

## LECTURE V.

## JUDAISM.

JUDAISM is the development of Mosaism, the carrying into practice, through a long historic period, of the principles laid down in the Mosaic system. Reviewing the whole religious history of the world, we may, without violence of imagination, discern a triad division, somewhat like the dual triad division of the six creation days, in which the first, second, and third days, respectively, supply a preparation and basis for the work of the fourth, fifth, and sixth. The first member of that triad is Primeval Revelation, with its outcome in Patriarchal Religion; the last is Christianity, whose history is to include all ages to the end of time; the middle term is Mosaism, with its issue in Judaism. Thus, Primeval Revelation unfolds itself practically through the Patriarchal period. Special revelation is then com-

paratively scanty and feeble. With the least possible Divine interposition, man is left to work out his own destiny, and, by long painful experience, it is demonstrated to him that his own unaided or slightly aided powers are unequal to the task of self-preservation from moral deterioration and religious decay. The whole world was sinking or had sunk into idolatry and godlessness, when God snatched one witness to truth from the universal error. Adam was the progenitor and representative of the whole race. But the whole race descended from him sunk lower and lower, and are swept away with sudden and universal destruction. Only Noah and his family are preserved, to be in a sense the progenitors of a new world. The result here was as disappointing as before. All the races and tongues of earth speedily declined from the knowledge and service of the one true God. The cure for this crying evil is not, as formerly, destruction. But, while the world in general is allowed to go on in the way which men perversely chose, a new father of a peculiar race is separated from the rest of mankind. Abraham is called to be "the father of the faithful." The Divine operation is restricted, as it were, to

a portion of the race, few in number, mean in culture, insignificant in power, yet destined to grow into a nation, and still more to find its hope realised in blessing all the nations of the earth. To this chosen people the special grace of God is confined. To them is vouchsafed special privilege and superintendence.

1. In Mosaism there is a great outburst of Divine energy, unprecedented fulness of Revelation, giving Divine direction on all points of morality, worship, and ceremonial, of private, social, and public duties, in every conceivable condition in which man is required to act. Judaism is the complement of Mosaism. It is Mosaism applied. It has its long historic period of more than a thousand years. It, too, fails. For surely that has failed which has not succeeded in preserving its own privileged race from general declension, both morally and religiously, and still less in recovering the other races of the great human family, and in accomplishing its own promise and hope of being a blessing to all the families of earth. Then comes the Christian Revelation, occupying, like Mosaism, a period brief indeed, but one of intense spiritual energy and revelational force—of such energy and force that there is

almost no parallel, certainly no equal. A few years—not more than 70—cover the duration of Christian Revelation, but the whole succeeding ages of time shall be the practical commentary on it. Its distinctive features and its probable effect are our next subject, and need not here be entered upon. What has been said is only to shew in what light we are to view Judaism, viz. :—as the historical and practical working out of Mosaism.

2. Judaism continued for almost a millenium and a half. We are often inclined to think of it as undergoing little transformation during its whole period. But this is a mistake. The Divine guiding principle did not vary sensibly, but the human circumstances through which that principle operated did vary most materially. Judaism illustrates the application of a general principle, not to one state of circumstances only, but to many. As we might expect of a Divine experiment, all possible conditions were exhausted. The circle to which the action was confined might be narrow, but the variety of circumstances was great. To pass by the era of Joshua and of the final conquest of the promised inheritance, as virtually

included in the Mosaic period, we have great variation of conditions in the ages which followed before the course of Judaism was run. (1) There is the period of tribal confederation, *i.e.*, the period of the Judges. (2) The period of the kingdom follows, when the whole nation owned a common rule, the period of centralisation, that of Saul, David, and Solomon, comparatively short, but almost vindicating for itself a spiritually independent position from its exceptionally spiritual activity and importance. (3) Then there is the division of the national unity into twain; the kingdom of Judah professing whole-hearted adherence to Mosaism and Jehovah, that of Israel giving only a half-hearted adhesion. Each furnishes a fertile field for the study of spiritual action. The revolted kingdom first comes to an end, and disappears into dark oblivion. Its lost tribes figure no more either in sacred or in profane history. The continuity of the nation is preserved only in that fraction of the race which stood firmly by the family of David. (4) How various are the experiences through which this survival of Judaism passed—the long captivity of the people in a foreign land, the restoration to their country and a qualified temporary

independence, their subjugation under Alexander the Great and his successors, the national uprising under the Maccabees, and the revindication for a time of their national independence, with the confused and complicated political changes, issuing at last in the Roman rule over the nation !

