THE CONCEPTION OF THE COVENANT IN THE THOUGHT OF ISRAEL PRIOR TO THE EXILE

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in the

University of Edinburgh

Rev. D. Bruce Gordon, B.A., B.D.

Graduate of

Queen's University and Queen's Theological College,

Kingston, Ontario, Canada.

Submitted

April --- 1936

F O R E W O R D

In order to trace the development of the conception of the covenant in the thought of Israel attention must be paid primarily to the movement of ideas within the life of that people. This will necessitate a minimum of attention to detailed historical events. Wherever these do exercise a real influence on the Israelite thought they are dealt with. Thus consideration of the different phases of the covenant-idea falls naturally into the chronological divisions of the major periods of Israel's history. On the other hand the division of the Kingdom in the time of Rehoboam made no real difference to the development of this idea, and it is passed over.

The assured results of scholarship, or the views of the majority, are taken for granted in connection with questions of authorship and dating of the Biblical narratives. For example, it is now well established that the J document, arising in the Southern Kingdom, with the E document, arising in the Northern Kingdom, likely some years later, were combined to form JE, and centuries afterward were combined with P, a post-Exilic document, to give us the Pentateuch much as we now have it. In the same way Deuteronomy is spoken of as appearing

---

in the year 621 B.C., but it is remembered that much in connection with the writing and dating of this code of laws is as yet unsettled. To consider such questions in a manner worthy of their importance for Old Testament study in general would be to enlarge the thesis to an unwieldy length and so defeat its purpose.

With these considerations in mind the Biblical sources have been followed in so far as these reveal the development of the conception of the covenant. This question, as A.B.Davidson states, "runs up into what is the main question of Old Testament religious history, viz., To what date is the conception of Yahweh as an absolutely ethical Being to be assigned?"[1] One purpose of the thesis is to cover this point. Beginning with the common Semitic inheritance, it goes on to deal with the contribution of Moses, how this was preserved and how new elements were added during the following centuries, until, with the prophets of both the Northern and Southern Kingdoms, there came a broadening and deepening of the conceptions of the past. The span of history examined is of considerable length, at least six hundred years, but from beginning to end there is constant development. Each period within that time arises out of the one preceding. Moses is indebted to the past, the pre- prophetic age depends

---

1. "Covenant," HDB, i., p.512.a.

on the work of Moses, while the prophetic religion would have been impossible without the pre-prophetic age. To the people of the Exile there was given a rich inheritance of high ideals and a lofty conception of God. A positive presentation of this inheritance as it is expressed in the conception of the covenant forms the subject of this thesis.

A B B R E V I A T I O N S

cf. -- refer to.

Common contractions used for titles of the books the Bible, such as, Gen.- Genesis; Deut.- Deuteronomy; Ki.- Kings; Am.- Amos; etc.

Cornill,"Intro." -- C.H.Cornill, "Introduction to the Canonical Books of the Old Testament," 1907.

cp. -- compare with.

Davidson,"Theol." -- A.B.Davidson, "The Theology of the Old Testament," 1904.

Driver,"Intro." -- S.R.Driver, "An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament," Eighth Edition, 1909.

E -- Elohist.

e.g. -- for example.

etc. -- et cetera.

f. -- and following verses, or pages.

Harper,"Amos and Hosea," -- W.R.Harper, "A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Amos and Hosea," 1905.

HDB -- J.Hastings, "A Dictionary of the Bible," 1908.

HERE -- J.Hastings, "Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics."

ibid. -- the same.

J -- Jahwist.

Kautzsch,"Rel." -- E.Kautzsch, "Religion of Israel," HDB, Vol.v.

op. cit. -- work already quoted.

P -- Priest's Code.

p. -- page.

pp. -- pages.

vs. -- verse.

vss. -- verses.

Z.A.T.W. -- Zeitschrift fur die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

CONCLUSION

APPENDIX

I N T R O D U C T I O N

From Genesis to Revelation our Bible is the story, or the history, of God's reaching out toward man and of man's response to this approach. The two main divisions in this story are shown by the Old Testament and the New Testament. In the former we have the earlier period of this gradual self-manifestation of God to man in accordance with human capacity and needs. Then in the New Testament we have the final and all-sufficient revelation of God in the person of Jesus Christ, wherein God Himself comes into the life of man and through which man obtained a new and a richer conception of God.

Our present task lies within that earlier time shown in the Old Testament. Here we are given what we might call a 'bird's-eye' view of the history of Israel. This is, however, presented from one particular and definite standpoint, namely its religious aspect. Every author or spokesman regards the Hebrew State as a religious community. All that happens to it from the very earliest times has religious significance, whether it be the

---

deliverance from Egypt or the experiences in the wilderness, the occupation of Canaan or the Exile from it. Each event expresses some phase of the relation existing between the people of Israel and Yahweh,[1] their God.

Yet the Israelites had no abstract theology or formal credal statements.[2] Their relationship to Yahweh was not conceived in such manner. Although essentially religious the people were not theologians. The conception of their relationship was part of their consciousness as a people, and it was expressed in a practical form which could easily and naturally manifest itself in their national institutions. This form was the idea of having covenant relations with Yahweh. That was the fundamental religious idea of Israel, directing all their life and thought. Their doctrine of God, their view of sin, and their conception of redemption arose from, or were influenced by, this

---

1. "Yahweh" will be used throughout this thesis as the spelling of the name of God; cf., e.g., S.R.Driver,"The Book of Genesis," p.407.
2. Deut.6:4 is the closest to anything of this kind. (All Biblical references are to the Massoretic Text.)

covenant idea. As A.B.Davidson says,

> "The idea of the covenant is, so to speak, the frame within which the development goes on; this development being in great measure a truer understanding of what ideas lie in the two related elements, Jehovah on the one side and the people on the other, and in the nature of the relation. This idea of a covenant was not a conception struck out by the religious mind and applied only to things of religion; it was a conception transferred from ordinary life into the religious sphere."[1]

The purpose of this thesis is to examine this covenant idea which we find in the life and thought of the people of Israel. Noting the meaning and the use of the covenant in those days, we will seek to arrive at some conclusion regarding the origin of this conception in Israelite religion. The conception grew with the nation itself, continually enlarging in influence, and in richness of content. It was, we might say, the mainspring which constituted the driving power of the great men and prophets of Israel, enabling them to give concrete expression to their thought and belief. We must trace the development of this idea, showing its guiding influence in the practical life and in the religion of the people.

This influence reached its flower during

---

1. Davidson,"Theol." p.239.

those years which led up to the Babylonian Exile in 586 B.C. By this time the covenant idea was not only deeply rooted in their religion but had borne its richest fruit. During the Exile and following it the process of ripening went on, but the great germinal period had been left behind. Thus our study will be confined to that age which precedes the Exile.

After examining the formative years of Israel's national life and those of the early monarchy, we come to that time frequently spoken of as the period of 'written' prophecy. In the latter, attention will be directed mainly to the contributions of the prophets Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Jeremiah. Many other great men were contemporaneous with them, yet those mentioned stand out as the great pioneers of the religious thought of their day. Moreover, modern scholarship is more nearly agreed regarding their message and the facts of their lives than is the case with most others.

Included in this age is the work of the Deuteronomic School. Without going into the large question of the authorship of the Book of Deuteronomy, and its exact dating,[1] we will regard it as

---

1. Cf., e.g., Driver,"Intro." pp.82f.

appearing in the life of the nation sometime prior to the Exile. The great majority of scholars will concur in this statement, all except a small School represented by R.H.Kennett and Hölscher. The view of this School is that Deuteronomy could not form the basis for the reform under King Josiah and was thus written much later, at least after the Exile had become an accomplished fact.[1] Others, such as A.C.Welch and Oestreicher, regard Deuteronomy as being much earlier than the formerly accepted date in the time of King Josiah. It will, however, be sufficient for our present purpose to accept the view of the majority, including the latter School, and place the appearance of Deuteronomy before the Exile.

The meaning of the word בְּרִית, rendered 'covenant' from the Latin 'convenire,' is now difficult to establish, owing to the lack of an English word which adequately interprets the term as it was originally used. The German 'Bund' is in the same position as the English 'covenant.' ברית seems to come from a root of ברה through the feminine ending "t" being used. But the natural root, ברה, meaning

---

1. Cf. R.H.Kennett,"Old Testament Essays," pp.82 and 220.

'to cut,' nowhere occurs in Hebrew. Its connection with the Arabic 'Barā', to cut, was long held to be the derivation of the word, partly because, in the forming of a covenant, an act of cutting frequently took place; either an animal being cut in two and the parties to the covenant passing between the pieces, or the parties cutting their flesh to allow their blood to mingle. Doubtless the Hebrew phrase כָּרַת בְּרִית, literally 'to cut a covenant'[1], arose from this element in the covenant-making ritual. Here ברית does not itself become the object, that which is cut apart or cut off. כרת ברית may be understood as a shortened expression in which the direct accusative is suppressed, and the meaning of the word will depend on the context in which it is found.[2] The formal "cutting ברית" is where something is cut, or divided, with the result that a covenant relationship is established as in the phrase כֹּרְתֵי בְרִיתִי עָלַי־זָבַח ("that cut a covenant with me by sacrifice")[3], where the supposition is that the direct object is an animal which is severed. Thus the rite sprang from the ברית and came to be an expression of it, although the idea of a covenant and of covenanting itself would be much earlier than

---

1. E.g., Gen.15:18; Ex.34:10; Jer.34:8.
2. Cf., e.g., G.Kittel,"Theologisches Wörterbuch Zum Neuen Testament," article on "διαθήκη", p.107f.
3. Ps.50:5.

any such phrase. The rite would, however, serve to strengthen the bond of relationship. Other phrases are also found, such as בְּרִית with עָבַר (enter, also violate, Dt.29:11), נָתַן (set or place, Gen.17:2), שׂוּם (make or render, 2Sam.23:5), עָמַד (persevere or keep, Ezek.17:14), and הֵקִים (קוּם, erect, Gen.6:18). These further emphasize that the covenant is, fundamentally, the creating of a certain close relationship between two parties.

A further suggestion is that בְּרִית may be derived from בָּרָה, meaning 'to eat'. Then the phrase כָּרַת בְּרִית would express both cutting and eating, two of the most common elements in covenant-making. Possibly בָּרָה, meaning 'eating', has a different root with the same sound which reflects the meaning underlying בְּרִית.

There seems to be more, however, in the suggestion of a connection with the Assyrian birtu, 'a fetter', and berîtu, 'a fettering'. There is the question, then, as to whether the corresponding verb, baru, means 'to bind' or 'to enclose'. Perhaps the closest we can come to expressing the various usages of בְּרִית is the word 'bond', or 'obligation'. This at least expresses what we find involved in the covenants with which history has presented us. It is

---

always a bilateral agreement of some kind. This may be in the form of a compact between the two parties, either individuals or tribes or between an individual and a group, entered into for the purpose of friendship, kinship, peace, or mutual help in some matter of common interest. Thus it is a new and valid relationship, and is formed for the benefit of at least one of the parties.

The meaning and significance of ברית is best seen by examining the ceremonies which are found accompanying it. A standard for general division may be found in the main feature marking these ceremonies. This may be the exchange of something belonging to the covenant parties, the eating of a common meal, or the rite of passing between the pieces of a severed animal. Two or more of these may feature the making of any one covenant.

The more primitive type of covenant was formed usually by an exchange of some sort between the two parties concerned. This exchange might be of food, names, garments, weapons, etc. In the covenant of friendship made between David and Jonathan the latter gave his garments and weapons to the former.[1] Whether or not David gave anything to

---

1. 1Sam.18:1f.

Jonathan we do not know. At that time he would scarcely possess any weapons, but the idea underlying an exchange remains. This idea is that whatever has been in intimate contact with a person becomes imbued with his personality. Thus to offer something to another was to offer something of oneself, the acceptance of which would create a community of life between them. David would henceforth carry about with him something of Jonathan's personality, their souls being united to form one common life. Obligations always rested on both parties, usually expressed verbally in oaths and in curses pronounced for unfaithfulness. In this case it was the obligation of intimate friendship.

Especially significant is the widespread method of covenant-making characterized by a common meal. This is known as the "Covenant of Salt", due to the invariable use of salt as an accompaniment to every meal. It also has the idea of exchange within it. The food that is partaken of in common establishes a bond of good-will, sometimes of actual kinship, between the two parties. It is an emphasizing of that bond of fellowship which ordinarily accompanies eating and drinking together in all parts of the world, even as to-day. The meal is the daily

---

nourishment of the community. This common strengthening creates a common life and 'strength of soul' among all those who partake. In the daily eating together of a tribe, a community of relatives, the psychic community already existing is confirmed and strengthened. For an outsider, then, to eat with the tribe or a member of it, is for him to share in this community of the tribal life. He becomes, for the time being, "one of the family."[1] Should an enemy eat from the table of an Arab this bond would be established and its obligations rigidly observed. Similarly a covenant of peace between two tribes was ordinarily confirmed by a feast, accompanied by an assurance of maintaining peaceful relations.[2] In the Old Testament covenant between Laban and Jacob there was a meal of some kind, eaten on the heap of stones, or beside the pillar, which had been erected.[3] This was the final link in establishing the covenant relationship.

Many covenants were accompanied by drinking only. This might be blood or a substitute--wine, or

---

1. Cf. E.Crawley,"The Mystic Rose," p.240--quotes Featherman,"Social History of the Race of Mankind," v., p.371; also J.A.MacCulloch,"Covenant," HERE, iv., p.206 and J.Pederson,"Israel," p.304.
2. Cf. J.G.Frazer,"Folk-lore in the Old Testament," i., p.399f.
3. Gen.31:46; and cf. Josh.9:14f.

a mixture of some sort, such as blood, water and filings from weapons.[1] In the use of blood, or a substitute symbolical of blood, there is the thought of creating a common life, as with eating. Blood was regarded as the seat of life and was thus a natural element to use in creating a close relationship. But further, a retributive element was present in that each covenanting party henceforth carried with him something of the other which acted as a sort of guardian to punish any breaking of the covenant responsibilities. With the mixture mentioned above the retributive element was stronger, the weapon filings carrying the significance of injury or death to a breaker of the covenant. The curses and self-imprecations regularly accompanying the drinking also indicated this. Such a rite is found especially in the admitting of a stranger into a clan, or for friendship between two people or tribes. In the latter case the chieftains, as representatives of the psychic community of their tribes, would mingle their blood.

Blood-covenants, although they illustrate one particular type of covenant-making, are really in a class by themselves. Their consideration would lead

---

1. Rev. F.Mason,"On Dwellings,etc.,of the Karens," p.160, speaks of the Karens of Burmas using this "peace-making water" in a covenant with an enemy: quoted by J.G.Frazer, op. cit., i., p.406.

one into far fields, such as the purpose and meaning of sacrifice. Furthermore, connected with the blood-covenant is the idea of identity of person or kinship produced between the covenanters. It is probable, however, that the idea of producing this relationship artificially is not primitive,[1] and covenants in general frequently imply no more than the bond of faithfulness to the object of the covenant. Thus the question of the blood-covenant will be omitted from our special consideration, especially as it is not prominent in the Old Testament. There are, chiefly, some of its rites which are survivals or adoptions from other peoples, and the rite of circumcision, which may be questioned as being a 'bona fide' example of the blood-covenant.

Another form of the covenant is found when a victim is cut in two and the parties concerned pass between the pieces. Such a ceremony is found in Genesis, chapter 15, verses 9 to 21, where Abraham and Yahweh enter into a covenant, Yahweh fulfilling His part of the ceremony as would any human. The rite has been explained as a symbolic form of imprecation, implying that those who swore the covenant oath to each other prayed that they might be treated similarly

---

1. Cf. J.A.MacCulloch,"Covenant," HERE, iv., p.206f.

if they proved unfaithful to their vow.[1] But this neglects the characteristic feature of passing between the pieces.

E.Crawley refers to the "split token," or the dividing of an object into two parts and each of the contracting parties being given a half.[2] The parties are, in this way, part of a whole and closely united. The idea here is chiefly the possession of something belonging to the other, as in the case of an exchange, and consequently an actual physical bond is established. This again does not explain the significance of passing between the pieces of the severed victim.

W.R.Smith has offered a 'sacramental', or 'purificatory', interpretation of the rite. He states that "the parties stood between the pieces as a symbol that they were taken within the mystical life of the victim."[3] The persons who passed between the pieces were thought to be thereby united with the animal, and with each other, by a common blood. Thus the rite would be a variation of the blood-covenant, the blood of the animal being substituted for human blood. The

---

1. Cf. E.Westermarck,"The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas," ii., p.208f.
2. "The Mystic Rose," p.238.
3. "Religion of the Semites," 3rd. edition, p.481.

element of communion is strengthened by the fact that the victim severed was always an animal, or animals, used in sacrifice.

J.G.Frazer has discussed this question at some length, quoting many examples of similar covenants, both Semitic and non-Semitic.[1] He finds a strong argument for the retributive element in the ceremony but also admits the force of W.R.Smith's point of view. Thus he concludes, speaking particularly of Abraham's covenant,

> "The rite is composed of two distinct but correlated elements, namely, first, the cutting of the victim in two, and second, the passing of the covenanters between the pieces. Of these two elements the first is to be explained by the retributive, and the second by the sacramental theory. The two theories are complementary to each other, and together furnish a complete explanation of the rite.[2]

The same could be said of all covenants. There is the union of interests, or of life, in the solemn ritual acts, and the rite becomes a sacramental one. Where blood is used, by drinking, laving or sprinkling it on the participants, this element is emphasized. Then in the covenant curse (אָלָה),[3] there is the retributive element associated in the above case with the act of cutting

---

1. "Folk-lore in the Old Testament," i., pp.392-425.
2. Op. cit., p.425.
3. E.g., Gen.26:28.

the victim in two. This may simply be implied as the result of the new relationship formed, as was the case apparently in the covenant between David and Jonathan; or, more usually, it is definitely stated as in the covenant of Isaac with Abimelech, Ahuzzath and Phichol.[1] The solemnity of the אמנה is increased when a "witness" is called to the covenant. If a covenant were made over the grave of a saint a supernatural element was introduced. The spirit of the saint was regarded as the keeper of the covenant who would act as guardian of the compact. There were gods who were believed to safe guard treaties and covenants,[2] so, where such existed, these would regularly be appealed to in the making of covenants. In the Old Testament Yahweh is frequently called upon to witness the compact, as when Jacob and Laban made their covenant. It was concluded with words that were typical:

> "This heap is a witness between me and thee this day...Yahweh watch between me and thee when we are absent one from another. If thou shalt afflict my daughters, or if thou shalt take other wives beside my daughters, no man is with us; see, God is witness betwixt me and thee."[3]

The evidence goes to show, however, that a covenant

---

1. Gen.26:26f.
2. Cf. W.R.Smith,"The Religion of the Semites," p.692 -- "Notes to 3rd. Edition," by S.A.Cook.
3. Gen.31:48-50.

witness was not essential in the establishing of a covenant relationship.

From the foregoing we can now distinguish the main constituents of any covenant. These are three in number, the oath (שְׁבוּעָה), the curse (אָלָה), and the ceremony accompanying these. In the Old Testament we find שְׁבוּעָה and אָלָה both used to mean either a simple oath[1] or a covenant oath.[2] In Nehemiah, chapter 10, verse 30, both terms are used in reference to the same covenant. In earlier times, however, it is likely that each term was used in its distinct sense and, as time went on, the ceremonies were shortened so that שְׁבוּעָה and אָלָה came to be used generally in reference to a covenant.[3] This would indicate that the oath, the positive part stating the purpose of the covenant and the conditions on which the future relationship was to exist, and the curse, invoking punishment on themselves in case of failure to keep the oath, was the central and all-important part of the covenant.

Yet a covenant is more than just a simple oath.[4] In the latter merely words were exchanged while

---

1. 1Sam.30:15; 1Ki.8:31. 2. 2Sam.21:7; Gen.26:28.
3. Cf. A.B.Davidson,"Covenant," HDB, i., p.510; also R.Kraetzschmar,"Die Bundesvorstellung im Alten Testament," p.15.
4. Compare 1Sam.30:15 with Gen.21:22.

in the covenant the words were part of a cultus act. The ceremony in which the oath and curse were embedded raised the whole to a higher level, and gave the oath a new sanctity. Thus, being a holier act, the agreement became more binding for the participants. As Kraetzschmar expresses it,

> "Erhöhte Furchtbarkeit erhielt die Ala und somit der ganze Bund dadurch, dass sich mit demselben eine feierliche, unter Vergiessung von Blut vollzogene Ceremonie verband."[1]

It was the ritual which made the formal covenant a solemn act, and it brought an element of permanence to the obligations.

Thus the covenant relationship gave each party to it certain rights. Even though the one was superior in strength, as in the case of a victor entering into a covenant of peace with the vanquished, there would be responsibilities on both sides which the other party would have a right to expect would be kept. In this way the term ברית came, eventually, to have the significance of a law, or code of laws.

From this survey the basic significance of ברית may be grasped. The term expresses a vital union established and continuing between two parties. This relationship goes deeper than an agreement or a compact. It involves the 'life force' of the/indiv-

---

1. Op. cit., p.15f.

individuals or those groups immediately concerned; their attitudes, interests and wills are brought into a harmony in accordance with the purpose for which the ברית is established. We may, therefore, define the term more fully as a 'spiritual bond' inaugurated between two parties through a ritual act or a ceremony, with accompanying oaths, to give outward expression and validity to the newly formed relationship. This, at least, we are justified in saying on the basis of the evidence which etymology and the accompanying ceremonies have to offer.

CHAPTER 1

THE USE OF COVENANTS IN SECULAR LIFE

In the Semitic world generally, sufficient examples of covenant-making are known to show that the covenant-idea existed in the social life of early times, and to reveal something of the significance of that idea.

Perhaps the most familiar, and at the same time the simplest in form, is the Covenant of Salt. Salt preserves and purifies food and is essential to both human and animal life. This fact would be especially important among Eastern nations with their hot climate, where salt was often regarded as a symbol of life.[1] Thus anyone who partook of another's salt automatically stood in a different relation to that person than formerly: they had together eaten of that which sustains life, creating between them the bond of psychic community. The passing traveller was always welcomed as an honoured guest within the tent of the Arab; nor would a traveller come to a tent without stopping and eating the proffered food. Even should that one happen to be a personal enemy, if he touched the cord of the tent or partook of food, he was treated by his host and by all the clan as a brother whose life and property would be respected the same as would

---

1. A.S.Peake,"A Commentary on the Bible," p.222.a.

those of any other member of the clan or tribe.[1] The relationship thus established might be temporary, confined to the time during which the food eaten by the guest remained in his body;[2] but it was a close relationship, something belonging to the host having become, for the time at least, a part of the guest. There must also have been a permanent element to it because of the symbolism of salt. At any rate, the Arab regarded hospitality as an imperative duty, and it was a matter of pride and honour to be generous in the exercise of it. Neglect to offer hospitality, or the breaking of the bond when once formed, would bring disgrace upon the tribe and was thought to insure severe reverses or injury in the near future, both to the individual who had transgressed, and to his tribe. The prevalence of this custom among primitive tribes and various peoples, with the fact that its history reaches far back into the dimness of antiquity, seem to indicate that the Covenant of Salt was one of the earliest, if not the earliest, forms of covenant-making, and was the pattern from which all later covenants took their shape.[3]

---

1. Cf. W.R.Smith,"The Religion of the Semites," p.315; also F.B.Jevons,"Introduction to the History of Religion," p.99.
2. Cf. A.Lods,"Israel from its Beginnings to the Middle of the Eighth Century," p.202.
3. Apart from any consideration of the Blood-covenant, which, linked with kindred and sacrifice, would also be early.

Differing somewhat in significance was the common meal frequently appearing in connection with the forming of a covenant where the eating together was, alone or in conjunction with other rites, an outward confirmation and expression of a covenant already inaugurated, not itself creating the covenant, as above. This concluding meal was common in every type of covenanting, such as making an alliance or a peace treaty, the accession of a king, or establishing friendship.[1] They would be the more important occasions, when every care was being taken to insure a solemn binding, all the necessary formalities being observed. Further, it is the party who is superior in strength or position who provides the meal, he being the one who would give strength of soul to the other. The partaking of the meal marks the beginning of the new relationship. The oath has been made, the mutual responsibility accepted and now a community of life is created. If the latter has already been accomplished, as by a preceding rite of cutting a victim in two, then the meal which follows will serve to confirm and strengthen, to a degree approaching kinship, the union already established.

Although there is no record of the ceremony concluding the covenant itself we can see that a league

---

1. Cf., e.g., A.Lods, op. cit., p.202; E.Crawley,"The Mystic Rose," p.239; J.Pedersen,"Israel," p.304.

for warfare was regarded as a covenant. In Psalm 83 we have a late record of a number of states surrounding Judah combining in an attempt to prevent the revival of the Israelite nation after the Exile. This is described by saying, "They are confederate (ברית) against thee,"[1] that is, "They have made a covenant against thee." An earlier instance is the uniting of the five Canaanite kings against Gibeon.[2] Here ברית is not mentioned, but the fact of their uniting would point to an agreement of some kind being made. Such covenants would deal with loyalty during the ensuing campaign, the extent of assistance to be given and the division of the spoil. Frequently they were only of a temporary nature, ending with the conclusion of the matter which had brought them together.

Other rites in connection with the establishing of peace or friendship between two tribes or communities are revealed by the discovery of the half skeletons, that of a girl and that of a boy, at Gezer, referred to by J.G.Frazer.[3] Remains of some solemn rite of the people who preceded the Hebrews in Palestine where here found by Professor Stewart Macalister. The only theory which seems to fit all the known facts, as Frazer so ably points out, is that these children

---

1. Ps.83:6; cf. also Isa.7:2.
2. Josh.10:1-5; cf. also Gen.14:1f.
3. "Folk-lore in the Old Testament," i., pp.416-425.

were killed and cut in two at the making of certain solemn covenants, the covenanters doubtless passing between the severed pieces, and each party to the covenant retaining a half of the victim as a guarantee of the good faith of the other party to the vows which each had taken.

The marriage compact was regularly regarded among the Arabs as a covenant ceremony. It was accompanied by eating and, especially, drinking together. This created a unity of life between the covenant parties, and between the tribe and the new member that was now being admitted into it. Also this became a pledge of faithfulness on the part of each party to the marriage relationship.[1] Furthermore, in the marriage itself is the thought of exchange. The relatives of the woman give their daughter while the other party must give a gift, regarding which negotiations are carried on before the marriage. The exchange is not simply a daughter for a certain material payment, but lies rather in the sphere of creating a community of life. Thus the gift must be sufficient to keep the balance between the families.

