THE SPIRITUAL HISTORY OF ISRAEL

by Jakób Jocz

First published in 1961
by Eyre & Spottiswoode
London

Digital edition 2019

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- Minor editing of the text (punctuation, etc.)
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Author's Acknowledgements

The theme: "the Spiritual History of Israel", was originally suggested by the Rev. L. S. Albright, D.D., Director of the Canadian School of Missions, Toronto, as a course of lectures. These were delivered at the School in the fall and winter of 1958. I am grateful to Dr Albright for the impulse which ultimately resulted in the publication of the present book.

Prof. R. A. Ward of Wycliffe College, Toronto, kindly read the MS. and made valuable suggestions; in addition, he generously agreed to write the Foreword. To have his name associated with this book adds to it a good measure of theological respectability.

My dear friend, E. P. E. Lipson, M.A., out of the goodness of his heart, has undertaken to read the proofs and to verify the biblical quotations. The author owes to him a great debt of gratitude for his valuable help.

Amidst many duties, my wife has managed to find both patience and time to decipher my handwriting, to type the MS. and to compile the indices. To her goes the credit for performing the most tiresome task, with cheerfulness and devotion.

Last, but not least, I am indebted to the Publishers for their painstaking care over the production of this work.

FORWARD

by Professor R. A. Ward, M.A., B.D., Ph.D.

I have been asked to write a Foreword to the book written by my friend and colleague, the Reverend Dr Jakob Jocz, Professor of Systematic Theology in Wycliffe College in the University of Toronto. To some extent his request is an embarrassing one. "I have need to be baptised of thee, and comest thou to me?" His profound scholarship and wide reputation need no comment of mine. But such is the persuasion of friendship that I have given way - with a good deal of pleasure.

Dr. Jocz disclaims any party association, and this is characteristic of the man. At all times he remains himself, his unique, critical, believing and lovable self. He is not a liberal ("It is an aberration of theology . . .") and he dislikes fundamentalism. I share his dislike of certain aspects of this movement, especially in some parts of the world where contending for the faith has become little more than virulent abuse. Indeed I deprecate the use of the term itself, as it has become a theological swear-word, not to be used in polite society. But I am entirely with him in his objection to what may be termed the 'mechanical' in our view of Holy Scripture. Fortunately evangelicals have long ago shifted from this position, though it is not always realized by their critics. It may indeed be questioned whether scholarly evangelicals have ever really believed in a mechanical theory of inspiration.

The author, then, is repelled by the two extremes. Where are the readers to place this man who would elude the party whips? He believes in the catholicity of the Church but he does not place more weight on the word 'catholic' than it was meant to bear. There is reason to believe that the uncompromising rigidity of certain contributions to ecumenical discussion has shown him his true place. I believe that his place - and his heart - is with those Christians who stand under the Word of God and are skilled in what used to be called experimental "religion". That, ultimately, is the theme of this book.

The prophets, says Dr Jocz, are a special case. Their secret is beyond our investigation and cannot be rationalized or explained. "But it is not the secret of the gnostic or the initiated who keeps his knowledge for the select few; it is rather the secret of the inner life of faith open to all who want to enter into its sanctuary." Those who have thus entered and enjoy that fellowship with God in Christ through the Spirit which is nowadays called experiential "religion" are at one with the prophets: there is a prophetic preaching and a prophetic hearing of the Word of God. This should be pondered by pulpit and pew alike.

There are places in this book where our paths separate. I should wish to assign far more historicity to some passages in the Old Testament than Dr Jocz would allow; and I believe in election to salvation as well as election to service. How did I ever have the sense to believe in Christ unless He chose me before I chose Him? Without His effective call, should I ever have responded? Again, without this doctrine of 'unspeakable comfort', as Article XVII terms it, how would the preacher proclaim his message with the conviction that "I have much people in this city"? I see no reason to criticize the statement in the Athanasian Creed that our Lord Jesus Christ is one Christ, "not by conversion of Godhead into flesh, but by taking manhood into God", though I sympathize with the truth for which Dr Jocz is contending. Much

depends on the meaning of 'conversion' here. But these, and other such subjects have long been debated *within* the evangelical camp, just as in the days of Wesley and Whitefleld.

These are not trivial matters. But they have not quite that centrality which we associate with St Paul's expression, 'the Word of the Cross'. What evangelical, then, could quarrel with a man whose theological thought converges on the Cross and whose personal life radiates from it? Consider these significant quotations: "The 'wrath of God' is not meant to be treated as a metaphor but as a terrifying fact. We will never understand the Gospel unless we grasp the seriousness of God's judgement upon sin. The Law speaks in no metaphors but in dead earnestness about God's displeasure with the sinner. . . . The sacrifice on the Cross on the part of the Messiah is the means whereby atonement is achieved. God, though righteous and holy, accepts the Death of His Son in lieu of the death of the sinner and graciously forgives. . . . What the Gospel offered was nothing less than salvation as a fact here and now."

All this speaks for itself. Dr Jocz speaks from within, and as a hearer. He declines a label and will not attach himself to any particular school of thought. So be it. He retains his intellectual and theological freedom. But he will not complain if those who glory in the authentic New Testament Gospel and strengthen one another's hands in evangelical associations claim him as a brother. Deep called unto deep.

The author is stimulating, even provocative at times. In his exposition he can criticize urban civilization and make the Tower of Babel relevant to our day and generation. He sees in the perspective of history that the encounter between Church and world has affected both parties, and he therefore draws a distinction between Christianity and the Gospel. All who love the Reformation - and Dr Jocz is a theologian in the reformed tradition - will welcome the statement that "there is probably a closer connection between primitive Christianity and the Old Testament, than there is between the former and historic Christianity". Those whose worship appears to be directed towards God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit should face the challenge that "the greatest danger to the Church's spiritual life is to become an end in itself". The evangelist will be heartened to read that "the Church is only the Church when it holds on to its prophetic-apostolic task of preaching repentance and building up the fellowship of believers. Its movement through history can only be measured by the story of its growth."

It would have been inappropriate in this Foreword to attempt anything in the nature of a review. On the other hand I could hardly seek to 'introduce' so well known a scholar. It has seemed the course of wisdom to consider the book in the light of the man I know. His theological and spiritual influence, his devout character and warm faith and joy, have been a stimulus to us all. He has made theology a subject for animated discussion in the Senior Common Room and in the Dining Hall, and his seminars a new form of pleasure. He is a brother beloved. In that light - read this book.

Wycliffe College
Toronto, Canada

INTRODUCTION

The spiritual history of Israel, theologically speaking, is the story of revelation. But the story of revelation would demand of the writer a strictly theological approach. This is not our intention. Our intention is rather to portray the working out of the prophetic idea in history. We are therefore approaching our subject from a specific angle, that of biblical Prophetism. Our purpose is not to explain the prophetic phenomenon, but to indicate its ramifications.

In our approach to the subject we have been forced to abandon the now universally accepted principle of evolution; we have convinced ourselves that this principle, though usefully applied to other phenomena, does not fit the realm of the spiritual. The 'laws' which here operate seem to be outside the calculable laws of cause and effect. To use an example: the Mendelian theory of heredity is in no way applicable to prophetic recurrence.

This places before us another problem. The Bible bears sufficient evidence of a progressive development of ideas both moral and religious. This appears to be specially the case when we compare the Old with the New Testament. It is this fact which gave rise to the idea of progressive revelation. Such a concept helps to explain the whole complex of biblical revelation covering many centuries. Unfortunately it carries an inner contradiction: if revelation is to retain its meaning it cannot be progressive. To say that the progress is on the human side is only to beg the question; if man attains to revelation by spiritual development then 'revelation' is a misapplied term. Besides, such an immanental concept of revelation is contradicted by the Bible which is the supreme witness to the Voice from the *outside*.[1] In face of these obvious facts we are forced to seek for a definition more consonant with the spirit of the Scriptures.

The title of the book may give rise to a misunderstanding: the *Spiritual History of Israel* may suggest to the reader an intention foreign to the writer. Here 'spiritual' as an adjective is not meant to be contrasted with any other aspect of Israel's history, like political, cultural, etc. Such a division is alien to Israel's tradition and to the whole tenor of the Bible. In the Bible spirit and matter are not differentiated hierarchically and are not kept in opposition. The spiritual and the material, the sacred and the secular are inseparable and presuppose one another: matter is the vehicle of the spiritual and the spiritual gives meaning to the material. In Israel all occurrences have a spiritual connotation, which means that there is no such thing as a non-spiritual history of Israel. This is already indicated by the ancient tradition which gives to the purely historical books of the Canon a prophetic connotation. Outside the Canon such books could only by a *tour de force* be given a 'spiritual' interpretation.

'Spiritual' is here a strictly defined adjective. By it we mean to indicate the leaven which entered the life of the nations and is still shaping human destiny. By 'leaven' we mean more than the moral values which lie behind the prophetic message of the Bible. We mean the Presence to which the Bible bears witness as the living God of history in whose hands is the destiny of mankind.

A further elucidation is required in connection with the use of the collective noun 'Israel'. Whatever connotation is given it in theological dictionaries, in the biblical context Israel is not a concept but a concrete historical entity. Israel is not merely the ideal people of God without spot or blemish, but the down-to-earth people of the Hebrew race. Like the Pauline

'saints', they are men of flesh and blood, human, sinful and contradictory. Israel is a stiff-necked people vacillating between the God of Moses and the golden calf. We will have to learn not to idealize Israel if revelation is to retain its true down-to-earth character.

It is customary to distinguish between Israel and the Church. On the plane of history such a distinction is justified. But in the context of revelation Israel and Church are synonyms: Israel is the Church and the Church is Israel. This points to a dialectic which is inherent in all history.

We are thus brought to yet another problem: history.

History will occupy much of our attention. As we enter the *Weltanschauung* of the prophets we come face to face with a specifically biblical concept of history which has powerfully affected and still affects the life of humanity. This novel approach to history is perhaps one of the most important elements of the prophetic message. It constitutes a revolution in human thinking and opens up new and undreamt-of horizons to man's aspirations and hopes.

1. The Bible

The story of Israel is inseparable from the story of the Bible. It is here that our difficulties begin. In past centuries when men had a noncritical, child-like approach to the book of books and saw in it a supernatural revelation of all truth, it would have sufficed to summarize the biblical narrative in order to do justice to our subject. Such an approach is not any more possible unless we deliberately shut our eyes to obvious facts.

Today we know that the Bible is by no means a monolithic book cast in one single mould. It is more like a library than a book. The literary effort behind it extends over centuries and covers a variety of situations. The social, political and cultural background varies from book to book. Books which in the past were regarded as complete units are now discovered to be composite works originating at widely separated dates, as is the case with the book of *Isaiah*.

To this must be added the fact that the Bible is a diffuse book and is as varied as life itself. It is certainly not a 'religious' book as religious books go. It is composed of a conglomeration of ethnic laws, national history, tribal taboos, and some primitive mythology. It comes from many sources and reveals considerable affinity with neighbouring cultures. Studied from the outside, it is possible to trace the origin, and growth of primitive ideas in the Bible as in any other culture. Stanley A. Cook was not far from the truth when he summarized his conclusions in the following words:

"The Yahwism of the Old Testament stands between (1) the later developments of Daniel and the apocryphal and other literature which form the prelude to the rise of Christianity, and (2) the *earlier* cruder and more 'mythological' beliefs and practices which either disappeared or have been sublimated. There is nothing extravagant in the view that in the older religion there was a divine kingship, with the king as the representative of Yahwe, and that grisly human sacrifices to Moloch were made *for* or *to* the King. The 'Messianic' idea had a long history behind it, containing much that recalls the beliefs and practices of 'barbaric' people."[2]

This evolutionary approach to the biblical material has the support of the majority of scholars. The results of a century of critical studies are being gradually assimilated even in

ultra-conservative circles. It is not possible to resist indefinitely the evidence and the logical conclusions of careful investigation. Now that the dust over the battlefield of biblical criticism is in the process of settling, we are able to admit without undue offence that Professor Cook's verdict is by no means extreme. Such an evolutionary view of the biblical material is inevitable once we are agreed that the Bible is the product of centuries, and was written by fallible men exposed to the limitations and prejudices of their times. It is only those still holding that the Bible is a supernatural book, written by the hand of God, who will take offence at such a view.

However, the crisis created by the modern approach to the Bible must not be glossed over or treated lightly. In the history of the Christian Church no world-shaking event affected her more profoundly than the demolition of the authority of the Bible. This applies most specifically to the Protestant Church which was founded upon the authority of the Scriptures as against that of the pope.

We may thus ask: What is left of the Word of God if such is the case with the Bible?

The question presses for a repeated attempt to re-define the meaning of revelation. This is the central problem for the theology of our age. All our other problems will fall into line once we have reached clarity on what is meant by revelation and how it stands with regard to the Canon of the Bible.

2. Revelation

Christian faith, because it is biblical faith, stands or falls with the concept of revelation. But this concept requires a definition compatible with the message of the Bible. If Bible and theology are not to fall apart, then the concept of revelation must be determined by Scripture and not by theology. Theology is only Christian if it is biblical, otherwise it becomes philosophy or metaphysics.

What then is the starting-point for a definition of the concept of revelation in the context of the Bible? Surely this, that God addresses Himself to man. It is the underlying supposition of all biblical witness that God *speaks*. If God were silent, revelation would be an empty word or at best the projection of human speech. But that God truly speaks is not verifiable by scientific method. It is an hypothetical supposition which allows of no other verification except faith. No *a priori* ontological argument can *prove* that God is under necessity to speak. All can do is assume that He is capable of speech. A discussion of revelation is therefore only possible once the first premiss is granted, namely that God graciously condescends to address Himself to man.

Having reached this point, the discussion takes a new turn. It centres round the question: *how* does God speak to man? what form does the speaking take?

In the traditional view revelation and history run parallel. Both move in a definite, though hidden direction and have an evolutionary goal. The direction is the Kingdom of God, and the goal is human perfection. The perfect Vision of God is only possible to those who have attained to the highest destiny. This is a gradual process in which both God and man co-operate. History therefore reveals a rising level of human perception of God and this is called 'progressive revelation'.

The weakness of this evolutionary concept of revelation lies in its contradictory nature. The contradiction lies in the fact that man is not really addressed from the outside but from within. The listening subject is also the speaking object. The immanental nature of such a concept leaves man as the sole actor whose speech is only the projection of his ego.

The second difficulty arises from the first. If revelation is conceived immanentally, then man can deposit it as objective 'truth' and treat it impersonally. The achievement of one generation becomes the stepping-stone for the next. The generation which follows need not listen to God but can delve into tradition; whether it be the tradition of exegesis or the tradition of dogma makes no difference. Such an impersonal relationship to God makes a philosophical proposition of the living God of the Bible. But if revelation is not a true *vis-â-vis* God and man, then it cannot be revelation in the biblical sense.

Not that Christian thinkers are unaware of the difficulty. But the fact of a progressive principle in history on the one hand, and the natural human tendency to apprehend God conceptually, on the other, have powerfully affected their judgement. Theologians have thus tried to solve the problem by a double argument:

1) it is immaterial by what means and agencies revelation is reached as all knowledge of Truth ultimately has God as the source,
2) revelation would be incomprehensible and devoid of meaning if it were not adapted to the mental and moral capacity of those who receive it. There must be reciprocity between the human and divine; only as man's comprehension grows so does revelation.

These arguments go back to the earliest ages of Christian thinking and were already used by the Church Fathers. Thus Clement of Alexandria remarks: "And would one say that it was through human understanding that philosophy was discovered by the Greeks, still I find the Scriptures saying that understanding is sent by God."[3]

For Clement, revelation extends beyond the biblical word and covers all knowledge which comes to man. Greek philosophy is to him as much revelation as is Hebrew prophecy. The difference is only in degree and not in kind.

In support of the second theory we can quote Tertullian: "Since human mediocrity was unable to take in all things at once, discipline should little by little, be directed, and ordained, and carry on to perfection. . . ." Tertullian reveals a touch of modernity when he explains: "Nothing is without stages of growth: all things await their season."[4]

Already Justin the Martyr held the view that revelation depended upon human capacity.[5] This is not an original view and goes back to the Greek thinkers who were aware that knowledge comes by degrees and is progressive. Such was the case with Xenophanes (*c*. 540-500 B.C.)[6] It is therefore not quite accurate to hold, as does Robert Murray, that the concept of progress belongs to the finest achievement of Christianity.[7] However the case may be, the evolutionary fact in nature has some application to history, though the latter as well as the former reveals regress as well as progress. But revelation by its very preposition is not commensurate with the immanental laws of our planet. Unless revelation is a free act of God, its significance is reduced to the ordinary phenomena of nature. But if it is a free act of God then it must remain outside the laws of cause and effect. In fact it must remain outside all human possibility and ought to be relegated to the order of miracle. When Prof. H. H. Rowley affirms that "the secrets of the spirit" can only be interpreted to men according to the

"measure of their spiritual capacity to receive them"[8] he has not only robbed revelation of its special character, but also given it an immanental signification which he previously tried to forestall.

Theologians adopted the principle of evolution for apologetic reasons. This was pre-eminently the case with the Church Fathers. They had to explain the *novum* of the Gospel in relation to history for nonbelievers. The question was asked and had to be answered: If the Christian faith was true, why did God wait so many centuries before He revealed it?[9] A progressive concept of revelation provided the answer: "There was never a time when God did not wish to make men live righteous lives; but He continually evinced His care for the improvement of the rational animal[10] by affording Him occasions for the exercise of virtue."[11]

God waited until man was ready; but this is an apologetic answer, not a theological one. Theologically man is never ready and never able. Here the now famous controversy between Barth and Brunner becomes important. Barth categorically refused to accept even the suggestion that there is an *Anknüpfungspunkt* in man which makes revelation possible; this is not a human but a divine possibility.

That man was not ready to receive revelation is part of the biblical message. This is peculiarly demonstrated by the life and death of Jesus Christ - from the cradle to the Cross there was no room for him. There is still no room for him. In the encounter between man and God, man is always taken by surprise and he only surrenders after a bitter fight.

It is therefore important for us to be absolutely clear what is the nature of biblical revelation before we look more closely into that fascinating literature called *The Holy Bible*.

a) Revelation as 'Truth'

The Greek noun *aletheia* occurs in the New Testament both as *'emet* and *'emunah* - truth and faith; the same Hebrew root is at the basis of both concepts.

The verb *'aman* signifies to support, sustain; thus *'omnah* is a pillar. In the hiphil form it means to lean on, to put confidence in. Thus 'truth' is something trustworthy, stable, steadfast. In the New Testament though the concept is somewhat widened, it is still closely connected with its Hebrew signification.

"Whereas, then, in Old Testament 'truth' is mainly thought of as a quality inherent in God or in men, especially the quality of steadfastness or fidelity, it is used commonly in New Testament in a more detached and larger sense for the real, that which indeed is, and which it is the proper function of the mind of man to occupy itself with and to apprehend. At the same time, this 'truth' does not appeal solely to the intellect. That it may be received, the moral dispositions of men must correspond with it. . . ."[12]

This truth involves the whole man; intellectual perception and moral character have to coincide if truth is to become effective. It means that 'truth' is not a state of mind but a mode of life expressed in action: "he that *doeth* the truth, cometh to the light" (John 3:21). This peculiar emphasis upon *poiein aletheian* – doing the truth – we meet in the Bible, reveals the difference between the Greek and the Hebrew attitude.

Plato tells us that "the genuine lover of knowledge must, from his youth up, strive intensely after all truth".[13] To achieve the goal such a person must be "temperate and

thoroughly uncovetous" and devote himself to the pleasures which are "purely mental". A man of lofty thoughts cannot attach too great importance to the affairs of this life; if he does he is a cowardly and mean character and has no part in true philosophy.[14] Such detachment from worldly affairs is necessary for man's inward freedom and his philosophical contemplation.

What is meant by "doing the truth" can be seen from the context of *John* 1:5-7: the opposite of truth is darkness and "doing the truth" is walking in the light. Even more explicit is 2 *John* where "walking in truth" means walking in the "new commandment" of love. This is no more a mental act, but total involvement of the human personality in a definite direction.

Buber's subtle distinction between *pistis* and *'emunah* as it occurs in the New Testament appears to us ill-founded. We can collect enough evidence to prove the opposite, namely that St Paul gave to *pistis* exactly the same connotation Buber gives to *'emunah*: believing God, and not just believing in God.[15] But Buber's main contention remains unaffected: "a person can be a confessor without really trusting . . ."[16]

This then is the incontrovertible fact: revelation in terms of 'truth' contradicts the meaning of *'emunah* as we meet it in the Bible.

The Church by objectivating revelation in terms of 'teaching', doctrine, dogma, truth, frequently found herself in an intolerable position. Holding that all truth was already deposited in The Book, she had to oppose every discovery which appeared to her contrary to the same. It was on such grounds that Galileo came in conflict with the Church.[17] Lecky quotes with relish the example of the Alexandrian monk Cosmas who composed his *Topographia Christiana* in which is worked out "a Christian topography of the universe established by demonstration from divine Scripture".[18] There are still people who use the Bible as a guide to science and look to it for verification of scientific discovery. Once revelation is identified with 'truth' pure and simple, their position is logical, but it is the logic of Omar, who according to tradition, decided about the future of the Alexandrian library by making the famous remark: "If the books agree with the book of God (Koran) they are useless; if they disagree they are pernicious; let them be destroyed."[19] That the 'truth' of the Bible lies in a different direction is the burden of this work.

b) Revelation as Faith

'Faith' is here given the widest connotation of *'emunah* – steadfast trust. Revelation therefore is the challenge to lean upon God. Revelation in such terms presupposes personal relationship; a relationship between two persons – God and man. It is for this reason that Buber defined revelation in terms of Encounter.[20] He stresses that faith is not opinion about God (*doxa*), but a confrontation before God which results in active obedience. In other words, faith is a 'relational act' as distinct from *doxa* which involves man only intellectually.

In the biblical context the problem is more complex than Buber would allow. The complexity derives from the incommensurability between God and man. God is not the obvious *vis-â-vis* man. He is the hidden God. The weight of His Presence man cannot bear. It is part of His mercy that He remains invisible for no man can see God and live.[21] Faith in the Bible denotes an indirect relationship; it means leaning upon the invisible God. Between God

and man there is a barrier which man cannot break. He cannot make God reveal Himself just because man wants to make His acquaintance.

None of the great theophanies in the Bible convey a description of God. An attempt is never made to lift the veil of the mystery. Even the so-called attributes by which He is described are only attempts to ward off the curious. This is specially the case with the theophany to Moses in *Ex.* 3. Scholars now tend to the view that the self-description of God, *eheyeh as-her eheyeh* – "I am that I am" – is not unveiling at all but the opposite. They explain the sentence in connection with the Hebrew idiom in which the repetition of the verb indicates evasion or indecision, as for instance: "they went where they went"; or "while I go where I go"; or "sojourn where you will sojourn".[22] M. M. Bourke concludes from these considerations: " 'I am who I am' seems to proclaim no less than the great biblical message: Israel's God is a 'hidden God' (*Is*. 45:15), incomprehensible, ineffable." [23]

Revelation thus comes to man by the *mediacy* of the Word, the *Logos*. But it is not an impersonal word dealing with general truths that man encounters *vis-â-vis* God. The Word concerns the hearer personally and is the only medium of Encounter. The revelational character of the Word lies in the unveiling of the hearer's position. The Bible is primarily the revelation of man before God. In its light man discovers himself a rebel in need of God's forgiveness of grace. The Word which man hears in his encounter with God has always a positive note - here judgement and mercy are inseparably welded. This is the greatest truth about God we know from the Bible.

c) The Personal Aspect of Revelation

The christological significance of the Word derives from the fact that we only know God as the One Who speaks. The *Logos* in the biblical context is therefore not a concept but a Person. It is for this reason that revelation cannot mean general truth, or religious truth, in the abstract. It can only mean the Word of the living God to *me*. Revelation, strictly speaking, always presupposes an I-Thou relationship. The living God addresses man.

According to the Bible the dialogue between God and man begins with a question. God invites man to explain his behaviour before the Judge of all flesh. Herein is the mark of His condescension that He patiently listens to what Adam has to say. Man's ability to respond to the challenge and to answer God reveals his uniqueness. This differentiates between him and beast: he is able to respond to the Voice from above. This is not man's achievement but his endowment. It lies within the order of God's will that man should be man.

Revelation is therefore no dialogue between self and self; i.e. between man's self and his better self. This would only be a monologue. A true dialogue is only possible when man confronts the Other One. In this confrontation man becomes an individual. Only before God does man become person. Revelation is therefore primarily a relationship between God and the individual. It is significant that in the Bible there is no instance when God addresses a whole people. He *deals* with a people, but speaks to the individual.

3. The Validity of a Theological Approach to the Canon

The discovery that the biblical literature derives from a number of sources and represents a variety of outlook, has made it increasingly difficult to build a monolithic system of biblical theology. The great theological structures in the tradition of the last century are now out of fashion. We cannot use the Bible any more without differentiating between the various layers and the different sources. This has brought about a reluctance on the part of scholars to work out a synthetic perspective of the biblical point of view. They argue, and with some justification, that a legitimate approach to the Bible, specially the Old Testament, is the one which limits itself to the exegesis of a particular text.[24]

Behind this attitude is the conviction that the Bible presents only an apparent and artificial unity. The material which we now, by hallowed tradition, keep within two covers as one single whole, has frequently no common denominator and is antipathetic in origin. Such deep-going disunity is supposed to be present in books which for centuries were regarded as supplementing each other, as is the case with the *Pentateuch*.

It would be foolhardy to deny that much of the biblical material goes back to primitive tradition and derives from many sources. But it is equally clear that the tradition behind the collectors, segregators and editors of the text reveals uniformity of outlook and religious values of a prophetic type. This prophetic tradition seems to have persisted through centuries with little alteration. From the evidence before us we feel justified to conclude an unifying element which extends through most of the Old Testament literature and which profoundly and decisively affects the New Testament outlook. The idea that the apocalyptic attitude predominates in the New Testament is a modern invention which has served to obscure some important facts. It is increasingly recognized that the prophetic tradition has shaped the outlook of much of the *Pentateuch*, specially *Genesis* and *Deuteronomy*. But even the historical books reveal many prophetic traits: the same can be said about the wisdom literature. Here we discover an underlying principle of unity which gives cohesion to the biblical literature. It is in relation to this prophetic element that a theological approach becomes possible.[25]

Our quest, however, is not after the "*normative* Old Testament religion",[26] which if discovered would in all probability prove to stand in bitter opposition to the prophetic point of view. Our purpose is to establish the point of conflict between 'normative religion' and the God of Israel as is recorded in Holy Writ. It is at this very point that the spiritual history of Israel becomes meaningful in pointing beyond itself.

4. The Writer's Position

It may seem unusual to introduce a personal note in a work which would appear to require scholarly detachment. But the writer questions the possibility of an objective, impersonal approach to the Bible. He believes that with regard to the Bible as with regard to faith, there are only two possible perspectives – from *within* and from *without*. Those within are hearers; those without have failed to hear. He makes bold to regard himself a hearer, though others may reach a different conclusion.

He is trying to write as a hearer, though he refuses to take sides in the dispute which divides Christendom today. He is unwilling to accept a label and to attach himself to any particular school of thought. He is neither a liberal, nor a fundamentalist nor a Barthian.

The writer uncompromisingly rejects the liberal point of view by reason of its immanental entanglements. By this he means the liberal's preoccupation with historic contingency to a degree which robs him of the ability to see through the maze of scholarly opinion the deeper meaning of biblical revelation. He finds it impossible to accept a God who has become the prisoner of His own creation.

Fundamentalism, on the other hand, is equally obnoxious to the writer. To him the Bible is no esoteric book consisting of a cryptic blueprint of world history. The living Voice of Almighty God cannot be reduced to paper and ink. To confine God's living Word to the printed page of a book is a naive form of magic. The bifurcation of revelation into two channels - Jesus Christ *and* the Bible - rests upon an unfortunate misunderstanding. The Bible can only be the servant of Jesus Christ and not his rival. To claim for the Bible inerrancy, verbal inspiration, mathematical accuracy by means of numerical acrobatics,[27] is to reduce the sovereign and free will of God to a mechanical system. This gross materialism turns the God of Israel into *deus ex machina* – in the literal sense of the word.

The writer owes much to Karl Barth, but he refuses to be the mouthpiece of 'Barthianism', specially as Barth requires no such help. Barth's later development in the direction of a more literalist approach to the Canon he finds difficult to accept. This does not mean that the writer treats the Bible lightly; it only means that he is trying to walk his own way and to reach his own conclusions.

Notes to Introduction

1. Prof. H. H. Rowley tries to safeguard the transcendental concept of revelation by affirming that there is no automatic spiritual growth of mankind and that revelation is not a matter of "the unfolding of the human spirit through the mere passage of time". But by accepting the concept of progressive revelation he opens himself to a contradictory position. (Cf. H. H. Rowley, *The Unity of the Bible*, 1953,7fl.)
2. Stanley A. Cook, *The Old Testament, A Re-interpretation*, 1936, 165.
3. Clement Alex., *Miscell*., VI 8.
4. Tertullian, *Dc Virginibus Velandis*; I.
5. Justin, *Apol*, 11 13.
6. Cf. Stobaeus, *Eclog*, I 224.
7. R. H. Murray, *Erasmus and Luther*, 1920, 424.
8. H. H. Rowley, *The Unity of the Bible*, 8.
9. CeIsus' question which Origen tries to answer; cp. *Contra Celsum*, IV 7.
10. τὸ λογικὸν ζῶον can also mean rational figure or image; cf. Liddell and Scott, *Greek Lexicon*.
11. Origen, ibid. The fact of antiquity was an important argument against Christianity in the ancient world. Arnobius deals with this question with remarkable skill. His point is that the worth of a religion is not determined by its age but by its divinity; cf. Arnobius, *Adversus Gentes*, II 71-5; Lactantius on the other hand boldly accepts the fact that God withheld the truth from the Gentiles because the time was not yet ripe; cf. Lactantius, *div. inst*. IV 2.
12. *H.D.B*., IV 819b.
13. Plato, *Republic*, VI 485.

14. Plato, *Republic*, VI 486.
15. Cf.. Martin Buber, *Two Types of Faith*, English translation, 1951. Gerard S. Sloyan rightly repudiates Buber's sharp distinction between *pistis* and *'emunah* in reference to St Paul and says of the Apostle that his hellenistic tendency "ran no deeper than it had to for his missionary needs. If he spoke an unclassical Greek, he thought authentically Hebrew thoughts". (Cf. *The Bridge*, ed. by J. M.Oesterreicher, III, 1958, 230.)
16. *Op. cit*., 43.
17. Cf. Andrew D. White, *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology* 1955 l30 fl.
18. W. E. Lecky, History of the Rise and Influence of Rationalism in Europe, I, 292 fl.
19. Cf. *The Imperial Dictionary of Universal Biography*, III, (no date), 565b.
20. Cf. M. Buber, *I and Thou*, English translation 1937, 110: "Man receives, and he receives not a specific 'content' but a Presence, a Presence as Power." Also 95: "Man's religious situation, is *being there* in the Presence . . . ."
21. Cf. J. Jocz, "The Invisibility of God and the Incarnation", *Canadian Journal of Theology*, No. 111, 1958, 181 fl. Cf. also the fine article by Prof. Emil L. Fackenheim, "The Dilemma of Liberal Judaism", *Commentary*, Oct. 1960.
22. Cf. Myles M. Bourke, *Yahweh the Divine Name, The Bridge*, III 284; Bourke quotes the appropriate literature.
23. *Ibid*., 287.
24. Cf. James Barr, "The Problem of Old Testament Theology and the History of Religion", *Canadian Journal of Theology*, July 1957. Prof. H. H. Rowley points out that there is a noticeable return to a more unified theological approach to the Old Testament and quotes a whole array of literature to prove his point. Cf. *The Unity of the Bible*, 5 fl. and notes.
25. Prof. H. H. Rowley accepts the idea of a "dynamic unity" as opposed to a "static unity". He sees a clear line of development from the Old Testament to the New. But we find it difficult to accept this horizontal aspect of revelation. The same criticism applies to the traditional view which connects both Testaments on the lines of an immanental process. For Dodd's view on the question of unity see C. H Dodd, *The Bible To-day*, 1947, 2.
26. This seems to have been Danton's objective as is implied by Prof. J. Barr; cf. *op. cit*., 147.
27. Cf. the incredible little book by Ivan Panin, *Verbal Inspiration of the Bible Scientifically Demonstrated*. A Mr A. B. King and "six other clergymen" add their own ingenuity to Panin's 'discovery' in order to show that the (Protestant) Bible is constructed on "a marvellous numeric design running through its every conceivable detail".

I. THE BIBLICAL PATTERN

The writers or editors we suspect behind the sacred text are always anonymous. They do not write to perpetuate the memory of their name, only to convey a message. They are not primitive story-tellers who spin a yarn in order to keep alive the tribal tradition. If they use folklore, they do so to embellish their main theme. The answer as to the identity of these men and the nature of their message can only be obtained by careful observation of the pattern which is artistically interwoven in the biblical narrative. The fact that this pattern is continuous though the writers, speakers, actors, constantly change leads us to suspect a living tradition which goes back to the earliest days of Hebrew history. We face here a threefold task: (1) the recovery of the pattern; (2) the elucidation of the *Weltanschauung* behind it; (3) the discovery of the Presence behind both.

We have to pursue these three lines in order to follow the intricate story of the prophetic tradition behind the Bible. But these three strands cannot be singled out and treated separately for the sake of analysis. They are so inextricably interwoven that only when kept together do they make sense. It is then upon the togetherness of pattern, *Weltanschauung* and the secret Presence of the Holy One of Israel that the story of revelation depends. This we would call the pattern within the pattern of the Bib1e.

1. The Creation Story

The Bible begins at the 'beginning': the genesis of our planet. It is not a scientific account. The editor had no interest in science; he knew little about it. He was also not interested in metaphysics; he does not speculate about God. Neither here, nor anywhere else is there ever an effort made to prove God's existence. That this is so, reflects upon the spiritual maturity of the writers. To put it more precisely: it reflects upon the depth of their spiritual insight. Martin Buber remarks on this point: "To the man of ancient Israel such a proof is quite foreign, because the idea of the non-existence of God lies outside the realm of that which was conceivable by him."[1] We incline to the view that there is yet another reason for the complete absence of proof that God exists. The idea that God is not, is an ever-present possibility with man and the Bible knows about it (cf. *Ps.* 14:1; 53:1). The deeper reason for the complete lack of proof is connected with the conviction that man is only aware of God when God deigns to make Himself known. If God kept silence, man would know nothing about Him. He is thus introduced as the Speaking One. To prove that God *is* once it has already been predicated that He speaks, would be illogical.

We come here upon the first feature of the Biblical pattern: the Speaking God. This is a universal feature: it pervades the whole of the Old and New Testaments. That God speaks is the deepest knowledge of the Prophets and the conviction of the Church: "In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us in one who is Son . . ." (*Hebr.* 1:4)[2]

Speech is understood to be the fundamental activity of God. He creates by means of His Word. From the first chapters of Genesis we receive no mental picture of God; not even a description of His character except in a veiled kind of way. What is said of Him is that He

speaks and that He speaks creatively. Those who use *Gen*. 1:1 in an ontological sense misuse it. It does not say that God was in the beginning but that a beginning was made when God decided to *create*: "In the beginning God created heaven and earth."

We thus come upon the second feature of the biblical pattern: God is the Acting One. Again, there is remarkable unanimity throughout the whole literature of Scripture on this basic point. God is the Acting One in nature, history, in the life of the individual; this is the unvaried witness of the Bible.

The almost naive anthropomorphism we meet in the Bible, specially in Genesis, is connected with the knowledge of God as the One who acts. The Hebrew here differs fundamentally from the Greek. Whereas the Greek is concerned with conceptual Being, the Hebrew encounters the One who acts. His God is no static Being[3] but the Acting One who speaks, walks, smells, is wroth, etc. His hands, His feet, His eyes, His nose, are expressions of intense activity.[4]

From a theological as well as a philosophical point of view, it is interesting to note the relation of Creator to creation as we meet it in *Genesis*: the Creator stands outside and above His creation as Master and Lord. His sovereignty is never in question even when man rebels against it. Here Spinozian pantheism is utterly excluded; so is Samuel Alexander's 'emergent deity' concept. God is complete in Himself and remains what he is *vis-â-vis* His creation. He is not compelled to create; he creates out of freedom. The Aristotelian concept of *entelecheia* which describes the movement of potential Being towards realization is equally inapplicable. [5] God does not fulfil Himself by creating. Creation in *Genesis* as in the rest of the Bible is no *Selbstverwirklichung* but a free act of grace. Here is yet another feature of the pattern: the freedom of God *vis-â-vis* creation. This point of view persists through the Bible, and finds special emphasis in *Deutero-Isaiah* and also in the nature miracles of the New Testament.

Another peculiarity about the creation story is connected with the concept of God's sovereignty. This is indicated by the appellative Elohim.

Scholars have been puzzled by the etymology of the name and its plural ending. Many suggestions have been made. There seems to be unanimity that the plural ending is not a remnant of polytheism but rather the expression of "majesty and rank"[6] or else the "fulness of mights or powers contained in God".[7] It is the plural of eminence and stands for God's majesty. This is emphasized by the concept of *creatio ex nihilo*. Such is God's majesty and power that He creates without fashioning the material; His Word suffices. The philosophical aspect which accompanies the problem of *creatio ex nihilo* is not the writer's concern. He does not construct a theory of Creation nor is he troubled by the problem of the Eternity of the Universe *vis-â-vis God* as is the case with Maimonides.[8] His purpose is to demonstrate the majestic power of God and he does so by presenting God's Word as co-equal with His Deed: God spake . . . and it was so.

In this respect there is a marked difference between the *Genesis* account of creation and the ancient legends which deal with the same subject.

Though ancient cosmogonies are so varied that it is not possible to obtain a coherent picture, in one respect they seem to agree: the gods use primeval matter to create the world.[9] If the biblical writer used ancient myth he had special reasons to recreate it so that it would serve his purpose. His motivation however was not philosophical or metaphysical but purely

religious. Here primitive myth is freed from all dramatization and the *dramatis personae* have disappeared from the stage; there is no struggle of the gods for supremacy, no slaying of Miamat by Bel-Marduk, no cutting of her body "into two halves like a flat fish". Israel's God requires no show of power – He simply speaks and worlds spring into being.

It is rewarding to contrast the position of Maimonides with that of the writer of *Gen*. 1. Maimonides clings to the *ex nihilo* theory for purely logical reasons. This can be seen from the syllogistic phrasing of the proposition: "If the universe had a beginning, God does exist: if it be eternal, God does not exist."[10]

The philosophical discussions of the later Middle Ages concerning *creatio ex nihilo* was motivated by quite different considerations than was the case with the Editor of the document of *Genesis*. He was not troubled by the problem how to reconcile creation in time with the eternal nature of God of whom movement, change and 'becoming' cannot be properly predicated. Here Thomistic philosophy and the theology behind *Genesis* Chapter 1 represent two alien worlds.[11]

In *Genesis* creation *ex nihilo* is a divine prerogative. Man also has the ability to create, but only in a derived and secondary fashion. Man's creativeness is limited by his material, and his skill or power. Man cannot make something out of nothing: *ex nihilo nihil fit*. Such limitation is a mark of his creatureliness. By contrast how tremendous is the statement: "God spake . . . and it was so . . . ." God creates in perfect freedom and His power is limitless. The stature of such a God staggers the writer's imagination. How puny are the gods of the Gentiles in comparison with the Lord of Creation!

It is thus in the very opening words of the Bible that we come face to face with a vision of God which is both unique and breathtaking. Modern writers who feel embarrassed by the 'unscientific' statements of *Genesis* with its philosophically difficult concept of 'creation in time',[12] would have had no cause for apology had they but grasped the inner meaning of the message it carries.[13] This message brings us to the next feature within the biblical pattern, namely that God is truly Lord over His creation.

The Lordship of God, which is an important part of the prophetic message, expresses itself in a peculiar way. The God of whom the Bible speaks is no despot who acts capriciously with His creation and delights in mocking man, as is sometimes suggested by the Greek poets.[14] On the contrary, He is both sustainer and protector of His creation. He is no remote figure who dispassionately watches the human drama, but is constantly present to protect, to guide and to interfere in human affairs. Although He holds the waters in the hollow of His hand, and weighs the mountains in scales and the hills in the balance (*Is*. 40:12), and to whom the nations are but a drop of a bucket (*Is*. 40:15); yet He cares for man and keeps His hand open to satisfy His creatures (*Ps*. 104:27 fl). There is no place for deism or pantheism in the Bible. God is neither servant nor onlooker *vis-â-vis* His creation, but Lord and father. Thus the older view of *creatio continua* is truly present in the Bible, for God is the upholder of His creation.[15] The *Epistle to the Hebrews* speaks out of the depth of biblical insight when it states that the Son (= eternal Word) "upholds all things by the word of his power" (*Hebr*. 1:3). Here creation and providence are indissolubly linked.

The very concept of creation in time implies both design and purpose. God who is ever active is ruler and sustainer of His universe. This is the meaning of the Johannine text: "My

Father is working still; and I am working" (*John* 5:17). These mighty acts of God are not just demonstrations of His power, but an expression of His will. In other words, design and purpose are implicit in the story of creation. *Genesis* 1 is therefore a fitting introduction to the rest of the Bible where the same God who created the Universe also directs human destiny. He is not only the Lord of creation but also the Lord of history.

This then is the biblical pattern which. dominates the narrative: The speaking, acting, sovereign Lord (*Elohim*) is Protector and Father of His creation and has His own hidden purpose with mankind.

What follows is the unfolding of God's purpose with man and with the human race. Israel stands in between the individual and humanity: he is both representative of man and of humanity.

2. The Father-Creator

Francis Thompson in his poem "The Hound of Heaven", uses this most startling metaphor to convey an essentially biblical point of view: God the lover of man. In the Bible God is Creator-Father and therefore personally involved in man's destiny.

Man, though a rebellious son cast out of the garden of Eden, is yet not deprived of his Creator's care. God goes with him into exile.

The editor of the story in *Genesis* has a remarkable perception of God as Father. The message he wants to convey is God's search for man. Though man may be barred from Paradise and the Tree of Life by the Cherubim holding a flaming sword which turns in every direction, God Himself leaves the garden in quest for the prodigal son. The ancient rabbis held that the *shekinah* departed with Israel into exile.[16] This is the very thought behind the story in Genesis.

Though man becomes disobedient and is compelled to leave the Presence of God, his Creator continues to be responsible for him and remains his provider and protector. God clothes Adam and Eve and remains near at hand. This is specially brought out in the story of God's dealing with Cain.

The story of the first act of fratricide is so arranged that the murderer should have no excuse to plead ignorance. He is forewarned of the consequences of sin and his duty to master it (*Gen*. 4:6 fl). But in spite of the enormity of the act God puts a protecting mark upon Cain "lest any who came upon him should kill him". This is how a father acts towards a profligate son.

The opening chapters of *Genesis* which purport to relate the early history of humanity, serve as an introduction to the rest of the Bible. Its theme is the Father-Creator's love for His wayward children. This becomes most specially pronounced in the prophetic writings. Under various titles: the Holy One of Israel, King, Saviour, Lord, Husband, God pleads with His people to return. He wants to readmit them to His fellowship and reinstate them to their former dignity.

It is this persistent, enduring, unfailing love of God which gives to the prophetic writings unique quality. Here we find a unanimity of outlook which entirely dominates the prophetic tradition. The prophets may threaten, cajole, plead or pronounce judgement, but they always end up on this note of reassurance: God cares, God forgives, God wills Israel's salvation.

This does not deny the fact that buried within the biblical tradition is a more primitive concept of God whose deeds are unaccountable and who sometimes acts capriciously.[17] But these evidences of a more primitive past have little bearing upon the main message of the Bible. It is more than likely that these less exalted views were held in non-prophetic circles at the same period and even outlived the prophets. The final editors of the text had too much respect for their ancient material to adjust the discrepancies of outlook.

When we come to the great literary prophets we need have no doubts as to the purity of their views regarding the character of God. In spite of tragedy and grief, humiliation and punishment, God stands faithfully by His people as the Good Shepherd. In view of the pleading, loving tones of prophetic utterance it is difficult to understand how scholars were unable to detect the fatherhood of God in the message of the Old Testament.[18] Montefiore rightly says: "A one-sided belief in a mere God of justice (in our sense of the word) could never have produced the *Psalter*."[19]

But the testimony of God's fatherhood is not only confined to the *Psalter*, it is part of the message of *Deuteronomy*, it is embedded in the message of *Deutero-Isaiah*, it reaches unusual depths of feeling in the message of *Hosea*. The fatherhood of God is implied in His deep concern with Israel, with the individual Israelite, and even with the non-Israelite. The universalistic traits of the Old Testament reveal in a special way that creatorship and fatherhood are inseparable attributes in God's character.

The psalmist knows and rejoices in the fact that: "The Lord is good to all, and his compassion is over all that he has made" (*Ps*. 145:9).

Jesus the son of Sirach, speaks out of the depth of Old Testament prophetism when he says: "The mercy of man is (only) towards his neighbour; but the mercy of the Lord is upon all flesh; reproving, and chastising and teaching, and bringing back, as a shepherd doth his flock" (*Ecclesiasticus* 18:13).

The prophets' pleading with a recalcitrant people on behalf of God is the most moving feature in the biblical situation. The prophets' appeal to the reason, conscience and heart of their people in order to win them back: "Why will you die, O house of Israel?" is Ezekiel's question. Is it not more reasonable to repent and return to God? (cf. *Ez*.18:30 fl.)

If Israel questions the justice of God's ways (cf. *Ez*. 18:25) then God is willing to appear before a court and stand trial: "Let us be judged together,[20] set forth your case that you may be proved right" (*Is*. 43:26).

He invites His people by the mouth of the prophet to engage in a dialogue and to have it out: "Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord" (*Is*. 1:18).

The Lord has a complaint against Israel (*Micah* 6:2) and appeals to the nation's conscience: "O my people, what have I done to you? In what have I wearied you ? Answer me!"

But the Father-Creator goes beyond the limits of equity. Though Israel is a sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity (*Is*. 1:4), He refuses to give it up. The same prophet who pronounces with fiery indignation: "My God will cast them off . . ." (*Hosea* 9:17), exclaims with moving tenderness: "How can I give you up, O Ephraim! How can hand you over, O Israel! . . . My heart recoils within me, my compassion grows warm and tender" (*Hosea* 11:8).

This fatherly involvement in the welfare of His creatures which runs through the Old Testament and finds its highest expression in the New Testament, makes a dispassionate deistic approach to the Bible impossible. In the face of such a God, man cannot remain neutral: he either hates or loves; he either believes or turns his back.

The scholar will find it next to impossible to sort out the different levels of theistic insight. It is not so that by having dismembered the text and classified it according to the original sources, we are now able to decide upon a 'higher' and 'lower' view of God. The prophets cannot be treated, by an E or a P or J attitude. They frequently carry within themselves contradictory notions about the nature of God. They know Him as El, as Elohim, as Eloah, as Zur, as Yahweh, as Yah, as Adon, as Adonai, as Melek, but above all they know Him as Father-Creator.

Next to the prophets it is the *Psalter*, the most ancient manual of Hebrew worship, which is a testimony of the Father-Creator attitude to His creatures. That God is Maker and Sustainer, Father and King, is the recurring theme of the *Psalter*. He is specially Father to those in need: "Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation" (*Ps*. 68:5).

That God is "greatly terrible"[21] and yet a Father whose faithfulness and steadfast love the psalmist sings (*Ps*. 89:1, 7, 26, 27), who punishes transgression and scourges iniquity and yet does not remove from Israel (= David?) His mercy (vv. 32 and 33) is the peculiar insight of the Old Testament.

Israel's Father-Creator is no despot who imposes His will and breaks every form of resistance. He is not fashioned in the image of Eastern patriarchic society in which the head of the family holds unchallenged authority. His faithfulness exceeds that of an earthly father: "My father and my mother have forsaken me, but the Lord will take me up" (*Ps*. 27:10).

That this is not an isolated sentiment we know from the latter part of the book of *Isaiah* which summarizes and brings to a culmination the prophetic knowledge of God the Father as no other text: "For thou art our Father, though Abraham does not know us and Israel does not acknowledge us; thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer from of old is Thy name" (*Is*. 63:16).

That God is Father-Creator is the background upon which the pattern of biblical narrative is woven. It is Israel's most precious knowledge.

Notes to Chapter I

1. M. Buber, *Two Types of Faith*, 37 fl.
2. The anarthrous use of the noun: ἐν υἱῷ has here, as elsewhere in the Epistle to the Hebrews, special significance. It is obvious from the context that 'a Son' is too weak a translation. Cf. B. F. Westcott, *Hebrews*, 1892, 7. The S.R.V. is here at fault and ought to be amended.
3. Cf. Plato, *Republic*, 11 382.
4. Scholars regard *Gen*. 2 as an extreme example of the most primitive layer of the J source revealing a naive anthropomorphic description of God. (Cf. H. H. Rowley, *The Growth of the Old Testament*, 1950, 25) But almost similar anthropomorphic expressions we find in the most lofty parts of prophetic writings, e.g. *Deutero-Isaiah*. Apparently the ancient Hebrew was not

perplexed by such features. This means no denial that *Gen*. 2 represents a more primitive view than does *Gen*. 1.

5. *Entelechela—en telei echein*—"to be in perfection"—i.e. to become actual what is potential. For the concept see Windelband-Heimsoeth, *Lehrbuch d. Gerch. derPhilosophie*, 1948, 117.
6. *Encycl. Biblica*, 3324.
7. So Dillmann: cf. *H.D.B*., II 199a.
8. Cf. Moses Maimonides, *The Guide for the Perplexed*, English translation by M. Friedlander, 1947, 191 fl.
9. Cf. Alfred Jeremias, *The Old Testament in the Light of the Ancient East*, Engl. 1911, I 143 fl.; for the Babylonian accounts of creation see Assyrian and Babylonian Literature, *Selected Translations*, Robert Francis Harper, 1904, 294 fl.; 299 fl. Cf. also S. R. Driver, *The Cosmogony of Genesis, The Expositor*, 3rd Series, Vol. III, 39 fl. The translator of *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, ed. by James B. Prichard, 1955, p. 6 assumes that *Ra* creates by word of mouth but this is contradicted by what follows.
10. *Op. cit*., 171; It is interesting to note that Thomas Aquinas was not so convinced that *creation ab aeterno* is incompatible with the Eternity of God and left it an open question: cf. R. P. Phillips, *Modern Thomistic Philosophy*, 1935, II 338.
11. For the Thomistic point of view see Phillips, *op. cit*., II 329 fl. In this connection Parmenides's view is of special interest. He denies a beginning to the cosmos on the basis of dialectical reasoning: because the cosmos is, it neither was nor will be since it is now; and because it is continuous it could have had no origin, since it could not originate from what is not, it also could not originate from what exists, since what exists is in itself all that there is. Such is more or less the summary of Parmenides's thought as given by D. J. Furley (cf. *The Listener*, Jan. 22, 1959, 167b).
12. It is noteworthy that Thomistic philosophy has freed itself from the notion of 'creation in time' but with it has conceptualized God to such an extent that He really ceases to be Creator: cf. Phillips, *op. cit*., 336 fl.
13. Prof. S. A. Cook is obviously troubled by the concept of creation in time; cf. *The 'Truth' of the Bible*, 1938, 257, 263, 289. But on it hangs the very message of the Bible, namely that God owns this world, and that its existence is not side by side with Him, but is limited to time.
14. Cf. J. J. I. Döllinger, *The Gentile and the Jew*, English translation, vol. I 292 fl.
15. That this view is supported by the "new conceptions of physics" is one of little consequence to our thesis. Cf. Cook, *op. cit*., 3 n
16. Cf. Montefiore and Loewe, *A Rabbinic Anthology*, 1938, 64, 104 (with appropriate references).
17. Cf. C. J. Gadd, *Ideas of Divine Rule in the Ancient East*, 1948, 15 fl.
18. Cf. C. G. Montefiore's complaint in his Hibbert Lectures for 1892, *Origin and Growth of Religion as Illustrated by the Religion of the Ancient Hebrews*, 1897, 463 fl.
19. *lbid*., 443.
20. R.S.V. reads 'argue' but the literal meaning of the verb is here better employed: *nishaphtah yahad*.
21. *Ps*. 89:7, cf. R.S.V. note.

II. THE CREATION OF MAN

Hebrew anthropology is determined by the conviction that God truly speaks and that He addresses Himself to man. It is often said that man creates God according to his own image.[1] In the Bible we find the reverse: here man sees God as utterly dissimilar to himself. It is the soberness of the biblical estimate of man which is specially impressive when viewed in the light of Greek tradition. In Greek mythology, the distance between the gods and man is reduced to a minimum; in fact there is hardly a difference between them; they all have the same origin. The ancient Greek poets sang: "The family of gods and men is one: Twin breaths are we, of one same mother born."[2] Zeus himself, according to the older myths, is no more than the ancestor of a clan by intercourse with a mortal woman.

In the biblical view, man is never equal to God. Even *Ps*. 8 knows the difference between Creator and creature. Man is made of earth and is as brittle as clay. His breath is in his nostrils and he is of small account (*Is*. 2:22). There is a striking similarity between the view of *Gen*. 2 and *Isaiah* 2 regarding man: both know of his frailty and precarious position. The same attitude we find throughout the rest of the Bible: man's time is limited (*Ps*. 90:10); he flourishes and wilts like the grass of the field (*Is*. 40:6 fl); he is made of dust and to dust he returns (*Gen*. 3:20). Yet he is different from the beast and holds a position uniquely his own. The difference between man and the rest of creation is indicated by the fact that he is created in the image of God.

1. The *Imagio Dei* Concept

Sir James G. Frazer, in his comparative study of *Folk-lore in the Old Testament*, devotes the first chapter to legends which tell of the creation of man. He goes for his material far and wide to illustrate the connection of the *Genesis* account with similar accounts of primitive people. Some of these legends vividly remind us of the story in *Genesis*, specially the feature that man was made of clay. From the anthropologists' point of view some of the legends are nearer scientific fact, specially the ones which suggest gradual evolution. Frazer quotes the myth of the aborigines of the Caroline Islands, who regard themselves related to animals, specially fishes. Even more modern are the views of some of the inhabitants of Celebes who "stoutly affirmed that the apes on that island were their forefathers".[3] Other legends are not so up-to-date. The Kayans of Borneo think that man descended from a tree and the Australian aborigines include among their ancestors swans, ducks and other species of water fowl.

The characteristic feature of the biblical account is the *imago Dei* concept. Looking through Frazer's material we can safely say that there is nothing to suggest a similar concept in the large material he collected. Only one legend comes near it, but even Frazer overlooks the fact, as the similarity is only apparent.

The Bila-an, a tribe in the Philippine Islands, tell of a certain being called Melu, a giant creature of outsize proportions, who is supposed to have fashioned man "according to his own likeness out of the leavings of the scurf whereof he had moulded the earth".[4] But the resemblance to the biblical story is only accidental. This can be recognized immediately from the fact that the scurf used by Melu resulted from rubbing his body in order to preserve its

whiteness. There is here no serious act of creation; Melu is only amusing himself. There is neither purpose nor design behind the act. The tenor of the biblical story is quite different.

In *Genesis*, man, in spite of his creatureliness, has a relationship to God which marks him out from the rest of creation. He therefore cannot be classed with other creatures, though physically he is part and parcel of the material world. There is an interesting connection between the story of *Genesis* and the view expressed in *Ps* 8:4 fl: "What is man that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him but little lower than God, and crownest him with glory and honour." *Ps*. 8 reflects the view of *Genesis*: the poet knows both the dignity and frailty of man at the same time. What is man? And yet He has made him a little lower than God!

In the Psalmist's question, the answer is already posited: what is man? – a small, frail creature. Yet God visits him and raises him to fellowship. Herein lies man's dignity and significance. It is within God's original design that man should occupy such a position.

