

ARTICLE II.

THE PROPOSED RECONSTRUCTION OF THE PENTATEUCH.

BY PROF. EDWIN C. BISSELL, HARTFORD, CT.

II. THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS, OR THE PROPHETS AND THE LAW ? 1

CURRENT problems of the Biblical criticism of the Old Testament have this peculiarity, that it makes little difference where one begins to discuss them, he cannot easily miss the main drift. Indeed, it is an obvious misfortune of this criticism, as represented in the school of Graf and Wellhausen, that instead of being able to concentrate its forces at any one point, it is obliged to scatter them along a line reaching from the times before Moses to those following Ezra, and to be as fully alert in one period as in another, since defeat anywhere must result in total rout and overthrow. Nominally, its aim is to reconstruct the Pentateuch, or rather, Israelitish history, on the principle of a natural development; but this necessitates as well a logical and historical revision of the entire Old Testament, not excepting the works of post-exilic writers. It accepts only the so-called Book of the Covenant (Ex. xx-xxiii; xxxiv, with nebulous fragments of history)² as the germ of the ancient Scriptures, and as representing down to the times of Josiah (c. B.C. 624), even through the notable reigns of David and Solomon, the aggregate of Israelitish annals and laws. With this king it dates the Deuteronomic code, holding it to be a recasting and enlargement of these same fragments of Exodus to suit the emergency of a central sanctuary, that is, of Solomon's temple, and the tendency expressing itself in it. The Levitical

¹ Read at the General Conference of Connecticut in New London, Nov. 15, 1882.

² Cf. Wellhausen's edition of Bleek's *Einleitung in das A.T.* (1878), p. 178.—All references to the Old Testament in this article are to the Hebrew text.

legislation, with its introductory history, forming the real body of the first four books of the Bible, appeared about two centuries later, under Ezra.

Now, from this scheme it will at once be seen that it is not alone the Pentateuch which is involved. The historical books must furnish a definite arena of discussion. And the prophets before the Exile, who it is supposed were special sources of the nation's history and religion, are a pre-eminently important factor in the debate, while the Psalter and some other portions of the Hagiography, as evidently reflecting the spirit and teachings of the rest, cannot be altogether overlooked.

In this paper I shall direct attention to but one principal feature of the subject, viz. to the prophets who appeared before the Exile; and I shall seek to answer the question, whether, in fact, as is alleged by our critics, they preceded what is known as the Levitical code or followed it; that is, whether the traditional order, the Law and the Prophets, should stand, or should be changed to the Prophets and the Law. As already intimated, the settlement of this one question, in the nature of the case, must be a virtual settlement of the entire discussion in its present form. And while there are points where the line of our critics' defence might, perhaps, be considered weaker, there is no point where a successful defence is, for the theory they defend, more imperatively necessary.

The question, then, is on the relative order of the Law and the Prophets; and waiving for the time all other related matters, let it be determined, if possible, from the writings especially involved. Has the ceremonial law of Exodus, Numbers, and Leviticus, with its conspicuous setting of history, left any such impression on the prophets referred to as might be expected if they had it before them? Or, more definitely, has this part of the Pentateuch left any discoverable impression at all upon these prophets, so that its existence in their time may be justly inferred; since that would be quite enough to prove the point under consideration?

In the meantime we shall do well to remember who these writers are whom we propose to consult: that they are prophets, and not priests; that their office in its essential import, and as interpreted by the whole Israelitish history, called them to watch over the spirit of the law, not to teach and explain its letter. At all times it was the substance, not the form of it, that was the subject of their burning utterances.¹

The leading positions taken by our critics to prove the negative of the question before us are, (1) that the prophets before the Exile are absolutely silent respecting the Levitical code, with the history that belongs to it; and (2) that they show decided hostility to animal sacrifices, a circumstance bearing still more directly against its supposed existence.² On these two abutments the critical arch, at this point, and its whole amazing superstructure, may be said to rest. And we have reason to be thankful for the clearness and unmistakableness of the issue thus presented. But that both these positions are simply supposititious, and have no substantial basis whatever, that indeed, they are demonstrably false on any fair interpretation of the records, I think can be made to appear to really candid minds; and even beyond this, that the first, if true, would prove nothing in the present case; while the second can be supported on no grounds which would not introduce confusion and absurdity into the prophetic literature.

Starting with a minor point, I remark that if it were to be admitted that the pre-exilic prophets make no direct reference to the Levitical code, it would by no means follow that it had no existence in their time. Do these prophets in their denunciations of idolatry ever make any direct reference to

¹ So Marti in *Jahrbücher für Protestantische Theologie* (1880), p. 159: "Sie [die Propheten] waren, also, diejenigen Männer, die zu wachen hatten über die wirksame Seite des Gottesdienstes im Israelitischen Volke. . . . Sie sind weniger die Wächter der Theokratie in ihren cultischen Institutionen als nach ihren sittlichen und moralischen Vorschriften." Cf. also, Delitzsch in *Messianic Prophecies* (Edinburgh, 1880), pp. 8-13.

