

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Expository Times* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php

pdfs are named: [Volume]_[Issue]_[1st page of article].pdf

Feast of Tabernacles precisely on the same day and date as the Jews, but *one month later*, in the eighth month, according to the Jewish computation. If they had not added a month, they would readjust their calendar and bring it into perfect harmony with the Jewish, but only for a while. Now, the same year was also a Jewish leap-year, and the next Passover would find the Samaritans two months behind the Jews, for the Jews had meanwhile intercalated another Adar. The Samaritans having, however, intercalated one month—a second Tishri—the same difference of one month between the Jewish and Samaritan computations was re-established as existed before, and they kept the Passover in what was the Jewish second month. In any case, it cannot be gainsaid that by the aid of the Samaritan Calendar we might get a different interpretation to the procedure of Jeroboam, and the event would receive greater significance than it has hitherto been invested with.

In the light of the above investigation, the action of King Hezekiah, as described in 2 Ch 30, will appear now under a totally different aspect. It is

no less than an attempt on the part of King Hezekiah, with the assistance of his wise men, to undo the work of Jeroboam in precisely the same manner as the latter had done, namely, to intercalate at a given time a month, and thus bring about a complete religious harmony between the northern kingdom and that of Judah, especially as the former had lost its political existence. Instead of keeping the Passover in the first month, he moved it to the second month, and sent letters to the whole of Israel, including Ephraim and Manasseh, and from Beersheba to Dan, asking them to join in the celebration of the festival of the Passover in Jerusalem—evidently on the date which agreed with the calendar of the northern kingdom. Ephraim mocked at this attempt, and the schism remained unhealed to this very day. Talmudic tradition describes his action as an attempt to make Nissan an intercalary month; but the reason why he should have attempted such alteration of the calendar was never suspected.

In another article I shall endeavour to explain the names of the Jewish Calendar months in the light of Samaritan tradition.

The Great Text Commentary.

THE GREAT TEXTS OF DEUTERONOMY.

DEUT. XVIII. 15.

The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken.

1. THE argument of the passage shows that the 'prophet' contemplated is not a single individual, belonging to a distant future, but Moses' representative for the time being, whose office it would be to supply Israel, whenever in its history occasion should arise, with needful guidance and advice: in other words, that the reference is not to an individual prophet, but to a prophetic order. The existence of such an order in Israel, forming a permanent channel of revelation, was, of course, a signal mark of distinction between Israel and other nations of antiquity. At the same time, the terms of the description are such that it may be reasonably understood as including a reference to the ideal prophet, who should be 'like' Moses in a pre-eminent degree, in whom the line of individual

prophets should culminate, and who should exhibit the characteristics of the prophet in their fullest perfection.¹

2. There is no doubt that these words did more than almost any others to create and keep alive that expectation of some great prophet to come, sometimes identified with Messiah, sometimes distinguished from Him, which we discover to have existed among the Jews generally at the time of our Lord's earthly ministry. The words were familiar to every Jew from his childhood, and through all the changes and vicissitudes of his national history, through those long years when vision and prophecy alike had ceased, there they stood as the great promise of God, of the ultimate fulfilment of which no Jew who believed in the faithfulness of his God could have a shadow of doubt. And thus, when a new teacher arose, the question was at once asked, with anxious interest,

¹ S. R. Driver, *Deuteronomy*, 229.

Could this be the prophet whose coming Moses had announced, and whom the devout-minded among the people, those who, like Simeon and Hannah, were waiting for the consolation of Israel, were eagerly expecting? So we read that when the nation was stirred to its depths by the preaching of John the Baptist, the Jews sent priests and Levites to John, and they asked him, 'Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; and he confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elijah? And he saith, I am not. Art thou the prophet? And he answered, No. . . . And they asked him, and said unto him, Why then baptizest thou, if thou art not the Christ, neither Elijah, neither the prophet?'