The Bible presupposes a hierarchical order of existence: matter, living creatures, man. In man the three are united: man is made of soil, is inbreathed with the Spirit of God, and is a living creature. Herein lies the uniqueness of his position that in him matter carries the image of God.

The *imago Dei* concept is here, however, not philosophically but morally conceived.[5] It has nothing to do with the immortality of the soul. This is a concept foreign to the Bible. Man is no little god rivalling the Creator. Those who link the *imago Dei* concept in *Genesis* with Plato's doctrine of the immortality of the soul, artificially superimpose a foreign idea which ill-befits the Hebrew writer. Not only *Genesis*, but the rest of the Bible, including the New Testament, knows nothing of the immortality of the soul. We are told that God alone has immortality (1 *Tim*. 6:16) and that man is a mortal creature whose days are counted. Immortality of the soul and Eternal Life are two divergently different concepts which must never be confused. Immortality of soul is an inherent quality in man, whereas Eternal Life is the gift of God. That man carries immortality by virtue of his humanity is a pagan thought; in the Bible, man possesses no such autonomy.[6] The doctrine of the immortality of the soul entered Christian thinking by the back door and stems from a foreign source. Barth rightly insists that not only body but soul also is nothing but a creature. The Bible, by insisting upon man's total dependence upon God, says no, not only to Gnostic dualism, but also to every form of monistic spiritualism.[7]

We now receive a glimpse of how the biblical pattern moulds and dominates the narrative so as to assert the absolute sovereignty of God. The story of the Bible is the story about man *vis-â-vis* God and it is at the very beginning of that story that the relationship is carefully defined: man is a creature; man is a special creature in a privileged position; man stands under the authority of God.

Adam is not defined racially but according to species. It is not Hebrew man before God, but plain *man* before God, which is the subject of the opening chapters of *Genesis*. Shimon ben Azzai (2nd century), the rabbi, was right when he quoted *Gen*. 5:1 to prove the basis of the Torah: "This is the book of the generations of Adam. in the likeness of God made He him."[8]

The prophetic universalism implied in the story of *Genesis* was not entirely lost on the rabbis, as can be seen from the case of Ben Azzai and others.[9] Though the rabbis were not able to draw the ultimate conclusions from the obvious universalism which characterized the prophets yet it profoundly affected their attitude to the Gentile world.

For the writer of *Genesis* there was no doubt: the God of Israel is Creator of mankind. All men carry God's image and stand in the same relationship to God. This knowledge has profoundly affected the history of humanity and given it a new direction. Whereas Aristotle could speak of a slave as an "animated tool",[10] Philo, the Hebrew philosopher, with the biblical tradition behind him, said: "Servants are free by nature, no man being naturally a slave."[11]

The emancipation of the human race began when a nameless Hebrew prophet uttered the awe inspiring words: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him" (*Gen*. 1:27).

2. Man’s Sickness

In Genesis the loftiness of man's position is strangely counterbalanced by the empirical knowledge of human frailty. Not only is man constitutionally dust and ashes, but also his moral stature is precarious. His position is characterized as standing between God's commandment and the whisper of the serpent.

For the metaphysician this raises the crucial problem as to the origin of evil. But the Bible does not concern itself with metaphysical issues. It does not attempt a reasoned explanation but frankly acknowledges the terrifying fact: evil holds man in thraldom. The Old Testament knows about evil, as it knows about God, not dialectically but existentially. How God and evil are co-related is not a biblical problem; the fact of evil is part of the pattern of life and an ever-present possibility with man.

We would be mistaken to take the story of the Fall as the main source for a doctrine concerning man. This dramatized story intends first, to give an explanation of how it happened that man became a fugitive; second, it intends to explain the moral aspect of the human position in relation to God, namely that man is a rebel. The extent of man's sickness is not expressed in the story of the Fall but in what follows: fratricide, the art of warfare, moral decadence, etc. Hence the story of the flood, the story of Sodom and Gomorrah, the sin of Lot, the story of Jacob. What the writer of *Genesis* thinks about man is summarized in the familiar words: "The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him in his heart . . ." (*Gen*. 6:5 fl).

This extreme pessimism is not an isolated instance but a frequent recurrence in the Old Testament. God's contention with man is the theme of the Bible. Israel's idolatry, his faithlessness, his proneness to moral aberration, are only examples of the general state of man's moral nature. The story of Israel is in a true sense the story of mankind. It is for this reason that Jeremiah can legitimately declare the human heart "deceitful above all things and desperately corrupt" (17:9), though he began by stating: that it was upon the tablet of Judah's heart that sin was engraved with the point of a diamond (19:1). Yet man's sickness does not mar God's original purpose. God is greater than man.

On this point there can be no difference. Whatever explanation may be offered for God's long-suffering, it is not His helplessness that allows the existence of evil.

In the book of *Job*, and in *Deutero-Isaiah*, and also occasionally in the *Psalms*, God makes use of evil for His greater glory. It could not be otherwise if His sovereignty is to be taken seriously. There can be no rival to His power. The 'adversary' (Satan) can only enjoy limited scope, the Kingdom belongs to God alone: "I form light and create darkness, I make peace and create evil, I am the Lord who do all these things" (*Is*. 45:7).[12]

The context of this verse extends beyond the 45th chapter of *Isaiah* and covers the rest of the Bible: "I am the Lord, and there is no other, besides me there is no God."[13] God allows evil, but it is man who holds the balance: "Sin is couching at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it" (*Gen.* 4:7).

The encounter with evil is dramatically depicted in the story of the Fall. This exquisite piece of symbolic writing, with its rich imagery, is only equalled by the story of Christ's temptation in the wilderness. The two stories are complementary and should be read together. The latter wants to bring out the difference between the first and the second Adam. Where the first Adam failed, the second Adam succeeded. The contrast is worked out with great subtlety: whereas first man surrounded by all the comforts of paradise lusts after the forbidden fruit and thus becomes disobedient; the Son of Man under the severe circumstances of the desert successfully withstands the temptation in humble obedience to God.

Both stories thus touch upon the same subject which forms the central theme of the Bible: obedience versus disobedience; or love of God versus self-love. This is the characteristic biblical diagnosis of mans' sickness. Man, the chief actor in the drama of history, is never presented in the role of a hero. He always appears in his true nature: unreliable, rebellious, selfish. Left to himself he misinterprets his position and becomes the willing tool of evil. Man is unable to uphold the balance and instinctively bends towards negation of design and purpose. He introduces a harsh dissonance in the otherwise harmonious universe so that God grieves for having created man (*Gen*. 6:6).

But man is not left to himself. At the very beginning of man's story the other Voice is heard. The Voice from beyond calls man to his senses by addressing to him two fundamental questions: "Where art thou?" (*Gen*. 3:9). "What hast thou done?" (*Gen*. 4:10). These two questions rephrased a thousand times and put in many different contexts re-echo from the pages of the Bible. When scholars try to define the unity of the Bible, they can only find it in its fundamental purpose which is a call to repentance.[14] The parable of the Prodigal Son is thus a masterly paraphrase of the Divine-human relationship as seen by the prophets: God waiting for the rebellious son to return. But He does not content Himself with passively waiting; He sends His messengers to bring the wayward son home again: "From the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt to this day, I have persistently sent all my servants the prophets to them, day after day, yet they did not listen to me, or incline their ear, but stiffened their neck. They did worse than their fathers" (*Jer*. 7:25 fl).

That man stiffens his neck and refuses to listen is a symptom of his sickness. God's 'regret' at creating man is an unusual attitude and has no parallel. The remedy is not destruction but warning at the consequences of sin. Judgement in the Bible is always the

inevitable consequence when everything else has failed. In the story of the Fall, judgement is by no means the last word. Man goes into exile, but God goes after him. We doubt whether Sir James Frazer's interpretation of the story is correct. He thinks that the main purpose of the legend is to explain the reason why it is man's destiny to die. Perhaps originally this may have been the intention, but in *Genesis* the emphasis lies somewhere else. Frazer complains that the "Jehovistic, writer has mangled and distorted" the original tale to suit his own purpose.[15] But in this very 'distortion' lies the whole significance of the biblical message.

The editor of this delightfully primitive myth was no savage, but a man of great moral and psychological insight. He has remarkable knowledge of the true nature of man. It is difficult to visualize an ignorant Bedouin spinning a yarn of such profound symbolism. The meaningfulness of the symbolism is implied in the text and is not the invention of exegetes. It is a mistake to be deceived by the unaffected simplicity of the form.[16] Behind it is the consummate skill of a great visionary who knows how to charge a primitive legend with infinite meaning. The purpose of the story is not to explain the reason of man's mortality, but the fact of his severance from God; mortality is the inevitable consequence. His second purpose is to bring out the nature of man's rebellion: a desire to be like God. This to the writer is the highest form of presumption.

If we accept Eduard Whiner's ingenious explanation of the sentence: *yad'a tov va-r'a* – 'knowing good and evil', we receive a further hint as to the nature of man's rebellion. Whiner maintains that the verb *yad'a* does not only mean to know, but can mean to decide *about* good and evil.[17] Man thus usurps God's prerogative and wilfully places himself in a position of anti-God. The subtle whisper of the serpent: *eritis sicut dii*, gives away man's intention. Man is not content to rule under God, he lusts for ultimate power. If this is the right exegesis and in accordance with the writer's original intention, then we find here a most up-to-date diagnosis of man's ailment: lust for power.[18] Philosophers and psychologists are agreed that the will-to-power dominates the human personality, though the degree may differ.[19] This basic tendency within man which the New Testament calls hybris-arrogance or insolence (cf. *Rom*. 1:30) is the root of his problem. Man, by setting himself up as god or anti-god, oversteps the order of creation and finds himself at variance with God and man.

The biblical meaning of idolatry is that man presumes to choose his god. By this act he reverses the given relationship of Creator to creature. The given order according to the Bible is that God makes man; the violation of that order is when man makes god. The prophets never tire to deride and inveigh against the folly of such action.

The root of idolatry is the cult of self which finds expression in pride when the "heart be lifted up" and man says in his heart, "My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth" (*Deutr*. 8:12-20).

Worship of self is not the invention of our modern age, but is as old as the human race. Nietzsche speaks not only for himself but for the rest of humanity when he lets Zarathustra say: ". . . If I may reveal my heart entirely unto you, my friends: if there were gods how could I endure not to be God! Therefore there are no gods."[20]

Behind this attitude of self-adulation is the craving for unrestricted freedom. Heinrich Heine, with naive candour, put into verse what usually remains an inarticulate wish:

I desire my full right to freedom, and find I the smallest restriction,
then even paradise is changed for me to suffering and affliction.[21]

The poet speaks out of the heart of humanity. The hidden will-to-power dominates man in all his relationships. Unrestricted freedom is a wish which carries annihilation in its wake. Here the creature does not only rebel against his creatureliness, but sets himself up above God, who consents to act within the laws of nature.

The story of the Fall conveys in symbolic language the true nature of original sin. What in *Gen*. 3 is described as a single occurrence in time is in history the recurring experience of every human being. The story of the Fall is a dramatization of the pathological condition of man both as an individual and also as the heir of past generations. Psychology may state the case in different language, but in essence it amounts to the same thing "the natural attitude of the individual toward his fellow is that of strife."[22] The Bible, with deeper insight, extends man's aggressiveness from his fellow man to his Creator, it shows him to be a rebel. The statement extends from the individual to society. The prophets declare Israel to be a rebellious people. (*Is*. 30:9; cf. *Is*. 1:4; *Jer*. 4:17; 5:23.) The Bible therefore sees the unfolding of human history as the working out of man's rebellion in all his relationships. Human society is heavily weighted by the fact of man's sickness. Biblical history is written to illustrate this fact. What the prophet says about Babylon is equally applicable to all civilizations our own included: "You felt secure in your wickedness, you said, 'No one sees me', Your wisdom and your knowledge led you and you said in your heart, 'I am, and there is no one besides me'." *Is*. 47:10).

Notes to Chapter II

1. Ludwig Feuerbach's criticism of Christianity is mainly based in this premise; cf. his *Das Wesen des Christentums.*
2. Quoted by Döllinger, I 296.
3. Cf. Sir James George Frazer, *Folk-lore in the Old Testament*, 1919, I 35.
4. Frazer, *op. cit*., I 16.
5. This is not completely foreign to Greek thinking. Plato calls the good man god-like Θεῷ ὅμοιος, cf. Minos, 12; for similar expressions, see C. T. Ramage, *Bible Echoes in Ancient Classics*, 1878, 5.
6. Cf. J. Jocz, "Religion and the Gospel", *Journal of Transactions of the Victoria Institute,* vol. LXXXIV. For the whole subject see D. R. G. Owen, Body and Soul (no date).
7. Cf. Otto Weber, *Karl Barth's Church Dogmatics*, English translation, 1953, 23. The immortality of the soul as a doctrine is of special danger to our modern age in which man asserts his autonomy with demonic ruthlessness. The editors of the report *Towards the Conversion of England* (1945) were quick to recognize the implications of this pagan doctrine and urged that it be jettisoned: "The idea of the inherent indestructibility of the human soul (or consciousness) owes its origin to Greek, not to Bible, sources. The central theme of the New Testament is eternal life, not for anybody and everybody, but for believers in Christ as risen from the dead. The choice is set before man here and now." (Cf. *Towards the Conversion of England*, 1945, 23. The report quotes no less an authority than Bp. Charles Gore, whose orthodoxy has never been doubted. Cf. Charles Gore, *Belief in God*, 130 fn. For a careful discussion of the whole subject see the learned treatise by F. Townley Lord, *The Unity of Body and Soul*, London, 1929, specially 109 fl; 128 fl; 226 fl.

8. Sifra, *ad loc*; cf. also Gen. R. *ad loc* (last para). Cf. also *Jew. Encycl*. II 673a.
9. R. Jeremiah (4th century) said: "When do we know that a Gentile who practises the law is equal to the High Priest? Because it says, 'Which if a *man* do he shall live through them'. (*Lev*. 18:5). The rabbi continues to quote text after text to prove that with God there is no difference. For the whole passage see Montefiore and Loewe, *Rabb. Anthol*., 564. There are many other passages to the same effect.
10. Aristotle, *Politics*, I 1253b.
11. Philo, *De spec. leg*., II 69.
12. The R.S.V. reads: "I make weal and create woe. . . ." But we prefer the more literal meaning.
13. The question as to the extent of henotheism in the Old Testament is not easily decided. Kautzsch thinks that even Moses was not strictly a Monotheist. (Cf. *H.D.B*., Extra Vol. 625b). There can, however, be no doubt as to the position of the prophets.
14. C. H. Dodd, *The Bible To-day*, 1947, 2; H. H. Rowley, *The Unity of the Bible*, 1953. For Rowley the unity of the Bible consists primarily in a unity of the process and development. Cf. *Ibid*., 15. He calls this a "dynamic unity".
15. Frazer, *op. cit*., I 51.
16. Prof. H H. Rowley thinks that the anthropomorphisms are "conflicting with a more exalted view of God": cf. *The Growth of the Bible*, 1950, 23. But similar anthropomorphism runs through sections of the Old Testament where there is a most exalted view of God; cf. *Is*. 40:10: "Behold, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold his reward is with him, and his recompense before him."
17. For the manifold meaning of the verb see Brown, Driver, Briggs, Hebrew Lexicon.
18. H. Türck, *Pandora and Eva, Menschwerdung und Schöpfertum*, 1931, 48 fl. Türck depends upon the exegesis of Eduard Böhmer, *Das erste Buch der Thora*, 1862. It is interesting to note that Francis Bacon already interpreted the story of Adam's Fall in a similar way. Man aspired "to make total defection from God and so depend wholly upon himself." (Francis Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning*, I, VI 6; W. A. Wright's edition, Oxford, 1873.)
19. C. Charles Baudouin, *Studies in Psychoanalysis*, English translation, 1922, 90; Jung speaks of the power-complex, cf. C. G. Jung, *Psychological Types*, English translation, 1944, 582. Will-to-power in extreme cases becomes megolomania; cf. William McDougall, *An Outline of Psychology*, 1923, 428.
20. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, English translation by Thomas Common, 98 (slightly modified).
21. The author's translation.
22. Alexis Carrel, *Man, The Unknown*, 1936, 208.

III. Man in Society

In the Bible man is assumed to be a gregarious creature: "It is not good that man should be alone." Human society begins with the introduction of Eve. The writer is no anthropologist and his approach to society is entirely sociological. Human society presents to him a moral problem. The right and wrong of human relationships is his chief concern. For this reason he places the story of fratricide at the very beginning. This is by no means accidental. The motive for Cain's murder is psychologically well-founded. Cain slays his brother because of jealousy, but it is 'religious' jealousy. Cain is provoked to envy by his brother's special favour with God. But with God there is no favouritism, hence the editor's interjection: "Why are you angry and why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted?" (*Gen*. 4:6). These questions come as a surprise to the reader, for the first impression is that God accepted Abel's sacrifice not because he did well, but because he brought the firstlings of his flock (cf. v. 4). It is more than probable that originally the story was intended to show God's special favour obtained by means of animal sacrifice. The editor however holds a moral view and bends the trend of the narrative towards it.

The story of Cain's murder reveals the moral concern of the writer. For the editor of *Genesis*, religion is inseparable from morality. Amoral religion is odious to him; Cain's crime is the more heinous as it is motivated by pseudo-religion. This stamps the writer as belonging to the prophetic school. Here moral rectitude and personal responsibility before God are the marks of religion. With these go belief in the sanctity of human life. To assault man, who was created in the image of God, is an act of rebellion against his Creator. The background of such a lofty attitude is the flaming words of the Holy God: Thou shalt do no murder!

A murderer is no hero, but a coward, in the opinion of the editor of *Genesis*. Lamech's martial song, and Cain's dastardly deed are of the same order; they express man's will to decide about good and evil. Be it noted that Lamech is the direct descendent of Cain. The writer obviously intends to illustrate the Fall and its consequences; he thus reveals man as a rebel against society because he is a rebel against God. Man was created for fellowship with God but becomes an outcast; man was created for fellowship with man but becomes a murderer. In this situation man finds himself in a twofold contradiction: history is the working out of the consequences of basically wrong relationships.

1. The Nations

The story of the nations is the story of war – *homo homini lupus*. We are meant to read between the lines of the opening chapters of *Genesis* which contain the characteristic prophetic protest against godless society.

The God of moral rectitude is revealed as Judge of immoral society. The story of the flood must be viewed in this light.

The Writer uses the ancient tradition of the deluge[1] to show the danger to which godless society is exposed. But to him godlessness is no philosophical proposition, it is only the reverse side of immorality: "The Lord saw that the wickedness (lit. evil, *r'a*) of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil

continually" (*Gen*. 6:5). The flood is God's answer to human degeneracy. We would miss the point the writer is making if we fastened our attention upon the geophysical location of the phenomenon. That such floods are verifiable incidents in history has little to do with the intention of the narrative. What the writer wants to convey is not the historical fact, but the inference from it, namely that God is both Judge and Lord over and against man. Man cannot with immunity break the moral laws set by the Creator. There is a limit to man's wickedness and in the end he has to pay for his deeds. Conformity with the moral order of the universe is a condition for human survival. Noah escapes the consequences of the flood not because he is God's favourite, but only because he "was a righteous man, blameless in his generation" (*Gen*. 6:9). This is summed up in one simple statement: "Noah walked with God."

In the story of the flood as presented by the writer of *Genesis* we have indicated the prophetic view of history: there are no chance happenings; everything is by design. All phenomena in nature and all incidents of history are fraught with meaning and have moral significance. It is the prophet's task to interpret the vicissitudes of history and the experiences of man in such a manner that these become meaningful and related to the human-divine encounter. This is the basic principle of biblical historiosophy.

It is with this purpose in view that the story of the nations is unfolded by the writer of *Genesis*.

2. Human Inter-relatedness

It is no mean achievement on the part of the biblical writer to present the human race as derived from one common stock. Adam – man is the ancestor of all humanity. God is the creator of man; all men are inter-related; these two points are important to the writer. Shem, Ham and Japheth are brothers and belong to the same family.[2] Adam is neither Hebrew nor non-Hebrew, he is plain man without a label. Here is the charter of human equality which has had such profound effect upon Western civilization.

The ancient Synagogue was not unaware of the implication of the common ancestry of mankind. We have noted how Shimon ben Azzai (early 2nd century) in order to prove the inter-relatedness of all humanity cited the text: "This is the generation of Adam . . . in the likeness of God made He him" (*Gen*. 5:1).[3] When we remember that a man of the stature of Plato never overcame his sense of superiority in relation to slaves[4] and could only think in terms of class-society,[5] we will appreciate the liberality of the Hebrew attitude.

The biblical concept of the basic unity of mankind is no mean achievement in days when racial taboos were even stronger than they are today. It is of some significance that the slave in Hebrew society, who was usually a foreigner, was admitted into the family. He was circumcised (*Gen*. 17:12 fl); he was included in the sabbath rest (*Ex*. 20:10); he was expected to join in the Passover celebrations (*Ex*. 12:44).[6] There is evidence to show that at least at some periods of Hebrew history inter-marriage with foreigners was a frequent occurrence. It was only in post-exilic times that a more chauvinistic policy was adopted,[7] though the writer of *Genesis* frequently tends in favour of an endogamous attitude as practised by a pastoral people.[8]

The unity of the human race is logically connected with Monotheism. If Yahwe is the only God and if He is Creator, then of necessity He is the Creator of all men.

This prophetic insight was however challenged by the facts of history. Not only is humanity divided racially, but within the same race there are rifts which seem to contradict the brotherhood of man. This disturbing fact requires an explanation and the writer of *Genesis* sets out to provide the answer.

3. Divided Humanity

The answer which the writer of Genesis provides for the empirical fact of divided humanity reveals his method of handling ancient myth. Although the origin of the myth is not clear, it is obvious that it rests upon an old tradition and reveals a Babylonian background.

In the story of the Tower of Babel, as in the story of Sodom and Gomorrah, the point the writer makes is God's judgement upon civilized society which always tends toward godlessness. But godlessness for the Hebrew has a moral connotation; it begins with man's autonomy before God and ends with immorality. The Tower of Babel illustrates man's striving after autonomy in the face of God, the root of all sin.

The ill-founded etymological explanation attached to the story must not obscure the deeper meaning intended by the editor. The story is so shaped as to exercise incisive criticism upon urban society with its overweening self-assertiveness. The story is used more as an illustration than to convey a fact. It is impregnated with symbolic meaning and it is left to the reader to recover for himself the veiled hints of criticism against urban civilization. These are already provided by the motive which prompts the building of the tower: to make themselves a name. This Promethean attempt at the impossible is an insult to God whose authority is challenged: "Nothing that they purpose to do will now be impossible for them" (*Gen*. 11:6, R.S.V.). However, the builders of the tower have forgotten to reckon with the Master-builder of the Universe. It is the writer's conviction that man's power is limited by design; he can only go thus far; to exceed his limits spells disaster. The overbearing tendency of civilization carries the seed of confusion. The German historian Oswald Spengler in two large volumes gave detailed elaboration of this fact.[9]

The story of the building of the Tower of Babel is not the only instance of prophetic criticism of city civilization. The prophets show a marked hostility to city life. (Cf. *Jer*. 35 the story of the Rechabites.) In the city men congregate not like a family but like a herd. Language is here not the expression of inner unity but of commercial gain. Unity is here achieved not by means of free fellowship but by standardized anonymity. The city of Babel is not the City of God, but the city of the Adversary. Babel stands for confusion, and the play of words in *Gen*. 9:11 is probably more than mistaken etymology; it is an expression of prophetic contempt of all that a pagan city stands for. Behind the parable is the conviction that God's judgement rests upon godless society. The story of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah only elaborates the point. The destruction of the two cities will undoubtedly rest upon authentic tradition, but what interests the editor is not so much the historic fact as the moral to be drawn from this otherwise natural disaster. For the Hebrew prophet every occurrence is an Act of God and carries a moral implication. The fall of two cities cannot be just explained away as the result of an earthquake. God is behind every phenomenon; this is

the deepest prophetic conviction. In the perspective of the prophet all natural phenomena operate on a spiritual level; the natural and the spiritual are only two different aspects of the same fact. There is an organic unity which pervades all life because the author of life is One. Moral laws therefore interpenetrate all phenomena. The fall of Babylon as described by *Isaiah* (chs. 13 and 14); the prophecy against Assyria and Nineveh as uttered by *Zephaniah* (2:13); the judgement upon the great empires in the book of *Daniel*; all lead back to a moral issue. In this respect there is complete agreement on the part of all biblical writers, no matter how widely separated they were in time: the moral issue is the decisive factor in human affairs. What man sows he must reap; there is no escape from the moral order established by God. However man may try to evade God's righteousness he can never succeed. History presents the spectacle of rising, falling, floundering humanity, over which God inexorably pursues His purpose. Empires may perish, nations may be swept away into captivity, civilizations may disintegrate, but God remains Lord and Judge.

The dispersion of the nations must be viewed from the peculiarly biblical aspect of history where events move on a double plane: horizontally and vertically. God acts and man acts at the same time; but God also counteracts: this is called judgement. Thus Pharaoh hardens his heart but it is God who hardens it. The nations become dispersed because of their disunity, but it is God who disperses them. Evil carries its own punishment, but it is God who uses even evil to serve His purpose. From His hand there is no escape. The Most High rules the kingdom of men (*Dan*. 4:17, 25, 32), though seen horizontally it is man who rules. But from the vantage point of the prophet, i.e seen vertically, God is the only Ruler: "Dominion belongs unto God and he rules over the nations" (*Ps*. 22:28). On the plane of history, humanity may appear divided, nations may war against each other; yet man belongs to God and behind the divisions of the nations is the unifying purpose of Almighty God. The conviction that the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof (*Ps*. 24:1) implies already a goal for history and spells meaningful purpose. "The Lord reigns" is the war-cry of the Psalms. Because God's reign is near at hand, He is and remains the Lord of the nations.

4. Biblical Universalism

There is a subtle difference between Israel's God and the God of Israel. This double genitive expresses two diametrically opposed concepts. In the first case God is Israel's property and Israel has an exclusive right to Him; in the second case, Israel is God's property and He does with him according to His good-pleasure. Here Israel has no monopoly upon God and does not dictate to Him. The God of Israel cannot be bribed and has no special favourites; He is Lord and Owner of mankind. That God is the Lord of the nations is the great insight of prophetic faith.

No one can read *Psalm* 67 and deny Old Testament universalism: it is the logical corollary that God is the Creator of man.

On the surface, the Old Testament appears to be a nationalistic book which concerns itself with the life and struggle of one single people. But on closer examination it reveals an undercurrent of universalism which frequently broadens to include the nations of the world. This does not mean that the Old Testament is free of particularistic, even chauvinistic traits. A library so varied and covering such a stretch of time could not be anything else but a mixture

of a variety of attitudes. But by reason of the fact that the two views exist side by side, the one must not obscure our vision of the other. Old Testament universalism has been sadly neglected by scholars.

Here we will fasten our attention upon the universalistic tendencies which properly belong to the prophetic pattern of the Old Testament. To understand the position we must realize that the Old Testament is the battlefield of two opposing trends. We can almost say that the spiritual history of Israel is the story of the struggle between universalism and nationalism; we can go even further and say: had nationalism won there would have been no spiritual history of Israel in accordance with our previous definition. Once we make universalism the focal point of Hebrew prophetism, the connection between Old Testament and New Testament springs into perspective. In the Gospel and in the message of the early Church, prophetic universalism reaches its highest expression and reveals the extent to which Jesus is the fulfiller of the Law and the Prophets. It is in the messianic proclamation of the Kingdom of God that the prophetic vision begins to take concrete form; i.e. the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. The fact that the nations respond to the invitation and come to the God of Jacob to be taught His ways and to walk in His paths (*Is*. 2:3) was of no small significance to the early Church.

Biblical universalism springs from the moral demands which God makes upon man irrespective of ethnic grouping. Although idols are an abomination to the Hebrew prophet, he regards even the idolator under obligation to keep the moral laws which originate from God. Respect for these laws goes far beyond the confines of Israel. To break these laws entails punishment as in the case of Sodom and Gomorrah. These are *pagan* cities which are brought to judgement by the God of Israel. An interesting case is that of Abimelech, the king of Gerar, who took Sarah to wife on the understanding that she is Abraham's sister (*Gen*. 20:1 fl). We meet here a non-Israelite who is as aware of the sin of adultery as any pious Israelite. The writer obviously expects even a heathen to keep the moral code. The same applies to what the rabbis later called the Noachidic commandments which are held to be the basic moral laws for humanity (cf. *Gen*. 9:4-7). Be it noted that according to the biblical account, long before Israel appears on the scene, God makes a covenant with mankind and sets the rainbow as a sign and token of His promise (*Gen*. 9:13 fl). The human race has a common ancestor whose name is simply MAN (Adam); the various races spring from the same family. Israel is not a people apart but belongs to the family of nations. In *Gen*. 10 we encounter a long list tabulating the nations as known to the writer at the time. The rabbis accounted for seventy nations which, according to their view, represented the whole population of the world. All these were under the Covenant of God with the sons of Noah. The God of Israel is here pronounced to be the God of all humanity.

The same universalism we meet in *Genesis* extends to other parts of the Old Testament. Even the book of *Exodus* which has as its main theme the liberation of the Hebrew people from the bondage of Egypt is not entirely free from universalistic tendencies. Thus Jethro becomes the father-in-law of Moses, the national leader of Israel. Even more, in *Exodus* 18 we find Jethro rejoicing with Moses and the children of Israel over the miracle of redemption. Here is a non-Hebrew who professes faith in Jahwe because He delivered Israel from under the hand of the Egyptians and even offers sacrifices to that God: "Now I know

that Jahwe is greater than all gods," he declares. In the same chapter we find Jethro instructing Moses in the councils of God (v. 23) a fact which led scholars to suspect Medianite influence upon Hebrew Jahwism.[10]

Another interesting feature in the book of *Exodus* is the position the stranger is allotted in Israelite society: he is included in the sabbath rest; he is protected from being wronged; he is singled out for kindly treatment: "You shall not oppress a stranger; you know the heart of a stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" (*Ex*. 23:9). Though there is fierce opposition to foreign gods, the stranger is not looked upon as an enemy; he is allowed to make special claim upon Israel's hospitality.

Biblical universalism which begins with the statement that God is Creator of man, continues with remarkable persistency right through: the Old Testament. Abram's call includes a blessing for the nations: ". . . in you all the families of the earth will be blessed" (*Gen*. 12:3). The book of *Ruth*, the book of *Jonah*, the great pronouncements in the Prophets, the many Psalms, all these testify that the biblical vision extends beyond Israel to the nations of the world: "From the rising of the sun to its setting my name is great among the nations, and in every place incense is offered to my name, and a pure offering; for my name is great among the nations, says the Lord of hosts" (*Mal*. 1:11).

This is a remarkable text for it even claims the mistaken worship of the heathen world as an act of homage to the God of Israel. Even the more ambiguous text of *Micah* 4:5: "For all the peoples walk each in the name of its god, but we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever," placed in its proper context becomes an universalistic text with special emphasis upon Israel's loyalty.

Characteristically enough, even the vindictive chapter in *Zechariah* ends with the hope that the survivors of the nations will come to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts, on the feast of booths (*Zech*. 14:16).

Isaiah's great vision of universal peace, when the nations will flock to the mountain of house of the Lord to learn of His ways and to walk in His paths, is verbally repeated in *Micah* 4. We do not believe this to be a gloss but rather a purposeful repetition to indicate the continuation of the prophetic tradition which was kept alive from generation to generation.[11] One of the most magnificent texts on the subject of universalism is to he found in *Is.* 19:18-24. This text which contains a reference to the "City of the Sun" can be dated, but whatever the circumstances of the prophecy, the vision of Egypt, Assyria and Israel at peace with each other though through history they have been arch-enemies, is the most noble achievement of prophetic faith in the healing power of God. What is even more, Egypt and Assyria are ranked here before Israel and singled out for special blessing: "Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel my inheritance." A similar attitude we find in *Jeremiah* where Israel is described as *reshit tevuatoh* - the first-fruit of his harvest (*Jer*. 2:3) - implying that God's harvest goes beyond the confines of one small people. That this is the case can be seen from *Jer*. 4:2 where Israel's faithfulness to God will result in that "the nations shall bless themselves in him and in him shall they glory".

In our view the greatest triumph of universalism is achieved in the last chapter of *Isaiah*. If we understand the text aright this is the picture: the survivors from the house of Israel are sent to the Gentiles to declare God's glory among the nations. The Gentiles in return bring

back the scattered Israelites to the Holy City as an act of thanksgiving to God. While in Jerusalem some of these Gentile visitors are instituted by God as Priests and Levites to take an active part in the Temple worship. This was a dignity hitherto reserved by hereditary right for the descendants of the tribe of Levi and the house of Aaron. Thus the Gentiles are given a full share with the children of Israel in the privileges of the People of God. Here the prophetic vision finds its ultimate fulfilment: "All flesh shall come to worship before me, says the Lord" (*Is*. 66:23).

We must not conclude these remarks without due notice of the fact that the prophets knew themselves not only sent to Israel but to the neighbouring nations as well.

Isaiah has something to say to the king of Babylon (ch. 13): he has an oracle concerning Moab (ch. 15); an oracle concerning Damascus (ch. 17); an oracle concerning Egypt (ch. 19); an oracle concerning Tyre (ch. 23), etc. Most nations adjoining Israel and many far away, like Ethiopia, are the prophet's concern. The concluding chapters of the book of *Jeremiah* are almost entirely devoted to the nations: "The word of the Lord which came to Jeremiah the prophet concerning the nations" (*Jer*. 46:1). In *Ezekiel* we find a similar situation: he has a lamentation over Tyre (ch. 27), a prophecy against Egypt (ch. 29 fl), a prophecy against Edom (ch. 35), etc.

In most cases the prophet's utterance is that of judgement in recompense for cruelty to Israel. But their ultimate vision goes beyond the immediate situation and conjures up a time when Israel and the nations are united in the worship of the one and only God who is both the God of Israel and the God of the Gentiles. From here there is a straight line to the New Testament with its message of salvation to the nations of the world.

5. Human Destiny

According to the prophetic vision of the Bible man is here by the purposive will of God. Design is the necessary corollary to the belief that this world is created by a God who is both wise and good. The idea that man came into existence by chance and is a freak of nature or the play-ball of some mischievous caprice, is a pagan possibility foreign to the Hebrew mentality.

The question what is man's purpose here upon earth is not directly raised in the Bible, except perhaps in the book of *Job.* The fact that God created man is sufficient to warrant meaningful design. Man's task is to comply with the created order and to fall in with the pattern of God's will. It is characteristic for the biblical outlook that the created order is always a moral order, otherwise God would not be what He is. For man to adjust himself to God's world is to accept the Creator's will. Man's ability to fit into the order of the universe depends upon his relationship to his Creator and his fellow-creatures. Every breach of the moral order is an act of rebellion against Him who is the Source of all values. The Hebrew's respect for the created order is not confined to moral laws but extends to the physical world. It is of special interest that the law prohibiting the mixing of kinds, (*kilayim*, *Lev*. 19:19) is repeated in the Deuteronomic Code (*sha'atnez*, *Deutr*. 22:11). Whatever the origin of the taboo, for the prophetic writer it carried the meaning of respect for the order of things. Dr J. H. Hertz put it in the following words: "Man must not deviate from the appointed order of things, nor go against the eternal laws of nature as established by Divine Wisdom. What God

has ordained to be kept apart, man must not seek to mix together."[12] The same attitude of reverence for the created order is expressed in the laws regarding the Sabbath, the Sabbath year, and the year of Jubilee (*Lev*. 25). Man must exercise restraint in his dealing with other men,[13] with animals[14] and with inanimate creation. Laws regulating the attitude to slaves underwent a number of changes as did all Mosaic legislation,[15] but as a rule the humanitarian attitude prevailed. Even a non-Hebrew slave must be treated with all deference; this seems to be the implication of *Ex*. 21:26 fl where bodily injury to a slave secures his freedom. Even more remarkable is the law of refuge in the Deuteronomic Code: "You shall not give up to his master a slave who has escaped from his master to you; he shall dwell with you, in your midst, in the place which he shall chose within one of your towns, where it pleases him best; you shall not oppress him" (*Deut*. 23:15-16). This contrasts sharply with the Code of Hammurabi which regarded the harbouring of a runaway slave as a capital offence.[16] There is indeed a vast difference between the Mosaic legislation and the Greek attitude which looked upon the slave as "an animated tool".[17] The difference stems from the religious conviction that God is the Creator of all men and that man is created for a high purpose.

It is man's destiny to rule over the created world; to have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth (*Gen*. 1:28). A similar idea is expressed by the myth that God brought all the living creatures for man to name (*Gen*. 2:19 fl). Behind it is the primitive concept that knowledge of the name of a thing conveys power over it. The 8th Psalm re-echoes the deep conviction that man enjoys a singular position and in glory can only be compared to God Himself: "Thou hast made him a little less than God and dost crown him with glory and honour" (*Ps*. 8:5).

Man's problem arises from the fact that he does not manage to live up to his vocation and thus falls short of his destiny set by his Creator.

This is the dilemma of history. The Bible presents history as the arena where two wills clash - God's will and man's will. The resultant spark of that clash we call revelation. In its light we discover man and God in juxtaposition. In the Bible God makes Himself heard in opposition. Yet God is not man's foe but his friend. The call to 'return' is thus the innermost message of the Bible. It is in the call to return that the frail and fallible word of man becomes the word of the living God.

Man's destiny is to hear the Word and to respond to the call. To return means to accept God's original purpose for man - sonship. The call of the Bible is the call to the rebel to become a son of God. Herein lies the connection not only between the Old and New Testament, but also between man and the Man Jesus Christ.

Israel's role in the scheme of the Bible is to reveal not only the destiny of the individual believer who answers to the call, but also the destiny of humanity which refuses to answer: "Hear, you deaf, and look, you blind, that you may see! Who is blind but my servant, or deaf as my messenger whom I send?" (*Is*. 42:18 fl). It is because humanity's destiny is to become the People of God that Israel occupies so prominent a position in the Bible.

Notes to Chapter III

1. Sir James Frazer has a long chapter, 'The Great Flood', which presents an outline of the various and widely-spread traditions about the deluge; cf. *op. cit*., I 104-361.
2. E. O. James explains that the grouping is purely arbitrary and has political and geographical rather than ethnological significance, cp. *The Old Testament in Light of Anthropology*, 1935, 13.
3. Cf. p. 40.
4. Cf. Plato, *Republic*, VIII 549. For the Greek attitude to slaves see John J. I. Döllinger, *The Gentile and the Jew*, English translation, 1862, II 226 fl
5. Cf. *Republic*, IV 441
6. Cp. *Encyclopedia Biblica*, 1914, 4814, para. 3.
7. Cf. E. O. James, *op. cit*., 130 fl.
8. Cf. *ibid*., 21.
9. Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West*, English translation, 1945, New York, 2 vols.
10. Cf. H. H. Rowley, *From Joseph to Joshua*, 1952, 149 fl.
11. Assuming that *Isaiah* and *Micah* are more or less contemporaries the quotation will have been arranged by a circle of disciples of prophets whose task was to preserve and edit the text.
12. J. H. Hertz, *The Pentateuch and Haptorahs*, 1938, 502a.
13. This is perhaps best expressed in the Ten Commandments, specially in the Sabbath Law.
14. The taboos with regard to a kid which must not be boiled in the mother's milk, *Ex*. 23:19; 34:26; *Deut*. 14:21; the cow and the ewe which must not be killed on the same day, *Lev*. 22: 28; the nest which must not be raided with the mother-bird present, *Deut*. 14:21; may originally go back to ancient Semitic folk-lore, (cf. R. Brinker, *The Influence of Sanctuaries in Early Israel*, 1946, 25), but in the present setting intend to inculcate respect and sympathy for God's creatures.
15. Cf. David Daube's *Studies of Biblical Law*, 1947, 52 fl.
16. Cf. *H.D.B*. Extra Vol., p. 600b, para. 16.
17. Cf. the short paragraph by Dr Hertz, *op. cit*., p. 537 fl.

IV. ISRAEL

1. Election

Though the books of the Bible vary in perception and background, in one respect they reveal remarkable unanimity: here God is always known as Sovereign Lord. Whether it be *Genesis*, or *Chronicles*, or *Isaiah*, or any other book, in this respect there is no difference; the transcendent and Sovereign Lord is presented as the One who invades the sphere of human life. Whatever else the Bible says, one thing it says with undeviating uniformity: "Thine, O Lord is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all" (1 *Chron*. 29:11).

Implied in the sovereign power of God is His freedom to act against and on behalf of man. The concept of election is connected with God's freedom of action. It is therefore important to remember that election is not equivalent with privilege or favouritism, but is God's way of using man for His purpose. By election is meant the uncovering of God's predetermined council within the dimension of time. It is therefore concomitant with revelation; both concepts relate to man's original vocation: that man should be *be-zelem Elohim* - in the image of God. Election is thus not a particularistic concept applicable to certain favourites, but extends to the human race. It originates with God's choice of a clod of clay to be man with all that it implies; election means that He persists in His choice. He could break it, drop it, dash it to pieces, abandon it as worthless, but this is not within His purpose. His purpose is that man should be a person with a will, an intellect and power of decision. For only thus can man be a true person in God's Presence and enter into an I-Thou relationship. It is by God's choice that *'adamah* (earth) should be *'adam* (man); and it is as man that God addresses him: *ayekah* - where art thou?

Herein lies man's dignity and privilege that he can give an answer.

The spiritual history of Israel has something to do with God's demand: where art thou? It is man's duty to give an answer. The awareness that Israel's history is history before God is the origin of the concept of election. But this is only the subjective side of it. There is an objective element which is of even greater importance: election springs from faith in a speaking God.

The Bible never affords an explanation how God speaks; it never explains the secret of man's hearing. It simply states: the Lord said to Abram "go" and Abram went. This dialogue between God and man in question and answer is the secret of biblical revelation. Here we will have to give up all our fond ideas about religious psychology, mystical intuition, and religious insight, if we desire to approach the Bible on its own terms. We will have to accept the matter of fact statement that over against man is a God who speaks. Election is implied in the ability of human hearing.

The universalistic aspect of election – namely that man is called to be man – is contradicted in history by the particularistic aspect of election: one man hears, the other does not. This is part of the biblical pattern: God chooses Abram and not Terah; he chooses Jacob

and not Esau. The secret of God's choice must not be resolved by rational explanation if His sovereignty is to remain inviolate.[1] Here we must respect the inscrutable council of God.

But election in the Bible is never a *private* affair. God does not choose Abraham for Abraham's enjoyment. The purpose of Abraham's election is that all the families of the earth be blessed (*Gen*. 12:3). The same applies to Israel as a people: Israel's election is for the blessing of mankind. In the biblical pattern therefore, election is a principle underlying the creation of man and is an expression of the will of God:

1) That man should be man.
2) That man should hear the Speaking God.
3) That man should be able to respond as a person.

Biblical election therefore begins with the individual.

2. Election of the Individual: Abraham

We have seen that election and revelation are related concepts. When God deigns to speak, man is *called* to listen.

The story of election follows a pattern similar to the one we observed in the earlier chapters of *Genesis*. Adam and Abraham are parallel figures: Adam is called to be man; Abraham is called to a relationship with God; Adam is the father of the human race; Abraham is the father of the Hebrew people. But there is a difference: while Adam remains an exile, Abraham is called back into fellowship with God. This new relationship is indicated by the change of name: Abram becomes Abraham. This change which indicates an inner spiritual metamorphosis also contains at the same time a promise: Ab-raham = "Father of a multitude".[2] Thus vocation, election and promise are part of biblical revelation.

This poses a problem: did Abram have the freedom to refuse? Could he disobey God and still maintain his status as man? Is it possible for man to be called by God and to turn his back? How is God the sovereign Lord in view of human disobedience?

The Bible offers no answer to the question of man's freedom of choice and divine omnipotence for it is not concerned with speculative theology. It always deals with concrete events: "And God said to Abram go . . . and Abram went." We thus find our attention fastened upon an individual believer *vis-â-vis* God.

This situation of man before God we call faith. Faith is the result of divine speech and human obedience: Abram heard and obeyed. We therefore conclude that biblical revelation begins with the individual. It is through the individual that God acts; all great events in the Bible are tied to an individual life; the individual is the instrument of God's will and purpose. But the individual is never taken out of his wider context for a private life with God, say, in the desert. There are no hermits in the Bible.[3] The individual's responsibility to society grows with his knowledge of God. In fact, he becomes a focal point in the life of the nation and forms a centre both of attraction and repulsion at the same time. This is the role of the prophet. We can thus discern two converging histories: the life of the individual who heard God and the life of the nation, in constant reaction to the prophetic witness to the speaking God.

The biblical narrative runs from the individual to the group and from the group to the individual: Abraham's story widens to become the story of Israel; Israel's story narrows to

become the story of the Messiah.[4] The individual's election is always with a view to the community. We know of no instance in the Bible where this is not the case. There is a conspicuous lack of mystics who spend their life in contemplation of the 'vision of God'. Ezekiel may be sitting for seven days in silence by the river Chebar, but only to be told: "Son of man, I have made you a watchman" (*Ez*. 3:15 fl). Similarly Job's friends remain silent for seven days and seven nights but only in preparation for the dialogue and out of sympathy with a stricken man. Every biblical situation has a social background and implies a human relationship. This is clearly indicated by the case of Abram.

Abram is not a mythological person devoid of human relations. There is a family history which precedes him. God takes him out of his given connections only in order to place him in a new human relationship. The settled town-dweller becomes a pilgrim on the way to the Land of Promise. He does not set out on his journey a lonely figure: "And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son . . . and the persons they had gotten in Haran,[5] and they set forth to go to the land of Canaan" (*Gen*. 12:5). We have here the nucleus of the new community, the family of God which lives by promise.

The R.S.V. reads: "Now the Lord said to Abram, go." By introducing 'now' as a demonstrative adverb the impression is created that there is a break in the story. To our mind the ordinary conjunctive 'and' is here more appropriate. The meaning being that what was said in Chapter 11 about Abram's family is in preparation for what is to follow: though Abram belonged to a family, though he was a member of a people and a citizen of a country, yet God told him to go, and he obeyed.

Herein lies the prophetic feature in Abram's story: he hears and obeys This is not the story of a hero nor that of a martyr. It is the story of a man who is obedient to the call of God. This is what the Bible means by faith. Abraham's faith, faithfulness, obedience, places him among Israel's prophets. He is the prophetic prototype of the men of faith who hear and obey. In Jewish tradition, Abraham is counted among the prophets. This is in keeping with our thesis that *Genesis* represents a prophetic outlook and is rooted in the prophetic tradition. Abram's story, therefore, shows all the characteristics of a prophetic call: personal encounter with God, challenge to adventure of faith, a call for the sake of others.

We will now digress for a moment on the question of historicity. Is Abram a symbolic figure or does he belong to history?

Dr Crowford Howell Toy asks this question in his article on Abram.[6] His answer is that much of the narrative in Genesis is legendary. Here are his *ipsissima verba*: "The stories of Lot, Hagar and Keturah are ethnological myths; the theophanies and the destruction of the cities are legends; circumcision was not adopted by the Israelites in the way here represented; the story of the attempted sacrifice of Isaac is the product of the regal period. Abraham's kinsfolk are personifications of tribes. . . . The biography of Abraham in *Genesis* is probably to be regarded as legendary: it has grown up round sacred places, ideas and institutions."

There may be or may not be a historical kernel embedded in the narrative. Does this affect our theological exegesis or not? If Toy is right can we still treat the story of Abraham seriously?

This has been the problem since the rise of biblical criticism and accounts for most of the crisis in the Western Church. What is the answer?

To give to Abraham's story historic significance is to contradict the purpose for which it was written. The intention of the writer is not to convey historic fact. He is not writing history, but the history of faith. Abraham is here a type like Adam, Cain, etc. We have called him a prophetic prototype; he is the type of the man of God who lives by faith: ". . . and he believed the Lord and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness" (*Gen*. 15:6). It is obvious that the story is written with a purpose; the writer wants to convey the meaning of the obedience of faith and for this purpose he uses material handed down by tradition. It is an *edited* story and it is edited with great skill. In a sense it is autobiographical; Abraham stands for the writer's personal experience of God as a prophet. He knows what it is to hear, obey and venture in response to the summons of God. He knows personally about the sacrifice of country, home and comfort for the sake of a higher vocation. For Abraham's biographer in *Genesis*, Abram is not a myth but a brother in arms who stands in the same service, carries the same burden and fights for the same cause. The complete absence of every heroic feature shows how closely related the writer is to his subject: both are down-to-earth men who walk before God.

The simplicity of the narrative is a masterpiece of perfection. We would specially single out the chapter describing the sacrifice of Isaac. Behind this story is the burning protest against a concept of God which is revolting to the writer. His God requires no human sacrifices. Though God has a right to demand man's all, He himself provides the substitute, for He is a God who gives and forgives - rather than takes and bears vengeance. Abraham's God is no Moloch who gorges himself with human flesh. This is the meaning behind the drama. With the unfolding of the story of Abraham's life the features of his God become clearer.

God hears the cry of the lad Ishmael in the wilderness and comes to his rescue: "The child lifted up his voice and wept, and God heard the voice of the lad. . . ."

God sees the sorrow of the handmaid Hagar and reveals Himself to her as the "God-who-sees" (*Gen*. 16:13).

God allows Abraham to bargain with Him and is prepared to spare a wicked city for the sake of ten righteous (*Gen*. 18).

The book of Genesis may well be called the Book of Renewal, or else the Book of New Beginnings, for it consists of many new starts. God wills to give man another chance. This is brought out in the case of Adam, Cain, Noah, Abraham, Jacob and Joseph.

With Noah specially a new beginning is made with humanity. In the case of the Patriarchs a new beginning is made on a narrower scale with one single people. *Genesis* introduces the birth of a people, but its main attention is fixed upon individuals. There is profound symbolism in the change of names: Abram becomes Abraham; Jacob becomes Israel; Sarai becomes Sarah. It is obvious that in each case, though the etymology may be confused, the symbolism is carefully worked out. Every Hebrew name has meaning and to change a name is to introduce a new element into the life of a person. Such a change implies a metamorphosis of personality and a new direction. By the fact that it is God who endows the individual with a new name is indicated that He encroaches upon the affairs of men and uses them for His own purpose. This is characteristic of biblical election.

3. Election Of The Community

We have already seen how the book of *Genesis* follows a certain pattern; it is the prophetic pattern of encounter between man and God in its manifold aspects. But *Genesis* has also a further aim, namely to introduce the reader to the origins of Hebrew history. It serves as *Vorgeschichte* for what is to follow. This is done with a kind of detachment worthy of a modern historian. Behind the simplicity of the stories is profound psychological and religious insight. As an instance we would quote the biographical notes about Jacob. The whole story is so true to life, and at the same time it is an accomplished piece of literary writing. Jacob's character is never analysed, never criticized, never summarized; it is left to the reader to draw his conclusions.

First we see the young man at his parent's house; the mother's favourite and the brother's rival. The tensions in the family are indicated with such refinement and in so few words as to arouse the curiosity of the reader. Then we see Jacob in flight from his brother's wrath, a selfish, conceited young man yet not without an inner life capable of higher dreams and visions. The romance with Rachel at the house of his uncle in Paddan-aram bears out the twofold nature in Jacob's character. This selfish man who strikes a bargain with God to his own advantage, is capable of a great and lasting love. At the same time we see him a grasping schemer matching Laban's wit with his own selfishness. Here we find ourselves again in an atmosphere of stealth and family tensions. At last Jacob's stay with his in-laws becomes impossible and he leaves under humiliating circumstances.

The story of his flight and Laban's pursuit with the resulting encounter between them is a delightful example of Eastern craftiness under the guise of courtesy. Jacob's inward change is described in symbolic language with fine spiritual perception: the lonely man at the ford of Jabbok fights with God in the person of a stranger for the blessing of his soul. He leaves the field of battle victorious but limping (*Gen*. 32:22 fl). This is the turning point in Jacob's life. He receives a new name and a new dignity; but in spite of his new relationship to God, he has to pay in full for the sins of the past. This is inherent in the order of things: what a man soweth that he shall reap. There is no escape from the Nemesis of history. Yet, and this is the ultimate moral of the story, the law of cause and effect does not interfere with God's providence. Though Jacob pays dearly for the sins of his youth in terms of sorrow and heart-ache, God's promise to Abraham stands This small nomad family is destined to become a great and mighty people.

The link between God's promise to Abraham and the fulfilment of Abraham's dream is Joseph. Joseph's function is similar to that of Noah, though under different circumstances. It is said of Noah that he walked with God (*Gen*. 6:9) and of Joseph that the Lord was with him (*Gen*. 39:23). In the case of both men their moral character is stressed, but the writer is equally aware of God's sovereignty. He knows that even man's failure is woven into the design of God's purpose. This is the meaning of Joseph's story: his brothers treat him despicably and sell him into slavery, but God turns their sin into blessing. Yet the moral order remains intact: Jacob and his sons go down to Egypt which ultimately becomes a prison-house for their progenies. In this way are the sins of the fathers visited upon their children, but God's purpose is not frustrated and His promise stands.

This sense of purpose in spite of apparent confusion goes right through the Bible and distinguishes the Hebrew view of history from that of other nations. Here a pattern of higher purpose is strangely intertwined with the ordinary events in the life of men. Man never escapes from the consequences of his deeds, but he is also unable to annul God's original purpose.

We thus find the descendants of Jacob in the land of Egypt in distressing circumstances. This time it is Pharaoh who is unwittingly interfering with God's purpose. Again it is one single individual who has the vision and is used to lead the people into freedom.

Once again we have to ask: is Moses an historic figure?

The answer is that as presented in the Pentateuch he is not. We know of no person so equipped to do what Moses did. But after allowing for tradition and legend, behind the story is a prophetic individual with clear vision and great faith in the power of God. Moses is carried by the conviction that it is God's will that man should be free. The person behind the narrative of the Pentateuch is no mythological figure, but real flesh and blood possessed by a sense of a great mission and used of God in a mighty way. There is not the slightest reason why we should doubt that the man Moses appeared before Pharaoh in the name and authority of Jahwe.

In Jewish tradition Moses is regarded as a prophet, in fact the greatest of the prophets. The rabbis speak of him as 'father', 'head' and 'master' of the prophets.[7] They aver that the gift of prophecy has remained with him all his life. He certainly displays the marks of prophetic vocation. Like Abraham he knows himself called by God; called for adventure with God; called to a life of faith and for the sake of others.

Even the mode by which Moses is introduced into the story shows all the usual features which go with the prophetic calling: God's special providence at his birth; his vision and vocation in later life; his close relationship to God; his inward certitude about God's will for his people. Moses, like Abraham, represents the man of faith whose life-story is interwoven with the pattern of God's design. His life is both a type and a historic fact. Like the stories of *Genesis*, the history of Moses expresses spiritual values in symbolic language. There are several incidents in the book of *Exodus* which are obviously symbolic in intention:

1) The burning bush which is not consumed and the revelation of God's personal name as Jahwe. (*Ex*. 3.)
2) The flight from Egypt. (*Ex*. 14.)
3) The story of the Golden Calf. (*Ex*. 32.)
4) Moses' request for the vision of God and God's evasive answer. (*Ex*. 33 and 34.)

