

BOSTON UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL

Dissertation

THE CONCEPT OF SIN IN THE PRIESTLY AND PROPHETIC
WRITINGS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

By

Russell Charles Murphy
(A.B., Asbury College, 1948)
(B.D., Nazarene Theological Seminary, 1951)

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
1953

Ph D
1953
m

DEDICATION

To
Freda

Approved
by

First Reader *Elmer A. Leslie*
Professor of Old Testament

Second Reader *Robert H. Pfeiffer*
Professor of Old Testament

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	1
Primary Considerations of the Dissertation	1
Statement of the problem	1
Reason for writing on the problem	5
Previous work done in the field	8
Limitation of the subject	10
Methods and procedures used	14
Significance of Terminology	14
Consistency or inconsistency of usage	22
CHAPTER I. LEVITICUS, THE BASIC CODE OF THE PRIESTS	23
Sources	23
Leviticus	23
Basic Goals of the Priesthood	25
Preservation of the religious community	25
Preservation of dignity and authority of priesthood	30
Means of Attaining Priestly Goals	34
Institutionalized religion	34
Institutionalized society	52
Social and ethical precepts	57
Union of Religious and Social Institutions	65
Signified in the covenant relationship	65
Atonement, General Considerations	81
Recognition of need for atonement	81
Repentance insufficient	82
Sacrifice demanded	84

	Page
Atonement for the individual	91
Atonement for community	104
Day of Atonement	108
Priestly Interpretation of the Results of Sin	118
Corollary Considerations	123
Intent of priesthood necessary function of religion	123
Tendency toward moral sterility a fault	125
Inevitable clash of priestly and prophetic ideas	127
CHAPTER II. REPRESENTATIVES OF PROPHETIC THOUGHT	130
The Rise of Prophecy	130
Basic goals of prophecy	130
Lack of continuity and uniformity	134
Representative Prophets	136
Amos - inexorable punishment	136
Sin as offense against God	136
Sin of individual	149
Sin of community	150
Result of sin	155
Restoration from result of sin	157
Hosea - unflinching love	161
Sin as offense against God	161
Sin of individual	171
Sin of community	173
Result of sin	174
Restoration from result of sin	178
Isaiah - faith above all	182
Sin as offense against God	182
Sin of individual	189
Sin of community	191
Result of sin	192
Restoration from result of sin	197
Micah - a clarification	201
Sin as offense against God	201
Sin of individual	209
Sin of community	210

	Page
Result of sin	210
Restoration from result of sin	212
Jeremiah - obduracy of heart	214
Sin as offense against God	214
Sin of individual	220
Sin of community	222
Result of sin	223
Restoration from result of sin	224
 CHAPTER III. THE MEDIATORS	 229
Representative Mediators	229
The Deuteronomist	231
Ezekiel	237
Deutero-Isaiah	245
Haggai	250
Zechariah	252
Malachi	255
Joel	256
Trito-Isaiah	257
Summary	259
 CONCLUSION	 261
Basic Disagreements Between Priest and Prophet	261
Did priests deny validity of prophecy?	261
Did prophets oppose all priestly ideas?	262
Can the differences be resolved?	263
Comparison of Priestly and Prophetic Mind	265
 ABSTRACT	 274
 BIBLIOGRAPHY	 280
 AUTOBIOGRAPHY	 290

INTRODUCTION

"No apology or preface is needed for the subject of sin in the world."¹

Primary Considerations of the Dissertation

Statement of the problem. Sin is so interwoven in the fabric of life and experience that there should be no necessity for a discussion of it. It is something of which any man can speak from philosophical observation, and quite frequently from theological speculation. It is a subject that claimed the pens of biblical authors through the centuries of Israel's Yahweh worship, a worship which has culminated today in three of the world's greatest religions: Judaism, Mohammedanism, and Christianity. It served as the inciting incident on which a priestly author fastened to explain the generation of humanity through procreation. It ran through the Old Testament as a dark adversary to the brilliant creation of Yahweh. As time went on, the threat of that adversary exerted such an ever-increasing power over the lives of the Israelites that it hung like a pall over their political, economic, religious, and personal life. Those great groups of writings to which we refer as the prophetic, the Deuteronomic, and the priestly, are pervaded by a somber, almost overwhelming sense of sin and judgment;² and no one of them would have attempted

1. Wood, TWS, 9.

2. Wright, OTAE, 70.

to explain Yahweh's relationship to man as a created being without giving large account to the place sin plays in that relationship. Of all the problems which forced themselves upon the biblical authors as they looked at human life, this was the greatest and most insistent.

The evils of the world were the commonplace of rhetoric to these men, and as they viewed these evils, they listened to the inner urgings of their own hearts which proclaimed that in some way sin was at the bottom of it all. Yet, so great was their faith in the election promises of Yahweh that they never became totally absorbed with the destructive nature of sin; for on the other side of their interest was that of salvation from sin. There were times (e.g. the eighth century) when it seemed that the total concern of the prophets was with the punitive feature of Yahweh's judgment on sin, but even here salvation was the point of the discourse. There was no prophet (in the form in which his writings have come to us today) who did not plead for submission, repentance, and obedience on the grounds that in so doing Israel would be saved. There was no priestly author who did not set forth his laws and precepts with the view that in observing them his people would be absolved of their sin and thereby come into salvation. There were differences of opinion among prophets and priests--and differences of opinion within each of the groups from time to time--as to the exact form this salvation would take, but the idea was there to be taken into account when sin is mentioned in connection with the Old Testament.

The problem which has been chosen as the topic of this dissertation is the discovering of basic concepts of sin within the priestly and prophetic writings of the Old Testament. The purpose is not to review the

entire theology of sin in the Old Testament, since this has been done frequently and adequately, as will be pointed out in review of previous work done in this field. The specific question to be examined will be, "What is sin in its essence and its outworking, and what do each of the classes of writers have to say about it?" This will, as we pointed out before, involve a study of the nature of sin, the acts of sin, its origin, its punishment, and, above all, the salvation from sin. The priests believed primarily in sin as the violation of cultic law; the prophets conceived sin primarily as violation of the moral law. If this dissertation is successful in achieving the goal set for it, we shall elucidate these two very general statements with a view to establishing wherein they are at variance and the area of agreement which they embody.

The statement of the problem of this dissertation would not be complete without a general definition of sin and salvation. Both priest and prophet would agree that man owed to Yahweh his utmost effort to conform to the ideal; to deviate from the ideal was sin. But they would also have agreed with Tennant that

By . . . 'ideal' is not meant . . . whatever ideal one is pleased to adopt for convenience sake, but the highest ideal that at the time is accessible to us; the all-knowing God being judge as to what exactly is, and what is not, accessible.¹

Such a definition will turn our study toward a search for the ideal to be conformed to. We must seek the motive which prompted the setting of certain ideals in opposition to others. And, if possible, we must seek to

1. Tennant, COS, 119.

harmonize the ideals of priest and prophet, each of whom claimed to be the spokesman for Yahweh as to what was pleasing to Him.

The problem of salvation is rather simply stated. In the words of S. B. Messer:

Its [salvation's] factors are a righteous God and sinful man. Its concerns are: How can a holy God and a sinful man continue to exist in the same universe? How may God achieve righteousness in man and thus establish harmony in the universe? How may God be rid of sin without destroying man?¹

It is hardly necessary to point out that the answer to the above question will depend entirely upon the meaning which is attached to sin. In no place does the externality of the priestly system stand in more direct contrast to the inwardness of the prophetic ideal than on this very point, and we must undertake a thorough examination with regard to it if we are to rightly evaluate the priest and the prophet.

It will be the problem of this dissertation, then, to relate the rites and teachings of the cult to the ethical interpretation which the prophets placed on Israel's religion. It will be necessary at times to defend one against the other in their extreme positions. At other times it will be advantageous to faith if we can harmonize apparent differences between them with respect to vital articles of belief. Finally, the contribution which each group made to the overall development of the scriptures will be carefully examined, so that we may make more effective use of their teachings in our present day theology.

1. Messer, "The Doctrine of Salvation," Crozer Q, IV, 3:283, J1 1927. ✓

Reason for writing on the problem. "Sin is, and God is That fact produced the Old Testament."¹ It was a statement such as this which first brought the subject of sin's importance to the mind of the student. A closer examination of this proposition convinced him that in between the two postulates and the conclusion lay the foundation of the faith which we hold as Christians; but a search of literature produced in the last twenty-five years revealed that there has been very little written on the subject. To be specific, beginning with Dr. Ralph W. Sockman's "Vanishing Sinner" published in Harpers' magazine in November, 1930, the sinner did practically vanish from periodical literature. Between November, 1930, and the review which Time gave to Reinhold Niebuhr's Nature and Destiny of Man under the title of "Sin Rediscovered" in March, 1941, there were only five articles on the subject of "Sin" appearing in current periodical literature. This fact is all the more amazing when it is considered that in 1924-27 alone there were four articles on the "Fall of Man", thirty on "Sin", and eighteen on "Salvation from Sin."² This trend away from writing on "Sin" continues even until now, and it seemed fitting that a detailed study of the priestly and prophetic writings of the Old Testament on this subject might be made. That which the ancients viewed so seriously could not be without concern for us, and if this dissertation should serve only to stir the soul of some reader to re-examine this basic doctrine of the Bible, it would not have been written in vain.

1. Wood, TWS, 9.

2. Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature, loc. cit.

There were other reasons which prompted this study. Questions came to mind such as, "Do the prophets recognize the fact of original sin?" "Did the priests think that there was merit in the animal sacrifice apart from the spirit of the worshiper?" "How could Yahweh use the priestly cult to teach ethical truth, or did He actually hate the cult as some of the prophets seemed to imply?" Further there were statements from well-known authors which provoked mental activity. For instance, there was the statement of Niebuhr which reads:

The serious view which the Bible takes of [the] sin of man's rebellion against God naturally leads to an interpretation of history in which judgment upon sin becomes the first category of interpretation.¹

or again, the paragraph from Köhler which reads:

Judaism holds that the soul of man came forth from the hand of its Maker, endowed with freedom, unsullied by any inherent evil or inherited sin. Thus man is, through the exercise of his own free will, capable of attaining an ever greater perfection by unfolding and developing to an ever higher degree of mental, moral, and spiritual powers in the course of history. This is the Biblical idea of God's spirit as immanent in man; all prophetic truth is based upon it; and though it was often obscured, this theory was voiced by many of the masters of Rabbinical lore . . .²

And still another question arose as to whether or not Messer had thrown any light on the question of sin when he said:

After sin had entered the world, God had no option but (a) to abandon his purpose in creating man, that is, to let him go on in his sin and in moral self-disregard maintain communion with

1. Niebuhr, NADM, 140.

2. Köhler, JT, 26.

him; or (b) to destroy man altogether; or (c) to become Himself Saviour and to win man to righteousness.¹

The very problem of sin itself added to the intention to write on this subject. The student felt himself in complete agreement with Wood that:

. . . that which makes sin, with its myriad evils in society, in characters, in fortunes, the supreme problem of human life, is not the mere consequences of sin, awful as those are. That which makes sin not only the practical problem of life, but the supreme problem of the reason, is the fact that sin, this universal and vital reality, is in strange and terrible conflict with the supreme reality, which is God. In this defiance of God by sin lies the real problem.²

What, then, did prophet and priest consider as defiance of God? Whatever it was, therein was sin. But if this defiance were to be sin, surely it must bear some moral connotation, for no guilt can logically accrue where there is no demand for obedience. Tennant's definition of responsibility, based on New Testament interpretation of moral obligation, is logically applicable even in Old Testament circumstances so far as it limits the possibility of sin, as follows:

Two fundamental requisites for the morality of conduct, and therefore for the possibility of [sin] are . . . firstly, an objective moral standard according to which conduct ought to be regulated, and violation of which is either imperfection or sin according to the capacities and opportunities of the individual subject. Secondly . . . a possibility of apprehension, in some measure, of the content of this moral law, and of recognition that it is binding upon himself . . .³

L. Messer, "The Doctrine of Salvation," Grozer Q., IV, 3:284, J1 1927.

2. Wood, TWS, 9.

3. Tennant, COS, 123.

Lastly, there was a desire to discover, if possible, how nearly these priests and prophets of yesterday shared the emotions and yearnings of men of our own day--the sense of reverence before the majesty of God, the sense of moral obligation laid upon one from beyond oneself and of moral unworthiness before a judge, and the longing for forgiveness. If they had shared in a revelation of Yahweh which would shed light on the pathway of modern man as he is involved in the spiritual conflict of his earthly existence, a detailed study of their teachings would be well in order.

Previous work done in the field. Since sin plays such an important role in the formation of the Old Testament, it goes without saying that no "Theology of the Old Testament" would be complete without at least a chapter devoted to the study of it. However, the treatment which the various authors of Theologies give is more extensive in scope than that intended by the present dissertation. Their purpose is the examination of the doctrine of sin as it is developed throughout the entire Old Testament. Some, in presenting the matter as a whole, do touch individually on the priestly concept as contrasted with the prophetic, but when they do, the emphasis is upon a synthesis of the two into a consistent doctrine. To name a few of the better discussions, there is Baab's The Theology of the Old Testament which has a good chapter on "The Idea of Sin;" Oehler in his Old Testament Theology translated by Day takes up the question of the origin and transmission of sin; Eichrodt's Theologie des Alten Testaments, Teil 2 und 3, devotes some 65 pages to "Sünde und Vergebung." This list by no means exhausts the sources in this field

where material could be found on the subject, but they are representative examples.

Bennowitz has written a full length book on Sünde in Alten Israel in which there are 10 pages on the subject of cultic sin, but he does not go further to elaborate on a clear distinction as between prophetic and priestly. A great portion of his work is taken up with a discussion of the origin, nature, and consequences of sin with particular reference to the fall, an approach only incidental to the purpose of this study.

Koberle in Sünde und Gnade deals with the overall subject which we have taken under consideration, but from a much broader viewpoint. Parts of his work are pertinent to this discussion, but they do not preclude the necessity for it.

Works which parallel the work of this paper most closely are those of Welch in Prophet and Priest in Old Israel, and Hoschander in The Priests and Prophets. Here again, however, there is much concern in tracing the historical development of the ideals of the two schools of thought, without pin-pointing specifically the contrast of their idea of sin.

There are any number of books which deal with one phase of our problem. On the subject of the priestly, there are such works as Gray's Sacrifice in the Old Testament; W. O. E. Oesterley's Sacrifice in Ancient Israel; W. R. Harper's The Priestly Element in the Old Testament; and H. H. Rowley's The Meaning of Sacrifice in the Old Testament, which gives an excellent summary of the current literature in this field.

With reference to the prophets, the literature is so extensive as to defy outline. Outstanding are the works Cornill, The Prophets of Israel; Duhm, Die Theologie der Propheten; W. Robertson Smith, The Prophets

of Israel; George Adam Smith, The Book of the Twelve Prophets; Battenwieser, The Prophets of Israel; H. Wheeler Robinson, Redemption and Revelation; and the same author's article, "Hebrew Sacrifice and Prophetic Symbolism" appearing in Journal of Theological Studies, xliii, 1942. E. Basil Redlich in The Forgiveness of Sins has some 50 pages given to consideration of forgiveness of sin in the prophetic age, including a brief discussion of the Priestly Code, but his concern for forgiveness overshadows entirely the nature and content of sin. Hence, there is no overlapping between this paper and his work.

When we come to a consideration of the individual books of the Old Testament which are the subject of our research, the source material is limited only by the time to be spent in research. The individual materials used in this dissertation appear in the bibliography. There was found some relevant material in each of them, but in no case was there sufficiently extensive treatment of the specific topic of "Sin" such as to preclude the usefulness of the proposed study.

Limitation of the subject. As we have pointed out above with reference to other books, the usual method of approach to the matter of "Sin" in the Old Testament is from the view of the overall doctrine as we have it in the entire volume. This method, of necessity, must obscure the constituent elements which go to make up this finished theology, just as the artist finds his individual strokes and colors obscured in the completed picture. The purpose we have set for our work is to observe the minute details of the priestly and prophetic idea of sin; to examine each of them individually to the exclusion of any mutual influence. It is not

our purpose to trace the historical development of the two schools, for that has been done adequately and frequently by other scholars in the past century.

Further, we shall not concern ourselves in this paper with the slight differences which appear from time to time in the priestly regulations with reference to the materials and methods of sacrifice and ritual. To do this would tend to divert our attention toward the detail to the injury of the concept as a whole. Also, our study of the prophets will attempt to discover for us the answer to the question, "What is SIN to the prophets?" rather than to enumerate the various classes of sin against which the prophets lashed out. It will be necessary at times to enumerate specific sins in order to achieve our purpose, but this will be incidental to the larger purpose.

Finally, after having viewed priest and prophet in this light, we shall turn our attention to that group which attempted to combine the two classes of writings into a religious synthesis—a group whom we have called the "Mediators".

The plan of this study limits itself to Leviticus as representative of the Priestly Code, for it is felt that the priestly idea of "Sin" is clearly marked in this book. In the study of the prophets it seemed advisable to include all four of the better known ones whose writings come from the eighth century B. C.—Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah, and Jeremiah from the seventh century. Those occupying a mediating position are larger in number, but, except for Deuteronomy and Ezekiel, they are less lengthy and require less detailed study than do either of the other two sections.

The question might arise in the mind of some reader as to why we present no discussion relative to the fall, and why JE, often referred to as the prophetical narrative of the Old Testament, is not treated. The answer to the first question is that we are concerned with the fall only as it is found in priest and prophet. Apparently both of these groups felt, as Wood does, that:

This problem of sin is in every way more vital than the question of the origin of sin in man. For tracing the origin of sin cannot change the fact of sin. Sin, however it got here, is here, and the real and vital question before men is, not how sin got here, but how to get rid of it.¹

This was by far the major emphasis of both groups and their interest in the origin of sin was only incidental to their greater concern.

In answer to the second question, Skinner in his volume on "Genesis" in ICC has pointed out that there is no need to find in JE the influence of the later prophets from Amos downward. He feels, rather, that the prophetic tone of JE can be accounted for by the prophetic impulse inherent in the religion from its foundation by Moses, and he further notes that in JE we find no echo of the really distinctive ideas of written prophecy.² These conclusions would warrant our omitting JE from the present study since Skinner ranks as one of the most reliable of Old Testament scholars on such matters.

One other limitation of this work should be noted before we pass on. We have stated above that there would be no attempt made to trace

1. Wood, TWS, 18.

2. Skinner, "Genesis," ICC, Vol. I, li.

the historical development of ideas in either priestly or prophetic writings. Justification for this point of view is presented by Snaith, who reminds us that the material as it comes before us in its completed form bears a message of Scripture as a whole which can never be found so long as we think of the Bible only with respect to its literary sources.

To quote him:

[The editors] chose the order we have. [They] had the final say, and they used all the material from its varied sources in order to teach their particular message.¹

Rowley expresses somewhat the same sentiment when he says:

I have little doubt that sacrifice did not mean the same to the patriarch, to priests or people during the monarchy, to prophets, and to the founders of Judaism. Yet there were some elements of its significance which were constant within the stream of the true tradition of Israel. . . . So far as the Pentateuch is concerned, I recognize that there are various strata within it; yet all were gathered by the final redactors within its compass, to be understood in terms of that dynamic element which reached its full development in the Judaism which made the Pentateuch the expression of its spirit. My concern is primarily with the conception of sacrifice cherished by the final framers of the Law. . . .²

It is with this attitude that we shall approach the study of the concept of sin in the priestly and prophetic writings of the Old Testament. We shall attempt to examine the representative scriptures which portray the final features of their ideas, and, if possible, to present clearly and concisely the similarities and differences which we find.

1. Snaith, DIOT, 112, n. 8.

2. Rowley, MSOT, 86.

Methods and procedures used. The methods and procedures employed in this paper are the same as those used in compiling any research paper in the field of theology. A bibliography was compiled, sufficiently extensive to cover the various phases of the subject. From this bibliography the more representative thoughts were assembled for quotation and paraphrasing into the text of this work. On this basic foundation of the thoughts of scholars in the field, the student has fabricated the plan and contents which follow. Finally, in the conclusion the student has given his own summary and evaluation of the subject.

It should be added that, in view of the nature of a doctoral dissertation, the student has used as primary source the Scriptures as they have come to us in the King James and the 1952 Revised Standard Version of the Bible. Where other translations are quoted by authors, credit will be given. Observation of the pertinent Scripture was made, the various commentaries and discussions of it were noted, and in cases where it was indicated, the student has noted his approval or disapproval of some particular point of view. Since the scope of material available was extensive, critical selection was employed to find that which said the most in the fewest words. The student has attempted to present a work which is detailed but not dull, scholarly but not scholastic, vivid but not verbose.

Significance of Terminology

Various words for sin in the Old Testament. The most frequent expression for sin in the Old Testament is חַטָּא, (34 times); אָשָׁם, (7 times); עָוֹן, (2 times); and פְּשָׁע, (155 times). The verb

"to sin," לָגַן, is used over 200 times.¹ The meaning of this word and its derivatives is closely akin to that of the Greek ἀναρτία, from the root ἀναρτάνω, "to miss the mark," and it may be used to designate a commission of evil against another person, the violation of the covenant, unconscious sin, blasphemy.² The name is given to the strongest manifestations of sin and to its mildest forms, but in the last resort every sin is directed against God, the guardian of holy order.³ It comprehends sins of weakness as well as sins of wickedness; i.e. any way in which man deviates from the divine way and the goal prescribed for him by the divine will.⁴

The place that לָגַן and its derivatives occupy in expressing the principal idea of sin comes no doubt from the fact that this root conveyed a clear objective picture to mind, with no reference to motive or to the inner quality of sinful behavior. Its pictorial character must have been obvious to all who used it.

There are a few places in the Old Testament where the word means literally missing the mark, and this must be the clue to its religious, legal and ethical significance. . . . It follows from these examples, even though they are not very numerous, that ht' never quite lost the sense of making a mistake; the commonest expression for sin in Hebrew lacks the deep religious quality of our word.⁵

In many passages of the Old Testament לָגַן expresses a legal idea. Originally denoting a faulty action, it came to be applied to

1. Kohler, TDAT, 157.

2. Baab, TOT, 85.

3. Schultz, OTT, 282.

4. Oehler, OTT, 160.

5. Quell, Bertram, Stahlin, and Grundman. KBW, "Sin", 7-8.

all kinds of wrong-doing. Again Quell et al. point out that this legal idea can be seen wherever it indicates failure to comply with the normal laws of human intercourse.

In the law concerning witnesses, Deut. xix, 15-21, hatta'th, like 'awon, means any breach of the civil law: there is no reference to religion or the cult; the case is tried in a secular court. Similarly, at Deut. xxi, 22, het' means an ordinary criminal case (mishpat).¹

Finally, although its use may be merely forensic with respect to individual culpability, its meaning clearly involves the supposition that the religious life is subject, or ought to be subject, to legal norms or at least to generally recognized rules.²

The word יָיַן appears 231 times³ with the primary meaning of crookedness, perversion, iniquity. It does not designate an action, but the quality of an action. It is used in connection with the guilt of sin, either to impute, take away, or forgive.⁴ Oehler feels that it is most closely paralleled by the Greek ἀνομία,⁵ but Quell is at pains to point out, quite adequately, that the Septuagint translators were not consistent in their usage when it came to substituting Greek words for Hebrew, and we cannot be justified in defining the Hebrew through the use of a single Greek word.⁶ It does, however, have a strong religious tone,

1. Quell, et al., "Sin," KBW, 8.

2. Quell, et al., "Sin," KBW, 10.

3. Köhler, TDAT, 157.

4. Oehler, OTT, 160.

5. Oehler, OTT, 160.

6. Quell, et al., "Sin," KBW, 1 f.

stressing the idea of guilt.¹ Köhler explains the difference between

אָבִיחַ and חַיִּיב in this way:

Das heisst, während אָבִיחַ eine Sünde bezeichnet, die einfach darin bestehen kann, dass ein Mensch eine Tat begeht, die ihm verboten, oder eine Tat unterlässt, die ihm geboten ist, ohne dass er den Grund für Verbot hier oder Gebot da kennt oder gar einsieht, bezeichnet חַיִּיב eine Sünde, die aus einer unrichtigen Gesinnung hervorgeht.²

However, this difference cannot always be found in the usage of the two words, for at times they parallel one another. They also at times parallel שָׁוָה, the word which is usually considered the strongest designation for sin in the Hebrew vocabulary.³

שָׁוָה represents sin under its most active, and therefore its least formal aspect. It is suitably equated with practicing rebellion. It is the term used in secular non-legal speech for the willful breaking of a relationship of loyalty and peace, as when Israel broke away from the house of David (I Kings 12:12). When Isaiah 1:2 depicts the opposition of Israel to Yahweh as the rebellion of sons against their father, or Jeremiah 2:29 draws a parallel between their rebellion and the initiation of legal proceedings against Yahweh, human responsibility for the situation, i.e. for sin, is unmistakable. Amos and Hosea both use it in this sense of rebellion, almost as an instinctive self-assertion and defiance of God. Here we find a numinous element underlying sin, a rebellion consciously willed as a spontaneous human reaction to the holy and the

1. Quell, et al., "Sin," KBW, 6.

2. Köhler, TDAT, 157.

3. Baab, TOT, 86.

godlike.¹ Men who commit this kind of sin are rank rebels deserving no mercy because they have deliberately chosen to transgress the commands of God and to reject his loving kindness and salvation.² Oehler makes the distinction between נ' ל' א' and י' א' א' as follows:

In its intensification, sin becomes י' א' א', an expression which probably means properly breach with God, and hence apostasy, rebellion against God. . . . While נ' ל' א' includes sins of negligence and weakness, design and set purpose are always implied in י' א' א'.³

The three words considered above, then, form the basis of our Hebrew vocabulary for sin. To these we are required to add others with varying shades of meaning, but at this point a summary of the importance of these three should be made.

These words, with the exception of י' א' א', show beyond doubt that the irrational factor in sin does not play a dominant part in Old Testament theology, having been largely displaced by the idea of ceremonial impurity. However, with the aid of explicit theological texts like the codes of law in the Pentateuch, we can recognize the underlying idea of missing the mark or offending against the norm as a necessary one for simple-minded folk. Says Quell, et al.,

Nothing could show the simple man more simply and clearly why his heart was restless in the presence of the holy than the use of words which meant missing the mark, rebelling against the normal, or going astray and needing to find the right way. By

1. Quell, et al., "Sin," KBW, 10-11.

2. Baab, TOT, 86.

3. Oehler, OTT, 160.

the employment of these pregnant terms, conduct was judged, responsibility was fixed, and above all, the demand of God's will was sternly recognised, so that they came to have the value of formulae, giving forceful expression to man's sense of creaturehood amid the trials of life. If the religion of Israel recognised the will of God as the supreme and universal law, then it must try to bring home to men the fact of their separation from God, and hostility towards him, by means of ideas which had binding force because they indicated the direction in which human life ought to move. Now this is exactly what we find: in hata' as a verb of motion, or in 'iwwah, in the thought of going astray, and the legal implications of pasha'—all thoroughly typical of Hebrew idiom.¹

It seems clear, then, that חָטָא, שָׁחָ, and שָׁחָ have taken their place in the language of piety as simple metaphors, unencumbered with theological speculation. If the later Psalmist was to relate his "missing the mark" to Yahweh alone, Psalm 51:4, he is only showing that man had come to recognize that the thought of Yahweh and what He has willed can reveal the true character of his failure. He is accountable to no judge but Yahweh Himself. But whatever word is used to designate sin in a particular instance is not in itself determinative of the theological quality of the act. Usually it is not the root itself, but the context which brings out precisely the thought and feeling behind the words and determines their religious significance. The roots within themselves have a pictorial quality which is hardly suitable for the religious situation to which they point, even in the case of שָׁחָ, where there can be no doubt as to the sinner's dominant motive.²

These words serve to establish the fact that something is out of order, and that a means of correcting the disorder is necessary. From the

1. Quell, et al., "Sin," KBW, 16.

2. Quell, et al., "Sin," KBW, 10.

standpoint of religion, they are efforts to exhibit religious phenomena whose background lies beyond human understanding. Hence, their limitation is evident. They are used in relationship to a norm, deviation from which is sin. To define sin, then, it will be necessary to observe the basis on which the norm is established, and the degree of adherence which is demanded. There is no doubt that prophet and priest disagreed on these points, and it is this disagreement, with its relative degree of agreement (if any) which is the concern of this paper.

There are other words which convey shades of meaning with respect to sin. There is יָג, which has less the meaning of sin than of ethical evil, and hence is used in Deuteronomy when Yahweh will punish his people for their evil-doing in forsaking him (28:20); in Isaiah to describe oppression of the underprivileged (1:16-17); and in Jeremiah to describe the evil deeds for which Judah is to repent (4:4), the irresponsibility of the rulers in caring for the nation (23:2), and the evil-doings for which God is planning to bring evil upon them (26:3).¹ יָוִיג, the opposite of פְּרָטָה, describes an evil that has become an habitual feature of the disposition and of the actions. Evil, as in itself empty and worthless, is called זָלָזָל.² זָלָזָל, to refuse to obey the divine command, and דָּלָדָל to reject, convey the idea of a contemptuous dismissal of God's claims upon men. Another term with a strong connotation of willful evil and rebellion against Yahweh is נִרְדָּד, to be contentious, refractory, rebellious. The substantive form of this word is

1. Baab, TOT, 87.

2. Oehler, OTT, 160.

used of the rebellion of his chosen people which has grieved Yahweh's holy spirit (Isaiah 63:10).¹

In this glossary of terms should be included the term for unwitting sins נלל. It brings out the tragic element in human experience, that of "erring or straying." Quell, et al. think it unfortunate that it appears in the Old Testament mostly in a rather feeble way in the terminology of ritual, as though it had lost its original force; or perhaps the other way around, that it had been developed by a few religious thinkers from its relatively harmless connection with ritual. "It . . . is the weakest of the words for sin, indicating as it does, not culpable negligence but ignorance."²

Less frequently used is the word for violence or wrong-doing, דלל. ללל^{III} is used with the idea of profaning Yahweh's holy name. ללל, meaning to backslide, and ללל, apostasy or defection are infrequently used.³

The only root in Hebrew which expresses quite definitely the ideas of guiltiness and guilt is ללל. Its use is almost confined to matters of ritual law, so that its quality is material and objective, meaning uncleanness. Thus "guilt" does not necessarily involve sin in the sense of willful rebellion against Yahweh's ordinance. It is incurred unintentionally, by mistake, and loses much of its force in the sphere of

1. Baab, TOT, 87.

2. Quell, et al., "Sin," KBW, 11.

3. Baab, TOT, 90.

casuistry.¹ This type of offense or guilt can be removed by a measurable offering. Exact fines can be calculated and imposed upon the offender against Israel's law.²

Consistency or inconsistency of usage. From the above discussion it can be seen that there is little to commend a theology of either priest or prophet on the basis of consistency of terminology for sin. However, as we take up the various books in further study, we will point out any preference which the author may have for a particular term to emphasize his meaning of sin. It appears, however, that the authors in Key Bible Words were right when they concluded:

It is abundantly clear, from the rich variety of terms used, that the Old Testament offers no neat uniform doctrine of sin; qualifications are always necessary, and all sorts of subsidiary questions are involved in the general problem of sin.³

1. Quell, et al., "Sin," KBW, 21.

2. Baab, TOT, 90.

3. Quell, et al., "Sin," KBW, 4.

CHAPTER I

LEVITICUS, THE BASIC CODE OF THE PRIESTS

"Truth can walk among the people, only if it borrows a garment from falsehood."¹

Sources

Leviticus. The choice of Leviticus as the source from which to draw the priestly concept of sin came from the detailed and relatively consistent way in which that book portrays sin as cultic. "The full description of the sacrificial system in that book identifies sin as failure --for whatever reason--to observe the demands of this system scrupulously and in detail."² Although it has its sources in earlier usages in Israel, such as the "Book of the Covenant" (Exodus 20-23), and Deuteronomy, it exceeds both in the purely priestly outlook. It is generally concluded that the laws of cult in Leviticus represent the old traditions of the priesthood at the temple of Jerusalem, and the social laws in the "Law of Holiness" (Leviticus 17-26) contain among pure constructions the old laws of kindred which do not harmonize with later customs and manners, but which formed the kernel of the social life of the oldest Israel.³

1. Hoschander, PP, 58.

2. Baab, TOT, 98.

3. Pedersen, ISR, I-II, 27.

The priestly document, coming from a period during and following the exile, is a strange instrument when viewed in the light of the prophetic teaching of the great eighth-century prophets. But when viewed in the light of the circumstances which produced it, there is justification for some such system. That group of priests whose daily task of sacrifice was cut off by the exile in Babylon had much time at their disposal to consider the warnings of the prophets with reference to this very catastrophe in which they shared. If they were not wilfully blind to the implications of the event, it would be only natural that they would come to a heightened sense of sin which had brought it about. Oesterley reflects the thinking of modern scholarship when he states quite categorically:

The great increase of sacrifices which arose during the post-exilic period was due to the developed sense of sin, which was one of the consequences of the exile.¹

There are some, like Badè, who would attribute the growth of the post-exilic sacrificial system to the cupidity of the priests,² but to most scholars this motive is considered quite secondary to the religious. Köhler represents those who occupy a middle of the road position on the matter, seeing in the cult a deep consciousness of sin, while at the same time classing the cult as man's mistaken effort to save himself by his own works.³

1. Oesterley, "Worship and Ritual," Peake, PAB, 350.

2. Badè, OTLT, 296.

3. Köhler, TDAT, 169 ff.

Scholars divide on the question of the origin of laws which go to make up the priestly demands. While the great amount of work which has been done in the field of archeology and ancient religions in the past quarter century has served to demonstrate the cultural milieu out of which the elaborate sacrificial system must have grown, a detailed coverage of this material is not indicated within the scope of this study. The pertinent background will be considered with respect to separate features of the cult when the origin has bearing on the meaning of the feature in question.

Basic Goals of the Priesthood

Preservation of the religious community. Back of the historical event of the exile lay some seven centuries through which a group of people had become bound together under a religious and political autonomy. There were documents then available which traced the beginning of this relationship of a religious community back to the covenant which Yahweh made with Abraham, the father of the religion and community. The period following the great era of Moses and the Exodus had seen the rise of a monarchy based on the religious legacy of Moses--a religion which identified Yahweh with his people, Israel, in covenant relationship which was of mutual benefit to both. The divided monarchy had seen the growth of apostasy, the rise of great social evils, the charges of prophets like Amos, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, and Micah who proclaimed that the covenant was being misinterpreted by those who made of it a mechanical bond unqualified by ethical considerations. Finally, in 586 B.C. their nation had fallen along with the Temple

which had become the symbol of their religion, and a new era in religious thinking was to dawn.

Dr. Pfeiffer dates the Priestly Code c. 450 B.C. during the Persian rule over Judea.¹ This date, coming something like a century and a half after the exile began and three quarters of a century after the first return in 538 B.C., leaves a considerable period of time in which the priests of the inadequately restored community could have weighed the implications of the covenant and their present situation. It was true that Jerusalem was back in the hands of the "Chosen People" after a fashion, but, says Pfeiffer:

The author (or authors?) of this great constitution of the Jewish Kingdom of God on earth were not dreamers of dreams, like Second Isaiah, but practical realists. Aware of the futility of any attempt on the part of the small Jewish community in Jerusalem to achieve political independence, the author willingly accepted the enlightened, just, and friendly rule of the Persian kings. He did not expect God to send his Messiah to create a Jewish empire, but proceeded to codify the constitution of God's Jewish Kingdom in the present--a sacred law said to have been revealed to Moses in the distant past.²

It was this type of thinking which apparently prompted the promulgation of the Priestly Code as embodying the law of Yahweh through which He was to achieve the purpose of the covenant. If there was to be no nation exclusively devoted to the worship of Yahweh, then a religious community within the nation must be preserved if the covenant were to retain its worth. If there were dreamers who were still hoping for political

1. Pfeiffer, GOTR, 31.

2. Pfeiffer, GOTR, 31.

independence to accompany the religious freedom now restored under the Persians, they were free to express themselves; the priestly author would have none of it. Steps should be taken now to assure the continuing of the religion of Yahweh by the true "Israel," and the proof of one's right to bear that name would be determined by his adherence to the code which came from our author's hand.

The above account, imputing motives to the priestly writer, is merely introductory. Back of this idea was all the religious practice of Israel's history. It would be unjust to imply that this work was a new and arbitrary creation of the author, for we find imbedded in it elements which bear the mark of Israel's religious development up to his time. True, the prophetic touch is missing in its aspects of morality and social ethics, but other elements of it are retained and set forth in a priestly interpretation. Knudson in considering the apparent difference between the prophetic and priestly emphasis of this era comments thus:

The lofty prophetic conception of God was then generally accepted; and so also was the prophetic program for human life. What the priests, indeed, aimed to do was to translate that program into terms so concrete that all could understand it. . . . These men sought by rules and rites and laws to reduce the prophetic teaching to a form that would be intelligible to all, and that might consequently be made the basis of an efficient national or ecclesiastical organization.¹

P has a philosophy of history in which, on the assumption of arbitrary enactments of God, it was simple enough to show how He became sovereign of the Jews and their proselytes, and lost interest in the rest of

1. Knudson, RTOT, 247.

mankind.¹ In principle, P made of the Jews "a sort of monastic order, living in the world but apart from outsiders and under their own rules, theoretically impervious to political vicissitudes."² Whatever the source of the material which came under the hand of the compilers,

. . . the selection and treatment of the material as a whole was dictated by the same fundamental principles. . . . the compilers set out to make a holy nation of the Jews, a church within the empire, a Kingdom of God realized not in a future Messianic age, but in the present.³

The legalism of the priestly writings, in contrast to the numinous teachings of the prophets, was directed toward preserving for posterity the historical content of Israel's religion. The prophets had acknowledged that the religion which they taught was the true religion of Moses, but the ideals and ethics which they taught could so easily be forgotten by a future generation who knew not the glories of the monarchy. Without the vehicle of the state as the organ through which the revelation of Yahweh was continued, there was a well-placed fear that the day would come when the historical God Yahweh would become merely another of the many gods of their environment. Moses had brought a new revelation, and so to him they turned for methods whereby his work could be made permanent. To achieve this, they chose the cult as the rallying point for the restored community. All of its regulations were identified with the time of the Exodus when Moses received the law of Horeb and passed it on to the people. By

1. Pfeiffer, IOT, 197.

2. Pfeiffer, IOT, 191.

3. Pfeiffer, IOT, 190.

observing the law thus given, each successive generation would renew its adherence to the covenant. "Yahweh the God of Israel, and Israel the people of Yahweh, formed the rallying-cry for the nation, as the simple creed of the Koran--no god but Allah, and Mohammed His prophet--formed the battle-cry of the Mohammedan."¹

At this time the average man was not prepared for the lofty spiritual truths laid down by the prophets. He was too much accustomed to sacrifices and sacred feasts to give them up altogether. He needed the outward rites that had been taught him; he needed also specific regulations for his daily life, for without them he was religiously adrift in an unfriendly sea of idolatry, mythology and astrology. The accomplishment of the religious practices prescribed for him as an Israelite gave him something tangible through which to express his religious sentiment, while offering at the same time a vehicle through which he was duly impressed with the reverence and awe due the Lord of the universe.² By associating these practices with the historical revelation of Yahweh's will to a community of which he was a member, the groundwork was laid for the inclusion of gentiles under the commonwealth of Yahweh.

The Priestly Code, then, was but another step in the relation of Israel to her God, in which Pedersen finds a constant fluctuation between two goals:

"on the one hand, the eagerness to exalt Yahweh above everything and free him from constraint by what is found on earth, and on

1. Welch, PPOI, 46-47.

2. Knudson, RTOT, 247-8.

the other hand, a passionate endeavor to bring Israel into more intimate relations with him."¹

By defining as sin anything which infringed upon Yahweh's majesty, while at the same time providing explicit procedures which will assure a right relationship with Him, it established the religious community. And whatever we may think of the "legalism" employed to accomplish this end, ". . . it fulfilled its purpose in preserving the Jews as a peculiar nation to the present day."²

Preservation of dignity and authority of priesthood.

Among all religions the priest is considered especially holy as the mediator between God and man, and in his appearance as well as in his mode of life he must observe special forms of purity and holiness. He alone may approach the Godhead, ascertain its will, and administer the sacrificial cult in the sanctuary. He must represent the Divinity in its relation to the people, embody it in his outward life, enjoy nothing which it abhors, and touch nothing which could render him impure. . .³

One of the fine points of any priestly system of religion is that which the man himself plays in it. The duties which evolve upon him by nature of his office, as we see from the above quotation, require of him a peculiar method and manner of life which sets him apart from his fellow men. He is a man, yet he fills a function in the eyes of the community which no mere man can fill. There is a sacred note to his office which cannot be profaned if he is to retain his effectiveness with those to whom

1. Pedersen, ISR, III-IV, 668-9.

2. Pfeiffer, IOT, 270.

3. Köhler, JT, 343.

he is called to minister. He must submit to limitations which he makes upon no individual communicant in his charge. Yet, for this very same reason, he must set up safeguards which will keep himself as well as the laity from infringing on the domain of the sacred office. It is no small matter to be called upon to assign the duties, privileges, and limits of the office of the priest, for the overlapping between the human and Divine element within the same human being is not easy to separate.

In respect to the priesthood of Israel, it is obvious that the code which is designated by their symbol, P, does embody rules and narratives which are designed for the specific purpose of maintaining the position of the priest as a power in the renewed community. Further, Leviticus makes it clear that this priesthood is to be that which is descended from Aaron as the true strain. Again and again we find phrases in which the Lord speaks to "Moses and Aaron" as He gives commands (11:1; 13:1; 14:33; 15:1). Aaron and his sons are designated as the ones who shall perform the various offerings prescribed in chapters 6 to 10. They are appointed to diagnose and prescribe the cure for diseases in chapters 13 to 15. Aaron as high priest is the official at the Day of Atonement in chapter 16. He and his sons are particularly charged in chapter 17 to see that no animal is killed except at the tent of meetings, in order that proper ritual may be followed in the event. In short, the functions of the priest are rigorously protected for the house of Aaron against any other pretenders to the rights of priesthood. To insure that no misunderstanding of this may arise, 6:20a; 22a establishes the principle of succession thus:

"This is the offering which Aaron and his sons shall offer to the Lord on the day when he is anointed: . . . The priest from among

Aaron's sons, who is anointed to succeed him, shall offer it to the Lord as decreed for ever; . . ."

This emphasis upon the absolute inviolability of the right of Aaronic succession reflects events which do not occur in Leviticus, but come to us from other sources. The value of priesthood made membership in it an enviable position, for under the restitution after the exile, the priest became the mainstay of society. He was no longer a mere oracle-giver and assistant at sacrifices, he was an authority on the law, the only one who could perform sacrifices and other Temple rites. By belonging to the priestly family, a man obtained his share of the priestly blessing with all that the covenant with Yahweh implied; he was born to the prerogative of being admitted to what was holy, a prerogative to be respected if holiness were to be maintained.¹

Thus it was that many of those who became subordinate priests must have fought for a position as priests of the first class. We have reminiscence of this struggle in the narrative of Korah's revolt, given in Numbers 16. The same idea is reflected in the ordeal of laying the rods in the Temple, where only Aaron's rod flowered (Numbers 17:16-26). If the priesthood were to stand with absolute meaning in Israel, there could be no question of its divine institution, not even a question within its own ranks as to which family group should be in ascendance.

This exacting demand for an ordained priesthood sprang also from the idea behind the religion of this strata of the Pentateuch. As Dr. Pfeiffer points out, the religion of this period is still basically that

1. Pedersen, ISR, III-IV, 191-2.

of a slave serving his divine master, that of a subject fulfilling his obligations towards his divine king, in order to avoid punishment and receive a reward. In the complicated system of ritual which grew up in an attempt to satisfy the requirements of such service, it is manifest that experts would be required to perform the tasks properly, lest both the sacrificer and the nation invite annihilation through the mishandling of holy things. (Cf. Leviticus 10:1-5; ch. 16.)¹

Other reasons have been advanced as to why the priests so jealously guarded their position. The increased power of the office during the monarchy had left it the only institution with a hold over the people when political independence was gone, and there are instances in which it appears that priests were not slow to increase their wealth and prestige by new laws concerning their share in the offerings and sacred gifts. This fact appears more explicit in a study of Deuteronomy and Ezekiel than it does in the P Code itself, but in it we find the same reflections on priestly property which are found in the two books mentioned. When it is remembered that Deuteronomy and Ezekiel predate P by some one hundred seventy-five years and one hundred twenty-five years respectively, it can be easily concluded that P need only review that order of priestly privilege which had been accepted from the other two.²

It is sufficient to state here that it was understandably the goal of the priesthood to preserve its own authority and dignity. We shall take up in the next section the method by which this was achieved, and in

1. Pfeiffer, GOTR, 9 f.

2. Pedersen, ISR, III-IV, 189.

the conclusion of this chapter we shall evaluate the contribution of this goal to the concept of sin.

Means of Attaining Priestly Goals

Institutionalized religion. It has become a well recognized fact in history that totalitarianism has certain advantages over democracy if the only end sought is that of solidarity of society. In fact, faced with the individual differences of human beings, there is no solidarity available except through common submission to an established and unquestioned law. This law can have its source in a man--as in the case of a dictator, or in an institution--as in the case of the Roman Catholic Church. But in any case, there must be a central unalterable authority which controls the area of man's life in which conformity is sought.

As we pointed out above, the specific aim of the Priestly Code was to make of the restored Israel a "religious community."¹ Emphasis cannot be placed on one of these words to the exclusion of the other. Those who were particularly interested in the religion of Israel were none the less convinced that this religion was the sole property of the descendants of Abraham, and they were at pains to establish regulations for the present community life of those who shared in the religious aspect of this inheritance. Second Isaiah may have lighted the way for accepting the universal Godship of Yahweh, but He was still the God of Israel through historical revelation--so much so that some five hundred years later Jesus was

1. Supra, 25.

to tell a Samaritan woman beside a well ". . . salvation is of the Jews" (John 4:22b).

Thus it was that the formulation of the final code for religion and society must include features which would reveal the cultic life of the group through religious activities. Baab defines a religious community as one which ". . . functions in relation to a distinct set of religious observances and forms . . ." ¹ The same author goes further to explain the nature of such a community.

Through public and private worship, observance of religious festivals, participation in ritualistic dramatizations of divine deeds, the offering of sacrifices and gifts to the deity, and compliance with taboos originating in the idea of the sacred, the cultic nature of the community's life is revealed. On the other hand, the community functions socially in maintaining itself, in developing control mechanisms to insure its survival, and in fostering institutions permitting the satisfaction of the social, sexual, economic, and political needs of the group. ²

Such a concept of religion and society lay at the back of the Priestly Code. It was not enough that religion should deal with the intangibles of morality and ethics. Under this type of thinking all the relationships mentioned above must be given a religious content, and the obedience or disobedience to rules in reference to them would then have connotations entirely lacking if the same rules were not ostensibly divinely commanded. It did not matter that some of the rules might very well have been arrived at by simple logic and human observation, for consistency and reason were not criteria for determining the value of any precept.

1. Baab, TOT, 98.

2. Baab, TOT, 98.

Reasons were sometimes given as to why certain practices were forbidden, as in the case of the prohibitions against indulging in the heathen practices of Egypt and Canaan (Leviticus 18:3-4), but in the majority of instances no reason is given. Always the voice of Yahweh voices the commands, those which to human minds are both reasonable and unreasonable alike, and unquestioned obedience is demanded. Deviation is sin.