² See Wellhausen, *Geschichte Israels* i. pp. 1-5, 57-59; Robertson Smith, *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, pp. 286-288; and *The Prophets of Israel*, pp. 164, 175 f.; Duhm, *Die Theologie der Propheten*, pp. 12, 17, 18.

that earliest supposed fragment of Israelitish literature, the Book of the Covenant, especially to the second commandment, holding so prominent a place in the Sinaitic legislation? It is acknowledged to have been extant in this period; it was recognized as Mosaic and authoritative.¹ To cite its clear and exceedingly explicit prohibition of graven images and of the service of false gods, which these prophets were always in one form or another denouncing, one might suppose would have been both pertinent and effective. But in no case is it done. And the precepts of this code, moreover, were practically ignored by the people down to the time of the Exile. What, then, is an argument worth drawn simply from the absence of direct appeal on the part of Israelitish prophets to supposed Mosaic institutions and laws?

It is well to note, indeed, in passing, into what a trying dilemma our critics are brought by this same Book of the Covenant, with its pronounced and clear-cut enactments.

¹ See *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, pp. 299, 331. In the latter passage this critic says: "While the Pentateuch does not make Moses the author of the Levitical code, it tells that he wrote down certain laws. He wrote down the words of Jehovah's covenant with Israel (Ex. xxxiv. 27, 28; Ex. xxiv. 4, 7). In the former passage the words of the covenant are expressly identified with the Ten Words on the tables of stone. In the latter passage the same thing seems to be meant." This is sufficient to show Professor Smith's opinion respecting the Decalogue. When he proceeds on the basis of Ex. xxiv. 4 to argue that it was *only* the Decalogue that Moses is here said to have written, the circumstances under which these words were uttered ("And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord," etc.), as following what is narrated in Ex. xx. 18-22, and the laws of which that passage is the natural introduction, plainly forbid such a construction. Indeed, when it is said xxiv. 3, that "Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord, and all the judgments"; it is evident on the face of it, that "all the words" *cannot* refer simply to the Decalogue, and "all the judgments" to the laws that follow it, xxi.-xxiii. For, (1) the people had themselves heard the Decalogue (xx. 1, 19), and did not need to have it so specially rehearsed. And (2), on that supposition, the people would be absurdly represented in xxiv. 3 as saying that they would keep the Decalogue, while they decline to say what they would do respecting the "judgments" (i.e. the Book of the Covenant, xxi.-xxiii.). While (3), at xxiv. 7, Moses is said to have read in the hearing of the people the Book of the Covenant, and got their assent to it before ratifying with them, by the sprinkling of blood, the Covenant with which it stood in connection. Cf. also Dillmann's *Commentary on Die Bücher Exodus und Leviticus* (1880), p. 256.

Assuming it to be the sole collection of laws possessed by the Israelites till near the close of the seventh century B.C. they are not only compelled, in direct contravention of a favorite method of argumentation, to admit that it was never directly appealed to, and remained in its principal features inoperative; but, to save their theory of the originality of the religion of the prophets of this period, must even argue that prophets and people were governed by principles really antagonistic to it. These prophets, they affirm, did not trouble themselves about image-worship, or any other special form of cultus. Elijah had no quarrel with Ahab concerning golden calves, says Professor Smith, more than once, in his latest work.¹ In fact, to avoid the necessity of taking account of the first and second commandments as recognized motives influencing the minds of men during this period, we find this critic resorting to a style of reasoning as utterly trivial as it is unjustified by anything that we know in the premises.

Elijah, who could not have been ignorant of the words written by the divine finger: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me; . . . Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image," Elijah, it is said, was moved to oppose the worship of Baal in his time, among other things, by the wine-bibbing habits of the Baal worshippers.² Hezekiah, of

¹ The Prophets of Israel, pp. 96, 109, 113. Professor William H. Green, D.D., in his recent volume, *Moses and the Prophets* (Carter, 1883), p. 265, as it seems to me uses language none too strong when he characterizes this position as an "atrocious misrepresentation." "If there is any one thing," he goes on to say, "of which Jehovah expresses his utter abhorrence everywhere throughout the Scriptures, it is the practice of idolatry in whatever form; and that a true prophet of the Lord, jealous as Elijah was for his name and worship in a time of widespread apostasy, and to whose divine commission such signal attestations were given by the Lord himself, could possibly have been 'indifferent' to what was so grossly dishonoring to God, or, as it is mildly put in the passage above cited, 'plainly out of place' in his worship, is absolutely beyond belief."

² The Prophets of Israel, pp. 84, 85. Professor Smith admits that this is only a surmise of his. "We have no evidence that Elijah had a personal connection with the Rechabites; but Jonadab was a prominent partizan of Jehu, and went with him to see his zeal for Jehovah when he put an end to Baal and his worshippers" (2 Kings x. 15 sq.). The other things which are supposed to have influenced Elijah in his opposition to Baal were, (1) the influence of the prophetic guilds, although the Professor concedes that "Elijah himself, as far

whom the writer of the Books of Kings declares that he "clave unto the Lord" and kept his commandments "which the Lord commanded Moses," according to the Scotch professor, became a reformer under circumstances even less creditable to his good sense and supposed loyalty to the national religion. He had seen, as the result of recent wars, many heathen shrines demolished and finally abandoned; while the temple at Jerusalem, in view of its apparent inviolability, at the same time assumed a relatively greater importance. Hence the thought came to him, why should not he set about the demolition of idolatrous shrines, and so enhance still more the importance of the temple.¹ The conclusiveness of this reasoning is only equalled by that of the same critic when he announces that the code of Deuteronomy "must be regarded as in a great measure a product of reflection on the failure of Hezekiah's measures."² Criticism, properly speaking, this is not. It does not show even a fair inspection of the records. The looking is a predetermined overlooking of what is most prominent in them. I have heard of an artist who once bought on the market a cheap picture of an animal, and finding it scrapable, he scraped out of it a masterpiece by Correggio. But who ever heard of an artist persistently attempting to reverse this process?