Likewise other solemn pledges and oaths

---

1. Cf. H.C.Trumbull,"The Blood Covenant," p.192.

were entered into as covenant contracts. An Assyrian inscription records such in the oath of fealty of Mati'-ilu, prince of Bît-Agusi, to the king of Assyria. The inscription runs thus:

> "This he-goat has not been brought up from its flock for sacrifice, neither to the brave, war-like (goddess Ishtar), nor to the peaceful (goddess Ishtar), neither for sickness nor for slaughter, but it has been brought up that Mati'-ilu may swear fealty by it to Ashur-nirari, king of Assyria. If Mati'-ilu sins against his oath, just as this he-goat has been brought up from his flock, so that he returns not to his flock and sets himself no more at the head of his flock, so shall Mati'-ilu be brought up from his land, with his sons, his daughters, and the people of his land, and he shall not return to his land, neither set himself at the head of his land. This head is not the head of the he-goat, it is the head of Mati'-ilu, it is the head of his children, of his nobles, of the people of his land. If Mati'-ilu breaks this oath, as the head of this he-goat is cut off, so shall the head of Mati'-ilu be cut off. This right foot is not the right foot of the he-goat, it is the right hand of Mati'-ilu, the right hand of his sons, of his nobles, of the people of his land. If Mati'-ilu (breaks this covenant), just as the right foot (of this he-goat) is torn off (so shall the right hand of Mati'-ilu, the right hand of) his sons (of his nobles, and of the people of his land), be torn off."[1]

Then there is a long gap in the inscription in which it is likely that the further dismemberment of the victim was described, with the statement of the symbolism of each limb being that of Mati'-ilu, his sons,

---

1. J.G.Frazer,"Folk-lore in the Old Testament," i., p.401f., quoted from F.E.Peiser,"Studien zur orientalischen Altertumskunde," p.3. Words in brackets wanting in inscription.

daughters, etc., if they should prove traitors to the king of Assyria. Although not stated, there would doubtless be a covenant meal on the completion of this ceremony. The record is a particularly interesting one in that it gives us an example of a covenant in which the retributive element is very strongly emphasized.

Other forms of early Semitic covenanting are also to be found. A primitive and natural rite was the drinking or the mingling of blood obtained from the two parties. As time went on this was superseded by a symbolic laving, sprinkling or anointing with blood. Herodotus tells of both methods of the blood-rite being in use. The Arabs of his day established a covenant by "licking up" each other's blood. In other cases blood was drawn from the thumbs of the contracting parties. This was smeared on a rag torn from their garments, and then on seven stones, the number seven being sacred.[1] Another step was the substitution of the blood of animals, used vicariously for human blood. Then the blood and wine, mingled for drinking or laving, became eventually simply wine, "the blood of the grape" as it was called.[2] In more recent times,

---

1. Herodotus i. 74; Tacitus, Ann.xii. 47, and Herodotus iii. 108; quoted by W.E.Addis,"Hebrew Religion to the Establishment of Judaism under Ezra," p.40f.
2. Gen.49:11; Deut.32:14.

since the days of Mohammed, when wine was renounced, coffee has come to take its place as a drink for sealing covenants and contracts. Milk was also used as a substitute, though early mention of it is rare.[1]

The exchange of clothing, shoes, ornaments or weapons was used to create a covenant relationship. As with the use of blood, a part of each covenanter was given to the other, creating and protecting the בְּרִית relationship. This thought underlies the action of one seeking protection laying hold of the garments of the man to whom he appeals. A more formal manner was to tie a knot in the head-shawl of the protector.[2] In this way the strength of soul of the protector was given to the one who appealed to him, through contact with the former's clothing. This is also revealed in the story of Ruth. She makes an appeal to her relative, Boaz, for protection by lying down at his feet and saying, "Spread thy skirt over thine handmaid."[3] Then, responding to her appeal, he goes to the elders sitting at the gate of Bethlehem for judging in any matter of law. There he arranges with Naomi's next-of-kin to redeem the family property. The next-of-kin not desiring to do this, Boaz obtains that right, which involved marriage with Ruth.

---

1. Cf. H.C.Trumbull,"The Blood Covenant," pp.64, 191f.; W.E.Addis, op. cit., p.44.
2. W.R.Smith,"Religion of the Semites," p.355.
3. Ruth 3:9.

The matter is confirmed according to a custom:

> "A man plucked off his shoe, and gave it to his neighbour: and this was a testimony in Israel."[1]

The next-of-kin removes a shoe and hands it to Boaz before witnesses, and the matter is concluded. While the Book of Ruth may be exilic, or post-exilic, it is referring here to what must have been long-established customs reflecting the principle of the union of the self with one's property, particularly clothing.

Stones frequently played a part in covenanting. To stand on a stone in making an oath was regarded as giving stability and permanence to the oath; it would, by magical transference, partake of the quality of stone. Thus Jacob and Laban ate their covenant meal on a heap of stones in concluding their ברית and Joshua set up a stone as a witness to the agreement at Shechem.[2] The numerous ancient stone circles, dolmens and cairns found to-day throughout Palestine, especially in Moab, reveal that stones held a large place in the social as well as the religious relationships of the Semites, as with primitive peoples in general.[3] In some cases the covenants connected with stones were religious in character, a deity being thought of as residing in the stones, but in other cases these

---

1. Ruth 4:7. 2. Gen.31:46; Josh.24:26.
3. Cf. J.G.Frazer,"Folk-lore in the Old Testament," ii., pp.401f.

apparently acted only through their own physical properties. With the latter the ceremony of oath or covenant was purely magical in character and the vow or bond created regarded as being strengthened and made immutable by the stone. Here again the covenant thought is in the field of the psychic community established between the parties being influenced by an accompanying rite.

The examples of covenant-making among the Semites, outside of Israel, are comparatively few. Yet there are sufficient of them to indicate that the custom was well-known. The establishing of social relationships necessitates a ceremony of some nature. Where we find even occasional references to the use of a custom prevailing among other people of that time and other primitive races, it cannot be doubted that it was the commonly accepted custom amongst the Semitic peoples. The wealth of material collected in the name of 'Comparative Religion'[1] shows that the covenant contract formed the basis of social contacts among all primitive races. Its presence, therefore, in the life of the Semitic peoples would indicate that it had a similar importance for them.

Turning now particularly to the use of the

---

1. By J.G.Frazer, H.C.Trumbull, E.Crawley, and others.

covenant in the secular life of the Hebrews, we find a greater amount of material available. This is due to the unique records which we possess, records which frequently deal with the personal fortunes and misfortunes of historic tribes and characters.

Clearly evident is the Covenant of Salt. The strength of this is revealed by the cry of the Psalmist:

> "Yea, my man of peace, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me."[1]

A greater breach of faith could not be imagined. The two men had been at peace, that is, in an intimate friendship. One had provided food, of which they had eaten together, and he had given his own strength of soul in the common life thus established between them. But the other had broken the ברית and turned against his fellow covenanter. The lament of the Psalmist is more than that of a broken trust, it is that of the breaking up of the life force of which his own soul was a part. He turns to God, as in fellowship with Him was the only hope of rebuilding that which had been destroyed.

In the Book of Ezra is another reference to the Covenant of Salt. In a letter to Artaxerxes for the purpose of trying to prevent the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem the authors declare:

---

1. Ps.41:10.

> "Because we eat the salt of the palace, and it was not meet for us to see the king's dishonour, therefore have we sent and certified the king."[1]

These men, having eaten the king's salt, were bound to him in loyalty and so to his interests. The appeal for support of their views is a very clever one in thus pointing out the strong basis for their own loyalty, and the appeal was successful.

This type of covenant is well illustrated in several instances narrated in the early Biblical stories. On one occasion Abraham sees three strangers approaching his tent.[2] Going to meet them, he bows to the ground and invites them to rest and take food, even bringing water for the washing of their feet. The best that Abraham can afford is prepared and given to his guests. Then there is the similar hospitality which Lot offers to the two angels who come to him at Sodom in the guise of strangers.[3] They become guests under his roof. When danger threatens them Lot is willing to bring disgrace upon his own family rather than have harm come to those who had accepted his hospitality. The latter was apparently the greater evil. This is further illustrated in the story of the Levite who accepted the hospitality of a man in Gibeah.[4] The

---

1. Ezra 4:14.
2. Gen.18:1-8 (J), cp. Driver,"Intro." p.15. Throughout the thesis Driver,"Intro." is followed in the Documentation of the Biblical narratives, unless otherwise stated.
3. Gen.19:1-11 (J). 4. Jud.19.

welfare of the man's daughter and of the concubine of the Levite was of less importance than that of the Levite, the invited guest with whom he had taken food.

The entertaining and killing of Sisera by Jael, the Kenite,[1] is interesting in this connection. Here hospitality was, apparently, offered and accepted. Then Jael proceeds to murder her guest. At first this appears to be a direct breaking of the Covenant of Salt and, instead of bringing disgrace, results in great honour to the woman. On examination, however, it is not so puzzling. The account in chapter 5, vss. 24 to 27, of the Book of Judges is the older of the two.[2] In this Jael strikes the death-blow as Sisera bends his head to drink. Thus no covenant would have been established. The man being an enemy to this lone Kenite family as much as to the Israelites helps to explain this act of cunning.

Another element in the Covenant of Salt is emphasized by the direct references to it. Leviticus, chapter 2, vs. 13, speaking of the 'meat offering', states, "neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant (בְּרִית מֶלַח) of thy God to be lacking," and

---

1. Jud.4:17-22.
2. Cf. Driver,"Intro." p.171; also A.S.Peake,"A Commentary on the Bible," p.261f. Those scholars who accept the later account of Jud.4 do not do justice to the strength of the Covenant of Salt as it existed in primitive times.

in Numbers, chapter 18, vs. 19, of the 'heave offering', it says, "It is a covenant of salt for ever before Yahweh unto thee and to thy seed with thee." Salt became a symbol of the covenant of Yahweh with His people because of its signifying the intimate bond established between those who ate together. Moreover it was permanent. The addition of salt to these sacrifices signified an inviolate bond which united Yahweh to His people forever. This is supported by the further reference in the Second Book of the Chronicles, chapter 13, vs. 5, where Abijah reminds Jeroboam I that Yahweh gave the rule of all Israel to David and to his sons forever by a "covenant of salt"; the will of Yahweh was united with that of the House of David.

From both the early and later records we thus have evidence of the importance among the Hebrews of this widely-used rite of eating in creating and strengthening a close relationship between two parties. So strong was its influence that it came to express some of the deepest thoughts of Israelite life and definitely took on the significance of permanence. This is likewise seen in the part which the common meal played in a number of the other covenants to be mentioned.

The establishing and confirming of friendship was regarded as a covenant, since friendship is a community of souls. The בריה between Jonathan and David

---

is the outstanding example of this. "The soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David,"[1] so they form a covenant giving expression and reality to the oneness of soul which they felt. It is confirmed by mutual assurances of friendship and by Jonathan giving his clothes and weapons to David, thereby giving something of himself[2]--there is no common meal in this covenant. With the rise of David's power and influence this intimate relationship with Jonathan could not help but involve the latter in a deep conflict with the psychic community of his family. Through him David partook of the common life of the family. This Saul recognized by at first honouring him, but when David began to supersede him in honour and influence this bond was broken. Ordinarily Jonathan would have been in the same position as Saul but his covenant with David made a division in his soul, his family on the one side and David on the other. Jonathan must then act as a conciliator so that the unity of his own life might be regained. This he attempts to do, warning David of danger from Saul and also entreating his father on behalf of David.[3] He is successful for a time, but when the situation goes beyond his control he remains true to David,

---

1. 1Sam.18:1.
2. The connection of the self with one's clothing is well illustrated in 2Ki.2:8,14--Elijah's mantle could divide the waters of the Jordan, even when it was used by Elisha.
3. 1Sam.19:1-7.

since they are really one. Saul's attempt on his son's life is due to the resulting breach in the family relation. Jonathan has failed in the claim of kindred by assisting in David's escape. The same breach is made in the family relation of David later when his sons rebel against him.[1] The conflict in the soul of Jonathan is really insoluble. His covenant with David is so strong that it is as intimate a relation as the claim of kindred, even more so since he remains true to it. After the real break with his family he meets David in the field and renews their covenant with Yahweh as a witness, giving mutual assurances that it extends to the families of both.[2] On hearing of the death of Jonathan, David's lament clearly reveals his feeling toward his "brother", speaking of him as though he were his kinsman. It is also seen in his kindly treatment of Mephibosheth, the lame son of Jonathan. David brings him into his palace 'to eat at his table continually', thus making him one of the family.[3]

From this we see that in both the relationship of kindred and that of בריה it is the spiritual element that is basic. In fact, these two come very

---

1. 2Sam.15f.; 1Ki.1.
2. 1Sam.20 (J) --may be an insertion from a parallel story, also early. On vss.11-17 (E) cf. A.S.Peake, "A Commentary on the Bible," p.282.b.
3. 2Sam.1:17-27; 9; 21:7.

close together in Hebrew thought. We find, for example, both שָׁלוֹם and בְּרִית used in reference to the relation of kinship and also friendship, with the context sometimes being the only indication as to which is meant.[1] שָׁלוֹם means the full harmony existing between those united, while בְּרִית indicates the fact of the union with the privileges and obligations involved. The two words used together as a "covenant of peace"[2] is then but a stronger expression for 'covenant'.

That actual kinship was not necessarily a result of all covenants is gathered from the stories of the patriarchs which have centred round the village of Beer-sheba. The origin of its name, "Well of the Oath", or "Well of Seven", is related in Genesis, chapter 21, vss. 22 to 32 (E), and again in Genesis, chapter 26, vss. 26 to 33 (J). In the former Abraham enters into a covenant at this place with Abimelech and Phicol. It was a covenant of peace and friendship, accompanied by an appropriate oath. Abraham had become powerful and conflicts arose over the question of water rights. Then Abimelech comes requesting the making of a covenant since it would be to his advantage to have the support rather than the enmity of so strong a neighbour. Abraham welcomes the suggestion and, as the

---

1. E.g., Gen.26:28-31; Ps.55:21.
2. Ezek.34:25; 37:26.

superior party, makes a present to Abimelech from his flocks. By accepting it the covenant is created. Then Abraham gives seven ewe lambs as a witness that the well in question is his and Abimelech acknowledges this in receiving them. Thus the place receives its name. "Well of Seven" may signify the covenant oath. Perhaps a ceremony was performed in which the blood of the seven lambs was used, as in the covenant of smearing blood on seven stones. However, no ceremony is mentioned and as there are seven wells in the locality the natural explanation is that the real significance of the name is "Seven Wells", the one based on the oath arising at a later time.

In the J narrative the covenant is made between Isaac and Abimelech, who is accompanied by Ahuzzath and Phichol. Isaac had previously been sent away because of his growing power, but now Abimelech seeks to make a covenant. The reason he gives in the words, "We saw certainly that Yahweh was with thee." Isaac's growing success made it advantageous to be affiliated with him. The covenant is made and concluded by a feast, which is provided by Isaac, as in the case of Abraham's covenant. Through this they are bound in a common life by eating and drinking together. The next day Abimelech and his men depart but between them there is complete harmony: "they departed from him in peace (שָׁלוֹם)."

In all matters connected with war the covenant is very prominent amongst the Hebrews, both in their dealings with each other and with foreign powers. Leagues were formed for purposes of offence and defence. In doing so, an understanding would have to be reached in regard to various things such as loyalty to each other, the number of men, the equipment to be contributed and the division of spoil. For this a covenant would be established. The league between Judah and Israel, with Edom assisting them, likely because of its subjection to Judah, to make war against the rebelling Moabites, would be a case in point.[1] In spite of the failure of this expedition the alliance did not cease but was further strengthened by the marriage of Athaliah, daughter of Ahab, to Jehoram, King of Judah.[2] Marriage was itself a covenant, creating a community of life between two parties and so between their respective families. This alliance lasted until after the disastrous attempt to recover Ramoth-gilead for Israel when Jehu put to death the king of Israel and the king of Judah, thereby breaking the channel of common life between the two kingdoms.[3]

An earlier instance of such a league is that of Abraham with Mamre, Eshcol and Aner, three brothers and chieftains of the district of Hebron in which he was

---

1. 2Ki.3:4f.
2. 2Ki.8:18; cp. Mal.2:14.
3. 2Ki.9:24,27.

dwelling. Lot was captured in a revolt against the king of Elam. Abraham hastens to the rescue, summoning to his assistance these three brothers who "were confederate with"[1] him. Here we find the covenant already in existence and are able to see something of its implications. Because of the bond between them any one of the four would have to respond to such a summons as Abraham sent, their interests being united. Likewise Abraham regards a due proportion of the spoil as belonging to his confederates. He mentions this in a matter of fact way while speaking to Melchizedek. The division of the spoil would be made, not simply because of the assistance rendered but because of the covenant relationship existing between them.

When, in the days of the Judges, the Israelites gathered at Mizpeh "unto Yahweh" to take up the avenging of the outrage of Gibeah a covenant would be established.[2] This place, probably near Shiloh where the tabernacle was at that time,[3] would be a natural place for making vows of unity and consecration for the forthcoming expedition; Yahweh would be called upon to witness the covenant. The account as we have it is the expansion, especially in regard to the extent of the unity of the Israelites and the size of the armies, of

---

1. Gen.14:13 -- בעלי ברית, thus "in covenant with".
2. Jud.20 and 21.
3. Cf. C.Warren,"Mizpah and Mizpeh," HDB, iii., p.401.

an earlier story.[1] Yet it points to the use of some form of covenant in the carrying out of an expedition of this kind. Furthermore, the action of the Levite, by which he called the people together, namely, the dividing of the body of the concubine and sending the pieces throughout the country,[2] may be a variation of the ceremony of dividing a victim in halves and the covenant parties passing between them. F.Schwally describes such an act as "Schwur-oder Bundesritus".[3] The distributing of the pieces would have a two-fold purpose and result. It would call the people together by reminding them of the covenant unity created at Sinai, and serve as an important part of the ritual in the covenant that would be concluded for the expedition, strengthening and confirming the bond already existing between them. The use of the body of the concubine would, under the circumstances, have peculiar force.

We later find Saul employing the same form to call the Israelites together to fight against the Ammonites.[4] In this case oxen are used as victims and the threat added of doing likewise to the oxen of all who did not respond to the call--a threat which is

---

1. Cf. Driver,"Intro." pp.168-170.
2. Jud.19:29.
3. "Semit Kriegsaltertümer," Heft 1, 'Der heilige Krieg im alten Israel,' Leipzig, 1901, p.54--quoted by Kautzsch,"Rel.", footnote to p.619.
4. 1Sam.11:7.

reminiscent of the covenant-oath. That this form of appeal was an effective one is seen by the large response in both cases of its use.

Then there is the league (בְּרִית) which Asa, King of Judah, made with Ben-hadad, of Syria, for his support against the threatening domination of Baasha, of Israel.[1] Here Asa makes a costly present to Ben-hadad and induces the latter to break an existing covenant with Baasha. He also claims that a covenant had been made between their fathers, in which case Ben-hadad's alliance with Baasha would be a breaking of that former covenant. The silver and gold of Asa, however, would be attractive, and, further, this arrangement would likely be more suitable to his policy--a covenant with Israel would prevent him from extending his domination southward. Asa gave him what would be a welcome excuse for setting it aside. Thus we see the covenant to have been an efficient tool in statecraft, since leaders who have covenanted together have, as far as possible, common interests, including common friends and enemies.

This is revealed also in cases where rebellion was being planned. In the seventh year of the reign of Athaliah over Judah Jehoiada, the chief priest

---

1. 1Ki.15:16f.

of the temple, gathered together the leaders of the army and they all entered into a covenant to support the cause of the young prince Joash.[1] It was made in the presence of Joash, who had been in hiding until that time. The covenant parties would then be Joash and his new followers, led by Jehoiada. By the psychic community established between them the priests, Levites and leaders of the army would be bound into a complete loyalty with the young prince, his interests and welfare becoming theirs, and they would stand or fall with him in the rebellion.

When Jehu opened his rebellion against Ahab he wished to enlist the support of religious leaders. Meeting Jehonadab, the son of Rechab and the leader of the group called 'Rechabites', Jehu inquires if his sympathies are with the rebellion. Receiving an affirmative answer Jehu asks Jehonadab to give him his hand (יָדְךָ תֵּן), which he does. Thereupon Jehu accepts his loyalty and takes him up into the chariot with him. This was a simple, and common, form of covenanting through which oneness was created and expressed by a physical contact.[2] Jehu was true to this covenant in his massacre of the Baal worshippers.

Another covenant arising out of a betrayal of

---

1. 2Ki.11:4f.; 2Chr.23:1f.
2. 2Ki.10:15; cf. also Lam.5:6; Prov.6:1; etc.

loyalty to constituted authority is that of Abner with David.[1] David agreed to accept the offer of making a league (כְּרִיתַת בְּרִית) with the former which involved the bringing of the Northern tribes under David's rule and Abner's treachery to Ishbaal. Before doing so, David demands that his wife, Michal, be restored to him, perhaps partly as evidence of Abner's good faith, although it is not a part of the covenant as David himself is partly responsible for her return. Abner comes to David and their covenant is confirmed by a feast, Abner departing again "in peace (בְּשָׁלוֹם, vss.21,23)". David is willing to trust Abner's covenant-oath in spite of his betrayal of Ishbaal. Joab then kills Abner. We are told that this was an act of vengeance, but there was probably the motive of jealousy as well, he fearing Abner would supersede him because of this covenant and the great service Abner was rendering the king. David is thus placed in a difficult position. A covenant friend has been killed and he cannot punish the slayer because Joab was so necessary to him. Thus he cries, "I am this day weak, though anointed king." His own strength of soul has been impaired and he is unable to take the required method of renewing it, namely, by killing Joab. He solves the problem by publicly lamenting the death of Abner and by making

---

1. 2Sam.3:6f.

Joab carry the full guilt of his deed through pronouncing a curse upon him and his house. That David always felt that this was not a full solution to his problem seems to be revealed by his death-bed speech to Solomon not to allow Joab to die a natural death.[1]

In the making of treaties for peace the covenant was the regularly recognized form of the contract. In this regard we have many cases from the earlier history of the Hebrews, showing that the covenant was a well-known ceremony even in the formative years of the nation. An outstanding example is that made between Jacob and Laban.[2] When the latter overtakes his fleeing son-in-law, charges are hurled back and forth between them, until it seems that violence will soon break out. The suggestion is then made by Laban that a covenant be established between them. They proceed to do so and each one pledges not to enter the territory of the other with hostile intent. A pillar (מַצֵּבָה),[3] or a heap of stones (גַּל),[4] is set up as a witness to their covenant and as a boundary between their respective territories. Yahweh is likewise called upon, in the covenant oath, as a witness. A feast on the spot follows, which is provided by Jacob, marking him as the superior party. This was connected in some way with the 'witness' stone or

---

1. 1Ki.2:5,6.
2. Gen.31:21f.
3. Gen.31:45 (E).
4. Gen.31:46 (J).

stones, some of the blood from the animal slain for the meal, or wine or milk, probably being poured over it. Doubtless Yahweh, as in the primitive manner, was thought to take up His abode in the stone, thus making Him a full partaker in the covenant, and its guardian. Jacob called in "his brethren" to eat of the feast. These would be not only his own kinsmen, but also those of Laban who were present since, in the covenant, all of them would become as brothers. An awkward situation is thus overcome and Laban turns homeward once more with peaceful relations existing, leaving his blessing on Jacob and his household.[1]

Immediately after this event Jacob finds

---

1. This covenant may reflect the establishing of tribal boundary rights between Israel and Aram, as some scholars state, e.g., C.H.Cornill,"History of the People of Israel," p.31 and A.B.Davidson, "Covenant," HDB, i., p.510.a., but this would not alter the covenant as being a treaty contract.
   Davidson further states, in reference to the meal mentioned in vss. 46 (J) and 54 (E) that "in neither case does the meal appear part of the covenant ceremonies." The meal, however, follows the covenanting as the customary and natural concluding act expressing and consolidating the oneness of the parties to the rite. Cp., "Diese 'Brüder' sind selbstverständlich nicht nur seine eigenen Geschlechtsgenossen, sondern auch die Labans, denn der Sinn der Handlung ist eben der, dass alle Beteiligten durch sie 'Brüder' werden und in demselben Verhältnis zueinander stehen, als ob sie blutsverwandt wären." G.Kittel,"Theologisches Wörterbuch Zum Neuen Testament," article on "διαθήκη", vol.2, p.114.

himself in a somewhat similar situation, which is even more difficult to solve. Jacob is again nearing his old home of Canaan. As he does so he remembers, with considerable fear, his former treatment of his brother, Esau. Having made a compact with him for the birthright,[1] Jacob obtained his father's blessing through guile, which, incidentally, was made binding by Isaac receiving meat from Jacob and partaking of it, revealing, in a different sphere of relationship, the binding character of eating another's food.[2] Esau, on discovering the deception, was very angry. Now, on Jacob's return, it is this anger which he fears. He sends a friendly message to Esau and, on the latter's arrival, greets him as a superior.[3] Jacob makes him a large present of cattle, carefully arranged in a number of herds that it may be more impressive. The gift is accepted. There is no mention of covenanting but the giving and receiving of this gift from the personal property of Jacob is really a covenant ceremony creating a relation of friendliness between them. Esau then turns homeward on the understanding that Jacob will follow, but the latter goes off to the west rather than south after Esau. The friendly relation continues, however, as we find them meeting amiably again at the funeral of Isaac.[4] Afterward they again part, but only because their flocks were too large for it to be practicable

---

1. Gen.25:29f.
2. Gen.27:1f., especially vs.25.
3. Gen.32 and 33.
4. Gen.35:29; 36:6f.

for the brothers to live together, very much as Abraham and Lot made an arrangement to live apart for the same reason.[1]

Of a different nature is the peace-covenant made by the Israelites under Joshua with the Gibeonites.[2] The latter fear the Israelites because of recent successes so an appeal is made to them. Guile is used to deceive the Israelites into believing they have come from a distant part of the land. They are received and נשׂא and ברית is established between the two peoples, both terms being used possibly to emphasize the character of the new relationship. When the guile practised by the Gibeonites is discovered the Israelites are highly incensed, but their oath is binding. That the former are aware of this, and trust it, is shown by their words,

> "We are in thine hand: as it seemeth good and right unto thee to do unto us, do."

The letter of the covenant is rigidly observed,[3] but the Gibeonites are relegated to a subordinate position, being made bondmen to serve at the sanctuary of God for all future time. Thus the community of life was preserved and at the same time punishment made for using falsehood in the creating of that common life.

Nahash, of Ammon, proposed a covenant to the

---

1. Gen.13.
2. Josh.9:3f. (JE).
3. Cf. also Josh.10:6f.

people of Jabesh-gilead when he came against their city.[1] The people had asked for a covenant, expecting thus to make an& honourable peace with the Ammonites, even though it would be a costly one for them. Nahash consented to do so on the condition that first the right eyes of all the people were to be put out. The Jabesh-gileadites replied that if they could find no assistance they would agree. They were to suffer ignominy and so be made entirely subservient to Nahash, but still a covenant would mean protection now and for the future, which seemed better to them than a hopeless resistance. Saul, however, solved the situation by defeating the Ammonites.

Then the settlement of the Hebrews in Canaan was not always accomplished by force of arms. There were many cases in which a home was found by a tribe through entering into a covenant with the Canaanites and settling down peaceably among them. In the first chapter of the Book of Judges we are told that the Benjamites did not overcome the Jebusites, "but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem unto this day."[2] The same chapter tells a similar story of many others, Manasseh, Ephraim, Naphtali, etc. That the covenant was the medium for establishing this peace is revealed by the prohibition that follows in Judges,

---

1. 1Sam.11:1f. 2. Jud.1:21;cf. also Josh.13:13.

chapter 2, vs. 2, where, after a reminder of Yahweh's covenant with the people of Israel, there is the command to "make no league (לֹא־תִכְרְתוּ בְרִית) with the inhabitants of this land." This command is also stated in Exodus and in Deuteronomy.[1] It was made because in a covenant of peoples there was not only a common interest created as regards friends and enemies, but, as far as circumstances permitted, a combining of cultural accomplishments and religious practise.

