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EDITORIAL

“**Y**E SHALL be my witnesses.” These words spoken just before His ascension express the final charge of Jesus to His disciples. And having tarried at Jerusalem until they had received power from on high through the coming of the Holy Spirit, they went out to make disciples of all nations by publishing the good news, that is, by confession of the name of Jesus, giving testimony or bearing witness to Him. The activity of the apostles may be summed up as that of bearing witness to Jesus, and, if we may believe tradition, all save one sealed their testimony with a martyr’s (witness’) death. And John tells us that he was in the isle called Patmos for the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus. Of John the Baptist it is written, “There was a man sent from God whose name was John. The same came for witness bearing, to bear witness of the Light.” (John 1:6f.) The apostle Paul informs us that at his conversion he was appointed a witness for Christ to all men. (Acts 22:15.)

And long before this final meeting the disciples must have been informed as to the character of their task. At least as early as Caesarea Philippi the paramount significance of witness bearing was brought home to them in a very forceful way. Jesus asked, “Who do men say that the Son of Man is?” (Matthew 16:13.) Jesus did not ask this question as to what men were thinking and saying about him out of idle curiosity. He knew well enough that among the people he was regarded as a prophet, whether as Elijah or Jeremiah or the Baptist. No, he asked this question because what men were thinking and saying about Him determined their eternal destinies, and He wanted to call forth from Peter, as the spokesman for the twelve, the true confession which touches the heart of the Gospel, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” And He impressed the significance of this confession upon them more when He declared that this confession of Peter was not the product of human observation or human reflection, but the revelation of His Father in heaven; and He then went on to say that upon this confession of Peter, or upon Peter as the first confessing member, He was to establish His church.

Witness bearing is therefore central. The church is true to her King only if she is a witnessing church. The minister is faithful to his Lord only if in season and out of season he proclaims the gospel of the grace of God in Christ Jesus. “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?” (Romans 10:13f.) The believer proves his loyalty and sincerity by confessing the

"THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS"*

OSWALD T. ALLIS

THESE words form a brief but very striking summary of the attitude of the New Testament to the Old. When we meet them in such a statement as, "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets," it is clear that they stand for the Old Testament as a whole. The two great commandments which describe our duty toward God and our duty toward our fellow-men are the great theme of the Old Testament Scriptures. This phrase is significant therefore for two reasons; because it emphasizes the unity of those Scriptures, the fact that they have a common theme and purpose, and also because it indicates that the two great elements of which this unity is composed are the law and the prophets.

THE BIBLE A SELF-CONSISTENT BOOK

That the Bible is a self-consistent, self-interpretative book has been the belief of Jews (as regards the Old Testament) and Christians alike throughout the centuries. It is clearly set forth in the Westminster Confession of Faith in the following significant statement: "The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself; and therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any scripture (which is not manifold, but one,) it may be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly." A distinguished theologian, Dr. Charles Hodge, has expressed it as follows: "If the Scriptures be what they claim to be, the word of God, they are the work of one mind, and that divine. From this it follows that Scripture cannot contradict Scripture. God cannot teach in one place any thing which is inconsistent with what He teaches in another. Hence Scripture must explain Scripture."

THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS

The harmony between the prophetic and the priestly elements in the Old Testament which justifies the use of the phrase, the law *and* the prophets, is also very apparent. Moses was a prophet; and in Deuteronomy he is expressly declared to be the type of the greatest of all the prophets, the Messiah who was to come. Yet Moses, we are expressly told, instituted the priestly ritual and ordained Aaron and his sons. Elijah offered a sacrifice to the Lord and was proved to be a true prophet of the Lord by the acceptance of his offering. The 53rd of Isaiah, one of the loftiest, if not the loftiest, of the prophetic utterances in the Old Testament uses distinctly priestly language. Jeremiah of Anathoth, regarded by many as the greatest of the prophets, was of priestly descent. John the Baptist, whom our Lord described as a prophet and much more than a prophet, was likewise the son of a priest; and the words with which he hails the world's Redeemer, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world," are borrowed from the priestly ritual of the Old Testament

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law. Clearly, priest and prophet are bound to one another by the closest of ties.

UNITY OF THE SCRIPTURES DENIED BY LIBERALS

It is important to bear these facts clearly in mind because the unity of Scripture has been emphatically challenged in recent years by influential scholars. Far from maintaining that the Old Testament Scriptures are characterized by unity and harmony of teaching, it is the view of those scholars who adopt what is commonly called the "higher criticism" that they contain many contradictions. Thus Professor McFadyen of Glasgow has recently declared that the "Old Testament is too splendidly human a book to be dominated by any mechanical unity: it speaks with a double voice, indeed with many voices." And he asserts that on matters of by no means minor importance there is "an endless variety of opinion in the Old Testament." We need only turn to any one of the numerous "Introductions" to the Old Testament which are written from the "critical" standpoint and notice the way in which the alleged differences in diction, ideas, viewpoint, etc., between the "Jehovist" and the "Elohists," the "Deuteronomist" and the "Priestly" writer are stressed, to convince ourselves that the disintegrating analyses upon which the critics are constantly engaged are based not upon the harmony, unity and full credibility of Scripture but upon the conviction that the "apparent" harmony is the result of a harmonizing process which has only imperfectly succeeded in overcoming and concealing a host of differences and disagreements, which it is the duty of the "critical" student to seek out and explain. We have, according to the critics, two or more accounts of Creation, the Flood, the Crossing of the Red Sea, the Conquest of Canaan, etc.—accounts which are so diverse as to be more or less contradictory. To the "critic," then, the phrase, "the unity of the Scriptures," in the strict and historic sense of the words, is meaningless or at best the expression of a naive, superficial judgment which breaks down at once when put to the test of scholarly investigation.

