

JOURNAL OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE.

TWENTIETH YEAR — 1901 — PART II.

The Religion of Moses.¹

REV. J. P. PETERS, PH.D.

NEW YORK CITY.

THE traditional view of the religion of Israel, in which most of us were brought up, represented Moses as the giver of an ethical and ritual law, of a highly developed and complex nature, centuries in advance of his time — a law so high in its ethical character that, for the most part, it is applicable to-day, in spite of the wonderful advance in morals since Moses' time; a ritual law so complicated that, even after the nation turned into a church, in the period following the exile, there were still portions of that ritual which were impracticable of execution. In the sharpest contrast to the traditional view in which we were brought up stands what, for want of a better word, I may call the critical view of to-day, which denies to Moses the authorship, not merely of the law as a whole, but practically of any part of it, even of the Ten Commandments, and makes his principal religious function to have been to teach the Israelites the worship of Yahweh, who was thus made God of Israel, in the sense in which, for instance, Chemosh was god of Moab; which does not admit that Moses taught a monotheism, or even a henotheism.

Budde, in his *Religion of Israel to the Exile*, delivered as the "American Lectures on the History of Religions" two years ago, says: "It is, therefore, in the highest degree improbable that Yahweh demanded at Sinai the exclusive veneration of His own godhead. . . . Not that I would deny that Yahweh was the only God of the nation Israel. As long as the nation Israel has existed Yahweh has been its only God, and as long as it continues to exist He will so remain. But in antiquity there were not only national gods, but also clan, family, and household gods. Every social unit had its special

¹ President's Address at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, Dec. 27, 1901.

god, nor was any association formed between men which was not dedicated to a special deity and placed under his protection" (p. 59).

Now it is clear to Budde that the modern critical view is radically at fault in that it makes no provision, in its account of Moses' work, for the ethical impulse on which the whole wonderful development of the history of Israel depends, and which clearly must be ascribed to Moses. He endeavors to make good that defect, following, substantially, the lead of Stade of Giessen, by the following curious theory: Yahweh, according to him, was the god of the Kenites, the tribe of Moses' father-in-law. Under Moses' leading the Israelites adopted this god as their god, and "Israel's covenant with Yahweh and Yahweh's with Israel" was "an alliance of Israel with the nomad tribe of the Kenites at Sinai, which had as its self-evident condition the adoption of their religion, Yahweh worship. . . . This is the oldest known example of transition, or conversion, of a people to another religion" (pp. 24 and 25). "Israel needed a God mighty in war, and found Him here" (p. 28). "Israel's religion became ethical because it was a religion of choice and not nature, because it rested on a voluntary decision which established an ethical relation between the people and its God for all time" (p. 38.)

According to Budde, "all attempts to find the germ of the ethical development of the Yahweh religion in the material content of the conception of God as represented by Moses, have completely failed" (p. 35). The ethical germ does not lie in anything that Moses did or taught or revealed, but in the fact that, breaking with all traditions of the past, the people, under Moses' leadership, it is true, made a choice of the God of another people as their God. That God was no more ethical than any other God. It was the fact of a choice, establishing a voluntary relation with the deity, instead of the "natural relation" conceived of as existing among all other peoples, which constituted the ethical germ.

Now I venture to think that Professor Budde's presentation of this extraordinary theory is its own best refutation; and for its further discussion I would, therefore, refer to the first chapter of the volume of lectures referred to, in which this theory is presented. But Budde does make this clear: that it is absolutely necessary, if one is to study the history of the religion of Israel intelligently, to find a satisfactory ethical foundation on which to rest the wonderful structure of this religion; and that that ethical foundation must be sought, if not in the teaching of Moses, then in some acts or events connected with him. The error in the critical view, if I may use such a term, seems

to me to have been, in general, that, reacting from the impossible traditional picture, Moses has been reduced to the ranks, and made not only a creature of his time and age, but one who had no outlook beyond that of the commonest men and women among whom he lived and moved.

We all recognize the principle of evolution in the history of humanity as well as in the history of the physical universe. What occurs is a development from what has been. A new movement of thought is an outgrowth of previous movements, modified by new conditions and environment. The history of a nation is a history of the development or evolution of a people or peoples, following certain laws which are, in the main, recognized, however difficult it may be to formulate them in precise terms. The physical conditions under which people live — conditions of climate, of fertility or sterility of the soil, of mountainous or level country, of pasture or arable land, of large rivers or small streams, of seaboard or interior — are bound to produce their effects. The relations of a people to those about them, and the particular circumstances under which they come in contact with surrounding peoples, have their influence.

We recognize evolution in religion. No religion, ancient or modern, has been created *de novo*. Each religion has been, to a greater or less extent, evolved out of preëxisting ideas, and has been affected, in its development, by the historical, climatic, and other conditions of the people who adopted it.

So with the individual man. We look for the explanation of a man, his thoughts and his actions, to his antecedents and his environment; but while this is true, we also recognize that there is a part of the man which is peculiar to himself. He is *sui generis*. The man is not altogether explained either by heredity or environment. However much he is affected by these, there is a something in him peculiar to himself; and the greater the man the greater this individual and peculiar element in his character is likely to be. This being the case, we must recognize also in the history of human institutions the peculiar and individual factor due to the peculiar character of the man or men to whom they owe their origin. This is especially true in the case of systems of religious thought which are due to one man. They possess, like the man himself, an element not explicable either by environment or heredity. This must be recognized in dealing with such peculiar modern religious manifestations as Mormonism, or the Shaker religion of the Puget Sound Indians, or Christian Science. It is true also of the great ancient religions of Zoroaster, Gau-

tama, Confucius, Mohammed, etc. It must be equally recognized in dealing with the religion of Moses. But here it seems to me that there has been a tendency on the part of the critics to stand so straight that, as it were, they lean backward. The same methods should be applied in the study of the religion of Moses as are applied in the study of the religions of Zoroaster, Gautama, Confucius, Mohammed, etc. It seems to me, however, that, reacting against the false exception formerly made by Jewish and Christian religious teachers in dealing with the religion of Moses, the tendency of modern critical students has been to apply the doctrine of evolution and environment to an extent which eliminates the personal factor altogether. The personal equation of Moses must be sought in the same way in which we seek the personal equations of the other great religious founders, and by the same tests; and, as in their cases, so in his it must be recognized that it is because he was *sui generis*, towering above his race and time, that he was able to found, among a primitive and barbarous people, a religion capable of such wonderful development. We must recognize the influence of preëxisting hereditary religious ideas in the creation, and the modifying and conditioning effects of environment in the development of the religion of Israel; but in doing so we must not fail to recognize the immense importance of the personal factor of the founder of that religion — a man spiritually and mentally in advance of those about him.

Moses was the founder of the religion of Israel in very much the same sense that Jesus Christ was the founder of Christianity, and Mohammed of Mohammedanism, Zoroaster of Zoroastrianism, and Gautama Siddhartha, the Buddha, of Buddhism. He was a unique man, towering above his time, anticipating future ages, reaching out beyond his own. We do not ordinarily call the religion of Israel Mosaism; and yet it would perhaps be as correct to do so as it is to use the names Christianity, Mohammedanism, and the like. The reformers and thinkers of all succeeding ages in Israel refer their reforms and their interpretations of the nature and commands of God back to Moses for their justification; and the more advanced the development of the religion of Israel the greater was the inclination to hark back to Moses as the first source and the standard for comparison, precisely as in Christianity to-day men hark back to Jesus as the founder. Perhaps, however, the failure to designate in common parlance the religion of Israel by the title Mosaism may be justified and explained by the fact that our actual information with regard to his work and teaching is less than in the case of any of the other great

religion-founders mentioned. He lived in a more remote age and under conditions less civilized and less adapted to the exact transmission of tradition than any of the others.

