things from the prophets' point of view.*

* We, however, place these books and Ruth, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, and Chronicles after the Pentateuch and include them in the *historical* division. The second section of what the Jews called the Prophets is nearly identical with the whole of what we call by that name. This second section *they* called the *later* Prophets. [Tr.]

The second subdivision was called the "later" prophets; and these were still further subdivided into the "greater," Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, and the "minor," namely, the twelve from Hosea to Malachi. These fifteen books of the later prophets are chiefly made up of prophetic discourses; but they contain as well a few passages of history—especially Isaiah and Jeremiah. With regard to Samuel and Kings we have further to remark that the Jews did not divide them each into two, as we do, but considered them only one book. They treated Chronicles in the same way. Thus they made the whole number of books in the Old Testament 36, while we make it 39.

We shall not at present say very much about the origin and contents of these books; but here is a word concerning each:

JOSHUA. This book is not called after its author, but after the person whose deeds it relates. At first it was regarded as part of the Pentateuch. The chief things it tells of are the conquest of Canaan and the division of the territory.

JUDGES. The 30th verse of the 18th chapter of this book makes it clear that it was not written till after the first set of Israelites had been carried into captivity, and perhaps not till still later. The book comprises a sketch of the times between the conquest of Canaan and Samuel, with the exploits of the judges.

SAMUEL. This book is made up of different parts of very unequal value. It was written shortly before or during the Babylonish captivity, and relates the history of Samuel, Saul, and David.

KINGS. The author of Kings wrote during the Babylonish captivity, and made use of many older materials. He looks at things from a similar point of view to the writer of Deuteronomy. He begins with the story of David's death and winds up with the devastation of Jerusalem.

ISAIAH belonged to a distinguished family, and in the year 757 before Christ he came forward at Jerusalem as a prophet. He saw the war of Syria and Ephraim against Judah, the fall of Samaria, and the siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib. There are many passages in the book bearing his name, which are not really written by him. Chapters xxxvi. to xxxix., which embrace historical narratives, especially that of Sennacherib's invasion of Judah, belong to a later author. Chapters xl. to lxvi. are by a prophet at the time of the captivity, whom we generally call, for want of any other name, the second Isaiah. Probably, these prophecies were not collected together till after the fall of Babylon. The following passages, too, belong to later times: chapters xiii. 1 to xiv. 23; xxi. 1 to 10; xxiv. to xxvii; xxxiv. and xxxv. Though they cannot all be ascribed to one author, they all belong to the days of the captivity.

JEREMIAH was of priestly descent, and appeared

in Jerusalem in the year 626 before Christ, in the reign of Josiah. He saw the fall of Judah, and stayed there after the devastation of the capital. He afterwards went with many of his countrymen to Egypt, where he died. The two last chapters of the book bearing his name do not really come from his hand.

EZEKIEL, a priest, was carried off to Babylon together with Jehoiachin, in the year 597 before Christ. There he labored as a prophet for twenty-two years. It is in his writings that we find the first traces of priestly legislation. This was afterwards carried out in much greater detail by writers of kindred mind.

HOSEA, who lived in the northern kingdom, that of the ten tribes, prophesied between the years 775 and 745 before Christ, during the reign of Jeroboam the Second and after his death.

JOEL. It is uncertain when Joel lived; he is probably one of the latest of the prophets.

AMOS was not a prophet by birth or education, but a herdsman from Tekoa, in Judah. It was in the kingdom of the ten tribes, however, that he came forward as a prophet. This was in the reign of Jeroboam the Second, between 790 and 780 years before Christ.

OBADIAH prophesied immediately after the devastation of Jerusalem, 586 years before Christ.

JONAH. The prophet Jonah is an historical personage, and we hear of him in 2 Kings, xiv. 25. But

the writer of the book of Jonah is not the prophet, but some one who lived in the fifth century before Christ, and wrote this wholly fictitious story to teach the loving kindness of Yahweh, showing how it embraces even the heathens.

MICAH, who lived at the same time as Isaiah, preached at Jerusalem in the early part of Hezekiah's reign.

NAHUM announces the approaching fall of Nineveh. Probably he was a contemporary of Josiah.

HABAKKUK lived at the same time as Jeremiah, and predicted the judgment of Yahweh on the Chaldeans.

ZEPHANIAH prophesied in the first half of Josiah's reign. The occasion of his prophecy lay in the reports of the inroads of the Scythians, who inundated Asia as far as to the borders of Egypt.

HAGGAI came forward in the year 520 before Christ, and vehemently urged that the rebuilding of the temple should be continued.

ZECHARIAH. This book contains utterances by three different prophets. The first of these wrote chapters i. to viii. He was really the latest of the three, and a contemporary of Haggai, whom he aided in his strenuous efforts to stimulate the Jews to rebuild the temple. The second author, a contemporary of Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah, wrote chapters ix. to xi. It is likely that he came from Judah, but prophesied in the kingdom of the ten tribes. The

third prophet, who was the author of chapters xii. to xiv., lived shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem, at the same time with Jeremiah and Habakkuk. It is not improbable that it was the similarity of name of the three prophets that led to their writings being united in a single book.

MALACHI. Whoever collected together the writings of the lesser prophets gave this name erroneously to an author whom we know nothing about, except that he lived in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, and was active in promoting their ideas.

The Jews grouped all the rest of the books of the Old Testament together, and called them the "Writings." These comprise the Psalms, the Proverbs, Job, the Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles.* They called them simply Writings, to distinguish them from the Law on the one hand, and from the Prophets on the other. No doubt, some of these writings already existed when the Law and the Prophets were collected — for instance, Proverbs, Job, and the Song of Solomon; but they were so very different from them that it was felt they could not be put into the same class. So they were made into a separate class; and the books that were written later,

* The division which the Jews called "Writings" thus embraces some books which we are accustomed to place in the historical group, and two (Lamentations and Daniel) which we insert among the Prophets. [Tr.]

whatever their character, were joined on to them, because it was considered that the collection of the Prophets was already closed once for all.

These writings vary very much both in contents and in origin. The PSALMS are a collection of religious songs, composed some before and some after the captivity. They are called David's because he was well known as a poet; though in all probability he did not write a single one of them. We count three different collections: first, from Psalms i. to xli.; secondly, from xlii. to lxxxiii.; and thirdly, from lxxxiv. to cl. The collector of the last group lived 150 or 140 years before Christ. The whole collection was used as a hymn-book by the Jewish Church.

The PROVERBS are a collection of short and pithy moral saws. They are mistakenly attributed to Solomon, but they were brought together long after his day by different people.

The Book of JOB is a didactic poem. The author relates the tragic fortunes of the pious Job, the tradition of which may be in part historical. The unknown writer's object is to discover how the calamities that befall godly men can be reconciled with the righteousness of God. But he cannot solve the problem completely. He lived shortly before the Babylonish captivity.

The SONG OF SOLOMON is a poem in which the praises of pure love are sung. It is not really by

Solomon, but by an unknown author, who probably lived about 800 years before Christ.

RUTH contains the story of the fortunes of Ruth, a Moabitess, from whom David was descended. Probably it is based on an historical tradition and dates from after the time of Ezra.

LAMENTATIONS comprise five songs of mourning, in which the deplorable condition of Judah and Jerusalem after they have been conquered by Nebuchadrezzar, is sketched. They are by different authors. Though it is a mistake to ascribe them to Jeremiah, they are quite in his spirit.

ECCLESIASTES, or the PREACHER, though it bears Solomon's name, was not written by him. Indeed, it was not drawn up till towards the end of the third century before Christ. The author tries to show that everything is vanity and that life is hardly worth anything at all to men.

The Book of ESTHER is intended to explain the origin of the festival of "Purim," and to encourage the Israelites to adopt it. This is the purpose which the tale of Esther's being made queen and of Haman's revenge is meant to serve. The story is altogether unhistorical. The writer lived long after the Babylonish captivity and is quite unknown. His book breathes an irreligious spirit full of the most narrow Judaism.

DANIEL, written 165 years before Christ by an unknown author, tries to encourage the pious of that

day in the struggle against Antiochus Epiphanes, and promises them a speedy and complete deliverance.

The book of Ezra, which was originally united with NEHEMIAH, relates many things about these two men, which were partly written by themselves, and were afterward collected by a third person who furnished sundry explanations and additions of his own.

CHRONICLES contain an account of the history of Israel from David till after the Babylonish captivity. Though the writer made use of many authorities and probably of Samuel and Kings among the rest, it is impossible as a rule to rely upon the information he gives; for he allowed his religious views to influence very largely his representation of the facts. He lived in the middle of the third century before Christ.

CHAPTER III.

THE SAME CONTINUED.

FROM what we have said about the dates of the historical writings of the Old Testament, the reader will have perceived that their authors, almost without exception, lived many years and even many centuries after the events which they relate. In the prophets, too, we find statements and narratives about previous ages; and they refer to events in olden

times which, in their own day, were universally accepted as facts. Now, when well informed and pious men tell us anything that they themselves have seen, or inform us what thoughts they and the men of their times entertain about God and religion, we willingly receive it all on their authority. There is, indeed, always a possibility that they have made a mistake in their observations or their reasonings; and this we have to investigate in each case. But if they deserve credit on account of their culture and character, we place confidence in their testimony. And this is the attitude we assume towards the writers of the Bible.

But it is another thing when they tell us about earlier times than their own. In that case we ask for their authorities, and want to know where they got what they tell us from. It does not matter whether it be historical events or religious ideas that they are dealing with. When prophets or priests, living in the eighth or the sixth century before Christ, begin to tell us the adventures of Moses and his contemporaries, or offer us accounts of the religious conceptions and customs of the men of those early times, it is of the utmost importance for us to know where they got their information from. On this it depends, in very large measure, what value we set on the information.

Now, it has been shown that the great majority of the writers of the Old Testament have no other source of information about the past history of Israel

than simple tradition. Indeed, it could not have been otherwise; for in primitive times no one used to record anything in writing, and the only way of preserving a knowledge of the past was to hand it down by word of mouth. The father told the son what his elders had told him, and the son handed it on to the next generation.* In this way it was preserved for hundreds of years; and it was only at a comparatively late period that the traditions of Israel were written down in books. The earliest traces of such a thing belong to the eighth century before Christ.

We need hardly point out that it will not do to take for granted the historical accuracy of such narratives in the Bible as are drawn from tradition, or to rely implicitly on their authority. Although tradition was more easily preserved in olden times than it could be now, because the narratives to be remembered all fell within a certain limited range of ideas; yet, as they passed from mouth to mouth, these narratives were adorned and enriched with all kinds of details, which, whether they were added on purpose or unconsciously, deprived them of their historical character. Narratives of this sort are called sagas or legends.

We must now take notice of another circumstance, that is of great importance in forming an opinion of the sources of our knowledge. Not only did the historians of Israel draw from tradition with perfect

* Exod. xii. 26; Ps. xliv. 1; Joel i. 3.

freedom, and write down without hesitation anything they heard and what was current in the mouths of the people, but they did not shrink from modifying their representation of the past in any way that they thought would be good and useful. It is difficult for us to look at things from their point of view, because our ideas of historical good faith are so utterly different. When we write history, we know that we ought to be guided solely by a desire to represent facts exactly as they really happened. All that we are concerned with is reality; we want to make the old times live again, and we take all possible pains not to remodel the past from the point of view of to-day. All we want to know is what happened, and how men lived, thought, and worked in those days.

The Israelites had a very different notion of the nature of historical composition. When a prophet or a priest related something about bygone times, his object was not to convey knowledge about those times; on the contrary, he used history merely as a vehicle for the conveyance of instruction and exhortation. Not only did he confine his narrative to such matters as he thought would serve his purpose, but he never hesitated to modify what he knew of the past, and he did not think twice about touching it up from his own imagination, simply that it might be more conducive to the end he had in view and chime in better with his opinions. All the past became colored through and through with the tinge of his

own mind. Our own notions of honor and good faith would never permit all this; but we must not measure ancient writers by our standard; they considered that they were acting quite within their rights and in strict accordance with duty and conscience.

The influence exercised by the writers' opinions on their representation of history differed with the point of view at which they stood. When a prophet was describing the events of the past, he gave them quite a different complexion to what a priest would give to the same facts. As a proclaimer of the will of Yahweh, the prophet sought above all things to impress his readers deeply with the might and majesty of Israel's God. The grand point to be brought out was that Israel's misfortunes were due to its neglect of Yahweh's service, and, on the other hand, that the nation's only salvation lay in a genuine attachment to the God of its fathers. But it was on the Law—the statutes and institutions—that the priest laid stress. With him, Israel's salvation depended on its faithfulness to this Law; ceremonial cleanness was the chief thing; offerings were to be brought and feasts celebrated. We can often prove from facts that the accounts of former times have been completely transformed, since we now and then meet with two narratives of the same thing from two different pens. We have a notable example of this in 2 Chronicles xxii. 10 to xxiii. 21. The author of this passage was a priest, and he has entirely changed the story as

it is told in 2 King xi., to suit his own point of view. For, according to his version, the priests and Levites played a chief part in raising Joash to the throne; while in the version given in the second book of Kings they had so little to do with it that they were not even mentioned. Then, again, the prophetic author in the Pentateuch (the Yahwist) tells us that Yahweh promulgated no other law on Mount Sinai besides the ten commandments; but the later priestly author makes Yahweh declare to Moses a whole series of other laws on this occasion. There are many instances of this kind, and they show us how necessary it is to be most cautious in using the narratives of writers who allowed themselves such freedom in the treatment of history.

Nothing but a most scrupulous and impartial investigation will serve to separate what is historical in this literature from what is unhistorical. This is essential, before we can come to any true knowledge of Israel's past. We must know what did really happen and what did not, what the author himself is responsible for and what he took from trustworthy sources. It is only when we have accomplished this that we are in a position to form a correct conception of the history of Israel.

What has been said, however, by no means prevents the unhistorical parts from helping us, just as much as the historical parts, in understanding the gradual progress of Israel in religious thought and feeling.

It is true that the unhistorical parts do not really teach us anything concerning those times which the writer wishes to inform us about ; but they do enable us to understand the opinions entertained by the writer himself and generally held in his own day. For example, all the stories about the patriarchs belong to a much later period and are quite unhistorical. They do not really teach us anything at all about the patriarchs themselves, and are utterly worthless as authorities about those ancient times. But they do acquaint us with the opinions which the author and his contemporaries entertained as to those times. They show us what Israel thought about the days that were gone by ; and in this way we get to know by their help what were the religious views current at a much later time than that of which they treat, but a time no less interesting to us. Every legend or myth is a witness about the author and his times, just as much as a real historical narrative would be.

The Old Testament is rich alike in legends and in myths.* We may take as examples the stories of the first human pair, the fall, Cain and Abel, the deluge, the tower of Babel, God's appearance to Abraham, and Jacob's wrestling. These stories have no his-

* In his former work, on the pre-Christian religions outside Israel, our author says : " Myths are stories which express some religious idea in such form as to introduce the powers of nature or the gods playing some part in the events narrated." See also, " The Bible for Young People," Vol. I., pages 5 to 11, on " myths " and " legends." [Tr.]

torical foundation whatever ; but, nevertheless, they give us an insight into the religious conceptions of the ancient Israelites.

And here we must not forget to speak of the exceeding value which many books of the Old Testament have for us, quite independently of their importance for the history of Israel and the Israelitish religion. In many of these books there breathes a pure and lofty religious spirit, which can hardly fail to arouse and to invigorate our own religious life. They are written by good and pious men, and often glow with a passionate, burning love of God and his Law. They introduce us to men whom we may well take as examples in the difficult battle of life. It is true that this cannot be said of all the books ; some of them are of no interest except from an historical point of view, and give us no moral or spiritual food at all. But in many others—the Pentateuch, the prophets, Job, the Psalms—there are passages which reveal pure enthusiasm, strong sense of duty, or burning devotion to Yahweh. Such utterances as these can never fail to nourish the noblest dispositions in the reader's heart.

CHAPTER IV.

THE TRIBES IN GOSHEN.

THE history of the religion of Israel must start from the sojourn of the Israelites in Egypt. Formerly it was usual to take a much earlier starting-point, and to begin with a discussion of the religious ideas of the patriarchs. And this was perfectly right, so long as the accounts of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were considered historical. But now that a strict investigation has shown us that all these stories are entirely unhistorical, of course we have to begin the history later on. About the times which preceded the sojourn of the Israelites in Goshen, we can only make more or less likely guesses. Of the sojourn itself, however, we know a few circumstances with certainty; and from that time forward we can trace the course of Israel's religious progress pretty regularly.

Besides the accounts of the patriarchs, we find in the book of Genesis many other stories which carry us back to the creation of the world. For Israel was not content with picturing its own origin, but, like all other ancient peoples, constructed myths or gave play to its imagination about the creation of the universe,

the first human beings, and the primitive races and their fortunes. Some of the stories on these matters are very old and were borrowed by the writers from traditions, while others are of more recent date and were invented by the authors themselves.

We shall not here discuss what is said of the primitive men and races ; but we must make a remark or two about the accounts of the patriarchs. The Israelites had similar ideas about the origin of their nation, to those which we find among other peoples. Thus, it was generally supposed that a nation sprang from a single ancestor, and that tribes which were akin to each other owed their origin to the same ancestor ; and in this way the Israelites thought that the twelve tribes which made up their nation were descended from twelve brothers, who were sons of one father. Such tribes as were in any way still more closely connected had the same mother too ; and those tribes which were rather looked down upon, are, according to the tradition, children of concubines. This is how we get the stories about Jacob or Israel with his two wives and two concubines.

Again, the Israelitish people was closely related to the people of Edom. But this name stands for the same as that of Esau. The result of this is that the forefathers, Jacob and Esau, were regarded as brothers ; and Esau was the elder, because the Edomites had had a settled habitation and had been regularly established under kings earlier than the Israelites.

But Esau was also the inferior in rank, because with its own people Israel naturally stood in higher repute than Edom. Isaac is the father of these two tribal fathers. Once more, Israel was conscious that it was related to the Ishmaelites, who dwelt in Arabia, and so their supposed forefather, Ishmael, becomes Isaac's brother; but, to signify that he was not held in such high repute, his mother is made a slave, Hagar. But then, again, Isaac and Ishmael must have the same father,—namely, Abraham; and he, according to a later account, is the forefather of other less important Arab tribes, called Midianites, Dedanites, and so forth. Their mother was called Keturah, which means “incense,” because the Arabs dwelt in the land of incense. The Ammonites and Moabites, too, were related to the Israelites, and they likewise obtain a place in the genealogy, and are sons of Lot, himself a son of Abraham's brother. In this way all the mutually related tribes are made descendants of one man, Terah, Abraham's father and Lot's grandfather. They are, therefore, called by the common name of Terachites.

As we have already said, we find similar representations among other peoples also. The Hellenes—or Greeks, as we generally call them—had their imaginary forefather, Hellen, the son of Deucalion and father of Æolus, Dorus, and Xuthus. Xuthus, again, was the father of Ion and Achæus. Thus they explained the connection of the four great divisions

of the Greeks, the Æolians, Dorians, Ionians, and Achæans. In the same way, the Batavians were considered descendants of Bato, and the Frisians of Friso. But, however simple such explanations may seem, they are utterly unhistorical. That is not how nations arise. By slow degrees families unite ; tribes migrate and intermarry. Through strife and conquest some become masters and others slaves ; and thus, out of very diverse elements a nation is compounded, till a time comes when it is no longer possible to distinguish all the separate elements. The Old Testament itself gives us ample ground to go upon in this matter ; so that the fact is firmly established, that these forefathers did not call the nation into being, but, on the contrary, the nation, in trying to imagine its own history, called these forefathers into being.

In saying this, we do not mean to assert, that there can be nothing historical underlying all these narratives in Genesis. In the first place, it is quite possible, in the abstract, that there may have been men who bore these names. But, if so, they were not the fathers of the tribes, nor did they play the part which Genesis assigns to them. And, indeed, their very existence remains a mere supposition, and does not help us with the history of Israel. But it is another thing when we find certain indications in these traditions, which do give us at least some hint about Israel's origin. From them we gather that, in very ancient times, Semitic tribes traveled westward

from Mesopotamia. Some stayed in Canaan or on the further side of the Jordan and in Arabia. Others, again, strengthened by a fresh migration from the old home, and perhaps preceded by a single tribe, went on to Egypt and established themselves in Goshen, the northeast part of that country. This is the only thing that we are able to affirm about the origin of Israel.

According to the tradition preserved in Genesis, it was the promotion of Jacob's son, Joseph, to be viceroy of Egypt, that brought about the migration of the sons of Israel from Canaan to Goshen. The story goes, that this Joseph was sold as a slave by his brothers, and after many changes of fortune received the vice-regal office at Pharaoh's hands through his skill in interpreting dreams. Famine drives his brothers—and afterwards his father—to him, and the Egyptian prince gives them the land of Goshen to live in.

It is by imagining all this that the legend tries to account for the fact that Israel passed some time in Egypt. But we must look for the real explanation in a migration of certain tribes which could not establish or maintain themselves in Canaan, and were forced to move further on. We find a passage in Flavius Josephus, from which it appears that in Egypt, too, a recollection survived of the sojourn of some foreign tribes in the north-eastern district of the

country. For this writer gives us two fragments out of a lost work by Manetho, a priest, who lived about 250 years before Christ. In one of these we have a statement that pretty nearly agrees with the Israelitish tradition about a sojourn in Goshen. But the Israelites were looked down on by the Egyptians as foreigners, and they are represented as lepers and unclean. Moses himself is mentioned by name, and we are told that he was a priest and joined himself to these lepers and gave them laws.

Josephus himself wants to identify the well-known "Hyksos" or shepherd-kings who ruled over Egypt for a time, with the Israelites. He is led into this opinion by his desire to glorify Israel. But it is a mistake; for the probability is that the Israelites never entered Egypt till after the Hyksos had been driven away,—that is to say, till after the year 1600 before Christ. But we cannot yet say for certain when they came to Egypt; and so, we cannot say how long they stayed there. The Old Testament says 430 years; but it cannot have been so long.

The children of Israel were terribly oppressed by the Egyptians, at any rate during the latter part of their stay. They had to do slaves' work in the quarries, and were employed in building two fortified cities, Rameses and Pithom. We may be sure that this oppression drew the tribes closer to each other. It did not, indeed, draw them so close that we could speak of the Israelites, while still in Goshen, as one

people ; but still the mutual ties, which had hitherto been exceedingly weak, were now strengthened, and the recollection of the oppression and of the subsequent exodus afterwards tended powerfully to call out and invigorate the feeling of relationship and sympathy.

CHAPTER V.

THE SAME CONTINUED.

WE must now proceed to consider the religion of the Israelites in the oldest form in which it is known to us. From what has been said, it is clear that we must once for all dismiss the common idea that this religion was regularly handed down from Adam to Noah, from Shem to Abraham and the patriarchs, and from these to Moses. Everything that is said to that effect in the Old Testament is quite unhistorical. Indeed, even of the religion of the tribes when in Goshen we know very little, and that little we have to make out from later accounts, or even to infer to a considerable extent from what we know of the popular religion in the eighth and seventh centuries before Christ, which of course had its roots in the past, and gives us some evidence of what that must have been.

In this way we discover that the religion of the sons of Israel was originally Fetishism, and that out of this Fetishism there slowly grew a Nature-worship, just as happened with the rest of the Semites.* We still find traces of the former in what the Old Testament tells us of the reverence paid to holy trees and stones. It is true that it is made to appear as if these stones were dedicated to Yahweh ; but this is to be explained by the subsequent desire of the writers of the Bible to bring all the idolatry that still survived in the popular religion, into connection with the worship of Yahweh by way of consecrating it. They could not exterminate it, and so they did their best to change its meaning. It was only on such conditions that these remnants of the old popular religion could still be tolerated at all. But they do not really fit in with the service of Yahweh, as it was afterwards understood, and they can only be explained as a relic from primitive times. In later ages the Christian missionaries, in many parts of Europe, followed the example of the Israelitish writers: to

*In his former work our author writes: "Fetishism is the least advanced stage of religion known to us. The name is given to the religion of those savage tribes which regard all objects as endowed with life like that of men, but of different degrees of power." "Nature worship" is the worship of the various powers of nature ; and our author elsewhere states that, while the Aryan races worshiped those powers as manifested *in* the phenomena of nature and intimately bound up with them, the Semites, the stock to which the Israelites belonged, worshiped those powers as terrible and destroying gods,—lords or kings standing *above* nature and more clearly distinguished from it than was the case among the Aryans. [Tr.]

those heathen practices which they found themselves unable to exterminate, they gave a Christian coloring and a Christian interpretation.

When the religion of a people rises to a higher level, the old ideas and forms survive for centuries beside the new. We find this general law exemplified all through the history of Israel. Here the popular belief was unusually strong, so that we cannot be surprised at coming upon the traces of the ancient religion even in much later times. But this must by no means blind us to the fact that fetishism grew into nature-worship in very early days. It is certain that the Israelites had already advanced to nature-worship when they were in Goshen. The general character of the religion of the sons of Israel was like that of the rest of the Semites; but they modified it in their own way. The Semites used to draw a contrast between the power of nature regarded as the source of life and blessing, and the same power regarded as the cause of death and destruction. Among the Edomites, Ishmaelites, Ammonites, and Moabites—the tribes with which Israel felt itself most nearly related—the service of the rigorous and destroying god was most prominent. The very names for God which are most common among them—Baal, El, Molech, Milcom, and Chemosh—are enough to show this. These names all denote the mighty, violent, death-dealing god. It is

true that these tribes also worshiped the powers of nature which confer life and blessing, but only in the second place. We know, from the character of their national god, that the Israelites formed no exception in this matter; for, in early times, he was regarded as a god of light and fire, who was to be greatly feared, and was propitiated by human sacrifices. The god of Israel was originally closely allied in character with the Canaanitish or Phœnician Molech. Hence he was worshiped in the likeness of a bull, as an emblem of the power of the sun, so mighty to destroy. Thus Molech, too, was represented with a bull's head, and a bull's horns were always given to Astarte. With this, also, are connected the bull's horns which we find on Yahweh's altar in later times, and the twelve oxen which support the molten sea.* The cherubs, too, on which Yahweh sits, are of Phœnician origin, and represent the heavy thunder-clouds which hide the Thunderer from the eyes of men. The representations of flowers and fruits which Solomon put in the temple are in the same way symbols of the life of nature as awakened by the sun-god. Moreover, by the side of Yahweh's altar we have what are called "asheras," which are lopped stems of trees and symbols of the goddess Ashera, the female side of the beneficent sun-god; and "chamanim," or sun-images, which represent the rays of the sun in the shape of a cone. All this shows that Israel's god was

* 1 Kings, vii. 23, 25.

originally regarded as a god of light and of fire, and differed little or nothing in character from the rest of the gods of the Semites. But in the conception of Yahweh, as the stern and terrible god, lay the germ of the higher conception which afterwards grew out of it. He is pure and holy; no man can see him and live. The first-born are his rightful property; circumcision, which was afterwards the sign of the covenant, was originally a bloody offering for the propitiation of a god of terror. All this shows that the children of Israel were profoundly impressed with the might of their national god: an impression which could not fail to bring them by and by to a loftier conception of his nature. Through the notion that the best and dearest must be given up to the strong and mighty god, the belief in his holiness was cultivated and strengthened. More and more did men come to see that nothing could serve such a god save holiness and a strict morality; his claims exceeded those of other gods, and he was gradually contrasted with them and placed above them in the thoughts of his truest servants, and at last he came to be looked upon as the only one that really existed and was worshiped as such, whilst the others were considered to be false gods which did not really exist. This pure monotheism is the fruit of the whole process of Israel's development, and it was not distinctly and definitely expressed till the eighth century before Christ. But the germ of it lay in the original form of Israel's

nature-worship, by means of which, under favorable circumstances, this people were enabled to rise far above the rest of the Semites.

According to the writer who put the Pentateuch into its final shape, the name of Israel's chief or tribal god, El-Shaddai, was afterwards changed by Moses into Yahweh. We are told that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, even in their days, called their god El-Shaddai.* This word means the Mighty One or the Strong One, and it implies that the tribes ascribed the character to him that we have explained above. What customs, and offerings, and festivals may have been associated with the service of El-Shaddai, we do not know.

Other gods, besides the chief one, were honored. First came the stars, and especially the planet Saturn, which the Israelites called Kewan. To Kewan the seventh day was dedicated. Very likely other planets, too, were worshiped, and the festival of the new moon belonged to the old nature-worship. Besides this, each tribe must have had its own special god or gods. Later on we find mention of "teraphim," a kind of household gods. They were consulted about coming events, and were worshiped as beneficent powers. But it is uncertain whether they were worshiped so far back as the sojourn in Goshen.

And this meagre account is all that our sources of information enable us to give of the primitive religion

* Exodus vi. 3.

of the Israelites. It will be enough to keep in mind that their polytheism had a chief god, and that they had a very solemn conception of his nature; while his worship was the bond that held the tribes together. And now we have to fix our attention on the man who is renowned as Israel's deliverer and lawgiver.

CHAPTER VI.

MOSES.

AS we have already related, the sons of Israel were cruelly oppressed during the latter part of their sojourn in Egypt. It is constantly becoming more certain that it was Rameses the Second who began this oppression. Remains have been discovered of Rameses, one of the two cities built by the Israelites. These remains confirm us in the belief that Rameses II. was its founder, and consequently that the oppression took place in his time. Under his son and successor, Meneptha, the escape of the Israelites known as the Exodus took place. This was about 1320 years before Christ.

According to the account in the book of Exodus, the oppression came to a climax when the king issued an edict that all the new-born sons of the Israelites should be drowned in the Nile. But one

of these lads was rescued in an extraordinary manner and brought up at court by the king's daughter. His name was Moses, and he was the son of Amram and Jochebed, of the tribe of Levi. Destiny had appointed him to be the deliverer of Israel. When he was forty years old he was obliged to flee from Egypt, and he betook himself to Jethro, a priest of Midian. He married Jethro's daughter, Zipporah, and for a long time tended his father-in-law's flocks in the desert. Then God appeared to him in a burning bush, and charged him to deliver Israel from Egyptian bondage. Moses goes to the king and begs permission to lead forth his people to the wilderness, that they may hold a religious festival there. At first the monarch hesitates, but he is afterwards forced to let the people go, by means of ten horrible calamities or plagues. Israel quits Goshen in hot haste, and presses towards the wilderness of Arabia. But now the Egyptian king repents of the permission which had been wrung from him, and is for bringing the Israelites back by force. He pursues them, and would certainly have subdued them again, had not Moses, by Yahweh's command, waved his staff over the Gulf of Suez, and caused the waters to separate, so that the Israelites could cross and reach the other side dry-footed, while Pharaoh and his soldiers, who were pursuing the fugitives, met with a miserable death in the waters, which flowed back into their place at a second command from Moses. Thus was Israel liberated by the mighty hand of Yahweh.

This story, which was not written till more than five hundred years after the exodus itself, can lay no claim to be considered historical. The exodus itself remains a firmly established historical fact. All the prophets, including the very oldest of them, speak of it as a thing universally known and believed. For the same reason it is certain that Moses, Amram's son, was the soul of the whole movement, and the leader of the people. He stirred up the tribes to resume the old roaming life and to forsake their settled dwellings in Egypt. That his enterprise would meet with opposition on the part of the Egyptians is in the highest degree probable. The narrative of the priest, Manetho, which we have already mentioned, also confirms the main fact of the exodus; and he, too, names Moses as the leader of the people. The main fact, however, is all that we know. Of the circumstances which may have accompanied the exodus we have no knowledge whatever.

From the nature of the case, we may infer that Moses laid the utmost stress on the religious significance of the escape from Egypt. The contest against the alien nation was a contest between the god of the confederated Israelites and the gods of the Egyptians. Moses must greatly have quickened the people's love for their common god; and his successful efforts must have impressed the sons of Israel deeply with the superiority of Yahweh's might over that of the foreign gods. When the tribes found themselves in the wilder-

ness—free men, delivered from the yoke of their oppressors, they must have felt that they were bound by closer ties than ever before to that faithful and mighty god.

Throughout all the ages that followed, Israel steadfastly cherished the memory of this deliverance from Egypt. In later times the Israelites began to associate the celebration of the Paschal feast—or Passover—with that recollection. But we must not go into the origin and meaning of this festival at present.

It is represented in the Old Testament that the god of Israel was never called “Yahweh” till the time of Moses. Moses was the first to whom El-Shaddai, the god of the patriarchs—of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—made himself known as “Yahweh.”* The only explanation of such a statement is that Moses proclaimed the national god by this new name; and no doubt there went along with this a fresh interpretation and conception of the nature of this god. We are not quite certain of the meaning or of the pronunciation of this name, “Yahweh.” We have been accustomed to say “Jehovah;” a form which we have constructed by adding the vowels of Adonai (pronounced, Edona), namely, e, o, and a, to the consonants JHVH, these four letters being all that is written in the original Hebrew. This combination arose from the fact that the Israelites themselves always refrained from uttering the proper name JHVH, saying

* Exodus iii. 1 to 14; vi. 2, 3.

“Adonai” (which is Hebrew for “the Lord”) instead. And in our authorized English bibles the confusion is kept up by JHVH always being wrongly translated “the Lord.” The vowels which really belong to JHVH are a and e.*

As for the meaning of this name, even the old Israelites themselves could only guess at it. What is certain is this, that the word is connected with the verb “TO BE.” But, granting that, this derivative word, Yahweh, may either signify, “He who is,” or “He who MAKES to be,” which would mean, “the Life-giver.” The writer of the third chapter of Exodus thinks that the name refers to the unchanging and faithful character of Yahweh, but it is certain that no such meaning is directly involved in it. Our best plan will be not to look for any fixed and sharply defined meaning in it, as if Moses had devised a new name for the national God, expressing the precise idea which he held of his nature. It is better to try to make out what conceptions he had, without expecting to get too much out of the etymology of the word.

It has been suggested that Moses may have borrowed a good deal of his religion from the Egyptians. In support of this, the account of his being brought up by Pharaoh’s daughter has been quoted from Exodus ii. 10, to which was afterwards added (see

* This makes “Jahveh.” But in English we get nearer to what was most likely the true pronunciation by writing this, “Yahweh.” Accordingly, we have adopted this form in the text. [Tr.]

Acts vii. 21, 22), that he was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians; and, again, we have been reminded of the agreement between many of the ideas and customs of the Israelites and those of the Egyptians. Some have even thought that the meaning of the name Yahweh had an Egyptian origin; and it is pointed out that the ark, the dress of the priests, the bull-worship, and many of the moral laws and commandments are found among the Egyptians too. But it is not very likely that Moses, who, after a violent contest, wrested Israel out of the power of Egypt—Moses, who represented this struggle as a struggle between the god of Israel and the gods of Egypt, would borrow much of his religion from the religion of his enemies. We do not mean to say that no traces of Egyptian influence can be pointed out in Israel. In the sphere of morals, at any rate, such an influence cannot be denied. Whole centuries before the exodus, the Egyptians had attained to an advanced and exceptionally pure morality; and we find noteworthy instances of agreement with the Egyptian code among the laws of the Israelites. Accordingly, we may well suppose that Moses adopted some of these lofty precepts, and announced them to Israel as the commandments of his god. But, though we have to allow that he borrowed from Egypt here and there, it still remains part of the original and peculiar essence of his religion, that he connected the moral law itself directly with the nature of Israel's God.