But these are merely negative results. We now go further, and affirm that the Israelitish prophets who rose before the Exile so far from being absolutely silent respecting the Levitical code and unaffected by it, on the contrary, show, as we can judge, had little to do with these guilds"; and (2) the sense of the injustice done to Naboth by Ahab in the matter of the vineyard. These are all the reasons which this critic can find for Elijah's contest with the prophets of Baal and their hideous idolatry.

¹ The Prophets of Israel, p. 362 f.

² *Ibid.*, p. 368 f. It was not the result of reflection on the prohibitions of the Decalogue, or on the inherent wrong of idolatry; but "it starts from the observation that it is impossible to get rid of Canaanite elements of worship until sacrifice and ritual observances are confined to one sanctuary, and that this again is impossible till the old principle is given up that all food, and especially every animal slain for a feast, is unclean unless presented at the altar." So it is to political shrewdness and finesse as well as sober reflection, that we are to ascribe the origin of the Deuteronomic code.

from first to last, that it has made a most powerful impression upon them. Their work, severally and unitedly, is largely a work of recovery and repair in significant harmony with its provisions; while, as we believe, definite allusion is made to it as to a well-known, extensive, and divinely authoritative body of laws.

There is the prophet Joel, for example, who, until the exigencies of this new theory made another conclusion imperative, was regarded by the almost unanimous consent of scholars as one of the oldest in the list.¹ He says nothing, it is true, about any Mosaic law of offerings which controlled the sacrificial ritual of the temple in his day. But is it any the less to the point that, in evident sympathy with an established priesthood, on the occasion of a great national calamity he summons them as ministers of his God to gird themselves and lament because the meat-offering and drink-offering are cut off from the house of their God (i. 13) ?

And so with Amos, the inspired herdsman of Tekoa, who prophesied near the beginning of the eighth century B.C. and, though himself from Judah, in that marked unity of spirit which characterized all the prophets, carried his bold message to the very centre of idolatrous worship in the northern kingdom. It is of transgression that he speaks. There is some definite law of the the Lord (ii. 4 חררה יררה ; cf. Lev. xxvi. 15) which has been despised, and commandments which have not been kept. It is evident, moreover, that something more than the Decalogue is referred to (iv. 6-11 ; v. 4, 5, 21, 22), when, with withering sarcasm, which would

¹ And it may be said that one of the chief problems of the Wellhausen school of critics has seemed all along to have been how best to discredit, or get rid of the defendant's witnesses. As late as 1875, when Duhm's *Theologie der Propheten* appeared, he was obliged to admit the virtual unanimity of scholars on the question of Joel's early date. He says (p. 71): "Zwar wird gegenwärtig Joel fast mit einstimmigkeit höher hinauf gesetzt; doch hoffen wir das jüngere Alter dieses Propheten mit überwiegender Wahrscheinlichkeit erweisen zu können." The proofs given, however (pp. 275-277), are, for the most part, simply a begging of the question, being based on the truthfulness of the theory which is under discussion, viz. that the Levitical code originated at the time of the Exile.

have been simply farcical if there had been no reference to a legally established place and order of worship, he bids the people of Israel come to Bethel and transgress, and at Gilgal to multiply transgressions; and, further, in masterly hyperbole, summons them to bring their slain offerings every morning, their tithes *once in three days*, and, like the Pharisees of after times, to publish abroad their freewill offerings, whose value was in their being the product of a silent, inward sense and impulse; in all of which utterances there are as many evident allusions to requirements of the Levitical or Deuteronomic legislation as there are clauses (Deut. xiv. 28, 29; xvi. 10; Lev. xxii. 21, 23; Num. xv. 3).

Hosea, beginning his work near the same time, but still, according to our critics, not far from two centuries before the appearance of Deuteronomy, and three and a half centuries before the code of Leviticus was conceived by Ezra and his coadjutors, we find hotly denouncing the priesthood of his day; not *as priests* observe, but as those who had been unfaithful and wilfully ignorant of their appointed work. They had misled the people. They had forgotten the law of their God (iv. 6. תִּירַת אֱלֹהֶיךָ) and God, therefore, repudiated them. And from the immediate context and other utterances of this prophet it is plain enough to see what this law is which, in his view, the priests have forgotten and trampled upon. It is a law which has to do with the sin-offering¹ and other sacrifices (iv. 8; cf. Lev. vi. 19; Hos.