Of all religion-founders Moses may probably best be compared with Jesus and Mohammed ; but the differences are almost as striking as are the resemblances. Jesus left no writings of any description, no code of law, no form of theology ; but he impressed himself upon a band of disciples, who later endeavored to record both his sayings and his life for the benefit of posterity. Moses had no such disciples, and the actual tradition of his life and teaching which has come down to us is from a much later period, and is strongly mixed with legendary and traditional elements ; it is connected also with a great mass of legislation which is clearly of a later growth, however much it may be founded upon his teachings. His work was to impress himself upon a people ; to make of a number of tribes a nation united by the bond of religion. In this national aspect of his work he resembles Mohammed. Like the latter, he established cohesion among independent tribes by means of a religious bond. Like him also he gave to his people, if not a theoretical, at least a practical, monotheism ; and like him he raised the religion of his compatriots to an ethical level, or introduced into it ethical elements previously wanting.

The story of Moses in the earliest form in which it has come down to us, in the Judæan and Israelite narratives (JE), contained in the books of Exodus and Numbers, dates from a time three centuries or thereabouts after his death. In its main features this story is as follows : Moses was the son of a Levite woman, born in the land of Goshen, where the Israelites were suffering under the oppression of the Egyptians. He was exposed by his mother in a pitch-smearred bulrush box on the Nile. He was found by the Pharaoh's daughter, and given by her the name Moses, "drawn out of the water." She gave him to his Israelite mother to be suckled, not knowing that she was his mother. So he grew up under the protection of the Egyptian princess, but himself conscious of his Israelite origin. When he was grown, he saw one day an Egyptian smiting a Hebrew, and, fired with indignation, he killed the Egyptian. Finding this in danger of becoming known, he fled from Egypt to Midian. There he attached himself to a priest of the country, named, according to one tradition, Reuel, or Hobab son of Reuel, and according to another, Jethro, and married one of his daughters. Later, at the call of Yahaweh, who declared himself to be the god of the Hebrews,

he returned to Egypt to demand at first permission for his Israelite brethren to go and serve their God in the wilderness, and afterward their release. Assisted by his brother Aaron, he was instrumental in bringing a number of plagues upon Egypt, ending with the destruction of the first-born of the Egyptians, through the power of Yahaweh. Then at last the Pharaoh consented to let the Israelites go out of Egypt; but after they had started he changed his mind and pursued them. By Yahaweh's order, Moses led the people to the shore of an arm of the Red Sea, and when the Egyptians pressed upon them from behind Yahaweh opened a way through the sea, and they escaped by night. The next day the Egyptians attempted to follow them, but were overwhelmed in the sea. For forty years Moses led the people about in the wilderness, undergoing various hardships. Their objective point was Canaan, but they were not strong enough to force their way into it from the south, although for a long time their headquarters were at Kadesh-Barnea, not far from the southern border of what was afterward the land of Judah. During this period Yahaweh gave his people a law through Moses. According to one tradition this law was given at Horeb, and according to the other at Sinai. This law consisted of two tables of stone, with five "Words" on each table, written by Yahaweh himself; but besides that there were judgments and statutes emanating from Moses by the command of God. The two tables with the Ten Words upon them were placed in a box or ark with a tent to cover it. This constituted the shrine or sanctuary of the Israelites, and was carried before them wherever they went. Finally, under the lead of Moses, the Israelites passed to the south of Edom, and then northward, east of Edom and Moab, until they came to an Amorite kingdom, which had intruded itself between Ammon and Moab. This they conquered, and took possession of the country east of the Jordan, from the Arnon northward, and there Moses died.

How much is historical in this tradition? There is no reason to doubt that the tribes of Israel, or at least a section of them, were oppressed by the Egyptians in Goshen, that border-land of Egypt inhabited by nomadic or semi-nomadic peoples. The oppression consisted largely, if not altogether, of conscription for enforced labor. Against this the Israelites rebelled, and fled into the wilderness. Their flight was connected with circumstances that impressed themselves as special providences, bringing them into a peculiar relation with the deity. Moses was their leader in the flight and the interpreter of God's action toward them. In the wilderness of Sinai and

Horeb the Israelites found kindred tribes, either some of the tribes known later as the twelve tribes of Israel, which had not participated in the sojourn in Egypt and the oppression there, or kindred peoples readily capable of amalgamation with the tribes of Israel, such as the Kenites and Kenizzites. Moses was connected with one of these tribes and with its priesthood. The dwelling-place of this tribe was in the Horeb-Sinai wilderness. So much is generally admitted.

Further, it is clear that Moses united the tribes of Israel by a religious bond, and that that bond connected them with the wilderness southward and southeastward of Judah. This is shown by one of the earliest fragments of Hebrew poetry which has come down to us, the Song of Deborah (Jud. 5). This poem, if not written by Deborah, was at least contemporary with her and with the events which it narrates, and probably originated not later than a generation or two after the time of Moses. The tribes of Israel are there represented as a united people, who are bound to stand by one another and to fight together the battles of Yahaweh.² Yahaweh is their leader, who has the right to claim the allegiance and the aid of all the tribes. It is he that fights. The tribes of Israel are his followers, bound to come to his aid, "to the aid of Yahaweh like heroes." How strong the bond of brotherhood among the Israelites was, and how binding was the obligation to come to the aid of Yahaweh, is shown by the curse invoked upon the inhabitants of Meroz, because they failed to assist their brethren in this war.³ But while the Song of Deborah thus testifies to a religious bond which united Israel under the leadership of its supreme king and ruler, Yahaweh, his dwelling-place is not in Palestine, but southward, at Horeb-Sinai, in the wilderness of Seir, Israel's former home. Thence he comes to fight for them (v.⁴).

The next question which we have to ask ourselves is: What was the nature of this bond by which the tribes of Israel were united to Yahaweh and to one another? It consisted in the recognition of

² The same view is presented in the Song of Miriam, Ex. 15, which McCurdy, in his *History, Prophecy, and the Monuments*, argues is in its original form contemporaneous with Moses.

³ It should be observed that all the twelve or thirteen tribes of Israel are not mentioned in this poem. Those that are mentioned are, first, the Josephites and Rachelites, Ephraim, Benjamin, and Machir, which is Manasseh, then Zebulun, Issachar, and Naphtali, the tribes especially concerned in this war. These are all united under Deborah and Barak. Further, we have reproaches addressed to Reuben, Gilead, that is Gad, Dan, and Asher, because they failed to come to the assistance of their brethren and to the aid of Yahaweh. Judah, Simeon, and Levi are omitted entirely.

one God as the God of all Israel, throughout all its tribes, clans, and families, to whom it owed a special allegiance, and to whom it stood in a peculiar relation, a blood-relationship which affected all. Now the primitive conception of a god depends upon his name; he cannot exist without a name, and, in a sense, the name makes the god. How true this was of Arabian heathenism appears plainly in the history of Islam, where Mohammed takes the name Allah and makes it the peculiar and special name of the god of Islam. Did Moses do the same thing?

