

the Hebrew religion does not, however, see in David, but in Samuel and Nathan, the purest expression of the Divine message in the human heart, 3,000 years ago. David was more than a king. He may well be honored as the mighty king of Israel, whose military genius welded the scattered tribes into a homogeneous people and made of them a nation able to maintain itself against the assaults of all enemies from without. But had he been only this his fame and value to posterity would have been no greater than that of Hiram, King of Tyre, his friend and equal on the field of battle.

But David was greater than all the kings of the world in his or earlier times because he gathered around him advisers like Samuel, Gad and Nathan, Abiathar, Abimelech and Zadok, counsellors of righteous aspirations. Morally David was weak. Here it might be said that the Psalms which bear David's name are certainly evidences of his exalted spiritual character, but we must not be misled by the superscription of these beautiful poems which point to him as their author. We must undoubtedly look to a far more recent age than David's for the origin of most if not all of the Psalms, and it is well for the character of David that the "Higher Criticism" relieves him of the duplicity of writing hymns of such tenderness and sweetness as the 23rd and 51st, and at the same time violating in his conduct the letter and spirit of them. We must judge David's character by the history given in the books of Samuel, a history so full of minute details that it comes to us with the freshness that it would have were the writer an eye-witness of that which he records, who did "nothing extenuate nor set down aught in malice."

Saul had failed to maintain the confidence of the prophetic party in Israel. David kept himself always in touch with the prophets and, to a large degree, under their influence, and abased himself under their rebukes, as when

Gad denounced him for ordering a census of the people (2nd Sam xxiv.) and Nathan rebuked him for his degradation in the case of Bathsheba. The value of David's example in our study of the development of the Hebrew conception of God is the evidence it gives of the rule of conscience over many acts of his life, as for instance in his generous treatment of Saul (1 Sam. xxiv. 1-12), in his repentance under the rebuke of Nathan, in his humility during the rebellion of his son Absalom, and especially in his bearing under the curses of Shimei (2 Sam. xvi. 5-14). It was for this reason that the prophets regarded David as a man after Jehovah's own heart. But we must not look to David as this man. Because of the weakness of his moral character his life was chequered with deeds that shock us. The pathetic picture of Rizpah (2 Sam. xxi.) and of his withdrawal on his death bed of his forgiveness of Shimei (1 Kings ii., 8, 9) are evidences that not to David, but to the prophets who at times controlled the actions of David, we must look to find the purest religious attainment in Israel 1000 years before the Christian era. The prophets listened for the Word of God, fortunately for the world David listened to the prophets.

WM. M. JACKSON.

New York, 11th mo., 1895.

EXTREME DOCTRINES.

I must beg leave to resume this subject. It is of much importance if Friends desire that their Society should increase or even hold its own. For in either case they must revise their creed, and I would be willing that this be made the test of the necessity of so doing.

And first let me oppose to the authority of Tolstoi that of Doctor Megee, Archbishop of York, who some months ago shocked orthodox England by declaring that if the teachings of Jesus were observed, society could not