

BIBLICAL PHILANTHROPY AND ITS MOTIVATIONS

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CHAPTER I.

TERMINOLOGY.

There are about a hundred and fifty references to Charity in the entire Bible, appearing in every book except Lamentations, Ezra, Canticles and eight of the minor prophets. These references are both fragmentary and scattered and vary much in value to the Bible investigator, but all happen to fall into three divisions:

A) The best material is to be found in those references to the customs and manner of living which picture and reveal the life of the people in Bible times. From such references we can observe the true life of the times; such references are brought in only incidentally to the main narratives. From Ruth 4:7 we must take a warning when we read "This was the custom of the olden time", for Biblical references might show the customs in vogue at the time the story was written down and not at the time of the events depicted; thus causing much confusion.

B) The second class of references seem at first glance to be most valuable, but actually are not so. These are the legal codes which provide for the poor in a manner so unusual, when compared with historical evidence, that it is generally admitted that they were never practiced in the form in which we have them, such as Leviticus 25, dealing with the Jubilee.

C) Another kind of material is that contained in the moral precepts advising one to be kind to the poor. We have a great deal of this nature, but in most cases it is lacking in specific details, and when so, is not of great use in determining motives. However, when we can read passages like Job 31 or Isaiah 58, we find very important as well as specific and valuable data disclosing the motive as well as the spirit of the age.

All this varied material must be collated and put into logical order and verified by the historical knowledge which we possess before we can picture the actual motives which prompted the Oriental mind to act, living about three thousand years ago.

It is of interest to note that there is practically no abstract word used in the Bible for charity, alms-giving, or hospitality. As with all primitive peoples, the fact is concretely expressed, no single abstract term being employed such as Proverbs 19:17 "Have mercy upon the needy" or (Amos 8:4) "Oppress not the poor", or (Job 31) "Have I eaten my morsel alone and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof", or (ibid verse 19) "Have I seen anyone perish for want of clothing or any poor without covering?" etc.

The word צדקה when used in the Bible means "righteousness, justification in a law court, or righteous deeds" (Brown, Driver, Briggs Dictionary). Only in post-Biblical times does this word definitely come to have the meaning of charity. There are, however, three Biblical instances in which the scholars try to construe this word to mean charity, and even here they do not agree among themselves. Cornill is the only one who holds that

in **צדקה תציל מחנות** (Proverbs 10:2 & 11:4) the first word means charity --- Wildeboer admits it as being possible whereas Frankenburg and the dictionaries insist upon the meaning of righteousness. The passage in Daniel 4:24 of the same nature is so late in date (B.C.E. 164) that the post-Biblical meaning is likely. In Esther 9:22 we find the expression **מתנות צדקה** used meaning "gifts to the poor". This also is a late passage and is the sole use of the expression in the Bible, although the verbal form **צדק** is common.

There are three hints at begging in the Bible, but as usual there is no abstract technical term found. These passages are Psalms 37:25; 109:10; I Samuel 2:36, and we find three verbs used in the same sense: **השתחוות**, **שאל**, and **הבקש**.

The most common term for "poor" is **עני** which means originally "one who is humbled" and thus received the meaning of poor, needy, or miserable (Driver's article "Poor" -Hastings Bible Dictionary.) Wellhausen shows the long evolution of the word as in Psalms 18:27 it refers to the poor but pious Israelites as opposed to the haughty nations, or to the poor within the nation whom the rich oppressed. **עני** means "one who humbles himself" (Driver--article Poor) and connotes the pious or meek. Paterson (Poor, Encyc. Biblica) does not admit the latter meaning even in the one reference to Moses in Numbers 12:3. It is still a disputed matter as to whether both **עני** and **ענין** were different words.

זָר originally means thin, feeble, or reduced, thus coming to mean poor.

אֲבִיוֹן really means "in want of" and hence may also be used for poor.

רָשׁ is used as the opposite of **עָשִׁיר**, and its meaning is evident.

In Psalm 102:7 we find **עֲרֵעַר** used to mean destitute or impoverished, and finally poor. Leviticus 25:25 ff. uses the verb **מָוַן** to mean "impoverished" (**מָוֶן** or **מָוִן**). Psalm 10:8 and 14 uses **חֲלָכָה** which is a very doubtful expression and appears only in this Psalm. Ecclesiastes 4:13 and 9:15 uses **מַסְכֵּן** which Paterson claims to be a very doubtful expression both as to meaning and origin, and holds that it probably was derived from the Assyrian.

CHAPTER II.

HOSPITALITY.

"Charity, derived from the Latin "caritas" is the display of love and sympathy by man towards man." (K.Kohler--HUC and Other Addresses). With this definition in mind, it may be said that hospitality was the expression of charity by early mankind. In the primitive stage of civilization there were no classifications of rich and poor---the clan was in every sense a unit every member of which shared alike, both in time of wealth or in need. This clan or gens was founded on kinship and could be augmented by covenant. The clan governed every phase of life---it regulated property rights, religion, marriage---and was the legal entity.

From the Book of Judges, we can see that the Israelites had advanced considerably from the primitive stage, yet they still had many of the institutions of early life. The transition from the nomadic to an agricultural life made very important alterations in their make-up. Land near the village belonged to a family in the community, while that at a distance was given out by lots in order to maintain a standard of equality (Numbers 32, 34, and 36; Joshua 13 to 19 incl. and 22). Buhl in the American Journal of Theology (Vol. I. p. 731 ff.) writes that it is still the custom in Palestine to cast lots annually for the various fields of the village, which are to be tilled by the villagers. In this manner he accounts for the expression "to cast lots with" in Jeremiah.

With such a community of goods within the tribe or clan, there was no need for charity among themselves; every man had his ground to farm, levirate marriage took care of the widow, or she might have land of her own, as did Naomi; the clan regarded minors as its property.

Hospitality begins to function when the member of a clan happens to be away from his own group. Even though he have his own provisions, he might at any time be in danger or in want. It is with this consideration that hospitality begins to assume a highly important significance, and is well known among the Semites. The Arab offers bread and salt, after which the parties who have eaten thereof are sacred to one another for two days and a night (Margoliouth).

