THE UNITY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. ¹

BY HAROLD H. ROWLEY, M.A., D.D.,

PROFESSOR OF SEMITIC LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES IN THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER.

FOR too long there has been a tendency to split the Bible into separate units, which are then set over against one another in sharp antithesis. The New Testament has been set over against the Old Testament, and not seldom the Old Testament has been regarded as an encumbrance to the Christian faith, which were best got rid of. Within the New Testament the Gospels and Paul have been set over against one another in terms of almost complete contrast, and within the Old Testament the Law and the Prophets have been similarly treated. The thesis of this lecture is that this has been carried too far, and that it has had disastrous consequences for the theological understanding of the Bible. For while our concern is primarily with the Old Testament, which alone figures in the title of the lecture, the interpretation of the New Testament is also involved. ²

It is perhaps necessary to say at the outset what is not meant by the unity of the Old Testament. It is not meant that there is any uniformity of message and outlook throughout the Old Testament, and still less throughout the Bible. It is not meant that the teaching of one part of the Bible has to be read back into another, to make all say the same thing. It is recognized that there is a wide variety of outlook and emphasis amongst the writers of the Bible, and that there are real differences between

¹ A lecture delivered in the John Rylands Library on the 14th of November, 1945.
² I have treated of some aspects of the present subject in 'Hattōrah-weenebeš'îm' = 'The Law and the Prophets', in Melilah, vol. i, pp. 185-191 (University of Manchester Press, 1944), and in some of the chapters of The Re-discovery of the Old Testament.
its various parts. But it is claimed, that the differences are often much exaggerated, and that underlying the differences there is a far greater fundamental unity than is sometimes recognized. Development in Biblical teaching is not to be denied, though it is not to be supposed that mere lapse of time of itself automatically brought development and progress. And in the development of Biblical thought we have not merely a series of moments which plot the course of the development, but rather the unfolding of what was already implicit. R. B. Y. Scott has observed that 'the relation between the Testaments is not simply one of succession and development, but one of relationship and vital continuity', and the same is true of the relation between the parts of each Testament to one another.

The modern critical study of the Old Testament has familiarized us with the view that, broadly speaking, the Law followed the Prophets. This has then yielded the view that the Prophets were the advocates of a purely spiritual religion that had no use for the sacrificial cult, while the creators of the Law were reactionaries who triumphed over the teaching of the Prophets, and fastened the yoke of ceremonial observances firmly upon the Jews. That there were differences of emphasis as between the Law and the Prophets can scarcely be denied, but that they were fundamentally at variance as to the nature of religion is in the highest degree improbable. Yet to some, it may appear that the attitude to the Law and to those who were attached to it

1 The Relevance of the Prophets, 1944, p. 206.
2 Cf., e.g. W. E. Addis, Hebrew Religion to the Establishment of Judaism under Ezra, 1906, p. 297: 'In point of time the prophets preceded the law'.
3 Cf. Kautzsch, in Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible, Extra Volume, 4th imp., 1909, p. 686b: 'No one has any right to depreciate the merit which belongs to the above-named prophets, of having discovered the ideal of true service of God in the worship of Him in spirit and in truth, without any outward ceremonies and performances'.
4 Cf. J. Wellhausen, Prolegomena to the History of Israel, Eng. Tr., 1885, p. 423: 'If the Priestly Code makes the cultus the principal thing, that appears to amount to a systematic decline into the heathenism which the prophets incessantly combated and yet were unable to eradicate'. Similarly, J. A. Bewer, The Literature of the Old Testament in its Historical Development, 1922, p. 267: 'Religion was a matter of the cult. The earlier prophets had violently protested against such a conception of religion and rejected the entire cultic apparatus as contrary to the will of God. But they had not succeeded in the long run.'
revealed in the New Testament is a strong support to the view that it was hard and unspiritual and external. The New Testament exalts the Prophets as those who testified of Christ, and has much to say in condemnation of the formalism of those who were devoted to the Law. But this in no sense involves the view that those who created the Law intended it to be the instrument of a formal and external religion. Still less does it mean that the Prophets, as is sometimes claimed, had no use whatever for the practices of the cultus, and that sacrifice was abolished in their teaching. For while the New Testament understandably made use of the prophetic passages which denounce sacrifice as evidence that animal sacrifice was not essential to acceptable religion, it taught that the necessity for sacrifice was really abolished in the Cross of Christ, rather than in the teaching of the prophets.

It must be admitted that the thesis of the present lecture is one that has been rejected by many distinguished scholars, for whom other scholars everywhere have the profoundest regard, though it is fair to add, that there has always been a minority who have claimed that the prophetic denunciation of sacrifice was relative and not absolute. Of the many writers on the other side who could be cited let five suffice. J. A. Bewer, in writing of Amos, observes that ‘Amos insisted that God’s sole requirement was social justice. God had never required any sacrificial cult from His people at all, only righteousness, nothing

1 Cf. E. Kautzsch, loc. cit., p. 723a: ‘The gulf between the religion of the Prophets and that of the Priests’ Code has been described as one that cannot be bridged. That there is, in fact, a deep gulf between the two, and that this shows itself in P in the shape of a falling away from the pure level reached by the Prophets, are truths that need be denied all the less, seeing that the teaching of Jesus certainly attached itself to the prophets, and would have the Law interpreted only in their sense and spirit.’

else! And in treating of Jeremiah the same writer says:

'Jeremiah was sure that Yahweh had never commanded any
sacrifices, but had required from the fathers nothing but obedience
to the moral law, and that was His sole requirement now' .

E. A. Leslie, after affirming that 'by rhetorical question Amos
implies that sacrifices and offering were not a part of Mosaic
religion', and that what Yahweh wants is justice, social rightous-
ness, observes: 'This emphasis upon God's demand for rightous-
ness, over against and in strict opposition to the whole
Israelite sacrificial system, is arresting in Old testament prophecy
and runs like a golden thread of unique brilliancy through the
warp and woof of Israelite prophetic teaching. It represents
the central and unique prophetic attitude, and it first appears
clearly in the thinking of Amos. It was in this prophetic reaction
to the purpose and practices of the public sacrificial cult that the
distinctive nature of the Israelite prophetic message emerges.'

Leroy Waterman ascribes to Amos the teaching that 'sacrifices
and offerings are useless; their efficacy is a delusion, a false
reliance', and declares that the assumption that Amos had no
idea of raising the question whether God wanted sacrifices
'buries the natural force of all his words on the subject, as well
as the witness of later prophetic writers'.

Again, J. Skinner, in one of the greatest books on the Old Testament written in
this century, says that the prophets taught that 'not only is
sacrifice of no avail as a substitute for righteous conduct, but a
perfect religious relationship is possible without sacrifice at all';
and in treating of Jeremiah he says: 'The error here rebuked
is not simply the practical abuse of sacrificial ritual by men who
sought thus to compound for their moral delinquencies; it is
the notion that Yahweh had ever instituted sacrifice at all. The
whole system, and all laws prescribing or regulating it, are

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1 The Literature of the Old Testament in its Historical Development, 1922,
3 Old Testament Religion in the Light of its Canaanite Background, 1936,
pp. 170 f.
4 Religion Faces the World Crisis, 1943, p. 56.
5 Ibid., p. 68. Cf. also the same writer's article 'The Ethical Clarity of the
6 Prophecy and Religion, 1922, p. 181.
declared to lie outside the revelation on which the national religion of Israel was based. Yet again, Paul Volz, in a work in which the prophetic opposition to sacrifice is frequently stressed, claims, on the basis of Amos v, 25 and Jer. vii, 22f., that Moses demanded only obedience and not sacrifice, and in his hostility to priestly religion suffers himself to write as though only the prophetic religion is represented in the Old Testament! For he says: 'The religion of the Old Testament, prophetic religion, is Word Religion, and hence the Old Testament prophetic religion stands in the sharpest contrast to priestly religion, or Cult Religion. Priestly religion is the religion of sacrifice; the priest brings the gifts of men from below up to the Deity. Prophetic religion is the religion of the word; it brings the voice of God from above down to men.'

