

Historic Jewish-Christian Relationships

and

The Bible As Classical Literature

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IT IS a great pleasure to your Speaker to visit your delightful city and to have the privilege of addressing a friendly group of Jews and Christians. That this sentiment of mutual esteem exists in a small city is notable, for in such circumstances there is always more intimate acquaintance of people with and about each other. And the occasion is of good omen to my eyes, for I believe that the true heart of America is to be found in the small cities and towns rather than in the metropolitan areas. in the customary "Main Street" of our American life, not on the "Broad White Ways".

I am sorely anxious for the cooperation of our two Religions and their peoples and primarily for their mutual respect and understanding. For the stars bode ill to-day for the fate of institutional religion. It is unnecessary to name the several great nations of our day which are oppressing and even suppressing religion as a vital force in society; and the persecution, it is to be noted, comes from the political extremes, from the Right and the Left. from Fascism and Communism. The immediate moral for us is that this is a time of trial for true religion, and we who are interested in that cause must prefer to emphasize those things which we possess in common rather than to insist on the factors which separate us.

To your speaker's mind the only religion that is congenial to the Christian is the Jewish. The word "congenial" is etymologically correct; for it means "of the same genus", and indeed historically Judaism and Christianity with all their ultimate differences are of the same mother-stock. I cannot speak so for Islam, although it too was mothered from the same stock. and although it has long displaced its parents in their home-land. Of all the other religions of the world I try to think with humane and sympathetic respect. But they do not belong in the class of our two religions to which we may give as common denominator the name of "the Bible Religion".

As a student of theology I have of necessity covered wide fields, extending all the way from the Hebrew Bible down through the New Testament into the territory of Church History at large. My present particular interest is Hebrew and the Hebrew Bible with the related Semitic languages and literatures, and just now my studies are far remote from the origins of the Church. But I have always been dominated by the interest in that late and dark age of Bible history, round about the beginning of the Christian era. out of which grew on the one hand Rabbinic Judaism and on the other the Christian Church.

The result of this study and thought, coming largely unconsciously as the best mental results are wont to come, has been the realization how largely and fundamentally the Christian religion is based upon Judaism. The Church soon came to wear a cosmopolitan dress of culture and language—Greek, Latin, Teutonic. Yet this ecumenical development was not strange to its origins. It is interesting to observe how despite the Jew's apparent exclusiveness as "a peculiar people" he has been since and indeed from before the Exile, 2500 years ago, a cosmopolitan. a characteristic which Jews themselves may ignore. Aristotle, in the fourth century B. C., tells how he met in Asia Minor a Jew who was "Hellenic not only in language but in soul." The first great Jewish philosopher and the greatest Jewish historian, Philo and Josephus, wrote in Greek. The Jewish part in the Arabic world of letters and philosophy is known to all. Indeed the Church followed its mother's roaming instincts. One of the earliest of Christian documents, the Epistle of James, was addressed from Jerusalem "to the Churches in the Diaspora." But despite excommunication from the mother

and its sense of its world-wide mission, the Church never forgot its Judaic origin.

The outstanding symbol of this maintenance of the true historical tradition is the Church's preservation of the Hebrew Bible, primarily as its first and only Sacred Scripture, to which were added, as after a model, the New Testament Scriptures. The Christian calls the two parts of his Bible the Old and the New Testament, or rather Covenant it should be, of which word "Testament" is an unfortunate Latin translation. But this without any superciliousness, as of reproach of "the old" after the lingo of the Modernist. The Church followed the Biblical and Jewish notion of the succession of Covenants; to its mind a New Covenant was logically in place. But this may at least be noted that the Church continued the Biblical notion of the development of religion in history, of the belief in a God of History; and it is peculiarly on this score that the two Bible religions stand apart from all other religions; their history is part of their faith and religious consciousness.