The early Hebrews were by no means different from their neighbors with regard to hospitality. They both received and gave of it to fellow-Hebrews, foreigners, and proselytes. The writers of Judges, Samuel, and the Hexateuch emphasize it, as follows:

Gen. 18 Abraham entertains the angels.

Gen. 19:3-10 Lot receives them while the men of Sodom threaten to do them violence.

Gen. 24:17-20 & 31-33. Rebecca gives water to Eliezar and his camels, while Laban brings them home.

Gen. 43:32 & 46:34 Jacob and his family are well received upon coming to Egypt.

Exodus 2:20 Jethro receives Moses when he is in flight.

Joshua 2:1&22 Rahab not only receives the spies, but shows regard for their safety by hiding them.

Judges 6:18-20 Gideon supplies the angel with food and drink.

Judges 13:15 Manoah wishes to supply his heavenly messenger with food.

I. Samuel 9:22 Samuel entertains Saul.

I. Samuel 21:1-6. David when in flight is received by Ahimelech, the priest of Nob, who not only cares for him but even goes so far as to give him of the sacred show-bread.

I. Samuel 22:3 & 27:3 David is entertained and aided by the king of Moab and the King of Gath.

I. Samuel 28:21-25 The witch of Endor compels Saul to eat food when he wishes to communicate with Samuel.

II. Samuel 9:1-13 David takes Ishbaal in his house.

II. Samuel 17:27 & 19:32 Shobi and Barzillai bring food to David when he flees from Absalom.

I. Kings 13:11-22 "The old prophet of Bethel" in his eagerness to offer hospitality to the man of God, even lies to him to induce him to stay.

I. Kings 17:9 The widow of Zarephath gives Elijah oil and flour.

I. Kings 18:4 Obadiah hid one hundred prophets and fed them.

II. Kings 4:8 The Shunamite woman arranges a regular room for Elijah.

II. Kings 4:42 A man from Baal-shalisha brings food to sustain the group of prophets.

Nehemiah 5:18 Nehemiah had one hundred and fifty guests at his table when he served as governor.

Job 31:17 Hospitality (specific cases) is claimed by Job as one of his virtues.

There are one or two definite examples in the Bible of cases where hospitality has not been kept sacred. One clear case of this is found in Judges Chapters IV and V. Here we read that Jael gives Sisera food and strikes him down while drinking, while in chapter IV, the older version, we find her represented as killing him while asleep. There is no doubt that this is a **flagrant** example of violating the sanctity of hospitality, and why she is praised so highly in the song of Deborah is amazing, unless it is thought that ridding a people of its enemy at any cost is honorable.

From the above it is evident that hospitality was accorded to anyone but was extended especially to those who were in some manner connected with the deity, such as a prophet, angel, etc. The references extend from the earliest sources to later times showing that even when the people became more civilized, this means of charity did not cease altogether but merely became less important.

One of the important features brought out by these references is that the favor was not to the one receiving the hospitality but rather to the donor thereof. Note how eager Abraham was that the angels partake of food, how the witch of Endor pressed Saul to eat; or consider the case of the prophet of

Bethel. The reason for this supplies us with the underlying motive for hospitality in ancient times, viz., that this act implied the ancient character of entering into a covenant, whether it was a covenant with a prophet or with an angel, and through them with God. Hence the Arabic rite of welcoming guests with bread and salt, thereby making the recipient a temporary member of the gens and thereby inviolate.

Hospitality was meted out in the following manner. One met the guest, provided water for the feet, rest, food, drink, housing and feeding for the animals as well as lodging for the night. The guest was inviolate (Genesis 19:8; Judges 19: 22) and no remuneration was accepted, but it was not infrequent to offer gifts, which were received (Job 42:11; Genesis 43:11 & 24:53).

As mentioned before, the man of God was the especially favored recipient of hospitality, as it was thought especially desirable to make a covenant with him and therefore with God. While the priest had his regular share of the sacrifices and oracles, the prophet had neither, with the exception of Samuel who received payment for reading the oracle. Hence the professional prophet lived, to a great part if not altogether, on charity received in the form of hospitality (Judges 18 -- the Levite at the house of Micah)

It is quite evident that underlying the practice of hospitality there is a definite theological motive and bearing. There is the refrain, "Remember that thou wast a stranger in the

land of Egypt", running through the Bible many times to urge the proper treatment of the "stranger within thy gates". It is a means of earning Divine favor to treat the stranger properly. And furthermore, as has been stated before, it was especially prized to be able to extend hospitality to the stranger, for through it and through the prophet or angel, the Divine covenant was made certain.

Of equal importance is the humanitarian motive implied by this practice. The footsore and travel-worn itinerant, especially going through the desert, evokes sympathy. Not only were human beings cared for, but animals as well.

The idea of mutual protection was a potent factor in the practice of hospitality, and possibly may have been the real and vital motive which brought it forth. Protection to the man temporarily absent from his tribal group was all important. The writer of Deuteronomy 23 never forgot nor forgave the Ammonites or the Moabites because they failed to offer hospitality to the Israelites when they came forth from Egypt and employed Balaam to curse them. This practice was the salvation of the traveller, for without it he stood little chance of ever returning to his own group. It was so well recognized that we can almost say that hospitality stations were established between Egypt and Palestine where the traveller was provided for. (Deut. 2:27 & 28 ; Gen. 43:21). (Exodus 4:24; Numbers 20:19; Jeremiah 9:2.) All of this indicates that the idea of self and mutual protection was a great force in the matter of hospitality.

It may also be mentioned that one of the finer features of ancient hospitality lay in the elevation that the donor experienced in the act. This fine feeling, though not necessarily motivating the practice, has been lost to a great degree by our modern age. The notion of a mutual elevation participated in by the giver and the recipient, is most beautiful and praiseworthy.

But hospitality was not to remain in practice indefinitely. In the codes, we see legal measures of relief which soon superseded the general practice of hospitality. This naturally implies class divisions and the rise of the dependent element in society.