¹ חֲזַחְתָּ עִמִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל, Lit., "They eat [fut. expressing the idea of what is customary] the sin of my people." Wellhausen (Geschichte i. p. 75) and his school (cf. The Old Test. in the Jewish Church, p. 251; The Prophets of Israel, p. 105) deny that the sin-offering is referred to. But if the priests are here spoken of, it is difficult to see what else can be meant. According to the Levitical code (Lev. vi. 19, וְיִשְׂתַּחֲוֶה אֹתָהּ יִשְׂרָאֵל עִמִּי), a part of the ceremony of this very sin-offering was for the priest to eat of it; and there can be no other reason for supposing that this is not meant here, than that it would offer an insurmountable obstacle to the new theory. That a fine paid in money to the priest by the transgressor is intended can by no means be admitted. A passage adduced in its support (2 Kings xii. 17) does not mean this (cf. Theile, Die Bücher der Könige, in loc.); and there is nothing in the Old Testament which gives the least coloring to the hypothesis that any such system of indulgences was ever known in Israel. The context of our passage shows that with the

viii. 13; ix. 4); with the distinction in food as clean and unclean (ix. 3, 4); with feasts, and new moons, and Sabbaths (ii. 13, cf. Lev. xxiii. 2, 4 ff.). Moreover, it is a written law of wide extent and many precepts. "I write for him," says the prophet in the name of the Lord, "the myriads of my law" (אֲבוּבֵי־לִי רַב־תּוֹרָתִי, viii. 12, not "the great things of my law," as the A.V. has it) — "they were accounted a strange thing." I am aware that among those who think the prophecy of Hosea ought not to contain such a sentiment the most persistent efforts have been made to put upon these plain words a different meaning; but the motive has been too transparent and the exegesis too strained to command anything more than a strictly partisan support.¹ In fact, in addition to the evident references to the Mosaic laws, moral or ritual, just referred to, it has been shown by a recent writer that there is not a single book of the Pentateuch which, in the way of illustration or historical priests of Hosea's time, the eating was the principal part of the ceremonial of the sin-offering. And they were quite willing that the people should commit more sin, that they themselves might have the more to eat. (Cf. the conduct of Eli's sons, 1 Sam. ii. 12-17).

¹ Professor Smith (The Old Test. etc., p. 297) says: "But the prophets of the eighth century never speak of a written law of Moses. The only passage which has been taken to do so is Hosea viii. 12. And here the grammatical translation is, 'Though I wrote to him my Torah in ten thousand precepts' [probably, a *lapsus penae* for, 'the ten thousand precepts of my Torah,'] they would be esteemed a strange thing." The matter, however, is not so easily disposed of. If the use of the past tense in the last clause is not allowed any weight in determining how the first verb is to be rendered, or if Smend's objections (Studien u. Krit., 1876, p. 633) that the hypothetical translation emasculates the passage of all sense whether the verb or the word for "ten thousand" be emphasized, still how can it be denied that there lies on the face of the declaration the presupposition of a written Torah? One of the latest commentators (Nowack, Der Prophet Hosea, p. 140) renders the verb as Ewald rendered it by "ich schreibe." But though it were to be taken hypothetically (as the future in Ps. xci. 7), that must not be allowed to obscure the obvious force of the verb that follows. As Bredenkampf has insisted: "Das als thatsächlich ausgesagte Fremddachten der Torah oder Toroth (LXX), setzt nothwendig das Vorhandensein desselben und zwar als geschriebener (אֲבוּבֵי) voraus" (Gesetz und Propheten, p. 37 f.). Cf. also the תּוֹרַת יְהוָה יִחַדּוּ וְיִקְרִי of Amos (ii. 4), of which Rudolph Smend wrote in 1876: "I do not understand how Duhm can affirm that these words should not be directly referred to an external divine law. For קִי is really just = *statutum*" (Studien u. Krit. (1876), p. 634, note).

reminescence has not left its impression on the pages of our prophet.¹

And Micah, too, in that memorable passage (vi. 6-8) cited by our critics to show that he rejected sacrifices altogether, demanding in their place that men should do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with their God, in this very utterance but echoes, as it would seem, a sentiment of the Book of Deuteronomy (x. 12), which it is affirmed did not yet exist, and presupposes the practice of ritual observances whose warrant can only be found in the Levitical code (*Lev.* ix. 3; cf. *Num.* xv. 1-16; xxviii. xxix.).

But of still more importance than these isolated references is the fact that there are certain grand features of the pre-exilic prophets, common at least to the most of them, which, in the nature of the case, can only be accounted for by regarding them as the result of the priestly legislation of the Pentateuch. One of them is the uniform attitude of these prophets towards a central sanctuary. According to the current criticism they ought, at least the oldest of them, to be wholly silent on this subject, since until Deuteronomy appeared, more than two hundred years after the date of Joel and Amos, and a hundred after that of Hosea, Micah, and Isaiah, there was no sign of a law regarding it. Every one did, as they say, in this respect what was right in his own eyes (cf. *Deut.* xii. 8). In fact, it is supposed that there was sufficient justification for such a state of things found in the Book of the Covenant itself (*Ex.* xx. 24, 25). But it is Joel who calls for the proclamation of a solemn fast in Zion, i.e. Jerusalem (ii. 15), and declares that it is the dwelling-place of Jehovah (iv. 17). It is Amos who begins his terrible arraignment of the kingdoms of the earth, especially of Judah and Israel, with the thrilling words "Out of Zion the Lord roareth, and uttereth his voice from Jerusalem" (i. 2). Bethel, the seat of idolatry, is to him a Beth-Aven (a seat of nothingness), and at Gilgal and Beersheba he would be sought in vain (v. 4-6). It is Hosea, a citizen

¹ Curtius, *Levitical Priests*, pp. 176-178; cf. Smend, l.c. p. 641.

of the northern kingdom, who invariably stigmatizes that kingdom as an organized apostasy, without a future and unworthy of the favor of Jehovah. Judah it was that should find mercy and salvation from the Lord their God (i. 6, 7; cf. xiv. 1). With his eyes fixed, as it would appear, on Jerusalem, he delivers the message which closes his book: "Take with you words, and turn to the Lord; say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously; so will we render the calves of our lips" (xiv. 2, 3; cf. his attitude towards Jehu (i. 4) after he had shown his true character).

