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THE PAULINE DOCTRINE OF THE RESURRECTION

First of all we should take note of the close connection between the parousia and the resurrection. It is clearly marked in the structure of 1 Thess. iv. 16: "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven . . . and the dead in Christ shall rise first." But this same passage seems further to imply, that the resurrection takes place before Christ in his descent reaches the earth, for it is said that, the dead having been raised, those that are still living, will together with them, be caught up in the clouds, henceforth forever to remain with Him.

With this meeting of Christ with his own in the air the statement of iii. 13, where Jesus is represented as coming with "all his saints" is usually brought in some connection. If "saints" here means believers, it will imply that the Lord in his final descent will be accompanied by all his people in an embodied state. It is not absolutely certain, however, that this combination of the two passages is necessary. Two other possibilities exist. The "saints" might designate the sum total of believers previously having their habitation in heaven and now making with Him the first stage of the journey from there to earth. Or "the saints" might refer to angels. Still, inasmuch as Paul nowhere else follows this latter usage, and, on the other hand, frequently calls Christians by the name "saints," the other view appears the more plausible. If the reference to all the heavenly saints as accompanying Him is adopted, note should be taken of the fact, that, since Jesus comes in visible form, in order to obtain a clear picture of the situation, the saints likewise ought to be conceived in cor-

WAS JESUS A MODERNIST?

The advocate of the so-called "modern" view of the Bible occupies a difficult and in some respects anomalous position. If he emphasizes too strongly the novelty of the views which he advocates, if he makes the break with the past definite and unmistakable, he is certain to alienate and antagonize many whom he would feign win for his opinions. If, on the other hand, he minimizes their novelty, if he identifies them too closely with views which are familiar and traditional, those who are in search of the new and up-to-date will be disappointed and look elsewhere for light and leading. Consequently the attempt is frequently made to steer a middle course between these two extremes: to present new and even radically destructive views but at the same time to maintain that they are really quite consistent with views which are old and precious.

A good example of such a middle course was furnished a few years ago by Dr. George A. Barton in a book entitled *The Religion of Israel*. The opening paragraph reads in part as follows:

Religion may be viewed from either the human or the divine point of view. From the divine standpoint God reveals truth; from the human, man discovers it. . . . Viewed from the divine side revelation has been progressive; looked at from the human, it has been evolutionary. He who speaks of the evolution of religion does not thereby deny the divine element, nor he who speaks of revelation, the human factor. If, then, in the following pages we seek to trace the evolution of the religion of Israel, we shall be but treating in the favorite phraseology of the time the progress of revelation in Israel.

The above statement sounds very simple; it seems to point to a very easy solution of the problem of reconciling "the old faith and the new knowledge." Revelation and evolution are merely two sides of the shield—the divine and the human: the difference lies solely in the point of view. But unfortunately the revelation and the evolution sides of the religion of the Old Testament cannot be harmonized after this easy fashion. In proof of this it will suffice to take a single illustration. If we turn to Ex. xx in our Bibles, we read there that the Deca-

logue was proclaimed by the LORD, from Mt. Sinai, to the children of Israel, in the days of Moses. The narrative is quite explicit with regard to this. Whether the statements are true or not, there is no uncertainty or ambiguity as regards place, time, speaker or auditors. This we may consider the "revelation" account of the giving of the Ten Commandments. But Dr. Barton tells us that seven of the commandments contained in this decalogue are different from the commands in the earlier decalogue (that of J), "which, it has been conjectured, goes back to the time of Moses."¹ And he tells us: "It is a plausible conjecture that these commands were conceived by Elijah and his followers to be more in accord with the demands of Yahweh, the champion of social justice, than the ritualistic decalogue of J."² This is the "evolution" account of the giving of the Decalogue. It is quite obvious, we think, that these two accounts are not and cannot be regarded as merely two sides or aspects of the same event. Looked at merely from the standpoint of chronology, they are incompatible; and the attempt to harmonize them can lead only to confusion. If the variation between "standard" and "daylight saving" time has caused and is causing many people in certain parts of the U.S.A., even quite intelligent people, serious difficulty and annoyance when the difference between the two is only an hour, how can the Bible student fail to be confused when he is asked to reckon time by two chronometers, one of which lags behind the other by some centuries? It is far better and much less confusing to state frankly that the differences between two such accounts is real and irreconcilable. If one of them is true, the other is false. They cannot both be true.³

¹ A decalogue carved out of Ex. xxxiv. and regarded as more primitive because all of its commands are "ritualistic." E.g., the tenth as Dr. Barton arranges them is "Thou shalt not see the a kid in its mother's milk."

² *Op. cit.*, pp. 90f.

³ J. E. McFadyen, in his *Old Testament Criticism*, declares that "the differences between the traditional and the critical view are 'immense.'" Yet in the same sentence he goes on to say "but it is equally true that these differences do not touch the religious essence of Scripture: they

There are a good many advocates of the "modern" view who recognize the necessity of stating quite clearly the difference between the old view and the new. And while their presentation of the new views may startle and shock, it is much better that the truth should be told. If the "evolution" account of Israel's early religious history is true, if it is correct to say with Professor Kennett, "Of the religion of the tribes of Israel proper at the time of the conquest of Palestine we have no direct information; all the stories relating to this period are written for the edification of later ages and are coloured by their circumstances,"⁴ then the "revelation" account, according to which the bulk of the Pentateuch is mainly concerned with telling us just this very thing, namely what the religion of Israel was as ordained by God through Moses, must be quite unreliable and even false. There is no middle ground. The two views are not merely two sides of the same thing; they are diametrically opposed; and it is the part of wisdom to recognize this.

At the same time most of those who hold the "modern" view are eager to avoid making the break between the new view and the old abrupt and final. Especially are they eager to find support for their opinions in the teachings of the New Testament and particularly in the words of Jesus. One of the most recent attempts in this direction is that of Dr. James H. Snowden in his book, *Old Faith and New Knowledge*. This book is not significant because of its originality. Dr. Snowden makes no claim to be original. The first sentence of the preface states that "This book may contain little that has not been said before, but the same things must be constantly re-

affect questions of method, of standpoint, of history, of chronology, of literature." These he considers non-essential. For he adds, "but in points that are vital to the faith of both parties the supporters of the older view and the critics who are not biassed by a theory—are in perfect harmony." How one who holds the views of Dr. McFadyen can make such a preposterous statement is hard to understand.

⁴Hastings, *Encycl. of Religion and Ethics*, art. "Israel," p. 400. Cf. art. "The Conflict over the Old Testament" in this REVIEW for January, 1923, p. 89.

stated as the trees bring forth the same leaves and fruits year after year." But the book is sufficiently noteworthy because of the position of its author and the views which he presents. Dr. Snowden was for some years professor of Systematic Theology and now occupies the chair of Apologetics in the Western Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. He was for several years editor of *The Presbyterian Magazine*, which is conducted under the authority of the General Assembly of that Church. He is at present the editor of *The Presbyterian Banner*. He wields the pen of a ready writer and he has for some years published annually a volume of "helps" on the International Sunday School Lessons. Consequently Dr. Snowden's views upon the subject "Old Faith and New Knowledge" should be of interest to many evangelical Christians, but especially to Presbyterians.

Dr. Snowden does not use the word "modernism" in his preface. He tells us that "The purpose of the book is to take a general view of the relations of faith and knowledge or of religion and science and especially to trace the process of their adjustment through the Bible itself." But this process of "adjustment" is merely another name for modernism; and the word occurs constantly. One of Dr. Snowden's numerous definitions is the following: "We, then, adopt as our definition of modernism and the sense in which we use it throughout this discussion the following: *Modernism is the principle and progressive process of continually unifying our growing experience in knowledge and life.*"⁵ While the whole of the preceding sentence is placed in italics by Dr. Snowden, the word which should be especially emphasized is "unifying." Dr. Snowden uses this or similar words very frequently.⁶ The modernist, he tells us, is "one who endeavors to bring all his knowledge up to date and adjust it to the thought and life of to-day."⁷ Consequently we find that everyone who has

⁵ P. 22.

⁶ Cf. e.g., pp. 107, 127, 145, 164, 176, 179, 189, 192, 207, 223, 261, 263, *et passim*.

