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strength, but that he knows better that he needs, that he is thrown back upon, the ultimate realities, the spiritual and the eternal. And the man or woman who will feel this most profoundly is the man or woman who has suffered most.

With everything that St. Paul lost—his ambition, his friends, and last of all the Church—there was the mutual assurance in persecution, the mutual joy and happiness in the communion of the Lord. And then those, too, are taken, and he is left in prison, chained day and night to a soldier guard. Surely no man ever lost more. To no man could the weakness that he spoke of mean more real, more heart-searching deprivation.

But then it came—it was coming more fully with each thing that he lost—the glorious vision of what God really is, and man in Him.

Every time of solitude, deprivation, friendlessness, has an enormous strength to give. We should win from it larger, truer ideas of what the world is, our fellow-men, ourselves, God. That was the strength that came to men like Hannington, imprisoned by savages, stricken with fever, and called out to be murdered while the ink was still wet on the page where he had written that he was held up by that thirtieth psalm, 'Therefore shall every good man sing of thy praise without ceasing: O my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever': the strength that is seen in the last words of Gordon to his sister, when it was too late for rescue—'God rules all. I am quite happy, thank God.' And, like Lawrence—'I have tried to do my duty.' It is the time of weakness that makes the hero and the saint.

The deepest lesson of weakness comes from the Cross. If you feel that you are losing your sense of the nearness of God, that, when the things you have been brought up to believe in are questioned, denied, mocked at, you have no answer ready because the questionings have eaten into your own heart; even if you feel as if the love of God was failing you because you cannot tell if there be a God at all, then remember the things that you do know—that 'to be brave and true and pure is better than to be cowardly and false and foul.' You do know that right is right, that the serious work, the happy companionship, the unselfish sympathy with others who perhaps are *not* strong, not industrious, not happy, do bring their own reward. Your time of weakness—for weakness it is to be, for the time, bereft of God—may bring you to see clearly what is real goodness, real work, real duty—what lies behind all these overlaying cares of our beset and hurried life. Only let your true desires be set on character, duty, goodness, and God will bring you to them, through the weak things that are temporal, to the things of power that are eternal. That is the lesson of the Cross. It was a great victory. Weakness, failure, desertion; so it seems. But not one word from the Lord, of blame of others; not one word that does not mean love, and patience, and forgiveness, and trust: those are the greatest things in the world, because they are the links between us and God; they are the strongest, because they cast the soul simply and entirely on our Father which is in heaven.[1]

[1] W. H. Hutton, *A Disciple's Religion*, 217.

Poverty in the Old Testament.

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The economic aspect of ancient Israel's life has not been very extensively considered by British or American scholars. Brief but suggestive discussions may be found in Orello Cone, *Rich and Poor in the New Testament*; Rauschenbusch, *Christianity and the Social Crisis*; Keeble, *The Social Teaching of the Bible*; and Louis Wallis, *Sociological Study of the Bible*. The subject is more fully treated by Sir George Adam Smith in the first volume of his *Jerusalem*, and by C. Ryder Smith in *The Bible Doctrine of Society* and *The Bible Doctrine of Wealth and Work*. In French the most elaborate of recent discussions is *Les 'Pauvres' d'Israel* by the Strasbourg professor, A. Causse; in German the subject has been treated frequently—by Buhl, Herrmann, Kleinert, Köberle, Löhr, Nowack, Walter, Weber, Wilke, and others. One aspect of the subject [1] has been recently presented

[1] *Die Beurteilung der Armut im Alten Testament* (Verlag Friedrich Andreas Perthes, Gotha, Stuttgart).

by a Swiss pastor, Dr. Hans Bruppacher, with considerable fulness and vividness, and a sketch of his book may be not unwelcome to readers of THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

The discussion, which is confined to the problem of poverty in the Old Testament, is divided into three parts: (i) the impression made by the references to poverty in the OT; (ii) the motives underlying the OT criticism of poverty; and (iii) the causes of poverty according to the estimate of the OT. There is a little, perhaps inevitable, overlapping in the argument, which fortunately is broad enough to include discussions of asceticism and immortality.

