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A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php

THE RELIGION OF MOSES

HAROLD M. WIENER, M.A., LL.B., OF LINCOLN'S INN
BARRISTER-AT-LAW

THE views entertained on the Pentateuchal question influence, and are influenced by, the conception held of the history of Monotheism in Israel. In a paper on "Hebrew Monotheism" which appeared in the *BIBLIOTHECA SACRA* for October, 1907 (vol. lxiv. pp. 609-637), I showed how the current ideas which derive from Kuenen are flatly contradicted by the evidence and his own emphatic statements made under the influence of an impartial examination of that evidence.¹ It is now desirable to approach the subject from another point of view; for, if I mistake not, there is Egyptian material which is not without its bearing on Old Testament criticism and the trend of Israel's thought.²

I

The Exodus from Egypt took place in the second year of the Pharaoh Merneptah, i.e. (on the basis of the dates given by Petrie and Breasted) not earlier than 1233 B.C. nor later than 1223 B.C. A century and a half earlier, in the reign of Amenhotep IV. (Akhenaten, Akhnaton, Ikhnaton, Khuenaton), 1383-1365 B.C. (Petrie) or 1375-1358 B.C.

¹ Soon after the appearance of that article a follower of Kuenen's met me. He admitted that his leader had been 'a bit careless,' but said he would take the matter up "for the dead man." He promised an answer by letter, evincing repugnance to the suggestion that an article would be better. I was much touched by the piety of his beautiful sentiments about "the dead man," but though His Majesty's Postmaster-general has succeeded in securing the due delivery of my other correspondence during the intervening years with tolerable regularity, no defense of the careless Kuenen has reached me.

² While the discussion that follows has benefited by the work of many scholars it owes most to Professor J. H. Breasted's *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*.

(Breasted), there arose in Egypt a monotheistic worship of the Aten or Aton, to which it is worth while to devote some attention.¹

By way of introduction a few sentences may be quoted from Professor W. M. Flinders Petrie's "Religion of Ancient Egypt" (1906), pages 54 f. :—

"Aten was a conception of the sun entirely different to Ra. No human or animal form was ever attached to it; and the adoration of the physical power and action of the sun was the sole devotion. So far as we can trace, it was a worship entirely apart and different from every other type of religion in Egypt. . . . The Aten was the only instance of a 'jealous god' in Egypt, and this worship was exclusive of all others, and claims universality. There are traces of it shortly before Amenhotep III. He showed some devotion to it, and it was his son who took the name of Akhenaten, the glory of the Aten,² and tried to enforce this as the sole worship of Egypt. But it fell immediately after, and is lost in the next dynasty. . . . In the hymn to the Aten the universal scope of this power is proclaimed as the source of all life and action, and every land and people are subject to it, and owe to it their existence and their allegiance. No such grand theology had ever appeared in the world before, so far as we know; and it is the forerunner of the later monotheist religions, while it is even more abstract and impersonal, and may well rank as a scientific theism."³

¹For a popular volume dealing with this monarch, see Mr. Arthur E. P. Weigall's *Life and Times of Akhnaton, Pharaoh of Egypt* (1910). This writer sets out parallel passages of Akhnaton's hymn and Psalm civ. on pp. 155 f. So does J. H. Breasted on pp. 371 ff. of his *History of Egypt* (2d ed. 1909), though less fully.

²Now rendered "Aton is satisfied" (see Breasted, *The Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt* [1912], p. 322). H. M. W.

³In view of later work some of the views that have been held about the history of the Aton worship must be modified. See Ludwig Borchardt, "Aus der Arbeit an den Funden von Tell el-Amarna, Vorläufiger Bericht" in *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft*, March, 1917 (No. 57, pp. 24 ff.). This scholar holds that the cult of the sun flourished under Amenophis III., but not to the exclusion of the rest of the pantheon, as in the

Our knowledge of this religion is derived from one long and several shorter hymns and a few short prayers. A. Erman (*Die Ägyptische Religion* [2d ed. 1909], p. 78) points out with justice that the expression 'Light or heat' which is in the solar disc' proves learned speculation to have been an element in the formation of the new faith, and this is confirmed by its theological conceptions.² There are naturally many points in connection with its history as to which Egyptologists are not at one. Most of these do not concern the present inquiry. For the purposes of Old Testament criticism it is immaterial whether the personal share of Akhenaton was a little greater or a little less, or whether those scholars are right who contend "that the religious and poetical matter, developed in the hymns . . . consists of topics already familiar to everyone. The originality lent to the hymns is probably like new wine in old bottles; it expresses old beliefs in new rhythms, and gives a touch, as far as we can judge, more vivid and personal to subjects treated by older writers."³

In the first instance the following points call for attention:—

later years of Amenophis IV. He thinks that the later Egyptians reprobated the political sterility of the monarch much more than his exaggeration of the Aton worship. Priests of the solar disc are found under the Ramessides. All that happened was that the god was reduced from the position of preëminence given him by Akhenaton to his earlier position in the Egyptian pantheon. See also his observations on p. 18 of No. 55 (Dec. 1914).

¹ N. de G. Davies, *The Rock-Tombs of El-Amarna*, part i. (1903) p. 45, renders "splendour."

² Cp. Davies, *op. cit.*

³ A. Moret, *Kings and Gods of Egypt* (1912), pp. 59 ff. See also especially Davies, *op. cit.*, p. 44: "So far as we can see, it does not greatly differ in essential doctrine from systems that existed in Egypt before and after it, but only in its uncompromising attitude to dissenting faiths, and the consistency with which, from the beginning, it accepted the positive and negative consequences of its doctrine. In both respects we may recognize the personality of its founder rather than the motive power of its creed."

1. There existed a monotheistic belief before the time of Moses.

2. The facts that will be adduced show conclusively that Moses must have been perfectly familiar with its ideas.

3. Some of the phrases and thoughts of this belief recur in the later literature of Israel in a form so closely similar as to exclude any theory of complete independence. It may be that they originated in Egypt or that both Egypt and Israel borrowed them from some common source; but the likeness is too great for any hypothesis of separate origin.

The nature of the "teaching"¹ of Akhenaton, as it was always called, may be gathered from the following quotations:—

"Thy dawning is very beautiful, O living Ra, etc., etc., the living Aten, *beside whom there is no other*, giving health to the eyes by his rays, he who [has made] all that is! Thou risest in the eastern horizon of heaven to give life to all that thou hast made, viz. mankind, cattle, flying and fluttering things, with [all kinds] of reptiles which are on the earth" (Davies, *El-Amarna*, part i. pp. 49 f. [my italics. H. M. W.]).

"I have come with praises to thy rays, O living Aten, sole (god). Thou art eternal, Heaven is thy temple in which thou makest thine appearance every [day]," etc. (*op. cit.*, part vi. p. 31).

The following excerpts from the longer hymn are taken from Breasted's "Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt." Some passages of Psalm civ. are placed in the margin for comparison.²

¹ Cf. the Mosaic Torah and Deut. iv. 1, etc.

² Full translations of the longer hymn are given by N. de G. Davies, *El-Amarna*, part vi. (1908) pp. 29 ff.; W. M. Flinders Petrie, *History of Egypt* (3d ed. 1899), vol. ii. pp. 215 ff.; A. E. P. Weigall, *The Life and Times of Akhnaton* (1910), pp. 150 ff.; A. Moret, *Kings and Gods of Egypt* (1912), pp. 55 ff.; J. H. Breasted, *History of Egypt* (2d ed. 1909), pp. 371 ff.; *Development, etc.*, pp. 324 ff.; G. A. Barton, *Archæology and the Bible* (2d ed. 1917), pp. 403 ff.

AKHNATON'S HYMN

When thou settest in the western
horizon of the sky,
The earth is in darkness like the
dead;
They sleep in their chambers,
Their heads are wrapped up,
Their nostrils are stopped,
And none seeth the other,
While all their things are stolen
Which are under their heads,
And they know it not.
Every lion cometh forth from his
den,
All serpents, they sting.
Darkness. . . .
The world is in silence,
He that made them resteth in his
horizon.
Bright is the earth when thou
risest in the horizon.
When thou shinest as Aton by day
Thou drivest away the darkness.
When thou sendest forth thy rays,
The Two Lands (Egypt) are in
daily festivity,
Awake and standing upon their
feet
When thou hast raised them up.
Their limbs bathed, they take their
clothing,
Their arms uplifted in adoration
to thy dawning.
(Then) in all the world they do
their work.
All cattle rest upon their pastur-
age,
The trees and the plants flourish,
The birds flutter in their marshes,
Their wings uplifted in adoration
to thee.
All the sheep dance upon their feet,
All winged things fly,
They live when thou hast shone
upon them.

