

the mouth of its supposed founder,' he proceeds to 'examine the passage more closely.' This is how he proceeds—

"The same night in which he was betrayed" —*was* he betrayed? The thing is historically so improbable, the whole story of the betrayal is so absurd historically and psychologically, that only a few thoughtless Bible-readers can accept it with complacency. Imagine the ideal man Jesus knowing that one of his disciples is about to betray him and thus forfeit his eternal salvation, yet doing nothing to restrain the miserable man, but rather confirming him in it! Imagine a Judas demanding money from the high-priest for the betrayal of a man who walks the streets of Jerusalem daily, and whose sojourn at night could assuredly be discovered without any treachery! "For Judas to have betrayed Jesus," Kautsky says, "is much the same as if the Berlin police were to pay a spy to point out to them the man named Bebel." Moreover, the Greek word *paradidonai* does not mean "betray" at all, but "give up," and is simply taken from Is 53<sup>12</sup>, where it is said that the servant of God "gave himself unto death." The whole story of the betrayal is a late invention founded on that passage in the prophet, and Judas is not an historical personality, but, as Robertson believes, a representative of the Jewish people, hated by the Christians, who were believed to have caused the death of the Saviour. Further, the "night," in which the betrayal is supposed to have taken place, has no historical background. It merely serves to set in contrast the luminous figure of Jesus and the dark work of his betrayer. Hence Paul cannot have known anything of a nocturnal betrayal on the part of Judas, and one more "proof" of the historicity of Jesus breaks down.

Sir Harry Johnston's new book is like a haggis,

somewhat confused feeding. A little patience, however, brings method out of the apparent chaos. Sir Harry Johnston is an anthropologist, and his interest is not in individuals but in races. The book is accordingly found to contain a series of anthropological studies in race development, three races being specially chosen for study—the Irish, the German, and the North African. The title of the book is *Views and Reviews* (Williams & Norgate; 3s. 6d. net).

There has been a good deal of discussion lately about the Pharisees. Jewish scholars, especially those of the liberal school of Mr. Montefiore, have charged the New Testament writers with misinterpretation, and their charge has been listened to by Christian scholars with patience and sometimes with considerable sympathy. And now at last a book entitled *Pharisaism* (Williams & Norgate; 5s. net) has been written by Mr. R. Travers Herford, B.A., which goes beyond anything yet attempted in the way of sympathy with the Jewish complaint. It is not an easy matter to deal with, and Mr. Herford has not found it so. He is not, however, so much troubled as some of us would be with that which is the central difficulty. For to him, to whom Jesus is 'simply the greatest man who ever lived,' it is not at all inconceivable that the Pharisees might have been treated unfairly even by our Lord Himself. His own opinion, indeed, is that Jesus 'having in effect broken with the religion of Torah, and being in the position of a man driven to bay, fighting, as the saying is, with His back against the wall, it is only human nature that He should so speak as to hit hard.' The conclusion he comes to, accordingly, is that the Pharisees on the whole are misrepresented in the New Testament, that they were better men, and practised a better religion, than the New Testament leads us to believe.

## The Gospel of Hosea.

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'For I am God, and not man.'—Hos. xi. 9.

HOSEA was one of the most beautiful souls that has ever lived and suffered in our earth. The most ethereal of the prophets, he seems like a spirit from a better world, radiating a pure heavenly light amid

the dark shadows of time. In the whole gallery of Old Testament portraits there is no more fascinating figure than that of the prophet of Divine and human love. If he had not been an inspired teacher, he might have been a great lyric

poet. One of the first, he was also one of the noblest of the not very large family of the mystics, who dare to make their own thoughts, feelings, and actions the norm of divinity. Mysticism has been defined by Vaughan, in his somewhat unsympathetic *Hours with the Mystics*, as 'that form of error which mistakes for a Divine manifestation the operations of a merely human faculty.' This hard saying surely applies only to the lower, and fails to take account of the higher, forms of mysticism. It can scarcely be doubted that certain human minds have had a wonderful affinity with the Divine mind. The light that has been in them has not been darkness; and if we are to understand such mysticism as theirs, we must rather begin by doing justice to that fine Hebrew saying, 'The spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord.' With Plato and Plotinus, the Hebrew and the Christian mystic take the things of time and sense for mirrors or symbols of eternal heavenly realities, and they can no more doubt their intuitions of God than they can doubt their own existence. It is true that even the purest human mind has never—except once—been an absolutely perfect medium for the transmission of the white radiance of eternity; and few confessions are more pathetic than that of Savonarola, the prophet-mystic of Florence, 'I count as nothing: darkness encompasses me: yet the light I saw was the light from heaven.' No doubt it was; and this inward illumination is the distinction of the true mystic. The very keenness of the self-scrutiny and self-blame of these great and humble souls makes us the readier to admit the essential validity of their unflinching claims to Divine insight, and we shall find how little the light of heaven was either distorted or discoloured as it passed through the mind of the prophet of Ephraim.