So too, Micah, in that sublime prediction concerning the last days, when the mountain of the house of the Lord should be established on the top of the mountains, announces that it is from Zion that the law shall go forth, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem (iv. 2, 3). And especially Isaiah, the close of whose prophetic activity antedated still by three quarters of a century the supposed date of Deuteronomy, leaves us no room to doubt how he regarded a plurality of altars among his countrymen. Zion is the mountain of the Lord to which the nations shall resort (ii. 2 ff.), copying the very words of his contemporary Micah (iv. 1, 2), to give additional emphasis to the thought. The Lord would dwell on Zion, as once in the fiery cloud of the wilderness, and no enemy, not even a Sennacherib, should dare to lift his hand against it (x. 32; cf. xxxiii. 20; xxx. 29). To those who find it not only unnecessary, but presumptuous, to make allowance in these utterances of God's prophets for a supposed political bias such evidence as this will be amply conclusive. The theory that during all this period there existed no statute touching a central sanctuary where the ordinary worship of God was to be conducted is a chimera. Defection, illegality, ignorance, perverseness there was enough of; but there was also something lying back in the early history of the people, well-known, fixed, and authoritative, which no true prophet could ignore and to which no instructed Israelitish conscience could fail to respond.

And let me call attention to another thing made singularly emphatic by these early prophets, and yet most singularly made emphatic if the theory of our critics be accepted: namely, the fact that a solemn covenant existed between Jehovah and the Israelitish people. Sometimes it is under the form of the marriage relation that it is represented, as very largely and repeatedly by Hosea (i.-iii.), who, it may be said, is full of the thought, and fortifies himself in it against the stout resistance of rulers and people (vi. 5, 7; viii. 1). He charges them with swearing falsely in making this covenant (x. 4), and with being a people bent on backsliding (xi. 7; cf. xiv. 1).¹ Sometimes, as in Amos, it is by a touching allusion to the early history (iii. 1-3). The sons of Israel are the family whom God had brought up out of Egypt. Them only had he known of all the families of the earth; therefore he would punish them for their iniquity. Could two walk together except they were agreed? (Cf. also iv. 6-11; v. 4, 5, 21, 22.) Sometimes, as in the graceful metaphors of an Isaiah, it is under the image of a family whom God had nourished and brought up, to be repaid with unthankfulness and rebellion (i. 2, 4); or of a vineyard on which there could not have been expended more kindly effort, while it had rewarded its patient and painstaking Lord only with wildness and emptiness (v. 2, 4). But under whatever form it may appear, it is everywhere a conspicuous and controlling fact with these earlier prophets. Their most powerful reasoning is rooted in it, and from it, as from an acknowledged event of history, their most stirring appeals find directest inspiration. So common and universally accepted, indeed, had the thought become, that it had already passed over from a literal to a metaphorical sense, and we

¹ So Nowack, *ibid.*, p. xxx. of the Einleitung: "Sehen wir darauf hin unser Buch an, so ergibt sich als Grundvoraussetzung für die Busspredigt Hoseas die, dass Jahveh in der Zeit, da Israel aus Egypten zog und in der Wüste weilte, dies Volk sich erwählt und einen Bund mit ihm geschlossen (ix. 10; xi. 1; xii. 10; xiii. 4, 5); kraft dessen Israel eine Reihe von Verpflichtungen auf sich nahm, die in der Torah Jahves niedergelegt sind (viii. 1, 12), als deren Inhaber und Verkündiger Hosea die Priester dieses Reiches ansieht" (iv. 6).

find Hosea (ii. 20) speaking of a covenant which the Lord would make with beasts of the field for Israel's sake.

Carlyle speaks of a peculiar class of people in his day who, in writing and deed, struggled not in favor of duty being done, but against duty of any sort being required.¹ Our prophets obviously did not belong to such a class. They have the keenest possible sense of certain obligations which had been assumed by Israel, and hence of certain inevitable obligations to be discharged by Israel.

Now, will any one venture the assertion that such a thought and moral force as this of the covenant could have sprung from the oral transmission of those few chapters of Exodus known as the Book of the Covenant? By no means. Its solemn basis and warrant lie outside that book (cf. especially xix. 3-6 f.; xxiv. 3 f.). Our critics themselves rather seek to deny that any such covenant existed; or, if it existed in thought, that it was anything more than a figment of the brain, a mere fancy of the prophets, no real thing presupposing two covenanting parties; presupposing, as to the Israelites any actual covenant must (Ps. l. 5), and as the very etymology of the word and history of the conception demand, sacrificial blood to solemnize it and sacredly bind the covenanting parties to its provisions.² But could anything be more fatal than thus to fly in the face of what is written as plainly on the whole prophetic literature of this period as high spiritual aspiration and loyalty to Jehovah are written there? It is as an unfaithful wife that Israel is depicted, who has forgotten the days of her first tender love, when, led by a prophet of the Lord, she came up out of Egypt (Hos. ii. 17; xi. 1; xii. 14). She had broken her plighted troth, and been treacherous and untrue (Hos. v. 7; vi. 7). She is

¹ Reminiscences by Froude (Harper's ed.), ii. p. 76.