These incidents are set in a narrative which deals mainly with moral and ritual law. The whole story is told in dramatized form and given an historic framework. Again we would suggest that the purpose is not to convey history but to place man in a relationship to God. But here the emphasis is not any more upon the individual but the community. It is a community caught in a conflict between the freedom of the prophet (which is the freedom of the individual) and the national cult (which is the binding force of religion in society). *Exodus* represents a temporary compromise between these two irreconcilable forces in Hebrew history. Here prophet and priest in search of a *modus vivendi* make moral law their common ground. Society built upon moral law unites individuals into a holy people: ". . . you

shall be my own possession among all peoples; for all the earth is mine, and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (*Ex*. 19:5 fl). But the compromise turns out to be to the advantage of the prophet.[8] The priest becomes subservient to the prophetic ideal and the ritual taboos take on a moral and personal character. The kingdom of priests is a holy people. Except perhaps in *Leviticus* the prophetic element outweighs the priestly element in the Pentateuch. Scholars have misunderstood the 'Law' by giving it a ritualistic connotation. The 'Law' is essentially prophetic and the cultic elements are used for a prophetic ends. This is more obvious in *Deuteronomy* than in any of the other books but is also borne out by many passages in *Exodus* and *Numbers*. How dominant the prophetic ideal remains throughout the Pentateuch can be seen from the story about Eldad and Medad who, endowed with the spirit of God, began to 'prophesy'. Joshua suggests that Moses forbid them and receives the answer: "Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put his spirit upon them!"(*Numbers* 11:26 fl). In this incident we encounter the prophetic ideal for the holy people - a people possessed by the Spirit of God. Here election is extended from the individual to society. Election of the community to serve the purposes of God is implied in the term "God's people". To be God's people is the vocation and destiny of Israel. Moses is the instrument in the hands of God to lead Israel to his ordained destiny. There is no religious importance attached to the person of Moses. The man whom God chooses as Israel's leader is diffident, of "heavy" speech, and quite inadequate for his formidable task. This is no description of a hero but of a humble man of faith who finds himself compelled against his better judgement (like Jeremiah at a later stage), to enter the battle for the freedom of his people in the power of God.

The struggle for the soul of Israel does not end with the flight from Egypt. Escape from physical bondage is only the beginning of the story. The trek to the Promised Land is the real testing ground of Moses' faith and endurance. It is in the description of the journey through the wilderness that the prophetic element in the Pentateuch becomes evident. How scholars have overlooked this fact is difficult to explain. The symbolism of the journey with its dramatic incidents is a superb example of prophetic writing. The writer or editor of the book of *Exodus* is relentless in his criticism of his people. This in itself links him with the prophetic tradition. That such is the case can be verified by comparing passages in *Exodus* with those in *Isaiah*:

Exodus 32:9	*Isaiah* 28:14	a stiff-necked people;
Exodus 32	*Isaiah* 1	an idolatrous people.

There is a multitude of texts in the Pentateuch which run parallel to the biting criticism of Israel as exercised by the prophets. This reveals a kinship of spirit and identity of purpose. Not only *Deuteronomy* but *Genesis*, *Exodus* and *Numbers* are written with a bias towards Prophetism and pursue a similar end.

How can such a phenomenon be explained?

We hold that the ancient legends and traditions which existed quite independently of the prophetic school are here utilized with a definite end in view. The prophets built upon this ancient material endowing it with new significance. Whether this material was already in written form and derived from various sources as scholars suggest, or was simply handed down as folklore, makes little difference to our hypothesis. The point we are trying to

establish is that the Pentateuch as we have it to day is the result of the creative genius of the school of the Hebrew prophets. The Pentateuch is therefore not constructed upon actual history but ideal history, though it is based upon the national traditions of the various Hebrew tribes.

If our thesis is correct we will have to approach the Law from a prophetic point of view and not as hitherto from that of the priest.[9]

4. The Law

Next to Israel, the concept of *torah* is an important factor in the Old Testament. With the question of Law we reach a crucial point in our discussion. The problem regarding the growth and development of the Mosaic Code is too complex and not within the intention of this work. All we need do is take note of the heterogeneous character of the component layers of the Pentateuch. By this we do not so much mean the now widely accepted source theory, rather the fact that cultic and moral laws are strangely intertwined as if they always belonged together. Traditionally, specially in the Synagogue, the two aspects of the Law are kept united as if they were complementary. But according to our theory they are not. We rather hold that the Law bears evidence to an uneasy compromise whereby two hostile trends were combined in an effort at reconciliation.

Adam C. Welch has worked on the theory that the cleavage between prophet[10] and priest was a later development and that *Deuteronomy* does not yet know of such a cleavage. At least he recognizes that it ultimately came to a breach whereas some scholars refuse to accept even as much.[11] In our view there is sufficient evidence to show both the composite character of the Pentateuch in regard to the moral and cultic aspect of religion, and the definite negation of the sacrifices on the part of the Prophets. Prof. Welch's assumption that *Deuteronomy* presents a unity of morality and cult we find unconvincing. We rather tend towards C. H. Dodd's view that *Deuteronomy* in the present form reveals "a prophetic revision of the ancient laws of Israel".[12] E. O. James appears to be nearer the truth when he points towards two opposing traditions and suggests that pre-exilic priesthood was oracular in its function rather than sacrificial.[13] The prophetic elements in the Pentateuch were already recognized by Driver who sharply distinguished between J and E on the one hand as revealing definite prophetic features and E and P on the other hand as chiefly concerned with the Tabernacle and the ceremonial system.[14] It is therefore an obvious conclusion that in Pentateuch (or Hexateuch) we have before us a composite work in which heterogeneous material from sometimes hostile sources was brought together in an effort to reconcile opposing trends. This only can explain the strange fact of a deep moral and an equally strong cultic concern co-existing side by side.

In our view the prophetic elements in the Pentateuch represent the older tradition. Driver held that the collections of J and E belong to the age of David and Solomon.[15] This is still the view of contemporary scholars though J is now regarded as more primitive in character than E.[16] The fact that these documents reveal pronounced prophetic elements is evidence of the age of the tradition specially when we remember the lapse of time between the growth of tradition and the written form.

If our assumptions are correct, and if Driver's dating of P, which he assigns to the period of the Babylonian captivity still holds good, we have to accept that the Exile gave birth to two divergent movements. First, it gave new stimulus to cultic worship; second, it prepared the ground for the later Synagogue which represents the emancipation from the sacrificial cult.

When we speak of a new interest in cultic worship we do not mean to imply that prior to the Exile such worship was unknown in Israel. R. Brinker has shown beyond contradiction the extent of cultic worship in early Israel and its immense influence upon the religious outlook.[17] What we mean to imply is that till the Babylonian Captivity the clash between prophetic and cultic religion continued, whereas after the Exile a compromise was achieved which completely altered the character of both. The classical example is Ezekiel who is a composite figure: half prophet, half priest.

Cultic worship was a widely-spread institution and prevalent among neighbouring nations. The Hebrew tribes will have acquired sacrificial worship from Egypt, from the Canaanite cults, and from Babylon. But we hold that the more primitive form of Yahvism was not cultic; it was prophetic and oracular. There may even be some remote connection between the religious history of Israel and Egypt. The story of Amenhotep IV and his religious reform to Aton-worship is the subject of much controversy. Some scholars interpret it as a conversion to a new religion and see in it an effort to break away from an older tradition. They look upon Amenhotep as an innovator, who tried to abolish idol-worship and to introduce Monotheism. Others regard the attempt as a reversion to sun-worship and connect it with the cult at Heliopolis.[18] But there is also the possibility that Ikhnaton's (= Amenhotep IV) decision is not an innovation at all, but a reversion to an older and more noble tradition. Unfortunately Amenhotep was defeated by the Theban priests in his religious struggle for a higher faith. The Hebrew prophets only partly won the battle, first by endowing priestly religion with prophetic elements and then by leaving a permanent legacy in Judaism and Christianity. In the latter, the tension between the priestly and prophetic attitude continues to this day. Thus history repeats itself. Some resemblance to Ikhnaton's reform movement can be detected in King Josiah's Reformation of 621 B.C., but equally well in the Reformation of the 16th century A.D.

From the above it is obvious that the Mosaic Code is a mixture of prophetic and priestly religion. These are so interwoven as almost to be indistinguishable. We will now try to elucidate the characteristic prophetic element of the Law.

a) The Law as Moral Imperative

Cultic religion is linked to magic and operates on the principle of taboos. Prophetic religion is characteristically concerned with the moral ordering of life.

Prophetic morality is not motivated by the utilitarian concern of philosophers like Hobbes, Locke and Bentham. They do not uphold moral ideals because it ensures the greatest happiness for the greatest number. Neither is theirs a calculating morality in the spirit of Rousseau's *Contrat Social*; nor do they play about with non-existent values in order to save the foundations of society as Vaihinger did in his 'As If' philosophy. Morality for the prophets is anchored in the nature of God: "A God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and

abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness" (*Ex*. 34:6). The order of the Universe points to the goodness and holiness of God. Immorality is not only defiance of God but a breach in the order of creation. Moral action is therefore never optional but of an imperative nature: 'thou shalt' is the voice of the Law. The compulsion, primarily, comes from without; there is an inward compulsion as well; but morality cannot be left to the uncertainties of man's choice. Moral action is part of the rules of life. Man can only break these rules at his peril. This objective aspect of moral behaviour is the greatest contribution of prophetic faith. Prophetic morality refuses to make human happiness the measure of what is right and wrong. Only what God wills is moral; what He deprecates is immoral. There are no ultimate values except those set by Him. Here morality is neither utilitarian nor emotional; its only driving power is the obedience of faith.

There is however a subjective aspect to moral action. If God wanted man to obey blindly He would make him a machine without power of decision. Blind obedience is not moral but mechanical. In this respect the Law of Moses differs from all other codes; it does not merely demand conformity, it pleads for personal consent:

"And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and to keep the commandments and statutes of the Lord, which I command you this day for your good?" (*Deut*. 10:12 fl).

Compared with other legal codes the Law of Moses is peculiar in that its objective is the holiness of a whole people: "Be ye holy, for I the Lord your God am holy" (*Lev*. 19:2).[19]

Man still has the freedom not to comply with the rules but then he must take the consequences. From the iron rule of cause and effect there is no escape. Man's freedom is never absolute; herein lies the very difference between him and his Creator. This is dramatically illustrated by the story of Adam and Eve, the Flood, Sodom and Gomorrah, etc. The function of the Law is to warn against the possibility of wrong choice and the fatal consequences.

Unlike any other law, the Mosaic Code does not only dispense punishment but offers grace. "The God of Israel does not desire the death of a sinner but that he should return and live" (*Ez*. 18:23).

The Law operates on the premise that sin in all its manifestations is defiance of God. It is in the nature of sin to disrupt the order of creation. It is man's 'no' to God and therefore also to society. We will now examine more closely the effects of sin.

1) Sin as Defiance. Man by pitting his will against the order of creation finds himself at variance with the Architect. The Bible never tires of emphasizing that all that is is God's. Sin means a violation of God's property. The hierarchical order of creation is deduced from the fact that God wills this world to be. God wills man to be man and beasts to be beasts. Man cannot exchange his role for another. The male cannot become a female; this extends even to dress: "A woman shall not wear anything that pertains to a man, nor shall a man put on a woman's garment; for whosoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord your God" (*Deut*. 22:5). All the given facts about man's life are not fortuitous but by design and serve to emphasize his creatureliness. Man is meant to accept the God-given limitations as an

integral part of his existence. To rebel against the given facts is to defy God's order. This rebellion is the nature of sin. The function of the Law is to define the boundary of man's creatureliness so that he is constantly kept reminded of his true position.

The first part of the Ten Commandments; the charter of man's freedom, defines his relationship to God: I am the Lord your God, you shall have no other gods besides me. Man is always in a position of dependence: God and man are never equal partners. Yet God so wills that man be not only a creature but a son. This is the ultimate objective of the Law. *Torah*, as Jewish scholars repeatedly stress, is more than 'Law'; it is a way of life with a definite purpose. The purpose of *torah* is to raise Israel to sonship: "If you will obey my voice - keep my covenant you shall be my own possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine" (*Ex*. 19:5). *Segulah*, God's special treasure, expresses the loving relationship between God and His people. Though man must not put himself in the place of God, it is his privilege to be a child of God. Unfortunately, man wants to be more; this is indicated by the story of Adam's rebellion. Human presumption has no limit. To see it in all its starkness we have to go outside the Bible, though the Bible also presents a large array of godlessness. It was left to Nietzsche's Madman to utter the most terrifying cry of defiance: "God will remain dead! And we have killed him."[20] To declare God dead is a naive form of defiance, a more subtle way is to set up a rival god. This the Bible calls idolatry. In the practical issues of life such defiance of God is expressed in deeds no matter what theoretical attitude man may assume. Man in action reveals whether God is truly God or merely an idol.

To the first part of the Ten Commandments logically belong the Sabbath rest and honour to parents. These two are of one piece with the preceding three: obedience to divine authority.

The Sabbath rest curbs man's natural tendency to lose himself in the mundane affairs of his own small world. Honour to parents serves as a constant reminder of human dependence: every man owes his life to somebody else. Dishonour to parents is an act of defiance to God for it contradicts the order of creation. By the same token the Sabbath rest guards the orderliness of nature where rest and activity alternate in rhythmic motion.

The second part of the Ten Commandments is anchored in the first: morality without God is without foundation. Man's behaviour towards his fellow-man depends upon the moral character of his god. What Prof. Whitehead chooses to call the "aesthetic order" over and above the moral order, is here fused in one single whole, the order of existence.[21] It is within this order that man is meant to live; to defy the order spells death. Here Law and the Prophets speak with one voice: "You shall therefore keep my statutes and my ordinances, by doing which a man shall live. I am the Lord" (*Lev*. 18:5). "Why will you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of any one, says the Lord God; so turn, and live" (*Ez*. 18:21 fl). Order in society is related to the order in the universe. Man accepts the presence of his neighbour as part of the limitation of his creatureliness as he accepts the physical world. To defy the order in society is to fly in the face of God. In the Bible man is never the innocent victim of circumstances, but a rational person answerable before the Highest Court. Before the Law man discovers himself responsible and guilty at the same time.

2) The Social Aspect of Sin. The doctrine of original sin as taught by the Church has many critics. The Synagogue looks upon it as contradictory to reason and justice. It must be

admitted that there is little in the Old Testament to give it support. Yet both psychologically and experimentally there is much to commend it. Original sin becomes specially evident in a social connotation. It stresses the fact that every individual life is indissolubly linked to society. Sin has profound social effect: man can never sin without affecting others. While the individual life covers a short space of time, society continues and is left to carry the burden of the past. This is the vicious circle of history: no man and no group can totally break with the past and start history *ab initio*. Every human life is a bridge between the future and the past.

The pathology of society begins with the sickness of the individual. In the individual, Adam's sin is re-enacted in such a manner that there is a social or accumulative burden of guilt. It is in this context that the story of the Cross appears in all its significance: the iron chain of causality could only be broken by the Son of God.

Sin is an inheritable disease and highly infectious: the corollary of Adam's disobedience is Cain's fratricide. The accumulative effect of sin grows by geometrical progression. The burden of sin was the specific awareness of the prophet. Only a man who had grasped the terrifying nature of sin could have written *Is*. 53. Here John the Baptist's cry reveals him within genuine Hebrew tradition: "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (*John* 1:29).

In theory the individual has a personal right to rebellion. This is a privilege which goes with the dignity of being man. Society has no right to prescribe for the inner life of the individual. But in practice, inward rebellion has inevitable social consequences: man at variance with the order of creation is of necessity at variance with society. Sin is therefore never a purely private affair. A breach of the natural order is a breach of the social order. If it were possible to separate 'religious' sin from its moral implications, the Law would concern itself with the moral aspect and leave the 'religious' aspect to the conscience of the individual. This has become the established practice in Western society; but Mosaic Law makes no such allowance. It operates on the assumption that defiance of God is a social breach which affects the very foundation of the community. The penalty for cursing God is death (*Lev*. 24:10-16). Be it noted that the penalty applies to sojourner as well as native for in both cases the effect is the same. In the Bible the sinner is always at war on two fronts with God and man. The Law concerns itself with this two fold relationship. Sin has always a social aspect.

3) Sin as Interference with the Order of the Material World. There is yet one more aspect of sin which is characteristic for the Mosaic Code

We have noticed that for the Hebrew the observable order of the universe is a created order. There is nothing impersonal or fortuitous about this world. All that is has purpose for it exists by God's design: "The heavens are telling the glory of God, and the firmament proclaims his handiwork (*Psalm* 19:1). What we have accustomed ourselves to calling the laws of nature are for the Hebrew the predestined relation between various forms of creation. Things stand to each other in a fixed relationship which must not be disturbed. The Bible insists that the law of causality covers the whole of creation, the moral and the physical world alike: what man sows that he must reap. In the moral sphere cause and effect are not as clearly observable as in the physical world. Interference with the created order in either

spheres is a serious offence. The Law therefore prescribes not only for moral conduct in the realm of values but also for man's relationship to *things*. This aspect of the Law is usually connected with ancient taboos. This may be so, though we have little evidence to prove it. But in the general scheme of prophetic faith these laws assume new meaning; they express profound respect for the order in the realm of inanimate creation. The Law thus forbids the intertwining of threads made of different substances in one and the same garment; the interbreeding of different species of animals; the mixing of different kinds of seeds.(cf. *Lev*. 19:19). *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, at a loss to provide a reasonable explanation for these unusual precepts, simply states: "The cabalists regard such combination as defiance of God, who established natural laws and gave each species its individuality."[22] The prohibition of *'sha'atnez'* (mixing, weaving) plays an important part in rabbinic law. The Mishnaic tractate (*Kilayim* - 'Diverse Kinds') carefully specifies the various possibilities as prohibited by rabbinic law, such as one kind of cattle with another, one kind of wild animal with another, cattle with wild animals, wild animals with cattle, one kind of unclean beast with another, one kind of clean beast with another, an unclean beast with a clean, a clean beast with an unclean - it is forbidden to plough with them, draw with them, or drive them" (*Kilayim* 8:2).

The same rule applies to seeds, plants, threads, etc. Behind the stringency of the rabbinic prohibition is the native Hebrew respect for the fixed relationship in the design of creation. When God created the world He pronounced it good and man must not try to improve upon it. This may run against the grain of the modern scientific mind, but reveals an attitude which over-civilized man is always in danger of losing. It is borne by the conviction that sin has a confusing and disruptive effect. The Pauline remark about the groaning and travailing of creation (*Rom*. 8:19 fl) has something to do with the biblical conviction that sin invades the physical world as it does the spiritual.

b) The Law as Judgement

"Thou shalt not" is a command which brooks no latitude. In view of the Law man cannot bargain. It is not a case of more or less but of either - or. To break one single commandment is to break the Law. "For whoever keeps the whole Law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it" (*James* 2:10). Only maximum obedience is valid before the Law. The terrifying effect of the Law is the discovery of the truth about oneself. This was St Paul's experience as movingly described in *Romans* 7: "If it had not been for the law I should not have known sin - apart from the law sin lies dead - when the commandment came sin revived" (*Rom*. 9:7 fl). The Law thus serves the purpose of revealing sin for what it is - rebellion against God. But the rebel does not just stand exposed before the Law; the Law serves a more definite purpose, it pronounces judgement. The Law places the sinner before the judgement-seat of God. It is in face of the Law that man discovers his responsibility as a person. The 'wrath of God' is not meant to be treated as a metaphor but as a terrifying fact. We will never understand the Gospel unless we grasp the seriousness of God's judgement upon sin. The Law speaks in no metaphors but in dead earnestness about God's displeasure with the sinner. In terms of the Law the relationship between Judge and sinner is impersonal and formal. The sinner is not judged by his motives but by his deeds. Here there is no pardon and no leniency: the wages of sin is death. No one can treat the Gospel seriously who does

not treat the Law seriously. It is only through the commandments that "sin becomes sinful beyond measure" (*Rom*. 7:13). No one can appreciate the depth of God's mercy in Christ Jesus who has not seen the terrifying fact of sin. This was the experience of men like Saul of Tarsus, Augustine and Luther. The difficulty of contemporary theology is that having treated the Law lightly it is at the same time under obligation to treat Atonement seriously. We discover here the important part the Old Testament has to play as a corrective to Christian thinking. Before the seriousness of the Law man quickens to the truth about God, that He is not the benevolent grandfather who benignly smiles at human failings, but the Judge of all flesh who punishes the sins of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation and by no means clears the guilty (*Ex*. 20:5; 34:7). The judgements of God is no empty phrase but a principle which governs history. Both biblical history and world history provide ample evidence of the wrath of God.[23]

For the prophets, God's judgement has a moral connotation. Although there are a few vestiges left which would suggest a more primitive view of God as an unaccountable and capricious tyrant as in *Ex*. 4:24 fl, the prevailing attitude of the Law is in the opposite direction. 'God's wrath' is never wilful anger, but moral indignation. In this as in many other respects there is no difference between the Prophets and the Mosaic Code, as there is no difference between the Old and New Testaments. It was St Paul, the great preacher of the grace of God, who said: "Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man sows, that he will also reap" (*Gal*. 6:7). The Law and the Prophets speak with one voice in pronouncing judgement upon sin. We regard this relentless insistence upon moral rectitude as a distinctive feature of prophetism. For the Prophets a right relationship to God is not by way of ritual correctness, but moral rectitude. The God of Israel cannot be bribed and by no means clears the guilty, and yet at the same time forgives iniquity, transgression and sin (*Ex*. 34:7).

c) The Law as Grace

The strange paradox between judgement and grace pervades all prophetic preaching. This contradictory attitude never seems to be a source of embarrassment to the prophet. His message is always both judgement and grace. To understand the logic of his argument we have to analyse the prophetic position in respect to the cult. This is an involved and difficult problem of which no final solution is possible. Scholars will always answer the question in accordance with their own predilections. We will try to be as objective as possible.

1) The Prophetic Attitude to the Cult. Prof. H. H. Rowley, we have seen, refuses to drive a wedge between the cultus and prophecy. To quote his own, words: "The Old Testament contains much to suggest that the prophets were not, as a whole, hostile to the priesthood and the cultus, but that there were prophets attached to the cult and functioning as cultic prophets."[24] But at the same time with characteristic caution, he adds the rider: "That there were varieties of prophets in Israel is quite certain."[25] It is this obvious fact of diversity which makes for the complexity of the situation. Scholars who connect the prophets with the cult speak of one kind, those who oppose the prophets to the cult, speak of another kind.[26]

We briefly restate the position: There seem to be two conflicting points of view represented. On the one hand the cult is encouraged and revered; this is chiefly the case with *Ezekiel*. But on the other hand, the cult is deprecated, and this seems to be the attitude of most prophets.

Robert Hatch Kennett in his interesting article on sacrifice,[27] has collated the passages which express an hostile attitude to the sacrifices on the part of the Prophets, and the evidence is impressive. We cannot quote all of them but a few will suffice: "What is to me the multitude of your sacrifices? says the Lord; I have had enough of burnt offerings and rams and the fat of fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs or of he-goats. . . . Bring no more vain offerings. . . . Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean . . ." (*Is*. 1:11-17).

Most of the other Prophets speak in a similar strain. *Hosea* 8:13 reveals biting sarcasm when he says: "Ye lovers of sacrifice - who sacrifice flesh and eat it - the Lord has no delight in them." *Jahwe lo razam* can be taken to mean either that God has no delight in the sacrifice or in the people who sacrifice, i.e., the 'lovers of sacrifices', but the effect is the same. The Prophet castigates the notion that God can be bribed with sacrifice. That God accepts no bribery and cannot be deceived by gifts has penetrated the Hebrew consciousness and entered the treasury of the wisdom literature: "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination unto the Lord - but the prayer of the upright is his delight" (*Prov*. 15: 8). Or: "To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice" (*Prov.* 21:3).

But it has been argued that the Prophets are not really opposed to the sacrifices as such but to their abuse and misinterpretation. We must admit that some passages suggest such a solution. Yet other passages are unequivocal in the condemnation of the sacrificial system altogether: "Did you bring me sacrifices and offerings the forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel?" asks Amos (*Amos* 5:25).

The Prophet's audience was apparently aware of a tradition that their wandering forebears practised a different mode of worship in the wilderness. The passage suggests that the sacrificial system was an innovation, after the nomad bedouin settled in Canaan. A similar tradition is preserved in *Jeremiah*. In fact Jeremiah denies that God commanded sacrifice: "Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: add your burnt offerings to your sacrifices and eat flesh. For in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, I did not speak to your fathers or commanded them concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices. But this command I gave them, Obey my voice; and I will be your God . . ." (*Jer*. 7:21 fl).

The most outspoken opposition to the sacrificial system we encounter in 'Trito-Isaiah'. There can be little doubt that here it is no more a question of opposition to the misuse of sacrifice, but rather a rejection of the system as such: He who slaughters an ox is like him who kills a man and he who sacrifices a lamb, like him who breaks a dog's neck.

The Prophet's indictment goes beyond the ordinary accusation we meet in this kind of literature: "They have chosen their own ways and their soul delights in their abomination" (*Is*. 66:1-3).

These are very strong words and we are inclined to the view that the Prophet would not have gone to such lengths in denouncing the sacrifices had there not been an old-established tradition of opposition to the cult. That such is the case can be seen from other passages in

the Old Testament, specially in the *Psalter*: "Sacrifices and offering thou dost not desire" (*Ps*. 40:6).

"The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit" (*Ps*. 51:17).

An interesting case is *Ps*. 4:5: the R.S.V. reads "offer right sacrifices and trust in the Lord", but the Hebrew *zivhu zivhe zedek* may equally well be translated "Make *zedek* your sacrifice and trust in the Lord." This seems to us a more accurate rendering of the meaning of the text. Luther translates: "*Opfert Gerechtigkeit und hoffet auf den Herrn*."[28]

The reason why our translators have chosen the other possibility is entirely determined by the unwarranted assumption that there is no real opposition in the Old Testament to the sacrificial system; the Psalmist therefore could not have implied that the only worthy sacrifice is righteousness. Thus A. Maclaren explains that the "sacrifices of righteousness" are the prescribed sacrifices, but offered with the right disposition.[29] This goes to show how easily a text can be misconstrued to fit preconceived ideas.

Our Lord made His stand on the side of the Prophets when He cited the text from *Hosea* 6:6: "I desire *hesed* and not sacrifice" (*Mtt.* 9:13; 12:7).

It seems to us that Robert Kennett's conclusion is well justified, namely that the great Prophets of the 8th and 7th centuries B.C. unreservedly repudiated the sacrifices.[30] This statement, though true, says too much, however, for repudiation was only one reaction; the other was to work out a compromise whereby the sacrificial system could be utilized to serve be prophetic ideal. This is in keeping with the general policy adopted by the Prophets in using ancient traditions and institutions to serve a more spiritual end.

There is enough evidence in the Old Testament in support of this view. A case in point is: 1 *Kings* 8: here Solomon is presented in the act of dedicating the Temple which he built for an habitation of the God of Israel; but at the same time the writer is aware of the fact that the highest heavens cannot contain the Lord of Hosts, how much less the house which Solomon built (v. 27). It is noticeable, that though the dedicatory prayer contains reference to the sacrifices there is no mention made of their efficacy and there is little place given to their importance. Prayer rather than sacrifice is in the forefront; God forgives not because of the sacrifices but because He hears the supplication of His people. An even more interesting example is 2 *Chronicles* 2:6. The verse is in the context of a letter supposed to have been written by Solomon to Huram, the King of Tyre, inviting his help with the construction of. the Temple. This non-Israelite king is told that the God of Israel is greater than all the gods and that no one is really able to build Him a house, since heaven, even the highest heaven, cannot contain Him. Then comes the remark: Who am I to build a house for him except as a place to burn incense before him?

This is rather surprising seeing that the Temple was primarily built not for incense but for sacrifices. Kennett remarks "The offering of incense was apparently originally only an adjunct of sacrifice in Israel."[31] But the writer of 2 *Chronicles* seems to imply that it is in lieu of the sacrifices. The toning down of the importance of the cultic function of the Temple reveals the impact of prophetic influence upon the mind of the Chronicler.

Another instance is *Ps*. 50 where two contradictory views are set side by side without even an effort at reconciliation. On the one hand we read: "I do not reprove you for your sacrifices, your burnt offerings are continually before me" (v. 8). On the other hand we have

the statement: "I will accept no bull from your house, nor a he-goat from your folds. For every beast of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills . . . If I were hungry I would not tell you . . . Do I eat flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?"

Moffat has overcome the difficulty by giving v. 8 a meaning which smooths over the contradiction: "I blame you not for lack of sacrifice," but this is not the reading of the Hebrew text. Another way to overcome the difficulty would be to say that the text is corrupt and needs amending. But it seems to us that the psalm represents a situation where two contradictory views were held side by side yet with the emphasis upon the prophetic attitude. This kind of compromise is evident in many other passages of the Old Testament.

It is of some significance that the most pronounced cultic book in the Pentateuch introduces the sacrificial system with a passive phrase: *'adam ki yakriv*. "when a man brings an offering . . ." or "when a man (desires) to sacrifice . . . " (*Lev*. 1:2) This is not an imperative and the following chapters bear out the optional and voluntary character of the system by the repeated use of the preposition *im* - if. This in itself is an indication of the toning down of the obligatory nature of the sacrifices. To find such an attitude in the book of Leviticus is a surprising discovery.

2) The Prophetic Compromise Regarding the Cult. We incline to the view that the reform introduced by Josiah represents a compromise between the prophetic demands and the popularity of the temple cult with the common people. Kennett astutely remarks that Josiah's reform was in reality an "illogical compromise": ". . . for if sacrifice was essential to the true religion of the people, there was no reason in making it very difficult for those who lived at a distance from Jerusalem to sacrifice at all. If, on the other hand, sacrifice was unnecessary, there was no reason for exempting the altar at Jerusalem from the general destruction of altars." Kennett suspects that Josiah was not prepared to offend the majority of his subjects but at the same time he was desirous to do away with some of the grosser practices connected with the cult; hence the compromise.[32]

Kennett had already pointed out that apart from the sacrifice at Sinai and the feast of the golden calf, JE contains no indication of any sacrifices between the departure from Egypt and the arrival in Palestine.[33] Even more striking is the fact that in the historical and hortatory additions of *Deuteronomy* there are no references to the sacrifices at all. We therefore incline to the view that the Deuteromic law is a classical example of the prophetic compromise in respect to the cult.[34] The prophetic editor of *Deuteronomy* incorporated the sacrifices in his code because in his view they were means of grace. He believed in the vicarious character of the sacrifices as an indication of God's readiness to exercise mercy rather than justice. The sacrifices in the prophetic view contradict the principle of the *lex talionis*: eye for eye and tooth for tooth. Even in *Leviticus* it is an act of grace on the part of God to provide a means of atonement: "The life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it for you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls" (*Lev*. 17:11).

We sympathize with A Geiger's position, though, opposed by Edersheim,[35] that the prevailing attitude of the Old Testament is not to regard Levitical priesthood and Temple worship as absolutely essential; it is rather tolerated than enjoined. Such a view constitutes a modification of Wellhausen's theory that the sacrificial system is a late introduction

vigorously opposed by the prophets. It is not for us to decide in the controversy between Wellhausen and W. L. Baxter, though Baxter's argument in favour of the sacrifices as a very old institution is very impressive.[36] We think Kennett's observation a very wise one: "Ritual and ceremonial is almost always older than the current interpretation."[37] This principle will apply to the age of the prophets as it does to our own. In post-exilic Judaism we meet a resurgence of sacrificial worship[38] but the interpretation will be different from that of more primitive times. The prophetic protest has left its mark. The great chapter of vicarious suffering in *Deutero-Isaiah* - *Is.* 53 - is the highest achievement of the prophetic understanding of the idea of sacrifice. This re-interpretation of the cult in terms of personal devotion and service is the greatest contribution on the part of the prophets to the spiritual life of Israel and the world. Without this new understanding of the sacrificial system the Cross would have been without a background and meaningless. The prophets have paved the way for the proclamation of the Gospel. In this sense there is a direct and dissoluble connection between the Old and New Testament.[39]

In the prophetic attitude to the sacrifices the other side of the Law is made visible: the Law is not only judgement but Grace. This double context of the Law as understood by the later prophets, makes it possible for them to deliver their message in the dialectic tension of judgement and grace.

The Mosaic Code as we have it today is the final result of a struggle which ended in a compromise. That the taboos and magic of cultic worship were transformed into the lofty message of moral Monotheism is due to the inspired vision of the Seers of Israel who by the Holy Spirit of God were enabled to use even man's superstitions for his blessing and God's greater glory.

d) The Symbolism of the Law

We have seen that the prophetic influence upon the spiritual life of Israel extended to the whole sphere of religious thinking. There can be little doubt that primitive cultic worship in Israel, as elsewhere, was understood in a mechanical and magical manner. If man performed the right act, God responded accordingly. But the impact of prophetism changed the magical attitude to a more personal and moral view. The change is partly reflected in the symbolism of the Law.

We have to distinguish prophetic symbolism from later Christian typology. The latter grew out of a necessity to relate Old Testament institutions to New Testament concepts. Christian typology is christologically orientated and found its classical expression in the *Epistle to the Hebrews*. In this epistle the high-priestly office, the royal office, the sacrificial system, are all interpreted as types pointing to the Messiah.[40] St Paul, too, has made his contribution to the typological interpretation of the Old Testament. In *Gal*. 4:22 fl Hagar is made out to represent by 'allegory' Mount Sinai which in turn represents the old covenant, which in turn represents earthly Jerusalem which is now in bondage. By contrast, Sarah, the free woman, represents the new covenant, which is a symbol of the heavenly Jerusalem, which is free and is our mother. This kind of typology was later elaborated by the writer of the *Epistle of Barnabas*, by Origen, and the other fathers of the Church. Gradually it took up a place of permanence in Christian exegesis and has remained with us to this day. It is still a

matter of dispute as to the legitimacy of typological exegesis in relation to the text. For our purposes we want to keep separate the symbolism of the Law from any later typological interpretation. Our intention is to see the symbolic expressions of the Pentateuch in the setting of its own background.

Another distinction we want to make is between symbol and metaphor. Although the relationship is close there is a difference which we must keep in mind. The "metaphorical," says Prof. Ed. König, "applies to expressions, the symbolical is an attribute of objects and actions".[42] Our concern here is with the symbolical which is expressed in the Law by means of situations and objects. Its importance for us lies in the fact that it reveals to an unusual degree the prophetic influence upon the spiritual history of Israel.

The great advantage of the use of symbolism lies in the extension of human speech to express what would ordinarily remain ineffable. We must therefore distinguish between primitive symbolism which is self-explanatory, such as we meet in the story of the Fall. Here the serpent is used to symbolize evil, and is employed in order to dramatize the story. The symbolism we have in mind is of a more subtle nature. A good example is Jacob's dream about the ladder upon which angels descend and ascend in constant communication with the earth. Here drama and symbol are utilized to convey a great spiritual ideal. The ideal behind the dream is the open heaven and the constant traffic which invisibly exists between above and below. We meet similar symbolic situations throughout the Bible, like Isaiah's vision in the Temple (*Is*. 6), or the vision of the valley of the dry bones by Ezekiel (*Ez*. 37) Now, the Law employs the same medium to convey the prophetic vision of God in relation to man. The medium as well as the ideas it conveys are strong evidence of prophetic influence upon the Law. The present writer is not aware that scholars have paid much attention to these facts.

There are a number of examples to draw from. Moses before the burning bush; the radiance of Moses' face after having been in the presence of God; Moses' vision of the Invisible God in *Ex*. 33 and 34. In all these symbolic representations we find expressed a view of God which is clearly prophetic. God is here recognized as the invisible and holy God of Israel whom the prophets preached and in whom they believed. There is a remarkable parallel between these stories and the passage in *Deutero-Isaiah*: "For thus says the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite" (*Is*. 57:15).

These great passages in the Law breathe the same spirit and are inspired by the same vision. In all these symbolic presentations the dominating thought is that the holy and eternal God condescends to meet man in a real *vis-â-vis* of person to person. It would require careful exegetical study to work out each situation in its proper context with all the accompanying features. But basically they all express the same attitude regarding the human-divine relationship. It would prove a rewarding study to go into greater detail.

Apart from the great narratives in the Law which employ dramatic symbolism, there are yet other expressions of symbolic action which belong to the same category. These are conveyed by means of dimensions, colours and objects.

1) Dimensions. The Tabernacle is an ideal structure. It is presented according to careful specification in which dimensions and their relationship are full of symbolic meaning. It is not any more possible to work out the mystical symbolism of these measurements and those who do so rely upon their own imagination. But the meaning of the relationship between the dimensions is clearly recognizable. We follow the suggestions by Prof. Ed. E. Nourse in his excellent article on the Tabernacle in the *Standard Bible Dictionary* (1909).

Prof. Nourse points to the special relationship between the camp and the Tabernacle as described by P. The fact that the 'camp' is only a legal fiction with which P operates makes little difference to our subject. What concerns us is the idea behind it. Here Tabernacle and camp form one whole, but the camp stands to the Tabernacle as the periphery to the centre. Their relationship expresses the degrees of holiness in hierarchical order: first the outer rectangle occupied by the eleven tribes; then the second rectangle occupied by the priests and Levites. Within this second area is placed the rectangular court of the Tabernacle which is again subdivided in such a way that the holy of holies forms a perfect square and exactly one third of the size of the Tabernacle proper. Prof. Nourse has shown that this imaginary structure derives its origin from several sources of which the Temple of Solomon is one. This Temple was 60 cubits long and 20 cubits wide, so that the holy place consisted of two compartments; one 40 by 20 and the other 20 by 20; the latter being the inner sanctuary. It is noteworthy that the Tabernacle is exactly half the size of Solomon's Temple. We will now quote Prof. Nourse verbatim: "The whole arrangement symbolized the idea of holiness. Next to the profane world was the holy nation, with Judah in the place of honour, then the more holy Levites, with the priests in the place of honour, then the still more holy enclosure or court with the altar in the centre of its E. half, then finally the 'sanctuary' with its Holy Place, and last of all the Most Holy Place, in the centre of which was the 'Shekinah', i.e. the manifestation of God Himself over the golden mercy-seat between the cherubim."[42] We can see from this picture how the ideal of the holy people is worked out in hierarchical order and is symbolized in terms of Levitical holiness.

It is interesting that the geometrical form is not a circle but a square. A circle would have given better symmetry to the camp but would have destroyed the hierarchical order of society. A theocracy operates in squares, whereas a democracy employs circles. Ours is the age of the wheel, the 'Mosaic' world is symbolized by cubes.

In this presentation of the people of God two strands are interwoven; the prophetic and the priestly, but again, it is the prophetic which dominates. The priestly ideal can be recognized by the hierarchical pattern; the prophetic element stresses the moral holiness of the people of God which is not merely achieved by Levitical purity, but derives its importance from the relation to the centre. Prof. Nourse has shown how the P description of the Tabernacle differs on some vital points from Moses "tent of meeting" in *Ex* 33:5 fl. In the JE and D source the tent is outside the camp instead of in its centre; here God manifests Himself at the entrance and not in the Holy of Holies; the charge of the tent is in the hands of Joshua and not of Aaron and his sons. From this comparison we can clearly see the priestly need for re-interpreting the prophetic vision in terms consonant with their own outlook. But the ideal remains unaltered; the holy people of God in its pilgrimage to the Land of Promise. Here is the *ideal* of the *civitas dei* in Old Testament garb - perfectly ordered society arranged

in squares of army formation marching to the heavenly Jerusalem. In the great vision of *Revelation*,[43] the seer of Patmos brings the theme to its ultimate conclusion: the people of God arrives at its destination; but this time it is not only the twelve tribes of Israel but a great multitude from every nation, from all tribes and peoples standing in the City of God before the throne and the Lamb. In this vision the prophetic ideal reaches its climax. There is a fascinating resemblance between the priestly description of the Tabernacle and the vision of the heavenly Jerusalem in the last book of the Bible.

2) Colours. Another medium for symbolic expression is the employment of colours. Colours have been used for this purpose from time immemorial. We quite naturally associate colours with certain qualities, like white with purity, black with sinfulness, etc.

The four colours which dominate the colour scheme of the Tabernacle are chosen with a purpose. It is difficult to understand why J. Hastings should express doubt of their special significance, seeing that everything else associated with the Tabernacle had symbolic meaning.[44] Our only difficulty is to decide on the right interpretation, as there is nothing to guide us in this matter. Philo was already confused on this subject and provided posterity with an explanation which is entirely out of context. According to him, white (fine flax) symbolized the earth; purple symbolized water; blue (hyacinth) symbolized the air; scarlet symbolized fire.[45] Josephus copied Philo's interpretation, which goes to show that even a Palestinian Jew two thousand years ago was already in doubt about the symbolic meaning of the colour scheme in the Temple.[46] Scholars recognize that no certainty can be reached on this subject, but we are inclined to accept the interpretation which is nearest at hand: Blue suggests the sky and by an association of ideas, eternity; purple stands for Kingship and in our context is a symbol of God's majesty; white stands for purity; scarlet suggests blood, then the sacrifices, then what the sacrifices stand for, i.e. atonement, and by a further association of ideas - mercy.

This is the colour scheme which dominates the Tabernacle and which must have been the motif in the Temple. These colours can be compared with the magnificent colourings of ancient Egypt. In the tomb of Iuaa and Tuaa there was found among other beautifully coloured articles, a coffer inlayed with blue faience, white and red ivory, dark ebony and gleaming gold.[47] It seems to us that this profusion of colour was chosen for effect rather than symbolic expression, specially as the coffer is not a religious object. But in comparing the colour schemes, the complete absence of black in Israel's colour symbolism is interesting. On the other hand there is a dominance of blue and white which does not seem to prevail to the same extent in ancient Egypt. Blue and white are still the national colours of the Jewish people. It occurs to us that the choice of these two colours is of some psychological significance. The absence of the grotesque and the sordid expresses a view of God which is far removed from the merely numinous. The peace and the depth of eternity are here combined with the purity and perfection of God which goes beyond mere Levitical holiness. Holiness as expressed by these colours has lost the animistic aspect of the taboo and has adopted the concept of moral perfection. Here the priest has yielded ground to the prophet.

The four sacred colours not only appear on the veil of the inner court (*Ex*. 36:35) but are also displayed on the screen at the entrance of the tabernacle (*Ex*. 26:36). It may well be that

there is further significance in this double presentation: the worshipper is reminded at the very entrance of the Holy Place that the Holy One of Israel requires personal holiness: Be ye holy for I the Lord your God am holy (*Lev*. 19:2).[48]

3) The Temple and its Furnishings. We come now to the last aspect of the symbolism employed in cultic worship. The Temple and all its appurtenances served as a visible symbol of the values which were invisible and belonged to the perfect world of the spirit. These symbols were used as an aid to help the worshipper realize the Presence of God. We come here upon an interesting difference between biblical and non-biblical religion.

The effort of the mystic is directed towards the conquest of the physical world. Matter is felt as a burden which hinders man's flight upwards. The spiritual world can only be reached by negation of the physical. The Gnostic and Manichaean attitude underlies most religious systems. It is strikingly different in the case of the Hebrews. The Temple stood as the visible sign not of man's flight upwards but of God's condescension towards man.

The *mishkan*, the Place of Abode, i.e. the place where the *shekinah* tabernacled, or as it was also called, the *'ohel mo'ed*, the Tent of Meeting,[49] was the place where man encountered God. That the great and holy God of Israel condescends to the human level and meets sinful man is a characteristic tenet of the Hebrew faith. We venture to suggest that this is not any more a priestly but a prophetic concept though parallels can be found in other religions where a similar belief exists. From the Christian point of view this is a most important concept for it links the prophetic faith to the fact of the Incarnation.

Admittedly in more primitive times God's presence was felt in terms of a physical or semi-physical substance. Some of the psalms still convey the impression of a physical theophany: "God has gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet" (*Ps*. 47:5).

Prof. Geo Widengren, in his Delitzsch lecture, has again brought to our notice the theory according to which the king plays a central cultic function in Hebrew religion.[50] Such a theory presupposes a very primitive form of Jahwe-worship in which the king performs the main cultic act and which concludes with sacred prostitution. We are not in a position to express opinion in this matter. It may well be that at an early stage of Hebrew history the head of the clan or the king performed such a function; what is more likely is that the Hebrews assimilated certain features of such a cult on settling in Canaan. But we have no doubts whatsoever that the tenor of the Old Testament literature is violently against it. This is already indicated by the subordinate position allotted to the king in *Deuteronomy* (*Deut*. 17:14-20), but above all by the obvious opposition expressed in 1 *Sam*. 8. Whatever the original background, our present documents are geared to contradict a primitive, physical concept of God. Both Law and Prophets stand for a God who is holy, invisible, and unapproachable, except by mediation. Man cannot communicate with Him directly. Between man and God stands the prophet, the priest, the 'angel' of the Lord, the Temple, the sacrifice.

Temple worship is thus tied to the concept of mediation. Its whole structure and all its furnishings purport to emphasize this basic idea. We are told in some detail what was inside the Holy of Holies, namely one single piece of furniture, the ark with the mercy seat above the cherubim: "There I will meet with you, and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim that are upon the ark of the testimony I will speak with you" (*Ex*. 25:22). The

'mercy seat' is the place where atonement is made as indicated by the Hebrew word: *kaporet.* Traditionally the *'aron ha-'edut* - the ark of the testimony - is supposed to have contained the document by which Israel pledged himself to serve God, the *torah*. It was on the basis of the Covenant that God was 'meeting' the representatives of His people. The remarkable feature about the description in *Exodus* is the spiritualized concept of the theophany. Here the tabernacle stands as a token of God's forgiving grace.

We will now quickly glance at the main Temple furnishings: the three most symbolic pieces as described in *Ex*. 25:10-40 are the ark, the table of shewbread and the candlestick.

The symbolism of the table with the twelve loaves is self-explanatory, as is the candlestick. It is difficult to see why Josephus had to resort to such a forced explanation which made the twelve loaves represent the twelve months and the seven lamps the seven planets, except that he was out to impress his Gentile readers with the superiority of Hebrew lore.[51] It is strange to find that A. R. S. Kennedy treats Josephus' fanciful explanation seriously.[52] He sees in the table with the shewbread a "survival from the pre-Mosaic stage of the religion of the Hebrews" and thinks of a time when men offered food to their gods for nourishment. This may have been the case; but why should they place twelve loaves for their one God? Maimonides who usually has an answer for everything is here at a loss. He confesses: "I do not know the object of the table with the bread upon it continually and up to this day I have not been able to assign any reason to this commandment".[53]

Whatever its origin in primitive times, the more spiritual construction was close at hand: the table with the bread stood as a symbol that God is sustainer and feeder of His people; unless God bless Israel's bread, famine is inevitable: "I will bless your bread and your water" (*Ex*. 23:25). There is here an obvious connection between the tradition about the manna in the wilderness, the injunction to keep an omer of manna in the Temple for a memorial, and the shewbread. The presence of the shewbread is to remind Israel of his dependence upon God: "I fed you in the wilderness when I brought you out of the land of Egypt" (*Ex*. 16:32). It is a mistake to hark back to the more primitive aspects, for by doing so we overlook the fact that the Law as handed down to us is the result of a revolutionary change from paganism to prophetic faith. When Jeremiah castigates the women of Jerusalem for kneading cakes for the "queen of heaven" (*Jer*. 7:18) he implies that this is a breach of Israel's faith, as do the rest of the prophets.

For the prophets, the shewbread stood for more than a symbol of Israel s physical need, it symbolized man's spiritual dependence upon God. The prophetic character of *Deuteronomy* is again revealed by the remarkable text: "And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know; that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but that man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord" (*Deut*. 8:3). Here we have already reached a position which is within reach of the Johannine concept of the Bread of Life.

The other piece of furniture of equal significance is the seven-branched golden lampstand. There seems to be confusion in the text whether this was lit by night only or was kept alight by day also. Kennedy brings three good reasons why the latter is more probable. The fact that it is referred to both in *Exodus* and *Leviticus* as *ner tamid* (*Ex*. 27:20; *Lev*. 24:2) "perpetual light", bears out the contention that the lamp was always alight. Josephus' tradition

that in daytime only three lights were burning[54] may well correspond to fact, as he knew about the Temple from personal experience. All we need for our purpose is to interpret the symbol in the context of the Law.

Here again the origin need not concern us. Fire worship, sun worship, and all allied cults may have given rise to the symbol originally. It is also well known that seven is a sacred number. But in the context of the prophetic perception of God the *ner tamid* takes on quite a different significance.

In our discussion of the colour scheme in the Temple we have already drawn attention to the complete lack of black. Light or white is a favourite colour of the Temple. Pure white linen forms the background of most of the fabric and is the only dress allowed to the priest. That the God of Israel is the God of light is already indicated by the fact that He created it. He is also the divider of light and darkness (*Gen*. 1:4). One of the plagues of Egypt is thick darkness (*Ex*. 10:21 fl); light is a blessing, darkness is a curse; while Egypt was in darkness there was light in every house of the Hebrews (*Ex*. 10:23). That God is associated with light is best seen from the Aaronic blessing: "The Lord make his face to shine upon you" (*Num*. 6:25). *Yaer* is the Hiphal future *yair*, to shine - from *'or* = light. That there is light in God's presence is magnificently symbolized by the story of Moses' luminous face (*Ex*. 34:39). To be in the Presence of God is to be in the presence of Light and such an experience makes an indelible mark. Moses had to cover his face for the children of Israel were afraid to come near him (this is the meaning of verse 33; cf. 2 *Cor*. 3:13). Such is the benevolent God whose glory is in His goodness (cf. *Ex*. 33:18 and 19); this is a remarkable statement. We read: And Moses said: "I pray thee show me thy glory;" and God said: "I will make all my goodness pass before you." Once again, we detect in this passage the all pervasive influence of the prophetic point of view; to equate glory with goodness is another magnificent achievement.

True, the God of Israel is not exposed to the human eye and His secret is guarded by thick darkness (*Ex*. 20:21; *Deut*. 4:11; 5:23); but we must not forget that this is for man's protection - for no one can see God and live - and that beyond the darkness is a glory which transcends all earthly splendour.

The golden lamp is thus a symbol of the perfect light which comes from God. There is no need to go to the ancient Parsees for an explanation. Behind the symbol is the prophetic belief that God is both Creator and giver of light and that only in His light do we see light (*Ps*. 36:9).

Maimonides' addiction to rationalize has played him false by suggesting a meaning which robs the *menorah* of all deeper significance. He avers that the Temple lamp was placed as a sign of honour to give distinction to the house of worship and to impress the worshippers: ". . . a chamber in which a continual light burns, hidden behind a curtain, makes a great impression on man."[55] This is too flat an explanation to be acceptable. We prefer to think that the ancient Hebrew had more imagination than credited with by the medieval philosopher. We are bold enough to suggest that there is an intimate connection between the symbol of light in the Temple and the same theme in the Johannine Gospel. Both stem from the same tradition which associates God with the source of light. Christian exegetes could not do otherwise than connect the symbolic meaning of the golden lamp with Him who claimed to be the Light of the world.[56]

According to Jewish tradition, the light for the lamp was never taken from any other source except from off the altar of burnt offerings.[57] This fact is full of symbolic meaning: God's face darkens upon sin but lightens upon the sinner in the act of reconciliation: "Why will you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord God; so turn, and live" (*Ez*. 18:31; cf. *Ez*. 33:11).

It is not possible for us to dwell at any length on the other symbolic furnishings of the Temple, such as the altars, the veil, the layer of brass, the priestly insignia and garments, etc. But we have said enough to substantiate the conclusion that though Temple worship originated in the dim past and was probably not indigenous to the Hebrew tribes while still nomads, the cult underwent a gradual change under the impact of prophetic preaching. Primitive animistic ideas which were originally expressed in cultic action were re-interpreted, deepened and spiritualized to fit the prophetic concept of the Holy, Invisible and moral God of Israel.

Our contention is that the 'Law' as now deposited in the Pentateuch is a prophetic document of the first order.

This brings us to the second part of our theme and to the second part of the Bible - the Prophets.

Notes to Chapter IV

1. Medieval and modern Jewish writers frequently speak of a Jewish 'aptitude' for God which is the ground of Israel's election. This is the view of Judah ha-Levi (1085-?1142), Moses Maimonides (1135-1204), Franz Rosenzweig (1886-1929), our contemporary Hans Joachim Schoeps, and others. It is a view we must vigorously reject.
2. The etymology of the name is difficult. We proceed on the assumption that the change of the name rests upon a word-play between הם and המון. (Cp. A Standard Bible Dictionary, 1909, sub. loc.)
3. Even John the Baptist was no hermit in the sense of Byzantine Christianity.
4. The interconnection between the Servant of God and Israel and vice versa is most clearly discerned in *Deutero-Isaiah*.
5. According to rabbinic tradition the words אשר עשׂו בחרן are in reference to the souls which they have had brought beneath the sheltering wings of the Shechinah. Abraham converted men and Sarah converted women: cf. A. Blashki and L. Joseph, *Pentateuch with Targum, etc., Genesis*, 1929, 49.
6. Cf. *Jewish Encyclopedia*, I 90b.
7. Cf. *Jewish Encyclopedia*, IX 52a.
8. R. Brinker worked on the assumption that there is a close relationship between priest and prophet, the only difference being that the first was attached to a definite sanctuary while the latter had a roving commission, (cf. *op cit*., p. 114). That there were cultic 'prophets' there can be little doubt. We venture the suggestion that these are somehow related to the 'false prophets' frequently mentioned in the Old Testament. Between them and the great prophets in the classical tradition there is an unbridgeable gulf.
9. R. Brinker's position which sees in the Priestly Code the torah of an ancient Canaanite shrine deserves careful consideration. (Cf. *op. cit*., 103.) The "superstructure of Israelite tradition superimposed upon it", represents to us the compromise between priest and prophet.

10. Welch speaks of "a certain type" of prophet, obviously differentiating between cultic prophets and those opposed to the cult. (Cf. Adam C. Welch, *The Code of Deuteronomy*, 1924, p. 219 fl.)
11. H. H. Rowley makes every effort to deny any fundamental difference between prophet and priest. All that the prophets intended was to stress that lack of obedience invalidated the sacrifices. But this was also the attitude of the priest. "Nowhere," says Rowley, "is sacrifice presented save as secondary to obedience and to righteousness of spirit." His conclusions are based on two points:
    (1) The editors would not have codified the texts regarding sacrifice if these were held to be contrary to the teaching of the Law.
    (2) In *Is*. 53 the prophet speaks favourably of the sacrifice on the part of the Servant of the Lord. This he could not have done had he depreciated sacrifices.

    It seems to us that neither of the arguments is convincing. In respect to the first point, Prof. Rowley himself admits that the editors indiscriminately combined contradictory evidence as is the case with *Gen*. 1 and 2! In respect to the second point the opposite view would fit equally well, namely, because the prophet did not believe in animal sacrifice, he stressed the efficacy of the personal sacrifice of the Servant of Jahwe. In the words of Prof. Rowley himself: "Unlike the animals . . ." (Cf. H. H. Rowley, *The Unity of the Bible*, 1953, pp. 39, 46, 55, 57, 73, etc.)
12. C. H. Dodd, *The Bible To-day*, 1947, 44.
13. Cf. E. O. James, *The Old Testament in the Light of Anthropology*, 1953, 110 fl.; 113; 115.
14. S. R. Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, 1894, 110 fl.
15. Driver, *op. cit*., 114.
16. Cf. H. H. Rowley, *The Growth of the Old Testament*, 32 fl.
17. R. Brinker, *The Influence of Sanctuaries in Early Israel*, 1946.
18. Cf. H. H. Rowley, *From Joseph to Joshua*, 117 and notes.
19. Some may object that holiness in the Levitical Code has a cultic connotation. This was certainly the case in the original setting. But in the present form *Leviticus* is not any more a purely priestly code. Under prophetic influence the concept of holiness has changed in character. Our present document shows all the signs of a compromise. (Cf. H. H. Rowley, *The Growth of the Old Testament*, 15 fl.)
20. Nietzsche, *The Joyful Wisdom*. For the religious aspect of Nietzsche's atheism, see K. Thompson, "Nietzsche's Religious Atheism", *Union Seminary Quarterly Review*, May, 1959.
21. In this respect Whitehead's reasoning is incontrovertible: "There is an actual world because there is an order in nature. If there were no order, there would be no world. Also since there is a world, we know that there is an order." Alfred North Whitehead, *Religion in the Making*, 1930, 104.
22. *Jewish Encyclopedia*, XI 212b.
23. Oscar Pfister in his book *Christianity and Fear*, English translation, 1948, has many excellent passages on the aberration of the Gospel in history as a message of the Love of God. But he fails to give enough weight to the stern side of God's judgement. Mental health can never become the criterion of spiritual truth.
24. *The Growth of the Old Testament*, 80.
25. *Ibid*., 81.
26. Cf. R. Brinker, *op. cit*., 114.
27. R. H. Kennett, *The Church and Israel*, 1933, a collection of essays edited by Prof. S. A. Cook after the author's death.
28. Cf. "Genesius", *Hebrew Grammar*, Oxford, 1910, pp. 414 fl. Moses Buttenwieser, *The Psalms*, Chicago, 1938, translates: "Make sacrifices for righteousness' sake", and explains that zedek is here a qualificative genetive (cf. *ibid*., 405). But does such a translation make better sense? A similar case is *Hos*. 14:2. The R.S.V. reads: "We will render the fruit of our lips," following the LXX. But the Massorah reads: *parirn sefatenu* - the bullocks of our lips. From the prophet's attitude to sacrifices and from the immediate text, it is obvious what is meant: cleansing from iniquity is not by bullocks on the altar but by a confession of sin by accepting what is good. The history of the text of *Hos*. 14:2 would help us to understand *Ps*. 4:5.
29. A. Maclaren. *The Psalms*, 1893. 134.
30. Cf. *op. cit*., 120.
31. *Op. cit*., 102 n. 1.