It is characteristic of the mystic that he does not need to stray from home in quest of the Divine secret. Hosea received his message neither in the solitude of the desert, nor in the society of other prophets. Rather the truth met him at his own threshold, revealed herself to him there, and summoned him thence to his life-work. Other prophets might come down from the mountains or up from the wilderness to thunder the word of the Lord in the ear of the nation, but there is no indication that Hosea ever wandered, or wished to wander, from the valleys and meadows, the orchards and vineyards, of his much-loved Ephraim.

There never was a truer patriot. The concentration of his thoughts is evidenced by the fact that while Ephraim is always on his lips—it occurs thirty-six times in his prophecy—he never once names Jerusalem, and all the references to Judah seem to be interpolations made by the Judean hands through which his work has passed. Too individual and original to owe much to other minds, he never affected the manners or felt the contagious influence of 'the sons of the prophets,' probably never wore the picturesque prophetic mantle of dark haircloth, and never had any connexion with the guilds of prophets who led a cœnobitic life and fanned each other's religious enthusiasm with the breath of music and song. Nor was he conscious of any temperamental affinity with the fanatical Nazirites and Rechabites—true descendants of the desert Bedouin—who had a quarrel with civilization as such, for how could he doubt that 'the corn, wine and oil, the silver and gold' were gifts of God? He was rather a man of the people, attempting, in an age of material splendour and spiritual decay, to live a common life well. Sensitive, poetic, imaginative, pensive, with far more than an ordinary capacity alike for joy and sorrow, he was intensely alive to the quiet beauty of nature, the peacefulness of home, the sanctities and fidelities of love. With such a common life he would have been well content. But God had other thoughts regarding him, and higher work for him to do, calling him to be one of the greatest religious teachers the world has ever seen.

True mystic that he was, Hosea recognized that his gospel was inseparable from his personality. Had he not felt that some indication of the development of his mind was an essential part of his message, he would never have written his poignant prelude. He perceived that the doctrine could not be understood without the personal illustration; the Divine archetype was only to be seen through the human type. There is an apparent egoism in the mystic which is compatible with a very real and profound humility. Indeed, his task of speaking of himself is sometimes the heaviest of crosses. Hosea would never have given his *confessio amantis* to a cold and critical world if he had not felt himself in the grip of an overmastering necessity. Wild horses would never have dragged the tale from him, but the hand of the Lord was upon him, and he could not choose but speak.

With touching reserve, in a quiet historical style which is yet tremulous with feeling and infinitely more moving than floods of impassioned rhetoric, he tells the story of his heart, not because he wishes to attract any attention to himself, but because he has so much to say of the Sacred Heart which beats at the centre of all things. Through an outer portal he will lead us into the temple's inner shrine. He has found that the Divine and the human secret of existence are one; they have both revealed themselves to him at the flaming core of an ordinary life.

The transfiguration of the common human lot, which henceforth shines with a radiance from heaven, is ever the most thrilling and wonderful of experiences. Suggestions of this more than magical change may be noted in external nature. 'The House Beautiful' is only 'a naked house' on 'a naked moor':

Yet shall your ragged moor receive  
The incomparable pomp of eve.

It is the task of the artist to open our eyes to the glory of 'things we have passed a hundred times nor cared to see,' till it begins to dawn upon us that 'every common bush' is 'afire with God.' But it is from the hidden depths of the human soul, touched by a light from heaven, that life itself catches a splendour which never again fades away.

There were two days of Hosea's life in which the gates of reality finally opened to him. The one was the day in which he declared his love, the other the day in which he was disillusioned. It was the second of these days—when his Eden was withered, and naught remained but 'bare ruined quires where late the sweet birds sang'; when his temple was in ruins, the shrine empty, the holy of holies desecrated—that really tested him. The ordeal to such a nature as his was the severest imaginable, the pain too exquisite for words, the sense of wrong too deep for tears. From his seven times heated furnace, how did he emerge? How did he take up the task of life again? Did he merely laugh a bitter laugh and turn to seek other pleasures? Did he live to write a dreary little 'Vanitas Vanitatum.' Did he anticipate the cynic of his race who set his seal to the insulting dictum, 'One type of manhood among a thousand have I found, but an ideal of womanhood among all these have I not found'?