² Cf. Zech. ix. 11: "Even thou! through the blood of thy covenant, I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit." There can be no doubt that the ceremonies recorded in Ex. xxiv. 3-8 are here referred to. Wellhausen says in a note on p. 434 of his *Geschichte*, i. "Die Vorstellung eines zwischen Jahve und Israel eingegangenen Bundes (Berith), von der aus die Autoritäten der Biblischen Theologie das ganze Alte Testament zu verstehen glauben, findet sich bei den älteren Propheten nicht."

even represented as saying in the better future, "I will arise and return to my first husband; for it was better with me than than now" (Hos. ii. 7). And there is nothing more characteristic of the prophetic activity of an Hosea or Amos than just this uniform and persistent effort to reclaim and bring back the nation to what appears to be a universally acknowledged standard. Human language offers no resources to express more strongly than is here expressed the sense of the prophets that Israel had fallen away, backslidden, broken faith with God. This is the actual, palpable substance of their commonest utterances. We never find them, as though founders of a new religion, dealing in abstractions or generalities; hovering in the air with imaginary conceptions of duty; pulling now one way and now another, or, in obvious collusion, joining their forces to hoodwink a credulous people. They are at the farthest possible remove from anything like mere histrionic representation. There is one thing which all will freely accord to these men, and that is, a marked intellectual superiority. But there is another thing which we must just as certainly accord them,—a deep and all-pervading intellectual sincerity and uprightness. They had tremendous convictions, not a bit of dilettanteism. They believed, therefore they spoke. If they appear somewhat intolerant it is because they felt that they had the warrant of history, and of the God of history, to be intolerant. It is with historical and popularly accepted facts that their message is concerned, whether here or there, with something well known to all, and long known, and known not simply by the understanding, but also by the heart and conscience.

It is on the very ground of this ancient covenant that Israel is called upon to be a holy people to the Lord (Ex. xix. 5, 6; Lev. xi. 44; xx. 25, 26; Deut. xiv. 21). They were his peculiar possession. He was holy and they should be holy. And it is noticeable that this idea of holiness, though naturally, as found in our prophets not bounded by the external requirements of the Levitical code (Isa. vi. 3), at least takes knowledge of them, and is everywhere more or

less modified by them. Hence it is that Jeremiah distinguishes the circumcised Israelite, who is yet uncircumcised in heart, from the uncircumcised Egyptian (ix. 24, 25). He recognizes the outward rite no less that he recognizes also its inward, spiritual meaning. And Isaiah, the most idealistic of all these earlier prophets, stigmatizes the people of his day as rebellious, in that they pollute themselves by dwelling amidst the sepulchres of the dead, lodging in the monuments, and eating swine's flesh, the broth of abominable (i.e. ceremonially unclean) things steaming in their caldrons (lxv. 3, 4; lxvi. 17).¹ And everywhere the land of Israel is looked upon as holy for Israel's sake (Amos vii. 17; Hos. ix. 3, 5); Zion and its temple are holy; and no less the altar-gifts and those who offer them (Isa. xxiii. 18; xliii. 28; Jer. xi. 15); feasts, Sabbaths and festival days (Isa. xxx. 29; lvi. 6; lviii. 13; Hos. ix. 5). It would be difficult, indeed, to find a prophet after the Exile who shows a deeper sense of the existence and sacred character of some ceremonial law than, for example, Hosea seems to do in one of his prophetic utterances (ix. 3-5; cf. Num. xix. 14 f.). And the inference is imperative. These prophets refer, though it may be never so indirectly, to the extended legislation of the Pentateuch. There is no other supposable circumstance which so well accounts for their habitual attitude, their prevailing current of thought and coloring of speech, as this overshadowing Sinaitic code founded on the covenant formally concluded through the mediation of Moses. Such a covenant, in the nature of the case, demanded an extended Torah to define its provisions. And to this same Torah in general, we believe, Jeremiah refers in that prediction of future brighter days, when Jehovah should make another covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah; not such a covenant as he had made with their fathers; but his law he would put in their inward parts and write it in their hearts (xxxi. 32). The idea of

¹ Even on the supposition that these passages are not from Isaiah, but from some one who lived during the Exile; still they must have been spoken long before the supposed introduction of the Code of the Priests (c. 444 B.C.).

covenant and law, that is, are with him interchangeable, inseparable. To a Jewish mind, in fact, the one involved the other as truly as the idea of a sacrificer involved that of a sacrifice and an altar.