Bishop Lightfoot uses this expression as a proof of the genuineness of the Fourth Gospel. The mention of '*the prophet*' without any explanation is, he says, most natural on the lips of contemporary Jews, whose minds were filled with the Messianic conceptions of the times; while such language is extremely unlikely to have been invented for them more than a century after the date of the supposed occurrences. But the point specially to be observed is, that the form which the conception takes is strictly Jewish, and not Christian. Christian teachers identified the prophet foretold by Moses with our Lord Himself, and therefore with the Christ. This application of the prophecy is made directly in St. Peter's speech (Ac 3²²), and inferentially in St. Stephen's (Ac 7³⁷); and later Christian teachers followed in their steps. But these Jews in St. John's Gospel conceive 'the Christ' and '*the prophet*' as two different persons. If He is not 'the Christ,' they adopt the alternative that He may be '*the prophet*' (1^{21, 25}); if not the prophet, then the Christ (7⁴⁰). It is hardly conceivable to my mind that a Christian writer, living in or after the middle of the second century, calling on his imagination for facts, should have divested himself so absolutely of the Christian idea and fallen back on the Jewish.¹

I.

THE PROPHET IN ISRAEL.

This passage sets forth prophecy as the most potent instrument for the growth and furtherance of the religion of Israel. The prophet is here declared to be the successor of Moses, to be the inspired declarer of the Divine will to his people in cases which did not come within the sphere or the competency of the priest. The latter was bound to work within the limits and on the basis of the revelation given by Moses. He was to carry into execution what had been commanded, to keep alive in the hearts of the people the know-

¹ Bishop E. C. S. Gibson.

ledge of their God as Moses had given it, to give 'Torah' from the sanctuary in accordance with its principles. But here a nobler office is assigned to the prophet. He is to enlarge and develop the work of Moses. The Mosaic revelation is here viewed as fundamental and normative, but, in contrast to the views of later Judaism, as by no means complete. For the completion of it the prophet is here declared to be the divinely chosen instrument, and he is consequently assigned a higher position in the purpose of God than either king or priest. He is raised far above the diviners by having his calling lifted into the moral sphere; and he excels both the other organs of national life in that, while they are largely bound by the past, he is called of God to initiate new and higher stages in the life of the chosen people. The ascending steps of the revelation begun by Moses were to be in his hands, and through him God was to reveal Himself in ever fuller measure.

i. The Need for the Prophet.

The promised prophet is to meet a continuous and permanent need of the people, after they are settled in Canaan (v.⁹): he is to supersede the necessity either of God's addressing Israel directly Himself (v.¹⁶⁻¹⁸), or of Israel's having recourse, like their neighbours, to the arts of divination (v.^{14f.}); and a criterion is even added enabling the Israelite to distinguish the true prophet from the false (v.^{21f.}).

1. Once, as the old tradition had it, the curtain was drawn back at Sinai, and the rude and childish nation was brought face to face with God. Nowhere in the literature of the world have we any passages so bold as those in which we read of God's coming down on the Mount and men's going up into His presence, where 'they saw God, and did eat and drink.' How much of literal fact was intended in the story, and how much of awful symbol, we cannot now guess; but when, in later times, the Hebrews pored over it, their judgment was clear that that was not the kind of access they desired, or could make use of. Such an unveiling as that was not helpful, but overwhelming; and God, even in His revelation, must use concealments if they were to have any fruitful acquaintance with Him. So, in the fulness of time, there was born a Man, who did not oppress or bewilder the eyes of onlookers, and who could yet say, 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.'

2. The prophet must take the place of the soothsayer. There is no nation in which we do not, at some stage of its existence, find such practices as are here condemned. They occur in forms of varying dignity; but everywhere we come upon men endeavouring by some kind of trick or technical art to enter into the secret with which human life is encompassed. The witch of Endor who called up dead men to answer questions, the Roman augurs who found guidance for the people in war in the entrails of slaughtered beasts, the astrologer who read the fortunes of men and nations written large across the face of heaven, the wise woman of more recent days to whom the village people went about a sick cow or a false lover, the rain-doctor of the Bechuanas who, in time of drought, became an autocrat—they are all members of one family, and they tell of a universal instinct by which men are driven to knock at shut doors. In their practices there may be enough of superstition and absurdity to raise our pity, but there is something noble too. For they tell of men refusing to look on life as governed wholly by accident, and eager for the assurance that it is possible to walk with confidence even in the dark. A yearning which is in no way base has led men along such obscure and ignoble paths.