PSALM CIV

Thou makest darkness, and
it is night,
Wherein all the beasts of the
forest do creep forth.
The young lions roar after
their prey,
And seek their food from
God (ver. 20-21).

The sun ariseth, they slink
away,
And couch in their dens (ver.
22).

Man goeth forth unto his
work,
And to his labour until the
evening (ver. 23).

The trees of the Lord have
their fill,
The cedars of Lebanon, which
he hath planted;
Wherein the birds make their
nests;
As for the stork, the fir-trees
are her house.

AKHNATON'S HYMN

The barques sail up-stream
and down-stream alike.
Every highway is open be-
cause thou dawnest.
The fish in the river leap up
before thee.
Thy rays are in the midst
of the great green sea.

How manifold are thy works!
They are hidden from before
(us),
O Sole God, whose powers
no other possesseth.
Thou didst create the earth
according to thy heart¹
While thou wast alone:

Thou hast set a Nile in the
sky;
When it falleth for them,
It maketh waves upon the
mountains,
Like the great green sea,

Watering their fields in their
towns

Thou makest the seasons
In order to create all thy
work:
Winter to bring them cool-
ness,
And heat that they may
taste thee.

PSALM CIV

The high mountains are for the
wild goats;
The rocks are a refuge for the
conies (ver. 16-18).

Yonder sea, great and wide,
Therein are creeping things in-
numerable,
Living creatures, both small and
great.

There go the ships;
There is leviathan, whom thou hast
formed to sport therein.
All of them wait for thee (ver.
25-27).

How manifold are thy works, O
LORD!
In wisdom hast thou made them
all;
The earth is full of thy creatures
(ver. 24).

Who sendest forth springs into
the valleys.
They run between the mountains;
They give drink to every beast of
the field,
The wild asses quench their thirst.

Who waterest the mountains from
thine upper chambers (ver. 10-
13).

The waters stood above the moun-
tains (ver. 6).

Who appointedst the moon for
seasons;
The sun knoweth his going down
(ver. 19).

¹ "Either 'pleasure' or 'understanding' here" (Breasted, p. 326).

AKHNATON'S HYMN

Thou didst make the distant
sky to rise therein,
In order to behold all that
thou hast made,
Thou alone, shining in thy
form as living Aton,
Dawning, glittering, going
afar and returning.

Thou art in my heart,
There is no other that know-
eth thee
Save thy son Ikhnaton.
Thou hast made him wise
In thy designs and in thy
might.
The world is in thy hand,
Even as thou hast made
them.
When thou hast risen they
live,
When thou settest they die;
For thou art length of life of
thyself,
Men live through thee

Thou didst establish the
world.

PSALM CIV

Who coverest thyself with light as
with a garment,
Who stretchest out the heavens
like a curtain (ver. 2).

I will sing unto the LORD as long
as I live;
I will sing praise to my God while
I have my being.
Let my musing be sweet unto him;
As for me, I will rejoice in the
LORD (ver. 33 f.).
All of them wait for thee
That thou mayest give them their
food in due season.
Thou givest it unto them, they
gather it;
Thou openest thy hand, they are
satisfied with good.
Thou hidest thy face, they vanish;
Thou withdrawest their breath,
they perish,
And return to their dust.
Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they
are created;
And thou renewest the face of the
earth.
May the glory of the LORD endure
forever (ver. 27-31).
Who didst establish the earth upon
its foundation (ver. 5).

Breasted (Development, etc., p. 329) thinks that the hymn "doubtless represents an excerpt, or a series of fragments excerpted, from the ritual of Aton, as it was celebrated from day to day in the Aton temple at Amarna."

It cannot be disputed that the religion of all these extracts is a form of pure monotheism. But neither can there be any doubt that some form of connection exists between portions of the great royal hymn and Psalm civ. Indeed,

when the two forms are carefully examined in their entirety, the impression left on the mind is that the Hebrew is answering Akhenaton (see, for instance, ver. 33 f. with the parallel), though he may have had before him a different set of excerpts, excluding some of the matter contained in our hymn. Under the influence of the evolutionary theory the commentators on the Psalm take little notice of the Egyptian hymn. Duhm and Briggs¹ do not mention it. Kittel prints it in an appendix without comment. And no other course is open to them. The evolutionary school claimed confidently that nobody thought thus for centuries after David. What use, then, could they make of historical material which proves the ideas to have been a century and a half earlier than Moses? The hymn shows irrefragably that some of the fundamental conceptions and phrases were familiar long before the Hebrew poem was composed (on *any* view of its authorship), whether we suppose them to have originated in Egypt or to be taken from the praises of some Syrian deity, such as the El Elyon, the God Most High, possessing heaven and earth, who was worshiped by Melchizedek of Jerusalem.² Aye, they were known before Moses, and the Psalm makes it clear that the knowledge of them never died. Taken in conjunction with the facts we are now to consider, it proves up to the hilt that Moses was acquainted with monotheism.

The Aton worship failed to establish itself as the exclusive religion of Egypt; but, as we have seen, it continued to exist, and its priests are found under the Ramesides. There is, moreover, a further point of great importance. While the Aton party had been worsted by the priests of Amon, many of the attributes of the Aton were

¹ Briggs assigns the Psalm to the Greek age!

² The reference to ships would hardly favor Jerusalem as the place of origin. Each of the two poems is strikingly faithful to the geography of its own country. The hymn shows the influence of the Egyptian sun, the Nile, and the general geographical and historical conditions of Akhenaton's Egypt very clearly. The Psalm bears the impress of Palestine and the worship of Israel's God.

ascribed to the victorious god. Perhaps the reasoning was that if Amon could visibly worst Aton he must at least be entitled to all the attributes ascribed to his defeated rival. Breasted quotes some hymns that throw light on this matter. The victory of Amon is celebrated in the following lines:—

“Thou findest him who transgresses against thee;
 Woe to him who assails thee!
 Thy city endures;
 But he who assails thee falls.
 Fie upon him who transgresses against thee in every land.

 The sun of him who knows thee not goes down, O Amon!
 But as for him who knows thee, he shines.
 The forecourt of him who assailed thee is in darkness,
 But the whole earth is in light.”

Of another composition Breasted writes:—

“Even the old monotheistic phrases have here and there survived, and this hymn employs them without compunction though constantly referring to the gods. It says:

“Sole likeness, maker of what is,
 Sole and only one, maker of what exists.
 From whose eyes men issued,
 From whose mouth the gods came forth
 Maker of herbs for the cattle,
 And the tree of life for mankind,
 Who maketh the sustenance of the fish [in] the stream,
 And the birds that traverse the sky,
 Who giveth breath to that which is in the egg,
 And maketh to live the son of the worm,
 Who maketh that on which the gnats live,
 The worms and the insects likewise,
 Who supplieth the needs of the mice in their holes,
 Who sustaineth alive the birds in every tree.
 Hail to thee, who hast made all these,
 Thou sole and only one, with many arms,
 Thou sleeper waking while all men sleep,
 Seeking good things for his cattle.
 Amon, enduring in all things,
 Atum-Harakhte,
 Praise to thee in all that they say,
 Jubilation to thee, for thy tarrying with us,

¹ Development, etc., pp. 345 f.

Obesance to thee, who didst create us,
 "Hail to thee," say all cattle;
 "Jubilation to thee," says every country,
 To the height of heaven, to the breadth of earth,
 To the depths of the sea."¹

"A hymn to Osiris of the same age," continues Breasted, "says to him: 'Thou are the father and the mother of men, they live from thy breath.'"

In the light of these facts it is impossible to hold that an adopted son of an Egyptian princess could have been ignorant of monotheism. The continuing worship of the Aton, the influence exercised by its monotheistic teaching on the liturgies of other gods, the reappearance of the conceptions and phrases of Akhenaton in the Hebrew field some centuries later, all prove that no educated Egyptian of the Mosaic age could have been unacquainted with monotheistic thought.