That he did so to some extent certainly is clear, among other things, from the Song of Deborah, which has just been cited, where the God who claims the allegiance of the tribes of Israel is Yahaweh. But that Moses was the founder of "Yahwism," that the one thing which he taught was the name Yahaweh as the God of Israel, is clearly disproved by the evidence of Israelite proper names. It is a well-established fact that among Semitic peoples the proper names of the deities worshipped will appear in the names of the worshippers, especially of the priests of the shrines and the kings and governing aristocracy. Now an analysis of Hebrew proper names shows us this peculiar fact: that while in the earlier stages of the history of Israel we have names denoting relationship to God, that he is father, uncle, brother, etc., names denoting the government of God, that he is king, lord, master, owner, etc., and names containing the general designation of divinity, namely El, names compounded with Yahaweh are almost, if not altogether, lacking. Before the time of the kingdom, there are few, if any, such names well attested. With the establishment of the kingdom, names compounded with Yahaweh begin to appear in the reigning family and in the court circle. After the separation of the kingdom, such names, although continuing in Judah, are lacking in Israel or Samaria until the time of the Prophet Elijah and the family of Ahab. It is clear that in the earlier period the father, uncle, brother, master (*baal*), king (*melek*), lord (*adon*), referred to in proper names bearing those words, is the God of Israel.⁴ This God is frequently designated as El, or Elohim. Now El is the universal Semitic designation of divinity, a sort of an ideograph, which might be added to any name to make it the name of a god, or to declare that it was a divine name. Elohim is the plural of Eloah, a word recognized by the Hebrews as an ancient designation of the deity, although seldom actually found in the more ancient documents. Eloah is identical with the Arabic Allah, the universal

⁴ Cf. especially Gray, *Hebrew Proper Names*.

Arabic name for deity, which Mohammed made *the* name of God.⁵ Moses does not seem to have followed quite the same method as Mohammed. He recognized but one El, or Elohim, for all Israel, whether designated as father, brother, uncle, master, king, lord, or whatever other title might be used; but from the evidence of the Song of Deborah and other early documents it would appear that he taught further the name Yahaweh as the special name of the God who belonged alike to all Israelites, not, however, to the exclusion of these other names or titles.

But whence was the name Yahaweh⁶ derived? In regard to this tradition seems to be conflicting. Passages may be cited from the Judæan historical compilation which would seem to show that, ac-

⁵ The name Eloah, or Elohim, does not appear as a component in Hebrew proper names at any period; and the same is true of Allah in Arabic use. What is the cause of this is not altogether clear.

⁶ The etymology of Yahaweh is uncertain. The traditional etymology connects it (Ex. 3¹⁴) with the root 'to be,' or, rather, 'to become' (*hayah*). Others make it a causative of the same root. Others connect it with *hawah*, supposed to have meant originally in Hebrew, as in Arabic, 'to fall,' and interpret it as meaning 'the one who causes (rain or lightning) to fall,' etc. Cf. Brown-Driver-Briggs-Robinson, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 218. In composition, at the end of a word, the form *yah* or *iah* is used, and the same form occurs independently in poetical use, apparently rather late. In composition, at the beginning of a word, the contracted form Yo (Jo) is used. Yah appears to be an undeclined form of which the nominative is Yahu, which form occurs independently in the proper name written in English, 'Jehu.' These forms are commonly regarded as abbreviations of Yahaweh. On the other hand, Yahaweh may be a secondary or specialized form from an original Yah, with the fuller nominative form Yahu. It is uncertain whether the name occurs in the Assyrian-Babylonian inscriptions. The trend of opinion at present seems to be in favor of such occurrence; my own opinion is that it does not occur except perhaps in composition in a few names which may be attributed to Hebrew influence. The vocalization of the consonants *YHWH* (JHVH), which compose the sacred name, is not quite certain. Wherever this ineffable name occurred in the text of scriptures, the later Jews substituted in pronunciation *a(ē)donai*, 'lord.' When they wrote the text with vowels, therefore, they wrote with the consonants of one word the vowels of the other. Our *Jehovah* is a combination of the consonants of *Yahweh* with the vowels of *adonai*. Presumably, the true vowel of the first syllable was *a*, of the second a slurred sound, such as we give in English to any vowel in an unaccented middle syllable, and of the third, perhaps, an *e* (Italian sound). The name thus vocalized is variously written as *Jahveh*, *Yahweh*, *Yahwé*, etc. These transliterations, however, fail to give any idea of the trisyllabic character of the word. We have preferred the less common transliteration, *Yahaweh*, used by Robertson in his Gifford Lectures on the *Religion of Israel*, as more correctly representing the supposed pronunciation of the word.

ording to early tradition, Yahaweh⁷ was an ancient name of God known to the forefathers of Israel. Again, passages may be cited from the Israelite historical compilation which seem to show that, according to tradition, Yahaweh was a new God, first revealed to Israel by Moses.⁸ Tradition does, however, make this clear: that the original habitat of Yahaweh was Horeb-Sinai. Horeb and Sinai, as used in the Old Testament, are clearly not some particular and individual mountain well known to later times, but a general locality. The Song of Deborah uses, to describe the same location, "Seir and the land of Edom," which use is imitated at times in later literature, as, for instance, in Hab. 3³, where the same region is called "Teman and Mount Paran."⁹ The region indicated is the mountainous territory to the south or southeast of Palestine, the wilderness out of which Israel came into Palestine.¹⁰

According to the tradition of Moses above narrated, the first manifestation to him of Yahaweh as the God of Israel occurred in that same mountain wilderness region. According to this tradition also, Moses was connected by marriage with a priestly family, having its home in that country. Now gods were ascribed in heathen Arabia to certain localities; and in many cases various tribes made pilgrimages to a shrine outside of their own boundaries, the god of which belonged, not to the tribe in whose boundaries his home was, but rather to the locality. In such cases it seems clear that the worship of the god by the various tribes which made pilgrimages to the shrines is to be ascribed to previously existing conditions; that there was an earlier connection with the locality and with one another on the part of the tribes which worshipped there, or of some of their number, through their forefathers. If, in the case of such a sanctuary, the guardianship of the shrine was vested in a family not of the tribe occupying the land in which the shrine was situated, it is probable that the latter tribe had come to occupy land formerly in the possession of some of the tribes making pilgrimage to that shrine. It worshipped the god because he was the god of the land whom it

⁷ Cf. the use of Yahaweh in the Judæan document in Genesis.

⁸ Cf. Ex. 3¹⁴.

⁹ Cf. also Dt. 33² Ps. 68⁷ ff.

¹⁰ Horeb is, properly speaking, the mountainous territory at the southern extremity of the Edomite country, east of the 'Aqabah. Sinai is the mountainous peninsula west of the 'Aqabah. According to the Judæan tradition, which is followed by the later Priestly narrative, Sinai was the mountain of God. According to the Israelite tradition, which is followed by the Deuteronomist and Habakkuk, Horeb, or the southern mountain region of Edom, was the mountain of God. Cf. also 1 Kings 19.

found in possession; but he was not, primarily, its own god. Considering these facts, it is not necessary for us to assume, as Stade and Budde have done, that Israel consciously adopted the god of a foreign tribe, the Kenites. It was because Israel entered into the land of Yahaweh, his sacred mountain, Horeb-Sinai, that the god of the land became his god.

The tradition that Moses, Israel's leader, was connected by marriage or adoption with priests of that land, and, therefore, presumably of Yahaweh, seems altogether credible, for without such a connection he could scarcely have established the worship of Yahaweh as an effective bond of union among the tribes of Israel. He would have been himself an outsider to the worship of Yahaweh. But, further, some at least of the Israelites were closely connected with the tribes of the southern wilderness. In part, at least, Judah belonged to that region, and, probably, Simeon also. In that case, Yahaweh may have been their God. That this was the case is suggested by the difference between the Israelite and Judæan traditions. According to the former (Ex. 3¹⁴), the name Yahaweh was first revealed to Moses at Horeb. According to the latter,¹¹ the name Yahaweh was used by the patriarchs from time immemorial.¹² But whatever the connection of a part of the Hebrews with Yahaweh before the time of Moses, it is clear that it was through him that Yahaweh became the name of the god of Israel, and apparently because of Yahaweh's connection with the land of Horeb-Sinai, in which Israel was organized under his leadership.

