

Protection of the Weak in the Bible

Rabbinical Thesis in partial
fulfillment of the requirement of
the Degree of Rabbi

Submitted to Dr. Abraham
Cronbach

by

Harold L. Gelfman

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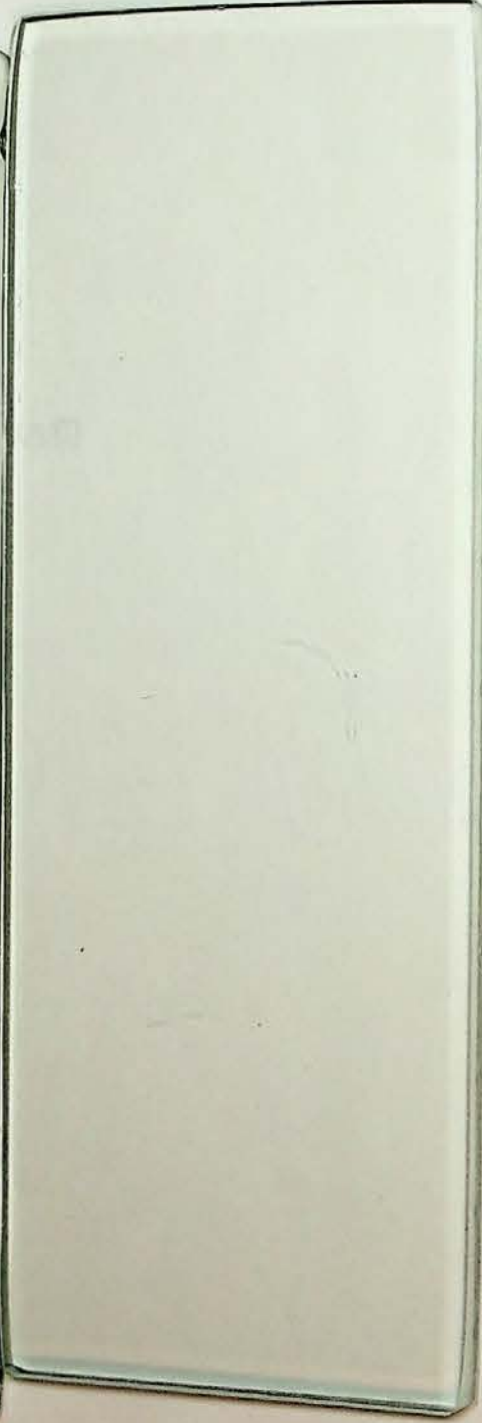
References

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PART I
THE HISTORICAL AND LITERARY BACKGROUND
OF THE BIBLE

Charts on Biblical History

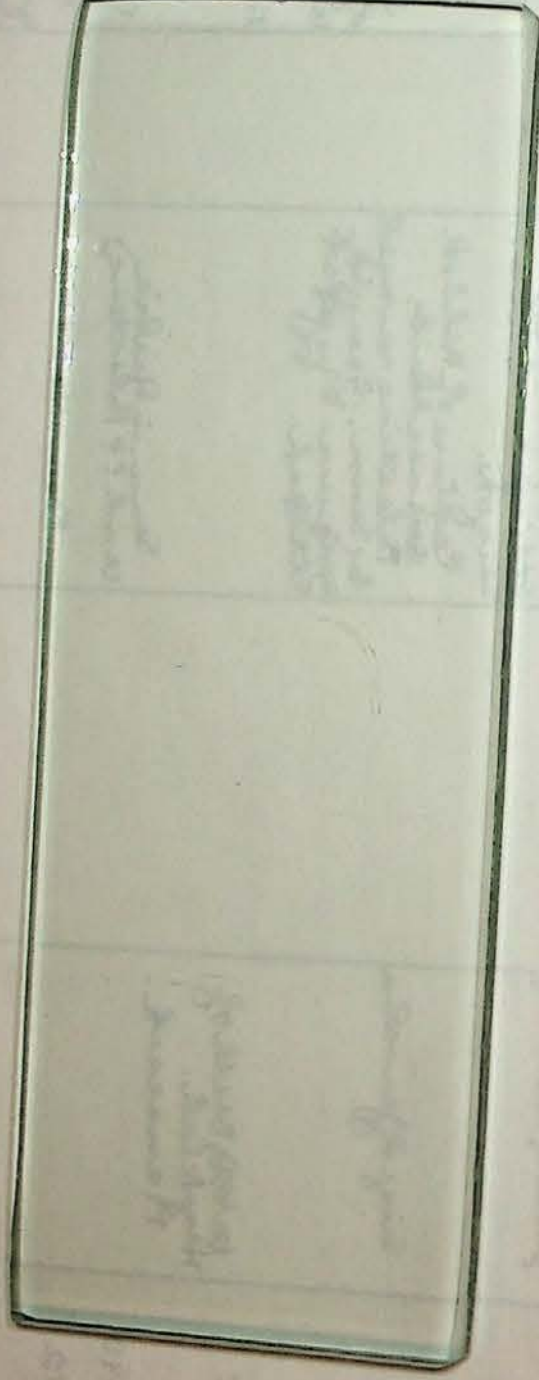
B.C.	REMARKS	(DAMASCUS)	BABYLON, ETC.	EXPL.	BOOK OF JEREMIAH
c. 1500 - c. 1200 c. 1200 - c. 1000 c. 1000 - 933 933 - 917 917 - 915 915 - 875	Nehus Settlement Conquest of Canaan Saul, David, Solomon Rehoboam Abijah Aza				
875 - 851 854	Iehoshaphat		860 - 825: Shalman- eser III. Ahab and Ben Hadad 853: Battle of Ramoth in Gilead 853 - 852: Ahaziah 852 - 843: Jehoram 843 - 816: Jehu Elisha Jehu pays Jehoram II Death of Jotham II		
851 - 844 844 - 843 843 - 837 842 c. 785 782 - 746 c. 746 745 c. 740 738	Iehoram Ahaziah Athaliah Uzziah Death of Uzziah Jotham		tribute to Shalman. Decline of Assyria Tiglath-Pileser IV Captivity of Rapah 19 districts of Hamath annexed by Tiglath-Pileser. Menahem and Pazon pay tribute to Assyria.	c. 745 - 718: Dymally XXIII dist united	Amos (c. 755) Hosea (-735) Call of Isaiah (A. 1) Isaiah 2 (c. 739) Isaiah 9: 7-10: 4+5: 26-29 (c. 737). 7: 1-8: 18 (c. 735). Isaiah 17: 1-11 (c. 733)
735	Syro-Ephraimite War: Judah attacked by Pekah and Rezin Ahaz pays tri-		Isaiah to Tiglath-Pileser. Philistine Campaign Captivity of Gafa Campaign of Sargon		
734					
733					



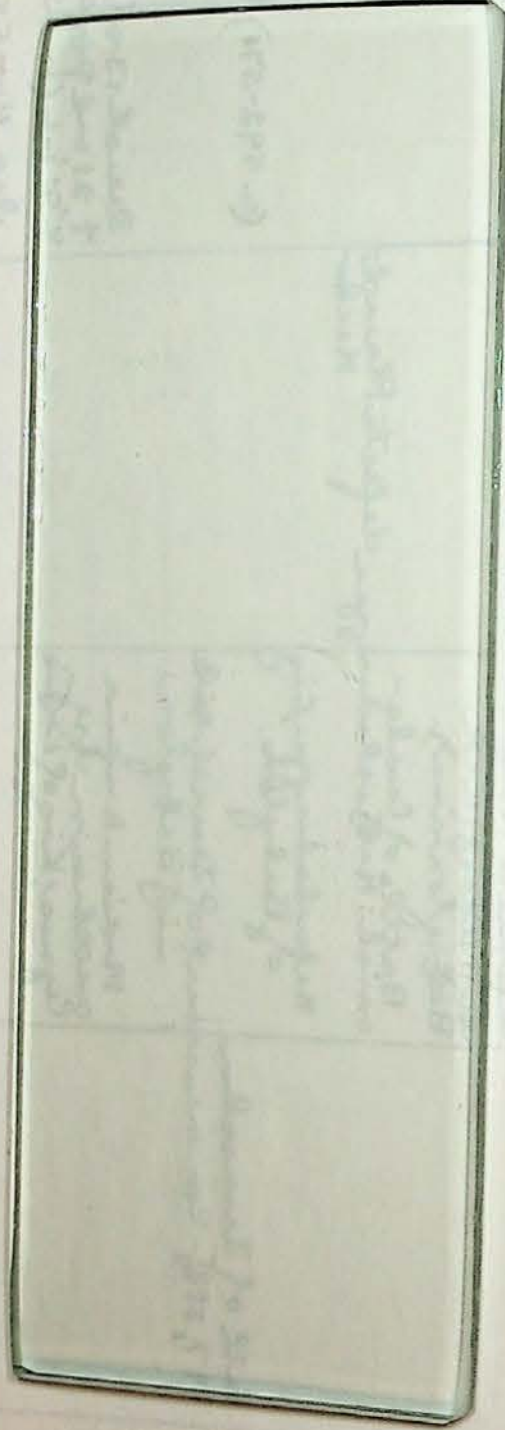
DATE	JUDAH	ISRAEL	SYRIA (DAMASCUS)	BABYLON, ETC.	EGYPT	BOOK OF ISRAH
B.C. c. 1500-1200 c. 1200-1000 c. 1000-933 933-917 917-915 915-875	Hurur Settlement Conquest of Canaan Saul, David, Solomon Rehoboam Abijah Aza	Settlement of Canaan Saul, David, Solomon Jeroboam Nadab (912-911) Baasha (911-888) Elah (888-887) Omri (887-876) Ahab (876-853) Elijah Ahab and Ben Hadad 853-Battle of Ramoth in Gilead 853-852-Ahaziah 852-843-Jehoram 843-816-Jehu Elisha Jehu pays Jehoram II Death of Jehu II				
875-851 854	Ishobaphat			860-825-Shalmaneser III Shalmaneser at Harkar		
851-844 844-843 843-837 842 c. 785 782-746 c. 746 745 c. 740 738	Jehoram Ahaziah Athaliah Uzziah Death of Uzziah Jotham			Tribute to Shalmaneser Decline of Assyrian Power Tiglath-Pileser IV Capture of Ramoth 19 districts of Hamath annexed by Tiglath-Pileser Menahem and Pazon pay tribute to Assyria		Amos (c. 755) Hosea (-735) Call of Hosea (c. 735) Isaiah 2 (c. 739) Isaiah 9: 7-10: 4+5: 26-29 (c. 737) 7: 1-8: 18 (c. 735) Isaiah 17: 1-11 (c. 733)
735	Syria-Ephraimite War: Judah attacked by Pekah and Rezin Ahaz pays tribute					
734		Exile of Manasse (2K. 15: 20 ff.)		Isaiah to Tiglath-Pileser Philistine Campaign Capture of Gaza Campaigns in Syria		
733		Pekah slain, No. End of King-				



DATE	JUDAH	ISRAEL	BABYLON, ETC.	EGYPT	BOOK OF ISAIAH
B.C. 727	(ca 715) Death of King Hezekiah.	Sieger free of Samaria End of N. Israel	Shalmaneser IV		Isaiah 38:1-4 (before 722)
724			Sargon		
722			Merodach-Baladan, King of Babylon, King of Babylon for 2 years.		
721			Sargon defeated Sargon and Egypt at Raphia		
720			Capture of Carchemish Campaigns in Asia Egypt takes tribute. Edom, Moab, Egypt, and Ethiopia rebel.		Isaiah 10:5-15 (after 707)
717			Capture of Ashdod Sennacherib.		(Isaiah 20).
715	(ca 720) Death of King Hezekiah. Judah, Philistia,		Palestine ravaged by Sennacherib. Assyrian conquers Egypt at Elkabah.		Isaiah 37:36-38 (ca. 702).
711	Siege of Jerusalem				Isaiah 37:36-38 (ca. 702).
705 704					Isaiah 37:36-38 (ca. 702).
698	(ca 688) Death of Hezekiah. Manasseh.		Sennacherib in Arabia (and ? Palestine)		Isaiah 37:36-38 (ca. 702).
c. 690			Esar-Haddon		(? Isa. 37:36-38 ff.)
682			Esar-Haddon captures Memphis.		7th cent.: writings of teachings of Isaiah preserved by disciples.
671			Ashurbanipal overthrows Tishlak of Egypt		
668			Capture of Thebes		
667			Nabopolassar independent king of Babylon		
625					



DATE	JUDAH	BABYLON, ETC.	EGYPT	BOOK OF ISRAH
B.C.				
621	Jewish's Reformation			
c. 607	Exile	Fall of Assyria; Capture of Nineveh by Medes (and Babylonians).		(c. 626-586) Jeremiah
605		Battle of Carche- mish: Nebuchadnezzar defeats Pharaoh Necho		
604		Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon		
586	Fall of Jerusalem 597, 586 - Commencement of Jewish exile in Babylon	Median Empire overthrown by Cyrus, King of Persia		(c. 592-571) Ezekiel
549		Babylon captured by Cyrus.		Isaiah 13+ (prob.) 14: 4, 21 and possibly 11:1- 8:9: 1-6 (c. 550). f Isa. 40-55 (in the main) (c. 540).
538	Persian dominion	Cambyses, King of Persia, conquers Egypt, and repairs Temple at Elephantine		? Isa. 15, 16 (c. 470). Isa. 50-66 (in the main) - c. 450?
525			Jewish Temple at Elephantine destr- oyed.	Isa. 24-27 (c. 400 or con- siderably later). c. 350-300 - Compilation of Isaiah 2-12, 13-23, 24-33. union of 40-55 and 56-66; union of 1- 39 (in the main) add 40-66.
411				Ben Sira refers to Isa. 40, etc., as a pro- phesy of Isaiah (c.
332	End of Persian dominion. Beginning of Greek dominion of Alexander			
	and of his successors - the Seleucids and the Ptolemies.			
323				



DATE	SUMMARY	BABYLON, ETC.	EGYPT	BOOK OF ISRAH
B.C. 167	Beginning of the Jewish revolt led by the Maccabees vs. the Seleucids.		c. 160 - Jewish Temple at Leontopolis (cp. ? Isa. 19: 17-23).	Daniel and part of Enoch (c. 167). Greek version of Isaiah (c. 150). Notes: minor additions to Isaiah.
A.D. <u>100</u>	Final settlement of Canon of Old Testament.			Many quotations from Isaiah in New Testament (c. 50-100) Consonantal text of Isaiah fixed c. 100. Consonants vocalized c. 600-700.
C. 100				Earliest Hebrew manuscript of Isaiah (916).

INTRODUCTION^{*}

Among the Israelites in Biblical times there were various classes of people who, because of their peculiar status, had to be protected. Such persons as slaves, strangers, women, orphans, unintentional murderers, and last but not least, the poor, had to be rescued from the hands of the powerful and the cruel. In order that the Israelite society might be established on as firm a foundation as possible, its builders could not disregard the underprivileged, the unfortunate, and the afflicted. The gap between upper and lower classes had to be filled; inequalities had to be reduced to a minimum. The cries of the oppressed and the defenceless had to be, at least, heard, and, if possible, answered. In short, the leaders in ancient Israel had to devise ways and means by which the weak could be protected from the evil designs and capricious whims of the strong. The mighty had to be restrained in the use of their power; the lowly had to be helped and raised to a level as equal as possible with their more fortunate brethren.

The great lawgivers, prophets, and sages of the Old Testament attempted to do this very thing. Their workshop was the environment

* Let it be understood that it is not the purpose of this paper to discuss in detail whether or not certain sections in certain books of the Bible are original. Part I merely intends to give the reader an understanding of the literary and historical background of the Bible -- material sufficient to prepare one for a developmental view of the social legislation in the Bible. Questions of dates, authorship, etc., which themselves require life-long studies, will not be given concentrated attention. However, such items will be considered wherever possible, in order to accomplish the aim of this writer; that is, to give an appreciation of how the Bible considered the protection of the weak throughout its long history of gradual development and composition.

in which they lived. Their tools were the accomplishments and influences of the past together with the moral passion and penetrating insight which were their own possessions. Naturally, as the years - the centuries - passed on and left their impress, this ethical idealism became more refined, scaled ever greater heights, and each succeeding generation was the recipient of finer truths. Of course, there were periods of retrogression, of reaction, when this momentum was upset for a while and selfishness and irresponsible power gained the ascendancy. **But** not for long. Progress could not be stopped; the world had to go forward. And so, soon there arose others who carried on man's struggle for a better and a happier earthly existence.

Such a developmental point of view is clearly shown in the Bible with respect to its treatment of the weak. But in order that we may better understand the progress Biblical teachers made in their social idealism, it is necessary that we give such a survey of the historical and literary background of the Old Testament which will enable us to perceive more clearly why certain concepts and laws evolved in the way that they did. Thus, our first task would be to describe the sources which were used in the composition of the Hexateuch.

Chapter I -- The Hexateuch*

The J and E Sources

These documents are usually called the Jahwistic and Elohistie narratives, for, unlike the two other great documents, -- Deuteronomy and the Priestly Code -- they, for the most part, contain very little law. Although the Book of the Covenant (Ex. 20:23-23:33) is embedded in E, nevertheless J and E are, aside from these laws, narrative collections. Thus, J and E, in this respect as well as in content, are closely parallel to one another. Then, too, they have a common purpose; that is, they both intend to prove that God's hand is in Israel's history. Whatever happened was God's will. And from the creation to the death of Moses (including the opening chapters of Joshua), the writers of these two sources endeavoured to show that it was God's plan throughout to establish Israel in Canaan. Naturally, there were circumstances that retarded the fulfillment of this purpose. But all these would be overcome.

In these sources are contained very old oral traditions, myths, historical, semi-historical and etiological sagas, and historical romances -- all woven together into a unit by this common purpose. But, nevertheless, the two sources can be distinguished as being separate literary units before they were worked together with ingen-

* Sources for material in chapter on the Hexateuch are:

Dr. Blank's Bible VI notes

International Critical Commentary, Genesis, Introduction, pp. XXXIV - LXVII

Encyclopedia Biblica, II, pp. 1669 - 1677, on Genesis.

Cambridge Bible, Exodus, pp. X - XIV; XXVff., LX - LXIII; 202-205

Encyc. Bib., II, pp. 1440-1451, on Exodus.

Encyc. Bib., III, pp. 2776-2792, on Leviticus.

Camb. Bib., pp. XIff., on Lev.

Encyc. Bib., pp. 3439-3449, on Numbers.

I.B.B., pp. XXIX-XXXIX, on Numbers.

Encyc. Bib., pp. 1074-1093, on Deuteronomy.

ious artistry. In any case, whether we consider them separately or combined, it is very likely that many writers in several centuries contributed to the composition of J, E, and JE. Each may be considered as having its own process of growth. In each there are distinguishing characteristics. They differ, more or less, in theological and ethical ideas. J's God is more anthropomorphic than E's; E is more definitely opposed to idolatry and child-sacrifice than J. Moreover, E is more developed in its ethical and theological ideas than J; E is on a higher cultural level than J. Therefore, it is very likely that E is later than J, and was written in an environment of more advanced culture than J.

It is to be noticed also that J has traditions that may be referred specifically to the southern part of Canaan called Judah; whereas, E has traditions that are specifically northern in character. And if we also take into consideration differences in the language and style of these two sources, we cannot but conclude that the Hexateuch contains two distinct documents, written by two separate schools of authors who lived in different environments; that is J was written in the southern kingdom of Judah, and E in the northern kingdom of Israel.

As for the date of J and E, that is rather difficult to determine, inasmuch as each document shows signs of a long, continual development, so that, at times, J and E seem to overlap one another chronologically. Secondary portions in E and redactional additions in JE show the influence of written prophecy later than the eighth century B.C. However, most critics agree that J is in the main less advanced culturally and therefore older than E; in other words, the

older parts of J are earlier than the older parts of E. Therefore, although J and E have portions that were written even as late as early post-exilic times (there are sections in Genesis which originate with Deutero-Isaiah), nevertheless both are, in the main, before Deuteronomy (621 B.C.), J being placed in the ninth century and E in the eighth -- both influenced by the prophetic movement of the ninth century and somewhat affected by the ideas of the eighth century prophets. Moreover, these writings were written in times of prosperity, optimism, and national security, thus stimulating literary activity. Probably the reign of Jereboam II (783-743 B.C.) was such a time for the composition of E; probably the earlier portions of J were written at such a time when the ^{Anglican} United Kingdom was established (c. 950 B.C. -- cf. Gen. 37:8; Dt. 33:7) or when Jehoshaphat ruled (in the middle of the ninth century). At any rate, it is almost certain that Amos (2:9) and Hosea (12:4,5,13f.) (c. 750 B.C.) knew of J and E, although J and E have no references to these eighth century prophets. And so, the terminus a quo for J and E may be said to be around 950 B.C. and their terminus ad quem may be estimated at 750 B.C. These are two approximate dates to limit the era when the composition of J and E took place.

The fact that repeatedly J and E refer to the altars and sacrifices as being made at any place (Gen. 12:7f.; 13:4,18; 22:9; 31:13; 46:1), contrary to the Deuteronomic injunction to destroy these local shrines and establish a central sanctuary in the place of God's choice (on Mt. Zion in Jerusalem -- cf. Dt. 12:2ff.), leads us to believe that these two sources were written before 621 B.C., the accepted date for Deuteronomy (cf. 2K. 22). And since we gave the date, 750 B.C., as the approximate terminus ad quem for J and E, it is very likely

that a redactor (R^{JE}), between 750 and 621 B.C., weaved these two documents into one unified whole, and, at the same time, omitted certain sentences, added some of his own, filled in gaps, and smoothed out contradictions. Since even the E writers probably were influenced after 722 B.C. by the Judaeen environment, R^{JE} (one writer or a group of writers) followed, to a great extent, J, if there would arise a question of choice of material. If R^{JE} liked the material in both, he would weave in both. Or, if there were contradictions, he would harmonize the two sources by glosses.*

It must be noted at this time that there are two groups of laws older than the J and E narratives -- laws which were incorporated into both sources. Exodus 34: 18-26, the oldest code of Hebrew laws, may be called J's decalogue, or the older counterpart to the decalogue in Ex. 20:1-17, E's legal contribution, and the introduction to the Book of the Covenant (Ex. 21-23). Just as Ex. 34 was incorporated into the J narrative, so Ex. 20:1-17 was woven into the E pattern. And, even later, probably the Deuteronomic editors (R^D) took Ex. 34, Ex. 20:1-17, and Ex. 20:23-23:19, and placed them in their present position.

The laws in Ex. 34:18-26 are of a ritual nature. They go back as early as the United Kingdom (from about 1000 B.C.). They are the counterparts of the laws in Ex. 20-23. These latter laws have a higher ethical tone. Unlike the cruder, pastoral civilization which influenced the Judaeen writers of Ex. 34, the E writers of Ex. 20-23 who lived in Northern Israel evolved laws which were compatible with a more complex civilization -- a civilization which, of necessity, demanded more attention for its poor and greater jus-

* There are secondary and tertiary forms of J and E and redactorial additions to JE which date down to early post-exilic times. But it is impossible, nor is it the scope of this paper, to discuss

tice for its dependents. They were assumed by Amos and Hosea in their addresses to the mighty ones of Northern Israel. They are laws for a society rapidly developing from simple pastoral conditions to the complexities of settled, agricultural life. They appear expanded and more developed in Dt. 5, and minutely defined in the Priestly Code. Thus, these two groups of primitives laws have a growth ranging from about 1000 B.C. to about 750 B.C. -- from the era of the United Kingdom (and probably earlier) to the times of Amos and Hosea. This coincides approximately with the chronological limits given for the development of the J and E narratives, exclusive of JE's redaction.

DEUTERONOMY

Having discussed JE and having given the period for its redaction as occurring between 750 and 621 B.C., we can now turn to another important source used for the composition of the Hexateuch. This is the Book of Deuteronomy, in which is contained the great law code of Dt. 12-26. The writing of this book was dependent on and later than JE. It is the result of those prophetic preachers (especially, the eight century prophets) and writers who flourished before this great document was found by Hilkiah in the Temple at the time of Josiah (639-609), king of Judah (2K. 22), in the year 621 B.C. Therefore, it was written either in the reign of Manasseh, (696-641), Josiah's predecessor or in the early years of Josiah's reign. In either case, it was a protest against Manasseh's idolatrous reaction to Hezekiah's (724-696) progressive reforms. Thus, in order that the moral convictions might be more effective in the lives of the people they had to be translated into stringent laws which had to be obeyed. And the such additional material in detail.

reign of Josiah was propitious for such moral and political action.

The Deuteronomy writer or writers followed the old custom of ascribing their work to some great personage like Moses, who believed in Yahweh as the only God. Therefore, such a deity required only one dwelling-place or sanctuary; that is the Temple in Jerusalem (יהוה אחד). ('ה נאמ' רעיו . The other laws are adjustments and corollaries to this central principle of D. As a result the local sanctuaries, which J and E seem to have taken for granted, were to be abolished (Dt. 12: 2-4f.), and all festivals were to be celebrated, and sacrifices offered in the central sanctuary on Mt. Zion in Jerusalem (Dt. 12: 6; 14: 22-29; 15: 19-20; 16: 1-8; 26). However, in time, certain adjustments were necessary to such a difficult law, which required those from several miles distant to fulfill their religious duties in Jerusalem. Therefore, in Dt. 12: 13, 14, 20-22, meat could be eaten as food in one's own gates, not as an offering but as an animal caught in the hunt. The ministers of the local shrines, the Levites, could come to the sanctuary in Jerusalem and receive an equal share with the priests of the central shrine in the offerings (18: 6-8a); and as another attempt at equality in the priesthood, neither the priests nor the Levites could possess any property of their own (18: 1). The local courts were not to be abolished, but a difficult case was referred to Jerusalem (16: 18; 17: 8-13). One other instance of modification as an adaptation to the times was in the law regarding the cities of refuge. In Dt. 19: 1-13, the provision is made that when the boundaries of the land will be extended and the distance becomes too great to go to the three original cities of refuge, three other cities should be added where the innocent manslayer

may flee. It is probable that such modifications as noted above were added subsequent to 621 B.C.

Moreover, such an idea as keeping the land ritually pure and free from abominable, non-Yahwistic practices (13: 2-19; 14: 1ff; 18: 9-22; 22: 5ff.) (practices prevalent in the local sanctuaries) was also probably a later addition to the kernel of D, pointing in the direction of the great Priestly Code (P). For, if Yahweh were supposed to dwell in the midst of Israel, and if there were any impurity in the land, then Yahweh would be forced to leave his people to their unclean ways. Therefore, the injunction, *אֲזַרְתִּי הָרָצָה (הַמְזֻזָּה) מִקִּרְבִּי* (cf. 22: 21, 24).

Thus, moral and religious reformation in Israel, begun by Hezekiah (2K. 18: 4, 22; 21: 3) and culminating in Josiah's reign, begin to take on a more definitely priestly character. However, let us not forget that much of this was probably evolved after 621, and that the kernel -- the main purpose -- of D was the moral and spiritual regeneration of the people -- that in such a task, in the framing of their work, the writers of D were inspired by the prophetic narratives of J and E and the utterances of men like Elijah, Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah. And the ideas in Deuteronomy, in turn, influenced Jeremias, Ezekiel, and Second Isaiah. In the estimates of the characters of the kings of Israel and Judah contained in the book of Kings and in reflexions on national history presented therein, the influence of Deuteronomy is rather evident. So, too, does this obtain in certain prayers; for example, those found in Neh. 1: 5-11; 9: 6ff; Dan. 9: 4-19, and in the editing of Joshua, Judges, and Samuel.

But what is more pertinent to our subject is the influence Deuteronomy received from the pre-exilic prophets in the matter of social legislation. Such humanitarian laws are those which provide care for the stranger, the orphan, and the widow (14: 29; 24: 17), for the Levite (4: 27; 12: 15), the freeing of slaves (15: 12-18), protection of women (22: 14ff.), security against usurious interest (23:21), and kindness to animals (22: 1-4). But more of this later.

It can be said now, however, that many of these laws are developments of laws found in the Book of the Covenant. In fact, almost two-thirds of the Book of the Covenant have parallels in D. We have only to compare how festivals are observed in Ex. 23: 14-19a (at local shrines) with the manner of their observance in Dt. 16 (at the central sanctuary) or the treatment of Hebrew slaves in Ex. 21: 2-11 contrasted with sentiments sounded in Dt. 15: 12-18, to realize that D had adopted and adapted a good portion of the legislation of the Book of the Covenant. Thus, we can say that D was influenced by the prophetic and legal heritage which developed before its time. And in this way it may be already seen that D occupies a chronological position between J, E, C (Book of the Covenant), and H (Holiness Code), P (Priestly Code), always bearing in mind that throughout the Hexateuch and in other books (such as Judges, Samuel, and Kings) there is the hand of an early post-exilic redactor who modified the works of those before him from a Deuteronomic point of view. (Such an editor is usually called R^D).

The Priestly and Holiness Codes

In treating the sources to the Hexateuch, there remain two other important documents, written at a time subsequent to that of

Deuteronomy. These are the Priestly and Holiness law codes, written by a writer or writers whose specific philosophy pervades the entire Hexateuch -- who have reshaped the Hexateuch, containing the sources already discussed, according to their own ideas of history.

The purposes of the Priestly writers were many. Probably their primary aim was to teach didactically. Even the narratives of P lead up to statements of certain laws or to the establishment of certain institutions. For instance, P's account of creation had in view the establishment of the Sabbath, the story of Abraham's circumcision of his son Isaac led to the promulgation of such a practice, the account of Jacob's struggles with Esau provided a basis for laws against foreign marriages, the Passover is the culmination of the Exodus story, the Korahite rebellion in Num. 16 is told in order to justify the priestly prerogatives of Aaron and his descendants.

Since it was the purpose of P to instruct the people, through stories, that certain practices were to be observed, a further reason had to be given to convince the people of their duties. This was done by showing, through long, carefully devised genealogies, that Israel is a *מְדִינַת כֹּהֲנִים*, a kingdom of priests -- that they could justifiably boast of their *שֵׁר* or descent from an exclusive stock particularly attached to Yahweh. Thus, in dealing with the wilderness period, P conceives God as dwelling in the midst of Israel and the tribes encamped round about his dwelling place, the Tabernacle. This idea leads to the institution of the single central sanctuary introduced by D and already taken for granted in P.

Therefore, a distinction is introduced by P between the Cohanim or Priests of the central sanctuary in Jerusalem and their menial assistants, the Levites, who used to minister in the local shrines.

There is one other characteristic of P, and this is that in describing the various laws intimated in previous sources, it develops them in much greater detail. In fact, throughout P there is an essential unity, and this consists of its pedantic, formal, legal, and institutional tone. Everything P does is accomplished by a definite scheme or formula; and it is very careful to carry out its plan to the minutest detail. Such pedantic thoroughness and formalism are evident in P's narratives, genealogies, dates, and laws.

