

CHAPTER XIV.

THE NEW POLITY.

A STUDENT who has attempted with painful care to trace the record of Israel's restoration is more conscious than anyone else can be of the uncertainty of many of his results. The utmost he may claim is that he has not ignored any of the evidence, or got rid of an inconvenient passage by merely assigning it to a late editor without seeking to explain why the editor inserted it. In the end he may reflect that he has satisfied himself at least as to the means by which a group of humble men built a house of worship in an obscure province of the Persian Empire and made it the centre for their race. Meantime great events were taking place in the history of their world. Babylon had succeeded Nineveh and given place to Persia: the Eastern world from the shores of the Aegean to the cataracts of the Nile had been united into an Empire. The stage was set for a greater upheaval and a vaster Empire, for Xerxes led his forces against the Greeks and prepared the way for the struggle between East and West. The time brought with it men who stand boldly out on the

pages of history. Their very names are resonant, as though attended by a roll of drums, Sennacherib and Sargon, Nebuchadrezzar, Cyrus and Darius. In contrast with these, the work of a little group, most of whom were nameless, who piled stone on stone till their temple was finished, who wept over the meagre outcome and exulted because their eyes had seen it, may well appear insignificant.

Yet we have learned of recent years that, when the world is in the melting-pot, the result is to make some men realise with a new intensity the plot of earth on which they were born, the ideals which are their own, the dear, familiar customs which have moulded them. These people refuse to submit to fate and circumstance, and save their souls. Out of the welter of the kingdoms, which became Assyrian in one generation, Babylonian in the next and Persian in the end we have the record of one which survived. What makes the achievement in some respects more notable is that it was the work of men most of whom were nameless and none of whom can be called distinguished. Here and there a name, of a priest, a governor, a prophet, rises out of oblivion ; but his work is occasional and at best merely focuses the purpose or the hope of those for whom it was done. It was a nation which refused to acknowledge defeat ; in the best sense of the word Israel's recovery was a popular movement. No sooner had Samaria fallen than the faithful remnant began to draw together and plan resistance to the heathenism which threatened to engulf them. When Jerusalem suffered the same fate, the Judeans maintained the altar-fire and joined with their brethren to continue the cult. Among the exiles Second Isaiah

was never weary in urging his fellow-countrymen to recognise the spiritual bankruptcy of the Empire which had swallowed them up: Babylonia had nothing to give to Israel, it was Israel which could teach Babylonia. Wherever we are allowed a glimpse into the life of the broken nation, we find it reacting. To notice that in every case the first actors were nameless men is an evidence that the movement was universal and spontaneous. It is as though Israel did not preserve their names, because it recognised itself in them: all they said and did was but the expression of what was in the heart of every lover of his people. At a later date there emerge the names of men who were identified with one or another outstanding feature of the work of restoration. But these men only brought to completion something which had already been begun; behind them was the life of a nation which refused to part with the things by which men live and in which is the life of their spirit.

A movement of this character, so widespread and so spontaneous, must in the nature of the case be conservative, and runs the risk of becoming reactionary. Many documents of the period are filled with a violent revulsion against Babylonia and its alien life. The temper shows itself in the collection of oracles on that nation which has been added to the book of Jeremiah, and rises to the pitch of hatred in Psalm cxxxvii. Like all who thus react against their world, the men wished to shut themselves away from it by restoring their own peculiar life and renewing the conditions of their past, so far as the masters of the world would permit. Only among these could they feel themselves

at home, and their contact with a larger world had issued in a passionate desire to win them back. As soon as Cyrus permitted the restoration of the temple and the return of the exiles, the people set themselves to make this institution the centre for Jewry. Their decision proved their strong desire to revive the past, and in turn determined the character of their future, for an institutional religion is always conservative. Accordingly, though the men rejected the extreme proposals of Ezekiel, they only modified them, for they made a descendant of Zadok head of a sacred college which included none but Judean priests, and they determined that the use at the temple must remain the old law of Leviticus, the combined manual for the priests and law for the people which was peculiar to the South. The Deuteronomic law was definitely set aside. The final rejection of the Code of Israel proper need not have been due to any animosity against the Samaritans, for a sufficient reason may be found in the character of that law-book. The Deuteronomic Code, which had been framed for the period of Israel's independence, was wholly unfitted to govern the life of a community which was now subject to Persian law. Israel was no longer free to put to death anyone who had committed the crime of man-stealing, and, even if the village communes had been permitted to continue, none of them was at liberty to deliver over a murderer to the avenger of blood. To attempt to maintain the old Code was to come continually into conflict with the local satrap. On the other hand, while the law in Leviticus did contain a few regulations on such subjects, its main interest centred

round the temple and its cult.¹ The single change which the college of priests permitted in the celebration of tabernacles, the practice of living in booths, furnishes another proof of their essentially conservative outlook, for they only admitted this novel feature after they had carefully explained that it was the revival of an old Mosaic regulation which had lapsed.