CHAPTER III.

THE CODES.

The great keynote of the Deuteronomic legislation for the poor appears in Chapter 15:11 ; "For the poor will never cease out of the land. Therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open wide thy hand unto thy brother, to thy needy, and to thy poor in thy land". This clearly indicates that the author of Deuteronomy is not concerned with Messianic hopes, etc., but he rather is resigned to the divisions of society into rich and poor, and he, the first primitive psychologist, considers these divisions as both natural and permanent. Hence the elaborate legal measures found in his code. In order to better realize what motivated the Deuteronomist in setting down the mass of laws with which we are concerned, it is necessary to consider the history of the period.

The primitive structure of society has passed and with it hospitality has been superseded. In contradistinction to this state of affairs, we know that in the beginning of the life of our people as farmers, there were no class divisions, for we recall that Boaz worked with his servants, and Saul, even when he had become king, worked in the fields. Nearly everyone had his own plot of ground, and if the story of Eliezer in Genesis 24 can be taken as an indication of the spirit of the times, it would seem that the very few slaves that did exist occupied a very high position of respect in ^{the} family life to which they belonged.

It is only natural that when the Hebrews took over the land of Canaan, they would absorb the Canaanitish habits of life as well. From the earliest times we know that the term "Canaanite" has meant "trader", and that the Canaanite towns were engaged in commerce to a very great degree. From Hosea 12:8 we see that it was not very long before Israel took up this profession also.

Beginning with Solomon, the kings of the land began to look out for the proper kind of harbors, to compete with the Tyrians for commerce. The fact that large estates were formed and mortgages held indicates a great deal and tells us that wealth was being accumulated, and the class divisions were setting in. When we actually delve into the reign of Solomon, a love of luxury, the rise of cities, the importation of skilled laborers, and commerce present themselves. It is needless to state that poverty was inevitable. The simplicity of the former life is gone forever. Solomon imports luxuries and splendid things for the court for which he cannot pay; in I.Kings 20:34 we find Ahab giving bazars in the fairs at Damascus.

This luxurious tendency was most vigorously opposed by the prophets who really give us most of our information about this period. The Rechabites were fighting for a return to the earlier mode of life and for the desert-like code which governed the Israelites with the greatest simplicity. (Jeremiah 35:2-10 and II Kings 10:15).

Amos sheds great light upon this subject and upon the extent of the evil practices of the times when he says (2:6-7) "Because they sold the righteous for silver and the poor for a pair of shoes; they pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor and turn aside the way of the meek." (8:4-6) "Ye that swallow up the needy and make the poor of the land fail, saying: 'When will the new moon be gone that we may sell corn, and the Sabbath that we may set forth wheat?', making the ephah small and the shekel great and falsifying the balances by deceit, that we may buy the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of shoes; yea, and even sell the refuse of the wheat." (5:11,12) "Your treading is upon the poor and you take from his burdens of wheat---they turn aside the poor in the gate of justice". (6:3-5) "Ye that lie upon beds of ivory and stretch themselves out upon their couches and eat the lambs out of the flock and the calves out of the midst of the stall, that sing idle songs to the sound of the viol and devise for themselves instruments of music like David; that drink wine in bowls and anoint themselves with the chief ointments". (4:1) "Hear ye kine of Bashan that are in the mountains of Samaria, who oppress the poor, crush the needy, and say unto their lords, 'Come let us drink'".

About this same time or possibly a little later, Hosea says of Israel (12:7): "He is a merchant, the balances of deceit are in his hands, he loveth to oppress".

Micah, a half century later, has a few choice compliments for Israel. (3:2-3) "You hate the good and love the evil; who ^{their} pluck off ~~the~~ skin from off them and their flesh from off their bones; who eat the flesh of my people and flay their skin from off them and break their bones and chop them in pieces as for the pot, and as flesh within the caldron". (2:1-2) "They covet fields and take them by violence; and houses, and take them away; they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage". This last comment puts one in mind of Isaiah 5:8-10. Isaiah lived in Jerusalem during the eighth century and his comments indicate no change in the life of the Israelites. But in the comment 5:8-10 we read " Woe unto them that join house unto house, that lay field unto field till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth". This is a very serious matter, because the very life of the nation was bound up with the free holding of the land, for as Buhl writes (Socialen Verhaeltnisse der Israeliten p.45,46): "Only the landowners were full citizens and the paternal estate was not to be alienated". This was the basis of the whole Naboth incident, for he would not sell his patrimony, saying, "The Lord forbid it me that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee". (I.Kings 21:3ff.) Isaiah continues (10:2) "Woe unto them that issue unrighteous decrees and who write grievousness which they have prescribed; to turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of My people, that widows may be their prey and that they

may rob the fatherless". (32:6,7) "To utter error against the Lord, to make empty the soul of the hungry, and he will cause the drink of the thirsty to fail. The instruments also of the churl are evil: he deviseth wicked devices to destroy the poor with lying words even when the needy speaketh right". (3:14-17) "The Lord will enter into judgment with the ancients of His people and with the princes thereof; for you have eaten up the vineyard; the spoil of the poor is in your houses. What mean ye that you beat my people to pieces and grind the faces of the poor? saith the Lord, God of hosts." He pleads for a new course of action (1:17,23) "Cease to do evil, learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Your princes do not judge the fatherless". (14:30,32) "The first-born of the poor shall feed, and the needy shall lie down in safety" (11:4-5) "But with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth".

Jeremiah, writing in the seventh century, shows that the life of the Hebrews had not changed a great deal from that of the previous century. Among the various atrocities he pictures are (7:6) "If ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow". (5:28) "They judge not the cause of the fatherless and the right of the needy they do not judge". Just before the fall of Jerusalem he admonishes the people (22:3,16) "Do not violence to the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. Thy father judged the cause of the poor and the needy, then is

was well. But thine eyes and thy heart are but for thy covetousness ---and for thy oppression and for violence".

