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A CONSIDERATION OF
THE CULTIC INTERPRETATION OF THE PSALTER

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A dissertation presented by

DONALD ANDERS

for the degree of M.A. in the University of Durham

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January 1962

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To
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in gratitude

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A consideration of the Cultic interpretation
of the Psalter

'Thus the evidence is conclusive that the Psalter has a history as long and complex as the Old Testament itself. Certain of its older poems may come from the days of David, about 1000 BC. Its later Psalms breathe the warlike spirit of the Maccabean age. It represents the growth of at least 80 and the work of fully 100 poets. Behind it lie 2 milleniums of Semitic religious history; but the Psalms themselves, with few exceptions, come from the four centuries and a half that began with the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC. They record the inspired insight, the dauntless courage, and the profound spiritual experiences of the noble souls who faced the cruel persecutions and the great crises of the Persian, Greek and Maccabean periods. Born in stress and struggle, they have a unique message and meaning for all who are in the stream of life'. Such was the concluding paragraph of a typical book on the Psalms written in the earlier years of the present century (C.F.Kent - The Songs, Hymns and Prayers of the Old Testament: 1914 p.48). It expresses admirably the conventional view which many theologians held at that time and indeed is typical of an older critical view which, in A.R.Johnson's words, regarded the Psalter as 'a reservoir whose resources were deep but well-fathomed' (Essay: 'The Psalms' - Old Testament and Modern Study p.206). But, to continue Johnson's simile - 'the tendency now is to regard this reservoir as fed by a river, equally deep but far more mysterious, whose course still remains to be charted but the exploring of which promises to open up far wider and richer territories in the realm of Israel's faith and worship than had hitherto been suspected' (loc.cit.). Our purpose in this study will be to consider some of the exploratory studies which have been made in recent years along the lines of a cultic interpretation of the Psalter and which have rendered the Psalms one of the most fascinating fields of research for the student of the Old Testament.

Whilst therefore we shall be dealing primarily with the newer cultic interpretation of the Psalms, it is important to point out that this method of interpretation is by no means one that is universally accepted amongst Old Testament scholars. Indeed one of the foremost exponents of the Cultic approach in England, A.R.Johnson, is particularly noteworthy for his insistence upon the employment of caution and sound judgement with regard to his own studies. There are many too who would think that this note of caution has been sadly lacking in the work which has been produced by the so-called 'Uppsala School' on this same subject. Some indication of the kind of criticism which advocates of the 'Myth, ritual and Kingship' school of thought are likely to call forth can be found in, say, Professor Snaith's detailed study The Jewish New Year Festival, or in such an article as Professor Stewart McCullough's 'Israel's Kings, Sacral and Otherwise' (ET LXVIII. 1957 p.144f. But see also A.R.Johnson's reply in the same Volume p.178f).

We shall commence our study therefore, with a general review of the standard treatment of the Psalter current at the turn of the century, and which so far as those scholars who are not convinced by the newer cultic approach are concerned, is still current. If we wished to give this older method of treatment some sort of designation, we might well call it an historical and biographical approach, that is, the Psalms were considered as individual compositions their character and date being decided almost solely on subject matter. Of the numerous commentaries¹ on the Psalter which employ this method we would mention amongst others A.F.Kirkpatrick- The Psalms (1902) and W.E.Barnes - The Psalms (1931) both of which we shall be considering in detail at a later stage. First of all then one or two general points regarding the Psalter:

1. Neale: Commentary on the Psalms (1869). e.g. Cheyne: The book of Psalms (1888). The origin and rel. contents of the Psalter (1891). The book of Psalms (1904). Briggs: A critical and exegetical commentary on the book of Psalms (1906/7). Cf also Marson: The Psalms at work (1894)

a) Names

The LXX translators used the word $\psiαλμός$ (meaning the music of a stringed instrument or a song sung to the accompaniment of such music) to express the Hebrew $רִיבּוּז$ which was the technical term for a song with musical accompaniment. The collection was titled simply 'Psalms' ($\psiαλμοί$) or the 'Book of Psalms' or in later times 'The Psalter' ($\psiαλτήρ$ or $\psiαλτήρῃον$). The Hebrew Bible gives the title of the book as 'Book of Praises' or simply 'Praises' $שִׁבְחָה$ abbreviated $שִׁבְחָה$. It is interesting to note here that only one Psalm carries the title of 'A praise' (Ps.145) - Kirkpatrick considers that the title of the collection probably originated in the use of it as the Hymn book of the Second Temple (op.cit.p.xv). Another title was $תְּפִלָּה$ or 'Prayers'. There are some five Psalms which bear this title (Psalms 17; 86; 90; 102; 142).

b) Divisions of the Psalter

Five books from earliest times:

I	<u>Psalms</u>	1-41
II		42-72
III		73-89
IV		90-106
V		107-150

This five-fold division is earlier than the LXX and we find reference to it in both early Jewish and Christian writings e.g. Midrash on Ps.1.1 - 'Moses gave the Israelites the five books of the Law, and to correspond to these David gave them the book of Psalms containing five books'. Similarly Jerome in his Prol.Gal. writes 'Tertius ordo Hagiographa possidet. Et primus liber incipit a Job. Secundus a David, quem quinque incisionibus et uno Psalmorum volumine comprehendunt'. Most of the Fathers mention this division, offering various reasons for its existence. Kirkpatrick's conclusion is that '....the division of the books in part corresponds to older collections out of which the Psalter was formed, in part is purely artificial, and probably had its origin in the wish to compare the Psalter with the Pentateuch' (op.cit. p.xviii).

c) Individual titles of the Psalms

i) Titles describing the character of the Psalm e.g. 'Psalm' (מִזְמוֹר) - a piece of music, a song with instrumental accompaniment or 'Song' or 'Canticle' (שִׁיר). Similarly Maschil (מַשְׁכִּיל), Michtam (מִכְתָּם), Shiggaion (שִׁגְיֹן), Prayer (תְּפִלָּה), Praise (תְּהִלָּה).

ii) Titles relating to the musical setting or performance e.g. 'To the chief musician' (לְמַנְצֵחַ); 'Selah' (סֵלָה); 'On Neginoth' (בְּנֵינֹת) etc.

Of these first two groups there is little evidence to show to which period they belong. Most commentators would take them as being post-exilic, but it is worth noting that what remains of pre-exilic literature is not the kind of material in which we would expect to find technical terms relating to musical ritual. Furthermore there is a noticeable absence of these titles in Books IV and V despite the fact that many of these Psalms were obviously intended for liturgical use. The translators of the LXX do not seem to have understood them even though they appeared in the Hebrew text and we might infer therefore that they were either obsolete or unintelligible at the time the Greek translation was made. They cannot then belong to the latest stage of the history of the Psalter.

iii) Titles referring to the Liturgical use of the Psalms e.g. 'For the Sabbath Day' (פְּסַלְמֵי יְהוָה לְיוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת); 'A Psalm of thanksgiving' (שִׁיר תְּהִלָּה לַיהוָה). Similarly 'A Song at the dedication of the House' (שִׁיר חֲנֻכַּת הַבַּיִת) or 'A Song of Ascents' (שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת).

Standard commentators would take many of these titles as later additions, as several of them, whilst agreeing with Jewish tradition are not found in the Hebrew text (cf. the title of Ps.30 supra - this is generally taken as referring to the Festival of Dedication of the Second Temple). As we shall have a good deal to say about these particular Psalms at a later stage in our study we will not comment on this judgement now.

iv) Titles referring to authorship or origin e.g. 'Of David' (73 Psalms bearing the title לְדָוִד); 'Of Moses' (Ps.90 - לְמֹשֶׁה); 'Of Solomon' (e.g. Ps.72 - לְשֹׁלֹמֹן); 'Of the sons of Korah' (10 Psalms bearing the title לְבָנֵי קֹהֵן).

v) Titles referring to historical events in the reign of David e.g. Ps.51 (referring to David's fall - $\text{בְּרֹא אֶלְיָי... יְבֹשֶׁת}$).

With regard to these last two groups there is general agreement that no reliance can be placed on these titles as indicating either actual authorship or as representing trustworthy tradition or giving reliable information. This conclusion is the result of careful examination of the contents and language of each Psalm in relation to its title and the resultant fact that it is frequently impossible to reconcile the two. For instance of the Psalms which bear the name of David there are many which assume circumstances and situations which do not in any way correspond with those which applied in David's time. Similarly the feelings expressed in certain of these Psalms are often difficult to reconcile with those one would **expect** in a man of David's position and character. Furthermore with regard to the content of certain of these Psalms we find that some refer to the Captivity (e.g. Ps.69); others to a period quite obviously later than David's (e.g. Ps.139) as witnessed by the language employed. We can question the titles of those Psalms ascribed to Asaph (David's musician) on similar grounds, for some of them refer quite clearly to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Exile (e.g. Pss.74; 79; 80 et al.) whilst others seem to belong to the post-exilic period. Nevertheless it would be wrong to dismiss the titles of the Psalms under discussion as being completely worthless, for the comparatively infrequent occurrence of titles in the later books IV and V of the Psalter is some indication that they were not merely the inventions of later writers, and we can also infer from this fact that the titles which are extant did rest upon some authority of one kind or another.

Thus it is generally accepted that the value of the titles lies in the fact that they indicate the source from which the Psalms were derived rather than actual authorship. The 'Psalms of the Sons

of Korah' therefore, is probably part of the title of a group of Psalms written by members of the family of Korah and preserved in a special collection. The same is likely to be the case with those Psalms which are entitled 'Psalms of Asaph'. Yet again in the case of the Davidic ascriptions we may reasonably assume that this has been taken over from the general collection from which the Psalm was derived. Kirkpatrick (op.cit.p.xxxiii) quotes an interesting parallel namely, that the whole Psalter came to be known as the 'Psalms of David' taking this title from its founder and most famous author. In the same way then, and in much earlier times, the smaller collections came to bear the name of David whereas in fact it is likely that only the origin and nucleus were his. On incorporation into the Psalter the name of David was placed as the title of each Psalm taken from these earlier collections. W.E.Barnes (op.cit. p.xxiv) draws attention to the colophon attached to Ps.72 - 'The prayers of David the Son of Jesse are ended' as evidence that the present Psalter was in fact composed from preceding collections.

Yet having said all this, one further word of caution is necessary. We have suggested that the Titles can be 'proved' by the content of the Psalms in question. It is however, pertinent to note here that we should take into account the possibility of alterations and additions to an original Psalm by a later writer or writers. A comparison with each other of certain Psalms which have similar subject matter, (e.g. Ps.53 with Ps.14) or of a Psalm with a similar account in another part of the Old Testament (e.g. Ps.18 with 2 Sam.22), does often indicate that editors have altered, divided and sometimes revised sections of the Psalms in the light of some special purpose of their own. Thus we should beware of being too arbitrary and suggesting that the considerations which we have discussed in the earlier part of this section necessarily preclude the possibility that the Psalms were in fact written by the author whose name they bear.

d) Authorship and age of the Psalms

It is at once apparent that if we reject the titles of the Psalms as being a reliable guide to authorship, then we have only the content to aid us. And as we have noted above, internal evidence, no matter whether it is of thought, style or language is itself exceedingly precarious as a guide to dating. Whilst agreeing that the Psalter is a work which speaks to every age and that it is the 'expression of a large spiritual experience' (Dean Church) so that considerations of date and authorship need not affect its general application, nevertheless as these considerations do have such an important bearing on the Cultic interpretation of the Psalter, we shall briefly consider the findings of the traditional school of thought in this respect.

It is most interesting in the light of dating connected with the present-day Cultic approach, that the more traditional commentators should at the turn of the century have been defending the dating of various Psalms as pre-exilic, against strenuous attacks from much more radical quarters. For instance, Wellhausen: 'Since the Psalter belongs to the Hagiographa, and is the hymn book of the congregation of the Second Temple....the question is not whether it contains any post-exilic Psalms, but whether it contains any pre-exilic Psalms' (Bleek - Introduction, p.507). And again Professor Cheyne in his Bampton lectures 1889 (*The Origin and Rel. Contents of the Psalter in the Light of Old Testament Crit.) maintained that the whole Psalter, with the possible exception of Ps.18, is post-exilic, belonging mainly to the later Persian and Greek period and containing a considerable number of Maccabean Psalms edited finally by Simon the Maccabee c.140 BC. Duhm (1900) adopted an even more radical view and not only denied the existence in the Psalter of a single Psalm that could be designated pre-exilic, but also expressed considerable doubt that any Psalm can be dated as early even as the Persian period.

Against such arguments, Kirkpatrick (op.cit. p.xxxviii f) cites an imposing number of references in religious poetry, culled from various Old Testament books, to support his contention that there is

no a priori improbability that the Psalter should contain pre-exilic Psalms. He further examines the Psalms individually and claims that there are a number which may most naturally be referred to the pre-exilic period.

a) Those Psalms which refer directly to the King may most naturally be dated during the period of the monarchy e.g. Psalms 2; 18; 20 et al. Even though we might admit that certain references to the King are general (e.g. Ps.33 16-17) there are enough specific references to support a suggested dating during the monarchic period.

b) Psalms such as 46-48; 75; 76 seem to fit the circumstances of general rejoicing as a result of the deliverance of Jerusalem from the hands of the Assyrians (c.701 BC) rather than to an indeterminate period of similar rejoicing during the Persian conquest.

c) Particular Psalms such as the first Psalm seem to reflect more faithfully the powerful preaching of the 8C prophets rather than any teaching of a later age.

All these specific examples then, together with others which may be included with probability and some at least of those Psalms which are completely impossible to date, furnish us with sufficient grounds for positing a pre-exilic date in many instances.