Yet the most conservative ecclesiastic lives in a world which does not stand still; and the world had not stood still since the time when the house of Zadok administered a ritual which served Judah alone. Even the author of the Ezekiel scheme intended his priests to judge in any controversy and so admitted the possibility of new questions arising which demanded decision. One notable change was that the temple with its cult had become the centre for a Jewry which was wider than Palestine. If the cult was to serve that larger community, its regulations must be adapted to meet the new conditions. The most obvious change was in connection with the three great festivals. Once it had been required of the worshippers that they appear three times in the year before the Lord, but that belonged to the time when every observing Jew lived in the holy land. The demand became impracticable with a diaspora in Egypt and Babylonia, and it has been quietly dropped from the calendar in Leviticus, chapter xxiii. Again, so long as the majority

¹ This character of the Deuteronomic Code explains why the Samaritans after the breach made no effort to revive it. They took over the Jerusalem use, because it fitted their condition, and because they had lived under it and their levites had administered it before the breach. It is an interesting illustration, however, of the tenacity of religious practice to note that they reverted to one feature in the old Deuteronomic method of celebrating passover.

of the worshippers were Jewish farmers, it was enough to date the feast of weeks "from the time that thou beginnest to put the sickle to the standing corn shalt thou begin to number seven weeks," or to say that tabernacles fell "after thou hast gathered in from thy threshing-floor and from thy wine-press." But, as soon as men resorted to Jerusalem from beyond Palestine, they needed to know the precise dates for their coming. The festivals have fixed dates for their celebration in the same calendar. Men who came from a distance on pilgrimage were also subject to the accidents of the road. They might be delayed beyond the regular period; they might have contracted ceremonial defilement on the way and have insufficient time for the necessary purification. Provision was made for them by permitting a second celebration of passover in the second month, Num. ix. 9-14, though the first month had been solemnly decreed to be the beginning of months for Israel. The reason for confining such a regulation to passover was due to the fact that the celebration lasted only for a day. It was not necessary to make a similar law for the other festivals, because they lasted over a full week.

A profounder change, however, came over the entire sacrificial ritual, especially in its relation to the community for whose benefit it was intended. This began as soon as the temple became the only legitimate centre for sacrifice, but its influence increased with the increase of the diaspora. The worshippers were unable to be present at sacrifices, which were still offered on their behalf. This character must always have attached to such offerings as the daily burnt-offering and the bread of the presence. Day by day

the temple-officials presented, on behalf of the nation, an acknowledgment of its dependence on its God, though the people were not present. But now the ritual of the major festivals was also carried on, though many of those for whom it availed were absent. Even the intimate offerings of the individual in vow or sin-offering became altered in character. Once Elkanah had gone up to Shiloh and paid his vow, and in the act recalled the occasion which had demanded it and renewed the gratitude which made it significant. Now many of the worshippers must send the money for a victim to the shrine, and be content to know that it was duly offered. The old personal relation had given place to a cash transaction, and the rest was carried out by men whom he did not know at a shrine which he had never seen, after a ritual in which he had never shared. The inevitable result of the new situation was to weaken the direct influence of the cult on the life of a large part of the community.

