

THE IDEALS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

II.—THE IDEAL SAINT.

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Strictly speaking, the ideal saint ought to be identical with the ideal man, and the theme of this paper might have been covered under the title of the previous one. The more especially as it was then pointed out that the Jewish conception of ideal manhood was almost purely an ethical one. But the point is one of sufficient importance to call for somewhat fuller treatment than it then received. For, even assuming that the national conception of the ideal saint is an ethical one, there are still various types of ethical ideals. It is a matter of importance which of these is to be regarded as the dominant one in their literature, and how far the true nature of an ethical ideal is really understood.

Roughly speaking, we may distinguish at least four types of character that have a claim to be considered as ethically worthy. First of all there is the ceremonial type, which is disposed to make much of ritual and to seek the attainment of holiness through the punctilious observance of forms which regulate conduct in a somewhat artificial way, under the direction of superior authority. Then next there is the ascetic type, which seeks the same end through the mortification of the flesh. It regards the body as a clog to the soul, and therefore endeavors to reduce its influence to the lowest dimensions by denying it every indulgence or gratification that it is possible to cut off and still live. Thirdly, we find a confessional type, which exalts knowledge or orthodoxy as the guarantee for right action, and attaches the highest importance to sound views of truth, especially such truth as has been revealed through properly accredited agents in the past. And finally we have the spiritual or mystical type, which