This position of the Church toward the Old Testament did not remain naive, unconscious as to its import. A remarkable movement occurred in Asia Minor in the second century, named after its leader Montanus, which desired to suppress the Old Testament and taught that its God was another than that of the New and hostile to him—a kind of dualism which may have seeped in from Persia. This heresy the Church deliberately condemned, and it perished. There are modern movements to-day of similar kind in our own country, more or less open condemnation of the Old Testament by Protestant leaders. Most appalling to the historical as well as to the religious sense is the present official movement in Germany to ban the Old Testament even as it does the actual Jews who are citizens of the land—the Old Testament which is as Jewish as the Jews themselves. This movement comes from a renascent Paganism. It does not proceed from the Christian Germans. In fact, so far as possible, there has been a tough resistance expressed to that historically absurd political dogma by the German scholarship. I cite at random two statements by very eminent German Protestant professors, printed under date of 1932. (I will not name them, for fear it might be taken ill against them). One of them speaks as follows: "The Holy Scriptures which the Evangelical Church since her establishment has rested as upon her foundation include, whether we like it or not, also the Old Testament. Or let us go one step farther back; the Founder of the Church, Jesus Christ, in spite of his rugged antithesis to the Judaism of his day, simply cannot be detached from the Old Testament." The other scholar makes the following statement: "One speaks more and more to-day of a Biblical Religion, including Old and New Testament. He who rejects the Old must reject the New."

Of general insidiousness in our modern Christianity is the ignoring of strict Bible study, as this appears in the very general giving up of Hebrew in the ministerial preparation. This movement proceeds in part from sheer mental laziness, in part from a neology which will have nothing to do with a volume millennia of years old. But Christian theological education must beware, for the same argument holds as against the New Testament, which is already nigh two millennia old. But why these ancient volumes as part and parcel of our religious faith? Because to the Christian, as to the Jew, his religion is historical. More than one half of the common creed of Christians, the Apostles' Creed, is a statement of belief in historic facts.

Now this inclusion of the Old Testament in the Christian Bible does not proceed from mere conservatism or for apologetic purpose—for which latter object it has been theologically used in polemics against Jew and Pagan. The Church, as *ecclesia orans*, has found it essential to its spiritual

and devotional life. The older Psalm-singing Puritanism will recall this as a historical fact. It is set forth in the Prayer Book of my own Church, in which one-third of the space is given to the Jewish Psalter. Indeed there is more Psalter along with extracts from other Old Testament writings in this Prayer Book than there is New Testament. We are all aware of the part that the hymn has played in the Church, especially in Protestantism. The basis of this hymnology, its model, has been the Jewish Psalter, of which many of our finest hymns are but transcripts, while perhaps it is only within about a century that in many Churches the only hymns allowed were the so-called Psalms in Metre. The Christian hymnal to-day is a cosmopolitan volume, but its inspiration comes from the Hebrew Psalms.

I will now, in a brief and necessarily categorical way, speak of certain theses pertinent to my subject.

(1) *The New Testament is a Jewish volume written by Jews.*

The only exception, if any, that might be taken to this statement would apply to certain minor Epistles of whose authorship we are in doubt. Luke, the author of the Third Gospel, was according to tradition a proselyte—but nevertheless a Jew. There is no question concerning the Judaism of Paul and of his Jewish learning—even if he was not a Rabbi. (The Hitlerites think to treat him with disrespect by calling him “Rabbi Paul”.) The Book of Revelation may best be explained as a translation from the Hebrew. As for the Four Gospels there is at present sharp debate. There is no question that Jesus’ words were all Aramaic, and that we have them now only in Greek translation. It has long been recognized that the first three Gospels are composite, made up of earlier Gospel stories. It is reasonable that these or their counterparts were written in part in Aramaic (one section indeed in Hebrew, Luke 1-2). The recently published theory by Professor Torrey of Yale, one of the most distinguished of American Semitists, and written without apologetic purpose of any kind, in his *Four Gospels: a New Translation*, maintains that all the four Gospels in Greek are translations from the Aramaic (and he has argued elsewhere that this is also true for the first half of the Acts of the Apostles). This novel theory has provoked large opposition, but for the present object it serves to insist upon the fact of the thoroughly Judaistic character of the earliest Christian documents. The position too generally held by historians of the Church and its thought that the early Church was distinctly Hellenic in its character must now shift to another viewpoint focussing upon the Jewish origins.