Whether we believe in the occasional appearance of abnormal powers of the soothsaying kind or not, it is evident that in every nation's life there has been a time in which faith in the existence of such powers was universal, and in which the moral and spiritual life of men has been threatened in the gravest way by the proceedings of those who claimed to possess them. At this hour the witch-doctor, with his cruelties and frauds, is the incubus that rests upon all the semi-civilized or wholly civilized peoples of Africa. Even British justice has to lay hands upon him in New Guinea, as the following extract from a Melbourne newspaper will show: 'Divination by means of evil spirits is practised to such an extent and with such evil effects by the natives of New Guinea that the Native Regulation Board of British New Guinea has found it necessary to make an ordinance forbidding it. The regulation opens with the statement, "White men know that sorcery is only deceit, but the lies of the sorcerer frighten many people; the deceit of the sorcerer should be stopped." It then proceeds to point out that it is forbidden for any person to practise or to pretend to practise sorcery, or for any person to threaten any other person with sorcery, whether practised by himself or by any one else. Any one found guilty of sorcery may be sentenced by a European magistrate to three months' imprisonment, or by a native magistrate to three days' imprisonment, and will be compelled to work in prison without payment.' Through the sorcerer attempts at advance to a higher life are in our own day being rendered futile;

at his instigation the darkest crimes are committed; and because of him and the beliefs he inculcates men are kept all their lives subject to bondage. So also of old. The ancient soothsayer might be an impostor in everything, but he was none the less dangerous for that. To what depths of wickedness his practices can bring men is seen in the horrors of the secret cult of the negroes of Hayti. Even when soothsaying and magic were connected with higher religions than the fetichism of the Haytian negro, they were still detrimental in no ordinary degree. No worthy conception of God could grow up where these were dominant, and toleration of them was utterly impossible for the religion of Jehovah.¹

ii. The Test of the Prophet.

1. Behind all the terrible aberrations of heathen soothsaying and divination the author saw hunger for the revelation of the will and purpose of God. That was worthy of sympathy, however inadequate and evil the substitutes elaborated for the really Divine means of enlightenment were. So he promised that the real need would be supplied by God's holy prophets. Nothing that savoured of ignorance or misapprehension of God's spirituality, or of unfaithfulness to Jehovah, could be tolerated; for Israel's God would supply all their need by a prophet from the midst of them, of their brethren, like unto Moses, in whose mouth Jehovah would put His words, and who should speak unto them all that He should command him. This is the broadest and most general legitimization of the prophet, as a special organ of revelation in Israel, that the Scripture contains.

To most persons the name 'prophet' suggests the thought of prediction—of speaking before, of foretelling the future. The gift of prophecy is widely imagined to be a power of foreseeing in detail the course of coming events, which enables men to write down the history of them before they have come to pass. This, however, is a comparatively modern conception, and is not the main thought which Holy Scripture puts before us in regard to the prophets of the Old Testament or our Blessed Lord Himself as pre-eminently the Prophet. 'A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you like unto me.' The words imply that the speaker, who (it must always be remembered) is represented to be Moses, was himself a prophet, as the one to come was to be like him. But we can see that prediction occupies but a very small place in the life of Moses. True, it is not entirely absent, but it is not the dominant feature. He was a prophet, not as a *foreteller*, but as a *forthteller*, and a speaker *for* God. We instinctively think of him as the giver of the law, the revealer of God Himself, rather than as the man who announced beforehand the course of history. Incidentally, indeed, there are in his utterances announcements of the future; but how do they come in?

¹ A. Harper.

Not so much because he had *foresight* of the incidents and details which were afterwards to be written down in the pages of history, but rather because he had such clear and swift *insight* into the mind of God, and could, therefore, unveil the working of the eternal laws of God's dealing with men, and through this insight could anticipate with unerring certainty that, given certain conditions on the part of man, certain results were sure to follow.¹

2. The test marks of the prophet as given in the text are these three:

(1) The prophet is 'raised up' by God; the individual holder of the office has his 'call' and does not 'prophesy out of his own heart.' The man who takes this office on himself without such a call is *ipso facto* branded as a false prophet.

(2) The prophet is 'from the midst of thee, of thy brethren,'—springing from the people, not an alien, like so many of these wandering soothsayers, but with the national life throbbing in his veins, and himself participant of the thoughts and emotions of his brethren.

(3) The prophet is to be 'like unto' Moses,—not in all points, but in his receiving direct communications from God, and in his authority as God's messenger. The crowning characteristic, 'I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him,' invests his words with Divine authority, calls for obedience to them as the words of God Himself, widens out his sphere far beyond that of merely foretelling, brings in the moral and religious element which had no place in the oracles of the soothsayer, and opens up the prospect of a continuous progressive revelation throughout the ages ('all that I *shall* command him').