These changes, great and small, furnish ample variety of conditions to illustrate the practical working of Mosaism in the history of Judaism. In a narrow sphere, that of Jewish nationality, and in a limited period, they illustrate what shall take place in the larger field of the world, and in the longer period of time, which applied Christianity shall cover.

3. Coupling Mosaism and Judaism together, in what respect did they differ from the preceding and subsequent periods of development? One peculiarity distinguishes Judaism from the Patriarchal and Christian periods. It was the period of Prophetism in a special sense. It began with the first of the prophets in Moses, and ended with the last of the prophets in the Baptist (for he is linked more to the past, as being the second Elias, than to the era of which he was the forerunner). Divine com-

munications were given as occasion required in the previous period. But the combined Mosaic and Judaic period is specifically distinguished by a prophetic character. Scripture links and yet discriminates the two stages of the period as those of the law and of the prophets. In short, there was not only in Mosaism a time of exuberant revelation, of special Divine inspirational energy, but through the greater part of Judaism there was a continuous revelational influence—Samuel, David, the occasional prophets of whom we read in the historical books of the Old Testament, and finally those greater and lesser prophets of the latter days of the kingdoms, whose writings form a component part of the Old Testament canon. Thus, in this middle period of religious development, there was not only an initial stage of revelational energy, but a sustained activity of the same, stronger at some times and less strong at others, yet permanent in its operation.

4. How does Judaism historically and practically illustrate the success or failure of Mosaism? and first as regards religion strictly so called. Mosaism provided an elaborate system of religious means, constantly

reminding the people of their duty to God by calling them constantly to religious services. These external acts of devotion kept in their view their religious duty, so far as such means could lead towards such an end. The historical facts of Judaism must decide whether the means accomplished the end or failed. There can be no doubt that they failed. Regard Judaism in the Wilderness period, and make all allowance for the exceptional circumstances of the position, it still seems clear that the Ceremonial Law was then but imperfectly observed. The rite of circumcision was wholly neglected, and mention is made of no more than one celebration of the Passover (Num. ix.). Yet these ordinances were really the most important of the Mosaic economy, the most significant, and, under varied form, of perpetual significance and observance. It is remarkable that the celebration of the Passover is only seven times noticed in the whole Scriptures, from its first observance in Egypt to its last observance by the Lord and his disciples on the eve of His sufferings. The second instance (in the wilderness) has already been mentioned. As to all the other recorded instances, it is notable that they were on occasions of special religious

revival or interest. Thus a celebration took place under Joshua at Gilgal (Josh. v.), on which occasion it is said, "The Lord rolled away the reproach of Egypt," obviously pointing to a prior negligence in religious observance, and an awakening to the duty which Mosaism prescribed. Then, many centuries afterwards, the observance is recorded in connection with the Reformation of Hezekiah. A century later, in the reign of Josiah, a great reformer and persevering restorer of true religion and of Mosaism, the celebration of the Passover is again described, and in terms which plainly convey the idea of long and habitual previous neglect. The only other intermediate allusion to the observance of this religious ordinance is in the days of Ezra, also a period of great importance in the history of Judaism, when the Jews were permitted to return from long captivity to their own land, and to restore their city and religion. Without discussing the circumstances under which these celebrations of the Passover were held, the narratives certainly produce the impression that its observance was exceptional and not regular or habitual. The marked absence of allusion to such observance during the golden age of

Judaism, the era of David, is indeed suggestive, and the more so from the fact of that king, hero, prophet, and psalmist, organising the Tabernacle (the model of the later Temple) worship, by distributing systematically the duties of those who were officially set apart for the discharge of such functions.