(2) *The Christology of the New Testament concerning Jesus as Messiah and Lord is entirely Jewish in idea and language.*

This statement confronts the surprise and contradiction of customary Christian history of doctrine, and equally, I doubt not, of Jewish scholars. I have come to see, for I was not brought up that way by my guides in that history, such men as the great Harnack, that all the theological terminology in the New Testament is drawn from the Old, and I am glad to have Dr. Torrey’s corroboration of my deliberate opinion. The Church took form in its thought when it was still a Jewish sect, and that embryonic formation has characterized it ever since. The exegesis that supported the Christian theology was entirely drawn from the Jewish exegesis of the Hebrew Bible. For instance, we can compare the theological interpretation of the Scriptures in the Epistle to the Hebrews with that of Philo, the greatest of early Jewish theologians and philosophers, except that the former is far less Hellenic than the latter. The Gospel of John, which has generally been understood as peculiarly Hellenic, is to my mind absolutely Judaistic. However this may be, we may note that there is a change coming over Christian historical theology which is compelling it more and more to recognize the

Jewish origins. It is again a case—to quote the German professor—of “whether we like it or not”. To my audience I would say that the two groups do not sufficiently understand the particular volumes cherished by one another, and indeed the Jew knows less about the New Testament than the Christian knows about the Old. Each group has had its special interest, the Jew in his Torah, the Law, the Christian in his Gospel, and when we come to argue we insist on these contrasts. But for his Gospel the Christian uses Old Testament language, while the evangelical principle of the Gospel came to be early balanced by a law for the new Christian society. And this leads me on to my next thesis.

(3) *There is a contrast between the phases of religion represented in the Old and the New Testaments, a contrast generally expressed in the antithesis of Law and Gospel. The contrast is this: the former represents a this-worldly religion, the latter an other-worldly religion.*

In this statement I refer to the religion of the actual volumes. Now like any broad and general statement, the above thesis may seem quite too categorical to either Jew or Christian, and such a thesis must be explained and confined to certain limits. Let us observe the political and social circumstances in which the two volumes severally arose and for which they speak.

The religion of the Old Testament, the religion for whose history that volume is our only authority, grew up and developed in all the diverse kinds of history which a people can experience. Indeed, that volume is the history of its religion. We find in it the story of the beginnings of Israel with its peculiar religion, as a patriarchal family, a tribe or folk, to use the Teutonic term. We see it developing into a people with a will to be one, and so into a nation, taking its part in the turmoil of ancient Oriental history. It loses its political independence and becomes a Church-State with its own local autonomy in the great empires of Persia, the Greeks, and finally Rome. The concern of that religion is the maintenance of the Chosen People in this “naughty and wicked world”. It is not concerned with a future life. The references to the hope of immortality are late and few and uncertain. At the best there is a millennial hope for a better world, but still always a this-world. The volume which presents this remarkable history—and there is no other such volume in the whole gamut of the history of religion—is a reflection of the “morals and manners” of that history, as expressive of the religion. The very elements in that history which many moderns object to, with its dealing with ordinary humans and their passions, is the thing which makes it precious to the Christian at least, for in it we read of the fermentation of that religion in this present, so real world, and mark how that leaven triumphed, or how far it triumphed in actual history. The Church has always found its *exempla morum* in the Old Testament, whether in its Sunday Schools, to which that volume presents real human characters in every-day life, or to Christian political thinkers, men like Augustine, Calvin, Coleridge. Almost every programme of the Christian Commonwealth has taken the Old Testament for its text-book, whether it be the Holy Roman Empire with the Pope sitting in the seat of the High Priest, or the Puritan establishments modelled directly after the Jewish theocracy.

In antithesis, the New Testament presents the history of the growth of a small sect within barely its first two generations. It was first an appendage of the Jewish Church, and when, as it felt, it was excommunicated by the mother, it went forth into the world as a waif without legal position. It had no political concern. Only slowly there grew up the social problems that were presented in the narrow limits of its domestic circle. It was at first communistic, with the believers sharing all things in common—a condition which did not last long, and Paul had to emit the dictum that “if a

man will not work, neither let him eat," a rule that might be still observed in modern dole systems. Foolish language is abroad to-day to the effect that that Church was politically revolutionary, anarchistic. It was nothing of the sort. There are very few references in the New Testament to the Christian's attitude toward politics, and these are all, to say the least, conservative, very much indeed such as the intelligent Jew would have observed. There is one word of Jesus, "Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's" and the Caesar of his day was Tiberius. Paul teaches that "the powers that be are ordained of God—resist not the power for it bears not the sword in vain", and commands the believers to "pray for the king and all in authority"—and that king was probably the emperor Nero. In this the Apostle was following the ritual usage of the Jews in the Temple with the daily sacrifice for the emperor, the deliberate omission of which in 66 A. D. was the overt act of rebellion against the empire.