With regard to the post-exilic dating of many Psalms, Kirkpatrick marshals an array of evidence leading to his general consideration that it is '...antecedently doubtful whether any Psalms date from the Maccabean period, and it seems to be fairly open to question whether the internal characteristics of the supposed Maccabean Psalms are such as to outweigh these general considerations' (op.cit. p.i). He nevertheless admits that few modern commentators deny and indeed many assert, the existence of Maccabean Psalms in the Psalter.

e) Object, collection and growth of the Psalter

We have already used supra the title 'Hymnbook of the Second Temple' a title commonly given to the Psalter. But whilst there is undoubtedly a great deal of the material which we may regard as

being suitable for liturgical use, there is also much which could hardly have been written for this particular purpose. The general intention of the compilers was no doubt to make a collection of the religious poetry which did in fact exist - hence we have Psalms suitable not only for public worship and liturgical use, but also for public and private devotions. If we examine in detail the internal evidence of the Psalter it seems reasonably certain that the product as we now have it is an 'omnibus' collection of various smaller collections which had independent historical, liturgical and personal subjects. Furthermore, detailed examination of the language, titles etc. seem to support the contention that these collections existed in original dependence. Hence Kirkpatrick (op.cit. p.lviii) constructs a neat table of suggested 'steps in the formation of the Psalter' moving from an original collection bearing the name 'Psalms of David' to the complete edition as we now have it, and ranging in date from the period of the monarchy down to about 200 BC. Finally he notes that 'The opinion is gaining ground that "the Psalter in all its parts, is a compilation of the post-exilic age" (Driver - Lit. of Old Testament p.386), but this does not exclude the possibility that pre-exilic collections of Psalms existed, side by side with prophetic and historical books. Their extent however cannot now be determined'. In conclusion on this point we think Sellin's comment pertinent (he was a contemporary of Duhm) - After rejecting the suggestion that the 'I' of the Psalter refers not to an individual but to the whole Jewish community, he states: 'Equally mistaken is the view that because the Psalter was the hymn book of the post-exilic community, every one of the hymns in it must necessarily be post-exilic, a view which the analogy of any hymn book one chooses to name would be sufficient to disprove....A sounder criticism of the Psalms must start from the certainty that the Psalter must in any case contain a nucleus of pre-exilic Psalms. A simple and inexpugnable argument for this is at once furnished by the so called Royal Psalms 2, 18, 20, 28 et al. Alongside of the Royal Psalms we ought probably also to place those in which the authors take up, in

regard to the animal sacrifices, the same position as the pre-exilic prophets, in contrast with the period after Ezra when the Priestly writing was the dominant influence; thus giving us grounds for regarding them as contemporaries of the prophets. Speaking generally there is between the pre-exilic psalms just mentioned and those by which they are surrounded, so close a relationship in ideas and language that we are warranted in concluding that the nucleus of the Davidic collection, 5-41; 51-72, belongs to the pre-exilic period, and was the book of prayers and hymns which Judah took with her into exile... But in this connection two points have to be kept in mind. The first is that just as a psalm from this collection might by a later redactor be detached from its surroundings and inserted in another collection (Cf. 45, 50 110?), so a certain number of exilic or post-exilic psalms may have found their way in here (22, 69? etc). And the second point is that even the pre-exilic psalms have a history behind them, they lived prior to their enrolment in collections "on the lips of men" and this or that detail in them may well be the reflection of a later period' (Introduction to the Old Testament: English translation pp.199-202).

So much then for the main outline of the historical and biographical method of approach to the Psalter and those features of interpretation which have marked out their authors as following a fairly conventional pattern of treatment. We move now to make a preliminary examination of the newer methods of Psalm study, beginning with the work of Gunkel and his disciples, and leading on to the current 'Myth and Ritual' approach, typified in continental writing in the work of the 'Uppsala School' and in England by the provocative and exciting studies of S.H.Hooke and Aubrey Johnson. The latter, in his chapter 'The Psalms' (Old Testament and Modern Study ed. Rowley p.162) begins his review of 20th century Psalm studies by stating - 'In so far as the study of the Psalter has made any progress during the generation which has passed since the foundation of the Society for Old Testament Study, it is largely due to the influence of one man - Hermann Gunkel'. What then was the outstanding contribution which Gunkel made to this department

of Old Testament studies, which was in fact, but a part of his 'epoch-making approach to the study of the Old Testament as a whole' (Johnson loc.cit.)? The essence of Gunkel's approach lay in the fact that he believed that in the ancient world the power of custom was greater than it is today, therefore, he maintained, the personal contribution of individuals to the religious literature of ancient Israel can only be understood properly against the more conventional background furnished by an examination of the different 'types' (Gattungen) which it presents and also by its 'life situation' (Sitz im Leben) which brought it into being and maintained it. Thus an informed study of the religious literature of Israel must necessarily include a study of the history of its forms (Formgeschichte) and these must further be related to contemporary religious forms in the countries round about - Mesopotamia, Egypt etc. Gunkel's work and the resultant widespread interest today in theories of Divine Kingship may well be said to have had their seminal origin in the studies produced by J.G.Frazer at the turn of the Century. In his Lectures on the Early History of the Kingship (1905) and the later Golden Bough (1911-15), Frazer discussed the ritualistic and mythological background of Mesopotamia (i.e. the cult of the mother goddess and her lover, the dying and rising God Tammuz) and its counterpart in Syria, Cyprus, Phrygia and Egypt. His studies did in fact provide a wider setting for the mounting interest in the religious aspects of Kingship throughout the ancient Near East. Nevertheless, we should note that 'Frazer's work may hardly be held directly responsible for the actual developments in this field of study in so far as they affect the Old Testament; for he merely helped to provide a wider setting for the mounting interest in the religious aspects of Kingship throughout the ancient Near East which was already proceeding pari passu with the growth of his own monumental studies' (A.R.Johnson ET LXII p.36).

Gunkel then, developed these ideas in the realm of Old Testament studies and in particular the Psalter, approaching the latter in the light of its comparison with similar records of earlier and

contemporary cultures of the Near East, and also giving special attention to the literary form of its contents. The results of his work are to be found in a series of volumes¹ published between 1904 and 1933. We shall give a general outline of his classification of the Psalms into types with a little more detail in connection with the 'Royal' Psalms as this group plays such an important part in any study of the Cultic approach to the Psalter. There are five main types - all cultic in origin. These are:

i) The Hymn (Hymnus)

This was originally intended to be sung, either by a choir or as a solo, as a part of normal worship (Cf. for example Amos 5.23). Gunkel considered it possible that in later times this type might have been freed from its cultic associations and might have been a free composition of its author's own personal adoration and devotion. This group includes Pss. 8, 19, 29, 33, 65, 68, 96, 98, 100, 103, 104, 105, 111, 113, 114, 115, 117, 135, 136, 145, 147, 148, 149, 150. In addition Pss. 46, 48, 76, 87 are listed as Zionslieder and Pss. 47, 95, 97, 99 as Thronbesteigungslieder.

ii) Communal laments (Klagelieder des Volkes)

This type had for its setting some general calamity which threatened the whole of society e.g. famine or foreign invasion. It was probably sung at a general assembly in the sanctuary to the accompaniment of public display of grief - wailing and beating of breast etc. We can see possible examples of such circumstances in Josh. 7,6; Judges 20.23,26ff; 1 Sam. 7,6 et al. Such laments are Pss. 44, 74, 79, 80, 83, and to a certain degree Pss. 58, 106 and 125.

iii) Royal Psalms (Königspsalmen)

Pss. 2, 18, 20, 21, 45, 72, 101, 110, 132 and 144.1-11. In all of these psalms the central figure is one who can only be explained as a native Israelite King of the pre-exilic period, and as Gunkel

1. *Ausgewählte Psalmen (1904)

* 'Psalmen' in Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart (1913 iv.)

*Die Psalmen (1926)

*Einleitung in die Psalmen (1933 - completed by J. Begrich)

pointed out, there is considerable evidence outside the psalter to show that the king was regarded as having a specially intimate relationship with Yahweh, and as playing an important role in public worship. In this connection we should notice:

a) Ceremonial anointing with the title of 'Messiah of Yahweh'. This suggests that the king might therefore be regarded as sacred and inviolable (Cf. 1 Sam. 26.11)

b) The sanctuaries in both Jerusalem and Bethel were royal temples (v. 1 Kgs. 5.15-7.51; Amos 7.13)

c) David took a prominent part in the bringing of the Ark to Jerusalem (2 Sam. 6)

d) Solomon took an active part in the ceremony of dedication of the Temple (1 Kgs. 8)

e) There are examples in the temple ritual where the king either offers sacrifice or has it offered on his behalf (v. 2 Sam. 6.17; 24.25; 1 Kgs. 3.4)

f) We find mention of public intercession on behalf of the king before battle (e.g. 1 Sam. 13.9f; 2 Chr. 14.9f; 20.1-30).

Further, Gunkel pointed out that archaeological research in both Egyptian and Assyro-Babylonian fields had revealed royal texts which indicated that they were used in a similar cultic setting. Thus he assigned the psalms detailed above to particular incidents in the life of the King and to other 'royal' occasions:-

- i) Anniversary of the founding of the Davidic dynasty and the Royal sanctuary (Ps. 132)
- ii) The king's enthronement (Pss. 2, 101, 110)
- iii) The anniversary of any special royal occasion e.g. birthday (Pss. 21, 52); wedding (Ps. 45)
- iv) Divine supplication before battle (Ps. 20, 144.1-11)
- v) Thanksgiving for triumphal return from battle (Ps. 18).

iv) Individual lament (Klagelied des Einzelnen)

This category forms the backbone of the Psalter and embraces Pss. 3, 5, 6, 7, 13, 17, 22, 25, 26, 27.7-14, 28, 31, 35, 38, 39, 42-3, 51, 54, 55, 56, 57, 59, 61, 63, 64, 69, 70, 71, 86, 88, 102, 109, 120, 130, 140, 141, 142, 143. Such psalms, Gunkel noted, had a common theme which was characterised by the same or similar modes of expression and intensity of feeling, the worshipper obviously being in some form of distress and frequently bewailing the enemy or enemies by whom he is continually persecuted or slandered.

v) Individual songs of thanksgiving (Danklieder des Einzelnen)

There are comparatively few of these songs - Pss. 18, 30, 32, 34, 41, 66, 92, 96, 118, 138, and they are the correlative to those psalms discussed in category iv) supra.

Of the remainder of Gunkel's types there are 4 only which we shall mention en passant - Songs of pilgrimage (Wallfahrtslieder) e.g. Ps. 84; Communal songs of thanksgiving (Danklieder des Volkes) e.g. Ps. 67; Wisdom Poetry (Weisheitsdichtung) e.g. Ps. 127 and finally Liturgy (Liturgie) e.g. Ps. 24. We may note too that there are Psalms which cannot be absolutely classified as they contain a mixture of different types. Gunkel called these Mixed poems (Mischungen) e.g. Ps. 40, 89, 90 et al.

There can be no doubt that this approach of Gunkel's has proved to be of tremendous value and that 'it has already brought increased life to the Psalter, which is now one of the most fascinating fields of research for students of the Old Testament' 'Aubrey Johnson - Old Testament and Modern Study p.180). It is not surprising therefore, to find that nearly all the more important works which have been published¹ since Gunkel have been influenced by his conclusions - both general works and those specifically concerned with the Psalter.

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1. e.g. Welch: The Psalter in life, worship and history (1926)
Prophet and Priest in Old Israel (1936)
 O & R: An introduction to the books of the Old Testament (1934)
 James: 30 Psalmists (1938)
 Bentzen: Introduction to the Old Testament I and II
 (1948/9)
 Paterson: The praises of Israel (1950)

Nevertheless we should notice that there have been numerous commentators¹ who have preferred to retain the old approach, considering the content of each Psalm individually as a guide to its date, purpose etc. Whilst these commentaries are certainly not without their value in this detailed consideration they lack the value which a broader view, considering the relation of the Psalms to the whole history of the religion of Israel, brings with it. As we shall be examining some of the representative work produced by these authors at a later stage in our study we will not stop to consider examples now.

We move on then to give a general outline of the contemporary position in Psalm study, that is, the development of the work of Gunkel as outlined above, by such notable figures as Mowinckel, Hooke and A.R.Johnson. We have already mentioned that in addition to his detailed examination of Gattungen and Formgeschichte Gunkel stressed the necessity of considering the psalms in relation to the contemporary religious forms of the countries round about. It is this particular aspect of study which may well be said to have assumed prominence in recent years and to have given rise to works ranging from the comparatively sober (and to us exciting) study of A.R.Johnson - Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel to the somewhat extravagant hypotheses put forward by members of the so-called 'Uppsala School'. As A.R.Johnson points out in his review of Psalm study (Old Testament and Modern Study p.186), it is interesting to note that during the period from the first publication of Gunkel's article in Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart in which he expressed surprise that so little use had been made of the wide field of comparative material available from the early cultures of Mesopotamia and Egypt, to the publication of the second edition of this same book

1. e.g. König: *Die Psalmen (1927)

Barnes: The Psalms (1931)

Buttenwieser: The Psalms (1938)

Eerdmans: *The Hebrew book of Psalms OTS iv. (1947)

some twenty years later (1930) a great number of studies with precisely this focus of interest had made their appearance¹.

'Indeed' states Johnson, 'there was now a danger of going too far in the other direction'.

But if Gunkel had been the outstanding figure in the earlier movement, it is Mowinckel who lays claim to such a description in the second phase which we are now considering. Mowinckel openly acknowledged that his own work was based upon that of Gunkel and that it was to the latter he owed his enthusiasm for the subject. Nevertheless he held contrary views to those of his predecessor, notably with regard to the exact relation of the Psalms to the cultus. In this respect he maintained that the psalms were wholly or almost wholly cultic in both origin and intention, and were not, as Gunkel had suggested, 'spiritualised' versions of psalms which had formerly been cultic but which had now been freed from this association.

The really great contribution though, which Mowinckel has made to contemporary psalm-study lies in his contention that in ancient Israel there was an annual New Year Festival, observed in the Temple in the Autumn, at which Yahweh's enthronement as universal king was both celebrated and enacted². The basis for Mowinckel's observations were Pss. 47, 93 and 95-100, and he maintained that the recurring expression: יְהוָה לְבָרַךְ : in these psalms was to be interpreted 'Yahweh has become king'. This, he thought was to be interpreted in the light of the cultic observances in the countries round about Israel, and notably Babylon where the New Year Festival was celebrated with the God Marduk in the leading role. In the

1. e.g. Blackman: The Psalms in the light of Egyptian research in The Psalmists Ed. D.C.Simpson
 Gressman: The development of Hebrew Psalmody, The Psalmists Ed. D.C.Simpson
 G.R.Driver: The Psalms in the light of Babylonian research, The Psalmists Ed. D.C.Simpson.

2. v. *Psalmenstudien II. Das Thronbesteigungsfest Jahwäs und der Ursprung der Eschatologie (1922).

development of his theory, Mowinckel extended Gunkel's group of 'Royal' psalms so that his complete list included Pss. 2, 18, 20, 21, 28, 44, 45, 60, 61, 63, 66, 68, 72, 80, 83, 84, 89, 101, 110, 118, 132, 144 and also 1 Sam. 2.1-10 and 2 Sam. 23.1-7. As his theory was to prove of tremendous importance in the development of Old Testament studies, many later commentators accepting it in principle, and modifying or developing¹ it, we shall do well at this point to outline what exactly Mowinckel considered the New Year Festival to be.

Primarily the festival was one of renewal, that is, on this occasion year by year, Yahweh repeated his original triumph over primaeval chaos, and his work of creation. This was enacted in a ritual drama, Yahweh triumphing over the kings and nations of the world who were regarded as the allies of primaeval chaos, and the Ark symbolising his presence being carried in procession to the sanctuary where he was freshly acclaimed as universal king. By this means the faith of his chosen people is vindicated, the covenant with them and the house of David is renewed (the latter being represented by the reigning king), and the good fortune of Israel was assured for the coming year. We may note too that Mowinckel makes an interesting cross reference here to the eschatological teaching of the Canonical prophets, relating the prophetic 'Day of Yahweh' (originally the cultic 'day' of his enthronement) to a projected future true day of enthronement when Yahweh would really come in power as universal king. One final point of interest is that Mowinckel gives the festival a place in the early history of Israel - he considers for instance that Isaiah's vision and call (Isaiah Ch.6) took place on such a festival day and that the festival itself might even have had its roots in the pre-Davidic worship of $\text{יְהוָה בְּיְרוּשָׁלַיִם}$ (Cf. Gen. 14.18f). As we shall see, this last is a point upon which A.R. Johnson places much emphasis in his study Sacral kingship in Ancient Israel (p.42f).

