THE BIOGRAPHY OF THE BIBLE

ERNEST SUTHERLAND BATES

Global Grey ebooks

THE BIOGRAPHY OF THE BIBLE

BY
ERNEST SUTHERLAND BATES

1937

The Biography of the Bible By Ernest Sutherland Bates.

This edition was created and published by Global Grey

globalgreyebooks.com

CONTENTS

ONE. GENERAL CHARACTER

A GREAT BOOK is a living organism. Months, years, or centuries may go into its gestation. When finally composed and written down, it can be said to be born, but only born. It then grows and develops through the interpretations of generation after generation of readers, critics, editors, and translators, each adding something, great or little, to its expanding magnitude.

The life of the Bible, above all other books, is a life made up of countless lives, embodying their joys and agonies, their visions, their defeats and aspirations. Four thousand years cling about it. A full millennium of myths and legends passed into it; another millennium was consumed in the writing; bitter battles over canon and creed occupied a third; a fourth has seen the ever-continuing translations into modern tongues.

No individual, no Caesar or Napoleon, has had such a part in the world's history as this book. Wars, reformations, martyrdoms, religions, lie heavy on its head; men fought and died over its meaning; down through the ages it has continued to evolve, affecting for good and also for ill millions and millions of lives.

Not until the fourth century A.D. was it called the Bible. Saint John Chrysostom, the golden-mouthed, well deserved that sobriquet when he named the collection of Jewish and Christian sacred scriptures the Bible—one book, the Book. For in spite of the length of time consumed in its creation and in spite of the greatest diversity in the literary and moral value of the various parts, the unity of the Bible is its most compelling feature, so compelling that centuries after the original work was completed, when men of other races and languages sat down to translate the Bible, although they usually collaborated in large groups, nevertheless under the spell of the original they often found themselves writing as one man. This unusual and significant literary phenomenon appeared even in the Septuagint of the first translators, the legendary two and seventy Jewish elders of Alexandria who, according to the tale, in two and seventy days of the third century B.C. rendered the Old

Testament into Greek. In all these cases, the quality of the translation sprang from the quality of the original.

When one asks, however, just wherein resides this unity, so evident to sense that it has always been overemphasized rather than underemphasized, the answer is not easy. The older and still customary explanation that it consists in a definite type of religion maintained from first to last will not bear scrutiny. The religion of the earliest parts of the Old Testament is a tribal religion, strong and stern, intolerant, only half ethical and not even consistently monotheistic; the Prophets introduced nothing less than a religious and moral revolution; the later books of the Old Testament reveal the conflict between humanistic and nationalistic aspirations; and the coming of Christianity brought so great a change that the Jews themselves could not accept it. Yet all these varying attitudes are expressed fully and powerfully in the Bible.

Nor can one say with truth that the Bible is unified because it is always inspired by some religious viewpoint, however divergent the successive viewpoints may be. The collection of love lyrics known as the Song of Songs is purely secular, and the greater part of Ecclesiastes is a work of skeptical philosophy. Yet these are included, and one feels that the pattern is not broken.

The one enduring characteristic which does mark the Bible from first to last is a pronounced attitude of mind that reveals itself in literary style and content.

The content of the Bible is Man. Alone among the ancient nations, the Jews accepted Man as the object of chief interest. Their religion, while in all its manifold forms preaching absolute submission to God, in another way made God himself subordinate to Man; where half of the Greek myths deal with the doings of the gods among themselves, gods who think only occasionally of the creatures of a day on earth, Jehovah is shown as making the destiny of Man his chief concern. Where the pagan gods are transparent personifications of natural phenomena gradually humanized, Jehovah is fundamentally Man himself gradually idealized to the height of human imaginings of good.

The content furthermore is Average Man. There are no Homeric heroes in the Bible. Abraham is brave and cowardly by turns, Jacob is loyal and

a trickster, Joseph indulges in the vainglorious babblings of youth, the noblehearted David under the influence of lust will cause the murder of a devoted servitor, Solomon's wisdom cannot keep him from debauchery. As a result, where Agamemnon and Achilles and all the highborn heroes of Greek tragedy move us but aesthetically, our spirits are touched simply and directly by our sorrowful twin brothers who acted so like ourselves centuries ago. We can find Abraham in the flesh on a Vermont farm, meet Jacob in the streets of New York, encounter Joseph in any gentle but pampered favorite child, and discover degenerate Solomons in night clubs from the Atlantic to the Pacific coast.

Finally, the content is Collective Man. Behind these sharply defined individuals, one is always conscious of their ancestors, and stretching before them one sees the long line of their descendants. A compensatory dignity accrues to the persons in the tale from their relation to the social whole. The group, the nation, and ultimately all mankind form a perpetual background against which the characters stand out the more plainly but into which they eventually merge and their relation to which constitutes the criterion of their conduct.

From this interest in the average man and the collective man springs the democratic and revolutionary character of the Bible. The constant admonitions to heed the poor, the widow, and the orphan; the diatribes against the corruptions of the court, the law, the men of power and wealth; the ever-repeated pleas for social justice; to the extent that these have entered into the thought of the world we have in the first instance to thank the Bible.

The literary style of the Bible is in harmony with the unusual content. It is a style that moves effortlessly from the familiar to the sublime; from Job scratching himself among the potsherds to the same Job holding converse with God in the whirlwind. The Jews were the first realists.

Even the Jewish myths were localized and definite. Not only does the Ark of Noah come to rest upon Mount Ararat but its exact size is recorded—three hundred cubits by fifty by thirty. Abraham, visited by three angels, has water brought to wash their feet and tells his wife Sarah to "make ready three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth." In the Book of Tobit, Asmodeus, that wicked spirit, slayer of husbands, is put to flight by the homely ritual of raising a smoke from

the heart and liver of a fish laid over smoldering ashes. Such precise vivid details lend verisimilitude to the most fantastic narratives. The persistence of the belief in the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures and in their complete inerrancy is largely due to the impression on the reader that he is hearing for the first time a story told by an eyewitness of the events recorded.

The Jewish imagination, running always to the concrete, emphasized action. One could say with slight exaggeration that the Jews were behaviorists in their psychology, leaving motivation to be inferred from deeds, uninterested in it otherwise. The style moves with the swiftness of narrative as well in reflective passages as in those directly concerned with events. Wisdom is condensed into antitheses and aphorisms. Nature is never presented for itself in set pictures but as momentary illustration or background. All is condensation, concision, brevity. Enlargement comes not through the logical development of an idea but rather through concentration upon a single idea until it is seen to be exemplified everywhere, swelling to amplitude through reiteration, as in music or in life itself the same theme is repeated with multiplying significance.

Thence comes the characteristic parallelism of word, phrase, or strophe which forms the chief basis of Hebrew versification.

Less of a deliberate artifact than the quantitative structure of classical poetry or the accentual basis of modern systems, it lay close to prose, in the sense that writers, as their mood heightened or relaxed, could move from prose to verse, from verse to prose, without violent transition.

While as in other early poetry there is usually present a liturgical flavor of chanting that effectually sets the verse of the Bible apart from modern rhythms, the form undoubtedly suggested the poetic prose and free verse of Ossian, Blake, Carlyle, Ruskin, Walt Whitman, and other moderns.

Thus, both in content and in form, the greater part of the Bible when taken directly and not hardened into dogma, has been throughout history a freeing and liberalizing force. Unfortunately, freedom, obtainable only through law, is often lost through law.

Much in the Bible itself proved a bondage to the Jews, and to this very day passages torn from their textual or historical context still furnish

instruments to those who love to inflict or suffer bondage. Through its very closeness to life, the Bible has shared the fortunes of life. Its biography, like that of individuals and nations, is a tale of conflicting forces, and of struggles alike internal and external.

TWO. THE AUTHORS

THE BIBLE is a unique literary product. Literature normally springs from and reflects national glory in other fields of human endeavor that to a degree at least would be significant in themselves without the literature. The silent Medes still march their armies across the pages of history, and from voiceless Carthage the triremes still row out to battle; had the Greeks and Romans written no word of their own imperial conquests these would nevertheless have molded the ancient world. With the Hebrews, it was quite otherwise. Had there been no Jewish literature, the Jewish nation would have been long since forgotten. Their literature was not so much expression as a molding force which, Antaeuslike, grew stronger with every outward defeat.

The external facts in no wise justified the Hebrews' belief in their own importance. Sober history first knows them as only one of the many nomadic groups that came out of the Arabian Desert in the centuries before 1000 B.C., vainly striving to obtain possession of the richer coastland of Palestine then held by the Canaanites, a nation of Phoenician stock, and by those colonizing Cretans who appear in the Bible as the Philistines. Of the invaders, the Hebrews were, it is true, the most nearly successful, as at last, under their warrior king, David (about 990 B.C.), they did establish themselves in the hill country on the edge of the coastland. David's son, Solomon, contracted an advantageous alliance with Hiram, king of Tyre, and was even deemed worthy to wed with a daughter of the reigning Pharaoh of Egypt. But that was the high point of Hebrew political history. In the reign of Solomon's successor there came the disastrous division of his realm into the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah (the former with ten tribes, the latter with but two), both of which thenceforth existed precariously by favor of alliances with one or another of the more powerful neighboring nations. Such slight importance as was possessed by their tiny territory—the two kingdoms together measured only about one hundred miles in length by thirty or forty in breadth—resided solely in their lying across the trade routes from Egypt to the great empires of the East. In that position, they were exposed to constant attacks and had

enough ado merely to maintain their independence as long as possible. The kingdom of Israel was finally destroyed by Assyria in 722 B.C., that of Judah by Babylon in 586 B.C. Thereafter, the Hebrews ceased to exist as a political entity.

Had this been all their story, history today would reckon them among the most insignificant of ancient nations. They were important only because in their own minds they were important: precisely, indeed, because they refused to be refuted by the evidence of outward fact. Something within them told them they were a great nation in spite of everything. And they proved it, though not in the way that they intended, by their literature.

Behind history lies tradition, which may be called a kind of tribal memory, transmitted orally and growing by accretion from generation to generation. The Hebrews were not content with a nameless origin in the Arabian Desert: they claimed to have won their freedom from an earlier Egyptian bondage (which sober history, thus far, has neither been able to affirm conclusively nor to deny); and their legends went still further back to a period when they had inhabited the very land of Palestine they now desired to conquer—and even beyond that to a time when their ancestors had first come into Palestine from far-distant Chaldaea. Back and still back, bringing mythology to the aid of legend, they traced their origin at last to Adam, first born of men.

The raw material of history was thus already at hand when the prosperous reigns of David and Solomon quickened the interest of the Jews in their own past. The times called for historians, and these appeared.

Probably the earliest large portion of the Bible to be written down in anything like its present form was the part of the Second Book of Samuel now included in chapters ix—xx. This is sometimes called by scholars "The Court History of David" because the internal evidence makes not unplausible a pleasant theory that it was the work of some gifted contemporary personally familiar with the events recorded, a contemporary whose general sympathy with the king did not blind his critical judgment to the errors of his monarch.

After this magnificent beginning, subsequent historians worked backwards from the known to the unknown. Brief biographies of the

earlier legendary heroes, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson, began to be written. References in the Bible to the now lost "Book of Jashar" and "Book of the Wars of Jehovah" indicate the existence of what were probably collections of folk poetry that were made at about this time. Fragments of this poetry were incorporated in the historical narratives, sometimes only a couplet or a refrain, sometimes whole poems. Such are the "Song of Lamech" in Genesis, the "Song of Moses" in Exodus, the "Song of the Well" and the "Prophecy of Balaam" in Numbers, the "Apostrophe to the Sun" in Joshua, the "Song of Deborah"—possibly as early as 1100 B.C. and the "Fable of Jotham" in Judges, and finally, the "Song of the Bow" in Second Samuel. Even though it owed much to Babylonian example, this poetry of the Hebrew dawn already had a distinctive character. While of only ballad length it was far more closely knit than any ballad; possessing an epic sweep and power, it was still essentially lyrical but in its volume and amplitude suggested a nation singing, a nation marching in the confidence that it was led by God. As, for example, in the triumphant "Song of Moses":

"I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously:
The horses and his rider hath he thrown into the sea . . .
The Lord is a man of war:
The Lord is his name.
Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea:
His chosen captains also are drowned in the Red Sea.
The depths have covered them:
They sank into the bottom as a stone."

Often, the narrative element is more stressed, as in the "Song of Deborah":

"The kings came and fought,
Then fought the kings of Canaan
In Taanach by the waters of Megiddo;
They took no gain of money . . .
The stars in their courses fought against Sisera.
The river of Kishon swept them away,
That ancient river, the river Kishon . . .

Blessed above women shall Jael be,
The wife of Heber the Kenite,

Blessed shall she be above women in the tent.
He asked water, and she gave him milk;
She brought forth butter in a lordly dish.
She put her hand to the nail,
And her right hand to the workmen's hammer;
And with the hammer she smote Sisera, she smote off his head,
When she had pierced and stricken through his temples.
At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down:
At her feet he bowed, he fell:
Where he bowed, there he fell down dead.

The mother of Sisera looked out at a window,
And cried through the lattice,
'Why is his chariot so long in coming?
Why tarry the wheels of his chariots?
Her wise ladies answered her,
Yea, she returned answer to herself,
'Have they not sped? have they not divided the prey;
To every man a damsel or two;
To Sisera a prey of divers colours,
A prey of divers colours of needlework,
Of divers colours of needlework on both sides, meet for the necks of them that take the spoil?'

So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord:
But let them that love him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might."

In the "Song of Deborah," as in the medieval ballad of "Chevy Chase," a mere local skirmish acquired a lien on immortality, but how different the spirit of the two poems! The earlier—by nearly three thousand years—is also, in its literary artistry and emotional subtlety, much the more mature. The Hebrew minstrel is less interested in the events themselves than in their significance, and his admiration is given, not to physical courage but to an act of personal treachery redeemed, in his eyes, by loyalty to the nation. The triumph of the Hebrews is enhanced by the dramatic contrast between the overthrow of Sisera and the self-deceived hopes of his mother—in much the same way that Aeschylus in The

Persians chose to celebrate the Athenian victory at Marathon through the psychology of the defeated instead of through that of the conquerors.

The same mingling of lyrical and epic quality, with a still stronger stressing of the personal note, is found in the "Song of the Bow," attributed by Jewish tradition to King David:

"The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places:
How are the mighty fallen!
Tell it not in Gath,
Publish it not in the streets of Askelon;
Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice,
Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph . . .
Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives,
And in their death they were not divided:
They were swifter than eagles,
They were stronger than lions.
Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul,
Who clothed you in scarlet, with other delights,
Who put ornaments of gold upon your apparel.
How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle!
O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thine high places.
I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan:
Very pleasant hast thou been unto me:
Thy love to me was wonderful,
Passing the love of women.
How are the mighty fallen,
And the weapons of war perished!"

When the Prophets should come, they would have but to alter the martial spirit of this early poetry into a still loftier zeal for righteousness and they would find its peculiar rhapsodic form the appropriate medium for their own mature expression.

Truly, the Hebrews seem to have been born old. Their own legends of their great antiquity as a people are countenanced, if not by the known facts of history, at least by the richness of experience embodied in their literature at its first appearance. It is as if they had indeed been the first to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and had assimilated that bitter fruit long before other nations tasted it. It is as if like Adam

and Eve they had never known childhood or youth, their gaiety and inconsequence, that lighthearted spirit of play which lurks beneath the gravest meditations of Plato but is found nowhere in the whole of the Old Testament. Jehovah was a jealous deity; he gave his worshipers the strength to survive, he gave them sublimity and tenderness and an exquisite sense of beauty, but all on condition that they should forget that they had ever been children and should devote themselves manfully, seriously, and dutifully to his service. And when at last he had settled them in the Promised Land, what service could be more suitable than to expand that fragmentary thanksgiving poetry of Moses and Deborah into a continuous narrative of God's relations with his people?

So it came about that five hundred years before Herodotus the Jews had already begun to write history. Not, of course, history in the modern sense, nor yet exactly in the sense of Herodotus. The Jewish writers were anything but objective-minded: the meaning of all history to them lay in the career of the Chosen People who in their view occupied the center of the stage. They were uninterested in aught that resembled a scientific approach; the direct moral and religious implications of history were all that mattered, and these appeared most clearly in the deeds of individuals. The historical books of the Old Testament resolve themselves into a series of dramatic biographies. From Abraham through Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, on down the long impressive line of judges, kings, and prophets, the series runs, to end at last in the four biographies of Jesus at the beginning of the New Testament.

All this mighty work was essentially a collective enterprise. In order not to go astray in our interpretation at the very outset it is necessary to dismiss our exacerbated modern sense of private property even in works of literature. Copyrights, and the ideas that accompany them, are of recent origin. Such glorification of professional authors as we find among the Greeks, with their cherished prizes for the successful dramatists at the Dionysiac festivals, had no counterpart among the Hebrews. Properly speaking, there was no such thing as a class of professional authors among them. Their writers, whether historians, prophets, or poets, wrote for glory, not for gain, and even the glory was that of their nation, not their own. In these circumstances, questions of forgery or plagiarism simply did not exist. The historical writers laboriously collected their materials but afterwards freely annotated and

revised them; quite shamelessly, and to the great benefit of literature, they put their own words into the mouths of men long dead; some, more scrupulous toward older records, would retain contradictory accounts of the same events; others, more interested in some larger truth, would rewrite the earlier accounts in order to harmonize them: but always, like the builders of the medieval cathedrals, they were concerned with their achievement, not with themselves. Anonymity, not personality, affords the clew to Biblical authorship.

Nothing could have been further from the minds of these Jewish authors than any faintest suspicion that the deeds they recorded were intrinsically of less importance than their own recording of them. The historical Ahab and Jezebel were very different from the biased and impassioned portraits of those characters in the Book of the Kings; but the portraits were more valuable than the characters they misrepresented. The portrait painters themselves, however, did not think in such terms. Ahab and Jezebel were to them simply hateful figures who must be shown as such. Conversely, with the good and great—to let them speak as they would, or should, have spoken was no treachery to truth. So it was quite natural, in the absence of early records, to ascribe whatever laws were found to the traditional legislator Moses, just as it was equally natural after the Scriptures were written for the Psalms to be ascribed to King David, traditionally a poet, and for the Proverbs to be ascribed to King Solomon, traditionally the wisest of men.

A real understanding of Old Testament literature first became possible through the discovery of nineteenth-century scholarship that the early historical books are in the main a compilation of four separate documents, all of which may be approximately dated. This discovery, when all its implications were developed, necessitated a resetting of the entire Old Testament in new terms of chronology, authorship, and meaning.

Any careful reader can perceive that there are two radically different stories of creation presented in the opening chapters of Genesis, but actually between the naïve, primitive account in the second chapter and the highly philosophical version of the first chapter no less than five centuries intervened. So long was the span of time which elapsed during the writing of even Genesis.

The earliest document, known as J from its use of the name Jahveh, or Jehovah, for the deity, was put together in the ninth century B.C. in the Southern Kingdom. It constituted a connected narrative of Hebrew history from the creation through the reign of Saul. A century later, in the Northern Kingdom, was compiled the second or E Document, so called because in it the deity appears under the name Elohim. It begins a little later than J but comes down to the same period. After the downfall of the Northern Kingdom, both documents came into the possession of Southern Kingdom writers who combined them into a single narrative in the seventh century B.C.

J and E dealt with the same general material of myth and legend but in somewhat different fashion. There is considerable divergence in vocabulary and style and great divergence in moral and religious sentiment. In the earlier narrative, as one might expect, the customs of the people are more savage and the conception of the deity is more frankly anthropomorphic. From J comes the insistence on Jehovah as primarily a god of war. To E we are indebted for the story of Joseph; the treatment of character is subtler than in J, and the god of E's theology, while still a tribal deity, is less vindictive. The two documents furthermore reveal diametrically opposite attitudes toward the institution of monarchy; where J accepts it as of divine origin, E—written when the apostasy of the Northern kings, Omri and Ahab, was in men's minds—regards the inauguration of the monarchy as a decline from the earlier semidemocratic form of government in the period of the judges.

