

CHAPTER III.

PATRIOTISM IN THE OLD
TESTAMENT

“We do wrong to the Old Testament if we deny that it comes from the same just and good God as the New. On the other hand, we do wrong to the New Testament if we put the Old on a level with it.”—AUGUSTINE.

“It is to be observed that at many epochs in the world nationalism is the truest universalism. There may be a catholicism which is merely sectarian, and an alliance of a whole continent which is only a tyrannical compact of its kings, and a fellowship of art or science which is no more than a bond of selfish and disdainful refinement; and none of these have the true spirit of universalism such as is exhibited by the feeling of brotherhood within a single nation, drawing its various classes into one, and harmonising all its public and private life. The true and universal religion, says Kuenen, must be born of the nation, but rise above it. And this condition the religion of Israel fulfilled.”—FREMANTLE.

CHAPTER III.

WE enter with this chapter upon the most critical stage of our inquiry. We have sought on previous pages to disentangle the various threads of which the cord of patriotic instinct is woven, and to form some provisional estimate of their ethical worth. It has not appeared, so far, that any of the three elements comprising the instinct—intellectual, emotional, or dynamic—need be regarded as under the ban of religion, or necessarily repugnant to an enlightened conscience. There has seemed a possibility, even a probability, that the ties of patriotism are of God's own weaving, and that the sentiment itself may be an instrument of human good.

But Christianity is a revealed religion, and demands that in this matter as in others, we betake ourselves "to the law and to the testimony." As a matter of fact, patriotism has been indicted before the court of conscience on several counts—that it is rooted in pride, has been the most frequent cause of wars, is not taught by our Lord, finds no place in creed, catechism, or con-

fession, and is inconsistent with the universal love of our neighbour. These charges are seriously made, and formidably supported. They can only be refuted, if refuted they are to be, as the result of some candid investigation into the teaching of the Christian Scriptures. It is in the Scriptures that we learn, under supreme authority, what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man. We turn, therefore, in this chapter to the teaching of the Old Testament, that we may discover what it has to say to us on this important theme.

It is necessary, however, as we enter on this inquiry, to admit and emphasise the fact that not even the most thorough study of the Old Testament can yield a verdict on the validity of patriotism that shall be final for the Christian conscience. The maxim of St Augustine must here be well borne in mind: "We do wrong to the Old Testament if we deny that it comes from the same just and good God as the New; on the other hand, we do wrong to the New Testament if we put the Old on a level with it." The decisive documents of the Christian faith are found, not in the Old Testament, but in the New; and the difference of attitude on this subject between the earlier and the later revelation is very startling, and will bring us later on to the crux of the whole inquiry. Vast mischief has admittedly been done

in the past by the attempt to carry over into our Christian era the principles of the older dispensation without due consideration of the radical revision given to them by Jesus Christ. The story of such world-miseries as slavery, witch-hunting, and war furnishes abundant warning of the discredit brought upon Christianity by the attempt of those who could find no justification for a certain course of conduct in the teaching of our Lord and His apostles, to fall back upon the older code as of equal or co-ordinate authority. The story of national sentiment itself resounds with the same admonition. Nevertheless the teaching of the Old Testament on the subject of patriotism is of great importance, and of permanent interest. The general scope of it is well indicated in the tribute paid by St Paul to these older Scriptures, that they are "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." In harmony with this description, the Old Testament yields us a "doctrine" of patriotism, which discloses to us the only basis on which it can be solidly built. It offers us ample material for the "reproof" of a greedy patriotism, and the "correction" of a giddy one. And above all, it presents us with the record of a steady "instruction in righteousness," which has for its purpose the discipline of a nation to be the organ of the divine will, so that even when that purpose turns out in

some measure to be disappointed, the indestructible principles remain for future reference. It should also be added that in the Old Testament we discover the historic background, against which the life and teaching of our Lord stand out, so that we recognise many convictions which He could take for granted in His ministry, and are thus withheld from building rashly on the argument from silence. The Old Testament does not hold its place in the canon simply as a dark foil for the glories of the New. It was in speaking of the Old Testament that our Lord said He came not to destroy but to fulfil. We are bound to give its teaching a prominent place in our thoughts, even in matters where it cannot speak the final word. Especially shall we find it of peculiar value in setting forth religion as a matter of public and national concern.

I.

The first general statement to be made upon the view of patriotism given us in the Old Testament is that it is nearly impossible to exaggerate the extreme intimacy of the connection discoverable in this ancient literature between the two things we are studying in these pages—love of country and love of God. From one point of view,

the Old Testament may be described as the Devout Patriot's Handbook. Patriotism was to the Jew inseparable from religion ; all that was most holy, most fair, most pure in his religion was mirrored in the patriotism which was its visible counterpart. The wings of patriotism can bear it to no loftier height than it reached in Jewish history. The reason for this lies on the surface of the record. The story of the Old Testament is the story of a "chosen nation." All that the Jew believed about God was summarily reflected in the assurance that He "had showed His word unto Jacob, His statutes and His judgments to Israel." It would be as impossible to tear love of country from the religion of the Old Testament as to tear the figure of a cross from a Gothic cathedral ; and for a similar reason. Even if, in the latter case, wanton hands should pluck the cross from the towers, snatch it from the altars, shatter it in the windows, deface it from the carving—even were the building levelled with the ground—still the whole structure is built on the figure of a cross as its ground-plan ; and to the final stage of ruin the symbolism would abide. Similarly, when we turn to the Old Testament, we find the record shaped after a distinct ground-plan, and that plan the call and equipment of one particular nation for peculiar service. Historical books point to the origin of the people, and display its instruction and discipline at the

hands of Jehovah. Law-books preserve the national code. A psalter mingles patriotic with personal songs. Finally, the unique institution of prophecy, confessedly unparalleled in any other race, draws together the intellectual, emotional, and vital threads in patriotism, and weaves them into a religious unity, unknown before or since.

