

*communion with God.* It is not living unselfishly but living to God. It is not in the first place a life of sacrifice (for martyrdom can be, and now often is, quite unholy) ; it is a life of communion, with such sacrifice as that may entail for the only end that hallows all its means.

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### THE HEBREW FEASTS IN LEVITICUS XXIII.

ONE of the main points in pentateuchal criticism is the festal calendar appearing in Exodus xxiii. 10-19, xxxiv. 17-26, Leviticus xxiii., Numbers xxviii. and xxix., and Deuteronomy xvi. A comparison between these lists seems exceedingly instructive for showing the date of the various "strata" which the dominating school of higher criticism assumes. I have dealt with some of these feasts, the Days of the Unleavened Bread, the Passover and the Day of Atonement in the EXPOSITOR for November, 1909, and June, 1911, and tried to explain the original character of these feasts.

The question remains to be discussed whether the calendar of feasts in the so-called Priestly Code may be assigned to the pre-exilic period or not. It is generally accepted that the Priestly Code is of no value for our knowledge of the real nature of the Hebrew feasts, as it transformed the feasts from nature-festivals into festivals of religious history.

Those who assume that the ancestors of the Israelites were nomads are compelled to suppose that the three annual feasts, the days of the unleavened bread, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles were adopted by the Israelites from the Canaanite population of Palestine, for it is beyond doubt that these feasts are agricultural festivals. If we must admit that this Nomad-theory is not supported by

the old Israelitic tradition (cf. the *EXPOSITOR* for August and October, 1908) it becomes probable that these feasts may have been known to the Hebrews in a more remote period. If the Book of the Covenant, therefore, may be assigned to the Mosaic period (cf. *EXPOSITOR* for August, 1909) the question arises whether it is possible to assume also an older date for the list of feasts in the "Priestly Code."

The common theory is that the Pentateuch clearly shows the development of religious worship, as far as the feasts are concerned, by the fact that these feasts were modified by the exilic and post-exilic scholars. Being agricultural feasts they are supposed originally not to have been celebrated at a fixed date. The time at which the festivals would begin depended upon the ripening of the crops in the various parts of the country. In the oldest law, Exodus xxiii. 10-19, it is only said that every male in Israel shall appear before Jahve three times a year, at the feast of the unleavened bread, at the feast of the harvest, and the feast of the ingathering. But it is not said at which date these feasts are to be celebrated.

In Deuteronomy xvi. no fixed dates are mentioned. The Passover is to be kept in the month of Abib. Pentecost shall be celebrated seven weeks after the opening of the harvest, but for the feast of tabernacles no month or other date is mentioned.

In the original form of Leviticus xxiii. that is assigned to P<sup>1</sup> and is supposed to have been written in the Exile, the feasts were fixed in a general way, the reaping of the crops being the fixed time for the feast of the unleavened bread and the seventh month being the term for the feast of tabernacles.

The later insertions in Leviticus xxiii., however, that are ascribed to P<sup>2</sup> and are supposed to have been written in the post-exilic period, fixed the feast not only by a month

but by month and day, and so are supposed to have deprived them of the last surviving remnant of their original nature. P<sup>a</sup> is said to have transformed the agricultural feasts that were celebrated at home into festivals that were celebrated by feast-offerings in the temple. The fixed date took away the last remnant of the old feasts. The idea of the Sabbath, which was so important to P as a day of rest, was applied to other feasts, and so strict Sabbath rest came more and more to be an essential part of all festivals (*Encycl. Bibl.* p. 1515). The theological system of P would have petrified the feasts. The minute elaboration of the ritual of the feasts was the chief point for P and his pupils. Numbers xxviii. 29, therefore, is regarded as the latest list of feasts that is to be assigned to a priestly writer of the fifth or fourth century before Christ.

It is easily understood that this theory has met with the approval of numerous scholars. It seems to be reasonable to accept the view that an agricultural feast cannot be celebrated at a fixed date, as it must be dependent on the ripening of the crops. It seems also improbable that the offerings in the temple will have been the main point in the celebration of agricultural feasts, which of course kept people at home instead of allowing them to go to a remote sanctuary. The line of development that is traced seems to be in perfect harmony with the evolution of religious thought generally.

If, however, we enter into a careful examination of the details, we find that things are not so easy as they seem to be, and especially the argument of the fixed date and the strict Sabbath rest may be used quite as well in favour of a theory diametrically opposed to that of Wellhausen.

