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become careless and inattentive. Like all other work for the Master, it needs constant prayer for Divine aid, and strong faith in His power to help. The sowing and reaping are both in his hands ; if He see fit, He will give the increase ; and if in this life we are not permitted to see much fruit of our labour, we shall "in due season reap, if we faint not," in that day "when both sower and reaper shall rejoice together" in the Master's house above.

I am, yours very sincerely,

MARTHA BLAKENEY.

The Vicarage, Sheffield,
Oct. 20th, 1885.



ART. IV.—GENESIS AND THE BIBLE. PART III.

ETHICAL RELATIONS.

IF the Bible be regarded as containing the records of an advancing revelation, and as presenting the scheme of truth which that revelation yields on the whole, it will be in the doctrinal relations of the first book to the rest that we shall seek the most important evidences of preparation and decisive intimations of unity of design. These relations have been traced in a former paper in respect of ten principal doctrines, to which others will easily be added by the considerate student of the book. Instead of supplying these, it will now be better to advert to another class of relations, which, if they offer themselves less directly in the way of argument, have yet a suggestive bearing on the conclusion. If the ethical relations of Genesis with the later teaching of Scripture were undiscoverable or discordant, if its moral judgments, its principles of life, its casts of character, were not such as the Law would authenticate or the Gospel complete, the continuity of feeling would be broken with a disturbing and even dislocating effect. Perhaps this ethical character has naturally a more enduring vitality than belongs to definite opinions, as appears in the history of races, in which may often be traced the same moral tendencies and characteristics after creeds and institutions have been changed. So in the race which has its record in the Scriptures—I mean that of the Church or people of God—we expect to trace a moral tradition, a continuous tone and temper, which shall discriminate the line of spiritual descent, and create a conscious kindred with the first generations even in their distant posterity. This latent unity becomes indeed a necessity, when we regard the moral life of which we speak as the outcome of a divine seed, generating a race which,

under all its superficial varieties of condition and measures of attainment, is essentially begotten of God.

Certainly we all recognise this in reading the Book of Genesis. Its moral atmosphere is natural to us. We use its stories easily for the education of our children, and the English peasant is at home in the tents of the patriarchs. We see in the later Scriptures that their revered names had a power of moral influence on their descendants according to the flesh, and with us, their remote spiritual descendants, that moral influence is scarcely less. This statement needs no proof; for all who have been brought up on the Bible have imbibed the spirit of the ethics of Genesis.

Of these there is no code. As was noted in a former paper, history is the method of its teaching. Actions are related without comment, and so characters transpire, and speak for themselves; for, through the haze of distance and of a rudimentary stage of life, the personality of the men stands clearly out. In regard to particulars of conduct we are left according to our lights to approve, to doubt, or to condemn. The main instruction is in the general effect, in the manner of men which they are or become, in the issues of their conduct, in the Divine sanctions or reproofs, in the sense that all is passing under the eye of God.

It is fit, however, that we should note some definite heads under which we see the elements of future teaching.

1. The foundation of the ethics of revelation is laid in that relation of man to God which involves his *moral responsibility* and places him under righteous judgment. This appears in the probation ordained in Eden, in the sentences at the Fall, in the stern yet patient observation of the corruption and the violence that are in the earth, in the Flood brought in on the world of the ungodly, in the cry of Sodom that ascends to heaven, in the flames which purge pollution, and in many gentler reminders that the grounds of morality for man are laid in the righteousness of God. This surely is the principle which distinguishes the ethics of the Bible from the ethics of the world. In them life may be linked to conscience, but in it conscience itself is linked to God. This changes the moral situation, makes responsibility real, and constitutes the court within a department of the court above. All that is in the Law, all that is in the Prophets, all that is in the Gospels, rests upon this consciousness which is impressed on the first pages of Scripture.