The passages to which appeal is made to support these positions are well known. But before we turn to examine them, let us look at some prima facie evidence that Law and Prophets, or Priests and Prophets, are not at such cross purposes as is alleged.

In the first place, recent study has emphasized the place of prophetic groups within the cultus. In a number of passages in the Old Testament priests and prophets are mentioned together, as though they were jointly officials of the cultus. Of British scholars Professor A. R. Johnson, of Cardiff, has given most attention to this aspect of the study of the Israelite prophets, and has recently published a careful monograph on it. The facts he examines are recognized by many recent writers. Thus, R. B. Y. Scott writes of prophets who 'appear to have been directly associated with the various local temples', while Pedersen goes so far as to treat them as regular members of the temple staff. He says: 'We hear constantly of the connection of the Israelite prophets with the cult and the temples. . . . They constituted a stable part of the staff of the

1 Prophecy and Religion, p. 182.
2 Prophetengestalten des Alten Testaments, 1938, p. 56.
3 Ibid., p. 19.
temple, and we learn that in the temple of Jerusalem they were organised under a leader who was responsible for them (Jer. xxix, 26). A Swedish scholar, Haldar, in the latest book devoted to this subject, goes very much farther than Johnson, and reduces all the prophets to members of the priesthood. While this goes beyond the evidence, and ignores the variety of type, function and relation to the priesthood of Israelite prophets, a more cautious scholarship may yet recognize that sharp lines of division are not to be drawn, though differences are to be recognized. Hard lines do not divide the colours of the spectrum, yet the colours are not all to be identified. There were prophets who stood beside the priests as cultic officials, though probably serving the cultus in different ways. Prophets and prophetesses, either singly or in groups, are consulted by kings, or attached to the court, just as the Jerusalem shrine was attached to the court. To suppose that these were all false prophets, and to distinguish them thus from the true prophets, who may then be supposed to have been in fundamental opposition to the cultus as such, is to ignore the evidence. For Isaiah was officially consulted by Hezekiah in precisely the same way, and the great canonical prophets not seldom exercised their ministry in the shrines, and we read of a complaint to the priests of Jerusalem that they do not exercise a proper discipline over Jeremiah. Moreover, the line of division between a true prophet and a false prophet is

1 Israel III-IV, 1940, pp. 116 f.
2 Associations of Cult Prophets among the Ancient Semites, 1945.
3 Cf. R. B. Y. Scott (op. cit., p. 43): 'With the great prophets such a connection with the cultus was exceptional; but that bodies of "official prophets" continued down to the seventh century to be associated with the temple priesthood, is clear from Jer. xxvi, 8, 11, 16'. That some of the canonical prophets were cultic prophets has recently been argued by Humbert. Cf. 'Essai d'analyse de Nahoum 1-2', in Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, xliv, 1926, pp. 266-280; 'Le probleme du livre de Nahoum', in Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses, xii, 1932, pp. 1-15; and Problèmes du livre d'Habacuc, 1944.
4 Cf. Graham and May, Culture and Conscience, 1936, p. 214: 'It has long been customary to speak of them as the "true prophets", in contradistinction to the "false prophets" who functioned within the dominant cultus and devoted their efforts to the sanctioning and the support of the existing order of life. Yet, like all such labels, these are but casual and misleading.'
5 Jer. xxix, 26 f.
not one that can be drawn by any simple rule of thumb. Graham and May would sweep aside altogether the distinction between true and false prophet in the realm of morals and philosophy, and would find it rather in the realm of social philosophy. While I would not subscribe to this, I think there is real penetration in their observation that 'Hebrew prophetism became uniquely influential not only because of its own innate intellectual and moral vigor, but because it took its rise within a society whose people had not learned to spurn the religious cultus as a vehicle of socially valuable ideas and attitudes. It was only through the regenerative and transformative influence which critical prophecy exercised upon this cultus that its own deeper social insight was woven into the fabric of a people's life.'

This is to recognize a difference of attitude towards the cultus on the part of those who expressed what is here called 'critical prophecy', without converting them into such radical opponents of the entire cultus that it would be hard to see why they should be called by a name which they shared with officials of the cultus.

In the second place, the simple antithesis of Priests and Prophets, or priestly religion and prophetic religion, breaks down in the recognition that within the prophetic canon what is treated as the priestly attitude finds expression. Haggai and Zechariah were in no way opposed to the cultus as such, but urged the rebuilding of the Temple, while Malachi rebuked the people for the meanness of the sacrifices they offered. Trito-Isaiah was not the enemy of the cultus, while the book of Ezekiel offers its sketch of the reformed community in terms of a life that centred in the Temple and its worship, so that Ezekiel is frequently spoken of as 'the father of Judaism', i.e. the father of priestly religion. To brush all these aside as irrelevant to the discussion of the genius and spirit of Hebrew prophecy will hardly do. For if Hebrew prophecy is first to be narrowed to mean the canonical prophets, and then narrowed still further to mean a

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1 Cf. what I have written in 'The Nature of Prophecy in the Light of Recent Study', in Harvard Theological Review, xxxviii, 1945, pp. 1-38; especially pp. 16 ff.
3 Ibid., p. 215.
selected few within this group, it would appear that what is con-
venient to a theory is being selected, instead of Hebrew prophecy
being studied without bias. It is, of course, true that the post-
exilic prophets were not of the same stature as the greater pre-
exilic prophets, and it is also true that a difference of emphasis
in their message is apparent. Yet it is still a prophetic emphasis.

Not seldom the exile is regarded as the great watershed, and
the post-exilic prophets are treated as sharing the degenerate
spirit which appears in the Law, and therefore as exponents of
priestly religion rather than prophetic. But this at once suggests
that the antithesis which is being drawn is not between Prophets
and Law, or prophetic and priestly religion, but between the
pre-exilic and the post-exilic periods, in the former of which a
conflict of attitudes between the great canonical prophets on
the one hand and their prophetic and priestly contemporaries
on the other was seen, while in the latter was achieved the triumph
of all that the great canonical prophets opposed, and the complete
disappearance of their witness and attitude.

Such a view leaves too many questions unconsidered and
unanswered. For it is hardly to be contested that the prophetic
books were edited in the post-exilic age. This is certainly true
of some, and probably true of all the books which bear the names
of the great pre-exilic prophets. That there were pre-exilic
collections of oracles of these prophets is highly probable, and
indeed almost certain. So far as Jeremiah is concerned, we have
explicit testimony that a collection of his oracles was prepared
under his own direction,¹ and it is probable that this was one of
the sources drawn on by the compiler of our present book. We
cannot then deny the possibility that other prophets and their
disciples may have similarly prepared collections of their oracles.
Yet the fact that a single oracle is sometimes independently
ascribed to two different prophets, as notably in the case of the
familiar oracle about beating swords into ploughshares, ascribed
to both Isaiah and Micah,² or parts of the little book of Obadiah,
 asncribed also to Jeremiah,³ suggests that we have travelled a long
way from the age of the prophets before the books which bear

¹ Jer. xxxvi, 32. ² Isa. ii, 2-4 and Mic. iv, 1-3.
³ Obad, 1-4 and Jer. xlix, 14-16; Obad. 5 f. and Jer. xlix, 9 f.
their names were compiled. Moreover, other material besides oracular material has been drawn upon, some autobiographical and written in the first person, and some biographical and written in the third person.\textsuperscript{1} This also suggests that our present prophetic books were compiled after the period in which the prophets lived, by writers who drew on a variety of sources. Yet again, there is not a little material in some of the books, and especially in the book of Isaiah, which is certainly of much later origin, and almost certainly of exilic or post-exilic origin. Hence the compilation of the books which bear the names of the pre-exilic prophets must be placed in the exilic or post-exilic age—though it may be repeated that this is not to deny the authenticity of much of the oracular material on which the compilers drew. In any case, it is relevant to observe that the writers who find the sharp antithesis between the pre-exilic prophets and the post-exilic priests have always recognized the post-exilic character of the prophetic books in the form in which we now have them. They have never offered any adequate explanation of their strange assumption that the post-exilic age which rejected the fundamental attitude of the pre-exilic canonical prophets to the cultus was sufficiently interested in their work to collect and edit their oracles.