"PROPHETIC RELIGION" VERSUS "PRIESTLY RELIGION"

And this theory of an "inner contradiction," as it may be called, finds its clearest expression, we are told, in the antagonism between the two great representatives of Old Testament religion, the prophet and the priest. Thus Professor McFadyen tells us: "But all such differences tend to resolve themselves broadly into two opposing categories, the prophetic and the priestly. . . ." While such a statement may come as a surprise to many, it has long been advocated in "critical" circles. Twenty-five years ago Doctor, now Bishop, Headlam spoke of "a tendency which I have noticed is becoming rather common in certain writers, of emphasizing very strongly the distinction between the prophetic and Levitical elements in the Old Testament, and of condemning the latter, or at any rate minimizing very considerably its importance." And even when Dr. Headlam made this statement it was nearly forty years since Graf had asserted that Jer. vii 22-23 proved that "the middle books of the Pentateuch" could not have been known in the days of Jeremiah "who taught that the sur-

render of the heart to God, piety and obedience to the moral law were all that was necessary to true wellbeing." This revolutionary doctrine which means that the bulk of the Law was both *non*-Mosaic and *post*-prophetic soon became a fundamental postulate of the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis, which is at present dominant in "critical" circles. "It is no new matter," wrote Wellhausen, "but a thing well known, that sacrifices are not what the Torah of the Lord contains."

MINIMIZES IMPORTANCE OF SACRIFICE

This theory of an opposition on the part of the prophets to the priestly element in the Old Testament, has been stated with varying degrees of severity. According to Professor Addis of Oxford the prophets "held that sacrifice was an affair of quite subordinate importance." Professors Bailey (Worcester Academy) and Kent (Yale) declare that, "The prophets knew very well that ritual and sacrifice had little to do with true religion." Professor Fowler of Brown University tells us that according to the prophets, "Mere sacrifices were not the only means of intercourse with the Deity." These statements it will be noted all show an unmistakable tendency to minimize the importance of sacrifice.

OR REJECTS IT ENTIRELY

But the antithesis can be, and frequently is, much more sharply drawn. Wellhausen, who has told us negatively that "sacrifices are not what the Torah of the Lord contains," tells us positively that the sacrificial ritual was "at first the bond connecting Israel with heathenism." This means, of course, that the Old Testament sacrifices were essentially pagan in origin. It is not surprising then that we should find the alleged antithesis presented in a very drastic way by representatives of the Graf-Wellhausen school. The following statements are worthy of careful pondering: Professor Badé of the Pacific School of Religion asserts that, "Few mistakes have introduced greater confusion into the study of Old Testament religion than the hoary assumption that the great prophets and the ritual laws of the Pentateuch agree in their valuation of sacrifice. In Ezekiel, Leviticus and kindred priestly literature God's favor is dependent upon a strict performance of the ritual. The prophets from Amos to Jeremiah denounce and repudiate this view." Professor Bewer of Union Theological Seminary (New York) in commenting on the popular religion of Israel says, "But Jeremiah was sure that Yahweh had never commanded any sacrifices, but had required from the fathers nothing but obedience to the moral law, and that was His sole requirement now (Jer. vii. 21-26)." A distinguished German scholar, Professor Cornill of Halle, declares that "Jeremiah was the first to set religion consciously free from all extraneous and material elements, and to establish it on a purely spiritual basis." And he holds that this "touches directly the kernel and substance of religion. Another scholar, Professor Eiselen of Garrett Biblical Institute, assures us that Jeremiah "declares the whole sacrificial system to be an abomination to Jehovah." According to the late Professor G. B. Gray of Oxford "Sacrifice and many of the forms of religion Israel shared with the nations, and it is not the institution, but the

repudiation, of sacrifice that distinguishes the religion of Israel." Professor George Foote Moore of Harvard maintains that "It is the fundamental doctrine of prophecy: the will of God is wholly moral. For worship he cares nothing at all; for justice, fairness, and goodness between man and man he cares everything." In commenting on Jeremiah vii. 21-23 which he says "contradicts Deuteronomy and even more strongly Leviticus in their repeated statements that in the wilderness God also commanded sacrifice," Principal George Adam Smith of Aberdeen University cites 1 Sam. xv, Hosea vi. 6 and Amos v. 25 and then says, "And the following passages (he refers to Micah vi and Ps. 1 and li) only render more general the truth that Israel's God has no pleasure at any time in the sacrifices offered to Him with the institution of which—the natural reference is—He can have had nothing to do." Professor J. M. Powis Smith of Chicago University declares, "It is the glory of the prophet at his best that he allowed nothing to share the place that belonged of right to ethics alone. . . . In contrast with the earlier emphasis upon sacrifice, the later prophets are always minimizing it and exalting ethical and social duties, *e. g.* Amos v. 25, Jer. vii. 22, Micah vi. 6-8."

THEORY A VERY POPULAR ONE TODAY

In view of such statements it is not surprising that we should find Professor Lofthouse of Handworth College remarking: "The rivalry between prophet and priest is a commonplace in most presentations of Hebrew history." Indeed "rivalry" is hardly strong enough to cover some of the statements quoted. Prophetic *rejection* of sacrifice could hardly be more drastically stated. It is also clearly apparent that in this "rivalry" the modern critic takes his stand emphatically with the prophet as against the priest, or, as Dr. Orchard of London has expressed it, that he has "restored" the prophets in the Old Testament "to a regulative position." "If it seems dogmatism," Professor McFadyen declares, "to say, as one has said, that it is the prophets who laid the true foundations and proclaimed the essence of true religion, it is at any rate a dogmatism which would be supported by the consensus of Christian scholarship." It is clear then that according to the "critical" scholar the Old Testament Scriptures are not merely not a unity, but that markedly diverse and even contradictory viewpoints are represented in them, and further that these differences of viewpoint find their strongest expression in the antithesis which some of these scholars would express in most drastic terms between the law and the prophets.

