

factor, which forms the theme of the Synagogue poetry for the Feast of Weeks, or the doctrine of the advent of the Messiah, and the restoration of Israel to the Holy Land, which constitutes the subject of elegies for the Ninth of Ab and the Consolation Sabbaths succeeding it.

It is true that these poetical compositions cannot be considered as representative of universal Rabbinic opinion, in the same measure as the Talmud and the Midrash. To a certain extent they enjoyed only local authority, each country having in addition to the common Prayer Book a liturgical collection of its own. The ritual of the Spanish Jews, for instance, contains but few compositions emanating from the Franco-German School, or even from their earlier models written in Palestine and Babylon. It is distinguished by the simplicity of its diction and its symmetrical form. It is, further, less cumulative of its epithets of the Deity, and is sparing in allusions to the Talmud and Midrash, whilst there is in it but a minimum of Angelology, which forms such a prominent feature in the sacred poetry of other schools, reflecting unmistakably the influence of the Chapters of the Chambers and similar mystical productions.

Such differences, however, vital as they may appear to the metaphysician, affect but slightly the main features of such doctrines as are above referred to and are discussed in the course of these pages. In these the consensus of opinion was maintained