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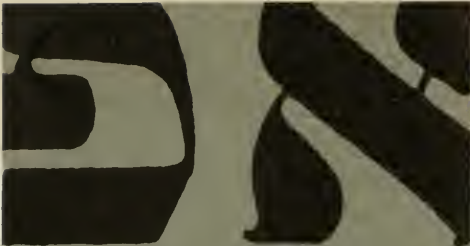


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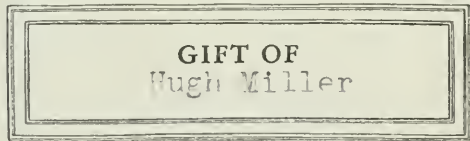
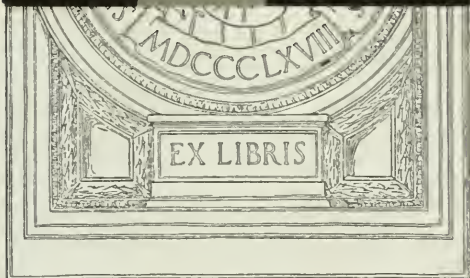
THE SOURCE OF THE  
CHRISTIAN TRADITION

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Oct 1900

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THE SOURCE OF THE CHRISTIAN TRADITION



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OF THE  
CHRISTIAN TRADITION

A CRITICAL HISTORY OF ANCIENT JUDAISM

BY  
ÉDOUARD DUJARDIN

REVISED EDITION, TRANSLATED BY JOSEPH McCABE

[ISSUED FOR THE RATIONALIST PRESS ASSOCIATION, LIMITED]

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The historian neither attacks nor defends religions; he studies how certain books, which have become sacred books, claiming the veneration of all ages throughout the whole earth, came into being among a certain people, at a certain period, in certain circumstances, in order to meet certain needs.

*Page 99.*

The evolution of the Jewish people must be studied with the same cold impartiality as the evolution of any other people of the ancient East.

*Page 200.*

*Gift of Hugh Miller*

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## PRELIMINARY NOTE

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BEFORE we begin our study of Judaism, let me give a little elementary information in regard to Jewish history, geography, and literature.

### JEWISH HISTORY.

The following table indicates the chief divisions of Jewish history, and, side by side with it, in a still more compendious form, the stages in the history of surrounding peoples.

In this table there is no mention of the patriarchs, the captivity of the Hebrews in Egypt, the exodus under Moses, or the conquest of Canaan by Joshua; it will be seen, in the course of the work, that these persons and events are legendary. It is enough to say that tradition places Abraham in the twentieth century; certain recent writers have sought to make him a contemporary of Hammurabi. Moses is assigned by tradition to the sixteenth century.

### CHRONOLOGICAL SCHEME.

#### TO ILLUSTRATE THE HISTORY OF JUDAISM.

---

##### *Jewish History.*

##### *Synchronisms.*

#### THIRTY CENTURIES OF HISTORY

#### BEFORE THE SETTLEMENT OF THE ISRAELITIC TRIBES.

4000 B.C. : Sumer o-Akkadian  
Empire in Chaldæa.

In Egypt, first dynasties.

2000 : Hammurabi, King of Baby-  
lon.

1580 : Amasis I., King of Egypt.

1300 : Salmanasar I., King of  
Assyria.

XIV-XI cent. : The Israelitic tribes  
in Palestine.

Period of "Judges."

## PRELIMINARY NOTE

1000-538 B.C.

## THE TWO KINGDOMS.

- 1000: Saul and David, then Solomon. In the East, the great Assyrian and Babylonian Empires.  
In Egypt, the last national dynasties.
- 933: Death of Solomon.  
The two kingdoms of Judah and Ephraim.
- 722: Destruction of the kingdom of Ephraim by Salman-  
asar II., King of Assyria.
- 538: Destruction of the kingdom of Judah by Nabuchodo-  
nosor, King of Babylon.  
The "Deportation."
- 

538-332 B.C.

## PERSIAN PERIOD.

- 538: Conquest of Western Asia by  
Cyrus, King of Persia; then  
of Egypt by Cambyses, his  
successor.
- End of 6th century: Formation of  
the State of Jerusalem under  
Persian suzerainty.  
The "Restoration."
- 490: Battle of Marathon.
- 480: Battle of Salamina.
- 429: Death of Pericles.
- 5th century: Period of "Esdras."
- 

332-63 B.C.

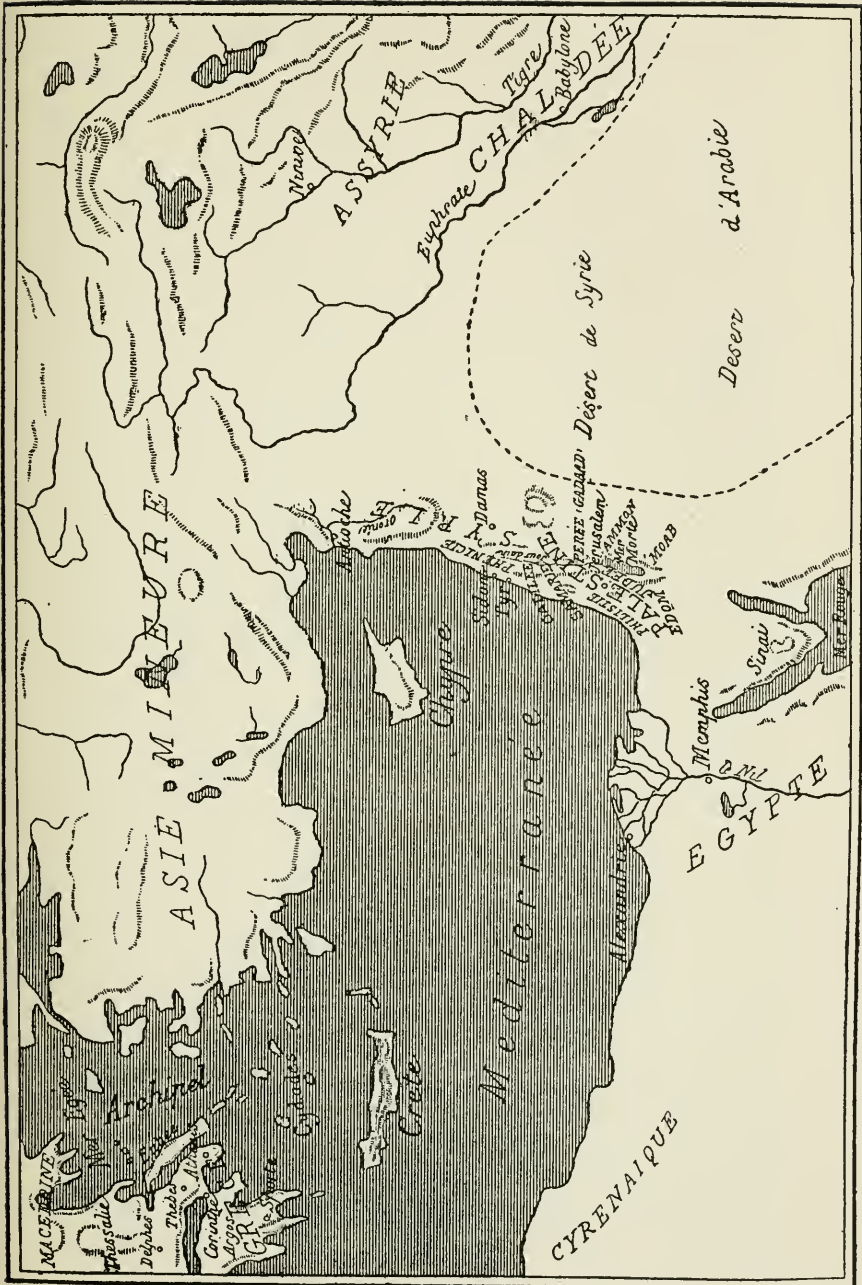
## HELLENISTIC PERIOD.

- 332-141: Judæa passes under the  
suzerainty of Alexander  
and his successors (the  
Ptolemies in Egypt, the  
Seleucids in Syria).
- 332: Conquest of Western Asia and  
of Egypt by Alexander the  
Great, King of Macedonia.
- 167: Civil war: the Machabees.
- 141: Triumph of the Machabees:  
independence of Judæa.
- 

63 B.C.-70 A.D.

## ROMAN PERIOD.

- 63: Pompey takes Jerusalem. 48: Battle of Pharsala: reign of  
Cæsar.
- 40-4: Reign of Herod. 31: Battle of Actium: reign of  
Augustus.
- 35 A.D.: "Conversion" of St.  
Paul.
- 66: Rebellion of the Jews against  
the Romans.
- 70: Taking and destruction of  
Jerusalem by Titus.



MAP OF PALESTINE AND THE SURROUNDING COUNTRIES, FROM THE FIFTH TO THE FIRST CENTURY B.C.

## JEWISH LITERATURE.

The Bible is a collection of the following books:—

1. LEGENDARY AND HISTORICAL BOOKS.—First, there are the five books of Moses: *Genesis*, the best known of the five, relates the creation of the world, the deluge, and the story of the patriarchs—Abraham, father of the Jewish people, and Jacob and his twelve sons, including Joseph, who was sold by his brethren; *Exodus* depicts the captivity of the Hebrews in Egypt, their flight under the leadership of Moses, the crossing of the Red Sea, and the revelation of the law on Mount Sinai; *Leviticus* continues the expounding of the law; in *Numbers* we read the enumeration of the people of Israel, and the continuation of the law; lastly, *Deuteronomy* expounds a new series of laws, and closes with the death of Moses. This collection of five books is often entitled “The Book of the Law”; it has also the name of the Pentateuch, or book of five volumes.

It is customary among informed writers to add to the Pentateuch the *Book of Joshua*, an account of the conquest of Canaan by the Israelites under the command of Joshua. The six books thus combined form what is known as the Hexateuch.

To the Hexateuch succeed the so-called historical books: the book of *Judges*, for the more or less legendary period which extends from Joshua to Saul; the two books of *Samuel*, for the reigns of Saul and David, with the prophet Samuel as protagonist; and the two books of *Kings*, for Solomon and his successors, down to the taking of Jerusalem by Nabuchodonosor<sup>1</sup> and the Deportation.

The book of *Chronicles* is a duplicate of the historical books: the books of *Esdras* and *Nehemiah*, which are a continuation of *Chronicles*, describe the Restoration under Cyrus (end of the sixth and the fifth centuries).

2. PROPHETIC BOOKS.—After the Hexateuch and the historical books come the books of the prophets. There are three great prophets—Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel (Daniel, the fourth, being generally referred to a different series)—and

<sup>1</sup> At the author's request I have retained the older and more familiar spelling of Biblical names.—J. M.

twelve minor prophets, who extend from the period of the kings to that of Esdras. These books consist of series of discourses or apologies.

3. THE HAGIOGRAPHERS.—We have then a group known as the Hagiographers; a series of dogmatic romances, pious stories, poetry, and philosophic essays, such as *Job*, the *Song of Solomon*, *Esther*, and, most important of all, the book of *Psalms*. To these is added the book of *Daniel*, which opens the series of apocalypses.

We ought to add to the preceding group certain books which have not been admitted by the Jews into the Canon of sacred scriptures, though their importance is no less great. They are called the Deutero-Canonical or Pseudepigraphic books. Most of them are apocalypses: for instance, the books of *Enoch*.

#### *Traditional Conceptions.*

The synagogue and—after, and in harmony with, the synagogue—the Christian Church have simply accepted as the date of composition of each of these works (with the exception of some of the non-canonical books) the date of the latest events recorded in each book. Further, the principal character of each of the works is almost always regarded as the author of the work.

Thus Moses and Joshua are believed to have written the Hexateuch in the sixteenth century before the present era. The aged prophet Samuel is believed to have written, in his severe style, the book of *Judges* and the books which bear his name. Each of the prophetic books is supposed to have been delivered orally at first, then written, by the prophet who is the hero of each book. As to the hagiographers, tradition spreads them over the whole period of sacred history, from Moses to the last days of Judaism.

An elementary criticism suffices to cast doubt on these conceptions. As soon as any freedom in the study of history was obtained in Europe, the traditional teaching was assailed. After considerable labour the critical school had, in the second part of the nineteenth century, reached conclusions to which it still adheres to-day, except on a few points of detail. Reuss

in France,<sup>1</sup> and Graf in Germany, were the leaders of this school. Renan, in his *History of Israel*, has accepted the results of their exegesis without reserve, and this has given them a wide publicity. It will therefore suffice to recall the theory of Renan in broad outline to give an idea—in spite of more recent advances in detail—of the conclusions of the critical school.

### *Conceptions of the Critical School.*

To the period of the Judges, of Saul, David, and Solomon, are assigned the beginnings of Hebrew literature; namely, certain old songs, such as the Canticle of Deborah, and a few heroic narratives, which are believed to have been interpolated in the body of the canonical books, where they are found.

Literary works do not begin, it is added, until the age of the successors of Solomon, and a first version of *Genesis* was written in Samaria. The prophets appear at the same time. With the exception of the second part of Isaiah, and a few fragments scattered through the whole series, the prophetic books are still assigned to the dates which tradition had given them. The books of *Judges* and *Samuel* are believed to have been written in succession. Then Deuteronomy was promulgated by King Josiah, under the influence of the prophet Jeremiah.

We come next to the ruin of Jerusalem and the Deportation. The prophets continue their work: it is the age of Ezekiel and the second Isaiah. Then there is the Restoration, and to Esdras is attributed the promulgation of the laws contained, chiefly, in part of *Exodus*, in *Leviticus*, and in *Numbers*. The Hexateuch is presently completed, and thus the end of the fifth century would mark the close of the great Biblical literature.

After a comparative silence of more than two hundred years, the second century is assigned as the period of the psalms and the apocalyptic books, of which *Daniel* is the first.

<sup>1</sup> In the introduction to his *Histoire Sainte et la Loi* (third volume of his Bible) Reuss has given at length all the arguments—irrefutable arguments—which forbid us to attribute the Pentateuch to Moses, or to assign it to any period previous to that of the kings.



*Recent Conceptions.*

Except as regards the *Psalms* and *Daniel*, the preceding views have been ruined by M. Maurice Vernes, who has proved that the compilation of all the Biblical writings, especially the prophetic works, must be placed later, not only than the destruction of the ancient kingdoms, but even than the Restoration.<sup>1</sup> M. Joseph Halévy, again, while defending the antiquity of the Biblical works, has demonstrated that the prophetic books are later than the Mosaic writings.<sup>2</sup>

Tradition placed the Mosaic books before the prophets. The formula of the critical school, on the contrary, is: the Prophets before the Law. With the new theory of dates we return to the traditional formula: the Prophets after the Law.

Since the issue of the first edition of this book the discovery of the papyri of Elephantine<sup>3</sup> has given a most striking confirmation of the scheme of dates which we had adopted after M. Maurice Vernes. They show that the Jews of Elephantine knew nothing of a Mosaic law in the middle of the fifth century, and were especially ignorant (down to 409) of the fundamental law of Deuteronomy, though in constant communication with the metropolis. Certain students of the subject have made desperate efforts to resist the evidence; but, on the whole, we are now granted almost everything except the late date of the prophets. One thing at a time.....Quite recently, however, Mr. Thomas Whittaker<sup>4</sup> has given his valuable adhesion to our thesis.

On the other hand, we protest against the version of our theories that is given by certain critics, such as Jean Réville, who have represented us as saying that not a single element in the Hexateuch is earlier than the Restoration. We have, on the contrary, explained in this very work how the compilers

<sup>1</sup> See especially *Résultats de l'exégèse biblique* (1890), *Essais bibliques* (1891), and *Du prétendu polythéisme des Hébreux* (1891).

<sup>2</sup> See *Recherches bibliques*, 3 volumes, 1895, 1901, and 1905.

<sup>3</sup> Sayce and Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri discovered at Assuan*, London, 1906; Sachau, *Drei Aramaeische Papyrusurkunde aus Elephantine*, Berlin, 1907; and Sachau, *Aramaeische Papyrus und Ostraka aus Elephantine*, Leipzig, 1911.

<sup>4</sup> *The Origins of Christianity*, 2nd ed., London, 1909.

of the Mosaic writings made use, after the Restoration, of legends and customs belonging to earlier times.

It is on these terms that we have proposed, and still propose, the following conceptions:—

1. LEGENDARY AND HISTORICAL BOOKS.—The Mosaic books, *Joshua*, *Judges*, *Samuel*, and *Kings*, were composed during the fourth, and at the beginning of the third, century. To these we may add *Chronicles*, *Esdras*, and *Nehemiah*, which are later.

2. PROPHETICAL BOOKS.—*Jeremiah*, *Ezekiel*, the double *Isaiah*, and the minor prophets, were composed in the second part of the fourth, and in the course of the third, century.

3. HAGIOGRAPHICAL.—The *Psalms*, *Daniel*, and other works, were composed during the second and first centuries.

Retaining the apocalyptic books, especially, in this third and last series, we have framed a classification of the books of the Bible which corresponds to the history of Judaism, and which will provide the main divisions of our inquiry:—

THE LAW (books of *Moses*, *Joshua*, *Judges*, *Samuel*, and *Kings*).

THE PROPHETS.

THE APOCALYPSES.



PART FIRST  
THE LAW

---

CHAPTER I.

THE EARLY DAYS OF JEWISH HISTORY

FOURTEEN centuries before the Christian era opens we find, in the correspondence of certain Egyptian kings, which we have discovered at El Amarna, Palestine described as divided among a number of long-settled peoples, and we read of the recent arrival of bands of marauding Bedouins.

A column erected by an Egyptian king a hundred and fifty years later mentions Israel among these peoples. It is the first reference we have as yet to the name, and this first indication, marking the appearance of Israel in the history of the world, tells at the same time of its first disaster. "Israalou is annihilated," says the column. It is an announcement of the destiny of that extraordinary people, unceasingly shattered, rising again unceasingly.

Then silence falls once more on Palestine, and until about the year 1000 before the commencement of the present era we have nothing to supply the deficiency but the legends incorporated afterwards in the sacred writings of Judaism.

Who were these populations that we find settled on the plains of southern Syria in the fourteenth century, and these tribes, hardly advanced beyond the nomadic life, who sought a place among them? Whence did they come? To what families did they belong? History can only reply to these questions by hypotheses.

The last nomads to settle in the country seem to have come from the deserts of the south. There is nothing improbable in the supposition that, before they invaded Palestine, these hordes of formidable Bedouins had for many years wandered in the arid peninsula of Sinai. On issuing from the pitiless desert they had found in Palestine a country watered with many streams and shaded with verdure, a vast oasis, in which they were disposed to settle. The former inhabitants had been powerless to repel them. They were hardly able to maintain their hold in the most strongly fortified of their small towns; while the nomads, scattered about them, reaped their harvests, plundered their caravans, and fought with each other. After a long period of guerilla warfare the invaders succeeded in making themselves sole masters of the territory; and, adopting fixed habitations, they slowly absorbed what was left of the primitive population.

We have no reliable document to throw light on this obscure origin. We can but hesitatingly pronounce a few names: the Ammonites and the Moabites to the east, the Edomites in the south, the Israelites in the centre.

They no longer lived under the shade of the tent. Huts of earth and stone now lodged them; and they gradually settled in the older towns, which they took. The soil of Palestine was suited for the cultivation of barley and wheat, the vine and the fig, as well as for the rearing of cattle. The olive flourished in it, and honey was plentiful. The pastoral people turned to agriculture.

At times there were still great migrations. Tribes displaced each other, and, crossing the entire region, went on to establish themselves more strongly in a different district, or to seize by force the better situated or better built villages.

The memory was preserved of an attempt made by an Israelite sheik, named Abimelech, to subdue the surrounding population. But from that period of remote barbarism only a few half-legendary names have survived.

These were preserved by popular traditions, remains of primitive monuments, and very ancient customs, for the use of those who, at a later date, undertook to narrate the past of the Jewish people. This was what is called the period of the Judges.

The ethnographic development of the Israelites cannot be regarded as different from that of the other peoples of western Asia. Struggling in obscure savagery for existence, entirely resembling the neighbouring groups, just as barbaric as they, Israel has no history during long centuries.

On every side of the Israelites were great empires that had reached the height of their civilisation long before. To the south-west was Egypt, then at least three thousand years old. In the east was Babylonia, still older than Egypt. To the north-east lay Assur, the expansion of which dated from only a few centuries back; in the north was the vast feudal empire of the Hittites. A thousand years earlier, in the time of Hammurabi, the Babylonians had brought under their dominion the obscure region which was one day to be known as Judæa. The Egyptians, the Hittites, and, more recently, the Assyrians, had come after them, and Palestine had begun to be a route between the Nile and the Euphrates. Then the conquerors had left these mountains to their inhabitants, and had disappeared since the middle of the eleventh century. Egypt was spending itself in internecine warfare; the empires of the Hittites and Assyrians were likewise in decay. But these successive masters had brought with them a certain civilisation, which the Israelites had inherited when they settled in the country. The high culture of Babylonia had, as in the whole of western Asia, accomplished its work.

It was, apparently, a little before the year 1000 that the attempt which Abimelech had made in vain was successfully repeated by Saul, the chief of the Israelitic tribe of Benjamin. A number of guerilla raids were made

on the formidable and menacing populations of Philistia, and Saul was able to extend his dominion over several tribes.

The chief of one group, David, of the neighbouring tribe of Judah, resumed and completed the work of Saul. He seized the ancient town of Jerusalem, which had up to that time remained in the hands of the early inhabitants. Situated on the height of the Judaic plateau, in the most fertile part of Palestine, and strongly entrenched, it was made his capital. He rapidly imposed his dominion on all the tribes of Israel, and possibly extended it to the sister tribes, Ammon, Moab, and Edom.

First bandit, then chief of tribes, David was a successful adventurer, who held his power by force and ability. His successor, Solomon, seems to have been a peaceful sultan, with a taste for splendour, who sought to make something of a kingdom out of the confederation of rival tribes subdued by his father. But none of his successors had the strength or the ability to keep the elements together.

If a fusion had been possible between the Israelites of the north and those of the south, between the various populations of Palestine, the history of the east might have counted one more empire in the series of victorious and fugitive dominations which followed each other in Asia until the time of Alexander. But the fusion was not accomplished, and the work of Saul, of David, and of Solomon had no sequel.

It is well known that at the death of Solomon the northern Israelites formed a small State, which was called the Kingdom of Ephraim, and that the southern Israelites (Kingdom of Judah) alone remained faithful to the house of David. As to the neighbouring and related populations, they rapidly fell away.

At this point the word "Israel" loses its meaning and its use in the life of the peoples of Palestine. The name "Israelites" had been that of a certain number of tribes

established before the year 1000 in southern Syria. Now these tribes are gathered into two distinct groups, the Ephraimitic and Judaic kingdoms. The name of Israel is about to pass out of the pages of history, until the day when it will be revived by the policy of Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup>

Chronologists put the death of Solomon in the year 933. From that date, for many centuries, the story of the two peoples, Ephraim and Judah, runs its obscure course.

Like all small oriental courts, the primitive and rude palaces of the kings of Judah and Ephraim abound in domestic crimes. Writing is hardly known; the arts are primitive, and, to build their royal houses, the sultans of Judah bring workmen and precious material from the industrial and commercial towns of Phœnicia, and pay for them in market produce.

The political organisation is the most summary of autocracies. The king is a despot, surrounded by a small legion of janissaries, who guard his omnipotence; the officers and governors are slaves of the monarch. There is nothing in the nature of regular taxation or fixed administration. It is a tyranny of the most barbaric character.

Of fixed laws there is not a shadow. The first law to be promulgated in Judah will be nearly two centuries after the fall of the royalty. Josias did not promulgate any legislation. There is no trace of codified law before the time of Esdras. The one rule is custom; its sole corrective, the caprice of the sultan.

Of the religion of these tribes, from whom will issue the people that will establish Christianity in the world, we are able to form a fairly reliable idea.

In all probability, the Israelitic tribes had, like the Moabite, Edomite, and Ammonite tribes, brought with them into Palestine the patron-god who had, from the

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix I.

sacred tent in which he dwelt, protected their wandering across the desert. Few monuments of this remote period have been preserved for us, and the Bible, which is a precise and precious document for the beliefs of the age in which it was composed, gives us the most inaccurate information on earlier times.

We may, nevertheless, conceive that in the course of time, as the former Bedouins of the desert settled on the soil of Palestine, the god of each of their tribes had become attached to the land to which the tribe was attached; and, while the gods of the earlier populations fell to the rank of inferior divinities, he reigned in proportion to the reign of his worshippers.

All the tribes had substantially the same religion. Did they all adore the same god under different names? Had they different gods? In view of the lack of precise mythologies, history can tell us nothing; but the only difference it has yet detected between the various gods of the southern Syrians is a mere difference of name.

Let us leave to specialists the discussion of the religious origins of Judaism, and restrict ourselves to the better known period of the kings. Each of the little Palestinian kingdoms has its god. Moab adores Camos; Ammon adores Milkom; Ephraim and Judah adore Jahveh.<sup>1</sup> These deities entirely resemble each other, and all are fed with the fat of the flocks; in exceptionally grave circumstances children are sacrificed to them.

Each of these deities was the special god of his people, the divine patron of his country. Just as Jahveh is the god of Ephraim and Judah, Milkom is the god of the Ammonites and Camos the god of Moab. It must not be supposed for a moment, however, that, in sacrificing to their own god, these peoples deny the god of their neighbours. Judah prays to Jahveh, but does not fail to recognise the formidable power of Dagon.

<sup>1</sup> The form "Jahveh" seems to be preferable to "Jehovah" as a vocal expression of the four consonants יהוה which make up the divine name.



One day the kings of Samaria, the capital of Ephraim, and of Jerusalem, the capital of Judah, set out to make war on Mesa, king of Moab. What does Mesa do? He says to himself that perhaps Jahveh, the protector of Jerusalem and Samaria, is not inaccessible to corruption; and, in solemn sacrifice, he offers up to him his eldest son. Jahveh, won by the sacrifice, grants him the victory; Jerusalem and Samaria are betrayed by their god, and vanquished. So we read, almost, in the third chapter of the second book of Kings.

The protecting, patronising, territorial god is in effect a national god; and, if the grandchildren of the Israelites alone deduce the full consequences from the idea of a national Jahveh, centuries later, it is nonetheless true that the premises were common to all the inhabitants of lower Syria from the tenth to the sixth century before the present era. Mesa, king of Moab, conqueror of his enemies from Ephraim and Judah, could thank his god Camos (the author of the stele has made no mistake) in the very same terms in which Ephraim and Judah would have congratulated Jahveh, if they had won.

We must, therefore, conceive the history of the Hebrew kingdoms up to the Deportation in the same way as that of the neighbouring peoples; scientifically, it is impossible to conceive it otherwise. Jahveh, who afterwards became the one god of the Jews, the Eternal of the Christians, and the Absolute of the philosophers, cannot have been a less abominable idol than Camos or Milkom.....Let us try, for our edification, to reconstruct the cult of Jahveh, from the tenth to the sixth century.

At the summit of a high hill, in the shade of a venerable and verdant tree, is a large flat stone, uncut, on which the victims are immolated. Before the altar are two emblems. On one side is the *matsebah*, a column of stone in the form of a menhir; on the other side is the *asherah*, the trunk of a tree which has taken root there and had its branches lopped off, or the trunk of a tree

forced into the soil. Some of the Semitic gods, such as Bel of Phœnicia, have a female partner; but most of them are originally hermaphroditic, and, at some unknown epoch, the lord Jahveh was perhaps of this number, both male and female.

To these rural altars the families bring the beasts destined for the sacrifice. A sacrificial priest lives close by. At their call he approaches, clad in a white tunic. He begins by pouring oil and wine on the altar. Then the beast is brought forward, and is felled and dismembered by one skilful stroke of his knife. The pieces are distributed. The priest has put aside those which custom assigns to himself; the remainder is given back to the pilgrims; and from the fat, which is set afire, the portion of Jahveh rises to heaven in a black and acrid smoke. Jahveh loves fat, says the Bible. Then they all take their seats at the table, and the ceremony ends piously with a banquet, at which the head of the family presides.

By the side of the altar of sacrifice is the tabernacle. There the image of the god dwells and gives his oracles.

At first the images of Jahveh were manifold. He was adored under the form of an aerolith, under the form of a precious stone, and under the form of various animals. It is well known that at Jerusalem he was a brazen serpent; in Ephraim he was a young golden bull. We speak of it to-day as a golden calf, because we have in our language no word for the young male corresponding to the name of the young female, heifer. [Bullock would be the more correct term in English.] Jahveh was a young bullock. He had also a human form.

Nothing of importance could be meditated, either in the family or the tribe, without consulting Jahveh. It seems that Jahveh replied with a "yes" or a "no." The ephod was a small formless statue, plated with gold, representing a human appearance of the god, with a pocket, in which were two balls of different colours. One of these balls meant "yes," the other "no"; and the priest drew out



one ball in giving the divine answer. The tabernacle, a kind of small chapel made of animal skin or of carpet, but sometimes built of stone, sheltered the precious statue and, perhaps, its interpreter. Not far away was the vigilant sheik of the village, the owner of the sanctuary, with a troop of well-armed servants. A consultation of the ephod of Jahveh was paid for in ready money, and was a good source of revenue. Sometimes a neighbouring sheik made a sudden descent, at the head of his people, to seize the god, and there were battles waged round the profitable idol. There were even cases—witness the seventeenth chapter of *Judges*—in which the sheik not only stole the ephod, but enticed away its priest.

The *aron*, or ark, of Jahveh was a wooden chest in which the precious stone, or the aerolith, was kept, and it was represented as the dwelling of Jahveh. During the battles of different peoples the ark of Jahveh was brought sometimes into the midst of the army, so that the presence of the god might lead to victory; but at times—witness the fourth chapter of *Samuel*—the army was nevertheless defeated, and the enemy carried off the abode of the vanquished god as the most glorious of trophies.

The sanctuaries of Jahveh were numerous. What we have just described was the rural “high-place.” In the more important towns the sanctuaries rose to the position of temples; but, save that they were of vaster proportion, they only differed from the little provincial sanctuaries in being enclosed by a wall. At the bottom of the court was the tabernacle; in front of the tabernacle was the altar of sacrifice; and on either side were the phallic *matsebah* and the accompanying *asherah*. Round the court was a line of priests’ houses; and near by was always the house of the emir, the sheik, or the sultan, the sentinel at the door of the divine patron. Whether the sanctuary is a temple or a simple high-place, it is always a tabernacle in which the representation of the

god dwells, and an altar on which cattle, and sometimes human beings, are immolated.

The most famous temples of the period of the kings were those of Jerusalem and Gabaon in Judah, and of Sichem, Dan, Bethel, and Silo in Ephraim. In the description of the Jerusalem temple, which is given in the book of *Kings*, we must not seek more than general and very summary indications, as the description was composed long after the building had been destroyed, and with the view of depicting an ideal type.

The proportions of the structure, the richness of the materials, the number of the priests, and the splendour of the accessories, distinguished the metropolitan temples from the provincial sanctuaries. It seems even that Solomon, in building the temple at Jerusalem, imitated the magnificence of the Phœnician temples, and copied their arrangement. The traditions of the east were not less observed at Jerusalem than at Tyre or Sidon, or in the capitals of Syria. By the side of the priests' houses, round the central court, where the sacrifices were offered, there were the chambers of the sacred courtesans. Masculine, as well as feminine, prostitution formed part of the cult of Jahveh.

What was the further development of beliefs and religious institutions in the Hebrew kingdoms of Ephraim and Judah? The same as those of Moab, of Ammon, of Edom, or of any of the neighbouring peoples of Syria; nor is it possible to conceive otherwise.

Jahveh was the god of Judah, just as Camos was the god of Moab, or Milkom the god of Ammon, and conquest alone could dislodge them. The older Palestinian cults, anterior to the arrival of the Israelitic tribes, had assuredly not wholly disappeared; but, as we said, these ancient divinities only survived as inferior divinities. In each population there was only one god officially adored, the god of the conquerors, the patron-god: Jahveh in Israel, Camos in Moab, Milkom in Ammon—each in his own

home. Syrian princesses, coming, by chance alliance, to reign over the harems of the Hebrew kings, may have brought with them the image of their national god. Certain kings may, to please a favourite sultana, to flatter their Phœnician ally or Ninevite suzerain, or to disarm the anger of the foreign god, have set up altars to Bel or Astarte in their kingdoms. That is not only possible, but probable; yet these were exceptional occurrences, and the old national religion was never altered. An altar of Camos at Jerusalem would be as inconceivable as the German flag at Paris.

Why, then, did the Biblical writers afterwards relate that the sanctuaries of Baal, Moloch, and Astarte had covered the land of Jahveh? The source of this error—an error of which, as we shall see, the policy of Jerusalem took advantage—is easy to trace. The word king is *melek* (*moloch*, according to an orthographical corruption) in Hebrew; lord is *baal*. Now, the titles of lord and king were precisely those which the peoples of Palestine lavished on their gods; throughout the whole of Syria it was customary to speak of the local god as the *baal* or the *moloch*. Like their neighbours, the Israelites of Judah, as well as the Israelites of Ephraim, called Jahveh their *baal* and their *moloch*; that is to say, their master and their king. When the practice was lost, the biblical writers, who were at times great poets, but always bad linguists, did not understand that this *baal* or *moloch* was Jahveh himself, and they imputed to their ancestors, in regard to the Phœnician Baal and the Ammonite Moloch, sins of apostasy of which they were really innocent. By an analogous blunder they confused the tree-trunk, the *asherah*, with the Astarte of the Phœnicians; and the Jewish writers, and the Christian writers after them, said that the idol of Astarte was raised, throughout Israel, by the side of the *matsebah* before the altar of Jahveh. Apart from a few chance altars, raised in temporary circumstances to foreign divinities, and

apart from the survivals of ancient pre-Israelitic cults which had passed to the condition of popular superstitions (like the cult of certain saints in our own time), we may affirm that, on the contrary, no temple could be consecrated, either in Judah or Ephraim, to any other god than the god of Judah and Ephraim; any more than an altar could be raised in Moab to any other than the god of Moab.

When we have thus recalled, amid the stony mountains of Palestine, the ancient sanctuaries of Jerusalem, Bethel, Silo, Dan, Sichem, and Gabaon, with their stone altars, their tent-like tabernacles, their *matsebah* and *asherah*, and, in the case of the more magnificent, their walls of worn masonry, the homes of their priests, and, in the case of those which affected rivalry with the Egypto-Phœnician temples, their chambers of double prostitution; when we have pictured to ourselves the sheik followed by his family, the lowly shepherd of the flock, the husbandman bound to the soil, clothed in their white mantles and turbans, leading the ox or the ram to the altar of the god, or coming to ask of the ephod some news of the ass they have lost, or some counsel as to the coupling of their heifers or the proper season to sow; when, in the midst of a frightful combat, we have seen the emir take the supreme measure of sacrificing his son as a holocaust to the anger of the god, we have nothing further to do, if we would exhaust all that the authentic documents can tell us of this remote past, of three thousand years ago, but to evoke from their remote obscurity the processions and the rejoicings at the festivals of Jahveh, which we may witness to-day in this unchanging east.

These festivals are alike over the whole of Palestine, and their order is dictated by the natural development of the rural year. First we have the spring, when the seedlings begin to break through the soil, and when the mothers of the flock deliver. Little caravans form on all sides round the village, and bring to Jahveh—each seeking

the nearest sanctuary—the first-fruits of the field, the first-born of the flock.

Then it is harvest-time, which will later be called the Pentecost. The Israelites pray to Jahveh and thank him, with ripe ears of corn and weaned beasts, with the offer of young bullocks, of yearling lambs, of the rams whose odour he finds pleasing. During this time no servile work is done.

Later is the vintage and the end of agricultural labour. From all sides the caravans rise toward the sanctuary of the protecting god. Each man has brought the fruit of his trees, and branches of palms and willows from the river-side, and for several days they rejoice before their god. The sky is serene, the nights are mild. Round the sanctuary, at the summit of the hill, at the foot of the venerable and verdant tree, they have built huts of foliage, the shelter of a few days. There they live, and eat and drink, and celebrate the passing of the year and the coming repose of the autumn. It is the feast of Tabernacles, the feast of the tents of foliage.

What can literature have been among these half-barbaric peoples, without written laws, without government, in the throes of perpetual warfare, interrupted only by the common cycle of annual festivals, and with this local and idolatrous religion?

There cannot have been any more literature in Ephraim or Judah than in Moab, or in any of the neighbouring kingdoms. Most assuredly there cannot have been more than in the regions of higher civilisation, like Phœnicia. And this literature is the same everywhere. At the court of each of the petty oriental kings an historiographer recounts the high deeds of the master. Among the people a few short religious chants, not written, pass from mouth to mouth. There are legends, finally, epical narratives, certain familiar stories, which the elders teach the young, and which pass down the course of ages.

The legends, the chants, the annals of the historio-



graphers of Moab, Ammon, and Edom have been lost in the melting away of tribes which, once they had been devastated, were unable to form again into peoples. On the other hand, thanks to the Restoration, the official annals, certain religious songs, and a few ancient legends remained, after the confusion of the Babylonian captivity, in the memory of the Jews of the fifth and fourth centuries. These reminiscences enabled the Jews afterwards to write the story of their past. But what was afterwards made of this historiography and these legends must not deceive us. Neither in Judah nor in Ephraim, any more than in Moab, Ammon, or Edom, can we seek, among such primitive races, anything else but the popular songs, the legends, the epic stories, which we find at the origin of all civilisations. We must not imagine that, beside the despotic and formidable sultan, there was any other historian than the servile scribe charged to leave to his successors, in lines as brief as those of an inscription, the memory of falsely represented exploits.

Have we at least some monument, some inscription, from this remote epoch? Have we found a single stone of the harems of these petty monarchs, their citadels, the ancient sanctuaries, the stone columns, the *matsebahs*, the triumphal arches? It was believed, a few years ago, that Moab, in default of literature, had left us a really ancient monument in the pillar (stele) of its king Mesa. Unhappily, the famous stele seems too fine to be genuine. Of ancient Hebraism no monument of the slightest interest has come down to us. Apart from a few stones of Jerusalem, apart from what the future may discover in the deeper soil of Palestine, nothing has survived the ages. While, in Assyria, Babylonia, Susa, and Egypt, the spade of the explorer has brought before us the fallen empires, with glories that fill us with amazement, and disclose to us the marvellous civilisations they had in the remotest depths of history, Judæa has as yet yielded only a miserable past. This corner of the east lingered in the

primitive state which is, indeed, no longer barbarism, but is hardly civilisation; and the great fortune of the Jews, one day destined to spread far and wide, had not yet, even in the seventh century, in the time of the last kings of Judah, begun to reveal itself.

No history, indeed, is more pitifully obscure than that of the petty kings of Ephraim and Judah, down to the day when they were swallowed up in the flood of the Assyrian and Babylonian invasions. After the death of Solomon, his successors in Ephraim and Judah had worn themselves out, during two centuries, in warfare with each other or with their neighbours. And one day the countless and terrible multitudes of the Assyrians appeared in the north of Palestine.

The kings of Nineveh were then reconstructing one of those vast empires which had successively held western Asia, had pushed as far as Egypt, and, passing on to Europe, had been arrested only at Marathon. The Assyrian troops made their way by great invasions, without settling anywhere. They passed like a devouring wave, ravaging everything, carrying off the booty, and massacring the population. A defeat would arrest them for a few years; submission, ransom, the paying of tribute, would set them on their way again. Then the wave came back like the tide, and, sooner or later, swept over the barriers. The kingdom of Ephraim, situated in the north, was the first to suffer. The ancient historiographers of Samaria, and the writers of *Kings* after them, have left us the record of the unequal struggle of Ephraim against the northern foe; and the cuneiform monuments found in the Assyrian ruins mention the misadventures of the petty kings of the land of Omri.

Toward the end of the eighth century, two centuries and a-half after Solomon, Salmanasar, king of Nineveh, took Samaria, and bore away in captivity the king and the chief inhabitants of Ephraim. The northern kingdom had ceased to exist.

Jerusalem, more sheltered, in a stronger situation on its hill, resisted the Assyrians. History tells that Sancherib, the successor of Salmanasar, had come to lay siege to Jerusalem, where the pious king Ezekias reigned, and that the angel of Jahveh went forth one night, and smote a hundred and eighty-five thousand men in the Assyrian camp; so that, when the Hebrews arose in the morning, they found the enemy slain. But the angel of Jahveh intervened too rarely, and the little kingdom of Judah (about the size of Corsica) only lived from that day in a death-agony.

War was being waged between Nineveh and Egypt, and the land of Judah was the line of march and the field of battle. Over it passed the hostile armies, with which no neutrality was possible. After a hundred years of guerilla fighting in the mountains, of submission, revolt, and desolation, the poor people found itself reduced to one strong town, Jerusalem, perpetually besieged and ransomed, with its surrounding country eternally devastated.

Babylon had displaced Nineveh; the formidable empire of Assyria had fallen; the Chaldæan armies of Babylon passed in turn across western Asia. After resisting the Assyrians so long, the Jerusalemites were about to yield to the unceasing attack of the Chaldæans. We have reached the time of Nabuchodonosor. The virulent poetry attributed to Jeremiah has immortalised the last years of the descendants of David; but, from party spirit, it has perverted the truth.

It is very difficult for us to conceive the last years of ancient Jerusalem, with its Josias, Joachim, and Sedecias, as the chastisement of a people punished by a jealous god for falling from its earlier virtue, or to see in them anything else than the bloody and terrible resistance of a small agricultural and pastoral population, who have been devastated and have taken shelter behind the walls of the citadel, where the emir dwells, in the shadow of the chief sanctuary of their god. It is a savage struggle, and the



end of it must be either an improbable victory or destruction.

Jerusalem had, four centuries earlier, under the bold and astute David, almost become the centre round which might gather all these small populations, of like customs and the same language and religion, to form a kingdom of the southern Syrians, masters of the route between Egypt and Asia, with every prospect of vanquishing the Phœnician ports, the Mediterranean, and the open west. Israel fell short of this destiny; a more extraordinary future was reserved for it. These tribes, nomads but a short time before, hardly emerged from barbarism in the sixth century, wore themselves out in unceasing intestine war; and their petty sultans, cruel and knavish as are all oriental despots, could only pillage, betray, and massacre each other, while the formidable power of the great military dominations of Nineveh and Babylon increased beside them.

In 588 Jerusalem is taken by storm by the troops of Nabuchodonosor. The king Sedecias, after seeing his sons slaughtered, has his eyes put out; bound in bronze chains, he is carried off to Babylon with the chief men of the town. The house of Jahveh is burned down.

The kingdom of Judah is destroyed; the kingdom of Ephraim has disappeared a century and a-half before; Moab, Ammon, and Edom, their brothers, successively melt away. Syria is conquered. There is no longer a Philistia; Tyre alone holds out on its island. The whole of Palestine is thrown into confusion. The Chaldæans of Babylon use it as the Assyrians of Nineveh had done. When they have conquered a land, they begin by carrying off all that is portable in gold, bronze, and precious objects. Then they burn down the buildings and destroy the walls. They massacre all who resist, and divide those who submit into two groups: the chiefs, whom they bear away into captivity, and the common folk, whom they leave, with the charge of paying tribute, on a land of

smoking ruins, of desolation, of long infertility. It is all over then with Judah, as with Ephraim, and Moab, and Edom, and Ammon. The Hebrew people has perished, and it has perished without leaving any memorial—neither in history, nor art, nor legislation, nor literature, nor religion. It has perished like the most obscure of these rough tribes of western Asia. But from this people which has done nothing there will now come sons who will do everything.

## CHAPTER II.

### ESDRAS

#### § 1. *The Beginning.*

THE history of the Jews begins in 588.

Jerusalem, which has never been more than a small and obscure town, is now a heap of ruins. On every side the surrounding country is laid waste. Nothing is seen in it but bands of marauding Bedouins. The soil is cultivated no longer; there are now no flocks. The sheiks and leading men have been massacred or borne away. There remains only a miserable gathering of the poorer folk.

The years pass slowly by.

Some measure of peace has been recovered, however. People endeavour to rebuild their dilapidated huts. To restore the walls of the town is out of the question. They seek to draw closer to and help each other amidst the general desolation, but they have no resources, no means of defence, and, apparently, no energy. In the half-peace which ensues upon great disasters, they return somewhat toward the primitive savagery.

Still the years pass by.

These plains of southern Syria have become a desert where one no longer dare put flocks to graze, where it is fruitless to till the soil, where the olive and the fig are blighted, and no one seeks to restore them. In the general insecurity what remains of life gathers instinctively round the old town, where it is easier to defend oneself against the marauders, and the nearness of neighbours gives one a feeling of confidence. Jerusalem has remain a small centre, like Samaria. In and around Jerusalem, in spite of the demolished walls and the

blackened sanctuaries, there are some signs of sluggish life. Two generations pass in this wise.

Suddenly, in the year 538, it is said that strange armies have arrived from the distant heart of Persia, that they have gathered on all sides round invincible Babylon, and that one night, while the emperor Balthasar held festival with his courtesans, they swarmed to the assault of the impregnable capital; that Babylon has fallen and its terrible empire is over. A new people is master of the world; a new emperor reigns, Cyrus. Emissaries, with armed cohorts to support them, go out to every part of Asia. It is said that the new people is strong, but not cruel; that the new emperor lets every man live at his own fireside, worship his own god, tend his vine, lead out his flock to pasture, and do his business in peace in the markets of the large towns, under the shadow of his formidable, but protective, power.

It is difficult to say, in the present state of science, if the Persian domination and the government of Cyrus were at the start as peaceful as the flattering historians would have us believe. It seems clear, at least, that the Persians acted differently from the Assyrians and Chaldeans. The latter had been ruthless conquerors, indifferent to organisation; the Persians sought from the first to organise their empire. The Persians were a great aristocratic nation, of strong government, with severe morals and religion, far removed from barbarism, with laws and agriculture. Their powerful military organisation, instead of pressing toward savagery, maintained discipline. Their Aryan spirit showed itself in a craving for government, a leaning to administration, a feeling of the need of order; so that, at the time when they were leading their armies across Asia, Cyrus, Cambyses, and Darius were writing edicts, appointing satraps, maintaining an interchange of couriers with each of them, holding the final court of justice, and governing.

The Jewish historians relate, with improbability of

detail, that, as soon as Cyrus had taken Babylon, he allowed the descendants of the Judaites, who had been brought into captivity by Nabuchodonosor, to return to their country, rebuild their town, and restore their temple. They assert that the first caravan left Babylon under the guidance of Zorobabel, and returned to Jerusalem; and that then, nearly a century later, in 458, Esdras in turn led back a group of exiles to their country. They give the names of the heads of families, count the caravans, and relate the most precise details about the two migrations.

Historical criticism retains only a few facts out of these accounts. The Restoration was the work of the Jerusalemites who had remained in and around the town, rather than of the descendants of the exiles of 588.

The descendants of the Jerusalemites who had been exiled to Babylon had definitely settled there. It is likely enough that exiles who found the doors of their country re-opened after fifteen, twenty, or even thirty years of captivity would be eager to return to their homes. But by the time of Cyrus it was already more than fifty, and even sixty, years since the deportation (as the great deportation of 588 had been preceded by another in 599). Two generations had passed away, and they had settled in the land of exile. At the time of the supposed return of Esdras a hundred and thirty, or a hundred and forty, years had elapsed since the deportation. There was no longer question of returning to Jerusalem. They were in Babylon, and would remain there. "Captivity" is an incorrect word, and has done much to put a false complexion on their history. There was no captivity or slavery. They had been forcibly transferred to the banks of the Euphrates, but had settled there, and now lived there in freedom. Though the Babylonian deportation had been compulsory, it proved to be merely the first of the countless emigrations by which the Jews were afterwards to fill the world. The Babylonian colony, the first

of the Jewish colonies, remained, grew, and lasted for centuries.

That a small number of the Judaites returned to Palestine in the time of Cyrus is quite possible; but we must seek the restorers, or, rather, the founders, of the Jewish nation amid the miserable population which remained in the country. The Persian domination, succeeding the Chaldæan domination, gave the Judaites who remained in their home the chance of restoring and organising. It seems that the world began to breathe once more, after the Babylonian oppression; in Palestine, as everywhere else, if a spark of life remained in the breast, it was now possible to rise again. But nothing was more lowly, and nothing is more obscure, than the beginning of this resurrection.

The first known act of the story is the restoration of the temple of Jahveh, which is attributed to Zorobabel. However modest this reconstruction of the temple may have been, it is the first stirring of the soul of Jerusalem. As long as there was no temple there was nothing but a stricken population, scattered over a land of ruin. The temple means that Jahveh has returned to his land, and that there is once more a god at Jerusalem.

Years passed by after the reconstruction of the temple. Jerusalem had remained dismantled since 588; and, at this period in the east, an open town was an easy prey to the attacks of neighbours and nomads. The Biblical writers narrate that a Jew of the name of Nehemiah, who held the office of cup-bearer to the emperor Artaxerxes, obtained from his master, and brought to Jerusalem, permission to rebuild the walls. There were frightful difficulties. The workers, as they built, had the trowel in one hand and the sword in the other. It seems that the work was completed less than a hundred years after Cyrus, about the middle of the fifth century.

With temple and walls Jerusalem became a town. With the narrow strip of country immediately around it,



the town became what we should call a small territorial unity, and provided the conditions which were necessary for life and prosperity.

Jerusalem and its outskirts were typical of the organisation which the Persian government sought to promote in the immense agglomeration of peoples under its yoke. The Persian government expressly restored life to the small States, the agricultural populations, the cities girt about with countryside, all the little territorial unities. A large State would have been a great danger; very small States were preferable in the confederation which made up the new empire. The policy of the Persian emperors aimed at the development of the small States and preventing the formation of large ones. In one of the chief towns of Syria resided a satrap, with an army, who governed the Syro-Palestinian region. He had a lieutenant and some troops in each town, and his work consisted in maintaining order and receiving the tribute. Provided it paid the tribute and there was no disorder, each town and each group of towns, each petty State, did what it pleased.

Was there a restoration in the other cities of Palestine like that of the capital of the former kingdom of Judah? Did the earlier kingdom of Ephraim witness a revival of Samaria? Had Moab, Edom, and Ammon the same good fortune? Did the old cities and centres of Syria, devastated in the Assyrian and Babylonian conquests, return to life? Certainly. But the history of these peoples is almost unknown. Even the history of Jerusalem, in spite of the brilliance of its later development, is full of obscurity until the second century; it is the more natural that we should know little of the destiny of the unhappy neighbours who never attained distinction. It is, however, certain that under the dominion of Persia there was, from end to end of Palestine, a re-awakening—I had rather say an awakening—of these stricken populations. At Samaria as well as Jerusalem, in the capitals of Moab, Edom, and Ammon, in certain towns of Philistia,

at Damas, there was an organisation not unlike the development of the burgher-cities of the Middle Ages.

In the midst of these petty States, and not differing from them in origin, the little State of Jerusalem is destined to grow and develop. It is the story of this little State, similar at first to the story of the surrounding States, that we have henceforth to follow. The inhabitants of Jerusalem now call themselves by a new name, the "Jews." The word "Jew" is a corruption of the older "Judæan"; but a new name characterises a new fact. Formerly there was a kingdom of Judah; now there is a Jewish people. The name "Jew" is born in history. Instead of the little kingdoms which divided southern Syria between them before the sixth century, there have appeared a multitude of tiny, independent States, under the common hegemony of the Persian emperor, not larger, at the most, than one or two counties. Jerusalem is one among this mass of rival cities, which are irremediably lost to us in the night of a dead past. It has its thousands of acres of pasturage and crops around it, and at this date vegetates miserably, like in all respects to the obscure cities about it; yet its name will one day stand high in the world's annals. We saw in the first chapter that the story of the earlier kingdom of Judah was the same as that of neighbouring peoples; we shall see in the history of the Jewish people something wholly special, extraordinary, unique. Did something happen at Jerusalem, then, during the fifth century, which could not happen in the rival cities of Palestine? All the evidence is against it. But from the common circumstances of all these cities and all these peoples of Palestine one people alone was able to develop the logical consequences. They had a common origin, a common beginning; but everywhere else was abortion—at Jerusalem alone we find a continuous development to the higher stage. Of different children of the same parents one only becomes a Napoleon; the others remain Jerome, Joseph, or Lucien.



For twenty centuries the Jewish and Christian orthodoxies have taught that the destiny of Israel can only be interpreted as a prolonged miracle. History will simply say that the development of the Jewish State, among the other States of Palestine, has been a similar success to the development of the Athenian republic among the republics of Hellas, or to the even more extraordinary development of Rome among the cities of Italy.

What is the Jewish people in its beginning? A few miserable shepherds or husbandmen, a few lowly artisans and poor folk without chiefs, who have gathered round the ruins of a dismantled city, three parts destroyed by fire, from the terror of looting hordes and hostile neighbours. Then, when a better age begins and a great peace fills the world, the little town is gradually rebuilt, the temple of its national god restored, its walls raised once more in spite of a thousand difficulties, and some security is provided for its inhabitants and its outskirts. We are now in the middle of the fifth century. There is still no organisation, no written law, at Jerusalem. The town, except for its modest temple and perhaps a few houses, is no more than a cluster of huts with an encircling wall. There is no civilisation; it is the dubious age when a people barely begins to exist. Savagery and misery lie at the gates. It is much the same with Samaria, the old capital of Ephraim, with the sacred towns of Bethel and Silo, and with the small Syrian towns, the towns of Moab, Ammon, Edom, and Philistia. Jerusalem, for all its temple and its walls, remains a humble city of Palestine.

It is at this moment that the evolution commences from which Christianity will issue. The date is fixed by the name of Esdras.<sup>1</sup>

The story of Esdras, as we read it in the book which bears his name in the Bible, is, like almost all the Biblical stories, a doctrinal legend; that is to say, a legend with the purpose of establishing a religious dogma. Criticism

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix II.

can glean only two or three facts from it, and the greatest obscurity surrounds the person, and even the age, of Esdras. Was he the man of genius who first organised the population of Jerusalem? Was he the head of a school of reformers? Is his name merely the symbol which conceals a popular movement, or the geographical expression which denotes a group? It is supposed that Esdras was a real personage, a priest of Jahveh; that he, in particular, forbade the Jerusalemites to have foreign wives, and that he came after Nehemiah. But if his personality is, and must apparently remain, shrouded in irremovable obscurity, the work done, whether it was the work of one (as is the more probable) or of many, or, better still, the collective work of the nation, is clear and intelligible. It is the first affirmation of the nationalism which was the point of departure of Judaism.

When the men of Jerusalem had rebuilt the temple of their god and restored their walls, it seems that, instead of slumbering in their comparative security, they went on to give a profound consideration to their situation, their past, and their future; and that this profound meditation laid the foundation of their fortune. The other peoples round about them, Samaria, Moab, and Edom, similarly situated, did not rise above the needs of daily existence. It seems that the men of Jerusalem stopped to reflect, and interrogated their destiny. The others, accepting the lot which chance dealt out to them, were content to live. The men of Jerusalem trembled for themselves; they dwelt on the two long centuries, the horrors of which were barely over. This little population, restricted to the few acres which lay between the Cedron and the valley of Ben-Himmon, shuddered to find itself conquered, isolated, and so weak, and it reflected anxiously on its past. With the terrible memories of ruin and deportation, with the painful recollection of the slow and burdensome restoration, they contrasted the memory of their earlier glories. Among the older folk one still heard tell of the former greatness

of the nation's heroes, the victories of David, and the splendour of Solomon. They dreamed of the old Davidic kingdom, and in exaggeration made it stretch from the desert to the great sea. They told marvellous tales of the temple so magnificently built by Solomon, and contrasted with it the poor edifice of Zorobabel. While other nations drowsily accepted things as they were, the men of Jerusalem asked themselves why this thing had happened to them, and why that; why this former grandeur and why the fall. They could not reconcile themselves to the thought that they had once been great, and were now miserable, unless it were for some extraordinary reason. They put themselves the fateful question, Why, which is the root of all resurgence.

The naive theology of the tenth, the eighth, and even the sixth century, taught that the victories of nations were the victories of their protecting gods, and their defeats a defeat of the god. A victory effaced a defeat. Jahveh, once beaten under Achaz, had had his revenge under Ezekias. It was a very natural idea in the turmoil of brigandage, sometimes profitable, sometimes a failure, among the ancient populations of Palestine. But the frightful events which had ensued, the Chaldæan invasion, the ruin and exile, had definitely brought these tribes into subjection, and had meant the defeat of their gods. And each people continued, as before the Babylonian conquest, to honour its own god. Moab worshipped Camos, Ammon worshipped Milkom. In the same way Jahveh reigned at Jerusalem. Just as Camos was the territorial god of Moab, Jahveh remained the territorial god of Judah. Nevertheless, while the neighbouring peoples acknowledged the defeat of their gods, the men of Jerusalem proclaimed that their god had not been conquered. On the very morrow of the Babylonian deportation, under the ignominy of the Persian domination, they declared that Jahveh was the terrible master who had thought fit to chastise his people, and now thought fit to restore it.

They affirmed that their disasters and their ruin and oppression were the work of their national god himself.

In appearance, there was no change of the old traditions in the Palestine of the fifth century; but in reality the whole soul was revolutionised in the men of Jerusalem. While the others thought it enough to cultivate the protecting deity, who sent the sun and the dew, the men of Jerusalem put their own despair, anxiety, and pride into the terrible soul which they gave to Jahveh. It was a prodigious effort of a few heroic men. The other gods had become poor secondary deities, oppressed with their people, now, under the Persian hegemony, ruling only the small happenings of their little towns. The men of Jerusalem had the boldness to proclaim that their god had triumphed, that he had deliberately allowed the downfall of his people, and that he now willed its restoration. Jahveh was no longer a mere territorial god, sitting in the ark, a lover of fat. He appeared to Esdras, to the Esdras group, in the agony of their humiliation, as the terrible master who had done everything.

Why had Jahveh willed these abominable things—the burning of his temple, the destruction of his town, the dispersal of his people, and the desolation of his land during two hundred years?

As a stricken soul, which has felt the throes of agony, is determined to learn the cause of its misfortune, and, if it is to live again, absolutely needs to know why it came so near death, so the Esdras group invented the only answer which seemed fit to reassure its life.

This answer had to be the powerful stimulant which would restore the patriotism of the people, and exalt that patriotism into the most sombre fanaticism. The men of Jerusalem must be united in a savage love of their city. Patriotism must in future fill every heart until there is no place for any other feeling. The love of Jerusalem, their country, must flash forth in the depths

of their souls so vividly that for ages to come its walls will need no other light.