The earliest Hebrew tradition ascribes to Moses a representation of the presence of the deity in the shape of an ark or box, by which the God of Israel might accompany his people wherever they went. When the Israelites entered Canaan, the ark of Yahaweh of Hosts was carried with them, and located in the tribe of Ephraim.¹³ Where this ark was, there was Yahaweh.¹⁴ There has been handed down an old ritual formula, connecting itself with the time when the ark was a movable, not a stationary, sanctuary: "Rise up, Yahaweh, and let

¹¹ Cf. the two documents of the Hexateuch known to critics as E and J, in Driver's *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, Addis' *The Documents of the Hexateuch*, etc.

¹² It may be noted, further, that it is in the tribe of Judah that names compounded with the divine name Yah (for Yahaweh) first become prominent. They do not appear among the middle and northern tribes, with the exception of Saul's family and court, until the time of Ahab and Elijah. This suggests an earlier connection of Judah with Yahaweh.

¹³ 1 Sam. 3¹ ff. 4⁴.

¹⁴ 1 Sam. 5⁶ 2 Sam. 6¹⁰⁻²⁰.

thine enemies be scattered, and let them that hate thee flee before thee"; and its counterpart: "Return, Yahaweh, unto the ten thousands of the thousands of Israel."¹⁵ Even after the ark became a part of a sanctuary, first at Shiloh, and, later, in David's time, at Jerusalem, it was still, at least on special occasions, carried out to battle, with the belief that with it went the presence of Yahaweh.¹⁶

It is clear that we have in the ark the shrine of a god who accompanies Israel in all his movements, and it is also clear that that God is Yahaweh. Furthermore, there is no question that the ark is to be traced back to the Mosaic period of Israel's history, and was brought with him out of the wilderness.

This idea of Yahaweh present in the ark and accompanying Israel from place to place, or going forth to battle with his armies, does not seem consistent with the localization of Yahaweh in Horeb-Sinai, and, apparently, did not originally belong to the religion of Yahaweh of Sinai. We have in the representation of the presence of Yahaweh by the ark and the representation of Yahaweh as dwelling at Horeb-Sinai two different conceptions, which have been united with one another.¹⁷

Through the ark the Israelites carried their God with them, that he might be ever present. Nevertheless, Horeb-Sinai continued to be, in a special sense, the residence or dwelling-place of Yahaweh. It was there that he first became known; there Israel acknowledged him as his God. From the ethical standpoint, the conception of Yahaweh accompanying Israel by means of the ark is an advance over the conception of Yahaweh as localized in Horeb-Sinai. The importance of this new conception in the religious development of Israel becomes more apparent when we consider the consequences of the contact of Israel with the civilization and the religion of Canaan. Without the presence of Yahaweh, Israel must inevitably have lost his religion. Had his God been connected irrevocably and inseparably with Horeb-Sinai, then Israel, settling in Canaan, must ultimately have abandoned him in favor of the gods of the land into which he entered. By means of the ark, Yahaweh accompanied his people whithersoever they went, the special deity of Israel, always in the midst of them.

¹⁵ Num. 10²⁹ f.

¹⁶ 1 Sam. 4⁴ ff. 2 Sam. 11¹¹.

¹⁷ Cf. Ex. 23²⁰ 32²⁴. It may have been the sense of this inconsistency which led to the development of a view which we find represented in the traditions of the ninth century, contained in E, that it was not Yahaweh himself who went with Israel through the wilderness into Canaan, but the angel of Yahaweh.

The holy tent, which we find mentioned in the ninth century writings, JE, belongs also to the externals established, or, at least, adopted, by Moses. It is represented as an ordinary tent, which Moses sets up outside of the camp as a tent of revelation, where Yahweh appears to him and grants him oracles.¹⁸ Joshua, Moses' successor, is mentioned as the guardian of this tent, which suggests that it had some content. The most natural content would seem to have been the ark; but it must be confessed that the relation of these two, one to another, is not clear.¹⁹

But whence was the ark derived? The shrines of the heathen Arabs, to whom we must in general look for an interpretation of the religious conditions of pre-Mosaic Israel, were local; they did not conceive of the god as moving with his people from place to place, but as localized in some given spot. A similar belief seems to have prevailed in Canaan, where the *ba'al* was thought to be attached to the land, a view which the Israelites themselves shared after their settlement in Canaan.²⁰ Moreover, although the Arabians revered stones as the representatives or abiding-places of the god, those stones could not be transported from place to place. It was the stone and the place together which constituted the shrine. The nearest approach to a transportation of the god that we find in heathen Arabia is the representation of his presence in battle by a sacred banner, or by a mare, or a maiden mounted on a mare. But this is very far removed from the conception of a god dwelling in the midst of his people in an ark or box, not only going forth to battle with them, but also travelling with them from one country to another. Apparently neither the Canaanites nor any of the surrounding peoples kindred to the Hebrews—Ammonites, Moabites, Edomites—had anything resembling the ark, or any custom resembling the Israelite custom of carrying the presence of god about in or by means of an ark. The nearest analogy to the ark that has been found is the use of a boat, in Babylonia and Egypt, to transport the gods from one shrine to another, or to take a god in solemn procession through or about his land.²¹ That this was not a common Semitic practice is clear from the fact that we find no similar use in Arabia, or among

¹⁸ Ex. 33⁷.

¹⁹ In the later Priest Code, the tent is an elaborate tabernacle, and it is clearly stated that its most sacred content was the ark of the Covenant, Ex. 25¹⁰ ff. 26²⁴.

²⁰ 1 Sam. 26¹⁹.

²¹ Jastrow, *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, pp. 653 ff.; Erman, *Aegypten*, p. 373 f.

the Syrians or Phoenicians. It seems, therefore, that we cannot, arguing from the Babylonian use of god-ships, suppose the ark to have been a part of the ancestral pre-Mosaic religion of the Hebrews, either as an original Semitic use, or as one derived from the Babylonians, in consequence of their earlier connection with the West Land; for in that case we should have found the same use among some of the Hebrew or Canaanite peoples outside of Israel. Hebrew tradition itself assigns the origin of the ark to Moses, and apparently with right. Was the ark, then, a modification of the Egyptian god-ship, or is it in any sense due to the influence of the Egyptian use of ships to convey the images of the gods from place to place? It seems to me probable that we should recognize here Egyptian influence, and that the Egyptian ship became among the Hebrews a box, very much as in the Hebrew flood story the Babylonian ship became a box.²²

The next question with which we have to deal is the contents of the ark. Clearly an ark has a purpose and an object only as the receptacle for something which it contains. An empty wooden chest cannot, like a block of wood, be a sanctuary. Since the ark was regarded as containing the divinity in itself, the stone contained therein must have been regarded as the "house of the divinity."²³ Such is the general verdict of scholars to-day; but, on the other hand, many, if not most, modern critical scholars, while accepting tradition up to the point of an ark containing a sacred stone or stones, discard the tradition that the contents were two written tables of stone. They admit the ark and the stone, but suppose the latter to have been a rude stone, perhaps meteoric, of the nature of a fetich. There is no documentary or traditional evidence for this supposition, nor even any incidental allusion which can be referred to in support of it. The main, if not the only, reason, for this view, is that the Decalogue seems too advanced to be ascribed to so early a period, and that the conception of an ethical code of laws as the representative of the presence of God, in place of an image or a fetich, is unique, and out of the line of development, at least in that age. Further than this, there is the general fact that rude stones, and es-

²² In support of this proposed connection with Egypt may be cited the supposed Egyptian derivation of the name of Moses, from the time of the LXX Greek translation onward. Cf. Dillmann on Ex. 6²¹. Some have further supposed the names Miriam, Aaron, and Phinchas, the grandson of Aaron, to be of Egyptian origin. Cf. on the last Dillmann on Ex. 6²⁵.

