

thanks to God for thus imparting so many truths to the people of China, through all these centuries of the past.

Lao-tze as a person is wrapped in uncertainty, but a benign influence has flown forth from his life, made articulate in his words, which form a gem in Chinese literature. Whatever be the defects in the followers of Lao-tze, as in the followers of Christ, our admiration goes forth to both Lao-tze and Christ, and we believe in perfect confidence that their goodness, or grace, or truth, or gentleness, all come from God, "to whom be all the glory."

## THE POST-EXILIC PERIOD.

BY REV. AMOS I. DUSHAW.

THAT the post-Exilic period is of great interest and of great importance to the student of both Judaism and Christianity is evident by the voluminous literature on the subject, and by the scholars of international reputation from the foremost universities of Europe and America who have produced this literature.

To the great majority of Bible readers this period is probably only a blank. In fact up to very recently even the majority of preachers thought it negligible, and there are undoubtedly quite a few even to-day who do not fully realize the significance of it. But to the faithful student this period is of more than secondary interest. From a religious point of view it may well rank with the period of the eighth-century prophets. It was during this period that the Jews made an honest effort to put into practice the religion of the prophets, namely, monotheism plus morality. If Elijah could have returned he would have found to his great joy that his labor had not been in vain, because idolatry, the great sin of ancient Israel, had been completely obliterated and Baal had no more worshipers among the Jews.

This period produced the prophets Haggai and Zechariah; the great leaders of Judaism, Ezra and Nehemiah. This period produced Ben Sirach; the Apocalyptic literature; the translation of the Old Testament into the Greek; Judaism; the great Maccabean family; the religious parties; the great rabbis, like Antigonus of Socho who said, "Men should serve God without an eye to the reward"; also the great and gentle Hillel; Philo the great philosopher of Alexandria; and last of all it produced Christianity. "To the student of Christianity they [these times] are of the greatest in-

terest, for then many of the religious rites and usages developed, which, adopted with slight modifications, have become the institutions of the Christian Church" (Kent). To the multitudes of Christians who have either erroneous or superficial views of the Jew and Judaism this may indeed sound rather startling but it is nevertheless true.

He who wishes to be a competent interpreter of the New Testament must be thoroughly familiar with these times. For example, it may safely be said that the great majority of Bible readers and people in general do not have a very high opinion of the Pharisees,—to them the term Pharisee is synonymous with hypocrisy, and yet this party produced Saul of Tarsus who was certainly not a hypocrite. Cheyne in his work, *Jewish Religious Life After the Exile*, writes as follows: "In the Psalms of Solomon, so called, we have a record of the religion of the Pharisees. It is well that we should learn to know every school or party from its own ablest representatives, and so students may be advised to read these books [post-Exilic writings] which cannot fail to correct the bias with which, if their education has been Christian, they not unnaturally approach New Testament times."

This period should be studied more than it is in our theological seminaries, and it should be made compulsory and not elective. Why should the clergy be so ignorant of the Jew and of Judaism? There are very few ministers who ever dream of associating Christianity with Judaism, or of the Church with the Synagogue. It is only in this way that much of the prejudice which exists to-day in the Protestant Church of America can be eliminated. The prejudice against the Jew is solely due to ignorance of the Jew on the part of pew and pulpit.

With these few introductory remarks we can now take up some of the important aspects of this period.

#### THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD.

The Chosen People were called out from the rest of the nations in order that they should be witnesses of the true religion. See the call of Abraham, "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." The prophets conceived this religion to be the worship of one God, who is righteous, just, holy, and merciful, and who expects His children to be the same. In order to grasp these spiritual verities Israel went through a severe process of training. And considering all the disadvantages under which the nation labored, we can fully sympathize with all their shortcomings. It was no easy

task for a people who were not yet settled in their convictions, to remain pure when they were surrounded by so many subtle temptations, namely, by the nations and tribes who had religions which appealed to the sensual in man. During the centuries preceding the downfall of the Jewish State under Nebuchadnezzar Israel lapsed and relapsed into idolatry time and again; but the nation always had its faithful ones. We recall God's words to the great Elijah, 1 Kings, xix. 18, "I have left for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal." Such bands of faithful men existed during the worst periods of Israel's religious experiences. At least the millions of professing Christians cannot find fault with those ancient Israelites. Nineteen hundred years have passed by and the Christian Church has not abolished the evils which determined the downfall of Israel. The messages of Israel's prophets have not yet lost their force because they are applicable to present-day conditions. (See Micah vi. 8.)