What was there, then, among these peoples of southern Syria to correspond to what we now call our country? At Jerusalem this thing was Jahveh; in Moab men called it Camos; in Ammon it was Milkom; in Tyre, Bel and Astarte; at Damas, Rimmon; and in Philistia, Dagon. If this exalted patriotism had been born in Moab or at Damas, it would have found expression in the names of Camos or of Rimmon. Being born at Jerusalem, it was uttered in the name of Jahveh.

The man, or the group, known as Esdras announced that Jahveh had devastated his land, scattered his people, destroyed his town, and burned his temple, because his town had denied him, and his temple had witnessed the setting-up of foreign idols in face of his jealousy. That meant that the land of Judah had been laid waste, its people scattered, and the town destroyed, because their ancestors had let the love of their country grow cold in their hearts; because the people had not held together in the great national solidarity; because nationalism, which alone makes a people great, had been enfeebled in the town of Jerusalem.

The defeat, the ruin, the deportation, the obscure misery, and the servitude had punished the soul of Judah for not maintaining the great passion for one's country, for lack of which every people is condemned to death. Esdras expressed that when he proclaimed that Jahveh had punished his people for being unfaithful to him, for having worshipped other gods. The restoration, the return of hope, the better prospect, would reward the Jewish people, if it drew together in a fiercely exclusive nationalism. Esdras expressed that when he announced that Jahveh restored the life of his faithful children, and promised them a happy future if they consecrated themselves entirely to him.

Historically, it was false to say that the old kingdom of



Judah had been faithless to Jahveh. We know that Jahveh had always been worshipped in Judah, and it is impossible to conceive that any other national god than Jahveh had been worshipped there. But Esdras was not concerned with historical criticism; and the glorious untruth of those who restored the Jewish nation to life in the fifth century met none to contradict it. The soul that has come back from the death-agony, and seeks to know why it has suffered, does not need a true answer; it needs a reply that will prove a remedy. The untruth of Esdras was the sole remedy that could, and did, save the Jewish soul. After such dire catastrophes, in the midst of continual danger, in face of a future full of peril, it was necessary to put soul into a people that would live. It was necessary to say to it: "Behold thy flag! In that is thy strength. If thou wilt keep thy eyes on that emblem, thou shalt be strong. If thou turnest away, doubt not that thou art lost. Know that, as often as thy fathers rallied to it they won glorious victories. And when they turned away from it remember Nabuchodonosor the conqueror, remember they blackened home and scorched vine, remember the exile by the rivers of Babylon. Thou hast been conquered, Judah, because thou didst betray Jahveh. Thou hast recovered because thou hast returned to him. Be faithful to Jahveh, Judah, and thou shalt be happy."

It was thus that the profound and desperate meditation of the men of Jerusalem, in the fifth century, saved them.

It was thus that the earlier local god of Judah, the protecting Jahveh of Judah, like to the Camos of Moab and the Milkom of Ammon, was transformed, enlarged, animated, and became the formidable being whom we afterwards find depicted in the Bible.

At Jerusalem, then, the religious question was a national question. The unutterable name, Jahveh, of which scholars are unable to find the origin, has this meaning, and may be thus translated: our Fatherland.

“Thou shalt love the lord thy god with all thy love,” commands *Deuteronomy*. That means: “Thou shalt love thy country above thyself.” The standard to which the patriots were to rally was the name of the god. Henceforth to offer outrage to Jahveh would be to insult the flag. In great nations there is a blind and fierce idol, with sword in hand, the Fatherland, which demands human sacrifices, and to which fathers must bring their children as holocausts. At Jerusalem the idol was named Jahveh.

This exalted nationalism, of which we are now to follow the development, was the cradle of Christianity.

## § 2. *The Esdras School.*

Tradition places in the year 458, three-quarters of a century after the rebuilding of the temple, the arrival of Esdras at Jerusalem. There was much dispute about this date, and even about the historical reality of Esdras, when the Elephantine papyri<sup>1</sup> were found to confirm, not indeed the historicity of Esdras, but the dating of the events which are ascribed to him. We have therefore, in this study, taken Esdras as the expression of the school, political group, or national movement, which developed at Jerusalem at this very epoch.

The work of the Esdras school consists of three great leading achievements:—

1. The prohibition of any other cult than that of Jahveh.
2. The prohibition of mixed marriages.
3. The prohibition of any representation of Jahveh in a material form.

PROHIBITION OF ANY OTHER CULT THAN THAT OF JAHVEH.—In the older Jerusalem of the kings, and in

<sup>1</sup> See p. xv.



the restored Jerusalem of Zorobabel and Nehemiah, there had not been any other cult, apart from insignificant exceptions, than that of Jahveh. But in this the Jerusalemites merely followed the common Palestinian custom of worshipping no god but their own. With the Esdras school the exclusion of foreign gods becomes a formal proscription.

Was there some danger at Jerusalem, at the time, of the intrusion of foreign cults? At first communication between one people and another had been rare and difficult, and the Persian empire did not concern itself with proselytism. One cannot see how the old Jahveh, in the depths of his sanctuary, could be disturbed by any god of the district or by a Persian god.

Did the danger come from the ancient gods of Palestine, which Jahveh had once reduced to the condition of vanquished gods, as the Israelitic tribes subdued their worshippers? As we have said, these cults had not disappeared; but they had become lowly popular superstitions, and it is impossible to imagine the ancient gods of Canaan, in the Judah of the fifth century, otherwise than as little agrarian gods, insignificant local demons, which no more threatened the lord Jahveh than the altars of a St. Antony of Padua contain a menace to the official Catholic cult.

The obscurity of Jewish history at this period reduces us to hypotheses. In any case, the legislation of the fifth and fourth centuries betrays a constant preoccupation with foreign cults and the ancient cults of Palestine. With Esdras, in fact, the law of fierce patriotism, without which the Jewish State could not exist, always took the form of a kind of uncompromising fidelity to the national god. Jahveh alone is the god of Jerusalem, is the invariable starting-point of the Jewish legislation. As soon as there were any laws at Jerusalem, apostasy—that is to say, the worshipping by a Jew of any other god than

Jahveh—was denounced as the greatest of crimes, and punished with death. One after another the most frightful measures were passed to prevent the possibility of a religious secession.

The text we are about to quote is about half a century later than Esdras, but it will give an accurate idea of the way in which the Esdras school were disposed to treat anti-patriotism:—

If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying: Let us go and serve other gods.....

Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him:

But thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people.

And thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die; because he hath sought to thrust thee away from Jahveh thy god.....

If thou shalt hear say of one of thy cities, which Jahveh thy god hath given thee to dwell there, saying: Certain perverse men are gone out from among you, and have withdrawn the inhabitants of their city, saying: Let us go and serve other gods.....

Then shalt thou inquire, and make search, and ask diligently.

And behold, if it be truth, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought among you;

Thou shalt surely smite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, thou shalt curse it with all that is therein, and thou shalt slay the cattle thereof with the edge of the sword.

And thou shalt gather all the spoil of it into the midst of the street thereof, and shalt burn with fire the city and all the spoil thereof every whit, for Jahveh thy god; and it shall be an heap of ruins for ever; it shall not be built again.<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of the Inquisition was to establish a

<sup>1</sup> *Deuteronomy* xiii. 6-16. [The few modifications of the English text are in accordance with the author's reading of the Hebrew.—J. M.]

religion. The purpose of the atrocities of Deuteronomy was to found a nation.

PROHIBITION OF MIXED MARRIAGES.—This was, perhaps, the special work of Esdras.

The princes came to me [says Esdras, in the book which is ascribed to him] saying: The people of Israel, and the priests, and the Levites, have not separated themselves, in regard to their abominations, from the people of the lands.....

For they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons; so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of these lands.....

And when I heard this thing, I rent my mantle and my garment, and plucked off the hair of my head and of my beard, and sat down astonished until the evening.<sup>1</sup>

And later on:—

Now therefore give not your daughters unto their sons, neither take their daughters unto your sons, nor seek their peace or their wealth for ever; that ye may be strong and eat the good of the land, and leave it for an inheritance for your children for ever.<sup>2</sup>

And foreign women were expelled, with the children they had had.

The narrative is legendary; but the fact seems to be historical, and there is reason to allow Esdras the honour of having accomplished it. All the Hebrew books make the prohibition of mixed marriages one of the fundamental laws of Judaism. When they have to relate the apostasies of Solomon, they will ascribe them to the influence of the foreign princesses introduced into his harem. When they have to describe the edifying life of the typical heroes of Judaism—the life of Abraham and his descendants—they will marry them solely to women of their own race. Indeed, the Deuteronomic law was explicit:—

Neither shalt thou make marriages with them [the surrounding nations]; thy daughter thou shalt not give

<sup>1</sup> *Esdras* ix. 1-4.

<sup>2</sup> *Esdras* ix. 12.

unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son.

For they will turn away thy son from following me, that he may serve other gods.<sup>1</sup>

The prohibition to take a foreign wife was a powerful means of maintaining at Jerusalem the exclusive cult of Jahveh; that is to say, of promoting a purely national development. Later the Jewish writers will speak of the sacredness of their race, and will shrink from the mixed marriage as a sacrilege. But in the fifth century there is only question as yet of inspiring a fierce nationalism, under the pretext of an absolute consecration of the Jewish families to Jahveh. We have to come to the first century before the present era to find the Jews relaxing in their observance of the old law, and to St. Paul to discover their entire rejection of it.

Historians admire the decision with which the men of Jerusalem made for themselves this anti-human law, which, in repelling from them the women of the surrounding populations, at the same time isolated them in the midst of those peoples.

PROHIBITION TO REPRESENT JAHVEH IN A MATERIAL FORM.—Here the historian does not merely admire the opportuneness of a severe law, but is amazed at a conception so profound that he can hardly grasp its realisation.

How will it be possible to make this enormous difference between Jahveh and the other gods? How will it be possible to isolate him so jealously in the heart of the Jewish people? How can they make of him so exceptional a god that the cult of other gods will never mingle with his, and the Jewish fatherland will be for ever the sole deity of these ardent hearts?

The men of Jerusalem in the fifth century imagined that the other gods, such as Camos, Bel, or Rimmon,

<sup>1</sup> *Deuteronomy* vii. 4.

might be represented as an ox, a serpent, or a fish, as of either or both sexes, but that Jahveh should have no representation or emblem; that he should rule, sexless and invisible, in the storm.

The critic finds it difficult, in view of the scarcity of documents belonging to the period, to say how the idea came to the Jews of the fifth century of a god without images. Possibly it was suggested to them by the Iranian religion, which had no representations of Ormuzd; though the influence of Iranism on the Jews seems to be later than the fifth century, and it is at Babylon and in the Babylonian civilisation that the men of Jerusalem were educated. There may have been some accidental cause. Perhaps the destruction of all the emblems of Jahveh at the time of the Babylonian conquest, the extreme misery of the Jerusalemites at the time of the Restoration, the impossibility of making divine images rich and magnificent enough to represent the god of whom they now dreamed, or a repugnance to their rude and inadequate images, inclined them to dispense with a material representation of their deity altogether. We do not know. Accidental causes are unknown, the deeper cause is clear. In imposing this new law, he whom we call Esdras yields to a powerful political need. The man of genius is but the mouthpiece of a group. He seems to stand out in advance because he is the first to formulate clearly the law which is vaguely muttered by those about him. At times he seems to be in opposition to his contemporaries, but it is an illusion. He is merely overpowering their inertia, pressing them toward the goal to which they are unconsciously tending. So extraordinary a novelty as a god without images in the Palestine of the fifth century must be explained by the normal development of a nationalism which was pushed to its extreme consequences. For the Jews of the fifth century Jahveh, or the Jewish fatherland, had to be something unique, something monstrously and incredibly isolated. This

was necessary for the preservation of Jahveh; in other words, that the Jewish fatherland might survive amidst so many dangers.

Take ye therefore good heed to yourselves lest ye make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure,

The likeness of male or female, the likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air,

The likeness of anything that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the waters beneath the earth :

And lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, shouldst be driven to worship them, and serve them.....

And if ye corrupt yourselves, and make a graven image, or the likeness of anything, and shall do evil in the sight of Jahveh, thy god, to provoke him to anger,

I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land.....<sup>1</sup>

Similar is the command of the Decalogue :—

Thou shalt have none other gods before me.

Thou shalt not make thee any graven image.....<sup>2</sup>

After the period of Esdras there is no representation of Jahveh in the temple. At the bottom of the sanctuary there is a curtain, and the holy of holies behind the curtain is an empty room. The Jewish god dwells there unseen. The golden bulls, the bronze serpents, the old ephod and *matsebah* and *asherah*, are memories of abomination; or, rather, they change their meaning. The golden bulls are now identified with the angels of Jahveh, the Kerubim; the bronze serpents with the Saraphim; the ephod becomes a ritual garment; the *matsebah* is now merely a commemorative column. The *asherah* alone perishes in the wreck; it is taken to be a representation of the Phœnician Astarte. The old cult disappears, is proscribed, and becomes criminal.

<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy iv. 16-26.

<sup>2</sup> Deuteronomy v. 7-8.



And now a new phenomenon appears. Representations of the deity are so severely condemned that people confuse the ancient representations of Jahveh with the figures of the other gods of Palestine. Idolatry means the worship of images; it may apply to the worship of an image of Jahveh, just as well as to the worship of images of other gods. The older Israelites had been guilty of idolatry in worshipping Jahveh under a human or animal form; but they had not worshipped foreign gods, such as Camos and Milkom, under these material forms. The Jews of the Esdras school would make no distinction between Jahvic and foreign idolatry; the one was coupled with the other in a common execration; and, when some centuries had passed, the prophets did not even understand that these material representations had belonged to Jahveh. This failure to understand the ancient religion of Israel is, as Maurice Vernes has shown, one of the proofs of the extremely late date of the prophetic books.

In after years the idea of a god without material representation will be one of the forces of the Judaism which becomes Christianity, when it presents itself to minds that love abstraction and are weary of the symbolism of the Greek divinities. But we must understand that in the fifth century, and as long as the temple of Jerusalem stood, this cult of a god without images, instead of being a spiritual cult, was just as grossly materialistic as that of the other gods. At Jerusalem, just as everywhere else, the local god is honoured by the immolation of animals. The beasts are slain before the altar. The priest is a sacrificer—in other words, a butcher. The Mosaic legislation will publish a manual of slaughtering; and, when Jerusalem becomes the holy city, the goal of countless pilgrims, the temple will be a vast slaughter-house where, in honour of the unseen god, the blood of animals will flow without ceasing.



§ 3. *The First Institutions.*

Meantime the institutions which were inspired by the great design of centring all the strength of the Jewish soul on the name of Jahveh were gradually rising.

The Babylonian influence, which will presently prove overwhelming at Jerusalem, is not yet appreciable except in so far as it dominates the whole civilisation of western Asia. The disciples of Esdras shut themselves sternly within their walls, under the shadow of their temple. The Jewish element rules as exclusively as is possible. Then the nationalism of the Jews clothes itself at once with the religious garb which it will never again lay aside. The form of government becomes a theocracy. The institutions, evolving round the religion of Jahveh, assume a religious form. The laws, civil as well as hygienic, will become religious laws. The government will assume a religious character, and the leaders of the State will rule in the name of Jahveh, and be priests.

How did the priests of the local god attain, in the fifth century, to the government of the State of Jerusalem? In the absence of documentary evidence, we can only say that the historical probabilities point to the priests as the only men, after the Restoration, who were capable of exercising authority in the town and its neighbourhood.

The State of Jerusalem advances under the supervision of its Persian masters; the emperor who reigns at Susa, and the satrap who governs in Syria, grant the Jews full liberty of administration, provided that they live in peace and pay the tribute. There was not, and could not be, a Jewish army, and assuredly there was no military caste. The Persian hegemony laid no other specific obligation on its subject-peoples than political submission and taxation. There was, then, nothing of a military character at Jerusalem to take the lead. The extreme poverty and lack of commerce and industry during the

century which followed the Restoration prevented the formation of a middle class. Industry never flourished at Jerusalem. Commerce remained scanty when the Persian peace was established in the east. An oligarchy of merchants was hardly more possible than a military oligarchy in the Jerusalem of the fifth and fourth centuries. The domination of a petty sultan, a sort of pacha ruling under the suzerainty of the Syrian satrap, could not have been set up without at least a semblance of national military authority. Supported solely by the power of Persia, it would have been odious to the people. The Persian Empire never inclined to have its small vassal states administered by prefects. It was only the organisation of Rome that would send functionaries to the other end of the world. In view of the impossibility of any other form of government, therefore, a clerical government was almost inevitable, from the very nature of the situation. And it was found that this government corresponded with the needs of the people of Jerusalem.

Was the patriotism of the Jews formulated in the name of the national god because a priestly government was the only one possible at Jerusalem in the time of Esdras? Or did the government of Jerusalem fall into the hands of the priests because Jewish patriotism expressed itself in the name of the national god? It is probable that cause and effect acted together and gave rise to a twofold logical necessity; the priestly government confirmed the patriotism of the Jews in a religious form, and the concentration of their patriotism in a religious form decisively strengthened the priestly government.

From the time of Esdras—that is to say, from the time when the Jewish State began to live—the priests found themselves at the head of the social hierarchy. There was neither military caste, nor oligarchy of merchants, nor despotic pacha. The Persian lieutenant represented the distant military power, to which no one dreamed of

offering resistance, and the local police sufficed to maintain order. There was a sacerdotal caste; and the leader of the priests, the high-priest, governed. The first care of the Jewish legislators seems to have been to establish a system of tithes on the harvest and on cattle, a scheme of offerings, voluntary or involuntary, which would rapidly gather into the hands of the priests all the wealth possible in the miserable little country. The sacerdotal caste was soon as rich as it was powerful.

It quickly formed itself into a hierarchy. Round the person of the high-priest a certain number of families seized the revenue and the authority. The Mosaic law will give the name of priest-levites to these privileged members of the priesthood. The simple levites, at a lower level than these, formed a sort of army, maintained and directed by the priests. Finally, at the bottom of the sacerdotal caste there were the lowly functions of the poor officers who were not even levites. If we imagine the vast Catholic Church reduced to the proportions of a Church having control of a community of less than thirty thousand souls, we can picture to ourselves the bishops with their pope, then the army of curates and vicars, and, as was seen in the Middle Ages, the crowd of humbler officials working in obscurity about the altar.

There was this difference, that at Jerusalem the priests made and applied the laws and administered justice. The executive and judiciary power, as well as the legislative authority, belonged to them. They were the heart, the brain, and the arm of Jerusalem.

Beneath the sacerdotal caste the people were distributed in families of husbandmen, shepherds, and small merchants. They were far removed from the life of the patriarchs; nevertheless, beyond the little commerce that was indispensable in any community, agriculture and the rearing of cattle were the sole business of the Jews in the Persian period. The legislation of *Exodus*, *Deuteronomy*, and, later, *Leviticus*, does not deal with any other

customs than the quite primitive ways of an absolutely territorial people, among whom there is great poverty.

Finally, the Sabbath is a theocratic institution; its purpose, like that of the prohibition of mixed marriages and the condemnation of any representation of Jahveh in a material form, is to isolate the nationalism of the Jews among the other peoples.

The Sabbath would have little interest if it were no more than a day of idleness for the profit of the workers, the slave as well as the free man, even to the beasts of the fields. It is, on the contrary, the day consecrated to Jahveh; it is a sort of tithe that the Jew will take from the week, the offering of a day which he owes to his god. It is a taboo day. Let any man who doubts this open his Bible:—

The seventh day is the sabbath of Jahveh, thy god..... Remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that Jahveh, thy god, brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched-out arm; therefore Jahveh, thy god, commanded thee to keep the sabbath day.<sup>1</sup>

The law of the third century puts the motive even more plainly:—

Jahveh rested on the seventh day; wherefore Jahveh blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it.<sup>2</sup>

The man who desecrates the Sabbath is put to death.<sup>3</sup> We must admit that the death-penalty would be excessive if it were merely a matter of ensuring respect for a purely humanitarian institution.

Even more than circumcision, which was common to many of the peoples of Palestine and has not a great importance in the Bible, the Sabbath is the outward mark by which the children of Jahveh must separate themselves from other men. He therefore does not merely order

<sup>1</sup> *Deuteronomy* v. 14-15.

<sup>2</sup> *Exodus* xx. 11. See also xxxi. 12-17.

<sup>3</sup> *Exodus* xxxi. 14-15.

rest, but commands abstention from all work, of any kind whatever, and an entire consecration to Jahveh.

The Jewish institutions are, therefore, organised on an essentially nationalist basis, and in an essentially religious form. The Persian suzerainty was the providential feature which, by maintaining a general peace in the world, allowed the theocracy to develop. If Jerusalem had been independent, it would have needed an army, a military power, and would have had the precarious existence of all petty States. As a vassal of Persia, Jerusalem was able to begin in freedom the extraordinary work of conquering Palestine, and then the world, with the arms of a spiritual body.

#### § 4. *Progress of the State of Jerusalem.*

In virtue of the nationalism which its priests had imposed on it, the little State of Jerusalem enjoyed a great prosperity from the end of the fifth century. The Jewish soul was greater than that of neighbouring peoples. Jerusalem was a centre, or, rather, a heart, from which the strength streamed out on every side. The Jewish activity—the activity of the men of Jerusalem—was felt as far as the frontiers of the Palestinian territory.

In Palestine the State of Samaria alone made some show of resistance to Judaism. We have not the needful documents to tell the story of the development of Samaria. Possibly the capital of the former kingdom of Ephraim had preserved its regional supremacy, and it may have been an important town in the sixth century, when Jerusalem was only just beginning to revive. Possibly it developed at equal pace with Jerusalem in the fifth century, retaining, while Jerusalem enlarged, its moral autonomy, with its temple on Mount Garizim in contrast to the temple of Jerusalem. Finally, it is possible that the temple of Mount Garizim, as the Jewish historian

Flavius Josephus tells, was not built until the end of the fourth century.<sup>1</sup> However that may be, we find the antagonism of Jerusalem and Samaria in the earliest pages of Jewish history. By the fourth century Samaria was a rival, if not an enemy, of Jerusalem.

The other Palestinian States were incapable of resisting Jewish influence. Most of them merely vegetated, or remained stationary. The priests who ruled at Jerusalem saw their authority extend on every side.

Their ambition grew with their success.

Judæa has always been a poor country. The thousand square miles which represented the little State in the fifth century consisted of a vast plateau which was for the most part sterile, and gradually merged into the desert toward the south. The State of Samaria in the north was more fertile; but the plains of Gaza in the west, and the rich valleys of Galilee beyond Samaria, excited the envy of the wretched mountaineers of Jerusalem. The populations of these regions spoke the same language. Though they were often at enmity, they seemed to belong to the same family. Why should not the Jews succeed in imposing their leadership on the others?

From the remotest period of the history of the ancient kingdom of Judah, which they had set themselves to study, the names of David and Solomon shone with the aureole which illumined their sombre genius. David and Solomon had not been humble sultans, like their successors; their empire had reached from the Mediterranean to the Jordan, from Lebanon to the southern deserts. David, the first king of Jerusalem, and king of nearly the whole land of Palestine, was quite enough to suggest to the cupidity of the Jerusalem aristocracy the idea of the kingdom of which Jerusalem would be the capital.

The Persian Empire had not allowed the thousand small States and slight territorial unities it had con-

<sup>1</sup> Appendix II.



federated to enlarge their boundaries at each other's expense. The satrap who governed the Syrian region was at Sidon. Both at Jerusalem and Samaria there were lieutenants representing his authority. Under the Persian dominion there was no chance for Jerusalem to enlarge its power in any other than a religious sense. But religious aggrandisement meant political aggrandisement. The Persian government merely exacted the payment of the tax. Once that was paid and order was respected, every man who worshipped the god of Jerusalem obeyed the clergy of Jerusalem. To introduce the Jewish religion into the towns of Palestine was to secure the acceptance of the Jewish law, the recognition of the Jerusalem aristocracy as master, and a fresh source of revenue for the temple through the tithes.

In this way, under the suzerainty of its Persian masters, Jerusalem could become the capital and the metropolis of the ancient cities of Palestine. Its aristocracy did not, however, confine itself to this ambition. Had it not the right to expect and to hope that at some future date—it might be far or it might be near—the Persian Empire, against which its neighbours, Phœnicia and Egypt, were constantly rebelling, and which showed evident signs of decrepitude at the end of the fifth century, would fall to pieces? It had succeeded too well, in virtue of its nationalism, in restoring the little State of Jerusalem, in spite of countless difficulties, not to consider itself justified in entertaining such high ambitions. Nationalism, a necessary condition of the development of a young people, proves inadequate unless it is enriched with that spirit of expansion, domination, and conquest which we call imperialism. Thibet is, perhaps, a model of the nationalist state. More gifted peoples are not content merely to endure; they wish to grow, and they unconsciously feel that he who does not grow will perish. It is the law of imperialism.

The ancient kingdom of Judah had been independent.



Could not the new State, which they dreamed of building within the frontiers of the former Davidic empire, secure, with the help of Jahveh, its political independence? The possession of Palestine—the free and peaceful possession of Palestine—was the formula which the priests of Jerusalem were about to write on every page of their books. It was the programme they had undertaken to carry out ever since the close of the fifth century.

It is at this period that literature is born at Jerusalem. From this point the study of the history of Judaism becomes a study of its books—the books of the Bible—in the order in which they were composed.

We are singularly fortunate in having the history of Judaic ideas recorded in a series of books that had issued from such a depth of the Jewish soul, had been so passionately lived by the Jewish soul, and were so vehemently symbolical of the Jewish soul, that no literature of any other people forms so adequate an expression of the history of that people.

With some sublime pages, the books of the Bible are undigested compilations of badly-made records, contradictory, devoid of art or style. The smallest chapter of a Greek or Roman writer seems to be all harmony, logic, and truth, when one approaches it from the chaos of Hebrew remains. But so strong a soul suffers, hopes, and uplifts itself so vigorously in this confusion that the wretched people lives again for us through all the years of its terrible career. We have but to follow the series of these books to retrace, from its very source, the course of the great river that will one day be the river of Christian tradition.

The fifth century is the century of the Medic wars. Asia is failing to subdue Greece, and Greece is beginning, in Asia Minor, to conquer Asia. Isolated from these glorious episodes, lost in the most obscure corner of a small province of the vast Persian Empire, living among mountains on which no echo ever falls of the great events

in the north, the Jewish State, with a religious fanaticism that is merely an exalted nationalism, succeeded in giving itself a remarkably original character.

Before Jerusalem was destroyed by Nabuchodonosor the State of Judah was a small nation. After the Restoration the Jewish State is a congregation, a church, a group without political independence, military power, or lay chief, governed by its priests under the suzerainty of the Persian satrap.

But there is in the bosom of this little church so profound and ardent a soul that without armies, by the sole power of its vitality, it will come to conquer a portion of the civilised world. Everywhere else men's ambitions, dreams, and fevers find an expression in deeds; here it is all expressed in the name of a god who is the soul of the people, and in whom the people are concentrated.

Literature only makes its appearance among a people when it has reached a certain stage of its development. Quarter of a century after Esdras the Jewish State is sufficiently confident of its spirit, its institutions, and its ideal to have a literature at length. The story of this literature will henceforth be the history of the imperialism of Jerusalem.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE BOOKS OF MOSES

#### § 1. *The National Epic of an Imperialism.*

THE literature of the Jews is born at Jerusalem in the fifth century before the present era. It has from the first all the characters of primitive literatures.

The general character of primitive literatures is to take the shape of a series of epic fragments, independent of each other even when they continue the same subjects. As epic fragments, they relate the history, legends, and fables of the past. A concern about origins is found at the beginning of all literatures; every people, as soon as it becomes self-conscious, demands that it be told whence it came. Being independent of each other, these epic fragments are short compositions that are held together by no unity, unless it be the unity of inspiration. Called rhapsodies in ancient Greece, they gave themselves in Judæa the name *mashal*, the meaning of which would afterwards be somewhat altered; their writers are *moshlim*. And we beg to be allowed to use these two words, unfamiliar as they are, rather than words borrowed from a foreign environment.

Besides this general character, which is common to all primitive literatures, a certain number of special characters are due to the different situations of various peoples. In the west of Asia the first writers are local priests. The priests are powerful among newly-formed societies; at Jerusalem they govern the State. Art, in the sense of a composition for its own sake, does not exist among the primitive Orientals, and some of them, such as the Jewish people, will never rise to its level. With them literature

has always an immediate object. It is utilitarian and political; it is dogmatic; it justifies, enforces, or recommends something.

Most frequently it provides a frame for legislation. The laws must come direct from heaven, and the writers are engaged to describe how.

Everything contributes to the same object—fabulous traditions, national legends, and the history of their ancestors, are turned into illustrations of the religious, political, or social theses that it is sought to impose.

To show the legitimacy of the actual institutions seems to be no less needed. It must be explained how they were established, and they must be consecrated by having a venerable origin assigned to them.

The relation to neighbouring peoples is another point that the *moshlim* will never forget; they have to show that, if their own people have such and such a descent, the neighbouring people has a different origin, so that the recriminations, ambitions, and hatreds between them will thus be more or less sanctified.

These special characters of the early literatures of ancient western Asia may be resumed in a general law, which has persisted so steadily as the dominant law of the Hebrew literature that it seems to us to-day to be peculiar to it; it is the constant practice of projecting into the past, in the form of myths and legends, the institutions, laws, and theories of the present time.

Encyclopædias of the religion, law, organisation, and ambitions of an epoch, these epic growths are born and develop as soon as the national soil is sufficiently fertile, and they increase, in infinite variety and often in contradiction with each other, until the time when the reflective work of an established school undertakes to gather them together in great epics. Such were the earliest literatures of western Asia; such was bound to be, and such was, at Jerusalem, the Mosaic literature, or, to speak more correctly, the great cycle of epic narratives of which the

five books of Moses, and the books of *Joshua*, *Judges*, *Samuel*, and *Kings*, were afterwards formed.

But, while this national epic was bound to have, and actually had, the general characters of the earliest writings produced in any civilisation, and especially those of the civilisations of western Asia, it was further bound to have the absolutely special character, which distinguishes it from all others, of being the expression of an imperialism.

Born in the age of Cyrus, the Jewish people had hardly known more than a century of real existence when the first *mashal* was written; nevertheless, the five centuries of the Davidic dynasty formed a prologue, a necessary pre-historic phase, to it. The succinct narratives of the ancient historiographers of the kings of Judah, which survived in part at least, provided a chronological frame for Jewish history from David to the Deportation; though they may have been no more than a few great deeds, a few anecdotes. The priests of Jerusalem had only to resume this history to adapt it to the lessons which they desired to give. But what could they discover before David? Until the day when David made Jerusalem his citadel it had been but a poor little town without history or legends. Babylon and Memphis had countless ages of ancestors; Sichein, Bethel, and Hebron, in Palestine, had certain vague memories. Jerusalem had nothing.

How could the priests who governed the little State of Jerusalem make their past begin with David? Primitive peoples have always hung upon the most remote antiquity the national epics with which they illustrated their legislation. The priests of Jerusalem, who began, at the end of the fifth century, for the purpose of political education, to write the ancient history of their town, could not escape this psychological necessity. Their ambition suggested to them a way to create the ancestors that they had not.

We saw how, from the close of the fifth century, the

priests of Jerusalem had entertained the hope of re-establishing, with profit to themselves, the ancient empire of David and Solomon, and formed the project of subduing the populations of the same tongue and similar manners who, in the north and on the west, surrounded their barren mountains. The history of Jerusalem in Palestine is the same as that of Rome in Italy, if we take account of the difference that separates the Jewish from the Roman soul. Apart from the difference in the means that are at the command of a sacerdotal aristocracy and a military, positivist, and juridical aristocracy, we find, on both sides, a long-matured resolution, carried out with patience, to annex the surrounding peoples. But while Rome relies solely on military force and administrative power, Jerusalem uses the devices of churches; its leaders begin by annexing the traditions, the ancient glories, the legends, the national reminiscences of their neighbours, before annexing their consciences and, ultimately, their territory.

By a piece of brilliant audacity the priests of Jerusalem were about to lay at once the first stone of their work. Without avowing an ambition that would have brought violent hostility upon them, they set to work on a plan that was conceived for ages.

The territory of Jerusalem and its surroundings had no past; but, as we said, a few ancient legends survived among their Palestinian neighbours. Monuments, tombs, and stone columns preserved the remembrance of heroic names and adventures; traditions were cherished that told of deeds of earlier days; sanctuaries were still found, sometimes half ruined, which went back to an age long before the time of David and Solomon. The priests of Jerusalem resolved to appropriate the names, adventures, traditions, and legends of their neighbours. It was the beginning of the conquest. Above all things they strive to give a Jewish character to the traditions of Palestine, to bring local legends into the Jewish cycle, to persuade



the Palestinians that they are brothers. Finding no past among themselves, the priests of Jerusalem resolutely seize the past of their future subjects, and the great national epic, which ought to be an epic of Jerusalem, is going to be an epic of Palestine.<sup>1</sup>

Then, with no less brilliant decision, they put into circulation the word which, since it symbolised the past that they were restoring, symbolised their ambition. To the empire of David and Solomon, which had disappeared five hundred years before, they gave a name which was destined to create a unity between the scattered populations of the then divided Palestine. They did not invent this name; they rescued it from oblivion, and adopted it. It was the name Israel.

In a certain sense it might be said that the Mosaic books were written for the purpose of launching the name Israel, which represented the programme of the Jerusalem aristocracy. If Israel was not a new name, we may be sure that it had no longer any meaning at the time of the Restoration. It had been borne, a thousand years before Esdras, by the last nomads to settle in Palestine; and, among the populations whose destruction, as we saw, is recorded on it, the column of a pharaoh mentions Israalou. David and Solomon had afterwards united under their domination all the Bene-Israel, but their empire had not cohered. After Solomon the tribes of the north are rent from the tribes of the south. The former make up the kingdom of Ephraim; those of the south form the kingdom of Judah. Two and a-half centuries later the destruction of the Ephraimitic empire throws the ancient tribes of the north into a chaotic condition. The Judaic kingdom lasts another century and a-half; then it in turn disappears in the conflagration lit by Nabuchodonosor, and we have to come to the age of Cyrus and the end of the sixth century to witness the restoration, or

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix III.



creation, of the cities of Palestine. At that time there are a certain number of small populations speaking the same language and having analogous religions. Possibly they descend from the ancient Israelitic tribes, but they are none the less isolated from each other. All recollection of ancient Israel is obscured. It is even declared that Judah alone was restored of the ancient twelve tribes of Israel; the others have disappeared. And the unlimited complaisance of commentators has, down to our own time, disposed them to seek the lost tribes in the centre of Asia, in Madagascar, or in Japan.

The priests of Jerusalem at once give a meaning and some prestige to the name of Israel by applying it to the ancient kingdom of David and Solomon. A certain unity immediately appears among the populations of Palestine. They are found to have common ancestors, they form one large family, and, as far back as the legends of Palestine reach, they discover a national history; a new fatherland has been created. But, in making an Israelitic kingdom of the provinces of the former Judaic sultan David, the men of Jerusalem indicated that, since all the territory of Palestine had once been united under the sceptre of Jahveh's favourite king, it must be united again some day, and that, as in the time of David, Jerusalem must be its centre and capital.

The name Israel is, then, merely the myth in which the men of Jerusalem have symbolised their ambitions. It is a Utopia endowed with a past. Renan, after and before many others, wrote a history of the people of Israel. We know Israelitic tribes fourteen hundred years before the present era; we then become acquainted with two Hebrew kingdoms; lastly we find a Jewish people. But we must erase from history the expression, "the people of Israel," or leave it only in the sense of being the ideal of the Jewish people.

The priests of Jerusalem had thus conceived a history of their past in which they would absorb the precious

relics of their neighbours whom they proposed one day to annex. But, although it stretched farther back than the past of Jerusalem, the past of their Palestinian neighbours was soon exhausted, and the most ancient of their memories scarcely reached more than a couple of centuries ahead of David, to the time of the Judges. Beyond the Judges lay the dark night of barbarism.

One must remember that at the time of the Judges those whom we call the Israelites are Bedouins, scarcely settled on the land. Whence do they come? Through what adventures have they passed? How can these mysteries be penetrated? It was necessary for the commentators to be affected with dogmatism just as much as the priests of Jerusalem were in the fourth century, not to advance a fatal question, an absolute *non possumus*, to the Mosaic records.

One day hordes of nomadic shepherds and marauders arrive in the midst of the plains of western Syria, dragging their flocks and their women behind them. With their weapons in their hands, they have slowly crossed the desert in search of a fountain to assuage their thirst, a grain-pit to sack. Now they discover a more temperate clime, a soil that is watered with dew every night, streams, and green trees. The indigenous populations are not strong enough to resist them, and they settle, vagabond troops brought from the depths of the unknown like a cloud of locusts in the wind of the desert.....What critic will be able to retrace the migrations of these locusts?

Egyptology has not yet found any trace of the Israelitic episode. In the present state of the science it is almost certain that, if nothing has yet been found, it is because nothing exists. Do we need to add how the Biblical record, in all that relates to the sojourn in Egypt and the exodus, swarms with material improbabilities, geographical errors, and historical impossibilities? It is a clear proof of an imaginative composition.

We may grant that a name, the possibility of a fact,

may have been saved in the wreck of the ancient history of Israel. It is possible that these nomads may have preserved, and transmitted to their descendants, the name of some great chief who had directed their migrations in a remote age. It is no less possible that the memory may have survived of a period of slavery in the land of Egypt; though nothing is less probable, since not a single Egyptian monument mentions this Israelitic episode. We may, if we will, retain the name of Moses, but that is all.

Twelve centuries lie between the recorded facts and the age in which they were recorded; the critics who put back the composition of the Mosaic books to the eighth century will say eight, instead of twelve, centuries. How many generations in twelve, even eight, centuries! How many generations lost in the vicissitudes of nomadic life, of barbarism, or of a most rudimentary civilisation! Let us understand that nothing crosses such steppes as those.

The priests of Jerusalem who, after Esdras, undertook to relate the origin of their people, or, rather, of the so-called people of Israel, would thus find themselves confronted, in regard to the time before the Judges, with a yawning abyss, in which nothing was offered to them but a few remote traditions. But they are determined at all costs to glorify this ancient Israel, and from that time, with the aid of these vague traditions, they proceed to an imaginative creation.

Does anyone hesitate to admit that the priests of Jerusalem would deliberately, shamelessly forge the Mosaic history? We must not forget that we are dealing with orientals: that we are dealing with priests, with rulers who have no idea of writing history in the modern fashion, but write merely to establish dogmas, give a divine character to laws, legitimise institutions, preach a national faith to a people, and create for it a sublime past.

That the ancestors of the Jewish people, the people of Israel, should have come from Egypt, guided across the desert by the hand of Jahveh, to settle in Palestine, will

hardly suffice as a picture of their origin for the men of Jerusalem. Whence came the Israelites before they settled in Egypt? Had not Jahveh chosen the people, which he was to cherish, in the remote ages? Had he not, since the first days of the world, promised to the ancient Israelites the country which he would give to their descendants? The writers of the Bible do not doubt that they can put back to the very creation of the universe the promises of Jahveh and the miraculous choice of Israel. Thus will be composed the history of the patriarchal times, the account of the first days of the world.

Possibly the Palestinian traditions furnished one or two other names; but, though the imagination of Jerusalem continued to play the chief part, it was Babylon, possibly Egypt, perhaps even Persia, that would now contribute elements to the story.

Science is gradually making clear the share that the sages of Babylon had in their conception of the origin of humanity. The story of Moses may seem to imply no foreign document, but the account of the origin of man points to documents of Babylonian origin; witness the Deluge.

The Babylonian civilisation, like that of Egypt, sinks into the remotest depths of history. Countless centuries old at the time when the writers of Jerusalem were but beginning to think of writing a history of their ancestors, Babylon had civilised the west of Asia all around it. The kings of Persia, instead of destroying the vast city, had often resided there. Alexander and his successors respected its great antiquity, and it was still, in the fourth and the third centuries, the centre of western Asia. Though it had ceased to be its political capital, it had remained the spiritual metropolis. From immemorial time science, art, and a powerfully-organised religion lived under the shelter of its walls. Heir of the ancient cities of Chaldæa, it has been the religious, artistic, and scientific teacher of Asia.

In the fourth century it is still ruled by its own laws; the Persians, its masters, respect the legislation that had been promulgated, fifteen hundred years before, by the Babylonian king Hammurabi. The little States of western Syria accept this influence, like the others, and the Jews are affected by it even more than the others. A Jewish colony lived at Babylon; they are the descendants of the men of Judah deported in 588 by Nabuchodonosor. There is unbroken intercourse between the Jews of Jerusalem and the Jews of Babylon; the Jews of Babylon continue to teach those of Jerusalem the legends, laws, and sciences of Babylon.

The men of Jerusalem could therefore learn from Babylon certain legends about the early ages of humanity, the Deluge, and certain movements of peoples across Asia; but could they learn from it anything concerning their own ancestors? Is it conceivable that the Babylonians possessed information on the migrations of the Israelitic nomads in the time of Hammurabi, or in the time of the Kassite kings? In point of fact, Assyriology is still silent as to the adventures of the Bene-Israel before the time of Solomon. The amount of information that the writers of Jerusalem may have received from the Babylonian civilisation is, therefore, easy to determine. Of the ancestors of the great family of western Asia which is called Semitic they might learn something; of the ancestors of the Israelitic tribes in particular they could learn nothing.

As to the Medo-Persic science and religion, it is certain that the priests of Jerusalem were acquainted with it, but its influence seems to have been rather theological, and came later.

Gathering, therefore, on the one hand, from the reminiscences of the cities of Palestine certain fragments of legends, and possibly a few vague names, such as that of Moses, and from the science of Babylon, and perhaps that of Egypt, on the other hand, a few traditions which



Assyriology and Egyptology are gradually detaching from the Biblical narratives, they proposed to make amends for the lack of a national past of their own, and, in view of the dogmas which they purported to illustrate, in the fashion of their contemporaries, and the ambitions that they resolved to justify, to erect in freedom the monument of their pretended past.

Thus, although the historical, legendary, and mythical framework of the Mosaic books is borrowed from the legendary and fabulous histories of other peoples, they are in substance profoundly national. These legends have been borrowed from their Palestinian neighbours only with a view to annexing them; from their Babylonian ancestors only to enrich themselves with their glory. All this legislation, theory of origins, legitimising of institutions, lessons drawn from events, and justification and glorification of the ambitions of Jerusalem, will be so fiercely national that this epic, created afresh or borrowed from foreigners by this people without a past, seems to us as profoundly Jewish as if it had really been born of the forty centuries' past which the writers of Jerusalem pleased to imagine. The books of the law are the programme of the imperialism of the men of Jerusalem.

### § 2. *The Jehovist-Elohist Period.*<sup>1</sup>

If the date 458, which tradition assigns to the arrival of Esdras, corresponds to the great nationalist movement from which Judaism issued, it is to the generation that lived about the middle of the fifth century that we must grant the high honour of having written the first pages of the Mosaic books. Above all things, the priests who then governed wished to impose upon the people of Jerusalem, not merely by force, but by persuasion—that is to say, by

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix IV.



faith—that fidelity to the patron-god, Jahveh, the soul of the Jewish State, in which they recognised the supreme condition of the existence of their country; they must perpetuate, as a living and eternal reality, the teaching of Esdras. Jahveh punishing his people for their unfaithfulness to him, and restoring them for their fidelity to him, was the great lesson with which they needed to penetrate the Jewish people. And these terrible priests, who enforced nationalism under pain of death, wished, instead of legislating in the abstract, to give the precept at once in the form of example.

Thus was the Bible begun.

The priests of Jerusalem wished to enact: "Jahveh is the national god of Jerusalem; Jerusalem can have no other god but Jahveh."

What they said was: "Your fathers were taken away by the rivers of Babylon, because they had forsaken Jahveh."

They wished to enact: "You shall not have foreign wives.....You shall make no image of your god.....You shall not offer the holocaust to your god save in his house of Jerusalem."

What they said was: "Your town was burned down, your fathers were slaughtered, your nation was destroyed, because you had taken foreign wives, because you had worshipped images, because you had burned the fat of your flocks under every high tree and on every green hill."

Thus did they undertake to relate to the people the story of its past, in order to give it an example and a lesson. In following the development of the many narratives, the combination of which afterwards formed the earliest books of the Bible, we shall see the unfolding of the series of dogmatic theses of the aristocracy of Jerusalem in the fifth and fourth centuries.

After the manner of the sages of Babylon, the priests of Jerusalem made their history go back to the creation

of the world. The *moshlim* narrated with light heart the marvellous adventures of primitive ages, which had for the most part been taken from Babylon. But the main object of the priests was, by means of complete genealogies, to connect the patriarchs, the fathers of the people of Israel, with the first man. No link in the chain must be wanting; and, unfortunately, the different *moshlim* invented different genealogies, which, in spite of their disagreement, were equally preserved for our veneration.

From the time of Noah and the Deluge we find the theory of the Pact making its appearance. The Deluge is over, and Jahveh puts before the patriarch, for the first time, the bases of the famous alliance.

Let us explain what we mean.

The history of the Jewish people from its constitution as a people—that is to say, from Esdras—until the time of its destruction, the history of the Jewish soul, such as it was framed amid the civilisations of the east and as, afterwards, in its Christian form, it was imposed on the Græco-Roman world, is the development of a leading idea, which shows itself from the childish legends of Judges to the death-rattle of the Judæo-Christian apocalypses. This is the Pact—the compact agreed upon between Jahveh and the Israel which symbolised the ideal of Jerusalem. Theologians speak of it as the Covenant.

Jahveh will punish Israel, if Israel is unfaithful to him; if Israel is faithful to Jahveh, he will reward Israel. But it must be clearly understood that the Jews were not thinking of vague promises made by the deity; there was question of a real treaty, an act drawn up in good and due form, a private deed, signed, read, and approved, the considerations and clauses of which will fill the whole of the Judaic literature. Only, in the fourth century, Jahveh merely promises the Jewish people the free and peaceful possession of Palestine.

With the legend of Abraham the theory of the Pact

reaches its full development, at the beginning of the fourth century. Abraham is brought by Jahveh from Ur in Chaldæa to take possession, for his descendants, of the country that the god reserves for them. A score of times the god gives his divine word to the patriarch:—

In the same day Jahveh made a covenant with Abraham, saying: Unto thy seed do I give this land.....

And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a god unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.<sup>1</sup>

The choosing of Israel, the fundamental dogma of Judaism, is the starting-point of the Pact. Jahveh has chosen Israel among the peoples from the earliest time; and now, if Israel observes the law of Jahveh, Jahveh will secure its happiness in the land which he has given to it. We know what is meant by Israel. At the time when the *marshal* of Abraham were written Israel has no real existence; it is the myth that symbolises the future kingdom of which the aristocracy of Jerusalem dreams. The choice of Israel has, therefore, two stages: in the first stage it is the union of the populations of Palestine in one single kingdom by the Jewish people, under its hegemony; in the second stage it is the assurance of an endless prosperity to this new kingdom amid the kingdoms of the earth.

The writers who, in the fifth century, composed the earliest Biblical narratives aimed at proving this choice of their people, by putting it at the very source of history. But they were not less concerned to specify the degrees of subordination of the States which must make up the kingdom of their dream, and the degree of vassalage of the surrounding States. Round about them are the little peoples which they regard as brother-peoples, believe to belong to the Israelitic stock, and propose to absorb in their ideal Israel. A little farther off are their neigh-

<sup>1</sup> *Genesis* xv. 18; xvii. 7, and *passim*.

bours, the congenital peoples of Moab, Ammon, and Edom. Legend says that David reigned over them; why should they not some day be subject to the hegemony of Jerusalem? The *moshlim* of Jerusalem will tell how Moab, Ammon, and Edom are cousins, or, rather, more lowly brothers, younger sons who owe obedience to their elders. Beyond them there is Syria, into which Jewish action is already penetrating; for Syria also is a country of the same family.

These relationships are symbolised in a series of myths.

Abraham, the mythic father of the people of Israel, was not the only son of Thare (or, as is now more commonly said, Terah) when he left Ur in Chaldæa to come to Palestine; he brought with him Lot, his brother's son. Now, Lot is the father of Ammon and Moab. But Ammon and Moab are the sons of incest; the myth of the daughters of Lot puts in their place, in this great table of origins, the lower tribes of Moab and Ammon.

Abraham himself has two sons. One is Isaac, the legitimate son, the heir of Abraham, the chosen of Jahveh; the other is Ishmael, son of a slave, bastard, humbler brother of Isaac—Ishmael, the father of many Arab tribes.

Isaac, again, has two sons. Esau, deprived of his birth-right, is the father of Edom; Jacob, the favourite of the god, is destined to continue the family.

Jacob himself is the eponymic father of the privileged people. He is Israel himself; for the name Israel, which the priests of Jerusalem have revived in order to give it to the former kingdom of David—that is to say, to the collection of Palestinian States which they hope to unite under their hegemony—is now projected upon the ancestor Jacob. Israel becomes the second name, the surname given by Jahveh himself to the patriarch Jacob.

And Jahveh said to Jacob: What is thy name? And he said, Jacob.

And he said: Thy name shall be called no more Jacob,

but Israel; that is to say, conqueror of God! Because thou hast fought with God and with men, and hast prevailed.<sup>1</sup>

On that day the definition is completed. Israel is the solemn name of the eponymic patriarch in whom the Jerusalemites of the fourth century symbolised the Palestinian kingdom which they aspired to found on the model of the ancient empire of David.

With Jacob-Israel we come to the very heart of the family which the men of Jerusalem are ambitious to form. The people of Israel is created. Jacob has twelve children, and these twelve children are the fathers of the twelve tribes of Israel, and give them their names—Ruben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Joseph, Benjamin, etc. From that time, through the whole of Jewish history, the relations between the different Israelitic groups will be reflected in all the Biblical narratives. At one time Joseph will be exalted, at another time he will be cast in the shade; though he is the hero of a celebrated *marshal*, this eponymic father of a northern tribe will never be raised to the rank of ancestral patriarch, with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Benjamin will be alternately praised and vilified. Simeon will become the expression of the Jewish ambitions in the southern territories. Judah himself will not always be equally glorified, and he will experience the severity of the depreciating myths, when the priest-writers are minded to rebuke their people; but at the origin of the tribe will be placed the myth of Tamar, with the purpose of celebrating, by a providential and almost miraculous intervention, the birth of the ancestors of Jerusalem.

Nothing is more comical than the concern of commentators to locate on the Palestinian territory these twelve tribes, of which scarcely one half had a real existence, and which, in the mind of the fourth-century writers, are only the expression of political views. Formerly—a long time ago—geological and astronomical

<sup>1</sup> *Genesis xxxii. 27-28.*



truths were sought in *Genesis*; later an effort was made to reconcile the Bible and geology. To-day people seek ethnographical and anthropological indications in *Genesis*, as if the Biblical writers had been better at ethnography than geology; as if the Bible were anything else but dogmas illustrated by fables.

We have only quoted a few instances. The early Biblical narratives are encumbered with genealogies which are all dogmatic, and all aim at expressing the pretensions of the aristocracy of Jerusalem. If there are many contradictions between these genealogies, these ethnic myths, it is because the Bible was not composed by one single school, nor in one single day; it is because each generation, each school, inscribed its ambitions therein. Such is the myth of the sons of Noah, one of the last born of the Mosaic myths.

Everywhere, in the course of their wanderings over the land of Palestine, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob lay the first stones, in some way, of the ancient sanctuaries of Jahveh scattered over Palestine, for which it was necessary to find a patriarchal origin.

Let us try to understand how the Jerusalemite writers of the fourth century could, and must, glorify the sanctuaries of their neighbours. Commentators see in that an irrefutable proof of the non-Judaic origin of a large part of *Genesis*; we see in it a proof of the contrary. In the fourth century these famous sanctuaries had almost all disappeared, or were in ruins. Most of them were mere memories. Bersabee, Hebron, Bethel, Gabaon, Mispah, Galaad, and Mahanaim no longer existed; venerable ruins, they could cause no apprehension to the clerical aristocracy at Jerusalem. On the other hand, they are careful not to seek a sacred origin for Samaria, the rival city; and Sichem, a sub-prefecture of Samaria, too ancient and celebrated to be omitted, is most frequently mentioned unfavourably. For Jerusalem, on the contrary, they find, in Melchisedech and the sacrifice of Moriah, especially sacred



antecedents. The old sanctuaries celebrated by the aristocracy of Jerusalem are almost always vanished or fallen rivals, whose extinct glory does but exalt the primacy of Jerusalem, in preparing the way for it.

But in collecting the ancient legends of Palestine, and appropriating the old memories of neighbouring cities, the priests of Jerusalem are, as we know, pursuing their secret aim. They, a people without a past, must enrich themselves with the legendary and national treasures of the tribes that they dream of assimilating; they will gather about themselves, and under their leadership, this land of Palestine that they are ambitious to conquer; they are more than ever determined, in incorporating in their work the traditions and dreams of congenial and neighbouring peoples, to realise at some near date their ideal of a people of Israel.

We ought also to say a word of the etymologies that abound in the Mosaic books—etymologies of which hardly a single one has been admitted by philologists, plays upon words such as primitive peoples love, puns with a purpose of proving something. But it is enough to understand that everything in this Bible, in which some have thought to find history, is dogmatic, purely dogmatic.

The marvellous thing is that the patriarchal legends have grown round these theses in a delicious flowering of the oriental imagination. Doubtless, in this never-changing east, the Jews of the fourth century did not imagine, in their more remote legends, caravans that differed from those which they saw passing at the foot of the walls of Jerusalem; and the gates of the town opened at evening to the same nomad flock-drivers, seeking rest and refreshment. Yet the theorists who related the vagabond origins, in which they found it expedient to fix their dogmas, were at the same time poets. Thus these flowers, the prettiest that the east has produced, came into the light: Abraham wandering in the valleys of Palestine, Eliasur and Rebecca, Joseph and his brethren, etc.—those beautiful stories whose

profound charm has won the soul. Strange genius, in which the narrowest dogmatism has clothed itself with so delicious a mantle of idylls!

The great episode of Joseph closes the patriarchal legend. With it, in our Bible, the book of *Genesis* terminates. The following book, *Exodus*, is a collection of narratives relating to the departure from Egypt and the crossing of the desert; Moses is its hero.

Everyone will remember the *scenario*.

The people of Israel languishes in the service of Egypt. Jahveh gives Moses the mission to deliver them. Episode of the ten plagues of Egypt. Passage of the Red Sea. After that the people of Israel wander in the Sinaitic peninsula, under the lead of Moses. But the writers of the beginning of the fourth century, who were the first to relate the vicissitudes of the exodus, knew nothing of the revelation on Sinai. For them the sacred mountain on which Jahveh appears to Moses is called Horeb. It is the unanimous opinion of the critics that the mention of Sinai suffices to discredit a later series of narratives—the series which we shall call the levitical.

Here are expounded a certain number of laws which the priests of Jerusalem wished to legitimise, and which they describe as dictated by Jahveh himself to Moses. Let us add that they occupy only a small part of our actual *Exodus*.

Our whole *Leviticus* and part of the actual book of *Numbers* belong to a later period. The sequel to the preceding narratives is found in the second half of the book of *Numbers*. Forty years have elapsed; the people of Israel still wander in the desert; they reach Cades; fights with the natives; arrival on the plains of Moab, near the Jordan, opposite Jericho. There Moses dies, after placing his hands on the head of Joshua. From that time the children of Israel obey Joshua.

The book of *Deuteronomy* is altogether later, and certain chapters of Joshua have preserved the narratives

of the earliest Biblical writers. Under the leadership of Joshua the Israelites conquer the promised land. Jericho is taken, its walls falling at the sound of the sacred trumpets; the Israelites settle in the promised land, the twelve tribes dividing it more or less between them. Joshua dies, and is buried in Mount Ephraim.

Nothing is more familiar than this series of episodes of which Moses and Joshua are the heroes. The group of priestly writers who first offered them as a lesson to the people of Jerusalem saw in them, especially, an illustration of the famous compact between Jahveh and his people, the same covenant which other priestly writers had traced to the patriarchs. The Israelites, saved from Egypt, guided in the desert, and endowed with the soil of Palestine, exhibit the benevolent, but definitive, act by which Jahveh consecrates to himself the people he has chosen. Henceforth the Jewish literature will unceasingly remind the Jews how they owe to Jahveh the land they occupy and their very existence. Israel belongs to Jahveh as one who is saved from death belongs to his saviour; so, at least, the theology of Jerusalem will have it.

The earliest legislation of the priests of Jerusalem is thus found to be inserted in the midst of the Mosaic episodes. The priests, as we said, wanted to represent as dictated formerly by Jahveh the laws which they wished to impose on their contemporaries, and we are not astonished at their procedure. There is no legislator in ancient times who did not assign a divine origin to his work. Why should the Jerusalemite legislators of the fourth century act otherwise?

But it was equally important to make these laws the very conditions of the compact between his people and Jahveh.

And Jahveh said: Behold, I make a covenant; before all thy people I will do marvels, such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation: and all the people shall see how terrible is the work of Jahveh.....

Thou shalt worship no other god: for Jahveh, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous god.<sup>1</sup>

Thou shalt not make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and thou shalt not take their daughters unto thy sons.....<sup>2</sup>

Thou shalt make thee no molten gods.<sup>3</sup>

The feast of unleavened bread thou shalt keep: seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread.....<sup>4</sup>

Every first-born of a mother is mine, and every firstling among thy cattle, whether ox or sheep, that is male..... All the first-born of thy sons thou shalt redeem, and none shall appear before me empty.<sup>5</sup>

Six days thou shalt work, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest; in earing time and in harvest thou shalt rest.<sup>6</sup>

And thou shalt observe the feast of weeks, of the first-fruits of wheat harvest, and the feast of ingathering at the year's end.<sup>7</sup>

Thrice in the year shall all your menchildren appear before your lord Jahveh, the god of Israel. For I will cast out the nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders: neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before Jahveh, thy god, thrice in the year.<sup>8</sup>

Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leaven; neither shall the sacrifice of the feast of the passover be left unto the morning.<sup>9</sup>

The first of the first-fruits of thy land thou shalt bring unto the house of Jahveh thy god.<sup>10</sup>

Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk.<sup>11</sup>

And Jahveh said unto Moses: Write thou these words: for after the tenour of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel.<sup>12</sup>

All these are religious laws, it will be said. They are not, because at Jerusalem religious institutions are but the form of the civil institutions; because the rulers are

<sup>1</sup> Primordial law nationalising the cult of Jahveh.

<sup>2</sup> Prohibition of mixed marriages.

<sup>3</sup> Prohibition of images.

<sup>4</sup> Feast of the Passover.