During the eighth and seventh centuries came the prophetic movement which determined the whole later course of Jewish religion and literature. It not only directly inspired what was for the Hebrews in their creative middle period the most valuable part of the Pentateuch, namely, the book of Deuteronomy; indirectly, it inspired nearly all the rest of the Old Testament in the form in which we have it and even the far distant New Testament as well. The heart of the Bible lies in the prophetic literature rather than in the so-called Mosaic law, the latter itself owing far more to the Prophets than to Moses.

The prophetic movement was without true analogues elsewhere in history. The origin of the Prophets was shabby enough; in the beginning they seem to have been mere soothsayers, foretellers of the future,

miraclemongers. Their early representative, Balaam, in the book of Numbers, is little more impressive than Calchas, the *mantis kakaios* of the Iliad. In Greece, the influence of the soothsayers was replaced by that of the Delphic oracle; in Rome, the soothsayers remained mere soothsayers to the end; in Arabia they became the mad dancing dervishes, and in India degenerated into the self-lacerating fakirs. Among the Hebrews alone they grew into a moral force, ultimately the most profound in the community. Doubtless, some aura of the occult long hung about them, as can be seen from the marvels attributed to Elijah and Elisha, but by the time of the eighth century they had come to abjure signs and wonders in favor of a purely spiritual message.

The Prophets stood apart from the regular priesthood, and were often hostile to it. Their credentials were those of their own genius. They were a kind of inspired moral rhapsodist who trusted to inner inspiration and illumination. "The word of the Lord that came unto" Hosea, or Micah, or Zephaniah—so runs the formula. Having no faith in rites or ceremonies, they preached a religion of inner rectitude. They were much concerned about the sufferings of the poor and the exactions of the rich. They were as one in demanding a loftier worship of Jehovah as the God of righteousness, the only God. Through them the Jewish religion was changed from a form of henotheism, a worship of one god as greatest of many gods, to a definite monotheism. Jehovah ceased to dwell upon Mount Sinai: his dwelling became the universe; he ceased to be a god of war and became a god of justice.

In politics, the Prophets were intense nationalists, isolationists. When Amos, the first of the literary Prophets appeared as early as 750 B.C., the desperate situation of Israel and Judah was already evident. In fact, it was the national peril that brought the Prophets upon the scene. One and all, they strove to strengthen the morale of their people by bidding them abstain from the idolatries of the surrounding nations, by pleading with them to search their own hearts, by exhorting them to faith in Jehovah. The essence of their political message was that the Hebrews must look to themselves for salvation rather than to their ever-shifting alliances with this or that neighboring monarch.

The moral revival initiated by Amos, who came from the South to preach in the North, and carried on a decade later by his Northern follower,

Hosea, did not avail to stay the fall of Israel. But neither did that terrifying event halt the prophetic movement. Rather, it gave new impetus to it in the Southern Kingdom, where the sense of national peril bred men of a caliber to meet it.

Greatest of them was Isaiah of Jerusalem, probably the most influential of all Old Testament writers. The first city dweller among the Prophets, an aristocrat at home in the court, he was a statesman whose wise advice was sought and taken by King Hezekiah, and after the defeat of Sennacherib, which he foretold, his prestige redounded to the benefit of the whole prophetic movement. Preaching both before and after the fall of Israel, he foresaw inevitable disasters for the Southern Kingdom also, but placed his hope in the formation of a morally disciplined "saving remnant" who should be strong enough to survive and, under some future leader, restore the glory of the nation. From him first sprang the Messianic hope which was to grow stronger instead of weaker as century after century, postponing the realization, would make the need the greater.

Contemporary with Isaiah was Micah the Morasthite, the "Prophet of the poor." A plebeian and a countryman, he was yet a twin brother of the spirit with the urban aristocrat of Jerusalem. The two were equally unsparing in their censure of the exactions of the rich; the extortionate landlords and the venal judges, who existed then as now equally in city and countryside, were excoriated by them in ringing tones. Both sensed the connection between economics and war; and both looked forward beyond the trying present to an eventual period of social justice and universal peace:

And they shall beat their swords into plowshares,
And their spears into pruninghooks:
Nation shall not lift up a sword against nation,
Neither shall they learn war any more.
But they shall sit every man under his vine
And under his fig tree;
And none shall make them afraid.

All of these Prophets were poets, Isaiah the greatest. Amos' verse was a bugle call to battle for righteousness—he dealt almost solely in denunciation; the more pastoral Hosea preferred the method of entreaty

and the note of flutes; Micah's verse had the richness of organ tones; but Isaiah's was a mastery of every instrument. It is not surprising that the reputation of Isaiah grew so great that the poems of numerous unidentified later Prophets (one of them his equal in loftiness if not in range) came to be added to his own in the collection under his name in the Old Testament (chapters XL to LXVI).

Shelley's conception that poets are the natural lawgivers of society was now literally fulfilled for perhaps the only time in history. The book of Deuteronomy, composed directly under prophetic influence, was nothing less than a revision and expansion of the Mosaic law designed to harmonize it with the poetic insight, the high moral principles, and the monotheistic theology of the Prophets. The authors of the book are not known, nor has its date been certainly established. But it was probably written during the reign of Hezekiah or in the early part of that of his son, Manasseh, who became king at the age of twelve, fell under pagan influence, turned idolater, and endeavored to exterminate the Prophets. According to Jewish tradition, Isaiah himself suffered martyrdom by being sawn asunder. Yet the prophetic movement was not killed. As usual in such cases, it was merely driven underground. At some time during the persecution, the book of Deuteronomy was hidden for safekeeping in the Temple where it was not discovered until 621 B.C. when the priest Hilkiah carried it to the friendly King Josiah, an idealistic youth of eighteen, who at once made it the basis of extensive legal reforms, as is related in the twenty-third chapter of the Second Book of the Kings.

The Deuteronomic legislation was accepted as of Mosaic origin. The Deuteronomists themselves could scarcely have been aware how little of their work actually stemmed from such an august source. It was based upon what is known as "The Book of the Covenant" (Exodus xx. 22–xxiii. 19), then universally ascribed to Moses, but actually no later in most of its legislation than the beginning of the monarchy. Even the Ten Commandments (Exodus xx. 1–17) are now generally considered to have been of eighth century rather than of Mosaic origin. Yet parallels have been found to the Code of Hammurabi, the great Babylonian legislator of about 2250 B.C., and where the influence of Hammurabi has been detected that of the much later Moses may be assumed, even though today it be impossible to assign any single law to his certain authorship.

Jewish legislation, like every other, was a gradual growth, but all of it which endured was traditionally ascribed to Moses. The Deuteronomists, though innovators, were deeply imbued with a sense of the past greatness of their nation; they felt that they wrought in the spirit of Moses; in giving their work the literary form of a series of discourses delivered by Moses in the land of Moab beyond Jordan just before the Children of Israel entered the Promised Land, they chose the most suitable time and place, as well as author, to lend it the utmost authority.

The motivating principle of the Deuteronomic legislation was the conception of the oneness and perfection of God. Symbolizing this oneness, they sought to centralize worship in the Temple at Jerusalem (an attempt that would have been hopeless before the fall of the Northern Kingdom and utterly meaningless in the actual time of Moses). As God's care extended to all his people, the Deuteronomists tried to create a parallel to the divine beneficence through legislation for all. Particular aid was given to the poor and lowly who most needed it: every seventh year there was to be a general remission of debts and a freeing of all Hebrew slaves; fugitive slaves were not to be returned to their masters; after fields and vineyards had been once gleaned the residue must be left for the wayfarer; laborers must be paid their wages daily; the taking of interest among Jews was forbidden; the divorce laws were liberalized to the advantage of women. And all this humanitarian legislation was persuasively enforced by the reminder, "Thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt."

During their period of favor at court the Deuteronomists were extraordinarily active. After the revision of the law, they turned to the production of revisionist history. They rewrote the Hexateuch (the Pentateuch plus the Book of Joshua) and threw the scattered narratives of the Book of Judges into connected form; drawing upon "The Court History of David" and other sources now lost—"The Book of the Acts of Solomon," "The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel," and "The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah"—they composed the Book of Samuel and the Book of the Kings (each first divided into two in the Septuagint translation), with the exception of the final chapters of the latter added during the Exile. Thus, when they had finished, they left behind them a consecutive history of the Jews from the creation down to their own period, a history which was also a grandiose philosophy of

history into which the book of Deuteronomy was neatly fitted in its assumed chronological position.

Well it was that the Deuteronomists wrought so feverishly, for their time was short. The eighty-odd Deuteronomic laws established a series of ideals most of which are ideal still today, but they did not long remain in force as actual laws. The death of King Josiah at the battle of Megiddo in 608 B.C. was followed by another melancholy period of reaction, during which the reforms were successively abandoned. The weak and vacillating Jewish monarchs drifted from one unwise political intrigue to another, and their veering course ended in the total destruction of their kingdom by Nebuchadnezzar (more properly, Nebuchadrezzar) of Babylon in the year 586 B.C.

During this period of gloom Judah never lacked a Prophet. Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah turned their eyes abroad or to the distant future, but Jeremiah struggled vainly with the desperate present. Denounced as unpatriotic by monarchy and priesthood because he opposed the suicidal war with Babylon, he was a conscientious objector familiar with the stocks, imprisonment, and exile. Although in manner a preacher rather than a poet, his nature was essentially poetic, introspective, tender, and sensitive, shrinking from the conflicts that his conscience nevertheless forced upon him. This first of many Hamlets was not even permitted to share the captivity of his people by the waters of Babylon but unwillingly was carried off to Egypt by a group who desired the prestige of a Prophet in their midst. There, the loneliest of men, he died.

The anonymous book of Lamentations came to be ascribed, in the time of the Septuagint, to Jeremiah, for no better reasons, apparently, than that it deals with the fall of Jerusalem and shows the influence of the prophetic point of view. Although it contains enough of the latter to make it probable that it was written by some follower of Jeremiah, the literary style of the poem is utterly different from that of any of the Prophets. It is a work of highly self-conscious art, a kind of choral dirge, composed in the difficult form of an elaborate acrostic, each line beginning with a different letter of the alphabet, yet with such a complete mastery of its artificial technique that this is kept wholly subordinate to the cadences of deep mournful emotion that rise and fall in a

psychological rhythm not unlike the movement of the choral odes in Greek classical tragedy.

Dealing with a minor theme connected with the overthrow of Jerusalem, the short and relatively unimportant poem of the Prophet Obadiah lashed out in furious invective against the neighboring nation of the Edomites who had joined the Babylonians during the war in an unnatural alliance which seemed to the Prophet an act of treason both to kindred and to God.

The period of the Exile lasted for fifty years. The Hebrew people had definitively lost all political power; their nation was divided between the larger portion resettled in Babylonian captivity and the small discouraged remnant left to haunt the hills of Jerusalem where palace and temple were destroyed and foreign overlords held sway: it might have been expected that the two Southern tribes would disappear from history as the ten Northern tribes had done. But when the Northern Kingdom fell, Israel had no sacred literature other than the recently compiled E Document and the heretical prophecies of Hosea. The tribes of Judah and little Benjamin, on the other hand, went into captivity bearing with them the complete Deuteronomic account of Jewish history from Genesis through Kings, the Book of Deuteronomy itself, and the prophetical writings of Amos, Hosea, Micah, Isaiah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Jeremiah. On them, their nation was based more firmly than it could have been on any political organization.

Of all this mass of literature, the work of the Deuteronomists was the most important. Their conciliation of Prophet and priest inured at first to both. Ezekiel, the last of the three major Prophets, was himself a priest who shared the exile of his people. Of all the Prophets, he was the most constructive. Essentially a mystic, subject to trances and visions, he united prophetic fervor with an intense love of ritual; in a strange apocalyptic style which carried to excess the symbolic manner to which the Prophets were addicted, he unrolled a cosmic panorama before the eyes of his hearers and made them feel not only that they were its center but that their actions could take on a mystical significance when performed through a ritual suffused with inner meaning. He thus unwittingly prepared the way for the later formalism of the priests, but at the moment the effect of his work was to preserve the morale of the

Hebrews under captivity by giving definition to their religious practices and by encouraging their hope of return to Jerusalem, the sacred city. The enduring influence of his style is seen not only in the books of Daniel and Revelation, written directly under his influence, but also in the "Paradiso" of Dante, the Paradise Lost of Milton, and the Prophetical Books of William Blake.

Ezekiel wrote in prose, but the Exile was not to end without the appearance of another mighty poet, of unknown name, whose work, fully equal in value to that of Isaiah, was collected under the latter's name and now forms the bulk of chapters XI to LXVI in the Book of Isaiah of our Old Testament. This great poet, who is sometimes called the Second Isaiah or Deutero-Isaiah, had an original intuition of Jewish destiny which gave him unprecedented hope and confidence. Hitherto, the misfortunes of the Hebrews had been explained as a chastisement for their sins, and the Unknown Prophet occasionally reverted to this view, but when his insight was deepest it seemed to him that the very function of the good was to suffer on account of and for the sake of the wicked so that both might at last be saved. The sufferings of the Hebrews could thus be interpreted as part of a world mission. Personifying his people in the figure of God's Servant, the Unknown Prophet drew into it the lives of the tortured Isaiah and Jeremiah and, for the first time in history, glorified the career of sacrifice and martyrdom.

Remember these, O Jacob and Israel;
For thou art my servant:
I have formed thee;
Thou art my servant:
O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me. . . .

Behold, my servant shall deal prudently,
He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.
As many were astonished at thee;
His visage was so marred more than any man,
And his form more than the sons of men:
So shall he sprinkle many nations;
The kings shall shut their mouths at him:
For that which had not been told them shall they see;
And that which they had not heard shall they consider. . . .

Surely he hath borne our griefs,
And carried our sorrows:
Yet we did esteem him stricken,
Smitten of God, and afflicted.
But he was wounded for our transgressions,
He was bruised for our iniquities:
The chastisement of our peace was upon him;
And with his stripes we are healed.
All we like sheep have gone astray;
We have turned everyone to his own way;
And the Lord hath laid on him
The iniquity of us all.

It is not surprising that the Christians should have later found in this incipient doctrine of vicarious atonement a clear foretelling of the coming of Jesus of Nazareth.

After the Second Isaiah, prophecy dwindled. With the return of the Hebrews from captivity, attention was concentrated on the institution of the church, which now must be both church and state for them. The Prophets Haggai and Zechariah did indeed find in the delayed rebuilding of the Temple a worthy theme which inspired them to a momentary eloquence, but Joel merely aped the grand manner on the insufficient occasion of a locust plague, while the anonymous Book of Malachi (Malachi meaning *messenger* or *messiah*) was written in the rationalistic style of the rabbis.

The rehabilitation of the Jews in Palestine was a long and weary process. After the conquest of Babylonia by Cyrus the Persian, they were given permission to return in 538 B.C., but they did not do so all at once. They came back in small bands year after year, and the rebuilding of Jerusalem was proportionately slow. Not until 444 B.C. were the walls re-erected through the enthusiasm of Nehemiah as related in his autobiographical account, and not until 397 B.C. did the late-returned priest Ezra promulgate the code of laws that was henceforth to regulate the worship of Jehovah.

Ezra's code is now considered to have consisted of the Book of Leviticus probably composed as early as 500 B.C. under the influence of Ezekiel. Its exilic origin is evident in its emphasis upon the Sabbath, an

institution that received additional stress when the captives found it important to have one day out of the week specially devoted to the religious services that preserved their national memory. The priestly origin of the work is evident in its institutional character throughout.

Like the Deuteronomists, the priests supplemented their codification of the laws by a revision of Jewish history such as to give the authority of tradition to their work.

Their special contribution, now known as the P or Priestly Document, constituted the last of the four great strands of separate narrative to be woven into the single account in the completed Old Testament. Of priestly origin that first chapter of Genesis wherein the creation itself is turned into a stupendous glorification of the institution of the Sabbath, of priestly origin the many accounts which sought an ancient basis for the Temple ritual and such ceremonials as circumcision and the keeping of the Passover. Capable at their best of loftiness and even sublimity, the priests were likewise capable of infinite pedantry. Anything connected with the Temple worship seemed to them of world importance. To stress the role of the priestly class in earlier history they compiled the two books of the Chronicles, an arid retelling of Kings given liveliness at the end by the addition, though in the wrong order, of the memoirs of Nehemiah and Ezra. They were the codifiers, the Alexandrians, of the Old Testament. They ended by turning the inner religion of the Prophets into a matter of outer rites and ceremonies, the very thing against which the Prophets had rebelled. They preserved the religion of Jehovah at the cost of formalizing it.

But though the priests came to control Jewish life, they did not control later Jewish literature. The Prophets were dead, but humanists arose in their place, quite free from the prevailing ecclesiasticism. Less impassioned than the men of old but more philosophical, they brought into literature a new tone of urbanity.

The Books of Ruth and Jonah were direct protests against the narrow nationalism of the priestly legislators. During the period of the Exile, the Hebrews left in Jerusalem had intermarried freely with the surrounding peoples; the stern new lawgiver Ezra annulled these marriages and disinherited their offspring. Hence the social significance of the Book of Ruth with its pastoral tale of a foreign woman taken in marriage by the

Hebrew Boaz and becoming an ancestress of David himself. A work of propaganda—but never before or since was propaganda presented in so sweet and winning a manner. Similarly humanistic was the Book of Jonah, whose intolerant prophetic hero was shown to be rebuked by God himself. In the same emotional key, though less definite in its meaning, was the delightfully fantastic tale of Tobit, one of the earliest of those included in the Apocrypha.

Of uncertain date but certainly postexilic is the most perplexing work in the Old Testament, the Song of Songs. Manifestly a collection of secular love lyrics recited at some wedding ceremony, the whole is sufficiently dramatized to suggest a connected narrative, but seems in too fragmentary a condition to make this narrative at all clear. Tantalized modern critics have been tempted to make all manner of fanciful reconstructions of the poem, usually interpreting it as a dramatized story of the unsuccessful rivalry of King Solomon with a rural swain for the love of a Shulamite shepherdess. This romantic conception is much less plausible than that which sees in the poem a fragmentary masque adapted for a marriage ceremony in which bride and groom took the conventional characters, now of king and queen and now of shepherd and shepherdess. Fortunately, the sensuous beauty and lyric rapture of the Song remain the same in any case.

A garden shut up is my sister, my bride;
A spring shut up, a fountain sealed.
Thy shoots are an orchard of pomegranates, with precious fruits;
Henna with spikenard plants,
Spikenard and saffron,
Calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense;
Myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices.
Thou art a fountain of gardens,
A well of living waters,
And flowing streams from Lebanon.

Misinterpreted in antiquity as a symbolic poem depicting the love of Jehovah for his people, this secular work crept into the Jewish sacred canon and from it was transferred to the Christian canon with the further misinterpretation that it symbolized the wedding of Christ and his Church. Conceived in this light, it was the favorite reading of the

German medieval mystics, Eckhart, Tauler, and Suso, as well as that of both the antagonistic religious leaders of New England, John Winthrop and Roger Williams.

From the end of the fourth century came the collection of the half-secular, half-religious gnomic verse known as the book of Proverbs, really a collection of collections, including the proverbs originally attributed to Solomon, a later compilation of the time of Hezekiah, and others attributed to a mysterious "King Lemuel" and to "Agur, the son of Jakeh." The book of Proverbs is an example of what the Hebrews called "wisdom literature," a term of broad significance covering prudential folklore maxims such as are common to all nations and also highly philosophical discourses in which human reason was regarded as identical in nature with the divine "wisdom" revealed in the order of the universe. On the one hand, we find:

Go to the ant, thou sluggard;
Consider her ways, and be wise.

And, on the other:

"I wisdom have made subtilty my dwelling,
And find out knowledge and discretion. . . .
The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way,
Before his works of old.
I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning,
Or ever the earth was.
When there were no depths, I was brought forth;
When there were no fountains abounding with water.
Before the mountains were settled,
Before the hills was I brought forth:
While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields,
Nor the beginning of the dust of the world."