²³ Benzinger, *Hebräische Archäologie*, p. 369.

pecially meteoric stones, were throughout Arabia, Syria, and Palestine worshipped as representations of deity. On the other hand, there is no slightest allusion or reference in any writing which can in any way be made to suggest a consciousness that at any time the contents of the ark had been a rude, unlettered stone or stones, while from a very early period certainly contemporary writers state its contents to have been two inscribed stones.

The earliest writings which have come down to us, writings practically contemporary with David and Solomon, mention the ark as "the ark of the covenant of God," or "of Yahaweh." Similarly, in the earliest portions of the Pentateuch, JE, we find the titles "ark of the covenant," or "ark of the covenant of Yahaweh." In the seventh century, the "ark of the covenant of Yahaweh" is the name in common use.²⁴ The Book of Deuteronomy (chap. 10) states the contents of the ark to have been two tables of stone containing the Decalogue, placed there by Moses. A similar statement is made in the Book of Kings (1 K. 8^{9, 21}). It is evident that from the seventh century onward the contents of the ark were the Decalogue, and that this was then understood to be the covenant from which the ark took its name, "ark of the covenant of Yahaweh," as the passages referred to in JE and Samuel show. But a part of this title, *viz.* "ark of the covenant," is as old as the tenth century. Moreover, it seems clear that the writer of Deuteronomy derived his information as to the contents of the ark from the earlier writing JE, and that in the original form of the Judæan historical document of the ninth

²⁴ Jer. 3¹⁶. The use of the terms "ark of the covenant," "ark of the covenant of Yahaweh," "ark of the covenant of God," etc., in the earliest strata of Samuel and the Hexateuch, side by side with the terms "the ark," "ark of Yahaweh," "ark of God," is too frequent to admit of explanation by interpolation. In his *Exodus*, Bacon at times assumes that the words "of the covenant," etc., are a later addition; but this is not done systematically, and, even accepting his emended text, we still have numerous cases of this use. In fact, in both JE and the earliest document in Samuel, the addition "ark of the covenant" is too common to be explained on the ground of interpolation. Moreover, some of the terms used, such as "ark of the covenant," "ark of the covenant of God," "ark of the covenant of Yahaweh of Hosts," "ark of the covenant of the God of Israel," are not names which we find used by the later writers. In Deuteronomy the name "ark of the covenant of Yahaweh" becomes almost a *terminus technicus* for the ark. The same name is used once in Jeremiah. The Priest Code has its own peculiar designation, "ark of the testimony." The Chronicler uses various names taken from the earlier books, the "ark of God" and the "ark of the covenant of Yahaweh" being the most frequent, and adds one name of his own, the "holy ark."

century (Ex. 34) it was stated that the contents of the ark were two tables of stone containing the Decalogue.²⁵ Combining these historical statements, and the names of the ark found in the earliest documents, one may safely say that as early as the time of David the contents of the ark were two tables of stone, containing the Decalogue, and regarded as a covenant from or with Yahaweh. In other words, we can trace back to David's time the presence in the ark of two stones inscribed with the ten "words." That any change should have been made between the time of David and that of Moses in the contents of the ark, by the substitution of written tablets for a rude stone or fetich, is so improbable, in view of the unethical character of that period, that the possibility need not be considered. In fact, no one has ventured to attribute the invention of the Decalogue, and its substitution in the ark for a rude stone or fetich, to the time of the Judges. So far as those who hold to such a substitution have defined their position at all, they suppose the substitution to have been made, or at least the Decalogue to have been composed, in the early prophetic period; a theory altogether subjective, and directly contradicted by the objective evidence set forth above.

The Decalogue of the two tables may be restored with a fair degree of accuracy by a comparison of Ex. 20 and Deut. 5, as follows: —

- Table I. 1. Thou shalt have none other gods before me.
 2. Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image.
 3. Thou shalt not take the name of Yahaweh, thy God, in vain.
 4. Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy.
 5. Honor thy father and thy mother.

- Table II. 1. Thou shalt not murder.
 2. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
 3. Thou shalt not steal.
 4. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.²⁶
 5. Thou shalt not covet.²⁷

These Ten Words lie at the foundation, both in form and content, of all later legislation.²⁸

²⁵ Cf. Driver, *Deuteronomy*, 10¹⁻⁵.

²⁶ Possibly: "Thou shalt not oppress." Cf. this JOURNAL, June, 1886, pp. 140 ff.

²⁷ For the primitive Mosaic character of the Decalogue, and its original form, cf. Briggs, *The Higher Criticism of the Hexateuch*, and especially pp. 181 f.

²⁸ Outside of the Decalogue, the earliest code of Hebrew laws which has come down to us is the fragmentary code, in the 34th chapter of Exodus, from J, parallel to which we have, in the 21st to the 23d chapters of Exodus, a fuller code, from E. The Commandments, or Laws, in the 34th chapter of Exodus, are almost identical with those in the 23d chapter, vv.¹⁰ to ¹⁹, which constitute a

But it has been contended that to ascribe to Moses any such teaching as that contained in the Ten Commandments would be to leave nothing for the prophets.²⁹ It is, however, universally recognized that with Moses begins the ethical content of the religion of Israel, and that it is impossible to understand the later religious development without accounting in some way for the ethical element which was introduced into it at the time of Moses. Writers who have denied the Mosaic authorship of the Decalogue have, in point of fact, reduced Moses to a nonentity, and offered no explanation of the ethical impulse given by him ; or else found it, it may be, in the adoption by the Israelites of a foreign god, an altogether inadequate cause for the remarkable ethical development which resulted from the impulse then imparted. It is necessary, as already said, to rec-

decad or decalogue of feasts and offerings. This decad in Ex. 23 is part of a larger code, consisting of a number of decads, and before that code as a whole, as we now have it, is placed the Decalogue, as something still more fundamental. It seems to me probable that the decad in Ex. 34 was part of a larger code bearing a similar relation to the Decalogue. The concluding words in Ex. 34²⁷⁻²⁸, "and Yahaweh said to Moses: 'Write these words, for according to these words have I cut with thee a covenant, and with Israel.' And he was there with Yahaweh forty days and forty nights. Bread he ate not, and water he drank not. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, ten the words," on which has been based the statement that the Decalogue of J was the laws of Ex. 34¹⁷⁻²⁶, are accordingly to be referred, not to the immediately preceding decad, but to the whole code, of which this was but a part; and the 'ten words' there referred to are not the fragments of two or three pentads, which have been retained out of J, but the well-known Decalogue. That this is so is shown further by a comparison of Deut. 10, for it seems impossible to suppose that the writer of Deuteronomy, having JE, and probably also J and E before him, could have blundered in so fundamental a point. We have, then, in their present forms, the Book of the Covenant, Ex. 21-23, and the Deuteronomic code, both prefaced by the Decalogue, as though it were something recognized as fundamental; and apparently the same was true of the code of which we have fragments in Ex. 34. In further evidence that the Decalogue once preceded the code of laws of which we have a fragment in Ex. 34 may be cited, as it seems to me, the fact that we have the "Ten Words" in Ex. 20 in a Yahawistic setting, or with a Yahawistic preface: "I am Yahaweh thy God," etc. Moreover, the additions to the Words, as Carpenter and Battersby point out, have affinities with J, as well as with E and D. The actual Words themselves find certain parallels or resemblances in both Books of the Covenant (Ex. 21-23, Ex. 34), which seems to me to establish, as far as we can expect it to be established by such means, the dependence of both those codes on the Decalogue, or rather the preëxistence and the recognition of the latter (Carpenter and Battersby, *The Hexateuch*, Vol. II., p. 111).