And yet it is to be observed, with no less emphasis, that the same book, which thus embodies and displays the spirit of patriotic exaltation, contains material for the discipline and correction of extravagant nationalism as no other record of a people's history has ever done. Love of country is never offered in the Old Testament as a substitute for love of God. Patriotism may never usurp God's throne. When we read in a recent study of Japan that patriotism and religion are one thing in that country, so that the religion is just the summed-up expression of the patriotism, "not to be divided from it but by death, the death of both," we are reading a statement that could find no warrant in a survey of Old Testament teaching. At the very outset of the story, the *purpose* of the call of Israel is clearly defined, and it is a purpose stretching far beyond the selfish good of the people themselves. The Divine dealings of later days are directed quite as much to the discipline and correction of the Chosen People as to their prosperity, and the frankness with which this is admitted is

one of the unique features of the story. The Hebrews were great, it has been justly said, because they were never entirely, or for more than a season, without their protesting voices. Always some men were raised up who would not be satisfied with any achievement. "It is this which marks them as a people of God—their inability to be satisfied with anything they have attained as final, or the best that God can do for them." Thus in reading the Old Testament, the devout reader hears the voice, "Come up hither," and becomes conscious that God has His own point of view, which the attentive scholar is imperatively called to share.

A picture-parable from the Old Testament itself may summarise in a general way the trend of its teaching on the relationship between patriotism and God. When Joshua, having crossed the Jordan, was looking forward to the conquest of the Promised Land, and contemplating the manifold difficulties of his task, he went forth one night to ponder and to pray. In this hour, when hopes trembled into fears, he saw a vision—"there stood a man over against him with a sword drawn in his hand." The stranger was manifestly divine; and Joshua put the momentous question, "Art Thou for us or for our adversaries?" But the answer was other than he looked for. "*Nay, but as Captain of the Host of the Lord am I now come.*"

That is to say, the Representative of high heaven had appeared as no partisan. He was there as the Leader of the Hosts of God, to support the righteous nation that did God's will. He had come, not to be enlisted, but to enlist others. No eager patriot might dare to hail him as an "unconditional ally," as a modern monarch dared to hail God.¹ Many a calamity of the Jewish people would have been averted in later days if this early parable had laid stronger grip upon their imagination. But it is at least to the abiding honour of the older dispensation that this principle appears thus distinctly, and thus early in the record.

II.

Passing to a more detailed examination of Old Testament teaching upon patriotism, we naturally open the volume at the Book of Genesis, bent on discovering whether this Book of "Beginnings" offers us any assured beginning for a coherent theory of love of country. And at once, within the compass of the first few pages, we are struck

¹ The exact words of the Kaiser should be kept on record. He is reported to have said in an imperial proclamation: "The year 1917, with its great battles, has proved that the German people has in the Lord of Creation above an unconditional and avowed ally, on whom it can absolutely rely. Without Him all would have been in vain. We are no longer alone."

by the emergence of two facts, which have an obvious bearing upon the subject in view. One is, that God is represented as the Creator of all mankind, without distinction of race or colour. The other is, that Divine sanction seems to be claimed also for the later separation of mankind into distinct peoples, and even (after however obscure a fashion) for the diversity of human tongues. In other words, we can disentangle two opposite and yet related principles from the first few chapters of Genesis, and these turn out to be manifestly basal principles in relation to our subject. The first is that of the unity of man, brought to light in the Creation story—that God (as St Paul expressed it later) “has made of one blood all nations of men.” This is a restrictive principle, so far as love of country is concerned. For it means that all men alike are to be honoured in virtue of a fundamental equality of origin; and that Seneca was right when he said for the Stoics, “*homo sacra res homini.*” What is common to man is more fundamental than what is peculiar to men; and, important as we may consider racial distinctness to be, racial unity is more important still. Nevertheless, a second principle comes clearly to light in the immediate development of the history—that in the eyes of the writer of Genesis mankind has been divided into separate nations, not casually nor wantonly, but after the determinate counsel

and foreknowledge of God. We must complete the quotation from St Paul: "God hath made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined their appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation." This is the constructive principle of patriotism, as the first was a restrictive one. Not by accident or mishap have racial diversity and separateness of national life come to pass. The variety of men has place and function in the purposes of God no less assured than those of the unity of man. These—according to the early teaching of Genesis—are the twin principles governing our subject. If we compare the waves of patriotic feeling covering the earth to the waters of a great sea, then in the light of the second principle we say, "the sea is God's, and He made it"; in the light of the first we say, "hitherto shalt thou come and no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." We must now expand these principles more fully, and trace their subsequent development in the Old Testament.

i.