Later, under the monarchy, such covenants were commonly made with other nations, which covenants were nearly always condemned by the prophets of Israel. Solomon enters into a covenant with Hiram, the King of Tyre,[2] in order to trade with him for the material needed for the proposed temple at Jerusalem. The prophet Amos speaks of Tyre as having broken the "brotherly covenant,"[3] either this one between Solomon and Tyre or a later one formed with other Phoenician cities, by taking captives and selling them to Edom as slaves. For this breaking of a covenant Tyre is to be destroyed. Likewise there is the covenant of peace which Ahab makes with the Syrian king, Ben-hadad,[4] condemned by a certain "son of the prophets," and that of Ahaz with

---

1. Ex.23:32; 34:12; Dt.7:2.
2. 1Ki.5:15f.; 9:11f.; with David 2Sam.5:11.
3. Am.1:9.
4. 1Ki.20:33f.

Tiglath-pileser III, of Assyria, for help against Israel and Syria, established by a gift of silver and gold.[1] One result of such covenants was the bringing into Israelite religion of much that was foreign to Yahweh-worship, especially those with the larger nations, when the Israelites were the inferior party. Receiving military aid they had to keep the balance by giving adherence to customs or practises in the national life of their covenant friends. This is shown, for instance, in the changes which Ahaz made in the equipment of the temple at Jerusalem, including the addition of an Assyrian altar.[2] The record speaks as though the latter was an altar of Damascus, but such an important innovation would need more than a king's whim to carry it through. Besides, the general influx of Assyrian ideas into Judah at about that time and the circumstances attending the event all point to the new altar being Assyrian and part of the covenant obligations.

A further example of a covenant with a foreign people is the agreement entered into by the sons of Jacob and the Shechemites. Here, apparently, a covenant to become as one people is made between them, but with the intention always in the mind of the one

---

1. 2Ki.16:7f. and Hos.12:2; cf. also 2Ki.18:28f.; Isa.8:10f.; 28:15f.; 10:15; etc.
2. 2Ki.16:10-18.

party not to keep it. The covenant is disregarded and the city of the Shechemites sacked. For this treachery Jacob openly reproves his sons.[1] They have trifled with one of the most sacred things known to them, the covenant relation, and no excuse could condone that. Instead of openly maintaining the violated honour of their house they took shelter behind a false covenant. The story, as related in Genesis, chapter 34, is regarded by scholars as being a reflection of tribal history, particularly of the tribe of Simeon.[2] Such a view, however, does not influence the conception here shown of the covenant relation. It was treacherously broken by one party, the tribes of Simeon and Levi, and the results reveal that a covenant was regarded by the people as inviolate, even though made with an enemy. To break its solemn obligations brought shame and dishonour to the covenant-breaker.

In the civil life of the Hebrew people the covenant held a large and important place. When the Israelites were in difficulties over the Ammonite raids and desired a leader to help them they called upon Jephthah. Before agreeing to help, however, he makes sure that he is not to be cast aside, once this task is accomplished, by establishing a covenant

---

1. Gen.34:30; perhaps also Gen.49:5-7.
2. Cf. J.A.Selbie, "Simeon," HDB, iv., p.518.

between the ambassadors and himself.[1] Its terms are that Jephthah is now to serve the Israelites and that he is to be officially appointed as their head, or leader. The covenant is sworn at Mizpeh, with Yahweh as a witness. Here the ambassadors represent the Israelites and make the covenant on their behalf. Thus the covenant parties are really Jephthah and the Israelites, and the relation is confined to one special matter.

Similarly, when he took his seat upon the throne, a king took an oath of office, while the people, through representatives, pledged themselves to loyalty. David's accession to the rule of all Israel, at Hebron, is confirmed by such a ceremony, which is described as a covenant.[2] The anointing of the king with oil, and feasting, are also accompaniments of the 'coronation-covenant', as seen in connection with the accession of Saul, Solomon, Jehu and others.[3] Between the king and people is created a psychic community; their interests and wills becoming one. This gives an added significance to the condemnation of David's treatment of Uriah and Ahab's treatment of Naboth.[4] Such acts were not only unjust, they were a violation of the covenant relation existing between king and people. Also there is

---

1. Jud.11:4f.
2. 2Sam.5:3; 1Chr.11:3-- כרת ברית; cf. also 2Ki.11:17.
3. 1Sam.9:22f.; 11:15; 1Ki.1:33f.; 2Ki.9:1f.; cf. also 2Sam.15:12; 1Ki.1:9.
4. 2Sam.11 and 1Ki.21.

the covenant made with Nebuchadrezzar by Zedekiah when he came to the throne of Judah.[1] It is more than an accession-covenant since it is also one with a foreign power, even though a compulsory one. By it Zedediah and Nebuchadrezzar are to be united by a common will--that of Nebuchadrezzar. Through his position as king the will of the people is to be at one with that of Zedekiah. Thus all are bound to Babylon. He broke the covenant, however, and the fierce denunciation of the act by the prophet Ezekiel, in spite of his ardent patriotism, reveals how seriously the covenant bond was regarded. The prophet emphasizes the fact that, since Zedekiah had made Yahweh a witness to the covenant, the breaking of his oath was the same as breaking an oath made to Yahweh Himself. True to the חסד of all covenant-making Yahweh will punish the betrayer of the compact.

The prophet Jeremiah tells of another covenant of Zedekiah's time. This also concerns a civil matter, the freeing of the slaves when Jerusalem was besieged by the Babylonians.[2] In the face of this threatening peril all Hebrew slaves were given their freedom by a covenant before Yahweh, accompanied by all the traditional rites, a calf being cut in half and the people passing between the severed parts. It was a

---

1. Ezek.17:11f.; 2Ki.24:10f.; 2Chr.36:13.
2. Jer.34:10f.; cf. A.C.Welch,"The Book of Jeremiah," p.82.

recognition, under the stress of the circumstances, of the law of Exodus and Deuteronomy by which slaves were to be freed after six years of service.[1] Doubtless there was the added reason of increasing the number of defenders of the city. But as soon as the enemy had retired to meet the approaching army from Egypt the people of Jerusalem, freed from the threat of immediate calamity, reduced the former slaves once more to bondage. This act the prophet roundly condemned and proclaimed the vengeance of Yahweh on these covenant-breakers.[2] The event reveals, not only the idea of retribution being an integral element of ברית, but the interesting fact that the ritual of the primitive "Cutting Covenant" had remained through the centuries. To maintain such a concrete form the covenant must have been a very important institution in the life of the people. It also emphasizes the importance of the ritual which accompanies the covenant oath.

In concluding an examination of these covenants made between men certain characteristics common to many of them should be pointed out. First there is the status of the covenant parties, that is, their equality or otherwise. In a large number of cases they are clearly unequal. This unequality may rest in their station in life, in power or in the benefits that can be

---

1. Ex.21:2 and Dt.15:12. 2. Cf. also Hos.10:4.

given. In the simple Covenant of Salt the stranger is taken under the protection of the host, the former being, at least for the moment, at the mercy of the latter, who thus accepts the greater obligation. The Gibeonites frankly admit the Israelites to be their superior in strength--for that reason they had sought the covenant--and Nahash is acknowledged to be the stronger by the Jabesh-gileadites. It is the growing strength of Abraham, as with Isaac, which induces Abimelech to come seeking for the establishing of a covenant relationship. Abner comes as a suppliant to David and Ahab makes a covenant with the conquered Ben-hadad. Likewise the covenant spoken of by Jeremiah is the granting of freedom to slaves by their owners. The breaking of this covenant is the disregarding of their oath, again reducing the slaves to servitude and thus taking advantage of their position as masters. Nebuchadrezzar's covenant with Zedekiah is also of this type--a master granting privileges to a dependent.

A covenant establishing friendship might conceivably be between parties of equal standing, assuring equal benefits to both, or between parties of unequal standing. In the case of Jonathan and David, however, since the former was the son of the king and David an unknown lad from a distant tribe, friendship between

---

them would certainly be of much greater benefit to David. Subsequent events proved this to be so.

As against this evidence there are covenants which show that no idea of unequality in status was in the mind of either party. Such would be, mainly, cases where two or more groups enter into a league, or covenant, for a war of offence. The league which the Israelite tribes formed at Mizpeh would be of this nature and also that which the five Canaanite kings formed against Gibeon. A similar case is the covenant formed by Jehoiada among the captains of the army, including himself, likely representing the priesthood, to rebel in the cause of the young prince Joash. In the covenant between Jacob and Laban there seems to be no difference in strength between them. It is a covenant of peace and made before hostilities break out. Furthermore, the covenant between Solomon and Hiram of Tyre has no question of a superior party in it. There is friendship already existing between Israel and Tyre and this ברית is really a business contract--the exchange of building materials for food supplies.

Thus it is impossible to conclude that a covenant was an agreement between parties of unequal standing, involving obligations only on one side, which

---

Valeton maintains.[1] Nor, on the other hand, are we justified in saying that it was fundamentally a bilateral agreement with reciprocal obligations, as Kraetzschmar argues.[2] There is evidence on both sides, although the former has the greater weight. Perhaps a truer statement would have a share of both views. A covenant was not simply a promise by one party to an inferior, nor was it a simple mutual contract. Rather, we might say that it was a binding agreement between two parties of unequal status that carried obligations for both sides. When two parties are equal in all matters then there is no occasion for entering into a covenant. It is where uncertainty regarding the relative standing or relative strength exists that a covenant is made, or where there is affection, with the desire to make promises and obtain security in them. A covenant always creates a psychic community but within that community the strongest soul or will, which therefore gives the most, will be the ruling one.

The exact strength of the relationship created between the covenant parties likewise presents a problem. Is this a full blood kinship or is it something less deep and lasting? In the use of blood rites

---

1. Cf. "Das Wort ברית bei den Propheten und in den Ketubim--Resultate," article in Z.A.T.W., xiii., 1893, p.245f.
2. "Die Bundesvorstellung im Alten Testament," pp.3f., 183f.

it seems clear that the former is the thought in the mind of the covenanters, since they partake, in some manner, of the same blood. The strength of the bond created by the covenant between David and Jonathan, and between David and Abner would indicate a full kinship. The uniting of the Israelites with the Gibeonites and the covenant suggested by Nahash to the Jabesh-gileadites reveal that, although the one party was to be subservient to the other, a common life, equivalent to kinship, was thought of, as would also be the case in the covenants formed by the Israelites during the settlement in Canaan. The understanding between Israel and Tyre was described by Amos as a covenant between brothers. Begun by David and continued under Solomon, it was again revived under Ahab by his marriage with Jezebel and eventually broken by Tyre. Thus a sense of kinship is implied as existing even in political covenants, although in this case time may have had something to do with the relationship. Where the parties are already bound by blood ties a covenant serves to strengthen and confirm this relationship in connection with a definite project, the purpose of the covenant. Thus Jacob establishes harmony between himself and Esau, the Israelites unite to avenge the wrong done to the Levite, the accession of Saul and others to the kingship is recognized, and Jacob heals

---

the breach with his father-in-law, through covenanting. In the last case Jacob includes his brethren and those of Laban in the covenant ceremony, indicating that the relation is more than personal--it extends to the respective families.

On the other hand there are covenants which plainly do not carry the relation of kinship. In the simple Covenant of Salt the bond is frequently temporary or else extends only to the generous giving of hospitality. Had this been regarded as creating a relationship as deep as kindred the ancient narrators would have been in difficulties over Abraham's entertaining of the three divine messengers. As it is, the story only reveals the close relationship between Abraham and God which brought to him the divine favour. In political alliances also the bond evidently does not go deep enough for kinship. Very often the covenant concerns only one particular matter, as in the rebellion of Jehoiada and the covenants with foreign powers for help in an emergency. Once this matter has been dealt with the covenant ceases to act unless it is constantly renewed, as by the annual presents or tribute of Judah to Assyria under Ahaz and Manasseh. When Asa made his covenant with Ben-hadad the latter breaks another covenant already made with Baasha. Nor could Asa's covenant have stood very long as we find

---

Ahab concluding a treaty of peace with Ben-hadad soon after. These covenants appear to be simply political expedients, with the community of life created being related only to the matter of the covenant purpose.

The weight of evidence, then, favours the view that a relation of kinship is established in the making of a covenant. Yet even a few cases wherein the unity does not go so deep are sufficient to destroy this as a hard and fast rule. In all cases the covenant creates an intimate relation, one that goes beyond material considerations, and enters the field of the spiritual. There is the union of souls, but it is this union which may be more or less intimate. In covenants attended by blood rites and those which are established by a formal and elaborate ceremony the resulting relation is of the deepest. Actual kinship, guarded by the most solemn curses and oaths, is created. But there are covenants also wherein the unity of souls is less intimate and less permanent. Circumstances, and the "raison d'être" of the covenant will have much to do in determining these. Facts would seem to indicate that originally the covenant did create the relation of kinship but as time went on and life became more complicated the covenant was adapted to an ever-widening circle of situations.

In the process the full intimacy of the relationship of the covenant as originally used became lessened through the needs of adaptation.

Viewing the covenant as it was employed among the Israelites we see it to have been a well-recognized institution, entering into every sphere of the social relationship. It dealt with life, and, since the soul cannot exist alone, the covenant offered a medium through which the life of the individual, or group or nation, might be enlarged. At the same time, the covenant, by directing the conduct of the covenanters, became the guardian of such virtues as honesty, sincerity, loyalty and friendship, developing a finer legal and moral sense of what was right and what was wrong. Thus the covenant relation acted as a social force, working outside the control of primitive legal standards and religious practices, a force without which that primitive social life would have been a chaos.

C H A P T E R 2

T H E U S E O F C O V E N A N T S

I N R E L I G I O U S L I F E

On coming to the consideration of the use of covenants in the religious life of the Semitic races generally we find their position is not a commanding one. Yet they exist in a certain form.

There is evidence to show that covenants made in the vicinity of a sacred spot, such as before the tomb of a saint,[1] were very highly regarded among the Arabs; blood or wine poured out, doubtless on or before some symbol of the presence of a god or spirit, such as an altar, was a sign of covenanting with that deity.[2] Occasionally special gods are found who were invoked at the sealing of a covenant. Such are mentioned in the Egypto-Hittite and the Hittite-Mitannian treaties.[3] The appeal to the deity in these cases would have a two-fold purpose. The deity would be regarded as the guardian of the covenant, visiting punishment upon either party in the event of their breaking the covenant oath. Then, through the common-meal concluding the covenant, the spirit of the saint or the god would be looked upon as a third party whose presence was recognized by the outpouring of blood or some other form of offering. Thus the deity

---

1. Cf. E.Westermarck,"The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas," ii., pp.209, 623.
2. Cf. H.C.Trumbull,"The Blood Covenant," p.191.
3. Cf. W.R.Smith,"The Religion of the Semites," Notes to the 3rd.edition, by S.A.Cook, p.692.

was included in the psychic community established by the covenant, and loyalty to the deity became also loyalty to the covenant obligations. This relationship between the human parties and their gods is the essential element in such covenants. The deity acting to punish a possible covenant-breaker, and so introducing the divine power into the imprecations and curses, follows as a natural result. The unity of life between the three parties made all of them vitally concerned in assuring the full honouring of the responsibilities of the relationship. The common meal, then, formerly valid in itself as a bond, came to have a sacrificial significance. Because of the polytheism existing in the Semitic world, and the fact that the relationship between the deity and his worshippers was not a particularly high one, we can understand something of the reason why covenants in their religious life were not prominent.

When the covenant was for the purpose of admitting a stranger into the fellowship of a clan the new member would, in the future acknowledge the clan god or gods. The invoking of the god as a party to the covenant would then have equal force for both the human parties. But when, for instance, two different clans or tribes, acknowledging different gods, entered into a covenant of friendship or

---

peace the invoking of a deity would have force only if the god of the stronger party was acknowledged by the weaker or if a god, common to both, was appealed to, perhaps by the union of the two gods into one, resulting in a union of the two clans. We can perhaps see the former working out in the case of Manasseh, King of Judah.[1] The Assyrian army had overrun the country, and safety for the nation was only assured by treating with the enemy. We find immediately a great influx of Assyrian religious forms and rites. The weaker party had had also to acknowledge the gods of the stronger. A case of the latter is seen in the covenant-god of Shechem. This city formed the centre of a league between one or more tribes of the Canaanites and the Israelites, the god of this confederacy being called, "Baal-Berith".[2] Both of these instances emphasize the fact that "there can be no brotherhood without community of Sacra."[3] That individuals or tribes may become closely interrelated a community of interest, not only socially but also religiously, must be brought about.

Furthermore, the gods were regarded as covenanting with the people. The uplifted hand is a

---

1. 2Ki.21:1f.
2. Jud.8 and 9; cf. Appendix 1.
3. W.R.Smith, op. cit., p.316.

prominent feature of the images of Babylonian, Assyrian and Phoenician deities, "especially of the gods of life, or of fertility, who have covenant relation with men."[1] On the seal of Ur-Gur, the earliest ruler of "Ur of the Chaldees," the ruler and his attendants are shown before the moon-god, Sin. Both parties are represented with uplifted hands, as though making an oath, or covenant. There is a similar representation of worshippers and deity in the case of the sun-god, Shamash, the Assyrian gods, Asshur and others, and the Egyptian gods. This attitude signifies the swearing of an oath. Showing that it is not an attitude of supplication or of adoration

> "it is to be noted that in the representation of Amenophis IV, or Khuen-aten, with his family, before the aten-ra or the solar disk, the worshippers stand with their right hands uplifted, while the sun-god reaches down a series of open hands, as if in covenant proffer to the uplifted hands below."[2]

There is also the fact that in Babylonia, as in Israel, the giving and taking of the hand was a symbol of covenanting. In this way a child was adopted into a family, or a man and woman "covenanted to become one" in marriage.[3] In Hebrew יָד נָשָׂא, 'to lift the hand,' was employed in the taking of an oath[4] and נָשָׂא came to mean swearing, being used in Exodus, chapter 6, vs. 8, with

---

1. H.C.Trumbull,"The Threshold Covenant," p.79.
2. Ibid., p.81.
3. Ibid., p.82f.
4. E.g., Deut.32:40, "I lift up my hand to heaven;" also Gen.14:22; Dan.12:7; etc.

reference to the covenant which Yahweh had sworn with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.[1]

There is, however, no evidence to show that the god and the people were bound to each other by any sort of covenant relation. On the contrary, such a conception never became part of their theology. The uplifted hand was prominent in swearing an oath but it seems to have rarely appeared in the ritual of covenants between men. Thus the uplifted hand in representations of the gods would but indicate their readiness to swear protection, or some other benefit, to a worshipper. Where these take on the character of a covenant, both god and worshipper granting benefits and swearing a mutual oath, accompanied by a ceremony, such as a sacrificial meal, it would be no different from a covenant entered into by two human parties.

Among the Semitic races the most efficacious way of establishing relations with the deity was by means of blood-rites. Thus the priests of the Syrian Baal, when calling upon their god during the encounter with Elijah on Mount Carmel, cut themselves with knives until the blood ran freely and Mesha, King of Moab, when in the extremity of a siege, offered his eldest son in sacrifice as an

---

1. Cf. also Num.14:30.

appeal for divine aid.[1] Behind these, and other similar rites, is the idea of the blood-covenant. Yet with them, as with other covenants in the religious life, we find that the worshipper is the one who initiates the relationship. The gods themselves are never conceived of as seeking to enter into a covenant relation with the people.

Among the Hebrews, however, we find an utterly different situation. Here the covenant-idea eventually came to hold a central and controlling place in their religious thought.

In the first place, Yahweh was commonly appealed to in the making of oaths and covenants. In the Second Book of Samuel, chapter 19, vs. 14, we are given what must have been the customary form of an oath: "God do so to me, and more also, if....," while David, having had Saul in his power, allows him to go unharmed, and in the ensuing conversation makes the statement, "Yahweh therefore be judge, and judge between me and thee."[2] Likewise, in the covenant made between Jacob and Laban, standing beside the heap, or stone, of witness, they call upon Yahweh to be the guardian of their covenant and to be a witness between them.[3] The elders of Gilead bind themselves to their

---

1. 1Ki.18:28 and 2Ki.3:27.
2. 1Sam.24:15.
3. Gen.31:49f.,(J); 53 (E).

agreement with Jephthah by the oath, "Yahweh be witness between us, if we do not so according to thy words,"[1] the Israelites gather for their expedition against Gibeah at Mizpeh "unto Yahweh,"[2] and David, on entering upon the kingship, made a covenant with the elders of Israel at Hebron "before Yahweh."[3] These instances are sufficient to reveal the fact that, as with other Semitic peoples, the deity was frequently called in as a third party to a covenant. The position of Yahweh in such covenanting would be the same as in other Semitic covenants which enter the sphere of religion. He would be regarded as the guardian of the covenant oath and His presence as a covenant-party would strengthen the bond established between the two human parties.

But the use of the covenant-idea did not remain here with the Hebrews. There are a number of covenants mentioned in the Old Testament which present a point of view basically different to that found in any covenant examined thus far. This is seen first in the Book of Genesis, where God is spoken of as making a covenant with Noah[4] and also with Abraham.[5] Simply as covenants between two parties

---

1. Jud.11:10.
2. Jud.20:2.
3. 2Sam.5:3; cf. also 1Chr.29:22; 2Chr.23:16.
4. 6:18; 9:8-16.
5. Chapter 15; 17:1-22.

these are similar to any others--there are the vows, the ceremony, and obligations involved. The peculiarity of these covenants lies, not only in the fact that one party is a human and the other a deity, but that it is the deity who initiates the covenant and who, as the superior party, accepts a corresponding position with regard to the obligations.

This is a religious covenant proper, or theological covenant, and indicates that the relation of the deity to His worshipper is based on a covenant relation. Such a conception is found nowhere among the other Semitic peoples. It is the possession solely of the Hebrews. Thus there naturally arises the question as to when and how this conception originated.

Ancient tradition does not answer with full certainty. The conception, however, is portrayed as being important from a time early in the settlement of the Israelites in Canaan. Appearing then as a people who are in a covenant relation with Yahweh we must likewise find here the key to the problem of how a loose coalition of tribes became a united people, forming the nation of Israel. The immediately preceding events must necessarily contain the answer. These are the Exodus from Egypt under the leadership of Moses and its associated happenings.

The existence of Moses as an historical figure, as well as the Biblical account[1] of his leadership in its general outlines, is now well established by scholars.[2] He is of the tribe of Levi and born in Egypt. From here he flees to Midian over the killing of an Egyptian and there marries the daughter of Jethro, a Midianite priest. A revelation from Yahweh comes to him and he returns to Egypt. In the name of that God he calls the Israelites together and succeeds, in spite of opposition, in leading them out of the country into the desert. On the borders of Egypt this group is joined by some other tribes which had been living in that district.[3] In the desert Moses succeeds in welding these tribes into a nation, claiming allegiance to the one God, Yahweh. This is accomplished through the events connected with Mount Sinai,[4] which become, as a result, the culminating point of the Exodus. To Moses, as the representative of the people, Yahweh reveals His will,

> "If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people."[5]

---

1. In the Book of Exodus.
2. E.g., A.B.Davidson,"Intro." pp.152f.; Kautzsch, "Rel." p.624; T.H.Robinson,"A History of Israel," i.; H.Gressmann,"Mose und Seine Zeit."
3. Ex.12:38.
4. In J & D, "Sinai"; in E & P, "Horeb". The exact location of the Mount does not affect the historicity of these events. For summary of this question cf. J.R.Harris,"Mount Sinai," HDB, iv., p.536f.
5. Ex.19:5 (J).

Then follows the revelation of the laws contained in Exodus, chapters 20 to 23, opening with the "Ten Words", or Ten Commandments, and, in chapter 24, the covenant proper. An altar is erected and a sacrifice of oxen made, the blood being retained. One half of this blood is then sprinkled on the altar, the covenant obligations read and accepted by the people; the remainder of the blood is sprinkled on the people, Moses calling it "the blood of the covenant which Yahweh hath made with you."[1] This is followed by a sacrificial meal partaken of before Yahweh on the Mount by Moses and other representatives of the people.[2]

The analysis of these events according to J or E is difficult and yields only provisional results. "Nevertheless," as Driver states, "the composite character of the narrative seems to be unmistakable."[3] We may therefore proceed to a detailed examination of the Sinai events in order to answer the question as to how the conception of the theological covenant entered the thought of Israel with them.

In the first place, there is a strong and continuous tradition of the event running through all our sources, J, E, D and in the writings of the prophets.[4]

---

1. Ex.24:3-8 (E). 2. vss.9-11 (J).
3. Driver, "Intro." p.32.
4. Cf., e.g., Ex.19f.; Deut.8:1,2; Am.2:10; Hos.11:1; Isa.11:16; Jer.2:6; Ps.78:12f.

If the conception of a covenant with Yahweh arose later through the prophetic activity then the conception of the Sinai-covenant would have arisen at the same time. Yet the attitude of the prophets is the reverse of being originators. They regard themselves as coming through the call of Yahweh to lead the people back into the relationship with Him from which they had departed.[1] They built upon the conception of the covenant; without its presence their message would have been unintelligible to the people. Moreover, by the time the earlier of the prophets were giving their message, about 750 B.C. onward, the conception had already become traditional, as is definitely shown by its presence in J and E.

Further, the union of a group of tribes in primitive times could only be achieved by the acknowledgment of a common god through a covenant ceremony. The Song of Deborah,[2] "a historical document of the first rank,"[3] reveals the fact that, while the Israelitic tribes were still engaged in wresting the land of Canaan from the inhabitants, there existed among the majority of the Israelites a real sense of unity under the leadership of Yahweh. Thus we must assume

---

1. E.g., Am.5:15; Hos.11:7f.; Isa.5:1f.; Jer.2:2f.
2. Jud.5.
3. Kautzsch,"Rel." p.631.a; cf. also A.Lods,"Israel from its Beginnings to the Middle of the Eighth Century," p.309, and others.

that some form of covenant ceremony had taken place prior to the entry into Canaan, when the tribes scattered throughout the country to find a home.

The succeeding history of the conquest strengthens this assumption still further. Time brought victory to the Israelites over the Canaanites, both politically and in the sphere of religion. The survival of faith in Yahweh over the attractive worship of the Baals of the land could only have resulted from a strong sense of loyalty to Yahweh existing before the entry into Canaan. Also the nature of Yahweh must have been conceived as essentially different and antagonistic to that of the Baals. Otherwise it would be impossible to understand the overcoming of the natural tendency toward fusion of deities, with the ultimate submerging of Yahweh as a separate and distinct god, which came with settlement in the midst of the more advanced Canaanite population.