At the time of the P Code the groundwork had been laid for the building of religious institutions. Ezekiel had followed Deuteronomy and had elaborated the ritual into that which became the norm of the Second Temple worship. The relatively small group of returnees from the exile could be served from one sanctuary at Jerusalem, and already that edifice had been restored in 538-516 B.C. Further, there is evidence to show that even such competing sanctuaries as Bethel had lost their power and were recognizing the authority of Jerusalem, (cf. Zechariah 1:1-7), and this in 520-518 B.C. This central point from which to operate the socio-religious organization made easier the control of competition and the suppression of heresy. It also furnished a "home" for the cult, and as such it was the primary institution in the new order.

The second institution in the new order was the Priesthood. It had existed since earliest times, but never with the depth of meaning it now achieved. Men once had recognized the need for some such office even in the time of Abraham, as seen in the story of Melchizedek in Genesis 14:18-20. From the division of the kingdom to the time of the exile, there had been an ever increasing emphasis upon the importance of the Temple at Jerusalem and its priests, but the division of authority between priest and king--with the king superior to the priest--had not lent itself to the

rigid priestly system now proposed. The priest spoke the word of Yahweh from the now completed Torah, and the Israelite who would enjoy proper relations with the Deity must go through the priest. It was only through his ministrations of sacrifice and ritual that the individual or the community could escape the sin which now had infiltrated every aspect of life under the new constitution.

This thought leads to the third religious institution which now took on a new aspect: the sacrifice with its accompanying ritual. It is not always possible to indicate precisely when particular developments arose, but there is no doubt that the daily morning and evening burnt-offerings, the various sin and trespass offerings, culminating in the ceremonies of the Day of Atonement all belong to this period.¹ Hölscher has pointed out that the public obligatory sacrifices alone in this period required annually 1,093 lambs, 113 bullocks, 37 rams, 32 goats, 150.6 ephahs of fine flour, 342.08 hin of wine, and an equal quantity of oil; besides these there were the innumerable private offerings.²

The primary features of the new religious order then became the Temple, the High Priest as head of the priesthood, and the system of worship prescribed. These were the sine qua non of the religion of Israel as outlined under the Priestly Code.

It must not be erroneously assumed that the cult of Israel grew up out of a superstitious fabrication of the priests. Back of it there were long periods during which the religion had been developing from its

1. Oesterley, "Worship and Ritual," Peake, PAB, 350.

2. Hölscher, GIJR, 217.

original spontaneous individuality into the formal techniques by which it is more frequently known to us. But the intent of both forms of worship were the same: the establishing or preserving the right relationship between Yahweh and His people. The cult may have done this inadequately, as the prophets were quick to point out, but it served a purpose for the age and the people it served. Commenting that the people were not able to receive the naked truth of prophetic teaching, Hoschander says with facetious insight:

. . . if we may use a parable, we would say that naked truth is treated as a naked person who walks abroad, which would be regarded as exceedingly indecent. Truth can walk among the people only if it borrows a garment from falsehood. Thus dressed it still remains truth, and loses nothing thereby.¹

There is much to justify this statement as we study the relationship of prophet and priest. The prophet was an idealist, seeking rapid and sweeping changes in the social and religious life of the nation. The priest, on the other hand, ". . . must be patient with the slow-moving minds of peasants and dare not, by too large and sudden changes, lose the confidence of men whom he must seek to lead into new ways."² At the same time the true priest had the same goal as the prophet, and the difference between them was ". . . one of tempo rather than of principle."³ It is realized that evidence can be cited by the critic of this view if definition of goal is restricted to Christian or prophetic terminology, but in

1. Hoschander, PP, 58.

2. Welch, PPOI, 77.

3. Welch, PPOI, 77.

the Old Testament context it is in method and not in intent that priest and prophet disagree. Both seek to remove the element of experience which made man unacceptable in the eyes of Yahweh.

Sin was the name both groups gave to this terrible factor in their lives. The national humiliation and suffering that followed the fall of Jerusalem brought home to the people a consciousness of sin such as they had not had before, and the whole post-exilic system bears witness to the desire of the returnees that it shall never again happen thus to Israel. To accomplish this result, it would be only natural that the religious leaders of the community should attempt to define sin more explicitly. The fine insights of the prophets, too rare for the average man, should be translated into codes of regulations which could be observed by all with meticulous care. Without denying the value of the spiritual element, the priests no doubt would have agreed with a modern theologian who defines sin as ". . . the unwillingness of man to acknowledge his creatureliness and dependence upon God and his efforts to make his own life independent and secure."¹ This, too, was the prophetic definition, but there appeared to be need for a more concrete program than the prophets advocated for enabling human beings to demonstrate to the satisfaction of Yahweh that they acknowledged their creatureliness and dependence upon Him. To remedy this defect in the religious system became the task of the priestly author.

It is not always easy to find the spiritual concepts which underlie the Priestly Code, but the sacerdotal institutions which surrounded

1. Niebuhr, NADM, 138.

the sanctuary--where the Deity of Israel dwelt and where the sacrificial cult was administered--were necessary to deepen the popular notion of holiness and of the reverence due the sanctuary. Without them the idea of holiness and reverence for the sanctuary could never have been elevated into the realm of spirituality and morality. The priesthood may have recognized the wisdom of the prophets, but they also must have seen that very few individual Israelites would achieve the prophetic ideal. If the experiences of the exile had won the priests for the service of loftier religious ideas than that which they cherished before the exile, they now sought means for communicating these truths to the congregation in understandable form.¹

The details of the ordinances which came from this priestly viewpoint will be the subject of a later section of this paper. Here we are concerned with the motive, the symbolism, the higher meaning of the rites, for it is in these respects that their spiritual content is revealed.

The fundamental principle back of the people's obligation, the revelation of God's commanding will, is expressed in the words, "Be ye holy, for I am holy," (Leviticus 11:44 f., 19:2); or more completely, "Sanctify yourselves and be holy, for I am the Lord your God," (Leviticus 20:7). It was the holiness of their Deity which demanded that Israel be a holy people. The impress of consecration to the Holy God is to be stamped on the life of the Israelites in ordinances extending to all important relations and conditions; in every important affair of life the Israelite has to accomplish something which God demands. Therefore in all

1. Köhler, JT, 344.

things he must realize to himself the voice of the commanding God. The rites of the law are not mere heathen acts of magic to satisfy and placate the god; rather the ceremonial law of Israel gives special expression to the antagonism of the true religion to heathen nature worship, by showing that while in the latter the Deity is drawn down into nature, in the former what is natural must be consecrated and hallowed to God.¹

It is not always so very evident that the demand of the law is internal as well as external. But when it demands that one shall deal justly with his neighbor (Leviticus 19:13 ff.), when it blames the iniquity of the nation on their "uncircumcised hearts" (Leviticus 26:41), and when it gives divine sanction to the obviously pure morality of the Holiness Code, it becomes clear that the binding force of it is in both internal and external fields. Oehler feels that undoubtedly it does demand the external as co-ordinate with the internal, and that:

. . . precisely in this lies an important educating element. When all the relations of life, even those merely external, are placed under a direct command of God--when man in all he does or may not do has to render obedience to God, he is thereby led to the truth that what he ought to be is not to be sought in the rules of life arbitrarily formed and shaped by conventionality, but in an absolutely perfect will, which conditions and determines all things.²

The same author continues:

By bringing man to a consciousness of the essential nature of a higher divine righteousness, the law roused the conscience from

1. Oehler, OTT, 182.

2. Oehler, OTT, 183.

slumber, taught men to recognize wickedness as sin, and so made the need of reconciliation with God to be felt.¹

For a right estimate of the law it should be kept in mind, then, that the whole ritual ordinances to which the Israelite was subject, from his circumcision onward, have a symbolic character, mirroring the inner process of sanctification, and so forming the instrument of a tuition advancing from the outer to the inner. In fact, the precepts of the law are given in detail, mainly in the negative, while on the positive side, the duties often are stated as general rules; many positive points that lie in its intention are not expressly enjoined, but only the facts, patterns, and institutions are set forth which serve to guide a free development of positive virtues. "It was only Jewish tradition which at a later period extended its leading-strings over the space which the law had left open for the free development of piety."²

In line with this same idea, Lofthouse has commented on chapter 26 of Leviticus thus:

. . . this chapter, along with Dt. 28, and the other hortatory passages in Dt. show that the Law was thought of, not simply as a body of mechanical precepts with their appropriate "sanctions," but as a moral challenge given to Israel either to accept or refuse, even though refusal, like the rejection of Christ in the NT, involves certain and terrible penalties.³

And Köhler climaxes the entire thought in connection with the purpose of the law in these words:

1. Oehler, OTT, 183.

2. Oehler, OTT, 184.

3. Lofthouse, "Leviticus," Peake's Commentary, 211.

The object was to bring about the sanctification of the entire people upon the holy soil of the national land, through institutions embodying the ideal of the holiness of God in the life and cult of the people. Circumcision, idealized by the prophetic author of Deut., was to be made the sign of the covenant to mark as holy the progeny of Abraham . . . strict laws of marriage were to put an end to all heathenish unchastity; the Sabbath rest was to consecrate the labors of the week, the Sabbatical month and year the produce of the soil. . . . The prohibition of unclean foods, heretofore reserved . . . for the priests and other consecrated persons, was now applied to the whole community in order that Israel should learn "to set itself apart from all other nations as a holy people."¹

The greatest step to be taken in formalizing spiritual concepts was that of purifying the worship which had grown up around the Temple during the latter days of the divided monarchy. The reading of the prophets of the eighth century, along with the records of the books of Kings, will serve to refresh our memory that pagan symbols and practices had permeated the worship of the first Temple, and priestly authors of this latter date would no doubt have found it easier to ascribe the downfall of Jerusalem to this fact than to the moral turpitude of the people. The Deuteronomic Reform had set the stage for the centralization of worship at Jerusalem, and possibly the reform of Josiah had done much to put away the heathen practices which were associated with Yahweh worship in the time of Manasseh. However, Jeremiah was still active in denouncing the false faith which the people had in the Temple worship, along with the pagan activities there. Hence, in the restored community there would be need to accomplish a complete reformation of the ritual in the light of all that had gone before.

1. Köhler, JT, 345-6.

Care should be taken to point out here that the new manual of worship was not entirely new--a fact which we have noted before. The item which concerns us is the fact that under the Priestly Code of this post-exilic period every effort was made either to expell foreign elements from Israel's religion, (cf. Leviticus 18:1-5), or they were spiritualized and incorporated into Yahweh worship. A case in point is that of the Scape Goat who is driven into the wilderness on the Day of Atonement, (Leviticus 16). No source for this ritual, either heathen or Israëlitish, has ever been found. Possibly Azazel, for whom this goat was chosen, was a desert demon,¹ and this peculiar rite had no place in the system of P. In earlier times, when heathenism was still a danger, such rites were discountenanced by the priestly legislators, but, "now," says Lofthouse, "the menace of heathenism broken, they are taken over, as survivals and still popular, on account of their suggestive symbolism."²

The central sanctuary throughout Leviticus is referred to as the "Tent of Meeting," "The Tabernacle of the Lord," or "My Sanctuary." From this fact alone it would not be possible to prove definitely that the Jerusalem Temple is the only place where sacrifice is recognized. However, against the background of Deuteronomy and Ezekiel, plus the later historical books, it can be established that this was the case in post-exilic Judaism.

The most significant development in the character of Jewish religion is the fact that all the leading ideas and motives which emanated

-
1. Whitehouse, "The Religious Institutions of Israel," Peake's Commentary, 104.
 2. Lofthouse, "Leviticus," Peake's Commentary, 205.

from the priesthood were concentrated in one single focus; the hallowing of the name of Yahweh.¹ In line with the dictum of Deuteronomy 12:11-14, the sacrifices were to be brought to the place which ". . . the Lord your God shall choose to cause his name to dwell there . . ." In Leviticus it was to the "Tent of Meeting" before the "Tabernacle of the Lord" that they were to be brought, and where the name of Yahweh then was said to dwell. There was to be no slaughter of animals except at the "Tent of Meeting," in order that the people might ". . . no more slay their sacrifices for satyrs, after whom they play the harlot" (Leviticus 17:7a). This sanctuary was to be revered as belonging to Yahweh (Leviticus 19:30). Since blasphemy of His name was punishable by death, as in the instance of the stoning of the man who blasphemed it in Leviticus 24:10-11a; 23, so desecration of the sanctuary was considered a profaning of His name.

In two places, 19:4 and 26:1, Leviticus does forbid the erection of idols, molten gods, graven images or pillars, and figured stones in the land, indicating that these symbols of foreign worship were recognized as a danger to true Yahweh worship. If these rules came from early days, they had been disregarded in the final days before the exile, and a re-stating of them was now in order. Second Isaiah had had much to say on the futility of idols as objects of worship, and now a law concerning them was to become a part of the Code. The instruments of worship, enumerated in other parts of the Pentateuch, are not again specifically set forth in Leviticus, but their existence is assumed. It is only against forbidden instruments that it is specific.

1. Köhler, JT, 348.

The institution of the priesthood itself was no doubt in worse need of reformation than was the Temple idea. The picture which Ezekiel had painted with respect to the Jerusalem priesthood is enough to substantiate such a statement. Their office had been bitterly assailed by the prophets, who charged their sacerdotal practices with being a threat to the moral and spiritual welfare of the people; and if they were to come with renewed vigor into the religious life of Israel, purification of the priestly office was in order.

If the priests were careful to protect their station from any other who would infringe upon it, they were nevertheless just as careful to maintain the idea of purity within their own ranks. In chapters 21-22 of Leviticus the regulations with regard to the personal and official life of the priests are restrictive in the extreme. No descendant who is physically deformed or outwardly diseased shall be allowed to serve before the altar, lest he profane the sanctuaries (21:16-23). The priests are not to defile themselves for the dead except for kinsmen of the immediate family (21:1-3). They are not to take to wife a harlot, a divorcee, or one who has been defiled (21:7). The High Priest (called in Leviticus "the priest who is chief among his brethren" 21:10), in addition to the restrictions placed upon the regular priests, is to avoid all risk of pollution by taking up his dwelling in the sacred precincts. With respect to marriage, he is prohibited from taking to wife any except a virgin of his own people (21:14), with the specific note that he may not marry a widow—a restriction not employed with regular priests.

Priests may not minister before Yahweh while in a state of ceremonial uncleanness, on the pain of being cut off from Yahweh's presence

(22:2-3), and a continuation of the same thought adds in 22:9, "They shall therefore keep my charge, lest they bear sin for it and die thereby when they profane it: I am the Lord who sanctify them."

None except the immediate household of the priest may eat of the sacrificial offerings (22:10-16). Even the daughter of the priest who profanes herself by playing the harlot profanes her father by the act, and her terrible punishment is to be burned with fire (21:9).

The personal life of the High Priest was not allowed to interfere with the ministrations of his office. When Aaron's two sons, Nadab and Abihu, offered unholy fire before the Lord and were struck dead for the act, Aaron was not permitted to mourn their death (10:6), nor was he allowed to leave the tent of meeting in this hour of personal sorrow. The anointing oil of the Lord was upon him for the performing of his priestly function before the congregation, and to have gone out would have subjected him to the penalty of death (10:7).

One other important instance in which the priests are enjoined from some specific act with the injunction "lest you die" is found in 10:9-11.

Drink no wine nor strong drink, you nor your sons with you, when you go into the tent of meeting, lest you die; it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations. You are to distinguish between the holy and the common, and between the unclean and the clean; and you are to teach the people of Israel all the statutes which the Lord has spoken to them by Moses.

Verses 10-11 follow loosely here, but in context, for it is logical to believe that the ministrations of their office would be so drastically effected by strong drink as to call down the wrath of Yahweh upon them. Deuteronomy 33:10 had outlined the profession of Levi in these words:

"They shall teach Jacob thy ordinances, and Israel thy law; they shall put incense before thee, and whole burnt offering upon thy altar." Ezekiel had expanded this to include the giving of judgment according to Yahweh's law (44:23-24), but he too had included a prohibition against strong drink in connection with it (44:21), apparently feeling that their duties would not be carried out adequately if they were under the influence of wine. Leviticus, when laying down the final manual of the priests, saw fit to include this as a very important point.

The ground for this very severe rule of priestly conduct is given in 22:32, "and you shall not profane my holy name, but I will be hallowed among the people of Israel; I am the Lord who sanctify you . . ." This verse forms the concluding sentence of the precepts for the Aaronitic priesthood and warns them as the guardians of the sanctuary to do nothing which might in the popular estimation degrade them or the divine cause intrusted to them.¹

The third item of religion which needed the refining touch of this era was the institution of sacrifice. The introduction of heathen practices into the worship of Yahweh prior to the exile is well attested, especially in the instance of child sacrifice. There were other innovations which Jeremiah especially condemned, and Amos indicated that the worship at Bethel and Gilgal were transgression within themselves. Israel had begun to take part in the rites of religions in which the deification of the forces of nature brutalized the moral sense of humanity, in which, says Köhler:

1. Köhler, JT, 349.

. . . no vice seemed too horrible, no sacrifice too atrocious for their cults. Baal, or Moloch, the god of heaven, demand in times of distress the sacrifice of a son by the father. Astarte, the goddess of fecundity, required the "hallowing" of life's origin, and this was done by the most terrible of sexual orgies.¹

Against these shocking rites both prophet and priest hurled their vials of wrath. However, in the age in question the prophet's voice was largely quiet, and it was to the priest that the task fell. In the words of Pedersen, "In post-exilic times the fight against the foreign cult was regarded as a duty by the true priesthood, it gave them the right to be priests."²

In this age, too, the pressure of accumulated national calamities which appeared to betoken the abiding displeasure of the deity had awakened a new consciousness of guilt. Thus the idea of the expiation of sin gradually tended to displace or modify any other meaning that sacrifice and ritual may have had. The transformation took place, no doubt, only in meaning, and not in form—a fact which has led some to think that the cult of Israel does not differ from that of its heathen neighbors. But Ottley notes the very important difference when he says:

. . . the men of a later age were led to invest the ancient form of sacrifice with a new significance, in proportion as they came to realize more profoundly the inviolable holiness of Jehovah, the sinfulness of man, and the consequent need of priestly mediation.³

The cult, then, which now was Israel's religious constitution, must have been recognized by the people as something which was so peculiar to

1. Köhler, JT, 54.

2. Pedersen, ISR, III-IV, 187.

3. Ottley, AOOT, 233.

Israel that it served to mark them off from the heathen world among which they must live. Welch in commenting on this, observes:

What makes this more noteworthy is that it did have that effect The network of regulations as to food and as to ceremonial purity were the characteristic features of Jewish life which marked off every Jew from his neighbour. But the purpose of these regulations was to preserve in all the members of the race the condition of purity which made them fit to take part in the sacrificial worship. The separation of the Jew from his world not only coincided in time with the restoration of the temple-worship, but was the direct result of this cult. In view of this it becomes extremely difficult to believe that the cult on which the men rallied, and which had this for its result, had originally been no integral part of their peculiar religion, but had been borrowed wholesale from the very paganism against which they were now reacting.¹

To make the cult truly Israel's, certain practices were of necessity condemned. Such were the rites which could not by any means be purified and made to conform to the character of Yahweh as revealed in the Sinai revelation. The vicious worship of Molech by which children were burned as sacrifice is forbidden in the strongest terms, both in 18:21 and 20:2-5. In the latter reference Yahweh not only pronounces that the offender in this respect shall be stoned, but He further states that if the community does not punish the offender, Yahweh Himself will set His face against him and his family and all who follow him in playing the harlot after Molech. This particular sin was evidently much in evidence in the history of Israel. Jeremiah among the prophets is strong in denouncing it, and Micah asks, "Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" (6:7b). The circumstances

1. Welch, PPOI, 20-1.

in which we find Molech worship in the thoughts of their formers indicate that it may have been a cult practice to which the people resorted in times of deep national crisis--the ultimate in sacrifice according to their view. Welch sees it as a pre-Mosaic rite, the condemnation of which lies behind the beautiful story of Abraham's intended sacrifice of Isaac. Here, the sacrifice was prompted by the highest motive, yet it was forbidden; surely it would not be permitted on the lesser motive of bribery toward Yahweh in order to escape the calamities coming on the nation.¹

A prohibition of the same type is found in Yahweh's forbidding Israel to adopt the mourning practices of their neighbors (19:27-28); and again they are told that they shall not practice augury or witchcraft (19:26b), for Yahweh will set his face against that person who turns to mediums and wizards to play the harlot after them, (20:6).

In short, the rules of sacrifice which now became the manual of the priest, the law of holiness which directed the relationships of life, and the miscellaneous precepts of conduct were a composite of that which had seemed to last in the religion of Israel. This was enough to satisfy Yahweh's commands, and more need not be added. The story of the two sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, who took each his censer and offered unholy fire before the Lord ". . . such as he had not commanded them . . .," is extremely important in this connection. This incident, coming as it does following Leviticus 9:24 where the fire of Yahweh consumed the sacrifice on the altar, figures greatly in the Priestly Code as a prohibition against unauthorized cultus, illustrating the danger inherent to the

1. Welch, PPOI, 82.

would-be priest of unsanctioned ministrations. The key to the whole situation lies in the words, "such as he had not commanded them." So strict was the code that not only should they meticulously observe all commands of performance, but they should not in a single feature overstep into some ritual not specifically directed. The fact that they were the sons of Aaron and thereby priests in their own right did not mitigate their fault; rather it would seem to increase it, for they should have been the champions of the letter of the law, not those against whom its force should fall. Their fate served as a warning to any future priest who might on occasion desire to bring innovations into the worship, and by so doing, bring about a return of Yahweh's wrath, of which post-exilic Israel had had enough.

Institutionalized society. When we speak of institutionalized society we are not necessarily speaking of uniform society. This fact becomes evident when we observe the features of the code of Israel which distinguished it from its neighbors, at the same time leaving it free to participate in the cultural, economic, and political life of its environment. Yet, if Israel were to become a distinct society among the nations, there must be some set of institutions in which the group was uniform. Some identifying mark must be employed by which it could be said, "this man is a Jew," as that term now came to be used.

We have discussed in the previous section the religious institutions which marked Judaism after the exile. Now we turn to those rules which operated outside the cultic system, but which nevertheless were characterized as Jewish.

Certain of these ordinances given by the Lord to Moses appear to be merely hygienic and dietary rules from which the health of the community would prosper. Our modern understanding of such matters supplies a better explanation of the wisdom behind many of the prohibitions with respect to foods and disease. But--and this must be noted above all else in this connection--never once does the law say that these rules are given for hygienic or dietary reasons. Always the reference is toward the command of Yahweh, without respect to the reasonableness of the rule.

The duty of the priest to "distinguish between the holy and the common, and between the unclean and the clean" is explicitly stated in Leviticus 10:10. Then immediately following in chapters 11-15 the rules of uncleanness are laid down in itemized detail. It would not serve any purpose here to enumerate these rules in detail; rather we can get a clearer picture for purposes of our study if we simply outline these five chapters under the following headings:

1. Chapter 11 - Law of clean and unclean animals.
2. Chapter 12 - Law concerning purification of woman after childbirth.
3. Chapters 13-14 - Law concerning leprosy and its cleansing.
4. Chapter 15 - Law concerning discharges from the body.

Chapter 11 forbids the eating and touching of certain land animals, water animals, birds, and creeping things, on the penalty of becoming unclean. In parts of this chapter it is said that these unclean animals are an abomination, but this difference in terminology has no significance except to indicate that possibly this whole chapter is a compilation of earlier groups of laws.¹ The significant feature of this chapter lies in

1. Carpenter, Hexateuch, Vol II, n. Lev. 11.

the fact that these regulations are enjoined on Israel with these words:

For I am the Lord your God; consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy. You shall not defile yourselves with any swarming thing that crawls upon the earth. For I am the Lord who brought you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God; you shall therefore be holy, for I am holy. (Leviticus 11:44-45).

Thus, the physical benefit which may accrue from these rules plays no part in their justification. They are stamped with religious authority through the formula of "a holy people for a holy God."

On the other hand, there is nothing in the chapter to indicate that transgressing one of these rules is a sin within itself. In fact, here we find no requirement made that a sin- or guilt-offering must be brought when one is guilty of having breached the rules. The only specific penalty prescribed is that the one who is guilty of having touched uncleanness shall wash himself and be unclean until evening. However, when we turn back to chapter 5, it is there stated that those who transgress in this way, even unwittingly, shall bring their guilt-offering for the sin which they have committed (Leviticus 5:6a). This would indicate that sin came into the picture when the Israelite performed some act of worship at the sanctuary while in an unclean state, thus profaning the holiness of Yahweh. Since no member of the congregation would knowingly infringe on this dangerous ground in an unclean state, it is only for the unwitting transgression that atonement may be made. Any willful disregard of the holiness laws was so dangerous a transgression that the sinner must be exterminated (ch. Leviticus 20:1; 22:3, 9; 19:8). There was only the possibility of expiation for the sin if it were committed inadvertently

(cf. Leviticus 5:15 ff.; 22:14, 16).¹ This same idea is borne out in chapter 15 with reference to discharges from man and woman. When one is defiled with a discharge which is natural, i.e. semen and the regular discharge of blood with a woman, no offering is demanded for purification; only a period of separation is required. However, when either man or woman has a discharge from the body which is not natural, upon being cleansed of the discharge the person must bring an offering to the priest to make atonement before the Lord (cf. Leviticus 15:16; 19; 15; 30). But both of these situations are concluded by verse 31 of the same chapter which reads:

Thus you shall keep the people of Israel separate from their uncleanness, lest they die in their uncleanness by defiling my tabernacle that is in their midst.

It appears then, that certain types of uncleanness were thought to be upon the individual through the natural functions of life, and for these no offering was required. On the other hand, uncleanness which arose from unexplained physical conditions was to be atoned for. This same thought seems to underlie the demand for a cleansed leper to bring an offering for atonement (Leviticus 14:12, 21). The connection between such matters and sin is not so easily seen in our day, but Gray explains it thus: ". . . the reason for the guilt-offering is not stated, nor is it clear. Possibly . . . it is for some unknown sin which was certainly . . . according to the thought of the time . . . the cause of such misfortunes as leprosy . . ." ² Under any condition, the important fact is

1. Pedersen, ISR, III-IV, 282.

2. Gray, "Numbers," ICC, Vol. IV, 66.

that the uncleanness must be removed if the individual is to escape death upon contact with the tabernacle. This serves again to focus the attention on the religion of Israel, as found in the temple, the priesthood, and the cult--the center around which all life rotated.

The line of reasoning which we have been following will not carry over to chapter 12 where the law concerning the purification of a woman after childbirth is found. Here is a natural function of the body, one considered a blessing from God, yet at the completion of it an atonement must be made. The high standard which the Israelites maintained with regard to the family life of the community forestalls any suggestion that there was fear that the children were born through a sinful act on the part of either parent. An interesting explanation for the commandment to offer a sin-offering at this time comes from Oehler, who says:

It is also to be noticed, that Mosaism, although it derives the propagation of man's race from God's blessing, still regards all events and conditions which refer to birth and generation as requiring a purifying expiation; compare the law, Lev. xii, and xv., in which the thought lies that all these conditions are connected with the disturbance of sin.¹

This point of view cannot be substantiated from the text, however; it seems reasonable to conclude, then, that there was neither a sanitary nor a rational reason underlying the laws contained in chapters 11-15 of Leviticus, nor in the parallel sections of Deuteronomy and Numbers. Granted that there might be sound reasoning on those lines which we can read into them from our vantage point of twentieth-century science, it remains obvious that they were included in the priestly writing as a

1. Oehler, OTT, 162.

means for directing these elements of Israelitish experience toward the Temple and Yahweh. If we see a reference to the story of the Fall in the case of purification for a woman following childbirth, we read into it facts which are not explicit in the text. Here, as with all elements of the Priestly Code, reason is not merely secondary; it is absolutely rejected in favor of the one criterion for law: "Yahweh said . . ."

Social and ethical precepts. It could be lamented that as Judaism crystalized into Phariseeism, it was the rigid enforcement of the law of uncleanness which characterized it, rather than the devout practice of the injunction, ". . . thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself; I am the Lord." (Leviticus 19:18b). That this is true cannot be denied. However, since our study is concerned with the content of the Priestly Code as it was laid down, and not as it was practiced, this very vital ethical element of the religion of the priests has now to be considered. The source for it is found in the so-designated Holiness Code of Leviticus 17-26.

Köhler thinks it significant that we find the words, "You shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy" as the introduction to the chapter on the love of man, the nineteenth chapter of Leviticus, placed at the very center of the entire Priestly Code.¹ His observation would be doubly well taken if it were not true that the same phraseology is used when the P author would put the voice of authority behind some minute detail of the cult, thereby demanding as scrupulous obedience to the cult as to the ethical side of religion. As the text now stands, the simple

1. Köhler, JT, 351.

formula, "be ye holy, for I am holy," does no more to establish the eternal ethical quality of Israel's God than it does to establish the eternal quality of His demands for cultic obedience.

This is not to say that ethical and cultic obedience cannot stand side by side. Rather, the whole pattern of the Priestly Code demands the observance of both, not one without the other. We cannot rightfully judge the emphasis of the code on the basis of space allotted to individual topics, for it is quite evident that the Old Testament was not compiled with any such idea in mind. Hence we cannot say that the great amount of space given to ritual indicates its ascendancy over morality in the minds of the priests.

MacFadyen sees in the Holiness Code the proof that prophetic and priestly interests are not essentially incompatible. He says:

For all its [Holiness Code's] pre-occupation with ritual, time and again it speaks with the veritable voice of the prophet, notably in chapter nineteen, where the holiness which Jehovah demands has to express itself not only in reverence for Himself and respect for the ritual law, but in tender consideration for the blind, the deaf and the hired servant; and it is from this chapter that Jesus took the golden words which summarize, in one of its aspects, His conception of human duty, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."¹

This subject must be discussed more fully at a later time. It is introduced here simply to point up the idea that plain morality does appear in P, giving altogether a different idea of sin than that contained in the ritual law.

1. MacFadyen, MOI, 180-1.

What, then, are these social and ethical concepts which spring from Leviticus, and for what reason are the Israelites asked to obey them?

The relationships of marriage were considered most holy by the Hebrews, and one would naturally expect that strict regulations would be set forth governing this feature of life. However, this knowledge hardly prepares us for the great detail of the priestly author when he enumerates, expressly or by inference, no fewer than seventeen forms of incest which are prohibited, plus adultery, sodomy, and lying with beasts. This list, with minor exceptions, appears twice, once in Leviticus 18:6-23 and again in 20:11-21. In the first list the offences are called merely "abomination," "wickedness," and "confusion." In the latter list, however, specific penalties are ordered for infractions of the rules as follows:

To be put to death for:

- Adultery with another's wife, v. 10.
- Incest with the father's wife, a daughter-in-law, v. 11-12.
- Sodomy, v. 13.
- Taking of a wife and her mother (punishable by burning), v. 14.
- Lying with a beast, v. 15-16.

To be cut off from the people for:

- Incest with a sister, v. 17.
- Lying with a menstruating woman, v. 18.

To bear iniquity is added punishment for:

- Incest with sister, v. 17.
- Incest with aunt by blood relation, v. 19.
- Incest with aunt by marriage, v. 20.

To die childless for:

- Incest with aunt by marriage, v. 20.
- Adultery with a brother's wife, v. 21.

The conclusion of both of these chapters sheds interesting light on the reason why these practices are so strongly condemned by Yahweh.

It is well stated in 18:24-25:

Do not defile yourselves by any of these things, for by all these the nations I am casting out before you defiled themselves; and the land became defiled, so that I punished its iniquity, and the land vomited out its inhabitants.

Here, then, is a morality which is not based in law but in the integrity of nature. These are practices which were not wrong because Yahweh condemned them, but which Yahweh condemned because they were wrong. As Köhler says:

Denn ehe die Israeliten nach Palästina kamen, haben die Völker (Heiden) dort diese Sünde begangen. Dadurch wurde das Land unrein und bekam eine Schuld! Lev. 18:25. Diese Schuld suchte Jahwe an dem Lande dadurch heim, dass es seine Bewohner ausspeien musste. Hier ist Schuld ohne Gesetz . . .¹

Pedersen has pointed out that the reason back of these prohibitions is not to be looked for in the experience that marriages between near relatives make unhealthy progeny—a doubtful supposition—but in the deeply-rooted, all-pervading psychic nature of marriage wherein one person cannot stand in that same relationship to another of the opposite sex in the same family. Psychically it is impossible to stand in two relationships, intimate but of the same kind, to the same person, i.e. a mother as both mother and wife to a son. Knowing this, Yahweh forbade it.²

Chapter 19, as we noted, the most nearly prophetic chapter of the Priestly Code, has only two commandments with reference to the sexual life of the community, and both of these lack the ethical content of chapters

1. Köhler, TDAT, 161.

2. Pedersen, ISR, I-II, 65.

18 and 20. The first regulation concerns the punishment of a man who lies carnally with a bondmaid who is betrothed, but not free, v. 20-22. Her status as a slave saves both of them from the sentence of death, but the man is required to bring a ram for a guilt-offering. Although the legal aspect has not been violated with regard to property rights in the woman, a sin has nevertheless been committed.

The second reference is simply a command: "Do not profane your daughter by making her a harlot, lest the land fall into harlotry and the land become full of wickedness," (Leviticus 19:29). On the surface this appears out of place with the verse immediately following, "You shall keep my sabbaths and reverence my sanctuary; I am the Lord." However, when this is viewed against the background of religious prostitution which characterized the nature religions of Israel's neighbors, the author of P would recognize the danger to true Yahweh worship which would result if prostitution were permitted in Israel. Consequently, he forbids prostitution on the ground that it will defile the sanctuary, i.e. profane the name of Yahweh. This is in keeping with the strict commandments of chapters 18 and 20 against following in the paths of the heathen who had inhabited the land before them.

One of the most important changes introduced by the Priest's Code concerns slaves. Both of the earlier codes required that a Hebrew slave be released after six years of service. The priestly writer, on the other hand, who is careful to prescribe that the bondman be humanely treated (Leviticus 25:46, 53), allows him to be held until the year of jubilee, that is, in extreme cases, practically for life. At first sight, this seems retrogressive, but it is not entirely so; since the effect of such

a law would naturally be to put an end to the enslavement of Hebrews for debt, and this is evidently its intent, the idea being that only aliens should be bought and sold and serve without wages in the community (Leviticus 25:39-46).¹ A fellow Israelite who becomes so involved in debt that he cannot maintain himself shall be given the position of a hired laborer who gradually pays his debt by his wages. If an Israelite is forced to sell himself as a slave to a foreigner, his family must redeem him.

Embedded in ten short verses of Leviticus 19 are ten rules of conduct toward a neighbor which come very near to the New Testament standard, and surely to a prophetic one. The sins against which the prophets cried out so loudly are here negatively stated to act as guide for all who should come after. Where the prophets said, "ye do not fear Yahweh, for this ye have done," the priest now says, "ye shall not do this, but you shall fear your God." The laws found here are not of a type, nor are they codified as we would like, but the spirit of them makes up for their lack of continuity. Concern for the rights and the welfare of others is the trade-mark of every one of them. Justice, tempered with love and mercy raise them high above the level of all else that we now attribute to the priestly pen.

Briefly, we find them making it the business of Yahweh that they shall leave gleanings in the field and vineyard for strangers, v. 10; that they shall not steal, lie, or deal falsely with one another, v. 11; that they shall not swear falsely by Yahweh's name (no doubt in support

1. Mitchell, EOT, 263.

of their own false witness), v. 12; that they shall not rob or oppress a neighbor, or withhold the wages of a hired man overnight, v. 13; that they shall not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block in the way of the blind, v. 14; that they shall be righteous in judgment, regardless of the position of the one being judged, v. 15; that they shall not bear slander nor stand forth against the life of a neighbor, v. 16; that they shall not hate a brother, bear a grudge, or take vengeance against their own people, v. 17-18. The climax is reached in v. 18b, "you shall love your neighbor as yourself." This is followed in v. 34 by an admonition that they shall also love the stranger who sojourns with them as they love themselves.

This teaching would have been a difficult one for Hebrews in particular to follow. As Mitchell points out,¹ the earlier Hebrews were inclined to meet injury with resentment, and when they were strong enough so to do, with retaliation. The author of Leviticus 19:17 f. saw the danger in this spirit, and urged its avoidance. He reaches his climax in a series of ascending concepts until at last he reaches the highest of the ideal. First comes the prohibition, "You shall not hate your brother in your heart," v. 17. The terms used give no clue to the circumstances under which they were chosen. The next clause, however, is "you shall reason with your neighbor," which indicates, that, when the author forbids hatred, he refers to the resentment kindled by injurious treatment. This becomes still clearer in v. 18 where he adds; "You shall not take vengeance or bear any grudge against the sons of your own people." Finally, he

1. Mitchell, EOT, 264.

lays down the positive precept in the words which are the supreme test of the good will, the fundamental principle of morality: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Unfortunately the purity of this passage is not retained throughout the book of Leviticus. The abbreviated lex talonis of 24:17-21 was more rigidly adhered to than the law of a forgiving spirit--so much so that Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount could hold up to them their law of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" as that which they had followed, as opposed to His standard of love and forgiveness. But it is to the credit of the priestly author that this one small flicker of enlightened spiritual insight found its way into the manual of ritual in the priesthood of Judaism. The spark was there from which Christ could fan a flame called Christianity.

A commentary on the business standards required by the code is found in this same chapter. It occupies only two verses, 35-36, yet it has in it a spirit of justice that would do credit to the most outspoken prophet:

You shall do no wrong in judgment, in measures of length or weight or quantity. You shall have just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin: I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt.

Accurate measures for conducting business, participating as they do in the affirmation of just treatment with the bargainer, are established as the Jewish standard through Yahweh's command. The fact that here again history records the failure to live up to this law is no reason to forget that it does lie in the code.

The code is rounded out on a different but worthy level when each Israelite is commanded to revere his father and mother (19:3a), plus the institution of Jubilee year when property shall revert to the owner who might have sold it in the interim, (25:10). The family with its property rights was basic to the continuity of the community as a religious institution, and the social regulations for preserving it were safeguarded through the law.

These social and ethical precepts, then, were combined with the hygienic and religious institutions to make a unity of Yahweh worship as conceived in the minds of the priest. We now turn our attention to the elemental institutions on which all these were based.

Union of Religious and Social Institutions

Signified in the covenant relationship. In addition to the religious and social regulations which were binding upon the individual or upon a group such as the priests alone, there were rules governing the life of the entire community as a unit. True, no absolute distinction can be made between the general social community and the community which functions religiously, in view of the well-known function of religion as a means of social control; yet there is a difference which can be well considered in the religion of Israel.¹

In our day when the emphasis of Christianity is so much upon the salvation of the individual, our minds do not turn quickly to grasp the concept of sin as a community affair rather than a personal one. But in

1. Baab, TOT, 98.

Old Testament religion the emphasis is, on the whole, on the community, the nation Israel, rather than upon the individual Israelite. Speaking generally, the individual Jew would never have thought of his own salvation first, and that of his people second; it was sufficient for him that he should have a share in the redemption of Israel.¹ This is not to say that there was no individual piety in the Old Testament, nor that the individual was absolved of guilt simply by virtue of being a member of a religious community. Ezekiel and Jeremiah had attacked this conception as invalid, and the instances of Noah, Lot, and Caleb furnish illustration that the solidarity of the group did not preclude discriminatory reward and punishment. However, the supremacy of the group idea cannot be gainsaid as the basic idea of Israel's religion.

Dr. Knudson has pointed out that this sense of solidarity in Israel had grown rather than diminished through the vicissitudes of her history, and that whereas once it had been a kind of mechanical hanging-together, in its later stages it came to be the mark of the ultimate in devotion of Israel to Yahweh.² He says:

The clearest and noblest expressions of the religious function of the nation come from the postexilic period, and it is here also that we must look for the truest and the most intense devotion to the common good.³

The unity of the group and the combination of social and religious ordinances can be found in other societies of antiquity, as any good

1. North, TOT, 49.

2. Knudson, RTOT, 331.

3. Knudson, RTOT, 330.

history of antiquity will point out. In the case of Israel, however, there was a unique relationship between it and Yahweh--a relationship which was not natural but volitional. It was an historical act, clearly defined in the tradition and literature of the people, wherein Yahweh selected her for his special care on the condition that she observe His law. The germ of this covenant was found in the promises made to Abraham as the father of the race; the content of it was revealed at Sinai. Here, through the power of the one God of Israel, ". . . a people without the law were given a law . . . the several tribes and extraneous clans became one nation."¹

Without this covenantal idea, there would have been no Israel as we have come to know it. It is out of place to discuss the covenant as a feature on which the priestly concept of sin was based, without at the same time pointing out that from it stemmed also the prophetic message. Priest and prophet disagree--at times to the point of violence--over the interpretation of the covenant, but it stands always in the background of any religious demand or entreaty issued to Israel by her religious leaders. It would be impossible to overemphasize the importance of both the historical and volitional aspects of it, for both of these elements entered decisively into the interpretation which Israel placed upon it. Question may be raised in the minds of critics concerning the historicity of the event, and the extent of revelation which came to Israel at the time may not be definitely determined, but to our Old Testament authors there was both a covenant and content in an historical sense. Their whole theology

1. Wright, OTAE, 39.

was based upon it. The literature on the subject of covenant is voluminous, and a survey of it is not indicated here. However, our inquiry can be enriched if we express the essence of the idea in the words of a few of the individual authors, letting each stress his own point of view.

G. A. Barton places emphasis upon the freely-chosen relationship which sprang up between Yahweh and Israel at this time, with reference to Yahweh's choice:

The covenant at Horeb placed the religion of the Hebrews upon an entirely different basis. Yahweh was related to his Hebrew worshippers, not by kinship, but by contract. If they did not fulfill their part of the contract, they could not expect him to fulfill his. He had chosen one people; he could cast them off and choose another.¹

Büchler, on the other hand, stresses the willing acceptance with which Israel greeted the terms of the contract:

God revealed Himself on Sinai to Israel as King of the universe, the Master of all His creatures; He invited Israel to recognize Him as their King and Master, and when they accepted His Kingship and became His subjects, He gave them His laws, positive and negative, which they should observe as expression of His will. Disobedience is disloyalty to their King, breaking off of His yoke and breaking of His covenant which were imposed upon them by God after the declaration of their willingness to accept them; it is the rejection of God as their King and the denial of Him.²

The same author makes this concluding statement:

The foundation of the rights of Yahweh to Israel's love and loyalty stem always and only from that event of Sinai, entered into by contracting parties.³

1. Barton, RI, 64.

2. Büchler, SSA, 106.

3. Büchler, SSA, 39.

It is Redlich who points out still another very vital aspect of this relationship when he says:

The covenant was a redemptive act imposed by Jehovah on Israel. It made Israel a unity and gradually welded it into a nation. Jehovah became father of Israel, and by the covenant He, on His side, as one of the parties to the covenant, had His obligations towards Israel He would be their God, however much they sinned and in all circumstances of their history.¹

And Norman Snaith evaluates the beauty and necessity of it in these words:

God has done many things for all the sons of men, but He has done special things for Israel. He has always done that which is required on any ordinary, proper, and reasonable basis for all the sons of man, but He has done more than was required on behalf of Israel. If he had not done this, then such a small nation as Israel would never have survived all the vicissitudes of the centuries. If he had not continued to do more than was required, Israel-Judah would have slipped back, as indeed they were always trying to do, and would have become one in the midst of the nations, lost in the welter of them, just as Edom, Ammon, Babylonia, Assyria, and the rest have been lost.²

Leviticus does not record the events in which the covenant came into being; rather it assumes the existence of the covenant and bases its commands upon it. The only historical reference employed in support of these demands is that of the Exodus, it being understood that this included all the events which accompanied it. But by the time of P the details of the Exodus were so much a part of the tradition of Israel that the mere mention of the word supplied its own content to the mind of the hearer. It brought to mind the glorious past out of which had come that bond which united the people of Israel into a unit, and which had joined that unit to Yahweh in mutual understanding.

1. Redlich, TFS, 11.

2. Snaith, DIOT, 180.

We return, then, to social regulations having a hold over the whole community, based on a religious motive. These were the laws which were to act as deterrents to conduct, endangering the solidarity and uniqueness of the holy community--a community which through divine election was set apart from the world to carry out a peculiar purpose: obedience to Yahweh's will and the transmission of His word of redemption to the gentiles. These were regulations designed to resist corruption and contamination from without and from within, and to stimulate constantly the imagination of the people with reference to its special status before Yahweh.

The first of these devices was the rite of circumcision. Leviticus makes less of this rite than do other portions of the P Code, but here again the lack of elaboration is probably due to the fact that the practice is so well-founded in Israel that only a reminder is needed to enforce its observance. It was the distinctive mark by which every male born in Israel was officially designated a member of the congregation, and in later times it became the sign by which foreigners could come to share in the rites and benefits of the covenant of which it was a sign. The actual command for circumcision appears quite incidental to the purification of the woman following childbirth in Leviticus 12:3, but nevertheless it is not omitted; and its spiritual meaning comes clear and plain with prophetic insight in Leviticus 26:41 where the uncircumcision of the heart is cited as the cause of Yahweh's anger toward their fathers.

We miss the deeper meaning of the outward rite thus enjoined on Israel if we interpret it only from hygienic or even symbolic aspects. The Hebrew thought that the soul found its expression in what may be

called secondary actions, similar to those frequently carried out by the prophets; i. e. Ezekiel's laying siege against a tile (Ezekiel 4), and Isaiah's barefoot symbolism that the Assyrians would be carried away barefoot (Isaiah 20:2-4). These actions are called tokens, and it is to this group that the rainbow, circumcision, and the sabbath belong as tokens carrying the covenant. He who participates in the token indicates thereby a soul willingness to share the obligations and the benefits of the covenant. The contents of the soul are manifested in them and fill them. Pedersen in commenting on this concludes: "If one spoils the token, then its mental implication is broken."¹

This is more easily understood when we consider, as Pedersen further points out, that in Hebrew thinking no distinction is made between soul and body as two fundamental forms of existence.² The flesh is the weaker; the soul is the stronger. The soul is more than body, but the body is a perfectly valid manifestation of the soul. In this case of covenantal tokens, the whole soul acts through the details which the part, the body, performs. The body and soul, then, are more than "united;" the body is the soul in its outward form.³

The same point of view is applicable to the institution of the sabbath. This was one of the central themes around which the new church of the postexilic period gathered; it became the partner with circumcision in the two definitely identifying marks which separated the Jew from his heathen environment.

1. Pedersen, ISR, I-II, 169.

2. Pedersen, ISR, I-II, 171.

3. Pedersen, ISR, I-II, 171.

The command for sabbath observance is more noticeable in Leviticus than that for circumcision. It appears once in the great nineteenth chapter in the same verse with the demand to honor the father and mother. Then again it is found in the introduction to the chapter on appointed feasts which are to be kept (23:3). It is employed in the setting of the date for the offering of first fruits (23:15-16); its terminology is used in connection with the rest of the land in the seventh year (25:2-4), and with the jubilee year when land and men shall be restored (25:13 ff).