It might be supposed that whereas the dominant circles of the post-exilic age favoured the priestly and anti-prophetic movement, there might well have been less influential circles which still valued the work of the older prophets and edited their oracles.\textsuperscript{2} But such a supposition would break down at once. For the post-exilic age saw not alone the editing of the prophetic books, but the gathering of these books into collections, and the gradual formation of the prophetic canon of Scripture. It is not, indeed, to be supposed that there was any formal act of canonization of Scripture at this time. Such a formal act is the termination of a long process, and not its initiation. There is first of all the

\textsuperscript{1} Cf. Oesterley and Robinson, \textit{An Introduction to the Books of the Old Testament}, 1934, pp. 221-232.

\textsuperscript{2} E. Kautzsch supposes that survivals of prophetic attitudes are found in post-exilic psalms, and by implication regards them as quite unrelated to the outlook of their own day. He says (\textit{op. cit.}, p. 686b): ‘This Prophetical conception was not so very quickly obliterated even in the post-exilic period, which is mostly thought of as the era of torpid, rigid legalism’.
gradual achievement of a place in the esteem of men, and the winning of the veneration which is acknowledged, and not created, by canonization. The formal act of canonization probably did not take place until towards the end of the first century A.D., when the Rabbis assembled at Jamnia reached agreement as to which books 'defiled the hands'. But we have ample evidence that the general recognition of the Old Testament as Scripture had long preceded this. The formal agreement as to which books constituted Scripture was reached by the leaders of Judaism, just as the general recognition had been given by the adherents of Judaism—of that Judaism which is supposed to have rejected the non-cultic religion for which these pre-exilic prophets are thought to have stood. Why, then, should the oracles of the pre-exilic prophets have been not only edited, but accorded this recognition and esteem by circles to which their supposedly non-cultic religion ought to have been anathema?

Indeed, the position is even worse than this. The Minor Prophets formed a single collection in the Hebrew Canon, and are reckoned not as twelve units out of a canon of thirty-nine units, but as one unit out of a canon of twenty-four units. They were probably inscribed on a single roll, and in any case, since they are reckoned as a unity, they must have been preserved together by people who venerated them as a unity. Yet, within this little collection we find Amos and Hosea and Micah, which are supposed to exemplify the pre-exilic type of religion, purely spiritual and anti-cultic, and also Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi, which are supposed to exemplify the post-exilic type of religion, formal and ritual. In the same way another single collection bears the name of Isaiah, but contains material not only of widely separated dates, but of these supposedly contrasted types. It contains oracles of the eighth-century Isaiah, supposedly anti-priestly and anti-cultic, and oracles of Trito-Isaiah, pro-priestly and pro-cultic. No explanation is offered of the strange supposition that the same circles should cherish these collections, without apparently realizing how inconsistent they were.

Again, the book of Deuteronomy is commonly believed to be the Law-book of Josiah's reform, and to have been compiled in the seventh century and to rest on the teachings of the eighth-
century prophets. I know that this view has been challenged on two sides during the last quarter of a century. On the one hand, Kennett and Hölscher, with some followers, have brought the book of Deuteronomy down to a later date, while on the other hand, Oestreicher and Welch have carried it up to an earlier date, and Professor Robertson has joined them in this. It is unnecessary to discuss this question here, and while I personally still accept the seventh-century date, my personal view is immaterial. For the school that has made almost a dogma of the antithesis of prophetic and priestly religion has accepted, almost without exception, the view that Deuteronomy was prophetic in its inspiration and a seventh-century work. It is quite certain that the book of Deuteronomy emphasizes the moral and social values that appear in the eighth-century prophets, and calls for the same religious purity and unswerving loyalty to Yahweh alone that those prophets demanded. But the law of Deuteronomy knows no hostility to the sacrifices of the cultus. Skinner, in the great book to which I have already referred, claims that the sacrificial element is not prominent, or emphasized, in Deuteronomy, and that the aim of the writers of this book was not to insist on the necessity of sacrifice, but to regulate it. Nevertheless, the sacrificial element is there, as he admits, and a code which aimed at the centralizing of the cultus in a single sanctuary was manifestly not hostile to the cultus as such. If, *ex hypothesi*, the book of Deuteronomy reflects the teaching of the eighth-century prophets, it might be supposed that its authors would have understood those teachings, and that, therefore, its recognition of the legitimate place of a purified and regulated sacrificial cultus, not as the sole expression of religious loyalty, but validated by the expression of the fundamental loyalty of spirit to Yahweh in the reflection of His will in all life, reflects the like recognition by the eighth-century prophets.

1 *Deuteronomy and the Decalogue*, 1920.
3 *Das Deuteronomische Grundgesetz*, 1923.
6 *Prophecy and Religion*, 1922, pp. 183 f.
The simple assumption that the creators of Deuteronomy failed to understand the vital point of the teaching of the prophets on whom they rested is as unsatisfying as the assumption that the post-exilic community rejected the essential thing that these prophets stood for, and yet edited and collected and venerated their oracles, without realizing the crass stupidity of what they were doing.

Nor is it true that the Law was as unconcerned for spiritual religion as is so often supposed. When our Lord was asked which was the first commandment, He chose a word from Deuteronomy, which we all recognize to be profoundly spiritual. 'Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.' It is easy to credit this noble word to the prophets by the recognition that Deuteronomy, though itself a part of the Law, yet reflects the prophetic teaching in the way that has been indicated. But let it not be forgotten that post-exilic Judaism, that is supposed to have been so hard and unspiritual in its foundation and in its practice, singled out this word for unique honour, and to this day there is no word in the Old Testament which Judaism holds in higher esteem. Can it be quite so axiomatic that Judaism was unspiritual and anti-prophetic?

The other word which our Lord culled from the Law to attach to this was taken from the Law of Holiness, which is generally believed to have been embodied in the post-exilic Priestly Code, though itself probably older than the main body of that Code. It runs: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' That is a principle which might well have stood in one of the pre-exilic prophets. Indeed, the whole context in which it stands might well have come from one of the prophets: 'Thou shalt not oppress thy neighbour, nor rob him. The wages of a day-labourer shall not remain with thee all night until the morning. . . . Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgement. Thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the powerful, but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour. . . . Thou shalt not hate thy

1 Deut. vi. 4 f. 2 Lev. xix, 18.
brother in thy heart . . . but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.'

And all rests on a religious motive and inspiration, precisely as the prophetic utterances do. 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. I am the Lord.'

Just as Amos saw that because God is just they who worship Him must reflect His justice or repudiate Him, and Hosea saw that because God is a God of hesed, loyal to His covenant and abounding in goodness towards His people, they who worship Him must be loyal to their covenant with Him and must reflect His spirit in their dealings with one another, and as Isaiah saw that because God is a God of holiness they who worship Him must be purified of their sin and reflect His holiness, so here the Law perceives that the corollary of the worship of God must be the reflection of this high spirit in the life of the people.