²⁹ Cf. Budde, *Religion of Israel to the Exile*, p. 32.

ognize that Moses towered above his time and people, precisely as did Zoroaster, or Jesus, or Mohammed; and that we must ascribe to him a rôle of very great importance, and an ethical conception in advance of his surroundings.

But the Decalogue is not in itself without connection with previously existing ideas and practices; nor is it a step in advance so enormous as to be incredible. The Decalogue was a practical code of fundamental laws concerning the relations of Israel to its god, and of Israelites to one another. It contains, it is true, grand possibilities, and put side by side with the later prophetic teaching, and interpreted in connection with that teaching, it becomes a code of ethics and of conduct universal in its character; but that was not its primary sense.

The First Commandment, "Thou shalt have none other gods before me," was an assertion of the fact underlying the union of the tribes in one people, that Israel has one god, who has become his special god, supplanting the tribal and family deities. This was in fact the necessary condition of union. The Israelites did not attain to monotheism until a much later period, nor is the command in itself monotheistic. In fact, the words of this commandment imply a belief in the existence of other gods. That this commandment was effective from the outset, and that this one god, whose peculiar and personal name was Yahaweh, was the bond of union to Israel, is shown by the Song of Deborah, the story of Gideon, by a study of the proper names of Israelites, and, in fact, by the history of Israel in general from the beginning onward.

The Second Commandment presents a difficulty, inasmuch as from the outset it seems to be disregarded. In the time of the Judges we find images used in the worship of Yahaweh, such as the ephod which was made by Gideon out of the spoils of the Midianites (Jud. 8²⁴), or the "ephod" and "teraphim" set up by Micah in his private temple (17⁵). Similarly, David consulted Yahaweh by means of an ephod (1 Sam. 23⁶). In David's time, also, teraphim were in use, household deities, sometimes clearly of considerable size, and made after the human form (1 Sam. 19¹²). These teraphim continued to be used as late certainly as the middle of the eighth century, as we see from the reference to them in Hosea (3⁴), and from the story of Rachel's concealment of the teraphim, in the narrative of E (Gen. 31¹⁹), although possibly about that time they began to come under condemnation as foreign idolatry (cf. Gen. 35²⁻⁴, also from E). The worship of Yahaweh under the form of the golden

calf in Israel, which began, according to the historical narrative in Kings, under Jeroboam, in the tenth century, was the most conspicuous form, however, of the authorized national use of an image. This calf-image may be closely akin to the cherubim of the temple at Jerusalem; but the latter, even though they symbolized the presence of Yahaweh, were not, apparently, conspicuously presented to the eye as objects of worship. The cherubim were merely adjuncts to the ark, which latter was the special representation of Yahaweh in the Jerusalem temple. The calves, on the other hand, seem to have been openly displayed to the people as the representatives of Yahaweh, the objects of his indwelling, and hence they were *images* in a sense in which the cherubim, even granting that the latter may have been bull-shaped, were not. Neither Elijah and Elisha, nor yet Amos, condemned the calf, or rather small bull, images, although the latter so strenuously castigated the moral transgressions of Israel and its substitution of ritual for moral righteousness. Among the prophets, it is Hosea who first denounces the calf-worship and the worship of "graven images" (11² 8^{ff.}), about the middle of the eighth century. But the same prophet seems to consider the *mazzebah*, the ephod, and the teraphim necessary adjuncts of the worship of Yahaweh (cf. 3¹). Earlier than Hosea we have a condemnation of the calf-worship under the form of historical narrative, in the Israelite document E, and still earlier than this in J, the latter taking us back certainly to the ninth century. Toward the close of the eighth century, as we learn from the Book of Kings (2 Kings 18⁴), a brazen serpent was one of the objects of worship in the temple. Now it is worthy of note that the Israelite document E, which condemns the worship of the golden bull, did not condemn the worship of the brazen serpent, but, on the other hand, commends it as of Mosaic origin, and a means of miraculous healing (Num. 21^{4ff.}). Presumably Isaiah was in sympathy with the reform which abolished the brazen serpent, although neither that nor any idol or image in the temple is mentioned by him. One gathers, rather, from his prophecies, that the images and idols which he denounced were extraneous to the temple worship, and were connected with the worship of other gods or demons. He mentions "*asherim*" and "sun-images" (17⁸), he speaks of "graven images and molten images" (30²²), and says that "the land is full of idols" (2⁸), which he contrasts with the worship of Yahaweh. He also condemns the worship of oaks or terebinths (1²⁹); but, on the other hand, like Hosea, he regards the *mazzebah* as a necessary adjunct of the worship of Yahaweh (19¹⁹). There is

no strong polemic against idol-worship in his prophecies, as there is in those of Jeremiah or Deutero-Isaiah; and in his general idea of what constitutes an image he has not advanced to the position of the reformers of the seventh century. It is in the reign of Josiah, toward the close of the seventh century, that we first meet with the effective and comprehensive condemnation of images of every sort, including the *mazzebah*, in the books of Deuteronomy and Jeremiah, and in the action of the King, with the counsel of prophets and priests (2 Kings 23). The struggles between the iconoclasts and the iconodules was not, however, ended in a day; it went on during the exile, as is evidenced by Ezekiel and Deutero-Isaiah, and the victory of the iconoclasts was not secure until the post-exilic period.

What was the relation of the Second Commandment to that struggle? Was it an outgrowth of the struggle? That is the view represented by Wellhausen, Kuenen, Stade, Addis, and others. Bacon, in his *Exodus*, marks this commandment as *Rd.*, that is, 'an addition to E,' to which he ascribes all the other commandments but the Fifth and Tenth (which, according to him, are also *Rd.*), 'a harmonistic adjustment of JE, or a Deuteronomic expansion, later than 722 B.C.' This seems to be approximately the opinion of Carpenter and Battersby (*The Hexateuch*, Vol. II., p. 111), who, discussing the commandments as a whole, "conjecture that they took shape between the first collection of laws and narratives in J and E, and the later reproduction of ancient *torah* in D." The argument for this position is in part one from silence, in part one from the positive disregard of and disobedience to the commandment in practice. But supposing that we consider the Second Commandment as the product of the period between Isaiah and Jeremiah, what are we to do with the commandments in E (Ex. 20²³) and J (34¹⁷), which prohibit the making of gods of silver and gold, and of molten gods? They were a part of the law of God in Israel and Judah surely as early as the close of the ninth century in the latter case, and the first half of the eighth in the former. According to the theory of the above-mentioned scholars, the latter of these commandments, "Thou shalt make thee no molten gods," was included in the "Ten Words" of J. But it is precisely during the century following these "Ten Words," with their prohibition of "molten gods" or "gods of silver and gold," that the use of images was, as far as we can judge from the information at hand, most common, so that even the prophets themselves could not conceive of the worship of God without some sort of image.

