

content of the old song, and it reveals its deeper meaning. Not only did circumcision and the Sabbath as ordinances of distinction from other peoples gain more prominence, but also within the hedge thus formed there was real intellectual life, bringing a consciousness that they possessed something which was of more than national significance, and their vision of the real sacrifice as the contrite heart and not the mere material offering. It was a time of heart-searching, and many were led to recognize that the verdict of history had confirmed the message of the earlier prophets (Zech. 1/6). The situation was complex and many-sided. Some may have even desired to build a temple in Babylonia, others may have thought that the religion could live without a temple. The leaders were thrown back upon the earlier literature, "the book" became more important, and in that there was the germ of later Rabbinism; the need for study and teaching was felt, and this was destined to create schools that would mean more to Judaism and the world than any temple. "The Law" came to be something more minute and comprehensive, but, as we may see from the later literature, it could not confine the fulness and variety of life or crush the universal tendencies inherent in the prophetic faith. Out of the ruins of a nation there came a Church, but that Jewish Church inherits the rich revelation and noble influence of the Hebrew religion. To speak of it as "a sect" is not fair; the life is too varied and catholic to be summed up in that reproachful word; it contained all the elements of the "high," "low," and "broad" sections. It is true that we sometimes find these elements at war with each other, but we have received the rich result of the whole movement.

Ezekiel works in the midst of the exiles; he declares that the destruction of Jerusalem must be completed, and when that prediction is fulfilled he sets himself to face the problems of the future. He is a striking figure, a prophet judging the history of his people by absolute standards, a visionary with strange ecstatic experiences, a poet with great descriptive power, a pastor realizing the dreadful responsibility of his office, a priest seeking to build up a holy nation. He has been called "the father of Judaism," and "the creator of eschato-