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ORIENTALISTISCHEN LITERATUR-ZEITUNG

THE ALTARS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

BY

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OF LINCOLN'S INN / BARRISTER-AT-LAW

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Preliminary.

In studying the subject of Altars in the Old Testament the first necessity is to empty the mind of all preconceived ideas from whatever source they may be derived. Religion, philology, archaeology, the comparative study of ideas and institutions, biblical criticism, have each and all influenced men's conceptions of the meaning of particular passages. If we would arrive at correct notions we must be willing to utilise all the help we can get from any source, but only at the correct time. The texts must first be allowed to speak for themselves, and only thereafter can we call in other informants and test and amplify the knowledge we have derived from our investigation in the light of their statements.

The method which will be used in the first instance in dealing with the difficulties that surround the subject is the application of a doctrine which has been known through centuries of legal experience. It is the everyday work of jurists and courts of justice to interpret ancient documents of doubtful meaning. That has borne fruit in certain principles which are universally accepted. "Contemporanea expositio est optima et fortissima in lege"¹.

And this doctrine of contemporary exposition overrules philological considerations. To take an extreme instance, nobody would suggest that a small altar of incense was a place of slaughter for cattle. Yet in Hebrew the word for altar (מִזְבֵּחַ) unquestionably means place of slaughter². Here then is a very plain example

1) 2 Inst. 11.

2) K. Galling, *Der Altar in den Kulturen des Alten Orients*, 1925, 56, endeavours to draw a distinction between the verbs זָבַח and שָׁחַט. He makes the former mean the cutting up of the victim, not its slaughter. This is wrecked by passages like Dt. xii 15 f., 21 f., 1 Sam. xxviii 24, 1 K. xix 21 and, as we shall see, Ex. xx 24—26. In these texts זָבַח means to slaughter. His explanation of מִזְבֵּחַ as the place where

in which contemporary usage overbears philology. But the doctrine is not limited to such cases as this where only a single word is concerned. It may affect the whole interpretation of a passage. And it is based on the obvious considerations that the true meaning of a document is that which it would bear to contemporaries, and that those who lived at or near the time of composition were necessarily better qualified to apprehend that meaning than persons in later ages who live in a totally different atmosphere.

The novel points of view that have emerged in the endeavour to apply that doctrine in the following study have come as a surprise even to myself. It is hoped that those who read it will not allow themselves to be deterred by this feature, but will give calm and impartial consideration to every new suggestion.

As this monograph is concerned with altars entirely in their legal, not in their artistic aspect, no attempt will be made to investigate the latter except in so far as it touches the legal enquiry.

One other preliminary remark. Except where the context shows that some other sense is intended, the term 'altar' will be regularly used in this monograph as the equivalent of the Hebrew word מִזְבֵּחַ of which it is the almost constant rendering in the English Versions¹.

the victim was dismembered or its parts laid before the deity for food is refuted by everything we know of Hebrew sacrificial procedure. His view that 1 K. xiii 2 and 2 K. xxiii 20 are concerned with human sacrifice results from his misunderstanding of the verb used. What Josiah in fact did was to defile and destroy the idolatrous altars and kill their ministers. It can not seriously be contended that he used them for the purpose of sacrifice or that he indulged in the practice of human sacrifice (see Galling's own remarks op. cit. 76), or that any religious rite was performed in connection with the execution of the idolatrous priests.

1) G. B. Gray, *Sacrifice in the Old Testament*, 1925, 96 f.

I. Altars of Sacrifice.

A. Ex. xx 24—26 and Cairn Altars.

1. Ex. xx 24—26. For the purpose of obtaining our first ideas as to altars it will be well to begin with a legal text and to study its terms in the ordinary way in which laws are studied. The best approach to the subject will be Ex. xx 24—26 which runs as follows in the Massoretic Text:

24 (מִזְבֵּחַ אֲדָמָה) תַּעֲשֶׂה לִּי וּבָחַת עָלָיו אֶת עֲלִיתָךְ וְאֶת שְׁלֵמֶיךָ אֶת צֹאנְךָ וְאֶת בָּקָרְךָ בְּכָל הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר אֶזְכֹּר אֶת שְׁמִי אָבוֹא אֵלֶיךָ וּבִרְכֶּכֶתִי: 25 וְאִם מִזְבֵּחַ אֲבָנִים תַּעֲשֶׂה לִּי לֹא תִבְנֶה אֹתוֹךָ גֹּזִית כִּי חִרְבְּךָ הִנֵּפֶת עָלֶיהָ וְתִחַלְלָהּ: 26 וְלֹא תַעֲלֶה בַּמַּעֲלָה עַל מִזְבְּחִי אֲשֶׁר לֹא תִגְלֶה עֲרוֹתֶךָ עָלָיו:

'24. An altar of earth mayest thou make to Me and mayest slaughter on it thy burnt offerings and thy peace offerings, thy flock and thy cattle: in all the (or every) place where I cause My name to be remembered I will come unto thee and bless thee. 25. And if thou wilt make unto Me an altar of stones, thou shalt not build them as hewn stones: for if thou hast swung thy tool on it (sc. the stone), thou hast profaned it. 26. And thou shalt not go up by steps on Mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon.'

There are differences of reading and interpretation some of which will need consideration hereafter.

2. Types of altars. The first thing to notice about this passage is that not all the altars of the O. T. conform to the type here contemplated. In Ex. xxvii 1 ff. we read instructions for constructing an altar of an entirely different kind. The altar of burnt offering that was to stand in front of the tabernacle was to be made on other lines. It will be convenient to enumerate the differences that come into view at the first comparison: —

(i) The altars of Ex. xx (hereinafter called cairn altars) were to be made of earth or unhewn stone: that of Ex. xxvii (hereinafter called the tabernacle altar) of wood covered with bronze.

(ii) From the nature of the materials cairn altars could have no fixed pattern or measurements: the tabernacle altar had both.

(iii) Cairn altars could have no horns since none could be made without working the materials: the tabernacle altar had horns.

(iv) Cairn altars had no grating or ledge: both distinguish the tabernacle altar.

(v) Cairn altars could be served by laymen who wore no breeches: the cultus of the taber-

nacle altar was under the superintendence of priests who were dressed otherwise¹.

So much is apparent at the first blush. The next step must be to enquire whether altars of these two types ever co-existed. There is a very simple way of testing the matter. The cairn altars could have no horns since the nature of the materials employed — earth or unhewn stone² — did not permit of their formation. The tabernacle altar on the other hand was horned. So we have to ask whether there is a period of history in which cairn and horned altars are found side by side. The answer is in the affirmative. Such passages as Deut. xxvii 5—7, 1 Sam. xiv 33—35 (Saul after the battle of Michmash), 1 K. xviii 31 f. (Elijah on Carmel), 2 K. v 17 (Naaman's two mules' burden of earth), leave no doubt as to the existence and utilisation of cairn altars for certain purposes. On the other hand 1 K. i 50 f. (where Adonijah grasps the horns of the altar), ii 28 (where Joab does likewise), Amos iii 14 ("the horns of the altar shall be cut off") prove that the horned type was also in use³.

This truth is of tremendous import for the comprehension of our subject. It is frequently

1) It may be convenient to add here other points of difference that will emerge in the following study.

(vi) In the case of a cairn altar the victim was placed on the altar and killed there: in the case of a horned altar the slaughter took place near by (below 4—5).

(vii) A horned altar might have fire perpetually burning on it: this was not so with a cairn altar.

(viii) A horned altar was always raised or at any rate lofty: not so a cairn altar.

(ix) The treatment of the blood was generally different: except in the one case in which Moses officiated in person and performed a duty otherwise reserved for a priest (Ex. xxiv 6), the blood was not tossed against a cairn altar: but in the case of burnt offerings and peace offerings brought to a horned altar, this rite was always observed (below 17).

It is not claimed that all these peculiarities necessarily distinguished every altar of the horned type; but some were always present.

2) It is of course perfectly possible that horned altars of worked stone may have existed among the Hebrews or among other peoples, but it is impossible that there should be a horned altar of unhewn stone. This point has generally been overlooked. Thus Professor Barton writes in connection with the period covered by the books of Judges and Samuel: "The altars of the period were probably for the most part made of stone (see 1 K. xviii 31, 32) and also had horns (1 K. i 50, 51)" (Jewish Encyclopedia I 465 a s. v. Altar). An inspection of 1 K. xviii shows that Elijah's altar was built of stones which he certainly did not work and can have had no horns. Barton's remark rests on a confusion of the two types.

3) König has fallen into the error of overlooking these distinctions in a recent discussion (ZAW 1924, 340).

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supposed e. g. that Ex. xx 24—6 is a polemic against the altar of Solomon's temple, or that a law of many altars was succeeded by a law of only one altar¹. Such theories are seen to be baseless when once it is recognised that for a long time two different kinds of altars co-existed.

The further consideration of the questions relating to horned altars must be postponed till we have completed our examination of the problems of cairn altars. For the present we return to Exodus xx.

The verb used 'make (עָשָׂה)' throws no light on our problem. The more usual word is 'build (בָּנָה)', but the two are employed interchangeably in Gen. xxxv 1, 3, 7. The linguistic usage in connection with the construction of altars of whatever type seems to have been elastic, so that no stress can be laid on it.

Further questions have been raised on the materials of cairn altars.

(a) In 1 Sam. xiv 33 (cp. 1 Sam. vi 14) Saul makes use of a single large stone, not of stones. Is that in accordance with this law or not? It would appear that it is. We are not dealing with a modern code in which there would probably be a definition clause stating that the plural includes the singular etc., and we must not look for draftsmanship on modern lines. But two considerations suggest that the stone was thought to comply with all legal requirements. Saul himself, who was in a position to know what was right, expressly erected it because the people were sinning. He therefore conceived his action to be in complete accordance with the demands of the law as he knew it². And secondly a perusal of the passage shows that what was in the lawgiver's mind was not the question of one stone or several, but the question of unhewn or hewn stone. The evil he seeks to prevent is the working of stones used for the construction of altars. Hence it is not correct to press the plural and say that what the law requires is not an unhewn stone but a number of unhewn stones.

1) The views of Wellhausen on this subject have been answered by me in chapter VI of *Essays in Pentateuchal Criticism*, 1910, and by M. Kegel in *Wo opferte Israel seinem Gott? Neue kirchliche Zeitschrift*, Juni and November 1924. Kegel's discussion deserves full and careful study. At the time of writing the Wellhausen school have shown no ability to answer it.

2) It is impossible to suppose that the law of Ex. xx intended to prohibit single stones of this type, for had that been the legislator's object he would have said so explicitly by using some such phrases as "thou shalt not make it of a single stone".

(b) In two narratives we meet with rocks which have been thought to be altars. In Jud. vi 11—24 Gideon is visited by an angel. After some colloquy he leaves his guest and during his absence slaughters a kid and prepares food which he brings out. It is to be noticed that the killing and any dealings there may have been with the blood and the fat do not take place at the rock. The angel thereupon directs him to deposit the food on a rock and a miracle is performed. Subsequently Gideon builds an altar there. The rock itself was not treated as an altar either before or after the miracle. The kid was not slaughtered there and Gideon does not thereafter regard it as the equivalent of an altar. Consequently it has no bearing on the question under consideration.

In Jud. xiii 2—23, on the other hand, we have a narrative in which a rock is apparently used as an altar. There is nothing whatever in the text to suggest that this is an extensive rock surface. Manoah offers his offerings on the rock (verse 19) and in the next verse this seems to be called the altar. If, as has been thought, there was an altar upon the rock, no question arises: if, however, the rock itself was the altar — and this is the more natural interpretation — we must ask whether this agrees with Ex. xx. This brings us once more to a question which is nearly identical with that which we had to consider under (a). Suppose that nature provided a boulder in situ which was in all respects suitable for the purposes of Ex. xx 24—26, would it be in accordance with the law to sacrifice on it, or was it necessary that the sacrificant should utilise none save an altar that had been made by human action? The law itself provides no answer to this question. In ninety nine cases out of a hundred no such boulder would have been available, and the lawgiver couches his requirements in language that fits the ninety nine cases and not the hundredth. Had the law been intended to prevent the use of such boulders we should have had language expressly prohibiting the practice. As it is, we are dealing with a *casus omissus*, and the law does not appear to lay stress on the making as a necessary element in the provision of a legitimate altar. In those circumstances the doctrine of *contemporanea expositio* applies, and we must hold that the boulder was in accordance with the current view of the true meaning of the law¹.

1) In 1 Kings i 9 Adonijah slays animals by (עַל) the stone of Zohelath, but we have no information as to his procedure. Hence the passage falls out of account.

We conclude, then, that cairn altars were of an entirely different type from horned altars, that the two co-existed for some period of time, and that a cairn altar might properly consist of a heap of earth or unhewn stones, or of a single unhewn stone, or of a boulder in situ¹.

3. The sacrificant contemplated by the law. Who is the person whom the lawgiver addresses in the second person singular? Apparently an ordinary layman. The law is here clearly interpreted by the numerous historical instances, some of which have already been mentioned, and the provision of ver. 26 shows that the lawgiver is not primarily thinking of persons robed like priests (see Ex. xxviii 42 f.; below 14). On the other hand it would be a mistake to press this too far and say that a priest could not use such an altar when occasion demanded. If, for example, a priest had been on a visit to Jesse's residence at the time of a clan sacrifice (cp. 1 Sam. xx 6, 29) and had been asked to kill an animal, the law would not have acted as a bar, and again if Elijah had happened to be of a priestly family, his action on Carmel would not have been in any way a contravention of its meaning. A priest had additional rights and duties in sacrificial matters, but it would be wrong to infer that he thereby lost any rights or duties which were his in virtue of his Israelite birth.

Thus when we find Dt. xxvii prescribing the erection of an altar of this type on a particular occasion for use in a very solemn and important national ceremony, we cannot draw the inference that the author of the passage did not know or did not approve of any other contemporary type of altar. The true conclusion is that he contemplated a proceeding in which an altar of this kind would be correctly used. In point of fact there was a form of covenant which was concluded by certain solemnities which comprised the erection and utilisation of a cairn altar, and that is the reason for this command².

4. The method of utilisation. The law provides that "Thou shalt slaughter on it" (עָלָיו). In the case of sacrifices made at the tabernacle altar, Leviticus provides unambiguously for slaughter by the side of the altar, see e. g. i 11 "he shall kill it by the side of the altar (עַל יָדָהּ)", iii 2 "at the opening

of the tent of meeting". But Josh. xxii 23 uses the same phrase as this law in connection with the sacrifice of peace offerings, and in that case a horned altar made after the pattern of the tabernacle altar is in question. We must therefore ask whether עָלָיו is here used to signify 'by' or 'upon'.

Fortunately we have materials that enable us definitely to decide the question. In Gen. xxii we have an instance of a contemplated sacrifice on an altar of this type. It is true that we are dealing with a burnt offering, not with a peace offering, but then so is Lev. i; and Ex. xx 24 couples both offerings, providing that they shall be slaughtered עָלָיו. Whatever this expression means in connection with the slaughter of the burnt offering, it must necessarily also mean in connection with the peace offering. In the case of the tabernacle altar slaughter of the victim upon it was precluded by the fire which burnt there: in the case of a cairn altar the fire was kindled ad hoc, so that this consideration did not come into play.

Now the description of Gen. xxii is quite unambiguous. Abraham builds an impromptu altar. From the nature of the case this can only have been a cairn altar. He then places the fuel logs on top, binds Isaac and puts him "on the altar above the logs (עַל הָאֵל עַל הַלֵּצִים)". He next stretches out his hands and takes the knife to slaughter the victim (10 f.). That settles the question so far as the meaning of Ex. xx 24 is concerned. In Josh. xxii 23 the term may be used vaguely, or in a different sense — that is a point on which differences of opinion are possible: but as to Ex. xx 24 the facts of Gen. xxii are conclusive. The victim was to be put on the cairn altar and slaughtered there.

In this a Semitic custom was being followed: "in the oldest known form of Arabian sacrifice, as described by Nilus, the camel chosen as the victim is bound upon a rude altar of stones piled together"¹.

Of the Bedouin Dr. Schumacher writes "In order to fulfil a vow, the family members of a tribe . . . gather at a shrine under a tree; a sheep or a goat is brought thither, the khatib or priest lays it across the "altar", with the body on the stone and the head and neck hanging down"².