At the beginning of Ezekiel, we find him speaking in much the same way. (45:9; 22:7; 22:12,29; 18:7-17) "Remove violence and spoil, take away your exactions from my people". "He hath given his bread to the hungry and hath covered the naked with his garment; he hath not given forth upon usury". Zachariah (7:9,10) "Oppress not the stranger, nor the widow, nor the fatherless, nor the poor". Malachai (3:5 & 2:10) "Have we not all one father? Hath not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously one man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers?" "And I will come near to you to do judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers and against the adulterers, and against false-swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, the fatherless, and those who turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not Me, saith the Lord of Hosts".

The above excerpts from the messages of the prophets cast a strong light upon prevalent conditions. They show that a class division had become an actuality; that the prophets, in taking the side of the poor, wished to arouse the old virtues of their former simple life and to bring back the pure worship and the pure moral code which was practiced in the early days. They were not able to realize that the evils of which they spoke were only inevitable when classes of rich and poor divide up society. There is always the tendency in life to look upon

the past and wish for the "good old days", regardless of whether these days were good or bad. The same seems to apply in this case, for the prophets did not realize that the worship of their day was by far the less bad and the less impure of the two. They must be given full credit for seeing that the evils of which they complained were bound to bring the downfall of their state.

The motives which inspired the great literary prophets to accomplish or at least to try to accomplish a change in treatment of the poor were of the very highest. In my opinion the greatest and most noble key-note struck by all of the prophets was on the subject of Justice. When Jeremiah (12:1) calls out "Absolutely righteous art Thou, O God", when he considers the lot of the poor and how the wicked apparently prosper, he reaches magnificent heights. As a group, the prophets were motivated by justice, they wanted a fair and equitable treatment given to the poor, and in righteous indignation they uttered their protests. From the passages noted, it is quite evident that humanitarian motives stirred them to the very roots of their being.

There is no doubt that conditions of the country were very bad and were rapidly approaching a crisis at about the seventh century. The best proof of this is the fact that, in addition to the prophetic protests, the Deuteronomic Code came into being about this time. The continued re-iteration and repetition of the prophets time after time showed that the problem of the poor and how to deal with them must have been before the public

mind constantly. For the first time, our people had a very definite and considerable charity problem on its hands to face. The problem was acute and the next step was a codification of this demand for justice for the poor, for a cessation of oppression of the weak and the needy, for fair dealings which would attempt at least to restore a portion of the former equality, and to provide for the poor by legal pressure upon the rich. This is the purpose of the Deuteronomic code, published during the life of Jeremiah -- 621.

Deuteronomy, the great monument of the seventh century, is the fullest and most complete recognition of the dependent to be found in the Bible. With the true prophetic spirit we find the widow, the orphan, the stranger, and the poor all enumerated and treated. In Deut. 10:18 we learn that "God is the maker of justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loveth the stranger in giving him food and raiment". In the very next verse the author of Deuteronomy requires the Jew to be kind to the stranger because they have been in his place when in Egypt. In Deut. 11:12 it is shown that the land belongs to the Lord; He therefore has the right to dictate who shall partake of the produce. Here, for the first time, we must entertain a new phase of charity, namely that it was no longer a matter of free will, it was no longer an act that one might perform or might not, as pleased: now charity is commanded by law; it became binding upon all members of the community and it became an obligation which devolved upon every person.

One of the most characteristic features of the charity laws is the interdiction of various things by means of the "taboo" ordinances. Certain privileges are forbidden to one group and are permitted to another. The spirit of the prophets which inspired this whole work was to give as much as possible to the needy. Hence when the owner of certain products was forbidden to make use of a certain commodity, they might be given to the priests, to the poor, or apportioned to anyone who might be in dire circumstances at the moment --- or in certain cases they might be left unused altogether.

At this time we must deal very briefly with a new class of the poor which the Deuteronomic code, itself, created, and for whom it necessarily had to provide, namely the priests. According to Deuteronomy, all worship and sacrificing had to be conducted at the central sanctuary in Jerusalem. This meant that the priests of the high places" were no longer permitted to officiate there (at these high places) and were therefore to be denied their usual share of every slaughtered animal, which portion formerly was their remuneration for performing the rites connected with the sacrifice. In short, a whole class of priests was legislated out of existence, and what was more important for them, their supply of food was taken from them. They had one of two things left open to them, They could either come to the Temple in Jerusalem and there share in its functions, or they could be supported by the charity of their own district. It seems that the former privilege must have been denied to them or at least made so very unpleasant that they could not take advantage of it, for in II. Kings 23:9 we read "Neverthe-

less the priests of the high places came not up to the altar of the Lord in Jerusalem, but they did eat of the unleavened bread among their brethren". It is also reasonable to suppose that even if conditions at the Temple in Jerusalem had been ideal, all the priests of the land who had ministered at the high places could not have been given a part in the one sanctuary in Jerusalem. Without doubt, this is one motive for ^{the} legislation of the charity laws, namely the provision of a livelihood for this group of men whose occupation Deuteronomy had removed. One means of such provision was through the various ramifications of the several taboo laws.

A brief survey of the various codes to be treated may prove helpful in understanding the development of the various laws which they promulgate. They all present different views on the problem of charity. The earliest, the Book of the Covenant, even though written in the prophetic manner, is still quite crude. It deals with the limitations of slavery, the laws concerning the seventh year, caring for the stranger and the poor. About one hundred and fifty years after the Book of the Covenant, Deuteronomy was "found"; it is the most highly developed system of poor relief of all or any ancient codes. It contains a law of slavery, the triennial tithe for the poor, the seventh year as a remission of debts, the law of gleanings, and the laws of interest and pledges. When this code was no longer observed, the Holiness Code regulated the Sabbatical year, slaves, the gleanings and the corners of the fields. Ezekiel is next in line, with a plan to

solve the entire matter by an equal distribution of all land by clans, thus eliminating all poverty. He therefore has no laws of charity at all, and this is the attitude of the Priestly code, written about 450. In it, all the charity which was formerly given over to the poor is now diverted to the priestly class. There was only one regulation for the poor, and that was set forth in the Jubilee, which provided that the clan was to retain its land forever and no family was to become permanently impoverished. This law of the Jubilee was probably never put into practice, and was all theoretical legislation. In the period after the Jubilee, the poor were taken care of by the last step of charity work, namely by almsgiving, and not by legal regulations, since Deuteronomy was not applicable to a people without their own homeland.