Here again we must look below the surface for the true meaning of the law. The sabbath as a simple day of rest, even though it would have had beneficent results in the lives of men and animals, would never have laid hold of the nation as it did had it not been for better reasons than that. To the priestly author who set it in the law, no other rite or institution was more sacred nor binding than this. Of all the tokens of covenant, this alone was traced to an origin at the very instant of creation (Genesis 2:2-3). Leviticus again was but re-phrasing the custom of Israel when it commands the sabbath observance in every form. The importance of it is very evident as we read the controversy which Jesus provoked on this subject during His lifetime four and a half centuries later. Skinner warns us against the fallacy of attempting to interpret the sabbath of Judaism by our modern standards thus:

The writer's [P's] idea of the Sabbath and its sanctity is almost too realistic for the modern mind to grasp; it is not an institution which exists or ceases with its observance by man; the divine rest is a fact as much as the divine working, and so the sanctity of the day is a fact whether man secures the benefit or not. There is little trace of the idea that the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath; it is an ordinance of the kosmos like any other part of the creative operations, and

is for the good of man in precisely the same sense as the whole creation is subservient to his welfare.¹

Most writers agree that the practice of the sabbatical year for the land was never actually observed to any great extent before the exile, and that the year of jubilee never became a prevalent practice, although the legal principle of a family's retention of ownership of land did strike deep in the roots of the nation (cf. Oehler, OTT, 343 f.). But it must be noted in this connection that Leviticus 26:24-35 anticipates that this will be the case, and Yahweh warns that if they are disobedient to His law, He will scatter them, and

Then the land shall enjoy its sabbaths as long as it lies desolate, while you are in your enemies' land; then the land shall rest, and enjoy its sabbaths. As long as it lies desolate it shall have rest, the rest which it had not in your sabbaths when you dwelt upon it.

Many rather logical and plausible explanations have been advanced as to the desirability of the sabbath and jubilee year. The humanitarian aspect of the provisions contained in their instructions have been stressed. The agricultural benefit has been noted, as well as the accentuation of the Jewish conception of property rights vested in families. But actually the law gives none of these reasons, and the Israelite who would have observed them would have required no such reasonable motivation for his obedience. His only reason would be that Yahweh demanded it, and in Leviticus 25:21 promised a blessing for obedience. To fail to obey

1. Skinner, "Genesis," ICC, I, 35.

would be a sin against his covenant with Yahweh; to obey would bring the blessings of the covenant.

The principle of tithing sprang from the sense in which it was understood that all property, including the cultivated land, belonged, in principle, to the Lord. The Israelites had to pay Him a tribute for using most of it for their own benefit. These sacred dues were partly reserved by God for his own exclusive use, and partly assigned to the priests and Levites. As Dr. Pfeiffer observes:

It is thus clear that the cardinal principle of the P Code, divine ownership of everything, was purely theoretical and that in practice the Lord was satisfied with a token payment, fixed arbitrarily--a concrete sign that the rights of the divine land-lord were honored.¹

The tithe of the land is designated holy unto the Lord, along with the firstlings of the flock in Leviticus 27:26-32. No man could pay such an obligation without acknowledging thereby that he shared in the mystical relationship between Israel and Yahweh, in the name of which the law was propounded.

These last named rites--circumcision, sabbath, and tithes--were binding over the entire social unit, yet their practice was individual and personal. They were acts that could not be shared with others, for they were outward signs of the inward nature of the worshiper. There were, however, exercises of a communal nature in which the individual was submerged as the entire group worshiped in unity through appointed feasts, and to these we now turn.

1. Pfeiffer, IOT, 265.

Leviticus 23 gives the most complete calendar of feasts held sacred in Israel. It varies somewhat from that found in Ezekiel and Numbers, but the differences are not pertinent to our study. It is sufficient here to name the feasts, giving special consideration to any reference they may have to sin. In short, these feasts are: Passover, Unleavened Bread, Firstfruits, Day of Remembrance, Day of Atonement, and Feast of Booths. Only the Day of Atonement ranks large in our study, and since its provisions are set forth in a separate chapter (16), it will be treated as a unit at a later point. It is the five feasts which now concern us.

It could well be said that all of these were days of "remembrance," for they each commemorate some event out of Israel's past, or else call her to meditation upon her relationship with Yahweh in retrospect. Passover with its following feast of Unleavened Bread was an unsurpassed reminder of the mercy of Yahweh in delivering her from Egypt and espousing her unto Himself as a bride. The feast of Firstfruits was but another reminder that the increase of the field was from Yahweh, and although the form of it may have been borrowed somewhat from Canaan, as Welch suggests,¹ it was now utilized to good advantage by Israel as a commemorative exercise. The Day of Remembrance, preceding the Day of Atonement by ten days, was a signal that all Israel should review the present in the light of the past, to prepare for the solemn assembly of the Day of Atonement. The Feast of Booths was not only for their reminder, but to remind all their posterity that Yahweh made His people Israel to dwell in booths when He

1. Welch, PPOI, 112 ff.

brought them out of Egypt. The Day of Atonement was actually the climax of all these others in a spiritual sense, serving as the unit between the past and the future, bearing witness to the provident care of Yahweh for Israel as evidenced in respect for their agreement entered into at the Exodus.

None of these feasts except the Day of Atonement are recognized as having any bearing on the question of sin in the community. Although there are burnt offerings, cereal offerings, and drink offerings brought before the Lord in the practice of them, no mention is made here of their being sin-offerings. Numbers 28 and 29 specify the offering of a sin-offering in connection with these feasts, but it appears that it is considered merely one of the series of offerings normally given, with no special significance as to the sin atoned for. The sin which would actually accrue with reference to the feasts would be a refusal to observe them in detail as prescribed. To do this would be to refuse a direct command of Yahweh--the very essence of sin.

This brings us to a study of the notion of sin found in all these sundry laws. Were minor infractions of cultic demands as serious as disregard of the moral law? In the case of P the answer must be affirmative. Says Dr. Pfeiffer:

They [Priestly authors] were evidently obsessed by the idea of sin for them it was not confined, as with the prophets, to transgressions of the moral law, but included any infringement, even unwitting, of ceremonial rules and prescriptions concerning the defilement of persons or inanimate objects.¹

1. Pfeiffer, IOT, 270.

The same author points up this idea more distinctly in another place when he observes:

The arbitrary character and absolute authority of the Priestly Code appear not only in the exact amounts specified for . . . sacred tributes and fines, but also in the failure of the legislators to give a rational explanation of how and why such sacrifices and offerings produced the results ascribed to them. The legislators demanded blind, unquestioning obedience rather than intelligent understanding The old rites had become empty forms, meaningless in themselves but essential because prescribed by God for his inscrutable, unsearchable purposes. No attempt was made to explain rationally the ceremonial system as a whole, but occasionally explanations of individual rites occurred--without, however, being systematized in the least.¹

Albright draws the contrast between Israel's law and that of its neighbors, showing that the most striking thing about the apodictic laws of Israel is their categorical character, which stands in sharp contrast to their nearest extra-Israelite parallels, the Egyptian Negative Confession and the Babylonian Shurpu. The amazing difference lies in the fact that ". . . the Israelites are commanded not to commit sin, because Yahweh so wills."²

It is on this one point, then, that the concept of sin hangs in the Priestly Code. The whole law, in all its parts, has the same form of absolute, unconditional command. Israel had agreed in covenant with Yahweh that He should be their God and they would be His people. Before the making of the covenant, the people had the choice whether they would bind themselves by the law that would be given; but after they pledged themselves, all choice was taken away. Because of this strictly objective character of the law, human judgment cannot be allowed to make distinctions

1. Pfeiffer, IOT, 269.

2. Albright, FSAC, 93.

between the different precepts. In the law, the most inward commandment, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" stands beside "You shall not sow your field with two kinds of seed; nor shall there come upon you a garment of cloth made of two kinds of stuff." (Leviticus 19:18-19). That Israel must be holy, like Yahweh, is ground alike of the command not to be defiled by eating the flesh of certain animals, and of the command to honor father and mother. Oehler summarizes his thought on this feature of the law in these words:

Whether . . . distinctions are to be made [between the different laws] can be decided only by the Lawgiver, who appoints, it is true, a severer punishment for certain moral abominations, and for the transgression of such precepts as stand in immediate relation to the covenant idea (e.g. circumcision, the Sabbath, etc.) than for other transgressions. But, so far as man is concerned, the most inconsiderable precept is viewed under the aspect of the obedience demanded for the whole law.¹

The justification for this arbitrary and inscrutable legalism was easily enough explained in Judaism. Büchler quotes Rabbi Simeon b. Yohai (c. middle 2nd century B.C.) as re-enacting the conversation which occurred between Yahweh and Israel at Sinai as the basis for Leviticus 18:2. Yahweh is pictured as saying, "I am the Lord your God; am I not He whose rule you accepted at Sinai?" When the people answered, "Yes," God replied, "As ye accepted My rule, accept My decree."² And Büchler himself explains the obedience demanded to the unintelligible laws in this way:

As the Master of the Universe, God imposed, among other reasonable laws, a few unintelligible duties upon Israel who have to

1. Oehler, OTT, 182-3.

2. Büchler, SSH, 39.

obey also such decrees, since they are His subjects and accepted at Sinai voluntarily His yoke and His kingship over them.¹

Back of this conception of the absolute and unquestioned authority stands the Semitic idea of Yahweh as King. He is absolutely sovereign, and there is no necessity laid upon Him from outside. He decides what is to be and what is not to be. To this extent, He is arbitrary in His judgments, and arbitrary in His love. Just as Israel had no right to question the unmerited love which had won them to Yahweh's favor, she had no right to question His decrees toward her. He is accountable to none; He is the Norm by which all things must be judged, and by Him alone can the final verdict be given.²

The scriptures abound in illustration of the fate of those who disregard the law, assuming unto themselves the right to judge the degree of obedience demanded. To name a few, there is the instance of Nadab and Abihu cited above; the instance of the man who was stoned for blaspheming the Name (Leviticus 24:10-15, 23); and the instance of stoning of a man who gathered sticks on the Sabbath (Numbers 15:32-36). Just as one member of the body being injured affects the entire body, so one member of the congregation becoming unfit for the Temple worship injured the corporate holiness of the community. Hence, no personal freedom could be permitted to those who would weigh and balance the merit of one law as opposed to another.

So great was the concern for the unit as opposed to the individual that the law was not restricted to Israelites alone, but was extended to

1. Büchler, SSA, xiii.

2. Snaith, DIOT, 178-9.

the stranger who might be sojourning with them. This fact is stressed more specifically in the Holiness Code where emphasis is placed upon pure morality, but it is also frequent enough in other places to make the entire law binding upon the stranger who was a part of the community Israel. He is not only protected by the law from wrong and violence, but commanded to the positive kindness of the Hebrew community. He has the same claims upon the charity of his neighbors as the native Hebrew, and if at any time he wishes to enjoy full religious privileges, he has only to submit to circumcision, when he becomes to all intents and purposes a Hebrew.¹

This notion of sin stemmed from Israel's religion which recognized the will of Yahweh as the supreme and universal law. The rituals and moralizing precepts incorporated in the P Code were attempts to bring home to men the fact of their separation from God, and hostility towards Him, by means of ideas which had binding force because they indicated the direction in which human life ought to move.² The prophets and the Psalmist achieved a more spiritual insight into these facts than did the priests. The latter were so morbidly pre-occupied with the thought of sin that they resorted to multiplication of symbols and ideas in an effort to accomplish their purpose; but they succeeded, even more specifically than did the prophets, in defining the will of Yahweh in terms that anyone could understand. P formed one link between the religious synthesis of Deuteronomy and the casuistry of Phariseeism, and today we are prone to judge its

1. Mitchell, EOT, 267.

2. Quell, et al., "Sin," KBW, 16.

value in the light of this latter result, rather than in the light of the spirit which prompted it. That this disparaging judgment may be both unjust and invalid is evident when we consider that it achieved an end which the prophets had never been able to reach; it cemented in the mind of every Israelite the consciousness of sin's awful nature, the terrible fate of those who practiced sin, and the absoluteness of Yahweh's holiness as opposed to the absolute uncleanness of sin.

Atonement, General Considerations

Recognition of need for atonement. Ezekiel had laid the basis for the idea of atonement when, in the days of the exile, he had brooded over Israel's sin and the possible restoration from it. He had realized that men do not love the hand which punishes them, unless that hand is later turned to them in blessing. And he had further realized that the nebulous idea of repentance as sufficient to restore Yahweh's favor would never satisfy the cult-bound souls of the Israelites. These were men upon whom the blow of the exile had fallen with such force as to daze their religious consciousness. Their confidence was so shaken (so it seems from the record) that many would never make the effort to return to their beloved Zion. Had they been of a mind to obey Yahweh, the intangible demands of the prophets--righteousness, justice, honesty--were of such elusive definition as to thwart the desire to achieve them except in the strongest hearts. It was to such a faint-hearted group that Ezekiel came with his message of restoration and faith, based on the idea that sin could be atoned for through clearly defined acts.¹

1. Lofthouse, PR, 156 ff.

This is not the place to discuss Ezekiel, nor yet to indicate the amount of his borrowing from the Holiness Code and Deuteronomy. It is sufficient here to point out that the idea of atonement, which formed the basis for the whole Priestly Code, stemmed from his program for reconstruction after the exile.

Repentance insufficient. As we shall note with reference to the prophetic movement, before the exile there was a tendency on the part of the people of Israel to limit sin to a very small area of their rather narrow religious lives. Apparently the forgiveness of sin played little part in the motivation of their religious exercises. Rather, religion was practiced primarily as the means whereby the favor of Yahweh was secured for material and physical blessedness. Such was not the case following the exile. Whereas before that catastrophe sin had touched lightly upon their senses, now it pervades their every thought. Sin can be the result of willful or unwilling conduct. It can be incurred consciously or unconsciously. It can result both from what a man does and from what he does not do. It is everywhere and in everyone, an awful reality which separates men from Yahweh unless in some way it can be dispelled. Israel appears to be in that state of humanity so well described by Reinhold Niebuhr, when he says:

No man, however, deeply involved in sin, is able to regard the misery of sin as normal. Some memory of a previous condition of blessedness seems to linger in his soul; some echo of the law which he has violated seems to resound in his conscience. Every effort to give to the habits of sin the appearance of normality betrays something of the frenzy of an uneasy conscience.¹

1. Niebuhr, NADM, 265.

With such a universal consciousness of sin, it was a psychological necessity that some concrete system be devised whereby men could be sure that sin was atoned for, and thus their favor with Yahweh restored. Jewish theology does not admit that there is an unpardonable sin.¹ Hence, the law took hold of this aroused conscience, setting down ordinances and rituals as the expressed command of God, teaching men to recognize wickedness as sin, and so making the need of reconciliation with God to be continuously felt.²

To our minds it would appear probable that by this time the prophetic ideal would have surpassed the priestly, and that all Israel would have come to see that the holiness sought by Yahweh was holiness of heart rather than that of ritual. We must, however, guard against the fallacy of judging concepts of 2500 years ago in the light of modern day understanding. A lengthy discussion of holiness in the Old Testament is not mandatory in our study, but a summary of its aspects at this point will help to clear up the question as to why repentance was not a sufficient remedy for sin among the Hebrews.

To understand the idea of holiness which confronts us in the Old Testament, we must go behind the one very familiar distinction, the distinction between the material and the spiritual; the distinction, as we might say, between the sacred vessel and the purpose for which it is employed. To us the cleanliness of the vessel is one thing, a matter of soap and water; the rightness of the purpose is another, a matter of the humble and believing heart. To the Jew, however, the cleanliness of the

1. Eisenstein, "Sin," JE, XI.

2. Oehler, OTT, 183.

vessel was not simply a matter of soap and water. It might be unclean when no dirt was visible to the naked eye, but when it had been touched by some "unclean" person, a foreigner or someone who had been in contact with a corpse. In other words, holiness is a quality neither purely physical nor purely spiritual, which must be possessed by every person and everything brought in worship into Yahweh's presence. It may be lost by any of the various kinds of prohibited contact or employment.¹

Sacrifice demanded. The atonement for sin very largely paralleled the means whereby this state of holiness was restored when once it was lost. Sin was a violation of the nature of Yahweh, and His nature was holiness. Thus, just as a sincere desire to have holiness re-established in the individual and the community could only be fulfilled by means of a definite and prescribed ceremonial, so genuine repentance over some act of disobedience, or even unintentional neglect which hindered the free access of the worshiper to Yahweh, could not be evidenced by penitence or regret. Certain elaborate ceremonies, to mark the return to the ritually pure society of worshipers, must also be performed, or Yahweh would continue to shrink back as He would shrink back (so He was represented), in a kind of physical disgust from a dirty cup or an unclean animal brought to His sacrificial altar.²

It was this holiness of their God which was violated when Israel sinned. Ideally, every action which was directed toward removing this

1. Lofthouse, PR, 183.

2. Lofthouse, PR, 183.

violation should have been motivated by repentance; otherwise the worshiper would not have come to the place where the rites of atonement were carried out. But the repentance without the sacrifice would have been ineffectual, both from the point of view of the individual and of Yahweh. Without sacrifice, the individual might easily have feigned a repentance that was not sincere; by the same token he would have no means of assurance that Yahweh had accepted him back into the congregation of the holy without this physical manifestation of an honored contract between them.

Rowley has emphasized repeatedly the insufficiency of either repentance or sacrifice in his pamphlet, The Meaning of Sacrifice in the Old Testament. To cite a few examples:

. . . it was not supposed that man could save himself from his sin either by his penitence or by his sacrifice. It was divine power that reached down to save him in the moment when he offered himself with his sacrifice. The animal itself could do nothing for him. But when its sacrifice was the organ of his approach in humble surrender and obedience to God, it became the organ of God's approach in power to bless him.¹

Where sacrifice was prescribed and offered, it must be the organ of the spirit of the offerer before it could be the organ of power of God unto him or on his behalf. Where sacrifice was not prescribed because the sin was so much more heinous, then penitence and humble submission were even more called for ere the divine power could operate in the heart of the sinner.²

It is in the words of Büchler that we find the totality of the sacrificial transaction summed up for our observation. In concluding his comment on the sin of robbery found in Leviticus 5:1 ff, he writes:

1. Rowley, MSOT, 95.

2. Rowley, MSOT, 103.

When the atonement of the robber's grave sin against God and his fellow-man had been effected by his confession, by the full restitution of the property and the payment of an additional fifth of its value, and by the confession of his offences over his expensive guilt-offering, by the sprinkling of the blood of the atoning sacrifice against the wall of the altar and by the burning of its fat upon the altar, the stain of his sin was completely washed away from him and he felt relieved from the burden of his transgression. "And the priest shall make atonement for him before the Lord" is followed in Lev. 5:26 by the words: "and he shall be forgiven, concerning whatsoever he doeth so as to be guilty thereby." They suggest that even all those acts have not secured yet for him the final and crowning gift, forgiveness, which now after the atonement only God can bestow in His love.¹

The significant feature of the religion of the Hebrews was this: their scripture nowhere contemplates men as ignorant of the existence and love of God.² They were always conscious of His permanence in man's changing world. He was a factor they could not ignore, even had they so desired. Hence, they must in some way come to terms with Him. The history of this adjustment has given to us our Old Testament. As Brunner has said:

What is the history of religion itself but the story of the way in which man, who cannot get rid of God, tries to get off as easily as he can? . . .

Many and varied are the ways by which guilty man tries to evade the Divine Gaze. They are summed up in the history of religions, of their cults and mythologies.³

If Brunner has expressed the general human reaction to the demands of God, it does not necessarily follow that the desire for easy atonement

1. Büchler, SSA, 448-9.

2. Davidson, "God," HDB, II, 196.

3. Brunner, MIR, 185.

motivated the cult of Israel. It seems rather that it was prompted by a desire to fix definite bounds within which they could be certain that His demands had been met. As a part of this system sacrifice was indispensable, and an inquiry into its meaning is basic to our understanding the priestly concept of sin.

Atonement is defined as "the setting at one, or reconciliation, of two estranged parties."¹ To accomplish this renewed state between Israel and Yahweh was one of the offices of sacrifice. However, atonement was not the motive or the end of all sacrifice (cf. Rowley, MSOT, 76 f.), for there were offerings on the altar which were clearly not propitiatory. We are not concerned with this latter class, but with those sacrifices whose end result was the accomplishing of atonement.

Dr. Pfeiffer has pointed out that two general terms are used in P with reference to sacrifice, expressing a twofold purpose. The general term is qorban, possibly a loan word from Aramaic, meaning gift. In P this word obviously evolved from meaning a free gift to God to a prescribed tribute. The other word is kipper, which he thinks is probably connected with the Assyrian kuppuru (to erase, wipe off, hence to cleanse persons or things). He prefers this sense to that which would attend if it were derived from the Arabic kafara (to cover up). In the technical language of the priests, this word denoted expiation or atonement which the priest performed by means of blood (Leviticus 17:11), and the various sacrifices.²

1. Köhler, "Atonement," JE, II.

2. Pfeiffer, IOT, 269-70.

Oesterley has discussed the meaning of כפר from each of these view points, showing that both contain at least something of the element which we associate with atonement. He agrees with Pfeiffer that there is a good deal of justification for the meaning "to wipe off" or "to wipe clean." He also sees justification for the meaning "to cover over," pointing out that there are two possible interpretations of this idea with respect to atonement: (1) That a gift or offering has the effect of covering the eyes in order that a cause of offence may not be seen. By it God is induced not to see the cause. (2) That that which is covered over is not the face of God, but the cause of the offence, so that it is not seen by God; by this means the sin would be regarded as non-existent. In the first case the making of the atonement was accomplished by a gift to the Deity; in the other the sin was, as it were, obliterated by means of covering it over. This latter meaning would fit well with Leviticus 17:11 "It is the blood that makes atonement for your souls," but a generalization cannot be drawn from this one instance.¹

Köhler thinks that the verb was derived from the noun כפר, to ransom, and meant originally "to atone." "Every sacrifice," he says, "may be considered . . . as a kofer, in the original sense of a propitiatory gift, and its purpose is to 'make atonement . . . for the people.'"² Oesterley carries out the same idea in considering sacrifice as a means of mediation when he says:

1. Oesterley, JDM, 19-20.

2. Köhler, "Atonement," JE, II.

. . . according to the teaching of the Old Testament, the idea of Mediation did not consist merely in intercession. Though, perhaps, not much more than adumbrated, there seems nevertheless, to be connected with it an underlying conception of a price to be paid.¹

The preceding quotations and explanations have been presented to bring before the reader's mind a very important fact in connection with sacrifice: we do not know by what means it was supposed to accomplish the desired effect; we only know what it was supposed to do, not how it did it. To summarize with Büchler:

What the real and direct object and the concrete and immediate effect of the sin-offering and the atonement were, and to what extent the sin-offering removed the sin for which the sacrifice was brought, is nowhere in the Pentateuch either explicitly stated or even indicated. For the book of Leviticus is only a code of the sacrificial procedure for the Israelite who voluntarily brings, or has the duty to offer, a sacrifice, and for the priest who offers it up; the meaning of the sacrifices themselves and of the individual acts in connexion with them must have been explained separately, but that part of the code has not been preserved.²

This is not to say that sacrifice was nothing more than a symbol. That the personal act of sacrifice was generally regarded as doing something, i.e. as efficacious, hardly needs demonstration. This is implied, on the one hand, in the detailed attention given to sacrifice in the Old Testament. This would be meaningless unless sacrifice were meaningful, to a degree far beyond a figurative and merely declaratory symbolism.³ The sacrificial animal was not merely a substitute for the offerer. He

1. Oesterley, JDM, 17-18.

2. Büchler, SSA, 262.

3. Robinson, H. W., "Hebrew Sacrifice and Prophetic Symbolism," JTS, xliii, 1942, p. 131.

laid his hands upon it, and was conceived of as in some way identified with it, so that in its death he was conceived of as dying--not physically but spiritually. The death of the victim symbolized his death to his sin, or to whatever stood between him and God.¹

The essence of this transaction is found in the statement of Leviticus 17:11: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it for you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement, by reason of the life." The significance does not lie in the blood--as sacred as that symbol has become in Christianity--but it lies in the fact that Yahweh Himself has given it as a means of atonement. The sacrifice, whether it was the offering of an individual or that of the community, was brought by men who were members of the covenant with Israel. As part of this covenant Yahweh had given the blood as a sign of atonement, and its efficacy rested not on the blood per se, but on the character of Him who had commanded that it be used.² It is not the act nor the gift which produces results; it is Yahweh Himself who gives for this purpose the blood, the life of the animal, which belongs exclusively to Himself.

This, then, is the connection which sacrifice has with sin. He who brings a sacrifice for sin thereby declares that his sin was not committed consciously or of set purpose. His coming indicates that he renounces his sin, confesses himself guilty in the sight of God, and does what God requires in order to make good whatever offences he has committed.

1. Rowley, MSOT, 88.

2. Welch, PPOI, 133.

The act itself may serve as confession, or it may be expressed in solemn words (Leviticus 16:21); but the confession must be either implicit or explicit in the ceremony if it is to be effective for the removal of sin.¹ In popular thought the blood and sacrifices were believed to have automatic power, just as they were thought to have among non-Israelite people. But this view, so often challenged by the prophets, is not the real teaching of the Old Testament. There it is clearly taught that sacrifices must be the organ of the spirit of the offerer, if they were to be effective.²

Atonement for the individual. It is obvious that the priests were of the opinion that failure to observe the cultic practices was sin in itself. Participation in the appointed feasts and the Day of Atonement was mandatory. On the other hand, there were instances where sin of the individual provoked the need for participation in atoning rites. Further, there were sins for which no atonement could be made, crimes for which compensation is absolutely out of the question, death being the inevitable punishment. Such are intentional murder (Leviticus 24:17) and adultery (Leviticus 20:10). Lastly, there were instances under the law in which sin-offering was demanded, but for which no apparent responsibility could be placed against the individual, such as at the cleansing of a leper (Leviticus 14:1-19) and the purification of a woman following childbirth (Leviticus 12:6).

1. Schultz, OTT, 92-100.

2. Rowley, MSOT, 87.

With the second class of sin mentioned above, we should remember that we are treating them from the viewpoint of the law. As Rowley suggests:

. . . there are whole classes of sins for which no ritual is provided. These are heinous sins, of too great a magnitude to be dealt with by ritual acts. For murder and adultery the Law provided no means of atonement, and only demanded the execution of the murderer or adulterer. Yet sometimes we find that there is cleansing even for sins of this magnitude and it is clear that in the thought of the Old Testament sacrifice is not the only organ of atonement. To remember this is of the first importance in any study of sacrifice, or of the treatment of sin, in the Old Testament.¹

This list of sins is generally the same as that found in Leviticus 18 and repeated in 20, sins which are denounced on the ground that they were practiced by the heathen of Egypt and Canaan. These were acts that were intrinsically bad (cf. supra, 60). In addition, blasphemy is included in this category (Leviticus 24:16). According to the law, he who sinned in these respects had forfeited the gracious favor of Yahweh, and hence was a smirch on the holiness of the community. There remained no way by which the purity of the community could be restored except by the physical expulsion of the sinner.

The third category above, in which the sin-offering is demanded where no apparent guilt rests upon the individual requires special treatment. These are the two instances where the words "and he shall be forgiven" do not follow the bringing of the required sin-offering or guilt-offering. If we surmise that in the case of the leper his leprosy was regarded as punishment for some very heinous sin, then the cure of the

1. Rowley, MSOT, 97-8.

leper would be evidence that the sin was forgiven, and therefore not needing to be atoned for by sacrifice. It is more likely that the sacrifice demanded at the cleansing ceremony provided the means whereby the leper could again take his place in the holy congregation.¹ The same would apparently be true with respect to the return of the woman to society after becoming unclean through childbirth. Here no personal guilt surrounds either the act or the person; the ritual purity is all that has been violated.

We have already spoken of ritual sins which violated the nature of Yahweh, and hence were toward Him alone. In them there is nothing which would be of offence toward another human being. These were the unexplained rules by which humanity was to remain in contact with Yahweh on congenial terms. On the other hand, there were sins which involved the rights of others, and were denounced by the law in the name of Yahweh. From this standpoint a new idea of sin arises: "Sin is not simply moral evil; it is moral evil regarded religiously."² It is only when wrongdoing is subjected to divine scrutiny that it becomes sin. Gray sounds the same idea when he writes:

Sins against men . . . and faithlessness to Yahweh are . . . connected in Lev. 5:21. It is possible to sin against God without sinning against man (Ps. 51:6), but all sins against man are also sins against God. Hence, after the offender has made restitution to the wronged man or his representative, he offers God a guilt-offering Both implications--that God is offended with wrong done to man, and that restitution must be made before

1. Rowley, MSOT, 97, n. 1.

2. Knudson, RTOT, 255.

the rite of atonement--are of importance in estimating the value and character of later Jewish law.¹

The law took account of this relationship between the two classes of sin, those toward Yahweh and those toward a fellowman. The Rabbis in a later day, when the Temple had been destroyed and the Day of Atonement had to take the place of all atoning sacrifice, formulated a principle that "The Day of Atonement atones for sins between man and God, but atones not for sins between man and his neighbor until he has conciliated him."² This is indeed the spirit which we find in the laws governing inter-personal relationships in Leviticus 5:1; 6:1-7. In all these prescribed means of atonement, ". . . the clearest part is undoubtedly the law referring to the atonement for the various sins of misappropriation of another man's goods . . ."³

Sin of omission is laid at the door of him who is a witness to a matter, yet does not come forward when public announcement is made calling for witnesses (Leviticus 5:1). The spirit would require a volunteer witness, rather than a subpoenaed one. Implied here is the requirement that each man become "his brother's keeper." If the command had read positively, "You shall testify," the quality of disobedience would have been changed. As the command reads in the text, the sinner's own knowledge is the only instrument of accusation, and the only atonement for this sin is confession and sacrifice. No doubt it was the intention of this rule to

1. Gray, "Numbers," ICC, IV, 41.

2. Büchler, SSA, 410.

3. Büchler, SSA, 375.

bring forth those who, having testimony of which only they themselves knew, would have seen injustice done rather than testify. Their indirect contribution to such a case would bring on them the guilt of sin.

The sins against man outlined in Leviticus 6:1-3 all have to do with the unjust procurement of the property of another, whether by violence, deceit, oppression, or false affidavit. Such sins can be forgiven, but only after restitution has been made of the stolen property, plus one fifth of its value as a forfeit (Leviticus 6:4-5). Numbers 5:8 goes further than the Leviticus passage in requiring that in cases where the wronged person cannot be reached and where he has no known kinsman, the recompense shall be made unto the priest. Here is the thought which evidently more clearly surrounded the law: that it is not merely a return of the property for the benefit of the rightful owner, but also a chastisement of the guilty party.

In consideration of such sins of dishonesty, it must be remembered that theft is prohibited in the Ten Commandments next to murder and adultery as one of the basic principles enunciated for the protection of both property and human society. As Büchler puts it:

Evidently the fundamental principle relating to the security of private property was, from time immemorial, clear to every Israelite, and the law appealed to him not only as reasonable, but also as sacred, and needed neither justification nor further explanation.¹

These rights of society and the individual were also inherent in the laws governing illicit sexual relations, murder, and sacrifice to

1. Büchler, SSA, 108.

Molech which we have discussed before. In such matters, human personality had been violated in such a way that no restitution could be made. Only the death of the guilty party would serve as a fitting forfeit in return. The principle of restitution also underlies the short lex talonis in Leviticus 24:18-20. The principle of justice involved here may not be so clearly spiritual as that of the prophets, but there is a rugged spirit of fairness without which the prophets could not have launched their programs of social justice. Although we may find the law in a form much later than the great writing prophets, the spirit of it was undoubtedly recognized from earliest times in Israel, and it was on that innate consciousness of the quality of justice that both prophet and priest built.

The types of offerings for these various offences have been the topic of much discussion among men who have attempted to compile a systematic theology of the Old Testament. The question turns on whether or not there can be a clear distinction drawn between the 𐤓 𐤏 𐤏, guilt-offering, and the 𐤓 𐤏 𐤏 𐤓, sin-offering. Ottley reviews the evidence and concludes that ". . . any artificial distinction between the sin- and the trespass-offering is precarious."¹ Köhler reaches substantially the same conclusion in his Theologie des Alten Testaments.² However, each of these men appear to have made sufficient reservation on their statement to allow them to agree with Dr. Pfeiffer that the two offerings should not be confused, although they are more or less equated in the law of Leviticus 5:5-7.³

1. Ottley, AOOT, 238.

2. Köhler, TDAT, 178.

3. Pfeiffer, IOT, 268.

The guilt-offering is called for in the case of a man's having illegally retained or misappropriated property belonging to Yahweh (Leviticus 5:14-16) or to man (Leviticus 6:1-7). It was to be accompanied in each instance by restitution and an added one-fifth of the value. It seems to have been commanded originally for the purpose of expiating offenses in which damage could be estimated and covered by compensation.¹ However, in some late laws a guilt-offering was prescribed for offenses not connected with misappropriation of property (Leviticus 5:1-6, 17-19; 19:20-22).²

Oesterley maintains a distinction between the two offerings. He maintains that the original idea of an $\frac{\square \omega \chi}{\tau \tau}$ was that of compensation, and that the compensatory act in later times became an exclusively religious act under the noun form of the verb, "to be guilty." He adduces the method of dispensing the blood in support of his stand:

The great difference, and it was of fundamental character, between the asham and the chattah . . . was that in the case of the asham the blood of the victim was not applied to the horns of the altar; the reason for this was that . . . the asham was compensatory; it compensated for injury done, and therefore there was no need for the offence to be expiated at the altar. As an acknowledgment of guilt the asham offering may perhaps be best described as an "act of penitence."³

In contrast to this method of atonement, the same author explains:

The central point of the "Sin-offering" is the smearing of the blood of the sacrificial animal on the horns of the altar

-
1. Harper, PEOT, 4.
 2. Pfeiffer, IOT, 5.
 3. Oesterley, JDM, 26.

. . . . In the case of the Chattah or "Sin-offering" the blood first of all consecrated the altar afresh, while the offering itself was the means of re-establishing normal relations between God and the worshiper; it was that which made reconciliation. But when it is asked what was supposed to be the cause of the relationship having been broken, the reply is, some ritual offence, something which had impaired the "consecrated state" of a man. The result of this was twofold; a state of "uncleanness," and a consequent estrangement between God and the man who had "made a mistake."¹

This negative emphasis of the sin-offering is in keeping with its original meaning, that of a sacrifice offered on behalf of one who had "missed the mark," one who was "lacking" in something. It is not an offering sacrificed on account of known or conscious offences against the ritual laws, much less does any idea of moral offence enter in.²

A noticeable feature of these two offerings in Leviticus 4 and 5 is that the expense of the sacrifice is graded according to the dignity or wealth of the offender. Thus we find in chapter 4 that the offering may be a bullock, a he-goat, a she-goat, or a ewe lamb, while in chapter 5 it may be a she-goat, a ewe lamb, a turtle-dove, a young pigeon, or the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour. As Barton points out, these were to be offered for the most part in the case of offences of a non-moral nature,³ and it only applied as atonement for unconscious violations of certain taboos, both ceremonial and moral (Leviticus 5:1-6). It was the specific ritual of purification of those polluted through childbirth, organic secretions, leprosy, or contact with carcasses of unclean animals.⁴

1. Oesterley, JDM, 23.

2. Oesterley, JDM, 24.

3. Barton, "Sin-Offering," JE, XI.

4. Pfeiffer, IOT, 267.

At first glance it would seem that distinction could be made between the sin- and guilt-offering on the basis of intentional and unintentional sin. This is not the case, however; for it seems evident that the entire complicated system of atonement existed only in relation to minor offences, committed whether through ignorance, carelessness, or infirmity. Sins committed for any other reason would no doubt fall under the classification "high handed" or "presumptuous" sins--terms which are found in Numbers and Deuteronomy, but not in Leviticus. But Leviticus does recognize sins for which the only satisfaction is established through the death of the sinner, and these are of a nature which can best be described as "high handed," (cf. Leviticus 18-20).

These latter sins were those prohibited by the very nature and letter of the covenant. One who committed them intentionally would be guilty of intentionally disowning the covenant itself, thereby cutting away the ground on which it would have been possible for him to obtain reconciliation. In the words of Schultz:

For one who sins "with a high hand," that is, with the intention of acting in defiance of God's commandment, there is no sin offering. He refuses, in fact, to enter the circle within which such a sacrifice has efficacy.¹

There is evidence to indicate, however, that acts committed intentionally were not always classed as "high handed." Sin-offering and guilt-offering could not atone for the "high handed" sins, yet they were valid for false dealing with a neighbor in the matter of a deposit, or of robbery or oppression, or of the wrongful retention of something that was

1. Schultz, OTT, II, 88.

lost. In none of these cases does it seem likely that the sinner would be ignorant of the sin at the time of his committing it. Nevertheless, it should be borne in mind that these were sins which could be somewhat expiated by redress of grievance, and hence did not come in the irrevocable group. The one instance in which an outright violation of humanity can be absolved by sacrifice is that wherein a man lies carnally with a woman who is a slave (Leviticus 19:20). The only consistent method by which this could be made to come under those sins which could be redressed by damages would be to consider the female in the light of her Hebrew standing--that of chattel property. Since she could not call her soul her own, she would not have personal rights. This is at least reasonable in the thought of the period from which the law comes, but such straining for consistency is not absolutely necessary. It would be better to conclude with Rowley that:

Clearly . . . the distinction between unwitting sins and high-handed sins is something different from sins committed in ignorance and sins knowingly committed, and if conscious sins could ever be atoned for by a sacrifice, then high-handed sins must be defined in some other way.¹

He feels that by high handed sins is probably meant ". . . deliberate sins, perpetrated of set purpose, rather than sins into which a man 'fell' through human weakness, or involuntarily."² The criterion for measuring the degree of sin would then appear to be somewhat as it is in Christianity--the evaluation of the motive and purpose behind the action. This

1. Rowley, MSOT, 97.

2. Rowley, MSOT, 97.

concept was not refined to a system, nor is it necessarily consistent, but the germ of the idea is present.

In connection with the sins for which a guilt-offering should be brought, we have touched the matter of unwitting sin. The definition is in the name, and the offering is demanded only when the guilt is perceived in specific transgressions (Leviticus 4:14, 23, 28; 5:3). In the conclusion of this group of laws, however, there is a verse which states: "If anyone sins, doing any of the things which the Lord has commanded not to be done, though he does not know it, yet he is guilty and shall bear his iniquity," (Leviticus 5:17). [*Italics mine*]. There is a suggestion here --although it is no more than a suggestion--that some subsequent calamity or misfortune has caused the worshiper to believe that he has in some manner offended the favor of Yahweh through an unconscious transgression, and the rite of the guilt-offering becomes the instrument of a general confession, rather than a specific one. However, this repeated general rule could be merely a warning that when discovery of the guilt was made, there could be no excuse offered for failing to bring a sacrifice on the ground that at the time of sin the worshiper was not conscious of it, hence not guilty.

Particular attention should be given to the case of the anointed priest who sins unwittingly in any of the things which the Lord has commanded not to be done. He alone does not incur personal guilt in such instances; rather his sin brings guilt on the people (Leviticus 4:3), and the atoning rite is not followed by the words "and he shall be forgiven," as it is in the case of the congregation, ruler, or common people. His transgression violated the one person on earth through whom the positive

act of atonement could be pronounced as meriting forgiveness from Yahweh. The Haggadah interpreted this passage literally to mean that the sin of a High Priest rendered all the people guilty, because he was no longer qualified to atone for them.¹ In observing the rite unto his own need, it was not personal forgiveness he was seeking, but the restoration of the covenantal link between Yahweh and the people. The continued favor of God would be evidence enough of his personal forgiveness.

There are certain sins among the children of Israel for which the penalty is to be "cut off from the people." These are of a ritual nature for the most part, having to do with the eating of the sacrificial meat while unclean (Leviticus 7:20b, 21b), eating the fat of a sacrificial animal (7:25b), eating of the blood (7:27), and failing to bring an animal for slaughter to the tent of meeting (17:9). In 20:3,6 this is the punishment prescribed for those who give of their children as sacrifice to Molech, and those who turn to wizards and mediums.

Question arises as to whether or not this means merely excommunication or death to the sinner. In the two latter instances noted above, the added sentence of death is passed, and the jealousy with which the priests guarded the cult would indicate that the death sentence was implied in the term "to be cut off from the people," although we cannot be sure if this were the case in practice. Gray sounds logical when he suggests that doubtless men like P desired the death of such a sinner, and when the heathen government permitted it, certainly they inflicted it. But he thinks that at this late date we can read between the lines that such

1. Cohen, "Leviticus," SC, 615.

capital punishment of the religious transgressor was not permitted by the government, and that it was necessary to rest content with the belief in the destruction of such a sinner by God.¹ It is in keeping with the whole idea of the covenant to think that one who deliberately flaunted its requirements would be considered worthy of death.

The same line of reasoning is evident in the usage of the phrase "he shall bear his sin." It occurs in connection with "he shall be cut off from his people" frequently enough to indicate that the two are of equal severity, as in the case of eating the meat of a sacrifice on the third day (Leviticus 19:5), and the punishment of the man who blasphemed the Name of God (24:15-16). At the same time, the former of these offences is commanded to be punished only by "bearing of iniquity" in 7:18, which appears to equate the two forms of punishment. On the other hand, "they shall bear their sin" is an added malediction to the curse of childlessness which is placed on a man who lies carnally with his uncle's wife (20:20), and it is set as the punishment in certain other prohibited sexual activities. The exact meaning of the phrase cannot be established from the definite examples in which it is found, but must be interpreted in the overall view of the P Code, which is that any sin not specifically covered by the atonement of ritual is punishable by death.² Gray defines the term to mean that the sinner "shall suffer the consequences of his sin, undergo the punishment of it,"³ and since death is the prescribed

1. Gray, "Numbers," ICC, IV, 84-5.

2. Ottley, AOOT, 238.

3. Gray, "Numbers," ICC, IV, 85.

punishment in the only instances where content is given the phrase, we can assume that it means death.

Atonement for community. In contrast to the many occasions requiring atonement for the individual, there are relatively few instances when atonement is to be made for the community except on the Day of Atonement. There were daily offerings for the maintenance of right relations between the community and God--which Leviticus does not mention--plus the sin offerings on new moons and festivals. These were of a general nature, probably for the purpose of expiating any sin which rested upon the congregation through the willful or unwitting sin of one of its members who was not as yet found out.

There is one instance, however, where atonement is required immediately upon the congregation's recognition of a sin on the part of the entire community. This is in the case where the whole congregation commits a sin unwittingly in respect to the things which the Lord commanded not to be done (Leviticus 4:13-21). No example of this type of sin is given, but the Rabbis interpreted it to mean that the community acted upon an erroneous decision with reference to cultic practice.¹ When such error was discovered, it was of too great magnitude to be borne until the Day of Atonement, but must be expiated at once by the proper offering. We do not know how frequently this rite was observed, but it seems that it was the basis for the activity of Ezra and Nehemiah when sin-offering was made by the returnees (Ezra 8:35) and public confession of sin was

1. Cohen, "Leviticus," SC, 616.

held on the twenty-fourth day of the seventh month (Nehemiah 9:1-38). These would have been occasions well meriting such atonement.

The degree to which the sin of the individual defiled the community is not easily ascertained. That some defilement did attach to the innocent through the sin of the guilty is a well established thought pattern in Israel, yet history would indicate that punishment actually settled physically on the innocent when the greater part of the community countenanced sins of the individuals. Moreover, there were sins against which the children of Israel are warned on the basis that they "defile the Land," (Leviticus 18:24, 28; 20:23). These are the enormities associated with the Canaanites who inhabited the land before Israel--sins for which the very land itself vomited them out at the command of Yahweh (18:24-25). They are the list of sins for which no atonement is prescribed with reference to the individual or the nation. On the other hand, there is historical proof that these very sins were from time to time committed in Israel (cf. the prophets Jeremiah and Amos).

It would seem then that the defilement of the land could not be expiated through ritual means, and that when the accumulated defilement became too great to be offset by the personal holiness of the congregation, the land had no alternative but to vomit out the inhabitants at Yahweh's command. The act of defilement first defiles the person who commits it, be he a Canaanite or an Israelite, and the persons in turn defile the land.¹ In theory the entire congregation was commanded to be absolutely holy, but in practice the community was spared direct punishment so long

1. Büchler, SSA, 221.

as the character of the congregation remained substantially inviolate. The intent of this entire passage appears to be that the Canaanites, who were not heedful of these laws and who failed to punish transgressors, practiced these abominations and went from bad to worse. So will it be with Israel if they are not observant of the divine commands.¹ Though the previous inhabitants may not have been conscious of their actions in the sense of sin,² the law implies that such actions are abhorrent to the nature of man as well as Yahweh, and hence are not to be countenanced even among the heathen.

These offences which defile the land are all of a religious and moral nature, except that of lying with a menstruating woman (Leviticus 18:19; 20:18); or rather we possibly should say that we recognize fundamental religious principles and moral connotations in all except this one. It is possible that the Hebrews instinctively recognized that the disciplinary measure which limited the exercise of the marital privilege would tend to restrain the pure desire of a married couple from degenerating into mere sensual lust, and that that which appears to us only as a cultic prohibition actually has its roots in a deeper moral sensitivity. They would not have delved as deeply into the psychology of these laws as we can and do, for their reasoning was deductive rather than inductive; yet it is evident that they recognized a difference between the quality of this type of transgression and that of a ritual offence. There is no specific instance in which a cultic sin is spoken of as defiling the land.

1. Cohen, "Leviticus," SC, 719.

2. Quell, et al., "Sin," KBW, 13-14.

On the other hand, it is oversimplifying the P Code to break it up into moral and cultic segments, giving greater emphasis to one than to the other. In general both are underwritten by the same authority and command. Leviticus 26, the high point of the book, opens with a statement concerning idols, sabbaths, and the sanctuary; but when it begins to outline the progressive severity of Yahweh's punishment for broken laws, it makes absolutely no distinction between moral and cultic. Here the culmination of Yahweh's wrath will be evidenced by the captivity of the people in a foreign land (26:38), a parallel to the "vomiting out" in 18:25, 20:22. We could go further to point out here that the prophets considered observance of the letter of the law insufficient without the spirit, but on the whole P does not hold to such an idea.

Defilement of the sanctuary is on a different basis than that of the land. Here ritual uncleanness will defile (cf. the defilement from those unclean by discharge Leviticus 15:31; the ministrations before the altar by a blemished priest 21:23; and the uncleanness of the people 16:16). Provision was made for removing the defilement in the first and last instances noted, and it is conceivable that the second could be atoned for under the provisions of atonement prescribed for a priest who sinned unwittingly (Leviticus 4:3-4). However, if a priest should deliberately serve before the altar while blemished, his transgression would come under an entirely different category of sin. The implication of the law is that such a person would be "cut off" from the people, while the people themselves would be atoned for under the provisions of 4:13-21.

In addition to these means whereby the sanctuary is defiled, it is also defiled by the sacrifice to Molech (Leviticus 20:3), and indirectly

by the presence of idols in the land (26:1-2). The familiar prophetic term of "harlotry" is used in connection with both of these religious perversions. Since it is not indicated that the idols were set up in the sanctuary nor that the sacrifice to Molech was carried on there, the contamination results from the moral and religious nature of these practices rather than from levitical uncleanness.