Moses not only preached Yahweh as the god of Israel, but he wished the tribes to worship this god in contrast to, and to the exclusion of, all other gods. But we do not by any means intend to assert that Moses was a monotheist, or that he supposed Yahweh to be absolutely the only god and the other gods not to exist at all. Such pure monotheism as that belongs to much later days. It was not till many centuries after the time of Moses that the prophets attained to so lofty a conception. Moses himself believed in the existence of other gods just as much as in that of Yahweh; but he taught that Yahweh was the only one to whom the Israelites ought to pray. He was profoundly impressed with Yahweh's majesty and power. Yahweh only was Israel's god. We find this principle expressed in the phrase of the law—"Ye shall have no other gods before me." But we shall come back to this presently.

It is more difficult to answer the question what Moses thought about the worship of images, and what was his attitude towards the bull-worship. Bull-worship was still a thoroughly national institution in Israel whole centuries after Moses was dead. It has sometimes been compared with the Egyptian worship of Apis. But such a comparison is a mistake; for it was a real live bull that the Egyptians adored, while Israel's bull-worship was only the worship of Yahweh in the likeness of a bull. It is quite clear, from the subsequent history of Israel, that this was popularly

regarded as pure Yahweh-worship. And, however bitterly the later Israelites condemned it, however zealous the priestly lawgiver after the captivity showed himself against the worship of images, it is easy to see that there was nothing in the traditions about Moses to mark him out as an opponent of image-worship. There is, however, on the other hand, nothing to show that he defended it or approved of it.

The most noteworthy point in the representation of Yahweh which Moses gives us, is the moral character that he ascribes to him. We must, it is true, put out of our heads altogether any such exalted ideas as those entertained by the prophets of later times. To their minds Yahweh was a purely spiritual being, who desired, not sacrifice, but purity of heart ; a god who, far from being identified with nature, was contrasted with nature as her almighty lord and master. Now, although Moses acknowledged the dominion of Yahweh over nature, he by no means made any such sharp distinction between them. To him Yahweh was still the light-god and fire-god, a terrible and mighty being, whom none could either gaze on or approach. But at the same time he regarded him as the Holy One ; this god of his demanded morality ; it was only by being good that men could serve him. Thus Moses identified the command to lead a moral life with the law of Yahweh, and it is his signal merit thus to have laid the foundation of Israel's subsequent growth and

progress in religious thought and feeling. He was the first of all the men of Israel to feel and say, "Yahweh is holy, and desires holiness."

We may well suppose that the sons of Israel were still too backward to accept the teachings of Moses at once. Tradition speaks of opposition to Moses, again and again renewed, on the part of the tribes, and even of actual insurrections. The union of the tribes, which the deliverance from Egypt had powerfully cemented for the moment, did not prove strong enough in the long run. It was not only that the people kept up the service of other gods, — that went on for centuries; but even in serving the ancient god of their fathers, they failed to heed the modified character which Moses ascribed to him. The sequel of the history shows us that it was only a few of the more thoughtful followers of Moses that could sympathize with him, and that in them alone did his views bear fruit. His work, like that of all great reformers, was for the future; fairly understood by posterity alone, he stands at the opening of the history of Israel, the deliverer and legislator of his race, and succeeding centuries have set a seal upon his work.

We must now speak further of the code of law which Moses promulgated, and of certain institutions and usages attributed to him. Moses represented the relation between Yahweh and Israel as a covenant; Yahweh was Israel's god, and Israel was

Yahweh's people; the code constituted the basis of this covenant between the two. We have this code complete in two separate passages of the Pentateuch, Exod. xx. 2-17, and Deut. v. 6-21. When we compare these two passages together, we find a great difference between them, not only in a multitude of small points, but especially in the commandment to keep the Sabbath-day. It follows at once from this, that these commandments are not derived from Moses in their present form. The commandments as we have them must be regarded as later elaborations, the gist or kernel of them alone being from Moses. Moreover, the tradition that Moses broke the original tables of stone seems to indicate that the code was not considered so holy but that it was permissible to modify it. At any rate, it is probable that this story covers some recollection of a remodeling of the code.

This code, which is generally known as the law of the Ten Commandments, is called in the Pentateuch itself the law of the Ten Words. The exordium itself—"I, Yahweh, am your god, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage," which is not generally counted, inasmuch as it cannot be said to be a commandment, must be reckoned as the first Word. This is the foundation, the starting-point, of the whole set of laws. Yahweh, on his part, makes the announcement that he regards himself as the god of Israel, and founds upon it the obligation of the people to obey his commandments. Then the second

Word will be what is usually called the first commandment, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me;" while what we call the second commandment, which contains a prohibition of idolatry, is of later date, and must be regarded as an elaboration of the first. Then follows the third Word, the same as our third commandment, dealing with the sacredness of an oath taken in Yahweh's name; and then we have the dedication of the seventh day of the week to Yahweh, the commandment to honor our parents, and the prohibitions of murder, adultery, theft, false witness and covetousness.

According to the narrative in Exodus, Yahweh himself proclaimed this set of laws on Mount Sinai, while all the people were gathered at the foot of the mountain, and tumultuous tokens of Yahweh's majesty and power, in earthquake and thunder, filled them with awe. All that is likely to be historical in this account is that Moses assembled, not indeed the whole of the people, but the heads of the tribes, and gave them the code; there was probably no lack of sacrifices and festivals on the occasion, while the representatives of the Israelites solemnly pledged themselves to keep the commandments thus communicated to them.

We can say nothing with certainty about any other laws or precepts given by Moses. With regard to the great majority of the laws which we find in the Pentateuch, it is quite certain that they belong to a

later day. At the same time, it is possible that a few more injunctions are to be ascribed to him. It is likely enough that he retained much that was already current before he began to teach, or, at any rate, that he adopted it with modifications. Such was the case with the dedication of the Sabbath in the fourth Word. The seventh day, as we have already seen, was originally dedicated to the planet Saturn, or Kewan; Moses adopted the institution, but made the day *a day of rest*, and consecrated it to Yahweh. In the same way, he retained the established customs of circumcision and the dedication of the first-born. He probably laid it down that all first-born sons must be redeemed from Yahweh with an offering. Human sacrifice, though by no means uncommon in Goshen, and not yet extirpated, even after the time of Moses, was certainly not prescribed by him. It was not necessary that the man who was due to Yahweh should be offered up; he was redeemable, and, indeed, was obliged to be redeemed. It is true that human beings were sometimes dedicated to Yahweh, and then burnt with all who belonged to them, and this custom was called "cherem," or *ban*; but this was a punishment wreaked upon those who had been guilty of grave transgressions of Yahweh's law. It was not human sacrifice, properly so called.

According to a later tradition, the code of laws was preserved in the ark, that is, the chest, of the covenant, which was placed in the middle of a porta-

ble tent, called the tabernacle. The description given of both of these in the Pentateuch is utterly incorrect, inasmuch as it is at variance with the much older accounts in Samuel and Kings. It is in the highest degree probable that this ark was regarded as the dwelling-place of Yahweh himself; or, perhaps, a stone was kept in it, and this stone was looked upon as Yahweh's dwelling, and the ark only as the place where it was kept. In any case, the Israelites attached the greatest value to this chest, as we may gather from their habit of carrying it with them into battle. They attributed to it mighty powers and most formidable effect. Now, we may, with considerable confidence, take Moses to have been the originator of this ark, and it is very probable, too, that he cherished that material conception which, in times long subsequent, we still meet with among the people. This ark, we may suppose, stood in a simple tent, while a few priests were attached to it, with Aaron, the brother of Moses, at their head.

We know nothing more of any laws or institutions given by Moses. But slight as our information is, it is sufficient to justify us in the very high estimate of him to which we have already given expression. We recognize and esteem him as the founder of Israel's national existence, the great legislator and religious leader, who gave the first powerful and decisive impulse to the development of Israel.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PERIOD OF THE JUDGES.

IF we wish to form a correct conception of the religious condition of Israel during the period of the Judges, that is between Moses and Saul, it will not do to be guided by the opinions of the writer of the Book of Judges. That writer did not live till the sixth century before Christ, and he measured the condition of his countrymen, in ages long gone by, according to the standard of his own days. He was a monotheist; and he held that the good or ill fortune of his people depended on nothing but attachment to Yahweh, or neglect of his service. That is the point of view from which he writes history. According to his representation, Israel had already been united into one nation and brought to pure monotheism by Moses; and had thus, with the powerful help of Yahweh, possessed itself of the land of Canaan without much difficulty. But the nation had fallen away from Yahweh afterwards and served other gods; and so Yahweh had given it over to foreign oppressors, or to the Canaanites themselves. Israel had thus been brought to its senses, and had turned again; Yahweh had raised up some valiant man, as a judge, to defeat

the enemy and bring about a fresh period of rest and peace. After the lapse of some time the circumstances had repeated themselves, and there had been the same idolatry on the part of Israel, and the same deliverance by Yahweh.

This representation is not only altogether unhistorical, but also psychologically impossible and unreasonable. That a nation, after once attaining to pure monotheism, should again and again fall back into polytheism, is inconceivable. Would any one deliberately serve other gods when he knew very well that they did not even exist, and that there was but one sole God? A pure monotheism is the overthrow of polytheism. Moreover, we know from other writings, much older than the Book of Judges, that the people did not attain to monotheism till many centuries later; so that there are ample reasons for not abandoning ourselves unconditionally to the guidance of the author of Judges. We may, indeed, learn from him what people thought in his day about the history of former times, but not what that history really was. Happily, however, he incorporated in his book certain passages of older, and some even of very ancient date, which give us more light; and from the sequel of Israel's history we can make out for certain what the state of affairs was in those olden times, at any rate in the main.

We have seen that, though Moses was by no means

a monotheist in the sense of denying the existence of other gods, he, nevertheless, preached Yahweh as the god of Israel, whom the nation was to worship to the exclusion of all other gods. But we cannot be surprised to find that the people was not yet sufficiently advanced to understand and appreciate Moses' point of view. The best men in the nation, the heads of the tribes, may have been led by the powerful influence of Moses, and the course of their own fortunes, to accept the religion of Yahweh, but the people itself stuck by the old gods and the old customs. The tribes, so slightly bound together in Goshen, were indeed brought into closer union by the worship of a common god and by their common exodus; but they soon resumed the old wandering life, which did not tend to strengthen their mutual ties. Things are not likely to have improved after the death of Moses. We may see how slight were the effects of their consciousness of a common origin and a common religion from the fact that, even in the conquest of Canaan, the tribes did not take the field together against the enemy, but fought either one tribe at a time, or at any rate only a few together. Of a nation, properly so called, there was as yet no trace; there were only tribes, which pressed forward as opportunity offered and drove the feebler enemy before them. Nor was the conquest of Canaan achieved in a single year, or in a short space of time. The country was slowly occupied bit by bit; the former inhabitants

were never altogether expelled, but almost everywhere succeeded in maintaining themselves. In some cases, indeed, they fell under the rule of the invaders, but in others they remained independent, or even got the upper hand. Thus, we cannot credit Joshua, the successor of Moses, with having taken the whole of Canaan and divided it among the tribes. He was only the most distinguished of the Israelitish chiefs; a man who, acting quite in the spirit of Moses, united a few tribes, and with them conquered part of Canaan.

From these general considerations we at once perceive what we must think of the narratives of the invasion and the establishment in Canaan. The author of the Book of Joshua tells us that Joshua, while still on the other side of the Jordan, united all the tribes, miraculously crossed right through that river with them, no less miraculously captured the city of Jericho, and after a few successful battles found himself master of the whole land. Thereupon he proceeded, so we are told, to divide Canaan among the tribes, and each tribe thenceforth enjoyed its inheritance undisturbed. We see how unhistorical all this is, when we remember that the Canaanites preserved their independence more than two centuries longer; it was only under Solomon that the last of them were thoroughly absorbed in Israel. Thus Joshua's activity must have been confined within a much narrower circle. A complete conquest of

Canaan—to say nothing of an extermination of the Canaanites—never entered his head. He sought and found there a dwelling for himself and his followers, but most of their enemies remained quite independent of them.

The Phœnicians in the north offered no opposition to the invasion of the Israelites; but neither did they suffer anything at their hands. As for the Philistines, not only did they keep their freedom, but they proved strong enough by and by to subject more than one tribe to their own rule. Jabin, the King of the Hazorites, oppressed Israel for many years. The Jebusites, the Gibeonites, and others remained quite independent throughout the whole period of the Judges. Now all this is proof enough that the whole land was not conquered by the Israelites.

When we say that the Israelites are not to be considered as one nation, or as an united whole, but only as a number of tribes, not merely independent of each other, but often hostile to one another, this does not hold good of Joshua's day only, but of much later times. From Deborah's song (Judges v.) which was composed in the period of the Judges, we see clearly how weak were the bonds that united the tribes. She was a most influential woman, thoroughly imbued with the spirit of Moses, a true servant of Yahweh, an enthusiastic advocate of Israelitish nationality. She judged Israel, and is described as "a mother in Israel." In her days Naphthali and

Zebulon were oppressed by Jabin, King of Hazor, and she encouraged the Israelites to resist him. Now, in the song referred to, she complains that the brethren did not help one another in the struggle with the common enemy (Judges v. 14-18, 23); and this shows that there was no national unity, and that the tribes were very loosely associated together. It was only by slow degrees that the need of a closer bond made itself felt, and that the best men in Israel showed themselves anxious for union. Thus, the period of the Judges may be called the period of the gradual establishment of an united nationality.

The tribes were not governed by the Judges, as is often supposed. The elders were the chiefs of the tribes, and the administration of justice was in their hands. The Judges were only the leaders who commanded one or more tribes, when they had to resist some enemy.

But it is time to notice the influence which the invasion of Canaan exercised upon the Israelites. It compelled most of them, at any rate, to choose settled dwelling-places. Some tribes, or sections of tribes, might prefer to keep up the old wandering life, but the majority were obliged to change their habits. The Canaanites were in a much more advanced state of civilization than they were, and had long lived in cities and villages. If the Israelites were to maintain themselves against them, they had nothing for it but to build villages and cities, too, and say

good-by to their wandering life. But when they took up their abode among the old inhabitants, their relations with them grew slowly more amicable here and there, and they even began to intermarry with them.

But another important step resulted from the settlement in Canaan, and the change in the habits of the Israelites: they began to apply themselves to agriculture. To say nothing of the influence which this had upon their civilization, it naturally led them to turn their thoughts more towards those gods of the country who made the field to yield its fruit. The worship of these gods by the Canaanites could not but exercise a strong influence on the Israelites, and some of them joined in it readily enough. We must not forget that the Canaanites were Semites just as much as they were, and thus came of a common stock; and as they spoke the same language, they had no difficulty in holding intercourse together. Now, the worship of Baal and Ashera, the god and goddess who presided over the forces of life and fruitfulness, prevailed among the Canaanites; and they worshiped Baal in joyous and noisy festivals of a very sensual kind. No wonder, then, that when the Israelites came into closer contact with the Canaanites, they fell into the worship of the gods of the country almost as a matter of course. This was all the more natural, because, as we know, they were by no means monotheists. According to their ideas, the

gods of other nations were just as much gods as their own tribal god, Yahweh. It is even possible that at this time they sometimes called their own god, Baal. So little difference was there in those days, according to their way of thinking, between the Canaanites' god and theirs. Thus, there was no difficulty in serving both together. They never thought of sticking for the exclusive worship of their own god; and the result was, that, during that period, the religion of the Israelites was a mixture of very various elements.

All the Israelites, however, did not ally themselves so closely with the Canaanites, or pass over so readily to the service of their gods. There were many who remained faithful to the old habits, and saw nothing but a lamentable falling off in the way in which their brethren entered into fellowship with the inhabitants of the land. This was the case most of all with those who kept to the nomadic life. With them, in all probability, the worship of Yahweh was preserved from foreign adulteration. They drew a contrast between the character of their own god, so strong and stern, but, at the same time, so pure, and the soft and sensual nature of Baal. They were zealous for what was ancient, national, Mosaic, as opposed to everything that could injure what was peculiar to Israel. In this struggle they were in a minority at first, but by degrees they increased in influence and power; and at the close of the period of the Judges, there

was an end to all danger that the Israelitish element would be swallowed up by the Canaanitish.

We will not go into details in considering the narratives which we find about the Judges in the book which is named after them. We will only notice a few minor indications, which reveal the religious features of the time as we have just sketched them. We have already mentioned Deborah in another connection; from the song which bears her name, we see that she knew how to inspire Barak, the Judge, and to fill the people with zeal for Yahweh. It is her earnest desire that Yahweh should be served as the god of Israel. In her, the love of the people and the love of the people's god coalesce. She labored entirely in the spirit of Moses, and exercised a most happy influence on her people.

In Gideon's own individual name, "Jerubbaal"—for "Gideon" is only a surname,—there is evidence that Baal was served in Israel in those days. There are a great many names compounded from Baal; but by and by, when people began to find this offensive, the "baal" was often changed into "bosheth," which means "shame."*

It is related of Jephthah, that he made a vow to sacrifice the first human being he met when he got home, to Yahweh, if only the latter would give him the victory over his enemies. And when he had

* For example, in "Ishbosheth" (2 Samuel ii. 8, &c.). [Tr.]

defeated them and was returning home, his daughter came out to meet him ; and he fulfilled his vow by slaying her. From this it appears that in those days human victims were offered to Yahweh, which is quite in keeping with the character assigned to him ; but it is equally clear that human sacrifice was already an exceptional thing, and did not often take place, so that Jephthah could regard it as likely to prove a powerful agency in securing Yahweh's favor.

The story of Samson and his deeds originated in a solar myth,* which was afterwards transformed by the narrator into a saga about a mighty hero and deliverer of Israel. The very name, "Samson," is derived from the Hebrew word that means "sun." The hero's flowing locks were originally the rays of the sun ; and other traces of the old myth have been preserved, pointing to a time when the worship of the sun, borrowed from the Canaanites, found a home among the Israelites. And this is one more proof of what we said above.

We know very little about the forms of worship which prevailed in the time of the Judges. Yahweh was worshiped at a great many places, in sanctuaries of larger or smaller dimensions ; and we find mention made of images of Yahweh there, which were probably images of a bull. At Shiloh there was

* See page 25, note. A *solar* myth is a myth in which the sun is the hero, and the alternations of cloud and sunshine, day and night, summer and winter, or similar phenomena, afford the basis for the adventures described. [Tr.]

a temple of Yahweh, in which the ark was kept. Towards the end of this period especially this ark seems to have been held in the deepest respect, if, that is, we may judge from the fact that in a certain war against the Philistines it was borne by two priests into the midst of the camp in order to make sure of victory. But the plan was not successful, and the priests forfeited their lives in their efforts to defend the ark against the enemy. All this goes to show that the worship of Yahweh was rising into higher and higher estimation. At this same Shiloh sacrifices were offered, and there were great festivals held yearly, with choral dances in honor of Yahweh. Any one might be a priest and offer sacrifice, but the Levites were preferred for the purpose.

The political condition of Israel towards the end of this period was such that the tribes began strongly to feel the need of closer union. There were many districts in which they could with difficulty maintain their footing against their enemies. Especially was this the case in the south, where the Philistines penetrated a long way into the Israelitish territory, and succeeded in reducing more tribes than one to subjection. And now there were not a few who began to see that the national existence of Israel was in peril, and that the only safety lay in harmonious action on the part of all the tribes. And religious considerations pointed in the same direction. To these we must now turn our attention; and it is

thus that we shall make acquaintance with the famous Samuel, and come to understand the part he played in the religious history of Israel.

CHAPTER VIII.

SAMUEL AND SAUL.

THE character and career of Samuel are sketched by a very friendly hand in the books which bear his name. The writer is certainly not always quite fair, and has obviously exalted his hero, especially at the expense of Saul. He gets all the credit, for instance, of delivering Israel out of the enemy's hands, though as a matter of fact it was Saul and David who accomplished this. But, for all that, Samuel's merit is really very great. His labors were carried on quite in the spirit of Moses: he stirred up the religious feeling of the nation, and the enthusiasm which he succeeded in imparting to others, he guided and preserved from running into excesses.. Samuel was the precursor of Saul and David, and it was he who made their work possible.

He was the son of Elkanah and Hannah, and belonged to the tribe of Ephraim. He was educated under Eli, the priest, at the sanctuary of Shiloh; and, after Eli's death, he rose to high distinction and

became very influential. He made his home at Ramah, where he labored as Judge ; and, unlike any of the previous Judges, he held courts of justice, and that not only in his own dwelling-place, but also in other places in the neighborhood.

It was in his days that that strong desire for political unity showed itself of which we have already spoken ; and at the same time a vigorous religious life was stirred up. There had always been worshipers of Yahweh, and he had always been looked upon as the national god ; but the gods of the Canaanites were served along with him, without any one seeing any harm in it, or supposing there could be any inconsistency in serving Yahweh at the same time. Now, however, the opinion was growing more and more common that the only 'salvation for Israel lay in serving Yahweh in the spirit of Moses, that is to say, to the exclusion of all other gods. Very probably this view was powerfully promoted by a presentiment that, if Israel allied itself too closely with the Canaanites, all that was peculiar to it, including the worship of Yahweh, would inevitably perish. This feeling declared itself in those Israelites especially who were most attached to the ancestral manners and the ancient habits of their tribes. As an indication of this, we may mention the powerful influence which Eli, the chief priest at Shiloh, where the ark of Yahweh was kept, exercised towards the close of this period, while we find no traces of any such respect

being paid to this sanctuary in earlier times. And with Eli's death the authority of the Shiloh priesthood was broken up,—a fact which must, indeed, be attributed in the first place to the feebleness and insignificance of the priests belonging to his family, but is due in part, also, to the removal of the ark to Kirjath-jearim, and afterwards to Jerusalem. The temple at Jerusalem totally eclipsed the ancient sanctuary of Shiloh.

Now, Samuel, who, on the death of Eli, rose to the highest pitch of influence and authority, was the representative of those new tendencies which were working so much in the spirit of Moses. With his whole soul he urged the service of Yahweh. Indeed, he would tolerate no other god in Israel. His whole career was actuated by these feelings. He stirred Israel up to resist the Philistines; and perhaps even went to battle against them himself. He preached that the Canaanites must be subdued, and, if possible, altogether extirpated, and that all the sons of Israel must be faithful to Yahweh.

It was about this time that the institution of the Nazirites, connected, as it was, with the movement of Samuel, arose. This was the name given to those who dedicated themselves to the service of Yahweh alone, while, in honor of him, they abstained from wine and strong drink and from cutting their hair. In this abstinence from wine we perceive an opposition to the service of the Canaanitish gods. For the

worship of the Baals was accompanied with the use of the product of the vine, and at their festivals this was carried to great excess. And so by his solemn vow to abstain from wine all his life, the Nazirite intended publicly to declare himself against the Baals. Samuel himself took the vow, as we are also told of Samson before him; and many others followed his example in those days, in fervent enthusiasm for Yahweh.

To Samuel's time, too, must be referred the rise of prophecy. We are not at present in a position to examine this phenomenon fully, and we shall recur to it by and by. But we must not defer the explanation of its origin. The word "nabi," which the Israelites used for a prophet, signifies one who is inspired and moved by the divine spirit. Probably the example of the Canaanites led to the rise of this kind of inspiration among the Israelites. At any rate, the Canaanites had their prophets too, and the Israelites were far from denying that a man might be inspired by other gods besides Yahweh. The only difference between what were called "true" and "false" prophets—between the early Israelitish prophets and those of the Canaanites—was, that the former were supposed to be inspired by Yahweh, and the latter by some other god.

The prophetic spirit manifested itself chiefly among young men. In powerful language they gave utterance to their zeal for Yahweh and his service, and they seem to have stirred up the prophetic fervor

with music and song. They banded themselves together in fixed localities, where they lived together. Some of them, too, were married. The societies which they thus formed are known as the "schools of the prophets." But we must not imagine that this term implies that they received any instruction; it was merely the name of the society. Later on, we find them called "the sons of the prophets," and find a "father" at their head.

Samuel seems to have given a very happy bent to their activity. Enthusiasm of this kind, as history teaches us by many examples, easily passes into fanaticism and excess, and afterwards degenerates into a dead formalism and a mere counterfeit of enthusiasm. The prophecy of Israel did not, indeed, escape this latter danger; but Samuel preserved it from the former. It is true that it was not Samuel who gave the first start to the growth of prophecy; for it originated among the Canaanites, or at all events sprang from the example of the native inhabitants, so that it did not begin in the spirit of Samuel. But, for all that, when once it had found its way into Israel, he guided it in accordance with the spirit of Moses. And thus—together with the institution of the Nazirites—it assisted in awakening the religious sentiment; and we may safely say that the influence which Samuel exercised on prophecy at its rise was auspicious in the extreme. But for him, it could not have grown so fair in later times; and it was he who

made it serve to arouse the sentiment of nationality. The prophets in the service of Yahweh believed in the calling of Israel to be Yahweh's people, and did all that in them lay to propagate and strengthen that belief. They collected the songs of the people, and infused their own feelings into the stories of the great events of the past. And they began to look upon the popular faith as a degeneration from the true, pure faith, which they themselves held, and which they took to be the ancient and original belief. Thus their thought and their labor tended in a definite direction, and, however one-sided they might be sometimes, they always recognized the true greatness of Israel and promoted it.

Samuel himself, too, is called a prophet. Indeed, the name is even applied to one so far back as Moses, while Deborah is described as a prophetess; and one other individual, though not indeed an historical personage, receives the title. But, from a note given in 1 Samuel ix. 9, it is clear that no one really bore the appellation of prophet before Samuel; for we there read that he who was called a prophet in Samuel's time, was previously called a "seer." Accordingly, when later writers call Moses and others before Samuel prophets, we must suppose that they are guilty of an anachronism. Samuel himself was a "seer" as well as prophet. That is to say, it was believed by himself and others that he could know hidden things and foretell future events. This belief in the seer's

knowledge of hidden things was general in antiquity, so that we need not be surprised to meet with it in Israel. Now, while the work of these seers was not connected with religion, the prophets differed from them in this respect entirely. Their purpose was, at bottom, something different from divining hidden things; their aim was higher,—they were zealous for Yahweh. They worked on a distinct religious principle, which in later ages gave rise to the loftiest religious thought.

So strong was the wish of the Israelites for a king towards the close of Samuel's life, that at last it brought about its own fulfillment. In the narratives which we possess, Samuel is represented to have opposed this wish, and to have given a reluctant consent only when he was at last obliged to do so; and Yahweh himself is made to disapprove of the popular desire, and only to allow the Israelites to choose a king in the end, when, in spite of all that Samuel could say, they still insisted on the fulfillment of their wish. The tradition itself did not give a consistent report of these particulars. In 1 Samuel, chapters viii. to xii., we find two very different and contradictory accounts of the election of Saul, the first king. According to one, Samuel anointed him on occasion of a chance meeting, while, according to the other, he was appointed king by lot at an assembly of the people. Thus we see how entirely men failed, at

a later time, to form a correct idea how it all happened. And, indeed, it was very difficult to do so; doubtless, the faithful worshipers of Yahweh in Samuel's time must have been very much opposed to the election of a king. Yahweh himself was king; and it might well be feared that the freedom of former ages and the ancient simplicity of manners would suffer by the institution of monarchy. And Samuel, we may be sure, was no partisan of the new form of government, nor was it at his instigation that Saul was appointed, though no doubt his influence made itself powerfully felt in the actual choice. The real pressure came from the political party. They, like the prophets and like Samuel, were desirous of establishing the unity and power of the nation. But Samuel sought this result from his religious principles alone, from the struggle in favor of Yahweh, and against everything Canaanitish. The political party, on the other hand, were not interested in such a struggle, for they feared it must weaken Israel, and they wished for a king solely because they desired the unity of the nation and looked upon it as the best safeguard against enemies at home and abroad. Thus, up to a certain point, the two tendencies told the same way, and each was auxiliary to the other; the unaided efforts of Samuel could never have made Israel a great and powerful nation, while, but for him, the true development of the Yahweh religion would have been impossible. But when at last he found

himself obliged to yield, he took care that a king was chosen who sympathized with him in sentiment and in principle. And if the selection of Saul was not at first so universally approved as could have been wished, when once it was perceived that he was the right man to conduct Israel to unity and power, all acquiesced in the choice.

Saul was the son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, which dwelt in the heart of the land. Perhaps the fact that he belonged to so small a tribe was not without influence in his elevation to the throne, for it removed all fear of the mutual jealousy of the larger tribes. A very successful campaign which Saul conducted, with a view to the deliverance of the city of Jabesh, in Gilead, attracted general attention to him, and at once conferred upon him much authority and power. He went on with the work of Israel's liberation, which he had thus begun, and fought many a successful battle against the Philistines. This naturally brought him into great favor in the eyes of the national party, and, on the whole, short as his reign was, he managed to win the attachment of his people to a remarkable degree, as we may gather from the faithful loyalty manifested towards the son who succeeded him on his death.

At first, too, Saul was on the best of terms with Samuel. And, indeed, it was only to be expected that he should be. It was in no small measure

Samuel's doing that he had been chosen king, and with all the strength of his conviction he shared Samuel's views. He was zealous for Yahweh; he pursued the Philistines and the Canaanites with fire and sword; he was bent on making Israel great and powerful.

But it was not long before a change came about in the relations of these two men. They had a disagreement, which led at last to an open breach. We cannot trace its cause with certainty; what we are told about it does not deserve to be believed in all particulars. According to one account (1 Samuel xiii.), Saul was rejected by Yahweh because he had disobeyed a command of Samuel to wait seven days for him before he offered his sacrifice to Yahweh. According to another account (1 Samuel xv.), Saul had been commanded to make war upon the Amalekites and to lay the *ban* (or "cherem") upon them, that is, utterly to extirpate them. Every human being and every animal was to be put to death. Saul discharges his commission and puts all to death except Agag, the king of the Amalekites, whom he carries off prisoner, while he also preserves some of the cattle, and leads them away for the purpose of offering them up to Yahweh. But this was contrary to Yahweh's orders, and so Samuel is commanded to announce to Saul that Yahweh has rejected him. The prophet goes to Saul, informs him of his rejection, and with his own hands hews Agag to pieces in honor of Yahweh.

This version of the affair belongs to much later times, when people did not know how to explain what had happened, and looked for its cause in a direct rejection of Saul by Yahweh. If we were obliged to accept this story, we should think better of Saul's behavior than of Samuel's. Probably, however, there is a germ of truth in this representation, and it is this,—that the ground of Samuel's enmity is to be sought in a change in Saul's opinions. Though the latter had at first been as zealous as Samuel himself, he soon began to think that such zeal would tend, not so much to strengthen as to weaken Israel. It seemed to him that it would be better to absorb the Canaanites into Israel than to exterminate them, as Samuel proposed. Why should they all be destroyed when they might surely help so much in increasing the strength of Israel against its enemies? Saul, who had formerly, with Samuel, given the preference to religious considerations, now began to be guided more by political ones. Perhaps, too, he was growing tired of the over-ruling influence of Samuel and his party, and this told in the same direction. It is certain that at a later time he set himself against the prophets, and also put a great many priests to death. No wonder, then, that the party of the strict Yahweh-worshippers began to oppose him, seeing that they could no longer expect any good from him.

And so these two found themselves opposed to one another in spite of their former friendship. Nor did

they bring the quarrel to a conclusion. Samuel died, and he was soon followed by Saul, who was wounded in an unsuccessful battle against the Philistines, and, in his despair, put an end to his life with his own hand. Three of his sons, including the famous Jonathan, died at the same time. If we must render high respect to Samuel, Saul, too, holds an honorable place in the history of his people. Though he had sprung from the soil, the splendor of a court could not spoil the simplicity of his character. He never became an Oriental despot. He possessed both tact and courage, and he manfully contributed his share towards the greatness and glory of his people.

CHAPTER IX.

DAVID AND SOLOMON.

IT is time to direct our attention to David, that famous king who exercised so powerful an influence on the growth and progress of Israel. He was the youngest son of Jesse, a man of Bethlehem, which was a city of Judah. While Saul was still alive he had come to court, and for a long time he had been held in great respect there. According to one of the two accounts given of his introduction to Saul, he attracted the king's attention by his glorious combat

with Goliath, the Philistine. According to the other account, the courtiers brought David to the king to play the harp before him, at which he was very skillful, thus affording Saul a desirable diversion in the low spirits which troubled him towards the end of his life.

David became conspicuous by his extraordinary valor in war, and more and more attracted the notice of the people. This led Saul to regard him with suspicion. On the march home from a certain battle the strain had been raised, "Saul hath slain his thousands, but David his tens of thousands." This aroused the liveliest suspicions on the part of the king; and David, though he had contracted a close friendship with Saul's son, Jonathan, felt that he was no longer safe at court, and fled to the wilderness of Judah, where other fugitives speedily joined him to the number of four hundred. Saul pursued him, and although David found a secure retreat among the holes and caverns of the mountains, and once magnanimously spared the life of Saul, still he could not hold out for long, and was obliged to take refuge in the country of Israel's bitterest enemies, the Philistines. And one of their kings gave him the city of Ziklag to dwell in.

We may mention, moreover, in passing, that, being afraid of Saul, David brought his parents to the king of the Moabites, with whom they lived in security (1 Samuel xxii. 3, 4); which shows that he was on very

good terms with that monarch. We refer to this circumstance because, in the Book of Ruth, which was written at a later time, it is said that David's family was related to the Moabites through his great-grandmother, who was one of them. It would seem, then, that this tradition, of which we shall say more by and by, is founded on an historical fact.

It was but natural that nothing short of absolute necessity should induce David to leave his fatherland. Men thought, in those days, that in Israel alone could Yahweh, Israel's god, be served. His power and dominion did not extend beyond Israel's boundaries. Outside those limits reigned other gods. And so he who left his country, at the same time left his god; the Israelite in the land of the stranger was an Israelite no more.

We see this clearly enough in a conversation between David and Saul (1 Samuel xxvi. 19), where the former says: "If Yahweh have stirred thee up against me, let him smell an offering," that is, turn his anger away by bringing him an offering; "but if they be men that set thee at enmity against me, cursed be they, because they are for driving me out from abiding in the inheritance of Yahweh, and they say to me, Go, serve other gods." When we hear him express such views as these, we can hardly be surprised that nothing short of necessity could make him leave his fatherland, and the more so that he could already count so many faithful friends and retainers there.

It is not likely that David made any attempts to obtain the crown for himself during the life of Saul. Saul was too securely fixed in the hearts of the majority of the people, and David himself honored him as the anointed of Yahweh. But circumstances marked him out as the leader of all such as could not reconcile themselves with Saul's opinions and tendencies. We have seen above how an estrangement gradually came about between Saul and the prophets, with Samuel at their head. Saul began to see that these enthusiasts, who were for the extirpation of the Canaanites, were more likely to weaken than to strengthen Israel. A coldness ensued, and even distinct opposition. What could be more natural than that the party of the prophets should look to David? He was the man marked out; he was appointed, so to speak, by the circumstances of his life, to serve the good cause. It was represented in later times that Samuel himself had consecrated David as king; such an account is, indeed, quite unhistorical, but it is perfectly true that the prophets supported David in his opposition to Saul. The prophet Gad, warns him not to stay in his hiding-place for fear of a surprise from Saul; Abiathar, the priest, flees to David, and accompanies him on all his expeditions. This same Abiathar was the only one who had escaped from a massacre of the priests of Yahweh at Nob, instituted by Saul, in which eighty-five priests perished; and this massacre is

pretty good evidence of the hostility which had arisen between Saul and the party of Yahweh. Thus everything concurred to unite David with these men, and perhaps, by his very persecutions, Saul himself played no slight part in establishing David as the leader of his opponents.