But there is a further question. A monotheistic religion arises — perhaps, as we shall see, one actually influenced by the worship of the Syrian Baal. It is overthrown by another Egyptian god, whose worship promptly takes over the monotheistic phrases connected with the defeated deity. When the gods of Egypt are in turn defeated by the Baal of Israel, Who, we must remember, was emphatically a jealous God, is it likely that this Deity, who was held to be "maker of what exists, maker of herbs for the cattle and the tree of life," should not have been proclaimed by His servant to be "the sole and only one," "beside whom there is no other"? The struggle in Egypt had not been a war between armies. It had been a contest between divinities, the God of Israel and the gods of Egypt. Could the Victor be regarded as something less not merely than the defeated deities, but than the Aton whom they had conquered at an earlier date? Or could the Creator be less the sole God than the sun which He had made? When the facts are candidly examined, is it really possible to hold *a priori* that Moses could have failed to regard his God as the one supreme, exclusive Ruler over all that is?

¹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 347 f.

Or is it scientific to endeavor to excise from Exodus all monotheistic expressions, or to argue that monotheism is the result of the teaching of the prophets? To the unscientific dogma of the late origin of monotheism, History replies in no uncertain voice, that the idea was older than Moses and thoroughly familiar to him.

Many scholars think that the name of Aton is none other than the Semitic word *Adon*, lord, and Professor A. H. Sayce holds that this worship came from Asia:—

“The God of Khu-n-Aten, in fact, has much in common with the Semitic Baal. Like Baal, he is the ‘lord of lords,’ whose visible symbol is the solar orb. Like Baal, too, he is a jealous god, and the father of mankind. . . . On the other hand, between Aten and the Semitic Baal there was a wide and essential difference. The monotheism of Khu-n-Aten was pantheistic, and as a result of this the god he worshipped was the god of the whole universe. The character and attributes of the Semitic Baal were clearly and sharply defined. He stood outside the creatures he had made or the children of whom he was the father. His kingdom was strictly limited, his power itself was circumscribed. He was the ‘lord of heaven,’ separate from the world and from the matter of which it was composed.”¹

We shall consider some facts relating to the Baal at a later stage. For the present we may just recall one result of textual criticism. In all the early books of the Old Testament the word “Baal” was applied freely to the God of the patriarchs. If to their conception of the Semitic Baal we add those ideas of the Aton worship which are shared by all the great teachers of Israel’s religion and the Name which was revealed to Moses, what do we get?

II

On turning to the patriarchal age, we are confronted with a new preliminary difficulty, the existence of a god Bethel whose divinity appears to have been recognized by persons to whom the Elephantine finds have introduced us. It happens that the correct translation of the Massoretic text of Gen. xxxi. 13, אֲנִי הָאֱלֹהִים בֵּית־אֵל, is, “I am the God,

¹The Religion of Ancient Egypt (2d ed. 1913), p. 98.

Bethel"; and this is accepted by Dr. C. F. Burney,¹ who thinks "we may perhaps recognize a primitive identification of the stone itself with the deity." I do not accept this view; but, as the matter is one of considerable difficulty, it will be well to state the facts in some detail.

The Elephantine papyri speak of a God יהו (YHW), Who is undoubtedly the God of Israel. The community was, however, very mixed, and we meet with other gods. In Pap. 27 (Sachau, pp. 103 ff.²) we find Malkijah, son of Joshibjah, described as a *Syrian* belonging to the 'standard' of Nebokudurri (apparently not a Jewish 'standard'), complaining of certain wrongs alleged to have been committed against him by another Syrian.³ After stating that he has made complaint to his god (i.e. presumably a temple tribunal) and received his decision, he apparently proceeds to call upon the defendant to take an oath of purgation before [חרכביתאל אלהי] (YHW). This seems to mean HRM-Bethel the god, pointing to a Syrian god of that name. There is also a proper name HRM-nathan = HRM gave. We read (Pap. 34, Sachau, pp. 126 f.), 'There witnesses HRM-nathan, son of Bethelnathan, son of Teos (or Tachos).'⁴

A long list of contributions⁵ (Pap. 18, Sachau, pp. 72 ff.) is headed, "These are the names of the חילא יהודיא (Jewish or Judæan army) who gave money ליהו אלהא (for YHW the god)." In it, however, we read:—

¹"New Aramaic Papyri and Old Testament History," Church Quarterly Review, vol. lxxiv. p. 405 (No. 148, July, 1912).

²The references are to E. Sachau, *Aramäische Papyrus und Ostraka* (1911).

³It is, however, noteworthy that a man is sometimes called a Syrian in one passage and a Jew in another (see A. van Hoonacker, *Une Communauté Judéo-Araméenne* [1915], pp. 3 f.).

⁴This letter is doubtful.

⁵For an English translation of the whole document, see M. Sprengling, "The Aramaic Papyri of Elephantine in English," *American Journal of Theology*, vol. xxii. pp. 349 ff. (No. 3, July, 1918). His discussions show that the evidence is quite insufficient for any certain conclusions on most of the matters he considers.

לִיהוָה (for YHW) 12 keresh, 6 shekels.

לְאַשְׁמֹבֶתֶל (for Ashambethel, if that vocalization is correct) 7 keresh.

לְאַנְתְּבֶתֶל (for Anathbethel) 12 keresh.

Apparently, therefore, Ashambethel and Anathbethel were divinities.¹

Ashambethel as a deity derives some support from two proper names אֲשַׁמְכֹרֵי and אֲשַׁמְרֵם in Pap. 24 (Sachau, p. 95), a list of names that are predominantly of Egyptian and Babylonian origin. Here we must compare 2 Kings xvii. 30, where, in the description of the conduct of the foreign nationalities settled by the Assyrians in Samaria, we read, "And the men of Hamath made אֲשִׁימָה (Ashima)." That again points to a Syrian divinity. Amos (viii. 14) denounces those who swear by אֲשַׁמָּה of Samaria. This is ordinarily rendered 'sin of Samaria'; but, in view of the Elephantine material, it has been conjectured that we should regard it as the proper name, Ashimah or Ashmah of Samaria.

As to Anathbethel, we know of a goddess Anath (see Breasted, *Ancient Records*, vol. iii. p. 43, "Anath is satisfied" (reign of Seti I.); vol. iii. p. 201, "Anath is protection" (reign of Rameses II.); vol. iv. p. 62, "Montu and Sutekh are with [him (Ramses III.) in] every fray, Anath and Astarte are his shield"), and place-names like Beth-Anath and Anathoth tell of her worship in early times by some inhabitants of Canaan.² Anati (עַנְתִּי) occurs as a man's name not only in this Papyrus (Sachau, pp. 74, 79), but also, though the fact is generally overlooked in this connection, in the Amarna tablets (Knudtzon, 170. 43). Further עַנְתִּי־יְהוָה (Anath-YHW) appears in Pap. 32 (Sachau, pp. 118 f.). In these papyri, YHW is called the God of heaven, and Jer. xlv. denounces with great emphasis the worship of the queen of heaven by the Jews in Egypt. That chapter should be carefully examined in this connection.

¹ In any case the heading of the list does not fit in with these facts.

² See further De Vogüé, *Mélanges d'Archéologie Orientale*, pp. 41 ff., and compare Anathothijah, 1 Chron. viii. 24.

It proves the worship of other gods by Jewish colonies in Egypt. It seems quite likely, therefore, that Anath-YHW may have been a consort of the God of heaven Whom the Jews worshiped. If this is sound, it would point to Anathbethel's having been a consort of the god Bethel. On the other hand, Bethel might possibly (but improbably) be taken as a place-name in these two words. They would then mean, respectively, the Anath and Asham of Bethel.

A Phœnician god Bethel is mentioned in a treaty made between Esarhaddon and Baal of Tyre. In business records of the time of Artaxerxes I. we find a personal name Bit-ili-nûri in which Bit-ili is written with the determinative of a god, and there is other evidence.¹ The papyri contain the name Bethelnathan in a passage quoted above, and also mention a Bethelnathan son of Jehonathan. Sachau (pp. 82 f.) quotes other names compounded with Bethel. Lagrange has suggested with great probability that we should recognize the god Bethel in Jer. xlvi. 13: "And Moab shall be ashamed of Chemosh, as the house of Israel was ashamed of Beth-el their confidence."