Thus a slaughter at such an altar would normally cause the blood to flow on the ground

1) W. Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, Rev. Ed. 1894, 338.

2) S. I. Curtiss, *Primitive Semitic Religion of Today*, 1902, 235.

1) From the nature of the case it is difficult to identify any Israelite altar of this type today: but Père Tonneau thinks he has found Joshua's altar on Mt Ebal (*Revue Biblique* xxxv, 1926, 98—109).

2) See H. M. Wiener, *Studies in Biblical Law*, 1904, ch. II.

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(Dt. xii 16, 24), while in the case of a horned altar the blood was tossed against the altar (Lev. i 5 Dt. xii 26 etc.) by the priests.

With regard to the subsequent offering up of the burnt offerings, presumably the procedure followed was that described in Gen. xxii, except that the victim was cut into pieces which were placed on the wood (1 K. xviii 33 cp. Lev. i 6—8 etc.) before it was kindled.

5. What victims were to be slaughtered there. "Thy burnt offerings and thy peace offerings, thy flock and thy cattle". These words have occasioned great difficulty. It has often been thought that the flock and cattle were regarded merely as materials of the burnt offerings and peace offerings. This is open to two objections. The language would be cumbersome and unnatural if that had been the meaning intended, and the knowledge we can gather from the historical sources is conclusive as to the true purport of the enactment.

In the earliest times with which we have any acquaintance non-sacrificial slaughter was the rule in Israel. We have a number of historical instances Gen. xviii 7, xxvii 9—14, xliii 16, Ex. xxi 37, Jud. vi 19, 1 Sam. xxv 11, xxviii 24, 1 K. xix 21. How widespread the custom was may be seen from three considerations. The hospitable practice of the East was to kill on the arrival of an honoured visitor (Gen. xviii 7, 2 Sam. xii 4 etc.), as it still is in many cases¹, and this was never conditioned by any stipulation that the host must be in a state of sacrificial purity. Secondly, sacrifice to the God of Israel was always impossible outside the desert and the territory of Israel, which was regarded as His inheritance (Ex. viii 22, 1 Sam. xxvi 19, etc. see below 7—9). Thirdly the legislation contemplates the killing of stolen animals by thieves, and obviously the conception of sacrifice is completely excluded in this instance (Ex. xxi 37). We see, therefore, that so far as the words "thy flock and thy cattle" are concerned, the intention of the law is to secure slaughter at a cairn altar, but not to convert all slaughterings into sacrifices. The best illustration of its meaning is given by 1 Sam. xiv 33 f. where Saul, finding that the people are eating the meat with the blood, commands them to kill at a cairn altar to obviate this. It is only necessary to take the law as meaning precisely what it says to grasp its true intent. The lawgiver is here regulating the existing custom of non-sacrificial slaughter.

This raises a presumption that the earlier

1) See e. g. A. Jaussen, *Coutumes des Arabes au pays de Moab*, 1908, 348 ff.

words of the sentence are also directed to the regulation of something that already existed. We must therefore examine the historical material to see what light this throws on the practice to which this enactment is addressed.

Genesis introduces us to a period in which laymen build altars and offer sacrifices in circumstances which exclude the possibility of any priestly intervention. Thus Noah builds an altar and offers up burnt offerings (Gen. viii 20), and it is immaterial for our present purpose whether the received Hebrew here preserves the name of the Deity found in the original autograph or whether we have to do with a substitution for Baal or some other word¹. Similarly with Abraham in Gen. xxii in the case of the contemplated sacrifice of Isaac and the actual sacrifice of the ram. Side by side with this we find in Genesis itself that there exists an organisation for the worship of some deity — presumably the Baal — which involved professional personnel. When Rebekah goes to enquire and receives an answer (Gen. xxv 22 f.), it is a necessary inference that she went to some known place of enquiry where there was some definite provision for dealing with enquiries. Similarly Gen. xxxviii presupposes the existence of a cult in the organisation of which hierodules held a recognised position².

The practice of Moses may be regarded as indecisive for the present purpose since our knowledge of it relates to exceptional occasions and may have been due to special circumstances: but the actions of contemporaries may properly be taken into account. They should however be read in the light of the information to be derived from another passage — 2 K. v 17. There Naaman, — who was a Syrian, not an Israelite, — asks from Elisha the gift of two mules' burden of earth, "for thy servant will no more offer burnt offering and sacrifice to other gods save to the Lord." So a foreigner could lawfully and properly offer lay sacrifices on a cairn altar to the God of Israel at a date some centuries later than the time of Moses, and the necessary condition

1) It is the view of the present writer that the word Baal was originally of common occurrence in the text of all the early books of the O. T. Its removal at a late date in the history of the text appears to have been partly responsible for the origin of the "Gottesnamenfrage" and of many historical and other difficulties. See *Bibliotheca Sacra* Jan. 1915, 134—153; Apr. 1915, 308—333; Apr. 1916, 332 note; Oct. 1916; Apr. 1917, 315 ff.; Apr. 1918, 239 ff. *Theologisch Tijdschrift* 1918, 164—169; H. M. Wiener, *The Religion of Moses*, 1919, 17—27, etc.

2) On this see further below 6, 18—19.

for a lawful sacrifice of this class was not Israelite birth or any initiation into the religion — still less membership of any priestly profession, — but a cairn altar erected on or taken from the Lord's inheritance!

It is sometimes thought that Jethro officiated in Ex. xviii 12, but that is exactly what he is not stated to have done. We are told that he took (קָרַב) a burnt offering and sacrifices for God. This is quite unusual language if it is meant that he himself performed the whole of the sacrifice from first to last, but entirely natural if he merely took the offerings to the tabernacle to be dealt with in accordance with the ritual that was usual there¹. Hence it does not appear that Jethro's sacrifice can properly be cited as an instance of the utilisation of a cairn altar. It is of course out of the question that he performed priestly duties at the tabernacle.

It is otherwise with Balaam. It is true that he sacrifices at Bamoth Baal (Num. xxii 41 ff.) and presumably to the Baal: but his procedure may fairly be quoted as typical of ordinary lay sacrifice at the period to which it relates. When he causes seven altars to be built and offers sacrifices (xxiii 1 f.), we realise that from the necessities of the case the altars must have been of the general type to which the cairn altars of Ex. xx belong. The impromptu construction leaves no room for the making of altars of the horned type or of any other type involving processes of manufacture, and it is impossible to read into the narrative any suggestion of priestly service in this connection.

Thus we see that there was a long period of time during which it was usual not only among the Israelites but among other inhabitants of Palestine and Syria for laymen to offer sacrifices at cairn altars. This went so far that a Naaman could properly sacrifice to the God of Israel. Yet during the whole of this period the custom could and did co-exist with another form of worship which had fixed seats and a regular personnel (Gen. xxv 22 f., xxxviii; compare the priestly office of Jethro, the fact that Josh. xxiv 26 knows of a sanctuary of some deity in Shechem, and all the data as to horned altars and a priesthood among the Israelites and other peoples in the period between the Exodus and the exile)².

1) It is generally recognised that Ex. xviii belongs to the end of the period at Horeb, not to its beginning. The alternative reading ויקרב (See Kittel B. H. ad loc.) is the word ordinarily used of a layman bringing a sacrifice to the sanctuary.

2) See below B.

Our next task must be to endeavour to form some idea as to what sacrifices were offered at cairn altars. Our information as to Noah, Abraham and Balaam alike relates to exceptional occasions. The contemplated sacrifice of Isaac is referred to a special divine command. This makes it impossible to regard it as illustrative of any general practice. But of Noah and Balaam it may perhaps be said that their actions suggest that it was usual to utilise cairn altars when for any reason there appeared to be a call for immediate sacrificial service of a deity then and there. Instances of sacrifice in connection with the conclusion of a covenant would fall within the same general principle.

So would such cases as Gen. xli 1, sacrifices offered in connection with the proclamation of a new king, 2 Sam. vi 13, 18 (if these were in fact brought to a cairn altar which is unlikely) 1 Sam. vi 14, and perhaps Jgs. vi 25—28 (though this is primarily referable to a divine command). But our information does not stop there.

There is an illuminating narrative in 1 Sam. xx. Two points should be noticed. An annual family sacrifice at Bethlehem is put forward as a plausible excuse for David's being absent from Saul's court (6, 29), and Saul on the occasion of the new moon has a banquet marked as sacrificial by the fact that only persons who were ritually clean could partake of it (26). From this we learn that family celebrations were a recognised part of the religious life of ancient Israel, and further that the new moon was also an occasion of local sacrifice. Now the festive character of the new moon depended primarily not on any Pentateuchal law but on earlier custom¹. Like cairn altars themselves, family sacrifices and new moon celebrations belong to a preexisting body of religious practice.

In connection with this passage 1 Sam. ix 12—24 should be considered. Here we find a sacrifice — apparently local in character — celebrated at a high place (בִּמְה). Saul is informed that "the people have a sacrifice today in the high place". This suggests that the occasion was not a national festival. We should rather think of a local feast — whether of a recurring or a nonrecurring character it is impossible to say. There may of course have been many such local festivities in ancient Israel as in the Palestine of today.

Other features must be noticed. There is no priestly service of any kind. The only

1) Cp. 2 K. iv 23, Is. i 13 f., Hos. ii 13, Am. viii 5.

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actors in the sacrifice are the slaughterer or cook (כֹּהֵן 23 f.), and Samuel who says grace before the meat (13). The place itself is of a permanent nature possessing a chamber with accommodation for about thirty persons at least (22)¹. It is called a high place, but there is, of course, no objection to the name if no provision of the law was violated. When we read denunciations of high places in later times we are not to think that all high places as such were necessarily contrary to either the letter or the spirit of the Pentateuch. Providing that all its requirements were duly satisfied, high places would not be illegal.

It appears then that local altars were used for local sacrifices in much the same way as synagogues, churches and mosques are used for local prayer. Non-pilgrimage festivals and solemn or exceptional events in the life of the local community, the family or the individual were occasions for their employment, and in the main this cult was regulated by customary law, was conducted by Israelite laymen, and even by non-Israelites (like Naaman), and having regard to its origin and such scraps of information as we possess, seems to have differed very little from corresponding rites of the surrounding peoples. If Moses uses cairn altars, so does Balaam; if Elijah constructs a cairn altar and places on it wood and a burnt offering, the priests of Baal do likewise (1 K. xviii 23, 26). But the rites of the latter were marked by self mutilation which the narrative clearly regards as foreign to the Israelite practice (28).

One other feature calls for notice here. Samuel could and did go to a particular place and offer a sacrifice at a time chosen by himself (1 Sam. xvi 2—5 cp. x 8). It is clear that the occasion was not any recognised festival: the place selected (Bethlehem) does not appear to have possessed any exceptional historical or religious associations, and Samuel himself does not seem to have had any personal connection with it. Yet it is obvious from the story that his action would be regarded as normal and natural. Our data are quite insufficient to make any explanation convincing. It can only be suggested that possibly his character as a religious and national leader led him to make occasional visits of this kind.

6. The concluding clause of Ex. xx 24. We have here varieties of reading and interpretation that must be considered. The M.T. reads בְּכָל הַמָּקוֹם which may be rendered by 'in every place', but is the correct Hebrew for

"in all the place". K. 199, however, apparently supported by the LXX, omits the article, reading clearly 'in every place'. The Peshitto moreover has 'thou shalt cause My name to be remembered (תִּזְכֹּרֵנִי)' for 'I shall cause My name to be remembered (אֶזְכֹּרֵנִי)'. Thus we have to decide between four possible readings and renderings: —

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| (a) 'In all the place where I cause My name to be remembered, | I will come to thee and bless thee! |
| (b) 'In every place where I cause My name to be remembered, | |
| (c) 'In every place where thou causest My name to be remembered', | |
| (d) 'In all the place where thou causest My name to be remembered.' | |

Of these (d) may be rejected at once. It only gives the same sense as (a) in a far weaker form.

Of the other possibilities (a) might refer to either (i) the land of Israel (cp. xxiii 20), or (ii) the central sanctuary contemplated by the Law, and realised during the desert period by the Tabernacle and subsequently to some extent by Shiloh and, after an interval, Jerusalem. The historical instances we have examined are conclusive against (ii).

They also rule out (b) which is usually understood as meaning any place that has been hallowed by a theophony or historical event. It cannot be held that every fellah in the country who received a guest and slew in his honour did so on the scene of a theophany, that the cattle thieves of Ex. xxi 37 were so favoured, that every place in which a family or local sacrifice was celebrated (1 Sam. xx) had received a special manifestation of God's presence or that the earth taken by Naaman (2 K. v 17) had this characteristic².

Thus we are reduced to a choice between (a) (i) and (c). The practical difference between them will be seen to be nil when the doctrine of ancient Israel on the subject of the country of sacrifice is examined, and in order to understand the law we must now examine this.

Hebrew thought was originally quite clear on the point that sacrifice could not be offered to the God of Israel except on territory of Israel or in the desert (Ex. viii 22, Dt. iv 28,

1) Cp. R. Dussaud, *Les Origines Cananéennes du Sacrifice Israélite*, 1921, 94: "L'invocation du nom divin est la forme élémentaire de la prière".

2) These facts are habitually left out of account e. g. by E. König ZAW 1924, 337 ff. He gives various alternative interpretations on pp. 338 f., all of which are shown to be impossible by the considerations adduced above.

1) So the Hebrew. Seventy according to the Greek.

xxviii 36, 64, 1 Sam. xxvi 19, Hos. ix 3 ff., Jer. xvi 13). So far as the Egyptian period is concerned, the reason given in Ex. viii 22 is alone sufficient, though of course there may have been other grounds which it was not necessary to mention in that context. There seems, however, to have been a further basis for the practice in the theological ideas of the period. A number of passages support the idea that the world was parcelled out into different territories in which different deities were to be worshipped. 'When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the children of men, He set the boundaries of the peoples according to the number of the children of God [so LXX: M. T. Israel]. For the Lord's portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance' (Dt. xxxii 8 f.). The same notion appears in the expressions about other gods being divided to other peoples (Dt. iv 19 f., xxix 25). In accordance with this some elements of the people believed that in his own territory Chemosh, for example, had powers similar to those exercised by the Lord in the land of Israel (Jgs. xi 24, 2 K. iii 27)¹.

The idea itself in some form or other is almost a necessary corollary of the monotheism of that age; for if there be only One God, and if He be a God of justice, how account for the fact that the majority of mankind worship other gods unless that be His will?

Be that as it may, whether as the result of theological speculation or of practical or prudential considerations, we find the doctrine firmly established that the God of Israel could be worshipped sacrificially only on certain defined territory. And side by side with this we meet with the belief that He could be addressed in prayer and could assert His power all the world over. Of the numerous illustrations of this it will suffice to refer to a few—the patriarchs on their wanderings, Absalom at Geshur (2 Sam. xv 8), Elijah at Zarephath (1 K. xvii 8 ff.). Of these Absalom belongs to the age of David, whom men thrust out from the inheritance of the Lord saying, go, worship other gods (1 Sam. xxvi 19), and Elijah to that of Naaman, whose action, as we shall see immediately, provides a very strong example of the sacrificial practice.

But the classical instance is furnished by Egypt. The scenes laid in that country by Genesis and Exodus provide outstanding

examples of the invocation of the God of Israel and of His power to help in a foreign land, while, as we have seen, no sacrificial worship could be paid to Him there (Ex. viii 22)¹.

It is probable that in the age of David there were no exceptions to the sacrificial doctrine we have noted, but as the commercial and other diaspora grew, the need for some modification in its working became increasingly urgent. Was such a community as that which would arise in Damascus as the result of the concession granted by Benhadad (1 K. xx 34) simply to abandon the public worship of the God of Israel? For it must be remembered that the house of public prayer without sacrifice had not yet been devised.