The sojourn in Ziklag did not last long. When David received the news of Saul's death, he returned to his Fatherland, and he was anointed king at Hebron, the chief city of Judah, by delegates from the different cities belonging to that tribe. The greater part of the people, however—in fact the whole of the northern part of the country—remained true to Saul's son, Ishbosheth, or, as his real name was, Eshbaal. This Ishbosheth was an insignificant man; but the fact that the people did homage to him as king says a great deal for Saul, who had established himself so firmly in the affections of his subjects that they would not desert his family.

David's power greatly increased at Hebron, while that of Ishbosheth rapidly diminished, especially when Abner, who had been Saul's chief general, deserted him. Ishbosheth met his end at the hand of assassins; and the voice of the people declared more and more decidedly in favor of David, so that the delegates of the different tribes very soon came to Hebron, and there did homage to him as king.

David reigned at Hebron for seven years. After the lapse of that time he established his court at

Jerusalem. This city had formerly been called Jebus, and had hitherto remained in the hands of a Canaanitish tribe, known as Jebusites. Its position was an admirable one, and so strong, that it was a common saying on the part of its inhabitants, that the blind and the lame could defend it. Yet David undertook the siege, and showed such valor and such strategy that he was very soon master of the city. And there its unusually advantageous position induced him to set up his seat of government. The site included two hills; and on one of these, Zion, which was afterwards called the city of David, he built himself a palace, and he brought thither the ark of the covenant.

After his removal to Jerusalem, David waged many successful wars. Saul, in his time, had organized a small force as a sort of standing army, and had thus broken with the old custom of sending all the men home after a war. This was a very advantageous measure, for Israel was now prepared for defence or attack at a moment's notice. So David followed Saul's example. He established a body-guard, called the Cherethites and Pelethites; and, in addition to these, he had a very valiant band of picked men, who always remained true to him. He gradually extended his power; he began by subduing all enemies at home, so as to secure to Israel a complete supremacy over the Canaanitish elements of the nation. Indeed, after Solomon, we hear no more about them. David

afterwards advanced against his foreign foes and carried on his wars against them so successfully that he extended the boundaries of his kingdom as far as the Euphrates. With the Phœnicians he concluded a treaty which remained in force all through his life.

Of course all this gained for David the cordial affection of his people. But they did not love him quite so deeply as is represented by later writers who saw in him an ideal king. An Oriental monarchy involves many oppressive burdens for the people. His subjects were obliged to provide for the requirements of the royal household, which were by no means trifling; and if the inhabitants of Judah found some compensation in having the king living amongst them, the rest of the Israelites were often weary of the burden. Whatever share they might have in the glory of their prince's wars, David's government seems on the whole to have given them no little ground for complaint. It is to this that we must trace the success that attended an insurrection led by Absalom, one of David's sons, when he actually succeeded in forcing his father to flee from Jerusalem and in getting himself proclaimed king. Soon afterwards, however, he was slain in a battle with David, and his forces were beaten. This was a happy event for the unity of the kingdom, for civil war would soon have brought it to an end.

It is not very easy to estimate the influence which

David exercised upon the religious condition of Israel. If we rely upon the accounts of later writers and accept their estimate of David, we find him a man after God's own heart, and after him was no king like him. And, again, if we base our opinion of him on the psalms which bear his name, he was a man of extraordinary piety and of heartfelt religion. Many of these psalms are marked by a pure and highly cultivated religious sentiment, and if they are really the work of David, they give us an exalted idea of his religious thought and feeling. But this is at variance with all that history tells us of him. He was a thorough soldier, rude and fierce, and of vehement passions; his deeds give no sign of profound religious sentiment or of extraordinary spiritual attainments. And, indeed, an impartial investigation shows that it is a mistake to suppose that he composed these psalms. It is highly probable that not one of the seventy-three psalms that bear his name is really his. It is true he was a poet (a song of his has been preserved outside the collection of psalms), so that at a later time he figured in the thoughts of the people as the father of the psalmists; but what he really composed were songs of war and love.

The glory, too, which was ascribed to him by later generations was very much exaggerated and not justified by history. We shall see by and by how his memory came to be so exalted; for the present, we need only observe that he did not by any means stand

before the most advanced of his contemporaries, and that the story of his life shows that his religious ideas were far from being so pure as was supposed in the eighth century before Christ and afterwards.

But if David can no longer wear all the laurels with which he was crowned by the traditions of the people and the partiality of their pride, this does not detract from his real merits. On the contrary, it is thus only that he is restored to his proper rights. If he had really composed those beautiful psalms and exhibited such exalted piety as was afterwards ascribed to him, the fierce and dissolute and violent deeds which he perpetrated would be quite inexplicable. In that case we should have to look upon him as an impossible character, combining gentleness, tenderness, and intense piety with a disposition rude and rough, animated by sensual passion and the thirst of blood. But, as it is, we must judge him, not by the standard of those who sang his praises in a later age, but by that of the times in which he lived and the stage of religious development which had then been reached. And to those who contemplate David from this point of view, he is really a great man. We have already seen that he enjoyed the support of the prophets and had attached himself to their party and to their religious movement. And in this he never wavered. Perhaps his constancy may be ascribed in part to political reasons; for David saw clearly enough that he could look to the prophetic party for powerful

support. The course of events had from the first tended to bring this about. Saul's hostility to David had increased in proportion to his estrangement from the prophets. What, then, could be more natural than for David to attach himself to the prophets, and for them in their turn to fix on the opponent of Saul their hopes of the realization of their views? In later days David thoroughly understood that nothing could be happier for him than an alliance with the prophets. Thus it is open to any one to say that his motives were political; his wish was to make Israel great and to strengthen the foundations of his dominion. But for this purpose it was essential to promote the national unity; and this was done partly by the wars which he waged with such admirable success, but in no small measure also by strengthening the sympathies of the Israelites with the followers of Samuel and leading them to feel that they must be Yahweh's people. Thus much David perceived, that the service of Yahweh as the national god could not but draw the Israelites closer together and increase their feeling of national unity. But this was just what the prophets wanted; and, happily, circumstances had so far changed since Saul's time, that there was nothing to lead to any collision between them and the king. Samuel had wished that the Canaanites should be extirpated; but Saul, though he had at first shared the feeling, had afterwards perceived that their extirpation would weaken Israel too much, and that his

kingdom could not afford to lose its Canaanitish element. And then Saul and Samuel had quarreled. But in David's time the Canaanites were no longer anything like so important as they had been in Saul's. Partly through the activity of the prophets, and partly, too, through Saul's assistance, the Israelitish element had everywhere gained in strength; it had got the upper hand so completely that the prophets had no longer any need to urge the extirpation of the Canaanites. They were gathered up into Israel and absorbed by that people; and thus the occasion for a quarrel like that with Saul had vanished.

Thus, for David, policy and religion pointed in the same direction; and the removal of the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem must be regarded from the same point of view. This ark had formerly been kept in the sanctuary at Shiloh, and after many changes of fortune it had come to Kirjath-jearim. By way of promoting the unity of the Yahweh-worship, David brought it to Jerusalem, his seat of government, and set a priesthood over it. The sacrifices offered at Jerusalem and the festivals celebrated there brought the people together, increased the authority and influence of the priests, and gave the national service of Yahweh a centre, which helped to cement the nation together, and afterwards played no small part in further developing the religion of Israel.

Now, though it is of course quite true that all this served, as we have said, to promote the power and

the union of the kingdom, yet this would not justify us in supposing that David's motives were solely political. On the contrary, everything combines to make it clear that he was himself a faithful adherent of Yahweh, and that in bringing the ark of his god to Jerusalem, he intended to carry on his worship with new splendor. Only, we must be on our guard against fancying on this account that he shared the pure conceptions of the prophets of a subsequent age, or that he could be called a monotheist. David was a child of his own times. He believed in the existence of the gods of other nations just as much as in that of Yahweh ; but he held that Yahweh was the god of Israel, and that it was for Israel to serve him. We find in David no trace of a spiritual idea of Yahweh's nature. From the story of the transportation of the ark it is plain that David supposed he was bringing Yahweh himself into his capital with the ark. To him Yahweh is the mighty and terrible being who sends extraordinary disasters to punish sin, and whose anger must be appeased by sacrificial offerings. From this point of view the narrative in 2 Samuel xxi. is very instructive and well calculated to acquaint us with the opinions which David held in common with his contemporaries. In a certain famine the king and his people saw an indication of the wrath of Yahweh ; and they felt that he must somehow or other be appeased. The oracle declares that the cause of Yahweh's displeasure lies in a transgression

on the part of Saul, who had put some Gibeonites to death and escaped unpunished for the deed. The penalty could not be remitted ; but Saul was no longer living to make atonement for his sin. So seven of Saul's sons and grandsons were put to death by David instead of him, at the request of the Gibeonites, as an offering to appease Yahweh. We see clearly enough from this narrative how Yahweh was regarded at that time ; he was a stern, fierce god ; he was easily provoked, and sent heavy calamities to punish sin ; but he could be appeased by human sacrifices. Nor does this story give us the slightest reason to ascribe to David better knowledge than his contemporaries possessed.

David reigned for forty years and died at Jerusalem, after appointing his son, Solomon, to succeed him. When we contemplate him in the light of the age in which he lived, we cannot deny him the glory of a great statesman, a valiant warrior, and an upright and zealous servant of Yahweh. But, for all that, we must not overlook his faults. In domestic life he showed himself feeble and destitute of the courage necessary for the punishment of the guilty. He was no stranger to the passion of revenge. His religious ideas were by no means unusually advanced. And thus, however high a place we may assign him in virtue of the powerful influence which he exerted on the history and the progress of Israel, those after generations which looked upon him as the ideal of an Israelitish king made a great mistake.

The reign of Solomon seems in many respects to form a contrast to that of David. The latter was a warrior, the former a man of peace. David remained zealous to the last in his loyalty to Yahweh and his friendship to the prophets; but we read that Solomon in his old age fell away from Yahweh, and thus lost the support of the prophets. We shall see, however, that there was less difference in policy and religious opinions than might be supposed between the two kings, and that what difference there was is completely explained by circumstances. David had made Israel great and powerful by his wars, while Solomon reaped the benefit and made the glory of Israel still more conspicuous; but both were guided by the same policy. Solomon favored the worship of Yahweh, but did not uphold it exclusively; he built a temple for Yahweh, but for other gods as well. Now, it is true that we do not read that David worshiped other gods, but we know that he acknowledged their existence just as much as Solomon. In fact, there is no such great difference between them; and we should be less struck by what difference there is, if posterity had not conceived a mistaken idea of Solomon, just as it did of David. If we do not wish, then, to go wrong, we must begin by letting the facts speak for themselves, and try to form a correct notion of the condition of the Israelitish people under this famous monarch.

Solomon preserved almost the same boundaries as

had been established by his father. By way of strengthening the kingdom he fortified several cities which he had either built or restored, and maintained a standing army of no inconsiderable size for those days. A regular government was instituted. He was at peace with the princes of the neighboring states, and he contracted marriage with several foreign princesses, the king of Egypt's daughter being amongst the number. In addition to all this, he brought the last of the Canaanites, who even in David's time had enjoyed a kind of independence, into complete subjection. Of course all these things increased his fame and glory, and the name of Israel came to be spoken with respect by foreigners.

Moreover, Solomon began to direct his attention to commerce, which soon attained to large proportions. Up to this time Israel had had nothing that could properly be called commerce. Continual wars had made it impossible in David's time; and, before that, Israel was as yet too rude and uncivilized to apply itself to trade. But times were changed now. Solomon had formed treaties with the surrounding nations, and as he wanted a great many things which his own country did not produce, he endeavored to procure them from his friends in foreign parts.

It was thus that commerce arose; and Solomon acquired such great treasure by it, that his wealth became proverbial. The result was, that the Israelites came to have more intercourse with foreigners, and

their views were enlarged, and their knowledge and civilization improved; while foreigners, on the other hand, became better acquainted with the Israelites, and began to have a more exalted idea of their power and splendor. We have a token of this in the friendly attitude of Egypt and Phœnicia, both of which were far in advance of Israel at the time, and in the journey undertaken by the Queen of Sheba, in Arabia, in her anxiety to make acquaintance with Solomon, whose praises she had heard so loudly spoken.

If we bethink ourselves how closely the conception of Yahweh was connected with the growth of the national civilization, we shall easily perceive what influence this new state of things must have exercised on the religious opinions of Israel. Even in David's time a higher idea of Yahweh had been reached; for his wars—which were known as “the wars of Yahweh”—had made Israel great, and as the nation became conscious of its own increased greatness, it began to believe more strongly in the power of its god. It rose to a higher notion of what that god could achieve, now that it saw that he could make his people great and famous. Yahweh had grown great with his people. And under Solomon things proceeded further still in the same direction. The Israelites became more and more important in their own eyes, and began to feel their own dignity. The splendor of Jerusalem, and the brilliancy of a monarch whose fame even foreigners acknowledged, led

the nation to a more exalted sense of power; and the mental development and the civilization which accrued could not fail to react upon their religious conceptions. The season of rude strength—of barbarism—was gone by forever; mental and spiritual progress had begun, and gave promise of magnificent fruit in time to come. No wonder, then, that Israel began henceforth to form loftier ideas of Yahweh's power, and, ere long, of his nature too.

But it is time to tell how Solomon built a temple to Yahweh at Jerusalem. According to the writer of 2 Samuel, chapter vii., David himself had formed a project for the erection of such a temple, but although Nathan, the prophet, approved of the scheme at first, he came the next day to inform the king that Yahweh did not wish for a temple. Yahweh had, from the most ancient times, wandered from place to place in a tent, and had never desired to have a temple built for him. Solomon should do this work, so said Nathan, by and by, instead of David.

This story contradicts itself. For if Yahweh did not wish for a temple, why should Solomon build one? But it suggests to us that the strictly religious or prophetic party was not very well pleased with the idea of building this sanctuary. They dreaded the luxury and splendor of the new worship, and felt that the simplicity of the old times, when Yahweh still dwelt in a tent, was better and more pleasing to Yahweh himself.

In full accord with this is the fact that Solomon was actuated in no small measure by political motives in building the temple. He saw that the erection of a magnificent temple to Yahweh, and the establishment of an influential priesthood, could not fail to add lustre to his government and his capital. The sacrifices offered there, and the festivals there celebrated — and probably the three great festivals of the Israelites were instituted by him — drew together the inhabitants of different parts of the country, and not only strengthened the hold of the Yahweh-worship upon them more and more, but at the same time impressed them deeply with the splendor and power of the king. Thus religion once more proved a useful political instrument. Nor must we see in this any insincerity on the part of Solomon. He honored Yahweh as the god of Israel, and was genuinely anxious to promote his service; and his earnestness is in no way impaired by the fact that every stone which he added to the temple, with this end in view, told likewise towards the consolidation of his own kingdom.

The temple was a marvelously imposing and magnificent building for those early times. We can form no accurate idea of its arrangements, because it was so often altered and embellished; and the accounts which we now possess are of much later date. It is true that the author of Exodus xxv. describes the tabernacle in the wilderness in such terms as to make

it appear that its plan and that of Solomon's temple coincided ; but this account proves nothing with regard to the one or the other, for it was not written till the age subsequent to the captivity, and it follows the plan of the temple that was then standing at Jerusalem. Solomon's temple, on the Hill of Moriah, was built of stone, and wainscoted internally with cedar-wood from Lebanon. In the centre was a wooden erection, the true sanctuary, divided into "the Holy" and "the Holy of Holies." In the latter stood the ark, above which were two cherubs, symbolical animal forms, the probable signification of which we have already explained.* Other symbols of a like kind, borrowed from nature-worship, were to be found all about the temple.

From one thing and another, we see that to Solomon's mind Yahweh and the Semitic gods were not widely different in character. Foreign workmen and artists from Phœnicia built his temple, and decorated it with symbols borrowed from their own religion ; proof enough that neither the king, nor those who carried out the work for him, were conscious of any such difference. And, indeed, as a matter of fact, not only was Solomon no monotheist, but he had no very exalted idea of Yahweh. He built smaller temples, not far from Jerusalem, for other gods as well—the gods of his foreign friends—one for Astarte, the goddess of the Zidonians ; another for

* See page 36.

Chemosh, the god of the Moabites ; and another for Milcom, the god of the Ammonites. He felt no difficulty in combining the worship of these other gods with that of Yahweh. Nor did he act thus — as the writer of 1 Kings xi. would have us believe — in his old age, led away by his foreign wives, but he did it in full accordance with what were, from the first, his religious convictions. In the temple at Jerusalem itself Yahweh alone seems to have been worshiped in his time, although some of the later kings set up images of Ashera and of Baal even there. But Solomon never in any degree whatever upheld the exclusive worship of Yahweh.

Attached to the temple there was a priesthood. The priests were, no doubt, chosen by preference from the tribe of Levi, although this was not insisted on. Every Israelite was at this time permitted to offer sacrifice, and the king did so frequently. It was only at a later epoch that this became the exclusive right of the priests, and that the offering of sacrifice was confined to Jerusalem. In Solomon's time, and for centuries after him, offerings were made on the "bamoth" or high places, just as much as in the temple. Nor as yet was any distinction drawn between Levites and priests ; all were equally qualified to perform the sacrificial offerings.

Solomon is celebrated also as the first of the "sages" of Israel. Those were known as "sages"

who were possessed of a skillful understanding, a ready wit, and keen powers of observation, and knew how to give lessons of wisdom in daily life. And posterity regarded Solomon as a "sage" after this fashion to an extraordinary degree, and supposed him to be the writer of the Book of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. We shall refer to these books again by and by, and can here only assure the reader that it is a mistake to ascribe them to Solomon. The wisdom or "chokma" of Solomon was of a very different kind to that of the following centuries which has been preserved to us—for example, in the Book of Proverbs. The latter bears a religious stamp, and is connected with the worship of Yahweh; but the wisdom of Solomon was worldly, and had nothing to do with religion. We must especially avoid estimating it too highly, or measuring it by what we in our day should call wisdom. With Solomon it consisted, in the first place, in the acuteness of his judgments, of which we have an example in 1 Kings iii. 16–28; in the next place, in his aptitude for solving enigmas; and lastly, in his sayings about plants and animals. It was said of him, subsequently, that he had composed three thousand proverbs and one thousand and five songs. This is certainly very much exaggerated; but it affords good ground for regarding him as the first of the "sages" of Israel, to whom those of later times could look back as their great predecessor.

From this, too, we gather that Solomon's tendencies

were by no means identical with those of the prophetic party. He was no more exclusive or strenuously Israelitish in politics than he was in religion; indeed, he might rather be said to be cosmopolitan, and human rather than national. If his spirit had become predominant, the peculiar character of Israel and of the Israelitish religion would very soon have vanished, and Israel would have coalesced with the surrounding peoples. It was a happy thing, on the one hand, that his powerful government strengthened the belief in Yahweh's might and grandeur; and no less happy was it, on the other hand, that, thanks to the prophets, Israel preserved its peculiar religion and rose at last to a pure monotheism, such as no other people of antiquity ever reached.

CHAPTER X.

REHOBAM AND THE DISRUPTION OF THE KINGDOM.

SOLOMON died in the year 978 before our era. While the southern part of the country at once acknowledged his son, Rehoboam, as his successor on the throne, the northern tribes made difficulties. Rehoboam had gone to Shechem, the ancient capital of the north of Israel, to receive homage as king. The representatives of the ten tribes came to him, however, with demands for the lightening of the

national burdens, while they sent to Egypt for Jero-boam, the son of Nebat, who had raised an insurrection in Solomon's lifetime, and had been obliged to take refuge in flight. He now placed himself at the head of the malcontents in opposition to Rehoboam. After taking counsel, the latter announced by way of reply to the representatives of the northern tribes, that he could not accede to their requests, but would make their yoke yet more grievous than it had been in the days of his father. This was the signal for revolt. Ten tribes renounced the sovereignty of Rehoboam. It was in vain that he endeavored to regain the allegiance of the rebels; there was nothing for it but to take flight with all speed to Jerusalem.

To discover the cause of this revolt, it is clear that we must recur to an earlier date, and seek it in the reign of Solomon himself. And, indeed, this king had aroused a great deal of discontent among those who dwelt in the northern parts of the country. Nor must we forget that there had never been much sympathy between the north and the south. In the period of the Judges the tribes had felt hardly any interest in each other; Ephraim, the most powerful of the northern tribes, had exercised a kind of supremacy in the north, similar to that of Judah in the south. United for a short time under Saul, and after his death once more dissevered, under David and Solomon they had at last become one kingdom. But the old jealousy was not extinct. It is true

that the military fame and power of David had preserved his authority intact, and in like manner Solomon's splendor had at first made all attempts at resistance impossible, and afterwards speedily suppressed them. But still the fire smouldered. The taxes which had to be paid to provide for the formidable requirements of the king's court, and the compulsory labor which had to be supplied for the building of the strong places, for the preparation of the pleasure-grounds and palaces, and above all for the temple, made the yoke a heavy one. And the Israelite was too fond of liberty, and remembered too well his olden independence, to submit to such a yoke permanently. Moreover, all the advantages of the new state of things fell to Judah; there stood the temple, and there was the seat of government; and Judah had its share in the treasures of the king and in the luxury of the royal court. Almost all the offices and appointments, too, were enjoyed by Solomon's fellow-tribesmen. And all these circumstances strongly inflamed the jealousy of Ephraim. No wonder, then, that the fire which had so long been smouldering at last burst into full blaze.

And there were other causes which operated in the same direction. We are told in the eleventh chapter of the first Book of Kings how Ahijah, the prophet, a Shilonite, announced to Jeroboam that he should be king over the ten tribes of Israel. The address put into the mouth of the prophet is, no doubt, unhis-

torical, since it is full of the ideas of later times, but it is an indication that the prophets were not passive in this matter. They supported the revolt, and helped Jeroboam against Rehoboam; they were induced by their religious principles to come forward on this occasion as a political party.

It is easy to understand what feelings actuated the prophets and their friends. We have already seen that they were not much pleased with the building of the temple, because it conflicted with their attachment to the simplicity of the ancient service. Indeed, the whole tendency of Solomon's government went against the grain with them, for it seemed as if he wanted to get rid of everything that was peculiar to Israel, and to put the worship of Yahweh on the same level with that of the rest of the gods; while they, cherishing, as they did, the spirit of Moses and of Samuel, were anxious to preserve all lines of demarcation between Israel and the surrounding peoples. The Canaanites they held accursed; they hated commerce for the changes it made in the simple manners of old; and the worship of strange gods was in their eyes abomination. On these grounds they supported Jeroboam; for they hoped from him the restoration of the ancient ways and of the sole worship of Yahweh.

The two kingdoms were of different size. Jeroboam's authority extended not only over the ten tribes, but over the conquered districts of the north as well; though

these ere long recovered their independence. Rehoboam reigned over Judah, to which a large part of the tribe of Benjamin was added. This tribe was, indeed, connected by descent, and by sympathy as well, with the north: Benjamin was the full brother of Joseph, that is, of Ephraim and Manasseh. But the city of Jerusalem stood on the territory of Benjamin, so that that district was, so to speak, welded to Judah, and could not attach itself to Ephraim. The Simeonites, too, who no longer constituted a distinct tribe, belonged to Judah; and we must add to these the Edomites, who had been conquered by David.

If religion had so much to do with the disruption itself, we cannot be surprised that it exercised a distinct influence on the subsequent march of events. We perceive this at once in the fact that Jeroboam introduced new forms of worship. He founded or restored two sanctuaries, one at Dan, in the north, and the other at Bethel, in the south of his kingdom. In these temples he placed the images of a bull, overlaid with gold, as symbols of Yahweh. Besides this, he issued instructions that his subjects should henceforth keep the harvest-festival in the eighth month at Dan and Bethel, although at Jerusalem it was celebrated in the seventh month. By these measures he widened still further the breach between the two kingdoms.

This bull-worship was the ancient form of the wor-

ship of Yahweh. Jeroboam set himself against the tendencies of Solomon, who had acted in defiance of the traditions handed down from ancestral times. Indeed, Jeroboam went further still. Bull-worship, though a genuine Israelitish institution, had never been the official worship. Although it may have been carried on in some of the smaller temples, it had never occurred to David to introduce it generally. But this was done by Jeroboam. He went back to the time of the Judges. Nay, he did more: he made bull-worship the state-religion. A later historian reckons this against him as a sin, and always speaks of "the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat;"* but we must not be guided by his opinion. What he condemned was at the time approved. None of Jeroboam's subjects offered any opposition. On the contrary, the great majority unquestionably applauded him for his attachment to the ancestral worship.

Still, it may be asked whether the attitude of the prophets towards the king was in nowise modified by the introduction of this bull-worship. But we cannot answer the question with any certainty. On the one hand, it appears that the prophets Elijah and Elisha, who flourished at the end of the tenth and the beginning of the ninth centuries before Christ, by no means opposed the bull-worship, and it was only in the eighth century that some of the most advanced of

* 1 Kings, xvi. 26, 31; xxii. 52; 2 Kings, iii. 3; x. 29; xiii. 2, 11; xiv. 24; xv. 9, 18, 24, 28.

the prophets preached against it, a proof, one would think, that the great majority saw no harm in it. But, at the same time, it is certainly possible that the conduct of Jeroboam was disapproved of by the prophets of his day: in the Book of Kings* we are told that a certain prophet of Judah, whose name is not given, as well as Ahijah, did disapprove of it. But we cannot place much confidence in the statements, for both the narratives are of a later date and have been embellished. At all events, the opposition was not violent, and soon left off altogether.

Of course, the mutual relations of the two kingdoms could not be of the most friendly kind. At first, indeed, they were distinctly hostile, and Jeroboam seems to have conceived the design of bringing Judah into subjection to himself. But in this he did not succeed; and, however small Judah might be, it generally contrived to maintain its independence. Continuing under the same dynasty, that of David, it escaped those court-intrigues and assassinations which were to Ephraim so terrible a source of weakness. Once only does Judah appear to have been subjugated by its stronger neighbor, and that was in the reigns of Jehoash and Jeroboam the Second. But circumstances were more favorable to Judah, to judge from the fact that it maintained its national existence for about 150 years longer than Ephraim.

There were seasons, however, of reconciliation

* 1 Kings, xiii. xiv.

between the sister nations. Some kind of intercourse, especially on the frontier, no doubt there always was; but in the time of Ahab, whose daughter married the king of Judah, their relations were distinctly those of friendship.

The condition of religion, too, remained more tranquil in Judah than in Israel or Ephraim. In the latter, as we shall presently see, a fierce struggle was carried on concerning the worship of Yahweh, a struggle which was of the utmost moment in the further development of the Israelitish religion, and most important from an historical point of view. In that struggle the very existence of the Yahweh-religion was at stake, and for a time it stood in the greatest danger of extirpation. But the state of affairs in Judah was altogether different. There, the temple remained the national sanctuary, dedicated to the nation's god; and though in Judah, too, worship was continually accorded to other gods, no struggle against Yahweh ever took place there, as it did in Ephraim. On the one hand, then, things went better here, and less risk was run; but, on the other hand, Judah rendered less assistance during this early period in the development of Yahwism. Judah shared in the benefit of Israel's struggle, but for all that it does not interest us at first to at all the same degree as Ephraim. To this latter kingdom, then, we will in the first place turn our attention.

CHAPTER XI.

THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL.

WE have already seen what was the condition of religion in the kingdom of Israel shortly after the disruption. Yahweh was worshiped there as the national god, in the form of a bull, without any one offering any opposition. This continued to be so under the succeeding kings. The historian passes a very unfavorable judgment on most of them, alleging that they did evil in the sight of Yahweh, and that they cleaved unto the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat. Ahab, the son of Omri, is drawn in the blackest colors of all. He had married Jezebel, a daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Tyrians. He seems to have been very much under this woman's influence. At any rate, he built a temple to the Tyrian god, Baal, at his residence of Samaria, and erected the "asherah," a stunted column symbolic of the goddess Ashera.

We must not assume on this account that Ahab did not worship Yahweh. On the contrary, he would seem — at first, at any rate — to have acknowledged Yahweh's prophets, and to have accepted their word as that of Yahweh. Moreover, the names of his

children are compounded of that of Yahweh. From this we may gather that he not only recognized Yahweh as the national god of Israel, but accorded him service. But to this he added the service of Baal. This Baal was not the god of the country, whom the Israelites had almost always worshiped since their arrival in Canaan, but the Tyrian god of the same name,—not, indeed, very different from the Canaanitish god, but still, as a matter of fact, an importation from abroad. His foreign extraction made him seem to the prophets all the more hostile to the national god, Yahweh. To make matters worse, the king encouraged this Baal-service at the court itself without the least disguise. A multitude of priests—many of them, no doubt, foreigners—served in the temple; and their influence was very powerful. We must remember, besides, that the worship of Baal and Ashera was extremely sensual, so that it could not fail to arouse the liveliest indignation in the faithful followers of the stern and holy Yahweh.

It was under these circumstances that Elijah, the Tishbite, appeared upon the scene as the leader of the prophets and the whole party of the servants of Yahweh. He and his friends began the quarrel. Ahab did not oppose Yahweh at first, but the quarrel was forced upon him. It would seem, indeed, that the prophets did not confine themselves to spiritual weapons, but actually had recourse to violence. This, however, Ahab could not pass over; and, no doubt,

he was urged by Jezebel, too, to make himself felt. So he began to persecute the prophets of Yahweh and to put them to death. And now a season of terrible woe broke upon the servants of Israel's god, and there seemed at first to be great danger that Baal would triumph, and that the service of Yahweh would be uprooted. The historian paints a sad picture of the state of things in those days. He puts into Elijah's mouth the tragic cry, that they have thrown down the altars of Israel's god, and slain the prophets, and that he alone is left. And even he was obliged, for a time, to quit his country and seek a refuge elsewhere. Yet his courage never flagged, and he never rested from the struggle,—soon to meet with happier success. The accounts of this struggle which have come down to us are too much interwoven with legend for us to build upon, or even to extract much from. Elijah is said to have foretold a three years' famine, and at its close to have challenged the priests of Baal to a decisive contest between their god and Yahweh. They accepted the challenge, so the story goes, and set up an altar on Mount Carmel, and besought their god to send fire down from heaven to kindle the sacrifice. Their entreaties were of course in vain. But Elijah, we are told, prayed to better purpose. A flash of lightning consumed his offering, and proved that Yahweh was God indeed.

Now this story, beautiful, and indeed sublime, as it is, has evidently been so much embellished that we

cannot even tell for certain whether it has any historical foundation at all. A famine may really have taken place and led many Israelites to reflect, and re-awakened and increased the zeal for Yahweh. At any rate, not only did the persecution cease, but Ahab thenceforward treated the prophets of Yahweh better and paid them more respect. Towards the end of his life, his relations with them were thus on a much better footing, and we find them once more accepted as his counsellors.

It would not be easy to form too high an estimate of Elijah's influence. He was a man of strong and impetuous character, well calculated to produce a profound impression upon his countrymen. He was a stern proclaimer of the word that stirred within him, and his was a fiery zeal. He shrank from no measures of violence, and from no persecutions, to promote the honor of Yahweh. He would suddenly appear when least expected, in his characteristic costume, the hairy mantle of the prophet; the people recognized him and feared him as the servant of the mighty god of the nation. And that character may be seen in the miracles ascribed to him. He stands before the monarch courageous and resolved; a blood-stained struggle has for him no terror, and he thinks to serve Yahweh well in extirpating the priests of Baal. He is a man of deeds, who knows his own aims, and never falters in their accomplishment.

The influence of Elijah was all the greater, too,

that he stood at the head of the schools of the prophets, and, indeed, of the whole prophetic party. They all looked upon him as their master, and followed him as their acknowledged leader. There is no trace among them of difference of opinion. The great struggle between Yahweh and Baal united them in one mind, and this much enhanced their strength as a party in the state.

Elisha is described as the disciple and successor of Elijah; and, like him, he appears as the leader of the whole party, so that he is much respected even at court. He wielded a powerful influence, but hardly seems to have produced so overwhelming an impression as Elijah. The power accorded to him by tradition is not so great, and he only builds on the foundations laid by Elijah. He has not the stern vigor of his predecessor. The worship of Yahweh was, nominally at least, in the ascendant in his time, and all that he had to do was to hold the ground which Elijah had won.

There are no other prophets in connection with whom so many miracles are related as these two men. They predict coming events; they heal the sick and raise the dead; nay, they control the fire of heaven. Elijah is fed by ravens, and, by the power of his word, prevents the oil and meal of the widow of Zarephath from growing less; he does not die, but rides to heaven in a chariot drawn by fiery steeds. It is just the same with Elisha: he

makes iron float on water ; he renders poisonous viands innocuous ; and he punishes the children who mock him, with death. He restores to health the leprous Naaman by making him bathe in the Jordan, and by his word his deceitful servant, Gehazi, is stricken with a like disease.

That such stories should be invented about them is not at all surprising. It is only that legend reproduces in its own forms the impression which these men made on their contemporaries. They are the heroes of Yahweh, men of unshaken zeal and courage, whom no dangers can subdue. They are like a refining furnace, and they fill all men with fear. Their own minds are impressed with the terrible and awful might of that Yahweh whose representatives they are, and they themselves appear in the self-same character which they ascribe to their god.

It has been thought that the famous account of Yahweh's appearance to Elijah on Mount Horeb (1 Kings xix.) ought to be interpreted as a condemnation of Elijah's violence and of the slaughter of the priests of Baal, inasmuch as it is there said that Yahweh was not in the rushing wind, the earthquake, or the lightning-flash, but in the whispering of the gentle breeze. But those who urge this have overlooked the fact that this is the very occasion on which Elijah receives the commission to anoint as king that same Jehu who was to extirpate the

house of Omri and to quench the worship of Baal in the blood of his priests and followers. This, surely, is proof enough that Yahweh has no reproaches for the prophet's zeal.

We have said that Jehu, the son of Nimshi, was destined to put an end to the struggle between Yahweh and Baal; for we must not imagine that the efforts of Elijah and Elisha were already crowned with all the success that they desired. It is true that the persecution ceased, and that Ahab himself, and his son, Ahaziah, after him, paid honor to Yahweh and consulted him. Nevertheless, the worship of Baal was not destroyed. Ahaziah's successor, Jehoram, the second son of Ahab, seems to have governed in a different spirit from his father; at least, we are told that he removed the "pillar," that is the symbol of Baal which Ahab had made. But this was not enough in the eyes of those who were zealous for Yahweh: to begin with, they could see nothing good in Jehoram, because he was the son of that Ahab whom Yahweh had rejected; and then, after all, Baal was still worshiped in Israel. Thus it came about that the party of the prophets set their hearts on having a new dynasty. They had no hope of any salvation or any permanent improvement under the old one. They thought that a new king, raised to the throne by their aid, would more powerfully defend their views and aims and allow himself to be guided by the spirit that actuated them. Jehu was the very man for

them. His reign completely answered to the expectations of the strict Yahweh party. He not only exterminated the family of Omri, but razed the temple of Baal at Samaria to the ground, and put all the followers of the god there to death. Jehu was the first prince who was animated by zeal akin to that of the prophets, and he accomplished what Elijah had desired. The latter, it is true, did not live to see the triumph, but it was he who had made it possible. Yahweh had come off victor in the struggle with Baal.