Strangely enough, however, moral impurity alone will not defile the sanctuary, provided that he who comes guilty of moral transgression comes in repentant spirit to confess his transgression and to pray for forgiveness. In practice not even the gravest crime, like that of murder, would prevent the sinner from approaching the altar and seizing its horns (cf. Exodus 21:14; I Kings 1:50-53), and he would not thereby defile the sanctuary and its altar.¹ Yet Leviticus knows nothing of this lenient attitude. It is characterized by the arbitrary and unrelenting imposition of the death penalty in all cases of willful sin for which no restitution can be made.

Day of Atonement. In introducing his discussion of the Day of Atonement, Margolis has this to say:

The Day of Atonement is the keystone of the sacrificial system of post-exilic Judaism. In the belief that the great national misfortunes of the past were due to the people's sins, the Jews of post-exilic times strove to bring on the Messianic period of redemption by strictly and minutely guarding against all manner of sin. The land being defiled by the sin of the people, the pollution must be removed lest the Divine Presence withdraw from among them. Hence the sacrificial system with its sin- and guilt-offerings.²

1. Büchler, SSA, 235.

2. Margolis, "Day of Atonement," JE, II, 1902.

This "Great Day" of Judaism has, for the past 1700 years at least, been the Yoma Rabba, the great day, or Yoma, the day of the Jewish calendar.¹ The ritual for its observance found in Leviticus 23 and 16 is probably a composite of old and late laws, combined to produce a fitting climax to the entire sacrificial system. The peculiarity of the day does not lie in the fact that the number of sacrifices was greater, nor yet that the more directly expiatory sin-offerings outnumbered other types of sacrifices. Its peculiar status arises from certain details of the expiatory ritual, the range of applicability of this ritual, and above all, in the fact that the entire day, from evening to evening, had to be spent fasting.²

The development of the various features of this day is not our concern, nor can we be sure in what order the events prescribed in Leviticus 16 occurred. Generally, the procedure was as follows: The High Priest put on his special vestments of linen (v. 4), then with his hands placed on the head of a bullock contributed from his own means he made confession of his own sins and of those of his nearer household (v. 6). The two goats contributed by the people were placed before him, being designated by lot, the one for a sin-offering "for the Lord," and the other to be sent away into the wilderness "for Azazel" (v. 7-10). Once more the High Priest made confession over his own bullock for himself and nearer household, then after killing the animal and receiving its blood into a vessel, he took a censer full of live coals and two handfuls of

1. Gray, SIOT, 306.

2. Gray, SIOT, 306.

fine incense into the sacred recess behind the curtain, the Holy of Holies; there he placed the incense on the coals, the cloud of incense enveloping the so-called "mercy-seat" (v. 11-13). He returned for the vessel containing the blood of the bullock and re-entered, sprinkling some of it with his finger seven times on the front of and before the mercy-seat (v. 14). He then left the sacred compartment to kill the people's goat, marked "for the Lord," and with its blood he re-entered the Holy of Holies to perform the same number of sprinklings in the same place (v. 15). By this rite the most holy place was rendered free from all impurities attaching to it through the intentional or unintentional entrance of unclean persons into the sanctuary (v. 16). No one was permitted to remain in the sanctuary while the High Priest officiated in the Holy of Holies (v. 17). He then mixed the blood of the bullock and goat and put some of it on the four corners of the altar, sprinkling some of the blood with his finger seven times on the surface of the altar, by which rite it was cleansed from the uncleanness of the people of Israel (v. 18-19). The live goat was now brought forward, the High Priest laid his hands upon its head and confessed over it "all the iniquities of the people of Israel, and all their transgressions, all their sins." Laden with the people's sins, the animal was sent away into the wilderness (v. 20-22). The High Priest then entered the sanctuary again, took off the sacred robes, bathed, and put on his ordinary apparel. Finally he sacrificed a burnt-offering for himself and the people, while the sacrificial blood and meat were disposed of as directed (v. 23-28).¹

1. Margolis, "Day of Atonement," JE, II, 1902.

In this elaborate ceremonial the ordinary rites of the sin-offering are to be discerned in an intensified form. The High Priest alone could perform the rite on this day, whereas any duly ordained priest could officiate at any other sacrifice. The Holy of Holies and the sanctuary themselves were purged of their participation in the uncleanness of the people, and by dipping his finger in the victim's blood and applying it to a sacred object like the altar, the priest established union between the people that he represented and the Deity. The sins were not only expiated by the blood sacrifice, but they were symbolically borne away on the head of the scape-goat. Finally, all work on that day was forbidden on the penalty of death (Leviticus 24:30), and fasting was commanded in the same vein of thought (24:29).

The entire nature of the Day of Atonement—solemn and forbidding as it is in contrast to the festivities and joy which accompany other holy days of Judaism—would cause us to feel that it was more than a day on which the priest performed a mere ceremonial cleansing for impure persons whose presence in the camp may have defiled the sanctuary. In the ritual, an essential element was the priestly confession of the sin of the community. The fast was designated as "affliction" of soul, indicative of a repentant spirit. Leviticus 16:16 includes uncleanness, transgressions, and sins all as the defilement from which the sanctuary and the Holy of Holies was cleansed by the atoning sacrifice. To insist that these serious activities were carried out only to secure expiation of cultic sin is to display a shallow appreciation for the spiritual insight of the priesthood. It may be true that the law felt there was forgiveness for the individual with respect to cultic sin alone, but the spirit

of the Day of Atonement goes deeper than that. With reference to it, Rowley has this to say:

In the ritual of the Day of Atonement, when atonement was made for the sins of the community, an essential element in the ritual was the priestly confession of the sin of the community. That confession was made by the priest as the representative of the community, and in so far as it did not represent the spirit of the community it was meaningless. To treat this element of the ritual as a hollow formality, in which the sincerity of the priest, or the genuineness of its expression of the attitude of the community towards itself and towards God, as of no moment, is to do less than justice to the Law.¹

This conclusion is borne out in 16:30 where the results of the Day are stated in these words: "for on this day shall atonement be made for you, to cleanse you; from all your sins you shall be clean before the Lord." Büchler points to the exalted sense of purity promised in this verse, thus:

No other sin-offering, whether brought by the congregation of the people . . . or by an individual . . . effects the purity from sin before the Lord stated here, and the recurring declaration, 'and they (he) shall be forgiven' . . . in connexion with atoning sacrifices is hardly to be compared with that. . . . do the words perhaps mean: so that ye may, and surely will, be pure before the Lord?²

The full scope of atonement on this Day was finally interpreted in much this same light in the Talmud. Hershon quotes from Yoma, on the Day of Atonement, this elucidation of the degree of atonement accompanying the various rites:

1. Rowley, MSOT, 94-5.

2. Büchler, SSA, 263.

A sin-offering and an expiatory sacrifice secure pardon for known offences. Death and the Day of Atonement, together with repentance secure pardon. Repentance secures immediate pardon only for light offences against positive and negative precepts; but for weighty offences the full pardon is suspended till the coming of the Day of Atonement, which fully secures it.¹

This same quotation continues, pointing out carefully the spiritual element in atonement;

He who says, 'I will sin, and the Day of Atonement will secure me pardon,' for such a one the Day of Atonement does not bring pardon. For a man's offences against God, the Day of Atonement ensures pardon; but for a man's offences against a fellow-creature the Day of Atonement does not effect pardon, until he first appeases the offended party.²

These observations would lead us to believe that the Day of Atonement was different in its intent from the appointed rituals of occasional sacrifice. These latter were but portents of the actual spiritual atonement which became effective in the sanctuary and community on this special Day. Would it be too wide a surmise to suggest that even the Priestly Author would have permitted a share in the benefits of this Day to the penitent soul who had been driven to his sin through human frailty and passion; to the soul whose acts were not the result of set purpose, but of powerful emotions? I think the very spirit of the law would include such in the efficacious atonement of the Day of Atonement, although it would be doubtful exegesis to thus interpret the letter of the law.

As with all other ritual ordinances, the Day of Atonement has a symbolic character, mirroring in it the inner processes of sanctification,

1. Quoted by Hershon, TT, 98.

2. Quoted by Hershon, TT, 99.

and so ". . . forming the instrument of a tuition advancing from the outer to the inner."¹ We turn now to a consideration of the symbolism involved in this splendid rite.

First, the tent of meeting at which the sacrifice was carried out was the physical symbol of Yahweh's presence in the camp. As such it was a symbol of the right of access to Yahweh vouchsafed by the divine mercy to man. It was the spot where Yahweh could be approached, and where He deigned, under conditions of His own appointment, to draw near to man. Numbers 9:15 calls the tent of meeting the "tent of testimony," a name which implies that Yahweh's presence among His people was "a moral fact conditioned by His covenant grace, rather than any mere local proximity."² Appearance of the Israelite before the sanctuary to perform the duties of expiation testified of his willingness to honor the covenant, just as the presence of Yahweh within the Holy of Holies testified to His respect for it. As the terms on which the covenant had been established were voluntary, and therefore moral, so the meeting of the community with their God at the tent of meeting once a year evidenced the continuing moral willingness of both parties to preserve the contract inviolate. If the people came to have a legal conception of this contract, rather than a moral one, it still does not alter the fact that ideally every Israelite should have been motivated to share in the atoning rites through a sense of his own moral insufficiency.

Again, the very structure of the tent of meeting was symbolic of the inaccessible holiness of Yahweh. Not every man could enter into the

1. Oehler, OTI, 183.

2. Ottley, AOOT, 248.

exalted presence. Only that man who had been chosen for the office could enter the Holy of Holies, and he could do so only after special atonement had been made for him. The worshiper was held, so to speak, at arms length. He was constantly reminded of the gulf that intervened between sinful man and the all-holy God. The very fact that human approach to Yahweh was possible only under the most jealous restrictions served to bring home forcibly to the heart of the Israelite the inherent imperfection of the whole ancient system. It set a standard of absolute holiness, at the same time stressing the almost insurmountable barriers which prevented its achievement.

It was this latter fact which gave rise to the next significant symbol in the Day of Atonement: the expiation of sin by the blood and the sending away of the sins on the head of the scape-goat.

The blood in Hebrew thought was sacred as the seat of life (Leviticus 17:11). The death of the animal in sacrifice was not so significant as was the liberation of the blood, which was considered as still living, and in a real sense, active beyond death. The blood thus offered was in fact an emblem of life yielded up in perfect self-surrender. In every sacrifice there was the idea of substitution, wherein the victim takes the place of the sinner. But in this transaction the animal becomes the symbol of the total surrender of the sinner to the will of Yahweh. Its blood which is poured out in surrender is then accepted by Yahweh, and becomes the means through which defilement is removed from the community, the sanctuary, and Holy of Holies. Thus, in symbol, self-surrender of the individual to the will of Yahweh brought about his own purification and that of the entire covenantal community.

Lastly, we come to the symbolism involved in the scape-goat, upon whose head the accumulated sins of the people are laden. These are the iniquities, the sins, the transgressions which the High Priest confesses over the goat before sending him away into the wilderness. There could hardly be a more beautiful symbolism than this, whereby men became conscious that through the merits of this Day they were relieved of the burden of guilt which sprang from their sin-laden conscience. As the goat was led off into the wilderness, it would take little imagination for the devout Israelite to experience a joyful sense of release as he pictured his own sin gone forever, just as was the goat. This one rite breaks through the gloom of an otherwise oppressive ceremony of affliction, bringing joy out of weeping for those who could share in an experience which transcended the outward symbol to the inner work. The Rabbis recognized the beauty of this act, inventing for it in a later day a sequel which, though obviously not historical, expressed its meaning with exquisite beauty. The words of Hershon and Rabbi Ishmael describe it:

The high priest was duly informed that the scape-goat had reached the wilderness. How did they ascertain this? There were signalmen stationed at certain distances all along the way, who, by waving flags, handed on from one to another the information. [But Rabbi Ishmael says] "They had also another sign. A bright scarlet strip was tied at the doorway of the sanctuary, and when the scape-goat reached the wilderness this strip turned white, as it is said in Isaiah 1:18, 'though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow.'"¹

This was a wonderful understanding of all that the atonement ceremony involved, the visible symbolism whereby men came to their God seeking

1. Hershon, TT, 93-4.

release from their sins, and the answering symbols wherein He bore witness to them that the work was done.

It is tragic that a ceremony so full of spiritual meaning should degenerate into a formal legalism which thwarted the intent of those who by it were attempting to perpetuate the concept of a covenant between a Holy God and a holy congregation. It appears from the text of Leviticus that the author of this manual tended to forget the spirit in favor of the letter of the law. Possibly we must look back of the day of the Priestly Code to find a time when these rites were filled with the proper sense of repentance on the part of those who fulfilled them. If the institution of the Day of Atonement as we have it dates from a late post-exilic period and was not known in early Israel,¹ it is conceivable that the writer who collected the ceremonies which now make up the Day of Atonement sought out those which within themselves most decidedly portrayed the proper spiritual attitude. We have reviewed the need for some such ordinances in the introduction to this chapter,² relating the historical circumstances which prompted the priests to seek a sure means of securing assurance of Yahweh's continued assurance. The law was their answer to the problem. Gray rightly points out that it would be unfair to charge the framers of the law with a merely mechanical and unethical view of sin and forgiveness, overlooking the direct action in expiation which the law attributes to Yahweh; but he goes on to cite the danger that a very mechanical and unethical view of sin and forgiveness might be fostered by the Day of Atonement if one is of a mind to so

1. Gray, SIOT, 310.

2. Supra, 25.

interpret it.¹ This, however, is an abuse to which every ritual of expiation, every symbol of forgiveness, every theory of atonement is liable; and in Israel the Day of Atonement served its purpose in heightening the sense of sin through the demand of expiation. It cast over the life of Israel an outlook not so bright as formerly, but one more deeply secured in the meaning of the covenant.² The choice of the lesser of two evils--legalism or no law at all--was settled in favor of the former.

Priestly interpretation of the results of sin. We have noted how frequently the death sentence is passed upon sins of a certain nature. We have seen further that the result of cultic sin was contamination which unfitted the Israelite for appearance before the sanctuary. In other words, we may generalize the priestly concept of the results of sin under the headings of physical, material, and temporal. In the entire book of Leviticus there is not a hint of a future life for the individual, nor of a gloriously restored nation such as we find at times in the prophets. The one chapter (26) which rises slightly above the prosaic and didactic level of most of the book is yet completely imbued with the Deuteronomic theory of temporal reward and punishment.

The positive blessings which are promised for obedience stand as striking evidence that the Israelite considered the benefits of the covenant to consist of temporal and material prosperity. The keynote of this whole idea is struck in Leviticus 25:18-19 when the Lord declares:

1. Gray, SIOT, 320.

2. Gray, SIOT, 321.

Therefore you shall do my statutes, and keep my ordinances and perform them; so you will dwell in the land securely. The land will yield its fruit, and you will eat your fill and dwell securely.

Chapter 26 continues in the same vein, where in verses 3-13

Yehweh promises that if they will walk in His statutes, then He will give them:

1. Rain, productive land, year round crops, full stomachs.
2. Peace, victory over enemies, national security.
3. Increased population, reserves of wealth.
4. Yahweh Himself to walk among them and dwell in their midst.

These features of life were very naturally of major concern to a small group of people who were attempting to establish themselves as an entity within the religious, political, and economic ferment so characteristic of the Near East. The leaders of Israel perceived through the bitter experiences of the exile that only through the miraculous intervention of Yahweh could they hope to maintain autonomy for so small a group as theirs. The covenant was understood to vouchsafe such an autonomy to them; hence it must be interpreted to furnish the physical instrumentality by which its provisions could be realized in fact. If it appears that the priests were putting these words into Yahweh's mouth, they can be defended on the grounds that they were only attempting to voice the meaning of the covenant in words which the average Israelite could understand. And let it be noted here that the great prophets themselves were not totally averse to such thinking. Obviously they too believed that the religious life of the community determined the political

and economic status in direct ratio as it was pleasing or displeasing to Yahweh. Their views would have differed drastically from those of the priests with regard to the means whereby correct religion should be practiced, and they did catch glimpses of a glorious future restoration which the priests never envisioned; but both priest and prophet were so closely involved with the "here and now" as to speak of the results of obedience and disobedience in very materialistic terms.

Punishment for disobedience is couched in terms much more explicit in detail than are the terms for blessing. In summary they are: plague and defeat, to be followed, after neglect of this warning, by infertility and wild animals and, if repentance is still withheld, by the threefold penalty of sword, pestilence, and famine. Sin is to be paid for seven times over. In the famine what would have been the portion of one family has to be eked out among ten (26:14-26.) The results of neglect of the third warning are: the extremities of famine and captivity; siege; desolation of the country, destruction of the cities, uselessness of all religious observances; dispersion of the nation; desertion of Palestine and abject misery of the survivors (26:27-39.) The terrors described here would have been familiar sights to any inhabitant of Jerusalem in the days of its downfall, and the reasoning behind them would have been the logical conclusions of a mind who was acquainted with the progressive pattern of Amos 4. Deeper involvement in sin brought ever stronger warnings from Yahweh, warnings which were as much a part of His side of the covenant as were the promised blessings. Only when sin had progressed to its ultimate where men not only disobeyed but actually "abhorred" Yahweh's ordinances (26:15) would He be compelled to

give them up to the most drastic fate.

The question at once arises as to whether or not it is the infraction of the law or the abhorrence of it which brings on the punitive action of Yahweh. If the people had loved the law even though they had not performed it, would they still have found favor? Or if they had performed the letter of the law while hating its rules, would their action have been counted unto them for atonement? It is the age-old problem of whether a man is judged by his intention or his actions. In this instance the answer is probably to be found in an equation of action and intention. There is here a tacit recognition of a religious phenomenon: mankind in general will not observe for long a law which is dependent on his own will for its enforcement, unless he is in harmony with the spirit and motive of that law. So strict and demanding were the laws of the Code that only that one who revered the covenant in which they were commanded would—or could—observe them with religious fidelity. Yet they were light enough that he who desired the end result which came from observing them could—and would—keep them.

The blending of these two streams of thought, relative to cultic obedience and spiritual intention, is dramatically pointed up with reference to the exile in this great 26th chapter of Leviticus. The one commandment specifically called to mind in connection with it is that of the sabbath year of rest for the land (v. 33-35). This practice can hardly be thought of in any way other than a purely cultic feature of Hebrew civilization, but here it is placed in almost a causal relationship with the tragedy of the exile. On the other hand, when the restoration from exile is promised after the land has enjoyed its rest (v. 43a),

The conditions of restoration are said to be confession of iniquity, humbling of uncircumcised hearts, and making amends for iniquity (v. 40-41). It is through the covenant established with the fathers that both of these conditions are set forth. It is as though the Lord were saying: "You did not let the land rest as I commanded, nor did you observe the law of the year of rest. To be loyal to my word, the land shall find its rest in the hour of your desolation. But if you will repent in sincerity for the wickedness of your heart which prompted you to disobey my law, I shall again fulfill to you the material advantages of our agreement."

It is an unchallenged observation that the religion of the priests minimized the ethical considerations of religion. The people of Israel, burdened as they were with anxiety, smitten as they were in their consciousness of sin, humbled by their idea of God, took upon themselves the "severest yoke ever placed by religion on the neck of man."¹ A service worthy of the supreme God must be regulated with unalterable rules in the most minute details. Sacrifice became the great act; no longer was it accompanied by gladness and joy. It represented purification from sin, and as the purifying ritual could be explicitly set forth, so the sin for which it was to atone could be literally defined. To be holy one must wash; one must touch no unclean thing; one must not eat what is unclean; one must observe the sabbath, the day of Yahweh. Intrinsically there was a basis for a mysterious faith in all these rites, a symbolism which should have borne a higher portent to the sinner

1. Harper, PEOT, 55.

than the mere mechanical inference that the material sacrifice removed sin as though it were filth which could be scrubbed from the body. The externality of the ceremonial did not obliterate the ethical sensitivity of Israel's religious leaders, as we see from other books of the post-exilic period, such as the final collection of Proverbs, Ruth, Jonah; but these were not the work of the priest. One faint hint of ethical monotheism creeps into Leviticus when Yahweh indicates that it was His wrath which drove the former inhabitants of Canaan out of the land on account of their sin (18:25); yet the general monotheism of P has little of this element in it. The One God had set forth definite regulations by which He should be worshiped, His one demand and supreme attribute was holiness, and holiness could be obtained only by strict adherence to the rules.

Corollary Considerations

Intent of priesthood necessary function of religion. Humanity acting in the way it does, exercise of the restrictive power of the priests is a necessary function of religion. Such methods may not be the ideal way in which to bring about conformity to the will of God, but, as Hoschander points out, it can be demonstrated from experience that ". . . the conduct of a moral life, without external forms of worship, is for the average man nigh impossible."¹ He continues:

On the other hand, external acts of devotion toward God would unceasingly remind people of their duties and responsibilities in all affairs of their life, including conduct toward their fellowmen, and

1. Hoschander, PP, 106.

force them against the evil inclinations of their heart, inherent to its nature, to walk the straight path of the righteous. This may not be an ideal condition, that man's actions should be the result of fear of God and against their own inclinations, that "Damocles' sword," as it were should be the only incentive to keep man on the straight path. . . . [But] Man has learned by experience that obedience to the law can be enforced only by fear. And for the same reason the Mosaic Law also imposed penalties on the transgressors of its laws.¹

As long as the priestly system served to accomplish this type of conformity in the hearts of Israelites, there is no denying that it served a purpose of outstanding value in Judaism. This strange system, which seems so distasteful to us in our exaggerated love of freedom, was liberty rather than bondage to the pious Israelite, for the perplexity of his soul was stilled through these ordinances.² Ezekiel had been the first to see in the exile that the religious atmosphere of the prophet would be too rare for the befuddled remnant of Israel whose religious conceptions had been shattered in the debacle of 586 B.C. It is possible that the pure demands of moral and social virtue so loudly demanded by the prophets would have had no foundation from which to spring back into the stream of world religion had it not been that the priests gave to the Jews a religious form adapted to the circumstances in which they lived. Speaking figuratively, this was the day in which the compass which guides the seeing eye was of necessity replaced by the hand which leads the blind. The method was not foreign to Israel, for her history had borne explicit witness to the usefulness of rites and symbols in achieving the end of worship. These were now overemphasized in an effort

1. Hoschander, PP, 106.

2: Harper, PEOT, 54.

to reach a goal of piety which previous systems of worship had failed to reach in Israel.

Tendency toward moral sterility a fault. A system of worship based so largely upon a prescribed code of sacrifice and holy rites obviously tends toward moral sterility. Schultz has reviewed this religious phenomenon in his Old Testament Theology, concluding with respect to the sacred forms of atonement that:

. . . when great attention is given to them, they may even have an injurious effect on the people in regard to religion. For they regard sacrifice as an act; and it is only natural for human ignorance and pride to imagine that God is reconciled by the mere act itself--that sacrifice is not a means of grace bestowed upon the people by God, but a gift, valuable in itself, to the receiver. . . . such a view necessarily destroyed in the people the one condition of reconciliation--a humble and believing spirit.¹

When atonement became inseparable from the act of sacrificing, the logical inference to the natural mind was that the atonement was effected by the bringing of the gift pure and simple--that is, by obtaining the favor of God by means of a material present acceptable to Him, or by a humility flattering to the pride of the injured party. The sinner brought God a gift to appease Him; he bowed before Him in fasting, in an attitude of mourning and humiliation, and sought in this way to make his prayer for pardon impressive and effectual.² In simple thinking, it was only a short step between the two propositions, (1) Atonement cannot be made without sacrifice, to (2) sacrifice is the means of atonement. We have but to view the moral condition of Israel at the time of the prophets to

1. Schultz, OTT, 94-5.

2. Schultz, OTT, 93.

realize that this conception of sacrifice lay at the bottom of the warped religious sentiments of that day, when the people, as if they had not forsaken righteousness and order, betook themselves to fasting and yet never left off practicing covetousness and injustice.

When religion is viewed in this way, morality becomes simply compliance with established customs. It so limits the field of objective morals that it permits new evils to grow up without a distinct recognition of their unethical or at least their sinful character. Sin is reduced to what has been termed "forensic liability". Sin ceases to be a matter of conscience, becoming something impersonal and objective. Dean Knudson relates the story of how Lord Melbourne once protested against a sermon on personal sin by rising from his seat and stalking down the aisle, muttering to himself that things had come to a pretty pass when religion was made to invade a man's private life. "And," continues the Dean, "This is the attitude of mind which a ceremonial type of religion is likely to create."¹ Smith points out that the enlarged emphasis upon the non-ethical in general and the ritualistic in particular imperils the right evaluation of the ethical by the masses,² and Rowley comments that unconscious sin cannot demand the same quality of repentance which should accompany atonement for conscious sin.³ The same author draws the fitting conclusion to an evaluation of the Priestly concept of sin when he says: ". . . while at its best Judaism was

1. Knudson, RTOT, 248-9.

2. Smith, MLH, 298-9.

3. Rowley, MSOT, 101.

spiritually sensitive, at its worst it became a mere externalism."¹

Inevitable clash of priestly and prophetic ideas. The prophets were men of life, men who were concerned with what religion accomplished in the areas of emotions and attitudes which eventuated in actions. They held the conviction that Yahweh's requirements were moral in character, and that material sacrifice, from its very nature, was not moral. Without enlarging here a topic with which we shall be more largely concerned at a latter time, it is safe to say that holding the sacrifices to be worthless, the prophets necessarily would have held the sacrificial cultus equally worthless. To them the term "ritual purity" would have had the connotation of a hangover from the days when religion was nothing more than superstition, and to these men of enlightened religious feeling, the term itself was a misnomer.

A further point of conflict between priest and prophet was the economic abuse which the priests came to make of their office. Bade is somewhat vituperative in his attack on this feature of priestly religion, but he has made a significant point when he suggests that in asserting that Yahweh Himself instituted the sacrificial system, and that His favor was dependent upon the scrupulous observance of the ritual ordinances, the priesthood was at the same time enforcing its claims to material support with the authority of divine command. In his own words:

The prophets who had denied that God had instituted sacrifices, or could be propitiated by means of them, were condemning an economic abuse as well as a religious superstition. These uncompromising preachers of morality were at the same time undermining the

1. Rowley, MSOT, 102.

authority of the priests and allied false prophets to rob the people in the name of God.¹

In the same vein, he points out the reason for the clash between the two groups:

Sacerdotal greed had seen its advantage and was pushing it farther by all the means in its power, chief among them being the profitable delusion that sacrifices possess the magic efficacy of atoning for sin, and securing prosperity. By calling a halt upon the propagation of this doctrine, men like Amos, Isaiah, Micah, and Jeremiah aroused the lasting hatred of the priests and professional prophets-- a hatred inspired as much by the bread-instinct as by differences of theological belief.²

Welch is much more generous in his appraisal of priestly motives, feeling that their defense of the cult was of deep religious intensity, rather than stemming from the ". . . baser consideration that by this craft they had their living."³ No doubt there is as much justification for this viewpoint as there is for that of Bade quoted above, for human motives are complex in the extreme, and it seems reasonable to assume that there were men who defended the priestly system from motives which were mixtures of the constituent elements in all degrees. But granting the possibility that the words of Bade are strong beyond necessity in attributing vicious motive to the priests who made of sacrifice such a powerful instrument of religion, we recognize that the abuses cited did exist.

Prophecy being what it is, the very presence of evil in the

1. Bade, OTLT, 297.

2. Bade, OTLT, 297-8

3. Welch, PPOI, 74.

priestly system was sufficient to call forth the uncompromising denunciation of individual evil, and by corresponding logic, of the system itself. When this happened, the prophets found arrayed against them the tenacity with which men cling, especially in everything which touches their religious customs, to old and familiar forms which have grown to be part of their very life. Welch charitably takes some of the guilt in this controversy off the shoulders of the priests and lays it on the laymen. From what we know of men's habits in religion, he thinks it would be a mistake to conclude that the priests were alone in their opposition.¹ When the clash came, the division between the groups was heightened by the extremists on either side who saw only the bad in the other. We have looked at the priestly representatives in the first half of this paper, pointing up the attitudes which characterize them. We now turn our attention to the representatives of prophetic thought.

1. Welch, PPOI, 74.

CHAPTER II

REPRESENTATIVES OF PROPHEPIC THOUGHT

The Rise of Prophecy

"And the significant thing about these oracles is that they came true."¹

Basic goals of prophecy. Since its beginnings early in the life of Israel, the office of the prophet had been that of bringing the fresh word of Yahweh unto the people. On any occasion the prophet's voice might suddenly be raised to declare Yahweh's pleasure or displeasure with the moment, and to announce His intention to prosper or defeat the purpose of the individual or nation involved. More frequently than not, the voice was employed to warn against contemplated action, presenting the course which faith in Yahweh would direct, and at the same time pointing out the calamities which would follow any undertaking not sanctioned by Him. The prophet was God's immediate spokesman, divinely "inflated" by the word of Yahweh in order that that word might be given to the people with unmistakable certainty. Ritual grew fixed; it could not any more be used to express this or that immediate need;² but the prophets were not bound by fixed rules nor antiquated expressions.

1. Faus, GP, 31.

2. Hamilton, SFG, 63.

Their message was as living as the editorials of a daily newspaper in our time.

The contemporary nature of prophetic activity was no doubt its most dominant feature. The great eighth century movement of prophecy, characterized by that new association of holiness and righteousness in a very special way,¹ spoke first and foremost for the ears of Israel and Judah. Prophetic criticism was directed at the men of that day--their institutions, their governments, their businesses. If it appears to be directed to us in the twentieth century, it is not because the prophets were able to forecast in mysterious language the headlines of our day, but because the essential meaning of our situation in relation to God is precisely the same today, even though the local and temporal setting has changed.² The fact that their message does appear so up-to-date is a woeful commentary on the unchanging sinful bent of human nature; yet by the same token, the desire we find in ourselves to follow their teachings is testimony to man's ever-continuing striving for the perfect realization of God's will.

The prophets, no less than the priests, were obsessed with the idea of sin. For both groups sin was anything which blocked the free intercourse between Yahweh and Israel. Granted that they interpreted it differently, both held true to the serious view which the Bible as a whole takes of man's rebellion against God. It is only natural then that the prophets, speaking to their contemporaries, presented an interpretation of history in which judgment upon sin became the first category.

1. Snaith, DIOT, 67.

2. Anderson, RTB, 95.

To them the most obvious meaning of history is that every nation, culture and civilization brings destruction upon itself by exceeding the bounds of creatureliness which God has set upon all human enterprise.¹

The prophets were also possessed of that marvelous insight to understand the sameness of Yahweh's nature, at the same time recognizing His changing methods in revealing Himself to succeeding generations. They brought up to date the message of Yahweh for a nation which had progressed and matured from its nomadic days of infancy. They saw that the knowledge of Israel's God is such that every human institution must be judged by it; that there is nothing so sacred that Yahweh Himself may not defile or destroy it when it is used as a substitute for a people's true security. This fact accounts for their severe denunciation of cult, their challenge to the validity of existing religious institutions.²

The prophets were not, however, free-lance religionists. They too were restricted through the revelation which had come down to them. Yahweh had promised to raise up after Moses a prophet like unto him. Each new revelation must therefore be in agreement with the initial revelation to Moses, and the truth of any prophet's message must be tested by whether it contradicted or continued this (Deuteronomy 13:1-5). But the true prophet went much further than the people in developing the implications of what was involved in the will of Yahweh, especially in relation to the actual life of the nation. Says Welch:

Every feature of that life must correspond with the express will of Him who had called it into being to know and do His sovereign bidding.

1. Niebuhr, NADM, 140.

2. Wright, OTAE, 110.

Therefore the message of each prophet had two foci; it dealt with the mind of Yahweh and with the actual life of Israel as a more or less worthy response to that mind.¹

It was the unworthiness of the cult as an expression of this relationship that brought criticism of it from prophets. These men, whose judgment was based on the revealed will of God, were very definitely interested in the civil and personal relationships of the nation. But at the depths of their mission they of necessity were forced to concern themselves with the cult, the institution by which men sought to maintain their relation to their God. Again to quote Welch:

The acts by which men entered into relation to God, maintained it for themselves and their children, restored it when it was interrupted, must, more than any other part of their life, reflect the peculiar character of that relation, peculiar because their God was unique. At once there began to reveal itself the antinomy which had existed from the beginning between the revelation of the divine nature at Horeb and the actual cult by which Israel offered its worship. They were not based on the same principles.²

Being men of a practical turn of mind, the prophets could not sit idly by and watch their fellow Israelites enjoy a smug sense of pious reverence in the cultic rites, while at the same time the principles of justice and righteousness were outrageously violated by them. These rugged men--for they were rugged in message if not in person--returned again and again to the themes of personal wickedness, injustice, unworthy worship. These were the sins which characterized Israel in their day. In point of fact, the sins which the prophets treated were confined to a

1. Welch, PPOI, 67f.

2. Welch, PPOI, 69.

minimum of subjects, but these they treated thoroughly and frequently. In reading the prophetic literature, one is struck by the constant recurrence of certain themes, almost to the point of monotony.¹ It is as though the prophets, like the priests, would not spread their teaching too thin, lest it be lost in complexity.

Lack of continuity and uniformity. Prophecy was sporadic by nature; or, that is to say, true prophecy as we find it exhibited in the great writing prophets. Historically we find that there were groups of prophets, living and functioning as a community, given to the office of seers. These, however, were not the strain which have made prophecy famous in Israel. This was accomplished by men who rose to an occasion in history. They seized upon the day of their own lives as the vehicle through which to interpret the will of Yahweh to mankind. They were active for long periods, silent for equally long terms. One might appoint his successor, as did Elijah, or another might appear for one fleeting hour and be gone when his message was said, as was Amos. There might be periods when there was no prophet to speak, or there might be times when the activity of several overlapped. They were by no means uniform in the emphases they brought to the consciousness of their countrymen, but each had a phase of true religion to highlight in Israel. They were an institution in one sense of the word, but they were far from being stereotyped and hidebound. They took no pains to tie their preaching in harmonious continuity with that of their predecessors, and little more to explain their dependence on theological

1. Anderson, RTB, 98.

presuppositions of their religion. They held high the covenant, basing all their preaching upon it; and as it was a many-sided contract, so their preaching was many sided. They were men of crisis, realists who

. . . met in the strength of God, and at the divine impulse, the problems and evils of their own age. They had to face the problems of materialism and commercialism; the evils resulting from the accumulation of wealth, power, and resources in the hands of a few; very serious economic problems; cruelty, oppression, arrogance on the part of the rich proprietors; corruption in government and in the administration of justice; they had to grapple with a cold, heartless formalism which threatened to destroy pure, spiritual religion.¹

It goes without saying that these men were not popular in a pleasant sense of the word. We can easily see, as does Anderson, that

These men were not servants of popular desire or defenders of the status quo. Like Micaiah they testified, "What the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak," even though it usually invited ostracism, ridicule, and persecution.²

Yet, it is one of the strange facts of biblical history that although the prophets were an unpopular minority in their day, the whole Old Testament, reflecting as it does a dominant prophetic viewpoint, bears witness to the unescapable realism of their message. "The uniqueness of Israel's faith is the uniqueness of the prophets."³

The prophets too must answer the question of what should be done about the perennial problem of the broken covenant, with its allied problem of what attitude Yahweh would take towards those who have broken

1. Eiselen, GOVT, 253.

2. Anderson, RTB, 93.

3. Anderson, RTB, 94.

it. Israel's loyalty to the covenant--as we read in the pre-exilic prophets--had been characterized mostly by its fitfulness (Hosea 6:4). The common sense realism of the prophets prevented their accepting the terms of the covenant as mechanical; their spiritual insight perceived the deep ethical intent of it. Their task was to convey their high perception into the hearts and lives of their people.

Representative Prophets

Amos - inexorable punishment. Amos appeared on the scene at a time of prosperity for the Hebrews, especially for the Northern Kingdom. Jereboam II, who was then king, had warred successfully and in this and other ways added greatly to the wealth of his people; and wealth had brought with it the train of vices by which it is usually accompanied. For one short prophecy against the nation and its vices, Amos emerges from his obscurity very briefly, leaving us only a glimpse of the man. The roar of the lion, to which he compares the voice that compelled him to prophesy, is the roar with which the beast springs upon its prey (3:8). He does not continue the activity of prophesying as a professional vocation. He is sharply distinguished from men of the prophetic guilds, as well as from men like Isaiah and Jeremiah who received the divine call in their youth and continued their work for many years, receiving new revelations from time to time in connection with the changing events of the day. It is not even Israel's sin so much as it is the impending disaster confronting them which brings him forth as the great preacher of doom.¹ But their sin is at the root of their fate, and he denounces

1. Smith, TPOI, 129.

all evidences of it in unparalleled intensity.

Amos took his illustrations from life. He looked at life as it was. Throughout his book he is absorbed with nothing else than documentary facts which expose the material and moral wickedness of the people. So great is his preoccupation with his subject matter that in all the book there is but one prospect of the Ideal. That one prospect does not break till the close, and then in such contrast to the plain and final indictments, which constitute nearly all the rest of the book, that ". . . many have not unnaturally denied to him the verses which contain it."¹ He speaks--surely with firsthand knowledge--of the conditions in Northern Israel. He has followed with close and sympathetic attention the progress of the Syrian wars and all the sufferings of the nation from pestilence, famine, and earthquake. The luxury of the nobles of Samaria, the cruel sensuality of their wives, the miseries of the poor and the rapacity of their tyrants, the pilgrimages to Gilgal and Beersheba--these are painted from life.

Amos was a pioneer. Prior to his time, everything a man was called upon to do in the name of religion lay on the same level, all jumbled together in one undifferentiated mass. "Amos was the first to make the distinction, and with his realization of what actually mattered a new stage was reached in thought, a great step forward taken."² Not even in the days of David had the essential been so clearly divided from the unessential as now was the case. But since Amos' time, "Men have

1. Smith, TBOT, 83.

2. Hamilton, SFG, 79.

never been able altogether to disregard it or forget it. That is the achievement of Amos, and its importance can hardly be overestimated."¹ He was the forerunner of that great group of Hebrew prophets of whom Davidson says,

[their] . . . hearts were filled with great moral anticipations. No men could detect so sharply as they the subtle moral currents of the world. Their ears and senses were preternaturally acute to the foot-falls of Jehovah.²

Although the Law in a cultic sense does not appear in Amos, his book is shot through with a deep understanding of the unalterable nature of moral law. Cornill points this fact up:

In Amos we have, so to speak, the incorporation of the moral law. God is a God of justice; religion the moral relation of man to God—not a comfortable pillow, but an ethical exaction. Israel had faith in its God, He would not leave His people in the lurch, but would assist them and rescue them from all calamity. This singular relation of Israel to its God, Amos acknowledges; "You only have I known of all the families of the earth." But what is his conclusion? "Therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities."³

It is highly characteristic of the grim mind of Amos that all his illustrations of the great law of cause and effect are stern. He appears to be saying, "Law reigns, and law is a stern thing; the man or the nation that fails to recognize this is living in a fool's paradise."⁴ His message could hardly by the largest charity be described as a gospel of

1. Hamilton, SFG, 79.

2. Davidson, DTP, 283.

3. Cornill, POI, 42.

4. McFadyen, CFJ, 28.

grace. It is a gospel of law--for that too is a gospel; to understand and obey the laws by which Yahweh governs His world is the way of peace; to ignore or defy them is the way to destruction.¹

Amos then becomes the first of the prophets to clearly and fully enunciate the moral law as the highest demand of Yahweh.

We would be prone to think that this revelation was not so startling, that actually this was a very commonplace truth which would have been recognized eventually by all nations. But this is to do injustice to the value of Amos. Cornill again illuminates the value of Amos' teaching:

In Amos it [Israel] breaks for the first time through the bonds of nationality and becomes a universal religion instead of the religion of a single people. In analysing the relationship of God to Israel, or at least in recognising it as morally conditioned, which by the fulfilment of the moral conditions could just as well be discharged by any other people, he gave a philosophical foundation to religion, which rendered it possible that the religion of Israel and the God of Israel should not become implicated in the fall of Israel, but could be developed all the more grandly. The fall of the people of Israel was the victory of God, the triumph of justice and truth over sin and deception. That which had destroyed every other religion could not only strengthen the religion of Israel.²

Once having caught sight of the ethical nature of Israel's God, Amos had only a step to go before extending His reign in moral matters with respect to Israel's neighbors. His book opens with a detailed charge against them; one by one he names their transgressions for which the Lord will visit calamity upon them. In each instance the crime for which they are charged is against human decency, against the right of

1. McFayden, CFJ, 71.

2. Cornill, POI, 45.

life for other nations and individuals. For the first time a prophet dares to speak out now and hold that these evils, once considered the normal actions of nations at war with one another, are actually subject to the wrath of God. They were vicious deeds which, Amos implies, anyone should recognize as wrong.

When Yahweh through Amos threatened to destroy several foreign peoples because they were not up to the moral standards required by him, this must necessarily mean that these peoples were supposed to know the standards in question. Amos has not given his opinion on this point. For him ethics originated in Yahweh, and when Yahweh was the god of the whole world its peoples would as a corollary know the laws and demands. But Amos certainly knew that the peoples mentioned by him had their own gods and did not at all obey Yahweh or worship him. The conclusion is then forced upon us that Amos--consciously or instinctively--may have held some ethical standards as being self-evident and existing independently.¹

In this connection Amos recognizes degrees of responsibility in ratio to knowledge. His accusations of the heathen nations are broad, general, and for extremely violent misdeeds. When the Lord speaks out against them, He does not swear by His holiness, nor yet does He bring them to account for any specific knowledge which has been imparted to them. But when the indictment is brought against Judah--not the main indictment of the book it will be remembered--they are charged in detail with having rejected the law, being led astray by lies of their own invention (2:2-4b). Then when Israel is brought to the bar, explicit and clear is her responsibility proclaimed, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities." (3:2). He then proceeds to enumerate with brutal detail

1. Kapelrud, "God as Destroyer in the Preaching of Amos and The Ancient Near East," JBL, LXXI:1, 37.

the sins for which they are arraigned, sins black and vicious and lurid.

"The passion of Amos' soul is for the establishment of social justice."¹ With these words McFadyen characterizes the message of this fearless prophet. However, it is not the purpose of this study simply to set forth the various sins against which Amos inveighs in order to preach a social aspect of sinning. We are concerned with what these outward sins reveal as to the character which produced them in individuals and the nation; what sin does to the relationship between man and God. To answer these questions social justice and the holiness of God must be equated in some very definite way. To that point we now turn.

In the first place, Amos does not employ the vocabulary of theology to any great extent. He does not go into any great explanation that oppression of the poor, intemperance, and immorality are sins because Yahweh hates them. He assumes that because Yahweh denounces them, they are wrong, and hence come in the category of sin. However, in his introductory oracles beginning, "For three transgressions . . . and for four . . ." (1:3, 6, 9, 11, 13; 2:1, 4, 6), he uses, יָוָדָה, or "rebellion," indicating that all which follows in his bill of particulars is in the nature of rebellion against the implied law of Yahweh. When he announces that Yahweh will punish Israel for her iniquity, he calls it יָיָוָדָה, or "perversity," charging that "They do not know how to do right," (3:10a). Once he refers to sin as יָוָדָה, in connection with transgressions יָוָדָה לְיָוָדָה (5:12). Once, also, he uses the verb transgress יָוָדָה, strangely enough in connection with his satirical

1. McFadyen, CFJ, 57.

call for Israel to "Come to Bethel and transgress," (4:4).¹ On the whole, the infrequent use of such terminology has no relationship to the deep sense of sin which we find in the book. The very essence of Amos' message is the very sinfulness of sin in everyday life, not in the stereotyped and formal language of the sanctuary.

Amos, like the other prophets, had no idea that he was the purveyor of a new or unheard-of religion. When he came to Israel and Judah he presented himself as one speaking truths which the mass of his countrymen had ignored, but not truths of which they were ignorant. If at times they appeared to treat Israel as having sunk below the level even of heathen nations, it was elsewhere plain that they measured the people of Yahweh by a standard which could not have been applied to those who had never known the living God (3:2).²

If, then, Israel can make no plea of ignorance of the moral law, what is her defense against the prophetic word? At once they meet his charges with a cry of privilege: they do not deny that Yahweh brought them out of Egypt (3:1); they acknowledge that He raised up some of their sons as prophets (2:11); they do not question that their land has suffered some devastation from famine, pestilence, and war (4:6, 10). But--so the inference may be drawn--they see no association between these things and the moral condition of the nation now. They were faithful in their religious observances at the sanctuaries, they were at present enjoying a measure of prosperity which they could with reason

1. See Young's Analytical Concordance.

2. Smith, TPOI, 108.

attribute to Yahweh's favor, so why listen to the words of a rustic from the wilderness? They accepted the covenant as a fact, their election as a final and irrevocable act on the part of their God. Nothing could disturb it.

Just here is Amos' deepest penetration into their condition: he saw with breath-taking clarity that they had lost all ideas of right and wrong (3:10). But that did not excuse them. They did not know how to do right, but they should have known. The very heathen knew, and they would have been shocked at the confusion and oppression which reigned in Hebrew society.¹ Just as Yahweh punishes the iniquities of other nations on moral grounds, so will He punish those of Israel; and more severe shall be Israel's punishment because of the special relation that exists between her and Yahweh.² The sin of Israel is deeper and blacker than that of other nations because she has sinned not only against conscience, but against the manifest love and the special revelation of Yahweh. Such revolt against Yahweh could not be due to anything other than willful disregard of His demands. It could only have come about as the result of acting against her better knowledge; of turning a deaf ear and stubborn heart to the message of her great preachers. This no man and no nation can do with impunity. The doom is inescapable.

What had produced such a situation in Israel? Simply, they misinterpreted the covenant. They failed to realize that election to privilege is always election to duty and responsibility.³ Sin is traced

1. McFadyen, CFJ, 32.

2. Robinson, RIOT, 68.

3. McFadyen, CFJ, 23.

to a wrong conception of Yahweh, of His providences and His requirements.¹ The disasters outlined in the artistically constructed poem in chapter 4 were commonly viewed by the people as penalties; the prophet regards them as appeals of love. When the people thought of the love of Yahweh, they were sure it was always manifested in prosperity and blessing. Amos denies their supposition. He declares that it is because Yahweh loves them too much to leave them alone that these things have come on them. The ninth and tenth verses of the last chapter contain also a touch of this truth: The fierce discipline to which the nation is about to be subjected is but a sifting, in which not the least kernel shall fall to the ground.

It goes without saying that this re-evaluation of events in the mouth of the prophet was unwelcome because it disturbed the comfortable equanimity of his audience and dealt a blow at their most cherished convictions. The plumb line measurement (7:7-8)--falling always toward absolute central morality--was hateful to their self-made codes of values. The comparison of their lives to a basket of spoiling vegetables (8:2) is odious in the English translation, to say nothing of the pun involved in the Hebrew. The description of their land as "trembling" on account of their deeds (8:8) speaks of the earthquake, no doubt; but, as McFadyen observes, the prophet

. . . essentially means that the land in which such things are done is not a safe place to live in; it is reeling and rocking--or if not now, it will be soon--because it has no solid and stable foundation to rest upon.²

1: Redlich, TFS, 24.

2. McFadyen, MOI, 116.

In general, they are deceived, and self-deceived at that. They are what they are because they want to be so; therefore, God will not let them go on without calling this fact to their attention. Amos, as Yahweh's messenger, is the vocal and explicit voice of Yahweh, a supplement to the former revelations which have come to them. If they have misunderstood the former warnings because they were general, and hence capable of double interpretations, Amos' word is clear and unmistakably in direct contradiction to what they wanted to hear.