Nor should we forget the Psalter. There is a disposition to-day to recognize a large pre-exilic element in this collection, that contrasts greatly with the view of a generation ago, when practically all the psalms were dated in the post-exilic period, and the greater part of them assigned a somewhat crowded home in the Maccabæan age. The tendency to earlier dating is not all gain, indeed, even from the conservative point of view. For not seldom there goes with it a tendency to find the Psalms primitive as well as early, and to read them as embodying the spells of a magic-loving and superstitious people, or as the surviving rituals of the old fertility cult that is condemned as Baalism in the Old Testament. But speaking generally, while to-day there is a reaction from the late dating of the individual psalms that held the field at the beginning of the century, there is still a recognition that the collection of the Psalms into the present Psalter was the work of the post-exilic age, and a recognition that the Psalms were probably used in the worship of the post-exilic Temple, as they have continued to be in the worship of the Synagogue. Hence here, precisely as in the case of the pre-exilic prophets, we have the evidence of post-exilic esteem. The Psalter is, therefore, a monument to the interest of the supposedly unspiritual Judaism in the things of which it sings. And if the individual psalms were written in the post-exilic period, as the

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1 Lev. xix, 13 ff. 2 Lev. xix, 18.
school that set Prophets and Law-givers over against one another believed, the situation would be very much worse. The Psalms have ministered, in Synagogue and Church, to spiritual religion, and they are read most naturally as spiritual compositions, written out of spiritual experience and to minister to such experience. And if that is so, then the post-exilic age that treasured and collected them could not have been dead to spiritual things, and the leaders of Judaism, who used them in the corporate worship, could not have been so unspiritual as they have often appeared in modern works.¹

If now we examine both Prophets and Law in the light of this *prima facie* evidence that they are not wholly at cross purposes, we may get a truer understanding of both. We may find that when the pre-exilic prophets denounced sacrifice, it was not sacrifice as such that they condemned, but the particular sacrifices that their fellows offered, and that they declared them futile because they were invalidated by the spirit of the offerers, and by the life out of which they sprang and to which they led.²

¹ Cf. W. Eichrodt, *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, i, 1933, p. 191: 'Man meint, seine (i.e. Yahweh's) schützende Nähe geniessen, ja an seiner durch den Kult vermittelten Gemeinschaft sich berauschen zu können, ohne sich um die ins praktische Leben eingreifenden Grundgesetze des göttlichen Heerschers zu kümmern'. Also *ibid.*, p. 193: 'Denn wo man die Gottesfurcht im Verkehr von Mensch zu Mensch missachtet und Gott nur in Kult sucht, da macht man ihn zur unpersönlichen magischen Kraftquelle, die man mit geschäftiger Routine und ohne Ehrfurcht behandeln kann, da entzieht man sich selber mit dem Zentrum seiner Persönlichkeit und Existenz, mit seinem Willen, dem Anspruch des göttlichen Herrschers'. This impersonal and magical view of the observances of religion derived in no small degree from the Canaanite fertility cult, which had so largely set its stamp upon the popular religion. Cf. R. B. Y. Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 138: 'There could be no question of a personal and moral relationship between the nature gods and their worshippers, or of any meaning in events beyond their indication that the gods were for the moment pleased, indifferent or angry. This religion required the performance of certain "religious" acts and the observance of certain taboos; the only sin was failure to fulfil the cultic requirements. For the whole apparatus of the cult was essentially a kind of sympathetic magic, which, if correctly performed, would harness the divine forces for the satisfaction of human desires.'

² That the Psalms are spiritual compositions dating from the post-exilic age has been commonly allowed, even where their testimony is discounted in estimating the quality of post-exilic Judaism. Thus Kautzsch suggests that the elements in the Psalter which are thought to be inconsistent with the attitude of the priestly school only found their way into the collection by being given a forced interpretation. See *loc. cit.*, p. 686b.
When Hosea said: 'I desire *hesed* and not sacrifice', was he really making a categorical denial, as is so often supposed, that any sacrifice could have meaning for God? The principle of parallelism, that has long been so well recognized in Hebrew poetry, should make us pause before drawing such a conclusion. For the parallel line runs: 'And the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings.' This should suggest that the first line expresses a comparison, and means that God's demand for *hesed* is more fundamental than the demand for sacrifice. What he asks is not mere sacrifice, sacrifice that is unrelated to the spirit of him who brings it, but an inner quality of spirit without which the sacrifice is meaningless. It is an idiomatic Hebrew way of expressing comparison to set two things in sharp antithesis in this manner, using what Father Lathey has called 'the relative negative'.

C. J. Cadoux draws attention to the same thing, and speaks of 'the use of an unreal negative to emphasize an important affirmative, i.e. the use of "not", when what is really meant is "not only".' These writers cite such New Testament verses as 'Whosoever receiveth me receiveth not me but Him that sent me', 'My teaching is not mine, but His that sent me', and such Old Testament verses as Joseph's word to his brothers: 'It was not you that sent me hither, but God.'

In all of these cases, it is clear that the negative might be translated 'not so much'. Or again, we may note that our Lord is reported to have said: 'If any man cometh unto me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters . . . he cannot be my disciple.' Did He mean this literally? Did He, who called men to love their enemies, really demand that they should hate those most closely bound to them? No one would maintain it, or dream of interpreting this verse save in comparative terms. There is nothing surprising, therefore, in finding the same idiomatic usage in the passage in Hosea.

1 Hos. vi, 6. 2 *Journal of Theological Studies*, xlii, 1941, p. 155. 3 *Expository Times*, lii, 1940-1941, p. 378. I am indebted to Fr. Coleran's paper for reminding me of this article of Dr. Cadoux's, on 'The use of Hyperbole in Scripture'. 4 Mk. ix, 37. 5 Jn. vii, 16. 6 Gen. xlv, 8. 7 Lk. xiv, 26.
THE UNITY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

The force of this contention might be turned by a different, though quite legitimate, rendering of the second line of the verse from Hosea. It might be rendered: ‘I desire hesed and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God without (lit. away from) burnt-offerings’. That this is not the real meaning here can only be rendered probable by the study of the other prophetic passages about sacrifice. For the more natural interpretation, which stands above, is in harmony with the teaching of all the prophets, and with Deuteronomy’s interpretation of the teaching of the prophets.

When Amos says:

‘I hate, I despise your feasts,
And I take no delight in your gatherings.
For though ye offer me burnt-offerings,
Or your meal offerings, I will not accept them,
Nor look at the peace-offerings of your fatlings’

he does not mean us to stop there. He continues:

‘But let justice well up as waters,
And righteousness as a mighty stream.’

Here again we have expressed in absolute terms a contrast which is really more complex. His thought is not that God wants this and not that, but that it is for lack of this that that is meaningless. More vital than the forms of the cultus is the doing of God’s will in life, for it is this that reveals the spirit in which the others are performed. He proceeds:

‘Was it sacrifices and offerings that ye brought me
In the wilderness those forty years,
O house of Israel?’

The commentators suppose that Amos is here denying that any sacrifices were offered in the period of the Wandering, and are somewhat embarrassed to square such a statement with fact. For there is no reason whatever to suppose that Mosaic Yahwism was entirely non-sacrificial, and every reason to accept the tradition, itself older than the time of Amos, that it was sacrificial. Köhler says that the implication of Amos’s question is historically false, but in so far as it is true, it means that sacrifices were

1 Amos v, 21-24.  
2 Amos v, 25.
instituted by man and not God. But of this the passage contains not even a hint. But if Amos's meaning is that sacrifices that are not the organ of the spirit are meaningless and an offence to God, then he was not talking patent nonsense. For then he meant: 'Was it mere sacrifices and offerings, sacrifices and offerings that were an end in themselves and not the expression of your loyalty of spirit, that you offered in the wilderness days?'