The division of the united kingdom after the death of Solomon was, from a political point of view, a very unfortunate occurrence. If Solomon had not been followed by a foolish and weak son the division would not have occurred then and the fratricidal wars which followed it would have been avoided. A united nation might have withstood successfully the great empires of Babylon and Assyria. As a matter of fact a united Israel has always succeeded in maintaining its position against its foes. Every great defeat was suffered because of internal strife and division. Even mighty Rome never fought a united Israel. Neither Pompey nor Titus ever did. Also to-day the Jew is laboring under the same disadvantage.

Samaria fell in 722 B.C. This put an end to the Northern Kingdom, and those carried into captivity by the Assyrians were assimilated by their conquerors. They were not fortunate to have with them in captivity a mighty religious prophet like Ezekiel. But when Jerusalem fell in 587 B.C. under Nebuchadnezzar conditions were altogether different. The Babylonians were not as cruel as the Assyrians, and Nebuchadnezzar was a wise and humane monarch, at least for that time. He did not seek to destroy the religions of the conquered nations. In this respect his policy was similar to that of the Romans. The Judean captives were therefore not forced to give up their God. Furthermore, the Judeans carried into Babylon in 605 B.C. and 597 B.C. had had the good fortune to have been under the instruction of Jeremiah and Ezekiel. In Babylon these Judean captives were rather strengthened than weakened in their loyalty to their ancestral faith. With the fall of Jerusalem the

Judean State died and the Synagogue was born. Now the Judeans ceased playing politics, and they began to give greater attention to the voices of their religious teachers.

If the exile was a misfortune from a political point of view it was a blessing from a spiritual point of view. The exile killed idolatry and created Judaism, one of the mightiest forces for monotheism and morality. From now on multitudes of the Judeans came in contact with the great empires and with their religions, sciences, and philosophies. From a pastoral and agricultural people many of them became commercial and cosmopolitan. It may safely be said that up to this time the Jews had no love for commerce. With the downfall of the Babylonian Empire and the ushering in of the Persian Empire under Cyrus the Great the conditions of the Judean exiles were changed for the better. Cyrus permitted the Judean exiles to return to Judea and rebuild the Temple. Under the leadership of Zerubbabel the prince and Jeshua the priest, a large number of exiles returned. These Babylonian Jews brought with them patriotism and enthusiasm for the faith of their fathers. Under the spiritual leadership of Haggai and Zechariah the Temple was rebuilt. With the coming of Ezra and Nehemiah, especially under the powerful influence of Nehemiah, the wall around Jerusalem was rebuilt, the Temple worship fully organized, the compromising priests expelled: the Jewish community commenced its great work of standing as a living and powerful witness for monotheism and morality, and what is more, they succeeded in their work.

These Judeans, or Jews, were not as powerful as the great empires; but they created a greater and more enduring empire, namely, a spiritual empire, and wherever Jehovah is worshiped to-day, by Jew, Christian, and Mohammedan, we see the work and influence of those exiles, and the words of Zechariah have had a literal fulfilment, Zech. iv. 6, "not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." Surrounded by great and hostile forces they succeeded in freeing themselves from idolatry, and have passed on a priceless heritage to the whole world, and the work of those exiles will not be finished until every idol is cast into the fire and the God of Israel enthroned in every heart. The modern Christian missionary is carrying on the work and is their true and worthy successor.