All this did not lead to any neglect of the temple-ritual or to a perfunctory performance of it. Rather the effect of lodging such a duty in the hands of a professional and hereditary caste was the usual one in such cases; the men magnified their office, and elaborated the system which they administered. A detailed list of the communal offerings, corresponding to the festival calendar in Leviticus, appears in Numbers, chapters xxviii. f. The list opens with the daily burnt-offering, which now must begin and close each day. The character of the victims is defined with the cereal-offering and drink-offering which must accompany them, xxviii. 1-8. The burnt-offering, however, must be supplemented on certain holy days,

such as the Sabbaths, vv. 9 f., and the first day of each month, vv. 11-15. Then follow regulations about the ritual for the great days of the year. It begins with passover, which, however, received no detailed description, since it was so largely in the hands of the worshippers. The sole concern of the priests with the service was that they slew the lamb and manipulated its blood. On the other hand, the dates and the duration of the festivals of unleavened bread and of weeks are fully stated with the sacrifices which accompanied them, vv. 16-31. Chapter xxix. is devoted to the ritual for the seventh or sacred month in the Jewish year. Its first day is marked off as a day of holy convocation with trumpet-blowing, but it is further signalled by a special series of sacrifices which were additional to the daily burnt-offering and to those offered on the first day of an ordinary month, vv. 1-6. Then followed the day of atonement with its appropriate offerings, vv. 7-11. The culmination of the month and of the year, however, was מִן־הַיּוֹם , the festival *par excellence*, that of tabernacles. Its significance was doubly marked. Its period was extended to an octave instead of the original seven days, and it received the largest number of sacrifices, which ran in a descending scale from thirteen bullocks on the first day to seven on the seventh, vv. 12-38.

The leading feature in this directory for the sacred year at the temple is its formal and ordered character. One has the impression of a piece of mechanism, which goes on without a hitch, because every one exactly knows his place and the duty he has to fulfil. In part this impression is due to the fact that the directory was intended to guide the priests in what had become

a complicated ritual. But this merely emphasises another feature in the succession of sacrificial acts, the fact that the solemn pageant might run its stately round without the presence of any worshippers. Once, when Israel thronged to its local shrines, men did not appear before the Lord with empty hands, but there was no exact definition of that which they must bring. The sacrifices varied in amount and even in character, as the year varied in the bounty of its yield. Now the amount and character of the offering for each day have become stereotyped, so that there is no place for spontaneity.

Corresponding with this is another feature in the directory: the number of the burnt offerings has increased, while the *שלמים* or 'peace-offerings' have sunk into the background. The only mention of these last appears in a casual reference to them in verse 39. Now the peace-offerings were one of the oldest forms of sacrifice in Israel and had been peculiarly associated with the major festivals. Their characteristic feature was that, after the fat and blood were presented at the altar, the flesh of the victim which the worshipper had brought was given back to form the material for a joyous feast at the sanctuary. A well-to-do farmer invited his friends to share with him, and, according to the Deuteronomic Code, was bidden invite the poor and the levite among his guests. The sacrifice supplied the element of spontaneity, which answered to the command that no one should appear before the Lord with empty hands, though it was apt to produce the scenes which Amos censured. Yet it obviously required the presence of the worshippers. As soon as the attendance of these was no

longer demanded, the peace-offerings became merely, as verse 39 proves, one of the voluntary sacrifices, and no attempt was made to regulate their amount or their method. What increased, both in number and in prominence, were the burnt-offerings, which, since they were wholly consumed on the altar, required no one except the officiating priest. They were provided from the contributions of the faithful, were determined in number and in character for the several festivals and were offered with an intention for all Israel. There was both loss and gain in the inevitable change. The services must have become more decorous, and the connection of the festivals with nature and its life was made more remote: but the element of spontaneity in men's gratitude was less, and the association of the community with the great seasons of their religious year became to many a cash-nexus.

Thus the cult became an integral part of and was subsumed under the general idea of law. The earlier codes of the nation had insisted that the true Israelite must reserve his worship for the shrines which his own God had chosen, and at which nothing was permitted except that which was according to the statutes of the God of Israel. The aim had been to prevent the similarity of the ritual from leading men into a careless use of the Canaanite shrines and so into forgetfulness of the essential difference between Yahweh and Baal. That danger had disappeared among men, some of whom had maintained their own cult during the exile, while others had returned from Babylonia in order to take part again in the worship peculiar to Israel. The new danger was that

