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neighbours. It came to her that sympathy and love were the only things worth having; and when, with all her trying, she could not break down the barrier, she went down to live in the old cottage with the leaking roof and the rotten floor, feeling

that no amount of discomfort and privation mattered, if only she could get to the hearts of her neighbours by understanding them from the inside.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> E. Herman, *Christianity in the New Age*.

## The Spirit of Early Judaism.

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### Contrasts within the Post-Exilic Age.

WE have dealt with the contrast between the pre-exilic and the post-exilic age: now let us look at the contrasts which abound within the post-exilic age itself. For though it is common to suppose that the heavy hand of the priest lay upon its life, in point of fact its literature exhibits a refreshing variety of opinion and attitude. No wooden orthodoxy holds the field unchallenged. Whether the liberal thinkers were welcomed by the leaders of the Church or not, they certainly claimed and heroically asserted their right to freedom of thought, and it is to the credit of the later Church that she accepted within her canon of Holy Scripture—though clearly sometimes with modifications which blunted the edge of their heresy—books like Job, which contained utterances, or like Ecclesiastes, which were pervaded by a spirit that challenged, where it did not deny, much that was dear to the orthodox heart. What could the original genius who gave us the Book of Job have thought, for example, of the pious Chronicler? With what horror would the Chronicler have read the daring and to him impious challenges of Job, or studied the cold-blooded scepticism and pessimism of Ecclesiastes! Probably the fact that Ecclesiastes found a place in the canon at all is a testimony to its popularity: it represented a mood which all the pieties of the orthodox Church could do nothing to dissipate, and had simply to accept, correcting it, as best it could, by gentle touches here and there.

#### (i.) ATTITUDE TO THE WORLD-ORDER.

These daring thinkers may have been in part provoked into their heresies by the kind of faith which they saw to animate some of the men who

determined the opinions and controlled the fortunes of the Church—a faith which must have seemed to them lacking in imagination and in due respect for facts. Of this type the Chronicler may be taken as a fair specimen. Like the writer of Job he is a religious man, but, unlike him, he finds no perplexities in the moral world, but everywhere a precise and mechanical correspondence between character and destiny. Not only is piety rewarded by prosperity, but prosperity presupposes piety. The most pious kings have the most soldiers. David has over a million and a half, Jehoshaphat over a million, while Rehoboam has only 180,000. Manasseh's long reign of fifty-five years—a stumbling-block on the Chronicler's theory—has to be accounted for by his repentance (2 Ch 33<sup>11ff.</sup>). Religious explanations are everywhere assigned for facts. Josiah's defeat and death, for example, are the penalty of his disobedience to the Word of God which came to him through the Egyptian king (2 Ch 35<sup>21ff.</sup>). So Uzziah's leprosy is the divine punishment of his pride in presuming to offer incense despite the protests of the priests (2 Ch 26<sup>16ff.</sup>). What would the writer of Job 21 have thought of such a facile theodicy? But it is not only that the Chronicler sees God as the immediate arbiter of human destiny, whose rewards and punishments are swift and just and sure: he has no hesitation in coercing recalcitrant facts into line with his theory. In 1 S 28<sup>6</sup> it is implicitly said that Saul earnestly sought to discover the divine will: in 1 Ch 10<sup>14</sup> this is roundly denied—he did not inquire of Jehovah. In 1 K 9<sup>11-14</sup> Solomon gives Hiram cities in return for the loan of money, whereas in 2 Ch 8<sup>2</sup> it is Hiram who gives Solomon the cities. The Chronicler tells us that Jehoshaphat of Judah joined with Ahaziah of

Israel, and attributes to that union the wreck of his fleet (2 Ch 20<sup>35</sup>); according to 1 K 22<sup>49</sup> he refused to join him, and so on. The point is that religion in the post-exilic period is represented by widely different types—on the one hand, we have a mechanical faith which finds the world easy to interpret and calmly transforms such facts as may stand in the way; and on the other hand, the fearless facing of fact and the daring challenge, in the name of the higher Justice, of the facts which seem to offend it. If we may compare things widely different, it is roughly reminiscent of the difference between the Roman Catholic and the Protestant mind.

(ii.) ATTITUDE TO THE COMMUNITY AND THE INDIVIDUAL.

Another aspect of the variety of outlook in the post-exilic Church is that there is now a genuine appreciation alike of the value of the community and of the individual. It is far from true to say, as has sometimes been said, that in pre-exilic times the only unit for religious thought is the community, and that the individual is the discovery of Jeremiah; but it is true that in that period the community bulked as a religious unit immensely more than the individual. And it is surely no accident that the individual's emergence into prominence is coincident with the collapse of the state. Then, more than ever before, the God of Israel becomes the God of the Israelite, 'for they shall all know me, saith Jehovah, from the least of them to the greatest of them' (Jer 31<sup>34</sup>). This does not mean that the communal idea is lost; even the famous oracle from which this text is taken, and which gives so noble an expression to the relatively new idea of religious individualism, represents the new covenant as made 'with the house of Israel'; but the old idea is immeasurably enriched. Here, as in so many other spheres, Ezekiel points the way to post-exilic development. It is he who repeatedly and elaborately emphasizes the truth of the potential worth and responsibility of the individual—'the soul that sinneth, it shall die' (18<sup>4</sup>); but it is he also who saw, far more clearly than Jeremiah, the importance of an organized community for the nurture of the religious life, and who devotes nine whole chapters of his book (40-48), of which indeed they are the crown and climax, to an elaborate sketch of its organization

with the laws which should regulate and the officers who should govern it. If Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi remind us of the importance of the Church, books like Job and Ecclesiastes, with their notes of independence and challenge, remind us of the sacred rights of the individual.