32. *Op. cit*., 124.
33. *Op. cit*., 123 n.
34. After this sentence was written we were glad to discover that our friend Dr R. Brinker had already expressed a similar view in reference to *Deuteronomy*: "A joint effort of priestly and prophetic circles would seem to be postulated . . ." *Op. cit*., 20.
35. A. Edersheim, *The Temple*, 1874, 79.
36. W. L. Baxter, *Sanctuary and Sacrifice - A Reply to Wellhausen*, 1896.
37. *Op. cit*., 101.
38. Cf. Kennett, ., 125.
39. The New Testament attitude to the Temple cult is a major issue and deserves more intensive study. Prof. Cullmann is led to assume a certain opposition to the cult which permeates the Fourth Gospel and Stephen's speech in Acts. (Cf. Oscar Cullmann, "A New Approach to the Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel - II", *The Expository Times*, Nov. 1959.) It is our conviction that there is a direct connection between the prophetic attitude to the cult and New Testament christology; cf. J. Jocz, *The Jewish People and Jesus Christ*, 160-63.
40. Cf. the essay by Walther Eichrodt, "Vom Symbol zum Typos", *Theologische Zeltschrift*, Nov.-Dec., 1957.
41. *H.D.B*., Extra Vol., 169.
42. *Standard Bible Dictionary*, 1909, 837b fl.
43. Cf. *Rev*. 21:6, "The city lies four-square . . ."
44. Cp. *H.D.B*., article on Colours.
45. Cf. Philo, *de Vita Mos*., 3:6.
46. Cf. Josephus, *Ant*., III 7, 7.
47. Cf. *The Wonders of the Past*, ed. by J. A. Hammerton, I 227.
48. The R.S.V, translates more accurately: You shall be holy for I the Lord your God am holy.
49. Not "tabernacle of congregation" as in A.V.
50. Cf. Geo Widengren, *Sakrales Königtum im alten Testament und im Judentum*, 1952.
51. Whiston rightly points out that when writing for Jews, Josephus gives quite a different explanation: cf. W. Whiston, "The Works of Flavius Josephus", *Antiq.* III 7, 7. His reference is to *War*, VII 5, 5.
52. *H.D.B*., article on Shewbread.
53. *Guide for the Perplexed*, English translation, Friedlander, 356.
54. *Antiq*., III 8, 3.
55. *Op. cit*., 356.
56. Cf. the fascinating book by Johannes Lundius, *Die alten juedischen Heiligtuemer, etc*., 1722, 119.
57. Lundius, *op. cit*., 118.

V. THE PROPHETS

In the preceding chapters we worked on the assumption that prophetism is a special characteristic of Hebraic religion; that it differs radically from any other form of religious expression within and without Israel; that its chief contribution consists of a specific vision of God; that it is characterized by profound moral earnestness; and that it exercised decisive influence upon the formation of the so-called biblical outlook.

We now have to face the prophetic phenomenon in greater detail and try to answer some of the obvious questions which spring to mind.

1. The Meaning of the Term Prophet

The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* which is an infallible guide in determining the meaning of a word, defines prophet: "Inspired teacher, revealer or interpreter of God's will"; it gives quite correctly the origin of the noun as derived from *pro* and *phetes* = speaker, from *phemi* = speak; the prophet is thus a spokesman either before or on behalf of somebody. This definition is consonant with the role the prophets play in the Bible. It is, however, not the popular understanding of the term. It is most unfortunate that traditionally the prophet is associated with *fore*-telling rather than *forth*-telling. The Oxford Dictionary therefore proceeds to give the more popular meaning of the term in the adjective form 'prophetic' as predicting, or containing a prediction of events, etc. For this reason it is important to emphasize the main task of the Hebrew prophet was to act as herald and not as predictor; he spoke of the future only incidentally. This fact is already indicated by his name: *nabi*, from *nab'aum*[1] a word related to *nab'a* - to well up, issue forth, bubble up, pour forth. From this it would appear that the *nabi* is a person who pours forth exalted speech from the depth of his being; he is the messenger who utters speech on behalf of an higher authority than himself. Scholars have suggested that the Greek ὁ προφήτης is not like προλέγω, i.e. the prefix προ - is not in reference to time at all but rather to place: πρόφημι would therefore mean to stand before or on behalf of the speaking God and act as interpreter.

The term later used in Talmudic literature is indicative of the change from Prophetism to Rabbinism when the spontaneity of prophetic speech was replaced by a carefully prescribed exegetical tradition: *targum* is derived from the verb *tirgem* (*ragam*) - meaning to conjecture, to opine.[2] Thus the *turgemon* is not any more a prophet, but the reciter of scripture with implied meaning of interpreter and expounder.[3] With this interesting change of terminology goes the change from Old Testament Prophetism to rabbinic Judaism.

But *nabi* is not the only description of the prophetic function. There are other descriptive terms which indicate the position he occupied and the role he played in the life of the nation. Here are some of the names which describe the prophet: *ro'eh* - seer; this occurs chiefly in the books of *Samuel*, *Kings* and *Chronicles*; but also in *Is*. 29:10; as does the name *hozeh*, which means to see inwardly; to be a visionary.

Zofeh is more closely connected with great prophets and occurs in *Is*. 21:6; 52:8; 56:10; 62:6; *Micah* 7:4; *Jer*. 6:17; *Ez*. 3:17; 33:7; *Hab*. 2:1 fl.

Whereas *nabi* is in reference to speech, *zofeh* is more descriptive of the prophet's function: his task is to act as watchman like the man on the tower of a walled city who warns of danger. *Shomer* - guard or guardian (*Is*. 30:10; *Jer*. 51:12) is only a variation of the same function. As *shomer* the prophet keeps guard over God's vineyard which is Israel. Sometimes the prophet is also called *'ebed Elohim* - the servant of God; or even *malakh* - messenger, or simply "man of God", as in the case of Elisha (2 *Kings* 5:8, etc.).

That the prophet's task was not only to warn but to guide is amply demonstrated by the indictment of the false prophets who did the opposite; most specially in *Ez*. 34.

2. The True and the False Prophets

Not much is gained by an isolated description of functions and names ascribed to the prophets unless they are placed in their proper context. Once this is done a puzzling and complex picture appears. We soon discover that the prophets were a motley group of people with heterogeneous aims and a variety of moral standards. But even to one and the same prophet various moral standards are ascribed as is the case with Elisha who has compassion upon the woman at Shunem but curses the children who call him bald-head (2 *Kings* 4:8 fl; 2:21 fl). It is obvious that Prophetism in the Bible does not present a straightforward story easily described. It is a complicated phenomenon which covers a great variety of experience. Much in the biblical record which goes under the guise of Prophetism is more closely allied to the sibyls and seers so ably described by Edwyn Bevan[4] than to the great prophetic tradition of the Hebrew people. Here dreams, hallucinations and trance are employed to obtain theophanies, methods universally used in the ancient world. Balaam receives his vision by falling down with his eyes uncovered (*Numbers* 24:4), Saul strips himself of his clothes and lies naked in a trance for twenty-four hours (1 *Sam.* 19:18 fl). From the context it seems that not only he and his messengers were thus overcome by the "spirit of God" but that David and Samuel had a similar experience. No wonder that in Hebrew *yitnabe* means not only to prophesy but also to rave, to play the madman. Here there is little difference between the wild dervishes of Arabia, the fakirs of India, and the 'prophets' of Israel. Bevan quotes from a book by Wilhelm Radloff describing life in Siberia (1884) how a shaman works himself up into a state of ecstasy by the use of drums and other means. When finally he reaches a state of trance he is able to tell his audience that he is now in heaven, in the presence of the great god Kaira Kan and can overhear his secrets.[5] Is there any difference between the Siberian shaman and the 'prophetic' experience of David, Saul and Samuel?

The, reasoned scholarly approach to the problem was, and still is, to apply the theory of evolution to the prophets of Israel as we do to any other phenomenon. Scholars thus trace the history of Prophetism from primitive beginnings when animistic ideas and superstitious customs prevailed in society, to the more refined perception of the greater prophets who gradually advanced to a higher spiritual view. Andrew C. Zenos in his article on prophecy in the *Standard Bible Dictionary* suggests that Elijah constitutes the dividing line between the primitive and the more developed concept of Prophetism. The first period extends, according to Zenos, to the days of Samuel; with Samuel we reach a period of transition when the name prophet was transferred to the seer, though originally these were two distinct functions. But at that period neither prophet nor seer was "exactly what the prophet later became, e.g. in the

days of Elijah or Isaiah". Prof. Zenos supports his view by pointing to 1 *Sam*. 9:9: "Formerly in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, he said: 'Come, let us go to the seer', for who is now called a prophet was formerly called a seer."

This is a passage which can either be treated seriously as a piece of valuable historic information, or else regarded as a gloss. Prof. Zenos obviously treats it seriously, but this is not the attitude of most scholars. It is now looked upon as a gloss come down to us from a time when the name *nabi* became universally established and carried with it dignity and respect. The gloss intends to explain that though Samuel is referred to as *ro'eh* - seer - and refers to himself as such (1 *Sam*. 9:19) he is nevertheless a prophet.[6]

It seems to us that even less acceptable is E. Kautzsch's approach which simply draws a line of division between the 'writing prophets' and those of earlier times. He thus disallows any other description except *nabi* for the writing prophets and regards *ro'eh* and *hozeh* as derogatory names usually coupled with soothsayers and false prophets.[7] But Kautzsch has to admit that at least in *Is*. 30:10 *roim* appear in an honourable sense. Kautzsch's explanation is too artificial and mechanical to do justice to the complexity of the problem.

We do not think it possible to draw a clear line of distinction between true and false prophets, or between greater and lesser prophets. We refuse to accept the suggestion of an upward trend in prophetic history so that prophets nearer to our time are 'greater' than those further away from us. Such a naive interpretation of history does not take full account of the vacillation which takes place in the inner life of man. This mechanical application of the law of evolution is ill-fitting to the more subtle balances in the realm of values.

Biblical Prophetism is distilled in the crucible of the dialectic encounter with God where right and wrong, true and false become difficult and indeterminable entities.

In biblical history the 'false' prophet plays an important part and augments our picture of Prophetism; he is a factor in God's revelation to man. Without the presence of the 'false' prophet we would not be able to understand the phenomenon of Hebrew Prophetism or grasp its meaning.

A prophet is not 'false' because he wants to deceive or because he is a pretender. He is only called 'false' because his message is wrongly motivated. Wrong motivation however is not something which is peculiar to some people and not to others. Mixed motives is unfortunately the daily experience of man. A true prophet can therefore become false, and a false true, depending upon the degree of his obedience and the inner motives which prompt him. A classic example is Moses who at the waters of Meribah acts as a false prophet by striking the rock twice (*Numbers*, 20:11 fl; cp. *Ex*. 17:6). Another illustration is Balaam who finds himself in the difficult position of having to please Balak, the son of Zippor, and also God (*Numbers* 22 and 23). An interesting incident is recounted in 1 *Kings* 13 where a prophet who is simply called *ish Elohim* prophesies correctly but by becoming disobedient to God's command turns into a false prophet.

What then makes a prophet 'false'?

We have a classic example in the case of Micaiah,, the son of lmlah, of whom we are told by Ahab, the king of Israel, that he hates him for he never prophesies good concerning him. By contrast Zedekiah the son of Henaanah, like the 400 of his confreres, is only too ready to prophesy in the king's favour (1 *Kings* 22:11). An even more dramatic case is

provided by Jeremiah in his confrontation with Hananiah, the son of Azzur (*Jer*. 28). Here the two prophets meet in the temple before the priests and all the people to pitch prophecy against prophecy: the one contradicting the other. Hananiah was proved false, though he appears in his full right as "prophet from Gibeon". We may well ask: How did Jeremiah know that he was in the right and his opponent in the wrong?

Hananiah was prophesying the very thing the people in Jerusalem wanted to hear above everything else, namely the imminent fall of the Babylonian empire. This was a message pleasing to their ears, 'smooth things' for which they craved though it carried an illusion (cf. *Is*. 30:10). This wishful thinking was out of touch with the reality of the situation as history has proved. False prophecy is the kind of prophecy which is detached from reality. But there is yet another principle involved.

As is well-known, Jeremiah adopted a strange policy with regard to the Chaldees; this created the impression that he was acting as traitor to his people. Seen from a distance it occurs to us that his attitude was not only dictated by the hard facts of international affairs as in the case of Josephus centuries later. Jeremiah's attitude to Nebuchadnezzar will also have been determined by the characteristic prophetic understanding of history. This biblical historicism is based on two premisses: (1) that God is the God of history; (2) that man reaps the fruit of his deeds. For Jeremiah, therefore, the king of Babylon is an instrument of God's wrath; he is God's servant (*Jer*. 25:9) to perform His will. A parallel case is that of Cyrus, king of Persia, whom *Deutero-Isaiah* announced as God's anointed (*Is*. 44:28; 45:1). Jeremiah's historiosophical insight allows of no short cuts in history. The impetus of evil has to play itself out with all its consequences. There is no escape from the moral responsibility before God. What a people sows it has to reap. The path to redemption is a path of suffering. It does not do to heal the wounds of the people lightly by just saying peace, peace, when there is no peace (*Jer*. 6:14). Now Hananiah had no such insight and was deluding himself and others. This proved him a 'false' prophet.[8]

3. The Secret of the Prophet

What is behind that characteristic conviction of the prophet which makes him 'true'? In this question is hidden the whole problem of biblical Prophetism. Scholars can adopt either of two courses: they can approach the prophets in their own context and treat them as *sui generis*; or else they can try to place them against the wider background of similar phenomena and rank them with the great national poets and leaders of other nations. Our choice of procedure will largely depend upon our theological predilection. This in turn depends on how we relate ourselves to the question of revelation. If we are prepared to accept the biblical assertion that God truly speaks though man as his mouthpiece, then we must deal with the prophets on their own terms and treat them as *sui generis*. On the other hand, if by revelation we merely mean a degree of intuition of which others are equally capable, though perhaps on a lower level, then the prophets are not a special case and must be viewed in the context of the general phenomenon.

The writer ranges himself with those to whom the prophets are a special case. Their secret is therefore beyond our investigation. All we can do is collect the biographical data scattered in the prophetic writings so as to construct as accurate as possible a picture of the

inner life of the prophet which could help us to understand his position. From such a study several characteristic features would emerge; the most important being his auditory gift. The prophet is primarily a hearer of the Word of God; his speech is only secondary. He speaks under compulsion and only because God has already spoken to him: "The lion has roared - who will not fear? The Lord has spoken - who can but prophesy?" (*Amos* 3:8).

This sense of compulsion is the most characteristic feature of the true prophet. The genuine prophet does not choose his vocation; he is called to it, frequently against his will. The message he is entrusted with makes him an unpopular and lonely figure. But there is no escape from his duty even though it may be contrary to his better judgement as in the case of Jonah. That the book of *Jonah* belongs to a different class of prophetic writing more in line with the poem of Job than with any of the classical prophets, makes little difference. Behind 'Jonah' is a great and remarkable man of God.

Unpopularity is the burden the prophet has to bear; it is part of his vocation to find himself in opposition to the majority view. The prophet Micah complains: "If a man should go about and utter wind and lies, saying: 'I will preach to you of wine and strong drink' - he shall be a prophet for this people" (*Micah* 2:11).[9]

It is therefore the unpopularity of the genuine prophet's message which makes him unpopular as a person. If he could afford to do what the false prophet used to do, pander to the public, he too would enjoy popularity; but then he would not be a prophet. Occasionally the prophet's lot becomes too hard to bear and he rebels, as is the case with Jeremiah. But the compelling power of God's Word is like fire in his bones and he has to give in: "Lord, thou hast enticed me and I was enticed; thou art stronger than I and thou hast prevailed" (*Jer*. 20:7 fl). The Word of God, or the God who speaks, is behind the prophet's words and actions. This is the remarkable awareness of the prophet: he knows himself taken hold of by God and used as an instrument or mouthpiece. He is a man possessed in the literal sense of the word: God has taken possession of his life. What he says is God's Word, though it is the prophet who speaks.

The true prophet speaks and acts though it may turn to his own personal disadvantage; he cannot do otherwise. This inward compulsion marks him out as a true prophet. The false prophet is under no such necessity; he prophesies professionally. His prophetic calling comes to him by way of the more conventional channels; he is either a member of a prophetic school, (cf. 1 *Sam*. 10:5; 19:20) or else he inherited the art of prophecy from his family tradition.[10] Such men specialized in the art of prophecy in a professional manner and spoke with an eye to personal advantage. They could not afford to become unpopular for their livelihood depended upon popularity: Thus says the Lord concerning the prophets: who lead my people astray, who cry 'Peace' when they have something to eat, but declare war against him who puts nothing in their mouth (*Micah* 3:5). This passage shows clearly enough that the professionals prophesied for payment. When Amos protests to Amaziah that he is neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet be means precisely this very thing that he does not prophesy for gain.[11] Amos knew himself a prophet not by choice but by special calling; God took him from following the flock and said to him: "Go prophesy to my people Israel" (*Amos* 7:15).

The shepherds against whom Ezekiel inveighs were the kind of men whom Jesus Christ described as hirelings (*John* 10). They had vested interests in the flocks; their real purpose

was to feed themselves and not the sheep. The indictment applies as much to the priests as it does to the prophets. Ezekiel was both, priest and prophet; he thus had a special right to pass judgement. In ch. 13 he denounces the "foolish prophets"; in ch. 22: 26 he denounces the priests; in ch. 34 he denounces both - the shepherds of the people.

Whence the prophet's moral authority to act as judge of his fellow men?

This too is part of the prophet's secret. He knows himself placed between two worlds - the world of values and the empirical world of history. He is uniquely involved in both these worlds; in him they meet and fuse. Hence the prophet's uncompromising call to repentance: he refuses to accept a world torn between God and evil. He knows himself as the mediator between God and man and being the spokesman of the righteous God he appeals to his people's conscience. It is this unrelenting, almost fanatical, moral earnestness which makes the prophet such an enigma to us who live by compromise.

The mere fact of an auditory experience does not make a man a prophet. Such an experience may derive from quite a different source. Psychiatrists tell us that auditory hallucinations are a common occurrence with certain patients: "More usually hallucinations are of the nature of voices, the spoken words being distinguished as a rule. It is their content that is of special interest - and it has to be remembered that their content is just as much part of the patient's mental life as his ordinary thought, however foreign in origin they appear to be."[12] But if the prophets are not exactly mental patients, is it possible that they are a more respectable variation of those quacks and visionaries who in all ages have exercised authority over the minds of men by means of dreams and portents? Is there a difference between the augury practised in Rome by the religious official who was credited with the skill of foretelling the future from the behaviour of birds and the appearance of entrails of sacrificial animals and the lower forms of prophecy we meet in the Bible?

Portents, dreams and visions occur in some parts of the Old Testament. We are told of theophanies; of angels who speak in dreams as in the case of Jacob (*Gen*. 31:11). In *Numbers* 12:6 we are expressly told that God reveals Himself to prophets in dreams and visions. Saul's visit to En-dor reveals to us a world of superstition and black magic. We are told that Saul tried dreams, the Urim and then the prophets, but without result. In the end he resorted to a medium who was successful in conjuring up the dead Samuel (cf. 1 *Sam*. 28:3 fl). Is all this part of the prophetic phenomenon?

It is to be noted that both the Law and the prophets are bitterly opposed to every suggestion of soothsaying and magic:

> *Ex*. 22:18: You shall not permit a sorceress to live.
> *Lev*. 20:28: A man or a woman who is a medium or a wizard shall be put to death.
> *Deut*. 18:10 fl: There shall not be found among you anyone who practices divination, a soothsayer, or an augur, or a sorcerer, or a charmer, or a medium, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord.

In Isaiah sorcerers, harlots and adulterers are put in one class as belonging together (*Is*. 57:3); and Jeremiah goes one step further and classes the prophets with the diviners, dreamers, soothsayers and sorcerers, all working for the same end to delude the people (*Jer*. 27:9). He is careful to single out the prophets who mislead the people with their dreams (*Jer*.

23:27 fl) and he warns against prophets and diviners who are out to deceive: "Do not listen to their dreams which they dream, for it is a lie which they are prophesying in my name; I did not send them, says the Lord" (*Jer*. 29:8 fl).

It is obvious, therefore that there can be little doubt about the sanity of men like Isaiah, or Jeremiah, or Amos. These men are neither dervishes, nor are they psychopaths or charlatans. Their moral earnestness, their readiness to suffer for what they preach, their deep spiritual insight into human nature, their close understanding of world affairs, their courageous leadership and their inner strength to stand alone against the many, marks them as a special category of men. Were they pretending, or is it only a formula when they prefaced their speeches with the words: 'Thus says the Lord'? How did they know that God was speaking and how did they hear?

It does not seem to us that there is a satisfactory answer to the question on the ordinary level: how does a prophet hear or how does he distinguish between the voice of God and his own imagination? Only occasionally are we allowed a glimpse into the secret of the prophet's experience of God. Such an insight is provided us by the text in *Is*. 50:4: "The Lord God has given me the tongue of those who are taught, that I may know how to sustain with a word him that is weary. Morning by morning, he wakens my ear to hear as those who are taught" (cf. also *Ps*. 40:6 fl). From this passage we learn that the prophet is a speaker or spokesman, only because he is first a listener. This gift of hearing is part of his life of faith. Faith listens before it expresses itself in speech. A faith which is deaf is also dumb: *he'emanti ki 'adaber* says the Psalmist (*Ps*. 116:10): "I believed therefore will I speak." Prophetic speech is out of the depth of faith; this is the only legitimate explanation of the prophet's secret life. To go beyond it is to leave the context of the Bible and to reconstruct our own. This was done by Maimonides when he tried to explain the phenomenon of biblical prophecy by making it dependent upon our own intellectual qualities: "Prophecy is, in truth and reality, an emanation sent forth by the Divine Being through the medium of the Active Intellect, in the first instance to man's rational faculty, and then to his imaginative faculty; it is the highest degree and greatest perfection man can attain; it consists in the most perfect development of the imaginative faculty."[13] By way of an introduction Maimonides has already indicated his full agreement with the sages who said: "The spirit of prophecy only rests upon persons who are wise, strong and rich." For though prophecy "depends chiefly on the will of God who is to prophesy, and at what time", yet God selects only the best and the wisest. "Prophecy is impossible without study and training," though study and training is not enough.[14] This attempt to rationalize the prophetic phenomenon allows for inspiration but limits it to those qualified to be thus inspired.

Anyone familiar with the biblical record will immediately see the difference between Maimonides the philosopher and the men of faith as encountered in the Bible. There is a secret about them which we cannot explain, try as we may. But it is not the secret of the gnostic or the initiated who keeps his knowledge for the select few; it is rather the secret of the inner life of faith open to all who want to enter into its sanctuary. Hence the prophet's message is always for the many. Only when he is rejected and his message despised does he reluctantly seal it to be preserved for better days (*Is*. 8:16).

4. The Prophet's Message

There can be little doubt that the prophets believed themselves to be the mouthpiece of God; they were convinced that upon them fell the responsibility of a special mission; they believed they were speaking with an authority given them by God. When we compare prophet with prophet we soon discover an amazing unity of purpose. Though each one of them shows characteristics of his own, they all aim at one objective: to call Israel back to God. Their task can be summarized under five headings:

a) Pronouncement of judgement.
b) Call to repentance.
c) Interference in current events.
d) Offer of grace and forgiveness.
e) The vision of God's ultimate triumph in history.[15]

We will now proceed to analyse these points in some detail.

a) Pronouncement of Judgement

Independence of public opinion and complete fearlessness marks the prophet out from the rest of society. Henryk Ibsen must have had the Old Testament prophets in mind when he wrote his play the *Enemy of the People*. Here the doctor of the town, the hero of the play, discovers his strength at the moment of greatest opposition.. But Ibsen's doctor is not quite a prophet, for he lacks contact with the spiritual world. In *Brand* Ibsen came much nearer to the Old Testament prophets: Brand's deep convictions, unbending character and his fearlessness give him the characteristics of the prophet. That he ultimately stands corrected before the voice from heaven does not detract from his stature, as it did not in the case of Elijah: Brand's values are derived from the invisible world and it is this which brings him so near to the prophetic man.

It is in face of the ultimate values of the spiritual world that the prophet measures the deeds of men and finds them wanting. But we would be mistaken in our judgement if we regarded them as mere moralizers. Their task was not to make people better but to confront them with the Holy God of Israel. Such confrontation demanded pronouncement of judgement. It is the prophet's function to pronounce the judgement of God upon society. An example of such indictment is *Isaiah* 1. No one can read this chapter of invectives without trembling: "Hear the word of the Lord, you rulers of Sodom, Give ear to the judgement of our God, you people of Gomorrah" (*Is*. 1:10).[16]

But the prophet's task is not just to speak in generalities and to adjudge 'society'; his concern is with the individual. To confront the individual with the ultimate challenge of the spiritual world is the prophet's main duty. He is therefore not just a preacher but a man of action. Classic examples are Elijah before Ahab and Nathan before David.

We do not know another instance in world literature to equal the story of Elijah's encounter with Ahab at the most critical moment when the latter finds himself in Naboth's vineyard: "Have you found me, O my enemy?" asks the King. "I have found you, because you have sold yourself to do what is evil in the sight of the Lord" answers the prophet (1 *Kings* 21:20).

The story of the encounter between Nathan and King David is even more dramatic: here stands the otherwise unknown servant of God before an Eastern despot fearlessly casting in his teeth: "You are the man!" (2 *Sam*. 12:7).

From such and similar incidents, we begin to realize, the reason for the prophet's name: *shomer* - guardian - for he knew himself the guardian of his people's conscience. Neither the nation corporately, nor the individual Israelite was allowed to set up standards of values different from the absolute requirements of God, without the prophet's protest. But he was not merely protesting, he was sitting in judgement and pronouncing the verdict as in the case of Elijah upon Ahab; or to quote another example, as in the case of Jeremiah with regard to Judah.

No prophet would have ever taken it upon himself to pronounce judgement because of his own outraged conscience. However we may try to explain it, it is a fact that when the verdict was final, events have proved the prophet right. We come here upon the inevitability of cause and effect; but also upon the moral structure of the universe; "those who sow the wind must reap the whirlwind" (*Hosea* 8:7).

b) Call to Repentance

The prophets seldom announced judgement without the offer of grace. Judgement in the prophetic context is primarily not punitive but exhortative (cf. *Amos* 4:6, 8, 9, 10, 11). It intends to call man back to his senses and to warn him of the consequences if he persists. The last chapters of *Deuteronomy* are a classical example of prophetic writing in this respect. *Deut*. 28-30 are traditionally called the *tokehah* from *yakah*, to argue, to dispute, also to arbitrate, mediate, to chide. This is the verb in *Is*. 1:18: "Come now, let us reason together," says the Lord. 'Let us argue it out' is the meaning. The prophet appeals to man's good sense and is prepared to reason with him. This is a moral and intellectual approach, though the sentimental element is not entirely lacking. Sometimes a prophet is more emotional as is the case with Hosea, sometimes more intellectual as is *Deutero-Isaiah*.

Deutero-Isaiah scorns those who surround themselves with artificial sparks (*Is*. 50:11) and neglect the source of all light. His appeal to the grandeur of nature is always a call to consider Him who created it: Lift up your eyes on high and see: who created these? (*Is.* 40:26). Similarly Jeremiah pours scorn upon those who hew out cisterns which cannot hold water and neglect Him who is the fountain of living water (*Jer.* 2:13).

But whatever approach the prophets may choose, their aim is always the same: a call to return.

Shuvu is the war-cry of the prophets: come back! This short dramatic and active verb dominates the prophetic message: "Return to me and I will redeem you" (*Is*. 44:22).

"Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts, let him return to the Lord that he may have mercy on him and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (*Is*. 55:7).

"Return, faithless Israel, says the Lord, I will not look on you in anger for I am merciful, says the Lord" (*Jer*. 3:l2).

"Return O faithless Sons, I will heal your faithlessness" (*Jer.* 3:22).

A glance in any concordance will suffice to prove how unanimous the prophets are on this point. Hosea's challenging cry: *shuvu Yisrael ad Adonai Eloheka ki kashalta ba'avoneka* is the cry of all the prophets. The Hebrew *ad* has the meaning of 'unto' - return, O Israel, *unto* the Lord your God, for you are trapped in your sins! This is the meaning of the text.

This prophetic call to return has played an important part. in the spiritual history of Israel, both in Church and Synagogue. The Greek μετάνοια = μετά + νοέω, change of mind, is a paraphrase of *teshuvah*, but not a translation. It expresses the same meaning but lacks the characteristic Hebrew emphasis upon *action*. If John the Baptist or Jesus Christ preached in Aramaic, as they must have done, they would have used the Hebrew expression and not the Greek. It is noteworthy that both John (*Mtt.* 3:2) and Jesus (*Mtt.* 4:17) take up the cry of the prophets. Strack and Billerbeck have shown how the concept of *teshuvah* is closely linked to the concept of salvation in the minds of the Rabbis. For this they quote pages of evidence.[17]

R. Eliezer ben Hyrkanos (*c*. 90) said: Unless the Israelites repent they will never be saved, see *Is*. 30:15: "In returning and rest you shall be saved." R. Yehoshua ben Hananya then asked: What if the Israelites become obdurate and refuse to repent, will they not be saved? R. Eliezer answered: God will put over them a king so cruel like Haman, then they will repent and be saved, see *Jer*. 30:7: "It is a time of distress for Jacob; yet he shall be saved out of it."

"Great is *teshuvah*," says the *Midrash*, "for it preceded the creation of the world," in the sense that God has foreseen repentance in His plan of salvation (*Mdr. Ps*. 90:12). Unfortunately, both in Church and Synagogue 'repentance' became a formality which in the Roman Church goes under the name of 'penance' and is given sacramental significance. It must be admitted, however, that true penance, which implies contrition, confession and satisfaction, may be a mighty means for a return to God.

c) Interference in Current Events

The prophet is never an onlooker, he is a man of action. Nothing has more obscured the significance of the prophet than the idea that his concern is mainly with the future. Though the prophet has an eye for the future and is inspired by a great vision, as we shall see later, his main concern is with the present. His task is to interfere with current events and place them in the right perspective. We have already seen how Elijah opposes Ahab in his nefarious dealing with Naboth; how Nathan accuses David of murder and adultery. Prophetic history is full of similar incidents on an individual and national scale.

There is the delightful story about Elisha who leads the entire Syrian army into the enemy city of Samaria and then persuades the king of Israel to make a banquet for his captives: "So he prepared for them a great feast and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master. And the Syrians came no more on raids into the land of Israel" (2 *Kings* 6:23). Is there a better way of stopping a feud between two neighbouring nations?

It is usually in times of crisis that the prophet appears on the scene or is asked for advice. He never speaks in his own name or expresses his personal opinion. It is his task and duty to speak in the name of God and only thus is his word valid. During the Assyrian siege of Jerusalem when Hezekiah was hard pressed, he sent an embassage to Isaiah the prophet

asking for his prayer on behalf of the nation (*Is*. 37). We are not told that Isaiah prayed; we are rather given the impression that the prophet was waiting to be approached. His answer is immediate and without hesitation: "Say to your master: Thus says the Lord: Do not be afraid because of the words that you have heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have reviled me . . ." (*Is*. 37:6).

He thus instils new courage in the king and the nation. Strange to relate, he is proved right by subsequent events (cf. 2 *Kings* 19). A similar situation occurred in the days of Elisha the prophet during the siege of Samaria by Ben-hadad, king of Syria. At a moment when the situation became desperate, Elisha declared almost immediate relief: the Syrian army retreated that very night (2 *Kings* 7).

We meet quite a different situation in the case of Zedekiah who sends to Jeremiah to enquire of God regarding Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon (*Jer*. 21). The prophet announces judgement against the king and the city and advises the inhabitants to surrender to the enemy. Later, when the exiles in Babylon expected a quick return, the prophet wrote to disillusion them. He advised them to build houses, plant vineyards and to seek the welfare of the country of their captivity: "Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are among you deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams which they dream for it is a lie. . . . For thus says the Lord: When seventy years are completed for Babylon I will visit you. . ." (*Jer*. 29:8 fl). It was the persistent advice of Jeremiah to yield to the inevitable and accept the suzerainty of Babylon; this was looked upon as treachery and cast in his teeth: "Let this man be put to death, for he is weakening the hands of the soldiers who are left in this city, and the hands of the people, by speaking such words to them. For this man is not seeking the welfare of this people, but their harm" (*Jer*. 38:4). It may well be that it was Jeremiah's example which prompted Josephus, centuries later, to secede from the warring army into the Roman camp. It seems to us that F. J. Foakes Jackson fails to grapple with the psychological problem which is presented by Josephus' unexpected behaviour.[18] However the case may be, while Jeremiah was concerned for the safety and welfare of his people, Josephus seems to have been interested mainly in his own survival. History has already pronounced the verdict: while Jeremiah is counted among the prophets, Josephus occupies a place among traitors, though both have been proved right with regard to the futility of the struggle.

The prophets' task was not only to interfere but also to interpret events. This they always did in the light of God's judgement. All national calamities were understood as 'visitations' and related to the moral code of values. God is always presented as the great Guardian of right; there are no accidents in history: "I form light and create darkness, I make weal and create woe, I am the Lord, who do all these things" (*Is*. 45:7). War and peace, famine and plenty are to the prophets indications of God's dealing with His people. There are no chance happenings, no fortuitous events which have no relation to God, the Lord of History. All that happens has significance and must be interpreted in the light of God's purposeful *telos*. The prophet therefore asks: "Does evil befall a city, unless the Lord has done it?" (*Amos* 3:6). An example how the prophets interpret events is provided by the case of Joel in connection with the locust which afflicted the land. He calls upon the priests to blow the trumpet in Zion, to sanctify a fast, to sound the alarm on the holy mountain and to repent (*Joel* 2:1, 15).

d) Offer of Grace and Forgiveness

However severe the prophets may appear in their pronouncement of judgement, they never regard punishment as an end in itself. It is only a means to call Israel back to God. In this respect Amos' historiosophy is typical for all the prophets. Amos enumerates the various calamities which befell the nation and constantly ends with the refrain: "Yet you did not return to me, says the Lord" (*Amos* 4). His cry, like that of the rest of the prophets, is: "Seek me and live" (*Amos* 5:4). It must be noticed that to the prophet to seek God is tantamount to seeking good: "Seek good and not evil, that you may live, and so the Lord, the God of hosts, will be with you . . ." (*Amos* 5:14). The offer of grace and forgiveness is the reverse side of the prophet's pronouncement of judgement and call to repentance. Only when kept together: judgement *and* grace, do we receive a balanced view of the prophetic message.

The same prophet who announces the terrible day of the Lord, and asks, who can endure it? (*Joel* 2:11) pleads: "Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart . . . return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful . . ." (*Joel* 2:12 fl). Ezekiel tells us that God does not want the sinner's death, but rather that he should return from his way and live (*Ez*. 18:23), and he dramatically puts it in the form of a question: Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked, says the Lord, and not rather that he should turn from his way and live? The same text is repeated in ch. 33:11: this time not in the form of a question but in the predicate form; but the verse ends with the pleading question: For why will you die; O house of Israel? This offer of grace and forgiveness is the positive side of the prophetic message and is the recurring theme in all the prophetic writings: "If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land . . ." (*Is*. 1:19). Sometimes the prophet loses patience and cries: forgive them not (*Is*. 2:9), but this is only a momentary lapse; his knowledge of God prevents him from vindictiveness and forces him to preach mercy and forgiveness rather than judgement and death. This is specially the case in *Deutero-Isaiah* where the love of God reaches evangelical heights: "Seek the Lord while he may be found . . . return to the Lord and he will have mercy. . . and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (*Is*. 55:6 fl). The rest of the prophets are not far behind. Hosea who presents God in the simile of a wooing husband trying to regain the love of his faithless spouse, promises to heal Israel's faithlessness and to love him freely (*Hos*. 14:4); and Jeremiah is instructed to search the streets of Jerusalem to find one who does justice and seeks truth and God will pardon the whole city (*Jer*. 5:1). This is no doubt one better than in the story about Sodom when God was prepared to spare the city for the sake of ten righteous (*Gen*. 18:32). Yet behind this offer of grace is also the frightful indictment that there is not a single man in Jerusalem who has remained faithful to the Covenant. That Israel stubbornly refuses to repent and accept God's free pardon is the sorry tale of the prophetic record. Whether it be in tones of wooing love or in the language of bitter punishment - they would not hear (*Is*. 28:12); *we-lo avitem* - and you would not (*Is*. 30:15) is the bitter accusation hurled against God's people. We notice that exactly the same word was spoken by Jesus of Nazareth: "How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, *and you would not*" (*Luke* 13:34). Ezekiel is being prepared beforehand as he embarks on his prophetic career not to count on success: "But the house of Israel will not listen to you; for they are not willing to listen to me; because all the house of

Israel are of a hard forehead and of a stubborn heart" (*Ez*. 3:7). The psalms reflect this prophetic attitude of plea and condemnation: "O Israel, if you would but listen to me! But my people would not listen to my voice: Israel would have none of me" (*Ps*. 81:9, 11). Man rejects the offer of grace and thus asserts his autonomy. He remains true to his nature and pitches his will against the will of his Maker. Does this mean that God is defeated in His purpose and that man achieves the ascendency? To allow such a supposition would amount to a denial both of the wisdom and the power of God. This the prophets cannot accept. Out of this dilemma was born the messianic hope.

e) The Vision of God's Ultimate Triumph in History

The God of the prophets is not vindictive; He comes to save and not to destroy; He does not act as man would; He is not swayed by anger but moved by love: "I will not execute my fierce anger . . . for I am God and not man, the Holy One in your midst, and I will not come to destroy" (*Hos*. 11:9). The prophets apparently believed love to be stronger and more potent than man's stubbornness. God could have brow-beaten Israel into obedience, but He prefers the more excellent way: "I led them with cords of compassion, with the bands of love." And though Israel became faithless God's love remains unaltered: "even as the Lord loves the people of Israel, though they turn to other gods . . ." (*Hos*. 3:1). It means that God is prepared to go beyond limits to win His way to His people's heart - this is the Gospel in anticipation as perceived by the prophets. The 53rd chapter of Isaiah must be read in the context of the limitless love of God as reflected not only in *Deutero-Isaiah* but in other prophets. A God who desires mercy rather than sacrifice (*Hos*. 6:6) is a God who practises mercy Himself; Jeremiah is told of God: "Go and proclaim these words towards the north, and say: Return faithless Israel, says the Lord, I will not look on you in anger, for I am merciful, says the Lord; I will not be angry for ever" (*Jer*. 3:12). The Hebrew *hesed* is not easily translated into English and the R.S.V. adopted the phrase 'steadfast love' to convey the meaning of the noun. It is remarkable that the expression has both a positive and negative meaning: it may mean not only loving-kindness but also reproach, shame, disgrace. At first, this contradiction appears startling, but on reflection it reveals a profound truth; no one knows what *hesed* really means unless he is prepared to endure shame and disgrace. This is the very characteristic of the suffering Servant of God in *Deutero-Isaiah*. An even more touching expression is *raham* which is freely used in the prophetic books to describe the loving nature of God: to have compassion, pity, tenderness, love; *rehem* is the mother's womb and *rahamim* is descriptively rendered 'bowels' with the meaning of compassion, tender pity (cf. 2 *Cor*. 6:12; *Phil*. 1:8; 2:1; *Col*. 3:12). That God is *El rahum wehannun* (*Ex*. 34:6): "merciful and gracious" is the deepest knowledge of the prophets; that God exercises mercy and grace is their ultimate message. The passages are too many to be quoted; suffice it to point to the Psalms where God's 'steadfast love' is the recurring refrain. *Deutero-Isaiah* (or Trito-Isaiah?) summarized the prophetic knowledge of God's tender love when he said of Him: "In all their afflictions he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them" (*Is*. 63:9).[19]

It is obvious that such a God is not easily discouraged by man's recalcitrance and because wisdom and power are linked to His love He wins in the end. In spite of all discouragement the prophets therefore are buoyant with the sense of victory in the

knowledge that God will ultimately triumph. The froward people will return in penitence of heart and God will accept them in mercy: "I will betroth you to me for ever; I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice; in steadfast love, and in mercy. I will betroth you to me in faithfulness; and you shall know the Lord" (*Hosea* 2:19 fl). This is the text recited by every pious Jew as he winds the thong of the phylactery round the middle finger of his left hand. But the passage has much wider implication than the people of Israel. The prophetic vision goes far beyond the limits of the Holy Land. Israel is here only the representative of the human race. It is a travesty of Hebrew messianism to confine it to one single people as is sometimes done by Jewish writers. In his essay on "The political ideal of the Prophets: A Study in Biblical Zionism", Israel Friedlaender (1876-1921) reveals complete lack of understanding for the prophetic vision when he says: ". . . when on the twentieth of Kislev 458, the people, shivering from cold and excitement, gathered on the streets around Ezra and took a vow to send away their foreign wives and the children born from them, and to separate themselves from the people of the earth, the political ideal of the prophets achieved its final and lasting triumph. . . ."[20] It would be of some interest to know which of the prophets Friedlaender had in mind? Hosea, who is entirely occupied with Judah and Ephraim and speaks in such lofty tones about the love of God, refuses to make distinctions between God's people and any other people. He knows only too well that there are no favourites with God: "As Shalman destroyed Beth-arbel on the day of battle . . . thus it shall be done to you, O house of Israel, because of your great wickedness" (*Hos*. 10:14 fl). It is just because Israel is endowed with privileges that his responsibility is the greater: "You only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities" *(Amos* 3:2). In the consciousness of the prophets the world outside Israel is God's world. Man, as we have already seen, was originally created without any distinctive marks of race or colour. Humanity in the prophetic view is interrelated. God's triumph over Israel extends to the nations of the world, who will join with Israel in the worship of the only and true God. This is the messianic theme of the Old Testament.

It will lead us too far to investigate into the origins of a personal Messiah. In spite of the large literature dealing with the subject we are still in the dark about its inception and development. Whether its origin goes back to a tradition borrowed from foreign sources, as German scholars insist,[21] or from the concept of an ideal king as recently demonstrated by Helmer Ringgren[22] is immaterial to our discussion. To us it is important that the great messianic prophecies unite in their vision these elements: Israel - the nations - the personal Messiah —the servant of God - the triumph of God's reign.

We have already seen that in the prophetic view Israel, God's people, the holy and priestly people; the people of the Covenant, appears to be an apostate people, which God refuses to give up.

Equally the nations, the *goyyim*, are not left outside God's providence and concern. God's hand is stretched out over all nations (*Is*. 14:26) and Israel's destiny is bound up with the destiny of the peoples of the world. The invitation to go to the mountain of the Lord and to the house of the God of Jacob (*Is*. 2: 3) extends to all the nations. God is their judge (*Is*. 2:4) and He is the judge of Israel, for He is the judge of all flesh, as Abraham already knew. On the great day of reconciliation, when the ensign is raised, the outcasts of Israel and the

dispersed of Judah will be swiftly carried on the shoulders of the Philistine's back to their own land (*Is*. 11:12 fl; cf. *Is*. 66:20). The Gentiles come to Israel not only as servants but as worshippers; they come to learn God's ways and to walk in His paths (*Is*. 2:3), for God is equally the king of the nations (*Jer*. 10:7).

The ensign which shall be raised for the nations is connected with the root of Jesse (*Is*. 11:10). Him shall the nations seek and his dwelling shall be glorious. There can be little doubt that the oldest stratum of messianic prophecy visualizes a personal Messiah in the form of an ideal King upon whom rests the spirit of God (cf. *Is*. 9:6 fl; 11:1 fl; *Micah* 5:2). There is no good reason why the genuineness of these passages should be disputed.[23] In *Deutero-Isaiah* the ideal King is viewed as the Servant of the Lord *par excellence* and he thus becomes the chief representative of Israel. Scholars have not been able to explain how the ideal King becomes the Suffering Servant. Some try to see in the Suffering Servant a portrayal of the fate of Zerubabel or Jehoiachim (so Sellin), others, some great unknown leader who lived in the 6th century (so Duhm). Klausner inclines to the traditional Jewish interpretation which sees in the Servant Songs the combined suffering of the Prophet himself and of his people: "Thus everything said in these chapters can and must be related in one process both to the prophet and to the whole Jewish nation: the servants of the LORD are this nation's chosen remnant, to which alone belongs the future."[24] Klausner fortifies this view with the authority of W. F. Albright; but if we accept as valid such an explanation we are faced with the even greater difficulty of doing justice to the text. The text, though frequently speaking of Israel as the Lord's Servant, also speaks of an individual apart from Israel. It is next to impossible to identify the Servant with the prophet himself or his disciples as Klausner does.[25]

We have shown in our book, *A Theology of Election*,[26] the points of identification between Israel and the Suffering Servant to the effect that the Suffering Servant is not a collective name for Israel or the Remnant of Israel, but the Representative Israelite.

The concept of a personal Messiah is deeply embedded in Jewish tradition and is reflected in the liturgy of the Synagogue's Prayer Book.[27] At the inauguration of the Sabbath the Synagogue recites the stirring passage: "Shake thyself from the dust, put on the garments of thy glory, O my people! Through the son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, draw thou nigh unto my soul, redeem it."[28] This is as 'Christian' a hymn as any to be found in the liturgy of the Church. The reference to the son of Jesse and to the town of Bethlehem gives it a Christmas-like flavour. Most important of all is the mediatory function of the Messiah as expressed in this verse. Also the spiritual and personal character of redemption is here indicated. All this goes to show how closely related were the messianic ideas of Church and Synagogue before the schism.[29] Though apocalyptic writers have made no small contribution to the development of the messianic concept, the real source of inspiration comes from the Old Testament prophets.

The Messiah's goal, both in the Jewish and the Christian view, is the initiation of God's Kingdom here upon earth. This is also the *telos* of the Gospel as it is the *telos* of the messianic vision on the part of the prophets. Even the great and terrible Day of the Lord is only in preparation for God's reign, when "the Lord of Hosts shall be exalted in justice" (*Is*. 5:16). Though the phrase "Kingdom of God" is lacking, the concept is present both in the

Prophets and the Psalms. In fact it is the underlying theme of New and Old Testament alike. The breadth of the messianic vision can be gauged from the magnificent text which has become the inspiration of Christian hymns: The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea (*Is*. 11:9).

It is an aberration of liberal theology, both Jewish and Christian, to present biblical messianism in the clearly defined rational terms of moral idealism. Though the prophets are deeply concerned with the moral aspect of human life and long for the day when evil will cease, the inspiration behind the messianic vision goes beyond the problem of ethics. The messianic hope is the prophetic theodicy of the Old Testament. The Prophets' God could not be defeated by sin and evil in Israel or the nations. They believed in a God whose wisdom and love triumphs over the human heart. Man may resist, but ultimately God has His way with humanity, and wins in the end. Messianism in the Old Testament is the vindication of God before history.

5. The Prophets' Position in History

So far we have confined ourselves to the Old Testament with occasional references to the New. We will now look beyond the framework of the Bible and try to assess our indebtedness to Israel's prophets on the wider plane of history.

It is next to impossible for us, who have been brought up in the prophetic tradition, to visualize a Bible minus its prophetic elements. Apart from the great moral values and lofty insights about God, we would miss in such a Bible the grandiose vision which is at the heart of the New Testament, namely the vision of messianic restoration. Humanly speaking, without the prophets there would be no New Testament, no Church, no Salvation.

To estimate adequately the influence of the prophets upon history we would have to take into account the impact of the Bible upon the nations. This would have to include not only the story of Judaism and Christianity, but of Mohammedanism as well. It would also include the whole complex of Western culture with its great concepts of morality, social justice and human dignity. We would also have to include the great social movements down the centuries which derived their passion for justice from Israel's prophets. We would also have to take into account the *indirect* influence exercised by the Bible upon the lives and thoughts of individual men and women outside the areas traditionally associated with the three named religions. To do justice to such an undertaking would require a separate treatise.

Here we can only indicate in the briefest manner the central contribution the prophets made to the spiritual life of humanity.

Man is a gregarious creature and tends towards uniformity. Despite his great destructiveness, he is conservative by nature. He prefers to move along the line of least resistance and shrinks instinctively from any form of change. He is tied to tradition and lives in dread of public opinion. Instead of personal moral responsibility, he prefers to conform to the rules of the herd and be one of many.

The prophets are individualists in the highest sense of the word. They are the great rebels in society. Their openness for God makes them intolerant of any form of injustice and slavery. Their social conscience, sharpened by the eternal values of the spiritual world, makes them rebel against inequalities in society. Because they know God to be both Creator and

Father they refuse to be satisfied with a world torn asunder by war and conflict. Their concept of the purposefulness of creation gives them a sense for the meaning of history and the sanctity of life. Being realists and not dreamers they know the truth about man and the tragedy of human history. But they believe in God more truly than in the opposing forces of evil; and because their God is both good and powerful they look forward to the time of the accomplishment of His purpose with mankind.

But the prophets are not mere onlookers. They throw all their weight of conviction and enthusiasm into the balance for a better and happier world. They demand a new earth and a new heaven and with it goes a new humanity. This brings them in conflict with the established order and the usual human prejudices. They face the struggle not in their own strength but in the conviction that right is on their side because God is on their side. This makes them lonely individuals despised and derided by society. But they stand their ground in the knowledge that right is stronger than might.

Whenever and wherever man has raised his voice against the stupidity, prejudice and injustice of men, the prophets were his allies. Since the day when the first prophet spoke out in the name of God in protest against tyranny and oppression, no man has ever stood alone in this fight. Our Western society is built upon the value and the right of the individual which in the Gospel message reaches its highest expression. If the prophets had accomplished nothing else but brought freedom to the individual they would have bestowed the greatest benefit on mankind.

Hebrew prophetism is thus at the very basis of world history. It has moulded the past and has still greater things in store for us in the future.

Notes to Chapter V

1. *Naba'um* – Accadian " to call (specially of a man by God) so Wm. Foxwall Albright, *Yahweh & the Gods of Canaan*, 1968, 208.
2. Cf. Brown, Driver and Briggs *Dictionary*.
3. Cf. Jastrow, *Dictionary to Talmud*, etc.
4. *Op cit*., 44. For a contemporary practice in the Hunza valley cf. *The Listener*, Nov. 17, 1960, 879.
5. *Op cit*., 44.
6. For an interpretation of the text see *H.D.B*., IV 108a; also Cheyne, *Critica Biblica*, 1904, 212.
7. *H.D.B*., Extra Vol. 672a-b.
8. For a more recent discussion on the subject see Edmond Jacob, "Quelques Remarques sur les Faux Prophètes", *Theologische Zeitschrift*, Nov.-Dec. 1927. Jacob says: ". . . nous dirons que le vrai et le faux ne se situent pas en deux camps séparés, mais queles deux notions se mêlent sans cesse a l'interieur du prophétisme; aussi ce qu'on appelle le "faux" prophétisme ne serait que la tentation a laquelle est constamment expose tout prophète"; p. 483.
9. The word for 'prophet' is here *mattif*, from *nataf*—drop, drip, flow; *mattif* therefore means one who speaks, preaches—prophet.
10. We suspect that the expression in *Amos* 7:14 'son of a prophet' has a different meaning from the expression 'sons of prophets' in 2 *Kings* 2:5; 4:38; cf. also 1 *Kings* 20:35.
11. Cf. Kautzsch, *H.D.B*., Extra Vol. 672a.
12. Sir David Henderson and R. D. Gillespie, *A Text-Book of Psychiatry*, Seventh edition, 118.
13. *Guide for the Perplexed*, 225.
14. *Ibid*., 220.

15. Since writing these words the author was gratified to discover that Harvey H. Guthrie suggests a similar scheme. Cf. *God and History in the O.T.*, 1960, 135.
16. 'Judgement' in *Is*. 1:10 in Hebr. *torah*. The R.S.V. therefore translates 'teaching', but this is too literalistic a rendering. 'Judgement' is more accurate as derived from torah; i.e. they are given a chance to hear what God's Law says about them.
17. Cf. *Kommentar zum N.T. aus Talmud und Midrasch*, I 162 fl.
18. Cf. F. J. Foakes Jackson, *Josephus and the Jews*, 1930, 258; also J. Jocz, "Josephus in New Translation", *The International Review of Missions*, Jan. 1960, pp. 105 fl.
19. The alternate reading: "he did not afflict", is most likely a gloss by someone who took exception to the idea of a suffering God, on philosophical grounds.
20. Quoted by H. M. Orlinsky, in his article "Jewish, Biblical Scholarship in America", *Jewish Quarterly Review*, April 1957, 351.
21. For the literature, cf. J. Klausner, *The Messianic Idea in Israel*, English translation, 1956, 13 n. 1.
22. Helmer Ringgren, *The Messiah in the Old Testament*, 1957.
23. Cf. *Encyclopedia Biblica*, 3059a.
24. Klausner, *op. cit*., 162.
25. Cf. *ibid*., 157.
26. J. Jocz, *A Theology of Election*, 1958.
27. Cf. *ibid*., 104-6.
28. Cf. Singer's *Authorized Prayer Book*, 112.
29. The stanza comes from the poem *Lekah dodi*—come my friend (to meet the bride; i.e. the Sabbath) and was written by Solomon ha-Levi (Alkabes), first half of the 6th century. But the ideas expressed are much older; cf. the Annotated Edition of Singer's *Prayer Book*, 1914, CXXIV fl.

VI. PROPHETIC HISTORIOSOPHY

History as perceived in the biblical narrative is somehow connected with the peculiarity of the Hebrew language. It is a fact that the Hebrew verb differs vitally from our own Western use in respect to time. Whereas in our use of the verb, time is the deciding factor, in Hebrew usage it is the intensity of action which defines the verb. A. B. Davidson is well justified in his remark that the Hebrew verb has no tenses in the strict sense of the word.[1] Perhaps a more accurate distinction is made by S. R. Driver, who says: "In Hebrew the tenses mark only differences in the kind of time, not differences in the order of time i.e. they do not in themselves determine the date at which an action takes place, they only indicate its character or kind. . . ."[2] It means that the Hebrew is not so much concerned when an event took place as with its effectiveness or state of completion. It is always the intensity of action which determines the verb. This is not to say that past and future are fused and are treated as immaterial, it only means that the future is determined by the past and depends upon it. Here we find indicated an awareness of the cohesion of history. It is for this very reason that the past tense is the most common form of the biblical narrative:

Adonai bar'a . . . God created . . .
we-ha-nahash hayah . . . and the serpent was . . .
u-Mosheh hayah ro'eh . . . and Moses was a shepherd . . .
wa-yelek Abram . . . and Abram went . . . etc. etc.