1. e.g. Bentzen: *Forelaesninger over Indledning til de gammeltestamentlige Salmer (1932)

Böhl: *De Psalmen (1946-49)

Leslie: The Psalms (1949)

Cf. also Oesterley: The Psalms (1939)

Keet: A liturgical study of the Psalter (1928)

Such then is Mowinckel's theory in outline. We have already mentioned that it has been accepted by many commentators in principle and modified and developed by others. It needs also to be mentioned that the theory has by no means met with general acceptance and that there have been a number of very powerful works written with the aim of refuting¹ it. We shall say more about these when we come to review the contemporary position of Psalm study. The theory was further elaborated by H.Schmidt (*Die Thronfahrt Jahves) who incorporated Pss. 2, 20, 21, 89.1-3; 6.19, 110 and 1 Sam. 2.1-10 as well as Ps. 132 into the Festival. Yet more studies quickly appeared by Gressman, Goodenough, Lods and C.R.North, the latter's Religious Aspects of Hebrew Kingship (1932) appearing in the same year as the now famous lectures by a team under the leadership of S.H.Hooke which were published in 1933 under the title of Myth and Ritual. In these lectures 'another attempt was made, along much the same lines as those of Mowinckel, to arrive at a more balanced appraisal of the Hebrew scriptures than that which was characteristic of the dominant school of literary criticism; in short, an attempt was made to study the ritual and mythology of ancient Israel from the standpoint of what Hooke regarded as a culture pattern characteristic of the ancient Near East, in which the ritual and mythology associated with the figure of Marduk (or Bel) at the Babylonian akitu festival and the partly analogous features of the corresponding Osiris-Horus complex in the worship of ancient Egypt were all thought to share, a governing factor being the importance attached to the king in what was at basis an elaborate effort to promote the well-being of the community' (A.R.Johnson: Art. 'The Hebrew Conceptions of Kingship' - Myth, Ritual and Kingship p.225f). Hooke's basic pattern took the following form:

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1. Eissfeldt: *Jahwe als König - ZAW xlvii 1928 pps.81-105
 Pap: *Das israelitische Neujahrsfest (1933)
 Snaith: The Jewish New Year Festival: Its origins and development (1947)

i) The dramatic representation of the death and resurrection of the god.

ii) The recitation or symbolic representation of the myth of creation.

iii) The ritual combat, in which the triumph of the god over his enemies was depicted.

iv) The sacred marriage.

v) The triumphal procession, in which the king played the part of the god, followed by a train of lesser gods or visiting deities. It must be said here that the evidence brought forward in support of this theory as related to Israel was extremely slight - being based primarily on two factors. These were respectively, the evidence afforded by contemporary Aramaic papyri for the association of the goddess Anath with Yahweh in the worship of the Jewish colony at Elephantine in the 5th Century BC, and the regulations for the construction of the booths which are the special feature of the Feast of Tabernacles (these it was claimed, being in fact an adaptation of what was originally the bridal chamber connected with the sacred marriage, and not a particular reference to the period of the wanderings). With this in mind, therefore, we might indeed with Johnson, find it 'quite remarkable...that so little consideration was given to the royal psalms with their rich mythological colouring and the indications which they give of the part played by the king in the ritual of the cultus' (ibid. p.227).

This leads us on to outline in brief (for we shall be considering it at some length at a later stage in our study) the work of Aubrey Johnson himself in the field of Myth and ritual. With the publication of Pedersen's Israel in 1934, further support was forthcoming for Mowinckel's theory, and at about the same time Aubrey Johnson, who was studying the Psalter with a quite different aim in mind, found himself 'forced into partial acceptance of Mowinckel's theory'. He was in fact engaged in a study of Greek and Hebrew ideas of life after death, and during this examination had occasion

to read a discussion of the root $\text{נ}^{\text{ש}}\text{נ}$ in the work of Wolf Wilhelm Graf Baudissin¹, a work which was concerned with the Adonis-Esmun-Tammuz relationship and its bearing on the conception of Yahweh as the 'living God'. His consideration of this discussion led Johnson to place an ever greater emphasis on the role of the king in the New Year Festival than Mowinckel had done, and from a basic foundation of Psalms 2, 18, 89, 110, 118, 132 and other 'Kingship' psalms, he maintained that the New Year Festival had its roots in the pre-Davidic cultus of $\text{יְיָ} \text{בְּיְרוּשָׁלַיִם}$ at Jebus (Jerusalem). His outline of the important parts of the Festival was:

a) In the ritual drama the kings or nations of the earth, who represented the forces of darkness and death as opposed to those of light and life, united in an effort to destroy Yahweh's chosen people by slaying the Davidic king upon whom its vitality and its survival as a social body was held to be dependent.

b) At first the king (who is described as the Son, the Servant and the Messiah of Yahweh) was allowed to suffer defeat and as a result was nearly engulfed in the waters of the underworld, but at the last moment, after a plea of loyalty to the Davidic covenant and an acknowledgement of his ultimate dependence upon Yahweh, he was delivered by the personal intervention of the Most High and brought back in triumph to the land of light and life.

c) Such a restoration to life however, was in a sense a rebirth. It was a sign that this suffering Servant and humble Messiah had been adopted once more as the Son of the Most High or, to express this vitally important role in another way, that he had been re-installed in office as a priest 'after the order of Melchizedek'. Accordingly the survival and indeed the prosperity of the nation, for which the King was directly responsible, found provisional assurance for yet another year.

Johnson is very anxious to point out (v. Myth, Ritual and Kingship p.229) that he arrived at his conclusions 'quite independently of any associations with the "Myth and ritual School"', and it is

1. *Adonis und Esmun (1911)

worth noting here that whilst he did deliver a lecture (which afterwards appeared in print as the essay entitled 'The role of the king in the Jerusalem cultus' in The Labyrinth - 1935) under the auspices of S.H.Hooke, this did not imply that his conclusions were reached 'in an effort to lend support to Professor Hooke's theory of a culture pattern common to the ancient Near East and displaying the characteristics to which I have already referred' (loc.cit.). Furthermore, Johnson constantly reiterates that he advocates no conception of Yahweh as a dying or rising God, or of the king playing the part of Yahweh or that of any God in the ritual described.

In recent years there has been a mass of literature¹ on the subject of 'Myth, Ritual and Kingship' in the Old Testament, and indeed it is probably true to say that the so-called 'Uppsala School' has developed the original theories into a movement which seeks to set a new interpretation of the Old Testament, founded on the priority of ritual and tradition, against historical and documentary interpretation. A noticeable extension of these same principles in other fields of theological work is to be found in Professor H. Riesenfeld's *Jésus Transfiguré, published in 1947. At the present moment it is difficult to present any complete picture of the work of the Uppsala School, and this situation is likely to prevail until such time as the fragmentary studies which are to be found in various publications, have been presented to us in concrete form.

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1. e.g. Engnell: Studies in Divine Kingship in the Ancient Near East (1943)
 Gadd: Ideas of Divine Rule in the Ancient Near East (1948)
 Mowinkel: *Religion og Kultus (1950) He that cometh
 (1951 English translation 1956)
 Widengren: *Sakrales Königtum im Alten Testament und im Judentum (1955)
 Bentzen: King and Messiah (1955)
 Johnson: Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel (1955)
 Hooke (ed): Myth, Ritual and Kingship (1958)

and many shorter articles in ET; *Atant; *UUA et al.

We would note, however, that A.R.Johnson (Art: Hebrew conceptions of Kingship: Myth, Ritual and Kingship p.231ff) considers that both Engnell and Widengren are of the opinion that Yahweh himself was thought of as a dying and rising God - an opinion which he himself strongly challenges (v. Art: ET Vol.62 pp.41f and supra). On the other hand, it would seem more likely that in fact both these authors support the view that Israel adopted, but reinterpreted, a cultic pattern which originally had this meaning. Mowinckel (He that cometh p.86) believes that neither in Israel nor Babylonia do the sources afford evidence for any such view. Further, he himself avoids any suggestion that the king should be regarded as an 'incarnation' of Yahweh, and quite clearly expresses the opinion that we should think rather of the king's being equipped with supernatural power through the gift of the 'Spirit' (v. op.cit. p.66 and 69 and Cf. C.R.North: 'The religious aspects of Hebrew Kingship' *ZAW 1.1932 p.17 and J.de Fraine: *L'Aspect religieux de la royauté israélite (1954) p.193ff).

We come now to what is the central section of our study, namely the examination of the Psalms themselves from the differing stand-points of the older historical and biographical approach and the newer 'cultic' approach. Quite obviously we are unable to consider each individual psalm in detail. Indeed such a course would be neither relevant nor necessary. To render such an examination workable therefore, we shall select certain psalms which have particular relevance to the cultic interpretation of the psalter and we shall consider these both in the light of the ideas which have come to us from the 'Myth and Ritual School' and scholars associated with it, and also from the point of view of the older 'atomistic' commentators. Our principal works of reference in the former category will be Mowinckel: He That Cometh (English translation 1956); Aubrey Johnson: Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel (1955); Hooke (ed): Myth, Ritual and Kingship (1958); and in the latter category Kirkpatrick: The Psalms (1902); and W.E.Barnes: The Psalms (1931). The psalms which we have chosen to consider are

Psalms. 2 (Cf.110); 18 (Cf.118); 21; 24 (Cf.47 and 68); 29 (Cf.93); 48 (Cf.46 and 149); 72; 84 (Cf.89); 89; 95 (Cf.99); 97 (Cf.82 and 98); 101; 132 and we shall examine these firstly as they are presented to us by the older commentators, and then as we find them interpreted by writers of the 'Cultic' school. In order to make the latter interpretations intelligible, it is necessary to have a reasonably clear idea of the mythological and cultic features of the 'New Year Festival' which scholars of the 'Myth and ritual' school have advanced as a Festival celebrated 'in Solomon's Temple between the 10th and the 6th Centuries BC' (Johnson - op.cit. p.124). Accordingly we will briefly outline Johnson's final reconstruction of the events of the Festival and his estimate of their significance without discussion, for we shall critically examine his theory at a later stage of our study, when we come to review the present-day position in psalm study. Johnson writes as follows:

'In the first place we have

- a) The celebration of Yahweh's original triumph as leader of the forces of light, over the forces of darkness as represented by the monstrous chaos of waters or primeval ocean;
- b) His subjection of this cosmic sea and his enthronement as King in the assembly of the Gods;
- c) The further demonstration of his might and power in the creation of the habitable world.....'

All this is the prelude to the thought of his re-creative work, which is expressed in the form of a ritual drama.... In this ritual drama the worshippers are given:

- a) an assurance of final victory over 'Death' i.e. all that obstructs the fullness of life for mankind which was Yahweh's design in the creation of the habitable world;
- b) a summons to a renewal of their faith in Yahweh and his plans for them and for the world;
- c) a challenge to a renewed endeavour to be faithful to him and to his demands, so that the day may indeed dawn when this vision of a universal realm of righteousness and peace will be realised, and his kingdom will be seen in all its power and glory.

Moreover the summons and the challenge are directed first and foremost towards the ruling member of the house of David, in whom rest the hopes of Yahweh and his people; for we now know that humanly speaking, the leading actor in this drama is the Davidic king, in whom the life of the nation as a corporate whole finds its focus. This work of salvation (הַשְׁלֵשׁ) as it is called, is portrayed by some kind of mime in which the kings (i.e. nations) of the earth, representing the forces of darkness and "Death" as opposed to light and "Life" and commonly designated the "Wicked" (רְשָׁעִים) unite in an attempt to overthrow Yahweh's covenanted followers i.e. his "votaries" (עַבְדֵי יְהוָה) or the "righteous" (צְדִיקִים) under the leadership of the Messiah. The latter, who is also described as the Servant of Yahweh, suffers an initial humiliation: but this issues in his salvation and that of his people, for it involves the recognition of an ultimate dependence on Yahweh rather than "the arm of flesh" and thus sets the seal upon the basic plea of "fidelity" (אֱמוּנָה), "devotion" (קִדְּוָה) and "righteousness" (צְדָקָה) on the part of the Messiah and his subjects. As a result victory (or salvation) is eventually secured through the dramatic intervention of Yahweh himself in the person of the "Most High" who makes his presence felt at dawn on this fateful day, and delivers the Messiah and ipso facto the nation, from the forces of darkness and death. In this way Yahweh reveals his own "fidelity", "devotion" and "righteousness" in relation to his covenant people. Further, this deliverance from "Death" marks the renewal of life or the rebirth of the king in question. It is a sign that in virtue of his faithfulness and basically by reason of his faith this suffering Servant and humble Messiah has been adopted as "Son" of Yahweh.....and as such he is enthroned on Mount Zion as Yahweh's unmistakable vice-regent upon earth. This is not all however, for Yahweh's earthly victory has its counterpart in the heavenly places. The rebellion of the kings of the earth is but a reflection of the rebellious misrule of the lesser Gods in the divine assembly, to whom the "Most High" had

granted jurisdiction over those territories which were occupied by the other nations of the earth. Accordingly the overthrow of the kings of the earth corresponds to the overthrow of these rebellious Gods, who, having shown their unfitness to rule, are condemned to die like earthly princes. Thus Yahweh proves to be what has been aptly called "the enduring power, not ourselves, which makes for righteousness" and the helpless, the poor and the humble, not merely in Israel but throughout the world, may look forward to an era of universal righteousness and peace, as the one omnipotent God comes with judicial power to destroy the wicked, to justify his Messiah and his Messiah's people in their responsible mission to the world, and to enforce his beneficent rule upon the earth' (Johnson op.cit. p.124ff).

There are one or two further examples of cultic interpretation of the Psalter to which we might profitably draw attention at this point. The first is the contribution which studies of the 'Cult Prophets' have made to our subject. In older studies on the Old Testament Prophets there has been a tendency to stress the specific contributions made by the prophets to Israel's understanding of Yahweh and to ignore, or completely fail to understand, the equally important place which the prophets had in connection with the worship of Yahweh. More recent studies of the prophets, have however, clearly indicated that many of them seem to have belonged to a cultic order, and that a concern for the cult is apparent throughout their ministry. So long ago as 1914 Hölscher suggested that there were prophets who stood beside the priests in the shrines and who belonged to the staff of these shrines (Cf. *Die Profeten p.143). Mowinckel himself took up this theory in his *Psalmenstudien III (1923), and it has since been developed by numerous writers, noticeably by A.R.Johnson in his monograph The Cultic Prophet in Ancient Israel (1944 - we understand that a revised edition of this work is about to be published).