What inferences can we draw from these facts? In the first instance, we must conclude that the community was exceedingly mixed. It may be that Van Hoonacker is right in holding that they were largely Samaritans.² Certainly there is a great similarity between the facts we find here and the statement of 2 Kings. On the other hand, there is also a striking resemblance to the cults denounced by Amos and Hosea, and it may very well be that the Elephantine colony contained a strong admixture of descendants of the ten tribes. The fact to which attention has been drawn above, that one and the same man is described sometimes as a Jew and sometimes as a Syrian, may perhaps also point to the presence of Jews whose ancestors had been settled in Syria before migrating to Egypt.³

¹ Zimmern in E. Schrader's *Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament* (2d ed. 1903), pp. 438 f.

² *Op. cit.*, pp. 82 ff.

³ We know from 1 Kings xx. 34 of an Israelite commercial colony in Damascus.

Similarly an English Jew settling in some other country to-day might sometimes be called the Jew and sometimes the Englishman. Intermarriage, which was prohibited by the Law only in the case of certain tribes, is presumably responsible in whole or in part for the great mixture of names. There is, moreover, reason to believe that to a great extent personal names had ceased to have a religious significance and had become labels, as with us.¹

On the other hand, except, to some extent, in the case of Anath-YHW (who appears to have been invented as a consort for Israel's God under the influence of the cult of Anath), the facts all seem to point to the influence of foreign North Syrian divinities rather than to any native Jewish object of worship. HRM-Bethel appears to be Syrian. Ashima is expressly connected with Hamath; and, if we should read this name in Amos viii. 14, the inference is that the Syrian worship had penetrated the Northern Kingdom as did that of the Phœnician Baal in the days of Ahab, but without ceasing to be heretical in the eyes of the faithful. As Anath and Bethel were also Syrian divinities, the most natural view is that Ashambethel and Anathbethel, like HRM-Bethel, should be regarded in the same light. If they were worshiped in Israel or in Judah, this was a falling away, and would have been so regarded by the faithful in every age. A passage in 2 Kings (v. 17 f.) shows us the converse process. Naaman, the Syrian, impressed by his miraculous experience, adopts the worship of Israel's God even in Damascus. But possibly strict worshippers of Rimmon regarded him in much the same way as the prophets viewed Hebrew worshippers of Syrian deities.

Thus it appears that the Elephantine material may and does throw considerable light on the religious circumstances of the age and on some difficult prophetic texts. It does not, however, appear to aid in the criticism of

¹See S. Daiches, *The Jews in Babylonia in the Time of Ezra and Nehemiah according to Babylonian Inscriptions* (1910), a short monograph which should be read by all who have occasion to deal with this period.

the Pentateuch. Looking at the Old Testament history broadly, we may say with confidence that there was continuous polytheism and idolatry among the people till the Exile and later;¹ but the particular influences and dangers varied to some extent in different epochs. For example, the Phœnician Baal was particularly dangerous in the age of Ahab, but we should not be justified in reading this back to, e.g., the time of the Judges. Similarly with the Bethel-Ashima group. As a menace to the pure faith of Israel they seem to me to belong to entirely different times from any that fell within the purview of the Pentateuch. Solomon's polygamy and imperialism gave rise to one set of dangers for Israel's religion (1 Kings xi.), Jeroboam's schism (1 Kings xiii. 26 ff.) to another; and it is probable that from that time onward successive waves of foreign influence affected the religious practices and beliefs of Israel.

But if we are not justified by the religious history in importing the god Bethel into the Book of Genesis, the textual facts are most unfavorable to the Massoretic reading. I agree with Dahse² in thinking that we should read not 'Bethel,' but 'that appeared to thee in the place'; and I recall the fact that the Hebrew word 'place,' like its Arabic equivalent, also has a special religious meaning.

For these reasons I cannot accept the view that Genesis recognizes a god Bethel as the object of Jacob's worship.

¹Many of the facts are collected in an interesting article by Professor J. M. P. Smith on "Jewish Religion in the Fifth Century B.C.," *American Journal of Semitic Languages*, vol. xxxiii. pp. 322-333 (July, 1917). It is amusing to note his astonishment (p. 328) at finding a statement of Jeremiah's to be true after all: "We recall with fresh understanding that Jeremiah declared 'according to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah' (Jer. xi. 13), and begin to suspect that Jeremiah meant just what he said"! Those who are tempted to believe in the evolutionary theory should contrast his picture of the religion of the Jewish masses at that period with the Aton faith.

²See his *Textkritische Materialien zur Hexateuchfrage*, vol. i. (1912) pp. 5 f.

III

The Tetragrammaton יהוה itself may or may not have been used in Israel or outside before the time of Moses. On the face of the Massoretic text it seems clear that it had been in common use for centuries before (see especially Gen. iv. 26, "Then began men to call upon the name of the LORD"). But textual investigations have now proved that in this matter we cannot rely on the Massoretic text,¹ and when we read (xvi. 13) the impossible 'She called the name of the LORD that spake unto her,' we realize that the Tetragrammaton has been deliberately substituted for another word or words in occurrences where some designation of the Deity followed the word name as a genitive. Insight into editorial methods enables us to see that this is due to the influence of Ex. iii. 15. If 'this is my name forever, and this is my memorial unto all generations,' then, so ran the argument, it must necessarily be read wherever in any generation there is a reference to the name of the Deity. Consequently the argument from Gen. iv. 26, etc., is worthless. The only other striking passage is xxviii. 20 ff., dealing with Bethel. But obviously if baal or some similar word has been removed from the text of Genesis, and if the editors regularly treated designations of the Deity as variable elements to be brought into accord with the principles they had deduced from Biblical verses, the probative value of this passage is no higher than that of others.

Professor N. J. Schlögl, as the result of an exhaustive examination of the textual material, cannot convince himself that the Tetragrammaton is original in any passage before Ex. iii. 12,² and certainly the general drift of the revelations to Moses and the Pharaoh's ignorance of the LORD (Ex. v. 2) would fit in well with the view that the Name was new.

¹ See *Theologisch Tijdschrift*, 1918, pp. 164-169; *BS*, Jan. 1915, pp. 134-153; April, 1915, pp. 308-333; April, 1916, p. 332, footnote; Oct. 1916; April, 1917, pp. 315 ff.; April, 1918, pp. 239 ff.; *Methodist Quarterly Review*, April, 1918, pp. 183 ff.

² *Biblische Zeitschrift*, vol. xiii. (1915) p. 113.

The theory that the Tetragrammaton occurs before the time of Moses in cuneiform inscriptions has been conclusively disproved by Professor D. D. Luckenbill,¹ following earlier work of Daiches, which, however, is less convincing. I only quote one sentence: "But so long as there are no other reasons for supposing that the name of the Hebrew deity would occur in a Babylonian (*not a Hebrew*) name five hundred years before the time of David, and there certainly are no such reasons, and until the determinative for deity is found prefixed to such a name, we must look elsewhere for an explanation of the form."

It remains to notice one other view, viz. that Moses derived his religious belief, or at any rate the Name of God, from the Midianites. That is inherently improbable, for there is nothing whatever to suggest that any deity bearing this name was ever worshiped in Midian. It is flatly contradicted by Ex. iii. and vi., and also by the whole Old Testament view that the God of Moses was the God of the patriarchs. Textual criticism now furnishes new facts. In Ex. xviii. 1 ("Now Jethro . . . heard of all that God had done for Moses, and for Israel his people," R. V.) the LXX reads, 'Jethro heard what κυριος 'Ισραηλ had done for his people.' The variants recorded in Brooke and McLean's edition are insignificant:—pr o j: ο̄θ̄ς Cyr-cod: om z: † ο̄θ̄ς α₂. Of these, j's reading is probably due to an attempt to make sense of the text; but, if original, it represents a Hebrew 'the baal of Israel.' The general Greek reading when retranslated gives YHWH Israel, which is just as impossible as Thomas Israel would be in English. The original probably had 'the baal of Israel,' and the LXX and M. T. offer alternative corrections. If in the eyes of Jethro the God of Moses was the baal of Israel, it is obvious that the Name and worship were not derived from Midianite sources. That hypothesis may therefore be dismissed as worthless.