However, though P (or P^G, denoting the kernel of P)^{has} such essential unity, nevertheless within itself it is composite. For example, towards the end of the book of Exodus, Moses orders the Tabernacle set up and dedicated, and Aaron and his sons clothed and consecrated. One would think, then, that the book of Leviticus would begin with the carrying out of these orders. But no such things occurs. Instead, the first seven chapters are devoted to a description of the various sacrifices; this section is called the Priestly Torah section (P^T), because the word, Torah, is used for the laws relating to such sacrifices. Chapters 11-15 of Leviticus are also of the same character (P^T). Thus, it seems that Lev. 1-7, 11-15 once had an independent existence, and were inserted among chapters 8-10, 16. For these latter chapters are a direct continuation of Ex. 40 and carry on the thought with which the book of Exodus closes.

There are other portions which can be distinguished from the rest of P and which form, more or less, a unit. Most prominent among these are chapters 17-26 of Leviticus, called the Holiness Code. The legislation in this Code is in a form earlier in development than P^G. It consists of earlier material incorporated and reworked by the writer of P^G in his document. For instance, whereas in Deuteronomy there is no distinction between priests and Levites, the hand of P is evident in Lev. 17: 2; 21: 21, where the descendants of Aaron seem to be a priestly class set apart from the other Israelites. And in Ezekiel 44 the Levites are degraded further to mere menials in the Temple service, inferior to the Zadokites, the priests or sons of Aaron. Thus, Ezekiel too, ^{points} in the direction of P, where the process is completed and the distinction between the priest and Levite is represented as an established Mosaic institution, fixed and settled from the beginnings of Israelitic history. This is the lesson from the Korahite rebellion in Num. 16. Thus, we have an example of P using H to its own advantage and reworking it according to its own ideas.

Since this introduction merely intends to introduce the reader into a development of the historical and literary background of the Bible, such evidence seems sufficient to conclude that H was probably written at a time between D (621) and P^G (c. 500 B.C., according to I.C.C., Numbers, pp. XXIX-XXXIX). Just as P^G reworked much of the Hexateuch with the various sources already discussed before the writer, so too did P^G rework H so that it too was ready for redaction by R^P (or R^{JEDP}) in late post-exilic times. (down into the fourth century B.C.).

Chapter II

Judges, Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles*

Having discussed the sources of the Hexateuch in order that our subject may be better understood from a developmental point of view, it is necessary that we know something about the manner in which the historical books of the Bible were composed.

The book of Judges covers the period of the invasion of Palestine by the various Hebrew tribes, its conquest and settlement, the influence of Canaanite, Baal civilization upon Yahwism, and the struggle of Hebraic, democratic culture to maintain itself against heathenish aristocracy. The various narratives concerning this period were culled from local traditions and popular tales, transmitted orally. The prose and poetry versions of Deborah's exploits in Jud. 45 give evidence to the fact that such a narrative was probably derived from a work like the Book of Jashar or the Book of the Wars of Yahweh (cf. 2S. 1:18; Num. 21:14). These very old sources, and J and E strands of narratives were woven together by a redactor (R^{JE}) into a pre-Deuteronomic Book of Judges; and, in turn, his ed-

* Cambridge Bible, Judges, pp. XIII-XXIV.
Encyclopedia Biblica, Judges, pp. 2633-2642.
International Critical Commentary, Samuel, pp. XV-XXIX.
Encyc. Bib., Kings, pp. 2664-2671.
Camb., Kings, pp. XVIII-XXIII.
Encyc. Bib., Chronicles, pp. 763-772, XXVIII-XXXI.
I.C.C., Chronicles, pp. 2ff.
(These are the sources for this chapter).

itorial work was continued by those same writers who shaped the Hexateuch into its present form (R^D , R^P).

The two books of Samuel, containing the histories of Samuel, Saul, and David, are composed of several narratives woven together; and the hands of those pre-exilic and post-exilic redactors mentioned in connection with the previous books of the Bible, are evident throughout. Nevertheless, two main strands are especially conspicuous to the critical reader. They may be designated as the Samuel and Saul narratives.* The Saul account is older and probably forms the ground-work, with stories of Gideon, Jephthah, Samson based on the Book of Judges. The Samuel document, on the other hand, is in line with the redactor of Judges who embodied the Deuteronomistic theory of history into the framework of Judges. Indeed it seems that the Saul and Samuel sources are each part of a larger, unknown history. Such was the manner in which the books of Judges and Samuel were composed.

The two books of Kings include the period from the last days of David, Solomon's reign, to the last kings of Judah. The last event occurs in 561 B.C. with the freeing of Jehoiachin, Zedekiah's nephew and predecessor, by Evil-Merodach of Babylon, after Jehoiachin had been in a Babylonian prison for 37 years. Therefore, Kings could not

* According to I.C.C., Samuel, pp. XV-XXIX, the contents of the Samuel document are:

1S. 1; 3; 4; 7: 3-17; 8; 10: 17-25, 12; 15; 16: 1-13; 17; 23: 19-24; 26; 18: 1-5, 14-16, 17-19; 18: 30-19; 7, 8-10, 18-24; 21: 11-16; 22: 3-5; 28; 31; 23: 11-18 (? -- later interpolation); 2S. 5; 7; 8: 16-18.

The contents of the Saul document are:

1S. 9: 1-10; 16; 11; 13: 2-14; 52; 16: 14-23; 18: 6-13, 20-29a; 19: 11-17; 21: 2-10; 22: 1, 2, 6-23; 26; 23: 1-11; 25; 27; 29-30; 2S. 1; 2-4; 9-20.

1S. 5: 1-7: 1 is embodied in the Samuel document from a source now lost to us.

have been compiled before 561, although not much later than this date. For soon after, the priestly movement was gaining so much momentum that the Deuteronomistic outlook on Israelitish history was soon to be pushed into the background. And since it has been intimated before (in connection with the analysis of D) that the compilers of Kings were profoundly influenced by Deuteronomy, we must date the compilation of Kings not much later than 561 B.C.

Now, in Kings there are usually brief appeals at the end of each king's reign. Excluding those chapters concerning Solomon's reign (1K. 3-11) which were probably based on the "Book of the Acts of Solomon" mentioned in 1K. 11: 41, these summaries were derived from "The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel (or" -- of Judah)" (cf. 2K. 15:1,2, 5-7), and were written in the style of annals (1K. 14: 21-16: 34; 2K. 23: 31-25: 7). Such sections formed the framework of the histories. However, there are portions where no such appeals to chronicles are made (1K. 17: 1; 22: 28; 2K. 18: 17-19: 34). In such cases narratives or groups of narratives are inserted.

There are still other sections in the style of Deuteronomy and from D's standpoint. Some pass judgment on the conduct of kings (especially, whether or not they have followed Yahwistic worship in a single, central sanctuary at Jerusalem); others trace the connection between the sins of the people and the calamities which have

1S. 2: 1-11, Hannah's Psalm, is an independent composition, probably from a collection like our book of Psalms, and inserted in the text later. 1S. 2: 12-17, 22-25, 27-36 are verses which the author of the Samuel document took from an earlier source and weaved into a life of Samuel. 2: 18-21, 26 were inserted into the Samuel account when the latter was completed. 1S. 13: 8-15a is a late insertion by an editor or scribe to whom Saul's rejection came too late. It was inserted into the Saul account before the Samuel document was written. 1S. 14: 47-51, a summary, is probably a later insertion. There are very few redactions

befallen them; while still others record in detail matters relating to Temple worship. Then, too, in order to emphasize D's prophetic import, certain special incidents which called forth prophetic activity, are narrated at length (cf. 1K. 13: 1-32; 14: 1-18; 18: 1-46). But in all these instances, the motive of the author of Kings is to further D's main principle of worshipping only at a single, central sanctuary in Jerusalem (1K. 15: 14; 22: 43; 2K. 17: 7-23) (also 1K. 8: 22ff.; 9: 1-9).

The other historical Biblical book is Chronicles (1 and 2). Originally, the book consisted of those chapters from 1 Chr. 1: 1 to Neh. 13: 31 and included the single work, Ezra-Nehemiah. This unity was broken when Ezra-Nehemiah was admitted into the Canon first, because it concluded the history of Israel from Samuel and Kings; while Chronicles supplemented much of the material in Samuel and Kings.

Chronicles, written later than Kings, continued Hebrew history to the second visit of Nehemiah to Jerusalem in 432 B.C. In the genealogy of high priests it went as far as Jaddua (Neh. 12: 11), contemporary of Alexander the Great (c. 330 B.C.). Thus Chronicles was written about 300 B.C.

The Chronicler's interest are more in line with P; that is, in matters pertaining to religious worship. Whereas, the author of Kings appealed to the Deuteronomic or pre-Deuteronomic (prophetic)

in Samuel. 1S. 20-21: 1 is a fragment from an altogether different source. 2S. 6 contains matter common to both the Saul and Samuel documents. There is an appendix to the two books of Samuel in 2S. 21-24.

stratum of the Hexateuch. The Chronicler takes a viewpoint more favorable to southern Judah than to northern Israel; whereas, the author of Kings considers both sections, although he sometimes appears to be an orthodox Judaeen, influenced to a great extent by Deuteronomy.

As intimated before, the Chronicler seems to be of the school of P. He glorifies the great deeds of the past, and passes over the distasteful episodes. Since he is an adherent to the P interpretation of history, the Chronicler stresses the Temple in Jerusalem, its worship and ministration (2Chr. 23). His interests, too, are rather in the institutional aspects of religion, and he favors anything that emphasizes Jewish exclusiveness or *וידוי* (cf. the many genealogies, chs. 1-9, especially with regard to eligibility into the priesthood; cf. Ezra 2: 61-69; Neh. 7: 63-65). In order to encourage the people to practice those things which will make them an *עם נבדל*, he stresses also divine providence and immediate retribution.

As for the sources which the Chronicler used, they are many. However, in the main, he was dependent upon the earlier Biblical books (especially Samuel and Kings) and some midrashic histories of Israel.*

* The Chronicler, according to the I.C.C. (Chronicles, pp. 2ff.) used also: 1. A Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah, for the reigns of Jotham, Josiah, and Jehoiakim (2Chr. 27: 7; 35: 27; 36:8); 2. A Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel, for the reigns of Asa, Amaziah, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (2Chr. 16: 11; 25: 26; 28: 26; 32:32); 3. A Book of the Kings of Israel, for the genealogies (1 Chr. 9: 1) and the reigns of Jehoshaphat (2Chr. 20:34) and Manasseh (2Chr. 33:18); 4. A Midrash of the Book of Kings for the reign of Joash (2Chr. 24: 27); 5. A History of Samuel the Seer, of Nathan the prophet, of Gad the Seer, for the reign of David (1Chr. 29:29); 6. A History of Ahijah the Shilonite, visions of Iddo the Seer, for the reign of Solomon (2Chr. 9:29); 7. A History of Shemaiah the prophet, of Iddo the Seer, for the

Chapter III

Ezra and Nehemiah

These books were originally one. The beginning of Ezra (1:1-3a) is a sequel to the end of 2 Chronicles. The compiler of these books was probably the same as the one who put together Chronicles.¹ As mentioned in connection with Chronicles, he probably lived around 300 B.C., at the end of the Persian and the beginning of the Greek period. He deals with Hebrew history in the Persian period (538-332 B.C.), describing how the Jewish exiles were allowed by Cyrus in 538 to return to Jerusalem and rebuild their Temple under the leadership of Sheshbazzar; how those who returned could not co-operate in this work until 520 B.C., when the foundations of the Temple were finally laid (Hagg. 1:1; 2:18) and the Temple itself rebuilt from 519-515 (cf. Ezra 5:1-6:15); how in the reign of Artaxerxes I (464-424 B.C.) the walls of Jerusalem were restored, in spite of overwhelming odds, under the leadership of Nehemiah, who came to Jerusalem in 445 B.C. (Neh. 1:1-7: 5; 12:27-43); and how on a second visit, in 433, Nehemiah (Neh. 13: 4-31), and soon thereafter, Ezra, in the first quarter of the fourth century in Artaxerxes II's reign (404-358), tried in vain to dissolve mixed marriages (Ezra 7-10) and to organize the Jewish commonwealth into a separate congregation (Neh. 9f.; 13: 1-3), with a "Torah" as their guide (Neh. 8).

reign of Rehoboam (2Chr. 12:15); 8. A Midrash of the prophet Iddo for the reign of Ahijah (2Chr. 13: 22); 9. A History of the prophet Jehu inserted in the Book of the Kings of Israel, for the reign of Jehoshapha (2Chr. 20:34); 10. A writing of Isaiah the prophet for the reign of Uzziah (2Chr. 26:22); 11. A vision of Isaiah the prophet in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel, for the reign of Hezekiah (2Chr. 16: 11; 25:26; 28:26; 32: 32); 12. A History of the Seers, for particulars concerning Manasseh (2Chr. 33:19); 13. A genealogical register compiled in the days of Jotham and Jereboam II (1Chr. 5:17); 14. A later history of David? (1Chr. 23:27); 15. A Chronicle of David, in which the census was taken by Joab, wasn't entered (1Chr. 27:24); 16. A collection of Lamentations (2Chr. 35:25).

This compiler used as his sources Memoirs of Nehemiah (Neh. 7:6-10:39; 1:1-7:5a; 13:4-31, etc.) and of Ezra (Ezra. 7:27-8:34; 9:1-15, etc.), lists of names and genealogies (Neh. 11:3-36; 12:1-26; Ezra 2), and an Aramaic history of the period from which he gathered certain letters, like the one in Ezra 4:7-24.

There is one other item which requires some discussion in connection with Ezra-Nehemiah. This is: What was the ~~new~~ תורה נכונה which Ezra brought in Nehemiah 8 upon a platform to read before an assembly of the people? Is this "Torah" the same as the priestly law -- an argument maintained by not a few scholars? Our discussion of the various sources, which were used in the composition of the previously mentioned Biblical books, leads us to conclude that the "Torah" read in Neh. 8 or agreed to in 10:30 consisted of laws dependent on the Book of the Covenant in Exodus, on the Deuteronomic code, or in some cases they even resemble P, although they are not exactly like P. For example, Neh. 10:31 takes a definite position against intermarriage (like Dt. 7:3 and Ex. 34:16). Verse 32a of the same chapter forbids buying on the Sabbath or on a Holy Day, and it seems that such a law was quoted from P. Verse 33 speaks of donating one-third of a shekel yearly for the Temple service; and P refers specifically to such a practice, although in Ex. 30:11-16 the amount is one-half of a shekel instead of one-third. Neh. 10:34 seems to be in the language of P. Nevertheless, there is a possibility that it is merely a quotation or that P had not yet become crystallized. Moreover, the offering of ~~אֵלֶּיךָ~~ ^{לְךָ} in Neh. 10:36 is found in all law books, including P. ^{In} ~~Another~~ words, we must conclude that the Law was still in the process of development, and that P is not necessarily the one which Ezra brought to read to the people. Thus, the

ספר חוקי הכהנים of Neh. 8:1 or the חוקי הכהנים mentioned in Nehemiah 10:30 might have been P, but this does not mean that it is necessary to identify such a law code with P. In short, if Ezra's law book were P or a part of it, then we could date P as having its final form no later than Ezra-Nehemiah (c. 433 B.C.)* However, if it were not P, then we may conclude that P was at this time in the process of crystallization, and that it probably assumed a completed form about the end of the Persian period; that is, the latter part of the fourth century B.C.**

* Although the Aramaic passages (cf. Ezra 7:12-26) are indicative of even a later date; (that is, after the third century B.C.).

** Encyclopedia Biblica, Ezra-Nehemiah, pp. 1478-1487. (This is the source for this chapter). Also I.C.C., Ezra-Nehemiah, pp. 2-52.

Chapter IV

Daniel and Esther

The book of Daniel was probably composed in the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes (IV) (175-164B.C.) to exhort and encourage the people during such troublous times, when this tyrant sought to suppress the Jews in the living of their own life*. The first six chapters seem to be pre-Maccabean and written in Babylonia about the third century B.C. They narrate events at the time of the Persians and Medes down to the Greek period. The last six chapters deal with the first years of the Maccabean uprising, before the retaking of the Temple by the Maccabeans and its purification on the twenty-fifth of Kislev, 165 B.C. Nevertheless, as with the other Biblical books which we have discussed, Daniel too, has later scribal additions and glosses (cf. Ch. 9; 12:11,12,etc.).

The book of Esther is also a product of the Greek period, having been written after the persecutions of Antiochus Epiphanes and the deliverance of the Jewish people by Judas Maccabeus in 165 B.C. Indeed, in 1: 1, 13, 14; 4: 11; 8:8, the time of Xerxes and the Persian Empire is spoken of as an era long passed. The period of the book is characterized by a great Jewish proselytization movement (8:17; 9:27); by a great hatred of Gentiles (probably

* Dr. Bittenwieser (in his article, Are There Any Maccabean Psalms, in the Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol. 36, pp. 230ff.) believes that the book of Daniel is "a translation from an Aramaic original by one who did not know how to write Hebrew proper." For, since the work was intended for the masses, "it may be definitely concluded that the language spoken at the time by the people must have been Aramaic." Thus, at the time of the Maccabees, when Daniel was written, Aramaic was the spoken language of the Jewish people, and Hebrew had deteriorated. (cf. * on page 21). This is evidenced by the poor Hebrew style and several Aramaisms.

inspired because of Antiochus' treatment of Jews in 169 B.C.; cf. 3: 12f.); by a growing commercialism among the Jews (3:9); and by a fresh spirit of independence (3:2) and national pride. Because of such evidence, it seems that the book was written in the period after the Maccabean struggle -- at a time of worldliness and self-complacency; that is, about 135 B.C. Moreover, the very late and inferior sort of Hebrew and the several Aramaisms, seem to convince us of this date -- especially, when we realize that there is no external evidence that the observance of the festival of Purim (which is the purpose of the book of Esther) was practiced by Palestinian Jews before the first century B.C./^{It} is very likely that the author was a Persian Jew, who knew Persian words and Persian customs, and who had come to Judaea to commend the observance of Purim (a Persian custom) to the people of that land.*

* According to the Encyclopedia Biblica on Esther (pp. 1400-1407), these are additions: 3:1 (Mordecai's prayer to supply lack of religious sentiment); 4 (Esther's prayer); 5; Mordecai's dream in Chapter 1 and its interpretation in chapter 7; and the King's two epistles in chapters 2 and 6.
I.C.C., Daniel, pp. 96-99.
Encyc. Bib., Dan., 1002-1015.
I.C.C., Esther, pp. 60-64.
Encyc. Bib., Esther, pp. 1400-1407.
(These are the sources for this chapter.)

Chapter V

Ruth, Job, Ecclesiastes, Proverbs

Heretofore, with the exception of the romance of Esther, we have been discussing Biblical books which are strictly historical in character. We have seen how and when they were composed and what was the motivation in each case. We have undertaken such an analysis so that we shall be able to better appreciate how certain ^{style} social legislation developed.

Now we consider four books which deal with certain problems of life. They are written in a more critical tone than the other books of the Bible. Strictly speaking, they aim to impart wisdom to the reader -- truths which may or may not agree with traditional points of view.

For example the author of the book of Ruth attempts, even though by implication, to protest against the exclusivism of Ezra and Nehemiah (in 432 B.C.) in forbidding intermarriages. In so doing, he is also able to delineate noble and virtuous characters in a God-fearing, pastoral community. Thus, by developing for the reader an interesting romance, he is also able to point out indirectly the evils resulting from a strict edict against intermarriage.

Although the time for this narrative seems to be in the age of Judges, nevertheless, upon closer observation, one realizes that Ruth was written much later. Notwithstanding the fact that there are certain phrases which are also found in older historical books (like Samuel and Kings) and that the author was probably acquainted with a Deuteronomistic form of the book of Judges (cf. Ruth 1:1), nevertheless the author probably lived later than D and after the exile. If his purpose was to protest against the ban of intermar-

riage, then Ruth was written even later than 432 B.C. Moreover, certain customs like that of נָשׂוּת (cf. Dt. 25:9f.) had, because of the exile, probably fallen into disuse and had to be revived through re-explanation. In Ruth 4:7 such a practice as נָשׂוּת is described in order to validate a transaction in the matter of the right of redemption, when the brother-in-law refuses to marry his brother's widow. In other words, all this seems to indicate that Ruth was written in late post-exilic times (probably in late Persian times), after 432 B.C.*

The book of Job is another work of protest. This time it is a protest against the traditional belief in individual retribution; namely that the righteous are rewarded by God for their good deeds, while the wicked will suffer from His wrath. Job finds that this theory is not true to life: that, on the contrary, the righteous suffer and the wicked prosper. In other words, Job could not reconcile such a condition with the idea of a just God. One might answer that God's justice is vindicated in the life to come. But Job is not so sure of this, as is evident in 14:14, where he declares that if he felt this were true, then his present unfortunate lot could be tolerated. In other words, Job doubts not only the validity of the belief in individual retribution but also of the belief in a world to come, where such apparent contradictions will be resolved. As a result the author shows what terrible mental anguish can possess a man who is the "victim" of such intellectual

* Ewald believes that Ruth was taken from a larger series of similar pieces by the same author of such historical and quasi-historical narratives as those contained in Judges, Samuel, and Kings. Budde, however, feels that Ruth is part of the "Midrash of the Book of Kings," referred to in 2 Chr. 24:27. (cf., Encyclopedia Biblica on Ruth, pp. 4166-4172).

honesty, and he tries, by the writing of such a narrative, to arouse pity for such an individual.

It is thus evident that this book was written at a time when the idea of individual retribution had been fully accepted and taken for granted; and one who disbelieved in it would be looked upon suspiciously and considered a sinner. Therefore, the book must have been written later than Jeremiah who introduced this belief, and Ezekiel, the Deuteronomistic redactors of Judges and Kings, and the Holiness and Priestly Codes, all of which carried forward this notion. In P this belief finally came into prominence. So that if we date P around 400 B.C. (see page 13), then the book of Job was written probably around that time or even somewhat later. This is true especially if we realize that about this time the belief in a resurrection was just beginning to gain ground, although it was not so much taken for granted that Job's friends would have referred to it in their arguments with him. Indeed, at the time of Ezra and Nehemiah (c. 430 B.C.), the belief had been unknown, inasmuch as in none of the writings of Haggai, Malachi, Zechariah 1-8, different portions of Third Isaiah, P, Chronicles, and Ezra and Nehemiah, is there any trace of a belief in a resurrection or in Tiamat-Satan's annihilation at the end of time, which is bound up with it. Moreover, the apocalypse Isaiah 24-27 was written at a time when "the belief in a resurrection had an established place in Jewish religious thought" (in the second half of the fourth century B.C.). And another fact is that Job was written at a time when Hebrew Literature was at its height. Beginning with the fourth century, Hebrew, because of the encroachment of Aramaic upon it, began to

decay. Therefore, we are inevitably led to Battenwieser's conclusion that Job was written about the year 400 B.C.²

Dr. Battenwieser maintains that the prologue (chapters 1 and 2) or the Narrative was written by the same author who wrote the main body of the book (the Dialogues), consisting of the speeches of Job and his three friends and God's revelation and speech amidst the storm. However, the happy ending in 42:10, 12-17, he believes, is a later addition, absolutely inconsistent with the fact that the author wishes to disprove the established "belief in retributive justice and to show instead that there was such a thing as disinterested worship of God". But verse 11 of chapter 42 "is the real and original ending, consistent with the contents of the Dialogues and fitting in well with the Prologue from which it receives meaning and point."^{3*}

Ecclesiastes, too, is another book in the category of Wisdom Literature. Its dominant theme is to show that "all is vanity," that man is helpless and limited in his capacities; and that he, like the beast, is destined for the same end, death. Therefore, in such a world of injustices and oppressions (4:1,2; 5; 8-6: 9; 8: 10-15), the author advises us to make the most of life. We can find happiness only by obeying God's covenants -- only by being reverent and sincerely religious.

Ben Sira (Ecclesiasticus) resembles and is dependent upon Ecclesiastes both in thought and style. This is especially true in the case of the Greek translation of Ben Sira. Thus, in time, Ben Sira is probably later than Ecclesiastes.

* Material for Job is based on Job, by M. Battenwieser; Encyc. Bib., Job, pp. 2482-2489; I.C.C., Job, pp. XXVf., XLIXf.

The time in which the author lived was that of much taxes, frequent wars, and a corrupt nobility. There was court and temple wickedness, oppressions, and arbitrary despotism (suppression of free speech, in 10:20). Koheleth probably lived in Jerusalem near the Temple (8:10; 5:1). He was wealthy (2:4-8) and old (11:9-12:7), living alone as the result of an unhappy marriage (7:26, 28). He uses late Hebrew and Persian words and Aramaisms, which indicate a late date. Since many scholars have come to identify the "old and foolish king" of 4: 13-16 as Ptolemy IV (d. 205 B.C.) who ruled Palestine as Egyptian overlord in the third century, they have concluded that the "poor and wise youth" and "the second youth" are Ptolemy V and Antiochus III of Syria who succeeded Ptolemy V (cf. 10:16-17). Therefore, the book of Ecclesiastes must have been written about the beginning of the second century B.C.*

One other manual of conduct -- probably the best instance of Wisdom Literature -- is that of the book of Proverbs. It, too, instructs from the point of view of the individual. Its dominant theme is "loyalty to the universal human conscience conditioned upon knowledge."⁴ And it seems to have been written at a time when Jewish culture assumed a non-national character -- at a time when monotheism was tacitly assumed. It was an era, like the Greek period, when Jewish religion, culture, and civilization were highly developed, and affected by subversive external influences. Thus there was great opportunity for those of a serious nature to indulge in reflective thought and give words of instruction to those who needed their guidance. In other words, all evidence points to

* As in the other books previously discussed, it was inevitable that certain editorial additions and glosses should have crept in. According to the I.C.C. of Ecclesiastes (pp. 44-65), 1:1, 2; 7:27; 12: 8-13 ("End of discourse all have been heard") are editorial notes.

a time like that of the third century B.C. (300-200 B.C.), when decadent, Hellenistic civilization was greatly affecting Jewish life in Palestine, and when the complexities of city life with its advantages and vices, were probably the subject of the day,* as the approximate date for the book of Proverbs.

2: 26a; 3:17; 7:18b, 26b, 29; 8:2b, 3a, 5, 6a, 11-13; 11:9b; 12:1a, 13 (from "fear God --"), 14; 5:3, 7a; 4:5; 5:3, 7a; 7:1a, 3, 5, 6-9, 11, 12, 19; 18:1; 9:17, 18; 10:1-3, 8-14a, 15, 18, 19 -- are all glosses inserted by an orthodox glossator in the spirit of the Pharisees.

* Prov., 6:32-35 (adultery is a crime against man's well-being); 1:10-19 (organized robbery); 11:26 (hoarding corn); 27:23-27 (care of flocks); 16:10-15; 25:2-5; 31: 2-9 (Manuals for the conduct of kings); 6:6-11; 12:24 (in praise of industry); 24:17f.; 25:21f. (kindness towards one's enemies -- this goes beyond Lev. 19:18, which refers only to one's fellow-countrymen); 1:20-33 (wicked are warned; they must repent, or die). According to Encyclopedia Biblica on Proverbs (pp. 3911f.), chapters 30-31 are added appendices.

These are the sources for this chapter:

Encyclopedia Biblica, Ruth, pp. 4166-4172

Camb., Ruth, pp. XIV-XVI

I.C.C., Ecclesiastes, pp. 44-65

Encyc. Bib., Proverbs, pp. 3911-3918

(Job sources have been given on note * p. 27).

Chapter VI

Lamentations and Psalms*

Before we enter upon a discussion of the prophets who represent the noblest examples of moral passion and social consciousness on behalf of the weak and the oppressed, it is well that we say a few words concerning two works which are classic examples of religious poetry.

The great dirge mourning the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in 586 B.C. -- Lamentations -- is such an instance of intense grief and religious fervor. All chapters, except the last, consist of alphabetic acrostics; and all chapters have twenty-two stanzas. The entire work is written in a כח'ג (Kinah) or elegiac metre.

Chapters 1, 2, and 4 are dirges, describing the death of the Jewish nation. They were probably culled from earlier elegies used liturgically on the ninth of Ab in Zechariah's time (Zech. 7:5). They were composed much later than the time of Nehemiah, probably in the latter part of the Persian period (in the fourth century -- 400-333 B.C.). Chapters 2 and 4 are parallel to one another describing the sufferings of the leaders. They resemble the so-called "persecution" psalms, 1-72.**

* The sources for this chapter are:
Encyc. Bib., Lamentations, pp. 2696-2705.
Camb.; Lamentations, pp. 353-360.
I.C.C. Psalms, pp. LVii-XCii; XC-XCi (N.B.)
Encyc. Bib., Psalms, pp. 3921-3965.

** Budde: Chapters 1 is not the work of an eye-witness to the fall of Jerusalem (in Encyc. Bib., pp. 2696f.).

Chapter 3, however, treats the nation as an individual, and expresses the thought that the affliction of an individual is an wholesome discipline. Israel, engaged in a poetic monologue, is exhorted to repent and trust in God's goodness. Budde (see note ** on p. 30) assigns this poem to the pre-Maccabean part of the Greek age.

Chapter 5, in the form of a prayer, closes with a sense of the wrath of God continuing to spend its strength upon the unfortunate people. It was written in a time of economic stress, when Israel was harassed by insufficient agricultural (v. 10) labor and by raids upon their fields at the harvest-season by their enemies, the Edomites and Nabataean Arabs (v. 9; cf. Isa. 62:8, which was written probably in the age of Nehemiah). There is the dominant note that all this has happened because "we bear the sins of our fathers" (in V. 7; cf. Zech. 1:2-6 and also very late Psalms). Indeed, a deliverer would be most welcome to rescue them from such troublous times (this refers either to the difficult days before the coming of Ezra and Nehemiah to Jerusalem -- c. 470-450 B.C. -- or else in the dark days of Artaxerxes Ochus, 359-338 B.C.).

Besides Lamentation, there is what is probably the greatest example of lofty religious passion, zeal, and courage. This is the book of Psalms, the prayer and hymn-book of the post-exilic Jewish community. As for the dating of these various Psalms, this is indeed very difficult. However, it may be said with a fair degree of accuracy that there are no pre-exilic psalms, and that the final redaction of this great collection of songs occurred no earlier than the Maccabean period.

There are certain psalms which some scholars seem to think are

Maccabean. These are: 2,20,21,30,33,44,60,61,63,74,79,80,83,102, 110,115-118,135-138,145-150. However Dr. Battenwieser* believes that psalms 30,116-18,137,138, and probably 33, "are of such literary perfection that they must have been produced while Hebrew literature was still at its height; while others like psalms 2,20,21,60,61,63, 102,115,146,147, show such a freshness and finish of style that it is obvious that they must have been written before any decadence of language had become manifest. A third group, finally, comprising psalms 44,69,74,79,83,135,136,145,148-150, and the fragmentary psalm, 110, though clearly showing a decided decline in literary skill, are all without exception written in faultless, idiomatic Hebrew, showing no trace of decomposition so markedly in evidence beginning in the second part of the third century B.C." Therefore, even this third group does not belong to the Maccabean period. Moreover, "the conditions alluded to in these psalms might have occurred at almost any time during the two centuries from the closing decades of the Persian down to the Maccabean period." In fact, the closing period of the Persian reign was probably such a period of great suffering for the Jews (cf. Isa. 14:29-32 and Josephus, Contra Apion, 191 and 193) and, with the coming of Alexander, a short respite of liberty was enjoyed by them. On other words, those Psalms speaking of religious persecution and tyrannous rule do not necessarily refer to the troublous Maccabean times, and "might just as well have been written during the time of Artaxerxes Ochus, whose rule was characterized, as we know from his reign of terror in Egypt, by extreme religious intolerance, while those Psalms which sound a note of

* Are There Any Maccabean Psalms, M. Battenwieser, an article in the Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol. 36 (1917), pp. 232ff.

triumph might easily be a product of the time of Alexander, the outstanding features of whose rule were religious tolerance and regard for the individualities of nations." And after Alexander's death, there was a period of continuous struggle, of which the Maccabean wars were but the closing act, which finally led to Hebrew giving way and being superseded by Aramaic. In the light of these facts, "it is to be questioned whether there are any Psalms dating later than the middle of the third century B.C."⁵ However, this does not prevent us from concluding that the entire Psalter was finally redacted in the Maccabean period or even later.