2. Both God's judgment of man and His communion with man have been included under doctrinal relations; but man's response to them is ethical. If the sense of indefeasible responsibility is a great moral power, so also is the *sense of*

permitted fellowship. To walk *before* God elevates life ; to walk *with* God raises it still higher. A sweeter and happier tone of feeling is then infused, and righteousness becomes holiness. This fellowship of man with his Maker dawns on us in the Book of Genesis, when "Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him ;" and when "Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God ;" and its presence and effects are seen in detail in the very different lives of Abraham and Jacob. This vast accession to human life, impossible to natural religion, is one of the chief gifts of revelation, in the first records of which it appears. It glows in the experience of Psalmists and Prophets, and is interpreted, assured, and enlarged in the Gospel of Christ, in which we have access with confidence by faith in Him, and know that "truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." This surely is a great factor in moral life. If it is unknown to the ethics of the world, it is none the less ethical. For if that word expresses the fulfilment of our relations, we cannot exclude from it the highest relation of all ; and if it signifies the habit and disposition of the mind, we must take account of a habit which so extensively and profoundly affects its whole disposition.

3. A main department of morals lies in the relation of the sexes, *the institution of marriage*, and so in the family life which surrounds it. Here the ruling principle and the irrevocable charter are given in this book, as simultaneous with the origin of man. "So God created man in His own image. In the image of God created He him : male and female created He them." Thus the sexes are both participants of the image of God, according to the different order appointed for them, and they are bound to recognise and respect it, each in the other. Again, after the statement that the creation of woman was a second act, and, in some sense, by derivation from the man, as a "help matching" him; "This," said Adam, "is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called Ish-sha, because she was taken out of Ish ;" and then it is added, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife : and they shall be one flesh." By the facts (however understood) and by the language employed this primeval record has placed the institution of marriage on a solid and enduring basis. Its witness stands at the beginning of human history, as a perpetual declaration of the will of God, on a subject which lies at the root of moral health, and at the foundation of social welfare. Through all the ages in which the canker of corruption spread, the violated principle remained on the sacred page, side by side with that of man's right of lordship in the world. It could not be neutralized by the

deviations which it condemned, deviations which began under specious reasons, even in the patriarchal time, and which are there marked by their proper consequences of family division and disquiet. It could not be effaced by the more reckless disregard, which obtained when Hebrew society was deeply infected by heathen corruption. It could not be impaired even by the restricted relaxations, by which the Mosaic Law made allowance for the state of things with which it had to deal. It remained unaltered and undimmed, to be reasserted in due time by Him Who came not to destroy, but to fulfil. Then His strong clear teaching not only cast aside the Pharisaic inventions for human licence, but terminated the exceptions which had been "suffered for the hardness of the heart," and restored with added majesty the commandment which was "from the beginning." So, in this chief department of morals, the law of Genesis became the law of Christianity, and that which was enacted for man created was re-enacted for man redeemed.

4. As we pass from the principles of law to those of life and character, we naturally turn to the first life that is clearly depicted, the first character which we really know. The power of that life and the ground of that character is *faith*. The father of the chosen race is the father of the faithful. St. Paul is our interpreter. With what love and reverence did the children of Abraham, through all their generations, look back to him in whom they saw their own origin; him who was chosen out from the world, who was "called the friend of God," who first received the promises, who transmitted them to his descendants, in whose bosom at last they hoped to rest! And the man himself was worthy of the feelings which were thus awakened. It was a grandly proportioned figure invested with dignity and grace; a pure and noble character, a high ideal, an ever-living influence. No man would feel all this more strongly than St. Paul. But to him was granted a clear perception of the principle which made Abraham the fit recipient of the promises and proper parent of the Church. For him light from heaven fell upon the words, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted unto him for righteousness." He who was preaching a "righteousness of God by faith in Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe," saw that this was the primitive doctrine, illustrated by the first example, antecedent to the covenant of Sinai, and "witnessed by the law and the prophets." "Our father Abraham" had now for him a closer paternity than he had once acknowledged, and more numerous descendants than he had once supposed, and more glorious promises than he had once understood. "Abraham," he would say, "believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness. Know there-

fore that they which be of faith, the same are sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the nations by faith, preached the Gospel beforehand unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all the nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham."