The covenant at Sinai came as a natural result of the thought of Yahweh which had been revealed to Moses in the preceding events. During his sojourn with Jethro[1] some revelation of the nature and purpose of this God had come to him. This at least we can read as lying behind the story of the burning

---

1. Ex.3.

bush that was "not consumed".[1] The mind of Moses was doubtless prepared for such a revelation through meditation on the lot of his people. They were being oppressed by the powerful and hostile Egyptian Pharaoh. The future promised only the loss of all tribal feeling and all consciousness of a former time when they had possessed their freedom. These facts aroused the passionate tribal loyalty of Moses. In the midst of this experience a divine revelation brought home to him two significant realizations, namely, the nature and the will of the God who had now revealed Himself. These things comprised the message with which Moses returned to his people, and by which he led them out of Egypt.

The attempts of scholars to find in the name "Yahweh" something of what the early Israelites regarded as His nature have not met with very satisfactory results. The meaning given in Exodus, chapter 3, vs. 14, is אהיה אשר אהיה, 'I am that I am,' or 'I will be what I will be.' This we cannot consider as revealing much more than the interpretation held by the author of E in his own day. Likely the original reading was simply אהיה יהוה, 'I am Yahweh,' and farther on in the verse the אֶהְיֶה שְׁלָחַנִי was יהוה שלחני, 'Yahweh sent.' In both cases it

---

1. Ex.3:2.

was Yahweh who spoke and acted. Likewise the other interpretations which scholars have at various times suggested, such as "makes to be" or "creator,"[1] could only be probabilities, indicating what the name may have signified to the Israelites of later history, and expressing ideas which had been gradually developing.

That the word conveyed any such lofty significance to Moses is scarcely conceivable. Even the simpler ideas of "the falling one," "he who causes to fall" or "the Breather,"[2] signifying Yahweh to be a Storm-god, merely express a characteristic generally thought of in connection with divinity. Further, the actual name must have been known even before Moses' day. E and P suggest that it was revealed for the first time to him. Yet had this been the case its meaning would have been preserved as a treasured fact of revelation. The tradition in J, that Yahweh was known and worshipped by the ancestors of the Israelites, is nearer the truth.[3] In all likelihood it was a much older name, the meaning of which had become, and still remains, lost, to which the Israelites attempted to give a meaning which conformed to their

---

1. From the Imperfect Hiphil of הָיָה.
2. Also from the root 'hawah.'
3. Ex.3:16; 3:13 (E) states that the deity was worshipped in the past, only the name, Yahweh, being new.

own religious conceptions of the later times. Otherwise we should have to regard the stories of the patriarchal age as being entirely unreal and devoid of any historical foundation, an attitude which modern historical research has rendered impossible. Also, the history of the Exodus would be inexplicable. Since Yahweh was formerly known we can understand Moses being able to induce the people to leave Egypt under his leadership. Because their memory of the God had become dim, the creative spirit of Moses was allowed full play in interpreting to them the moral nature of Yahweh which had been revealed to him.

The significant elements in Yahweh's nature are seen in the characteristics of justice and mercy then revealed. These are expressed in the words of Yahweh to Moses:

> "I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey."[1]

In the following verses the same sentiment is expressed by E. Thus both of the earliest documents, J and E, are at one in saying that it was the condition of the Israelites in Egypt which had called forth Yahweh's

---

1. Ex.3:7f. (J).

activity on their behalf. Their condition of oppression had aroused His compassion and sense of justice, so He was going to lead them out to freedom, giving them a land of their own. Such a conception was formerly unheard of. The aid of a deity, according to primitive ideas, was obtained through sacrifice, which was but an appeal to, and a renewal of, the blood kinship thought of as existing between a god and his people. It was for this reason that Mesha sacrificed his son to Chemosh, the national god.[1] Any vital connection with Yahweh, however, would have long since become very vague among the Israelites. As a result the common methods of strengthening relationship and making appeals to the deity would be impossible, especially while they were under the conditions which existed in Egypt. The sacrifice and feast, traditionally called "The Passover,"[2] which formed the occasion of the Exodus, is the nearest approach to this, and events were then already under the reforming influence of Moses. Yet this God, Yahweh, chose to take them under His protection, making them His people, and willed to do this for moral reasons. Thus the Exodus took place.

This evidence of the power of Yahweh induced

---

1. 2Ki.3:27.

2. E.g., Ex.12:11.

other tribes living in the neighbourhood to join the standard of Moses.[1] Arriving at Sinai, a holy mount long regarded as the dwelling-place of Yahweh, with the shadow of Egypt left far behind them, it was only natural that the new relationship which had been revealed should assume definite expression. To represent this in any form of theological statement, even had it been possible, would have been both meaningless to the people and impractical. To express it through new ritual forms, such as P emphasizes as the most important part of the Sinai events, would have been artificial and we do not need to go any further than the Deuteronomic Reformation under King Josiah in 621 B.C. to see the difficulty of imposing a new cultus upon a people. There was only one way in which a primitive people could express such a relationship, and that was by establishing a covenant. This ancient custom, common to all the Semitic peoples and adaptable to various circumstances, was an instrument ready to their hand. Already it had found its way into the religious life by the invoking of a deity as a third party to a covenant. What more natural than it be used how by Moses to express this new relationship between Yahweh and Israel? H.C.Trumbull, in speaking of the Passover rite, has said,

---

1. Ex.12:38.

> "In dealing with his chosen people, God did not invent a new rite or ceremonial at every stage of his progressive revelation to them; but he took a rite with which they were already familiar, and gave to it a new and deeper significance in its new use and relations."[1]

This applies equally to the covenant rite as employed at Sinai.

All the conditions necessary to ordinary covenant-making were present and the Sinai-covenant thus remains true to the principles of all covenanting. There were two parties: Yahweh, symbolized by the altar that was erected,[2] and the people, who were, through the nature of the circumstances, the inferior party. The blood of the sacrifice being divided and half of it sprinkled on the altar signified the entering of Yahweh into the covenant, while the acceptance of the terms of the covenant, which were read by Moses, and the sprinkling of the other half of the blood on the people, signified their entrance into the relationship. Thus obligations were attached to both parties, giving each certain rights and privileges against the other as long as the covenant obligations were faithfully observed. Yahweh was to be the God of the Israelites, while they were bound to faithfulness in His worship. This covenant was also a

---

1. "The Threshold Covenant," p.203.
2. Ex.24:4.

sacramental rite of communion between the deity and His worshippers. The ceremony was similar to that of a covenant between two human parties in which a sacrificial victim was divided in half, except that Yahweh became the one party taking the people as the other party into a covenant relation with Him. The sacrificial feast of Moses and the other representatives of the people on the Mount in Exodus, chapter 24, vss. 9 to 11, is either a repetition of the same thing, coming to us from the document J, or else, as is more likely, it is the feast ordinarily concluding a covenant ceremony, in which case the whole even more nearly portrays the usual ritual of covenant-making.

This covenant at Sinai was marked by only one important difference, namely, the deity was the one who initiated the covenant. The condition of the Israelites in Egypt had appealed to His nature and He had willed to help them. He had sent Moses to be their leader and He had led them out of Egypt and through the Red Sea. Because of this evidence of His thought toward them, and of His power, the Israelites responded and entered into a covenant to accept what would be their side of this proffered relationship. Hence Yahweh was thought of as the initiator of the Sinai-covenant. At the time this

---

conception came as a natural consequence of all that had taken place. The great significance of it was not grasped then--perhaps not fully grasped even by Moses himself. It remained for future generations to take it up and develop the implications contained within it, but this was the seed out of which developed the flower of Israel's moral and spiritual religion. A God, whose nature and will were essentially moral, had, of His own choosing, reached out to help this people and had bound it to Himself, and so to the following of His will for all time, by a solemn agreement. In no other way could we conceive of a primitive people obtaining so early such a lofty and moral religious conception. Nowhere else in the history of Israel prior to the Exile do we find a set of circumstances which moved the people so deeply. Each event had its own influence and the cumulative effect was to produce an indelible impression on the nation which then came into being. The covenant came as a natural development, yet in each step of the way the guiding Hand of God is clearly revealed.

The establishing of this covenant at Sinai has been questioned as an historical incident. Wellhausen regards it as but a reading back into the past of ideas current among the Israelites at a much later time, that is, during the age of the great prophets of

---

Israel. In one place, referring to the events of Exodus, chapter 19, and the following chapters, he says,

> "The giving of the law at Sinai has only a formal, not to say dramatic, significance. It is the product of the poetic necessity for such a representation of the manner in which the people was constituted Jehovah's people as should appeal directly and graphically to the imagination."[1]

Such a view, however, disregards a number of significant facts which cannot justifiably be overlooked. There is the strong tradition which looks back to the events at Sinai as being the inauguration of a new relation between Yahweh and Israel, the creating of a nation out of separate tribes, and the lack of any other time, either before or after Sinai, when such a conception of covenanting could have arisen. Then there is the whole situation itself, which advances naturally from point to point to give a consistent picture of this deeply significant conception of the covenant entering the thought of Israel and expressing the ideals which were the basis of the later Israelitic religion--the revelation to Moses, his own character, the Exodus, and the unity of the tribes to one another and all to a moral God by a covenant bond. In disregarding these things Wellhausen has

---

1. "Prolegomena to the History of Israel," p.439 -- note on Chapter 1, "Israel," reprinted from the Encyclopedia Britannica.

too easily passed over the divine activity in early Israel preparing a foundation for the later structure of high moral and religious thought.

A somewhat different interpretation of these events, known as the Kenite hypothesis, has been advocated by Professor Budde,[1] following the view of Stade.[2] Briefly, this view is that while Moses was a fugitive from Egypt in the region of Sinai, he became acquainted with the God of whom Jethro, who became the father-in-law of Moses, was priest. Jethro belonged to a tribe of Midian.[3] In the Book of Judges, chapter 4, vs. 11, he is spoken of as a Kenite, so the Kenites were likely connected with the Midianites. The Kenite God, Yahweh, revealed Himself to Moses at Mount Sinai and called upon him to deliver the Israelites. Moses returned to Egypt in the name of this God, led his people out into the wilderness, and brought them to Mount Sinai. There a covenant was established, the people choosing this God of the Kenites to be their own God. In the fact that this was a relation entered into voluntarily by the people Budde sees the origin of the later ethical development of the Israelitic religion. He says,

---

1. "Religion of Israel to the Exile," pp.1-38.
2. "Gesch. des Volkes Israel," i., p.507 -- referred to, e.g., in Kautzsch,"Rel." p.626.b; also J.Robertson,"The Early Religion of Israel," p.509 (Note xxii.).
3. Ex.2:16 (J); 18:1 (E).

> "Israel's religion became ethical because it was a religion of choice and not of nature, because it rested on a voluntary decision which established an ethical relation between the people and its God for all time."[1]

This view has been favoured by many scholars,[2] but, on the other hand, there are a number of vital questions which it does not satisfy. In the first place we must ask how it was that Moses was able to inspire in the Israelitic tribes who were in Egypt a faith in Yahweh great enough for them to rally under His name and embark on a very hazardous journey into the desert. This is at once explained by the Biblical tradition of the God who revealed Himself to Moses being identical with the God of the Patriarchs. The Kenite hypothesis, however, necessitates an entirely new, and thus an entirely unknown, God. It is difficult to understand how this could appeal to the people, let alone inspire any great confidence. E.Pace argues in its favour:

> "The Israelites were held in bondage by the Egyptians, and no hope of escape seemed possible. They would feel, according to primitive ways of thinking, that their subjection was proof of the inferiority of their god, or gods, to the god of Egypt. Only the hope of the aid of a new and mightier god could arouse them from their dejection."[3]

---

1. Op. cit., p.38.
2. E.g., C.H.Cornill,"The Culture of Ancient Israel," p.64; E.Pace,"Ideas of God in Israel," pp.223f.; W.O.E.Oesterley & T.H.Robinson,"Hebrew Religion, Its Origin and Development," pp.104f.
3. Op. cit., p.220.

But does primitive thought ever accept an entirely new god under such circumstances? Rather, we find either one of two results--the god, or gods, of the conquerors are accepted, after having proved their superiority, as was the tendency later in Israel's history, or that the anger of the deity of the conquered people had been incurred with the consequent loss of his help, as in the case of the fall of Babylon, when the priests of Marduk attributed this to the anger of that god.[1] We know that the former was not the case as there is little evidence of Egyptian influence in the religion of Israel. Regarding the latter nothing definite can be said except that there is a real possibility of some such idea being in the mind of the Israelites in Egypt. But that this would lead them to discard the old for something new is another question. It demands an act of faith entirely foreign to primitive modes of thought. It would be much more in line with such thought to revive the old in a new character. To do so is the task given to Moses according to both E and J and, since the name Yahweh is old, there is little reason against the Kenites having received it from the Israelites rather than vice versa, as the Kenite hypothesis states.

---

1. Mentioned by A.C.Knudson,"The Religious Teaching of the Old Testament," p.159.

The importance of Moses as the founder of the religion of Israel must not be minimized. All our sources unite in attributing to him such a position, and any theory of the origin of Israel's religion must take into account the contribution made by this man. He is revealed to us as one far in advance of his race and time, a great leader, law-giver, priest and prophet. Other influences, out of the past and in the following years, played their part in shaping the religion of Israel, but the personal influence of this one man, so conspicuous spiritually and mentally, was immeasurable. Then to reduce this figure merely to that of a man with a genius for leadership, like any great Arab sheik, is to do less than justice to his work and influence. To Moses must be given the credit of receiving a revelation of the moral nature of the God of Israel's forefathers, reading its confirmation in the Exodus events, and of transmitting this to his people. By doing so he won for himself the position, not only of being the founder of the nation of Israel, but founder of its religion as well.

The Kenite hypothesis emphasizes Exodus, chapter 18 (E),[1] which relates the visit of Jethro to the wilderness-camp of the Israelites. This is done

---

1. Cf. K.Budde, op. cit., pp.17f.; also W.O.E.Oesterley and T.H.Robinson,op. cit., pp.111-112.

at the expense of the covenant narrative in chapters 19 and those following, which thus becomes but an anti-climax. Yet tradition points back to the latter as the climax of all the events of the Exodus. The common meal eaten by Jethro and the leaders of the Israelitic tribes, related in chapter 18, really becomes, with Budde, the covenant meal through which the Kenites admit the Israelites to the worship of their God, Yahweh. This chapter does give us the origin of the community of worship which history indicates as having existed between the Kenites and the Israelites,[1] but that is quite different from the event being the origin of Yahweh-worship among the latter. There is no mention, or even hint, of this in the narrative. The sacrifice is preceded by an expression of thanksgiving for all that the Lord had done in the past; there is no thought of the future nor petition concerning it. The sacrifice and the eating of the bread seems to be no more than the covenant of the common meal strengthened by an appeal to the deity, as the whole event is dealt with in the few words of verse 12, and the regular Israelitic formula for the inclusion of a deity is employed--לִפְנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים, 'before the Lord'.[2] Had this ceremony marked the origin of Yahweh-

---

1. Cf. 1Sam.15:6; 27:8f.; 30:29.
2. Cp., e.g., 2Sam.5:3; Jud.11:11 -- לִפְנֵי יְהוָה.

worship for Israel it is scarcely possible that אֱלֹהִים would have been used here for the God. We would at least expect to find the name יהוה, the God with whom the covenant was being formed, especially as verse 11 uses the term יהוה, contrasting it with אֱלֹהִים. The eating of this common meal under the direction of Jethro is quite adequately explained by his residence in that district. This would place upon him the duty of showing hospitality to the newly-arrived Israelites, and the customary way of doing so was through this Covenant of Salt.

Finally, Budde seems to deal too easily with the origin of the conception of Yahweh as a moral God. Apparently at the time of the Sinai-covenant there was nothing ethical in the conception of His nature. This came, according to Budde, only as later ages fulfilled the possibilities of the voluntarily accepted bond with their God. He states,

> "All attempts to find the germ of the ethical development of Yahweh-religion in the material content of the conception of God as represented by Moses have completely failed. If Yahweh-worship itself had no ethical character, this (covenant) relation to Him had such character, and all future development could spring therefrom."[1]

Yet if Yahweh, whether regarded as the God of the Kenites or as the former God of the Israelites, turned of His own free will to the Israelites just at the

---

1. K.Budde, op, cit., p.35.

time they were being oppressed in Egypt it must have been because their condition appealed to Him. No other reason is indicated nor can be given as to why He acted at that particular time. For instance, in later days we find a close connection between justice and the worship of Yahweh. The prophet Amos especially emphasizes this. But between the events of the Exodus and the time of Amos there is no period at which this could have taken an especially strong hold on the consciousness of the people--and Amos, in common with all the "writing" prophets, looks to the past for the basis of his message. Thus we must look to the conception of the covenant-God for the germ of this moral idea of justice.

This is found in the covenant as related in Exodus, chapter 19, in which the deity is conceived to be the initiator of the relation. The Kenite hypothesis neglects this fact, emphasizing, rather, that the Israelites voluntarily chose Yahweh to be their God. A certain moral development might conceivably result from this, just as all covenants left the covenanting parties in honour bound to be faithful to each other. They would have to 'live up to' their agreement. Beyond this the moral standards of the one did not concern the other party, except where a more or less continuous social contact was a result.

The former situation is seen in the covenant between Abraham and Abimelech and the latter where some of the Israelitic tribes settled among the Canaanites through covenanting with them. When, however, we have a clear case of the latter type it is the standards of the superior party which would naturally exert the greatest influence. When this is a religious covenant there would follow the continuous association of the god and his worshippers. The influence of the covenant then would be determined finally by the nature of the god. If he is no different to, say, the Moabite god, Chemosh, the ethical influence could only be very slight, practically limited to the honouring of the agreement. Especially would this be true when it is the people who choose the god. They would accept him as he then appeared to be to them. Taking his place in their daily life, even as the head of a confederacy of tribes, there would be nothing in their relationship that would lead the worshipper to expect anything greater in his nature. At all events, it gives, in itself, no impulse toward the attaining of spiritual truth and an enlarging conception of the god. As applied to Israel this is the view of the Kenite hypothesis. The people are really the free will agents and, ethically speaking, are the superior party to the covenant. They are the ones who would

---

be giving the most. Consequently any future progress in the ethical and spiritual life of Israel must come from within the people themselves and certainly not as a result of their covenant relationship.

But the attainment of a high ethical standard in religion merely through philosophical reasoning, or in some such way, on the part of man has never yet been demonstrated. Also, to deny the importance of the covenant relation is to completely deny the whole conception which all Israel had of the origin of its religion, along with a great deal of evidence in support of that conception. When we regard Yahweh, however, as choosing the Israelites to be His people the situation becomes altogether different. The events of the Exodus, preceding the covenant ceremony, revealed something of Yahweh's will and of what His choice of Israel would mean for them. Because of that deliverance and all that it implied regarding Yahweh's continued presence with them, a deep sense of gratitude and loyalty was called forth. This devotion itself would be a moral act, while, at the same time, it would tend toward an idealizing of its object. In conjunction with this there was already the moral element in Yahweh's character revealed by the events

---

of the Exodus. He thus becomes, clearly, the superior party, both in power and in character, acting of His own free will, and His choice of Israel gave to men not only an impetus toward the idealizing of His nature but turned the trend of this into the moral channel which had been already indicated. Thus the door is opened to both a moral development and a spiritual development, this newly-awakened consciousness of God seeking to discover and understand more fully this divinely instituted relationship. The growth of Israel's moral and spiritual religion throughout the ensuing centuries was the result of just such a search.[1]

A further view is presented by R.Kraetzschmar.[2] He contends that the covenant was originally made between Yahweh and Moses, the thought of a covenant made with the nation being a later development, at the earliest about 700 B.C., and that the prophets prior to Jeremiah were unacquainted with any such covenant with Israel. Thus there was no great day at Sinai which formed a turning point in the history of Israel, and in the covenant made with Moses alone Yahweh bound Himself as guardian of the Israelites irrespective of their actions, since they were not bound to Him.

---

1. Cf. Appendix 2.
2. "Die Bundesvorstellung im Alten Testament."

From the above discussion of the views of Wellhausen and Budde we can see a number of ways in which Kraetzschmar's view is also unsatisfactory. The most cogent points may be briefly stated. Moses' call was a commission to a people[1] in the name of a God already known and worshipped by at least one of the tribes. The earliest legislation presupposes a close relationship already existing between the Israelites and Yahweh, as does the ancient Song of Deborah. All warfare is in the name of Yahweh, who is the leader of the nation; the sacred ark symbolizes His presence with His people. Amos refers to the deliverance from Egypt as being the beginning of the relationship between Yahweh and Israel;[2] Hosea speaks in a similar manner,[3] even making direct reference to a covenant between "the house of the Lord" and Yahweh.[4] There is Hosea's figure of the relation of the nation to its God as a marriage covenant contracted in early days.[5] Isaiah portrays the nation of his day as departing from an intimate relation established long ago with Yahweh,[6] and Jeremiah builds his thought of a New Covenant on the failure of the old covenant made when the nation was brought by Yahweh "out of the land of Egypt."[7] To regard the covenant at Sinai, then, as

---

1. Ex.3:7-10 (J and E).
2. Am.2:9.
3. Hos.2:17.
4. Hos.8:1; also 6:7.
5. Cf. Hos.1 & 2; cp. 11:1.
6. Isa.1:2f.; 1:26.
7. Jer.31:31.

made between Yahweh and Moses is to deny a unanimous tradition, disregard the element of the divine in the work of Moses, utterly change the complexion of Israel's religious outlook from as far back as the Song of Deborah, which arose at the time of the events of which it speaks, and remove the foundation on which the literary prophets built. This would be to deal with the Biblical narratives with unjustifiable violence, and would give us 'a stone in the place of bread.' A covenant at Sinai through which Yahweh became bound to the nation of Israel and Israel to Yahweh, each with their distinct place in the covenant obligations, remains the only logical interpretation from the evidence afforded, as well as the highest in moral and spiritual value.

Modern scholarship, as represented by such men as W.Eichrodt,[1] K.Galling,[2] L.Köhler,[3] G.Kittel,[4] and J.Pedersen,[5] is in general agreement with this point of view. Following the line of historical development yet seeking to co-ordinate the results in the light of the spirit of Old Testament revelation, and the intimate connection of the New Testament with the Old, has

---

1. "Theologie des Alten Testaments," 1933.
2. "Die Erwählungstraditionen Israels," 1928.
3. "Theologie des Alten Testaments," 1936.
4. "Theologisches Wörterbuch Zum Neuen Testament," Vol.2, 1935, article "Διαθήκη," p.106f.
5. "Israel, Its Life and Culture," 1926.

resulted in regarding the events associated with Mount Sinai as the basis of the national and religious life of historic Israel. The different scholars have their individual methods of approach and points of emphasis. Eichrodt, for instance, speaks of the covenant relationship between Yahweh and Israel as containing a reciprocal friendship, pointing to this element in secular covenants, while Galling bases the reciprocity of the relation chiefly on the evidence of the sayings of the prophets of later times. He, furthermore, thinks of the major fact of the Sinai events as being the election of Israel by Yahweh, of which the covenant was but a result. J.Pedersen, while accepting the Exodus and Sinai-covenant as historical, regards any record we have of the covenant conditions as appearing so much later that they make impossible the ascribing of any law to Moses. Köhler states that both parties to the covenant accepted mutual obligations, but emphasizes the fact that Yahweh was constantly spoken of as the one who concluded the covenant. Thus Yahweh was regarded as the superior party. Eichrodt sees this superiority as being the result of Yahweh acting through grace. But in every instance there is the acceptance of the historicity and the supreme importance of the covenant at Sinai. Moses, in the name of Yahweh, the god of their forefathers, rallies his fellow-countrymen in Egypt and leads them out into

not quite true of Galling.

---

the desert. At Sinai a covenant ceremony takes place by which the people freely bind themselves to the service of the God who has chosen them. On the basis of this covenant they are henceforth the people of Yahweh and Yahweh is their God.

With the entrance into Israelitic thought of this new conception of the covenant as being the relation between Yahweh and the people of Israel a new day dawned for religion. Something of its deep significance may be realized by briefly examining the use made of the theological covenant in the Old Testament.

Beginning with the Pentateuch, the first covenant mentioned is that of God with Noah after the Flood.[1] God initiates this covenant and its terms are reciprocal. On the one side God will no more send a universal flood upon the earth, the fear of man will be with the beasts of the earth and man is given the privilege of using animals for food. On the other side man is to abstain from eating the blood of animals, and both man and animals are not to shed human blood. As a covenant imprecation is the declaration that whoever causes bloodshed will have his own blood required of him. To be a reminder of the covenant to both God and man, God will give the rainbow in the clouds. This covenant-token

---

1. Gen.9; and 6:18.

is the only material expression of the covenant that is mentioned.

Coming to us solely from the Priest's Code the covenant with Noah is the first of a series of covenants portraying the history of Israel. The J and E documents do not refer to it, and the earliest reference is that in Isaiah, chapter 54, vs. 9, written at the time in which the trend of thought in P would be taking shape. The divine activity is predominant to such an extent that the covenant is scarcely different from a promise made by God that the earth will not again be covered by a flood. The absence of any covenant ceremony increases this impression--the record of Noah's sacrifice being in the J document and entirely unrelated to the covenant. We must therefore see in it a late conception which reveals the covenant-idea influencing later ages to such an extent that the whole of history is interpreted in the light of the covenant relation.

The second covenant mentioned is that with Abraham. There is a double record of this in Genesis, that of chapter 15 from J and E, and that of chapter 17 from P. The latter is similar in form to the covenant with Noah. God appears to Abraham and simply declares the covenant. Its terms are the change in names

---

to Abraham and Sarah, the giving of seed to Abraham, God becoming the god of Abraham and his seed, and the promise of the land of Canaan to be their possession. The obligation imposed on Abraham and his descendants is the observance of the rite of circumcision. This rite is also to stand as the token of the covenant, and really becomes the ceremony creating the covenant, since anyone who is not circumcised cannot be regarded as a member of the family of Abraham, that is, of the future Israel.

The narrative of J and E presents an interesting record. The ancient ritual of passing between the halves of a severed victim is carefully followed. Abraham, falling asleep, beholds a vision of God taking part in this covenant in the form of smoke and flame--reminiscent of the pillar of smoke and fire which went before the Israelites in the wilderness during the Exodus.[1] It would be expected that Abraham would also perform this act in the rite but he does not do so. Thus, as in P, the weight of the covenant obligations are placed on God. The covenant terms differ somewhat from those of P: God will give Abraham a child and multiply his seed, they will inherit the land of Canaan and Abraham, in his old age, will come to a peaceful end.

---

1. Ex.13:21 (J).

There is no mention of human obligation except that of faith, indicated indirectly in verse 6, which implies that the covenant was made with Abraham because "he believed in Yahweh." The victims severed in the ceremony are all included among the sacrificial animals of later days while the birds were not divided, after the manner commanded by later Levitical law.[1] This fact, with the difference in the covenant terms and the presence of a formal ceremony, mark the record as being older than the one in P. Yet the whole thought of this covenant is clearly a reading back into patriarchal times of the conception which came to Israel through the Sinai covenant. The extreme anthropomorphism of the JE narrative and the universalistic tendency revealed in the statement that in Abraham "shall all the families of the earth be blessed"[2] support this, as well as the fact that in the actual events connected with Abraham we can discover nothing to satisfactorily explain the new and important conception of a deity taking the worshipper into a covenant relation. In the patriarchal history Abraham is by far the clearest figure, but legend and folk-lore had already been busy with his name and historical situations became obscured. Thus it was only natural that the Israelites of later days, as they sought to

---

1. Lev.1:17.

2. Gen.12:3 (J).

record those earlier times, should do so in the light of the only relationship with Yahweh of which they had any real knowledge. That they did so is but evidence of the strength of the influence which the covenant at Sinai left on the thought of the Israelites.