This is the view which was taken nearly half a century ago by D. B. Macdonald, and it seems to me to accord excellently with the context and with the character and arrangement of the Hebrew, as well as with the general teaching of Amos. What he demands is that sacrifice shall not be invalidated by the spirit in which it is offered. If God is a God of Justice, then injustice must be an offence to Him, and therefore sin. What is the use, therefore, of offering a sacrifice which ostensibly asks for the forgiveness of sin, if one is inflexibly determined to continue to practise injustice, and therefore to sin? The heart denies what

1 Theologie des Alten Testaments, 1936, p. 170. Cf. Lindblom (Prophetismen i Israel, 1934, p. 432), who declines to discuss whether the implied negative answer was historically right or wrong, but who finds Amos's meaning to be that a sacrificial ritual was completely immaterial to the true religion of Yahweh.

2 'Old Testament Notes. 2. Amos v, 25', in Journal of Biblical Literature, xviii, 1899, pp. 214 f. Macdonald notes the emphatic position of sacrifices and offerings in the Hebrew, and the unusual verb for bring, and argues that the meaning is 'Was it only flesh-sacrifices and meal-offerings that ye brought me in the wilderness?' where the answer expected is: 'We brought more than this; we brought true worship of heart and righteousness'. Oesterley reaches a similar result by another way. He believes the answer expected in the question was an affirmative one and that the meaning is 'Did not your forefathers offer me sacrifices which were acceptable because they were offered in faithfulness and sincerity?' where the implication is 'Why, then, do you offer sacrifices which, on account of your sins and on account of your false ideas about your God Yahweh, are worthless and unacceptable?' (Sacrifices in Ancient Israel, 1937, p. 195.) A. Van Hoonacker had earlier held that the affirmative answer was expected, but found the emphasis of the question on the 'forty years'. Despite their sacrifices they had been doomed to wander for forty years, and excluded from the Promised Land. So now, despite their sacrifices, they would suffer the exile to which vv. 26 f. refer (Les douze petits prophètes, 1908, p. 252).

3 Cf. J. M. P. Smith, The Prophets and their Times, 2nd. ed., revised by W. A. Irwin, 1941, p. 62: 'It was not ritual as such to which he objected, but rather the practice of ritual by people who believed that thereby they set in motion magical forces and insured for themselves well-being and happiness'. Cf. 1st ed., 1925, p. 50.
the sacrifice professes to say to God. Or what is the use of offering a sacrifice which asks of God His communion, if the offerer will have none of that communion? For just as Isaiah perceived in his call that moral impurity cannot live in God's presence, and that when he stood in that presence either he must perish with his sin, or his sin must be taken from him that it alone might perish, so Amos perceived that the man of injustice, who was determined to cling to his way, could not know communion with a God of justice. 'Can two walk together except they be agreed?' he asked. If they go to a different rendezvous they cannot meet, and the only rendezvous where a man can meet with God is marked by justice, where the unjust can only stand when he is cleansed of his injustice. If they walk along different roads they cannot walk together, and the only road along which a man can walk with God is the highway of righteousness. Communion with God is conditioned by the spirit. And hence the sacrifice that asks for communion, but that is not the organ of the spirit, is meaningless and futile, since its cry is repudiated by the heart of the offerer. That does not mean that the sacrifice that is the organ of the spirit is equally futile. The pre-exilic prophets did not discuss that sort of sacrifice, because that was not the sort they witnessed.

So with the similar passages in the other prophets.

'Of what use to me is the multitude of your sacrifices?
Saithe the Lord;
I am sated with burnt-offerings of rams,
And the fat of stalled beasts,
The blood of bullocks and of sheep,
And of he-goats I do not delight in.
When ye come to see my face,
Who hath asked this at your hands?
Trample my courts no more!
Vain is the bringing of meal-offerings;
The smoke of sacrifice an abomination to me...
And when ye spread out your hands,
I will hide mine eyes from you;

1 Amos iii, 3.
2 Cf. R. de Vaux, Initiation Biblique (ed. A. Robert and A. Tricot), 1939, p. 683: 'S'ils (i.e. the prophets) paraissent le (i.e. the cult) condamner absolument, c'est par une manière de paradoxe; ce qu'ils répudient, c'est le formalisme extérieur des gens "bien pensants" et "pratiquants", qui se croient quittes envers la morale et la piété s'ils ont régulièrement accompli les rites'.
Yea, though ye multiply prayer,
I shall not be listening.
Your hands are full of blood.
Wash you! Make you clean!
Put away the evil of your deeds
From before mine eyes!
Cease to do evil!
Learn to do well!
Seek justice!
Restrain the oppressor!
Give justice to the fatherless!
Take up the widow’s cause!"1

There is no more reason to suppose that Isaiah regarded all sacrifice as wrong in itself than to suppose that he regarded prayer as alien to true religion. Both stand in a like condemnation, for he regards both as wrong when offered by men whose hands are full of blood, and who are unwilling in their hearts to turn from their evil ways. To ask for a boon and to be unwilling to receive it is to make the request a mockery, and to insult God. And it was in terms of that empty mockery that Isaiah saw all the religiosity of the worship in his day.

So again when we turn to the great passage in the book of Micah.

'With what shall I come before the Lord,
Or bow before God Most High?
Shall I come before Him with burnt-offerings,
With calves of yester year?
Will He be pleased with thousands of rams,
Or with myriads of rivers of oil?
Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression.
The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?
He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good.
And what does the Lord ask from thee,
Save only to execute justice
To love the quality of hesed,²
And humbly to walk with thy God.' ³

1 Isa. i, 11-17.

² The word hesed is always untranslatable, and nowhere more so than here. It includes the quality of loyalty—here loyalty to one’s fellows—and also the quality of graciousness, as well as of mercy. There is perhaps also the flavour of loyalty to God and to the Covenant, a loyalty which is shown in the reflection of the hesed of God, that richest quality of His Being, which made Him choose Israel in her weakness and worthlessness, not to exploit and crush her, but to lavish on her His mercy and to rescue her from Egypt.

³ Mic. vi, 6-8.
However abundant and costly the sacrifices, they are vain; but they are vain not because they are sacrifices, but because of the lack of justice and *hesed*, and of willingness to walk humbly with God in the way in which alone He delights. Here, as elsewhere, when the prophet says by implication 'Not this, but that', he may legitimately be understood to mean 'Not this alone, for the ultimately essential is that, and that is of profounder significance than this, giving it meaning and validity'.

To this it may be replied that it would seem to carry us too far, since it would involve the conclusion that even human sacrifice could be validated by the spirit. I do not think this is really involved. For the prophetic oracle is commonly compressed, and in what seems to be a single movement of thought it says more than one thing. On the one hand, the prophet is saying that sacrifice is invalid, unless validated by the spirit; and on the other he is saying that an invalid sacrifice is not made valid by being raised to the nth power of magnificence or costliness. Let it be remembered that they who sacrificed their children sacrificed them not, because they did not love them, but because they did. Such a sacrifice was always a sacrifice that hurt, and that hurt intensely. But what the prophet is saying is, that the making of the sacrifice hurt more in the wrong place, does not make it more worth while. That is a movement along the wrong line. It is in the penitence of the spirit, and the submission of the inner personality so that the offering is ultimately the offering of oneself, that the deepest cost must lie and the deepest hurt be found. Long before this prophet's time Israel's leaders had perceived that God does not want human sacrifice, as the story of Genesis xxii shows. And he is not going back on that, but rather saying that his contemporaries who were going back on it, and who were seeking to validate their offerings by their cost rather than by the spirit in which they were brought, were taking a false way.