<sup>5</sup> Law of taxes.

<sup>6</sup> Law of the Sabbath.

<sup>7</sup> The three great feasts, that of Easter recalled.

<sup>8</sup> The three pilgrimages.

<sup>9</sup> A detail of the Passover.

<sup>10</sup> Law of taxes.

<sup>11</sup> A law the meaning of which, Reuss says, was unknown even to the ancient Jewish commentators. We believe that it refers to a proverb, of which the meaning has been lost.

<sup>12</sup> *Exodus* xxxiv. 10-27.

priests, and we know that to worship Jahveh means to consecrate one's soul to one's country, Jerusalem. But, from the first feeble utterance of the Jewish legislation, we see, among other laws, the utopian law: the ideal law by the side of the practical law. In demanding that the males shall come in pilgrimage thrice a year from the country round Jerusalem to the one temple (for it is a question of the one temple, whatever the commentators may have thought of it), Jahveh promises them that no enemy shall profit by their absence to sack their houses and ravish their women.

Another small, but slightly longer, code<sup>1</sup> deals with certain questions of the civil order. It regulates the position of servants; it punishes homicide, theft, blows and wounds, seduction, sorcery, bestiality, and usury; it resumes the prescriptions of the preceding code, and adds the extraordinary utopianism of the sabbatic year. The Jews are not only enjoined to dedicate to Jahveh the seventh day of the week, but they are also commanded to consecrate a whole year in every seven years:—

Six years thou shalt sow thy land, and shalt gather in the fruits thereof: but the seventh year thou shalt let it rest and lie still.<sup>2</sup>

At a later date the legislators of Jerusalem will guarantee their people that Jahveh will, in the sixth year, give them a double harvest, sufficient to feed them during the seventh.

Lastly, a number of enactments are devoted to protecting the man whom our translations call "the stranger," and who is really only the Judaising foreigner. For a people who were ambitious and hopeful to annex the surrounding peoples it was necessary to protect foreigners, when they began to accept Jewish ways. Jerusalem is still but a town with its immediate surroundings; but it dreams of becoming the capital of a great country, and

<sup>1</sup> *Exodus* xxi. 1 to xxiii. 19.

<sup>2</sup> *Exodus* xxiii. 10, 11.



the *mashal* of Jerusalem always think of the people of Israel which does not yet exist, except as an ideal. Theoretically, the Mosaic laws are made for the whole of the States of Palestine; in practice, they are only valid for Jerusalem and its immediate district. Theoretically, the Palestinian neighbours are brothers; in practice, they are still foreigners. The protection of the Judaizing foreigner at Jerusalem is a transitory arrangement. It is an accommodation of the utopia to realities.

The Pact, formerly concluded by the patriarchs, now signed by Moses, is afterwards renewed by Joshua. After delivering Israel from the bondage of Egypt, Jahveh gives it the good and spacious land, the land flowing with milk and honey, the land of the Canaanites, Hethites, Amorrhites, Pheresites, Hevites, Jebusites, and Gergezites.

What historical value is there in this list? Possibly they have founded erudite discussions on narratives in which dogmas are covered with a mantle of fable. If peoples who attained to some idea of history, the Greeks and the Latins, were unable to learn anything of their past beyond a few centuries, how can we suppose that Orientals, Jews entirely lacking the historical sense, can, apart from a miraculous communication, and apart from what was afforded by Chaldæa and Egypt, have learned anything about a period that was contemporary with nomadism, a period one thousand years before their time?

Renan, with his habit of ridiculing the improbabilities of the exegetic theses which he adopted, was astonished that there was no mention of a revolt of Canaan in the history of Israel. The Canaanites, Hethites, Amorrhites, Pheresites, Hevites, Jebusites, and Gergezites are, in the Mosaic epic, the characters which the imagination of the Jerusalem *moshlim* of the fifth century has summoned to play a part: to explain that Jahveh had, as an effect of his favour, given to the Israelites a country to which they



had no other right than this favour of Jahveh. Later, in the deuteronomic period, these supposed peoples, gathered together under the generic name of Canaanites, will serve to illustrate another dogma. At no time are they anything but puppets in the hands of the priests of Jerusalem.

We do not mean to say that there never were any Canaanites, Hethites, or Amorrites. The Hethites formed a great empire in the north of Palestine at the time of the Egyptian and Assyrian invasions. The Canaanites seem to have come from Chaldæa, and are related to the Hyksos who invaded Egypt. But the Bible knows nothing of these historical Hethites and Canaanites. It knows next to nothing of the Hethite empire; it is unable to distinguish the Hethites from the most miserable tribes of Palestine. The names only are real; the rest is fiction, and fiction with a purpose. The fact is that they needed an appendage to Israel. They had taken from the past the old and disused name of Israelites, and the Israelites had become the chosen people of Jahveh. In the same way they take from the past the forgotten and lost name of Canaanites. The Canaanites become objects of disgrace to Jahveh; as a kind of theological helots, they are the rejected of Judaism. Canaan is the counterpart to Israel. Palestine will henceforward bear two equally unreal and dogmatic names. Before Jahveh makes a gift of it to his people, it will be called Canaan; afterwards, it will be known as Israel.

After the narrative of the conquest of Canaan, the history of Israelitic antiquities is continued in a new cycle of epic episodes.

Judges was the name given to the legendary heroes of Palestinian extraction who had lived in the land of Israel before the establishment of royalty. Such were Gideon and his son Abimelech, Deborah the prophetess, Jephtha, who sacrificed his daughter to Jahveh, Samson, the lover of Delilah the Philistine, Samuel, whose sombre figure would afterwards grow to terrible proportions.

Does anyone question the purely, absolutely dogmatic intention of the *moshlim*? Let us see how the book of *Judges* will presently speak:—

The children of Israel went every man unto his inheritance: and the people served Jahveh for many days.....

And there arose another generation after them which knew not Jahveh, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of Jahveh, and served the Baals, and they forsook Jahveh, and followed other gods of the gods of the people that were round about them; and bowed themselves unto them, and served Baal and the Astartes.

And the anger of Jahveh was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of the spoilers that spoiled them; and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies.

Whithersoever they went out, the hand of Jahveh was against them for evil, as Jahveh had said, and as Jahveh had sworn unto them; and they were greatly distressed.

Nevertheless Jahveh raised up Judges which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them.....

And when the Judge was dead, they returned and corrupted themselves again, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them.....

And the anger of Jahveh was hot against Israel.....<sup>1</sup>

It is always the same story. The Israelites having forsaken Jahveh, they are handed over by him to their enemies. As soon as they repent, Jahveh raises up a Judge to deliver them. Then the Israelites fall back into their sin; they forget Jahveh, and serve the Baals and Astartes. At once the anger of Jahveh flames out against them, and again he delivers them to their enemies until they repent, when he raises up another Judge to save them.

The legends of the Judges are merely an illustration of this doctrine: the forsaking of Jahveh is punished by defeat, the return to Jahveh is rewarded with victory.

After the Judges, the writers of Jerusalem undertook

<sup>1</sup> *Judges* ii. 6-20.

to narrate the history of Saul, the first Israelitic king, and of David, the great founder of the dynasty. This made up what are called the two books of *Samuel*. But the story of Saul and of David has no other object than to show how fidelity to Jahveh is infallibly rewarded, and disobedience is infallibly punished. The history of Solomon and the kings who succeeded him, down to the disappearance of the dynasty and the destruction of Jerusalem by Nabuchodonosor, was written later. The present state of Biblical criticism does not enable us to determine if the earliest Jerusalem writers went beyond the reign of David; if they did, their narratives must have been lost.

Such, then, is the literature of Jerusalem at the beginning of the fourth century. Some men of the sacerdotal caste which ruled the little State of Jerusalem, and already had some influence in neighbouring countries, have undertaken to relate how their laws were given by Jahveh, their god; how Jahveh, their god, chose them as his people; and how their fortune has depended, and will always depend, on their fidelity to him. Each narrated these episodes that were used to illustrate the fundamental dogmas according to the traditions he had collected, according to his own imagination, according to the legends that circulated about him or the knowledge brought from Babylon. These early fragments, from which the Bible would afterwards be formed, were a kind of rhapsodies, but rhapsodies with a purpose; fables, but in the sense of the Greek *ὁ μύθος δηλοὶ ὄτι*; moral tales, epics or idylls, proverbs in the form of legends, a vast cycle of independent narratives. And from this mass of different episodes there emerges at once a sort of great national history, which this people, boldly absorbing its neighbours, gives itself in order to learn from the example of an imaginary past. The creation of the world, the Deluge, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and his sons; then the captivity in Egypt, Moses raised up by Jahveh to deliver his people and lead them to the gates of the promised land, the

crossing of the desert, the giving of the law; after Moses, Joshua and the conquest of Palestine; then, when Israel is settled in its inheritance, the constant punishment of secession, the invariable reward of a return to Jahveh, the Judges, Saul, David founding the famous Israelitic kingdom that they would restore—a complete past created almost in its entirety by a small people that is hardly born, with a view to opening out the future. Never was there a vaster programme, or one that was more magnificently realised.

But the years were passing, and fresh needs demanded fresh activities.

### § 3. *The Deuteronomic Period.*

The few laws which the earlier *moshlim* had inserted among the Mosaic episodes sufficed, as legislation, for the period of the immediate successors of Esdras. Written laws never precede the organisation of a people; they do not appear until the people becomes self-conscious. Societies which do not develop have no legislation. Legislation is a sign that a society has entered upon adolescence.

Half-a-century after Esdras the State of Jerusalem has reached the period of development which is the adolescence of a people. It has become stronger every day, in proportion as it has deepened the ardent nationalism which was symbolised in the name of the lord Jahveh. The sacerdotal aristocracy is larger; the people obey with more comprehensive soul; the temple casts a more formidable shadow round the city. The time has come for framing more precise laws. The Deuteronomic period will be above all things legislative.

Of the two most important of the Deuteronomic laws, one relates to the prohibition to worship Jahveh elsewhere than in the temple at Jerusalem, which is thus raised to

the rank of the sole temple of the god; the other relates to the extermination of the so-called Canaanitic cults. Both of them—the one in looking to the Palestinian worshippers of Jahveh, the other referring to the Palestinian worshippers of other deities—seem to have aimed chiefly at preparing the hegemony of Jerusalem over the whole of Palestine.

The enacting that the temple of Jerusalem shall be the sole temple of Jahveh is a fact turned into a law. We must explain how the exigencies of their imperialism led the successors of Esdras to codify a state of things which already existed in point of fact.

The Jewish State of the fifth century comprised the small town of Jerusalem and its outskirts. It is the same situation as that of the Athenian Republic, of which Athens was the only town; or of the Roman Republic, which consisted of Rome alone. One cannot imagine two Capitols at Rome, or more than one Acropolis at Athens; and it is even more inconceivable that there should be several temples at Jerusalem in the east, with its one god, a god personifying the soul of the country. Our modern Catholic churches, Protestant chapels, and Jewish synagogues are houses of prayer. They convey no idea of the temple at Jerusalem, which was the centre of the State. We must regard it as, not merely the house in which sacrifice is offered, but the throne on which is placed the sovereignty of the national god. The Bible will teach that Jahveh has two homes—one in heaven, the other in the temple at Jerusalem.

If the State of Jerusalem had been larger, or had comprised more than one town, it is possible that sheer necessity would have brought about a decentralisation of the cult. In point of fact, it consisted of one town only, and its outskirts, including the desert regions, had an area of only a few thousand acres—not twice the extent of the Isle of Wight. In a few hours' march the most distant rustics could reach their capital, and all the Jews, without

exception, could bring their offerings in their hands to the temple at each of the ceremonies on which this was enjoined.

We said a moment ago that the Jerusalem temple had not the same character as our Christian churches or our synagogues; it was also quite different in arrangement. When we regard the situation of the temple as it is to-day, and try to imagine what the topography of these places was formerly, we see plainly that there could not be two such edifices in a State of a few thousand acres. The temple of former days was, like the Haram of to-day, an immense fortified esplanade, with the house of the god in the centre. The house of the god was not larger than one of our small churches; the esplanade could easily contain the whole Jewish people on the days when they were commanded to appear before their god.

Can it be supposed that there were rural sanctuaries in the surrounding district? It is not impossible, if we are merely thinking of lowly survivals of the older Palestinian cults. Instead of regarding them as temples, however, we can at the most see in them certain obscure high-places maintained by local superstition. A temple was at once a fortress, a palace, and a court-house. What common measure could there be between the seat of the government at Jerusalem and miserable chapels lost on the mountains?

In the time of Esdras and his successors, then, the Jerusalem temple is the sole temple of the State, and it is difficult to see how any historian can doubt this. Why, then, did the men of Jerusalem take the trouble to formulate a solidly accomplished fact in the form of a rigorous enactment?

When they looked out beyond their walls, the men of Jerusalem perceived Moab and Camos, the god of Moab, in the east, across the Dead Sea; in the north-east they saw Ammon, and its god Milkom; but what did they see in the south, in the nearer west, and in the north, in



Samaria? They saw hostile peoples worshipping Jahveh, their own national god. The national god of the Jerusalem State had, in fact, once been the god of all the Israelitic tribes. In the time of David and Solomon he had had altars from one end of Palestine to the other. Later, in the period of the two kingdoms, his cult had been celebrated in Ephraim, as well as Judah. The Assyrian and Chaldæan invasions had thrown everything into confusion; but, as the times became more tranquil, a certain number of these old sanctuaries were restored. Some of the ancient towns of Palestine, notably Samaria, had then, in the fifth century, preserved or rebuilt temples in which holocausts sent up their smoke to Jahveh no less than in the temple at Jerusalem.

The disciples of Esdras were bound to regard these cults as sacrilegious. Their sanctuary was, in their eyes, the sole orthodox sanctuary; the others were altars of abomination, plainly repudiated by the god. They might indeed have been content to declare that Jahveh was rightly worshipped in Jerusalem, and not rightly in Samaria and elsewhere; but with the magnificent decision, of which we find so many examples in Jewish history, and which made the Jewish people one of the great peoples of the world, they took advantage of what might have been an unfortunate circumstance.

They intended some day to rally or annex to the reconstituted kingdom of Israel, of which they would be the chiefs, these Palestinian towns in which an illicit incense was offered to their god. But how could they express in the language of the fifth century the rallying, annexing, or subduing of Samaria? Solely by imposing the Jerusalem cult upon Samaria. Turning toward Samaria, and toward the towns of Palestine in which Jahveh was worshipped, the men of Jerusalem did not hesitate to proclaim that it was only in their town and their temple that all the children of Israel—that is to say, all the Palestinians—should render to the god the cult that was due to him.

We do not say that the Deuteronomic law of the monopolisation of the cult in the single temple at Jerusalem was promulgated for the use of the neighbouring populations, and especially the State of Samaria. We say that this law, inspired by the imperialism of the legislators, had in view, in their minds, the neighbouring populations, and especially Samaria. It is laid down in view of the time when the whole of Palestine will be under their domination. It condemns the other sanctuaries in advance: it kills rivalry in the germ. Two centuries in advance it formulates the principles on which the Machabees will proceed. It is, in the minds of the successors of Esdras, the complement of their theory of Israel. They gave their mountain in advance as capital to the people of Israel whom they proposed to create some day.

Jerusalem was to be the capital of the State of Jerusalem: that was the expression that Deuteronomy gave to the ambition of the successors of Esdras. In putting forward, at the close of the fifth century, the pretension to appropriate the cult of Jahveh—that is to say, to appropriate Jahveh—they were putting forward the pretension to make tributaries of their neighbours; they posed as sovereigns. To rule religiously meant, as we know, to rule as completely as it was possible under the suzerainty of Persia, in expectation of the time when this yoke itself would be cast off.

The ordaining of the Jerusalem temple as the sole temple of Jahveh, the monopolisation of the cult of Jahveh in the single temple of Jerusalem, was at first a fact, then a law. The fact arose from the natural circumstances in which the little State of Jerusalem was placed by the end of the sixth century; the law arose from the deliberate ambition of the Jewish aristocracy. In order to impose its hegemony on its neighbours, it had created the theory of the ideal Israel. Now it proclaims, as a supreme law, that Jerusalem is the centre from which Jahveh must reign over the whole of Palestine.

Unto the place which Jahveh, your god, shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there, even unto his habitation shall ye seek.<sup>1</sup>

Is it possible to determine the date of this event? The task seemed difficult, until the papyri recently discovered at Elephantine<sup>2</sup> provided the means, apparently. Let us give the facts which became known to us through the discovery.

At some unknown period, perhaps at the beginning of the sixth century—that is to say, at the period of the destruction of Jerusalem by Nabuchodonosor—a Jewish colony had settled in Egypt, on the island of Elephantine, opposite Assouan, not far from the first cataract. They built there a temple to their god, Jahveh. In the year 523 or 522, when Cambyses crossed Egypt, he sees and respects this sanctuary, the papyri state. It is the time when the Jews of Jerusalem are restoring their town.

A century passes. The Jews of Elephantine, nevertheless, have a social and economic life. They obey laws. They would observe the Mosaic laws, the Jehovist and Elohist and Deuteronomical laws, if they knew them. But, in point of fact, they obey laws which at times cruelly violate the Jehovist, Elohist, and Deuteronomic codes. They are nevertheless in constant communication with the metropolis, and, in the year 419–418, they receive from it a regulation for the celebration of the Passover. Hence the priests of Jerusalem do not regard the priests of Elephantine as schismatics. Elephantine is more than seven hundred miles from Jerusalem. The monopolisation of the cult in the Jerusalem temple is a fact in the State of Jerusalem; but the fact has not yet been erected into a law, and it only holds of the State of Jerusalem. The fundamental law of Deuteronomy is not yet codified in the year 419–418.

Suddenly, during the month of Tammuz, in the fourteenth year of Darius (that is to say, in the month of

<sup>1</sup> *Deuteronomy* xii. 5.

<sup>2</sup> See p. xv, note 3.

July, 409), the Egyptian priests of Elephantine come to terms with the local authorities.

“The sanctuary of the god Jahveh must be removed from the city of Elephantine,” they say.

And the temple of Elephantine is rased to the ground.

What do the priests of the ruined temple do? They petition the Persian governor; and at the same time they appeal to the high-priest at Jerusalem for his intercession.

The priests of Elephantine do not regard themselves as schismatics in 409. It is a fresh proof that the Deuteronomic law was not known to the Jews of Elephantine in 409.

We have just seen that in 419–418 the government which ruled at Jerusalem had sent them a regulation for the celebration of the Passover.

What reply does the high-priest of Jerusalem make in 409? He does not reply at all. Is his silence due to negligence or hostility? We shall see.

Three years pass, and, in the month of *Marchshvan*, the year 17 of King Darius (that is to say, in November, 406), the Jews of Elephantine make a fresh appeal to the Persian governor. To whom do they turn for help this time? To the sons of the pacha of Samaria, the rivals and opponents of Jerusalem.

The silence of the high-priest of Jerusalem, therefore, was a mark of hostility. The Jewish priests of Elephantine must have seen that they had nothing to hope for from him. They turn to the enemy.

The Jerusalem aristocracy admitted in 419–418, but admits no longer in 409, the practice of the cult outside the temple of Jerusalem. The Deuteronomic law, which did not exist in 419–418, and was not yet known at Elephantine in 409, is now promulgated. It is taught to the Jews of Elephantine by the hostility of the high-priest at Jerusalem. They become schismatics, and can only turn to Samaria. The year 409 is the approximate date when the monopoly of the cult in

the single temple of Jerusalem changes from law by custom into written law.

But, besides the regions in which Jahveh was worshipped, there were parts of Palestine in which other gods were worshipped. Such were the coveted plains of Philistia, and the sister-countries of Ammon, Moab, and Edom. There were also regions in which the cult of Jahveh was accompanied with that of other deities; as in certain parts of the State of Samaria. The priests of Jerusalem, moreover, failed to distinguish properly between the cult offered to images of Jahveh and the worship of strange gods. We have, for instance, seen them confusing the altars of Jahveh-Melek with the altars of the Ammonite Moloch. Finally, on every side, perhaps even in Judæa, local superstition raised numbers of small sanctuaries to the most sanguinary demons; and although these sanctuaries no longer threatened the great official temples, they propagated idolatry. Of all these cults, which Deuteronomy, as we shall see, collectively denominates Canaanitic, some were Canaanitic in the scientific sense of the word—that is to say, anterior to the arrival of the Israelitic tribes in Palestine; others might be the cults of sister-tribes such as Ammon, Edom, and Moab; while others may have been introduced later into the country. Whatever their origin and development were, it is against these different forms of Palestinian paganism that the Deuteronomic legislators found themselves compelled to act; just as they had been constrained to act against the Jahvic temples which rivalled that of Jerusalem.

In the Jehovist period the chief object of the successors of Esdras had been the resolute maintenance of Jewish nationalism about the name of Jahveh, the national god. Jerusalem was then the most meagre of the Palestinian States; it seemed to the priests of Jerusalem necessary to create a focus of unquenchable patriotism in the temple of Jahveh. Half a century afterwards, the little State



having prospered, and beginning to extend its activity into surrounding regions, there was a danger of the people of Jerusalem allowing strange deities to penetrate into their town and their hearts. Further, a new danger was arising. Would not the people of Jerusalem take their gods from these foreigners whom they were beginning to subdue? Would not the conquered impose their gods on the conquerors?

It was not enough to preserve the people of Jerusalem from the contagion of foreign idolatry; this idolatry must be exterminated in such of the neighbouring communities as came under their influence and began to feel their domination. It is, indeed, an invariable fact that, in the history of religions, the people who have suffered a religious defeat tend, in spite of their conversion, to persevere in their former practices. It could not be otherwise among the peoples who were gradually falling under the hegemony of Jerusalem. These Judaisers were not all good Judaisers; a large number, especially in the country, were clearly very bad. The old idolatrous and fetichistic practices, the worship of Jahveh in an animal or inorganic form along with their insignificant and domestic gods, sacrifices, and necromantic propitiations, would not fail to persist. They must be eradicated at any cost.

Thus it is that the State of Jerusalem, which is a people, now assumes the features of a sect. The work of Esdras, creating an ardent nationalism, but giving it the form of a religion, has developed an extraordinary fanaticism in the souls of the Jews. When Rome conquered Italy, it imposed its laws strenuously; Jerusalem imposed a faith, a cult, a ritual, on those about it. The despotism would be terrible some day. Judaism, through its priests at first, through its Pharisees afterwards, always exacted of the Judaisers, not merely material obedience, but the entire surrender of the moral personality. It has been said that the Inquisition is found



in Deuteronomy. The clerical aristocracy of Jerusalem inaugurated the Inquisition in the fourth century before the present era.<sup>1</sup>

In fine, not content with preserving the Jewish soul from foreign idolatry, or with attacking this idolatry in the heart of the Judaizing peoples, the Jerusalem legislators felt that the great programme of the reconstitution of the kingdom of Israel implied, if the neighbouring populations were to be conquered some day, the condemnation of whatever deities they had besides Jahveh and the monopoly of the Jahvic cult at Jerusalem. Like the monopoly of the Jahvic cult at Jerusalem, the condemnation of pagan cults in Palestine was a logical and necessary consequence of the ambition of Jerusalem. The leaders who ruled at Jerusalem took the offensive. They turned again to the neighbouring populations, whom they dreamed of conquering some day, and, in order to impose on them the worship of the Jahveh who reigned at Jerusalem, they cast anathema on their gods. The centres of anti-Jahvic idolatry which continued to increase in Palestine threatened—at first in Jerusalem itself, then among the Judaisers, lastly among their idolatrous neighbours—the authority which the Jerusalem clergy dreamed of securing in the name of the people of Israel. It was the exigencies of their imperialist policy that once more guided the Deuteronomic legislators when, on the one hand, they promulgated their fearful enactments against idolatry, and when, on the other, they launched their anathema against the Canaanites.

We know that the Canaanites, Hethites, Amorrhites, Pheresites, Hevites, Jebusites, and Gergezites are names that the Jehovist writers used in order to explain how Jahveh had benevolently bestowed their land on Israel. In the Deuteronomic writers all these peoples are confounded under the generic name of Canaanites. But the

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, p. 33.

Canaanites are no longer merely victims despoiled by Jahveh in favour of Israel. They become the symbol of idolatry, of paganism; they are, by the very definition, the enemies of Jahveh. In accordance with the invariable usage of Jewish literature, the *moshlim* of the fourth century project on them, in the past, a contemporary reality. The Canaanites of the Deuteronomic Bible are the mythical image of those neighbours of Jerusalem who, in the midst of and by the side of the hegemony of Jerusalem, maintained in the fourth century the religious practices condemned by the law of Jerusalem. Even more than during the Jehovist period, Canaan is the counterpart of Israel.

Thus the *mashal* of the Deuteronomic period are terrible for the Canaanites. The Deuteronomic episodes of the conquest, in the book of *Joshua*, are pages of blood. There is nothing but frightful massacres. Women are no more spared than men; children no more than the aged. The flocks are exterminated, the soil is accursed. These pages seem to be written in the fearful delirium of visionaries sated with carnage. The command of Jahveh is explicit—none must be spared. And when Joshua is laid in his tomb after the conquest, not a single Canaanite remains alive, say the ancient narratives. The priests who ruled at Jerusalem in the fourth century were giving to the world the dilemma that pervades the whole of Jewish literature, including the prophets and the apocalypses—submit or be exterminated.

The ancient Jehovist narratives of a period presumably later than Joshua and the ancient episodes of the Judges knew nothing of this extermination of the Canaanites; they had frankly related the sequel of the conflicts between the Israelites and the Canaanites. With that indifference to contradictions that shocks us so much, though it is general among the Orientals, and particularly found in the Jews, the Deuteronomic writers did not trouble to recast the legends of the Judges and Samuel.

The inconsistency that they allowed to pass is seen continually in the Bible as we have it.

We do not propose to give here a summary of the Deuteronomic legislation. Its numerous enactments, apart from a few precepts of common law, public hygiene, and ritualism, which are required in a developed civilisation, only develop the principles on which Judaism is formed. Jahveh is the sole god; Jahveh must have no images; there must be an ardent solidarity, a mutual love, among the Jews, and their arms must be open to the foreigner when he comes to prostrate himself at the feet of Jahveh and of the Jewish fatherland, but anathema to the foreigner who will not Judaize. Let us add a first systematic organisation of the clergy: the question of sacrifices, offerings, and tithes—that is to say, the fiscal law of Jerusalem, discussed in minute detail; finally, recalled with the most precise rites, the three great annual feasts of the Passover, Weeks, and Tabernacles—that is to say, of the spring, the harvest, and the vintage, since, in this east in which the priests command in the name of the local god, the popular gatherings take the form of religious festivals.

But it must not be supposed that the priests of Jerusalem could, like the Roman jurisconsults, promulgate laws in the abstract. Calling themselves the heirs of Moses, they simply taught the people the very ancient law dictated to him by the national god, a thousand years before, in the deserts of Horeb or on the banks of the Jordan. No legislation could succeed at Jerusalem that did not bear the name and authority of the unique legislator Moses. Instead of saying to the people, "Thou shalt rest on the seventh day of the week," they could not fail to say: "In such and such circumstances, on such a day, at such a place, Jahveh spoke unto Moses, and said to him: Thou shalt rest....."

Hence the Deuteronomic period marks the composition of a new series of episodes (of a more particularly

legislative character), which were added to the episodes already composed. There was no break and no external distinction between what we have called the Jehovist-Elohists period and the Deuteronomic period. Fresh narratives are added to the early narratives of the creation, the patriarchal legends, and the Mosaic epic. The new generations contribute their portion. But the general spirit has changed somewhat; we have reached the time when the rather vague teaching of the Jehovist and the Elohist no longer suffices, and a more explicit legislation is brought on the scene. The new priestly writers do not profess to recommence the work of their predecessors; they continue and complete it.

It is now related that at Horeb, just after the escape from Egypt, when they were beginning to cross the desert, Jahveh had spoken to Moses. After forty years they reach the banks of the Jordan, in the plains of Moab, and there:

Moses called all Israel, and said unto them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day.....

Jahveh, our god, made a covenant with you in Horeb.....

He talked with you face to face in the mount, out of the midst of the fire.

I stood between Jahveh and you at that time, to show you the word of Jahveh; for ye were afraid by reason of the fire, and went not up into the mountain.

And Jahveh said to you.....<sup>1</sup>

The celebrated decalogue follows.

Other scenes are composed to enframe other legislation. Each new promulgation is presented as an account of a conversation between Jahveh and Moses, from which Moses brings fresh commands. In fine, we have the famous episode of the benedictions and maledictions, a magnificent development of the old theme:—

If thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of Jahveh

<sup>1</sup> *Deuteronomy* v. 1-5.

thy god, Jahveh thy god will set thee on high above all nations of the earth.....

But if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of Jahveh thy god, all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee.....

All the blessings are enumerated, and they betray the ideal of the Jerusalem aristocracy of the fourth century. All the curses also are enumerated, with a concentration of lyric atrocity that amazes us.<sup>1</sup>

The Deuteronomic writers added a large number of new narratives to the older ones relating to the conquest of Palestine by the Israelites under the command of Joshua. These narratives form part of our actual book of *Joshua*. The same need that had compelled the writers to enlarge the Mosaic epic with so many episodes also forced them to develop the epic of the conquest. Once more a fresh situation created fresh needs.

We have already said that the writers who related the episodes of ancient Israelitic history probably reached as far as the end of the reign of David, when the Deuteronomic spirit gradually replaced the Jehovist spirit. The story of Solomon, son of David, who, all-powerful master of his neighbours, allowed their women to seduce him into accepting their abominable deities, and of his successors, the kings of Judah and Ephraim, with the constant punishment by Jahveh of their lapses into idolatry and the constant reward of their return, was written in a Deuteronomic spirit. The great principle, laid down by the Jehovist writers, that unfaithfulness is always punished and faithfulness always rewarded, has not ceased to rule; but the infidelities that are punished are now acts of disobedience to the Deuteronomic codes.

The famous reform of Josias is the last creation of the Deuteronomic dogmatism. No story was ever more improbable, yet no story was ever taken more seriously

<sup>1</sup> *Deuteronomy* xxviii.

by the commentators; it was a colossal mistake, misleading Biblical criticism for half a century. Possibly it is an historical fact that King Josias, rebelling against the king of Assyria, undertook to expel the Assyrian deities which his servile predecessor Manasseh had introduced into Jerusalem. As it is related in the Bible, the alleged reform by Josias is an extreme episode invented with a view to show that Jahveh had given a last counsel to his people on the very eve of the Deportation. The end of the Davidic dynasty, the ruin of the nation, and the burning of the town, are, as usual, and more than ever, a great chastisement inflicted by an angry god on the people who have forsaken him for the Baals and Astartes.

Because the king of Judah hath done these abominations, because he hath worshipped idols, and hath made Judah also to sin with his idols,

Therefore thus saith Jahveh, the god of Israel, Behold, I am bringing such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah that, whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle.

And I will stretch the plummet over Jerusalem; and I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it, and turning it upside down.

And I will forsake the remnant of mine inheritance, and deliver them into the hand of their enemies; and they shall become a prey and a spoil to all their enemies;

Because they have done that which was evil in my sight, and have provoked me to anger.<sup>1</sup>

That point had been reached in the composition of the Biblical narratives by the middle of the fourth century, in the period of the last Persian emperors. Since the Medic wars there is a continuous war between Persian Asia and Hellenic Europe. Greek colonies develop in Asia Minor, and the Greek civilisation gradually penetrates the east. The empire of Artaxerxes spreads, as a confederation of provinces and States, as far as India, across the whole of western Asia. Soon will open the great

<sup>1</sup> 2 *Kings* xxi. 11-15.



epic of Alexander, conquering this vast universe for Hellenism after a hundred and fifty years of struggle.

At this time Jerusalem may have had ten or fifteen thousand inhabitants, counting its whole population. The surrounding districts would hardly double the number. We may conceive the Jewish State as a small republic of thirty thousand souls, as little known to the rest of the world, as lost in the universe, as the lowliest of the principalities by the Jordan. It is elsewhere—at Susa and Babylon, round the person of the king of kings, in the heart of the great Persian feudalism; at Athens, Sparta, Thebes, and presently in Macedonia; in Asia Minor, where Hellenism and the East are face to face; in the islands of the Ægæan Sea—that the destinies of the universe seem to be arranged.

Yet the history of the world is being prepared just as much in this obscure corner. The future presents itself in the form of a few priests who are giving precepts and dogmas to their little town.

The genius of Greece has left to posterity, in immortal images, the memory of its ideas, its art, and its civilisation. In the narratives of its historians and the verses of its poets we read, just as clearly as in the columns of the Parthenon, the annals of the luminous ages which represented the adolescence of the human mind. But the annals of Judaism, which will later form a counterpoise to the genius of Greece, are being written in a country that was unknown to Socrates and Pericles. If we would discover the origin of our Christianity, we must study the humble composition of a series of fabulous and dogmatic narratives, written in the shadow of a poor temple in western Syria, by a few generations of fanatical priests, for the instruction of the small people that the disdainful Persian allowed them to govern.

§ 4. *The Levitical Period.*

We have already said<sup>1</sup> that the discovery of the papyri of Elephantine strikingly confirmed the dating which we have adopted for the books of the Bible. The witness of the contemporary Greek writers has the same effect.

In the middle of the fifth century so inquisitive and informed a writer as Herodotus is ignorant of the very name of the Jews, much less the Israelites. If the Mosaic legislation were then in existence, and if the temple had been organised with its fully developed services, it would be unintelligible that Herodotus should know nothing of a work that would have so richly rewarded his curiosity. We are, on the contrary, in the age of Esdras (458, the arrival of Esdras at Jerusalem). Jerusalem is hardly born yet.

Aristotle, in the middle of the fourth century, speaks of a geographical feature of Palestine; he knows nothing of Jews or Israelites. The Jews are still, in spite of a real development, only one of the many small peoples of Palestine.

The word "Jew" enters Greek literature after the time of Alexander, at the end of the fourth and the beginning of the third century. The first interesting mention of it is by Hecataeus of Abdera, at the beginning of the third century. He is acquainted with various Mosaic narratives and Deuteronomic laws, and a Levitical law, but with sufficient errors and confusion to indicate that he has merely heard them spoken of in Egypt, where he lived, and some of the Jews had settled.

The Levitical or sacerdotal period, which succeeded the Deuteronomic period, and was the period in which the so-called Levitical or sacerdotal episodes of the Mosaic books were written at Jerusalem, seems to have commenced about the middle of the fourth century, and to

<sup>1</sup> See p. xv.

have developed during the Alexandrine conquest and the wars of the successors of Alexander; it thus seems to have coincided with the beginning of prophetism, and to have continued until the first part of the third century, at the time when peace was restored in Palestine, under the vice-royalty of the high-priest Simeon I.

It is the period when the State of Jerusalem definitively secures the hegemony over one half of Palestine; the period when the aristocracy of the Jerusalem priests is at its zenith.

In Palestine the State of Samaria alone resists the State of Jerusalem; Judæa is about to form a great province, of which Jerusalem will be the capital; the little neighbouring States are subdued; the ardent nationalism of the successors of Esdras has borne fruit; Jerusalem reigns over the surrounding country.

In regard to its internal affairs, the clerical aristocracy is fully organised; the caste enjoys all its privileges; the office of high-priest passes from father to son, and, first under the suzerainty of the Persian emperors, then under the suzerainty of the Macedonian kings of Syria and Egypt, the high-priests govern the State; below them are a few families occupying the highest positions and holding the wealth of the country, who will afterwards be known as the princes of the priests. A body of sacrificial priests continues the hierarchy; the army of levites obeys them; while the Jewish people is disposed about them, obedient and fanatical, in the fidelity of its heart to Jahveh.

At the same time the rites have become innumerable; many of them come from Egypt. The priests have gradually created a vast formulary in which their power is revealed and exercised. Jerusalem is something like a fraternity in which a mitred abbot rules, with his college of vicars, amid an endless procession of ceremonies. But let us note carefully; it is from this minute actual organisation that the financial power of the Jerusalem aristocracy has arisen.

The Deuteronomic period had known nothing of these complicated institutions, this powerful hierarchy. New laws had to be issued gradually, to fix the new ritual prescriptions; and new myths, to legitimise the new institutions. The organisation of the Jewish State is ever one of divine right, the right of Jahveh. The old theory of Deuteronomy is applied to the new situation. It is proved that Jahveh himself, in the remotest period of history, said that things must be so. The authors of the legislation of the fourth century had thought it necessary to attribute the promulgation of it to Moses; the priests who codified the new laws of the Jewish State in the third century thought it no less indispensable to make Moses their godfather. It was imperative that the whole of the law should have been promulgated by Moses, dictated to Moses by Jahveh; it was imperative that the priesthood should be traced to a brother of Moses, and that the temple should have existed in its first form under Moses in the desert.

The work that had been done in the Jehovist and Deuteronomic periods was resumed in a new spirit, in view of the necessary apology for the priesthood, but equally in view of the development of the imperialist policy. And it is possible to-day for commentators to distinguish this new edition of the Mosaic books, which the later compilers generally placed at the end of the older one, in the books which compose our actual Bible.

The Deuteronomic writers had not resumed the legendary history of origins; they had been content with the Jehovistic narratives. The sacerdotal writers acted differently; they took up again the whole legendary history of origins, from the patriarchs and the creation onward. There was a sacerdotal account of the creation, just as there had been a Jehovistic account. The older account is the one which begins at the fourth verse of the second chapter of *Genesis* in our actual Bible: "These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth, in

the day that the god Jahveh made the earth and the heavens." It describes how Jahveh made woman from one of the ribs of the first man, and ends at the twenty-fourth verse of the same chapter. The sacerdotal account is the famous beginning of *Genesis* with the creation in six days: "In the beginning god created the heaven and the earth.....and god said, Let there be light." Here god creates man to his own image; and he creates him both male and female.

The patriarchal legends are resumed with an exaggeration of the ritualist or hierarchical tendencies; in other places genealogies abound, and take the place of the older narratives; throughout, a new political situation gives birth to new ethnographic myths.

The Deuteronomic writers, who had made no addition to the Jehovistic episodes of the patriarchal legend, had added much to the Jehovistic episodes of the exodus. Nevertheless, this enlarged history of Moses and Joshua seemed to the writers of the Levitic period to be inadequate. They took it up afresh.

I will quote only one instance, which has been very profoundly studied by M. Maurice Vernes in his lectures at the *École des Hautes-Études*.

The earlier writers had imagined that the Israelites had, after leaving Egypt and taking possession of Palestine, entered upon a solemn covenant with Jahveh and sworn eternal fidelity. But where had the contract been concluded? The older narratives betray the hesitations, alterations, and instability of their compilers in dealing with the ancient traditions. It is at Cades, or Massa and Meriba, in certain obscure oases, during the crossing of the desert, that Jahveh has his obscure conversation with Moses. Then one writer more luckily introduces the mountain of Horeb; Moses descends from the company of the god with the Decalogue written on tables of stone, and, on the eve of entering the promised land, he expounds to the people, amid the plains of Moab, the

whole cycle of commandments which Jahveh has revealed to him, and of which the Decalogue was the preface. A different tradition is developed, however, in another school. We know that one of the most ancient sanctuaries of Jahveh, the memory of which still survives, is that of Sichem, the old temple of Baal-Berit, of the Lord-of-the-Alliance, or Jahveh-Lord-of-the-Alliance, celebrated in the time of Gideon and his son Abimelech. There, it is said, the alliance was promulgated, amid a great gathering of the people, with the benedictions of Mount Garizim on the one side and the maledictions of Mount Ebal on the other. The Deuteronomic episodes close with these contradictions.

The writers of the sacerdotal period desired more majesty in the conclusion of the covenant; and, at the same time, their imperialism required that the Jerusalem temple should have the glory of it. There was among them a writer of genius and an able casuist—a common conjunction among the Biblical writers—who conceived the epic of Sinai.

In the middle of the Arabian desert, during the terrible forty years' wandering, the people, led by Moses, halted at the foot of Sinai. There, amid the chaos of rocks on which no vegetation finds root, in the horror of the naked gorges and the snowy peaks, across the storms which roll from summit to summit and precipice to precipice, Jahveh manifests himself to his prophet; while the people, gaping with horror, gather in the valleys below. A thick cloud had descended; smoke arose, as if from a furnace, and the mountain trembled. Jahveh descended on the summit of the mountain, and called Moses; and Moses went up. Then the god spoke:—

I am Jahveh, thy god, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.....<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Exodus* xx. 2-3.



The law follows. It is the work of a man of genius; the work of a casuist.

The covenant has been concluded among the summits of Sinai, in the middle of the desert, far from the land of Israel, consequently far from the place where the single temple of Jerusalem will be raised. But it has been concluded above the ark, near the altar of brass, under the tent of tapistry and animal-skins which is called the Tabernacle. But where have the ark, the brass altar, and the Tabernacle remained for time out of mind? In the Jerusalem temple. After wandering through the desert and finding a temporary shelter at Sichem, at Silo, at Bethsames, at Cariathiarim, and at Gabaon, the divine "furniture" is brought to Jerusalem, and installed for ever by Solomon in the temple. The Jerusalem temple is therefore the legitimate heir or, rather, the continuation of Sinai.

Though civilisation has advanced, the same spirit that had inspired the ancient *moshlim* now inspires the sacerdotal *moshlim*. We are still in the east, still at Jerusalem; the aim is still to legitimise the actual laws by attributing to them a divine origin, to consecrate the institutions by deriving them from Jahveh. We have, as before, doctrinal theses illustrated by legends; hopes and ambitions that must be justified; genealogies created in great numbers to explain the Jewish pretensions amid the neighbouring peoples. The last Mosaic legislation is, like the preceding, at once a theological legitimation of existing institutions, a solemn promulgation of new laws, and a presentment of ideal legislative views.

It is a theological legitimation of existing institutions. That which exists is justified by the divine will from the remotest antiquity; the temple is as it is, because Jahveh has so commanded; the sacerdotal caste rules, because the priests are the direct descendants of Aaron, brother of Moses.

It is a solemn promulgation of new laws. The new

laws are not new laws, but the laws which Jahveh himself dictated to Moses long ago—though three-fourths of the laws of the Levitic period settle questions of vestments or of ritual butchery.

It is a presentment of ideal legislative views. Side by side with the immediately useful enactment we have the dream that it will be well to realise in a better, and probably approaching, period. The ideal mingles throughout with the real. Like that of Deuteronomy, the sacerdotal legislation is at one moment minute, at another chimerical; it is always dogmatic and theocratic, always imperialistic.

But there are other things in view than those of the Deuteronomic period. The characteristic of the Levitical period is the need, on the part of the clerical aristocracy of Jerusalem, of a definitive organisation.

The legislation of the last great Mosaic code is really that of a powerful church, which radiates over the surrounding countries. It has all the greatness and all the meanness of a constituted State which aims at ruling, and is not content merely to live. An administration, of complicated structure, is formed. One thinks of the Catholic Church, so powerful, so administratively organised for ruling.

There is no longer any question, for instance, in the Levitical narratives of the massacres of the Canaanites. The Jerusalemite cult has definitively triumphed, round about Jerusalem, over the earlier pagan resistance. The horizon is broader; beyond the surrounding countries they perceive more distant peoples whom it will be possible to Judaise.

The ancient covenant concluded between Jahveh and the Jewish people demanded that, as a reward for its fidelity, Jahveh should secure for Israel the free and peaceful possession of that part of Palestine to which the priests of Jerusalem had given the mythic name of Israel, the symbol of their ambitions. Now that the country is

almost subdued, and, as Samaria alone resists, the ancient Israel is almost restored, the dream of a more far-reaching Judaisation, which we shall find developing in the soul of the First Isaiah, is already dawning in the soul of the priests of Jerusalem. Political independence, or the rejection of the yoke of Persia or Macedonia, is always included in these Mosaic epics, from the first Jehovistic *mashal* to the last Levitic genealogies; but in the last pages of the final Levitical narratives there appears, as in the First Isaiah, the ambition to conquer the world, and the covenant is enlarged until it promises the Jews, as a reward of their traditional faithfulness, not merely the enjoyment of a part of Palestine, but the conquest of the universe. Extravagant dream for one of the smallest peoples of the earth at the beginning of the third century! Supremely fruitful dream, because it would one day lead to its own realisation. And we read this dream, perhaps for the first time, in the Jewish epics, in the famous episode of the three sons of Noah:—

And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard:

And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent.

And Ham saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without.

And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness.

And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what had been done,

And he said: Cursed be Canaan [son of Ham]: a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.

And he said: Blessed be Jahveh, god of Shem, and Canaan shall be his servant.

God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem.<sup>1</sup>

Shem, the narrative goes on to say, is the father of

Israel and the cognate peoples. Ham and Canaan are the fathers of the Canaanites, who for the last time symbolise the *goyim* who are refractory to Judaism. Japheth is the father of Javan, Ἰαπετός, the father of the Greek peoples and all those whom the Jews of the third century regarded as Greeks. In Japheth the Greek world is, provided it submit to the law of Jahveh, invited to take part in the blessings of the god.

We have reached the period of the high-priest Simeon I., who succeeded the high-priest Onias I. in the year 300. Simeon I. is very probably the Simeon the Just of whom Flavius Josephus and the Siracid speak, and the Shimeon Hasadiq, of whom the Talmud speaks, the ideal high-priest of the rabbinical tradition, he who is followed by decadence.<sup>1</sup>

It seems that after this date the Mosaic legends ceased to enrich themselves with new narratives and fresh prescriptions. Modifications, corrections, interpolations, and manipulations of the old narratives will continue to be made; the largest additions will consist in the insertion of entire psalms; but the general sum is fixed, and presently the scribes will begin to arrange this infinite number and variety of fragments, in order to make a single book of them. Discordant narratives placed in succession, the same things told several times with variations that are often contradictory, the legislations of several centuries simply put side by side, and hundreds of myths that had their origin in the most diverse circumstances, jostling each other with no unity save that of the constant idea of the national work that is to be accomplished—such will be the compilation of which the scribes of the third and second centuries will make the book of the Law, the masterpiece of oriental literatures.

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix V.

§ 5. *A First Glance at the Internationalisation of Judaism.*

Perhaps it is important to religions to maintain the historical value of their sacred books ; so our conservative theologians believe. Perhaps it is a matter of indifference to religions whether or no their origin be illumined by the light of history ; so our liberal theologians, Catholic and Protestant, believe. But the historian knows nothing of these considerations. He neither attacks nor defends religions ; he studies how certain books, which have become sacred books, offered to the veneration of all ages throughout the whole earth, came into being among a certain people, at a certain period, in certain circumstances, in order to meet certain needs.

Christianity has made the national and nationalist books of the smallest people of ancient Western Asia the sacred books of the modern world ; in other words, it has internationalised them. We shall follow this work, as we gradually cover a fresh stage in Jewish history. With the first group of the Jewish books, the books of Moses, we catch our first glance of the internationalism of Judaism.

The books of Moses were, as we recognised, born of the imperious need, felt by the little people of Jerusalem, to create a past for itself, to give itself a legislation of divine origin, to legitimise its institutions, to consecrate its ambitions, to sanctify its national hatreds. Internationalisation is the art of appropriating words that have a concrete meaning in their age and their environment, and clothing these words with a general and purely moral meaning ; of ridding them of their literal meaning in order to give them one that is ideal.

We will give several examples. This chapter, indeed, might bear the title, "On the Meaning of certain Hebrew Words."

THE NEIGHBOUR.—The neighbour, in Hebrew *rea*, means compatriot in the Mosaic books. A Jew has no other neighbour but his compatriot Jew. The Egyptian is not a neighbour for the Jew. The famous verse, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,”<sup>1</sup> means, “Thou shalt love thy compatriot as thyself.” It is a fresh affirmation of the ardent nationalism to which Jerusalem owed its fortune.

THE STRANGER.—The stranger is protected by the Mosaic law. But the English word “stranger” [in the Biblical sense of “foreigner”] serves as a translation of four different Hebrew words—*ger*, *toshab*, *nocri*, and *goim*. The *ger* and the *toshab* are the strangers settled in the territory of Jerusalem and obeying the Mosaic law; the *nocri* is the non-Judaizing stranger; the *goim* are the enemy. Need we say that the Mosaic protection does not extend beyond the *ger* and the *toshab*?

PURITY AND IMPURITY.—The meaning is strictly materialistic. At first an impure thing, *tame* in Hebrew, may have been a thing taboo, but in the fourth and third centuries it is merely an infectious or infected thing. A pure thing comes to mean a clean or disinfected thing: purification is a hygienic operation. In a country, however, where all the laws are clothed in a religious form, the operation is conducted according to a special rite, and gives a pretext for a tax which the rulers receive.

Woman is impure for several days every month; whoever has touched a corpse is impure; to eat certain forbidden animals makes a man impure.

Ye shall not make your souls abominable with any creeping thing that creepeth, that ye should be defiled thereby: I am Jahveh, your god.<sup>2</sup>

If a woman shall be cleansed of her issue, then she shall number to herself seven days, and after that she shall be clean.

<sup>1</sup> *Leviticus* xix. 18.

<sup>2</sup> *Leviticus* xi. 43.



And on the eighth day she shall take unto her two turtles, or two young pigeons, and bring them unto the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.<sup>1</sup>

**HOLINESS.**—The root of the Hebrew word *qadosh*, which is translated “holy,” means “to separate.” A holy thing or a holy man is a thing or a man separated from others, especially designed for a certain end; it is to prepare especially by setting apart. The people of Israel is holy, because it has been set apart by Jahveh from the other peoples of the earth. We are nearer than before to the idea of taboo. Even when the word begins to have a moral signification, it only means sacred in the sense of consecrated. The feminine *qedoshah*, holy, is a neological and post-Biblical variant, invented by the modesty of the rabbis to replace the real feminine *qedeshah*, a genuine Biblical term, which means prostitute; a reminiscence of the ancient times when prostitution was part of the cult of Jahveh.

**JAHVEH.**—The history of the divine name is a remarkable example of internationalisation. We will presently study the history of the word *elohim*, which likewise means god in Hebrew—a god and the gods—and we shall see how the enlargement of the meaning of the word has corresponded to the development of Judaism. Let us deal here with the special name of the special god of the Jews, Jahveh.

The Jewish god is designated in the Bible by the proper name Jahveh. Jahveh is his name, just as Camos is the name of the Moabite god, and Dagon the name of the Philistine god. Whence did the ancient Israelites obtain the name? It is believed that there was an expletive form of the ancient word *Jah*, which closely resembles a Babylonian *Jah*. Science is not yet agreed on the

<sup>1</sup> *Leviticus* xv. 28–29.

point.....In any case, Jahveh is the name of the god worshipped at Jerusalem.

When the Jews, in the third and second centuries before the present era, had promoted their little local god to the dignity of supreme god, master and creator of the universe, they had some scruple to permit their lips to utter the name of so august a personage; and they gradually substituted for it vague words like *Adonai*, which means "my lord." A day came even when, putting a false interpretation on a verse of the Law, they no longer dared pronounce the sacred name; and as it occurred on every page of their books, they decided to read it *Adonai*.<sup>1</sup>

The Greek translators of the Bible merely transcribed the Hebrew proper names in Greek characters; but they dared not preserve Jahveh, and they translated it into the Greek equivalent of *Adonai*, ὁ κύριος, the Lord. The Catholics followed them in calling the ancient Jahveh *Dominus*, then "the Lord." The Protestants [apart from the English Bible] translated it "the Eternal." To-day the learned students of the Hebrew texts, who take credit for critical judgment, continue to say "the Lord," if they are Catholics, and "the Eternal," if they are Protestants or Israelites.

Now Jahveh is a name, like Milkom, or Camos, or Jupiter, or Wotan. To say Jahveh is to indicate a certain god, apart from other gods; possibly a greater, better, and purer god than Milkom, or Camos, or Jupiter, or Wotan, but a particular god in contrast to others. The terms "Lord" and "Eternal" are, on the other hand, just as acceptable to the Christians as to the Jews, to the Europeans as to the Asiatics, to the philosophers as to the metaphysicians, to Kant as to Esdras. But from Jahveh to the Eternal or the Lord is as far a cry as from the

<sup>1</sup> Hebrew grammarians still teach young Israelites to pronounce the divine name *Adonai*.

little State of Jerusalem to the Christian, Catholic, and universal Church.

It suffices to restore "Jahveh" everywhere in the Bible where we find "the Eternal" or "the Lord" to put things right. If we keep "the Eternal," we are reading a sacred book; if we restore Jahveh, we have an historical document. The anger of the Eternal, the vengeance of the Eternal, are phrases that, at the best, point to a somewhat confused idea of a vague divinity. Vengeance and anger have the sound of human expressions, applied, for want of better, to divine things that are not our anger and vengeance. Jahveh is, on the contrary, a clearly-defined god: he is the god of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob, and of Jerusalem, who will perhaps conquer the world, but only in so far as Jerusalem will conquer the world. Jahveh becoming the Eternal is a national and nationalist god becoming international.



PART SECOND

THE PROPHETS

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CHAPTER I.

THE BIRTH OF PROPHETISM

§ 1. *Hellenism.*

IN the year 334 before the present era Alexander was invading Asia Minor. The Persian army was beaten in the first encounter, and Asia Minor conquered. In the following year the victory of Issus delivered the whole empire of Darius to the Greeks; and in 332 Alexander took the town of Tyre, and subdued Palestine without striking a blow. A tradition tells that he entered Jerusalem, and that the priests, going out to meet him, obtained from him, at the threshold of the temple, his clemency for their town. Whether or no Alexander entered Jerusalem, Palestine, together with the whole of western Asia, passed from the domination of Persia to the domination of Macedonia.

At this date the State of Jerusalem has reached the zenith of its development. The work begun by Esdras had had its effect. While the other small Palestinian States that were subject to the Persian suzerainty languished in a state of inactive existence, the Jewish State had, within the humble limits of its walls and its immediate surroundings, entrenched itself in the intense nationalism that found expression in the religion of Jahveh; and, reacting on the country about it by the very fact of its energy, the Jewish soul had gradually permeated Palestine. The majority of the small States

of ancient Israel accepted the religious and moral hegemony of Jerusalem; the neighbouring populations—Moab, Ammon, and Edom—vegetated; even in the towns of Syria the name of Jahveh was becoming great. The State of Samaria alone remained antagonistic. Everywhere else the number of Judaisers increased constantly, and the priests of Jerusalem might entertain the great hopes they had given themselves, and imagine their people chosen among all peoples and the Jewish soul imposing its primacy on surrounding nations.

But it is important to determine precisely what we mean by these geographical expressions—Palestine, Judah, Judæa, and the State of Jerusalem.

After taking Tyre and Gaza, Alexander, now master of the Syrian region, set up a government which was bounded by the Mediterranean, Lebanon, the Syrian and Arabian deserts, and Egypt. That is Palestine; though historians also add Cœle-Syria. Palestine, therefore, forms in the age of Alexander a large province, embracing: in the north, the small States which were later to be gathered together under the name of Galilee; to the east of the Jordan, Galaad (later Peræa); in the south-east, Ammon, Moab, and Edom; on the shores of the Mediterranean, the ancient Philistine towns; in the centre, lastly, the two rival States, the two leading powers of the group, Samaria, in which is included part of the ancient kingdom of Ephraim, and Judah, which comprises the former kingdom of Judah. Such is the advance made by the State of Jerusalem since Esdras. If the Davidic kingdom is still far from being restored, the kingdom of Judah at least is gained. In the time of Esdras the State of Jerusalem consisted of the town and the surrounding district; in the time of Alexander this State has extended its domination over the territories of which the kingdom of Judah had once been composed. The land of Judah, however, is now about to receive the name of Judæa. In creating a province of Judæa, with Jerusalem as its capital and



metropolis, the Macedonian kings will merely consecrate an accomplished fact. As to Canaan and Israel, these ancient denominations, now mere expressions of a theoretical nature, correspond geographically, sometimes to the whole, sometimes to the greater part, of Palestine.

The Jerusalem aristocracy, mistress of Judæa, already ruled over a half of Israel, of the land of Canaan promised by Jahveh to the town of his temple, when the first of the great crises which were to overthrow Judaism occurred. A new danger, Hellenism, had appeared, a danger the more formidable because it arose in the very bosom of the aristocracy that had once created Judaism. And the Jewish soul would, if it were to persevere, need to make a greater effort than it had needed a hundred and fifty years earlier to create itself.

It must not be thought that Hellenism penetrated the State of Jerusalem for the first time with the armies of Alexander. We know that the battles of Marathon and Salamina had had no echo in the Jerusalem of the Restoration. Many years passed without the disciples of Esdras suspecting anything of the Greek civilisation which struggled against the Persian monarchy in Asia Minor and on the islands. Gradually, however, as the Persian hegemony gave security to the roads in western Asia, while the Greek and Persian armies fought their alternating conflict, the Hellenic infiltration reached Palestine. Tyre, the great commercial town of the east, was not far from the mountains of Jerusalem ; Palestine was a stage on the road from Asia to Egypt ; Palestine could not escape the commercial invasion of the Greeks. At what date did the priests of Jerusalem perceive the novelty that was approaching their walls ? No document informs us ; but it is probable that by the middle of the fourth century, many years before the arrival of Alexander, words of the Greek tongue were heard at the foot of the temple of Jahveh. The Macedonian conquest was not a sudden invasion of unexpected conquerors, of a horde of

victors who at once take possession of a great land ; it was the logical outcome of a century and a-half of effort, the conclusion of a long and uninterrupted campaign. Asia was conquered by the civilisation, as much as by the armies, of Greece. But under the leadership of Alexander Hellenism entered more imperiously, with the authority of victory and conquest, the regions where it had hitherto merely insinuated its influence.

The military success of Alexander mattered little to the children of Jahveh. Israel had seen many such. The triumph of the King of Macedonia might be ephemeral ; it crushed no hope. And, indeed, had not the sacred dogmatics possible explanations of all the victories of the *gaim* ? Whether the master of the hour was called Alexander or Darius, the stern perseverance of the Jew would regard with disdain the soldier who won battles ; the soul which had been born again, had lived and grown, after Nabuchodonosor, would be able to resist the new master. But those at Jerusalem who clung to the old traditions of Esdras and Deuteronomy were alarmed, in the year 332, to see Jews about them beginning to live the Hellenic life.

Thus was opened a new epoch of Judaism. In future the Jewish traditionalism will oppose itself implacably to Hellenic ways. There begins, in the heart of Judaism, that struggle of parties which is the key of Jewish history—the struggle of nationalism and foreign influence.

At Jerusalem, however, nationalism was the party of democracy, Hellenism the party of the ruling aristocracy.