a meticulous exactness in the performance of the statutes delivered to Israel should come to be valued for its own sake. As the priests fulfilled the appointed ritual for the benefit of worshippers who could take no direct part in it, the effect could not fail to be that the service came to be considered as in itself well-pleasing to God, whose ordinance it was. Where the prophets had been able to say that obedience was better than sacrifice, the priests could now say that sacrifice was part of obedience. The cult was as much God's claim on His nation as any other part of His law. Again one may recognise that the changed attitude brought both loss and gain. It is well that men should be able to believe that, both in their moral conduct and in their religious sacraments, they seek to do the will of God. Yet it cannot be entirely wholesome when sacrifice, the fine flower of religion, which derives so much of its loveliness from its spontaneity, is construed from the side of law. The effect may not have appeared at once, but it was inevitable, and it appears in a remarkable utterance of Ben Sira. He says in general terms : he who practiseth kindness offereth a meat-offering and he who showeth mercy presenteth a thank-offering. What is well-pleasing to the Lord is to avoid evil, and the way to forgiveness is to avoid wickedness. But then, as though he had recognised the consequence of his conclusion in relation to the cult, he added : appear not in the presence of the Lord with empty hands, for all these things (are to be done) for the sake of the commandments, E.V. xxxv. 1 ff. Yet even in their crudest early form the sacrifices had once meant

more than that: men had seen in them a means for maintaining and enriching their relation to God.¹

A final feature of the directory which deserves full recognition is the larger place given in it to victims, the specific purpose of which was to secure propitiation for sin. Neither the daily burnt-offering nor the passover is associated with an offering for this purpose: but at every new moon, on the day of atonement, and on each successive day of the celebration of the festivals there is introduced a he-goat which was to be offered as a sin-offering, sometimes with the addition "to make atonement for you." What makes the fact more remarkable is that this he-goat is the only offering the purpose of which was defined, while nothing is said of the effect desired from or effected by the other offerings. It is impossible to say definitely whether any propitiatory efficacy was believed to attach during the early period to the communal offerings. We are so ill informed about the place which the cult held in the religious life of early Israel that we dare not be dogmatic on that subject. At a period when men were not making fine theological distinctions it must remain possible that, since they practised the cult as the means for maintaining their relation to God, they may also have seen in it a means for restoring that relation after it had been broken. Yet, even though this should have been the case, the fact remains that in the directory this element has obtained a new emphasis. A victim, which served to make

¹ For another illustration of the same attitude at a later date cf. Gray, 'Sacrifice in the Old Testament,' pp. 51 f.

atonement for sin, must appear in all the more important rituals.

To note this emphasis on atonement in a general list of offerings, which was concerned primarily with their amount and their constituents, directs attention in turn to the larger prominence given to propitiation in the post-exilic material. That shows itself in the effort then made to distinguish between the *זָבַח* or guilt-offering and the *זָבַח חַטָּאת* or sin-offering. When men were making a distinction, in a way which evidently satisfied them, but which still eludes us,¹ between two forms of offering, both of which dealt with propitiation, we may conclude that the subject had won a peculiar significance in their thought. Again, scholars differ as to whether the Day of Atonement was a creation of this period, or had its roots in a much older ritual, which was original at Jerusalem, but was later extended to the whole nation. But they will agree that in the later law it reached a place in the life of Jewry for which there is no evidence in the early literature. The position it then reached has only deepened and strengthened, till it has become one of the most remarkable features in Jewish life. To recognise the date of its appearance in the festival calendar marks the extent to which the sense of the need for propitiation and of its connection with sacrifice engrossed the minds of men after the Return.

The most significant evidence, however, is the way in which the entire sacrificial system was brought into definite association with atonement for sin. As

¹ Even Schötz, in his suggestive and valuable 'Schuld und Sündopfer im Alten Testamente,' has not cleared up all the intricacies of that problem, at least to me.

has been noted above, we must allow for the possibility that such an association existed during the earlier period. Yet the conclusion can never reach beyond an inference. There is no need for an inference as to the post-exilic attitude, for the matter is plainly stated. It appears most clearly in certain parts of the book of Ezekiel, where the purpose, not of one or another sacrificial act, but of the entire statutory service, is declared to be "to make atonement for the house of Israel." Thus we find it broadly set down: it shall be the prince's part to give the burnt-offerings and the meal-offerings and the drink-offerings, in the feasts and in the new moons and in the Sabbaths, in all the appointed feasts of the house of Israel: he shall prepare the sin-offering and the meal-offering and the burnt-offering and the peace-offerings, to make atonement for the house of Israel, xlv. 17. Here it seems clear that most of the regular communal sacrifices had an efficacy for propitiation ascribed to them and even that this was their leading end.