⁷ P. 21.

stated new truth or has sought to bring the new into harmony with the old, or rather, to adjust the old to the new, is claimed as a modernist by Dr. Snowden. From Abraham to Paul, from Clement of Rome to Sir Oliver Lodge, Dr. Snowden instances many, including the Lord Himself, who were modernists or held the principle of modernism. Abraham "modernized his old faith into the new, and, therefore, he was a modernist in his day and an example for us in our day." "In the true and proper sense of the term, Moses was a modernist." The prophets had "the spirit of modernism." "Peter . . . refused to stand still in the tracks of the fathers, but moved forward as new light fell upon his path. Peter also was a modernist." Stephen was "the first martyr for modernism." At the Council of Jerusalem, "Modernism won and this is why we are Christians to-day." Paul was "the master modernist."⁸ In short, "The whole Bible

⁸ As the above phrase would imply Dr. Snowden is quite enthusiastic about the modernism of Paul. He declares that Paul "had a sponge-like mind to soak up both Greek and Hebrew learning and expressly taught and practiced the art of appropriating truth from any source" (p. 167). He is especially impressed by the address on Mars' Hill and describes it as "a splendid instance of the principle of modernism and of its practice." He tells us that Paul "did not reject the Greek faith and did not even show disrespect to the idol in which it was embodied." On the contrary he declares that Paul "proceeded to pour upon that poor dumb idol the light of the gospel and transformed it into a stepping-stone up into the glorious light of God as Creator and of 'the Man . . . that He hath raised from the dead.'" We have here a good illustration of a certain looseness of thinking which at times destroys the force of Dr. Snowden's arguments. Dr. Snowden in this paragraph *four* times uses the words "idol" or "idol worship." Yet the narrative tells us expressly that what had impressed Paul was an altar to an unknown god. Had Paul desired to use an idol as a "stepping-stone" to Christ, the Greco-Roman pantheon was full of them. Zeus, Hermes, Ares, Aphrodite were household names. But the idols of paganism, even a cultured paganism, were utterly abhorrent to a faithful disciple of Moses and of Christ. Had Paul wished to adapt Christianity to the Greek religion, the mythology and the cultus of that religion furnished him abundant material. But he did not turn to them. It was an *altar* to "an *unknown* God" which captured his imagination. And when he proceeded to give to that abstract and empty conception the reality and content of Christian faith, his words fell on deaf

in principle and method and spirit is a modernistic book.”⁹

In view of such sweeping assertions, it is important that we should carefully define our terms. If the greatest figures of the Bible, the Lord and His apostles included, were modernists, it goes without saying that every Christian should seek to be one also. If a modernist is simply “one who endeavors to bring all his knowledge up to date and adjust it to the thought and life of to-day,” every honest and intelligent man is and should be a modernist, provided of course the thought and life of today is in harmony with truth and reality. This important proviso needs to be made, for, as Dr. Snowden recognizes, “new” and “true” are not necessarily synonymous terms. He tells us frankly that modernism “may incorporate and often has incorporated error as well as truth.”¹⁰ No one could denounce behaviourism more emphatically than Dr. Snowden does, notwithstanding the fact that it is very popular today. He tells us that a Chicago professor has “tossed it upon the scrap-heap of baseless theories and vagaries.” He declares that “It is obviously self-contradictory: for it uses consciousness to deny consciousness, consciousness first cutting its own throat and then loudly declaring that it is dead.”¹¹ Behaviourism is new, but it is not true, Dr. Snowden himself being witness.

What, then, is modernism? “Modernism,” Dr. Snowden assures us, “is a principle and a method and not a doctrine,”¹² the principle of up-to-dateness; and he tells us:

There are modernists who do reject the supernatural in all its forms, but this is the result of their application of the principle of modernism and is not the principle itself; and there are other modernists who accept the supernatural in its thorough-going sense, and this also is the result of their application of the principle and is not the principle itself. It is vital to any proper discussion of this subject that we keep the principle of

ears. Paul strove to preach the Gospel tactfully; he did not try to adapt it to pagan creeds and customs.

⁹ P. 170.

¹⁰ P. 179.

¹¹ P. 232.

¹² P. 21.

modernism apart from the results of its application by different students; and the same is true of fundamentalism.¹³

But it is hard to hold principles without applying them: a method is of little value unless it leads to practical results. And it is important to note that Dr. Snowden does not succeed in keeping the two distinct; in fact he hardly even attempts to do so. One of his fullest definitions of modernism is given where he is discussing "the principle of modernism in the Bible." He tells us:

Modernism as defined and held by this writer is the principle and spirit of holding and expressing our religious faith and theological doctrines as interpreted in the light of the established knowledge of our day, or the process of progressively unifying our total knowledge and experience, and let no fundamentalist untruthfully impute to him modernism in his own sense of "agnostic modernism" or in any other sense than that which the writer himself has declared and hereby declares that he holds it.¹⁴

Here Dr. Snowden speaks definitely of "the established knowledge of our day," as normative for the expressing and interpreting of religious faith and theological doctrines in modern times. Elsewhere he tells us that in the nineteenth century Christian faith was confronted with the results and spirit of modern science "and had to adjust itself to them at whatever cost of compromise."¹⁵ What does this established knowledge, to which Christianity has had to adjust itself *at whatever cost of compromise*, include? At least two things—"evolution" and "higher criticism."

Dr. Snowden assures the reader very positively that a modernist, at least an up-to-date modernist, must be an evolutionist and, as regards the Bible, a "higher critic." Speaking of evolution, he denies that it is a mere theory or guess, he cites "eight 'facts' or 'things done'" which taken together prove "the biological evolution of life from simple beginnings."¹⁶ He does not attempt to conceal his contempt for those who

¹³ P. 22.

¹⁴ P. 107.

¹⁵ P. 177.

¹⁶ Pp. 212f.

have the temerity to question these *facts*.¹⁷ And he exclaims: "How long will our well-meaning but ill-informed opponents of evolution carry on their war on this theory, a war on the scientific knowledge and higher culture of the world, a war that is perfectly futile and was long since hopelessly lost?" He asserts that "it is accepted and wrought into the structure of systematic theology in practically all our standard theological institutions";¹⁸ and he declares that "we should have

¹⁷ One of these "facts" is that of "geological succession." Dr. Snowden tells us: "This fact shows that the genealogical tree of living forms runs its rocky roots down through all the strata of the earth. At the bottom are found traces of the simplest forms of life and these grow into or are succeeded by higher types up through the whole sixty miles of stratified rock, culminating in vertebrates and man at the top. What is the meaning of this succession of fossil forms but that this was the order of their development?" (p. 212). "Sixty miles of stratified rock"! *Sixty* miles of rock exhibiting the evolution of life from the lowest to the highest forms! We read this statement and rub our eyes in amazement. Where are these sixty miles of stratified rock, where we can find the history of the development of life written as on tables of stone? Mt. Everest is less than 6 miles high. The greatest known depth of the ocean is only 6 miles. No one has reached the top of Mt. Everest; no one has descended to the ocean's depths. Yet Dr. Snowden speaks of sixty miles of stratified rock! How is this total reached? In only one way,—by adding together the totals of different strata lying far removed one from another in various parts of the earth's crust, on the *assumption* that they are members of a series and that these members are properly arranged, i.e., arranged in accordance with the *theory* of evolution. To those who are accustomed to speak glibly in terms of "sixty miles of stratified rocks," it must be rather disconcerting to be reminded by such a know-nothing among the geologists as George McCready Price that "the total thickness of stratified rocks found piled in any one locality is never more than a few thousand feet." All the rest of the sixty miles is theory. Yet Dr. Snowden speaks of these sixty miles as if they represented a panorama of life which any man can visit and study at his leisure. It is small wonder that Dr. Snowden speaks so contemptuously of Professor Price and pokes fun at the editor of this REVIEW for being so ignorant as to publish one of his articles. It is much easier to ridicule than to refute.

¹⁸ Dr. Snowden quotes a single sentence from Dr. William Brenton Greene, Jr., of Princeton Seminary, to the effect that "Evolution is taught in this institution [Princeton] as one of the ways of God's working," as proof that "Princeton comes near making it unanimous." He uses this single sentence which was published in a symposium in *The Christian Standard*, and which is so brief that it can easily be misunderstood. But he ignores completely Dr. Greene's elaborate discussion of Evolution in this

the intelligence and wisdom to see and welcome this tremendous instance and triumph of modernism."