There was a moral standard to which the prophet had to conform, and the value of his prophecy was to be measured by that standard. A prophet who advises the people to do wrong is a false prophet, even if he is able to work miracles. Whatever value the sign might have as evidence, it must always give way to the higher test, conformity to the truth. Hananiah made a great hit before the people by breaking the symbol of submission upon his adversary's neck; Jeremiah put an iron yoke in place of the wooden one to show that truth could not be disposed of so summarily. In the very controversy Jeremiah seems to have groped, even though somewhat blindly, after that highest standard of prophecy. His point was that the people had reason to believe his message, all the more because it foreboded an evil time. If the people had paused to analyze, instead of madly seizing at straws in conformity with their desires, they might have seen many reasons to urge the accuracy of Jeremiah's forecast. He had prophesied already for several

years, and had shown that he could not be moved by persecution. The political outlook was all in favour of Jeremiah. The impotence of an alliance of small jealous nations against the great power of Babylon, and the futility of dependence upon Egyptian aid, had been shown again and again in history. However difficult the problem appeared to Zedekiah's court, it is plain now, and was plain then, on which side was the lover of truth, and its upholder at whatever personal peril.²

II.

A PROPHET LIKE MOSES.

1. If the passage promises that at all moments of difficulty and crisis in Israel's history, the will of God would be made known by a Divinely sent prophet, that would be specially true of the last and greatest crisis, the birth of the new time which the Messiah was to inaugurate. Whatever fulfilment the promise might receive previously to that, it could not be perfectly fulfilled without the advent of Him whose office it was to close up the history of the present world, and bring all things by a safe transition into the New Messianic world. That was the greatest crisis; and necessarily the prophet who spoke for Jehovah in it must be the crown of the long line of prophets. There is still a higher sense in which this promise has reference to the Messiah. He was to sum up and realize in Himself all the possibilities of Israel. Now they were the prophetic nation, the people who were to reveal God to mankind; and when they proved prevalently false to their higher calling, the hopes of all who remained faithful turned to that 'true' Israel which alone would inherit the promises. At one period, just before and in the Exile, the prophetic order would appear to have been looked upon as the Israel within Israel, to whom it would fall to accomplish the great things to which the seed of Abraham had been called. But the author of Second Isaiah, despairing even of them, saw that the destiny of Israel would be accomplished by one great Servant of Jehovah, who should outshine all other prophets, as he would surpass all other Israelite priests and Davidic kings. As the crown and embodiment of all that the prophets had aspired to be, the Messiah alone completely fulfilled this promise, and consequently the Messianic reference is organically one with the primary reference. They are so intimately interwoven that nothing but violence can separate them; and thus we gain a deeper insight into the wide reach of

¹ Bishop E. C. S. Gibson.

² L. W. Batten, *The Hebrew Prophet*, 133.

the Divine purposes, and the organic unity of the Divine action in the world. These form a far better guarantee for the recognition of Messianic prophecy here than the supposed direct and exclusive reference did. By not grasping too desperately at the view which more strikingly involves the supernatural, we have received back with 'full measure pressed down and running over' the assurance that God was really speaking here, and that this, like all the promises of the Old Testament when rightly understood, is yea and amen in Christ.

Every Divine idea which has been imperfectly manifested in fragmentary and sinful men and in the material creation is completely incarnated in Him. He is the King to whom the sins and the saintlinesses of Israel's kings alike pointed. He is the Priest, whom Aaron and his sons foreshadowed, who perfectly exercises the sympathy which they could only feel partially, because they were compassed with infirmity and self-regard, and who offers the true sacrifice of efficacy higher than 'the blood of bulls and of goats.' He is the Prophet, who makes all other means of knowing the Divine will unnecessary, hearing whom we hear the very voice of God speaking in His gentle words of love, in His authoritative words of command, in His illuminating words of wisdom, and speaking yet more loudly and heart-touchingly in the eloquence of deeds no less than Divine; who is 'not ashamed to call us brethren,' and is 'bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh'; who is like, but greater than, the great lawgiver of Israel, being the Son and Lord of the 'house' in which Moses was but a servant. 'To him give all the prophets witness,' and the greatest of them was honoured when, with Moses, Elijah stood on the Mount of Transfiguration, subordinate and attesting, and then faded away when the voice proclaimed, 'This is my beloved Son, hear ye him'—and they 'saw no one, save Jesus only.'¹