If that had been the end of it, we should never have heard of him and his story. He would have had no gospel for Israel and mankind. But when the first anguish of disillusionment was past, he came out of the depths not merely with the peace of an accepted sorrow, but with the awakened consciousness that love is love for ever. 'Love is not love which alters when it alteration finds. . . . It hath the quality of everlastingness.' One cannot but wonder if the prophet knew those words, first heard somewhere among the hills and vales of Ephraim, and more fervent than any ever breathed by the burning lips of Sappho:

For love is strong as death. . . .  
The flashes thereof are flashes of fire,  
A very flame of the Lord.  
Many waters cannot quench love  
Neither can the floods drown it.

At any rate the truth that love is unquenchable was the keynote of the prophet's whole after life. Love was evermore his Lord and king, who could not be defeated or discrowned. Therefore we find him ordering all the rest of his days on the calm assumption that love must triumph. We see him always in the attitude of intensely eager, but perfectly assured, waiting. We watch his love bearing all things, believing all things, hoping all things, enduring all things, and never failing. It is patient because eternal. Just when it appears to have received its death-blow, it proves itself to be deathless, a truth which is the burden of perhaps the finest sonnet in the English language:

Now at the last gasp of Love's latest breath,  
When, his pulse failing, Passion speechless lies,  
When Faith is kneeling at his bed of death  
And Innocence is closing up his eyes,  
Now if thou would'st, when all have given him over,  
From death to life thou might'st him yet recover.

Now, as is the man, such is his gospel. There never was a clearer illustration of the principle that the heart makes the theologian. With the uttermost daring of a simple faith, Hosea makes his own mind an index of the Mind of Deity. It is true, he might have done the same if he had been hard and unforgiving; he might have done the same if he had set his face like a flint, and determined simply to be just; he might have done the same if thoughts of repudiation and reprobation had barred out all other thoughts. But in that case he would have had no gospel, he would simply have been one more stern censor of sin and preacher of righteous-

ness. It was his conduct in the supreme moral crisis of his life that made his mind like a sensitized plate ready to receive a new image of God. His own forgiving pity, his own redeeming love, won for him a sudden vision of the great Heart of the Eternal. From that hour he knew that inextinguishable in the bosom of God burns the original uncreated flame of love, of which all other love is the emanation and reflexion. And he knew that the norm of divinity is not man's all too prevalent inhumanity to his fellow-man, but man's nobility in those rare moments when he rises completely above himself into the atmosphere of another and a better world. The revelation probably astonished no one more than the prophet himself. Immediately he began to wonder if he had ever till then really known God at all. How blind and dull and stupid he had been! He had never realized what heights and depths of patient goodness there are in the Divine nature. He had never *sympathized* with Israel's God, whose holy love had been so long and so cruelly requited with ingratitude and infidelity. The new revelation, bursting upon his mind and opening his lips, made him a prophet. His gospel clothed itself in great words, which were not the fruit of the toiling intellect, but the gift of eternal love. And as for his own private sorrow, it was all but completely swallowed up in the joy of the apocalypse of Divine grace; so much so, that with another act of incredible daring, another intuition of childlike faith, he declares that even *that* marriage was, after all, made in heaven (Hos 1<sup>2</sup>).

Thus for the first time in history it dawned upon the human mind that God's sovereign attribute in heaven and in earth is His loving-kindness. The words almost tremble on the prophet's lips, though it was reserved for an apostle to utter them, that 'God is love.' Later seers and poets would express the truth in many other noble and beautiful forms, but there is a mingling of burning passion and melting pathos in Hosea's primitive Hebrew gospel—his protevangelium—which makes it for ever memorable:

How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?  
 How shall I deliver thee, Israel?  
 How shall I make thee as Admah?  
 How shall I set thee as Zeboim?  
 My heart is turned within me,  
 All my sympathies are all aglow.  
 I will not execute the fierceness of my anger,  
 I will not turn to destroy Ephraim:  
 For I am God, and not man.

For the first time it is seen that the real and fundamental difference between God and man is not His almightiness appalling our impotence, His greatness dwarfing our littleness, His omniscience amazing our ignorance, but His love shaming our lovelessness. That is the quintessence of Deity. By loving and redeeming where it was natural, as all the world thought, to loathe and reject, Hosea instinctively separated himself from men, took sides with God, and suddenly found himself caught up to a height from which he could see, as man had never seen before, that

Broad and deep and glorious,  
 Like the heavens above,  
 Shines in might victorious,  
 God's eternal love.