Of the four festal calendars which the Pentateuch contains, Exodus xxiii. 14 ff. and xxxiv. 17-26 were dealt with in the EXPOSITOR for September, 1909. There it was

argued that Exodus xxiii. is part of the old words of the Covenant alluded to in Exodus xxiv. 3 f., and the grounds were given for the theory that Exodus xxxiv. 17-26 is a post-exilic correction of the old Mosaic law Exodus xxiii. 14 ff.

For our present purpose it is important to examine the calendars in Leviticus xxiii. and Numbers xxviii. and xxix.

It is obvious that the present form of Leviticus xxiii. contains some insertions of a later date. It follows from verse 38, the colophon of the calendar (these are all the set feasts . . . besides the Sabbaths), that it did not mention the Sabbath. Verse 3, therefore, must be a later insertion (Driver, *Lev.*, p. 93). The chapter contains two ordinances about the feast of tabernacles (vers. 33-38 and vers. 39-43) which cannot have the same origin.

The theory of the school of Wellhausen is that vers. 9-20, 22, 39-43 are to be assigned to the Law of Holiness. Some scholars suppose that the vers. 13 and 14 and parts of vers. 39 and 41 are a later insertion (Driver, *Lev.*, p. 94); but if we except these verses we are supposed to possess here a festal calendar, in which the old connexion between the life of the people and the operations of agriculture are still felt. In the vers. 4-8, 21, 23-38, however, we are supposed to find the calendar of the Priestly Code, in which the laws of the successive feasts are all formed on the same type. Mention is made of a holy religious meeting, the abstinence from servile work, and usually of the offering made by fire to Jahve. This calendar is said to show the systematisation of worship and observance which was carried on in priestly circles (Driver, *l.c.* p. 93).

In connexion with this theory we must draw attention to the following facts.

1. In the so-called Law of Holiness the fundamental part of the text belongs to this legislation. Occasionally

some verses are said to have been added by a later priestly writer, but there is no doubt about the fact that in Leviticus xvii.-xxii. the fundamental part is assigned to H (the author of the Law of Holiness). In Leviticus xxiii., however, it is impossible to apply this theory. Here the fundamental part of the chapter is contained in the legislation of which ver. 38 is the colophon, assigned to the Priestly Code. Ver. 37 says, "These are the set feasts of Jahve, which ye shall proclaim to be 'holy calls,' to offer fire-offerings," etc. The feasts of vers. 4-8, 21, 23-38 are to be celebrated by "holy calls" and fire-offerings and cover the whole year. So there can be no doubt about the fact that the legislation ascribed to the Priestly Code is complete in itself.

But those parts that are assigned to the Law of Holiness obviously depend upon P. For vers. 9-20 and vers. 39-43 are no complete legislation. Ver. 9 f. contains the ordinance about the first sheaf of the harvest that is to be offered to Jahve "on the morrow after the Sabbath." We can only understand it if we connect vers. 9 f. with vers. 4-8, for there it is said that the first and the last day of the feast of the unleavened bread shall be a Sabbath. If we separate vers. 9 f. from vers. 4-8 we do not only not understand the term "on the morrow after the Sabbath," but we also are compelled to assume that the festal calendar of H would not have mentioned the feast of the unleavened bread. The day of the sheaf cannot be identical with this feast. We can hardly believe that H would not have known this feast, for it appears in Exodus xxiii. 14 ff. and is also mentioned in Deuteronomy xvi. This shows that the theory of the school of Wellhausen cannot be right. The legislation assigned to the Priestly Code is to be regarded as the fundamental part of the chapter.

Now it is perfectly true that we cannot assume that vers. 9 ff. is a part of the legislation closed by the colophon

vers. 37 f. The style of vers. 9-21 is different from vers. 4-8, 23-38. In the former verses the animals that must be sacrificed are enumerated (vers. 16 ff.), in the latter it is only stated that a fire-offering is to be presented. Therefore it is probable that vers. 9 ff. are an addition to the legislation assigned to the Priestly Code. But in this case we also must presume that this legislation is older than the addition.

2. The feast of the tabernacles lasted seven days in the pre-exilic period. An eighth day was added to it in the post-exilic time. The eighth day is not mentioned in Deuteronomy. In 1 Kings viii. 66 the people are sent away on the eighth day, so the feast can only have lasted seven days. Nehemiah viii. 18 the eighth day is kept. The school of Wellhausen assumes that the festal calendar of H mentioned a feast of seven days and that the legislation of the Priestly Code knew a feast of eight days. But this conclusion is not to be reached from Leviticus xxiii.