¹ American Journal of Theology, vol. xxii. pp. 47-50 (No. 1, Jan. 1918).

IV

It is manifest that, in order to understand the religion of Israel, we must get as close as possible to the original text of the Old Testament. Some work has already been done on Genesis and a little on the later books, but even in the best part of the field we are still far from finality.

The phenomena of the text of Genesis in respect of the Divine appellations merely form part of a larger problem — that of the Divine appellations throughout the Old Testament — which in turn is only a section of the great textual problem of the Old Testament. The best text we can now hope to recover will be attainable only when the whole of the available material has been published and thoroughly discussed, but it is necessary to go as far as we can towards solving provisionally the difficulties that arise on the facts already before us. No doubt some of the perplexities are due to glossing, mistakes in resolving real or supposed abbreviations, confusions between the Tetragrammaton and *Adonai*, owing to the identity of pronunciation, and erroneous emendations of passages that were thought to be corrupt. But the chief cause lay elsewhere. The Old Testament has been deliberately edited by men whose minds were dominated by Biblical texts and theological views. In many of the books the chief stumbling-block was the presence of the word "Baal," to which objection was taken later on account of the interpretation placed on passages like Hos. ii. 16 f.¹ In fairness, however, to the editors, we must remember that something like their work was absolutely necessary if monotheism was to be safeguarded.

The time is now ripe for advancing further along what experience has shown to be the right road, and we can

¹Formerly I hesitated in some passages between Baal and Adon. I now think that adon was not removed, for it appears actually to have been *inserted* in place of older titles that were deemed objectionable, e.g. in Deut. ix. 26 (see Dahse, *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 12, and *infra*); and that would not have occurred had this word been obnoxious to the editors. Compare also the use of *Adonai*.

make some additional use of our archæological, religious, and textual materials.¹

The word "Baal" seems to have been extremely common at the time of Moses. A journal of an Egyptian frontier official dated in the third year of Merneptah (i.e. in the regnal year immediately following that in which the Exodus took place) gives us the following:—"There went up the servant of Baal," "The chief of Tyre, Baalat-Remeg," "Meth-det, son of Shem-Baal." Yet the English translation of the whole journal occupies scarcely more than a page of Breasted's "Ancient Records" (vol. iii. pp. 271 f.). Working back, we find that names compounded with Baal, e.g. Amur-Baalu, occur in the Amarna tablets, and the Baalat of Gubla is often mentioned. Coming down to the finds at Samaria, we meet with the names Baala, Baalzamar, Baalizakar, Baal-Meoni, Abibaal, and Meribaal on ostraca.² Bealiah occurs as a Jewish name in Babylonia in the time of Darius II. (424-404 B.C.).³ The Elephantine papyri and ostraca contain a number of names compounded with Baal, but Sachau (p. 77) states that none of them occurs in any papyrus that is certainly Jewish.

So much for the additional facts revealed by archæology. Now who or what was baal?⁴

In itself "baal" is an absolutely harmless word, mean-

¹ On some of the matters here treated see now further H. Grossmann, *Hadad und Baal nach den Amarnabriefen und nach ägyptischen Texten in Abhandlungen zur semitischen Religionskunde und Sprachwissenschaft* Wolf Wilhelm Grafen von Baudissin . . . überreicht [1918], pp. 191-216. This volume became available in London too late for use in the present discussion.

² D. G. Lyon, *Harvard Theological Review*, vol. iv. (1911) p. 141; S. R. Driver, *Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement* (1911), pp. 82 f.

³ S. Daiches, *op. cit.*, p. 17. These facts show that Professor L. B. Paton was unfortunate in asserting (*Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. ii. [1909] p. 291) that "No names of this type are found after the time of David," and in some of the inferences he draws. The revelations of the spade habitually damage the reputations of modern Orientalists.

⁴ At this point it is necessary to utter a word of warning for English readers. The second volume of the *Encyclopædia of Re-*

ing lord, master, owner. It is commonly used of men in various good senses, such as master of a horse, owner of an ox, husband of a wife, and can also express different kinds of relationship. Thus 'baal of dreams' is the equivalent of the English "dreamer." The usage of the word is singularly flexible. It was also applied to supernatural light and Ethics edited by Dr. J. Hastings, which appeared in 1909, contains a long article (pp. 283-298), by Professor Lewis Bayles Paton, which gives a great deal of information and might naturally be consulted on the subject. It must, however, only be used with reserve, because of an unlucky mistake in the Hebrew and Old Testament field which vitiates the discussion. We read (p. 284a): "In Bab-Assyr. the worshipper addresses his god as *Bêlt*, 'my lord,' or *Bêltt*, 'my lady'; but this is not found in the other dialects, except where there is direct borrowing from the Babylonian. . . . It is noteworthy, however, that, while the worshipper does not speak of the god as 'my *ba'al*,' he may call himself 'slave of the *ba'al*.'" Now that is exactly what the worshiper did do in Hebrew. Hosea ii. 16 is perfectly explicit on the point: "And it shall be at that day, saith the Lord, that thou shalt call me *Ishi*; and shalt call me no more *Baali*." That means that *Baali*, my baal, was commonly used in Israel (compare Isa. liv. 5; Jer. xxxi. 32). Professor Paton's attitude is the more curious because later in the article (p. 292a) he actually refers to the Hosea passage, and (p. 292b) even points to some of the textual mutilations that were carried through in order to purge 'the Old Testament of this word.' This, of course, disposes of his statement (284a): "Corresponding to the original usage which limited the name *Ba'al* to owners of things, the *ba'alim* are elsewhere uniformly regarded as proprietors of objects and places, not as owners of persons. Lords of tribes or of individuals are . . . never *ba'alim*. One never meets *Ba'al-Israel*, *Ba'al-Moab*, *Ba'al-Ammon*." As the word has been systematically removed from the Old Testament text, we cannot be sure whether it was used of Moab and Ammon or not. It is quite possible that it stood originally in some places where we now read 'abomination' or some other word (e.g. 1 Kings xi. 5, 7; see BS, July, 1917, pp. 479 ff.). It—or rather the feminine *Baalah*—seems, however, to have been used of Judah (see the names in 2 Sam. vi. 2 [Kittel, *Biblia Hebraica*, ad *loc.*] compared with 1 Chron. xiii. 6); and in connection with Benjamin we should restore 'his Baal' in Deut. xxxiii. 12 (see BS, April, 1918, pp. 239 ff.). In Ex. xviii. 1 we have seen that the readings are explicable on the view that Baal of Israel has been deliberately mutilated; and there is strong reason for holding that the expression Baal of Hosts was frequent.

beings, and here its flexibility makes it extremely difficult always to be sure what is meant. Perhaps it will be sufficient to refer to three matters:—(1) All kinds of spirits supposed to be connected with wells, trees, etc., were called baals; (2) so were a number of local deities, such as the Baals of particular towns; and (3) baal is also used for one deity who was Baal *par excellence*, Hadad, the Addu of the Amarna letters. In 108. 9,¹ we find Rib-addi of Gubla comparing the king to Addu and the sun in the heaven; in 147. 14, 149. 7, we have similar comparisons by Abi-Milki of Tyre; and in 159. 7, by Aziru prince of Amurru. In 52. 4 the Pharaoh is called ‘my lord (bel), my Addu’ by Akizzi of Katna. M. J. Lagrange (*Études sur les Religions Sémitiques* [2d ed. 1905], pp. 91, 93), following Hommel and Knudtzon, thinks that in many cases where we find the name written ideographically in proper names it was actually read as baal. Be this as it may, Hadad seems to have been a baal whose worship was not confined to any particular locality, to have been associated with the heavens, and to have been often called Baal Shammem, the baal of heaven.

For a long time the use of the word “baal” in connection with Israel’s God was regarded as just as natural and harmless as its use of any other deity. Bealiah, ‘Yah is my Baal [Lord],’ is found as a proper name (1 Chron. xii. 6; Daiches, *op. cit.*), just as is Elijah, ‘Yah is my El [God].’ But later a change set in, and the word, when used as a designation of God, was sedulously removed from the Old Testament books. Various devices were adopted,—mutilation of the word itself, substitution of another expression, and total excision of an offending phrase, all being practiced.² Sometimes the divergences of parallel texts or

¹ I cite by J. A. Knudtzon’s *Die El-Amarna Tafeln* (1915).