It might be legitimate to say that this was merely the expression of an individual conviction or of a school of thought on the subject, were it not that the resemblance between the prophetic passage and the directory in Numbers is sufficiently close to warrant the conclusion that the same attitude to the entire cult was influencing the law. The definite inclusion of a he-goat with the mention of its purpose in so many of the public ceremonies supports it. The use, too, of the word *לְכַפֵּר*, to atone, in the later law offers confirmatory evidence. "This phrase is used, not only in connection with sin-offerings, but so widely that it is right . . . to recognise that the

later priestly system had as a whole and in a certain measure an expiatory character, though this was intensified in connection with certain parts of it."¹ The movement of thought in this direction represented something larger than the conviction of an individual prophet.

What, however, its express appearance in the book of Ezekiel and in the later law may well suggest is that it had a natural affinity to the cult as that had been practised at Jerusalem. The connection between the cult and propitiation is emphasised in the oracles of a Judean prophet, and it colours deeply the conception of the sacrificial worship and even brings about a revaluation of some parts of it in a law which was issued after the Judean priests came into control of the temple. The ceremonial at the Day of Atonement reached a new prominence in the same law; and certain features in its early ritual point to an original connection with Jerusalem. All these factors combine to recall that from the beginning the sacrifices at that altar were linked to propitiation for sin. The *ἱερὸς λόγος* of the shrine at the capital has been preserved in full because it told how Yahweh had chosen the site of His altar for the future temple in what had been a Jebusite town. But it also told that the divine election was revealed through the fact that the first offering presented there availed to turn back the divine anger from the nation. The sword of the destroying angel, already drawn to smite the city, was stayed when the smoke of the first sacrifice rose from the sacred site. In the most direct way the sacrifices offered there were given a peculiar

¹ Cf. further Gray, 'Sacrifice in the Old Testament,' pp. 82 ff.

value for the propitiation of the sins of Israel. Though Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the altar must be considered the product of a later time, the extent to which the prayer dwelt on the power of the sacrifices offered there to atone for sin, both individual and national, witnesses to the special efficacy which continued to be attached to the temple-cult.

This explains in turn why the two prophets, who derived from the Southern kingdom, paid special attention to the relation between sacrifice and propitiation. When Isaiah was troubled by the sense of his personal guilt which to him was bound up with the guilt of his nation, the conviction came to him through a vision of God in the temple; and he found it natural to clothe his sense of forgiveness in imagery taken from the altar cult. Whatever else his language may imply, it proves that to his people there was an intimate connection between the sacrificial ritual and the forgiveness of sin. It would be unwarrantable to conclude that the prophet counted sacrifice essential to his forgiveness: it is equally unwarrantable to ignore that he used symbols which appealed to his people. In the same way Micah's reference to thousands of rams, ten thousands of rivers of oil, and to the offering of the first-born has no meaning unless the community, to whom the prophet sought to teach true religion, believed that these cult-offerings availed to atone for the sin of their souls. What makes these two references more remarkable is that there is nothing corresponding to them in the utterances of the prophets of Northern Israel. These speak often and strongly about the cult of their nation, but, except for an ambiguous phrase in Hosea iv. 8,

they never associate it in the same intimate way with the craving for pardon or with the assurance of it. We seem to be conscious of a note which was characteristic of Judean piety, so that, when the men of the Return declared the entire cult valid for propitiation, they were merely bringing into special prominence a feature of that service which had always been of peculiar worth to them. Here, as elsewhere, they were essentially conservative in their standpoint.

While thus reviving the past, however, the men served the present through the new emphasis they laid on this feature of the cult. They were helping to give it a certain *raison d'être* in the life of their scattered nation. Centralisation first and the diaspora afterwards had weakened the intimate bond between the sacrifices at Jerusalem and the actual life of the people. The ritual observances were remote and had become largely professional in their character. They were urged on the loyal Jew as part of his obedience to the will of his God, and as part of what made him distinct from the heathen, rather than as the expression of his personal relation to God. As time went on and each successive generation grew up without having taken any share in this outward form of the faith, the link might have become very thin. What place did the cult fill in helping Jewry to maintain its relation to the God of the fathers? It availed, said the law by its emphasis on propitiation, to atone for the sins of Israel. Day by day, week after recurrent week, sometimes increasing in volume but never ceasing, the smoke of the altar-fire went up to heaven. Every Israelite had his share in it, since he helped to maintain it; and it availed for what was every man's need.