On the whole, if this period under the Persian rule was not a very glorious one from a political point of view, and even if occasionally there were petty annoyances under the governors, they were not hindered to live their own religious life. But there must

have been a great many disappointments on the part of the faithful and patriotic Jews that they were not taking the position of the foremost power in the world. However we read of no return to idolatry. Idolatry has been crushed forever. From this period on those who lost faith in the teachings of their fathers drifted into scepticism and indifference. We gather some information about this period, about the religious condition of the people from the prophet Malachi.

A different and more and more important period opens with the conquests of Alexander the Great. This period, as we shall see, had the greatest influence upon Judaism. It tried its metal by placing it in the crucible, and the pure metal came out purer. This period opens with Alexander's victory over Darius III at Issus, 333 B. C.

#### ALEXANDER AND THE JEWS.

It is remarkable that most of the great men of history were kindly disposed toward the Jews. Nebuchadnezzar was practically forced to use drastic measures against them. Cyrus the Great restored them to their own country. Julius Cæsar was a friend of the Jew. The same may be said of Charlemagne, Cromwell, Napoleon, and Queen Victoria, and so were most of the great leaders of the French Revolution, like Danton and Robespierre. Occasionally some pope or priest, like Bernard de Clairvaux. Alexander the Great, too, may be reckoned as one of their friends.

At the siege of Tyre Alexander summoned the Jews to renounce their allegiance to Darius the Persian and to send provisions. This Jaddua, the high priest, refused because of his oath to Darius. This alone would perhaps have influenced Alexander's conduct toward them when he saw that they valued honor more than life. However, after capturing Tyre he started with his army toward Jerusalem. He was met on Mount Scopus by Jaddua and a company of priests dressed in their sacred vestments, and to the surprise of his army, he received Jaddua most cordially, treated the city with kindness, and offered a sacrifice in the Temple. He granted the Jews many favors, did not interfere with their religion and freed them from paying tribute during the sabbatical year (Josephus, *Ant.*, XI, 8-15.) During this period many Jews settled in Alexandria. After the death of Alexander Judea changed rulers again and again, but the people were not molested in their religious freedom.

But Alexander's great ambition to build up a great empire with a common culture, Greek or Hellenistic, was bound to have its influence upon the Jews. Alexander died in 323 B. C., but his suc-

cessors continued his policy. While Egyptian Hellenism had on the whole an ennobling influence on the Jew—producing a Philo—the same cannot be said of Syrian Hellenism. Laboring under a false conception of culture and cosmopolitanism, the leading Jews of Jerusalem were willing to discard so-called bigotted views, and become like the other people. These Jews gradually began to be ashamed of Judaism. They sent offerings to the heathen temples, just to show their cosmopolitanism, and introduced Greek sport into the Holy City. Gradually but surely Hellenism was undoing the work of Ezra and Nehemiah. But for the hasty and drastic measures of Antiochus Epiphanes this might have gone on, and no one can tell what the result would have been.

Antiochus Epiphanes was to Judaism what Alva was to Protestantism in the Netherlands. The high priest and his party may have been willing to sacrifice Judaism, but he and the Syrian monarch had to reckon with another element among the Jews, namely, those who were ready to sacrifice everything, even their lives, for the faith of their fathers. Religious persecution soon produced its martyrs and heroes. Mathews makes the following statement: "Had the already aggressive Hellenizing movement been allowed to run its course among the Jews it is not impossible that Judaism, like other ethnic faiths, would have succumbed."

But Hellenism was suddenly interrupted in its course. Once more it was to be demonstrated that truth is all-powerful. The anti-Hellenizing forces were insignificant and ridiculously weak to resist the Syrian empire with its well-organized and well-equipped army, supported by the Jewish aristocracy. Religious enthusiasm inspired the faithful ones not only to die for their faith, but to organize armed bands of loyal and brave men who were determined to crush this monster, and crush him they certainly did.

#### THE UPRISING UNDER MATTATHIAS IN 166 B. C.

This is one of the most interesting and most glorious periods in the history of the Jewish people and also of great importance to the student of the Christian Church. Christianity is the outgrowth of Judaism, and consequently, whatever is of great importance to Judaism is also of great importance to Christianity. This struggle is to Judaism what the Reformation was to the Evangelical faith—the victory of the insurgents meant the victory for truth and the defeat of paganism.