2. What is signified by 'like unto me'? The phrase has a note of ambiguity in it very seductive to commentators, who have debated as to how much is implied. One scholar thinks it means—of thy brethren, as I am; Driver insists that the coming prophet is to be the Lord's representative with the people as Moses was. It is impossible now to fix with precision the original shade of meaning. But very soon disappointment began to enrich and deepen it, and already in the last chapter of Deuteronomy, which is a kind of epilogue to the book, it is written (34¹⁰), 'There arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face.' The Samaritans in their separation and the later Jews were emboldened to find in these words a veiled promise of the Messiah. Every prophet as he came was

¹ A. Maclaren.

tested by the standard they afford, and thus their mind moved forwards to the Prophet who occupied the future.

In the Chinese version of the Diamond Sutra *Kin Kang King*, which is one of the most popular of all the Buddhist sutras, and most widely used throughout China, there is a very remarkable passage attributed to Gautama Buddha in the sixth chapter. It is to this effect:—

'Five hundred years after my death there will arise a religious prophet, who will lay the foundation of his teaching, not on one, two, three, four, or five Buddhas, nor even on ten thousand Buddhas, but on the fountain of all the Buddhas; when that One comes, have faith in Him, and you will receive incalculable blessings.'

Now, since it is well known that Jesus Christ and Ashvagosha² did appear some five hundred years after Buddha, this is one of the most remarkable prophecies in the whole range of sacred literature.³

(1) What Moses was to the Israelites that Christ is to mankind. The Israelites were in the land of strangers, viz. the Egyptians; they were slaves, hardly tasked, and wretched, and God broke their bonds, led them out of Egypt, after many perils, to the promised land, Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey. How clearly this prefigures to us the condition of the Christian Church! We are by nature in a strange country; God was our first Father, and His Presence our dwelling-place: but we were cast out of paradise for sinning, and are in a dreary land, a valley of darkness and the shadow of death. We are born in this spiritual Egypt, the land of strangers. Still we have old recollections about us, and broken traditions, of our original happiness and dignity as freemen.

Moses conducted the Israelites from the house of bondage to their own land, from which their fathers had descended into Egypt. He came to them from God, and, armed with God's power, he smote their cruel enemies, led them out of Pharaoh's territory, divided the Red Sea, carried them through it, and at length brought them to the borders of Canaan. And who is it that has done this for us Christians? Who but the Eternal Son of God, our Lord and Saviour, whose name in consequence we bear. He has rescued us from the arm of him who was stronger than we; and therefore in this respect first of all, Christ is a second Moses, and a greater.

² Ashvagosha lived about 100 A.D.—six centuries after Sakya Muni—and composed 'The Awakening of Faith.'

³ Timothy Richard, *The New Testament of Higher Buddhism*, 47.

(2) Moses saw God face to face; yet not as Christ. 'No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.' None was so favoured as Moses in this respect; before Christ came, Moses alone saw God face to face; all prophets after him but heard His voice or saw Him in vision. Samuel was called by name, but he knew not who called him in the dark night till Eli told him. Isaiah saw the vision of the Seraphim, and heard them cry 'Holy' before the Lord; but it was not heaven that he saw, but the mere semblance of the earthly temple in which God dwelt among the Jews, and clouds filled it. But Moses in some sense saw God and lived; thus God honoured him. 'If there be a prophet among you,' said Almighty God, 'I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold'; and on his death, we are told, 'there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face.' Yet, favoured as he was, Moses saw not the true presence of God. Flesh and blood cannot see it. Even when Moses was in the Mount, he was aware that the very fulness of God's glory then revealed to him was, after all, but the surface of His infinitude. The more he saw, the deeper and wider did he know that to be which he saw not.

But Christ really saw, and ever saw, the face of God; for He was no creature of God, but the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father. From eternity He was with Him in glory, as He says Himself, dwelling in the abyss of the infinite greatness of the Most High. Not for forty days, as Moses on the Mount in figure, but for ever and ever was He present as the Counsellor of God, as His Word, in whom He delighted. No language is needed between the Father and Him who is the very Word of the Father; no knowledge is imparted to Him, who by His very nature and from eternity knows the Father, and all that the Father knows. Such are His own words, 'No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.'