It has been noted that the phenomenon of prophecy was not peculiar to Israel, though the contribution of the Old Testament

prophets is quite distinctive (Cf. A.Haldar's work on this subject - Associations of Cult Prophets among the Ancient Semites - 1945).

In the ancient world prophets were frequently associated with the sanctuaries and it was part of their function to give the divinely inspired 'Word' to the King. That they exercised this function at the sanctuaries is not surprising, for it was quite natural that they should be found in close proximity to the God's habitation, and further, taking part in those rites in which the proximity of the God was felt to be most real. In the Old Testament for instance we could cite as examples of such activity in Ancient Israel, Deborah (Cf. Judges 4.5 where there is no sanctuary mentioned but where there is a significant reference to a specific palm tree thought of as holy); Samuel (when he receives his oracle: 1 Sam. 3.7 and also when he anoints the future king: 1 Sam. 9.12f); the Prophetic Guilds, who though itinerant, frequently appear at a sanctuary (1 Sam. 19.20). Of these latter, Eichrodt writes 'On closer inspection, the cultus at any rate calls for consideration as the most likely sphere of its emergence' (Theol. of the Old Testament Vol.I p.312). We may note further, the fact that Ahab (1 Kgs. 22.1ff) inquired of Yahweh through the sanctuary prophets.

The function of the prophet then, was to inquire for and strengthen the king in his undertakings. That the circumstances sometimes led to corrupt practices is made quite clear in numerous references (Cf. for example 1 Kgs. 22), but in general, the great prophets seem to have been able to bring considerable influence to bear on the king as a result of their possession of divine energy. Many 'independent' prophets prophesied at shrines, not because they belonged to the regular personnel of the shrine, but because it was an appropriate place at which to do their work. We might note in this respect Amos, who specifically denies that he is a recognised Cult prophet (Amos 7.14) or Isaiah, who received his initiatory vision at the Temple in Jerusalem (Isaiah 6). We should also note that these prophets made vigorous attacks upon, and criticised in considerable detail, the ritual practices of their day, thus indicating an intimate

knowledge of same (Cf. Isaiah 1.11ff; Amos 4.4ff. et al.). It is also noticeable that whilst the great prophets certainly criticised the priesthood, they were no less critical of the prophets (Cf. Mic. 3.5-7; Jer. 6.13; 14.18 et al.).

The prophet then, had his essential place in Israel's worship as the one who saw and heard Yahweh and reported what he had seen or heard, or otherwise acted in obedience to the divine command. Further, in his function of presenting Yahweh to his people, the prophet was Israel, just as the sacral king in his cultic role was Israel. The prophet received the divine guidance, judgement and salvation into his soul in order that the soul of Israel might be likewise permeated. For the 'Word' of Yahweh with its power of self-fulfilment had taken residence in him, and through him it went out into the life of the community. It is in this way that we find the prophets functioning in the worship of Israel in Ps. 60.6-9; 75.2-6; 81.6-14; 82.2-7; 95.8-11; 110 et al. These would appear to be words uttered by the prophets within the movement of the ritual, in answer to some request made by the officiant on behalf of Israel. It has been suggested that the Levitical Temple singers were the spiritual descendants of the earlier cult prophets and that in fact, they were probably the end product of a process which had gradually absorbed the post-exilic cult prophets (Cf. Eichrodt op.cit. p.337n).

So we see the cult prophets, like all other cultic persons, acting not as individuals but as corporate personalities. What they did they did as Israel, even when the Historic Israel repudiated them. They brought into Israel the constant renewal of Yahweh whom they worshipped, the result of which although frequently for condemnation of an unholy people, was ultimately working for the restored life of Israel so that Israel's loyalty might be deepened. Most scholars would agree that to suggest that the great prophets were looking for a religion without ritual, is far too superficial an interpretation of the texts. No critic of the cultus in Israel is more severe, for instance, than Ezekiel - he condemns both as priest and prophet, yet in his vision of the future, he sees that

worship must be the real heart of Israel's life. Nor is it satisfactory to think that the great 'writing' prophets had prepared a plan for reform of the cultus. What they undoubtedly did was on the one hand to point to those elements in the cultus which were obscuring or perverting the knowledge of Yahweh, and on the other hand to insist that ritual acts or words required at one and the same time a humble and contrite heart. It is of the greatest importance that we should realise that Israel was not simply being presented with the stark alternative of righteousness or ritual, but rather that the prophets were insisting on a proper understanding of the fact that it is righteousness which is of prime importance, ritual without righteousness being useless or even dangerous.

We conclude this brief section on the Cult prophets by mentioning H.H.Rowley's essay 'Ritual and the Hebrew Prophets' (Myth, Ritual and Kingship p.236ff). In this essay he writes, 'If there were cultic prophets who had a defined place in the ritual of the shrines, and who shared with the priests in the services which took place there as officials of the cultus, it is impossible to suppose that the major canonical prophets exercised their ministry in this way' (p.251). He continues 'So far as the preservation of prophetic liturgies in the prophetic books is concerned, I am sceptical of the claims that are made to detect them. A few may have survived....But it is not there that I look for the solid fruits of these studies. Rather is it in the new light which they have shed on the Psalter by bringing it into relation with both prophecy and the cultus. Here once more there has been a significant perception that beneath all its variety of form and of idea, the Old Testament has a deep unity, and that not alone the Law and the Prophets, but the Psalms have a real place in that unity, and that all belong essentially together' (loc.cit. p.260).

The second example of cultic interpretation of the psalms to which we wish to draw attention, concerns those verses, especially

in the individual laments, which refer to 'workers of unrighteousness'. Mowinckel has put forward the view that this expression describes sorcerers, who by the exercise of their magic arts brought suffering on the 'humble' or 'afflicted'. The penitential psalms, in which mention is made of these, were, he maintains, invocations of Yahweh's divine power to break the spells. They belonged to the Temple ritual and were associated with ceremonies at which the temple prophets and the temple priests together sought to unloose these binding spells and to declare the free, full truth of God. In the same way the Imprecatory psalms were expressions of the deep, fearful antagonism which was aroused in men's hearts against those who are supposed to exercise some mysterious demonic influence over others. These psalms were uttered, according to Mowinckel's theory, to counteract these curses in the name of Yahweh who is a sure defence against the powers of darkness and is mighty to defy and overthrow all the hosts of evil which stir themselves up against his servants.

This theory has not met with general support. Professor G.W. Anderson (A Crit.Introduction to the Old Testament p.178) writes 'In spite of the learning with which the view has been advanced, it is probable that the expression "workers of iniquity" is usually to be taken in its general sense'. In a similar vein, G.S.Gunn (God in the Psalms p.101f) writes, 'The interpretation is said to make a strong appeal to many in the younger churches today who are familiar in their environment with a potent belief in the malignant action of spells and evil spirits. In the present world more people than formerly would agree that there is an element of real truth in Mowinckel's view, and yet regard it as exaggerated. Belief in a world of evil spirits explains part of the situation delineated in these psalms. But it is not required as an essential explanation of the phenomenon of one group praying against another hostile group. That seems to have been a common enough practice in the Hebrew world and far beyond it, and still is in the behaviour of one sect to another, both Jewish and Christian. Such prayer often has

its source in the basic idea of retribution, that in a world ruled by God, evil will recoil upon the persons responsible for it.... The view of Mowinckel can hardly cover the whole area of thought in question, nor even the larger part of it. For the enemies were more real, visible and troublesome than it allows for. We have to suspect the modern tendency in certain quarters, to reduce the area in which purely ethical concepts reign in the Old Testament field'.

The third and final cultic interpretation to which we should like to draw attention, is that concerning the Annual renewal of the Covenant. Another basic theory of Mowinckel's, this has been taken up at some length by Artur Weiser in his commentary on the psalms - *Die Psalmen (4th Edition, Rev. 1955). We understand that this commentary is shortly to be published in English translation.

We now turn to a consideration of the psalms which we have selected for study, and we shall treat these in an order which will illustrate in its own way (in so far as the Cultic approach is concerned) the principal features of the New Year Festival which we have just set down. The following outline indicates the significance of this order:

i) Psalms providing general background information concerning the Festival.

Psalm 72 - The King's place in the social order as 'Ruler' or 'Judge', responsible to and upon Yahweh for the 'righteousness' of the people.

Psalm 132 - The Covenant between Yahweh and the House of David.

Psalm 89 - The everlasting significance of this Covenant.

Psalm 29 - Yahweh's Kingship over the realm of nature and his promises to Israel.
(with Ps. 93)

Psalm 95 (with Ps. 99) - Israel's corresponding obligation towards Yahweh.

ii) Psalms proclaiming Yahweh as King.

Psalm 24 (with Pss.47 &68) - Yahweh in his universal sovereign power as the divine King.

Psalm 48 (with Pss.46 & 149) - Yahweh's triumph over 'Death'.

Psalm 97 (with Pss.82 & 98) - Through Yahweh his 'righteous people' are also delivered from 'Death'. Yahweh pronounces sentence on the Gods of the nations prior to a new era of righteousness and justice.

iii) Psalms illustrating the earthly King's place in the ritual of the Festival.

Psalm 84 (with Ps.89) - The earthly king as the 'shield' of his people and 'suffering Messiah' of God.

Psalm 101 - The Messiah pleads his loyalty to the Davidic Covenant affirming his own and his people's righteousness.

Psalm 18 (with Ps.118) - The Messiah's thanksgiving for answered prayer.

iv) The Davidic King enthroned as Yahweh's vice-regent on earth.

Psalm 2 (with Ps.110) - The re-enthronement of the King as Yahweh's vice-regent, and his endowment with universal power.

Psalm 21 - The King is given life through Yahweh's 'victory' and is re-enthroned. Yahweh's followers are reassured of his triumph.

All quotations in the notes referring to the cultic interpretation of the selected psalms are of Aubrey Johnson's own translation of the Hebrew.

Psalm 72

Both Kirkpatrick and Barnes are agreed that this important psalm seems to reflect the memories of Solomon's imperial greatness rather than anticipate it. Kirkpatrick considers that its primary aim is to 'depict the blessings which flow from the righteousness of Yahweh's earthly representative, the theocratic King' (op.cit. p.416). Hence, although the king for whom it was written must remain uncertain, he suggests that it does refer to some actual king of Judah. Neverthe-

less the whole tone of the psalm goes beyond this primary reference in giving a Messianic prophecy of the kingdom of God on earth in its ideal character of perfection and universality. Barnes does not make any reference to any particular king, but rather interprets the psalm as being the backward and forward-looking vision of a seer, at a time when Israel was in a state of 'servitude', poverty and misery' (op.cit. p.342).

Commentators interpreting this psalm along cultic lines, see it as an indication of 'the king's supremely important place in the social order' (Johnson op.cit. p.6). The key words in the psalm are 'righteousness' (רְדִיפָה) and 'justice' (צְדָקָה), and the basic thought throughout is that of a king, dependent upon and responsible to Yahweh for the right exercise of his power, watching over the rights of his people and ensuring in particular that the weaker members are both protected and the recipients of justice according to their need.

The psalmist then extends the immediate object of his thoughts to include the world at large, and prays that this earthly king may come to enjoy universal sway:

'May he also rule from sea to sea....
All nations serve him' (vv.8-11)

We shall have occasion at a later point to discuss the interpretation of 'The River' (v.8) as a reference to the current of the great cosmic sea which nourishes the holy city.

But the king is primarily guardian of the humble and needy:

'For he will deliver the needy when he crieth....
And their blood will be precious in his eyes' (vv.12-14)

and the right exercise of this guardianship (i.e. through righteous and just government) will lead to economic prosperity:

'So may he live and be given of the gold of Sheba....
May all nations call him happy' (vv.15-17)

Thus we see that the principal theme is that the 'national prosperity of Israel is conditioned by the behaviour of society as a whole. That is to say....the moral realm and the realm of nature are regarded as one and indivisible' (ibid.p.11). We might compare

Mowinckel's treatment of this psalm (He That Cometh p.89f) which he considers portrays 'almost every aspect of the demands, promises and requirements associated with the king'.

Psalm 132

Kirkpatrick is quite definite that this psalm is 'an encouragement to Israel of the Restoration to believe that Yahweh will not fail to perform his promises to the house of David' (op.cit. p.763). Expressing doubt as to the precise period to which the psalm belongs, he nevertheless favours the age of Nehemiah. Barnes also considers the psalm to be a 'backward look' by the psalmist to the days of David. Both commentators discount any suggestion that the dating could be 'monarchic', mainly on the grounds of the force of the expression 'Lord remember David'.

Johnson, however, treating the psalm as a quite clear example of a 'Royal' psalm, considers its Sitz im Leben to have been 'a dramatic commemoration or liturgical re-enactment of the bringing of the Ark to Jerusalem and the consequent founding of the Jerusalem cultus in close association with the Davidic dynasty' (op.cit. p.18). Thus the psalm falls into two parts: firstly a hymn asking Yahweh's continued favour to the royal house:

'Yahweh remember David....

Turn not back the face of thy Messiah' (vv.1-10)

Noteworthy points here are the details which are recounted of the finding of the ark in Ephrathah (v. 1 Sam.6.1, 7.2), and also the interpretation of:

'Rise up Yahweh, to thy home (lit. '**resting place**'

Thou and thy powerful Ark'

יְהוָה יָסֹבֵב
בְּיָמֵינוּ
וְיָסֹבֵב
בְּיָמֵינוּ

as expressing literally what was actually happening as the Ark was lifted into its place in the Temple.

The second part is an oracular response, stressing the preservation by Yahweh of his 'everlasting covenant': This may have been sung antiphonally by the Temple choirs or the response may have been that of an individual temple official:

'Yahweh hath sworn to David....

While on himself his crown shall sparkle' (vv.11-18)

One interesting point is the reference to 'testimonies' viz:

'If thy sons keep my covenant
And my testimony (or testimonies) that I shall teach
them'

Johnson considers that this verse throws considerable light on the well-known crux concerning the coronation of the boy king Jehoash (2 Kgs. 11.12; Cf. 2 Chron. 23.11) where it is stated that the king was invested with 'the crown and the testimony'. In his view there is no need to emend the text to read for 'testimony' the 'bracelets' or 'the insignia'. The simple fact was that the king wore, in addition to the royal crown, a document which embodied the basic terms of Yahweh's covenant with the house of David (Cf. the later custom of wearing phylacteries).

The other point of very considerable interest is the significance of the verse:

'Yahweh hath chosen Zion;
He hath desired it for his abode' (v.13)

Johnson has a very long section here in which he considers what we learn from the Old Testament of the background of Jerusalem's history, and concludes that 'after the capture of Jerusalem, David found in the Jebusite cultus with its worship of the "Most High" (אל ילין) and its royal-priestly order of Melchizedek, a ritual and mythology which might prove to be the means of carrying out Yahweh's purposes for Israel and fusing the chosen people into a model of national righteousness' (op.cit. -.46. For the detailed argument v. ibid. pp.27-46).