Having discussed writings which tell of the histories, narratives, and influences of one thousand years of Hebrew development, we have now come to the point where we must give the background to the foremost exponents of social consciousness, the prophets. We must discover how they developed that intense moral passion which played such a mighty role in the development of that peculiar Hebrew genius which inspires men to struggle for peace, justice, democracy as against moral anarchy, tyranny, and oppression -- that distinctive spirit for social and spiritual righteousness which has come to identify the Jewish people with the exalted principle of ethical monotheism.

Chapter VII

Ethical Monotheism: Its Origins

Before we discuss the development of prophecy and consider how the prophets themselves contributed, to the evolution of Hebraic thought, it would be well if we understood how the ethical genius of the Hebrew people came into being.

Ethical monotheism may be said to have evolved out of the conflict which ensued when two entirely different cultures came into contact with one another. These two ways of life were Baalism and Yahwism.

The birth and early history of Yahwism took place among the nomadic, Semitic tribes of the Arabian desert. The Judah, Simon and Levi tribes, which, under Moses, marched up through the Negeb and made their home in rocky, Judaea, were such wandering peoples. They came into southern Canaan a hundred years or so after the tribes of Ephraim, led by Joshua, had crossed the Jordan and in-^{the}filtrated northern Palestine (c. 1200 B.C.). For/southern tribes, life on the desert had been relatively simple. They were organized into exclusive clans or tribes. Each clan was a democratic entity unto itself. The welfare of the clan depended upon the consideration for every individual. Thus, these unsettled Bedouin tribes, within their own limits, were based as literally as possible on the ideals of justice and brotherhood as between its members. If there is any such thing as a pure communism or socialism, here it was. For, within such desert groups -- unsettled, migratory -- there was no such thing as private property, upper and lower classes, creditors and debtors. The sources of life -- land, water, etc. -- were communal. All was for one, ^{grammar} and one was for all. ^{fiction}

Such economic and social attitudes were expressed by these democratic nomads in their customary usage or law, or what Professor Wallis calls, their mishpat. The mishpat is, according to Wallis, "the social arrangements or institutions which bind people together in groups like the family, clan, nation."⁶ Therefore, when Amos says in 5:24, "Let justice (mishpat) roll down like waters," he means "Let the social arrangements of this people, to whom I am speaking, be just (cf. Isa. 32:1; Mic. 3:1)." In other words, the later prophets like Amos still clung to the ideas of democracy and brotherhood which are the "customary usage," or "mishpat," of a nomadic desert tribe. Moreover, like their ancestors, they believed that social relationships -- public and private matters -- were concerns of religion. The deity -- called Yahweh -- was the defender of this status quo; He was invested with all the characteristics of the desert democracy; and He and His champions could tolerate no other attitudes.

Thus, when some of these nomadic tribes entered southern Palestine, they discovered that they did not have to change their mode of living very much. The scant rain-fall had washed away most of the already poor top-soil making large-scale agriculture impossible. For these people, a pastoral existence was the only life that offered itself to them. This meant that they had to live a semi-nomadic life with but slight variation from the life in the desert which they had so recently given up. For the most part, the code of the desert was preserved and the religion of Yahweh was modified but slowly. It was the South which maintained and kept alive the ideals and standards of the desert.

However, the northern tribes of Ephraim were not so fortunate. From the desert they came into contact with the more highly developed civilization of the settled Canaanites, whose religion was the worship of Baal and his counterpart, Asherah. No more could the sons of Ephraim enjoy the benefits of a simple pastoral life; rather they had to adapt themselves to a new, agricultural economy. Yahwism, democracy, equality now had to struggle to preserve themselves against the encroachments of Baalism, private property, and class distinctions. Thus, "a great struggle followed between two races and their respective gods."⁷

Now, what was this Baalism? First, the word "Baal" means master or owner. This term was applied to the gods of the Canaanites, who were masters of their "good earth," and thus controlled the destinies of their life. And their human representatives -- the upper classes -- were also called baalim. In other words, Baalism recognized class distinctions, and the difference between the lower classes and slaves became in time very slight. Thus, the common man -- the enslaved peasant -- was disregarded and considered of value only as a slave, working for his Baal, or as material for military ventures. If he "stepped out of line" and sought to advance in his position, the Baal had his "society" defended from "barbarism" by a paid police.

In Baalism there was no such concept as inalienable soil (cf. 1K. 21:1-4). Individuals owned property privately, not cooperatively. If the owner became enmeshed in debts, he would have to mortgage his possessions to pay his creditors. If he failed to "meet" the principle and interest on these mortgages, his property was foreclosed and taken away from him. After this, there were not

many steps to enslavement. So much for the commercial "civilization" of the Canaanitish Baals.

One can imagine how intense was the struggle for the preservation of the desert mishpat of Yahweh, when the Hebrew tribes -- especially those in the north -- were thrown in the midst of such an alien culture as Baalism. Indeed, the struggle for justice on the part of the champions of Yahweh was, to them, bound up with the struggle against "other gods" and the civilization they signified. The Israel tribes that still clung to the name of Yahweh might soon have forsaken the last vestige of their desert heritage had not circumstances forces them to break with Baal and to call upon Yahweh's aid against the Canaanites at the battle of Ta'anach. It was especially the enslaved inhabitants of the ~~tribe~~ of Issachar in the north, (cf. Gen. 49:14-15) which inspired Deborah and Barak to begin to fulfill the command to wipe out the "iniquity of the Amorites." This spirit of independence was contagious among the other northern tribes, who had most to lose by attacks of Baalism upon them, and an impersonal movement of nationalism through military cooperation grew in strength. And the conquest and destruction of Baalistic groups began in earnest (cf. Jud. 9:44-49). Thus, when the Philistines started to assert their power against these Hebrew tribes, this nationalism grew and, along with it, ~~xxx~~ with every Hebrew victory, grew the prestige of Yahweh as the National Deity.

However, even though Yahweh and his people effected many conquests (incomplete though they may have been), Yahweh was still only the head of a pantheon of Baalistic gods. And, it may be said

that though conquered in the military sense of the word, culturally the latter were assimilating Yahweh to them. Yahweh's name may have survived, but this was His only remnant. The religion and civilization of Yahweh was becoming more and more Baal's. An aristocracy of landholders and slave-owners ~~was~~ arising in Ephraim (2S. 13:23-29; cf. 14:30,31; 1K. 2:36-40; 1S. 25:10); and a peasant aristocracy was asserting itself, as well, in the south. Class distinctions and private property were becoming the order of the day in both sections of Palestine, although the trend was more rapid in the North. It was thus not very difficult for Saul, with the help of the B'nai Nebi'im, or fanatical zealots or ecstatic prophets, to unite the aristocracy of both parts of Palestine, together with their manpower in slaves, and ward off the Philistine threat to the nationalist movement of the Hebrews (cf. 1S. 10:5f; 14; 19:20-24). Of course, this was all done in the name of Yahweh. But, as said before, what a delusion! It was not a fight to save the democratic mishpat of the desert Yahweh, but rather it was a struggle to preserve the interests of the upper classes and their civilization as against an equally alien culture. And the lower classes were duped into giving up their lives for the defense not of their own Yahweh, but rather for the preservation of an inferior Baalistic "civilization"!

This work of unification and consolidation, started by Saul, was continued by David, who seized the walled, Amorite city of Jerusalem and established it as the capital of his united kingdom -- a kingdom united only in name, but which contained two alien cultures, whose representatives would soon divide the country at the very least provocative incident. The reign of Solomon laid the

basis for such an incident.

For, in Solomon's reign there was peace and security from hostile neighbors. There was opportunity to establish United Palestine as a power in the world. Peace had thrown back into farming many who had previously been needed for service in the army. The influx of large numbers into farming produced a surplus crop which gave the country a commodity for export; and it was not long before a merchant class arose to conduct foreign and domestic trade. As these merchants became more prosperous than their brother-farmers, they moved to the capital to keep in closer touch with national and international affairs. They became the aristocracy at the king's court. It was here that they joined the more fashionable Baal-Yahweh cult.

For, Solomon's many marriage-alliances (2S. 5:11). had brought foreign princesses to Jerusalem. These devotees of foreign deities had come with their retinues, and, out of respect to their rank, had been permitted to set up their worship in the Temple, itself built on a Phoenician model and radically different from the desert "ohel mo'ed". Thus, in Palestine, under the influence of foreign cults, the worship of a Baalistic Yahweh had been established and practiced by the aristocracy with a lavish display of wealth, unknown to the pastoral nomad or the small farmer.

This would not be so bad if the aristocracy could have removed itself from the general scene. But this was impossible. The luxuries of the rich for their own enjoyment and for their worship of strange gods had to be obtained somehow; and the best way to do this was by burdening the once independent farmer with ex-

orbitant taxes (1K. 4:7), and expropriating his property (1S. 22:7; 8:11,14), forcing him and his family into rigorous labor (1K. 5:13f.; 9:20-22; cf. Lev. 25:29-46; and 1 K. 11:28; 12:14), or humiliating slavery, if he could not replenish the treasuries of his rich Baals or lords. Inevitably, as a result of all this, dissatisfaction seethed through the masses. Even in David's time, rebellions broken out (cf. 2S. 15:2-6), but they were easily quelled by professional mercenaries or gibborim (2S. 8:18; 15:18; 20:9). The trouble was lack of competent and inspired leadership. This is why the revolt failed.

Leaders soon appeared upon the scene -- champions of Yahweh -- personalities like Elijah, Elisha, Amos, and Jehonadab ben Rechab, who looked askance at the Temple with its foreign innovations. The Rechabites, Nazirites, and the prophets themselves linked the life in the desert with the life that was acceptable to Yahweh. They denounced class distinctions as in opposition to the will of Yahweh. As his champions and defenders of the old, democratic life when the Hebrews were nomads wandering in the desert, they were acceptable leaders of the masses who also yearned to return to the old days. Now that the people saw how much of their liberty was being taken from them and how much they had to endure against a merciless aristocracy indifferent to their cries, they turned to these champions of the old Yahweh for guidance. The same evils against which these leaders protested -- heavy taxes, court aristocracy, slavery -- were causes also for their grievances; and when the masses saw that they were not alone in their protestations, they prepared to resist their persecutors under the inspired leadership of the champions of Yahweh.

Thus, ethical monotheism -- the fundamental doctrine of the Hebrew religion -- grew directly out of matters in which **social** relationships were involved. The religion of Yahweh -- the Hebrew religion -- became active -- came into its own -- when its adherents were thrown in the midst of an alien culture which threatened to consume it. The religion of **justice**, brotherhood, equality evolved into a passionate reality when it had to defend itself against the injustices of Baalism.. Ethical monotheism was inextricably enmeshed in the social system. And in order to realize itself upon the highest spiritual level possible, it had to combat those patterns antagonistic to it. And such men like the great literary prophets, and such works as J and E and Deuteronomy arose at just the opportune time, when Yahweh and his people needed them to emphasize the old morality, the morality of the desert. It was with them that the social struggle at last found expression and surged forward, against **perverse** influences, into that great product of the Hebrew genius -- ethical monotheism -- a philosophy of life which emerged from the spiritual, moral, and above all, social experiences of the Hebrew people.

The Development of Prophecy

How did the prophets of Yahweh -- those who evolved this doctrine of ethical monotheism -- come upon the scene of human relationships? What were the **seeds** which, in time, brought forth the flowering of the Hebrew genius -- of the spirit in which there ^{flamed} ~~flowered~~ a great passion for social righteousness?

It seems that the Hebrew prophet, first of all, feels that he is very close to God -- that God calls to him especially to guide

the people and to right the grievous wrongs done against His name, so that they may find favor in His eyes and, in this way, enjoy a happy life in the future. Now, in order to lead his people and tell them what God desires of them, the prophets must know what is God's will. For this is needed the art of divination -- of understanding the will of God. From the varied types of diviners who practiced this art evolved the institution of the Hebrew prophet.

Among the desert Hebrews there were various methods of divining into the future and thus knowing the will of God. Lots were cast, the spirits of the dead were consulted, or ~~the observation of~~ the flight of arrows ^{was observed.} ~~were such methods.~~ However, for all of them only a certain chosen person, close to the deity, was qualified, so that the divination might be valid. The כוֹהֵן

זָרִיחַ -- the oracular priest whose oracular decision was called זָרִיחַ -- the זָרִיחַ and the זָרִיחַ were such qualified individuals. As for the זָרִיחַ and זָרִיחַ, they could foretell the future, read minds, and find lost articles. They were honored and respected, but with certain exceptions like Nathan, the court זָרִיחַ, they never rose much above the level of ecstasies.

And when the Hebrews entered Palestine, they found among the Canaanites bands of low-grade ecstasies -- dervishes -- who roamed about in bands. They were called קְנִי' גִּזְיָאִים, and they belonged to one of the many sanctuaries in the land, supervised in their activities by the priest of the shrine.

Since these diviners were the special representatives of a deity, defending the authority of his word, those who divined in

the name of Yahweh grew in prestige when their deity was victorious at Ta'anach and eventually became nationalized and imperialized under David and Solomon. Now, when they spoke in Yahweh's name, their words were hearkened to. They alone were the legitimate diviners of God's will; they alone were sought to consult the will of the great God, Yahweh -- the God of the desert mishpat who had grown so much in power and prestige.

But many of these *מְקַדְּשֵׁי יְהוָה*, or guilds of professional prophets, when they prophesized, still believed that their God was the same as the one who represented the old desert life of democracy and social justice. And thus when, during Solomon's reign, foreign, Baalistic elements began to creep into the pure Yahweh-worship, these prophets became greatly disturbed. For they feared that such innovations would greatly threaten their authority and the authority of their deity, Yahweh. Therefore, they protested against the new standards, and, in their protests, the prophets found a favorable response among the masses of the people.

At the close of Solomon's reign certain individuals arose out of the ranks of the *מְקַדְּשֵׁי יְהוָה*, and took matters in their own hands in order to restore to the people the old religion and social system connected with the mishpat of the desert Yahweh. These individuals discovered that they could no longer work effectively in the company of other diviners. Rather they now had to work through political machinations by inspiring assassinations, revolts, and reformatations. This was the best way they could bring about a "new deal" for Yahweh and His people.

Ahijah the Shilonite was the first of the professional prophets* to break away from his guild and to engage, as an individual, in

* He was a professional prophet and received pay for his art, by the

political activity.⁸ He had already, for some time, ^{scorned} the arrogant and complacent aristocracy that had been formed at Solomon's court; and he hated the foreign cults which the King had introduced into his kingdom by his marriage - alliances. He maintained that Yahweh desired not the riches and poverty, the taxes and debts which Baalism had brought into the lives of the people,⁹ but rather that the old life of the desert should be reinstituted.¹⁰ Ahijah, therefore, conspired with Jereboam (cf. The Lucianic text of the Septuagint to 1K. 5:13-18; 9:15-23; 11:26ff.; 12:24f.); but the revolt failed; Jereboam had to flee for his life; and since the prophet's person was considered inviolable, Ahijah escaped harm.* However, after Solomon's death, the Northern tribes seceded from Judah under Rehoboam and followed Ahijah's advice (cf. 1K. 11:29-31)¹¹ by designating Jereboam (who had, by this time, returned to Israel) as their king, in 932 B.C.¹² This time another professional prophet, Shemaiah, convinced Rehoboam that such a division of the kingdom was the will of Yahweh (cf. 1K. 12:22-24).** Thus two individual professional prophets brought

reference to the ten loaves and biscuits and a cruse of honey in 1K. 14:3 as payment for prophesying about Jereboam's son. J.M.P. Smith, *The Prophets and Their Times*, p. 8, informs us that Ahijah used visions -- a method of professional prophets -- to prophecy (cf. 1K. 14:1ff.).

* cf. 2S. 12:1-15, where Nathan, the court seer, rebukes David for his sin concerning Bathsheba and Uriah; and yet David does not harm Nathan.

** Oesterley and Robinson, *A History of Israel*, p. 274, however, disagreed and maintain that there was continuous hostility between Rehoboam and Jereboam (cf. 1K. 14:30).

the religion of Yahweh into the social and political scene and by their work, made it a force in social reform.

But Jereboam did not fulfill the hopes which Shemaiah and Ahijah had in him. Instead he erected foreign-cult sanctuaries at Dan and Bethel.¹³ The prophets, including Ahijah, denounced him (1K. 14:7-16). However, during his life-time (937-915 B.C.) down to the reign of Ahab (875-853 B.C.), prophetic resistance and political activity were successfully thwarted. The same was true in Judah during the reigns of Rehoboam (937-920 B.C.) and Abijam (919-916 B.C.). But in 899 B.C., a champion of Yahweh, Azariah ben Oded, was able to effect a religious and political reformation, and overthrow the idolatrous queen-mother, Ma'acha, and put her son, Asa, on the throne of Judah (2Chr. 15:1-19)*. Asa, it happened, followed prophetic influence and abolished his mother's syncretistic cult,¹⁴ along with her sacred prostitutes and mifletzeth.¹⁵ Instead, he showed a strong willingness to re-establish Yahwism in the form of a definite religious program (the K or Kenite Code).¹⁶ In this manner, he and his descendants were able to maintain the old democratic desert standards. And thus the political activity of the prophets ceased in southern Judah with Asa's reign; whereas, in the North there was being enacted a mighty dramatic struggle between Yahwism, championed by Elijah and Elisha, and Baalism, defended by Ahab and his false prophets (1K. 16:29-2K. 10:36).

* However, G. Hoelscher, Die Profeten, attributes the change to priestly, not prophetic, influence. Morgenstern, Oldest Document of the Hexateuch, pp. 112f., believes it to be due to prophetic influence.

For, ever since Jereboam I, as intimated before, there had been reaction to Baalism and resistance to any attempt by the prophets to effect a religious and political change. But with the rule of Ahab, there were sufficient reasons for condemnation by the professional prophets. First, they denounced him for having spared the life of the Syrian Benhadad and for having made a treaty with him (1K.20:35-43).¹⁷ Second, the prosperity of Ahab's reign, with the evils similar to those during the time of Solomon, were intolerable to these advocates of Yahwism. And third, the introduction of Tyrian Baalism through Ahab's marriage to Jezebel marked the limit of the prophets' endurance. It is then that Elijah appears, in order to protest against Jezebel's foreign cult and her priests (1K.17:19), her disregard for the sanctity of the prophet's person (1K.18:4; 19:1-2), and her gross perversion of justice in the case of Naboth (1K. 21:15-16).

According to Dr. Morgenstern,¹⁸ Elijah was probably a Kenite.* At any rate, he was a semi-nomadic shepherd from Southern Judah (cf. 2K.1:8),¹⁹ who vehemently protested against Ahab's violations of the desert mishpat (1K.21:17-29). But, contrary to those professional prophets who preceded him, Elijah did not desire to effect any political revolution. Rather, his aim was to convince the people, through education and example, to return to the true worship and life which Yahweh had taught them in the desert. Therefore on Mt. Carmel he proves to them the might of the one true God (1K. 18:19-40); but they received his message with indifference. Discouraged, and persecuted by Jezebel (1K. 19:1-2), Elijah returned to Yahweh's dwelling-place -- the מִדְבָּר --** where he received consolation,

* An associate of his was Jehonadab ben Rechab, a descendant of the Kenites, who advocated old desert values. Also, Elijah was probably influenced by the Kenite Code, mentioned in connection with Asa's reign in Judah. Moreover, the term "Tishbite" applied to Elijah probably designated "a foreigner who comes to sojourn in a new country."

** Yahweh's residence is not yet in Jerusalem, according to Elijah,

and encouragement to appoint Elisha his successor to carry on his work (1K. 19:19-21). Thus died a new kind of prophet who, instead of endeavoring to have the old desert mishpat of Yahweh rule in the hearts of men through a change in the political order, desired to show his people the errors of their ways through the slower process of education, instruction, example. Such methods were to be carried on by the later literary prophets; and through them there developed the great moral and spiritual insights, which made of ethical monotheism an ever finer and nobler principle for life.* However, it was not until about 750 B.C. that Amos appeared as the first prophet to continue the work of Elijah.

It is well, nevertheless, that we mention the work of two prophets before Amos, who though lesser lights, championed as well as they could the cause of Yahweh. The first of these is Micaiah ben Imlah, who, though one of Ahab's professional prophets, nevertheless did not allow himself to become a tool of the king -- who did not degenerate like his colleagues into a "false prophet," (cf. Mic. 3:5) subservient to the king's whims.²⁰ Micaiah's

but rather in the cave on Mt. Horeb (cf. J. Morgenstern, *Oldest Document of the Hexateuch*, pp. 34-35.)

* The composition of the J and E sources was influenced by Elijah and the eighth-century prophetic movement. These two documents are themselves insurgent prophetic pamphlets, protesting Baalistic practices. E's Moses (Num. 25:4-5; cf. Ex. 32:26-27 -- "Slay ye everyone his men that joined to Baal-Peor") is a prophet like Ahijah and Elisha. In the Joseph-story, E portrays Joseph as a Baal of dreams (Gen. 37:19), who was sold into slavery (Gen. 37:28; cf. Amos 2:6, 6:6; 8:6), who is above sexual temptation (Gen. 39:7ff.) (cf. Am. 2:7), and who nourished all his father's house (Gen. 47:1ff.), and set up a national, planned economy (Gen. 41:25ff.). It is obvious that E wrote these portions from the viewpoints of protests against Baalistic idolatry and sexual immoralities and as propaganda for group solidarity (democracy) and a cooperative commonwealth. Thus, RJE, who must have lived between 750 and 621 B.C., weaved together two strands of narratives under prophetic influence.

character as a true prophet is best illustrated when, unlike the other 400 professional prophets, he refused to predict success for Ahab and Jehoshaphat in their battle against Benhadad of Syria for Ramoth-Gilead. For this he was thrown into prison; but he maintained his integrity as a worthy interpreter of God's word (1K. 22:5-6, 8, 13-28).

The other prophet Elisha, Elijah's successor, tried to fulfill the charge which his predecessor entrusted to him; but he had neither the patience nor the background of his master*, and therefore reverted rather to the policies of the professional prophets by fomenting political and religious rebellion against Joram in an attempt to bring the people back to the desert mishpat of Yahweh. He was aided in this by other professional prophets in Bethel, Gilgal, and Jericho (2K. 2:3-18; 4:38ff.) and by Jehonadab ben Rechab, founder of the Rechabites who, like the Nazirites (cf. Num. 6:2ff.), advocated a return to the old life in the desert.** These, together with Elisha, succeeded in overthrowing Joram (852-842 B.C.) in a bloody revolution, which cost the lives

* In 1K. 19:19, Elijah finds Elisha ploughing behind the twelfth yoke of oxen -- which seems to indicate that he was a rather well-to-do farmer.

** Morgenstern, Oldest Document of the Hexateuch, p. 116 -- "This reformation took place in 842 B.C." G. Hoelscher, Die Propheten, says that the Rechabite life was the nomadic life which also became their religious ideal. They hated the Canaanite culture, the class distinctions, the social injustice, the despotism and luxury of the house of Omri. Therefore, they advocated a return to the simple life of the desert. Their religious reformation at this time took the form which we find in the Book of the Covenant (Ex. 21-23).

of the king and his family and every adherent to the Baal cult (2K. 13:18-27). Jehu, the choice of the Yahwists, succeeded to the throne of Israel (842-814 B.C.). It can thus be seen Elisha's career was a backward step in the development of prophecy; and it was not until the prosperous reign of Jereboam II (781-740 B.C.) that Amos came forth to denounce the evils similar to those which accompanied the peace and security of Solomon's and Ahab's reigns -- oppression, corruption, complacency. For, when Amos appeared upon the scene, the aristocracy had already duped the masses with their conception of the Yom Yahweh -- a day linked with the New Year's Day, when Yahweh would make Israel ruler over all the nations of the world and Yahweh himself would be their only God. This enabled the upper classes to divert the minds of the people from their poor lot; and, at the same time, by giving the underprivileged masses a hope of future ascendancy and dominion over others, they could endure the oppression of the ruling aristocracy.

Thus everything was in readiness for Amos' denunciatory message of doom in the courtyard of the Temple on the last day of the Asif festival in the year 751 B.C.^{21*}

* The bibliography for chapter VII is at the end of part I.

Chapter VIII

Introduction to the Eighth Century Prophets

Before we consider the prophetic careers of Amos and the other eighth century prophets, it would be well for us to understand something of the historical background in which they lived

In 782 B.C., Assyria started on a period of decline until the year 745, when the fortunes of Assyria under Tiglath-Pileser III, took a turn for the better. The increase in prestige thus initiated was continued by Shalmeneser V (727-722), Sargon (722-705), and Sennacherib (705 on).

In the period of decline, the kingdoms of Israel and Judah were able to assert themselves. Thus, under Jereboam II (781-704) of Israel and Uzziah (789-737) of Judah, power and prosperity came to these two Palestinian states. An added factor which aided the rise of Judah and Israel was the fact that Damascus, to the north, had been crushed by Assyria before the beginning of the eighth century. Therefore, when Assyrian power did decline, Damascus could not assert itself as quickly as the two Hebraic kingdoms. Left thus unmolested, Judah and Israel enjoyed luxury, complacency, and social irresponsibility. As a result, social and spirirual maladjustments ensued, which gave Amos the opportunity to express his lofty moral insights.

However, such prosperity did not last for long, for when Syria and Northern Israel allied with one another in 734 B.C. to war against Ahaz of Judah, the latter made the fatal mistake of seeking Assyria's aid. Thus, when Tiglath-Pileser III interfered for Judah and defeated her two enemies, not only were Israel and

Syria subject to the power of Assyria but also Judah henceforth was a vassal to that foreign "aid". Israel dared to revolt under Hoshea but she was crushed, once and for all, by Sargon in 721 B.C. Sargon followed up this victory by the subjugation of Philistine cities, leaving only Judah unharmed.

However, when Sennacherib succeeded Sargon in 705, Babylonian power, under Merodach-Baladan, was beginning to rise. The latter and Western peoples, including Hezekiah of Judah, thought that here was an opportune time to rid themselves of Assyrian domination. But they were wrong. And, in 701, Judah barely escaped complete destruction by the Assyrian hordes.

Thus, we have traced briefly the history of Israel and Judah from 782 to 701, which includes the reigns of Jereboam II, Pekah, and Hoshea of Israel, and of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah of Judah. At this time, too, Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah flourished*.

* The source for this chapter comes from Dr. Blank's Bible II notes.

Chapter IX

Amos

Amos was a southerner from the village of Tekoa (1:1), a few miles south of Jerusalem. Part of the year he was a dresser of sycamore trees (which brought forth food eaten mostly by the poor); the rest of the year he was a shepherd. Thus, Amos was of a humble economic and social status. His knowledge was limited to the current knowledge of the land. In such an environment, Amos had ample opportunity for reflective thought -- for introspection and meditation over solemn things. It was very natural that he should have developed a psychic personality, subject to hallucinations and visions, burdened with a feeling of heavy responsibility to preach the word of God to His people -- to feel that Yahweh was constantly near him. And, indeed, one spring day, when the herbage began to dry, he saw God forming locusts to destroy the ripe grain; and he comprehended God's purpose: "Locusts destroying vegetation" means "God will destroy mankind." Amos grieves at this thought and pleads for Israel; and Yahweh hearkened to his plea and relented. (7:1-3)

In another vision, about the middle of summer, he saw a great fire consuming ocean and land. In this instance also he perceived it meant the destruction of mankind; and again he pleads for God's mercy; and God hearkens. (7:4-6)

And then a few weeks later, toward the end of summer when the food is ripe, he sees a basket of summer-fruit; and, punning on the word סוף, Amos perceived that the summer fruit mean the end of Israel. Yahweh will not pass over the transgressions of

Israel; indeed, there is nothing but doom in store for His people.
(8:1-3)

Also with the word *קוֹל* meaning a plumb-line, does Amos pun, in his fourth and final vision. Moreover, he connects the lead plumb-line with the lead imported from Assyria. Thus, Amos interprets such a vision to mean that Israel's walls are out of plumb; they are about to totter at the hands of Assyria. Assyria, the lead plumb-line (*קוֹל*), will smite (*נכח*) and destroy "the high-places of Isaac and the sanctuaries of Israel." (7:7-9)

In other words, instead of a message of hope, Amos brings to the people nothing but a message of doom and exile to a place from which Israel had once, in the distant past, come; that is, a corner of Assyria, Kir. It is true that the arch-enemies of Israel -- their persecutors, Syria, Gaza, Tyre, Edom, Ammon, Moab, and Judah -- will suffer for their social sins. (1:3-2:5). But, just because Israel has a special, covenantal relationship with Yahweh, this does not mean that his sins will be ignored. (3:1-8) On the contrary, in spite of all the sacrifices Israel may offer in expiation for his sins (4:4,5), Israel is doomed (2:13-16; 5:16,17,18-27; 8:11-9:8) because of his own social sins (2:6-12; 5:10-15; 8:4-6). The Yom Yahweh is a day not of rejoicing (5:16,17), but of gloom. The only way out is to "seek me and live" (5:4-6) -- "hate evil and love good" (5:15,14).

Amaziah, functioning for Jereboam II as the chief priest at the Bethel sanctuary, is about to offer up sacrifices in expiation of Israel's sins, when he hears Amos' last words. Believing

him to be a member of a guild of ecstatic, professional prophets, Amaziah tells him to go away to his own land of Judah. But Amos protests that he is not such a prophet, but merely a simple dresser of sycamore trees whom God chose to prophecy to His people and lead them from their evil ways (7:10-14).

Thus, besides his message of doom, Amos was the first to conceive of Yahweh as God of all the world who demands moral virtues -- social justice -- of all. And if anyone does not conform with God's standards -- no matter who he may be -- even Israel, his special choice among all the nations (3:2; cf. 9:7) -- he shall not go unpunished. Thus, at the same time that Amos is universalistic in his social-justice message (9:7), he manifests a particularistic note in that he exacts more of Israel because of his more intimate relationship with God*.

* Amos does not ask why Israel was God's chosen one; conscious choice -- why? -- comes with Ezekiel and Deutero-Isaiah who give the reason why. As for Amos, he was not compelled to give an answer until the doom was lifted.

The source for this chapter is Dr. Morgenstern's Bible I notes.