It is often said that whatever may be the case with the other pre-exilic prophets, it is certain that Jeremiah condemned the whole sacrificial cultus, and would have swept it all away. Certainly of all the prophets he most stresses the inner and spiritual qualities of true and pure religion. He knew that
religion could continue to survive without the Temple and without sacrifices. But there is no reason to suppose that he imagined that it could only flourish when stripped of all its outer forms. Religion must have some forms of expression and of self-transmission, and the destruction of the Temple and of all existing forms would inevitably mean that if it were to live, it would have to create for itself some new forms. What Jeremiah was concerned to say was that the inner life was more vital than the forms in which it expressed itself, and that its forms must be the organ of the expression of that inner life, if they were to have any validity or meaning. And that would be just as true of any new forms that should be created as it was of existing forms. It was not because the existing forms happened to be wrong in themselves that Jeremiah denounced them, but because in his view no forms could be right in themselves. Their rightness or wrongness lay ultimately in what was brought to them, and what was received through them. Even the Covenant was meaningless to Jeremiah so long as it was something formal, with its law inscribed on tables of stone. Its law needed to be inscribed on the living tables of human hearts and personalities, and the Covenant to be something that each man entered into for himself, giving it meaning by his own loyalty of spirit. Broadly speaking, all the prophets said in effect that each generation must enter into the Covenant for itself, and bring to it its own loyalty. The Israel that was merely descended physically from the Israel of Sinai was not thereby in covenant with God, unless it entered for itself into the Covenant by its loyalty of spirit. And Jeremiah merely carried this further in the thought that each individual must make the corporate Covenant his own individual Covenant, if it was to have meaning for him.

His oft-cited words about sacrifices are commonly brought into association with those of Amos.

'I did not speak unto your fathers,
Nor did I command them,
In the day when I brought them forth
From the land of Egypt,
Concerning burnt-offerings and sacrifices.
But this is the word which I commanded them,
Saying, Hearken ye to my voice,
And I will be your God,
And ye shall be my people;  
And walk ye in all the way  
Which I shall command you,  
That it may be well with you."  

Here we have another instance of the characteristic Hebrew way of expressing the relative importance of two things—here the relative importance of sacrifice and obedience. What he means is that the supremely important fact of Sinai was not sacrifice, but the Covenant there established, and that the sacrifice Moses instituted was not mere sacrifice, sacrifice that was an end in itself, but sacrifice that was organically related to the Covenant, and that had no meaning apart from the Covenant. To bring to the prophetic oracles the principles of interpretation that rightly belong to a code of laws, and to forget that they are poetry, and require for their interpretation the penetration that exalted poetry always calls for, is to do them violence. In a legal document such a statement would be taken to mean that Jeremiah was not alone denying the validity of sacrifice, but challenging the historical accuracy of the tradition that Moses established sacrifice in Israel, or that he followed the Divine leading if he did. But this is not a legal document, and need not be so interpreted. For we should not forget that elsewhere Jeremiah says:

'Bethold! I am bringing evil  
Upon this people,  
Even the fruit of their own devices;  
For to My words they have not given ear,  
And My law have they rejected.  
Why then cometh there to Me  
Frankincense from Sheba,  
Or sweet cane from a distant land?  
Your burnt-offerings find no acceptance,  
And your sacrifices are not pleasing to Me.'

The burnt-offerings and sacrifices are not pleasing, not because they are burnt-offerings and sacrifices, but because they are offered by men who do not hearken to the voice of God, and who therefore in their hearts reject His Covenant.

In all of these passages there is no reason to suppose that the prophets condemned the cultus as such, but only the cultus

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1 Jer. vii, 22-23. Pedersen holds it doubtful whether this passage is by Jeremiah. See Israel III-IV, p. 562.

2 Jer. vi, 19 f.
that was regarded as an end in itself. So to treat it was to convert it into an insult to God, and a hollow mockery. And in the eyes of the prophets few things could be more terrible than that.

But it was equally terrible in the eyes of those who framed the Law. Nowhere does the Law teach that God may be mocked with impunity, and nowhere does it encourage men to offer sacrifices with hearts that are indifferent to God's will and way, or with hands that are full of blood. The sacrifices it called for were the sacrifices that were the organ of the spirit, and the expression of the loyalty and devotion of the heart, and not the hollow sacrifices the pre-exilic prophets denounced. It called for sacrifices that were offered in a profoundly humble spirit, the sacrifices of men who hated sin with a deep hatred, and desired to be cleansed of it, and who desired the communion of God that they might be like Him. Nowhere in the Law is there any word to suggest that clean hands and a pure heart were matters of indifference in its eyes. For deliberate and premeditated sin it offered no cleansing any more than the prophets had done. 'The soul that doeth aught with a high hand, whether he be home-born or a stranger, the same blasphemeth the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from among His people.'

It regarded the sincere confession of sin as essential to the expiation. 'It shall be, when he shall be guilty in one of these things, that he shall confess that wherein he hath sinned; and he shall bring his forfeit unto the Lord for his sin which he hath sinned...and the priest shall make atonement for him as concerning his sin.' He was required to make restitution to his neighbour for anything in which he had wronged him in a way that would have commanded the fullest approval of the pre-exilic prophets. 'When a man or woman shall commit any sin that men commit...then shall they confess their sin which they have done; and he shall make restitution for his guilt in full, and add unto it the fifth part thereof, and give it unto him in respect of whom he hath been guilty.'

1 Cf. Pedersen, Israel III-IV, p. 631: 'All this scarcely means that the prophets and those similarly disposed wished that the sacrificial cult should disappear'.
2 Num. xv, 30.
3 Lev. v, 5 f.
4 Num. v, 6 f.
And when we enquire how the sons of Judaism understood the Law, we are confirmed in the view that it called for the sacrifices that were the organ of the spirit. In the book of Proverbs we read in the Revised Version:

‘The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination:
How much more when he bringeth it with a wicked mind.’

The meaning of the second line is ambiguous, and some prefer to follow the Revisers' Margin and read 'when he bringeth it to atone for wickedness'. But in either case, it is clearly recognized that the spiritual state of the offerer is of more importance than his offering. So again we read in the same chapter:

‘To perform righteousness and justice
Is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.’

Here is a word which might well have graced an oracle of one of the pre-exilic prophets. And in the second century B.C. we find Ben Sira uttering similar sentiments:

‘The sacrifice of an unrighteous man is a mockery;
And the obligations of the wicked are not acceptable.
The Most High hath no pleasure in the offerings of the godless;
Nor is pacified for sins by the multitude of sacrifices.’

There is no suggestion here that the mere opus operatum of sacrifice can suffice to win the Divine favour, and that the observance of the Divine will is an irrelevance. Yet this word comes from a writer living far down in the period of Judaism, when a merely external religion is supposed to have held the field. And much later still, in the Talmud we read: ‘Be not like the fools who sin and bring an offering without repenting . . . and know not whether they bring it for the good or the evil. The Holy One, blessed be He, says, They cannot distinguish between good and evil, and they bring an offering before Me! ’

That deliberate sin was heinous, and not to be atoned for by the mere act of sacrifice, was recognized as much in the Mishnah

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1 Prov. xxi, 27. 2 Prov. xxi, 3. Cf. 1 Sam. xv, 22.
3 The rendering here follows in part Box and Oesterley, in Charles’s Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, i, 1913, p. 435. The R.V. has ‘He that sacrificeth of a thing wrongfully gotten, his offering is made in mockery’.
4 Following the Syriac text. The R.V. has ‘And the mockeries of wicked men are not well-pleasing’.
5 Ecclus. xxxiv, 18 f. (xxxi, 21-23).
6 T. B. Berakoth 23a.
as in the Law. We read there: 'If a man say, I will sin and repent, I will sin again and repent, he will be given no chance to repent. If he say, I will sin and the Day of Atonement will clear me, the Day of Atonement will effect no atonement.'

Similarly, in the Tosephta we read: 'Sin-offering and guilt-offering and death and the Day of Atonement all put together do not effect atonement without repentance'.

Or again, in the Midrash Rabbah we find: 'This is so that a man shall not say within himself, I will go and do things ugly and unseemly, and I will bring an ox, on which there is much flesh, and offer it on the altar, and lo! I shall be in favour with Him, and He will receive me as a penitent.'