These statements about the past are not important because they describe events, but only because events are never isolated happenings. All events have meaning and purpose and form a pattern. There is a chain of events which makes up history. Nothing happens by chance, this is the basic insight of the prophetic view of history. This, what Toynbee calls "the volitional view of history", viz, history governed by intellect and will, endows events with "the maximum of significance".[3] For the same reason events are non-recurrent, because every event is unique in the chain of causality.

The lack of clear distinction in the use of the Hebrew verb between past, future and present reflects upon the biblical concept of eternity. To call it a 'concept' and to refer to 'it' as neuter, is in itself a betrayal of the Hebrew heritage. In the Bible 'Eternity' is a He, a Person, and therefore not a concept. In Him, the God of Israel, past, present and future merge, for His activity covers the whole stretch of time.[4] Man knows about Him, who is always the Acting Presence, from personal encounter. The Hebrew always meets God in action. This is most meaningfully expressed in the theophany to Moses: *eheyeh asher eheyeh* (*Ex*. 3:14); the A.V., the R.V., the R.S.V., all read "I am who (or that) I am". But James Moffat translates equally correctly in the future tense: "I-will-be-what-I-will-be." We suspect that Moffat was influenced by M. Buber and Franz Rosenzweig who also translate in the future tense: "*Ich werde dasein, als der ich dasein werde*." Yet Moffat's sentence is more intelligible. He is also more consistent in rendering the second *eheyeh* in the future: "I-will-be has sent you," while the others simply translate: *ich bin*. But the fact remains that both present and future are equally correct, and quite logically so; for God is the same, yesterday, today and for ever. The prophetic view of history is determined by this stupendous fact: history is God's doing here

upon earth in Israel and among the nations. The Hebrew does not think of God as Pure Being, but as the ever Acting One. Not because He *is*, but because He *acts*, reveals the God of Israel as the God of history.

We have already dwelt upon the fact that God is Creator; that He is the Lord of history; that He is the God of Israel, and the God of the nations. We come now more specifically to the detailed perception of history in the biblical context.

1. The Small Things

Pagan histories dwell upon the great events which shape human destiny: the great leaders, the great wars, the great battles. Biblical history pays unusual attention to the small and insignificant: Abram the wandering sheik, Joseph the slave in Egypt, David the shepherd boy, become important not because of their personal achievements, but because they are fitted into the purposes of God. The God of Israel intervenes in their lives and magnifies His name by using them to His greater glory.

Equally insignificant are the events the Bible uses for its pattern. These are events which seem to be far removed from the scene of world-history: the calling of Abram, Jacob's journey into exile, Joseph's arrival in Egypt, Moses' flight into the wilderness. Only when placed in perspective, and added up do these minor occurrences assume significance; they form the pattern of revelation. But even in this perspective they do not seem to affect the life of humanity in any direct manner. Biblical history is always a mosaic of small and insignificant happenings which do not seem to bear upon the great events on the world arena.

Israel is a small people: "It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love upon you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples; but it is because the Lord loves you, and is keeping the oath which he swore to your fathers" (*Deut*. 7:7 fl). The Holy Land, though described as a land "flowing with milk and honey", is in fact, apart from the small fertile plain, a land of frequent drought and rocky hills. In the political struggles of world politics its importance lay chiefly in its strategic position as a link between East and West. Hebrew prophets are well aware of the diminutive size of their land: The children born in the time of your bereavement will say in your ears: "the place is too small for me; make room for me to dwell in" (*Is*. 49:20). Dean Stanley rightly observes: "The contrast between the littleness of Palestine and the vast extent of the empires which hung upon its northern and southern skirts, is rarely absent from the mind of the Prophets and Psalmists. It helps them to exalt their sense of the favour of God towards their land by magnifying their little hills and dry torrent-beds into an equality with the giant hills of Lebanon and Hermon and the sea-like rivers of Mesopotamia."[5] Dean Stanley points to texts like *Ps*. 68:15; 45:4; *Is*. 2:2, to show the awareness on the part of the biblical writers of the physical disadvantage of the Holy Land. But this is more than made up for by the fact that the Creator of the Universe is Israel's God. Such a God does not depend upon the great and imposing; He uses the small and insignificant to reveal His mighty power. We have recorded for us two incidents which well illustrate the prophetic perception in this respect. One is the choosing of the shepherd boy David for kingship. Samuel was drawn to accept Eliab, Jesse's eldest son, as the future king of Israel, but God said to him: "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the Lord sees not

as man sees; man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart" (1 *Sam*. 16:7). The other equally famous incident is young David's fight with Goliath. David wins not with the sword but with a shepherd's sling and a few stones so "that all this assembly may know that the Lord saves not with sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord's . . ." (1 *Sam*. 17:47).

Behind these stories is the prophetic conviction that the shaping of human destiny is in God's hands and that He does not depend upon an outward show of strength. The Psalms frequently express the same thought: Not from the east or from the west and not from the wilderness comes lifting up; but it is God who executes judgement, putting down the one and lifting up the other (*Ps*. 75:6). The historiosophy of the book of *Daniel* is built upon the premise: "God rules in the kingdom of man." This is the basic conviction of the Prophets. For this reason man is warned not to make flesh his arm (*Jer*. 17:5) and not to put his trust in princes: It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to put confidence in princes (*Ps*. 118:9). God does not depend upon the strength of horses nor does He take pleasure in the legs of a man (*Ps*. 147:10); the deciding factor in human life is the will of God. Not to count with God is man's greatest mistake. The word to Zerubabel is therefore: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts" (*Zech*. 4:6). For the same reason the prophets have a special eye for the small and insignificant things of life. Their own position of a lonely voice in the wilderness would be unbearable except for this fact. They draw their strength from the conviction that to be on the side of God is a sufficient reward for the prophet's utter helplessness. To them history corroborates God's power in weakness: thus was Jericho conquered and Israel's enemies put to flight; thus did Gideon gain the victory though he reduced his army to a mere 300 men; thus was Israel delivered from the hands of Pharaoh.

In this, as in so many other respects, the New Testament shows exactly the same attitude. The Master is born in a stable, lives in a carpenter's home, suffers an ignominious death; the disciples are simple fishermen, "unlearned and ignorant men" (*Acts* 4:13). The Gospel is preached to the poor and publicans and sinners enter the kingdom of God. Jesus shows special concern for the small, the lowly and the poor; he came to seek what is lost. He quotes *Ps*. 8:3 (*LXX*): "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast brought perfect praise" (*Mtt.* 21:16).[6] The Gospels frequently use children as an example: "Unless you become as little children . . ." (*Mtt.* 18:3).

The disciples in Corinth are humble men, for God chooses the foolish things so that He might put to shame them that are wise (1 *Cor*. 1:27). Paul himself glories in his weakness for only thus is the power of God made perfect (2 *Cor*. 12:9). The *Epistle of James* reminds its readers: "Listen, my beloved brethren: has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith . . . ?" (*James* 2:5).

2. The Balance of Justice

All justice is for the Bible related to the decision of the Supreme Judge who pronounces in conformity with the law of equity. An earthly judge may err, but the Judge of all flesh can be relied upon to mete out justice with perfect impartiality. The *lex talionis* as annunciated in *Ex*. 21:24 fl: "eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe", springs from the sense that there is a law of equity which must

not be impaired. The perfect equipoise between crime and punishment is felt to be necessary in order to maintain the balance of God's justice. For this reason the judge must show no partiality to the poor man (*Ex*. 23:3), even as he must not honour the person of the mighty (*Lev*. 19:15). The insistence upon impartiality which is the basis of Western law is clearly defined in the Mosaic Code: "You shall not be partial in judgement, you shall hear the small and the great alike; you shall not be afraid of the face of man for the judgement is God's . . ." (*Deut*. 1:17). To judge righteously between man and man, whether Hebrew or alien (*Deut*. 1:16) is the basic principle of biblical justice. To upset the balance means to interfere with the very order of the universe as ordained by the will of God. Innocent blood which is shed without retaliation cries to heaven for vengeance as in the case of the blood of Abel (*Gen*. 4:10). Retribution is a necessary principle for the maintenance of the balance of equity. It underlies the structure of the universe and provides the link in the law of causality, the balance between cause and effect. Such is the principle which governs the life of individuals and nations. The historic books in the Bible are written with this aim in view, namely to bring out the principle of justice in the affairs of men. There is therefore justification for the Hebrew tradition which attaches to the books of *Joshua*, *Judges*, *Samuel* I and II and *Kings* I and II prophetic significance.[7] These books originated in prophetic circles and were written in the spirit of prophetic historiosophy. Their aim was to show that justice is the underlying principle in history: "what a man soweth that he will reap" (*Hosea* 10:12 fl).

Yet the prophets knew that justice is a cold and impersonal principle which when applied mechanically defeats its own end. They have thus joined justice to mercy. *Mishpat* and *hesed* though separated in history are united in God. The God of Israel is not only Judge but a merciful Judge: *rahum we-hannun* is His Name (cf. *Ex*. 34:6). *Zedakah* - 'righteousness' - when applied to God has always the overtone of mercy, so much so that *mishpat* and *zedakah* are almost synonyms. Though God does not clear the guilty yet He keeps *hesed* unto thousands and forgives iniquity, transgression and sin (*Ex*. 34:7). Such is His character that He tempers justice with mercy.[8] *Zedek* is therefore a prophetic concept which transcends the law of equity and puts justice on a personal basis: here man faces the Judge who does not only condemn but also justifies. In this way *mishpat* ceases to be a mechanical principle and becomes an element in the divine-human relationship. In fact, justice without mercy is unthinkable to the prophets. Man is meant to hold on to *hesed* and *mishpat* (*Hosea* 12:6) for these must never be separated.

Here the concepts of righteousness, mercy and justice are so blended that they almost become indistinguishable. What the prophets mean by *zedek* we find illustrated by the story of Abraham's plea on behalf of Sodom (*Gen*. 18). The text speaks of God as the Judge of all the earth who executes *mishpat* (v. 25), yet Abraham expects Him to spare the city for the sake of ten righteous. It is obvious that *mishpat* here has a different connotation from that which is usually attached to the meaning of 'justice'. The law of equity is outweighed in this remarkable story by a new principle which completely bypasses the *lex talionis*.

To keep the balance between justice, righteousness and mercy is a divine prerogative and the whole story of the human race bears witness to a God who blends these three attributes in perfect harmony. Evil is therefore never permitted to overbalance so that God's purposes are

frustrated. God always remains the Lord of history: this is the very heart of prophetic faith. The God of Israel is *only* God and all other gods are idols.

Behind this attitude is the characteristic prophetic realism which assesses man's moral qualities in accordance with fact. The prophets know that man can never live up to the absolute righteousness of God. Without *zedek*, *mishpat* would only become a destructive principle playing havoc with God's purpose as Creator. Unless God forgave sin man cannot be clean: "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" (*Ps*. 51:7). Man without the *hesed* of God cannot exist: "for there is no man who does not sin" (1 *Kings* 8:46). Humanity thus stands condemned before the righteous God who loves righteousness (*Ps*. 11:7). But the moral earnestness of the prophets saves them from a facile solution which would reduce the moral imperative to a functional proposition.[9] Because man cannot attain to perfect righteousness he is therefore not exempted from trying: "Consecrate yourselves therefore and be holy, for I am the Lord your God" (*Lev*. 20:7).[10] It is the prophet's task to encourage man in the great quest: "He hath showed you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God" (*Micah* 6: 8).

To strive after righteousness is man's main task in this world and history is judged by the degree both the individual and society make this their goal. To seek God, always means to seek righteousness; in the mind of the prophets the moral and the religious are never separate. Andrew C. Zenos rightly observes: "This concentration of righteousness as an ethical quality absolutely necessary in the normal relation with J abides through to the latest times. It is the doctrine of *Zephaniah* (2:3) and *Jeremiah* (9:24; 22:3) of *Ezekiel* (chs. 18 fl) and *Deutero-Isaiah* (58:2; 60:17) and *Haggai* and *Zechariah*."[11] Biblical history is written with a view to establishing the principle of righteousness in all the affairs and relations of man. It is because idolatry is a denial of the character of God as a God of justice, righteousness and mercy, that it is looked upon with such horror by the prophets. Over against the immorality of the idols stands the Holy One of Israel who "desires truth in the inward being" (*Ps*. 51; 6). Whereas idolatry is a lie, for it puts man in a position to decide about his god, the God of Israel judges man's deeds according to His own standards: "Imri did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, and did more evil than all who were before him. For he walked in all the ways of Jeroboam the son of Nebat . . ." (1 *Kings* 16:25 fl).

Jereboam's sin was the more grievous in that he made Israel to serve idols; but Imri did the same, and so did Ahab, and Israel followed suit. The prophets' message could therefore have been nothing but judgement. But because God's justice is balanced by His mercy there is always hope. The call to *return*, so characteristic for the prophets, springs from the conviction that God's justice is tempered by mercy.

3. The Interconnection Between the Individual and Society

The third assumption in the historiosophical structure of the prophetic *Weltanschauung* is the close interaction between the individual and society. The responsibility, in the prophetic view, is mutual and inescapable: Imri is responsible for making Israel sin, but Israel, on the other hand, cannot escape the consequences of being led astray by the king. This interplay of co-responsibility pervades all judgements of historical events in the Old Testament. Not only

is there a correlation between individual and community but even a corporate responsibility between one generation and another. This is the meaning of the annunciation: ". . . visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and children's children to the third and fourth generation" (*Ex*. 34:7). In this connection a much quoted Old Testament proverb springs to mind. The exiles in Babylon complain: "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge" (*Jer*. 31:29 fl; *Ez*. 18:2). On the surface it would appear that an innocent generation is complaining of God's injustice in making them bear the punishment for the sins of the fathers. Both Jeremiah and Ezekiel give the impression that this is an intolerable situation which God will rectify. But from the context it becomes obvious that what they mean to emphasize is the personal implication of those who complain. These exiles suffered not only for the sins of the fathers, but also for their own. It means that in history the law of cause and effect is as inexorable as it is in nature; the present is the immediate result of the past and the children's teeth are set on edge, though the fathers ate the sour grapes. In the case of Jeremiah and Ezekiel the emphasis is upon personal responsibility though the law of causality is not denied.

The co-responsibility of society for the individual, and of the individual for society, is never questioned in the Old Testament. It underlies the Mosaic law and the biblical concept of community depends upon it. The whole idea of the People of God is based upon the interdependence of community and individual. The modern idea of detached individuals is foreign to the Bible. In biblical society the individual lives by reason of the community and the community consists of individuals. The New Testament concept of the Church must be viewed in the context of this close relationship between the one and the many. The discipline as exercised in the early Christian community was based upon this mutual co-responsibility: the community is responsible for the individual in the sight of God. This the Church inherited from the Mosaic law. But in the case of the prophet the position is reversed: here the individual is responsible for the community. The prophet acts as the community's conscience: "I have made you an assayer and tester of my people that you may know and test their ways" (*Jer*. 6:27). On the other hand the community's responsibility is to rid itself of wrong leadership. If it follows the false prophet it will inevitably reap judgement. The fact that the office of the prophet was retained in the early Church only goes to show the close relation between the two Testaments.

For the prophets, history is the arena where the interplay between individual and society takes its full course and it is through this interplay that the forces are released which shape future events. The whole story of Israel's kings, leaders, priests and prophets, as well as the story of Israel as a people, is written under the aspect of mutual responsibility. But the decisions which are made by man individually and by the community collectively, though important, are never ultimate. If it were otherwise, God would not be the God of history. The concept of *teshuvah* (return, 'repentance') derives its meaning from this fact. God graciously allows man to turn back, to reverse the law of causality by an act of faith. The prophet finds it difficult to understand Israel's stubbornness; God sends him to ask his people: "When men fall, do they not rise again? If one turns away, does he not return? Why then has this people turned away in perpetual backsliding?" (*Jer*. 8:4 fl). For the prophet, man's decisions are only interim decisions for the last word rests with God. God's purpose overrides both the decision

of the individual and that of the community. This has to be so, if God is to be taken seriously. History is therefore not a play of whimsical and uncontrollable forces but a real drama with a beginning and an ending.

This close connection between the individual and the community as between generation and generation is part of the self-consciousness of the Synagogue. Every individual Jew knows himself in some measure responsible for the community. The old adage *kol Yisrael haberim* - all Israel are comrades - well expresses the awareness of co-responsibility. In accepting the sins of the fathers, the succeeding generations accept their co-responsibility before history on the part of the whole of the community. The sense of historic cohesion is given expression in the liturgy of the Synagogue: On account of our sins we were exiled from our land, and removed far from our country, and we are unable to fulfil our obligations in thy chosen house, that great and holy temple which was called by thy name, because of the hand that hath been stretched out against thy sanctuary.[12]

This characteristic Jewish sense of historic responsibility is inherited from the prophets. Underlying this strong awareness of co-responsibility are two contradictory suppositions: first, that God is the shaper of history; second, that man moulds his future in accordance with the law of causality. There is never an attempt to resolve the contradiction. History, in the prophetic view, is the result of the tension between God's will and human action. Here judgement and grace are in a peculiar inter-relatedness. Man's deeds are under the judgement of God, but God's grace moulds the future. Because God's grace is more important than human recalcitrance, the future spells not defeat but triumph. Biblical future is therefore under the sign of salvation - it is messianic future.

Notes to Chapter VI

1. Cf. A. B. Davidson, *An Introductory Hebrew Grammar*, 1900, 52,
2. S. R. Driver, *The Use of the Hebrew Tenses*, 1892, 3.
3. Cf. Arnold Toynbee, *An Historian's Approach to Religion*, 10.
4. William H. Saulez, *The Romance of the Hebrew Language*, 1913, 107.
5. A. P. Stanley, *Sinai and Palestine*, 1881, 114.
6. The massoretic text reads *'oz* (strength), but interestingly enough the Midrash agrees with LXX's αἶνος; the Targum has עשוא - 'might'. Here the New Testament goes back to a more reliable tradition of the text.
7. These books are described in the Hebrew Bible as *nebiim rishonim—prophetae priores*.
8. The Rabbis have much to say on the subject of God's leniency towards sinners. Cf. *Rabbinic Anthology*, ch. IX: Divine Mercy and Divine Judgement.
9. It seems to us that Jack J. Cohen's article, "Towards a Theology of Ethics", which is an effort to emancipate morality from 'super-naturalism', puts man in a position which would be utterly unacceptable to the prophets (cf. *Judaism*, Winter 1958, 59 fl).
10. We have already remarked that it would be easy to argue that here as elsewhere Levitical holiness is meant. We want to add that this is contradicted by the context of *Ex*. 19 and 20 where a "kingdom of priests and a holy nation" is under the obligation of the moral code. That the New Testament understands holiness in terms of moral perfection goes without saying (cf. *Mtt.* 5:48).
11. *Standard Bible Dictionary*, 743b.
12. Singer's *Prayer Book*, 264.

VII. HAGIOGRAPHA

The third division of the Old Testament as arranged in the Hebrew Bible is frequently treated less seriously. It is our intention to show that even in this part of the Bible there are prophetic elements which further reveal the powerful influence upon the spiritual life of Israel.

The twelve books which are grouped in this section are unequal in character and were put together more by accident than design. *Ecclesiastes*, *Esther*, *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*, *Song of Songs* and *Chronicles* obviously stand outside the sphere of direct prophetic influence and represent a marked difference in *Weltanschauung*.

Ecclesiastes, a book strangely tinged with pessimism, reveals an attitude utterly foreign to the rest of the Bible. The great English scholar Charles Henry Hamilton Wright speaks of it as "unique in the whole range of Biblical literature".[1] W. O. E. Oesterley and Theodore Robinson suspect strong though superficial Greek influence.[2] It is therefore a book which we can eliminate as of no importance to our subject. The same applies to *Esther* which is the creation of a nationalist Jew who probably adapted an ancient Babylonian myth to suit his own purpose. It is difficult to attach any spiritual significance to this historical novel and a contemporary Jewish writer has urged its removal from the Old Testament Canon.[3] *Canticum Canticorum*, or as Oesterley and Robinson prefer to call it, *The Song of Solomon*,[4] consists of a series of erotic poems of considerable beauty but of no further theological significance. It is only by a very remarkable stretch of imagination and an inordinate addiction to allegorical interpretation that Church and Synagogue manages to give to these poems a mystical content.

But *Ezra* and *Nehemiah* as well as the two books of *Chronicles* are important for us, for here is revealed once again, as so often in the Bible, the great spiritual struggle between the Prophet and the Priest.

Scholars are agreed that *Chronicles* 1 and 2 as well as the *Ezra-Nehemiah* document have behind them the same compiler and represent the same attitude. In all these documents the Temple with its priesthood, liturgy and sacrifices is in the very centre of religious life. The priests, the Levites and even the minor officials in the Temple organization occupy a position of unique importance. We meet here a rigid form of religious observance utterly alien to the spirit of the prophets. In *Chronicles*, specially, cultic worship is once again triumphant and the prophet is replaced by the priest and Levite. Here we move in a different atmosphere from that of an *Isaiah* or a *Jeremiah*. Again, *Ezra* and *Nehemiah* reveal a situation in which Judaism is entrenching itself around cultic worship; this document breathes a spirit of narrow nationalism which ill accords with the universalist attitude of the great Prophets. In a sense, the situation is similar to the one Amos faced at Bethel - the Temple is a national shrine once again and Yahwe is appropriated as the God of the Jews. The breaking up of marriages contracted with foreign women may have been dictated by a desire to prevent pagan influence, but will undoubtedly have also been the expression of chauvinistic sentiment. Here the vision of the prophets that Jerusalem will become a centre for the nations of the world is reversed: biological instinct wins over prophetic universalism.

But even at that time the spirit of the prophets was not dead. The legacy of the prophetic writings, the pious circles of disciples, and the tradition of prophetism which stretched over hundreds of years was still acting as a leaven in Jewish society. Scholars had suspected that the little book of *Ruth* written by an anonymous hand was in answer to the extreme nationalism which prevailed after the return from Babylon under Nehemiah and Ezra. This may be so or may not, but the book itself bears testimony to an attitude quite different from the narrow nationalism of post-Exilic times. Oesterley and Robinson suggest that the book belongs to a time when the Moabites were regarded with special hostility and that it was written by a "broad-minded Israelite" who "sought to mitigate this feeling by reminding his countrymen that the greatest of all Israelites since the days of Moses had Moabite blood in his veins".[5] This is a more plausible explanation than the one suggested by Driver, who thinks that the book was written in the interests of the duty of *levirate* - marriage. It is noteworthy, however, that Driver himself draws attention to the fact that Boaz was not a brother-in-law.[6] That David came of Moabite stock must have been an old tradition which survived for many centuries. We find it difficult to accept a pre-Exilic date for this book, as Driver does. What interests us here is the description of the heroine. Ruth is not only beautiful to look at but displays remarkable traits of character, though a foreigner and belonging to a people hostile to Israel. First, the writer seems to indicate that in older times intermarriage was not looked upon as a crime in spite of the prohibition in *Deut*. 23:2: No Ammonite or Moabite shall enter the assembly of the Lord; even to the tenth generation none belonging to them shall enter the assembly of the Lord for ever. . . . Second, the writer extols her character as a faithful and loving woman. Ruth regards herself as part of the family and remains loyal to her mother-in-law after all the ties have been broken. Third, Ruth the Moabitess is presented as renouncing her pagan faith and choosing of her own free will the God of Israel to be her God. And last, the great King David, who by the 5th century has already assumed messianic significance, has Ruth the Moabitess as his ancestress.

It seems to us that these four points which are brought home by the skilful narrative of this beautiful tale, reveal an attitude remarkably akin to that of the great prophets. We have here all the elements of the prophetic hope: Israel and Moab in a blood-relationship as represented by the two intermarried families; Ruth the stranger, a loyal and loving daughter to Naomi; the pagan Gentile incorporated into the religious community of Israel; through inter-marriage with an Israelite, Moab the arch enemy of the Hebrews, having a claim upon the Messiah of Israel by reason of the connection with the house of David.

By projecting the story into the time of the Judges, the writer of *Ruth* wanted to indicate that the missionary process of assimilation had already begun a long time ago, and no effort on the part of nationalist fanatics can reverse it. Foreign blood is already injected not only in the ordinary Israelite, but even in the royal family. Here prophetic universalism celebrates its highest triumph. In a sense, the messianic age had already begun and the nations are on their way to the holy mount of the God of Israel.

The next book revealing immense prophetic influence is the book of *Job*.

Job the lonely and innocent sufferer, for the sake of vindicating not his own righteousness but God's unsearchable wisdom, is in himself the portrayal of the prophetic figure.

The vision of God as reflected in the book of *Job* is again utterly prophetic: God is all-powerful, all-wise and all-loving. It is for this reason that the writer indignantly rejects the easy solution that suffering is punitive. Job refuses to accept his friends' point of view that his suffering is God's retribution for his hidden sins.[7] This problem is not new to the Bible and is dealt with in some of the *Psalms* and the prophets.

There is a streak of the Promethean character of the prophet present in the features of Job. We meet it in *Jeremiah*, *Habakkuk*, in some of the *Psalms*, and sometimes in secular poetry.[8] Here man presumes to stand up in the Presence of God with his complaint demanding an answer. In the words of Habakkuk "I will take my stand to watch, and station myself on the tower, and look forth to see what he will say to me, and what he will answer concerning my complaint" (*Hab*. 2:1). The prophet's complaint is that God's mills grind too slowly, while justice is frustrated and the innocent suffer. God's answer is exactly the one which Job ultimately received and which was given to Habukkuk: "For still the vision awaits its time; it hastens to the end - it will not lie. If it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come, it will not delay—" (*Hab*. 2:3). Jeremiah raises the same question: "Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I complain to thee; yet I would plead my case before thee; Why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why do all who are treacherous thrive?" (*Jer*. 12:1 fl). The subject is echoed by a number of psalms and finds its ultimate answer in *Deutero-Isaiah*, ch. 53: the suffering of the righteous is of vicarious quality and is on behalf of others. Although the book of *Job* does not go as far as that, it comes very near the prophetic ideal in its concept of *disinterested* faith in God. If we accept the introductory chapters which are written in prose, as part of the book, and there is no good reason why we should not, then Job's relationship to God reveals one more prophetic feature: he clings to God not for the sake of personal security but for what God is in Himself. On his wife's suggestion: "Curse God and die," he replies: "Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" (*Job* 2:9 fl). Behind this reply is the suggestion that 'evil' in the hands of God serves a purpose and that God is ultimately vindicated, though man cannot see it at the time.[9] This humble and submissive faith in God, so characteristic of the prophets, we find reflected in the famous words: "For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at last he will stand upon the earth; and after my skin has been thus destroyed, then without my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see on my side, and my eyes shall behold, and not another" (*Job* 19:25 fl). There is many a passage in *Jeremiah* and *Deutero-Isaiah* which in mood and attitude reflects the book of *Job*. It would be a rewarding study to relate these two prophets to the great and heroic sufferer of the Old Testament.

There is one more point we should like to make. Scholars have noticed how little there is reference to the sacrificial system in the book of *Job*. They have therefore concluded that our present version, though edited about the middle of the 5th century, is the literary form of an older pre-exilic tradition when the sacrifices were regarded as of less importance.[10] There is, however, no need to go to this expedient. Once we are agreed to accept the view that the prophetic tradition was kept alive and survived till New Testament times, we have in the book of *Job* an attitude typical of the prophets. Not the Temple with its ritual and cult, but the lonely, suffering and anguished man before God is here in the forefront of the picture.

The collection of proverbs need not engage us as it represents quite a different aspect of Israel's life and is only indirectly connected with Hebrew religion. The relation between the religious outlook and the wisdom literature is established through the medium of morals. The deep-seated moral earnestness of the prophets is here reflected in quite a different way. Driver adroitly remarks: "the wise men took for granted the main postulates of Israel's creed, and applied themselves rather to the observation of human character as such, seeking to analyse conduct, studying action in its consequences, and establishing morality, upon the basis of principles common to humanity at large."[11] Yet it may well be that these teachers of wisdom, these "humanists of Israel" as they were called by Delitzsch and Cheyne, owe their broad humanitarianism to the legacy of the prophetic tradition. Their humanity is typically Hebrew: a deep sense of God's holiness, a conviction of His inexorable justice and a burning concern for moral conduct. Though the Proverbs may well go back to a dim past and have some connection with the wisdom literature of the Egyptians, their present form is of a much later date and reflects a situation different from that of the prophets. Hence the lack of warning against idolatry and some of the grosser sins inveighed against by the prophets.

We have already had occasion to make reference to the *Psalms* in our discussion of the Temple cult. We have seen how some of the *Psalms*, if not in direct opposition, show at least a degree of depreciation of the sacrificial system. Such psalms will have originated in prophetic circles and the fact that they have been incorporated in the *Psalter* reveals the extent of the prophetic influence upon the devotional and spiritual life of the Hebrew people. We now venture to suggest that the frequent reference to the poor and humble (*'anavim*) in the *Psalms* (cf. *Ps*. 22:26; 25:9; 37:11; 76:9; 147:6; 149:4) applies to people who are somehow connected with the prophetic tradition. These are men of the same circle as those mentioned in *Is*. 11:4: the dallim and *'aneve-'arez* (the poor and the humble in the land). We also meet them in a number of other passages like *Is*. 29:19; *Deutero-Isaiah* 61:1; *Amos* 2:7.[12] Zephaniah singles them out in a special way as those who stand a chance to escape in the day of God's wrath (*Zeph*. 2:3). These groups of the 'poor', 'humble' and 'meek' are men in whose midst the prophetic tradition was kept alive and who lived by the messianic hope. It is noteworthy that Jesus of Nazareth addressed his Beatitudes to them (*Mtt.* 5:5), and that in the Gospel of St Luke the 'poor' are favourably singled out for special attention. The inner circle of disciples consisted of the humble and meek who waited and prayed for the salvation of Israel like the priest Zechariah, the righteous and devout Simeon, and Anna the prophetess. The later *Ebionites* were Hebrew Christians who faithfully continued the prophetic tradition though they may have stressed material poverty more than was originally intended. Though *'anav* and *ebion* are frequently interchanged, because of the logical association - the poor is humble and the humble is poor - yet material poverty and humility before God are not necessarily the same. The *'anav* is the pious man who lives by faith and looks to God for salvation. Thus Moses himself is called an *'anav* (*Numbers* 12:3), which may have something to do with the tradition that he was a prophet. The historic connection of the ideal of 'poverty' in the more spiritualized sense has become clearer to us since the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls.[13]

If this is a correct assumption then we have further proof not only of the fact that there is a direct link between Prophetism and many of the *Psalms*, but also of the all-pervading influence of prophetic faith upon the devotional life of Israel.

Here mention must be made of one more book which according to the Christian tradition belongs to the prophets but which the Hebrew Bible reckons among the Hagiographa.

Be it said at once that *Daniel* is not a prophet in the biblical sense of the term. He lacks the immediacy of the Word, the urgency of divine commission, and the characteristic prophetic concern with the concrete situation. The hero of the book of *Daniel* is not a prophet but a religious philosopher. The book itself is a historiosophical treatise. The writer's task is not to interfere in concrete events but to interpret them. Daniel looks away from the immediate present and tries to see the historic situation in the perspective of eternity. He does not annunciate, he only speculates on the transiency of mundane glory: *sic transit gloria mundi.*

But in some respects. Daniel's attitude and vision is essentially prophetic. This is an important point for us for it throws some light upon the rest of the apocalyptic literature.

Though Daniel is not a prophet, yet he stands within the periphery of prophetic tradition. This is to say that without the prophets' influence upon the thinking of the Hebrew people this book would have lacked the perspective of history in the prophetic sense. First to be noted is Daniel's approach to history: he allows no chance happenings. The God of Israel overrules history and inexorably pursues His goal. Second, God's reign extends to the nations of the world: The Most High rules over the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will (*Dan*. 4:32). His reign is not merely confined to "the people of the saints" (*Dan*. 7:27) but stretches over the whole earth. Third, God triumphs over history and in this triumph the Messiah plays an important part: "And behold with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and kingdom, and all peoples, nations and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed" (*Dan*. 7:13 fl).

In his prophetic messianism Daniel reveals himself as a disciple of Israel's prophets though he occupies a place outside the prophetic tradition proper. This book bears witness to the penetrating influence of the prophets extending far beyond their immediate circle.

In this connection we must mention Daniel's prophetic contempt for idolatry and his remarkable willingness to identify himself with the guilt of others. In this respect ch. 9 can hardly be surpassed and reveals the writer not only as a philosopher but as a humble and sincere believer who bows under the weight of his own and his peoples' guilt. His only plea is that God would forgive and show mercy not because of Israel but for His own sake: "O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, give heed and act, delay not, for thy own sake, O my God, because thy city and thy people are called by thy name." It means that God's great honour is involved in Israel's defeat and like *Deutero-Isaiah* (52:5) the writer's concern is that God's name should not be blasphemed.

Daniel's greatest achievement is in the historiosophical field. Here the perspective is undoubtedly prophetic.

The God of heaven dominates in the affairs of men; this is the recurring note in the book: "The Most High rules in the kingdom of men" (*Dan*. 4:17; 4:25; 4:32; 5:32). "His kingdom is therefore an everlasting kingdom and His dominion from generation to generation" (*Dan*. 4:3). This may not be apparent to the ordinary man, but Daniel is no ordinary person; he is a man of vision and therefore a man of faith. The fact that Nebuchadnezzar, the pagan monarch, bows before the decrees of the Most High God, and proclaims His sovereignty to the subject nations (*Dan*. 4:1 fl) is not so much a warning to Antiochus Epiphanes as an encouragement to the faithful. Their cause may seem to be hopeless but God is on their side. Those who know God cannot afford to lose heart; they must persevere in faith; "Blessed is he who waits" (*Dan*. 12:12), until the drama is played out when God has been vindicated in the eyes of His saints. In true prophetic style, the last word is therefore not a word of despair but a word of hope and encouragement: "Go your way till the end; and you shall rest, and shall stand in your allotted place, at the end of the days."[14]

It is this triumphant faith in the God of history which places Daniel among the Old Testament prophets.

Notes to Chapter VII

1. *The Book of Koheleth*, 1883, 141.
2. Cf. W. O. E. Oesterley and T. Robinson, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 1934, 215.
3. Cf. Shalom ben Chorin, *Kritik des Estherbuches*, Jerusalem, 1939.
4. This is the name given it in the English Bible. The Latin *canticum canticorum* corresponds to the Hebrew *shir ha-shirim*.
5. *Op. cit*., 84.
6. S. R. Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, 1894, 426.
7. Cf. the interesting essay by Morris Stockhammer, "The Righteousness of Job", *Judaism*, Winter 1958. Stockhammer's approach is the more unusual for a Jewish writer, as he argues for a dualistic point of view between the natural and the spiritual order.
8. An outstanding example is the Polish poet Adam Mickiewicz. Mickiewicz in his epic poem *Dziady* comes to grips with God over the justice of His rule in view of the bitter suffering of subjected Poland. The poet challenges God to explain, but no explanation is given. He then cries:
   Still thou art silent, I have fathomed thee and read the secret of thy sovereignty.
   He lied who called thee love, thou art Wisdom alone.
   Not to the heart
   But to the mind thy ways shall be revealed
   And what the weapon that mine arm doth wield . . .
   Finally the poet accuses God that He is not Father but Tsar! (Cf. Poems by Adam Mickiewicz translated by George Raphael Noyes, *Institute of Arts and Sciences in America*, N.Y., 1944, *Forefathers' Eve*, Part III, Act I, 270 fl.)
9. Cf. Stockharnmer, *op. cit*., 70 fl.
10. Cf. Oesterley and Robinson, *op. cit*., 174 fl.
11. Driver, *op. cit*., 369.
12. That *'anavim* is almost used as a *terminus technicus* in the Hebrew Bible is not easily apparent from the English translation. This applies to the R.S.V. as well.
13. Cf. Hans-Joachim Kander, *Die Bedeutung der Armut im Schrifttum von Chirbet Qumran, Judaica*, Heft 4, 1957. For the subject of the *'anavim* see J. Jocz, *The Jewish People and Jesus Christ*, 194 fl.

14. Though *Dan*. 12:11-13 is regarded by scholars as a later addition, it is quite in keeping with the spirit of the book and expresses well the attitude of persevering faith.

VIII. THE STORY BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

The apparent gap in the Canon of the Bible between the Old and New Testaments does not really exist once we take into account the large literature which falls into that era. These writings were created by the need of the hour and admirably reflect the spiritual and political conditions of the time. There is no doubt that much of that literature was lost by the accidents of history, as is the case with the five books which were written by Jason of Cyrene.[1] Yet enough has survived to provide us with some insight into the hopes, conditions and aspirations of the couple of centuries which preceded New Testament times. These books are of special interest for the scholar if for no other reason than that they overlap with the writings of the New Testament. This explains the large scholarly literature which has accumulated and which deals with this special area of study.

By a curious coincidence a number of these writings have found their way into the canon of the Western Church. This collection of books which is interposed between the Old and New Testament goes under the name of *Apocrypha*. But by far the larger part is outside the Canon and hardly known, except to scholars. This collection of writings is known as the *Pseudepigrapha*. To demonstrate the importance of these ancient documents we quote a paragraph from the work of an English scholar: "The apocryphal literature (therefore) throws light upon the intellectual and moral world into which Christianity was born. It illumines many aspects of Jewish life; it reveals the thoughts and ideals upon which the New Testament writers were nurtured, and in the light of which their teaching must be interpreted; and it shows us how, in certain Jewish circles, there was steadily taking place a preparation for Christianity. When it is remembered that there is a distance of about two hundred years between the latest book of the Old Testament and the earliest of the New Testament, it will be seen that the study of this literature is at least as important as that of the Old Testament, for an intelligent understanding of the New Testament. To neglect the Stoics and Epicureans and pass at one step from Aristotle to the later Stoicism of Cicero and Seneca would hardly be a greater leap than to pass from the Old Testament to the New Testament without investigating Jewish literature in the intervening period."[2] This goes to show the importance of this whole collection of writings for a better understanding of the spiritual history of Israel.

It is not easy to classify these varied and sometimes heterogeneous books even under a number of separate headings. Although all written by Jews, their backgrounds are different; some originated in the diaspora, some in Palestine. They have come down to us in a variety of languages, like Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Syriac, Ethiopian, Arabic and Armenian. Since the Western Church admitted the Apocrypha into the Canon, the Synagogue has completely lost interest in these books until quite recently. Now there are modern Hebrew translations of some of them.

To give a brief résumé we will try to classify this large literature under several headings.

1) Historical books

To this class belong *Mac*. I and II and *Esdras* I. But it is only *Mac*. I which contains a factual statement of history and is our main source-book for the period of the Maccabean struggle.

2) Wisdom literature

Under this heading fall the *Wisdom of Solomon* and *Ecclesiasticus* (or the Wisdom of Jesus the son of Sirach), and in part the *Book of Baruch*.

3) Legendary works

Here we have a number of legendary works in the form of historical romances such as *Tobit*, *Judith*, the *Rest of Esther*, *Song of the Three Children*, the *History of Susannah*, the *History of Bel and the Dragon*.

4) Apocalyptic literature

This by far the largest group includes such books as *Esdras* II; the *Ethiopic Enoch* which is a composite work consisting of the original Enoch; the *Book of Similitudes* and the *Noachidic* fragments; the *Slavonic Enoch*; the *Sybilline Oracles*; the *Assumption of Moses*; the *Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch*, and its Greek counterpart which purports to contain a further revelation to the same man. The messianic parts of the *Psalms of Solomon*; the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*; the *Book of Jubilees*; the *Ascension of Isaiah*, which is probably an older work, re-edited and given a Christian dress. The collection of books of *Adam* (or the history *Adam and Eve*) five books in all of varied origin and tradition; the *Apocalypse of Elias* (in fragment); the book of *Eldad and Modad*; the *Prayer of Joseph* and the *Apocalypse of Zepheniah* (in fragments).

This whole literature, both apocryphal and pseudepigraphic, presents us with a pattern and an imagery at first hardly suggestive of any relation to the prophets of the Old Testament. But closer investigation soon uncovers an interesting connection between the Old Testament Canon and these rather extravagant and somewhat fanciful writings. Not only does the Old Testament serve as the literary pattern; not only are whole sections quoted from it as in the case of *Esdras* I; not only are the Old Testament heroes used to cover up the authors' anonymity; but the views and ideas are derived from this source. The *Weltanschauung* is here prophetic in its basic assumptions: the moral order of the universe; the goal of history; God's autocratic rule over creation. For these writers, as for the prophets of the Old Testament, the messianic hope spells out God's triumph over evil and the ultimate vindication of His people. In one case at least, an extra-Canonical book was written with the purpose of augmenting what is lacking in the book of *Esther*. Scholars suggest that this was the main purpose for the creation of the *Additions to Esther*; namely to augment the Canonical book by giving it a religious tone and emphasizing God's special providence over Israel.[3] But in spite of such efforts, these books are not prophetic in the Old Testament sense.

What is lacking?

We have already seen that in some respects these works reveal a measure of prophetic influence. The messianic ideal looms large and the moral earnestness is as evident as in any

of the Old Testament writings. Yet there is a remarkable difference between the Seers of the Old Testament and the apocalyptic visionaries of the Pseudepigrapha: the latter are primarily *literati* bent on speculation and theological abstraction, whereas the former are always men of action. The prophets speak with unwavering authority in the name of God; the apocalyptic writers speculate about the *Age to Come*. The prophet speaks the Word of God; the apocalyptic visionary elaborates upon it. The prophet stands astride history and attempts to direct it; the apocalyptic writer stands at a distance as an onlooker, trying to interpret the signs of the times.

From the theologian's point of view the most interesting book is the "*Ethiopic*" *Enoch*, for we find here a fully developed messianology which is remarkably close to the New Testament concepts of the Messiah. There is a description of the 'birth pangs of the Messiah' which is conceived as a day of judgement preceding the messianic age; a vivid elaboration of the blessings of the messianic times often in terms of purely material bliss; and a most interesting portrayal of the person of the Messiah. He is described as *the* Righteous One, as the Son of Man, or the Son of the sons of man, or else as the Son of a woman; he is spoken of as existing before the creation of the world and thanks to him both heaven and earth will be transformed and become a blessing and an eternal light. The name '*Masih*' was left untranslated in the Ethiopic version and shows that by that time "The Anointed One" was already a personal noun attached to the specific function of Messiahship.[4] Many ideas in this book are closely related to the New Testament. On the other hand, much is made of the *Torah*, of the Judgement of the wicked and their ultimate destruction, and the bliss and reward of the righteous. There is also much legendary material which gives to the book the appearance of unreality in comparison with the down-to-earth attitude of the New Testament. Discussing the resemblance to New Testament ideas, Prof. Klausner remarks: "To consider *all* these chapters as a Christian interpolation is not reasonable: a Christian interpolator would have found here ample opportunity to refer to the sufferings of the crucified Christ - but there is no mention of them. These are popular Jewish notions about the personality of the Messiah, as revealed also at a later time in the *Midrashim* - the popular collection of legends, stories, and national hopes, both early and late."[5] Klausner calls the "*Ethiopic*" *Enoch*, the Messianic book of Judaism par excellence of the period of the Second Temple.[6]

As is well known, *Enoch* is a composite work and the messianic ideas in it are not uniform. Side by side with the supra-mundane, almost divine person of the Messiah, is the more Jewish concept of a devout, utterly righteous man, who only occupies a position of *primus inter pares*, in relation to the rest of Israel.[7]

The book of *Enoch* is therefore an important document to show the inner tensions and ideas prevailing in Jewry which ultimately led to the separation between Church and Synagogue. It also helps us to understand the rich New Testament eschatology and the great hope of the future life. There is remarkable resemblance between some sections of the book of *Enoch* and the New Testament book of *Revelation*, specially in the concept of the heavenly Jerusalem. Ideas such as the resurrection of the dead, judgement of the just and unjust, the vindication of God's elect and the triumph over Satan, are all to be found in this book. To quote Prof. Klausner once again: "All expectations of holy Scripture here have been expanded and have become more detailed and more deeply felt; sometimes they are worldly

and materialistic, sometimes sublime and spiritual. The Pseudepigraphical books that follow, likewise the Talmud and the Midrash, altered considerably the arrangement and the characteristics of the expectations, but they did not add much to what is in this unique book . . . ."[8]

We have paid special attention to the "*Ethiopic*" *Enoch* because it affords a good example of this interesting and even fascinating literature. The subject justifies more detailed treatment than is offered here. Our main intention is to disclose the propelling power which drove those men of vision under the stress and strain of their days to look for redemption which is not wrought by the hand of man but by God. The initial inspiration to turn from the petty affairs of man to the great vision of God's reign upon earth, they received from the prophets of the Old Testament. The apocalyptic books are thus a continuation of the prophetic hope of man's ultimate redemption. In this, though limited sense, the apocalyptic literature continues the prophetic tradition and forms the bridge from the Old to the New Testament.

Notes to Chapter VIII

1. Cp. 2 *Mac*. 2:23.
2. H. Maldwyn Hughes, *The Ethics of Jewish Apocryphal Literature*, (no date), 2.
3. Cp. H. M. Hughes, *op. cit*., 5.
4. Cf. *Enoch*, 52:4.
5. J. Klausner, *The Messianic Idea in Israel*, 292.
6. *Op. cit*., 301.
7. *Op. cit*., 288.
8. *Op. cit*., 301.

IX. THE SYNAGOGUE

Unlike most religions, Judaism has no 'founder'. It was never founded but grew out of the particular circumstances in which the Jewish people found themselves. The roots of Judaism are in the Old Testament; particularly in the Pentateuch, but only in a derived and round-about way. Between the Law of Moses and Pharisaic rabbinism there are centuries of development which changed the Mosaic faith of the Old Testament into its step-child called talmudic Judaism.

The connection between Mosaic law and rabbinic law is not always obvious to the outsider. There is both a connection and a difference between the two which must be recognized if we are to assess the meaning of Judaism correctly.

1. The Torah

To the Jew *torah* means more than the law of Moses. "Torah," says Rabbi I. Epstein, "connotes the whole body of Jewish teaching, legislation, practices and traditions that have proceeded from the interpretation and re-interpretation of the laws of the Bible according to the light of reason, and the principles of righteousness, justice and equity, as well as any adaptations or modifications made by the spiritual leaders of the people applicable to changed conditions of life - economic, domestic, social."[1] Such constant modification of the original law had to be justified and this was done by the assumption that together with *written law* Moses delivered to the children of Israel, the *unwritten law* which was passed on by word of mouth from generation to generation. The *mishnaic* tractate of *Abboth* opens with the statement: "Moses received the Law (i.e. oral law) from Sinai and committed it to Joshua and Joshua to the elders, and the elders to the Prophets, and the Prophets committed it to the men of the Great Synagogue."[2] The *unwritten torah* is thus the body of an ever expanding tradition how to apply the written law to the changing circumstances of life. But the task of the rabbis was not only to adapt the written *torah* to the new conditions, but "to build a fence" round it.[3] This fence-building activity was performed with such zeal that in some instances the original intention of the Mosaic law was entirely lost sight of as a result of the multiplication of rabbinic precept.

As an illustration we use the prohibition: "Thou shalt not boil a kid in its mother's milk" (*Ex*. 23:19). This commandment is repeated in *Ex*. 34:26 and *Deut*. 14:2l. It is not possible any more to say with a measure of certainty what was the motive behind this law. Some scholars give it a humanitarian meaning,[4] others connect it with the practice of idolatry. [5] The rabbis, however, have deduced from this law the complete separation between milk and meat in the diet of the Jews. Not only is a pious Jew not allowed to eat milk and meat at the same time, but even the utensils and dishes must be kept separate. The medieval Jewish commentator Rashi sees in the threefold repetition of the law a threefold prohibition: (1) in respect to eating; (2) in respect to deriving benefit; (3) in respect to boiling. Dr J. H. Hertz takes the attitude that the practice of keeping separate milk and meat is an old Jewish custom which was only later associated by the rabbis with the above texts. He does so on the grounds that Targum Onkelos already renders our text: "Ye shall not eat flesh and milk." But this is

not a convincing argument.[6] We are rather inclined to see the process in the reverse: because the rabbis were zealous to build a fence round the law they deduced by inference that the mixing of milk and meat is forbidden by the law. There is a host of other precepts which are equally far-fetched. Here then is a typical example of the connection between Mosaic and rabbinic law. Judaism is tied to the Law of Moses in a theoretical sense, in practice the *torah* is committed to the Jewish people and its interpretation is vested in the Great *beth din* - the Supreme Court. Not even a voice from heaven can now interfere with the rabbi's right to interpret *torah* according to the laws of tradition. This is the meaning of R. Jeremiah's dictum: "The Law was given us from Sinai. We pay no attention to a heavenly voice".[7]

2. The Literary Foundations

The literary sources of Judaism are vast. This is understandable considering the age of the Jews and the nature of their religion. Judaism is not static. It grows and develops, always adapting itself to changing conditions. It therefore shows an ever-present need to re-define itself and restate its position.

Next to the Old Testament, and particularly the Pentateuch, must be placed the *Mishnah*. It was compiled by R. Judah the Patriarch at the close of the 2nd century and represents a collection of legal traditions derived from the Pentateuch. It has binding force and forms the basis of rabbinic law. Then come the *Talmuds* - a library in itself (the modern English translation published by the Soncino Press comprises thirty volumes) - incorporating a mass of Jewish tradition and folklore. These contain the opinions of scholars from the 3rd to the 5th century. The code which comprises a complete digest of traditional Jewish law and practice is called the *Shulhan Arukh* compiled by R. Joseph Karo and first published in 1565. The *Siddur* (Daily Prayer Book) and the *Mahzor* (the order of Services for the Great Festivals) contain the mass of religious sentiment expressed in liturgy and worship.

3. The Teaching Of Judaism[8]

a) Life

The great tenet of the Synagogue is that God is One and that He is the sole and only Creator of heaven and earth. He is thus the source of life and by His will all life exists. Life is the most precious gift to the religious Jew. To preserve one human life is equal to preserving the whole world, and conversely, to destroy one human life is equal to destroying the whole world. The meaning of life is not merely confined to existence, but to moral quality and character. Judaism is essentially a moral religion infused by optimism. Matter is not a vehicle of evil, but exists for man's benefit. To live the pious life is to enjoy it. "The Holy Spirit rests on him who has a joyous heart," is a rabbinic dictum. A special point is made on Jewish festivals of eating fruits and dainties and encouraging others to do likewise. By the enjoyment of life the Jew expresses gratitude to his Creator.

b) Death

A people attached to life naturally shies from death. Death is a terrible calamity to the Jew. There is something characteristic about the Jewish attitude to death which is different

from that of a Christian. The Jew faces judgement on the strength of his own merits[9] the Christian on the merits of Jesus Christ. This is the profound difference. There is also the fact that the Old Testament has only veiled and indirect references to life after death. Bereavement is thus a major tragedy in the Jewish family. The Jewish customs of mourning are designed to express profound sorrow and grief. After death it falls upon the son of the deceased, or another member of the family, to recite the *Kaddish* prayer at a public place of worship. Great importance is attached to this rite. It is not uncommon to hire a stranger to recite the prayer in cases where there are no near relatives left. It is of some interest that the *Kaddish* prayer itself makes no reference to death except at the burial service. It is rather a glorious ascription of praise: "Blessed, praised and glorified, extolled and honoured, magnified and lauded be the name of the Holy One, blessed be He." With this doxology the Jew surrenders to the omnipotent will of God.

c) God

Judaism has been described as ethical monotheism. The same could be said of Christianity. But Jewish monotheism has its own characteristic. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One," is the foundation of all Jewish thought and practice. The emphasis is upon unity almost in a numerical sense.[10] This is in direct contradiction to the Christian doctrine as expressed in the 'Athanasian' Creed: "One God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity." The Creed of the Synagogue formulated by Moses Maimonides in the 12th century defines in the second article the nature of that Unity: "I believe with perfect faith that the Creator, blessed be His Name, is a Unity and that there is no unity in any manner like unto His."

Together with the Unity of God goes His invisibility and incorporeality (spirituality). The second commandment has taken deep roots in Jewish consciousness: "Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image. . . ." For this reason there is a complete lack of artistic decorations in the Synagogue except for a few traditional symbols.[11] Pious Jews are so intensely afraid of idolatry that they refuse to be painted or photographed in case this may lead to idol-worship. God is never identified by any symbol; even His *nomen proprium* is never pronounced. The God of Israel cannot be thought of, let alone visualized in any form. He is eternal, omnipotent, just, good and holy. Being the only God, He is naturally the God of all mankind and Creator of the universe. But His relation to Israel is of a special nature. The awareness of chosenness is at the bottom of Jewish piety. "Our Father, our King" and "thou hast chosen us from all the nations" are recurring phrases in the liturgy of the Synagogue. In this way the Jews express their special relatedness to the God of Israel.

d) Sin

Judaism is a profoundly moral religion. Its emphasis is not upon creed but practice. We have already seen that *torah* is not just 'Law': it is a way of life; a code of ethics; a religious experience and the peculiar privilege of the Chosen People. The rabbis have aimed at achieving complete unity between life and religion. The division between sacred and secular is almost non-existent in Judaism. Here all aspects of human life from cradle to grave are endowed with religious significance and must be used as means for the sanctification of God's holy name.

In such a totalitarian approach to life, sin is a disrupting feature which seems to contradict both the omnipotence and holiness of God. Judaism therefore refuses to take sin too seriously. It does not look upon sin as an inherent flaw, but rather as a weakness which can be easily rectified. Man need not sin if he follows the precepts of the *torah*. Judaism therefore repudiates the Christian idea of Original Sin as a non-Jewish concept. In the view of the Synagogue there is nothing fatalistic about sin which man cannot remedy. If a man does wrong and falls short of the mark he can always repent and make amends for past failure: every man must make his own atonement. Sin therefore to Judaism is not a state but an act; it consequently speaks of trespasses rather than sin. This does not mean that the pious Jew knows nothing of God's grace and forgiveness. Man needs God's grace to cope with his failures but cope he must personally and in his own strength. God does forgive but on condition that man repents and amends his ways. The Christian idea of atonement is an aberration to Judaism on two counts: (1) man himself must pay the penalty for sins; vicarious sacrifice is immoral; (2) that God should do it on man's behalf is a sacrilegious thought.

In Judaism, repentance is the clue to the divine-human relationship. The grace of God consists in the fact that God always forgives if man truly repents. Hence the importance of the Day of Atonement. This special Day is given to Israel in order to adjust himself to the demands of a Holy God.

Behind the Synagogue's rationalistic concept of sin is its 'humanistic' idea of man. Here man is not a fallen creature helplessly lost in sin unless God Himself comes to his rescue. He is a son of God created in His image and endowed with all the dignity of his position. Man may be prone to fall, but he can also rise again; and rise he must if he is to prove himself worthy of his status. Salvation, therefore, never means salvation from sin, as it does in the Church, but political and social salvation, first of all for Israel, and then for humanity.

e) Ceremonies and Practices

Judaism, being a religion of practice rather than creed, has naturally evolved its own characteristic ceremonial. But at this stage in Jewish history it is not easy to give an accurate picture, for the Synagogue today is in a state of transition. Many causes are responsible for this. The impact of rationalism, the disruption of Jewish life through assimilation to a non-Jewish environment, the fury of anti-Semitism in Europe, the growth of political Zionism culminating in the establishment of a Jewish State are all contributory causes. The result is that Judaism does not present a united front. Apart from the masses of irreligious Jews, there is deep-seated division within the Synagogue itself. Orthodoxy is rapidly losing ground, while the Liberal and Reformed movements are steadily growing. The shape Judaism will finally assume in the Jewish State is impossible to foretell. The following remarks refer rather to the past than the future; they are written with a view to Jewish orthodoxy as traditionally known.