What are the classes of sins denounced by Amos? The most glaring one is the love of ease and pleasure (4:1b; 5:11b; 6:4-6) which drives them to oppress the poor and tread down the helpless for gain. Though he calls them ". . . cows of Bashan . . ." (4:1a), he indicates that ". . . they have done what no animal could do, in that they have made pleasure the chief end of life."¹ They have prostituted their very religion to this purpose (2:7b-8; 8:4-6). He does not treat their sin in elaborate detail, but McFadyen sees point in this brevity:

He [Amos] says little about impurity, but that little is lurid enough. In a context which discloses priests tippling within the very sanctuaries themselves, he shows us worshippers indulging in the vilest passions--the one offence, like the other, clothed in the garb of religion.²

The immorality and intemperance which the prophets saw as inevitable concomitants of Israel's sin are first seen clearly with Amos. The nation was living in a period of ease which rested upon a false

1. McFadyen, CFJ, 82.

2. McFadyen, MOI, 110.

security: a conception of their God as bound to them in a quasi-human relationship. They were in grave danger of falling into the polytheistic attitude in which the god of a nation serves only to reflect within himself the grossest aspects of human nature, in order that humanity might be excused for reveling in gross indulgence. From Amos through Jeremiah this danger is constantly present in the thought of the prophets; hence they are jealous that the Oneness of Yahweh shall be proclaimed and understood, and that the uniqueness of Israel's relationship with the One God shall be moved from a mechanical level to a spiritual plane. It was only when the One God of all the earth became to Israel a God of moral law that a voice could be raised to demand temperance and morality in His name. Amos saw this; then he proceeded to explain it. First, he laid the foundation for universal morality, then from it he drew his detailed charges against Israel, citing their actions as violations of his previously-stated law. One by one he strikes out fiercely at every class, recurring again and again to the theme of intemperance among the clergy, politicians, and the women. With scorn and threat he lashes at each in turn. One of the most revolting pictures in the prophecy is the sanctuary scene in 2:7-8, ". . . which reveals in all its unbelievable nakedness, the depravity of the men charged with the religious fortunes of the people, and the unspeakably vile uses to which the country churches were put . . ." ¹

The effect of these practices at the sanctuaries was more than mere individual acts of unbridled animal passion. They served to

1. McFadyen, MOI, 108.

increase the very evil from which they sprang, for they too acted in perverting justice for the oppressed and powerless groups of Hebrew society. With W. R. Smith we note:

In order . . . fully to appreciate the corrupting influence of these degraded holy places and their ministers, we must remember that in the ancient constitution of Israel the sanctuary and the priesthood had another function even more important than that connected with feasts and joyous sacrifices. Since the days of Moses it had been the law of Israel that causes too hard for the ordinary judges, who decided by custom and precedent, must be brought before God for decision. . . . These days, however, were past. Under the kingship the judicial functions of the priests were necessarily brought into connection with the office of the sovereign. . . . The priests became, in a sense, officers of the Court, and the chief priest of a royal sanctuary, such as Amaziah at Bethel (Amos 7:10-13), was one of the great officials of state. . . . Thus the priesthood was naturally associated in feelings and interests with the corrupt tyrannical aristocracy, and was as notorious as the lords temporal for neglect of law and justice.¹

A third aspect of civilization which Amos indicts is dishonesty. This almost goes without saying. A civilization whose temper is materialistic can hardly be other than dishonest.

Wherever men care more for the things that can be tasted and counted, handled and weighed, than for the things of the spirit, sooner or later they will learn to be unscrupulous in securing them. If money and the things that it can buy are put first, honour will be put second.²

So observes McFadyen, with keen insight into the nature of humanity, and of Israel in particular.

Amos charges them also with spiritual indifference. They are not "grieved over the ruin of Joseph!" (6:6b). Their worship is senseless

1. Smith, TPOI, 100-1.

2. McFadyen, MOI, 112.

and selfish; therefore they shall be the first to go into exile (6:5,7a). Their physical indulgence has made them dull of heart so that they can disregard the basic ideals of righteousness which they should have known as His true requirements. Their complacency, born of a stupid confidence in their national position (6:1a), has led them to disregard also their impending doom at the hands of their enemies. Worse yet, in their blinded condition they do not perceive that their very form of worship nauseates Yahweh (5:5, 21-23), for it in no way fulfills the conditions which He has laid down for continuation of their agreement (5:25-26). And, in the end, their long continued insensitivity to the word of Yahweh will bring the inevitable silencing of His voice in their midst. The great tragedy of all their tragedies will not be the famine of bread nor the thirst for water, but the famine and thirst for the word of the Lord which has now been withdrawn from them. They who thought and talked in materialistic terms would awake to the horror of their plight when His word no longer came to them; they would recognize that this was punishment surpassing any physical deprivation they must undergo. In frenzy they would seek the word of the Lord then, but their searching will be in vain. The description of this scene by the prophet himself is unsurpassed:

"Behold, the days are coming,"
 says the Lord God,
 "when I will send a famine on
 the land;
 not a famine of bread, nor a thirst
 for water,
 but of hearing the words of the Lord.
 They shall wander from sea to sea,
 and from north to east;
 they shall run to and fro, to seek
 the word of the Lord,
 but they shall not find it."

(8:11-12)

Lastly, Amos clearly depicts the progressive nature of sin. In this he parallels Jeremiah quite closely. Once the judgment of Yahweh could have been averted by the prayer of an intercessor (7:1-9), but no longer. Again and again Yahweh Himself had striven with them to bring them back to their spiritual senses (chapter 4), but they would not return unto Him. What once was a simple desire for enjoyment of the sinful pleasures of their society has now crystallized into a hatred of those who would seek to interfere with their pursuit of these pleasures (5:10). Now the only kind of religion which they will tolerate is one which does not disturb their way of life (7:10-13). Consequently, the true prophet, of necessity, cries out in bitterest invective against that system of religion which has become the instrument of man's self-devised rules for meeting the religious obligation (4:4-5). Sin has not only destroyed man's spiritual sensitivity, it has spawned within him a personal arrogance which has prompted him to formulate his own rules for religion (5:25-26). Now they have gone too far; now their day of doom has struck; the voice of Yahweh speaks through the prophet: "Prepare to meet your God, O Israel" (4:12b). And lest by some fallacious exegesis this meeting should be interpreted as a day of Israel's victory, Amos warns that it will be a day of darkness, not light, of destruction and not salvation. The scope of Yahweh's mercy has been exhausted. Judgment is at hand (5:18-20).

In considering Amos (as we intend to consider all the prophets) from the standpoint of sin as offense against God, with reference to the individual, the community, the results, and the restoration from it, we have seen that a basis was laid in the opening chapters whereby all wrong

conduct--especially of a social nature--was related directly to Yahweh. Without such an understanding, moral evil does not have a religious connotation and hence is not sin. Attention has been called to those who have objected to Amos' program on the ground that he advocates mere morality, to which McFadyen answers:

Well, even mere morality, if there be such a thing, is not to be despised. A nation which "hated the evil and loved the good" (v.15) which had delivered itself from the things which cripple and curse it, would be a wholesomer place to live in than one which is still in bondage to these things. But no more than any other Biblical writer does Amos plead for a merely moral solution of the problem. In the chapter of disasters . . . [chapter 1] each description is closed with the sorrowful refrain: "Yet ye did not return unto ME."¹

This pioneer is pointing out to Israel that her wrong conduct stems from a wrong understanding of her God. The motto of the prophet is "Back to God," confess and turn from the sins that are grieving His spirit and ruining the land.²

If Amos attacks the worship of idols at all, it is not in any sustained drive. The only reference on such a matter is in connection with his denunciation of sacrifice as not stemming from the wilderness experience (5:25-26). The RSV translates this passage as follows:

Did you bring to me sacrifices and offerings the forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel? You shall take Sakkuth your king, and Kaiwan your star-god, your images, which you made for yourselves . . .

The conclusion stated in the following verse connects this statement to

1. McFadyen, MOI, 124.

2. McFadyen, MOI, 124.

the exile with causative language: "therefore I will take you into exile beyond Damascus, says the Lord whose name is the God of Hosts." This makes it appear logical to suppose that whatever form of worship Yahweh had given them in the days of Moses they had so corrupted it by now that He could cite it as one of the transgressions for which they must suffer the punitive and purging effect of the exile. But Amos too well knew that the destruction of images would not destroy the inwardness of Israel's sin. As Dr. Pfeiffer says,

Amos and Hosea upbraided Israel for degrading practices in connection with the cult, for superstitious trust in the opus operatum, for social villany and political chaos, but they were too keen observers of human behavior to fancy that imageless worship would work like a charm or even improve conditions at all. There is no reason for assuming that they inveighed against the golden bulls of Dan and Bethel.¹

Two other passages make reference to circumstances which might possibly be considered idolatrous worship (2:4; 5:5) where reference is made (1) to Judah's failure to keep the law of the Lord, and (2) to the futile worship at Bethel and Gilgal. Granting the authenticity of these passages--which Dr. Pfeiffer denies--they would not be sufficient to mark Amos as a decrrier of idols. One would almost be safe in saying that Amos was too much concerned with correcting the social evils which a corrupt cult had saddled on the nation to take note of a cultic deviation. If we were forced to answer the question whether Amos wanted to purify the cult along Deuteronomic lines or wanted to forget the whole corrupt business, our answer would be the latter proposition.

1. Pfeiffer, "The Polemic Against Idolatry in the Old Testament," Reprint from JBL, XLIII, Parts III-IV, 1924, 232.

That sin is a violation of Yahweh's holiness is stated simply in 4:2, but the term is not defined. The context of the entire book gives meaning to the term, rather than the term giving definition to the book. The holiness of God, which was interpreted in different ways by different writers at different times, found its first strong expression in ethical terms with Amos. From this time on, ethical holiness became the prophetic mark of Yahweh's divine character and nature.¹ Sin, being a profanation of Yahweh's character, was hence a matter of ethics, regardless of what else it might be.

In respect to Amos' treatment of sin in the individual and the community, it cannot be denied that he suffered from the limitation which characterized the writings of earlier prophets, wherein sin and forgiveness are both national. Redlich explains this limitation:

It is quite possible that this limitation was due to the influence of the covenant relation between God and Israel as a nation. For if the individual was lost in the community and had no recognised and permanent place as a religious unit, there was no possibility of ethical and spiritual progress.²

The same author continues in another place:

Profound thoughts of sin and forgiveness were not possible when the prophets dealt with Israel as a national unit. It was with the destruction of the kingdom that real progress began.³

I can concur with the first quotation above that Amos did find

1. Ringgren, PCH, 29.

2. Redlich, TFS, 24.

3. Redlich, TFS, 25.

himself bound to the nationalistic conception which would be more worthy of a priest than a prophet, but it is not so easy to accept the second proposition. Amos does accept the doctrine of collective responsibility and retribution as coming on the whole society collectively seen (9:1 ff) and his charges are against broad segments of the nation, not individuals, except in the case of Amaziah and Jeroboam (7:11, 17). He does declare that Israel's sins have brought national ruin (6:8); that they might have changed the course of events, but they were not willing, preferring to keep their sins and thus call the doom upon themselves (5:14; 4:6-12).¹ However, on the basis of these facts it is not necessary to say that Amos did not recognize the individual character of morality. His whole call to righteousness and justice appears to be directed toward the spiritual senses of his hearers. He does not castigate the whole of society, but continually singles out those who oppress the poor, who crush the needy, who lie on beds of ivory, who swallow up the needy, who make the poor of the land to fail. "The lesson which Amos proclaimed with such elemental power is that social injustice is the way to national ruin."² But the root of the social problem ". . . is not defective social arrangement, but sin; and no fundamental improvement can be effected by a change in the environment, but only by a change in the men."³

Here, then, Amos clearly is speaking to individuals. He speaks

1. Kapelrud, "God as Destroyer . . .," JBL, LXXI:1, 37.

2. McFadyen, CFJ, 137.

3. McFadyen, CFJ, 60.

in terms of "love" and "hate", of "justice" and "righteousness", of "pride" and "deceit". These are not the attributes of a nation but the attributes of human beings, individualized, and it may be that Amos has a better picture of individual and social responsibility than we ascribe to him from our backward looking interpretation of his work. He probably accepts the idea of collective responsibility because he is of the opinion that sin has permeated the whole of society so deeply that even repentance cannot avert the destruction of a society which continues to harbor the perpetrators of these evils he describes.¹ The preponderance of evil in the society of his day, as opposed to good, evidencing the presence of a vast number of corrupt individuals in Israel, weighed the scales of the justice of God to the side of Israel's destruction. As yet only the sin may be individualized, for forgiveness—slight as its appearance is in Amos—is still national. But the repentance which produces this forgiveness is spoken of in terms which only individuals could satisfy. He asks for no revision of the corn law nor for legislation to guarantee lower interest rates. He advocates no national prohibition law to curb the appetites of the "cows of Bashan". Rather, he admonishes his hearers to "Hate evil, and love good, and establish justice . . ." (5:15a); to ". . . let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an everflowing stream" (5:24). These are not considered as reforms which can be legislated by the nation; they are transformations of individual characters within the nation. As the sin of the individual in the moral sense brought condemnation on the nation, so the

1. Kapelrud, "God as Destroyer . . .," JBL, LXXI:1, 35.

forgiveness of that sin for the nation required the repentance of the individual. Admittedly, Amos does not penetrate the depths which Ezekiel reaches in his enunciation of the doctrine of personal responsibility, but his thinking on this line is profound and constructive. Without the great advance which Amos made toward interpreting sin in clear-cut moral terms, Ezekiel's work would have lacked firm foundation.

The results of sin, as viewed by Amos, are seen in the light of national disaster. In the two instances where he pronounces punishment upon individuals, i.e., Jeroboam (7:11) and Amaziah (7:17), their chastisement is linked with the exile of the nation. In the description he gives of these disasters, he sets the familiar pattern of the prophetic movement, where sin culminates in decimation, famine and exile. It is Yahweh who visits these calamities on the land (9:4). Sin brings with it an irrevocable judgment. As sins increase, Yahweh progressively releases the reins of the forces seeking to devour the rebellious people until finally the staggering sum of their iniquity removes all His restraining grace. For their many sins, unrepented of and unforsaken, a day of retribution is coming, and Yahweh declares, "I will not turn it back."¹ He had warned them repeatedly of this fact, but they would not heed (4:6-12). His prophet now has brought them many things from His word, the sum of his prophecy bursting forth in a death-wail over the house of Israel:

Fallen, no more to rise,
 is the virgin Israel;
 forsaken on her land,
 with none to raise her up.
 (5:2)

1. McFadyen's translation of 1:3a,6a,9a,11a,13a; 2:1a,4a,6a; CFJ, 137ff.

So certain is her doom that the lament is not out of place, even if it is slightly premature. Everything suggests the impending destruction, even the innocent little basket of summer fruit.

It, too, like the man testing the wall with the plumb, is sadly eloquent of the fate of Israel, a vivid symbol of the end. It tells him that the summer is past and the autumn is come, and the year will soon be over. So Israel's autumn, too, has come; she is older and nearer the end than she knows. The fruit is ripe; so is Israel--ripe for destruction.¹

Amos, like the Psalmist, conceived of Yahweh as the omnipresent God, but that thought--which to the Psalmist was such a source of comfort and joy--becomes, when interpreted by the righteous imagination of Amos, almost more than we can bear. Again McFadyen expresses it extremely well;

The gracious hand that leads and holds the Psalmist, becomes the terrible hand that seizes the sinner for judgment. It is Amos' grimly magnificent way of saying that for the man or the society that flouts the dictates of conscience, honour, morality, pity, there can be, in the end, nothing but ruin, irretrievable and inescapable.²

This terrible fate which awaits Israel is not the blind working of chance, nor yet is it the outgrowth of sin's self-destructive character. That which is coming is the intentional handiwork of Yahweh, subject to His direction and engendered by His anger. When this strange preacher approached unto Israel to reprove their iniquities against their God, he made clear the basis of justice on which their punishment rests; "You only have I known of all the families of the earth . . ."

1. McFadyen, CFJ, 110.

2. McFadyen, CFJ, 129.

(3:2a); then like a bolt from the blue he puts into Yahweh's mouth a terrible "therefore"—". . . therefore I will punish you . . ." (3:2b). As their previous prosperity was due to Yahweh's care for His chosen people, so their future devastation would be due to His displeasure with them. As His grace and love had been particularly for Israel, so His wrath should be vented especially upon their sin.

Amos holds little hope for his own generation with respect to restoration from the result of their sin. Twice he calls upon them in the name of Yahweh to "Seek me and live" (5:14b, 6a); again he urges them to "Seek good, and not evil. . . . Hate evil, and love good . . ." (5:14a, 15a); but the only hope he holds out to them if they obey is that ". . . it may be that the Lord, the God of hosts, will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph" (5:15b). The description of this pitiful remnant leaves nothing over which to rejoice, for

Thus says the Lord: "As the shepherd rescues from the mouth of the lion two legs, or a piece of an ear, so shall the people of Israel who dwell in Samaria be rescued . . . (3:12a).

It is equally clear that whatever restoration there is to be will be on moral grounds alone. When they "seek good, and not evil," then, "so"—on moral terms and on no other—"shall the Lord, the God of hosts, be with you, as you have said" (5:14).¹ The prophet does not command them to avoid evil nor yet to do good. Their actions with respect to these two opposites must stem from the inner character of the individual, who avoids evil because he hates it and who does good

1. McFadyen, MOI, 123.

because he loves it (5:15a). The good again is defined in Amos' crystal clear statement, "Establish justice" (5:15a), or in the immortal words of 5:24, "But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an everflowing stream."

It is no accident that the "establishing of justice" is equated with "seeking the Lord." The prophet had said before, "Seek the Lord and live," (5:6); then "Seek good, and not evil, that you may live," (5:14a); now he says, "Establish justice," as evidence of your seeking the good (5:15a). Religion which did not include this virtue was more than useless. The religious exercises of their favorite sanctuaries--where they supposedly sought Yahweh--were repulsive to Him, for there they increased their sins of injustice (4:4). Their worship effected no communion with Yahweh, because their hearts were not right. Amos knew that

. . . no prayer for communion could be genuinely expressed by a sacrifice, if there was no desire to walk in harmony with God's will. . . . This is essentially the message of Amos and of other prophets. "I hate, I despise your feasts, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Yea, though ye offer me your burnt offerings, and meal offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fed beasts. . . . But let judgment roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream." 5:21-24.¹

But there is to be a restoration, according to the last few verses of the prophecy. From 9:8b through 9:15 we find a picture of renewed community which would be worthy of the pen of the anonymous prophet of the exile. In fact, the beauty of these days to come is

1. Rowley, MSOT, 91.

described in such glowing terms that many scholars find it impossible to believe that Amos wrote this section of the book. They are content to let it end with the terrible words, "I will destroy it from the surface of the ground" (9:8a). "If Amos modified that message, then, they tell us, the less Amos he."¹ Our concern, however, is not with the authenticity of the passage, but with the fact that it is included in the present text.

What is this picture of restoration following Israel's purging punishment? The sinners of the people will have been killed by the sword (9:10a); out of the ashes of the cities that had been burned and laid waste will rise nobler cities, inherited by a happy and prosperous people, who will regain their ancient territory, plant gardens and eat the fruit of them, and live ever more in peace and security, undisturbed by any haunting fear of attack; for they will have the Lord's own promise: "I will plant them upon their land, and they shall never again be plucked up out of the land which I have given them" (9:11-15).

There is no denying that this is a picture of material prosperity and blessing which the prophet holds out to the nation. Further, it is only by implication that the promise of this coming day of renewed blessing is connected with moral regeneration of the people, i.e., "the sinners of my people will be destroyed" (9:10a). In every detail the community idea is evident, with no thought given to the state of the individual except in connection with group prosperity. It recognizes no means for restoring the sinner to the covenant; rather it appears to follow the

1. McFadyen, CFJ, 136.

Priestly Code in prescribing the death of the sinner as the means for removing sin from the community. As beautiful as the passage is, it leaves something to be desired from the standpoint of spiritual interpretation of religion, and for the most part, sinks below the high moral level which Amos holds in the greater portion of his writing. If we are tempted to allegorize the passage, we should take care to remember that the prophets themselves give us little license for that privilege. On this McFadyen says:

Surely no one who knows the religion of the prophets could accuse them of being otherworldly, in any depreciatory sense of that term. Otherworldly they were, if you like, in the sense that they were the impacable foes of the existing materialistic order of society . . . and in the sense that they were the unwearied champions of that diviner order, according to which men would do justly and love mercy and walk humbly with their God. . . . But not with the remotest justification could it be said that they were otherworldly in the sense that [they] . . . set their hopes and affections in the life beyond the grave. For this world they cared everything, upon this world they believed that the ideal society would, in God's good time emerge.¹

The restoration from sin, then, as portrayed in Amos, has two features. In chapter 5 life is promised--apparently to his generation in Israel--if they will seek the Lord, and on moral grounds. Yet he hardly seems to think that their repentance will be of sufficient depth or scope to effect a reversal of God's wrath and punishment. In chapter 9:8b ff, the nation which has suffered under the shaking of the Lord's hand will come forth a purified nation, a nation which shall enjoy a full and unprecedented prosperity from the hand of their God. But there is no link between the two chapters. Chapter 9 in no way indicates that

1. McFadyen, CFJ, 116-7.

the moral requirements of Chapter 5 have been met; rather it seems to consider that the effect of the punishment has been simply to destroy those who were sinners, not to regenerate them. We are forced to wait for a later prophet to find the answer to the question, "Can the individual know the forgiveness of sins?" But as later prophets followed the path which Amos blazed, the individual nature of religion became more and more evident to them, until Ezekiel gave a clear and concise answer to the question some two centuries later. Our attention now must be turned to the representative prophets who stand between Amos and Ezekiel.

Hosea - unfailing love. What did this great prophet have to say about sin, he whose personal tragedy became the instrument of his message from Yahweh? What did he have to add to the teaching of Amos, whose strong denunciation of Israel's sin had left yet the problem of how an outraged God could be reconciled to sinful man? The moral realism of Amos had forced him to stop short before he reached the understanding of a Hosea that love was the ultimate element in religion--love which could supersede law and redeem unregenerate man. As G. A. Smith has diagnosed the problem which Amos left to future prophets:

We perceive then, the problem which Amos left to prophecy. It was not to discover Love in the Deity whom he had so absolutely identified with Law. The Love of God needed no discovery among a people with the Deliverance, the Exodus, the Wilderness and the Gift of the Land in their memories. But the problem was to prove in God so great and new a mercy as was capable of matching that Law, which the abuse of His long-suffering gentleness now only the more fully justified. There was needed a prophet with as keen a conscience of Law as Amos himself, to affirm that Love was greater still; to admit that Israel were doomed, and yet proclaim that their redemption was possible by processes as reasonable and as ethical as those by which

the doom had been rendered inevitable. The prophet of Conscience had to be followed by the prophet of Repentance.¹

The story of Gomer and Hosea is one of the most familiar of all Old Testament love stories. And well it should be: from it has sprung the most sublime insight into the real nature of Yahweh's love for Israel, and through it, His love for mankind as a whole. We hardly need recount here the circumstances which prompted the marriage of the prophet to a wife who turned to adultery first, then to outright harlotry disgracing herself and the husband whose love she spurned for the lowest of vices. Through a progressive revelation of her infidelity, the prophet labors in tears to prevent the culmination of her sin when she shall sell her very body into the slavery of her filthy occupation. Through insight born of hindsight, he sees that her conduct is the result of her impure tendencies toward harlotry which were present when he took her as his bride (1:2).² Yet his love and tears were powerless to effect her rehabilitation until she had gone the limits of her transgression. As Hosea watched her deterioration, as he chose for her children names which indicated that the sanctity of their marital union had been broken through her wantonness, he recognized that love persisted in his own heart when there could no longer be question that justice had been violated. This was his magnificent contribution to the religion of Israel. It was his personal experience of moral evil in Gomer, his wife, that gave him, at the cost of so much suffering, such insight into the

1. Smith, TBOT, 238.

2. Smith, TBOT, 248.

nature and activity of sin, and its relationship to God.

He saw that sin spoiled life, both in its quality and its relations. By his intimate knowledge of what Gomer's infidelity meant to himself, he entered into a new sympathy with the God who is made to suffer through the sin of man.¹

We should not wonder that God saw fit to make use of this experience of the prophet to portray this knowledge of sin and its hatefulness. There are some of the ugliest facts of human life about this story--facts so realistic as to appear offensive to fastidious readers. But it is just here that its real value comes out, for it shocks us with the realism of sin and what it does. But one of the glories of the Bible is that it ". . . never shuns realism when it would expose the hatefulness of sin or magnify the power of God's love to redeem."² Just as Hosea saw what sin meant when he looked on Gomer corrupted by its vice and entangled in its toils, so he imagined further what the sin of Israel must mean to God, and his faith in God's final victory over the evil spirit of Israel was the reflection of his own assurance that his love would conquer the spirit of infidelity in Gomer and win her back to a new betrothal, holy and righteous.³

Something of what that experience meant to him may be gathered from the fact that throughout his book the words he perpetually uses for wickedness in general are harlotry and whoredom and adultery. This fact is all the more significant when one considers that none of his three

1. Robinson, CH, 30.

2. Smith, TBOT, 243.

3. Robinson, CH, 31.

contemporaries do this. Hamilton points this out in a vivid paragraph:

. . . where Amos repeats over and over the word transgressions, and Micah denounces especially lying and deceitfulness, and Isaiah is hottest against greed and arrogance, Hosea sees his country as one that has "gone a whoring from their God," Israel "has played the harlot," "gone after her lovers and forgot me, saith the Lord." The words recur perpetually as nowhere else in the Bible. Evil had taken that shape in Hosea's mind. "I have seen a horrible thing, the whoredom of Israel."¹

Hosea is the first to make a profoundly ethical application of the figure of marriage to the relation between God and man. He was more naturally led to do this by certain religious beliefs which were current among the Semitic peoples, wherein the union of a god with his land or people is expressed by the figure of marriage. The conception of the god as physically married to the land and as producing its fruits seems part of the idea underlying the fertility cults and their resulting sexual indulgences in the name of religion. But Hosea took the figure, which in the fertility cults tended to become more gross in their sensual and debasing practices, and by inspiration applied to Israel's worship the moral side of the sex relation, the higher principles which lead to its sublimation in human experience and make of human love the most divine of all man's experiences. By daring to snatch this exquisite figure from the hands of the heathen, Hosea not only elevated the idea of God's love to the great line of thought which culminates in the gospel of the New Testament, but he also elevated the idea of marriage far above any mere physical union of the sexes for the gratification of physical appetite. As Smith summarizes:

1. Hamilton, SFG, 114-5.

By inspiration, whose ethical character is conspicuous, Hosea breaks the physical connection altogether. Yahweh's Bride is not the Land, but the People, and His marriage with her is conceived as a moral relation. [The physical fruits of the land] are represented only as the signs and ornaments of the marriage, love-gifts from the husband to the wife. (2:8). The marriage itself is purely moral: "I will betroth her to me in righteousness and justice, in leal love and tender mercies." From her in return are demanded faithfulness and growing knowledge of her Lord.¹

To the extent to which Hosea's relationship with Gomer mirrors Yahweh's relationship with Israel, Gomer becomes the symbol of Israel.

But Robinson observes that:

Gomer is more than what we mean by a symbol; she is for the time being the epitome of Israel. In her centers and culminates (for the prophet) the physical sexuality and the spiritual infidelity of Israel; in her, if his appeal of love be not in vain, will be found the first fruits of the new harvest, the promise and potency of a genuine repentance. The conversion of Gomer will be an actual event, part of, and instrumental to, the conversion of Israel.²

Unlike Amos, Hosea makes rather extensive use of terms for sin whereby he identifies the nature of the whoredom of Israel. He does not use these terms, however, in connection with Gomer's sin against him. What in her is referred to as "lewdness," (2:10), and "harlotry," (1:2), is called in Israel "sin," "to err," in some form of ח'גן, ten times; "iniquity," ג'י'ו, ten times; "to transgress, pass over, or rebel," ג'ג'ו four times; "wickedness," in a form of ג'ג', six times; "iniquity as vanity," ג'ג'ח', twice; "iniquity as perverseness," ג'ג'ג'ו, once; and "iniquity as perversity," ג'ג'ז'ו, once.³ But, as with

1. Smith, TBOT, 255.

2. Robinson, CH, 61.

3. See Young's Analytical Concordance.

Amos, there is not sufficient differentiation in usage to establish a theological viewpoint of the prophet. All of these are considered as evidences of the broken covenant (2:18, 6:7, 8:1), which, for all the prophets and priests, is the basis of Yahweh's right to the loyalty of Israel.

Hosea introduces into the covenantal idea a new and most important word, חסד, which has been rendered so often "loving kindness." It is a word difficult to translate, or even to interpret. It carries with it a meaning of "leal loyalty," "steadfastness."¹ It is not mere sentimentality which pities its object; it is also faithful watchfulness which disciplines if necessary. Robinson takes note of the difficulty involved in explaining it thus:

That great word "hesed" is very difficult to render, for it expresses the moral bondage of love, the loving discharge of an admitted obligation, the voluntary acceptance of a responsibility. It is significant that Amos does not use the term at all, whilst it occurs six times in Hosea. Its finest expression is in ch. 11:8, 9 "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim. . . . My compassions are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim." . . . That is the fundamental fact in the relation of God to Israel; He cannot let her go because He is what He is. He took the initiative with her, long ago, from the land of Egypt (ch. 13:4); now, in her need, he takes a new initiative, like the old (2:14-23).²

With the use of חסד as the fulfillment of the covenant, Hosea penetrates to the spirit of love which alone can fulfill the bond of the letter. This is not a gospel of law, as in Amos, but of love. Not power, but love is the distinguishing characteristic of his God.

1. Smith, TBOT, 255.

2. Robinson, CH, 50. (חסד does not appear in 11:8-9, but these verses interpret its spirit.)

"He declared, the first man in the world to declare it, that love and not fear was the force that could draw men away from evil to good."¹ But the recognition that love, as opposed to power, was the prime attribute of God brought also another tremendous implication which Hosea recognized. He perceived that a loving God could not exercise omnipotence. Love could not compel; it must woo. To Hosea, this was something greater than the most transcendent power. He saw God looking at mankind as a mother at a little stumbling child learning to walk, or as a man at his tired, hungry ox after the long day's plowing, or as an anguished father at a wayward son. He who sinned, according to Hosea, did not sin simply against an inanimate law; he sinned against warm and tender love, against the אֱהָבָה of Yahweh, which formed the spiritual kernel of the covenant. Their sporadic faithfulness to their side of this relationship had been such that the prophet cries to them, "Your love אֱהָבָה, is like a morning cloud, like the dew that goes early away" (6:4b). They have been disloyal as a faithless wife is disloyal; therefore their sin is as her sin--harlotry.

Just as harlotry does not stem from mere outward practice, but from an inner spirit, so sin is not alone a series of isolated acts, but a spirit of infidelity. We agree with Robinson that this idea was something new in the history of religion.

This conception of sin as essentially consisting in an inner spirit which manifests itself in outer acts was something new in the history of religion, however familiar and obvious it has become to us. There is nothing in Amos, the immediate predecessor of Hosea, which goes as deep as this. The prophets generally gave a new moral

1. Hamilton, SFG, 111.

content to sin, in place of the older idea of a broken taboo, and infringement of a non-moral "holiness". But it was Hosea who penetrated to the genuinely religious aspect of sin, as consisting in an alienated spirit.¹

Hosea's phrase to describe the inner source of the externally visible alienation from God is "the spirit of whoredom," which he uses twice (4:12, 5:4). It is obviously drawn from his own experience of Gomer's conduct, and denotes the actual impulse to sexual immorality which was at the root of her infidelity. In its figurative transference to Israel, it denotes the inner spirit which found outer expression in all the acts which Hosea has been seen to condemn. In the two passages where it is used, it is evident from the context he is employing it to point up their outward sins as external evidence of inward alienation. To quote from Robinson again:

In 4:12 he says that the spirit of whoredom has caused the people to wander away from the true God, and he illustrates this by reference to divination by means of the sacred tree or the sacred staff, and to the sacrifice and incense offering upon the high places, with which sacred prostitution was connected, and also to the idolatry to which Ephraim was wedded (4:17). All this was done in the name of Yahweh, but the prophet contends that it springs from a false conception of His nature and requirements; it is the lower passions of men which produce this actual immorality and this religious infidelity. In the second context (5:4), the phrase is in parallelism with the words "they know not Yahweh." . . . To know Yahweh is to be just and loving; not to know him is to be the opposite, and this injustice and disloyalty spring from within.²

Hosea expounds his theology from God's point of view and not from man's. Israel had forgotten the real character of their covenant

1. Robinson, CH, 39-40.

2. Robinson, CH, 39.

with Yahweh, and it could only be re-established when He brought them back to a realization of its provisions and requirements. His judgments upon His people was not alone on their social and political sins, but more bitterly upon their failure to recognize and fulfill their relation with Him.¹ Their ignorance of Yahweh's real character had led them into three things, back of which was one sin: an unfaithfulness which showed itself in their desertion of the true worship of God, and in a lack of trust which made them turn to earthly kings instead of to the Heavenly King. These three things were:

1. A corrupted worship of Yahweh, which copied the gross immoralities of Canaanitish heathenism.
2. A state of political anarchy, which made them turn to one usurping king after another.
3. A weak and hesitating foreign policy, which made them put their faith in some great alliance, without being able to agree whether it should be with Assyria or Egypt.²

It is generally agreed that the idol worship against which Hosea brings his denunciation is not pure idolatry as such, but he inveighs against the use of figures associated with Yahweh worship, especially the calves at Dan and Bethel. His quarrel with belief in local Baals and in the debasing worship of them is not so much because they are impossible rivals of the true God as because He is a spiritual God and if His worship is mixed up with the unspiritual worship of other cults, it is an

1. Chamberlain, MTBL, 178.

2. Crafer, BH, 10-11.

outrage on His love, in gross ignorance of His true character.¹ It is this type of idol worship to which Ephraim is joined (4:17), enjoying its lustful exercise, rather than attributing power to its gods. Hosea's emphasis, much more than that of Amos, falls on the actual immorality of the cult and of its priests, and he seems to be the first to denounce the idolatry which formed part of the worship of Yahweh.²

Oddly enough, Hosea's chief charge against the people is one of stupidity. High and low they are a "people without intelligence," as Smith translates לֹא יָדְעוּ אֵל of 4:14b.³ Sin is lack of knowledge, a fatal ignorance of God Himself. Yahweh brings His controversy to Israel because there is "no knowledge of God in the land" (4:1b); because "they do not know the Lord" (5:4b).

The prophet deals explicitly with this ignorance in the fourth chapter. The causes of it are two: the people's own vice and the negligence of their priests. Wine has taken away their understanding (4:11), and their religious vices have dulled their sense of morality (4:12-14). Yet Hosea sees that the fault does not lie with the people alone. Their teachers are to blame, priest and prophet alike, for both stumble and flounder, and it is true that a people shall be like its priests (4:9). God has been faithful to give them knowledge of Himself through revelation to Jacob (12:4-6), and through the prophets (12:10). It is not an ignorance of the facts of their history, nor want of devotion to the memory of these with which Hosea charges his people, for they are a

1. Crafer, BH, 11.

2. Robinson, CH, 36.

3. Smith, TBOT, 351, n. 2.

people who crowd the sacred scenes of the past--at Bethel and at Gilgal and at Beersheba. It is an ignorance of the character which shines through the facts which he holds against them. Furthermore, they cannot claim that they are ignorant through never having had knowledge, for Yahweh recalls that once they had known Him and trusted Him, "but when they had fed to the full, they were filled, and their heart was lifted up; therefore they forgot me" (13:6).¹

In contrast to this ignorance which has spread in Israel, embodying in itself a false knowledge of the character of Yahweh, Hosea describes the essential temper and contents of a true understanding of God. To quote Smith on this:

Using the word knowledge in the passive sense characteristic of his language, as not so much the acquisition as the impression of facts, an impression which masters not only a man's thoughts but his heart and will, Hosea describes the knowledge of God as feeling, character, and conscience. He makes it parallel to loyalty, repentance, love, and service. He emphasizes that it comes from God Himself.²

It is in this way that Israel once had known her God. Having now lost this sense of His nature, all her ways, political, economic, religious, had become full of sin. For people who had once known the right way and to whom now the prophet brought a warning to return at once to it, nothing but the most terrible stupidity would keep them from turning.

In the over-all teaching of Hosea, it is strange to find that he has no message for the individual soul; but even more so than Amos he seems to deal with Israel throughout as a solid whole. Crafer makes

1. Smith, TBOT, 351 ff.

2. Smith, TBOT, 353.

note of this fact as follows:

Even when classes in the community came within his view, priests and prophets, kings and princes, there is no separate dealing. The religious unit is the community, which is personified throughout, in a solidarity alike of guilt, of punishment, and of subsequent restoration as the result of repentance.¹

Robinson also observes the personal and ethical aspect of the treatment Hosea gives to the question of sin as harlotry, and makes the following comment:

To us it seems obvious that such a conception of sin individualizes it, and this, in fact, was seen by Jeremiah. It cannot be claimed that Hosea sees the full consequence of his own inner emphasis on the individual life. It is of the nation Israel, as a whole, that he is thinking, according to the sense of corporate personality which characterizes the thought of Israel. True, the deeds which he condemns are committed by individual persons, as his own experience of Gomer's conduct has amply shown. But it is the social mass of evil, the common stock to which each man contributes, that is primarily in his mind, and it is the common spirit, the spirit that prompts the whole people to such evil, which he discerns. We cannot speak of more than an implicit individualism in his phrase.²

We have discussed this same hint of individualism in Amos,³ and were brought to the same conclusion with respect to him. What these early prophets did was to sow the seed of an idea which would come to fruitage in Jeremiah and Ezekiel. But before leaving that subject, we should note with G. A. Smith the beauty of one thought in connection with Gomer's restoration. Her redemption was as real as ever Israel's would be. It is not the mere completion of the parallel between her and

1. Crafer, BH, 13.

2. Robinson, CH, 40.

3. *Supra*,

her people. "It is, as the story says, an impulse of the Divine Love, recognised even then in Israel as seeking the individual."¹ When the prophets came to realize that Yahweh desired morality, and that morality was personal, the way was opened for the religion of Israel to become concerned with the individual person upon whom the moral law acted.

Hosea makes a step in this direction when he assigns degrees of blame and condemnation on certain classes in society. His bitterest invective is directed against the priests, for their own misconduct and for their neglect of duty toward the people. He blames them primarily for the ignorance of the people (4:6), they feed on the sin of the people because they are greedy (4:8), whoredom and adultery among the people is blamed on consecration of such evil things by the ritual (4:14) and the priests use the sanctuary as a base for actual robbery and murder (6:9).

The princes and kings are also singled out for criticism because of their evil schemes and intrigues (7:3, 5, 6a). Though the sceptre has been quickly torn from the hands of kings who sat of late upon Israel's throne, none of them has called upon Yahweh for help (7:7). They too share in the blame for Israel's fate. Kings and princes are powerless to defend Israel against Yahweh's wrath (13:9-10). It is indicated that the leadership of kings has been one of the contributing factors in Israel's apostasy; that Yahweh was angry in giving them kings; that in wrath He will take them away (13:11).

From this we see that the chief targets of Hosea's attack were

1. Smith, TBOT, 266-7.

the main social and religious institutions of his time. They were to him the entrenchments of moral evil, at the same time expressing and reinforcing the "spirit of whoredom" which he recognized as the real root of all the trouble in the national as in the domestic tragedy of his experience. This moral evil, which he saw so clearly, was rooted in social relations, buttressed and defended by vested interests of kings and priests alike, passed on from one generation to another in continuous solidarity.¹

This comment brings us to recognize one of the most striking results of sin, namely, that it will provide means whereby it can protect itself from destruction by righteous men of the congregation. Society is made up of individuals, but in a way that defies explanation society is above the individual. It does possess a character of its own, not always the sum total of the majority of its members; rather, it more frequently reflects the character of a minority who have become leaders of the mass. There is room for debate on the question whether or not a righteous uprising of the mass could expel the evil leaders of any given society, but with reference to Judah and Israel we find the prophets always calling upon the leaders to turn again to Yahweh in the hope that the nation may be spared. They never directed their appeal to the popular mind, apparently feeling that no revolt against idolatry and injustice could succeed unless kings and priests were supporting it. The strangle hold which sin had on the community could only be broken when active leadership was taken to purge the social institutions of it.

1. Robinson, CH, 31.

Another great teaching of this book is that the sin of immorality stems from false worship. In this instance the false worship took the form of idolatrous associations in the cult of Yahweh. It could have been any form of religion which permitted men to gratify the lusts of the flesh while claiming the immunity from punishment which religion offers. Hosea tells them that their intemperance has destroyed their understanding (4:11), now they have turned to superstitious religions (4:12), and hence their homes are wrecked by adultery and harlotry (4:13b). And as a tragic sequence to this fact, they are prodded to a realization that no man sins alone; others are contaminated by his example. The degree of this contamination is set in its most shocking form when the men are reminded that it is vain for them to think that they can be impure and their wives and daughters remain chaste (4:14). The sinner always would permit the relaxation of moral laws only for himself, not for all society. Boldly the prophet quotes Yahweh as saying that since the men have defied morality by sacrificing with temple prostitutes and going in to harlots, He will suspend moral judgment upon their wives and daughters who play the harlot and commit adultery (4:13b-14). There is no double standard of morality here; it is a terrible warning to anyone who loves his home.

Sin has other results which work in the inner man. With Isaiah (6:10) and Jeremiah (13:23) Hosea emphasizes that repeated sin brings atrophy of the will until the sinner cannot find it in himself to turn. The striking figure of old age which is applied to Israel in 7:9, picturing the premature senility of the man who has abused his body, illustrates the point. "Aliens devour his strength, and he knows it not; gray hairs are sprinkled upon him, and he knows it not." The figure of sowing

and reaping (10:12-13) doubtless implies much besides the moral atrophy of the sinner, but it does include that moral deterioration, ". . . the underlying assumption [of which] is that the sequel of disobedience is the growing inability to obey."¹

In a number of places Hosea stresses that inner alienation is not only the source of evil deeds, but is also in increasing degree their consequence. Robinson has a paragraph worth quoting on this in which he borrows illustration from the great poet, Robert Burns. Robinson writes:

Here, for example, is Burns, speaking of sexual sin
 I waive the quantum o' the sin,
 The hazard of concealing;
 But, och! it hardens a' within,
 And petrifies the feeling!

. . . Does Hosea, then say this? Not in so many words, but it is implicit in some of his sayings: "Whoredom and wine and new wine take away the will" (literally, "the heart," "the seat of volition") (ch. 4:11). "Ephraim is wedded to idols, let him alone" (4:17); "Their doings will not suffer them to turn unto their God" (5:4), "They became abominable like that which they loved" (9:10). Further, we may take his use of the figure of sowing and reaping as indicating the closeness of connection between the sin and its penalty.²

The moral strength of the nation had been sapped by sin so that its destiny could not be fulfilled, just as disease saps the strength of a pregnant woman and prevents childbirth (13:12-13).

The most distressing of all results of sin is the separation from God which is its inevitable result. All the punishments which are to come upon Israel and Judah pale beside the threat of Yahweh's leaving them. "I will return again to my place, until they acknowledge their

1. Robinson, CH, 44.

2. Robinson, CH, 41.

guilt and seek my face, and in their distress they seek me . . ." (5:15). One of the terrors of the exile will be the absence of all their rites by which they were accustomed to serve their God in the house of the Lord (9:3-4). If it were the purpose of this paper to treat the subject matter in homiletic style, great stress would be laid on this point as the essence of the results and punishment of sin. For an individual or a nation that has known God as had Israel--in loving guidance and gentle care--nothing could be worse than the complete withdrawal of the consciousness of His presence. Even the promises of His attention to them in the acts of punishment were cheering beside the prospect of His complete withdrawal.

It is with reference to God, too, that we find Hosea stressing the terrible nature of sin. God not only hates sin, it causes Him suffering of intense degree. No more moving words are found in the Old Testament than those of chapter 11:8-9;

How can I give you up, O Ephraim!
 How can I hand you over, O Israel!
 How can I make you like Admah!
 How can I treat you like Zeboiim!
 My heart recoils within me,
 My compassion grows warm and tender.
 I will not execute my fierce anger,
 I will not again destroy Ephraim;
 For I am God and not man,
 the Holy One in your midst,
 and I will not come to destroy.

Here the prophet reveals the great suffering heart of God, yearning in redeeming grief for His people to return, longing for them to forsake the sin which separates Him and them. Justice would have demanded that He destroy them; mercy would not permit it. Though He suffered, yet He

saved. Sin which brings such suffering to the heart of God is revealed at its blackest against the background of His grace which still seeks to redeem. Just as Gomer's infidelity takes on a new and darker color against the fidelity of Hosea's love, so sin is revealed as all the more vile against the Love it thwarts.

One other very important point remains to be noted before we move on from the subject of sin against love: Love can redeem; it cannot restore. Hosea with all his love could not make Gomer a pure woman again. He could forgive her; she could again become his wife and live in faithful bonds of marriage with him; but always there was the fact of her sin which could not be erased. His love could win her back, but he could not make it as though she had never gone away. So it was with Israel; the former glory of her relationship with Yahweh had been forever marked with Israel's failure to fulfill the covenant. Any future relationship would have to take that fact into consideration.

There is no lack of judgment in Hosea. Sin bears the brand of God's anger upon it and He has promised to "punish them for their ways, and requite them for their deeds" (4:9b). Yet Hosea does begin to see that punishment is not the end of all of Yahweh's dealings with His people. His teaching on the restoration has not yet reached that wonderful insight whereby Second Isaiah laid bare to us the internal process going on within Israel, the atonement of her sin and her repentance accomplished through her suffering, for like other prophets, he does not bridge over the chasm between Israel's dissolution and her restoration.¹ But

1. Davidson, OTP, 369.

Hosea hints at the hope which others were to make so explicit, that as God chastises Israel by dispersing her in His anger, so He gathers her together again in His returning mercy.

The basis of restoration is not merit, but mercy. The God whose love was foreshadowed in Hosea's treatment of Gomer could not look upon His beloved Israel with unconcern, no matter how deep her sin. On the very brink of her doom such a God is compelled from His inner nature to cry out in anguish, "I will not execute my fierce anger, I will not again destroy Ephraim; for I am God and not man . . ." (11:9a). It is this love of God that brings the one divine possibility of Israel's restoration. Hosea's hope at this point

. . . is not like that of most of the prophets, based on catastrophic and eschatological expectations. He believes, rather, that a patient and enduring love, eloquent through its suffering, will at last avail to penetrate to the spirit within and transform its alienation.¹

We should miss the real meaning of Hosea's prophecy if we made it only a gospel of grace and love, however. The punishment which was to come was very real, and the suffering of a physical nature. There was nothing encouraging to sinners of obdurate character who refused repentance. The judgments were fitted into the covenant as the means whereby the divine purpose of salvation could bring about the repentance produced by the trials of devastation. The penalties were meant to be pedagogic, to secure repentance. In this respect they were more than retributive in aspect; but to deny the fact that Israel's punishment was in the nature of retribution for her sin is to deny the fundamental teaching of the

1. Robinson, CH, 32.

entire book. Nowhere else in the Bible do we find a clearer picture of the inevitable suffering which the sinner undergoes as the result of his sin, nor of the penalties which persist even after repentance has brought forgiveness. However, this truth should not hide from us that the really important aspect of penalty is its potential effect upon the sinner who encounters it, for this too is fundamental to Hosea. The tenor of the message is far above the severity of an Amos in its use of terror to produce a turning of the heart to a new affection.