The Jewish soul had been formed on the principle of a complete isolation from other peoples. From that time everything had been laid down in the Jewish law, in that illustration of the Jewish law which the Jewish literature is, with a view to keeping the men of Jerusalem together among other men as a kind of church, a caste of saints, the privileged children of the divinity, enjoying his especial protection. If the Jews began to live the life

of other peoples, was it not all over with the Jewish soul?

The men of Jerusalem in the time of Esdras had perceived in a flash of genius the only conditions of existence that were possible for them; the same flash of genius came to some men of Jerusalem a century and a-half later, in the time of Alexander. The Jewish soul must resist Hellenism with all its strength, must remain purely Jewish in face of Hellenism, or it must perish. The task of the Jews was to extirpate from their midst every tendency to Hellenisation, to set up among them an Inquisition which should preserve the hopes of Judaism from any alloy.

The historians of Judaism have not understood that the tempests of Judaism took place between Jews from the time that Hellenism invaded Asia. The task of Judaism in the third and second centuries was to struggle, not against the ways and ideas of other nations, but against the introduction of these ways and ideas into Israel.

However sombre a fanaticism may have always ruled in the little State of Jerusalem, it would be absurd to suppose that there were not in it, as elsewhere, minds that were inclined to more moderate ways, to some indulgence for foreign ideas, some tenderness for art and elegance. Men of this character cannot have been wanting in the most sombre surroundings, and the Macedonian conquest discovered some within the walls of Jerusalem, to the great scandal of the puritans. It happened, however, as is quite natural, that the new tendencies were especially found among the aristocracy.

The desire of luxury appears inevitably among a prosperous aristocracy, even if it be a clerical aristocracy. The clerical aristocracy held nearly the whole wealth of the country, thanks to the numerous taxes which had been instituted, in the form of tithes, offerings, and propitiations, by the Deuteronomic law; its power, established by divine right, was absolute. Among the priests of Jerusalem there were wealthy men who longed for

more spacious and better decorated houses. They modified the old traditional garment; the fashion made its appearance in the approach to the temple of Jahveh. They affected to speak Greek; their wives wore eccentric dresses; richer wines flowed; possibly there were flowers on the table. I do not exaggerate; these abominations are described with indignation in the prophetic books.

Hellenisation took place in another way. People who are little familiar with the biblical writings will be astonished to learn that they not only anathematise luxury, but they condemn commerce as a crime. Commerce became afterwards the great occupation of the Jews, because new conditions of existence made new souls. In developing commerce throughout Asia, the Macedonian conquest introduced it into Jerusalem, and some of the Jews became merchants. Naturally they became rich; and, just as naturally, they sought luxury. Once more the puritans raised the cry of scandal.

A century later the evil was at its height when, probably for the first time in history, the Jews attacked finance, and Joseph, son of Tobias, became farmer-general of the Ptolemies for the government of Cœle-Syria.

If Hellenisation had triumphed at Jerusalem, the world would never have known either the Jewish conquest or Christianity. But there was a formidable reaction of the old nationalism, a prodigious outflame of the implacable soul of Jerusalem; and it was among the people, the humble, that the movement arose, and grew, and triumphed. Starting from the people, the nationalist reaction assumed a democratic character, which would be an essential part of Judaism.

Jewish patriotism understood and proved that the correction of its leaders is a supreme law, that the leaders must set an example of obedience to the traditions, that it is useless to speak to the people of discipline when the leaders have not first obeyed the most rigorous of disci-

plines, and that there is no real nationalism in a State in which guilty leaders are tolerated.

This appeal to the ancient traditions and the necessary discipline, this return to an uncompromising nationalism, this renaissance of the imperialism of Jerusalem, was the work of the prophets.

## § 2. *The Men of God.*

In the remotest periods of the history of peoples we find sorcerers, mercenary diviners, strange healers, feared and venerated, in the whole of the east, in the west and Africa as well as Palestine, among the nomad leaders of flocks, in the first settlements of primitive husbandmen, in the little cities surrounded with their walls of earth, in the old towns where a formidable sultan rules with his harem and janissaries, in the shade of the oldest sanctuaries, and in the valleys where the caravans pass.

These men, with their disordered gestures, their incoherent speech, and their wild eyes, are sometimes mad, sometimes epileptic. They wander about in rags, thin and famished and sordid. You meet them near the villages, but they live in the desert places. The caverns are their homes; they spend long hours in solitude. They have no trade. When a beast or a man falls ill, they know the remedy that will cure; when difficult projects are in contemplation, they utter words in which one divines the future. A few silver coins or measures of corn are their salary.

These victims of hallucination are regarded as inspired by the deity. Among primitive peoples the insane was always considered a sacred being. It was the same in Judæa as in the rest of the world; it is the same in the east to-day. Madness is a sacred malady; epilepsy is a divine phenomenon. The divine word can only be imparted to human ears by means of this delirium, in which

a man loses his individuality and becomes a passive instrument of inspiration. Saint Paul will explain it in the most precise manner in a later age.<sup>1</sup>

On that account they are venerated and feared. These haggard sorcerers and famished soothsayers see something in the future, and control evil spirits. With all their rags they bear on their brows the sign of Jahveh. They are men of god.

The ancient tribes of Palestine, Israel as well as Moab, Ammon, Edom, and Syria, swarmed with men of god. The Bible has preserved the memory of these men of god in pages to which we cannot grant an historical value, but which undeniably afford a valuable picture of customs.

There was once [eleven hundred years before the present era] a man of Benjamin, whose name was Cis, the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Bechorath, the son of Aphiah, a Benjamite, a mighty man of power.

And he had a son whose name was Saul, a choice young man and a goodly; and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he; from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people.

And the asses of Cis, Saul's father, were lost. And Cis said to Saul his son: Take now one of the servants with thee, and arise, go seek the asses.

And he passed by mount Ephraim, and passed through the land of Salisa, but they found them not; then they passed through the land of Salim, and there they were not; and he passed through the land of Jemini, but they found them not.

And when they were come to the land of Suph, Saul said to his servant that was with him: Come and let us return; lest my father leave caring for the asses, and take thought for us.

And the servant said unto him: Behold now, there is in this city a man of God, and he is an honourable man. All that he saith cometh surely to pass. Now let us go thither. Peradventure he can show us our way that we should go.

Then said Saul to his servant: Let us go, but, behold,

<sup>1</sup> 1 *Corinthians* xii. and xiv.



if we go, what shall we bring the man of God? For the bread is spent in our vessels, and there is not a present to bring to the man of God; what have we?

And the servant answered Saul again, and said: Behold, I have here at hand the fourth part of a shekel of silver; that will I give to the man of God, to tell us our way.....

Then said Saul to his servant: Well said, come, let us go. So they went unto the city where the man of God was.

And as they went up the hill to the city, they found young maidens going out to draw water, and said unto them: Is the seer here?

And they answered them and said: He is; behold, he is before thee; make haste.....

As soon as ye be come unto the city, ye shall straight-way find him, before he go up to the high place to eat. ....Now therefore get you up.

And they went up into the city; and when they were come into the city, behold, Samuel came out against them, for to go up to the high place.....

Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate of the city, and said: Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house is.

And Samuel answered Saul, and said: I am the seer: go up before me unto the high place; for ye shall eat with me to-day, and to-morrow morning I will let thee go, and will tell thee all that is in thine heart.

And as for thine asses that were lost three days ago, set not thy mind on them, for they are found.<sup>1</sup>

The aged wizard Samuel, who was able to find the lost asses for a fourth part of a shekel of silver, seems to have delivered his consultation with a somewhat simple apparatus on that day. It was not always so—with some of his colleagues, if not with Samuel. And the Bible does not fail to give us some information on the way in which, at the remote epoch of the legend, the predictions and conjurations took place.

The anecdote of Saul, the asses, and Samuel continues; and, after the meal, Samuel says to Saul, among other things, and in the midst of theologico-dogmatic discourses after the manner of doctors of the Esdras school:—

<sup>1</sup> 1 *Samuel* ix. 1–20. Certain features of this translation are taken from Lemaistre de Sacy.

When thou shalt have gone on forward from thence, thou shalt come to the oak of Thabor, and there shall meet thee three men going up to God to Bethel, one carrying three kids, and another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a bottle of wine :

And they will salute thee, and give thee two loaves of bread ; which thou shalt receive of their hands.

After that thou shalt come to Guibea-of-God, where is the garrison of the Philistines ; and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp before them ; and they shall prophesy :

And the spirit of Jahveh will come upon thee ; and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man.<sup>1</sup>

To prophesy means, in Hebrew, to utter cries and dance to the sound of instruments.

Consider David, later, bringing back to Jerusalem the ark of Jahveh :—

David, clothed with a linen tunic, danced before Jahveh with all his might.

So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of Jahveh with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet.

And as the ark of Jahveh came into the city of David, Michol, Saul's daughter (and David's wife), looked through a window and saw King David leaping and dancing before the face of Jahveh ; and she despised him in her heart.....

When David returned to bless his household, Michol the daughter of Saul came out to meet him, and said : How glorious was the king of Israel to-day, who uncovered himself in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, and appeared half-naked like a buffoon.<sup>2</sup>

I do not regard the legends of David, Saul, and especially Samuel, as having historical value ; but they imply certain ways. Israel could not be an exception amid the other peoples of the East. The historical probability that epileptic wizards, diviners, and healers, with the gestures and speech of madmen, filled Palestine, both at the time

<sup>1</sup> 1 *Samuel* x. 3-6.

<sup>2</sup> 2 *Samuel* vi. 14-20.

of the ancient kingdoms and at that of the Restoration, is confirmed by the testimony of the Biblical books.

What name did these wizards bear in Palestine? The Bible uses several words of which the meaning is the more vague because of the wilful confusion that its writers have made between the real wizard of history and the idealised seer of the legend. The three words most frequently used are:—

*Ish haelohim*, the man of god;

*Hozeh*, or *roeh*, the seer;

*Nabi*, the speaker, more particularly the prophet.

It is impossible, in the actual condition of science, to determine the chronological order of these three designations. The third has been accepted by usage to designate the prophets in the highest sense of the word; the first, probably earlier than the other two, expresses rather the primitive idea of the healing diviner, an insane man—that is to say, a man inspired by a god; the second, and vaguer, term is less frequently used, and is hardly applicable to any but Samuel or Gad. Hence, while warning the reader that the choice is arbitrary, I beg to be allowed, for the purpose of explaining more clearly, to neglect the term “seer” (*roeh* or *hozeh*); to restrict the word “prophet” (*nabi*) to the idealised prophetic type; and to keep for the historical Israelitic wizard the name of “man of god” (*ish haelohim*).

For the moment we have to see how the man of god was made a prophet.

The men of god whom we find in the real history of ancient Israel, just as in Moab, Ammon, Edom, Syria, and in the whole of the East and among all primitive peoples, did not play any particular part in ancient Israel. They were, as everywhere else, tellers of good stories, bonesetters to whom every one had recourse when necessary, and who gave their advice in the form of chants, or rather howls, and of dances, or rather stamping and frenzied leaping.

At the time of the Restoration we find them once more, eternal features of the East, always the same, miserable and powerful wizards, whose ravings are inspired by Jahveh ; just as we shall see them again in the Jewish world of St. Paul, and as we find them in our own time under the name of howling and dancing dervishes. What part did they play in the restored Jerusalem of the fifth and the fourth centuries? No other than that which their ancestors had played in the ancient kingdoms ; no other than that which their colleagues played in the surrounding peoples—that is to say, none.

They would have passed away, forgotten and of no account, had their names not served to shelter a literary artifice of the Jewish writers of the fourth century : had not the historical men of god suggested to the imagination of the writers of the Bible the ideal and purely literary type of the prophets.

The priests of Jerusalem who had related, in the earliest books of the Bible, how Jahveh punished national infidelity and rewarded national fidelity, had imagined that Jahveh had, in the course of these vicissitudes, often given direct advice to his people. With the spirit of hostility to abstractions which caused all their teachings to pass through the living form of legends, they had thought it necessary that, from time to time, sacred personages should have, on the part of Jahveh, warned their ancestors, whose history they were relating, of the chastisements that awaited them and the promises that were held out to them ; they had pretended that Jahveh himself had, all through this tragic and glorious history, raised up inspired men to speak in his name, and to repeat in his name, at every turn in Jewish history, from the settlement in Palestine until Nabuchodonosor :—

Thus saith Jahveh : Because ye have forsaken Jahveh, your god, and prostituted yourselves to the Baals and Astartes, I will strike the fathers and the children, the neighbour and his neighbour.....Thus saith Jahveh : If

ye return to Jahveh, your god, I will make your captives return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and I will break your chains, and I will take from your necks the yoke of your enemies.....

These inspired men are, therefore, above all, admonishers invented by the Biblical writers in order to make more precise the teaching that they wish to give to their readers. Not only the warnings, but the warners themselves, might be omitted from the historical books without the narrative suffering in the least. The books of *Samuel* and *Kings* are surcharged with these episodic personages; in every page we find them playing the part of the moralists with which Alexander Dumas filled his compositions, a sort of Desgenais speaking in the name of public morality—that is to say, to keep to the sentiment of the Bible, in the name of Jahveh.

The Jewish spirit always disliked abstract instruction. Instead of a simple statement that King David committed a sin in taking the wife of his servant Uriah, and that this sin deserved punishment, we read:—

The thing that David had done displeased Jahveh.

And Jahveh sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him:

.....Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of Jahveh, to do evil in his sight?

Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house.<sup>1</sup>

It is an invention. Who were these admonishers who were supposed to have the task of announcing the orders of Jahveh to the people of Israel? The Jerusalem writers might have assigned the part to priests of the earlier times; and some of them did so. But, as a rule, they preferred to assign the part to special personages; and, looking round them, they selected the men of god.

They supposed that in former times there were among these demented wizards, these dreaded and venerated

<sup>1</sup> 2 *Samuel* xi. 27; xii. 1, 9, and 11.

diviners, who were seen wandering near the towns and whose ravings seemed to have a divine origin, some who were especially inspired by Jahveh, and charged with the mission of speaking to Israel in his name. The character was thus created. It answered perfectly the needs of the writers, and the fiction was gradually elaborated; under the name of prophets, the men of god came and went on behalf of Jahveh throughout Jewish history, drawing from events the lesson that it suited the priest-writers to give to their people.

The men of god were thus raised to the rank of prophets. But it must be quite understood that in the time of the ancient Hebrew kingdoms there had never been, and there was not in the fifth and fourth centuries, any man of god who professed to give warnings to the Jewish people at the command of Jahveh. In accordance with the conventional definitions which I proposed for the words "man of god" and "prophet," we must say that, in the Judæa of the fifth and fourth centuries, as in all ancient kingdoms and in the Palestine of the third and second centuries, there were, at all times and in all places, humble men of god, but that, in point of fact, there were no prophets.

Later, during the first century of the present era, when the ancient books of Judaism had become sacred books, when everybody in Judæa believed in the historical reality of the Samuels, Elijahs, Jeremiahs, and Isaiahs, it is true that some of these poor healers and fortune-tellers, who always abounded in Palestine, tried to set up as new Elijahs and Jeremiahs; this is the only period in which there were, historically, prophets in Palestine—pale imitators of fictitious heroes, such as John the Baptist, Jesus of Nazareth, or Theudas.

We may therefore define the prophets as:—

Fictitious characters, invented by the Jewish writers of the fourth and succeeding centuries, on an idealised model of the men of god (that is to say, the wizards, soothsayers,



and healers) who were found throughout the east, and interpolated by them in their national history to play the part of admonishers enjoined by Jahveh to give a lesson to his people.

To explain the presence of the prophets in the books of the Bible, it is by no means necessary to suppose that there had been prophets in the days of the ancient kingdoms, or were in the fifth and fourth centuries; it was enough that there had been, and were, men of god. For the Middle Ages to create the epic character of Merlin the Enchanter, it was not necessary that a Merlin the Enchanter should have existed in the Middle Ages; it was enough that there were wizards, and that some writer sought to idealise them. The prophets of Israel are the Merlins of Judaism.<sup>1</sup>

The fiction remained poor, however, in the earlier books of the Bible. The characters of Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha had not yet been created, or at least not yet developed; the prophet-admonishers brought on to the scene by the earlier writers were feeble expressions of a mediocre literary device. Lifeless and uninteresting phantoms, they would have been lost in oblivion if, some day about the year 332 and the conquest of Jerusalem by Alexander, the fiction had not been suddenly raised from its lowly level and developed, and received at once an unexampled range.

About the year 332, in fact, when it was necessary to raise a cry of alarm on account of the new peril that threatened Judaism, to discover a more impressive formula, to arrest with inspired language the men who were leading the country of the Jews to destruction, some writer at Jerusalem imagined that, in the remote period of kings Uzziah, Jotham, Achaz, and Jeroboam, there was a man of god, a soothsayer—that is to say, a prophet—of the name of Hosea, and that this Hosea had begun

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix VI.

to speak in the name of Jahveh and warn Israel, reproach it with its faults, and foretell its punishment. Instead, however, of telling the fact in a few dry lines, as the writers of the books of *Kings* had done, when they described the prophet Nathan accosting King David, the new writer conceived the extraordinary idea of inventing a series of long discourses and saying to his contemporaries :—

The word of Jahveh that came unto Hosea, the son of Beeri, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Achaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam, king of Israel.<sup>1</sup>

The speeches of Hosea are admonitions, threats, and promises. But the dry admonitions of the earlier Biblical books are now changed into impassioned odes, in which the oriental imagination displays itself in a thousand picturesque and lyrical inventions. The cold moralists of earlier times become great inspired figures who, in the name of the national god, speak the language that befits his terrible anger, or his terrible love. The earlier Biblical writers had drawn from the events of their national history, and from their ancient legends, some teaching for the use of their contemporaries; in order to express this teaching better they had mingled with the events and the legends, as spokesmen, certain men of god, uttering a few words dictated to them by Jahveh and then withdrawing into obscurity. Of these vague silhouettes of men of god the present generation now made the tribunes, the orators, and the national poets who were about to become the prophets.

It was the great creation of Jewish literature. In this way the men of the popular party took from the very hands of the aristocratic writers the weapon they had fashioned, the literary artifice they had suggested; but they magnified it at once.

<sup>1</sup> *Hosea* i. 1.

The invention succeeded, as a matter of fact. Immediately after Hosea, another writer invented Amos.

Amos is conceived to be a shepherd, a contemporary of Hosea: "an herdsman, son of an herdsman, and a gatherer of wild figs; and Jahveh took him as he followed the flock, and said unto him, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel."<sup>1</sup>

Once more we read: "The words of Amos, who was among the herdmen of Tekoa, and the visions which he saw concerning Israel, in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam, king of Israel."<sup>2</sup>

The prophetic books are not problem-books. They do not relate recent or contemporary events in the form of ancient happenings. The authors of the prophecies, like all the writers of the Bible, wish to give a lesson to their contemporaries; and, like all the writers of the Bible, they refuse to preach in the abstract. Round the lesson that they wish to give they create an impassioned scene with the memories or the legends of their national past.

But if the writers place themselves in the time of an Amos and an Hosea, if the facts in which they frame their discourses are ancient facts, the ideas they express are modern ideas. Their preoccupation is obvious; and, in spite of the lie about their false antiquity, they are so candid and sincere that, in the language which they put into the mouths of the idealised ancient men of god of Ephraim and Judah, we hear the echo of the great events of the Macedonian period.

Lastly, we must not forget that the prophetic books are pseudonymous; that is to say that, though composed in the fourth and third centuries, they pretend to be the works of writers of the eighth, seventh, and sixth centuries.

There is no room to doubt that the author of the discourses of Hosea professed, about the year 332, to

<sup>1</sup> Amos vii. 14-15.

<sup>2</sup> Amos i. 1.

publish the authentic discourses which Hosea had pronounced in the eighth century. The claim that these lost and forgotten discourses were suddenly recovered would hardly astonish an age that was incapable of criticism, when there were at times only one or two copies of a book in existence.

The Jewish writers always proceeded in this way. The Bible is a collection of books which were not written by the authors to whom they are ascribed. A new work needed the authority of an older work; the work of a contemporary had to borrow the authority of some venerable name. The Mosaic *moshlim* had acted in this way, and the psalmists and writers of apocalypses would do the same. Was it not necessary to legitimise and sanctify the lesson to be given to the people?

The prophets are, as we said, fictitious characters invented by the Jewish writers to figure in the history of their country. The prophetic books are literary compositions which their authors put forward as the works of these characters. They are imaginative works published as works that have reality; books of sermons which are presented as genuine.

At Athens, among peoples educated in the school of the Hellenic intelligence, the creation of the beautiful is a sufficient aim for the historian, the poet, and the philosopher. The man of Jerusalem, on the contrary, writes and speaks only with a strictly utilitarian object. Glory, the supreme reward at Athens, is not found at Jerusalem. The books of the Bible are anonymous, or, rather, pseudonymous. In order to give greater authority to their words, the authors of the prophecies sacrifice their personality. They sign their works with some ancient name, and say:—

Thus spake Hosea.....Thus spake Amos.....Thus  
spake Jeremiah.....

§ 3. *Hosea and Amos.*

After Alexander, as in the days of the Persian emperors, the government of Jerusalem remained in the hands of the leaders of the old clerical aristocracy. But the heads of the old aristocracy which rules Judæa under the Macedonian suzerainty are intoxicated with the charm and joy of Hellenic ways; these grandchildren of the sombre companions of Esdras, rich, obeyed, and feared by the people, have become prosperous and luxurious pachas. Hellenism, which triumphs with the Macedonian armies, triumphs also in the hearts of the Jewish aristocrats, and overthrows traditions no less than territories. At this time Onias I. is high-priest at Jerusalem; in other words, he is viceroy of Judæa. As powerless to resist the moral invasion of Hellenism as the invasion of Egyptian or Syrian armies, he lets things have their way. The work of the prophets begins.

We have already described how certain men arose amid the Jerusalem democracy and the old nationalism unaffected by the Hellenic contagion, to bring back to a respect for tradition an aristocracy that was won by the foreign novelties; and how the work of the prophetic books—first Hosea and Amos, then Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah, and their disciples—was a nationalist and democratic reaction against the hellenisation of the sacerdotal caste which ruled the State.

Alexander having entered Palestine in 332, one may admit, in a general way, that Hellenism had begun to penetrate Judæa about the year 350, and the year 332 probably indicates the period when the prophetic literature may have begun at Jerusalem. We must assign to the last third of the fourth century, 332 to 300, and the early years of the third century, the prophetic books of Hosea and Amos, then of Jeremiah and his disciples. Ezekiel follows; and the Isaiahs are still later.

The democratic nationalism, and especially the anti-hellenic, anti-aristocratic, and anti-sacerdotal spirit of the prophetic writers, localise them in the period of Alexander and his immediate successors. The historical atmosphere is none the less significant. Let us recall the chief political events of this half-century, beginning a few years before the coming of Alexander, say 350 to 300; we shall see that no date suits the older prophets better. To understand them, it is important to imagine oneself at the close or in the midst of the circumstances of which they speak.

The last years of the Persian monarchy had been occupied in an expedition of Artaxerxes Ochus against Egypt and Phœnicia. While Artaxerxes Ochus was besieging Sidon, the Jews had rebelled; but the rising had been suppressed, Jerusalem taken by the Persian army, and a number of Jews deported to Egypt and Hyrcania.

In 332 Alexander had taken Palestine, and placed there a Macedonian governor. Soon afterwards he had founded the city of Alexandria in Egypt, and some of the Jews, taken forcibly or driven by misery, would settle there later.

After the death of Alexander his generals had divided his empire; but their ambition had drawn them into endless wars. Palestine was for a quarter of a century the object of a struggle between the Macedonian king of Egypt and the Macedonian king of Syria.

Palestine had been given to the king of Syria. In 320 Ptolemy surprises and sacks Jerusalem, and a certain number of Jews are deported to Egypt.

Antigonus soon retakes Palestine. Ptolemy re-enters it in 312; he is again driven out. Jerusalem returns to Syria; but its walls have been rased.

Finally, in 301, Palestine is restored to Egypt. The city of Antioch is founded in Syria at this date, and is partly peopled with Jews.



Incessant crossings of armies on the march, Judæa a battlefield, unending devastation, Jerusalem twice taken by assault and sacked, the Jews twice deported, the country in military occupation, a continuous emigration—that is the picture of Palestine between the year 350 and the year 301, as we find it in history.

In the heart of this stricken country the rivalry of Jerusalem and Samaria has increased. The latter takes the side of Egypt, the other of Syria; a little later, Jerusalem sides with Egypt, Samaria with Syria. Districts are taken from Samaria and given to Judæa; they are again taken from Judæa and restored to Samaria. When Jerusalem is in favour with the conqueror, it demands the punishment of Samaria; Samaria is not more generous when its protector has triumphed. Meantime the ancient Philistine and Edomite populations are stirred, and armed bands spread on all sides, even as far as the walls of Jerusalem.

An intestine war between Jerusalem and Samaria and the hostility of surrounding peoples—that is the internal history of Palestine.

Lastly, beyond the Palestinian region, deportation and emigration have begun to fill Egypt, Syria, and Phœnicia with Jewish colonies. Alexandria, Antioch, Damas, and Tyre are about to experience the misery of the ghetto. Not all the exiles are miserable, though the majority are; and, all round Palestine, a vast field of exile, in which the children of Israel weep for their absent country, is about to be the horizon that will limit the gaze of the men of Jerusalem.

That is the character of the second half of the fourth century. This series of events will not be recalled, even by way of allusion, in the prophetic books, because their authors frame their discourses in an earlier period. Some striking fact may, from time to time, be indicated in the form of a prediction (for instance, the taking of Tyre by Alexander, he being the only man who could

take Tyre); some slight allusion may be made to some great event (such as the disgrace of an unpopular minister). But the misfortunes of this troubled period will be the atmosphere in which the characters of the monodramas play their part.

In every chapter of the prophetic books will be found the sentiment of foreign invasion, the pillage of the country by armies, the profanation of the holy city, and deportation. Parochial quarrels between Jerusalem and Samaria, ending in virtual or open, but always fierce, warfare, will fill the old prophets. The terror of Edomite invasions will hover above them, and maledictions will be showered on Egypt and on Syria. They will return incessantly to the question of "foreign alliances." Must they take the part of Syria against Egypt, of Egypt against Syria, or remain simply the men of Jahveh? And they will never forget their brothers in Egypt and Syria, their exiled brothers, the unhappy victims of deportation or emigration, of whose return they never cease to dream.

Thus the historical world in which the authors of the prophetic books lived breaks through the fiction in which they enfold themselves. Their object is quite plain to us; in the name of the old Jewish traditionalism they hurl threats against Jerusalem for its infidelity to Jahveh—in other words, to its national traditions. Whatever modifications or interpolations were made in the prophetic books down to the time when they became sacred and canonical, the critic cannot fail to penetrate their spirit, if he be free from theological prepossessions.

The first, the author of the prophecies of Hosea, hurls his anathema; and, from the first lines of his fierce diatribe, the fiction of the poet clothes with the most highly-coloured allegories the maledictions with which the old traditionalism would terrify its compatriots.

When Jahveh began to speak by Hosea, Jahveh said to Hosea: Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and

children of whoredoms; for Israel hath committed great whoredom, departing from Jahveh.

So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim: which conceived, and bare him a son.

And Jahveh said unto Hosea, Call his name Jezreel; for yet a little while and I.....will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel.

And Gomer conceived again, and bare a daughter. And Jahveh said unto Hosea, Call her name Lo-ruhamah [that is to say, Not-loved], for I will no more love the house of Israel.

And Gomer weaned her daughter; and she conceived and bare a son.

And Jahveh said unto Hosea, Call his name Lo-ammi [that is to say, Not-my-people]; for ye are not my people, and I will not be your god.<sup>1</sup>

The most terrible threats are then unfolded. In the books of the Bible, however, the threat is always succeeded by a promise. Israel the sinner will be punished; Israel faithful will receive an infinite reward.

And the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered: and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God!

Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land; for great shall be the day of Jezreel.

And ye shall say unto your brethren, Ammi [My-people], and to your sisters Ruhamah [Beloved].<sup>2</sup>

And then the exhortation:—

Raise yourselves, raise yourselves against your mother; for she is not my wife, neither am I her husband! Let her therefore put away her whoredoms out of her sight, and her adulteries from between her breasts:

Lest I strip her naked, and set her as in the day that she was born, and set her like a dry land.....

For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine,

<sup>1</sup> *Hosea* i. 2-9.

<sup>2</sup> *Hosea* i. 10-11, ii. 1.

and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal.

Therefore will I return, and take away my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof, and will recover my wool and my flax given to cover her nakedness.....

I will cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts.

And I will destroy her vines and her fig trees.....and I will make them a forest, and the beasts of the field shall eat them.

And I shall punish her because of the incense which she burned to the Baals, because of the earrings and jewels, and because she hath forgotten me, saith Jahveh.

Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak to her heart.

And I will give her vineyards, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope; and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt.

And it shall be at that day, saith Jahveh, that thou shalt call me, My husband; and I shall take from her mouth the names of the Baals.....

And I will betroth thee unto me for ever.....<sup>1</sup>

The prophets know nothing but threats and promises. But it is to the higher clergy of Jerusalem that the threats are addressed.

Hear ye this, O priests: and hearken, ye house of Israel; and give ye ear, O house of the king: for judgment is toward you.<sup>2</sup>

Hostility to the priests who rule Jerusalem breaks out in the famous and little-understood passage of the prophecies of Hosea:—

I desire love; that is to say, love of the god—that is to say, patriotism; I desire patriotism, and not sacrifices. I desire respect for the god; that is to say, respect for the national institutions, respect for the traditions; I desire respect for the traditions rather than burnt offerings.<sup>3</sup>

The invectives grow, in strength and number, against

<sup>1</sup> *Hosea* ii. 2-19.

<sup>2</sup> *Hosea* v. 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Hosea* vi. 6.

the aristocracy of Jerusalem. Nothing of the kind had as yet appeared in Jewish literature, neither in the Mosaic books, nor in *Judges*, nor in *Kings*. A new soul has arisen among the people. Henceforward, through the whole of Jewish history, we shall follow this antagonism between the popular party and the aristocracy. Its appearance begins with the prophetic books; we are in the period when Hellenism enters Jerusalem.

Amos, the successor of Hosea, enumerates in his turn the crimes for which Jewish traditionalism demands justice of Jahveh.

Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria.....

That lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall.

That chant to the sound of the viol.....

That drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments, and are not grieved for the affliction of Israel.

Therefore now shall they go captive with the first that go captive, and their cries of joy shall cease.<sup>1</sup>

The author of the prophecies of Amos is not less furious than the author of the prophecies of Hosea against the powerful and wealthy—that is to say, against the priests who govern Jerusalem:—

I hate, I despise your feast days, saith Jahveh, and I will not smell your perfumes in your solemn assemblies.

Though ye offer me burnt offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts.

Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs, and let me hear no more the melody of thy viols.<sup>2</sup>

Men had arisen among the people of Jerusalem who understood the new danger, the great danger that threatened the country. The sombre nationalism of Esdras and his successors had concentrated all the strength of the little State round the name of Jahveh,

<sup>1</sup> *Amos* vi. 1 and 4-7.

<sup>2</sup> *Amos* v. 21-23.

the national god; it had made foreign idolatry the supreme danger. Now Hellenism was a new danger, as the leaders were forgetting the old Judaic traditions, and were turning to Hellenic novelties.

The pleasantness of the new ways, the easy life and festivities, the beautifully decked women and spacious houses, the wealth that affords luxury, and the luxury that makes the soul soft—all this is called, in the fierce language of the prophets, apostasy, fornication, adultery, treason, the forsaking of Jahveh, the worship of strange gods, the installation of the abominations of anti-national cults at Jerusalem, the revival of ancient idols, the stealing of the heart of Israel from Jahveh by Baal, Astarte, Camos, and Milkom.

In resuming the war upon Baal, Astarte, Camos, and Milkom the prophets will, in the ancient fashion of Jewish literature, give their contemporaries a glowing lesson for the present in the guise of an ancient history.

What had the Jews of the end of the fourth century to fear from Baal, Astarte, Camos, and Milkom? Baal and Astarte now mean the Hellenic seduction. Apostasy and treachery are forgetfulness of the ancient Deuteronomic discipline. Prostitution is the abandonment of the old national traditions. Twenty-two centuries before our time we find the men who are indulgent towards foreign ideas and ways declared by their enemies to be "traitors" and "men of no country." It is an exaggeration, assuredly; but this corrupt aristocracy brought Judaism into danger of death. The threats, the fury—nowhere else can one find invective comparable to that we shall presently meet in Jeremiah—the storms of the Jewish democrats are intelligible, if we suppose that they are denouncing the terrible danger of an aristocracy that is forgetting its traditions, losing its discipline, and denationalising itself. In face of this invading Hellenism the Jewish soul found itself at the most formidable turn in its history, and brought forth its decisive work.



## CHAPTER II.

### JEREMIAH

THE history of Jewish literature is, as we said, the history of Judaism itself. Having once formulated itself in the Mosaic books, the vast movement of ideas, which Judaism was, became fixed in the works of certain anonymous writers—writers of genius—the authors of the prophecies which bear the names of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Isaiah. To analyse these works, to understand their object, to penetrate their spirit, and to appreciate their effect, is to write the history of Judaism from the end of the fourth, and during the third, century before the present era.

In order to combat the Hellenic idolatry and ways, the authors of the prophecies of Hosea and Amos had conceived the characters of the prophets Hosea and Amos as men who had lived in the remote period of the ancient kingdoms of Ephraim and Judah, two hundred years before Nabuchodonosor; and they had composed, and put into circulation, certain great lyrical discourses which the prophets were supposed to have pronounced, and which were understood to have been preserved by some extraordinary miracle. Apart, however, from the indication of the kings under whom the alleged prophets were supposed to have lived, and a few other very general indications, they had not made known any of the circumstances in which these discourses were said to have been pronounced. The historical framework remained vague; clear enough in ideas, the discourses of the prophets floated between heaven and earth, as far as the facts were concerned. Were the authors of the prophecies of Hosea and Amos ignorant of the details of the events that had taken place in the ancient kingdoms of Ephraim and

Judah, four centuries before their time? They saw the need only of one thing—the lesson that they wished to convey to their contemporaries; and they omitted to surround their declamations with an historical environment which did not interest them. The writer who composed the chief prophecies of Jeremiah, like every serious writer, at first followed his masters; like every writer of genius, he then passed beyond them. It is impossible to study the whole book of Jeremiah within the limits of the present work. Criticism, indeed, now shows that it is the work of several writers; we shall concern ourselves preferably with the one who created the figure of the terrible *nabi*. Whether or no a man of the name of Jeremiah ever really existed mattered little; just as it mattered little to the romances of the Round Table whether or no there ever was a Merlin the Enchanter. Whether he created or developed his character, the writer, like his predecessors, went back to an earlier period; but, not going so far into the past, he stopped at the period of Nabuchodonosor, and placed his spokesman at that time; and, instead of being satisfied with such vague surroundings as those in which the prophecies of Hosea and Amos are placed, he showed his originality by framing his discourses in the very definite historical environment that was wanting in the earlier works.

The period he had chosen evidently suited him. The period chosen by his predecessors was half forgotten by the Jews of the fourth century; but they had a vivid memory of the last kings of Judah, the invasion of Nabuchodonosor, the lingering and bloody agony of ancient Jerusalem, the destruction of the city, and the deportation to Babylon. They might be indifferent to the remoter misfortunes of Israel; it was impossible to be untouched by the catastrophe that had ruined the earlier Jerusalem and given birth to the actual city. Nabuchodonosor was still, in the imagination of the Jews

of the third century, the scourge of god at whose recollection they shuddered; the exile beside the rivers of Babylon was the symbol of the exiles and emigrations of the end of the fourth century; the burning of the temple was the supreme threat held over the head of Jewish nationalism. The author of the prophecies of Jeremiah, in going back to this fatal period, could not but revive its episodes. The events amid which he placed the words he wished to speak were well known. They were impressed on every side, and the romance inevitably took shape. Jeremiah was not merely an eloquence that thunders, and a lyrism that enthuses, in the clouds; he was a soul that mingles with the events; and the character of the prophet assumed a glowing and terrible life amid the misfortunes of his country. The author of the prophecies of Jeremiah is, like the authors of the prophecies of Amos and Hosea, a poet and an orator; but he created a literary form that one may designate the lyrical romance, if we regard its form, or the political romance, if we regard its substance. And the romance of Jeremiah was so powerfully conceived, and so passionately lived, as to mislead posterity for ages into seeing history in his vivid fancies.

The subject of the romance of Jeremiah is as follows:—

We are understood to be at the close of the seventh century, at Jerusalem; the Jewish people has been unfaithful to Jahveh, its national god; a prophet named Jeremiah announces, in the course of many adventures, that punishment is coming. Meantime Nabuchodonosor, King of Babylon, approaches with his army; Jeremiah recognises in him the instrument of Jahveh, and exhorts the Jews to make no resistance, to accept their chastisement; when the trial is over, he promises that Jahveh will restore his people. In fact, Nabuchodonosor takes and destroys Jerusalem; but the appeased god will raise, on the ruins of the guilty and justly-punished city, the new Jerusalem that will never perish.

The words of Jeremiah, the son of Hilkiah, of the priests that were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin, in the days of Josias, king of Judah, and in the days of Joachim, son of Josias, king of Judah, unto the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah, brother of Joachim, king of Judah, unto the carrying away of Jerusalem captive.<sup>1</sup>

Thus the book opens. Then follows the narrative of the vocation of the prophet:—

The word of Jahveh came unto me, saying :

Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee ; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee ; and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.

Then said I, Ah, Lord Jahveh, behold I cannot speak, for I am a child.

And Jahveh said unto me, Say not, I am a child ; for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak.

Do not be afraid of their faces ; for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith Jahveh.

Then Jahveh put forth his hand, and touched my mouth, and Jahveh said unto me, Behold, I have put my words into thy mouth.

See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant.<sup>2</sup>

The romancer imagines that the country has reached the last stage of perversity. Idolatry reigns at Jerusalem ; Jahveh is forsaken and betrayed ; Jerusalem, the spouse of Jahveh, stains herself with all the Baals ; like a prostitute, she has rejected her faith. Jeremiah then rises, with threats on his lips. Many times before Israel has turned away from its national god. Now the chastisement is at the gate. Like Hosea and Amos, Jeremiah exhorts his fellow-citizens in a series of great lyric discourses. The anger of Jahveh is about to break out ; if Israel return not to Jahveh, Israel will be destroyed.

Jeremiah is not heard ; Israel perseveres in its idolatry ; the voice of Jeremiah grows harsher.

<sup>1</sup> *Jeremiah* i. 1-3.

<sup>2</sup> *Jeremiah* i. 4-10.

And at that time, saith Jahveh, they shall bring out the bones of the kings of Judah, and the bones of his princes, and the bones of the priests, and the bones of the prophets, and the bones of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, out of their graves ;

And they shall spread them before the sun, and the moon, and all the host of heaven, whom they have loved, and whom they have served, and after whom they have walked, and whom they have sought, and whom they have worshipped ; they shall not be gathered, nor be buried ; they shall be for dung upon the face of the earth.

And death shall be chosen rather than life by all the residue of them that remain of this evil family, which remain in all the places whither I have driven them, saith Jahveh of the Hosts.<sup>1</sup>

The threats increase.

I will appoint over ye four families, saith Jahveh, the sword to slay, and the dogs to drag, and the fowls of the heaven to tear, and the vermin of the earth to devour.<sup>2</sup>

Meantime, the symbolic apologues appear. Israel is a linen girdle that Jeremiah is about to bury on the banks of the Euphrates, and to find rotten, because Jahveh has rejected it. Then there are the vessels full of wine, which Jahveh dashes the one against the other : the clay vessel which Jeremiah is going to break, in the midst of the elders of the people and the elders of the priests, in the valley of Ben-Ennom.....Thus, saith Jahveh, will I break this people and this city.....Gradually Jeremiah becomes a living person, the circumstances are detailed, the surroundings are sketched, the romance unfolds.

Phassur, priest and overseer of the temple, hears Jeremiah predict the destruction of Israel ; he takes him to prison. On the morrow Jeremiah says to him :—

“Jahveh hath not called thy name Phassur, but Magor-missabib [or Fear-on-all-sides].”

He renews his sinister predictions, adding that Phassur himself and all his people will be taken captive.

In Phassur and Jeremiah, the priest and the prophet,

<sup>1</sup> *Jeremiah* viii. 1-3.

<sup>2</sup> *Jeremiah* xv. 3.

the two parties face each other. And presently the author of the book will reproach the rulers with not doing justice, with oppressing the weak, with living in luxury. Woe, he says, to those who do injustice! Woe also to those who build themselves vast houses, with spacious chambers, high windows, and cedar and vermilion ceilings.<sup>1</sup>

The romance continues. King Zedekiah sends two priests to Jeremiah:—

“Inquire of Jahveh for us; for Nabuchodonosor king of Babylon maketh war against us.”

And Jeremiah says to them:—

“Thus shall ye say to Zedekiah: Thus saith Jahveh, god of Israel: I will smite the inhabitants of this city with the pestilence, the sword, and the famine: I will deliver Zedekiah.”<sup>2</sup>

The formidable Nabuchodonosor draws near. Can the humble kingdom of Judah resist him? But the writer does not see in him the enemy who is about to destroy his city and his country; he recognises and salutes the minister of the judgments of Jahveh.

Behold, saith Jahveh, I send against them Nabuchodonosor, king of Babylon, my servant.....and will utterly destroy them, and make them a desolation, and an hissing, and perpetual solitudes.

I will take from them the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones, and the light of the camp.

And this whole land shall be a solitude and a desolation, and this nation shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.<sup>3</sup>

At the end of seventy years Jahveh will turn against Babylon, and will chastise it for its pride in thinking that its strength came from itself, and not from the anger of Jahveh. The anger of Jahveh is not a metaphorical expression. Listen to this manifestation of the god who

<sup>1</sup> *Jeremiah* xxii. 14.

<sup>2</sup> *Jeremiah* xxi. 3-7.

<sup>3</sup> *Jeremiah* xxv. 9-11.



was afterwards to become the Unconditioned of the philosophers:—

Jahveh roars from on high: he roars, he roars upon his habitation: he gives a shout, as they that tread the grapes, against the earth.....

The cry of terror of the shepherds and the affrighted howling of the flocks are heard, because Jahveh doth spoil their pasture.....

He forsaketh his covert, like a young lion; and the land becomes a desolation.<sup>1</sup>

And what about those whom the god has struck?

And the slain of Jahveh shall be from one end of the earth even unto the other; they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried: they shall be dung upon the ground.<sup>2</sup>

Meantime the romancer tells how Jeremiah is about to take his stand in the court of the temple, and continues to predict the ruin of the country; and the priests seize him, saying:—

“Thou shalt die! Why dost thou prophesy against the city?”

The people intervene:—

“This man is not worthy to die; for he hath spoken to us in the name of Jahveh, our god.”

Jeremiah recommences as soon as he is free. He warns the neighbouring countries, Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Sidon, that they will be destroyed if they do not submit to Nabuchodonosor. In order to express it, he sends yokes and bonds to the kings of the five peoples.

And Jeremiah himself, the writer continues, came before the people with a wooden yoke on his shoulders. But there are those who contradict him. Hananiah, another prophet, says:—

“Thus speaketh Jahveh, god of Israel, I break the yoke of the king of Babylon.”

<sup>1</sup> *Jeremiah* xxv. 30-31 and 36-38.

<sup>2</sup> *Jeremiah* xxv. 33.

Taking the yoke from the neck of Jeremiah, Hananiah breaks the bar of it, saying :—

“ Thus saith Jahveh : Even so will I break the yoke of Nabuchodonosor, king of Babylon, from the neck of the nations.”

Jeremiah is silent, and goes his way. But on the morrow he comes again before the people with an iron yoke on his neck.

“ Thus saith Jahveh : Thou hast broken a yoke of wood, but thou hast made instead a yoke of iron. For thus saith Jahveh, god of Israel : I put a yoke of iron on the neck of the nations, that they may serve Nabuchodonosor, king of Babylon, and they shall serve him ; and I give him the beasts of the field also.”

Then, turning to Hananiah :—

“ This year thou shalt die, because thou hast spoken against Jahveh.”

Hananiah, the romancer adds, died in that year.

Jeremiah is the prophet of death. This people, which has given itself to the Baals and Astartes, must be destroyed. The sentence is irrevocable. And he writes to those who have already been deported to Babylon that they may not hope to see their country again.

No anarchist ever preached so violently the destruction of the present social order, that he might build anew the social order of the future. Jeremiah goes through the town crying that it is useless to defend oneself, or to struggle, for the city is forsaken. He summons Nabuchodonosor with the sword, the plague, and famine. Implacably he hands over to him the race of David.

The romancer describes the indignation that breaks out in Jerusalem. The city gathers in crowds. Jeremiah is again put in prison. Meantime the army of the king of Babylon besieges Jerusalem. King Zedekiah goes to see the prophet in the yard of the prison :—

“ Wherefore dost thou prophesy the ruin of the land ? ” he says to him.

“This land will be restored some day. Once again its people will buy houses, fields, and vines.”

And Jeremiah, always joining example with precept, at once buys a field at Anathoth, his native village, with all the ceremony of a burgher who wishes to be quite safe about his investment. The prophecies of restoration and glory now increase. When extermination has atoned for the present crimes, the kingdom of Jerusalem will be able to rise again, Jahveh will bring back the captives and re-establish them, and the nations of the earth will be astonished at the good he will do them.

Thus saith Jahveh: Again there shall be heard in this place, which ye say shall be desolate, without man and without beast.....the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voice of them that shall say, Praise Jahveh of the Hosts, for Jahveh is good, for his mercy endureth for ever..... For I will cause to return the captivity of the land, as at the first, saith Jahveh.

Thus saith Jahveh of the Hosts: Again in this place which is desolate, without man and without beast, and in all the cities thereof, shall be an habitation of shepherds causing their flocks to lie down.

In the cities of the mountains, in the cities of the vale, and in the cities of the south, and in the land of Benjamin, and in the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, shall the flocks pass again under the hands of him that telleth them, saith Jahveh.

Behold, the days come, saith Jahveh, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah.

In those days, and at that time, shall I cause the branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land.

In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely; and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, Jahveh-our-Righteousness.

For thus saith Jahveh: David shall never want a successor to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel;

Neither shall the priests and the Levites want a successor before me to offer burnt offerings, and to kindle meat offerings, and to sacrifice continually.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Jeremiah xxxiii.* 10-18.

But for the moment Jerusalem must be delivered into the hands of Nabuchodonosor, and burned, and its people must go into captivity. While the army of Nabuchodonosor presses the siege of the city, Jeremiah begins afresh his abominable imprecations.

In this romance Jeremiah plays a terrible, odious, and sublime part. Imagine, says Renan, a Frenchman within the walls of besieged Paris during the war of 1870 hailing the minister of heaven in the Emperor William, applauding his victories, and urging him to destroy Paris and France! It is quite intelligible, we reply, if the imprecations are written two hundred and fifty or three hundred years after the events by a polemist who is illustrating his political theories with ancient examples.

In another place he reproaches the aristocracy with "loving strangers."<sup>1</sup> The charge is incomprehensible if it was made in the days of Josiah and Zedekiah, at the time when the army of Nabuchodonosor threatened the city, when Jeremiah is the only friend of the enemies of his country; it is justified if we put it at the end of the fourth century, and if the foreigners loved by the aristocracy are Greeks.

One day Jahveh ordered the prophet to write in a book all the words with which he had inspired him. The king orders the book to be seized, and has it read to him by Judi, his secretary. He was sitting in his winter residence; it was the ninth month; a brazier burned in front of him. And, as Judi read, the king took the leaves of the roll, and cast them in the fire.

It was useless, as Jahveh at once dictated to Jeremiah a new book similar to the first! The orthodox fancy that posterity thus came to possess the precious text of the prophet.

Meantime the romance is full of adventures. The prophet finds it useful to leave a city where he feels no

<sup>1</sup> *Jeremiah* ii. 25.

longer safe, but he is stopped at the gate of Benjamin by the officer of the guard, Irijah, the son of Shelemiah. He is brought before the chief officials, beaten, and put in a subterraneous dungeon, where he remains several days. As a special favour the king orders that he be brought into the yard of the prison, giving him every day a piece of bread out of the bakers' street.

Jeremiah is inexorable:—

“Thus saith Jahveh: This city shall be given into the hand of the king of Babylon, which shall destroy it.”

The chief officials become impatient:—

“Let this man be put to death! For thus he weakeneth the hands of the men of war.”

“Behold,” says the king, “he is in your hands.”

They take Jeremiah, and cast him into a dungeon, the cistern of Malchiah, son of Hammelech. There was no water, but mud only, in the dungeon, in which they placed him. Now this was noticed by an Ethiopian eunuch, named Ebed-melech, who was of the king's house. The king was sitting before the gate of Benjamin. Ebed-melech went to seek him, and said:—

“My lord the king, these men have cast Jeremiah the prophet into the dungeon, to die of hunger.”

And the king charged Ebed-melech, the Ethiopian, to take thirty men and withdraw Jeremiah from the dungeon before he should die. Ebed-melech provided himself with cords and rags of torn stuff, and, letting them down to Jeremiah, said to him:—

“Take these cords; put these rags of torn stuff under thine armholes.”

The holy prophet was saved.

Meantime the siege goes on. Jerusalem is in a desperate condition. Suddenly, on the ninth day of the fourth month of the eleventh year of Zedekiah, a breach is made in the walls of the city, and Jerusalem is taken by assault. Nergal-sharezer, Samgar-nebo, and Sarsechim, the leaders of Nabuchodonosor's army, camp in

the ruins of the gates. The writer narrates the catastrophe, and tells how the Babylonian generals recognised in Jeremiah the prophet of the god who had guided them.....It is easy to see how much history there is in that.....Speaking the language of Deuteronomy, Nebuzaradan, captain of the guards of king Nabuchodonosor, says to Jeremiah:—

“Jahveh had pronounced this evil upon this place. Now Jahveh hath brought it, and done according as he hath said, because ye have sinned against Jahveh.”<sup>1</sup>

The romance closes with the adventures of the Jews who remain in Judæa, and of those who escaped into Egypt. Jeremiah is one of the latter. In Egypt he continues his sinister predictions in the shape of threats and vociferations against the nations of Palestine, against Babylon itself, and, more than ever, against his compatriots.

But at the moment when he relates the destruction of the ancient land of the Jews, the author of the romance of Jeremiah declares that Jahveh, god of the Jews, is triumphant. The ardent nationalism which could not be established while the nation was intact is glorified by the sombre romancer amid the ruins and the dispersal. Like some great fire that destroys the stubble and the wood, but leaves unhurt the granite columns, the ruin of Jerusalem has destroyed the lower elements in Israel, without touching the incombustible and unalterable work that was done by Jahveh. The temple built by Solomon to the gods of Canaan, to Moloch, the Baals, and the Astartes, is in flames; but the melting down of their idols does but leave erect, in bronze, to stand for thousands of years, the name of Jahveh, who alone is renovated.

Jeremiah has prophesied ruin.....

I send upon ye, he said, the sword, the famine, and the pestilence; I will treat ye as vile figs that cannot be

<sup>1</sup> *Jeremiah* xl. 2-3.



eaten, they are so evil; I will deliver ye to be molested by the kingdoms of the earth, to be a curse, and a desolation, and an hissing, and a reproach among the nations whither I have driven ye; because ye have not hearkened to my words, saith Jahveh, which I sent unto ye by my servants the prophets.<sup>1</sup>

But he has also prophesied the restoration:—

I will bring again your captives; I will bring ye from the nations whither I have driven ye, and I will cause ye to return to the places whence I have driven ye.....

The legend is born; it grows and spreads:—

Fear thou not, Jacob, my servant; for, behold, I am thy saviour, and will bring thy seed from the land of their captivity.

And I shall be with thee, to save thee, for I shall then make a full end of the nations whither I have scattered thee. And thou shalt be my people, and I will be thy god.

The whirlwind goeth forth with fury, the fierce anger of Jahveh shall not return, until he hath performed the intents of his heart.....

I love thee with an everlasting love. I will build thee again, O virgin of Israel. Thou shalt again be adorned with thy tabrets, and shalt dance. Thou shalt again plant vines upon the mountains.

And there shall be a day that the peoples shall cry: Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion, unto Jahveh, our god.

For thus saith Jahveh: Sing with gladness for Jacob. Hear the word of Jahveh, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him..... Thus saith Jahveh, god of Israel.<sup>2</sup>

The old idolatrous people of Judah is destroyed; but the Jewish people is about to arise, and Jahveh, after dragging it through all the ignominy of the dispersal, promises it a new Jerusalem.

Jewish history is, for the book of Jeremiah, merely an illustration of a doctrine. There is need to exhort contemporaries to be faithful to the powerful nationalism symbolised by the name of Jahveh. New gods, as

<sup>1</sup> *Jeremiah* xxix. 17-19.

<sup>2</sup> *Jeremiah* xxx., xxxi.

abominable as the Moloch, the Baals, and the Astartes of former times, have appeared; they are called Greek gods; and the forsaking of Jahveh for Moloch, Baal, and Astarte is only a myth representing the Hellenic apostasy. The Jewish people is warned by the example of its fathers, the fearful example of the ruin, and the miraculous example of the restoration. Like his predecessors and followers, the sombre author of the prophecies of Jeremiah gives a lesson for the present in the shape of a history of the past. But the cold dogmatism of the earlier historical books has been replaced by the impassioned romance of a man of genius who, breathing life into the dogma, dramatises the implacable action of the national god, of whom he is the spokesman.

But we must not forget that, for the author of the book of Jeremiah, just as for the authors of the books of Hosea and Amos, the criminals who are forgetting the old traditions and turning to foreign cults are the priest-aristocrats who rule the State, the privileged leaders who have been seduced by the pleasantness of Hellenism. The democratic character of the prophetic writers is clearly shown in the fact that the aristocracy is the party of those who favour the novelties they attack with their threats, and the democracy is the party of the pure who have escaped the contagion; it is seen just as clearly in the fact that the prophetic writers were men of the people rising in opposition to the men of the aristocracy. But there was at the same time a profound necessity for this, though it was an outcome of the circumstances. On three counts the aristocracy had to be denounced by the prophets; first because, about the year 332, it was identifying itself with the anti-traditionalist party, secondly because the prophets did not arise within its ranks, and thirdly because democracy was a logical outcome of the evolution of Judaism.

There was no democracy, in the modern sense of the word, in Greece; there was none at Rome. The

democracies of Greece and Rome are privileged classes below which swarms the vast crowd of all who are not citizens. Democracy was born at Jerusalem.

The terrible fierceness of the Jewish soul could not indeed fail to see the conclusion of its premises. Foreigners are enemies; in face of them the Jews are united in struggle and hatred. A similar hostility, a hatred common to a whole people, creates in that people a bond of love like the savage and fanatical bond that held the Jews together. Implacable enemies of other peoples, they had to be themselves indissolubly united. All were sons of Jahveh, and so all were brothers, and all must be equal before Jahveh. When a glowing patriotism centres about a military leader, a king, or a dynasty, the State falls into a hierarchy below this supreme head, and inspires in all its subjects a duty of love of the master. But in a theocracy, when the name which expresses the nationalism of a people is that of its god, there is an inevitable implication of democratic equality. Below the national god there must be leaders to rule; as long as these rulers are faithful to their duties, the ruled may accept them. But no fault will be forgiven to this aristocracy; the moment it fails, its subjects will remember their rights. Sooner or later it is doomed to perish.

A hierarchic society admits, not indeed the oppression of the weak by the strong, but the supremacy of the strong. A few must be above, and the many must be below; inequality of duties implies inequality of rights. In a theocracy the god alone is master. There is an unrestricted demand for equality. It seems intolerable enough that some shall be feeble and others strong; but the feeble, at least, will not suffer even the appearance of oppression. Hence we get what has been called the victory of Judaism; the orphan, the widow, and the wage-earner will be infinitely protected. But let us not be too sentimental about it; the orphan, the widow, and

the wage-earner were not less protected in pagan Rome than in Jerusalem. Let us have the courage to recognise more nobleness in the strong man who gives than in the weak who asks. It is noble in the strong to protect the weak; but when the weak himself claims to be protected, the claim is just, but has no title to our admiration. Let us reserve our admiration for a Marcus Aurelius, master of the world, who practises lofty virtues; and when we see the ghetto stir itself and murmur against the oppressor, let us grant these people the satisfaction that we may owe them, and pass on.

In earlier days the Mosaic books, and the books of *Judges*, *Samuel*, and *Kings*, had threatened with a divine punishment the crime of idolatry—that is to say, the abandonment of the national traditions. The prophetic books threaten with divine punishment, first the crime of idolatry, then the crime which they call injustice, and which is the oppression of the people by its aristocracy. This novelty should suffice to show commentators that the prophetic books are later than the Mosaic books. From the time of Hosea and Amos, especially from the time of Jeremiah, Judaism, which has been a national fact, becomes at the same time a democratic fact. By the example of a past, which he dramatises, the author of the romance of Jeremiah pursues a twofold aim; he professes to restore the nationalism of the Jews, but he wants to found the democracy of the Jews. Judaism was destined to be the party of the lowly; a day was to come when the Jewish aristocracy, almost entirely Hellenistic, would be excluded from Judaism. The author of the book of Jeremiah, following the authors of the books of Hosea and Amos, brings under a common anathema those who seemed to favour the Hellenic idolatry and reject the cult of the national god, and those who enriched themselves, gave themselves to luxury, oppressed the people, and refused justice to the weak.

I will get me unto the great men, and will speak unto

them; for they have known the way of Jahveh, and the judgment of their god; but these have altogether broken the yoke, and burst the bonds.

.....Thy children have forsaken me, and swear by gods that are no gods. They commit adultery, and assemble themselves by troops in the harlot's house. They are well-fed horses; they run here and there, and every one neighs after his neighbour's wife.<sup>1</sup>

As a cage is full of birds, so are their houses full of deceit; therefore they are become great, and waxen rich.

They are waxen fat, they shine; they judge not the cause of the fatherless; they prosper; the right of the needy do they not judge.<sup>2</sup>

Here is the most characteristic speech of the anti-sacerdotal tribune:—

Thus saith Jahveh of the Hosts, god of Israel: Put your burnt offerings unto your sacrifices.....I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them, in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices.<sup>3</sup>

Here the prophet is actually declaring that Jahveh gave Moses no laws concerning sacrifices and holocausts! Is he referring to the ritual prescriptions of Deuteronomy? No, for Jeremiah is in his whole book faithful both to the spirit and the letter of Deuteronomy. He is referring to the new ritual laws which the priests were then promulgating in the Sacerdotal Code, the appearance of which we may fix by the opposition of Jeremiah.