Dr. Snowden speaks with equal positiveness with regard to the higher criticism of the Old Testament.¹⁹ He states frankly that "the general result of this study has been to assign most of the books of the Old Testament to other times and authors than the traditional ones." He places first among such conclusions the documentary theory of the Pentateuch according to which "it assumed its final form after the Exile in Babylon, probably at the hands of Ezra." He tells us that "Daniel falls about 168 B.C., in the time of the persecution of the Jews by Antiochus Epiphanes, where it fits in like a key in its lock. Other books, including many of the Psalms, Chronicles, Jonah, Ecclesiastes, Job and Proverbs, fall in post-Exilic time." He concludes this brief summary with the statement: "The evidence for these processes and for some of these results lies upon the surface of these books and is visible even to English readers, and the results have the practically unanimous support of modern scholars." Clearly Dr. Snowden is a "higher critic." But still clearer is it that Dr. Snowden does not accept "higher criticism" merely in theory. He is equally positive in asserting the validity of the "assured results." Consequently it appears that while Dr. Snowden may start out with modernism simply as a principle of up-to-date-ness, he ends by identifying it with evolution and higher criticism both as theories and as systems embracing very definite conclusions or "facts."

In view of the importance which Dr. Snowden attaches to

REVIEW for October 1922, in which Dr. Greene points out the dangerous fallacies in that theory and declares that while "the Supernaturalistic explanation of the pertinent facts of geology and palaeontology . . . asserts and maintains 'evolution within limits' or 'within the type'" it also maintains that "God created the different species" (p. 549). This is a totally different thing from saying with Sir Arthur Thomson, one of Dr. Snowden's Christian evolutionists, that "there is at no stage any intrusion of extraneous factors." It is the "intrusion" of the supernatural as an extraneous factor that the evolutionist goes to such lengths to avoid.

¹⁹ Pp. 91f.

both "evolution" and "higher criticism" as significant illustrations and instances of modernism, examples so important that the man of today cannot be "modern" who does not accept both, the question whether the Bible is a modernistic book ceases to be the general question whether its contents were up-to-date when they were written. Rather it tends to become the specific one, whether its teachings are in harmony with the theories and conclusions of the evolutionist and the critic of today. In short, Dr. Snowden uses two quite different definitions of modernism in the course of his book. In speaking of Abraham as a modernist, he does not mean of course that Abraham was a Darwinian in science or a Wellhausian in religion. He means simply that Abraham had an open mind to new truth and tried to relate the new truth which came to him to the knowledge which he already had. And the same might be said in general of the great men of both sacred and profane history who lived before the nineteenth century. They are claimed as modernists only in the sense that they were abreast of and added to the knowledge of the age in which they lived. But by starting with a definition of modernism which is very general and abstract and ending with one which is quite specific and which commits the modernist to the acceptance of certain very definite conclusions, which, Dr. Snowden to the contrary notwithstanding, are still unproved and so debatable, he is likely to confuse the reader, who may fail to note the important distinction between the two senses in which the word "modernism" is used in this volume.

In asking the question, Was Jesus a Modernist? we are not discussing whether Jesus was and is up-to-date. No Christian can for one moment question this without admitting that Christianity in so far as it is really Christian belongs to "the things that are shaken," and so are to be done away. What we are concerned to know is whether in its twentieth-century meaning, which involves the acceptance of evolution and higher criticism, Jesus was a modernist. We shall consider this question, as briefly as we may, in three important aspects: (1) Jesus' attitude toward the Old Testament; (2) Jesus'

attitude toward the God of Early Israel; (3) Jesus' attitude toward one of the typical "wonders" of Holy Writ, Jonah.

JESUS AND THE SCRIPTURES

What was Jesus' attitude toward the Scriptures of the Old Testament which were the Bible of the Jews at the time of His earthly ministry? Dr. Snowden tells us that it was one of reverence.

Jesus used and revered the Old Testament. He was brought up on it in the home, it was his text-book in the village school, and it was used in the worship in the synagogue at Nazareth. It was by feeding on this book that he "advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." He was familiar with the stirring scenes of its history, its stories of national heroes, its dramatic events, triumphs and tragedies, its poetry and prophecy. He sang its psalms and had his imagination kindled with the sublime visions of Isaiah and the grand drama of Job. He sunk all his roots into it and absorbed its teaching and spirit into his soul.²⁰

What is the attitude of modernism to the Old Testament as it is understood by Dr. Snowden? It is this:

The most distinctive thing about the Old Testament is that it is old. It has done its work and belongs to the past. It has "waxed old" and is now "done away." It is one of "those things that are shaken, as of things that have been made, that those things which are not shaken may remain." It is like the stratified rocks under our feet that are full of fossils which once were living forms but are now dead and turned to stone.

This is not to disparage the Old Testament, for it was new and useful in its day. And this is just the point we are now about to make. The Old Testament was once the New Testament. In its day it was up to date and was a modernist book. Its old faith advanced with new knowledge and this kept it abreast of the times. When its day had passed it fell behind and was numbered with the things of yesterday; it passed into the museum of fossilized religion and extinct theology. Yet it still remains as a foundation on which we build and as an old root out of which new truth grows and blooms.²¹

The statement which we have just quoted is a remarkable one. Dr. Snowden tells us that the language which he uses regarding the Old Testament is not intended to "disparage" it; "for it was new and useful in its day." But he does not

²⁰ P. 134.

²¹ P. 109.

hesitate to assure us quite emphatically that its day is past and that it has been relegated to "the museum of fossilized religion and extinct theology." In this same quotation he defines fossils as things "which once were living forms but are now dead and turned to stone." We do not hesitate to say that we have read statements frankly intended to disparage the Old Testament which were far less derogatory to it than this. We have heard the Old Testament called hard names. But this statement by Dr. Snowden cannot easily be surpassed. Dr. Snowden belongs to a denomination which has a *Hymnal*. At the back of this *Hymnal* there is a "Psalter." This Psalter contains sixty selections, averaging twenty to thirty verses each. All are taken from the Old Testament Psalms; and they are intended for use in the public worship of Almighty God. We imagine that they are used regularly by most of the congregations of the Presbyterian Church to which Dr. Snowden belongs. Yet according to Dr. Snowden the Psalms passed centuries ago "into the museum of fossilized religion and extinct theology." A more grievous misrepresentation, it would be hard to find. "If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone?" Either the ministers of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. are calling upon their congregations once or twice every Sunday to resurrect some of the "fossils" of an all but forgotten past, to feed on "stones," or else Dr. Snowden has traduced and defamed some of the most precious possessions of the Christian believer of today. The Old Testament Psalms are pre-eminently the book of devotion of the Christian Church. They are not "fossils"; they are not "dead and turned to stone." They are full of living truth because they are the words of the living God. They have brought blessing and comfort and life to countless generations of believers. They were the solace of the persecuted saints on the desolate moors of Scotland and in the mountain fastnesses of the Waldenses. Martyrs went to the stake with psalms on their lips. They have been read and chanted and sung in every part of the Christian Church; and will continue to be so used while

time shall last.²² "Fossils"! Every Christian who is loyal to God's word will emphatically repudiate such an outrageous metaphor.

Indeed, Dr. Snowden cannot finish the paragraph without contradicting himself. For, after saying that the Old Testament has "passed into the museum of fossilized religion and extinct theology," he goes on to say in the very next sentence, "Yet it still remains as a foundation on which we build and as an old root out of which new truth grows and blooms." New truth does not grow from and bloom from fossils. Elsewhere he tells us, in speaking of the Old Testament prophets, "Our democracy has not yet caught sight of their political ideals, our social order lags far behind their social gospel, our League of Nations and dreams of world peace are but the blades and buds of seeds they planted, and our utmost achievements grow pale and pitiful in the light of their splendid visions."²³ Such language is not appropriate as a description of a book which has "passed into the museum of fossilized religion and extinct theology." But it is the nemesis of the modernist to despise the past, especially when he cannot harmonize its truth with the wisdom of the present. And when Dr. Snowden speaks as a modernist there is a lack of reverence in his words which as every one knows who has read the Gospels at all attentively is quite different from the attitude of Jesus toward the Old Testament.

One of the clearest statements of Jesus' attitude toward the Old Testament is found in the Sermon on the Mount, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you,

²² In his commentary on *The Psalms* (1902) Prof. Kirkpatrick has an informing chapter on "The Psalter in the Christian Church." His first sentence is "If a history of the use of the Psalter could be written, it would be a history of the spiritual life of the Church." He declares that "The voices of holy men in every age unite in bearing a concordant testimony to the power and preciousness of the Psalms"; and cites by way of illustration from Athanasius, Basil, Augustine, Luther, Calvin and Dean Church.

²³ P. 129.

Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." Dr. Snowden tells us that when Jesus several times in this same discourse says, "But I say unto you," He "contradicts Moses." He asserts that "Jesus put himself above the Scriptures and made them subservient to himself. . . . He revised and corrected them and brought them up to the level of his own light and leading. He modernized the Old Testament with the New and in this sense he was a modernist." Yet Jesus expressly described His own attitude toward the Old Testament as "fulfilment." He nowhere intimated that the Law was not given by Moses, or that it incorrectly expressed the will of God for Israel. But He did claim that it contained elements which were temporary and were to give place to that which was higher and better. The fact that Jesus recognized the Old Testament as of divine origin and authority, yet placed His own authority above it is a striking proof of His consciousness of His divine mission, of His Oneness with God. This is latent in the words "But I say unto you." The "I" is all important. Jesus speaks with the authority of God.

Dr. Snowden assures us that "the Pharisees were the fundamentalists of their day" and that they "tried to fasten their fundamentalism" on Jesus, but that "against their conservatism he opposed his liberalism, and against their fundamentalism he put his modernism." He describes the belief that the Messiah was to come as a conqueror to break the yoke of Rome and set up a worldly kingdom at Jerusalem as "a fundamental doctrine of the Pharisees." He tells us that Jesus came into violent conflict with their teaching on this point, and that this led to His death: "they fell upon him in fury and crushed him on a cross." And he further assures us that in thus breaking with the fundamentalism of the Pharisees, Jesus "was keeping pace with the growing light of revelation, and this is the principle of modernism." It should hardly be necessary, we think, to remind the reader that in His controversies with the Pharisees, Jesus consistently appears as a defender and expounder of the true teachings of the

Old Testament Scriptures against their misinterpretations and human additions. Again and again He met them with the words "It is written." In rejecting their conception of the Messiah as an earthly king, He was fulfilling the Old Testament teaching while rejecting the "traditions" of men. The Gospel narratives show plainly that Jesus accepted fully the belief of the Pharisees that the Old Testament Scriptures were the Word of God. He said emphatically, "The Scripture cannot be broken." He condemned them for making naught that word by their traditions. He refuted the *new* knowledge of men with the *old* wisdom of God. Especially distressing is it to find Jesus spoken of as "keeping pace with the growing light of revelation" as if He were striving to keep abreast of the best thought and knowledge of His day, lest He be left behind in the march of human progress. Jesus was Himself the supreme revelation of God, the Way, the Truth and the Life. He was not a man following the gleam; He was the Light.

Finally Dr. Snowden assures us that "in his teaching Jesus spiritualized the Old Testament at a stroke." Properly understood, we believe that this is true. In His Person and in His words and works Jesus fulfilled the types and ritual of the Old Testament, spiritualizing and universalizing the Jewish religion. But this does not mean that Jesus discarded the Old Testament or contradicted its teachings. How hard put to it Dr. Snowden is in trying to prove that Jesus is a modernist is shown by his use of such illustrations as the following. Commenting on the words uttered by Jesus' hearers on a certain occasion, "What is this? A new teaching!" (Mk. i. 27), Dr. Snowden says, "Jesus, a teacher of new theology! This surely was modernism." Again, he tells us, that "the first recorded command in the preaching of Jesus was 'Repent ye' (Mk. i. 15), a word that means 'change your mind,' " asserting that "the first imperative word in the preaching of Jesus expressed or at least implied the principle of modernism." Yet it is perfectly obvious that what Jesus was calling upon the people to do was to *repent* of their sins. Dr. Snowden

finds in the parables and passages in which the gospel is likened to seed an illustration of the principle of modernism, because they "imply growth and progress," arguing that "the analogy of the gospel to seed implies that it will be subject to like changes." Yet it is plain, we think, that in these parables Jesus is not speaking of changes in the seed due to its adapting itself to the soil, but showing that the seed cannot grow and bear fruit if the soil is bad. It may kill the seed; it may hinder its fruitfulness; it cannot change its nature. He argues that Jesus' teaching that men should "put new wine into fresh wineskins" means that "twentieth century Christianity cannot be contained in fifth century or fifteenth century creeds and confessions." The real point is, Can it be contained in New Testament Christianity? And finally in such words as "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold" and "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now," he argues that Jesus "provides for the progressive revelation of truth through all the ages." This he tells us "includes the written Gospels and the Letters of Paul and all subsequent Christian literature," implying that there is no essential difference between the New Testament and extra-canonical literature. Yet the *Westminster Confession of Faith* expressly states that "The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit or traditions of men."²⁴ He even assures us that Jesus "cast His teaching in biological and evolutionary concepts, which are the current coin of our modern world." In short, Dr. Snowden not merely finds in the teaching of Jesus a timeless element which makes it accord with the modernism of all ages, but he even claims that Jesus' teachings are in harmony with the views of the twentieth century evolutionists. It is hardly necessary, we think, to point out that Dr. Snowden's use of such passages as we have just

²⁴ Chap. I, Sec. VI.

quoted, involves a theological *tour de force* which suggests the allegorizing methods of an Origen. What Jesus' real attitude toward the Old Testament and how radically it differed from that of the "modernist" of today will become increasingly clear as we consider His conception of the God of Early Israel and contrast this conception with that of the "modernist" critics.

"THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, ISAAC AND JACOB"

One of the most remarkable illustrations of Jesus' attitude toward the Old Testament is found in the course of his argument with the Sadducees about the resurrection (Mk. xii. 18-27). Brushing aside as unworthy of serious consideration their carefully elaborated theological "difficulty"—the woman with the seven husbands—He proceeds to show that the true answer is clearly given in the Old Testament Scriptures. It is very significant that in doing this He does not turn to the writings of the post-Exilic period, to "Maccabean" Daniel, who is thought by some critics to have "borrowed" the doctrine from Zoroastrianism. Instead He goes back to one of the great events in Israel's ancient history, the Call of Moses, to the revelation made to Moses at "the bush." More noteworthy still, He selects from the record of this revelation to Moses a phrase referring to a then distant past, the time of the patriarchs: "I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." And from these words which are intended to show that the God who reveals Himself to Moses is the God who had in times past manifested Himself to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, He deduces the great doctrine of the resurrection. If God is the God of the patriarchs, they must live; for "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." It would be hard to find a statement which illustrates more clearly the wealth of meaning which Jesus found in the Scriptures of the Old Testament. But the point which concerns us especially is the positiveness with which He identifies the God of the patriarchs and of Moses with the God whom He called His Father and the Father of

His own disciples. It was the living God who called Abraham and Moses, who spake through the prophets, the one God whose demand of His people has ever been that they love Him with all the heart and soul and might.

On the other hand, it is one of the most emphatically stated contentions of the "critics" that the God of the Old Testament, or, we would better say, the conception of that God, passed through a process of development, or rather rectification, so drastic that between the God of the pre-prophetic period and the God of the Prophets and of Jesus, there is a difference so great that it tends to become an impassable gulf. Dr. Snowden does not state this view in its most extreme form. But the language which he uses is sufficiently strong to startle and amaze anyone who has a real love for the Old Testament. He speaks of the God of the early period as a "tribal God." Writing of the character of that God, he tells us that

At first it was strongly and sometimes grossly anthropomorphic. God was viewed as having a literal body with fleshly organs and senses. He was hungry for food and delighted in fat and in the smell of burnt meat (Lev. iii). Jehovah also was viewed as having human virtues of strength and bravery and faithfulness to His friends and with human passions of vindictiveness and hate, sparing none of His enemies but slaying "both man and woman, infant and suckling" (1 Sam. xv. 3). These were common views of their gods held by all the neighboring pagan tribes and the Hebrews shared in them.²⁵

This is sufficiently clear. But let us hear Dr. Snowden a little further.

Jehovah thus starts out as the tribal God of the Hebrews clothed upon with clouds of human limitation and imperfection and with the dark shadows of human passion, but as He strides onward through expanding Hebrew faith and knowledge these human imperfections fall off and He finally stands forth in all the majesty and glory and beauty of the one sovereign and spiritual and holy and good God in whom we clearly discern the lineaments of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is a long distance from the God of Sinai and the wilderness and the times of the Judges to the God of Amos and Isaiah and the Exile. Broader knowledge and clearer revelation and richer spiritual experience took the steps that lay between these stages and brought the old faith to the new vision. The principle of modernism was again exemplified.

²⁵ P. 125.