In ver. 34 it is said, "on the fifteenth day of the seventh month is the feast of tabernacles for seven days." Ver. 36 says, "Seven days you shall bring a fire-offering to Jahve; on the eighth day you shall have a 'holy call' and you shall bring a fire offering." Now it is very improbable that a legislator, who aims at a feast of eight days will speak about a feast that is to last seven days. The only possible conclusion from ver. 34 is that the original form of this part of the legislation mentioned a feast of seven days and that the ordinance to keep an eighth day, as is brought in the second part of ver. 36, is to be regarded as a later addition, in order to agree with the post-exilic practice. In the verses assigned to H in the same way a feast of seven days is mentioned that appears to last eight days (ver. 39). We fail to understand why this eighth day is supposed to be a correction by a redactor in ver. 39 but why it should be part of the original text in vers. 34 ff. If we must admit

that vers. 34 ff. also know a feast of seven days, there is no further ground for the thesis that ver. 39 f. must be older than vers. 34 ff. Furthermore it is obvious that in ver. 41, "and ye shall keep it a feast to Jahve seven days in the year, it is a statute for ever in your generations," the ordinance of ver. 39 f. comes to a close. The following words, "Ye shall keep it in the seventh month," belong to the following verse, that contains the ordinance to dwell in tabernacles. This ordinance originally was not connected with vers. 39 f., otherwise the final words of ver. 41, "it is a statute for ever in your generations," would not separate these ordinances. But then there is no reason to separate ver. 39 from its introduction, "On the fifteenth day of the seventh month (. . . ye shall keep the feast)." The only ground for assigning these words to a redactor is the theory that H did not give fixed dates for this feast, but this result can only be obtained by an arbitrary cancelling of these words.

The ordinance to dwell in tabernacles can only be explained as an addition to ver. 39 f. So it is much more probable that vers. 39 ff. are also an addition to the so-called Priestly legislation, than that we should have to explain vers. 33 ff. as an addition to ver. 39 f. Both additions deal with different ordinances. Ver. 39 f. says that on the first day of the feast branches of various trees shall be taken, ver. 42 ordains to dwell in tabernacles. None of these verses contains a complete legislation about the feast in the seventh month. We may expect that a festal calendar of H, that enumerated the animals that should be sacrificed, would also have dealt in a more exhaustive way with the feast of the seventh month. It therefore is highly improbable that we may assign vers. 39 ff. to the same source as vers. 9-21, as the school of Wellhausen nevertheless does. We perfectly understand that the priests have written on

the margins of their manuscripts other ordinances about the feast of the tabernacles than were contained in ver. 33 f. (this legislation only intending to enumerate the days on which the "holy call" should be made and fire-offerings should be sacrificed). It is natural that these additions become part of the text. But we do not see how a complete festal calendar, that should be assigned to H, could be derived from Leviticus xxiii.

3. At the feasts mentioned in the fundamental part of this chapter, there shall be *mikra kodesh*. I translated these words in the quotations above by "holy call." This is not the usual translation. This term generally is translated by "holy convocation" or "holy religious meeting." It is supposed that the Israelites in the post-exilic period gathered in holy congregations in the temple. The word 'Edah, congregation, is supposed to be a technical term of the Priestly Code. The "holy religious meeting" of Leviticus xxiii., therefore, is supposed to prove the post-exilic origin of the fundamental part of this chapter.

The Hebrew word *mikra*, from the verb "to call," does not mean "convocation," but is simply "call." In Nehemiah viii. 8 it means "reading" ("and they read in the book . . . so that they understood the reading"), as the law was read aloud to the people (cf. Arabic *Korân*, "what is read"). Now a call may be a convocation if an object is added that expresses this meaning, as, e.g., Numbers x. 2, but in itself the word does not have this sense. The only place that might be quoted in favour of this sense is Isaiah iv. 5, but this place is a *crux*.<sup>1</sup>

Now ver. 2 shows that the usual translation is wrong. "Speak unto the children of Israel the feasts which you shall proclaim (תקראו) *mikra-kodesh*" cannot be trans-

<sup>1</sup> Probably instead of "her assemblies" (מקראיה) should be read "her buildings" (מקרה); cf. Eccles. x. 18.



lated "which you shall proclaim to be holy religious meetings," for the feasts are no meetings, only on some days of the feasts religious meetings are supposed to be held, as on the first and seventh day of the feast of the unleavened bread and on the first day of the feast of tabernacles, but on the other days of these feasts no meetings are held. Furthermore, the term to proclaim a feast to be a meeting is a very improbable one. It is supposed that the purpose of the meetings is to present the fire-offerings unto Jahve. The congregation of the Israelites is thought to have assembled in order to bring these sacrifices as a gift of the holy congregation. We fail to understand how it is these circumstances can be possible to bring fire-offerings to Jahve on every day of the feasts (vers. 8, 36), a meeting only being held on the first and last days of the feasts (vers. 7, 8, 35). Obviously the mikra kodesh has nothing to do with the fire-offering but with the Sabbath-rest, which is in all instances immediately connected with this term (vers. 3, 7, 8, 21, 24 f., 27 f., 35; cf. Exod. xii. 16; Num. xxviii. 18-26, xxix. 1, 7, 12).