This covenant with Abraham is mentioned several times--after his willingness to sacrifice Isaac, where it is spoken of as an oath (נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה),[1] and with his descendants, Isaac and Jacob.[2] The scheme of P now becomes evident: first a covenant of God with mankind in general, through Noah, then one with the Israelites in particular, through Abraham, giving them a title to the land of Canaan. There is no mention of the Sinai covenant in the Priests' Code, but there is the renewal of the terms of Abraham's covenant made to Moses in Egypt, emphasizing the giving of Canaan and stating that the Israelites are to be His people and He, Yahweh, will be their God.[3] The sign in this case is the observance of the sabbath "for a perpetual covenant."[4]

Two other covenants of a similar nature arose in the thought of Israel, that with David and that with Levi. The former follows David's declaration of his intention to build a temple for the ark of Yahweh.[5] The

---

1. Gen.22:15f. (J).
2. Gen.26:1f. (J), and 28:13f. (J) -- 35:9f. (P).
3. Ex.6:2f.
4. Ex.31:12f. (P).
5. 2Sam.7.

prophet Nathan eventually forbids this, saying that David should not build a house for Yahweh but that Yahweh would build a house for him, his descendants being assured of the mercy of Yahweh for all time. A warning of punishment for any iniquity is included, but David's house and kingdom are to be established forever. In the Second Book of Samuel this is referred to as "an everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure;"[1] in the Psalms as a covenant and oath;[2] and in Deutero-Isaiah as "the sure mercies of David."[3] The earliest reference to this covenant after its appearance in the Book of Samuel is in Isaiah, chapter 16, vs. 5, in connection with the prophecy regarding Moab. Thus by that time it had become a part of the national traditions.

The thought of a covenant with Levi begins with the story of the wilderness wanderings, where it is related that this tribe remained loyal to Moses through the dissension caused by Aaron and his golden calf.[4] That a strictly priestly caste, called Levites, was not recognized until considerably later is clearly shown by the narrative of Micah's shrine in Judges, chapter 17. Micah consecrates one of his sons to be his priest but later a travelling Levite arrives and

---

1. 23:5; also 2Chr.7:18; 13:5; 21:7.
2. 89:4,36; 132:11.
3. Isa.55:11.
4. Ex.32:28,29.

Micah induces him to remain at a fixed salary and act as his priest. This reveals a process of transformation going on--there was the freedom by which anyone could act as priest but a priestly class was arising whose members were more highly regarded than any others. By the time of the division of the Kingdom this development seems to have been completed, as the author of First Kings, in his comments on the new religion of the North, states that Jeroboam "made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi."[1] A well-defined priestly class existed, and the acceptance of any outsiders as priests was a breaking away from the true Yahwism. The Book of Deuteronomy mentions the separation of the Levites for priestly duties as being the ones separated by Yahweh to carry the ark and to minister to Yahweh.[2] It is a permanent separation because they had kept the covenant.[3] Thus by the time of Deuteronomy the idea of the Levitical priesthood had become well established and was being spoken of as a covenant.[4]

These three covenants, of Yahweh with Abraham, with David and with Levi, give expression to three basic principles, or articles of faith, in the thought of Israel--the inalienable right to the land of Canaan,

---

1. 12:31. 2. 10:8. 3. 18:5; 33:8f.
4. Cf. also Mal.2:4f.; and Jer.33:21 (not in LXX, and probably post-Exilic--G.A.Smith,"Jeremiah," p.290.).

the permanence of the dynasty of David and the priesthood being perpetuated in the family of Levi. This use of the covenant idea emphasizes one phase of it in particular, namely the immutability of the covenant compact. Through the founding of the right to the land and these national institutions in a covenant, these were given authority by their very permanence. The same thought is revealed in connection with the sabbath and the shew-bread of the tabernacle, which are spoken of as everlasting covenants.[1]

Of quite a different nature is the covenant of Joshua and the Israelites at Shechem.[2] Joshua gathers together all the people with their leaders, and speaks to them at some length, as the spokesman of Yahweh, of all that had been done for them from the time of Abraham until the possessing of Canaan. He then dramatically places the issue before them: are they to serve the false gods of the past, the gods of Canaan, or Yahweh. The people declare their gratitude and loyalty to Yahweh. Joshua warns them of the consequences of their choice but they remain firm: they will serve Yahweh and obey Him. Joshua then makes a covenant with them, confirming this choice. A stone is set up under an oak near the tabernacle and Yahweh declared to be a witness

---

1. Ex.31:16,17; Lev.24:8,9.
2. Josh.24.

to their covenant.[1] At first sight this does not appear to be a theological covenant. The parties are the Israelites and Joshua, Yahweh being merely a third party to act as guardian. Since, however, Yahweh is the one who speaks, through His representative, Joshua, and the purpose of the covenant is the worship of Yahweh, it is in reality a theological covenant. It differs in some points from that of Sinai, chiefly in that Yahweh is not the initiator of it. Yet this idea lies behind it. The mention of all that Yahweh had done for the Israelites indicates that He had taken the first step in establishing a relationship with them. In the Sinai covenant it is the free-will action of Yahweh in taking this people to be His own which is emphasized while here it is the fact of the people entering free-willingly into the covenant relation. They agree on their own responsibility to unreservedly accept Yahweh as their God. A somewhat parallel situation is the election of Saul by the people to be their king,[2] and the acceptance of the בעל־ברית of Shechem by the Israelites.[3] That back of this covenant lies the one made at Sinai is clearly indicated by the fact that Yahweh is mentioned as a God with whom the people are familiar. His claim to their allegiance had already been made and

---

1. It is quite possible that the god associated with the oak was the Baal-Berith of Jud.8:33.
2. 1Sam.10:17f.
3. Cf. Appendix 1.

this had been acknowledged, to a certain extent at least. The people answered Joshua, "Forbid that we should forsake Yahweh to serve other gods." Loyalty to Yahweh was in danger, the influence of the pagan worship surrounding the Israelites already being felt, so Joshua establishes this covenant, a renewal of that at Sinai, to consolidate the Israelitic tribes and strengthen their loyalty to Yahweh.

We find the same thing taking place on later occasions. On concluding his purging of the worship of the Southern Kingdom, Asa gathered the people together at Jerusalem and all entered into a covenant to "seek Yahweh, the God of their fathers, with all their heart and with all their soul." Then, after the rebellion against Athaliah, Jehoiada, with the king and the people made a covenant with Yahweh that they were to be Yahweh's people.[2] This was followed by purging Jerusalem of Baal worship. Such covenants as these were really a renewing of the Sinai covenant after the people had fallen away from its observance. The principle, 'Yahweh, the God of Israel and Israel, the people of Yahweh' was reaffirmed and the relationship between them strengthened.

This is true of the covenant with Yahweh of

---

1. 2Chr.15:8f.; cp. 1Ki.15:11f.-- no covenant mentioned.
2. 2Ki.11:17; 2Chr.23:16,

Josiah and the people, which stands as one of the major covenants of the Old Testament.[1] Hilkiah, the high priest, discovered a book of law in the temple when the building was being renovated. On this being brought to the king and Huldah, a prophetess, having endorsed it, the king immediately called the people together. The book was read to them. Josiah then made a covenant before Yahweh to observe all the laws proclaimed in this book and the people "stood to the covenant," thereby making themselves a party to it. A thorough reformation of the religious practices of the kingdom follows, being concluded by the observance of a Passover feast according to the directions of the newly-discovered laws. This feast would also have the force of a covenant meal. The importance of this covenant is due to a number of factors. Chief of these is the fact that it was centred in a book, significantly called "The Book of the Covenant,"[2] which has been identified with the legal section of Deuteronomy.[3] Thus a definite and permanent record was given in writing of the terms of the covenant. The drastic reforms necessitated by its adoption were made possible through several important events in the political sphere taking place at this time: a reaction from the corrupt religion of Manasseh's reign which came with the accession of Josiah, the lifting of the Assyrian domination, and the recent

---

1. 2Ki.23; 2Chr.34.
2. 2Ki.23:2.
3. Chapters 12-26.

Scythian invasions of Western Asia. With the backing of the king the reformation was carried out and the event became a milestone in the history of Israelitic religion. The Book of Deuteronomy states that its laws were written by Moses himself and given into the keeping of the Levitical priesthood,[1] but this is clearly an attempt to give the laws the authority of Mosaic authorship. It also indicates the view that these laws expressed the manner in which the covenant between Yahweh and Israel might be correctly observed by the people. Thus Josiah's covenant would be a renewal of that made under the leadership of Moses, with a change in the covenant terms applying to the human party.

Much the same may be said of the events narrated in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah.[2] The exiles who had returned from Babylon and the Israelites living about Jerusalem adopted the Levitical Law in a great public ceremony. Ezra uses the term "covenant" but refers simply to the marriage reforms by which all non-Israelitic wives and their children were to be put aside. Nehemiah does not actually use this term, merely saying of the people that they "entered into a curse, and into an oath (בְּאָלָה וּבִשְׁבוּעָה), to walk in the law of God." But these indicate that the covenant idea was there. Also, chapter 10, vs. 1, clearly implies the term, which

---

1. 31:9.

2. Ezra 10; Neh.10.

has likely become dropped through editing, as the verb כרת is used. The Authorized Version recognizes this by inserting the word, obtaining the translation, "we (the princes, Levites and priests) make a sure 'covenant'." Nehemiah and other representatives of the people seal the covenant, while the rest of the people simply take an oath. Its special terms are the forbidding of foreign marriages, strict observance of the sabbath, remittance of debts every seven years, the support of the temple, providing wood for the sacrificing, the offering of first fruits and the payment of tithes. The whole situation in connection with this covenant parallels, even in many of its details, that of Josiah. A code of law, regarded as the true expression of the will of Yahweh, is adopted at a significant moment in the history of the people, marking a renewal of the former covenant relation with Yahweh.

From this evidence it is clearly shown that the religious, or theological, covenant is not simply an idea or theory which has grown up with the nation and been applied to its religious life, but arises from the religious experience of an early time. The covenant relation of Yahweh as the God of Israel and Israel as the people of Yahweh comes into prominence in a fully developed form and as the content of a deep conviction. Nor does this prominence come late

---

in Israel's history, when men were seeking to clarify their understanding of God and give more definite expression to the connection of Yahweh with human affairs. It came with the forming of the nation itself through the events of the Exodus. The importance of this covenant is glimpsed in the frequency with which the thought of Israel turns back to it, particularly in the crucial moments of the nation's history and for the interpreting of its basic ideals. In the ensuing centuries the covenant idea was re-interpreted again and again as the result of changing circumstances and needs. Many times the national life swayed back and forth between the high and the low in religious faith, but always, as the higher emerged, the influence of that early covenant conception can be traced. Re-interpretation and development in this conception was necessarily accompanied by change in the thought of Yahweh and in the part which the people played in the covenant relationship. To a consideration of these changes we now turn our attention.

CHAPTER 3

THE RELATION OF YAHWEH TO ISRAEL

In the creation of any ברית the relationship that is established imposes certain obligations on both the parties involved. In the theological covenant of Yahweh with Israel the understanding of these obligations is essential to an understanding of the relation. In this chapter the place of Yahweh, the superior party to the covenant, will be examined. The moral and spiritual level attained by any religious faith, as well as the forms in which it may be expressed, is determined by the conception of the deity worshipped. A detailed consideration of this conception would, however, take us beyond the bounds of our subject. Thus it will be confined to the Israelitic thought of Yahweh in His covenant relationship with the nation.

This relationship began with the work of Moses. It is revealed in all the events of the Exodus, culminating in the ceremony of the covenant at Mount Sinai. The new relation into which Israel then entered with Yahweh signified, and at the same time consolidated, a conception of God which differed from that of every other nation. When the bond that unites a god and his worshippers is that of the covenant relation, we are moving on an entirely different plane than is found, for instance, in Moab. That country had its national god, Chemosh, just as Israel had its god, Yahweh. The Moabites were bound to the worship of Chemosh

---

and expected his favour in return. Yet the bond between them would be regarded as that of blood relationship, existing from the beginning of their race. Thus the fortunes of the one were bound up with those of the other. In the case of Israel, however, there is a fundamental difference. Yahweh initiated the covenant. Thus the religion of Israel became an elective religion, founded on a definite historical act, in contrast to natural religion. The distinction is revealed in the ceremony concluding the covenant. This established a relationship that was not temporary but valid for all time. Yahweh could dissolve it at will, since He had made the initial choice. This only served to further emphasize the distinction from naturalism. There was no compulsion in the relation. Entered free-willingly it becomes the spiritual relation of person to person. Furthermore, the sprinkling of blood and the covenant meal were not the mechanical observance of ritual demands, automatically procuring the favour of the deity. Rather these were the rites confirming a relationship and involved Israel's pledge of loyalty to the will of Yahweh. The favour of Yahweh is given, but not because of the covenant. On the contrary the covenant is the result of the voluntary gift of this favour, previously manifested in the Exodus.

The events of the Exodus revealed Yahweh as a

God of power. Through the opposition of Pharaoh in Egypt and at the Red Sea,[1] and in the difficulties and dangers of the wilderness journey,[2] Yahweh was the leader and protector of the Israelites. But this power was not arbitrary nor capricious. It was self-consistent in that Yahweh acted with a purpose which would not change. The covenant was thus a guarantee to Israel that Yahweh was acting honourably, an assurance that the people could regard Him with perfect confidence. No heathen god had a character in this sense. Their activity was unknowable, the arbitrary use of power, while the character of Yahweh was constant. For Moses and the Israelites this would be the most significant meaning of the Sinai covenant. Their primary interest was not the nature of Yahweh. They were not seeking a theology. Rather, their concern was for the practical needs of the present. "Will Yahweh's relationship to Israel in the future continue to be what His activity has thus far indicated?" is their question; and Yahweh concludes a covenant with them--He can be depended upon.[3]

Since this divine power must find a sphere in which to express itself Yahweh promised to be with

---

1. Ex.5f.; Ex.14. 2. E.g., Ex.15:25; 16:4; 17:8f.
3. Possibly the name יהוה, and connecting it with the God of the forefathers in Ex.3:14 may have some significance here--but cf. above, p.75f.

Moses, and likewise He would be with Israel, manifesting His power and revealing His will. This was Yahweh's choice, and the covenant was Israel's acceptance of the position of being His people. He therefore acquires an intimate relation to history, in particular, the history of the Israelites. The connection of a deity with isolated events was generally accepted in the ancient world, but nothing of the thought of history being a connected series of happenings wherein a definite and divine purpose was being carried forward had entered the mind of man. Yet the latter is the distinctive thought of the Israelites as a result of the Sinai covenant. Yahweh chose to intervene in history for the welfare of this people, and, His nature being revealed as dependable and ethical, a value and significance formerly unknown, was thereby given to history. All that took place became a part of Yahweh's intention toward His people and a further revelation of His nature or will. Thus every event became a factor expressing something of Yahweh's relation to Israel.

The Mosaic period was essentially a formative one. Emerging out of the past with but the vaguest of traditions, the Israelites received a revelation of Yahweh that placed Him in their thought as a God possessing a definite character, which was ethical,

---

a God, moreover, who was active in the world. This conception must not be thought of as coming to Moses through the actual events of the Exodus. Rather, he saw these events in the light of Yahweh. The medium of revelation was thus not history but man, and it was left to Moses and his people to apply the revelation to history. The fact that they did so gives this age its significance in the history of religion as being the point at which was born the nation and the covenant religion of Israel. Older and coarser ideas were overlaid with the higher and, although there was still a long way to go, Yahweh stood out then as a distinctive personality having moral characteristics, even if not yet a fully moral character.

With the entrance into Canaan came the first significant change. This was through the lowering influence of the Baal nature-worship. The syncretism which resulted brought Yahweh intimately into the life of the people and He becomes fully established as the God of Canaan. Yet, in doing so, the moral element in His relation to Israel recedes while the material and the ritualistic come to the fore. The relationship tended to become one of reciprocal service--the sending of the increase of field and flock on the one side, and the giving of appropriate gifts on the other--which is in distinct contrast to the thought of Yahweh choosing

---

Israel for the carrying out of a divine purpose and the people free-willingly accepting their part of self-surrender to this purpose. The relationship becomes one of inter-dependence between a patron god and his worshippers, which is a mere compact between two equal parties.

The institution of the monarchy brought another important influence. Conflict immediately appeared between the political power and the sovereignty of Yahweh, first glimpsed in the break between Saul and Samuel.[1] This conflict was deepened by the fact that the monarchy rested on a religious foundation, the king becoming the highest religious officer in the State, and by the tendency toward tyranny on the part of royalty, as existed in all the States surrounding the Israelites. The result of this influence was to unite the will of Yahweh with the policy of the king, making the national fortune or misfortune reflect the greatness or otherwise of the national God. The covenant relation, as with naturalistic worship, then becomes a relation of two parties equally dependent on each other.

One other factor is important in this period, namely, the work of Elijah. This prophet brought to a

---

1. 1Sam.13:11f.; 15:10f.

head the question of Baal worship.[1] His particular problem was the worship of the Tyrian Baal, propagated by Jezebel and her imported priests from Tyre. The contest on Mount Carmel opened his campaign; his work was continued by Elisha, and the revolution of Jehu brought it to a conclusion.[2] Never again was there any danger in Israel of worship being offered to a Baal, whether that of Tyre or Canaan. Henceforth all worship throughout the country, at the high places and in the various sanctuaries, impure though it might be, is offered to Yahweh. Elijah was seeking to clarify the relation of Yahweh to Israel as well as to declare His character. The people could not serve Yahweh and Baal at the same time since what was acceptable to Baal was utterly unacceptable to Yahweh. The two conceptions of deity were far apart and could not be brought together. It was a difference of character. What this difference was is clearly indicated in the case of Naboth.[3] Ahab will go only so far in his attempt to obtain this man's vineyard but Jezebel goes much farther: she employs arbitrary force. It was the character of Yahweh that His power would be purposive and used according to that which was consistent with this purpose. Elijah's condemnation of Jezebel is centred in this, that she was the representative of

---

1. 1Ki.18 and 19.
2. 2Ki.10:18f.
3. 1Ki.21.

the irresponsible power of Baal worship, which was an entire contradiction of the covenant relation. It would be possible to unite, for example, the Moabite Chemosh and the Ammonite Milcom, but neither of these had anything in common with Yahweh. Irresponsible force and consistent justice were irreconciliable. Elijah is following the principles of the Mosaic revelation.

The influence of Baalism and that of the monarchy impel the higher minds among the Israelites to find a new statement and a fuller definition of the covenant of Yahweh with Israel. Their recoil is well illustrated in the use of the divine names. בַּעַל was at first used without hesitation.[1] Later it came to stand for pagan gods, particularly those of Canaan, and its use in referring to Yahweh was condemned,[2] יְהוָדִי coming into prominence in its place. בָּעַל was also used[3] but now fell out of favour and, in referring to pagan deities, was repointed with the vowels of בֹּשֶׁת, shame, to give בֹּעֶל.[4] Thus the authors of J and E portray the covenant relation as having been instituted in the distant past with the

---

1. E.g., Jud.8:33.
2. Hos.2:18. Also Jerubaal, the real name of Gideon, Jud.6:32; and Ishbosheth, a son of Saul, was originally Ishbaal, later changed because of hostility to Baal.
3. Deut.33:5; also 2Ki.23:10.
4. E.g., 2Ki.23:10.

patriarchs. While their thought is that of the Sinai covenant these authors apply the principles of that relationship to all the traditions and history of the nation to show that faithfulness to the covenant resulted in prosperity and faithlessness in punishment. By teaching that all which had happened in the past was the work of Yahweh alone they sought to counter-balance the tendencies toward naturalistic thought and nationalism.

One result of this, furthered by the growing prophetic influence, was that there now appeared the first cleavage between the leading minds of the Israelites and the religious life of the common people. Israel had become a nation conscious of its separateness from every other nation. This distinction was rooted in its faithfulness to Yahweh who had now attained a moral character. But the two lines of development which had appeared, the higher and the lower, remained and followed constantly diverging paths until the dissolution of the national life.

When we enter the field of 'written', or 'literary', prophecy we find a much clearer presentation of Yahweh's relation to His people. This is due to the fact that these prophets have left us many authentic records of their work and their times,

---

also to the fact that their age came as the result of centuries of political, social and religious development. Their teaching contained nothing that was fundamentally new, but they enlarged and clarified all they had inherited, their contribution becoming the highest peak of development until the advent of Jesus Christ.

A characteristic of the earlier of these prophets is the almost complete avoidance of direct reference to the covenant with Yahweh. This has been taken by some scholars as an indication that the thought of Yahweh's relation to Israel was only clothed in this form when the use of the term ברית became more frequent, that is, with Deuteronomy.[1] This lack, however, can be readily understood. For example, no writings have come down to us from the prophets prior to Amos, and the earliest documents we have, J and E, are familiar with the thought. The covenant-idea would be well known to the people and so constant mention of it would be unnecessary, as well as unnatural. Further, the writing prophets were emphasizing their own interpretation of the

---

1. E.g., Wellhausen, Stade, and Kraetzschmar. A.Duff,"Old Testament Theology," i., p.122f., regards Hosea as being the first to speak of covenants in religion, as against Guthe, who gives the credit for this to Jeremiah. Cf. also Appendix 2.

covenant relation as opposed to that of the popular religion and the thought of the Sinai covenant too readily lent itself to the legalistic conception of the latter. Yet their whole thought moves within the circle of the covenant-idea. Amos never employs ברית in this connection, but the 'idea' is prominent through his emphasis on the moral obligations which the covenant relation involves. On the other hand, with Jeremiah the covenant is prominent. In the light of his message as a whole this is natural. He sees the time coming when the old covenant relation will be ended and a new one inaugurated. For him, then, this question is central. The thought of the covenant in Israel is revealed by the conception that was held of the relation existing between Yahweh and the people, not by the use, or the omission, of the term itself.

With Amos this relationship is expressed in terms of Justice. Yahweh is righteous, or just (צדק), in His dealings with Israel. This thought had been present in Yahwism from the first. It came with the revelation to Moses in Midian, to which he later gave a practical application by sitting as a judge over his people, a representative of Yahweh.[1] The prophet Nathan denounces David in the name of

---

1. Ex.18:13f.

justice, as did Elijah with Ahab, while the laws of the Book of the Covenant show a real advance over primitive customs in this regard, as in blood revenge, in the treatment of the helpless, and in usury.[1] Amos goes still further and makes this idea the very centre of his conception of the relation of Yahweh to His people. It is a lack of this in Israel which calls forth the prophet's condemnation and constant declaration of coming disaster sent by Yahweh.[2]

Since Yahweh is ethical in nature He cannot be a national God and show favour to any one nation, even to Israel. An ethical standard, to remain ethical, must be world-wide in its application. Thus Amos condemns the nations surrounding Israel for crimes against morality, such as inhumanity, the breaking of a covenant oath and the lack of compassion.[3] His righteousness is not simply a hard justice, but includes the more tender emotion of pity. Yet punishment must come to all who have transgressed by turning aside from these simple requirements which Yahweh has made known to all men and nations. Thus there is an enlarging of the thought of

---

1. Ex.21:12f.; 22:21,27; and cf. 1Ki.3:28.
2. E.g., Am.2:9f.; 5:4f.
3. Am.1 and 2.

Yahweh's relation to man. Its scope is no longer confined to the people of Israel. In the past Yahweh could bring disaster to the army of an enemy[1] while a victory against Israel was construed as due to His wrath.[2] But other nations possessed, in this regard, a similar conception. Chemosh is spoken of as giving territory to Moab by conquest just as Yahweh does to Israel.[3] Now, however, Amos sees the hand of his God as guiding and directing all the nations of the earth in matters that are quite apart from the welfare of Israel. "Have not I brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt? and the Philistines from Caphtor and the Syrians from Kir?"[4] he asks on behalf of Yahweh. His successors follow him in this. Isaiah portrays Assyria as a rod in the hand of Yahweh, chastising Judah,[5] and Jeremiah speaks of Him calling the kingdoms of the north to encompass Jerusalem.[6] Their view is still centred upon Israel. Yahweh's supremacy over other nations is used, either as a contrast for His special relation to Israel or for the furthering of His purpose in that nation. Yet there is a definite broadening of their horizon. The prophets see that Yahweh is actively engaged, not only in the affairs of Israel, but also in those of the outside nations.

---

1. E.g., Ex.14; Jud.5.
2. E.g., 2Ki.23:26.
3. Jud.11:24.
4. Am.9:7.
5. E.g., Isa.10:5f.; also 7:20.
6. Jer.1:15.

Hosea gives us a figure of the divine relationship to Israel that is peculiarly his own in that of husband and wife. It is significant that he should use this since heathen religions had some such conception in their worship of female deities and the forces of reproduction, as found in connection with the Canaanite Baals. Yet, out of his own tragic experience the prophet read the history of Israel as a breach of the intimate relation of family life. His wife proved unfaithful after their marriage,[1] deserted to her lovers and later Hosea purchased her back, restoring her to his home after a period of seclusion. His own great love revealed to him Yahweh's unending love (חסד) toward Israel. Through his message Hosea lifted the conception out of any of the degrading implications of nature-worship and gave it purely moral significance. The thought of Yahweh showing this love toward His people was present before Hosea, as David asks if there are any of Saul's house left that he "may show the חסד of God unto him."[2] Yet Hosea was the first to apply the term to the relation existing between Yahweh and

---

1. The only view consistent with the analogy of Yahweh's relation to Israel; cf. A.R.Gordon, "The Prophets of the Old Testament," p.77 (footnote), W.R.Smith,"The Prophets of Israel," p.178f., and others, e.g., A.B.Davidson, and A.C.Welch.
2. 2Sam.9:3; cf. also 1Sam.20:8.

Israel, and to read the history of the nation in the light of it. Following him Deuteronomy uses this thought,[1] and Jeremiah also employs the figure of Yahweh as a husband.[2] Ezekiel has an adaptation of it in his metaphor of Israel as a foundling daughter whom Yahweh saves, guides through childhood, and eventually marries, only to have her prove unfaithful.[3]

Hosea uses a second figure, that of father and son. This appears particularly in the latter part of his book, but it is intimately connected with his thought of the husband and wife relation. The two ideas are really combined in the first chapter. Yahweh had loved Israel in its youth and guided it through all its history.[4] Now it has forsaken Him for other gods.[5] Yet He will bring Israel to Himself again since His love continues even through its evil-doing,[6] and will at last give the nation peace.[7] This figure is first found in J, which speaks of Israel as the "firstborn son" of Yahweh.[8] There was never implied any sense of physical sonship, but it signified the preferred position and affection always reserved for the firstborn among the Semitic peoples. Under the prophets it became one of the great conceptions of

---

1. Deut.5:10.
2. Jer.31:31.
3. Ezek.16.
4. Hos.11:1-4; 7:15; 9:10.
5. Hos.11:2; 4:1f.,16f.
6. Hos.2:16f.; 11:8.
7. Hos.2:20f.
8. Ex.4:22.