Wisdom literature in its loftiest form is found in the Book of Job. Building upon the framework of an old pre-Deuteronomic folk tale, the unknown fourth-century author constructed a dramatic poem which took up again more poignantly that problem of evil which had embarrassed Habakkuk and Jeremiah—the question of how to reconcile God's justice with the suffering of the innocent. Though he probed

deeply, he found no answer other than that such suffering seemed a necessary part of a general scheme of things which in its grand totality he was fain to accept, but in his central figure he created, not the "patient Job" of popular tradition but a Promethean character, the most rebellious in the Bible, whose insistence upon personal integrity recalled the old prophetic strain here re-enunciated with an intensity unequaled elsewhere in the Old Testament.

Oh that I had one to hear me!
(Lo, here is my signature, let the Almighty answer me);
And that I had the indictment which mine adversary hath written!
Surely I would carry it upon my shoulder;
I would bind it unto me as a crown.
I would declare unto him the number of my steps;
As a prince would I go near unto him.
If my land cry out against me,
And the furrows thereof weep together;
If I have eaten the fruits thereof without money,
Or have caused the owners thereof to lose their life:
Let thistles grow instead of wheat,
And cockles instead of barley.

A century or more later, the book of Ecclesiastes carried the questionings of Job still further to the point of doubting the objective basis of the entire system of human values.

"Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher; vanity of vanities, all is vanity. What profit hath man of all his labour wherein he laboureth under the sun? . . .

"I applied my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly: I perceived that this also was a striving after wind. For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow. . . . For of the wise man, even as of the fool, there is no remembrance for ever; seeing that in the days to come all will have been already forgotten. And how doth the wise man die even as the fool! . . . All is vanity and a striving after wind."

This profoundly pessimistic work, in which reason seemed to turn its subtlest weapons against itself, would hardly have been admitted into

the Jewish sacred canon but for the additions of a pious redactor which served to blunt its point. Even with these conventional scholia attached, Ecclesiastes has remained the favorite Old Testament reading of philosophical skeptics.

Probably as late as the second century B.C. was made the world's most important collection of sacred poetry called the Book of Psalms. Many of these were of pre-exilic origin, some possibly even going as far back as the time of King David, but the great majority were unquestionably postexilic. They make up the most varied book in the entire Bible: all the inner conflicts of the Hebrews are expressed in it—the struggles between sacerdotalism and the individual conscience, between nationalism and humanism, between vindictiveness and tolerance, between despair and the uttermost of faith. Because these conflicts were permanently human as well as Hebrew, because the positive tone of hope and thanksgiving usually emerged triumphant, and because of the tender yet exalted notes of highest poetry often present, the Psalms have always been the best-loved portion of the Bible. Divided by the Hebrews into five books, a division not usually retained in modern translations, they were sung in the synagogues to the accompaniment of musical instruments and early became the chief hymnbook of the Church.

In the centuries after the return from captivity, great events had happened in the outer world leaving the isolated community in Judea long untouched by them. The glory that was Athens had waxed and waned in the interval, Sparta and Thebes had risen and fallen, Alexander had overthrown the Persian Empire, and it was parceled out among his generals. All this meant nothing to the subject nation of the Hebrews, who passed unmurmuring from subjection to the Persians to subjection to the Greeks. But when that unusually intolerant Greek, King Antiochus Epiphanes, attempted in the middle of the second century to root out the Jewish religion, the nation rose in arms under Simon Maccabeus and his son Judas. The literary fruits of their heroic and ultimately successful rebellion were the three works of patriotic fiction, the partially apocalyptic Book of Daniel, the Book of Esther, and the Book of Judith, together with the last of the Biblical narratives, the two Books of the Maccabees.

Judith, the two Books of the Maccabees, and the earlier mentioned Tobit belong in the collection known as the Apocrypha which also includes two notable works of wisdom literature, the book of Ecclesiasticus, written by Jesus, the son of Sirach, in the second century and translated from Aramaic into Greek by his grandson, and the later Wisdom of Solomon, the only book of the Old Testament to reflect the influence of Greek philosophy and the only one to breathe any strong hope of personal immortality; the charming tale of Susanna and the elders, added at the beginning of the Book of Daniel, and a less worthy addition at the end of the same work, the exaggeratedly fantastic "Destruction of Bel and the Dragon"; also a poetic interpolation in the Book of Daniel, "The Song of the Three Children," which is included in the Prayer Book of the Church of England; an unauthentic "Prayer of Manassas King of Juda When He Was Holden Captive in Babylon"; seven rather stupid chapters added to Esther; a book attributed to Baruch, Jeremiah's secretary, followed by a letter of Jeremiah; and the two Books of Esdras consisting of a Greek expansion of the Hebrew Ezra.

The books mentioned in the preceding paragraph were excluded from the Hebrew canon of sacred literature, not because of literary inferiority, which characterizes most but not all of them, but because the canon reached its final formulation in the triple division of the Law, the Prophets, and the Hagiographa (or Writings) at the end of the second century B.C. before the Apocryphal works had become widely known and indeed before some of them had been composed. The Greek canon adopted later by the Jews of Alexandria included the Apocrypha, and it formed an integral part of the Septuagint and Vulgate translations. Although some question of their value always existed, the Roman Catholic Church officially placed the Apocryphal books on an equality with the other books of the Bible by action of the Council of Trent (1545–63). The more skeptical Protestants admitted them usually with the qualification that they were to be read for "edification" but not for the "establishment of doctrine." They were included in the King James version and regularly appeared in editions of it until, beginning with 1827, they were arbitrarily omitted in the millions of copies circulated by the British and American Bible Societies. As a result, the great majority of British and American Protestants have long since come to regard as the true Bible one artificially limited, not by the official action of any of

their churches but by the decision of semiprivate missionary agencies. Thus the British and American Societies, which should be given credit for the greater part of the popular knowledge of the Bible which now exists, must also be held responsible for the regrettable ignorance of the Apocrypha. From the literary and historical points of view, at least, a Bible without the Apocrypha is a truncated Bible.

From the same points of view it is regrettable that Jewish sacred writings of the first century B.C. such as the very influential Book of Enoch and Book of Jubilees were omitted, because of their late date, from both the Hebrew and the Greek canon. As matters stand, there is a gap of over a century between the Old and the New Testaments, and it was precisely in the literature of that period, unrepresented in our Scriptures, that a number of the ideas taken for granted in the New Testament were first fully developed: the doctrine of personal immortality, the belief in the immediate coming of the Messiah, and the expectation of the imminent destruction of the world.

Thousands of books have been written and will continue to be written on the New Testament. For the purposes of the present volume, however, it may be treated much more briefly than the Old Testament, and this for several reasons. Its writing occupied little more than fifty years instead of a millennium. To all but orthodox Jews it is now much more familiar than the Old Testament. And it presents fewer purely historical problems.

The order of the books as they appear in the New Testament is, of course, as far from chronological as is that of the Old Testament. They are arranged, very roughly, according to importance, with little regard to the date of writing. A chronological rearrangement would place most of the Epistles first, then the Synoptic Gospels, then a few late Epistles and the Book of Revelation, and finally the Gospel and Epistles of John.

The earliest Christian compositions were the Epistles of Paul, written in Greek, like the rest of the New Testament, during A.D. 50–61. It is hardly too much to say that the labors of the Apostle in those few years transformed Christianity from a local cult into a world religion. Certainly no other man ever achieved results of such magnitude in so short a space

of time. His success arose as much from the direct influence of his powerful personality on his many missionary journeys as from the persuasiveness of his writings; yet the popularity of these with Christians of all ages is the best evidence of their enduring power. Much in them was highly legalistic, but whenever their author freed himself from the entanglements of rabbinical learning and the involvements of argument, his language became simple yet eloquent, moving with ease from moods of emotional tenderness to passionate invective. His influence was so great that other writers soon attempted to wield his pen. Of the Epistles attributed to him, the unquestionably genuine ones were, in the order of composition, First Thessalonians, Second Thessalonians, Galatians, First Corinthians, Second Corinthians, Romans, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon. The authenticity of the excellent Epistle to the Ephesians is more doubtful; those to Timothy and Titus are now generally rejected; and the great Epistle to the Hebrews has long been recognized as not of Pauline authorship.

Little is known of the writers of the minor Epistles in the New Testament. Jude is only a name; the two ascribed to Peter were really anonymous, as were the three attributed to John, the author of the latter, however, being probably also the author of the Gospel according to John. The Epistle of James may just possibly have been the work of James, the brother of Jesus; at any rate, its spirit is close to that of the Synoptic Gospels in its protest against social injustice and in its emphasis upon salvation by works rather than upon salvation by faith.

If all we knew about the life of Jesus of Nazareth were derived from Paul and his followers, it would be next to nothing. Paul had ample opportunity to have familiarized himself with the details of Jesus' life through his personal acquaintance with the original disciples, but he seems to have been little interested in the human Jesus; it was the resurrected Jesus who was valuable to him as a sign of God's redemptive love for man, and in spite of the famous passage in First Corinthians—"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity"—Paul's emphasis was normally laid upon faith in the divine Christ rather than upon the moral teachings of the actual Jesus of Nazareth.

The first record of the latter is believed to have been a lost collection of the "Sayings of Jesus" made by Matthew, which is mentioned by the early Christian writer Papias (about A.D. 130). There was also, presumably, a lost Aramaic account of the life of Jesus. Most likely on this basis, John Mark, a missionary companion of both Peter and Paul, produced in about A. D. 70 his Gospel in Greek, a simple biographical account which included few of the parables or other teachings,—followed, perhaps a decade later by the Gospel according to Matthew which made much use of the lost "Sayings" together with some use of Mark and the lost Aramaic Gospel. Finally, after still another decade, Luke, the most accomplished literary artist among the Gospel writers, combined Mark and Matthew, together with fresh material gathered through his own researches, in a finished and complete biography. When, afterwards, Luke added his invaluable account of the early Christian Church in the Acts of the Apostles, what may be called the historical portion of the New Testament was completed. The Fourth Gospel was written much later, probably in the first quarter of the second century A. D., and under the influence of Greek philosophy as expressed in the work of Philo Judaeus; though it contains some fresh material such as the incident of the woman taken in adultery, as a whole it seems to represent a conscious rearrangement of the Synoptic narratives in order to emphasize the divinity of Jesus.

Mark's Gospel was much the briefest of the four and can easily be read at a single sitting—as indeed it should be to obtain the full effect of its swift dramatic narrative. Matthew's, more massive and inclusive, was written primarily for the Jews, with many quotations from the Old Testament to buttress the new teachings; it is less vivid than Mark's and not well unified, but it has the inestimable value of containing the collection of parables. Only about a third of Luke's Gospel was original, but this section introduced sixteen fresh parables, several Christian hymns, and a number of characters, mainly women, who do not appear in the other Gospels; its shorter form of the Sermon on the Mount seems to represent an earlier version than that in Matthew; it is the tenderest of the Gospels, foreshadowing the feminine element in Christianity to be developed centuries later in the Catholic worship of the Virgin and the saints; and although a compilation, it was so skillfully constructed that its parts blend beautifully into a consistent whole. The author of the Fourth

Gospel was the mystic among the Gospel writers, interested chiefly in the symbolic meaning of the events recorded, this meaning being brought out in the conversations and long discourses with which the book abounds. Nearly all the great theological disputes of the next three centuries turned on the doctrines of this Gospel, which exercised a greater influence on the immediate future than the other three together.

Probably about the year A.D. 90 was written the book of Revelation, which now stands at the end of the New Testament. While it is chronologically misplaced and while ethically it represents a reversion to a pre-Christian way of thought, dramatically it is exactly where it should be. Picturing, in a series of apocalyptic visions almost blinding in their splendor, the destruction of the earth and the final conflict between the armed hosts of good and evil, this, the most Hebraic of the New Testament writings, breathing the spirit of the Prophets and thunderous with shouts of battle and cries of victory, formed a fitting conclusion to a thousand years of literature that was born of suffering and heroic struggle.

THREE. THE CONFLICT OVER CREED AND CANON

THE CHRISTIANS of the first century A. D. lived in expectation of the second coming of Christ, therefore they felt no need of a permanent creed or sacred canon. As most of them were converted Jews, they naturally accepted the Old Testament, known to those outside of Palestine in the version of the Septuagint (completed in the first century B.C.), but beyond that they had only such fragmentary Christian writings as their particular congregations happened to possess.

When during the second century the hope of Christ's immediate return gradually faded and the necessity of finding some definite body of doctrine to hold the Christian communities together began to be recognized, the difficulties in the way were almost insuperable. The Christian congregations were scattered throughout the separate cities of the Roman Empire. The enhancement of the value of the individual brought by the Christian emphasis upon personal immortality, while it was one of the main reasons for the rapid spread of the new religion, was also a danger in that it tended to foster highly individualistic and divergent interpretations of this new religion's meaning. Far greater than the likelihood of its being crushed by the sporadic and inefficient Roman persecutions was the possibility that Christianity would split up into a number of mutually hostile sects.

To arrive at any settled system of dogma it was necessary to answer a number of perplexing questions. Assuming that the Apostolic writings could be separated from the pseudo-Apostolic imitations that now began to appear in large numbers, were they to be considered as of greater, equal, or lesser authority in comparison with the literature of the Old Testament? To just what degree was the Mosaic law still binding upon Christians? What was the true relation between the human and the divine natures united in the Christ? And how answer the old question as to the existence of evil in a world ruled by a perfect deity? Upon these points, Christianity was time and again threatened with dissolution.

In contrast to paganism and to the rival Oriental religions, Mithraism and Isis worship, Christianity had the immeasurable advantage of possessing the imposing body of sacred scriptures in the Old Testament. For a time, however, it was doubtful whether this immense advantage would not be thrown away at the outset. The Jews had rejected Jesus; the temptation was strong for the Christians to retaliate by rejecting everything Jewish. There was much in the Old Testament, particularly in its early parts, which was thoroughly inconsistent with the teachings of Jesus. Why retain the scriptures of a religion whose priests had brought about the crucifixion of the Christ?

Thus the question of the inclusion of the Old Testament in the Christian Bible was at the outset involved in the larger question as to the meaning of Christian salvation—whether it was to be salvation in the world or salvation from the world. On this issue the future of Christianity turned: whether it should become a negative religion like Buddhism or Zoroastrianism or should follow the more positive path laid down by its founder. At the moment the forces making for the negative and pessimistic interpretation were numerous and powerful. The Roman Empire was full of Oriental cults practicing various forms of mystical asceticism. Greek philosophy which in its palmy days would have offered a defense was now tending downward in the same direction. Plato's identification of evil with matter was bearing dark fruit in an ever-increasing dualism between the spirit and the body. Warred upon from right and left by the sensuality of paganism and by the asceticism of its own extremists, it took Christianity more than a century to find its way into the open.

The stoutest fighter for the preservation of Christianity as a monotheistic religion was the mighty Origen (Origines Adamantius), the chief Christian theologian of the third century and the first great textual critic. Born in Alexandria, the son of a Christian martyr, he was so precocious a student that at the age of eighteen he succeeded Clement of Alexandria as head of the catechetical school. The most prolific of writers, reputed author of six thousand works, he still devoted twenty years to a study of the Scriptures which resulted in his Hexapla, the first polyglot Bible, in which he arranged in six parallel columns the Hebrew Old Testament, his own Greek transliteration of it, the Septuagint, and three second-century Greek translations by Aquila, Theodotion, and Symmachus.

Although in his youth he had emasculated himself in literal fulfillment of the supposed commandment of Christ in Matthew xix. 12, he was not a literalist in his general interpretation of the Bible. The Scriptures, he held, should be read in three ways: as a record of facts, as a moral allegory, and as religious symbolism.

By the end of the third century, the danger that Christianity might abandon the Old Testament definitely passed. There had also by this time come to be accepted the nucleus of a canonical New Testament, consisting of the four Gospels and the Pauline Epistles. But the final status of the other New Testament works was still undetermined, as well as that of various Christian apocryphal writings. Out of a mass of early Christian "gospels" and "epistles," most of which were of little worth, several works possessed survival value, the *Epistle of Barnabas*, the *Epistle of Clement of Rome*, the *Shepherd of Hermas*, and the *Apocalypse of Peter*. Two second-century works were also very highly esteemed: the *Testament of Our Lord*, which professed to be the very "testament or words which Our Lord spake to His Holy Apostles when He rose from the dead," and the *Apostolic Constitutions*, a collection of eight books ostensibly recording the words of the Apostles as written down by Clement of Alexandria. Popularly attributed to the Apostles also was the anonymous Apostles' Creed, which in practically its later form already circulated during the second century. This creed, however, did not attempt to define the precise relations between the Father and the Son, much less to explain the nature of the Trinity. Such creedal formulation, as well as the precise limitation of the canon, did not come until the establishment of Christianity as the religion of the Roman Empire accomplished a more definite unification of divergent tendencies and doctrines.

This occurred in the early part of the fourth century after Constantine the Great had been led to favor Christianity because, according to the accepted legend, Just before the decisive battle which made him emperor he saw in the sky a miraculous cross bearing the words in Greek, "By this, conquer." When Constantine chose Byzantium, renamed Constantinople, as the capital of the Empire, he presented the churches of the city with fifty magnificent copies of the Bible prepared at his expense.

A new heresy led to the formulation of a new creed. In Antioch the presbyter Lucian had been preaching strange doctrine, namely that Christ, since he had been created by the Father, could not be held equal to the Father. He was the first created of beings, created before all worlds, but he could not be considered coeternal with the Father without violating all logic. One of Lucian's pupils, the presbyter Arius, taught the same doctrine in Alexandria where he was indignantly answered by another Alexandrian cleric, Athanasius. The bishop of Alexandria, after some hesitation, supported the latter, but Arius found an almost equally powerful adherent in another of Lucian's pupils, Eusebius, who had become bishop of Nicomedia. The quarrel spread from church to church; bishop anathematized bishop; the dispute at last became so scandalous that in 325 Constantine, in order to bring peace to the warring clergy, called the first ecumenical council at Nicaea in Asia Minor.

It was probably the most important gathering in the whole history of Christianity, for its decision would determine the official creed of the Christian Church for centuries to come. Arianism was a first faint beginning of what would today be called a Unitarian conception of Christianity; the Athanasians, on the other hand, were the stoutest of Trinitarians. The issue was decided neither by reason nor by the authority of the Scriptures, but by the relative strength of the contending parties. The Nicene Council resembled a truce between hostile armies rather than a peaceful convocation; both sides came armed, and physical conflict was narrowly averted; only when the Arians found themselves decisively outnumbered did they accept a creed which anathematized their teachings.

The creed of 325 is popularly supposed to have been the Nicene Creed of later prayer books, but in reality it was merely an early and incomplete draft of that creed. It read:

"We believe in one God, the almighty Father, creator of all things visible and invisible; and in one Lord, Jesus Christ, born of the Father, only-begotten—that is, of the substance of the Father, true God from the true God, born, not made, *homoousion*—that is, with the substance of the same Father, through whom all things were made which are in heaven and on earth; who, for the sake of us men and for the sake of our salvation, descended, and was incarnated, and was made man, suffered,

and arose again on the third day, ascended to heaven, whence he will come to judge the living and the dead; and in the Holy Ghost.

"However there are those who say: there was a time when he was not, and before he was born he was not, and that he was not created out of any substance, or who say that he was transformed from some other substance or essence—that is, that the Son of God is changeable or mutable—these the Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes."

Homoousion—"of one substance"—or *homoiousion*—"of like substance"—on this question of a single word the Christian Church was rent apart for many years. Although the Homoousians seemed to have won a definitive victory in the adoption of the creed of 325, following which Athanasius was made bishop of Alexandria, the Homoiousian Arians had given only a nominal submission. They intrigued successfully at court, another council was held at Tyre, Athanasius was deposed, and Arius returned to Alexandria in triumph. It was now the turn of the Athanasians to intrigue; a third council, two years later, held at Sardica, restored Athanasius to his diocese. Another two years, and he was again deposed. So the struggle went on, year after year. Five times Athanasius was driven into banishment, five times he was restored.