No doubt in an age not long subsequent to that of Ezra, who is generally regarded as the compiler of the Old Testament canon, Mosaism, in all its minute detail, came to be the national practice; and an oral law, supervening, began to multiply as well as enforce the observances which Mosaism prescribed. A very curious contrast is suggested by this fact between the outcome of Mosaism and of Christianity. Mosaism, with its elaborate detailed prescription of ceremony and ritual, fails for long to be reproduced in Judaic practice. The letter of specific injunction gives place to the spirit of simplicity and abstraction. On the other hand, Christianity, with its severe ceremonial simplicity, speedily develops an elaborate ritualistic observance of ordinances, certainly of man's invention, or in the spirit of a Jewish restoration. Mosaic complexity and Christian simplicity were alike Divine. Judaic neglect

of externals and Christian multiplication of rites and observances were alike human. Can any account be given of such phenomena? May we not suggest that, as Mosaism in its complexity was suddenly introduced in the period of Patriarchal ceremonial simplicity, the old habit so far neutralised the new influence. The latter could come into full action by slow degrees only. Time and circumstances were required for its development. Then, by way of parallel, the simplicity of Christian ceremonialism, in fact, the Christian extrusion of ceremonialism, was proclaimed abruptly in an era and to a people saturated with ritualism, externalism, elaboration of observance. The force of habit made men slow to accept the new reformation. Consequently the first and most formidable foe of Christianity was Judaism, of whose injurious influence we have abundant testimony in the New Testament Scriptures, as well as in the increase of observances when Christianity began to develop itself more independently of the previous dispensation. To the simplicity of the Gospel ritual is gradually added a detailed and complex ritualism. Seasons and symbols are recognised and multiplied, while spirituality decays. Eventually the

true Christian principle begins to assert itself, and simplicity of Christian worship is sought to be restored. The details belong to the history of Christianity, and not to our present subject, except in so far as a historical parallel necessitates allusion to the subsequent, in order to the illustration of the precedent.

5. Mosaism had not only its religious but its political side. Yet the two aspects can hardly, in its case, be dissociated, since there was such a coalescence of the religious and civil, that they seem to be inextricably commingled. The development is wrought out in Judaism. There is a reminiscence of the past, as well as a shadowing forth of the future. The practical rises into the ideal, and the ideal seeks its realisation in a practice still higher than that from which its origin is derived.

The Theocratic idea was a reminiscence of the past, at least was illustrated in the past. The chief was also the priest. Civil power and sacred function were united in one person. Such was the case throughout the patriarchal period. Noah, Abraham, Melchisedec, were kings and priests of their tribes and races. But the family widens into the nation. The chieftain

develops into a king. The human conditions rise through the Divine impulse above themselves. And so Mosaism introduces the notion of a Theocracy. The term is first used by Josephus, but although so late in time, it is not inapt: "Our lawgiver had no regard to any of these forms (monarchies, oligarchies, democracies), but he ordained our government to be what by a forced expression may be called a Theocracy." (C. Apion, ii., 17.)

The old tribal conception of a chief is etherealised, while it yet retains much of its mundane associations. The visible ruler fades away, and in his place comes the Invisible Ruler. The chief is supplanted by God. The visible personality is swallowed up in the Invisible Divine Personality of the Theocratic Sovereign. Yet it retains so much of its earthly origin, as to have its Tabernacle in the centre of the camp, as afterwards its Temple was the centre of national life and the bond of national unity. The human and Divine intermingle, with yet a soaring above what is merely human, and an aspiration towards what is purely Divine. The Mosaic conception was grand. How did Judaism carry it out? In its first stage, under the Judges, the commonwealth

had no visible head. "There was no king in Israel in those days." Alas! that it should have to be added, "Every man did that which was right in his own eyes." There was independence of all human or visible control. It was the perfection of individual liberty. But did civil peace prevail? Did religious prosperity flourish? History testifies to the contrary. The nation loudly demanded a king, that it might be like the nations around it. The seed of a great truth had been planted, but as yet it could not bear fruit. Then a king was provided—Saul, a figure belonging to the heroic order, more akin to the Judges who had passed away than to the dynasty which followed; a man in whom we see the unique mingling of past and future, of great qualities and wretched littleness, of Divine strength and human weakness.