Psalm 89

The basic thought of this psalm is at once obvious, and expresses on the one hand the certain loving kindness and faithfulness of Yahweh, on the other hand the apparent failure of his mercy towards Israel. Kirkpatrick and Barnes place the psalm in quite different periods, the former during the Exile and the latter during the early period following the Exile when 'there was still a hope that the Davidic house might be restored' (op.cit. p.425). Great emphasis is placed on the 'loving kindness' (רַחֲמֵיךָ) and 'faithfulness' (אֱמוּנָתְךָ) of

Yahweh, each of these adjectives being repeated seven times (vv. 1, 2, 5, 8, 14, 24, 28, 33, 49). In Kirkpatrick's opinion 'The enthusiastic praises of Yahweh's majesty (v.5ff) and the detailed recital of the splendour and the solemnity of the promise (vv.19ff) serve to heighten the contrast of the king's present degradation, while at the same time they are a plea and a consolation'. Nevertheless there is no attempt on the psalmist's part to solve the apparent contradiction which he presents.

The importance of this psalm from the cultic point of view is that it gives us in extensive detail, a picture of the intimate relationship which was extant between Yahweh and the Davidic king. Thus Johnson ascribes it to an occasion when the royal forces or the king himself has suffered disaster. This latter is attributed to the anger of Yahweh and accordingly, the leaders of the people with the king himself, have assembled in the Temple to pray for divine favour. In the light of these circumstances, the psalm is interpreted as follows:

i) There is a hymn of praise celebrating Yahweh's supremacy

'My song shall be alway....

And in thy favour our horn shall be exalted' (vv.1-18)

ii) Yahweh is reminded of his promises to David and the Davidic line. From this we see that, employing the concept of corporate personality, there is to be a descendant of David who as Messiah (cf. v.20b) is not merely the 'Servant' but the 'Son' by adoption of the deity and who by reason of his 'sonship' is to have dominion over the kings of the earth.

'Of old thou didst speak by a prophet....

And his throne as the days of heaven' (vv.19-29)

iii) There are, however, certain definite conditions laid down by which it is possible for the Davidic king to be 'Son' and if these are not observed then Yahweh will exercise his justice. Nevertheless the covenant is 'everlasting' no matter what any individual monarch may do.

'If his children forsake my law....

A faithful witness in the sky' (vv.30-37)

iv) The disastrous situation is described and a plea made for Yahweh's covenant mercy:

'Thou hast broken down all his hedges....
 Praised be Yahweh for evermore. Amen and Amen'
 (with regard to the covenant relationship) (vv.40-52)

Johnson (op.cit. p.26) emphasises a very important point to which we draw special attention at this stage '....despite David's promised elevation to the rank of Yahweh's 'Son' and despite the gift of the divine 'Spirit' from the 'Holy One' of Israel (with all that this may imply in terms of Father, Son and holy Spirit), we must beware of exaggerating the importance of the fact that in Israelite thought the Davidic king is potentially so closely related to God. Although, in theory at least, he may be on such intimate terms with Yahweh and powerfully subject to his influence, he is by nature a man; and, so far as his subjects are concerned, he is no more than primus inter pares'.

Psalm 29

Taking an interpretation from the title of this psalm in the LXX (**Ἕξοδίου σκηνης** Vulg. in consummatione tabernaculi) Kirkpatrick holds that it was sung in the time of the Second Temple on the 8th or concluding day of the feast of Tabernacles. The psalm expresses the typical devout Israelite's view of nature, viz. every natural feature which he observes expresses the beneficence, power and/or majesty of a God who is supreme ruler of the universe. Barnes is inclined towards an early, pre-exilic date for the psalm, and it is particularly interesting in the light of the cultic interpretation (infra) that he should specifically comment (op.cit. p.142f):

i) That the Psalm was not originally written for use in public worship and

ii) With regard to the expression **שָׂרְיָהּ - קִרְיָהּ**, that 'the modern interpretation that "holy garments" are meant in v.2b is unsuitable to the context'.

We might note here, that modern commentators, noting the striking similarity between this psalm and Canaanite poetry revealed to us in

the Ugaritic texts, have suggested that in the light of Ugaritic evidence, the expression **שִׁפְּתֵי־תְהִלָּתוֹ** should be translated 'when he appears in holiness' (Cf. similar usage in Ps. 96.9 and 1 Chr. 16.29).

From the cultic standpoint, the psalm is an important one. Not only does it reveal certain familiar liturgical features, but it is also a close parallel, both in language and form, with Ugaritic literature of the 2nd millenium BC. In fact the similarities are so great that 'the psalm has been described as in origin a hymn to Baal which has been put slightly revised in terms of Yahwism' (Johnson op.cit. p.54 Cf. also W.F.Albright in his article 'The Psalm of Habbakuk': *Studies in Old Testament Prophecy p.6 - Psalm 29 'swarms with Canaanitisms in diction and imagery'). Thus Johnson considers it possible that in this psalm we have an example of a hymn from the early Jebusite cultus which was adapted to the worship of Yahveh after the city had been captured by David.

The psalm commences with an instruction to the 'godlings' (**אֱלֹהִים יְהִלְלוּ**) in the divine assembly, to honour Yahveh as supreme:

'Render to Yahveh O ye Gods....

Bow down to Yahveh in his Holy splendour' (vv.1-2)

The main section of the psalm then describes Yahveh in terms of the Lord of nature speaking with a mighty voice whilst in his temple all are extolling his glory:

'The voice of Yahveh soundeth over the waters....

While all his Temple echoeth the word 'Glory' (vv.3-9)

Finally Yahveh's enthronement as Lord of nature with rule over the universe and in particular over the cosmic sea, carries with it a certainty that he will guarantee the seasonal rains and the consequent prosperity of his people:

'Yahveh is enthroned over the flood....

Yahveh will endow his people with welfare' (**וְיִשְׂבַּע יְהוָה אֶת־עַמּוֹ**)
(vv.10-11)

Thus Johnson believes that 'we have good grounds for associating this particular psalm with the occasion under discussion i.e. Israel's great autumnal festival as celebrated in the Jerusalem temple during the period of the monarchy' (ibid. p.57). He also relates the

circumstances of this psalm to the vision of Isaiah (Is. 6.1ff) and considers that we can fix in a similar fashion by comparison, the date and interpretation of similar psalms e.g. Ps. 93 et al.

Psalm 95

Barnes has little of interest to say with regard to this psalm. He merely treats it as one of the psalms of 'Ascent' which, like Pss. 120-134 were sung by persons going up to worship at the Temple. Kirkpatrick treats the psalm in the light of its relationship to Pss. 96-100 with which it has particular connection and considers that each of these psalms was definitely liturgical and was probably composed for the Dédication of the Second Temple in BC 516 (The LXX titles of Pss. 96/97 he considers give a true indication of their purpose i.e. *Ὅτε ὁ οἶκος ᾠκοδομηταὶ κ.τ.λ. and τῷ Δαβὶδ ὅτε ἡ γῆ αὐτοῦ καθίσταται.* Thus it is the deliverance from Babylon culminating in the Dédication of the Temple which the psalmist is concerned with here. The two parts of the psalm (vv.1-7b; 7c-11) are respectively an invitation to worship and also a warning against disobedience.

From the cultic standpoint we have here yet another of the 'enthronement' psalms, presenting us with another aspect of the covenant relationship between Yahweh and Israel and emphasising this time the obligation of Israel towards Yahweh. It is most naturally placed in the context of the New Year Festival.

The psalm opens with a summons to unite in praise of Yahweh the great God and King/Creator who is also shepherd of his chosen people:

'O come let us applaud Yahweh....

We are the people whom he shepherdeth, the flock
under his hand' (vv.1-7b)

At this point comes a change - a solemn charge is given to the worshippers (possibly by a cultic prophet acting as an extension of the Divine personality) not to be disobedient to Yahweh as their forefathers had been in the wilderness:

'O that today ye may hearken to his voice....
That they should not enter my homeland' (vv.7c-11)

Thus Johnson (op.cit. p.61) considers that the first part of the psalm is mainly a legacy from Canaanite mythology, 'while the second part, with its emphasis upon the lesson in obedience which is to be drawn from the history of the Wandering, is based upon the Hebrew traditions concerning the great events of the Exodus....'

We may compare with this psalm, Ps. 99 where the story of Israel's history is brought forward to the monarchy, and the establishment of the Ark in Jerusalem.

Psalm 24

Kirkpatrick here comes extraordinarily close to the contemporary cultic interpretation of the psalm in his suggestion that "'the ancient doors" are the gates of the venerable fortress, now opening to receive their true Lord' (op.cit. p.127), and that the occasion is an actual procession through Jebus with the Ark as the central feature of this. In his desire to set the exact occasion he selects David's installation of the Ark following the capture of Jebus (2 Sam. 6). Barnes, apart from a reference to Yahweh's victory over the 'Deep' and his foundation of the world upon the 'Floods' has little to offer of interest.

Cultically this psalm is very important for we probably have here an occasion on which the Ark (the symbol of the presence of Yahweh and the focus of his worship) was carried in procession up the slopes of Mount Zion towards the Temple.

The psalm commences with a characteristic reference to Yahweh's activity in Creation:

'The earth is Yahweh's and all that filleth it....
And doth maintain it above the currents' (vv.1-2)

Then follows a series of questions and answers stressing Yahweh's requirement of his covenant people - moral integrity:

'Who may ascend Yahweh's hill?....
Those that seek (the person of the God of) Jacob'
(vv.3-6)

Finally the worshippers in the procession appeal that the gates of the Temple shall be opened to allow Yahweh (symbolised by the Ark) to enter his sanctuary. As in Ps. 29 (supra) we notice that Yahweh is thought of as actually present in all his 'Glory':

'Lift up your heads O ye gates....
He is 'The glorious King' (vv.7-10)

There are two specific points of interest which Johnson makes regarding this psalm (op.cit. p.65). Firstly that 'Yahweh's Kingship is here represented as something more than a sovereignty over the realm of nature. It also includes his sovereign power over what we should call the moral realm'. Secondly we should notice 'the emphasis which is laid upon the identification of this King with one who has been proved "mighty in battle". That is to say, the procession of this God who is so actively concerned with both the physical and the moral realms is obviously a triumphant one. It is as a victorious warrior that the divine king is now entering his Temple'.

We should notice the close affinity which this psalm has with Pss. 47 and 68 both of which describe the triumphant progress of the divine King into his Temple.

Psalm 48

Both Kirkpatrick and Barnes are agreed that this psalm is a psalm of thanksgiving for a great deliverance. Its theme is the greatness of Yahweh and the glory of his city. With regard to the actual occasion, both commentators are in favour of taking the psalm to refer to the miraculous deliverance of Jerusalem from the army of Sennacherib in the reign of Hezekiah (701 BC - v. 2 Kgs. 18.13ff), and both favour an early date for this psalm and also for the two companion psalms 46 and 47.

One interesting feature of Barnes' notes is that he rejects the view of Duhm that the psalm was a Pilgrim psalm like the Songs of Ascent on the grounds that here we have special rather than general thanksgiving for a great deliverance.

For the cultic school of interpretation the psalm is important because it gives us some idea of the preliminaries which came before the actual procession of the divine king to his Temple (supra - Study of Ps. 24 and associated psalms).

The psalm begins with praise celebrating Yahweh's Kingship in Zion (NB: the description of Zion itself as ציון - the mythological mountain where Baal had his throne):

'Great is Yahweh and greatly to be praised....
The city of the mighty king' (vv.1-2)

Then the way in which Yahweh has discomfited the Kings of the earth
in Zion is described:

'God in the palaces thereof....
The fleets of Tarshish' (vv.3-7)

This can only be interpreted as a reference to the symbolic dis-
comfiture of the Kings in the dramatic ritual and this interpreta-
tion is strengthened by the lines which follow:

'As we have heard, so have we seen....
In the midst of thy Temple' (vv.8-9)

Yahweh's righteousness and judgement are then extolled:

'Like thy name O God so doth thy praise....
Because of thine acts of judgement' (vv.10-11)

Finally the remaining verses of the psalm refer to a ritual
procession emphasising Yahweh's leadership of his people in the
struggle against 'Death':

'March round Zion, go round about her....
Our God is our leader against "Death"' (vv.12-14)

We may assume then, that we have here the situation which
precedes the triumphal procession mentioned supra in the notes on
Ps. 24 (and also connected with Pss. 47 and 68). These last lines
are in fact an exhortation to commence such a procession.

Closely connected with Ps. 48 are Pss. 149 and 46, the former
giving us some interesting details of the part which the worshippers
play in the ritual performance and also a possible reference to its
timing:

'Let the devout be thrilled at the thought of
glory....
Let them applaud upon their beds,
With the acclamations of God in their throat
And a two-edged sword in their hand' (vv.5-6)

and the latter a threefold consideration of the events of the ritual
performance (v. Johnson op.cit. p.83ff).

Psalm 97

Here again we learn little from the standard commentaries of
Kirkpatrick and Barnes. The former takes the psalm as one of
celebration, and, mainly on the evidence of the LXX title

(Τῷ Δαυὶδ ὅτε ἦ γῆ κ.τ.λ.), cites the occasion as the restoration from Babylon. The latter entitles his notes on the psalm 'Another song of coming judgement' and considers that 'The psalmist sees in vision the Kingdom of God already present' (op.cit. p.464).

Treating the psalm cultically, we can observe several of the usual features. It begins with a plea to the world in general to rejoice in Yahweh's sovereignty:

'It is Yahweh who is King! Let the earth
rejoice!

And all the peoples have seen his glory' (vv.1-6)

Then Yahweh's triumph over the nations is declared to be a proof that those people around who worship inferior Gods are worshippers of Gods which have been compelled not only to acknowledge Yahweh as supreme, but also to admit the defeat of their schemes for his overthrow and the institution of world anarchy:

'When the Most High gave to the nations their
possessions....

Jacob was the portion of which he took
possession'

'All who serve a graven image are put to shame,
Thou art highly exalted above all the Gods' (vv.7-9)

The remainder of the psalm indicates the responsibility of Yahweh's followers to hate 'evil' and they are described as a 'righteous' people who have been delivered, at Dawn, from 'darkness' and 'Death':

'Those who love Yahweh hate evil....

And give thanks to his holy Name' (vv.10-12)

With this psalm we should consider also the closely related Ps. 82 and Ps. 98.

Thus far then, from the cultic point of view, we have illustrated the general features of the 'Autumnal Festival'. We continue now to consider several psalms which illustrate the special position which the reigning monarch held in this festival, and it is perhaps obvious that we should select our examples from those psalms which we generally classify 'Royal psalms'.

Psalm 84

Again Barnes seems to be very wide of the mark in his estimation of this psalm as one written by 'an anointed person, a king or a high priest' whose desire is 'that he may be allowed to go up once more to Zion', but who is unable to do so because of some unstated obstacle (op.cit. p.403). Kirkpatrick on the other hand comes closer to the cultic interpretation by his dating of the psalm as one written during the monarchy (though not as early as David), and by his understanding of the expression 'thine anointed' as a reference to the reigning monarch.