There is a sentence in Solomon's dedication prayer which might seem to have been written in order to convey the place which the constant sacrifice took now in the people's life: what prayer and supplication soever be made by any man, or by all Thy people Israel, which shall know every man the plague of his own heart, and spread forth his hands toward this house: then hear thou in heaven thy dwelling-place, and forgive, and do, and render unto every man according to all his ways, whose heart thou knowest (for thou, even thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men).

When the religious guides of the nation associated the sacrificial system as a whole with atonement for sin, they did not merely show the worth they conceived it to possess and the need they believed it to supply in the life of the people. They also revealed what was primary in their conception of the divine nature: to them Yahweh was the redeemer of Israel. Already the leading rituals of the nation, such as passover and tabernacles, had been supplied with rubrics, which dwelt on the historic and redemptive elements in the faith. Thus, when passover and unleavened bread were associated with the night of the Exodus in a month which was to be the beginning of months for Israel, the effect had been to bring into the foreground the nature of the God who was then worshipped. Yahweh was no mere nature-god, the giver of the new barley: He was the One who in a great historic act had intervened to save His people and to make them His own. What He had then done was the embodiment of His purpose to redeem Israel. Because this purpose was the expression of His

nature, it could not be exhausted in certain acts which belonged to the past, but was still in active operation, so that Israel could be assured of the divine power and will for its restoration. The sacrificial system, which owed its origin to His direction, bore in every part the sign-manual of His purpose with His people and so had efficacy for redemption. No man in Israel need despair of restoration, for in the ritual which He had ordered was the expression of His mind. A verse in Leviticus emphasised this aspect of the Israelite ritual: for the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that maketh atonement by reason of the life, xvii. 11. The verse offers no rationale of the use of blood for the purpose of propitiation. It is, indeed, a mere addendum to a law against promiscuous use of blood by the nation. What it does say is that the God against whom the Israelite has offended has provided the means of propitiation for all who choose to seek it.

In a measure this association of the cult with atonement was capable of supplying a much-needed corrective to a limitation of the divine nature which inevitably resulted from the conditions of the time. The law of centralisation could not fail to localise a deity who was only rightly worshipped at a single shrine in one city. Every man who came back from Babylonia and helped to restore the temple practically confessed that for a full relation to his God a share in this local cult was necessary. But a god who could only be worshipped aright in Palestine was himself a god of Palestine. When the cult was de-

clared to be valid for every Jew, and when its leading worth was declared to lie in its power to restore a broken relation between the Jew and his God, room was made for a larger and richer conception of the divine nature and power.

It is impossible to say more than that room was left for such a larger conception, because the new polity in this connection was fundamentally a compromise between two elements which had always existed in the faith of Israel.

The priestly college succeeded in giving the cult a surer place in the life of their nation, when they dwelt on its efficacy for propitiation. The temple was also guaranteed in its lonely dignity, because of the positive benefit it could assure men and not merely because a rival to it was forbidden. The sacrifices there were carefully guarded against one grave abuse, as though they were able of themselves to atone for sin. All their efficacy derived from God: He had appointed them and in them had provided the means for restoring the broken relation between Himself and His people. But there remained the fatal ambiguity as to what constituted such a breach and with it an uncertainty as to what was needed for its healing. The ambiguity had always existed in the historic faith of Israel, because the Mosaic movement was a reform superinduced on a naiver and grosser type of religion. The native cult, being nearer the nature-worship of its time, conceived of sin largely as ceremonial defilement: the Mosaic and prophetic movement, to which the relation between God and man was ethical, conceived of sin as moral transgression. The two elements were fundamentally irreconcilable,

since they posited a different view of the divine nature, and they had lain alongside each other in the faith of the nation, confusing its religious thought.