It will be answered to this presentation that there are the immortal principles of Christianity of love to neighbor, of turning one's cheek, and so on. But these are principles concerning which the Christian must anxiously inquire how far he is fulfilling them. It must be remembered that as concerns the early Church, such principles were primarily carried out within the inner circle, that as to their application to the larger world there was little sense of responsibility. For instance Paul directs, "Do good to all men, especially those of the household of faith."

But apart from what may be called the spiritual principles of a religion or its founder, which are of concern to the adherent of the religion, there remains for the historian the equally important, perhaps, secularly speaking, more interesting question: How were these original principles practically applied to this world's life? The early Church looked for the speedy end of this world and the coming of another, "a new heavens and a new earth," in a spirit of exultation. Its concern with this world was *pro tempore*. It was another question for that infant body when thrown out into the world it began to grow lusty and strong, to become a social and political factor, and finally within three short centuries to be exalted as the religion of the Roman empire. Then came the trial of the Christian principles, as we call them. And how did the Church put them into practice? We Christians often condemn the constantly sordid and cruel history of the Israelite monarchies, and we can equally condemn the history of the Judean commonwealth under the Hasmonaeans and the later high priests. What a contrast throughout that history with the high principles of the Law and the Prophets and the Psalmists, so we think. But we Christians must equally with sadness inquire how far Christian principles have controlled the shapeless body we call Christendom, whether under Catholicism or Protestantism or Modernism. Well, the Church that has entered into the arena of this world has another problem than when it was concerned merely with the other world. And it is for the sake of this mundane responsibility that the Church needs as a balance to its Gospel the historical experience of the True Religion as it appears in realistic form in the Old Testament.

(4) *The Christian ethic is solidly rooted in the Jewish ethic.*

Peculiarly in our own day religion is being judged, not by its norms of faith, but by its practical results in human character and action. Now I do not think that there exists among intelligent and unprejudiced Christian people any unkind criticism of Jewish ethics. On the other hand there is a large ignorance of or ignoring of the fact that much of what we term Christian in our ethical life goes back to the religion of the Old Testament. Especially to-day, when there is a growing ignorance about the Old Testament, there has developed an exaggeration of opinion about the New, as

though everything in it was new without father or mother. We find little to corroborate this notion in the New Testament itself. We have indeed, especially in the words of Jesus, practical ethical instructions of a supreme order, but almost always in the words of the Old Testament. While Paul breaks with the Rabbinic treatment of the Law, he in no way denies the ethical values inherited from Judaism. We Christians may claim that there were ethical advances, but we must equally admit the rich soil out of which these ethical principles grew. The question of the relative value of Jewish and Christian ethics is a delicate one. I think, as is true of all ethical judgments, whether upon individuals or groups, that there is such a mixture of various elements that it is difficult to settle down to definite comparisons. I must confine myself therefore to some concrete points, not indulge in generalities.

We are wont to speak of Christian charity in the sense of the care for the poor and unfortunate. This social feature the Church took over directly from Judaism and, by the way, the book of Deuteronomy contains the first Poor Laws in history. This shining characteristic the Jew has kept to the present time, (all honor to him), and we Christians must admit none are more generous in small circles of what is called charity or in the wide ranges of philanthropy than the Jewish people. Again we Christians are proud to speak of the Christian Home. But this institution grew up out of the Jewish home. There are just two cases of domestic home life with parents in the New Testament. The one is the tender relation between Jesus and his mother, and Christian preachers and artists have never wearied in pressing that sacred relationship of a Jewish home. And that is a striking reproduction of a pious Jewish home which Paul recalls in writing to his disciple, the young Jew Timothy, "recalling the unfeigned faith that is in thee; which first was in thy grandmother Lois and in thy mother Eunice." Those who know the Jewish home will recognize the characters.