It would be easy, were it necessary, to produce abundant proof that Dr. Snowden in the quotations which we have just given has not overstated, but if anything understated the conclusions of the modernists with regard to the pre-prophetic period in Israel. To them the work of the "writing" prophets was nothing short of revolutionary. Wellhausen speaks of the prophets as "destroying Old Israel."²⁶ A popular protagonist for their views, Dr. Fosdick, tells us that he does not see how any one can "identify the god"²⁷ (*sic!*) of the Conquest with "the God (*sic!*) revealed in the greatest of the Hebrew prophets and, above all, in Christ." He holds that "They are not of one spirit." Another recent writer has stated it crudely and blasphemously as follows: "They transformed a jealous demon who roared and belched fire from the crater of a volcano, into a transcendent spirit of Love. They took a bloody and remorseless protector of a desert people, and without realizing it, changed him into the Merciful Father of all mankind. In fine, they destroyed Yahweh and created God!"²⁸

In criticism of this view, we shall briefly consider three points suggested by the language of Dr. Snowden: (1) "the tribal God of the Hebrews"; (2) "strongly and sometimes grossly anthropomorphic"; (3) "with human passions of vindictiveness and hate"; and we shall ask ourselves whether it is true that there is "a long distance" between the God of Sinai and the God of the Prophets.

1. It should be noted that it is only on the basis of a radical reconstruction of the literature of the Old Testament that any warrant can be found for the claim that the God of Israel was a *tribal god* in the sense that the gods of the neighboring peoples, Chemosh or Moloch, were such gods. In the first chapter of Genesis, He appears as the Creator of heaven and earth. Abraham is called to go forth from Ur of the Chaldees near the Persian Gulf; the land of Canaan though occupied by other peoples with other gods is promised to him and to

²⁶ *Prolegomena* (Eng. Trans.), p. vii.

²⁷ *A Pilgrimage to Palestine*, p. 80.

²⁸ Lewis Browne, *This Believing World*, p. 236.

his seed; and it is declared that in him all nations shall be blessed. In the wonders of Egypt and the Exodus, the God of Israel judges Pharaoh and all the gods of Egypt. Benhadad, king of Syria, is visited with a crushing defeat because he acts upon the assumption that Jehovah is a "god of the hills," a local and limited deity, which is the tribal god idea in its essence. In describing Assyria as the rod of Jehovah's anger, Isaiah is but following the example of Moses who declared that the Lord would "toy" (Ex. x. 2) with mighty Pharaoh. It is true that there are passages in the Old Testament which describe Israel as in an especial sense a *chosen* people and speak of Jehovah as *their* God. It is true that God "dwelt," that He manifested Himself in a particular and unique way in the Tabernacle, and in the Temple. But these facts are not incompatible with omnipresence and omnipotence, as Solomon plainly recognized. For in his prayer at the dedication of the Temple he declared that he had surely built the Lord "a house to dwell in," while at the same time confessing that the heavens could not "contain" Him. It does not make God a fetich to dwell in the heart of the individual Christian today; and just as little did it make Him a tribal god, to dwell in the tents of Israel. Those who make much of the doctrine of the divine immanence in present-day religious thought, should not make a travesty of it in the life of ancient Israel.

2. Dr. Snowden tells us that the God of the earlier period was "strongly and sometimes grossly anthropomorphic." We would like to ask first of all whether Dr. Snowden objects to anthropomorphism as such, or simply to the form of anthropomorphism which he finds in what he regards the early characterizations of the God of Israel. If Dr. Snowden objects to the use of anthropomorphic language as such, we would suggest that he must eschew that familiar shibboleth of modern liberalism "the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man." If he were to interpret the expression "the Fatherhood of God" with the same crass and brutal literalism with which the "modern" critic interprets much of the anthropomorphic

language of the Old Testament, he would soon find that the difference between Old Testament and New Testament conceptions even as interpreted from the modernist standpoint is not as great as he alleges. Yet the very popularity of this phrase "the Fatherhood of God" is itself an illustration of the fact that, as Charles Hodge expresses it, anthropomorphism is "the fundamental principle of all religion."²⁹ We are made in God's image and "If we are like God, God is like us." This principle, as he points out, can be and has been grossly abused. But without it God becomes a mere abstraction.

If Dr. Snowden's objection is not to anthropomorphism as such but only to "gross" forms of it, it is to be noted that the type to which he apparently objects is not limited to the pre-prophetic period. Dr. Powis Smith of the University of Chicago tells us: "That the Psalter was the hymn book of the Second Temple has long been recognized by scholars." Writing of the idea of God in the Psalms, he says:

He is credited with all the attributes of man. The psalmists carry their personification of God so far as not to shrink from assigning even human limitations to Him. Of course, personality itself is a limitation, but they go far beyond that. He shares some of the frailties of human personality, and is presented in a thoroughly anthropomorphic way. He has a face, with eyes, ears, nose, and mouth. He has arms, hands and feet. He breathes, swallows and talks. He grows weary and may take a nap. He becomes angry and executes vengeance upon the wicked; but his anger may quickly come and as quickly go. On one occasion, indeed, Moses actually turned back Yahweh's wrath. Appeals are constantly made to his pride; he must intervene in his people's behalf for the sake of his own name, i.e., his reputation among men. He needs and is provided with a home; sometimes his dwelling place is in the heavens and again it is on earth, in the Temple at Jerusalem. He is credited with a great love of praise. This characteristic appears in the name of the Psalter which is "Praises." It is shown by the great amount of praise that is expressed in the Psalms. . . . This weakness is made use of in a fine argumentative way by some of the psalmists. Yahweh is not thought of as being above considerations that effect his own advantage; he is a God that may be reasoned with. Loving approbation as he does, he naturally will not wish to act in any way so as to diminish the volume of his praise.³⁰

²⁹ *Systematic Theology*, Vol. I, 339.

³⁰ *The Religion of the Psalms*, pp. 139ff. Dr. Smith adds about 75 Biblical references in footnotes. These we have omitted.

We have quoted from Dr. Powis Smith at such length primarily with a view to showing that the "hymn book of the Second Temple" is according to the critics of a piece with the pre-prophetic religion in its use of what Dr. Snowden calls "gross anthropomorphism." Yet the Psalter is not merely "the hymn book of the Second Temple," it is today the great treasure house of Christian devotion. If Dr. Smith and others of the critics were less concerned to *vilify* the God of Early Israel in the interests of a theory which maintains that the religion of Israel, like that of other nations, must have developed gradually out of that which is crude and base and vile, they would recognize that they are insisting in their interpretation of the figurative language of the Old Testament upon a literalism which surpasses in its crudity anything of which the most fanatical "fundamentalist" is guilty. We might say more upon this point, but since it is vitally related to the charge that the character of the God of the early Old Testament period is characterized by "human passions of vindictiveness and hate," we shall pass on to it.

3. The third indictment of the God of Ancient Israel is the most serious of all. Not merely is it claimed that Jehovah is represented as a *man*; it is asserted that He is not even a *good* man: He possesses the "human passions of vindictiveness and hate." This view is well expressed by Loisy in the following words:

The holiness of Yahweh consists in his inviolability and inaccessibility, in his power to make his will respected, but not in the moral perfection of his nature. His character, it has been said, shows a few moral qualities, but it is not precisely moral. His power, his knowledge, and above all his goodness, are limited. The God who is thought to have killed outright those who peeped into his ark, or who stretched out a hand to save it from tumbling, is not a judge who adjusts his punishment to the crime, but a terrific being whom one irritates by approaching too closely. The least infraction of his will, the slightest attack on the majesty of his name, drives him into a phrensy; but he punishes or ignores such offenses according to his whim.³¹

Such a conception of God, which must be regarded as a fearful misconception of the God whom the Christian wor-

³¹ Loisy, *The Religion of Israel*, p. 103.

ships is due, we are told, to the low standards of morality and religion which were held by the early Israelites; and it is argued that

. . . We must not for one moment believe, as many good people have tried to make themselves believe, that the Hebrew leaders always understood God's will. How could God have revealed His entire character in an age of the most rudimentary morality? The Hebrews were often crude and vengeful and they endowed their God with the same attributes. They often did terrible things in His name. No one would go to Joshua or Judges to learn the nature of God or of true religion. Yet the conceptions of that age were a step and a necessary one in the moral progress of the world.³²