If a day is "holy" it is not allowed to do on this day the usual business of every day's life. The history of religions has taught us the real meaning of this word. Everything that is holy is excluded from common life. So it is quite easy to understand that a holy day should be a day of rest. It of course was necessary to announce the holy days, as no clocks and official calendars existed. The verb קָרָא, to call, is always used for this announcement (cf. 1 Kings xxi. 9; Jer. xxxvi. 9; Joel i. 14; ii. 15). In the same way as the arabian Muezzin reminds the Moslem by his call of the time of prayer, so the call "holy" was to be called in order to announce that a "holy" day began. This interpretation is in harmony with the religious practice known unto this day to announce the approach of holy periods by the ringing of bells, etc. The post-exilic origin of Leviticus xxiii. 4-8,

23-38, therefore, cannot be proved by these supposed "religious meetings," which only originated from a misunderstanding of the Hebrew text. The question whether such meetings were really held in the post-exilic period as the school of Wellhausen assumes for our present purpose may be left aside.

4. Scholars assert that the alleged legislation of the Priestly Code had broken the close connexion between the life of the people and the operations of agriculture. But we find that of the feasts lasting seven days only two days are days of rest. So the other days must be days on which it is allowed to do work. This does not imply that the legislation breaks the connexion with the operations of agriculture. We may as well argue that these days are not days of rest as the population uses these days for the ingathering of the harvest.

But perhaps one will refer to the fixed date of this legislation and argue that no harvest-feast can be kept at a fixed date, as it can solely be determined by the ripening of the crops. Here we touch the main point in the argumentation of the school of Wellhausen.

We perfectly understand that this school could refer to this point in the period of Old Testament science, in which the history of religions was a nearly untraced field. We now see that the ingathering of the harvest is all over the world a thing that is closely connected with religious ceremonies and religious views, that determine the way in which the harvest feasts were celebrated.

We know from the Mishna in which way the harvest was opened. The way in which it is done is a curious one. It must be of much older date than the period of the Mishna, as all such ceremonies everywhere go back into remote antiquity. I refer to Mishna, Menakoth x. 2 f. dealing with the sheaf of Leviticus xxiii. 9 f.

"It was usual to bring the sheaf from the fields in the

vicinity of Jerusalem, but if the crops had not ripened, it was brought from other fields. Once it came from Gannoth Serifin, and the loaves (of Pentecost) came from 'En Soker. How was it done? The messengers of the law-court used to go on the day before the Sabbath to the field and to bind together the ears, that lay down on the ground, that they might be cut off easily. The inhabitants of the neighbouring towns assembled there that the sheaf might be cut off in the presence of a great assembly. As soon as it became dark one (of the messengers) said unto them: Did the sun set? They answered: The sun set. They (the messengers) said: Is this a sickle? They (the people) answered: It is a sickle. They (the messengers) said: Is this a basket? They (the people) answered: It is a basket. They (the messengers) said on the Sabbath, he said unto them: Is it Sabbath? They answered: It is Sabbath. They (the messengers) said: Shall I cut off? They answered Cut off. Shall I cut off? Cut off, they said. Each question was asked thrice. Why did they do so? Because the Baithusim used to say that the sheaf should not be cut off on the evening after the Sabbath."

The last sentence shows that the priests of the family of Boethus desired that the harvest should not be opened at night. This certainly is a remarkable custom. It is obvious that it must be done for some religious reason, for we can hardly find a time that is less practical for opening the harvest than the night. This old custom, referred to in the Mishna, shows that the night was essential, for it was necessary that the sun had set and that it had become dark.