It may appear that this subject belongs to the doctrinal relations which were dealt with in the last paper; and so it does, but to the ethical relations too. Justification being an act of God, the conditions of it are matters of revealed doctrine; but the faith which is made its condition is a disposition or habit of mind, and is part of human experience. Faith is not only, before God, counted for righteousness, but is also, in the man, a basis of moral character; and "the just lives by faith," in the sense of its being his ruling principle in the life that now is, as well as his earnest of that which is to come. This is pointed out in Hebrews xi. 9-16, in respect of the patriarchal life on the whole as being one of abnegation and separation from the world. And as faith is shown to have this effect on the general habit, so has it also on the particular acts, as pre-eminently in the offering of Isaac, and in other acts by other persons recited in that chapter. It was faith, as St. James tells us, which "wrought with the works," and in so energising, "was itself made perfect." (Gal. iii. 6-9.)

The glory of this sanctifying as well as justifying principle, partially veiled under the law, was reserved to the adult age and mature life in Christ. Then it is said (and the words are remarkable), "*After that faith is come*, we are no longer under a tutor, but are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 25, 26); and, let it be observed, we are so, as having the spirit as well as the status of sons. The light which thus broke out from an obscuring haze had already gleamed brightly at the dawn of revelation. We are called to observe it by the great interpreter, who has shown, with a force and fulness to which nothing can be added, the unity of mind between the father of the faithful and his remote descendants, the harmony of the first stage of the Gospel with its last, and the vital relation in this respect between the Book of Genesis and the New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

5. The ethical teaching of the life of Abraham is that of a character of sustained dignity, strong in faith, giving glory to God. The apparently retired uneventful life of Isaac is much withdrawn from sight, but there is ethical teaching in the life of Jacob, of a very distinct kind. It speaks to those whose faith works up through faults and infirmities, and makes its way through chastisements and changes; to those who know shame and sorrow, and wounds to their affections, and anxious fore-

bodings, and self-reproaches and strivings with God. Surely these first records of life and character had been wanting in sympathy with future experiences of believers if they had contained no such portrait as this. Certainly they had then been wanting in the relation which they now have to a large part of the succeeding books, as narratives which so fully recognise the mingled characters and histories of men in their relation to God. Such, too, are the Psalms, which are voices of sensitive as well as of heroic minds, which breathe of all various experiences, and which so often present as true a wrestling and prevailing with God as that which took place at Penuel. It may be felt, too, by sympathetic readers of the Psalms and Prophets, that there is something more than a conventional use of the personal name of Jacob to represent the people in those changing conditions, which are but an enlarged reflection of the man's own life. There is ever an instinctive if not an intentional association between the lesser and the larger story, in such words as "Command deliverances for Jacob." "The name of the God of Jacob defend thee." "Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel." "It is the time of Jacob's trouble." "The Lord hath redeemed His servant Jacob." "Jacob shall not now be ashamed, neither shall his face now wax pale." "Then shall Jacob rejoice, and Israel shall be glad."

The narrative in Genesis passed on through the ages, not only as a picture of trial, but as a lesson of *hope*; all the more a lesson of hope because a picture of trial, for "hope that is seen is not hope." Through dubious passages, painful incidents, and pathetic voices, the story advances to dignity and honour. The promises, of which he had rightly understood the value, but which he had sought amiss, are always before him. He has repeated cause to acknowledge "all the mercies and all the truth which God had showed to His servant." He finds that the things which were "against him" were for him. He blesses on his death-bed "the God Who fed him all his life long unto that day, the Angel which redeemed him from all evil." He sums up his life in the words, "I have waited for Thy salvation, O Lord." The lonely exile of Bethel has become a nation in Egypt. Thus in a mind which reverts tenderly to the past, and which anxiously forecasts the future, there is still the expectation which is inspired by faith, and the whole effect of the story is a lesson of hope.