(i) Dr. Bruppacher begins by asking whether, in the view of the OT, poverty is an inalienable element in the world order? Is it in accordance with, or is it opposed to, the will of God? Is its disappearance conceivable or desirable? His answer is that the OT regards poverty as an evil; it is not rooted in the will of God, and its disappearance would be in accordance with His will. Very numerous and harrowing are the descriptions of the sorrows of the poor (cf. Job $24^{7ff.}$), who, for a trifling debt, are liable to lose their liberty or to have their children sold into slavery. Poverty, with the conduct that leads to it, such as indolence and suretyship (cf. Pr.), is a spectre to be avoided at any price. Its sharpest sting, however, is not hunger and privation, but the social disabilities which it involves. The poor man is treated as a sort of outlaw, a fit subject for all kinds of exploitation and injustice, and, with no money to bribe the judge, he is practically without legal redress; for the average judge was more like those denounced by Isaiah (1^{23}) than like the clean-handed Samuel ($1\ S\ 12^{3}$). Excessive interest was charged for any money the poor man was obliged to borrow, and he was entirely at the mercy of his creditor, who, for his rapacity, had nothing to fear. David's early followers were recruited largely from the ranks of debtors ($1\ S\ 22^{2}$), and in Nehemiah's time, in order to secure necessary money from the wealthy nobles, the common people had to part not only with their houses and vineyards, but with their sons and daughters (Neh 5). To fall into the usurer's hands, as the poor often did, was one of the bitterest of accursed experiences (Ps 109^{11}). The general sorrows of the poor were intensified in the case of the widow or the orphan, for whom the OT throughout has the most compassionate regard. A man after all had some legal rights, a woman technically had none. How hard the widow's lot could be may be inferred from the imprecation in Ps 109^{9}. The horror which the contemplation of poverty evoked came, by a natural transition, to be transferred to the victims of poverty, the more readily as, according to the prevailing view of retribution, such men were regarded as wicked and godless. The poor man therefore ran the risk of being hated by his friends (Pr 14^{20}), even by his brethren (19^{7}), and the wisdom that might be in him was disregarded (Ec $9^{15f.}$).

Such, then, is the OT view of poverty. It is an evil, almost indeed *the* evil; it ought not to be. This conclusion is not contradicted by the frequent emphasis on the transitoriness of riches (Ps 49^{17}, Pr $23^{4f.}$): there is little consolation in this to the poor man, for no man knows better than he that the poverty to which the rich man may be reduced is a terrible thing. In all periods poverty is regarded as a grievous evil. It is strange, especially when the dangers of wealth were so clearly recognized, that there is no recognition in the OT of the ascetic value of poverty: the absence of this may be due to the deep impression made by the hard and inhuman lot of the poor.

Now what is the relation of God to poverty? Throughout the OT He appears as the Defender of the poor, who are regarded as the victims of social conditions that are not willed by the God who is the Creator of all the wealth of the world (Hos 2^{8}). It is not His will that any should be poor or hungry (Dt 8^{7-9}, Ezk 34^{29} 36^{30}). Repeatedly the wickedness of oppressing the poor and the duty of alleviating their lot are emphasized. The unwearying defence of them by the prophets shows how deeply human poverty is opposed to the Divine will. Two passages have been held to suggest that poverty is part of the world order and in accordance with the will of God. They are these:

> 'The rich and the poor meet together:
> Jahweh is the maker of them all' (Pr 22^{2}).
>
> 'The poor man and the oppressor meet together:
> Jahweh lighteneth the eyes of them both' (Pr 29^{13}).