It would not be easy to overrate the significance of this event. It is an important turning-point in the history of Israel's religious progress, and not in Israel's only, but in Judah's too; for the influence of Elijah's labors and of Jehu's zeal made itself felt in the southern kingdom a few years later, as we shall presently see. Followers of Baal did, indeed, long remain in Israel, as was only to be expected; but Yahweh was acknowledged once for all as Israel's god. Henceforward there was no more change. In the minds of the people the service of Yahweh was established as the one purely national worship. And although here and there it was still mixed with the service of other gods, these took an inferior position; none of them could be compared with Yahweh.

We have no literary remains — or hardly any — of the succeeding century, the ninth before Christ. Even

the accounts of this period in the second Book of Kings and the second of Chronicles are meagre, and somewhat untrustworthy as well. It is only by comparing what we know of the eighth century with the ascertained state of things in the tenth, that we find out that the intervening century, the ninth, witnessed an important advance in the religious ideas of the prophets. It is true that our insight into details leaves much to be desired ; but the outline is perfectly distinct.

In the first place, we may reflect that the defeat of Baal must have impressed the Yahweh-worshippers deeply with the power of their god. The conviction that he was something greater than other gods, which circumstances suggested and confirmed, would lead them to ponder on the question in what the difference between him and other gods consisted. They had already long believed, indeed, in Yahweh's superiority ; but they had only ascribed to him greater power and greater severity in his demands. In his essence, in his nature, they had hitherto discerned no difference. Yahweh was closely related to the nature-gods, and above all to Molech and Astarte ; he was the fire-god and the light-god, jealous of his honor, terrible in his chastisements. But now thoughts very different began to enter into their notion of Yahweh's nature. The movement of events and the national fortunes rendered this almost inevitable. For the condition of Israel, no less than that of

Judah, was anything but happy. Hazael, king of Syria, had defeated Ephraim, and almost entirely deprived it of power for the moment. Judah, too, had trembled before the conqueror; and, meanwhile, intestine quarrels between the sister peoples had intensified their misery. Was it not natural that the prophets should ask themselves what all this meant? And the only possible answer was, that it was owing to Yahweh's displeasure, and his anger at Israel's unfaithfulness and the worship of strange gods. This mighty god was jealous for his worship, and punished the unfaithfulness of his people. And now comparisons were made with the prosperity of earlier times, and the power and splendor of the nation under David and Solomon. On account of the indissoluble connection which was supposed to exist between fidelity to Yahweh and outward prosperity, it was taken for granted that in those good old times Yahweh had been faithfully served to the exclusion of all other gods, and that was why he had then conferred such abundant blessing on Israel. And if the olden times were presented in so fair a light to their imagination, they could not fail, on the other hand, to be deeply impressed with the idea that the present unhappiness of their nation was due to the neglect of Yahweh's claims. And on this thought they now concentrated their attention. Yahweh, originally the nature-god, had been preached even by Moses as the *holy* one, who required a holy and strictly moral life

in his followers. And now it was seen that this was the most important thing in the eyes of Yahweh, and so the prophets began to lay all the stress on it. They began to see a difference between Yahweh and the nature-gods, and to leave out of sight that side of his being which he had in common with those gods, in order to emphasize the moral and spiritual side. Thus that path was entered on which could not but lead to a spiritual monotheism. It is true that the other gods were not at once definitely denied, and that the recognition of Yahweh's sole spiritual supremacy did not in itself involve the immediate refusal to believe in the existence of any other gods, but still the first step in that direction had been taken, and further progress had been made possible.

That this representation of the progress of prophetic thought is in the main correct, may be seen from the writings of Amos, Hosea, and in Zechariah ix.—xi. These prophets appeared in the kingdom of the ten tribes, in the eighth century before Christ. In the same century, Isaiah and Micah, their spiritual kin, lived in Judah; but we shall speak of them by and by. Amos came from Tekoa, in Judah, but he betook himself to the kingdom of Ephraim, to prophesy there. Hosea preached at the end of the reign of Jeroboam II. and subsequently, from 775 to 745 before Christ. Of his story we know nothing. The prophet, whose utterances are contained in chapters ix., x., and xi. of Zechariah, who is not identical

with the authors of chapters i. to viii., and must be distinguished from the writer of chapters xii. to xiv. as well, lived in Judah, in the days of Isaiah, but in all probability, preached in Israel. Now these three prophets occupy a much higher point of view than their predecessors. In opposition to the bull-worship, they preach a pure monotheism. Apparently the other gods do not exist at all for them; they call them *nothing* and *vanity*, and make no distinction between them and their images. To the minds of these prophets Yahweh is Lord of the whole earth, and guides the destinies of all nations. He is a spiritual being, and cannot be worshiped in the image of anything. He will have righteousness and not sacrifice; for he is a god of stern morality, and emphatically demands obedience to his laws.

No one can help seeing that these prophets are very different from Elijah and Elisha, their predecessors, and stand far above them. If the latter contended for Yahweh against Baal, Amos and Hosea are zealous for a spiritual interpretation of Yahweh's nature. By them Yahweh is made greater, purer, and more exalted. If the wars of David had increased the might of Yahweh in the eyes of the Israelites, here was something more than might: here was a belief in the spirituality of Yahweh's nature, and in his moral perfection.

We shall recur to these ideas by and by, in referring to the prophets of Judah; we need only add, at

present, that Amos, and those who felt with him, must not be regarded as representing the whole prophetic party. Earlier—in the time of Elijah—the prophets all held the same views, and constituted a party united by well-defined principles. But things were changed now. Amos and Hosea were opposed to the majority of the prophets, and contended against them, just as much as against the people. Amos expressly declares that he does not wish to be reckoned as one of them. These circumstances can only be explained by the fact that the great mass of the prophets still entertained the old views, while Amos and Hosea had acquired new ones. They had attained to a clearer insight, a profounder interpretation of holy things, and a purer piety, and had left their old allies far behind. Henceforward, the great prophets stood alone, above the people, and above the majority of the servants of Yahweh.

After the death of Jeroboam II., under whom Amos and Hosea prophesied, the kingdom of Israel sped swiftly towards its ruin. Once more, as in earlier times, king after king lost his life by conspiracy, and perpetual changes of dynasty weakened the kingdom more and more. And foreign foes added to its troubles; the Assyrians harassed the unhappy inhabitants of Ephraim throughout a great part of the eighth century. In the days of King Menahem, (770 to 760 before Christ) the Assyrians threatened

Israel, but they were bought off for a great price. Against Pekah (758 to 728 before Christ), came the Assyrian prince, Tiglath-Pileser, seizing several Israelitish cities, and carrying away the inhabitants captive. And at last Shalmanezar menaced Samaria; Hoshea was now king of Israel, and it was only by paying tribute that he averted his threatened overthrow. But he soon broke faith, and then he saw Shalmanezar besieging his capital, Samaria. After an heroic defence of three years' duration, the city was taken and ravaged. The king was borne off prisoner, and the people were carried into Assyria.

Thus the kingdom of Ephraim came to an end 719 years before Christ. Shalmanezar transplanted men of foreign stock from Babylon, Cuthah, Ava, Hamath, and Sepharvaim into the conquered land, and these, speedily mixing with the remaining inhabitants, received the name of "Samaritans." We shall meet with them again in the course of our history. But the ancient kingdom of Ephraim was never re-established.

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CHAPTER XII.

THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH.

AFTER the disruption, the state of religion in Judah remained the same as it had been under Solomon. In Israel the olden bull-worship was brought in again by Jeroboam; but such was not the case in Judah. No change took place at first. The temple continued to be the sanctuary of Yahweh, and the priests belonging to the temple took care that Yahweh should continue to be worshiped there as Israel's god. With this worship, however, there still went along the worship of other gods as well. The later historian makes this a reproach against the kings of Judah, and lays the sin at their door. But we must not judge them by the standard of an age so long after their own. On the contrary, we must remember that in the tenth and ninth centuries before Christ the belief in the existence of many gods was universal among the Israelites, and that only a comparatively small party, that of the prophets, generally called the "Mosaic" party, insisted on the exclusive worship of Yahweh.

Thus, we need feel no surprise that there were in Judah numerous temples and images of the native

gods and of those of other countries. There were pillars and stumps of trees (symbols of Baal and Ashera), *teraphim* (little images which were worshiped as household gods), and on hills and under large trees there were altars to Yahweh, as well as the so-called "high places," which were smaller sanctuaries with altars in the form of a truncated cone, where Yahweh was served and other gods along with him. At first this state of things continued without any serious struggle between Yahweh and the other gods like that in Israel. There was more peace and quiet in the southern kingdom. But on that very account there came to be no slight danger of Yahwism and the service of the other gods getting mixed up together; and, as the people were particularly attached to the worship of the old gods of the country, there seems to have been some fear that the service of Yahweh might ultimately be entirely absorbed by it. It was, then, a happy thing that, in the kingdom of Ephraim, a struggle broke out between Yahweh and Baal. For, as we have seen, that struggle made manifest the difference between the two, and the superiority which was latent in the representation of Yahweh was brought to light and further developed. The struggle was not without results for Judah too; indeed, it was, in some degree, carried into that kingdom. Among the earlier kings there was not one who did not acknowledge Yahweh as god of Israel; and Asa and Jehoshaphat are cordially praised for

their zeal for Yahwēh. But Jehoshaphat's son, Jehoram, married Athaliah, a daughter of Ahab ; and their son, Ahaziah, was slain by Jehu when he exterminated the family of Ahab. Upon this Athaliah took the reins of government into her own hands. She built a temple to Baal at Jerusalem, not intending to show any hostility to Yahweh, whom she fully acknowledged as a god, but simply to put Baal on a level with him, as her father had done before her. But the strict worshipers of Yahweh could not acquiesce in this. Athaliah lost her life by an insurrection, after a reign of no more than six years. Through the instrumentality of Jehoiada, the chief priest in the temple at Jerusalem, her grandson, Jehoash, ascended the throne of his fathers, and a covenant was made between Yahweh and his people. All this shows clearly that the people acknowledged Yahweh as their national god, and that, however prone to serve other gods besides him, they insisted that he should be worshiped as the first and foremost. Or, even if we may not attribute the rising against Athaliah to the people at large, still the Mosaic party, strengthened, no doubt, by the triumph of their allies in Israel, must have been powerful enough to get their own way now and then. Jehoash himself and his three successors, Amaziah, Uzziah, and Jotham, are commended for being faithful servants of Yahweh, although the high places remained undisturbed. Indeed, however much this angered the later historian,

it was in perfect harmony with the spirit of the day. Of Ahaz it is recorded, with the severest censure, that he sacrificed his son to Molech. He seems to have been the first king to worship Molech so openly, although it was no new thing in Judah to serve him. But it is easy to understand how indignant the prophets must have been at such doings ; and, though our information on this point is extremely scanty, we see from the sequel how vigorous a resistance they must have offered.

A change most favorable to the views of the prophets took place under Hezekiah, the son and successor of Ahaz. He swept away the high places throughout the country, and broke the pillars and the asheras and the images of Yahweh. Beyond this our accounts of his action do not go ; but it is clear that it was in harmony with the opinions and wishes of the Mosaic party. They had been very much averse to the state of things under Ahaz, and no doubt they made every effort to bring about a change. In Hezekiah they found a man after their own heart ; for he was quite inclined to use strenuous and even violent means to establish the exclusive worship of Yahweh.

We may now clearly discriminate two very different parties in Judah. They were both for serving Yahweh as the god of Israel, but one of them still continued in sympathy with the ideas which prevailed in the

days of Solomon. The members of this party were cosmopolitan, and not strictly national in their feelings, and thought it right to serve other gods — the old Canaanitish ones, for instance, and those of the surrounding peoples — as well as Yahweh. They did, it is true, honor Yahweh as the national god, but they seem to have done so in the fashion characteristic of the high places. Opposed to these stood the other party, that of the prophets, and, generally, of all the strict Yahweh-worshippers, who still, indeed, acknowledged the existence of the other gods, but wished the worship of Yahweh to be the one sole worship of Israel, — a sentiment which explains their zeal against sacrifice on the high places and their abhorrence of the pillars and the images of Baal. These two parties struggled for supremacy with varying fortune. It depended more on the views of the king which should prevail, than on anything else. This was seen in the case of Ahaz, and in that of Hezekiah too. And thus there was nothing wonderful in the Mosaic party being worsted again after the death of Hezekiah; for Manasseh, who succeeded him, and Manasseh's son, Amon, too, adopted the opinions of the other party, who, after suffering the opposition of Hezekiah, seem to have left no stone unturned to bring things back to their former condition. To the Mosaic party, indeed, things seemed even worse than they had been before; for the new policy amounted in their eyes to apostasy, especially when

Manasseh introduced once more the abominable service of Molech, and slew one of his own sons and burnt him in honor of that god. In his reign the high places everywhere appeared again, and the symbols of other gods were set up in the temple at Jerusalem ; for instance, the wooden stump belonging to Ashera. In short, everything that Manasseh did was a thorn in the side of the strict followers of Yahweh, and they considered it a good riddance when his son, Amon, was killed, after a reign of only two years. The Mosaic party now had another opportunity of trying whether they could manage to set up and maintain the service of Yahweh, to the exclusion of all other worship. To that end it was essential that they should try to establish an influence over Josiah, the new prince, who was only eight years old at the death of his father, and win him over to their interests. This they attempted, and their efforts were crowned with the happiest results. In the year 621 before Christ, Josiah, now in the eighteenth year of his reign began a thorough reformation which completely answered to the ideas of the Mosaic party. Even before that he had given indications that he was an upholder of the exclusive Yahweh-worship, but now he took more thorough-going measures. The circumstances that led up to this are recorded for us in detail, and they are sufficiently important to detain us for a moment.

Some repairs being required in the temple at Jeru-

saalem, the king sends his secretary to Hilkiash, the chief priest, with a message about the contributions of the people towards the expense ; whereupon Hilkiash takes the opportunity of telling the prince's secretary that he has found the book of the law in the house of Yahweh. The secretary takes it with him to the palace and reads it to the king, who is thrown into great consternation on discovering how grievously the law of Yahweh has been transgressed. So he sends to inquire of Huldah, a distinguished prophetess at Jerusalem, whether this law is in harmony with the will of Yahweh, and she replies in the affirmative. Upon this Josiah hesitates no longer. He calls the people together, and reads the book of the law to the assembled multitude. Upon this the whole people enters into a covenant to follow Yahweh and to keep the words of this law. The priests are charged to make a beginning immediately, and the first thing they do is to remove from the temple everything which is contrary to the law, and everything which is connected with the worship of other gods, whether Baal or Ashera or the host of heaven. The temple of Molech and the chapels built by Solomon are entirely demolished, the high places all over the kingdom are destroyed, and the pillars and images cut down. And those priests who had served Yahweh on the high places are compelled to come to Jerusalem and be attached to the temple ; but they are not allowed to offer sacrifice like the Jerusalem priests.

In short, nothing was left undone to exterminate the worship of images and of other gods, and the reformation was as sweeping as ever it could be.

The account of this reformation in 2 Kings, chapter xxiii., is full and clear. Nor is there any doubt what objects Josiah had in view: he wanted to bring about the realization of the wishes of the Mosaic party, and was for putting an end to the worship of any gods besides Yahweh in Judah, and for confining the offering of sacrifice to the temple at Jerusalem. But if so, then these must have been the main points in the book which had been found by Hilkiah, and had stimulated the king to play the reformer. Happily, we still possess this book, and it is no other than Deuteronomy, the last of the five books which are called after Moses. We have already seen that in those books we have nothing from Moses himself except the Ten Words. We shall have to speak of the origin of the other books by and by; but Deuteronomy, from the 44th verse of the fourth chapter to chapter xxvi. and chapter xxviii. with xxix. 1, was written at this time. Who the author was we do not know, but he was a champion of the Mosaic party, and expressed the views of that party in this book of laws. He makes Moses speak as the lawgiver; for, both in those days and later on, it was considered quite allowable to write in another person's name; and in the same way the Mosaic leaders had no hesitation in representing the book to have been

found by Hilkiah, although, of course, he, at any rate, knew that it had only just been drawn up.

The writer describes how, in the fortieth year of their wanderings in the wilderness, Moses called the people together that he might recall the main part of the law to their remembrance before he died. He speaks with profound earnestness, and in a tone of paternal authority. He sternly forbids them to serve other gods, and strenuously insists that, when the Israelites have entered Canaan, they shall utterly exterminate the inhabitants of the land, that they may not be infected by the worship of their gods. Of course such a commandment had no bearing on the author's own times, as the Canaanites had ceased to have any separate existence; but it served to bring into bolder relief the danger and impiety of apostasy from Yahweh. Great stress is laid on the injunction to confine the worship of Yahweh to the temple at Jerusalem. Moreover, none but priests of the tribe of Levi are to serve in the temple; although nothing is said about limiting such service to those of the family of Aaron, a limitation which belongs to a much later date. Besides this, the lawgiver gives certain commandments concerning the celebration of the three high festivals, the Passover, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Tabernacles. These festivals were by no means new, and we meet with them in more ancient sections of the Pentateuch, such as the so-called Book of Covenants (Exodus xxi.-xxiii.);

but the Deuteronomist lays down more definite regulations. Then, again, he gives sundry injunctions in relation to things "clean" and "unclean," and to the prohibition of certain kinds of food. In the commandment concerning kings in chapter xvii., verses 14 to 20, it strikes us as remarkable that he forbids precisely those things which Solomon had practised. The king is not to trade with Egypt, nor to have many wives, nor to gather together much treasure, which are the very practices which history ascribed to Solomon. And we may see from this how little that famous prince answered to the ideal which now possessed the minds of the prophetic party.

But we must not expatiate any further at present on the contents of the Book of Deuteronomy. It is enough for our purpose to know the principal commandments, so as to be able to estimate the character of the reformation which Josiah initiated. In this book the Mosaic party had expressed their wishes, and now they had obtained that triumph over their opponents which they had so long desired: the king governed in accordance with their views, and everywhere put their principles into practice. And now they were inspired with the brightest anticipations. Surely now at last Yahweh would fulfill his glorious promises, and make Israel once more great and mighty as of old! Surely men now should see that Yahweh was God, and that Israel was his people: his

law was strictly kept, and surely the blessing would not be held back!

It did indeed seem at first as if the reign of Josiah would see the realization of these anticipations. The power of the Assyrians, always full of danger for Judah, was more and more curtailed by the Medes, so that Judah soon had no more to fear from them. But, alas, how soon was the sun of her prosperity to set! How soon was the ground to slip away from under these fair hopes of Judah's restoration! In the year 610 before Christ, when Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, was besieged by the allied Medes and Babylonians, Psammetichus, the king of Egypt, died. Necho, his son, resolved to extend his dominions at the expense of decaying Assyria, and to take possession of Syria. But these designs seemed to Josiah fraught with peril for Judah, and, however feeble he might be compared with Egypt, he made up his mind that he would try to frustrate Necho's purpose by force of arms. The battle was fought in the plain of Megiddo, but fought, alas! with unhappy result for Judah; for her troops sustained defeat, and Josiah, her beloved prince, was slain.

The news of this disaster fell like a thunderbolt. It was not only that the immediate future was very dark, but the Mosaic party found themselves bitterly disappointed in their religious hopes. Pious men asked in bewilderment what must now be thought of

Yahweh's promises, and, above all, of Yahweh's righteousness. Had the people failed, then, to serve him faithfully, or could not the recent conversion blot out the sins of days gone by? Was it possible that Josiah had not been pious enough, and could it be necessary to do still more than he had done?

All the writings which have come down to us from this epoch (the end of the seventh and the beginning of the sixth century before Christ) show what a stimulus to reflection was afforded by the tragic termination of Josiah's reign, and generally by the incongruity which there seemed to be between Judah's fortunes and her zealous worship of Yahweh. To this period belongs the composition of the Book of Job, to which we shall return by and by. And to this period belong Jeremiah, Habakkuk, and the unknown writer of the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth chapters of Zechariah; while Ezekiel wrote down his prophecies in the company of the exiles themselves during the early years of the captivity. Other writings, too, the greater part of Lamentations and some of the Psalms, date from this season of woe. They are all occupied more or less directly with this problem so hard for them to understand, and strive to find some adequate solution of it.

But to the old party, which Josiah had suppressed, the solution did not by any means present so much difficulty. They ascribed Judah's calamities to the extirpation of the worship of the other gods. And,

in accordance with this view, the worship of the Baals was begun again, as well as that of the host of heaven, of the moon-goddess, Astarte, and of Molech. Sacrifice was once more zealously offered on the hills and under the green trees. The worship of the gods of old was revived in full force. And bitter are the laments of the prophets, especially of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, over this mournful state of thing. For our part, however, we can feel no great surprise that things should have fallen out thus, remembering that, though the worship of other gods than Yahweh had been suppressed, it still had too strong a hold on the heart of the people to be extirpated. Such, then, was the attitude of either party, each standing in marked opposition to the other and reproaching it with the disasters of their common country. If they had but presented a unanimous front, meanwhile, to their common foe! But, alas! here, too, they were divided; and by their divisions they reduced the strength of Judah. And so the nation marched swiftly towards its doom. Immediately on the death of Josiah the people had proclaimed Jehoahaz king; but he was deposed by the victorious Necho, and was succeeded by Jehoiakim, his younger brother. In the meantime Nineveh was taken by the Babylonians, so that the struggle between them and the Egyptians could no longer be averted. In the year 604 before Christ the two armies met at Carchemis or Circesium, where the Babylonians, under Nebuchadrezzar, were

completely victorious. Syria at once fell into their hands, and Judah also was obliged to submit in 610 before Christ. But dependence on a foreign monarch was intolerable to the Mosaic party; and priests and prophets urged the people to rise and throw off the yoke. Jehoiakim gave ear to these counsels, and in 599 or 598 before Christ he revolted from Babylon. He himself, however, died very shortly, and it was on his son, Jehoiachin, that the consequences of his conduct fell. Nebuchadrezzar laid siege to Jerusalem, and in the year 597 before Christ he took the city. Jehoiachin, together with a great many distinguished citizens, was carried off to Babylon, and the victorious invader set up Zedekiah as king. But the national party still refused to abandon the struggle, and tried to fortify themselves against the hated conqueror by means of alliances with the surrounding peoples. Especially did they put their hope in Egypt, and when, on the death of Necho, Hophra ascended the throne, Zedekiah, fancying that he might count on his assistance, rebelled against Nebuchadrezzar, who consequently laid siege to Jerusalem in the year 588 before Christ. For a moment he was compelled to raise the siege, since Hophra made an attempt to relieve the city. But it was of no avail; and Nebuchadrezzar soon appeared again, and in the year 586 he captured Jerusalem. Zedekiah was taken to Babylon, after having his eyes put out. The city and the temple were given over to

the flames, and large numbers of the inhabitants were carried captive to Babylon. Gedaliah became governor of the remnant of the people, but ere long he fell by the hands of assassins. Upon this most of the inhabitants of Judah who were still left in their native land fled to Egypt, carrying with them Jeremiah, who there found his grave. Judah was utterly fallen, and the whole country was desolated.

We may easily conceive what were the feelings of the strict followers of Yahweh at these calamities. Up to the last they had deemed such a result impossible. Both priests and prophets were firmly convinced that Yahweh would come to the rescue; and in that conviction they steadfastly counseled resistance to the Chaldeans and Babylonians. Did not the sacrifice smoke upon the altar in the temple at Jerusalem? Was not the law kept? Was not Yahweh served? How, then, should he give Judah into the hands of the hated Babylonians, a people who knew not his name, and worshiped other gods? The people might not, indeed, be so prosperous as could be wished, but that was no reason for supposing that the heathen would triumph. Yahweh would bring them to judgment. Yahweh would bring a strong hand against them, and utterly destroy them. And so they had no fear, but persisted to the last in preaching resistance to Nebuchadrezzar and holding up the prospect of deliverance at the hand of Yahweh.

But Jeremiah was an exception. While priests and

prophets, ay, even such men as Habakkuk and Zechariah (xii.—xiv.), blinded by their conviction that Judah was a chosen people, and their faith in the permanence of their nation, could not imagine that Jerusalem should fall, Jeremiah interpreted things differently. So profoundly was he impressed with Yahweh's holiness and righteousness, that he saw how little the service in the temple could please him. Righteous Yahweh must punish Judah, and give her over into the hands of her foes. Jeremiah's love for his people yielded to his faith in the holiness of Yahweh. He prophesies that Judah must fall and go into captivity as a punishment for her sins. Impossible for the service of Yahweh in Jerusalem and the offerings in the temple to atone for all the wrongdoing that had gone before. Sooner would Yahweh reject his people than that his holiness should fail. But he would not punish Judah for ever—only for a time. After seventy years the people should come back from Babylon. Then, but not till then, should Yahweh be appeased, and Judah be converted.

Thus did Jeremiah, though left almost alone, hold fast by his convictions, in spite of the insults of those to whom he might have looked for sympathy and the charge of lack of patriotism, and thus did he preach that Judah must bow her neck to Babylon. His countrymen would not listen to him, but Judah was overtaken by the ruin which he had foreseen. The event showed that he was right, and posterity accorded

him the well-earned meed of honor which his contemporaries had withheld.

CHAPTER XIII.

PROPHECY.

BEFORE we pursue the thread of our story further, we shall do well to devote some little special attention to those classes of men who exercised a more than ordinary influence upon the religious development of the people of Israel. And we allude, first of all, to the prophets. It is true that we have already had occasion from time to time to notice them, inasmuch as up to the captivity almost all that was great and noble in Israel proceeded from them. But it is of the utmost importance that we should acquire a correct idea of their character and their work; and for this reason we shall now give the subject our special attention. Thus we shall be able to sketch in general outline the rise, the culmination, and the decline of that peculiar phenomenon which is generally known as "Prophecy."

The Israelitish prophets occupy a distinct place of their own among their people. They stand side by side with the priests and the "sages," to both of whom they are sometimes in antagonism. So thorough is

their independence that they often oppose, not only the princes, but even the priests and the temple service, and with the utmost freedom pronounce unfavorable judgment on the sacrifices which are offered to Yahweh. And this is what more than anything else distinguishes them from the prophets whom we meet with among other peoples, such as the Egyptians and the Greeks. The latter are just as closely connected with the temple-service as the priests themselves. Not so the prophets of Israel. They come from all ranks of the people, -high and low, and some of them are of priestly families. But as prophets they take a distinct rank of their own; they are quite independent of all others, and are themselves perfectly conscious of their independence.

They bear various names. The prophet is usually called "nabi" — a word with which we have already made acquaintance, meaning one who is incited or inspired by the deity. He is also called "seer." These names, however, would not afford us sufficient knowledge of the prophet's character, if history threw no light upon the subject. We may lay it down as the general characteristic of the prophets that they were pious men who, animated by a holy enthusiasm, felt it laid upon them to bear testimony to Yahweh, to declare his will, and to urge men to keep his commandments. They believed that Yahweh held direct communication with them, and even apprised them habitually of his intentions. And this belief took all

the firmer root, because their ideas were not arrived at by slow investigation or earnest reflection, but rather by sudden intuition. Thus they ascribed the utterance of their moral and religious convictions to the direct operation of Yahweh ; and so they called their sayings “the word of Yahweh,” and expected others to recognize and acknowledge them as such. They considered themselves the interpreters of Yahweh, called by him to preach his word to Israel and to reveal his will.

Prophecy had its birth in the days of Samuel. It is true, as we have already mentioned,* that Moses was called a prophet, and Deborah a prophetess ; but this is only the mistake of later writers, and it is true that the prophetic inspiration, properly so called, did not show itself till long after Moses, towards the end of the period of the Judges. It is by no means improbable that the example of the Canaanitish prophets had its influence. There were, indeed, seers in Israel at an earlier date, that is to say, soothsayers ; but they busied themselves with matters altogether outside the sphere of religion, while the one sole aim of the prophets was to promote the worship of Yahweh. All at once we find large societies of prophets appearing, known as the schools of the prophets. The first mention we find of these again, after Samuel, is in the time of Elijah and Elisha, whom the prophets honored as “fathers.” The members of these

*See page 68.

societies were so numerous as sometimes even to be counted by the hundred, like the prophets of Baal. They were consulted by princes who wanted to know the will of Yahweh. Thus they seem at this time to have constituted a class strictly fenced off, and recognized and revered alike by king and people. About a century later, in the time of Amos, things were changed in this last respect; and the prophetic office had come to be regarded as a means of livelihood, and many people joined the ranks without the proper inspiration or the true enthusiasm, merely for the sake of leading a quiet, comfortable life. The result was that the popular respect for these men greatly declined, and Amos himself boasts that he is neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet, meaning that he did not belong to their rank, and had not come out of their schools—proof enough that, in his opinion too, their olden glory was departed and their olden spirit lacking.

This is the last trace of the schools of the prophets that we find in history. After Amos they disappeared entirely. It would seem that they were more numerous in Israel than in Judah. At any rate, it is only in the former that we meet with them.

From what has now been said of the schools of the prophets, it will be seen that here, too, we have to deal with a development and a decline, as is the case in every phenomenon in the history of religion. Nor need we be surprised at this. At first these societies

were very favorable to the awakening and intensifying of national feeling in Israel. Young men, taken from the midst of the nation, penetrated with the spirit of Yahweh, bore glowing witness to the calling of Israel to remain true to the god of its fathers, who by mighty deeds had shown that he had chosen Israel for his peculiar people. These efforts were crowned with the happiest results, and it would not be easy to exaggerate the influence over the people which the prophets thus acquired. But, as we have seen, it did not always remain so. In large societies, enthusiasm cannot long maintain itself at the same pitch, and by degrees here, too, it came to move along the track of custom. Hence, in later times, many young men became prophets, attracted by the honors and the gains which the career offered, but without any of the prophetic inspiration. But hence, too, when the schools of the prophets were on the decline, the genuine prophets, men really possessed by the spirit of Yahweh, stood aloof from, and even in contrast to, the old societies. That same Amos who made it his boast that he was neither a prophet, in the ordinary sense of the word, nor the son of a prophet, declared that Yahweh had taken him from tending the flocks and commanded him to testify before Israel. Thus prophecy advanced beyond the point to which it was carried by the schools; and its progress was due to individuals, such as Amos, Hosea, Micah, Isaiah, and Jeremiah, and not to the whole class. The con-

sequence was, that not only did differences of opinion arise among the prophets, but definite hostility. In Samuel's times, and in those of Elijah and Elisha too, they still formed an united party under the guidance of these men themselves, and we hear nothing of any differences of opinion or of purpose ; whereas, in the eighth century and subsequently, the best and most advanced prophets opposed the general body ; and just as Amos was ashamed of the majority of the prophets, Jeremiah bitterly complains of them, and denounces them in no measured terms. He is conscious that there is a deep gulf fixed between his views and theirs ; he opposes them with all his might, and calls them false prophets, — just as they in their turn resist his influence in every way in their power.

This advance is accompanied by a change in the prophet's method of working which we must not overlook. Up to the eighth century the prophets acted in union and as a distinct party ; they spoke in the name of a large body of persons, and were conscious of the power which this circumstance secured to them in affairs of state. Their activity had no small influence on national politics. In Ephraim they effected several revolutions, and often succeeded in placing a new dynasty on the throne, inasmuch as they represented the sentiments of a large section of the nation. This was the case with Samuel, and with Elijah and Elisha also. They were not preachers,

properly so called, but men of action who took part in affairs. But the great prophets of the eighth and seventh centuries were men of another stamp; they were no longer the spokesmen of a party; they were no longer supported by a numerous following. On the contrary, they stood almost alone. The fact of their being so much in advance of the majority of the prophets deprived them of their assistance and co-operation, and at the same time of much of their influence in affairs of state. They were thus reduced to confine themselves more and more to the one thing by which they could exercise power, that is their preaching. They made themselves heard wherever they could, in the temple at Bethel, in that at Jerusalem, in streets and squares, and wherever they could find ears to listen to them. Thus they came to be men of speech, and testified of Yahweh, and communicated his commandments to all who would hearken.

And it is these men that we have to thank for the sublimity to which the religion of Israel attained. Samuel preserved Yahwism from perishing before the power of the Canaanitish religion; Elijah and his school defended the reverence and service of Yahweh against the Tyrian Baal; but the prophets of the eighth and seventh centuries ascribed an ever-increasing loftiness and purity to Yahweh's own being, and with great force urged and further advanced the belief in his unity and his moral and spiritual char-

acter. We have already come across these men in dealing with the history of Judah and Israel; and we will now try to sketch in a few strokes the exalted conception of Yahweh which we meet with in them.

Amos, Hosea, Micah, and Isaiah are the first strict monotheists. While the other gods had hitherto been believed to exist side by side with Yahweh, and the contemporaries of these men still held that view, they themselves place these gods on a par with their images, and draw no distinction between worshiping strange gods and image-worship. The other gods are not real gods at all. Yahweh is sole lord of heaven and earth; and Yahweh is only to be served.

The duty of serving Yahweh rests in the first place with Israel. For Yahweh has chosen Israel to be his peculiar people, and loves Israel with the tenderest love, as a man loves his wife. He has always poured out his blessing upon Israel; he has led it ever since he brought it out from Egypt, and has never wearied in his loving-kindness or his faithfulness. But Israel is bound in return to honor Yahweh as its god. Israel must consider the close and tender relation which subsists between Yahweh and his people and keep his commandments accordingly. And it is most of all worthy of notice that, according to the prophets, these commandments are all of a moral nature. Obedience is better than burnt-offerings. Yahweh has no pleasure in rams and goats, but desires righteousness and mercy, cleanness of heart and life.

In short, so deeply were the prophets impressed with the holiness of their god, that they taught their countrymen that only by a strictly moral life could they serve him.

And their expectation with regard to the future of their nation was closely connected with these views. We shall presently deal with this subject at greater length, and need now only mention the main point of that expectation. They cherished the hope that one day Israel should altogether belong to Yahweh, and serve him with abiding zeal ; so that here, too, their preaching bore a moral character, which, however much it might vary according to the peculiarities of the individual prophet, was always conspicuous, and must ever excite our reverence for the pure and holy spirit which animated them and for the sincerity of their piety.

Seeing that the prophets looked at everything which concerned Israel in connection with the spiritual relation between Yahweh and his people, it was natural enough that they should express opinions about affairs of state. They were not, however, guided by political principles, but solely by their theocratic opinions. Thus Isaiah warned his contemporaries against any alliance with Assyria, or Egypt, such as many were recommending at the time because he could see no hope of safety except in a return to Yahweh and fidelity to his commandments. Jeremiah, on the other hand, more than a century

afterwards, exhorted his countrymen to submit to the Chaldeans, though the Mosaic party were doing all they could to encourage resistance. The reason was, that he was thoroughly convinced that the sins of Israel could not escape punishment at the hands of Yahweh, and that the fall of Judah could, therefore, no longer be averted. Both Isaiah and Jeremiah were directly moved to take the line they did by their religious convictions, and not by political considerations.