After the purification of the nation through its suffering, Hosea foresees the desired change of heart which will bring about the renewed betrothal of Yahweh with Israel, just as Hosea instituted a new bond of marriage with Gomer after he had proved her. This new betrothal will be accompanied by restored prosperity and such harmony of outer nature as will supply all Israel's physical needs, but this is not the sole end of the prophet's promise. Much more important to him is the fact that there will be re-established the perfect fellowship of life and love between God and His people, in which His purpose for them will be completely realized.¹ The broken heart of God will be comforted by the return of His people, who will now call Him "My Husband," and not "My Baal," signifying a union of Yahweh and Israel on terms of mutual love and respect.

The most touching picture of the restoration is in the dialogue between the penitent people and Yahweh with which the book closes. They approach Him with a prayer for pardon confessing their sin and promising no more to turn for help to worldly powers or material forces, no more to

1. Kirkpatrick, DOP, 136.

worship the work of their hands. Very gracious is His answer: "I will heal their faithlessness; I will love them freely, for my anger has turned from them" (14:4).¹

Unlike Amos, Hosea does not omit connection between the suffering of the exile and the repentance which produces restoration. The events which should occur in Israel's history would bring her to a sense of misery, a sense of guilt, and a desire to return on her old self.² Repentance so motivated would imply recognition that all sin was committed against God, a deep sorrow for wrongdoing, and an earnest determination to live henceforth in a manner acceptable to Yahweh (14:1-3).³ When such a position is reached in the hearts of the people, then their sin will be forgiven, their backsliding healed, and their land blessed. Just as their prayers bring moral restitution (5:15, 6:1 f, 14:1 ff), so their faithfulness will bring renewed material blessing.

For the first time in prophetic writing we find in Hosea a hint of the Messianic King who shall come. There is, however, no direct connection between His coming and the fact of sin. The reference is one in connection with Israel's return to Yahweh after they have dwelled many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or pillar, without ephod or teraphim (3:4b). Then they shall return and seek the Lord their God, and David their king (3:5a). Nothing is said as to the nature of the work of this king, although it appears plain from the position which he

1. Kirkpatrick, DOP, 134.

2. Smith, TBOT, 363 f.

3. Eiselen, MP, 34.

occupies that he is to be Yahweh's true representative.¹ The development of the idea that this king is savior has not yet taken place. There is not a hint of redemption in his office, but merely a suggestion that his appearance will accompany the forgiveness which follows their repentance. It remained for others to see the power of this idea as a redemptive force in Israel.

Summarizing briefly the work of Hosea, we find that he opened a new conception of what sin is. More than an infraction against law-- although it is that--its worst offense is against love. All sin is against God, and His suffering love permits punishment for the sinner while at the same time this same love is preparing to redeem. He has recognized that sin begins within; that it is what it does as a result of its inward nature; that it is socially nurtured; and that it is self-destructive.² This keen penetration of the nature of sin has not been surpassed except in the Gospel of the New Testament, where the prophetic ideas found concrete expression in the Person of Jesus Christ, Love Incarnate. Hosea laid the foundation on which Judaism could prepare a religion that would give us a Messiah and a Savior.

Isaiah - faith above all. When we arrive at the prophet Isaiah, much ground has already been covered in the prophetic concept of sin. As compared with the brevity of Amos and Hosea and Micah, Isaiah is long and in every respect he is a continuation of them. As Hamilton notes: "He did not go off on any new paths of his own as Amos and Hosea did, but he

1. Kirkpatrick, DOP, 137.

2. Robinson, CH, 29.

went along the ways they had discovered."¹ It will not then be necessary for us to recite in detail the many social sins against which he shares a hatred with the earlier prophets, for his attitude is much the same as theirs. Rather, we are concerned with the new insights which he brought to the over-all subject of sin.

In keeping with accepted critical analysis of the Book of Isaiah, this section of our research will deal only with the first thirty nine chapters, which are attributed--with certain exceptions--to Isaiah, son of Amoz. This division of material is not at all exhaustive, but for our purpose it marks sufficiently broad limits to permit general observation without undue historical inaccuracy.

Isaiah employs the usual vocabulary for sin, and with such slight difference between his work and the two prophets considered previously that there is nothing to be gained from inserting here a summary of the terms and their frequency. There are the usual "rebellion" and "perverse-ness," plus a reasonable usage of נ' ל' II with the connotations pointed out in our introduction. But again no doctrine can be established on this ground.

Chapter one summarizes the entire book with relation to the estrangement which exists between Yahweh and Judah. The opening words of the vision read:

Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth;
 for the Lord has spoken;
 "Sons have I reared and brought up,
 but they have rebelled against me.
 The ox knows its owner,

1. Hamilton, SFG, 139.

and the ass its master's crib;
But Israel does not know, my people
does not understand."

Ah, sinful nation,
a people laden with iniquity,
offspring of evildoers,
sons who deal corruptly!
They have forsaken the Lord,
they have despised the Holy One of Israel,
they are utterly estranged.

Why will you still be smitten,
that you continue to rebel? (1:2-5a).

The prophet continues in the same line of thought as he decries their vain religion, their "wickedness and worship" (1:13b) wherein they spread before Yahweh "hands full of blood" (1:15). Then, with the sense of Yahweh's faithfulness which characterizes this work, the prophet pleads with the people to "wash themselves, seek justice" (1:16, 17), climaxing even in the opening chapter with these words which have been the source of hope for uncounted multitudes who have sought to find forgiveness for sin:

"Come now, let us reason together,
says the Lord;
though your sins are like scarlet,
they shall be as white as snow;
though they are red like crimson,
they shall become like wool. (1:18).

Yet even here willingness to obey is demanded as a condition of forgiveness:

If you are willing and obedient,
you shall eat the good of the land;
But if you refuse and rebel,
you shall be devoured by the sword;
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken. (1:19-20).

There follows then an outline of Yahweh's method of purging the "faithful

city which has become a harlot" (1:21). Zion will be redeemed by justice and those in her who repent will be redeemed by righteousness, but rebels and sinners will be destroyed together (1:27-28).

In brief, this is the message of Isaiah. Throughout his prophecies there moves the idea that sin is an outrage and insult to Yahweh's majesty, a condition that springs from Judah's proud independence. More, it is a condition that will speedily be visited with a searching judgment. The worship which they practiced, while at the same time displaying a reckless indifference to truth and right and justice was but a deification of wealth and power and selfish pleasure and reckless ambition, an insolent defiance of the supreme majesty of Yahweh. Man seemed in his complacent self-aggrandizement to have forgotten his Maker. Israel had defiantly flung off the obligations of allegiance to its King. "The indictment against them," says Kirkpatrick, "is summed up in the words, 'Their tongue and their doings are against Jehovah, to provoke the eyes of His glory' (iii. 8)."¹

Frequently the nation is charged with "despising" the "Holy One of Israel" or His "word" from the mouth of the prophet (1:4, 5:24, 30:12), with "rejecting" the law of Yahweh (5:24). They are called "perverse" twelve times, set on going their own way without regard to the express command of Yahweh by Isaiah. Such is the nature of the spirit which produces sin in Israel. Isaiah does not attempt to put into a coherent system of thought a reasonable explanation of why men can defy God. He simply portrays to us the evident fact that there is a constant

1. Kirkpatrick, DOP, 171 f.

contradiction between what men should do and what they do, and that what they do is evidence of man's power to thwart God's omnipotence if he so desires.¹

However, it is not only the omnipotence of Yahweh which is flaunted by Israel in her sin. Isaiah brought to the fore a new meaning of holiness as an attribute of Yahweh, the first time that an ethical content was given to it.² Holiness in Isaiah loses the static quality so often associated with it as a mere token of separation or taboo, and becomes the living character of God. Kirkpatrick outlines the evolution of this term to include moral purity:

Primarily the Hebrew root from which the word is derived seems to denote separation. It represents God as distinct from man, separate from the creation which He has called into existence. Then, since limit is the necessary condition of created things, and imperfection and sinfulness are the marks of humanity in its fallen state, the term grows to denote the separation of God from all that is limited, imperfect, and sinful. But it does not rest here in a merely negative conception. It expands so as to include the whole essential nature of God in its moral aspect. This it is which evokes the unceasing adoration of angelic beings. His purity and His righteousness, His faithfulness and His truth, His mercy and His loving-kindness, nay even His jealousy and His wrath, His zeal and His indignation--these are the different rays which combine to make up the perfect light of holiness. It is the moral nature of God, which man's dull soul can but dimly imagine . . ."³

The importance of this new conception of holiness cannot be over-emphasized in relation to the subject of sin. Where once the holiness of God was but a thing to be feared, now it became a principle of life to

1. Hamilton, SFG, 143.

2. Battenwieser, POI, 270.

3. Kirkpatrick, DOP, 176-7.

be lived. Although much of the P Code may not yet have been written and accepted into canonicity, yet the germinal demand that Israel should be holy unto her God was implicit in her religion. Yahweh is Israel's God, they are His people. They are to reflect and exhibit to the world His character. To quote Kirkpatrick again on this:

They are to be His witnesses. Perhaps originally this meant little more than that they were to be a separate people, distinguished by their allegiance to Jehovah; but as His character was gradually revealed to them in Law and Prophecy, the claim on Israel grew to have a deeper meaning. Then it was that the divorce between calling and practice grew to be startling.¹

This holiness of Yahweh had also another aspect: it was the pledge of His faithfulness with Israel (or Judah). In the latter period of Isaiah's ministry, when the worldly-wise statesmen in Jerusalem threatened to entangle Judah in an alliance with Egypt, and involve it in the ruin which befell Samaria, Isaiah unhesitatingly bade his countrymen to rely upon the Holy One of Israel. His honor was pledged to defend His own people; but they were for the most part faithless. Unfortunately, the worldly spirit predominated and they did not heed the prophet's words,

For thus said the Lord God, the
Holy One of Israel,
"In returning and rest you shall be saved;
in quietness and in trust shall be
your strength."
And you would not, but you said,
"No! We will speed upon horses,"
therefore you shall speed away;
and, "We will ride upon swift steeds,"
therefore your pursuers shall be swift.
(30:15-16).

Mockingly they deride the prophets, rebelling against their instructions.

1. Kirkpatrick, DOP, 176.

They forbid them to prophesy anything except good. In flippant disregard of the message, they say to the prophets, "Let us hear no more of the Holy One of Israel" (30:11b). The attitude of such a remark is comparable to that of a hardened sinner who no longer cares to have his conscience pricked by the word of truth. Later on we shall see that it is just such a hardening of the conscience against which Isaiah attempts to warn the people as they rush on to their doom.

Against the background of ethical holiness, all the social sins of the nation took on a new meaning. As we have said, the list in Isaiah is practically the same as that in Amos and Hosea, but here these evils are set in lurid reflection from the brightness of Yahweh's holiness, not merely His justice. The revelry (5:11-12), the rich oppressing the poor (5:8), the luxury and religious indifference indicating moral decay (1:11 f), their shrewdness and skill in mixing strong drink (5:21-22), their bribery and injustice (5:23), all are flaunted against God in mockery as they cry out,

"Let him make haste,
 let him speed his work
 that we may see it;
 let the purpose of the Holy One
 of Israel draw near,
 and let it come, that we may know it!"
 (5:19).

This is the language of men grown sated on their own power. There is a scepticism with reference to providential government which scoffs at the prophet's warning. Their attitude underscores a fact which Niebuhr calls attention to with respect to the dangers of power and position:

The simple religious insight which underlies . . . prophetic judgments is that the men who are tempted by their eminence and by the possession of undue power become more guilty of pride and injustice than those who lack power and position. The injustice of the powerful and the pride of the eminent are assumed as a matter of fact, and they are threatened with judgment. . . . While the religious dimension of sin, pride, is always the primary concern of the prophets, they see . . . clearly . . . that an inevitable concomitant of pride is injustice.¹

Isaiah goes further than Amos and Micah in his analysis of national sins, for he is conscious that the people sin not only in deed but in thought (5:8-24). He points out that sin is pride and haughty looks (2:11), as well as a callow insensibility to what is divine (6:10). All the false ideals of God and His righteousness and all the corruption in national life are traced to their source, the absence of the knowledge of God. "This is Hosea's view too, but Isaiah defines it more clearly; religious sensibility to know God is His chief requirement."²

Sin of the individual comes more clearly into focus as we study Isaiah in comparison to earlier prophets. The circumstances of his own call indicate that his case was not unusual in Israel, where men were unclean by reason of their unholiness. Büchler has made a good argument to prove that the uncleanness here referred to is not Levitical, but moral, and that the symbolic purging by fire is by no means a Levitical method of cleansing.³ The prophet no doubt sees himself as one of those whose guilt has brought the stumbling and falling of Jerusalem and Judah "because their speech and their deeds are against the Lord, defying his

1. Niebuhr, NADM, 223.

2. Redlich, TFS, 43.

3. Büchler, SSA, 233.

glorious presence" (3:8b). He is the first of the prophets to testify to individual purging as a prerequisite to his divine calling as a prophet. Further, here the doctrine of individual purification outside the community concept is for the first time enunciated. But just as his cleansing did not cleanse the community, just so the impurity of the community could not contaminate him. He emphasizes this fact more distinctly when he declares "Zion shall be redeemed by justice, and those in her who repent, by righteousness" (1:27). Again the individual is clearly in mind when he says, "Tell the righteous that it shall be well with them, for they shall eat the fruit of their deeds" (3:10). He continues in verse 11 to warn the wicked "Woe to the wicked! It shall be ill with him for what his hands have done shall be done to him."

A man so sensitive as Isaiah, who saw his own undone condition in the sight of a Holy God, would naturally insist upon personal morality in other worshipers of Yahweh.¹ It is not strange, therefore, to find him in the fifth chapter of his prophecies making especially prominent the abuse of wine and other means of intoxication (5:11, 22). Then again in chapter 28 he returns to the subject with a vehemence unparalleled in any other prophet. Here the priest and prophet are upbraided unmercifully because:

These also reel with wine
and stagger with strong drink;
the priest and the prophet reel with
strong drink,
they are confused with wine,
they stagger with strong drink;
they err in vision,

1. Mitchell, EOT, 137.

they stumble in giving judgment.
 For all tables are full of vomit,
 no place is without filthiness.
 (28:7-8).

This passage is reminiscent of that one in Leviticus 10:9 where the priests are forbidden to take wine under such strong penalties. The theme is so constant in the prophets as to indicate that it was one of the major factors contributing to the sinfulness of the people as well as priest.

But if Isaiah began to see more clearly the personal aspect of sin, he did not forget the national character of it. As yet it was the community as belonging to Yahweh that claimed his attention. It is the nation that could have been saved but would not (30:12-15), and it was to Ahaz as king and not as an individual that he offered the promise of deliverance from Rezin and Pekah. Here it was the faith of one man, whose actions guided the destiny of the nation, which could become effective to save it. It is also to the king as king that the prophet adds, "If you will not believe, surely you shall not be established" (7:9b). So too with his charges against the wealthy and the priests--as in the case of Amos--he demands changes in the social structure which fosters wicked individuals, but by and large his concern is for the corporate body of society. As Redlich summarizes:

Isaiah prophesied for nearly forty years in the southern kingdom. In his view, God was still the god not of the individual, but of the community. The sins against which Isaiah declaimed were still the sins of the community. The love and obedience which God sought were still that of the nation.¹

1. Redlich, TFS, 40.

Unlike Amos and Hosea, Isaiah does not launch out against unchastity either of religious or secular nature. In 1:21 Jerusalem is called a harlot, but it is as the abode of injustice and not of impurity. Mitchell explains this absence of a subject so prevalent in other prophets by suggesting that we have an incomplete record of the utterances of Isaiah.¹ So also Dr. Pfeiffer feels that idols are mentioned only twice in genuine oracles of Isaiah (2:8a, 18).² Other references in 2:20, 31:6 add nothing to our understanding of sin as it stems from idolatry. It is inconceivable that a prophet of Isaiah's character would have overlooked so important a subject if it had been prevalent, so we may with some justification conclude that for the greater part of Isaiah's lifetime idolatry was not much practiced in Judah.

The results of sin in Isaiah's thought are seen against two backgrounds: (1) the character of Yahweh which has been defied, and (2) the effect which this character of His has on the nation who defies it.

With respect to the first of these, it is evident that the prophet knows that the holiness and majesty of Yahweh must be vindicated. The outrage against them cannot be glossed over if the character of Yahweh is in any way substantial. Yet, equally, the same character of Yahweh denies that He will abrogate the covenant made between Him and His people. Therefore, some way must be devised whereby the justice and holiness of Yahweh can be served in treatment of the sin of Israel.

The prophet meets this situation in an unusual way: he says that

1. Mitchell, EOT, 138.

2. Pfeiffer, "Polemic . . .," JBL, XLIII, 1924, 232.

he is commissioned of Yahweh to enjoin the people not to hear or understand the message:

Hear and hear, but do not understand;
 see and see, but do not perceive.
 Make the heart of this people fat,
 and their ears heavy,
 and shut their eyes;
 lest they see with their eyes,
 and hear with their ears,
 and understand with their hearts,
 and turn and be healed. (6:9b-10).

With Cornill, we could declare that these words sound terrible, even almost godless; but with him also we recognize that they contain a deep truth. Says Cornill:

Isaiah has clearly recognised that man can and dare not be indifferent to the good. Either he bows to the good and it becomes a blessing to him, or he hardens his heart against it, and it becomes to him a double curse.¹

Kirkpatrick studies the same scripture and arrives at the conclusion that:

It is a stern sentence. But the nation was already insensible, deaf, and blind. God's message must fall upon unreceptive ears, and it is a fixed law of the divine economy that calls to repentance, messages of grace, all good motions and impulses, do but harden the hearts of those who will not yield to them. Individuals would no doubt hear and repent. But the nation as a whole was spiritually dead. Isaiah's ministry would but confirm the obdurate mass of the people in obduracy.²

Cornill again reviews the circumstances of this call to harden

1. Cornill, POI, 61.

2. Kirkpatrick, DOP, 150.

the hearts of the people, and in it finds evidence even of God's mercy.

The nation as a whole is neither ripe nor ready for the future kingdom of God. And since the judgment is the necessary transition to salvation, since the quicker the judgment comes, the quicker salvation can be effected, therefore it is to the interest both of God and Israel if the sins of the latter shall speedily reach a point where judgment must ensue.¹

Sin, then, has within it something that hardens when truth is brought to bear upon it. The sinner, individual or nation, will find that the only possible results of exposure to the light of the prophet's message are repentance from sin or confirmation therein. It is as though the two ingredients were chemical agents brought together, from which a reaction should take place inevitably. Whether the reaction will take the form of repentance or confirmation will depend entirely upon the disposition of the hearer to accept the truth.

It is evident that Isaiah is convinced that Judah is now rapidly hastening to the fate of Samaria, and finding mercy in the onrush of that day he calls upon them to await their doom in a merciful stupor:

Stupefy yourselves and be in a stupor,
 blind yourselves and be blind!
 Be drunk, but not with wine;
 stagger, but not with strong drink!
 For the Lord has poured out upon you
 a spirit of deep sleep,
 and has closed your eyes, the prophets,
 and covered your heads, the seers.
 (29:9-10).

This scripture portrays a very subtle feature of sin: it produces a moral torpor which is, in one aspect, a divine judicial penalty;

1: Cornill, POI, 61.

in another, the effect of psychological law--the atrophy of an unused faculty. God had closed their eyes, but the people had closed their own eyes. "With sealed eyes and muffled heads they could see nothing."¹ Religion which follows such spiritual obtuseness becomes nothing more than formality, which imagines that religion is a matter of prescribed and recited formulas, instead of being a thing of the heart. Because the nation draws near to Him with their mouth and honors Him with their lips, but their hearts are far from Him, Yahweh promises that even the discernment of their discerning men shall be hid (21:13-14). Working like a terrible disease in the body religious, sin shuts up the very fountain of healing.

Finally, the prophet pictures the entire nation as without any perception of the message of God--a nation where not one can be found who can interpret the vision (21:11-12). When this point is reached, it culminates in their arrogant denial of their creaturehood, a flaunting of themselves against their maker as would a pottery vessel deny its potter (21:15b-16).

Such action on the part of the nation leaves Yahweh no choice but to vindicate His character by the punishments which He not only permits, but actually manipulates against Judah. Sin, then, forces God's hand to deal with it. And well it might be that He does have the power to do so, for sinners so pervert truth as to "call evil good and good evil" (5:20). They bring pollution to the earth, and a curse rests upon the earth and its inhabitants because they have transgressed the everlasting covenant

1. McFadyen, TBPI, 191.

(24:5-6). But sinners in Zion are afraid, trembling at the revelation of Yahweh's judgment (33:14), and again it is well that this is so, for the ". . . day of the Lord comes, cruel, with wrath and fierce anger, to make the earth a desolation and to destroy its sinners from it." (13:9).

Yahweh declares: "I will punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; I will put an end to the pride of the arrogant, and lay low the haughtiness of the ruthless" (13:11).

As opposed to the terrors awaiting the sinners in the day of Yahweh's wrath, He promises that those who walk righteously and speak uprightly, who are free from the social sins of their neighbors—they shall be established (33:15-16). This fact leads to an interesting conclusion with respect to the sin of unbelief. The king, in the name of the nation, had been promised that if he would believe he should be saved (stating 7:9b positively). Here those who are to be saved are the ones who are morally satisfactory. The obvious implication is that only those who are morally in good standing can believe for salvation. The great sin of this book is that of unbelief, a lack of faith. "The real ground of their hankering for alliance with Egypt was mistrust of Jehovah, and confidence in material power."¹ Faith would have undertaken nothing, would have left everything in the hand of God,² but a people beset by sins of social and religious character, as outlined frequently in Isaiah, could not believe until they had forsaken those sins.

Judah was not without those social sins which had characterized

1. Kirkpatrick, DOP, 166.

2. Cornill, POI, 65.

Israel, and just as Israel had done, so had Judah. Her sins had dimmed the keenness of the sense of Yahweh's protective presence; hence she had sought among the nations for material support against her enemies. Now, even though she would have forsaken her sins, she could not bring herself to believe that the alliances could be replaced entirely by a simple return to faith in Yahweh. So it is with the individual and sin: he who attempts to retain his faith while practicing his sin will find himself at last involved so deeply in associations of this world that only a mighty act of God can break the ties of sin and free him to a renewed faith. The exile was just such a redemptive act in the case of Judah; and although the experience was a bitter one, it was blessed in its results to them and its teaching to us.

As with other prophets, Isaiah could not let sin have the final word. He saw as Amos and Hosea had seen—perhaps even more clearly than they—that men did not want evil even when they did evil. Isaiah knew, as Hamilton says,

. . . the force of the appeal that hands red with blood could be washed clean, that a man might walk in the light of the Lord instead of the thick clouds of wickedness. He believed it to be stronger than any other and absolutely sure to prevail in the end. Evil would finally be conquered since men were made by God and so were made for goodness and were happy only if they were good.¹

No doubt it is just such an insight on the part of the prophets that led them to continue their ministry to a seemingly unreceptive and ungrateful people. They perceived the agony of the soul that found itself bound by sin, all the while hating it with the better part of its

1. Hamilton, SFG, 142.

nature. As with the nation, so with the individual, restoration from the effects of sin and removal of the impulse to sin must be the work of God (35:4b); but the teaching throughout the book is implicit always that this act of God will not take place until repentance has been engendered through suffering for sin, (cf. 1:27, 4:3-4, 4:4-8). Not all the individuals in Judah will repent (4:3-4), nor all the nation (6:13, 10:22-23); but those who do repent will rejoice that Yahweh's anger is turned away and He has become their salvation (12:1-2). This is the first time that a prophet has introduced the idea of a savior in just this way, but now it was to become the dominant idea of Jewish literature for six hundred years.

Turning to the motivation of Yahweh's action in restoring Judah, we find that only thus can He vindicate the constancy of His covenant. He it is who "waits to be gracious" to Judah, who "exalts himself to show mercy" unto them (30:18). So great is His concern for Judah and Jerusalem that He will not stop in His endeavors to purge them, and it is only owing to their own refusal that they do not become clean from impurity. It is to the end that they may co-operate with Him in the desire for purging that He continues His punishing acts (4:4-6).

Late though they are, chapters 24-27 show that the idea of the political restoration of the nation is still vividly associated with the great day of deliverance. The exile, which will have accomplished its purpose of purification, will be revoked and one by one they will be brought back (27:12-13). By the exile Jacob's guilt will have been expiated (27:7-9), and there shall follow a time when death is no more and tears are wiped away (25:8). A deliverer in the form of a son will come,

upon whose shoulder shall rest the government, to establish justice and righteousness (9:6-7a); and this deliverer shall come through the zeal of Yahweh (9:7b). It is doubtful, however, whether we can safely declare that the advent of this deliverer will follow his own successful conquest of the sinful forces in the world; rather, it appears that

. . . in prophecies in which the figure of the king of the golden age appears at all, he is not the instrument of God in the conquest of independence and power; he appears on the scene only after the great deliverance has been wrought by God himself, as the ruler of a redeemed and regenerated Israel.¹

This feature of the Messianic King must be noted in other prophets, but with them we can be content to ascertain whether this observation is correct. However, it does no injustice to certain passages—notably the Suffering Servant passages of Second Isaiah—to indicate that two features of the Messianic office may be involved in one person, both the redemptive activity and the kingship which follows it. Of these we will treat later. For the present it is more relevant to our discussion to see that the restoration will be accompanied by a spiritual renewal comparable to that described by other prophets. In that day the very spiritual debilities which have beset them because of their sin shall be removed. Their deafness and blindness will be removed, injustice will be done away, "Those who err in spirit will come to understanding, and those who murmur will accept instruction." (29:17-24). This changed attitude of heart, produced no doubt by the purging fires of exile, will characterize a nation over which a pure and holy king could reign with justice. It

1. Moore, JUD, II, 331.

would be proper to infer from this that sinners--nations and individuals alike--bind themselves off from the gracious reign of God by their sins. In His mercy He not only brings almost irresistible pressure on them to repent of their sin, but He also comes to dwell with them upon the condition of their repentance. There is here a background of the New Testament doctrine that sin breaks the fellowship of man with God, and that the purpose of Christ is first to destroy all conflicting loyalties in the human soul, then to abide in that soul when He becomes the sole object of its loyalty.

Isaiah had much to teach Judah about sin and a Holy God who was outraged by it. He was far surpassed by Hosea in religious depth and fervor,¹ for his teaching is born of experience not so deeply human and gripping as was Hosea's; but he brought more clearly into focus the great power of Yahweh in effecting the redemption of His people through suffering. It is entirely in keeping with Jewish disregard of chronology that the editors included the redemptive lyrics of Second Isaiah with the writings of Isaiah, son of Amoz, for that which was a dimly discerned hope to the pre-exilic prophet became the brightly enlightened vision of the anonymous prophet of the exile. Where the first Isaiah foretold the suffering and touched less frequently the glory of a restored land, the Second Isaiah set forth to proclaim the fact that the debt of sin was now paid, the restoration in all its glory was at hand.

Before passing on to Micah, one more thing needs to be said concerning Isaiah and the restoration; namely, that he nowhere indicates

1. Cornill, POI, 69.

that the cult will be the vehicle of the restored relationship with Yahweh. In that day men will not have regard for the altars nor the articles of heathen worship which they have fashioned with their hands, but they will regard their Maker, and their eyes will look to the Holy One of Israel (17:7-8). Their cry shall be:

"Behold, God is my salvation;
 I will trust and not be afraid;
 For the Lord is my strength and my song,
 and he has become my salvation." (12:2)

"Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion,
 for great in your midst is the Holy One
 of Israel." (12:6).

So it shall be when sin is expiated, a spiritual love and desire for the Holy God will be the foundation of their worship before Yahweh. It will not be as though they now were bound by the abject and forbidding fear of the cult, nor yet that they should be freed of all moral restraint. It will be that they shall rejoice in the unhindered intercourse they enjoy with a reconciled God.

Micah - a clarification. The short book of Micah sums up his predecessors Amos and Hosea, and his contemporary Isaiah. In his simple but comprehensive summary of man's duty to his neighbor and to God, he takes up and combines the teaching of these men. Amos had insisted upon the paramount necessity of civil justice; Hosea had proclaimed that it was not sacrifice but loving-kindness ⱮⱮ that God desired; and one of the most prominent doctrines of Isaiah was the majesty of Yahweh, to which reverent humility on man's part is the fitting correlative.¹ In

1. Kirkpatrick, DOP, 227.

the great judgment scene of 6:1-8 which forms the keynote as well as the climax of the thought of Micah, this prophet defines with amazingly clear insight the demands of Yahweh on His people. The sins of the people have brought them into controversy with God, and the charges are now brought that by their action they have been unfaithful to the covenant of His mercy. History vindicates His faithfulness, therefore their disloyalty can not be blamed on His infidelity. Furthermore, with biting severity Micah declares that they have been shown what is good; no excuse can be brought that they sin in ignorance (6:8). "He has showed you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"

The verse quoted above would be sufficient to establish Micah as one of the greatest of prophets, even though nothing else of his writing had come down to us. The prophetic ideal of religion had never been put more beautifully and comprehensively by any previous prophet, nor was any other to define God's requirements in better terms until Jesus Himself interpreted the word by the spirit. This pronouncement becomes all the more powerful in religion when it is set against the two verses immediately preceding where the extremes of sacrifice--bullocks, rivers of oil, even child sacrifice--are denounced as totally futile and insufficient to meet the conditions of a moral God.

"With what shall I come before the Lord,
and bow myself before God on high?
Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,
with calves a year old?
Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams,
with ten thousands of rivers of oil?
Shall I give my first-born for my transgression,
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"
(6:6-7).

With a moral indignation which is quite awe-inspiring the prophet challenges the uselessness of such practices. The people's question implies that they are confused as to just what they shall do to preserve a right relationship with their God. Ruthlessly their excuse is brushed aside. Micah seems to say, "Away with your pretensions of piety! You know better than to trust in such vain religious exercises, and your knowledge shall be the measure of your judgment before Yahweh."

There is a beauty in Micah's treatment of this prophetic synopsis which other prophets miss. It is concise, yet comprehensive in its exposition of true religion. No one element in the three-part formula can be excluded and a satisfactory basis for religious society be found. To forfeit any part is to violate the principle of the other two.

To treat them in reverse order, taking the climax of the argument first, what does it mean to "walk humbly with your God?" What does God require of duty towards Himself? Kirkpatrick answers these questions quite adequately when he says that a life walking humbly with God is one of fellowship with God implying identity of will and purpose—but fellowship conditioned by that spirit of humility which must ever govern the intercourse of weak and sinful man with a perfect and infinite God.¹ Such an attitude of humility would perchance permit of the introduction of some rules of worship which appeared to be unintelligible to finite minds. On the other hand, there is an implication that the will of Yahweh is revealed in full to those who choose such a walk in preference to their own selfish and arrogant ways.

1. Kirkpatrick, DOP, 226.

The second demand is also a spiritual rather than a physical demand, for God has shown man that he who would satisfy God must love kindness. This is a much nobler matter than the mere act of justice which we shall next consider. Here the command is to love, and no man can force love against the nature of his heart. No doubt there were not a few among the wealthy nobles of Micah's day who prided themselves on not being guilty of injustice, but the passion of their souls was in no way directed toward a love for it. Herein the prophet penetrates to the depth of man's social dilemma; it does not stem from his lack of knowledge, but from a lack of desire to perform the good. It is only the heart which loves kindness that will consistently show kindness; and, oddly enough, the command here is couched in terms which so indicate. A mere act of kindness, which to man would appear to demonstrate a kind character, is not sufficient evidence for a God who can meet man's strongest excuse with His very telling charge: "He has shown you, O man, what is good;" and one feature of that which is good is "to love kindness", not merely to show it.

If the prophet had arranged his order of argument as we have here, the third element would follow without discussion. That man who walks humbly with a God of the character revealed by prophet and priest through the centuries of Israel's history would never doubt that acting unjustly brought his soul under condemnation. He who in meekness and humility sought to walk with God, who genuinely loved kindness, that man would never think of desecrating his God by injustice to his neighbor. The level of conduct which grants justice to all alike is but the lowest level of human reasoning; to say nothing of the moral quality which it

assumes in the light of God's demand.

But this last point explains, I think, just why the prophet chose the order he did for these demands. He was an orator, a skillful debater, and a splendid arranger of his material. It does him injustice to think that he had no point other than poetic beauty in the present form of the text. Rather, I would think that he began where the people were, citing to them the lowest level on which anyone could expect God's law to be fulfilled; the relation of one man to another in the regular functions of society. That man who does not recognize the rights of his fellowman to honest treatment under any circumstance, he (according to Micah) need strive no further to fulfill the weightier matters of the law. Society itself is in danger of extinction when this obvious truth is either denied or disregarded. Believing that the society of Judah at least was ordained of God, the simplest of rules for its preservation would be self-evidently a demand of Yahweh for His people. If this condition be met, then it might be that men were candidates to progress upward toward that full understanding of God, up to where their love for kindness would lead them to invoke the leadership and companionship of Yahweh in the search for means of establishing justice among men. In reality, the three portions of this beautiful ideal are inseparable, for the attempt to settle on any one plane, to the exclusion of either of the others, as expressive of true religion is to invite spiritual disaster. The New Testament took the idea here expressed and put it in terms which Micah no doubt had hardly yet apprehended, but which he did envision, when the test of a man's love for God would be made the love he bore for his neighbor (I John 4:19-21). But Micah rises very high in his perception

of the truth that a violation of this simple trilogy is sin. The prophet in him, interested always in social justice, saw the foundation of that social zeal in the close personal association with the God whose character provoked the zeal in the soul of a human being.

A catalogue of the sins outlined by Micah would parallel almost exactly those of Amos and Hosea. As with these former prophets, Micah pictured a society so permeated by sin that there was no trustworthiness left in anyone, a society where the most sacred relations of life were violated (7:5-6). This condition was the culmination of sins which had promoted the destruction of the godly man and upright man from the earth (7:2). For this reason judgment had come, and for their sins which had cursed society their land would be destroyed (3:12).

In one respect Micah stands in contrast to Isaiah and the emphasis which the latter put on faith. Those to whom Micah spoke were evidently lulled into a false security by the very doctrine of Immanuel which Isaiah preached for so many years. But where the difference lay was in the fact that Isaiah saw the plan of Yahweh in the tribulation which accompanied submission to the foreign powers that were overrunning Judah. True, he did promise deliverance at times from the hand of the invaders, but in the over-all picture Isaiah saw very clearly that the hurt of Judah was sore and that in the long run her sins would destroy her. Micah, on the other hand, omitted quite a few historical details which Isaiah made us aware of, giving to us an etching of a divine plan rather than a detailed account of its actual carrying out. The message of the two prophets was essentially the same with respect to sin in that it was bound up with faith in Yahweh based on heart condition before Him.

There were, however, a class of prophets who prostituted the doctrine of Immanuel, and against them Micah arrays himself in full battle dress. His description of them as paid shepherds who say what the purchaser of their counsel desires to hear is set in vivid contrast to his own divine commission, where with boldness born of a sense of an inner power, he says:

But as for me, I am filled with power,
with the Spirit of the Lord,
and with justice and might,
to declare to Jacob his transgression
and to Israel his sin. (3:8).

These men, who prophesied for hire, were false, untrue and unauthorized. Here he laid down the criterion for any prophet who would ever again claim to speak for Yahweh: he would have a mission with a moral character declaring from an inner consciousness of Yahweh's Spirit the transgression and sin of the land.

From this pronouncement of his personal inspiration from the Spirit of the Lord to charge Israel and Judah with sin, Micah shows us a very important aspect of prophetic thought. He here emphasizes that the charges he makes are not those arrived at by cold and clear reasoning; they are the revealed insights from Yahweh which come only to men specifically chosen for the office. This thought continued in Judaism, although the office has for long remained vacant. But the spirit of the office is still with us and has a valid teaching for our day. We too have a society which appears to stand condemned in many particulars as was that of the prophets. If we are to be of help to our generation, it is important that we understand clearly why the prophets pronounced the

sentence of death upon the social order of their day. Why then did they condemn?

Surely these men did not consider justice, as they conceived it, as a universal rational concept that would be self-evident to all men of reason, if only a Socrates were around to lead men dialectically to apprehend it. Nor did they consider it an ideal, a moral "value", a humanitarian standard, or an ethical norm. The justice they demanded was obedience to the divine Person; it was submission to the will of God in the covenant relation. Man's chief end in life is humbly to accept God's lordship over his life and so to live among his fellowmen that all his actions will express obedience to the will of God.¹ Anyone who fails thus to conduct his affections and his actions has sinned. Needless to say, with this idea Micah clarified the concept of sin for generations to come.

Micah is more consistent in his use of terminology for sin than are any of the other prophets. In five out of six instances where he uses נִלְוָה, he equates it with עֲוֹן "transgression," "rebellion". But in the conclusion of the book, both terms are used in parallelism with רָעָה "iniquity" (7:18-19), indicating that he, like the other prophets, was not drawing fine distinctions of a theological character with respect to terminology.²

To quote Dr. Pfeiffer on the question of idolatry in Micah, "Micah, to the best of our knowledge, had nothing to say about idolatry!"³

1. Anderson, RTB, 101.

2. See Young's Analytical Concordance.

3. Pfeiffer, "Polemic . . .," JBL, XLIII, 1924, 233.

There is a statement in 1:7a that "All her images shall be beaten to pieces," but the author quoted above considers this a gloss, and with apparent good reason. At least we can say that Micah did not consider the worship of idols in anything like the same way as did Ezekiel and the Deuteronomic redactors.

Sin with respect to the individual becomes a little clearer in Micah. Woe is spoken specifically to those who devise wickedness and work evil because it is in the power of their hands to perform it (2:1). It is this same group who deny the prophet the right to speak evil against them and who would only accept a preacher who preached to them of wine and strong drink (2:6, 11). The prophet speaks for God to them and says that they should desire to hear the word of the Lord, for the words of the Lord do good to him who walks uprightly (2:7b). It is also because of the accumulated sins of the rulers that Zion shall be plowed as a field and Jerusalem become a heap of ruins (3:12). But Micah also emphasizes the forgiving nature of Yahweh, laying a stronger foundation for the doctrine of Jeremiah and Ezekiel with respect to individual guilt and pardon. This prophecy closes on that thought:

Who is a God like thee, pardoning iniquity
and passing over transgression
for the remnant of his inheritance?
He will not retain his anger for ever
because he delights in steadfast love.
He will again have compassion upon us,
he will tread our iniquities under foot.
Thou will cast all our sins into the depths
of the sea. (7:18-19).

It was this ability to pardon, to pass over iniquity, that made Yahweh unique. The coming disintegration of the state, plus the rising sense of

individualism, was to soon see in such a God the privilege of personal forgiveness. It was not too large a step to take that the individual should put his own name in the place of the generic noun "man" in 6:8, to make it read, "He has showed you, O individual, what is good." If Micah did not take this step fully, he at least gave license to those who would interpret him so in the future.

Micah shared the concept of national sin with his predecessors. It is still with the nation Israel that Yahweh has his controversy (6:2). He makes the usual charges against segments of the national life which the others have made--against rulers and princes and priests and false prophets. His strong mention of child sacrifice indicates that it was even now becoming common again in Judah as an essential of religion. Such a dreadful thing could hardly be conceived as arising only with the individual, but would surely come from an official religious sanction of same. It is in the name of the true unit of Israel that the prophet speaks in 7:1-6, lamenting the universal corruption and expressing its determination humbly to bear the punishment.¹ It is to the remnant of the nation and only incidentally to the individual that the restoration is promised (7:7, 20).

What of the results of sin in Micah? He seems to feel that simple as Yahweh's requirements are, there is little expectation that the nation as a whole will conform to them. Their ingrained selfishness and inveterate corruption forbid the hope. Nothing but the sternest discipline of punishment can avail to reform that guilty people. He sees the

1. Kirkpatrick, DOP, 230.

tragic conclusion of sin in a passage which has few parallels in prophetic writing for pathos. Of it Kirkpatrick says:

Sorrowfully he [Micah] confesses the widespread and deep-seated depravity which prevails (vii. 1-6); and then he turns to contemplate the future. In faith and patience he will watch and wait. With humble resignation he accepts the just punishment of the nation's sin sure that the dawn must follow the darkness.¹

The most significant result of sin which Micah adds to those considered in other prophets is his perception that just as men are permitted to devise evil and have the power to perform it (2:1), so Yahweh has power also to devise evil against them, from which they cannot remove their necks (2:3). The principle of freedom and its abuse is graphically illustrated here. God never prohibits man from sinning; the character of man's freedom permits the practice of sin if he so desires. But, once man does give in to the desire, he sets in motion the inexorable working of God's restrictive punishment which cannot be relieved until the sin has been expiated. Again here we meet the implication that as sin increases, so God's warning discipline becomes increasingly severe, culminating in the destruction (death) of the sinning unit. Whether it be national or individual, the teaching is the same.

Yet again Micah brings out the idea that sin is not total, that nothing can so completely deprave Israel (and by inference, the individual) that God cannot find a way to save him.

Man's perversity may delay, but it cannot frustrate God's purposes. He will yet find a way to pardon, and not only to pardon, but

1. Kirkpatrick, DOP, 227.

to remove the iniquity of His people. The oath which He swore to the forefathers of the nation cannot be broken.¹

If this be a valid deduction, it indicates that the trials of discipline will have the desired effect, and the recognition of having sinned against God will make the sinner submit humbly to God's indignation (7:9a). The picture of the truly penitent heart, aware of its own shortcomings and that of its nation, given in 7:1-7 is the ideal of self-evaluation and Godly sorrow for sin, and there is no more beautiful faith disclosed in the Old Testament than that which follows:

Rejoice not over me, O my enemy;
 when I fall, I shall rise;
 when I sit in darkness,
 the Lord will be a light to me.
 I will bear the indignation of the Lord
 because I have sinned against him,
 until he pleads my cause
 and executes judgment for me.
 He will bring me forth to the light;
 I shall behold his deliverance.
 (7:8-9).

Just as no true prophet can overlook the idea of restoration, so Micah himself looks beyond the present to a day when iniquity shall be pardoned, sin forgiven (7:18-19). But to him this day, accompanied by the blessed recovery of nature, will not come except as a result of repentance. Micah is drawing nearer the time when atonement will be thought of almost entirely in terms of sacrificial rites; but with Hosea, Amos, and Isaiah, he recognizes no need of any means of reconciliation with God after the estrangement by sin, other than repentance (6:6-8).²

1. Kirkpatrick, DOP, 228.

2. Köhler, "Atonement," JE, II, 1902, 186.

Ethical change and confession are the requirements which this prophet sets forth as conditions of forgiveness.¹

Again we find that the restoration will be accompanied by the advent of the ideal king, and Micah goes even further than Isaiah in predicting that the Messiah will be born in Bethlehem (5:2). This prince will gather round him an abundance of able leaders to repel the Assyrian invader, even to carrying the war back into the enemy's country (5:5-6).²

However, it seems that his advent will come only after the repentance of the nation has given to it a renewed spiritual vigor. His coming will accompany the return of Yahweh's favor after their repentance has effected forgiveness. But this prince is not described in the terms of a savior such as the Suffering Servant of Second Isaiah. As yet prophecy has not accepted the idea that any man or any means can atone for the nation except it repent.

Micah's small book of only seven chapters is a shine light among the prophets who sought to avert the destruction of Yahweh's beloved nation. A concept of forgiveness, of God's greatness in providing it, of the way in which suffering promotes the repentance which effects it--all these are clearly set forth in Micah. He did not live to see even the beginning of his prophecy fulfilled, but they were fulfilled quite graphically some 115 years later in the days of the great Jeremiah. He shared with his contemporary Isaiah the position of the last prophet of consequence before the actual fulfillment of the prophetic destruction of

1. Redlich, TFS, 39.

2. Kirkpatrick, DOP, 219.

Jerusalem. From this time on it would seem that Yahweh's warning had been sufficiently sounded until it should become necessary for the prophet voice of Jeremiah to announce "the day is at hand." We move our study now into the teaching of that prophet who shared the downfall of his beloved city.

Jeremiah - the obduracy of the heart. Cornill has called Jeremiah the noblest offshoot of prophecy.¹ Possibly this position of superiority is not due so much to Jeremiah's outstanding mentality and spirit as it is to historical accident. When we consider that he lived to see the culmination of all that the earlier prophets had foretold, we cannot wonder that there is a potency, a depth of realism in his work that is lacking in others. But, whatever the reason for it, it is in him that prophecy finds its most outspoken and penetrating voice against the sin of Judah and Israel.

Our present copy of this book has been arranged so that the prophet begins his charges against Yahweh's people in the opening chapters. The keynote again is struck in the words of 2:13b "they have forsaken Me." All that follows in the details of their perversion is but an explanation of this one phrase. Says Anderson on this:

Jeremiah's words clearly refer to the covenant relation between Israel and God. According to each one of the prophets, Israel's trouble was due to a perverted will, a misuse of freedom that was her divine endowment. Instead of being faithful to the God of the covenant, her life story was one of continual and deliberate revolt. Instead of accepting him as her sovereign Lord and the true center of her life, she insisted upon going her own way, with his name upon her lips, but with her heart far from him. It was not merely that social

1. Cornill, POI, 91.

injustices were being committed, not merely that an unwise foreign policy was being pursued, not merely that strong statesmen were lacking; more basically the trouble was in the realm of the spirit--in that area where God makes his demands upon the will and where man, in free decision, must say Yes or No.¹

As much or more than any other prophet, Jeremiah emphasizes that Israel has resolutely, firmly, stubbornly said No to God. She was the faithless wife whose harlotry had led her to pursue other lovers; she was the child who had rebelled against the parents; she was the subject who had committed an act of treason against her king. This was Israel's sickness unto death. All her outward manifestations of sin were, to Jeremiah, nothing but the evidence of an inner waywardness. If at one time it might have been claimed that Israel's failure could be attributed to the temptations of her foreign suitors, it could no longer be so stated. They had become a people who "love to wander thus, who have not restrained their feet" (14:10). Rather than the modest virgin who is seduced by unscrupulous scoundrels, Israel had become like the brutes of the desert who regularly seek out means for satisfying the brute passions without restraint (2:23b-24).

All the prophets knew very well man's inability to turn from his sin, but what the earlier prophets lacked in explaining this point, Jeremiah and Ezekiel fill up. In 9:6 Jeremiah says that the reason people refuse to know God is through mirmah, translated deceit, but coming from the root meaning "to become putrid, corrupt."² There is again the implication that sin deceives the people, but that they must deceive

1. Anderson, RTB, 99.

2. Snaith, DIOT, 84.

themselves in order to continue sinning. The utter destruction of spiritual light which Isaiah prophesied to follow his teaching has now been revealed in Jeremiah's day.