² For instances, see the articles cited in footnote 1, p. 339, *supra*. Thus Ahab’s four hundred Baal prophets have been converted by editors into prophets of Israel’s God, thereby depriving the narrative of all sense (1 Kings xxii.; 2 Chron. xviii.); the men of Sodom have been made to sin before the LORD, of Whom they knew nothing, instead of before the Baal, etc.

of ancient versions show that different editors have worked on different principles, and enable us to go some way towards restoring the original. In other passages considerations of sense or sound come to our assistance.

If, now, we read the patriarchal history in the knowledge that we can place no reliance on the Massoretic designations of the supernatural beings, we shall not come to the conclusion that the background is monotheistic. There is undoubtedly one supernatural Being Who stands in a special relation to the patriarchs, and He has messengers or angels who are also supernatural; though their existence is, of course, entirely compatible with monotheism. But apart from the strange gods whose worship Jacob forbids *in a particular locality* (Gen. xxxv. 2), though he had apparently not reprobated it elsewhere, there are two classes of other beings. In Gen. xxxii. 24 Jacob wrestles with a man according to most texts, but an angel according to *D*, supported by Justin (and Theodoret). Whether on the textual question we regard 'man' as original, or take it as a substitution for Baal made on the basis of the *ishi* (my man) of Hosea's famous text (ii. 18 f.), it is clear that the narrative regards Jacob's opponent as supernatural. In Gen. xvi. we again find a baal or el (BS, Jan. 1915, pp. 103 f.). Another class of supernatural beings is furnished by Leah's invocation of the Syrian deity Gad (Gen. xxxi. 11) and passages like Gen. xiv., where we find a deity who in the original text was called *El Elyon*. The Tetragrammaton in verse 22 is a late insertion, and we may doubt whether *in the patriarchal age* this god was identified with the God of Israel, Who, however, later absorbed his name.

The textual phenomena of the last four books of the Pentateuch resemble those with which we meet in Genesis. Pending the publication of Dahse's full materials, it is unnecessary to deal with the bulk of the passages, but I have observed that in some the results that can be obtained are material to the present study. In Deut. vi. 4 the Hebrew gives:—'Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God the LORD one.'

To any thinking man it will seem most improbable that an author, of the ability of the writer of this passage, having an extremely important announcement to make, should formulate it in language that is susceptible of four different meanings, none of them good. If he wished to say either that 'the LORD, our God, is one' or 'the LORD our God is the only God,' it was open to him to do so. But the R. V. adopts as its text "the LORD, our God, is one LORD." That makes exactly the same sort of impression as if one should say "My friend Thomas is one Thomas," for the Tetragrammaton is just as purely a personal name as is Thomas. The textual material increases our embarrassments. The Nash papyrus, our most ancient Hebrew witness, adds אהי 'he is,' which rules out the other translations and leaves the meaningless R. V. in sole possession of the field. If the word is original, why was it dropped in M. T.? If it was not, how came so nonsensical an interpretation to arise? The great body of Septuagintal authorities support the Nash papyrus, a few Fathers have 'God' for the second LORD, and n, Boh, Eth^c, Pal^p, with some patristic authorities, read 'the LORD, our God, is one,' omitting the second 'LORD.' This would be excellent, but for the fact that it could not have given rise to the current texts, and is therefore not original. Yet there is a very simple solution. 'Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God is one baal' (כעל אהי אהי) would give a good sense and explain all the readings. The removal of the word by later editors gave rise to alternative mutilations, ending in nonsense. In days when baal was a synonym for God, the original sentence meant 'The LORD our God is one God.'

In the overwhelming majority of cases the removal of baal and the substitution of some other word has made no substantial difference. In others the clear sense of the passage has overcome philology, and most readers have continued to understand it in the way originally intended by the author, in spite of verbal changes. For instance, where in a law baalim was altered to *Elohim*, the A. V. rightly rendered "judges," for in the old days justice was

dispensed by the Baalim (citizens, elders) of the place.¹ When the word was removed, *Elohim* was substituted, doubtless under the influence of Deut. i. 17, "for judgment belongs to Elohim," but the common sense of the people was not led astray, and it was understood that the real meaning was 'judges,' not 'God.'

In some passages, however, the change affected the sense in a way that could not easily be remedied. In Ex. viii. 18 (E. V. 22), in the light of my present knowledge, I regard the Septuagintal texts² as being due to an original Hebrew, 'shall know that I, the LORD, am baal of all the earth.'³ Such an expression is unquestionably material to our conception of the religion of Moses.⁴ On the other hand, if baal has been altered into the Tetragrammaton, much may have been ascribed to Israel's God that was not properly His. The golden calf affords a remarkable illustration. If Aaron said "a feast of the LORD tomorrow" (Ex. xxxii. 5), it was either identified or connected with Him. But if the true reading be that of the LXX, 'a feast of the lord [baal] to-morrow,' then the calf is the calf of Hadad.⁵ Again, Ex. iv. 24-26 is clearly a

¹ See BS, April, 1919, pp. 210 ff.

² See BS, Jan. 1915, p. 136.

³ It seems quite likely that the expression "shall know that I am the LORD" is never original in *Exodus*, where we are dealing with a newly revealed name with no associations.

⁴ I am of course aware that the evolutionary school deliberately reject all these monotheistic expressions as late additions to the text of their earlier documents. Their action is based on the *a priori* view that monotheism is late, which I have refuted in the BS for Oct. 1907 (as stated at the beginning of the present discussion). As we have seen, monotheism was, in fact, much older than Moses (*supra*, pp. 323-333).

⁵ LXX του κυριου, except the Syro-Hexaplar, which renders *Dominus*, correctly representing M. T. I must not be understood as saying that *in the best text we can now restore* of the Septuagintal Pentateuch δ κυριος with the article, as opposed to κυριος without the article, never represents the name of God; but the usage without the article for this purpose is so preponderant, that I suspect that originally the translators always employed it to represent the Tetragrammaton. Like the Hebrew, the Greek has been so much cut about to free it from what was deemed objectionable (witness

story of some baal who differed essentially from Israel's God. No Hebrew historian could possibly have represented his God as trying to kill a man and failing in the attempt. This baal belongs to the same class as Hagar's interlocutor and the being who wrestled with Jacob.

In Num. xiv. 9 we meet the unintelligible expression "their shadow (צל) has departed," etc. Most Septuagintal texts have $\delta \kappa \alpha \iota \rho \omicron \varsigma$ but the Armenians read *Dominus* and N gn k l F^b (mg) $\delta \kappa \varsigma = \text{הבצל}$, 'the baal.' For our present purpose it is worth noticing that the expression seems to have been 'the baal,' not 'their baal.' The narrator here probably adopts the term commonly used by the natives themselves, without thereby indicating that he necessarily regarded 'the baal' as identical with Israel's baal.

Other readings throw light on our problem. In Num. xvi. 22, M. T. has 'God, god of spirits of all flesh,' but the LXX clearly read 'and of all flesh'¹ (א for ב). Similarly in xxvii. 16 the LXX seems to have found 'LORD, God of spirits and of all flesh.' Those readings make the LORD God of the supernatural world as well as of mankind and the whole animal kingdom.

Deuteronomy ix. 26 should perhaps be placed by the side of these. Dahse (*op. cit.*) has carefully distinguished seven Greek readings. Three of these contain the phrase 'king of the gods,' which is clearly the original. The Hebrew *elohim* is, however, used of supernatural beings generally; so that king of the gods does not necessarily mean what it would in the mouth of an ancient Greek. It need not mean more than the "God of gods" of x. 17, if that phrase be interpreted not as a simple superlative, but in the nine readings in Josh. vi. 17) that it is not safe to build much on the presence or absence of the article. On the bull of Hadad, cp. M. J. Lagrange, *op. cit.*, p. 93. He holds that Hadad was Baal Shamem, and that his attributes were sufficiently like those of the God of Israel to have led to a mixture of worship and the adoration of the latter under the image of a bull. That would explain the practice of the Northern Kingdom and illuminate Aaron's action.

¹ Divergencies in the readings of the Septuagintal authorities that do not affect the point at issue are disregarded.

its literal sense;¹ but it does point to a belief in the existence of other supernatural beings over whom God reigns supreme.