A typical example of the taboo law appears in certain sacrificial feasts, showing how in certain things, private ownership was abolished, how anyone might share with the owner, himself, on equal terms. In Deut. 16:11,14, we read "And thou shalt rejoice before the Lord, thy God, thou and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and the maidservant, and the Levite that is within thy gates, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow that are among you in the place which the Lord, thy God, hath chosen to place His name there". The festivals are then enumerated, and it is expressly stated that on the Feasts of Tabernacles and Weeks, all are to take part, namely the Levite, stranger, fatherless, and widow together with the family of the owner in Jerusalem. Still later, the Priestly

Code (Exodus 12:43-49) extends this law to include Passover, adding that only the circumcized may partake. Sacrifices might be consumed by the donor (Leviticus 17), by the person offering them (Deut. 14:22), or by the priests (Leviticus 2:3; 7:30), or burned up entirely as indicated by Leviticus Chapter I.

Many scholars think that the law of taboo concerning the corners of the fields is nothing more than a humanitarian adjustment of the common law of many ancient peoples to leave a little for the god of fertility. However, the Holiness Code provides that a field should never be completely reaped, but that a little must be left standing in the corners of the field to be enjoyed by the stranger and the poor (Leviticus 19:9 & 23:22).

Quite similar to the above, is the law regarding the gleanings of the field. These might not be carefully garnered, and anything which fell had to be left for the poor and the stranger. Both the passages above refer to this custom. But in Deuteronomy 24:19-22 the law reads "When thou cuttest down thy harvest in thy field and hast forotten sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it; it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless and the widow; when thou beatest thy olive tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again, it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless and the widow. When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard, thou shalt not glean it afterward, it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless and the widow". Deuteronomy 23:24,25 is still more generous "When thou comest into thy neighbor's

vineyard, then thou mayest eat grapes to thy fill at thine own pleasure; but thou mayest not put any in thy vessel. When thou comest into the standing corn of thy neighbor, then thou mayest pluck the ears with thy hand, but thou shalt not move a sickle unto thy neighbor's standing corn". Buhl (Sociale Verhaelt-nisse ---p. 105) writes that this is not merely a taboo law, but rather a remnant of communal ownership which ordered that anyone might share in the produce of the land. Ruth 2:2-18 gives an exceptional example of kindness relative to the law of gleaning in that Boaz gives her some of the reaped barley in addition to the gleanings to which she was rightfully entitled by law.

The next taboo law to be considered is that of the tithe. Deut. 14:22-27 exacts the annual tithe which is to be eaten in Jerusalem with the Levites as well as with the family of the owner. In addition to this, Deut. 14 & 26 provide that the tithe of every third year is to be devoted to the poor, the Levite, the widow, the orphan and the stranger. It is difficult to ascertain whether the Israelites actually did this every third year, which, with the Sabbatical year, would mean that about one fourth of one's income would be given out every seven years. This triennial tithe was not to be used up at once, but was rather to be kept "so that the poor may come and eat and be satisfied". To make this law still more interesting to us, Deut. 12:7-19 reads that all vows and offerings must be eaten at the central sanctuary in company with the Levite. In this same matter of tithes, the Priestly section (Leviticus 27 & Numbers 18) ignores the poor

completely by giving all such to the Priests and the Levites. Both the Levite and the Priest were to share in the tithe of the national income. In addition to this, the priest received the heave offering, the firstlings and the donations. Ezekiel 45 likewise disregards legal provision for the poor, and turns over a regular income to the priests, but by his time almsgiving had already taken over the matter of charity.

The final taboo regulation which I wish to consider is in all probability the oldest and most important of all, namely the Sabbatical year, or the year of release שנת שבתון, שמיטה. This matter is taken up in the Book of the Covenant (Exodus 23:10,11), by Deuteronomy in 15:1-3, and by the Holiness Code in Leviticus 25:3-7 and 17-22. All three differ in regard to the exact details but the main points are all quite similar. The Book of the Covenant reads "For six years thou shalt sow thy land and gather its produce; but the seventh year thou shalt let it rest and lie fallow that the poor of thy people may eat; and what they leave, the beast of the field shall eat. Likewise shalt thou do with thy vineyard and thy olive trees". Now in Deuteronomy there is no mention made of land. It is not concerned with land, but deals only with debts saying that all debts to Israelites must be released, but not to foreigners. Since interest was not permitted by Deut., this probably means that all debts are remitted for good, and not suspended for a single year. This view is justified by verse 9 which orders the Israelites to lend even if the seventh year is at hand. The passage in the

Holiness Code deals with the matter of land, and states that neither reaping nor sowing is permitted in the seventh year. "And the Sabbath of the land shall be meat for you, for your slaves, male and female, and for your hired servant, and for the sojourner with you". Whereas, in the Book of the Covenant the produce is to be reserved for the poor, here it is to be eaten by the owner with the poor. The idea is that of a Sabbath for the land --- it shall have a rest. The scholars have **expressed** various opinions as to whether the whole country rested or whether it worked as a sort of a rotation of the different fields. Buhl in *Soziale Verhaeltnisse* (p. 63) holds that the former is the more likely both by reason of the analogy drawn with the Sabbath (Lev. 25) and because of the explicit language of Deuteronomy 15:9 "Behold, the seventh year is at hand, the year of release --- thou shalt surely open thy hand to thy brother, to thy needy and to thy poor in thy land". On this year, rich and poor, land owners and hired laborers shall return to their original nomadic state. On this year all their differences are supposed to have vanished. It is natural to doubt whether this law ever was observed, in spite of the passing references to it in the Bible (Deut. 31:10; and II. Chron. 36:21). ~~and~~ Lev. 26:34,43 reads " until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths. For as long as she lay desolate she kept the Sabbath to fulfill seventy years. Nehemiah (10:32) pledges his people to observe the seventh year in the remission of debts, while ⁱⁿ I Macc. 6:49,52 we read that the people were **unprovisioned** at the siege "it being the seventh year when the land was not sown".