HAS DISASTROUS BEARING ON NEW TESTAMENT

This theory of a thoroughgoing antithesis between the law and the prophets has obviously a most important bearing upon the understanding and the valuation of the Scriptures. If the Old Testament Scriptures contradict themselves, this is a matter of far-reaching significance. Two contradictory viewpoints cannot both be true. If the "prophetic" conception of sacrifice as defined by the critics is correct, the emphasis placed by the law upon ritual sacrifice is both false and dangerous. This can only mean that a large part of the Old Testament represents a conception

of religion which is now rejected as unworthy. And the theory does not stop there; its New Testament implications are even more serious. One of the scholars quoted above, Professor Cornill, tells us, "Jesus of Nazareth in contrast to the pharisaical Judaism of his time purposely links his own activity to the prophecy of ancient Israel, himself its purest blossom and noblest fruit . . . The Christian Church has known no better designation for the earthly pilgrimage of its founder than to speak of him in his office as prophet." Another writer, Professor Kirsopp Lake of Harvard, in a recent contribution to the *Hibbert Journal* predicts that the "experimentalist" (a new and very suggestive name for "liberal") will regard Jesus as "one of the greatest of the prophets" although he is careful to state that such advanced thinkers will hardly be prepared to accept as true for this modern world everything that Jesus said. Professor Fagnani of Union Theological Seminary (New York) assures us that "There is one, and only one, religion that is different from all the others, and that one is to be seen in the teaching of the great prophets of Israel . . ." What is this unique religion? "The prophetic religion stresses," he tells us, "the Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of Man, and the establishment on earth of the 'Kingdom of God,' or the organization of the real democracy, which involves world-wide co-operation for the common good." Jesus is set before us by this writer as the greatest of the prophets of Israel, as one in whom the religion of the prophets attained its fullest development. But he tells us definitely that "Jesus was not a Trinitarian, Jesus did not proclaim Himself God, He did not claim worship." And he regards the "Savior-God of Paul, of Hellenism, and of historic Christianity" as a perversion of the "religion of Jesus." "In the religion of Jesus God is a just and tender Father who forgives a prodigal son when he comes back, simply because he loves him and not because an innocent victim has suffered in his stead." A distinguished Jewish scholar, ex-President Kohler of the Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, uses very similar language. He declares that "No intermediary power from without secures the divine grace and pardon for the repentant sinner, but his own inner transformation alone." "The great prophets of Israel alone recognized that the entire sacrificial system was out of harmony with the true spirit of Judaism." A Unitarian writer, W. H. Fish, uses this theory to justify "the simple rational view which Unitarians generally hold, according to which, after being reconciled or turned away from our selfishness and drawn to God through the impression made by the absolute self-sacrifice illustrated in the death of Christ, we are saved from our sins and the consequent divine displeasure by the help, the guidance and the inspiration of his life." A liberal theologian, Professor G. A. Barton of the Episcopal Divinity School (Philadelphia), assures us that Psalm li anticipates "in principle the parable of the prodigal son. The Father needs no propitiation except the penitence of the son for whom he has waited so long." And he adds, "The Old Testament contains no more spiritual view of religion than this. Here is the flower of its piety." Thus, we see that Reform Jew and Unitarian unite with the Liberal Christian in

making true religion a religion without sacrifice; and further that they support it by an appeal to the theory of an antithesis between the prophet and the priest and reject either avowedly or by implication the atonement of Christ.

CAN THIS DISASTROUS INFERENCE BE AVOIDED?

The serious nature of the inferences—as to both the Old Testament and the New—which are being drawn from the “critical” theory of a prophetic rejection of sacrifice makes it vitally important for the Christian of today to face two questions: Is the critical theory of “prophetic religion” true? and, Is the New Testament inference from this theory necessary? The natural order to discuss these questions would be the order of statement; for the second is of real validity and practical interest only if the first receives an affirmative answer. But, in view of the statements which we have just quoted in which the New Testament inference is stated in uncompromising form, it will be well for us to consider the second question briefly before passing on to the first and fundamental problem. This seems advisable because it will be objected at once that these quotations are not representative of “critical” opinion regarding the atonement of Christ. That the inference is logical and natural will perhaps hardly be denied. But it will be affirmed that there are many Christians who hold “critical” opinions relative to the Old Testament who yet continue to regard the death of Christ as a sacrifice for sin. That there are such Christians, perhaps many of them, we are not disposed to deny. The point, however, is this. How do they avoid drawing the natural and logical inference from their acceptance of a conception of religion which makes sacrifice not merely unnecessary but even vicious? There are two principal ways by which this inference is evaded. The first is by ignoring it.

TO IGNORE IT IS DANGEROUS

There are many who simply do not draw the New Testament inference. They accept the conclusions of the critics with regard to the Old Testament, they accept the alleged prophetic rejection of sacrifice; but when it comes to the New Testament, the emphasis placed upon the necessity of the death of Christ and its vital significance for the Christian is so inescapably plain that they dare not deny it. It is also stated so clearly in our hymns, in our historic creeds, and enters so prominently into the historic faith of the Church that they cannot escape it. They are obviously in an illogical and hence unsafe position. The conclusions which they have accepted with regard to the Old Testament are logically destructive of their New Testament faith. It is better of course to be an illogical Christian than a logical unbeliever; but their attitude toward the great Old Testament prefigurement of the atonement cannot but act as a hindrance to a high regard for or insistent emphasis upon the necessity and full meaning of the death of Christ as a sacrifice for sin. In other words it tends to the ignoring of it—a tendency which is becoming increasingly apparent in books and preaching which represent the “liberal” viewpoint. We have quoted a statement by Professors Bailey and Kent in which as

compared with some others the prophetic rejection of sacrifice is rather temperately stated: "The prophets knew very well that ritual and sacrifice had little to do with true religion." At the close of the book in discussing "Israel's priceless gifts to the world," this is what they tell us about Jesus and Christianity: "From the Hebrew prophets, as well as from Jesus the Prophet of Nazareth, come those principles of justice to all men and classes, of the equality of opportunity and responsibility for every individual and nation, of good-will between men and races, of service to the poor and needy, and of co-operation in building a perfect society which are the essence of democracy and the watchwords of the modern world movement . . . Above all, the Hebrew prophets, psalmists and sages, and the greatest Prophet of them all, have taught men how to enter into living touch and personal co-operation with him, whom to know aright is life eternal." Here the Cross is not denied, but it is completely ignored; and this is tantamount to its positive rejection.