Chapter X

Hosea and Micah

This high moral and spiritual tone was carried on by Hosea and Micah, two champions of Yahweh, who continued the fight for social justice against the destructive forces of Baalism.

Evidently, from the opening verse, Hosea was a contemporary of Isaiah, living "in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah of Judah, and Jereboam II of Israel." He probably started his prophetic career before the death of Jereboam II (c. 740 B.C.) and witnessed the troublous reigns of Menahem and Pekahiah (till c. 734 B.C.). This date is more likely when we realize that there is no reference in Hosea to the Syro-Ephraimitic war against Judah in 734-733 B.C. and he still speaks of Gilead as part of northern Israel in 5:1; 6:8; 12:11, although after 734 this city was under the rule of Tiglath-Pileser of Assyria. It thus seems that Hosea did not prophesy after the year 734 B.C.

This was a period of lawlessness (4:2; 5:1; 7:1), political anarchy (7:9; 8:8), and irresponsible religious and political leaders (4:8f; 5:1; 9:15). Being a resident of northern Israel and not a visitor like Amos, Hosea, as a distinguished citizen in the midst of the affairs of the kingdom, understood these evils very well and denounced them. His tragic marriage also convinced him of Israel's infidelity and indifference to Yahweh's love. He conceived of Israel as an unfaithful wife who forsook her true husband, Yahweh, and went after other objects of her affections. Therefore, Hosea holds out for Israel nothing but doom, unless his people repent and return from their evil ways and their long ingratitude to God. Hosea, in fact, seems to feel that deliverance is

already too late -- so much is Israel steeped in the habit of sinning*.

God's omnipotence, in Hosea, is not stressed so much as it is in Amos. Moreover, Hosea's God is not as universalistic as Amos understood Him. Hosea shows no interest in Yahweh's work except as it affects Israel. The other nations are considered only rods of chastisement for Israel. Thus, Yahweh is to Hosea a national God who requires personal religion -- moral faithfulness -- and not immorality (4:6).

Another champion of the poor -- a spokesman for the oppressed peasants -- is Micah. His date is very difficult to ascertain. Some (e.g., Nowack) say that he lived in post-exilic times, when the Jerah-meelites, or Edomites, were persecuting the small Jewish remnant in Palestine (cf. 6:9-16; 7:1-6, 7-20 are verses which, they believe, resemble Psalms 12,14,58; Isa. 56:11-57:1; 59:1-15a, which have references to evil Jews who act against their own fellow-Jews on behalf of the Edomite persecutors. They believe that the enemy referred to is not Babylonia but rather the Edomites.²²)

Others, like Cheyne and Barton, place Micah during the reign of Manasseh (c. 650 B.C.),²³ at about the time when Deuteronomy was being written (cf. 6:1-8, 9-16; 7:1-6, which are in a rhetorical, Deuteronomic tone). They say that Micah, like D, a sympathizer with the ideals of the great eighth-century prophets, was driven into hiding because of the tyrannical attitude of the king, and had to write in secret.

However, the International Critical Commentary²⁴ more correctly

* References to Judah and to the future Messianic hope for Israel are probably later, secondary additions.

dates Micah after the Syro-Ephraimitic war in 734, in the reigns of Ahaz and Hezekiah of Judah. Therefore, 1:2-9 refers to the approaching destruction of Samaria and tells of the consequent danger to Jerusalem; for Micah himself lived in an unexposed town, Moresheth, only about fifty miles from Jerusalem. In short, Micah portrays to us those troublous times from 721-701 B.C., when the Assyrian hordes were harassing the inhabitants of Palestine; and from his words we derive a picture of how the death-struggle in northern Israel affected a citizen of Judah like Micah. We see also the period after 721 -- from 715-701 -- when Judah was well-nigh rent assunder by plots and counter-plots of pro-Assyrian and pro-Egyptian parties in Judah under Hezekiah. Micah makes us realize that Judah is on the down-grade, torn between allegiance to Assyria or to Egypt. It is a period of rule by a degenerate commercial aristocracy -- of luxury and indulgence, greed and tyranny, injustice and oppression of the poor peasant and wage-earner (3:1-3) -- when widows and orphans are evicted from their homes (3:11; 2:2,9) and priests and prophets cater to the rich and brow-beat the poor (3:5ff.,11). The people are so blind that they believe Yahweh will not leave them in spite of their corruption. Only sacrifices are needed, they believe, to appease His anger.

But Micah carries on the noble heritage handed down to him by Amos and Hosea, and affirms pure ethical monotheism as against the evils of the Baalistic "civilization." If the ethical character of Yahweh is not emulated, then Micah, too, envisions nothing but punishment and doom. It will not avail the vested interests to cast over their sins the cloak of religion. Total de-

struction is inevitable. Salvation lay only in the redemption of the simple, country-folk, who alone know Yahweh's paths of social justice.*

* Encyc. Bib., Hosea, pp. 2119f.
I.C.C., Hosea, P. CXL-CLXiii.
I.C.C., Micah, pp. 17-26.
Encyc. Bib., Micah, pp. 3072-3074.
(These are the sources for this chapter.)

Chapter XI

Isaiah (1-39)

Isaiah gives emphasis to such a "defeatist" policy in the international affairs of Judah -- not because of his political insight, but because he is inevitably driven to such a conclusion by reason of his conception of and unswerving faith in the ethical character of the one God, Yahweh.

Isaiah's ministry covers the period from about 740 to about 700 B.C., when Israel was torn apart by civil war, when a Syro-Ephraimitic alliance was made against Judah in 734, when Samaria was destroyed in 722, when Palestinian dependencies revolted against Assyrian rule (c. 713-711), when Judah made the mistake of joining other Palestinian dependencies along with Egypt against Assyrian rule after the death of Sargon (705), and when, as a consequence, Sennacherib came into Palestine and threatened Jerusalem in 701 B.C. In other words, Isaiah, viewing the course of history through the eyes of a Judaeen, lived at the time of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah.

Isaiah's prophecies, dealing with definite political problems, are divided into two groups corresponding to two momentous occurrences in the history of Judah. One is the Syro-Ephraimitic alliance against Judah in 735; the other is Sennacherib's campaign against Judah in 701 B.C. However, Isaiah's attitude at the end of his ministry was the same as at the beginning -- one of complete defeatism: that Judah is doomed if it does not place absolute faith only in God and not in human precautions or material defences (18:1-6; 22:8-11) against the brutal force of

Assyria, equally hated and doomed by God for destruction. Chapters seven and eight express his views in connection with the 734 event. 17:1-11 (omitting vv.7,8); 7:4,9b-8:6a,7a(a)b,8 express Isaiah's view that Judah must remain peaceful and not answer force with force. But Isaiah did not believe that the people would have sufficient faith to adopt this plan of procedure; and, therefore, knowing that they would be destroyed, he writes these prophecies only that they may be preserved as warnings for future generations (8:1ff.). 6:9,10 show how Isaiah felt regarding the futility of his task, his words falling on deaf ears (30:8-11; 29:9-14) -- their spiritual blindness (5:18-21). And 30:1-17; 31:1-4,5-9; 22:1-14, belonging to the period of 701, express the same confidence in repentance and faith, non-resistance and not force, as the paths to deliverance and peace.

30:1-7a; 31:1,3 refer to Egypt in whom the people place their trust; and 30:16 expresses condemnation for Judah's turning to the "horses of Egypt." In other words, Isaiah thought that Judah was doomed, not because he had any superior political insight and knew that Assyria was stronger than Judah's ally Egypt, but because he was a "religious realist" who knew that the people would suffer because of their unrighteousness and lack of faith. The people must repent and return to God -- they must bridge^{the} chasm between their own impurity and God's holiness, if they wish to be saved. Otherwise, the Yom Yahweh will be that day when God will himself sweep away all impurity. This was the way Isaiah believed the land, Palestine, and the people, Israel, could once again become holy, even as God is holy, and just as Isaiah himself was purified in the consecration vision of chapter six.

Thus, Isaiah's idea of Kodesh -- holiness -- has ethical, rather than ritual, implications (5:16; 1:4,10-17). For this reason, Assyria herself is doomed because of her own brute force and unrestrained, imperialistic greed. And she, together with Judah, will be meted out the same punishment (1:21-- a city once faithful is now fallen). Both have acted contrary to Isaiah's idea of divine holiness. More than this; Isaiah did not believe, as the people did, that Zion was the inviolable abode of Yahweh, and that Assyria's march against Jerusalem would be frustrated by Yahweh's intervention; but rather he announced the destruction of Zion and its Temple and denounced the people's belief in the sanctity of Zion and the efficacy of the sacrificial cult.

But, did Isaiah have any future hope? The name of his son -- *Yic'ake* -- in 10:21-23 may give us a positive answer; but it is a gloss; it seems to refer to a remnant who will be left after the destruction -- who will repent then -- and not to those who live before the destruction. On the other hand, 8:16 refers to a sealing up of the testimony among Isaiah's disciples -- which seems to suggest that there will be a future. However, Isaiah may have uttered these words merely as consolation after the blow does fall (cf. 31:5). It is true that there are certain passages (9:1-6; 11:1-10; 32:1-8; 17:12-14; 18:1-7; 2:1-4) which are exalted in conception, prophetic in character, and Messianic in hope. But they are not Isaianic. They are post-exilic, eschatological expressions of nationalism or particularism (cf. Chr. 24-27 -- picture of world-judgment -- which ^{is} ~~are~~ very late).

Thus, Isaiah is a spiritual realist, defeatist in his political

attitude, holding out no future hope but rather inevitable doom as punishment for the people's blindness in not seeing their sins and returning, purified, ^{to} God's ethically holy ways*.

* The sources for this section on Isaiah (1-39) are derived from Dr. Blank's Bible II notes and M. Battenwieser, Prophets of Israel, pp. 254-296. Also: Camb., Isaiah (1-39) pp. LXXviii-LXXix; I.C.C., Isaiah, I, 1-39; Encyc. Bib., Isaiah, pp. 2194-2207.

Chapter XII

Jeremiah

Just as the J and E insurgent, prophetic narratives influenced the eighth century prophets to champion Yahweh and His desert mishpat of social justice against the onslaughts of heathen, aristocratic Baalism so it was through the Deuteronomic school of writers and through Jeremiah that this same social struggle was brought upon the center of the scene (Jer. 2:2,23; 7:9; 9:14; 11:13; cf. 3:24; 11:17; 12:16; 19:5; 23:13; 32:35; and Dt. 7:1-5, 25; 12:2-4,30; 20:16-18; 31:16; 28:14; 30:16,17; cf. 1K. 8:4,6,7; 2K. 17:7,8,19,20,35,37); and it was not long before Josiah and his Deuteronomic prophets together with Jeremiah were vindicated in their defeatism (cf. Dt. 28:25; 4:25,26) by the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 for the sins of her people (2K. 21:9-15,23,24; 23; 26; 24:3-4; cf. Dt. 17:19,20) in neglecting the poor and the needy (that is, "the left wing of the property class, or the שְׁכֵנֵי פֶתַח "25 -- Jer. 22:15,16).

Jeremiah, the most autobiographical of the prophets -- a personality in whom the inner struggle of the soul is vividly portrayed -- was the son of Hilkiahu, a priest in Anathoth, near Jerusalem. Thus, the opening verses of Jeremiah, though editorial, are undoubtedly correct.

His period of prophecy may be said to have occurred from 627-586 B.C. Thus, he must have lived as a child under the evil Manasseh (696-641 B.C.), grown up and started prophesying under the inspiration of Josiah (639-609) and his Deuteronomic reform (621B.C.), and witnessed the two deportations to Babylon in 597 and 586 in the reigns of Jehoiachin (597) and Zedekiah (597-586).

Jeremiah's first period of prophecy was 627-622; he was then silent until Josiah died in 609. Then from 609-604 he resumed his prophetic career. During this latter period Jeremiah preached against the corrupt king Jehoiakim, his rebellious people who rejected the worship of Yahweh, and the priests who had implicit trust in the inviolability of the Temple. For Jeremiah, too, was a defeatist prophet, opposing such a prophet of success and optimism as Hananiah ben Azur (Jer. 28). In 604, Jeremiah dictated to Baruch his prophecies; but he and his amanuensis had to flee because of their denunciatory ^{english} work.

In 597 Nebuchadnezzar put down a revolt by Jehoiakim, and the nobles -- the aristocratic Baalim -- were deported to Babylon. From 604-597 Jeremiah was forced to be silent because of the opposition of Jehoiakim. But in 597 his words were vindicated, so that from then to the capture of Jerusalem and the second deportation in 586 B.C., he was not held in disfavor and could speak. He tried to prevent the weak and vacillatory Zedekiah from joining Hophra of Egypt against the Babylonian yoke; but all was in vain. And although Nebuchadnezzar's siege of Jerusalem was lifted for a while, nevertheless Jeremiah did not think that this was permanent (especially since the nobles had acted so brazenly by forcing people back to slavery -- Jer. 34:8,9,17,18). And so, in 586 B.C. Jerusalem was captured and the people exiled to Babylon (Jer. 39). The ^{יְהוֹנָדָן בֶּן-חֲנָנִי} and Jeremiah -- the pro-Babylonian party -- were spared and left behind; and they chose Gedaliah as their leader (Jer. 39:10-14; 2K. 25:22); but this was only for a short time, for soon thereafter Ishmael, of Davidic descent, assassinated Gedaliah, and some of the ^{יְהוֹנָדָן בֶּן-חֲנָנִי}

and Jeremiah had to flee to Egypt, where Jeremiah probably died either in 585 or 580.

As intimated before, Jeremiah, in the first chapters, denounces the syncretistic Baalism which still prevails ~~even~~ among the people in spite of Josiah's Deuteronomic reformation. Therefore, he sees nothing but destruction by a foe from the north. Neither God nor the Temple and its punctilious worship will protect the people (7; 21:5,6; 26), who have failed to live up to the covenant which they made with God (cf. Ch. 35, the Rechabites story). Only faith in and obedience to God's will, loyalty and righteousness, can save them. Therefore, repent, (3:12,22), submit to the yoke of Babylon (cf. 38:4) and the yoke of the covenant. Otherwise, there is nothing but doom. But Jeremiah knew that the catastrophe was inevitable, for his words were falling upon deaf ears.

Finally, Jeremiah is distinguished from the other prophets before him in that he is the most personal -- individualistic and introspective -- of them all. Through his own soul-struggle, he arrives at the idea that religion is an inward thing (31:30ff.) -- a matter of the self, of one's struggle with his own soul. Jeremiah may sometimes be despondent because the people are indifferent to his message, but he regains courage when he realizes that his message comes from God. Though he must proclaim doom, he does it with great regret, realizing that he especially, because of his nearness to God, must proclaim His word.

There may be some future hope in Jeremiah's words. For in 29:1-23, he tells the exiles, in a letter, that their lot is not a

permanent one; in Chs. 30 and 31 he holds out hope for northern Israel, for these exiles have already paid the penalty and are ready for restoration; and, finally, in the consecration vision (1:10), Jeremiah talks about rooting up and pulling down, building and planting.

Thus, Jeremiah is another prophet who pleads for social righteousness, in spite of the physical and mental sufferings that come to him as a result of his keen sensitivity to social wrongs.*

* The sources for this chapter are:
Dr. Blank's Bible II notes;
Encyc. Bib., Jeremiah, p. 2385, 2390-2392;
Camb., Jeremiah p. 396, p. Xff.;

Chapter XIII

Ezekiel

This prophet was said to have been among the priests who went as exiles to Babylon in 597 B.C. (2K.24). The most probable date for the beginning of his prophetic career, according to Dr. Blank, is contained in 1:2-- which places him in the fifth year of Jehoiakim or probably 30 years after the Deuteronomic reform (621). In any case, his prophecies of destruction against Jerusalem (1-24) and against the foreign nations (25-32) began in 597, at the time of the ^{first deportation.} ~~investment of Jer-~~
~~usalem~~ ^{ch. 1-24 were preached at time of Nebuchadnezzar's investment of Jerusalem}; chapters 25-32 were spoken from 587 to 566, when the exiles in Babylon received the news of the capture of Jerusalem. By 566, also, Tyre (ch. 26) had submitted after a siege of thirteen years (585-572), and after ^{that} Nebuchadnezzar ~~had~~ quieted Egypt in 568-567 (29:19, 20). Up until now, Ezekiel had been a preacher of destruction and denounced the sins of the people-- the sun-worshippers, sacred prostitutes, etc. But from chapter 33, Ezekiel becomes a prophet of rehabilitation and hope, and plans the restoration of Israel to Palestine in the future. These prophecies (33-48) were spoken from 585 to 572 B.C.*

*However, it would be well to mention that Dr. M. Battenwieser in his The Character and Date of Israel's Prophecies, Hebrew Union College Annual, Vol. VII (1930), pp. 1-18, believes that "when Ezekiel in chap. 3 and in chap. 33 and also in chap. 24 states that in the interim between his call and the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. his mouth was shut and he carried on no prophetic activity whatever, he is simply telling the truth, quite oblivious to the fact, ^{we may believe}, that he is giving himself away. The entire first part of his book, that is, chaps. 1-31 are not real prophecies but are only disguised as such-- they are, without exception, vaticinia post eventum. Though the Book of Ezekiel cannot be said to show any of the eschatological notions of later apocalyptic literature, and for this reason cannot be classed as such, the method or artifices employed in it, conspicuous among which is the strange mingling of fact and fiction, are typically the same as characterize the apocalyptic writings." (p7)... (thus) "the entire book of Ezekiel was written some time after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C."

Ezekiel does not stand very high among the prophets, due to his angularity of character, his lack of originality, and his emphasis on ritual. He has a coarseness of expression in his realis-

Chaps. 40-48, containing Ezekiel's ritualistic legislation for the future Israel, bears the date of the fourteenth year after the destruction of Jerusalem, and the brief supplement to the prophecies against Tyre and Sidon, chap. 29:17-21, dates from the sixteenth year of the same event, so that it seems safe to fix on 570 as the terminus ad quem... Perhaps the most startling experience... is the realization that Ezekiel did not actually at any time before 586B.C. predict the fall of Jerusalem, that only after that event had happened did he make out that he had prophesied it." (pp.17f.). For, the ritualistic legislation of chaps. 40-48 is the chief object of the book; what pervades is only introductory or preliminary material--especially since Ezekiel's viewpoint was that of a priest concerned primarily with the Temple and its cult. So that it is very likely that before 586B.C. he, with others, believed that Yahweh could not possibly permit the destruction of the Temple. And after that date, he wrote as if he had prophesied destruction and his prophecies had come true. He "told you so" in his Book only after 586B.C.

J. Smith, in his Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, has a different opinion. He believes that "Ezekiel was a North Israelite, and that the appeal of his book was directed to the North Israelite community." (p.71). He adds "that the book is in the main a compilation of two sets of oracles, the majority of which, he considers, emanated from Palestine... the redactor has chosen to give a Babylonian complexion to the whole book, and to convey the impression that the prophet was (a Judaeen-- p.X) resident in Babylonia when he uttered his oracles." (pp.90f.). Thus, "Ezekiel's prophetic activity commenced about 722 either amongst the Northern exiles or in the homeland, and he continued his prophetic labors until about 669 in Palestine or alternately in Palestine among the northern exiles." (p.98). This is one set of oracles, written in the Baalistic reign of Manasseh. The other set, consisting of much fewer oracles and written in the latter part of Ezekiel's prophetic career, was probably written in the Diaspora (cf. pp.99f.).

tic handling of Israel as a nation. Unlike the other prophets, he has little refinement of feeling for other persons. He is, at times, brutal. His interest in minute details (ch. 1) and his combination of prose with poetry makes his style more burdensome than the writings of such a prophet like Isaiah (Isa.6). Some say that this is probably due to the fact he was subject to pathological aberrations. He shows certainly a peculiar personality.

Moreover, although Ezekiel does show at times some originality, nevertheless most of his figures and ideas are taken from his predecessors, worked over, and developed.

His emphasis upon the ritual, comparable to that of Haggai and Malachi, is greater than with the other prophets. **This** is understandable, when we realize that he was raised in Jerusalem as a member of a priestly family. Nevertheless, Ezekiel may be justified in opposing the syncretistic Baal-worship; for with these religious customs there came pagan worship and pagan social abuses. Yet, it may be said that Ezekiel does not rise to the greatest heights of personal and ethical religion among the prophets. (He may be compared with the authors of Deuteronomy).

Then, what was Ezekiel's message? As intimated before, before 586 he had no original message. Between 593 and 586 he shows the effects of Jeremiah's influence. For Ezekiel, too, is a defeatist in his political attitude, and believes that Judah is inevitably destined to be conquered and exiled to Babylon (cf. Jer. 28; 29; 37:3-10; and Ezek. 2:10; 3-5; 12; 34; 1; 8-11; etc.) -- all these passages contain symbolic actions which are variations on the same theme; inevitable doom. And, like Jeremiah, he in-

veighs against those false prophets who preach optimism and a hopeful future (Ezek. 29:31); and also attacks the people for their stubborn indifference and blindness (3:7,8,11; 12:2). And when Ezekiel speaks, he addresses his remarks, like the other prophets to all classes of people -- kings, priests, prophets, and the people en masse -- for he believes that all have an equal share in communal responsibility.

This brings us to Ezekiel's idea of his own responsibility. He feels himself the "watchman of Israel," responsible not only for himself but for all the people (3:16-21). He realizes that he is different from the rest of the people -- God's representative (18:25,29; 33:17,20) -- and feels that he is called upon to defend God's ways and warn the people of their evil deeds. And in chapter 18 Ezekiel describes the differences between a *צדיק*, a righteous man, and a *רע*, a wicked person (cf. 22:7-12,13; 7:19?, 23; 8:17; 22:4,6,7; 33:26; 34:21; 33:14; 9:9; 11:6; 22:3f.; 33:25; 22:7,10ff.; 7:10,20,24;16:47,etc.) who exacts usury, neglects the stranger and the poor, commits violence and robbery, sheds blood, is adulterous, irreverent, and arrogant, and, as kings, priests, and prophets, oppress and delude the people with false hopes.

Ezekiel's greatest, original contribution is, thus, his doctrine of individual responsibility, by which he also gave hope (cf. Jere. 31); that is, he believed that what one's parents or community did or is now doing, does not matter; rather, it is what the individual himself is at the present time, that counts (33:18; 18; 33; 3:16-21;

14:12-21)*.

By all the sins which Israel has committed, he has become impure, defiled, unholy -- especially through his devotion to the syncretistic cults (6:11f.; 20:2f.; 22:10; 33:5; 16:15ff.; 8:3,11,14,16; 23). Thus, Israel is a rebellious, faithless people. And so, Ezekiel, through his religious and ritual approach, becomes not only a reformer of the cult but a social reformer.

And as a result of these sins, a great calamity will come upon Israel; and Yahweh and his prophet will vindicated. Therefore, when the end did come, Ezekiel now felt it his duty to comfort his people and give them hope (34:36; 37; 38; 39); for God desires not death but repentance (33:11).

Thus for the great ethico-religious, priestly prophet of the exile, Ezekiel, who had a fine sense of individual responsibility and social justice, and who carried on the fight against syncretistic, Baalistic cults and their concomitant, social evils.

* Dr. Blank, in his Bible III notes believes that Ezekiel 40-48 was written after 586 and before P; and that, probably under the influence of H (Eev. 17-26), it is merely an editorial expansion of Ezekiel.

These are the sources for this chapter:

Dr. Blank's Bible III notes.

I.C.C., Ezekiel, pp. XVII-XL.

Encyc. Bib., Ezekiel, pp. 1460f.

Chapter XIV

Isaiah 40-55 and 56-66

The other great prophet of the Exile was Deutero-Isaiah (Isa. 40-55). Battenwieser* believes that he lived in Jerusalem. For Deutero-Isaiah could not have lived in Babylon have been and/tolerated, if he spoke as his written words indicate -- in cutting remarks against the Babylonian government (46:1-47:15). The fact that Second Isaiah lived in Jerusalem is especially plausible when we see how graphically he pictures the joy in the Holy City when the exiles will return from the East (43:5-6; 40:9-11). Moreover, his descriptions of conditions in Babylon are not vivid; and most likely this would not have been the case if he had actually lived there.

Most critics believe that 40-55 are a unit, although 49-55 may have been written a short time after 40-48. These latter chapters refer to Cyrus' impending defeat of the Babylonians under Nabonidus in 546 and the fall of Babylon in 539 -- an event which marks for Israel the eve of deliverance from the Babylonian yoke and a period of tolerance under Persian rule -- when the exiles will soon be allowed to return to Jerusalem to rebuild their Temple (520 B.C.). Thus, Deutero-Isaiah spends his wrath upon evil Babylon and envisions hopes of restoration with the appearance of Cyrus (44:24ff.). It, therefore, seems likely that 40-48 were written sometime between 550 (Cyrus' star begins to rise) and 539 (the fall of Babylon). 49-55 was written

* Battenwieser, M. -- Where did Deutero-Isaiah Live? -- article in Journal of Biblical Literature (1919).

a little later, ~~and that~~ the hopes voiced in 40-48 ~~were~~ ^{being} not immediately realized. The Suffering Servant passages (49:1-6; 50:4-9 (10f.); 52:13-53:12), although they have a unique character and therefore seem to have formed a unit in themselves and inserted into the text, ^{they} nevertheless, according to Dr. Blank*, are songs which were originally a part of the context.

Deutero-Isaiah's message is mainly one of comfort (40:1) and hope (chap. 51). He believes that, though at present Israel suffers miserably for sins, (52:13-53:12) nevertheless, Babylon will soon be brought low (chap. 47) and all the nations will come to Yahweh in Israel's newly restored land (43:1-21; 45:14-25). Israel will be a blessing to the nations (49:1-6); and, as Yahweh's servant, though suffering for Him in order to fulfill His word among the nations (50:4-9), nevertheless Israel will emerge victorious (52:13ff.), and Yahweh, creator of the world, will be confirmed as the one mighty God, above all other Gods and human agents (40:12-31). It will, indeed, be a time of rejoicing for the needy (55:1ff.).

Trito-Isaiah, or Isaiah 56-66, contains prophecies, of various dates -- some perhaps earlier than 520 B.C. (when Temple was rebuilt), others as late as about 450 (the time of Ezra and Nehemiah). However, the most likely period is the time of Ezra's reforming activity, shortly before Nehemiah's advent, say about 450 B.C. The Temple seems to have been rebuilt, although the city walls have not yet been restored. There are still many in exile; but the

* This section on Deutero-Isaiah derives its material from Dr. Blank's Bible III notes.

Jerusalem community seems to be the main point of interest. (ch.60)

In Trito-Isaiah, there is a much greater concern with ritual practices than in the other prophets (ch. 56; 58:1-12,13). Indeed, ceremony and ritual seem to be put on the same plane as ethics and social justices, although there is a noble conception of religion (fasting) and morality in chapter 58.

Thus, in spite of a greater tendency on the part of Trito-Isaiah to emphasize ceremonial observance (and, in the case of aliens and eunuchs in chapter 56:1-8, this is ~~and~~ the basis of gaining God's favor), nevertheless this collection of prophecies also was made from the viewpoint of denouncing the wicked (56:9-57:2,3-13) and giving hope to the righteous cause of those who do Yahweh's will (57:14-21; 59:15b-21; 65:8ff.; 66:5ff.). In the end, Yahweh will emerge victorious (63:1-6), and the evil idolators will perish (57:3-13; 65:1-7; 66:1-4,14f.).*

* Sources on Trito-Isaiah are:

Dr. Blank's Bible III notes.

Camb. on Isaiah 40-66, pp. IXf., XXXIIIIf., XLIIIf.

A.S.Peake, A Commentary on the Bible, pp. 460f., 468-473.

Chapter XV

Zephaniah, Zechariah, Malachi

In concluding this historical and literary background to the Old Testament, it would be well to describe briefly the work of a few of the minor prophets.

About 621, in the beginning of Josiah's reign and about the time of the Deuteronomic reformation, the evils of Manasseh's and Amon's reigns were still persisting (2K. 21:2-9, 21f.). There were Idolatrous, syncretistic, Baal-worship and the corruption, injustice, and oppression which we saw inevitably resulted from such a system (Zeph. 1:8,9; 3:1-4). Therefore, when, about this time, the wild hordes of Scythians swept down from the north upon Assyria and Egypt, Jeremiah (cf. 4:3ff.) and his contemporary, Zephaniah (1:2ff.), seemed to sense the danger and feel that now at last Judah would be punished for her sins. Here at last, Zephaniah thought, was the *Yom Yahweh* (chap.I) with which the other prophets had threatened the people. Here was the disaster looked for; probably through this method Judah will be purified of her sinfulness and will seek to follow in Yahweh's righteous paths (3:1-7,8-20); probably through such a sweeping and world-wide judgment, embracing all the nations and destroying all the wicked, a purified remnant would be left (2:3; 3:12) to serve God faithfully. This was Zephaniah's great hope on the day when the rod of God's anger, the Scythians, would chastise and purge His people. This was how Zephaniah thought ethical monotheism would emerge victorious in its social struggle with the perverse forces of

idolatrous Baalism.

Two other prophets whose background is of some importance to our study lived in post-exilic times. They are Zechariah and Malachi.

Zechariah's prophecy is divided into two parts: chapters 1-8 and 9-14. Chapters 1-8 are probably (with the exception of some additions) original with Zechariah; that is they were written by the priest and prophet (1:1; 3:7ff.; Neh. 12:4ff.) when he came to Jerusalem with Haggai (chs. 1,2) in 520 B.C. to encourage the Jews to restore the Temple (2:6ff.; 8:1ff.). Thus, Zechariah, as a prophet of the restoration, pictures the new community, reorganized and rid of sin (1:7ff.; 4:6bff.). He recognizes Zerubbabel as prince of the commonwealth (6:9-15) and Joshua as its high-priest (3:1-10); they will tolerate no other rule in the land but that of Yahweh, the rule of truth and peace (3:10; 8:19) and social justice (7:9f.).

However, most critics agree that chapters 9-14 were not written by Zechariah. A few critics say that chapters 9-11 were written by a contemporary of Amos and Hosea. But Wellhausen²⁶ and others agree that 9-14 are definitely post-exilic and later than 1-8. They²⁷ believe that 9:1-10 was written in 333 B.C., after the battle of Issus when Alexander defeated Darius III and spared the Jews on his way to Egypt (9:8) -- or even later. They²⁷ assign 9:11-11:3 and 11:14-17; 13:7-9 to different authors. 9:11-11:3--expressing hope-- they say refer to the liberality of Ptolemy II (285-247 B.C.); and soon after the reign of Ptolemy IV in 217 B.C., the pessimistic picture (heavy taxes, oppression, and injustice -- cf. 3Macc. 2:27ff.; 3:25) in 11:4-17; 13:7-9 were written. Finally,

another writer with apocalyptic tendencies presents the entire picture more optimistically in 12:1-13:6; 14 about the same time (217 B.C.).

Thus, Zechariah 9-14 too speaks against those "foolish shepherds" (11:4-17; 13:7-9) who oppress their flocks, but who will soon be destroyed by Yahweh, the defender of the poor and righteous who will remain (9:9ff.). Throughout this portion also there are hopes for the triumph and restoration of Israel and Judah (10:1-11:3; 12; 13), and they will be blessed among the nations (8:18-23). Once more, Yahweh, Israel, and ethical monotheism will emerge victorious in the social struggle.