The first principle—that all men are to be honoured as the offspring of God, independently of clime or colour—is the primary one of the two. Not only is it clearly taught in the statement that

God created man in His own image, but it is implied with little less clearness in the first sentence of that very ethnographical survey which delimits the territories of the various nations. In the tenth chapter of Genesis we have a survey of the world of the writer's day. It is therein assumed, as has already been hinted, that variety of racial life is to be accepted as part of the Divine purpose for the world. But the first sentence of the far-flung survey is, "These are the generations of the sons of Noah." Now a statement tracing to a single family the joint origin of mankind, and displaying the human race as grafted to a common stock of life, so that one common sap ran in all veins, had in its own day the merit of originality, and is far from devoid of arresting power at the present moment. The universal belief of the ancients was that the various races of men were divided from one another by an entirely impassable abyss. When the Hebrew revelation denied this and asserted universal blood-relationship, that revelation made history, as well as recorded it. It offered a basis for the historic assertion of the American Declaration of Independence that "all men are created equal"—afterwards the battle-cry of Lincoln's anti-slavery campaign. It warranted the fuller statement of a living scholar, expressed in modern terms: "The first and most fundamental Christian principle of society is the principle of

the likeness or equality of human nature; the conception of the equal value of human nature in the sight of God; and the conception of the universal capacity of human nature for the highest life."—(Dr A. J. Carlyle.)

Accordingly, we are impressed thus early in our study by a sense of the balance and sanity of the view of patriotism derivable from the primitive teaching of the Old Testament. The patriot whose mind is in subjection to the teaching of the Hebrew Scriptures will keep steadfastly before him that, however dear to himself his native land may be, men of all lands trace their parentage to a common Father, so that no man or community of men dare regard fellow-mortals as of baser clay.

“Our country claims our fealty, we grant it so—but then,
Before man made us citizens, great Nature made us men.”

When the Greeks of olden time beheld in themselves a higher race, and in foreign peoples only “barbarians”; when the question was raised in later Jewish speculation as to how many Gentile souls were equivalent in God’s sight to that of one Jew; when Brahmans claim to be sprung from the mouth of Brahma while lower castes spring from his foot; when our forefathers argued for slavery on the ground of a chasm of earthly destiny as between black men and white; when Friedrich Lange in his ‘*Deutsche Religion*’ said,

“the German people is the elect of God, and its enemies are the enemies of the Lord”; or when Englishmen of the present hour speak contemptuously of “lesser breeds,” or call an educated Indian a “nigger”—then the Magna Charta of human fellowship has been torn up, and sooner or later the trespass against Society will be avenged. Vengeance often comes, as a matter of fact, through the tragic proof that the spirit of disdain, thus fostered as between races, cannot eventually be held in check as between members of the same race. The man who says “nigger” in India says “scum” in London or “cad” in Edinburgh. “This religion is highly improper,” said a peeress of the eighteenth century, animadverting upon Methodism: “it teaches the wretches to crawl above their sphere.” Not without divine prompting, St Paul implies, did even the heathen poet say, “we also are His offspring.” And not without similar prompting, we may assume, did the later Latin poet win the plaudits of his audience with the words, “I am a man; nothing human is alien to me.”

ii.

But we now turn to emphasise the second important principle which underlies the early teaching of the Book of Genesis, and from that starting-point extends its pervasive influence throughout

the Old Testament. This principle is that of the divine recognition of racial diversity. It is clearly implied in the world survey of Genesis x. that the sons of Noah, sprung as they were from a common stock, scattered over the world under God's cognisance, and manifested different characteristics in accordance with His purpose. Howsoever we may interpret the story of the Tower of Babel, at all events it points to divine counsel and foreknowledge even in the matter of diversity of human language, and offers little forecast of a cosmopolitan world, where the babies all learn Esperanto. When we consider how each nation among the races of men has expressed in a tongue of its own what has been noble and beautiful in national character; when we reflect how no one of the richer languages of humanity can be perfectly translated into another; and when we remember the treasures of racial genius embodied in such languages as Greek, Latin, French, German, English, we shall be content rather to emphasise the providential origin of the diversity of Genesis xi., than to dwell upon its secondary character as a punishment. In the Pentecostal miracle, according to St Luke, each country was addressed in its own tongue.

It is furthermore to be observed that the conception pervades the Old Testament of a profound concern on the part of Jehovah with national

life in all lands, so that Gentile nations as well as the Jews share in a divine vocation. It might even be urged that the peculiar call to the Jewish people given through Abraham is only a "special case" of the call to *all* nations, implied in the survey of Genesis x. Just as the Creation story, it might be held, discovers the bed-rock upon which are broad-based the later developments of Providence and Redemption, so the record of the providential separation of all nations by their Creator in the earlier story is the necessary presupposition of the more special separation of one peculiar people to be, after a more exclusive fashion, the channel of the divine purpose. Let us listen to the prophet Amos, as he rebukes the false nationalism which would recognise no other as akin to it: "Are ye not as children of the Ethiopians unto me, O children of Israel? saith the Lord. Have not I brought up Israel out of Egypt, *and* the Philistines from Caphtor, *and* the Syrians from Kir?" (Amos ix. 7). Isaiah looks forward to the day when Israel shall be a third with Egypt and with Assyria, and when the blessing of the Lord shall be spoken in this form: "Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance" (Isa. xix. 25). It is of Cyrus, a heathen king, that the voice from the Unseen asserts, "I have girded thee, though thou hast not known me." The