"PROPHETIC SUFFERING" NO SUBSTITUTE FOR "PRIESTLY EXPIATION"

The other way to avoid drawing from this theory the New Testament inference that the sacrificial meaning of the death of Christ must be rejected is by seeking another basis for it than the Old Testament sacrificial ritual. This view has been ably advocated by Principal Smith. He tries to save the Cross by substituting the Old Testament prophets for the ritual sacrifices as the type of the suffering Savior. Thus, he speaks of Jeremiah as breaking "from one type of religious solidarity," by which he means the ritual sacrifices prescribed by the priests, "only to illustrate another and a nobler" type, the necessity of personal vicarious suffering as experienced by the prophets. He speaks of Jeremiah as "the symbol, if not the conscious preacher of vicariousness." More specifically he says of him, "He had given his back to the smiters and his cheeks to them who plucked out the hair . . . He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief . . . It is the second greatest sacrifice that Israel has offered for mankind." And he sums up by saying of this prophet: "he foreshadowed as far as mere man can the sufferings of Jesus Christ for men." This means that the Old Testament prophets notably Jeremiah, are to be regarded as prefiguring by their sufferings with and for their people the atonement of Christ.

MAGNIFIES TYPE AT EXPENSE OF ANTITYPE

The objections to this theory are obvious. There is first the idealizing of the human. Jeremiah was a man, a mere man, a sinful man. Yet his sufferings are made to differ only in degree—"second greatest"—from those of Christ. Israel was a sinful nation, false to its divine vocation, desperately in need of salvation, soon to suffer exile for its sins. Yet Israel is here represented as making an offering for the sin of the world. But the atonement of Christ was not Israel's greatest offering for mankind; it was God's offering for the sin of Israel and of all mankind. There is only one Savior; not Jeremiah, not Israel, but Christ alone. It is not a question of lesser or greater. He is the *alone* Savior. This is emphasized in the typical sacrifices. The sufferings of bull and goats were but slight;

they had no value in themselves; no importance is attached to them. We would never think of comparing their sufferings with His. They served only as feeble types of the perfect sacrifice to come. Principal Smith so magnifies the sufferings of Jeremiah as to make them *almost* equal to the sufferings of Christ. The idealizing of the prophet amounts almost to an apotheosis.

CANNOT EXPLAIN THE CROSS

The second objection is that this theory tends to ignore the meaning and necessity of the *death* of Christ. We do not know how Jeremiah died. We do know that he was expressly spared when Jerusalem fell. We do not know how Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah died. Of Elijah, the great epic figure of prophecy, we are told expressly that he did not die. How then, if the prophets were types of Christ, if Jeremiah "foreshadowed as far as mere man can the sufferings of Jesus Christ for men," can we attach particular significance to His death? And how, if the Old Testament ritual of sacrifice, which makes the shedding of the blood of an innocent victim the means of expiation, is rejected as essentially pagan, can a meaning be attached to Jesus' death which differs essentially from the meaning of His life or the lives of the prophets? The logical tendency of this theory is to regard Christ's death as the supreme expression of that law of vicarious suffering which was so splendidly typified in the heroic witness of the prophets and in all the splendid acts of self-sacrifice which meet us on the pages of human history, whether we think of Leonidas and his Spartans at Thermopylæ, or of the "Unknown Soldier" of the fields of Flanders, and to deny that His *death* was a *unique* act of *expiatory* suffering for the *sin* of the world.

CRITIC CANNOT AVOID DEPRECIATING THE CROSS

Now it is true that Principal Smith's words, "foreshadowed as far as mere man can," leave it open to us to attach, as he apparently does, an expiatory significance to the death of Christ which we cannot give to the sufferings of the prophets. Consequently those who accept the critical theory of "prophetic religion" and yet wish still to believe that Christ died as "a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice and reconcile us to God" may be thankful to Principal Smith for making it *possible* for them to do this. But it is clear that unless expiatory significance is to be attached to the sufferings of the prophets, which seems to be expressly forbidden by such passages as Jer. xv. 1 and Ezek. xiv. 14 (cf. Jer. vii. 16) and also by the consistent teaching of the Bible that sinful men cannot perform works of supererogation, we are not logically justified as far as the Old Testament is concerned in regarding the sufferings of Christ as expiatory. Consequently while this theory is intended to save for the "liberal" Christian the evangelical doctrine of the Cross, it logically tends toward the very thing it is designed to avoid, the denial of the necessity of atonement for sin. His rejection of the expiatory sacrifices of the Old Testament is the critic's nemesis when he stands before the Cross. He cannot consistently use the words of the Institution of the Supper, or the language of Hebrews where the death of Christ is explained as the fulfilment of

the sacrifices of the ceremonial law. For he has rejected that law of expiation as essentially pagan and hostile to "prophetic religion." And the substitute which he has found, "prophetic suffering," need not be and clearly cannot be regarded as expiatory.

IS "PROPHETIC RELIGION" TRUE? A VITAL QUESTION

This makes it clear how vitally it concerns the Christian to know whether the critical theory of an antithesis between the law and the prophets is true. The law typifies expiation, priestly expiation. If "prophetic religion" rejects sacrifice and if "prophetic religion" is true, the denial of the expiatory significance of Christ's death is the natural and logical inference; and while the sufferings of the prophets may be regarded as typifying the sufferings of Christ and as permitting us to regard them as expiatory, the rejection of the Old Testament ritual of sacrifice with its emphasis on expiation makes it difficult for the Christian to hold on to the expiatory significance of His death. Consequently all those to whom the Lord Jesus Christ is precious as Savior from the *guilt* and *penalty* of sin, should realize the importance of thoroughly investigating this modern theory of "prophetic religion." The Cross is the central truth of Christianity. Any teaching which obscures the Cross, which minimizes or denies its necessity or unique efficacy, is a menace to Christian faith. Is "prophetic religion" true?