Goaded on to desperation by heathen foes and treacherous brethren, the loyal element produced a great leader like Judas

Maccabeus, a warrior who will compare with the greatest soldiers of all times. With limited resources he defeated great armies and saved Judaism. Like Samuel and Saul he revived the martial spirit of the Jew. Followed by his brave and loyal brothers, Jonathan and Simon, and then by the great Hyrcanus, he won for Judea an honorable position in the world. It concluded honorable alliances with Rome and Sparta. Judea was strong and therefore respected. Through these alliances protection was brought to the Jews throughout Egypt, Greece, and Rome. For a hundred years Judea was a sovereign state; and under Alexander Janneus the dominions of Judea were so enlarged that it corresponded to the empire of David,—from the Desert to the Sea, and from Lebanon to the River of Egypt.

It is true that the alliance with Rome brought the incorporation of Judea into the Empire. But this was not Rome's fault; it was the fault of Judea, its kings, its priests, and its parties. Even without this alliance, but as the result of misgovernment Rome would anyway have succeeded in absorbing Judea and have made it a Roman province.

Lack of internal harmony will bring about the downfall of any nation. But Judea showed its spirit when it accomplished what it did, considering its relatively small position in the world from the point of view of extent in territory and population.

The Maccabean family saved Judaism, and as Christianity is the outgrowth of Judaism we see no reason why Sunday-school scholars should not study this period and become acquainted with Judas, Jonathan, Simon, and Hyrcanus, as they are acquainted with Saul, David, and Solomon. They will thus learn that the history of the Jewish people did not close with the destruction of the Temple of Solomon.

The victory of the Pious Jews, or the Puritan Jews, meant the permanent defeat of the vicious element in Hellenism, at least the Hellenism as represented by Syria and the Jewish aristocratic party. Never again did the heathen powers try to crush Judaism. Now, Hellenism, if it had any good thing in it, had to win its way through milder means. It was left to a Jew of the Dispersion to combine pure Judaism with the best there was in Hellenism, namely, monotheism and righteousness plus the internationalism of Hellenism. We refer to Saul of Tarsus.

"The historical content of the second century has been described as the victory of Nomism over Hellenism. This, however, is a partial statement of the case, true from one point of view, untrue

from another. The sharp attack of the Syrian Greeks on the organized Jewish faith was thoroughly crushed by the Maccabean uprising; the attempt was not repeated by Greeks or Romans. Yahveh, the Lord, was not displaced by Jupiter Capitolinus. The Jewish sacred books were not destroyed. Judaism as a religious system remained firm and Hellenistic heathenism suffered a decisive defeat. But this is only the outward aspect of the question. Judaism, while it had an inward life vigorous enough to repel all such attacks, had also a depth and breadth of susceptibility which recognized the value of certain foreign truths. Notably the great belief in immortality came to the Jews through Greek intermediation." (From Toy, *Judaism and Christianity*.)

Judaism showed its strength not only when it survived the attack of Syrian Greeks, but also by the way it enlarged its spiritual empire before the coming of Jesus of Nazareth, and by the way it has survived the vicious attacks of the Christian Church during the past centuries. The Judaism of the Chassidim flourishes best where it suffers most, as in Russia and Rumania. The Christian Church, in spite of its overwhelming numbers can no more defeat Judaism than did Antiochus, so long as it uses the devil's weapons. A religious system like Judaism can only succumb to another religious system when that system shows its superiority not only in its teachings but also in the life of its confessors.

#### THE SYNAGOGUE.

The synagogue is one of Judaism's most unique as well as most important institutions. It is a combination of a house of prayer and a religious school. This institution is of interest to the student of Christianity as well as to the student of Judaism. Christianity was born in the synagogue; or rather the church was born in the synagogue. See the Acts of the Apostles in support of this statement.