Rabbinic law has closely defined Jewish life from cradle to grave. A Jewish boy enters the Covenant through circumcision when eight days old and becomes a 'son of the Law' at thirteen. From that moment he is pledged to keep the 613 commandments till he breathes his last breath. All his life he remains a marked man, for Judaism aims at complete separation from the Gentile world. He is kept aware of his Jewishness at every possible turn. For this

purpose he wears an *arba kanfot* (four-cornered garment with carefully arranged fringes) and refrains from cutting the corners of his beard and from using a razor. He keeps his head covered most of the day, and even at night, out of reverence for God. He minutely observes the Sabbath, even abstaining from turning on the electric light or breaking open an envelope. He eats only food permitted by law and prepared according to rabbinic prescription. For prayer, he wraps himself in a prayer shawl (*tallit*), and wears phylacteries (*tephillin*) upon the left arm and the forehead. He places a *mezuzzah* (a small roll of parchment containing the *Shem'a* and other texts) upon his door-posts, and he goes to the Synagogue, if possible, daily and keeps the fasts, and feasts. He prays for the coming of the Messiah and for the restoration of the former glory to Israel.

In comparison, the Jewish woman has few duties to perform. Her religious obligations are mainly confined to home and kitchen. She occupies an inferior position in the Synagogue. The Jewish male thanks God every morning for not having been made a heathen, bondman or a woman; while the Jewish woman says: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who hast made me according to Thy will." In the Synagogue, public worship requires a quorum of ten male Jews. Any number of women present do not count as a substitute for one single man missing.

In many respects Synagogue worship is similar to the Service of the Christian Church. This goes back to the days when there was as yet no difference between Church and Synagogue. The main features are set prayers from the prayer book, conducted by a leader; the reading of Scriptures, and on special occasions a sermon. There is no congregational hymn singing but the whole Service is intoned. The most prominent place in the Synagogue is the 'ark' where the scrolls of the Law are kept. In front of the ark is suspended a lamp perpetually burning. At the entrance to the Synagogue water is provided for ritual washing of hands. Nobody has privileged status in the Synagogue. Judaism is a priestless religion. The Rabbi's authority is derived from the congregation. There is no function in the Synagogue which cannot be performed by the humblest member of the community. There is perfect equality of all Jews before God and the Law. "All Jews are brethren" is a common phrase among them. It is remarkable that in spite of immense suffering Jews have never yielded to pessimism. This in itself is a great achievement on the part of the Synagogue. Judaism has sustained its faith in human dignity and the triumph of good over evil. Its educational impetus is beyond estimate. Requiring of individual Jews personal knowledge of the Scriptures, literacy was common among them when as yet the nations of Europe were still groping in ignorance and darkness. The Bible was their text-book and the Church owes the Book of books to the faithfulness of the Synagogue.

Rabbinic learning with its hair-splitting intricacies required a ready mind and strong powers of concentration. It greatly helped to develop a quick-witted people. The ritual of hygiene has established habits of cleanliness and the high moral standards have preserved the purity of family life. Family cohesion, devotion to children, respect for parents, philanthropy and loyalty to the race, are only some of the virtues due to the influence of the Jewish faith. Above all, Judaism encouraged endurance in time of bitter persecution and kept the lamp of hope burning in the Jewish heart. It proved a mighty force in the preservation of a scattered people.

4. Relations with Christianity

In spite of the fact that the Synagogue has much in common with the Church, there is a deep gulf dividing them.

The primary divergence between Judaism and Christianity concerns the person of Jesus Christ. The Church makes stupendous claims for Jesus of which the Synagogue emphatically denies. In the Jewish view the 'salvation' offered in the New Testament is not the kind the Jews expect or need. Some Jews will go as far as allowing to Jesus a position equal with the other sages of Israel. Every claim above the one of equality appears blasphemous to the Jew. But the majority of the Jewish people, as a result of ignorance or prejudice, maintains a semi-hostile attitude to Jesus and the New Testament.

Though Church and Synagogue frequently use the same vocabulary the content is utterly different. We have already seen that 'salvation' has quite a different connotation in the Synagogue. The same applies to the term 'sin'. Some of the fundamental Christian concepts are entirely lacking. Regeneration in the New Testament sense is utterly foreign to Judaism; so is the idea of conversion. When Jews speak of 'conversion' they always mean a change of religion, usually in the sense of apostasy from Judaism. The Johannine concept of conversion is unknown to Jews. All this is logically connected with the difference in the assessment of sin. It stands to reason that if man is not fundamentally evil he does not require radical change. This in turn determines the function of Messiah. The Jewish Messiah is not expected to *save* but to *lead* the Jews, and humanity, into the Kingdom of God. The emphasis is thus not upon the Person but upon the Messianic function. Characteristic Jewish optimism, an incorrigible trait, stems from this source.

This brings us to the greatest issue of all.

The Christian doctrine of the Trinity constitutes the greatest offence to Judaism. In fact, most Jews are convinced that Christians are Tri-theists. The Jewish concept of the Unity admits of no variation in the Godhead. Even had the Synagogue accepted the Messiah-ship of Jesus, it would still have to deny the Doctrine of the Trinity. To the Synagogue, Jesus can only be man, no matter how great, for there must be no religious significance attached to a human person. For Judaism to give way on this point is to deny her *raison d'être* and to become the Church. Here, and here only, the dividing line is definite and without compromise. Every other difference ceases to be important in the face of this fundamental issue.

In the Christian view, God's ultimate dealing with man is in His Son Jesus Christ. In him is the Law completed and fulfilled; for this reason Christ is understood to be the end of the Law (cf. *Rom*. 10:4). It means that God is no respecter of persons who deals with Jews one way, because they are Jews; and with Gentiles another way, because they are non-Jews. The Christian missionary obligation is carried by the conviction that what applies to one, applies to all: "What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all; for I have already charged that all men, both Jews and Greeks, are under the power of sin, as it is written: 'None is righteous, no, not one . . .' "(*Rom*. 3:9 fl). Before the Cross no one can claim exemption; here all men become equals. The fact that the Synagogue seems to be unaware of a missionary obligation is disturbing to the Church. To Christians the truth is one and indivisible. If the Synagogue is

right, then it must preach it, and suffer for it. A faith which confines itself to one people is not the faith of the Old Testament prophets. This lack of a 'world-mission' separates Judaism from the rest of humanity, and also from the Bible.[12]

This brings us to the next issue.

There is a sharp difference in the Christian and Jewish attitude to the Scriptures. Not only is the Synagogue's Bible limited to the Old Testament; not only is there a fundamental exegetical difference between Jewish and Christian exposition, but the very categories of biblical thinking are differently perceived. It must be remembered that post-exilic Judaism has undergone a profound change as a result of a double crisis. The first crisis relates to the disappearance of Temple-worship. With the destruction of Jerusalem a central aspect of religious life dropped out of Jewish thinking and had to be substituted by something else. This meant a re-orientation from a sacrificial and substitutionary concept of approach to God, to a direct and immediate approach. The emphasis was thus shifted from the sacrificial cult to the study of the Law. The process is much older and goes back to the Babylonian Captivity, but the tragedy of A.D. 70 brought it to a head.

The second crisis coincides in time with the first. Christianity which began as a small Jewish sect soon grew to become a dangerous rival to the Synagogue not only among Gentiles but in Jewry itself.[13] Thus a number of views which were traditionally held in Judaism were gradually abandoned in order to emphasize the difference between the two faiths. We thus find that whereas Christianity operates with Old Testament concepts such as sacrifice, vicarious suffering, mediation, etc., the Synagogue has either dropped these concepts altogether, or else relegated them to secondary importance. This is another reason why the two faiths frequently speak at cross purposes.

For the impartial scholar there can be little doubt that the Synagogue's attitude radically differs from that of the Old Testament. Here both the priestly and the prophetic aspect of Old Testament religion has largely disappeared. The rabbi is neither priest nor prophet, but the *expounder* of the Law.

In the Church these two functions have been fused in the person of the Messiah. The Pauline Epistles, but specially the writer of the *Letter to the Hebrews*, reveal the extent to which the Old Testament categories have influenced early Christian thinking. The Johannine attitude is similar: the theology of the Fourth Gospel rests upon the theory of mediation and vicarious sacrifice. The fulfilment of the Law and the Prophets is here understood to mean that in Jesus the Messiah the priestly and prophetic office reaches its culminating point. The Messiah is the Priest who sacrifices himself in the Deutero-Isianic sense (cf. specially *Is*. 53); he is also the Prophet in whom the Word takes on flesh and blood. He thus accomplishes what the Temple, the priesthood and the sacrifices hinted at - he atones for the sins of the world. This is the argument in the *Epistle to the Hebrews* and throughout the New Testament: "Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way which he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water" (*Heb*. 10:19-22).

When we read in the Fourth Gospel that Jesus said: "I am the way" (*John* 14:6) we must place this statement in the Old Testament context in order to appreciate the import of its meaning. Thus placed it means that the Messiah is the bridge to God - the Mediator in the prophetic and priestly sense. For this reason Paul could truly say that Christ is the *telos* of the Law for in him the prophetic and priestly line has come to an end.

The Synagogue's view points in the opposite direction. Here man approaches God without mediation though on the basis of the Covenant. It means that the Synagogue refuses to accept the idea of a broken Covenant which had to be re-constituted. To be a son of Abraham *ipso facto* means to be a son of the Covenant and thus a child of God. Here mediation is self-accomplished and is taken for granted by reason of birth. Atonement therefore has not the radical significance it has in the Church.

In contradistinction to the sacrificial system, rabbinic Judaism rests upon knowledge of *torah* on the part of the individual Jew. Here 'knowledge' must be understood in the widest possible sense. It is not enough to know the text, or even the plain interpretation of the text. What is required is knowledge of the traditional interpretation of the text in terms of *halakah*, i.e. in terms of precepts, duties and laws. But there is also an *haggadic* aspect of the text which contains hidden meanings and which constitutes the edificatory element of *torah*. *Halaka* from *halak* - to walk - is the obligatory aspect of the Law which has binding force upon the individual and the community. *Haggadah* from *hagged* (*nagad*) - to narrate, to discourse, is left to the imagination of the individual though the approach is governed by certain rules.

To engage in the study of torah is looked upon as a pious act which takes precedence over every other obligation on the understanding that an empty-headed man cannot be a sin-fearing man, nor can an ignorant person be pious.[14] The *mishnaic* tractate *Pirke Abboth* stresses the importance of *torah*-study on almost every page.

Symbolically, the difference between Judaism and Christianity is illustrated by this difference in attitude: traditional Judaism is engrossed in the study of *torah* in the broadest sense; the mark of Christianity is a personal relationship to Jesus Christ.

5. Judaism in Relation to the Prophets

In Judaism we thus reach the end of a long process of development; first prophet and priest struggle for supremacy; later, the prophet wins in the moral field while the priest becomes the guardian of the national cult. With the cessation of Temple worship, the lawyer and scribe displace the priest. But do they displace the prophet?

Though there is much in Judaism which the prophet would have called *mizvat 'anashim* (*Is*. 29:13); 'precepts of men', important prophetic elements have survived in Judaism to this day. It could not be otherwise, considering the tremendous impact of the prophetic faith upon the spiritual life of the Hebrew people; plus the fact that the Old Testament is still the most sacred book to the Jews. The Synagogue's lofty view of God; its insistence upon morality as the basis of religion; its concern with social justice; its refusal to segregate life into sacred and secular; its inveterate optimism which mainly derives from the knowledge that God is the Lord of history; its firm belief in Israel's election.; and many other features, Judaism owes to the prophets.

But there are other aspects which are a departure from the prophetic attitude and which give to Judaism some non-prophetic characteristics.

Here we would specially mention the post-Exilic concept of *torah*. It is founded on the supposition that revelation is a fixed norm in terms of precepts, laws and regulations to which every Jew must submit. This reduces the Word of the living God to the dead letter of a Code to be studied, investigated, elaborated, expounded and turned into a system of minute observance. There is a world of difference between the petty casuistry of the *halakhic* teacher and the broad sweep of spiritual perception on the part of the Old Testament prophets.

Although the Synagogue knows all about *hovot ha-levavot* (duties of the heart), the system as elaborated by the rabbis lends itself towards formal observance without *kavvanah*, i.e. inward intention. Keeping the letter of the law, though it may sometimes be contrary to its spirit, is a great weakness in Judaism, not only in the case of the individual but of the system as such. The legal fiction which goes under the technical name of *'eruv* (עֵרוּב = mixture, combination), makes it possible to satisfy the letter of the law without inconveniencing the community, as for instance, in the case of some Sabbath-day prohibitions. Another legal fiction is the *prosbul* instituted by Hillel. It is an instrument executed in court to make it possible for the creditor to secure his debt against the operation of the Sabbatical year. The intention was to prevent hardship to the poor, who found it increasingly difficult to borrow money as the seventh year was nearing. But though the intention is laudable a solution by means of *reservatio mentalis* is not. These and similar practices would undoubtedly fall under the prophet's condemnation who inveighed against any subterfuge: "Their fear of me is a commandment of men learned by rote . . ." (*Is*. 29:13).

But it seems to us that the most radical departure from the prophetic ideal on the part of Judaism lies in its relationship to the outside world. It is not enough for the Synagogue to keep on repeating in its liturgy: *'atah behartanu mikol ha-'amim* - thou hast chosen us from all the nations . . . and rest contented in the knowledge of its privilege. The prophets never understood election except in terms of service. Israel has a duty towards the nations which cannot be fulfilled by its present policy of passive endurance. This was clearly recognized by C. G. Montefiore, the leader of Liberal Judaism in Britain.[15] But the fact remains that Judaism of every shade, be it orthodox or Liberal, has no message of Salvation for the outside world. Judaism is therefore always under suspicion of tribalism. The God of the prophets is now primarily the God of a people, and the Synagogue has never been able to raise its voice with conviction and call to the world as the prophet did: "Turn to me and be saved all the ends of the earth!" (*Is*. 45:22).

Nevertheless, Judaism represents an important chapter in the spiritual history of Israel and has made its own unique contribution to the life of the Church. It has also influenced other religious systems and spiritual trends, notably Mohammedanism. No one who writes about the spiritual history of Israel can afford to overlook the Synagogue.

It is important for a Christian writer to place Judaism in its right perspective and to see it not only negatively as has been done for centuries but also positively, as the opposite number of the Christian Church. The juxtaposition of Synagogue and Church is an essential part of the theologian's task in his effort to understand the meaning of revelation. We have tried to do this in our book: *A Theology of Election*.[16]

Notes to Chapter IX

1. Epstein, *Judaism*, 1939; 33.
2. Cf. *The Mishnah* translated by H. Danby, 1933, 446 note 2.
3. Cf. *Abboth*, 1:1.
4. Cf. J. H. Hertz, *The Pentateuch,* 1938, 318.
5. Cf. David Daube, *Studies in Biblical Law*, 1947, 83 fl.
6. It seems that the Karaites had no such tradition. Cf. the statement by Sahl (second half of 10th century) from which it would appear that they allowed the boiling of a chicken in milk. *Jewish Quarterly Review*, April 1958, 360.
7. *Baba Metzia*, 59b. The whole incident is of an amusing nature and cannot be taken too seriously, but it well illustrates rabbinic autonomy regarding the Law.
8. A few paragraphs in this section are repeated from the essay on Judaism in *Religions in a Changing World*, edited by Howard F. Vos, Moody Press, 1959.
9. There has been a protracted and heated controversy between Christians and Jews on the subject of merit in Judaism. For a full statement of the rabbinic point of view see A. Marmorstein, *The Doctrine of Merits in Old Rabbinical Literature*, 1920; also the interesting article by S. Levy, "The Doctrine of Original Virtue", *The Jewish Literary Annual*, 1905. For a more critical view see Strack-Billerbeck, *Komm. z. N.T. under Lohn und Verdienst d. Vater*. Montefiore has severely criticized Strack and Billerbeck on this and other issues in his *Rabbinic Literature and Gospel Teachings* (1930), but sometimes unjustifiably.
10. For the Jewish emphasis upon 'Unity' see J. Jocz, *A Theology of Election*, 1958, 40 fl.
11. There is some evidence to show that the ancient Synagogue took a more liberal view on this subject and even allowed some pagan motifs. Cf. Erwin R. Goodenough's extensive work, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period*, 6 vols., 1956. But see Heinrich Strauss' criticism of this work in *Judaism*, Winter, 1958, 81 fl.
12. Prof. Arnold Toynbee in a provocative article challenged Judaism to assume a missionary responsibility towards the Gentile world and thus realize the great vision of *Deutero-Isaiah* (cf. *The Jewish Chronicle*, Oct. 2, 1959). The national limitations of Judaism are best gauged from Prof. Zwi Werblowsky's reply to Toynbee's challenge (cf. *The Jewish Chronicle*, Nov. 13, 1959).
13. For evidence see J. Jocz, *The Jewish People and Jesus Christ*, 42-64.
14. So Hillel in *Pirke Abboth*, 2, 6.
15. For a recent discussion of the missionary obligation on the part of Judaism see the American Jewish weekly, *The National Jewish Post and Opinion*: "Converting Non-Jews," Feb. 14, 1958, 14.
16. S.P.C.K., 1958

X. THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

It is frequently held, and not only by Jews, that Christianity, like Mohammedanism, derives from Judaism. Unless we understand under 'Judaism', the prophetic faith of the Old Testament, this is an inaccurate assumption. The misconception is due to a false construction of history and rests upon suppositions which cannot any more be supported for lack of evidence. Here are some of the facts which must be borne in mind:

1) Up to A.D. 70 Pharisaic Judaism was only one of several parties, and not even a majority party, in Palestine.
2) While the Temple was still functioning the Synagogue had to take a secondary place and was only subsidiary to cultic worship.
3) The messianic movement, which now goes under the name of Christianity, found itself in opposition to Pharisaism at its very inception.

It is important to place primitive Christianity in its right historic connections if an assessment of its relationship to the Old Testament is the intention.

Be it said at once that Pharisaic Judaism in the shape as it ultimately emerged at the end of the 2nd century, i.e. at the time of the conclusion of the *Mishnah*, was the result of a struggle with a number of opposing parties. The Sadducean party, although politically the most formidable, was spiritually of lesser importance. Whatever interpretation, we may give to the sect connected with the Dead Sea Scrolls, and there are many to choose from, one fact is startling: here was an important movement within Jewry of which we knew nothing and still are in the dark about its true origin. To us it appears obvious that Christianity, in its original setting, was one of the opposition parties which maintained a different tradition from that of Pharisaism,[1] Its spiritual connections go far back in Hebrew history and derive from the perennial struggle between prophet and priest.

The best evidence for the deep-going division in Jewry is the New Testament itself. Jewish scholars have tried their best to present Jesus as a Pharisee, but without success. Pharisaism reveals an essentially different attitude in respect to the Law. Jesus' spiritual *milieu* is that of the prophets. Herein he does not stand alone but within a group of men and women who lived and moved within the prophetic tradition. To this group we have already counted Zecharias and Elizabeth, their son John the Baptist, the saintly Simeon and Anna, but there must have been many more. We have expressed the view that the 'poor and humble' in the land who waited for the consolation of Israel belonged to the same circles. The 'poor in spirit', a curious expression which undoubtedly goes back to the Old Testament[2] like the *anavim* (Mtt. 5:5), to whom the Sermon on the Mount is addressed, are more than just casual bystanders. They are a coherent group who at long last have the privilege of hearing the Messianic Manifesto. These men and women inspired by the prophetic message put their hope not in the meticulous observance of the Law, but in the prophetic vision of the messianic age. Prof. G. Klein has suspected that a group which in Jewish tradition is referred to as the *doreshe reshumot* - Investigators of the Scriptures - and whom he designates as mystics, will have been closely allied to the New Testament circles.[3] Whether they were 'mystics' or not, their existence points to a messianic tradition which has its roots in Old

Testament prophecy. These were men who watched the "signs of the times" (*Mtt.* 16:3) and waited for him who was to come (cf. *Mtt.* 11:3). The primitive Church has its roots in these pious, prophetic circles and not in rabbinic Judaism.

If these assumptions are correct, then we have uncovered evidence that the prophetic tradition remained unbroken and that the link between the Old Testament and the New Testament is much closer than was ever realized. There is probably a closer connection between primitive Christianity and the Old Testament, than there is between the former, and historic Christianity.

In the perspective of history, 'Christianity' has a much wider connotation than the primitive faith of the early Church. Christians, as they were first called at Antioch (*Acts* 11:26), were men and women who accepted the claim of Jesus to Messiahship against the background of 1st century Judaism. There was no Christian tradition as yet, which had other than spiritual values attached to it. 'Christianity' meant faith, and nothing else than faith, in Jesus the Messiah who died for sinners and rose for their justification (*Rom*. 4:25). It did not include, as it does today, history, dogma, culture and tradition. The nineteen centuries of Church history inevitably widened the meaning of 'Christianity' to include more than the primitive faith of the Church. These new values, concepts and ideas brought into the Church by the influx of the nations, became inextricably intertwined with the original Gospel message.[4] It has been the task of scholars to untwist the foreign strands so as to recover the original layers of the Gospel. These original concepts appear to be different when placed back into the context to which they belonged. Scholars have thus learned to distinguish Hebraic thought as derived from the Old Testament, from Hellenic thought which superimposed itself upon the original message. It is obvious therefore that historic Christianity covers a long process of development in addition to the original faith in Jesus Christ.

The late William Temple in his Preface to *An Outline of Christianity*, makes the following remark on the sub-title - "The History of our Civilization": "The History of Christianity can only be written with fullness and accuracy if it be treated as the History of Christendom and of the impact of Christendom upon the non-Christian world."[5] This encounter between Church and world had a mutual effect on both, and contemporary Christianity is the result of it. In our discussion therefore we have to distinguish between Gospel and Christianity in order to avoid confusion.

1. The Gospel

We have already elaborated upon the fact that the messianic hope was part of the historiosophical view of the prophets. The messianic idea may have been of much older origin than the Old Testament, but for the prophets it became associated with the view that God is the Lord of history, and that He will ultimately bring it to a successful conclusion. But the messianic hope carried with it not only the conclusion of history but also the vindication of God's people. The people of the Covenant who became *lo-'ammi* - 'not-my-people', will ultimately become God's people (*Hosea* 2:23; cf. 1:9), a holy people (*Ex*. 19:6). In this way the messianic hope was both a national hope and an universal hope; it concerned Israel and it concerned the world.

In times of stress, when Israel's existence was threatened, the messianic hope flared up with new vigour. It entered the Jewish consciousness and became a purely national hope, as it has been since the Exile after A.D. 70. This was an inevitable development both because of the original connection, and also because in Jewry the religious and the secular are inseparably linked.

In the New Testament the two hopes are equally intertwined and kept together. This is the heritage of the Hebrew Bible. The Son of David is first and foremost the claimant to David's throne: "In that day I will raise up the booth of David that is fallen and repair its breaches and raise up its ruins and rebuild it as in the days of old, that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and all nations who are called by my name . . ." (*Amos* 9:11 fl).[6] The Gospel starts with the assumption that there is a connection between the messianic hope of the prophets and Jesus of Nazareth. This is specially emphasized by frequent references to the Old Testament. The Johannine Gospel gives expression to this view when Philip says to Nathanael: "We have found him of whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth; the son of Joseph" (*John* 1:45). This brings us to the important question of the messianic texts.

a) Old Testament 'Evidence'

The exegetical problem which concerns itself with the question of interpreting messianic texts is in the centre of the controversy between Church and Synagogue. It is of special importance to the Church, as by tradition she always appealed to the Old Testament for proof of her christology. Such an appeal to Scripture is already implicit in the Gospels: καθὼς γέγραπται; ὅτι γέγραπται; ἵνα πληρωθῶσιν αἱ γραφαί; these are phrases which belong to the oldest tradition of the New Testament and which go back to Jesus himself. Dalman's suspicion that these phrases are due to the influence of the LXX makes little difference to this fact.[7] The affirmative κατὰ τὰς γραφάς we read it in 1 *Cor*. 15:3, 4, was of special importance to the *kerygma* of the early Church while still upon Jewish soil. When it is said in 1 *Peter* 3:15: Always be prepared to make a 'defence' (*apologia*) to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you . . . Old Testament evidence will undoubtedly have been part of such apology.

The English scholar Vincent-Henry Stanton took the trouble to collate all the Old Testament texts which occur in the New Testament. He grouped these texts into three categories:

1) Texts which are used as referring to the person and function of the Messiah.
2) Texts in which κύριος is used as a reference to the Messiah (following the LXX).
3) Texts which relate to specific incidents in the life of the Messiah.

Stanton admits that after critical examination not all these texts can be applied legitimately in the messianic sense. He holds that such texts are used rather as illustrations than proofs and ought to be understood in this sense. On the other hand it is noteworthy that the exaggerated allegorism as deployed by the rabbis and Church Fathers only seldom occurs in the New Testament. Stanton draws attention to yet another feature: the Old Testament

theophanies which play an important part in messianic exegesis of the Church Fathers as references to Jesus, are entirely absent in the New Testament.[8]

To appreciate the New Testament use of messianic texts we ought to bear in mind the possibility, suggested by Credner and Hatch that these quotations originally belonged to a messianic collection widely used in the early Church.[9] These *florilegia* served a missionary purpose, specially for Jews.

The theory that such *testimonia* existed for propaganda purposes and were used as a kind of *vademecum* listing *catenae* of texts, was further elaborated by Rendel Harris. Till recently there was nothing to support such a theory except that it made it possible to account for a number of incorrect Old Testament quotations (cf. *Mark* 1:2; *Mtt.* 27:9; also 1 *Cor*. 15:25 fl; *Eph*. 1:20, 22; *Hebr*. 1:13; 2:6-8 - some quotations being an amalgamation of two or more sources). But since the discoveries of the Qumran MSS we now have proof that such *florilegia* existed in fact. Among the rich material discovered at Khirbet Qumran there is a small sheet which obviously belonged to a larger work consisting of an anthology of messianic texts. The sheet contains the following quotations from the Pentateuch: *Deut*. 18:18 fl; 5:25-29; *Num*. 24:15-17; *Deut*. 33:8-11.[10] It is more than probable that the rest of the quotations, now lost, will have proceeded to bring proof from other books of the Old Testament. This explains the Gospel reference to the 'Law and the Prophets' bearing witness to the Messiah (*Luke* 24:44; cf. 24:27; also *Mtt.* 11:13; *John* 5:39). Such messianic interpretation of texts has an old and well established tradition behind it. Only thus can we explain the sometimes unwarranted use of texts in the New Testament which, from an exegetical point of view have little to do with messianic prophecies.[11]

Rendel Harris and Zwaan have made the suggestion that *Acts* 26:22 fl is a literal quotation from such a messianic Compendium and contains one or more titles of what scholars call the *Book of Testimonies*:

(a) that Christ was to suffer,

(b) that he was to be preached to the nations,

(c) that by his Resurrection light should come to Israel and to the Gentiles.[12]

These three fundamental points which will have been in the centre of the controversy with the Synagogue had to be 'proved' from Scripture to carry weight. In addition, all the outstanding incidents in the life of the Messiah had to be related to Old Testament prophecy in order to authenticate Jesus of Nazareth as the One who was to come (*Luke* 7:19; *John* 6:14; cf. *Luke* 3:16). It is only natural that the use of Scripture to 'prove' the Messiah should stand under the suspicion of *vaticinium post eventum*. We believe, however, that the early Church, in her scriptural proof, proceeded in the opposite direction from our own; she first discovered the Messiah and *then* went to the Old Testament. But by whatever means we may try to account for the corresponding features of Old Testament prophecy and New Testament fulfilment, we face several incontrovertible facts:

1) The concept of the Messiah is of prophetic origin.
2) The function of the Messiah both as the exalted king and the Suffering Servant stems from the Prophets.

3) The vision of renewal associated with the coming of the Messiah is taken from the Prophets.
4) The advent of the Messiah as an act of God is part of the prophetic message.
5) The triumph of the Messiah over the nations of the world belongs to the prophetic vision.

If these premisses are granted we already have before us the skeleton of the Gospel story.

b) The Historic Facts About Jesus

There was a time when scholars earnestly discussed the possibility that a man like Jesus of Nazareth never really existed; and if he did exist, the New Testament was not the source to find out anything about him. Today there is hardly a scholar left who would defend the so-called mythological theory. It is an interesting fact that Jewish scholars on the whole have always stood for the historicity of Jesus of Nazareth. The question regarding the New Testament sources is a different matter. It must be admitted that the New Testament was not written with a view to history, but with a view to faith. In this respect A. I. Polack fairly states the case when he says: "Not only is the material at our disposal somewhat scanty and, at least as arranged in its present form, composed a generation or more after Jesus' death, but it is also largely coloured by the beliefs of those who were already convinced of his supernatural character."[13] This is the measured opinion of a Jewish writer. The more learned work by a Christian scholar, Prof. Günther Bornkamm, expresses a similar view.[14] But Bornkamm makes two important points which seem to have been overlooked: in spite of the biased information about the historic Jesus contained in the Gospels they bear evidence (1) to the denial of the early Church that Jesus was a myth; (2) to the denial of all exaggerated eschatological enthusiasm (*eschatologische Schwärmerei*). The early believers knew Jesus as an historic personality, and to be a Christian meant first and foremost to follow a man who lived, died and rose from the dead. Bornkamm points out that faith as conceived in the Gospels does not begin with itself, but points to an historic past at the end of which stands a real man of flesh and blood.[15]

Our only source for the life of the historic Jesus remains to this day the New Testament. All other hints and references are of little value.[16]

It is quite possible to write a biography about the historic Jesus using the material we have in the Gospels without resorting to any of the supernatural elements which they contain. This has been done both by scholars and also by novelists. The book by Heinrich Weinel and A. G. Widgery, *Jesus in the Nineteenth Century and After*, gives an excellent survey of such attempts. Almost simultaneously appeared Albert Schweitzer's second enlarged edition of his *Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung*, published 1913. The last forty years have seen a new spate of books all dealing with the same subject. Writers have felt an inward compulsion to explain Jesus of Nazareth in non-supernatural terms. They all proceed on the assumption that the supernatural is legendary and the invention of those who wanted to believe more than the historic Jesus stood for. A classical example is the work of Ernest Renan who presents Jesus as the great ideal of true humanity: "To make himself adored to this degree, he must have been adorable. Love is only kindled by an object worthy of it, and we should know nothing of Jesus, if it were not for the passion he inspired in those around him, which obliges us still

to affirm that he was great and pure. The faith, the enthusiasm, the constancy of the first Christian generation is only explicable on the supposition that at its inception there existed a man of transcendent greatness."[17]

From such portrayal of the great hero of the Gospels it would appear that Jesus was a good man, a man of great sympathies, endowed with exceptional gifts of leadership, a master of parables, a lover of humanity. But this rationalized picture of Jesus violates some important principles of sound reasoning. It detaches the hero from his natural background, from his religious *milieu*, it isolates him from the causality of history. Renan's Jesus is too much of a freak of nature to be accepted as a real person. C. G. Montefiore, in his cautious manner, was driven beyond Renan's standpoint and admitted that Jesus regarded himself as the Messiah. He says: "For my part, then, I range myself with those scholars who, differing in many things, yet agree in this, that Jesus claimed the Messiahship, and believed himself to be the Messiah."[18] This, of course, does not yet answer what kind of a Messiah he wanted to be. Did he look upon himself as Messiah in the prophetic sense, the apocalyptic sense, the popular Jewish sense? Naturally enough, such questions Montefiore cannot answer, but he ventures the suggestion that Jesus knew himself "in some important personal relation" to the Kingdom of God[19] and that he interpreted his messianic Kingship in terms of service.[20] This is a view more nearly approximating the Jesus portrayed in the Gospels. However much the contemporary view of the Messiah at the time of Jesus may have differed from that of the Prophets, Montefiore rightly assumes that: ". . . the base of the conception, its central figure, was still doubtless that of the eleventh chapter of *Isaiah* . . . the figure of a righteous monarch filled with the divine spirit."[21] But why limit it to the eleventh chapter of Isaiah? Is it because it corresponds more nearly to the liberal views of Montefiore himself? Would it not be right to expand the messianic idea to cover the rest of the prophets and specially, to *Deutero-Isaiah*? Is it not more natural to connect Jesus' concept of service with the *Deutero-Isaianic* idea of the Suffering Servant, as the Gospels do? However we may try to face the problem, one thing is certain: there is an indissoluble connection between the Messiah as portrayed in the Gospels and the prophetic ideal of the Servant of God. Would it not be more correct to say that Jesus took for his pattern of messianic function the prophetic ideal of the Messiah? According to the Gospels, at any rate, he found in the Prophets of the Old Testament his vocation and his programme (cf. *Luke* 4:16 fl).

There is one more problem connected with the historic facts about Jesus we cannot by-pass. It is the question of opposition on the part of the religious leaders. Why the Sadducees should oppose Jesus is no problem at all. Their vested interests, their desire to maintain the status quo of the political situation, and a number of other motives will have put them in violent opposition to this claimant of Messiahship.[22] The problem arises when we face the pious Pharisees: to claim Messiahship was not an offence in Israel; all that was necessary was to prove the claim. Was Jesus persecuted because he was unable to prove the claim, or for some other reason?

It is a remarkable fact that Jesus never openly claimed to be the Messiah, except in the last hour before the Sanhedrin. According to *John* 10:24 the 'Jews' pressed Jesus to give a straightforward answer: How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ tell us plainly. This interesting passage fits in remarkably well with the situation depicted in the

Synoptic Gospels where his Messiahship is a closely guarded secret only known to the disciples (*Mtt.* 16:13-20).

In the Johannine Gospel opposition to Jesus is frequently linked to his claim of being the Son of God in a special sense. He is openly accused of "making himself equal to God" (*John* 5:18) and thus committing blasphemy (*John* 10:33). Occasionally there is a hint of this in the Synoptic Gospels as in the case of his trial. But here Jesus never refers to himself directly as the Son of God and almost invariably calls himself the Son of Man. Even if it had been otherwise, for a Jew to regard himself as a son of God and to call God his Father, was no offence. This is hinted at in the passage already quoted where Jesus says: "It is written in your law, 'I said, ye are gods' " (*John* 10:34; cf. *Ps*. 82:6). To resolve the difficulty scholars resorted to the expediency of reducing the difference between Jesus and the Pharisees to questions of the Law: Jesus created enemies by opposing pharisaic teaching. In this respect Jewish scholars have made a valuable contribution by pointing out some affinities between Jesus and the Pharisees on points of doctrine. It is now obvious that the cause of disagreement went further than a difference of opinion. The offence on the part of Jesus lay in the authority which he assumed. This question of ἐξουσία is always in the background of every clash between the Master from Nazareth and the religious leaders.[23]

Friedlander well summarizes the Jewish objection to Jesus which remains valid to this day:

1) His right to abrogate the Divine Law.
2) His power to forgive sin.
3) The efficacy of his vicarious atonement.
4) His ability to reveal God, the Father of man, to whomsoever he will.[24]

Such authority Friedlander bluntly repudiates. This is the very point which makes it impossible to approach the Gospels on the ordinary historical plane. The authority of Jesus is the rock upon which every rational approach is wrecked. Unless we credit the Man of Nazareth with megalomania, or else amend the records, we find ourselves in a peculiar dilemma. No wonder the religious leaders asked the question: "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" (*Mtt.* 21:23.) This was the very point which impressed everyone who heard him: "for he taught as one who had authority, and not as their scribes" (*Mtt.* 7:29).[25]

c) The Authority Of Jesus

The question which is raised in connection with Jesus' authority belongs to the order of theology and not of history. At this point the historical Jesus makes room for the New Testament Christ. Attempts have been made to explain the behaviour of Jesus on a purely psychological basis but such an effort inevitably leads to pathological conclusions. If we are determined to maintain the sanity of Jesus, his authority presents a mystery. Be it noted, however, that to a lesser degree the same problem presents itself in the case of the prophets. Their unbounded confidence in their vocation and message, their unwavering cry: "Thus saith the Lord . . ." presents a similar dilemma.

Some scholars, specially Jewish scholars, in search of a suitable niche for Jesus of Nazareth, have strongly advocated that his rank is that of a prophet. Behind it is the assumption that we know the secret of the prophet and understand his position. But do we?

How does a sane, intelligent and educated man like Isaiah honestly maintain that he is the mouthpiece of Almighty God? How does a reasonable man like Jeremiah, in spite of inward rebellion, submit to the illusion that he is God's messenger and that what he says are the *ipsissima verba* of God Himself? We are here confronted with the same problem as in the case of Jesus: either these men are deceivers or deceived!

There is however a theological answer, though it may not appeal to everyone. There is also some good logic behind it, though this is not enough to make it a valid answer. The theological answer is rooted in faith, which means that it rests upon several assumptions: that there is a God; that He is an intelligent Being; that He is able to communicate with man if He chooses to do so.

The Bible is only intelligible if we accept the claim it makes that God speaks to man. In this premiss is included the supposition that God is capable of speech and that man has the ability to hear. All biblical theology is built upon this underlying assumption. This is the reason why biblical theology can only be a theology of the Word of God. Theologians may differ on what is meant by the Word of God, and how it comes to us, but they cannot differ on the main supposition that God speaks. Once this is granted, we must proceed to observe two peculiar features about biblical revelation: (a) its indirectness; (b) the unity of Word and Action.

1) The Indirectness of God's Word. In the Bible man never encounters God in a direct relationship. A classical example is *Ex*. 33:11 where it is said of Moses that he met God *panim 'el panim* - face to face. This was felt by Jewish commentators to be an embarrassing anthropomorphism. The Targum Onkelos tried to soften it by using the *hitpael* form to make it appear that God spoke to Himself, but in the *presence* of Moses. Rashi follows the Targum's evasion in order to circumvent the difficulty. But the real difficulty is not connected with the expression *panim 'el panim*, but rather with the story which follows. First, God's glory which Moses desired to see is spiritualized to mean His 'goodness' (*Ex*. 33:19), then we are told that Moses is placed in a position from which he can only see the 'back'; further, what was meant to be a vision becomes an audition by which the thirteen *middot* (attributes) are announced; and finally, verse 11 is contradicted by verse 20 which says no man can see God and live.

Whatever the history of the text, in its present form it presents a puzzle which can only be explained by the fact that in the prophetic view no direct relationship to God is possible. Not even Moses could see God and live. Man meets God by mediation - the prophet, the priest, the 'messenger' (*malakh*) are the means of relating God to man. To meet God is to see His 'back', to hear His voice, but never to encounter him directly.[26] This fact is of immense importance for our understanding of the New Testament doctrine of the Incarnation. To this we will come later. But we still face the question: how did Moses, how did the Prophets, hear the Voice?

For a theologian to attempt an answer is to explain away the mystery of God's Word. There is only the answer of faith, which is the answer of the Bible: God speaks by His Holy Spirit. Those who have never heard the voice of God cannot know what this means. The temptation to explain the Voice as a psychological process, a mystical experience, or an intuitive insight, must be resisted at all cost, if the main premiss is to stand that God *speaks*, and that He speaks to whomsoever He wills.[27]

2) The Unity of Word and Action. We have already seen that in the prophetic view, there is no difference between Word and Action in relation to God. God's Word is His Deed, and His Deed is His Word. This is classically expressed in the story of the Creation: "He said and there was . . ." We are told by *Deutero-Isaiah* that God's Word is never spoken in vain: "It shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose and prosper in the thing for which I sent it" (*Is*. 55:11). This is an obvious conclusion from the prophetic faith in the God of Israel who is both All-wise and All-mighty. It is inconceivable for the prophet to visualize a situation in which God speaks and nothing happens. The effects may not be visible immediately, but this is only due to man's blindness. It is part of the prophet's mission to make people see the potency of God's spoken Word, which is always an *enacted* Word. For God is always the Acting One; He has done the "former things" and also does "new things" (*Is*. 42:9). It is the prophet's task to declare them before they spring forth, not in order to foretell the future but because they already exist in the present, for all God's Words are promise and fulfilment at the same time.

It is from this unitive concept that Word equals Deed that the Johannine concept of the Incarnation must be viewed.

d) The Miracle of Revelation

From what has already been said, it becomes obvious that in the context of prophetic revelation the New Testament does not depart from the Old Testament tradition, but brings it to its ultimate conclusion. The theme is the same in both: man's encounter with God. Here, as in the Old Testament, the principle is kept inviolate in case man oversteps the mark and misunderstands his position.

First, it is not man's quest for God which brings about the encounter. Man is not a seeker of God, but an idolator at heart; he is God's fugitive. The encounter is brought about by God's condescension to man: this is the theme of the Bible.

Second, revelation in the New Testament, as in the rest of the Bible, is indirect and in a hidden manner. The men and women who met Jesus of Nazareth did not see more or hear more than those who were confronted by Isaiah, Jeremiah or Ezekiel. Even the message was almost identical: *return* - the kingdom of God is at hand! The only difference was the added authority in the demeanour of the man: "but I say unto you"; "thy sins are forgiven thee".

Third, revelation in the New Testament is a personal encounter. This is the meaning of discipleship. Jesus was seeking disciples and not worshippers. "Blessed is he who doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven." Doing the will of God, hallowing His Name, was tantamount to following the Master. Conversely, no one could follow the Master without doing the will of God and hallowing His Name. The response to this personal moral

challenge is called in the prophetic tradition to "know God". This is not intellectual knowledge, but moral knowledge which expresses itself in action. Here man is treated as a person in his relationship to God.

Fourth, in the life of Jesus as presented in the Gospels, Word and Deed coincide in a way which is only hinted at but never realized in the prophetic writings. The Prophets knew that God's Word and Acts are interchangeable but they never saw it visibly realized. They thus speak in the prophetic future: God who speaks will perform it, but between act and deed there is the moment of suspense - "the historic moment".

The Gospels present a different picture. Here act and speech coincide in an unusual manner: "He spoke and there was a great calm." (*Mark* 4:39); he said: "I will," and the leper went away healed (*Mark* 1:40 fl); he said to a woman, "thy sins be forgiven thee" and the woman went on her way rejoicing (cf. *Luke* 7:36 fl). He said to a man on the gallows: "To-day thou shalt be with me in Paradise" (*Luke* 23:43), and the man died reconciled. Here the prophetic future is turned into present, and the suspense of history is removed. This may not have been apparent to the onlooker, but was the experience of those who believed. This is what we mean by the authority of Jesus. The Incarnation, theologically speaking, is the coincidence of Word and Act. In Johannine language it is expressed, in the sentence: *Verbum caro factum est* (*John* 1:14).

This condescension of God to humanity is called εὐαγγέλιον - the Good News. It is not news which the prophets had anticipated and which has now taken place. It exceeds all that the prophets hoped for. Their messianic longings have been fulfilled in a manner quite different from all their anticipations.[28] To grasp what εὐαγγέλιον meant to the early Church we will have to ponder on the Johannine text: "And from his fulness have we all received, grace upon grace" (*John* 1:16). It is difficult for us who have become accustomed to the message of the Gospel to share with the Apostle Paul the joy of knowing the love of God in Christ Jesus: "For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (*Rom*. 8:38).

This triumph of faith is the believer's response to the miracle of revelation.

e) The Prophetic Pattern of the Gospel

We must grant the Jewish contention that by the usual rules of exegesis the Church's Christology has little support in the Old Testament. This may seem a blow to some theologians who have spent much ingenuity to prove their case. Yet this does not amount to a denial of the presence of messianic texts or the close connection between the two Testaments. All we mean to aver is that the Church's Christology was not formulated with a view to Old Testament teaching, but primarily with a view to Christ Jesus and his resurrection. The Church's Christology is Resurrection Christology. The way of the Christian Faith is from the empty Tomb to the Old Testament Scriptures and not the other way around. Christ exceeds the Old Testament in the same measure as he fulfils it. But at the same time all the elements of the messianic vision on the part of the Prophets is contained in the Gospel. Whereas in the

Old Testament the messianic hopes are diffused and tentative, in the New Testament they take on visible form and become centred round a living person.

It has been a matter of discussion whether Jesus himself was at all concerned with the nations outside Israel. But once we put the Gospel in the context of the Old Testament hope the answer is obvious: *messianic salvation is for the world*. There are enough indications in the Gospels to support such a conclusion, specially in the Fourth Gospel.[29] But the synoptic Gospels are not far behind and this in spite of such incidents as the encounter with the Syro-Phoenician woman (*Mark* 7:25 fl). It could not be otherwise if Jesus took the prophetic vision as his pattern, as he obviously did. This was the vision which inspired St Paul to reach out with the Gospel message to the Gentile world, as it was the same vision which prompted Luke to set himself the task of telling the story of the *Acts of the Apostles*.

Significantly enough, the story of the Church begins with a motley crowd from every corner of the ancient world listening to Peter declaring Salvation.[30]

f) The Son of God

Most scholars are now agreed that, according to the New Testament, the Gospel - εὐαγγέλιον - was not what Jesus did, said, or accomplished, but what he was - *the* Son of God. It is only for us to decide what was meant by this term.

That the Messiah was a son of God constitutes no offence and presents no difficulty. But it is obvious that in the New Testament the term is not used in this sense when applied to Jesus. Scholars have therefore thought that the New Testament concept of Son of God is a later development and of non-Jewish origin. We will quote a typical passage from Prof. Klausner: "Graeco-Roman influence here mingles with Jewish traditions and produces the special conception of Paul and his followers that Jesus the Messiah is a 'son of God' (*Filius Dei*, θεοῦ υἱός) and 'Lord God' (*Dominus Deus*)."[31]

According to Klausner the blame for the transformation of a Jewish Messiah into the pagan Son of God is to be put upon Saul of Tarsus. But it is an interesting fact that in the Synoptic Gospels, where Jesus mainly refers to himself as the Son of Man, his God-Sonship is a guarded secret and only used by those who knew him to be the Messiah. It seems to us that Klausner has oversimplified the problem. That this is the case can be seen from his treatment of the Apostle Paul. Just to say that this disciple of Gamaliel and highly trained Pharisee succumbed to pagan influence unawares is to ask us to believe the impossible. It is clear that God-Sonship in a very special and unique sense was both for St Paul and the early Church an inherited tradition and stems from Jewish sources.

This is borne out by the fact that the concept of Son of God in the Christian sense of the phrase is already embedded in the earliest strata of the New Testament documents. It certainly dominates the Pauline Epistles which are prior to any of our written Gospels. The tendency has therefore been to explain St Paul in the context of a non-Jewish background. In this connection some very extravagant theories have been constructed with the intention of severing the Apostle to the Gentiles from his Jewish *milieu*. More moderate scholars have been working on the principle of a gradual development from a biblical to a more speculative and metaphysical concept of Messiahship to which St Paul made his own contribution. It is

interesting to note that Montefiore, who wrote from a Jewish point of view, already based his conclusions on such an hypothesis.

Montefiore begins with the premiss that in Jewish circles the Messiah was regarded as the son of God, but in such a description there was nothing of a Trinitarian flavour. To Jews such a phrase was near at hand; Israel was God's people and every Jew was a son of God. The Messiah, the Anointed of God, was *the* Son by reason of his greater devotion and zeal. This was a concept the Messiah Jesus inherited from his Jewish background. Regarding himself the Messiah, he also looked upon himself as *the* Son. Only later as Christian doctrine develops, "Jesus becomes the Son of God not merely as the Messiah, but as metaphysically related to the Godhead." This new concept of the Messiah introduced a foreign element which marks the point of departure from Judaism and draws a dividing line between Church and Synagogue. For this reason the controversy, in the Jewish view, is not with Jesus who remains to the end a faithful Jew, but with Christianity which has mistaken the title 'Son of God' and has put upon it the wrong construction: "What Jews have denied in thousands to protest against was not the teaching of Jesus, but the teaching of the Church - the incarnation, the Trinity, the worship of the Man-God, the mediation of the Messiah . . ."[32]

If this argument is valid, then the responsibility for this strange and unfortunate aberration rests with Saul of Tarsus. He it was who first attached a metaphysical connotation to the person of the Messiah, before there was as yet any written Gospel. Here then, it would seem, is the source of the Church's Christology. Paul is therefore regarded as the one who by introducing a foreign element changed the whole structure of what was originally a genuine Jewish movement. But the surprising feature about the whole situation is the fact that we fail to discover in the Pauline writings any visible signs of a formative character. His Christology is fully developed from beginning to end. This is a phenomenon which requires an explanation.

It is an easy way out of a difficulty to say that Paul adopted pagan ideas which he unawares absorbed from his surroundings. This view expressed by J. Klausner is somewhat modified by a later passage which we think worth quoting in his own words: "Saul Paul of Tarsus, who was a Jew, but one steeped in Greek Culture, began to employ the concept 'Son of God' in a sense close to but not identical with the pagan concept: as Messiah, Jesus is 'Son of God' in the sense of a 'heavenly man' not susceptible to sin nor even to death. . . . This was the first step toward deification. But Paul the Jew did not go so far as to call Jesus 'God'."[33]

This is so simple a solution that we cannot help questioning its validity. It may help to have yet another glance at St Paul's Christology.

J. Gresham Machen, in his book *The Origin of Paul's Religion*, has brought out very forcefully the extent of Paul's dependence upon the tradition of the Church. This factor has been largely overlooked by scholars in their assessment of Pauline Christology.[34] If we are to accept extraneous pagan influence upon the Apostle we must equally accept similar influence upon the primitive Church in its earliest stages of development. Karl Ludwig Schmidt has seen aright when he states: "The oldest Gospel handed on to us, the one by Mark, already presupposes the Messiah-faith, the Christ-cult and mythos which lies outside all personal-psychology."[35] This is an important admission and if correct reveals two facts: (1) that the

earliest Gospel is already based on a fully developed Christology, (2) that such a Christology has other than Pauline origin.

Without entirely excluding extraneous influence, it is evident that to understand the New Testament Christological views some other than pagan sources are necessary. Scholars have thus turned for a clue to Jewish apocalyptic writings. Prof. Klausner is inclined to accept the theory that the apocalyptic literature has largely fashioned New Testament views. But on Klausner's own evidence, perhaps with the exception of the Syriac Book of Baruch, neither the Apocryphal nor the Pseudepigraphic literature warrants a 'Christian' view of the Messiah. In fact he is emphatic on this point that these are Jewish books and have no other but a 'Jewish' Messiah in view. To quote one instance, Klausner says in connection with the messianic view of the *Fourth Book of Ezra*: "This is a thoroughly Jewish view, in complete opposition to Christianity, in which the Messiah takes the place of God in the Day of Judgement and what follows."[36] We thus find ourselves in a difficult situation. The apocalyptic literature, though important, is insufficient to explain New Testament Christology, and pagan ideas could not have been as decisive a factor while the Church was still upon Jewish soil, as some scholars make out. To solve the dilemma two expedients have been adopted: (1) To put Paul of Tarsus in the centre of this new development and to regard him as the link between pagan and Jewish thinking,[37] (2) to assign even to the earliest Gospel a late date so that it already reflects the attitude of the Gentile Church. Neither of these points can be settled definitely, but it seems to us sound reasoning to look to yet another factor which is of no less importance.

The assimilation of ideas is an established fact and need not detain us. Not only Christianity but even Judaism, and Pharisaic Judaism at that, has assimilated extraneous views. But a gradual assimilation of ideas is one thing and a radical change of a fundamental attitude is quite another. For so radical a change as early as the 1st century in the concept of the God-Sonship of Jesus we require a more startling factor than the need for adaptation to the views of pagan listeners. In our view that factor is Jesus himself.

There are elements in the Pauline concept of Messiah which are *sui generis* and which can only be explained satisfactorily if they are traced back via the tradition of the early Church to the Master himself. Martin Buber comes remarkably near the truth when he tries to show from three Pauline texts (*Phil*. 2:6; 1 *Cor*. 8:6; and *Col*. 1:15 fl) that Paul's intention was twofold: "Loyalty to the highest possible conception of his Master and unweakened maintenance of monotheism."[38] In Buber's view, this was an impossible undertaking and Paul was unable to maintain the balance. It is our contention, however, that Saul of Tarsus with his keen intellect and Jewish background, no matter how influenced by Greek environment, could not fail to realize the consequences of his Christological views. That he persisted in them without flinching can only be explained on the assumption (a) that the Master himself made stupendous claims to authority; (b) that Paul believed these claims to be vindicated by the Messiah's resurrection.

It is naive for K. L. Schmidt to suggest that the concept of the 'Son of God' which with Jews was nothing more than a dignity title for the Messiah, was misunderstood among Gentiles and led to the theory of the Virgin Birth. We will have to assume that Paul himself misunderstood the meaning of 'Son of God' and put upon it a non-Jewish construction. This

is so contradictory an assumption as to be unworkable. It seems to us that for the historian there is no way out of the dilemma, except to go back to the source and to blame Jesus himself for the misunderstanding. If this is the case then many of our ideas about the Synoptic Gospels as distinct from the Johannine Gospel will have to be revised. Rudolf Otto is essentially right when he treats *Mtt.* 11:27 as a genuine *logion* going back to Jesus himself: "All things have been delivered to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him." On the surface this text may seem to convey a gnostic flavour, but put in the context of the Gospel it rather reveals the remarkable self-consciousness of the Messiah. There are a number of other texts which belong to the same order. Behind these *logia* is the awareness of a man who carries a great burden of authority from on High. The present writer is thus driven to the conclusion that Jesus' self-designation 'Son of Man' was deliberately chosen to disguise the other more esoteric concept of 'Son of God'. The God-Sonship of the Messiah was the secret which was only revealed to the innermost circle of believers. This becomes clear from the passage in *Mtt.* 16:13 fl which narrates the incident at Caesarea Philippi. Jesus asks: "Who do men say that the Son of Man is?" After receiving an answer he asks directly: "But who do you say that I am?" Peter speaking for himself and the rest of the group replies: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

From the context of the text and the wider context of the New Testament, it is quite obvious that we are here faced with a crucial statement relating to the self-consciousness of Jesus of Nazareth. This is not any more a dignity-title attached to the Messiah, but the ultimate secret shrouding the metaphysical nature of Jesus, the son of Joseph and Mary. It is at this point that our ordinary reasoning gives out. This is the scandal of the Gospel; the blasphemy and offence for which Jesus died. This fact may be disconcerting to scholars and may open wide scope for the psychologist's probing into the sanity of Jesus, but has to be faced squarely. In this respect Gerald Friedlander, writing from a Jewish point of view, accurately assesses the situation when he says: "The Gospel introduces the idea of one divine son, apart from all men, becoming a mediator between God and humanity," and he quotes *Mtt.* 9:27; *Luke* 10:22; *Mark* 10:45, to enforce his point.[39]

With these facts in mind we now can return to St Paul. There can be little doubt that Saul of Tarsus, the former Pharisee, made his own specific contribution to the Christological views of the early Church. He formulated, he defined, he endowed with a concrete terminology what was already latent in believers' circles regarding Jesus of Nazareth. But what he inherited from the Church was equally decisive, namely, that Messianic faith was not centred upon the moral teaching of Jesus, but upon Jesus himself. The Messiah's extraordinary authority was reinforced by faith in his resurrection. In the forefront of the disciples' attention was not his *doctrine* but his person. A believer was one who believed *in* Jesus, and because he believed in Jesus he accepted his authority and obeyed his teaching.

We have tried to show in another connection that the disciples among themselves and among non-believing Jews were known as 'be-livers'. We expressed the view that the Hebrew *ma'aminim* was derisively corrupted to *minim*.[40] Herein lay the difference between disciples and non-disciples: the former believed, the others mocked. That faith was first and primarily resurrection faith.

No one reading St Paul can fail to notice the importance he ascribed to the resurrection of the Messiah: "If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain . . . if in this life we who are in Christ have only hope, we are of all men most to be pitied" (1 *Cor*. 15:14 fl). Pauline theology is resurrection theology *par excellence*.

It is curious that Jewish scholars who concern themselves with the difference between Pauline and Jewish concepts fail to appreciate this fundamental fact. They usually reverse the position: because Paul had such an exaggerated idea about the person of the Messiah, he was willing to accept the resurrection as fact. We hold the opposite to be the case: because Paul believed that Jesus was raised from the dead he held such an exalted view of Messiahship.