"PRIESTLY RELIGION" VERY PROMINENT IN OLD TESTAMENT

It is to be noted in the first place that "prophetic religion" requires the rejection of a large part of the Old Testament. We have but to think of the prominent and important place which "priestly religion" takes in the Pentateuch and in the historical books to realize this. Leviticus and parts of Exodus and Numbers have to be rejected; Deuteronomy, although usually regarded by the critics as a prophetic book, has to be carefully edited. Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah, because of their "priestly" emphasis, have to be largely discounted. In short the religion of the early period in which sacrifice figures conspicuously must be regarded as primitive and the religion of the late period in which sacrifice figures no less prominently must be regarded as decadent. The worship of the Tabernacle, Temple, and Second Temple with its tremendous emphasis in act and word on expiation through sacrifice—all falls under the ban of "prophetic religion." This is very significant.

"PROPHETIC RELIGION" NOT TAUGHT BY *all* THE PROPHETS

In the second place it is to be noticed that in defining "prophetic religion," the critic is forced to distinguish carefully not only between *prophet* and *priest*, but between *prophet* and *prophet*. Joel, Ezekiel, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, must all be regarded as inferior or renegade prophets because of the emphasis which they place on priestly ritual and the worship of the temple. In other words, the status of a prophet, whether he is a "great" prophet or not, is determined by his attitude towards sacrifice. It is a common thing to denounce Ezekiel. He is called by Wellhausen a "priest in prophet's mantle." Professor McFadyen in speaking of one of his great utterances remarks, "When a priest or a prophet with a

priestly heart stumbles into saying a great thing, it is seldom so great as it looks." This almost contemptuous reference to Ezekiel is due solely to the fact that Ezekiel does not hold that conception of "prophetic religion" as a religion without sacrifice, which the critics regard as the true one. But such language as applied to a prophet of the Lord is its own sufficient condemnation. It is significant that when Professor McFadyen speaks of "prophetic religion" he is obliged to qualify his language by referring to the prophets of the "golden age of prophecy." There are clearly other prophets who hold a very different conception of "prophetic religion" from that announced so confidently by the critics.

NOT TAUGHT BY *any* OF THE PROPHETS

But we observe further that Professor McFadyen is obliged to make a second significant qualification. He speaks not merely of "the prophets of the golden age of prophecy" but also of "certain utterances" of these prophets. This seems to imply that there are utterances of these prophets which do not support the critical theory. We do not need to look far to convince ourselves that such is actually the case. Jeremiah xvii. 19-26, xxx. 14, xxxiii. 11, 18, are clearly out of harmony with the theory that "prophetic religion" was opposed to sacrifice. The same is true of Isa. lvi. 7, lx. 7, lxii. 9, lxvi. 20, passages which the Christian Church has always regarded as Isaianic, and which many critics now deny to their "Great Unknown" of the exilic period largely because of the favorable attitude toward sacrifice expressed in these verses. No wonder then that Professor McFadyen should confine himself to "certain utterances" of the "great" prophets. What are these "certain utterances"?

PROOF-TEXTS OF "PROPHETIC RELIGION"

Among the most important of the "proof-texts" of "prophetic religion" are the following: "Have ye offered unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel?" (Amos v. 25); "I desire mercy and not sacrifice" (Hosea vi. 6); "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly and love mercy and walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah vi. 8); "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me?" (Isa. i. 11); "For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices" (Jer. vii. 22). It will not be possible for us to discuss all of these passages in detail, but we shall take them up in order.

THE CRITICS MISINTERPRET AMOS

Amos v. 21f. is frequently cited as proving that Amos rejected the ritual of sacrifice. The passage reads as follows:

I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. Take away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let judgment run down as water and righteousness as a mighty stream. Have ye offered unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel? But ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch

and Chiun your images, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves. Therefore will I cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus, saith the Lord, whose name is The God of hosts.

Regarding this passage Graf affirmed about fifty years ago that it proved that "in Israel's time of special nearness to Jehovah" there was no sacrifice required. Robertson Smith has used almost identical language regarding it: "The whole ritual sacrifice is to Amos a thing without importance in itself. The Israelites offered no sacrifice in the wilderness and yet Jehovah was never nearer to them than then." Principal Smith likewise refers to "Israel's ideal days in the desert."

ERROR POINTED OUT YEARS AGO

In view of the definiteness of the statements which we have just quoted, it is important to observe that fully a generation ago Keil opposed this interpretation of the critics on the ground that the "forty years" here referred to "denote the time during which the people were sentenced to die in the wilderness after the rebellion at Kadesh"; and he pointed to the fact that in this period the rite of circumcision was allowed to lapse as an indication that Israel ceased to obey the law. Six hundred thousand men (in round numbers) heard the law at Sinai (Ex. xxxviii. 26, Num. ii. 46), six hundred thousand reached the Jordan at the close of the wilderness period (Num. xxvi. 51). Was it the same six hundred thousand and had these years been to them a time of special nearness? We need only read a few verses farther in Num. xxvi. to receive a very definite answer:

These are they that were numbered by Moses and Eleazer the priest, who numbered the children of Israel in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho. But among them there was not a man whom Moses and Aaron the priest numbered, when they numbered the children of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai. For the Lord had said of them, They shall surely die in the wilderness. And there was not left a man of them save Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun.

Six hundred thousand at Sinai, six hundred thousand on the plains of Moab; but only two of them the same! The rest perished because of their unbelief in the wilderness. And yet the critics speak of this as a *time of special nearness!* This is all the more remarkable because the Old Testament record is clearly supported by the New. Let us turn to Stephen's speech in the Book of Acts where this passage in Amos is expressly cited:

Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness? Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them: and I will carry you beyond Babylon.