Johanson (op.cit. p.94) takes the psalm as 'a hymn sung by Yahweh's worshippers in celebration of their pilgrimage from the towns and villages of the land at the time of this autumnal festival'.

At the commencement of the psalm we find portrayed the feelings of those who have to spend most of their lifetime away from Jerusalem:

'How lovely is thy dwelling-place....
Who can always be praising thee' (vv.1-4)

We should note that Yahweh is addressed not only as 'Yahweh of Hosts' but also as the 'Living God' (שׁוֹמֵר הַיְיָ) and the 'Divine King' (מֶלֶךְ הַיְיָ).

Yet the pilgrim is happy in his own way, for he is aware that following his pilgrimage will come the winter rains transforming the dry ground into pools of water. Thus he is spurred on to meet God in Zion and make his special prayer for the reigning king in Jerusalem, the 'shield' (מָגֵן הַיְיָ) of his people and the 'Messiah' of God. We see then a progression of thought from Yahweh to his earthly representative:

'How happy mankind who make thee their strength,
And look upon the face of thy Messiah' (vv.5-9)

Having correctly orientated the two aspects of worship of the divine King and regard for the earthly king, and linked them together with the coming of the winter rains, the worshipper considers afresh the ultimate pleasure which results from worship in the Temple:

'For I prefer a day in thy courts....
How happy mankind who trust in thee!' (vv.10-12)

Finally there is a great song of personal thanksgiving to Yahweh the 'Living God':

'Yahweh liveth! Blessed be my rock!....
To David and his seed for ever' (vv.46-50)

With this psalm we should compare Ps. 118 which is a psalm containing identical features of thanksgiving, praise and triumph and which ends, most interestingly, with what Johnson considers to be 'the royal summons to begin the festal dance as an act of thanksgiving to Yahweh for his lasting devotion....' (op.cit. p.118) namely:

'Join in the dance with festal boughs....
For his devotion is everlasting' (vv.27b-29)

Kirkpatrick spends a great deal of time on this psalm, elaborating his principal theory that it was composed by David himself as a great hymn of thanksgiving in the hour of his highest prosperity and happiness. Having considered the fact that the compiler of 2 Sam. embodied it in his work as the best illustration of David's life and character and the noblest specimen of his poetry' (op.cit. p.85), he dates the composition of the psalm as 'most naturally and fitly assigned to the interval of peace mentioned in 2 Sam. 7.1'. He continues 'In that time of tranquillity David renewed the mercies of Yahweh in this sublime ode of thanksgiving, and planned to raise a monument of his gratitude in the scheme for building the Temple, which he was not allowed to carry out'.

Barnes, in an extremely lengthy study of authorship and evidence for this, also supports Davidic authorship, concluding his study 'Ps. 18 reveals its religious power in that it has for its subject the excellences of a Divine protector, but its religion betrays itself as early and undeveloped by the unmeasured terms in which the fate of the human enemy is described' (op.cit. p.80).

We come now to the final section of our study of the features of the dramatic ritual involved in the autumn festival - namely, the re-birth of the Messiah and his re-enthronement as 'Son' of Yahweh.

Psalm 2

Both Kirkpatrick and Barnes are agreed that the situation presupposed in this psalm is of an anointed king (Yahweh's representative) enthroned on Mount Zion menaced by a confederacy of subject Gentile nations. In their interpretation of the psalm, however, we find differing views. Kirkpatrick considers that it could refer to a definite historic occasion, and he is strongly in favour of relating it to the reign of Solomon, although he concludes that 'the particular historical reference is of relatively small moment compared with the typical application of the Psalm to the kingdom of Christ' (op.cit. p.6). Thus he states, 'This Psalm is typical and prophetic of the rebellion of the Kingdoms of the world against the Kingdom of Christ'. Barnes on the other hand, believes that 'it is not Israelite history but Israelite prophecy (or apocalyptic) that harbours the thought of a universal dominion which has its seat in Jerusalem. Ps. 2 is not a page from the annals of Israel, but a fragment of a vision of the Kingdom of God' (op.cit. p.5). Hence his closing sentence 'Ps. 2 is a vision of the Holy Catholic Church'.

Both commentators are further agreed that the language of the psalm is theocratic throughout - it is God himself who is the real king, the 'Son' is the king on earth, representative of him that 'sitteth in the heavens'.

A glance at Johnson's outline of the New Year Festival renders it at once obvious that in Ps. 2 we have a perfect illustration of the final stage of the dramatic ritual suggested (supra p.20). Yahweh has secured the king's supremacy over the nations, the true Messiah is re-born and adopted as the 'Son' of Yahweh. Hence his re-enthronement as Yahweh's vice-regent on earth and his endowment with universal power:

'Why did the nations....
But I, as you see¹, have set up my King
Upon Zion, my sacred mountain' (vv.1-6)

1. This translation does justice to the force of the introductory (שׁוֹמְרֵי).

At this point, the Messiah is made to recount an oracle which he has received from Yahweh:

'Let me tell of Yahweh's decree....
Thou shalt smash them like a potter's
vessel' (vv.7-9)

Finally the rebellious kings are urged to shed their pride and to recognise Yahweh's universal sovereignty:

'Now therefore....
Happy all those who seek refuge in him' (vv.10-12)

Johnson further links up this psalm with Ps. 110, which he considers is an oracle delivered specially for the occasion by one of the cultic prophets¹. Hence the celebrated crux interpretum 'thou hast the homage....After the order of Melchizedek' (vv.3-4) presents no difficulty, for in fact it deals in 'a perfectly straightforward way with the rebirth of the Messiah, which, as we now know, takes place on this eventful day with his deliverance from the Underworld, apparently at the spring Gihon at dawn....' (op.cit. p.121). It is interesting to compare here Mowinckel's view that in these verses we have the prophetic poet using purely mythological language derived probably from the myth of the birth of the new Sun God (v. He That Cometh p.62).

Psalm 21

Kirkpatrick considers that this psalm is one of thanksgiving for victory and that 'its occasion need not be looked for in a coronation festival or a royal birthday' (op.cit. p.109f). Barnes on the other hand, whilst accepting this interpretation in general, believes that it is the king's might not Yahweh's which is being celebrated (with the exception of vvs. 9b and 13). He does however, show some sympathy towards the suggestion that the psalm (together with Ps.20) was liturgical, and possibly used before battle to accompany sacrifice and invocation of Yahweh.

1. For Johnson's detailed study of the role of the cultic prophet see his book The Cultic Prophet in Ancient Israel (1944).

In the light of the interpretation of Pss. 2 and 110 (supra) it becomes evident that much more is involved in Ps. 21 than is immediately apparent.

The opening lines are those of rejoicing because Yahweh has granted the king the 'Life' which he so earnestly prayed for, in that he has performed an act of 'Victory' (וְשָׂרָה). This 'Victory' leading on to the king's coronation is the result of a true covenant relationship:

'The king is glad, O Yahweh, by reason
of thy might;
And in the unshakable devotion of the
Most High' (vv.1-7)

The remainder of the psalm directs the thought of the worshippers away from the immediate (dramatic) victory which they have observed, to the certainty of victory in actual combat i.e. to the thought that Yahweh through his earthly Messiah will destroy his enemies. The psalm closes with an exhortation to Yahweh to arise and bring to pass this final act of judgement:

'Thy hand will reach out to all thine enemies....
That we may sing the praises of thy might!' (vv.8-13)

We move now, in the next section of our study, to give special attention to three contemporary approaches to the Psalter which we have mentioned frequently in our discussion thus far. These are to be found respectively in the work of Scandinavian theologians (particularly the Swedish 'Uppsala School'), the English 'Myth and Ritual School' and that of Dr. Norman Snaith. Our aim will be to give a general outline of the characteristics which each approach has, and then to attempt an assessment of its influence upon theological studies in this field as a whole.

Firstly, what may be said about the so-called 'Uppsala School'? We have already noted (p. 21 supra) that the original theories held by theologians of this School have developed into a movement which now concerns not only the Psalter, but the interpretation of much of the remainder of the Old Testament also. It is worth noting

at the outset that there is considerable diversity of opinion amongst different members of the School with regard to common problems. This is an important fact as many students seem to have the impression that all members are united in defence of certain theological developments which have had their origins in Uppsala. We would do well to accept Professor G.W.Anderson's definition of the term - he writes: '....for convenience, the term "Uppsala School" may be retained to describe a group of scholars, connected, for the most part, with the older Swedish University, in whose work there is a common emphasis, a common approach, and a common type of solution, even where there is controversy over detail' (HTR Vol.XLIII 1950). Thus we find that 'In the fields of textual and literary criticism great emphasis is laid on the importance and reliability of oral tradition. In the study of religion the school is anti-evolutionist, and is concerned to stress the abiding positive influence of the cult, and the importance of the role of both king and prophet in the cult. These lines converge in a vigorous attack on the analysis of the literature and the reconstruction of the history of the religion which are associated with the name of Wellhausen' (loc.cit.). So much then for the general characteristics of the School; we are specially concerned with its work and that of other Scandinavian writers in the field of the Psalter itself and it is to this that we shall now turn.

It has been made abundantly clear in the preceding pages that a startling change in the approach to the Psalms has taken place during the first half of the present century. This change, as we have seen, was principally the result of the development of Gunkel's original work by Mowinckel, the latter establishing a scientific foundation upon which succeeding scholars have built. This new movement, as Aage Bentzen states 'has not affected the Western world as much as Scandinavian countries, where Mowinckel's influence has been most penetrating' (op.cit. p.83, note 2). Hence, there is a great deal of material available (noticeably from Uppsala) which

indicates the principal attitudes which Scandinavian theologians have adopted with regard to the Psalter. We shall attempt first of all, to give a general outline of conclusions reached regarding the cultic activities of which the psalms were originally believed to have been a part. For this we are indebted to Aage Bentzen's excellent introduction to his King and Messiah (English translation 1955).

The festival of Yahweh's enthronement on New Year's Day (v. Pss. 47, 93, 95-100 et al.) is described as a 'ritual drama' with the re-creation of the world as its central theme (v. Mowinckel's *Psalmenstudien II). In this ritual drama, the 'New Year Festival' celebrated at the time of the autumn equinox, the nation of Israel experienced a repetition of the events of Creation. This involved God's battle against the powers of Chaos, the primeval ocean, Rahab the dragon, and their accompanying host of demonic powers. Yahweh being victorious in this battle, the heavenly vault is created as a final protection against the powers of Chaos, the 'Sea' and the 'Flood'. This creation of the heavens is a decisive act of salvation on God's part, and a proof that he is all powerful over other Gods - 'For all the Gods of the peoples are idols: But it is the Lord who made the heavens' (Ps. 96.5). Through the religious act of 'remembrance' (anamnesis¹) the people were able to re-experience this act of salvation. By 'remembrance' in this sense is meant a real and tangible experience of the saving facts of religion so that the congregation 'become contemporary' (Kierkegaard) with the fundamental act of salvation in the history of the world. This assurance of life for the people through the divine act of creation of the Heavens, is clearly seen in Psalm 8 (Cf. also Pss. 29, 46, 95 et al.).

The enthronement and New Year Festival of Israel then, which emerged from such a study of the psalms, was seen to have been

1. For more detailed information on 'anamnesis' see Pedersen - Israel III-IV, pp.401ff; 408ff)

related to similar religious celebrations held in countries throughout the Ancient Near East. Mowinckel had already drawn such a comparison with the Babylonian equivalent (v. *Psalmenstudien II), and similar comparative studies were furthered by the discovery of the Ras Shamra tablets. Important work on these tablets by Flemming Hvidberg¹ has shown that the Enthronement Festival was found also in Canaan.

Proceeding from these conclusions, attention was then focussed on the figure of the Divine or Sacral King and this figure has attracted great interest and aroused much controversy. It was considered that in the cult the King acted as the God's vice-gerent, he was 'Son of the God' and in the ritual drama of the Creation, he fought the God's battles. Like Baal he suffered death and was raised from the underworld, thus securing salvation for the people whom he embodied. In their relation of these fundamentals to those in the Israelite festival, Scandinavian scholars do seem to have been occasionally misrepresented. Bentzen (op.cit. p.13) writes 'These ideas were accepted by Israel only in a modified form. The "dying God", as Johs. Pedersen, Hvidberg and Engnell unanimously assert, was incompatible with Israel's idea of God. Yahweh was eminently the "Living God", the "God of Life", the God "who does not die", as the original text of Habakkuk 1.12 runs according to rabbinical tradition. But this conviction did not prevent certain features from the ritual combat between God and the powers of Chaos, as we see it in poetical allusions in Job, the Prophets, above all in Deutero-Isaiah, from entering the world of Israelite thought'. This opinion appears to be somewhat at variance with that of A.R.Johnson, who, writing on the subject of Engnell's recent studies², states 'He (i.e. Engnell) advances the view that in the

1. v. Graad og Latter i det Gamle Testamente - *København's Un. Fest.(1948) and Cf. Chap. 'Canaanite religion' in *Den Israeltiske Religions Historie (1943).

2. Johnson is referring specifically to Engnell's Studies in Divine Kingship in the Ancient Near East (1943)

area under survey the fertility aspect of a primitive high god was split off into a fertility God of the dying and rising type, and that this was done in such a way that normally the original identity was not altogether lost; accordingly the king, who was regarded as the embodiment of this dying and rising 'young god', might also be regarded as an incarnation of the high god....Hence, if the king is to be regarded as an incarnation of the high god, and, therefore, is to be identified with Yahweh, this means, presumably, that we have still more evidence for the view that Yahweh was thought of as a dying and rising God' ('Hebrew conceptions of Kingship' Essay in Myth, Ritual and Kingship Ed. S.H.Hooke.).

But the myth of the battle of the Gods was completely reinterpreted in Israel, and above all was given historical significance. Thus in the Passover ritual, God waged war against the 'Nations'; the Chaos, Rahab and Tiamat were identified with Egypt and Pharaoh, and the legend of the Exodus from Egypt was embellished by features drawn from the Creation epic (v. Pedersen's Israel III-IV especially pp.440ff where the content and extent of foreign influence upon Israel is discussed). We find many of these features in the Psalms as a whole and particularly in the 'Royal Psalms'. Thus it is possible to recognise survivals from the earlier cultic ritual even in psalms which are easier understood politically and historically - 'Political enemies and the military defeats of the king are described and painted in colours taken from the divine ritual-combat. The political enemies are identified with the powers of Chaos; the powers of Chaos are actualised in political enemies' (Bentzen op.cit. p.14).

Apart from the 'Royal Psalms' proper however, there are a great many others which contain references to the King, the 'Lord's Anointed' etc. This carries us further to consider the interesting theory put forward by recent scholars, especially in Sweden, that these are psalms which have been 'democratized'. Such a view starts from the basic premiss that at an earlier period in Israelite history (as in other countries round about), the psalms in general

belonged to a royal ritual. Later, it is believed, these rituals were made accessible to the 'commoners' i.e. the general public. So far as this occurred in Israel, we are able to recognise it particularly in those poems which have as their subject the innocent suffering of the Servant of God (e.g. Pss. 22, 69-71, 88 etc.) It is noteworthy that Engnell¹ extends the category of 'Royal Psalms' to include Ps. 18, 49, 89, 116, 118.