If the above quotations correctly represent the God of Israel as conceived of in the early period of the history of that ancient people, the question at once presents itself, and it is a very pressing one, When did this misconception cease? When was it superseded by a better and truer conception of God? The critics would probably be unanimous in answering, With the great prophets of the eighth and seventh centuries B.C. "It is a long distance," Dr. Snowden tells us, "from the God of Sinai and the wilderness and the times of the Judges to the God of Amos and Isaiah and the Exile." Let us turn then to Amos and see how he portrays the Deity. The brief collection of his prophecies commences with a series of eight denunciations, each of which begins, "Thus saith the Lord." In six of the eight, the denunciation proper, as distinguished from the preliminary indictment, begins with the words, "and I will send (or, kindle) fire." The last of these denunciations, that pronounced against Israel, cites the destruction of the Amorites by Jehovah, a deed particularly execrated by the modernists, as an object lesson to the Israel of the prophet's own day. The remnant of Israel which will remain after the Lord's vengeance is accomplished is likened to "two legs or a piece of an ear" rescued from the mouth of a marauding lion. The denunciation reaches its height in the last chapter where we read: "Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I

³² Laura E. Knott, *Students' Hist. of Hebrews*, p. 83.

bring them down : and though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them out thence ; and though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea, thence will I command a serpent, and he shall bite them : and though they go into captivity before their enemies, thence will I command the sword, and it shall slay them : and I will set mine eyes upon them for evil, and not for good." Certainly the God of Amos is very far from being a "pacifist" deity.

Suppose then we turn to Hosea, Hosea who is often spoken of as the direct antithesis of Amos, Hosea who became, we are told, "the prophet of God's inextinguishable love for His sinful people,"³³ who "anticipated by eight centuries the teaching of Jesus that love to God and love to man are essential to the formation of a perfect society,"³⁴ who "is perhaps nearer to Jesus in his teaching than is any other O.T. prophet."³⁵ This "prophet of the divine love," this "St. John of the Old Testament"—these and other similar titles are constantly applied to him—how does he describe Jehovah's attitude toward Israel? He tells us that He will be as a ravaging lion or an angry bear to Ephraim and Judah (v. 14, xiii. 8), he declares that they shall "reap the whirlwind" (viii. 7), he predicts that Egypt shall "gather" them and Memphis "bury" them (ix. 6), he asks for them "miscarrying womb and dry breasts" (ix. 14), he declares that they shall be "wanderers among the nation" (ix. 17), and that they shall call on the mountains to cover them and the hills to fall on them (x. 8). Finally, he declares that "Samaria shall become desolate for she hath rebelled against her God : they shall fall by the sword : their infants shall be dashed in pieces, and their women with child shall be ripped up" (xiii. 16). This last statement is particularly noteworthy because, in proof of his charge that the God of Israel's early history has the "human passions of vindictiveness and hate," Dr. Snowden cites His "slaying 'both man and woman, infant and suckling' (1 Sam. xv. 3)."

³³ Sanders, *Old Testament Prophecy*, p. 14.

³⁴ Bailey & Kent, *The Hebrew Commonwealth*, p. 190.

³⁵ *New Standard Bible Dictionary*, art. on "Hosea" by Zenos, p. 362b.

Yet we find Hosea, the prophet of the divine love, predicting that the God of Israel will do in the future to His disobedient children exactly what Dr. Snowden denounces the impossible God of Early Israel for commanding in the past.

Nor is this severe portrayal of the God of Israel in the prophetic period confined to Amos and Hosea. Micah is regarded by many as having discovered and enunciated for all time the central principle of true religion: "He has shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" What is Micah's word from his God for Samaria? "I will make Samaria as a heap of the field, and as plantings of a vineyard: and I will pour down the stones thereof into the valley, and I will discover the foundations thereof." And for Zion? "Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest." And Isaiah? What has he to say? In the burden of Babylon we read, "Their children also shall be dashed to pieces before their eyes; their houses shall be spoiled, and their wives ravished. Behold I will stir up the Medes against them, which shall not regard silver; and as for gold they shall not delight in it. Their bows shall dash the young men to pieces; and they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb; their eyes shall not spare children."

We might continue the quotation of passages indefinitely; but the above will suffice to show that the distinction which is constantly made, in fact it is one of the commonplaces of criticism, one of its assured results, between the "angry God" of the pre-prophetic period and the "God of love" of the prophets, is a grievous misrepresentation. The God of the prophets is fully as "angry" as the God of the earlier period. The "carrying away" of Israel and the "captivity" of Judah, with all their accompanying horrors, furnish convincing proof of this.

It is to be noted further that the severe aspects of the God of the Bible do not cease even with the Old Testament. Some

of the most terrible words of denunciation are found in the New Testament and on the lips of the Saviour Himself. It was Jesus who said "Fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell," who spoke of the "outer darkness" where there would be "weeping and gnashing of teeth," and of the "fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched." And it was on the way to Calvary that, in speaking of the fearful punishment which should be visited upon a rebellious people, Jesus quoted the words of Hosea's prophecy, "Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us." If love, or as we should prefer to say complacence, is the only divine attribute, if the God whom the man of today can worship must be a God of love and love only, then the critic must not content himself with rejecting the God of the pre-prophetic period in Israel. He must reject also the God of the prophets and of the New Testament. And finally he must reject the doctrine of Divine Providence or become a believer in a "finite god." For as Orelli has well said: "Were God indeed incapable of the deepest emotions of love, He would be poorer than man; and were He incapable of wrath, the events of history could not be traced back to Him."³⁶

The answer of the critics to the contention that the God of the prophetic period in Israel's history shows the same stern and severe aspects as does the God of the earlier period will be, of course, that there is a vital and essential difference which must not be overlooked. The God of the early period is vengeful, capricious and biased, a non-moral and indeed an immoral being; the God of the prophets is supremely ethical, a just and righteous God, who will not spare even His own people when they sin against His holy will. We are told that it was by the very tragedy through which God's people passed at the hands of the great world-powers Assyria and Babylon that the prophets learned that God was not the mere god of a tribe, bound to protect his children whether they were right or wrong, because he was their god, but the God of all the

³⁶ *The Twelve Minor Prophets*, p. 61.

earth, the ruler of all nations, who demands of all alike righteous obedience to His just and holy will.

In view of this contention that the God of the prophets, as distinct from the "god" of the earlier period, was a just and righteous God, we would call attention to a statement which appears in the Book of Genesis, a statement made to Abraham in explanation of the failure of God to give to him during his own life-time the land which He promised to his seed. The statement is this: "For the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." What is meant by this phrase? The spade of the archaeologist has made us more intimately acquainted with the religious practices of the ancient inhabitants of Palestine and the neighboring regions than was formerly the case. As a result of these discoveries, discoveries which only serve to confirm the express statements of the Old Testament records, a distinguished German critic tells us that the religion of the Canaanites was characterized by "religious obscenity and infant sacrifice."³⁷ It would seem then that the inspired writers spoke advisedly when they referred to the *iniquities* of the Amorites and the *abominations* which they practiced in the worship of their gods. It would seem that the attitude of the God of Ancient Israel toward such customs and those who practised them may justly be called righteous indignation. Yet we are being told today that such a characterization is unjust to these ancient peoples. A recent writer speaks as follows:

"The iniquity of the Amorites" is a recurrent phrase; but we should be careful of the sense to be attached to the expression. There is an implication of moral turpitude, of a deliberate choice of evil, in our use of the word "iniquity," which it would be inexact to emphasize in this particular connection. Doubtless the rites of the High Places would appeal to an individual morally warped. Doubtless they would have a subtly deteriorating effect on the morals of the community at large; the licence which they encouraged, and on occasion even enjoined, would in itself be destructive of personal self-control. But it would be a grave mistake to imagine that they had been deliberately contrived in order to satisfy the lower cravings. They had come into being when the ancestors of the Semites were on the level of savages.³⁸

³⁷ Cornill, *The Culture of Ancient Israel*, p. 10.

³⁸ Macalester, *A Century of Excavation in Palestine*, p. 277.