Meanwhile, the Arians, who were energetic missionaries, made many converts among the Northern barbarians. Ulfilas translated the Bible into Gothic, thereby making what is generally considered the first beginning of Teutonic literature. Believing that his converts were already sufficiently warlike, he is said to have omitted the Book of the Kings from his translation lest it further increase their military ardor. It would have been well for the cause of peace had theological controversies also been eliminated in the process of converting the barbarians. Stammering their first Latin, the Goths became divided into Homoousians and Homoiousians, and the subtle words of a learned creed served as cause of battle in distant Gaul and Spain.

After fifty years of conflict, verbal and physical, the Athanasians emerged triumphant. The Council of Constantinople in A.D. 381 adopted the Nicene Creed in its present form (with the exception of a single word, to be discussed later) and further declared this creed to be unamendable. Henceforward, the creed originated by Athanasius possessed an authority equal to that of the Bible itself; it had become a third Christian

sacred scripture, brief but fully as potent as the Old and New Testaments.

The creedal triumph of Athanasius was accompanied by the acceptance of his personal canon of Biblical Scripture. Under the influence of Jerome and Augustine, the Athanasian canon was formally adopted by successive synods in A.D. 382, A.D. 393, and A.D. 397. Thus it came about that the Bible contains the books which it now does.

The final acceptance of the canon was made certain, not only by the decision of the Church, but by the great Latin translation of Jerome (completed after fifteen years of labor in A.D. 405), which included none but the canonical books. An earlier anonymous translation of the Bible, known as the Old Latin translation, had been circulated since the second century, but with great divergence among the copies, particularly between the European and African versions of it. Pope Damasus commissioned Jerome to make the necessary revision, which he did most thoroughly, retaining the Old Latin only for the Apocrypha and for the rest of the Old Testament going directly to the Hebrew text, though this unfortunately, as of course he could not know, actually represented a later version than that of the Septuagint on which the Old Latin had been based.

When the Vulgate, as Jerome's translation came to be called, was put before the people, it was bitterly attacked because of its alteration of familiar passages. Jerome was charged by his popular accusers, whom he contemptuously denominated "two-legged asses," with having impiously changed the words used by the inspired writers of the Bible. It required a century and a half for his work to win general favor. But after that for a thousand years it was the only Bible known to western Europe.

In spite of the labors of Athanasius and Jerome, there still remained disputed points of dogma unmentioned in the creeds and unaffected by the canon. These questions were settled for orthodox Christianity by the master mind of Augustine, author of one of the most poignant of autobiographies, author of the most influential of all theological works, The City of God. In this last he gathered up and attempted to synthetize four centuries of Christian thought. With Paul he held to the dogma of predestination: that by Adam's fall the human race was corrupted so that men are born in a condition of original sin from which they can only be

redeemed by God's grace operating usually through the ministrations of the Church. The harshness of this doctrine he tried to mitigate by holding with Origen that evil is mere privation of the good, thus introducing a hierarchy of relative goods wherein worldly possessions are regarded as legitimate so long as they do not turn the mind from higher things, marriage is still a sacrament though celibacy is more blessed, and the State is beneficial as an earthly institution though the Church, concerned with spiritual things, is far higher, while highest of all is the Church within the Church, the City of God, composed of the Elect united in that love of God which is the supreme good. Thus Augustine found a place in his system for both the flesh and the spirit, the exoteric and the esoteric, worldly compromise and pure monasticism, in a system as broad and complex as was the Church for whose glory it was conceived.

One more heresy arose, indeed, even in Augustine's own time: that of the British monk, Pelagius, whose follower Coelestius, was condemned by the Synod of Carthage for holding "seven mortal errors," the most damnable of which were the assertions that Adam would have died even if he had not sinned, that the human race as a whole was unaffected by his sin, that unbaptized children might be saved, and that men were free to will the good without a special act of God's grace. The simple island monk's humanitarianism could make no headway against the subtle dialectic of Augustine, trained in the methods of the Greek philosophers.

Thenceforth for a thousand years there was little danger from individual heresy. The Church was in possession of the Bible, clearly defined creed built upon it, and of a great mass of literature culminating in the work of Augustine which could be used to defend the Church's claims. It was well organized under its established system of bishops, presbyters, and deacons, centered in the twin seats of empire, Rome and Constantinople. Thus equipped and organized it would be able to survive even when the empire fell.

Nevertheless, internal unity had not been achieved. Impregnable as it had become against outside assaults or local rebellions, the Church still had two heads, and this was one too many. The long quarrel over the creed had expressed a struggle for power between East and West, the East being more liberal as it was less ecclesiasticized. Under the

leadership of Athanasius, Jerome, and Augustine, the West had won many battles, but the conflict was not ended. The further growth of the Church of Rome was destined to breed irreconcilable differences.

From the first, the Roman Catholic Church had claimed a priority based on the alleged martyrdom in Rome of Peter, the "Rock" on whom Jesus in Matthew xvi. 18–19, had said that he would build his church, giving to him "the keys of the kingdom of heaven." As early as the second century Pope Victor I had threatened to excommunicate the Eastern churches if they did not accept the Roman date for Easter, a festival which had taken over the old pagan holidays in celebration of the Spring. In the Athanasian Creed reference is made to "the Catholic Faith" and "the Catholic Religion" rather than to the "Christian" faith or religion. After the fall of the Empire in 476 the Papacy secured control of the city of Rome with vast estates elsewhere in Italy, Sicily, and Africa. Politics and religion became inextricable in a church which thus enjoyed both spiritual and temporal power.

Meanwhile, over in Constantinople its Patriarch, who had secured the primacy among the churches of the East, watched the growth of his western rival with jealous eyes. The secret enmity between the two heirs of the Empire came to a head in the ninth century when Pope Nicholas I and the Patriarch Photius excommunicated each other. Officially, the quarrel was over the Nicene Creed. In the form of that creed used in the Roman Catholic Church the word *filioque*—"and from the Son"—had been added to the description of the Holy Spirit as "proceeding from the Father." Photius, the greatest scholar of the age, declared that this addition, after the Council of Constantinople had declared the creed unamendable, was sufficient to convict the Roman Church of heresy. Boasting an Apostolic origin older than that of the Church of Rome, the Greek Church became "The Holy Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Oriental Church" in opposition to "The Holy Orthodox Catholic Apostolic Roman Church," each denying to the other the right to any of these titles save the geographic one.

Thus Christianity moved into the Middle Ages divided. But the Greek Church was early hampered by the growth of Mohammedanism, and aside from its extension into Russia had all that it could do to maintain itself at home. The Christianization of western Europe was to be

accomplished by the Roman Catholic Church alone. Centralized and authoritarian as this body had become, without these qualities it could hardly have succeeded in its mission.

FOUR. THE BIBLE UNDER MEDIEVALISM

THE MISSIONARIES went forth to Christianize the Northern barbarians with the Bible in their hands. As later with the American Indians, its simple touching stories of piety and suffering won the hearts of the rude tribesmen as could no other appeal. Without the Bible, the medieval Church would have been powerless to accomplish its enormous task of bringing a thousand warring nations and subnations, of divergent stock and traditions, into some kind of spiritual unity. That the whole of Europe came at last to accept, not merely nominally but actually, the same religion, with the same general code of moral obligations for all, was a testimony primarily to the enduring efficacy of the Bible.

In the beginning, vernacular renderings of the Bible were encouraged, and wherever this occurred its fecundating influence was soon apparent. Especially was this the case in England where, aside from Beowulf and a few fragments, Anglo-Saxon literature began with paraphrases and translations of the Bible.

For the English-speaking peoples special interest attaches to these early Anglo-Saxon undertakings. Like the prophetical books of the Bible, they were born of men's need in time of turmoil and distress, when the few Christians in the British Isles stood in danger of being wiped out by the Danish invaders even as the Hebrews had been environed by the hostile Assyrians and Babylonians.

Being special objects of attack from the looting Danes, the little centers of learning in the monasteries founded by the missionaries, such as those at Ely, Wearmouth, and Yarrow, on the isle of Lindisfarne, and at Lastingham in the North Riding, were one and all decimated by the great plague of 664 which took particularly heavy toll in the congested quarters of the monks. It was in this period of terror and in the exposed Yorkshire town of Streonshalh (later to be sacked by the Danes and renamed Whitby) that the work of Biblical translation was begun, calmly and serenely, in the Benedictine monastery founded by Saint Hilda.

The moving tale is told by the Venerable Bede in his Ecclesiastical History of how an illiterate cowherd named Caedmon, attached to the

monastery, was discovered to possess such a native power of putting into verse the Biblical stories which he heard that the Abbess Hilda took him into the order and had him instructed until he was able to paraphrase in Anglo-Saxon verse a large part of the Vulgate as it was translated for him by the other monks. Of his work but a single manuscript remains, containing parts of Genesis, Exodus, and Daniel, together with original poems on the fall of the Angels and the temptation of Man. These fragments show Saint Hilda's cowherd to have well deserved her patronage.

The literary movement thus begun was continued in the religious poetry of the Northumbrian Cynewulf in the eighth century, during which England also produced one of the foremost scholars of the day in the person of the great Alcuin (Ealhwine in Anglo-Saxon). Invited to France by Charlemagne, Alcuin as abbot of Tours became the center of a new religio-literary movement in that country.

Charlemagne was an impatient Christian. When the continental Saxons scoffed at his religion, he gave them the choice of baptism or death, justifying his intolerance, as Augustine had done, by Christ's words, "Constrain them to come in" (Luke xiv. 23) in his parable of the slighted invitation. Once the Saxons had accepted baptism, however, he sent them missionaries who taught so successfully that within a few years Saxon literature produced the long Christian epic of the *Heliand*.

In truth, Charlemagne was more enlightened than the official leaders of the Church at Rome. The text of Jerome's Vulgate, through incessant copying and recopying, had already become much corrupted, and Charlemagne, at the beginning of the ninth century, undertook the task of revision which the Church itself postponed until the sixteenth century. He sent for scholars from all over Europe, who under the leadership of Alcuin made one revision; then Theodulf, bishop of Orleans, dissatisfied with this, made, singlehanded, another; it was in one or the other of these revisions that the Vulgate was henceforth known in northern Europe.

Charlemagne considered himself the head of both Church and State. Not approving of the Papacy's attitude toward the worship of images and pictures, he composed, with Alcuin's assistance, a treatise on the subject. As he knew both Latin and Greek and had mastered the learning of the

period, he was no mean polemicist. His legal code was fashioned on the Biblical model, with laws prohibiting the taking of interest on loans (Deuteronomy xxiii. 19) and enforcing observance of the Sabbath and the payment of tithes. In the church services he required the priests to translate the sermons and the readings from the Bible into the vernacular for the benefit of the common people.

Inspired by Charlemagne's cultural example, Alfred the Great of England endeavored to go still further in the way of familiarizing his people with the Scriptures and with later Christian literature. At the head of his legal code he placed the Ten Commandments, translated by him from the Book of Exodus, and he also found time amidst the cares of state to translate the *Pastoral Care* of Pope Gregory the Great, the *History of the World* by Orosius, and the *Consolation of Philosophy* by Boethius. Finally, he gathered about him the ablest scholars of the realm to carry on this work of translation, in the magnificent hope that "all the freeborn youth of my people . . . may persevere in learning . . . until they can perfectly read the English Scriptures."

Under the stimulus of Alfred's influence and example, the writers of his and subsequent reigns produced an abundance of Christian literature. Aelfric the Grammarian, in addition to numerous religious homilies, made a paraphrase of the first seven books of the Old Testament known as "Aelfric's Heptateuch." Aldheim, Abbot of Malmesbury, and Guthrac, a hermit of Croyland, produced versions of the Psalms. Completed in this period, though begun earlier, were the Lindisfarne Gospels and the Rushworth Gospels, both of them glosses—that is, literal word-by-word translations without regard to sentence structure. By the time of the Norman Conquest there were also in existence translations of the Books of Kings, Esther, Job, Judith, and the Maccabees. In other words, the English people already possessed, in one form or another, most of the Bible in their own language, and only awaited some great Anglo-Saxon Jerome to make the complete translation.

The Norman Conquest eliminated all possibility of his coming. The Norman-French, at first imposed by the conquerors upon the language of the conquered and later assimilated with it, produced a new composite language so that the old Anglo-Saxon literature was no longer intelligible. By the twelfth century it was evident that new versions of the

Bible were needed. But these did not appear, for the attitude of the Church toward the use of the vernacular had gradually changed.

To understand the indifference and even hostility of the medieval Church toward the popular reading of the Bible, a number of points must be borne in mind. The leaders of the Church considered the unification of Europe to be their all-important task, and they were not eager to foster national literatures to develop the spirit of local independence. Among a people too ignorant to understand the Scriptures correctly, the reading of them, it was thought, would merely lead to heresies and schisms. Far better to let the knowledge of them come through the priests who could tell as much or as little as the individual case required. Was it not better to give the people concrete help through the confessional and indulgences, through the exhibition of relics to heal their sicknesses, and through rich ceremonials appealing to their senses? So the Church was easily able to justify a course that gave it greater and greater power over the people.

The medieval period was torn as perhaps no other between the demands of the spirit and the flesh. To the former, the monks were specially consecrated, and after the great monastic revival of the sixth century under Saint Benedict learning and education were left primarily in their care. Well the Benedictines wrought in their early years; theirs was the leading part in the Christianization of Europe; in a world made up largely of robber barons and their serfs the monasteries were little islands of fraternity and peace in whose libraries the monks labored over their illuminated manuscripts and from which they went forth to carry their messages of human brotherhood. But they could not escape the fate that makes the spirit's triumph transient and breeds failure from success. They mingled with the world too much, too much with politics; their monasteries became too powerful to preserve their simple rules of life. By 1354 it is estimated that the order had acquired thirty-seven thousand monasteries and had numbered among its members twenty emperors, ten empresses, forty-seven kings and fifty queens, twenty-four popes, two hundred cardinals, more than one thousand canonized saints, seven thousand archbishops, and fifteen thousand bishops. No order could fail to be corrupted by such a superfluity of worldly glory.

As the system of feudalism developed, all care for the cultural development of the common people was abandoned. Popular reverence for the Bible was excessive, popular knowledge of its contents was abysmally small. More and more it was devoted to magical purposes, a practice that went back to the Roman Empire. One of the first uses to which parchment was put when it began to supplant papyrus in the fifth century was to furnish little strips, inscribed with verses from the Bible, to be fastened on chair backs or around the necks of babies as charms to keep away the demons. The Lord's Prayer and various Psalms were regarded as particularly efficacious spells. The Roman custom of consulting the Virgilian lots, that is, of opening the *Aeneid* and taking the first verse on which the eye lighted as a prophecy of the outcome of some contemplated enterprise was succeeded by a similar superstitious use of the Bible during the Middle Ages.

The worship of relics led to organized pilgrimages to famous shrines, such as that described by Chaucer in *The Canterbury Tales;* of these, the most highly regarded was the difficult pilgrimage to the traditional Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem. Those who had accomplished it were known as palmers and enjoyed on their return double honors as specially sanctified beings and as explorers of strange lands who brought back marvelous tales with no possible check upon their stories. Only if one bears in mind the romantic place of the Holy Land in medieval imagination can one understand the two hundred years' fanaticism of the Crusades.

Mohammedanism had been more successful than Christianity in civilizing the nations who accepted it. True, the religion of Islam had a somewhat easier task. Its peoples were all more nearly of the same stock, its lands were nearer to the sources of classical civilization, and its sacred book, the Koran, taught a more familiar ethics. Through these and perhaps other causes, the Moorish kingdom in Spain and the Saracen cities of the East had attained a higher level of learning and culture than existed at that time anywhere in Christendom. After the victory of Poitiers in 7 32 when Charles Martel turned back the Mohammedan invasion of the West, Christianity had felt secure. But in the eleventh century, its old foe, immensely wealthier and more powerful, menaced it from the East. Constantinople was endangered, and in 1095 Pope Urban

II preached what was to be the first of seven Crusades for the rescue of the Eastern capital and the recovery of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem.

All the contradictions of medieval Christianity came to the front in the Crusades. A war in honor of the Prince of Peace, begun to tumultuous cries of "God Wills It!" was conducted in a manner that would have shamed the heathen races in the Old Testament.

The Crusaders, wearing the Cross on their breasts, soon lost the memory of their original purpose in an indiscriminate bloodlust. Every successive Crusade was marked by horror and disaster.

Before the First Crusade could be properly organized, the common people, roused to frenzy by the preaching of Peter the Hermit and others, set out in undisciplined hordes, murdering and looting as they went, to be destroyed by the Christian Magyars, Slays, and Greeks before they ever reached the Turks. After the knightly armies that followed had captured Jerusalem, all the Jews in the city were burned alive in the synagogue and the rest of the population, estimated at seventy thousand, was massacred.

Then the Crusaders returned home burdened with loot but left so small a force to defend Jerusalem that it was soon again endangered, when a Second Crusade was preached to secure the gains of the first. It failed utterly after two great armies had been defeated and the nobility had fled by sea, leaving the common soldiers to be slaughtered. Jerusalem was taken by the Saracens, and the Third Crusade was preached.

It too failed: the death of one hundred thousand soldiers in the victory at Acre was made useless by the subsequent quarrels between the leaders, Philip Augustus and Richard Coeur-de-Lion. The Fourth Crusade was diverted through the intrigues of Enrico Dandolo, the doge of Venice, to an attack on Christian Constantinople, which was sacked and burned.

Then came the two pathetic Children's Crusades—"armies" of twenty and thirty thousand children, led by shepherd boys: one group dissolved after terrible losses in the frozen Alps, and the other, more luckless, persisted until the children reached Egypt where they were sold into slavery. In the Fifth Crusade, the wily politician, Frederick II, succeeded in recovering Jerusalem by treaty instead of by force of arms, but his achievement, widely condemned for its un-knightly character, was of no permanent

significance as the city was soon retaken by the Moslems. In the Sixth Crusade, Saint Louis, king of France, was captured with his entire army in Egypt, and it taxed the resources of the French realm to pay the enormous ransom that was demanded. The Seventh and last Crusade, led by the same Saint Louis, ended ignominiously in Tunis when the king fell ill and died.

What had all this record of savagery and failure to do with our immediate theme of the Bible? A great deal.

The Crusaders, always in want of money and provisions, early adopted the practice of sacking the Jewish quarters of the towns through which they passed. The anti-Semitism from which Europe has suffered, to a greater or less extent, ever since, definitely began with the Crusades. Before that time the Jews had been generally tolerated; it was recognized that they at least held sacred the older half of the Bible, which was still the source of their ritual and the object of their constant study; there was hence a kind of distant relationship between them and the Christians. But after the Crusades, the Christians were reluctant to admit any kind of connection with the Jews. The unpleasant fact that all the Christian Sacred Scriptures had actually been written by the Jews could not be denied, but it could be ignored if men would but refrain from investigating origins at all. Any historical study of the Bible was therefore unwelcome and was delayed by this obscurantist attitude until well into the nineteenth century.

There was, it is true, another side to the Jewish persecutions. The book of Deuteronomy had brought about a strange situation in the medieval world. In accordance with its provisions, Christians were forbidden to take interest on loans. The Jews, on the other hand, were permitted to exact interest from foreigners. Enjoying a monopoly of money-lending, they often yielded to the temptation to raise the rates of interest to usurious heights. It is perhaps not surprising that the exasperated Christians often retaliated by seizing the wealth of those whose special privileges in the money market seemed to them so unfair.

But the spirit of persecution once aroused is rarely limited to its initial victims. The Jews were not the only victims of the revival of intolerance which accompanied the Crusades. Christians also suffered. At the beginning of the thirteenth century, the Papacy declared a crusade

against the large Albigensian sect in southern France, accused of Manichaean tendencies because of their pacifistic ethics, and in the campaigns that ensued whole cities were exterminated. The stage was already set for the persecutions of the Protestants three centuries later.

A contemporary movement often confused with the Albigensian was that of the Waldensians, the followers of Peter Waldo. This man, a prosperous merchant of Lyons, suddenly decided in 1176 to take literally the injunction of Jesus, "Sell all that thou hast and distribute unto the poor" (Luke xviii. 22). He carried out his resolution and formed a sect, known as "the Poor Men of Lyons," who, like the Albigensians, were complete pacifists, refused to take oaths, and held aloof from civic life. If this was what came from the reading of the Bible, Pope Innocent III determined to cut off the evil at its source; he forbade laymen henceforth even to touch the Bible, much less read it. But the Waldensians managed to survive the Albigensian persecution, became Protestants during the Reformation, and continue to exist in small numbers even to this day.