It seems that the Sabbath laws had the same humanitarian end in view. The phrase of special import is "that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou". Other references to this may be found in Exodus 20:8; Exodus 23:12; Deut. 5:12. The relation of the Sabbatical year and the Sabbath is a definite one, both as to intention and result; both were conceived under the prophetic inspiration and both share the same humanitarian motive.

The laws concerning the Hebrew slaves were very strict. Ex. 21:2-11 allows a Hebrew slave to serve six years and be free in the seventh year. He himself may go free at this time, but may not be permitted to take with him a wife and her children which he acquired while in servitude. If he wishes to remain a slave for life the master pierces his ear with an awl to the door. Female slaves who had been concubines might not be sold, but must be kept in that position or set free altogether. This same law is applicable to a non-Jewish female slave who is captured in war and acts as a concubine (Deut. 21:10 ff.). Any slave whom a person maims, must be set free at once. At the end of the six year period of servitude, when a slave is released, the master must give plentifully to the slave "To the double of the hire of a hireling hath he served thee for six years". If a man steal an Israelite in order to enslave him, that person must die (Deut. 24:7). The fact that slavery was so carefully regulated as well as the regulation that if a slave chose to remain with his master, the Eliezer incident, and several others, such as Samuel I. 9:9) seem to indicate that

the lot of the slave was fairly good. No slavery of any kind can be commended, but it seems that the Hebrew slave was well cared for, in fact he became a member of the very family for whom he labored.

The humanitarian motive was prominently exemplified in the regulations of interest and loans, for they were so governed as best to meet the requirements of the poor. Exodus 22:25-27 orders that no money is to be lent on interest and that if a garment is offered as security, it must be given back before sundown so that the owner might sleep in it. The creditor had the power to enter the home of the debtor, seize that which he wanted or sell the debtor into slavery in order to satisfy himself for the amount of the loan; hence we read "not to oppress a hired servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren or of the stranger that is within thy gates". (Deuteronomy 24:14).

From the 24th chapter of Deuteronomy we derive our material for pledges. One might not take a millstone, nor a widow's raiment, nor enter a house, nor sleep with the pledge. That laws such as these were necessary is shown by a passage like Amos 2:8 "They lay themselves down beside every altar on goods taken in pledge". The law of wages read that all wages must be given each day before sundown in order that the laborer might not suffer. In all these laws it seems that two conflicting forces clashed, namely economic necessity versus humanitarian sentiment. The prohibition against usury occurs frequently

with positive demands to care for the poor.

The matter of redeeming land must be dealt with very briefly. The idea in back of it all ~~was~~ that every fifty years a general readjustment of the land ~~was~~ to take place so as to bring back every plot into the hands of the original owners and clan. No land could become alienated. The law held that the land could not actually be sold but was rented for a period of one to forty nine years. The price of this rental was governed by the year of the Jubilee. At any time the original owner might redeem his land by making a payment of the proportionate year of the Jubilee. This must have been an old practice, for Jeremiah redeems the field of his uncle in Anathoth, and Ezekiel 46 has the same theory.

Finally, the Deuteronomistic code makes certain regulations for the treatment of the enemy and the stranger other than the Jew, who might be in the land. The regulation of war in Deuteronomy 20 and 21:10ff. is a fine expression of the humanitarian motive which characterizes this whole code. It states that any man who builds a new house or plants a vineyard or betroths a wife or is faint of heart, might not enter the battle field. When fighting, the enemies must first be given an opportunity to yield and admit defeat and thus eliminate the war if possible. When taking a city, men alone should be killed, whereas women and children might not be killed. The ancient humanitarians even go so far as to prohibit an army from killing or chopping down the fruit trees even when making a siege, ~~an~~

the basis "that the tree of the field is man's life". As has been stated before, a woman who had been captured ~~and~~ married might not be sold as a slave, but must be either set free or treated as an Israelitish wife.

Buhl writes that the Ger (גר) was a non-Jew who had been protected by the clan or some member thereof. He was not the ordinary foreigner, for he was called גר . Exodus 22:21 and Exodus 23:9 command "A stranger shalt thou not oppress, for thou knowest the heart of the stranger since thou was a stranger in the land of Egypt". Deut. always associates the stranger with the poor, the fatherless, the widow, and the Levite.

There is no necessity to dwell any further upon the possible motives for the Codes. They have been fully dealt with as the various portions were treated, their purpose was mentioned and the motives noted.

In short, the codes had to provide for the priestly group which they legislated out of existence. They were deeply concerned with the humanitarian problem of the poor, and wished to see justice meted out to them. Their humanitarian measures were magnificent; the measures they adopted for wartimes have not been equalled even today. Their standard of ethics was very high, and all their motives centered about who would enter into judgment with those who did not obey His laws (Chapter 1).

CHAPTER IV

AIMS

When the Jews were taken into captivity, it is very easy to see how the Deuteronomic provisions for the poor were no longer adequate. The Codes with all their laws were simply out of date, for the Jews no longer were in a position to meet their demands. Where were they to acquire land? They could not leave gleanings, release slaves or share their sacrificial feasts with the poor and needy. They had no wealth or land with which to do the commanded acts. A new method of caring for the poor had to be devised which would be commensurate to the means of the Jews as well as to the land in which he lived. Hence the old custom of hospitality was extended to cover the giving of all necessities wherever they were needed, and given the name of "Almsgiving".

This practice is distinctly Exilic, never being mentioned in the Bible except in the exilic or post-exilic passages. Almsgiving arose under the power of the priests who turned over the contributions given for the poor to the priests, and favored the new theology (Chapter V) which went along with this practice. It is a logical development of hospitality for as soon as one needs more than food and a night's keep, we call it alms. But there is one very important difference which must be kept in mind, namely that aid is now entirely

voluntary, to be offered or refused at will. This difference is brought out strongly if we recall the demand of David upon Nabal for gifts---he does not ask for them as gifts but demands them as a right. No such demands are permitted--all giving to the poor is voluntary.