Israelitic religion,[1] although the Old Testament thought of the fatherhood of God always contained a large element of the idea of His supremacy and power.

A further expression of relationship is found in Isaiah's thought of holiness. This was a term, common both to Israel and to its neighbours, used of anything which was set apart for the deity. The separation was a purely ritualistic one; uncleanness would result from a neglect of the proper ceremonies, or from contact with a person or thing not prepared ceremonially for such approach, and therefore unholy. Thus immorality and holiness might exist side by side without any thought of contrast, as with the 'holy women' (הַקְּדֵשׁוֹת). As used by Isaiah of Yahweh the term expressed His Godhead. He was the "Holy One of Israel."[2] Yahweh, however, was different from all other gods in that His nature was moral. As a result His holiness likewise included moral separation. Thus the maintaining of His relationship to Israel meant that that nation must be holy in the same sense. In this way the term was given a moral content and the relationship of "holiness" came to be one of the deepest conceptions of future religion.[3]

---

1. Cf. Hos.11:1; Isa.1:2; 30:1,9; Deut.14:1; 32:6; Jer.3:4,19; 31:8,19.
2. E.g., Isa.6:3; 10:17.
3. E.g., its frequent use in Deutero-Isaiah and in the "Holiness Code" of Leviticus.

Other, and less prominent, metaphors are found for the relationship of Yahweh to Israel. There is that of master and servant.[1] This did not have the significance it attained through the post-Exilic and Christian thought of the "Servant of Yahweh," but was sufficiently important to lay the basis of this later development. Joseph's brothers speak of themselves as "servants of the God of thy father," signifying simply that they were worshippers of Yahweh in common with Joseph himself,[2] and the Israelites speak of Moses as the servant of Yahweh, meaning one specially chosen by Him for a high task.[3] Thus the term is old and formed a favourite way in which to speak of individuals, as apart from the nation, in their relation to Yahweh, especially in referring to the prophets.[4] The figures of a king and his subjects,[5] and of a shepherd and his sheep,[6] were also used. The former came naturally through the institution of the monarchy and was held in common with other peoples. The latter would be suggested by the common occupation in Palestine of sheep-grazing. Its richness of thought has given us the Twenty-third Psalm and the

---

1. E.g., Deut.32:36; Isa.1:3.
2. Gen.50:17 (E).
3. Ex.14:31 (J).
4. 1Ki.18:36; 2Ki.14:25; Am.3:7; Jer.7:25; etc.
5. E.g., Isa.6:5; 43:15; Jer.10:10.
6. E.g., Hos.4:16; Isa.40:11; Jer.31:9.

New Testament thought of Christ as a shepherd and as the Lamb of God.[1]

With the appearance of Deuteronomy the theological בְּרִית comes into prominence. Never absent from the thought of Israel it is now employed to express the relation of Yahweh to His people. Just as Deuteronomy is an attempt to give expression to the religious experience of the nation's past so it clothes in the form of a covenant relation all past experience of that relation. But one change is introduced in the thought of this; the covenant terms take the form of a code of law. The condition is thereby established of a permanent relationship into which the Israelites automatically enter because they are the children of their forefathers with whom the Sinai covenant was made. They cannot therefore break the covenant, except through the extreme sins, such as idolatry.[2] The worst that can otherwise happen is to be temporarily outside its relationship by infringing the laws of Deuteronomy. An expression of this change is seen in the use of צִוָּה, (command, or appoint), in referring to the establishing of the covenant by Yahweh.[3] The term is not new, as it is found in JE,[4]

---

1. Cf. Ps.80:2; John 10:14; Heb.13:20; John 1:29; Rev.5:6; etc.
2. Cf. Deut.13.
3. Deut.4:13; 26:16; and in the Deuteronomic revision of history, Josh.23:16; Jud.2:20; 1Ki.11:11; 2Ki.17:15.
4. Josh.7:11.

but it now comes into prominence as a regular expression of the Yahweh covenant. One element in the covenant relationship which Deuteronomy emphasizes is that of faithfulness. Yahweh is

> "the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love Him and keep His commandments."[1]

In a Deuteronomic section of Kings and in Nehemiah the same expression is found, Yahweh "keepest covenant and mercy".[2] Deuteronomy is simply giving new expression to one of Yahweh's basic characteristics, namely His self-consistent activity. The covenants with David and Levi are further appearances of this thought. Yahweh, having made a covenant, will henceforth be faithful to it. Consequently, the nation which has entered into a covenant relationship with Him must reveal a corresponding faithfulness.

Jeremiah's view of the divine relationship swings away from the Deuteronomic conception and follows the spirit of that presented by his predecessors. His message, like that of Hosea, springs chiefly from his personal experience. As a prophet he is not received by the people so he is thrown back on Yahweh. In supplication and conversation with Him the prophet finds his strength and comfort.[3]

---

1. Deut.7:9. 2. 1Ki.8:23; Neh.9:32.
3. E.g., Jer.15:15f.; 14:13f.; 20:7f.

Through this Jeremiah came to see that all true religion is founded on an inward relation existing between God and man. The ritual, with all its externals of religion, is then unessential, and the time is coming when it shall be entirely done away with.[1] Even the temple, which had become a fetish to the people since the time of Isaiah, would be destroyed. The religion of the past is condemned since it was not the service which Yahweh had commanded,[2] and the prophet is quite indifferent to the reforms of King Josiah. These have failed[3] since Yahweh's demand is not for any outward obedience alone, but for a purging of the inner life. He is one who "triest the reins and the heart."[4] The same principle is even applied to prophecy. The mark of the true prophet as against the false "dreamers" lies in the inner consciousness of the speaker and in the morality of his message.[5]

Present through all the prophet's thinking is the conviction that the nation is doomed to destruction.[6] The people are steeped in sin and Yahweh will give them into the hand of their enemies,

---

1. Jer.3:16; 7:9-28.
2. Jer.7:21-24; 2:20f.
3. If chapter 11 is accepted. Cf. G.A.Smith,"Jeremiah," p.144f., J.Skinner,"Prophecy and Religion," chapter 6.
4. Jer.11:20; 4:3,4; 5:23; etc.
5. Jer.23:16-32.
6. E.g., Jer.7:32f.; 12:17.

particularly Babylon.[1] Yahweh, however, will not utterly destroy His people, for whom He has a gracious purpose.[2] Land will yet be bought and sold in Judah and Yahweh will gather His people in Jerusalem, making an everlasting covenant with them.[3] Yet the future relationship between God and people must be different from that of the past. A new covenant will be established, not one concerned with external things, as formerly, but a covenant written on the heart and in the inner life of man.[4] With the definite ending of the old covenant Yahweh's relation to the nation ceases. Yet He will not forsake His people. Thus all thought of a reciprocal contract is now absent, replaced by an intimate spiritual fellowship which cannot be permanently broken, not because of a legal bond, but because of Yahweh's unending grace.

In Exilic and post-Exilic thought the influence of both Jeremiah and Deuteronomy is strong. Thus Ezekiel thinks chiefly of the covenant in his view of the future, when, under the reign of David, Yahweh makes a covenant of peace with the restored

---

1. E.g., Jer.1:14f.; 32:3; etc.
2. Jer.3:17f.
3. Jer.32:6-15,36f.
4. Jer.31:30f. Cornill,"Intro." p.303, following Giesebrecht, claims "a substantial kernel" of chapter 31 as belonging to Jeremiah, and vss. 30-33 to be "incontestable".

Israel, the old covenant having been abolished through the sins of the people.[1] Deutero-Isaiah, unlike Ezekiel, does not speak of the Sinai covenant but of the Exodus. The covenant relation is the ideal to which Israel shall eventually attain and Yahweh's activity in this regard is not confined to one historic act but is constant. The divine faithfulness began with Abraham and would continue for all time.[2] In the future the covenant would likewise be incorporated with a human person, or persons, the Servant of Yahweh, through whose vicarious suffering an indissoluble fellowship is created between God and people.[3]

At the same time the priestly side of religion was active, resulting in the editing of the Priests' Code, which was eventually promulgated by Ezra at Jerusalem.[4] Through it the covenant relation is reflected as much the same as in Deuteronomy, except that it is even more formal and ritualistic in its expression.

The covenant relation, as portrayed by the leading minds of the Israelites from the time of Moses, is a relationship of grace, established through a historical act and guided constantly by Yahweh's purpose of

---

1. Cf. Ezek.16, 36, 37.
2. Isa.41.
3. Isa.42:5f.; 49:7f.; 52:13-53:12.
4. Cf. Driver,"Intro." p.135f.

salvation for man, with the eventual appearance of an age of peace under the leadership of a redeemed Israel leading a world wherein Yahweh would be universally acknowledged as God alone. But it was a two-sided relationship, as the Israelites had very definite duties to perform. This phase of the covenant is to be dealt with in full in the following chapter, but here it must be pointed out that the efforts of these leading minds were to maintain the moral significance of the relation in accordance with their ethical conception of the nature of Yahweh. The metaphors used by the prophets were to act as a corrective to the naturalistic and legal interpretation of the relation. The LXX version of the Old Testament has expressed this emphasis on the grace of God in the covenant by its use of διαθήκη, rather than συνθήκη, which is parallel to our English use of 'covenant' as an agreement or contract. Διαθήκη signifies a disposition by will or 'a will and testament', by a testator, and so Yahweh is the originator and sole disposer of the covenant relation. There is a certain two-sidedness to the meaning of this term, however, in that a testator binds himself to his testament and also binds his heirs who are to fulfil any conditions which may be stated.

Yet the emphasis is slightly altered from the meaning of the Hebrew ברית as used in the Old Testament generally.

Growing out of the thought of the covenant relation as an act of grace on the part of Yahweh is the question of the election of Israel to be the recipient of this divine grace. Choosing, with reference to Yahweh, is not prominent in the language of pre-Exilic records, appearing chiefly in Deuteronomy,[1] although it is frequent after the Exile, in Deutero-Isaiah and in the Psalms.[2] The thought of the election was, however, deeply entrenched in the minds of the Israelites. But to ask, "Why did Yahweh choose Israel rather than some other nation?" is to ask a question which rarely occurred to the Israelite. He took this for granted, just as he did the existence of God, and thought rather of its practical results. The covenant of Joshua at Shechem, which speaks of the choice as though it originates with Israel, does not contradict this, in that Yahweh is there mentioned as already having a claim on their loyalty through having brought them up out of Egypt.[3]

Reasons for the election of Israel may nevertheless be pointed out. As regards the Old Testament

---

1. E.g., 4:37; 12:21; also Jer.33:24.
2. E.g., Isa.41:8f.; 44:1f.; Ps.89:4; 105:6.
3. Josh.24:17, and cf. above, p.104f.

these are found in the realm of the ethical. Thus both J and E speak of Yahweh having seen the afflictions of the people in Egypt, which caused Him to lead them forth to a new land.[1] The election was due to the moral nature of Yahweh becoming active in the world. He might have chosen any other nation if He willed to do so, but He chose Israel and for a purpose that was moral.

In the First Book of Samuel, chapter 12 and vs. 22, the motive for Israel's election is said to be that it had "pleased the Lord". However, the good pleasure of Yahweh does not carry us very far as a motive. It is somewhat similar to the saying of Amos,

> "Have not I brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt? and the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir?"[2]

Both expressions imply that Yahweh could have chosen any other nation. Yet Amos gives further content to his words. Not only had Yahweh brought up His people out of Egypt and through the wilderness into Canaan, but He had sent prophets and Nazirites to them. These had not been heeded and their message was scoffed at. Therefore destruction was coming to Israel.[3] Even clearer is his statement,

> "You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities."[4]

---

1. Ex.3:7,8 (J); 3:9,10 (E).
2. Am.9:7.
3. Am.2:10-16.
4. Am.3:2.

This is one of the strongest and noblest statements in the whole of prophecy. Yahweh's choice of Israel and Israel's of Yahweh brought responsibility with it, that of following the moral will of their God. But this had been disregarded as the people were being drawn into a naturalistic conception of relationship to Yahweh, and as long as ceremonial requirements were met they thought the relation would continue unimpaired. Thus we again find the motive for Israel's election to be the carrying out of a moral purpose in the world: as yet there is no thought of a purpose 'to' the world. Deuteronomy carries the same idea of responsibility. It is emphatic regarding the special relation of Israel to Yahweh and the election of the nation. But this election involved, not privileges, but duties--the duties described in the Deuteronomic law. Doubtless the phrase in First Samuel (12:22), spoken by Samuel himself, is merely the use of a common figure of speech[1] with some conception of a moral relation lying behind it.

Isaiah does not raise this question, but following out the implications of his message we can glimpse the answer which might have been expected from him. Sublime holiness, such as that possessed by Yahweh, demands a people who will also be holy,

---

1. Cf. Num.24:1; Jud.13:23; 14:7; 1Sam.18:26.

not only to worship Him, but to manifest His holiness, and thus His glory, to the world.

A conception especially prominent in the time of the prophets is the motive of love toward Israel on the part of Yahweh. Thus Hosea says,

> "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt,"[1]

and there is his thought of the love of a husband toward his wife, while Deuteronomy declares that Yahweh "loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them."[2] In this Book there is added to the motive of love the reason that He would "keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers,"[3] probably added to emphasize the faithfulness of Yahweh to the covenant relation. No reason for this love is ever stated. The only indication in this regard is a negative one,

> "The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people."[4]

What is signified is really the free and enduring grace of God, out of which sprang love for Israel, and no age has been able to reach a deeper or truer faith than that.

Ezekiel's thought of the election being

---

1. Hos.11:1.
2. Deut.4:37; also 10:15.
3. Deut.7:8.
4. Deut.7:7.

for Yahweh's glory before the nations, with the consequent thought of His irresistible grace eventually bringing Israel to a new spirit,[1] is not as deep as the motive of love. With Deutero-Isaiah we have this thought of love but it is a love that goes beyond Israel to include the world. The election of Israel is for the purpose of service to Yahweh through revealing Him to all mankind.[2] The prophet applies, in a larger way, the conception of grace attained before the Exile.

Such is the thought of Israel regarding its election to be the people of Yahweh. Several further considerations might also be mentioned. In the first place, as Davidson states,

> "The Shemitic peoples are no doubt distinguished by what is called a genius for religion."[3]

He indicates[4] that among the Arabs, Assyrians, Moabites and others, the religious spirit pervaded the whole national life. Whether this should be called "a genius for religion" or not may be questioned. Yet we have only to consider the Israelites themselves, the work of Moses followed by the long line of lofty religious minds, seen in the prophets, and how their

---

1. Ezek.20; 39:21f. 2. Isa.43:3f.; 44:1; etc.
3. "Theol." p.249.
4. Ibid.--quoting from Riehm,"Alttest. Theol." p.48.

message affected many people in every ensuing age, resulting in their words being preserved century after century, to realize something of the depth of their capacity for the appreciation of the religious which marked that nation.

Further, there is the religious condition that existed among the Semitic people, namely, monolatry. One god was the centre of the religious life of the nation. Other nations had their gods but with a chief divinity about whom the rest were grouped in a secondary position, or a polytheism such as existed in Greece and Rome. In the case of Israel it was an exclusive monolatry, the worship[1] of a single God for the whole nation. This, along with the fact that He was conceived as possessing an ethical character, resulting in the union of ethics and religion, explains the wide gulf that came to separate the religion of Israel from that of its neighbours.

Finally, there is the particular type of mind which is characteristic of the Semitic people. Speculative or metaphysical thought had little place in their life. Rather, the interpretation of divine

---

1. The position of monotheism was not reached prior to the Exile, although all the prerequisites for such were previously present.

revelation was along the lines of the simple and the practical. Their only concern was with life as they experienced it, and their religion was the part which God played in it. Thus the great truths revealed to the Israelites were preserved in a pure form instead of becoming distorted or lost through being subjected to theological speculation, as has sometimes happened even within Christianity.

These latter considerations do not in any way detract from those which we have noted in the Biblical sources. They are more of the 'scientific' approach than the religious, and serve but to deepen the wonder and wisdom of the working out of God's purpose in the world. To see the creation of a people fitted to receive the divine revelation, the basing of that revelation on the free will relation of a covenant and the achievement of such a lofty height of spiritual appreciation as we have reviewed in this chapter, is to see the Spirit of God at work in the world for the redemption of man.

C H A P T E R 4

T H E R E L A T I O N O F I S R A E L

T O Y A H W E H

In all covenanting certain obligations were accepted by both parties concerned. These obligations might not be the same for each, nor even explicitly stated, yet they were inevitably present as such formed an essential element in a בְּרִית. In the covenant established between Yahweh and Israel there were, likewise, responsibilities resting on both parties. We have just reviewed the conception which the Israelites held of the relationship of Yahweh to the nation as a result of His election of Israel to be His people. We now turn to the other side of this covenant relation to examine the obligations which rested on Israel by virtue of their acceptance of His choice.

In the Biblical narrative, in the Book of Exodus, chapters 19 to 24 and 32 to 34, the conditions of the covenant concluded at Sinai are spoken of as being the "Ten Words"[1], commonly known as the Ten Commandments. There is still considerable divergence of opinion among scholars as to what composed the original Decalogue. Three forms of it, in particular,[2] have come under discussion in this regard. There is the

---

1. Ex.34:28.
2. A copy of the Decalogue in Hebrew was found by W.R. Nash, the Secretary of Biblical Research, in 1902. It is known as the "Nash Papyrus", and dates from about 100 A.D. This copy gives very much the same Decalogue as Deut.5, except that the order is different, the 7th law coming first. Another version of the Decalogue is found in the LXX, where the order is also changed, to 7-8-6.

code found in Exodus, chapter 34, vss. 14 to 28, from J; that of Exodus, chapter 20, vss. 2 to 17, from E; and that in Deuteronomy, chapter 5, vss. 6 to 21. Among these there are many similarities, especially with the Elohistic and Deuteronomic Codes.[1] The Jahwistic Code, however, is marked by a greater dissimilarity to either of the other two, shown by a preponderance of ceremonial regulations over the ethical. Which of these three is the oldest and so to be regarded as our nearest approach to the terms of the Sinai covenant?

The Deuteronomic Code, as it stands, seems quite plainly to be later than the others. The differences between it and the Elohistic Code are chiefly additions made to some of the laws and the inclusion of phrases, both characteristic of Deuteronomy. Thus the author would be copying an older form in which he made minor changes to suit the school of thought current in his own time.

With the Jahwistic Code we have, from its large amount of ceremonial law alone, what seems to be a very old form. Wellhausen regards this, with the Book of the Covenant (Exodus 20:22 to 23:19), to be "the starting point of the religious history of Israel,"[2] and the Elohistic Code to be a product of

---

1. For a comparison of these cf., e.g., Driver, "Intro." p.33f.
2. "Prolegomena to the History of Israel," p.392.

the later prophetic activity from the eighth century onward. But this is to misinterpret the basis of the prophetic message as an inheritance from the distant past. The Jahwistic Decalogue, however, may be nothing more than an appearance since the decalogue form is found elsewhere in the law-books.[1] If J had had practically the same code as E, the author of the JE narrative would scarcely have repeated it in Exodus, chapter 34, after having stated the Elohistic Code in chapter 20. Thus, instead of the Jahwistic Code he inserted this group of ceremonial laws, which, moreover, clearly parallel the laws in the Book of the Covenant.[2] This parallelism is of such an extent that we really possess another edition of the J Decalogue in the Book of the Covenant.

As a result there is only the Elohistic Code left for consideration, with the question as to whether a Mosaic origin may be claimed for it or not. For this the evidence of tradition cannot be lightly set aside. It points to a moral and spiritual element in the worship of Yahweh having been handed down from the time of Moses, while Moses himself is regarded as the one great figure standing at the beginning of Israel's religious history. As such a leader, it

---

1. Cf. Driver, "Intor." p.39f.
2. Cp., e.g., Ex.23:19 and 34:26, regarding not seething a kid in his mother's milk.

would be surprising if, in the circumstances, he did not set forth the basic principles of the religion which he founded in some concise form, and the tradition that in the Decalogue we have such a summary is too strong to be neglected. Moreover, Israel was even then beyond an entirely primitive stage of development and the setting up of purely moral laws was in no way an impossibility, as shown by the Babylonian Code of Hammurabi, dating from about 1900 B.C., which is thought to have exerted considerable influence on the Semitic peoples,[1] and by the Code of Solon in Athens, about 592 B.C.[2] Other early peoples, such as the Hittites and Assyrians, had their legal codes,[3] so the idea was not peculiar to the Israelites and its presence among them is in no way surprising.

A number of critics, however, while attributing to Moses some such code as we have in the "Ten Words", consider that one or several of the laws must be assigned to an age later than the Mosaic.[4] Especially is this thought to be true of the second 'Word', prohibiting the use of images. The using of these all

---

1. Cf., e.g., C.F.Kent,"Biblical Geography and History," pp.11f., 106; and J.G.Frazer,"Folk-lore in the Old Testament," iii., p.95f.
2. Cf. J.B.Bury,"History of Greece," p.182f.
3. Cf., e.g., N.H.Baynes,"Israel Amongst the Nations," p.38.
4. E.g., A.Kuenen,"The Religion of Israel to the Fall of the Jewish State," i., p.274f., and A.H. McNeile,"The Book of Exodus," p.lix.

through the time of the Judges and the early monarchy would indicate that no prohibition was then in force. It is not until the prophet Hosea appears that a definite condemnation of their use is found. Yet, along with this, there is the fact that the central sanctuary of Yahweh is never known to have possessed an image, whether in the time of Eli[1] or in the Jerusalem temple; the ark remained as the only material representation of Yahweh.[2] Also, the non-observance of a law, religious or otherwise, is no proof of its absence. While it is not possible to be dogmatic on the question there does seem to be evidence indicating that the Mosaic emphasis is on an imageless worship of Yahweh. It is entirely probable that, recoiling from the extreme idolatry of Egypt, Moses gave some guidane to his people in this regard. A possible suggestion is that the condemnation was directed against the making of molten images.[3] These were common among other peoples and would thus be a special source of danger to Yahweh-worship.

One difficulty in accepting the Elohistic

---

1. 1Sam.1-3.
2. The place of the Brazen Serpent in Yahweh-worship (Num.21:6-9; 2Ki.18:4), remains a question, but the lack of reference to it, especially by the prophets, indicates that it was not of great importance. But cp. A.Loisy,"The Religion of Israel," p.62f. and Kautzsch,"Rel." p.628.a.
3. E.g., K.Marti,"The Religion of the Old Testament," p.100.

Decalogue is that it has usually been read in the light of the high ethical standard of Christianity. It is possible, however, that the original significance was somewhat different because of a lower standard of thought. This has been pointed out by Kautzsch,[1] who thinks of the "Ten Words" as having to do with the preservation of rights. Thus he says,

> "All the Commandments may readily be subsumed under the prohibition: 'Thou shalt not do violence to (1) what belongs to God...(2) what belongs to thy neighbour,'"

the last command having to do with approaching, even in thought, a neighbour's property. Thus, as far as the commands themselves are concerned, it is quite within the realm of possibility that they may have originated in the Mosaic period.

Furthermore, this Decalogue, as we have it, is the result of a long growth, reaching even into post-Exilic times. Thus additions would doubtless be made, such as those in the Deuteronomic Code. The possibility is that originally all the commands were expressed in a uniform style which was simple and concise, as we still have the sixth,"Thou shalt not kill," and some others. This at once eliminates many difficulties created by the longer forms, especially with the command against images and the sabbath-law,

---

1. "Rel." p.634.a.

as well as difficulties created by comparison with the Deuteronomic Code. Also it makes the Code more in keeping with its title of the "Ten Words", implying very brief statements, and one that would be more easily retained in the memory of the average Israelite.

From this discussion it can be seen that finality regarding the Mosaic authorship of the Decalogue is scarcely possible. Yet the evidence tends to support the view that at least an undeveloped form of it came from his day. This being true, we have what constituted the conditions of the Sinai-covenant. These would not be given in the supernatural manner indicated in the Book of Exodus.[1] The most that we are justified in saying is that a symbolic ceremony of covenant-making took place in which Yahweh became recognized as Israel's God and Israel accepted the position of being Yahweh's people. The immediate covenant obligation resting on the latter was that of entering into the service of Yahweh and thus of doing His will. It was the elucidation of this will by Moses which gave to the Israelites, and through them to the world, the charter of religion as seen in the Decalogue. Unfitted to become, itself, the basis for a law, particularly in the field of religion,[2] because

---

1. Ex.19:3-19; 24:12f.
2. E.g., nothing is said of what is to be done on the sabbath.

of its negative character, the Decalogue yet provided a standard according to which all future development could be judged.

In considering the Mosaic legislation there must also be included that body of law which is clearly recognized by scholars as being old, namely the Book of the Covenant,[1] Exodus, chapter 20, vs. 22, to chapter 23, vs. 33, (chapter 34).[2] The condition of society reflected by its precepts is that of a simple agricultural type. This is revealed by the prominence of domestic animals, the ox, ass and sheep, and by the primitive law of "an eye for an eye," the 'lex talionis'.[3] Thus the Book of the Covenant may be regarded as arising out of the conditions of the settlement in Canaan, when the majority of the Israelites became agriculturists. It is possible, however, to see in it even an earlier stage. The journey of the Israelites through the desert after the Exodus, led them to the country east of the Jordan River and the Dead Sea. Here they were able to conquer Heshbon and gain control of the East-Jordan land. As a result, the Israelites, remaining here for a considerable number of years, began to learn the arts of cultivation and a higher type of

---

1. So called from the use of the phrase in Ex.24:7.
2. According to Driver,"Intro." p.35f.
3. Ex.21:23-22:12.

civilization before the entrance into Canaan began.[1] The formulating of such laws as we find in the Book of the Covenant is what might be expected under these conditions, especially when we remember that Moses was still the leader of his people. For this reason we may, with justice, regard the Code as reflecting to a large extent the direct influence of Moses.

The ethical significance of this legislation is seen, first of all, in the source from which it arose. In Exodus, chapter 19, vs. 13, Moses is shown as sitting in judgment over the people. All matters of doubt and controversy were brought before him. The task became such an arduous one that his father-in-law advised the appointment of lesser judges who would take care of the smaller matters, reserving the important ones for Moses. In the parallel account in Numbers[2] it speaks of seventy as the number of judges, or elders, who were appointed. In itself this is not unnatural, as in tribal organization the leader of the tribe, or sheik, acted as a judge, while minor matters and family disputes were settled by the head of the family. Doubtless the 'elders' chosen by Moses would be the tribal sheiks, who had already had some experience in this position, The organization was similar to that of early Greece

---

1. Num.21f.; 32.

2. Num.11:16; 24f.

with its king, elders and people,[1] which was a form common to most primitive peoples. Beyond this there were no official judges or law courts. Disputes were settled according to the customs which had grown up and been inherited from the past, since it was Custom which directed the social, political and religious habits.