What does the old democrat demand in place of these ritual laws which the aristocracy is multiplying about the cult?

This thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your god, and ye shall be my people; and walk ye in the way that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you.<sup>4</sup>

Jeremiah is faithful to Deuteronomy and Esdras; he is faithful to the formula of Hosea:—

“I desire love; that is to say, love of the god—that is

<sup>1</sup> *Jeremiah* v. 5-8.

<sup>3</sup> *Jeremiah* vii. 21-22.

<sup>2</sup> *Jeremiah* v. 27-28.

<sup>4</sup> *Jeremiah* vii. 23.

to say, patriotism ; I desire patriotism, and not sacrifices. I desire respect for the god ; that is to say, respect for the national institutions, respect for the traditions ; I desire respect for the traditions rather than burnt offerings.”<sup>1</sup>

In the book of Jeremiah the Jewish soul had found expression. Just as violent, Deuteronomy had formerly continued the work of the first Mosaic legislators ; the new work, outlined in the books of Hosea and Amos, was now continued. In face of a decadent aristocracy, denationalised by Hellenism, the rigorist party, at once traditionalist and democratic, was taking over the inheritance of Judaism. The book of Jeremiah was born of it, and constituted it.

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 128.



## CHAPTER III.

### EZEKIEL

#### § 1. *The First Book of Ezekiel.*

BESIDE the writers of genius who imagined Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Isaiah, Jewish history shows us, as disciples repeating the lessons of the masters, the "minor prophets" of Judaism—Michah, Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Joel, etc. We will consider only the original works, and will now deal with the strange and poignant romance entitled the prophecy of Ezekiel.

In the days when this work was written Judæa was in turn the prey of the Seleucids of Syria and the Ptolemies of Egypt; but the second of the great prophetic writers refuses, like the other Jewish writers, to speak in the present, and seeks in the past the hero and the framework of his romance. He chooses the same period as the author of the romance of Jeremiah. While, however, the latter had placed the action in Jerusalem, the author of the romance of Ezekiel places it in Babylonia.

As we know, in 599, eleven years before he destroyed Jerusalem and the kingdom of Judah, Nabuchodonosor had taken Jerusalem for the first time, but was content to impose severe conditions on it and to deport some thousands of its inhabitants to Babylonia. The romance of Ezekiel opens near the river Chobar, not far from Babylon, in the midst of these first victims of deportation. The eleven years will soon be over; in Palestine the king of Judah has sought to throw off the yoke of Nabuchodonosor; the latter has returned with his formidable army; Jerusalem is besieged; the day of its capture and destruction is at hand.

Meantime the deported Israelites drag out their

miserable lives in the land of exile, bemoaning their country and questioning in their hearts the god who has smitten them. Among them is a prophet, Ezekiel, son of Buzi, priest of Jahveh. And suddenly, on the fifth day of the fourth month, the hand of Jahveh is on him.

I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud and a fire intermingled, and a brightness was about it; and out of the midst of the fire came the likeness of glowing brass.

And out of the midst thereof appeared four animals. And this was their appearance: they had the likeness of a man.

And every one had four faces, and every one had four wings.

And their feet were straight; and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot, and they sparkled like burnished brass.

And they had the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides; and they four had their faces and their wings.

Their wings were joined one to another; they turned not when they went; they went every one straight forward.

As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side; and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle.

Thus were their faces; and their wings were stretched upward; two wings of every one were joined to those of another, and two covered their bodies.

And they went every one straight forward; whither the spirit was to go, they went; and they turned not when they went.

As for the likeness of these animals, their appearance was like coals of fire, burning like torches; and this fire went up and down among the animals; it gave forth a bright light, and out of it went forth lightning.

And the animals ran and returned, as the appearance of a flash of lightning.....

Above the heads of the animals there was, as it were, a firmament of terrible crystals, stretched forth over their heads above.

And under the firmament were their wings straight, the one toward the other.....

And I heard the noise of their wings, when they went, like the noise of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty, a noise of great tumult as the noise of a camp.

When they stood, they let down their wings; and there was a voice from the firmament that was above their heads, when they stood, and let down their wings.

And above the firmament that was above their heads there was the likeness of a sapphire stone, in the form of a throne; and upon the likeness of the throne appeared the likeness of a man sitting on it, above.

And I saw as the appearance of glowing brass, as the appearance of fire, round about, serving as his home, from his loins upward, and from his loins downward; I saw, as it were, the appearance of fire with, all around, a bright light.<sup>1</sup>

It is Jahveh himself, mounted on his chariot of Kerubim. At a later date the Christian Church will, for the men of the West reared in the Hellenic tradition, turn these terrible Kerubim into our charming cherubs, chubby and curly-haired, with pretty white wings. But the Kerubim, offspring of Babylon, brought to Jerusalem with the traditions of ancient Chaldæa, were monsters with the heads of animals, the bodies of bulls, two pairs of wings, spitting fire, as we see them in the Babylonian ruins. Henceforward the Kerubim will play their part in the manifestations of Jahveh.

Jahveh speaks to Ezekiel:—

“Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to these nations that have rebelled against me; they and their fathers have rebelled against me, even unto this day. I do send thee unto these impudent and stiff-hearted children, and thou shalt say unto them: Thus saith the lord Jahveh.”<sup>2</sup>

Ezekiel rises; he takes a brick, and on it he represents Jerusalem besieged, and, round about it, the trenches, terraces, and camps, and the rams round the walls; and he takes an iron stove, and puts it, like an iron wall, between him and the city; for at this moment, says the

<sup>1</sup> *Ezekiel* i.

*Ezekiel* ii. 3-4.

writer, Jerusalem is besieged by Nabuchodonosor. Then he lies down on the left side, and remains lying for three hundred and ninety days, bearing the iniquity of Ephraim. Then he turns to the right side, and remains lying thus for forty days, bearing the iniquity of Judah. With corn, barley, beans, and lentils he has prepared as many loaves as he must remain days lying down, and has had them baked in dung. So will the children of Israel eat a defiled bread. As a favour, Ezekiel obtains permission of his god to bake his bread in cow's dung instead of in human excrements. And he prophesies against the guilty city.

We are now in the temple of Jahveh, dishonoured by all kinds of idolatries and prostitutions. Opposite the holy of holies is the idol of jealousy; here are all sorts of reptiles and abominable beasts, worshipped by seventy sheiks, with censers in their hands; there are women sitting and weeping over Adonis; there, again, are twenty-five young men throwing kisses to the sun.....Does that not cry for vengeance?

Meantime the Kerubim unfold their wings, and bear the prophet from chapter to chapter.

Now the hero prepares his travelling garments, and in the evening, in the midst of his silent compatriots, he sets out as exiles do. He has not gone out of his house by the door; he has, with his own hand, made a breach in the wall. Under the eyes of his compatriots he places on his shoulder the mantle of a traveller, and departs, covering his face, so that it shall be a sign to the house of Israel. And he says:—

I am your sign; like as I have done ye shall do. Ye shall go into captivity.

Your princes, in the midst of you, shall put their mantles on their shoulders, and shall go forth in the twilight; the wall will be dug through to let them pass out; they shall cover their faces, that they see not the ground.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ezekiel* xii. 11-12.

Later the lord addresses the guilty spouse, her whom he has distinguished and clothed and adorned, and who has prostituted herself to strangers.

In another place there are two women, Aholah and Aholibah—that is to say, Samaria and Jerusalem—whom the master had chosen. Both have been unfaithful; they have suffered their bosoms to be touched; they have uncovered their bellies; they have called those who passed by to their beds. Loaded with ornaments, their eyes painted, sitting on magnificent beds, with bracelets on their arms and crowns on their heads, near a table covered with incense and oil, they have, with gesture and voice, called upon the blue-cloaked Assyrians, the pachas and young horsemen of Assyria, the red-robed Chaldæans, with mitres of flowing colours. They have smiled when the Egyptians have stroked their breasts in memory of their virginity. But they will be despoiled of their ornaments, they will have their bosoms torn, they will be left naked on the ground, the nose and ears cut off.

Meantime the threats are carried out. One day a fugitive comes, who has escaped from Jerusalem, and he says:—

“The city has been taken.”

Then Jahveh speaks to Ezekiel:—

O thou, son of man, prophesy unto the mountains of Israel, and say: Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of Jahveh.....

Because they have made you desolate, and swallowed you up on every side, and ye became a prey among the nations;

Thus saith the lord Jahveh to the mountains and to the hills, to the rivers and to the valleys, to the desolate ruins and to the cities that are forsaken, which became a prey and a derision;

Thus saith the lord Jahveh: I will speak, in the fire of my jealousy, against the residue of the nations, which have appointed my land into their possession, to cast it out for a prey.

Thus saith the lord Jahveh: I lift up my hand; the nations that are about you, they shall bear their shame.

But ye, O mountains of Israel, ye shall shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to my people.

For, behold, I will turn unto you, and ye shall be tilled and sown;

And I will multiply upon you man and beast; and they shall increase and bring fruit; and I will do better unto you than at your beginnings, and ye shall know that I am Jahveh.<sup>1</sup>

Ezekiel is borne through space. He walks in the midst of a valley, which is full of bones, numbers of bones, very dry bones.

And Jahveh saith: Prophecy unto these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of Jahveh.

Thus saith the lord Jahveh unto these bones: Behold, I will cause spirit to enter into you, and ye shall live.

And I will lay sinews upon you, and bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put spirit in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am Jahveh.

So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone.

And when I beheld, lo, the sinews were on them, and the flesh grew, and the skin covered them; but there was no spirit in them.

And he said unto me, Prophecy unto the spirit, prophecy, son of man, and say to the spirit: Thus saith the lord Jahveh: Come from the four winds, O spirit, and breathe upon these slain that they may live.

So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the spirit came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.

Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel; behold, they say, Our bones are dried; our hope is lost; we are undone.

Therefore prophecy, and say unto them, Thus saith the lord Jahveh: Behold, I open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, O my people, and bring you into the land of Israel.

And ye shall know that I am Jahveh, when I have opened your graves, and brought you up out of your graves, O my people.

And I shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live;

<sup>1</sup> *Ezekiel xxxvi. 1-11.*



and I shall place you in your own land, and ye shall know that it is I, Jahveh, who hath spoken it and performed it, saith Jahveh.<sup>1</sup>

The earlier prophets promised Israel a happy future; they said that Jahveh himself would accomplish the work of liberation. Ezekiel announces that the day of Jahveh will come only after frightful catastrophes, in the midst of the direst anguish. The Jewish people must not hope to enter peacefully, under a serene sky, into its era of happiness. To fulfil the promise there must first be frightful days; no doubt in order that Israel may atone for its former crimes, but also in order that it may the better realise the price of the favours which Jahveh reserves for it.

And in the depths of the north, among horsemen with helmet and shield, all terribly clothed, all wielding the sword, a multitude gathered to make plunder, to ruin the nations and destroy the flocks, he evokes Gog, king of Magog, prince of Rosch, Meshech, and Tubal.

Then, when the desolation is at its height, Jahveh will manifest himself in an upheaval of the mountains, a fall of the rocks, a rending of the walls, with pestilence and blood, and a rain of fire and sulphur and stones falling like hail; he will appear on his chariot drawn by the four Kerubim; he will see that he is recognised by the nations; and they will know that it is Jahveh.

§ 2. *The Second Book of Ezekiel: the Legends of Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha.*

*Success and Check of the Prophetic Party.*

Our Bibles do not distinguish the two books of Ezekiel; but the testimony of the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus shows<sup>2</sup> that the two parts, so different from each other, of the narrative of Ezekiel (chs. i.—xxxix.

<sup>1</sup> *Ezekiel* xxxvii.

<sup>2</sup> *Jewish Antiquities*, x. 6.

and chs. xl.-xlviii.) were originally separate. The second book of Ezekiel is a piece of tentative legislation which the prophetic party opposed to the Mosaic legislation.

About the same time certain writers of the same group created or developed the legends of Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha, which were afterwards incorporated in the books of *Samuel* and *Kings*. Samuel was a character of the older historical books; Elijah and Elisha seem, on the contrary, to have been almost invented by the prophetic school, and their adventures wholly fictitious. The legends of Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha were put forward by the prophetic party in opposition to the Mosaic legends, just as the legislation of Ezekiel was in opposition to the Mosaic legislation.

The prophetic movement had issued from the terrible upheavals which preceded and followed the arrival of Alexander the Great in 332. After the battle of Ipsus, the successors of Alexander having definitively divided his empire between them, an era of less frightful trouble, if not an entirely peaceful era, had set in. This period of semi-tranquillity corresponds, in Jewish history, to the pontificate of Simeon I., called Simeon the Just, probably 300-270. Ptolemy is king of Egypt; Seleucus king of Syria. The wars between Egypt and Syria are over for a time. Jerusalem is still subject, but there is an end of the passing of armies, the battles, the taking by storm, the massacres, and the deportations.

We must not, however, take literally the statements of the Siracid and of the Talmud about the happiness of Judæa under Simeon the Just. It was a comparative happiness, in view of the frightful calamities of the preceding and following periods. Let us conceive the pontificate of Simeon the Just as a calm amid the storms which laid Judæa desolate from the year 350 to the Christian era; and let us understand that not one of the causes of the misery and ignominy that beset the unhappy country had been removed. Yet these years of

calm enabled the sacerdotal aristocracy, on the one hand, to complete the work of the Mosaic legislation,<sup>1</sup> and the prophetic party, on the other hand, to make its first effort to seize the government.

The books of Amos, Hosea, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the minor prophets had been very successful with the population of Jerusalem. They had succeeded in every case in preventing the Hellenisation of Judæa. The prophetic writers had proved that to Hellenise Judæa would be to denationalise it; they had convicted the Hellenising priests, before the tribunal of public opinion, of forfeiture; they had restored the ancient traditions to honour. Moreover, though Hellenism had made terrible inroads into the nobility of Jerusalem for a third of a century, it could not have absorbed it; though a large number of these priest-levites, to whom had fallen all the power and all the wealth of Jerusalem, had abandoned themselves to the charm of Hellenic novelties, others must assuredly have protested, in conjunction with the democrats, against the forsaking of ancient customs. The latter could only reproach an Amos, a Hosea, or a Jeremiah, with exaggeration. Supported by the people of Jerusalem, badly fought by the more Hellenising aristocrats, and hardly disapproved by the others, the prophetic writers had, at least to some extent, succeeded in imposing their ideas.

The prophetic writers and the crowd of common folk who had followed them now formed an opposition party against the ruling aristocracy. Would the ambition of this turbulent minority be satisfied with a first victory? They professed to reform the government and the Church of Jerusalem; but what is the reform of a government or a Church if not the substitution of a better government and a different Church?

Read over again the invectives of the prophetic writers against the sacerdotal aristocracy, their threats and their

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 95.

maledictions. What did they want? The fall of the priest-aristocrats. It is but a step from that to wish to take their place or claim to succeed them, and this step was taken with the second book of Ezekiel and the legends of Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha.

There was, however, no open rupture.

It is clear that the prophetic party at Jerusalem was a kind of Jewish protestantism. Religiously, they demanded a return to the ancient traditions and ways, the purity of the primitive dogmas, and the severity of the ancient virtues. Politically, they wanted to replace an ancient aristocratic government by a new democratic government. In ancient Judæa, as in certain German towns in the sixteenth century, to govern religiously was to govern politically; and the struggle of Jewish prophetism with the Mosaic Levitism, or of Protestantism with the Roman Church, is the struggle of a democratic theocracy to take the place of an aristocratic theocracy.

But, while the men for whom the second book of Ezekiel and the legends of Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha were composed are reformers, they were not rebels, at least in the third century. Perhaps they had not among them a man of decision who could, like Luther, break openly with the established authority; perhaps they would not consent to such a rupture. They merely betray at times a significant violence against the hostile party.<sup>1</sup> They flatter themselves that they rely on persuasion for the acceptance of their novelties; they refuse to employ insurrectionary means; they give a foretaste of the art of despoiling with a blessing.

On the other hand, they do not reform for the pleasure of reforming. All that, in the Mosaic legislation and customs, seems to them to befit the new priesthood which they desire to institute, is accepted by them. They preserve as much, and alter as little, as possible of the

<sup>1</sup> See, for instance, *Ezekiel* xliv. 10-15.

Levitical prescriptions; their innovations are confined to essential things. Hence there are many resemblances in detail between the Mosaic legislation and that of Ezekiel, the customs consecrated by the books of Moses and those that the legends of Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha propose to establish.

Avowing themselves to be above all traditionalists, the men of the prophetic party were careful to avoid revolutionary airs. They purported merely to establish new institutions by the side of the old; and there again, as we shall see, they went too far. In reality they tended toward a change of personalities rather than a change of institutions.

The sanctuary shall be for the priests, sons of Zadok, which have kept my charge, which went not astray when the children of Israel went astray, as the Levites went astray.<sup>1</sup>

The procedure of the authors of Ezekiel, Elijah, and Elisha is the unvarying procedure of Jewish literature. They know that the priesthood which governs at Jerusalem comes from Moses, and is of divine institution; prophetism is careful not to throw doubt on those truths. But they teach and explain that, beside this government of Mosaic origin and divine institution, there is another government, another priesthood, likewise of divine institution, but of prophetic origin, of which Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha were the protagonists. Against Aaron, the first Mosaic high-priest, they put Zadok, high-priest of King Solomon. The priests of the levitic aristocracy were called Aaronids; an attempt will be made to give the name of Zadocids to the priests of the prophetic party. The books of Moses had been written to justify and legitimise the official priesthood, among other institutions; in order to create a new prophetic priesthood, they fabricate ancient books from which it appears that Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha were prophets invested with the high sacerdotal functions,

<sup>1</sup> *Ezekiel* xlviii. 11.

or that Jahveh himself dictated to his prophet Ezekiel, three hundred years before, the legislation with which they flatter themselves they will quietly overthrow the old Levitic government. In order to attain its objects, the prophetic party, faithful to the delinquencies of Judaism, uses the customary stratagem of the pseudo-ancient books, and appeals to the will of the national god, which is said to have been made known some centuries before in prophecies and legends which have been fortunately recovered.

We will not linger over the legends of Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha. They relate that Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha were all three prophets, but that all three exercised the priesthood—which is in contradiction to the Levitic institution. What is worse, all three sacrificed outside of Jerusalem, or of the sanctuary in which the ark of Jahveh was kept—a thing illicit in Samuel's case, but criminal in the case of Elijah and Elisha, according to the express terms of the Mosaic law, because both are supposed to be later than Solomon and the building of the temple. We may add that most of the adventures of the three prophets are "duplicates" of the adventures of Moses or Mosaic characters; for instance, Elijah going up to Jahveh on Horeb.<sup>1</sup> Finally, and decisively, Samuel is represented as taking the place of the contemporary high-priest, who has become unworthy; as to Elijah and Elisha, they ignore the Levitic priesthood.

We will make a summary analysis of the legislation proposed by the second book of Ezekiel.

The book opens with a plan of rebuilding the temple. The question was then being discussed, and the plan of Ezekiel agreed so well with the feeling of his contemporaries that the high-priest Simeon the Just caused the temple to be restored at that time, from the foundations to the sanctuary, including the enclosing walls.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 1 *Kings* xix. 6-18.

<sup>2</sup> See *Ecclesiasticus* 1, 1-3.



One day, it seems (the author of the second book of Ezekiel says which day: the second of the first month of the twenty-fifth year), the prophet is transported in ecstasy, in the land of Israel, to the top of the holy mountain. Here he sees a man whose appearance was like to brass; it is not clear if this man is Jahveh himself or an angel of Jahveh. Angel or god, this man held in his hand a line of flax and a measuring reed. He says to Ezekiel:—

Son of man, behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears, and set thine heart upon all that I shall show thee; and declare all that thou seest to the house of Israel.<sup>1</sup>

Then the divine apparition takes, with its cord and reed, all the measurements of a building, which is the ideal temple.....And Ezekiel notes carefully:—

The threshold, one reed.....

The first chamber, one reed.....

The vestibule, eight cubits.....

The posts of the vestibule, two cubits.....

There are six pages of it in our Hebrew Bible, for the writer enters into the minutest details. The attempt has been made to reconstruct the plan of this edifice with its minute measurements. Unfortunately, certain essential points are wanting; there are evident errors in the text, and some contradictions. The plan cannot be set up without many hypotheses.

When scholars believed in the authenticity of the book of Ezekiel, and placed it in the period of the Deportation, the description was sometimes referred to the temple of Solomon, which had just been destroyed, and sometimes to the temple which Zorobabel was about to build. We do not know anything of the temple of Solomon. We suspect what the temple of Zorobabel was like: a humble building, made of fragments, with no size or harmony—something like Our Lady of Loretto in point of size,

<sup>1</sup> *Ezekiel* xl. 4.

Renan says. The celebrated temple in which Jesus of Nazareth preached was the third temple, the masterpiece of Herod the Great. A simple plan of reconstruction, the temple described by Ezekiel was an idealisation of the modest sanctuary of Zorobabel, which seemed inadequate to all in the third century. Without departing from its arrangement and general proportions, the writer pointed out to his contemporaries what improvements were advisable, and what should be done to bring the building up to the height of the required splendour. But, acting on the old Judaic method, he thought it best to attribute his plans and counsels to Jahveh himself, speaking through the ancient prophet Ezekiel.

When the temple is described, with its sanctuary, vestibules, courts, external galleries, and priests' lodgings, Ezekiel expounds the rites of the altar and the way of offering holocausts and shedding blood on it. He then describes the new organisation of the clergy, and he suddenly launches anathema on the old Mosaic clergy:—

Let it suffice you of all your abominations, in that ye have brought into my sanctuary strangers, uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in my sanctuary, to pollute it, when ye offer my bread, the fat and the blood, and they have broken my covenant because of all your abominations.<sup>1</sup>

The old Mosaic clergy, which has been led into foreign abominations—that is to say, Hellenism—is condemned. It has been faithless to Jahveh. It must be replaced by a new clergy issuing from the prophetic party. So, in the legends of Samuel, the prophet takes the place of the Levitic high-priest. We have quoted the characteristic phrase:—

The sanctuaries shall be for the priests, sons of Zadok, who went not astray, as the Levites went astray.

For the priests who are sons of Aaron will be substituted the priests who are sons of Zadok. In reality,

<sup>1</sup> *Ezekiel* xliv. 7.

the Zadocids are the new sacerdotal corps which the prophetic party wants to substitute for the old Levitic corps in the administration of the temple and the government of the State; or, rather, the parts are reversed. The former aristocrats will become the servants of the new masters. For the first time we find in Judaism the revolutionary formula, "The first shall be last."<sup>1</sup>

There follows a complete legislation of the cult, a full ritual, differing little from the Mosaic code. We know that the Jews do not innovate without some use. Then there is a political legislation, in which we find again the determination to establish a government proceeding from prophetism.

A prince is set at the head of the hierarchy. The Hebrew text does not say either a high-priest or a king; *nasi* means originally the head of a tribe. We must see to what this title corresponds.

The *nasi* of Ezekiel could, without having the title, exercise the functions of a king; democracies often lean to Cæsarism, out of fear of aristocracies; the Jewish books are full of the expectation of a monarch descending from David; in fine, some have thought of the Machabees, and it has been suggested that the legislative part of the book of Ezekiel might belong to the second century. But the *nasi* of Ezekiel has none of the characters of a king or a tyrant.

It has also been asked if the institution of the *nasi* did not correspond to a movement of ideas that took place, from the third century, in favour of a military theocracy, with a kind of head of the executive power depending on a legislative priesthood. The Persian peace had formerly allowed them to form a sacerdotal government without military organisation; but since the coming of Alexander the state of war had been almost permanent round Jerusalem. Below the priests who governed the State

<sup>1</sup> See *Ezekiel* xliv. 10-15.

there might, these writers conclude, have seemed to be a need for an executive power, a minister of war, a general commander of the troops which were charged to guard the temple.

It is a gratuitous hypothesis, with nothing to confirm it. Nothing in the text of Ezekiel allows us to liken the *nasi* to an executive of any kind. Indeed, the military spirit was never less in any people than it was among the Jews; and if there was one party in which the military spirit was wanting, it was the prophetic party. The old aristocracy may have developed a military spirit with its Hellenism; the prophetic writers, on the contrary, want no other guardian of the temple than Jahveh. The psalms and apocalypses will push to paroxysmal extremes this exclusive abandonment of oneself in the hands of the deity. A military institution seems to be incompatible with the prophetic tradition.

The Biblical scholars who have studied the question of the *nasi* of Ezekiel should have been edified by the extraordinary absence of the high-priest, the *cohen hagadol*, from this legislation. In reality, the prince, in the second book of Ezekiel, is the new title proposed by the prophetic party for the new high-priests. The former high-priests, of the aristocratic and Hellenising party—the Aaronid high-priests—were *cohen hagadol*; the new high-priests, of the democratic party, the Zadocids, must be *nasi*. A new dynasty must have a new name. Though the *cohen hagadol* is not mentioned in the legislation of Ezekiel, the functions attributed to the *nasi* are his. At the head of the reformed sacerdotal corps the author of the book of Ezekiel puts a reformed high-priest, a religious as well as political character.

The remainder of the plan presents no difficulty. The sacerdotal body will govern and render justice by the side of the prince.

Below them Israel, its theoretical frontiers restored,

mistress of Galilee and Samaria, will enjoy the old land of Canaan promised formerly to the patriarchs.

And in the end we have the most chimerical utopia that has ever been imagined. The land of Palestine is divided among the twelve ideal tribes by means of straight lines drawn from east to west, forming twelve geometrical and almost equal portions, with Jerusalem in the centre, a sort of State of the church, the privileged portion of the new priests. And the book Ezekiel closes with these words :—

And the name of the city from that day shall be :—  
Jahveh-Shamma, Jahveh-Is-Here.<sup>1</sup>

The enterprise of the prophetic party failed.

Practical impossibilities, such as that of realising the extravagant division of the land of Canaan into geometrical portions among tribes that existed only in theory, would not have been an obstacle to the success of the legislation of Ezekiel ; the Jewish spirit always liked to combine utopia with reality. The literary poorness of Ezekiel's project was a graver obstacle.

Recall the legendary fables, the profound and remote atmosphere, of the Mosaic books. There is nothing of the kind in the second book of Ezekiel. The first book of Ezekiel, the lyric book, was full of sublimity and beauty, but the second was too earthy, too devoid of inspiration, too bare of fiction, to captivate oriental souls. The Mosaic law had been the work of several generations of national poets, who were at the same time resolute politicians. The law of Ezekiel was the work of a party-man, who lacked imagination.

Even the very traditionalism that had made the fortune of the prophetic party was in the way of its ambition. Its adherents were bound to present themselves as the authentic continuers of the ancient institutions. How, then, could they impose new ones? How

<sup>1</sup> *Ezekiel* xlvi. 35.

could they reconcile with the respect due to the Mosaic legends some of the counter-legends of Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha?

The legislation of Ezekiel did not succeed. The prescriptions and institutions imitated from the Mosaic codes lived, and might give the democrats some illusion of success; the innovations failed.

These intrinsic reasons for the failure of the prophetic enterprise were supplemented by the historical circumstances in which it took place.

In a period of trouble, in opposition to a feeble or unfortunate high-priest, prophetism might have succeeded; in opposition to a comparatively fortunate and strong high-priest like Simeon the Just, at the very time when Judæa seemed to enjoy a little peace, it was bound to fail. If, on the other hand, the priesthood had rejected all reform, or abandoned itself to extreme Hellenisation, the reformers would have found new weapons in the excess of popular indignation; but we know that prophetism itself had eradicated Hellenism from the priesthood, and this first success prevented it from winning again, or from dethroning its opponent.

We have compared Jewish prophetism to modern Protestantism, and the analogy goes further. Luther did not destroy the Roman Church; in establishing a rival Church beside it, he reformed it. It is too little known that, on many points, the Roman Church satisfied the demands of Protestants. It was the same at Jerusalem in the third century. The prophetic party constrained the clerical aristocracy to make certain reforms, but did not overthrow it.

While the prophetic party attempted in vain to impose its laws and seize the government, the old aristocracy completed the work of the Mosaic legislation, and, thanks, no doubt, to the action of Simeon the Just, victoriously imposed it. The prophetic party was beaten, but not destroyed, and had not ceased to produce great



men. The causes that had given it birth remained, and would be aggravated after the death of Simeon. It would continue to agitate Judæa no less than before. But it was all over with the legislative reforms of the second book of Ezekiel, and the traditions which the legends of Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha had endeavoured to implant. When, after a century of struggle with an aristocracy that falls deeper and deeper into Hellenism, it finally has its revenge, it will accept and appropriate the old Mosaic law, the work of the aristocracy; and the book of Ezekiel will, so the Talmud relates, run some risk of being excluded from the canon of the sacred books.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE TWO ISAIAHS, AND THE IMPERIALIST REVIVAL

#### § 1. *The Jewish People in the Days of the Two Isaiahs.*

FROM the third century onward the history of the Jewish people is enacted, partly in Palestine, partly in the Jewish colonies, which spread more and more around the Mediterranean. The earliest prophetic writers had arisen under the stress of the frightful calamities that had fallen on Judæa during the second half of the fourth century. To understand the last prophetic writers, it is necessary to resume the history of the Jewish people, during the following century, in the colonies as well as in Palestine.

IN PALESTINE.—The pontificate of Simeon the Just was a calm after the storms at the end of the fourth century. During the earlier years of his son, Onias II., this peace is still disturbed only at rare intervals in Palestine. But from the year 247 the wars begin between the Ptolemies of Egypt and the Seleucids of Syria, and Palestine is once more plundered. Again we find the long train of misfortunes which these wars drag after them. In 240 peace is restored; Palestine remains in the possession of Egypt. Will the unhappy country have at least time to dress its wounds? At the end of some years the war will be renewed between the Syrians and the Egyptians (221–217). Palestine will again witness the ceaseless crossing of armies, battles, and towns from which the vanquished will burst forth with fury and the conqueror enter with threats. In 201 the king of Syria again invades Palestine. The war lasts

three years; in the end the Egyptians are beaten, and the king of Syria remains in possession of Palestine. Judæa has changed its master.

The Jewish historian Josephus has told us<sup>1</sup> how severely the Palestinian States suffered from the wars that took place between the kings of Egypt and Syria. At Jerusalem the humiliation is all the greater from the high hopes that had been entertained. Had not the books of Moses promised to the imperialist ambition of the successors of Esdras the free and peaceful possession of the land of Palestine? The chosen people of Jahveh suffered, in subjection to the *gaim*, in proportion to its dreams.

When the war rages, plunder and devastation are multiplied; when peace follows, exaction begins and violence accompanies it. The powerful desire but to enrich themselves; they refuse justice, and oppress the weak; on the pretext of gathering the tribute claimed by the suzerain, they plunder the towns and the country; the tax-farmers are the leaders of bands who go from country to country, extorting the debt with arms in their hands. But the exactions and violence seem more cruel to the people of Jerusalem when they are committed by men of its own aristocracy, and when its leaders rely on the foreign master in maltreating and despoiling it.

The Mosaic law rules at Jerusalem. Under the shadow of its unchallenged authority, and under the suzerainty of the Syrian or Egyptian kings, the high-priest is a kind of viceroy who wields a supreme power. The sacerdotal aristocracy surrounds him; the people obey. The recently completed theocratic constitution is in full vigour; but there is an irremediable division in the depths of Jewish society.

The hatred of the rigorists for the Hellenists had gradually risen. To the prophets the forsaking of the

<sup>1</sup> *Jewish Antiquities*, xiii. 1, 3; 2, 28; 3, 129.

national ways was an apostasy. The prophets had set up anew the Jewish soul, by teaching that without Jahveh and the law of Jahveh the Jewish people were doomed to perish. The hatred of the rigorist Jews for the foreigner was great, but their hatred of the renegade was bound to be fiercer.

Day by day the abyss grew deeper. The Jews of the people, in the midst of their misery, deluded themselves with hopes that promised them revenge; and already some of the aristocrats of the higher clergy assured themselves that these hopes were vain. In the humiliation of the land, the sons of the clerical aristocracy of Jerusalem were contented with a state of things that left them masters of Judæa under an easily tolerable suzerainty, wealthy, and independent enough to enjoy their wealth.

The anger of the traditionalist and nationalist Jew against the renegade Jew, of the poor against the rich, was inflamed by the innumerable exactions, the denials of justice, the increasingly severe oppression, with which the people reproached their aristocracy. It seems, if we take the evidence of contemporary writers, making allowance for rhetorical exaggeration, that this oppression was extreme, and that the common folk, exploited and flouted by their masters, reached a state of the most violent resentment. The scandal was at its height, among the pious and patriotic poor of the lower classes at Jerusalem, when, towards the middle of the third century, under the pontificate of Onias II., a certain Joseph, son of Tobias, obtained from Ptolemy Philopator the farming of the taxes in Palestine. This Joseph, son of Tobias, was the nephew of the high-priest Onias II.; he was thus one of the heads of the Jerusalem aristocracy. In his Hellenism, his pomp, his exactions, Joseph, son of Tobias, exhibits all the grievances of the children of Jahveh against their aristocracy.

Here is the episode of Joseph, son of Tobias, according to Flavius Josephus. In order to give an idea of Jewish

society at the time, we cannot do better than quote at length the picturesque account in his *Jewish Antiquities*, which critics are disposed to place in the Days of Ptolemy Philopator (222-205).

The high-priest Onias had a restricted intelligence, and was dominated by the love of money; hence, as he had not discharged the tax of twenty talents of silver, which his fathers paid the kings, out of their own revenues, in the name of the people, he caused King Ptolemy to be very angry. Ptolemy sent a messenger to Jerusalem, reproaching Onias for not having paid the tax, and threatening that, if he did not receive the sum, he would divide the Jewish territory into lots and settle soldiers on them as colonists. The Jews were terrified on hearing the king's threats; but nothing could move Onias, blinded by his avarice.

There was at the time a certain Joseph, a young man, but already enjoying the reputation of a grave, prudent, and just man with the inhabitants of Jerusalem; he was the son of Tobias and of a sister of the high-priest Onias. His mother having apprised him of the presence of the envoy—for he was then on a journey at Phicola, the village to which he belonged—he returned to the city, and reproached Onias with not considering the safety of his fellow-citizens and wishing to put the people in danger. . . . . Onias persisting in his refusal, Joseph then asked his permission to go on an embassy to Ptolemy in the name of the nation; and Onias granted it. Joseph went up to the temple, therefore, summoned the people to assemble, and begged the citizens to be neither disturbed nor dismayed by the indifference of his uncle Onias in their regard, but to keep their minds calm and banish their gloomy presentiments. He promised, in fact, to go on an embassy to the king and persuade him that they had done no wrong. At these words the crowd thanked Joseph; and he, going down from the temple, gave hospitality in his own house to Ptolemy's envoy, heaped rich presents on him, and, after treating him generously for several days, sent him back to the king, adding that he would shortly follow himself. . . . .

The envoy, on his return to Egypt, told the king of the obstinacy of Onias, and spoke to him of the great merit of Joseph, who was coming to clear the people of the delinquencies charged against them. He praised the young man so much that he made the king and his wife Cleopatra well disposed towards Joseph before he

arrived. Joseph sent to borrow money of some of his friends in Samaria, and, after preparing all that was necessary for the journey—clothes, utensils, and beasts of burden, which cost him about twenty thousand drachmas—he went to Alexandria. It happened that at the same time all the chief citizens and magistrates of the cities of Syria and Phœnicia were going there in connection with the farming of the taxes, which the king sold every year to the strongest men in each city. When these saw Joseph on the road, they railed at his poverty and simplicity. But Joseph, hearing on his arrival at Alexandria that Ptolemy was at Memphis, went to meet him. The king was seated in his chariot with his wife and his friend Athenion, the very man who had been sent to Jerusalem and entertained by Joseph. When Athenion saw him, he at once made him known to the king, saying that this was the young man whose kindness and generosity he had praised to him on his return from Jerusalem. Ptolemy then first embraced him, made him enter the chariot, and, as soon as Joseph was seated, began to complain of the procedure of Onias.

“Forgive him,” said Joseph, “on account of his age; for thou knowest assuredly that old men have often but the intelligence of children. But we, the young, will give thee full satisfaction, and thou shalt have no fault to find with us.”

The king, delighted with the charm and sprightliness of the young man, conceived such an affection for him as if he had long known him; he invited him to stay in his palace, and share his meals every day. When the king had returned to Alexandria, the leading men of Syria, seeing Joseph sitting beside him, were very envious.

When the day had come on which the taxes of the cities were to be put up at auction, those whose dignity gave them the first rank in their country came to buy them. The offers rose to eight thousand talents for the taxes of Cœle-Syria, Phœnicia, Judæa, and Samaria. Then Joseph approached, and accused the buyers of having come to an arrangement to offer the king so poor a price for the taxes. He declared that he was prepared to give double, and deliver up to the king, in addition, the goods of those who had failed in their duty to his house; these goods were, in fact, assigned with the taxes. The king heard him with pleasure, and said he was ready to award him the farming of the taxes, because he would thereby have an increased revenue; but he asked



if Joseph had security to offer. Joseph replied very cleverly:—

“I will find you excellent people whom you cannot distrust.”

The king asking who they were:—

“I give you as security, O king, thyself and thy wife, each for the portion that is due to the other.”

Ptolemy laughed, and allowed him to have the taxes without security. This favour greatly angered those who had come from the cities of Egypt, as they felt themselves relegated to the second rank. And each returned to his country with his little disgrace.

Joseph obtained of the king two thousand foot-soldiers, for he had asked troops in order to bring to reason those who might despise his authority in the cities; and, after borrowing five hundred talents from the friends of the king in Alexandria, he set out for Syria. When he reached Ascalon, he demanded that the inhabitants should pay the tax. They refused to pay anything, and even insulted him; then he seized the chief among them, slew a score of them, seized their goods—about a thousand talents—and sent them to the king, informing him of what had happened. Ptolemy admired his decision, praised his conduct, and gave him a free hand. The Syrians were terrified at this news, and, having under their eyes, as an example well calculated to discourage disobedience, the fate of the victims at Ascalon, they opened their gates, received Joseph with every attention and paid the tribute. The inhabitants of Scythopolis however, attempted to insult him and refuse him the tax, which they had hitherto paid without difficulty; there also he had the chief men put to death, and sent their goods to the king. When he had collected a great deal of money, and made a large profit on the farming of the taxes, he made use of it to strengthen the power he had, thinking it wise to use the goods he had acquired in preserving what had been the source of his present fortune. He therefore sent many presents to the king, to Cleopatra, to their friends, and to all who had power at Court, thus purchasing their good will.

He enjoyed this prosperity for twenty-two years, and became the father of seven sons by his first wife, and, by the daughter of his brother Solymios, of a son named Hyrcan.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Jewish Antiquities*, xii. 4, from the translation of Théodore Reinach.

It is between this Hyrcan and his brothers that the dissensions and intestine wars arose which were to desolate Judæa at the beginning of the second century.

IN THE COLONIES.—But in the third century the Jewish people is not confined to Judæa; it is found wherever Jewish colonies have been established; and in the colonies the secular hopes of the Jews are no more realised than in Judæa.

We shall close this volume with a comprehensive study of the expansion of the Jews in the Mediterranean basin.<sup>1</sup> We have already seen the Jews spread, first in Palestine, then in Syria, Phœnicia, and Egypt; soon we shall see them penetrate into Asia Minor, the Greek islands, and Greece itself.

Deportation and emigration have done their work. Violence and misery alone have driven the Jews from their country, and these colonists are, in the main, merely exiles whose misfortunes are incessantly deplored by the prophets, and whose triumphant return they are ever predicting.

However widely they have spread, the Jewish colonies are nevertheless, in the third century, lamentable settlements in which misery reigns and men are but pariahs. Already the Jewish quarter is a thing of contempt and detestation among the nations. How could these folk, who mingle not with the people among whom they live, preserve their own clothing and usages, isolate themselves in their sectarian pride, think themselves better than others in spite of their sordid poverty, and cannot conceal their envy, if not their hopes, expect from other men anything but hatred in return for their hostility, and disdain for their weakness?

After so many promises of a glorious return to the mother country, the Jews of the colonies will be still in

<sup>1</sup> Part III., ch. iv.

the second century what they were in the third: unhappy exiles, dying, one after another, in a surfeit of humiliation, under the enmity of a foreign sky.

Thus did the reality belie the old Jewish hopes, from the third century onward, in the colonies and in Judæa. The situation was this: in Judæa were foreign domination, oppression, internal divisions, and exactions on the part of the clerical aristocracy; beyond the Jewish frontiers was the vast field of misery in which the exiles shuddered, hated by, and hating, other men.

The most adventurous optimism could with difficulty cast a few rays of light on this sombre picture. Jerusalem was still the most important town, its temple the most celebrated sanctuary, and Judæa the leading State of Palestine; beyond Palestine, the Jewish colonies spread the name of Jahveh in the great cities of the eastern Mediterranean. To maintain and renew this confidence, to sustain their courage, to rekindle the fire of the imperialism of Jerusalem, there was need of the work of the men of genius who wrote under the name of the prophet Isaiah.

## § 2. *The First Isaiah.*

The collection of prophecies which, in our Bible, bears the name of Isaiah, is divided into two quite distinct parts. Critics of the slightest shade of independence have long since unanimously agreed in recognising them as two different works, which it is customary to call the First and the Second Isaiah. The one comprises chapters i.-xxxix. of the collection, the other chapters xl.-lxvi. It is further possible, and even probable, that the chapters ascribed to each of the two Isaiahs come from a number of different writers.

The author—let us say the principal author—of the prophecies of the First Isaiah followed the tradition of his forerunners. For his fabulous material he, like they,

took a situation and the name of a prophet in the ancient history of Judæa, and he represented as spoken to this prophet, in the circumstances of the situation he had chosen, the words which he himself, a man of the third century, wanted to impress upon his contemporaries. The authors of the books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel had chosen the last years of the former kingdom of Judah; the author of the book of Isaiah went farther back into the past, and chose the period of Hezekiah and the last kings of Ephraim. The book of Isaiah, however, is not so much a political romance as a collection of anecdotes and fine odes. The anecdotes are episodes of ancient Jewish history, in which the author introduces his prophet with an action or a discourse; the odes are invectives against the Jewish aristocrats who indulge in Hellenic ways, or oracular utterances on neighbouring peoples, Tyre, Egypt, Syria, and Babylon.

On the doctrinal side the First Isaiah continues the work of prophetism. He resumes the invective of Jeremiah against the clergy and the Levitic legislation in the famous apostrophe: "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith Jahveh: I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts."<sup>1</sup> It is not a question, as so many writers have said, of a profession of spiritual faith, but of attacking the corruption of an aristocracy that lives on the temple and oppresses the people. There is nothing new in it. The originality of the First Isaiah consists in responding to the misery and despair of his compatriots with the imperialist dream of a conquest of the world.

Esdras and his successors had, after the Restoration, created Jewish nationalism. In the midst of the small States of Palestine they had, in concentrating the State of Jerusalem round the name of Jahveh, created a Jewish soul. Reduced to a few thousand men, vanquished,

<sup>1</sup> *Isaiah* i. 11, and following.

oppressed, enslaved for a century, the little people had not returned to life with the spirit of some great conquered nation that is suddenly saved by a brilliant victory. Defeat, oppression, slavery, and weakness had taught it patience. Stubborn, but humble, concealing behind their half-closed eyes their unconquerable ambition, the companions of Esdras had undertaken, noiselessly, with bent backs, to build the house of Jahveh.

We have seen how they taught the men of Jerusalem that the misfortunes of their fathers had been a punishment for their unfaithfulness to Jahveh, and that Jahveh had promised to reward them, if they were faithful to him.

Then the famous theory of the Covenant had been gradually shaped. The duty of the Jewish people is to be faithful to Jahveh; the duty of Jahveh is to reward the Jewish people, if the Jewish people is faithful to Jahveh. In the first Mosaic *mashal*, however, in Deuteronomy, the reward promised to the Jewish people consists of nothing but the free and peaceful possession of a land flowing with milk and honey, the most beautiful country in the world: thus do the Jews describe Palestine.

The free and peaceful possession of Palestine is the ideal of the early *moshlim* and of Deuteronomy. "Jahveh, thy god, will set thee on high among the nations of the earth.....all the peoples of the earth shall be afraid of thee";<sup>1</sup> that is the maximum and exceptional formula of the promises of Jahveh to the fourth century. The ambition of the Jews of Deuteronomy had not gone beyond that; their dream was to be happy on the soil that Jahveh had sworn to their fathers he would give them.<sup>2</sup> The promise was restricted:—

From the wilderness to Lebanon, from the river Euphrates to the western sea, shall your coast be.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy xxviii. 1 and 10.      <sup>2</sup> Deuteronomy xxx. 20.

<sup>3</sup> Deuteronomy xi. 24.

And as, at this time, the Jerusalem aristocracy had just put forth the name and theory of the people of Israel, gathering together under the name the whole of the populations which it meditated ruling and assimilating, the famous programme "Israel in the Promised Land" represented the whole imperialism of the time.

Confronted with the irruption and the menace of Hellenism, Hosea and Amos strive to recall the people to their duties; and, like Deuteronomy, they merely offer their contemporaries the promise of happiness at home.

Jeremiah, in the dread of the danger that nearly wrecks Judaism in the days of the successors of Alexander, is a mild soul, haunted only by the threat of the catastrophes that are about to fall again upon Jerusalem, if Jerusalem is unfaithful. After the threat, however, Jeremiah does not fail to tell and to repeat the promise. But it suffices for him to tell of the flourishing of the Jewish State, the replanting of their vines and fig-trees, the dancing of the daughters of Jerusalem, on peaceful evenings, to the sound of zithers and tambourines. Jeremiah often addresses foreign nations; though by foreign nations, in Jeremiah, we must understand the States which surround Judæa. Never (except, perhaps, once) does Jeremiah turn to the Islands; in the Bible the Islands are the Greek world, and Jeremiah does not look so far.

Ezekiel, in his sombre visions of the future, was hardly attentive to anything but his country. He had put his particular formula on the ancient promises; but had he enlarged it?

Isaiah is the first to turn to the Islands.

The dream of a universal conquest is the stroke of genius of the First Isaiah, though it is foreshadowed in the authors of the last Mosaic narratives.

We know what the situation of the Jewish people is at the time. In Judæa it is subject to foreigners; a corrupt



aristocracy oppresses it; constant wars burden the land of Israel. In the colonies it vegetates miserably; the son dies after the father without having seen once more the sky of his country. They are far from counting on the old hopes of peace, glory, and happiness; faithfulness has not had its reward. And it seems to the most optimistic that the fulfilment of the divine promises is very far off, very difficult, if not quite chimerical. The free and peaceful possession of Palestine; Israel prospering in the promised land! The reality was very far removed from the dream.

What could be said to the Jewish people to restore its confidence and courage?

In a sublime invention the First Isaiah, refusing to preach a perilous defensive, suddenly turns round, and, taking the offensive against the enemies of his country and his party, he teaches the Jews that they have nothing to fear, and that not only will every promise be fulfilled, but Jahveh will give his people, at one stroke, a hundred times more than he promised.

Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, about the throne of David, and about his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of Jahveh of the Hosts will perform this.<sup>1</sup>

The golden age that other poets had put at the beginning of time is foreseen in the future by the First Isaiah.

And on that day the shoot of David shall be an ensign for the nations; to it shall the nations turn; and his rest shall be glory.<sup>2</sup>

On that day Philistia will be conquered, Edom and Moab will be the prey of the children of Israel, and the sons of Ammon will be subject to them.<sup>3</sup> To Dumah (probably Edom) it shall be said:—Submit.<sup>4</sup> Tyre will be destroyed, but it will rise again after seventy years in

<sup>1</sup> *Isaiah* ix. 7.    <sup>2</sup> *Isaiah* xi. 10.    <sup>3</sup> *Isaiah* xi. 14.    <sup>4</sup> *Isaiah* xxi. 12.

order that its wealth may be offered to the temple at Jerusalem.

And it shall come to pass in that day, that Tyre shall be forgotten seventy years, according to the days of one King; after the end of seventy years shall Tyre sing as an harlot:—

Take thy guitar,  
Run through the town,  
Forgotten courtesan ;  
Dance thou for ever,  
Sing without end,  
That men recall thee!

And it shall come to pass, after the end of seventy years, that Jahveh will visit Tyre, and she shall return to her hire, and shall commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth.

And her merchandise and her hire shall be consecrated to Jahveh; it shall not be treasured, nor laid up; for her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before the face of Jahveh, to eat sufficiently and for magnificent clothing.<sup>1</sup>

The Ethiopians shall be conquered, but they will submit and will bring offerings to the temple of Jahveh;<sup>2</sup> the Egyptians shall be chastised, but they will turn to Jahveh, and he will hear them;<sup>3</sup> Syria will accept the god of Jerusalem; there will be a road from Egypt to Syria, and Jahveh will bless the submission of the Syrians and the Egyptians.<sup>4</sup> What is the meaning of the conversion of the Syria of the Seleucids, and the Egypt of the Ptolemies, if not the submission of all that the Jews of the third century know of Hellenism? And all these victories will have for prelude the reconciliation; that is to say, the definitive union of Judah and Ephraim;<sup>5</sup> that is to say, of Jerusalem and all the ancient Palestinian towns—in other words, the final constitution of the Israel which symbolises the Jewish ideal.

And it shall come to pass in the last days that the mountain of Jahveh's house shall be established in the

<sup>1</sup> *Isaiah* xxiii. 15-18.      <sup>2</sup> *Isaiah* xviii. 7.      <sup>3</sup> *Isaiah* xix. 21-22.

<sup>4</sup> *Isaiah* xix. 23.

<sup>5</sup> *Isaiah* xi. 13.

top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills ; and all nations shall flow unto it.

And many peoples shall come and say : Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jahveh, to the house of the god of Jacob ; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths.

For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jahveh from Jerusalem.

And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many peoples.<sup>1</sup>

The submission of the world is the necessary and logical consequence of the covenant. Provided Israel observes the conditions, Jahveh will observe them on his side ; and the work of Jahveh will be, not only to make Israel powerful and prosperous, but to bring the whole world to kneel before it. For the first time in the story of Judaism, the First Isaiah says it explicitly. It is a momentous event. Until that time they thought only of obtaining from Jahveh the peaceful enjoyment of Palestine ; now they dream of becoming masters of the world. The history of the Jews will be nothing else but the conflict of this ambition with the reality.

The whole is interconnected as cause and effect. The grandeur of the future held out to the Jews has magnified beyond measure the god who is capable of making such promises ; while, by a reaction of the effect on its cause, the greatness of the god enlarges the splendour of his promise. To the First Isaiah belongs the glory of first magnifying Jahveh, the god of Israel, to the proportions of the god of the universe.

We know the Jahveh of the early nomads settled in Palestine, a tribal god, becoming later the patron-god of the ancient kingdoms of Judah and Ephraim, entirely similar to Camos, the patron-god of Moab, or Milkom, the patron-god of Ammon. In the days of Esdras the Jewish soul had needed, if it were to rise again and endure, to hold itself aloof in a proud patriotism. At

<sup>1</sup> *Isaiah* ii. 2-4.

the same time it necessarily isolated Jahveh amid the congenital and neighbouring gods; and from that time Jahveh had begun to play a separate part, with a pride equal to the pride of his people, in the crowd of Palestinian gods.

Then, persevering in a pretension that gave it greater strength, the Jewish soul had come to regard itself as chosen for an extraordinary destiny among other peoples. And at the same time Jahveh became, for the Jews, a higher god among the other gods. That is the period of Deuteronomy. There are plenty of texts showing Jahveh as a god above the other gods. Does not Moses sing, after the crossing of the Red Sea:—

“Who is like unto thee among the gods, O Jahveh?”<sup>1</sup>

For the First Isaiah Jahveh becomes the supreme god; beside him there are but demons and angels. The demons are the strange gods, the hostile gods, the gods of foreigners and foes, who will all disappear on the day of the victory of Jahveh; the angels are the servants of Jahveh, encircling his throne in the heavens. Jahveh is the one god, the true god. Deuteronomy and Jeremiah himself proclaimed that the worship of other gods was the greatest of crimes. The First Isaiah is not more indulgent, but he recognises a new sentiment; he feels that the strange gods are inferior gods, that they are doomed to perish, and will perish.

In that day man shall cast their idols of silver, and their idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats.<sup>2</sup>

The moment will come presently when the Second Isaiah will add irony to malediction, and, railing at these idols of wood or gold, made by the hand of man, will make it plain that Jahveh alone is god, and that the other gods are nothing.

With the history of Jahveh corresponds the history of

<sup>1</sup> *Exodus* xv. 11.

<sup>2</sup> *Isaiah* ii. 20.

the old word *elohim*. It is the Hebrew word which we translate "god." What precisely is the *elohim*? A fetish that becomes an idol, an idol that becomes a national god, a national god that becomes the god of the universe, awaiting the time when the god of the universe becomes a metaphysical god. The First Isaiah is at the stage of the god of the universe.

But the history of the word *elohim* and the history of the god Jahveh are, at the same time, the history of the Jewish soul that is faithfully reflected therein. A Syrian tribe that becomes a small people; a small people that holds aloof in an extreme and fierce patriotism, finding in it the strength to live and endure; and now a handful of men, a brotherhood almost, hardly a nation, rather a church, that thinks itself destined to rule the world, and believes so strongly in its destiny that it will eventually accomplish it.

That again is in the First Isaiah.

Until then the Jewish soul is in a state of preparation; it exists only potentially. Even in Jeremiah it is as yet only concentrating, or forming. Jeremiah had been only a strenuous return to the policy of Esdras and Deuteronomy, become democratic as it confronted the Hellenisation of the aristocracy. With the First Isaiah Judaism opens out towards the world. The prophecy of Jeremiah had been the cry of alarm of a man who saw the foundations of the Judaic edifice give way. Now the Jewish soul revives; Hellenisation has not disappeared from the aristocracy, but the Jewish people have renewed their tradition. Now, for the first time in the Bible and in Jewish history, the eyes of the men of Jerusalem are about to turn beyond Palestine. For the first time the Jewish soul appears, in the First Isaiah, of the character in which it will, under a Christian form, conquer the world, by faith in its election.

And already the First Isaiah tells, without ambiguity, how this extraordinary conquest will be accomplished.

Before him Deuteronomy, the early prophets, and Jeremiah have, one after the other, developed the formula of the famous covenant. The First Isaiah deduces its full consequences; he expounds it in its full amplitude. There is a synallagmatic bargain between Jahveh and Israel; if Israel is faithful to Jahveh, Jahveh will give it the world. But Israel is only a small people amid the great peoples of the earth. Syria and Egypt crush it with their formidable power. What armies will Israel lead out to conquer such foes? What general will lead them to the battle? The armies will be the hosts of heaven, and Jahveh will be their general. Edom, Moab, and Ammon in subjection, Tyre giving up its gold like an aged prostitute, the Ethiopians bringing their tribute, Egypt and Syria on their knees, the peoples of the earth crowding to the mountain of Jerusalem—all that will be the personal task of Jahveh.

Behold, the day of Jahveh cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate and destroy the enemies.

The stars of heaven, even the Orions, shall not give their light; the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine.....

Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of Jahveh of the Hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger.

And it shall be as the chased gazelle and as a sheep that no man taketh up: they shall every man turn to his own people, and flee every one into his own land.

Every one that is found shall be thrust through, and every one that is seized shall fall by the sword.

Their children also shall be dashed to pieces before their eyes; their houses shall be spoiled, and their wives ravished.....

For Jahveh will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel.....

And the house of Israel shall possess the peoples for servants and handmaids; and they shall take them captives whose captives they were, and they shall rule over their oppressors.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Isaiah* xiii. 9-16 and xiv. 1-2.



And it shall come to pass in that day that Jahveh shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth.

And they shall be gathered together as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be punished.<sup>1</sup>

And the multitude of thy foes shall be like small dust, and the multitude of the terrible ones shall be as the chaff that passeth away; yea, it shall be at an instant suddenly.

Thou shalt be visited of Jahveh of the Hosts with thunder, and with earthquake, and with great noise, with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire.

And the multitude of all the nations that march against thee, and all they that fight against thee, shall be as a dream, a vision of the night.

And it shall even be as when an hungry man dreameth, and, behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty: or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and, behold, he drinketh; but he awaketh, and, behold, he is faint, and his soul is athirst: so shall the multitude of all the nations be that march against mount Zion.<sup>2</sup>

When such a hope becomes, not the theme of rhetorical effusions, not the outworn phrase of a materialistic clergy, but the flesh and blood of a people, however lowly it be in the heart of the hills, it is a formidable people.

### § 3. *The Second Isaiah.*

The work of the prophets, however, was not yet complete. Another voice was to be heard, introducing a new aspect of the evolution of Judaism. This is the Second Isaiah, the best known, the most Christian, of the prophets.

A connecting link between the prophets and the psalms, the Second Isaiah is already the consoler of the downcast. The imperialism of the Second Isaiah is an imperialism of the downcast.

The book of the Second Isaiah is a collection of odes.

<sup>1</sup> *Isaiah* xxiv. 21-22.

<sup>2</sup> *Isaiah* xxix. 5-8.

The writer, however, was unable to speak in his own name; pseudonymity is the invariable condition of Hebrew literature. He presented his work as a continuation of the work of the old prophet Isaiah. A book that had not the paternity of some ancient name would not have been received at Jerusalem. The literary artifice he used was this: the aged prophet Isaiah, in the time of Hezekiah, king of Judah, is represented as consoling the Jewish people in its misfortunes, and prophesying the end of the Babylonian captivity and the restoration of Jerusalem by Cyrus, in the time of Zorobabel. In reality, however, it is not to the misfortunes of the days of Hezekiah or of the Deportation that the writer offers his consolation, but to the evils of the present time. It is not the end of the Babylonian captivity that the writer announces, but the return of the exiles from all parts of the Dispersion; it is not the throwing off of the yoke of the king of Babylon, but the end of the Egyptian and Syrian servitude; it is not the restoration of Jerusalem in the days of Zorobabel, but its future glorification, when the day of Jahveh shall come.

Like all the prophets and all the Jewish writers, the Second Isaiah develops in an almost unique way the classic theme of the evils which are the chastisement inflicted by Jahveh on the guilty Jews, and the rewards which the god promises to his people when it returns to fidelity. But the evils deplored by the Second Isaiah are no longer the same as those that the early prophets lamented, and of which they held the threat over the head of their contemporaries. Formerly they spoke of invasion, burning, and deportation: now the theme is that Jerusalem, with all its pride, is a slave, that the Jewish colonies are humbled in the midst of the *goyim*, and that the heads of the Jerusalem aristocracy are bad shepherds who betray the flock.