Here is very graphically illustrated the need of the human heart for an object of faith and trust. Israel's sin had deceived her and had now separated her from her God. Yet she must have something in which to trust, and to her sorrow, she has been reduced to trusting in lies (13:25b). But this condition has not come by mere chance nor through ignorance. Nowhere does any prophet leave this route of evasion open to Israel. They are brought face to face with the inescapable truth that their suffering is the result of their willful and continuing disobedience to the revealed will of Yahweh. Now in the day of Jeremiah the full result of this sinning is upon them. They are a people who have refused to take correction; they have made their faces harder than rock; they have refused to repent (5:3). They are a people of a stubborn and rebellious heart (5:23a). Evil thoughts lodge in them (4:14b). They are a people of perpetual backsliding who hold fast to deceit, who refuse to return; no man repents or ever asks "what have I done?", but each rushes headlong on his own course (8:5-7). Their modesty is gone, for they are not ashamed to commit abomination, nor do they know how to blush any more (8:12). They have cultivated the growth of falsehood, not truth, in the land (9:3).

So complete has the sin of Judah now become that it is described as being "written with a pen of iron; with a point of diamond it is engraved on the tablet of their heart, and on the horns of the altar." (17:1). Whatever else we may draw from this analogy, this much is

certain: there is no light way to remove such a condition. Here no mere removal of the social injustices would redeem Israel, for it would be striking at the branches, not the root of her spiritual sickness. Their idolatry (1:16; 7:16f; 8:2, 19; 11:13; 32:29ff; 44:2ff, 7ff) stems from this heart condition; their unbelief is its result (5:12). Their immorality (5:1, 26-28; 6:6ff, 13; 7:5ff; 9:2ff, 8; 24:8ff) has its source here. Their blind formalism (7:9ff) and their self-confidence (8:8f; 18:18f) both have a base in their corrupt heart condition. The cure of all of these rests upon the cure of heart.¹

This perception of the inwardness of Israel's religion as opposed to the trust which had grown up in the material aspects of worship has earned for Jeremiah the title of "the first great heretic."² In this respect he was, but with good reason. He faced a new condition which even the politically minded Isaiah had not met in its deepest form, namely, the trust which Judah now put in the presence of the Temple in Jerusalem. The great difference between the false faith of Isaiah's day and that of Jeremiah was that the people of the early period had trusted Egypt and Assyria--those of Jeremiah's period trusted in the Temple. Of course, there was political intrigue in Jeremiah's time, but it was backed up by a false religious hope, which made it all the more dangerous. Boldly Jeremiah declared to them their delusion on this point. Their fanatic iterations "the Temple of Yahweh, the Temple of Yahweh" become but vain and empty cries in the mouth of people who steal, murder, commit

1. Kirkpatrick, DOP, 310 ff.

2. Badè, OTLT, 258.

adultery, swear falsely, burn incense to Baal, and walk after other gods (7:9ff). Indignantly Yahweh demands how they can do such things and then come stand before Him in His house and say, "Deliver us." By so doing they were demonstrating their complete lack of understanding of Yahweh and His character. Yet the prophet who declared this truth was met with scorn and persecution, for they were self-confident to the point of arrogant declaration, "We are wise, and the law of the Lord is with us . . . the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet." (8:8; 18:18). They were so blinded by their sin that now they had come to the place that,

They trusted in the wisdom of their "wise men"--the philosophical thinkers and political advisers of the state; in the law which the priests and scribes expounded with an easy-going opportunism; in the comfortable assurances with which the false prophets drugged their consciences. The established order of things was very satisfactory; it was not going to come to an end just yet; Jeremiah was a revolutionary disturber of the public peace to challenge its excellence.¹

Another evidence of their brazen denial of Yahweh is in their continued insistence that they have not sinned. After enumerating their many and violent rebellions against Him, Yahweh says to them, "Yet in spite of all these things you say, 'I am innocent; surely his anger has turned from me.' Behold, I will bring you into judgment for saying, 'I have not sinned.'" (2:34b-35). Yet still a deeper perversion of their hearts is shown in their boldness to demand that Yahweh shall deliver them from their enemies even though they admit their guilt and backsliding. We hear them saying,

1. Kirkpatrick, DOP, 312.

Though our iniquities testify against us,
 act, O Lord, for thy name's sake;
 for our backslidings are many,
 we have sinned against thee.
 O thou hope of Israel,
 its savior in time of trouble,
 why shouldst thou be like a stranger
 in the land,
 like a wayfarer who turns aside
 to tarry for a night?
 Why shouldst thou be like a man confused,
 like a mighty man who cannot save?
 Yet thou, O Lord, art in the midst of us,
 and we are called by thy name;
 leave us not. (14:7-9).

Such attitudes on the part of Israel are cause for unparalleled astonishment. For this they are described as foolish, stupid, knowing not Yahweh (4:22). The very heavens are called to witness with shock and horror the unbelievable fact that Israel has forsaken Him, the fountain of Living Water, to hew themselves broken cisterns which can hold no water (2:12-13). In so doing they have done a horrible thing, in that they have stumbled in their ways, in the ancient roads, and have gone into bypaths, not the highway (18:15b). They have literally "missed the mark" of their revealed duty, sinning outrageously and thereby making their land a thing to be hissed at forever, a place of horror (18:16a).

The climax of Jeremiah's thought is reached when Yahweh speaks to tell him what he shall answer when, in the day of utter destruction, the people shall ask, "Why has the Lord our God done all these things to us?" (5:19a). The answer is not so startling--"As you have forsaken me and served foreign gods in your land, so you shall serve strangers in a land that is not your land." (18:19b). The amazing thing is that they should not know already why their punishment had come with such destructive force. Isaiah, Micah, and Jeremiah had plainly and explicitly told them

of Judah's impending destruction and the causes for it, to say nothing of the terrible example which Israel had set for their observation. The reasonable conclusion exists that sin so destroyed their moral faculties that they were totally unable to discern a valid judgment upon their impure hearts and their immoral lives.

Terminology for sin in Jeremiah follows the usual pattern of prophetic writers. Again, the consistency of usage is not outstanding enough to say that in his mind any one word or concept defined exactly what sin was. Quite often he describes an action to define the term used, giving actual content to it through living description. His vocabulary is wide, but not unusual; hence we need not review it exhaustively since the ground has been covered with other prophets.¹

As we examine the writings of Jeremiah with reference to an increased interest in the individual, we find that at last it has dawned upon the prophet that the individual men are responsible for the complexion of Israel's society. We find him sharing with Ezekiel the refutation of the parable concerning the fathers' sin resting upon the children, stating that "every one shall die for his own sin" (31:30a). It is not a society so much as the average citizen of all classes whose range of desire is largely confined to the level of things, to the material products which can be wrung from the soil, the sea, the mine.² The prophet is charged to seek in the streets of Jerusalem, to run to and fro in her squares, to see if he can find "one who does justice, and seeks truth"

1. See Young's Analytical Concordance.

2. Graham, PIC, 56.

(5:1b), to the end that, "I may pardon her" (5:1c). Such language is reminiscent of Abraham's intercession for Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19). Sadly, it seems no one was found for Jerusalem, just as there were not enough in Sodom. The Lord who tries the righteous (20:12) apparently found that the individuals of Jerusalem were those who had stubborn, rebellious hearts (5:23); individuals who stubbornly followed their own hearts (9:14); individuals who were part of an evil people who follow their own evil hearts (13:10; 11:8). They are those of whom Yahweh can ask, "How can I pardon you?" (5:7a), for their sins of personal lust are committed in full knowledge that they are wrong (5:7-9).

But Jeremiah does reach a point with respect to the individual that introduces to us the need for a power of grace to deal with the sin of the heart. Though he seeks a greater exercise of the will and judgment on the part of the leaders, the priests, and the people, yet in the final analysis he recognizes that:

I know, O Lord, that the way of a man
 is not in himself,
 that it is not in man who walks
 to direct his steps.
 Correct me, O Lord, but in just measure;
 not in thy anger, lest thou bring
 me to nothing. (10:23-24).

If this consciousness of man's inability to perform God's will came from Jeremiah's introspective self-examination, we should be thankful for it. Isaiah's Temple experience had given a shadow of such an idea, but here it is stated explicitly for the first time. It is as though Jeremiah, having witnessed the failure of his predecessors and being himself exhausted from entreating the people to turn from their

wicked ways, had come at last to realize that such pleadings fell on ears which could not perceive because of the nature of the hearts of the hearers. Through this understanding the area of man's inner life was opened to the supernatural working of God through His own spiritual measures. When once a man awakens to this fact, then he becomes a candidate for the grace of God to correct and to judge, for no man will arrive at such a conclusion until he is ready to repent of the past rebellion which he has demonstrated toward God. (cf. 5:24). Personal responsibility of the individual worshiper came one step nearer full development with Jeremiah's pronouncement of this doctrine.

The emphasis which Jeremiah puts upon the individual is not at the expense of the community, however. It is the community which speaks its practical atheism in contempt when "They have spoken falsely of the Lord, and have said, 'He will do nothing; no evil will come upon us, nor shall we see sword or famine.'" (5:12). It is Israel as a nation to whom "the word of the Lord is to them an object of scorn, they take no pleasure in it." (6:10b). It is the land of Yahweh and His inheritance which the nation defiles by worship of Baal (2:7). It is Israel who has long ago broken the yoke of Yahweh, declaring, "I will not serve" (2:20a). It is to Israel as His bride that Yahweh gives the challenge, "How can you say, 'I am not defiled, I have not gone after the Baals'? Look at your way in the valley, know what you have done—." (2:23). The whole concept here is ". . . but a part of the imagery which represents Israel as the wife of God and its worship of other gods as adultery."¹ Contamination

1. Büchler, SSA, 222.

of sin has permeated society, both poor and great (5:4-5). They are skilled to do evil, but know not how to do good (4:22b). It is the "virgin Israel" who has done a "horrible thing" in deserting her God (18:13-16a).

On the other hand, it is the nation to which Yahweh directs His promise of restoration. Other nations shall be destroyed, but Israel shall be corrected with judgment (30:11). Israel will return from the captivity into which her sins have plunged her (30:11). It is in the tenderest terms that God declares His love for His people, "I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness unto you" (31:3b). A king like unto David is promised to the restored nation (23:5-6).

Jeremiah has an unexcelled vocabulary in describing the results of sin. Because of it God "hates" His heritage (12:8b). It provokes Yahweh to vengeance (5:9b f, 29b; 9:9) against them, for He is "weary of relenting," therefore He has stretched forth His hand against them to destroy them (15:6). Since no prophetic exhortation could convince them of their sin and chastisement could not bring them to repentance, they were to Yahweh as incorrigible children (5:3), and nothing was left but to write Judah's epitaph: "This is the nation that did not obey the voice of the Lord their God, and did not accept discipline; truth has perished; it is cut off from their lips." (7:28b).

The final statement of the above quotation points up one of the tragic features of sin: continued rejection of truth eventuates in its destruction in the land. No air of injured innocence will suffice to excuse the utter rejection of truth on the part of Israel. That which

they have refused to heed has now departed from them. Just as a bird is equipped with a natural homing instinct, so man has an instinct for God, but sin destroys it (8:7). The sinner, individual or nation, is left without that knowledge and longing for truth which steadies the life in the midst of difficulty.

It took the prophet who was most firmly convinced of Israel's destruction to bring forth the most constructive teaching with regard to her restoration. But a study of his work will reveal that all of Jeremiah's negative teaching was based on the principle that the severity of Yahweh's judgment was truly remedial and constructive.¹ Other prophets had taught that a covenant would be renewed between Israel and her God in the day of restoration, and Hosea had pictured the renewal in the terms of a renewed betrothal; but it remained for Jeremiah to take the concept of the covenant and make of it an inward thing. Just as he had seen sin as engraved in the hardness of their hearts, so he saw the law of Yahweh inscribed on the heart of the returned Israel.

But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord; I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each man teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, "Know the Lord," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. (31:33-34).

Here we have a splendid merging of the national and the individual concept of sin. As a broken and dishonored covenant connotes a decadent state, so a new covenant relation with God, wherein not the communal

1. Genung, GBL, 241.

body but the individual soul is the vital unit, connotes a new commonwealth renewed after its inner principle.¹ This renewed covenant will be based upon the pardoning and forgiving grace of Yahweh, extended freely to the people who have passed through the purging of the exile, and who, ideally at least, will no longer go after strange gods and work iniquity. It is God who will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against Him (33:8). They will find that their broken fellowship with God has been restored, for Yahweh declares,

I will give them a heart to know that I am the Lord; and they shall be my people and I will be their God, for they shall return to me with their whole heart (24:7).

This picture, however, is ideal in the extreme and must be predicated upon the basis of Jeremiah's teaching in other places. At first there is apparently a tone of hopefulness in his message, which finds expression in promises to Judah that if her ways were mended she might dwell in the land. There is legitimate inference to be drawn from some passages (notably 18:7-11) that the course of sin and its punishment may be stayed at any point (cf. also 7:4-8; 26:3). On the other hand, the prophet is later enjoined not to pray for this sinful nation (7:16; 11:14; 15:1). Once the patience and love of God have been exhausted by their iniquity, His justice demands correction of the rebellious nation. If Jeremiah was not certain when this point had been crossed with respect to Judah, it nevertheless was there as a pertinent factor in his teaching with respect to sin, for there is no doubt that Jeremiah never questioned

1. Genung, GBL, 241.

the justice of God in bringing the sin of Judah into final trial before Him. But Jeremiah also shared with other prophets the thought that even though suffering was a payment for sin, yet it was also to be constructive. He, more than Hosea, makes a direct connection between the suffering of Israel and her restoration, but not so much as does the great Second Isaiah who sees the exile as double payment for her sins (Isaiah 40:2). Jeremiah nowhere states whether the great visitation will be sufficient to wipe out the grave sins of many years, but added to all the rest of his teachings, we may think that he had such an idea in his thinking.¹ The great 51st chapter, which almost burns the page in its strong and intense picture of destruction, gives the keynote to the purpose of God in destruction, viz., the deliverance of the good. On it Chambers comments, "You will never find in the Bible that things are destroyed for the sake of destruction."² We might prefer that the prophet establish a more causal connection between the exile and the restoration, but at the same time we are at liberty to infer that the latter would have been impossible without the former. Also, although it is not specifically stated, we may infer that the suffering will produce the repentance and returning which Yahweh so frequently pleaded for with Israel. For surely it is the work of the Lord that shall restore them (31:7, 10), and He has been brought to forget His anger against them because they mourned and acknowledged their guilt in going astray from Him (31:17-19).

In Jeremiah we also meet strongly the twofold nature of sin:

1. Büchler, SSA, 253.

2. Chambers, TPS, 24.

actions and attitudes. Particularly in 33:8 we note Yahweh's saying, "I will cleanse them from all the guilt of their sin against me, and I will forgive all the guilt of their sin and rebellion against me." The two words for cleansing and forgiveness are not synonymous, for the cleansing corresponds to the atoning action of the priest in the sacrificial sprinkling of the blood, which cleanses away the sin completely, and it is followed here by God's forgiveness.¹ Following the prophet's sustained figure of sin as a contamination of the heart, the removal of sin in 33:8 then depicts complete destruction of both the principle and the practice of sin in the life of the individual and nation.

There is no question that Jeremiah did not consider it necessary that cultic purification accompany the restoration. We may question, if we wish, whether or not he was opposed to all cultic worship, but certainly he did not favor the cult of his day (cf. 7:22). When we hear him calling for "washing" and for "circumcision," it is the heart that is the object of these activities (4:4, 14a); and rather than putting from them unclean objects as a means of salvation, they are commanded to put away evil thoughts (4:14b). He is one of those prophets of whom Oehler says,

. . . when they speak of the true sacrifice, the true lustration which man needs, they are simply expressing the thoughts which underlie the symbolical ritual.²

Significantly, Jeremiah tells them that they shall be found of their God when they pray (29:12). When they are told to "go, stand not

1. B'üchler, SSA, 449.

2. Oehler, OTT, 183.

still! Remember the Lord from afar, and let Jerusalem come into your mind" (51:50b), it is not simply a command to recall, but to re-identify themselves in their minds with their God.¹ When they shall have succeeded in opening their minds to repentance, then they shall be restored to an intimate, spiritual fellowship between them as a repentant, pardoned people and the God who loves them with an indomitable love (24:7).

Jeremiah seems to have caught the inner nature of sin—its obduracy, its bitter rebellion against Yahweh—better than some of the other prophets. By the same token he has given us a wonderful picture of the forgiveness which awaits the repentant soul. Just as he saw the terrible condition of the heart which had lost Yahweh, he saw most clearly the blessedness of that heart which found Him again.

We should not leave Jeremiah before commenting that we see the doctrine of Messiah coming out in him. He pictures the glories of a well cared for land, shepherded by gentle shepherds, and ruled by the righteous Branch of David's line. His rule shall be wise, just, and righteous, and under Him Judah and Israel shall dwell securely (23:4-6). The connection which His coming has with the expiation of sin is not by any means clear, but He will appear when Yahweh breaks the yoke of foreigners from Israel's neck (30:9), indicating that He will rule over the people who have been regenerated through the exile. However, His office has not yet become that of a vicarious sufferer who carries the sins of the nation. It remained for Second Isaiah to bring forth this idea. To him and others like him who attempted to strike a balance between the priestly and the prophetic, we now direct our thought.

1. Chambers, TPS, 30.

CHAPTER III

THE MEDIATORS

"When a series of statements is traditionally sacred and continually repeated, directly opposed ideas can be expressed at the same time with wonderful ease to the hearers."¹

Introduction

There was a group of writers who were not so extreme in their views as were the pure priest and prophet. Possibly they came nearer than either of the other groups to expressing the real religious genius of Israel, for it hardly seems that the violent controversy which apparently flared up in the eighth century could have been representative of the over-all attitude of Israel toward its cult and Yahweh's spokesmen. The office of both priest and prophet had suffered through misuse of it by individuals, and at the time of this conflict between the writing prophets and the officiating priests it is apparent that there were false prophets and corrupt priests functioning within the cultus of Israel. On the other hand, it does not follow that a purified form of each office would not be essential to a complete religion for humanity. The Bible in its teaching of these matters does not present us with a book of sacred theology and a definition of the office of the speaking prophet;

1. Hamilton, SFG, 193.

rather, it projects men and systems against the background of humanity and by this means seeks to show what is required from a worshiper of God. The total revelation of Yahweh to Israel, then, carries with it instructions as to the proper method as well as the proper spirit of worship. Extremists, yes, even fanatics were necessary among the proponents of each one of the opposing systems which vied for the adherence of Israel to it as the only acceptable form of worship; that is, they were necessary if one system was not to strangle the other completely and destroy its function and usefulness to the religious society. It might be noted that the almost total absence of prophecy during the last four centuries before Christ witnesses to the danger of one system gaining absolute ascendancy over the other, resulting in the abuses which were so common to Phariseeism. We value the writings which give us the clearest picture of the separate sides of the religious system of Israel, for the clarity of presentation found there is invaluable to us when we attempt to form systems and emphasize details. Yet, we should take care to avoid the danger of becoming one-sided and thereby omitting other things which are also important.

The group of biblical writers who have attempted to combine the prophetic and priestly teachings we have chosen to call the "mediators". Like the other books considered, some of these books are long, others extremely short; but they have in common the emphasis which they place upon a union of moral and ritual obedience. Some of them have suffered in popularity for this synthesis of doctrine, as is the case with Ezekiel among modern writers.¹ It might conceivably serve our purpose to ignore

1. Davidson, TOT, 359.

these writers in our present study since they add little to the minute details of the priestly and prophetic conception of sin. On the other hand, they do present us with a valuable insight into the attempts to unite the moral and cultic features of worship into a working religion. For this reason we turn now to study representatives of this group. Where details overlap features which have been considered previously, we shall not burden the reader with examining them again. Further, a detailed examination of them is not indicated, since in them we are seeking for application and interpretation of the two elements of Israel's religion with respect to sin; hence our treatment of them can be both brief and yet complete.

The Deuteronomist. Almost all modern scholarship is agreed that the book of Deuteronomy is the deposit of the teaching of the eighth century prophets.¹ In this respect it emphasizes the humanitarian teachings of those men. It is not necessary to dwell on the frequency with which the widow, the orphan, and the stranger are commended to the consideration of the people, because they were themselves once strangers in Egypt. Duhm² and Davidson³ both stress the point that the humanity inculcated everywhere in this book comes from the reflection of the teachings of Hosea and Isaiah on these matters. Deuteronomy marks a decided strengthening of the idea that all of Israel's religious law stems from the historical fact that Yahweh chose them from all the nations of the earth and

1. Rowley, MSOT, 80.

2. Duhm, TDP, 199.

3. Davidson, TOT, 360.

through the historical revelation of His love for them He has proved His fidelity to the covenant.

Moreover, laws of morality and ritual alike are enjoined upon Israel by the complementary passages of 4:37 and 6:4: "because He loved your fathers and chose their descendants after them . . ." ". . . you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might." Whatever might be the demands upon Israel in the name of her religion, obedience was sought through the motivation of love along with law (6:5; 10:12; 11:1; 13:33; 30:6, 16, 20). Just as the marriage vow binds two people into one by the phrasing of the vow, "forsaking all others and keeping thyself only unto him so long as ye both shall live," so Yahweh is joined to Israel in a bond which is mutually accepted by both. Further, just as the spirit of this pledge, not the law of it, is expected to enforce the relationship between man and wife, just so does Deuteronomy expect Israel to obey the rules of Yahweh because of her love for Him; and--to continue the analogy at the risk of exceeding a reasonable application of it--the rules of worship attached to the covenant of Israel and her God may correspond to the social rules governing the conduct of husband and wife.

What was sin in Deuteronomy? It is anything which is out of harmony with the character of Yahweh as He has revealed Himself historically to Israel, and that character is holiness. Probably in this respect Isaiah's doctrine is most clearly reflected in Deuteronomy. However, where Isaiah finally concluded that a remnant of Israel would be all that would attain this state of holiness, Deuteronomy seeks to realize the ideal in the present life and people. This was the unifying idea which

underlay all the prescriptions regarding cleanness and purification, as well as the denunciations of the impurities of the Canaanites.¹ The main idea of the book is the holiness of Yahweh and the necessary holiness of His people. And as Davidson points out,

To 'sanctify' Jehovah is to recognise Him to be the God that He is; God alone, spiritual, and above all ethical. To 'sanctify' Him in thought is to recognise this; in act, it is to live as the people of such a God should do--to be like Him.²

With reference to the opposite of sanctifying Yahweh in Israel, the same author continues:

The opposite of to 'sanctify' is to 'profane'; and the people profane His name when, being His people, they engage in the impure worship of the Canaanites, or serve Jehovah in a false way, as under visible forms; and when, being His people, they practise the moral impurities of the nations about them.³

Welch has grasped the same controlling idea in his definition of "abomination" which occurs so frequently in connection with forbidden objects and practices among the Israelites. He defines the term as ". . . something which was grotesquely dissonant with the nature and will of the God who had revealed Himself to Israel."⁴ This class of disobedience included specifically the keeping of idols such as the Canaanites worshiped (7:25-26), the desire to worship Yahweh as these gods had been worshiped (12:31), the offering of blemished sacrifice (17:1), the

1. Davidson, TOT, 361.

2. Davidson, TOT, 361.

3. Davidson, TOT, 361.

4. Welch, PPOI, 85.

exchange of clothing between the sexes (22:5), bringing the hire of a harlot or a Sodomite as payment for a vow to the Lord (23:18), the remarriage of a twice divorced woman by her first husband (24:4), and the rendering of unjust measure and weight in trade (25:13-16). "Abominable" practices "provoke Him to anger" in 32:16.

To complete this idea we have but to turn to 7:9-10, where those who fail to observe the law are characterized as "those who hate Him". Just as those who love Him will obey and "sanctify" His name, so those who hate Him will disobey and "profane" it. The absolutes of either/or were now being drawn, those indiscriminate labels which inevitably work to the disregard of moral shades in judging of human action. As D moved on to P, this emphasis was strengthened on the side of law as opposed to ethics.

A survey of the rules with respect to chastity and sexual relations between the sexes would show that they parallel closely those laid down in Leviticus. Generally speaking, the tone of morality is high and the ethical demands of Yahweh's holiness are emphasized.

On the other hand, it must be recognized that under Deuteronomy and the law in general, holiness was extended over a multitude of outward conditions; and ideas such as clean and unclean, perfect and imperfect physically are drawn very largely into it. D served as the tutor of P in the employment of this device to set before the people the great ideal of holiness, seeking by this method to teach to the congregation the necessity of attempting to realize it in their lives.

To accomplish this latter task, Deuteronomy does make use of the laws of clean and unclean, ritual and sacrifice, Temple worship and

priesthood. It appears in partial answer to the dilemma which Amos posed, "either ethics or ritual," seeking to give Israel a religion which would include both ethics and ritual.¹ However, Deuteronomy does not ascribe atoning value to sacrifice as Leviticus does, and Badè is of the opinion that it is retained in D only as a humanitarian means of supporting a very influential class of society, the Levites and Priests.² To say the least, the general attitude of D toward sacrifice is not that of the Priestly Code. The observance of ritual was not in the least considered as efficacious unless it was accompanied by the proper spirit on the part of the congregation. In commenting on Deuteronomy 28, Rowley observes:

It is obedience in life, and not mere sacrifice that ensures blessing. When the prophets declared that a harvest of sorrow would be reaped because the whole of society was rotten in the eyes of God, despite the splendour of the ritual, they were not saying anything that was alien in principle to what is said in the Law.³

It should be added, however, that Deuteronomy makes this fact clearer than other parts of the Law.

Deuteronomy so firmly believed that sin brought positive and immediate punishment upon the sinner that we have named such a doctrine the "Deuteronomic Law". The list of curses found in 27:15-26 concludes with the affirmation, "Cursed be he who does not confirm the words of this law by doing them." The nature of such curses is vividly described in very physical and temporal terms throughout the rest of the book.

1. Pfeiffer, IOT, 534.

2. Badè, OTLT, 300.

3. Rowley, MSOT, 94.

Everywhere the lesson is driven home that men suffer only because God is angry with them. Here is the essence of D's concept of sin: the ethical standard of the prophet and the ceremonial of the Temple are both expressive of the character of Israel's God; that God has laid down the rules of the book as a guide by which Israel can be sure that she is living up to her responsibilities with respect to Yahweh's will for her as His chosen people; hence, any infraction of these rules in any form is sin. Whether or not this was a wise step in the religion of Israel is open to question. Cornill voices the general opinion when he makes note that Deuteronomy

. . . substituted for the living revelation of God in the human heart and in history, the dead letter. For the first time a book was made the foundation of religion, religion a statute, a law. He who followed what was written in this book was religious, and he alone.¹

There is no question that this fact led to abuses and misinterpretations. Cornill further thinks that the attempt on the part of D to realize the prophetic ideas by external means naturally brought in its train the externalization of those ideas.² At least he is justified in such a stand with respect to the punishment of and restoration from sin. Punishment takes the form of physical hardship visited upon the sinner and his posterity, while restoration plays no part in D's scheme. By raising the office of the priest to new heights, D opened the way by which the whole cultus became more and more an institution for the propitiation of sins with the priest as the intermediary who negotiates the

1. Cornill, POI, 89.

2. Cornill, POI, 89.

forgiveness, but he himself has little to say of the matter. It remained for men like Ezekiel and Second Isaiah--men who had experienced the suffering of the exile--to bring the feature of atonement into strong focus in Israel. We move next to Ezekiel, to seek his contribution to the question under discussion.

Ezekiel. This prophet-priest occupies the most strategic position among the writers of Israel with respect to the development of her religion. He lived to see not only the downfall of Judah, but also a great part of the captivity. He shared in the fulfillment of prophecy while assisting in the re-creation of a new religious synthesis of prophecy and cult. It is not difficult to understand, then, why we can look to him for much that appears in both prophet and priest. We will not go into detail on the features in which he parallels both these other groups, for they have been covered previously. However, there are certain exceedingly important features of the religion of Israel with reference to sin which Ezekiel is the first to make clear. It is on this point that we wish to dwell briefly.

In the first place, Ezekiel is not so explicit as some of the earlier prophets in detailing the sins for which Israel is charged before Yahweh. As Dr. Pfeiffer points out, Ezekiel with a theoretical generalization rhetorically sums up the religious sins as idolatry (or, like Hosea, as whoredoms); and--with considerable exaggeration--tends to summarize the nation's ethical transgressions as murder, or shedding of blood (7:23; 9:9; 16:38; 22:2-4, 6, 9, 12 f., 25, 27; 23:38, 45; 24:6 f., 9; cf. 18:10; 33:35; 36:18).¹ A number of ethical offenses are

1. Pfeiffer, IOT, 547.

enumerated in 22:1-16, and more fully later in chapter 18 when the prophet is dealing with individuals instead of the nation. A study of his ethical code reveals that it closely resembles that of the Holiness Code found in Leviticus. Such similarities are sufficient to establish that Ezekiel held the same high ethical standards as the other prophets, even though he may have given less space to a discussion of them.

Secondly, we find the real polemic against idols beginning with Ezekiel.¹ His concern on this point may have been largely unfounded as far as the facts go, since there is little indication that the Israelites and Judeans were prone to the use of images at any period of their history, whether in the worship of Yahweh or of other gods.² However, the worship of other gods and the practice of their abominations seem to have found rather fertile soil among the Israelites from time to time, and it is reasonable to assume that Ezekiel's strong denunciation of idolatrous worship was given as a preventive measure. No doubt by it he hoped to prevent the Jews in Babylon from going away to worship the idols of their conquerors. The spirit of gloom and despondency which had settled over the exiles was warning enough that they would be open to receive any new religion which would promise to supplant that in which they had been disappointed in Jerusalem. Seeing this, Ezekiel would have been justified in combating a possible evil as though it were a historical one.

Robinson evaluates such teaching for modern thought in an excellent paragraph as follows:

1. Pfeiffer, "Polemic . . .," JBL, XLIII, 1924, 234.

2. Pfeiffer, IOT, 546.

It is perhaps difficult for us to enter into the full meaning of the prophetic denunciations of idolatry, just because we tend to think of it as a superstitious form of religion at a lower level than our own, but still sincere religion. But this is not what the prophets saw. They rightly regarded this assimilation of Israel's worship to that of the surrounding peoples as the abandonment of Israel's prerogative; in fact, Ezekiel here represents the people as saying (32): "We will be like the nations, the races of the lands, in serving wood and stone." . . . From our modern standpoint, we may say that the vice of all forms of idolatry is that it fossilizes religion by fixing it to the static and material, whilst a prophetic religion is always dynamic and spiritual and able to adjust itself, even unconsciously, to new needs. The future of Yahwism lay with its rejection of idolatry, for that left it open to spiritual and ethical development.¹

Sin in Ezekiel is considered as the heinous deeds and arrogant defiance of Yahweh, such as found in Sodom; or as self-willed separation, such as that of Samaria (16:53). It is pictured as ingratitude in 36:31 and 16:61-63. This latter point is one of Ezekiel's deeper elements, giving us the evangelical perspective that we can never discover what sin really is until we see it against a background of divine grace. It is found at other places in Ezekiel also, particularly in the allegory of the faithless wife (cf. 20:43).²

For all his emphasis upon the individual, Ezekiel was also concerned with the community. He was striving to secure a spiritual bond between individuals that would preserve the community. Says Cornill:

If Ezekiel could only succeed in making of every individual a sanctified personality, who at the same time felt himself to be a member of a community and was steeped with conviction that he could find true salvation only in this community, then would there be some hope of obtaining citizens worthy of the Kingdom of God, which was sure to come.³

1. Robinson, THP, 101.

2. Robinson, THP, 108.

3. Cornill, POI, 121.

His teaching with reference to the purging of the exile is also significant. On the very day when Jerusalem was invested (24:1), Ezekiel inveighed against the "bloody city" and composed the parable of the rusty caldron (24:2-14) to signify the ineradicable nature of its wickedness and to foretell its utter destruction.¹ In brief, he is saying that no amount of cleansing will remove her sin. She is like a pot so corroded that only to be cast into the fire for re-smelting and re-casting will make of her a fit vessel. Again, because she has not been purged by the lesser afflictions which have come upon her, her present destruction is in the nature of both a cleansing and a satisfaction of Yahweh's fury upon her (24:13). This bears out the thought which we found in the earlier prophets---that judgment could have been stayed all along its course had Israel but repented. This too is indicative of Yahweh's merciful favor toward her, that He did not cease to entreat her through purging methods, even when she was either unwilling or incapable to cleanse herself of her grave sins, and when she did not so much as invoke His assistance.²

We should not overlook the fact that Ezekiel did tend to confuse the external and the internal in the minds of his hearers. If we look at the list of sins denounced in chapter 18, we find, indeed, the high social morality demanded by all the great prophets---the justice and the mercy which are the higher life of a nation. But Robinson points out the weakness of his teaching this way:

1. Pfeiffer, IOT, 539.

2. Büchler, SSA, 253.

. . . the weakness here is that these are coupled with purely ritual demands, such as eating no flesh with the blood in it. You cannot put ritual and moral demands on the same level without tending to assimilate their value which means, for most people, the externalization of the moral demands into an outward obedience at the most; and, for some people, the exaltation of the ritual into something of intrinsic worth. We see the same danger in Chapter 22, where sins of sexual immorality and the oppression of the helpless through bribery are linked with the purely ritual breach or neglect of sabbath observance (8). Some of the admitted weaknesses of later Judaism (as also of Christianity) can be already seen in Ezekiel's failure to discriminate in the evils he denounces.¹

We must admit that this failure exists. Ezekiel does lay great store upon the sabbath, circumcision, and the concept of kosher. Whatever reason we may ascribe for his doing this, it is all too obvious that he did bring these three distinctive marks of later Judaism into religious prominence never before enjoyed. It is not our task here to justify or condemn his work at this point. It is enough to say that disobedience in these respects was sin, just as it was in respect to moral offenses.

Before turning to the use the prophet made of ritual and morality we need first to look at the contribution he made with reference to the individual and his religious experience. It is to him that we look for elucidation of Jeremiah's perception of the importance of the individual, for Jeremiah left it quite clouded. Ezekiel, on the other hand, came to the despondent exiles with the encouraging message that God takes no pleasure in the death of a sinner, but wishes rather that he be converted and live (33:11). He saw further that this conversion is quite possible; for the relation of God to man adjusts itself according to the relation

1. Robinson, THP, 102.

of man to God. This is the point, says Cornill,

. . . where Ezekiel's creative genius is displayed. If religious personality be the true subject of religion, the inestimable value of every individual human soul follows directly from this fact. Here it is that the lever must be applied, and in Ezekiel thus prophecy is transformed into the pastoral care of souls.¹

In dealing with the individual, the prophet not only disentangles him from the mass and the misfortunes of the past, but he also asserts a moral freedom of the individual which--once exercised--will permit him to break with the past, shake off its moral shackles, and in the favor of God, redeem himself from its consequences. Speaking of the two chapters (18 and 33) in Ezekiel which deal with the problem, Davidson says,

Perhaps there are hardly any more important passages in the Old Testament than these two chapters in Ezekiel. The religious unit, so to speak, that subject between which and God religion is the bond and in which religious experiences take place, is the individual mind.²

The prophet is here emphasizing a fact that had to come forth if the honor of Yahweh was to be vindicated. Death, per se, had come to the nation in the form of exile. It was the result of their sin. Apparently death was then the only way in which the justice of God could be satisfied on sinful men. But Ezekiel saw that this was not absolutely so. There yet remained a method of saving Yahweh from the charge of injustice and that method was to extend to the repentant individual the promises of life which had once been extended to but rejected by the nation. In

1. Cornill, POI, 119.

2. Davidson, TOT, 358-9.

this connection we hear the prophet stating a truth that is cherished even unto this day: "As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live." (33:11). Clearly he was stating his belief that every man will be responsible for his own conduct. No longer will the nation be held responsible for sins of individuals. Collective responsibility can only be possible where individuals accept their own responsibility as units of a group. This was, as Chamberlin observes, a hard doctrine for people who had thought in collective terms,¹ but it was a necessary one if either the nation or the individuals making it up were to come to a full understanding of the meaning of responsibility.

It is yet too early for the idea to have taken hold in Israel that sinfulness is a taint from which no human being is free. However, this doctrine, already implied in the sin offering required in the consecration of the priests (Leviticus 8), eventually became normative.² Ezekiel cleared the way for it.

In considering Ezekiel's doctrine of regeneration we must distinguish between what he says about the renewal of the nation and that of the individual, for it must be admitted that these two are not systematically co-ordinated. His best chapter on the renewal of the nation is found in chapter 37, giving the vision of the valley full of dry bones. With respect to the individual, the significant thing is that the washing which Yahweh shall give will bring forth a change of heart (36:25-27),

1. Chamberlin, MTEL, 266.

2. Pfeiffer, IOT, 545.

which, in the Hebrew idiom means a change of purpose.¹ This regeneration--a new birth in the Johannine terminology--is regarded as essential to any future which is to be better than the past. The change of purpose will be seen in obedience to the commands of God. The old heart of stone, which was deaf and unresponsive to those commands and petrified in its willfulness, will be exchanged for a new heart of flesh with responsiveness to the grace of God.

Ezekiel was a priest and therefore more deeply penetrated with the sense of sin and purity than other prophets. However, the prophet in him is not satisfied with the mere negation of ritualism. For him atonement is wrought by acquiring a "new heart and new spirit" (18:31). On the other hand, he does combine a belief in a complicated atoning ritual (cf. chapters 40-46) with the prophetic hope in the redeeming power of God's spirit which shall cleanse the people from their impurities and endow them with a "new heart and a new spirit" (36:26).² On this same subject McFadyen comments:

It is . . . significant that [his] ritual programme is immediately preceded by the words, "I have poured out My spirit upon the house of Israel." Like a true prophet, Ezekiel believes in the outpouring of the spirit, but, like a true priest, he believes that the spirit will express itself in ritual form. Similarly the great word, "I will give them another heart, and I will put a new spirit within them"--a word which strikes the authentic prophetic note--is immediately followed by other words which show that Ezekiel is thinking in terms of the legalism of the priest: the new spirit is given to the end "that they may walk in My statutes and keep Mine ordinances and do them."³

-
1. Robinson, THP, 107.
 2. Köhler, "Atonement," JE, II, 1902.
 3. McFadyen, MOI, 177-8.

Ezekiel's real contribution, then, is in his awareness of and development of the concept of individual responsibility in matters religious. On the other hand, his attempt to cement the individuals into a religious unity by means of a ritual code had both historical and psychological justification. Lofthouse's designation of him as the "Prophet of the Reconstruction" is a well-taken name,¹ for apparently he attempted to rally the discouraged exiles on the fundamental teachings of both elements of Israel's religion--the priestly and prophetic.

Deutero-Isaiah. Deutero-Isaiah, with his idea of the Suffering Servant, seems to have lost much of what we knew in the austerity of earlier prophets. There is nothing in his message of a social nature, not a trace of the passion of anger that swept through Amos and the first Isaiah at the oppression of the weak. Hamilton describes the difference between Second Isaiah and Amos in these words:

Never an idea entered Amos' mind that he could put off on God his own responsibility for the poor. But to the second Isaiah the whole question of poverty and oppression was unimportant. He was not concerned with it at all.²

Such an observation is too patently true to need further comment except to say that in this latter day there were no Jews in position to oppress their brethren, hence there was no need to preach against such sins. This anonymous prophet of the exile was motivated by another task to be done, namely: to persuade the Jews to return again to establish the

1. Lofthouse, PR, n.p.

2. Hamilton, SFG, 226.

community over which Yahweh was ruler. This task required a different emphasis than any ever before brought in Israel, an emphasis upon the power and unchanging mercy of Yahweh.

This feature of Second Isaiah is best illustrated in contrast to first Isaiah. In the latter the phrase most often repeated is "Woe unto them." So begin God's terrible threats to the wicked. Essentially, He says, "Fear Me." But in Second Isaiah the words perpetually repeated are, "Fear not," and hereby the awful God becomes a God who is a companion and savior to Israel.

This prophet again differs from other prophets in that their deepest conviction is that sin has run its course, and now only destruction awaits Israel, and later Judah. Not so with Second Isaiah. He did not regard the punishment as unalterable. It was the other prophets who sang of unforgiven sin—he sang of forgiveness. Nor did it escape him that he was bringing a new thing to be in Israel—the message that Israel's sin has been pardoned and again they share the kindness of God. His is the first voice to declare, "Israel has received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins" (40:1-11; 44:21-23).

This prophet recognized a very important fact in the religious experience of mankind; it takes small faith to declare the wrath of God toward sin, but it takes a profound spiritual insight to lead one to a faith in a redeemer who loves man to the degree that makes possible the transmuting of remorse into repentance. However, once this deeper fact is realized, the way is open for restoration to the former state. Israel in exile was suffering from that state in which a man finds himself when he knows only judgment for sin and recognizes that his is discovered. In

such a condition Israel could not rise above the despair of remorse to the hope of repentance.¹ It was the task of the new prophet to accomplish this transition in the heart of Israel.

Quite briefly the same charges are made against Israel here as were made by former prophets. They were sold for their iniquities, for transgression their mother was put away (50:1b). Their necks have been like iron sinews, their foreheads like brass. They have been obstinate and obdurate (chapter 48). They are accused of having sought to worship idols, and Yahweh points out His superiority over all of them, although they have been slow to acknowledge it. Yet, for all this, Yahweh has not cast them off for His name's sake; and the reason He is restoring them is not for their merit, but for His glory (48:11b). He is repeatedly called Savior and Redeemer of Israel, but almost in every case the salvation is not on a moral basis, but simply the return of the national position which once was considered evidence of Yahweh's care for them. In two instances (43:25; 44:22) the people are entreated to return unto Yahweh because He has redeemed them, indicating that there is no element of repentance involved on their part. Naturally, in this context it is the nation and not the individual which is considered.

On the other hand, there are instances where it appears that the suffering of the exile has brought about a change of heart. Even as Yahweh submits them to the purging fires for His name's sake, they are being refined as silver--i.e., their dross is being removed. This is not quite the clear insight of a later passage (55:6-7) where the sublime doctrine of repentance and pardon are beautifully stated:

1. Niebuhr, NADM, 257.

Seek the Lord while he may be found,
 call upon him while he is near;
 let the wicked forsake his way,
 and the unrighteous man his thoughts;
 let him return to the Lord, that he
 may have mercy on him,
 and to our God, for he will abundantly
 pardon.

This clear insight is somewhat clouded by the fact that there are undeniable references to priestly elements as a part of atoning process. The people are charged in 43:23-24 with not bringing burnt offerings and sacrifices to Yahweh, nor having satisfied Him with the fat of sacrifices. Rather, they have burdened Him with their sins and wearied Him with their iniquities. Also, when the new day is prophesied, the first feature of it will be the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the Temple (44:28b). The ransomed will come to Zion with singing (51:11), and the Lord shall return to Zion to take up His abode (52:8b), reminding us of Ezekiel's having seen Him depart therefrom. And at last we find that the cultic distinction between the clean and the unclean, the circumcised and the uncircumcised form a part of this vision of restored religious community.

This priestly idea embedded within this section of the book of Isaiah is not without one startling advantage, however. Without it the most significant part of the office of the Suffering Servant would be left out, for all the tribulations of this one are to the end that he shall become a "guilt-offering" for transgressors (53:10). Oesterley thinks this word is, perhaps, the most significant word in the entire 53rd chapter, a word pregnant with meaning to the Hebrews who were accustomed to the offering of this type in the cult.¹ In this one word is

1. Oesterley, JDM, 8.

involved a recognition of the guilt which the "Servant" takes upon himself, and also a recognition that a compensation for sin must be paid.

Says Oesterley,

The thought underlying it all is that God has been injured, and has therefore to be compensated; the asham is the medium whereby the injury is compensated for, and by means of which normal relations between God and His people are re-established. As a compensatory offering the victim in the asham could be said to "bear the sin (i.e., the injury done to God) of many".¹

Whatever may be the identity of the Servant, the vital point in connection with him is that he takes upon himself the sins of others, with the two-fold result that the latter are made righteous, i.e., become justified in the sight of God, while he himself becomes a sacrifice for sin. It is this principle of vicarious suffering, here introduced into biblical history, which forms the foundation in our religious belief. For it we are grateful to Second Isaiah. This is not to say that the principle of mediation had not been known before in Israel, but only to point out that a differentiation has to be made between the principle of mediation and the idea of a mediator. The latter is a logical development of the former and Judaism was not slow to develop this idea once it was presented, but without the work of this prophet centuries more might have elapsed before Israel realized that sin could be vicariously atoned for.

Here too is a tacit recognition that only God can provide a satisfactory atonement for sin. Repeatedly we find that the prophet represents Yahweh as redeeming His people for His own sake, not for theirs

1. Oesterley, JDM, 26-7.

(43:25). It is God against whom they have sinned (42:24b), and He it is who pleads with them to return unto Him because He has redeemed them (44:22b). Rowley does not think that this close connection between redemption and suffering can be removed from a close relation to the suffering of God, since it is born of Israel's sense that all sin is fundamentally and primarily sin against God; therefore, the triumph over sin must be His.¹ Whether or not Isaiah saw the full outworking of his doctrine is not in question here. Very probably he did not; but the idea which he presented fitted the historical Jesus so perfectly that men have come to identify the two as synonymous in Christianity.

This prophet has made the last great contribution to the thoughts concerning sin among the mediators of priestly and prophetic thought. A short sketch of others who made contributions of a rather minor nature now claims our attention.

Haggai. The burden of Haggai is the stirring up of the returnees to rebuild the Temple in order that their worship may be acceptable in the sight of Yahweh. Following the restoration of the cult in 537 B. C., highly momentous transformations must have taken place within the priesthood, for in the year 520 B. C. we suddenly find a high-priest of whom there is no premonitory trace in the Israel of the pre-exilic period, and of whom absolutely nothing is known either in Deuteronomy or by Ezekiel.² Haggai tells us that the cornerstone of the Temple was not laid until the 24th of December, 520 B. C. This, along with his announcement that their

1. Rowley, TRA, 168.

2. Cornill, POI, 149.

present hardships spring from their disregard of the house of the Lord, marks him as a definite priestly writer. He is not concerned with idolatry and heathenish practices so much as with a growing tendency toward secularism.

Even Haggai's great comment on the effects of holy and unholy objects is based on this emphasis of the rebuilding of the Temple. When he puts his question regarding the transmission of holiness and its opposite, uncleanness, from the answer of the priest he develops a principle which became quite normal in Judaism. The principle enunciated was this:

Whereas indirect contact with holiness does not make holy, direct contact with uncleanness does make unclean; and therefore since the nation has so little contact with holiness, and so much with uncleanness, the whole nation is unclean and the sacrifices which are offered are similarly infected. . . . But when the Temple is rebuilt--it being implied that the Temple worship will be a greater factor in the life of the community than formerly--the sanctifying influence will outweigh the defiling, and with increased holiness will come an increase of welfare.¹

The work of Haggai, as well as that of Zechariah, is to implement the plans of Ezekiel and the promises of Second Isaiah. They are called to encourage and reprimand the discouraged and lagging returnees. Through their inactivity in setting up the house of the Lord, they are showing their unbelief in Yahweh's word. Here is a reflection of the first Isaiah, a lack of faith on the part of the nation--a faith which expresses itself in action. The object of the action is different from that prescribed by the earlier writer, but the purpose is the same. The people are called to show their trust in their God. Not to do so is sin. However, Haggai adds the touch of the priest to this setting by implying

1. Kennett, "Haggai," Peake's Commentary.

that the presence of the Temple in their midst will act as a means whereby holiness shall come into all the land and the curse of barrenness will be removed.