prophets frequently speak of Gentile nations as instruments in God's hand, even if at times only for chastisement: "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will send and take Nebuchadnezzar *my servant*, and will set his throne upon these stones that I have hid, and he shall spread his royal pavilion over them" (Jer. xliii. 10). A Talmudic legend carries this idea so far as to assert that the Law was offered first to the other nations, but only Israel accepted the yoke. And in Deut. xxxii. 8, 9, there is a notable rendering in the Septuagint: "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, . . . He set the bounds of the heathen according to the number of the angels of God, but He Himself took up His abode in Israel." That is to say, while God Himself took up His abode in Israel, over the heathen He placed His angels. Heathenism was not left without the ministry of divine operation—to each separate nation, its separate angel-minister.

Thus it would appear that, according to the Old Testament, there are two focuses and not merely one which determine the just orbit of national relationships. At the one focus there stands the conception of unity of origin, at the other there stands the correlative conception of ordained diversity of race. The maxim of Aristotle, that man is born to be a citizen, seems to have Old Testament support. Martensen's fuller statement

does not appear to go beyond the facts: "As nationality is the natural basis of the State, so it is also the condition of all human development. Even the Spirit of God, as Pentecost further testifies, would address men of every nation in their own mother-tongue. Hence his nationality is an indispensable possession for each individual." Chesterton's characteristic dictum may supply a modern statement of the principle involved: "I want to love my neighbour, not because he is I, but precisely because he is not I. Love desires response, therefore love desires division. If souls are separate, love is possible."

III.

We shall now proceed to inquire what are the characteristic features of the patriotism manifest in the Old Testament, and controlled in its development by the twofold conviction we have described. It will be found convenient to speak of these features under three heads, corresponding to the analysis of the first chapter, and to consider the basis in *intelligence*, the expression in *emotion*, and the embodiment in *action*.

i.

The first point to be made is that the patriotism depicted in the Old Testament is rooted in intelligence. It is more than a feeling or an enthusiasm. The Jewish patriot could give a reason for the faith that was in him; he held the most coherent philosophy of history the world has ever known. If he believed that no nation upon earth was like Israel, he believed it upon a quite intelligible ground. The ground was that God had set Israel apart as His Chosen People. The supreme Power in the universe had allied this particular nation with Itself for wise and holy ends, and these ends do not conflict, as it turns out, with the diverse vocation of other peoples. Thus to the Jew his nationality was a sacred thing, and patriotism was a sacred duty. Patriotism, indeed, was simply the grateful recognition on earth of a vocation decreed in heaven. It is, of course, in no way surprising that this claim of the Jews to be a Chosen People lent itself at times to the distortion of arrogance, and tended to make the race unpopular. Just as the claim of an individual to be one of the "elect" has often proved offensive to his neighbours, so the claim of the Jews to be an elect nation has been apt to provoke other peoples to wrath or scorn. "Sinai," as the rabbis said, "has brought forth Sinah (hatred)." The

hatred of the Jews in Germany ("Judenhetze") may spring from the conviction that there cannot be *two* Chosen Peoples!

Nevertheless, two things must be said in support of the Old Testament conception of a Chosen People. One is, that as a matter of fact the Hebrew claim has been justified by history. The place occupied by the Jews in the long story of human development is undeniably unique. The gifts and calling of God have in this matter been without repentance; so that amid whatsoever shadow, and mingled with whatsoever tragedy, they brought in the day when "there came out of Zion the Deliverer." No Christian can be blind to the extent to which our Saviour's words have been fulfilled, "salvation is of the Jews." The other remark to be made in support of the Old Testament conception is, that it is quite consistent with the recognition of a parallel divine call to other nations. "There is nothing unique," says a modern Jew, "in considering yourself a Chosen People." We reflect that no sane modern statement of the doctrine of election would be put in terms implying a correlative doctrine of reprobation. One of the prophets foresaw that the Temple should be a house of prayer for all nations; and another foretold that "from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, God's name should be great among the nations." The 100th Psalm is a challenge to

all lands, claiming that Jehovah is the Maker of all men alike. "Before the eyes of the Psalmist," says Professor Menzies, "there rises the noble vision of a worship in which the whole world will join, a universal religion which will be recognised by all nations, in which men of every race will gladly flock together to take their part." And in our later day we see nothing inconsistent in believing that Israel was divinely called to be a Chosen People in respect of all that concerns the furthering of man's highest welfare, while we also believe that other nations were called to other tasks—Greece to perfect the ideal of beauty, or Rome to exhibit the grandeur of law. "When the fulness of time was arrived," says Neander, "and Christ appeared, then it was that all the threads, hitherto separated, of human development were to be brought together and interwoven in one web."