Not unsimilar in aim was the movement initiated by Francis of Assisi which, being conducted more judiciously, found shelter within the bosom of the Church. His monastic order, with its triple vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, was founded, like the Waldensian heresy, on strict observance of the Scriptures. To Francis the reading of the Bible was a religious ecstasy. He meditated so intently on the history of the Lord's passion that the signs of the stigmata appeared on his own body. His most difficult act of almsgiving occurred when he parted with his sole possession, the New Testament, to a poor widow. Dying, he had the thirteenth chapter of the Gospel of John read to him, so that the last words he heard on earth were those in which Jesus foretold his own death.

These various movements, alike in their care for the common people and in their reliance on the Bible, testified to a new spirit abroad in the land. Something was happening to the feudal system.

Emerson, in his poem "Uriel," introduces a young seraph who shocks the angels with his heretical proclamation:

In vain produced, all rays return
Evil will bless, and ice will burn.

An apparent illustration of Uriel's philosophy may be seen in the further effects of the Crusades. In the amount of needless suffering and horror produced, few greater evils have befallen Europe than the Crusades. And yet without the Crusades, the glorious thirteenth century which marked the culmination of all that was best in medievalism could never have occurred. Acquaintance with Arabic philosophy, and through it a closer acquaintance with the Greek philosophy on which it was based, fitted in with the broader outlook on the world induced by foreign travel to stimulate a zeal for learning which found expression in the establishment of universities throughout western Europe and in the development of the incipient Scholastic movement in philosophy, until this produced, in the persons of Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas, and Duns Scotus, with others only a little less eminent, thinkers almost on a par with the greatest of antiquity. And this, the intellectual aspect of the new age, was superficial in comparison with the fundamental changes that were going on in the whole social order.

The Crusaders, in order to finance their expeditions, had been forced to borrow heavily from the towns and cities so that there grew up a creditor class of merchants and burghers with a whip hand over the nobility. The latter were further weakened by the death of so many turbulent barons in or on the way to Palestine. For the moment, the decrease in the strength of the first estate, the nobility, benefited the second estate, the Church, which effected an alliance with the rising power of the cities, now well on the way to form a significant third estate. The new regime meant a vast enlargement of human opportunity. And as usually happens, enlargement of opportunity brought a rebirth of literature and art. By way of literature and art, its ancient friends, the Bible began to come back into its own.

A Biblical history, the *Historia Scholastica*, was written by Petrus Comestor for the use of scholars. For the unlettered was circulated the *Biblia Pauperum*, a kind of Biblical picture book showing famous scenes from the Bible. The greatest familiarity with the Bible, however, was to come through drama.

Modern drama, like the classical drama, developed out of religious liturgy. As early as the tenth century, the Benedictine nun, Hrotswitha of Gandersheim, had vaguely sensed the possibilities of religious drama,

and in order to wean the nuns from reading the profane works of Plautus and Terence had written six Latin comedies with highly moral implications. But she was on the wrong track. The future lay not in imitation of the classics but in the use of elements much nearer at hand. The elaborate ceremonies of the medieval Church already possessed a wealth of dramatic material in the processionals, the changes of persons and costumes during the service, the washing of feet on Maundy Thursday, the representations of the manger at Christmas and of the tomb at Easter. Gradually, the Christmas and Easter celebrations took on more and more of an explicitly dramatic character: additional personages were introduced, such as Roman soldiers, the Magi and the shepherds, the women at the tomb, and angels, with rhymed dialogues written for all of them; finally, laymen were allowed to participate in the role of evil characters like Herod, Judas, and the impenitent thief. Thus, during the twelfth century, well-rounded Christmas and Easter plays were presented by the clergy in the churches and churchyards all over western Europe. Essentially the same everywhere, they were known by different names: miracle plays in England, mysteries in France, *ludi* in Germany, *autos* in Spain.

The popularity of the plays brought great crowds to see them, rude and boisterous crowds whose conduct was often indecorous, yet for whose benefit the writers began to introduce numerous scenes, such as a quarrel between Noah and his wife, which shocked the sensibilities of stricter clerics. So in 1210, Pope Innocent III, the same who preached the Albigensian Crusade and forced Frederick II to go unwillingly to Jerusalem, forbade the clergy to take any further part in the development of popular drama.

The plays, transferred to the market place and taken over by the guilds, were greatly enlarged after they fell into the hands of the laity until they came to represent the entire cycle of Biblical events from the creation to the resurrection. There they were halted by the nature of Christian dogma; unlike the Greek myths which could be handled freely by the Athenian dramatists to the extent of completely changing both plots and characters, the Christian stories could not be fundamentally altered without impiety. The creative genius of dramatic writers sought relief through the introduction of allegorical figures who gradually came to swamp the stage. From this resulted the new type of morality play,

wholly allegorical in character, and this in turn, with the coming of the Reformation, was easily transformed into the satirical interlude, usually directed against the Catholic Church. Forced into the realm of the abstract in order to gain freedom, the drama came back to the concrete through satire, and in Protestant England there resulted the great period of purely secular Elizabethan drama which culminated in Shakespeare. The religious origin of the drama, however, still directly influenced the great plays of Calderon in Spain and can be seen, indeed, as late as the seventeenth century in the *Esther* and *Athalie* of the Catholic Racine.

If the Church early relinquished its part in the development of drama, the same thing did not happen in the realm of architecture. The noblest expression of the medieval spirit in its uttermost reach of aspiration was found in the twelfth- and thirteenth-century Gothic architecture which was fostered equally by church and town. Rising high above the market place, the houses, and all other public buildings, the cathedrals in their erection gave employment to thousands of the common people, enlisted the support of the guilds, afforded sanctuary for the tombs of the nobility, enshrined the legends of the Bible and the saints in their multicolored windows of stained glass, and presented religion in a guise of beauty which yet did not obscure its austerity. Rather, in them, austerity itself became beautiful. Each cathedral was the pride of its city. As far its lofty towers could be seen, men were comforted by its presence.

Gothic architecture was an embodiment of a final combined effort of the three estates of feudalism before they fell apart forever. Sculpture and painting, beginning as an adjunct of architecture, were, on the other hand, to reach their highest development during the more individualistic period that followed when the merchant princes of Italy erected their little separate courts and vied with one another in patronizing the arts and also the new learning that was brought from Greece after the fall of Constantinople in 1453.

Sculpture and painting reflected the general movement of culture in their choice of themes. During the medieval period these were drawn mainly from the lives of the saints, or from events in the Bible, both alike interpreted according to the medieval standards of asceticism; very gradually, the meager limbs and wrinkled faces of the anchoritic ideal were supplanted by the more well-rounded bodies and ruddier faces of

the Renaissance. The painters, originally often monks, eventually became a professional class dependent upon private patrons rather than the Church; mythological themes tended to replace the Biblical; and the artists at last became entirely cynical, taking their mistresses as models for either a Venus or a Madonna, whichever happened to be called for. The deeply religious Michelangelo, to be sure, infused a prophetic spirit into his work, and in his statues of David and Moses, as well as in the frescoes of the Sistine Chapel, he achieved a marvelous harmony of the Biblical, the medieval, and the pagan; but of his two most gifted contemporaries, Raphael contentedly painted the courtesan La Fornarina as the Virgin Mother, and Leonardo used the same model for both his Bacchus and his John the Baptist. The later Venetian School still affected Scriptural subjects, but the interest was no longer in any kind of characterization, Christian or pagan, but in the sheer beauty of the flesh, the texture of garments, the overwhelming joy of deep, rich colors. Venice, whose commercial prosperity after the Crusades was the first harbinger of the decay of medievalism, was also the first to announce that medievalism was dead, through the paintings of Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese, and Giorgione, who had lost even the memory of the long medieval centuries that preceded them.

In all this art, interest in the Bible was ultimately swallowed up in broader, if less lofty, interests, but till the end the Biblical aspects of art continued to keep alive the Scriptural stories.

Through the miracle plays and the religious paintings, during the centuries when the Bible itself could not be generally read, even when this was permitted, since to the great majority Latin had become an unknown tongue, the common people came to know, at least vaguely, the old legends that still after fifteen hundred years retained the power of religious inspiration. The popular demand for translations in the vernacular which the Protestant reformers were to meet and satisfy arose in no small part from the but half-gratified curiosity of the later Middle Ages.

FIVE. THE GREAT TRANSLATIONS

IT IS NOW recognized that the Reformation and the great translations of the Bible which accompanied it were incidents in a social revolution. The Catholic Church was a part of the dying feudal system; its prelates were noblemen, its estates rivaled those of earls and dukes. Even in England, where the Church was weaker than on the Continent, its monasteries are estimated to have owned one-tenth of the national wealth. Of the "nyne and twenty in a companye" that gathered at the Tabard Inn in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, more than a third were connected, directly or indirectly, with the ecclesiastical hierarchy. To maintain this enormous bureaucracy, the land was burdened with tithes and taxes. The Papacy no longer even pretended to have a spiritual mission: the licentiousness and crimes of Alexander VI, the political intrigues and ruthless wars of Pope Julius II, the rivalry of the double Popes of Rome and Avignon, these were known to all. Idealists were shocked by the corruptions of the Church, and materialists envied it its wealth. As a new middle class arose through the extension of trade and commerce in the late Middle Ages its members begrudged both the nobility and clergy their special privileges. Of the two the clergy were the more hated because they took their orders from Rome, offending the spirit of nationalism that had begun to develop, particularly in northern Europe. Thus, moral, political, and economic reasons all lay behind the Reformation.

The reformers were drawn to the Bible by natural affinity. Theirs was the cause of the people against the rich and powerful; the Prophets had fought for the same cause. In the struggle of the Hebrews against idolatry, the reformers saw an analogue to their own struggle against the ritualism and relic worship in the Catholic Church. Their emphasis upon the individual conscience drew inspiration from the Gospels; Paul's teaching of justification by faith brought them courage and consolation. Inevitably, the Bible became the chief weapon of the reformers in their war upon the Catholic Church.

The greater the distance from Rome, the less the power of the Catholic hierarchy. So it was at the outer edge of Christendom, in England, that there appeared during the last half of the fourteenth century the

"morning star of the Reformation," John Wiclif (whose name is spelled in twenty-eight different ways). Trained in scholastic philosophy at Oxford, fellow of Balliol, Master of Balliol, in favor at the courts of Edward III and Richard II, he was statesman, philosopher, theologian, and reformer. Largely due to his efforts was the defeat of Pope Urban V when the latter claimed from England the payment of feudatory tribute. Five papal bulls against him failed to shake his influence. He sent out his students as itinerant preachers against the corruptions of the Church, and he organized a group of scholars to translate the Bible from the Vulgate into the vernacular. But when his study of the Scriptures led him to deny the doctrine of transubstantiation (the literal presence of the body and blood of Christ in the bread and wine of the Communion service), which had been a subject of dispute from the time of Justin Martyr until Pope Innocent III declared it an article of faith in 1215, then Oxford University turned against its leader and deprived him of his office. He was forced to retire to the living of Lutterworth where he died in 1384.

Two years before Wiclif's death, however, the translation of the Bible which had been projected by him was finished, the first part as far as the middle of the Book of Baruch being chiefly the work of his disciple Nicholas of Hereford, the rest being possibly the work of Wiclif himself. In 1388 the whole was revised by another disciple, John Purvey, after which for over a hundred years the "Wiclif Bible" remained the only English translation in existence.

The Lollards, as the followers of Wiclif came to be called, developed into a mighty social force. They denied the papal authority and the temporal lordship of the clergy; they denounced the worship of images and relics, the pilgrimages to the shrines of saints, and the ceremony of the mass; they were opposed to all wars, and to capital punishment. The Church was forced to adopt more and more vigorous measures against them: from excommunication and imprisonment it proceeded at the beginning of the fifteenth century to burnings at the stake. The circulation of the vernacular Bible, the source of all the Lollard "errors," was strictly forbidden. The persecutions continued through the reigns of Henry V and Henry VI, and the Lollard movement was eventually broken up, though probably not so much by the persecutions as by the devastating

Wars of the Roses which held back all learning and social progress in England for over fifty years.

The Lollard movement left to posterity the one work of medieval English poetry worthy to rank with Chaucer's—*The Vision of Piers Plowman* by William Langland, and it left the Wiclif Bible—which continued to circulate in secret, despite the suppression, to such an extent that no less than one hundred and eighty copies have come down to us—and it gave birth to the Reformation.

John Huss, rector of the University of Prague, was deeply influenced by Wiclif: he taught much the same doctrine and instituted a translation of the Bible into the Czech vernacular, for which he paid with his life by burning at the stake in 1415. A hundred years later, Martin Luther, a monk of Wittenberg, deeply influenced by Huss, preached the same doctrines, but this time, though he was excommunicated there was no burning, for he had a nation behind him. So little had all the persecutions availed to halt the spread of ideas that were needed and sought after by the people.

The reformers, however, would hardly have succeeded, or succeeded so soon, but for two extraneous events. The first was the fall of Constantinople before the Turks in 1453. Hundreds of Greek scholars, bearing with them treasured manuscripts, fled to western Europe where they became influential teachers. The New Learning, consisting in a revival of Greek culture, gained adherents everywhere. And scholars, at least, could no longer be satisfied with a Latin version of the New Testament when the original Greek was once more accessible.

A still greater boon to the reformers was the invention of printing, generally attributed to Johann Gutenberg, about the middle of the fifteenth century. The first complete work to issue from the Gutenberg press at Mainz was a Latin edition of the Bible, printed in the manuscript style to which men were accustomed, and illuminated by hand. Forty-five copies have been preserved of this the first and most beautiful of all printed books.

The reformers were quick to take advantage of the new invention. A French translation of the Bible was brought out as early as 1474, and Germany already possessed eighteen vernacular versions when Luther's

translation appeared in 152234. In two of these earlier German translations, through a pre-Puritan puritanism, the Song of Songs was left in Latin lest it prove a corrupter of youth.

Luther's rendering was by far the most accurate that had yet appeared. For the New Testament he used the Greek text of Erasmus' edition (published hurriedly in 1515 in order to forestall a Spanish publisher, but thoroughly revised in 1519); for the Old Testament he used substantially the Masoretic text which had been preserved from generation to generation in practically the second-century form by a guild of Hebrew scholars known as the Masoretes, who consecrated their lives to this one purpose; only in the case of the Apocrypha was Luther content with the inferior Latin text.

But his translation had a greater merit than mere accuracy. He was a master of words, not their slave; interested not in any pedantic adherence to literalness but in giving the full meaning of the original as forcefully and vividly as possible; the result was that he produced a work of literature so influential that, mainly because of it, the High German in which he wrote eventually displaced Low German and became the national tongue.

Although Luther included all the books of the Bible in his translation, he was far from holding the view which later arose among Protestants that all parts of the Bible were equally inspired. Reverencing especially the writings of Paul, whose doctrine of justification by faith became the cornerstone of his own teaching, he recognized the non-Pauline authorship of Hebrews, considered the anti-Pauline Epistle of James as of relatively little worth, and doubted the value of Esther, Jonah, Jude, and Revelation. Disputes over the canon, together with much hairsplitting as to the exact nature of Christ's spiritual presence in the bread and wine of the Communion, alienated Luther from the Swiss reformers, Zwingli and Calvin, to the great detriment of the progress of the Reformation.

England, which had once led in the translation of the Scriptures, now lagged behind the other nations. Not only were there versions in French and German but also in Spanish, Danish, Dutch, Swedish, Russian, and Bohemian, before the English, exhausted by their civil wars, made any attempt to replace the suppressed Wiclifite translation, now outmoded in

its clumsy antiquated prose, by some more faithful and readable translation. But when the work was once begun, although it brought death to its originator, it was carried through to a more glorious conclusion than in any other land.

William Tyndale, who suffered martyrdom to give us the basis of the English Bible that we now possess, was born no one knows when or where or of what parents. The most probable conjectural date is some time between 1490 and 1495, the most likely place somewhere in Gloucestershire on the Welsh border. He was entered at Magdalen College, Oxford, in 1510, took his M.A. there in 1515, and went for further study to Cambridge which the fame of Erasmus had made a center of Greek and theological learning. After being ordained to the priesthood, he acted as tutor to the children of Sir John Walsh at Little Sodbury, Gloucestershire, from 1521 to 1523, during which time he also preached in neighboring villages and possibly at Bristol. His liberal views giving offense to the local clergy, he was summoned before William of Malvern, the chancellor of Worcester, on charges of heresy, but was allowed to depart for London without censure. That he already cherished the design of making a vernacular translation of the Scriptures is evident from an incident that occurred during his residence at Little Sodbury. Becoming involved one day in theological argument with a visiting ecclesiastic, when the latter exclaimed, "We were better without God's laws than without the Pope's," Tyndale indignantly replied, "If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth the plough shall know more than thou dost." Seven hundred years after Alfred the Great and two hundred after Wiclif, their still undefeated spirit was reborn.

In London, Tyndale's plans received encouragement from laymen but none from the clergy. He lived for a year as chaplain in the house of Alderman Humphrey Monmouth, meanwhile preaching at St. Dunstan's-in-the-West, beginning his translation of the New Testament, and striving vainly to win the ear of the bishop of London, Cuthbert Tunstall. The bishop, he found, was irreconcilably opposed to his project and, if it were completed, would prevent its publication. At last Tyndale came to understand, in his own words, "not only that there was no room in my Lord of London's palace to translate the New Testament but also that there was no place to do it in all England."

Determined to pursue his task, nonetheless, even at the cost of exile, Tyndale went to Germany, where, after probably visiting Luther at Wittenberg, he settled with his amanuensis, William Roy, in Cologne, and completed his work on the New Testament. An edition was already on the press when a zealous Catholic named Johann Dobneck learned of the undertaking and immediately reported it to John Cochlaeus, dean at Frankfurt, who persuaded the senate of Cologne to interdict the printing. Tyndale took the sheets already finished and fled to Worms where two editions, quarto and octavo, were brought out on the press of Peter Schoeffer in 1526.

Copies were smuggled into England in bales of cotton, but many of them were seized and destroyed through the diligence of Cardinal Wolsey and Bishop Tunstall. In order to suppress the edition entirely, the Bishop sent a special agent to Antwerp to buy up all the copies of this "pestilent New Testament." The Antwerp Protestants gratified him to some extent and then immediately sent the money on to Tyndale to finance larger undertakings of the same nature!

Tyndale's translation of the New Testament, judged by its influence, was the greatest work of English prose ever achieved by a single individual. Following, like Luther, the Greek text of Erasmus, he also made good use of Luther's own translation, and rivaled the great German in a style which so successfully combined dignity, brevity, and familiarity that it worked a revolution in English prose. Tyndale's New Testament was substantially the New Testament of the King James version, which was, as we shall see later, essentially a revision of earlier translations. Even when the King James version was in its turn revised in 1881, the editors testified that eighty per cent of the words in the Revised Version of the New Testament were still the words of Tyndale.

The translator's personal reward for this masterwork was hardship and danger. Harried from place to place, he took refuge for a time with Philip of Hesse at Marburg but found it advisable to move about under such concealment that his wanderings cannot be traced today. Nevertheless, these years were rich in literary production. Having learned Hebrew for the purpose, he finished the translation of the Pentateuch in 1530 and that of the Book of Jonah, which, unlike Luther, he valued highly, in 1531. Meanwhile, his breach with the Church was completed by his

following Wiclif and the Swiss reformer Zwingli in a denial of transubstantiation. He set forth his views on the authority of the Scriptures over the Church and on the separation of Church and State in his *Parable of the Wicked Mammon* (1528) and *Obedience of a Christen Man* (1528), which drew forth a reply by Sir Thomas More, author of the *Utopia*, this in turn eliciting a rejoinder by Tyndale. In spite of his hostility to the Catholic Church, he could not stomach the brutal method of Henry VIII's divorce from Catherine of Aragon, and in his *Practyse of Prelates* (1530) he excoriated both the Church and the king.