Malachi, said to be the last of the prophets, lived at a time of disillusionment -- when the long-hoped for Messianic age which would come with the rebuilding of the Temple (in 520 B.C.) failed to materialize. Thus, many -- especially the younger generation (cf. 4:5) -- were beginning to give up the militant universalism of preceding prophets and adopting an exclusivism which could tolerate no longer the infiltration of foreigners which had occurred with the coming of the period of tolerance under Cyrus' Persian rule (2:10-16). It is obvious that when Malachi wrote, the Temple had already been rebuilt (1:10; 3:1,10). And since Malachi opposes those same practices -- intermarriage (2:10-16), faithlessness and materialism (2:17), and insincerity in offering tithes to Yahweh (3:7-12) -- which Ezra and Nehemiah subsequently set out to reform, Malachi lived between 520 and 444 B.C. Thus, a date of about 485 B.C. (with which the I.C.C. and Oesterley and Robinson are in agreement) seems to be correct. In fact, Malachi, in his interest in the ritual side of religion,

seems to come after H and Ezekiel 40-48, close to P.

Because of such disillusionment which characterized his age, Malachi tells the people that their unfulfilled hopes are not due to Yahweh but rather to their own sins -- the corruption of their priests (1:6-2:9), the "free-thinkers" who feel that the old beliefs and rites are outgrown (2:17; 3:13ff.), social injustices (3:5), and the other evils mentioned just above. No, Yahweh still loves Israel (1:2-5) and all sincere worship (1:11). Malachi welcomes a broader point of view from young skeptics (3:13-16). But he says that God wants also loyalty to old practices, sincere faith in Him, and righteous conduct. On the Vom Yahweh (3:2; 4:5) the wicked, to be sure, will perish (4:1-3). But the righteous and the penitent will be saved on that Day (3:13-4:6). Thus, Malachi shows great interest both in the ethical and ritual aspects of religion, although he may appear to stress the latter; and he speaks his words in order to give hope and courage to an age of disillusionment. He envisions for the people a Golden Age, in order to bring about better moral and religious conditions at a time when promises had been unfulfilled.*

* The sources for this chapter are:

I.C.C., Zephariah, pp. 159-180.
Encyc. Bib., Zephariah, pp. 5402-5408.
I.C.C., Zechariah, Chapters, pp. 81-106.
Encyc. Bib., Zechariah, pp. 5391-5395.
I.C.C., Zechariah 9-14, pp. 218-259.
I.C.C., Malachi, pp. 3-15.
Encyc. Bib., Malachi, pp. 2907-2910.

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1. Encyc. Bib., Ezra-Neh., pp. 1478f.
2. Job, M. Battenwieser, pp. 77ff.
3. Ibid., p. 67f.
4. Encyc. Bib., p. 3911f.
5. Are There Any Maccabean Psalms? by M. Battenwieser, in the Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol. 36 (1917), p. 248
6. Wallis, L. -- Sociological Study of the Bible - p. 4f.
7. Ibid. - p. XXVf.
8. W.O.E. Oesterley and T.H. Robinson, A History of Israel, p. 325.
"This is the first hint of a prophet taking part in political life."
9. J.M.P. Smith, The Prophet and His Problems, p. 144: "Yahweh was the defender of the oppressed."
10. J. Morgenstern, Amos Studies I, pp. 37f: "The professional prophets wanted a king who would revive the old simple life of Yahweh."
11. J.M.P. Smith, The Prophets and Their Times, p. 30.
12. According to J. Morgenstern, Amos Studies. However, C.F. Kent, A History of the Hebrew People: Divided Kingdom, gives the date as 937 B.C.
13. Oesterley and Robinson, op. cit., p. 277.
14. Ibid., p. 284.
15. J. Morgenstern, Oldest Document of the Hexateuch, p. 112.
16. Ibid., p. 116.
17. J. Morgenstern, Amos Studies, p. 38. Also, Oesterley and Robinson, op. cit., p. 294.
18. Dr. Morgenstern's Bible I notes.
19. J. Morgensters, Oldest Document of the Hexateuch, p. 35.

20. J. Morgenstern, Amos Studies, pp. 39,45.
21. Dr. Morgenstern's Bible I notes.
22. Encyc. Bib., pp. 3072-3074 -- article by Cheyne.
23. Ibid. Also G.A. Barton, History of the Hebrew People, p. 283.
24. I.C.C., Micha, pp. 17-26.
25. Wallis, L. -- God and the Social Process -- p. 249.
26. J. Wellhauser, Zechariah, art. in Encyclopedia Biblica, pp. 539lf.
27. I.C.C., Zechariah, pp. 218-259.

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PART II
PROTECTION OF THE WEAK
IN THE BIBLE

Having concluded a survey of the literary and historical background of the various books of the Bible, and having shown in a rather general way how a refined conception of ethical monotheism emerged out of the long social struggle between Yahwism and Baalism, we are now able to enter upon an equally intensive study of how the great social consciousness of the Hebrews, culminating in the literary prophets, blossomed forth in all the grandeur of their spirit and the nobility of their soul -- how, indeed, the religion of Israel is indissolubly linked with social problems. To do this, we begin this portion of our study by showing how, from early to late Biblical times, Yahweh himself -- the God of Israel -- is concerned with the welfare of those of His creatures who may be oppressed by adherents to the Baalistic way of life.

Chapter I

God and the Weak

The earliest verses we come to, which illustrate God's care for the weak, are in the Book of the Covenant, incorporated into E about 750 B.C. Ex. 22:20-23 say:*

וְגֵר לֹא תוֹנֶה וְלֹא תִלְבְּנוּ
כִּי גֵרִים הִיִּיתִם בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם כִּי אֵלֹהִים לֹא תִדְּרוּן
אִם זָרָה תִּזְנֶה אֹתוֹ כִּי אִם צָדֵק יִצְדַּק אֱלֹהֵי אֲמֵרָא שֶׁצִּדְקוֹ
וְחֶרֶף אֹפִי וְחֶרֶף אֹתְכֶם בְּתֵרֶם וְפִי נִשְׁכַּם אֲחֵינוּ הַנִּיכָם יִתְחַיֶּי.

"You must not ill-treat a resident alien, nor oppress him; for you were once resident aliens (cf. Cambridge Bible on Exodus, p. 231) yourselves in the land of Egypt. You must not wrong any widow or

* For all translations of Part II, see American Translation of the Bible.

covering; it is his cloak for his body. What else could he sleep in? And if he should cry to me, I would respond; for I am kind." (cf. Dt. 24:12). It is evident how here too God, in his mercy, will come to the aid of the unprotected if anyone is heartless enough to withhold from him the very garment with which he covers himself to protect him from the cold of the night.

Such early expressions of sympathy soon had their effect. For Isaiah, in 3:14,15, and 29:19, is even more explicit and stronger in his denunciation of those who maltreat the poor and the underprivileged. He even goes so far as to single out the poor as the sincere worshippers of God. In 3:14,15, he says:

וְהָיָה כִּי יִשְׁפֹּט ה' אֶת-עַמּוּתְךָ וְיִסְּרֶנּוּ אֶת-הַבְּרִיָּה
וְיִסְּרֶנּוּ אֶת-הַבְּרִיָּה וְיִסְּרֶנּוּ אֶת-הַבְּרִיָּה
וְיִסְּרֶנּוּ אֶת-הַבְּרִיָּה וְיִסְּרֶנּוּ אֶת-הַבְּרִיָּה

"The Lord will bring an indictment against the elders and princes of His people. 'It is you that have ravaged the vineyard; the plunder of the poor is in your houses. What mean you by crushing my people, and grinding the face of the poor?' Saith the Lord, God of Hosts." In other words, Isaiah, champion of Yahweh and His social standards, severely condemns the rulers who have become so influenced by Baalism that they appropriate unto themselves the vineyard and the little that the poor have. Such a practice was unheard of in the communal sort of society prevalent in the desert. There the land was inalienable -- the common possession of all; there such expropriation

the field, you shall not go back to take it; it shall be for the resident alien, the widow, and the orphan, in order that the Lord your God may bless you in all that you do." In other words, we meet again those three special classes of unprotected individuals -- the widow, orphan, and resident alien -- and a fourth, the Levite, who has dedicated himself to God's service, and, as such, has no possessions like the rest of the people. Therefore, some provision must be made for him, too. Thus, in apportioning the triennial tithe among the needy, and in setting aside the forgotten sheaves of the field for them, the Levite is also remembered. And if these words are fulfilled, then such charity will bring blessing.

But, Deuteronomy goes still further in giving concrete expressions to the philanthropic attitude of E and Isaiah. Not only is it concerned with the distribution of the triennial tithe and the forgotten sheaf among the poor and the needy, but the law of *שמיטה* (which will also be discussed more fully later) raises a problem. In Dt. 15:9 it says:

חַיִּים וְדָר עִם אֲדָמָה בְּאֶרֶץ אֲחֵיכֶם קִרְבָּה שְׁנֵי-שָׁנִים
שְׁנֵי שָׁמַיִם וְרִצָּה צִדִּיק בְּאֵינֶיךָ תִּהְיֶה וְלֹא תִתֵּן
אֵל וְקִרְאָה וְלֵיךְ אֵל-פ' וְפִיךָ בִּקְחָה חֶטְא

"Take care lest a base thought enter your head like this: 'The seventh year, the year of remission (of debts) is near!' and you behave meanly to your needy countryman by not giving him anything, and he cries to the Lord against you, and you incur guilt." In other words, the benefits afforded to the poor and

needy by the year of release (שמיטה) -- when all debts are cancelled or suspended -- are not to be neutralized by the thought of its near approach deterring the wealthy Israelite from aiding his needy brother? The thought of future loss or gain should not be the motivating factor in giving relief.

Thus, in pre-exilic times, the prophets and prophetic law-makers tried to do all in their power to counteract the subversive influences of Baalism, which condoned indifference to and oppression of the unprotected and the needy. After 586 B.C., the Biblical literature demonstrates to us the pitiful conditions of the exiles and their extreme distress over the loss of their nationhood.³ We see portrayed the insecurity and loss of confidence which made readjustment so difficult. Thus, Psalm 88:16 laments:

יְיָ אֱלֹהֵי מִצְרָיִם מָוֶן לְמִצְרָיִם אֵלֶיךָ אֶפְרַיִם
אֶפְרַיִם אֶפְרַיִם אֶפְרַיִם אֶפְרַיִם אֶפְרַיִם

"I have been afflicted at the point of death from my youth up; I have borne Thy terrors; I am overcome." The nation, symbolized as an individual, feels so persecuted that it seems his miserable lot has been with him from the very early period of his history. Therefore, the Psalmist pleads:

אֵלֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵי מִצְרָיִם
אֵלֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵי מִצְרָיִם אֵלֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵי מִצְרָיִם

"Let not the crushed be again put to shame; may the poor and needy praise Thy name." (Ps. 74:21). In other words, may God never cause calamity and destruction befall His creatures who have suffered enough for their sins; rather let God rejoice in having His name praised by His own poor and needy. Thus, prayers are the order of the day for the exilic community, with

the hope that God will bring better times. Therefore,

יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּצִדִּיק וְצִדִּיק בְּמִשְׁפָּט
 אֱלֹהֵינוּ יִשְׁפָּט אֶת אֲרֻמֵּינוּ וְיִצְחָק מִפְּנֵי
 עָלֵינוּ וְיִצְחָק מִפְּנֵי אֲרֻמֵּינוּ וְיִשְׁפָּט
 אֶת אֲרֻמֵּינוּ וְיִצְחָק מִפְּנֵי עָלֵינוּ

"May he (the Messianic king of the future) judge thy people with right, and Thine afflicted with justice.... May He judge the afflicted of the people, and give deliverance to the poor, and crush the oppressor.... May He take pity upon the poor and needy, and save the life of the poor; from oppression and violence may He ransom them; and may their blood be precious in His eyes." (Ps. 72:2,4,13,14). Probably, the memory of the reigns of such evil kings as Manasseh and Amon (2K. 21) are so vivid to the Psalmist that he prays to God to send to His poor and needy and afflicted people a deliverer who will act justly and save His unfortunate, unprotected, and weak people from cruel tyrants. Oh, God, "do not give to the wild-beasts the life of Thy turtle-dove; do not forget the life of Thine afflicted one forever!" (Ps. 74:19). Here is one of the finest expressions of the great poet pouring out his heart to God on behalf of the weak as against the bestial rapaciousness of their overlords and masters. And the author of this psalm, having convinced others of the righteousness of his pleas, impels the Deuteronomic redactor of the Book of Samuel (c. 561 B.C.) to borrow from an old collection of psalms and assuringly exclaim:

בְּצִדִּיק וְצִדִּיק בְּמִשְׁפָּט
 אֱלֹהֵינוּ יִשְׁפָּט אֶת אֲרֻמֵּינוּ

"In my distress I called upon the Lord, and unto my God I called for help; He heard my voice from His palace, and my cry reached His ears. (2S.22:7; cf. Ps. 18:7). Indeed, he asserts:

אֶקִּים עַל־אֶבֶן עַל־רֶגֶל עַל־אֶבֶן עַל־רֶגֶל

"He (God) raises up the poor from the dust; He exalts the needy from the refuse heap. (1S. 2:8a; cf. Ps. 113:7). This passage indicates how wretched was the condition of the poor in the days of the Deuteronomic redactor of Judges, Samuel, and Kings (c. 561 B.C.). For, the poor are often forced to spend the night on the mound of rubbish, which accumulates near an oriental town, in default of a lodging⁴. And so, the catastrophe of 586 surely must have wreaked havoc not only with the social and spiritual life of the exilic community, but also with their economic status. And God is called upon to rush to the defense of his unprotected people*.

We have seen how desperate and gloomy~~ly~~ was the condition of the Hebrews in exile; let us pause and examine closely how post-exilic events had their effects upon the sentiments of Biblical writers with regard to the protection of the weak.

Isaiah 41:17 is a good illustration of the sentiments of the people at about the time Cyrus appeared upon the scene, and,

* It is well to note that what we call pre-exilic times is any time before 586 B.C. Exilic times include the period from 586-c.540, the beginning of Persian rule. (Of course, the post-exilic periods of Hebrew history continues for a long time. It may be said to begin from the time of Cyrus (c.540 B.C.) to the beginning of Greek dominion under Alexander the Great (332 B.C. -- see chart of Hebrew History).

with his conquests, was presaging the dawn of a new day for the Hebrews. This verse reads: *הַצִּיִּים וּפְאִיקוֹנִים מִקִּשִּׁים מִיָּם וְאִין פִּסּוֹן קִצְמָא נִשְׁתַּב אִין בִּי אֲזַנָּא אֵלֵּי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲזַרְקָא*.
 "When the poor and the needy seek water in vain, and their tongue is parched with thirst, I the Lord will answer them; I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them." And Deutero-Isaiah continues in this vein, with more assurance, when Cyrus issues a decree in 536 permitting the Jews to return to Jerusalem and build their Temple. For in Isa. 49:13b, he asserts: *כִּי נִחַם עַם וְזָנִי יִרְחַם*.
 "For the Lord has comforted His people, and has had pity on His afflicted ones."

This attitude of consolation and hope -- of dreams of a new day -- continue throughout post-exilic times. For example, Isaiah 14:28-32 (especially verses 30a and 32: *וְרָצוּ קְבוּרָי דְּזִיִּים וְאִיקוֹנִים עֲקֻטָּה יִקְבְּצוּ..... וְאֵם-יָצַח מֵאֲכָבִי-גִו' כִּי בִי*

וְאִיקוֹנִים עֲקֻטָּה יִקְבְּצוּ..... וְאֵם-יָצַח מֵאֲכָבִי-גִו' כִּי בִי
וְאִיקוֹנִים עֲקֻטָּה יִקְבְּצוּ..... וְאֵם-יָצַח מֵאֲכָבִי-גִו' כִּי בִי
 "And the poorest of the poor shall feed, and the needy will lie down in security (cf. Ps. 22:27).... And what answer will the messengers of the nation (Philistia?) give? 'That it is Yahweh who founded Zion and in her the afflicted of His people have taken refuge!'") illustrates very pointedly such sentiments, which are undoubtedly post-exilic insertions into the Book of Isaiah (cf. Isa. 26:6; 29:19; cp. also the insertion in Jer. 20:13: *שִׁירוּ לַיהוָה הִלְלוּ אֱלֹהֵי-יְהוָה כִּי נִצְּלָה אֶת-נַפְשִׁי אֶת-יַד אֲרֻרִים*.
 "Sing to the Lord; praise the Lord; for He has saved the life of the needy from the hand of the wicked;" cf. the language of Ps. 10:2)⁵. And, finally, in very late post-exilic times, a disillusioned people is comforted by the thought in Zephaniah

3:12:

וּפְּעֹלֹתַי בְּקִרְבְּךָ יִשְׁכְּנוּ וְלֹא יִשְׁכְּנוּ בְּעַמְּךָ - ע

"For I (God) will leave in the midst of you a people humble and poor; and in the name of the Lord they will seek refuge," envisioning an ideal religious life late in Israel's history (cf. Zeph. 2:3--which is also late post-exilic), when Israel, as a purified remnant, will no longer be guilty of offences of the past.⁶

After some years (536-520) of reluctance on the part of some of the exiles to give up their comparatively comfortable position in Babylonia and return to cooperate in the rebuilding of Jerusalem, finally in 520 B.C. the foundations of the Temple were laid, inspired by the exhortations of Haggai (chap. 1) and Zechariah (6:9f.). Its rebuilding was completed in 516 B.C. But from this latter date to the coming of Ezra and Nehemiah (c. 444 B.C.), there was a period of disillusionment (in that the Messianic promise, as a result of rebuilding the Temple, had not come to pass), close social relations and intermarriage between the Jews and neighboring peoples, a tendency to look askance at the old faith and ritual, and friction between the Jews and the Edomites who "swept westward and took possession of southern Judah, occupying the whole of it up to and including the city of Hebron."⁷ This is the period of disillusionment which Zephaniah (3:12; 2:3) must have had reference to when he tried to console the people.

The chaos, insecurity, and pessimism of this period of re-

storation before Ezra and Nehemiah is marked in several passages. Especially in Psalms are there utterances which reflect those troublesome times. Psalm 10:12 reads:

קוֹמֶה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ יָדְךָ אֵלֵינוּ - תִּשָּׁכַח עַמִּי

"Arise, O Lord; O God, lift up Thy hand. Do not forget the poor." Evidently, the people are suffering from crafty and cruel enemies, who ignore and contemn Yahweh -- who invade the land and imperil the existence of its inhabitants. These enemies are probably those who later troubled the population of Jerusalem while the Jews were attempting to rebuild the walls under the leadership of Nehemiah; that is, the Moabites, Ammonites, Arabs, and Philistines.⁸ A period of religious declension, internal corruption, and injustice is witnessed by the reader of Psalm 12:6:

אֲסַר עַמִּי אֲנִי אֲנִי אֲנִי אֲנִי אֲנִי אֲנִי אֲנִי אֲנִי
יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ יָדְךָ אֵלֵינוּ - תִּשָּׁכַח עַמִּי

"Because the poor are exploited, because the needy groan, I shall now arise, saith the Lord; I shall place him in the safety for which he belongs." The righteous, indeed, are suffering from a miserable lot. This is no exaggeration, for Psalms 14:4 is even more vivid in a description of the way the rapacious greed of the wicked consumes God's own people -- the righteous, the poor, and the needy.

בְּלֹא יָדָעוּ כֹּל בְּרֵאשִׁי אֲנִי אֲנִי אֲנִי אֲנִי אֲנִי אֲנִי אֲנִי אֲנִי
יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ יָדְךָ אֵלֵינוּ - תִּשָּׁכַח עַמִּי

"Do they know nothing, all the evil-doers, who eat up my people as they eat bread, but do not call upon the Lord?" Yes; the Psalmist in those trying days before the coming of Nehemiah had reason to cry out:

כֹּה - אֵלֵינוּ אֲנִי אֲנִי אֲנִי אֲנִי אֲנִי אֲנִי אֲנִי אֲנִי

"Turn to me and have mercy upon me, for I am lonely and afflicted" (Ps. 25:16; cf. Ps. 109:22).

Nevertheless, in spite of all the misery which he sees his poor and unprotected brethern endure, the Psalmist, like those before him who had an unswerving faith in God, could not help but believe that God would care for these unfortunate creatures of His. This was what made the religion of Yahweh -- ethical monotheism -- so meaningful to him. For, indeed, God was inextricably identified with the social struggle; and it was inevitable for Him to take the right side -- to defend the cause of the weak and the oppressed. *לואי עני ואנוכי*

ישועתי אלהים תשעבני

"But as for me, though afflicted and in pain, Thy salvation, O God, will set me on high." Assuredly, "how happy is he who is considerate of the weak; on the day of trouble the Lord delivers him -- *אשרי אשכיל אל-צדק יום רע יחלפו פ' (Ps. 41:2)*

And as if mocking the wicked, the great poet says in Psalm 14:6:

לך-עני תבישו כי פ' מחספיו "You would put to

shame the plans of the poor; but the Lord is his refuge." Again in

Psalm 35:10: *תאמרנא פ' מ' כחוק מפיל עני מתבק ממנו ועני ואניין מגדלו*

"(All my bones will say), 'O Lord, who is like thee, saving the poor from him that is too strong for him, the poor and the needy from him that would rob him?'"

Malachi, however, in about the middle of this period (c. 485 B.C.), is not so reassured and must protest against conditions as they exist, in his great social-justice passage: *והייתי עז מאת-כ...*

קצקי סכר-שכיר אלהמות ויתוס ואט' -גר לאו
And I will be a swift witness ----
יכאונא אחר פ' קצאונא

against those who oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow and the orphan; and those who defraud the resident alien, and do not fear me,' says the Lord of hosts (Mal. 3:5)." And while Malachi, under the influence of a growing interest in particularistic ceremonialism, attempts to put ritual and ethics on the same level (even stressing ritual), Trito-Isaiah, in that remarkable passage in 58:6f., makes a clear and effective distinction, by asserting:

חֲלוּם עָלַי חֲלוּם אֶתְרֵיכֶם בְּתוֹם חֲרָבוֹת
 רָעָה כִּתְרֵי אֶתְרֵיכֶם אֶתְרֵיכֶם וְלֹא רָעָה רֵעֵיכֶם
 אֶתְרֵיכֶם תִּתְּנוּ בְּלֹא כֶסֶף לְרֵעֵיכֶם וְלֹא
 חֲרָבוֹת תִּתְּנוּ בֵּיתֵיכֶם כִּי תִרְאוּ זָרָם וְכִסִּיתוּ וְאֶתְרֵיכֶם
 לֹא תִתְּנוּ... אֵלֶּיךָ תִּקְרָא וְאֵלֶּיךָ תִּשְׁוֶה וְאֶתְרֵיכֶם תִּפְלֹא

"Is not this the fast I choose --- to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the knots of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and every yoke to snap? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and the homeless poor (cf. Lam. 1:7; 3:19) to bring home; and when you see the naked, to cover him, and to hide not yourself from your own flesh (that is, your fellow-Israelites, as in Neh. 5:5) ---- Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry, and he will say, 'Here I am!' (cf. Zech. 7:1ff.; 8:19)".

In other words, abstinence from every form of oppression, and the exercise of positive beneficence towards the destitute consist of the true fast which God desires. He who would obtain mercy from God must show a merciful disposition towards his fellowmen.

Verily, the spirit of self-denial possesses no value before God unless carried into the sphere of social duty -- into concrete acts, such as releasing the weak and the unprotected from oppressive and unjust obligations (cf. Ps. 73:4) and setting free bank-

rupts, whose liberty had been forfeited to their creditors (cf. Neh. 5:5).⁹ This seems to be a protest in favor of a purely spiritual and ethical religion, without sanctuary or sacrifice,¹⁰ as in Isa. 66:2:

וְאֵלֶיךָ כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל יָבִיאוּ זָבָח וְכָל-אֵלֶיךָ
לֵאמֹר כִּי יָדִי עָשְׂתָה כָּל-אֵלֶיךָ
וְכָל-אֵלֶיךָ הֵם
"My hand made all these things, and all these things are mine, saith the Lord; yet to this man will I have regard -- the one who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word." Not only this; but these passages conceive of God as a being more interested in matters of the spirit and of ethical conduct rather than the formal, symbolic acts of institutional religion.

Our study has thus reached the period when the Jews under Nehemiah were engaged in the work of rebuilding the walls about Jerusalem, in spite of the fact that they were being continually harassed by enemies from without -- by Sanballat and Tobiah, the Arabians, Ammonites, and Ashdodites (Neh. 4:1-23; 6:1-14). The troubles the Jews had to encounter in their work are not better expressed than in Psalm 40:18 (cf. Ps. 70:6):

אֲנִי חֲלוּשׁ וְעָנִי (for Psalm 70:6) וְאַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵי מִצְרָיִם
"Since I am poor and needy, O Lord, hasten to me! Thou art my help and my deliverer; O my God, do not tarry!" Indeed, those must have been perilous days; nevertheless, the walls were built in less than three months (Neh. 6:15-19) about the year 444 B.C.

The Temple and the city walls having been restored, and living in comparative security from enemies outside, opportunity was afforded to those who desired to indulge in reflective thought -- to observe reality as they saw it, the evil and the good. And

some, after intense spiritual struggles, finally emerged, like Job, victorious with an ever greater faith in God's goodness and close relationship with the unprotected who, though righteous, suffered at the hands of evil-doers. For example, in Job (5:15,16; 34:28; 36:6,15) are most poignant expressions which manifest God's prominent role in the social struggle:

וְיִשַׁע אֱלֹהִים
 מִפִּי כֹסֵף וּמִיַּד חֲזָק אֶסְיוֹן וְהִנֵּה אֵלֶּיךָ תִּקְוָה וְיִצְלָמֶךָ
 קִבְּצָה פִּי... אֶפְסֵי עֲוֹנוֹתַי וְצִדְקַתְךָ צִדְקַת צְדִיקִים יִשְׁמָע
 עָלַי יְיָ רַחֵם וְאַשְׁפֹּט צְדִיקִים יִתֵּן... וְיִהְיֶה זֶה קִצְרוֹ וְיִגַּל בְּהִלָּה
 אֱלֹהִים

"---So that He saves the needy from the sword of their mouth; and from the hands of the mighty the needy (Thus) There is hope to the poor, and iniquity shuts its mouth! So that they (the wicked) might cause the cry of the poor to come unto Him; and He might hear the cry of the needy.....He will not keep the wicked alive; and He grants the right of the poor.... He rescues the poor through his poverty, and uncovers their ear through oppression." In other words, the poor, whose ruin "crafty ones" had been contriving and at whose expense men of wealth have left no stone unturned to aggrandize themselves, are delivered from the clutches of their slanderous words. So that evil, abashed, must shut her mouth and allow God to hear the cries of the poor. And, to be sure, when God does hear their righteous cause, He will undoubtedly right the wrongs done to these socially distressed and unfortunate ones (cf. Ps. 34:7; 68:11): Job concludes that through poverty and suffering, the righteous are delivered, purified, and ennobled.¹¹ Such are the reflections of Job on the destiny of the weak and their mighty persecutors, and

the part which God plays in defense of the righteous cause of the oppressed.

Such great faith in God's goodness and righteousness continued into the Greek period of Hebrew history (after 332 B.C.), in the writings by the author of the Book of Proverbs. Such sayings as:

לֹדֵד הָעָנִי חֲסֵד אֱלֹהֵי אִשָּׁה יִקָּדֵשׁ
 "He who mocks the poor insults His maker; he who rejoices at their calamity will not go unpunished (Prov. 17:5)," and מְחַיֵּה הַמֵּת

וְהַיֹּדֵעַ כִּי יִשְׁלַח אֱלֹהֵי אִשָּׁה יִקָּדֵשׁ
 "He who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord; and He will repay him his deed (Prov. 19:17)," are classic illustrations of the fact that God looks with favor upon him who cares for the poor. Such an act is viewed as a natural duty of man; and he who does so, renders unto God himself the blessings of his kindness. For this, in return, God will bless him with long life and worldly prosperity.¹² But, it is as if he blasphemes his Maker, if he acts otherwise; "he will not go unpunished."¹³

The Psalmist, too, who composed some bits of poetry in the Greek period, conceives of God as an integral part of the social process -- the moral symbol and ^{English} ~~saviour of~~ ^{saviour of} mankind. For instance, in these Psalms there is complete confidence in God's goodness:

כִּי לֹא יִשְׁכַּח אֱלֹהִים תְּהִי תִקְוַת דָּלִים תִּשְׁכַּח
 "For the needy shall not always be forgotten nor shall the hope of the poor perish forever (Ps. 9:19); כִּי - אֱלֹהִים - אֱלֹהֵי הַיָּסוּד

וְהַיֹּדֵעַ כִּי יִשְׁלַח אֱלֹהֵי אִשָּׁה יִקָּדֵשׁ
 For Thou wilt deliver a humble people; but haughty eyes thou wilt bring low (18:28); כִּי מֵעַד אֶל-אֱלֹהִים
 "For the Lord listens to the needy, and does not despise His prisoners (Ps. 69:34); כִּי יִשְׁלַח אֱלֹהֵי אִשָּׁה יִקָּדֵשׁ

For He rescues the needy when he calls for help,
and the afflicted who has no helper (Ps. 72:12; cf. Job 29:12);"

"עָלָה אֶקִּיּוֹן מְדוּמָה וְיָשָׁם כְּצֹאן מִשְׁפָּחוֹת

"But He exalted the needy above affliction, and made families
like a flock (Ps. 107:41); פָּזַר מִן אֶבְיוֹנִים צִדְקָתוֹ

"He has scattered abroad; He has given
to the needy; His righteousness will endure forever; His horn

will^{be} exalted in honor (thus Psalm 112:9 is the classic passage
illustrating God's loving care for the poor and needy; it de-
scribes God as the Great Giver, whose kindness to the weak and
the unprotected man may well emulate; ~~Psalm~~ Psalm

112:9 provides the basis for the later usage of the term "right-
eousness" -- צִדְקָה -- as a synonym for "almsgiving;"¹⁴ indeed,

to be liberal in helping those less fortunate is to be righteous
as God is righteous in His unlimited mercy for the afflicted and
the deprived; cf. Prov. 11:24); חֲקִי' מְדוּמָה בִּלְבַד מֵאֵשֶׁת

"He lifts up the poor from the dust; He raises
the needy from the refuse heap (Ps. 113:7 -- cf. Is. 2:8);" and

finally Psalm 140:13, which epitomizes the indomitable confidence
in God's protection of the weak: צִדְקָתוֹ כִּי - עֲשֶׂה בִּי דָוִד

"I know that the Lord will maintain the cause of
the wretched, the rights of the poor."^{*} אֲשֶׁר אֶקִּיּוֹן

* cp. also Ps. 132:15. However, later in the Greek period, soon after
the battle of Raphia (217 B.C.), there came a turn for the worse.
And so, Zech. 11:7 tells us that: וְהָיִיתִי מְרֹאֵשׁ וְלֹאֵשׁ וְלֹאֵשׁ וְלֹאֵשׁ

"So I became a shepherd of the flock to be slaughtered for the mer-
chants of the flock; and I took for myself two rods. The one I
called "Delight;" and the other I called "Union." So I became a
shepherd of the flock;" that is, subjects who needed to be unified
by a king's benevolent solicitude for their welfare.¹⁵ But evidently
oppression prevailed, for in Psalm 86:1 it says: פָּנֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ

"Incline Thine ear, O, Lord, answer me; for I
am afflicted and needy."