It is very specially to be emphasised that the vocation of Israel depicted and illustrated in the pages of the Old Testament is a vocation to service no less than to privilege. The most striking illustration of this fact lies in the terms of the original call given to Abraham and recorded in Genesis xii. Here—to use Isaiah's vivid image—we find the rock whence this people was hewn, and the hole of the pit whence they were digged. And what are the terms of the divine

call? "Get thee out of thy country unto a land that I will show thee; and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and *thou shalt be a blessing, and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.*" Nationalism is revealed, in this instance at any rate, as the chosen instrument for the carrying out of the divine purpose; but, on the other hand, nothing can be more plainly stated than the end towards which this purpose moves. It is not the blessing of Israel alone, but the blessing of the world. The current of national life is not to be primarily self-regarding, but to set towards the larger life of humanity. The history of the descendants of Abraham was designed to illustrate the truth enshrined in the great saying of Hooker: "The greatest felicity that felicity hath is to spread and enlarge itself."

The tragedy of the Jewish people in later centuries has lain in their failure to realise the true significance of their national calling. In spite of the terms of the call of Abraham, crying aloud from early records, their nationalism has too often become self-centred, and has "to party given up" what was "meant for mankind." The Jew forgot that—

"Heaven does with us as we with torches do,
Not light them for themselves; for if our virtues
Did not go forth of us, 'tis all alike
As if we had them not."

It is startling to find in an authoritative article upon Judaism, written for the 'Dictionary of Religion and Ethics,' the statement that Judaism "has no missionary aim. . . . She has not to compete with the more popular expositions of religion ; her *raison d'être* is not to rival the successful missionary activity of her daughters, the Church and the Mosque." And Dr Glover quotes another Jewish writer as saying, in a more contrite spirit : "To this day it is confessedly the weakness of Judaism that it offers no impulse, and knows no enthusiasm for self-sacrificing love, where the interests of the tribe are not concerned." How strangely alien are such boasts or confessions to the primitive charter of Hebrew nationalism ; and how clearly they show that Jewish patriotism has missed the way. Nevertheless, let us note as we pass on, that we cannot fairly charge to the nationalism of the Old Testament a fault which belongs to its misconception, and which can be corrected from the pages of the ancient Scriptures themselves.¹

The Old Testament conception of a Chosen

¹ Commenting on I Thess. ii. 16, Dr Milligan makes a striking quotation, as showing the attitude of the stricter Pharisees towards other nations. "Haec autem omnia dixi coram te, domine, quoniam dixisti quia propter nos creasti primogenitum saeculum. Residuas autem gentes ab Adam natas dixisti eas nihil esse et quoniam salivae adsimilatae sunt, et sicut stillitidum de vaso similisti habundantium eorum."—4 Ezra. vi. 55.

People has permanent beauty and value in relation to our subject. The present writer, indeed, doubts whether there is any possibility of a modern patriotism, at once religious and intelligent, except as linked with this or some equivalent conception. There is no reason, as we have seen, why a modern claim to be a Chosen People should not whole-heartedly welcome similar claims on the part of other races. The formula for to-day is not "*the* Chosen People." In the unique case of the Jews, the definite article may have seemed in keeping; for there was little extravagance in the forecast of Balaam that "this people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations." But in our more complex day, we may well be content with the more modest prefix. If we claim, for instance, that Great Britain is "*a* Chosen People" (with memory of "D.G."), we are only claiming for the region of national life what every Christian already believes in the region of personality. We are only assuming that if every man's life is indeed, as Bushnell taught us, a plan of God, no less than this need be claimed for the life of a nation. As the individual has in the divine purpose a place to fill and a work to do, so it is with the race. Abraham Lincoln gave utterance to a remarkable saying in 1862: "I hold myself in my present position, and with the authority invested in me, as an instrument of Providence. I am

conscious that all I am, and all I have, is subject to the control of a Higher Power." Was Lincoln to be commended for saying this as a man, and yet frigidly precluded from saying it as the spokesman of his country? There is no arrogance in the claim to be a Chosen People; since it is only St Paul's "I am what I am," writ large, and to be reverently qualified by the same preface, "by the grace of God."

Now upon this basis of a doctrine of vocation, a religious patriotism can be built securely. For such patriotism rests not on the whim of man, but upon the eternal purpose of God. Its basis lies outside the realm of national self-will, or the impulses of corporate vanity. Just as in the personal sphere the doctrine of divine sovereignty was said in a happy phrase to have put iron into the blood of our forefathers, so this self-same doctrine in its wider sweep makes patriotism strong as well as beautiful, intelligent as well as ardent. The emphasis is removed from man's choice to God's. In the Old Testament, the thought is not that Israel had chosen God, but that God had chosen Israel; not by way of patient search and partial discovery had they found Him, but by way of sovereign and irresistible choice had He found and separated them. Thus patriotism is simply the human response to the divine call to a people. The national creed is sung in such words as these: "He hath

made me a polished shaft, in His quiver hath He hid me."

It is obvious, of course, and has been already admitted, that such a doctrine of a Chosen People offers itself now, as in former days, to distortion; and that, when the doctrine becomes corrupt, its corruption—"like that of all noble things under the devil's touch"—is a very shocking one. "Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds." Nevertheless the doctrine stands clearly forth from Old Testament teaching, and commends itself to reason. Just as a man ought to cherish his own individuality as his one instrument of fellowship with others; just as Henry James's young sculptor—confronted in his eager ambition by a brow-beating reference to Michael Angelo—showed no real arrogance in exclaiming, "Oh, but Michael Angelo was not *me*"; so will a nation that asserts eternal Providence and justifies the ways of God to man do well to claim its own corporate inheritance in the increasing purpose of the ages. Only when notes are different is harmony possible, only when temperaments and aptitudes vary can each people be called to cast its own into the common stock.

ii.