The synagogue is strictly a democratic institution, free from priestcraft, and is the forerunner of the Christian non-Episcopal church. Here knowledge, the ability to expound the Law, took precedence over priestly succession, and as such produced the great rabbis. Toy makes this certainly startling comment about the great Hillel, "Hillel surpassed Isaiah in distinctness of moral view." Of course, the great mass of Christians are not competent to challenge this statement because they know practically nothing about this master in Israel. But this statement must mean a great deal to the modern Jew because it shows a high appreciation of one of Israel's

great leaders in religious thought. The *Pirke Abboth*, or "Sayings of the (Jewish) Fathers," are the priceless gems which fell from the lips of many of these rabbis. There is no doubt a very close connection between the moral sayings in the New Testament and the ethics of the rabbis who taught in the synagogues. "Their religion became constantly more ethical" (Toy).

When did the synagogue originate? This is a debated question, and an exact answer cannot be given. But it probably had its beginning with the faithful Jews in Babylon. There those exiles would quite naturally come together to talk of their past, review their history, and also worship their God. Jer. xxiv. 1-7 would indicate that the first exiles were not the chaff of Judea. However it developed more rapidly after the triumph of Judaism over Hellenism. With a strong central place of worship like Jerusalem, recognized as such by all the Jews including those of the Dispersion, a place for worship and for the study of the Law in places outside of Jerusalem was needed. The synagogue met this need as it was both a house of worship and a school combined. Here we may also notice the beginning of a common school among the Jews. In every village there was a synagogue, like the one at Nazareth, and it offered an opportunity for every Jewish boy to be instructed in the Law.

The influence of the synagogue was for good, not only in Palestine, but also throughout the Roman Empire. The Romans extended their empire through the force of arms; the Jews extended their empire through the influence of the synagogue. The empire of the Romans has passed away, while the empire of the Jew still exists. He has forced the world to accept the God his fathers worshiped, and he has also forced upon the world the acceptance of his Holy Writings. Wherever the synagogue was planted there it stood for monotheism and morality and made converts. The charge often made that the Jews never cared for converts is false. Jesus said to the Jews, "ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte." The first Gentile converts to Christianity were from among those who had already been converted to Judaism through the synagogue. We will not dwell at greater length upon this interesting subject. We trust that those who will read this sketch will be influenced to make a further study of this most wonderful of Judaism's institutions.

This leads us directly to a consideration of the religious parties which originated during this period. There were three distinct parties and they came into prominence after the defeat of Syrian Hellenism.

*a. The Essenes.*

This party only numbered about six thousand, and it was strictly non-political. The Essenes were monks of Judaism, but much freer than the monks of the Church. They were not in bondage to the hierarchy, and they never degenerated morally as did the monks of the Church. They believed in keeping themselves pure, morally and physically, and in doing good. They had everything in common, and those who were full-fledged members abstained from marriage. They did not mingle in politics and were consequently not molested by the officials, either Jewish or Roman. And they were held in high esteem by the common people.

*b. The Sadducees.*

The Sadducees were members of the conservative and ruling party. They held the ecclesiastical offices, and were in favor of foreign alliances. From the New Testament we gather that they put a literal construction upon the Law. They rejected the Oral Law. And because the Law contained no definite teaching about the resurrection they rejected it. Jesus rebuked them for their literalism. They were not very popular with the common people. This may be due to the fact that they represented the aristocratic section of the nation. The party perished with the destruction of the Temple under Titus in 70 A. D.

*c. The Pharisees.*

Ministers and laymen who have not studied the New Testament times generally speak unkindly of the Pharisees. They are judged by their poorest rather than by their best representatives. And yet, Christianity is largely the outgrowth of this party. Many of their ideas have been incorporated into Christianity. While they were the Separatists, they were not, as the growth of their faith shows, slaves of the letter like the Sadducees. On the contrary, they represented the progressive element in Judaism. They were to Judaism what the Puritans were to England, and they had the virtues and vices of the Puritans. They were the teachers of Judea, they taught in the synagogues, and they taught faithfully. They were stern moralists. Jesus's story of the Pharisee and the Publican (Luke xviii) gives us one type of the Pharisee. From the point of view of morality he was a good man; but he lacked sympathy for the sinner. Saul of Tarsus was also a Pharisee, and we know that Christianity did not make him a more moral man.