We do not know at what period an answer was first found to this question; but that it was found at some time is shown by the case of Naaman (2 K. v 17). By a legal fiction it was held that a sacrifice offered outside the territory of Israel would fall within the re-

1) The treatment of the Paschal victim supplies a very interesting application of the doctrine. On the actual Passover in Egypt, the ceremony is domestic, the slaying was not done at an altar, and the blood was not treated as in a sacrifice (Ex. xii 7). The meat was not to be boiled on any account but eaten roasted (8 f.). Thereafter there was to be a commemorative *zeman* (festival) (14). On the occasion of the first commemorative Passover a year later, however, we find that the ceremony has ceased to be domestic, the Paschal victim has become a sacrifice and a *qurban* has to be brought from it to the religious centre (Num. ix 1–13). As a sacrifice it would be treated in all respects in the appropriate manner, and the meat would naturally be boiled (see Num. vi 19, 1 Sam. ii 13–15). Deuteronomy agrees as to all this. It expressly commands that the Passover is to be sacrificed in the place which the Lord shall choose to set His Name there and forbids its slaughter locally. The flesh is to be boiled and eaten at the sanctuary, and in the morning the sacrificant is to leave the Temple and return to his tent (Dt. xvi 1–8). This phrase has occasioned much unnecessary difficulty. "Tents" does not here mean "houses". What is contemplated here as in Hos. xii 10, is that the pilgrims would necessarily use tents to provide themselves with accommodation during their visit to the religious capital as is done by the Arabs in Palestine to the present day. On the transfer of the service of Ex. xii 21–27 to the religious capital see H. M. Wiener, *Early Hebrew History and other Studies*, 1924, 58 f.

It will be seen that Deuteronomy throughout agrees with Numbers and with those provisions of Ex. xii which refer to the commemorative Passover, as modified by later legislation. There is no conflict here between two (supposititious) documents D and P: but there is a difference between the rites of the historical event and those of the subsequent annual commemoration. (See further H. M. Wiener, *The Main Problem of Deuteronomy*, 1920: German translation *Das Hauptproblem des Deuteronomiums*, 1924.)

1) Later these gods or sons of god became, or were replaced by, angels in Jewish thought (Dan x 13, 20, 21 xi 1, xii 1).

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quirements of the doctrine, if earth taken from Palestine was utilised for the altar. It scarcely seems that this device was invented by Naaman. There is nothing in the text to suggest it, and we may perhaps infer that in his age it was already a recognised method of overcoming the difficulty created by the doctrine. But as yet it was employed merely for local altars. Hosea ix 3 ff. makes it evident that while Naaman's method might solve the problem of finding a substitute for the local sacrificial worship, it was not held applicable to a House of the Lord.

There is some not very clear archaeological evidence which suggests that there may have been a temple of the God of Israel in Assyria at a later date¹. And the Elephantine papyri, if genuine, show us one in Egypt. In Babylonia we have the evidence of the Prophet of Consolation who thunders against the proposal to build a substitute for the Jerusalem temple in the land of exile (Is. lxvi)². The ultimate solution was found in the creation of the synagogue, the house of public prayer without sacrifice, and its adaptation as a substitute alike for local altars and for a pilgrimage Temple³.

Such was the doctrine and such its history so far as our materials enable us to trace it⁴. The decision as to the text and meaning of our phrase in Ex. xx 24 can only be taken in the light of it.

If we read 'in all the place where I cause My Name to be remembered' the verse will incorporate the doctrine. It will mean that sacrifice at cairn altars is legitimated for all Palestine by this law. If, on the other hand, the preference be given to 'in every place where thou shalt cause etc.', the meaning will be that sacrifice at cairn altars generally is legitimated by the law, and the doctrine of limitation to Palestine (and the desert) will

be of independent origin. The latter view is favoured by two considerations. We know that sacrifice in Egypt to the God of the fathers was in fact deemed impossible before the wilderness period (Ex. viii 22). The people had therefore acted on this view for centuries. Moreover we know that in the later period it was held that lawful sacrifice could only be offered at Jerusalem. It is easy to understand that in this state of feeling the reading permitting sacrifice at local altars might be replaced by a text which could be interpreted as pointing to the exclusive legitimacy of the temple as the scene of sacrifice: it is less easy to see how the clear reference to a plurality of altars embodied in the Syriac reading could in that age have been substituted for a precept that was held to favour the Jerusalem monopoly. But whichever view be taken on the textual question, the meaning of the verse will be substantially the same for historical purposes.

7. The prohibitions of Ex. xx 25 f. Ex. xx 25 provides that if stones were used they must be undressed. The swinging of a tool upon the stone would profane it.

Endeavours have been made to connect this with conceptions of rocks or stones as the abodes of spirits¹. In the form in which these are sometimes put forward the theory is simply ludicrous. It cannot be pretended that Ex. xx 25 is concerned with a deity who dwelt in stones. And even if anybody were hardy enough to affirm this, he would find himself in a difficulty to prove that the deity was conceived as dwelling in the altars of earth to which the stone altars were merely alternative².

If the swinging of a tool on the stone profaned it, we can only infer in this context that for some reason this was a profanation of the stone for the purposes of the cult of the God of Ex. xx. We must look for this reason in the beliefs and practices of contemporary heathenism.

"In all Arabian sacrifices except the holocaust . . . the godward side of the ritual is summed up in the shedding of the victim's blood, so that it flows over the sacred symbol, or gathers in a pit (ghabghab) at the foot of the altar idol. An application of the blood to

1) See S. Schiffer, *Keilschriftliche Spuren der in der zweiten Hälfte des 8ten Jahrhunderts von den Assyriern nach Mesopotamien deportierten Samarier*, 1907. G. A. Barton, *Archaeology and the Bible*, 2nd. Ed. 1917, 450—2.

2) On this see H. M. Wiener, *The Prophets of Israel in History and Criticism*, 1923, 86 f., 134 f. and, for proof that Is. lvi—lxvi belong to the Prophet of Consolation, 131 ff.

3) On Is. xix 18—25 see op. cit. 172 f. and the further literature there cited.

4) It does not appear that there was any parallel doctrine in the other Syrian cults of the day forbidding sacrifice to the deities with which they were concerned in the Lord's inheritance. Certainly the native cults found by the Israelites on their entry were continued, and we have numerous instances of the worship of non-Israelite gods both in the biblical material and in our other sources.

1) On this belief see e. g. S. I. Curtiss, op. cit., 85—7.

2) Further I. Benzinger aptly argues (*Hebräische Archäologie*, 2nd. ed. 1907, 321) that if working stone had been conceived as driving out an indwelling numen, the ancient Canaanites would not have made their altars by cutting stones or rocks.

the summit of the sacred stone may be added, but that is all. What enters the ghabghab is held to be conveyed to the deity; thus at certain Arabian shrines the pit under the altar was the place where votive treasures were deposited. A pit to receive the blood existed also at Jerusalem under the altar of burnt offering, and similarly in certain Syrian sacrifices the blood was collected into a hollow, which apparently bore the name of mashkan, and thus was designated as the habitation of the godhead.¹

So far as the Jerusalem pit is concerned the theory cannot be sustained for the Israelite period. We have too much information as to the treatment of blood in the ritual both at horned and cairn altars for the explanation to be tenable. Whether it is true of the Jebusite period our materials do not enable us to say. But modern researches have brought to light numbers of stones and rocks which are noticeable for cupmarks cut in them². These are thought by some to have been used as altars. Thus the Rev. H. B. Greene writes, "Each has upon the face of the altar cup-shaped hollows with drains leading into them, these hollows having the same general arrangement in each. In the case of four, a cup-shaped hollow exists some feet to the northwest which seems to have a close relation to the altar. Two altars being out of place, it cannot be known whether such a hollow existed in their cases. In two instances a hollow exists on the step, or on what takes the place of the step, of the altar"³.

It is extremely doubtful whether these stones were in fact altars. If so, not one of them complied with the requirements of the Israelite law. They may of course not have been Israelite at all in origin: or they may have been the product of syncretism. But if they are altars, they attest the existence of a practice against which Ex. xx 25 was clearly aimed.

Whatever be thought of the cup hollows in instances like these, there is on the whole no doubt that in such a high place as that discovered at Gezer, there are hollows that have been cut artificially in the rock for

purposes connected with heathen worship. In some way — whether as the result of the belief that the rock was inhabited by a deity or otherwise — these were connected with heathen conceptions. Hence any treatment of stone on such lines would be a link with the cults which it was the especial mission of the Pentateuchal legislation to combat. Thus it would appear that the prohibition of Ex. xx 25 is aimed at contemporary heathen ideas which are illustrated by modern discoveries, and conceivably, but not certainly, these ideas centred in the belief that a deity dwelt in the stone.

There is another point which appears to confirm this. In terms, and apparently also in intent, the prohibition relates only to cairn altars of sacrifice. It does not apply to altars for any other purpose, and it is doubtful whether it applies to altars of sacrifice of any other type. Now at Gezer a little horned altar (not of sacrifice) dating from about the year 600 B. C. was found¹. It is of a true Israelite type, square and horned, though made of stone. There is a complete absence of any heathen characteristic. If the working of stone for such an altar was lawful, as appears to have been the case, it would point to a connection between the prohibition and the use of an altar for animal sacrifices — i. e. between the prohibition and the manipulation of the blood. Similarly the altar of Josh. xxii, which was merely memorial, was built to a pattern — i. e. probably of hewn stones — but was felt to be unobjectionable because it was not for sacrifice. It looks therefore as if the making of cavities in stones was supposed in heathen belief to make the blood accessible to the indwelling deity, but this is of course only a conjecture².

While Israelites may often have broken the law, we must notice that the best practice was in accordance with it. If we consider the case of Saul after the battle of Michmash (1 Sam. xiv 33 f.), or Elijah on Carmel (1 K. xviii 31 f.), we see that no tool was swung on the stones. And in contrast to the whole body of heathen practice at such altars with cavities as have been brought to light, we find the command "Ye shall pour it (the blood) out on the ground like water" (Dt. xii 16, 24) and the obvious fact that this was what happened in the historical cases.

In this connection Is. xxvii 9 should be

1) See below 30.

2) It is impossible to say for certain whether a horned altar of sacrifice could lawfully be made of dressed stones.

1) W. R. Smith, op. cit., 339 f.

2) See e. g. H. B. Greene, Hebrew Rock Altars, Biblical World ix, 1897, 329—340. S. I. Curtiss, op. cit., 234 ff. S. R. Driver, Modern Research as illustrating the Bible, 1909, 65—7, 81. H. Vincent, Canaan d'après l'Exploration Récente, 1907, passim, especially 99 f.; D. P. Blair, Stone Altars and Cupmarks in South Palestine, Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement 1919, 167—74.

3) Loc. cit. 338.

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altars and to be addressed to the individual Israelite. The provisions for the local administration of justice are immediately followed by those for local sacrifice¹. Then the code passes to national institutions.

Subject only to the enactment contained in Deut. xii which it will be well to consider after Lev. xvii 1—9, the foregoing constitute the whole of the laws relating to cairn altars. They suggest that the institution was felt to be fraught with possibilities of religious abuse against which the lawgiver desired to guard, and the evidence we possess shows that history proved the dangers of the institution.

In the desert period it was found that the Israelites abused the opportunities which the slaughter of animals without supervision afforded them to sacrifice to the "he-goats" (שְׂעִירִים). Accordingly it was enacted that all domestic animals slaughtered for food should be brought to the door of the tent of meeting. This of course suspended the operation of Ex. xx 24—26 for the remainder of the wanderings so far as related to slaughter for food. In verse 7 we find the words "a permanent statute shall it be for you for your generations". They are attached to a prohibition to sacrifice to the "he-goats". The idea of permanence can only have been intended to apply to one of two things: either to the veto of worship of the he-goats — and this is by far the more probable, — or to the whole institution of slaughter. It is utterly impossible to suggest any age in Israelite history after the desert period in which the idea of concentrating all slaughter at a single spot could have effected a lodgement in any sane brain. It was inconceivable when Israel was settled in the land: it was still more inconceivable in the days of the diaspora². At the outside it could only have applied to the inhabitants of the religious capital in the period after the conquest. It is surely unlikely that any legislation in a confessedly transitional era like that of the wanderings should intend to characterise as permanent a provision which from its very nature would have to be entirely repealed, or at least modified out of all recognition, on the happening of an event the occurrence of which in the near future was confidently anticipated. For this reason we should prefer

1) Apparently xvii 2—7 should stand after xiii 6 and has been accidentally omitted through the homoeography of ובערת הרק מקרבך and then taken into the text at the wrong point. See further my article on The Arrangement of Deuteronomy xii—xxvi, Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society VI, 1926, 185—195.

2) See H. M. Wiener, The Origin of the Pentateuch, 2nd. impression 1912, 120 f. = Wie steht's um den Pentateuch?, 1913, 102.

the construction which regards the words as to permanence as limited to the prohibition to worship the "he-goats".

This law, as has been said, created a situation which it was necessary to modify at the conquest. The inevitable change was introduced by Dt. xii 15, 16; 20—25. If the religious capital was too far away, local slaughter was to be permissible "as I commanded thee" (21) a clear reference to Ex. xx 24—26¹. The blood of animals so slaughtered for food was to be poured out on the ground like water, and clean and unclean alike could partake of the flesh.

B. Horned Altars.

1. General. We found that side by side with the cairn altars the Old Testament introduces us to other altars which were of a different type or types, and for convenience we termed these horned altars. There is no general law relating to them which could be made a basis of study as is Ex. xx 24—26 for cairn altars, and our procedure here must be first to collect such information as we can regarding them from scattered passages.

We note first that not all altars of this class were identical in pattern. In 2 K. xvi 10—16 we read how Ahaz saw at Damascus an altar of burnt offering which commended itself to his fancy and caused a similar altar to be erected in Jerusalem. In contra-distinction to each other the older Jewish altar is called the altar of bronze and the new altar is termed the great altar. This seems to imply that the new altar was not of bronze and was larger than the Jewish kind. The king effects a partition of the offerings between the two altars, transferring the great majority to the new structure. This shows that a Damascene altar was essentially adapted to a sacrificial system that bore a general resemblance to the Jewish.

It may however be that all Jewish horned altars were substantially of the same type, but in examining the evidence we must keep an open mind.

In 1 K. i 50 Adonijah takes sanctuary and grasps the horns of the altar. In the sequel he is brought down from it (וירדהו מעל המ' ver. 53). So we see that unlike the cairn altars this altar was raised². This is strongly confirmed by the

1) See further below 18.

2) Ex. xx 26 prohibits going up to the altar by steps "that thy nakedness be not exposed". This obviously applies to all raised cairn altars whether the approach was made by steps, or by a slope as in the post-exilic period. The latter was merely a device for attempting to harmonise the provision of this verse with the horned altar to which it was never intended to apply.

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notice as to Joab (ii 28—34), for there we read of his being "by the side of (צל)" the altar. Yet he grasped its horns. These data can only be harmonised by the view that the altar itself was raised. From this case we also learn that this altar was associated with the tent of the Lord and was consequently certainly served (at any rate in part) by priests. When, therefore, we read in 2 Sam. vi 17 of David's placing the Ark in the tent he had erected for it and offering, we must conclude that he used a horned altar.

One other reference in the books of Samuel calls for attention in this connection. The author of 1 Sam. ii 28 uses the expression "to go up on mine altar (לעלות על מזבחי)" in connection with the priesthood¹.

An altar at which sanctuary was taken was contemplated by the earliest legislation (Ex. xxi 14), which also speaks of a House of the Lord (xxiii 19, xxxiv 26), to which pilgrimages were to be made three times in the year (xxiii 14—19, xxxiv 18—24). Obviously neither altar nor House can be identified with the local cairn altars.

In Joshua ix we find further data. The Gibeonites are made slaves and hewers of wood and drawers of water "for the house of my God" (23), "for the congregation and for the altar of the Lord" (27). This narrative again presupposes a central altar of a very different kind from a local altar, and suggests a definite ministry of a more elaborate character than that outlined in the Pentateuch.

In view of current controversies it will be well to leave Solomon's altar aside till we have examined some other facts.

Jeroboam introduced certain changes into the sacrificial system. A writer who is unfriendly to his policy describes them in 1 K. xii 26—33. He built houses of high places, certainly in Beth-el and Dan, and probably elsewhere (see xiii 32), and made non-Levitical

priests. But it is not charged against him that his altars were not in accordance with established views. It does not therefore appear that he adopted any outstanding novelty of construction: and in fact the language used in connection with them does not suggest that they differed in pattern from other Israelite horned altars. He "went up on (על)" the altar (xii 32, 33 bis) and provided it with a priesthood (32, Am. vii 10) and we know from another source that it had horns (Am. iii 14).

In xiii 1 he is spoken of as standing "on" or "by (על)" the altar to burn sacrificial offerings. He removes his hand "from on (מעל)" the altar (4).