We pass from the intellectual to the emotional aspect of the patriotism depicted in the Old Testa-

ment; and here we find, as might justly be expected, that a sentiment so deeply rooted in intelligence has flowered in varied and many-coloured beauty. The emotional content of Hebrew patriotism is a very rich one. It seems as though all the constituents of human nature had combined to lay their offering of gratitude, pride, and devotion on the shrine of the land they love. Affection for home and kin; attachment to the soil; pride in a noble ancestry; hope for the future based on deliverances of the past; loyalty to king and law and fellow-countrymen; willingness to sacrifice life itself for national welfare,—all these are elements in that Jewish patriotism which is justly proverbial for its intensity, and is not even yet outworn. Instances are scattered through all the Books of the Old Testament. Our treatment of them must be essentially selective.

(1) *Love of kin and home*, mirroring love of country in the smaller realm of domestic life, is an immensely powerful factor in Hebrew patriotism. Nowhere shall we find the great saying of Bagehot better illustrated than “a cohesive family is the best germ for a campaigning nation.” The history of Israel takes its rise, as we have seen, in the call of a family, and that family a small one, and to the end the character of the source seems to fix the quality of the stream. Conceptions of good and evil are frequently expressed in terms of domestic

relationship. "Abraham was gathered to his kin"—there is the Hebrew view of blessing in death. "The transgressor shall he cut off from his kin"—there is the Hebrew view of a curse in life. The general teaching of the Old Testament is in thorough accord with the saying of John Bright, that "the nation in every country dwells in the cottage"; or with the more formal pronouncement of modern sociology, that the family is the "ultimate social unit." It sets its seal to the later words of our own King, that "the foundations of national greatness are set in the homes of the people." Where shall we find so close a knitting of the all-important family tie as in the pages of the Old Testament, from the stories of the patriarchs in the Book of Genesis to the very last words of the volume, "I will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and of the children to the fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse"? When we look in through the open door upon some of the family groups of the Old Testament—Abraham, Sarah, Isaac; Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob; Jacob and his sons; Naomi, Ruth; Hannah, Samuel; the house of Obed-edom; the sons of Rechab—we see already some foreshadowing of the beautiful New Testament conception of the "Church which is in the house"; some adumbration of the truth so tenderly expressed by Clement of Alexandria, "Our Lord said that where two or three were gathered in His name,

there was the true Church. Who are these two or three but the father, the mother, and the child ? ” A patriotism with a rallying-point in every home will offer a focus of heat as well as of light ; it will be emotionally ardent as well as intellectually sound.

(2) A well-spring of patriotic emotion often found overflowing in the pages of the Old Testament, is affection for this or that *spot* of earth which has become to the individual soul the symbol of all that constitutes the fatherland.

“ God gave all men all earth to love ;
But since our hearts are small,
Ordained for each one spot should prove
Beloved over all.”

Many instances of this local patriotism have been carried over from the Old Testament into popular speech, and typify for all time the call of home. Jacob saying to his household, “ Let us arise and go up to Bethel ” ; Naomi turning in her old age to the home of her childhood ; David longing for one draught from the well of Bethlehem ; the psalmist remembering Zion in far-off Babylon,—these are now classical instances of patriotic homesickness. Who shall define the exact nature of the emotional tug at the heart of Hadad, when that little-known exile was cross-questioned by a king of Egypt as to precisely *why* he proposed to return to his own country ? “ What hast thou

lacked with me?" said the wondering monarch, "that, behold, thou seekest to go to thine own country?" And Hadad answered, "Nothing; howbeit, let me go in any wise" (1 Kings xi. 22). "*Nothing; howbeit, let me go in any wise*"—there speaks the authentic voice of the home-sick patriot, who in vision beholds some familiar scene over the hills and far away. It is the same voice as is heard in the most famous anonymous lines in British literature:—

"From the lone shieling on the misty island
Mountains divide us, and a waste of seas—
Yet still the blood is strong, the heart is Highland,
And we in dreams behold the Hebrides."

This warm feeling for locality was strengthened in the Jewish mind by a proud sense of the beauty of their country, and by their steadfast belief that in respect of situation the lines had fallen to them in pleasant places, and that they had a goodly heritage. And although the impression is widespread to-day that this idea was exaggerated, and that Palestine is a rather disappointing country in outward aspect, those who traversed the land with the British force under Allenby know that this reaction has been carried much too far. A frequent comment of our Scottish soldiers on the land their valour did so much to free was, "it's a bonnie country"; and those who caught the tone of the exclamation report a warm emotion brimming