The significant thing in connection with Moses, however, is that he occupied his judicial position, not only as the leader of the people, but as the representative of Yahweh, the covenant God.[2] The judicial decisions and laws, then, emanated, not from the person of a tribal sheik, but from Yahweh Himself. Moses acted merely as the interpreter of the will of Israel's God. In this way Custom ceased to be the standard of conduct. Former usages might be condoned or condemned, but in either case they were no longer customs. The decisions of Moses and the observances he sanctioned came to the Israelites as the personal commands of Yahweh.

Thus a different standard of morality comes into being. Certain things are commanded, things which are either to be done or to be left undone. The observance or non-observance of the commands involves an act of the will, and we find conduct raised

---

1. Cf. J.B.Bury,"History of Greece," p.54f.
2. Ex.18:19,20.

to the level of conscious morality. Punishment, in the form of misfortune, follows non-observance because it is disobedience and rebellion. This punishment must be either right or wrong. As a result the thought of sin enters as a factor in personal conduct, which at once creates a moral standard.

This brought an enlarging of thought regarding sin and the beginning of that idea which is fundamental to the Old Testament, namely, that all sin is really sin against God. Previously the most common terms for sin were רַע, 'evil' or 'violence', and חָטָאת, חָטָא and חַטָּאת, all having the sense of 'missing one's aim'.[1] The last term, with two others, occur in one verse, Exodus, chapter 34 and vs. 7, and are henceforth the most important. These are עָוֹן, meaning 'perversity' or 'depravity', which enters the sphere of the quality of actions, and פֶּשַׁע, meaning 'transgression' and so expresses the voluntariness of sin. Etymology cannot carry one very far, yet there can be seen in the use of these terms a distinct setting over against each other of what is good and what is bad. With the use of such terms as עָוֹן and פֶּשַׁע there is expressed a conscious turning aside, or falling away from, a recognized standard, and the matter becomes definitely moral.

---

1. Gen.6:5; Ex.34:7; Deut.15:9; Gen.13:13.

In ethical standards the Mosaic legislation marks a real advance. Its whole aim might be said to be the preservation of the rights both of God and of men. This is true not only in the Decalogue, but in such laws as those for the protection of servants, strangers, widows and orphans.[1] Even the 'lex talionis' probably marks an advance from the custom of uncontrolled retaliation to the position of allowing 'only' an eye for an eye. Thus Moses interpreted the justice and compassion of Yahweh as constituting Yahweh's demands of the Israelites, and this requirement proved to be the foundation stone of all later morality. The work of Moses, as judge and law-giver, performed that fundamental task of uniting religion and ethics, giving this Mosaic legislation its historical significance.

A further element in this legislation is that which deals with ceremonial matters. It is beyond doubt that many of the pre-Mosaic usages continued throughout the years of the Exodus. We have an example in the traditional feast celebrated at the beginning of it. Yet such a formative period could not help but leave its mark on ceremonial as well as on social customs. Thus there is the regulation of Exodus, chapter 23, vs. 18, regarding the feast of

---

1. Ex.21:1f.,26; 22:21.

Unleavened Bread, those of verses 14, and following, regarding this and the feasts of Harvest and Ingathering, and the directions given for the building of altars in chapter 20, verses 24 and following. Likewise, sacrifices were recognized. These were offered in connection with the religious festivals, when part was given to God and the rest provided a feast for the people. They were community events, since all property was regarded as being possessed by the tribe and the deity in common. The practice of sacrifice in the Israel of Mosaic times was an inheritance from the distant past and similar to the practice of other Semitic peoples. Beyond certain precepts wholly concerned with the regulating of ritual forms, as has just been noted, there is no record, in the earliest literature, indicating the institution of anything entirely new in the way of sacrifice. This is due to the covenant relation not being instituted through it. Rather, the relation was based on Yahweh's choice of Israel. Thus, while sacrifice was the central feature of the cult, it never became a central feature of the covenant relation. The highly developed sacrificial system of later times becomes, chiefly, but an expression of this relation. As A.C.Welch states, sacrifice was "a subordinate and an unessential part of Yahweh-worship."[1]

---

1. "The Religion of Israel Under the Kingdom," p.17.

Apparently Moses actually originated very little in the matter of ceremonial forms. It seems that the ark, with its accompanying "tent of meeting" where Moses went to consult Yahweh by means of the sacred lot, the Urim and Thummim,[1] were the only real innovations made under his leadership. His setting apart of his own family of Levi to act in the capacity of priests,[2] while in all likelihood historical, was not the creation of a strictly priestly class, since later, for example, Gideon offered sacrifice with his own hands.[3] The significant thing is that the emphasis of Moses is not on this phase of Yahweh-worship and that from the very beginning of the covenant relation ancient usages were taken up and made to express that relation.

Between the laws relating to ceremonial forms and those which are social and ethical, no distinction is drawn. Except for the introductory Decalogue which divides them, both are found mixed indiscriminately in the Book of the Covenant, with all the laws equally the command of Yahweh. This marks the whole Mosaic legislation as being primitive, and was a necessary first stage. Yet it reveals that characteristic which is true of all later Israelite religion, namely, of bringing into the

---

1. Ex.33:7f.
2. Ex.32:26f.; Deut.10:8; 18:1f.
3. Jud.6:26f.; on this question cf., e.g., W. Baudissin,"Priests and Levites," HDB, iv., p.67f.

domain of religion the whole life of the nation and the individual. This follows directly from the covenant relation. Had the covenant obligations been thought of as concerned only with religious praxis the new relation would have been no different from that between any other Semitic people and its deity, nor would Yahweh have been any different from any other deity. Thus the real significance of the covenant would have been removed. But Yahweh was different, His nature was ethical. Hence the obligations of a relationship with Him must go beyond the sphere of ritual to enter that of conduct. Every phase of the national life, whether social, political or religious, is involved. It becomes the personal concern of Yahweh and subject to His direction. As a result, the covenant was not merely a theoretical conception but a practical engagement for everyday life.

The value of the Mosaic legislation lies, not so much in the individual laws themselves, as in the spirit permeating the whole. This spirit is distinctly ethical. Although the ceremonial law is as important as the ethical, it is also true that the ethical has become as important as the ceremonial. Thus the covenant relation, by setting up moral obligations, served to mark off the Israelites from all

---

other peoples by lifting them above the forms of naturalistic religion. It was also a statement of the relation existing between Yahweh and Israel. There were certain things against which Yahweh reacted, others which He demanded. If the relation was to continue these terms must be observed.

After the Israelites entered Canaan the unity of the nation was broken by the settlement through individual tribal activity. Because of this the national consciousness was low and therefore, also, the consciousness of the relation to Yahweh. He was still their God, but lacking unity in organization He was thought of chiefly as a leader in such matters as warfare. Even this reveals the unifying influence of the covenant.

Nor were the covenant obligations entirely forgotten. It was the sacred duty of the tribes to respond to a call made in the name of Yahweh, since, in the Song of Deborah, reproaches and curses are heaped on those who did not come to His help. Also the traditions of the past remained alive in the minds of the people. These were continued chiefly orally, but it must have been during these years that a beginning was made at bringing them together and putting them into a written form.

There were the Judges themselves, who, contrary to their title, were not legal arbiters, but champions of Yahweh against all enemies, either from among or outside of the Israelite people. Their authority was limited, being confined to one tribe, or at the most to several, and was usually of a spasmodic nature, Gideon being the only one who was succeeded by a son.[1] Thus, as defenders of the name and worship of Yahweh and upholding the customs of the past, many of which now expressed the principles of the teaching of Moses, they helped to keep alive a consciousness of the bond existing between the people and Yahweh. Perhaps their greatest contribution was the maintaining of the unity of the Israelites, loose though this was, by coming forward in moments of crisis to save the independence of their tribe, and by coming in the name of Yahweh.[2] Such was regarded as further evidence of the divine care for the Israelites and promoted a sense of loyalty to Him.

The Israelites displayed a higher ethical standard than did the Canaanites or the surrounding tribes. This was revealed by the widespread indignation at the treatment accorded the concubine of the Levite at Gibeah,[3] the sacredness of an oath, even

---

1. Jud.9:1.
2. Cf., e.g., Jud.6:11f.; 10:15f.; 13:2f.
3. Jud.20:1f.

though made to a harlot or involving great personal loss,[1] the Nazirite vows, revealing an appreciation of the simpler and purer life of nomad days,[2] and the recurrence of phrases such as, "Do not this folly,"[3] and "No such thing ought to be done in Israel."[4] During these years, although there was little progress ethically, there was also little decline.

In the sphere of religious praxis there was the greatest development of the period, due to the syncretism with Baal worship. This meant the Canaanizing of Israel, which deeply influenced the conception of the covenant obligations. The religious festivals, already influenced by the East-Jordan sojourn, became those of an agricultural people. There were marked by a low level of religious expression, being accompanied by hilarious feasting, with much wine and dancing, while the offering of sacrifices rapidly grew in number and in importance. Even human sacrifice was recognized. Among the Canaanites this was frequent, especially the sacrifice of new-born children.[5] With the Israelites it never attained much importance, although it was present from ancient times. The whole spirit of Yahweism was antagonistic to it, as revealed

---

1. Josh.6:22; Jud.11:35.
2. Jud.13:4,5.
3. Jud.19:23; 1Sam.13:12.
4. 2Sam.13:12; Gen.34:14; 1Sam.24:6.
5. Cf. J.G.Frazer,"Folk-lore in the Old Testament," i., p.417f.

in Yahweh's intervention in Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac.[1] When it does appear it is always in circumstances out of the ordinary, as in the case of Jephthah,[2] or under the Kings Ahaz and Manasseh,[3] when it was due to outside influence. Another important feature was the presence of the mazzebah, (מַצֵּבָה), or sacred stone, and the asherah, (אֲשֵׁרָה), the sacred pole or tree, found at every sanctuary. As symbols of the Baals, they were common to primitive Semitic religion. The Israelites having previously been nomads, these representations of divinity, which could not be moved from place to place, could not have played any large part in their cult. Now, however, they were taken over and made to symbolize Yahweh. Sexual orgies in homage to the forces of generation and the "hiero-douloi," of both sexes, also entered Israelitic religion at this time. Thus the low naturalistic forms of expressing relationship to a deity became prominent, and the covenant responsibilities were regarded as a mechanical observance of rites, utterly apart from moral considerations.

Accompanying this development was that of the priesthood. With the taking over of the sanctuaries there came the need of recognized priests, and Levites

---

1. Gen.22.
2. Jud.11:29f.
3. 2Ki.16:3; 21:6.

came to be regarded as such. Not yet, however, were they regarded as necessary for the most important part of the cultus, the offering of sacrifice. This could be done by anyone, such as Gideon, Manoah, Micah's son and Samuel.[1] The duties of the priests seemed to have been chiefly confined to carrying the ark,[2] caring for the sanctuaries, and giving to all who inquired of them, oracles, or statements, of the will of Yahweh.

One service the priests and sanctuaries performed was to preserve the history and traditions of the past. Many of the narratives in the earlier Biblical sources are centred in some sanctuary, such as Shechem and Beersheba,[3] so these places played a large part in contributing to our historical material. Further, except for the Judges themselves, the priests were the only recognized representatives of Yahweh and teachers of His religion. Yet, through them religion became more formal and ritualistic, giving impetus to interpreting the covenant obligations as primarily the observing of the correct rites.

The period of the Judges closes with the figure of Samuel, one of Israel's greatest spirits and

---

1. Jud.6:19f.; 13:19; 17:5; 1Sam.1:1 and 2:18; and cf. above, p.102f.
2. E.g., Josh.3:3f.; 4:10.
3. Jud.9 and Gen.21:22f.

the greatest since Moses. The opening chapters of First Samuel tell of his education and call to the priesthood. He is also spoken of as a Judge[1] and a seer (רֹאֶה).[2] Tradition has coloured the history of his life and influence, yet this alone bears witness to his importance. He came at a critical time in the history of Israel, when the Philistine aggression was endangering the existence of the nation. The people thought that the favour of Yahweh had been lost. The covenant relation and its obligations were prominent in their minds and they were asking what Yahweh required of them. Samuel's task was to supply the answer.

One way in which he did so was by his influence on the prophetic order. The נְבִיאִים seem to have been bands, or schools, of men who, in the name of Yahweh, proclaimed His will. This came to them in the characteristic form of ecstasy. Alone, these roving bands could scarcely have attained any very high development, but under the guidance of a person such as Samuel they possessed great possibilities. Their ecstatic behaviour was foreign to him. He was not a prophet in this sense, but an inspired leader of the religious life of his people. Yet he had a close connection with the prophets. A company

---

1. 1Sam.7:15. 2. 1Sam.9:9.

of them lived at Ramah, Samuel's home, and, on one occasion at least, he acted as their appointed leader.[1] Thus Samuel guided and influenced these bands, particularly along the line of patriotism. Going through the land they called upon the people to resist the Philistines in the name of Yahweh, performing the double service of inspiring the Israelites and of reminding them of the covenant relation of earlier days. Through this influence of Samuel it is likely that the fusion took place of the characteristics of the נביא and the רואה, or חוזה, which we find in the later prophets.[2]

The other step taken in this critical time was the creation of the kingship. In this Samuel also played an important part, anointing Saul to be the first king of Israel[3] and giving the king his full support until antagonised by the one whom he had been instrumental in appointing.[4] With the establishment of the monarchy there was an end of the Judges, and the virtual ending of Samuel's life work. As the last of the Judges he did much to preserve the higher relation to Yahweh, and he laid the foundation of the prophetic order, which was to achieve the highest conception of the covenant obligations prior to the New Testament.

---

1. 1Sam.19:18f.; and cf. 10:5.
2. Cf. 1Sam.9:9.
3. 1Sam.10:1.
4. 1Sam.13:11f.; 15:10f.

The monarchy brought an important influence into the sphere of Israel's social and religious life. This influence could only become really operative after the introductory years were over, that is, after the reign of Saul. His kingship was a period of transition from the loosely organized state of the Judges to that of the well established kingdom which David perfected. When this transition had been accomplished it meant a unified nation with a capital city, Jerusalem. Consequently there would be an organized government and administration of justice, with the power of the king and his army standing behind it.

A somewhat parallel influence was felt in religion. The ark was brought to Jerusalem and placed eventually in the temple which Solomon erected.[1] This city thus became the spiritual centre of the nation, which, being the royal sanctuary as well, attained high prestige and a wide influence. The other shrines and the local "high places" throughout the country, taken over from or shared with the Canaanites, remained for many years, but the superior holiness of the Jerusalem sanctuary was always acknowledged.

This change necessarily involved considerable development in the cult. There would be a new emphasis

---

1. 2Sam.6 and 1Ki.8.

on correctness of detail in the ritual, accompanied by a much greater splendor and elaborateness. Something of this would be manifest throughout the whole nation, both through the example set by the Jerusalem sanctuary, with that of the sanctuaries at Bethel and Dan under the Divided Kingdom, and through the fact that settled social conditions always cause a trend in this direction. Now J and E assume definite form and provide a norm for the religious activity of the people by ordering and regulating the sacrificial system. The laws of Exodus, chapter 34 (vss.14-26), reflect the prevalent ideas. Three times a year all the males are to "appear before Yahweh," at the Mazzoth Festival, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Tabernacles. No one is to come empty-handed, but to bring the "first of the first-fruits" of the land, and directions are given as to how the sacrifices are to be treated. From these regulations the thought underlying the festivals can be seen. They were community, or national, observances since every male was to take part. Also, they were an acknowledgement of allegiance to Yahweh since everyone was to bring a gift. This marks a change in the conception of sacrifice. Formerly expressing the thought of sacramental communion, with the change to an agricultural type of society it became a gift. Yahweh, becoming king and lord of the land, must be

---

approached, as in the case of worldly kings, only with gifts. Thus the festivals came to form a vital element in the expression of religion, being accepted as an integral part of the covenant obligations. They constituted another influence working toward the influx of naturalistic ideas and practices.

With development in the cult there is a tendency shown toward specialization, that is, leaving the performance of religious rites to the more qualified persons. Thus sacrificing is increasingly left in the hands of the priests, until later, with Deuteronomy, it became their chief function and could only be carried on correctly at a central sanctuary.[1] As a result they occupy an increasingly important position as representatives of Yahweh, and their office as teachers of religion, through the giving of "Toroth," would likewise be strengthened.

We find, however, that the kings also have a great deal to do with sacrifice and other priestly functions. When David has the ark brought to Jerusalem we are told that he offered sacrifices, wore a linen ephod, the priestly garment, and pronounced a blessing on the people.[2] Solomon acts in a similar manner,[3] while Jeroboam I and Ahaz both offer /sacri-

---

1. Cf. Deut.33:8f.; 12:5f.; 26:4.
2. 2Sam.6:13f.
3. 1Ki.8:5,55f.; 9:25.

sacrifices.[1] Then there is the appointment and control of the priests exercised by David and Solomon in connection with Abiathar and Zadok.[2] These facts might be said to point to the kings occupying the position of high-priest. Yet the term "high priest" does not seem to be used before the Exile. There was undoubtedly a 'chief priest,' as seen in such men as Abiathar, who exercised control over the royal sanctuary, with a certain amount of influence over other places of worship. Yet the king is never referred to as even a chief priest. The power of the kings in religion would spring from their position as proprietors of the sanctuary, a position which paralleled that of Micah in his sanctuary. Also the king would have priestly prerogatives, being the representative of the nation in its covenant relation with Yahweh. As a result there was the unifying of the national and the religious ideals, which was strengthened by the religious foundation of the monarchy and the attitude revealed by the earlier sources which regard the institution as a proof of the grace of Yahweh.[3] The influence of this on the thought of the covenant obligations was to make patriotism synonymous with piety, and Israelitic citizenship the predominant requirement for a right relationship with Yahweh.

---

1. 1Ki.12:25f.; 2Ki.16:12,13.
2. Cf. 1Sam.22:20f.; 2Sam.8:17; 1Ki.1:25f.; 2:26,35.
3. Cf. 1Sam.9:1-10:16.

Another class of persons regarded as representatives of Yahweh were the Rechabites. These clung to the simplicity of the nomadic life, living in groups in tents and refusing the products of vine culture.[1] Similar to them, though not living in organized communities but in a freer manner, were the Nazirites. In spite of uncertainty regarding the nature of the early Nazirites it is clear that they were persons consecrated to the worship of Yahweh.[2] The influence of these sects was probably greater than the few references to them would seem to indicate, as they were a constant reminder to the people of their earlier history when the relation of the nation to Yahweh was uninfluenced by the complex and lower elements which came with the settlement in Canaan.

But more important than all other persons or groups were the prophets, who now begin to exert an increasingly powerful influence on the national life. Individual men appear who, under a call from their God and through His guidance, take a prominent place in the public life of the nation. Thus the prophet Nathan, at the court of David, advises the king not to build a temple to Yahweh, frankly rebukes his sin and is the instigator of the plan by which Solomon succeeds David.[3] Later Ahijah inspires Jeroboam

---

1. 2Ki.10:15 and Jer.35:6,7. 2. Num.6:1-21.
3. 2Sam.7; 12; 1Ki.1.

to lead the rebellion which resulted in the division of the nation into two kingdoms,[1] while Elijah and Elisha play equally leading parts in the politics of their day.

Prophecy had thus developed a long way. Bands of prophets of the type of Samuel's time still existed, as Obadiah hid a group of one hundred from the persecution of Jezebel[2] and others lived at Bethel, Gilgal and one, numbering at least fifty, lived at Jericho.[3] But leading figures appeared among them who blended the characteristics of the seer, who simply revealed what Yahweh had spoken, and of the nebi'im, who declared the words of Yahweh while under the influence of an ecstatic trance. Such were Elijah and Elisha who, while retaining much of the ecstatic element,[4] yet rose far above the average. This blending is also illustrated by both the terms of prophet and seer being used with reference to the same person, as in the case of Gad.[5] Then, in the person of Micaiah ben Imlah, we find an entire absence of the ecstatic and a combining of only the best of both the ancient seer and the prophet. There is even a distinct hostility appearing between the old and the new, as Micaiah opposes the common prophets, stating that "a lying

---

1. 1Ki.11:29f.; 12:15.
2. 1Ki.18:4.
3. 2Ki.2:3; 4:38f.; 2:7.
4. Cf. 1Ki.18:46; 2Ki.3:15; 9:1,11.
5. 2Sam.24:11.

spirit" from Yahweh caused them to speak falsely regarding Ahab's proposed campaign against Ramoth-gilead.[1] In these leading men is revealed a message constantly becoming more positive. From simply a patriotic defence of Yahweh prophecy attains a fuller understanding of His demands and begins to actively apply this to existing conditions.

One point here is significant. These prophets always attack the royal household when condemning any breach of faith or morals on the part of either king or people. They do so because the king is the leader and representative of the nation. The covenant relation was instituted between the nation and Yahweh. Thus its obligations rest upon the people as a whole, and we see the prophets as the exponents of those principles expressed by the Mosaic Decalogue. Seeing their vocation in this light, their message is not for the king as an individual but for the nation itself through the person of the king. This position, of representing Yahweh before the nation, had formerly been occupied by the priests, but now the prophets begin to take it over. By doing so they turn the religion of Israel into a different and a higher channel.

Arriving at this stage in the development

---

1. 1Ki.22.

of prophecy we can now look back and see that such a phenomenon, culminating in the writing prophets, came as an inevitable result. Given a conception of God such as Moses had realized and had interpreted to his people, a spiritual God with a moral purpose, it necessitated the presence of representatives to interpret His will. Kings and priests had proved to be insufficient. The one was carried away by political expediency and self-interest, the other by attention to ritual and the furthering of the cult. Thus, if the nation was to fulfil its part of the covenant relation and be true to the God who had chosen it for a definite purpose, the people must have the covenant obligations made known to them, and so be led to do the will of Yahweh. This was felt by the prophets themselves. "Yahweh will do nothing but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets," Amos declared,[1] while Isaiah and Jeremiah both state that Yahweh Himself had placed His words in their mouths.[2] Hosea has the same thought when he speaks of Moses as a prophet.[3] They were men who felt an impulse from God moving within them, impelling them to denounce wrong as contrary to His character and will, and to proclaim His judgment on wrong with His goodness to those worthy of His love.

---

1. Am.3:7. 2. Isa.6:8f.; Jer.1:7.
3. Hos.12:14.

So keenly did Jeremiah feel this that the word of Yahweh was as a burning fire shut up in his bones, forcing him to speak,[1] and Amos says, "The Lord Yahweh hath spoken, who can but prophesy?"[2] It is their faith in Yahweh, with the impelling sense of His moral demands, which brings the prophets to their task, or, as A.C.Welch expresses it,

> "Israel's pride and strength is to obey the will of its Maker, a will which is righteous and just, in the sense in which men recognise justice and righteousness in their relations to one another. Hence the State which serves Him must have a moral basis, and the prophet who is His mouthpiece must protest against anything which saps that moral basis."[3]

Israel must remain faithful to its covenant obligations. Only by doing so can it prosper. From the beginning of prophecy this is its basic principle, a principle involving loyalty to Yahweh and the following of His moral will.

This impresses upon us the source of the prophetic message, that is, Yahweh. Although filling a large place in the political and social life of Israel, the prophets, in their thinking, do not begin with the facts in the world around them and then argue back to the relation of things to Yahweh. Rather, they begin with Yahweh and His demands, according to which they boldly and consistently measure the

---

1. Jer.20:9. 2. Am.3:8.
3. "The Religion of Israel Under the Kingdom," p.54.

whole life of their nation.[1] They are emissaries of God first, politicians and economists second. It is not, for example, the advance of Assyria into the Western world which led Amos to proclaim the doom of the Northern Kingdom, as R.S.Cripps maintains.[2] It was the moral and religious condition of the people, their neglect of the covenant obligations, which would be the primary cause of its ruin. "Shall not the land tremble for this?" he asks, after pointing out the shortcomings of the people,[3] and Isaiah follows him in speaking of Assyria as merely the instrument by which Yahweh's punishment is to be carried out.[4] The one purpose of the prophetic activity was to represent Yahweh and reveal to the nation the obligations of its covenant relation with Him. It was this which called the prophetic order into being and, through fulfilling its task, gave the religion of Israel its distinctive character.

Little need be said of the religious conditions which faced the prophets. In considering their message these become quite evident. It is sufficient to say that these conditions were largely determined by the syncretism of Yahweh worship with that of the Baals. The high places remained throughout the country and

---

1. E.g., Am.7:7f.
2. "Commentary on the Book of Amos," p.101.
3. Am.8:4f.
4. Isa.10:5.

still retained their old paraphernalia of worship. This left the people open to the influence which came from the enforced official recognition of the religion of an overlord, as when Judah became tributary to Assyria or Babylonia. Thus new usages crept in, such as the new altar of Ahaz[1] and worship of the "queen of heaven."[2] Against this Popular Religion the voices of the prophets are heard in a united condemnation.

Their protest is directed, above all, against the idolatry and idolatrous practices of the people. Hosea particularly emphasizes this in his thought of unfaithfulness. Using the figure of his wife breaking her marriage vows, he declares the nation has committed adultery. It has broken its moral relation to its divine husband, Yahweh, and played the harlot--since the moral element of marriage-love was absent--with Baal for gifts of "corn and wine and oil."[3] Deuteronomy clearly shows the influence of Hosea in its strong opposition to idolatry. Anyone who seeks to draw the people away to serve other gods is to be stoned to death. Then, in Jeremiah we also find Hosea's figure of adultery being used in this connection.[4] Idolatry in the narrower sense of the use of images is likewise

---

1. 2Ki.16:10f.
2. E.g., Jer.7:17f.
3. Hos.1-3.
4. Jer.3:1f.; 13:27.

condemned, Hosea being the first to denounce the evil.

> "Ephraim is joined to idols," and
>
> "Now they sin more and more, and have made them molten images of their silver, and idols according to their own understanding, all of it the work of the craftsmen,"[1]

reveal his intense feeling against the practice. Henceforth the leaders of true religion, the authors of Deuteronomy, Isaiah and Jeremiah all follow his lead.[2]

Concerning sacrifices they are equally outspoken, Amos treats them with scorn, crying,

> "Come to Bethel and transgress; at Gilgal multiply transgression; and bring your sacrifices every morning."[3]

This was the sort of thing the people liked to do. They thought that a multitude of sacrifices would be pleasing to Yahweh, but they were wrong. Sin could not be so easily passed over. Repentance must come from within, since it is judgment and righteousness that Yahweh demands.[4] In the same tone Isaiah declares,

> "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me?...I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats...Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth."[5]

But he says,

---

1. Hos.4:17 and 13:2; cf. also 8:4,5; 10:1; etc.
2. Deut.16:22; Isa.2:8; 1:29; Jer.1:16; 2:13,22f.; 11:12f.; etc.
3. Am.4:4.
4. Am.5:24; Hos.6:6f.; Jer.7:4-11.
5. Isa.1:11,14; cf. also Jer.6:20.

> "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall
> eat the good of the land."[1]

The nation's past is brought before the people and the present measured beside it, only to be found wanting.

> "Did ye, then, bring sacrifices to me
> In the desert, O house of Israel?"[2]

a rhetorical question which takes for granted the answer, "No." Jeremiah likewise declares that in the desert no command was given regarding burnt offerings and sacrifices,[3] but only the command of obedience to Yahweh. Their words are important as indicating the conception then held as to the terms of the covenant relationship when first instituted. That conception was an accurate one, for, although sacrifices were present in the wilderness days, they formed no essential part of the commands or ordinances on which the new relationship between people and deity was established.