It may be added that on the Moabite stone Mesha appears to speak of the אֱלֹהֵי אֲרָאֵל (? altar hearth) of DWDH (line 12) and in a damaged phrase of אֱלֹהֵי אֲרָאֵל (altar-hearths) of the Lord. These are dragged before Chemosh. They were obviously not portions of cairn altars; and consequently testify to the existence of a different type of altar alike in the worship of the God of Israel and in that of one at least of His rivals¹.

Altars found in Petra have steps which do not lead up the whole way, and Gressmann has pointed out that it follows from this that the animal was not slaughtered on the altar² (cf. Lev. i etc.). This is another point of difference from the cairn altars, for, as we have seen³ the victims were actually slaughtered upon these. We shall find that all the Israelite horned altars of which we have adequate data were high (see especially Lev. ix 22 where Aaron comes down from the altar, and next section). Possibly, even, some were raised by being placed on a platform or mound. And this after all is a necessity of the case. If sacrifices were to be celebrated in the sight of a large congregation or even of a whole people or its representatives, it would be necessary to arrange for the vital portions of the ceremony to be performed where it was possible to see them; and this could be most easily effected by raising the altar hearth, either through making the altar lofty, or by erecting it on a platform or other elevation.

2. The Tabernacle altar. This was 5 cubits by 5 and stood 3 cubits high. It had

1) Critical commentators generally make 1 Sam. ii 27 ff. Deuteronomistic. It shows the view taken of the priesthood and its duties in the days of the writer. The priesthood is chosen to go up on the altar, to burn incense and to bear an ephod before the Lord. Burning incense is here regarded as distinct from the altar duties and ephod duties and parallel to them; and the priesthood was chosen in Egypt and receives the fire offerings of the Lord. All this exactly squares with the representations of the Pentateuch in the portions attributed to the supposititious priestly code, but the hierarchical organisation contemplated in ver. 36 seems to be further developed than anything known to the Pentateuch. On incense see further below 29, and on this passage cp. B. D. Eerdmans, Das Buch Leviticus (Alttestamentliche Studien IV) 1912, 28 f.

1) A number of horned altars have been brought to light by modern exploration, but most of them appear to have been altars of incense. There is, however, abundant evidence of the use of wrought altars among the neighbouring peoples for sacrificial purposes.

2) Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart I 1908, 372.

3) Above 4.

horns and was made of wood covered with bronze. Half way up was a bronze grating. It had rings to take the staves that were necessary for its transport. It was hollow (Ex. xxvii 1—8). It is not said that this altar was to be raised. But in order to manipulate the offerings on an altar about 5 feet high with comfort, the priests would necessarily stand on some sort of step or platform even if the altar itself was not raised. This explains the language of Ex. xxviii 42 f. (as to the priests' breeches)¹ as compared with Ex. xx 26; and in Lev. ix 22 we read of Aaron's coming down (יִרְדּוּ) from the altar.

It has been objected that the wood of an altar made on these lines would be charred by the altar fire and that the construction was therefore not practical. But the possibility of charring would depend partly on the thickness of the bronze at the top, and partly on the free access of air which would provide the necessary oxygen for combustion. It may be doubted whether there is anything in the objection.

3. The altar of Solomon's temple. We have seen that in early times there existed a horned altar which stood in front of the Ark and was regarded as an integral part of the sacrificial apparatus. Further Bethel had one or more horned altars, and horned altars were commonly used in the worship of other contemporary deities². In view of these facts any theory that Solomon's temple lacked such a structure is *prima facie* improbable.

We have certain incidental references which throw light on the matter. The altar of bronze we find in the time of Ahaz (2 K. xvi 14, 15, cf. Ezek. ix 2) is presumably Solomon's altar. At any rate there is no suggestion of any other altar having been constructed in the interval.

According to 1 K. ix 25 Solomon built an altar, but this verse was not in the original LXX. There seems, however, to be no good reason for rejecting viii 64 which definitely speaks of the altar of bronze. But difficulty

1) It has been suggested that Ex. xxviii 42 f. is secondary, the reason advanced being that the breeches are not mentioned in xxix 9 and Lev. viii 13. This rests on a misunderstanding of the sacrificial theory. In these passages the priests are not functioning as priests, but undergoing consecration. Accordingly they do not approach the elevated altar, but occupy a position like that of an ordinary lay sacrificant in Lev. i ff. The specifically priestly duties are here performed by Moses who was doubtless suitably clad. But as soon as the priest "comes near unto the altar", he must wear his breeches (see Lev. vi 2—4).

2) See above 12, below 19.

has been caused by the fact that Kings does not narrate the construction of an altar. In view of the detailed character of the description of the temple and its furniture, the omission is certainly striking.

Various solutions have been suggested, but the distinction between horned and cairn altars rules out most of them. Nobody who realises the part played by the horned altar in the life of the period could attach importance to the hypothesis that one of the pillars Jachin and Boaz which stood in the porch of the temple (1 K. vii 15—22)¹, was really the altar, or to the idea that the natural rock² was so employed. Again the notion that the altar of 2 Sam. xxiv which David constructed was used by Solomon is ruled out³, for that altar was erected hastily under the stress of emergency and cannot have been a horned altar.

The Chronicler attaches great importance to this erection of David's (1 Ch. xxi 26—xxii 1), but the cases of Adonijah and Joab (1 K. i 50, ii 28—34) prove that even after its construction the principal altar in front of the Ark was of an entirely different type. Yet his very partiality for this altar lends weight to his statement that Solomon's Temple had an altar of bronze (2 Ch. iv 1). Had the sources he used left him free, he would have made David's construction in Araunah's threshing floor the altar of burnt offering par excellence for the whole pre-exilic period in accordance with the view he takes in 1 Ch. xxi 26, xxii 1. That he has not done so is strong evidence that he found the altar of bronze in some document he was using.

In these circumstances the only hypothesis that fits the facts is that Solomon did in fact use a bronze altar of the horned type and that for some reason the notice of this is not in our present text of Kings. It is conceivable that it has been deliberately cut out; but it is more likely that it has been lost through an accident in the MS tradition. It could have fallen out through homoeography if Solomon made the altar, for 1 Ch. iv 1 begins with the same word (וַיַּעַשׂ) as the following sentence. Or de Groot may be right in thinking he used David's

1) William Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, 2nd. ed., 487. Equally the data as to the position of the altar forbid the idea that it consisted of one of these pillars (Ezek. viii 16 compared with ix 2, Joel ii 17, 2 K. xvi 14).

2) Sir George Adam Smith, *Jerusalem* ii, 1908, 60. On Dr. de Groot's extension of this theory see further the Appendix.

3) G. B. Gray, *Sacrifice in the Old Testament*, 1925, 134 ff.

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horned altar¹. In either case the loss of any notice may be due to some such accident as that which has cost us the names of the prefects in 1 K. iv 8b, 9, 10, 11 and 13 — a tear, a rub or a smear².

This is confirmed by the fact that in Phoenicia we meet with altars of bronze³. In view of the connection with Solomon's temple and Phoenician art this is a strong argument⁴.

According to 2 Chr. iv 1 Solomon's altar was 10 cubits high by 20 by 20. These are the dimensions of the post-exilic altar according to Hecataeus (Josephus Ap. I 22, 198), and it may be that the Chronicler is here thinking of the altar of his own day. It is certainly noteworthy that the superficies of the hearth of Ezekiel's altar is only 12 by 12 (Ezek. xliii 16). Now we have already seen that the altar of Ahaz was larger than that of Solomon. It seems very improbable that Ezekiel would have reduced the size of the altar to less than that of the first temple altar which had been shown by experience to be too small for its task. It is far more likely that Solomon's altar was the smallest of the three, that Ahaz built a larger structure because the amount of sacrificial business demanded it, and that Ezekiel's idea was to regulate the dimensions of the new altar in the light of practical experience. Possibly his measurements are those of Ahaz: possibly he introduces changes: there is nothing to tell us which view is correct: but almost certainly he is not merely copying Solomon's altar, for in that case the passage would be unnecessary, — and it is extremely unlikely that he is reducing the size of any altar that had been used.

Solomon's altar had proved too small for the initial sacrifices (1 K. viii 64). We have seen that Ahaz introduced a larger altar. It is interesting to compare the dimensions of the altars we know:

1) Die Altäre des Salomonischen Tempelhofes, 1924, 27f.

2) Stress has been laid on the word "build" in 1 K. x 25 and it has been argued that this applies only to stones. It may however be that in linguistic usage this had become applicable to all altars of whatever material they were really constructed. In any case caution is necessary in using this notice having regard to the fact that it was missing in the original text of the LXX. Its language may be coloured by the post-exilic altar.

3) Corp. Inscriptionum Semiticarum i Nos. 1, 143. See the discussion in Perrot and Chipiez History of Art in Phoenicia and its Dependencies I, 1885, 261.

4) It is perhaps worth noting that according to Herod. i 183 the temple of Bel in Babylon had a table and two altars, the smaller being of gold.

Tabernacle:	3 cubits high	5 × 5 square
Ezekiel:	10 " " (+ horns 1)	12 × 12 " (hearth) ¹
Post-exilic:	10 " "	20 × 20 square
Herod's:	15 " "	50 × 50 " (Josephus)
		32 × 32 square (Mishna: at the base)

If we had the correct text of Ezekiel together with accurate information as to the history of the cubit and the other altars, we might perhaps find that there was a close connection between the altars of the prophet and Ahaz in both pattern and dimensions. One point however stands out. Ezekiel's altar, as we shall see, was of a peculiar pattern. The tabernacle altar to all appearance is in the form of a hollow box with no bottom. There is no hint in the Bible that the bronze altar of Solomon was of any other shape, and certainly the notice in 2 Chron. iv 1 does not suggest superimposed platforms. It is very possible that both Solomon's altar and the post-exilic were of the tabernacle shape: and that Ezekiel represents a form which was not the original Jewish altar. In this matter however the literary notices should be controlled, in part at any rate, by archaeological material to the extent to which that is available.

4. Ezekiel's altar. In Ezek. xliii 13—17 we find a description of a horned altar. No mention is made of the materials. This means either that these were a matter of indifference or else that the prophet saw no ground for objecting to those that had been used hitherto for such altars. In any case the nature of the description excludes the possibility of the employment of earth or undressed stone.

The horns are a prominent feature, and the prophet assumes as a matter of course that it would have steps (ver. 17). "Its steps look (פְּנֵיהֶם so read with Versions) eastwards". This certainly suggests that he was familiar with steps in the case of the temple altar. The language is not appropriate if they are intended to be an innovation.

It is scarcely necessary to add that the altar was served by priests and attached to the temple.

The architectural details for the most part lie outside the scope of this study². It is, how-

1) W. F. Albright (The Babylonian Temple-tower and the Altar of Burnt-offering, Journal of Biblical Literature xxxix, 1920, 137 ff.) formerly thought that the foundation was 20 by 20 cubits square. He now tells me that he no longer believes the measurements of Ezekiel's altar to be the same as those of the altar of Solomon's temple as given in 2 Chr. iv 1.

2) On these see Albright loc. cit.; de Groot, Die Altäre etc. 43 ff.

ever, necessary to note that the altar contemplated by the prophet, while conforming to the type of the other lawful horned altars of the Bible in having a square superficies and horns, differs from them notably in pattern. It consists in the main of a number of square stages of diminishing superficieses superimposed upon one another. That shows that in the view of the prophet there was nothing particularly sacrosanct about some of the details of what may be called the regular pattern. Squareness and horns — those are the common characteristics of all the lawful horned altars we know, including the golden altar of incense. But this raises a presumption that when archaeology reveals a square, horned, unadorned altar in an Israelite stratum that too may be a lawful horned altar.

One other point appears material to our investigation. Ezekiel recognises the altar hearth as a distinct part of the altar. Perhaps it was a plain surface, but equally it may have been hollowed. And in this recognition of the separateness of the hearth the prophet is supported, as we have seen, by the inscription of Mesha which speaks of altar hearths of other gods as having been dragged before Chemosh. They were therefore detachable.

5. The post-exilic altar. In Ezra iii 2 f. we read of the building of the post-exilic altar. Taking the passage as it stands it would appear that it was speedily completed. The people come in the 7th. month (1) and the altar is ready for the Feast of Booths — apparently before. There is no hint of casting bronze or of any metal working. The opening phrase of verse 3 "And they set the altar upon its base (or in its place) (וַיִּכְנוּהוּ עַל מְנוּחָתוֹ)" seems to mean no more than that it was erected on the former site. Moreover it is scarcely favourable to the altar's having been of such a pattern as Ezekiel's.

Much clearer information is furnished by 1 Macc. iv. The altar had been profaned by the setting up upon it of the "abomination of desolation" (i 54) viz., an idol altar (59). It was therefore resolved to pull the altar down. The stones were laid up, and whole stones were taken according to the law of Ex. xx 24—26. With these a new altar was built on the model of the former altar (iv 44—47). It can not therefore be doubted that the post-exilic altar was made of undressed stones.

Hecataeus (cited by Josephus Ap. I 22, 198) states that the altar was of undressed stones 10 cubits high by 20 by 20¹.

1) On the statements of the Mishna see G. Dalman, Palästina-jahrbuch V, 1909, 43 f.

According to Josephus (B. J. V, 225, [5, 6]) Herod's temple had an altar 15 cubits high by 50 by 50 with corners projecting like horns, and was approached from the south by a slope. No iron tool was used in its construction¹.

6. The general characteristics of the lawful horned altar. It is practically impossible to discuss the altars of burnt offering in this connection without considering the data as to other Israelite altars of the same general type. Now excavation has revealed a square horned altar of either incense or drink offering. It was found at Gezer and apparently dates from before 600 B. C.² It conforms to what the comparison of Ezekiel with our other data appears to indicate as the main — perhaps the sole — requirements of the Law. It is wholly unadorned and bears no inscription, but it is marked by two peculiarities. It swells somewhat, so that the top is larger than the base. It will be remembered that Ezekiel's altar of superimposed tiers has the opposite peculiarity, and that the Mishna regards the figure of 2 Chr. iv 1 as referring only to the base of the altar. It is therefore a possibility that provided the altar was square it was regarded as immaterial whether it was of uniform size throughout.

The second point is that the surface of the Gezer altar is slightly concave. It will be recalled that Ezekiel contemplates an altar hearth of special structure, and Mesha's inscription mentions altar hearths. It may be that these were sometimes concave, or at any rate did not present merely a square level surface. At all events it would be very rash to suggest that this Gezer altar is not of the true Jewish type. Alone of all the ancient altars of the Israelite period that have been recovered in Palestine up to the date of writing, it is alike square, horned and unadorned. Unlike the altar of Ex. xxx 3 it has no moulding, but this was mere adornment of a type difficult to reproduce in stone without more workmanship — and consequently more expense — than this altar shows. Josh. xxii provides a strong argument for its being Israelite³. That passage proves that

1) For a discussion of the data of the Mishna see G. Dalman, Neue Petra-Forschungen, 1912, 138 ff. The majority of the questions that arise on these data do not fall within the scope of this monograph. It is only necessary to note that the method of construction of Herod's altar — filling wooden frame work that was subsequently removed with unhewn stones and cement — is obviously excluded in the case of the post-exilic altar by the language of our authorities.

2) See below 30 f.

3) It is interesting to note that some altars found on the road to Palmyra (Revue Biblique xxix, 1920, 369), to which Père Dhorme has kindly drawn

the Israelite type was regarded as thoroughly distinctive in Palestine. When, therefore, we find an altar that presents its characteristic features, it is difficult to suppose that it belongs to the worship of some strange deity.

We conclude, then, that Israelite wrought altars whether of sacrifice or of incense were necessarily square and horned and marked by little or no adornment. Details of size, materials, and shape (within the limits indicated) seem to have been largely matters of indifference¹.

7. The method of utilisation. The victim was never slain on the altar, but at its side. The flesh of burnt offerings was completely consumed on the altar, and the blood of burnt offerings and peace offerings was poured or thrown against it (7y) (Dt. xii 27, 2 K. xvi 15, Lev. i 5, etc.). For the rest, we have here a quantity of material which it seems unnecessary to transcribe or summarise in detail for the purposes of this study, which is concerned with altars rather than with sacrificial procedure.

8. What sacrifices were to be offered at the horned altar of the religious capital. This is one of the great cruxes of Biblical study.

According to the Pentateuch there were certain national offerings (as distinct from individual offerings), and these were of course to be offered at the religious capital (see e. g. Num. xxviii f.). We find in 2 K. xvi 15 that this law was duly observed².