But it is said that the earlier prophets show decided opposition to the offering of sacrifices in themselves considered, and therefore they cannot have known and acknowledged this Levitical code which prescribes them, and contains the ritual by which they were afterwards to be governed. If such a claim were not made by men of learning and responsible positions we could hardly regard it as seriously meant. On its face it appears to us as nothing less than preposterous. Does Samuel show opposition to sacrifices when he says to the impatient and recreant Saul: "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams?" (1 Sam. xv. 22); as little as Hosea when, in rebuke of gross excesses of externalism, he declares as the mind of the Lord: "For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings" (רַחֵם אֱלֹהִים מִזְבִּיחַ, vi. 6). There are no texts better adapted than these to illustrate the uniform attitude of the prophets in all periods of Israelitish history towards animal sacrifices. What they opposed was misdirection, degenerating into absolute idolatry. It was an effort at prayer without a consecration of the will. It was a perverse tendency to look upon sacrifice as an *opus operatum*, something in itself sufficient for their spiritual needs. To enjoin the people to bring their offerings was wholly needless. To interdict it would have been as futile as to interdict the dews from gathering on Lebanon. What they did properly seek to do was to insist on the spiritual significance of these solemn rites; to persuade men that the form without the substance was not only rubbish, but might be even a stench in the nostrils. Just as a minister of our day might say to men who offer their means for the spread of the gospel and the support of its institutions while personally standing aloof from it: "It is not your money we want, but you." Just as the apostle Paul actually said

to his Corinthian sympathizers under similar circumstances: "I seek not yours, but you" (2 Cor. xii. 14). So these men of God in the olden time in the midst of a tendency to pure exteriority, to exaggerate the matter of the flesh and blood of their offerings until they were made to represent everything in religion and, at the same time, to excuse everything in irreligion and idolatry, found no language but that of hyperbole that met the case.¹

Do you think God hungry? Will he eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats? said the Psalmist, in view of a similar perverseness (l. 13; cf. xl. 7-10). No stronger language is found in any prophet on this subject than in Isaiah.² He compares the sacrifice of a lamb to the cutting off of the neck of a dog, and in the same passage, puts the offering of an oblation on the same level with the presentation of the blood of swine (lxvi. 3). But he cannot mean to reject and cast obloquy upon sacrifices themselves; for he elsewhere represents them as praiseworthy and to be desired (xix. 19). And in the very context, he indulges, as here, in the language of strong hyperbole. "Where is the house,"

¹ It was not formalism alone nor idolatry alone that the earlier prophets opposed, but both together, and especially the latter as a direct fruit of the former. So Delitzsch in speaking of the schism of Jeroboam II. (Old Testament History of Redemption, p. 105 f.), truly says: "For out of dynastic considerations Jeroboam sought to perpetuate the independence of his dominions by destroying the religious unity of both kingdoms, and by introducing a new mode of worship, which, without cutting loose from Jehovah, met the heathen lusts and Egyptian propensities of the masses through the choice of a symbol derived from the Egyptian steer-god, and flattered the Ephraimitic national pride by the choice of ancient places celebrated through the great national reminiscences connected with them (1 Kings xii. 26 sqq.; Amos iv. 4; v. 5; viii. 14; Hosea iv. 15). This syncretistic state religion (Amos vii. 10, 13), with its self-created priesthood, and its servile, fawning prophets, is considered by the prophets of Jehovah in both kingdoms as an accursed apostasy; and so every fraternization of the kings of Judah with the kings of Israel excites the displeasure of the prophets, even when it is favorable to the interests of the kingdom of Judah." Cf. also Smend, *ibid.*, pp. 601, 602, 606.

² If our critics' theory were true, one might expect as Bredenkampf has shown (*ibid.*, p. 78 f.), to find in Amos and Hosea the most marked antithesis noted between outward offerings and inward piety rather than in Isaiah, Micah, and Jeremiah.

he asks, as representative of the Highest, "that ye will build for me" (lxvi. 1, 2)? Was he therefore an opponent of an outward temple? And in another place (i. 12, 13): "Who hath required this at your hands, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me." Is this to be taken as prosy literalness? Then, in the same breath that the prophet discourages outward offerings and sacrifices he also favors the closing of the temple gates against his apostate countrymen. There is no argument to prove the one which will not just as really prove the other.

Jeremiah also uses language on this point which is scarcely less emphatic. "To what purpose," he asks in one place, "is there brought to me incense from Sheba, and sweet cane from a far country? Your burnt-offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices sweet unto me" (vi. 19, 20). But when we consider the circumstances of the case, that a wretched reliance on altar-gifts had in his day gone so far and been so mixed with idolatrous conceptions and practices that every city had its god, every street its shrine, (xi. 13), and that a king of Israel in heathenish blindness had even ventured to offer up his own son (2 Kings. xvi. 8; cf. Hos. xiii. 2; Mic. vi. 7), is it to be wondered at that a prophet speaking in the name of the Lord should say: "*Your* burnt-offerings are not acceptable, nor *your* sacrifices sweet unto me!" Is it to be wondered at that sometimes he falls into the language of hyperbole or apparent paradox, so often found needful by our Lord himself! How poor a vehicle is human speech at the best to carry to human hearts the inspired utterances of a prophet of God! It seems sometimes to stagger with the weight that is put upon it. The words come forth bursting and out of order. And how utterly lame and inconsequent must the communications of a Jeremiah and an Isaiah have appeared even to us, if in circumstances like theirs they had only prosily stated just what our critics require of them.