The distinction ran deep. The idea of ceremonial impurity incapacitating a man from approach to God fatally separated between the need of repentance and the act by which a man was restored to the worshipping community. For a man could not repent of a sin which he committed involuntarily or even in ignorance. It was possible for a man to contract impurity in the performance of a religious duty, as when he performed the last rites for his dead father. Such an impurity could be contracted through physical means and could therefore be cleansed by physical means. So much was this the case that it is misleading to translate *זָבַח* in its primitive use by sin-offering, because that word inevitably brings with it our thought of sin as moral transgression. It should rather be rendered purification offering.¹ For the purpose of purgation in lighter cases lustration with water was sufficient: to cleanse a more grievous impurity the means of purification must be heightened by the addition of the ashes of the red heifer or by the blood of a victim. Since, again, the defilement could be contracted through physical means, it might attach to things as well as to persons. A vessel in a house might become unclean and so unfit for use: if it was of earthenware, it must be broken, for the impurity might have penetrated into it; if it was of metal, it only needed lustration with water. The very altar at which atonement was effected could become un-

¹ See Kennedy's lucid and concise conspectus in the article "Sacrifice" in Hastings' single volume D.B.

clean and must therefore be 'unsinned' every year. Here, probably because of its sacred character, its unsinning demanded the blood of a victim.

Alongside this more primitive idea of ceremonial impurity, which was naturally embedded in the cult, was the Mosaic or prophetic thought on the subject. There the relation between God and Israel was ethical, and any breach in this relation must be due to moral failure. What incapacitated a man for approach to God was his voluntary act. Therefore the first essential for restoration was repentance. The great teacher at once of the necessity and the value of true repentance was Hosea, who dwelt upon it positively, as though no more was needed. On the other hand, Isaiah and Micah developed the theme with a conscious reference to the demands of the cult. Isaiah made his demand for repentance fundamental, but he set it in definite relation to the altar and its sacrifices: Micah required for true religion that men should walk humbly with their God, but he set this over against the sacrifices which the men of his time multiplied for the relief of their troubled hearts. Both prophets, conceiving sin as voluntary and ethical, demanded repentance and posited their demand in connection with, even in opposition to, the sacrificial ritual.

It was possible to give effect to the demand for a recognition of the significance of repentance in connection with the sacrifice at the altar by the use of rubrics which were added to the ritual. In my judgment the penitential psalms, whether they were spoken by the individual or chanted in name of the community, expressed the attitude of the penitent who sought reconciliation, while the actual sacrifice

embodied the unalterable purpose of God who forgave. Thus the altar became the meeting-place between the worshipper with his repentance and God with His purpose of mercy.

Yet any such revaluation of sacrifice left untouched the contradiction between the two causes of separation between Israel and God, ceremonial uncleanness and moral fault, and certain conditions of the period brought the ceremonial element into undue prominence. Thus, when the priestly college made Leviticus the use at the temple, they bound all Jewry by the Code which is most deeply influenced by this conception. That law insisted on the ethical character of the divine commands, and contains the classic pronouncement in Judaism on the duty of love toward one's neighbours; but the regulations which bear on ceremonial impurity are more numerous and detailed, and no effort has been made to reconcile the two or to indicate their relative importance. They are simply set down alongside each other, as though they were of equal significance. Again, the men into whose hands the guidance of the people had fallen were the priests, whose specific function it had always been to distinguish between the clean and the unclean. Since the altar with its sacrifices was their peculiar care, they naturally magnified the side of the law which they administered. Nor is it difficult to realise that this conception of the relation between God and Israel fell into line with the ideal of the Jerusalem temple as the national centre. A ceremonial method of approach better agrees with a national deity worshipped at a historic shrine than the large demand for clean hands and a pure heart which could be brought

at any shrine and under any sky. Yet all this does not fully explain why such a law with these preconceptions touched and in the end came to dominate the life of the scattered nation. There must have been something in the situation and the temper of the people which made it acceptable to them. There it is necessary to recognise that from the beginning of the exile the Jew, whether in Palestine or in the diaspora, was brought into close and constant contact with heathenism. On every side he could not escape from the sight of heathen emblems; in his intercourse with his world he was continually brought up against a life which was pagan in its sanctions and in its personal habits. It requires a real effort for men of to-day to realise how instinctive and even physical in its character must have been the reaction. The devout Jew could not fail to be troubled with a continual malaise in such conditions. The man-who said, how can we sing the Lord's songs in a strange land, expressed more than a revulsion against turning his sacred songs into a means of amusing his neighbours. There was something revolting to him about the use of Israel's sacred lyrics at all in that polluted air. A similar difficulty arose in the early Church at Corinth over the question of the use of meats offered to idols, and it is instructive to recognise how St Paul dealt with it. The Christian apostle was able to say that an idol was nothing in the world and to conclude that anything offered to it was equally impotent with itself for good or evil. The only question which remained was the moral question of how Christian men who saw that principle with all its consequences should behave towards those who had scruples on the

subject. The idea of ceremonial uncleanness had no place in the Christian ethic. But the Jerusalem priests could not take that way, because ceremonial sin was embedded in their law. They must define what amount of contact did or did not defile; they must prescribe the means by which the Jew kept himself aloof from every impure thing: they began the long series of enactments which form part of the *halakah* in the Talmud. As for those defilements which were inevitable, they taught that the cult availed to propitiate.¹