If we proceed to inquire what influence the prophets exercised on their contemporaries, it seems that the answer cannot be of a very satisfactory nature. The prophetic writings which have come down to us are full of endless lamentations over the sins of the people, their going after strange gods, their image-worship, their unfaithfulness to Yahweh, their frivolity and their immorality. This kind of complaint is so general with the prophets, that we can only suppose that it expressed their universal experience; from which it would appear that their influence over the people was not very great. They did, of course, find some kindred spirits who became their friends and disciples, but as a rule these were but a small minority. Nor can we be at all surprised at this when we reflect on the changes that had come over the prophets themselves. In the olden times, such men as Samuel or Elijah and Elisha held opinions very

like those of the rest of the Yahweh party; so that they were more in sympathy with the people and were able to exercise a powerful influence over them. But when some of the prophets had attained to a deeper religious insight, and had risen above the mass of their own colleagues, the divergence between them and the people grew too great. Such a man as Isaiah was not understood by the multitude; with his monotheism and his purely moral principles, he stood too far above the men of Jerusalem, who were willing enough to worship Yahweh, but worshiped other gods along with him. And Jeremiah was so much in advance of his contemporaries, that even such men as Habakkuk and Zechariah (xii.-xiv.), most strict Yahweh-worshippers and prophets though they were, were nevertheless opposed to him. What must other people have thought of him, then, and how scanty must his influence have been! Nor was the case different with the famous prophet of the captivity generally known as the second Isaiah. Men might, indeed, listen to him, and even rejoice at his glorious predictions; but as for shaping their lives in harmony with the spirit of his teaching, they never thought of it, for he, too, stood far in advance of the great mass of the people.

To this we must add that a different spirit, that of the scribes, began to make itself felt in Israel after the captivity, while a different power, that of the priests, rose to the ascendant. The authority of the

Law now took the place of the freedom of the prophets and their inspiring utterances. Men no longer heard Yahweh's word, or spoke from out of the treasure of their hearts, but they cultivated a habit of intellectual reflection on what Yahweh had uttered in ages gone by. This was the death-knell of prophecy. It is true that here and there a voice might still be heard, but this was but a faint and feeble echo of the mighty voices of the past. The spirit of prophecy was crushed out beneath the pressure of the Law, and after Ezra no prophet arose in Israel.

We see distinct indications that prophecy was pining away in Haggai, Zechariah (i.-viii.), and Malachi, the most prominent prophets of the age which followed the captivity. They speak under the shadow of a profound disappointment, from which they cannot escape. They cannot conceal from themselves the fact that the fair anticipations of the older prophets have not been fulfilled. Jeremiah had spoken of seventy years; the second Isaiah had predicted the fall of Babylon and the ensuing restoration of Israel. But, alas! the seventy years were gone, and Babylon was fallen, yet the woe of Israel was not removed. What wonder that zeal should wane, when men had lamentations such as these to utter, or that enthusiasm could not sustain itself? Its place is usurped by that sober thoughtfulness and calm reflection which busies itself with investigating a state of

affairs which it no longer understands. And if we further observe how different is the ideal of a pious Israelite from what it used to be, no longer of the free prophetic type, we cannot be surprised at prophecy dying out of Israel.

We must not leave this subject without a word about the so-called false prophets. We have already seen that the great men of the eighth and following centuries had to act in opposition to the majority. This was, above all, the case with Jeremiah. He stood almost alone. All who were opposed to him were, to his thinking, false prophets, that is to say, they did not testify rightly concerning Yahweh. On the other hand, his opponents reproached him with being no true prophet of the god of Israel. The writer of the Book of Deuteronomy, too, utters warnings against false prophets. No man may prophesy what Yahweh has not put into his mouth, and no man may prophesy in the name of other gods. And hereby shall the people know whether a man be a true prophet: if his words are not confirmed by the event, or, if he encourages men to worship other gods, then he is no servant of Yahweh. He only can be a true prophet who remains faithful to Yahweh.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE MESSIANIC EXPECTATION.

IF we now turn our attention specially to the Messianic Expectation of the prophets, it is not because what they say on this subject constitutes a preponderating part of their preaching, or is more important than all the rest, but only because their expressions have hitherto been represented in so perverse a manner as to render it necessary that we should set ourselves to place them in the true light of history.

We have made acquaintance with the prophets as preachers of Yahweh, the god of Israel. They had a lively idea of his power and glory, and his holiness and righteousness. They were thoroughly convinced that his rule extended to the whole world of nature and of man, and that all his divine commands must be complied with. And if this was not yet the case, they were well assured that the time must come when it would be, since Yahweh had dominion. These two conceptions were most intimately connected together, just as, in general, all pious men in every age have cherished the certain hope that there was a good time coming, for which God had destined mankind. The

hopes which the prophets of Israel indulged are peculiar only in the form in which they are expressed.

We usually call this hope of theirs the "Messianic Expectation," from the Hebrew word "Messiah," in Greek, "Christ"; and in English, "an anointed one," or a king. Many of the prophets gave expression to their hopes of better times in the form of a prediction that a king, or "Messiah," should appear. And because this form of the expectation came to be the best known, and most celebrated, it is called "Messianic" in all its forms, although several of the prophets never said a word about any such Messiah.

We need not be surprised to find traces of this hope of a good time coming in other writings besides those which are properly called prophetic. We find it definitely expressed in some of the historical books of the Old Testament, which is the less to be wondered at when we remember that these books were, to a great extent, written by prophets. Thus, in Genesis xii. 2, the promise is given to Abraham, "In thee shall all nations of the earth be blessed"; which means, all nations shall gaze upon you and desire such prosperity as yours for themselves. This is evidently meant to express the anticipation of a glorious future for Israel. In 2 Samuel vii. 12-16, a speech is put into Nathan's mouth, in which he promises David that the crown shall be hereditary in his house. Yahweh shall love his family as a father loves his child, and establish his seat of government

for ever. * This is an expectation belonging to a later period, and similar to what we shall presently meet with again in some of the prophets.

The most general form in which the older prophets express their anticipations is this: that a blessed future shall dawn for Israel as the people of God. The belief in the immortality of man had not yet arisen; it was thought that the spirit was annihilated at death, or returned to Yahweh who had given it. But it was believed that the nation would endure and be blessed. Yahweh would hold a judgment, and a portion of the people would repent and serve him as in the days of old. Then it was thought that a time of peace and happiness would dawn for Israel; and the sister-peoples, Ephraim and Judah, would be united and share the blessing of Yahweh. The land would produce abundant corn and wine; dearth and famine should be no more; there should be peace with the surrounding peoples; swords and spears should be beaten into scythes and pruning-hooks.

Amos, Hosea, Zechariah (ix.-xi.), Micah and Isaiah agree in this fair sketch of the coming time. They express their anticipations in the most beautiful imagery, and sometimes in language of great sublimity. Amos (in ix. 11, with which may be compared, also, Hosea iii. 5) expresses the further expectation that Yahweh will set up the fallen tabernacle of David, meaning that Ephraim and Judah shall be

united under David's house, while Isaiah and Micah direct the hopes of Israel towards a noble prince who should spring from the family of the famous monarch. They said that the prince would be anointed by Yahweh, that he would rule his people in righteousness, and that the spirit of Yahweh should rest upon him. He was to come out of Bethlehem, that is, the house of David, which had originally belonged to a little town of that name in Judah.

It was in this form that the Messianic Expectation became most widely known, especially when, in later times, the Christians found in it a foreshadowing of Jesus and his birth at Bethlehem. But we need hardly stop to prove that the prophets had no such application as this in their thoughts. For the interpretation which was subsequently given to their words, the significance which was attached to them, or the stories which were tacked on to them, the prophets themselves of course are not responsible. All that we have to do at present is to consider how they came to fix upon a king of the house of David. We must recollect that to the minds of the prophets David was the ideal of a true theocratic prince; according to their views his reign had been the golden age in the history of Israel. In his days the nation had been great and prosperous; in his days — so they fancied — Yahweh had been served in a proper manner; and if it were ever again so in Israel, as surely it must be, — if Israel were ever great again and faithful to its god,

then would times like the times of David return once more, and a prince like him once more sit upon the throne. Inasmuch as Yahweh was gracious to his people, he would certainly some day give them a king like David, and descended from his house. Of course all the prophets did not represent things in just the same light. These expectations were modified by the idiosyncrasies of the particular prophet, and the circumstances by which he was surrounded. Thus, about a century after Isaiah, we find almost the same expectation expressed by Habakkuk, and the unknown writer of Zechariah, xii.—xiv. They said that Yahweh would judge Israel, and Israel should repent and be blessed. The last-mentioned prophet also expected the restoration of the house of David. But their contemporary, Jeremiah, although no less assured than they were of a restoration in the remote future, expected a fearful judgment first. Judah must fall into the hands of the Chaldeans and their king, Nebuchadrezzar. The inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judah were to be led captive to Babylon, and to sojourn there seventy years—a round number. Then, and only then, should Babylon fall, and the captives return from all parts of the world to which they had been scattered,—the men of Ephraim first, and then those of Judah. All were then to be converted, and Yahweh would grant them a season of much blessing. He would make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not according to

the old covenant which he had made with their fathers, in the day that he took them by the hand to bring them out of Egypt, for they had broken the covenant of Yahweh, though he was a lord to them. But this is the covenant which Yahweh shall make with the house of Israel in those days: he will put his law in their inward parts and write it in their hearts; he will be their god and they shall be his people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor and every man his brother, saying, Know Yahweh,—for they shall all know him from the least of them unto the greatest of them; and Yahweh will forgive their iniquity and remember their sin no more. Then shall Yahweh raise up a righteous branch to David; he shall rule as king. There shall be peace under a line of princes, shepherds of the people of that ancient house; there shall be abundance of cattle and sheep, of corn and wine; and unbroken joy shall dwell in Israel. There shall no longer be an ark, and it shall not be missed; for the whole of Jerusalem shall be called the throne of Yahweh.

In the second Isaiah we meet with a further and most important modification in the prophetic expectation with regard to Israel's future. He sets aside all mention of a prince of the house of David or of a personal Messiah. Times were altogether changed, and David's line had sunk too low for him to cherish any hopes of its restoration. Instead of the ideal

put forward by the older prophets, we find him expressing the expectation that Yahweh would glorify himself in his servant. In speaking of "the servant of Yahweh," the prophet does not mean any individual, but the religious kernel of the nation, the prophets themselves in the first place, and, in addition, all who are faithful to Yahweh. Yahweh has chosen this servant to himself, and for his sake he will be gracious to the whole of Israel. But to that end the servant must take the sins of his people upon himself ; being a part of Israel, he must bear Israel's diseases, be wounded for Israel's sins and bruised for Israel's iniquities. Then, and not till then, shall the glory of old be restored, and Israel have dominion over the heathen. And even these shall be converted by the servant of Yahweh. They shall be witnesses of his patient suffering, they shall hearken to his preaching, and become acquainted with Yahweh, and call upon him as their god. Thus shall the servant of Yahweh be a light to the Gentiles and lead them into righteousness.

Thus culminated the Messianic Expectation of the prophets. In the second Isaiah it reached its loftiest point, and showed in the most attractive manner its moral and religious character. It burst the narrow bonds of the sentiment of nationality and waxed more broadly human. After this prophet it never appeared in the same form again. Circumstances changed and new modes of feeling arose in Israel.

In Haggai and Zechariah (i.–viii.), who appeared in Jerusalem shortly after the second Isaiah, and in Malachi, the contemporary of Ezra and Nehemiah, we find no more such high and enthusiastic hopes. The thing is easily explained, for we know that sad experience and bitter disappointments had extinguished enthusiasm, and with its disappearance hope could no longer maintain so high a pitch. We have nothing but continual repetitions of lamentations over the times, with announcements that Yahweh will surely bring judgment to pass, and promises that after that a better day shall dawn. In Malachi we find the further idea that Yahweh will send the prophet Elijah before the day of judgment comes, to give Israel a last chance of repenting. Thus was the hope kept alive indeed, but bereft of ardor, until long afterwards it acquired renewed force, and began to show itself in other forms.

CHAPTER XV.

THE SAGES.

WE have already had occasion* to mention “the sages,” and made acquaintance with Solomon as the first of the line. It will be well to take this

* See page 93.

opportunity of examining them and their work with closer and more special attention and of giving a short sketch of their history during the whole period that they flourished in Israel.

Originally the character of these sages was not distinctly religious. They were men who excelled in acuteness of observation, and put their conclusions into short and pithy sentences, often characterized by genuine wit. They by no means confined their attention to Israel, but kept their eyes open for anything good among other nations. Like Solomon, they were inclined to cosmopolitanism. They desired to exhibit and to instruct their contemporaries in whatever was human, and not exclusively what was Israelitish. At first their wisdom, which was called "chokmah," was very simple, without much depth, and of a purely secular character. At that time the sages stood in opposition to the prophets, in so far as they were devoid of sympathy with their efforts to keep Israel from all contact with strange peoples, or with their notion that safety was only to be found in strict and exclusive Yahwism; and they were no less removed from any sympathy with the insistence of the priests on the temple-observances. The wisdom which they taught was at first the wisdom of daily life or of ordinary common sense. It was neither high-flown nor enthusiastic, and on that very account it had great influence with the people. For their proverbs, and riddles, and lessons were easy to

understand, being uttered by men who stood in closer relation to the common people, and were nearer to them in thought and spiritual capacity than the priests or the prophets.

In the course of time, however, the sages began to lay more stress on serving Yahweh, and applied themselves earnestly to the great problems of religion; and the tone of their utterances underwent a corresponding change. Those books of the Old Testament which were written by sages, namely, Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes, afford proof of this gradual modification. We will accordingly examine them one by one.

The Book of PROVERBS is not the work of a single hand or of a single age, but contains eight collections of various dimensions. The oldest group belongs to the eighth century, and may, perhaps, embrace a few proverbs to be ascribed to Solomon. An important section belongs to the seventh century, while neither of the last two chapters was written till after the captivity. Besides Solomon, "sages" generally are mentioned as authors, while "the men of Hezekiah," whoever they may be, appear as the collectors of one group.

The book deals with a variety of topics. Truthfulness, faithfulness, honor, industry, thrift, temperance, chastity, self-restraint, mercy, obedience to parents—these, one and all, are urged upon the reader. It is all put into the shape of proverbs, in

short and pithy saws. The form of expression is rhythmical, which is the general characteristic of Hebrew poetry. The proverbs are so arranged that both members of the verse convey the same idea, though clad in different words, or else so that the second part contains a contrast to the first. Both these forms of verse are called "parallelism." Elsewhere, again, the two sections of the verse express different truths, which are nevertheless closely connected with one another, or they comprise a comparison.

Of course all the different authors do not speak from the same point of view. We saw just now how the character of the "Wisdom" was gradually modified; and this may be seen clearly enough in the different collections of adages which make up this book. In the oldest parts, which belong to the eighth century before Christ, we have the most simple lessons of practical wisdom, with nothing very lofty about them, but yet, even then, all in the interests of Yahwism. Many sages had then forsaken the teaching of Solomon, and exchanged their indifference to religion for genuine interest and respect. And this is still more the case subsequently,—in the seventh century. The author of Proverbs i. 7—ix. lived at that time, and approached so closely to the prophets that he often speaks quite in their spirit. We are indebted to him for the beautiful saying that "the fear of Yahweh is the beginning of wisdom." This is his

leading idea. Wisdom must be in harmony with Yahwism. He holds the belief in God and his holiness and righteousness as firmly as the prophets themselves. He conceives of "Wisdom" as an attribute of Yahweh, or rather, by a kind of personification, as a companion of Yahweh's from the foundation of the world. In exalted language, she gives utterance to pure conceptions of religion which may be likened to those of the prophets. The writer of this part of Proverbs reminds one above all of the Deuteronomist, and the similarity extends even to forms of expression. And this shows how Wisdom gradually developed in Israel, and did its share towards increasing the popularity of the religion of Yahweh.

The Book of JOB is a sublime and wonderfully beautiful poem, composed by a contemporary of Jeremiah, who probably lived in the south of Judah. He tries to solve the riddles of God's government in connection with the calamities that befall the pious. It is by no means improbable that he wrote under the stimulus of the death of Josiah, a calamity the magnitude of which we have described above,* and which was such a mournful and insoluble riddle to all the faithful. This writer, like so many others, had observed the apparent inconsistency between Yahweh's righteousness and the adversities of his faithful worshipers, and he sets himself to discover the recon-

*See page 127.

ciliation between the two. He dresses up his argument in the story of the pious Job, a story likely enough not without some historical foundation. At first the favorite of fortune, rich in honors and blessings, Job suddenly meets with the most terrible reverses, and is bereft of all his possessions and all his children. He has nothing left. Lonely, and stricken with a horrible disease, he sits down upon the ground. His wife urges him with scoffing words to forsake God, who has overwhelmed him with such calamities ; but Job retains his integrity : Yahweh had given and Yahweh had taken away ; he had received good at his hand, and should he not receive evil also ?

Three friends come to visit him, and, in accordance with the popular belief of their day, urge him to confess his sins ; for they maintain that it must be for his sins that Yahweh, the Holy One, is punishing him. God is righteous, and therefore a man's fortunes must be the measure of his piety. If any one is unfortunate he must have sinned, though it be years ago, and though it entirely escaped notice. God overtakes the guilty ; and the unfortunate is always guilty. Job's friends continually revert to this fundamental conception. But Job himself declares his innocence in the most emphatic language. He can recall no sin that he has committed. His conscience acquits him. His misfortunes cannot possibly be the penalty or punishment of any transgression. He bursts into bitter and vehement complaints over his misery and

the hardships of God's dealings with him; and he always has an answer ready for the assertions of his friends. Nevertheless, he himself cannot find the solution of the calamities that befall him; the method of God's government remains a riddle to him.

At last Yahweh himself is introduced to reply to Job's complaints. But even Yahweh does not explain his dealings; he only adduces his divine power and wisdom to awe Job into silence. So insignificant and humble a being as man cannot fathom the counsels of God; but instead of withstanding him, he ought to yield him a complete submission.

Such, then, is the conclusion to which the writer comes. The relation between virtue and happiness neither is nor can be understood; it is in its very nature incomprehensible. God is righteous, and therefore pious men must prosper — of this the writer is firmly persuaded; again, pious men are often unfortunate — of this experience gives unquestionable proof; these two assertions contradict each other, and yet they must both be true. To extricate himself from the dilemma, our author makes his hero quite prosperous again at the end: the prosperity which Job found in his latter days far surpassed his former prosperity. In this the poet contradicts himself; but he cannot help it, because he does not know where to find the solution of the mystery.

In this sketch of the sages of Israel and their writings we must, for the sake of completeness, say something about *ECCLESIASTES*, although this book belongs to a much later period, and was written under entirely different circumstances to those which we have hitherto been contemplating. It dates from the end of the third century before Christ, and is the work of an unknown author, who writes in the name of Solomon, the son of David, king in Jerusalem. As to this last point, writing in the name of some celebrated character of antiquity is not, according to our notions, a moral proceeding. But in those days it was a pretty general practice, and was thought to be justified by the hope of exercising a wider influence. Probably this assumption of the name of Solomon accounts for *Ecclesiastes* having been admitted by the scribes of Jerusalem into the ranks of Holy Scripture. There was a great deal in it that was at variance with their opinions, but their respect for the name of Israel's royal sage forbade them to leave this book out.

The writer gave Solomon the title of "Preacher," from which the book itself derives the name of "Koheleth," rendered by the Greek word, "*Ecclesiastes*," which, like the original, signifies one who preaches. The author lived at a time when Israel's fortunes were very low. The splendor of the people of Israel had faded away, and their might was broken. They were sighing under the yoke of the Greeks.

Anarchy and impious violence everywhere prevailed. All this the Preacher beholds; and he narrowly and keenly observes the circumstances of the time. Apparently he is a man of distinction among his people, and his heart can find no satisfaction in what constitutes the delight of the scribes. He therefore finds no comfort in his pain, and knows no solution to the riddles of life. On the one hand, he holds fast by the belief in God and his righteousness. This belief is so deeply rooted in Israel, that not even he can doubt it. But, on the other hand, he beholds the frightful misery and all the evil that happens under the sun, and he can neither explain it nor reconcile it with the government of God. Less bigoted than the strictly orthodox Jews—especially the scribes—he was not interested exclusively in things purely Israelitish. But even his larger range of vision yielded him no satisfaction. He tried to find peace in pleasure, but it palled upon him; he turned to wisdom in search of what he wanted, but it was in vain; there is no remembrance of the wise more than of the fool. Hence his saying that all is vanity on the earth. He has no choice but to abide in this belief, but it is no happy faith; he acquiesces in evil out of despair. He is a thorough-going pessimist; and so he comes to the conclusion that the best advice he can give men is, not to weary themselves, but just to enjoy whatever God lets them enjoy. According to him, we ought to fear God, but

not out of devotion or because we love him ; simply because he is a God of righteousness, who severely punishes the transgression of his commands. Moreover, he has none of that consciousness of the near presence of God which we meet with in the prophets and several of the psalmists, and which gives us so high an idea of their piety and their sincere religious feeling. To his thinking, God is far away in heaven, and so he tells us not to be rash before God, and not to be hasty to utter anything before him. His advice comes pretty much to this: fatigue yourself as little as possible with doing God's commandments ; you cannot neglect them altogether, because God would punish you if you did ; but do not put yourselves to inconvenience by troubling too much about them. And his theory of morals is quite in harmony with this view. His principle is to avoid all extremes ; we must not be too righteous or too wise, but neither must we be too wicked, for if we are either one or the other, we shall bring destruction on our heads.

Thus the Preacher's point of view is neither very religious nor highly moral. He stands below a great many of his predecessors and contemporaries. However, we must not forget that he lived in the midst of a most melancholy state of things, and that the efforts of the scribes could not possibly satisfy him. The Law and the temple filled others with enthusiasm ; but they had no power to touch him. His range of vision was wider than that of others, but his needs were greater too.

Nor must we forget to mention his disbelief in the personal immortality of man. The belief in it existed in his day, and he was well acquainted with it; but he denies it and argues against it. Man dies like the brutes, and he is no better than they. Hence his gloom; for him there was no hope in the future, no comfort in the present, no solution of the riddles of life. Truly, false as is his point of view, his gloom is no longer a puzzle to us.

Very shortly after the Preacher, Jesus, the son of Sirach, wrote his famous Proverbs, known as Ecclesiasticus. This book did not obtain a place in the Old Testament, but it has been preserved for us in a Greek translation. This Jesus is also a sage, but in a better sense than the Preacher. He is strongly attached to the Law, the temple, the priests, and the services of religion. He stands on the foundations of the ancient Israelitish faith, and makes the ideas of the prophets his starting-point. On these principles he founds his theory of morals, which is far loftier than that of the Preacher.

These writers are the last of the sages of Israel. If writers of this class do not occupy so prominent a place in the history of the religious progress of this people as the prophets, the scribes, and the priests, yet, by proclaiming their moral ideas, they did their part in bringing the application of the principles of the prophets home to their countrymen.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE BABYLONISH CAPTIVITY.

WE must now once more take up the thread of our story, and turn our attention to the condition of the Israelites after Nebuchadrezzar had laid waste Jerusalem and the temple. Those who were left in Judah were deeply conscious of the wretchedness of their lot, and the description of it preserved for us in the Book of Lamentations abundantly testifies how dire was their misery. Obadiah, and possibly one other prophet as well, still prophesied among them; and from Ezekiel xxxiii. 23-29 we see that they still cherished a feeble hope that Israel's restoration would come from themselves. But this hope proved altogether vain; their power was shattered once for all.

We have but little information with respect to the condition of the captives. We know that one party—the first who were carried away—settled on the river Chebar, while it is said that the second and third detachments were taken to Babylon—a term which may be used for the surrounding country as well as for the city itself. How they lived there we do not know. Probably some of them, at any rate, continued

to lead the life of husbandmen, or practised some handicraft, but there can be no doubt that a great many soon began to apply themselves to trade, to which circumstances naturally inclined them. It is probable, too, that the majority of them, at any rate, rose to a certain degree of prosperity in the course of time. So that their condition was, at the worst, perfectly tolerable.

Those mutual differences in religious opinions and ideas which we have seen among them from of old still maintained themselves. The worship of strange gods still flourished to such a degree that all the zeal of Ezekiel was necessary to contend against it. Then, again, among the faithful servants of Yahweh there were those who thought that the sojourn in Babylon would not be for long — an opinion which Jeremiah vehemently opposed in a letter which has been preserved. On the other hand, however, there was an increase of those who agreed with that prophet in hoping for a restoration at some future time, but, like him, did not expect it to take place for a great many years, and, looking at things in much the same way as the writer of the Book of Deuteronomy, appealed to the holiness of Yahweh as an argument that matters could never mend unless Israel were converted. They appealed to the history of their people to show that the only hope of salvation for Israel lay in unswerving attachment to Yahweh. Most likely the Books of Judges, Samuel, and Kings were written at this time,

or a little later. Perhaps they are by the author of Deuteronomy, and, at any rate, they are just what he might have written.

Ezekiel takes the most distinguished place among the prophets who appeared in the first period of the captivity. He was a priest who had been transported with the earliest colony, as far back as the year 597 before Christ. He was utterly overwhelmed by the tragic lot that had overtaken his countrymen, and was profoundly impressed with the righteousness of that God who had so heavily punished the unfaithful. This gave his prophecies a sombre and melancholy tone. Yet he was as confident as the rest of the ultimate restoration of Israel, and threw himself into the contemplation of the glorious future with manifest delight, describing it at great length. It is important to observe that we find in him the first traces of those sacerdotal precepts in reference to the temple and the worship there, which were subsequently so fully developed in the Law.

The prophets Ahab, Zedekiah, and Shemaiah belong to the same period. They predicted a speedy restoration, and found plenty ready to listen to them. It was against them that Jeremiah directed his zeal. The event proved their expectations fallacious, and their influence soon passed away.

It was not till after the death of Nebuchadrezzar and his son, Evil-Merodach, that circumstances once more stirred up hopes of deliverance among the

Israelites. Rumors then began to reach them of the conquests of Cyrus, the Persian king, and their interest was naturally aroused to the utmost. This appears from what the prophets of the time have left us. We do not know the names of any of them, although their utterances have been incorporated in the Books of Isaiah and Jeremiah. Thus Isaiah xiii. 1-xiv. 23; xxi. 1-10; xxiv.-xxvii.; xxxiv. xxxv.; and xl.-lxvi., as well as Jeremiah l. and li., belong to this last part of the captivity, and were subsequently gathered up into the books called after Isaiah and Jeremiah. They all treat of the liberation of Israel, which is to ensue on the fall of Babylon. Isaiah xl.-lxvi. is especially important in this connection. We have already made some acquaintance with the writer* who, because we do not know his real name, is generally called "the second Isaiah." He was profoundly impressed with the power of Yahweh; for he was persuaded that the fortunes of foreign nations—the aggrandizement of Persia and the approaching fall of Babylon—were ordained by God solely with a view to enable Israel to return to the fatherland. Every circumstance is arranged by God with an eye to this result. Thus the prophet perceives that his God is the mighty ruler of all the nations of the earth, and that there are no other Gods beside that One. No one else so vigorously exposes the vanity of idols, and his descriptions of Yahweh's glory and majesty are strikingly

*See page 150.

beautiful and sublime. Most touching are the words of consolation with which he tries to encourage his countrymen, and strong is his faith in the future of Israel.

The events of the years immediately ensuing set the seal upon his expectations. In the year 538 before Christ the city of Babylon was taken by Cyrus, and the kingdom of the Chaldeans came to an end. We know nothing about the attitude of the Israelites while all this was going on. It is possible that they found means of helping Cyrus, and facilitating his capture of the city. But however that may be, one thing is certain: Cyrus was remarkably gracious to them. His attention must have been called to them very soon, and perhaps he was acquainted with the expectations which their prophets had held out; or he may have been struck with the similarity of their religion with his own. At any rate, it seemed to him desirable to let them return to their country, that, bound to him, as they would be, by every consideration of honor and gratitude, they might constitute a strong section of his immense kingdom out there in the far west. So he very soon gave the captives leave to go back to Judah, and to restore the temple.

They did not, however, all of them avail themselves of the permission. According to the writer of the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah, there were about

42,000 of them that did so; but probably the heads of families only are intended, so that the women and children must be added. But this computation is clearly too high if we remember the number that were carried away; and there is, no doubt, some mistake here which we cannot now hope to get to the bottom of. But there is no question that the number of those who returned was very considerable. They set out and arrived at their journey's end under the leadership of Zerubbabel, a man of the house of David, and of Joshua, the grandson of the last high priest.

But a great many Israelites stayed behind in Babylon, which shows clearly enough that they were not so very miserable there. They kept up a constant and lively intercourse with their brethren in Judah, and at a later time many more of the exiles went back to their fatherland, as we shall shortly see. We shall perceive, at the same time, how powerful was the influence of the exiles on the Israelites in Palestine; indeed, it was they that gave its special character to the religious life of the latter in its subsequent development.

That this influence of theirs continued for centuries, is shown by the Book of Esther. The author lived in the third century before Christ, and his object in writing the book was to promote the observance in Palestine of a Persian festival, known as the Feast

of Purim, which had already been introduced among the Jews abroad. With this view, he relates an entirely fictitious story about a marvellous deliverance of the Jews in the reign of Ahasuerus or Xerxes the First. He tells how this king married a Jewess named Esther. His chief minister, Haman, bore a grudge against Esther's uncle, Mordecai, and determined to destroy all the Jews by way of punishing him. He cast lots (Purim) to decide the day for carrying out this project. But fortunately his plans were frustrated by Mordecai and Esther; Haman was disgraced and put to death; and the king gave the Jews leave to fall upon their enemies, and kill as many of them as they could. This they did; and in memory of their deliverance they made the day on which the lot had fallen, and the ensuing day, an occasion of annual thanksgiving, under the title of the Feast of Purim.

We said just now that this story was entirely fictitious. It is true, however, that the festival in question was of Persian origin, and that the Jews in Persia gradually took to observing it. The author of the Book of Esther wanted to see it introduced into Palestine. And his wish was fulfilled. As early as the second century before Christ the feast was in general use, showing that the Jews did not yet feel any difficulty in adopting new elements into their ritual, and that there was still much intercourse between the Jews in Palestine and those who were

abroad. For the rest, the writer was a narrow-minded man, full of national prejudice. But he does not at all put the glory of Israel in its religion, and never once mentions the name of God in the whole course of his book.

This is the place to speak of the influence of the Persian religion on that of Israel. There is nothing to be surprised at in the existence of such an influence, or even in its being in some directions very powerful indeed. Those Israelites who had stayed behind in Babylon were in perpetual contact with the Persians there; indeed, many of them moved into Persia and Media, while the hearty good-will that subsisted between the two peoples was hardly ever disturbed. Moreover, there were several points of agreement between their respective religious ideas. The Persians were just as much opposed to images of the deity as the Israelites; their Ormuzd was revered, like Yahweh, for his holiness, and was also looked upon as the only god. They had almost exactly the same regulations about clean and unclean, and their myths concerning the creation of the first human beings agreed together, even in some of their details.

Many persons have been so struck with all this, that they have supposed that the whole history of the Jewish religion subsequently to the captivity might be explained by reference to Persian influence. This, however, is an exaggerated view. The growth of the

Jewish religion had its roots in the Jews themselves. Their religious feeling was of sufficient character and force to determine the lines of its own development, and all that the facts warrant us in saying is that their opinions and ideas were more or less modified by the influence of the Persians. Let us now go a little further into the matter.

And, first of all, we have to deal with the doctrine of angels. The belief in these beings was held by the Israelites much further back, and we often hear of angels, especially of "the angel of Yahweh." But the older prophets did not feel any need of angels as a means of communication between Yahweh and mankind. Yahweh himself addressed men personally, without any go-between, and concealed none of his counsels from his servants; but this mode of intercourse gradually declined. Yahweh, in his holiness, began to be further removed from human beings, and no longer conversed with them himself, but sent his angels. These became the indispensable messengers for the proclamation of his will. In this character they play a conspicuous part in the prophecies of Ezekiel; and Zechariah distinguishes himself by the emphasis with which he insists on the activity of angels as servants before the throne of Yahweh. It is in this last prophet that we find the first distinct traces of Persian influence; in his representations and descriptions of angels he ascribes attributes to them which he has borrowed from the Persian Amshas-

pands. By and by appears the belief in nations or individuals having guardian angels; in Daniel they have definite names; and at last there comes to be a universal belief, just as there was in Persia, in an incalculable host of heavenly spirits or angels, all of whom have their own special ranks and characters and spheres of action.

In the second place, we can trace the influence of Persia in the conceptions which the Jews entertained of evil spirits. They already believed in a "Satan," that is to say, an *accuser*. In the Book of Job he takes his place in the council of heaven along with the angels; he is just as much a servant of Yahweh as the rest, and his office is to apportion calamity and sickness to men according to Yahweh's supreme will. In the same way the Israelites had formerly explained evil, disaster, and sin as proceeding from the will of Yahweh. It was Yahweh who incited David to take a census of the people, though the writer of 2 Samuel xxiv. 1, regarded it as a grave sin. Amos asks whether there can be any evil in a city which Yahweh does not cause (chapter iii., v. 6); and the second Isaiah tells us (chapter xlv., v. 7) that Yahweh makes peace and creates evil. But these ideas were completely transformed. Satan was reconstructed on the model of the Ahriman of the Persians, the creator of evil, and thenceforth he stood in opposition to Yahweh, as the wicked spirit beyond all others, and all evil was his handiwork. Accordingly, the author of

1 Chronicles xxi. 1, alters the story told in the second Book of Samuel, to which we alluded just now, and makes Satan, instead of Yahweh, incite David to take a census of his people. In the same manner, the Israelites now began to believe in an army of wicked spirits too, as we have them in the new Testament, where they are called devils or demons. A great deal of power was ascribed to these demons. It must not be understood, however, that monotheism was denied. The Jews still maintained it practically, just as the Persians did, although they were logically involved in dualism, or the belief in two ultimate powers.

The Jewish belief about immortality, too, felt the influence of the Persians, though not very profoundly. In its main outline it grew naturally and spontaneously out of the thought and feeling of the Israelites themselves. Yahweh was regarded as lord of life and death. His prophets, Elijah and Elisha, waked the dead. Thus Yahweh had power to restore life to whom he would. And in later times, when the relation between Yahweh and those who believed in him had come to be looked upon more as something personal, the belief in the personal immortality, not, indeed, of all men, but of the Israelites, was a very natural consequence. In the days of the Preacher it was held by some, though he himself combats it; and the writer of the Book of Daniel, about sixty years later, supposes it to be more generally accepted.

The Persians entertained the belief from remote antiquity, and that, too, in the definite form of a resurrection of the dead, that is to say, a restoration of man to life after death; and it is highly probable that the Jews were indebted to them for that conception, or, at any rate, that they were influenced by them in adopting it.

CHAPTER XVII.

EZRA AND HIS TIMES.

WE must now return to the Israelites who had gone back from Babylon to Jerusalem. They are usually called "Jews," inasmuch as all of them, except the Levites, were descendants of the old inhabitants of the former kingdom of Judah, the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. Although they considered themselves the true representatives of the whole Israelitish people, there were no members of the other ten tribes amongst them.