That this prophet was no opponent of sacrifices when

properly offered is clear from the fact that elsewhere he speaks of them as the crowning blessing of a happier day (xxxiii. 18, 21). How could he have been opposed to sacrifices? He was himself a priest. And more than this, he was contemporary and coadjutor of the very king Josiah in whose reign, according to our critics, the code of Deuteronomy with its provisions for every form of animal offerings was foisted on a heedless people. We find, indeed, no other spirit, touching ritual observances, ruling in any of these earlier prophecies than precisely that which dominates in those that follow the Exile, when, as it is supposed, the Code of the Priests came to fullest bloom. Zechariah, for example, made his appeal to these very men when a deputation from Bethel came to ask if fasting were still pleasing to God: "(Do ye) not (know)" he inquires "the word which Jehovah hath proclaimed by means of the former prophets?"

"So declareth Jehovah of hosts, saying :
Judgment of truth judge ye,
And mercy and compassion
Do ye each to his brother."

(vii. 9; cf. Isa. lviii. 3 ff.). So, too, Haggai takes greatest pains to show (ii. 11-14) that it is the ethical relation of the people to God that is vital. Consistency, consistency was his demand. Not alone holy flesh and punctilious conformity to sacerdotal rites; but clean hands and a loyal heart. And Malachi, who closes up with great announcements and ringing appeals the goodly line of the ancient prophets of Israel, but reflects in this respect with undiminished splendor the spirit of all who had gone before him. Suddenly the Lord who was longed for would come to his temple. But who could abide the day of his coming? He would appear as a refiner's fire. He would purge the sons of Levi as gold and silver, that their offerings to the Lord should be offerings of righteousness; that Judah and Jerusalem should bring sacrifices that would be pleasant to the Lord "*as in the days of old, and as in former years*" (iii. 1-4).

Is anything more needed to show what was the unchanging attitude of the Israelitish prophets in every period with respect to the development of religious life among the people? The writer of Deuteronomy represents it as well as an Amos or an Isaiah when he says (x. 12): "And now, Israel, what doth thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul?" And above all He represents it, who came as the last and greatest of the prophets, and who said, in sharp rebuke of the spurious ceremonialism of his day, putting its true interpretation on that now disputed text of Hosea, "Go and learn what that meaneth: I will have mercy, and not sacrifice." And what more natural than that these grand old prophets, if so be that they were true prophets of God, standing firm where priests and people had fallen away, should do this very work? That they should see and should hold up the spiritual side of the Mosaic laws and institutions, insist upon it, emphasize it, and all the more because of the enormous exaggeration of the merely outward by their contemporaries? Like everything else in this world of ours that has lived and made itself felt, the progress of the Israelitish religion was never in straight lines of growth, but always by a kind of action and reaction; revealing mighty underlying forces that pushed it onward, but also other forces, only less mighty, that pushed it backward — a sort of systole and diastole that ever marks the throbbings of a deeper life in human affairs. And is not this fact that the prophets did the work they did, and stood together to do it, shoulder to shoulder, the shaggy Elijah and the tender Hosea of Israel beside Amos and the great Isaiah of Judah, politically divided, but one in aim and one in spirit against an intractable nation of formalists and idolaters, the strongest proof that they were specially, supernaturally, moved of God so to do? Does it not carry in itself the clearest condemnation of that theory of the merely natural development of the

Old Testament religion which our critics would persuade us to adopt? ¹

And so, without resorting to any of the numerous collateral arguments which might be urged against the theory we have been considering, like the uniform testimony of the oldest witnesses and the repeated confirmatory references of Jesus and his apostles; without calling attention to the wholesale dislocations, eliminations, conjectural readings, and charges of duplicity against Old Testament writers which would be necessitated by the change proposed; without taking advantage of the naïve admissions of some of the ablest of this school of critics which show that their objections to the traditional view, after all, inhere less in the documents themselves than in their own minds and their own invincible prepossessions,² we find that, tested by the reasoning on which its supporters themselves most rely, this concerted effort to face about the pre-exilic prophets and reconstruct on other principles the history of Israel is a signal failure. Simple plausibility is the height of its achievement; and to attain to this its path must be marked by the profanation or the wreck of that which the noblest of our race have ever held as most sacred and most dear.

¹ It is not so easy to see how, on any just principle of development, the matter is helped for these critics by the supposition of a climax of spirituality in the prophets, and of sacerdotalism in the age that followed them. We might justly expect rather, first, that which is natural, then that which is spiritual. The remark of Smend still remains true, whatever his present attitude towards this theory may be (*ibid.*, p. 638): "Schon hienach möchten wir die Bemerkung Duhms, dass die Prophetie abgestorben sei, als durch Esra das Gesetz in's Leben trat, dahin umkehren, dass das Gesetz kanonische Geltung erhielt, weil die Prophetie abstarb." Just in this direction, too, points that relatively isolated text in the Book of Proverbs (xxix. 18): "Where there is no vision (וְיִדְרֹם) the people are in disorder; but he that keepeth the law, happy is he."

² As, for instance, Wellhausen (*Geschichte*, i. p. 11): "Passages out of Amos and Hosea may be adduced which are supposed to show acquaintance with the Code of the Priests; upon him, however, who holds them to be earlier than it, they can make no impression." And Stade (as quoted by Professor Duff in the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 1882, p. 392): "But I am convinced that the controversy will never be settled by an analysis of the Pentateuch. The view taken of the Pentateuch will depend, on the one hand, on the view taken of the critical structure of the Books of Judges, Samuel, and Kings; and on the other, on the theological valuation of prophecy."