The last-named passage further introduces us to another class of offerings that were unknown to the Pentateuch — royal offerings made daily by the king *ex officio*. As there was no Mosaic law on the subject Ezekiel regulates them in passages of the great vision which concludes his book. This has been supposed quite wrongly to refer to the national offerings. The language is explicit, and, if read without preconception in the light of 2 K. xvi 15, will be seen to refer to the royal offerings³.

With regard to slaughter merely for food there is not very much difficulty. After the period of the wanderings to which Lev. xvii

my attention, are also square, and that it is thought that there are on other grounds clear traces of Jewish influence at Palmyra (op. cit. 377).

1) See now Postscript on the Shechem Altars.

2) This passage mentions the morning burnt offering and the evening meal offering, the burnt offering of the king and his meal offering, and the burnt offering of the people and their meal offering, i. e. at least two burnt offerings and two meal offerings in addition to the royal offerings.

3) On Ezekiel's vision see further below 25—28.

Wiener, Altars.

1—8 applies, only persons in or near the religious capital could have used the central sanctuary for this purpose: and they would have done so only if sacrificially clean and disposed for a sacrificial meal. We cannot be sure of the precise construction to be put on the law in details of this sort, but for our present purpose this is not very important.

As to individual sacrifices, there were some, like those of the Nazirite (Num. vi), which could be brought only to the religious capital. These, again, give rise to no difficulty. And sin offerings and guilt offerings belonged properly only to this capital.

We now come to the ordinary annual religious life of the Israelite. If we start with the early legislation, we find that it invariably contemplates that on three festivals there were to be pilgrimages to the House of the Lord; and the language used makes it clear that in the normal course of events the resident in the country was expected to go there only on these three occasions and not, e. g., for new moons (Ex. xxiii 14—19, xxxiv 18—26, cp. Ex. xii 14). In these passages there can be no confusion between the part that the local cairn altars and the religious capital were to play in the life of the individual. All sacrificial worship was local save in so far as the law requires pilgrimages. But on those three occasions pilgrimages were obligatory, and they were to be made not to a local altar, but to the house of the Lord (xxiii 19), where all the males were to appear before Him (17).

It is in Deut. xii that most interpreters discover difficulties. While it may be conceded that the text of that passage may have undergone deterioration, I cannot think that if it be studied in the light of all our knowledge it really presents the formidable embarrassments that are generally supposed. What has been wrong is not so much the language of the chapter as our knowledge of the conditions for which it was framed.

It is commonly contended that Dt. xii forbids all sacrifice at any place whatever except at the religious capital. It is claimed that it abolishes all local altars and consequently necessarily legitimates local non-sacrificial slaughter for food for the first time in the history of Israel.

We have seen that local non-sacrificial slaughter for food was the general rule in Israel from the earliest times¹. That part of the theory therefore breaks down utterly.

1) Above 5.

That Deut. xii cannot possibly have the meaning attributed to it appears in the first instance from four considerations.

1. If the intention really was to confine all sacrificial service to one religious centre, the effect would have been to abolish all joint or public worship for all Israel (other than the inhabitants of the capital) except at the pilgrimages. It must always be remembered that in the whole preexilic age all public service was sacrificial. The house of joint prayer without sacrifice, which is now so familiar to us in synagogues, churches and mosques, had not yet been devised. Now Deuteronomy requires the males to make three visits a year to the religious capital (xvi 16). If, then, it was the intention of the legislator to limit all sacrifice to these occasions, the women and children would not necessarily have any opportunity of joining in public worship during the year, and nearly all the males would also be excluded from it except at these festivals. That any religious legislator should adopt such an attitude to joint or public worship is surely unthinkable and was equally so in the age in which this law was composed.

2. We have seen that there existed a whole body of customary law as to local worship reinforced by Ex. xx 24—26, which on any view of the composition of the Pentateuch, was in existence at the time that Deuteronomy was written. All this is entirely ignored by the chapter. There is no provision as to e. g. new moons¹ or tithe animals, though the custom of tithing dated from Jacob (Gen. xxviii 22), whose wealth consisted of live stock. If the legislator had intended to abolish cairn altars and their sacrifices, it would have been necessary for him to say so, e. g., "Thou shalt not have power to erect an altar to the Lord thy God save in the place that He shall choose, nor shalt thou have power to sacrifice any sacrifice in any of thy gates." Similarly with the observance of new moons and all other local solemnities. That, however, is precisely what the chapter does not say. "Thou shalt not have power to eat in thy gates the tithe of thy corn or of thy wine or of thine oil etc." (xii 17), but this does not apply, e. g., to the tithe of live stock. That which ex hypothesi the chapter was intended to abolish is never prohibited at all.

3. Not only so, but the procedure at cairn altars is expressly mentioned and approved for certain purposes. In ver. 21 we read "if the place... be too far from thee, then thou

1) See above 6.

mayest slaughter of thy herd and of thy cattle... as I have commanded thee, and thou mayest eat within thy gates". The command is to be found in Ex. xx 24: "An altar of earth mayest thou make unto Me and mayest slaughter there... thy flock and thy cattle". The language used in the two passages is identical, and there can be no doubt as to the meaning of the allusion. It is absurd to suggest that the law of Dt. xii is intended to abolish an enactment which it expressly recognises and approves.

4. As we have seen¹ Deuteronomy xvi 21 — xvii 1 is concerned with local cairn altars and their sacrifices. Had the Deuteronomic code been directed against them, it could never have contained such provisions. A lawgiver does not issue a statute recognising and regulating an institution which another part of the same statute aims at abolishing at once and for ever.

For these reasons it is beyond doubt that Deuteronomy xii on its true original construction was not directed against cairn altars of the Lord and their worship so long as the relevant provisions of the Mosaic legislation were duly observed. It remains to consider what its true meaning can have been.

We must begin by recognising that the lawgiver was necessarily familiar alike with the existing state of the law, its historical antecedents and the contemporary dangers to the religion he was striving to protect. If we look into these a little more closely, we shall find a clue to his real meaning.

The institution of sacrifice, broadly regarded, was not specifically Israelite, nor does the Bible ever suggest that it was. On the contrary it always represents the custom as deriving from a remote antiquity and as being common to all the surrounding peoples. We have reviewed a number of instances of this: here it suffices merely to mention Noah, Balaam, the prophets of Baal and Naaman as examples of the use of cairn altars and local sacrifices, and on the other hand the Damascus altar copied by Ahaz as an illustration of the use of another type. Further, Genesis shows us two sacrificial customs side by side. On the one hand the patriarchs build local altars and sacrifice freely without priestly assistance: on the other we find Rebekah consulting a sanctuary and are introduced to a form of cult which had a personnel that included hierodules (Gen. xxxviii 21 f., cp. Num. xxv 1 f.). In other words a dual system of sacrifice existed among the neighbouring peoples. There were occasions on

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which a Moabite or a Midianite or an Ammonite could offer sacrifices locally: there were others when he would go to a sacred "place" where he found a priestly personnel.

The biblical material provides us with other evidence of this. Jethro was priest of Midian, i. e. the Midianites had an organised personnel. If Balaam and Balak raise impromptu cairn altars and offer burnt-offerings, Moab nevertheless boasted permanent high places and a sacerdotal system (Is. xv 2, Jer. xlviii 7, 35)¹. If the prophets of Baal erected a cairn altar on Carmel and attempted to offer a burnt offering upon it, temples and a priesthood nevertheless existed side by side with such places of sacrifice (2 K. x 18—28 xi 18), and the earlier of these passages teaches us that sacrifices and burnt offerings were offered there to Baal². Another reference suggests that permanent sanctuaries of Baal probably had horned altars (Jer. xvii 1 f.), though not all temple altars of any deity were necessarily of one type, and the Baal of Jeremiah was not the Phoenician Baal. But this much we are entitled to say. There were among the surrounding peoples two forms of sacrificial worship, the one local or occasional, which could be practised by a worshipper without priestly assistance, and the other centred in special sacred places which had a regular priestly service. Similarly there were at least two types of altars in vogue — altars of the cairn class and temple altars, which, so far as we can tell, were sometimes horned as in the case of the Damascus structure seen by Ahaz and those condemned in Jer. xvii 1. Burnt offerings were offered at both, though we cannot say on any materials before us what burnt offerings were required to be brought to the temple.

We have already noted³ that Mesha's stone shows that there was an altar hearth of DWDH, which agrees with our inferences from the contemporary biblical material.

Similarly in the Palestine of today we find pilgrimage and local sacrifices side by side.

"There are two primitive places of sacrifice.

a) At the shrine of some being who has the value of God to the worshipper, or at least of

1) The king of Moab offers up his eldest son as a burnt offering on the wall in 2 K. iii 27, but we cannot tell whether this was effected on a permanent or temporary altar or whether the wall itself was so used. In any case there were Moabite high places or temples as well.

2) Compare the Carthaginian offerings which have been studied by e. g. M. J. Lagrange, *Études sur les Religions Sémitiques*, 2nd. Ed. 1905, 469 ff. R. Dussaud (*Les Origines Cananéennes du Sacrifice Israélite*, 1921).

3) Above 13.

some being of whom he stands in fear The shrines to which sacrifices are brought range from a circular wall of stones around a supposed grave, all of the crudest description, to a building known as a *kubbeh*

"In the case of a shrine under the open heavens, or a building, if I asked the Arabs or Syrians the question, "Where is the sacrifice killed?" the answer always was, "Near the door, or on the threshold". . . . It is often customary to put blood on the lintel and the doorposts. This is explained by the natives as being equivalent to an announcement that his sacrifice has arrived

b) The other primitive place of sacrifice is at the dwelling of the one offering it, whether that be cave, tent, or permanent building"¹.

This dualism was necessarily familiar to every Israelite, or perhaps it would be better to say that the Israelites were children of the culture of which this organisation of worship formed part. The Hebrew legislation took over the leading ideas while striving to purify the sacrificial institutions from all pagan influence, to separate the worship of Israel from that of the surrounding peoples, and so to mould the system as to make it an instrument for the strengthening of the new religion. It was sought to attain these ends by regulating the system of local worship, by substituting one great religious capital for the numerous centres that were usual in the heathen religions, by prohibiting all pagan practices that were *contra bonos mores* or tended to religious abuse, by enjoining the destruction of idolatrous high places and by forbidding all such associations as might lead to apostacy. The danger for the followers of the new religion may be likened to that which led the early Christian Church to abolish the observance of the Sabbath for fear that its members might be led to Judaise. In the same way the Pentateuchal legislation tries to obviate the risk of the Israelites heathenising.

The legislation of Ex. xxiii and xxxiv proceeds exactly on these lines. There is the prohibition of other gods (Ex. xx 23), the law of cairn altars which we have already studied, such precepts as xxii 17 (against a sorceress), 19 (sacrifice to other gods), xxiii 13 (mention of other gods), 24 f., 32 f. (against the heathen gods etc.). Above all there is the law of the pilgrimage festivals (14 ff., see also xxxiv 12—26).

1) S. I. Curtiss, *The Place of Sacrifice among the Primitive Semites*, *Biblical World* NS xxi. 1903, 248—59 at pp. 250—3; cf. *Primitive Semitic Religion*, 231, P. Kahle in *Palästina-jahrbuch* VIII, 1913, 154.

It is with that system and those conceptions that Deuteronomy has to deal. And the opening verses of chapter xii make this clear. The place which the Lord shall choose is pitted against what may be called its opposite number in the heathen system, not against a different part of the Israelite system. What corresponds in the Mosaic religion to the sacrifices which the heathen offered at high places is to be brought only to the one legitimate religious capital. But nothing is said of the worship which was not paid at high places or capital. The chapter must be read in the light of this fact, which is clearly stated at the very beginning. One other matter must also be taken into consideration. We have seen that during the desert period the law of Lev. xvii 1—9 concentrated slaughter for food at the tabernacle. This was impossible in any other period, and therefore it was necessary once more to legitimate domestic slaughter. For this reason Dt. xii reenacts the portion of Ex. xx 24—26 which had been temporarily suspended by Lev. xvii 1—9. Of the remainder of Ex. xx 24—26 it makes no mention, for that had never been suspended: but in xvi 21 — xvii 1 the lawgiver promulgates a further enactment relating to the subject matter of the Exodus law.

Thus it comes about that xii 2 f. deals exclusively with heathen high places. Then we read "Ye shall not do thus to the Lord your God: but unto the place which the Lord your God shall choose . . . shall ye seek" (4 f.). The thought is here dominated by the parallel the heathen places offered to the place of choice. "And ye shall bring thither" certain specified offerings (6). There is nothing there about local cairn altars.

Then there is a prohibition of the religious lawlessness prevalent at the moment. Num. xxv 1 ff. affords an extreme instance of this, but doubtless less heinous offences were also being committed. And again we meet the command to bring to the place of choice "all which I command you" followed by an enumeration (11). The meaning is that the individual offerings which rested on Mosaic command — statutory individual offerings as I have elsewhere¹ ventured to term them — are to be brought to the place of choice: but there is not a word about customary individual offerings — the sacrifices usual on, e. g., the New Moon. Then there is another clause directed against the heathen high places. "Beware lest thou offer thy burnt offerings in any place thou mayest see" (13). Here 'place' is used, not as in Ex.

xx 24 of the whole land, but as throughout this chapter in the sense of "sacred place". The lawgiver's mind is with the pilgrim who on his journey to the place of choice sees some other sacred place and thinks he may as well offer up his burnt offerings there. That is the force of the words "which thou shalt see". He is obviously not thinking of a local altar belonging to the individual Israelite or situate in his village, but of something he may see on a journey. And it is with this implied limitation that verses 13 f. are uttered. 'Thy burnt offerings' means thy pilgrimage burnt offerings. What were technically called "holy things" (קדשים) and vows were to be brought to the place of choice (ver. 26). Other sacrifices are left unaffected. Thus in reality the pilgrimage law of Deuteronomy merely follows on the same lines as the pilgrimage laws of Exodus. Both legislations alike are directed against heathenism and syncretism; both require three annual pilgrimages to the capital; both allow local slaughter for food; and neither interferes with the customary local worship of the country Israelite in the form in which we found it to exist¹.

From a consideration of the meaning of the law it is natural to turn to its subsequent history. We have seen what it was that the lawgiver feared, and if we consider the antecedents of the people and the occasional glimpses we obtain of their conduct even in the Mosaic age, we must admit that he had only too much reason for his fears (see Lev. xvii 7, Dt. xii 8 f., Num. xxv 1, Am. v, Ezek. xx). Apostasy and syncretism were dangers that more than once proved all but fatal to the religion. They would have been extremely formidable enemies even under the most favourable conditions, and but a little while after the death of Moses the conditions were unfavourable. The Israelites were a scattered minority in a land the strong places and cities of which were mostly in the hands of heathen races that were predominantly hostile to them. Communications were always difficult and sometimes impossible. The ideal of one place of choice as a centre to which the whole nation could make three pilgrimages a year in complete safety was unrealisable. Hence some compromises between the extreme demands of the law and the dictates of practical necessities were inevitable. They were doubtless determined in the first instance by the mentality of the people involved and the surrounding circumstances.

The Ark seems to have been in Shiloh and

1) Essays in Pentateuchal Criticism, 1910, 195 ff.

1) See above 5—7.

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pilgrimages were made thither (1 Sam. i, ii); the requirements of the Law appear to have been sufficiently known for any departure therefrom to incur censure (1 Sam. ii 12—17). But in Jgs. xvii f. we meet with a house of the Lord that was unlawful and idolatrous. The author of Judges xvii 6 leaves no doubt as to his disapproval. The story shows us that the mind of Micah, the owner of the house, was a curious medley. He believed strongly in the virtue of a Levitical priesthood (xvii 13), and appears to have worshipped the Lord either alone or with other gods. It would be difficult to be sure of the exclusiveness of his cult, but he was a thorough idolater (3 ff.). His mentality is interesting as showing the effect of the teaching of Moses on minds that were not yet sufficiently developed to appreciate the more important portions of his doctrines.

Then came the Danites and stole his property and priest (xviii 17—21). Ultimately they set up the idol in Dan and the descendants of the priest ministered there till the Assyrian exile (30 f.). Here we have the story of the genesis of a house of the Lord that combined Mosaic elements with others deriving from pre-Mosaic and Canaanite heathenism. It fully illustrates the dangers the lawgiver had foreseen. And the author of Ps. lxxviii 58 does not regard it as an isolated instance.