Likewise in Hebrews we read, "But with whom was he grieved forty years? Was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?" (Heb. iii. 17). And still the critics assure us that this was a *time of special nearness!* Yet is not the point of Amos' argument inescapably plain, especially when interpreted to us by Stephen? Israel

had disobeyed God. The generation which wandered in the wilderness was a generation of wrath; it was to perish there, it was not to see the promised land, and it gave itself up to idolatry. Why then, asks Amos, should the Israel of the Northern Kingdom, which was likewise a generation of wrath, had given itself up to the idolatry of the calves, and was shortly to be swept away into exile, keep up a hypocritical and vain worship of Jehovah? Amos, be it remembered, is speaking at Bethel, one of Jeroboam's calf temples, and he upbraids its devotees with their false loyalty to Jehovah. Let them follow their fathers and not offer to Jehovah, their covenant God whom they had rejected, sacrifices which were meaningless and valueless. Certainly this interpretation is worthy of consideration. It is favored by the Old Testament and confirmed by the New. Yet it would seem as if the critics had never heard of it. So expert are they in ignoring objections to their theories and those that make them.

HOSEA, MICAH, ISAIAH, JEREMIAH

We can speak only briefly of the other passages cited above. Of Hosea it should suffice to point out that no less eminent a critic than Stade has said: "For him a relation to Yahweh without external worship, without priest and offerings, is inconceivable." But we may add that in the verse cited, the antithesis is not absolute as the critics allege but only relative: "I desire mercy and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings." Some critics render the second part "to the exclusion of burnt offerings," but this is unnatural and the forced interpretation of the special pleader. Micah vi. 8, "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly and love mercy and walk humbly with thy God?" is often cited by the critics as expressing the quintessence of "prophetic religion" as a religion without sacrifice. But what does "walk humbly" mean? These exact words occur only here in the Old Testament; but there is good reason for believing that they mean walk in accordance with the Law of God. And this is confirmed by the fact that in the preceding verse the conception of "ritual" worship which is rejected is not the one taught in the law but an essentially pagan conception—hecatombs and infant sacrifice, which means Baal or Moloch worship. In Isa. i. it is made perfectly clear that the people whose sacrifices are rejected are a rebellious people. It is said of them, "Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward." Their leaders are called "rulers of Sodom," and they themselves "people of Gomorrah," and they are enjoined to "give ear unto the law of your God." Clearly the rejection of their sacrifices can be fully explained as due to the wickedness of those who offer it. And as a proof that it is not a rejection of sacrifice as such we need only observe that as Professor Kittel has pointed out their *prayers* are rejected as emphatically as their *offerings* (vs. 15). Yet prayer is given by the critics an important place in "prophetic religion." The same facts should be borne in mind in regard to the great Temple Address recorded in Jer. vii. It is not denied that the Temple is the Lord's House; but it

is affirmed that the people have made it a "den of robbers." The whole picture is of a perversion of religion which made the temple worship a farce, an impious fraud, a means of escaping the consequences of sin while enjoying its pleasures and profits—in short, an utter perversion of religion as redemption from sin. The language of vs. 22 may be, Professor John D. Davis points out, "the rhetorical negation, frequently employed for emphatic antithesis (e. g. Deut. v. 3)." It is certainly better to understand it in this way than to assert with Principal Smith that "it contradicts Deuteronomy and even more strongly Leviticus, in their repeated statements that in the wilderness God also commanded sacrifices." Psalm li, is especially instructive in this regard. In vs. 16 the Psalmist says, "For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering." This verse the "critics" regard as a particularly clear statement of the spirituality of "prophetic religion," its rejection of all external ritual. Yet in vs. 19 we read: "Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offerings and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar." This verse asserts with equal clearness the validity and acceptability of sacrifice. How shall we treat the two? The critics cut out vss. 18, 19 as a later addition which is out of harmony with "prophetic religion" as a religion without sacrifice. But if we interpret vs. 16 *in the light of* vs. 19 it is evident that both are to be interpreted in terms of the great prophetic utterance of Samuel: "Behold to obey is better than sacrifice and to hearken than the fat of rams." Sacrifice is not a substitute for obedience. Sacrifice without repentance and new obedience is vain. It is worse than vain. It is an affront to a gracious and holy God, an abuse of His mercy. But repentance and obedience are not a substitute for sacrifice, nor do they make sacrifice unnecessary.

"PROPHETIC RELIGION" A MISREPRESENTATION

We have now examined the "certain utterances" cited by Professor McFadyen. There are no other utterances more confidently cited by the critics as providing that the prophets rejected sacrifice than these. Yet all of these passages can be explained as the expression of the burning indignation with which the prophets regarded that fearful abuse of the externals of religion which was so prevalent in their day. It is not necessary to infer from them a deep-going and fundamental antagonism between the law and the prophets. There is no real warrant for such an inference when we consider these passages in connection with the other teachings of the prophets, and in the light of the Scriptures as a whole. Why then has a theory with such meagre and specious Biblical basis and such radically destructive tendencies become so popular?

RESTS ON FALSE ANTITHESSES—"SPIRITUAL" VERSUS "EXTERNAL"

The great reason for the popularity of "prophetic religion" is due, we believe, to the fact that certain popular but false antitheses have been very skilfully used in its support. We can only discuss them very briefly. The first is the antithesis between spiritual religion and external ritual. True religion, we are told, is a thing of the heart. Outward ceremonies

and prescribed duties may be performed, creeds and dogmas may be accepted, and yet the heart be untouched by the power of a living faith. These things may even be used to cover up grievous sins, secret sins of the heart and outbreking sins of the life. All this is true. Yet the antithesis is fundamentally false. The rich who cast much into the treasury may have done it from wrong motives. This does not prove that in the case of the poor widow the gift of two mites was not an act of true worship acceptable to God. We have the best authority for so regarding it. It was the expression of a faith which had gripped the heart and moved the will. The lawyers were not condemned because they *knew* the law, but because they made it a burden for others and did not practice it themselves. The rich were not at fault because they *gave much* but because giving much cost them little and they desired their good works to be seen of men. There is no divorce between head, heart or hand in true religion. Yet this attempt to set the one over against the other, illustrated here in an alleged antithesis between spiritual religion and external rites, is one which is made a good deal of today. Ultimately it leads to the old false antithesis between "faith" and "works." There is an antithesis between a barren and a fruitful faith, and between good works which are the expression of a true and living faith and those which are a substitute for it. But a true faith will ever express itself in true acts of worship and of service.