Saul is succeeded by David, in all respects his contrast and superior, great alike in his virtues and in his vices. With every drawback, David is adopted as the best symbol and type of the Theocracy, a king who ruled in the fear of the Lord, who acknowledged his subordination to the unseen God, and who was accepted as the visible impersonation of that invisible Theo-

cracy which Mosaism had enunciated. In his descendants the Theocratic idea was to be carried out in perpetuity. "There shall not fail thee a man to sit on the throne of Israel." Never did this hope pass away from the mind of the people. Centuries afterwards, in the decaying and perishing state of the Monarchy, it is recalled by Jeremiah (chap. xxxiii. 17). Only, its temporal realisation had then been given up for lost, and the hope of the Prophet is turned to a more spiritual future. There the old confidence could find itself realised under new conditions. The old Word of God would receive a new interpretation. "In those days, and at that time, will I cause the branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely; and this is the name wherewith she shall be called—The Lord our righteousness." (Jer. xxxiii. 15, 16.)

As Judaism went on, the Theocratic idea became more earthly. The Theocratic King was more fully unfolded in prophetic description. His attributes became more Davidic and Solomonic; *i.e.*, the prosperous was emphasised to the exclusion of the adverse. The

light alone was seen. The shade was put out of view. Therefore, when Christ came, the nation rejected Him. Men could not penetrate through the veil which concealed His glory. The blindness was in their own eyes, and not due to the gloom which encompassed the fleshly manifestation of the true Theocratic King. And so Judaism, which was to work out the Theocratic idea, failed to comprehend it—utterly missed it. Yet that did not stop its development. As at first it was a soaring from earth to heaven, so in its last and fullest display, our Saviour said, “My kingdom is not of this world.” It is something better, higher, nobler, divested of earthly attributes, and raising hope above what is seen and temporal, to what is unseen and eternal. Judaism here also failed.

Christianity succeeded. It supplanted the terrestrial notions which weighed down the popular Jewish conception of the Theocracy. It conceived its Theocratic King as Head over all principalities, powers, and dominions, and every name that is named, whether in heaven or on earth. It raised the subjects of the Divine Theocracy to the plane of the Theocratic King Himself. “Because I live, ye shall live also.” (John

xiv. 19.) "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him."  
(2 Tim. ii. 12.) "Thou madest them unto our God a kingdom and priests; and they reign upon the earth."  
(Rev. v. 10.)

6. How did Judaism carry forward the moral development of mankind? Mosaism prescribed the duties of morality in precise terms, and with an authority of the most solemn description. The moral law of the Decalogue was the central principle of Mosaism. Religion demanded the practice of virtue as its outcome and evidence. Yet the history of Judaism testifies to failure. Its development of Mosaism proved the incapacity of law and rigid rule to produce the result of morality. In the case of the best men, and of the best families of Judaic history, gross immoralities are recorded. Think of the man after God's own heart, of David and his grievous transgressions. Think of Solomon, to whom was granted wisdom in answer to his youthful prayer, lapsing into gross immorality and irreligion. Think of the crimes attaching to the members of their families; and remember, moreover, the burden of later prophetic complaint. What is the common topic of all, more

than a bemoaning of spiritual decay and moral degradation, such as called down the Divine anger on wickedness, national, official, personal? The law did not succeed in making a holy nation. It did not prevent the inroads of moral evil. The great moral degeneracy bewailed by the prophets was the cause of ultimate national ruin. The law during its course served only to make sin without excuse. By long trial and constant failure, it proved the incompetency of Mosaism to secure man's salvation, or promote his moral elevation.

Thus we see, on the advent of Christianity, that the spirit of the Law could not be amalgamated with the Gospel. Judaism had latterly become more minute and mechanical than its written Mosaism. It regarded nothing but the external act, and disregarded the internal motive. "Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees ye shall in no wise enter the kingdom of heaven." According to perverted Mosaism, *i.e.*, developed Judaism,—“that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man,” whereas the teaching of Christianity was the direct contrary. Mosaism, as

developed in Judaism, finally failed to accomplish that which was its first and central principle. Is its successor, the Christian dispensation, destined to succeed? At least it claims to do so. "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son," professes—not in vain—to accomplish. Mosaism presented the Divine moral direction, Judaism supplied the human application, but the object aimed at was not obtained. Something was still wanting which Christianity must supply. The discipline of failure had to be undergone before success could be reached. "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ."