Ezekiel in Chapter 18 speaks of alms in conjunction with the former means of relief "he has restored to the debtor his pledge, hath spoiled by violence, hath given his bread to the hungry and covered the naked with a garment; he hath not given forth upon usury, neither hath he taken any increase", This passage is typical for it shows that even though alms-giving was the prevalent mode of relief, it never entirely superseded the former legal mode, but rather was an accompaniment to it. Isaiah 58 puts the practice of alms-giving among the cardinal virtues "Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? When thou seest the naked thou shalt cover him that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh",

The Psalms mention alms several times, but are interested in charity from a theological point of view, which will be dealt with in the next chapter. (37:6) "All the day he deals graciously and lends and his seed is blessed". (37:21) "The wicked borrows and does not pay again, but the righteous showeth mercy and giveth". (112:5,9) "Well it is with the man that dealeth graciously and lendeth---he hath dispersed, he hath given to the needy", Ecclesiastes 11:1 writes "Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many

days", Daniel 4:7 says "break off thy sins by righteousness any thy iniquities by showing mercy to the poor", Later still in origin, Esther proclaims the feast of Purim to be "a good day, of sending portions to one another and of gifts to the poor",

There are now to be considered the two really great works, Job and Proverbs, both of which indicate the higher value of alms. Job, dating from circa the fourth century (the date is still in dispute; Steuernagel and Cornill say 250; Duhm, Kautsch 300; Driver, Cheyne, and Davidson call it exilic; Littenweiser 400-350) fuses justice and the priestly and prophetic views toward the poor into almsgiving. The "friends" accuse Job of not giving alms and he in turn makes the accusation against them. It is regarded as a sin when one does not give alms and is condemned by Job 24:2-11 "There are those that commit land robberies, that steal herds with their shepherd; that carry off the donkey of the orphan and seize the ox of the widow; That even take the orphan from the mother's breast and attack the infant of the poor; that thrust aside the needy. The poor of the land must hide lonely as wild asses in the wilderness they go forth to their labor; they must hunt the desert for substance, there is no harvest for the homeless. They must harvest fields that are not theirs, the vineyard of the wicked they must pick clean. Naked must they pass the night for lack of clothes, they have no covering from the cold. They are drenched by the downpouring of the mountains, they must

embrace the bare rock for want of shelter. They must go naked without garments", Accusations of uncharitable acts are plentiful--- Job 22 " Thou hast taken a pledge of thy brother for naught, and stripped the naked of thy clothing. Thou hast not given water to the weary to drink, and thou hast withheld bread from the hungry. Thou hast sent widows away empty and the arms of the fatherless have been broken",

To my mind the greatest exposition of charity in the whole Bible, both from the point of view of motive and deed appears in the two following passages in Job: 31:13-32 "If I did despise the cause of my manservant or of my maidservant when they contended with me, what should I do when God appeareth, when he visiteth the earth, what should I answer him? Did not he that created me, create him (the manservant) too? Did not one God fashion us both in the womb? If I ever refused the poor aught for which they asked, or suffered the eyes of the widow to pine away; if I ever ate my bread alone and shared it not with the orphan; if I ever saw a wretched person without clothing, a poor man without garments, and his body did not bless me when he was warmed by the wool of my sheep; if I ever shook my fist at an orphan, even though I saw ready support in the court: then let my shoulder blade drop from my shoulder, and my arm be rent from the socket etc.". Chapter 29:12-16 is equally as fine "I have saved the poor from the tyrant, and the orphan who had none to protect him. The blessing of the wretched hath been bestowed upon me, I have gladdened the heart of the widow. I am attired in righteousness, my uprightness adorneth me as a robe and a turban.

I have been eyes to the blind and feet to the lame. I have been a father to the poor, and I have searched the cause of those that were strangers to me". In these passages charity is at its greatest height and beauty.

The date of the book of Proverbs is also disputed by the scholars. If we accept the opinion of Driver, part of Proverbs is pre-exilic in origin, and hence alms were known before the exile. On the other hand, Bennett, Adeney, Toy, Cornill, and Steuernagel all decide that Proverbs is dated after the exile, and most of them feel that it comes a very long time after it, from the fourth to the third century. Taken as a whole, Proverbs manifests the spirit of Job for the most part, devoting itself to alms. That the condition of the poor was serious at this age can be seen from a statement such as (22:7) "The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender". Here we find a new form of statement presented. It is true that the usual precepts about oppression, justice, landmarks are present, but with a theological accompaniment which was rare in pre-exilic writings. "He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him, but blessing shall be upon the head of him that selleth it", "Remove not the old landmark and enter not into the fields of the fatherless for their redeemer is mighty",

The passages in Proverbs are not as fine as those in Job, nor as poetically expressed, but are still of great significance. (31:20) The virtuous woman "stretcheth out her hands to the poor, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy", (17:5) "he that oppresses the poor reproaches his maker", (14:20ff) "he that despises his neighbor sinneth, but he that hath

mercy on the poor, happy is he". "Rob not the poor for the Lord will plead their cause". (25:21) "If thy enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink, for thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and God shall reward thee". (25:8) "He that giveth to the poor, never shall lack",

Thus it can be seen that the practice of giving alms was associated with theological ideas which gave to it a deep appeal and a very firm hold upon the Jewish people. As then need of the poor continued and legal aid became less possible, the merit of giving to the poor became more important. This doctrine grew in importance to such a degree that we find Jesus saying "Sell what thou hast and give to the poor" or the Koran "Fear God with all your might but give alms for your own weal", (XCIII, 16). Thus the giving of alms is a logical development from hospitality, and from a historical point of view it was the successor to the several codes which could no longer function due to the change in conditions and times. The motives of almsgiving are in no wise different from those of the earlier stages of charity giving, and are only a trifle more pronounced. The humanitarian, ethical, benevolent aspects were drawn upon before. In addition to these we now have the element of free will injected, plus a more pronounced divine force used as a retribution for charity giving or for the lack of it.