6. The life of Joseph is before us in the last division of the book, forming a happy completion, and one worthy of the large proportion of space allotted to it. It fulfils a conspicuous part in all the three relations which we have noted between Genesis and later revelation. In the *historical* relation it is not only the necessary introduction to the life in Egypt

and the events which follow, but is distinctly typical of that greater history which was accomplished after seventeen centuries. *Doctrinally* it taught the truth of that Providence by which Divine purposes are accomplished through the unconscious agency of man, purposes concealed in their course and disclosed in their result, of which, again, the redemption of the world is the great proof and example. *Ethically*, the story of Joseph has an even closer relation to the things that were to be, exhibiting in those distant days the mind of Christ, and fragrant with the very spirit of His Gospel. Under the simple truth and natural grace of the narrative the last section of Genesis connects itself by this threefold cord with the final stage of revelation.

The moral character and effect of the story are felt and recognised by all. Those who can appreciate little else in the Bible are touched, softened, and instructed by this. It is indeed a wonderful picture, that of the boy, his father's stay and comfort, hated and ill-used, sold to slavery, alone in a strange land, his very virtues turned against him, falsely accused, cast into prison and left there through the sweet years of early manhood ; yet never soured, never losing heart, always ready for any duty to be done or service to be rendered, firm against temptation, kind to fellow-prisoners, trusted by his master or his gaoler because faithful to conscience and to God. We see him then as a born king of men developing great powers, grasping great questions, controlling great events, meeting a terrible emergency, and shaping the constitution of a nation. This is the man who stands for ever as the very ideal of forgiving love. Frank and heartfelt as it was, his was no weak forgiveness, but thoughtful to arouse conscience, and patient till repentance appeared. The details of that exquisite story are in all our minds, fresh as when we read it in childhood, and affecting in their latest repetition. Who does not feel the sweet-ness of that yet unspoken forgiveness, those tender emotions, those natural tears, that brotherly kindness, that filial love ? Who can tell what has been their power in the world, to soften and sweeten, to heal and reconcile ; and even to assist reluctant Christian hearts in attaining the spirit of their creed ? In the Gospel of Christ the most urgent lessons are directed, the most affecting motives are brought to bear to fill the human heart with this same spirit of love. In this respect the ethics of Genesis, pre-eminently in its closing section, are at one with the ethics of the Gospel.

We are used to these patriarchal records as an integral part of the Bible, and in that position the character we have noted appears quite natural. But, if we take them by themselves, as being (what in the first place they are) the ancestral tradi-

tions of Israel, that character is a singular phenomenon. They occupy for this people the same place which for other races is also filled by the traditional stories of their reputed founders or typical heroes. We know what these are in general. But here, instead of fragmentary legends we have clear and simple narratives; instead of dream-like figures, we see men like those we know; instead of wild exploits, romantic achievements, and the pride of war and conquest, we behold in these first heirs of promise a separation from the course and spirit of the world, common virtues disciplined in common trials, "touches of nature which make the whole world kin," scenes by which the heart is made better, and in distinct relief three living lessons of *faith, and hope, and charity.*

Thus in respect of historical method, doctrinal faith, and ethical spirit, the Book of Genesis fitly opens the course of revelation and the development of the kingdom of God. Thus it appears as part of a great design, the original part, fundamental to the rest, shaped by the same hand, vitalized by the same breath, which have presided over the formation of the entire Book which the Catholic Church acknowledges as the written Word of God.

T. D. BERNARD.



ART. V.—THOMAS GRAY.¹

M R. GOSSE, in the series of "English Men of Letters," has given us a book which will probably be the standard authority upon Gray for the future. It is a very graceful as well as most interesting monograph. The edition is in four volumes, and is more complete than any that has yet appeared. It is certainly remarkable that all the writings of a classic so distinguished as Gray had not been given in any one edition to the world before. Mason had made a collection of the "letters" and a few of the minor prose works, and had also printed a variety of the posthumous poems. The Rev. John Mitford published the first accurate edition of the poems, and Mathias has published the works of Gray in two quarto volumes; but many of the poet's letters and verses, though published in various forms and sizes, have never been included in Gray's works. It remained for the Clark Lecturer on English

¹ *Gray*, by EDMUND W. GOSSE. "English Men of Letters." Macmillan and Co. *The Works of Gray*, by EDMUND GOSSE. Macmillan and Co.