7. Mosaism was rich in ritual, making religious observances a part of the common daily life. With what result did Judaism carry this into practice? Did it eventually improve and deepen the religious feeling? The answer must be in the negative. As time went on, prophetic complaints increased of externalism having supplanted spiritual views and feelings. Religion had too much become a mechanical round of observances. The mere performance of the act had emerged into undue importance, while the motive was put out

of sight and out of account. At the advent of Christianity this tendency had been fully developed. The neglect of ordinances, more or less chargeable against the early and middle periods of Judaism, was succeeded by an excessive attention to them, and multiplication of them. That remarkable phenomenon, the Oral Law, was doubtless the product of the influences to which we have alluded. By multiplication of observances and injunctions, not contained in the Written Law, it so engrossed the mind by the minuteness of its details as to preclude anything like thought or spontaneity. Moreover it sacrificed the second table of the law to an exaggerated and false reverence for the first. Its law of Corban is specially alluded to by our Lord in illustration of this, and is denounced by Him as virtually annulling the spirit of the Law given by God.

The process by which this conclusion was reached is not difficult of explanation. While the people dwelt peacefully in their own land they did not feel so keenly the importance of adhering strictly to their religion in all its points. But the national sufferings attending the downfall of the Davidic monarchy, the captivity in Babylon, and the precarious position which the

Jews occupied after their return, alternately the prey of this aggressor or that—the combination of such circumstances led to their clinging to their law and religion as the great badge of a separate nationality, and the great pledge of their national continuance. The promise of a Deliverer and of future glory to the nation, although imperfectly and even erroneously understood, lightened with hope the darkness through which they were passing. In their deepest abasement they were supported by the expectation of coming good. Naturally they would hold firmly by that law and those prophecies on which their hope was founded, and the negligence of a former period would change into the excess of the present. By our Lord's time all the spirit had gone out of their religious observances, and with excess of form there was an entire lack of the power of godliness. Judaism having grown into such a spirit could not be amalgamated with Christianity, whose first and fiercest conflict was waged against its influence; nor could the conflict cease until the Judaic leaven had been expelled. It was the war of freedom against subjection, of the spirit against the flesh, of vital religion against a system of dead works.

8. The religious instruction provided by Mosaism, and practised in Judaism, was largely symbolical. The instruction was not so much by word as by act. The sacrificial observances pointed to the necessity of atonement; the justice of God must be propitiated for the sin of man. The washings and cleansings taught the necessity of purification in order to acceptance with God. These duties were mainly the function of the priesthood, who were limited to a small portion of the people. The time of the priests was fully occupied in the performance of the religious functions which they alone could discharge. Although other duties of a higher and more ethical character are hinted at, these did not, and probably could not, become the subject of special regulation. Thus the priests were to teach the Children of Israel the statutes of the Lord (Lev. x. 11; Deut. xxxiii. 10, &c.), and, in the language of the last prophet (Mal. ii. 7), looking back on the ideal of the order, "the priest's lips were to keep knowledge." But whatever might have been the ideal as regards their teaching directly and orally, it never was to any appreciable extent carried into practice, and the people were thus left to gather such meaning as they could out of the

religious symbolism. While some of the better spirits of the nation might penetrate to the spirit of the act, discern its meaning, and be edified, the great bulk of the people would see nothing but the outward performance, and would fail to connect with it any spiritual significance. The religious observances would be to them religion and not merely religious means. The symbolism would fail to teach them what was symbolised.