It is important to notice that in the whole of the Pauline corpus there is not a single passage which would suggest that Jesus raised himself from the dead. Although the Apostle ascribes Lordship to the Messiah, in fact divinity, he always speaks of the resurrection in the passive voice, as do all the New Testament writers.[41] Behind this fact is the essential Monotheism of the Jew Saul who understood the Incarnation to mean true and unadulterated humanity on the part of the Son of God. In the person of Jesus Christ, God did not walk about incognito to play havoc with the laws of nature as He pleased, but became man in every respect. The 'Man Christ Jesus', is not a semi-God or God in disguise, but a humble man who suffered and died upon a Cross. That he was raised from the dead by the power of God is the most extraordinary thing ever said about him. That this man Jesus was the Son of God, in a sense in which no one else has ever been, was demonstrated by his Resurrection. To undermine the Apostle's faith in the Son of God, we would have first to undermine his faith that Jesus was raised from the dead.

To sum up: Paul's Christology has two specific sources: the claim to supreme authority on the part of the historic Jesus, and the resurrection-faith which was handed on to the Apostle by the Primitive Church. This does not mean that we need deny extraneous influence upon St Paul. No man's thinking can be traced like a graph, and a man with such wide connections like the Apostle was exposed to a variety of influences. There are obvious biblical elements, rabbinic elements, hellenistic elements and a mosaic of other components which colour the Pauline outlook. But these are not decisive in themselves; they are used to embellish the main theme: "that he who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh is the Son of God" (*Rom*. 1:1 fl).

That such is the case can be seen from the fact that scholars are able to prove either way - that Paul drew from his Jewish background and also from alien tradition. Thus W. D. Davies shows the close connection between Pauline thinking and Rabbinic Judaism,[42] while Joseph Klausner has accumulated a store of evidence to prove St Paul's dependence upon Hellenism.[43] The fact is that both views are right, but neither, nor put together, do they explain the nature of Pauline Christology. It is only because scholars have underestimated the importance of the living tradition of the Church that they have accepted the view that Paul was too preoccupied with the heavenly Christ to pay much attention to the historic Jesus. The truth is that there is no Gospel for St Paul without the historic Jesus. It is the very heart of his *kerygma* that the Son of God became man and was born of a woman (*Gal*. 4:4 fl). Not that Jesus became God but that God in the person of Jesus "emptied himself and took the form of a servant" (*Phil*. 2:7). This was the *Good News* which Paul preached.

g) The Christological Aspect of Theology

The Christological concern dominates Christian theology through the ages. Whenever the Church tried to understand her position she could only do so *vis-à-vis* the miracle of the Incarnation. In every other respect she resembles the Synagogue. Her only line of demarcation from the world and from pseudo-Christianity was her profession: *verbum caro factum est*.

That God became Man is a contradictory proposition. It lends itself to misunderstanding and is at the root of all heresies. To this day the balance between orthodoxy and heresy is very delicate. There is a contradiction inherent in the very structure of the Christian Faith: it keeps two irreconcilable elements in tension yet without fusion - the Son of God and the Son of Man. In the words of the Athanasian Creed:

> Now the right faith is that we believe and confess: that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is both God and man.
> He is God, of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds: and he is man, of the substance of his Mother, born in the world;
> Perfect God: perfect man, of reasoning soul and human flesh subsisting;
> Equal to the Father as touching his Godhead; less than the Father as touching his manhood.
> Who although he be God and man; yet he is not two, but is one Christ:
> One, however, not by conversion of Godhead into flesh; but by taking manhood into God;[44]
> One altogether: not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person.

The logic of these statements is not self-evident, neither can it be. Behind these sentences is the desire on the part of the Church not to resolve the ultimate secret of the Incarnation. When hard pressed to elucidate her position she was forced into the field of speculative philosophy and exegetical enquiry. Under stress she frequently said more than is warranted by biblical evidence, but on the whole she remained true to her task: profession of the miracle of the Incarnation. With all her faults, this is the remarkable achievement of the historic Church and distinguishes her from all other Christian sects

The credal statements of the Church, whatever their philosophical intention, carry the message about a God who was not satisfied to remain the transcendent God of the universe, but stooped down to the human level and in the person of His Son became man in order to seek and save what is lost.

2. The Historic Church

The task now before us is not a theological presentation of the Church, but a concrete assessment of her position in history. For this we need a matter-of-fact historical approach. Our purpose is to enquire as to the part the historic Church has played in shaping human destiny. What we are seeking to establish is an answer to the question how did the preaching of the Christian message affect the life of men and nations?

It is obvious that full treatment of our subject would go far beyond the limits of this work. It would also require greater historical knowledge than the writer can boast. The

extensive and fascinating work by Kenneth Scott Latourette bears witness to the vastness of such an undertaking.[45] We have thus decided to confine ourselves to one single aspect, namely the prophetic element in the Gospel which has exerted the most powerful influence upon human history.

a) The Vision of the People of God

We have already brought sufficient proof to show the close connection between the prophets and the New Testament; a similar connection that we desire to establish is between the historic Church and the Bible. We want to show that the prophetic vision which became concentrated and redefined in the person of Jesus burst upon the nations with such force that even after 2000 years it is far from spent. The new insights, aspirations and values which came to the Gentile world as a result of the preaching of the Gospel are both historically and spiritually linked to the prophetic tradition of the Old Testament. By divine providence the Church was chosen to act as the door to admit the nations of the world into a realm of spiritual life and experience hitherto closed to them. Herein lies the historic mission of the Church and her *raison d'être*.

L. I. Newman, who wrote on the Jewish influence on the reform movements within Christendom,[46] failed to give sufficient attention to the prophetic leaven behind the great movements within the historic Church. Though Newman acknowledges the Old Testament as a "foremost factor" in the ferment of Gentile ideology, he is too concerned with the apologetic aspect of "Jewish" influence to pay more than passing attention to the impact of Hebrew prophetism. He thus fails to appreciate the impetus which the Gospel released when it brought these two alien worlds together.

The Church did more than just act as a link between the Hebrew and the Gentile world; it brought into play an element which resulted in stupendous consequences upon the shaping of world history. This element was the sense of *fulfilment* of the prophetic hope. By this we mean that the Christian Faith did not merely sum up the values of the Old Testament prophets, but placed Gentiles in a position of dignity equal to that of Israel. Those who have been strangers and foreigners to the commonwealth of Israel (*Eph*. 2:12) have become through Jesus Christ the People of God, in fact the '*new*' Israel.[47]

All reform movements within the Church are motivated by the desire to reconstitute the true People of God. Here lies the key not only to Church history but also to much of the secular history of Europe. The great revolutionary movements of the 19th and 20th centuries were secular attempts to revive the prophetic vision of the messianic era, not as a hope, but as fulfilment. This sense of completion has entered man's consciousness with the preaching of the Gospel. The impatience of the nations, most particularly in our own century, has something to do with the awareness that salvation is within reach if only we can lay hold on it.

We encounter here an important difference between the Old and New Testament man. For the prophets, the messianic vision always related to the future: "I see him but not now; I behold him but not nigh; A star shall come forth out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel" (*Numbers* 24:17). But for the Church the messianic vision was a *present* experience;

the Messiah had come; the King was here. This *hic* and *nunc* of the Gospel pressing for decision, became the driving force behind world history *post Christum natum*.

The quick progress of Christianity upon Gentile soil constitutes a puzzle which has been variously explained. Some scholars attribute it to the social implications of the Gospel at a time when society was sharply divided between a small reigning class and large masses of the under-privileged. To the dispossessed it offered the promise of a better world in exchange for the suffering here upon earth. What was denied to this large section of disinherited humanity in the realm of the material was fully compensated in the realm of the spiritual. By being admitted, through faith in the Son of God, to the Family of God, these outcasts of society were elevated to the dignity of children of God and became heirs of the Kingdom. This was the very message which St Paul preached: "In Christ Jesus you are all sons of God . . . there is neither slave nor free, for you are all one . . ." (*Gal*. 3:27 fl). It is a revealing fact that those who were won for the Gospel outside Jewry were men and women of the lower if not lowest classes: "For consider your call, brethren; not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth; but God chose what was foolish in the world to shame the wise, God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong, God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are . . ." (1 *Cor*. 1:26 fl).

It is a fact that the 'rich' fare badly in the New Testament, specially in the Gospel according to *Luke* and in the *Epistle of James*. The early Christians called themselves The Poor and according to the Gospel tradition, the Master has grave doubts whether the rich can find their way into the Kingdom of God (*Mtt.* 19:23 fl). If we bear in mind that to Jesus, as to the Old Testament prophets, the Kingdom of God was no vague religious concept but God's concrete reign here upon earth, we will appreciate the implications of the message: "Blessed are the poor, for yours is the Kingdom of God. Blessed are you that hunger now, for you shall be satisfied" (*Luke* 6:20 fl). It may well be that the Matthaean version of "poor in spirit" is an effort to soften the more original *logion* which was addressed to men of "low estate". The Messiah knew himself specially commissioned to preach glad tidings to the poor (*Luke* 4:18; cf. *Is*. 61:1 fl). The Church still sings in the words of the *Magnificat*: "He has put down the mighty from their throne; and exalted those of low degree; he has filled the hungry with good things and the rich he has sent empty away" (*Luke* 1:52 fl). Today it means very little, if anything at all, to a mainly middle-class church, but in its original setting it must have meant a good deal more than the promise of 'spiritual blessings'. Good News for the poor is more than an echo of the prophetic cry for social justice; it is in fact a message of fulfilment and of a new hope.

It would be a mistake to limit the appeal of the Gospel message to the equalization of society. The revolutionary ferment of the Gospel went much deeper. Bypassing the obvious inequalities of Gentile society, the preachers appealed to the deeper needs which were at the root of existing evils. Although there were, naturally enough, more of the lower classes in number adhering to the Gospel, men and women of upper society were not entirely lacking. There is enough evidence to prove this to be the case from our New Testament records. What was it that appealed to the learned and educated in the somewhat crude story about a man who died an ignoble death at the hands of Romans and who is said to have risen from the

dead? What did the Gospel offer to the Roman patrician who was hardly aware of social injustice which has become hallowed by tradition?

To answer this question we will have to look more closely into the ancient world as spiritually constituted.

Apart from the gross immorality of ancient society and its religious syncretism, there was a philosophical aspect to it which must have resulted in far-reaching psychological turmoil. What we have in mind is the inherent dualism pervading the thinking of the educated classes.

The peculiar dualism of the ancient world consisted in the sharp division between spirit and matter. This created a dichotomy in the psychic life of men with a deep craving for salvation. The Gospel was brought to the Graeco-Roman world at a time when it was most deeply involved in Eastern dualism. This was partly due to the persistent influence of the Mazdaean Mithras cult and partly to the philosophical ethos of the times.

Rome, the metropolis of the ancient world, became the battlefield of a large variety of cults, mainly from the east, and a multitude of philosophical schools. In this metropolitan melting pot an eclectic *Weltanschauung* was being forged, but it was a *Weltanschauung* of a world torn to pieces by a fatalistic dualism. All the great philosophical schools like the Greek Platonists, the Alexandrian Pythagorians, the Oriental Gnostics, were all committed to a dualistic point of view. This philosophical type of dualism bred cynicism on the one hand and other-worldly ascetism on the other. The Neo-Platonism of Plotinus (204-269) and his disciple Porphyrus (230-300) was an effort to provide this divided world with a metaphysical superstructure. The Church contested the grounds of the philosophers by offering a new and diametrically opposed point of view. The Gospel was that in Christ Jesus there was a link between heaven and earth. Since the Son of God became flesh and dwelt among us matter was hallowed to become the vehicle of the Holy Spirit. There is nothing therefore despicable about man's material existence, his body is destined to become the Temple of God (cf. 1 *Cor.* 6:19 fl).

It is true that much of pagan dualism entered the Church by the back door. This was an inevitable process, considering the background of those who became her foremost apologists. This explains the curious fact that Western Christianity was and still is largely swayed by Neo-Platonic ideology.[48] But at the same time the Church provided an answer to the perplexing problem of a divided world which not only satisfied the intellect but the heart as well. It uttered a Word which was heard and received as a true word of salvation.

The close brush between Hebrew thinking and gnostic dualism gave a peculiar twist to the Christian message from which the Church has not yet recovered.

Gnostic dualism is carried by the conviction that evil is inherent in matter. Salvation therefore in the gnostic setting is release from the defiling influence of material existence. The stoic philosopher who managed to achieve a maximum of detachment from the material world, was thus the ideal candidate to saintship. This explains the effeminate concept of the Christian saint in much of medieval art, and also the flight from the world into monastic existence on the part of so many Christians. This non biblical attitude of other worldliness contradicted the down-to-earth realism of the Hebrew prophets and played lightly with the tenet that God is Creator of the material world.

It is a curious fact that our inherited dualism from pagan philosophy has largely obscured the genuine biblical dualism which stands directly opposed to it.

The Bible does not distinguish between spirit and matter but between right and wrong. Here the division is ethical; salvation does not mean to be freed from matter but to be freed from sin. Sin creates a rift between man and God. Separation from God is thus not founded upon the fact that man is matter whereas God is Spirit, but upon the fact that man is a sinner whereas God is holy. God remains invisible only because sinful man cannot endure His searing Presence.[49] Salvation as conceived in the New Testament is reconciliation between man and God; the sacrifice on the Cross on the part of the Messiah is the means whereby atonement is achieved. God, though righteous and holy, accepts the Death of His Son in lieu of the death of the sinner and graciously forgives. But the sinner does not remain a mere onlooker, watching the Son of God die a vicarious death - he becomes totally involved in the tragedy of the Cross and identifies himself with the Victim: "We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin[50] might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For he who has died is freed from sin. But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him" (*Rom*. 6:6 fl). The sinner who, by reason of his sin, has forfeited all rights is thus forgiven by an act of grace on the part of God and received back into sonship (cf. the parable of the Prodigal Son, *Luke* 15:11 fl).[51] The estrangement between God and man is not due to the physical state of man, but to his rebellious nature. In the Bible soul and body are of equal value and belong together: disembodied souls are as unthinkable as soulless bodies. The body has the noble task of housing the Holy Spirit of God: "Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's spirit dwells in you? If any one destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and that temple are you" (1 *Cor*. 3:17). This is the basis of the sanctity of human life in its totality - both spiritual and physical.[52] Such sanctity extends to the whole of man, both body and soul. Man in his totality is God's creature and belongs to him (cf. 1 *Cor*. 6:19).

Scholars have frequently been deceived by the apparent similarity between New Testament and gnostic dualism and have mistaken the one for the other. This has special bearing upon our understanding of the Pauline attitude. Here is a typical dualistic text from the letter to the Romans: To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the spirit is life and peace (cf. the whole passage, *Rom*. 8:3-17). It is only when we realize that the juxtaposition of *sarx* and *pneuma* in Pauline usage is within the biblical context of moral values, that we are able to assess the real meaning of the text. It is now a well-established fact that for the Apostle *sarx* is not just matter: ". . . but that side of the human nature which is morally weak, the side on which man's physical organism leads him to sin".[53] This Pauline dualism is far removed from the Gnostic contempt of matter. It is rather a challenge to inward mastery of uncurbed appetites: "I do not box as one beating in the air, but I pommel my body and subdue it, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified" (1 *Cor*. 9:27).

We have dwelt on this question for it affords an illustration of how in the realm of spiritual values the slightest shift of emphasis may completely alter the pattern. It was against the Neo-Platonic and gnostic background of the Graeco-Roman world that the moral dualism of the Bible fought a losing battle. The moral earnestness of the Sermon on the Mount was neutralized by the vague metaphysics of speculative Neo-Platonism. Christianity would have

lost itself entirely in metaphysical speculation but for the powerful check exercised by the Old Testament. The Bible stood as the irrefutable witness that the world in its totality belongs to God and that Jesus Christ came to save it.

b) The Gospel as Discovery of Self

As in the case of the Prophets, the Gospel begins with a call to repentance. This is characteristic for the prophetic approach to man: man who was created in the Image of God must *return* to his former position. Such return is conditional upon man's discovery of his status as a sinner before God. Here the moral element is decisive for a right relationship to God. Knowledge of God leads to a crisis which begins with self-discovery: man cannot know God unless he knows himself. But he will never really see himself for what he is unless he encounters the Other Man in the person of the Son of God. It is only by contrast that we are able to see ourselves. In the centre of the Christian *kerygma* stands the Man who is the pattern of manhood as the true Son of God. This is the Christian hope: that, "we shall be like him for we shall see him as he is" (1 *John* 3:2). God predestined the believer "to be conformed to the image of his Son in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren" (*Rom*. 8:29; cf. also 2 *Cor*. 3:18; *Phil*. 3:21; 2 *Peter* 1:3 fl).

Jesus Christ who is God's Word to man is not only a Word of Salvation, but a word of judgement. He came "for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is spoken against . . . that thoughts of many hearts may be revealed" (*Luke* 2:34). This is consonant with the Hebrew concept of the Word of God as defined in *Hebrews* 4:12: "For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. . . ."

The biblical call to self-discovery is different in nature from the Greek motto: *gnothi seauton*. Whatever that inscription may have meant to the worshippers at the temple of Delphi, to Plato it certainly does not mean the discovery of self as a sinner. This becomes abundantly clear from the *Dialogue* with Alcibiades where for man to know himself is to know his soul, and to know his soul is to discover his own inherent divinity.[54] For the soul is "the very likeness of the divine, and immortal, and intellectual, and uniform, and indissoluble, and unchangeable . . ."[55]

The biblical realism concerning man came as a jarring note to the ancient world with its facile idealism. It may well be that opposition to Christianity among the intellectual circles of paganism was at least partly due to the unconscious desire to retain at all cost a pleasant illusion. The world outside Israel at that time was nurtured in a tradition of the minimum of distance between God and man. St Paul had to preach to people who took their divinity for granted. Only once did he fall to the temptation to pander to their views when he quoted the poet Aratus at Athens: "For we indeed are his (i.e. God's) offspring" (*Acts* 17: 28). The fact that Aratus was a stoic poet adds poignancy to the quotation.[56] Saul the Hebrew knew only too well that man is not *genos* of God but only his handiwork (cf. *Psalm* 100:3).

The self-discovery of man as a sinner was the most revolutionary ferment which changed the whole structure of ancient society.

c) The Gospel as Vocation

As was the practice with the Prophets, the Gospel never leaves a negative impression. The proclamation of judgement is always followed by the offer of grace. God, though an enemy of sin, is the friend of sinners. This is the very meaning of the Good News: "in Christ Jesus God justifies the ungodly" (*Rom*. 4:5). The work of reclaiming sinners for God was the task of the Church on behalf of the Master. Jesus Christ came to call sinners to repentance. The parable of the Prodigal Son expresses in a superb manner the theme of the Gospel: that God the Father is willing and ready to reinstate the vagrant to sonship. The point of the story is not that the son returns, but that the father receives him back without recriminations and questioning.

The awareness of God's concern for man at his worst is behind the vitality of Western civilization which is built on the assumption of the importance of the individual. The Gospel parable about the shepherd who left the ninety-nine sheep in the wilderness to rescue the one which was lost; or the woman who called her neighbours to rejoice with her for she had found the one piece of silver which went astray (*Luke* 15: 3-10); represent a point of view foreign to ancient thinking. Although the prophets were trying to emancipate the individual from tribal loyalties, their efforts must be regarded as scattered seeds which only centuries later came to fruition. Tribalism which is the basic instinct of the herd, is a biological law for the preservation of the species. Used intelligently it serves a great purpose; blind submission to it spells tyranny and spiritual death. Tribalism is the most deeply-rooted instinct next to self-preservation. But it is also a tyranny which stultifies and cripples the growth of human personality. The freedom to be a person and not merely a number is linked to the conviction that man is a person before God: "For we do each demand that our life shall have meaning and value, not only in our own eyes, or only the eyes of our fellows, but also in the whole scheme of things."[57]

This is the very message which the Gospel carried: that there is value and purpose in the life of each individual before God. But it went further than this. Even Plato in his *Republic* still thinks in terms of group society, though he comes remarkably close to a full appreciation of the individual by means of his concept of the Immortality of the Soul. The Gospel, however, addresses itself almost exclusively to the individual. Kierkegaard gave full weight to this fact when he defined the individual as "the Christian category". Windelband-Heimsoeth make the following admission: "This is essentially the Christian *Weltanschauung* that it makes the person and the relationship of persons the kernel of all reality."[58] They point out the extent Christianity differs fundamentally from the Hellenistic attitude which sees in personality a limitation and finality (*Verendlichung*) reserved for the lower gods and for humanity, but not for the Highest Being. By contrast Christianity, "as a living religion, demands of man a personal relationship to the Highest Personality who is conceived to be the world-foundation (*Weltgrund*), and this is expressed in the concept of man's sonship to God".[59] Here, in this personalistic relationship, the meaning of history takes on new dimensions. Whereas in Greek thought the individual's life was a-historical for he had no history of his own and only the history of his people, the Christian acquired a *personal* history. His conversion was an act of God and therefore of eternal significance. His life had meaning and purpose warranted by the fact that the Son of God died for each individual, no matter how

insignificant a position he may occupy in society. The Christian thus knew himself as a person for whom God paid the highest price - with the Death of His Son - to win him into a son-relationship. As a son of God he was entrusted with a double task: to serve God here in this life and to win the Crown of Life in the hereafter (cf. *Rev*. 2:10). This was the highest dignity man could attain to and it brought both purpose and direction to even the most humble life: "Do not be ashamed then of testifying to our Lord . . . but take your share of suffering for the Gospel in the power of God, who saved us with a holy calling . . ." (2 *Tim*. 1:8 fl). This "high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (*Phil*. 3:14) of which the Apostle speaks was not the special privilege of a class within the Church, but of every single member, no matter how humble his origin and degrading his past. This was a new element in the consciousness of the human race which completely changed man's attitude both to himself and the created world around him. Prof. Herbert Butterfield, in his Riddell Memorial Lectures for 1951, paid special attention to this new discovery of the meaning of personality based on the view that man is a spiritual creature and as such created for spiritual ends.[60] He sharply distinguishes the Christian idea of personality from its "truncated and desiccated version" of 18th century individualism which is nothing more than "an ungrounded piece of self-assertion".[61] The Christian concept of personality had profound social implications thanks to its deep-rooted attachment to the collective life of the Church. This new nobility of the common man is the second revolutionary principle which transformed the antique world into modern society.

d) The Gospel as Church

Archibald Robertson, in his learned treatise on the Kingdom of God, distinguishes three principle interpretations of this biblical concept:

1) The perfect reign of God in heaven after the Last Judgement;
2) The visible reign of Christ on earth between his Second Coming and the Last Judgement;
3) The reign of the Visible Church between the first and the second coming of Christ.[62]

This remarkable difference of interpretation is due to the exegetical difficulty of defining the New Testament point of view regarding the Kingdom. Even the Synoptic Gospels show a variety of views sometimes contradictory. A classical case is the text in *Luke* 17:21 where the translation of one single word alters the whole meaning of the concept: The Kingdom of God is *in the midst* of you (*entós*; so R.S.V.). The Kingdom of God is *in you* (*entós*; so A.V.). Which is the better rendering?[63] But the difficulty is not only linguistic; it lies in the nature of the concept itself. Robertson observes: "The Kingdom of God, as our Lord preaches it, is at once present and future, to be received now to be entered into hereafter, at once actual and ideal. In this respect it corresponds to the idea of Salvation, the *summum bonum* of the individual, as the whole to the part."[64] The complexity is yet greater when we remember that the Kingdom is sometimes conceived as a gift and sometimes as a process: "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom" (*Luke* 12:32). At the same time the Kingdom of Heaven is like a grain of mustard seed . . . (*Mtt.* 13:31, etc.). It is sometimes a gift and sometimes an achievement; it is sometimes immanent and sometimes

transcendent. The reason for this apparent contradiction lies in the circumstances accompanying the Gospel: the Messianic Age was come, the Kingdom was at hand; from henceforth history moved between the Event of His Coming and the End. The believer prayed: Thy Kingdom come; but at the same time he knew himself already a member of Christ's Kingdom here and now.

We will fail to see the transition from Israel to Church unless we constantly bear in mind the concept of the Kingdom of God: the People of God as a concrete fact in history.

The chosen people of God, which according to Pauline preaching extends to all believers in Christ (cf. also 1 *Peter* 2:9 fl), is the evidence of the reality of the Kingdom of God in history. The Church is the place where the Kingdom, i.e. God's reign on earth, becomes visible in the life of men and women. The "Lord's Prayer" reveals the connection of the Kingdom with the empirical life of the Church: "Thy Kingdom come - Thy Will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Though Church and Kingdom are never identical, yet they are inseparably linked.

To the early Church the Kingdom of God was no mere theological concept but a reality. Archibald Robertson, whose sympathies tend towards a more 'spiritualized' concept of the Kingdom, remarks upon the Jewish tendency towards the concrete and tangible.[65] He does not however fail to appreciate the simple faith carried by the conviction that "this world is God's world, and its history is in His hands".[66] It was the Church's task to take this conviction seriously and to orientate her life by it.

The Gospel had profound social significance in that it pressed for redemption of society. The Kingdom of God is unthinkable in the lonely isolation of the individual. It is in the togetherness of the People of God that His Name can be hallowed. The love of God and the love of man are correlative and cannot be separated. The practical aspect of God's reign is magnificently illustrated in the parable of the Good Samaritan. The believer needs his neighbour to realize God's reign upon earth. The hermit's flight to the desert rests upon a misunderstanding of the true meaning of the Kingdom. Robertson quotes the case of the Gallican Churchman, John Cassian, who visited the fathers in the wilderness in order to find out about them. The answer he received to his question why they went to the desert is most revealing: "We have come to seek the Kingdom of God."[67]

Here the Kingdom of God is already detached from its original Jewish concreteness and has become an isolated personal quest: "the Kingdom of God is within you".

But the Gospel was too closely knit to the Hebrew Bible to allow an individualistic a-social interpretation of the Kingdom. Such an interpretation would have completely contradicted the immense importance the prophets placed upon society as the area where God's will is done. Although there were repeated mystical attempts in the opposite direction, the social implications of the Kingdom could never be nullified. It constituted a challenge to re-interpret history from age to age. This found its classical expression in Augustine's great work: *De Civitate Dei*.

The Church Fathers frequently resorted to a spiritualized, otherworldly concept of the Kingdom, specially since Origen's allegorical approach to the Bible began to bear fruit. But the existence of the empirical Church made a completely spiritualized interpretation impossible. The great problem was, in what relationship does the Church here upon earth

stand to the eschatological hope of the New Testament? It was this problem which baffled Augustine and engaged his attention for the last twenty-five years of his life. (There was an interval of fifteen years between the first and last book of *De Civitate Dei*.)[68]

A. Robertson in his chapter on Augustine's concept of the Kingdom has clearly shown that for him the Church occupies a key position as the link between the *civitas terrena* and the *civitas superna*. In fact she is the visible sign of the *regnum Dei* in history, and as such has a claim to the *civitas Dei*, or in a sense, is already the *civitas Dei*. In Robertson's own words: "There is (therefore) an inchoate and imperfect, but still true embodiment of the Kingdom of Christ on earth. In this sense the Church is the Kingdom of Christ. The Church may be regarded in two ways, either as the external society bound together by the sacraments, the *correptio*, and the hierarchy, or else the sum total of those now on earth who are predestined to eternal life. . . ."[69] In either case, however we may define it, and Augustine himself greatly wavers on this point, the Church in history has a definite and visible connection with the Kingdom of God.

Here the prophetic ideal of the People of God triumphs over against an individualistic and spiritualized concept of Salvation in the hereafter. The social aspect of the Kingdom worked as leaven in the Western world and reappeared under various guises sometimes religious (viz, the medieval Papal empire), sometimes secular (viz, the Bolshevik revolution), sometimes a combination of both (viz, post-Reformation Germany, England, etc.).

This prophetic vision of the *Regnum Dei* which is the goal and purpose of the Gospel, aims at the redemption of society. The Church at its inception and for centuries after was the embodiment of this new order in human relationships which radically affected the ancient world. In terms of history the Church was a revival of the Old Testament ideal of the perfect Theocracy in which the People of God submits to Him and accepts no other authority except from above. The messianic era inaugurated a new 'race', a 'new Israel' and with it a new world-order.[70]

The vision of the People of God called to prepare the way for the coming Kingdom profoundly influenced the life of the nations. It captivated the imagination and fired the will of rising generations to translate into actual experience God's perfect reign upon earth. The awareness that Christians are the reconstituted Israel, the new People of God, has proved a great power in the shaping of European destiny; it is still a ferment in the world, acting as a mighty force towards the redemption of society.[71]

Whenever men and women hear the Gospel, the concept of Church powerfully affects their social relationships and raises the perennial question regarding God's reign here upon earth. The new relationship among believers which cuts across the ancient taboos of class, colour, race and sex, challenges the old social order. Christians may try to avoid the issue and hang on to antiquated forms of society as long as possible, but they do so with a bad conscience. Whenever the Gospel is faced honestly, men and women become aware of the challenge to their disordered social relationships. Resistance to that challenge is an indication of the measure of resistance to the Gospel itself.

The appearance of the Church as a community of believers with a new order, with new values and tasks, acted and still acts, as a revolutionary element on the arena of history.[72]

3. The Church in History

The shaping of Church history and with it world history is closely linked to the concept of God's reign upon earth. This was the *telos* which gave history meaningful purpose. This biblical attitude to history profoundly influenced men's habits of thought and action. The release from the tediousness of the Greek *Weltanschauung* according to which "the time-process was an eternal recurrence, leading nowhere",[73] enabled humanity to perceive a new and glorious vision. The Kingdom of God here upon earth carried man's highest hopes and aspirations. That vision was linked to the eschatological hope of the Church. The cry of primitive Christianity: *Marana-tha*![74] was taken up by the Gentile Church and prayerfully repeated from age to age. Behind this prayer was the conviction that history has an end and that it is a positive end - God's ultimate triumph over it. No matter how strongly the Devil may resist, no matter how severe the judgements of God, salvation is at the end of the road, for God's purpose cannot be defeated and the Son of God could not have died in vain.

But salvation, like the Kingdom of God, had a double aspect. Sometimes the emphasis was upon salvation *here* and *now*; other times the accent was upon salvation in the hereafter. It was because of this peculiar ambiguity that the Christian hope vacillated from a concrete to a millenarian attitude and *vice versa*. But however deeply the Church may have sunk into mysticism, the vision of God's reign upon earth she could never entirely surrender. First, because of her theological premiss, but also because of her ethical commitment. To expect God's Kingdom, to pray for it and to seek it, implied to live according to its rules and to realize it in the concrete situations of living. The Church could not afford therefore to theorize about God's Kingdom without seeking to give it practical expression. Thus, by the inexorable logic of history she was moved to stretch out her hand toward political power in order to achieve her higher ends. The complexity of Church history derives from this uneasy alliance between Church and State. ". . . the conversion of Constantine opened a period which hardly ended until the 20th century - a period in which the religion of the New Testament was to have the alliance of power, and was to be now the support, now the passive accomplice of secular authority."[75] Thus tied to the State, the Church became engrossed in the mundane affairs of the world, and rightly so. Her failures do not derive from her concern with the affairs of this world, but from the fact that even she could not resist the temptation which goes with the wielding of power.

Understandably enough, while Christianity was a persecuted religion, the other-worldly aspect of God's Kingdom was in the forefront of Christian thinking. At that time the issue was clear on the one hand was the world in thraldom of the Evil One (1 *John* 5, 19), on the other were those born of God and destined for eternal life. The classical case is that of Ignatius aspiring to martyrdom: "I write to all the churches, and I bid all men know, that of my own free will I die for God; unless ye should hinder me. I exhort you, be ye not an unseasonable kindness to me. Let me be given to the wild beasts, for through them I can attain unto God."[76] Here we see revealed something of the contemptuous attitude of the post-Apostolic Church towards this transient world. But with the ascendency of the Church and her alliance with the State the issue became more muddled and complex. As an organization placed in history the Church could not afford for long to disregard the more practical side of life. She had to come to terms with the world, and compromise, if she wanted to survive.

Already the early Apologists take up a conciliatory attitude to the State. This was both a matter of prudence and conscience. From its inception the Church was never a political organization, at any rate not on Gentile soil. The post-Apostolic Church inherited the Pauline tradition of respect for civil authority. The Apostle looked upon the State as the servant of God to whom the Christian owes obedience and respect (cf. *Rom*. 13:1-7; 1 *Tim*. 2:2). The Apologists for the Church regarded it as their special task to convince the powers that be that Christians are good and loyal citizens and that the Christian faith carries no danger for the State.[77] But a time came when there was no need for the Church to make apologies for her existence; the State took her under its protection and she became reconciled to the State.

After the edict of toleration by the dying Emperor Galerius, the Church's position of disadvantage rapidly changed. Constantine by the edict of 315 gave her equality of rights with those of the other recognized religions; and Constantine's son raised Christianity to be the official religion of the State. From now on the problem of the relationship between Church and State, and the Church-State to the Kingdom of God, had to be faced with varying degrees of acuteness. At some stages of history it became a critical issue and the answer to the problem largely affected the course of events.

a) The This-Worldly Aspect of the Kingdom

From Jewish tradition the Church inherited a concrete, politico-social, materialistic, concept regarding God's reign upon earth. The theocratic ideal of the Old Testament fortified by the conviction that the Church is the New Israel and that With Jesus Christ the Kingdom of God had already broken in upon history, combined to press for visible signs of God's reign in the world. This realism was linked to the eschatological hope and for at least the first two centuries was upheld by the expectancy of an imminent and literal return of Jesus Christ. Everything in the New Testament encouraged such a hope and the Montanist movement was the Church's desperate effort to hold on to that faith. Montanus himself "expected the immediate establishment of the Millennial Reign at Pepuza" in Phrygia, and is supposed to have even initiated a collection of food for such an eventuality.[78]

In circles where the apocalyptic hope was less pronounced there was a need for a more spiritualized interpretation of the Kingdom. For this less apocalyptic and more other-worldly attitude the Church could equally well appeal to Scripture. Did not the Lord himself say: "My Kingdom is not of this world"? (*John* 18:36).[79] This other aspect of the Kingdom is already inherent in the New Testament and appears to have Dominical authority behind it. The Church could therefore emphasize either side with equal right, as she frequently did.

Justin, in his *First Apology*, makes a point to stress the otherworldly aspect of God's Kingdom: "We speak of that which is with God . . . our thoughts are not fixed on the present."[80] By the time Eusebius of Caesarea wrote his *Ecclesiastical History* (between 313-4 and 324-5)[81] the concrete millennial hope seems to have given way to a large extent and a more spiritualized concept was in fashion. Eusebius already writes disparagingly about the naive realism of Papias' views regarding the Millennium and accuses him of misunderstanding the Apostolic tradition. He goes so far as to accuse Papias of "exceedingly small intelligence" because of his views.[82]

In this more spiritualized concept of the Kingdom, the Church in history had to be fitted in. But here a new problem arose: how could the political power of the Church be squared with the other-worldliness of the Kingdom of God? These two opposites had to be related if the Church in history was to maintain her connection with the *kerygma* of the Kingdom. This was the problem which Augustine faced.

Augustine of Hippo was the first to tackle the problem of Church and Kingdom of God in all seriousness and the result of his labours has profoundly affected the thinking of the Church during the succeeding centuries.

Augustine's first task was to understand the position of the Church in history. An answer to his problem he found in the New Testament where the Church is both: the communion of the Saints, the Bride of Christ, without spot or wrinkle; but also the Church in Corinth and Ephesus with all her failings. What applied to historic Israel - "not all of Israel are Israel" - had for him equal application to the Church: both the *electi* and *reprobi* co-exist in the same body of the Church. The Church is thus both, the Kingdom of God and part and parcel of this world. In its eternal aspect it embraces not only the departed and the unborn but even the angels of God; but in its historic aspect it presents quite a different picture. The historic Church includes sinners and saints; and because of this fact she cannot do without the help of the State, as the State cannot do without the Church. The State needs the Church as a moral force for the maintenance of the *pax terrena* ; at the same time the Church depends on the State for the enforcement of virtue and justice without which no society can survive.

This interdependence of Church and State brought the theocratic ideal of the Old Testament within sight. To achieve it the State was to serve the purpose of the Church. The ecclesiastic dream was to fuse *Imperium* with *Ecciesia* in such a way that the Kingdom of God become a concrete fact in history. The long-drawn struggle of the medieval Church for supremacy over the State must be seen in this light.

Thus the Church, which turned away from the millennial and more concrete concept of the Kingdom of God in exchange for a spiritualized and other-worldly ideal, was forced back to adopt a secular and this-worldly view by the sheer logic of history. Her aim still was the *societas perfecta*, though she was forced to enlist the aid of the State to achieve this end. The ascendency of the Papacy, which reached its zenith of power under Gregory VII (Hildebrand, 1073-85) and Innocent III (1198-1216), was only possible because monarchs and subjects alike largely believed in the theocratic dream of the ages.

The medieval Popes, who sincerely believed in their high calling as the actual representatives of Christ on earth, laid claim to highest power - *plenitudo potestatis.* Their right of "binding and loosing they extended from the spiritual to the political domain. Innocent III vigorously upheld Gregory's view that St Peter's successors had authority "to direct emperors and kings and to dispose of their kingdoms".[83] In theory this is still the view of the Roman Curia. Thus Tarquini (1810-74) deduced from *Mtt.* 16:19 that St Peter was invested with *potestas absoluta et monarchica*[84] and that the Pope has a rightful claim to such power. That the papal claim to *plenitudo potestatis* should meet with bitter opposition on the part of the Heads of States was a natural consequence, specially when their interests clashed.

The rivalry of the secular and spiritual authority, as exemplified in the struggle over the question of Investiture, ultimately severed the State from the Church and led to the rise of

nationalism. The Church thus defeated her own end. The tragedy of the Church has nothing to do with the great claims she made on behalf of God. Her fall was caused by the contradictory position in which she found herself: on the one hand she made claim to highest spiritual authority - but on the other, she showed all the greed and lust for power of a secular State. Her unique position was thus vitiated by the hypocrisy of the hierarchy and she found herself debased and derided in the eyes of humanity.

What offended Christian sensibilities more than anything else was the Church's attitude to wealth. Arnold of Brescia was not the only one who could not reconcile the lowly poverty of Christ and his Apostles with the pomp and luxury of the Church prelates. The Franciscan order with its pledge to poverty expressed the revulsion on the part of many devout Christians to the worldly aspirations of the official Church. Nothing reveals more clearly the degenerate character of the hierarchy than its attitude to the 'spirituals' as against the 'conventuals' of the Order of St Francis. That Nicolas III in his Bull *Exiit qui seminat* (1278) decided in favour of the renunciation of all property as the Christian ideal, is a remarkable exception to the rule. As is well known, the decision was reversed by John XXII and partly reversed by his successor Clement V. In 1318 four of the 'spirituals' were burned at Marseilles as 'heretics' for upholding the Christian ideal of poverty. No wonder that the Fraticelli, the most radical wing of the Franciscan Order, were forcibly driven to the bitter conclusion that the Church was a non-Christian organization. The separation between Church and State seemed to be the only solution suggesting itself to the many upright men who were suffering under the degradation of the Church.

Conciliarism was born from the pressing need of finding a solution to the Church's problem. The idea that a General Council could change and save the Church was entertained by the best men in Christendom.[85] The conciliary movement was backed by men like Henry of Langenstein, John Gerson, Dietrich Niehm and John Major. The issue, as those men saw it, centred round the question of authority: in whom was authority vested? Was it the Pope, the Emperor, the People or the General Council; who had the decisive voice? They realized it was not enough to say that ultimate authority was vested in God. Who is the custodian and administrator of divine authority here upon earth?

The Conciliarists were driven to the conclusion that authority must not be vested in a single man even though he be the Pope. On this score they achieved a remarkable degree of unanimity though they differed on other points. Here, the Abbot of Fiore in Calabria, Joachim, Marcilius of Padua (Marsiglio), William of Ockham and Dante, all speak with one voice.

Robertson looks upon Dante's treatise on the question of government as of decisive importance in reversing the trend of a theocratic order of society: "The *de Monarchia*, (then) is the reversal of the principles of the *de Civitate Dei*, in so far as those principles had laid the foundation for the conception of the Kingdom of God as an omnipotent Church."[86] Dante laid down the theory upon which the Reformation of the 16th century was to build the new structure of Europe. Unfortunately the Reformers were unable to solve the problem which bedevilled Church history. The new relationship between Church and State which evolved as a result of the Reformation put the State in the position of the Pope. The Reformation

therefore did not solve the problem but only re-opened the issue regarding the concreteness of God's reign in the affairs of men.[87]

b) The Other-Worldly Aspect of God's Kingdom

The dualism which the medieval Church tried to overcome received new emphasis from the increasing secularism of modern society. Neither Lutheranism with its submission to the State, nor Calvinism with its effort to absorb the State into Church government, managed to resolve the tension.

Modern society followed Dante's principles of government, based upon complete separation of Church and State. The result is a God-less State which acknowledges no higher authority than itself and a 'spiritual Church' which must refrain from meddling in the problems which agonize humanity. Where does the answer lie? Once we reject Augustine's solution of a theocratic society as unworkable, and Dante's solution of two clearly divided domains, the spiritual and secular, as artificial, is there an answer to resolve the problem?

Marsiglios' dream of peaceful co-existence between Church and State with the latter in supreme authority as put down in his *Defensor Pacis* was proven by history to be an illusion. Theoretically it may be possible to keep in separation the spiritual from the material, but in life there is no such division. Here Church and State overlap, and interlock, clash and create friction in a thousand ways. The State left unchecked becomes a Moloch who eats up his own children; the Church left in sole control becomes a tyranny based upon hypocrisy and cant. A compromise between Church and State leads to Caesaro-Papism - a state in which the spiritual and secular authorities combine to enforce their will upon the people. Here then is the dilemma of history for which humanity has sought an answer from time immemorial.

We will have to relate our problem to the prophetic message, specially in conjunction with the New Testament *kerygma* of the Kingdom of God, if we are to see the issue in the perspective of biblical revelation.

By the mysterious play of contingencies in the affairs of men, the words of Jesus regarding the Kingdom of God carry an ambiguity which is more than linguistic: The Kingdom of God is *within* you (*entos*); the Kingdom of God is *among* you (*entos*) (*Luke* 17:21). Which is correct? Are these apparently opposite interpretations irreconcilable, or are they meant to carry a double truth? *Regnum Christi internum est* is borne out by the inwardness of our Lord's preaching, by faith in the Holy Spirit of God and by the experience of the Church through the ages. *Regnum Christi externum est* relates to the concreteness of the Kingdom of God, the *fiat* of Salvation, the Hope of the Ages and the protest against the *present* order. And yet each version carries implications which are diametrically opposed to the other.[88] If the Kingdom of God is *within* man, then detachment from the world is the only solution; if the Kingdom of God is amongst men then the composition of society is a primary factor for its realization. Is a synthesis the answer?

The theoretical, philosophical, logical solution is to say that the Kingdom of God is *both*, within and outside us. We could point out that two factors are necessary for a realization of the Kingdom of God: the personal and the social. Regeneration of the individual and the reconstitution of regenerate individuals into a new society would be the making of the Kingdom. But this is *not* the biblical answer. Here God's Kingdom stands under the sign of

sub specie aeternitatis; it means that it has an eschatological aspect as well. This is the otherworldly aspect of the Kingdom of God.

Here then we come upon the dialectic of the biblical message regarding man and society, history and the End of history, which is shaping, forming and propelling human destiny until its ultimate conclusion.

c) The Dialectic Aspect of the Kingdom of God

The Church has inherited from the New Testament the vision of the Kingdom in a threefold context.

1) The Kingdom of God is Within You. Regeneration is the underlying principle of spiritual life. Though the terminology is taken from the New Testament, the concept of regeneration stems from the prophets, chiefly from Ezekiel. The classical chapter of regeneration in the Old Testament is *Ez*. 37. Though national restoration plays an important part in this chapter, the spiritual aspect is not entirely lacking. The prophet's God is One who opens graves and quickens the dead.[89] But He does more than raise people from the dust, He breathes into the raised skeleton the breath of the living God. That this is implied in the vision of the Dried Bones is evident from other passages in Ezekiel where the prophet speaks of the renewal of the human heart (*Ez*. 11:19; 18:31; 36:26). In these passages *lev hadash* - "new heart" - has the signification of a regenerate heart. As is well known, the Hebrew *lev* is equivalent to the Greek *nous* - it is the organ of inwardness. The 'uncircumcised' heart, is a heart hardened and devoid of responsiveness to the Word of God. In typical pictorial language the prophet calls for spiritual renewal: "Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, remove the foreskin of your hearts, O men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem" (*Jer*. 4:4). Here Jeremiah takes up a truly 'Pauline' position when he exclaims with no small measure of sarcasm: "The nations are uncircumcised (i.e. in their flesh) but the house of Israel is uncircumcised in heart" (*Jer*. 9:26). The prophets are convinced that the outward sign of the Covenant is no guarantee of the inwardness of spiritual life. There is perhaps no other text in *Deuteronomy* which so reveals its prophetic attitude than the one in 10:16: "Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stubborn." *Psalm* 51 reveals a similar spirit: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and steadfast spirit within me" (*Ps*. 51:10). In *Deutero-Isaiah* the principle of renewal extends from the individual to the nation and from the nation to the universe: Israel is called by a new name (*Is*. 62:2);[90] God creates new heavens and a new earth (*Is*. 65:17; 66:22). The idea of a 'new' covenant as announced by Jeremiah (*Jer*. 31:31) belongs to the same concept of renewal. This can be seen from the promise which follows: "I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts (*Jer*. 31:35). From this it becomes clear that the Pauline argument regarding the "circumcision of the heart" (*Rom*. 2:29) and his concept of *kaine ktisis* (notice the context in *Gal*. 6:15) are derived from the prophetic tradition. The concept of *palingenesis* has its roots in the Old Testament and is an important element in the prophetic message. Jesus' surprise at Nicodemus' ignorance on this subject expresses the difference between him and the Pharisaic point of view: "Are you a teacher in Israel, and yet you do not understand this?" (*John* 3:10). The Johannine expression "to be born from above" (*John* 3:3), or "to be born of God" (1

John 4:7) like the Pauline sentence "to be transformed by the renewal of your mind" (*Rom*. 12:2) only paraphrases the prophets' faith in a God who quickens the dead.

There is however an important difference between the Old and New Testament in respect to renewal but this is only with regard to time. In the New Testament we meet to a very high degree with the awareness that the process of renewal had begun with the preaching of the Gospel and that man now lives in the Messianic age. This *now* of Salvation constitutes the most potent factor in the shaping of historic Christianity.

What the Gospel offered was nothing less than salvation as a fact here and now. This sense of fulfilment pervades the whole New Testament and forms the inner spring of its *kerygma* to the world. We will have occasion to see how profoundly this Now of salvation has affected the Christian man.

It is true, that in contradistinction to the Old Testament, the New Testament application of renewal is primarily directed towards the individual. But there is an inner logic for this fact. The New Testament with its overwhelming eschatological sense, never regards historic salvation as complete. The breaking in of the Messianic Age is only the beginning of salvation. Ultimate salvation belongs to the *eschaton*, when God will be all in all (1 *Cor*. 15:28).[91] The building up of the *ecclesia* in preparation for the eschatological Event is the task in history. Here Jews and Gentiles are gathered in to constitute the messianic People of God. Although the social aspect is by no means neglected, the emphasis is primarily upon individual renewal. The New Testament therefore speaks in terms of *inwardness*: The Kingdom of God does not mean food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (*Rom*. 14:17). It operates in a hidden manner and is not perceptible by outward signs: "The Kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say 'Lo, here it is!' or 'There!' for behold, the Kingdom of God is *within you* - *entos humon estin*" (*Luke* 17:21).

2) The Kingdom of God is Among You. Montefiore liked to stress the *inwardness* in the teaching of Jesus and saw in it yet another link between him and the prophets of the Old Testament.[92] But such one-sidedness tends to make of Jesus a mystic with no further consequence for the shaping of history where not the mystics but the 'realists' carry the day. The fact is that for Jesus the Kingdom of God was not merely the private matter of the individual but of tremendous consequence for humanity as a whole. The outwardness of the Kingdom affects human relationships and attitudes in every sphere of life. The very idea of 'repentance' as the human response to the approaching reign of God has profound social implications. The Kingdom of God from its inception is never entirely a matter for the individual; it is preached to the multitude (*Mtt.* 9:35); men in their togetherness are to see it (*Mtt*. 6:33); to enter into it (*Mtt*. 7:21); to take it by force (*Mtt*. 11:12). The social aspect of the Kingdom is only too obvious: "If by the Spirit of God I cast out demons, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you" (*Mtt*. 12:28). All the 'signs' in the Gospel were to be indications of this supreme fact. The mighty acts of Jesus must be understood as pointers that *the* Day (*ha-yom*) of Salvation is at hand. In keeping with the prophetic attitude the Kingdom of God is both a day of Salvation and a day of Judgement at the same time: "Therefore the Kingdom of Heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his

servants" (*Mtt*. 18:23). Man individually and society corporately is being judged by the new standards of God's Kingdom. The light of eternal values illuminates the darkness and throws it into relief. It is in this sense that we have to read *John* 1:9: "The true light, which lighteth every man, was coming into the world."[93] Before *the* Kingdom of God, whose chief representative is Jesus the Christ, the New Man of the New Age, humanity is judged, not directly but by implication. This is the tenor of the Johannine Gospel.

When we come to St Paul we find a similar situation. For him the Kingdom of God is not a theological concept but an overwhelming fact in history demonstrated by the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead. The risen Christ is the focal point of that Kingdom which was initiated on Easter Sunday and is now in the process of spreading the world over. The visible appearance of God's reign is for the Apostle anchored in the God-Sonship of the Messiah. He is the token and pledge of the New Era in which the human race finds itself. W. D. Davies rightly observes: "Paul knows nothing of solitary salvation; to be 'in Christ' is not for him a mystic flight of the alone to the Alone. . . ."[94] For the Apostle, the Kingdom of God is the new dimension which is affecting the destiny of humanity.

The *outwardness* of God's reign derives from the outwardness of the Resurrection. For the Church the Resurrection was not an idea but a real Event: Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, has entered history to transform it. His Presence as the Risen Christ gives reality to the Church: "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in the midst of you" (*Mtt*. 18:20). Ignatius put it in his own words: "Wherever Jesus Christ is there is the Catholic Church."[95] The presence of the Church in history is like the presence of Christ in history and spells judgement and grace. The Master was "set for the falling and rising of many in Israel and for a sign to be spoken against" (*Luke* 2:34). The Gospel has a similar effect upon the lives of men: "That the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed" (*Luke* 2:34). For some, the preaching of the Kingdom is a stumbling-block, to others it is a haven of refuge.[96] Such division in society is the inevitable result of the moral challenge which is presented by the Gospel. It separates the chaff from the wheat and constantly initiates a new beginning in the social order, though the process of completion belongs to a different dimension in the economy of God. Here in history only beginnings can be made, but they are *real* beginnings in which the spiritual values of the Kingdom of God act as leaven.

The re-grouping of society is part of the outwardness of the Kingdom of God. Biological society is kept together on a tribal basis. 'Blood and soil' are the decisive elements which preserve the tribe's cohesion. The Church contradicts the animalistic biological ties. Messianic society is based on spiritual kinship. Here Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female are united in a new Brotherhood. In the Messiah divided humanity is being re-united and re-created into the New Man (*Eph*. 2:15) with new values and new aspirations. The breaking down of the 'wall of hostility' and the creation of peace (*Eph*. 2:14) are the visible signs of the outwardness of God's reign in the midst of history.

No matter how much the Church may have failed in her task to redeem society and to establish peace; no matter how little she may have reflected the spirit of her Master in the course of history; her existence constitutes to this day a challenge to herself and the world, that another order was initiated which contradicts the 'order' of this world.

The prayer therefore - Thy Kingdom come - implies more than personal regeneration, and does not only refer to the *eschaton*; it has practical application *here* and *now*; both the individual believer and the Church in her togetherness make ready for the Kingdom of God in history.

3) The Kingdom of God is Not Yet. History means change and in a world of change nothing can be completed. The *End* may become visible but is never achieved. There are always new horizons which allure the wanderer and new goals which must be attained. The experience of salvation in the historic setting can only be a token of ultimate salvation in the world to come. Here neither the individual nor society can experience the reign of God in the ultimate sense. This strange juxtaposition of Already and Not Yet is the other peculiar time-consciousness of the Bible. For want of a better name we call it the Prophetic Now.[97]

Notes to Chapter X

1. Since the discovery of the Qumran Scrolls, scholars are increasingly inclined to admit that many so-called 'Non-Jewish' features in the New Testament are of Hebrew origin but belong to a tradition opposed to Pharasaism. Even the Johanine Gospel may turn out to be of genuine Jewish provenance; cf. Prof. Oscar Cullmann "A new approach to the interpretation of the Forth Gospel", *The Expository Times*, Oct. 1959.
2. Strack-Billerbeck, *op. cit*., I 189.
3. For the subject cf. J. Jocz, *Judaica*, Sept. 1953. Is there connection between *reshumah*—sign—and σημεῖον in reference to the acts of the Messiah?
4. For greater detail see Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity*, I 212, 225, 233, 247, 285, etc.
5. *An Outline of Christianity*, ed. by A. S. Peake and R. G. Parsons, 5 vols. p. xvi.
6. There is evidence of an opposite tradition by which Jews repudiated the popular view that the Messiah is to be identified by his Davidic descent (cf. *Mark* 12: 35-37 and parallels). F. C. Grant rightly suspects that originally the dispute was of a more pronounced character than is now evident from the Gospels (cf. Frederick C. Grant, *The Gospels, their Origin and their Growth*, 1957, 100), and that it has something to do with the rejection of a mundane and political eschatology; cf. also C. H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures*, 1952, 106.
7. Cf. G. Dalman, *The Words of Jesus*, English translation, 1902, 41 fl.
8. Cf. V. H. Stanton, *The Jewish and the Christian Messiah*, 1886, 193.
9. Prof. C. H. Dodd in *According to the Scriptures, London*, 1952, has minutely re-examined the question of Old Testament *testimonia* as used by New Testament writers in support of their claim that Jesus is the Messiah. The result of this study is a modification of the earlier view:
   (1) "The composition of 'testimony-books' was the result, not the presupposition, of the work of early Christian biblical scholars." The editors of the *testimonia* adopted the method of biblical study rather than the idea of a collection of texts.
   (2) The selection was of large sections of the Old Testament of which the verses or sentences quoted were intended to serve as 'pointers' to the context of the given passage.
   (3) These passages were interpreted upon "intelligible and consistent principles".
   (4) These passages provided the basis for a Christian theology (cf. *op. cit*., 126 fl).
10. Cf. A. Dupont-Sommer, *The Jewish Sect of Qumran*, 1954, 174 n. 14.
11. Cf. J. Jocz, *Das exegetische Problem und die Judenmission*, *Judaica*, Heft I, 1956.
12. Cf. A. Lukyn Williams, *Adversus Judaeos*, 1935, 10 and notes.
13. A. I. Polack and W. W. Simpson, *Jesus in the Background of History*, 1957, 65.
14. Prof. Günther Bornkamm, *Jesus von Nazareth*, 1956, 13 fl.