The political situation was long such that for the majority of the Israelites pilgrimages to Shiloh at the appointed times were quite impossible. Accordingly breaches of the strict law were necessary, and local sanctuaries served by priests were inevitable. Law must always adapt itself to life, and in judging any particular local sanctuary, it would be necessary to have far fuller information than we ever find in our sources. In a case where pilgrimage to the sanctuary of the Ark was impossible, it was obviously necessary to have recourse to some other means of disposing of the "sacred things", and the opinion formed of the method adopted would depend on its exact character. There may have been sanctuaries of varying degrees of legality, and some of them were probably nothing more than old heathen high places of some baal. On the other hand it is reasonable to suppose that the practice of a Samuel would be as nearly as possible in accordance with the requirements of the law. His sacrifices, whether offered on a local cairn altar or elsewhere, were presumably 'sacrifices of righteousness', and if Zebulun and Issachar had a sanctuary that complied with the requirements of the law so far as circumstances permitted, it may well be that their cult was thoroughly consistent with

the spirit of the legislation where the fulfilment of the letter was impossible (cp. Dt. xxxiii 19).

However this may be, so far as our sources are concerned, we find a new period of complaints beginning in the age of Solomon. From 1 K. xi 1—9 it is clear that he definitely built high places that were devoted to other deities and was guilty of worshipping them. It is not here a case of sanctuaries of the Lord in which the true religion was observed in a corrupt form: it is a case of the worship of other gods. Jeroboam constructed houses of high places (1 K. xii 31). It is not however suggested in this passage that these were to other gods, and the motive of his religious changes was political¹. On the other hand 1 K. xiv 9, 2 Chr. xi 15 regard him as having worshipped other gods, and there is no improbability in this.

Judah for its part indulged in all the practices of the Canaanites (1 K. xiv 24; on the whole situation cp. 2 K. xvii 7—23, 29).

It is unnecessary to cite all the passages where we read complaints that the high places were not taken away. Two periods of reform should be mentioned — those of Hezekiah and Josiah, but before we turn to these we may consider the testimony of the earlier prophets.

Amos (ii 8, iii 14, vii 9), Hosea (viii 11 x 1, 2, 8, and perhaps xii 12, where the text is very doubtful) and Isaiah (xvii 7 f., xxvii 9²) condemn the whole system, as they found it, in the clearest terms. But it is obvious from their references that it was saturated with heathenish practices. In every instance where we have any details to go upon, it will be seen that they have in mind abuses which are incompatible with the chaste, ethical, exclusive, imageless worship of the God of Israel. If Ephraim had multiplied altars not for the purpose of sinning, but for the purpose of carrying out the requirements of the religion with only such modifications as were imposed by distance, the increasing numbers of the population, and political and other conditions³, it is not likely that any of these denunciations would have been uttered.

1) See H. M. Wiener, *Early Hebrew History and Other Studies*, 1924, 12—16.

2) On the date and text of this passage see H. M. Wiener, *The Prophets of Israel in History and Criticism*, 1923, Appendix IV.

3) It must be remembered that the pilgrimage laws of the Pentateuch presuppose a population with the mobility of Bedouin (such as the Israelites were in the age of Moses and ever less thereafter), settled on a small territory. With the growth of population and of settled conditions and the foundation of a diaspora, they became continually less capable of execution. The Pentateuch had in view a people

There is no reason for seeing any inconsistency between such judgments and Elijah's complaint of the destruction of the Lord's altars (1 K. xix 10, 14). As this is coupled with charges of forsaking the covenant and slaying the prophets, it must be taken to refer to such altars as were compatible with the higher religion of Israel. Probably he is thinking of the local cairn altars which, as we have seen, were the scene of all ordinary public worship for the great majority of the people. He means that the true religion has been attacked and in large measure overthrown over the whole country.

In view of all this there seems to be no difficulty in understanding the reform of Hezekiah, and no ground whatever for doubting its historical character. He destroyed the high places with their abuses (2 K. xviii 4, xxi 3, cf. Mic. v. 11—13). This was surely natural enough in a monarch who stood in close relationship to the prophets and was peculiarly receptive to their teaching. Indeed, when we consider the impression that Micah certainly made upon him (see Jer. xxvi 18 f.) and his close relations with Isaiah, it is inconceivable that he should not have favoured the course they advocated in this matter. They were certainly not men who would have compromised on matters that were affected by their deepest and dearest convictions.

Manasseh rebuilt the high places and introduced religious abuses of the worst types (2 K. xxi 2 ff., cp. Jer. vii 30 f., xvii 1—3, xix 4 f., xxxii 32—5, Ezek. vi, xvi 16 ff.).

We now come to Josiah. From 2 K. xxii 17 (cp. xxiii 4—8, 10, 13 etc., and the prophetic passages just cited) it appears that the gravamen of the charge against the malpractices of Judah consisted of apostasy; but every variety of abuse known to the time seems to have existed in one form or another. In these circumstances it is difficult to say anything definite about the mentions of high places which occur in 2 K. xxiii from the point of view of an enquiry into altars. Unless it can be shown that a particular high place contained nothing objectionable from the stand-point of the Law

all the members of which would habitually be within easy reach of the religious centre. The only exception it contemplates is extremely illuminating, for it is eloquent of the conditions in which alone it could have been composed. An Israelite who was away on a journey was to sacrifice the Passover a month later (Nu. ix 10). The possibility that this might be impracticable owing to the length of the journey never enters the lawgiver's mind,—still less the idea that a state of things might exist in which Israelites were permanently resident abroad!

we cannot say that Josiah and his advisers objected either to local cairn altars or to local horned altars. The fact is that the system of worship he combatted was steeped in polytheism, idolatry and immorality, and questions of the legality of different forms of altars or of numerous places of worship lie entirely outside the scope of the materials we have. When, for instance, Jeremiah says "according to the number of thy cities were thy gods, Judah, and according to the number of the streets of Jerusalem did ye set (שמתם) altars to burn incense to the baal" (Jer. xi 13), we realise that he has in mind religious phenomena which were of a very different order of importance from any question as to the form or number of altars. At the same time we learn from the verb used in this very passage that these altars were not of the cairn type, and from another oracle of the same prophet (xvii 1 f.) that, as we should have expected, they were horned altars.

Josiah's reformation was a failure. Not merely is it clear that all the old abuses revived: we actually learn from the pages of Jeremiah (xliv) that in the opinion of many idolaters the misfortunes of the Jewish state were due to the cessation of heathen worship. Thus there were two great currents of politico-religious thought, that which regarded the pure worship of the God of Israel as the ideal in the sphere of religion and looked to His protection in the realm of politics, and that which held exactly the opposite view.

Then came the exile and the people were winnowed in a foreign land. The system of local sacrifices necessarily ceased altogether; a new atmosphere was created, and a new background for the whole cultic organisation. We are imperfectly informed as to the machinery of worship in the period of captivity. It is possible that the synagogue—or something like it—was then invented. In any case the old practices had ceased perforce: and the returning exiles came back accustomed to entirely new practices and to the ideas they had engendered. Read in the light of those ideas and the prophetic denunciations of high places, the laws of sacrifice appeared to bear a meaning which our historical enquiry has shown not to have been original. Accordingly a construction was adopted which had the merits of corresponding to the actual needs of the age and also ruling out all possibility of syncretism through any form of local sacrifice. It constituted a great advance in the process of divorcing the religion from sacrifices and fitted it to become less dependent on accidents of

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place and circumstance. We are not concerned to trace the further progress in that direction. Our task is done when we have shown the original meaning of the various enactments and traced their history to the adoption of that post-exilic view which prevailed till the rise of the modern critical schools.

II. Memorial Altars.

The literary material introduces us to some altars which were not intended for actual sacrificial use. The purpose of such structures seems to have varied, and it is often impossible on our present materials to determine exactly whether an altar was built for sacrifice or for some other purpose.

The classical instance of a memorial altar is that erected by the trans-Jordanic Israelites in Josh. xxii 10—34. In the view of the writer of that passage the type of the altar was distinctively Israelite, so much so that its existence would be conclusive proof of the right of the people in whose territory it was situated to be regarded as true worshippers of the Lord (24—28)¹. It was built not for worship but for evidential purposes. As already pointed out, it can only have been a horned altar.

A second example of a memorial altar is to be found in Ex. xvii 14—16. Here the object seems to have been to make a solemn asseveration relating to future acts. The idea appears to be similar to that found in the class of covenants which were concluded with a token (אֶתֶּן)².

There are a number of other passages in which our information is so scanty that we can only say that the altars they contemplate may or may not have been simply for non-sacrificial purposes. Such are Gen. xii 7 (but not 8, where the calling on the name of the Lord involves worship, cf. xiii 4), xij 18, xxxiii 20 (if the text is correct), xxxv 1—7, 1 Sam. xiv 35 (which may or may not refer to the stone of 33).

Archaeology also provides us with examples of altars that were not made for use³: but in view of the scantiness of the Biblical material consideration of these seems unnecessary.

III. Altars of Incense.

1. The altar of incense in Solomon's temple. The altar of incense played a special part in the ritual of the sanctuary. It was used

1) It is obvious that this has a bearing on the date of the passage.

2) See as to these H. M. Wiener, *Studies in Biblical Law*, 1904, Ch. II.

3) See e. g. G. Dalman, *Petra*, 1908, 198 f.

only to afford a protective cloud of incense smoke at certain periods. Its early origin has been denied by an exegesis that failed to understand either Lev. xvi or Ezek. xl—xlviii or Neh. ix—xi; and it will therefore be necessary to deal to some extent with the Day of Atonement and its ritual in order to elucidate the problems it offers.

In connection with Solomon's temple we find mentions of an altar of incense in 1 K. vi 20—22 and vii 48. The last-named passage is perfectly clear. "And Solomon made all the vessels that were in the house of the Lord: the golden altar, and the table etc." So the M. T. In the LXX (3 K. vii 34) we find variants, but the material words as to the golden altar appear in B and Lagarde's Lucian. There is therefore no sufficient textual reason for doubting that according to this passage Solomon's temple contained an altar of incense.

In 1 K. vi 20—22 the textual difficulties are greater. At the end of 20 we read in the Hebrew "and he covered an altar with cedar", and at the end of 22 "and all the altar that belonged to the oracle he covered with gold". The first clause is obviously corrupt: the second was added to the septuagintal text by Origen under an asterisk. But B and Lagarde's Lucian both read in 20: "and he made an altar in front of the oracle and covered it with gold". It seems probable that those commentators are right who hold that the original was "and he made an altar of cedar in front of the oracle and covered it with gold".

Thus on textual grounds there is no reason to doubt that Solomon's temple contained an altar of incense.

2. Ezek. xli 21 f. There has been a great deal of discussion as to whether this difficult and corrupt passage refers to the altar of incense or the table of shew bread. The most recent commentary of importance prints the first half of 21 with the pregnant note "unübersetzbar"¹. The rest of the passage appears to describe a table 3 cubits high by 2 by 2, perhaps with horns, made entirely of wood. If the reference is to a table of shew bread it appears to differ from the Pentateuchal table in dimensions, and possibly in the possession of horns. The latter was 2 cubits by 1 by 1. The non-mention of gold does not appear to be important, for it is quite conceivable that Ezekiel is passing over a matter that does not seem to him material to his purpose.

It is said on the one side that this passage means that there was a table which looked like

1) J. Herrmann, *Ezechiel*, 1924, 260.

an altar, on the other that an altar could be called a table. Eerdmans¹ urges that it is impossible to think of a table because a table has feet while here the prophet speaks of wooden walls. The table of shew bread had feet, as is shown by the arch of Titus and Ex. xxv 26. The height of Ezekiel's table is 3 cubits or about 1½ metres high which is most inconvenient for a table, as against two thirds² that height in the case of the tabernacle table. Moreover Eerdmans contends that it is unsuitable for a table that the height should be greater than the length or breadth as is the case here.

This reasoning is forcible, but not conclusive. The text is not certain, and, even if it were, it does not give us the whole of the prophet's thought or the reasons that accounted for his proposed change. He certainly can not have intended the surface of an altar to be of wood. Therefore, if he is really thinking of an altar, he is passing over at any rate the covering of gold or some other metal, or the hearth, which would of necessity have to be placed over the wood. We do not know any facts about either altar of incense or table of shew bread which may have led Ezekiel to think a change desirable. It is conceivable that in his desire for symmetry he wished for a table looking like an altar to balance the altar of incense. Or experience in the case of either implement may have revealed some practice which he regarded as undesirable and proposed to remedy by a change of design or measurements. To me it seems best not to rely on the passage either way, for our knowledge is insufficient. Whichever of the two articles Ezekiel meant, he is not excluding the other, for his vision is not intended to exhaust the details of the temple, its furniture or its ritual, but only to deal with what he desires to modify. That will appear more fully hereafter³: at this stage we need only notice that the utensils of Ex. xxv 29, if the reference be to the table, are not mentioned, so that it is impossible to regard his allusion as covering the whole of the contents of the sanctuary.

3. The Altar of incense and the Day of Atonement in the Pentateuch.

In order to appreciate the exact position of the altar of incense and the Day of Atonement in the cult we must begin by taking the data of the Pentateuch exactly as they stand and endeavouring to ascertain their meaning without any preconceptions. If they present us with a clear-cut, selfconsistent theory, we can

then proceed to ask whether there are any external grounds for doubting the historical character of their representation. On the other hand, if we find that the data are not self-consistent, we shall have to consider whether any, and, if so, what, elements appear to be historical.

In Ex. xxx 1—10 we find a command to make an altar of incense. Its dimensions were to be 1 cubit long by 1 broad by 2 high. It was to have horns and other features which need not be particularised. The material was to be shittim wood overlaid with gold. It was to stand in front of the veil over the ark. It was to be exclusively for the burning of incense. This was to be burnt by Aaron every morning and evening when attending to the lamps: and atonement was to be made on its horns once a year. Its general purpose is clear. It was to provide a protective cloud of incense smoke while necessary work was being done in the sanctuary.

In the ritual of the sin offering we find that in the case of atonement being made for the anointed priest or the whole congregation some of the blood of the offering was to be put "upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense before the Lord which is in the tent of meeting" (Lev. iv 7), or "upon the horns of the altar which is before the Lord, that is in the tent of meeting" (18). The phraseology is noteworthy. This altar is "before the Lord".

In Lev. x 1 f. we read that Nadab and Abihu burnt strange fire "before the Lord" in censers with fatal results. As the priests were staying at the door of the tent of meeting, this apparently means in the tent. After their death the law of Lev. xvi is given, laying down that Aaron was only to go into the most holy place on one day in the year, and then with special precautions "that he die not".

It is in that chapter that we find references to an altar which in the light alike of the language of the chapter itself and of the passages just cited from Ex. xxx and Lev. iv appears clearly to be the altar of incense. In this connection the purpose of the burning of the incense must be borne in mind: it protected the priest when otherwise the proximity of the holy things might destroy him. In order that he might perform his ministry in the most holy place he would require its protection in one form or another both (a) while within the dwelling but without the veil, and also (b) while within the veil. In the theory of the Pentateuch the altar of incense could and would afford the necessary smoke during (a), but not during (b): and accordingly, in this latter case the use of a

1) B. D. Eerdmans, Das Buch Leviticus, 1912, 30.

2) Eerdmans by an oversight makes it half.

3) See below 25—28.

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censer was the only method to which the priest could have recourse.

In the light of this let us examine the ritual of Lev. xvi. Aaron is to dress himself appropriately and provide himself with a bullock for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering for himself, and two kids for a sin offering and one ram for a burnt offering for the people. After certain transactions outside the tabernacle which do not affect the question under consideration, we read the following: "12. And he shall take a censer full of coals of fire from off the altar [from before the Lord]¹ and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small and bring it within the veil. 13. And he shall put the incense on the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of the incense may cover the covering that is upon the testimony, that he die not". Now it is beyond dispute that what is here contemplated is a bringing within the veil and subsequent acts that will protect him during the transactions there. But how is he to pass safely through the tent of meeting to the veil? It is perfectly clear that if we are to suppose with the Vulgate text, which seems to be correct, that he took the coals from the altar of burnt offering outside, he would have no protection whatever during his passage through the tent of meeting, unless the altar of incense was burning in accordance with Ex. xxx. It follows that the existence of the altar of incense is here assumed as a matter of course. It is regarded as fulfilling its appropriate function of protecting the priest while he is within the tent².