As for the argument from silence, it certainly seems to me that the references of Hosea to our commandment, and indeed to the Decalogue as a whole, unless we emend him out of all recognition, are as clear as those of Jeremiah, who confessedly had the Decalogue before him in Deuteronomy as "the sole legislation of Horeb," God's word in a peculiar sense, and the foundation of the entire law of God. The second table is referred to in Hos. 4⁹ in the same phraseology as in Jer. 7⁹, as "killing, stealing, and committing adultery," or, rather, Hosea is more explicit in his reference than Jeremiah, since he mentions also "false swearing." Neither mentions coveting. No other prophets but these two make an explicit reference to the commands of the Decalogue, to however late a period one descends. Now it will scarcely be contended that one pentad of the Decalogue was in existence without the other. The general evidence of Hebrew laws of itself makes us demand two full pentads, and the existence of one pentad of the Decalogue is in so far an evidence of the other. But this negative evidence of Hosea's acquaintance with the first table finds positive support, not merely in his denunciation of the calf-worship, but also in his denunciation of "graven images" (11²). The First Commandment, or at least the idea which it expresses, lies at the basis of all the teaching of Hosea and the following prophets, but is nowhere quoted by any of them. The Fourth Commandment must have been known to Hosea, for it appears in both "Books of the Covenant" (Ex. 34²¹ and 23¹²), but it is not quoted nor referred to by him, while from the words of his successor, Isaiah (1¹⁸), one might well suppose that no such commandment was known in his time. Hosea certainly had the two "Books of the Covenant" behind him, with the larger mass of laws of which they were but a part, all put forth as of divine authority (8¹²). In that mass of laws, and included, under any understanding of their contents, among the "Ten Words," was a prohibition of images; nevertheless, that prohibition was not effective, and did not become so until the close of the seventh century. After that time, while the Decalogue was recognized as the word of God, and the teaching of historians, prophets, psalmists, and wisdom writers was in accord with its teachings, we observe a singular lack of direct citations from or references to it, and the laws of the Priest Code are quite as independent of it as the "Books of the Covenant" are claimed to be.

There is a feature of the iconoclasm of the reformation under Josiah which has been generally overlooked or underemphasized, but which is of some importance for the study of the history of the

Second Commandment. That reform went far beyond the letter of the commandment. The letter of the commandment was at that time antiquated. It specified merely "graven images"; the reform condemned the *mazzebah*. Isaiah, who had gone beyond graven images to condemn grove worship and *asherim*, had accepted the *mazzebah*; Jeremiah and the men of his time stretched the idea of the commandment to condemn the *mazzebah* also. Even the commentary on or expansion of this commandment in Deuteronomy, which, from its appearance also in Ex. 20, may be assumed to be at least somewhat older than the main book of Deuteronomy, does not cover the *mazzebah*.

This application of the commandment by a process of gradual evolution to things and conditions to which its words do not properly apply seems to me suggestive of the real history of the commandment, its interpretation, neglect, and application. That history, as I conceive it, is as follows: Moses gave the Israelites a god, Yahaweh, as their god, throughout all their tribes. The representation of this god to them was the ark. By this ark, and not by some "graven image," such as was used in Egypt, was God, Yahaweh, to be represented to them. Technically, the wording of the commandment does not prohibit the *mazzebah*, and the rude stones, trees, and the like, which constituted the representations of God in the primitive nomadic life. It was intended as a supplement to the First Commandment, to secure the service of Yahaweh as the God of Israel, in the sense already explained, by furnishing a symbol or representation of him. As the ark was thus the representation of Yahaweh, graven images would have represented some other deity, and, in fact, did represent the deities of Egypt, and were, hence, forbidden. With the entrance into Canaan and the adoption of Canaanite shrines, ritual, etc., came the inclination to adopt the Canaanite representations of deity. So long as these were adopted as representations of Yahaweh, and not of some other god, this did not so much matter, and did not seem to be a breach of the commandment. The situation is parallel with that which we find in the history of the Christian Church. In each case a practically imageless church, having among its first principles a condemnation of images, comes in contact with image-worshipping peoples. The Christians, while condemning those images as idols, when worshipped as the representations of other gods, did not regard them in the same light when adopted as representations of their own god or their saints. There seems to have been no consciousness on their part of a breach of the Second

Commandment in doing this; and they both adopted images from other religions and also made new ones of their own. The onus of the commandment, as they understood it, was against heathen idol-worship. Ultimately they developed a practical polytheism. Then came the struggle of the iconodules and iconoclasts, and, finally, the Reformation, with the triumph (in the northern and western lands of Christendom only, thus far) of the iconoclasts. The history of Israel was similar. It is with Elijah, the Wycliffe or Huss of Israel, that we meet the first mutterings of reform. His is the battle against the introduction of a foreign religion, against the substitution of Baal for Yahaweh. At first there is no denunciation of image-worship; that is not, or is not perceived to be, an issue in the struggle. Running parallel with this struggle for the national god is the writing of the story of Israel, the telling of its deeds and achievements in the past, which awakened or renewed a patriotic spirit in the people. In this story we begin to hear the call back to primitive things, and to the primitive religion of Israel, which is so strongly developed in Amos and Hosea. But before the time of those prophets this national religious movement had already led to a renaissance of Mosaism, the condemnation of strange gods in the narrative of E, referred to above, and the condemnation in both J and E of the golden calf. The golden calf was a later introduction, a substitute for the original ark, a "graven image" put in the place of the true and original representation of God given by Moses, namely, the ark. This was a period of close contact with other nations, and a time of free borrowing in things religious. The result was that a contest was joined between the nationalists and the foreignizers. The conflict between the opposing views grew constantly more defined, and in this conflict the Second Commandment gradually came to have a new and independent significance, as was the case in the history of the Christian Church, until at last things were condemned which at first had been accepted on the basis of tradition as necessary adjuncts of the service of Yahaweh. The Second Commandment itself was explained, and interpreted, and applied, until there grew up about it a definitely fixed commentary, which has come down to us in Ex. 20 and Deut. 5, attached to the original commandment. Finally, at the close of the seventh century B.C., the reformers extended the scope of the commandment even beyond the words of the commentary, to include the *mazzebah*, and every symbol of the presence of deity, except the ark itself.

The Third Commandment prohibits a false oath by the name of

Yahaweh, and is a practical assertion of the sanctity to the Israelite of the name of Yahaweh as the name of his God, to whom he stands in a peculiar relation. Not that false oaths by other gods or other names of God were allowed, but that there is a peculiar wickedness in the Israelite's making a false oath by the holy personal name of *his* God. To-day, in some Moslem lands, as I can testify from personal experience, a man who will swear falsely by Allah, or Mohammed, or even by Ali, will not do so by the shrine of the local saints ; and similar conditions are vouched for by travellers in Spain and other Christian countries. This does not mean that the Moslem of those regions does not believe in Allah, Mohammed, or Ali, or the Christian in God, Christ, or the Virgin, but that his special god, who takes direct cognizance of his affairs, and whom to offend is dangerous, is the saint of that shrine. The Third Commandment ascribes that function, so far as the Israelite is concerned, to Yahaweh ; and it is thus closely related in thought and purpose to the two preceding commandments. Indeed, these three are supplementary or complementary to one another.

The Fourth Commandment deals with an institution, an ancient sacred custom. It enjoins the keeping of the Sabbath as something already well known. The later additions to the Sabbath law, or the interpretations of its meaning or origin, which connect it with agricultural life, have in themselves nothing to do with the original Sabbath law. Such criticisms as that of Addis are quite beside the point, and depend on a misunderstanding of the origin and original purpose of the commandment. Addis says (*Documents of the Hexateuch*, Vol. I., p. 139) : "The Sabbath implies the settled life of agriculture. An agriculturist needs rest and can rest from tillage. A nomad's life is usually so idle that no day of rest is needed, while, on the other hand, such work as the nomad does, driving cattle, milking them, etc., cannot be remitted on one day recurring every week." The Sabbath, as Jastrow has pointed out,³⁰ was not originally a day of rest, and had nothing to do with agriculture. That is part of the later application and interpretation of this commandment, but is not contained in the original "Word." The Sabbath was, in fact, an antique observance, as was the division of the week into seven days, and, apparently, a primitive Semitic conception, although no trace of it among the Arabs has yet been discovered. This commandment simply recognizes its existence, and makes it an essential feature of the Hebrew sacred law.