We understand this if we remember that the first day of the feast of the unleavened bread is the 15th of Nisan. The sheaf is cut off on the evening following the 15th, that is on the first night after the full moon. Now, we know that all over the world the moon is connected with the sowing, the

ripening, and also with the ingathering. The increasing moon is supposed to promote the growth. All things that exist in cutting off should be done as the moon decreases (J. Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*,<sup>3</sup> p. 677). That moon and growth were connected in Semitic religious thought is proved by the famous Babylonian hymn to the Moon-god Sin (IV. Rawl. 9, a-62, b-2, 4. If thy word blows like a wind in heaven, food and drink prosper. If thy wind is placed on earth the green plants grow. Thy word makes fat the cattle and makes the living beings numerous). In the present time it is still believed by the population of ancient Moab that the moon has a great influence (A. Musil, *Arabia Petraea*, iii. p. 309).

It deserves attention that the harvest festival in the autumn also begins on the 15th. We do not see why the post-exilic scholars should have chosen for both feasts the same day of the month. Religious feasts are not made, but grow; and if they are regulated by certain ordinances, these ordinances conform themselves to the old customs. In 1 Kings viii. 2 (cf. xii. 32) the harvest festival is kept on the 15th of the 7th month. In North Israel this feast was celebrated in the 8th month, but also on the 15th (1 Kings xii. 32 f.). The fruit ripens later in the north than in the southern part of Palestine, but the predilections for the 15th cannot be connected with the fact that the fruit was just at this day ripe enough to be gathered. There must be some other reason, and if we remember the influence of the moon as a part of ancient popular religious belief, we at once see that this belief explains the date of the feasts.

If this observation is justified, these things present themselves to us under a new light. The fixed date proves the connexion of the feasts with the agricultural operations of the people, instead of bearing testimony to a process of petrification, as the school of Wellhausen assumes.

But how is it to be explained in this case that in the festal calendar of Exodus xxiii. and of Deuteronomy xvi. no fixed dates are mentioned? I tried to show in the EXPOSITOR for October, 1910, p. 324 f., that the laws of Leviticus are the legislation of the priests of Jerusalem for the population of Jerusalem and its vicinity. The laws of Leviticus xiii.-xv. imply that the people that is to obey these regulations lives in the neighbourhood of the temple. So we understand that Leviticus xxiii. mentions a fixed date for the feasts. 1 Kings viii. 2 and xii. 32 proves that the harvest festival was kept on the 15th of the 7th month at Jerusalem. The time of the ripening of the fruit is in a certain place every year nearly the same; there is only a difference of a few days if there is any. It is, therefore, not astonishing to find that a local legislation contains fixed dates for the main agricultural feasts. The Book of the Covenant and Deuteronomy, however, are a legislation of a general character. In these laws the whole of Israel is addressed. In Exodus xx. 24 it even is supposed that altars for Jahve will be built in various places. This explains that in the festal calendars of both legislations no fixed date is mentioned for the harvest festival. Deuteronomy mentions the month Abib as that of the feast of the unleavened bread, but it deprives this feast of its original character by combining it with Pesach (cf. EXPOSITOR for Oct., 1910) and by connecting it with the Exodus.

In the festal calendar of Leviticus xxiii. the year begins at the equinox of the spring. This is a common argument for the post-exilic origin of the fundamental part of this chapter. We know (cf. EXPOSITOR for June, 1911, p. 498) that the year began in the spring in the time of Jeremiah. We have no certainty about the date of the shifting of the beginning of the year from the autumn to the spring season, but it cannot be maintained that this took place in the post-

exilic period. The character of the day of atonement proves that this day is connected with the New Year's festival. The celebration of this day must be pre-exilic, otherwise it would not have been kept on the 1st of the 7th month, in the middle of the post-exilic year. This proves that this feast dates back to the time that the year began in the autumn season.

So there is none of the feasts in this chapter that might not be regarded as pre-exilic, and the common theory about the evolution of the festal calendar is not confirmed if we place Leviticus xxiii. in the light of ancient religious ideas. To the fundamental part of the chapter some ordinances were added, which gave a more full description of some of the ceremonies.

The list of sacrifices in Numbers xxviii. and xxix. appears to be a post-exilic commentary to Leviticus xxiii. Numbers xxviii. 26 obviously depends upon Leviticus xxiii. 16, as the same term "a new offering" is used. The double burnt-offering of every day and the celebration of the feast of tabernacles during eight days prove that these chapters refer to the post-exilic period. So we understand the slight difference between the offerings mentioned in Leviticus xxiii. 18 (7 lambs, 1 young bullock and 2 rams) and Numbers xxviii. 27 (7 lambs, 2 young bullocks and 1 ram). This difference supports our theory that the list of feasts in Leviticus xxiii. is to be assigned to the pre-exilic period and is to be regarded as the festal calendar of the priests of the temple in Jerusalem.

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