In 1535 he was at Antwerp, busied with further translation, when he was betrayed by Henry Phillips, an Englishman whom he had befriended. For fifteen months he was confined in Valverde Castle, six miles from Brussels, awaiting trial as a heretic. His friends tried desperately to secure the intercession of Henry VIII, but that monarch, who had become a Protestant in 1534 merely because of the Pope's refusal to validate his divorce, was not the man to forget Tyndale's attack upon him. He did permit Thomas Cromwell to write letters in Tyndale's behalf to Archbishop Carandolet, president of the council, and to the governor of the castle, but without more active intervention these were quite useless. The prisoner, who had serenely turned his confinement to good account by carrying on his translation of the Old Testament through Second Chronicles, was condemned as a heretic, and on October 6, 1536, he was executed by strangling, and his body was publicly burned. To the end, he thought only of his great task, and his last words were, "Lord, open the King of England's eyes."

The opening of the King's eyes occurred the very next year but in a somewhat devious manner. Miles Coverdale, an English reformer of about Tyndale's age and, like him, educated at Erasmus' Cambridge, had found it necessary to spend the troublous years 1528–35 on the Continent rather than in England. According to an unsupported statement of John Foxe, he had met Tyndale in Hamburg and had given him some assistance in his translation of the Pentateuch. However that may be, he had by 1535, without going back to the original texts, completed a translation of the entire Bible in an English style less forceful than Tyndale's but with more of purely literary grace. While sufficiently courageous and a powerful orator, Coverdale was by nature pacific and not averse to the use of tact in a good cause. Accordingly, he

dedicated his translation to King Henry VIII and "his dearest just wyfe, and most vertuous Pryncesse, Queen Anne." Since the King had not yet fallen into the mood to execute this dearest wyfe, he accepted the compliment and graciously allowed Coverdale's work to be admitted into England. A complete Bible in English now at last existed and could be freely read.

Coverdale's work, however, contained numerous errors, and in 1537 a better translation appeared over the name of Thomas Matthew, a pseudonym for John Rogers, Tyndale's literary executor. It included all of Tyndale's translations, published and unpublished, and where Tyndale was not available it made use of Coverdale. But the fiery notes of the editor were much too democratic in character to please the ruling powers, so one Richard Taverner was encouraged to rush through a hasty revision of "Matthew's Bible," omitting most of the notes, which was published in the same year, 1537.

This, too, proved unsatisfactory, and Coverdale was commissioned to make a new translation. As printing was cheaper in France, the work was brought out there, but just when the first impression of twenty-five hundred copies was off the press, these were seized and burned by order of the Inquisition. Coverdale was able to rescue a few copies which one of the officers of the Inquisition had privately sold to a haberdasher for waste paper; with these and the presses and types, Coverdale returned to England, where in 1539 the work was published in a huge folio, known from its size as the "Great Bible." A second edition, published in 1540, was called "Cranmer's Bible" from a long introduction by Archbishop Cranmer. With it, Coverdale's major work in the translation of the Scriptures was completed. Much of it was incorporated in the King James version, and Coverdale's rendering of the Psalms, adopted as the Psalter of the first Book of Common Prayer under Edward VI, still appears in the Anglican and Protestant Episcopal Prayer Books. Not an impeccable scholar, Coverdale was a felicitous writer with a delicate ear for all niceties of language; the English Bible owes more to him than to any other man except the mighty Tyndale.

In 1551 Coverdale became bishop of Exeter, but the accession of the Catholic Queen Mary, under whom all English versions of the Bible were suppressed, brought him a year's imprisonment, after which he fled to

Geneva whither the more radical reformers had preceded him. There all came under the influence of Calvin and his Scottish follower, John Knox. The result was the appearance in 1560 of the "Geneva Bible," edited chiefly by William Whittingham, Thomas Sampson, and Anthony Gilby, possibly assisted by John Knox and, more doubtfully, by Coverdale. It was the most accurate translation yet produced: its editors were better Hebrew scholars than Tyndale, and in their rendering of the New Testament they had the advantage of possessing the excellent Latin translation made by the reformer, Theodore Beza, in 1556, as well as a revision of Tyndale's New Testament brought out by Whittingham himself in 1557. In the latter, the more readable Roman type had been substituted for the black letter previously used, and this sensible innovation was retained in the "Geneva Bible" which, designed for popular consumption, was also made of portable size and was published at a very moderate price. It was popularly known as the "Breeches Bible" from its translation of Genesis III. 7: "They sewed figge tree leaves together, and made themselves breeches." Later virtually adopted as the authorized version of the Scottish Kirk, it was more widely read even in England than any of the earlier versions. One hundred and sixty editions were published. As the Bible of early Massachusetts and Virginia, it must always have a special interest for Americans.

And yet, with all its merits, the Geneva version proved a hindrance rather than an aid to the true understanding of the Bible. In 1551 a French printer, Robert Estienne, in publishing a Greek translation of the New Testament, had divided it into verses for the sake of easy reference in a concordance which he had in mind to bring out. The same method was followed in Whittingham's New Testament, and in the Geneva edition was extended to the entire Bible. The effect of thus breaking up a coherent discourse into isolated fragments, divided with little regard to their meaning and each printed as a separate paragraph, was to make it difficult to follow the sequence of thought and to encourage what became the besetting sin of later times—the habit of regarding all parts of the Bible as of equal value so that one could snatch any verse out of its context and hurl it at the head of an opponent in a theological argument.

A minor defect of the "Geneva Bible," which also came from Whittingham's New Testament was the pedantic custom of printing in

italics words not found in the original, thus emphasizing the very words that were of most doubtful authenticity and value.

Although the "Geneva Bible" was dedicated to Queen Elizabeth with an exhortation to show no mercy to Roman Catholics, the violent notes with which it abounded were almost as critical of the Church of England as the Church of Rome. It was essentially a Puritan Bible and as such could find no favor with the ruling hierarchy. To offset its influence, Matthew Parker, Archbishop of Canterbury, organized in 1564 a committee of bishops to produce an "official" translation. Known as the "Bishops' Bible," this appeared in 1568 in a sumptuous edition adorned with woodcuts and copperplate portraits of Queen Elizabeth, the earl of Leicester, and Lord Burleigh. But unfortunately the bishops were neither as good scholars nor as good writers as the reformers. Their New Testament, which was practically Tyndale's, was satisfactory, but there was such an outcry against their translation of the Psalms that in the third edition in 1573 they restored Coverdale's old translation, printing it in parallel columns with their own. This edition was known in popular parlance as the "Leda Bible" because some of the type heads had been previously used for an edition of Ovid's Metamorphoses so that the initial at the beginning of the Epistle to the Hebrews happened to be a rather unsuitable representation of Leda and the swan. On the whole, the elaborate "Bishops' Bible" was a costly failure which did not in the least serve to displace the "Geneva Bible" from popular affection.

One specific legacy of the "Bishops' Bible" to subsequent translations was of considerable importance in the matter of ecclesiastical discipline. This was the substitution of "church" as the rendering of the Greek *ecclesia* for the more accurate "congregation" used by Tyndale and Coverdale. The motivation of the change was the desire of the bishops to conceal the democratic character of the early Christian assemblies and to give the impression that their organization resembled that of the Anglican Church. The point was later deemed so significant by King James I that he specially prohibited the editors of the Authorized Version from returning to the usage of Tyndale and Coverdale.

During these years the Roman Catholic Church had at last awakened to the need of meeting the reformers on their own ground. Although the Church had in its possession the oldest existing manuscript of the New

Testament, written on vellum in the fourth century, this manuscript (now known as the Vatican Codex) had lain unnoticed in the library of the Vatican century after century while the Church had done nothing to correct the increasing corruption of the Vulgate text. The condition of the latter had, however, become so scandalous by the time of the Council of Trent in 1546 that a revision of it was authorized, although little was actually done until in 1586 Pope Sixtus V appointed a revisory commission, headed by Cardinal Caraffa, which completed its work within four years. The new text was issued in 1590 with an anathema upon any who should henceforth dare to change it. It proved to contain so many errors that in the next year Pope Gregory XIV appointed a second revisory commission, which within twelve months produced a text differing from that of Sixtus V in 2,134 places. This was issued in 1592 by Pope Clement VIII with a new anathema upon any subsequent changes. To modify any disagreeable impressions that might arise from the difference between the two revisions, the later like the earlier was attributed to Sixtus V.

In 1582 an English translation of the Vulgate New Testament was published by a group of Roman Catholic scholars at Rheims; a translation of the Vulgate Old Testament was prepared at the same time, but lack of funds caused the postponement of publication until 1609 when, after revision in accordance with the textual changes noted above, it was brought out at Douai. As polemical in purpose as the "Geneva Bible" or the "Bishops' Bible," changing "cup" to "chalice" and "repentance" to "penance," its renderings were sanctioned by the Roman Catholic Church whose members were forbidden to read the Protestant translations. The chief editor, Gregory Martin, and his colleagues, William Allen and Richard Bristow, were competent scholars but they were not really in sympathy with the purpose of their own work. As if to emphasize their contempt for the vulgar herd they deliberately adopted a heavily Latinized style which obscured the meaning. Thus, for example, the phrase "He humbled himself" became "He exinanited himself." Similar words virtually unknown to the English language outside of the "Douai Bible" are "colinquination," "correption," exprobate, "obsecration," "scenopegia." A Protestant taking up the "Douai Bible," with its unfamiliar headings such as First and Second Paralipomenon, Osee, Micheas, Sophronias, and Aggeus, will feel that he is reading a

different work from the Bible that he has always known. In one respect, however, the "Douai Bible" was much superior to the later Protestant versions from the literary point of view: it did not contain the irrelevant and confusing division into numbered verses.

At the time of the accession of King James I in 1603, the situation had wholly changed from that of a century before when there was no English Bible in existence. Now there was a bewildering number of them. The need seemed to be for standardization rather than for further new translations.

In 1604, at a conference of churchmen called by the King at Hampton Court to consider "things pretended to be amiss in the church," Dr. John Reynolds, President of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, pointed out the desirability of a revised version of the Bible. The suggestion was welcomed by the learned monarch, who declared, "I have never yet seen a Bible well translated into English, and the worst of all . . . is the Genevan." He proposed that the work be done "by the best learned in both Universities, after them to be reviewed by the Bishops, and the chief learned of the Church; from them to be presented to the Privy Council; and lastly to be ratified by his Royall authority, and so this whole Church to be bound unto it, and none other."

The churchmen were less eager in the matter than was King James, but through his pressure a group of "four and fifty learned men" was appointed during the ensuing year, of whom only forty-seven seem actually to have taken part in the great undertaking which was finally begun in 1607.

No company of better scholars ever worked together on a common task. Headed by Dr. Lancelot Andrews, dean of Westminster—who is the subject of a charming essay by T. S. Eliot—the group was mainly composed of the leaders of learning at the universities of Cambridge and Oxford. It was divided into six committees, to each of whom was assigned a separate portion of the Scriptures, the whole work being later gone over by a single committee. The undertaking consumed substantially four years (three and a half in the editing and six months in the printing). The Authorized Version, which incidentally owes its title to the printers, as the King's plan of formal authorization was never carried out, appeared some time in 1611.

Dr. Reynolds, who shared with King James the honor of initiating the work, did not live to see its completion. One of the ablest of the editors, much consulted by the others, he was stricken with tuberculosis but labored on to the very last, so that as we are told "in the very translation of the book of life, he was translated to a better life."

In the preface to the 1611 edition, drawn up by Dr. Miles Smith, afterwards bishop of Gloucester, the editors modestly disclaimed all originality. "Truly (good Christian reader)," they said, "we never thought from the beginning, that we should need to make a new Translation, nor yet to make of a bad one a good one . . . but to make a good one better, or out of many good ones, one principal good one." This is an exact statement of what the editors actually accomplished. The Authorized Version was essentially a revision of revisions. It was based upon a revision of the "Bishops' Bible" which was a revision of the "Great Bible" which was a revision of "Matthew's Bible" which was a combination of Tyndale and Coverdale. The last two were the main sources of the King James version. But the editors consulted all the existing translations and were deeply influenced by the interpretations of the "Geneva Bible" and by the sonorous Latin of the Douai Old Testament. Their catholicity reaped its reward in what was unquestionably the best translation yet made, both in accuracy and in richness and variety of style.

Like Jerome's Vulgate, the Authorized Version was slow to win its ultimate position of unquestioned supremacy. The radical wing of the Puritans continued to prefer the "Geneva Bible," selections from which were republished in 1643 as "The Soldier's Pocket Bible" in pamphlet form for the use of Cromwell's army. During the Civil War in the United States, about fifty thousand copies of this were reprinted for circulation among the Northern troops.

In spite of the utmost care, the King James version was from the outset bedeviled by printers' errors. The two impressions of the first edition were known respectively as "the Great Hee Bible" and "the Great She Bible" because the one rendered Ruth iii. 15 as "Hee went into the city," while the other read "She went into the city," both forms still appearing in modern Bibles. Another error that has never been corrected was the substitution of "at" for "out" in Matthew xxiii. 24, giving the oft-quoted mistranslation, "straining at a gnat." There was also much inconsistency

in the spelling of Hebrew names, some of which has never been eliminated.

The errors were, in fact, so numerous that a revised edition was called for as early as 1615, to be followed by others every few years. In each new edition, however, new errors cropped up. That of 1631 was called the "Wicked Bible" because it gave the seventh commandment as "Thou shalt commit adultery." Cromwell was reputed to have paid out a thousand pounds in bribes to the 1638 revisers to induce them to change "we" to "ye" in Acts vi. 3 so that the power of appointing officers should seem to have belonged to the people instead of to the Apostles. An elaborate edition put out by the University of Oxford in 1727 was nicknamed the "Vinegar Bible" because a headline to the parable of the vineyard in Luke xxii read "The Parable of the Vinegar."

At last in 1762, in the "Standard Edition" prepared by Dr. Thomas Paris of Trinity College, Cambridge, a work appeared almost free from printers' errors, and with modernized spelling and punctuation; but at the same time some demon of pedantry inspired the editor to start the evil custom of elaborating the marginal reference notes. Succeeding generations of editors indulged in the same pastime until the Bible came to assume its familiar modern form in which, to quote Professor Goodspeed of the University of Chicago, "It often looks more like a surveyor's manual than a work of literature."

Cross references to other passages of a translation are of little service to genuine scholarship if the whole translation is based on a faulty text. Gradually it became evident that this had been the case with the King James version, at least so far as the New Testament was concerned. The translators had conscientiously consulted the Greek text of Erasmus as the best then known, but Erasmus himself had had no manuscripts earlier than the eleventh century. Only seventeen years after the publication of the Authorized Version, Cyril Lucar, Patriarch of Alexandria, presented King Charles I with a fifth-century manuscript, the Codex Alexandrinus, which embodied a text differing in many places from that of Erasmus. During the next three centuries, fifth-, fourth-, and even third-century manuscripts of parts of the New Testament came to light in increasing numbers. (The total of New Testament manuscripts now in existence is estimated at four thousand.) The additional

knowledge furnished by these was reinforced by an ever closer study of the early Syriac, Coptic, Ethiopic, Armenian, Arabic, and Persian versions. It was inevitable that many new English translations should be attempted.

In fact, between the King James version and the Revised Version nearly a hundred such translations were published. Most of them were produced solely in the interest of greater accuracy, but two of the translators, Principal George Campbell of Aberdeen, in 1788, and Gilbert Wakefield, fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge, in 1789–91, had enough literary sense to abandon the verse divisions for modern paragraphing. In 1798 Nathaniel Scarlett made an interesting experiment: in order to emphasize the conversational character of much of the New Testament, he arranged it as dialogue, putting the speakers' names at the side as in drama. The most important of all these translations, however, was Challoner's thorough revision of the Catholic Rheims-Douai Bible in 1749.

Recognition of the need for an official revision of the King James version was voiced in 1810 by Dr. Marsh, Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Cambridge. With true Anglo-Saxon conservatism, nothing was done about it until 1856 when another Lady Margaret professor, Dr. Selwyn, brought the matter up in the Canterbury Convocation, thus provoking a motion in the House of Commons for the appointment of a Royal Commission to consider various "amendments" to the King James version and report back to the House—much as if the Bible had been a set of legal statutes. Finally, in 1870, through the efforts of Bishop Wilberforce and others, the Convocation of Canterbury appointed a committee of seven to have general charge of a complete revision of the King James version. The enterprise was conducted in a broad and tolerant spirit which was something new in Biblical history: scholars of other denominations were invited to co-operate, with the further assistance of an American Revision Committee headed by Dr. Philip Schaff, editor of the Schaff Herzog Encyclopaedia of Religious Knowledge. Owing to the thoroughness of their work, it took the revisers more than six times as long to complete their task as it had taken the King James editors. The New Testament was published in 1881, the Old Testament, without the Apocrypha, in 1885, and the Apocrypha itself in 1895.

The Revised Version proved to be a very conservative revision. All radicalism was eliminated at the outset by the adoption of a set of rigid rules: to introduce only such changes as were absolutely necessary on account of the meaning; to accept no changes in the text except by a two-thirds vote; and to adhere so far as possible to the language of the King James version. The American Revision Committee took these rules less literally than did their British cousins, with the result that there was considerable diversity of opinion between the two committees. More than a thousand of the American suggestions were indeed incorporated in the British edition, but the more important of them were relegated to an appendix. Furthermore, what has since become the accepted Greek text of the New Testament, that prepared by Westcott and Hort, was not published until 1881, and though both of these great textual critics were members of the British committee their suggestions were frequently not adopted. For these reasons, the American Revision Committee felt justified in continuing its own work, which resulted in the publication of the American Revision in 1901.

Of all the official and semiofficial editions of the Bible, the American Revision of 1901 (the edition circulated by the Gideons) is by far the best from the point of view of literal accuracy. Unfortunately, from the point of view of literary value it is one of the worst ever published. It came out during the period when American scholarship, justifiably proud of its learning and its new methods of technical research, looked with suspicion on all literary attainment as a kind of concession to emotional weakness. Both the British and American revisers recognized the absurdity of the verse paragraphing in the King James version, but they went to the opposite extreme of adopting unconscionably long paragraphs even in conversational passages. The unreadability of these was increased in the American Version by the inclusion of the old verse numbers within the paragraphs, so that the reader often had to hurdle two or three of them in a single sentence. And whereas the British revisers had had the courage to remove the network of marginal notes enmeshing the text, the American edition dutifully restored this smothering parasitic growth.

It was left for an individual to do what the churches and the groups of organized scholars had signally failed to do—present the greatest literary work of all time in a literary form—one which should bring out the

meaning, emotional as well as intellectual, instead of obscuring this meaning in conformity with dogmas of religion or pedantry. Professor Richard Green Moulton of the University of Chicago began in 1895 to publish the books of the Bible separately—thus calling attention to the distinctive character of each—in an edition named "The Modern Reader's Bible" in which the text of the British Revision was presented in an attractive form, with verse printed as verse, prose as prose, and the latter paragraphed with some regard to meaning. His work was a great improvement upon anything that had gone before, but it was still, like the English Revised Version on which it was based, a compromise. Professor Moulton was not quite willing to be so radical as to accord the Bible the full advantages possessed by other works of literature. His paragraphing was so heavy that today it already looks archaic; he seemed to share with previous editors a feeling that there was something profane in the use of quotation marks (although he did finally consent to introduce them in the Gospel of John); and he obstinately refused to recognize the conclusions of the Higher Criticism with the result that he was occasionally led into serious errors—such as his endeavor to reconstruct the Song of Songs as a connected drama. His edition, completed and published in a single volume in 1907 (unfortunately in a print so fine that it did not encourage reading), was the last important one to disregard, even partially, the Higher Criticism. The development of the latter has proved so fundamental not merely to individual translations and editions but to the entire understanding of the Bible that its story demands a separate chapter.

SIX. THE HIGHER CRITICISM

THERE IS no particular mystery about the so-called "Higher Criticism." It is simply that study of the meaning of the Bible which employs the same combination of textual and historical criticism that is used today in the study of all ancient literature.