³⁰ *American Journal of Theology*, April, 1898.

The Fifth Commandment asserts the reverence and obedience due to a parent, in true primitive fashion, placing this reverence almost on a plane with the duty towards God. It is not ancestor-worship, and, in fact, the Hebrews never developed ancestor-worship; but it is the exaltation of the parent to a position near to that of God.

The commandments of the second table, the second pentad of the Decalogue, are more distinctly ethical, in our sense of the word, than those of the first table, and it is particularly against this pentad that the protest has been raised that they were impossible at the time of Moses.³¹ The code is, in fact, capable of the broadest ethical interpretation, and under the Prophets it began to receive such an interpretation. But in its literal sense it constitutes no more than the foundation, the groundwork, of the ethical structure which was developed later. Now all concerns of life, in the Arabian conception, as in the early Hebrew, were governed by religion. What a man should eat, his relations to his wife, to his children, the relations of guest, of friendship, the common affairs of greeting and of etiquette, were included in the sphere of religion. Everything had its origin and its sanction from the god. This was true, also, of the ethical relation of members of a family or clan toward one another, — that they were not to murder, commit adultery, steal, bear false witness, or covet, within the limits of their own family or clan, because those things were contrary to the will of the god with whom they were all united in a bloody bond, and through whom they were united with one another in the same bond. This common clan or tribal law is made, in the second pentad of the Decalogue, the law of all Israelites toward one another, because all are become the servants or worshippers of the one God, under or in whom all are united in one tribe.

In view of the fact that we have traced an apparent connection between the ark of Moses and the godship of the Egyptians, and a probable acquaintance on Moses' part with at least some of the most striking features of Egyptian religious observance, it is worthy of notice that the commandments of the second pentad of the Decalogue may all be paralleled from the Egyptian sacred law. In the 125th chapter of the *Book of the Dead* we have the negative confession,³² in which the soul of the dead is made to vindicate himself before Osiris, averring, among other things, that he has not stolen, murdered, etc. From this negative confession we can restore the

³¹ Budde, *Religion of Israel to the Exile*, p. 33.

³² Cf. Wiedemann, *The Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*.

Egyptian sacred law, which, by the way, underwent a continual growth and development. This law was regarded as divine, and supposed to have been written by the divine scribe Thoth.⁸⁸ It may be, therefore, that Moses derived a suggestion not only of an ark, but also of a sacred law, from Egypt.

The remarkable feature of the Decalogue, and that which exalts it to a place apart, rendering it universal and permanent in its character, is that it selects precisely the fundamental and ethical relations, and lays the stress upon them. It is this which makes it essentially an ethical law, and it is this which gives to the religion of Israel that ethical character which distinguishes it at the outset from other religions, and renders it capable of the further development which it received. The Decalogue sets forth an ethical conception of the God of Israel as one to whom murder, adultery, theft, and the like, are especially offensive. This does not mean that the ethical relation is the only relation in which God is viewed, nor does it mean that at the outset God is viewed as one who condemns the slaughter or robbery of the enemies of Israel. Yahaweh is the God of Israel, and as such the enemy of the enemies of Israel; toward them he has no law. He must cast out and destroy the gods and their peoples before himself and his people Israel.

He is represented in the earlier writings as manifesting himself in the storm; lightning is his weapon, the thunder is his voice. This has been misinterpreted as meaning that he is a nature-god, a god of the storms. Again he is spoken of as a warrior, and hence some modern writers have interpreted him as a god of battles. In the Song of Deborah, we find him pictured as the giver of rain (Jud. 5⁵). He is not really a god of a special attribute, or the representation to the Israelites of natural phenomena. He is Yahaweh, the God of Israel, who fights for Israel, who manifests himself in natural phenomena; but he is not, therefore, limited to those. He covers the whole field alike.

In the early days of Islam, the characteristic feature of Allah seemed to be that he gave the victory to his followers. He seemed like a god of battle, because the special business of Islam was to fight; and the same is true at the outset of Israel and Israel's god. On his entrance into Canaan, Israel's special business was to fight for the acquisition of territory and possessions; and, in general, the business of any people in the transition from the barbarous stage is to fight battles. During that period Yahaweh was a god of war,

⁸⁸ Erman, *Aegypten u. ägyptisches Leben*, I., 204.

because war was the special function of his people. So, also, under primitive conditions, the most striking manifestation of divine power is the thunder-storm, and hence, particularly, the thunder-storm manifests Yahaweh. In the Deborah Song, already referred to, we see another form of manifestation, the useful and practical, becoming more pronounced as the people advance toward the settled state as cultivators of the soil.

To turn from the conception of God, and his relation to his people, to the rites by which a relation with God was established or maintained, we find circumcision taking the most prominent place. In the later period circumcision and the Sabbath become, in fact, the peculiar characteristics of the Jews. Circumcision was customary in early times not only among the Hebrews, but also among the Phœnicians and Canaanites, the Arabs and the Egyptians; in fact, all the people in the immediate neighborhood of the Hebrews, with the exception of the Philistines, practised this rite. It is not, apparently, an original Semitic practice, since we do not find it among the Babylonians and Assyrians. It may have been introduced into Phœnicia, Palestine, and Arabia, from Egypt. The Hebrews apparently inherited it from their forefathers in those regions. A curious reference in one of the oldest passages of the Pentateuch (Ex. 4²⁴⁻²⁶) connects Moses with circumcision, and suggests that in some manner or other circumcision assumed a new shape at his time. Possibly the change was the transfer in age, so that, instead of circumcising on the entrance into manhood, which seems to have been the original form of the rite, it was transferred to infancy, as we find it among the Israelites during the entire historical period. Circumcision was connected with the blood-covenant, as is shown by the passage referred to. It is clear, also, from 1 Sam. 18, that in the time of Saul and David it was a part of the holiness-regulation, that is, of the peculiar relation of the Israelite to his God, so that there was a special stigma attaching to peoples who did not practise this rite. The same view is set forth in the oldest history of the earlier days (Josh. 5^{2,3,8,9}), where circumcision is regarded as the condition of the covenant-relation of Israel with its God. But here the rite seems to be connected in time with the entrance into Canaan, as though first adopted as a national rite on the entrance into that country.

In general, so far as rites and ceremonies were concerned, it seems probable that Moses left them with little change as he found them. If we ask after the position which Moses claims for himself,

we find him represented as a priest rather than a warrior, the founder of a cult, connecting itself closely with a special symbol of divinity, the ark, with its contents, the Decalogue. Later, we find a priesthood hereditary in his family, the priests of the temple of Dan deriving their origin from him (Jud. 17, 18). On the other hand, it is clear that he did not regard himself as a priest in any exclusive sense, or found a priesthood hereditary only in his family, or even assume for himself or for his family the guardianship of the ark. That position was assigned by him, according to what sounds like a reliable tradition, to an Ephraimite, Joshua (Ex. 33¹¹), and the later priestly caste was derived by tradition not from Moses, but from his brother Aaron. Moses' own special function as priest seems to have been the interpretation of the oracles of God.