But this means nothing more than that life has set them together: the second clause does not mean that it is God who makes the rich rich and the poor poor, but simply that He is the Creator of rich and poor as He is the Creator of all; and the synonymity of 'oppressor' (29^{13}) and 'rich' (22^{2}) is highly significant. The statement in Dt 15^{11},

that 'the poor will never cease out of the land,' which has been held to imply a fatalistic acquiescence in the permanence of poverty, has to be read in the light of its context (15[1-11]), which is one sustained and eloquent appeal for the combating of poverty, as manifestly opposed to the will of God, and especially in the light of v.[4], 'there shall be no poor with thee'—which indeed (whether a gloss or not) may have been intended to combat by anticipation the fatalistic interpretation of v.[11]. No more does 1 S 2[7] ('Jahweh maketh poor and maketh rich') prove that poverty is God's will: for the context (vv.[4f. 8]) treats it as the penalty of pride. Poverty may, of course, as in Job's case, be a test of a man's moral quality, but the fact that it can be a test only proves that, in its essence, it is foreign to the purpose of God for man.

In the solidarity of nomadic and tribal life, there is practically no problem of poverty; this emerges only after the transition to the settled life rendered possible by the establishment of the monarchy with the consequent rise of trade and commerce and their concomitant luxury. As the rich became richer, the poor became poorer. The increasing recognition of the evil of poverty is due to the great prophets, and it finds expression in the successive law-books of Israel: Dt. marks a distinct advance on the Book of the Covenant in the laws governing pledges and the release of a slave debtor (cf. Ex 22[26f.] with Dt 24[6], and Ex 21[2ff.] with Dt 15[12ff.]); even the ritual P, in the laws governing the harvest (Lev 19[9] 23[22]), shows a more deliberately tender interest in the poor than the humane Deuteronomist (Dt 24[19]). Further, the dogma of retribution which maintained that the good were rewarded with good things, and the evil punished, as frequently in Pr. and Job, with poverty, clearly shows that poverty was regarded as an evil.

(ii) How does it come that Israel debates the problem of poverty so earnestly and combats poverty so passionately? Considering the ethical earnestness of the prophets, it is impossible and absurd to charge them with materialism in their championship of the rights of the poor. They are disinterested and incorruptible opponents of poverty, because they believe that it, and the social conditions which create it, are in opposition to the will of God. Their attitude to poverty is rooted in their faith in God as the God of the resources of the world. Poverty has ideally no place in a land which He has visited with blessing (Ps 65[9-13]); He is the enemy of poverty, and He delights to lift the poor out of his misery (Ps 107[41]). All social life should be inspired by the recognition of His presence, and this recognition is shown in operation in regard for the poor. But this obligation is often ignored by the arrogance of those who are in high place, and the God who alone is exalted—as Isaiah reminds us in his splendid poem (2[12-17])—is the implacable foe of pride, and consequently of the poverty created by the proud and unscrupulous exercise of power. The prophets fiercely defend the poor, in part because they are the victims of a pride which is hateful to Jahweh (cf. 1 K 12[1-14]). The wealth of the world is God's, and to become rich by making others poor is to defy the God who is the Creator of both. The stories of the patriarchs, however, of Abraham, Job, Boaz, show that riches, though frequently, are by no means inevitably associated with pride.

From all this it is easy to see how naturally faith in Jahweh's care for the poor would develop: they are *His* poor (Ps 72[2]). This thought of the Divine care for the poor appears, of course, in other literatures also, but it is nowhere expressed with the same frequency or passion as in the OT: it receives very touching expression, *e.g.*, in both versions of the Hagar story (Gn 16 and 21). The fundamental character of this conception of Jahweh is shown in the supreme significance attached to the redemption of Israel from the bondage of Egypt, a redemption which illustrates His pity as much as His power; and to this redemption prophets and legislators continually revert, basing upon it their demand for Israel's obedience to Jahweh's will. Thus pity is not merely an element in His character, it is of His very essence, without it He would not be Jahweh; and those who are named by His name must reflect that pity. This passionate interest in the poor and needy shines from many an historical narrative: it inspires some of the patriarchal stories (cf. Hagar, Joseph); it is seen in the loving detail of Nathan's parable of the poor man with the one ewe lamb, and in the story of the widow of Zarephath. Especially does the widow evoke the compassionate interest of prophets and legislators: a poor man's garment may not be detained overnight, but a widow's may not be taken in pledge at all (Dt 24[12f. 17]). Jahweh is the Defender of the widow (Ps 68[5]). Profoundly significant of Israel's attitude is Jeremiah's estimate of Josiah (Jer 22[15f.]), which implies that to do

justice to the poor is to know Jahweh. No criterion could be more practical than that.