To return to the priest. Once within the veil and protected by the smoke from his censer, he performs certain sprinklings (14). A similar ritual is observed in regard to the blood of the people's goat (15). He then atones for the holy place and the tent of meeting (16). No man is to be in the tent when he goes to atone in the holy place till he comes out (17) "And he shall go out unto the altar that is before the Lord, and make atonement for it; and shall take of the blood of the bullock and of the blood of the goat and put it upon the horns of the altar round about" (18). Here the altar can only be the altar of incense for (a)

the priest comes to it on leaving the holy place, not on leaving the tent; (b) it is expressly called "the altar that is before the Lord" (הַמִּזְבֵּחַ אֲשֶׁר לִפְנֵי יְהוָה); and (c) Ex. xxx 10 so states.

The further transactions do not concern our present enquiry. We have found a ritual which is perfectly intelligible and self-consistent and refers to the golden altar. There is no internal reason whatever for doubting it.

Thus far, then, the Biblical evidence is all on one side¹. It contains a ritual attributed to Moses that expressly refers to the altar of burnt offering, and it shows us such an altar in Solomon's temple.

4. The Evidence of Ezek. xl—xlviii.

It is said however that Ezek. xl—xlviii excludes the existence of the Day of Atonement. This argument we must now consider.

It cannot be doubted that there is an ideal element in this great vision which stands in no relation to practical possibilities; see for instance the temple river (xlvii) and the division of the land (xlviii). We must therefore be on our guard against taking it as a whole too literally. It is to be regarded as partly symbolical.

But when allowance has been made for this we find that there are other characteristics which can be clearly traced. The vision is founded on two main ideas. Owing to changed circumstances there are a number of matters which require legal regulation. Some had never been regulated at all and are the results of new conditions. In the case of others, new conditions are responsible for a state of affairs which makes the old regulations inapplicable. The second great conception is that there should be a general tightening up of the holiness of the principal institutions with which the prophet deals. And here he lays his finger on a number of points in which the old institutions had in actual working during the course of centuries displayed weaknesses. As a result of this he does not aim either at covering the entire field of law or at superseding any existing institution except to the extent to which it appeared to him that reform or amendment of some kind was desirable.

Let us take one or two illustrations of these principles before dealing with the precise matters with which we are primarily concerned here.

1) K. 69 and the Vulgate omit the words "from before the Lord". The language of the Hebrew מִלִּפְנֵי "from before" instead of אֲשֶׁר לִפְנֵי "which is before" suggests that they are a gloss.

2) If the Massoretic reading be adopted, the altar in question is the altar of incense, for we see from Lev. iv 7, 18 that this altar, which stood in front of the veil (Ex. xxx 6), is the altar before the Lord. But in view of Jerome's reading this point should not be pressed.

1) Amos ix 1 also appears to refer to an altar of incense. The Lord is seen standing on an altar. That will have been within His dwelling, a temple, not on an altar of burnt offering outside, and this conclusion is confirmed by the reference to the capitals which are to be smitten.

There had grown up a system of royal offerings which were not regulated by any existing law. We read of these in 2 K. xvi 15. They were additional to the national offerings. Now Ezekiel, who here substitutes a 'prince' in the future for the king of the past, proceeds to regulate these offerings of the "prince" on a number of different occasions (e. g. xlv 4 etc.). This is legislation to fit the results of new conditions.

It has been supposed that in such passages he is referring to the national offerings, but this is not correct. He deals with these too in a manner that shows how he fills lacunae in the existing law. The Pentateuch assigns no clear revenues for the national offerings. Ezekiel declares that they are to be provided by the prince (xlv 17) out of resources he has just assigned to him for this purpose (13—16). Thus he is putting forward plans for dealing with new institutions and with matters that under the Pentateuchal legislation were *casus omissi*, and in doing so he recognises the existence of that legislation and its continued applicability where no specific modification is introduced.

Let us take another instance from the ritual of an ordinary individual burnt offering, to which we may confine ourselves for the sake of brevity. Lev. i (cf. 1 Sam. ii 13—17) contemplates a very simple procedure. The sacrificant presents an animal, lays his hand on the head, and subsequently kills it himself to the north of the altar. This will only suit a relatively primitive state of society. With economic development and the growth of refinement and luxury, the system would necessarily prove inadequate. Where a rich and pious worshipper brought a number of animals, he would be unable to kill them all himself; and with the advance of civilisation a man of position would find the work distasteful. The practice cannot have been applied to such sacrifices as those of Solomon (1 K. iii 4, viii 63). We learn from Ezekiel that as a matter of fact aliens were employed in Solomon's temple to perform this task (xlv 7—11)¹. The prophet viewed this as an abuse and accordingly desired to set aside non-Zadokite members of the priestly tribe and assign to them this function as part of their regular duties.

So much for the personnel of the rite: in the sphere of the matériel too he appears to contemplate reforming innovations. After

1) For parallels in the Palestinian customs of today for slaughter by a servant see Kahle in *Palästina-jahrbuch* VIII 155—157.

the prophet has been brought in his vision to the north gate of the inner court, he sees a number of constructions for use in connection with the burnt offering. There is a chamber for washing it, four tables for slaying it (and the sin offering and the guilt offering)¹ and other tables for the instruments of slaying (xl 38-43). The text is corrupt and obscure, and it is not possible to enter into precise details with any degree of certainty, but this much is clear: the prophet contemplates an elaborate apparatus which is entirely unknown to the Pentateuch and apparently to the early days of the temple of Solomon².

Then comes the altar itself. We have already seen that his altar of burnt offering is apparently different in certain respects from Solomon's bronze altar. We know that Ahaz had constructed a new altar and that it was larger than that originally used. The mere volume of work had made some modification of the earlier arrangements imperative: but as usual we cannot tell how far Ezekiel is building on some earlier structure and how far he is innovating³.

With regard to the description of the temple in xl—xlii and xlv 19—24 Professor W. F. Lofthouse appears to me to hit the mark when he writes: "While special attention is given to the entrance-gates, the dimensions of the courts, and the shrine, we are left entirely in the dark as to the height and shape of the structure; and the purpose and construction of several of the buildings within the enclosing walls is quite obscure. With a directness and concentration of purpose as impressive as it is tantalizing, Ezekiel passes by what does not assist his direct object, and he merely notices a structure which he assumes to be as familiar to us as it was to him. The temple proper would appear to be exactly similar to that of Solomon; the arrangement of the courts is entirely different; hence the care with which Ezekiel describes the latter. In the eyes of

1) It is interesting to notice how far we have moved from the original idea of the altar as the place of slaughter. Ezekiel here provides tables to take the place of the primitive altar (see above 1, 4—5).

2) There are not sufficient data for tracing the history of the additions to the temple buildings from Solomon to the exile; see Perrot and Chipiez, *A History of Art in Sardinia and Judaea*, E. T. 1890, i 195 f. Hence we cannot tell how far Ezekiel is modifying practices that may have grown up, and how far he is introducing complete innovations.

3) See above 15—16. For a discussion of the differences between Ezekiel's rites of consecration of the altar and those of Exodus see J. Touzard, *Revue Biblique* N. S. xvi, 1919, 71. (I owe this reference to the kindness of Père Dhorme.)

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Ezekiel, the great requisite is symmetry, the symbol of complete holiness."¹

This general purpose is stated by the prophet with considerable clearness. First the vision is given to him in order to declare what he has seen to the house of Israel (xl 4). Then in xliii 6—9 we find an explanation of certain provisions which rests on the view that past practices of the people were objectionable in view of the place being God's dwelling place. This is followed (10 f.) by two verses of which the text is uncertain. The general sense seems to be that the people were to have an opportunity of considering the plan of the house, and, if they felt ashamed of their past practices, they were to note the details and apply them. Finally the fundamental conception of the entire vision is given in the concluding words which present the name of the city "the Lord is there"² (Ezek. xlviii 35).

It is in the light of this that we should consider his references and his silences. We have already discussed xli 21 f.³

We come now to the Day of Atonement and Ezekiel's general attitude towards the existing holy seasons and other sacred institutions.

In xliv the prophet begins this section of his proposed legislation by attacking the question of the priestly personnel. I have dealt with this elsewhere⁴. Here we need only notice that he is intent on reform for the reasons he himself gives, and deliberately passes by such an institution as the high priesthood, because he desired no modification in the office.

He then deals with the division of the land on very theoretical principles (xlv 1—8). His main ideas are symmetry, holiness and the prevention of such flagrant abuses as the treatment of Naboth by Ahab. This leads him to urge upon the princes — who in this vision correspond to kings of Israel — to do justice (9), and by a natural transition he passes to the thought of just measures (10—12). Association of ideas brings him next to the number of various measures and other dues to be given to the prince as an oblation for sacrificial purposes (13—16). Then comes a very important verse relating to the national offerings. "17. And it shall be the prince's part to give the burnt offerings, and the meal offerings, and the drink offer-

ings, in the feasts (בחגים), and in the new moons, and in the sabbaths, and (so 40 MSS, Versions) in all the appointed seasons of (מועדי) the house of Israel; he shall offer the sin offering and the meal offering, and the burnt offering, and the peace offerings, to make atonement for the house of Israel."¹ In xlv 9 we read again of the "appointed seasons (מועדים)".

We may join with this the first two words of xlv 11 "and in the feasts and in the appointed seasons (ובחגים ובמועדים)". Naturally interpreted these words mean the three pilgrimage festivals and the other sacred seasons, including, of course, the Day of Atonement². Further, when we read of the sin-offering etc. as things well known, we naturally understand those sacrifices bearing the names used by Ezekiel of which we have knowledge in the legislation of the Pentateuch. That, and only that, is the *prima facie* meaning of the expressions used. It is in the highest degree unnatural to put any other construction on the words. If that were all, there would be no reason for doubting that Ezekiel knew the Day.

This verse is however immediately followed by another passage (xlv 18—20), which is sometimes said to prove that Ezekiel enacted two annual days of Atonement — on the first Day of the first and seventh months³ respectively. There is here a complete misunderstanding. The Day of Atonement was a day on which the people celebrated a sabbath of rest and fasted, and the priest made atonement for them from all their sins. The days of Ezekiel are days on which the people do not celebrate a sabbath of rest or fast, and on which the priest does not make atonement for them from all their sins. They are not holy convocations at all. Further, if we compare the two institutions, we find not merely that the people were participants in the one and not in the other, but in addition (a) that the prophet carries this idea a stage further, and (b) that the two institutions are complementary. In the ritual of the Day of Atonement the conception of intention predominates: Ezekiel's days are concerned only with the involuntary. In Lev. xvi 21 we read "and he shall confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions,

1) On the meaning of this verse see above 26.

2) The same holds good of the uses of the word מועד in Hos. ii 13, ix 5, xii 10. Is. i 14. xxxiii 20, Ezek. xxxvi 38 xlv 24. There is not in fact the slightest ground for supposing that in such passages the reference is to anything but the seasons we know.

3) Reading in xlv 20 with the LXX "in the seventh on the first of the month (בשביעי באחד לחודש)" for the Massoretic "on the seventh in the month (בשבעה בחודש)".

1) The Century Bible, Ezekiel, 288; cp. Perrot and Chipiez loc. cit.

2) The Hebrew has מיום but the LXX renders by αὐτῶν ἡμερῶν γεννηται i. e. apparently it read מיום היותה cf. xxxiv 12; and the second word appears to have fallen out of the Hebrew.

3) Above 23—24.

4) Pentateuchal Studies, 1912, 277—283.

even all their sins". The thought is of offences intended, or at any rate known. In Ezek. xlv 20, on the other hand, we read "from a man that erreth and from a simpleton". Here the thought is of offences committed without contemporary or subsequent knowledge and unintentionally. There could be no confession, for there was no knowledge, or — in the case of the simpleton — no comprehension of the nature of the act. The original ritual of the sin-offering in Lev. iv contemplated error, but only error followed by knowledge (14 etc.). Here, as the comparison with the simpleton, the absence of confession and the non-participation of the erring persons abundantly show, we are dealing with error that remains concealed from him who falls into it. In purview, therefore, the days of Ezekiel are complementary to the Day of Leviticus.

Something similar holds good of the rite. Not merely is it accomplished without the participation of the congregation or any confession made on its behalf. It is confined to the outer parts of the sanctuary. This is in strong contrast to the ritual of the Day of Atonement. In the latter the blood is used in the holiest portions, within the veil in the Holy of Holies itself and on the horns of the altar of incense. The priest atones for the holy place and the tent of meeting and the altar: he confesses the sins of the children of Israel and sends them away. It is otherwise on Ezekiel's days. The blood is put on the doorposts of the house¹, on the four corners of the settle of the altar of burnt offering, which stood outside (not even on its horns), and on the posts of the gate of the inner court. There is no entry at all into the house; still less any ritual within it, or any dealing with the sins of the people. Ezekiel treats only of matters which in his view constituted *casus omissi* in the legislation of the Day of Atonement.

Thus when the matter is carefully regarded, we find that there is nothing here that conflicts with the natural view of the meaning of the prophet's references to the sacred seasons. It remains to point out another ground for holding this to be the correct interpretation of his proposal.

We have seen that Ezekiel entirely passes oversins that have been committed intentionally or knowingly, and confines himself to sins committed without contemporaneous or subsequent knowledge, and acts for which their perpetrators were not responsible by reason of defective mental power. In other words, he

1) The text of verse 19 is uncertain.

says nothing about the most serious, the most extensive, and the most urgent side of his subject—wilful sin, but contents himself with treating of matters of relatively minor importance. That is an attitude that no great religious teacher would ever adopt. It can only be explained by the view that he recognised the existence of an institution which covered the ground and held that no change in it was desirable. He however detected certain deficiencies which were not included in the ritual of expiation, and suggested an additional institution which should be devoted to their removal.

For these reasons, then, we must hold that Ezekiel was perfectly familiar with the Day of Atonement as we know it, and regarded it as definitely binding the house of Israel. We have already seen that that Day carries with it the altar of incense.

5. The evidence of Neh. viii and other passages as to the Day of Atonement.

In considering the bearing of Neh. viii ff. on our problem, we must begin with the initial verses. In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, there was an assembly of the people (viii 1 ff.). The place in which the assembly was held is important. It was not at the temple, but in a square outside: and the proceedings at this assembly bore no sacrificial character. By no possibility can it be made probable that they formed part of a regular temple service.

The date is also material. The reading took place on the first day of New Year. The day is holy (viii 9—12, cf. Lev. xxiii 24 f.). It is followed by a reading on the second day (viii 13). Then there are readings on the seven days of tabernacles (viii 18). We hear nothing of any intervening reading.

The first thing to notice is that on the first two days of the month the people are able to devote their time to the readings of the law. According to the Pentateuch only one day of New Year is to be celebrated; but in this passage we appear to find the later custom of two days already in force. This marks a development when contrasted with the Pentateuch.

Next we see that great attention is paid to the Festival of Booths which had not been celebrated in such fashion since the days of Joshua the son of Nun (viii 17). Here again we have a daily reading. But all these readings were necessarily apart from the temple service. No attempt whatever is made to combine the readings with the sacrificial ritual.

When, therefore, we find no mention of the Day of Atonement in this passage, we are not

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at liberty to infer that it was unknown or not celebrated. The true inference is that it was so dominated by the temple service and the expiation of sin that no outside reading of the law could be tacked on to it or felt to be in place on that Day¹. The argument from silence amounts to nothing.

One other passage calls for notice — Jer. xxxvi. In the fourth year Jeremiah instructs Baruch to read to the people in the temple on a fast day (6). In the ninth month of the following year a fast is proclaimed and the command is obeyed (9). It is argued that the Day of Atonement — the tenth day of the seventh month — must necessarily have fallen in this period if it was then an existing institution. Why then does not Baruch carry out his instructions on this Day?

The answer is probably twofold. The Day was sacred to a particular purpose with a fixed liturgy and was not available for such actions as that contemplated by our passage. There was no opening for Baruch. And secondly Jeremiah's object was to reach an audience composed of pilgrims from the country as well as of inhabitants of the capital, and Atonement was never one of the pilgrimage celebrations. Hence it was necessary to have recourse to a day with a more fluid and less absorbing liturgy that attracted visitors from outside to the temple precincts.

Professor Löhr has recently argued that the fast day of Is. lviii was the Day of Atonement². If he is right, this would give us a glimpse of the mode of its observance near the end of the Babylonian exile to which period this chapter belongs³.