"ANGRY GOD" VERSUS "GOD OF LOVE"

The second antithesis is that between an "angry god" and a "god of love." The "critical" student of the Old Testament has singled out those passages where the dreadful consequences of sin are most terribly shown. He has divorced these passages as much as possible from others in which the love and mercy of God is plainly manifested. He has largely neglected the fact that this anger of the God of the Old Testament is an anger against sin. With the help of "comparative religion" he has *constructed* as the God of ancient Israel a Yahweh who is like the Molochs and Chemoshes of the ancient Semitic world, vengeful, capricious, unethical—a "national god" in the worst sense of the word. This god is an "angry god" he contrasts with the "god of love" revealed by the Old Testament prophets and by Jesus. And since sacrifice is connected with worship in ancient times, he makes it a part of the worship of the "angry god" and rejects it accordingly. But it should not be necessary to point out that this "angry god" is not the God of the Old Testament. That God is a God who hates sin, but loves the sinner, and has Himself prepared a way of escape; He is a God of mercy and of grace. The God of Israel in the time of Moses was not the fearful monster that many of the critics represent Him as being. And on the other hand the God of the prophets was not merely a "god of love"; he was also a God of justice. Amos shows this very clearly, as the critics are fond of pointing out. He was then as He is now, "merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth," yet a God "that will by no means clear the guilty." He is both an angry God *and* a God of love. The sacrifices which He

ordained were typical of that perfect sacrifice that was to come, when this "angry" yet "loving" God would Himself bear the sin of men on the Cross. The sacrifices of the Old Testament are not man's offering to a bloodthirsty and vengeful god. They are God's way of reconciling man unto Himself; and they point forward to the Cross of Christ. Love and justice are not mutually exclusive; they meet in the Cross. It is the Cross that proves to us most fully that the "angry" God who hates sin is a "God of love," the only hope and refuge of the sinner. And this God of love is revealed in the Old Testament as well as in the New: in the Promise to Abraham which already includes "all the nations of the earth" in its ample scope as really as in the Incarnation and the Death of Christ. The antithesis is merely a new form of the old argument that a loving God cannot punish sin, and requires no atonement.

"SERVICE OF MAN" VERSUS "SERVICE OF GOD"

The decalogue has two tables. Jesus' summary of its contents, a summary based on the Old Testament itself, brings this out clearly. First there is man's duty to God, then his duty toward his fellowmen. The two belong together, and the order of importance is the order of statement: God first, man second. There is a great tendency today to shift the emphasis, or to ignore the first duty altogether in the interest of the second: to reduce Christianity to philanthropy. This tendency is strongly manifest in "prophetic religion," with its rejection of the greatest Old Testament act of worship, sacrifice. As we have seen, Professor Moore speaks as if the two were mutually exclusive: "It is the fundamental doctrine of prophecy: the will of God is wholly moral. For worship he cares nothing at all; for justice, fairness, and goodness between man and man he cares everything." This reduces the Old Testament prophet from a spokesman for God to a social reformer; and social service becomes the all important thing. But the antithesis is false, fundamentally false. True devotion to God is now and has ever been the impelling motive for real service of man. It is when we truly love God that we learn to love our brother also.

THE "PRIMITIVE" VERSUS THE "TRUE"

The fourth antithesis and in some respects the most important is that between the *primitive* and the *true*. In the Book of Genesis we find the institution of sacrifice immediately after the Fall. This has been understood to mean that the necessity of sacrifice was revealed to man or at least realized by him as soon as sin brought about its fatal alienation from God. And as proof of the correctness of this view which makes sacrifice the expression of a universal need it has been customary to point out that in ancient times the rite of sacrifice was practically, perhaps actually, universal. This great argument for the truth and necessity of a practice derived from its antiquity and universality has been very generally accepted by Christians in the past. Yet Professor Shotwell of Columbia University assures us that to the "trained mind . . . there is nothing more suspect than the conclusions of a universal belief. The catholic appeal to what all men have believed, everywhere, at all times, is just what

the psychologist is least sure of." And Pfeleiderer has told us quite definitely that, "What is essential in religion is least of all to be recognized in its historical beginnings." Now what is responsible for this sudden loss of prestige? Why is the argument from antiquity and universality regarded as no longer valid? The answer is, because of the popularity today of the theory of evolution. Evolution as a theory of development from the germinal and imperfect to the mature and perfect tends naturally to regard the word ancient or "primitive" as the antithesis of "true." "Primitive" man, "primitive" religion—primitive here means crude, childish, false. Consequently if sacrifice is ancient and universal the evolutionist will be disposed to regard it as primitive and crude and probably mistaken. The "angry god" with his bloody sacrifices represents, he tells us, primitive man's misconception of the "god of love" whose religion demands no sacrifice. And if this "god of love" requires no sacrifice, of course the Cross loses its sacrificial meaning. The critical conception of "prophetic religion" is thus emphatically an evolutionary conception. It is evolution with its doctrine of the primitive which enables the critic, as he thinks, to treat the sacrificial system of Old Testament religion, despite its tremendous importance, both essential and typical, as a crude and mistaken conception. And it is to be remembered that back of and fundamental to its rejection of sacrifice as primitive, is evolution's rejection of the "Fall" as a myth. According to the Bible, sacrifice followed sin and sin came from the Fall. But Professor Dulles of Auburn Seminary assures us very positively that "The supposition that man had a 'Fall' which exposed him to endless wrath is no longer a tenable foundation on which to build a theology." And Professor Fagnani to whom we have referred above as applying the theory of "prophetic religion" to the New Testament in very drastic form tells us: "It is the Pauline belief in a Fall in Adam that makes necessary an atonement through Christ. But if Adam is not historical and the Fall is not historical, then the Atonement is not necessary and the religion of Jesus stands forth freed from all the additions and complications that the theological speculations of the early Church have added to it." Why must we assume that the Fall is un-historical? Sir Oliver Lodge gives us the answer of many evolutionists when he says: "We did not make the world; and an attempt to punish us for our animal origin and ancestry [note the words!] would be simply comical if any one could be found who was willing to take it seriously." This does not mean, of course, that there are no evolutionists who regard the Biblical account of the Fall as essentially true. But the consistent and thoroughgoing evolutionist is quick to see that a "fall upward" is really a contradiction in terms. But if man did not fall into sin, how can he need redemption from sin? Where is the necessity for expiatory sacrifice, for the Cross of Christ?