Was no corrective provided for such an evil, no remedy for such a defect? Not by any regular or permanent institution, but by an occasional interposition of God as the case might require. Such a permanent institution would have been inconsistent with the aim of the Mosaic dispensation, which was substantively directive, making known to man his duty, and submitting to his consideration motives to its performance and deterrents from its violation. Its spirit was expressed in the farewell words of the great law-giver, "See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil." (Deut. xxx. 15.) The purpose of the dispensation was to give a law or directory of duty, and leave man to the trial of his own powers for its observance. It was thus that

men were prepared by trial and failure for the acceptance of the dispensation destined to supersede it. But had they been so left entirely to themselves, it is clear that, supposing the rites of religion to have continued to be regularly performed, their meaning and influence would speedily have been lost. To prevent such a result, God sent prophets from time to time to be preachers of morals and of spiritual religion. The symbolical teaching of the law naturally lost much of its effect, and required to be reinforced from time to time. Instead of learning the necessity of moral purity by the legal washings, the majority came to rest in the outward act as in itself sufficient. It was the work, then, of the prophets to hold up before their countrymen a high and spiritual morality, not veiled in types or symbols, but so expressed that none could profess to misunderstand it. Thus in Isaiah i., the prophet contrasts ceremonial observances with spiritual morality —“Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth. They are a trouble to me, I am weary to bear them. . . . Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the

oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow." The system of morals put forward by the prophets, if not higher, and sterner, and purer than that of the law, is more plainly declared, and with greater (because now more needed) vehemence of diction.

In short, the prophets were extraordinary exponents of the law. Their task was to restore the balance which had been overthrown through the people and their teachers dwelling on the outer covering of a truth or of a duty, and leaving out of sight the inner meaning which spiritualised what otherwise had become a dead, unsuggestive symbolism. We speak here of Old Testament prophetism only in one of its relations. In its other aspects, it does not come within our present argument. Its higher purpose of making the promise of a Deliverer clearer and more precise, we do not here discuss. We only allude to its incidental counteractive of that symbolism which, by a natural and necessary process, tended to substitute form for power, mechanical for spiritual religion.

9. Judaism had a long history, and encountered many foes. After being delivered from Egyptian idolatry, ages passed before it was again in contact or con-

flict with it. For long also it was separated from the Polytheism of the East, its first adversary. But, settled in Palestine, it was always exposed to the snares of Phœnician religious influences. Phœnicia was its near neighbour. The native tribes, moreover, were not extirpated from the land, and there were, perhaps, few families in Israel which had not in them some blood of the Phœnician or Canaanite races. In consequence, we see a constant influence from such sources, operating detrimentally on the religious development of the chosen people. Only after the Captivity was the old prescribed separation recognised as a great religious duty, and a duty of constraining necessity. As their outward state decayed or became precarious, there grew on them the feeling of exclusiveness, the consciousness that absolute homogeneity alone could, humanly speaking, preserve their national identity, and continue their national existence till the hoped for fulfilment of the promises should arrive. Hence they cultivated an intense national feeling, born of religion; and thus they were able to encounter, without yielding, the subtler foe of Greek culture to which they became finally exposed. It

cannot be said, indeed, that they remained altogether unaffected by its influence. If Palestinian Judaism was less affected, Alexandrian Judaism was considerably acted upon. But if somewhat influenced by these extraneous forces, it influenced them still more powerfully. Under God's providence, it gave a spiritual meaning to that language which, at the Christian era, was the most widely spoken throughout the civilised world, and prepared it to become the vehicle of Christian inspiration for all lands and all times.

The period intervening between the cessation of prophecy and the coming of Christ, was one of quiet but important work. The leaven of Judaism was silently acting, so as to prepare outside minds and outside language for the great era about to arrive. Philosophy had been undermining the old popular religious beliefs of classical heathendom. It could not provide a substitute for them. It only made a vacuum. Judaism had become too narrow and formal to supply the want. Yet not a few Hellenistic proselytes more or less fully adopted it, and beyond these a preparation was made, and an expectation was begotten, which Christianity came in due time to fulfil. The rapid extension of the

latter is primarily due, doubtless, to the special working of God. Yet we are not to exclude from consideration the human circumstances of the case. The fields were white unto the harvest, and Judaism was no weak element in ripening the nations for the spiritual harvest which then began to be gathered in, and which shall not cease until time shall be no more.

If Judaism, or applied Mosaism, utterly failed, either in spiritually preserving or in elevating one people among the many nations on earth, it served at least to prepare the way for the last and only perfect dispensation, destined never to end and never to fail, but to work out to final and complete success the Divine purpose of grace for the salvation of mankind.