6. Altars of incense in archaeology. There was a time when it was claimed that incense was not introduced into the Jewish ritual till a very late date. The discoveries of archaeology have entirely disposed of this⁴.

At Gezer a jar of incense was actually found in a house dating about 1000 B. C. "It was

either still in the hands of the manufacturer, or else preserved for use in the household worship of the domestic teraphim."¹

At Serabit Sir Flinders Petrie found a number of altars of incense. It will be well to quote his excellent description in extenso.

"The plainest and roughest of the altars were Nos. 14 and 15, which were found in the Portico; no. 15 has been merely rough-chipped, no. 14 has been dressed over. The altar no. 13 is well finished, and on the top the surface was burnt for about a quarter of an inch inwards, black outside and discoloured below. This proves that such altars were used for burning; and from the small size, about 5 to 7 in. across, the only substance burnt on them must have been inflammable, such as incense. This altar is a foot high; it was found in the shrine of Sopdu, and is now in the British Museum. The tallest altar of incense was no. 4², which is 22 in. high; there is a cup-hollow on the top, 3½ in. wide and 1 deep. It was found broken in two, in the court. A larger and more elaborate altar was found in the Sacred Cave, no. 3¹. It has been much broken about the top, but it had originally a basin hollow about 9 in. wide and 4 in. deep, which might perhaps have been for libations. Around the narrowest part is a thick roll 4½ in. high. The whole altar was 25 in. high. Two small altars, nos. 1 and 2, were also found in the cave or portico; they are more nearly of the type of vase-altars of the XIIth. dynasty found in Egypt, of which the only published example seems to be the top of the altar in Illahun, vi, 10. A similar but taller altar, no. 12, was found in the shrine of Sopdu; and a rude one of this type, no. 7, was in the Shrine of the Kings, but had been much broken.

"Most of these altars seem to be intended for incense, and in one case there is the mark of burning on the top; they thus agree with what we know of the Jewish system, where a small altar was reserved specially for incense. We have here, then, another instance of Semitic worship, differing from that of Egypt, where incense was always offered on a shovel-shaped censer held in the hand."³

All these altars are of dressed stone, but not one of them is square or horned. The only point of resemblance between any of them and the altars of Exodus is to be found in the roll of the altar numbered 3 in the text and 4

1) I have here taken the Hebrew text as it stands. Some regard it as a compilation from various sources which may refer to different occasions that had nothing to do with one another. In that case, of course, no argument whatever as to the Day of Atonement could be based on the chapter. Hence it is unnecessary for us to consider such theories for the purposes of the present study.

2) *Das Ritual von Lev. xvi.*, 1925, 15.

3) See H. M. Wiener, *The Prophets of Israel in History and Criticism*, 1923, 131—8 for proof of the statement in the text.

4) For other arguments as to the antiquity of the custom of burning incense see B. D. Eerdmans, *Das Buch Leviticus*, 28—30, A. van Hoonacker, *Revue Biblique* xi, 1914, 161—187.

1) R. A. S. Macalister, *The Excavation of Gezer II*, 1912, 425 f.

2) In Sir Flinders Petrie's illustration the Nos. 3 and 4 appear to be transposed.

3) *Researches in Sinai*, 1906, 133 f.

in the illustration, which perhaps corresponds to the η or moulding of Ex. xxx 3, or the η or ledge of xxvii 5.

More interesting even than these is a four-sided block of limestone found at Gezer.

"The top and bottom are respectively about $10\frac{1}{2}$ " and 9" square: the height is 13". There is no inscription or device of any kind on the stone. The most interesting detail is the prolongation upwards of the angles with four knobs, doubtless the 'horns' of the altar. The top is very slightly concave, and would hold about $\frac{1}{8}$ pint of liquid."¹

Professor Macalister thinks the date rather earlier than 600 B. C. This is the only altar so far found in Palestine that has a claim to be regarded as conforming to the true Jewish type².

Horned altars of incense were found at Petra³ as also others that were hornless⁴.

Something should be said of the interesting incense altar discovered at Taanach⁵. It is hollow, of irregular shape, and elaborately ornamented, and was to be placed over the fire. It is thus of an entirely different type from all the altars we have had under consideration; consequently the ornamentation and its symbolism need not be considered, for it has no real bearing on our enquiry. Professor Sellin, the discoverer, was of opinion that it was found in a private house. Père Vincent holds that it dates from about 670 B. C. If this is right, it would fall in the reign of Manasseh, the greatest apostate of all the Jewish kings, who more than any other was held re-

sponsible by the prophetic teaching for the spiritual downfall of the nation (2 K. xxi, Jer. xv 4). If the dating is correct the altar is an example of the religious malpractices of the time such as are attested by Jer. xix 13, xliv, where the burning of incense to the host and queen of heaven is particularly prominent. In any case, whatever the date, the view that this was an altar of the God of Israel seems to me doubtful. In a matter like this no certainty is possible on the facts before us, but the probability appears to be all the other way. We know of no true Israelite altar that in the least resembles this. The whole system of burning the incense by a fire within the utensil is foreign to anything we learn from the Bible, or Mesha, or the Gezer stone. The most characteristic features of every known lawful Israelite altar, the square surface and the four horns, are lacking¹. The ornamentation and irregular shape stand in the strongest contrast to the entire known practice of the people. Père Vincent² lays stress on the fact that the side of the base measures 45 centimetres, which he thinks agrees with Ex. xxx, but I think with Volz³ that this is probably not so. In any case such a coincidence might be due to chance, or to syncretism operating in the worship of some other deity, or simply to fashion or convenience: and it would be too slender a foundation for the conclusion which is sought to be drawn from it even if there were no other considerations to take into account. And when the arguments on the other side are weighed, it appears to be devoid of probative force. What was known to be characteristic was not the size but the pattern (Josh. xxii), and, judged by this standard, the Taanach altar of incense falls out of account in any survey of the Old Testament material⁴.

It is unnecessary to consider other utensils that have been found in Palestine, for no claim is made that they have any bearing on our problem.

Thus the upshot of the whole matter is entirely to disprove the theory of the late date of the introduction of incense into the ritual of Israel and the discovery of one altar — the little Gezer stone — which may possibly have been Jewish. Owing to its small size it cannot have been intended for any form of animal sacrifice either by itself or as part of a larger

1) R. A. S. Macalister, *The Excavation of Gezer* II, 1912, 424. See also *Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly* 1907, 196 f. It there appears that the knobs are $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches high. These knobs and the concave top exclude the possibility that the block was originally a mere building stone and prove its ritual character.

2) On the Shechem altars see the Postscript.

3) G. Dalman, *Petra* 205, 245 f. etc. Such horned altars as those reproduced by Gressmann, *Altorientalische Texte und Bilder*, 1909, II 31 do not here concern us since they belong to a much later age. But the picture of a horned altar on a door-jamb at 'Abdeh (*Revue Biblique* N. S. II, 1905, 88, Gressmann, op. cit. II 32) may represent a Nabataean structure. See also K. Galling, *Der Altar* 66 f. The earliest horned altar known to archaeology appears to be the Gezer stone, and it is uncertain to what influences the later horned altars are to be attributed.

4) Dalman, op. cit. 203, 317. But not all the cases that he cites on p. 83 seem to be certain.

5) The best discussions of this known to me are to be found in Père H. Vincent's *Canaan d'après l'exploration récente*, 1907, 181—7, and P. Volz's *Die Biblischen Altertümer*, 1914, 19 f. Illustrations there and in Sellin, *Tell Ta'annek*; I. Benzinger, *Hebräische Archäologie*, 2nd. Ed. 1907, 273; A. Jeremias, *Das Alte Testament im Lichte des Alten Orients*, 3rd. Ed. 1916, 229 etc.

1) This altar had two horns.

2) Op. cit. 183.

3) Op. cit. 19.

4) As a distinguished archaeologist said to me 'I think it very risky to consider it Israelite, and equally risky to consider it non-Israelite'.

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structure. It can have been used only for incense or drink offering (cp. Gen. xxxv 14, 1 Sam. vii 6). There may have been many customs in private or local worship of which we know nothing. Presumably the burning of incense of the special kind reserved for the religious centre would be unlawful (Ex. xxx 34—8); but other incense might have been used, and it is not possible on any material we have to say that this was prohibited by the Law any more than were local sacrifices. The type of a true Hebrew altar was admittedly distinctive and important: excavation and research and the comparative material from other lands have revealed a number of altars of many different kinds, but only the Nabataean altars show any real resemblance. As matters stand, the balance of probability seems to favour the view that this is Jewish.

Conclusion.

Our investigation has carried us over a large number of points of detail and it may not be amiss briefly to mention some of the main conceptions that emerge.

The sacrificial system of Israel stands in the closest relationship to the contemporary Semitic systems, and this is clearly illustrated by the facts as to altars. Much of what has been supposed to be characteristic is in fact nothing more than a particular adaptation and modification of ideas and practices that were common to the age. The Law invented few, if any, of the sacrificial institutions: but it took existing Semitic institutions and stamped upon them a peculiar impress. So far as we can tell, this process was intended to work out in detail the characteristic conceptions of the religion — the making of a peculiar people, a holy nation, a kingdom of priests.

Study of the Biblical data and the comparative material shows that the views which have enjoyed the greatest currency of recent years are entirely baseless. There are differences in the places of sacrifice in Israel: but these correspond to similar differences in the places of sacrifice among the surrounding peoples: and in every instance they are the results of the plain dictates of necessity or convenience operating in the formation of national customs. As to the theories of composition and date, the less is heard of them the better. In no instance do the plain facts of the case offer any substantial basis for their formation or acceptance, and the sooner scholarship leaves the field of speculation to found itself on solid fact, the better will it be for its work and reputation.

Appendix.

Dr. de Groot's theory of Solomon's altars. A curious theory has recently been put forward by Dr. J. de Groot (*Die Altäre des Salomonischen Tempelhofes*, 1924). He attempts to prove that there were two altars in the court of Solomon's temple. He admits that the writers of Chronicles and Kings considered that there was only one (p. 5), but endeavours to show the existence of two altars from 2 Chr. vi 13, vii 7, 2 K. xii 10 (9), xvi 12 ff., 1 K. viii 64, ix 25 and Ps. lxxxiv 4 supported by Am. iii 14.

In 2 Chr. vi 13 we read that "Solomon had made a laver of bronze and placed it in the midst of the court, five cubits was its length, and five cubits its breadth, and three cubits its height, and he stood on it etc." The dimensions are those of the tabernacle altar (Ex. xxvii 1), and de Groot suggests that in reality they are also the dimensions of Solomon's bronze altar (p. 24 ff.). If that is correct, the Chronicler has taken them from a source and changed altar into laver to permit of giving larger dimensions to the only altar he recognised (2 Chr. iv 1).

It is certainly possible that this is so, though, of course, it is a mere conjecture. Assuming it to be correct, it does not prove the existence of two altars but of one. Solomon's bronze altar will then have been 5 cubits by 5 by 3, and the figures of 2 Chr. iv 1 will be those of the post — exilic altar. Thus, so far, we meet with one altar and one only — the bronze altar, whatever its dimensions may have been.

The next passage, 2 Chr. vii 7, may be considered together with 1 K. viii 64, for both go back to the same original. According to this Solomon consecrated the midst of the court and offered sacrifices there because the altar of bronze was too small. That surely proves that the only structure which could properly be called an altar was the altar of bronze. It is not said that Solomon made or built a second altar. On the contrary he consecrates something which is termed the midst of the court, and it is obvious that neither the original author of the notice nor the persons responsible for the forms in which we have it considered that Solomon made two altars.

We may now take the other passages in Kings in the order in which they come. According to 1 K. ix 25 Solomon offered burnt offerings and peace offerings three times a year on the altar he had built. We have already remarked on the doubtful character of this notice in view of the septuagintal readings. But if it be accepted as strictly historical it disposes of the idea that Solomon was here utilising the second or larger altar assumed by de Groot. 'The altar he had built' is not language that could be applied to the middle of the court (whether or not we assume this to be identical with the famous temple rock). The middle of the court was not an altar, and it certainly had not been built by Solomon, either as an altar or otherwise. It may be that the term 'built' could in the usage of the time designate the making of an altar of whatever material: it certainly cannot be supposed that it was applicable to natural rock in situ.

De Groot then amends the rest of the verse (p. 9) to support his theory. That is merely an admission that there is no ancient authority whatever for any text that recognises two altars.

In 2 K. xii 10 (9) we read that the priest placed a box "by the altar on the right as one entered the house of the Lord". Here, says de Groot, we have an altar standing at the right of the entrance, whereas the proper position for the altar is the midst of the court. Accordingly this is a second altar (pp. 6 f.). But accor-

ding to Greek MSS and the Syro-Hexaplar the correct reading is the mazzebah (הַמִּזְבֵּה)¹, i. e. the Hebrew text has been altered under the influence of Dt. xvi 22. This agrees with the general tendency of the scribes, and we must therefore accept the Greek reading. The Chronicler for the same reason cuts out all reference to the mazzebah (2 Chr. xxiv 8).

The last passage (2 K. xvi 12 ff.) implies clearly that there were only two altars after the erection of the new structure on the Damascene model. There is no hint in the text that there had been any other altar than that of bronze before this was built: and the new division introduced by ver. 15 appears to be due to the fact that now for the first time there were two regular altars instead of one.

Thus the historical books do not contain a single passage that lends the slightest countenance to the view that there were two altars in the court of Solomon's temple: but they invariably suggest that there was only one.

Ps. lxxxiv 4 unquestionably uses the plural 'altars' in connection with the temple. This seems to be merely a poetical usage not to be pressed literally.

As to Am. iii 14 we know that altars and high places abounded in the northern kingdom (see e. g., 1 K. xii 31, xiv 9, Hos. viii 11). That Amos should therefore speak of the altars of Bethel and subsequently of the 'the altar', i. e. the great altar of burnt offering in its principal temple causes no astonishment. If Jerusalem at a later date had as many altars as

streets (Jer. xi 13), the denunciation of a similar state of affairs in Bethel does not justify any conclusions as to the arrangements of its chief house of worship.

For these reasons there is no evidence to support the theory, and it is in fact rebutted by all the facts that have any probative force.

POSTSCRIPT — THE SHECHEM ALTARS.

Since this monograph was written, Professor Sellin has discovered two Israelite house altars at Shechem. They so entirely confirm my results that I have not had to add, alter or withdraw a single word. As I have written above, "Israelite wrought altars whether of sacrifice or of incense were necessarily square and horned and marked by little or no adornment. Details of size, materials, and shape (within the limits indicated) seem to have been largely matters of indifference" (p. 17).

A preliminary account of the new discoveries from Professor Sellin's pen appears with photographs in the Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins Bd. 49, Heft 3, 1926, pp. 232 f. One altar is 60 centimetres high and 36 wide, the other 90 centimetres high. Both are square, horned, and of wrought stone. Both have a moulding (זר), and are otherwise unadorned.

1) See Kittel, Biblia Hebraica ad loc.

viii 20 . . .
xii 7f. . .
xiii 4, 18 . . .
xviii 7 . . .
xxii . . .
xxv 22f. . .
xxvii 9—14 . . .
xxviii 22 . . .
xxxiii 20 . . .
xxxv 1—7 . . .
xxxviii . . .
xxxviii 21f. . .
xlii 16 . . .
xlii 1 . . .

viii 22 . . .
xii 7—14 . . .
xii 14 . . .
xii 21—27 . . .
xvii 14—16 . . .
xviii 12 . . .
xx 23 . . .
xx 24—26 . . .
xxi 14 . . .
xxi 37 . . .
xxii 17, 19 . . .
xxiii 13 . . .
xxiii 14—19 . . .
xxiii 24f. 3 . . .
xxiv 6 . . .
xxv 26, 29 . . .
xxvii 1ff. . .
xxvii 5 . . .
xxviii 42f. . .
xxix 9 . . .
xxx 1—10 . . .
xxx 3 . . .
xxx 34—38 . . .
xxxiv 12—2 . . .

i . . .
iii 17 . . .
iv . . .
iv 7, 18 . . .
vi 2—4 . . .
viii 13 . . .
ix 22 . . .
x 1f. . .
xvi . . .
xvi 21 . . .
xvii 1—9 . . .

vi . . .
vi 19 . . .
ix 1—13 . . .
xxii 41—xx . . .
xxv 1f. . .
xxviii . . .