

the higher motives through which God blesses our human kind," yet men subject to human imperfections, when we behold as a result of their work in the world a steady advance of righteousness among mankind, we can properly estimate a record of endeavor and achievement that is inspiring and helpful. We need not be concerned about the authorship of the books. We need not be troubled about the contradictory statements therein. We need not stumble over the evidences of immoralities that seem justified therein; but we do need to study to appreciate the *processes* by which, in the conscience of the Hebrew race, righteousness came to prevail more and more.

It is my purpose in the series of articles to trace this progress of righteousness in the Hebrew religion. In doing this I shall show that there are contradictions in the Bible which cannot be reconciled upon any theory of inspiration, that there are traditions that are not more reliable as history than are the myths of any other ancient nation, and that there are exaggerated statements in the form of statistics that cannot possibly be sustained by facts.

I ask that my readers may dispossess their minds of prejudice to such a degree, at least, as to cease to read their own sentiments into the Bible, as do those who put an allegorical or spiritual significance into what is simply narrative, and is intended to be historical. Too long have good people read the Bible simply to find in it a sustainment of their own views. Too long have Christians gone to it simply to find "proof texts" of their own creeds. Too long have well-meaning persons advised that you lay aside your reason when you read the Bible, that you pass over the passages that seem bad in their teaching, and await the time when God shall open your understanding to the mysteries which he has therein concealed. None of these practices can possibly reveal the treasures of the Bible; no one can understand the Bible who adopts such

methods. No one is competent to give advice upon the subject who has adopted them. He only who uses the best powers of his mind and his heart, who studies the Bible, not to idolize it, nor yet to disparage it, will glean from it its purest thought, its best instruction, its highest inspiration.

In the forthcoming series I shall try to pursue this course.

WM. M. JACKSON.

PAST—FUTURE.

A paper read at the twenty-first anniversary of London Grove First-day School, 1st mo. 6th, 1895, by J. P. R.

While we believe with Adelaide Proctor that

"Every day is a fresh beginning,
Every morn is the world made new."

yet in a special manner the thought of ending one thing and beginning another, comes to us when a year, recently our own, is lost in the abyss of ages. The year now fading into the shadows of the things that are behind, has left its marks of joy or pain upon each mind and heart, ineffaceable traces which help to make us what we are and shall be through the years that are to come. The angel of the backward look reveals to us resolves not translated into action, purposes unfulfilled, possibilities unrealized. But it brightens the picture with sunny days and happy memories, and if we have lived with righteous purpose, in spite of our failures and omissions, we stand again ready to close a door upon the past, conscious of strength and power, knowledge and hope gained, in the span of days now closing. We may only casually glance at the record which the angel writes, for time in his swift course knows no pause, and while we live the present and think of the past, we must make ready to follow the angel of the future, who comes to us always radiant with hope, ready to convey us with swift sure wings over the heights and through the upper air, if we can follow, or patiently to lead us over rough and devious paths if we can