Again we Christians are accustomed to speak of the humanity of Christian law in contrast to non-Christian legal institutions. I do not think that in this judgment we are including the Jews, although we may point to many a cruel and unjust act in their history, just as we must in our own Christian history. But I fear we fail to recollect the barbarity of Anglo-Saxon law in its treatment of the condemned criminal, its savagery towards the offenders of lesser degree. Down until within a century the British criminal law on the statute books was infinitely more barbarous than the ancient Hebrew law, where there was a remarkable limitation of the number of capital offences, and where, with one exception, there was no mutilation of the offender. And let us remember that that law is at least 2500 years old. In one respect the Hebrew law stands forth in remarkable contrast to almost all Western law down to our own day; it appreciates the person above property, whereas the English law, which we have inherited, does the reverse. It is cheaper with us to kill a man than to steal a small sum of money. The murder rate is higher in our own country than in any other land. We have to do some housecleaning before we sit in judgment upon the morals of other peoples, even ancient peoples.

(5) *The categorical contrast of Law and Gospel as expressive of the distinction between Old and New Testament is false. If there is polarization of the two elements in the two volumes, the two are mutually complementary and essential.*

I have no doubt that this thesis will arouse much objection, more particularly from the Christian quarter. There is a shibboleth of contrast that is freely bandied about to express the difference between Jew and Christian in the curt formula of "Gospel versus Law". A recent high spokesman for

the present Administration contrasted his New Deal with the old and sad condition of things in the antithesis of Law and Gospel, which was cheering to all who do not like the law until they found that the new Gospel was to be enforced with heavy fines and long imprisonments—which is not the way of the Gospel.

But the Church in retaining the Old Testament in its Holy Scriptures recognized the part that law holds in society. The Apostle Paul, who is for the most part responsible for the vogue of that contrast, nevertheless found it necessary to lay down the law for the infant churches for which he was responsible. The exaggeration of the evangelical antithesis to law was early seized upon by many antinomian outcroppings in the early Church, which was forced to lay a heavy hand of discipline upon the fools and the licentious who imagined that all law was now done away with in the freedom of the Gospel. In this connection I may quote from a recent statement by an impartial judge, Professor F. C. Burkitt, of Cambridge (in his *Church and Gnosis*, 1932, pp. 23 f.) : “We still hear from time to time in some quarters that there is too much of the Old Testament in Christianity. The best answer to this is that many scholars tend nowadays to treat Christianity as one of the pagan Mystery-Religions. If the Church had not been determined to claim the Old Testament for its own, to declare itself the true Israel and the heir of the Old Testament anticipations, I think it would have been swept away from an historical view of Religion altogether.” And what is true of the Church’s historical consciousness is true also of its sense of responsibility for the world’s social condition, for which it needed the Old Testament as an exemplary volume in order to keep its feet upon this earth.

It is indeed to be admitted that there is a certain polarization of the two elements, Law and Gospel, Righteousness and Love, in the several volumes. We may speak of a difference of proportion in the respective handling of the two elements. But there has been an exaggerated stressing of the distinction on the part of evangelical Christians, with again an unfortunate influence on those who know little about the Bible. We find also in the Old Testament the balancing of Law and Gospel, of Righteousness and Love. Their parity is finely put by the singer of Psalm 101 : “I will sing of mercy and justice”; if we translate “mercy” rather with “grace”, we get a formula that fits both Old Testament and New Testament.

I have no doubt that both parties, Jews and Christians, are to blame for the common distortion of the facts. The Jew because he has especially in reaction from the daughter heresy, exaggerated the Torah; and the Christian, because in exalting the divine Grace he has depreciated the divine Right and Righteousness. To my Evangelical brothers I would say that the Christian exaggeration produces a vast harm, which they should take to heart. Modern Christianity is putting on the market too much of a cheap Gospel of “Divine Grace and Love”. As well in the New Testament as in the old we read of the divine righteousness, and “the terrors of the Lord” are pictured as strongly there as in the Old Testament—more strongly indeed, for there the terrors as well as the grace are for eternity. But lest we be misled by isolated passages of the Gospel, the Church preserves the authoritative volume of the Old Testament that we may watch our step and keep the proper balance. The Bible religion is a religion of paradoxes—that is what makes it great. And one of the great paradoxes is that God is God of Right and of Love. As another Psalmist has it (36:6-7) : “Thy righteousness is like the mountains of El, Thy judgments are a great deep.... How precious is thy grace, O God, And the children of men take refuge under the shadow of thy wings.” What we need to-day in the present uncertainties and problems of the world is not a watered Gospel but one