This desire to keep Judaism aloof from the debasing and insidious influence of its heathen surroundings led to a new emphasis being laid on the outward signs which distinguished the Jew. Such practices as the observance of Sabbath and circumcision assumed a new importance. As Israel had its own thought of God and its own end for life, it must have its own

¹ On the question of sin and atonement in the later law, cf. G. F. Moore, 'Judaism,' Vol. I., Part III. The weakness of Moore's discussion is that he has not allowed for the extent to which the idea of sin as moral transgression had lodged itself in Jewish thought and has written at times as though only ceremonial impurity was recognised there. Now, in the wealth of valuable and interesting material which he has collected, especially in the Notes, Vol III., he has shown how persistently the early Rabbis discussed the value of repentance and of the sin-offering respectively in relation to voluntary sins. But he has failed to explain why this particular question continually troubled the minds of thoughtful men in Jewry. They were recognising the presence of two unreconciled elements in their ancestral faith, and thus unconsciously showed that the faith was not homogeneous in its teaching on the subject. Nor has he recognised that the distinction in the post-exilic law between sins done *בשגגה* or *per incuriam* and sins done *בין דמה*, with the somewhat contradictory view as to whether sacrifice availed for both, proves how early the question forced itself on men's minds. Since, in my judgment, the distinction is not clearly drawn, nor is the validity of the sin-offering defined, I must conclude that the men of the Return left the fundamental contradiction unreconciled, and handed it on to their successors.

outward customs distinct from the alien world. When such things are set down in a book they leave an impression of aridity in their formal and austere demands. But no student of Church history can fail to recognise that every devout fellowship, which finds itself in a hostile world, has thrown up its own hedge of peculiar observance. Even the Friends, who submitted to no ritual in their method of worship, were once recognisable through the outward acts which they required from their members. Such a series of habits always appears to a generation which has forgotten the distinction between the Church and the world to be unnecessarily austere and more than a little arbitrary. Yet behind its shelter may blossom the scented flowers of a sincere piety, of a tender conscience and of a generous helpfulness to the brethren. Nor should it be forgotten that the circumstances of the time inevitably led to a demarcation of the community by external signs. The men of the Return were acting under Cyrus' edict which conferred liberty of worship on them, and it became necessary to distinguish those who could claim this privilege. A Persian governor needed to know beyond mistake the men who had the right to worship at Jerusalem. There inevitably arose a certain stereotyping of what was meant by Judaism, with the result that outward signs of nationality gained greater prominence, with the further result that the faith lost a little more the prophetic element of universality.

It is not therefore surprising that prophecy died out in Jerusalem. Prophecy had never quite lost its charismatic character, and this, with its sense of direct relation to the divine, is always difficult to

reconcile with a formal institution. Now the new Judaism was centred round an institution, and was contracting the habit of discipline. Prophecy also, since it was primarily ethical, was inevitably universal in its outlook. But the institution was local, the cult was historic, the law with its peculiar practice was increasingly national. There are soils in which certain flowers refuse to grow, and there is an atmosphere in which the genius of the prophet was not at all at home. When, however, he sought an audience and a locus elsewhere, the resultant loss was not confined to Jerusalem. The individualist temper of the prophet had been disciplined—and no man needs discipline more—so long as he was closely allied with the actual life of a larger community of which he was an integral part. Now, too many of them, untrammelled by the wholesome realities of the world, lost their way in apocalyptic dreams.

Meantime the priestly college went their own way to guide their scattered people along the lines which have been sketched above. Their thought was engrossed in the control of the institution and in matters of its relation to the life of their nation. In much the same fashion, as soon as the Roman bishops had become the rulers of the Church, they ceased to produce theology. After the time of Ambrose what the faithful received from Rome was Canon law and Papal bulls. The torah which went out from Jerusalem was no longer that about which the prophets had dreamed that it might enlighten the world: it tended more and more to become the halakah of the Talmud.