Thus, we see that throughout Biblical history and literature God was always identified with the social struggle, protecting His weak creatures against the rapacious lords of Baalistic "civilization." And no matter how dark the present may have been, there was always that grand, supreme confidence that God and His righteous ones would emerge victorious and vindicated.

Chapter II

General Expressions Concerning
the Protection of the Weak

We have already seen how, in Ex. 22:20-22, the resident alien, the orphan, and the widow were emphatically protected from injustice and oppression. Amos and Isaiah, who lived about 750 B.C. and who were influenced by the Covenant Code passages in Exodus, are ever more definite in their protest against mal-treatment of the "poor and needy;"

אֲנִי... אֶקְנוֹת בְּכֶסֶף דָּלִים וְאֶקְנוֹת בְּזָבִיבִי לְעֵלִים.
"Hear this you who trample upon the needy, and would bring the poor of the land to an end buying the poor for silver, and the needy in exchange for a pair of sandals (Amos 8:4,6);"

וְלִגְדִּי אֶשְׁפֹּט צָרִי וְעַיִן אֶפְיוֹת אֶמְנוֹת שֹׁאֵם וְאֶת יְתוּמִים יִקְצוּ.
"To thrust aside the needy from their rights, and to rob my poor ones of justice. That widows may become their spoil, and that on orphans they may prey." In other words, no passages better than these express the indignation of the prophets against those who take advantage of the low and miserable status of the poor to pervert the justice due them and even force them into a life of servitude*.

And witness how this lofty spirit is continued by the prophetic influence in Deuteronomy (15:7f.; 24:17; 16:11; cf. 16:14).

בְּקֹדֶשׁ אֶתְּנֶנּוּ לְעֵלִים וְלִגְדִּי אֶשְׁפֹּט צָרִי וְעַיִן אֶפְיוֹת אֶמְנוֹת שֹׁאֵם וְאֶת יְתוּמִים יִקְצוּ.
אֲנִי... אֶקְנוֹת בְּכֶסֶף דָּלִים וְאֶקְנוֹת בְּזָבִיבִי לְעֵלִים.
אֲנִי... אֶקְנוֹת בְּכֶסֶף דָּלִים וְאֶקְנוֹת בְּזָבִיבִי לְעֵלִים.
אֲנִי... אֶקְנוֹת בְּכֶסֶף דָּלִים וְאֶקְנוֹת בְּזָבִיבִי לְעֵלִים.

*Isa. 5:16; Hos. 6:7; 12:8.

וּפְתִיחוּ וּפְחִילְמוּ אֶת קִרְבְּכֶם בְּמִקְוֵי אֶשֶׁר יִבְחַר ה'

אֱלֹהֵיכֶם לְעֵינֵי שָׂם... לֹא הָיָה מִשְׁפָּט לְךָ יְהוֹשִׁיעַ וְהָיָה בְּגֵז אֱלֹהֵיכֶם

"If there be a needy person among you, any of your fellow-countrymen in any of your communities in the land which the Lord your God is giving you, you must not steel your heart nor shut your hand against your needy countryman; --- and with your son, daughter, male and female slaves, the Levite in your community, the resident alien, the orphan the widow, who are among you, you are to rejoice before the Lord your God at the sanctuary, which the Lord your God chooses as the abiding-place of His presence (cf. Dt. 16:14) You must not pervert the justice due the resident alien, or the orphan; nor take a widow's garment in pledge."

And, considering also Dt. 24:19-21 which prescribes forgotten sheaves and left gleanings for the poor and needy, we have in these passages the essence of the Biblical idea of the protection of the weak, considered under various classifications of unprotected individuals. Indeed, Dt. 15:11 takes for granted that there will never fail some poor ones in the land. But let them not become permanent, hereditary, socially doomed proletarians (Dt. 15:4). Thus Jeremiah denounces those indifferent to this injunction: - אֲמָנוּ (עֲשֵׂנוּ = עֲשֵׂנוּ) לָךְ עֲזָרוּ וְיִצְחָקוּ (דְּבָרִי -

(omit - ר) דִּין לֹא דָנוּ יְהוֹשִׁיעַ וּמִשְׁפָּט אֲבִיוֹנִים לֹא עָשָׂה (Jer. 5:28). "They grow fat and rich; yea, they transgress and prosper; they uphold not the cause of the orphan, and the rights of the needy they do not defend."

As if to illustrate the admonition of Jeremiah (7:6a): לֹא יִתְחַנְּנוּ

וְלֹא יִשְׁחָדוּ "Don't oppress (these three special

~~Jer. 5:28, Jer. 7:6, Jer. 22:26~~

classes of weak individuals) the resident alien, the orphan, and the widow" -- the Deuteronomic redactor of the Book of Samuel, who lived in exilic times (2S. 12:1-6) tells how a rich man cruelly performed the duty of hospitality by seizing the only possession of his poor neighbor. How worthless is such "kindness!" No; with this Biblical writer the end does not justify the means. Repeatedly there is the exhortation, in one form or another, in pre-exilic and post-exilic times, "Do not devise wickedness against those who can not protect themselves -- whether they be resident aliens, slaves, poor and needy Hebrew laborers, orphans, or widows (cf. Zech. 7:10; Lev. 19:33,H; Mal. 3:5, for post-exilic expressions)." This prophetic view is constantly emphasized: Practice the social virtues; Yahweh is champion of the poor and the weak; and ethical righteousness is an essential element in religion, over and above ceremonial purity and perfection (cf. Isa. 58:6f.). In other words, the fulfillment of one's obligations to God does not release one from certain obligations to his fellow-men (especially to the stranger in the community, who had few friends to safeguard his interests).¹⁷ Failure to discharge these duties means disobedience to the religious and ethical mores of Yahweh's society; and such crimes as those vividly described by Job (24:2-12a), which Job himself judged himself innocent (29:12-16; 30:25; 31:13-21) -- like foreclosures on private property, dispossessing the poor, leaving the weak and defenceless without food, shelter, or clothing, withholding pay from the hired laborer and increasing the burdens

of slaves, preventing the justice of those who have no bribes to offer, making more grievous the pains of the afflicted -- all these dastardly acts are ever repugnant to God and to those like Job, whose fervent desire is to be like God in his conduct towards his needy fellow-men¹⁸ (cf. Ps. 112:9).

No wonder then that "the wicked (who) draw the sword and bend their bow, to bring down the poor and needy, to slay those whose way is right" (

חַרֵּק בְּתוֹרַת רַעֲדִים וַיִּרְכֹּוּ קֶשֶׁת
אֶפְפִּיף עָלָיו וַאֲבִייוֹ
אֶטְקוֹת יָשָׁרִים - צֶדֶק

(cf. Ps. 10:9; Ps. 37:14 --

are cursed, as only the Psalmist can curse, with these words:

בְּגִאוֹת רַעֲדִים יִצְלַק עָלָיו יִתְבַּשׁ בְּאִמְנֻתוֹת צַדִּיק

"The wicked in his arrogance consumes the poor; may they (the wicked) be caught in the schemes which they have devised! (Ps. 10:2)."

And Proverbs continues this intense moral passion by asserting:

בֶּן-עֲרֻרָה טֵטֵא וְאִחְוָן צַדִּיק אֲשֵׁרִי

"He who despises his neighbor sins; but, happy is he who is kind to the poor (Prov. 14:21)!" Even "better a poor man who walks in his integrity than one who is crooked in his ways, although he may be rich"

(טוֹב רֵשׁ הוֹלֵךְ בְּתוֹרַת מִדְּקָה שְׂבִיתוֹ וְכֹחַ עֲשִׂיר

Prov. 19:1; cf. Prov. 28:6); or "it is better to be humble with the poor than to share spoil with the proud" (טוֹב עֲבֹל - רוֹחַ אֹת -

Prov. 16:9). צַדִּיק מִחֶלֶק עֵלִי אֹת - גִּלְיָם

* cf. Job 24:2ff. גְּבוּלוֹת יִשְׁגּוּ עֲדָר גִּזְלוּ וַיִּרְצוּ חֲמוֹר יְתוּמִים יַעֲבֹר
יִחַדּוּ שׂוֹר אֶת-מִנְהַג יָטוּ אֲבִיוֹנִים מִדֶּקֶת... צָרוֹם יִינּוּ... מִדֶּרֶךְ וַיִּנְאֲקוּ וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ

"Men remove boundaries; they steal flocks and pasture them; they lead away the ass of the orphan; they take as a pledge the ox of the widow; they turn aside the needy from the waynaked they pass the night without clothingFrom the city the dying groan, and those who are wounded call for help."

Job. 30:25-

"I have certainly wept for him whose times were hard; I was grieved for the needy."

In other words, these general expressions regarding the protection of the weak continue, through the words of man rather than from the viewpoint of God, the same thought; that the weak and the afflicted should be well cared for by those more fortunate; that neglect of this duty is verily a profanation of God's name; that the wicked will reap the consequences of their own evil ways; and therefore, in any case it is better to be poor and lowly (without the "opportunity" to do evil) and be on the side of God and Right than of superior station and liable to all the perversive influences which may come as the result of such position in the economic and social order.

Chapter III

Favoritism Towards the Poor

In fact, the Bible has a high estimate of the moral integrity and intellectual capabilities of the poor. Jeremiah

(2:34) claims: *לֹא בְּכַבֵּיךְ (בְּכַבֵּי יָד) נִמְצְאוּ זֶמַר וּפְשׁוֹת אֲבִיוֹנִים*

"On your hands also is found the blood of the innocent poor -- not breaking into houses did you find them, but opposed to all such things." (cf. Ps. 37:

14; Isa. 58:7f.). And the Book of Proverbs comments thus:

*אֵל-יֹדֵעַ בּוֹן קִיּוֹם עָרֵב וְצָדִיק תִּצְלֵי מִמּוֹת
דָּב-אֵכָל נִיר רֹאשִׁים וְיֵשׁ נֶסֶח בְּלֹא מַעֲשֵׂה*

"Wealth is of no avail on the day of death; but righteousness saves from death (Prov. 11:4; cf. Prov. 10:2) The fallow land of the poor yields food in abundance; but it is wept away by injustice." (Prov. 13:23) In other words, goodness is the saving power for the poor and allows them to reap the abundance of their crops, only to be snatched away by wicked and greedy men of wealth. But ill-gotten wealth, though it may procure temporary triumph, profits nothing in the end, since violence and injustice are sure to bring divine or human (legal or private) vengeance -- yea, even death premature, sudden, violent, or otherwise unhappy. Wealth will not be able to avert God's judgment; but the righteousness of the poor secures the favor and blessing of God; that is, a long and peaceful life*¹⁹ (cf. Prov. 19:1; 28:6; 22a,b; 30:1).

* These Proverbs passages are perhaps as late as the second century B.C. when, as in Daniel 4:24(27) *אֲנִי מֶלֶךְ וְאַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵי שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ וְאַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵי כָל הָאָרֶץ וְאַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵי כָל הָאָרֶץ וְאַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵי כָל הָאָרֶץ* "Therefore, O King, be pleased to accept my advice and break off your sins by alms-giving and your guilt by showing mercy to the poor; then perhaps your prosperity may be prolonged.", righteousness is being identified with alms giving. For, in the Daniel passage

But, not only is it asserted that the poor are righteous -- not only are preferences given to the poor -- but also their wisdom is mentioned in the Bible -- especially in Proverbs 28:11 and Ecclesiastes 4:13 and 9:15:

חכם קדניו איש עטיר ורץ חקי /
 חקרנו / טוב ילד מסכן מאתק דקן / כסף ישר לא יד /
 אפדער דוד / ואצא דפ איש מסכן חכם ואצא - פוא איש -
 פדיר קחכחמו ואצא לא זכר איש פאסכן פפוא /
 "The rich man is wise in his own eyes; but a poor man possessed of intelligence will test him (Prov. 28:11).... Better is a youth poor and wise than a king old and foolish, who no longer knows how to be admonished (Eccles. 4:13).... And (it is told) there was found in it (a city) a poor, wise man, and he rescued the city by his wisdom: yet nobody remembered that poor, wise man (Eccles. 9:15; cf. 2S. 20: 15-22, the siege of Abel-Beth-Maacah, which was relieved by the action of a wise woman -- here, in Ecclesiastes, changed to a poor man because of the context²⁰)."

Thus, throughout Biblical times we see certain positive attitudes with regard to the important obligation of protecting the weak. Not only is this duty important but it is well-nigh sacred, inasmuch as God himself cares for those who are at the mercy of the wicked; and, therefore, he who is kind to the poor and the needy imitates the ways of God and gains His favor. However, no words are denunciatory enough for those who do otherwise. Thus, God --

Especially, we see a king being urged to rid himself of the guilt of his sins -- by righteousness, which is defined as showing kindness to the poor -- the care of the poor being considered the most obvious of social duties and a special indication of a good heart, and as a means of wiping out guilt.¹⁹

the symbol of ethical monotheism -- is a very part of the social struggle. Social and economic morality is not something peripheral to religion; rather it is its very center and core.

Chapter IV

Some Negative Sentiments on the Subject

The E prophetic narrative²¹ vividly shows us how a defenceless individual might be taken advantage of by an unscrupulous and more fortunate person. For, in Gen. 31:41 Jacob complains to Laban for having the presumption to suspect him of the theft of his (Laban's) household gods; and defending himself, Jacob protests:

גַּם-אִי עֲרִיץ שֶׁנִּי בְּקִיטָהּ עָבַדְתִּיךָ אֲרִבָּה-עֲרִיץ שֶׁנִּי
 כֶּשֶׁתִּי בְּנִתִיךָ וְשֵׁשׁ שָׁנִים בְּצֹאֲנֶךָ וְחֵמֶזְלִי אֶת-אֲשֶׁרֹתִי עָשִׂיתָ אֵינִי.
 "For twenty years now I have been a member of your household; I worked fourteen years for your two daughters, and six years for your sheep. Ten times you changed my wages." Obviously, the author wishes to protest against economic oppression of such morally unprincipled individuals as Laban. And the writer has this apply also with regard to the treatment of the resident alien, the widow, and the orphan (cf. Ex. 22:20,21).

And, as we have noticed before, the eight-century prophets, influenced by J and E, are even more severe in their denunciations of such flagrant injustices. Amos exclaims:

אָמַר הַצִּדִּיק בְּעַם
 בָּרוּךְ הַקֵּשׁן אֲשֶׁר קִבֵּר שִׁמְרוֹן הַדִּשְׁקוֹת בָּלִים הַרְבֵּלוֹת פֶּאֱמוֹת אֲדֻנֵּיפָם
 "Hear this word, you cows of Bashan, you who are
 on the mount of Samaria, who oppress the weak, who crush the needy, who say to their lords: 'Bring that we may drink.' (Amos 4:1)"
 אָמַר הַצִּדִּיק בְּעַם
 הַשִּׁמְרוֹת אֲקִיּוֹן וְהַשְׁקִיטוּת צֹאֲנֵי-אֲרִבָּה-עֲרִיץ אֲמַתִּי יִצְדָּר הַחֲדָשׁ וְהַשְׁקִירָה
 שָׁקֵר וּפְשָׁעִי וְנִבְרָתִי - כִּי עָלְתִּי אֶפְרַיִם וְהָבִיאוּ אֶת-הָאָדָם הַחֲדָשׁ
 "Hear this, you who trample upon the needy and would bring the poor of the land to an end, saying: 'When will the new moon pass that we

flesh of my people and strip them of their flesh, and lay bare their bones and break them like meat in the pot and flesh within the cauldron (Mic. 2:2, 3:3)." Such is the bestial, rapacious character of those who evict (probably through foreclosure) their neighbors/^{out} of their homesteads in order to increase their own estates. Soon, these prophets justifiably believed, no one will remain but these rich/land-grabbers, and the poor yeomen will lose their position in the country.²⁵ From what has been said before about the old desert mishpat of Yahweh, it is very evident that this is a very denial of the principle of the inalienability of land. Thus, these prophets cannot tolerate such tyranny, such greed. This peasant prophet, Micah, born and bred on the vine-clad hill-slopes of western Judah, considered the ousting of peasant-farmers from their small holdings, inherited through successive generations of toilers whose life had gone into the "good earth," was a wholly unpardonable crime. No amount of legal procedure could make it appear right.²⁶ The devastation of the defenceless poor at the mercy of these ravenous wolves is total and irreparable; and woe unto those who are guilty of shedding such innocent blood (cf. Jer. 2:34; 7:6a; 22:13; 22:17). This is well illustrated by the later exilic Deuteronomic editor of Samuel and Kings who gives us such stories as Nathan's parable and rebuke of David's affair with Bathsheba (cf. 2S. 12:1-6) and the widow's pitiful plight in 2K. 4:1, where she implores Elisha, the prophet, to save her from the gaping jaws of these "wild-beasts:"

וְאֵלֶּם אֲנִי - בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים
אֲנִי אֲנִי - בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים
כִּי דָרְבָּךְ פִּי יָרוּ אֶת - בְּ וּפְנֵי
כִּי דָרְבָּךְ אֶת - אֶת יְצִי אֶת דְּרָבָיִם.

"Now the wife of one of the members of the prophetic order cried out to Elisha, saying: 'My husband, your servant is dead, and you know that your servant feared the Lord; but the creditor has come to take my two children to be his slaves!'" (cf. Neh. 5:1-13). Such was the miserable lot of the poor and the defenceless. Is it any wonder, then, that the prophets were so vehement in their denunciations? They could not stand idly by, and view the dreadful situation with an "open and tolerant mind," while their own fellow-men were suffering so. They had to speak out and utter words of censure and condemnation to those who dared to perpetrate such villainous crimes.

Ezekiel himself, who went with the other exiles to Babylonia, must have been an eye-witness to some of these outrageous deeds. For he describes the corruption within Jerusalem thus:

אב ואם בקרבו יאמרו זה עשיתי
 וזה עשיתי... וזה עשיתי... וזה עשיתי
 וזה עשיתי... וזה עשיתי... וזה עשיתי
 וזה עשיתי... וזה עשיתי... וזה עשיתי

"Father and mother within you (that is, the city of Jerusalem) men despise; the resident alien within they treat oppressively; the orphan and widow they wrong (Eze. 22:7).... There are those within you who slander in order to shed blood (Eze. 22:9).... (Even) the common people practice oppression and commit robbery; they wrong the poor and needy; and treat the resident alien with injustice (Eze. 22:29; cf. Jer. 37:2)."^{*} Malachi (c. 485) (3:5)

^{*} cp. also Ezek. 22:12. cf. Sulzberger, M. -- Polity of the Ancient Hebrews, p. 3; cp. 58-59, 76, 79; the Am Ha-Aretz is the federal assembly of the poor, their representative body. cf. Schaeffer, H., The Social Legislation of the Primitive Semites, pp. 147f.

and Job (c. 400), however, living already at a time when the city of Jerusalem and its Temple had been rebuilt by the returned exiles and when the city walls had been re-established, are able to speak more calmly and reflectively, and, although there is still corruption within,* (Malachi 3:5; Job 24:2-12a; cf. Job 20:19; 31:21), they, together with Zechariah who also lived during the Restoration period, (c. 520 B.C.), believe that these are the conditions of God's acceptance: כֹּה אָמַר יְיָ צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

וְהָיָה כִּי יִשְׁפֹּט יְיָ אֶת-אֲמֹנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהָיָה כִּי יִשְׁפֹּט יְיָ אֶת-אֲמֹנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
 אֵל-הַיָּדָעִים וְהָיָה כִּי יִשְׁפֹּט יְיָ אֶת-אֲמֹנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהָיָה כִּי יִשְׁפֹּט יְיָ אֶת-אֲמֹנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
 "Thus spoke the Lord of hosts, saying: 'Render true judgments, and practice kindness and mercy each toward his brother. Do not oppress the widow and the orphan, the resident alien and the poor; and let none of you devise in your heart wickedness against your brother.' (Zech. 7:9, 10; cf. Job 29:12-16; Isa. 58:6f.; Mal. 3:3,4)." This passage from Zechariah is another one of those portions which succinctly state the criteria of social justice and the standards which God requires of his creatures in their relations to one another. Thus, later, in the Greek period, the author of the Book of Proverbs speaks to "a class of people whose teeth are swords and whose fangs are knives, to devour the poor from the earth, and the needy from among men" (Prov. 30:14

דָּוָר חֲרוֹת שֵׁנוֹ וְהָאֵלֶּיךָ עֵלֶיךָ אֵלֶיךָ וְהָאֵלֶּיךָ עֵלֶיךָ אֵלֶיךָ וְהָאֵלֶּיךָ עֵלֶיךָ אֵלֶיךָ
 to "a wicked man who oppress the poor" who is comparable to "a lashing rain that leaves no food" (Prov. 28:3 גֶּבֶר כִּי וְעֵץ דָּלִים מֵאֵר סֶלָה וְאֵין לֶחֶם), and he urges them "not to rob the poor, because he is poor, nor crush

*cp. also Ps. 109:16, which according to I.C.C., Psalms, II, pp. 366f., is in the early Persian period; and, therefore, it concerns the times under discussion.
 ** cp. Ps. 10:2a,9; 14:4; 37:14, for descriptions of the deeds of the wicked.

the needy in the gate" (Prov. 22:22 *הָעֵשֶׂה בִּלְבָבוֹ אֶת-הָעֲנִי וְלֹא-תִצְחֵם אֶת-פִּי קֶשֶׁר*),
for he concludes that "he who oppresses the poor insults his Maker;
but he who is kind to the needy honors Him" (Prov. 14:31 *עֲשֵׂה בִלְבָבוֹ*

חַסְדָּא וְלֹא-תִצְחֵם אֶת-פִּי קֶשֶׁר)

reduced to slavery because of destitution. Many of these slaves were well taken care of by their masters, so that not a few of them preferred to remain forever as slaves under a master's protection rather than have to make their way in the world independently. Also, many of the aliens residing in the community had found their lot rather happy, so that in time, they expressed their desire to become full-fledged citizens and to enjoy all the privileges which come with such citizenship. Since the community had a religious basis, the alien first had to become circumcized and then express his willingness to participate in the ceremonial observances of the Hebrew religious community (this latter provision was optional). Thus, being a protected member of the community, the alien was on the level with any other Israelite. As for slaves, as part of the Israelitish household, and circumcized (cf. Gen. 17:11-13), they too were considered members of the community. Thus, the Hebrew commonwealth was very inclusive and allowed those of lower status to improve their position considerably.²⁸

There were, to be sure, the luxurious rich and the miserable poor. Yet such, wretched as they were, might, in the Hebrew society, rise out of their poverty. Though forced to take to the city-dump for lodgings (Is. 2:8), the needy might lift himself out of his misery. And just here we catch a glimpse of one of the most hopeful features of that old time, and life --- labour was so highly esteemed that it was believed the poor unfortunate might lift himself by hard work and righteous conduct into a position of respectability.²⁹ In fact, Day tells us that "in many of these small villages one common threshing-floor might suffice for the entire com-

community, as might also one wine-press. Here, though families might have their individual fields for the season at least, as they surely would have their individual homes and granaries, there was something akin to a community of interests and a division of labour in the very fact that common utilities might serve one and the same community."^{30*} Thus, it was so much easier for those in the lower social brackets to maintain themselves and even improve their position.

Now, we have mentioned certain resident aliens -- or פְּרִיזִיטִים as members of the Hebrew household. Exactly who were they? It seems that Sulzberger gives a very plausible explanation. He says that "at the final conquest of Canaan, the Hebrews took the land of the Canaanites and divided it among themselves, retaining the previous inhabitants as workingmen. Most of these remained settled on the land as a peasant population and these were called toshabim (תּוֹשָׁבִים) while those who were not so settled worked for a daily wage as sekirim (סְכִירִים). The general term applied to both classes was גֵּר (Literally, stranger). When one of these gerim died, his family (the widow -- יְתוּמָה -- and the orphan -- יָתוּם) were not driven out of their humble cottage, but remained on the land and worked on it. Hence the locution יְתוּמָה וְיָתוּם which occurs so frequently as descriptive of the conquered population."³¹ At first, גֵּר simply meant stranger. Abraham calls himself thus when he speaks to the Hittites (Gen. 23:4). But after the Hebrews had conquered the Canaanites, and throughout the Biblical period, even to a time when the גֵּר had become completely assi-

* Ginzberg disagrees with the idea that there was a sort of primitive communism among the Hebrews. cf. Ginzberg, E., Die Sozialen Verhältnisse der Israeliten, in the Jewish Quarterly Review, Vol. 22, No. 4, pp. 406f.

milated into Hebrew life, \aleph took on the meaning of a laborer. And the Book of Proverbs assumes this to such an extent that the \aleph is already identified with the various classes of workingmen -- the \aleph , \aleph , and \aleph --³⁰ that he was not known by any other name. Of course, later, in the Common Era, \aleph became the term for a proselyte.³¹

And while speaking about the proselyte, it is interesting to note that Sulzberger identifies the \aleph with that "considerable body of Egyptian natives (who) attached themselves to Israel with the determination to become a part thereof and to share its fate."³² It is true that their reception into the fold by the Israelites was cold; that those of so-called pure Hebrew blood would not admit them immediately as their full equals. But it was not long before they had become assimilated into the Hebrew body politic; and they were set up before the \aleph as a model to imitate. Thus, the \aleph and the \aleph , laborers, in the Hebrew community, were afforded opportunities to advance themselves to full membership in Israel.

Of course, besides these, there were the slaves (male and female), the ox, and the ass who did the work for ^{the} Hebrew land-owners. Then, too, there were Hebrews themselves who worked on their own land or hired themselves out to others. They were the \aleph , the \aleph , the \aleph , and the \aleph . Of these, "only one, the \aleph , came to mean the unsuccessful farmer, who, though he did not prosper, was still able to hold on to his land, cultivating it by the aid of his wife, and children, and in many cases supplementing its insufficient returns by working part of the time for others and receiving wages therefor."³²

Slaves

First, let us examine probably the most important and a very common institution in ancient times -- that of slavery. The slave was called ³³אֲדָמָה. If he was bought, he was designated as אֲדָמָה-אֲרָמִי, if he was born in the Hebrew house-hold of slave parentage, he was called a אֲדָמָה-אֲרָמִי (Gen. 14:14) or a אֲדָמָה-אֲרָמִי (cf. Gen. 15:3; Eccles. 2:7 -- commented above on p. 114), (also for אֲדָמָה-אֲרָמִי Gen. 17:12,13; Lev. 22:11; Jer. 2:14) or a אֲדָמָה-אֲרָמִי. But, although the Hebrews practiced slavery, they had a rooted aversion to the system, and they tried to mitigate its evils as much as possible. We have already seen how, in Gen. 15:3 (cf. Gen. 21:7-11), the אֲדָמָה-אֲרָמִי could inherit his master's property if there were no male heir. And we learn from Gen. 24:2, and LS. 9:3ff.; 25:14ff., that slaves were not "dumb" but, on the contrary, they were often asked for their opinion and advice, and to negotiate for the master in business transactions or in match-making (Gen. 24:53). In fact, in IChron. 2:34, 35, Sheshan, a Judæan magnate, gives his daughter in marriage to his Egyptian slave, Yasha; and in Prov. 17:2 it states that "a capable servant will rule over a dissolute son, and will share the inheritance among the brothers" (אֲדָמָה-אֲרָמִי יִשְׁרָף בְּעַד אֲדָמָה-אֲרָמִי). Although most of these passages are rather late in the Biblical period, nevertheless they do indicate how a favorable estimate of the position of the slave grew.*

Not only this; but slavery was mitigated in even more practical ways. E's Book of the Covenant informs us that "when you buy a Hebrew slave, he is to work for you six years, but in the

*Cp. also Job's defence of his treatment of slaves in 31:13-15.

onomy combines some ritual observances with ethics. For in 12:12, 17, 18; 16:11, 14, it is specifically stated that the slaves, along with the other members of the household, should take part in the observances at the central sanctuary, whether it be the Feast of Weeks or the Feast of Tabernacles. However, ethics still predominates in Deuteronomy-- in some cases on a higher level than E-- so that in Dt.5:14ff., slaves rest on the Sabbath, and for this added reason: Because the Hebrews themselves were once slaves in Egypt. And in Dt.15:12ff., the law in Ex.21, regarding the sending of a Hebrew slave free at the end of six years, is made even more humane-- "and when you set him free from your service, you must provision him liberally out of your flock, threshing-floor, and wine-press..."

וכי- תשלחו חבשי אצמך לא תשלחו ריקם
 . הוצק תצונו או מצאנו ואצמך ואצמך.
 the case of a man marrying a woman captive; that is, if he tires of her, then he must not only set her free, but

ואכר -- "he must not sell her as a slave (Dt. 15:10ff.):"

Finally, "you must not turn a slave over to his master when he has escaped from his master to you" (Dt.23:16; cf. IK.2:39,40--

אח תסגיר). To conclude our study of how slavery was mitigated the best way possible under existing conditions, we need only to point out a few passages from the post-exilic works of H and P. In H, Leviticus 25 is our key chapter. There, in verse 10, the fiftieth year (the Jubilee year), rather than the seventh year (evidently this law in Ex.21:2ff. was not practicable), is the time when all slaves were freed:

וקצמת את שנה
 תמשים שנה וקראתם זכור בארץ לכל- ישיב יובל פיא
 תהיה לכם וקראתם איה אל- אומותו ואיה אל- משפחתו וקראתם

"You must hallow the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout

its
the land to all/inhabitants; it is to be a jubilee for you,
when each of you shall return to his own possessions, and
each of you shall return to his own family." And in verses 39 to
46, if Hebrews are reduced to such poverty that they must sell
themselves to their own fellow-Hebrews as slaves, such individuals
are to be treated not as ordinary slaves, who may serve forever
in a family as inherited property, but rather merely as hired/^{or settled}
laborers (that is, עֲבָדֵי כֶסֶף -- cf. Sulzberger, M.-- Status of
Labor in Ancient Israel-- pp.116ff.). This applies also to a poor
Hebrew in the employ of a rich alien or serf; and his פֶּדוּת or
kinsman must "redeem" him, if that needy relative cannot redeem
himself (Lev. 25:47-55). Finally, P states with regard to the
Passover sacrifice that "any slave of a man that has been purchased
may eat of it when you have circumcized him" (Ex.12:44-- צִדְקָה-פֶּדוּת
וְצִדְקָה אֵל עֲבָדָיו וְעֲבָדָתוֹ). Thus, only
by entering into the covenant of Abraham did the slave become a
member of the Israelitish community and partake of its privileges
(cf. Gen.17:11-13).