what may well be called the Epic Story. I refer to the Patriarchal legends which we possess in Genesis.

The outstanding example of the Heroic Ode is the Song of Deborah, although there exist snatches of other such compositions, proving that that notable gem was not unique. Such compositions are likeliest to the great classical Arabic poetry which came into being, as is generally held, within the century before Mohammed. It is interesting how this ancient Semitic strain persisted, to revive some fifteen centuries later. Both expressed the native genius, both arose on the eve of national development, in Palestine before the rise of the monarchy, in Arabia by the time of the Arabic state of Islam. But out of the other cultures of the Near Orient we have surviving no such poetry as the Song of Deborah, nothing like it in Greece or Rome; perhaps we should go to the Norse Eddas for a similar. If the other Semitic peoples had such poetry, they forgot it in the sophistication of their culture. But the peculiarity of the Hebrew literary as well as religious genius is that it never forgot its traditional legends. With all their many experiences and political vicissitudes, and their incorporation into the cosmopolitan world of culture, along with their neighbors of Egypt and Syria and the Mesopotamian Valley, the Hebrews still harked back to their origins as to a paradisaic age.

This fact appears particularly in what I have called the Epic Story. Apart from the literary charm of the Patriarchal legends and traditions they constitute a remarkable and unique historical monument. Of all migrating peoples—and ancient civilizations grew up out of the shock and counter-play of such migrations—Israel alone preserved a tradition of its origins and wanderings. We know that the Greek people was made up of several waves of immigrants, Achaeans, Dorians and others, but the Hellenic traditions on this score are most meagre and confusing; modern historical scholarship is only slowly throwing light on the chaos, discerning, for instance, that those invading hordes fell upon and possessed an older civilization, the Minoan, which can rank as a peer with the great civilizations of the second millennium B. C. But the Hebrew tradition insists upon the distant origins and widespread wanderings of its people, while modern archaeology is proving and confessing the general truth of that historical tradition. The other peoples settled about their fleshpots, were fascinated with their civilization, and their sophistication lost track of their simpler origins. But Israel—I believe because of its peculiar religion, with a God who wandered with it—found its literary delight in the stories of the Wandering Patriarchs, in the scenes of the “great out-of-doors”, of the desert in preference to the Sown-land, the country as opposed to the city. And the unique feature of those traditions is that they deal, not with heroic episodes of war and rapine—although these dominated the Palestinian history of that age, but with the homely scenes of domestic life, of the love of men and women, of the devotion of parents to their children, of the feuds between brother and brother. The book of Genesis, as also many another episode in the Bible history, is peculiarly fitted *ad exemplum morum*, as the epical Berserker tales of the heroes of Homer and the Vedas and Eddas can never be.

In consanguinity with this genre of traditional story is what I would call the Historical Story. I think in the first place of the episodes in the Book of Judges, all centered about Heroes who “saved” their people; and then of the development of this episodic history into that series of biographical histories which we possess in the Book of Samuel, of the somewhat obscure seer Samuel, of the first King Saul, who failed, and of David who succeeded and became his people’s national ideal for the past and the future. I may