In the later literature, and especially in the Psalms, the poor and the pious are practically synonymous. Doubtless the prophetic championship of the poor contributed to this association, which would be still further strengthened by the experience of exile, though the exile alone could not have created it, for that was regarded as a penalty for sin. The deepest explanation, however, of the OT attitude to poverty lies in its ethical conception of God. Jahweh is a God with a character, and He demands character from His worshippers. It is for this reason that the prophets depreciate—some would say, attack—the cult. Cult is as nothing to character: the religion of Jahweh must express itself in the discharge of socio-ethical obligation. In this demand Moses, Elijah, Nathan are at one with the literary prophets, and even the cultic P (Lev 19^{9}), to say nothing of the incomparable thirty-first chapter of Job, shows how profound was the effect of their teaching upon later generations. OT ethics are social ethics. In the name of the God they worship, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah, and Jeremiah demand that justice and mercy shall reign in human society. In the OT the goal of moral effort is not the perfection of the individual, but the objective realization of the will of God, which is a moral will directed towards righteousness and love. It is in social life, within the relationship of man to man, that that will is done. Thus as the prophets are striving for a society inspired by justice, kindness, and love, they are bound to combat ruthlessly all that destroys this or makes it impossible. The sins of which Eliphaz accuses Job (Job 22) are social sins, the virtues claimed by Job are in the main social virtues (31), chastity and sincerity being merely mentioned incidentally: this is characteristic of OT ethics. Foreign to the OT is a romantic ethic, which aims only at the culture of the individual life.

There is in the OT no ascetic evaluation of poverty, no such appreciation of it as may be found in Buddhist or Christian monasticism, as a means of overcoming the earthly and the sensuous. The Rechabite ideal (Jer 35) has nothing in common with asceticism: the aim of the Rechabites in abstaining from the life of the cultivated land was not that, in the simple life of the desert, they might remain unentangled by the perilous attractions of civilization; it was simply to preserve the old nomadic culture. It is not true to say that the prophets, like the Rechabites, advocated a return to the simple life of the olden time: they did not flee from the world, they sought to establish a new and worthy society *in* the world. If there were pious circles in Israel that thought to commend themselves to Jahweh by asceticism, they certainly can have played no great rôle. The absence of reference to any such group is significant and renders their existence improbable—an improbability heightened by these two considerations: (i) that Jahweh is the Lord of the wealth of the world, out of which He 'satisfies every living thing,' and (ii) that poverty is not the will of God, and that it is a mark of true piety to combat it. To bodily asceticism, as expressed in fasting, is twice opposed, in post-exilic writings, the *askesis*, or practice of love. In both passages, Zec 7^{1-10} and Is 58^{3-7}, the opposition is very deliberate and explicit: the fast for which Jahweh cares is a fast, not from food, but from injustice and unkindness. In view of other passages in Trito-Isaiah which emphasize the importance of cultic duties (Sabbath, 56^{2}; sacrifice, 66^{3}), Duhm and Haller believe that the prophet is depreciating not fasting, but only the wrong kind of fasting, *i.e.* one which is unaccompanied by kindness to the needy; but the other interpretation is so much more natural that it is easier to believe that this passage is not from the same hand as the others. There are indeed certain temporary abstentions, *e.g.* of nazirites from wine, of warriors from intercourse, of Jeremiah—but for special reasons which make his case exceptional—from marriage. These temporary abstentions are sufficient to show that a mild and occasional ascetism is not inconsistent with faith in God as the Enricher of life and the Giver of all good things. But such sporadic practices do not invalidate the conclusion that there is, strictly speaking, no ascetic evaluation of poverty in the OT. The 'poor and needy' of the Psalter may or may not have been really poor; presumably, at any rate, they were not poor in every case; but they certainly did not constitute a party or order, like St. Francis' Order of Poor Brethren. Rather does the name, though originally not unconnected with the economic aspect of Hebrew life, imply there a certain direction of the religious spirit. There was no 'congregation' of the poor any more than there was a 'congregation' of the wicked.