In Deut. xxxii. 8 *f.* the LXX reproduces the same idea. Its Hebrew appears to have read:—

- 8 When Elyon gave to the nations their inheritance,
 When He separated the children of men,
 He set the borders of the peoples
 According to the sons [LXX angels] of El.
 9 For the portion of the Lord is his people Jacob,
 The lot of his inheritance is Israel.²

Yet this was felt to be perfectly consistent with saying (ver. 39): "See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me."

v

We may now attempt a synthesis of the facts bearing upon our problem.

The ancestors of the Israelites dwelt of old time beyond the River and they served other gods (Josh. xxiv. 2, 14 *f.*). Abraham had communion with a God of heaven with Whom he felt himself to stand in a special relation. But His name was certainly not revealed to the patriarchs and was probably unknown. There is no reason to suppose either that he believed that God to be the sole deity or that he refrained from worshiping other gods. El Elyon of Jerusalem (Gen. xiv.), the being who appeared to Hagar (Gen. xvi.), El Olam (Gen. xxi. 33),³ were not necessarily identified in Abraham's mind with the Baal whom he worshiped in the 'place' of Shechem. We must regard the patriarchs as standing on the common Semitic level, believing in a plurality of baals, some of whom we should

¹ Cp. Josh. xxii. 22, M. T.

² It looks as if, in an ancestor of our present Hebrew, 'Israel' had been written above the line or in the margin, and had then been treated as a correction of the 'el' of ver. 8.

³ 'Their' was unknown to D and Philo; *f* misplaces 'the name of the Lord,' which points to its being an addition. It is quite possible that originally El Olam was a local numen.

term gods while others might be regarded as genies or local spirits that would hardly be dignified with such a title. While I am seldom able to follow Eerdmans in matters of detail, I think that he showed true insight when he wrote the following sentences: "The exegesis of Genesis teaches us in my opinion that a background of polytheistic traditions lies behind our text. The monotheistic scribes read these traditions in a monotheistic sense, and only a few traces are now preserved which show us the original meaning of the narrative. These traditions are not the product of a pre-exilic or postexilic school, but old popular traditions" (*Die Komposition der Genesis* [1908], pp. 1 f.). Scientific textual criticism, working hand in hand with archaeological study and comparative religion, enables us to go some way towards recovering the original spirit of the narratives.

As already indicated, we have no means of judging how far Abraham identified the God Who appeared to him with many of the local baals worshiped in Canaan, just as we are ignorant of how far the Amorites themselves identified the baal of one city with the baal of the next. It is most probable that in those ages the bulk of the people would have been quite unable to give a clear, consistent account of their beliefs, and we may reasonably suppose that the leaders of the religious thought of the age would often have regarded as local cults of the same deity what to the majority of the populace were cults of different gods. One point, however, does suggest itself. The insistence upon Shechem as the scene of a great covenant between God and Israel (*Deut.* xi. 29 f.; xxvii. 8 f.; *Josh.* xxiv.; see *BS*, Oct. 1916, pp. 609 f.) and *Gen.* xxxiii. 20 (*El Elohe Israel*) taken in conjunction with *Gen.* xii. 6 f., make it likely that the God of Abraham was identified with a Baal worshiped at Shechem, while *Gen.* xxiv. shows that He was regarded as the God of heaven. Jacob certainly identified Him with a God Who appeared to him in Bethel (*Gen.* xxviii. 11-22, etc.), and in the expression "this is the gate of heaven" (*xxviii.* 17) we should possi-

bly see further evidence of the identification with the God of Heaven. Yet there is not the smallest reason for regarding this patriarch as a monotheist or even a monolater. He certainly cannot have sacrificed to the God of his fathers when in Laban's service; for, unlike Naaman at a later date (2 Kings v. 17), he did not travel with two mules' burden of earth, which would have given him the soil on which alone, according to the ideas of those days, sacrifice could have been offered. The natural impression made by a perusal of Gen. xxxi. is that the vision it narrates reinaugurated a relationship which had lapsed for some years. Laban and his daughters were polytheists. When Leah said, "With Gad" (Gen. xxx. 11), she was calling on a Syrian god of that name; and the story of the stolen teraphim (Gen. xxxi.) speaks with no uncertain voice. Jacob became squeamish about strange gods only when he approached Bethel (Gen. xxxv. 1 ff.). It has already been indicated that some of the minor supernatural personages with whom we meet in the narrative, such as Jacob's antagonist at Penuel, should not be identified with the God of the patriarchs.

The people who went down into Egypt, therefore, were polytheists and the descendants of polytheists. They stood on precisely the same footing as the contemporary Amorites, except that they believed that a, or more probably the, God of heaven, Who had been worshiped at Shechem and probably Bethel and other places, had appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and entered into special relations with them. But here comes a very important point. Unlike all the other relationships between the human and the Divine with which we meet in Semitic religion outside Israel, this was conceived as a voluntary sworn contract, called a covenant, into which both parties had entered. The significance of this is very great indeed. It disposes of all theories of a natural or local relationship between this God and the patriarchs. "The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the Lord which hath fed me all my life long unto this day, the King which hath

redeemed me from all evil" (Gen. xlviii. 15 f.), assumed this position in the eyes of the patriarchs through revelation direct and unmistakable, taking a form which deliberately shut out all other possibilities of interpretation. But as yet His worship is not exclusive. Save within a very limited territory (Gen. xxxv. 2 ff.), He is not a jealous God. There is no suggestion anywhere that polytheism was untrue or undesirable (except as indicated in the last sentence). He is not yet conceived as the God of gods.

With the descent into Egypt sacrificial worship of the God of the fathers necessarily ceased (Ex. viii. 22 [26]). The people naturally and inevitably served other gods (Josh. xxiv. 14; Ezek. xx. 7 f.). There was a memory of the God of the fathers, and in persecution an appeal to Him; but that was all. The Israelites of those days were polytheistic and idolatrous to the core.

The first intervention of Moses on behalf of his brethren was in no sense religious. His patriotism was stirred (Ex. ii. 11 ff.), and there is as yet no hint of what he was to mean in the spiritual history of mankind. That first appears in the narrative of the burning bush. He receives a revelation, and the Being Who speaks to him is not a god of Egypt or a god of Caanan, not a god of Reuel or of Midian, but "the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (Ex. iii. 6). The Name is revealed to him. Philologists have debated as to the etymology of the word YHWH, and their result has been negative. They have failed to agree. Naturally so. It is not put forward as something which could have a definite meaning ascertainable by philology. It is called "this glorious and fearful name" (Deut. xxviii. 58), and is obviously intended to transcend etymology, not limited in sense to any single aspect of the Divine nature, however many its phonetic analogies might suggest. The revelation of the name had several effects, but for our present purpose we need consider only one. A personal name at once emphasized the distinctness of this God from all others. Monotheism is not yet taught, but the supreme

power over the creation of man and all his faculties is distinctly asserted (iv. 11). A supernatural being meets Moses at the lodging place and seeks to kill him. The attempt is, however, defeated by appropriate means (Ex. iv. 24-26). Here we have a belief in a genie of low-grade power whom we should not term a god. Then comes the narrative of the happenings in Egypt. Pharaoh has never heard of the new name of God, and proceeds to extremities. This is followed by the great conflict with the gods of Egypt in which monotheism clearly emerges for the first time in the narrative.

That conflict should be studied in the light of our knowledge of Egyptian religion. We have seen that monotheism had sprung into being in that country some one hundred and fifty years earlier. While it had failed, the attributes of the Aton had to some extent been ascribed to the triumphant Amon. It was inevitable that in a struggle against Amon they should be assigned to the victorious God of Israel. And so we read, Ex. viii. 6 (10), "that thou mayest know that there is no other save the LORD";¹ viii. 18 (22), 'that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, am baal of all the earth';² ix. 14 ff., "that thou mayest know that there is none like me in all the earth . . . to shew thee my power, and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth"; ix. 29, "that thou mayest know that the earth is the LORD's." The monotheism of Israel had been born, but how could it be saved from the premature fate that had befallen the religion of the Aton? How was the Torah of Moses to win a brighter future than the "teaching" of Akhenaton?