here only summarily remark that this is the first appearance in literature of such historical writing. Centuries later appears Herodotus, the cosmopolitan traveller, borne on the waves of the triumph of the Greek genius; he presents such Historical Stories galore, culled from over the earth. He performs this duty as the "investigator" of history (for history was for him "investigation"). Without any such "scientific" consciousness the composers of the Samuel Book, especially in the David history, have left to us artless and strikingly true portraiture of their heroes. There has been much discussion on the part of students of history as to how far these Biblical biographical stories are to be rated in the category of high History. That they have none of the art and consciousness of a Thucydides and a Polybius is evident. But they present an objective and realistic view of their subject, without passion and prejudice, which makes their compositions true dramas of human life. If David is presented as "the man after God's heart" and thereafter becomes his people's Messianic ideal, it is the same David who is confronted by the prophet's damning accusation "Thou art the man," the same human David who prays for his dying baby and who mourns over his rebel son. Only occasionally in ancient history do we obtain human records like these. The Bible history is most concerned with the essentially and universally human. The book of Ruth has been variously diagnosed by the critics, many assuming it to be a piece of propaganda; if so, how artfully it is disguised in a story which culminates in the birth of a baby!

Such Historical Story develops at last into formal History, such as we possess in Kings, with the usual historical apparatus of chronologies, dynasties, wars, the ups and downs of national history. As a whole that book is a historical compendium, not to be reckoned in high literature. And yet there are brilliant exceptions when the ancient Historical Story reappears, as in the Story of Elijah, of the prophet Micaiah, of the revolt of Jehu with its climax in the death of the proud and relentless Jezebel.

But there is one note in Hebrew historiography which I would insist upon and which makes it classical in the history of history. The Bible is the first volume to grasp the notion of the unity of human history. I sometimes think that the Table of the Nations in Genesis 10 is one of the most remarkable of historical documents, not so much for its assemblage of more or less authentic ethnological facts, as for its philosophy of history. The human race is one. Abraham's family with all its peculiar privileges takes its place in the anthropological pedigree along with all the other known races. For Israel's historical philosophy, the one God involves the unity of the human race, a doctrine taught from the first chapters of Genesis. Anthropologists of our day may dispute this anthropological monism; but the actual unity and common destiny of the world's population are being borne in upon us by the crowding events of current history in our own day. Later the great Prophets of Israel were to express for the first time in literature the unity of the divine *pronoia*, as the Jewish historian Josephus termed it, the divine providence over history. Schiller's thesis that "Weltgeschichte ist Weltgericht" was pronounced first in the Bible. When Paul at Athens cited, *ad captandam benevolentiam* of his audience, the Greek poet Cleanthes' novel assertion for the Hellenic world, "For we are also his offspring," he was but speaking ancient Hebrew philosophy. It is of interest that following these Biblical lines the Christian historiographer Eusebius, in the fourth century, gave the world in epitome the first Universal History.

I have dwelt so far upon the prose literature of the Bible; I have purposely magnified it, because its classical value is often ignored or depreciated. I turn my attention now to the Poetry of the Bible. This field of that

literature is so familiar to us, so much a part of our religious heritage that we may easily overlook its notable classical value as literature. Probably the very reason that the Prophets and the Psalms are books of ritual and religious edification stands in the way of the literary appreciation of them by Jew and Christian. But they are monuments to the fact that great thought expresses itself in great diction, and that religion has always primarily given voice in poetic form. What the quality be of that poetry depends upon the genius of the people. It has become clear to my mind that out of all the poetic literatures at the basis of our Western civilization, there is only one that can be ranked with that of Greece, namely, the Hebrew poetry. From Mesopotamia and Egypt and Syria only rare bits have been discovered that may compare to it. And Hebrew poetry has this universal characteristic that even when it is translated into other tongues its fundamental character still persists; this is shown by the verse form into which the early versions largely turned it.

Of the remains of this Hebrew poetry several genres survive, bearing witness to an original widespread poetical accomplishment. I have spoken earlier of the Heroic Ode, most finely exemplified in the Song of Deborah. The throbs of such music survive in more chastened form in the later Prophets, who still in elevated fashion sing of the "Wars of the Lord". But before we pass to this religious poetry, we should notice the phenomenon of an ample secular music and song, testified to from many a current reference in story and history, and possessing its chief monument in the Song of Songs, the Song of Solomon. There are many explanations of this gem of love-poetry, some holding it to be an imitation of the late Greek bucolic poetry best known to us under the name of Theocritus. But I believe it to be thoroughly Oriental, Syrian; it is the remains of a widespread genre, which has survived to us only through the Bible, but it is a species that is thoroughly Oriental as the later Arabic love-poetry shows, which itself had its influence upon Western poetry in the chansons of the Troubadours.