It is doubtless true that the Law laid stress on unconscious sin, and in this there was peril. It also put far more emphasis on ritual and involuntary uncleanness, than any of the Prophets of the pre-exilic period would have done. Its aim was not to bring moral offences down to the level of ritual offences, but to lift ritual offences to the level of moral offences. 'Be heedful of a light precept as of a weighty one', said Rabbi Judah the Prince, who had so large a hand in the compilation of the Mishnah. He did not mean 'Treat a serious offence with the levity with which you would treat a trivial one', but rather 'Treat a trivial offence with the same seriousness that a major sin would demand'. Any sin was serious, since it was a contravention of the will of God, and to Rabbi Judah the Prince, as to many another of the leaders of Judaism, there were no minor sins.

It must, however, be admitted that however praiseworthy their motive, there was serious peril in the lack of differentiation between the technical and the moral, since it opened the door to the externalism of many of the Pharisees in the New Testament period, revealed in the Gospels. Writing of these Pharisees Klausner says: 'The casuistry and immense theoretical care devoted to every one of the slightest religious ordinances left them open to the misconception that the ceremonial laws were the main principle and the ethical laws only secondary'.

1 Yoma viii, 9.
3 Lev. R. ii, 12.
4 Pirqe Aboth ii, 1.
5 Jesus of Nazareth, E. Tr. by H. Danby, 2nd ed., p. 216.
recognize this is not to condemn Judaism root and branch as unspiritual and external in its conception and foundation. As Klausner again observes: ‘In every system, as time goes on, the secondary comes to be regarded as primary and the primary as secondary; the most exalted idea has associated with it disciples who distort and transform it’. The fence that Judaism erected to protect the spirit became to some of its sons more important than the spirit. Yet was it never so to all its sons. Nor was it created so to be to any. For Judaism was called into being by men of spiritual insight, who cherished the words of the prophets as well as the words of the Law, and who saw in the observances of the Law the organ of the spirit the prophets had demanded.

If, then, the pre-exilic prophets denounced the sacrifices that were not the organ of the spirit, and the Law called for sacrifices that were the organ of the spirit, there is no fundamental conflict between them, though there is a difference of emphasis. For both regarded sacrifice as potent to bless the offerer only when it bore to God his humble and submissive spirit, that it might also bear to him from God the boons he sought. Such a view makes intelligible the collection of the oracles of the pre-exilic prophets in the post-exilic age, and their veneration alongside the Law itself in the Judaism of the post-exilic days. It means that the Law was not created to be the antithesis of all that the Prophets had stood for, but to be the guardian and upholder of it. It also makes intelligible the collection and employment of the Psalms in the worship of the post-exilic community.

For the Psalter, as has been increasingly insisted in recent years, is essentially a cultic collection. It has often been called the ‘Hymn Book of the Second Temple’, but the term is not wholly apt. For while it was used in the Second Temple, it was probably not used in the same free way as a modern Hymn Book. It was more probably a ritual collection, whose poems were recited or sung as a necessary part of particular rites. It is now some years since Mowinckel advanced the view that the Psalter


2 Psalmenstudien I, Auwär und die individuellen Klagepsalmen, 1921.
was a collection of cultic texts, many of them associated with magic, and that their recital was believed to be potent of itself to effect what the worshipper desired. While I should not subscribe to this view in these terms, I think Mowinckel pointed us in the right direction. But I think it is truer to say that particular psalms accompanied particular ritual acts, as both the necessary accompaniment and interpretation of the rite, not because magical potency was attributed to the mere recitation or chanting of the psalm, but in order that the psalm might evoke the appropriate spirit from the worshipper, and so make the rite in a very real sense the organ of his worship.¹ A. C. Welch suggested that Psalm cxiv was a Hymn for the Passover, which may have been chanted in the Temple as the lambs were being slaughtered by the priests, or sung in the home after the actual offering,² and that the penitential psalms may have accompanied sin offerings.³ He says: 'The significance of the cult, according to these hymns, rested, not on the rite per se, but on the character of Him who had commanded it, and on the attitude of those who fulfilled it.'⁴ It is probable that the recitation or chanting of the psalm was regarded as essential to the due performance of the rite, but that beyond this it both interpreted to the worshipper the real significance of the rite, and called forth from him that spirit which would make the rite the vehicle of his spirit. The use of the psalter was intended to guard against that hollowness of spirit against which the pre-exilic prophets had declaimed. If a sin-offering were being offered, I can think of nothing more appropriate or more effective than Psalm li to make the worshipper realize that his offering was of less significance than the spirit in which he brought it, or to call forth from him that spirit of penitence which could make the cry of his offering the genuine cry of his heart, that his offering might be at once the organ of

¹ Cf. what I have written on the Psalms in Religion in Education, xii, 1944-1945, pp. 36-40. I there recognize varieties of spiritual level in the Psalter, and also recognize that many of the psalms may have had their origin in particular experiences, either individual or national. It would follow that though I believe they formed a cultic collection, they would not all equally directly serve the cultic purpose for which they were used.

² Prophet and Priest in Old Israel, 1936, p. 132.

³ Ibid., p. 133.

⁴ Ibid.
his approach to God, and of God’s approach in grace to him. By their profoundly spiritual quality the Psalms carried his spirit into the ritual act, that it might become the organ of his spirit, and so made it sacramental—not in the sense of a mere opus operatum, but in the sense of something in which he and God could meet, he to yield and God to bless, his offering bearing his spirit to God by his mystical identification of himself with it, and bearing the divine gift to him. The high spiritual tone that marks so much of the Psalter, and that makes it still of value to lift the modern worshipper into the presence of God and to make the worship the organ of his spirit, is evidence of spiritual qualities both in the days when the Psalms were written, whether pre-exilic or post-exilic, and in the days when they were collected to be employed in the service of the Judaism that was based on the Law.

When we thus recognize that Law and Prophets were not in irreconcilable conflict, and that the use of the Psalms was designed to make the practices of the Law the organ of the spirit the Prophets called for, we not merely find a real unity within the Old Testament, but we have a basis for the study of the New, to which I can only draw brief attention.

The central fact of the New Testament, in both Gospels and Epistles, is the Cross. The view so long current that the Prophets were against all sacrifice is probably in no small measure responsible for the modern dismissal of the interpretation of the Cross in terms of sacrifice. For if sacrifice was already abolished in the teaching of the pre-exilic prophets as in itself an offence to God, the Cross could hardly be interpreted in such terms.

The New Testament interprets the Cross in many ways indeed. None by itself offers a complete interpretation, and none is to be pressed in any hard and literal fashion. To interpret it in terms of sacrifice is to interpret it in terms of a metaphor, and there are elements of the metaphor which cannot possibly apply. Christ was not sacrificed on an altar in a shrine in accordance

\[1\] Cf. C. G. Montefiore, in Record and Revelation (ed. H. W. Robinson), 1938, p. 439: ‘To the Rabbis, and indeed to all subsequent Judaism up to modern times, the Old Testament was a unity. To us the contrast between the Prophets and the Law is extremely familiar, and indeed is often overworked and exaggerated.’
with a ritual procedure carefully regulated and controlled, nor were the Roman soldiers who crucified Him priests, nor they who handed Him over to death the offerers of this sacrifice to God. A metaphor can only bring into focus certain aspects of the truth, and we must never be the slaves of our metaphors. Yet we are wise if we retain those aspects of the truth which our metaphors express.