And so, we have seen that the Hebrews tried to lessen as
much as possible the evils of slavery, since they believed that
only God was the true owner of men and of the land upon which they
live.³⁴ "From Israel has come a moral code based on the Ten Command-
ments, which expresses, as well as mere laws can, the fundamental
duties of man to God and to his fellow-men... It is this code that
is the basis not only of the constitutions but also of the every-
day life of all the great democracies of the present-day."³⁵

Some General Comments on Laborers

In general, it may be deduced, from what has already been written, that the Biblical writers took special pains to provide laws which would protect the laborer -- whether he may be slave, hired laborer, or merely a Hebrew toiler. They praised and blessed those who cared for those weak and immensed in poverty; and they denounced and cursed those who did otherwise. It was very distasteful to these writers to see the strong take advantage of those less fortunate (cf. Gen. 31:41 -- E).³⁶ They could not bear to see a laborer, who needed his pay very badly, being cheated of that which was due him. Thus, D and H explicitly demand justice for hired servants. They say:

אל תדעק
שכיר דני' אונקיון אמת'ק און מערק אסר קאנדעק קעמק
קיוואו תתן שכרו ולא תבואו דע'ו פאש כ' דני'
פואו אא'לו פואו נוסא און - נבשו לא - יקרא דע'ק און -
ה' ופיה קק תטא... אל תדעק און - רדק לא תגזו
אל תעין ברחם שכיר אמתק דע - קק

"You must not defraud a hired laborer who is poor and needy whether he is one of your countrymen or one of the aliens resident in your land, in your community. You must pay him his wages by the day, before the sun sets, for he is poor and expecting it, so that he may not cry to the Lord against you, and you incur guilt (Dt. 24: 14-15).!" "You must not defraud your fellow nor rob him; the wages of a hired laborer **and** not to remain all night with you until morning (Lev. 19:13)." In other words, the wages of a poor hired servant are not to be withheld from him after the time they are due. They are to be paid regularly at the end of a day's work.³⁷

The Ger

And the same treatment -- kindly consideration, fair dealings, equal social and religious privileges with other Israelites -- was accorded to the גֵּרִים, the Canaanitish hired laborers, by the laws of E,D,H, and P, as to the slaves and the other employed servants (cf. Ex. 22:20f.; 23:9,12; Dt. 16:11,14; 24:14,15,17,etc. -- some of which have already been discussed). Even "when you have finished taking out all the dues of your produce in the third year, the year for the taking out of dues, you must give them to the Levite, the resident alien, the orphan, and the widow, that they may eat their fill in your community." (Dt. 26:12; cf. Dt. 14:28f.)

כִּי תִכְלֹף לַעֲרֵךְ אֶת-כָּל-מַעֲשֵׂי תְּבוּאָתְךָ שָׁנָה בְּשָׁלִישִׁית שָׁנָה

וְהָעֲרֵךְ וְהַתֵּיבָה לְעַלְוֵי זֶרֶק עֵינֶיךָ וְלַאֲלֻמִּים וְלַעֲרֵךְ וְלַעֲרֵךְ
"And you must not glean your vineyards bare, nor gather the fallen

fruit of your vineyard; you must leave them for the poor and the resident alien, since I, the Lord, am your God" (Lev. 19:10; cf.

Dt. 24:19f.) וְכִבְיָחֶם לֹא תִחַזְּלֶם וְכִבְיָחֶם לֹא תִחַזְּלֶם וְכִבְיָחֶם לֹא תִחַזְּלֶם

even a single grape must be left to the poor. Their

leket and their peret, are their due; do not withhold these from

them. The ma'aser ani -- the triennial tithe -- is theirs, too;

let the gerim and the other weaker classes of the Hebrew society

share in this, too. "For the Lord they God is one who is never

partial, and never takes a bribe, who secures justice, for the or-

phan and the widow, and loves the resident alien in giving him

food and clothing. So you should love the resident alien; for you

were once resident aliens yourselves in the land of Egypt." (Dt. 10:

17-19; cf. Lev. 19:33 --H כִּי פִי אֶלְפִיכֶם הוּא... אִשְׁרָאֵל יֵשׁוּ

בְּנֵיךְ וְלֹא יִקַּח שֹׁחַד עֵשֶׂה מִשְׁפַּט יִתּוּם וְאַלְמָנָה וְאִפְסָךְ גֵּר

לִתְּתֶם לוֹ לֶחֶם וּשְׂמָלָה וְאִפְסָתֶם אֶת-פִּתְּךָ כִּי-גֵרִים הֵייתֶם בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם

And finally P climaxes the entire argument for equal treatment for all laborers by repeating again and again the thought: "You shall have the one ordinance, with resident alien³⁸ and native-born³⁸ to be treated alike...." (Lev. 24:22a; cf. Ex. 12:49; Num. 9:14; 15:15,16,29).

משפט אחד יביאכם כג כאו דרת

Kindness to Animals

There is one other group which work for men. These are animals, such as the ox and the ass used by the ancient Hebrews. As dumb laborers employed by man, they require humane treatment.

Thus, in Ex. 24:26b

לא תרעל ג' קחלב אמו

("You must not boil a kid in its mother's milk"), and in Lev. 22:

28 ("and in the case of a cow or ewe, you must not slaughter it,

and its young on the same day"--H), ושל או עט אמו ואמו קח

And therefore, care is taken to be as little

cruel as possible with them. And "if you chance upon your enemy's

ox or ass going astray, you must be sure to take it home to him"

(Ex. 23:4; cf. Dt. 22:1-5) כי תפגד שור אייבך או חמורו חזק

Moreover, "if you should happen to come upon a

bird's nest in any tree, or on the ground, with young ones or

eggs, and the mother sitting on the young or the eggs, you must

not take the mother with the young" --(Dt. 22:6) כי יקרא קל

צפור לפניך בצרך ככל-על או חל-באלי אפרתים או קיצי אפר

וקצת ע-באפרתים או חל-בקיצי לא תקח חל-באפרתים

And your land "during the seventh year you must leave it alone and

let it lie fallow, so that the poor of your people may eat of it, and

what they leave the wild beasts may eat" (Ex. 23:11; cf. Lev. 25:5-7--H)

אפי' דא תשאנא ונטשת אכא

אק'י' דאק' ו'תרם תאכא ח'י' פ'ש'פ' Thus E's Book of the Covenant, D, and H provide laws which urge the most humane treatment for dumb animals.

How much the more does this apply when they are used by man in his daily work! Therefore, Ex. 23:12 legislates:

ש'ת' י'א'יך "Six days you are to do your work, but on the seventh day you must desist, in order that your ox and ass may rest." And, in D (Dt. 25:4), it says: "You must not muzzle an ox when he is treading out grain"

ת'ד'פ' א'ז'י'ק' ו'ק'י'ו'ם פ'ש'פ'י' ת'ש'ת' א'מ'ן י'ו'ה ש'ו'ר'ק' ו'מ'ו'ר'ק' "Six days you are to do your work, but on the seventh day you must desist, in order that your ox and ass may rest." And, in D (Dt. 25:4), it says: "You must not muzzle an ox when he is treading out grain"

Thus, we have seen how Biblical writers protested the laborers of the ancient Hebrew society. We notice that in some laws there is a development of the humaneness in treating them. We realize Israel's laws are not mere formal legalism, but that they are tempered greatly by a deep ethical and social consciousness.

Of the weaker classes of individuals, there remain two groups to be discussed -- the Levites and women.

The Levites

In the old days of the Judges, the Levites were itinerary ministrants at small sanctuaries on private estates (cf. Jud. 17: 10)

ו'י'א'מ'ר' א'ל' א'י'כ' ש'ב'ת' - ז'מ'ר'י' ו'כ'י'פ' א'ל'מ'א' א'ל'כ'ב'ן ו'א'נ'כ'י' 10

א'מ'ן - א'ל'ק' ז'מ'ר'ת' כ'ס'פ' ז'א'י'ם / ז'ר'ק' ק'ר'ב'י'ם ו'מ'ח'י'ת'ק' "Live with me," Micah said to him: "Be father and priest to me, and I will give you ten shekels of silver a year, the necessary clothes, and your living." In other words, a Levite from Bethlehem in Judah is to serve in the employ of the Ephraimite Micah

as his priest in return for food, clothing, and lodging. And when larger local sanctuaries grew up in various cities, like Gilgal, Dan (cf. Jud. 18:30), Beth El, these wandering priests found employment there. But with the appearance of Deuteronomy (621) and the command for a single, central sanctuary in Jerusalem, these local sanctuaries dwindled in importance. D, however, made provisions for the displaced Levites of the local shrines by giving them an equal share of the offerings with their fellow Levites in the central sanctuary (Dt. 18:8 חזק

(18:1) חזק Then, too, the entire class of Levites owned no property. Therefore, the Temple and the land about it, along with a share of the prescribed offerings, were their only means of support (Dt. 18:1 חזק יביתם חזק

חזק ונתתם דם ישראל אש"פ ונתתם יאכלו
 "The Levitical priests, that is, the whole tribe of Levi, shall have no property or heritage like the rest of Israel; they shall live on the sacrifices made to the Lord and the dues made over to Him." Therefore they are to receive portions of the annual tithe, share in the offerings brought to the Temple on the Feast of Weeks and the Tabernacles Feast, and share in the triennial tithe with the חזק יביתם חזק (Dt. 14:22,23,27; 12:18, 19; 16:10-14; 14:27-29).

But, after the Exile, Ezekiel, planning for the restoration of the Temple, scorns the local Levites and makes them menial servants to the regular priests of the central sanctuary. And it is these priests who now receive their portion of the offerings and the best of the first-fruits and dough (Ezek. 44:28-30). Moreover, the ministrants in the Temple and their superiors are

allotted a special strip of land around the Temple (Ezek. 45:1-5), for, as has been said, they had no private property. And P strengthens these provisions by stating that their land should never be totally alienated (Lev. 25:32 ^{אֲרֵצֵי כֹהֲנֵי עִיר} ^{אֲרֵצֵי כֹהֲנֵי עִיר} "In the case of the cities of the Levites, however, in the case of the houses of the cities in their possession, the Levites shall have a perpetual right of redemption"). These are the forty-eight cities and their suburbs mentioned in Nu. 35:1-8. And, like in D, only to a greater extent, they are to receive portions of the offerings for their support (Nu. 18:21,23,24,25-32,9,10,11,14,19; Lev. 7:8,9-10,11-14,28-36; 10:12-14,15; 6:14-18,19-20; 23:15-20; Ex. 29:27,28; Num. 5:5-8,9,10; 15:20,21; 18:12,13,15-18; Lev. 24:5-9a; Num. 31:25-29). Thus, in return for their service in the Temple, and in lieu of any possessions of land, the Levites received the tithes offered by the Israelites to God, and the special allotment of land consecrated to them in Lev. 25:32-34. So much for a class of individuals who, because of their peculiar position in the religious life of the Hebrew community, had to be taken care of. However, in time they developed not into a protected class but rather into an aristocracy of priests.

Women

In E (Ex. 20:17a; cf. Dt. 5:21) it says ^{אֲנִי וְאִשְׁתִּי} ^{אֲנִי וְאִשְׁתִּי} "You must not covet your neighbor's wife." Thus, at a very early stage in Hebrew history, the woman was regarded, like the slave, as the private property of her husband,

not to be damaged in any way. In ancient times marriage was made by contrast or purchase; and the woman lost her personal freedom, when she was handed over ^{to} the suitor in return for a compensation (נָשָׂא -- cf. Dt. 22:23f.) paid to her father (or by capture in war -- cf. Jud. 21) -- the girl thus becoming the property of her buyer, who takes every precaution to guard his precious possession. Gifts from her husband or father are her only personal property (cf. Gen. 16:2; 30:4,9; Jud. 17:1f.), although the Shunnamite woman in 2K. 4:8f., is called an שֵׂרָה גְּדוּלָּה , a rich woman (cf. 1K. 9:16).³⁹ But, in general, it may be said that wives could not inherit property (except Ruth 4:3,5; Num. 27:1-11; 36:1-12 -- P; cf. Job 42:15; Josh. 17:3-6, which are ^{to inherit} post-exilic passages. These, too, are made/only because of default of sons, and in order to keep intact tribal possessions. Therefore, these daughters of Zelophehad could not marry outside of their tribe*.)

Now, in early times the right of sons only to inherit involved the duty of Levirate marriage; that is, the brother of a deceased husband who left no male offspring, had to marry his widow; and the first-born of such a marriage succeeded to the property of his dead father (cf. Gen 38), in order to preserve the latter's name and his property (cf. Dt. 25:5,6,9). If the brother does not fulfill this obligation, then the widow takes his sandal from his foot and spits in his face (cf. Dt. 25:8-10; Ruth 4; cf. Ps. 60:10).^{40**}

* Previously, D specified only sons could inherit (Dt. 21:15f.; 25:5-10).

** A פֶּדוּת however, has the right and duty to redeem his deceased kinsman's property, including his wife, but he does not have the duty of Levirate marriage (Ruth 4:5-6,10,11,21). In: Schaeffer, Social Legislation of the Primitive Semites, p. 61.

Thus, indirectly, this custom was humane; for it prevented the widow from being thrown out on the street, without anyone to provide for her.⁴¹

A woman was protected in other ways, too. In Ex. 22:15, 16, it states: "If a man seduces a virgin who is not betrothed, and lies with her, he must pay the marriage-price for her, and marry her; if her father absolutely refuses to give her to him, he must pay money equivalent to the marriage-price of virgins."

וכי' - יבתה זויש בתולה אשר לא אורסה וסכר חלה
אמר ימכרה או לאיש אוס מאן מאן ימכר חלה
או כסף יקר כאמר בתולה

For, this is considered as damage done to one's private property. And as valuable chattel, the husband had to carefully look after his wife. Thus, a Hebrew daughter sold into slavery must, so long as she is in his care, be provided with food, clothes, and her conjugal rights by her master; if he does not this, then she goes out free without money (cf. Ex. 21:7-11. In Dt. 15:12, however, she is provided for liberally).

According to McLennan, Ancient History, p. 178; Smith, W.R., Kinship and Marriage, pp. 145f., 272; Wellhausen, Ehe, pp. 460, 474, 479, the Levirate system is a survival from a previous polyandric society. Stade (*Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, I, pp. 393f.) relates it to ancestor-worship. W.R. Smith (Kinship, p. 158) says: "It goes back to a type of marriage in which a small group of brothers, dwelling together on the same estate, had a sort of common property in the wife."

Then, too, ⁱⁿ Dt. 24:1-4a there is the key passage regarding divorce:

כִּי יִקַּח אִישׁ אִשָּׁה וְקָרָא וּפִיָּה אִם עָלָה
תֹּמֵצָא חֵן בְּדֵינָיו כִּי מָצָא בָּהּ עֲדוּת צָרָה וְכָתַב
לָהּ סֵפֶר כְּרִיתוּת וְנָתַן בְּיָדָהּ וְשָׁלַח מֵאִתּוֹ
וַיֵּצֵא אֶת אִשְׁתּוֹ וּלְבָבָהּ וּפִיָּתָהּ לֹא יֵשׁ - אֲחֵר וְשֵׁנִי
בְּאִשׁ בְּאַחֲרֶיךָ וְכָתַב לָהּ סֵפֶר כְּרִיתוּת וְנָתַן בְּיָדָהּ
וְשָׁלַח מֵאִתּוֹ אִם כִּי יָמוּת בָּאִשׁ בְּאַחֲרֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר לָקַחְתָּ לְאִשְׁתְּךָ
עָלָה יוֹכֵל בְּדָעָה בְּרָאוֹן אֲשֶׁר שָׁמַע עֲשׂוֹק לְקַחְתָּ לְעִיּוּתָהּ

... - - - - - "When a man takes a wife and marries her, if it turns that she does not please him, because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes a bill of divorce, and putting it into her hand dismisses her from his house; if, on leaving his house, she goes and marries another man, and then the latter husband turns against her, and writes her a bill of divorce, and putting it into her hand, dismisses her from his house, or if the latter husband who married her dies, her former husband who divorced her may not marry her again...." In other words, the dignity of woman had to be maintained. She was not a mere toy, hastily divorced and remanied at will. Nor could her husband accuse her unjustly of unchastity; or else he had to pay 100 silver shekels to her father (Dt. 22:17ff.).

כִּי יִמָּצֵא אִישׁ נָדָרָה
קַרְוָלָה אֲשֶׁר עָלָה אִנְשָׁה וְהִשָּׁפַח וְשָׂכַר עָמָה
וְנִמְצְאוּ וְנָתַן בָּאִשׁ פְּסָכָה עָמָה לְאִשְׁתּוֹ בְּנִדְרָה
חֲמִשִּׁים כֶּסֶף וְלֹא - תִּפִּיב לְאִשָּׁה תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר עָלָה
לֹא יוֹכֵל שָׁמַע כֵּן - יֵמִין

"If a man chances upon a girl, a virgin who is not betrothed, and

seizes her, and lies with her, and they are caught, the man who lay with her must pay the girl's father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife as long as he lives, without his being able to divorce her, because he violated her" -- Dt. 22:28,29. However, if the girl cries out for help and there is none to save her, the man is killed (Dt. 22:25-27). For the brazen violation of the daughters of Israel was not to be tolerated (cf. Jud. 19-21; Gen. 34:20:1ff.).

The treatment of women captives was also very humane. In Dt. 21:10ff., she is allowed to mourn for her husband for a whole month; after that time, her captor may marry her and have intercourse with her. But, if he does not like her, then he shall let her go free and not sell her for money as a slave, "because you have humiliated her." וְאִם לֹא יִרְצֶהּ וְיִשְׁלַחָהּ חֵפְזָהּ וְלֹא יִמְכְּרָהּ וְיִשְׁלַחָהּ חֵפְזָהּ And ~~even~~ if one wife was slighted, over another, the former's feelings were to be spared and her first-born was to inherit two-thirds of his father's property (Dt. 21:15-17). Also, we have seen the innumerable passages which protect her as a widow (Dt. 10:18; 24:17; 27:19; 24:19-21; Ruth 2:2; Dt. 16:11,14; 26:12f.; Isa. 1:17; 10:2; Jer. 7:6; 22:3, etc.)*.

* Other sources regarding the treatment of women are to be found in: Bertholet, History of Hebrew Civilization, pp. 148ff.; Day, The Social Life of the Hebrews, pp. 128ff.; Encyclopedia Biblica II, pp. 1498f., 2943f.

Chapter VI

Justice

Of course, much has already been intimated concerning the Bible's deep sense of justice -- especially in protecting the weak from unscrupulous individuals. Ex. 23:6 (E) states explicitly:

"You must not pervert the justice due your poor in his case."

Therefore, - לא תשא שמוע שואו אל-תשא ידך עמו -

רעה צפיותו עד תאם לא תביע אומרי-דקים

צדקתו ולא-תדעם על-דק לנשט אומרי דקים לפשט

מצדד-שקר תרחק ונקי וצדיק אל-תביע כי לא -

אצדיק רעד ושמוע לא תקח כי פשט יחר בקהים ויסל

"You must not give false, hearsay evidence; do not join hands

with a wicked person by being a malicious witness. You must not

follow the majority by doing wrong, nor give evidence in a law

suit so as to pervert justice, by turning aside with the major-

ity.... Avoid false charges; do not have innocent and guiltless

persons put to death, nor acquit the wicked. You must/take a

bribe; for a bribe blinds the open-eyed and subverts even a just

case (Ex. 23:1, 2, 7, 8; cf. Dt. 24:17; 27:25)." These are the

important passages in E and their parallels in D which instruct

public tribunals in matters of justice. And just as D in 27:25

curses those who pervert justice, so the prophets say: "Woe to

those who.... thrust aside the needy from their rights, and rob

my poor ones of justice" (Isa. 10:2)

פוי... חפלות מצדין

צאים חגגת משפט צדי' צד'

...לא צנו דין יתום ויצע'הו ומשפט אפיונים לא שפלו

...."they uphold not the cause of the orphan, to carry it to success, and the rights of the needy they do not defend (Jer. 5:28)." For, "Amos says to them (5:12), "I know that your

transgressions are many and your sins countless; you, who oppress the innocent, take bribes, and thrust aside the needy at the gate (where justice is dealt)" -- כי יצדו רבים

בשדכם ויצמיח חטאתכם צורי צדיק לקח' כפר אפיונים קשר' ^{פלו}

These are the ones who threaten the unprotected with death in order to extort from them ransom -- who make the feeble feeble-minded by their legal decisions, and, giving unjust verdicts against the poor, they thus deprive them of their rights.⁴² (cf.

Isa. 29:21; Mal. 3:5; Prov. 18:5), and repel them so that they can not defend their cause (cf. Isa. 10:2). "Thus saith the

Lord: 'Morning by morning give righteous judgment, and deliver the despoiled from the hand of the oppressor; lest my fury go forth like fire, and burn with none to quench it; because of your evil doings (Jer. 21:12; cf. Jer. 22:3)" כה אמר ה' ציו

עקר משפט ופצלו גזול מיד עושה בן תצא כאש

חמתי וקצרה ואין מכפר מפני רד מעליכם

This passage was addressed to king Zedekiah, for it seems that an important part of the king's duties was to bear and judge cases (especially appeals, cf. 2S. 14:4) at the city gate (cf. 2S. 15:2-4).⁴³ In other words, Proverbs (11:14) reflects: "For

want of guidance a people will fall; but safety lies in a

wealth of counselors" האין תחבולות יל-דך / משוער קרב יועץ

However, remember: "Open your mouth on the side of Justice,

and defend the rights of the poor and the needy" (Prov. 31:9)

וְהָיָה כִּי יִשְׁפֹּט הָעָם בְּיָמֶיךָ וְהָיָה כִּי יִשְׁפֹּט הָעָם בְּיָמֶיךָ

Then, how was such justice to be administered? "The civil court held at the city gate seems to have met every morning. (cf. Jer. 21:12). Probably in early times the whole proceedings were oral (Prov. 18:17). The plaintiff was the injured man in person. He stood on the right hand of the judges (cf. Zech. 3:1). The accused stood on their left, probably dressed in mourning garb (cf. Zech 3:3). The judges were seated (cf. Ps. 94:20; Dan. 7:9). The onus of proof was on the accused. He was fortunate if he had influential men to speak on his behalf (cf. Gen. 43:9; Jer. 24:17). There could be no case without witnesses (cf. Josh. 7:14-18; 1S. 14:38-42; Dt. 1:16,17 -- except in Dt. 21:18ff.). At least two were necessary; at all events, no one could be condemned to death on the statement of one witness (Dt. 17:6; 19:15; Num. 35:30). Everything possible was done to impress upon the witnesses a sense of responsibility. If their evidence led to the condemnation of the accused, they had to be the first to lay hands on him (cf. Dt. 17:7; Lev. 24:14). If their evidence was proved to be false, they were liable to the punishment they had hoped to bring on the accused man (cf. Dt. 19:19). The oath seems to have been an important part of the court procedure (cf., Bertholet, History of Hebrew Civilization, p. 226). It was chiefly used, of course, in cases where there were no witnesses. If, for example, a man had entrusted an animal to the care of another, and the animal perished, or was hurt or stolen, without anyone having seen it, an oath "before Yahweh"

decided the question (cf. Ex. 22:9; Lev. 5:22; 1K. 8:31). The oath was usually part of the procedure at a sanctuary -- it is the same to this day. A person taking the oath did so with hands raised to heaven (cf. Gen. 14:22; Dt. 32:40), where the Deity was conceived to dwell (cf. the ceremony of the Sotah in Num. 5:11f.).⁴⁴

Many cases involved merely the question of damages to one's property and the indemnification due to the plaintiff. Thus, the principle of *עוֹלָם עוֹלָם* (Lev. 24:19ff.) was extended to the act of making good in money or in kind a loss inflicted. And so, specific fines or restitutions were imposed in cases of theft (Ex. 22:1-4; Lev. 6:2-7) or damage to property (Ex. 21:33-34; 22:5-6; 21:28-36; 22:7-15), according to the extent of the harm or loss suffered (even if the infringement on property rights referred to those of one's enemy -- cf. Ex. 23:4,5; Dt. 22:1-4).

Other cases involved injury to a person. "Whoever kidnaps a man, and sells him, or if he is found in his possession, must be put to death (Ex. 21:16; cf. Dt. 24:7)" *וְכִלְיֵהוּ*

וְכִלְיֵהוּ Thus, not only was a man protected by Hebrew law when he happened to suffer a loss, but if he were kidnapped, he could have redress by the law even to the extent of demanding the death penalty. In Ex. 21:18,19, if two men fight and one suffers so much from the blows inflicted that he is unable to do his work, the assaulter pays for such time which was lost. Finally, the principle of *עוֹלָם עוֹלָם* applies also to harm done to any part of a person's body (cf. Ex. 21:26-27; Lev. 24:19).

This is how Hebrew law, when administered justly, protects

those who, without such provisions having been made for them, would have suffered immeasurably.

We conclude our analysis of justice in the sense of protecting the weak and defenceless, by examining how the innocent or unintentional murderer was protected from the vengeance of those merciless and without understanding.

Chapter VII
The Manslayer

The innocent manslayer needed some sort of protection from the relentless Semitic law of blood-revenge or lex talionis. Now, in the very early days -- say, between the crossing of the Jordan (c. 1280 B.C.) and the reign of David (c. 980 B.C.) -- many small city-states were converted into cantons or counties זריס governed by cantonal councils זקני פזיר instructed and aided in administrative and judicial matters by Levites and Nebi'im, agents for the central government.⁴⁵ A person charged with homicide was tried before these councils at whose head were יוֹבִלִים. Usually some sort of a settlement or adjustment was attempted by means of כֶּבֶד, that is, by compounding a trespass for money instead of for the blood of the defendant. If there was a dispute about the terms, or if the defendant felt that he would have difficulty proving his innocence, he could flee to a sanctuary in the מקום of any of the זריס of the land for protection. From here, bargaining was done between the נזיר and the פזיר with the מקום -priest acting as intermediary (cf. 1S. 12:1-5). Thus, unless the culprit and his family were very poor, the matter was adjusted by the giving of כֶּבֶד or ransom-money.

But there was much abuse of this כֶּבֶד privilege. And, as with Samuel's sons (1S. 8:3; cf. Amos 5:12,15), often the מקום -priests would accept part of the כֶּבֶד as a bribe coming either from the נזיר or the פזיר. Therefore, the מקום, its priest, its נזיר, and the family פזיר were eliminated.

In short, the institution of כפר was no longer allowed. Instead, a federal officer, the שופט, was sent to each canton to watch court proceedings and receive the death-warrant from the זקני פדיר for the execution of a convicted murderer. The guilty person could then flee to a fixed, separated city (עיר מקלט) (Dt. 4:41-43; this passage specifies three cities; Dt. 19:1-13 anticipates the addition of three more; Num. 35:specified six such cities*), where he might appeal the verdict.** For this purpose a proper highway to such a city (Dt. 19:6) was built, lest the inflexible שופט pursue and overtake him and kill him, for this officer was so obligated because of the death-warrant which he possessed (cf. Dt. 19:12). If the victim was judged innocent in that court of appeal, he served his term (Num. 35:24ff., fixes it until the death of the presiding כפר) and then he was freed and the שופט's death-warrant was no longer effective. But if he left before his term expired, he could be killed (Dt. 19:12; Num. 35:26,27). However, it was still possible for the זקני פדיר of an עיר מקלט who were friendly with the other local councils, to prevent justice. Moreover, the common people, the family גוי, and the זקני פדיר were still favourably disposed to make use of the כפר.

However, finally, the כפר was torn by its roots with the abolition of the זקני פדיר in homicide cases, and the estab-

* "Apparently the cities selected were sites of ancient shrines (cf. Josh. 20:7,8), which were already asylums for unintentional murderers" (Kent, C.F. - Israel's Laws and Legal Precedents, p. 91, n.).

** The עיר מקלט was not the seat of the federal high court. The שופט in Jerusalem was the national court of appeals. It was the duty of the שופט to restore the innocent murderer to the עיר מקלט (Num. 35:25).

lishment of federal courts and sheriffs -- מִשְׁפָּטֵי -- in every
canton to execute the decisions (פֶּדֶס - שֹׁטֵט) (Dt. 16:18).
According to 2Chr. 17:2,7-9; 19:5,8, it was Jehoshaphat (873-
849 B.C.) who started this procedure which became a fixed law
in Dt. 16. Thus, about 850 B.C. everyone was beginning to rea-
lize that "the element of civil damages or private satisfaction
was eliminated from homicide cases, and that the State alone had
jurisdiction of this high crime."⁴⁶ And from this time, the homi-
cide fled to the צִד instead of the מִקְדָּשׁ (cf. Prov. 28:
17 אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר מָלַח אֶת אֲחֵרִים בְּדָמָיו יִפְּחוּ אֶת אִישׁוֹ וְיִמָּצֵא בְּיָדוֹ אֶת הַדָּם אֲשֶׁר מָלַח וְיָמָוֶת; "A man laden with another man's blood shall flee to the צִד;
let no one seize him there").^{47*}

We have thus seen how Hebrew ethics and law have endeavoured
to protect the weak, the defenceless, the innocent, the harmed per-
son. The Biblical writers have, indeed, contributed greatly to a
better understanding of the term "justice." They have taught us
how to temper justice with love (and conversely).**

We shall now discuss how the land was used by Biblical writers
to provide for the needs of the weak and the destitute, "the poor
and the needy."

* The translation is mine, so that I might be able to fix the pas-
sage into the discussion.

** Hebrew law opposes punishing the צִד, the man once acquitted
(cf. Dt. 19:10). The Bible takes special pains to distinguish
between the צִד and the פֶּדֶס, the wholly innocent man who
has never been suspected of guilt (cf. 1K. 8:32; Ex. 21:28; 22:8;
23:8; Dt. 25:1,2; Isa. 5:23; Jer. 30:11; 46:28; Amos 2:6; 5:12;
Ps. 84:21; Prov. 17:15, etc.).

Chapter VIII

Land and the Protection of the Weak

The Priestly authors took special care that the land should not be alienated by anyone forever: וְהָאָרֶץ לֹא תִמָּכַר בְּעוֹלָם

כִּי הָאָרֶץ לַיהוָה - כִּי גֵרִים אַתֶּם בְּאֶרֶץ אֲרָם
 "The land must not be sold in perpetuity; for the land is mine, since you are only resident aliens and serfs under me (Lev. 25: 23)." The land is God's; and no one has the right to keep it for himself forever (except Levitical pasture land, which could be redeemed at any time; it was inalienable -- Lev. 25:34; cf. 1K 21; Jer. 37:12; Dt. 19:14; 27:17; Hos. 5:10; Prov. 22:28; 23:10; Job 24:2). Therefore, all land could be sold or redeemed at a price proportionate to the number of crops raised in relation to the Jubilee or fiftieth year (which will be discussed below). Thus, if there were more years left till the Jubilee, the price would be higher; if there were less, the price would be lower. Moreover, a kinsman had the right to redeem the land of his relative (Lev. 25:25-27, 29-32; cf. Jer. 32:7-15; 1K. 21); or the seller himself could redeem it according to the number of years left for the Jubilee year. One retained the right to redeem a house in a walled city for one year. After that time the house may remain forever with the purchaser. However, as for houses in unwallled villages (like in fields), the right of redemption shall be retained for any time and the land shall be released in the Jubilee year (cf. the last verses quoted, and Lev. 25:13,24, 28b,31b). Thus, with the exception of Levites' land (Lev. 25:32-

34), no one family or group could maintain an eternal monopoly on land. As we have seen, this is a late extension of the old desert mishpat; namely, that land is inalienable -- the right of all (cf. 1K. 21 -- Ahab and Naboth's vineyard, as a violation of this principle). And so, the weaker individual was, in a way, protected from rapacious monopolists.