over the words. "Come in," says Sir George Adam Smith, in his 'Historical Geography of the Holy Land,' "with the year at the flood, with the springing of the grain, with the rush of colour across the field, the flush of green on the desert, and in imagination clothe again the stony terraces with the vines—then, even though your eye be Western, you will feel the charm and intoxication of the land." Assuredly, the writers of the Old Testament loved their country, not merely in its general aspect, but in its individual features; and were moved to dwell, as all such love is moved, upon traits that might seem trifling to other than the lover. The passionate human love depicted in the Song of Songs draws some of its inspiration from the nature-setting in the background—just as Annie Laurie's "promise true" was all the more delectable to her lover because of the "Maxwelltown braes" that were "bonnie," and that overheard the whispered vows. The very smallness of the land of Palestine may have tended to make its patriotism more manageable, more aware of itself. Phrases abound in the Old Testament, where a sense of detail in scenery, by confining the emotion in a narrower channel, seems to make its flow more impetuous. "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob! As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river-side, as the trees of lign aloes which the Lord hath planted, and as cedar

trees beside the waters." "The Lord thy God bringeth thee into a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley, and vines and fig-trees and pomegranates; a land of oil olive and honey." "This people refuseth the waters of Shiloah that go softly." "As mother-birds hovering, so will the Lord of Hosts defend Jerusalem." "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion, on the sides of the North, the city of the great King." And how diplomatically does Gideon appeal to local patriotism, and make handsome concession to the prejudices of a rival tribe, when he says to the petulant warriors of Ephraim: "What have I done in comparison of you? Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer?"

(3) Few more potent springs of patriotic emotion are to be found than those which lie in *cherished memories of national peril and national deliverance*. So capable a sociologist as Bagehot holds that only in the furnace of national tribulation can the various constituents of national life be fused into a compact unity. The reader, as we saw in a previous chapter, who recalls the story of Greece or Carthage, of Switzerland or Holland, of Poland or Scotland, will find proof that the crushing attacks of ambitious neighbours have often com-

pressed the defiant sense of nationality into a compact mass. They have acted like the shock or jar given to the chemist's phial of super-saturated fluid, which in a moment turns the liquid into spears of crystal.

In the Old Testament, the many signal deliverances of Israel find their first illustration and abiding type in the miracle of the Exodus and the rescue at the Red Sea. Because of what God had wrought for His people on "that night much to be remembered unto the Lord," the nation of Israel beheld itself as a unified folk, made one through the power of a corporate indebtedness. The commemorative feast of the Passover—the most venerable religious ordinance in the world—was appointed to fan into a flame year by year the embers of patriotic gratitude, and to reawaken the worshipful question, "Who is like unto Thee, O Lord, among the gods?" And according to the view of the Hebrew historians, the later story of Israel was simply the tracing into a long bright line of this initial glow-point of divine favour. The first mercy was the pledge and pattern of all later mercies. Even when, in addressing the exiles in Babylon, God undertakes to do a "new thing," and to make for them, not "a path in the mighty waters," but the converse of that—"waters in the wilderness"—it is the first initial deliverance of the Red Sea on which faith is based. "Thus saith the

Lord"—such is the preface to the promise—"which maketh a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters." Dean Stanley's memorable statement is as true in fact as it is admirable in expression: "The Israelite annals, unlike the records of any other nation, claim no merit, no victory of their own. There is no Marathon, no Regillus, no Tours, no Morgarten. All is from above, nothing from themselves."

There have been moments in our own island story when the sense of signal divine deliverance has been almost equally distinct. "When the danger had passed," says a recent historian, writing of the Armada, "it seemed as if God Himself were on the side of England. From the Queen downwards, the feeling was, 'Not unto us, O Lord.'" "Never was fleet so strong," said Drake, speaking of the Armada, "but the Lord of strength is stronger."¹

(4) A unique feature of patriotic emotion in the Old Testament is the national sense of pride and joy in the *law* of the country. We are so accustomed to think of the word "law" in the Bible as a theological term, that we forget that, if it was

¹ May we not reverently connect these incidents with our own time by paraphrasing the words of the prophet Jeremiah (xxiii. 7, 8): "The days come that they shall no more say, The Lord liveth which blew with his winds and the Armada was scattered, but, The Lord liveth which brought up and led his people out of the North country, and gave them deliverance in the Great War"?

indeed, religiously, the law of God, it was also, politically, the law of Israel—determining in a perfectly natural sense the code of justice under which the people lived, and the legislative enactments which fenced their daily life. It is a very rare phenomenon to find in any country so overflowing a satisfaction with the national code of laws, and so profound a sense of its righteousness, as we find in many parts of the Book of Psalms. If it be objected to this that the Hebrew law was largely ceremonial, so that the warm appreciation of the psalmists was a religious exercise rather than a political or social one, it is to be observed again that, as a matter of fact, it is not of the laws of ceremony or ritual that the psalmists chiefly speak. Now and again, it is true, we find in the Psalms allusions to the laws of the levitical code—to forbidden drink-offerings and proscribed dainties, to new moons and solemn feast-days, to burnt-offering and whole burnt-offering,—but as a rule when the psalmists speak of the law, it is the moral and political, not the ceremonial law to which they refer. As Dr Emery Barnes puts it with reference to the author of the 119th Psalm: “In his eyes at least the law of Moses is not a mere mass of arbitrary rules. It is Torah, that is teaching. It contains Testimonies, impressing upon man the nature of the God whom he serves; Promises of deliverance and good; Judg-

ments solving difficult questions of conduct. It is marked throughout by Righteousness, that is, by that perfection of goodness which belongs to God alone."