Our age has, rightly in my judgement, stressed the thought of the Cross as the revelation of the Divine love. Its Abelardian outlook has made it concentrate on such great texts as ‘God commendeth His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us’,\(^1\) and ‘God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself’.\(^2\) Yet if this thought alone is stressed, a one-sided view of the Cross is obtained. It has to leave out of account much that stands in the New Testament, and will not fit into Biblical Theology as a whole. It is often thought that a sacrificial interpretation of the Cross must necessarily set Christ over against God, and run counter to the clear insight of the texts just cited. It is true that much of the older interpretation brought into the focus of its thought the conception of God as hard and stern and exacting, the embodiment of justice in its severest aspect, confronted by Christ, the patient and gentle, the embodiment of love. That this is an equally one-sided, and even more objectionable, interpretation I should heartily agree. But truth is seldom the circle, with a single focus; it is far more often the ellipse, with two foci. Or, to express it differently, truth lies rather in a tension between two principles than in either alone. And in the teaching of the New Testament, as indeed also of the Old, the love and the justice of God both figure, distinguishable in thought but in action united, not warring with one another but together giving its quality to the single wholeness of the act of God.\(^3\) And if we look at the sacrificial element of the meaning of the Cross in the New Testament in the light of the Old Testament teaching we have found, it becomes less objectionable because it is integrated into a larger unity.

Sacrifice must bear a two-way traffic or none. That, I have maintained, was the view of both Prophets and Law-givers. If

\(^1\) Rom. v, 8.  \(^2\) 2 Cor. v, 19.  \(^3\) Cf. H. Wheeler Robinson, *Redemption and Revelation*, 1942, pp. 249-257.
it is to prove potent to bring to a man the blessing of God, it must be the organ of his approach to God, and of his submission of himself to the will of God. As a mere opus operatum, unrelated to his spirit, it is valueless. This is also the teaching of the New Testament in its sacrificial interpretation of the significance of the Cross. It is only when the Cross becomes the organ of man's surrender of himself to God, only when it bears his spirit to God in submission to His will, that it can become the power of God unto salvation, and the organ of the recreation of his personality. Until it is the organ of his offering of himself, he is numbered with the crucifiers of Christ, rejecting the grace of God, and 'crucifying afresh the Son of God'. The Cross is then as much the organ of his condemnation as were the hollow sacrifices the prophets condemned the organ of the condemnation of the men of their day. This making of the Cross the organ of a man's submission of himself to God is what the New Testament means by faith. For faith is no mere intellectual formulation of belief, though it involves an intellectual element, even if only implicit. But faith is rather a man's identification of himself with Christ, so that His Cross both bears his spirit to God and bears to him from God the renewal of his personality. For faith is not the organ of man's redemption, but only its condition. It is the Cross that is the organ of redemption, and the condition of faith is as necessary as the spirit the prophets called for. They declared futile the sacrifices that offered a plea which the heart rejected. And in the same way the New Testament teaches that the sacrifice of Christ can only be effective when the language of its plea is re-echoed in men's hearts. But then it does become 'the power of God unto salvation'. Thus it is only when it becomes the organ of man's approach to God that it becomes the revelation of God's love to him in power. That is why the two sides of the truth belong essentially together.

The familiar John iii, 16 presents us with a view of the Cross as the expression of God's love, but combines with this the recognition that it works not merely ex opere operato, but only when it becomes the organ of faith, when men believe on Him in such a way that they become identified with Him. 'God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son that whosoever
believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' And this is characteristic of Paul's thinking. He speaks of being crucified with Christ. The self that rejects and crucifies Christ must be yielded up to perish, and this takes place when a man makes His Cross the organ of his self-yielding unto God, when he so identifies himself with Christ in spirit that His Cross may fitly bear his spirit to God. And when this happens, he receives from Him the new self, marked by the indwelling presence and power of Christ. For when a man identifies himself with Christ, Christ identifies Himself with him. "I have been crucified with Christ", says Paul; "Nevertheless I live; and yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."¹ Or again he says: "That I may gain Christ, and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of mine own, even that which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, becoming conformed unto His death".² Quite frequently Paul comes back to this thought of dying with Christ, and rising to newness of life in union with Him. Fundamental to all his thought of the Cross is the idea that it not merely achieves something for men, but that it is something into which they must in a profound sense enter. "And you did He quicken", he says to the Ephesians, "when ye were dead through your trespasses and sins, wherein aforetime ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience. . . . But God, being rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, quickened us together with Christ . . . and raised us up with Him".³ Here again, it is to be observed, salvation is born of the love of God, and not wrested from the justice of God by the love of Christ; but it consists in an experience which can only be described as a dying with Christ and a rising with Him.

And when Paul offers an interpretation of the Christian sacraments he does so in terms of the same ideas. Baptism to him symbolized not alone death to the past and resurrection to

¹ Gal. ii, 20.  
² Phil. iii, 8-10.  
³ Eph. ii, 1-6.
newness of life, but identification with Christ, to enter into His death and to rise with Him to a newness of life that consists in the sharing of His life. ‘All we who were baptized into Christ were baptized into His death. We were buried therefore with Him through baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him by the likeness of His death, we shall be also by the likeness of His resurrection; knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin.’

Or again he says: ‘Having been buried with Him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.’

Similarly, when treating of the other great Christian sacrament, Paul uses similar terms. He says: ‘Whosoever shall eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgement unto himself, if he discern not the body.’ Whoever fails to bring to the sacrament the right spirit turns it into the organ of a curse upon himself, instead of the organ of a blessing. Just as the prophets declared that sacrifices that were not the organ of the spirit of the offerers were not merely futile but a positive offence to God, adding to the sin of men instead of making atonement for it, so here Paul is saying that without the right spirit this sacrament becomes the instrument of judgement. In partaking of it without bringing to it the spirit which could make it the organ of his act, he is guilty of the body and blood of Christ; that is to say, he crucifies Him afresh. And what partaking rightly involves is therefore presumably the renewing of the spiritual sacrifice of Christ, whereby a man’s spirit is united with His and renewed from His. It is again, as ever, two-way traffic or none. What a man gains from the sacrament is conditioned by what he brings to it, and the worthiness of what he brings is not something that consists in his own loftiness of character, but in the yielding of himself afresh to Him.

1 Rom. vi, 4-6.  2 Col. ii, 12.  3 1 Cor. xi, 27-29.
In Matthew’s account of the institution of this sacrament we read that our Lord said: ‘Take eat; this is My body . . . Drink ye all of it, for this is My blood.’  

The sacrament is therefore here conceived of as the organ of that self-identification with Christ which is fundamental to the experience of redemption and symbolized in baptism. This is underlined more than once in the Fourth Gospel. In the discourse which our Lord is there reported to have uttered in the Upper Room, we read: ‘I am the true vine. . . . Abide in Me and I in you. . . . I am the vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth in Me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit.’

And earlier in the Gospel, in the address attributed to our Lord in the Capernaum synagogue, we have an interpretation of this sacrament: ‘He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in Me, and I in him.’

Its purpose is here set forth as the renewal of union with Christ. To hold, as some have done, that this sacrament has a solely memorial significance is plainly not Scriptural. For beyond the memorial and declarative significance which it certainly also had, it has this other significance of entering afresh into the fruits of Christ’s sacrifice, and the renewal of the stamp of His personality upon His own. It achieves something not so much for men as in men, and it can only achieve this as they yield themselves willingly to its power.

This brief incursion into the New Testament does not profess to offer a complete account of the Cross of Christ, or of the Christian sacraments in New Testament thought. It merely aims to illustrate how the integration of the elements of the Old Testament Law, Prophets and Psalms, can find its counterpart and continuance in the integration of the elements of the New Testament. It is not my purpose to suggest that there is no diversity in the Bible, or within either Testament, but rather to suggest that beneath all the diversity there is an underlying unity of teaching as to the essential nature and significance of the supreme observances of both Old Testament and New Testament religion. That is one of the many reasons why the Old Testament was the preparation for the New, and why its understanding is still of importance to-day.

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2 John xv, 1-5.  
3 John vi, 56.