The above statement throws a very significant light upon the claim of the modernist that there is an essential difference between the "righteous God" of the Prophets and the "angry god" of early Israel. It shows us plainly that the *anger* of this so-called *tribal* God was directed in the early period as in the later against *sin*. It shows that the practices of the heathen against which the prophets launched their thunder-bolts were known in the days of the patriarchs and Moses just as in later times. Only, and here is the important point, it denies to them in the one period that ethical quality which it so strongly stresses in the other. It condones them as *primitive* in the days of Joshua: it condemns them as *wicked* in the days of Amos. Not merely this, it asserts that these primitive rites were practised, with impunity and even with a certain "evolutionary" propriety, by the invading Israelites as by the invaded Amorites. And it does this on the authority of a reconstruction of the religion of Early Israel based on comparative religion and evolution which is directly opposed to the contention of the Old Testament that Israel was called and set apart to be a holy people. The 24,000 who perished at Shittim are mute but eloquent witnesses to the fact that Israel was to be a peculiar people. Yet Dr. Barton in declaring that religious prostitution "was known in Israel as among the other nations, and was not eradicated until the reform of Josiah in 621 B.C.,"³⁹ fails to point out the all-important fact that this institution was expressly forbidden in the law of Moses. On the contrary, it is clear that he regards it as an inevitable feature in the primitive religion of Israel.

On this wise the God of Israel as worshipped in the days of Joshua is made into an immoral or primitive deity and his anger becomes mere capriciousness and vindictiveness. For His decree of extermination is directed not against a civilization steeped in sin but against a people as good or better than His own. But when the Bible itself is allowed to speak, neither in the case of the anger of God nor of His righteousness, is

³⁹ *The Religion of Israel*, pp. 7f.

there in the Old Testament any essential difference between the pre-prophetic and the prophetic periods. The Pentateuch declares the God of Moses to be a holy God. It is only by radically reconstructing the history along the lines of naturalistic evolution that this Holy God who cannot look upon sin is changed into a being who is both immoral and cruel.

The same applies to the love of God. We have seen that Hosea contains the most amazing expressions of the severity and the love of God. Were the critics to partition Hosea as they partition Moses, they could find in Hosea an angry god as terrible as their god of Early Israel. But it suits their purpose to regard Hosea as the Old Testament apostle of love. Yet at Horeb the Lord revealed Himself to Moses as plainly as later to Hosea as a righteous and loving God: "And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation" (Ex. xxxiv. 6-7).⁴⁰ And Jesus turns to the "law" which he frequently describes as Mosaic,⁴¹ for the "first and great commandment" which is "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind" (Deut. vi. 5). Yet the modernists insist on representing Him as an angry god whose anger was mere caprice and vindictiveness.

Consequently the question with which we are ultimately confronted is this. If there was so vast a difference between

⁴⁰ This passage is assigned by Driver to JE and consequently represents an early tradition regarding the Mosaic period. It is from this chapter that the so-called Decalogue of J, referred to above, is carved.

⁴¹ Cf. Mt. xix. 7, 8, xxiii. 2; Mk. x. 3; Lk. xvi. 29, 30, xxiv. 27; Jn. v. 45, 46, vii. 19, 23. These passages are perfectly consistent with the view that the Pentateuch is Mosaic. On the other hand, it is noteworthy that Ezra to whom the critics assign so important a part in the completion of their "so-called" Law of Moses is never once mentioned in the New Testament.

the God of the prophets and the God of Early Israel as the critics allege, would Jesus have referred so confidently to Him as the "God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob?" If the god of the patriarchs was a mere tribal god, like Moloch or Chemosh, would Jesus have said in speaking of this god, as Luke tells us that He did, "for all live unto Him." If the god of the patriarchs was "strongly and grossly anthropomorphic," would not Jesus who taught that "God is a spirit" have preferred to refer to one less "clothed upon with clouds of human limitations and imperfections" than this god of the patriarchs? If the fair fame of the god of the patriarchs was sullied by the "human passions of vindictiveness and hate," would not He who declared that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son for its redemption have thought with abhorrence of Ancient Israel's "angry god"? Believe it who may. For ourselves we cannot but see in Jesus' confident appeal to the "God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob" as well as in other and similar references to the Old Testament conclusive proof that this difference between the religion of the Israel in the early and later periods of which the critics make so much is a "modern" discovery which the teachings of Jesus emphatically repudiate.

JONAH

The view which is generally accepted by "modern" interpreters of the Old Testament is that the Book of Jonah is an allegory, a parable, a satire, a quaint old story, a wonderful sermon, a prophetic story, a missionary tract, which was written about three to five centuries after the time of the historical Jonah. "The real design of the narrative," Driver tells us, "is to teach, in opposition to the narrow, exclusive view, which was too apt to be popular with the Jews, that God's purposes of grace are not limited to Israel alone, but that they are open to the heathen as well, if only they abandon their sinful courses, and turn to Him in true penitence."⁴² That Jonah should be made the central figure in such an allegory is

⁴² Driver, *Introduction*, p. 323.

explained as due to his anti-Assyrian prejudices. Thus, Zenos holds that "the Book of Jonah was produced as a protest against the extreme form of Jewish nationalism in the latter half of the fourth century B.C., that in literary form it is an imaginative work with a moral lesson, and that the ancient prophet is chosen as its hero for his known anti-Assyrian bias."⁴³ "Unlike the other prophetic books," says Cooke, "Jonah delivers his prophecy in the form of a story. Of course the story is not to be taken as literal history; yet it is historical in the sense in which the parable of the Good Samaritan, its New Testament counterpart, may be called historical."⁴⁴

So interpreted the Book of Jonah is regarded by "modern" scholars as of immense importance. "The book of Jonah," Fowler tells us, "seems to be an allegory in which Jonah is Israel, the whale Babylon, and the great thought of the whole is that God cares for all peoples even the most wicked, and that he desires his people to share his purposes of mercy to all mankind. Viewed thus, instead of being a narrative of ancient wonders hard to believe or a mere silly story, the book becomes the vehicle for conveying a truth that lies above the level of almost all the rest of the Old Testament. It is the forerunner of Jesus' wonderful parables of the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son, with their lessons of a compassionate God and a broad and generous humanity."⁴⁵ It is described by Sellin as "one of the most precious jewels of Hebrew literature" and declared to be inspired by "a truly prophetic spirit".⁴⁶ It is, to quote again from Cooke, a prophetic voice "raised on behalf of the large theology which Israel's creed implied";⁴⁷ and he adds "No wonder that our Lord found the book congenial to His teaching." It is his opinion that "Among the inspired utterances of Israel's religion, the book

⁴³ *New Standard Dictionary*, art. "Jonah," p. 477b.

⁴⁴ In *A New Commentary on Holy Scripture*, ed. by Bishop Gore; Part I, p. 580.

⁴⁵ *Great Leaders of Heb. Hist.*, p. 186.

⁴⁶ Sellin, *Introduction*, p. 174.

⁴⁷ *Op. cit.*, in loco.

takes rank with Is. liii, Jer. xxxi. 31-34, Ps. lxxiii, and comes as near to Christianity as anything in the Old Testament." In fact Cornill apparently even finds in it a rebuke to the narrowness of Jesus' own teachings. For in speaking of it as "a protest against the pernicious arrogance of the Judaism that followed Ezra," he remarks: "In this the greatness of the Book of Jonah lies for all time, and also its unique significance in the Old Testament, to which a tribute of the highest admiration can only be rendered, when one recalls Mt. x. 5-6, xv. 24-26."⁴⁸ Since in the verses referred to Jesus forbids the Twelve to go to the "Gentiles" and "Samaritans" and declares that He Himself is not sent but "unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel," it is clear that in this comment Cornill is commending Jonah at the expense of the Lord Himself.

In this "modern" view the miraculous elements of the story are quite positively rejected. Thus Gunkel assures us, in speaking of the Old Testament narratives, that "A modern reader smiles when he finds it recorded as an historical fact that a she-ass opened its mouth and spoke, or that a man spent three days in the belly of a great fish and thereafter emerged alive, or that the first human beings lived for centuries."⁴⁹ According to Sellin, it may be true that Jonah went to Nineveh: "But this historical kernel has been elaborated in legendary fashion, on the one side by way of parallel to the story of Elijah under the juniper bush in 1 Kings xix, and on the other has been brought into connection with a folk-tale, based on a mythological foundation, which is found among many nations in different parts of the world—Indians, Egyptians and others."⁵⁰ Moulton believes that the story of the great fish is the result of the mistaken attempt of a commentator to explain the words "out of the belly of hell cried I," maintaining that "the trouble from which the singer has been delivered is, in the plainest language, described as an immersion in the sea." "Thus," he concludes, "the question is not,

⁴⁸ *Introduction*, p. 338.

⁴⁹ *What Remains of the Old Testament*, p. 15.