There has been a great deal more discussion concerning the identity of the 'enemies' who are referred to so frequently in the Psalter, and this whole question has had to be studied again in the light of new approaches to the Psalms. Thus, as Bentzen states 'In many cases we shall probably have to conclude that the "enemies" in the psalms (even in those where the king is not explicitly mentioned) are primarily the powers of Chaos, the primeval enemies of men and God, who are conquered by the sacral king. In some psalms however, they have been actualised in the concrete enemies of the nation or of the single individual, whether they be demons, or men who have made a covenant with them, "sorcerers", or whatever else combats the plans of the saving God of the Creation Story' (op.cit. p.14). It is interesting to compare this opinion with that of H. Birkeland, originally put forward in 1933 and recently reiterated², that the 'enemies' are almost invariably foreigners, and that the 'I' who speaks is, therefore, the king, or in some cases perhaps, the leader of the armed forces other than the king or, again, so far as the post-exilic period is concerned, a native governor or high-priest.

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1. Relevant information here appeared in *Svenskt Bibliskt Uppslagsverk i (1945) cols.1223-4. See also Widengren - 'En studie till Ps.88' *SEA. x.1945 pps.66-81.
 2. v. *Die Feinde des Individuums in der Is. Psalmenliteratur (1933) and Art. 'The evil-doers in the Book of Psalms' *A.N.V.A.O. ii. (1955)

This leaves us with one further aspect of study to mention. Over a period of years since 1940, Professor Widengren has published the results of his own research in the fields of both Myth and Ritual in the Ancient Near East¹, and also Sacral Kingship in the Old Testament² and in Judaism. In the latter connection Aubrey Johnson comments as follows: 'here it seems to me that the most important elements, even though the Old Testament evidence is not very convincing, are those which touch upon the king's connection with the 'Tree of Life' and the 'Water of Life' and the bearing which these ideas may have upon the Paradise story and the conception of the "Primal Man"³. As for the autumnal festival....In the first place room is found....for the king's part in a sacral marriage; and in the second place, an attempt is made to reinforce the view that Yahweh himself was thought of as a dying and rising God by citing, for example, a number of passing references to the thought of his being asleep and needing to be roused and by stressing the obvious cultic cry "Yahweh lives"' (loc.cit. p.233).

In conclusion of this short outline of Scandinavian studies in the Psalter, we shall briefly note one or two important views on this work, held by other scholars. First of all we would note that Mowinckel has criticised Engnell's use of the conception of high gods. 'He (i.e. Mowinckel) argues that both Engnell and Widengren include so many functions in the conception that it has ceased to have any precise meaning and he maintains that Engnell is too ready to assume that different deities were originally identical⁴.

1. Det sakrala kungadömet *R.o.B. ii (1943) pps.49-75. King and Saviour II *U.U.A. (1950); IV(1951).

2. ***Sakrales** Königtum im Alten Testament und im Judentum (1955) Hieros Gamos och underjordsvistelse Art. in *R.o.B.vii (1948) pp.17ff.

3. Cf. also the chapter by Bentzen in King and Messiah pp.37ff.

4. We are indebted to Professor G.W.Anderson for this information - v. Art. 'Some aspects of the Uppsala School of Old Testament Study': HTR Vol.43 (1950) p.252.

Further, Mowinckel maintains that the terms 'Messiah' and 'Messianic' used by Engnell of the sacral functions of the Divine King are wrongly used in that they should be used correctly in an eschatological sense only. Hence he writes 'whoever says "Messiah" also says "Eschatology"; and an ancient Oriental Eschatology as Gressmann and Sellin imagined has never existed' (*NTT (1944) pp.76f).

Secondly the Scandinavian School has met with other important criticism. Aage Bentzen himself states 'In principle I accept the view of Swedish scholars that the Psalms have been influenced by the royal ritual (Cf. my *Det sakrale kongedömmet* 1945). I am critical of the tendency to overlook nuances and to make premature generalisations; and I am conscious of the danger of forgetting that, when the Israelite Psalms were composed, the period during which psalms were used in the royal ritual both in Babylon and Israel was long past. I may add that I do not like the superficial way in which literary criticism is dismissed with such slogans as "evolutionism" and "logicism" by some of the Swedish scholars. The significance of the Uppsala School lies in its synthesis of earlier Scandinavian and Anglo-American scholarship - a work which was necessary and which has been carried out with great acumen and learning. Engnell especially, has made important contributions to the interpretation of the Ras Shamra texts' (op.cit. p.85 note 11). Opposition to the conclusions reached by the School are also to be found in the writings of Alt and Noth¹.

Thirdly we would mention two short critiques from British scholars. Professor G.W.Anderson (op.cit. p.252) comments 'To many it will seem that Professor Engnell's reconstruction of the history of Israelite religion does less than justice to the evidence

1. Alt - Art. 'Das Königtum in den Reichen Israel und Judah'
*Vetus Test. I (1951) pp.2f.

Noth - Art. 'Gott, König, Volk ~~im~~ im Alten Testament'
*Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche 47 (1950) pp.157ff.

of a real and lasting conflict between the distinctive Hebraic tradition and Canaanite religion. That Israel borrowed much from the latter is clear; and it is begging the question to assume that all such borrowing involved loss. But many would hold that the consciousness of Israel's distinctive inheritance was more widespread and profound than Engnell seems prepared to admit. Secondly in the view of the present writer, the characteristic pattern of Israel's faith and ritual is derived not from the common myth and ritual pattern of the ancient Near East, but from the events of the Exodus as recorded in Israelite tradition'. In the same year (1950) Professor A.R.Johnson, in his article in EJ Vol.LXII (p141f) wrote, 'The energy and enthusiasm of the Uppsala School seem boundless, and there can be no doubt that we have here a factor to be reckoned with in the prosecution of both Old and New Testament studies. Nevertheless, despite an obvious community of interest and a general sympathy with what is being attempted, the present writer has grave misgivings, save in the case of Bentzen and to a less degree Pedersen, concerning the normal Scandinavian approach to the question under discussion. Both in the case of Mowinckel where the tendency is even more prominent in the use of comparative data from the anthropological field rather than from the archaeological field, and in the case of the Uppsala School, where the latter feature is more prominent, one cannot but feel that the approach is being made from the wrong direction. It is right and proper, of course, to use such material for the light which it may throw upon the Old Testament, and the present writer is constantly glad to do so. Nevertheless the approach should surely be outwards from the latter rather than inwards from the former; otherwise instead of following the path of exegesis, we shall be likely to stumble into the pitfall of eisegesis with all that this may involve in a failure to recognise what may be distinctive in the material under review. Thus the descent to the Underworld and the struggle with the powers of darkness and death, which comes out so clearly in the royal psalms, must not be regarded as necessarily

peculiar to this context and, therefore, an unmistakable form or as a result of democratization. It must be studied in the light of what the Old Testament as a whole may have to tell us about the way in which the Israelites looked upon 'life' and 'death' and the degree to which a struggle between the two realms may have been a normal feature of Israelite thought concerning man. Similarly the Israelite conception of kingship should find its elucidation primarily from what the Old Testament has to say in general concerning man and his relations with the Godhead; and until we are reasonably clear on this point we shall do well to avoid on principle the widely indeterminate expression 'Divine Kingship' and content ourselves with the more neutral expression 'Sacral Kingship'. Accordingly, bearing in mind that our evidence is largely confined to the Southern Kingdom, the most that the present writer is prepared to say with regard to the point at issue is that in Israelite thought the king was a potential "extension" of the personality of Yahweh; and here all the emphasis lies upon the word in italics, for to say more is to overlook the significance of the covenant relationship between Yahweh as the Godhead, and the reigning member of the House of David'.

For the second main section of our review of contemporary Psalm study, we turn to the work of English scholars, notably those connected with the so-called 'Myth and Ritual School'. We have already dealt in considerable detail with the earlier history of the movement and in particular, with the place which A.R.Johnson and S.H.Hooke have occupied in this history. There are two specific works which have been written in recent years which need to be mentioned. The first, Professor Johnson's Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel (1955) we have used continuously throughout our study, so there is little need to say more about this book. However we would note again the two principal differences in the author's present approach from that which he held in his essay in The Labyrinth (1935). In his own words (op.cit. p.54) these consist of (a) 'the rejection of the view that the festival under

discussion (the New Year Festival) was concerned with the cyclic revival of the social unit, and (b) the recognition that its orientation was not merely towards the following cycle of twelve months but towards a completely new era. That is to say, if ever it had its roots in a complex of myth and ritual which was primarily concerned with the cycle of the year and an annual attempt to secure a renewal of life for a specific social unit, this had been refashioned in terms of the Hebrew experience of Yahweh's activity on the plane of history, and the thought in question (i.e. that of the author of Deutero-Isaiah) was really the creation of a new world order and the introduction of an age of universal righteousness and peace. In short, while the writer continues to reject the historical interpretation of these psalms, he now holds, not only that they were cultic in intention from the first, but that their orientation was also eschatological from the first'.

We have seen various criticisms of Professor Johnson's work, particularly with reference to Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel. Of these we would mention two, one of them in detail. S.H.Hooke¹ himself, reviewing the book (CQR Vol. CLVII: 1956 pp.391f) writes, 'Nevertheless, some difficulties arise in the mind. They may, indeed, be removed by the learned author in subsequent publications, but to express them here may be a help towards their removal. In the first place, the evidence is wholly drawn from the Psalter, and while, no doubt rightly, the present tendency is to assign a pre-exilic date to most, if not all, of the kingship and royal psalms, yet this is not a matter on which certainty is possible. Secondly, it is not unreasonable, perhaps, to ask how early did this highly moral and eschatological ritual take shape, and who was responsible for so remarkable an achievement. Thirdly, Professor Johnson agrees (p.60) that the agricultural festivals of Canaan were taken over by the Hebrews and given an historical interpretation, and on p.66 he adds "we are on the right track in seeing in this celebration of Yahweh as King an adaptation of the

1. Cf. also the review by C.R.North - ET Vol.LXVII (1955-6) pp.167f.

earlier worship of this one time Canaanite city" (i.e. Jerusalem). Again it may be asked, When did the process of adaptation begin, how long did it take, and who was responsible? Fourthly, it seems difficult to find support for the thesis either in the historical books or in the writings of the prophets. Indeed, unless the prophets who describe the religious condition of both Israel and Judah are grossly exaggerating, it is hard to imagine at what period of the history of the Davidic monarchy the religious level of kings and people was such as to permit of the annual performance of so lofty a ritual with any appreciation of all its moral and eschatological implications. These are some of the difficulties which present themselves to the mind of one who is both a whole-hearted admirer of Professor Johnson's work and a convinced believer in the general myth and ritual position. They in no way detract from the writer's appreciation of the very real merits of this profoundly devout and scholarly exposition of sacral kingship in Israel'.

A detailed criticism of Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel appeared in ET Vol. LXVIII: 1956-7 pp.144ff in the form of an article written by Professor W.S.McCullough of the University of Toronto and entitled 'Israel's Kings, Sacral and Otherwise'. After outlining Professor Johnson's main position, McCullough goes on to examine critically several aspects of the argument which he considers debatable. Under the heading of 'The Monarchy' he asks the question 'What has all this (i.e. Johnson's "idealised royalty") to do with the general picture of Israel's kings which we get from the Old Testament?', and after citing such records in Old Testament history as the despotism of Hebrew rulers (1 Sam. 8.11-18); the king as the object of prophetic rebuke (1 Kgs. 11.29-39; 16.7; 20.35-43; 2 Kgs. 20.16-19; Amos 7.10-13; Hos. 5.1-7; Is. 7.10-17 et al.) he writes, 'The impression which the Old Testament leaves on the present writer is that the kings of both Jerusalem and Samaria were a mixed lot, not greatly different from those who wielded kingly power in other small states either in the ancient

Near East or in mediaeval Europe. We may hazard the view that as time passed, the rite of anointing became but a formality, a conventional seal marking the attainment of royal authority. If the king's person was thought to be in some way sacral, this was of no great moment, for it had little to do either with his life expectancy or with his moral and political behaviour. It may be significant that to no Hebrew king except David, is attributed the possession of the spirit of Yahweh (1 Sam. 16.13; 2 Sam. 23.2). Probably such attribution, in the light of the performance of the kings in actual history, would have been felt an impiety'.

Turning to the position of the King as a religious leader, McCullough agrees that in the case of David and Solomon, both these kings officiated at certain times as religious leaders (v. 2 Sam. 6.13; 1 Kgs. 3.4-15). This fact, together with the record that kings showed frequent interest in the temple fabric, furnishings and repair etc. (2 Kgs. 12.1-17; 16.10-16; 18.4 et al.) would surely justify prayer for them of the kind which is found in the so-called 'Royal psalms'. Furthermore, 'if an Israelite king enjoyed the distinctive cultic position which Dr. Johnson claims for him, it is strange that no echoes of this are found in the Law'. McCullough then goes on to stress the place of the Priest and Priestly prerogatives in Israelite religion (Cf. 1 Kgs. 8.5-6,10; 12.31-32; 2 Kgs. 11.1-12 et al.) and suggests that it is more likely that the position of the king in Israel's cultus was not a static one. Thus he says 'It is not improbable that in the early days of the Davidic House, the king was head of the cultus, and that in the course of time the influence of the priesthood considerably increased'.

With regard to the House of David, the author considers that the reason why the Davidic line lasted as long as it did was partly due to the homogeneity of the people it ruled, and partly to the belief that this family was destined by Yahweh to rule forever in Jerusalem. Thus he says 'The view that the House of David was selected to rule for ever in Jerusalem, even when the selection is

qualified in some sense (Cf. 1 Kgs. 2.1-4) can only be described as a political myth or an artful fabrication'. He cites Psalm 89 as indicative of the non-moral direction in which this Davidic dogma could lead.