To whom, indeed, is the Second Isaiah speaking? To "him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation

abhorreth, to the servant of rulers," to "the prisoners," to "them that are in darkness," to those that hunger and thirst, to those whom the mirage and the sun cause to suffer.<sup>1</sup>

What does he say to them?

Fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings: for [he adds] the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool.<sup>2</sup>

Elsewhere there is question of the oppressors of Israel, who said to it:—

Bow down, that we may go over; and Israel made of its back as the ground, and as the street to them that went over.<sup>3</sup>

This people is robbed and spoiled, he says again.<sup>4</sup>

Later he speaks to those "that thirst" and to those "that have no money."<sup>5</sup>

The Second Isaiah belongs to the end of the third century, and is contemporary with the king of Syria Antiochus the Great. The abominable Joseph, son of Tobias, is dead, but his sons amply fill his place; one of them, Hyrcanus, commits the scandals of his father tenfold worse. One of the odes of the Second Isaiah<sup>6</sup> is evidently a diatribe, with transparent allusions, against the new farmer of the taxes, the "son of the sorceress, the seed of the adulterer and the whore," who enriches himself "at the cost of Israel," which has "rebelled"; who builds himself "a strong place on the mountain," offers "presents to the king [of Egypt] and sends messengers," and angers Jahveh by "the iniquity of his covetousness."<sup>7</sup>

The prophet returns unwearyingly to the exactions of the aristocracy.

But the Second Isaiah addresses himself to the exiles as much as to the Jews who remain in Jerusalem. The

<sup>1</sup> *Isaiah* xlix. 7, 9, and 10.

<sup>2</sup> *Isaiah* li. 7-8.

<sup>3</sup> *Isaiah* li. 23.

<sup>4</sup> *Isaiah* xlii. 22.

<sup>5</sup> *Isaiah* lv. 1.

<sup>6</sup> *Isaiah* lvii.

<sup>7</sup> *Isaiah* lvii. 3-5, 7, 9, 17.

third century is the period of the great departure of the Jews for the towns of the Mediterranean, and the thought of the poet goes out unceasingly to the miserable emigrants who languish, in the depths of the ghettos, as they turn towards the city of their god. The originality of the Second Isaiah is that he is a consoler of the afflicted even more than a judge threatening the guilty.

Comfort, comfort my people, saith your god.<sup>1</sup>

Thus does he open the series of his poems.

The famous poem of the "Man of Sorrows" is a summary of the lamentable picture, on which the Second Isaiah chiefly dwells, of the humiliations of the Jewish people; the passage is one of the best known in the Bible, yet it is still one of the least understood.

We must imagine the men of Jerusalem gathering round the temple, swathed in their loose mantles, during long days that are filled only with meditations in common, prayer, political agitation, anger against the oppressors, and dreams of the future. What do the great odes of the prophetic writers do, in this gloomy Asiatic forum, but legitimise with the authority of the national god their anger and their desires?

One day the poem of the "Man of Sorrows" spreads among this crowd, already become fanatical. It is, it seems, the work of the old prophet Isaiah. They do not think of disputing it; the brain of the ancient Jews was not open to critical questions. And this old poem—several centuries old, they say—seems to harmonise marvellously with all the restlessness of their souls.....

He hath grown up as a shoot, as a tender plant out of a dry ground; he hath no form, nor comeliness; he hath no beauty that we should desire him.

Despised and the least of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, like unto him from whom we turn our faces, he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Surely he hath borne our maladies, and carried our

<sup>1</sup> *Isaiah* xl. 1.

sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of god, and afflicted.

But he was wounded for our rebellions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement, the price of our peace, was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

And we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and Jahveh hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

He is maltreated, and he humbles himself; he opens not his mouth; as a lamb that is brought to the slaughter, and as a dumb sheep before her shearers, he openeth not his mouth.

He is delivered to captivity and judgment, and, of his generation, who understandeth that he is cut off out of the land of the living, and stricken for the rebellions of my people.<sup>1</sup>

This poem has been the successive theme of all theologies. Traditional theology has seen in it a prediction of the Messiah, Jesus; liberal Protestant interpreters have read in it the doctrine of redemption; even the most independent of the critics have agreed to recognise in it Israel atoning for the sins of the world. The Hebrew text, however, does not say that Israel was smitten for the iniquities of other peoples, but for its own iniquities. We will give an example of the incredible errors into which the best commentators may be led by preconceived ideas. The Man of Sorrows is smitten, says Isaiah, "for our iniquities," and the critic explains: "Yes, *our* iniquities.....but it is the *goin* who are speaking; only the prophet has forgotten to tell us."

The iniquities expiated by the Man of Sorrows are the iniquities of Israel; the Man of Sorrows, that is to say, Israel itself, atones for its own faults. The idea of Israel atoning for the sins of the world will occur to no one before St. Paul; it is impossible before the Christian era. Israel is humbled because it has sinned against Jahveh; if the Man of Sorrows, if Israel, is a redeemer, he is a

<sup>1</sup> *Isaiah* liii. 2-8.

redeemer only of himself; we return once more to the old familiar idea of the covenant.

But Jahveh now smites his people with a new humiliation. The evils with which the early prophets threatened Israel were those of a vanquished people; those deplored by the prophet of the end of the third century are the ignominies of oppression. In Jeremiah the sword was held over the head of Israel: now it is the stick.

Such is the meaning of the "Man of Sorrows."

Round the humiliation of the Jews the prophet brings again the series of ancient ideas. He enumerates the faults, the desertions, the apostasies of Israel. Then, to the men of Jerusalem who are listening to him, he promises, if Israel returns and keeps faithful, the same rewards that the First Isaiah has already conjured up like a mirage before their eyes, and he opens out the perspective of the glories to come.

Some have seen in the Second Isaiah a tender soul who dreams of pacific conquest, and summons all peoples to share the delight of the kingdom of Jahveh. Alas! this is how the tender soul of the Second Isaiah invited the Jews gathered in the precincts of the temple to fraternise with the *goyim*:—

Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin, daughter of Babylon! Sit on the ground; there is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldæans; for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate.

Take the millstones and grind flour; uncover thy locks, and make bare the leg, uncover the thigh, pass over the rivers.

Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, thy shame shall be seen. I will take vengeance, and I shall spare none.....

These two things shall come to thee in a moment, in one day: the loss of children, and widowhood; they shall come upon thee, in spite of the multitude of thy sorceries.....

There shall come an evil upon thee of which thou shalt not know the rising; and mischief shall fall upon thee that thou shalt not be able to put off; and desolation



shall come upon thee suddenly which thou shalt not foresee.....

Behold, they are as stubble, the fire burns them : they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame.<sup>1</sup>

Elsewhere :

And I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh, and they shall be drunken with their own blood as with the juice of the grape.<sup>2</sup>

Later :—

Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of dizziness, the cup of my fury ; thou shalt no more drink it again, but I will put it into the hand of them that afflict thee.<sup>3</sup>

Jahveh hath put on the garment of vengeance, and hath clad himself with jealousy as a cloke.

According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay ; to the islands he will repay recompense.

So they shall fear the name of Jahveh from the west, and his glory from the east ; when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the spirit of Jahveh shall put him to flight.<sup>4</sup>

I have trodden the peoples in my anger, and trampled them in my fury, and their blood hath been sprinkled upon my garments, and I have stained all my raiment.

For the day of vengeance is in mine heart.<sup>5</sup>

And the Jews enfevered, with anger and despair, repeated with their prophet, as they saw pass the proud aristocrats whom they accused of denying their god and their country:—

I number you to the sword, saith Jahveh, and ye shall all bow down to the slaughter ; because when I called, ye did not answer ; when I spake, ye did not hear ; but did evil before mine eyes, and did choose that wherein I delighted not.

Therefore thus saith the lord Jahveh:—Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry ; behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty ; behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed ; behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Isaiah* xlvii. 1-14.

<sup>2</sup> *Isaiah* xlix. 26.

<sup>3</sup> *Isaiah* li. 22.

<sup>4</sup> *Isaiah* lix. 17-19.

<sup>5</sup> *Isaiah* lxiii. 3-4.

<sup>6</sup> *Isaiah* lxxv. 12-14.

The hero of the Second Isaiah (who will also be the hero of the psalms) is designated by the words *ebed Jahveh*, which the Christian translations have rendered the "Servant of God"—that is to say, the servant of Jahveh. It is important to determine the precise meaning. The Hebrew word *ebed* has, in the Bible, a meaning which varies between slave, serf, servant, and domestic. The Mosaic law distinguishes between the Hebrew *ebed*, who is a kind of half-serf and half-servant, and the Canaanite *ebed*, who is a pagan slave; but Moses is at the same time said to be the *ebed* of Jahveh. In the Second Isaiah *ebed* of Jahveh evidently means the Jewish people. Jahveh is the sovereign, the supreme king, of the Jewish people, and the expression, *ebed* of Jahveh, means simply subject of Jahveh; the Jewish people is the subject of Jahveh, as all peoples of the East are the subjects—that is to say, the slaves—of their monarch. The subject of Jahveh is the slave of Jahveh. The *ebed Jahveh* is the sombre group of the men of Jerusalem who wander about the temple, poor, downcast, and proud. The Second Isaiah means that the Jewish people, the slave of its king Jahveh, will become master of the world.

Even more precisely than the First, the Second Isaiah predicts, to the audience which he fills with his hallucination, the submission of the world to the Jews. He admits no escape from the dilemma: to submit or perish. It is a pacific ideal, on condition that the world comes to its knees. And to his unhappy fellows, oppressed and humbled a dozen times, the poet repeats mercilessly these maddening promises:—

The sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee.....

The nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish, yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted.

The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious.....

The sons of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet.....

Thy people shall inherit the land for ever.....I am Jahveh, and I will hasten these things in their time.<sup>1</sup>

Indefatigable, the fierce tribune lashes his miserable audience into fanaticism:—

And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and your vine-dressers.

But ye shall be named the Priests of Jahveh; men shall call you the servants of your god; ye shall eat the riches of the nations, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves.

For your shame ye shall have double, and for confusion ye shall rejoice in your portion.<sup>2</sup>

You ask how all that will come about?

Behold, Jahveh will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind; he maketh a fire of his anger, and of his threat a flame.

For Jahveh will render his judgment with fire; he will smite all flesh with his sword; and the slain of Jahveh shall be without number.<sup>3</sup>

In that day all the Jews, scattered in the humiliation of the colonies amid the *goim*, will be brought back in triumph to Zion. It is expressed in the figure of the return from the Deportation; but the Second Isaiah is so far from thinking of the Babylonian captivity that he summons the exiles, not merely from the banks of the Euphrates, but from the west and the south<sup>4</sup>—that is to say, from Phœnicia and Egypt, and from the midst of all nations.<sup>5</sup> The imperialist promises are for the Jews of the Dispersion just as much as for those of Judæa.

The world will be subject to the Jews, and the nations will pay tribute.

They shall bring gold and incense.....the ships of Tarshish shall come with their silver and their gold.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Isaiah* lx. 10-22.

<sup>2</sup> *Isaiah* lxi. 5-7.

<sup>3</sup> *Isaiah* lxvi. 15-16.

<sup>4</sup> *Isaiah* xliii. 5-6.

<sup>5</sup> *Isaiah* lxvi. 20.

<sup>6</sup> *Isaiah* lx. 6-9.

The Jews shall be masters of the earth.

The time is come to gather all nations and tongues, that they may come, and see my glory.

And I will set a sign among you, and I will send those that escape of you unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal, and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the nations.

And they shall bring all your brethren, for an offering unto Jahveh, out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon dromedaries, to my holy mountain, to Jerusalem, saith Jahveh.<sup>1</sup>

And the last touch is:—

They shall look upon the carcasses of the men that have rebelled against me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.<sup>2</sup>

#### § 4. *The Internationalisation of the Prophetic Books.*

##### *The Age of the Prophets.*

We now know the work of the writers whose voice was to sound in the ears of humanity for so many ages, and we see that all they did was to reconstitute, democratising it, the Jewish nationalism, or imperialism, that had been created before them by Esdras and the Mosaic books.

As we have said, we attack no religion, and we defend none. The aim of the historian is to discover why and how certain books arose, which afterwards became sacred books. We have explained how the books of Moses, which were national and nationalist works, became international books; we have now to explain how the books of the writers called prophets—democratic as well as national and nationalist books—were internationalised in their turn.

<sup>1</sup> *Isaiah* lxvi. 18–20.

<sup>2</sup> *Isaiah* lxvi. 24.

Twenty-four centuries ago there arose, in one of the smallest States of Western Asia, certain men, an outcome of the most pressing need of the circumstances, who preached to their contemporaries the cult of their country and hatred of their aristocracy.

Internationalism has converted these men into:—

1. The apostles of the conversion of the world to monotheism ;

2. The protagonists of justice.

History, however, shows that :—

1. The Jewish prophets preached, not the conversion of the world, but its conquest and submission ;

2. The Jewish prophets were the protagonists, not of justice, but of the claims of their people and their political party.

The work of the Jewish people, say the Jewish and Christian orthodoxies, was to teach true religion to the world.<sup>1</sup> Recently Isidore Loëb, in a work published after his death,<sup>2</sup> and M. Maurice Vernes, in most of his later works, have revived the theory of the “ proselytism of the prophets.” According to them, the Jews dreamed, not of conquest and submission, but of the conversion of foreign nations.

The analysis of the prophecies of the two Isaiahs has fully shown, and the analysis of the psalms and apocalypses will constantly show, what kind of “ conversion ” there was in the minds of the Jews.

In what did the “ conversion ” of foreign nations consist? First, to obey the Jews; secondly, to pay tribute to them. One must not be deceived by the religious form that the Jewish claims took. The Jewish State is a State ruled by priests, in which the prophets aspire to replace the old clerical aristocracy by a clerical democracy. Though framed by the priests, the Jewish

<sup>1</sup> See Munk, *La Palestine*, commencement of Book III.

<sup>2</sup> *La littérature des pauvres dans la Bible* ; Paris, 1892.

law is a national law; the taxes paid to the Jewish clergy are taxes paid to the Jewish Government. A purely religious law, in the sense that we give to the expression—that is to say, a purely moral law—is an impossible idea in Judæa. So monstrous an anachronism robs Jewish history of its real features; the glory of the Jewish people is that it, the lowest people of the East, came to dream, like the Roman people, of material conquest, of the political submission of the world.

The Romans sent legions and administrators to conquer the world. The Jews relied on Jahveh and the hosts of heaven, Jahveh Sebaot. Jewish “proselytism” differs from Roman “proselytism” only in the choice of means. On both sides the design is to conquer foreign nations; and the same dilemma is proposed to the world—submission (conversion, if one insists on the word) or extermination. There is no ambiguity; the two Isaiahs and, later, the psalms and apocalypses repeat it invariably; if the nations be not “converted,” they shall be exterminated.

In the period of the Isaiahs, as in the time of Deuteronomy, Jewish nationalism, surrounded by the most formidable dangers, drew itself up ferociously to face other peoples. In the latter case the horizon is limited, in the former case it is broad; but in the third century just as much as in the fourth the idea is to reduce foreign nations, or to perish. Nothing is more human; nothing is simpler. Internationalism, reading “conversion” where it finds “conquest,” puts a dogma in the place of history.

That the prophets were the protagonists of justice in the world is another error that we have exposed. Even the most independent commentators of to-day praise the prophets for having claimed justice; some for having created justice. Did not James Darmesteter, in 1891, propose to France and the world a return to the Jewish prophets? History should expose this effect of inter-



nationalisation, for the idea of justice was never more cruelly denied than by the men of the Jerusalem democracy.

In what does justice consist ?

In this : to render to every man what belongs to him.  
*Suum cuique.*

Justice has been represented with scales in her hands. She is devoid of passion, and disinterested ; without passion, that is to say, she obeys neither hatred, nor love, nor anger, nor fear, nor vengeance, nor envy ; disinterested, that is to say, the thought of his own advantage never whispers in the ear of the judge.

Whence comes the sentiment of justice ? From an equal consciousness of rights and duties ; of duties that come of rights, and rights that impose duties.

A human, contingent thing, depending on place and time, differing in different places, overturned by circumstances, speaking one language one side of the Pyrenees and another language the other, justice has nothing but the name in common with the metaphysical idol imagined by certain philosophers, and especially worshipped since the days of Kant. Justice, a quality of an essentially practical order, a purely political virtue, an empirical and relative fact, is a Roman conception ; the allegory of the scales is Roman ; *suum cuique* is a Roman device ; "Justitia est constans ac perpetua voluntas jus suum cuique tribuendi."

The Romans found the sentiment of justice in the consciousness of their rights and their duties. Masters of the world (that is their right), they owe justice to the world (that is their duty). The ideal Roman is the judge without hatred and without love, without anger or fear, without vengeance or envy. The ideal Roman, did we say ? More correctly, the ideal of the Roman. The definition of justice remains, after two thousand years, the definition of the word *justitia*.

The Romans arose to that height because they were a

military people, and therefore subject to a hierarchy and a discipline, and a political people, and therefore careful to establish their domination on unshakable bases. The Jews, a people of exalted fanatics, impassioned by uninterrupted humiliations, were eternally incapable of that effort of serene moderation which justice implies.

The prophets are the spokesmen of a people and a party; they demand every advantage for this people and party. The idea of rendering to the *goyim* what belongs to the *goyim*, or to the aristocrats what belongs to the aristocrats, is at the very antipodes of the thought of the prophets. *Suum cuique*, say the Latins; everything for us, say the prophets. Is there a single passage in which the prophets do not demand the condemnation of their opponents?

Justice renders even to the enemy that to which he has a right. The prophets are impassioned tribunes who devote the *goyim* and the aristocrats to extermination, unless they come to their knees. As patriots and demagogues they were true to their parts. But what common measure is there between the demands of a people and a party and the serene concession of his right to every man?

The very idea did not enter their heads. The translations, which always have a pious bias, render as "justice" a certain number of Hebrew words, not one of which has that meaning.

*Mishpat* properly means judgment, sentence; when the prophets invoke *mishpat*, they purely and simply call upon their opponents the sentence of Jahveh—in other words, chastisement.

Let judgment, says Amos, roll on like the waves of a river, and justice flow like an unceasing torrent.<sup>1</sup> He means the judgment that will condemn our opponents—the justice that will grant us all our claims.

*Sadiq*, the just, means the man who lives honestly or

<sup>1</sup> *Amos* v. 24.

piously; it has nothing in common with the meaning of *justus*.

*Mishar* and *nakohah*, straightness, are much the same as honesty and piety; here, again, there is nothing of *justitia*.

The *goin* and the aristocrats who oppress and despoil the Jewish people stand for the rich man oppressing and despoiling the poor. The prophets who dream of exterminating or bringing to their knees the aristocrats and the *goin* are the poor man oppressing and despoiling the rich. Behind neither the one nor the other do I perceive the august shade of justice.

It may be objected that justice is employed in protecting the weak. But is it also employed in exterminating the powerful, in making outlaws of those who dissent? Serenity, disinterestedness, gravity, the stifling of hatred, the overcoming of anger, the abandonment of vengeance, a generous concession of rights in correspondence with duties—not one of these characters of justice is found in the prophetic books. Everything in them is national and democratic; it is the glory and the inspiration of the books.

At the root of the Jewish books is the eminently nationalist idea of the choice of Israel. Jahveh, the most unjust of gods, has chosen the Jewish people, not on account of their merits, as the Bible says unceasingly, but by his own free choice; he has chosen the Jewish people, and rejected the others. Christian theology will convert this iniquity into the dogma of predestination and grace. The eminently democratic idea that the popular party alone represents Israel is not less fundamental in the prophets. Among the Jews the prophets separate the men of their party from the men of the opposite party; the choice of Israel becomes in the prophets the choice of the democratic party of Jerusalem; Israel represents, in the prophets, merely the Jews of the prophetic party.

We must not read it "justice"; we must read it

“claims”—claims that are more or less authorised; claims of a people, the Jewish people; of a party, the democracy.

Internationalisation is, as we said, the art of appropriating words that had a concrete meaning in their time and place, and investing these words with a general, and purely moral, signification.

The history of ancient Judaism and primitive Christianity may be summed up thus: a national and nationalist fact which becomes an international fact. The task of the historian of Judaism is to detect the ancient national and nationalist fact under the modern international fact. The evolution of the Jewish people should be studied just as coldly as the evolution of any other people of ancient Asia.

On whatever side we look, we cannot find in the prophets, any more than in the rest of the Bible, anything else but national works, the outcome of the need of a definite period. At the root of the prophetic books there is the covenant agreed upon between Jahveh and Israel. The obligation of Israel is that it be faithful to Jahveh; the obligation of Jahveh is, on account of this fidelity, to give the world to Israel.

But in what does this fidelity to Jahveh, which is demanded of Israel, consist?

If we are to believe the majority of commentators and historians, Jahveh asks of Israel, before he will give it the kingdom of the world, the practice of the whole of what are called the Christian virtues.

Nothing of the kind. Jahveh merely demands that his people shall form an absolute nationalism in opposition to foreigners. The laws relating to the social order and fraternal life are only promulgated from Jew to Jew, not from Jew to foreigner. We have seen that the “neighbour” of a Jew is another Jew; a pagan is not the neighbour of a Jew. We have seen that the “foreigner” who

is protected by law is the mercenary or the proselyte who lives on Jewish soil under the law of Jahveh. The Jewish law is only for the Jews and the Judaisers.

Even when Jahveh becomes a universal god he is the prototype of a national god; the Jewish law, even if it become universal law (by conquest), will remain Jewish law. An absolute nationalism—that is the gist of the prophets; and it is the gist, too, of the psalms and apocalypses.

A statistic will show this.

The covenant concluded between Jahveh and Israel is set forth or recalled in about five hundred passages of the prophetic books. About two hundred of these passages do not give the conditions with any exactness; they merely recall the covenant. But the conditions are stated in about three hundred passages. We may distribute these three hundred passages in groups.

In four cases out of ten the condition is that they shall not worship foreign gods;

In one case out of ten, that they shall not represent Jahveh in a material form;

In one case out of ten, that they shall not practise his cult anywhere but in the temple at Jerusalem;

In a little less than one case in ten, that they shall observe the Sabbath—a supreme commandment;

In a little more than one case in ten, that they shall not kill or steal; these are precepts of ordinary law; fornication and adultery are almost always, in the prophets, symbolical expressions for the worship of foreign gods;

Lastly, in two cases out of ten, it is enjoined that they do not violate justice, despoil the weak, or oppress the orphan, the widow, and the mercenary stranger residing in Judæa and observing the Jewish law; but it is quite understood that there is question only of justice due to the Jew, of protection due to the Jewish or Judaising weak, widow, or orphan.

Hence, in only one case in ten is there question of the rules of ordinary morality; these, moreover, either implicitly or explicitly, apply only between Jew and Jew; twice the covenant imposes a law of democratic equality and protection of the lowly in Israel; in seven cases out of ten it aims merely at concentrating Jewish nationalism round Jahveh.

The same statistical procedure would yield analogous results from the Mosaic books.

Seven-tenths of the prophetic prescriptions and three-fourths of the Decalogue and the Mosaic law are devoted to religious questions; this frightful preponderance of the cult over civil, political, and moral law means simply that the Jewish soul, in order to live and last, has concentrated in a fanatical nationalism, and given to its country the name of Jahveh, god of Israel.

The men of Jerusalem had not to formulate the principles of a subjective religion for future ages; and the historian, in removing from the Jewish writers the false appearance of an impossible spirituality, instead of lowering their grandeur really restores to them their native truth.

What is there left when we have studied the development of Jewish nationalism in the prophetic books and the Mosaic law, pointed out the democratic tendency, and noted certain principles of right and morals that are common to all peoples? Nothing.

Nothing, unless it be this:—

The malediction of politics; to make alliances and organise armies is a mockery of Jahveh.

The malediction of luxury; luxury is an outrage on Jahveh.

The malediction of commerce; agriculture and pastoral work alone are permitted to the children of Jahveh; commerce is for the *göim*.

Reprobation of the joy of life and of pleasure; chastity



is erected to the level of a virtue for the first time in history; love becomes a shameful necessity, of which one is ashamed.

And then the malediction of the great, the noble, and the strong. Greatness, strength, and nobility are so many outrages on Jahveh. Jahveh, it is said a hundred times, has no deeper joy than in humbling the powerful, felling the strong, and flouting the noble.

And then the irrevocable condemnation of all that is intellectual, of art and science; never were the "intellectuals" so much hated as they were by Jewish nationalism.

There will be a day of Jahveh on every one that is proud and every one that is lifted up;

And upon all the cedars of Lebanon, and upon all the oaks of Bashan;

And upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up;

And upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall;

And upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all that charms the eye.<sup>1</sup>

There will be a day of Jahveh upon all that charms the eye! Jahveh, the national god, was the sublime creation that gives rise to an imperialism that would conquer the world. What an admirable reward the god has given to the people who invented him! But this god, who in ancient times bore, among other names, the name of Moloch, remains the terrible god to whom children are sacrificed. If he has given the world as a reward to his people, he has exacted in return the first born of the human sentiments.

Such is the meaning of the covenant, the basis of Judaism.

It is a commonplace to say that the legendary books and the prophetic books are resplendent with literary beauty. If *Genesis*, and the romances of the two *Isaiahs*,

<sup>1</sup> *Isaiah* ii. 12-16.

Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, had not been full of pages that attract our admiration even in an irreligious age, they would never have accomplished the work that they have done. They would have put no enthusiasm into the men of Judæa; they would not have overthrown the pagan world; they would not agitate souls to-day. We find in them nothing of the perfectly harmonious beauty which Greece created; what we find are strong souls, that see strongly, and, to express their vision, use strong words.

Jerusalem has, by a piece of fortune that I had almost called miraculous, given birth to a moral dynasty of men of genius, men of iron, men of dreams, men of fire, who have made it live for ages—in *sæcula sæculorum*, as the pride of triumphant Judaism will afterwards sing. But men of genius are not merely the summary of a period or a tradition; the sight of the things around them awakes in them an understanding, a divination, an idea, that it does not awaken in the men about them. They flare up, like torches, in the sombre night. A great shadow, undefined, mortally vague, spreads on every side; and suddenly the lightning comes, and they appear, they blaze, they are lighthouses, they are the star over a sea where all was chaos, and which becomes in their light a broad road towards the future.

The anonymous writers who, in idealising the figure of the ancient dervishes of Palestine, created the characters of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Isaiah, to meet the most pressing needs of their country and their time, stand out in the history of the world. And the century, the third century, which witnessed their appearance, should be known as the century of the prophets.

Two hundred years earlier there had been, across the sea, a prodigious outpouring of disinterested splendour. The Greek genius gave birth to art and science. The brains of men learned at Athens to be in harmony, and humanity may develop on the education created by the age of Pericles.

Later there will be the age of Augustus, and its successor, the age of the Antonines. It will be the Roman epoch. And humanity will learn from Rome law, the art of living in society, of commanding and obeying, of being peoples.

The moment when humanity will awake at the light of Greek culture, after a thousand years of stumbling in the dark, will be the age of Leo X.; it will assuredly be the Renascence, for the world will be born again to thought and to joy.

But there was an age when certain men, in the wildest corner of the universe, founded, in poems, discourses, and frightful imprecations, something new, something unknown to either Greek or Roman civilisation, something that will in turn be called Judaism, then Christianity, then, in a general word, Religion, and that will, in the days when evolution reaches its limit, become Socialism. Whether we bless or curse that age, let us recognise its greatness; it is the age of the prophets.

Judaism may now spread throughout the world. We have seen it radiate from Jerusalem across Judæa, then through the whole of Palestine; from there it has infiltrated into cognate and neighbouring lands, Moab, Edom, Ammon, and Syria; then colonies have gone out and settled in Asia Minor: in Egypt, in the islands of the Mediterranean, even on Greek soil. The Jews take with them everywhere the words of their prophets, consoling them in their weakness, their humiliations, promising them the victory in an assured time. They can bear distress and oppression, mockery and insults; they have with them this viaticum of enduring hopes and intimate certainties that Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the two Isaiahs have given them. The survival of Judaism amid so many causes of ruin could not be explained without the work of these writers of genius.

In the west, meantime, the power of Rome is growing; Carthage, its great enemy, is vanquished. Presently

Greece will become a Roman province; for the moment she wears herself out in intestine war. Her political agony will not, indeed, lessen her intellectual domination; intellectual Greece will triumph, in proportion as the policy of Rome triumphs. The third century is the time of the great philosophic schools that take their rise in Plato, Aristotle, and the time of the first Scipios. But amid these mountains of Judæa, of which the scholars of Greece and the Senate of Rome hardly know the name, there are men who have prepared the revolution that will one day destroy the Græco-Roman world.

PART THIRD

THE APOCALYPSES

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CHAPTER I.

HYMNS IN THE SYNAGOGUES

THE prophecies of the Second Isaiah date from about the year 200; the apocalypse of Daniel from about the year 164. The Second Isaiah closes the century of the prophets; Daniel inaugurates the era of the apocalypses. There is no breach of continuity between them. The apocalypse follows the prophets logically no less than historically. The last of the minor prophets, especially Zechariah, the most significant of them, are witnesses of the filiation. Before passing from one period to the other, from the prophets to the apocalypses, we must consider the psalms. A vast collection of short national poems, beginning in the third century and continuing during half of the second, the psalms will enable us to characterise the state of soul of the Jewish people at the time when, the voices of the prophets having ceased, the apocalypses appear.

Reuss, the great Biblical scholar, has called the psalms the hymn-book of the Synagogue.

In point of fact, the synagogue had arisen, and was developing in Judæa and in the Jewish colonies. Judaism had only one temple, that of Jerusalem; so the Mosaic law had enjoined. But the one temple that had sufficed during the fifth and fourth centuries, when the Jewish State comprised only Jerusalem and its outskirts, and even sufficed when Judaism had spread about Jerusalem

over the territory of Palestine, could not suffice now that Israel had settlements in the whole of Palestine, in Syria, Egypt, Asia Minor, the islands, and in Greece itself. On the other hand, it was impossible to infringe the primordial law of Judaism; and the sacerdotal aristocracy at Jerusalem would not have tolerated rivals.

The Jerusalem temple remained the one temple of Jahveh. There only could holocausts be offered to him; there only did the series of official rites proceed. Offerings and tithes continued to flow to the Jerusalem temple; and, from all the Jewries of the world, it was to that alone that the pilgrimages brought the tribute of the piety of the faithful. The Jerusalem temple remained the centre of the Jewish fatherland. But there arose houses of prayer, preaching, and patriotic gatherings; even in Jerusalem there were, round the temple, pious shelters for the pilgrims of various nationalities; and these were called synagogues.

No cult was practised in the synagogues; no sacrifices were offered in them; they were meeting-places. There one listened to the reading of the Law and, later, of the prophets; men were strengthened in the love of their country; and, with the reading of the national books, the commentaries, and the exhortations of those who speak, they loved to sing in common, in long-drawn sombre melody, hymns in which their souls found expression.

The psalms were the hymns they sang in the synagogues.

Who composed these hymns?

The old ecclesiastical exegesis did not hesitate to declare that the psalms were the work written in the tenth century by the pious King David and other venerable characters of antiquity. We cannot take a single step in Jewish literature without finding pseudopigraphy. The psalms were composed by the poets of the third and second centuries. The form, which is



suggested by various passages in the prophets, was probably borrowed from ancient Babylonian poetry; here again, however, the Jews, in appropriating a foreign thing, succeeded in making it eminently Jewish.

Just as the authors of the prophetic books had sought in ancient Israelitic history the situations in relation to which they had created the discourses they wished to address to their contemporaries, so the authors of the psalms took their situations from ancient history, especially from the legends of King David; and, by a similar artifice, they represented the songs which they would have sung to their contemporaries to be the antique work of certain heroes of their national history. Most of the psalms thus composed remained disconnected and independent of each other, and formed the collection known as the book of psalms; others, however, were inserted in the historical books, and even in the prophetic books, purporting to be lyrical fragments uttered on special occasions by Moses or his sister Mary, by David, or by Hezekiah.

As an outcome of the misfortunes of the end of the third and beginning of the second centuries, the hymns of the synagogue have a certain prayer as their constant refrain:—

“Jahveh, save us from our enemies; avenge us on our enemies; annihilate our enemies.”

The celebrated psalm cxxxvii., *Super flumina Babylonis*, must be quoted in full:—

By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.

We hanged our harps upon the willows of the land.

For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.

How should we sing the songs of Jahveh in a strange land?

If I forget thee, Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.

If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the

root of my mouth ; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.

Remember, Jahveh, the children of Edom, who said, in the day of Jerusalem : Rase it, rase it, even the foundation thereof.

O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed, happy shall he be that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us.

Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.

Psalm xxi. 8-10 :—

Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies ; thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee.

Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger ; Jahveh, thy wrath shall swallow them up, and the fire shall devour them.

Their fruit shalt thou destroy from the earth, and their seed from among the children of men.

Psalm xxxv. 26 :—

Let them be clothed with shame and dishonour.

Psalm lv. 15 and 23 :—

Let death seize upon them, and let them go down quick into the home of the dead.

But thou, O god, shalt bring them down into the bottom of the pit, and they shall not live out half their days.

Psalm lviii. 6-10 :—

Break their teeth, O god, in their mouth ; break the jaw of the young lions, O Jahveh.

Let them melt away as waters which run continually ; let the arrows they put to the bow be as if broken.

As a snail which melteth, let every one of them pass away ; let them be like the untimely birth of a woman, which hath not seen the sun.

Before your pots can feel the thorns, let the whirlwind take them away, both green and aflame.

Let me rejoice in seeing my vengeance ; let me bathe my feet in their blood.

Psalm lxviii. 23 :—

Let the tongue of thy dogs have its share of the enemy, saith Jahveh.

Psalm lxxix. 6, 10, and 12 :—

Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that have known

not thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name.

Let it be known among the heathen in our sight that there is vengeance for the blood which is shed.

Render unto our neighbours sevenfold into their bosom their reproach.

Psalm lxxxiii. 9-17 :—

Do unto them as unto the Midianites, as to Sisera, as to Jabin, at the brook of Kison ;

Which perisheth at Endor, and were as dung for the earth.

Make their nobles like Oreb, and like Zeeb, and their kings as Zebah, and as Zalmunna ;

My god, make them like a whirlwind, as the stubble before the wind, as the fire that burneth the forest, and as the flame that setteth the mountains on fire.

So persecute them with thy tempest, and make them afraid with thy storm.

Fill their faces with shame, and they will seek thy name, O Jahveh.

Let them be confounded and troubled for ever ; yea, let them be put to shame and perish.

Psalm xciv. 1-3 :—

God of vengeance, Jahveh, god of vengeance, show thyself.

Lift up thyself, thou Judge of the earth ; render them their reward.

How long shall they be glad ?

At times the Jew of the psalms boasts of loving his enemies.....We find, again, in psalm cix. 6-15, how he loves them :—

Set thou a wicked man over him ; and let Satan stand at his right hand.

When he shall be judged, let him be condemned ; and let his prayer become sin.

Let his days be few ; and let another take his office.

Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow.

Let his children be vagabonds, and beg ; let them seek their bread far from their ruined homes.

Let the extortioner cast his net on all that he hath, and let the strangers spoil the fruit of his labour.

Let there be none to extend mercy unto him, neither let there be any to favour his fatherless children.

Let his posterity be cut off; and in another age let their name be blotted out.

Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered with Jahveh, and let not the sin of his mother be blotted out.

Let them be before Jahveh continually, and let him cut off the memory of them from the earth.

And later, 18-19 :—

He clothes himself with cursing like as with his garment, and it comes like water into his bowels, and like oil into his bones.

Let it be unto him as the garment which covereth him, and for a girdle wherewith he is girded continually.

And, by way of conclusion, 21 :—

And do thou, for me, lord Jahveh, for thy name's sake, because thy mercy is great.

Psalm cxxxix. contains the avowal (22) without disguise :—

I hate them with perfect hatred.

Who are these enemies on whom the vengeance of Jahveh is called ?

They are the "wicked"; that is to say, for the traditionalist Jews, foreigners and Hellenising Jews.

The "wicked" are, first, foreigners, the men who, both in Judæa and the Jewish colonies, "oppress the Jewish people,"<sup>1</sup> "the nations that have not known thee, the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name,"<sup>2</sup> "the neighbours who have outraged Jahveh,"<sup>3</sup> those "who have burned up the synagogues of god,"<sup>4</sup> those "who have sought to cut them off from being a nation, that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance,"<sup>5</sup> "all nations that compassed it about,"<sup>6</sup> etc.

The "wicked" are also the Hellenising Jews, the aristocrats who live in opulence, the proud priests who exploit the poor, "those who glorify themselves,"<sup>7</sup> who "are inclosed in their own fat,"<sup>8</sup> who "render not

<sup>1</sup> All the psalms, *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> *Psalms lxxix.* 12, and *passim*.

<sup>3</sup> *Psalms lxxxiii.* 4.

<sup>7</sup> *Psalms lxxiii.* 8.

<sup>2</sup> *Psalms lxxix.* 6.

<sup>4</sup> *Psalms lxxiv.* 8.

<sup>6</sup> *Psalms cxviii.* 10.

<sup>8</sup> *Psalms xvii.* 10.

justice,"<sup>1</sup> who are "powerful"; they are, nevertheless, the "brothers" of the poor, "sons of the same mother,"<sup>2</sup> and—it is said quite literally—"the princes of the Jewish people."<sup>3</sup>

While the enemies of the traditionalist Jews are called the "wicked," the traditionalist Jews are called the "just" (*sadiq*), the "pious" (*hasid*), the "holy" (*qadosh*), the "poor" (*ani*), the "humble" (*anav*), the "needy" (*ebion*).

The procedure is elementary. Everything of the traditionalist Jew is good; all that is hostile to him is wicked. Good, wicked; just, unjust; holy, perverse—the use of the words is absolute.

The traditionalist Jews, the puritans, the men of the people, have all the virtues that are gathered up in the words "holiness" and "humility." The others, on the contrary, their enemies, are "violent," "sanguinary," "pitiless," "persecutors," "tyrannical," "thieves," "exploiters," "impudent," "insolent," "their mouths full of insults," "proud," "braggarts," "liars," "calumniators"; they have "vipers' tongues"; they are "knavish," "treacherous," "doing evil for its own sake," "impious," "blasphemers," "hardened sinners"; they are—it is the great crime—"rich," "contented," "happy," "tranquil," and, to crown the whole, "senseless."

At the root of the psalms, as of all the Judaic books, is the celebrated covenant agreed upon by Jahveh and Israel. Jahveh has promised victory to Israel, Israel claims from Jahveh the fulfilment of his promise.

"If thou art powerful, Jahveh, show it.....Since thou hast made us promises, Jahveh, keep them.....If thou wouldst be honoured, protect us, Jahveh."

Frequently the Jew of the psalms admits that he has "sinned"; frequently he denies it. He has not offended Jahveh; it was his fathers who offended.

Sometimes the argument is mixed with quibbling.

<sup>1</sup> *Psalms*, every page.

<sup>2</sup> *Psalms* I. 20 and lxxix. 8.

<sup>3</sup> *Psalms* cxiii. 8.

In psalm lxxxix. (30-37) the following reasoning is put to Jahveh:—

“Thou hast promised us thy alliance. If we offend thee, by not fulfilling thy law, chastise us. But that does not justify thee in not fulfilling thy promise. Strike, but pay.”

The payment is, for the Jew of the psalms, the “enjoyment of his inheritance.”<sup>1</sup> Palestine was the inheritance promised by Jahveh to his people in the days of Deuteronomy; now, ever since the two Isaiahs, it embraces the whole world.

I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.

Thou shalt break them with a sceptre of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.<sup>2</sup>

He shall send the rod of my strength out of Zion, and I shall rule in the midst of mine enemies.<sup>3</sup>

The lord shall crush kings; he shall fill the nations with dead bodies; he shall crush the heads of the earth.<sup>4</sup>

They will bind their kings with chains, and their ministers with fetters of iron.<sup>5</sup>

The nations that have not been destroyed will be subject, and will pay tribute. The dilemma proposed to the *goin* by the two Isaiahs is still there—to submit or perish.

Jahveh will make us princes in all the earth.<sup>6</sup>

Jahveh will bring the nations under our feet.<sup>7</sup>

Kings shall bring presents unto thee; they will come to cast themselves at thy feet with pieces of silver.<sup>8</sup>

They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust.

The kings of Tarshish and the isles shall bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.

Yea, all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him.<sup>9</sup>

The miserable Jews scattered among the foreign peoples will return in triumph to Judæa.

<sup>1</sup> *Psalms* xvi. 5-6.

<sup>2</sup> *Psalms* ii. 8-9.

<sup>3</sup> *Psalms* cx. 1-2.

<sup>4</sup> *Psalms* cx. 5-6.

<sup>5</sup> *Psalms* cxlix. 8.

<sup>6</sup> *Psalms* xlv. 16.

<sup>7</sup> *Psalms* xlvii. 3.

<sup>8</sup> *Psalms* lxxviii. 29-30.

<sup>9</sup> *Psalms* lxxii. 9-11.



Jahveh will redeem the exiles, and gather them out of all lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.<sup>1</sup>

Then there shall reign over the world a king descended from David, who "will have dominion from sea to sea, and from the Euphrates to the ends of the earth."<sup>2</sup> It will be a kingdom in which the face of Jahveh shall shine; in which there will be a "fullness of joy and pleasures for evermore";<sup>3</sup> in which the Jew will be "glorified and satisfied with days";<sup>4</sup> and "so heaped up with good things in his age that his youth will be renewed like the eagle's."<sup>5</sup>

Such is the dream. Here is the reality:—

Have mercy upon me, Jahveh, for I am weak; heal me, Jahveh, for my bones are vexed.<sup>6</sup>

I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears.<sup>7</sup>

Consider my trouble which I suffer of them that hate me.<sup>8</sup>

Hear the humiliation of the afflicted, the cry of anguish of the poor.<sup>9</sup>

I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men and despised of the people. They that see me laugh me to scorn.<sup>10</sup>

Have mercy upon me, Jahveh, for I am in trouble; mine eye is consumed with grief, yea, my soul and my belly.

My life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing; my strength faileth, and my bones are consumed.

I am a reproach, even among my neighbours; I am a great reproach and a fear to mine acquaintance; they that see me without flee from me.

I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind; I am like a broken vessel.<sup>11</sup>

Elsewhere:—

My wounds stink and are corrupt.....

I go mourning all day long.

<sup>1</sup> *Psalms* cvii. 2-3, and many other places.

<sup>3</sup> *Psalms* xvi. 11.

<sup>6</sup> *Psalms* vi. 2.

<sup>9</sup> *Psalms* xii. 5.

<sup>4</sup> *Psalms* xci. 16.

<sup>7</sup> *Psalms* vi. 6.

<sup>10</sup> *Psalms* xxii. 6-7.

<sup>2</sup> *Psalms* lxxii. 8.

<sup>5</sup> *Psalms* ciii. 5.

<sup>8</sup> *Psalms* ix. 13.

<sup>11</sup> *Psalms* xxxi. 9-12.

My loins are filled with inflammation, and there is no soundness in my flesh.

I am feeble and sore broken; I roar by reason of the disquietness of my heart.<sup>1</sup>

Psalm xlii. begins with a famous lyric movement:—

As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O god.....

But if the soul of the psalmist pants after his god, it is because he is oppressed by his neighbours, and awaits vengeance of his god. I quote:—

Mine enemies reproach me and break my bones.....O my soul, hope thou in god.....may my god be my salvation.<sup>2</sup>

Let us continue:—

We are like sheep appointed for meat.....

A reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and derision to them that are round about us.

We are a byword among the nations.....

My confusion is continually before me, and the shame of my face covereth me.<sup>3</sup>

Tacitus and Juvenal will, at a later date, speak of the Jew just as he speaks of himself:—

Be merciful unto me, O god; for man would swallow me up; he fighting daily oppresseth me.<sup>4</sup>

Save me, O god; for the waters are come in unto my soul, and I sink in deep mire.<sup>5</sup>

When I take as a garment the garment of affliction, I become a mockery to them.

They that sit in the gate speak of me, and I am the song of the drunkards.<sup>6</sup>

Deliver me out of the mire.<sup>7</sup>

Thou knowest my reproach, and my shame, and my dishonour.

Reproach breaketh my heart, and I am full of heaviness; and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none.<sup>8</sup>

And the psalmist adds:—

<sup>1</sup> *Psalm* xxxviii. 5-8.

<sup>2</sup> *Psalm* xlii. 10-11.

<sup>3</sup> *Psalm* xlii. 11-15.

<sup>4</sup> *Psalm* lvi. 1.

<sup>5</sup> *Psalm* lxix. 1-2.

<sup>6</sup> *Psalm* lxix. 11-12.

<sup>7</sup> *Psalm* lxix. 14.

<sup>8</sup> *Psalm* lxix. 19-20.

Mine enemies gave me gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar.<sup>1</sup>

One can thus understand the cry of these men, when they turn upon their enemies:—

Let their table become a snare before them, and trap in the midst of their welfare.

Let their eyes be darkened that they see not; and make their loins to shake.

Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them.

Let their habitation be desolate, and let none dwell in their tents.....

Add iniquity unto their iniquity, and let them not come into thy justice.

Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written in it with the just.<sup>2</sup>

The just man always means the Jew; the wicked, the enemy of the Jew. And the just man, the Jew, is now the humiliated:—

We are a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and derision to them that are round about us.<sup>3</sup>

My bones cleave to my skin.

I am like a pelican of the wilderness; I am like an owl in the ruins.

I have lost sleep, and am as a sparrow alone upon the house top.

Mine enemies reproach me all the day.....

I eat ashes like bread, and mingle my drink with tears.<sup>4</sup>

I am gone like the shadow when it lengtheneth; I am tossed up and down as the locust.<sup>5</sup>

I am small and despised.<sup>6</sup>

We are exceedingly filled with contempt; our soul is exceedingly filled with mockery.<sup>7</sup>

Jahveh, attend unto my cry; for I am brought very low; deliver me from my persecutors, for they are stronger than I.<sup>8</sup>

We dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead.

Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me; my heart within me is desolate.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Psalms* lxi. 21.

<sup>2</sup> *Psalms* lxi. 22-28.

<sup>3</sup> *Psalms* lxxix. 4.

<sup>4</sup> *Psalms* cii. 5-10.

<sup>5</sup> *Psalms* cix. 23.

<sup>6</sup> *Psalms* cxix. 141.

<sup>7</sup> *Psalms* cxxiii. 3.

<sup>8</sup> *Psalms* cxlii. 6.

<sup>9</sup> *Psalms* cxliii. 3-4.

But the counterpart of the humility of the Jew is the omnipotence of his god.

Jahveh, the little local god worshipped by David, the national god created by the patriotic spirit of the early priests of Jerusalem, the saviour who has brought Judah back from exile and raised up again the walls of the city, the protector of the ardent Jewish congregation, has gradually become the unique strength of these wretched men; and his praise flows unceasingly through the psalms. Jahveh alone can award the victory to his people. All power belongs to Jahveh. Not only can the enemies of the Jews do nothing against Jahveh; not only can the Jews themselves do nothing against Jahveh; but all that the Jews do, or can do, does not count, and is nothing.

I trust not in my bow, neither shall my sword save me; it is thou alone that dost save us from our enemies.<sup>1</sup>

Except Jahveh build the house, they labour in vain that build it; except Jahveh keep the city, the watchman watcheth in vain.

In vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late; Jahveh giveth just the same to his beloved during sleep.<sup>2</sup>

Never were perseverance and tenacity pushed so far; but never, at the same time, was contempt of personal action, of virile energy, human liberation, and bold front proclaimed so ferociously. In the prophets the Jewish soul had not pushed to the extreme the idea that Jahveh alone can do things. Jahveh was the great figure that dominated the history of Israel; but, if it were only in its rebellions and blasphemies, Israel still existed beside Jahveh. The struggle was still on between Jacob and the god. Now the full consequences of the Judaic spirit appear. The covenant produces its effects.

Jahveh is strong in direct proportion to the weakness of his people; powerful in proportion to its humiliation.

<sup>1</sup> *Psalms* xliv. 6.

<sup>2</sup> *Psalms* cxxvii. 1-2.

The lowliest of people needed, if it were to live and triumph, the most powerful of gods.

What is to be done by such feeble men in the hands of so strong a god?

Give themselves to him, entirely and unreservedly.

Expect everything from him.

Expect nothing of themselves.

Expect no result of their efforts.

Yield like the leaf that is borne in the wind, the stick that drifts on the stream, the stone that is flung from the sling.

And, simply, observe the commandments.

The Jew has made a covenant with his god. Each must give something. The Jew has promised his god that he will observe his law; he looks to him for everything.

All they that see me, laugh me to scorn; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head.

He trusteth to Jahveh, they say; let him bring him forth, let him deliver him, seeing he delights in him.

Thou art he that took me out of the womb; that made me rest in safety when I was upon my mother's breasts; I was cast upon thee from the womb; thou art my god from my mother's belly.

Be not far from me, when trouble is near, when there is none to help.....

Be thou not far from me, Jahveh; O my strength, haste thee to deliver me from the sword.....

And I will tell thy glory everywhere; I will celebrate thee; I will glorify thee; I will pay my vows before thee.<sup>1</sup>

“Heaven helps those who help themselves” is a pagan, not a Jewish, precept. It means, first, that you must help yourself, make an effort, be active, will; you must be the wind, not the leaf—the current, not the stick—the sling, not the stone. Heaven will then help you; but it matters little, because by your own effort you have deserved to be helped.

Israel, on the contrary, expects its salvation and victory

<sup>1</sup> *Psalms* xxii. 7-25.

from Jahveh. He waits in a ferocious and invincible obstinacy, but he waits in prayer. And the weaker he makes himself, the more he will rely on the favour of Jahveh; and the more he relies on Jahveh, the weaker and more lowly he will become.

Thus is faith defined, in religious language. The Jews had a glowing faith, for they believed simply in their god. They had also the virtue of love; that is to say, by the very fact of their concentration they had the love of one's nation which engenders hatred of the rest of the human race, *odium generis humani*, as Tacitus will say. They had also hope, besides faith and hatred—the hope that their god will give them what they desire. Thus they created the trinity of the three theological virtues: Faith, Hope, and Hatred.

Such is the hymn-book in which the Jews sang their ideal at the beginning of the second century. Some of the psalms are earlier, and date from the time of the later prophets; some are later, and seem to have been written during the guerilla warfare of the Machabees. But they have a great future. Composed by the lowliest among the sons of this lowly people, they will become more and more a national book, in proportion as the Jewish nation becomes humbler—until the day when the book of faith, hope, and hatred of the oppressed Jews becomes the book of faith, hope, and hatred of all the oppressed in the world.

To make it the book of pious souls in modern times one has only to forget its historical origin. Let the terminology be taken literally; let it be unknown that the "just" of the psalms are the Jews of the popular traditionalist party, and the "wicked" are the Jews of the Hellenising party and the *goyim*; let the "just" stand for believers, and the "wicked" stand for unbelievers; and this book that has arisen, at the beginning of the second century, out of the struggle of the two political parties that divided Jerusalem, will have experienced the



lot of the other Jewish books—it will be internationalised.

The psalms were the hymns sung in the Jewries already scattered over the Oriental world by the lowly and poor who were obsessed with the thirst for vengeance, and who, too weak to rise in revolt, began to expect from their god alone the fulfilment of their sanguinary dream. They were born in the lower depths of a people oppressed by its aristocrats, who found comfort in their wealth, as well as by the pagan peoples who envied them with their power and their disdain. The prophets had anathematised those of the Jews who were abandoning the national traditions for Hellenic novelties. The psalms are the book of the traditionalist Jews; but the traditionalist Jews are now the humble, the poor, the wretched, the men who thirsted for vengeance. They call themselves the "meek"; and it means that they accept their reproach, and count, not on their own arms, but on their god, to avenge them. The tenacious and obstinate maintenance of their confidence will ensure its success. It is the monstrous imperialism of these eternally vanquished, who cease not to dream of universal dominion.

The religious sentiment of modern nations has not been deceived. It sufficed to moderate certain expressions that were too obviously abominable for pious souls to find in the psalms, from St. Paul to Luther and on to our own time, the hymn of humiliation that knows no refuge but in the supernatural.

We have, in fact, reached the time when the phenomenon of religious faith is born in the history of the world. Through exaggerating its powerlessness, Jewish imperialism has come to the despairing surrender of itself into the hands of the supernatural. And that is, in the last analysis, the definition of religious faith.

When a man, a people, a world, has known the greatest pride, the vastest ambition, and the wildest hopes, and some pitiless reality persistently mocks the pride, unceasingly thwarts the ambition, and indefinitely rebukes

the hope, this man, people, or world can do no more, if it has the strength not to surrender, if it persists in willing, if it abandons nothing of its soul, than rely on and await the supernatural occurrence that will realise its hopes, crown its ambitions, in spite of a coalition of the universe, and, breaking the power of the enemy at one stroke, bring its pride to triumph.

Religious faith is the soul of man expecting nothing save by the action of a god. It is based on two facts: the powerlessness of man, the all-powerfulness of god. Faith is the reliance of man's powerlessness on the divine omnipotence.

The Greek and Roman religions were cults; but, properly speaking, they never knew this element of religious feeling. Never did Greeks or Romans, however superstitious they may have been, yield themselves to the supernatural. To create religious faith there was needed, on the one hand, the immeasurable persistence of the Jewish soul, and, on the other, the extraordinary series of situations that kept it in ceaseless oppression. Religious faith is the creation of Judaism.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE FIRST APOCALYPSES

IT would be useless to seek in the strong serenity of Greek and Latin literatures anything that recalls the prophets, the psalms, and especially the apocalypses.

In the Græco-Roman world nature rules. There is no supernatural, because there is only nature symbolised in human forms. From the earliest beginning the gods of Homer are heroes, and his heroes are gods. Energies unfold amid the harmonious development of myths; they bear the names of deities, just as to-day they bear scientific names; but they are never more than natural energies. While the orientals kneel before a god who is outside nature, a god who rules them as a sultan rules his enslaved people, the pre-Socratic philosophers study the secret of the physical laws by which the cosmos is organised. Socrates discovers the human soul. The metaphysic that Plato builds up is the masterpiece of dialectics. Aristotle lays the foundation of all the sciences, and writes, four centuries before the present era, two thousand three hundred years ago:—

“All that occurs proceeds from one principle to another.”<sup>1</sup>

Seneca, heir of the Greek scholars, will say later:—

“What is destiny? The necessity of all things and all actions (*necessitatem rerum omnium actionumque*).”<sup>2</sup>

The Greek tragic poets had known nothing finer in the thoughts of the people than the spectacle of heroic souls struggling against the fatality of the eternal future.

<sup>1</sup> *On the Parts of Animals*, l. 1-13.

<sup>2</sup> *Quæstiones naturales*, ii. 36.

Rome appears. She brings into the world the highest type of humanity, strength, and self-possession, "homo moderatus et gravis"—man master of himself and the universe. To contemplate the world, to detect its rhythm, to love life, to rejoice in the sun, to cultivate pleasure, to turn to neither of those excesses which men call debauch and asceticism, fear or rashness, and that lessen oneself, to be a strong and calm soul, to gather the fruit that the earth offers you—that was the wisdom of Greece and the virtue of Rome.

To expect of an omnipotent god the fulfilment of their exaggerated dreams—that was Jewish piety; and that we find praised in the prophets and the psalms. When these dreams had reached the stage of paroxysm, when, after waiting several centuries, their patience and anger were exhausted, the apocalypse appeared. That the Jew might still live on, it said to him:—

"Know in what wise thy god will ensure thy triumph to-morrow."

The apocalypse is a revelation; but it is a different revelation from those that abound in the prophets and psalms. The prophets and the psalms had said to the Jews:—

"Jahveh has promised you revenge and victory: count on revenge and victory."

The apocalypse says:—

"The event will happen in so many days, in such and such a way."

After the death of Simeon the Just the hostility between the popular traditionalist party and the Hellenising aristocracy had increased constantly at Jerusalem. The episodes of the struggle are not found in history until the time when it degenerates into civil war—that is to say, a little after the year 175, the date of the accession of Antiochus Epiphanes in Syria. This civil war is called by modern histories—Israelite, Protestant,

or Catholic—the “persecution” of Antiochus Epiphanes, and the “war of independence” of the Machabees. Our authorities, the historian Flavius Josephus (“*Jewish Antiquities*” and “*The Jewish War*”) and the first two *Books of the Machabees* (especially the second) do not agree in their account of the events; they agree, however, in representing the Hellenising party as appealing to King Antiochus to crush the traditionalist party.

A certain Onias (or Menelaus), whether or no he was brother to the high-priest Jesus (or Jason), takes the lead of the Hellenising party; it must be noted that at this time the Jews have two names, a Jewish and a Greek name. Menelaus is beaten. He then goes, “with the chief men of his party, to King Antiochus, and begs him to enter Judæa.”<sup>1</sup>

The first *Book of the Machabees* is not less explicit. “In those days,” it says, “there went out of Israel children of iniquity who counselled thus: Let us go and make alliance with the nations.....Then some of the people went and sought the King Antiochus.”<sup>2</sup>

Antiochus easily made himself master of Jerusalem, “because the faction of Menelaus opened the gates to him”;<sup>3</sup> he killed several of the opposite party, and, of course, profited by the opportunity to sack the town.

Now masters of Jerusalem, the partisans of Menelaus give free rein to their Hellenistic tendencies. They had told Antiochus, says Josephus, “that they had determined to embrace his religion and the Greek way of living, and they asked him to let them build a gymnasium in Jerusalem. He allowed them. Then they took from themselves the marks of circumcision, so that they could not be distinguished from the Greeks, even when they ran and wrestled naked; and, thus forsaking the laws of their fathers, they differed in nothing from foreigners.”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Jewish War*, i. 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Jewish Antiquities*, xii. 7.

<sup>2</sup> *1 Machabees*, i. 12-14.

<sup>4</sup> *Jewish Antiquities*, xii. 6.

It would be impossible to carry Hellenising further.

The trouble continued. The orthodox Jews saw with horror the triumph of Greek ways, and the gymnasium was not the smallest source of scandal to them. The two parties came to blows, and there were battles on the streets of Jerusalem.

After two years the Hellenising party, gravely threatened by the popular party, again summoned the king of Syria to help them. He had just been stopped in the midst of an expedition against Egypt by the Roman legate Popilius; the famous anecdote of the circle of Popilius will be remembered. Did Antiochus wish to vent his impotent anger on Jerusalem, as has been said? It is possible. But he certainly wanted to restore peace in a town in which there were disturbances daily, by exterminating the anti-Hellenising Jews and abolishing Judaism; and he was invited by the Hellenising Jews.