At the same time, Hosea's experience enabled him to realize, like no one before him, the moral dilemma in the counsels of God, the acuteness of the conflict between the claims of justice and pity. To a mind like his, law without love, and love without law, were conceptions equally intolerable. And if, like our own great religious poet, he had sought refuge in the conclusion that 'all's love and all's law,' yet that would only have been a partial solution. The mind cannot rest except in a unity. There must be sovereignty and subordination in the attributes of God; and when Hosea's view of the universe, after many oscillations, at last adjusts itself, the crown is on the head of Love, before which Law bows as the most awful but most obedient of ministers.

There is a prevalent notion that men like Hosea, the Old Testament prophet of love, and John, the New Testament apostle of love, are soft emotionalists, with no iron in their blood, no rigour in their gospel. There could be no greater mistake. Hosea's passion for righteousness is even more vehement than that of Amos. As the spiritual physician of Israel, faithfully diagnosing her moral and social diseases, he does not hesitate to announce that desperate remedies are needed. He is not one to shrink from the use of the knife, or blanch at the sight of blood. It is no sentimentalist who utters the terrific words:

Shall I deliver them from the power of Sheol?  
 Shall I redeem them from death?  
 Hither with thy plagues, O death!  
 Hither with thy pestilence, O Sheol!  
 Repentance is hid from mine eyes.

But his last word can never be judgment or

death or destruction. He knows that God smites in order to save, cuts deep in order to heal (6<sup>1</sup>). His distinctive and dominant conception—his inevitable word—is ‘love’ (*hesed*), which sums up both his religion and his ethics. ‘I drew them with human cords, with bands of love’ (13<sup>4</sup>). ‘It is love that I delight in, and not sacrifice’ (6<sup>6</sup>).

For how many thousands, or millions, of years had the living God been waiting for some mind to mirror and reveal His true nature to man! How patiently He had carried on ‘the education of the human race,’ always with this end in view, and always realizing that a lesson is never taught until it is learned! Hosea, with a heart purified and a mind illuminated by suffering, is the first to penetrate God’s open secret, that the deepest essence of Being is an inalienable love which cannot rest until it has redeemed the captive and saved the lost. Henceforth the Dweller in the Innermost, though unseen, will not be unknown.

It is not easy, therefore, to calculate our debt to Hosea. ‘When we consider,’ says Professor Cornill, ‘that all this was absolutely new, that those thoughts in which humanity has been educated and which have consoled it for 3000 years, were all first spoken by Hosea, we must reckon him among the greatest religious geniuses which the world has ever produced. . . . That this man, so apparently a man of emotion, governed entirely by his moods, and driven helplessly hither and thither by them, should have possessed a formal theological system, which has exercised an immeasurable influence on future generations, is a phenomenon of no slight significance. . . . But it is not too much to say that the entire faith and theology of later Israel grew out of Hosea, that all its characteristic views and ideas are to be first found in his book.’

Rapt into intense communion with God, till his eyes are opened to catch glimpses of eternal realities, and his ears to hear a music sweeter than

that of the spheres, the prophet reports his experience. And this is what the Revealer says in human speech: ‘I will not forsake, I will not destroy, I will love and redeem: for I am God, and not man.’ In the antithesis between God’s warm love and man’s cold indifference, therefore, lies all our hope of salvation. Another prophet heard a continuation of the strain: ‘For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts’ (Is 55<sup>8, 9</sup>).

The Psalmist caught the rapture of it:

For as the heaven in its height  
The earth surmounteth far,  
So great to those who do him fear  
His tender mercies are.

And finally the Christian poet gives the truth a perfect expression:

For the love of God is broader  
Than the measures of man’s mind,  
And the heart of the Eternal  
Is most wonderfully kind.

Before the coming of Christ the world saw no more Christlike spirit than Hosea, and our Lord linked His own eternal gospel to that of the prophet of Ephraim by His favourite thrice-repeated quotation, ‘I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.’ All the grace that Hosea found in Israel’s God, that, and something more, we find in the ‘strong Son of God, immortal Love.’ The incarnation resolved the antithesis between the attributes and the actions of God and man. ‘I will not destroy: for I am God, and not man’—that was the gospel to Israel. ‘Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends’—that is the gospel given to all mankind by Him who ‘seemeth human and divine, the highest, holiest manhood’; who is not come to destroy, but to save, for He is God *and* man, in one person, for ever.