

of God, even though Moses believed them so to be. Knowing, as we do from accounts in history, what cruel barbarities have been inflicted upon mankind in the name of religion, by men who thought they were doing God's will, we can understand why Hebrew zealots would feel it right to put to death apostates from their once cherished faith, but when the Deuteronomist tells us that the Lord inspired Moses to command the people to do this we must attribute the sentiment not to God but to men who, "in the times of ignorance," failed to read the mind of God. We may be quite sure God did not inspire the declaration: "If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, 'Let us go and serve other gods,' which thou hast not known—thou, nor thy fathers,—thou shalt not consent unto him, nor harken unto him; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him; *but thou shalt surely kill him*; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death." No, no! Our Father, "with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning," is not to be held accountable for the thought; it is due alone to the imperfections of men who had not yet learned to read clearly the mind of God, or to understand the law of love.

He who reads the Bible and fails to recognize this human element of imperfection, misses that which lends the most value to the Scriptures as a guide to religion. An ingenious writer in a treatise, recently published, entitled "The Law of Laws," considers the Bible as the Word of God, and invests its words with an esoteric meaning, which is not shown to the general reader. In brief, he infers that the Hebrews wrote under an inspiration of God, which caused them to use words that have a hidden meaning, that is only unfolded as man himself develops

to the capacity of understanding them. He thus makes the words of the ancient writers bear within themselves far greater significance than those writers thought of putting into them, a meaning far deeper than they themselves were possible of understanding in their age and degree of advancement, and he indicates that this was for the very purpose of making the words of Scripture the vehicle of Divine thought that would apply to the understanding of men in *all* ages and in *all* stages of development. This is new only so far as he puts the spiritual elasticity in the Hebrew words, giving them an ideal meaning that is discoverable only by earnest souls that, in unity of purpose, study through them the mind of God. Ministers in our own religious society are prone to treat the Scriptures in a somewhat similar way, by what they term "spiritualizing" the text. Much is lost by this. The more we keep in view the human element in the Hebrew character the easier it is to understand the Bible, the richer it becomes in spiritual teaching.

The great distinguishing virtue of the Hebrews, in all stages of their development, was that they put their trust in righteousness. What, says some one, were the brutal wars of the Judges, the treachery of Moses, the immorality of David, evidences that the Hebrews put their trust in righteousness? Let us not judge these events from the wrong standpoint. We must not clothe the Judges, Moses and David, with the civilization of our age, but must view them from the standards of their own times. Brutal as were the wars of the Judges, we shall find they never conducted a war which they did believe to be a righteous one. However they may have been mistaken in *our* opinion, *they* were quite sure they were faithful to the will of Jehovah, and that their cause was therefore just. They did not carry on warfare for plunder, or for mere conquest as, shame to say, so called Christian nations have often done; they waged it only for what they