(3) Now it is this intimacy that gave to Moses' word its note of authority; and it is because of the

closer intimacy that it could be said of Christ, 'Never man spake like this man.' Moses stood so near to the great reality that he dared to speak as from God. That is one of the tremendous things in the Old Testament, that 'men came under so overwhelming a conviction of God's presence that God's word breaks through them, and they speak to the people in the first person.' It is really God whom we hear, and thus there is an irresistible note of authority running through the book. The prophet, like Moses, when he comes, will not argue or dispute, but declare, and if you face him in a spirit of controversy, you will miss the gift which he has brought. The prophet is the embodied voice of God; and so it was said of Jesus: 'He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.'

'The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.' In Him God is fully and truly seen, so that He is absolutely the Way, and the Truth, and the Life. All our duties are summed up for us in the message He brings us. Those who look towards Him for teaching, who worship and obey Him, will by degrees see 'the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in his face,' and will be 'changed into the same image from glory to glory.' And thus it happens that men of the lowest class and the humblest education may know fully the ways and works of God; as fully, that is, as man can know them; far better and more truly than the most sagacious man of this world, to whom the gospel is hid.

(4) Moses was the great intercessor when the Israelites sinned. While he was in the Mount, his people corrupted themselves; they set up an idol, and honoured it with feasting and dancing. Then God would have cut them off from the land of promise, had not Moses interposed. He said, 'Lord, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people.' In this way he gained a respite, and then renewed his supplications. He said to the people, 'Ye have sinned a great sin; and now I will go up unto the Lord; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin.' Then he said to their offended Creator, 'Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin . . .'

Here Moses, as is obvious, shadows out the true Mediator between God and man, who is ever

at the right hand of God making intercession for us; but the parallel is closer still than appears at first sight. After Moses had said, 'If thou wilt forgive their sin,' he added, 'and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.' He was taken at his word. Observe, rather than that Israel should forfeit the promised land, he here offered to give up his own portion in it, and the exchange was accepted. He was excluded, dying in sight, not in enjoyment, of Canaan, while the people went in under Joshua. This was a figure of Him who was to come. Our Saviour Christ died, that we might live: He consented to lose the light of God's countenance, that we might gain it. By His cross and passion He made atonement for our sins, and bought for us the forgiveness of God. Yet, on the other hand, observe how this history instructs us, at the same time, in the unspeakable distance between Christ and Moses. When Moses said, 'Blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book,' God did not promise to accept the exchange, but He answered, 'Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.' Moses was not taken instead of Israel, except in figure. In spite of Moses, the sinful people were plagued, and died, though their children entered the promised land. And again, Moses, after all, suffered for his own sin. True, he was shut out from Canaan. But why? Not in spite of his having 'done nothing amiss,' as the Divine Sufferer on the cross, but because he spake unadvisedly with his lips, when the people provoked him with their murmurings. The meek Moses was provoked to call them rebels, and seemed to arrogate to himself the power and authority which he received from God; and therefore he was punished by dying in the wilderness. But Christ was the spotless Lamb of God, 'who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.' And His death is meritorious; it has really gained our pardon.¹

Teacher of teachers! Priest of priests! from Thee
 The sweet strong prayer
 Must rise, to free
 First Levi, then all Israel, from the snare.
 Thou art our Moses out of sight—
 Speak for us or we perish quite.²

(5) In one other respect Christ the Prophet was

¹ J. H. Newman.

² Keble.

like Moses. He was, and is, one of us. 'Of thy brethren,' it was said; and in Jesus there is nothing foreign. All He asked for was that, having ears, we should listen; to be a man with a man's faculties and a man's needs is on one side enough for the understanding of His word. The children pressing round Him and catching at His clothes did justice to His friendliness; the common people, hearkening to His word, found nothing there to baffle; and those who had despaired of themselves, since wisdom was for the wise and virtue for the good, rejoiced to find the best of all within their reach.

In the shop of Nazareth
 Pungent cedar haunts the breath.
 'Tis a low Eastern room,
 Windowless, touched with gloom.
 Workman's bench and simple tools
 Line the walls. Chests and stools,
 Yoke of ox, and shaft of plow,
 Finished by the Carpenter,
 Lie about the pavement now.