See Acts xxiii. 1, "I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day." Gemaliel was another type of Pharisee, and he generally appeals to every noble-minded man. Gemaliel would certainly not support the Inquisition.

Neither the Pharisee nor his work perished with the destruction of the Temple under Titus, because his house of prayer was the synagogue, and the synagogue survived the Temple. To him the Law was of greater consequence than the Temple and Titus could not destroy the Law.

The Pharisee shunned all foreign alliances. He aimed to make his people strong in the faith. His work still lives in the orthodox Jew.

#### THE MESSIANIC HOPE.

The coming of the Messiah was Israel's greatest hope. Without it Israel might have perished long ago. It was this hope that sustained the Jew during the bloody centuries of the past. For this hope they lived and suffered, and two thousand years of disappointment has not wholly crushed it. Marvelous indeed! A fact to be admired by intelligent and chivalrous people, regardless of race or creed. And the Jew rightly merits the title,—the Messianic People. Even a philosopher like Philo could not divest himself of this hope. He, too, looked forward to the coming of this mighty deliverer who would emancipate His people.

There were different views about the Messiah, about His person and about His coming; but they were all in unanimous accord about His work. In the New Testament we find the following interesting ideas: John vii. 26, "Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ?" Verse 27, "Howbeit we know this man whence he is: but when Christ cometh no man knoweth whence he is." (See also *ibid.*, vs. 40-42. Matth. ii. From Micah v. 2. Matth. xi. 3, 10, 11; xvii. 10-13.)

Or, to quote again from Toy regarding its import, *op. cit.*, p. 328: "The fundamental element is the destruction or coercion of Israel's enemies, and the establishment of the people in Palestine. In political independence and prosperity, sometimes by the immediate act of God, sometimes by the means of a king or other leader, a man sprung from the people, but raised up by God and endowed with all the qualities necessary to secure success; at the same time the worship of the God of Israel receives universal recognition and Jerusalem becomes the religious center of a regenerated world, the new heaven and the new earth."

Let us examine this.

There is, first, the destruction or coercion of Israel's enemies. Israel's enemies were also the enemies of Israel's religion. And yet, strange to say, this has in a large measure been fulfilled. Where is the Roman Empire? Like Babylon it believed itself indestructible; but it has perished. The nations that have succeeded the Roman Empire have accepted Israel's God. Their gods have been dethroned.

This has been brought about through Jesus Christ, the rejected Messiah.

And there is, secondly, the establishment of the people of Palestine in political independence and prosperity. It is true that the rejected Messiah failed to accomplish this. But this was not His fault any more than it was Jeremiah's fault that he failed to save Jerusalem and the Temple from destruction under Nebuchadnezzar. Like his faithful and mighty forerunners, the Prophets, he knew that the people needed a change of heart. Had the nation fallen in line with Christ's purpose, Jerusalem would never have been destroyed by Titus. In fact they might have been the means of saving Rome itself from destruction. There is no doubt in the writer's mind that had Judea accepted Jesus, Israel would have been permanently established, and the grand vision of Isaiah (chap. ii.) would have been fulfilled.

Pride, self-interest, and political ambition caused the downfall of the Judean State. Other States than that of Judea have fallen for the same reasons. Only the religion of Jesus, not the religion about Jesus, can save a nation from destruction, because it stands for righteousness, self-denial, and loving service. It is a lesson which Christian States and hierarchies have yet to learn.

Here our period ends. The true Church has taken up the work of the Synagogue and is carrying Israel's faith to the uttermost parts of the earth. But the greatest missionary work will begin when Church and Synagogue will clasp hands, bury the malice, hatred, and cruelty of the past centuries, go out into a bruised and bleeding world carrying the salvation of Him who has so far been the only true light to the nations. Then will the misfortunes of Israel and that of the nations come to an end. The Jew will be reestablished in Palestine, and Jerusalem may yet become the Capitol of a new spiritual empire. "For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." "And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall have taken away their sins."