(iii.) ATTITUDE TO THE FUTURE LIFE.

The variety of post-exilic thought is further evidenced by its conflicting attitude to the question of the future life. Pre-exilic thought had not concerned itself with this question at all, partly because, as we have seen, it had not fully and clearly realized the potential worth of the individual soul. But when the problem did emerge, honest thinkers were sometimes to be found on opposite sides. The oscillations of feeling through which the soul passed, whose misery drove it for refuge upon the thought of a future life, but whose native honesty was reluctant to pass beyond the borders of experience, are fascinatingly portrayed in the Book of Job. His first and prevailing mood is that death is the end:

As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away,  
So he that goeth down to Sheol shall come up no more  
(7<sup>9</sup>).

Man dieth, and is laid low;  
Yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?  
Man lieth down and riseth not (14<sup>10-12</sup>).

But a flash illumines the dark future, as Job thinks of the tree cut down, yet blossoming again:

For hope there may be for a tree;  
Though cut down, it may sprout again,  
And the shoots thereof need not fail.  
Though its root in the earth wax old,  
And its stem be dead in the ground,  
It may bud at the scent of water,  
And put forth boughs like a plant (14<sup>7-9</sup>).

The poor tortured soul clutches at the thought—though it is immediately let go—that if there be hope for a tree cut down by the axe, may there not also be hope for the man laid low by the stroke of death? Doubtless the thought is pushed sorrowfully away as soon as it emerges, but it remains hidden somewhere in Job's mind; and later it leaps forth in the sublime, if only momentary, assurance that beyond the grave he will see his divine Vindicator face to face (19<sup>25-27</sup>). This faith, once attained, is held with increasing confidence as the years go on. It is probably from the latter

half of the fourth century B.C. that these words come:

Thy dead shall arise and live;  
They that dwell in the dust shall awake  
And utter cries of joy (Is 26<sup>10</sup>).

The fullest expression of faith in the resurrection of at least some—probably the martyred dead and their oppressors—is uttered, significantly enough, by one of the very latest voices of the Old Testament:

Many of those that sleep  
In the land of dust shall awake—  
Some unto life everlasting,  
And others unto scorn,  
And abhorrence everlasting (Dn 12<sup>2</sup>).

But the point of peculiar interest is this, that this doctrine, which was fraught with such comfort and held with such passion by harassed souls, was during the very same period being, by other voices, denied. There can be no mistaking the drift of Ecclesiastes. 'The living know at least that they have to die, but the dead have no knowledge at all, and no further reward is possible for them—their very memory is forgotten' (9<sup>6</sup>). 'Nothing can be done or devised, known or apprehended, in Sheol, to which thou art going' (9<sup>10</sup>). 'The fate of men is the fate of beasts; their fate is one and the same. The one dies like the other. One breath is in them all, and man is no way superior to the beasts. For all is but an illusion. All are on their way to the same place. All sprang from the dust, and to the dust they shall all return. Who can tell whether the human spirit goes upward, and the spirit of the beast downward to the earth?' (3<sup>19-21</sup>). And if, as a foil to this melancholy outlook it be urged that the writer contemplates the return of the spirit to the God who gave it (12<sup>7</sup>), it may be replied that this too, as the following verse shows with its sad refrain, he regards as a vanity, and he may be thinking of the absorption of the human spirit (or it may be only the breath) in the universal spirit—in any case of the extinction of conscious personality. True, the context of one of these passages (3<sup>17</sup>) and certain other words in the book (11<sup>9b</sup> 12<sup>14</sup>), point to a judgment apparently in the world beyond, but it is always extremely probable, and in chap. 3 certain, that such passages are interpolations of a piety in sorrowful conflict with the gloomy context. It is clear then, that, even in matters of high religious importance,

there is no soulless conformity or weak subservience to official opinion. Strong men go their own way, and later editors at any rate recognize that they too have their place within the Church.