The Book of Proverbs belongs to a cosmopolitan category of literature witnessed to in extent from Egypt and Babylonia and Syria. Following the ancient mode of the proverb, it is cast into poetic form, in general of no higher literary value than the poetic compositions of the English and the French of the eighteenth century. Still, it is to be observed that a literary form is required and followed, which speaks for the artistic taste of the people. And there is one book, unique in the Bible, lying as we might say, between religion and philosophy, whose author strives hopelessly to strike the balance between faith and doubt—the Book of Job. This work is generally acclaimed as one of the great literary dramas of the world, one of the "Five Great Dramas", as one critic has held. It expresses a soul's struggle and despair in finding justification of that "ethical monotheism" which is said to be the characteristic of the Hebrew religion. It is a Soul's Tragedy, and it belongs to an age of sophistication appearing most modern and agreeable to our doubts and gainsayings concerning the Just Providence that should rule the world. But we forget in our conceit that many recurring ages of sophistication have passed over the world's thought about itself, and that in these cycles such sophistication has never had the last word. If we are world-weary, antiquity had that sorrow long ago. It is of interest that we have, too, an earlier Babylonian Job, and in Egypt also a composition of similar character, a "Man's Argument with his Soul". The relations of the Hebrew Job with such compositions are naturally scrutinized by literary critics, inter-dependence there must have been, for that ancient world was cosmopolitan to an extent that we are only beginning to

Greek and Latin models, counts the syllables, and depends upon the alternation of long and short, or rather, in English, accented and unaccented syllables. To this metre or musical measure there has been added the often meretricious element of rhyme which to common taste, I fear, is the chief criterion of poetry. We possess from the Semitic world, outside of the Hebrew poetry, two species of poetic art. One of them, in the Aramaic field, namely, in Syriac literature, simply counts the syllables and is hardly palatable to our taste. The other is the great Arabic poetry; this goes *pari passu* with Classical poetry in the count of syllables, along with an exaggerated use of rhyme and other conceits.

But Hebrew verse has gone its own way, with its counterpart only in old Teutonic measures. It counts the accented syllables, discounts the unaccented, and hence within the single verse there is a mobility of musical accent. If sung, the music must follow the singer's emphasis, not the reverse as in our usual songs and hymns where the poetry is compressed by an iron-clad tune. The verse or line is divided by a caesura into two parts, and then a balance is effected between the two by regulation of the beats. The most common form is 3x3, but we find a shorter more peremptory form 2x2, as also a heavier more imposing form 4x4, while the most musical of all is 3x2. We may apply to these forms the technical terms of hexameter, dimeter, tetrameter, pentameter, but only with caution; the poet is not confined to a procrustean bed of counted syllables of alternating quantity. In addition to the musical quality of Hebrew verse, a remarkable range of art is witnessed to by the strophe-formations. The most usual strophe consists of a pair of lines or verses, and corresponds to our quatrain of four lines. But the strophe form has a large development, and the poet kept it subject to his own handling by varying the length of his strophes to suit his purpose, even as within any given ode he could vary his measures to suit his theme or passion.

We possess, then, in Hebrew poetry an independent contribution to the world's poetics. It is a creation of art, but the art-forms are not imposed from without, but are rather spontaneous expressions of the poet's own music. The Hebrew poet was a man who sang to his harp, and as he sang the music followed. Later Jewish poets accommodated themselves to the literary forms of the civilizations in which their Diasporas were lodged. In the Hellenistic age they wrote in Greek hexameters, and the great Jewish poets of the Middle Ages made use of the forms of Arabic poetry. The ancient systems of metrics survive best in ancient synagogal music and the cantillation of the Psalms in the Latin and the Anglican Church. Probably the finest modern expression of that ancient poetry is to be found in the oratorios of Bach and Handel. I believe that for the poet and the lover of poetry there are literary treasures in the Hebrew Bible for form as well as substance, which still remain to be explored.

I conclude with a few specimens of the poetry of the Second Isaiah rendered into corresponding metrical form in the English. The varieties of metre and so of expression of thought will be obvious.

Isaiah 40:1-2, the Introductory Ode.