The moderate Hellenising Jews wanted only a certain modification of the rigours of the Mosaic law; they thought only of adjusting the cult of Jahveh to fresh needs. But when we recollect the spirit of ferocious exclusiveness, the intolerance, the quarrels and furies of the rigourist party, when we picture these demagogues roaring after the rich and powerful, invoking at every moment the vengeance of Jahveh, the more fanatical as they spoke in the name of their god, we are not astonished that aristocrats who were bent on luxury and pleasure, captivated with Greek ways, and ready to take any measure to secure the continuance of their privileges, could in their exasperation dream of ruining for ever the popular fanaticism, even if it involved the destruction of the very name of the god which it perpetuated. Moreover, what did it matter whether they worshipped Jahveh or Jupiter, if they gained tranquillity by the change? Let us remember that certain children of Israel had tried to obliterate on themselves the marks of circumcision. Had they not opened a Greek gymnasium in the holy city? Did they not day after day flout the



precepts of the Mosaic law? Were they not presently about to "sacrifice to the idols and violate the Sabbath"?<sup>1</sup> Finally, had they not offered to embrace the religion of the pagan Antiochus?

Whether or no he went beyond the desires of the Hellenisers, Antiochus was terrible. The Syrian army entered Jerusalem a second time, and massacred thousands of Jews. Looting was universal. The city was brought under an iron yoke. The king of Syria planted a Macedonian garrison in it, and built a fortress that commanded the temple. Lastly, whether or no he went beyond the demands of his inviters, he set up everywhere altars to the pagan gods, forbade the celebration of the Mosaic festivals and ceremonies, ordered the destruction of the sacred books, and—supreme abomination—he had a statue of Jupiter Olympus raised in the temple of Jahveh. This took place on the 15th of kislew, the month of November of the year 168 before the present era.

Never had such a danger threatened Judaism before. The hopes of three centuries seemed to be abortive. An interruption of the Jewish cult meant the destruction of the Jewish nation; the raising of a statue of Jupiter in the temple of Jahveh meant the defeat of the Jewish soul by the Greek world. The miseries and humiliations of the preceding centuries had not abolished one jot of the ancient promises, so long as Jerusalem remained a heart from which Judaism continued to draw life; now it seemed that the heart was destroyed.

The hour of the apocalypses had struck. The first was that of Daniel.

For some time a rumour spread among the people about the temple and in the synagogues. It was said that they had found the writings of an ancient prophet of the time of Nabuchodonosor and the Deportation; his name was Daniel; god had directed that his prophecies

<sup>1</sup> *Daniel* himself (xi. 30) relates that Antiochus is acting with those of the Jews who "were forsaking the holy alliance."

should remain sealed until the day when the events he foretold were about to happen; and this day had come. Some pages of the prophecy had already been read in pious gatherings; how the prophet and two of his companions, although honoured with the favour of the king Nabuchodonosor, had resisted his orders, and refused to pollute themselves with food forbidden by the Mosaic law, and how God had rewarded them.<sup>1</sup>

It seems possible to discover in what circumstances each part of the book of Daniel was successively composed and published. The first chapter is evidently earlier than the profanation of the temple. What do we find in it? Young Jews who occupy a high position at the court of king Nabuchodonosor and reconcile the duties of their office with the duties of their religion. There is no doubt that this piece was written to teach the Jews that they must never sacrifice the one to the other; the persecution has not yet broken out, but it is difficult for the traditionalist Jews to be faithful to their cult amid the advance of Hellenism.

Now the era of tragedy begins. The army of Antiochus has invaded the city; the Hellenisers triumph; there is general consternation among the men of the traditionalist party. A second book then spreads.<sup>2</sup>

It is said to be a new chapter of the prophecies of the ancient Daniel; and the wretched Jews, who are surrounded by the Hellenisers, learn with astonishment that king Nabuchodonosor once had a dream, and the prophet Daniel foretold to him that his empire would pass away, and that another empire after him (that of the Medes) would pass away, and that a third (that of the Persians) would likewise pass away, and that a fourth (that of the Greeks) would in turn be broken by the hand, not of man, but of Jahveh.

And in those days the god of heaven shall set up an

<sup>1</sup> *Daniel i.*

*Daniel ii.*

empire which shall never be destroyed, and of which the kingdom shall not be left to other people ; it shall break in pieces and consume all other empires, and it shall stand for ever.<sup>1</sup>

The worse the trouble becomes, the more splendidly do the old promises resound in the ears of the Jerusalemites.

At each new blow that strikes Judaism, the author of the prophecies of Daniel replies with a new book. The statue of Jupiter Olympus rises in the middle of the temple, on the altar of Jahveh ; and, wonderful to relate, a third *mashal* of the ancient Daniel appears. What do they learn from it? That once, four hundred years before, king Nabuchodonosor had ordered that a great idol, a golden statue of sixty cubits, should be set up, and every one should worship it ; that all—peoples, nations, and tongues—had fallen on their knees and obeyed ; that three Jewish young men alone refused ; that Nabuchodonosor in a rage had them thrown into a seven-times heated furnace, and the fire did not hurt them ; that they walked about unhurt amid the flames.<sup>2</sup>

Who could fail to recognise the allusion? Is not the idol erected by Nabuchodonosor the idol erected by Antiochus Epiphanes? Is not the poet, in telling how the three Jewish young men resisted the king of Babylon and were rewarded for it, teaching his contemporaries that they must resist the king of Syria, and they in turn will be rewarded for their holy rebellion?

The persecution becomes more terrible. The soldiers of Antiochus further the Hellenisation of Judæa with implacable zeal. Not only is the altar of Jahveh abolished and his cult forbidden, but the cult of the Greek gods is enforced. Many Jews who had hitherto been faithful to the old national traditions now fall away through fear ; the more stubborn conceal themselves ; a flood of shame and blood rises about the temple ; the

<sup>1</sup> *Daniel* ii. 44.

<sup>2</sup> *Daniel* iii. 1-30.

traditionalist Jews seem to be lost; Hellenism seems definitely to have triumphed. At this time the fourth prophecy appears. The new book is brought to the synagogues where the Jews meet in secret. It says that king Nabuchodonosor was, for not recognising the god of the Jews, driven from among men for seven years, "and did eat grass, as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws."

Other prophecies follow. There is a festival of king Balthasar, son of Nabuchodonosor, to which a thousand lords are invited, with their wives and concubines, with the vessels of gold and silver stolen from the temple at Jerusalem; and suddenly "came forth the fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the lamp on the plaster of the wall," and Daniel explains it:—

Numbered! God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. Weighed! Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. Divided! Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.<sup>1</sup>

The sixth prophecy of Daniel<sup>2</sup> teaches the Jews, as the third does but less happily, that they should refuse to worship any other god than Jahveh. Thus, one after the other, like a succession of defiances to the awful calamities and threats, the second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth prophecies of Daniel had arisen from the depths of the proscribed old party.

At this time there is a reign of terror in Jerusalem; surrounded by the troops of Antiochus, the Hellenisers triumph, possibly, beyond all that they had desired. Menelaus, the abominable high-priest, lets the impure blood of swine pollute the courts consecrated to Jahveh. From that day, even before the next four prophecies had appeared, the first six had an immediate effect. The old Judaic party draws together, finds a leader, and lifts up its head.

<sup>1</sup> *Daniel* v. 5 and 25-28.

<sup>2</sup> *Daniel* vi.

One day, in a small town of Judæa, some Jews of the rigorist party, a certain Mathathias and his sons, slew a Hellenising Jew and a company of Syrians who came to his defence. To escape punishment, they fled to the mountains; other Jews of the oppressed party joined them; the movement grew. The rebels found their enemies not strong enough to reduce them. They gathered strength, organised the revolt, formed a sort of army; Judas Machabæus, one of the sons of Mathathias, took command of it. Antiochus was called elsewhere by another war; the representative he sent against the rebellious Jews was beaten; and, in 164, Judas Machabæus took Jerusalem and solemnly purified the temple. He could not, however, force the citadel in which the Hellenisers took refuge. Thus the victory hung undecided between the two parties, and the struggle went on with alternating success and defeat.

The last four prophecies of Daniel seem to have been composed during the first years of the Machabæan movement. The poet and patriot who hid behind the mask of the ancient Daniel did not think his work was complete as long as there was still courage to restore and to exalt; and he put forth in succession the four great apocalyptic visions by which Jahveh unveiled to his spokesman, and he to the Jewish people, the future destiny of the universe.

We must not forget that with Daniel we are supposed to be in the days of Nabuchodonosor and the deportation to Babylon. The literary procedure that had been adopted by the authors of the books of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the two Isaiahs was followed by the author of the book of Daniel; that the book is pseudonymous is now recognised by every single student of any degree of independence. They unanimously recognise in the book what it really is—a work born of the upheavals of the year 168 and of the first efforts at recovery that followed.

The four great apocalyptic visions of Daniel are, therefore, four series of predictions, which start with the days of Nabuchodonosor, extend over a period of four hundred years, and, as their final goal, reach the days of the writer.

The history of the Jews and of their successive masters is thus related from Nabuchodonosor to Antiochus Epiphanes, under the form of predictions. The predictions, however, which concern the period after Nabuchodonosor and the Restoration are vague, and frequently inexact, the author of the book of Daniel not being a fully-informed historian. They become more precise gradually as they approach the year 164; the last events recorded are the wars of the Ptolemies and Seleucids, the deeds and actions of Antiochus Epiphanes, the profanation of the temple and interruption of the cult, and then, in the last, the revolt, the first successes, and the reverses of Judas Machabæus. At that point the so-called predictions necessarily end, and the real predictions, which the event was unfortunately not to realise, begin. We can imagine their nature: Jahveh intervenes, the enemies of Israel are annihilated, the Jewish people is triumphant.

FIRST VISION.—Out of the sea come four great beasts, which the prophet describes in full; they are the four empires which were, in succession, to oppress the people of Jahveh.

But, behold, thrones were set up, and the Ancient of Days did sit,<sup>1</sup> whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was of fiery flames, and his wheels a burning fire.

A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him; thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the judgment was set, and the books were opened.<sup>2</sup>

I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame.

<sup>1</sup> Jahveh himself.

<sup>2</sup> The scene of Jahveh's judgment.



As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away ; for a length of life had been given them for a season and a time.

I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the son of man came with the clouds of heaven,<sup>1</sup> and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him.

And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him ; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.<sup>2</sup>

SECOND VISION.—Beasts which occupy the earth fight with each other, wresting the dominion from each other, until the last of them destroys the very sanctuary of god. But let them be patient ; the holy place will be restored.<sup>3</sup>

THIRD VISION.—While Daniel meditates on the prophecies of Jeremiah, Gabriel, an angel of Jahveh, appears to him, and explains to him the hidden meaning of the words that Jahveh had uttered by the mouth of his servant in the days of Nabuchodonosor and the taking of Jerusalem. In seventy years, Jeremiah had said,<sup>4</sup> Jerusalem will be restored and glorified. Now, these seventy years are seventy sabbaths of years, seventy weeks of years—that is to say, four hundred and ninety years. The first entry of Nabuchodonosor into Jerusalem was in the year 599. To reach his figure, the angel of Jahveh overlaps the first seven sevens, or the first 49 years ; 49 years from 490 leaves 441 years ; and if we then calculate 441 years from the year 599, we reach the year 158. In the year 158, therefore—let us say, about the year 158, as the Jewish books know nothing of mathematical accuracy—or some years after the profanation of the temple by Antiochus Epiphanes, the divine promise will be fulfilled.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The king who descends from David, or the people of Israel itself symbolised by a man.

<sup>2</sup> *Daniel* vii. 9-14.

<sup>3</sup> *Daniel* viii.

<sup>4</sup> *Jeremiah* xxv. 12 ; xxix. 10.

<sup>5</sup> *Daniel* ix. We have followed the calculation of Reuss, *Bible*, Vol. VII.

This vision might be called : The art of adjusting dates. But let us not smile at the simple fraud that was to restore the hope of a crushed people.

FOURTH VISION.—The last piece put forward by the author of the prophecies of Daniel was the most explicit. The war between the traditionalist and the Hellenising parties dragged on; the traditionalists were suffering from discouragement; the voice of the prophet Daniel, announcing a speedy deliverance, must give a supreme assurance of veracity to the cruelly tried Jews. If a series of precise predictions, which had been uttered four hundred years before, seemed to have been fulfilled to the letter, was it not a proof that the approaching deliverance would be equally and speedily accomplished?

This is the prophecy.

In the third year of Cyrus, king of Persia, an angel appeared to Daniel on the banks of the Tigris. It may have been an angel, or god himself; for the description seems to apply to Jahveh.

I saw a man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold. His body was like the beryl, his face as the appearance of lightning, his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like the appearance of polished brass; and the noise of his words like the noise of a multitude.<sup>1</sup>

At this vision Daniel is filled with fear, but recovers. Then he, the pretended contemporary of Cyrus, tells, in the prophetic style, in fuller and fuller detail, the future history of the Persians, of Alexander the Great, and of the successors of Alexander, especially the Ptolemies and Seleucids.

The king of the north<sup>2</sup> shall come, and cast up a mound, and take a strong city;<sup>3</sup> and the troops of the south<sup>4</sup> shall not withstand.....And he shall give to the

<sup>1</sup> *Daniel* x. 5-6.

<sup>3</sup> Sidon.

<sup>2</sup> Antiochus the Great, king of Syria.

<sup>4</sup> The Egyptians, until then masters of Sidon.

king of the south a daughter.<sup>1</sup>.....And he shall turn his face unto the isles;<sup>2</sup> and shall take many.<sup>3</sup>

It is easy to understand the admiration of the Jews in the days of Menelaus for predictions that were so magnificently fulfilled. They would listen with confidence when Daniel continues:—

And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people.<sup>4</sup>

Among the angels who surround Jahveh, and of which each one is charged to protect one of the peoples of the earth, Michael is the angel-protector of the people of Israel.

Daniel asks how long it will be before the deliverance comes. The angel replies:—

From the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate<sup>5</sup> set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days.<sup>6</sup>

That is to say, three years and a half. The capture and purification of the temple by Judas Machabæus took place three years after the profanation. Is Daniel approximately fixing the victory of Judas Machabæus, or promising that six months after this first great success all their hopes will be realised? It is useless to press the passage; let us see the drift of the prediction:—

“From the day when the statue of Jupiter sullies the temple to the day when Jahveh will hand over the world to the Jewish people will be a thousand two hundred and ninety days.”

To his discouraged compatriots, in the midst of massacre and pillage, of alternating success and defeat, after the supreme catastrophe of the abolition of the law, the interruption of the cult, the surrender of the sanctuary to a hostile god, the apocalypse serenely declares that the term is fixed and the days are numbered; that after three

<sup>1</sup> Cleopatra, daughter of Antiochus, married to the king of Egypt.

<sup>2</sup> The Archipelago.

<sup>3</sup> *Daniel xi.* 15–18.

<sup>4</sup> *Daniel xii.* 1.

<sup>5</sup> The statue of Jupiter in the temple of Jahveh.

<sup>6</sup> *Daniel xii.* 11.

years and a half revenge and triumph will be brought by the angel of Jahveh. We need not ask if the Jewish soul will sink into utter despair when the three years and a half are over; minds that are so terribly hallucinated will be able at once to invent explanations of the delay, to adjust the dates, to make the calculation start from a different point, to interpret the word "week" as "three months," and translate the word "month" into "year." The book will have done its work.

More than any of the prophetic books, the book of Daniel is a book of promises. The Jews shall possess the earth; their empire shall destroy the other empires, and shall never be destroyed; it shall be a kingdom for ever. No doubt is tolerated. Like the psalms, the apocalypses promise the Jews universal dominion. The translations call it "the kingdom of the holy"; the "holy" are the Qedoshim, men "consecrated" to Jahveh—that is to say, the people of Jahveh. What it really means is, in the material sense, to take and hold for ever the place of Nabuchodonosor, Cyrus, and Alexander; presently they will add Cæsar.

Like most of the Jewish books, and better than any of them, the book of Daniel is a philosophy of history. The history of the world, or of those peoples who are known to the writer, is represented as leading up to a unique goal, the triumph of the Jewish people. The idea was to have a great future. Christian literature will adopt it, merely putting Christianity in the place of Judaism. Bossuet is but reproducing it in his "Discourse on Universal History."

Like the prophets—Ezekiel, Zechariah, and the two Isaiahs—and even more strongly, the book of Daniel opens out the perspective, at once terrible and reassuring, of the period of increasingly cruel calamities which, by the will of Jahveh, must precede the final triumph of Judaism. Jahveh means the distress to be at its height at the time when he will come to save and glorify his

people. What a comfort for the Jew who has been beaten by Antiochus and the Hellenisers! Later this period of preliminary terror will be known as the reign of Antichrist. From this time it becomes the necessary prologue of the apocalyptic program.

First of all Jewish writers, the author of the book of Daniel promises the resurrection of the dead. Whether or no there was an accession of Mazdæan beliefs, the idea of resurrection was too necessary logically in Judaism for it to fail, whether imported or not. Until then the Jews had hardly considered what might come after death; the rewards and punishments were of this world. Piety was rewarded with happiness here below; transgression of the law of Jahveh was punished with unhappiness here below. The extreme calamities from which the popular party suffered in the time of Antiochus were so glaring a violation of the doctrine that piety is rewarded with happiness, that the Jews were bound to think of happiness beyond this world. Jahveh would presently deliver the people of Israel, punish its enemies, and reward his servants; but what about those who had been slain? They will rise again in their flesh. It is not a question of an immortal soul; the Jews did not conceive that there could be a soul distinct from the body. It is a question of the resurrection of bodies, in such wise that all the children of Jahveh "shine as the brightness of the firmament, as the stars for ever and ever."<sup>1</sup>

Lastly—and this is the chief character of the apocalypses—the book of Daniel is eschatological.

Theologians make much use of the word "eschatology." Properly speaking, eschatology means the science or the study or the announcement of last things. If the word were adopted by scientists, we should give the name of terrestrial eschatology to the study of the conditions in

<sup>1</sup> *Daniel* xii. 3.

which the earth is doomed to disappear, either by the natural action of its chemical components or by the shock of a heavenly body, or from any other natural cause; but the word is almost exclusively restricted to religious questions, and applies generally to the supernatural conditions in which the actual world was, it was believed, doomed to perish.

The prophetic books themselves announced that, through the direct intervention of Jahveh, the pagan empires would be destroyed, and replaced by an empire in which the Jews should be masters. The apocalypse of Daniel has this element of novelty, that it knows the plan and date of the event, sets forth its course in advance, and positively fixes the day.

Remember the great vision of the prophet, in which the heavens open and disclose, amid flames, the thrones of Jahveh and his angels; then we have the assizes, the trial of mankind, when Michael, the angel-protector of Israel, intervenes, and offers to carry out the sentence of Jahveh with his own hand; the pagans will be exterminated, the Jews glorified and rewarded with the dominion of the world. This great scene will be developed by the successors of Daniel, and will afterwards become the Last Judgment of the Christians; but in the second century before our era it means simply the taking possession of the world by the Jewish people.

When will it take place? Must they still wait for centuries? Daniel has counted the seventy years, or the seventy times seven years, indicated by Jeremiah, and has calculated that the term is at hand. But a mere declaration is not enough; indeed, elsewhere, on two occasions, the angel declares that the desolation will last for "a time, two times, and half a time"<sup>1</sup>—that is to say, a year, two years, and half-a-year, or three years and a-half.

<sup>1</sup> *Daniel* vii. 25 and xii. 7.



In fine, when Daniel pointedly asks:—

“Lord, when will these things be?”

The angel replies:—

“From the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days.”

That is eschatology—a precise, categorical announcement of the great final upheaval which will give the world to the Jewish people. The ancient covenant between the people of Israel and its god now yields its extreme consequences. In order that Israel may obtain glory of its god, it is enough to trust him. Israel is faithful; moreover, how could a people groaning under such misfortunes listen to restricted promises and conditional consolations? The promise has been made absolute; it is to be fulfilled at once. With its temple profaned, its law destroyed, and its streets wet with blood, the wretched people can wait no longer. The apocalypse is the divine promise at the foot of the walls.

In saving the traditionalist party, the book of Daniel had saved Judaism. But the victory was not complete, and the struggle continued. Doubtless it was necessary, if the Jewish soul were to be permanent, that it should never know that peace in which energy slumbers.

As we have said, most historians have left to the events of the year 168 the traditional description of the “persecution” of Antiochus Epiphanes, and to the events of the following period that of “war of independence” of the Machabees. These descriptions, which are really biassed, must be explained, if not corrected; “persecution” must be understood as the oppression of one party by another party, “war of independence” as the revolt of the party oppressed against the oppressing party. Certainly Judas Machabæus and his brothers had enemies in the kings of Syria; when Judas Machabæus took Jerusalem, he took it from the officers of Antiochus; and afterwards his

successors wrested the independence of Judæa from the Syrian kings. But these Syrian kings were the patrons of the Hellenising Jewish party; the Syrian armies were the auxiliaries of that party. On their side the Machabees sought and obtained the help of the Romans, who were then penetrating Asia; Judas Machabæus was, says Josephus, the first Jew to enter into alliance with the Roman Senate.<sup>1</sup> The Judaic party leaned on the Romans, just as the Hellenisers leaned on the Syrians.

Mathathias, father of Judas Machabæus, had traversed the country "overthrowing the pagan altars; he forgave none of those who had worshipped idols and who fell into his hands, and he caused uncircumcised children to be circumcised."<sup>2</sup> Judas Machabæus "put to death the Jews who had violated the law of Moses."<sup>3</sup> We have nothing but massacres of populations, with looting and burning. Judas Machabæus and his troops threw themselves suddenly, by night, on Jewish villages that were unfaithful to Jahveh; he set them in flames, and slew the apostates. Jonathan, his successor, exterminated the impious from the midst of Israel, in the words of Deuteronomy, after every victory. Whenever the Machabees took a non-Israelitic country, they imposed circumcision on the vanquished. The enemies whom the Machabees fight are the "impious Jews" rather than the Syrians. This so-called war of independence was only a civil war in which each of the two parts summoned the foreigner to its assistance, a religious war that witnessed many St. Bartholomews. The Machabees have no right to the aureole which tradition has been pleased to grant them; Judaism will have its heroes, heroes and martyrs of Jewish liberty, two centuries later, at the time of the great revolt against Rome.

The civil war ended, in the year 141, with the triumph of the Machabees—that is to say, the victory of the

<sup>1</sup> *The Jewish War*, i. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Jewish Antiquities*, xii. 8.

<sup>3</sup> *Jewish Antiquities*, xii. 9.

traditionalists and the crushing defeat of the Hellenisers. In 141 Simeon, brother of Judah, took the last place in which his opponents had found refuge, and they were slain; he had himself proclaimed high-priest and prince of the Jews, and was recognised as such, not only by the Roman Senate, but by the king of Syria. But, although the defeat of the Hellenisers marks the end of the civil war, it does not mean the end of the struggle of the parties which distracted Judaism; a new party at once took the place of that which had just disappeared.

From this time a schism had occurred among the conquerors, and the ancient and everlasting antagonism of the aristocracy and the democracy appeared again in Judaism, under the form of the Sadducees and Pharisees.

Partly owing to Flavius Josephus, and partly under the influence of the Talmud, an exaggerated importance has been given to questions of religious controversy in connection with the antagonism of the Sadducees and Pharisees. The historian who proposes to set the work of Judaism in its historical environment cannot explain a two-century old antagonism by a divergence of opinion on the resurrection. The traditionalist party was bound, in the day of its triumph, to have the fortune of every victorious party; the powerful, the rich, the "upstarts," were sure to form a new aristocracy in it, and this new aristocracy was, like the earlier one, bound to be a clerical aristocracy.

The Mosaic law did not suffer any other rich and powerful persons, beside the prince, except the priests. The priests ruled in the name of the law; in the name of the law the tithes and tributes, gathered wherever there were Jews, put the Jewish fortune in their hands so exclusively that Simeon had had to have himself proclaimed high-priest at the same time as prince of the Jews. The Sadducees, though originating in the old popular traditionalist party, took the place of the former aristocratic party in Jewish society. There were no

longer Hellenisers of the type of Menelaus; but there was always a clerical nobility, opulent, conservative, and haughty, while the Pharisees, below and opposed to them, were a sort of puritan middle-class, poor, devout, and powerful on account of its numbers and its influence on the lower classes.

From the day when the Machabees became a settled dynasty they oscillated between the two parties, relying now on one, now on the other. Gradually, however, the old rigourist and democratic party adopted once more the attitude of opposition-party, never again to abandon it, and the aristocracy assumed the logical attitude that befitted a caste interested, above all, in adhering to the established authority. Always fond of power, the Hellenisers had been partisans of the kings of Syria, when they had been the masters; when the Machabees were the recognised sovereigns of an independent Judæa, the Sadducees could not fail to be on good terms with them; and they would not fail, later, to become partisans of the Roman government.

The Jewish nation might appear to be settled under the Machabees. Imposing its rule on neighbouring countries, and at length reducing Samaria, its ancient enemy, it obtained frontiers that had hardly entered the dreams of the early *moshlim* of the Mosaic books—Lebanon, the Arabian desert, and the Mediterranean. Jerusalem was in the end capital of all the territory promised by Jahveh to the patriarchs, the fathers of Israel; Israel was in the end realised under the authority of a king reigning at Jerusalem.

But decay followed closely upon this splendour. The Machabees, who had begun as leaders of bands, ended as oriental tyrants. No Asiatic dynasty escapes this fatal development. Crime multiplied in the palace; the political history of Judæa was directed in the harem; little by little all the old miseries fell again on the Jewish people.

There were unfortunate wars, and the soil of Judæa

was once more darkened by invasions, with their devastation and carnage. Civil wars broke out among the descendants of the Machabees, each summoning to his aid the neighbouring Egyptians, Syrians, Arabs, and, finally, Romans. At Jerusalem, meantime, the dissensions became more and more violent; disturbances spread disorder through the city, and ended in pools of blood. After the disturbances came revolts; and the savage vengeance of the tyrant of Jerusalem had the prisoners slowly tortured, round the table at which he indulged his orgies, while their wives and children were slain before their dying eyes.

It is all over with the momentary splendour. Henceforth there opens for the Jews an era of ferocious oppression, calamity, and wrath, that will last two centuries. Jewish history is a history of ever-increasing misery. It began with the rule, not yet a hard rule, of the Persian satraps; then the Ptolemies and the Seleucids wrest the country from each other; when peace is restored, their rule is as yet tolerable, but dissension rends Judæa and brings in Antiochus Epiphanes and the civil war; the Machabees, national sovereigns, now exercise over the Jews a tyranny worse than that of its former foreign masters; soon it will be the turn of Herod, then of the Romans.....What a terrible destiny for a people that declares itself born to rule the world!

From the depths of the Jewish soul rise new apocalypses, in which are expressed the wild hopes of a people whom no reverse can cast into despair. Little known works, copying each other, they have an interest on account of the state of mind that they indicate.

The book of Daniel seems to have been followed first by a book of Henoch. Henoch is one of the oldest patriarchs of the Bible, one of the ancestors of Noah. Like Daniel, he traces the destinies of the Jewish people in the framework of a universal history. He begins with the fall of the angels. He ends by announcing the general



attack of the nations upon Israel, the divine intervention, the victory of the saints, the resurrection of the martyrs, and the judgment of Jahveh.

Another apocalypse is written by an Alexandrian Jew. This time the Jewish writer, being an Alexandrian, makes use, not of an ancient prophet, but of the pagan sibyl, to foretell the destinies of the Jewish people. But the frame constructed by Daniel remains; universal history is related from the Judaic point of view. The picture opens with the tower of Babel; it closes with the final attack upon Israel of all the nations of the world in coalition, with the final eschatology and the triumph of Israel.

We have reached the first century. The series of apocalypses continues among the lower orders of the Jewish people.

A new book of Henoah appears, with the same promises and the same eschatology.

Then come the eighteen psalms of Solomon. The misfortunes of the hour are a punishment of the sins of Israel, but a glorious future is at hand. Jahveh is about to raise up a son of David who will fulfil the promises.

The *Ascension of Moses*, which is possibly later, is a furious invective against the enemies of Israel. The historical framework constructed by Daniel is faithfully reproduced; the destinies of the world are revealed to Moses down to the day of the expected catastrophe.

Meantime the Machabees had sunk to the lowest depth of crime and baseness; the hour of Rome was about to strike. For a century Rome had intervened, with increasing assiduity, but always from a distance, in the affairs of Judæa. At last its legions appeared on the frontiers of Palestine. The eagles that had conquered the world advanced, slow and terrible, with the calm strength of an invincible tide.

In the year 63 before our era Pompey took Jerusalem. Without reducing Judæa to the condition of a Roman province, he put it under the protectorate of Rome.



Rome is, at this period, 'mistress of the world. Her rule extends even over the east; the few kingdoms that seem to be independent, such as Egypt, are morally conquered. Already all obey; to-morrow all will be Roman provinces. And all submit to the accomplished fact. The Africans are subject; the Gauls are about to be; the Greeks have bowed their heads; Asia Minor and Syria worship their masters; Egypt aspires to slavery. Only the lowest of peoples does not yield.

The distinctive character of the Jewish soul was never to accept defeat; from that it drew its power. The Hellenist invasion had inflamed, instead of stifling, the ardour of the Jewish soul. The power of Rome in turn will not stifle it. While the degenerate sacerdotal aristocracy bears a yoke which allows it to cling to its enjoyments, the Jewish soul lives in the party of the rigorists and puritans, the guardians of the ancient traditions. The Jew cannot abandon his hopes, the inheritance of the world which he believes to be promised to him.

This people, which will not suffer itself to be reduced, astonishes us; it astonishes us no less when it puts its trust in the help of Providence. The Jewish soul dreams that it has its revenge; but now the minister of justice must descend from heaven in the midst of thunder and lightning.

There is now a new character in the apocalypses that rise, one after another, among the fanatical people. This character is, in the modern sense of the word, messianism. We have followed the study of Judaism down to the verge of the Christian era without pronouncing the words messiah and messianism. Of the many meanings that have been given to these two words we have preferred to retain one only, and that the most recent. It is now time to define it.

The Biblical books relate that, from the earliest days of royalty in Israel, the kings had been consecrated in the

name of Jahveh by an anointing with oil. Saul, the first king, had been anointed by Samuel. After the kings, and, like them, the high-priests, who were now heads of the State of Jerusalem, were Anointed ones. From that time the Anointed was the supreme head, king or high-priest, appointed by Jahveh to rule. Now in Hebrew to anoint is *mashoah*; an Anointed is Mashiah, or Messiah; a Messiah is an Anointed. The Greeks translated Mashiah by the word "*χριστος*"; the Latins said "Christus." The three words "Messiah," "Christ," and "Anointed" are therefore translations of each other, and all originally mean one who has received consecration by oil. It is already clear that the two words "Messianism" and "Christianism" are originally synonymous, like the two words "Messiah" and "Christ"; one is the Hebrew form, the other the Greek. The Vulgate and Lemaistre de Saci very properly call Saul, David, Solomon, and Zarobabel "Christs."

The Christ, Messiah, or Anointed, promised by the Mosaic books to rule the people of Israel when it is finally established, must be a king descending from David. He who is then promised by the prophets to reign, in peace and glory, over the vanquished world is again a Davidic king; but, although he is the head who will rule in the name of Jahveh, he is not the one who will conquer the world. He is merely the future king of the glorious era; he will enjoy the fulfilment of the prophecies; he will not himself fulfil them.

Who, then, will fulfil the promises of Jahveh? At the time of the Mosaic books and the early prophets it was believed that the Jewish people, with the aid of its god, but advancing itself to the combat, could, under the auspices of its god seconding its own valour, conquer its enemies, secure its kingdom, and consolidate it amid the nations. That was the heroic epoch of Judaism.

In the following epoch the Jewish people despaired of conquering by itself, even with the aid of its god. The

god must intervene personally; without its god, the Jewish people can do nothing. That is the doctrine of the prophets. "I am Jahveh, thy saviour," says Isaiah.<sup>1</sup> The saviour who will crush the *goin* and give Israel the empire of the world is, in Isaiah and Jeremiah, Michah and Zechariah, always Jahveh. It is the same in the psalms; Jahveh, in the psalms, is alone able to bring about the conquest of the world. The king who is a son of David will receive from his hands the world purged of his enemies, on its knees before his glory.

Daniel marks a third stage. An angel will do the work; an angel will destroy the empire of the pagans, and establish indestructibly the rule of the Jews.

In the successors of Daniel the Anointed comes into full view, but he is identified with the angel of Jahveh. That is the fourth and last stage of this long evolution. Though they had all received the sacred unction, the Machabees had, by their tyranny, their alliance with the aristocracy, their crimes, and their debasement, made the people refuse to regard them as Anointed. Herod also would be consecrated with the holy oil; but the hatred of the people could not bring itself to grant him the old and profoundly national title of Messiah. The earlier meaning of the word was gradually lost, and the title, which they refused to grant to sovereigns who were more and more detested, was fastened upon the expected angel. The Messiah ceased to be a man; he became a supernatural being. In the apocalypses which followed that of Daniel the Messiah is the angel who will deliver Israel, reduce or exterminate the pagan world, found the Jewish empire, and fulfil the ancient promises; and they began to expect his coming amid clouds and thunder in the opened heavens. Messianism had reached its definitive formula.

We must understand that it was the forlorn hope, the last card, of the Jewish people, as they clung to the most

<sup>1</sup> *Isaiah* ix. 16.

chimerical folly in order to hope once more. However much we may admire the tenacity of a people in refusing to die, and desperately creating new grounds for hope, let us realise how such an idea condemns all personal effort, and represents the abdication of human energy at the feet of the supernatural.

In the beginning the Jews had, like all great peoples, asked their god to assist them in triumphing over their enemies. And gradually, as their oppression became heavier, their ambition less practicable, and their confidence in themselves more feeble, they had relied the more on Jahveh. They had ended in relying on themselves, their own strength and energy, no longer; they relied wholly on Jahveh. Then this self-abdication had sunk a degree lower. The Jews no longer ventured to think that they would be permitted to co-operate in the work of Jahveh otherwise than by prayer; an angel must bring them the victory from heaven.....This angel is now the Messiah, promised and awaited from the earliest times, to reign over the universe.

That is the prodigy of the Jewish soul. When all hope is forbidden it, it still finds ground for hope. It does not abdicate; it does not renounce; it persists in its dream of revenge, even when the foot of the Roman is upon it. But its indefatigable imperialism now demands that an angel shall come down from the heights of heaven, in the midst of the Kerubim, in a flare of thunder and lightning.

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE ROMAN PERIOD

##### § 1. *Hillel and Shammai.*

THE day on which the Romans took Jerusalem and Palestine (63 B.C.) marks a new epoch in the history of Judaism. The genius of Greece had struggled and failed; in its turn the power of Rome is about to match itself against the old Jewish soul.

The Greek genius represented the finer achievements of intelligence, art, science, and philosophy; the power of Rome, on the other hand, consisted in the achievements of will, of the military spirit and the spirit of government. Devoid of all intellectual qualities, devoid of the least military instinct or political sentiment, the Jewish soul formulated its invincible craving for life and rule in so rabid a fanaticism that, after triumphing over the intelligence of Greece, it could stand erect in face of the power of Rome.

The wild nationalism of the Jews had opposed itself in a mass to the Hellenic invasion. Against Rome it had two methods of fighting. One was open war, which was condemned in advance to an overpowering check; the other was subterranean war, the only warfare that could succeed.

Two names, two men, living about the last year of the old era, seem to us fitting symbols of these two methods: one taught patience, the other preached violence: they were Hillel and Shammai. The man of violence, Shammai, was destined to win at Jerusalem, and his party led the holy city to its doom; but the Dispersion, that vast field of exile that stretched from

ghetto to ghetto across the Roman Empire, listened to the words of the man of patience, Hillel, the master of St. Paul.

During the twenty-five years which followed the taking of Jerusalem by Pompey, Judæa was spattered with blood by the efforts of the last descendants of the Machabees to win back or preserve their royalty. The family of the Herods comes on the scene. As Idumæans—in other words, Edomites—Antipater and his son Herod the Great came of a race despised by the men of Jerusalem. They became, in turn, creatures of Pompey, then of Cæsar after Pharsala, of Cassius after the assassination of Cæsar, of Antony after Philippi, and of Augustus after Actium. In the year 40 B.C. Herod obtained of the Senate the title of king of Judæa. With the help of the legions of Syria he secured his kingdom, and for more than thirty years he was a terrible and magnificent tyrant. A lover of splendour, he covered Judæa with monuments; and he rebuilt at great expense the humble temple that Zarobabel had raised to the national god five centuries before, and made it one of the wonders of the world. He was none the less fanatically hated by the Jews; but he was able to repress the anger that rumbled about him. In virtue of his energy, craft, and crimes, he ruled over the most difficult people to govern in the whole Roman Empire.

The story is familiar of the frightful agony of Herod, equally tormented by suspicion and illness, ordering massacres and, from his death-bed, directing the murder of one of his sons. Sedition only awaited his end to break out. One day he was believed to have died; at once a troop of fanatical Jews went to tear down the golden eagle, a sacrilegious emblem, from the front of the temple. The old king awoke to send the rebels to the executioner. But immediately after his death an era of trouble and revolt set in, and was destined to culminate



in the great insurrection of the year 66 and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70.

Augustus soon made a Roman province of Judæa. From that time it is governed by procurators, whose seat is Cæsarea; their names are Coponius, Ambivius, Rufus, Gratus, and Pontius Pilate.

The historian Flavius Josephus has given us a celebrated picture of the sects that then distracted Judæa; in it we can discern a picture of the various classes which formed Jewish society.

At the top were still the Sadducees, the aristocracy of Judæa, priests living on the temple, rich, sceptical, powerful, and necessarily hostile to the old Judaic ideas. Cultivated and intelligent, they understood that it was impossible to escape the authority of Rome. To preserve their wealth, they demanded submission to Rome, just as the Hellenising aristocrats of former days had demanded submission to Antiochus. Was the old Judaic dream of revenge still vigilant at the heart of these professions? It is hardly probable; no trace of it is found, at all events. Their only aim was to live on good terms with Rome, with the Idumæans who were in the favour of Rome, and with the procurators, and to continue to receive the enormous tithes that still came to the temple every year.

At a lower level, the Pharisees represented the middle-class. The Pharisees were not poor, but they were not rich. We have explained several times that in the East, where the material wants are less than in our climates, an intermediate situation is possible, in which the inheritance of some humble house, or some far from absorbing occupation, is enough to give one leisure to study the law, to discharge the many practices of the cult, and to indulge in religious and patriotic meditations. The Pharisees were the holy people that Jahveh had consecrated to himself since the Exodus, and, although they were not really priests, it was to them that the Law had said:—

“Ye shall be a kingdom of priests.”<sup>1</sup>

Putting themselves in the place of a degenerate and detested aristocracy, the Pharisees were really at the head of the Jewish people. They occupied, morally, the place of the old clerical aristocracy of the time of Esdras and Deuteronomy. They had inherited its ancient virtues, its patriotism, its uncompromising nationalism. But they had not its greatness; being continuers, and not creators, they made a superstition of observance. The tradition that is not enlivened by a slow evolution becomes dry; the legislation that has originated in the most ardent craving for life becomes a tyranny the moment it ceases to move; the heirs of the terrible patriots of the fourth century are quibbling formalists. But they still have obstinacy, the old Jewish virtue that stands for all qualities in these men.

The Sadducees and Pharisees composed the official Jewish world at the beginning of the first century of the present era. Below them were the very poor and very fanatical mass of the people. Very poor, or rather owning nothing, living from day to day, ready for sordid tasks when hunger spoke too loud, averse from work at any other time, clever only in following their old messianic dream through the idleness of long torrid days. Very fanatical also, enfevered by the promises of the apocalypses, inebriated with secret ambition and suppressed anger, regarding themselves as the sole heirs of Israel, they spent themselves in the silent rage of waiting so long for their day.

The popular class had an extreme left. Flavius Josephus, the historiographer of cultivated Judæa and courtier of the Flavian Emperors, describes in the darkest colours the lowest class of Jewish society. It was, he says, a collection of brigands, beggars, thieves, adventurers, assassins, and all kinds of fomenters of

<sup>1</sup> *Exodus* xix. 6.

disorder. These supposed brigands of Josephus called themselves the Zealots or Sicaries; pushing fanaticism to its last consequences, they made it their mission, it seems, some day to slay every Jew who transgressed the Law.

Finally, we must mention, outside of this passionate world, the Essenians or Essetes, a sort of devout dreamers, *illuminati*, living in prayer and asceticism.

Such was in the first century—with its extreme right consisting of aristocratic Sadducees, who remained Jews externally, but were rightly suspected by the rigourists and were the allies of the Roman procurators; with its right consisting of conservative Pharisees; with its left consisting of miserable fanatics; and with its little corner of eccentric Essenians, and its extreme left composed of uncompromising zealots—the Jewish society which the doctrines of Hillel and Shammai has just rent into two parties and two irreconcilable camps.

Hillel and Shammai were Jerusalem doctors of the Herodian period, whom tradition represents as devoted to the interpretation of the Mosaic law. Benevolent, indulgent, and gentle, Hillel is described as a partisan of the liberal interpretation; Shammai, a partisan of the strict interpretation, is a sombre, inflexible, violent man. They are depicted for us in an anecdote. A pagan said one day to Shammai that he would embrace Judaism if he would teach him the whole of the Law in the space of time that he could stand on one leg. For reply Shammai took up a stick. To the same inquiry Hillel replied:—

“Do not unto others that that thou wouldst they should not do unto thee. That is the whole of the Law.”

The Talmud represents them, amid the strong passions of the time, as exclusively concerned with questions of interpretation and casuistry. But the Talmud is ignorant of history, and its silence on the political attitude of the two great doctors proves nothing. Their fame rather leads us to think that they had influence on the events of their time. What man could have isolated himself in the

game of scholastic controversies, in the heart of Judæa, at such a time? We have no documents as to the political attitude of Hillel, but tradition relates that Shammai inspired the zealots. It is probable that Hillel inspired the opposite party. Were not the Pharisees who afterwards opposed the revolt against Rome disciples of Hillel?

Moreover, was not the interpretation of the Law an interpretation of Judaism? According to the Talmud, there was question of interpreting the Mosaic laws. That may be so, but there was also question of interpreting the prophets, the psalms, and the apocalypses—the whole of that vast series of books which had already, at the beginning of the present era, become sacred books, containing the expression of the development of the Jewish soul. Did not the interpretation of the Judaic tradition necessarily involve the framing of a political programme?

What was, then, the tradition of Judaism in the first century?

The glowing nationalism of the founders of the Jewish State, in the time of Esdras, had expressed in terms of the cult of the national god Jahveh the fierce patriotism which was to them the condition of existence; and this primitive conception had traced the path for Judaism. The ancient *moshlim* who had, in the fourth century, gradually composed the books of Moses, persuaded themselves, by identifying the god Jahveh with the Jewish fatherland, by repeating that Israel (we know why they said Israel) was the people of Jahveh, just as Jahveh was the god of Israel, that a covenant had been concluded between Jahveh and the Jews; that Jahveh had promised the Jews the free and peaceful enjoyment of their land if they observed his law.

In spite of the alternate mastery of Judæa by the Ptolemies and Seleucids, the prophets had improved upon the covenant. By a stroke of genius, the two Isaiahs had, at the time when the greatest misery prevailed and the

divine promise? seemed to fail, enlarged it so far as to announce that Jahveh promised, not merely the peaceful and glorious enjoyment of Palestine, but the dominion of the world.

The dark soul of the chanters of the psalms had found comfort in the promise; and, when fresh evidence was given of the vanity of such ambition, the apocalypses and the book of Daniel had appeared. In the apocalypses there are no longer conditions attached to the promise; the final event—the submission of the world, the possession of the earth, the glorification of Jerusalem—is announced absolutely, at a fixed date, in all its details. The Jew has now merely to await his time in a devout fulfilment of the works of the Law, and perseverance in his unconquerable faith. The day when the heavens will open and the Messiah appear, amid the parting clouds, in the roar of the thunder and the Keroubim, the work will be perfected, and the Jews will receive their inheritance from his hands, without striking a blow, while their enemies are exterminated or reduced.

To this pitch had the imperialism of the Jewish people attained when the Romans took Palestine.

Once more the fulfilment of their hope was postponed: once more the reality pitilessly belied their ambition.

Let us add that the Romans were much harder masters than the Syrians or the Egyptians had been. Moreover, while the Egyptians and the Syrians had left the Jews to govern themselves under their suzerainty, Rome imposed detested rulers, either as kings or procurators. For the Romans, though so tolerant toward the peoples whom they governed, had at last become weary of Jewish fanaticism; unruly subjects needed tyrannical government.

The hopes of the Jews lay dark in an abyss of calamities that they had never known before.

Then were formed the two great parties of the last epoch of the Jewish people. There was the party of the



insurgent, and the party of those who did not despair. There were, with Hillel and Shammai, two interpretations of the Judaic law.

Hillel interpreted it :—

“ Follow the example of our fathers. Be patient. Trust the divine promises. Confide in god. Wait. Expect everything from him. Expect nothing of yourselves. Observe the commandments. Believe and hope.”

Shammai interpreted it :—

“ Resist the oppressor. Obey god only. Refuse submission to the impious.”

Shammai was the leader of those who became at last tired of suffering, waiting, and bowing the head. But he was breaking the Judaic tradition ; it was Hillel who was faithful to it. When they rebelled against the Romans, the Jews rebelled at the same time against their past, their books, and their god. They ceased to be “ the pious ” ; and they became heroes. Nevertheless, while it drove them to revolt, their despair was still impregnated with Judaism ; beliefs that are four centuries old cannot entirely be abandoned. Though in rebellion, the Jews continued to await the Messiah who would give them the victory ; but, from the time when they were no longer content to await him in penance and prayer, the promise of great help and the hope of a magnificent victory gave them added strength to sustain them in the struggle.

The party of revolt had been secretly forming during the long reign of Herod. When it came to light, in the time of the procurators, it embraced a considerable part of the Pharisees, the violent of the Shammai type, those who are carried out of their way by anger ; but it was chiefly composed of men of the people, and absorbed the whole of the extreme left of the zealots.

The party of submission had its adherents to the end. It embraced the whole of the Sadducees. These wealthy, pleasure-loving aristocrats now expected little of the



promises of Jahveh; the Roman domination secured them a peaceful and pleasant life. The greater part of the Pharisees formed the nucleus of the party. As disciples of Hillel, they were men of tradition. It is certain that a fraction of the lower people also accepted submission, though they gradually tired of it, and passed to the opposite party.

Hillel and Shammai were not to be the leaders of the parties they had inspired. They were both dead when the period of trouble, violence, and folly, that led to the ruin of Jerusalem, began. The scene is now about to be occupied by a series of agitators, some arising in the school of Hillel, others in that of Shammai. Chief among them were, on the one side, John the Baptist and similar men, and, on the other side, Judas the Gaulonite, his sons, and the insurgents of the year 66.

## § 2. *Renascence of Prophecy.*

Let us recall what the prophets had been in the course of the preceding centuries. In ancient Israel, as in the time of Esdras and in every period in the history of oriental peoples, we found certain wizards, something like dancing and howling dervishes, who foretold the future, healed beasts and men, and wandered, feared and venerated, about the country and the towns of Palestine. It was believed that the spirit of Jahveh breathed in these poor fools; and they were called—as simple peoples always call such men—men of god. By a literary device that argues the most fertile power of invention, the writers of the end of the fourth and of the third centuries had attributed their discourses and dogmatic odes to ancient and legendary men of god, such as Hosea, Amos, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Isaiah; and, while these wild bone-setters, with the impress of sacred madness, were still, in the third century, seen wandering about the towns and fields,

people repeated the hymns, the vociferations, the poems, and the "prophecies," which Jahveh was supposed to have dictated to the ancestors of these wretched beings.

It was still the same in the second century. The author of the book of Daniel had, like the authors of the books of Jeremiah and Isaiah, idealised the sombre figure of the popular diviner into that of the prophet Daniel. After Daniel a few authors of apocalypses had maintained the tradition. The inspiration was failing, however. Moreover, a canon of the sacred books had been made, and it was more difficult to secure the acceptance of new prophets. Men of god still abounded in Judæa and in the whole of the East. There were still sorcerers, but there were no longer prophets, in Israel.

We reach the beginning of the first century of our era. The ancient prophetic books are the beverage that intoxicates the impatience of the Jewish people. At that time no one, either in Judæa or the Jewish colonies, doubts that Jeremiah, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel had really existed, and that they had, at the time of the ancient kingdoms and the Deportation, written the pages and done the deeds which their books ascribed to them; it is regretted that they have had no successors, and that the voice of prophetism has been so long silent. This glowing cult of the ancient prophetic books provoked, under the pressure of events, real rivals of the fictitious prophets. Was not the ambition to take up afresh the great work of the ancient tribunes bound to enter some of these fanatical minds? It is natural to think that more than one of these Jews, distracted with misery and ambition, dreamed, in their ecstasies and furies, of submitting themselves in turn, like a Jeremiah, to the inspiration of Jahveh. But in the first century the impatience, anger, and despair were too great to express themselves in books alone. Something more than words was wanted—the active work of an Elijah and a Jeremiah. From the midst of these men of god who

still wandered miserably about Palestine, pale vagabonds, diviners, and healers, bearing the sacred mark of Jahveh, madness, on their brows, there were bound to come some who would rise to the effective position of prophets.

Thus at the beginning of the first century, for the first time in history, the character that had been created by the fiction of fourth and third-century writers became at length a reality. There were among the lowly bone-setters and fortune-tellers of Palestine men who spoke, preached, and acted in the name of Jahveh. What literary inventiveness had made of an Elijah or a Jeremiah, a John the Baptist was in reality. The part which had been imagined for an Elisha or an Isaiah was taken up in fact by a Jesus the Nazarene. There were at length prophets in Israel in some other than a literary sense.

When we wish to conceive the life of a John the Baptist, a Jesus the Nazarene, or a Theudas, we must picture to ourselves wonder-workers, healers of men and beasts, wandering from town to town, living by begging or rascality, surrounded by a troop of followers, recruited from the lower classes of society, and practising divination as well as healing. Their minds exalted, and believing themselves to be in close relation with their god, they call themselves his spokesmen; that is to say, they give themselves the title of prophets on the same ground that they grant it to the great classic prophets—Elijah and Elisha, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Isaiah—their models.

As Judaism is now triumphant in the whole of Palestine (except in dissident regions like Samaria, which had just recovered a semi-independence), we shall not be surprised to find other men than those of Jerusalem among the new prophets. We do not know the country of John the Baptist; Theudas probably belonged to Jerusalem; Jesus is said to have been a Galilæan. There has been an interminable discussion as to whether

Jesus the Nazarene was a Jew. The point is without interest; or, rather, it is very simple. All these men, John the Baptist, Jesus the Nazarene, Theudas, and those whose names are not preserved in history, were so profoundly Judaisers that we must regard them as Jews.

The racial question is insoluble. It is beyond doubt that there had been a great mixture of populations in Galilee; but had there not been just as great a mingling in Judæa itself? Race is a fugitive, intangible thing; tradition alone counts. For three centuries, perhaps, and certainly since the early Machabees—that is to say, for a century and a half—Galilee had been Judaised. The Galilæans of the first century practised Judaism, and lived the Jewish life; they shared the Jewish soul unreservedly; they were Jews.<sup>1</sup>

Coming from the lower ranks of society, the new prophets remained, like their models, uncompromising demagogues. Like them, they are ferociously orthodox; like them, they are feverish with hatred of the *goin*; like them, they are hostile to the upper clergy; like them, they are pitiless enemies of wealth and power.

What do they take to be their mission? The same, having regard to new conditions and the more recent apocalyptic ideas, that the classical prophets had assumed in their day; they are going to proclaim the promises and threats of Jahveh, and announce the speedy liberation of Israel and the imminent coming of the judgment of Jahveh. In a word, they are precursors of the Messiah. The expected Messiah was to be an angel, not a man. It is inconceivable that any Jew could at that time call himself, or be called, Messiah.

Of the two camps of Hillel and Shammai, which divide Judæa, one ready to fly to arms, the other advising patience, one fomenting rebellion, the other promising divine intervention, the prophet-agitators are

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix VII.

disciples of Hillel. Their work is not to preach the holy war, but to announce the speedy coming of the liberator. Prudent in regard to the Romans, they avoid compromising words. But the course of things drags them out of their way. You cannot with impunity preach a great hope of vengeance among an over-excited people. Their hearts are inevitably lifted up; trouble begins—not revolt, but heated movements, sometimes half-seditious. That is enough, however. The Roman authority is implacable. Rome suffers everything, except disorder; if there are ideas of revolt, it will make a terrible example. It is not anger, but policy. At the first outbreak the procurator pronounces sentence of death.

At other times the miserable agitators themselves lose their heads, and resort to violence. From the precepts of Hillel they pass some day to the violent party. From that time they are confused with insurgents such as Judas the Gaulonite; and the Roman authority, which has not spared the mere fomenters of trouble, will certainly not spare the seditious. None of these new prophets comes to an end save by the sword or the cross.

Let us say a few words on the chief among them.

### § 3. *Jewish Agitators from the Year 1 to the Year 66.*

JOHN THE BAPTIST.—Our authorities are Flavius Josephus<sup>1</sup> and the later evangelical legends.

According to Josephus, John, surnamed the Baptist, a man of great piety, exhorted the Jews to refrain from sin and receive baptism. Josephus, who was resolved not to speak of messianism, says no more about him. The later legends leave no doubt that John announced the speedy coming of the kingdom of Jahveh. Possibly he was an Essenian. He had, Josephus says, many followers.

<sup>1</sup> *Jewish Antiquities*, xviii. 7.

The Herodian authority, which held in the neighbourhood of the Jordan, and rested on the Roman authority, feared some seditious movement. It had John imprisoned at Machera, and decapitated.

JESUS THE NAZARENE.—Our authorities are the Epistles of St. Paul, the gospel legends, and a few lines in pagan writers of the second century.

The existence of Jesus seems to be doubtful. The Jewish historian Flavius Josephus, who wrote fifty years after the assigned date of his death, says nothing about him; or, rather, his work only mentions him in a passage which is unanimously recognised as an interpolation.<sup>1</sup> Another Jewish historian of the same period, Justus of Tiberias, knows nothing of him. The famous Alexandrian Jew, Philo, who was born twenty years before Jesus, and died twenty years after him, and who was the most enlightened man of his age in the East, knows nothing of him. The Talmud has not a single authentic detail about him. No Latin or Greek historian of the first century had heard of him; and there is not a single contemporary official text that indicates his existence. As to the gospels, they are dogmatic, not historical, works; moreover, the earliest of them belong to the end of the first century.

On the other hand, the silence of Josephus may be due to the suppression, by Christian hands, of lines analogous to those he devotes to the other agitators; they would be regarded as blasphemous, and replaced by the interpolated passage. Again, it is difficult to admit that the gospel legends, however dogmatic and however late they may be, had not an historical basis. Finally, that the Latin and Greek texts know nothing of Jesus is not, perhaps, unintelligible, if his career was as humble as that of the obscure prophets who then abounded in Palestine.

<sup>1</sup> *Jewish Antiquities*, xviii. 4.



If, however, we choose to admit the real existence of an agitator of the name of Jesus, we have to be content with the most meagre biographical details. For instance, that Jesus was born in Galilee; that he worked as a prophet there in the same conditions as the other Jewish agitators of the time; that he at last allowed himself to be led into the misadventure (entrance into Jerusalem and invasion of the temple) which terminated in his arrest; and that he was, on that account, condemned to the cross by the Roman authority (not the Jewish authority) under the procuratorship of Pontius Pilate.

THEUDAS.—Consult Josephus.<sup>1</sup>

Theudas, in the year 47, when Cuspius Fadus was procurator of Judæa, persuaded a great crowd to follow him as far as the Jordan, in the expectation that the kingdom of Jahveh was at hand.

Fadus sent out a troop of cavalry. Theudas was taken and beheaded, and his head was brought to Jerusalem.

SOME OTHER AGITATORS.—It is beyond question that there were many other agitators. John the Baptist, Jesus the Nazarene, and Theudas—the only names that have reached us—may be taken as prototypes of the others.

Josephus speaks of numbers of “enchanters” who, deceiving the people under the pretext of religion, led them into solitary places, promising them that god would show them by miracles that he wished to deliver them from slavery. The procurator Felix, regarding these meetings as a beginning of revolt, sent out soldiers, who slew a great number of them.<sup>2</sup>

A prophet from Egypt attracts a number of Jews to the Mountain of Olives, assuring them that the walls of Jerusalem will fall at the sound of his voice. Felix killed

<sup>1</sup> *Jewish Antiquities*, xx. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Jewish War*, ii. 23, and *Jewish Antiquities*, xx. 6.

four hundred of them, and took two hundred prisoners ; but the Egyptian escaped.<sup>1</sup>

An "impostor," whose profession was thaumaturgy, leads out a number of people to the desert, promising to deliver them from all sorts of evils. Festus, the successor of Felix, dispersed them.<sup>2</sup>

They all have the same career, both those whose names history has forgotten and those whose names have survived, such as John the Baptist, Jesus, and Theudas. Disciples of Hillel, not of Shammai, they intend to preach peacefully the speedy coming of the messianic era, as Elijah, Elisha, Jeremiah, and Isaiah had done, and exhort the people to prepare for the great event. But the agitation works its effect ; from the very nature of things, trouble arises ; and one fine day, whether they seek it or are drawn into it, the disturbance breaks out. One of them, Jesus, makes a sensational entry into Jerusalem at the time of the Passover, and invades the temple with his company ; another, an unknown agitator, occupies the Mount of Olives. At once the Roman authority intervenes, and the prophet ends on the cross, if he has not been killed in the affray.

What traces did these ephemeral agitators leave behind them ? Once the disturbance was over, and the agitator cut down or crucified, most of his disciples scattered ; but a few remained faithful to the memory of the master. Flavius Josephus speaks constantly of the disciples of this or that man ; the Jewish books never mention anybody without saying who had been his master. In point of fact, we do not know if any disciples survived of Theudas ; but it is said that John the Baptist and Jesus had some after their execution. They were humble folk, however, doomed to disappear rapidly. Why should they last ? None of them had been animated by a master of genius. Jesus had taken up the work of John the Baptist ; an unknown continued the work of Jesus ; Theudas followed.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>2</sup> *Jewish Antiquities*, xx. 7.

Meantime there were, besides the prophet-disciples of Hillel, the insurgents, the disciples of Shammai.