The hope of immortality can reconcile men to the hardships of this world, and even weaken or

destroy the impulse to remove them. But glimpses of this hope are extremely rare in the OT (cf. Ps $73^{25f.}$, Job $19^{26f.}$, Dn 12^{2}): the great prophets did their work and made their demands upon men without it. Life in Sheol was a shadow life, it was not the enhancement but the loss of the happiness of this present life. Sheol is the one part of the universe that is never represented as having been created by Jahweh. His power, His blessing, His love must therefore be experienced, if at all, in this world, for there is no compensation in Sheol. It is in the existing society of living men that His purposes of righteousness and salvation must be wrought out; it is here that wrongs must be righted and justice, by Him as well as by men, be done. Poverty is a wrong and an evil to be obliterated, and necessarily to be obliterated here, as not in accordance with the Divine will. Thus the meagre reference to immortality in the OT is not altogether a sign of religious weakness: it is the indirect expression of a mighty faith that *this* world must have a meaning, and that *here* the honour of God must be vindicated.

(iii) What, according to the OT, are the causes of poverty? In the OT, as elsewhere, it is frequently regarded as a self-incurred evil, directly due to indolence or extravagance or love of ease and comfort. This view is energetically and repeatedly expressed in the Book of Proverbs. The clear-eyed prophets must have been well aware of the truth of this view, but, curiously enough, they never mention it: they find the chief causes of social distress to lie elsewhere. We get an occasional glimpse in the historical books of the supercilious attitude of the rich to the poor, and of the glib explanations by which they justified it. This cavalier demeanour is well illustrated, for example, by Nabal's haughty reply to David's request that a little consideration be shown to his men (1 S $25^{10f.}$). 'Who are they?' asks Nabal; 'nothing but a band of runaway slaves, coming from who knows where.' Also the case of Jephthah, disinherited as the son of a harlot (Jg 11^{1-3}), illustrates the popular tendency to connect poverty with immorality, even though the sufferer be not himself to blame, just as Proverbs more justly regards it as the direct consequence to the immoral man himself of his immoral conduct; and doubtless those who made the life of the poor man hard for him maintained with a certain shallow sincerity that he got what he deserved.

But poverty might also be the result of calamity. The death of a husband and father created a widow and orphans. And if famine and drought might gravely affect the fortunes of wealthy patriarchs, even compelling them to migrate, how much more gravely must such disasters have affected the fortunes of the poor! The siege of a city, of Samaria, *e.g.* (2 K 6^{24-29}), or Jerusalem (La 4^{10} $2^{11f.}$), must often have reduced the inhabitants to desperate straits in which women devoured even their own children. So poverty and privation may be due to an inescapable fate. But so far is the OT from being fatalistic that it seeks to counteract the blows of fate which shatter the fortunes of widows and orphans by its insistent demand for their support. Where no loving response is made to their need, it is not nature or fate but sin, the sin of fellow-citizens, that is responsible.

This leads to the consideration of the social problem. An ever-recurring theme of prophecy is that much poverty is directly traceable to the exploitation of the poor by the rich. The prophets do not, indeed, theorize about economic conditions, but they regard poverty as the direct result of oppression by arrogant and conscienceless wealth. At this point, however, a slight difficulty emerges. If poverty is the consequence of oppression, the natural inference is that the man now poor was formerly not poor. This, however, is seldom clear beyond cavil: it is the poor who are represented as being exploited. Is this to be taken quite literally, or does it mean that people in ordinary circumstances *became* poor by being exploited? The counsel in Pr 22^{22}—'rob not the poor, because he is poor'—shows that the former alternative, at any rate, sometimes represents the fact. The poor man might be forcibly prevented by his employer or social superior from rising by his industry out of his poverty. The oppression of those who are already crushed naturally aggravates the crime, and this accounts for the passionate defence of the oppressed by prophets and legislators. But some passages put it beyond reasonable doubt that the 'poor' had not always been poor to begin with: 'the poor' in such a phrase as 'to crush the poor' may conceivably be proleptic, *i.e.* 'to crush men so that they become poor.' The men who owned the fields and houses of which they were subsequently robbed, and who elicited the pity of Isaiah (5^{8}) and Micah (2^{2}) cannot, to begin with, have been poor in the strict sense of the word. Un-