It would therefore be a parallel phenomenon to what we often find in the Psalms, if modern political writers showed not merely a passive contentment with the law of their own particular country, but a whole-hearted happiness in a rule so just, and in a legislation so manifestly crowned with divine approval, as the rule and legislation under which they have blessedness to live. It is pleasant to find that such writers have not been unknown in our own British history. Speaking of the famous 'Commentaries' of Blackstone, Mr Wingfield Stratford says: "Blackstone worshipped the law of England with an intense ardour—he approaches the task of commenting upon it with something of the blindness of a lover. His four volumes are one long panegyric, and the reader can scarcely help being carried along by the writer's own enthusiasm; the law which once appeared so harsh and tedious takes on the form of a beautiful and beneficent genius, the embodiment of God's own justice, standing between him and every sort of injustice and tyranny." Some utterances of Milton and Burke seem touched with the same fervour. William Camden, the Elizabethan, writing "in praise of Britaine," says under this head:

“As for government ecclesiastical and civil, which is the very soul of a kingdom, I need to say nothing whenas I write to home-born, and not to strangers.” Manifestly we should not have advanced beyond the level of Old Testament teaching, but rather lingered woefully behind it, if such panegyrics seem to us ridiculous; or if any irony surrounds the statement that the laws of Britain ought to be also the laws of God.

iii.

We have now taken stock of the patriotism of the Old Testament in respect of its ground in reason, and of its overflow in feeling. But the final test of Hebrew patriotism, as of all other, must lie in its dynamic power—that is to say, in its capacity to lead towards golden deeds of service and sacrifice, and to render the patriot “ripe for exploits and noble enterprises.” In George Eliot’s phrase, patriotism, to be complete, must pass from the vividness of a thought and the ardour of a passion to the energy of an action. Of such golden deeds inspired by love of country, the Old Testament is full. Every educated man can call over the roll of its famous characters, and can recount the achievements which have made their names to shine in the national record “like the stars for ever and ever.” The eleventh chapter of Hebrews

contains a shining catalogue of such names, and gives us the moving summary of their deeds, that they "subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, escaped the edge of the sword, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens." But instead of reviewing incidents familiar to every Bible reader, we shall single out one particular form of patriotic heroism, less striking to the eye but not less important, wherein the goodly fellowship of the Hebrew Prophets blazed out a new path for the human race. We mean, the path wherein a patriot encounters the hardest of all tasks in patriotic sacrifice—the censuring and withstanding his country, where he thinks his country wrong. Certain patriots have had to play the part of those

"Who, loving as none other
The land that is their mother,
Unflinching renounced her
Because they loved her so."

This is by far the most crushing burden a patriot can be called to carry. Other forms of patriotism are elementary compared with this. To love one's country when it is worthy of love, and then, as moved by that impulse, to seek to serve it bravely, is no doubt a high task, and one covetous of the best that human nature can supply. But it is a task containing its own reward. The impulse to fulfil it rouses all the dormant faculties to healthful activity; the undertaking of it pleasurable stirs

the blood ; and the even partial achievement of it brings deep heart-content. But to love one's country in the very hour when bitter shame must accompany the love ; to care for it in its moral ugliness as Beauty cared for the Beast, hoping against hope for transformation, but conscious (unlike Beauty) that no caress will work the miracle—such a task touches the essential nerve of devout patriotism as nothing else can do. It means that the patriot must stand alone, amidst a crowd of fellow-countrymen who impugn the very love which consumes him. The more he loves, the less he will seem to love. He must choose between two loyalties, in the consciousness that the higher of the two makes no appeal to those whose support he would most value. Misunderstanding must infect and poison the air he breathes. Robert Browning, in his poem entitled 'The Patriot,' has described the man who, one short year before, had beheld the housetops crowded with cheering hero-worshippers, saying in disillusionment—

“There's nobody on the housetops now—
 Just a palsied few at the windows set ;
 For the best of the sight is, all allow,
 At the Shambles' Gate—or, better yet,
 By the very scaffold's foot, I trow.”

“There is something in the mere utterance of

truth," George Adam Smith has said, "which rouses the very devil in the hearts of many men."

Yet this task of withstanding popular sentiment was not merely the occasional hap, but the almost constant vocation of many of the Hebrew prophets. In such an instance as that of Jeremiah, we see the strain and stress of it arriving at such a pitch, that the fellow-prophet of a later age is thought to have beheld in him the first foreshadowing of a tragedy not finally staged till the advent of the Man of Sorrows: "He hath no form nor comeliness . . . there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men . . . we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised and we esteemed Him not."

Yet it was this patriotism, clinging to its country even in its country's sin, daring to lose its life without much hope that it would find it, willing to turn its back to the fatherland in turning its face to God, and receiving the appointed reward in being turned to the fatherland again, and bidden to pity and redeem it—it was this patriotism which was the real means of accomplishing the divine purpose in the choice of Israel. For such patriots became the nucleus of that "Remnant," through whom God's purposes for the Chosen People were after all accomplished, and the promise made to Abraham brought to due fulfilment. To one of

them was the assurance given, which shone like an emerging star of hope in many a cloudy sky of later days : " Thus saith the Lord, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not ; for a blessing is in it : so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all."