Originally, the term referred to any criticism concerned primarily with meaning as contrasted with "lower" or merely textual criticism. Owing to the fact that the study of the meaning of the Bible proved to be so peculiarly significant, the term eventually came to be restricted to it alone, although, of course, textual investigation was always one of the chief resources of Biblical Higher Criticism.

As usual, the philosophers were the first to come forward with a rational attitude. Thomas Hobbes in his Leviathan (1651), discussing Biblical dates and authorship, ventured a number of shrewd conjectures which lagging scholarship was to verify only after two centuries. He pointed out many passages in the Pentateuch clearly not of Mosaic authorship; the historical books were evidently written later than the events they recorded; Psalms and Proverbs, at least in their final form, were late. Hobbes glimpsed the fundamental truth that the Bible was a compilation of many books that were put together and revised by other hands than those of the original authors.

The Jewish philosopher, Benedict Spinoza (Baruch de Espinoza), went much further. Looked upon in his precocious youth as the coming glory of the Amsterdam synagogue, he had early mastered the Talmudic interpretations of the Bible and from them advanced to the more inspiring study of the Jewish medieval philosophers, Maimonides, Levi ben Gerson, Hasdai Crescas, Ibn Ezra, and Moses of Cordova. From them he acquired an independent habit of thought which soon brought him into collision with the authorities of the synagogue—for orthodoxy, Jewish or Christian, was everywhere equally intolerant. At the age of twenty-four, Spinoza was tried for heresy and excommunicated according to a formula which was a veritable masterpiece of gruesomeness.

"With the judgment of the angels and the sentence of the saints, we anathematize, execrate, curse, and cast out Baruch de Espinoza, the whole of the sacred community assenting, in presence of the sacred books with the six-hundred-and-thirteen precepts written therein, pronouncing against him the malediction wherewith Elisha cursed the children, and all the maledictions written in the Book of the Law. Let him be accursed by day, and accursed by night; let him be accursed in his lying down, and accursed in his rising up; accursed in going out and accursed in coming in. May the Lord never more pardon or acknowledge him; may the wrath and displeasure of the Lord burn henceforth against this man, load him with all the curses written in the Book of the Law, and blot out his name from under the sky; may the Lord sever him for evil from all the tribes of Israel, weight him with all the maledictions of the firmament contained in the Book of the Law; and may all ye who are obedient to the Lord your God be saved this day.

"Hereby then are all admonished that none hold converse with him by word of mouth, none hold communication with him by writing; that no one do him any service, no one abide under the same roof with him, no one approach within four cubits length of him, and no one read any document dictated by him, or written by his hand."

Thus cut off from the Jewish community, Spinoza withdrew to the outskirts of Amsterdam where he earned a frugal living as a grinder of lenses, devoting his leisure to thinking and writing and refusing all the offers of patronage and financial assistance that became more frequent as his reputation gradually extended. In the first of his works, the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (published anonymously in 1670), he outlined in some detail the proper method for the historical study of the Bible, and, like Hobbes, he pleaded for an interpretation based upon the Bible itself instead of upon extraneous dogmas. But knowledge of the Bible itself included in his eyes a knowledge of its natural environment: ". . . that is, the life, the conduct, and the studies of the author of each book, who he was, what was the occasion, and the epoch of his writing, whom did he write for, and in what language." Further, Spinoza demanded an inquiry "into the fate of each book: how it was first received, into whose hands it fell, how many different versions there were of it, by whose advice was it received into the Bible, and lastly, how

all the books now universally accepted as sacred, were united into a single whole."

Here was a complete outline for the science of Higher Criticism. But it came a hundred years too early.

The eighteenth century proved to be critically minded but not historically minded. Advances in physical science had led to the conception of a lawful universe difficult to harmonize with the primitive scientific notions of the early Hebrews. The miracles, formerly urged as a proof of revelation, now became a stumbling block, needing defense in their turn. Skeptics such as David Hume pointed out that if miracles were breaks in the order of nature they needed to be supported by extraordinarily strong evidence, whereas in reality the evidence was extraordinarily weak unless one previously admitted the idea of revelation which the miracles themselves were supposed to prove. Apologists such as Bishop Butler usually attempted to meet this argument by denying that miracles were breaks in the order of nature: they were to be explained either as natural events misinterpreted by the narrators (this explanation supporting the events at the expense of the narrators) or as elaborate metaphors for moral or religious truths (this supporting the narrators at the expense of the events). Both these explanations explained away, since neither of them upheld the genuineness of the miracle as it was actually reported. Thus the literal authority of the Bible was undermined as much by its defenders as by its critics. Neither party had the faintest glimpse of the importance of the miraculous, precisely because it was miraculous, in all primitive thought.

The religious arguments of the eighteenth century turned on the scientific authority of the Bible rather than on ultimate moral or religious questions. Most of the critics, such as Bolingbroke, John Toland, Samuel Reimarus, Voltaire, Volney, Rousseau, and Paine, were deists, believing in a perfect deity, considered to be the creator of nature and its beneficent laws. Even when they were atheists, such as Diderot, Holbach, and the early Shelley, they were devoted to the Christian doctrine of the brotherhood of man. Looking back upon the conflict today, one is impressed by the fact that the critics of the Bible possessed much more of its true spirit than did its orthodox defenders. The critics were social reformers, fighting as had the Hebrew Prophets against the

injustice of aristocratic and ecclesiastical domination; the apologists, on the other hand, were primarily concerned to defend the vested interests of Church and State. Thus, as during the Reformation, the discussion of the Bible was incidental to a larger social revolution, and the same classes who had once tried to suppress popular knowledge of the Bible, now, having taken the Bible over and established a private monopoly in it, consistently opposed any further extension of knowledge about it. In both instances, the conservative dread of new ideas was motivated by the fear of social change.

On the main question of the scientific authority of the Bible the rationalists of the Enlightenment were, of course, victorious. More logical and more intellectually honest than the eighteenth-century apologists, the rationalists were on the side of progress. But so far as specific knowledge of the Bible was concerned, they could do no more than pave the way for it; they could tell what the Bible was not; they could not tell what it was.

The situation is illustrated by the most famous of all the eighteenth-century attacks, *The Age of Reason*, by Thomas Paine, written during the stormiest period of the French Revolution when the author was in danger of his life. Paine believed in God, in personal immortality, and much more than most Christians in human brotherhood. But when he found errors in the Bible he considered them to be instances of deliberate falsehood; when he found repetitions, he scented plagiarism; when he found books ascribed to the wrong authors, he talked of forgery; in a word, he treated the Bible as if it were a contemporary eighteenth-century production, and denounced it for what, measured by the customs of his own time, seemed grave moral evils. As against his antagonists who reasoned from the same premises but denied the existence of the errors, repetitions, and wrong ascriptions of authorship, Paine was in the right, although most of his positive conclusions about the Bible itself were wide of the mark.

The *Age of Reason*, with its forceful, if occasionally vulgar, use of irony and wit, was welcomed by the disaffected of Paine's generation, and it continued to enjoy a kind of *succès de scandale* throughout the nineteenth century, giving rise in America to agnostic groups who continued to repeat Paine's arguments long after they were utterly

outmoded. So, in the last quarter of the century, Paine's views, without Paine's sincerity, were echoed in the meretricious rhetoric of Robert Ingersoll. Meanwhile, unknown to both the professional agnostics and their Fundamentalist opponents, there had arisen in Europe a new school of criticism which made all this noisy disputation meaningless.

The effect of the eighteenth-century attacks upon the Bible had been to lead European scholars at last to follow the advice of Hobbes and Spinoza to try to find out how and when and where and why the Bible actually was written. A beginning was made as early as 1751 by a French Roman Catholic physician, Jean Astruc, who proved from the internal evidence that there were at least two separate documents combined in the Pentateuch. In the same year Lowth discovered the system of parallelism in Hebrew poetry and thus began the study of the Bible as literature. But the real father of Higher Criticism was J. G. Eichhorn whose monumental *Einleitung* (1780–83) laid a sure foundation for future scholarship. Eichhorn distinguished between the priestly legislation of Leviticus and the popular legislation of Deuteronomy, showed that parts of the Book of Isaiah could not have been written by that Prophet, and gave a late date to Ecclesiastes, the Song of Solomon, and Daniel. After Eichhorn the fruitfulness of the historical method in the study of the Bible could no longer be intelligently questioned.

The next great landmark in Biblical criticism was furnished by the work of the Dutch scholar De Wette, who in 1806–07 proved the correctness of the guess of Thomas Hobbes that Deuteronomy was the lost book of the law found by Hilkiah in the Temple during the reign of Josiah and further indicated the key position of Deuteronomy as a product of the seventh century. For fifty years, critical debate raged over the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, but in the end the general conclusions of De Wette were vindicated. Through the labors of Reuss, Graf, Kuenen, Wellhausen, and many others on the Continent, supplemented by those of S. R. Driver, T. K. Cheyne, W. Robertson Smith, and others in Great Britain, the various documents of the Pentateuch were disentangled; the traditional order of Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Psalms, Prophets, was replaced by the correct order of Prophets, Deuteronomy, Leviticus, Psalms; Leviticus and Psalms were proved to have been postexilic collections; all the books were at least approximately dated; and a totally

new understanding of the entire character of the Old Testament was gained. Scholarship has no greater triumph to show in any field.

With regard to the New Testament the situation is somewhat different. There, the critical chapter is still unfinished. At the outset for several generations the Higher Criticism of the New Testament lagged behind that of the Old Testament until attention was aroused by the challenging *Leben Jesu* (1835) of David Friedrich Strauss (translated into English by George Eliot). Strauss denied all historical value to the Gospels, tracing their origin to popular mythology and Messianic expectations. Later knowledge concerning oriental religions of the sacrificed god (Osiris, Attis, Adonis), as set forth, for instance, in *The Golden Bough* by Sir James Frazer, has served to revive the "myth theory" of Jesus in recent years. Such able twentieth-century scholars as Loisy and Bultmann accept as genuine only the sayings of Jesus and remain skeptical as to all the recorded details of his life. The extreme myth theory, however, has never gained acceptance among anything like the majority of critical scholars, chiefly because of the difficulty, if not impossibility, of reconciling it with the unquestionable historicity of Paul and the disciples of Jesus whom Paul mentions.

Another once influential position now somewhat discredited was that of Ferdinand Christian Baur, founder of the Tübingen School which flourished at about the middle of the nineteenth century. According to Baur and his followers, the point of departure for New Testament criticism should be found in the conflict between the Judaizing tendencies of the original disciples and the anti-Mosaic teachings of Paul, a conflict finally harmonized in the Gospels and the Acts, which Baur accordingly dated in the second century. That there was a conflict, perpetuated by the Gnostics, is of course evident, but later critics have shown successfully that Baur greatly overemphasized it, and have restored an early date for the three Synoptic Gospels. The second-century date of the Johannine Gospel, on the other hand, is now generally accepted, the most that is claimed by conservative critics being that it contains earlier elements, possibly from the hand of John the disciple. That the Fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse could not possibly have been written by the same author is all but universally admitted.

Much less ultimately important than the work of Strauss or Baur, both of whom originated fruitful lines of investigation even though these did not bear out their own major conclusions, was the enormously popular *Vie de Jésus* (1863) of Ernest Renan, of which three hundred thousand copies were sold in France alone. Renan's later works in the long series, *L'Histoire des origines du Christianisme* (1863–80), and his *L'Histoire du peuple d'Israël* (1888–94) were more valuable. Through the charm of his style, if not through the profundity of his thought, he exercised great influence upon a whole group of French writers among whom Anatole France, at least, was a world figure.

At the close of the nineteenth century it seemed unlikely that any fresh sources of information about the New Testament would ever be forthcoming. Then, most unexpectedly, excavations in Upper Egypt by Flinders Petrie, Grenfell, and Hunt brought to light a mass of Greek papyri which opened up an entirely new line of approach.

The story of these discoveries is a modern romance. Most of the papyri were found in mummies, having been used as part of their wrappings, but the most important collection of all was unearthed at Oxyrhynchus in a rubbish heap long overblown by sand, where Grenfell and Hunt discovered the contents of a Roman record office. The papyri had been taken to the rubbish heap to be burned, but the fire had died out leaving many undamaged, and the sand blowing over them had preserved them for nearly twenty centuries. To this fortuitous good we owe sixteen quarto volumes of Greek texts, which have revolutionized our knowledge of the New Testament. Later findings were equally romantic, one of them consisting in the discovery of a number of mummified crocodiles, apparently useless to the explorers until an irritated workman hit one of the sacred reptiles over the head and the gash revealed that they too were wrapped in papyri covered with precious writings of the Roman era.

Much publicized in the press was the news that the Oxyrhynchus discoveries included a page of "Lost Sayings of Jesus," probably from an Egyptian Gospel. But the importance of the discoveries did not lie in these probably unauthentic Sayings but in the contents of the record office, including letters, contracts, wills, documents of marriage and divorce, and all manner of legal proceedings. These startlingly revealed the fact that the spoken Greek of the New Testament period was very

close to the Greek of the New Testament itself, which hitherto had been usually adjudged to be imperfect literary Greek. The full import of this discovery will be realized when it is said that the style of the New Testament, instead of being like that of the King James version, is much more like that of a well-written modern newspaper.

This had indeed already been suspected by a few clairvoyant scholars, one of whom, Ferrar Fenton, had published a translation of *Paul's Epistles in Modern English* as early as 1883. As soon as their conjectures were verified by the excavations, a number of scholars were quick to respond with modern speech translations. First in the field was a Roman Catholic, Francis A. Spencer, who in 1898 published a translation of the Gospels endorsed by Cardinal Gibbons. A similar translation was brought out the next year by F. S. Ballantine. More ambitious was the *Twentieth Century New Testament* published by a group of twenty scholars, representing various denominations, in 1899–1900. Then came the valuable *Historical New Testament* of Professor James Moffatt in 1901 and the *New Testament in Modern Speech* by Richard Francis Weymouth in 1903. The chief criticism to be brought against all of these experiments is that in spite of their titles they were not modern enough; the translators were haunted by echoes of older versions, which filled their pages with annoying suggestions of familiar rhythms and phrases entirely out of keeping with the new style. Of many later attempts in the same vein—there were more than twenty-five in the first quarter century, chiefly in America—the most successful was *The New Testament: an American Translation* by Professor Edgar J. Goodspeed published in 1923 and republished in 1931 as part of *The Bible: an American Translation*, in which the Old Testament was translated by a group of scholars under the editorship of J. M. Powis Smith. In literal accuracy, this last edition at present holds the foremost place.

At present. But New Testament criticism was never more alive than it is today, and we have learned to expect surprises. New Testament scholarship is still creative because its problems have not yet been fully solved. Many passages in the original Greek still remain so obscure as to be virtually unintelligible, although this would scarcely be guessed from the translations, since the translators, when in doubt, have simply done the best they could without mentioning their difficulties.

Quite recently, Professor Charles Cutler Torrey of Yale has advanced what may possibly prove an epoch-making solution of this textual problem. Having discovered that many of the obscurities can be explained as Greek mistranslations of Aramaic words or phrases, so that the passages become perfectly clear when rendered into their presumable originals, he has followed this clew to its extreme conclusion, namely, that all four Gospels are compilations of lost Aramaic documents. Believing that only by translating the Greek into Aramaic and then translating the Aramaic into English could the true meaning be recovered, he himself carried through this tremendous undertaking, publishing its results in *The Four Gospels: a New Translation* (1933). Obviously, this process of double translation is extremely hazardous, and, unfortunately, its value can be judged only by competent Aramaic scholars of whom there are relatively few. Should Professor Torrey's work be accepted in its entirety, it would bring the original composition of the Gospels close to the time of Jesus and would lend much added weight to the Fourth Gospel. Such good fortune rarely awaits any individual work of scholarship, however, since the achievements of scholarship are directly due to its collective character wherein the conclusions of one are checked and modified by those of his successors. But dramatically, at least, the bold Aramaic theory is a fitting consummation of the long adventure of the spirit that has gone into the making of our New Testament.

The problem of Biblical translation does not seem completely solvable. From the fact that the writers of the New Testament were able to infuse the spirit of a new and thrilling religion into conversational Greek, it by no means follows that this spirit can be recaptured by using twentieth-century conversational English. Modern English is saturated with scientific connotations equally foreign to the Greek of the New Testament and to Elizabethan English; it possesses qualities of force and precision, lacking in the older language, but it is essentially the speech of prose, whereas the prose of the King James version was itself half-poetry. Language forever changes and doubtless a time will come when the King James version will be no longer intelligible. Happily, we are still far from that period. The rhythm and diction and poetic quality of the greatest of all translations as yet remains closer to our hearts than the language of the market which we employ in our daily lives.

No one should any longer dream of consulting the Authorized Version to settle any disputed question of literal meaning. For that we will turn to the modern translations that we already have, or, in due time, to those others still to come. Each such new rendering will be welcomed, some of them with appropriate enthusiasm. But for literary appreciation and enjoyment, and for moral inspiration, we shall still do well to turn to the matchless King James version.

SEVEN. THE BIBLE AND THE STREAM OF LIFE

HEINRICH HEINE, with customary grace, wrote as follows of the Bible:

"The Bible, what a book! Large and wise as the world based on the abysses of creation, and towering aloft into the blue secrets of heaven. Sunrise and sunset, promise and fulfilment, birth and death—the whole drama of humanity—are contained in this one book. It is the Book of Books. The Jews may readily be consoled at the loss of Jerusalem, and the Temple, and Ark of the Covenant, and all the crown jewels of King Solomon. Such forfeiture is as naught when weighed against the Bible, the imperishable treasure that they have saved. If I do not err, it was Mahomet who named the Jews the 'People of the Book,' a name which in Eastern countries has remained theirs to the present day, and is deeply significant. That one book is to the Jews their country. Within the well-fenced boundaries of that book they live and have their being; they enjoy their inalienable citizenship, are strong to admiration; thence none can dislodge them. Absorbed in the perusal of their sacred book, they little heeded the changes that were wrought in the real world around them. Nations rose and vanished, States flourished and decayed, revolutions raged throughout the earth,—but they, the Jews, sat poring over this book, unconscious of the wild chase of time that rushed on above their heads."

The Jews wrote the Bible, and the Bible preserved the Jews. In antiquity it saved them from being absorbed and assimilated in the life of their Babylonian and Persian conquerors, from, losing their language and their laws, as the Briton yielded his to the Saxon and the Saxon his to the Norman. It enabled them to resist the intellectual Greek and the all-powerful Roman. And now, for nearly two thousand years it has kept them alive, even without a nation or a home. Their survival has not been due to any biological peculiarities of the "Jewish race," for ethnology recognizes no such race. The blood of every nation runs in Jewish veins today. But their religion, their laws, and their customs, enshrined in the Bible, have constituted a cultural inheritance outrunning space, outlasting time. That there are Jews in the world today is solely owing to the enduring influence of the Bible in their lives. Their experience is the

supreme example in history of the power of the written word. What all the Greek poets, philosophers, and scientists could not do for Greece, what all the Roman statesmen and legislators could not do for Rome, the Bible has done for the Jews.

This is remarkable enough: but it is little compared with the gifts brought by the Bible to the immensely larger non-Jewish world. The most national of books has proved itself to be the most international, the most local, also the most universal. With the words of Heine quoted above may be bracketed those of two other writers, one an Englishman, the other an American. From Robert Louis Stevenson:

"Written in the East, these characters live forever in the West; written in one province, they pervade the world; penned in rude times, they are prized more and more as civilization advances; product of antiquity, they come home to the business and bosoms of men, women, and children in modern days."

And from Walt Whitman:

"How many ages and generations have brooded and wept and agonized over this book! What un-tellable joys and ecstasies, what support to martyrs at the stake, from it! To what myriads has it been the shore and rock of safety—the refuge from driving tempest and wreck! Translated in all languages, how it has united this diverse world! Of its thousands there is not a verse, not a word, but is thick-studded with human emotion."