In the room the Craftsman stands,
 Stands and reaches out His hands.

Let the shadows veil His face
 If you must, and dimly trace
 His workman's tunic, girt with band
 At His waist. But His hands—
 Let the light play on them;
 Marks of toil lay on them.
 Paint with passion and with care
 Every old scar showing there
 Where a tool slipped and hurt;
 Show each callous; be alert
 For each deep line of toil.
 Show the soil
 Of the pitch; and the strength
 Grip of helve gives at length.
 When night comes, and I turn
 From my shop where I earn
 Daily bread, let me see
 Those hard hands—know that He
 Shared my lot, every bit;
 Was a man, every whit.

Could I fear such a hand
 Stretched toward me? Misunderstand
 Or mistrust? Doubt that He
 Meets me full in sympathy?
 'Carpenter! hard like Thine
 Is this hand—this of mine:
 I reach out, gripping Thee,
 Son of man, close to me,
 Close and fast, fearlessly.'

III.

OBEDIENCE TO THE PROPHET.

'Unto him ye shall hearken.'

1. The nation as a whole never acted in accordance with the teaching of Moses. They did not obey the command given here, 'Unto him ye shall hearken,' and reiterated still more solemnly in the words, 'And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.' The prophets for the most part spoke to their contemporaries in vain. Where they were not neglected they were persecuted, and many sealed their testimony with their blood.

Christ brings grace as well as truth, a most surprising miracle of mercy, from the freeness of the gift as well as a true wisdom from its fulness. And yet, in spite of all this bounty, men live heartlessly, not caring for the gracious benefit. Look at the world. Men begin life with sinning; they quench the early promise of grace, and defile their souls; they block up the entrances of the spiritual senses by acts of sin, lying and deceit, intemperance, profaneness, or uncleanness,—by a foolish and trifling turn of mind, by neglect of prayer when there is no actual vice, or by an obstinate selfishness. How many are the ways in which men begin to lose sight of God; how many are the fallings away of those who once began well. And then they soon forget that they have really left God; they still think they see His face, though their sins have begun to blind them. Like men who fall asleep, the real prospect still flits before them in their dreams, but out of shape and proportion, discoloured, crowded with all manner of fancies and untruths; and so they proceed in that dream of sin, more or less profound,—sometimes rousing, then turning back again for a little more slumber, till death awakens them.¹

2. Yet, with inextinguishable hope the people of Israel marched onward with uplifted faces, to

¹ J. H. Newman.

which light reflected from that future gave at times a radiant gladness; and always they kept an open ear for those who saw what God was about to do at each turning of the way.

Consequently, amid all drawbacks, the Israelites became an instrument of the finest power for good in the hands of their Almighty King; and even when their outward glory faded, they were inwardly renewed, and pressed onward age after age. 'Without hastening and without resting,' the purpose of God was realized in their history, guided by king, priest, and prophet, the three organs of their national life. Each contributed his share in preparing for the fulness of the time when He came who was the Salvation of God, and each supplied elements of the most essential kind to the mingled expectation which was so marvellously satisfied by the life and work of Christ.

There's a song in the air!

There's a star in the sky!

There's a mother's deep prayer,

And a baby's low cry;

And the star rains its fire while the beautiful sing,
For the manger of Bethlehem cradles a king!

There's a tumult of joy

O'er the wonderful birth,

For the Virgin's sweet boy

Is the Lord of the earth.

Ay, the star rains its fire, and the beautiful sing,
For the manger of Bethlehem cradles a king!

In the light of that star

Lie the ages imperaled;

And that song from afar

Has swept over the world;

Every hearth is aflame, and the beautiful sing,
In the homes of the nations, that Jesus is king.¹

¹ J. G. Holland.

Recent Foreign Theology.

Old Testament Eschatology.

In his recent volume, *Der Alttestamentliche Prophetismus*, Professor Sellin has published, among other matter, a series of lectures which he recently had occasion to deliver on the question of Old Testament Eschatology. The lectures thoroughly

deserved publication, were it only that they prove the extent to which Dr. Gressmann's 'Der Ursprung der Israelitisch-jüdischen Eschatologie' has influenced the whole outlook on Old Testament questions. Professor Sellin has felt it necessary to devote his chief attention to a vigorous criticism of Dr. Gressmann's position, but fortunately has not