Zechariah. A contemporary of Haggai, this younger prophet expands his teaching to include more of the teaching of earlier prophets than any of the other post-exilic writers. He preaches with a directness which reminds us of the words of Amos, and in his statements on social justice there is reflection of the great eighth century writers. However, he does not exclude from his message an encouraging note for those who were engaged in rebuilding the Temple. He joined with Haggai in seeking to inspire ". . . this sullen, suspicious, disillusioned and despondent people . . . with faith and hope in themselves, their God and their destiny."¹

The main feature of Temple worship on which Zechariah dwells is that of the high priest. Chapter 3 gives the picture of Joshua, the high priest, divested of his filthy garments and clothed with new ones symbolic of purity and authority. At the same time, while Satan stands there attempting to recall the sin of Israel to God's attention, the messenger of God proclaims that "I have taken your iniquity away from you." Further, this figure of the high priest is a foreshadow of that perfect one who shall come and whose advent will bring the removal of iniquity from the land (3:8 ff.; 6:9-15). There is much evidence to indicate that Zechariah had Zerubbabel in mind when he spoke of the "Branch" (6:12) who should build the Temple of the Lord. On the other hand, he makes it

1. McFadyen, MOI, 130.

quite clear that whoever it is that fills the position, his removal of the guilt of the land will be accomplished through Yahweh, whose servant he will be. Such an interpretation left the way open for future generations of Judaism and Christianity to identify Zechariah's "Branch" with Jesus, although it is very doubtful if Zechariah himself would have placed such interpretation upon his prophecy.

Chapter 5 is truly prophetic in its concept of a law embodying curses against those who steal and lie (5:1-4). The same chapter, picturing iniquity as a woman placed in an ephah and borne away to Shinar (5:5-11), looks with priestly eyes upon sin as an entity which can be removed physically from the bounds of the holy nation. On the other hand, it is not out of order to infer that the prophet here is prefiguring the entire removal of the spirit of wickedness and its banishment to the typical land of unholiness.¹

If, however, Zechariah speaks with the voice of a priest at times he nevertheless is truly prophetic. After he had given his encouraging words concerning the Temple building, he later directed the attention of his hearers from outward observances to the real substance of Yahweh's demands (chapters 7 and 8). He did this in response to their question whether it was still obligatory to observe the feasts instituted to commemorate the destruction of Jerusalem. With elemental simplicity he referred them to the "words which the Lord proclaimed by the former prophets" (7:7b); then he continued to detail for them these words with respect to justice, truth, oppression, just as these other men had done. He reminded his hearers that for them too was the warning which had come

1. Kirkpatrick, DOP, 428.

to their forefathers, the warning which had gone unheeded and had resulted in the exile. He draws on history for his lesson that:

It was just this sitting loose to moral obligation, this refusal to listen to the voice of the preacher when he pled for a nobler way of conducting the affairs of individual and national life, that had brought, according to Zechariah, the terrible doom of exile upon their guilty fathers.¹

In these same chapters Zechariah reminds us that men who would reconstruct their world must begin by reconstructing themselves. "Only reconstructed men can reconstruct the world. Especially must we begin by shaking off the paralysis of despondency."² "Be strong," "Fear not," he says (8:9, 13, 15), promising that they stand in Yahweh's favor just as their fathers stood in His disfavor. The only hindrance to the fulfillment of Yahweh's purpose for good lies now in their lack of cooperation with Him. If they will move along the moral lines indicated, they shall enjoy prosperity and happiness, and their fasts shall be turned into feasts of joy, gladness, and cheerfulness (8:19).

There is a passage of dubious authenticity which proclaims the opening of a fountain which shall be for the cleaning of the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from sin and uncleanness (13:1). This is promised in connection with the day of Lord which was so prominent among apocalyptic writers. It is a day when idols shall be cut off, and prophets will be ashamed to admit that they are prophets (13:2-6). Most scholars agree that this is much too priestly in tone to stem from

1. McFadyen, MOI, 140.

2. McFadyen, MOI, 131.

the original Zechariah. To say the least, it is not characterized by the morality of chapters 7 and 8, and its method of dealing with sin in such an arbitrary fashion is hard to reconcile with the situation in which Zechariah lived and taught.

Malachi. Forming the last of the Old Testament in our canon of scripture, this short book is critical of the priesthood, while at the same time holding firmly to the priestly idea. He does not speak as a protestant nor with the voice of the earlier prophets; his is the voice of a reformer. His charge of sin is leveled largely at the priests who have corrupted the altar of the Lord by bringing unclean sacrifices. By their attitude they declare that they have no respect or reverence for this instrument of their union with Yahweh. His charge is opposite that of Amos, for there the people are reprimanded for bringing such costly gifts in hands soiled with sin; here their crime is charged that they say those who do evil are good in the sight of Yahweh (2:17), and they ask, "Where is the God of justice?" (2:17b). Such a careless attitude would lead them to carelessness in the performance of their religious duties.

Again, in denouncing the evil of divorce and marrying of foreign women, Malachi declares in priestly tone that these things have profaned the sanctuary of the Lord (2:11b). Yet, the old tone of prophetic morality is not lacking, for Yahweh promises to draw near in swift judgment against sorcerers, adulterers, and oppressors (3:5). Then immediately following, he again returns to the priestly theme of required obedience to the statutes of God, placing especial emphasis upon the tithes and offerings which the law commands and which the people are now withholding (3:6-9). An observance of these demands would bring a return of

prosperity (3:10-12). But still the people suffer from the same blindness of their fathers, in that they say, "It is vain to serve God. What is the good of our keeping his charge or of walking as in mourning before the Lord of hosts?" (3:14).

Malachi has obviously come to share in the rather fatalistic conception that only an act of divine power can effectively eradicate the evildoers and the arrogant from Israel. Hence, we find him promising that there shall come a day when these classes of sinners shall be burned as stubble and when the righteous shall see the rise of one who shall heal them (4:1-2). More and more the time was coming when this idea should control the hopes of Israel with respect to deliverance from sin.

Joel. Joel is certainly both prophetic and priestly in his assurance that the present misfortune of Israel is due to her religious failure. However, his main emphasis upon the diverting of their disaster is upon priestly and ritual lines. They find themselves in this state "because cereal offering and drink offering are withheld from the house of your God." (1:13). They are called to a solemn assembly, a fast, to mourning in order that perchance God may yet hear and intercede for them against the evil of pestilence and famine (1:14; 2:15, 17). In this connection, however, the prophet does not fail to recognize that these rites are not effective except as they express the inner attitude of the penitent worshiper. "Return to me with all your heart," he says, "and rend your hearts and not your garments." (2:12a, 13a). This inner return will no doubt be accompanied by "fasting, weeping, and mourning" (2:12b), but these will be but the outer signs of their inner experience. "Such a return," says the prophet, "will perhaps bring a restoration of the

fortunes of Israel from the hand of the Lord their God who is "gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love" (2:13b). In this connection, he seems not at all so sure as some earlier prophets that repentance will bring about a turn of fortune. It may be that his observations from the history of his predecessors has led him to be cautious in his promises.

Joel does at last arrive at a sure word in respect to the question considered above. He concludes chapter 2 with a beautiful promise of restored fertility for the land and the removal of the enemy to the north. Then in chapter 3 he pictures Yahweh as a warrior who delivers His people from their enemies, and comes to dwell in Zion. Jerusalem becomes the ideal holy city through which no stranger shall ever again pass (3:17). The iniquity of the nations shall be brought into judgment (3:11-13), and Judah and Jerusalem shall be established forever through the power of their God (3:20). Nothing is said to indicate that this establishing shall follow either repentance or ritual. It is simply a gratuitous gift from Yahweh to His chosen people. We might infer from the prophetic thought in general that Joel simply went from the fact of devastation to the certainty of restoration without stating the obvious conditions by which one should be changed to the other. In this he is like other prophets who left out some of the details of this vital subject. It would seem to be safe to assume that he based his teaching in this respect on his dual basis of heart repentance and solemn observance of the ritual.

Trito-Isaiah. This short section of the book of Isaiah gives us a picture of a nation still unregenerated by the experience of the exile.

The people are slow to listen to the invitation with which this prophet opens his offer of salvation, and to the call to repentance. The prophet renews his summons to repentance, with an exposure of the hypocrisy of Israel's formal righteousness (chapter 58). Unrepented sin is the real hindrance to the desired salvation, not impotence or unwillingness on Yahweh's part. If man will not cooperate with Him, Yahweh's arm will effect His own salvation (59:16).

In this section the most fearful descriptions of the rebel's doom are presented side by side with the most glorious prospects of restoration. Yahweh is coming to redeem His people, but the mass of the nation is unfit for His advent. It is the prophet's task if possible to prepare them for it, to startle them into repentance, to inspire them with faith. They have no conception of Israel's calling and destiny; it is his aim to convince them of its responsibility and its magnificence. In the six concluding chapters the old promises are reaffirmed, but the contrast between the penitent, who can alone enjoy them, and the impenitent, for whom nothing remains but judgment, is even more strongly and sternly emphasized than before. Yahweh Himself cannot give salvation to those who obstinately refuse its conditions.¹

This prophet was friendly to the Temple and its services, as evidenced by his regard for fasting (58:3), the keeping of the sabbath (58:13-14), and the condition of the Temple (64:11-12), but these facts need not be taken alone as evidence of his attitude toward sin. He is as strong as any prophet in his demands for social justice and the abstinence from doing wrong (58:5-7). This is the fast which Yahweh desires.

1. Kirkpatrick, DOP, 373 f.

They are charged with having hands defiled with blood, fingers besmirched with iniquity, lips filled with lies, and tongues that mutter wickedness (59:3). Yet, there is still a possibility of redemption for those who turn from transgression in Jacob (59:20), for still the Lord's hand is strong and His ear attentive with regard to those who forsake sin and turn to justice and righteousness (59:1). It would seem that the prophet catches the idea sometimes expressed before: that the nation cannot be saved from iniquity as a unit, but individuals may yet come into the protective care of Yahweh on an eternal basis (59:21).

Summary. This group of mediators between priestly and prophetic schools of thought at times were not careful to designate the relative degree of importance which they attached to each feature of their religion. Ezekiel, probably with the intent of making both elements fit together into a workable whole, made by far the clearest combination of the two. Those who followed him apparently attempted to put spiritual meaning into the ritual which they borrowed from him. The degree of their success was not always the same, however; for we find that men so closely associated as Haggai and Zechariah were not entirely parallel in their emphases. The latter went much further than the former in stressing social righteousness as a mandatory correlative of ritual practice. The same could be said of other men of this group. However, it seems evident that they were men of their times, men who were working each in his own way toward a realization of the holy kingdom which they believed to be Yahweh's heritage in Israel. Ezekiel had modified and elaborated the ritual which came from pre-exilic Israel. Later writers than he were to amend and supplement it again into the P Code which claimed our

attention in the first part of this dissertation.

Of them all it can be said that they were trying to make Israel understand how deeply the very life of the nation was involved in the covenant with Yahweh which had been given at Horeb. To this end they felt free to employ and stress any feature of their religion which would serve this purpose. They realized that the simple demands of justice, love, and mercy would not appeal to the hearts of men sodden with materialism unless these demands could somehow be invested with divine sanction. They then made use of the historical faith in the covenant as the supporting pillar on which to base the primary feature of religion as their early fathers had known it. No one would deny that cult in some form had preceded the refined ethical teachings of the prophets. Hence, a true religion of Israel, if it were to have historical as well as contemporary significance, must in some way combine the ethical teachings of its prophets with the traditional forms of its worship. If this group did not succeed in doing this to our satisfaction, it is to their credit that they made the effort and left for us both a form and content for worshipping the One God of Israel.

CONCLUSION

Basic Disagreements Between Priest and Prophet

Did priests deny validity of prophecy? We have noted frequently the abuse which the prophets heaped on the priest; yet we have said little about what the priest thought of the prophet. Possibly this is due to the fact that the priests never in so many words brought open charges against prophecy as an institution. However, it is significant that in most instances where the writing prophets come into personal contact with representatives of the priesthood (cf. Jeremiah and Amos) there is a clash which is symbolic of the attitude between the two systems as they exist in historical context. Further, Jeremiah was from a priestly family, and Ezekiel was himself of priestly stock. Neither man ever repudiated his connection with this group, but both were at odds with the priesthood as it was practiced in their day. Deuteronomy, the kernel of the Torah, in formulating the first written document for the regulation of Israel's religion saw fit to include a section which provided for the office of a prophet, but it was careful to limit the teaching of such a prophet to those things which agree with the teaching of Moses (18:15-22). A further test of a prophet's authenticity is given in the same passage: only that prophet who foretells things which come to pass shall be considered as speaking the word of the Lord. This would lead us to believe

that the true priesthood of Israel, at least in early days, saw the constructive value of prophecy as it attempted to interpret the tradition of the past in terms which the present could understand.

We do not find any trace of this attitude in Leviticus. No provision is made there for any variation or interpretation of the law. There is, then, not so much an antagonism toward the prophet as an ignoring of him. If there was a time when the voice of the prophet would have been rejected or welcomed, that day was past by the time the P Code was finished.

Did prophets oppose all priestly ideas? The situation is different when we start to inspect the attitude of the prophets toward the priests. We do find words which indicate that the prophets were violently opposed to the sacrificial cult in any form (cf. Jeremiah, Amos, Micah). Yet all the prophets except Isaiah proclaim that they are preaching the same message as Moses gave in the days of Horeb, and it hardly seems that they could positively deny that Moses gave any form of worship at that time. Amos apparently does just this (5:22) and in this view he is supported by Jeremiah (7:22). The only way in which we may preserve the authority of the cult sacrifices as a religious exercise in the face of the prophetic denunciation is to do so in the words of Schultz:

Naturally the sacred forms of atonement, as such, were neither attacked nor questioned by the prophets, but certainly their significance in relation to God was. To that most important question, whether the covenant with all its promises, even when broken externally, could be again renewed through God's covenant mercy, these forms have no answer to give.¹

1. Schultz, OTT, II, 94.

This seems a more logical explanation of the conflict between the two. Priestly religion had no cure for the heart condition, no forgiveness for moral transgression of the more serious kinds, no grace as opposed to law. To such a religion the prophetic word was a vital necessity, and wherein the cult had failed as a worthy expression of man's worship of God, therein the prophet was under compulsion to attack it. But in their attacks on the cult,

Whether they dealt with moral questions or with the cult, they based their judgments on the character of God; but the God in whose name they spoke, and whose condemnation of the nation they anticipated, was one whom Israel also acknowledged, and however mistakenly, was seeking to serve through its public acts of worship. Hence prophet and people had their roots in a common past, the traditions of which belonged to them both.¹

The prophets, then, were in the position of men who were forced to bring charges against a system of their own nation, a system which had produced the very office which they held. At times it seemed that they were merely against all tradition for tradition's sake; yet close observation will reveal that they were mainly concerned with the perversion of the tradition into false doctrines. Men who have reached such a conviction will always speak strongly about a system which they believe to be an imperfect medium for the intercourse between a people and their God, but their words need not necessarily be taken at face value. They perforce must say, "Not THIS, but THIS" in order to point out the insufficiency of the former method of worship.

Can the differences be resolved? The point of the above

1. Welch, PPOI, 35.

discussion with respect to sin is here: the prophets without doubt did condemn the acts of cult where they were found to be a hypocritical and superficial means of evading moral and social responsibility. As such they were totally useless. Any value which they may have had in keeping the people conscious of their dependence upon God would have been secondary and hence of little import to the prophets, who were men of reality who struggled to turn the reality into the ideal. If the difference between prophet and priest can be resolved, it is at this point. No true prophet would ever agree that the Levitical methods of cleansing, the animal offerings, or the sabbaths would effect the cleansing of moral corruption. Nor would any true priest maintain any such position. The final framers of Israel's religion saw this fact and they incorporated both elements into a whole, not as contradictory but as supplemental. The priest was needed to preserve the law and the historical record of revelation, for without such a foundation the message of the prophet would become only a bald philosophical moralizing. On the other hand, without the stimulus of prophecy, a religion of tradition alone would become stultified and stagnant, incapable of dealing with the changing features of society. So it is that each carries a message of eternal truth to us with reference to sin. The priest reminds us that to forget the foundation of our religion is sin just as much as it is sin to forget our moral obligations to God and our fellowmen. The prophet constantly reminds us that sin is not something contained in a law book and defined for theological exposition, but that it is an element which is present in and active in every relationship of life.

It is this synthesis of the two ideas which gives to us the

great depths of Old Testament religion, the combination of the profound priestly mind and the sensitive prophetic mind. True, both of these religiously valuable elements of culture were abused, and the Bible is not at pains to spare us that fact. Fanatic prophecy is pictured for us as madness, and unworthy practices of the priest are pictured as abomination. But on the whole the best of both of them is brought before our eyes as the commandment of Yahweh for those who would serve Him.

What was this priestly and prophetic mind which incorporated to round out the Old Testament idea of sin? With respect to the priestly mind, Hoschander has well said:

We may well say that morals and ceremonial observances constitute the soul and body of any creed of a moral standard. In this physical world of realities it cannot dispense with either of them, and both are necessary for its existence. The soul is certainly its real substance, and the body is nothing but its garment. But without this garment, it would remain invisible to human eyes and be practically of no use to humanity. By the same token, if the Israelites had complied with those prophetic ideas in accepting their moral teachings, and abandoning at the same time prayers, rituals, sacrifices, and festivals, there would have been nothing that should remind them of the covenant of the Lord with their ancestors. The divine origin of these moral teachings was bound to be forgotten, and there would have been no longer any obligation for the people to follow their dictates, as man without being restrained by religion would naturally follow the line of least resistance.¹

The priests seemed to be intent upon three things: (1) To establish the fact of Israel's historical mission as the instrument of Yahweh in the world; (2) to make the nation and the individual conscious of being unworthy in the sight of Yahweh because of sin as a constant factor in experience; and (3) to provide a method whereby this sense of

1. Hoschander, PP, 59.

unworthiness could be stimulated as well as relieved through religious practices. It was the priestly hand in Israel's literature which bound her to Yahweh through the creation. The same hand outlined her history for later generations in a manner which clearly shows the sense of mission which penetrated the crises of her existence. It was the same author who made the cult and the ritual indispensable elements of her religion.

All three of the emphases mentioned above are tied up in the priestly concept of sin. For Israel to fail in her mission would be sin unsurpassed. All else was incidental to that controlling feature of her faith. The priests were dominated by the idea that Israel, through divine election, was a community apart from the world, set aside by God to carry out a peculiar purpose. To secure obedience to His will and the transmission of His word of redemption to the nations became the governing passion of their writings. As evidenced by the catastrophes of history, sin had unceasingly plagued the nation in its endeavor to fulfill its mission. Corruption and contamination from without and from within had had to be resisted steadily. When the people went astray after other gods, they forgot Yahweh; and when they forgot Yahweh, they set for themselves paths which did not lead toward their promised destiny. They lavished material and physical pleasures on themselves, giving themselves to actions which were out of harmony with His character. However, while acting in this way, they were apparently not conscious of a sense of sin. The word of the prophet witnesses to this fact, and the priest seeks to awaken a sense of guilt by the strong emphasis which he places on the ever-present fact of sin in life.

In this latter connection we can with reason assume that the priests were attempting to put every man under the sense of human unworthiness in the sight of Yahweh much in the same way as Isaiah became conscious of his personal unworthiness in the experience of his call. Repeatedly they undergird their demands with the words, "Be ye holy, for I am holy." No man of a serious bent could observe the close connection between Yahweh's holiness and His demand for meticulous obedience without recognizing the impossibility of an individual's being absolutely pure and blameless in the sight of Yahweh. Without stating it in New Testament terms, the priests appear to have been seeking to impress the individual that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23). However, where Isaiah had become quite individually conscious of his own personal sin, the average man appears not to have experienced this consciousness in any acute form under the teachings of the prophets. The reaction to the prophetic preaching was more likely to be a denial of sin. In dealing with such an attitude, the priest was confronted with the task of presenting a system of religion which would demonstrate beyond question that every man not only shares in the guilt of the nation, but is himself a sinner. How better could this be done than by the priestly method of working it by symbol and rite into the very fabric of daily existence?

With reference to this same topic, we must look at the seemingly unintelligible laws which make up parts of the priestly law. It is difficult for us, with minds schooled in the common conception of ethics as a product of man's moral consciousness, to see in these rules anything which is properly called sin. Here, I believe, is where the priests

achieved an insight of unparalleled significance in religion; namely, the one supremely determining factor in the creation of a structure of ethical principles whereby men may govern their lives is the fact of a creative, personal, and righteous God. Starting from this point, the priests set side by side reasonable and unreasonable (humanly speaking) laws. Man's judgment would have discriminated between the ethical quality of the first and the inscrutable pedantry of the second. But when both were referred to a source in the holiness of Yahweh, even the latter were imbued with ethical content. Disregard of them came to be a matter of moral judgment and religious faith in Yahweh Himself.

Religiously speaking, there is justification for this point of view. Obedience in that area where man's reason cannot penetrate demonstrates an abiding faith in the character of the God who makes the demand. Obedience to the so-called reasonable demands demonstrates nothing, per se, except a faith in man's own ability to determine the right course of life. The priests, with their many rules, were quick to contend that these were binding through the nature of Yahweh, leaving the connection between the command and His nature to be hidden in His inexplicable majesty. It was their way of stressing again the fact that God's ways are not man's ways, that God has the right to set up His laws without respect to man's judgment and to demand faith where reason does not reach. This is a basic point of Judaism which has been carried over into the dogmatics of Christianity, a point on which there is still considerable debate as to whether it is a valid element of religion for our day. If the student may vouchsafe a judgment at this point, he feels that wherein dogmatics have lapsed into Pharisaic legalism, they should suffer the

fate which that same legalism suffered at the hands of our Lord. On the other hand, wherein difficult doctrines have become a vital part of the faith of the religious community as a whole--through the help of enlightened leaders--they should by no means be abandoned simply because they do not appeal to our human powers of discrimination.

For the last few paragraphs we have been dealing with the priestly concern for Israel's sense of mission and the constant element of sin in the experience of nation and individual. The third feature of their program now evolves from a study of the previous two: namely, how to provide a method whereby this sense of mission could be stimulated and the sense of unworthiness relieved through religious practices. This task they accomplished by holding before the people cult objects and cult practices which were, to their minds, unquestionably the outgrowth of the covenant which had established Israel's special position to the One God of the universe. In this late day of her history the historians of Israel could demonstrate beyond question that she had been in need of redemption throughout the past centuries of her existence. The priest, as the appointed religious representative of Yahweh, pointed out just as readily the provision which was made for this redemption. These two elements made up the background against which the cult and ritual of the Second Temple grew up.

Here again we draw on Isaiah for a comparison. When he became aware of his undone condition before Yahweh, there was available for him one of the seraphim to bring a coal from off the altar, a coal which would purge his sin and iniquity. But again for the average man no such heavenly being was near to witness when sin and iniquity departed. No

less than Isaiah, the common man longed for assurance of this transaction, and it is plausible to think that no religion will satisfy the human soul which fails to provide some means whereby the sense of guilt which it stimulates can be removed and its removal witnessed in some effectual manner. To meet this need and to complete their system, the priests affirmed the God-ordained efficacy of the cult to accomplish the removal of sin. Having no seraphim at their disposal, they further affirmed Yahweh's election of the priest as His witness in such matters.

In so doing, the priests completed the circle of their task. No one would come to the priest for forgiveness unless he had faith that the office and institution of priesthood were ordained by the God who chose Israel for a special purpose. Further, no one would have come to participate in the atoning rites of the cult unless he were saying thereby that he was conscious of his sin and unworthiness before Yahweh. And last, by his very coming he attested his belief that by so doing he was re-establishing a broken relationship with his God. As mechanical as such a system may sound, there is underneath it a profound expression of man's longing and yearning to know that he stands in right relationship to his God. If some who participated in the scheme of such worship did not understand that the rites themselves were only meaningful as they were expressive of this desire, that is not to condemn the system entirely. Devout men of many generations lived in faith through the offices of the cult and priest.

Prophets gave content to Israel's religion; priests gave it form. The author of the P Code, coming after the great writing prophets, could not have been ignorant of them. We could wish that we were sure whether

or not he was attempting to organize, in a very practical way, a church which would provide an earthly vehicle for preserving and promulgating the sublime truths which came from the prophets. The present writer doubts if such is the case. P probably had no such conscious purpose. However, it is a tribute to the Hebrew religious genius that the final framers of the Old Testament saw the need for the religious-historical framework of a writer like P into which they might set the prophetic truths to secure for them the greatest authority in matters religious. It would seem to the student that nothing short of divine inspiration could account for the way in which these two apparently opposing features of religion could be blended into a whole that has stood through the centuries as the basis on which the three great monotheistic religions are founded.

The prophetic mind does not require so much summary as does the priestly. The prophets were men who spoke the language of our day as they fearlessly cried out for justice and righteousness. Their passionate zeal for human rights as championed by Yahweh, their sense of His majesty and power and love, their sensitiveness to the times and people among which they lived, all impress us with their humanity. They could not think of Yahweh as far removed in splendid isolation from His people. To them He was a father, a husband, a lover. He had not left men in ignorance concerning the means of fellowship and participation with Him in the right as opposed to the wrong. Without exception the prophets of greater importance affirm that God cannot be blamed for man's transgression, for He has made known to man the way of right. To these men who bared their souls to their God and then to their fellowmen sin sprang

from the selfish indulgence of human desires, and sin could only be forgiven when men repented of such actions and turned in faith to their God. They saw sin for what it was—a terribly destructive factor in history, both in the life of the nation and the life of the individual. Yet, for all this insight, the prophetic mind held out a hope for forgiveness and restoration of a repentant people; and the prophetic mind of a later date foresaw that restoration would come even though it must be ushered in by the forceful intervention in the affairs of mankind by Yahweh Himself.

To conclude our discussion at this point, we should note that the exile forced both priest and prophet to modify the views of pre-exilic times. Everyone realized soon after the exile that this catastrophe had not accomplished the spiritual or physical restoration which was anticipated on the strength of prophetic promises. Further, it was easily seen that the cult of pre-exilic times had not averted the disaster. Hence, both groups moved to bring their doctrines in line with the situation which confronted them after the exile. The answer of the priesthood, following Ezekiel, was the Priestly Code, with all the dogmatism we have noted. The prophetic answer became the doctrine of apocalypticism. The former of these doctrines we have seen tested by some 2500 years; the latter is yet to be fulfilled, if ever. But just as these men of the earlier day saw fit to adapt their idea of sin to the generation in which they lived, we may with safety take license in refining and interpreting sin for our generation. Whatever developments may have come in our thoughts about God in the centuries which separate us from the prophets and priests of the Old Testament, we must incorporate them into the foundation of our interpretation in the twentieth century. Christianity has

given us a broader and deeper outlook on social questions, as well as on the question of the nature of the God we serve. So it is that the Old Testament, for all the depth of its teaching, is not an end, but a beginning--the end of which is not yet in sight. But when men develop new means of sin, God will provide a sufficient revelation to the prophet and priest whereby they shall bring these new sins within the scope of God's vision and pronounce upon them the wrath of a God whose nature is outraged therein.

ABSTRACT

There has been a dearth of writing on the subject of sin in recent years. Considering the desperately serious view which the Old Testament takes of it, more attention should be given to it in present day theology.

The primary factors in sin and salvation are a righteous God and sinful man. Some means must be sought whereby the two can live harmoniously in the same universe. Sin in all forms is actually a strange and terrible conflict with the Supreme Reality, which is God. The real problem lies in this defiance of God.

Two elements are necessary to determine sin: (1) an objective standard of morality and conduct; (2) the possibility of apprehension of this standard and recognition that it is binding.

Terminology for sin cannot be cited as evidence of a theological position on the part of any individual group of Old Testament writers.

Priests: Leviticus, as representative of the priestly ideal, has one major goal: preservation of the religious community. To the priests, this was Yahweh's purpose for Israel. It was their duty to accomplish His purpose. They sought to do this by three methods: (1) establishing the fact of Israel's historical mission as the instrument of Yahweh in the world; (2) making the nation and the individual conscious of being unworthy in the sight of Yahweh because of sin as a constant factor in experience; and (3) providing a method whereby this sense of unworthiness

could be stimulated as well as relieved through religious practices. Anything which interfered with either of these three functions on the part of the priesthood was sin.

The apparent externality of the priestly methods is heightened by the fact that there is no provision made for the expiation of sins such as adultery, murder, and blasphemy. Only the death of the sinner could satisfy the law's demands in this type of sin. Such a system could not adequately meet the needs of the spirit of living men.

Even the Holiness Code, which the editor of Leviticus included in the priestly manual, maintains this viewpoint. The injunction to love one's neighbor is beautifully given, but there is nothing here of the prophetic note that new hearts are necessary or will be given in order that this love may become actual. There was no provision made whereby this love could be brought forth if human will power was insufficient to produce it.

Religiously speaking, the priests made a significant contribution by identifying as sin a refusal to obey a seemingly unintelligible law. In the covenant at Sinai Yahweh had given the laws, some quite reasonable in the eyes of men, others quite unreasonable. Absolute obedience was demanded to both. To obey the latter without question demonstrated a faith in the character and integrity of their God. To obey only the former was merely evidence of faith in their own ability to judge what constituted religion. This, to the priest, was a usurpation of God's rights.

Conclusion: (1) Sacrifice and cult were the foundation stones of the priestly concept of sin. These were joined inseparably to Israel's

history in the priestly system. Religion which is true to human experience must have historical and traditional background. Especially was this true with respect to the covenant basis of Israel's religion. The use of material devices for fostering this base of religion was not fundamentally sinful; the perversion of it was.

(2) The extreme emphasis which the priests placed on cleanliness and holiness are actually meaningful only when considered in the higher symbolism which they portray. There is profound significance in this feature of religion if the worshiper can penetrate the external and reach the inward symbolism in rites such as those of the Day of Atonement.

(3) The great danger inherent in making atonement inseparable from sacrifice is this: logical inference leads to a belief that the atonement is effected by the bringing of a gift pure and simple. Such warped religious sentiments lay at the bottom of the moral conditions of the days of the prophets. Morality had become simply compliance with established customs. This so limited the field of objective morals that it permitted new evils to grow up without a distinct recognition of their unethical character. Sin was reduced to what has been termed "forensic liability".

Prophets: Without exception, the prophets presented an interpretation of history in which judgment upon sin became the first category. They based this concept upon the historical idea of covenant, but, unlike the priests, they saw the flexibility of the covenant which demanded that every feature of the life of Israel must correspond with the express will and character of Him who had called it into being to know and to do His sovereign will.

The prophets made knowledge a prerequisite of judgment, proclaiming, however, that Israel could never defend her sin by saying she was ignorant. They charged that sin was offense against morality without law where no law existed. This accounts for their denunciation of foreign nations whose sins are noted. The principle of sin without law is not entirely lacking in Leviticus, but it is by no means a prominent teaching there. With respect to Israel, the prophetic position is that the hearers knew what was right. Refusal to do right came from a spirit of rebellion. Evils of society are traced to a wrong conception of God. They charge the people with willful self-deceit. This leads to a progressive atrophy of the will and spiritual senses which eventually makes men and nations unable to do the right.

Inwardness of sin is recognized as its greatest feature. Men act evilly only because they are evil. They are evil because they love evil. The seat of love is the heart. Therefore prophets seek that Israel shall repent and receive a new heart thereby. A new heart is one that would love God instead of evil and would therefore cause the owner to do right instead of wrong.

The most striking description of sin in prophets is the term "whoredom", denoting infidelity of Israel to her God. Particularly Hosea deals with this problem, demonstrating on the human level the redeeming power of love. So God's love redeems from consequences of sin. Other prophets were brought to some such conclusion with respect to the ultimate victory of Yahweh over Israel's sin in particular. This is not a universalism; it is based upon the condition of the covenant which was made freely between the two contracting parties. Love redeems only those

who have fallen within the covenant relationship.

In prophetic writings, the character of individuals determine the character of the nation. The greater the power of the individual or social class, the greater responsibility assumed with respect to sin and righteousness. This accounts for the emphasis prophets put upon the office of rulers and priests.

It is questionable whether the prophets would have denounced the cult as sinful per se. Their criticism of it seems to be exaggerated in an attempt to make of cult a worthy expression of the relationship between man and God. Their charge was against the smug sense of pious reverence which the people had in cultic rites, while at the same time the principles of justice and righteousness were outrageously violated.

Personal responsibility for sin grew gradually as a concept among the prophets until Jeremiah opened wide the way for a full individual accountability. Ezekiel followed him with two great chapters on the subject. However, the ideas of personal morality as the significant feature of religion were relatively short lived in Israel. Post-exilic Judaism's interest in the individual was that shown under P.

Conclusions: (1) Basically, love of ease and false ideas of worship are the sins the prophets denounce. These lead to all the oppressions which are practiced with easy consciences. Against these Yahweh has to bring punishment in the form of physical catastrophes. Also, they produce a dearth of spiritual life. However, these calamities are evaluated as a means to producing repentance. Prophets never predict destruction of anything simply for the sake of destruction.

(2) Lack of faith as sin reflects a denial of belief in the

reality of Israel's personal and historical God. To prophets, only men who were morally acceptable could have this belief, for a true belief would require men to be morally clean. A belief on other grounds is superstition. When punishment came on men because of their immoralities, they demonstrated unbelief by turning to idols and material power for rescue, rather than repenting and seeking help from God.

Mediators: Writers who attempted to bridge the gap between priest and prophet have been called mediators. These followed Ezekiel and Deuteronomy in particular in an effort to formalize spiritual concepts. This resulted in a tendency to confuse the external and internal in the minds of their readers. Morality did not disappear from their work. They simply are not clear or consistent in setting forth the relative value they place on morality and ritual.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Albright, William F. (FSAC)
From The Stone Age to Christianity
 Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, (1940) 2nd ed. 1946.
- Anderson, Bernhard W. (RTB)
Rediscovering The Bible
 New York: Association Press, 1951.
- Baab, Otto J. (TOT)
The Theology of the Old Testament
 New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1949.
- Bade, William Frederic (OTLT)
The Old Testament in the Light of Today
 Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1915.
- Barton, George A. (RI)
The Religion of Israel
 New York: The Macmillan Co., 1918.
- (Article)
 "Sin Offering," Jewish Encyclopedia, XI, 1907.
- Brunner, Emil (MIR)
Man in Revolt
 Translated by Olive Wyon
 New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1939.
- Büchler, A. (SSA)
Studies in Sin and Atonement
 London: Oxford University Press, 1928.
- Buttenwieser, Moses (POI)
The Prophets of Israel
 New York: The Macmillan Co., 1914.
- Chamberlin, Georgia L. (MTBL)
Making The Bible Live
 Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1939.
- Chambers, Oswald (POS)
The Philosophy of Sin
 London: Simpkin Marshall, Ltd., n.d.

- Charles, R. H. (RDBT)
Religious Development Between The Old and New Testaments
 New York: Henry Holt & Co., n. d.
- Cohen, Dr. A. (SC)
The Soncino Chumash
 Hindhead, Surrey: The Soncino Press, 1947.
- Cornill, Carl H. (POI)
The Prophets of Israel
 Translated from Der Israel Prophetismus by Sutton F. Corkran
 Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Co., 1895.
- Crafer, T. W. (BH)
The Book of Hosea
 Cambridge: The University Press, 1923.
- Davidson, A. B. (OTP)
Old Testament Prophecy
 Edited by J. A. Paterson
 New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1903.
- (TOT)

The Theology of the Old Testament
 Edited by S. D. F. Salmond
 New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1904.
- Driver, S. R. (DEUT)
A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy
 (International Critical Commentary, Vol. not given)
 New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1895.
- Duhm, L. B. (TDP)
Die Theologie der Propheten
 Bonn: Verlag von Adolph Marcus, 1875.
- Eichrodt, D. Walther (TDAT)
Theologie des Alten Testaments, Teil 2
 Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1948.
- Eiselen, Frederick C. (CVOT)
The Christian View of the Old Testament
 New York: Eaton & Mains, 1912.
- (MP)

The Minor Prophets
 (Whedon's Commentary, Vol. IX)
 New York: Eaton & Mains, 1907.
- Eisenstein, Judah D. (Article)
 "Sin," Jewish Encyclopedia, XI, 1907.

Fahlgren, K. Hj. (SED)

Sedaka

Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells Boktryckeri, 1932.

Faus, W. Arthur (GP)

The Genius of the Prophets

New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1946..

Gaster, Theodor H. (Article)

"The First Fruits and The Giving of the Law," Commentary,
13:5, May 1952.

Genung, John Franklin (GBL)

A Guidebook to The Biblical Literature

Boston: Ginn & Co., 1919.

Graham, William C. (PIC)

The Prophets and Israel's Culture

Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1934.

Gray, George Buchanan (NUM)

Numbers

(International Critical Commentary, Vol. IV)

New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1903.

(SIOT)

Sacrifice in The Old Testament

Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925.

Gunkel, H. (WROT)

What Remains of the Old Testament

Translated by A. K. Dallas

London: Allen & Urwin, 1928.

Hamilton, Edith (SFG)

Spokesmen for God

New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1949.

Harper, W. R. (PEOT)

The Priestly Element in the Old Testament

Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1902.

Hempel, Johannes (DEAT)

Das Ethos des Alten Testaments

Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1938.

Hershon, Paul Isaac (TI)

Treasures of the Talmud

London: James Nisbet & Co., 1882.

- Horton, R. F. (MP)
The Minor Prophets
 (The New Century Bible, edited by W. F. Adeney)
 New York: Henry Frowde, n. d.
- Hoschander, Jacob (PP)
The Priests and Prophets
 New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1938.
- Houghton, Louise S. (HLT)
Hebrew Life and Thought
 Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1906.
- Hyatt, J. Philip (Article)
 "The Sources of the Suffering Servant Idea," Journal of Near Eastern Studies, Vol. III, 2, April, 1944.
- Johnson, A. R. (VIAI)
The Vitality of the Individual in the Thought of Ancient Israel
 Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1949.
- Kallen, Horace M. (Article)
 "Whither Israel?," The Menorah Journal, XXXIX:2, Autumn, 1951.
- Kapelrud, Arvid S. (Article)
 "God as Destroyer in the Preaching of Amos and in the Ancient Near East," Journal of Biblical Literature, LXXI:1.
- Kennett, Robert Hatch (Article)
 "Haggai," A Commentary on the Bible, edited by A. S. Peake
 New York: Thomas Nelson & Son, n. d.
- Kirkpatrick, A. F. (DOP)
The Doctrine of the Prophets
 London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., (1892) rev. 1897.
- Knudson, Albert C. (BIP)
Beacon Lights of Prophecy
 New York: Eaton & Mains, 1914.
- (RTOT)
The Religious Teaching of the Old Testament
 New York: The Abingdon Press, 1918.
- Köberle, Justus (SG)
Sünde und Gnade
 München: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1905.
- Köhler, Kaufmann (Article)
 "Atonement," Jewish Encyclopedia, II, 1902.

- Köhler, Kaufmann (JT)
Jewish Theology
 New York: The Macmillan Co., 1918.
- Köhler, Ludwig (TDAT)
Theologie des Alten Testaments
 Tübingen: Verlag von J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1947.
- Kuenen, A. (PPI)
The Prophets and Prophecy in Israel
 (de Profeten onder Israël, translated by Adam Milroy)
 London: Longmans & Co., 1877.
- Leathers, Stanley (OTP)
Old Testament Prophecy
 London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1880.
- Leslie, Elmer A. (OTR)
Old Testament Religion
 New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1936.
- Lofthouse, W. F. (Article)
 "Leviticus," A Commentary on the Bible, edited by A. S. Peake
 New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, n. d.
- (POR)
The Prophet of Reconstruction
 London: James Clarke & Co., Ltd., n. d.
- Loisy, Alfred (RI)
The Religion of Israel
 (La Religion D'Israel, translated by Arthur Galton)
 New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1910.
- Margolis, Max L. (Article)
 "Day of Atonement," Jewish Encyclopedia, II, 1902.
- McFadyen, John Edgar (BPI)
The Book of the Prophecies of Isaiah
 (The Bible For Home and School, Vol. XX, edited by Shailer Matthews)
 New York: The Macmillan Co., 1910.
- (CFJ)
A Cry for Justice
 New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912.
- (MOI)
The Message of Israel
 London: James Clarke & Co., Ltd., n. d.
- Messer, Spencer B. (Article)
 "The Doctrine of Salvation," Grozer Quarterly, IV:3, July 1927.

- Mitchell, Hinckley G. (EOT)
The Ethics of the Old Testament
 Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1912.
- Moore, George Foot (JUD)
Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era, 2 Vol.
 Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927.
- Niebuhr, Reinhold (NADM)
The Nature and Destiny of Man
 New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941.
- North, C. R. (TOT)
The Thought of the Old Testament
 London: The Epworth Press, 1948.
- Oehler, Gustav F. (TOT)
Theology of the Old Testament
 Translated from Theologie des Alten Testaments by George E. Day
 New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1883.
- Oesterley, W. O. E. (JDM)
The Jewish Doctrine of Mediation
 London: Skeffington & Son, 1910.
- (Article)
 "Worship and Ritual," The People and The Book, edited by A. S. Peake
 Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1925.
- Oesterley, W. O. E. and Robinson, T. H. (HR)
Hebrew Religion
 London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1930.
- (IBOT)
An Introduction to the Books of the Old Testament
 New York: The Macmillan Co., 1934.
- Orr, James (GIIM)
God's Image in Man
 New York: A. C. Armstrong, 1905.
- Ottley, Robert L. (AOOT)
Aspects of the Old Testament
 London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1897.
- (RI)
The Religion of Israel
 Cambridge: The University Press, 1905.

- Peake, A. S. (JER)
Jeremiah and Lamentations, Vol. II.
 (The New Century Bible, edited by W. F. Adeney)
 New York: Henry Frowde, n. d.
- Pedersen, Johs. (ISR)
Israel, Its Life and Culture, Vol. I and II.
 London: Oxford University Press, 1926.
- _____
 (ISR)
Israel, Its Life and Culture, Vol. III and IV.
 London: Oxford University Press, 1940.
- Peters, John P. (RH)
The Religion of the Hebrews
 Boston: Gin & Co., Publishers, 1914.
- Pfeiffer, Robert H. (GOTR)
The Growth of Old Testament Religion
 Indianapolis: Shane Quarterly, 1947.
- _____
 (Article)
"Images of Yahweh," Journal of Biblical Literature, XLV:3-4, 1926.
- _____
 (IOT)
Introduction to the Old Testament
 New York: The Macmillan Co., 1941.
- _____
 (Article)
"The Polemic Against Idolatry in the Old Testament," Journal of Biblical Literature, XLIII:3-4, 1924.
- Porteous, N. W. (Article)
"Old Testament Theology," The Old Testament and Modern Study,
 edited by H. H. Rowley
 Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1951.
- Quell, Gottfried; Bertram, Georg; Stählin, Gustav; and Grundmann, Walter.
 (Article)
"Sin," Bible Key Words from Gerhard Kittel's Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, translated and edited by J. R. Coates
 New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1951.
- Redlich, E. B. (TFS)
The Forgiveness of Sins
 Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1937.
- Redpath, Henry A. (EZEK)
The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel
 (The Westminster Commentaries, Vol. 23)
 New York: Edwin S. Gorham, 1907.

Ringgren, Helmer (PCH)

The Prophetical Conception of Holiness

Uppsala: A. B. Lundequistska Bokhandeln, 1948.

Robinson, H. Wheeler (COS)

The Cross of the Servant

London: Student Christian Movement, 1926.

(Article)

"Hebrew Sacrifice and Prophetic Symbolism," Journal of Theological Studies, xliii, 1942.

(RIOT)

The Religious Ideas of the Old Testament

New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913.

(THP)

Two Hebrew Prophets

London: Lutterworth Press, 1948.

(CH)

The Cross of Hosea

Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, n. d.

Robinson, Theodore H. (PAP)

Prophecy and the Prophets

New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1923.

Rowley, H. H. (IMTW)

Israel's Mission to the World

London: Student Christian Movement Press, 1939.

(MSOT)

The Meaning of Sacrifice in the Old Testament

Manchester: The Manchester University Press, 1950.

(TRA)

The Relevance of Apocalyptic

London: Lutterworth Press, 1950.

Sanders, Frank., and Kent, Charles F. (MOLP)

The Message of the Later Prophets

New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1899.

Schultz, Hermann (OTT)

Old Testament Theology, Vol. II.

Translated from 4th German edition of Alttestamentliche Theologie by J. A. Paterson.

Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1898.

Skinner, John (GEN)

Genesis

(International Critical Commentary, Vol. I.)

New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1917.

(PR)

Prophecy and Religion

Cambridge: The University Press, 1922.

Smith, George Adam (TBOT)

The Book of the Twelve Prophets

Garden City: Doubleday, Doran & Co., inc., (1905) rev. 1929.

(MCOT)

Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament

New York: A. C. Armstrong & Sons, 1901.

Smith, J. M. Powis (MLH)

The Moral Life of the Hebrews

Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1923.

(PHP)

The Prophet and His Problems

New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1914.

(PTT)

The Prophets and Their Times

Chicago: University of Chicago Press, (1925), 2nd rev. ed.
by Irwin, W. A., 1941.

Smith, W. Robertson (POI)

The Prophets of Israel

New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1882.

Snaith, Norman H. (DIOT)

The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament

Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1946.

Tennant, F. R. (COS)

The Concept of Sin

Cambridge: University Press, 1912.

Welch, Adam C. (PPOI)

Prophet and Priest in Old Israel

London: Student Christian Movement Press, 1936.

(RIUK)

The Religion of Israel Under the Kingdom

Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1912.

Whitehouse, Owen C. (ISA)

Isaiah, Vol. I and II.

(The Century Bible, edited by W. F. Adeney)

Edinburgh: T. C. & E. G. Jack, 1905.

(Article)

"The Religious Institutions of Israel," A Commentary on the Bible, edited by A. S. Peake

New York: Thomas Nelson & Son, n. d.

Woods, F. H. (Article)

"Hexateuch," Dictionary of the Bible, Vol. II, edited by

James E. Hastings

New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1902.

Wood, Nathan R. (TWS)

The Witness of Sin

New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1905.

Wright, G. Ernest (OTAE)

The Old Testament Against Its Environment

Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1950.

Young, Robert (Concordance)

Analytical Concordance to the Bible

New York: I. K. Funk & Co., 1881, 4th rev. ed.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Russell Charles Murphy was born February 7, 1916, in Springfield, Tennessee, the sixth child of Lon G. Murphy and Eula B. Murphy. Both parents were descendants of pioneer settlers of Tennessee. He was educated in the public schools of Springfield, Tennessee, graduating from high school as valedictorian in May, 1933.

In January, 1943, he volunteered for military service and served two years and eight months as cashier for the finance department of the U. S. Air Force.

Upon discharge from service in October, 1945, he entered Asbury College, Wilmore, Kentucky. From this college he received the A. B. degree, magna cum laude, in June, 1948. In May, 1951, he was awarded the B. D. degree, magna cum laude, from Nazarene Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Missouri. The following fall he entered Boston University to work on the Ph. D. degree in the department of Biblical Literature, specializing in the field of Old Testament.

The candidate is a licensed preacher on the Kansas City District of the Church of the Nazarene. While attending seminary he pastored the Highland Methodist Church, Highland, Kansas, for three years. Upon entering Boston University for graduate work, he accepted a call to pastor the North Congregational Church, North Abington, Massachusetts, where he is still pastoring at the present writing.

In March of 1951 the candidate was married to Miss Greta Hamsher of Kansas City, Missouri.