15. *Op. cit*., 20 fl.
16. *Op. cit*., 24 fl.
17. Ernest Renan, *The Life of Jesus*, English ed., 189.
18. C. G. Montefiore, *Some Elements of the Religious Teaching of Jesus*, 1910, 125.
19. *Op. cit*., 124.
20. *Op. cit*., 136.
21. *Ibid*., 126 fl.
22. The possibility that the "Cleansing of the Temple" was in fact an attack upon the cult, cannot entirely be ruled out. This was first suggested by Robert Eisler as early as 1921 (cf. R. Eisler, "Jesus and the Blood Sacrifices", *Quest*, Jan. 1921), and upheld (though cautiously) by A. Caldecott (cf. "The Significance of 'the Cleansing of the Temple'," *J.T.S*., July 1923, 382 fl). Caldecott suspects that the abandonment of the sacrificial system on the part of the Primitive Church may go back to "a conspicuous and definite action of our Lord" (*ibid*., 386). If this is the case the Sadducees had ample reason for hostility!
23. On the subject cf. J. Jocz, *The Jewish People and Jesus Christ*, 34-42.
24. Gerald Friedlander, *The Jewish Sources of the Sermon on the Mount*, 1911, 265.
25. Prof. R. A. Ward of Wycliffe College, Toronto, suggests that the meaning of the Greek is "with conscious authority".
26. For the exegetical difficulty in connection with the Theophany of *Ex*. 33 cf. J. Jocz, *Canadian Journal of Theology*, No. III, 1958.
27. Cf. p. 71 fl.
28. Cf. J. Jocz, *Judaica*, I, 1956, 22 ff.
29. Cf. J. Jocz, "Die Juden im Johannes-evangelium", *Judaica*, III, 1953.
30. The important phrase in Acts 2 is "Jews and proselytes" (v. 10); here the proselytes represent already the Gentile world.
31. J. Klausner, *From Jesus to Paul*, English translation, 1944, 112.
32. C. G. Montefiore, *Synoptic Gospels*, 1909, II, 593. For a discussion of "the views of Jesus respecting himself and his mission" see C. G. Montefiore, *Some Elements of the Religious Teaching of Jesus*, 1910, ch. 5.
33. J. Klausner, *The Messianic Idea in Israel*, 1956, 527 II.; cf. also *From Jesus to Paul*, 435 fl etc.
34. Prof. R A. Ward draws my attention to Jülicher's *Jesus und Paulus*, 28, quoted by Emil Brunner, *The Mediator*, English translation, 1934, 179, that in spite of all controversy with the Church in Jerusalem, "We do not hear of any protest against the Pauline picture of Christ from other Christians". To this Brunner adds, the fact "that in the whole of the Pauline literature there is no trace of a Christological controversy", with the Primitive Church. (Cf. the whole section on Faith in Christ and the results of historical research, pp. 153 fl.)
35. We here present Schmidt's own words as the passage is not easily translated: "*Das uns erhaltene älteste Evangelium, das des Markus, setzt den Messiasglauben, den Christukult-und mythus voraus, der jenseits aller Persönlichkeitspsychologie steht*." Art. in *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 2nd ed., III 115.
36. J. Klausner, *The Messianic Idea in Israel*, 358.
37. This is the thesis of Klausner's book *From Jesus to Paul*; cf. specially the part of the book dealing with "The Teaching of Paul", pp. 435 fl.
38. Martin Buber, *Two Types of Faith*, English translation, 1951, 134.
39. G. Friedlander, *The Jewish Sources of the Sermon on the Mount*, 82.
40. Cf. J. Jocz, *The Jewish People and Jesus Christ*, 174-80.
41. Except perhaps I *Thess*. 4:14: where the voice is active but intransitive.
42. W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, 1948.
43. J. Klausner, *From Jesus to Paul*, English translation 1946.
44. The present writer takes issue with the sentence: 'not by conversion of Godhead into flesh but by taking manhood into God', on the grounds that it reverses the direction of revelation. The meaning of the Incarnation is that God stoops *down* towards man and not that man is caught up into divinity. The apotheosis of man is a pagan possibility, utterly foreign to the Bible.
45. K. Scott Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity*, 7 vols., 1937-45.

46. Cf. W. I. Newman, *Jewish Influence on Christian Reform Movements*, 1925.
47. On the subject of New Israel, see J. Jocz, *A Theology of Election*, 120-2.
48. Cf. Windelband-Heimsoeth, *Lehrb. d. Gesch. d. Philos*., 1948, 175 fl; also Johannes von Walter, *Gesch. d Christentums*, 1932, I, 1, 8 fl.
49. Cf. J. Jocz, "The Invisibility of God", *Canadian Journal of Theology*, July 1958.
50. We prefer the older reading against the R.S.V. - "sinful body" - as it is more true to the text and has quite different implications.
51. Whereas in the parable the prodigal son returns to his father's house a penitent moved by his deep need and misery, in life man needs more than just determination in order to return to God. The Cross is the sign and the token that God makes the first and most important step towards reconciliation.
52. The effort to find any other reason for the sanctity of human life must of necessity fail. Rabbi Jack S. Cohen, in a thought-provoking article, "Toward a Theology of Ethics", has attempted to derive "the idea of life's sanctity" from "the transcendent conception of the necessity of man's striving for a society of love and fellowship", but this he achieved only after reducing God to a mere concept of the human mind. Cp. *Judaism*, Winter, 1958, 59 fl.
53. Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 195. W. David Stacey, discussing the term *sarx* as employed by St Paul, remarks: "One of the chief connotations of σαρξ refers to flesh in its frailty and liability to death and corruption, in contrast to God. . . ." The author insists that Pauline psychology "is basically synthetic, as the Hebrew, and not dichotomous, as the Greek" (cf. W. David Stacey, *The Pauline View of Man*, London, 1956, 157 note and 158). For the Old Testament decisive influence upon St Paul's psychology see Stacey's references, *ibid*., pp. 160 fl.
54. Cf. B. Jowett, *The Dialogues of Plato*, II 499 fl.
55. *Op. cit*., 223.
56. Prof. N. B. Stonehouse tries to justify St Paul's reference to a Stoic poet in an ingenious way. He explains it in the sense that the Apostle intended to indicate the *sensus divinitatis* on the part of pagans, and this "in spite of their sin, their ignorance of God and their suppression of the truth" (cf. N. B. Stonehouse, *The Areopagus Address*, 1949, 34-7). Whether this is an acceptable explanation would require further study.
57. Grace Stewart, *The Achievement of Personality*, 1938, 157.
58. Windelband-Heimsoeth, *op. cit*., 200.
59. Windelband-Heimsoeth, *op. cit*., 199 fl.
60. Herbert Butterfield, *Christianity in European History*, 1952, 14 fl; 28 fl, etc.
61. *lbid*., 41.
62. A. Robertson, *Regnum Dei*, 1901, 119.
63. The Dean of St Paul's, Dr W. R. Matthews, wrote a short article, "The Kingdom Within" (*Daily Telegraph*, July 8, 1950), in which he stresses the inwardness of the Kingdom as conceived by Jesus Christ. This article was challenged by A. Hubert Jannaway in a pamphlet: "What did Christ Teach?" (1950). G. R. Beasley-Murray has carefully related the meaning of ἐντός in our text to the whole question of synoptic eschatology with special reference to *Mk* 13. His conclusion is that the Kingdom is present but "not *in the hearts of men*, but *in the person and ministry of Christ* who stood there". (Cf. *Jesus and the Future*, London, 1954, 174 fl; also note 4.)
64. A. Robertson, *op. cit*., 75.
65. A. Robertson, *op. cit*., 120 fl.
66. *Ibid*., 133.
67. A. Robertson, *op. cit*., 162.
68. The work was completed in 427 and Augustine died in 430.
69. A. Robertson, *op. cit*., 222.
70. Cf. *Justin's Dialogue with Trypho*, chs. 123, 135.
71. Cf. Albert Oepke's learned work, *Das neue Gottesvolk*, 1950; specially the chapters dealing with the political aspect of the Kingdom of God.

72. Cf. Karl Barth's assessment of the East-West conflict in relation to the position of the Church, *Die Kirche zwischen Ost und West*, 1949; cf. also Everett Tilson, *Segregation and the Bible*, 1958; also our review of the latter in *Canadian Journal of Theology*, July 1959.
73. Edwyn Bevan, *Christianity*, 1932, 11; cf. also H. Butterfield, *op. cit*., 13.
74. "Our Lord, come!" or else: "*Maran-atha*: our Lord comes!" Cf. Strack-Billerbeck, *Komm. zum N.T*., III 493 fl.
75. H. Butterfield, *op. cit*., 11.
76. S. Ignatius, *To the Romans*, 4:4. (Lightfoot's translation.)
77. Cf. Justin's *Apology* addressed to Titus; his *Second Apology* addressed to the Roman Senate; "The Plea" by Athenagoras addressed to Mark Aurelius; etc.
78. So A. Robertson, *op. cit*., 138 n.; but from *Eusebius*, H.E., V 18, 2, the position is not as clear as Robertson makes out.
79. The R.S.V. appears to give to the Greek text a somewhat different rendering.
80. *Apol*., I 11.
81. Cf. Lawler and Oulton, *Eusebius*, II 2 fl.
82. Eusebius, *H.E*., III 39, 12 fl.
83. See A. Robertson, *op. cit*., 265.
84. Cf. A. Robertson, *op. cit*., 371 n. The Church's claim to temporal power was not entirely based upon exegesis. She found support for her claim in a number of forged or invented documents like the "Donation of Constantine" and the "False Decretals". Robertson accounts for at least nine such documents; cf. *op. cit*., 238 n. 2.
85. Cf. the excellent volume in the series, the Library of Christian Classics, *Advocates of Reform*, Vol. XIV, 1953.
86. A. Robertson, *op. cit*., 292.
87. The pressure for social reform in the later Middle Ages was an important factor and must be taken into account. Cf. H. C. Vedder, *Socialism and the Ethics of Jesus*, ch. 1.
88. G. R. Beasley-Murray asks "whether this holding concurrently two such opposed views is really a piece of irrational apocalypticism, or whether it expresses a fundamental principle which cannot be surrendered?" (*Op. cit*., 173). We concur with Beasley-Murray that a fundamental principle is involved.
89. In the *Amidah* Prayer of the Synagogue, as elsewhere in the Hebrew Prayer Book, God is spoken of as *mehayye metim* - The Reviver of the dead; cf. Singer's *Prayer Book*, 44; etc.
90. A new name in the Bible is always a sign of inward renewal.
91. The R.S.V. reads "that God may be everything to everyone", but this only paraphrases the text.
92. Cf. C. G. Montefiore, *Synoptic Gospels*, 1909, LXXXIV; *Some Elements in the Religious Teaching of Jesus*, 1910, 20.
93. It is far-fetched to deduce from this text the doctrine of 'rational' endowment in the Platonic sense. This is not an a-historical but a profoundly historical statement.
94. W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, 1948, 86 fl.
95. Ignatius, *To the Smyrnaeans*, ch. 8, the shorter version. G. R. Beasley-Murray's conclusion is supported by the whole weight of textual criticism: Jesus claimed unique "significance for the Person of the Messiah, who is the Bearer of the Kingdom". (*Op. cit*., 226.)
96. In *Mtt*. 21:42 is an ingenious conflation of two texts; *Ps*. 118:22 and *Is*. 8:14 fl. Here the same rock "which the builders rejected" is to some a sanctuary, to others an offence. Cf. also I *Cor*. 1:22 fl.
97. This is not quite the same as the Kierkegaardian *Instant* but is related to it; for the latter cf. J. Jocz, *A Theology of Election*, 166 fl.

XI. THE PROPHETIC NOW

We have already dwelt upon the peculiar Hebraic attitude to time and history. Underlying this Hebraic, or prophetic consciousness is a sense for time utterly different from our own. Whereas we think of history chronologically, i.e. in terms of calendaric time, the Bible conceives time in terms of happenings. Here acts, events, occurrences and not duration is the characteristic feature of time. More specifically, time for the Bible is the dimension in which God performs His mighty acts. History is therefore the meaningful connection between act and act. We quote Minear because of his remarkable insight into biblical thinking: "In the Bible God's activity is not defined by time; on the contrary, his activity is the basis for the only genuine measurement of time."[1] This reversal of order - not that God's activity is defined by time, but that time is defined by His activity - indicates the complete otherness of the biblical *Weltanschauung* as compared to our own. In fact, Minear goes so far as to say that in this respect: ". . . it may be forever impossible for us to apprehend in its fullness the strange consciousness of the prophet and apostle."[2] One of the reasons is that for us the very meaning of 'history' is what relates to the past. We need an appreciable lapse of time for an event to become 'history'. This is not so in the Bible. Though there is a deep awareness of God as the God of the Fathers, i.e. the God of the past, decisive history extends from the past to the present and includes the future. This specifically biblical concept of time, not in terms of duration but in terms of activity, we call the prophetic Now. This prophetic Now consists of three elements which we will proceed to describe.

1. The Conjunctive Now

In the prophetic view all events have significance, for behind events is the hidden purpose of God. While the world takes notice of 'great' events, the Bible seems to delight in the mosaic of 'small' events.[3] Events, big or small, are links in the chain of God's immense purpose with mankind. The Now of history is therefore the conjunctive between what was and what will be. To tear past and future apart is to rob the drama of daily happenings of all purposeful meaning. It is for this reason that the prophets so frequently appeal to tradition, for Israel's tradition is the memory of God's acts in bygone days: "To the Torah and to the Testimony!" calls the prophet Isaiah, (8:20). "Ask for the ancient paths . . ." says the prophet Jeremiah (6:16; cf. 18:5).

According to *Deuteronomy*, when the Israelite appears before the priest with his first fruits he is to say: "A wandering Aramean was my father, and he went down into Egypt to sojourn there, few in number, and he became a nation great, mighty and populous. And the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, and laid upon us a hard bondage. Then we cried to the Lord, the God of our fathers, and the Lord heard our voice . . ." (*Deut*. 26:5 fl). This was Israel's *masoret*, in the truest sense of the word; it was the tradition as handed down from father to son (cf. *Ex*. 12:24-27): the account of God's mighty and wondrous deeds with His people.

When Peter, according to *Acts*, delivers his first 'sermon' on the day of Pentecost he speaks within the context of Israel's historic *tradition* (cf. *Acts* 2:14 fl). The connection

between past and present is even more clearly emphasized in the speech by Stephen before the Sanhedrin. Here the first martyr of the Church, in true Jewish fashion, places Jesus of Nazareth and the whole messianic movement in the context of Israel's history: i.e. what God *did* with Israel. Even the frequent incidents of Israel's disobedience are woven into the pattern of God's mighty acts. Stephen begins with God's revelation to Abraham and goes through the important incidents in his people's history leading up to the coming of the Messiah (*Acts* 7). Had he been allowed to finish his speech he would undoubtedly have concluded in true prophetic style with an exhortation to repentance and the promise of "times of refreshing" (*Acts* 3:19).

Such linking of past and future in the Now of the present is peculiar to the Old as well as to the New Testament. It is part of the Hebraic attitude to historic happenings. This is specially apparent in Deutero-Isaiah. There are too many passages to quote; almost any passage chosen at random will prove our point:

"Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord, awake as in days of old, the generations of long ago. Was it not thou that didst cut Rahab in pieces, that didst pierce the dragon?

"Was it not thou that didst dry up the sea, the waters of the great deep, that didst make the depths of the sea a way for the redeemed to pass over?

"And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing to Zion, everlasting joy shall be upon their heads, they shall obtain joy and gladness and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." (*Is*. 51:9-11)

This magnificent passage, which speaks of God's mighty acts in the past and contains the promise of a yet more glorious future, is linked by the prophetic Now in verse 12: "I, I *am* he that comforts you!"

Here the prophet, together with his hearers, stands in the midstream of history between what God did, and what He will do, is the Now of His Presence as Judge and Saviour. Immanu-El - God is with us (*Is*. 7:14) is the best paraphrase of what is meant by the prophetic Now. God is not just a memory of the past, or a pious hope of the future: He is first and foremost an overwhelming Presence; but He is what He is in the context of history. This means that His being for us is always by Promise. To stand within the Covenant relationship is to live under the sign of His Promises: the promise of the past and the promise of the future.[4] Only in the Now of faith are these two promises made one: what God was for our fathers and will be for our children He must become for us. This pressure of the Now of faith is the main burden the prophet has to carry.

There is always a discrepancy between the Now of faith and the Now of history. It is the tension of this discrepancy which constitutes the burden. In one sense salvation is here and now: "Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God and there is no other" (*Is*. 45:22). But history and faith do not quite coincide; the nations do not turn, salvation is only but a hope. This is perhaps best illustrated in the *Deutero-Isaianic* message to Israel: "*Sing*, O barren one who did not bear, break forth into singing and cry aloud you who have not been in travail. O afflicted one, storm-tossed and not comforted . . ." (*Is*. 54:1, 11). Here song and affliction, comfort and sorrow go hand in hand, the one contradicting the other. Yet the Now of faith and the Now of history are irreconcilable facts and can only be

resolved in the future. For another illustration we go to *Ps*. 126: "When the Lord turned the captivity of Zion we were like those who dream. . . . Turn again our captivity, O Lord, like the watercourses in the Negeb. . . ." Even if we take verse 1 to be a reference to the past and verse 4 to be a plea for a repetition of the same miracle of salvation, we still confront the suspense of history. On the historical level nothing is complete, but on the level of faith completion begins in the present. The God who turned the captivity of Zion is willing to do it even Now. This is most specially emphasized in the New Testament and is connected with the breaking in of the Messianic Age. The prophetic Now linking past with future is expressed in the present of the eschatological hope. New Testament eschatology does not begin in the dim future, it begins Now. There is no need to prove this point to anyone familiar with the Pauline letters. It will suffice to quote one single text: "Besides this, you know what hour it is, how it is full time now (ἤδη) for salvation is nearer to us now (νῦν) than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand . . ." (*Rom*. 13:11 fl).

Here, in the midstream of history, is the pivotal Moment in time and therefore the brink of eternity. The prophetic Now anticipates the End; only that the *eschaton* here is God's Beginning. In this eternal Now past and future are united.

2. The Now of Decision

The conjunctive Now is at the same time the Now of decision. The Bible presses towards the moral act. It is never content with conveying 'doctrine'; its appeal is to the will. There is remarkable consistency in this respect from *Genesis* to *Revelation* God the Creator who enacts history, challenges man to moral action. Service to God, doing God's will, casting off the works of darkness and putting on the armour of light, being children of light, etc., etc., is all comprehended in one single word: *teshuvah* (return). It is unfortunate that 'repentance' has acquired both in Church and Synagogue a formal character and has become rather an institution than a personal act of decision. The ancient Synagogue was well aware of the primary significance of *return*. The *Midrash* on *Psalm* 90:12: "Teach us to number our days" brings the following: "R. Yoshua said: If we knew exactly the number of our days, we would repent before we die. R. Eliezer said: Repent one day before you die. His disciples said 'Who knows when he will die'? All the more, then, let him repent today, in case he dies tomorrow. The result will be that all his life will be spent in repentance."

In another *Midrash* we read: "R. Levi said: If the Israelites would but repent for one day, they would be redeemed, and the son of David would come immediately, as it is said: 'To-day, if you would hear his voice'" (*Ps*. 95:7; *Cant*. R. 5:2).

The theme is elaborated in the *Letter to the Hebrews* with special emphasis upon 'to-day' (cf. *Hebr*. 3:7, 15; 4:7). The same emphasis we find with Paul; the Apostle quotes *Is*. 49:8: "In an acceptable time have I listened to you, and helped you on the day of salvation," and he adds with true prophetic zeal: "Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 *Cor*. 6:1-2). The challenge is contained in his moving plea: "We entreat you not to accept the grace of God in vain." Here is the same insistence upon action as in the Old Testament and in the Gospels: "Unless you return . . . you will never enter the Kingdom of heaven" (*Mtt*. 18:3; *strepho* is a literal rendering of the Hebrew *shuv*). "Not everyone who says to me 'Lord, Lord', shall enter the Kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my

Father . . ." (*Mtt*. 7:21). It is for this reason that Buber places Jesus of Nazareth within the prophetic tradition and calls him the 'central Jew': "The impetus of Jesus' message is the old Jewish demand for unconditional decision which transforms man and lifts him into the Kingdom of God. And this still remains the impetus of Christianity."[5] The challenge to decision brooks no postponement; to live is to act and to act aright is man's privilege: "He has showed you, O Man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (*Micah* 6:8). In the face of moral values man cannot afford to take up an indeterminate position. The opposite of doing right is doing wrong; there is no neutrality in the realm of values. Man cannot 'halt between two opinions'; if God is Lord then he must follow Him; on the other hand, if Baal is God then he must decide for him (1 *Kings* 18:21). The words in *Joshua* 24:15 are written large over the whole of the Bible: ". . . choose this day whom you will serve. . ." "This day" means *now*, at the given moment of time. Whatever allegiance man owed yesterday, today, now, is the time of decision. This particular moment of time, the Kierkegaardian Instant, has eternity attached to it. Here lies the paradox of the Prophetic position. Why should man make his choice now, when he may regret it later? How can he be sure that this and no other is the best of choices? Scientism requires an entirely different attitude; man can only make relative choices; he must not commit himself until he knows the ultimate truth; and because ultimate truth is beyond his possibility, he must not choose but wait. 'Agnosticism' is founded on this premiss. Dean Inge points out the linguistic infelicity of the term and is amused at Huxley's ignorance of Latin, though Huxley himself shows pride of achievement in coining the expression.[6] But the attitude which is implied goes far beyond the question of language. According to the Bible, man cannot afford to plead ignorance before the moral challenge. Here nothing can be deferred to a later date; to evade the issue is an act of treason to man's essential humanity. For this is not a decision for an abstract ideal, it is a decision for God. Such a decision constitutes the meaningfulness of being man: only man can make a decision for God. The concreteness of the Kingdom of God is somehow connected with this act of decision. In the Now of decision man stakes his life on the moral issue. If God is not good, then God is not, but then good also loses all meaning.[7] Herein lies the hazard of faith that man throws in all he has without reserve. He acts here and Now on the stupendous assumption that God is and that God is good. This is what Kierkegaard called the "fighting certainty".

Such is the second element in the prophetic Now.

3. The Now of Renewal

To the prophets moral values are not 'concepts' but realities founded upon the reality of God. Good is not God, but God is good. This is more than a play on words. It means that God is strictly personal. Good in the neuter is a pagan concept; according to the Bible God is the author of good and nothing is good outside or apart from Him.

This personalizing of God is more than a figure of speech peculiar to the Hebrews. Behind it is the recognition that God can be met only in personal encounter and that He sets the scale of values and not man. The story of the Fall makes this the main issue. There is no good unless He pronounces it so. This does away with all relativity in ethics which bedevils philosophy to this day. The question: what is good? is here solved in quite a different manner:

the *agathon* becomes *agathos*; One there is who is good (*Mtt*. 19:17). Windelband has shown that the problem of the *summum bonum* kept Socratic ethics imprisoned in a vicious circle.[8] The same is true of every philosophical approach where the good is given immanental significance. Good must have a goal which exceeds the useful; for the Bible that goal is God: *'atah tovati* - thou art my good" (*Ps*. 16:2); or if we accept the usual translation of the somewhat deficient text, the emphasis is even greater: "Thou art my Lord, I have no good apart from thee." *Ps*. 73:25 expresses the same attitude though in different words: "Whom have I in heaven (but thee)? And there is nothing upon earth that I desire besides thee."

This personal relationship to the 'Good' affects man in a different way from that of philosophical ethics. Biblical ethics goes beyond the concept of *arete* (to be understood in the double sense of virtue and skill) and also beyond *sophrosune* (to be understood in the sense of moderation or self-control). Biblical ethics has one aim only - fellowship with God. But fellowship with the living God affects man not just intellectually, or emotionally, or religiously, but totally. Touched by the One who is Life, man quickens to New Life. Biblical ethics aims at renewal from *within*. That in rabbinic Judaism *mizvah* (both in the sense of *eupraxia* and precept) has replaced the biblical concept of 'conversion' is a measure of its departure from the prophetic attitude.

Conversion in the Bible is more than the Greek term *metanoia* (*meta* and *noeo* - change of mind) suggests. *Teshuvah* is not change of mind but change of direction; but it is an inward change. An even better description is change of life in its totality. Such change is not a state or condition, but a relationship. This is not easy for us to grasp who are used to static modes of thought. There is dynamic content in the concept of Return. It may help us to understand the prophetic attitude if we bear in mind that life in the Bible is not an 'it' but always a relationship - man has life in proportion to his closeness to the Source of Life. He wilts when God hides His face from him and comes to life again with the return of His favour: "When thou hidest thy face, they are dismayed: when thou takest away their breath they pine away and return to their dust. When thou sendest forth thy breath they are re-created and thou renewest the face of the earth" (*Ps*. 104:29 fl). The Fourth Gospel with Life as its central theme means exactly this when it speaks of 'conversion'. The personal relationship as the basis of 'conversion' is here the more emphasized in as much as Jesus Christ is the one who conveys Life to the believer: "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (*John* 10:10). The Son of God gives eternal Life to those who have been given him by God to be his disciples (*John* 17:2). This 'giving' and 'having' eternal Life must be understood in the dynamic sense of person to person which is so peculiar to the Bible. Life eternal is not a state, and is certainly not a possession; it is a situation in which man faces God in the most intimate relationship of faith. Such a relationship is only possible in the Instant of time which is the Now of eternity. Man cannot settle in eternal life; he cannot entrench himself in it; he cannot take up a secure position; but he can be kept in Life as he leans upon God from moment to moment. This renewal of life by faith in the Covenant-keeping God is magnificently expressed at the end of *Isaiah* 40: "They who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." This Now of faith which is the Now of renewal is the third element in the prophetic Now.

The conjunctive Now which links past and future in the Instant of time; the Now of decision in which man hazards his life and stakes his all upon God; the Now of renewal in which the miracle of revelation becomes the personal experience of faith, kept together, makes up time in the biblical sense. This is not extended chronological time measured by the calendar. This is time in the vertical sense and is measured by the Event of God's grace in the realm of faith. Here the Kingdom is both a hope and an experience; it is here and it is coming. For the believer the Kingdom is not an 'it': it is linked to a Person; it is His Kingdom. God already reigns both in the life of the individual and in history. But while history lasts His Lordship is hidden and not clearly discernible except to the eyes of faith. The Prophets look to the day when He will reign in the ultimate sense, visibly, in the affairs of man. History is therefore a preliminary, an introduction to the Ultimate which extends beyond history, to the End of time. New Testament eschatology derives from this source.

4. The Category of Suspense

The values, ideas, concepts, attitudes, peculiar to the Bible have profoundly affected the nations of the world. Judaism, Christianity and Mohammedanism, these three world religions, have direct connection with the Bible. But biblical influence extends far beyond geographical limits and in the less tangible form of values and attitudes the Bible has profoundly affected the whole human race. In this wider connotation we may well say that the spiritual history of Israel reaches far beyond historic Israel or the Christian Church.

The 20th century has learned afresh the importance of ideology in the shaping of human destiny. To give an adequate appreciation of the part the Bible played and still plays in the ideological fermentations of humanity is beyond the limits of this work. Here we can only pinpoint one aspect to illustrate the revolutionary character of its thought.

Man's major need on the intellectual level is to understand himself as an individual and his place in society. To give sense to life he has to know what purpose he serves and what is the meaning of history. Without a positive answer to these two questions life becomes unbearable and existence is felt to be a burden. In such a case Schopenhauer's conclusion becomes inevitable: ". . . the best thing for man is not to have been born; world and man are something which ought not to have been."[9] Pessimism is the inevitable answer to every immanental explanation as to the question of existence. T. G. Masaryk, in his treatise on Suicidism,[10] has shown the connection between the negation of life and moral values. Schopenhauer expresses surprise that the "professors of Jewish religions" look upon suicide as a crime, whereas the Bible nowhere forbids such an act.[11] He praises the reasonableness of the pagan attitude which saw nothing reprehensible in suicide. This very fact reveals, the distance between the two world-views: the Hebrew view with its great sense of destiny and the pagan view with its sense of fate.

a) The Dichotomy of History

The cleavage which cuts across humanity: on the one hand the 'nations', on the other hand Israel, is not merely ethnic, racial or even religious. It springs from the primordial depth of consciousness revealing two entirely different worlds. The Hebrew world of values is inseparably linked to the God of creation by whose will, purpose, and therefore

meaningfulness, is already included in the scheme of things. On this level all man's decisions are *interim* decisions; ultimate decisions are God's prerogative. The sanctity attached to life: derives from this conviction. The prohibition to murder is not sociologically but theologically founded: life is by the will of God and to destroy it is an act of rebellion; it is *laesa majestas*. In the pagan world the centre is transferred from God to man. Here man is the real master: he decides about life and death, good and evil; he fashions his gods in his own image, and abandons them according to his whim.

But the division is not only psychological. It is not so that we discover here two different states of consciousness. The division is ontological: in the Bible a new reality comes into play; a new dimension opens before man. This is what we mean by revelation: the prophet knows himself in *front of* (*mippene*), the Presence of the God of Israel. This breaking in of God's Presence into history disrupts the chain of causality. The cycle of historical sequence is broken asunder not only horizontally, in the sense that the Bible introduces a new era, but also vertically, in that God's voice is heard on the plane of history. The effect of this cleavage of history was to revolutionize man's perception of his destiny and to orientate him to a new direction. The result of the revolution was fourfold:

1) Ancient man found himself trapped in a meaningless cycle from which there was no escape except by death. There is good reason to suspect that the classical concept of fate is rooted in the meaninglessness of existence. *Fors Fortuna* equipped with the wheel of chance was the very symbol of the unreasonableness of events in human life. *Ananke*, the goddess with the nail in her hand, capriciously fixed the decrees of fate for gods and men. *Necessitas* represented the blind forces which govern human destiny and which even the gods cannot escape or alter. Astrology and all the ancient forms of divination were efforts not to evade but to uncover man's fate; there was no escape from it: *Necessitas* preceded *Fortuna*.[12]

The Bible contradicts blind necessity. The vicious circle of history is broken from without; God enters the human plane. Man is not free but is made free from the burden of meaningless existence and is given a goal.

2) The Bible offers a double goal to humanity. It is the goal for the individual and the goal for the community. The New Testament lays more emphasis upon the first, the Old Testament upon the second, but in essence they are both agreed. Man's destiny is to become what he was meant to be - a son of God: this is the individual's goal. By this goal is determined the purpose of the community: to become the People of God. In this way the ideal of both Old and New Testament coincides, only the emphasis is different. "Be ye holy for I the Lord your God am holy" (*Lev*. 19:2), is said to a whole people; "be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect" (*Mtt*. 5:48) is said to individuals. In either case the motive is the sanctification of God's Name, and His reign on earth as it is in heaven.

3) There is no purpose served in breaking the cycle of historical causality unless history itself has a *further* goal. If history should end in a *cul-de-sac* then the individual's salvation is nothing more than self-deception, for his life is only the microcosm of that of humanity. Unless the individual and society have a goal which is parahistorical, history has no sense. The goal of history is the End of history, which is the Kingdom of God in its ultimate completion. This is a spiritual goal transcending all physical limitations. It is for this reason

that materialistic philosophy is a contradiction of biblical faith. Man is not the prisoner of the material world; the material world is his tool for higher ends.

4) In the Bible man is not an object but a subject. He is endowed with qualities which make it possible for him to think, act and choose. This does not mean that he is independent of the laws of heredity, of the influence of environment, and the conditioning of the *Zeitgeist*. The limitations of the material world and of cultural background are powerful forces to which man may succumb and thus lose his freedom. Man's struggle in life is a struggle for the freedom to be a man. The measure of his manhood is in direct proportion to his achievement of freedom. But here he finds himself in a paradoxical situation: only in dependence upon God is he free; for the freedom to be man is *the* freedom to be a son of God. To serve God is perfect freedom;[13] for man to make himself the centre is to become a slave. To make God his Centre is to regain the freedom to be man. This is the meaning of the Johannine word: "If the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed" (*John* 8:36). Herein is the very meaning of the Gospel that in the Son of God man becomes a son of God.

The message of the Bible is that the inevitability of history and the iron laws of causality have been split open from without, and that man is offered the freedom to be man.

b) The Brink of Eternity

To be or not to be are the alternatives of every human life and of every culture. But in history nothing is ever completed. The ultimate is of necessity beyond history for it is beyond change. Within the dimensions of time and space man's ultimate goal can only be a hidden goal: "Beloved, we are God's children now; it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is" (1 *John* 3:2). St Paul speaks of the prize of the "upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (*Phil*. 3:14). He looks upon it as the goal of his life, but it is a hidden goal; for here man can only see through a mirror, dimly, but then face to face (1 *Cor*. 13:12). All we can do is press forward, forgetting what lies behind and straining towards what lies ahead. Thus poised between past and future, biblical man finds himself suspended on the brink of eternity.

Such living is hazardous living in the prophetic sense. This is quite different from the wisdom which says: *memento mori*. What brings biblical man to the brink of eternity is not the inevitability of death; there is a different reason. Dying is not necessarily the way to eternity, but may equally well lead to total annihilation. The breaking in of eternity into time is connected with the fact that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. From henceforth the End is always within sight; the New Age has already begun; the Kingdom of God is at hand. The Son of Man is already on his way and he comes as a thief in the night: "Watch therefore and pray, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming . . . Therefore you must be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect" (*Mtt*. 24:4 fl). Since the Incarnation, human life is lived not only under the hazard of death, but under the greater hazard of Eternity. Time is running short, the day is at hand (cf. 1 *Cor*. 9:29). History is no more an end in itself; it is only the prologue to the great drama of salvation. The hero of the drama is God Himself, and the clue to it is in the Epilogue. What it means to stand on the dizzy height of the expectancy of faith, poised between time and eternity, we can gauge from the Pauline sentence in 1 *Cor*. 15:51 fl: "Lo, I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but

we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. . . ." The possibility of the Event entirely dominates the believer's hope in relation to the affairs of this world.

c) The Waiting Church

Expectancy is a constituent element of biblical faith. Faith in God means waiting upon Him in the literal sense of the word: "I will lookout for the Lord" is the meaning of *Micah* 7:7. The *Psalms* are full of similar expressions. This attitude of waiting is specially emphasized in *Habakkuk* 2:3: For the vision still awaits its appointed time, it hastens towards the End - it will not lie. If He tarries wait for Him, for He will surely come, He will not delay. [14] The Synagogue inherited this characteristic biblical attitude. The hope of the ancient Synagogue is centred upon the Messiah for whose coming she still prays in the words of the Maimonidian Creed: "I believe with perfect faith in the coming of the Messiah, and though he tarry, I will wait daily for his coming."[15]

It is a tradition to conclude the recitation of the Synagogue's Creed with the threefold affirmation: "For thy salvation I wait, O Lord! I wait, O Lord, for thy salvation! O Lord, for thy salvation I wait!" These three sentences which are repeated both in Hebrew and Aramaic give special emphasis to this attitude of expectancy.

In this respect both Church and Synagogue are in the same position. The more Church and Synagogue lose this attitude of expectancy the further they depart from the biblical position. This is specially true of the Church, for in her case, waiting for the Advent is part of her commission. A Church which forgets that she is only an interim Church whose task it is to point to the *eschaton* has completely departed from her original calling. We may even go further and say that her apostolic origin is only safeguarded by her eschatological orientation. The greatest danger to the Church's spiritual life is to become an end in itself. In the New Testament the Church is always a *waiting* Church. Her task is to prepare herself as a bride without spot or wrinkle for the coming Christ (*Eph*. 5:27).

This longing for the completion of redemption the Apostle was able to overhear, with an instinct of prophetic intuition, in nature itself: "We know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for the adoption of sons, the redemption of our bodies" (*Rom*. 8:22 fl).

The same can be said about the nations of the world whose inarticulate longing has found manifold expression in the poetry and literature of many ages. Hausrath has shown that Virgil's *IV Eclogue* was influenced by the propaganda of Judaism in the ancient world, and specially the influence of the Jewish Sibyl.[16] But our evidence goes far beyond any specific age or group of writers. The religious history of the ancient world, as well as our own, amply proves our case. Yearning for salvation underlies the mystery cults of the East, Stoicism as a philosophy of life, and the large variety of modern sects. No one reading the religious literature of the world can deny the fact that in it is expressed humanity's yearning and straining after salvation.[17]

The Church is thus joined by the religions of the world in their deep longing to overcome the suspense. She finds herself surrounded by a cloud of many witnesses. Her

danger is to mistake their position for her own, and to overlook the difference. She knows for whom she is waiting and what He is like; they do not.

d) The Waiting People of God

Impatience is the characteristic of unbelief even though it may take the form of religious dress. Such impatience is to be found not only in the religions of the world but in the Church herself. The history of the exegesis of 2 *Peter* 3:11-13 could serve as an example of the measure of the Church's faith in terms of humble waiting upon God. Not only the exegesis but even the translation of the Greek text, specially of verse 12, would reveal to the careful reader the quality of Christian faith from age to age. The Vulgate reads: *Expectantes et properantes in adventum diei Domini*; here *in* governs the accusative and expresses direction: expecting and hurrying towards the coming of the day of the Lord. The A.V. supplies εἰς after σπεύδοντας - which makes it read exactly like the Vulgate: hastening *unto* the coming of the day of God. . . . Both the R.V. and the R.S.V. are indefinite in their reading of the text, only that the R.S.V. goes back to a more liberal tradition and gives the R.V. reading as an alternative in the margin. This is a typical case where only theological consideration can decide the issue. Henry Alford, one of the most outstanding older exegetes, argues in favour of the opposite reading from that of A.V. Admitting as he does, that the "hastening of the day" is not within man's competence, it is difficult to see the logic of his argument that by perfection, repentance and holiness we diminish the need of *makrothumia* (forbearance, cf. v. 9) and thus do actually hasten the day.[18] It would lead us beyond our present task to produce the reasons for the opposite position. The fact is that, exegetically, either reading is possible, but theologically there is no alternative. Faith does not hurry but patiently waits upon Him who is faithful; all it can do is look towards and "earnestly desire" (so R.V.) the coming of the day of God; but it will never even try to hasten it. Here is a marked difference between religion and biblical faith. Religion solves problems and answers questions; faith looks to Him who is the Answer to all problems and places man under His own question-mark. It is an act of faith to live in suspense and this is the privilege of the People of God. We know of no text which gives more eloquent expression to this patient waiting upon God than *Psalm* 123: "To thee I lift up my eyes, O Thou who art enthroned in the heavens! Behold, as the eyes of servants look to the hand of their master, as the eyes of a maid, to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to the Lord our God, till he have mercy upon us." The People of God is God's waiting people.

Thus the category of Suspense introduced by the Bible and exemplified in the life of the People of God disrupts the course of history and puts man's doings under the question-mark. The entry of God into time has driven a wedge and has split open the closed circle of human existence. This new category which has entered the awareness of man in the Christian era is something which he cannot any more expel. Since the Incarnation humanity is facing a new threat: God has become man's *vis-à-vis*. There were wars, revolutions and upheavals before the birth of Christ, but since the preaching of the Gospel these acts of rebellion on the part of men and nations have acquired new significance. The mounting restlessness of the world seems to have some relation to the spread of the Gospel in the world. The leaven of the

Kingdom is a mighty factor in the shaping of human destiny. It has been said that religion is opium for the masses, but the Gospel is just the opposite. It quickens the conscience of humanity and presses for an answer regarding existence. It creates restlessness and impatience as men and nations receive a glimpse of the new possibility. The strains and pressures of our age are usually put at the door of science, but we must not forget that science itself is the fruit of man's awakening under the sound of the Gospel.[19] There may be sound psychological truth in the suggestion that behind science is the human attempt at self-protection from the attack of Eternity. Man is desperately striving after autonomy and science has become his last stronghold. To meet the invasion from above he has to close the circle and repair the breach which was torn into his world of finitude. Science is a means of securing man's position. By some strange intuition man feels that his time is running short; he therefore has to throw in all his energy and skill in building up his elaborate system of self-defence. But beneath the façade of autonomous existence there is a lurking sense of despair. The world has shrunk and become insecure. Man's hopes have crumpled and his ideals have become tainted with the poison of relativity. Once God is dead nothing has meaning any more beyond plebeian usefulness. The madman's cry of despair in Nietzsche's *The Joyful Wisdom*, that God is dead, and that "We have killed him, you and I", is the cry of the scientific age.[20] Because God is not, everything is relative; there are no absolute values. But the void of scientism is the very tool which undermines our defences and once again we find ourselves *sub specie aeternitatis*.

Man's over-exposure to Eternity may be compared to that of radioactivity - 'contamination' is the inevitable result,[21] Man's reaction varies, but react he must: either he resists to the bitter end, or else he humbly surrenders to salvation. We here encounter something of the mystery of human choice: there can be no explanation for the difference between man and man this side of history, except the inscrutable councils of God (cf. *Rom*. 9:18; 11:33). But in either case, the Category of Suspense plays its part and stirs man to action. He either hazards his life in the quest for a formula which would lift the uncertainty, or else he accepts suspense as a category of faith in humble obedience to God as creature to Creator.

The cacophany of our civilization maybe interpreted as our human attempt to disrupt the silence of Eternity. Man without God cannot bear the strain of uncertainty; he presses for an answer. To wait in faith requires the courage of the Saints. Only those who believe can endure the suspense of history for they know that underneath are the Everlasting Arms (*Deut*. 33:27). This they have learned from the Son of God who bore the suspense of history while himself suspended upon a Cross between heaven and earth, as he waited for God to speak His Word. The Resurrection was God's answer. Life from the dead is God's last word to man. This was the Word spoken into history by the Church and daily repeated these last two thousand years. This is the Word of the Bible; both of the Old and the New Testament. This is the message of the prophets enacted in the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. As long as this Word is heard the spiritual history of Israel continues.

5. The Category of Movement

There is a logical affinity between the concepts of suspense and movement in the biblical attitude of faith. Suspense in the prophetic context is never quietude, rest, inertness, but movement towards a definite goal. Motion is here not another characteristic of life, but life itself. To live means to be swept on by the crowding of events and the flow of time: "Thou dost sweep men away; they are like a dream, like grass which is renewed in the morning: in the morning it flourishes and is renewed; in the evening it fades and withers" (*Ps*. 90:5 fl). But though man is turned "back to the dust", God's purpose persists from everlasting to everlasting. This transitory view of human life is different from the Heraclitean concept of change in which man is caught up with the rest of the physical universe. Here man, Israel, humanity, is not the play-ball of the universal rhythm of the cycles in nature, but is kept in motion with a goal in view. Man's task is to press towards his destiny as fore-ordained by his Creator. The spiritual history of Israel is thus the story of a pilgrimage.

Man is set in motion when he confronts the God of Israel. It is at this point that history begins to have more than transitory meaning. Israel's history is initiated by a wandering bedouin. Abram with his caravan across the desert on the way from Ur of the Chaldees to the Promised Land, in obedience to God's command, is the epitome of human destiny in the biblical context.

The spiritual history of Israel begins with the story of a family in motion. This is not only the story of Abraham but of the rest of the Patriarchs. The transition from family to nationhood is epitomized in the life story of 'Jacob-Israel'.

Jacob-Israel was a wanderer to the end of his life, first as a fugitive, then as a servant in Laban's household and lastly as a shepherd-sheikh. He dies in a foreign land.

The story of Israel in the wilderness is a paraphrase of the life-story of the patriarchs on a nation-wide scale. The description of that story in *Exodus* and *Numbers* is not history in the ordinary sense of the word, but prophetic history. Here every event has symbolic meaning and points beyond itself. The prophetic aversion to city life, which we noticed in conjunction with the story of the tower of Babel, prompts the writer to idealize the journey through the wilderness. The picture before him is the People of God on the march to its appointed goal, the Land of Promise. But this is not a lonely march; the God of the Fathers fights Israel's battles, protects him from danger and supplies his daily needs. The journey through the wilderness is not a scramble of a disorderly mob, but the disciplined march of an army under perfect leadership. Moses receives almost daily instructions from God; the Israelites walk in formation according to their tribes; in the centre of the camp is the tabernacle of God surrounded by Priests and Levites. The journey itself is an act of faith, and Israel suffers defeat whenever he falls short of trust in God.

The strange thing about the Hebrew people is the fact that all through history it never really stopped in its pilgrimage, except for brief periods of respite. Hebrew history took place under the sign of Exile from its inception to this present day. There is tremendous pathos in the Deutero-Isaianic cry: "Thy holy people possessed it (i.e the land) but a little while: our adversaries have trodden down thy Sanctuary" (*Is*. 63:18). The medieval legend of the Wandering Jew, the Jerusalem boot-maker Ahasuerus, who is supposed to have taunted Jesus on the way to his crucifixion and was punished with the inability to die, is a Christian attempt

to explain the unusual history of the Everlasting People (*'am 'olam*, *Is*. 44:7).[22] We have attempted to show that the persistence of the Jews in history has theological significance.[23] But whatever explanation we may offer, the fact remains that the prophetic category of motion has found existential expression in Jewish life.

This fact has arrested the attention of Jewish thinkers who try to give to the burden of exile a positive meaning in terms of privilege.[24]

In the New Testament the theme of the pilgrimage was taken up by the writer of the letter to the *Hebrews* in a special way. To him faith is a quest and the end of the journey is the City of God. The heroes of the Old Testament are people who walked by faith which the Epistle defines as "the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (*Heb*. 11:1). They lived by promise but never achieved the goal, content to remain strangers and exiles on the earth (*Heb*. l1:13). For in this world there is no "lasting city" (*Heb*. 13:14); the man of faith is a pilgrim – *parepidemos* – on his way to the heavenly country where God Himself has prepared a city for the saints (*Heb*. 11:13-16). He therefore calls upon fellow-believers to "go outside the camp" and to bear the reproach as the Master did (13:13) "looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfector of our faith" (12:2).

The emphasis upon *paroikia* – journeying – (*Heb*. 11:9) and the fact that the Patriarchs lived in tents has special significance for the writer of *Hebrews*. But the point he makes is not in connection with the transiency of human life as is done in the Wisdom literature; his emphasis is upon the goal of the journey which is the City of God.

The theme of the book of Revelation is the same, only that at the End of time the pilgrimage concludes with the Great Invasion when the perfect City of God, the New Jerusalem, descends out of heaven to become a permanent feature upon earth (*Rev*. 21:2).

St Augustine finishes his great work on the City of God with a promise of the eternal Sabbath rest. Herein he follows the writer to the Hebrews who holds out to his readers the promise of the great Sabbath rest which is reserved for the People of God (4: 9). But at this point we have already reached the end of the pilgrimage: "There we shall rest, and see, and shall see, and love, we shall love, and we shall praise. . . . For what other thing is our end, but to come to that Kingdom of which there is no end."[25]

But while history lasts the End is not yet. The believer only strains towards the End: "I press towards the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (*Phil*. 3:14). Neither Paul, nor the writer to the Hebrews, nor Augustine just sat down to wait for the End. On the contrary, they were urged on by the shortness of time and the importance of their task. Man's vocation, in the prophetic view, is not to remain passive, but to take an active part in the drama of history. The believer is not just looking on while the forces of evil play themselves out; he takes an active part in directing history towards its goal. He plays a redemptive role in the drama of salvation. Biblical man is not chewed up by the blind forces of chance which play with human destiny, he intervenes as the messenger of God in the affairs of men.

This aspect of the prophetic attitude has found classical expression in the mission-consciousness of the Christian Church.

From its inception the messianic movement was a missionary movement. Both according to the Synoptic and the Johannine tradition the disciples knew themselves

messengers of the Kingdom of God. Characteristically enough one book in the New Testament is called *Acts of the Apostles* – more accurately: "Deeds of the Messengers."

Believers in Jesus the Messiah had a task to perform: "Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel . . . I am entrusted with a commission" (1 *Cor*. 9:16 fl). Christian faith is not a philosophy but a movement, a movement towards a goal; expansion is its life-blood. The uniqueness of Christ, the universality of the Gospel, the catholicity of the Church, the all-inclusiveness of salvation, presuppose a missionary attitude on the part of every believer. The Church is only the Church when it holds on to its prophetic-apostolic task of preaching repentance and building up the fellowship of believers. Its movement through history can only be measured by the story of its growth.[26] And grow it must, for this is its only sign of life.

The spectacle of the growth of the Christian Church through history, the story of its continued expansion, the record of its missionary activity, and its direct impact upon human life, is a breathtaking experience. But the progress of institutionalized Christianity is only one side of the picture.

The other side, though perhaps less perceptible, is no less potent. The prophetic message of the Gospel acts like a mysterious force upon human consciousness bearing in upon humanity to move it out of its inertia of mere physical existence, into the higher realm of spiritual life: "What does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and to forfeit his life?" asks Jesus (*Mark* 8:36). "The Kingdom of God does not mean food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" – says the Apostle Paul (*Rom*. 14:17). The difference between paganism and Hebrew faith consists in the knowledge that man does not live by bread alone, but that man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord (*Deut*. 8:3). Since these words were cast in the teeth of the Tempter by the Son of Man in the wilderness (*Luke* 4:4), humanity has been stirring towards a new life.

The spiritual history of Israel is the story of the Great Awakening. Man is quickening to the fact that only in his Second Birth does he aspire to sonship. The messianic ideal is borne by the hope that humanity in its totality will become the People of God. Here Israel is as wide as the human race. Amidst misery and despair, war and bloodshed, cruelty and hatred, man will reach out to Him who said: "I am the way – follow me."

The call which started Abram on his pilgrimage, which was echoed by the prophets, and became epitomized in the person of Jesus Christ, started a movement which will only end when the last man has reached the gates of the City of God.

The spiritual history of Israel has broadened into the story of the great quest which will occupy humanity to the end of time. It is the greatest quest man has ever undertaken – the quest for the City of God. Underlying this quest is the prophetic category of motion towards a purposeful goal which has entered into the very consciousness of mankind. From the day the prophets have spoken man will never rest until he achieves his goal. This restless pressure towards an ultimate purpose is the nature of biblical messianism. It is the prophetic legacy to the Christian Church.

The effect of Hebrew messianism upon history is too extensive to account. It is a fascinating and complex story deserving a separate treatise by a more skilful hand than ours. In such a story the political aspect of messianism will have pride of place. The political ideal

of perfect society was the inspiration behind many movements. Messianic redemption in the political sense was and still is the hope of many nations. We have mentioned Polish Messianism; we would draw attention to Irish messianism[27] during the years of national struggle. The Jewish people lived by the messianic hope for centuries. From the Levellers[28] of England to the Bolsheviks of Russia, all the great revolutionary movements derived from the same source. Biblical messianism fired the imagination of many visionaries and gave rise to numerous millenarian sects. It inspired humble men and women to leave home and country in search of the Heavenly Jerusalem, as in the case of the Mormons.[29]

But the biblical message goes beyond the political ideal. What gives to the story of Israel special character and marks Hebrew prophetism as *sui generis* is the reversal of direction in the quest for the Kingdom of God. Here it is not so much man's quest for God as God's quest for man. This is the essence of the Christian message that God himself steps into history, stooping down to the level of man and pouring Himself out (*kenosis*) in humble service.

Thus the prophetic category of movement becomes a double quest: man in search of redemption; God in search of man.

While history lasts, the quest continues and Israel's destiny remains in suspense.[30]

Notes to Chapter XI

1. P. S. Minear, *Eyes of Faith*, 1948, 99.
2. *Ibid*., 97.
3. See Chapter VI "The Small Things", p. 87 fl.
4. Oscar Cullmann maintains that the only dualism to be found in the New Testament is expressed in the dialectic between present and future and not (as is usually assumed) between time and eternity. (Cf. *Christ and Time*, English translation 1951, p. 146)
5. For the whole subject see J. Jocz, *The Jewish People and Jesus Christ*, 116 and notes.
6. W. R. Inge, *More Lay Thoughts of a Dean*, 1933, 210; T. H. Huxley, *Science and Christian Tradition*, 1895, 239.
7. Cf. Jacob Kohn, *The Moral Life of Man*, 1956, 219.
8. Cf. Windelband-Heimsoeth, *op. cit*., 65 fl.
9. A. Schopenhauer, *Parerga*, ch. 12, § 157.
10. T. G. Masaryk*, Modern Man and Religion*, English translation 1938. It is a pity that his otherwise excellent and thought-provoking book was so badly translated and edited.
11. Schopenhauer, *Parerga*, ch. 13, §158. The chapter discusses the question of suicide.
12. P. A. Brunt, discussing Marcus Aurelius, the King-Philosopher, whom destiny had placed at the head of the Empire at a most crucial moment, found him utterly incapable of formulating any new principle of government. He devoted all his energies to maintaining the *status quo*. (Cf. *The Listener*, March 3, 1960, pp. 387 fl.) This is typical for antique man, he cannot break beyond the charmed circle of fate.
13. This is the phrase in the second Collect at Morning Prayer in the *Anglican Book of Common Prayer*: "Whose service is perfect freedom."
14. We differ from the R.S.V. in making God and not the 'vision' the subject of the prophetic hope.
15. Cf. Singer's *Prayer Book*, 90.
16. A. H. Hausrath, *A History of New Testament Times*, English translation 1895, I 120 fl. Christian influence upon the modern world outside Europe is far greater than usually realized; cf. Arthur Koestler, *The Lotus and the Robot*, also: John Baillie, *What is Christian Civilization?*, 19 fl.; 26 fl.

17. In this connection we would quote Henrik Kraemer: "Even in its most degraded form religion is evidence that man is haunted by God. He cannot get rid of Him." (Cf. H. Kraemer, *Religion and the Christian Faith*, English translation 1956, 309.) That religion has another side to it is not unknown to the distinguished author. Cf. *ibid*., 144 and *passim*.
18. Henry Alford, *The Greek New Testament*, 1880, IV 417.
19. Cf. John Baillie, *Natural Science and the Spiritual Life*, 1951, p. 20. Prof. Baillie poses the question: "But where did Bacon and Descartes, and where did the first modern scientists . . . learn that the pattern was thus hidden from them?" He answers: "They learned it from the Christian revelation . . . from the Christian doctrine of creation which teaches that the world is not itself divine but is contingent upon the divine will."
20. Nietzsche, as perhaps no other writer, is the prophet of our age. Zarathustra's repeated cry: "God hath died: now do we desire the Superman to live," is a poet's intuitive penetration into the spirit of our times. He speaks out of the very heart of scientific man. For a penetrating analysis of our age see the article by Sh. H. Bergman, "The Religion of Humanism - its Rise and Decline", *Judaism*, Summer 1957.
21. Cf. the account in the *Readers' Digest*, Oct. 1957: "Atomic Tragedy in Texas."
22. The R.S.V. has omitted the expression *'am 'olam* from the text and has put it in the margin: the A.V. and R.V. read: "ancient people".
23. Cf. Jocz., *A Theology of Election*, 49 fl.
24. Cf. *ibid*., 47 fl. Prof. Gershom Schalom in his article on Jewish Messianism and the idea of Progress has shown the importance of the concept of *Galut* in the thinking of medieval Jewish mysticism (cf. *Commentary*, April 1958). There is however no connection between Reform Judaism and the Cabbalists of the Middle Ages - both trying to give meaning to Jewish destiny from their own particular points of view.
25. The last words of Augustine's *Civitas Dei*.
26. Franz Rosenzweig sees in the expansion of the Church through history a special feature of Christianity as distinct from Judaism which rests in itself. (Cf. *Der Stern der Erlösung*, III 98 fl.)
27. For Irish Messianism in relation to the Jews, cf. Herbert Howarth, *The Irish Writers*, *1880-1940*, 1958. For Messianism in primitive societies, cf. R. J. Z. Werblowsky, *The Listener*, Oct. 20, 1960. 680 fl. For political Messianism in European history, cf. J. L. Talmon, *Political Messianism*, London 1960.
28. Cf. A. H. Woolrych on Oliver Cromwell, *The Listener*, Jan. 15, 1959, pp. 120 fl. Although Erblösser and Werner write from a politically biased position, medieval heresies frequently reveal social unrest. Cf. *Ideologische Probleme d. mittelalterlichen Plebejertums*, Berlin 1960.
29. Cf. William Mulder, *Homeward to Zion*, 1957.
30. The temptation to break asunder the category of suspense would be the mark of the non-prophetic, non-biblical man. That this can happen even to students of the Bible is best illustrated by the theology of Jehovah's Witnesses; cf. Marley Cole; cf. *Jehovah's Witnesses, The New World Society*, New York, 1955; specially the sections dealing with "The Kingdom is Here".

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