Flavius Josephus distinguishes between the two. "While," he says, "the brigands filled Jerusalem with murders, the enchanters seduced the people."<sup>1</sup> "The former," he says elsewhere, "were impious men and disturbers of the public peace, deceiving the people under the guise of religion; the others were murderers, shedding human blood."<sup>2</sup> Every day, indeed, the flood of anger was rising in Judæa; the old lesson of patience was being lost.

In the year 4 Judas the Gaulonite and Sadoc had refused to obey Rome, and taken to arms. Then—to quote only the chief episodes of the story—there was the affair of the standards. Pontius Pilate had placed the figure of Tiberius Cæsar on the standards of Jerusalem. It was a sacrilegious violation of the Mosaic laws. The Jews advanced with such threatening entreaties upon Cæsaræa, where the procurator was, that he yielded.

Pontius Pilate having used the money of the temple on public works, another sedition broke out. This time he drowned it in blood.

Caligula wishes to have a statue of himself placed in the temple. There is the same popular movement as in regard to the standards.

Later, two sons of Judas the Gaulonite, Jacob and Simeon, entice the zealots into a fresh insurrection. They are taken, and suffer the punishment of the rebel: they are crucified.

The years which precede the great insurrection are increasingly filled with disorder; acts of fearful fanaticism on the part of the Jews, who are more and more exasperated, and of more and more severe repression on the part of the Romans. So great a terror reigned at Jerusalem, says Flavius Josephus, that people thought themselves

<sup>1</sup> *Jewish Antiquities*, xx. 6.

<sup>2</sup> *Jewish War*, ii. 23.

in no less peril than they would be in the midst of the most sanguinary war.<sup>1</sup>

In the other towns of Judæa disturbances break out between the Jews and the pagans, and are followed by abominable massacres. The fiercest intolerance predominates among the Jerusalemites; when they cannot persecute others, the Jews cry out that they are being persecuted. As the chosen race of Jahveh, they have rights over the pagans, but the pagans have no rights over them. Judaic fanaticism thus set an example to the Churches, which define liberty as the right to privileges, and regard themselves as persecuted when they are not permitted to oppress their opponents.

One day, at Jerusalem, the leaders of the active resistance party decide that the sacrifices offered to the temple by pagans must be rejected, and they refuse the victims that are offered in the name of the emperor. The men of the other party, both Sadducees and Pharisees, endeavour to persuade the recusants to undo their resolution; they see the danger that threatens the city. It is useless; the recusants, trusting to their greater numbers, think of nothing but revolt.<sup>2</sup>

The middle of the first century represents, in Judæa, one of the disturbed periods of history. A tempest of furious madness blows over Jerusalem, but the national passion never ceases for a moment to clothe itself in the form of a religious passion; for the Jews religion is, to the end, the formula of nationalism.

The great festivals which are celebrated every year at Jerusalem are always the occasion of trouble. Jerusalem is not an oriental capital; it is a holy city; it could best be compared to the Mecca of to-day. The Mosaic law has enjoined that, on each of the great festivals, the Jews must come to the temple, the unique temple at Jerusalem, to present themselves before their god.

<sup>1</sup> *Jewish War*, ii. 23.

<sup>2</sup> *Jewish War*, ii. 30.

Three times in a year shall all your males appear before Jahveh, your god, in the place which he shall choose ; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles.<sup>1</sup>

The law, once framed for a country that consisted of Jerusalem and its outskirts, remains the law of a country that embraces Palestine, to say nothing of the colonies scattered on every side. Judaism is maintained, with all its commandments ; it will not renounce a single verse of its Thora ; it knows that the duties it continues to impose are a source of strength to be preserved. Hence, at each of the three great festivals, immense pilgrimages, in which the national life is sustained in the form of a religious communion, meet in the holy city.

At ordinary times Jerusalem has thirty thousand souls ; at the time of the festivals the pilgrims bring up its population to a million feverish minds, wild-beating hearts, and howling mouths. All these move restlessly at the foot of the temple, the centre of the world, the house of Jahveh. The Roman cohorts watch them ; but the anger around them rumbles, and the fever rises. No one knows exactly the extent of the power of Rome. The prophets preach from the steps ; the zealots glide through the throng, sword in hand ; and men repeat the unforgettable promises of Jahveh.

These promises—the avenging of insults, the conquest of the world, the triumph of Judaism from the Euphrates to the gates of the West—should be fulfilled by Jahveh acting alone, by his Messiah, who will appear in the heavens above with a train of Kerubim. By forgetting the old verse : “ It is not on thy bow that thou shalt rely, nor by thy sword that thou shalt conquer,” by following Shammai instead of Hillel, the Jews of Jerusalem have condemned their city. The revolt of the year 66 ended in the ruin of the city and of Judæa in the year 70. And in their effort to meet Rome face to face, with open war,

<sup>1</sup> *Deuteronomy* xvi. 16.

the Jews of Jerusalem would have destroyed Judaism, together with the city, if it had not been saved by the men of the subterraneous war, the humble and patient Jews of the Dispersion.



## CHAPTER IV.

### THE INVASION

#### § 1. *Notes on the Dispersion.*

WHEN, in the year 70 of the present era, the Emperor Titus, after one of the most terrible sieges that is known to history, took Jerusalem by assault, burned the temple, destroyed the city, and put an end to the political destiny of the Jewish people, Judaism flourished over nearly the whole extent of the Græco-Roman world.

The spread of the Jews over the Græco-Roman world is called the Dispersion; the Greeks called it the Diaspora. We have often, in the course of our study, touched upon episodes of the Dispersion, and it may be useful to make a general survey of it before we conclude. But as the Dispersion did not attain its proper character until the time when the Jews took the books of the Law with them over the world, a few lines will suffice for the emigrations before the fifth century.

It will be remembered how the inhabitants of Samaria in 721, and those of Jerusalem in 599 and 588, were deported by the kings of Assur and Babylon to the banks of the Tigris and the Euphrates. At the time of the great Assyrian and Babylonian empires conquest was always followed by deportation. A Salmanasur, king of Assur, or a Nabuchodonosor, king of Babylon, fell with his vast army upon the kingdom of Samaria or the kingdom of Judah. The country was looted, the towns were sacked, and the conqueror led away, in immense flocks, the greater part of the vanquished population, as well as the treasures of their temples and harems. The lowly, the weak, the powerless, were left in the devastated

fields or amid the ruins of the dismantled towns. The finest part of the population, the soldiers and the agricultural workers, went with their leaders to populate some distant territory.

The Samaritans had been in Assyria nearly two hundred years, and the Jerusalemites fifty years in Babylonia, when, in 538, Cyrus, king of Persia, took Babylon, and, it is said, allowed the exiles to return to their countries. But we have seen that, contrary to the traditional opinion, only a very small number of the Jews left the banks of the Euphrates to return to Jerusalem. The rebuilding of Jerusalem, the reconstitution of the little Jewish State, the work of perseverance and passion which is called the Restoration, was accomplished by the sons of the men who had remained in the ruins of the city.

What became of the Jews who remained in Babylonia, and of the Samaritans who remained in Assyria?

The Samaritan exiles were lost in the chaos of peoples that swarmed about the Tigris. Two hundred years of exile must have erased all trace of their not very pronounced nationality. It was probably too late when the tolerance of Cyrus permitted them to renew their relations with their former country.

The Jews of Babylonia, on the other hand, had not had time, in fifty years, to lose their nationality. But the Assyriological documents show them to us mingling with the surrounding population. They would have been gradually absorbed, like their brothers of Samaria, or of Elephantine, if emigration had not brought among them Jews of the new school, the Esdras school, Jews who had with them the Mosaic law. Instead of the Jews of Babylon restoring Judaism at Jerusalem, it was the Jews of the restored Jerusalem who gave new life to Babylonian Judaism.

There was constant communication between the Euphrates and Jerusalem. The road from the Euphrates to Jerusalem does not go straight from east to

west. A straight line from Jerusalem to Babylon would cross the desert of Syria, which is impracticable. Even in our time the caravans which leave Jerusalem go straight north to Damascus. There they at last turn to the east, and, when they reach the Euphrates, they descend the bank of the river until they reach the field of ruins which was Babylon. The road is not more than a thirty days' journey. It was one of the busiest of ancient Asia. By it there penetrated into Jerusalem those Babylonian elements that formed the culture-medium in which the Jewish soul began to develop. By it, on account of the constant exchanges between the colony and the metropolis, the latter sent to the colony the nationalist spirit it had itself created, while the colony sent to Jerusalem the great Babylonian education that would give it its form.

For five centuries the Babylonian Jews will continue faithfully to send the tithes prescribed in the Mosaic law to the temple at Jerusalem, and to come thither on pilgrimage at the time of the great festivals. Afterwards, when Judæa has been destroyed by Roman legions, and the Jewish colonies of the western world will be rapidly Hellenising, Babylonia will remain a Jewish centre, sheltered from dangerous novelties, and the Talmudic growth will expand there in peace.

The movement from which Christianity was to issue took place in the Jewish colonies of the western world. We know what the development of the Jewish people was from the time of Esdras; but we must not forget that, although it gave birth to a soul wild enough to dream of conquering the world, Jerusalem long remained a poor State, limited to one city and its outskirts. The expansion first took place in Palestine. It began at the beginning of the fourth century, shortly after the time of Esdras. History has not preserved the details of this emigration, but the earliest Biblical books show the settling of a certain number of Jewish families outside the limits of the State of Jerusalem.

In the middle of the fourth century, about the year 350, shortly before the destruction of the Persian monarchy, deportation begins its work once more. The Phœnicians having risen against the Persian emperor Artaxerxes Ochus, the Jews also rebelled; like his Assyrian and Babylonian predecessor, the Persian, after reducing them, sent a certain number of them to Egypt and Hyrcania.

A few years later Alexander the Great spread his rule over the western Asiatic world. He wished to establish, under the hegemony of Greece, a new world, in which the small States which Persia had left isolated might be amalgamated. After his death his successors continued his work, amid the war which they waged unceasingly against each other. New provinces had been formed, new towns were created, and mixed populations were brought to them from every side. Alexandria in Egypt, and Antioch in Syria, were the chief of these cities.

It seems that Alexandria and Antioch received a number of Jewish families almost immediately. Tradition affirms that Alexander and his successors made it a point of honour to induce men of Judæa to migrate to their new capitals. The fact is doubtful; it is better to inquire to what extent the Jewish expansion at the end of the fourth century was due to deportation and to voluntary emigration.

We have seen the frightful misfortunes in which the Jews struggled during the last part of the fourth century. Shortly after the rebellion against Artaxerxes Ochus and the subsequent deportation, the wars of the successors of Alexander desolate Judæa, while intestine quarrels fling Jerusalem, Samaria, and Edom against each other. It is the abominable period reflected in the earlier prophets.

Among the events of this terrible period the fact of the taking of Jerusalem by assault, followed by a new deportation, seems to be historical. It is almost certain that in 320 Ptolemy Soter took Jerusalem by storm, after

a siege, and sent his prisoners to Egypt. The deportation under Ptolemy Soter, after the deportation under Artaxerxes Ochus, is enough to justify the imprecations of the prophets; but it is probable that, in the course of all these wars, raids brought troops of Jewish prisoners to both Egypt and Syria. At the very base of the Jewish expansion round the Mediterranean we are bound to put the violent removal of Jewish families from their homes, and their despatch to Egyptian and Syrian towns. The prophets repeatedly speak of the Jews outside of Judæa as exiles; and we cannot doubt that a large number owed their exile to violence.

But there were also voluntary exiles. The soil of Judæa is not rich enough to feed a compact population; and the endless misfortunes that fell on it during the second half of the fourth century were bound to accelerate the emigration.

Egypt has always been, and is to-day, the country preferred by Palestinians who are too miserable in their own land. The road that led from Jerusalem to Alexandria was followed by the Jews of the fourth century, as it has been by the Jews of all periods. About the year 300 the Greek historian Hecatæus of Abdera was able to obtain information at Alexandria on Jewish affairs and certain of the Mosaic laws. An inscription witnesses that there was a synagogue not far from the city by the middle of the third century.

On the northern side another road led to Antioch, and from there to Asia Minor. All these were open paths for emigrants. The Phœnician ports also, west from Jerusalem, attracted the poorer Jews who had not the means of subsistence in their own land; Tyre was soon full of them. The second half of the fourth century marks the beginning of the great movement of the men of Jerusalem toward exile.

We must not, therefore, imagine the Jews of the Dispersion as pioneers going out to spread the name of

Jahveh to the ends of the earth. Deportation and emigration, brutal constraint and misery, had done their work, and the prophets at Jerusalem unanimously lamented the brethren who had been torn from their city; with one voice they sang this one hope and one consolation, the return of the exiles.

Instead of the exiles returning to the mother country, new emigrants forsook her unceasingly. Increase and multiply, the law had said to the men of Jerusalem; and the Jewish people increased and multiplied above all others. Emigration spread into Egypt, the East, Syria, Asia Minor, the Greek islands, and even beyond. As we advance in history, more numerous and more precise documents make plain to us the Jewish expansion round the Mediterranean. The movement, begun at the end of the fourth century, continues in the third. The despair, the regret, the sufferings, and the hopes of the exiles, and the promises that they will return, fill the two Isaiahs. The third century is the century of emigration; the second will be the same. In the second century the Jewish colony at Alexandria becomes very large.

The exodus will continue inexorably during the Machabæan and the Herodian periods. At the height of the Machabæan wars deportation will begin again; Antiochus Epiphanes and his successors will send a part of their Jewish prisoners to Greece, where they will settle. A century later, in 63, Pompey, having taken Jerusalem by storm, will send a hundred thousand Jewish slaves to Italy, Flavius Josephus says. But it is emigration rather than deportation that will fill with Jews the towns of the Mediterranean basin, and every year vessels will leave the Phœnician ports with their mournful human herds.

## § 2.

What was to become of all these exiles and emigrants? Would they, as they were poured upon the foreign soil,



mingle with the native population and, while influencing them, insensibly disappear in them? If they had been thus assimilated, Judaism would have disappeared after the fall of Jerusalem, and there would have been no Christianity. But they were not so assimilated. The Jewish element resisted mixture; cast into the depths of the most varied cities, over the Græco-Roman world, the Jews preserved their individuality in them. Their rule was not to mingle with people whom they regarded as pagans; people whom they despised, and who despised them for their lowliness; people whom they hated, and who hated them for their separatist pride. And they found in the unwearying stubbornness of their soul the strength to persevere.

In the worst situation in which wretched emigrants could be placed, they sacrificed nothing of their fierce nationality. Always grouped together and closely united, occupying distinct quarters in their towns, they opposed a wall of iron to every attempt to invade them. They determined to remain, and they remained, in the midst of foreign and hostile populations, the same men that they had been in their own country of Judæa. They retained their customs, clothing, and religion, secured privileges, observed their laws, and remained Jews.

But, while they preserved their institutions and practices, they had not kept their language. In the first century before the present era Greek (not Latin, as one might think) was the universal language of the Mediterranean basin. The Jews of the Dispersion gradually began to speak Greek, and—a notable event—the Bible was translated into Greek. In this way Judaism, and Christianity afterwards, found the means of propaganda; Judaism at Alexandria was renovated by contact with Hellenic culture; and the only sacrifice that the Jews of the Dispersion made of their inheritance, the abandonment of the Hebrew tongue, would contribute to their development.

The date of the translation of the Septuagint (as the Greek translation of the Bible is called) is much disputed. Josephus relates that the "Book of the Law" was translated in the reign and at the command of Ptolemy Philadelphus, in 277, which we cannot admit. In 277 there was not yet a "Book of the Law"; there was merely a series of separate pieces, not yet put together; the latest Levitic *mashal* were scarcely finished. On the other hand, the translation of the Mosaic law was undertaken in order to meet the needs of the Jews of Alexandria, when they no longer understood Hebrew, and when they were numerous enough, and the colony important enough, to make so large a work indispensable and possible. These different considerations bring us to the second century before the present era, and, in point of fact, the first proof we have of the existence of a Greek Bible is about the year 130 (the arrival of the grandson of Ben-Sira at Jerusalem). The Jewish Bible thus became, on its translation into Greek, an instrument of propaganda through the whole Græco-Roman world, instead of being a document hopelessly closed against western peoples.

Thanks to the laws, customs, and religion to which they clung, the rule of isolation that they accepted or, rather, claimed, the hatred they felt for the *goim* and the hatred they engendered in the *goim*, and in spite of their having forgotten their mother tongue, these wretched emigrants and exiles remained Jews at all times and in all places, from father to son. They were bound to become very numerous. Not one of their colonies disappearing, or being assimilated, or mixing with the population, they would necessarily increase in importance. The Græco-Roman world ought, logically, to be filled with Jews in time. Was it so in reality?

Let us hear the witnesses.

*First half of the second century.*—The book of Esther, the most ferociously and sanguinarily Judaic of all the books of the Bible, shows us the Jews spread over the

whole oriental world, from Egypt to Persia and on to the islands of the sea, and so numerous, so powerful, and so dangerous, that the first Antisemite makes his appearance in history in the person of Haman. Haman speaks thus :—

There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom, and their laws are diverse from those of all peoples.....<sup>1</sup>

And Haman adds :—

Neither keep they the king's laws, therefore it is not for the king's profit to suffer them.

The book of Esther is not history ; it interests the historian rather by the situations it describes than the events it relates.

Let us hear the rest of the witnesses.

*End of the second century, or beginning of the first.*—The Alexandrian Jew who wrote in the name of the Sibyl speaks thus :—

Every land and every sea is filled with them.<sup>2</sup>

*About the year 1.*—We pass over a century, and reach the age of Augustus. The world is now Roman. The witness is a pagan writer, the historian-geographer Strabo :—

The Jews have penetrated into every town, and it is not easy to find a single spot in the inhabited world that has not received this people, and is not dominated by it.<sup>3</sup>

*Middle of the first century of the present era.*—Less than fifty years after Strabo, Philo, the most celebrated and learned of the Alexandrian Jews, gave fresh testimony to the invasion of the Græco-Roman world by his compatriots. His words are :—

Jerusalem is not only the metropolis of Judæa, but of most countries. It has sent colonies into the contiguous countries, Egypt, Phœnicia, Syria, and Cœle-Syria, and into more distant countries, Pamphilia, Cilicia, most of

<sup>1</sup> *Esther* iii. 8.

<sup>2</sup> *Oracles of the Sibyl*, iii. 271.

<sup>3</sup> Strabo, quoted by Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, xiv. 12.

the Asiatic States, even to Bithynia, to the confines of Pontus, to Europe, to Thessaly, Bœotia, Macedonia, Aetolia, Attica, Argos, Corinth, and the most populous and finest parts of Peloponnesus; and not only has it opened its settlements on the continent, but also in the principal islands, Eubœa, Cyprus, and Crete; I do not speak of the lands beyond the Euphrates, because all of them, including Babylon and the neighbouring satrapies, have, with few exceptions, Jewish inhabitants.<sup>1</sup>

It is a text of extraordinary importance, and it is confirmed every day by the inscriptions discovered.

*End of the first century.*—Flavius Josephus, who wrote in the last years of the first century of the present era, gives us many indications of the state of the Dispersion in his time. In Syria the Jewish inhabitants are in the majority; at Antioch they have a splendid synagogue; at Damascus they number more than ten thousand, and most of the women are Judaisers; they are settled in Mesopotamia, along the whole coast of Asia Minor, and in Cyrenaica. In Egypt they number a million.

The New Testament, in fine, is not a less witness, and the Epistles of St. Paul, especially, assume the existence of synagogues in all the large towns of the Empire.

It remains only to show how Rome itself was invaded by Judaism.

It seems that there were Jews at Rome from the second century before the present era. According to Valerius Maximus, the prætor Hispalus, in 139, expelled the Jews from the city on account of their proselytism. Flavius Josephus relates, as we saw, that Pompey, in 63, sent his prisoners as slaves to Rome. But the first contemporary witness to the existence of a Jewish colony in Italy is Cicero; and his testimony is decisive.

Cicero pleads for the proconsul Flaccus, who is charged with exaction in Syria. He comes to speak of sums of money that the Jews of Asia Minor had sent to the temple at Jerusalem, according to the practice of their

<sup>1</sup> Philo, *Legatio ad Gaium*, letter of Agrippa to Caligula.

religion, which Flaccus is accused of diverting. He then approaches the tribunal. He reproaches the accuser with having secured the trial on the Aurelian steps, in the open Forum, instead of in the enclosure reserved for civic affairs, and having chosen this spot because of the crowd of Jews who would be there.

“Thou knowest,” he says to the accuser, “how great is their number, their union, their power.....”<sup>1</sup>

And he says that he is going to speak law, so that he will be heard by the judges only. Later he congratulates his client for having dared to brave these Jews who sometimes disturb public assemblies.

Thus, barely three years after Pompey has sent his Jewish prisoners to Rome, Cicero speaks, not merely of the number and unity, but the power, of the Jews at Rome; and they are regarded as formidable, and can disturb a proconsul. The settlement of the Jews at Rome was accomplished more than half-a-century before the Christian era.

A hundred years later, Seneca, confirming the testimony of Strabo and Philo, will express a fact historically known in his time in saying of the Jews that “this nation [the most rascally of all, he adds] has done so well that its practices are now established over the whole earth.”<sup>2</sup>

### § 3.

The Jewish groups, thus scattered throughout the Græco-Roman world, had had at first, in point of organisation, the form of foreign settlements. Closed associations, they had originally represented the effort of the emigrants to defend and maintain themselves in the midst of a hostile world. Little by little, as the years

<sup>1</sup> Cicero, *Pro Flacco*, 28.

<sup>2</sup> Seneca, quoted by St. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, vi. 10.

rolled on, these associations had become permanent ; the hope of returning to their mother country became more and more chimerical ; the emigrants understood that they must die in the land of exile.

As we have said, the exiled or emigrant Jews had at all times and in all places preserved their laws, their usages, their religion, and, in a general way, their cast of mind. Nevertheless a great evolution of the Jewish soul would be brought about by the Dispersion. In Judæa the Jews were devoted exclusively to agriculture and pasture. Industry and commerce barely existed ; the Jewish spirit, absorbed in its nationalist and religious fanaticism, disliked meddling with business. The Roman, a soldier and administrator, hated and despised business ; the Jew had usually the same hatred and contempt out of fanaticism. Commerce is anathematised in the Bible. The Greeks, unlike the Romans and Jews, were born merchants ; it was an additional reason why commerce should be odious to the uncompromising prophets. We must conceive the Jews of Jerusalem as orientals incapable of any sustained labour, interested only in politics and religion, using up their days in controversy about the temple, after doing the smallest amount of work that would preserve them from dying of hunger. The formula of Jerusalemite Judaism was always that of the Sermon on the Mount:—

Behold the fowls of the air.....Consider the lilies of the field.....<sup>1</sup>

The Dispersion gradually converted the Jews into the merchants who were familiar to the Middle Ages and modern times. What enterprise, indeed, was there for these emigrants and exiles in towns where they infallibly remained pariahs ? The lowest occupations at first. The main point was to live. The indefatigable perseverance that expressed itself at Jerusalem in resisting anti-national influences found expression, among the Jews

<sup>1</sup> *Matthew* vi. 26 and 28.



of the colonies, first in a determination to remain Jews, then to ascend the steps that lead from the lowest occupations to high commerce. About the year 6 they are still, with few exceptions, in the humblest forms of commerce. But the evolution has begun; there is a tense activity in the ghettos. Does not the Mosaic law permit in the colonies what it forbids at Jerusalem? Is not usury permitted in regard to the *goyim*, though forbidden between Jew and Jew? While Jerusalem is the city of political and religious exaltation, the Jewish colonies are ant-hills, in which a small world of miserable folk busy themselves in the obscure getting of their daily bread.

The generations go by. The children, the grandchildren, of the emigrants are now attached to the soil on which their fathers settled, cursing their destiny. They remain Jewish in heart, thought, and ways. Never for a moment do they mingle with the *goyim*. They have kept their individuality. They belong, however, to the country; they become national, from the very nature of things; in a word, they cease to be foreigners. The Jewish communities are no longer the associations of foreigners that they were at first; they become private societies. It is the second form of their organisation.

But these private societies, formed for the security of the commercial as well as the religious interests of their members, have a peculiar character: they have the appearance of being purely religious societies. The synagogue is their centre in every city; the governor of the synagogue is their leader. Religion, in fact, is the bond and the soul of these communities. The association of interests in the Jewish colonies cannot, any more than nationalism at Jerusalem, assume any other form than that of religion. Another characteristic feature is that the Jewish communities now embrace, not only Jews, but Judaisers. Natives of the country in the vicinity of the Jews have begun to Judaize, or to experi-

ence the Jewish influence. They have learned about Jewish matters, observe certain Jewish laws, and live the Jewish life. The great work of propaganda has set in. And the synagogue opens its doors to the proselytes who come to it.

As private societies under the form of religious societies, then, the majority of the Jewish colonies organised themselves about the beginning of the present era; thus, especially, were organised the Jewish colonies at Rome. In some cities, however, the Jews attained a higher organisation, and reached a situation not unlike that of the corporations which the Romans formed in non-Roman countries. When the Romans settled or travelled in non-Roman lands, they were in a privileged position; they were independent of the municipalities in which they were, and they kept their own laws and jurisdiction. It is hardly surprising in men who had conquered the whole known world; it is not more surprising in the Jews, the eternally conquered, if we remember the immeasurable power of resistance and perseverance that sustained the miserable and admirable people through so many trials.

Strabo, in the text that we have quoted above, explains that the Jews had some such position in Alexandria and Cyrenaica:—

In Egypt the Jews have received separate quarters to live in; at Alexandria an extensive quarter has been set aside for them. At their head there is an ethnarch who administers the affairs of the colony, presides at litigation, and sees to the execution of contracts and regulations, like the head of an independent State.<sup>1</sup>

There the Jewish colony no longer needed to take the form of a religious association in order to maintain itself. Religion was always the principle of union, but the colony had become a sort of political federation—a State within the State; Strabo says ἔθνος, a people apart, a vassal

<sup>1</sup> Strabo, quoted by Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, xiv. 12.

rather than a subject of the local government. Let us hasten to say, however, that this extraordinary state of things does not seem to have been found outside of Alexandria and Cyrenaica. It is due to the great number of Alexandrian and Cyrenian Jews, and doubtless to the weakness of the last kings of Egypt.

The Romans exacted only submission and the payment of taxes; when they took Egypt, they accepted the accomplished fact. Moreover, all forms of organisation of the Jewish colonies, from the foreign settlement and the private society with a religious form to the political confederation of Alexandria or Cyrenaica, assumed religious liberty. Roman toleration had given the Jewish colonies, not merely religious liberty, but privileges. The Empire recognised all religions. For the Romans a religion was the symbol of a people; when they opened the Empire to all peoples, they opened their Capitol to all the gods. There was only the theory of the supremacy of the patron-god of the city, Jupiter Capitolinus, and afterwards of the cult of the Emperor, which similarly symbolised the dominion of Rome, that was incompatible with the Jewish religion. Caligula endeavoured to impose it on the Jews; they resisted, and the Romans had too deep a political sense to insist. The Roman government did not set up *à priori* theories; practical needs and local considerations preceded abstract principles. The Jewish communities were, throughout the whole Empire, dispensed from celebrating the cult of Cæsar.

Another privilege relieved them of military service. Military service seemed to the Jews incompatible with the observance of some of the laws of Moses, especially that of the Sabbath. Roman policy declined to exasperate fanatics.

By a third privilege the Jews had the right, as long as the temple existed at Jerusalem, not only to visit it from all parts in pilgrimages of thousands at the time of the great festivals, but to send their tribute to it.

This right was the consequence of their right to administer their own funds.

Finally, the colonies had the right of jurisdiction over their members—that is to say, that any Jew might be judged according to the Mosaic law. In regard to these liberties and privileges, we shall find the Roman Empire inexorable whenever there is question of public order, and chastise the Jews pitilessly in Judæa when they rebel, and in the Dispersion when, under the name of Christians, they became criminals at common law.

We have briefly shown the situation of the Jews scattered round the Mediterranean about the beginning of the present era. We have seen their number, the extraordinary development of their colonies, their organisation, and their privileges. We have now to inquire into their moral, social, and political activity; and that will conclude our study of Judaism before St. Paul.

#### § 4.

The Roman world was then a splendid marvel of proud strength and serene power. Rome covered the world as if with its spreading hands; like long fingers, its great stone roads, by which the legions and the prefects came and went, as the blood flows in the veins and arteries, sent out its implacable will—a will confident of itself and irresistible, because it brought peace, organisation, and justice to the world.

The peace it brought to the world was the fruit of four centuries of unbroken effort. On the field of battle as well as in the council, by the totality of its highest military virtues as well as of its highest civic virtues, its power had become great enough among other peoples to create its right. It made one vast society of all the nations gathered under its dominion; the wars of kingdom against kingdom disappeared; it was felt that the world

was, like a harmonious body, about to move according to the great rhythm of a central will.

For the last time the world saw the colossus roar, shake its mane, and go into action. That began at Pharsalus, and ended at Actium. The thunder seemed to rend the sky and overthrow the earth; the lightning flashed across the world, from the Euphrates to the Pillars of Hercules; the earth shook. Then there was a great silence, a serene calm, a radiant sun, a cloudless sky; it was the Roman peace, "the immeasurable majesty of the Roman peace."<sup>1</sup> But the Roman peace was an armed peace; the old legions remained in camp, the javelin in their hand, the shield on their arm. The procurator might display the gravity of his toga before the people; behind the feeble escort that accompanied him was the shadow of the Eagles, ever ready to swoop.

It was not enough for Rome to bring peace to the world; it brought an organised peace. The Roman was a born administrator no less than a born soldier. He knew how to keep what he conquered. Never were such profoundly statesmanlike qualities developed as among this nation of grave men, with hard mask, calm brow, severe eyes, and positivist spirit: men who were always victorious and always pitiless.

And the work that had pacified and organised the world ended in giving it justice. We have already recognised a Roman creation in justice. To give to every man what belongs to him, *suum cuique*, is an idea that was born at Rome. Rome, in fact, was a hierarchy. Above the countless multitude of lower beings, fit only to serve,<sup>2</sup> Rome towered, a pyramid of rock, with so many thousand citizens at its base, with the increasingly luxurious company of its leaders, and with the Emperor, the great commander, at the summit.

There were no castes at Rome; positions were open to

<sup>1</sup> Immensa pacis Romanæ majestas.

<sup>2</sup> Servituti nati, Cicero, *De Provinciis Consularibus*, v.

all, honours and wealth accessible to all. Foreigners might become citizens, knights, or magistrates; a toleration that afterwards degenerated into abuse. The legionaries were stationed in the provinces. Foreigners flocked to the capital. The great freedmen whom we find among the Cæsars, at the head of the hierarchy, were bastards of Roman nobles and beautiful slaves imported from all parts of the earth. Christianity, which did not abolish slavery, almost re-established castes. The great Roman soul knew no barriers of classes, though it knew the inequality of men. The Roman legislators believed that every man had his place; that there is order in the universe; that there is the oak and there is the reed, the lion and the beast of the herd; and that social perfection would be attained if every man, occupying the place that suits him, prided himself on being in his proper situation, his proper trade, his proper charge.

Honour is the law of the few; but the simple sentiment of professional duty is capable of replacing decaying religions in giving the necessary morality to the people. Rome had no religion, in the moral sense that we give to the word, yet never did virtue flourish more in any nation than that. The English have kept the ideal—the right man in the right place. Unhappy the man who thinks he is kept from his class, despises his superiors, and accepts not the post that life has entrusted to him. On the other hand, the practice of common virtues is easy, as well as the heroism of rare and great deeds, to any man who takes pride merely in doing his professional duty. To teach that to our children it would be enough, perhaps, as was done with young Romans, to give them a strong military education.

Judaism proclaimed that all the Jews were equal; it made of the Jewish people a people apart, a privileged group, a caste. The Jews had no military education. Military education had taught the Romans the inequality



of men and the accessibility of all to the higher offices—discipline, on the one hand, and, on the other, the fact that, as used to be said a century ago, every soldier has a marshal's baton in his knapsack. Roman justice, *suum cuique*, must be defined in that way. If equality means the possibility of all to mount the social pyramid by their own merit, it is just; but in the mind of the mutinous slave it means that the worker of the last hour shall have the same pay as he who began in the morning. The Romans never imagined that the last could be the first, that the lowly should eat the bread of the strong, and that life was a feast at which every comer had the right to an equal seat. That is why Tacitus declared, in speaking of the Jews: "What is sacred to us is held in horror by them; what to us is infamous is permitted to them."<sup>1</sup>

If we wish to understand the part that the Jews played in the great concert of European peace—their moral, social, and political attitude—we must first consult the Latin contemporaries. There is no variation in the verdict of the Latin writers on the Jews; and this consensus of superior men, of whom two at least, Juvenal and Tacitus, were great and good men as well as men of genius, is not a thing to disregard. Christian prejudice has endeavoured to throw suspicion on the severity of their judgment. Renan, in his *Origins of Christianity*, which has a Christian bias, never hesitates between some miserable story from "The Acts of the Martyrs" and Tacitus; in his opinion Tacitus is always wrong. The independent historian, on the other hand, regards the authority of Tacitus as very great, and does not understand how his judgment may be accepted in regard to the Germans and not accepted in regard to the Jews—unless it be that the Christian religion, being a daughter of the Jewish religion, owes it some respect.

<sup>1</sup> Tacitus, *Histories*, v. 4.

In the speech which we have quoted, Cicero, drawing up an indictment of Judaism, charges their religion with "shuddering at the splendour of the empire, the gravity of the Roman name, and the ancient institutions of the city."

Then Horace speaks several times of the Jews, sometimes representing them as a troop of fanatical proselytisers, forcing people to enter their ranks,<sup>1</sup> sometimes laughing at their superstitions and the Sabbath.<sup>2</sup>

Persius ridicules the way in which the wretched Jews celebrate the Sabbath.<sup>3</sup>

Juvenal describes the Jewish beggars with no other furniture than a basket and some hay,<sup>4</sup> and the Jewesses hawking about cheap predictions.<sup>5</sup> In this passage he gathers up all the reproaches that humanity addresses to Judaism—contempt of the laws of Rome, hatred of the pagans, and the refusal to take part in social duties:—

The son of a superstitious observer of the Sabbath worships only the power of the clouds and the heavens; after the example of his father, he has not less horror of the flesh of a pig than of human flesh, and he is circumcised. Educated in a contempt for Roman laws, he neither studies, observes, nor reveres any but the Judaic law and all that Moses transmits to his followers in his mysterious book. He would not tell the way to a traveller who did not belong to his sect; he would not show the spring to one who was not circumcised. And all this because his father idled on the seventh day of each week, and took no part in life's duties.<sup>6</sup>

Suetonius attributes to Augustus a joke about the Sabbath.<sup>7</sup> Seneca includes the observance of the Sabbath among the superstitions which he advises his reader to avoid.<sup>8</sup>

Martial vents his pornographic humour on the Jews;<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Horace, *Satires*, i. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Horace, *Satires*, i. 5 and i. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Persius, *Satires*, v.

<sup>4</sup> Juvenal, iii. 13–16.

<sup>5</sup> Juvenal, vi. 343 and 547.

<sup>6</sup> Juvenal, xiv. 87–104.

<sup>7</sup> Suetonius, *Augustus*, 76.

<sup>8</sup> Seneca, *Letter to Lucilius*, xcvi.

<sup>9</sup> Martial, vii. 30, 35, and 55.

in another place he describes the Jew "trained by his mother to beg";<sup>1</sup> and again he refers to the fetidness of the inhabitants of the ghetto, and, among the worst smells he can recall, such as "the smell of lagoons from which the sea has withdrawn, the thick miasma that rises from the marshes of Albula, the bad air of a pond in which there has been sea-water, the emanations of a he-goat paying attention to the female, or the exhalations of the great-coat of a veteran soldier overcome by fatigue," he puts "the breath of the observers of the Sabbath."<sup>2</sup>

We may recall that Seneca called the Jews "the most rascally nation of all," in relating that they "had done so well that their practices were now established all over the earth."<sup>3</sup>

Lastly, there is the well-known phrase of Tacitus in which, speaking of the Christians as identified with the Jews, he says they are "convicted of hatred of the human race."<sup>4</sup> Apologists refer exultantly to certain errors of Tacitus in regard to Jewish history and laws; but while Tacitus may have been mistaken on certain points of the ancient history and legislation (restricted in his time) of the small Palestinian people, he was better informed as to the morals of the Jews at Rome, his contemporaries. We have quoted his verdict:—

All that is sacred to us is held in horror by them; all that is infamous to us is permitted to them.<sup>5</sup>

He speaks of their "sinister, fetid" institutions, "which have made way by their perversity." He speaks again of their hatred of other men, their stubborn separatism. A little later their customs are "absurd and sordid";<sup>6</sup> in another place they are "an execrable people."<sup>7</sup> If Tacitus had read the apocalypse of St. John, with its cries of rage against Rome, and its calls for fire, he would not have

<sup>1</sup> Martial, xii. 57.

<sup>2</sup> Martial, iv. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Seneca, quoted by St. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, vi. 10.

<sup>4</sup> Tacitus, *Histories*, v. 4. <sup>5</sup> Tacitus, *Histories*, v. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Tacitus, *Histories*, v. 5. <sup>7</sup> *Teterrimam gentem*; Tacitus, *Histories*, v. 8.

doubted that among men who were capable of writing such books there were some quite capable—and more likely than Nero—of setting fire to the city.

Let us do justice to the extraordinarily powerful qualities of the Jewish people, but we need not be surprised at the horror with which Romans of the early centuries regarded the ghetto. Its unconquerable nationalism has made the Jewish people one of the greatest in the world; but we can quite understand that at the time of the Dispersion a Tacitus or a Juvenal could not look upon it with anything but contempt and indignation.

Let us picture to ourselves these groups, who have come from Palestine, in the most desolate suburbs of the large towns, in obscure districts under the shadow of slaughter-houses, at the outfalls of sewers, in all sorts of corners shunned by other people, corners where houses were few, and there were no trees, water, or clear sky. Let us recollect their acceptance of vile occupations, of blows, beggary, dirt, and humiliations. The Jew who emigrated to the West with his Syriac, Tyrian, and Egyptian neighbours, was not like them in the depths of his soul. While the poor Tyrian lived out his poor life in humble servitude, while the Egyptian was resigned, while all these orientals rejoiced when they gained a few coins and died young and without envy, the Jew had grown up with the idea that he was suffering, but would be avenged; that he was humbled, but his masters would be punished; and his soul was sharpened on hatred and hope. Under the rags of the miserable Jew the Roman felt a heart beating with hatred.

We saw that Judaism in Judæa was divided between the two schools of Hillel and Shammai, the school of patience and subterraneous war, and the school of revolt and open war. While the disciples of Shammai, getting the upper hand at Jerusalem, lead the holy city to destruction, the men of the Dispersion remain faithful

disciples of Hillel. None of the censures of Tacitus or Juvenal should astonish any man who understands the book of psalms:—

I am wasted in groaning.....  
 I am a rejected vessel.....  
 My wounds are fetid.....  
 I am sated with contempt.....

Then:—

Avenge us, Jahveh, god of vengeance.....  
 Let me bathe my feet in their blood.....  
 Render unto them their outrage sevenfold in their bosom.....  
 Happy he who shall seize their little children, and dash them against the rock.....  
 Rise, judge of the earth.....break their teeth in their mouths.....let me rejoice to see my vengeance.....<sup>1</sup>

It is a fierce expectation of vengeance, but there is no preparation for revolt, no organising of war, no sharpening of weapons. The Jew of the Dispersion is not minded to resist; he does not think of rising; no seditious idea has ever passed through the ghetto. He bends; his spine is appallingly supple; the stick plays merrily on it. He is proud, perhaps, but certainly not haughty. He expects victory of his god, not of himself. His tremendous strength lies in his confidence that his god will give him this victory.

He watches and waits, almost with an air of resignation. All the employments that the Latins disdain are his. He obeys miserably; he takes up dirty offices; he prostitutes his girls and boys. He humbles himself the more as he is so certain that he will be avenged. There is nothing in him of the shudder of the slave who is ready to rebel, of the generous anger that had shook the heart of a Spartacus when he at last brandished the sword that made Rome tremble, and that his arm was worthy to brandish. The Jews of Jerusalem had in the end the

<sup>1</sup> *Psalms*, passim. See above, p. 211.

soul of Spartacus ; the Jews of the Dispersion remained the sombre dreamers of the apocalypses.

The Jew of the Dispersion, who muttered *raca* in a low voice to the great lords of Rome, said to them aloud : *Adoni*. The spirit of hatred and rancour which his envy spread through the world was a hatred without greatness, and a vile rancour. He lived, and sustained himself and encouraged others with the words : " Patience, you will be avenged."

The Hebrew books do not exhort to action ; they can only curse and pray. Jahveh will smite the rich, because they are rich. Jahveh will destroy splendour, because it is splendid. Jahveh will burn what is beautiful. Jahveh wishes all strength, power, and joy suppressed ; for the Jew is weak, ugly, and sad. But the miracle of the Jewish soul was that the cry of hatred was accompanied by the cry of hope—or, rather, of certainty. And this hope was the more certain because, to realise their dream of imperialism, these sublime wretches counted, not on themselves, but on a god.

There is nothing more extraordinary than the mixture of profound humility and unconquerable pride that was characteristic of the Jewish soul. Pride, on the one hand, because of the certainty that he will one day be master of the world ; humility, because he does not trust his own strength, but that of another, Jahveh. It recalls the pride of the lackey, who can do nothing for himself, but his master is very strong. This pride in humility explains the work of quiet and implacable propaganda carried on by Judaism throughout the lower strata of the Roman world.

The hatred and hope of the Jew were diffused about him. The obstinate Jew was a figure in the mixed troop of the lowly of all nations who swarmed by the wayside. The others noticed his reticence, and questioned him ; and at times his pride disclosed the Messianic dream that exalted him. Gradually the  $\frac{1}{2}$  troop marvelled at the



promises made to the Jews by their god. The years went by, and the news spread. We can imagine the astonishment, the admiration, of these poor folk when they suddenly heard speak of revenge! The revenge, it seemed, was for the Jews only, not for the others; but, all the same, it was something to know that the very lowest of these lowly folk expected revenge. The Jew began to figure among the others as a man with a secret, a man who whispers in the shade. And presently they were saying that perhaps it would be possible to have a share in the inheritance promised to the Jews, and would be as well to join in their cult.

Thus what were called Judaisers began to increase. Foreigners converted, or affiliated, to Judaism, the Judaisers, whom we have already found grouped about the Jewish colonies, were not circumcised and eat non-ritual meats; but they knew the Jewish books in the Septuagint translation, listened to the discourses of the Jews, and frequented the synagogues.

Now the good news spread through the social depths. The spirit of rancour grew. There was talk of a possible change, and quoting of express words; the god of the Jews had promised. Nothing of the kind had been said in the name of the other gods; neither the Greek, nor Egyptian, nor oriental gods had promised any future to their peoples. But the god of the Jews had made a formal engagement, and they quoted Isaiah, Jeremiah, and then the latest of the prophets, the most precise in regard to the promise, Daniel.

From the earliest prophets the Jews had associated with the idea of victory over their enemies that of revenge of the lowly over the powerful. They now spoke in low tones of the incalculable wealth of the patricians; they cursed their pleasures and luxury, and exalted austerity out of hatred of the rich.

The less coarse minds had other arguments. Like certain anarchists of our time, they mingled philosophic

considerations with their appeal to passion. It was easy for them to ridicule the externality of an official religion that had become purely symbolical, and to exalt the mysterious religion which Judaism was. Jahveh had but one temple, at Jerusalem, and no statue; for the Jews scattered over the West he was the mysterious god without temple or altar.

At times the whispers of the Jews were heard among the educated classes; not infrequently free men and women—women especially—lent an ear to them. In the ages of the Cæsars Judaism had followers even among the patricians, so true it is that the superior classes are never without individuals who are eager to descend again.

This despised crowd of obscure beings who swarmed in the depths of the Empire was animated with the most ardent and sombre proselytism. These miserable people were priests.

“Ye shall be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy people,” the Law had said.

In order to send them to preach the reign of the lowly and the revenge of the weak, Jahveh had said to them:—

“Ye shall all be priests.”

“Ye shall all be nobles,” their genius had said to the Romans.

Under Augustus and Tiberius the Empire spread over the surface of the world; it spread in strength and beauty above the sullen hatred that rose toward it from all the lower depths.

One day, in the year 19 of the present era, Tiberius, though liberal, like all the Cæsars, was alarmed at the growing invasion. He forbade at Rome the ceremonies of oriental cults, especially Egyptian and Jewish rites, and he ordered the expulsion of the Jews from Italy. Judaism was forbidden at Rome under pain of perpetual slavery. The Roman Empire had divined its enemy.

It was what we might call the first of the persecutions;

the second, thirty years afterward, under Claudius, leads us to the appearance of Christianity.

The Jews had bent their heads to the storm; they had dissimulated, retired below ground, and waited. But gradually they made their appearance again on all sides, like a rumbling that seemed to have ceased and begins again under one's feet. They had to begin over again. The Jewish invasion received a fresh impetus—at Rome, Alexandria, in Greece, and in Asia.

At this time a tempest of heroic and furious madness swept over Jerusalem and Judæa. Twenty partial revolts formed a prelude to the great insurrection of the year 66. The Jews of Jerusalem and Judæa, who were going to seek with the sword the fulfilment of their hopes, were abandoning the tradition of the prophets, the psalms, and the apocalypses. They became heroes; for no heroism was ever greater than that of the men who defended Jerusalem against Titus. But by that very fact they were repudiating the fundamental dogma of Judaism, which is the abandonment of oneself in the hands of the supernatural. They forgot that the apocalypses, the psalms, and the prophets had preached that they must expect nothing of their own efforts, but look for everything from Jahveh.

“Cursed be the man that trusteth in man,” Jeremiah had said. “Blessed is the man that trusteth in Jahveh.”<sup>1</sup>

“For I will not trust in my bow,” said the Psalms, “neither shall my sword save me.....Jahveh is my hope, my strength, and my help.”<sup>2</sup>

“And in those days,” says Daniel, “the god of heaven shall set up an empire, which shall never be destroyed; with his hand he shall break in pieces and consume all the other empires.”<sup>3</sup>

Jewish tradition is with Hillel against Shammai; it is in the Dispersion. There the oppressed flocks make no

<sup>1</sup> *Jeremiah* xvii. 5 and 7.

<sup>2</sup> *Psalms* xliv. 6, and *passim*.

<sup>3</sup> *Daniel* ii. 44.

struggle. They accept everything, or feign to accept everything ; and they await the coming of the Messiah, in the opening heavens, with his company of Kerubim, to fulfil the promise.

How long would Jewish perseverance have lasted ? How long would Jewish imperialism have needed to complete its conquest of the depths of the Roman world ? How long would the outcasts of the Roman world have been able to hope for the coming of the day of Jahveh ?

Then through the Empire the news suddenly spread that the day of deliverance was at hand, and that, marvellous to relate, not only the Jews, but the Judaisers and all the lowly who would come to them, would be invited to take their place in the kingdom of vengeance.

This novelty was taught by a Jew of Tarsus, in Syria, a tent-maker by trade, Shaoul or Saul, and afterwards Paul, by name.

## APPENDICES

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[We did not think it advisable to interrupt our study by the discussion of details, of which each would require careful study. In these Appendices we shall deal only with certain points that are especially worthy of attention.]

### I.

“ISRAEL” (p. 5).—The name Israel is found, as we said, on an Egyptian monument of the thirteenth century, a stele raised by the Pharaoh Menephtah, who reigned from 1225 to 1215. Apart from this monument, and after this date, Egyptology knows nothing of it. Assyriology is entirely ignorant of it. Among the Palestinian monuments there is only the stele of Mesa that uses it; but, without discussing the authenticity of the stele, we may observe that the name Israel is used by it in a solemn and archaic sense. In much the same way the Emperor William might have said in 1871: “We have conquered Gaul.”

In the same way the name Sennaar (Shinear) has a precise geographical significance in the El Amarna tablets, but the Biblical period has only a vague and poetic meaning.

This silence of archæological documents has led us, among other things, to believe that, though the name Israel stood for a reality in the age of the tribes, and, no doubt, even in the Davidic period, it no longer did so in the time of the two kingdoms; and that it was revived and put forward by the Esdras school with an imperialist aim, as we have submitted in the first part of the work, ch. iii., 1.

However that may be, we refrain from giving this name to the kingdoms of Ephraim and Judah. There is a good deal of confusion in this respect in the Bible and in historians; they give the name Israel, on the one hand, to the kingdoms of Ephraim and Judah collectively, and, on the other hand, to the kingdom of Ephraim separately from the kingdom of

Judah. It is in every respect better to adopt the name Ephraim for the northern kingdom.

We reserve the name Israel to the two historical acceptations of the word: in the first, it designates "a certain number of tribes settled before the year 1000 in southern Syria"; in the second, it designates, from the fifth century onward, a conception of "Jerusalem politics."

As to the word "Hebrew," it is a vague term, applying sometimes in the Bible to all the descendants of Abraham—all the Palestinians, that is to say—and sometimes restricted to the descendants of Jacob, or the Israelites. As the word has not assumed any theoretical meaning analogous to that of the word Israel, we find it possible to use it, taking it in the second of its two meanings. We therefore call the kingdoms of Ephraim and Judah "Hebrew kingdoms," though the word is not found in Assyrian or Egyptian inscriptions contemporaneous with the two kingdoms.

## II.

THE SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH (p. 44).—As is well known, the Samaritan cult uses a special edition of the Pentateuch, which is called the Samaritan Pentateuch. The date of it is disputed. We regard it as later than the Machabæan period. The Machabees alone, as a matter of fact, imposed Jewish rule, and, consequently, the Jewish cult, on Samaria. After them Samaria recovered a kind of independence, and the Samaritan cult became a schism of Judaism. The priests of Samaria would then prepare the edition of the books of Moses that suited them.

## III.

OUR "IMPERIALIST" THEORY OF THE COMPOSITION OF THE MOSAIC BOOKS (p. 52).—Our theory is the only one to solve what M. Isidore Lévy, in his learned and acute lectures at the *École des Hautes-Études*, called the riddle of the Bible. If the Hexateuch was composed in Judah at a time when the kingdom of Ephraim had just been destroyed, after two centuries of hostility (let us say, rather, at a time when the State of Samaria was the chief enemy), how can we understand the Jerusalem writers incorporating in their work the legends



of the north, and even giving to Joseph, the Ephraimitic hero, so important a part?

It seems to us that only one reply can be made. The writers of Jerusalem annexed the traditions of peoples which they knew to have once been sister-peoples, in order that one day they might annex the peoples themselves.

Why did they not do the same in regard to the rich regions of the West? Not being conscious of any relationship with them, they used other means; but their imperialism is not less clearly shown in regard to them, and the Bible is full of their pretensions over all countries as far as the sea.

To the critics who hold that the Jerusalemites could not glorify enemies or rivals, we have only to quote the extraordinary passage in *Chronicles* (v. 1-2)—a Jerusalemitic work, if ever there was one, as no one denies—which exalts Joseph at the expense of Judah.

#### IV.

THE "DOCUMENTS" (p. 58).—Critics have given the following names to the different documents that compose the Mosaic books:—

Jehovic and Elohic, for the most ancient;

Deuteronomic, for the following;

Levitic or Sacerdotal, for the latest.

These names have been well chosen. To apply them to the periods in which the different parts of the books were composed, it is enough to give them their full meaning.

The Jehovic and Elohic period is that in which the work of the priest-writers consists in concentrating the Jewish soul about Jahveh, the national god; Jehovic, because it was formerly usual to say Jehovah instead of Jahveh; Elohic, because in Hebrew god is *elohim*.

The Deuteronomic period is that in which the laws of Deuteronomy (the second series of laws) are promulgated.

The Levitic or Sacerdotal period corresponds to the zenith of the Levitical priesthood.

We may add that it is customary to distinguish between the Jehovist and Elohist in the last period. The range of this study will not allow us to go into these details. We may regard the Jehovist and Elohist as two schools, or two shades of the same frame of mind.

## V.

SIMEON THE JUST (p. 98).—The reasons that have led some to dispute the testimony of Josephus, and put back for a century the pontificate of Simeon the Just, do not seem to us valid. Josephus is explicit; and as to the Siracid, he gives one the impression of speaking of the great Simeon, not as a contemporary, as Renan thought, but as a star shining above the temple in the remote past. Historical probabilities agree; Simeon the Just, so plausible at the beginning of the third century, seems to be impossible, at the beginning of the second, on the eve of the Machabæan period.

## VI.

THE NON-EXISTENCE OF THE PROPHETS BEFORE THE CHRISTIAN ERA (p. 119).—The belief in the historical reality of the prophets—that is to say, of characters playing the part of prophets in ancient Judah—is the great blunder, not only of classical exegesis, but even of independent commentators.

The most liberal Protestant students, no less than the Rabbinical tradition, hold that the prophets were semi-political, semi-religious characters (raised up by God, the orthodox go on to say), a sort of tribunes or religious reformers, who, from the time of the ancient Hebrew kingdoms down to Esdras, preached to the people, and whose discourses were preserved for us by the pious care of the synagogues.

M. Maurice Vernes has proved that the books of the prophets (pseudepigraphic, like almost all the books of the Bible) are the works of writers who were later, not only than the Restoration, but than Esdras. He concluded that prophetism was an institution of the fourth and third centuries; and he defined the prophets as "men clothed with a sacred character, exercising the ministry of inspired speech in the precincts of the temple at Jerusalem."<sup>1</sup> Hence M. Vernes only departs from tradition in placing in the fourth and third centuries an institution which tradition referred to the period from the eighth to the fifth century. The Protestant exegesis offers a wrong but conceivable hypothesis when it represents

<sup>1</sup> *Du Prétendu Polythéisme des Hébreux*, vol. ii., p. 399.

the development of the sacerdotal institutions as later than prophetism; while the hypothesis of prophetic institutions as contemporary with the great sacerdotal development puts M. Vernes in great difficulties.

Not content with taking seriously the reality of the prophets, commentators supposed that there were prophetic institutions analogous to the sacerdotal institutions, a body of prophets parallel to the clergy, and prophetic schools set up; and they endeavour to draw up the history of an imaginary institution.

The more audacious supposed that the literary type of the prophets was the idealisation, not of the wandering wizards that the men of god really were, but of professional sooth-sayers, attached to the temple. As a matter of fact, we find these regular bodies of diviners everywhere in antiquity—in Egypt and Babylon, in Greece and Rome. But—and this is one of the distinctive features of Judaism—the only divination practised in the temple of Jerusalem was that of the priests; nowhere is there a single mention in the Bible of organised diviners exercising an official function. Judaism had no divination except that of the priests, at the head of the social hierarchy, and that of the miserable popular men of god at the bottom.

But how can critics to whom the Bible is not only a sacred book, but an historical book, admit any doubt as to the reality of these characters? If the romances of the Round Table had had the good fortune to found a religion, their heroes would have become historical characters.

The thesis of the non-existence of the prophets until the Christian era can only be developed in an exegetical work. I would, however, call the attention of my readers to the extraordinary silence of the Jewish legislation in regard to prophetism as an established institution. The Hexateuch is the collection of Judaic institutions. It contains everything: political laws, civil laws, moral laws, religious laws, ecclesiastical laws, and ritual laws. The Hexateuch is not the work of one period, but of centuries; it embraces the whole of classic Jewish history. Now, though the word prophet is found in it here and there, there is not a trace of any regulation that might apply to a prophetic institution, in spite of the thousand and one laws concerning the priesthood.

There is, moreover, never question in it of prophetism as an institution. Of such a ministry as that of a Samuel, an Elijah, a Jeremiah, or an Ezekiel there is no trace whatever in the Hexateuch, the work that contains the whole of Judaism. Why this silence? Because prophetism was merely a literary fiction; because in reality there was no such a thing as prophetism.

Further, the word prophet is used in the Hexateuch in a different sense from that of the historical books. In the Hexateuch the name of prophet is given to leaders like Abraham and Moses or priests like Aaron; the word having found favour, the writers of the Hexateuch were bound to use it; but a prophet such as Abraham, Moses, or Aaron is a very different thing from a prophet like Samuel, Elijah, Jeremiah, or Ezekiel.

I may add that the early historical books (*Judges, Samuel, and Kings*), as well as the later historical books (*Chronicles, Esdras, and Nehemiah*), never present the prophets in any other light than as dogmatic admonishers, and never give the impression of playing an historical part, or of the establishment of a body with any function whatever. The prophetic books themselves, when we examine them closely, lead to the same conclusion. As to the hagiographers, everybody knows how little there is question of prophets in them.

On the other hand, the first book of the *Machabees* furnishes direct arguments against the reality of prophetism, by showing that at the time when it was written, not only were there no prophets, but there had been none for a long time.<sup>1</sup>

## VII.

WERE THE GALILÆANS JEWS? (p. 260).—The historian Flavius Josephus, who never fails to oppose the Jews to the Samaritans, assimilates the "Jews of Galilee" to the "Jews of Judæa"; see especially his *Jewish Antiquities*, xx. 5, and *Jewish War*, ii. 21. He speaks constantly of the Galilæan Judas the Gaulonite as a Jew. The thesis that the Galilæans were not Jews rests on a passage in the first book of the *Machabees* (v. 23), in which it is said that Judas Machabæus

<sup>1</sup> 1 *Machabees*, iv. 46; ix. 27 and 54; xiv. 41.

brought to Jerusalem the Jews of Galilee. The fact is improbable, and the story seems to be biassed; the return to Jerusalem of the dispersed Jews is, in fact, one of the clauses of the Messianic programme which the book of *Machabees* likes to carry out by means of its heroes. But if Judas Machabæus had really brought some of the Galilæan Jews to Jerusalem about the year 164, the Judaisation of Galilee would have had a century and a-half for its accomplishment, a century and a-half during which the rule of the Machabees spread over the whole of Palestine, and might impose Judaism in Galilee as in all other parts of Judæa, except Samaria.

## VIII.

SPELLING OF PROPER NAMES.—We had several systems to choose:—

To follow the traditional transposition, and say “Moses,” “Samson,” “Jerusalem,” “Samaria,” etc.

To represent the Hebrew spelling, and say “Mosheh,” “Shimeshon,” “Jerushalaim,” “Shomeron,” etc.—as Ledrain has done in his translation of the Bible, which is unreadable to the inexpert.

Reuss, and the majority of modern translators, have, in different degrees, adopted a mixed system; Reuss says “Moses” and “Jerusalem,” but “Shimeshon” and “Shomeron.”

We felt that it was better to adhere to the first system, and we have, as a rule, followed the spelling of Lemaistre de Sacy. [The familiar spelling of the English Bible has been generally retained in this translation, in accordance with the author’s desire.—TRANS.]





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