In the longest section of his critique, Professor McCullough deals with the Autumnal Festival itself. He expresses doubt that any idea of Yahweh as King was furthered by the Jebusite cult in Jerusalem and suggests that A.R.Johnson has presented 'an imaginative reconstruction' only, of the cultic procedure of the Autumn Festival. In so far as the description 'Ritual drama' is concerned, he objects strongly to it when used with reference to the religion of Israel, not because he refuses to subscribe to the view that Israel might have used such drama, but because 'even the members of the Myth and Ritual School must admit that no clearly discernible vestiges of such a drama have survived'. Dealing with specific points in Professor Johnson's argument, the author considers various examples of translation and interpretation connected with Pss. 48, 89 and 110 and then goes on to question Johnson's conclusions with regard to the particular part of the ritual drama which is said to indicate victory over death and which is an assurance to king and people alike of this fact. He maintains that the suggestion that Yahweh is in conflict with death, is foreign to the thought of Israel as represented in the Old Testament. In Israel, he thinks, death was only undesirable when it struck prematurely through sickness, disaster, or the machinations of enemies. 'It is from one of these ancillary agents that deliverance is usually sought in Israel's prayers, it is not from "death" as a part of the natural order of things'. Lastly, after a consideration of the specific texts in Psalms 68, 48 and 18 used by Professor Johnson in support of his theory, McCullough concludes '....if we are to be asked to believe that in the ritual of the autumnal feast "Death" was vanquished, we surely have the right to ask for more convincing evidence than Dr.Johnson supplies. Quite apart from such a consideration, what a meaning-

less mumbo jumbo it must have been, if year after year the king went through this drama wherein death was supposedly nullified, or the hope was held out that death would eventually be ended. Yet Hebrews continued to die and descend into Sheol as had their fathers, and there was still no hope of a resurrection. If such a ritual drama did once exist, we can well understand why, as religious insight deepened, it should have fallen into disuse'.

This criticism evoked a prompt reply from Professor Johnson, and in the same volume of the Expository Times (p.178ff) in reasoned and powerfully-written article, he dismissed the objections as having little bearing on the validity of his own argument or its conclusions. He ended his article 'To sum up, while Professor McCullough apparently deploras the use of imagination in one's approach to the words of Scripture, it seems to me that it is a lack of a disciplined imagination and the accompanying failure to recognise in classical Hebrew, not a dead language to be pinned down by the system-loving grammarian, but the living language of a people whose forms of thought and modes of expression were markedly different from our own, which has led to so much unnecessary emendation of the text and has blinded us to so much that is of fundamental importance in the Old Testament records. I must conclude, therefore, with an expression of gratitude to Professor McCullough for so clearly underlining this point and confirming me in the soundness of my methods.'

The second work, again to which we have made frequent reference, is the collection of essays edited by S.H.Hooke entitled Myth, Ritual and Kingship (1958). This volume contains nine essays in all, eight of which were delivered in the University of Manchester in 1955 and 1956. These essays cover a wide variety of topics, and often reveal differences both in approach and outlook. Four essays are concerned with evidence from outside Israel and deal respectively with the general practice of kingship in the early Semitic kingdoms, the Egyptian kingship rituals, the Hittite conception of kingship and the Canaanite conception as revealed by the Ras Shamra tablets.

Three of the essays have direct reference to the Old Testament. Professor Widengren writes under the heading of 'Early Hebrew myths and their interpretation', Professor A.R. Johnson contributes his widely-known chapter on 'Hebrew conceptions of Kingship' and Professor Rowley a study, written with much reserve, of 'Ritual and the Hebrew Prophets'. The first and last essays consist respectively of an introduction by Professor Hooke in which he surveys the contemporary position and answers some of the more important criticisms which have been made of the 'Myth and Ritual' approach; and a concluding critical review of the 'Myth and Ritual' position by Professor Brandon. With regard to the former essay it is worth mentioning here that Professor Hooke does in fact deal with many of the criticisms of the 'Myth and Ritual' position which we have noted, from time to time, in our study. But there is one particularly important attack on the position which we have not considered, namely, that of Professor Henri Frankfort. Professor Frankfort's criticism first appeared in his book Kingship and the Gods (1948) and an even more vigorous attack was made by him upon the 'Myth and Ritual' position in his Frazer Lecture for 1951 entitled *The Problem of Similarity in Ancient Near Eastern Religions. There are four main points of criticism:

- i) He suggests that the contributors to Myth and Ritual were far too dependent for their conclusions upon Frazer's original studies.
- ii) He strongly objects to the theory in Myth and Ritual that the similarity between the myths and rituals of Egypt, Babylon and surrounding countries is the result of a common 'culture pattern'.
- iii) He denies the existence of any such similarities, having objected that to start from a belief that these similarities are generic destroys any possibility of proper treatment of the evidence.
- iv) He maintains that the contributors to Myth and Ritual have 'recklessly' imposed an imaginary 'pattern' upon the religion of Israel. Professor Hooke expands and answers Frankfort's criticisms on p.4ff of his essay in Myth, Ritual and Kingship.

In the third and last section of our consideration of modern Psalm study we have as our subject, the work of Dr. Norman Snaith. As early as 1934, Snaith produced a volume entitled Studies in the Psalter in which he endeavoured to show that the psalms which Mowinckel associated most closely with the New Year Festival were actually post-exilic, and in any case were Sabbath Psalms. Hence they could not possibly have been the apparatus of a pre-exilic feast of the type which Mowinckel had proposed. In 1947, a second volume was published - The Jewish New Year Festival: its origins and development; and it is this work with which we shall now be primarily concerned.

The author begins with the pre-exilic New Year feast. Having denied (against S.H.Hooke) that the Passover was a New Year Festival, he maintains that it was a seasonal apotropaic festival (p.21ff). He then proceeds to show that in the pre-exilic Autumn festival two aspects were prominent - an Old Year feast of thanksgiving and joy and a New Year feast of prayer and supplication in which prayers for rain played the principal part (p.58ff). He further notes that in the early Hebrew rite '....there is no need to assume....any copying of the Babylonian custom of deciding the fate of the coming year' (p.64). It is also interesting to note that he agrees with Mowinckel that the origin of the phrase 'the Day of the Lord' is to be found in the ideas of the change of fate which came to be associated with the Autumn festival.

In his third Chapter, Dr. Snaith discusses the origin of Chodesh and Sabbath, arguing that the former should be translated 'new month day' and not 'new moon', and that the latter was originally the new moon day, in ancient Israel a day of joy (p.96ff). The chapter following elaborates the author's theory that the change of calendar which took place in the transference from the old Palestinian system to the Mesopotamian, accounts for Tishri 10 being the apparent New Year's Day in Ezek. 40.1. He examines the blowing of trumpets on Tishri 1 and suggests that this is connected with prayers for rain and not because Rosh hash-

Shanah is the festival of Yahweh the King (p.176). The Coronation psalms are ruled out as evidence in support of Mowinckel's thesis since they are Sabbath psalms (p.195ff).

The final chapter, which is the most interesting to us in our study, concerns New Year festivals in Mesopotamia and Syria. The author considers the Babylonian akitu festival and holds that there is a fundamental difference between the cults of Mesopotamia and those of Palestine - the former showing the influence of an urban development and of astrology while the latter are the cults of an agricultural people, and connected with fertility (p.214ff). His conclusion is worth quoting in full as it expresses quite clearly the position which he has reached viz: 'Our conclusion in this matter, therefore, is that the similarities between Mesopotamian ritual and Hebrew rites are not so marked as to involve any direct borrowing during and before the time of the kings. Such association as there is belongs to the distant past, and is confined to fertility rites generally. In Syria we have a development along the lines demanded by a predominantly agricultural community, with Tammuz-Adonis associations prevailing. In Mesopotamia we have an urban development, always inclining away from agricultural habits, with a much more definite pantheon. In Mesopotamia the deities tend to be more separate each from the other. They have their astral associations, and a whole world of astrological lore comes to be introduced. On the other hand in Palestine the tendency is for the ancient 'mana' ideas to prevail, and also for fertility cults to prevail, especially the weeping for Tammuz (Ezek. 8.14), the cult of creeping beasts (v.10) the worship of the rising sun (v.16). This latter is the type of cultus which shows most traces in the Old Testament, until the time when the kings who were tributary to Assyria and Babylonia introduced the cults of their overlords, but these new ideas were of comparatively late date, and few of them seem to have survived the exile.

The exile itself led to a new contact with Babylon, and the effect of this is to be seen in the new ideas concerning the Sabbath, in a revival of the ancient Rahab-myth (e.g. Second Isaiah), and in such cult innovations as the introduction of incense. But we find no adoption of Babylonian cult-ceremonies after the pattern which Mowinckel presupposes. The new Israel had a tremendous horror of all such associations, and it is unlikely that any new dramatisations were introduced which in any way allowed the Deity to be represented by mortal man, nor was there any king who could take a role anything approaching that which was demanded of the Babylonian kings' (p.220).

Dr. Snaith's book is interesting because it indicates something of the enormous amount of work which had been produced in the field of 'Myth and Ritual' between the year of publication of the volume Myth and Ritual in 1933, and 1947 when Snaith's book was itself published. We have not seen any detailed criticism of The Jewish New Year Festival. Reviews¹ of the book expressed in the main, the feeling that this was a detailed and scholarly work, indicating many new points of interest and illustrating, by its criticism of certain features of the 'Myth and Ritual' position, the necessity of cautious scholarship. A.R.Johnson in a footnote to his article in ET. Vol. LXII (1950) which refers to Snaith's book, writes 'While there is much that is cogent in the criticism which has been levelled against Mowinckel's theory....it is by no means unanswerable, and there is good reason to believe that in principle the theory is sound'.

So then, we turn to record some brief, final observations on the value of the 'Myth, Ritual and Kingship' approach to the Psalter, and its influence on Old Testament studies as a whole. S.G.F.Brandon in the concluding passage of his essay 'The Myth and Ritual Position Critically Considered' (Myth, Ritual and Kingship

1. See Review by D.M.G.Stalker in JTS Vol.L (1949) p.73f and C.R.North's review in ET Vol. LIX (1947-8) p.260.

p.290f), indicates in a particular way the effect which the 'Myth and Ritual' approach has had upon theological studies in general. He writes '....what is perhaps the most significant indication of the achievement of the "Myth and Ritual" thesis is to be found by way of a comparison. Between the years 1903 and 1921 the twelve volumes comprising Hasting's Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics were published. In this great corpus of information under "Ritual" only a cross-reference was given to "Prayer" and "Worship", while the article on "Mythology" treated the question of the ritual origin of myth solely from the aetiological point of view. When one contemplates the great output of works which has been inspired by the "Myth and Ritual" thesis and the interest and reorientation of view which those works represent, it would seem that a veritable renaissance (or reformation) was inaugurated in this field of study in 1933, when Professor Hooke and his colleagues published their symposium'. Our survey has clearly shown the result of this great interest to which Brandon refers, and there is no reason to doubt that, amongst students and scholars alike, the same degree of interest is likely to be maintained, if not increased, in the years ahead. For instance, a noteworthy event of recent months, has been the announcement of the translation into English and imminent publication of Mowinckel's latest work on the Psalter. This will be entitled The Psalms in Israel's Worship (2 volumes. Trans. DR. Ap-Thomas).

Thus there are many students of the Old Testament who would agree with Brandon in his estimation of the 'Myth and Ritual' thesis as 'one of the major developments in the comparative study of religion' and who would further concur that 'despite all the opposition which it has encountered, when the final adjustments are made it will be found that its contribution has been of the highest importance and that its value is abiding'¹ (op.cit. p.290). Certainly it has

1. Professor Brandon reminds us in a footnote that the measure of the influence of the 'Myth and Ritual' thesis is to be seen in the fact that the theme of the 7th International Congress for the History of Religions, held at Amsterdam in 1950, was 'the mythical-ritual pattern in civilisation', and that of the 8th Congress, held in Rome in 1955 was the 'king-God and the sacral character of Kingship'.

been firmly established by scholars supporting the thesis, that the office of kingship played a vital role in the religious life of countries of the Ancient Near East, and that the self-same office in Israel can only properly be evaluated in the light which such comparative study throws upon it. This is not to suggest, as many critics of the thesis have done, that Israel is thereby accredited with beliefs and customs utterly foreign to her religious nature, but rather that; as a result of such comparative study, 'many hitherto obscure passages in Hebrew literature gain a new and convincing meaning, and truer appreciation of the peculiar genius of Israelite religion is thereby made possible' (S.G.F.Brandon - loc.cit.).

It is certainly true that the methods of exposition used by both the 'Uppsala School' and the English 'Myth and Ritual' School have been severely criticised. We trust that we have illustrated in preceding pages of this study, a representative cross-section of such criticism which will enable the student of Sacral Kingship theories to assess its value for himself. That certain writers have been led on, as a result of their investigations and studies, to put forward views of an extreme nature, is not particularly surprising. Indeed what is surprising is the relative conservatism with which most protagonists of the 'Myth and Ritual' thesis have treated their findings. We make no excuse for quoting once again Professor A.R.Johnson's words in his Expository Times article (Vol. LXII p.41) concerning what he believed to be the right method of study with regard to 'Myth and Ritual' subjects - 'Both in the case of Mowinckel where the tendency is even more prominent in the use of comparative data from the anthropological field than from the archaeological field, and in the case of the Uppsala school, where the latter feature is the more prominent, one cannot but feel that the approach is being made from the wrong direction. It is right and proper, of course, to use such material for the light which it may throw upon the Old Testament, and the present writer is constantly glad to do so. Nevertheless, the approach should surely be outwards from the latter rather than inwards from the former; otherwise,

instead of following the path of exegesis, we shall be likely to stumble into the pitfall of eisegesis with all this may involve in a failure to recognise what may be distinctive in the material under review'. We believe Professor Johnson's own published work on the subject of 'Myth and Ritual', to be a brilliant example of how such advice may be effectively applied. Certainly there is no risk of Martin Noth's somewhat sweeping criticism of the method as resulting in excessive simplifications and a disregard of historical results (v. 'Gott, König und Volk' - *Z.Th.K. 1950 pp.157-191) being applied here!

It is almost 400 years since Richard Hooker (1554-1600) wrote of the Psalter - 'The choice and flower of all things profitable in other books the Psalms do both more briefly contain, and more movingly express....What is there necessary for man to know which the Psalms are not able to teach? They are to beginners an easy and familiar introduction, a mighty augmentation of all virtue and knowledge in such as are entered before, a strong confirmation to the most perfect amongst others. Heroical magnanimity, exquisite justice, grave moderation, exact wisdom, repentance unfeigned, unwearied patience, the mysteries of God, the sufferings of Christ, the terrors of wrath, the comforts of grace, the works of Providence over this world, and the promised joys of that world which is to come, all good necessarily to be either known or done or had, this one celestial fountain yieldeth....Hereof it is that we covet to make the Psalms especially familiar unto all' (Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity Bk.V. 37.2). In our own day it may be justly said that those scholars whose work we have examined and discussed in this study have, by their scholarship and imagination, made their own particular and valuable contribution towards rendering the Psalms truly 'familiar to all'.

APPENDIX A

ABBREVIATIONS OF PUBLICATIONS CITED

- A.N.V.A.O. - Avhandlingar utgitt av Det Norske Videnskaps-Akademi i Oslo.
- A.T.A.N.T. - Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments.
- C.Q.R. - Church Quarterly Review.
- E.T. - Expository Times.
- H.T.R. - Harvard Theological Review.
- J.T.S. - Journal of Theological Studies.
- N.T.T. - Norsk Teologisk Tidsskrift.
- R.o.B. - Religion och Bibel.
- S.E.Å. - Svensk Exegetisk Årsbok.
- U.U.Å. - Uppsala Universitets Årsskrift.
- Z.A.W. - Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft.
- Z.Th.K. - Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche.

APPENDIX B

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