Great religious changes soon took place among those who had returned. It was with high hopes and sacred enthusiasm that they had undertaken and accomplished the journey to Jerusalem, in spite of the inevitable difficulties and hardships which awaited them. Shortly after their arrival they had set up an

altar and offered sacrifice upon it, and this practice they continued regularly from that time forwards. At the same time they celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles. Nor did they lose any time in beginning to build the temple, amid the joyful shouts of the people; though the older priests and Levites, who had seen the temple of Solomon, could not hold back their tears when they thought of the glory of that first house of Yahweh.

But this enthusiasm was not long-lived. Its first interruption was due to the Samaritans, who dwelt where the kingdom of the ten tribes had once been. These people wanted to help in the building of the temple. But their application was refused on the ostensible ground that it was only to the returned exiles that Cyrus had given permission to take part in the work, but really because it was felt that the Samaritans could not be acknowledged as Israelites. For they were in large part descended from the foreigners whom the Assyrians had introduced into Samaria after its devastation. At first these colonists had worshiped their own gods; but, not long after their arrival in their new home, they began to worship Yahweh too, as the god of the country, in order that by his help they might be delivered from the ravages of the wild beasts which overran the land. But they did not yet consider themselves to be Israelites; and it was on this score that Zerubbabel and Joshua held them at a distance. This refusal made them very

sore, and kindled the first spark of that inextinguishable hatred which afterwards subsisted between them and the Israelites. But they continued to worship Yahweh, and by and by they even began to consider themselves genuine Israelites. In the course of time, too, they built a temple to Yahweh on Mount Gerizim, and adopted from the Jews the Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua, the latter of which contained the history of Ephraim's great hero.

After being thus rebuffed, they determined upon revenge. They laid accusations against the Israelites before Cyrus, probably alleging that they were attempting to make themselves independent. The upshot was that the permission to rebuild the temple was withdrawn, so that the work had to be discontinued. The Israelites felt this to be a heavy blow, disappointing them in their dearest hopes. How utterly different was their position from what they had hoped! Where were now the glorious predictions of Ezekiel and the second Isaiah, who, with so much fire, had foretold a good time coming and declared so positively that Yahweh would return to his people? Their lot was, if possible, sadder than of old. Their hope had vanished, and so their strength was broken and their courage oozed away.

Happily, after the lapse of a few years, men appeared who knew how to inspire a worthier mood. These were the prophets Haggai and Zechariah (i.-viii.). They admonished and rebuked the people, but at the

same time uttered new and glorious promises, which kindled once again their confidence in the god of their fathers. Under their inspiration the people once more put their shoulders to the wheel, and they succeeded in obtaining the permission of Darius, the king of Persia, to go on with their task. From that moment the Israelites met with no further disappointment, and in the year 516 before Christ the temple was finished and solemnly consecrated.

We have no record of the period between the restoration of the temple and the arrival of Ezra. All that we can make out about the state of popular religion during this time, from 516 to 458 before Christ, is from what Ezra tells us of the condition of affairs on his arrival at Jerusalem. From this it appears that universal discouragement and feebleness prevailed. Indeed, there was some danger that the religion of the Jews might be merged in that of the surrounding peoples. For there was much toleration, arising from indifference, as was shown, among other ways, by the numerous marriages, even on the part of priests and Levites, with foreign women. Thus it was no wonder that the interest in Yahwism declined, and the door was opened to foreign elements. And when we reflect that, though the writings of the prophets existed, they had not yet been collected, and that the Law, properly so called, was not yet written, while what there was of it had not yet

acquired any binding force, so that religion had not yet attained any definite, legal form in the popular consciousness, we cannot but allow that it was a dangerous state of things. All this was very disappointing to earnest men, and left them powerless, even if they had had the courage, to fight against this laxity of feeling. Such laxity is far more dangerous than the most strenuous opposition.

Happily, Ezra was able to mend matters. He was a priest and a *Scribe* of the Law of Moses. It was his endeavor to obtain a knowledge of that Law and to bring it into use. Among the priests in Babylon a spirit like his own prevailed, quite different from that of their brethren in Judah. When Ezra learned what the state of things was there, he made up his mind to go and bring about a reformation if he could. He asked leave of King Artaxerxes to go to Jerusalem, and, with his permission, he set out with a party of 1,496 men, besides a number of priests, Levites, and singers, and a few descendants of David. The journey was safely accomplished, and on his arrival at Jerusalem a great festival was held.

But the joy which the success of the journey inspired was soon rudely disturbed; for Ezra learned that a number of Israelites, actually including some priests and Levites, had taken foreign wives. This seemed to him a horrible sin, and pained him very deeply. He mourned publicly and humbled himself before Yahweh. But, when the people were come

together, he succeeded in persuading them, almost to a man, to resolve to live in obedience to the Law, and to send away their foreign wives and their children. There were only four men who ventured to resist, and their opposition was to no purpose; the resolution was shortly afterwards carried into effect, and about a hundred sent away their foreign wives.

However harsh such a measure might be, it was to all appearance absolutely necessary. If the Israelites had not been kept strictly aloof from all alliances with the surrounding peoples, they must inevitably before long have lost all separate existence, and the further development of their religion would have been for ever after impossible. We may easily guess, however, that it was not every one that agreed with Ezra and his friends, and that not a few considered the measures he adopted too hard. There might well be those even among the faithful worshipers of Yahweh who took a milder view about the heathen, and that, too, not only from philanthropy, but from the expectation which they entertained that, by intercourse with the Israelites, the other nations would be led to acknowledge the deity of Yahweh. Such is the view that we meet with in the books of RUTH and JONAH, the writers of which, in all likelihood, flourished at this time. In the former of these books we have the story of a Moabitish woman, who, by her marriage with an Israelite, became the ancestress of David. This fact, which is probably

historical, is adduced in protest against the aims of Ezra. That union between an Israelite and a foreign woman, at any rate, had had Yahweh's blessing in an extraordinary degree, and it was argued, therefore, that he could not approve of the rough measures which Ezra was taking.

The same thing is put still more forcibly in the Book of Jonah. The writer applies fiction to show that Yahweh abstains from executing the prophecies formerly declared, out of compassion for the heathen. Many of his contemporaries were both surprised and vexed that these prophecies remained so long unaccomplished. Jonah, the chief character in the book, affords a striking type of this sentiment. He longs to see the destruction of the heathen, and murmurs against Yahweh for being so patient and compassionate towards them. The writer, on the other hand, shows why Yahweh is so merciful. The heathen are being converted and coming to the fear of Yahweh; and that is why the prophecies are not fulfilled. It is clear from the above that this writer has quite a different way of thinking from Ezra. Indeed, we may affirm that there is no other book in the Old Testament which judges the heathen so tenderly.

Ezra's measure in reference to the foreign women was only the first step towards the reformation which he was anxious to bring about. He intended nothing less than the introduction of the priestly legislation; and it is to this momentous achievement that we must

now turn our attention. Ezra could not, however, carry this out all at once. Shortly after his arrival at Jerusalem, and as soon as he had accomplished the expulsion of the foreign women, he seems to have withdrawn for thirteen years, on account, we may surmise, of the political situation not being favorable to his purpose. It is probable that he was engaged during this interval in modifying the priestly legislation which he had brought with him from Babylon, and adapting it to the state of things in Judea. At the end of this period Nehemiah came to Jerusalem, arriving there in the year 445 before Christ. He had been cup-bearer at the court of King Artaxerxes, and being appointed governor by that prince, obtained leave to rebuild the ruined walls of Jerusalem. He immediately manifested his sympathy with Ezra, and powerfully seconded his endeavors. Some time after his arrival—how long, we are not told—he gathered the people together in Jerusalem to hear the Law, which Ezra read aloud, section by section, for several days running. Finally, a day of repentance was held, and then both priests and people made a solemn vow to keep the Law of God.

Nehemiah himself left Jerusalem again in the year 433 before Christ; but only to come back a little while afterwards, when he found many abuses being practised in defiance of the Law; and to these he set himself in violent opposition. Thus, the Sabbath was not kept holy, and many Jews had again married

foreign wives. These women had to be sent away again by his orders. One of the transgressors, a priest, probably Manasseh, a grandson of the high-priest, who had married a woman of Samaria, refused to yield, and was obliged to quit the country. He withdrew to Samaria, and became high-priest in the temple on Mount Gerizim, which was built at his earnest suggestion.

We see from all this that Ezra and Nehemiah could not boast of universal acquiescence on the part of the people. We have already referred to the Books of Ruth and Jonah, which breathe quite a different spirit to theirs. Opposition began to show itself, too, among the priests, as we see by the prophecies of Malachi, who lived at this time, and severely blamed the people, and the priests too, for the laxity of their allegiance to the Law of Moses. In estimating this opposition, which was so earnest on the part of many, we must observe that it was something *new* that Ezra and Nehemiah wanted to introduce. The Law which they publicly read and made binding on the nation had not hitherto been known in Israel, and comprised many an injunction which trenched more or less on the olden freedom. There were, as we have seen, not a few who could not acquiesce in such complete separation from other peoples. But the most important point was that Ezra's reforms were conceived in altogether a different spirit from that which had been manifested of old. Instead of the free word, there

was now the written Law ; instead of the independent attitude of the prophets, who judged everything according to the word which Yahweh spoke to them, there was now the submission to the authority of the Law. It must not, however, be supposed that Ezra was aware that he was following a different path from the prophets : on the contrary, he valued their writings very highly, and supposed himself to be carrying on their work in perfect harmony with their intentions. And, indeed, however anti-prophetic his efforts may have been, they were the necessary fruit of the work which the prophets had done. They had preached Yahweh as the god of Israel, and it was under the influence of this preaching that Josiah undertook his reformation and carried it through. And Ezra only followed the same track. But he sought what the prophets had sought, in his own way. It had been their endeavor to make their countrymen Yahweh's people by means of a spirit of freedom, and they had laid stress on what was inward, to the exclusion of the outward form. But they had failed to achieve their purpose, because they stood too far above the people, and were never quite understood by them. And now Ezra resolved to attempt what they had failed in, employing, however, the fixed forms and definitions of the Law instead of the prophetic freedom of speech. Not that he himself clearly saw the difference, but that the changes which time had brought about made it natural for him to

proceed in this way. Ezra was no prophet; he was priest and scribe. Nor was there any prophets after him. Malachi was the last of them, and even he had a good deal of the scribe in him. When once the Law got a footing in Israel, there ceased to be any sphere for the prophet, with his inspired and spontaneous utterance. The Law prescribed everything that was to be done, and squeezed the national life into its own narrow mould of institutions and commandments.

This legislation which Ezra introduced is scattered through the Pentateuch among passages of greater antiquity. In a previous chapter we examined those older passages. We saw that the five books of Moses, as they are called, were first edited in the middle of the eighth century before Christ. The author, who was a prophet, wrote the history of his nation and incorporated a few laws. And we discussed in detail the Deuteronomist, who wrote his laws during the reign of Josiah. And now we must say a word about "The Book of Origins." Such is the name which has been given to that part of the Pentateuch which was written by priests, or under priestly influence, in the captivity, between 538 and 458 before Christ. We find no traces of it before the beginning of that period, and it was in the latter year that Ezra brought the book with him from Babylon to Jerusalem. He made some modifications in it and constituted it a code of law for Israel, dovetailing it into those parts of the Penta-

teuch which existed before. A few alterations and additions were subsequently made; but these are of minor importance, and we may fairly say that Ezra put the Pentateuch into the form in which we have it. These priestly passages are partly occupied with historical matter, comprising a very free account of things from the creation of the world to the arrival of Israel in Canaan. Everything is here represented from a priestly point of view; some events, elsewhere recorded, are touched up in the priestly spirit, and others are entirely invented. At the very outset, the account of the creation from the hand of the priestly author (Gen. i. 1–ii. 3) is utterly different from the older prophetic narrative beginning at the fourth verse of Gen. ii. Here we are told that God created heaven and earth in six days and rested on the seventh day, obviously with a view to bring out the holiness of the Sabbath in a strong light. There is nothing about this in the more ancient passages. In his accounts of the earliest generations of men, of the flood, and of the patriarchs, the priestly writer is very brief, though his endeavor to draw the reader's attention to a gradual growth of God's revelation to his people is plainly discernible. At first God is called Elohim exclusively; further on, Abraham calls him El-Shaddai; while he finally reveals himself to Moses as Yahweh. According to this author, no sacrifice was offered in olden times, though, on the other hand, circumcision is put as early as Abraham as a sign of

the covenant which El-Shaddai made with him. He tells us nothing about the youth of Moses, but in his account of the deliverance out of Egypt he follows tradition. With the death of the first-born in Egypt he connects the institution of the feast of unleavened bread together with the description of the paschal offering. He, too, states that the law was given on Mount Sinai, but, for the rest, he by no means binds himself down to tradition. He describes in detail the tabernacle and the ark: Yahweh himself tells Moses exactly how they are to be arranged. It does not trouble our author in the least that he is here utterly at variance with history. The real tabernacle was nothing but a simple tent; but the description which we find here is borrowed from the temple of Jerusalem, and so highly satisfied were the priests with that temple that they refashioned the tabernacle of by-gone days on that model, and even shaped the precepts of Yahweh accordingly. In harmony with this, we are informed that sacrifice might only be offered at this tabernacle. We are told, further, that Moses appointed the sons of Aaron to be priests, and gave the rest of the Levites lower offices in connection with the services of religion. Both statements are equally unhistorical, and arise from the priestly opinions of the Babylonish law-giver.

Besides this refashioning of history from a priestly point of view, we have a great number of laws here, some of which are incorporated in the Book of

Exodus, and many more in Leviticus and Numbers. The most important of these will occupy our attention further on; at present we need only allude to the peculiarly priestly character which is distinctly discernible in all these laws. The author has evidently set himself to put the priestly idea into a fixed form, and to incorporate it in the framework of Israel's legislative code. There are full regulations concerning the mutual relations of the priests and all their duties; settled rules are laid down about the celebration of the Sabbath and the festivals, clean and unclean, and the contribution of tithes for the support of the priests and Levites. In short, it is a purely sacerdotal system that we have here, and the ideal which the legislator held before him was clearly nothing less than to make Israel a clean nation, keeping faithfully the commandments of Yahweh.

CHAPTER XVIII.

PUBLIC WORSHIP AND THE SYNAGOGUE.

WE proceed to pass under review the principal regulations of the priestly legislation in their action on the religious life of Israel after Ezra. It must not, however, be understood that everything was now precisely and unalterably settled, so as to

admit of no modification whatever. On the contrary, even after Ezra additions were made to the existing Law here and there, while oral tradition gave free scope for interpreting and applying certain commandments differently from the way which the Law prescribed, in obedience to the necessity of the moment, and according to circumstances.

Public worship and everything connected with it are regulated in detail under the priestly legislation. The temple itself was, in the main, similar to that of Solomon. Except that it was not so splendid as his, the only difference was that the holy of holies was separated from the holy place with a curtain, and not with doors that opened and shut, as it had been before. The high-priest might only enter once a year, on the great day of Atonement. This rule arose from the new conception of Yahweh's nature, as being separated from his people by reason of his purity and holiness. In former times, the prophets had taught that Yahweh spoke to his servants and entered into more confidential intercourse with them; but now Yahweh's character was considered to be so highly exalted, that he must always remain hidden from the unclean, and even from the priests, with the single exception of the high-priest himself; and this functionary was also now regarded as the only person qualified to consult Yahweh by means of the urim and thummim, which were used in a sort of divination.

The respective functions of the priests and the

Levites, too, were now regulated minutely. We have already remarked that the new legislation adopted the idea that none but the sons of Aaron might serve at the temple sacrifices. But this limitation had no ground in history. Those priestly families which had formerly offered sacrifice in the temple of Solomon had acquired by degrees a certain precedence over the priests of the high places who were attached to the temple at Jerusalem by King Josiah, but were not qualified to kindle the offerings. And now it was pretended in the legislative writings that these all belonged to the tribe of Levi, but that the priests of higher rank who had been attached to the temple all along were the descendants of Aaron, while all the rest, being descended from the priests of the high places, were excluded from all priestly employment, properly so called, and were regarded as mere supernumeraries for executing the minor duties. And for the future the singers were ranked along with them; while everything connected with the sacrifices and with the regulations about clean and unclean was entrusted exclusively to the priests.

The sacrifices were very numerous. The most important were the "*burnt-offerings*," which were offered for the honor and glory of Yahweh, as an acknowledgment of his deity. One of them was kindled every morning and every evening. The "*thank-offerings*" were made both at general festivals and at special ones, as an expression of joy at the

blessings given by Yahweh. Then there were the “*sin-offerings*” and the “*guilt-offerings*,” which were so much alike in many respects, that it is not quite clear to us how they differed in signification. One of these offerings might be made for every slip and every unwitting neglect, but not for a sin deliberately committed. The delinquent brought his victim to the temple; he laid his hand on the animal’s head, and then slaughtered it; the blood was caught, and the priest sprinkled it on the altar or the curtain, and, finally, the animal was partially burnt. The signification of the sacrifice was not that the guilt was transferred from the man to the victim, but that Yahweh in his mercy accepted the animal’s soul instead of that of the sinner. The occasions on which people were obliged to bring an offering of this kind were innumerable, and this diminished its significance very much, and could not fail to lead the Israelite to be less afraid, on the one hand, of uncleanness and the minor transgressions resulting from carelessness or neglect, inasmuch as he could make atonement with an offering, and, on the other hand, to become less sensitive to his moral responsibility for graver offences, inasmuch as they might easily be counted by the priest as among the delinquencies admitting of expiation. Thus, in spite of the contrary intention of the legislator, the sacrificial theory tended from the first to anything but the strengthening of the moral sentiment, and, by and

by, when the national thought and feeling had thoroughly assimilated it, it led to formalism.

Similar results accrued from the regulations about *clean* and *unclean*. Great importance was attached to them in the priestly legislation. The legislator set out from the principle that Israel, being Yahweh's people, must be a clean people *par excellence*. But every Israelite was liable to incur uncleanness in a multitude of different ways, some of them accidental and others unavoidable. He might not eat blood; he might never eat the flesh of unclean animals, and that of clean ones only if they had not died a natural death. Touching a dead body, too, made a man unclean, and so did certain diseases, especially leprosy. Accordingly, it was minutely prescribed how to become clean again in all these cases, and what offerings to make afterwards.

Detailed regulations were laid down for the three great festivals. In general, the practices sanctioned by long usage were retained, and only had a few injunctions added to them. As we have already observed, it is probable that these festivals were as old as Solomon. In the Book of Covenants,* and especially in Deuteronomy, they had been described with more or less detail, and now, in the priestly legislation, they received some further modification.

The Passover, or feast of unleavened bread, had originally been connected with the worship of nature.

* See page 10.

But at a very early date, it had been brought into connection with the recollection of the deliverance out of Egypt. Afterwards the eating of the paschal lamb was added to it. A lamb had been offered to Yahweh in old times, by way of redeeming the first-born son—a practice in harmony with the conception of Yahweh as a nature-god who had a right to the first-born even of men. From this came the term “pascha” or “phesach,” meaning, Yahweh *passes over* the first-born because a sacrifice is offered to him in redemption. Thus this offering bore a private character at first, but in the course of time it came to be made on the same day by everybody, and that, too, at the time of one of the annual festivals, that of unleavened bread. The Deuteronomist does not say much about it, because it reminds him of offerings of the same kind which were made to Molech. But the priestly legislator, knowing nothing of any such danger, finds a place in his legislation for this primeval usage of his people, at the same time entirely transforming its significance, and harmonizing it with Yahwism. The offering of the paschal lamb is turned into a festive meal for all the families of Israel, in commemoration of the day when Yahweh slew all the first-born sons of Egypt.

The Feast of Weeks, afterwards called Pentecost, from a Greek word signifying the *fiftieth* day, continued to be the feast of the first-fruits of the corn-harvest. It was only at a much later time, after

the commencement of the Christian era, that it was brought into connection with the legislation of Mount Sinai. The Feast of *Tabernacles* was a harvest-festival, held when all the fruits of the soil had been gathered, and served also as a commemoration of the sojourn in the wilderness. Besides these festivals, with which we are already acquainted, we find in the priestly legislation a new one, that of the moon, which was to be observed on the first day of every month, and especially of the seventh month.

We ought here to note that the legislator shows no little practical sagacity in his changes and additions. The origin of the paschal sacrifice was in anything but conformity with his principles; and the same may be said of the feast of the moon, which was connected with the worship of the moon-goddess. But both usages had firmly established themselves in the national life. The Deuteronomist had little sympathy with them, and the prophets less, and they would have been glad enough if it had been possible to banish them from Israel altogether. The priest, on the other hand, incorporated them in his legislation, but gave them a new significance. He thus enabled the people to keep their old customs, while so modifying them that they could no longer be hurtful to Yahwism. On the contrary, the old usages, which had struck their roots so deep, became integral parts of the service of Yahweh. And the result was that the priests got much more influence over the people

than the prophets had ever had. It was the priests who were the first to achieve what the prophets had desired, and to make Israel Yahweh's people.

Of course our legislator retained the Sabbath. He laid the utmost stress on the rest with which that day was to be consecrated to Yahweh, making death the penalty of disobedience to this law. He gave precise directions as to what kind of work was to be considered necessary and what was not, and, as we have seen already, he enforced the sanctity of the Sabbath with a reference to Yahweh himself, who had worked six days at the creation of the world and rested on the seventh day.

The most important day in the whole year in the legislator's eyes was the Great Day of Atonement, which fell on the tenth of the seventh month. Atonement was then made for all involuntary sins. It was considered that the whole nation and country had become unclean through the transgression of the moral and the ceremonial Law, and the Great Day of Atonement was intended as a provision against this. It was a day of humiliation—the only day on which every one was obliged to fast, refraining from both meat and drink. The high-priest had first to offer up a young bullock as a sin-offering for himself; while for the people there were two goats, between which lots were cast, and one was for Yahweh and the other for Azazel, which was probably the name of a wicked spirit. The goat which fell to Yahweh was

then offered up as a sin-offering by the high-priest, and its blood, as well as that of the young bullock, was sprinkled in the holy place and the holy of holies. This was the only day on which the high-priest might go in before the face of Yahweh in the holy of holies. Then he made confession of all the sins and transgressions of the people, and laid them upon the head of the second goat, which was thereupon sent away into the wilderness, where Azazel was supposed to dwell. Finally, the high-priest offered up one ram as a burnt-offering to Yahweh for himself, and another for the people. The underlying thought was that in the goat dedicated to Yahweh a clean soul was offered to the Holy One, while a whole year's sins, and all the uncleanness incurred by temple, soil, or people were transferred to the scape-goat, so that Israel was made clean again before the sight of Yahweh.

We need not enter into the further regulations laid down in the priestly Law. All that we want is to get some notion of the spirit in which it was conceived, and the ends that it proposed to itself. This legislation gave a new direction to the life of the Israelites, and impregnated the national thought and feeling with the principles of Yahwism. Henceforth progress became possible in a new direction, nor was it long before such progress was actually made; and it is on this, the necessary consequence of the introduction of this legislation, that we must now fix our attention.

Ezra's disciples, the scribes, inspired with a kindred sentiment to his own, carried on his labors. We are left in ignorance whether Ezra himself guided them in their action and drew up fixed rules for them, or whether such regulations were only dictated by the force of circumstances after his death. In any case, Jerusalem was the head-quarters of their activity and the centre from which they spread themselves all over the country. Their very name discloses the fact that they were skilled in the knowledge of Scripture, especially the Law of Moses; and on this account they are also called "lawyers" in the New Testament, without any distinct difference of meaning in the terms. They employed themselves in copying the Law, and especially in explaining and applying it, which was a particularly necessary thing to do; for the legislation, having originally been drawn up in Babylon, frequently came into collision with things as they actually existed in Judæa. It is true that Ezra himself had introduced a great many modifications; but these did not always prove sufficient. So whenever some change was manifestly required, the Scribes modified or elaborated the text of the Law, always, however, preserving the main principle unimpaired. And if change of circumstances called for some entirely new regulation, the case was met by what was called "oral tradition," which continued to maintain its place side by side with the Law. Its origin was ascribed to Moses, just as that of the Law

was ; so that it enjoyed a divine authority no less than the Law. But being more elastic than the Law, it could be used with advantage in such contingencies as the Law had not provided for.

These changes in the text of the Law, and the new regulations established by oral tradition in the centuries subsequent to Ezra, are ascribed to "the men of the Great Synagogue," at Jerusalem. Of these men we know comparatively little. It may be taken as historical that, from the time of Ezra until the second century before our era, they formed a central association of scribes at Jerusalem. Perhaps they met in some special building which must be called "great" in comparison with the numerous smaller synagogues which were erected in Jerusalem at one time or another. Their influence and authority extended far and wide. Judaism has to thank them for its preservation and development. They spread the knowledge of the Law among their countrymen, and made its observance feasible. They found means to keep the national religion of Israel free from foreign elements which would have led to its dissolution. They awakened and kept alive in the hearts of their people a strong affection for the Law, which was to prove its vitality in the midst of the fiercest struggles.

Since it was the aim of the scribes to bring the people under the dominion of the Law, they naturally endeavored forthwith to make them familiar with it.

Their great instrument in this work was the *Synagogue*; and it was from this word that the persons mentioned above derived their title. The word "synagogue" is Greek, and means *an assembly*. It stands for a hall or building in which the Jews assembled to listen to the reading of the Law. We are but imperfectly informed about the origin of this custom. We know that, towards the close of the captivity, the Jews in Babylon used to meet together to hear an address from one of the prophets or the reading of the older prophets, and subsequently of the Law. And, although we are not told so in so many words, it is more than probable that Ezra introduced this custom into Jerusalem too, and that it found its way thence into other cities of Judæa, and came to be adopted at last wherever there were Jews living. By degrees there came to be more unity and order in the arrangements of the meeting, the synagogues of Jerusalem being made the model for the rest. The chief thing always was, as it had been at first, the reading and expounding of the Law. To this was added the recitation of certain passages of the Law containing the most important precepts; so was the rehearsal of a prayer, and, by and by, when Hebrew was no longer spoken, the translation of the Law into the vernacular. In the course of time a special portion of the Law was appointed to be read on each Sabbath-day, of such a length that the whole could be got through in three years. By means of

this practice the whole of the people were made acquainted with the Law, and the scribes had abundant opportunity of explaining and propagating their own interpretations of it. This would have been quite out of their power had it not been for the synagogue. The temple at Jerusalem could not possibly have served the purpose. True, the temple was the seat of worship, and there it was that sacrifice was offered and that the faithful gathered together at the great festivals; but it was beyond its scope to spread the knowledge of the Law among the people. And the synagogue was not in opposition to the temple, nor was it any substitute for the temple in the towns and villages of Judæa. It merely provided for a want that the temple was not calculated to meet. Indeed, the scribes regarded the function of the synagogue as necessarily subordinate to that of the temple; nor is there the slightest indication to be found that it impaired in the least the consideration in which the temple was held.

We may easily suppose that the scribes must have exercised a most powerful influence. When once the Law was received as the rule of faith and practice, a leading place was secured to those who knew the Law and expounded it. The judges who were called upon by the Law to decide matters of all kinds, could not do better than go to the scribes if they wanted to understand how to apply the different precepts to a particular case. Week by week, the synagogue

brought the Law before the congregation, and by that means brought it home to every Israelite in his individual and domestic life. The result could not be doubtful; through the activity of the scribes, the Law, and the oral tradition along with it, really became the property of the people, and the universal rule of life. Nor must it be supposed that they looked upon it as an oppressive burden, and only bent beneath its yoke because they were obliged; that was the case at a later period, but not at first. The scribes' own love of the Law was the fruit of the most sacred and profound conviction; their devotion to it was unbounded; they regarded it with the deepest piety, and revered it as the word of God. They implanted their own convictions in the bosom of the people; and so far from following the Law with reluctance, the people accepted it with their whole heart, and loved it sincerely. There is abundant evidence of this. The majority of the songs in the Book of Psalms were composed in the centuries following Ezra's time, when the success of the scribes was at its height. Now in many of these Psalms, we find the most fervent praises of the Law, and so sincere and hearty are they, that it is out of the question to suppose that the poet felt its yoke oppressive. Indeed, we may affirm that it was the scribes who were the first to teach the people in general to love Yahwism. The prophets, the founders proper of Israel's religion, men of a sacred enthusiasm, which could brook no fetters, were obliged to fight

against the popular opinions and attachment to the worship of strange gods. The consequence was that, while very exclusive towards other peoples, they were by no means popular with their own. The scribes, on the other hand, had no need to continue the struggle against idolatry and image-worship; the great thoughts which had animated the prophets had become the property of the people, and Yahwism had exclusive sway in Israel. Its leading principles could now be further unfolded and applied in a variety of ways; the battle for its establishment had already been fought and won, so that there was no further occasion for confining all sympathy to what was Israelitish; things began to be looked at from the point of view of our common humanity, and thus the scribes approached, in this respect, the stand-point of the sages; they entered upon the inheritance of the prophets, but avoided their one-sidedness. Amongst the fruits of their teaching are most of those psalms in which the simple sentiment of religion, common to various races of men, finds such beautiful expression, that we ourselves, though removed from them by so many centuries, still repeat these hymns as the utterance of our own religious impressions and aspirations.

One point more must be discussed here, and that is the relations of the scribes with the priests. The question suggests itself, whether the influence and authority of the latter may not have been impaired by

the activity of the scribes. This was certainly not the case at first: Ezra, the first of the scribes, was himself a priest, nor would this combination seem to have been an unusual one. As the priests derived their authority from the Law, they could not be indifferent to it. On the other hand, the scribes could not do otherwise than support the priests, inasmuch as the Law assigned to them the first place. Thus the power of the priests had really nothing to fear from the scribes, and the high-priest retained the influence which he possessed as the head of the state under the Persian governor. Nevertheless, there was something in the mutual relations of the scribes and the priests that could not fail by and by to lead to the exaltation of the former above the latter. In Ezra's time, many priests had strenuously opposed his reforms; and thus it was impossible in the nature of things to entrust them with the maintenance of the Law. And so, the task of preserving, propagating, and developing the oral tradition was taken away from them, and their influence was commensurately impaired. Before the Law was written, they had had the support of its authority, and had been, indeed, in a sense, themselves the Law. But now that the Law was reduced to writing, its authority was co-ordinate with theirs, or rather superior to it, inasmuch as they derived all their power from it. So that they lost something; and the scribes, being the official interpreters and preservers of the Law, could not but grow more and

more influential. No wonder, then, that, however little foreseen or apprehended, conflict was destined one day to break out, and that the Priest was doomed to succumb to the Scribe.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE JEWS IN THE AGE IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING THE CHRISTIAN ERA.

IF the reader is correctly to understand the growth and progress of religious thought and feeling among the Israelites during the age immediately preceding the Christian era, we must sketch in a few strokes the condition in which they lived, politically speaking, during that period. What makes it especially necessary to do so at this point is, that it was in the course of the time now under consideration, that they came into contact with the civilization of the Greeks, which provoked a strenuous opposition on the part of the stricter Jews, and exercised a most important influence on their condition and opinions.

Under the Persian rule, the Jews enjoyed a certain measure of freedom. It is true they were under a foreign government; but things were largely left in the hands of the high-priest, and as his power was continually increasing, he may fairly be regarded as the head

of the state. We know little or nothing of how these high-priests conducted the government during the century following Ezra and Nehemiah. When Alexander the Great, with his Greek armies, fell upon Asia to overthrow the Persian monarchy, Jaddua was high-priest at Jerusalem; and while Alexander was laying siege to Tyre, he sent to invite him to tender his submission. Jaddua refused at first, but he was unable to resist the mighty conqueror. Alexander entered Jerusalem in the year 332 before Christ, and Palestine was incorporated in his dominions. After his death, it fell to the share of Ptolemæus, son of Lagus, who took Jerusalem one Sabbath-day, and led numbers of Jews captive to Egypt. After several wars, the battle of Ipsus secured him in the possession of Judæa, in the year 301 before Christ. Up to 203 before Christ, Palestine remained in subjection to Egypt, in spite of numerous attacks on the part of the Seleucidæ, who ruled over Syria and Babylon. In that year, however, it was incorporated in the kingdom of the Seleucidæ, and consequently, in 175 before Christ, the Jews came under the sceptre of Antiochus the Fourth, surnamed Epiphanes, the son of Antiochus the Third, who was called the Great. In the reign of this prince, they rebelled, and with such courage did they contend against the generals of Antiochus, that, in 164, they reconquered Jerusalem, and, in 138, Syria acknowledged their independence.

And now Judæa was once more an independent state, under the rule of the men who had placed themselves at the head of the rebellion and brought it to so successful a conclusion. Judas, surnamed MACCABÆUS, or the hammer, was their first leader; and was succeeded by his brothers, Jonathan and Simon. It was under the last of these that Judæa was declared independent. Their family is generally called the ASMONÆANS, after one of their ancestors. Simon, having been murdered in the year 135 before Christ, was succeeded by his son, John; and he, by successful warfare, greatly extended the kingdom, bringing Samaria, Galilee, and the region beyond Jordan into subjection, and incorporating the Idumæans, as the former Edomites were now called, in his dominions. His son, Aristobulus the First, was the first who assumed the title of king, and, after reigning a year, he was succeeded, in 105 before Christ, by his brother, Alexander Jannæus, whose wife, Alexandra, reigned for nine years after his death, bringing us down to the year 70 before Christ. After this, a fierce contest broke out between her two sons, Aristobulus and Hyrcanus, the latter of whom filled the office of high-priest, but was defeated by his brother. Antipater, the Idumæan, however, the favorite of Hyrcanus, managed to induce him to renew the struggle. But during the siege of Jerusalem by Hyrcanus, the Romans mixed themselves in the quarrel of the two brothers and assumed the part of umpires. In the

year 63 before Christ, Pompey the Great took Jerusalem, and set up Hyrcanus as high-priest and king. Aristobulus and his sons continued to oppose this arrangement, and the help of the Romans proved necessary to resist them,—a sufficient indication how dependent on the Romans the Jewish state already was. Meanwhile, Antipater's influence was on the increase, especially during the civil war between Pompey and Cæsar, which prevented the Romans from troubling themselves so much with Jewish affairs. Being a foreigner, however, he failed to gain the affections of the people, and after his death, which took place in the year 43, Antigonus, the son of Aristobulus, ventured upon a fresh attempt to get the mastery. Herod, the son of Antipater, who had married Mariamne, the grand-daughter of Hyrcanus, tried to maintain himself in his father's position, but was obliged to fly before his foe, who took Jerusalem in the year 40 before Christ. Herod sought help at Rome, and the Roman Senate acknowledged him king of the Jews. On his return to Judæa, he was enabled, by the help of the Romans, to bring his struggle with his rival to a successful issue. He took Jerusalem, and Antigonus was killed in the year 37 before Christ.

Herod, surnamed the Great, had a prosperous reign and gained considerable distinction for his kingdom. At Jerusalem he built a new temple instead of the existing one, of surpassing beauty and

splendor. He always strove to further the interests of his subjects, that he might, if possible, win their attachment. But in this he was not successful ; the Jews hated him, not only because he was a foreigner, but because he was guilty of many cruelties. He died in the year 4 before Christ.