"PROPHETIC RELIGION" AN EVOLUTIONARY THEORY

It is not our purpose to discuss evolution here. This would carry us too far afield. But it is of great importance to the proper understanding of "prophetic religion" and of Old Testament criticism and theological

liberalism in general to observe how unmistakably evolution figures in all the popular antitheses which we have been considering,—not merely in the last, but in all of them. The antithesis between “prophetic religion” conceived of as a lofty, “spiritual” religion and contrasted with a “priestly” religion which is regarded as crude, external and even immoral; the antithesis between “prophetic religion” as the religion of a “god of love” little inferior to the God of the Christian, and “priestly religion” pictured as the worship of the horrible “angry god” with his capricious temper and his thirst for blood; the antithesis between “prophetic religion” as a religion of self-forgetting, Christlike “service of humanity,” and “priestly religion” conceived of as a selfish and servile bondage to an oriental despot kind of god—all of these antitheses are wrought out and interpreted in terms of evolution. And it is evolution with its emphasis on man and human progress, with its belief that this progress is brought about by the cultivation of resident forces, with its tendency to deny or ignore sin and substitute eugenics and education for salvation, with its tendency to lose sight of God in the study of man and the world, which has cast its subtle spell over “prophetic religion.”

THE SPELL OF EVOLUTION

We realize what this spell of evolution is when Sir Arthur Thomson tells us:

Immense gaps in our knowledge are immediately apparent when we inquire into the origin of living organisms upon the earth, the beginnings of intelligent behavior, the origin of Vertebrates, the emergence of Man, and so on. We know very little as yet in regard to the way in which any of the “big lifts” in evolution have come about, and yet we believe in the continuity of the process. That is implied in our ideal conception of evolution, which we accept as a working hypothesis. It is not very easy to say what it is that is continuous, but we mean in part that there is at no stage any intrusion of extraneous factors.

This statement is very significant for two reasons: because of what it *admits*, and because of what it *asserts*. Sir Arthur *admits* the “big lifts,” the missing links. He admits that the evolutionist has grappled in vain with the deepest and weightiest problems. Indeed he goes on to call attention to the difficulty when he says: “But this continues to raise in the minds of many the difficulty that the results seem much too large for their antecedents. Can we believe that the world of life, with its climax in Man, has been evolved from a nebulous mass?” But he *asserts* with a dogmatism worthy of a far stronger case that this ideal conception must be allowed to bar out all extraneous factors. It need not, of course, be maintained that this view of evolution is necessary or inevitable, that it is the only view. But there is deep significance in these words and they remind us that Edward Clodd said years ago: “If the theory of evolution be not universal, the germs of decay are in it.” However much we may try to make terms with it, to christianize it, to find room in it for the Supernatural, for God, for sin, for salvation, this “ideal conception” of evolution as a law of *continuity*, a uniformitarianism that brooks at no stage “any intrusion of extraneous factors,” tends to overthrow us and

engulf us in the sea of Naturalism. Yet it cannot be too strongly emphasized that this *law of continuity* is not an established scientific fact, but, on Sir Arthur's own admission, "a working hypothesis," the formulation of "an ideal conception," which still leaves "immense gaps in our knowledge."

THE PRESENT CRISIS

Is it any wonder then that we are hearing so much about "theories" of inspiration, "theories" of the atonement? Is it strange that the liberals are trying to distinguish between an "inspired" Bible and an "errorless" Bible, between "vicarious suffering" and "a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice and reconcile us to God," that the now historic "Five Points" are so objectionable to them? Is it not obvious why evolution has become such a burning issue in Christian circles? "Prophetic religion" as portrayed by the evolutionary critic of the Old Testament is a totally different thing from "prophetic religion" as set forth in the Old Testament itself. Which shall we choose? Shall we accept the *ipse dixit*s of the rationalistic critic however much they contradict the Bible, or shall we hold to the authority of Scripture even though its statements are challenged by evolutionist and critic? There is no question where our Church has stood in the past. Our Standards tell us this plainly. The first question asked every candidate for ordination to the ministry is this: "Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?" The liberals would like to abolish it altogether or to be granted the right so to "interpret" it that "infallible" will mean "fallible" and "only" will not deny to evolutionary theories the right to determine Christian faith. Will it be in the interest of harmony and peace to make this concession? Our Standards tell us further that Christ's death was an act of "priestly" expiation: "Christ executeth the office of a priest, in His once offering up of Himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice and reconcile us to God, and in making continual intercession for us." Are we prepared to admit that the "priestly" conception of religion is "primitive," and that Jesus is only the last and greatest of the prophets, the supreme illustration of the great law of vicarious suffering? Are we prepared to admit that the right to hold such a "theory" of the atonement is guaranteed by our Standards and that those who hold such views are keeping within "evangelical bounds"? If so we would better simply admit that "inspiration," "infallible," "atonement," "Christ," "Christianity," etc., are terms so elastic and elusive as to be meaningless and that the great saving facts which they represent have lost their value for us, that we do not care enough for our Presbyterian, our Christian heritage to maintain it in the face of opposition and denial. Shall we do this? Or shall we say,

*Faith of our fathers, holy faith!
We will be true to thee till death.*