#### (iv.) ATTITUDE TO THE FOREIGNER.

Lastly, there are widely different attitudes in the early post-exilic Church to the foreigner: there is friendliness and there is hostility. Already during the exile both these attitudes are found. In its earlier half, Ezekiel, broadly speaking, contemplates the destruction of foreign nations as an indispensable preliminary to the reinstatement and restoration of Israel (chs. 25-32); but in its latter half, Deutero-Isaiah envisages a salvation to be mediated through Israel to all the ends of the earth. 'Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth' (Is 45<sup>22</sup>; cf. 42<sup>4</sup>). This generosity had already been anticipated by the writer of the so-called prayer of Solomon in the noble words, 'Moreover, concerning the foreigner, that is not of Thy people Israel . . . hear Thou in heaven thy dwelling-place, and do according to all that the foreigner calleth to Thee for' (1 K 8<sup>41-43</sup>), and it continues to inspire the greater-hearted men of the later time. But the prevalent mood was one of hostility: the 'heathen' lay beyond the covenant. They stood for something which it was the very business of a good Jew to defy and destroy. The old temper, which in the far-off days urged the extermination of the Canaanites, was flaming still: it was a case of *Judaea contra mundum*. The most typical representatives of early Judaism are the fiercest in their hostility. Ezra demands the unconditional divorce of all foreign women who had been married to Jews, and one of the most passionate prayers in the Old Testament is his prayer that God may forgive this appalling iniquity (Ezr 9. 10). Nehemiah, as a practical statesman, takes the most vigorous and even violent action against the Jewish offenders: 'I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters to their sons, nor take their daughters for your sons, or for yourselves' (Neh 13<sup>23</sup>). This antagonism to the foreigner reaches its climax in the bigotry, passion, and vengeance that thrill through the fascinating story of Esther. 'The Jews smote all their enemies with the stroke of the sword and

with slaughter and destruction, and did what they would unto them that hated them . . . and they slew of them that hated them seventy-five thousand' (Est 9<sup>6, 10</sup>). It is with a shudder that we read of Esther's request for a second butchery (9<sup>13</sup>). Here we have the very apotheosis of vindictiveness, and our only comfort is that in all probability this wholesale butchery took place chiefly in the writer's imagination; but even though it was only a 'paper massacre,' doubtless the wish was father to the thought, and the story is eloquent of the lurid and sanguinary antagonism of the average Jew to alien peoples.

But what a joy to be able to set against this orgy of vindictive brutality the lovely books of Ruth and Jonah. It may be only a fancy which sees in the Book of Ruth a contemporary protest against Ezra's rigid demand for the divorce of foreign women; but whether, chronologically, it be an actual protest against that legislation or no, it is at any rate a protest against the temper which inspired it. Ruth is a Moabitess, and the book sweetly urges that such a woman as 'she, with her loving heart and her resolve to take Israel's God for her God (1<sup>16</sup>), is an Israelite indeed, and ought to be gladly given her place within the community of Jehovah worshippers. Foreigner though she be, she is in worth the peer of any woman in Israel, and she is honoured to become the ancestress of Israel's great king. It took courage to say those things to a nation of bigots; let us be thankful that the man who said them did not

stand alone, but that others were found to say them too. The writer of Jonah holds up the bigotry of his countrymen to scorn in the person of his disobedient and loveless hero, who sat on a hill, with hatred in his heart, watching to see what would become of the enemy city, and yearning for its destruction (Jon 4<sup>5</sup>). Within the all-comprehending mercy of God that writer embraces even cruel Assyria, the country which for nearly two centuries had sought to crush the life out of Israel. 'Shall I not have pity upon that great city?' In his own wonderful way, with the subtlest and gentlest art, he tried—how unsuccessfully the Book of Esther makes too sadly plain—to inspire his narrow-hearted fellow-countrymen with something of the generosity of God Himself, who loved the whole world which His own fingers framed and did not desire that any should perish. The generosity which inspires the book and the intolerance which it so deftly satirizes are typical of two attributes to the foreigner to be found within the post-exilic Church.

This consideration of the attitude of that Church to faith, to the individual, to the future life, and to the foreigner, displays among her sons a refreshing variety of outlook. Utterly intolerant that Church can hardly be said to have been which embraced within her fellowship types so conflicting as to be opposed even in some matters of crucial moment. Within the community of good men there ought to be now, as then, room for honest difference of opinion.

## Contributions and Comments.

### 2 Peter iii. 10.

REFERRING to Mr. Wilson's interesting remarks in THE EXPOSITORY TIMES for October on an interpretation of *εἰρεθήσεται* in 2 P 3<sup>10</sup>, it may be pointed out that a similar interpretation was favoured by the late Dr. John Gwynn in his *Remnants of the Later Syriac Versions of the Bible*.

The Syriac version of 2 Peter—as also that of 2 and 3 John and Jude—usually given in our printed Syriac New Testaments is in all probability, as Dr. Gwynn maintains, a part of the Philoxenian Syriac version of the N.T. made from the Greek

in 508 A.D. and consequently represents a Greek MS. (or MSS.) of at least the fifth century, if not of an even much earlier date. Now the Philoxenian translator evidently had before him a Greek text which read *εἰρεθήσεται*, for his Syriac is ܘܢܠܘܟܘܠ; and 'all texts of Philox.,' says Dr. Gwynn, 'here attest *εἰρεθήσεται*' (*Remnants*, etc., p. 115). This must also have been a reading which Thomas of Harkel had before him when he made about a century later what is known as the Harklean Syriac version of the N.T., for he has in his margin ܘܢܠܘܟܘܠ, though in his text he has words representing *κατακλιθήσεται*.