CHAPTER V.

THEOLOGY .

Every phase of Jewish life has some aspect of the Divine as a motivation or source of inspiration; law was Torah, charity was religious, and temporal power was theocratic in nature. Everything revolved about God, and in this final chapter we shall sum up these conceptions of the Deity and His relationship to mankind which made possible the modes of charity throughout Bible times.

The first principle which lies at the very root of the Theological view is that "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof" (Psalm 24:1). The same sentiment is found in "In the beginning God created heaven and earth" as well as in I, Chronicles 29:14 "Give unto Him of what is His, since thou and what thou hast are His" From these few quotations it is evident that God is the maker and owner of everything, and that man can claim nothing as his own. As Schechter aptly puts it, "One is considered only the depository, or trustee of money which belongs to God". From this it is easy to point out that men are but "children of the living God" (Hosea 2:1). Dr. Kohler points out (J.E. Alms, Charity, Poor) that God as owner of all, claims his share for the needy, and the wealthy are personally held responsible for their needy brethren. Hence we read (Deuteronomy 15:10) "For the poor shall never cease out of the land, therefore I command thee--- open thy hand to the poor". Since Israel was the recipient of the land from God,

it was compelled to share it and its produce with all ^{the} people, especially when in need, by means of the tithe, gleanings, or any other method of charity. This was not a matter of free will, but rather a matter of justice, for since everything belonged to the Lord and He in turn had given His favors to His people, everyone had a right to share. Charity was justice and righteousness, as the later use of the word, **חֶסֶד**, would point out. He who gives charity is to be rewarded with blessings for his righteous acts. "Thou shalt deliver the pledge again when the sun goeth down that he may sleep in his own raiment and bless thee; and it shall be righteousness unto thee before the Lord thy God". (Deut. 24:13). Also "Blessed is the man that considereth the poor, the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble" (Psalm 41:1). In Ezekiel 18 we have the large compendium of individual retribution. Here a list of punishable sins is set down, and among them are noted the oppression of the poor, the taking of usury, and the refusal of alms. In this code we find the idea set forth that God is the friend of the poor, will reward the man who gives aid to the poor, and will protect the poor.

During the first period of charity, hospitality, the chief theological conception was that the stranger was under the protection of God; hence he was received and helped in as many ways as possible. This charity was in no sense optional, any more than the legal measures in the codes make charity optional, but was rather an obligation on the part of the giver---

the right of the stranger. Charity became optional only with the period of almsgiving.

The laws of taboo were for the benefit of the priest and the poor, both being under the care of God. The different things that came under this heading of taboo formed an excellent means of taking care of all the needy as well as the priests. In some cases the law of property was removed for a period, like the Sabbatical year, and all alike were to share in the produce of the fields and vineyards. Just as soon as the tithes, vows, first fruits, etc, were forbidden to an owner, they became the property of this special group of the poor and needy, who were under the care of God. With this idea in mind, namely that the poor were under the ever watchful eye of God, there were many festivals accompanied by feasts in which the poor might take part. The code of Deuteronomy (16:9 - 15) orders that all the sacrifices are to be eaten at the central sanctuary in Jerusalem with the family, the servants, ^{and} the poor, and that on ^{and} the festivals of Booths and Weeks, the Levite, ^{and} the widow are to be included. I. Chron. 16:3; II. Chron. 30:24; 35:7-9, mention the custom of giving food to the people that all might rejoice with regard to David, Hezekiah, and Josiah. Esther 9 ordains that this feasting upon the part of all is the proper way in which Purim is to be celebrated. When the ark comes to Jerusalem (II. Samuel 6:19) "a cake of bread, and a good piece of flesh and a flask of wine" is given by David to every one. (Driver considers this last passage late; all

the others are post-exilic; however, Steuernagel, Cornill, Bennett, and Adeney call the passage in II. Samuel "J".)

The speeches of all the prophets are carried on in the name of God, as the protector of the poor. (Amos 2:6) "For the three transgressions of Israel, yea for the four I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they sold the righteous for silver and the poor for a pair of shoes". (Isaiah 58:6) "Is this not the fast that I have chosen to loose the bonds of wickedness, etc.". There are a vast number of passages which tell of God's care for the poor, a number of which I shall cite but not quote: Psalms 74:19,21; 82:3,4; 146: 7-9; 68:5,10; 140:12; 69:13; 132:15; 72:2-4, 12-13; 107:36,41; 113:7,8; 9:18; 109:10,22,31;

I. Samuel: 2:8;

Job 36:6, 15;

Proverbs 15:25 etc.

In all of these the great moral principle stands out that God protects the poor and that human beings will act in like manner. God will requite those who so act and punish those who do not. This imitatio dei is applicable to many principles of morality in the Bible, but is especially applicable to mercy and charity. "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth to the Lord, and that which he hath given will He pay him again". (Proverbs 19:17).

Daniel 4:27 tells us that the king is advised "break off thy sins by righteousness and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor". Here we find that charity has been given the value of atonement. This is not found in any other place in the Bible. Very naturally atonement is dealt with, but only with ritual methods, such as the scapegoat and sacrifice, not to omit the pure morality taught by the prophets as the only means of atonement with God. Tobit uses this idea of charity in "Alms doth deliver from death and it shall purge away all sin". (12:8), but the Daniel incident is the first reference thereto in the Bible, and it has a distinct theological significance.

Just as Job represents the final development of the idea of charity in actual application to life, so does Proverbs 19:17 set it down in the Bible as a principle. In all the years following the Bible, there has been nothing to surpass these two references for nobility of conception or magnificence of purpose.

In commenting on charity, Shemoth Rabbah 31:15 tells us that "The Holy One, Blessed be He, opens His treasures and gives to the people of His silver and of His gold". Now if a class of people do not receive the proper share of God's goods, they have the right to voice a complaint. This unfortunate class, called the poor, are the special care of the Lord, and by helping to take care of them, the individual

merits favor from God. This is the whole of the theology of charity, namely by "being gracious to the poor, we lend to the Lord".