To some extent the lawgiver's problem resembled the Pharaoh's. Both had to deal with an entirely polytheistic people and with the same false gods. But here the likeness ceases. Neither in the nature of his deity, nor in the historical antecedents, nor in the circumstances of the

¹ So most Septuagintal texts, but it is possible that even this is not the earliest form of the verse, though it doubtless gives the original sense correctly.

² See *supra*, p. 347.

age, nor in the manifestations of Divine power, nor even in the absence of vested priestly interests in other gods, did the Egyptian enjoy the advantages of the Hebrew. Akhenaton taught a speculative belief of pantheistic character in the solar disc; Moses, on the other hand, spoke in the name of a personal God Who lay outside creation, Who was known to the people in their earlier history, Who showed Himself easily able to worst the gods of Egypt in championing their cause, and Who vouchsafed miraculous signs and wonders and a direct revelation of His will to the whole nation. It would be unfair, in view of our very limited knowledge of the faith of the Aton, to discuss the ethical character of that deity. But it is pertinent to ask, whether anybody supposes that Akhenaton could have enacted any law forbidding worship of other gods in the Egypt of his day. If that question be answered in the negative—as it clearly must be—we can institute no comparison between the methods of the two men. Akhenaton failed; but he failed where success was impossible; and even while we discern the flaws in his beliefs and in his methods, he is entitled to our admiration and reverence for a spiritual achievement which was colossal in itself and helped to mold the future of monotheism throughout the world. At the same time it is quite possible that Moses learnt some lessons from his failure.

If the teaching of the Egyptian was speculative, the Hebrew devoted more attention to conduct than to theory. The task of converting a polytheistic nation to monotheism is essentially practical, and the means must necessarily vary according to the stage of reflection and intellectual culture to which the people have attained. Monotheism in those days was contrary to substantially all human thought and experience. To an ordinary Israelite of the Mosaic age, an assertion that the gods whom the Egyptians and the Amorites worshiped simply did not exist, would have been incredible, if not meaningless. Accordingly we find the main efforts of the Pentateuch devoted rather to the enforcement of monotheistic practice than to

the discussion of its theory. It is clearly stated that "all the earth is mine" (Ex. xix. 5); and on that basis a covenant is made, placing the people in the position of a kingdom of priests. Yet the legislation is devoted to the practical task of preventing the worship of other gods. "Thou shalt make no other gods before me" (Ex. xx. 3); "Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor *the likeness* of any form that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation of them that hate me; and shewing mercy unto thousands, of them that love me and keep my commandments" (ver. 4-6); "Ye shall not make with me gods of silver, or gods of gold" (ver. 23)¹; "He that sacrificeth unto other gods shall be devoted"² (xxii. 19 [20]); 'make no mention of the name of other gods,' etc. (xxiii. 13); "Thou shalt not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do after their works; but thou shalt utterly overthrow them, and break in pieces their pillars. And ye shall serve the Lord your God" (xxiii. 24 f.); "Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. They shall not dwell in thy land, lest they make thee sin against me: for if thou serve their gods, it will surely be a snare unto thee" (ver. 32 f.). Those are among the terms of that first covenant.³ Nothing is here predicated as to the nature or power of those other gods: attention is concentrated on the translation into conduct of the requirements of monotheism. The difference between monotheism and monolatry looms large in modern textbooks; but as a question of real life it had no existence for the Hebrews of the Mosaic age. The time was not ripe for any mission-

¹ For the text, see BS, Oct. 1914, pp. 621 f., footnote.

² This appears to be the earliest form of the verse, which has suffered in transmission.

³ It seems unnecessary to quote further from the Pentateuchal legislation on this point.

any effort to other peoples. The practical task was to win a firm hold on *this* people for monotheistic practice.

Our information suggests that even this was quite beyond the religious powers of the bulk of the people. The episode of the golden calf illustrates this. One law is expressly enacted to strike at the worship of satyrs (Lev. xvii. 7); another makes the candid admission that sacrificial conduct was regulated by the principle "Every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes" (Deut. xii. 8). Amos v. 26 is too difficult a passage to be of much value as evidence; but Josh. xxiv. 23 speaks of "the strange gods which are among you," and Ezek. xx. is very emphatic as to the idolatry in the wilderness. Even the wonders of the Exodus and the wanderings, even Sinai, could not avail to stamp monotheism on the hearts of the common people.

The shaping of the conduct of this polytheistic, idolatrous nation was the immediate problem, not the formulation of belief and thought; yet no absolute hard-and-fast line could be drawn between these two tasks in any age. In every generation there are thoughtful minds, though they may be relatively few, and some provision for these was a necessity. There are questionings in the mind of every intelligent monotheist, at some period of his development, concerning the relations subsisting between the God of heaven to Whom belonged all the earth and other supernatural beings on the one hand, and the heathen nations on the other. We cannot say what answer Akhenaton made to them. "O sole God whose powers no other possesseth." "There is no other that knoweth thee, save thy son Ikhnaton." Did no other supernatural beings exist? And what of the other gods and their worshippers? We do not know exactly what the Pharaoh would have replied. The Pentateuch, however, provides answers. The God of Israel is not merely one baal (Deut. vi. 4). He is the only Deity (Deut. iv. 35, 39; xxxii. 39). He too is God and king over spirits of whatever nature just as fully as over flesh (Num. xvi. 22; xxvii. 16; Deut. ix. 26; *supra*, pp. 348 f.). And while there is none beside Him, He has assigned

objects of worship to the heathen (Deut. iv. 19; xxxii. 8 f. [LXX text cited *supra*]; cp. xxix. 25 [26]).

In these passages we have the only possible reconciliation between the idea of a single beneficent God and that of a special revelation to a particular people; but so far as the monotheistic idea is concerned they carry us no further than Exodus. In all alike we see One, All-powerful God. All alike recognize the existence of other supernatural beings, but Numbers tells us explicitly the relation between God and those beings, while Deuteronomy also explains the position of those nations to which God has not revealed Himself directly. Closely regarded, the doctrine of the Pentateuch is coherent and consistent. Monotheism, yes; but couched in a form that strives to regulate the conduct of the most ignorant and least reflective while presenting unobtrusively the deeper doctrine that was essential for thoughtful minds. And thus monotheism is consistently made the basis of special obligation on the part of the people. The religion of Moses was a religion of duties far more than of rights. "You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities." The formulation is by Amos (iii. 2), but the thought is that of the covenants. The Possessor of all the earth selects a kingdom of priests and a holy nation, and promises certain benefits; but in return He *imposes*, and the people accept, obligations both national and individual that touch human life at every point. One supreme God and a chosen people of revelation — chosen for duty and service — that is the doctrine. How different from the conception of Akhenaton!

From the outset it was obvious that many centuries of no common discipline would be necessary before these thoughts would really dominate the national soul, to the exclusion of polytheism and idolatry. To the exponents of the *a priori* method who are satisfied that Moses could not have been a monotheist, because, in the teeth of the historical evidence to the contrary, they have laid down the dogma that monotheism was not invented till many

centuries later, it seems equally impossible that the law-giver should have prophesied the Exile. Yet this attitude is wholly unscientific. Rationalism masquerading as science may seek to mutilate the evidence in order to force it into the Procrustean bed of some evolutionary doctrine. But true science does not start from *a priori* views or assert at the outset that the religion of Israel must have been a religion fundamentally resembling all other religions, nothing more or less. A science that is worthy of the name can only set out, unhampered by any prepossession of whatever character, to weigh the evidence and then decide impartially whether or not the religion of Israel is to be differentiated from other faiths, whether or not Moses was a monotheist, whether or not he prophesied the Exile. And when the evidence is fairly judged, the answer is not doubtful. The religion of Israel *is* different from all other religions, — different in its essential nature, in its history and effects, in its influence on the world. Moses *was* a monotheist. He *did* prophesy the Exile. Only a very poor psychologist could take Ezekiel for a knave or a dupe; and his testimony is emphatic: "Moreover I lifted up mine hand unto them in the wilderness, that I would scatter them among the nations, and disperse them through the countries; because they had not executed my judgments, but had rejected my statutes, and had profaned my sabbaths, and their eyes were after their fathers' idols" (Ezek. xx. 23 f., R. V.). The passage is instructive alike for its bearings upon the Pentateuchal question and because it shows how fully the best minds in Israel realized from first to last the enormous difficulty of making and keeping the people a nation of priests.