His three sons succeeded him — Archelaus in Judæa, Herod Antipas in Galilee, and Philip in the region beyond Jordan. Archelaus was deposed as early as the year 6 after Christ, and Judæa was incorporated in the Roman empire. Herod Antipas lost his crown in the year 39 A.D., and was banished. Philip died in the year 34 A.D. Judæa passed under the rule of the governor of Syria, who stationed a subordinate officer at Cæsarea, under the title of procurator, to govern Judæa. Pontius Pilate, who was at the head of Judæa from 26 to 37 A.D., held this office. But after his time Judæa was again amalgamated entirely with Syria.

In the year 41 A.D., Palestine once more obtained a prince of its own. Herod Agrippa the First, grandson of Herod the Great, who had become prince of the region beyond Jordan as far back as the year 37 A.D., and of Galilee in 40, now received from the Roman Emperor, Claudius, dominion over Judæa in addition. His reign was not without merit, but it lasted a short while only, for he died in the year 44 A.D. From that time Palestine remained under the rule of the Roman governors. It is true, indeed,

that Herod's son, Herod Agrippa the Second, enjoyed some authority, but it was inconsiderable. The Jews found themselves virtually under the immediate dominion of the Romans. This, however, they could not bring themselves to endure. Revolts broke out ever and anon, till, in 66 A.D., a general rebellion burst forth, all Romans were put to death, and the final war was begun. Though the Jews fought with much good fortune at first, they were naturally unable to maintain the unequal strife. Vespasian was entrusted with the conduct of the war by Nero; and when he himself was summoned to the imperial throne, his son, Titus Vespasian, carried on the war to its conclusion. In the year 70 A.D., Jerusalem was taken and the temple was burnt. The Jewish State had for ever ceased to be.

And now that we have glanced at the condition in which Israel found itself politically during the final period of its national existence, we are once more in a position to give undivided attention to what took place in the sphere of religion. We have already made acquaintance with the scribes and their work during the age succeeding Ezra, and acquired some notion of the priestly legislation and the oral tradition by means of which it was interpreted and amplified. The scribes carried on their work in the same spirit under the rule of Alexander the Great and his successors. The people were more and more affected

by their influence, and the Law became the guiding principle by which the pious Israelite decided what he should do and what he should not do. At the same time, the tradition was continually undergoing amplification to meet contemporary needs ; and many of the psalms in our collection date from the period we are discussing. The Book of Chronicles, which was written about 250 years before Christ, is particularly important in indicating the spiritual and intellectual tendencies of the day. It was originally united in one work with Ezra and Nehemiah — not that the whole came from one pen ; only, one author gathered together the existing records of Ezra and Nehemiah into a more extended work under his own hand. This author treads in Ezra's footsteps, and, indeed, goes still further than he did. He gives an account in his book of the history of Israel, but supplements or amends the ancient narratives as he pleases. He ascribes his own opinions to the ancients, making David, for instance, project the organization of the priests and Levites, though it was only finally settled in his own day. He describes festivals and ceremonies in the way in which they were kept in his own times, while pushing them back for centuries by way of endowing them with the authority of antiquity. Thus, he permits himself great liberties in his treatment of history, but it is with the distinct purpose of bringing into relief the excellence of the Law, of the priestly services, and of the sacrifices. And he is

further distinguished from his predecessors by his endeavor to identify piety with a reverence for the priests and Levites. He is thoroughly hierarchical in his temper, standing in this respect below the majority of the scribes, since they never allowed themselves to be swayed by selfishness. Then, again, he pays extraordinary attention to the singers and the porters, whom he includes among the Levites, and affiliates to the tribe of Levi by means of fictitious genealogies. All this shows that, even in the middle of the third century before Christ, no divine authority was attributed to the old historical books, and people did not shrink from making important alterations in them.

To this period, too, belongs the introduction of the feast of Purim, which we have already mentioned in discussing the Book of Esther. The successful issue of the efforts made by the author of Esther, in his desire to see this festival observed universally by the Israelites, shows us, in the same way, that there was still a sufficient measure of freedom to render possible the introduction of new regulations and usages.

We now approach that momentous era when the spirit of Greek civilization began to make itself felt even in Israel. Alexander had brought it into Asia, and in the long run Israel could not escape its influence. We have to inquire, then, whether Yahwism managed to hold its ground against the power of that foreign civilization.

At first it seemed as if Yahwism must succumb.

We have already made acquaintance with the Preacher, who could not sympathize with the movement of the scribes, and took too large a view to feel quite at home in the narrow circle of ideas which constituted Judaism. For his mind the spirit of the Greeks could offer no escape, but he had not long been dead before many distinguished Israelites showed a strong inclination to participate in the privileges of that foreign civilization. In the year 174 before Christ, Joshua, the brother of the high-priest, Onias the Third, found means to bribe King Antiochus Epiphanes to transfer the office to him. This Joshua was a friend of the Greeks. He established a gymnasium in the capital. Numbers of men, and some priests among them, took part in the athletic exercises which were held there, to the great scandal, we need hardly say, of the pious Israelites who were attached to the Law. But Joshua was in a short time supplanted by Menelaus, who had made a still higher bid to Antiochus for the office of high-priest. From that moment, there arose the most violent conflicts between the two rivals, and Antiochus seized the opportunity to march against Jerusalem himself with a view of chastising it. The city and the temple were taken in the year 169 before Christ, and the king plundered the temple of its sacred vessels. But this was only the beginning of the misery which overtook the Jews. Stimulated by fresh dissensions which arose among them, Antiochus, two years afterwards, resolved

to visit them with still heavier punishment. He once more entered the capital, put many of the inhabitants to death, and established a garrison of his own troops in a fortress which he erected adjacent to it. At the same time the temple was dissociated from the worship of Yahweh, and on the great altar a smaller one was set up, probably in honor of Jupiter Capitolinus, a god with whom Antiochus had been made acquainted through the Romans, and whom he identified with the Greek Zeus. Orders were also given that the Jews should hold no more Sabbaths, and keep no more festivals, and they were to leave off setting themselves against the use of the flesh of unclean animals. It was in December, 167 before Christ, that the first sacrifice to the strange god was kindled in the ancient sanctuary of Yahweh.

There were great numbers of Jews who were well enough pleased at these doings on the part of the Greek prince, and showed themselves quite ready to do as he bid; and the king himself seems to have supposed at first that he should not meet with any serious resistance. It was not he, but the high-priest himself, that had set the movement on foot, so that he naturally concluded that the action with which he had followed it up would gain approval, especially from men of distinction. He was soon to learn, however, that he had under-estimated the strength of Yahwism. When he met with resistance he thought to carry out his intentions by force; and hence arose

the fierce struggle of Judaism against the genius of Grecian civilization.

Our chief authority for the history of this revolt is the first and second Books of Maccabees. They tell us of splendid instances of loyalty to Yahweh and fidelity to the Law. The blood of martyrs flowed till, at last, the strain was so great that rebellion broke out at Modin, not far from Jerusalem. The servants of Antiochus visited that place, as they had visited others, to see the king's orders carried out. They set up an altar, and bade a priest named Mattathias, who lived there, make an offering upon it. On his refusal, a Jew came forward to make an offering, but Mattathias fell upon him and killed him. This was the signal for revolt. The foreigners were slain, and Mattathias fled to the wilderness with his five sons. They were speedily followed by many of the faithful. The venerable priest himself only survived to the following year (166 before Christ), but he was succeeded by his son, Judas Maccabæus, with whom the reader is already acquainted. In a series of battles and skirmishes he was constantly victorious over the troops which Antiochus sent against him, and as early as the year 164 before Christ, he was strong enough to march upon Jerusalem, take possession of the city, and purify the temple. On the very day on which, three years before, the first offering had been made to the god of the heathen, he was able to kindle sacrifice to Yahweh, the god of his

fathers, on a new altar for burnt-offerings. From that time forward, it was an established custom in Israel to celebrate that blessed event every year; and it was called the "Feast of the Renewal of the Temple," or "of Lights." The terrible struggle had resulted in victory. Yahwism stood more firmly than ever, hallowed by the blood of the martyrs.

A note-worthy book has been preserved to us in the literature of the Jews, dating from this period, written with the object of confirming the pious in their vehement conflict with Antiochus. We allude to the Book of Daniel. The author is not known to us, but he speaks in the name of Daniel, a man of the time of the Babylonish captivity, famous for piety and wisdom. He represents Daniel as prophesying of the days to come, and he makes him predict everything which he knew to have happened, and everything which he wished to happen in the future. He starts from the oracle in Jeremiah, to the effect that after seventy years Yahweh would put an end to Israel's misery and woes. That prophecy had not been fulfilled; but our author assumes that the period stated by the prophet of old is to be interpreted otherwise, and that he had not meant ordinary years, but Sabbath-years, consisting of seven years apiece, so as to make 490 years altogether. If his readers based their calculations on this assumption, they would see that the year in which Yahweh's temple was defiled —

167 before Christ—fell just in the middle of the last week of years. At the end of that time deliverance would come. So the pious must stand firm, and hold fast their trust in Yahweh. By way of enforcing this lesson, our author tells how Daniel and his three friends remained steadfast amid trials yet more terrible, and how Yahweh saved them out of the fiery furnace and out of the lions' den, into which they had been cast. God would punish Antiochus as he had punished Nebuchadrezzar, who was changed into an ox, or Belshazzar, who, having desecrated the sacred vessels of the temple, forfeited his life as the price of that heinous crime. The pious, then, had only to put their confidence in their god, who was mighty to save them as well.

Our author describes in detail the future which he expects. After the last week of days comes the resurrection of the dead. The pious shall live for ever. Then shall God's chosen ones exercise lordship upon the earth. Hitherto the heathen had ruled; four kingdoms had arisen one after the other—those of the Chaldeans, the Medes, the Persians, and the Greeks. In the mouth of Daniel all this was made a prophecy, although for the author himself it belonged to the past. To the kingdom of the Greeks belongs Antiochus, who is, of course, drawn in the darkest colors. But now the end is at hand. God, who is here called the Ancient of Days, seats himself on his throne and holds his judgment. The kingdom of the

Greeks, represented in the likeness of an animal, is brought to naught. Thereupon one like to a son of man draws near to the throne of God amid the clouds of heaven, and dominion and power are bestowed on him for ever. This son of man is the image or representative of Israel, which is here called "the people of the saints of the Most High." Israel, exalted far above the heathen, shall have dominion for ever.

This book had very great influence, first and foremost, on the writer's contemporaries; and, in the second place, as the first example of a new species of literature, known as "apocalyptic." From that time forward, many writers felt themselves stirred up to follow in the footsteps of the author of Daniel, and to put into the mouths of the pious of old such thoughts of their own as they desired to express. Prophecy was interpreted as a mechanical revelation from God, and it was represented that God had given sundry revelations concerning the future to Enoch, Moses, Ezra, and even the heathen Sibyl, and that they had reduced them to writing. Hence the word "apocalyptic," from *apocalypsis*, a revelation or unveiling. The last book in the new Testament, too, is of the same character, and contains predictions of the same sort about the days to come. It is easy to see that this kind of writings, however much prized by the pious, was no true outcome of the ancient and genuine spirit of prophecy; and it will be understood how

naturally such books led to an absorption in the future that was utterly idle.

The reader is already aware, from what has been said above, that the fair hopes which the author of Daniel entertained and awakened in the bosoms of others were not fulfilled. True, the temple was once more purified, and the Jews were even enabled once more to boast their independence ; but their kingdom never again grew great and powerful, and still less were they ever to rule over the heathen. Nay, there broke out a new struggle, this time among the Israelites themselves, a struggle the germ of which had long been there, though it was only now that its dangerous character appeared. We allude to the struggle between the party of the Sadducees and that of the Pharisees, and it is to it that we must now devote our attention.

Even before the struggle with Antiochus Epiphanes, there were two parties among the Jews. On one side was the high-priest, together with the priestly families and others of distinction ; on the other side was the great body of the people. The high-priest had at his side a council of elders, called the "Gerusia," and probably composed of the heads of the leading families. At first, the scribes were by no means hostile to them, but in the course of time their goodwill gave way to other sentiments. The priests, who composed the ruling party, came into frequent contact with foreigners, and were ready to accommo-

date themselves to them as often as it seemed necessary. The scribes, on the other hand, had nothing to do with such considerations, and were bent simply on the strenuous maintenance of the Law. By degrees they began to draw off from the priests and to act in opposition to them; and the people sided with them, partly out of sympathy with their aims and partly out of dislike to the aristocracy.

Now, when Joshua, as high-priest, sought to introduce the manners of the Greeks, the popular respect for the priestly party naturally received a severe shock; and during the revolt it was utterly destroyed, while the scribes, who distinguished themselves by their loyalty to the Law, won the highest regard. The Asmonæans made common cause with them, so that the conflict between them was for a time in abeyance. But it was only for a time; for the Asmonæans, actuated by the same principles as the old aristocracy, gradually grew nearer to the latter, while the scribes again drew off and once more sought and found support at the hands of the people.

These two parties received the names of "Sadducees" and "Pharisees." The derivation of neither word is certain. The former means "Followers of Zadok," probably some distinguished man of the day, who gave his name to his party. The word "Pharisee" signifies *separated*, but we do not know how the party came by that name. Probably it was that, in order to be the better able to obey the pre-

cepts of the law, they *separated* themselves from the masses, who could not possibly keep all the commands of the Law so strictly. The Sadducees constituted a definite rank in society, being the aristocracy; but any one could be a Pharisee, no matter what his social position might be, if only he agreed in the principles of the party. The majority of the scribes belonged to the Pharisees, and so did a few of the priests.

The differences between the two parties did not lead to any open rupture during the government of Judas, Jonathan, or Simon; for these princes, having acquired their authority during the revolt, could not but be favorably disposed towards the Pharisees. But under John Hyrcanus things underwent a change. According to Flavius Josephus, it was quite an insignificant occasion that led to the breaking out of hostilities. But the real cause lay deeper; sooner or later the principles of the two parties could not but show themselves in violent disagreement. And though Hyrcanus might pay respect to the Pharisees at first, it could not last; and he entered into closer and closer alliance with his natural friends and sympathizers, the Sadducees.

Under Alexander Jannæus, it came to actual civil war. Josephus tells us that 50,000 Pharisees perished. But so deeply was the prince impressed with their power and the popular support which they enjoyed, that on his death-bed he advised his wife, Alexandra,

to go over to the enemy; and, for the sake of peace and quiet, she did so, and that, too, with much success, though her son, Aristobulus, declared himself against her. In the wars which followed, on her decease, between Aristobulus and his brother, Hircanus the Second, the Pharisees did not, as a rule, take either side.

With regard to the religious opinions of the two parties and their controversies, a few words will be enough. The Sadducees were the aristocracy. They were a political party, and so we can only speak of their religious opinions so far as they were the result of their political principles. They were the conservatives. They systematically opposed all the novelties which the Pharisees wanted to introduce; they held by the Law and whatever had been established by the Great Synagogue in accordance with the decisions of oral tradition. It was formerly supposed that they rejected the latter, only acknowledging and accepting the Law among Israel's religious books, and not the prophets and the other writings. But this is a mistake. In this respect they agreed with their opponents. But they stood by what already existed, and did not want to see anything added to it. And so they did not believe in immortality, or in angels or evil spirits. For such doctrines were comparatively new, and so recent a writer as the Preacher controverted the belief in everlasting life, while Jesus Sirach did not even mention it. No wonder then,

that the Sadducees, true to their principles, declined to accept it.

The Pharisees constituted the popular party, properly so called. They were anything but conservatives, and did not shrink from new commandments more onerous than those of old, so long as they helped them towards their ends. In one point of view they were thus more liberal than the Sadducees, and that too, because they were more earnestly attached to the Law. They had a genuine love for that Law, and so they ventured to modify the injunctions of Moses as they thought desirable. In the estimation of the multitude, they were the pious *par excellence*; and although, especially in later times, dissemblers and hypocrites were to be found among the members of their party, this was not the case at first or with the majority. They were the true friends of Yahwism, the inheritors of the spirit of Ezra.

The scribes were their leaders from the first. The most distinguished of them stood at their head, and they are always mentioned in pairs. Hillel and Shammai are the best known pair. They were at the head of the scribes of Jerusalem, and it was their duty to propagate the oral law; probably they also had seats in the council of priests called the Sanhedrin. There they would come into conflict with the aristocracy, and, though they were in a minority, their position as leaders of the powerful popular party gave them great influence there.

We should be guilty of a grave omission if we said nothing about the Essenes, a third party in Israel, or rather a religious order, who troubled themselves little about the rest of the Jews. They had no influence worth mentioning on the growth and progress of religion in Israel; but they constitute in themselves a phenomenon so important that we cannot pass them by in silence.

The origin of the sect of the Essenes is buried in obscurity. But in all probability it is to be sought in those "pious" men who were the most strenuous in resisting Antiochus Epiphanes, and after the revolt carried out the precepts of the Law with the utmost possible stringency. The Essenes, the signification of whose name is not known, would seem from that time forward to have separated themselves more and more from the unclean, and ere long to have withdrawn from the towns and cities, where their intercourse with others made it almost impossible for them to keep the Law. At any rate, the accounts which have come down to us place them in remote villages in the neighborhood of the Dead Sea. Their mode of life was minutely prescribed: prayers were to be said before sunrise, and then they were to work till eleven o'clock. Then they had to take a bath, put on the white linen dress of their order, and partake of the common meal, at which there were prayer and singing. They abstained from meat and wine; when the meal was over, they betook themselves to work again until evening.

They took no part in the temple sacrifices, but in every other respect they were scrupulously obedient to the Law, especially in keeping the Sabbath, which they passed in absolute rest. Novices were received into the order after three years' probation; but they had first to take a solemn vow that they would keep the Law, be clean and holy in their lives, and strictly preserve the books of the sect and the names of the angels. We are not informed what the last phrase meant. The stricter Essenes abstained from marriage; but some married and lived like other people; these, however, were not admitted to the colonies of the strict members of the order. They had their goods in common, and on entering the order put all their possessions into the common treasury. The government was committed to leaders elected by the body at large, to whom every one owed obedience.

At the first glance it seems strange that such a sect should have had its birth among the Jews, and, in fact, many have supposed that it must have been of foreign origin. Josephus tries to show their agreement with the Pythagoreans; but he is evidently not to be trusted in the matter, inasmuch as he is bent upon persuading the Greeks and Romans that Israel too, has its sects of philosophers, just as much as any other people. That the Essenes were Jews is put beyond all dispute by their exaggerated regard for the Law. Their abstinence, too, their strict asceticism, however much opposed to the ancient ideas of

Israel, which recognized in a prosperous and joyous life, the blessing of Yahweh, is easily explained from the principles of a subsequent age; and even in ancient times abstinence from wine is to be found.* Moreover, in the priestly legislation, the consumption of meat containing blood was prohibited; and it was going only one step further to abstain from meat altogether; and with this is connected the fact of their taking no part in the sacrificial festivals at the temple of Jerusalem, or, indeed, in the sacrifices themselves. Then, again, their dread of pollution and their exaggerated anxiety to keep themselves separate, may be explained quite simply from their attachment to the Law, which was continually laying more and more stress upon cleanness. And so, though the peculiarities of Essenism are not all thoroughly explained, its Jewish origin is established beyond all question.

CHAPTER XX.

THE SAME CONTINUED.

IF the reader is to be acquainted with the condition of religion among the Jewish nation in the last century of its existence, we must not omit to speak

* See page 66.

of the Jews outside Palestine. There were great numbers of such Jews. As we have seen already, many stayed behind in Babylon even after the days of Ezra and Nehemiah; and from Babylon as a centre they spread into other regions, and during the dominion of the Greeks many Jews moved from Palestine to Damascus, to Antioch, and afterwards to the chief cities of Asia Minor. Before long, they passed into Europe and established themselves in Macedonia and Greece, as well as on the islands; while as early as the middle of the second century before Christ, they were to be found even at Rome.

They took up their abode, however, in Egypt in larger numbers than elsewhere, especially at Alexandria, the celebrated commercial city founded by Alexander the Great. Some of them came there of their own accord, others were carried there captive by Ptolemy. Their number was very considerable, and no small part of Alexandria was inhabited exclusively by them. A good many too, were to be found in Cyrene, in Nubia, and in Æthiopia.

We have seen above that the Babylonian Jews had not lost their interest in the religion of their fathers; and this continued to be the case, not only with them, but with all the Jews who were scattered abroad. They had been much influenced by the thoughts and feelings of the scribes, and had thus imbibed a deep affection for Yahwism. Moreover, there were sufficient numbers of them everywhere to form congrega-

tions and to found synagogues. They were so profoundly conscious of the difference between their own religion and that of the alien peoples among whom they dwelt, that they felt no difficulty in preserving their independence ; moreover, they kept up communication with their countrymen at home, sent their gifts to the temple at Jerusalem every year, and went there to keep the great annual festivals whenever they possibly could.

The influence of these Jews upon the peoples among whom they were settled was very great. Were we studying the spread of Christianity, we should see how much the progress of that religion was forwarded by the fact that there were Jewish congregations everywhere. We need only remark here, that when the heathens came into contact with the Jews, they made acquaintance with Judaism and learnt to regard it with interest. Perhaps the very contrast between the system of the Jews and that of the heathens inclined many towards the former, at any rate numbers of heathens joined the ranks of the servants of Yahweh. These converts were called "Proselytes." They were of two kinds, "Proselytes of Righteousness" and "Proselytes of the Gate." The former observed the whole of the Jewish Law, just like the Jews themselves ; the latter, who perhaps derived their name from the fact that they did not take their place in the synagogue among the believers, but stayed in a separate part near the entrance or gate,

did not submit themselves to the whole law, but only observed a few commandments; they were not to take the name of Yahweh in vain, or to worship idols, or to eat things containing blood, or to work on the Sabbath, and during the feast of the Passover they were to use unleavened bread. The first three of these commandments are called the "Noachic Commandments," after Noah, because they were considered as binding upon all men, unlike the Mosaic commandments, which were given to Israel only.

If the Jews thus exercised an important influence on the heathen, Judaism outside Palestine, in its turn, felt in no small measure the power of the Greek civilization. And this was the case in Alexandria more than anywhere else. This city was not only a great centre of trade where men were gathered together from all parts of the world, but it was also a centre of art and culture and philosophy. The Greek Kings of Egypt did all they could to further the interests of knowledge, and amongst other things, they established a library, which was the finest in the whole ancient world. In such a city, then, the Jews could not help coming into contact with the Greek civilization, imbibing its spirit, and harmonizing it, as far as possible, with their religious belief. The form of thought which thus came into being, the union of the philosophy of Greece with the spirit of Judaism, is called "Hellenism," just as, in the New Testament,

the Jews in foreign lands who had forgotten their mother tongue and spoke Greek, are called "Hellenists," in contradistinction to the Hebrews, who used their national dialect, which, however, was not Hebrew, but the kindred Aramaic.

It was in Alexandria that the celebrated Greek version, first of the Mosaic Law, and afterwards of the whole Old Testament, arose. It was natural enough that the Jews who dwelt there should strongly feel the want of such a translation. It was probably prepared about the middle of the third century before Christ. This, however, is not certain; it is true, there are a number of stories about its origin, but we cannot place any reliance on them, inasmuch as they are obviously due simply to the endeavor to exalt the value and authority of the version in question. It was related and for centuries believed, for example, that Ptolemy II. sent an embassy to Jerusalem to request the high-priest to send him seventy-two learned Jews, six of each tribe, to translate the Law. The men came, and accomplished their task in as many days as there were men, and they all made the same translation precisely to a letter. It is said that this translation derived its well-known name of the "Septuagint" (that is, the Seventy) from the number of its authors. All this, however, is unhistorical; the Alexandrian Jews themselves undertook the task, and it is not improbable that the name is taken from the seventy members of

the Sanhedrin at Alexandria, who, no doubt, gave the version their approval.

The literature of the Hellenists is pretty extensive. Especially numerous are the writings published in the names of more ancient authors, and all these aim at impressing the heathen with the glory of Judaism. The Alexandrian Jews do not hesitate to put words into the mouths of many famous Greek writers of former times in praise of monotheism and the moral precepts of the Old Testament. To this class of works belongs the revelation of the Sibyl, to which we have already alluded; the name is borrowed from the famous priestesses of Apollo, who were so called. One of these prophetesses is here brought on to the stage to predict the events which are related in the Old Testament. Ancient Jewish authors, too, were made to lend their names to the writings of the Hellenists. They always present the same character, only modified by circumstances and especially by the degree of favor in which the heathens stood among the Jews at the time. In the earlier literature we find traces of nothing but a friendly and cordial temper, but afterwards we also meet with distinct signs of conflict and persecution.

In many of these works the influence of Greek ideas is very distinct. This is most conspicuous in Philo, the principal representative of Judæo-Alexandrian letters. He was a contemporary of Jesus, and belonged to a distinguished Jewish family.

His elder brother stood at the head of his fellow believers in Alexandria, and he himself was once sent to Rome to ask for the emperor's decision in a dispute that had arisen. We do not know any further particulars about his life; but a great many writings of his have come down to us. From these we see that he was still better versed in the Greek philosophers than his predecessors. He made himself master of their ideas and concurred in many of their opinions. Nevertheless, he remained a Jew, and was fully persuaded of the divinity of the Law. Hence he arrived of necessity at the belief that those philosophical ideas which he recognized as true must be contained in the Old Testament, and must have been borrowed by the Greek philosophers from the scriptures of the Jews. True enough, an ordinary and superficial reader of these writings could not possibly guess that they comprised the sources from which Greek philosophy was derived; but these books had a double meaning, the ordinary one, which was obvious, and a deeper one, which could only be understood by learned thinkers. The *allegorical* explanation supplied the key; the simplest words, the names of things and persons and places, received a spiritual interpretation, and thus acquired an entirely new meaning. We can only call this arbitrary, and we know well enough that Philo attributed ideas to the writers which were altogether strange to them; but he and others of his way of

thinking not only thought such an interpretation quite right and fair, but considered that this was the only way in which the real meaning of an Old Testament writer could be understood. All this makes it clear to us that Philo's ideas were much in advance of the Old Testament, but he was too thoroughgoing a Jew to acknowledge this, and the only course open to him was to seek a remedy in the allegorical system of interpretation.

Philo's peculiar system cannot here be described. We shall only notice a single point, and this is one which appears again in the New Testament. Philo was a dualist, that is to say, he believed that the matter of which everything consists had existed from all eternity and did not proceed from God. He admitted that God had formed whatever exists, but would not allow that he had produced matter itself. God and matter are both eternal, and are so entirely separate that God does not operate upon matter directly, but only by means of intermediate beings. Here he is thinking of the angels of the Old Testament, and especially of the divine Wisdom, which, by degrees, came to be represented as a personal being associated with God. This idea we find even in the Proverbs, and in the Book of Wisdom, which was produced in Alexandria. It had become customary to speak of the divine Word, too, as a personal being. The Greek term, Logos, was applied to this, understanding thereby not only the spoken word, by which

God had created the world, but also the divine thought itself. Carrying on this idea, Philo taught that sundry powers proceeded from God, and that the Logos was the highest of these; it was like God, or rather, it was God himself, but only God as he reveals himself in the world. Now, it is in the fashion of this Logos that man is created; spirit and matter are at strife within him, but, by the power of the Logos, he may, by slow degrees, come to God.

This doctrine of the Logos we find again in the New Testament, namely, in the Fourth Gospel. The author of this work begins his book with the words: "In the beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with God, and the Logos was God." This is adopted from Philó. But further on the Evangelist says that the Logos became man in Jesus. It was an obvious step for him and for the later Christians to make this application, and to see in Jesus a manifestation of that divine being with whom Philo had made them acquainted. Thus, the famous Alexandrian prepared the philosophical forms in which the youthful Christian church might express its doctrinal convictions.

On the Jews themselves Philo and Hellenism in general exercised but little influence. Indeed, this could hardly be otherwise; the spirit of Hellenism was too foreign to Judaism. True, many Hellenists had settled at Jerusalem, where we meet them in the Book of Acts, especially Jews from Alexandria and from Cyrene; but they made their influence little

felt there and were regarded and treated not without suspicion by the leaders of the people. Nor need this surprise us ; Hellenism discharged its mission in the world, and helped to prepare the way for a higher religion ; but, in the history of Judaism, from which it had proceeded, and above which, in some respects, it raised itself, it was of no account whatever.

Here we might bring this work to an end, inasmuch as we have dealt with the history of the religion of the Israelites up to the beginning of the Christian era, and given a sketch of their fortunes up to the fall of Jerusalem in the year 70 after Christ. True, this is not the end of their history ; do not Israel and its religion survive to our own day ? But with this we have nothing to do here ; the purpose we set before us was to present a picture of the growth and progress of the noblest religion of antiquity. We have contemplated that religion in its first rude forms, hardly to be distinguished from the fetishism and the polytheism of other peoples ; we have watched it in its strenuous struggle to grow into monotheism ; we have viewed it in its fairest and noblest manifestations. We have made acquaintance with its story, step by step, during the lapse of thirteen centuries, and we should now be prepared to fix our gaze upon that new religion which originated in Israel and rose to be the mightiest world-religion. Thus we might fairly plead that we have fulfilled our task, were it not

that we desire to add a word about the writings of the Jews from which we have drawn our information. It is true that we have become acquainted with them in the course of our investigations, but they came to be valued as sacred writings by the Israelites, who made a collection of all those to which they attributed divine authority. Concerning this collection we have yet to speak, and we shall dedicate the next chapter to the purpose. But there is something more. It is of importance for a right understanding of the origin and early history of Christianity that we should allude to one more point in the condition of Israel, which will help us to understand the readiness with which numbers of Jews accepted Christianity; and we must say something, too, about the general condition of that Greek and Roman world in which Christianity made its appearance soon after the death of its founder.

We have made acquaintance with the Sadducees and the Pharisees, those two parties who contended for the foremost place among the Jews. The latter of these had the more influence on the people. The struggle between these parties still went on, and the Pharisees generally got the best of it. But by degrees another party arose amongst the populace, which could not acquiesce in the guidance of the scribes who stood at the head of the Pharisaic party, for the scribes confined themselves more and more to the study of the Law, and took less and less interest in practical matters. At the beginning of the Christian

era especially, serious political difficulties arose, in the solution of which they took no part, because the questions involved were not immediately connected with the main object of their endeavors. Nor did they seem much inclined to oppose the Roman supremacy, since it hardly affected their special interests, and they did not care to interrupt their study of the Law for the sake of taking forcible measures against their foreign rulers. A great part of the people, however, felt quite differently. The masses, having been instructed by the scribes, had accepted the Law, but could not, like the scribes, be satisfied with a passive and expectant attitude. If the Law was to be a reality, the chosen people ought not to lie under the sceptre of the heathen; so they must resist the heathen in the name of Yahweh, and they could not fail to be victorious. These opinions led to a series of revolts against the authority of the Romans. In the year 6 A. D. when Judæa was added on to Syria, and Quirinius, the governor, held a census, which the pious regarded as a token of slavery, Judas the Galilean rose up against him, and received considerable support, although he proved unsuccessful. The same thing occurred constantly. The members of this party were called "Zealots;" they were for maintaining the Law by force of arms, differing in this respect from the majority of the Pharisees. Thus they practically withdrew from the guidance of the Scribes.

The revival of the Messianic expectation must be coupled with all this. It had never disappeared, but up to the time we are discussing it had had no practical influence on the attitude of the people. Now, however, matters changed greatly. In the literature of this period, immediately before and after the beginning of our era, we find traces of the change. Nor is it surprising that the populace, groaning under the weight of Roman oppression, began to attach more value to the ancient anticipations of the prophets, or rather, that these anticipations assumed a more prominent place in their thoughts. Their idea of a Messiah, a son of David, varied a great deal, no doubt, and was, generally speaking, very indefinite and misty; but the expectation itself was none the less powerful for that, and in the misery of those days it brought consolation to many hearts, while it fired the courage of the Zealots. At a later period these Messianic expectations wonderfully facilitated the spread of Christianity among the Jews.

The religion of Jesus, though it owed its birth to Judaism, speedily passed far beyond the narrow boundaries of the Jews. Among the heathen it found a fruitful soil well prepared for its reception, waiting, as it were, to receive the seed of the gospel. Moreover, the circumstances of the time were exceptionally favorable for the spread of Christianity; and to these circumstances we must now devote a few sentences.

The Romans did not hinder, but rather promoted,

the subjection of Asia to the influence of Greek civilization, which was the grand conception of Alexander the Great. That universal dominion which they had established carried the influence of knowledge and civilization to the ends of the then known world. The peoples of the earth learned to know and to respect each other; their union under a single sceptre snapped the cords of a narrow patriotism, while leading all to regard one another as men of like dispositions and like necessities. The conception that all men are brothers took possession of the minds of the best men of the age. Unity of language promoted mutual intercourse and the spread of knowledge and information. The universal dominion of Rome brought peace with it and a sentiment of fraternity among the nations. In the sphere of religion a policy of toleration was pursued, and, at first, no hindrance was put in the way of the new faith.

Moreover, at the same time, the need of religion made itself more felt. The old religions were superannuated; they had fallen before the might of philosophy. But that philosophy had nothing to give in place of what it had taken away. True, in its noblest representatives, the Stoics and the Epicureans, it had declared the most exalted truths, preached the unity of God, and laid the utmost stress on the practice of virtue; but the masses felt little of its influence; they imbibed the negations of philosophy,

and had lost all belief in the gods of old, but were unable to rise to the new point of view which philosophy indicated, for it was something else that they wanted. Human nature is constitutionally religious, and if the influence of some new way of looking at things destroys the old ideas, many may be led into doubt, but the majority seek new forms to satisfy their needs. Nor do they usually show much timidity in the examination and acceptance of other forms of religion, provided only they find something that seems likely to satisfy them. And so it was in the old world of Greece and Rome. The belief in the ancient gods had had its day, and was now only to be met with in the lower ranks of society. Philosophy, however beautiful and exalted in its noblest representatives, was not fitted to take the place of religion, and could offer no compensation for what was lost. Men looked for something else. It was thought by many that it must come out of the East, and they attached themselves eagerly to every superstition and secret rite which came from Asia or from Egypt. It was a time of transition, full of doubt on the one hand and of unbelief on the other, but ready to receive the new religion when the hour should strike.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE COLLECTION OF THE BOOKS OF THE OLD
TESTAMENT.

FOR many centuries both the Christians and the Jews supposed that Ezra had brought together the sacred writings of his people, united them in one whole, and introduced them as a book given by the Spirit of God—a Holy Scripture. The only authority for this supposition was a very modern and altogether untrustworthy tradition. The historical and critical studies of our times have been emancipated from the influence of this tradition, and the most ancient statements with regard to the subject have been hunted up and compared together. These statements are, indeed, scanty and incomplete, and many a detail is still obscure; but the main facts have been completely ascertained.

Before the Babylonish captivity, Israel had no *sacred* writings. There were certain laws, prophetic writings, and a few historical books, but no one had ever thought of ascribing binding and divine authority to these documents. But after the captivity things underwent a change. Ezra brought the priestly Law with him from Babylon, altering it and amalgamating it with the narratives and laws already in existence,

and thus produced the Pentateuch in pretty much the same form as we still have it. These books got the name of the "Law of Moses," or simply the "Law." Ezra introduced them into Israel as a code of law, and gave them binding authority, and from that time forward they were considered divine.