Just as in Ex. 34:21 (J) and Ex. 23:12 (E), (cf. Dt. 5:14) the great prophetic narratives enjoined that no work was to be done on the seventh day of the week, so no work was to be done on the land every seventh year, nothing which would cause the land to put forth its full strength. Thus, in Ex. 23:10,11, "for six years you may sow your land and gather in its crops, but during the seventh year you must leave it alone and let it lie fallow so that the poor of your people may eat of it"

וְשֵׁשׁ שָׁנִים תַּעֲרֹץ אֶת-אֶרֶץ אוֹמֶת אוֹת-תְּבוּאָתָהּ וּפְסָחֶיהָ
תִּשְׁמָטֶנּוּ וְנִשְׁמָטֶנּוּ וְאִכְלוּ אֲדֹנֵי זֶמֶן This Sabbath principle was still further extended by the P writers in Leviticus:

וּקְדַשְׁתָּ אֶת-שָׁנָה חֲמִישִׁית שָׁנָה וּקְרָאתָ בְּכֹרֶךָ עֵלֶי-יוֹשְׁבֵי יוֹרְדָּה
הַיָּדָה תְּבִיֵּד עָלֶיךָ אֶת-שָׁנָה חֲמִישִׁית אוֹת-אֶת-מִשְׁכַּנְתָּהּ תִּשְׁבֹּר
"You must hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants; it is to be a jubilee for you, when each of you shall return to his own possessions, and each of you shall return to his own family (Lev. 25:10; cf. Lev. 25:4,7,11; 37:30 --H; 2K. 19:29; cf. Lev. 25:6 --H)*." In Lev. 25:

* In pre-exilic times, this law seems to have been disregarded, according to the traditions which the P writers give us (cf. Lev. 26:35,43; Ex. 35:2,3; 31:13b-17; Num. 15:32-36; 2Cro. 36:21). For it is possible that a fixed fallow for all the land would cause an interruption of social and economic life, although such a fallow year was observed in Neh. 10:31, Josephus, Antiquities, XI. 8. 6, and among the Hasmonaeans (1 Macc. 6:49,53). See Cambridge Bible on Leviticus, pp. 137f.

13-16,50, in the matter of redemption^P (also applicable to the redemption of slaves) the same standard of reckoning was used as in the matter of the seventh or Sh'mitah (שמיטה) year (cf. Lev. 25:25-27,29-32; p. 140f.). And a kinsman (קרוב) has the obligation to redeem an enslaved kinsman or his land (Lev. 25:25-31; cf. Ruth 4; Jer. 32:7ff.; Ezek. 11:15; Neh. 5:8)*.

Now, the Bible speaks about certain, specific portions of the produce of the land which shall be reserved for the "poor and needy" (cf. p. 141 -- Ex. 23:10,11; Lev. 25:4ff.; 37:30). First, there is the triennial tithe, or the *ובאו פסולי כ"א אין משעבד*
לו חלק ונהלה חלק ופגר ופיתום ובאמנם אשר משעבד
ואוכלו ושבעו זמון יקרבך ה' אלהיך בכל-מאמץ ידך אשר תעשה
 "And the Levite -- since he has no property or heritage with you -- the resident alien, the orphan, and the widow, who are in your community, may come and eat their fill, in order that the Lord thy God may bless you in every enterprise that you undertake (Dt. 14:29; cf. Dt. 26:12)." In other words, every third year, the tithe is not to be consumed at the central sanctuary by the offerer, his household, and the Levite (if the distance to the sanctuary is too great to carry the tithe, then money is exchanged for the food), but rather it is stored up in the Israelite's native place as a

* This Levitical Jubilee law was probably made by P writers as a compromise between a desire to revert to primitive communism, where the land was absolutely inalienable and the property of all, and the institution of private landownership (cf. Eerdmans, *Leviticus*, p. 126). For, as has already been mentioned the שמיטה (seventh year) law was not practicable (see p. 141,n.*). Other compromises, which have been mentioned, were: land in walled cities could be redeemed only for one year (Lev. 25:29-30) -- in unwallled villages at any time (Lev. 25:31); Levites' pasture-land could always be redeemed (Lev. 25:32-34).

charitable fund for the relief of the landless and the destitute; and the destitute shall eat of this tithe in their respective cities at public feasts provided from time to time by the local authorities. Or else, the tithe thus received was doled out to needy individuals. Thus, the needy were taken care of every third and sixth year in each Sabbatical or seven-year period; and, not considering whether or not the law was practicable, there was a seventh year when the land remained fallow for the poor.*48

Besides this important tithe, there is the **שכח**, or portion of the crops which the owner forgot to gather in. These are to be reserved for the defenceless and the destitute (**כי תזכר** **קצירך בשדך ושכחת זמר בשדה לא תשוב לקחתו ואגר איתוס ואנאמנה** **כי תזכר**). "When you reap your harvest in your field, and forget a sheaf in the field, you must not go back to get it; it is to go the resident alien, the orphan, and the widow....(Dt. 24:19; cf. Ex. 23:10-11)."

A similar injunction is carried forward by Lev. 19:9-10: **ואקצרכם את-קציר אנצכם לא תכלה באר שדך לקצר ולקט קצירך לא תלקט וכרמך לא תדולץ ופרט כרמך לא תלקט זרעו ואגר תדג איתוס אני ב' אלפיכם**. "And when you reap the harvest of your land, you must not reap your field to the very corners, nor gather the gleanings of your harvest; you must not glean your vineyards bare, nor gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard; you must leave them for the poor and the resident alien, since I, the Lord, am your God (cf. Lev. 23:22; Dt. 24:19-21)."

* The sacred tithe is a common institution of antiquity. The Greeks gave tithes to the gods of spoil taken in war, of crops, profits, etc. In Babylonia and Persia, the revenues of the sovereign were derived from tithes. Originally, among the Hebrews, the tithe was voluntary (cf. Ex. 25:2), but later it was often exacted by the priesthood or the community to maintain public worship (I.C.C., Dt., pp. 166f.).

Thus, besides the triennial *מזר עני*, the *שנה* and *יובל* years, and the *שנה*, the poor were considered with reference to other kinds of food; that is, the *באה*, *דק*, and *דלל* (the crops on the corners of a field, the gleanings of the harvest, and the fallen fruit of a vineyard). However, even the poor and needy should have regard for a neighbor's crops. They must not be too avaricious. They, as well as the land-owners, must practice self-restraint.

כי תבוא בכרם רעך ואכלת מזגים כנפשו
שדק ואו-כעק לא תתן כי תבוא בקמח רעך וקלט
אזילת כידק וארמא לא תגיש לא קמח כדק

"When you enter your neighbor's vineyard, you may eat your fill of the grapes, as much as you wish; but you must not put any in your bag. When you enter among your neighbor's grain, you may pull off some heads with your hand, but you must not put a sickle to your neighbor's grain (Dt. 23:25,26)." We may laugh; but Biblical writers could see both sides of a question -- the land-owner's and the peasant's. Thus, throughout these land laws -- in J, E, D, H, and finally culminating with the work of P -- there is a high, ethical and moral motivation, endeavouring to protect the weak and make their lot as tolerable as possible.

The next subject which occupies our attention is the way in which the weak were protected, when they had to borrow or loan money, food, or clothing.

Chapter IX

Lending and the Protection of the Weak

"This subject of interest for money loaned or 5.275
(increase) for victuals loaned was an important feature of labor conditions in the ancient world."⁴⁹ Yet, "the spirit of commerce took some time to capture Israel.... For a time commerce was left in the hands of the Canaanite, who, to a trained sense of the requirements of civilized life, united a real commercial spirit; so that for many a day Canaanite and trader were synonymous names (cf. Isa. 23:8; Zeph. 1:11; Zech. 14:21; Prov. 31:24; Job 41:6)."⁵⁰ But it was not long before the Hebrews imitated their Canaanite neighbors, and trading was a thriving feature also of Hebrew life. "The prophets, who opposed with all their might the evils that dogged the steps of this trading, bear involuntary but eloquent testimony to the great impetus it had received (cf. Amos 8:5; Hos. 12:8; Isa. 2:7,16)."⁵¹

Now, "the wages or other compensation must have been so scanty that whenever anything beyond the ordinary occurred in a laborer's family, he was compelled to resort to a loan to tide it over, and for this loan interest or increase was exacted. No one but the employer would lend the money to these laborers and there was practically no opportunity to earn a surplus wherewith to pay it back. On the contrary, as new difficulties arose there would have to be more loans. When it is remembered that the great Babylonian empire's normal rate of interest was three times as great as ours, it will be seen with what terrific rapidity a

loan would be doubled. The natural effect of such conditions was that the poor laborer would have to work all his life in the vain effort to reduce a debt which was steadily mounting. He would in short be in a position barely distinguishable from slavery
The result was the ordinance which forbade the changing of interest for loans to the 'עני (Ex. 22:24) את-דמי' את-דמי

פדיון דמי לא תביע לו כנסת לא-תשימון עניו נשק
"If you lend money to my people, to any person among you, you must not behave like a creditor toward him; you must not charge him any interest.", and afterwards to any Israelite who had become impoverished (Lev. 25:35-37) וכל יחוק אהיך ומשכ ידו דמיך
פחזקת קו גר ותושב וחי דמיך איש-תקח מאתו
נשק ותרבית וירוחי מאליביך וחי אהיך דמיך את-
כספק לא-תמנולו קנסק וארביה לא-תמנ אכספק
"If fellow-countryman of yours becomes poor, so that his ability to meet his obligation with you fails, and you force on him the status of a resident alien or a serf, and he lives under you, take no interest from him in money -- 52 or in kind -- 52, but stand in awe of your God, while your countryman lives under you. You must not lend him your money at interest, nor give him your food for a return."); and finally, ~~the~~ the sweeping prohibition to take interest from anyone but a נכרי, an unmitigated alien, a foreigner (נשק לא תשיק אהיך נשק כספ נשק אכספק
נשק כספ-נשק נשק אהיך נשק אהיך לא תשיק
"You must not exact interest on loans to a fellow-countryman of

yours, interest in money, food, or anything else that might be exacted as interest. On loans to a foreigner you may exact interest, but on loans to a fellow-countryman you must not ---- Dt. 23:20-21a).⁵³ Thus, these passages indicate that the Hebrew society was in "a rudimentary stage of commercial and monetary transactions,"⁵⁴ still favouring the stimulation of agricultural activity. The Hebrews had not yet begun to associate lending with business but rather as an act of benevolence, of relief or charity to the poor and needy; and therefore, interest on such loans was abhorrent to their "naive" commercial sense, which had not yet grasped the intricate financial system of a complex "civilization."

Thus, the Biblical writers are very careful to prohibit the taking of interest, and to specify under what circumstances a loan, if negotiated, should be made. And so E in Ex. 22:25,26 (cf. Dt.

24:12-13,17b) stipulates: *אם חקל חתול עלאת ודק דד-קא*

השם חס-קנול כי פיא כסותם לקדפ פיא עלאת

לצרואתם ישכב ופיה כי יצוק אל' ושארת' כי חול' אנ'
"If you ever take another's cloak in pledge, you must return it

to him by sunset; for that is his only covering; it is his cloak for his body. What else could he sleep in? And if he should cry to me, I would respond; for I am kind"). For the mantle was probably the only article a poor man could offer as a pledge; so destitute was he. Therefore, one should not take advantage of such a handicap; the poor man needs that mantle in which to sleep. But evidently many -- especially, the upper classes -- disregarded this; and Amos speaks of them that "garments taken in pledge, they

spread out beside every altar" (Amos 2:8a חבלים ⁵⁵ (omitted) וקצרים
 (יטו) אצל כל-מזבח; that is, that they mercilessly and illegally
 keep such garments to recline upon, as for sleeping, instead
 of returning them for the poor to sleep in. Moreover, Deutero-
 nomy (24:6) takes care that "no one is to take a handmill or an
 upper millstone in pledge; for he would be taking a life in
 pledge" (לא-יחבל רחים ורכב כי נפש פוא חבל).

Just as a garment is indispensable for a poor man's protection
 during the night, so the hand-mill is needed by him in order
 that he may prepare his food. Further, the creditor must also
 not abuse his rights. He must not enforce them vexatiously (cf.
 Job 22:6; 24:3). And so, in addition to these limitations,
 "when you ^{sing, say in Hebrew} take your neighbor a loan of any sort, you must not
 go into his house to take his pledge; you must wait outside, and
 the man to whom you are making the loan shall bring the pledge
 outside to you (Dt. 24:10,11). כי תשכך אשה

אנומה לא-תבא אל-קומה ערסו קחולו תחזק
 ובאים אשר נשכך בו יוציא אל'ך את-הערכוס בחולו
 In other words, the right of selecting the article offered as a
 pledge is to remain with the borrower.⁵⁶

In fact, later, Ezekiel sets up as a criterion for righteous-
 ness one who treats the weak justly in the matter of loans and
 pledges:...אויש לא יונב חבל פח"ק (חבלתו חזק ⁵⁷ ע"ב...
 קנשק לא-יתן / ותרקית לא יקח... צדיק פוא ח"ב
 ח"ב נאם אנני פ'
 "If he oppress no one, but conscientiously restore the debtor's
 pledge....if he lend no money at interest, nor take increase for

himself....he is righteous, and shall surely live,' is the oracle of the Lord God (Ezek. 18:7a(a), 8a(a), 9b; cf. Ezek. 18:16a (a), 17a (b), 17b (b); 33:15)." (For verses which speak to the contrary and judge the wicked person, cf. Ezek. 18:12a (a,c), 13; 22:12b). Thus, Nehemiah (5:1-13) still later, soon after the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, rebukes those rich oppressors for taking in pledge sons and daughters (as slaves), fields, vineyards, and houses, in order that their poor kinsmen might buy of them grain to eat, and borrow money to pay the King's tribute. Finally, after many sharp words, Nehemiah gets these wealthy "wolves" to agree to make restitution; and he has the priests take an oath that, just as he (Nehemiah) had shaken out before them the bosom of his garment, "so may God shake out every man from his house and from the fruit of his labor who does not keep this promise" (Neh. 5:13) and make restitution. In short, the nobles and the rich, according to Nehemiah, had violated the interest laws of Ex. 22:25; Dt. 23:20f.; Lev. 25:35f.; and evidently Nehemiah still adhered to these prohibitions to such an extent that he dared to curse those who would act to the contrary. By Nehemiah's time there was still the desire to cling to the "mishpat" of the old agricultural and pastoral civilizations. And Job, too, assumed the same position in this matter:

כִּי תִקַּח אֶת־חַיֵּי אֶת־אֶחָיו לְרָחֹק וְלֹא תִשְׁלַח אֶת־הַחַיִּים וְלֹא תִשְׁלַח אֶת־הַחַיִּים לְרָחֹק וְלֹא תִשְׁלַח אֶת־הַחַיִּים לְרָחֹק

"For you take pledges of your brothers for nothing; you strip the clothes off the naked (Job 22:6)." Finally, the Books of Psalms and Proverbs reflect and have this to say:

וְלֹא יִשְׁלַח אֶת־הַחַיִּים לְרָחֹק וְלֹא יִשְׁלַח אֶת־הַחַיִּים לְרָחֹק וְלֹא יִשְׁלַח אֶת־הַחַיִּים לְרָחֹק

"He doesn't put out his money on interest, nor take a bribe against

the innocent. He who does such things will never be moved (Ps.

15:5); " **אִרְבֵּה תוֹנוֹ בְּנֶשֶׁק וּבְתַרְבִּית לְחֹנוֹן בָּלִים יִקְבְּצֶנּוּ**

"He who increases his wealth by interest and usury, gathers it for him who is kind to the poor (Prov. 28:3)." In other words, according to these passages, the man who obeys and takes no interest from the poor gains in wealth; whereas, the rich man who does otherwise will soon lose his ill-gotten wealth to the benevolent individual. Moreover, Proverbs advises **כִּי אִם - עֲרֹבֶת אֶרֶץ**

תִּקְדַּח לְעַד כְּפִיךָ... עַש־צִיִּית אִבֹּתָ כִּי וּפְנִיָּה
 "My son, if you have become surety for your neighbor, have pledged yourself for another.....do this now, my son, and free yourself....

(Prov. 6:1,3a(a))." **וְדִירוֹץ כִּי-עֲרֹב עַד וְשֵׁם מוֹקְדִים קוֹטֵל**

"he who becomes surety for a stranger will suffer for it; but he who hates giving pledges is secure (Prov. 11:15);" and **אִדָּם חֹסֵר -**

אִדָּם חֹסֵר "a man devoid of sense is he who pledges himself, and becomes security in the presence of his neighbor (Prov. 17:18)." Thus, to make a pledge is not the most desirable thing to do.

However, if one does happen to be in debt, "every seventh year you must observe a remission; and the operation of the remission is to be as follows: Every creditor who has a claim against his fellow-countryman is to remit it; he is not to press it against his fellow-countryman or kinsman; for a remission has been proclaimed by the Lord" (Dt. 15:1,2; cf. Dt. 31:10) **מִקֵּץ**

עֲדָה - שֵׁשׁ תַּעֲשֶׂה שְׁמִטָּה וְזֶה דְּבַר - שְׁמִטָּה שְׁמִיטָּה כִּי -
בְּחַד שְׁמִיטָּה יִצֹּן אִשָּׁר יִשֶׁה קִדְמוֹתָיו - לֹא-יָקֵם אֶת-רֵעֵהוּ וְאֶת-אֲחִיו

Now, there is some question whether in the **שְׁמִיטָּה** year all debts were totally cancelled or merely suspended for that year.

Some* say that this *שמיטה* year was a time when the rights of the lender were held merely in abeyance for a year, and repayment of a loan was not to be exacted of a fellow-Israelite; ^{for that year} while others** maintain that this seventh year actually implied a total and absolute extinction of all pecuniary debts, and not a mere suspension for that seventh year. But, in any case, it is not very likely that such a drastic law could be enforced periodically in a well-ordered community. There would have to be effected an entire readjustment of the wealth of a country. No wonder, then, that in Dt. 15:7-11, next to the *Sh'mitah* passage, there had to be provided that ^{at} all times, regardless of the *שמיטה* year, "you must not steel your heart, nor shut your hand against your needy countryman; but you must open wide your hand to him, and freely lend him sufficient for the needs that he has. Take care lest a base thought enter your head like this: 'The seventh year, the year of remission, is near!' and you behave meanly to your needy countryman by not giving him anything You must give to him freely; and you are not to begrudge it when you give him something.... For the poor will never cease to be in your land...." (Dt. 15:7b-9a, 10a, 11a)

אין תחמץ את לבך אל אחיך - כי - פתח תפתח את ידך לו
וּפְדֹתָ תַּעֲדִיטְלוּ דִּי אֲחֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר יֵחֶסֶר לָם פֶּסַח לֶקַח

* I.C.C., Deuteronomy, pp. 174f., cf. Dillmann, Deuteronomy, p. 307.
** Fluegel, The Spirit of Biblical Legislation, pp. 86f.; cf. Nowack, W., Lehrbuch der Hebräischen Archäologie, I, p. 356; Ginzberg, E., Studies in Biblical Economics, Jewish Quarterly Review, New Series, Vol. 22, No. 4, pp. 356f.

בן - י' ת"פ דבר דם - זכרון קדוש זאמר קרוב

שנה - פסח שנת המלך ורד ציון באה"ק

פאקיון וואס מ'האט אים געגעבן. ... נאך וואס מ'האט אים געגעבן. ...
Thus, the author of Deuteronomy ... כ' יא - יחזק' אקרא האט ...

had a premonition that such a law would be difficult to put into effect. And, it seems that this ^{is} what happened later (cf. Jer. 34:8f.; Isa. 61:1; Ezek. 46:17; Lev. 25 -- except in Neh. 10:31, where the exaction of debts was refrained on the seventh year). So that, later, Hillel had to issue in the first century B.C. his Prosbul (B. Shebi'ith 10,1f,3f., 8f.)* to annul the drastic effect of Deuteronomy's *one* law.

This ^{is} how the Biblical writers attempted to protect the weak in money matters -- at times in practical ways; at other times they were a little too impractical, probably owing to their great zeal to care for the poor and the needy.

To conclude this entire study of the protection of the weak, there remains but to mention a few miscellaneous expressions on the subject.

* The Prosbul is "a formal document, signed before a judge, in which the creditor reserved the right to call in his loan whenever he pleased, irrespectively of the year of Release." (I.C.C., Deuteronomy, pp. 179f.).

Chapter X

Other Sentiments Concerning
the Protection of the Weak

"The peculiar pride and glory of the Bedouin was his hospitality. For a stranger to enter a tent of a Bedouin Sheik and partake of food, this means, for him, that he comes under the unqualified protection of the owner of the tent, until such time as he himself renounces that protective relationship. All that we read in ancient Arabic literature of the praise bestowed by poets on the hospitality of the nomads, and of the scorn they pour on the head of the man who betrays this protective relationship, is the expression of views and sentiments which can be transferred in their entirety to the Israelites of ancient days. Such an act as that of Jael, who lulls Sisera by a draught of milk into a false sense of security and thereafter slays him in her tent (Jud. 4:17ff.; 5:24ff.), must have seemed to the Bedouin not only an outrage on all good manners, but actually a crime. However, if a stranger should stay for a rather long duration of time, he was expected to bear his share in the work and expenses of the household, attaching himself as a regular member of the tribe or clan. This also obtained when entire ~~tribes~~ ^{clans} or remnants of tribes could no longer maintain an independent existence and, therefore, sought safety by attaching themselves to another and larger combination, thereby increasing certain tribes.⁵⁸ The fact that such relationships were often established by mutual

treaty is shown by the case of the Gibeonites (Josh. 9:3ff.)⁵⁹

Thus, "the arrival of a guest would turn a working day into a holiday....As in other respects, so also in this, the Hebrew's ideal was embodied in Abraham....No one could read or hear unmoved the story in J of how the patriarch, as soon as he saw strangers approaching, went forth to meet them, and begged them to stay and rest in his tent⁶⁰ (בראשית יח-כג) 'Let a little water be brought to wash your feet, and stretch yourselves out under the tree' -- Gen. 18:4.

and then, וְאַחֲרָיו אַבְרָהָם בָּרָךְ לְעַלְמָא דְכָל הַיּוֹנִקִּים וְלְעַלְמָא דְכָל הַבְּהֵמָה
Abraham ran to the herd, and picked out a bullock, tender and plump, which he gave to a servant, who quickly prepared it" -- Gen. 18:7 (J)). Lot, too, followed Abraham's example in Gen. 19:3 (J), and "he pressed them strongly, however, that they went over to his home and entered his house, where he prepared a feast for them, and baked unleavened cakes for them to eat וַיַּעַזְבֵם אֶת כָּל מִצְוֹת יְהוָה וַיֵּשְׁבוּ בְּבֵית לוֹט וַיֵּלֶךְ לוֹט וַיִּפְגַּע בְּשְׂנֵי בָנֵי חָמוֹר וַיִּזְנוּ עִימוֹ וַיֵּלֶךְ לוֹט וַיִּפְגַּע בְּשְׂנֵי בָנֵי חָמוֹר וַיִּזְנוּ עִימוֹ
Even a slave travelling

בנותיו ואין לאדם דם עמיתו ויהי-האיש קראן לו ויאכל עמו

"Then where is he?" he said to his daughters, 'Why did you leave the man behind? Invite him to have a meal'-- Ex. 2: 20 --J). Thus, in those olden days "there was a fellowship of man with man;"⁶¹ the door was open to all.

Some of these early traditions were also taken from J and incorporated by the Chronicles into the Books of Judges, Samuel, and Kings. For example: In Judges 13:15, "Manoah said to the angel of the Lord, 'Pray allow us to detain you, that we may prepare a kid for you'" ויאמר מנוח אל-מלאך

פ' נעצר-נא אותך ונדעם לפניך גדי צדיק
And in Jud. 19 there is the story how an old man of Gibeah in Benjamin is the only person to be kind enough to entertain a travelling Levite and his concubine, and to protect them from the evil men of the city, even at the sacrifice of his daughter's life (ו'ביאבו לביתו ויקח ארמורים וירחצו רגליהם)

ויאכלו וישתו.... ויצא אליהם ^{האיש} קדח פקית ויאמר אלעם
אל תרחק נא אחרי אשר-היו האיש ודנה אל-ביתו אל-תעש אה
בנהלם בדואה הנפ קחי הבתולה ופילגשפר אורצאם-נא איתם וצאו
אותם וצאו עמם השוב קדונכם ואליהם ודנה לא תעשו דבר הנבלה בדואה
"So he took him home and gave the asses fodder; and after they had washed their feet, they ate and drank....But the master of the house went out to them, and said to them, 'No, my friends; please do not be so depraved. Now that this man has entered my house, do not commit this carnal deed. Here is my virgin daughter and his consort; let me bring them out that you may ravish them,

he used them in his works. For, they do illustrate how seriously the Hebrews regarded the practice of hospitality; and where it was not rendered, or where the stranger even suffered indignities, the situation was considered so distressing that, at times, it provided a sufficient excuse for war (2S. 10:4ff. *וַיִּקְרַח חֲנוּךְ*

אֶת-עַקְצֵי דָוִד וַיִּגְלֹחַ אֶת-חֲצֵי זָקָנוֹ וְאֶת-מִדּוֹעֵי קִמּוֹן
עַד-שְׁמוֹתֵיהֶם וַיִּשְׁלַח דָּוִד וַיִּשְׁלַח יוֹאָב וְאֶת-כָּל-צְבָאוֹ
 "Whereupon Benun took David's servants, and shaved off one side of their beards, cut their garment's off at the hips, and sent them away....When David heard of it, he send Joab and all the army of seasoned troops."). Indeed, Job could boast "the stranger did not lodge in the street; I opened my doors to the wayfarer" (Job 31:

32) *כְּחֹף זֶאֵי יֵלֵךְ גֵּר צִלְתִּי זָאֵרָה אֹפֶתָהּ*

Besides such an exalted virtue as hospitality, the care for the sick was another way by which the Bible protected the weak.

In fact, God is frequently spoken of as "the Healer." *כִּי יְהוָה יִכְאִיב*

וַיִּתְּקֵם יְמִינֵי וַיִּצַּח תִּרְפִּינֵהוּ "For He wounds, but He binds up; He smites, but His hands heal (Job 5:18; cf. Hos. 6:1)."

And whenever anyone did suffer physically, there were prescribed various treatments (*פֶּצַח וְחִקּוּרָה וְאִכָּה טָרִיף לֹא-עָרֹו וְלֹא*

חֶקֶשׁ לֹא רִכְכָּה קֶשֶׁן "Nought but blows and bruises and bleeding

wounds, that have not been pressed nor bound up nor softened with oil" -- Isa. 1:6a (b), b; cf. Jer. 46:11; 30:13, 17; 33:6;

Isa. 58:8; 2K. 20:7). There were also doctors who administered such medical treatment (cf. Ex. 21:19, where the assailant is re-

sponsible for the expenses of medical treatment). The "man of God" (cf. 2K.5), at a lower stage the magician (cf. Ex. 22:18;

Dt. 18:10f.), usually the priest (cf. Dt. 24:8), were probably such persons professionally equipped for this work. "There can be no question that men of this class, with their abundant opportunities for studying ailments, would gather a certain amount of medical knowledge. One only needs to read the subtle powers of diagnosis which the law (cf. Lev. 13) expected from the priest in his examination of persons suspected of leprosy. Such men must have been skilled in the diagnosis and differentiation of skin diseases. (cf. Job 7:5,15; 19:17, etc.)."⁶³ Certain prophets, like Elisha (cf. 2K. 4:35; cf. 1K. 17:21), and prophetesses (Ezek. 13:12) must also have acted as doctors and nurses. For, we do read of the *רופאים* (cf. Gen. 50:2) and of mid-wives (cf. Ex. 1:15ff.) who aid to relieve the distressed. And in 2S. 5:6,8, the *בית חולים* was probably a sort of a hospital built on the highest part of Jerusalem, where the blind and the lame were kept.⁶⁴ Thus, the physically weak were well protected and taken care of by the Biblical writers and the people of their times, who were professionally equipped for the task.*

A city itself was protected by walls (cf. Neh. 2:17ff.; 6:15), which were thoroughly policed by *שומרים* (cf. Isa. 62:6) or *שומרי* (cf. Isa. 36:12; Jer. 32:12). Even in time of war the soldiers were taken care of. "Either the men going to war set up a service of their own so as to get provisions from home (cf. Jud. 20:10), or relatives left at home sent food after them into the field so far as that was possible (cf. 1S. 17:17)."⁶⁵

* We might also add that in Lev. 19:32a, there is a sentiment expressing reverence for the aged ("You must rise in the presence of the hoary-headed, and defer to the aged.")

Then

אנ' ע'ק' ת'ק' /
ב' /
ו' /
ו' /
ו' /

Conclusion

The writer of this thesis has made an honest and painstaking attempt to give to the reader a critical view of the historical and literary background of the Bible, and then to use such an appreciation, wherever possible, in depicting the development of various sentiments and laws which deal with the subject of the protection of the weak. He has tried to show how a lofty ethical monotheism grew out of the struggle between two alien civilizations-- the democratic, desert mishpat of Yahweh, and the aristocratic, private-ownership system of Baal. J and E, influenced by an incipient movement in prophetic idealism and, in turn, affecting the utterances of the eighth-century prophets, set out to defend and preserve the democratic customs of the desert Yahweh; and this program of social justice and reformation became ever more crystallized and articulate-- yea, more closely attached to the social and economic scene-- by Deuteronomy and the exilic and post-exilic prophets. In order to attract the people to the observance of the laws of justice and righteousness, rewards were promised to the faithful adherents and curses heaped upon the evil-doer. And even when times were bad-- when the righteous in Israel were suffering from the oppressions of their cruel persecutors-- it was always made clear that God was on the side of Right, and that, in due time, the good, living in a restored Jerusalem, would inherit the earth, and the wicked would perish. Some of the prophets were convinced that this was true; and their message was just this: "Obey the Lord or die; that is, have consideration for and protect God's

own afflicted and underprivileged creatures or suffer the inevitable consequences. And the later Book of Psalms brings to a climax such exalted and intense moral passion, given added inspiration by the reasoned convictions contained in such Wisdom Literature as the Books of Job and Proverbs.

Thus, we see the religion of Yahweh and Israel-- ethical monotheism-- inextricably bound up with the social process-- so indissolubly linked with it that God himself pleads the righteous cause of the poor and needy against the perversive influences and corrupt practices of the defenders of "other gods" and other ways of life. Indeed, the history and literature of the Biblical period, seen through the eyes of the great champions of Yahweh, emphasize to us the emergence of one dominating idea: the religious and moral obligation of protection of the weak.

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