scrupulous exploitation, therefore, was undoubtedly one—if not the chief—of the causes of poverty.

But poverty, besides being connected with indolence as effect with cause, is sometimes threatened as a Divine punishment for sins with which it is not causally connected, just as sins which might be expected to lead to poverty are sometimes punished otherwise. The individual, for example, is occasionally threatened with hunger, and the people with famine, for sins not directly specified (cf. Pr 13^{25}), or for transgression of the law (Dt $28^{15ff.\ 47f.}$). Where the connexion is causal and obvious, the attitude to life tends, as in Proverbs, to become utilitarian, and the particular sin which may issue in poverty may be avoided from no higher a motive than prudence. But where the connexion is not causal, the obligation to submit the whole of life to the will of God and to a genuinely ethical standard, becomes more keenly felt. The *jus talionis*, which ordains that he who reduces others to poverty, shall himself end in poverty, finds pictorial expression in Mic $6^{13ff.}$ Job $20^{18ff.}$, and elsewhere. The frequency of the references to poverty as a Divine punishment shows that the good things of this life have value in the sight of God and, ideally at least, fall to those who do His will. In this context an interesting question is raised by certain words of two widows. Naomi laments that her lot is bitter and that the hand of Jahweh is against her (Ru $1^{13.\ 20f.}$), and the widow of Zarephath confesses that the presence of Elijah calls her sin to remembrance (1 K 17^{18}). What idea underlies these words? So far as the record goes, the lives of both these women were irreproachable. Yet we cannot suppose that, overwhelmed with grief for the loss of her dead son, the Phœnician widow was, in an hour for her so solemn, uttering only an empty phrase. Perhaps her words are to be explained by the consideration that it is the deeper and more sensitive natures that are most keenly conscious of their sinfulness. Among such natures both these women may be reckoned. They are not bowing before an inscrutable or capricious Force! they—especially the foreign woman—say what they say, because they are genuinely conscious of their sinfulness in the sight of God, though this thought would doubtless not be felt by them in all its fulness.

To conclude: the OT does not show, on the economic side, how poverty is to be overcome. The prophets never deal technically with the economic reconstruction of society, even the legislators have not always a clear glimpse into what is practicable. It has been argued that all the eloquent and passionate appeals of the prophets were unavailing, because they made no attempt to create an organization for the administration of justice which would be independent of the caprice of individuals; but, as Duhm points out, this was the task reserved for European peoples, and the prophets, had their words had only a narrow reference to their own people and their own time, would have had no more than an historical interest for us to-day. It is their imperishable glory that they laid bare the ethical and religious foundations of human society, without which no merely economic reconstruction can be permanently satisfactory or stable, and that they passionately insisted upon the indefeasible importance of personal worth.

This is but an imperfect sketch of a highly suggestive and thought-provoking book. The broad outlines of the argument are here presented, but numerous incidental points have been necessarily omitted, points as interesting as those which have been recorded.

Recent Foreign Theology.

German Impressions of the Stockholm Conference.

THE German press, both secular and religious, has paid great attention to the Stockholm Conference on Life and Work. Criticism of its proceedings has not been lacking, but it is pure gain that the German public should be fully informed concerning all that took place at this remarkable gathering.

A place of honour must be given to *Die Christliche Welt*, for its recognition of the significance of the Conference. Its editor, Dr. Martin Rade—a friend of all international Christian movements—pub-