In the earliest period after Ezra, none of the other books which already existed enjoyed the same authority as the Pentateuch. All that we are entitled to infer as probable on the strength of the statement in 2 Maccabees ii. 13, is that Nehemiah made a collection of historical and prophetic books, songs, and letters from Persian kings. His object in doing this was to save them from being lost, not to form a second collection analogous to the collection of the Law. This was done for the first time by those followers of Ezra, the scribes of Jerusalem, whom we have made acquaintance with as the men of the Great Synagogue. These were the real collectors of the second and third divisions of the Old Testament.

The first thing these scribes did was to select out of the existing collection such books as belonged to the times prior to the captivity. These consisted of historical and prophetic books; some of these were taken without any alteration, while others were edited afresh; this was the case, for example, with the collection of the so-called minor prophets. After the time of Malachi, however, the opinion became established that there would be no more prophets in Israel,

and on this account the collection of the prophetic books was closed with him. To this second division also belonged the Books of Ruth and Lamentations; otherwise it comprised just the same writings which are still included in it.

It was probably about the same time that the scribes made a third collection, that, namely, of the Writings. They put under this head such books as could not be regarded as prophetic, and yet, on account of their contents, could not be passed over. The Songs, or Psalms, which had already been collected by Nehemiah, constituted the first portion of it; the Proverbs, Job, and the Song of Solomon, too, were already in existence, and, in the course of time, they were added to the collection, together with such books of later origin as were thought to deserve the distinction. It must not be supposed that any fixed plan was pursued in this work, or that the idea was entertained from the first, that these books would one day stand on the same level as the Pentateuch. They were collected to prevent their getting lost, and others were gradually added to them, such as Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, and Ecclesiastes. The last of all to be included in the collection was Daniel. For a long time, however, there was great difference of opinion as to what books had a right to claim a place among the Writings. The Alexandrian Jews especially adopted books into the canon which those of Jerusalem did not; scribes of a subsequent time,

too, had doubts about some books which the men of the Great Synagogue had already placed on the list of Holy Scriptures. The books in question were Ezekiel, Ecclesiastes, the Song of Solomon, Esther, and perhaps the Proverbs. The reason for doubting Ezekiel was that he did not agree with the Law; while, in the case of Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon, it was impossible to find anything religious about them, and their only claim to the honor of inclusion was the supposition that Solomon had written them. Like doubts were long entertained about Esther; nor need we be surprised at this, when we observe the total absence of the religious spirit from the book. This difference of opinion among the scribes as to whether these books ought to be included or not, lasted till the second century after Christ; and this is proof enough that they did not consider themselves bound by the opinions of their predecessors, and that these books about which there was so much disagreement were not put on the same level as the Law. The discussion, however, only had reference to some particular writings; in general we may suppose that, in the first century before Christ, considerable unanimity prevailed concerning most of the Books of the Old Testament. By degrees they all acquired divine authority; involuntarily the Jews extended the homage which they paid to the Law, to the Prophets, and subsequently to the Writings as well. This did not take place suddenly or by general

agreement, but in the lapse of years the Jews came to the belief that God had inspired the writers of all these books, and thus they came to be accepted as a rule of faith and morals. As the revealed will of Yahweh, they acquired the force of law for every believer, and it was for him to submit himself to them entirely.

These books, which were afterwards regarded as Holy Scriptures by the Christians too, were called *canonical*, from a Greek word meaning a *list*. But the canon of the books of the Old Testament must not be understood simply as a list of the books of the Jews, but as a list of their holy books, accepted by them as a rule of faith and morals, to which every one must be faithful and obedient. In contradistinction to these, all the rest of the Jewish writings, are called *apocryphal*, which means *hidden*, a word to which the unfavorable signification of spurious or fictitious was afterwards attached. It was only by very slow degrees that the books which do not appear in the Hebrew canon at last acquired this name. At first some of them stood in a position similar to that of the canonical writings themselves. This was the case with those works which were found in the Greek version of the Septuagint, and which were thus regarded with just as much respect as the rest by the Alexandrian Jews, and by every one else who used this version, even the early Christians themselves. Some of them were originally written in Hebrew, others in

Greek, although we do not possess any of them, except in a Greek, Æthiopic, or Latin dress. The most important are three books of the Maccabees, Judith, Tobit, Ecclesiasticus, Wisdom, and Baruch, as well as certain additions to Ezra, Daniel, and Esther. These books were never called apocryphal in ancient times, but on the contrary, were highly esteemed. Those writings only were then called apocryphal which were not found in the Septuagint, such as the Book of Enoch, the Psalms of Solomon, and the Revelation of Ezra. Subsequently, all these books were placed on the same level, and it came to be the general opinion that they were not holy or inspired by God, while all the books of the Hebrew canon began to be considered holy and divine. We, who know the origin of these books, can make no such distinctions.

The Talmud, that is to say, the "Instruction," belongs to the religious literature of the Jews. In this book are included the oral tradition and the commentaries composed by the scribes from the second to the fifth century after Christ. The first part of the Talmud is called the Mishnah, or the Repetition, and contains the tradition from the time of the older scribes, written in Hebrew, and closed at the beginning of the third century. A second part is added, called the Gemarah, or Supplement. It contains traditions not previously noted down, and later commentaries. We have two recensions of it—the

Palestinian, edited by the scribes in Palestine, and closed about the end of the fourth or the beginning of the fifth century, and the Babylonian, edited by the doctors in Babylon, and closed about the year A.D. 500. The Gemarah is not in Hebrew, but in the dialects of Palestine and Babylon. Sundry other pieces were afterwards added to the Talmud, such as the Targum, or version of the holy books, while at the same time, in the sixth and following centuries, the text of the Old Testament was fixed by the Masorites, that is to say, the men of the Masorah or tradition. This is the text which we still use; while the Talmud itself, in its integrity, is the most important source of our knowledge of Judaism in the first centuries after the destruction of Jerusalem.

APPENDIX.

CATECHISM.

CHAPTER I.

[Pages 1-7.]

SOURCES OF INFORMATION.

1. From what sources do we get our knowledge of the religion of Israel?

We get our knowledge of the religion of Israel from the Old Testament. P. 1.

- a. What is the meaning of "Old Testament" or "Covenant"?
- b. Enumerate the books of the Old Testament.
- c. In what language are they written?

2. How come these books to be the sources of our knowledge of the religion of Israel?

The books of the Old Testament bear historical witness of the religion of the Israelites at different periods of their existence, and thus they give us a knowledge of the growth of their religion. P. 1.

- a. Why is some chronological arrangement of the books so necessary to our studies?
- b. Can we tell for certain how old each of these books is?
- c. Has due stress always been laid upon this question?

3. Are these books of value to us for any other purpose besides the study of the religion of Israel?

These books teach us the history of the Israelitish people as well; but this is very closely connected with the history of its religion. P. 3.

- a. Which books are the most important for the political history?
- b. How far is the history of Israel carried in the Old Testament?
- c. Why is the political history of Israel so closely connected with the history of its religion?

4. Are there any other sources of information concerning the religious and political condition of Israel?

We get important contributions towards a knowledge of the latest periods of Israel's existence, as a nation, from the Apocryphal Books, Flavius Josephus, Philo, and the Talmud. P. 5.

- a. What do you know about the Apocryphal Books?

- b.* Who was Flavius Josephus, and what did he write?
- c.* How far do Philo and the Talmud help us?
- d.* Are there any other monuments or writings besides these, which throw a light upon some periods of the history of Israel?

CHAPTER II.

[Pages 7-19.]

THE SAME CONTINUED.

1. Of what divisions does the Old Testament consist?

According to the division adopted by the Jews, the Old Testament contains: 1st, the Law; 2d, the Prophets; and 3d, the Writings. P. 7.

- a.* How did this arrangement come about?
- b.* How are these books arranged amongst ourselves?

2. What books constitute the Law?

The Law consists of five books, which are called Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. P. 8.

- a.* What do these names mean?
- b.* Why are these books also called the Pentateuch?
- c.* When were they written?

- d. Can we discover different documents in these books?
- e. In what sense are these books called "the books of Moses"?
- f. Why cannot they have been written by Moses himself?

3. What books are called "the Prophets"?

Among the Prophets the Jews reckoned: 1st, the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings, which are historical in their contents; 2d, the prophetic writings properly so called, viz. (a.) Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, which are called the Greater Prophets, and (b.) the Minor Prophets, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. P. 11.

- a. Why are the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings considered to belong to the prophets?
- b. Do we find any history in the more distinctly prophetic writings?
- c. What do you know of the origin and contents of each of these books?

4. Which books constitute the writings?

All the rest of the books of the Old Testament: viz. Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles. P. 16.

- a. What is meant by calling these books "the Writings"?

- b. What have you to say about each of these books individually ?

CHAPTER III.

[Pages 19-26.]

THE SAME CONTINUED.

1. From what sources did the writers of the Old Testament derive their accounts of the history of Israel ?

The great majority of the writers of the Old Testament got their knowledge of the history of Israel simply from Tradition; and the result is that we find a great many sagas or legends in what they have written. P. 21.

- a. What do you mean by "tradition" ?
 b. At about what time did they begin to reduce tradition to writing ?
 c. What are sagas or legends ?

2. To what do these writers make their representations of history subordinate ?

These writers are governed in their representations of history by the overwhelming influence of their own opinions, which differ according as their sympathies are prophetic or priestly. P. 22.

- a. What kind of opinions do we call prophetic ?
 b. And what kind do we call priestly ?
 c. Give an instance of the influence of each of these two ways of thinking.

d. How does our modern way of writing history differ from that of these authors?

3. In spite of all this, are these books of any use in studying the history of the religion of Israel?

However strenuously we maintain the distinction between what is historical and what is unhistorical, both these elements are sources of information for us concerning the growth of the religion of Israel. P. 24.

a. Why must this distinction be strenuously maintained?

b. How is it that the unhistorical elements are just as useful to us as the historical elements?

c. Are there any myths in the historical portions?

4. Have not the books of the Old Testament a still higher value for us?

So mighty a religious spirit speaks to us from these books, that our own religious life is still aroused and strengthened by it. P. 26.

a. Is this equally true of all the books?

b. To what books does it chiefly apply?

CHAPTER IV.

[Pages 27-33.]

THE TRIBES IN GOSHEN.

1. Where does the history of the religion of Israel begin?

The history of the religion of Israel begins with the sojourn of the tribes in Egypt. P. 27.

- a. Where was it formerly considered to begin?
- b. Why do we reject this view?

2. In what light are we to regard the narratives which precede that period?

The narratives which precede that period do not comprise any history properly so called, but they represent the ideas of the Israelites about their past. P. 27.

- a. How far back do these narratives go?
- b. What did the Israelites believe about their ancestors?
- c. Is this altogether destitute of historical foundation?

3. What are we told about the coming of the Israelites to Egypt?

According to the tradition the elevation of Joseph, the son of Jacob, to the post of viceroy of Egypt led to the emigration of his whole family to that country from Canaan. P. 31.

- a. What are we told of Joseph?
- b. Does the history of Egypt contain any additional traces of the sojourn of Israel in Goshen?

4. What rendered the sojourn in Egypt of great importance to the Israelites?

The Israelites, still divided as they were into tribes, were prepared in Egypt for their amalgamation into a nation. P. 32.

- a. How long did the sojourn in Egypt last?
- b. How did their sojourn in Egypt prepare the way for their amalgamation into a nation?

CHAPTER V.

[Pages 33-39.]

THE SAME CONTINUED.

- 1. In what respects did the religion of the Israelites in Goshen agree with that of the other Semites?

The religion of the Israelites in Goshen was, like that of the rest of the Semites, a nature-worship. P. 34.

- a. Are any traces of this preserved in the Old Testament?
- b. Did this nature-worship continue to exist at a later time?

- 2. How far did the religion of the Israelites stand above that of the rest of the Semites?

The religion of the Israelites was especially directed to the heavenly and invisible, and this made it capable of developing into monotheism. P. 37.

- a. How were the two things connected?
- b. When did this nature-worship first develop into monotheism amongst the Israelites?

3. What do we know of the worship practised by the Israelites in Goshen ?

There are traces of the different tribes having worshiped their own special gods as well as one deity common to them all. P. 38.

- a. What traces do we find of the existence of these special gods ?
- b. Under what names do these gods appear in the Bible ?

4. Under what name did the tribes in Goshen worship their common deity ?

The tribes in Goshen called their common deity "El-Shaddai" or the Mighty One. P. 38.

- a. What idea is contained in the name ?
- b. Who was the first to use this name, according to the Bible ?

CHAPTER VI.

[Pages 39-51.]

MOSES.

1. What influence had Israel's liberation from Egypt upon the development of its religion ?

Through their liberation from Egypt, under the leadership of Moses, the belief of the Israelites in the power of their national god was greatly strengthened. P. 41.

- a. Who was Moses ?
- b. How is the history of the Exodus related ?

c. What festival was subsequently kept in remembrance of the Exodus?

2. What share had Moses in forming the religion of Israel?

Moses gave El-Shaddai the name of Yahweh, and endeavored to induce the tribes to worship him to the exclusion of all other gods. P. 42.

a. What is the meaning of the name Jehovah or Yahweh?

b. Did the belief in Yahweh at this time include the belief in the unity of God?

c. Was Moses indebted to the Egyptians for any element of his religion?

d. What attitude did Moses assume towards the worship of images?

3. What was the special excellence of the religion of Moses?

The special excellence of the religion of Moses lay in a moral character higher than was to be found in other religions. P. 46.

a. Was the people sufficiently advanced to appreciate this moral character?

b. What is the connection between this moral character and the worship of Yahweh as the Holy One?

c. How did Moses represent the holiness of Yahweh?

4. What was Moses' conception of the relation between Yahweh and Israel?

Moses represented the relation between Yahweh and Israel as a covenant, of which the code of the Ten Commandments constituted the basis. P. 48.

- a. What are we told about the inauguration of this covenant?
- b. How does the code of the Ten Commandments run?
- c. Is this code, in the form in which it has come down to us, derived from Moses?
- d. Where was the code kept, according to the tradition?
- e. Are any other laws ascribed to Moses?

CHAPTER VII.

[Pages 52-63.]

THE PERIOD OF THE JUDGES.

1. What course did the religion of Israel take after Moses' death?

Though some of the people kept to the service of Yahweh after Moses' death, it did not, for the next few centuries, prove strong enough to supplant the worship of other gods on the part of the majority. P. 54.

- a. How do you explain this?
- b. What did Joshua do for Mosaism?

2. What influence did the settlement of the people in Canaan exercise on the service of Yahweh?

It led to the admixture with it of sundry elements of the religion of the indigenous peoples. P. 57.

- a. What peoples dwelt in Canaan, and what do we read about their origin?
- b. What are we told of the entrance into Canaan and the settlement there?
- c. How was the people governed in times of peace and of war respectively?

3. In what religious condition were the Israelites during this period?

During the period of the Judges the Israelites were in a transition state, marked by great barbarism. P. 60.

- a. Did the Judges contribute anything towards the development of the religion of Israel?
- b. What do we learn from the song of Deborah in Judges v.?
- c. What do the stories of Gideon, of Jephthah, and of Samson show?
- d. What are we told about the ark of the covenant?
- e. What forms of worship prevailed in those days?

4. What result did this state of things lead to?

The Israelites, frequently oppressed by their enemies, began to feel more and more attachment to the service of Yahweh, and strongly felt the need of being more closely united. P. 62.

- a. What enemies oppressed them?

- b.* Is this political misery to be ascribed in any measure to the mutual relations of the tribes?

CHAPTER VIII.

[Pages 63-74.]

SAMUEL AND SAUL.

1. Who exercised an auspicious influence on the development of the religion of Israel towards the close of the period of the Judges?

Samuel, the last of the Judges, powerfully stirred up the religious feeling of his nation and laid the foundations of its political unity. P. 63.

- a.* What accounts have we of Samuel?
b. In what relation did he stand to Mosaism?

2. What new phenomenon do we meet with at this time?

Prophecy. It originated in an exalted religious enthusiasm, and was fostered and guided by Samuel. P. 66.

- a.* Is any mention made of prophets before this?
b. What were the schools of the prophets?
c. What were seers?

3. How did the nation achieve political unity?

The nation achieved political unity through the agency of Saul, who obtained important victories over the enemies of Israel and was raised to the throne. P. 69.

- a. What tribe did Saul belong to?
- b. What were his distinguishing qualities?
- c. What are the different stories that we have, in 1. Samuel, viii.–xii., about his elevation to the throne?

4. In what relation did Saul stand to Samuel?

At first Saul was very friendly with Samuel, but after a time there was a serious rupture between them, that led Samuel to seek another king. P. 71.

- a. What are we told about his searching for a suitable king?
- b. What was Saul's end?

CHAPTER IX.

[Pages 74–95.]

DAVID AND SOLOMON.

1. What political services did David, Saul's successor, do to Israel?

David subdued the enemies of Israel at home and abroad, and thus made the kingdom powerful. P. 79.

- a. Did he become king of the whole of Israel immediately after Saul's death?
- b. Why was the capture of Jebus, afterwards called Jerusalem, important?
- c. What measures did David take in reference to military affairs?
- d. What danger threatened the kingdom through the revolt of Absalom?

2. What influence did David exercise on the religion of Israel?

David worked in the spirit of Samuel for the promotion of the service of Yahweh, and prepared the way for the unity of public worship. P. 81.

- a. What did David do for the promotion of the service of Yahweh?
- b. Was his private life in harmony with these measures?
- c. What must we infer from David's treatment of Saul's seven sons and grandsons (2. Samuel, xxi.)?
- d. What claims has he to be regarded as the composer of a number of the psalms?

3. Who was David's successor?

David was succeeded by his son Solomon, who carried Israel to the highest pitch of prosperity. P. 86.

- a. How did Solomon govern?
- b. What relations did he enter into with neighboring nations?
- c. What were his relations with the prophets, and how were they afterwards modified?
- d. What was the condition of Israel politically at the close of his life?

4. What did Solomon become most famous for?

Solomon became famous, not only for the erection of the temple at Jerusalem, but also as the first of the "Sages" in Israel. P. 93.

- a. What was his object in building the temple?
- b. What were the "sages" of Israel?
- c. What instances are related of Solomon's wisdom?
- d. What books are attributed to Solomon as the founder of the sages?

CHAPTER X.

[Pages 95-102.]

REHOBOAM AND THE DISRUPTION OF THE KINGDOM.

1. What befel Israel on the death of Solomon?

On the death of Solomon Rehoboam became king, and in his reign the kingdom was split in two. P. 95.

- a. What led to this?
- b. What attitude did the prophets assume under these circumstances?
- c. Which tribes remained faithful to Rehoboam?

2. Who became king of the ten tribes?

Jeroboam, with the support of the prophets, became king of the ten tribes. P. 96.

- a. What do you know of Jeroboam's previous history?
- b. What relation did he sustain to the prophets as king?

3. Had this disruption any influence on religion?

This disruption caused religion in Israel to take quite a different turn from what it took in Judah, where Mosaism was developed in greater purity. P. 91.

- a. What was the condition of things from this time forward in Israel?
- b. What influence had the disruption on the state of religion in Judah?
- c. What did the prophets in Israel think of the worship of Yahweh in the likeness of a bull?

4. Was there no further connection between the two kingdoms?

The two kingdoms were generally at enmity with each other, but now and then their relations were friendly. P. 101.

- a. What shows the mutual hostility of the two kingdoms?
- b. When did they become more reconciled?

CHAPTER XI.

[Pages 103-116.]

THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL.

1. What was the state of religion in Israel?

The service of Yahweh had to undergo a severe struggle with the service of Baal in Israel. P. 103.

- a. Of what nature was the service of Baal?

b. What previous mention is there of religious service of this kind, and how did that of these later times differ from it?

2. What prophets opposed the service of Baal?

The prophets Elijah and Elisha powerfully opposed the service of Baal, when king Ahab strove to impose it by force. P. 104.

a. How did Ahab and Jezebel seek to uphold the service of Baal?

b. What was the nature of Elijah's prophetic efforts?

c. What measures did he take in opposition to the service of Baal?

d. What do we read about Elijah on Mount Horeb?

e. Who was Elisha?

f. What miracles are ascribed to these prophets?

3. What prophets arose in Israel a century later?

A century later Hosea, Zechariah (ix.-xi.), and Amos arose in Israel and preached a pure monotheism in opposition to the bull worship. P. 113.

a. What do we know of the work of these prophets?

b. How far were they in advance of Elijah and Elisha?

c. Is the book of Zechariah the work of a single prophet?

4. How did the kingdom of Israel come to an end?

After existing for two centuries and a half, the kingdom of Israel was destroyed by the Assyrians, and it was never again restored. P. 116.

- a. Do we know of any earlier invasions of Israel on the part of the Assyrians?
- b. What new inhabitants did the conquered country receive?
- c. What people was descended from them?

CHAPTER XII.

[Pages 117-133.]

THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH.

1. What do you know of the state of religion in the kingdom of Judah?

The service of Yahweh was more prominent in Judah than in Israel, and permanently established itself there. P. 117.

- a. Had Judah's possession of the temple any influence in this respect?
- b. What did the priests do to promote the service in the temple?

2. Had the kings any share in maintaining the service of Yahweh?

Many of the kings of Judah, especially Hezekiah and Josiah, showed themselves powerful protectors of the service of Yahweh. P. 120.

- a. Which of the kings did so, besides those you have named?
- b. Which of the kings showed sympathies in an opposite direction?
- c. Were sacrifices offered anywhere besides at Jerusalem?
- d. Do we find any traces of the service of Baal as well, in Judah?
- e. What do you know of Josiah and his reformation?
- f. What prophet supported him in it?
- g. How is the Book of Deuteronomy connected with this reformation?

3, In what spirit did the prophets of this time labor?

The prophets, who were often opposed to the priests, were zealous for a purer development of Mosaism. P. 121.

- a. What were the aims of the prophets?
- b. Whence sprang the opposition of the priests?

4. What led to the fall of the kingdom of Judah?

The kingdom of Judah, weakened by mixing in the wars between Egypt and Babylon and by internal divisions, was finally conquered by Nebuchadrezzar, who laid waste the city and the temple, and carried off the people to Babylon. P. 127.

- a. What part did Judah take in the wars between Egypt and Babylon?
- b. By what religious disputes was Judah weakened?
- c. What were the circumstances of its fall?
- d. Describe the behavior of Jeremiah, and state what you know of the last period of his life.

CHAPTER XIII.

[Pages 133-145.]

PROPHECY.

- 1. What was prophecy?

Prophecy was a peculiar phenomenon in Israel, consisting in the appearance of pious men, inspired with a sacred enthusiasm to testify publicly of Yahweh and his service. P. 133.

- a. What was it that the prophets called God's word?
- b. Under what names do the prophets appear in the Old Testament?
- c. Do we find traces of this phenomenon among any other peoples?

2. When did prophecy arise in Israel, and how long did it continue to exist?

From Samuel's time onwards, prophecy was on the increase in Israel, but after the Babylonish captivity it gradually died out. P. 135.

- a.* Was not the term prophet, applied even to one so early as Moses?
- b.* What share had Samuel in the promotion of prophecy?
- c.* When did the schools of the prophets fall into decay?
- d.* When did prophecy reach its climax?
- e.* Were all the prophets preachers, properly so called?

3. What was the purport of the preaching of the prophets?

The prophets preached, in accordance with the spirit of Moses, that a pure theocracy must be thoroughly realized in Israel as Yahweh's peculiar people.
P. 137.

- a.* How did they conceive the relation between Yahweh and Israel?
 - b.* What moral obligations did they deduce from it?
 - c.* In what light did they regard the heathen?
 - d.* Had their preaching any bearing on politics?
 - e.* In what respect did their preaching relate to the future?
 - f.* What development can we trace in prophecy?
4. What causes led to the decay of prophecy?

The prophets got but little hold upon the people, and prophetic inspiration gave way to intellectual reflection; and so, prophecy gradually fell into decay. P. 142.

- a. In what respect were the prophets too advanced for the people?
- b. What proof have we of the gradual decline of the prophetic inspiration?
- c. When did prophecy cease to exist?
- d. Were there false prophets as well as true ones?

CHAPTER XIV.

[Pages 146-153.]

THE MESSIANIC EXPECTATION.

1. What do you mean by the Messianic Expectation?

The Messianic Expectation consisted in the firm conviction that the day would come when the service of the God of Israel would prevail. P. 147.

- a. What does the title, "Messiah," signify?
- b. What was the origin of this conviction in the minds of the prophets?
- c. Do we find any traces of this belief in the historical books of the Old Testament?
(Gen. iii. 15; xii. 2; 2 Sam. vii. 16.)

2. What form did this expectation take in the minds of the prophets at first?

At first their belief was confined to the expectation of a happy future for Israel as God's people. P. 148.

- a. Which of the prophets entertained this expectation?
- b. How did they represent the anticipated future?

3. What form did the Messianic Expectation take at a later time?

At a later time the prophets proclaimed their expectation that the Messianic deliverance would be brought about by a prince of the house of David. P. 149.

- a. In which of the prophets do we meet with this opinion?
- b. What made them fix upon a prince of the house of David?
- c. Did they all advance this view in the same form?

4. Did the Messianic Expectation undergo still further modification?

Subsequently, in the second Isaiah, the religious nucleus of the nation took the place of the personal Messiah. P. 151.

- a. Under what title does the second Isaiah speak of the religious nucleus of the nation, and what does he say concerning it?
- b. What further special anticipation do we find in other prophets of a later time?

CHAPTER XV.

[Pages 153-163.]

THE SAGES.

1. Who were the "sages," in Israel?

The name of "sages" was given, in Israel, to those men who took an interest in increasing the culture of the people by teaching them lessons of practical wisdom. P. 154.

- a. With whom have we already made acquaintance in the character of the founder of the sages?
- b. What books owe their origin to this school?
- c. In what did the special character of their wisdom consist?
- d. How were the sages distinguished from the prophets and from the priests?
- e. Had this school popular influence?

2. What is the purpose of the Book of Job?

The writer of the Book of Job endeavors to solve the riddles of the divine government in reference to the calamities which befall the pious. P. 157.

- a. Are we concerned with real history in this book?
- b. In what form does the writer deal with this problem?
- c. Does he solve the problem satisfactorily?

3. What are the contents of the Book of Proverbs?

The Book of Proverbs comprises a collection of all kinds of lessons on a wise conduct of life. P. 155.

a. What are proverbs?

b. What are the principal subjects treated of in this book?

c. Are any writers or collectors of proverbs mentioned?

4. What are the characteristics of the Preacher?

The Preacher takes a very gloomy view of life in general, and evidently feels his inability to explain the riddles of life. P. 160.

a. When did he live?

b. What are the principal contents of his book?

c. Is it characterized by a pure morality or a genuinely religious tone?

CHAPTER XVI.

[Pages 164-175.]

THE BABYLONISH CAPTIVITY.

1. What effect had the sojourn in Babylon on the religious life of the Israelites?

When deprived of their temple and their religious services, the Israelites began to feel a deeper interest in the religion of Moses and the preaching of the prophets. P. 165.

- a. Do we find any psalms belonging to this period in our collection?
 - b. What was the condition of the captives?
2. Did any prophets arise during the captivity?

Ezekiel, the second Isaiah and others spoke words of consolation and encouragement to the people.
P. 166.

- a. Who was Ezekiel?
 - b. What do we know of the second Isaiah?
 - c. What was the nature of their labors?
 - d. What other prophets were there?
3. What brought the Babylonish captivity to an end?

The Persian king, Cyrus, having conquered the kingdom of Babylon, gave the captives leave to return to their own country. P. 168.

- a. How came Cyrus to be so favorably disposed towards them?
 - b. Did they all avail themselves of this permission?
 - c. Who were the leaders of those who returned?
 - d. Did any of those who stayed behind afterwards return from Babylon?
 - e. What are we told in addition, in the book of Esther, about those who stayed behind?
4. Did the Persians exercise any influence on the religion of Israel?

Under the influence of the Persians, the ideas and opinions of the Israelites underwent important modifications. P. 171.

- a. What ideas did they borrow from the Persians concerning angels and demons?
- b. What was their idea of Satan before the captivity?
- c. Did they afterwards adopt any ideas from any other nations?

CHAPTER XVII.

[Pages 175-188.]

EZRA AND HIS TIMES.

- I. What was the state of religion among the people after their return from Babylon?

Religious feeling was at first very animated among those who had returned, but it soon ceased to be so; a result to which the opposition of the Samaritans contributed more than anything. P. 175.

- a. How did this animation manifest itself?
- b. How did the opposition of the Samaritans originate?
- c. What was the result?
- d. Did not the non-fulfilment of the prophecies of Ezekiel and the second Isaiah also contribute to the popular discouragement?
- e. When was the erection of the temple completed?

f. Which of the prophets powerfully promoted this work?

g. What name do the Israelites bear from this time forward?

2. Who brought about a favorable change in the religious feeling of the people?

Ezra, who returned to Jerusalem from Babylon with a number more of the captives, and stirred up new life among the people by the powerful stimulus which he gave to their love of the Law. P. 177.

a. Who was Ezra?

b. How did he begin his work?

c. What measure did he take in reference to the foreign wives of the Jews?

d. Did they all acquiesce in this measure?

e. In which books of the Old Testament do we find a milder opinion concerning the heathen?

3. What did Ezra do for legislation?

Ezra, himself a priest, introduced into Israel the priestly legislation which we find in the Pentateuch, and made it binding. P. 179.

a. How far were the efforts of Ezra in harmony with those of the old prophets?

b. In which books of the Pentateuch do we find the priestly legislation?

c. At what period was it composed?

4. Who supported Ezra in his efforts ?

Nehemiah, who came from Babylon soon after Ezra, seconded his efforts loyally. P. 182.

a. What particulars do we know about Nehemiah ?

CHAPTER XVIII.

[Pages 188-204.]

PUBLIC WORSHIP AND THE SYNAGOGUE.

1. How was the temple-service conducted at this time ?

The temple-service was now conducted entirely in accordance with the priestly legislation. P. 189.

a. How far did the second temple resemble Solomon's ?

b. What were the duties of the priests and of the Levites ?

c. What sacrifices were now offered ?

2. What great festivals were kept ?

The great festivals which were kept were the Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles. P. 192.

a. How did these festivals originate ?

b. What was the Sabbath ?

c. Were there any other festivals ?

d. What was the Great Day of Atonement ?

3. How did the synagogues arise?

In Babylon the Jews began to assemble for the hearing of the Law, and from this practice the synagogues arose. P. 199.

- a. What is the meaning of the term synagogue?
- b. Were they intended to supersede the temple?
- c. Were they known so early as the first part of the captivity?

4. How was the synagogue introduced into Judæa?

The synagogue was probably introduced from Babylon into Judæa by Ezra, and there used for explaining and expounding the Law. P. 199.

- a. What were the men called who were employed in explaining the Law?
- b. Were the lawyers distinct from them?
- c. Was the authority of the priests impaired at all by that of the scribes?

CHAPTER XIX.

[Pages 204-225.]

THE JEWS IN THE AGE IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING THE CHRISTIAN ERA.

1. What course did the history of the Jews take after their return from Babylon?

The history of the Jews, after their return from Babylon, embraces the following periods: I. The Persian rule; II. The Greek rule; III. National independence under the Maccabees; IV. The rule of Herod and of the Romans. P. 204.

- a. How long did each of these periods last?
- b. Relate the most important events.
- c. What princes reigned over the Jews during the period of Greek rule?
- d. Did the spirit of Greek civilization exercise any influence on Judaism?

2. What struggle was brought about by the despotic measures of Antiochus Epiphanes?

Antiochus Epiphanes wanted to force Greek civilization upon the Jews, and this led them to offer that valiant resistance which the Maccabees put themselves at the head of. P. 212.

- a. In what books do we find a history of this rebellion?
- b. Give an account of it?
- c. What do you know about the government of the Maccabees?
- d. What Jewish festival dates from this epoch?

3. What book of the Old Testament was written in reference to this struggle?

The Book of Daniel, written in the year 165 before Christ, aims at encouraging the pious in this struggle. P. 215.

- a. Give an outline of the book.
- b. With what character does the writer connect his story?
- c. Of what class of literature was this book the beginning?
- d. How was it intended to sustain pious men in their efforts?

4. What influence had Greek rule on the state of religion among the Jews?

Under the influence of Greek rule the different religious schools among the Jews began to become more distinctly defined. P. 218.

- a. To what schools do we refer?
- b. What were the characteristics of the Pharisees?
- c. And of the Sadducees?
- d. And of the Essenes?

CHAPTER XX.

[Pages 225-239.]

THE SAME CONTINUED.

1. When did the Jews lose their national existence altogether?

After having been dependent upon the Romans for a considerable time, at the beginning of our era the Jews lost their national existence altogether. P. 209.

- a. When did they come under the sway of the Romans?
- b. What royal family still ruled over the Jews?
- c. When were they incorporated in the Roman dominions?
- d. In what year did the Jewish state come to an end?

2. What had meanwhile befallen the religion of the Jews out of Palestine?

With a great part of the Jews abroad the religion of Moses had acquired a peculiar character through contact with Greek civilization. P. 226.

- a. What was this character?
- b. What do you mean by "Hellenism"?
- c. What are proselytes, and what distinctions were there among them?
- d. What translation of the Old Testament dates from this period?

3. Where and in whom did this peculiar character manifest itself in the most special manner?

This peculiar character manifested itself especially at Alexandria, in Philo, who was a contemporary of Jesus. P. 230.

- a. Who was this Philo?
- b. What influence did Greek philosophy exercise on him?
- c. In what fashion did he endeavor to explain the Old Testament?

- d. What do you mean by the "Logos"?
- e. What do we find on this subject in the New Testament?

4. What was there noteworthy in the religious condition of the world about the beginning of the Christian era?

While Judaism seemed perishing in formalism, and paganism was exhausted by doubt and immorality, pious men, among Jews and heathen alike, were eagerly seeking a better religion. P. 234.

- a. What is formalism?
- b. What do you know about the doubt and immorality of the heathen?
- c. How did this search for a better religion show itself?
- d. What traces do we find of it in Greek and Latin authors?

CHAPTER XXI.

[Pages 240-246.]

THE COLLECTION OF THE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

I. When was the collection of the Old Testament writings begun?

The collection of the Old Testament writings was begun after the Babylonish captivity, by Ezra, who joined together the five books ascribed to Moses, and set them up as a legal code. P. 240.

- a. What did Ezra begin with ?
- b. What are we told about Nehemiah in this connection ?
- c. What books were written after the time of Ezra ?
- d. Who carried on the work begun by Ezra ?

2. How did the work of collection proceed ?

First, the Prophets, and then, by degrees, the Writings were added to the Law; and the whole collection was closed in the course of the century before Christ. P. 241.

- a. What were the last writings to be incorporated in this collection ?
- b. Was there any difference of opinion about including certain books ?

3. What value did the Jews finally set on this collection ?

This collection acquired canonical authority with the Jews; that is to say, it was regarded as a divine rule of faith and morals. P. 244.

- a. What is the derivation of the word "canonical" ?
- b. Did all these books acquire this authority at the same time ?

4. How did the rest of the religious writings of the Jews come to be regarded through these circumstances ?

The rest of the religious writings of the Jews, produced in the last period of their national existence, are called "Apocryphal"; and, though the Jews were at liberty to use them, they were not allowed to be publicly read in the synagogue.
P. 244.

- a. What is the meaning of the term "Apocryphal"?
- b. Mention the most important of these books.
- c. In what language have they been preserved?
- d. How did the Talmud arise?

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