⁵⁰ *Op. cit.*, p. 173.

as is commonly supposed, whether the incident of the whale is a real or a mythical incident. The question is, whether it is a part of the Bible at all; and the suggestion is that it is an addition of a commentator, and, moreover, an addition that is in manifest contradiction to the sacred text."⁵¹

The above quotations will suffice to make it clear that according to the "modern" view the whole point of the book of Jonah lies in its being a protest against the nationalism and exclusivism of the later Jews, a distinctly missionary and universalistic pronouncement; and not at all in the marvelous experiences of Jonah which are to be regarded as myth, legend, or fiction. How is it regarded in the New Testament? Let us consider this question first negatively, then positively.

In view of the great importance attached by the critics to the Book of Jonah as a missionary utterance, it is significant that neither Jesus nor any of the apostles uses it in this way. How effective a reference to Jonah's preaching to the myriad population of mighty Nineveh would have been as an introduction to Jesus' proclamation of the gospel! Yet in His first pronouncement to the people of His native village, Nazareth, He referred instead to Elijah's sojourn at Sarepta and Elisha's cleansing of Naaman. What would have been more appropriate than that Jesus, in declaring to Nicodemus the universality of the Gospel, that it extended to "whosoever believeth," should have appealed to Jonah and pointed out that His words were but the fulfilment of this great prophetic utterance? Is it not remarkable that Peter should have required a special supernatural vision to prepare him to obey the call of Cornelius, if the Book of Jonah proclaimed the rights of the Gentiles so clearly and conclusively? Is it not strange that Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, should make not the slightest reference or appeal to Jonah in justification of his missionary labors? The discovery that Jonah was a great missionary pronouncement is a distinctly modern one.

Turning now to consider the passages in the Gospels where

⁵¹ *The Modern Reader's Bible for Schools: Old Testament*, p. 260.

Jonah is referred to (Mt. xii. 39-41, Lk. xi. 29-32; cf. Mt. xvi. 4), we notice first that in no one of them is the status of the Gentile world the subject of discussion. The occasion is not a debate concerning the scope of the message, but the authority of the messenger. Jesus is asked for a "sign" (*σημεῖον*). What is meant by this seems quite obvious. The scribes and Pharisees were demanding some extraordinary token which would accredit Jesus. In reply Jesus tells them that there shall be no sign given them, but "the sign of the prophet Jonas"; and that there may be no uncertainty as to His exact meaning He adds, so the narrative in Matthew expressly tells us: "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." That is to say, it is the unique personal experience of Jonah, the "fish story" as it is derisively called, which Jesus cites when He refers most particularly to this book.

It is to be noted, furthermore, that to all appearances Jesus refers to this episode as fact, as a historical event which He describes as a type of a still more important event which He foretells: "As Jonas was . . . so shall the Son of man be. . . ." That Jesus in response to their demand for a "sign" should refer to this remarkable and unique Old Testament wonder was eminently appropriate. It was just the kind of sign for which His hearers were asking, an event involving the marvelous in a most extraordinary form; and the similarity between the event cited and the event predicted is obvious. That He would have cited as a type of the greatest of His signs—His death and resurrection—a mere legendary embellishment of a great prophetic utterance intended to teach a very different lesson, is quite out of the question. Consequently, those who would adopt this interpretation of Jonah are inclined to treat this verse (vs. 40) as an interpolation and if possible prove it an awkward interpolation since there is no evidence that the text is corrupt. That there is sufficient internal warrant for rejecting it is apparently often assumed to be the case. Thus Cooke tells us: "The 'sign of

Jonah' (Lk. xi. 29, 30) was the appearance of a Hebrew prophet in a stronghold of heathenism," ignoring completely the express statement of Mt. xii. 40.⁵² And Zenos tells us: "Jesus fixed on this [the missionary motive] as the central theme of the book, and used it as a means toward arousing greater zeal for the Kingdom of God among the Jews of His own day. In a word, the lesson of the Book of Jonah is analogous to the foreign mission idea of developed Christianity."⁵³

These statements sound very definite and confident. But when we turn to the New Testament narratives we fail to find any real warrant for them. The application of the Jonah incident as given by Mt. and Lk. states expressly that "as Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation." In what sense was Jesus a sign to that generation? The natural and obvious answer is, In His death and resurrection on the third day. Jesus never went as a foreign missionary, He did not go to Rome or Athens to call men to repentance; He did die and rise the *third* day, and in so doing He fulfilled the sign of Jonah.

We are also told that the Ninevites who repented at the preaching of Jonah and the Queen of Sheba who travelled far to hear the wisdom of Solomon will "rise up in judgment against this generation," because "a greater than Jonas is here" and they have rejected Him and His message. It is argued that the words "the preaching of Jonas" favor the

⁵² *Gore's New Commentary*, Part I, p. 580. With this agrees the interpretation of Mt. xii. 39f., as given in this commentary (Part III, p. 159). There the "sign of Jonah" is said to mean that "as Jonah preached repentance to the Gentiles with success, so a time will come when the Gentiles will hear and accept the Gospel while Israel will reject it." As to vs. 40 we are told, "This verse, peculiar to Matthew, probably gives the interpretation of our Lord's words current in the Palestinian Church, and accepted by the evangelist himself. Indeed it may be true to the mind of the Lord. . . ." It is noteworthy that while it is here admitted that vs. 40, which narrates the "fish story," may be *true to the mind of Jesus*, any reference to the fish is studiously avoided. It seems clear that even if the "modern" critic feels obliged to admit that the Lord may have believed the "fish story," the best that he can do is simply to ignore it.

⁵³ *Op. cit.*

“modern” interpretation. Two points are to be noted. All that we know about Jonah’s preaching to the Ninevites is that it was a message of woe and vengeance. In Jonah i. 2 we read: “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me.” When the word came a second time to Jonah it was this: “Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee.” In response to this command Jonah went to Nineveh; and this is the sermon which he preached, “Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be destroyed.” That is all we know about it. That Jonah would have emphasized this “preaching” by telling the story of his wonderful escape from death, seems highly probable. Such a story would have made a profound impression on the Ninevites. That he did so we cannot assert positively. What we do know is that this preaching was so effective that the city repented and was spared. We are told that this grieved Jonah exceedingly and that the Lord rebuked him for his lack of compassion. That Jonah told the Ninevites of God’s love is nowhere stated. If Jonah is a missionary tract, it is one for the Jews, not for the Ninevites. According to the critics it is intended for the Jews of an age centuries after Nineveh ceased to exist. Whether Jonah ever went to Nineveh they neither know nor do they greatly care. Consequently they regard the reference to the Ninevites as simply an appeal to an incident in a familiar story. Jonah was not really a sign to the Ninevites: the Book of Jonah was a sign to the narrow Judaism of the post-captivity period. It is hard to see how even the most ardent advocate of foreign missions can see in Jesus’ use of Jonah an attempt to arouse “greater zeal for the Kingdom of God among the Jews of His own day.” The refrain “a greater than Jonas is here” makes this plain. The Scribes and Pharisees are not rebuked for their lack of missionary zeal, but for their rejection of Him. And the sign which He promises them shows that He is thinking primarily of His death and resurrection.

In the treatment of the story of Jonah by the “modern”

critics we have an excellent illustration of the extremes to which these scholars are willing to go in claiming Jesus as a "modernist." In spite of the context which shows clearly that Jesus' reference to Jonah was in reply to a demand for a sign which would accredit Him, in spite of His definite reference to the "great fish" and the "three days" spent by Jonah in its belly, in spite of the statement that the Ninevites who repented at Jonah's preaching will rise to condemn "this generation" for their failure to accept a greater than Jonah,—in spite of these things we are told that Jonah is a missionary sermon addressed to the Jews of the times of Ezra or later, and that Jesus used it for the purpose of "arousing greater zeal for the Kingdom of God among the Jews of His own day."

Dr. Snowden tells us that "there are modernists who do reject the supernatural in all its forms." But he maintains that "this is the result of their application of the principle of modernism and not the principle itself." Whether or not the distinction drawn by Dr. Snowden is a valid one or not, the fact remains that this is the usual and the most characteristic application of the principle. The rejection of the supernatural both in word and act, the substitution of a more or less consistently naturalistic and uniformitarian theory of evolution for the pervasive supernaturalism of the Bible is its dominant characteristic. The modernizing of the story of Jonah shows this clearly. In the case of Jonah it means desupernaturalizing, no more and no less. We might go on to cite other instances of the efforts of the critics to prove that Jesus was a modernist. It is not necessary. That Jesus held the view of the Old Testament which is traditional in the Christian church, must be admitted we think by any one who will carefully consider the evidence.

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