Through the Bible, an alien religion became the most cherished possession of peoples infinitely stronger politically and economically than the Jews had ever been. It was more reverenced by the later Greeks than their own Homer, more by the later Romans than their own Virgil. When the Roman Empire perished, the Bible did not perish, because in it every successive wave of the barbarians found the answers to their deepest questions, the food for their most desperate hunger, until in far-distant parts of Europe nations still unborn when the Bible first was written learned from it themselves how to write and built new literatures upon its foundations. Again when later the Church, its guardian, forgot the treasure committed to its care, men sought the Bible out in time of need and deemed life but a little thing to give in its exchange. On its

basis, religion was a second time reformed, to usher in the modern world.

In this modern world three nations above all others have known the Bible best: Germany, Great Britain, and the United States of America. The rhythms of Martin Luther are said to pervade German literature. Of that, one not native to the language can hardly judge. But what American will fail to recognize the varied accents of the Bible, its solemn roll and swell and breaking crests and the movement of its inmost spirit in these passages from English classics—passages to which could not a thousand parallels easily be found?

In the Urn Burial, that meditation upon death of Sir Thomas Browne, most philosophical of all physicians:

"Five languages secured not the epitaph of Gordianus. The man of God lives longer without a tomb than any by one. . . . If in the decretory term of the world we shall not all die, but be changed, according to received translation, the last day will make but few graves; at least quick resurrections will anticipate lasting sepultures: some graves will be opened before they be quite closed, and Lazarus be no wonder, when many that feared to die shall groan that they can die but once. The dismal state is the second and living death, when life puts despair on the damned; when men shall wish the coverings of mountains, not of monuments, and annihilation shall be courted."

In the Jerusalem, half verse, half-rhythmic prose, of William Blake who saw the foot of Calvary between South Molton Street and Stratford Place, and took oath to build Jerusalem where England's dark Satanic mills obscured the sun:

The City of the Woods in the Forest of Ephratah is taken!
London is a stone of her ruins, Oxford is the dust of her walls,
Sussex and Kent are her scatter'd garments, Ireland her holy place,
And the murder'd bodies of her little ones are Scotland and Wales.
The Cities of the Nations are the smoke of her consummation,
The Nations are her dust, ground by the chariot wheels
Of her lordly conquerors, her palaces levell'd with the dust.
I come that I may find a way for my banished ones to return.
Fear not, O little Flock, I come. Albion shall rise again.

In the peroration of De Quincey's *Joan of Arc* when he summons to ironic trial Joan's accuser and judge, the bishop of Beauvais:

"My lord, have you no counsel? 'Counsel I have none; in heaven above, or on earth beneath, counselor there is none now that would take a brief from me: all are silent.' Is it, indeed, come to this? Alas! the time is short, the tumult is wondrous, the crowd stretches away into infinity; but yet I will search in it for somebody to take your brief; I know of somebody that will be your counsel. Who is this that cometh from Domrémy? Who is she in bloody coronation robes from Rheims? Who is she that cometh with blackened flesh from walking the furnaces of Rouen? This is she, the shepherd girl, counselor that had none for herself, whom I choose, bishop, for yours. She it is, I engage, that shall take my lord's brief. She it is, bishop, that would plead for you; yes, bishop, she—when heaven and earth are silent."

In Carlyle's passionate outcry against the aristocracy, his passionate eulogy of labor, toward the end of *Past and Present:*

"Gamepreserving aristocracies, let them 'bush' never so effectually, cannot escape the Subtle Fowler. Game seasons will be excellent, and again will be indifferent, and by and by they will not be at all. The Last Partridge of England, of an England where millions of men can get no corn to eat, will be shot and ended. Aristocracies with beards on their chins will find other work to do than amuse themselves with trundling-hoops.

"But it is to you, ye Workers, who do already work, and are as grown men, noble and honorable in a sort, that the whole world calls for new work and nobleness. Subdue mutiny, discord, widespread despair, by manfulness, justice, mercy and wisdom. Chaos is dark, deep as Hell; let light be, and there is instead a green flowery world. . . .

"Unstained by wasteful deformities, by wasted tears or heart's-blood of men, or any defacement of the Pit, noble fruitful Labor, growing ever nobler, will come forth,—the grand sole miracle of Man; whereby Man has risen from the low places of this Earth, very literally, into divine Heavens. Ploughers, Spinners, Builders; Prophets, Poets, Kings; Brindleys and Goethes, Odins and Arkwrights; all martyrs, and noble

men, and gods are of one grand Host; immeasurable; marching ever forward since the beginnings of the World."

In the social idealism of Carlyle's disciple, Ruskin, at the conclusion of his bitter-sweet lecture, Traffic:

"Solomon made gold, not only to be in his own palace as stones, but to be in Jerusalem as stones. But even so, for the most part, these splendid kingdoms expire in ruin, and only the true kinghoods live, which are of royal laborers governing loyal laborers; who, both leading rough lives, establish the true dynasties. Conclusively you will find that because you are king of a nation, it does not follow that you are to gather for yourself all the wealth of that nation; neither, because you are king of a small part of the nation, and lord over the means of its maintenance—over field, or mill, or mine,—are you to take all the produce of that piece of the foundation of national existence for yourself. . . .

"But if you can fix some conception of a true human state of life to be striven for—life good for all men as for yourselves—if you can determine some honest and simple order of existence; following those trodden ways of wisdom, which are pleasantness, and seeking her quiet and withdrawn paths which are peace;—then, and so sanctifying wealth into 'commonwealth,' all your art, your literature, your daily labors, your domestic affection, and citizen's duty, will join and increase into one magnificent harmony. You will know then how to build, well enough; you will build with stone well, but with flesh better; temples not made of hands but riveted of hearts; and that kind of marble, crimson-veined, is indeed eternal."

It is a far cry from such language to the stammering doggerel of the first work printed in America, the Bay *Psalm Book* of 1640. And yet, if we bear in mind the special conditions of their task, it may be said that Richard Mather and the other editors wrought in the spirit of the great translators. It was neither perversity nor literary deafness that led them to so transmogrify the work of Coverdale; they knew the Psalms well and loved them, knew them so well indeed that they knew they were written to be sung, and on the barren coast of New England were determined to raise the ancient paeans of praise as valid there after all the centuries as they had been in Palestine. But they were limited in their resources; they had only short-meter tunes; it was necessary to cut the pattern of their

verse to suit the music. They knew they were not writing poetry and confessed as much in their preface. They were simply endeavoring to incorporate a portion of the Bible in the daily life of the people, and this they accomplished.

Nowhere was there a more strenuous effort to take the Bible as the standard of conduct than in New England. The laws of Massachusetts Bay constantly quoted Biblical sources as authority. When in 1639 the colony of New Haven was founded and all its freemen were assembled to decide the form of civil rule, John Davenport arose and put the question whether the Scriptures "do hold forth a perfect rule for the direction and government of men in all duties," and the answer was a unanimous affirmative.

Unfortunately, but inevitably, men living under primitive conditions tended to stress the primitive parts of the Bible. The harshest sections of the so-called Mosaic law were reinforced by the dark theology of Calvin with its doctrines of predestination, total depravity, and the joy of the elect in the damnation of sinners. Particularly in Massachusetts, the Puritan magistrates and clergy early yielded to a lust for power and left behind them a black record of judicial crimes. Their devotion to the Bible, however earnest, was never pure but from the beginning was sullied by personal and class ambition.

Much deeper and more fundamentally sincere was the Biblical devotion of their victims. To Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson the Bible brought a message of spiritual freedom; where the masters of Massachusetts Bay searched the Scriptures for texts to sanction persecution, the Baptists and Quakers, reading more profoundly, found in them sustenance for their own democratic and humanitarian aspirations. Rhode Island and Pennsylvania counterbalanced Massachusetts and Connecticut, and in the long run Puritanism was conquered, though not without bequeathing an evil legacy in the form of a tradition of censorship and suppression with which American liberalism has had to battle ever since.

But on one point conservatives and liberals were from the first agreed: the importance of religious education. In 1649 the General Court of Massachusetts took measures for the establishment of schools throughout the colony and gave the reason for this legislation: "It being

the chief project of that old deluder Satan to keep men from the knowledge of the Scriptures, as in former times by keeping them in an unknown tongue, so in these latter times by persuading from the use of tongues, that so at least the true sense and meaning of the original might be clouded by false guesses of saint-seeming deceivers; that all learning may not be buried in the grave of our fathers in the church and commonwealth, therefor be it ordered. . . ."

Biblical learning never lapsed in Massachusetts. Cotton Mather, grandson of the editor of the *Bay Psalm Book*, also translated the Psalms in his *Psalterium Americanum* and spent fifteen years in preparing a huge commentary on the Bible in six folio volumes, to be called *Biblia Americana*, which, unfortunately, was never published. His son, the less massive Samuel Mather, made an original translation of the Lord's Prayer from the Greek, the first instance in America of such direct translation. But the most interesting of these colonial ventures in scholarship, and also one of the earliest, was the Bible for the Indians brought out in 1661–63 by John Eliot, one of the coeditors of the *Bay Psalm Book*.

Eliot learned the Algonquin dialect soon after coming to America and had lived and taught among the Indians for twenty years before venturing upon his translation. He was probably the most successful of all missionaries in that field, winning eleven thousand converts, training more than twenty native teachers, establishing fourteen Indian schools, and organizing twenty-four Indian congregations. He wrote several interesting accounts of his labors, in which he told of the embarrassing questions sometimes asked by his converts, such as:

"Why does not God, who has full power, kill ye devil that makes men so bad?

"Whether there might not be something, if only a little, gained by praying to ye devil?"

In spite of his familiarity with the native dialect, Eliot found the task of translation extremely difficult, since he had first to transpose the spoken tongue into its written equivalent, thus, as it were, creating *ad hoc* a written language. Even with the assistance of an Indian interpreter, he occasionally fell into blunders as when the parable of the ten virgins

became that of "the ten pure young men" because the Indians regarded chastity as a masculine virtue and had no word for it of feminine gender.

Twelve years after Eliot completed his translation, King Philip's War broke out and scattered his congregations to the winds. Gradually all knowledge of the dialect in which he wrote was lost until, it is said, no man living today could retranslate his translation into English. The final failure of his great missionary enterprise symbolized the melancholy fate that lay in readiness for future undertakings of the same character.

The final failure of Eliot's great missionary enterprise was but a new chapter in an old story. The Roman Catholics were already cruelly familiar with it. For two centuries Franciscans and Jesuits labored with the utmost heroism and devotion to Christianize the Indians; more than a hundred priests suffered martyrdom for the cause; the noble names of Marquette, Lamy, De Smet, and Serra still shine like beacon-lights across that stormy period of treacheries, massacres, and scalpings wherein the whites were quick to adopt the most savage customs of the natives and, indeed, often bettered their instructions. If the Indians were, as a whole, exterminated instead of being absorbed as a constituent part of the community the fault was not with the missionaries, Catholic or Protestant, but with the land-grabbers, shyster traders, and gold hunters responsible for that long exploitation of the natives eloquently and indignantly described in Helen Hunt Jackson's *A Century of Dishonor* (1881). In truth, the Americans had to Christianize themselves before they could well Christianize the Indians.

American life developed on the edge of the wilderness; if men penetrated too far into its fastnesses, they soon relapsed into barbarism. That they did not do so more completely, that in the long run it was not the wilderness that conquered men but men the wilderness, was largely owing to the influence of the Bible. As in the medieval period, religion was the mother of education. Harvard, Yale, and Princeton, all founded for the training of clergymen, were followed by hundreds of other religious colleges that bore the brunt of the struggle against ignorance all through the pioneer days and carried the values of civilization ever westward.

Once more, as in medievalism, literature arose out of religion. The Unitarian movement at the end of the eighteenth century and in the

early part of the nineteenth was the direct precursor of the literary efflorescence of the eighteen-forties and fifties. The great achievements in literature of those decades were proportionate to the moral aims. The co-operative movements and Utopian societies of the time were no accident. Religion, blessedly freed from dogma; a morality that had outgrown the limitations of Puritanism and looked forward to the creation of positive goods instead of stressing the eternal conflict with the Evil One; and a literature inspired by the new spirit and conscious of its own civilizing function: all these worked together to a common end. Of the creative personalities in that period an amazing number were clergymen who became writers, writers who became clergymen, or men who were both clergymen and writers all the time: the Unitarian ministers, William Ellery Channing, Theodore Parker, and James Freeman Clarke; the Universalist, Adin Ballou, the founder of Hopedale; George Ripley, the founder of Brook Farm; Emerson himself; Orestes Brownson, who tried nearly every form of Protestantism and at last found a permanent haven in the Roman Catholic Church where he became internationally known; these and many another.

One might continue almost indefinitely with the story of Biblical influence, direct and indirect, on American life. An excellent work, *The Bible in America* (1936), by the Reverend P. Marion Simms, is devoted to the literal influence alone, telling of the various Bibles used in different localities, of the scores of American translations, and of the gigantic missionary efforts of the American Bible Society. And this is only the smallest part of the story, for there remains the history of the great competing Protestant denominations who have flourished in America—the Quakers, the Congregationalists, the Presbyterians, the Episcopalians, the Unitarians, the Baptists, the Methodists, and the Disciples, each based upon a slightly different interpretation of the Bible, and each deserving a volume to itself, with at least one other separate volume for the treatment of American Catholicism, another for Mormonism—a heretical form of Christianity—and several for the almost innumerable minor sects from the Ephrata Community to the Buchmanites—all testifying, in one form or another, to the diversity and independence of American religious thought, yet almost all, in the last analysis, loyal to the fundamental American ideal that religion should function as a moral force in the daily works of man.

And yet it would be treason to the highest spirit of the Bible to end its story in this vein of easy optimism. In the Book of Job, Satan appears as the Accusing Angel in the very courts of heaven. It is as necessary now as then to listen to the worst that can be said, particularly when it is being said on every hand today. That plausible worst runs about as follows:

"Christianity has been anything but the religion of peace and human brotherhood that it pretends to be. Jesus may have preached tolerance, but Christianity has always been the most intolerant of religions. Were not the Catholic Crusades against the Moslems immediately followed by the Catholic Crusade against the Albigensian Catholics? Were the Protestants more than barely safe from the rack and thumbscrew of the Inquisition before they set their wits to devise torments for other Protestants? Even in a new country the terrors of the wilderness and hostile Indians could not unite them, as the persecuted Baptists and Quakers with their slit noses and cropped ears could well report. The wilderness was kinder to Roger Williams than were his devout fellow Protestants of Boston, and the Indians were less clever in devising tortures than were the magistrates of Massachusetts Bay.

"It took only the pitifully feeble Negro insurrection of Nat Turner to scare the Southern clergy into forgetting their Christianity and to send them hurrying pell-mell to the defense of slavery with the marvelous discovery that Abraham too had been a slaveholder. And it is but twenty years since, in the words of a noted Presbyterian clergyman, 'The Church threw itself into the World War and made itself, next to the daily press, the most powerful agency in repeating the lying propaganda that fed the flames of hatred.' Today in Germany Hitler treads down Luther with a fabricated Nazi Gospel of Saint John made up of passages carefully mistranslated to countenance a persecution of the Jews worse than the Middle Ages ever saw. Admit that man is a bloodthirsty beast, and that the quicker this human carnivore destroys himself the better."

Many bitter truths, which yet do not sum up to one single truth. History, indeed, and never more so than today, often seems a nightmare in which one may easily go mad. The outlook for the future never seemed so bright as at the end of the nineteenth century, rarely has it seemed darker than now. Western civilization may well be on the eve of self-

destruction through wars and revolutions. Still one knows what one knows, and time is not yet done.

It is no news that the Bible has often been turned to most unworthy uses. Men have found in it what they wanted to find. A living book will always take on some of the characteristics of its readers. Noble books will be chosen by the noble-minded, base books by the base, but the base will also lay their hands upon the noble books and turn them to dishonor. Worse still, nobility itself is never pure: no book, no man but shares the imperfections of humanity. All this is granted.

Yet it is no great task to refute the specific charges against the Bible. Why remember the religious persecutors and not the religious persecuted? Were not the Christian martyrs closer to the spirit of Jesus than the hairsplitting theologians of a later time? Joan of Arc was as real as the bishop of Beauvais, Tyndale as real as his judges, Roger Williams as real as the magistrates of Boston, and it is these persecuted ones whom humanity has chosen to honor and in whom one recognizes the compeers of the writers of the Bible. Strange choice for a "bloodthirsty beast" to make!

If the Church's assumption of omniscience led it to oppose, jealously and benightedly, the development of modern science, that assumption was the Church's, not the Bible's—and even so, it is but fair to remember that the Church first created the schools, thus making that development possible. The list of specific humanitarian efforts directly traceable in whole or part to the Bible is a long one: the care for the poor and the sick, the wounded and the dying, the institution of hospitals, almshouses, poorhouses, the building of libraries, the long struggle against usury, the dignifying of the family relationship, the improvement in the lot of women. If the slaveowners of the South were able to derive comfort from the example of Abraham, the slaves themselves derived far more consolation, often almost their only consolation, from the one book which offered them any hope, creating out of it those Negro spirituals, glowing and pathetic, the most significant example of folk literature in modern times. And it is hardly a mere coincidence that the Anti-Slavery movement itself originated with the Quakers, of all sects the one most vitally influenced by the Bible. Social reforms of more recent date that owed their inception to Biblical influence, however secularized they may

have since become, include the advances in nursing and in the more humane treatment of the insane, the newer methods in penology, the so-called emancipation of women, and the demand for factory and wage legislation.

But beyond all this lies a much larger issue. The modern world has largely put its trust in science, the best of tools and the poorest of masters. For science tells only of what is and of what can be made, disclaiming all interest in what ought to be and in what ought to be made. Unguided by rational ends, science may easily be harmful instead of helpful. And contemporary society has already become adept in using scientific means for evil ends. It has developed the terrible science of modern warfare. It has originated a new science of propaganda or an art of propaganda based on scientific methods—the science or the art of deliberate distortion of the truth. And before our eyes there has grown up in Europe a science or scientific art of miseducation wherein all the resources of psychological conditioning are utilized to prevent individual development and to make the victims contented slaves of whatever happens to be the government in power. Meanwhile the progressive groups in society have been fatally weakened by confusion in their own ranks, owing to the same neglect of values. One hears today much talk of "the class struggle" and of "the seizure of power," as if a mere class struggle, unless some moral issue is involved, were of any more significance than a conflict between red and black ants, or as if a seizure of power mattered when none are fit to wield the power. Let men fight for justice, justly, and they will have some inner strength. But instead, the old and hateful fallacy of the end's justifying any means has reappeared, complicated by the new fallacy of a supposedly irreconcilable opposition between "individualism" and "collectivism" so that one or the other must take all. This general breakdown of thought and not any natural bloodthirstiness of the human animal constitutes the peril of the hour.

What says the Bible to all this? It deals with Man the Valuer, and it is unwavering in its assertion of both individual and social values as inextricably one. The society it knows is a society made up of individuals, each with his own separate mind and conscience and incommunicable experiences, but each finding his fulfillment, none the less, in joyous association with his fellows and in subordinating the personal to the

common good. Or one may put the same message in the now tarnished terms of democratic idealism which need only to be seen in their true essence with the rhetorical rust removed in order to appear as inspiring as ever: liberty—that integrity of the individual mind proclaimed by Job; and equality—the fact that beneath all differences men are fundamentally alike in their ultimate needs and natures with equal claim upon whatever goods they can turn to account—the teaching of Jesus and the Prophets.

The true goods are noncompetitive and self-validating: physical health, creative labor, love and friendship and companionship, intellectual honesty, wisdom, and justice; to know these is in itself to value them. Here one must take his stand, not to be shouted down by the power lusts of all the political parties in the world.

Beyond the present bank and shoal of time where the stream of life seems caught in momentary swirls and eddies, it is reasonable to suppose that there still lie many happy valleys into which its course will flow. After periods of madness come periods of sanity. How much of what now exists must quickly perish no one can foresee; but of one thing we may be sure: if only shards and broken pieces of our civilization should remain, among them would still be found the Bible, whole and uninjured. The book that outlived the Roman Empire will outlive any destruction that impends. No nation has so assured a future, as none has had so great a past. And when in the far distant future humanity itself shall perish, it may well be that it will leave behind it no monument any nobler than the Bible.