The prophets realized that the significant element in the covenant was its ethical content. This they proclaimed by contrasting the faith in sacrifices, the festivals, and all the other practices of the cult, with what Yahweh really demanded, namely, justice, love

---

1. Isa.1:19.
2. Am.5:25, according to T.K.Cheyne,"The Two Religions of Israel," p.191.
3. Jer.7:22.

and obedience to His commands. Only by observing these could the nation be faithful to its covenant relation. Those scholars who maintain that the prophets utterly repudiated all ritual and sacrifice[1] go beyond the words of the prophets themselves. In fact there are several indications which point to an appreciation of ritual on the part of the prophets. Amos speaks of the new moon and the sabbath as being restraints on unjust actions, there being no buying or selling on those days.[2] Deuteronomy, while condemning all idolatry, makes full provision for cult observances. Isaiah received his call to office while in the temple, the altar and fire being closely connected with his experience, and he states that the people may trust in Zion because Yahweh founded it.[3] Jeremiah, in his thought of the future, speaks of the day when the people will again hear the watchman calling them to go up to Zion to worship.[4] These references must be taken into consideration when determining the attitude of the prophets toward the cult, and they are not without weight. This attitude, while one of frank condemnation, is a condemnation based on the absence of love and of knowledge of Yahweh. In comparison with

---

1. E.g., K.Marti,"The Religion of the Old Testament," and E.Pace,"Ideas of God in Israel."
2. Am.8:5.
3. Isa.6; 14:32.
4. Jer.31:6; on this cf. G.A.Smith,"Jeremiah," p.299f.

these things the cult is of slight importance to them and they do not form any complete theory regarding it. Hosea seems to have a greater appreciation of the ritual worship than the other prophets. For him the great evil is that the worship has really been not that of Yahweh, but of Baal, and thus adultery. His attack, then, was centred, not in the rejection, but in the purification of the ritual. Hosea was at one with the rest in that the whole emphasis of his message is on the ethical relation of the nation to Yahweh, which is placed in opposition to the popular conception of this relationship.

This popular conception, as the prophets see it, is based on a failure to realize the true character of Yahweh. The multitude of sacrifices and many of the ritual practices, especially those due to Canaanite influence, were offered in the name of Yahweh. The popular mind had reconciled these with the worship, and therefore with the character, of the national God. Only through having this conception could the people show such ingratitude to the One who had guided and protected them in the past, bringing them up from Egypt and destroying their enemies before them.[1] Yet they thought of Yahweh as a national God who would, because of this, remain their God in spite

---

1. Am.2:9f.; also Hos.11:1f.; Isa.1:3; 5:1f.; Jer.2:20f.

of anything they might do. Isaiah's prophecies regarding the inviolability of Zion, backed by the evidence of Sennacherib's retreat in 701 B.C.,[1] reacted on the popular mind in a similar way: Yahweh would not allow pagan hands to despoil His temple or His holy city of Jerusalem. Therefore the people within it would surely be safe. Such a trust, however, was not deep enough to meet their needs, and they turned to treaties with other nations for protection,[2] or to their own military strength and their treasures of gold and silver.[3]

The prophets are constantly seeking to turn the people's thoughts to Yahweh Himself, who, because His nature was an ethical one, demanded a corresponding ethical conduct on their part. Amos tells them,

> "Seek ye me, and ye shall live; but seek not Bethel, nor enter into Gilgal."[4]

Hosea declares there is "no knowledge of God in the land,"[5] and both Isaiah and Jeremiah speak of Israel as not knowing Yahweh, or as forgetting Him.[6] Also, Jeremiah sought to disabuse their minds of reliance on the temple itself, declaring,

---

1. 2Ki.19:20f.; cp. Isa.37:21f. Cf. also Isa.28:16; 1:26f.; etc.
2. E.g., Hos.8:9; Isa.30:1f.; Jer.46:25.
3. Am.2:14f.; Isa.2:7; 22:8f.; Mic.5:9f.
4. Am.5:4f.
5. Hos.4:1; also 4:6; 6:6; etc.
6. Isa.1:3f.; 5:13; Jer.9:6; 2:32.

> "Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of Yahweh, the temple of Yahweh, the temple of Yahweh are these."[1]

Because of this false confidence, and their abuse of the temple, Yahweh will destroy it, as Shiloh with its sanctuary was destroyed.[2] As for their reliance on other nations, it would be of no advantage. Isaiah refers to it on one occasion as making "a covenant with death."[3] This reliance on others was but an evidence of lack of faith in Yahweh, a trusting in horses and chariots and men, since "the Egyptians are men and not God and their horses flesh and not spirit."[4] The people's lack of dependence on Yahweh is revealed, above all else, in their mockery of the prophets and of the Nazirites, and in a refusal to listen to the divine message.[5]

The prophets' task throughout was to shift the emphasis in religion away from the natural to the ethical, from the material to the spiritual. Theological questions, such as monotheism, did not concern them. The existence or non-existence of other gods did not enter the field of their serious consideration. What they were concerned over was that the only reality for the Israelite was Yahweh. Since He was different

---

1. Jer.7:4. 2. Jer.7:12f.
3. Isa.28:15,18.
4. Isa.31:3; cf. also 30:7; Hos.7:11; etc.
5. E.g., Am.2:12; Hos.9:7; Isa.5:19; Jer.6:10.

from any other god their religious conduct must also be different from that of any other people. As matters stood this conduct did not meet such a requirement. Nevertheless it was there, a stern fact which must be reckoned with. Thus the prophets make their protest and passionately proclaim the conditions necessary for the maintenance of a right relationship with their God.

The lack of true knowledge of Yahweh's character, and the corruption in worship that resulted, were reflected in the moral conditions of all classes within the nation. Those who were the leaders of the people and should have been exponents of Yahweh had proved to be the reverse. The monarchy had followed the way of despotism. Instead of Yahweh being the head of the State the kings had usurped all authority, even controlling the worship of the people. The spirit of a theocracy was absent, replaced by the atmosphere of any other court of the day. Bloodshed, intrigue, evil and foreign influences entered, particularly into the Northern Kingdom. Therefore Hosea contradicts the earlier thought of the kingship, as a blessing given by Yahweh, and condemns the institution outright, declaring it was against the will of Yahweh.[1] He speaks of divine vengeance for the bloodshed with which Jehu opened his reign,[2] Isaiah shows that he is disappointed in the leadership

---

1. Hos.8:4; 13:9f. 2. Hos.1:4, (2Ki.9:24-10:25).

of Ahaz,[1] and the sins of Manasseh are spoken of as being the cause of the downfall of Judah.[2]

The priests have also failed in their duty of teaching the people. It is the priest Amaziah, of the royal sanctuary at Bethel, who takes action against Amos, with the result that the prophet has to stop his preaching.[3] Hosea charges the priests with being a snare to the people[4] and with abetting even highway robbery and murder.[5] They love strong drink and give oracles, or judgments, while under its influence.[6] He charges them with having forgotten the "Torah" of Yahweh, and so the people perish for lack of knowledge. It is a case of "like people, like priest."[7]

The majority of the prophets are no better. We find Amos declaring, in self-justification, that he is not a prophet nor the son of a prophet,[8] and Jeremiah finds some of his bitterest enemies among those who claim the same office which he himself holds.[9] These were a lower order of prophets, the direct descendants of the prophetic guilds of former days. They are frequently found in opposition to such men as Amos,

---

1. Isa.7:9,13; 3:12.
2. 2Ki.23:26f.; 24:2f.
3. Am.7:12f.
4. Hos.5:1; also Jer.2:8.
5. Hos.6:9.
6. Isa.28:7; and cf. Am.6:1f.; Jer.13:13.
7. Hos.4:6-9.
8. Am.7:14.
9. Jer.23; 27:14f.; 28; cf. also Hos.9:7; Isa.28:7f.

Hosea, Isaiah and Jeremiah, due chiefly to the loftier spiritual insight of these leaders. That there were charlatans among them is readily seen,[1] yet, regarding them as a class, they were 'false', not because of intentional hypocrisy, but because they accepted the lower thought of Yahweh as bound unconditionally to Israel. They lacked a true conception of their God as a moral Personality with all that that implied. It was as though they "prophesied by Baal."[2]

Similarly, those who occupied positions of power and influence, the judges and the wealthy class, perverted their power, using it merely as a means toward selfish advancement. Amos charges the capitalists with selling "the righteous" into slavery to obtain the payment of a trifling debt,[3] with oppression of the poor[4] and with bribing the judges so that justice was openly outraged.[5] Isaiah denounces the grasping landlords who sought to create large estates by violently expelling the poorer, and smaller, proprietors.[6] The wealth thus obtained brings with it all the evils of luxurious indulgence, drunkenness,[7] sexual license,[8] fine houses[9] and arrogance.[10]

---

1. E.g., cf. Isa.28:7; Jer.8:10. 2. Jer.2:8.
3. Am.2:6; 8:6.
4. Am.2:7; 5:11; also Isa.3:15; Jer.7:5f.
5. Am.5:7; 6:12; also Isa.5:23; 10:1,2.
6. Isa.5:8. 7. Am.2:8; 6:6; Hos.4:18; Isa.5:11.
8. Am.2:7; Hos.4:12f.
9. Am.3:15; 6:4; Isa.5:9.
10. Am.6:13; Jer.13:9.

The people are not far behind their leaders and thus vice runs unchecked throughout the whole nation. Justice has vanished,[1] and lying and perjury have taken its place.[2] Thus the poor, the widow and the orphan are oppressed.[3] This evil becomes even worse when openly committed, as with the breaking of the covenant with the slaves during the siege of Jerusalem in the time of Zedekiah. Even the women care only for luxury,[4] and add to the general iniquity by drunkenness and urging their husbands on to further evil.[5] So great is the existing evil that Hosea declares, "There is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land,"[6] and Jeremiah issues the challenge,

> "Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth."[7]

He knows that no such man can be found because of the evil of 'kings, princes, prophets and people.'[8]

This severe condemnation by the prophets springs from their conception of that which Yahweh demands from His people. Just as their failure to offer a pure worship is based on a lack of knowledge of

---

1. Am.6:12f.; Isa.1:23; Jer.8:7.
2. Hos.4:2; 10:4; Jer.5:27.
3. Am.2:6,7; Isa.10:2; Jer.7:6.
4. Isa.4:16f.
5. Am.4:1.
6. Hos.4:1.
7. Jer.5:1.
8. Jer.32:32; cf. also Mic.7; Jer.13:23.

Yahweh's character, so their conduct arises from the same fact. The covenant obligations, as these were presented to the nation in the first place, combined ethics and religion. The prophets remain true to this principle, but also advance beyond it. With them the ethical becomes of paramount importance, the determining factor in religion and conduct alike. For Amos this consideration eclipses every other interest. Righteousness and justice are what Yahweh demands above all else, and yet it is these which are so sorely lacking. His successors, including the Deuteronomic School of writers, each have their own particular message, bringing fresh implications to the covenant relationship, but with them all there is the reiterated demand for right conduct and an ethical religion as the only consistent expression of their covenant relation with Yahweh. Along with this basic ethical demand there is a further noteworthy advance, namely the absence of violence in the prophetic activity. Contrary to the policy of their predecessors, such as Elijah and Elisha, they do not ally themselves with those who would use force in changing the social or religious conditions, and, while they do seek to influence the national politics, they do so by moral suasion alone.

That the influence of the prophets was not without its effect is shown by the movements for reform

---

which took place. Under Hezekiah there was an attempt at this, but likely confined to Jerusalem, with its immediate surroundings, and not quite as thorough as the Deuteronomic record of Second Kings indicates.[1] Its influence seems to have been confined chiefly to image worship. The movement had no permanence and fell with the passing of Hezekiah himself. Of much greater importance was the reform led by King Josiah, in 621 B.C., founded on a code of law and adopted as a covenant with Yahweh.[2] Its reforms may be briefly stated. Worship at the high places is ended through centralization at one sanctuary, presumably in Jerusalem. Ritual worship is confined to the regular feasts and occasions of special importance, all at the one sanctuary. The killing of animals ceases to be entirely a matter of sacrifice, each person being allowed to kill his own meat, but the blood is to be poured out on the ground. Other laws deal with the reorganizing of the priesthood, the payment of tithes, idolatry, and so on, all with a view to guarding and correctly expressing the intimate relation of the nation to Yahweh, its only God. It was an attempt to express the principles of the prophetic teaching in the cultus and social life of the nation.

The advantage of such a code of law can be seen in that the people were given an easily understood set of ideas portraying the grace and faithfulness of

---

1. 2Ki.18:4.

2. 2Ki.23:1f.

Yahweh closely connected with the obligations demanded of them. It was a sort of compromise between the prophetic ideals and the Popular Religion. The praxis of religion is guided in such a manner as to eliminate, as far as possible, naturalistic ideas. It is surrounded with the atmosphere of the covenant relation, leading the worshipper to think of this relationship in all that he did. A practical advantage, which history has revealed, was that the Israelites carried with them into exile some quarter of a century later, a moral and spiritual set of regulations through which they could still maintain a relationship to Yahweh, even though the temple was non-existent and their national life destroyed.

On the other hand, there were definite disadvantages in this development. While it offered the people a high form, comparatively, of religious expression it also confined religion to the observance of a code of law. The object of the law was to create a people bound in an indissolvable relationship to Yahweh, erecting a wall within which higher religious life might be gradually developed. The law acted both as the sign that the people were in such a relation and as the vehicle by which it was maintained. Thus sin, even on the part of an individual, involved the nation in guilt and it must therefore be utterly stamped out.

The severity of punishment, revealed, for example, in the story of Achan's transgression,[1] is due to this conception. Likewise forgiveness for sin is only recognized in the sacrificial system for those transgressions committed through human weakness or imperfection, and so without any intentional evil. Those sins, on the other hand, which are premeditated or reveal a conscious turning aside from the will of Yahweh, such as idolatry, cannot be forgiven. They are sins done with a "high hand," and place the sinner outside the covenant relation. In Deuteronomy this legalistic thought of sin and forgiveness is not yet fully developed. Yahweh is not only a ruler demanding strict obedience, He is also a father, loving His son, Israel. In Yahweh's giving of the covenant lies a proof and a constant reminder of this love, thus providing a way of escape from a complete legalism. Yet with Deuteronomy the fully legalistic interpretation of religion had its origin. In later years we find it clearly stated with the introduction of the post-Exilic Levitical ritual system.[2]

The Deuteronomic reform, carried out at the time with stern consistency, achieved much success, but it was only an outward achievement. The evidence of Jeremiah goes to show that the hearts of the people

---

1. Josh.7; cf. also 22.

2. Lev.4:1-6:6.

were left untouched. Seemingly, at first he supported the movement, but came to realize that the people were, in reality, no better.[1] After the death of Josiah the old abuses again appeared, along with the fresh influence of the Babylonian supremacy. Thus we find this prophet once more taking up the task of condemnation of idolatry, of the worship at the high places with its accompanying abominations, and of the faith in the efficacy of sacrifices.

The prophets' conception of the covenant obligations and that of the people proving to be irreconciliable, the prophets are impelled to go further. Because of Yahweh's nature His will for Israel could not end in its destruction. Thus they come to the view of that destruction being an instrument in the Hand of their God to teach the nation a full knowledge of what He demanded. There would be a future for Israel, a future of peace and righteousness. This thought of the future brings into focus, not only the prophetic conception of Yahweh's relation to Israel, but also that of the implications for the Israelites of this relationship. We turn, therefore, to a more detailed consideration of this phase of the prophets' message.

---

1. Jer.11:1-17; cf. T.H.Robinson,"A History of Israel," i., p.427f., where "a substantial basis" is accepted as historically accurate. Cf. also G.A.Smith,"Jeremiah," p.144f. on this.

Beginning with Amos we are presented with a picture of almost unrelieved darkness. Yahweh had warned the nation already by sending famine, drought, pestilence and partial destruction.[1] The purpose of these disasters was redemptive. Through them Yahweh was calling the nation to "return" to Him, and thus His loving care for it was revealed. But they were unheeded and the consequences had to be faced. "Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel," is the final word.[2] The nation will fall and rise no more;[3] tested, as a wall that is not true, it will be torn down.[4] Only one glimpse of hope is seen:

> "Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live: and so Yahweh, the God of hosts, shall be with you, as ye have spoken. Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate: it may be that Yahweh, God of hosts, will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph."[5]

But it was a hope that never materialized and that faint ray is followed by even greater darkness.[6]

The manner of this coming destruction is a military overthrow by foreign enemies.[7] None are specially mentioned but it is likely that Assyria, at least, is in the prophet's mind.[8] Any who escape

---

1. Am.4:6f. 2. Am.4:12. 3. Am.5:2.
4. Am.7:7f. 5. Am.5:14,15.
6. Am.9:8-15 is generally recognized to be a later addition by another hand; cf., e.g., Driver, "Intro." p.318; R.S.Cripps,"Commentary on the Book of Amos," p.64.
7. Am.3:11; 2:14f.; 9:1.
8. Cf. Am.6:14; 5:27.

the first blow will be led away into captivity,[1] but those who do remain will be negligible, merely as the remnants of a sheep after the ravages of a lion.[2] For them there will be pestilence, famine and drought,[3] coming as a result of the general destruction.[4]

Amos introduces, in this connection, a thought that is new for his day. The judgment was to come on the "Day of Yahweh." In chapter 5, vss. 18 to 20, he contrasts this with the popular conception. Apparently the "Day of Yahweh" was expected to be one of "light" for Israel. It was to be a world-catastrophe through Yahweh's intervention in the affairs of men, which would be for the benefit of Israel because of His special relation to that nation. Thus, even those who realized the evil existing within the nation only looked with greater longing toward the day when Yahweh's reign of glory would arrive. They thought their position to be one of privilege. Amos had a far different conception.

> "Woe unto you that desire the day of Yahweh! To what end is it for you? The day of Yahweh is darkness and not light."

The nation, that is, the Northern Kingdom, had failed in adapting itself to the moral purpose of Yahweh. Therefore the primary reason for its existence was gone and Yahweh, instead of protecting it, would

---

1. Am.5:5,27; 6:7; etc.
2. Am.3:12.
3. Am.6:9f.; 5:16f.; 8:3,
4. Am.8:13.

bring about its ruin. The nation will be made to answer for all its sin,[1] and this can mean only destruction.[2] In the successors of Amos this thought of the Day of Yahweh appears,[3] but with the difference that the catastrophe is not the end.

The spirit of Hosea appears almost as a contrast to that of Amos. The latter was concerned, above all, with general ethical principles, but Hosea, a man of deep and gentle affections, is concerned with the love of Yahweh and its relation to Israel. Since the nation has proved faithless destruction is surely coming,[4] but Hosea is the first to glimpse something further. The catastrophe is to be the beginning of a time of purification, a second Egypt.[5] Hosea is thinking of captivity of the people in Assyria, and just as in the early days of Israel, Yahweh will "allure" her and bring her into "the wilderness" where she will return to Yahweh, calling Him, "My Husband," since "My Baal" will be used no more.[6] A new covenant will be made, not with Israel, but on behalf of Israel, with the beasts of the field and all other living creatures. Warfare will cease and the nation will cleave to Yahweh in righteousness and judgment, in love and mercy, and

---

1. Am.3:2,14; 6:3; etc. 2. Am.2:13f.; 4:2; 8:13; etc.
3. Hos.4:5; Isa.2:10f.; 10:3; Jer.17:16; 46:10.
4. Hos.2:6,12f.; 8:14; 13:5f.
5. Hos.8:13; 9:2. 6. Hos.2:16f.

shall know Him.[1] The covenant relationship will then become a reality, Israel becoming in truth Yahweh's people and Yahweh their God.[2]

From this we see that Hosea is more closely connected with earlier thought and writing than Amos. There are references to stories from the past,[3] to the law,[4] and to the covenant at Sinai.[5] The early experience of the nation, when the covenant was made, forms the background of chapter 2, and, in fact, it lies behind his entire message. Furthermore, it was love, such as that of husband for wife and of father toward son, that was the directing force which led Yahweh to choose and guide Israel through that past, and formed the basis of the covenant relationship. Out of these two elements, the nation's past and Yahweh's love, the prophet draws his picture of the future. "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?" is the cry of wounded love which cannot execute the fierceness of anger.[6] Therefore, out of the coming destruction Yahweh will somehow bring salvation with repentance. Thus his message closes with hope for the future and a picture of the nation as faithful to Yahweh in all things.[7] How this love of Yahweh will accomplish redemption in spite of

---

1. Hos.2:18-20.
2. Hos.2:25.
3. Hos.12:4,13,14; 11:1.
4. Hos.4:6; 8:1,12f.
5. Hos.6:7; 8:1.
6. Hos.11:8,9.
7. Hos.14:5f.

the utter destruction of the nation Hosea does not explain, but, resting his faith on the enduring character of the covenant relation, he does not doubt that it will triumph and Yahweh "heal their backsliding."

Building on the work of his predecessors, although following his own line of thought, Isaiah makes a further advance. His vision of Yahweh in the temple impresses him with a deep sense of the holiness of God and thus of his own unworthiness. With his cleansing he receives a commission to go to a people whose unworthiness must, likewise, be purged away. Thus disaster and ruin must come to his nation. Its cities and houses and land will be left "utterly desolate."[1] Yet the destruction will not be complete. The nation, as a nation, will be destroyed, but a remnant shall remain as a "holy seed."[2] This faith forms the basis of Isaiah's message. As with Hosea, and even Amos, repentance and obedience to Yahweh would bring forgiveness.[3] Yet the prophet sees no hope of this. The "faithful city," Jerusalem, has become a "harlot," its silver become dross, and therefore Yahweh will turn against it and purge the dross until "Zion shall be redeemed."[4] Nor is there any help other

---

1. Isa.6:11. 2. Isa.6:13.
3. Isa.1:16f., (Hos.10:12; Am.5:14f.).
4. Isa.1:21f.

than Yahweh Himself. Prince, soldier, judge, and prophet will all be removed,[1] while foreign alliances are utterly useless and a forsaking of Him.[2] Punishment is coming from Yahweh and only those who trust in Him will be saved. The band of disciples which Isaiah gathered round him would form the nucleus of the faithful ones, 'binding up the testimony and sealing the law.'[3] With them also would be the lowly of the nation who attended to the prophets' words.[4] This message of hope is declared, as well, in the name which he gave to one of his sons, Shear-jashub, "a remnant will return."[5]

This conception arose from Isaiah's thought of holiness as the basis of the covenant relation, a holy God and a holy people. Such a relation could not be broken; Yahweh would always maintain it by means of those who remained faithful to Him. Thus Isaiah differs from Hosea in that there was never any time in which Israel was not Yahweh's people. There is an unbroken continuity, since the holy seed is imperishable. Isaiah also goes further than Hosea by providing a solution of the problem of reconciling Yahweh's love with His purpose of judgment. Disaster will fall on the nation but the faithful within the nation will be preserved and a new era of peace and righteousness ushered in.

---

1. Isa.2:22; 3:1f. 2. Isa.7; 30:15; 31:1f.
3. Isa.8:16,18. 4. Isa.14:32. 5. Isa.7:3.

There is, however, a further conception introduced by Isaiah. In chapters 9, vss. 1 to 6, and 11, vss. 1 to 9, a picture of the future is given in which the all-important factor is the figure of a saviour, a descendant of David, who shall reign in peace and righteousness over the restored kingdom of David. This one, described as "a rod out of the stem of Jesse and a branch...out of his roots," shall come as a deliverer sent by Yahweh to the remnant of Israel. With the King there will be the City. In chapter 1, verses 26 and 27 speak of Zion being redeemed with judgment and being called "the city of righteousness, the faithful city." The development of this conception began in Israel with a longing for the glory and peace of David's reign. He was remembered as a just and high-minded ruler. The complete lack of such in the monarchy as it later developed, led to the hope, which crystallized into a belief, that the future would bring a kingdom similar to that of the past at the head of which would be an ideal David ruling in accordance with divine law. Included in this is the thought of Israel's rule over the surrounding nations under David, which in the future would be repeated even more widely. There is a blending of the ideal with the real. The hope is connected literally with the family and kingdom of David, but these become idealized and projected into the picture of what is to come, bringing a complete fulfilment of the

---

covenant with Yahweh. Thus the thought of the covenant with David arose. It was Isaiah who first took up this thought and gave it to his successors in a much more developed and concrete form.

Isaiah's fuller thought of the future was undoubtedly influenced by the fact that he saw the destruction, which Amos and Hosea had declared, effected on the Northern Kingdom.[1] The same influence was felt in even greater measure by Jeremiah, who saw his own people and Judah, the last of the house of Israel, carried into captivity, with Jerusalem and the temple lying in ruins. Even before the event, however, he is certain that it is coming. Warfare, with its attendant famine and pestilence, will be the agent of the destruction.[2] The land will be laid waste,[3] the people deported,[4] and the city of Jerusalem, with the temple, in which the people were placing such great confidence, utterly destroyed.[5] So great will the calamity be that the heathen nations will point to them in scorn and mockery.[6]

Yet there is still time to amend their ways and remain in the land. With his fine illustration of the potter,[7] who, in making a vessel, finds it marred

---

1. Cf. Isa.28.
2. E.g., Jer.14:12; 24:10; 29:18.
3. Jer.9:9.
4. Jer.9:15; 13:19; etc.
5. Jer.9:10; 7:2f.
6. Jer.18:16; 19:8.
7. Chapter 18.

and moulds it in another form that is good, the prophet teaches of Yahweh that

> "if that nation against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them."

Proclaiming this message Jeremiah finds the people immovable. "There is no hope; but we will walk after our own devices," is the reply, and they even try to silence the prophet. Thus Yahweh will turn His face away from them and the judgment becomes inevitable. The strength of this conviction is seen in his attitude during the time when the Babylonian forces were about Jerusalem in 588 B.C. The army of Egypt marched to the relief of the city, which brought a temporary lull in the siege. The people's hopes soared high, but Jeremiah again proclaimed that there was no hope. The city was doomed even though the whole Babylonian army was defeated.[1] Jeremiah had already realized that the hope of the future rested, not on those who were still in Jerusalem, but on the exiles even then in Babylon,[2] whose exile was to be of long duration, yet limited to seventy years.[3]

The future is thus not unrelieved darkness. Yahweh will not forsake His people. From them nothing can be expected, but in Yahweh there is always hope. He "will gather the remnant of (His) flock out of all

---

1. Jer.37:10. 2. Jer.24:1f. 3. Jer.25:11.

countries...and will bring them again to their folds," giving them leaders once more and peace and prosperity.[1] Jeremiah includes in this the figure of a Davidic King whom Yahweh will send;[2] he also refers, as did Isaiah,[3] to heathen nations being included in the future blessings if they turn to Yahweh and His ways.[4]

The relation between the people and Yahweh is based on the inner attitude of the individual person, as with Jeremiah himself. The personal experience of the prophet in his relation to Yahweh gradually impressed this truth upon him. Through this Jeremiah rose to the highest conception of the future relationship between a people and their God found in any of the prophets, or even in all Hebrew thinking, while in his message we have the climax of thought regarding the covenant relation. Yahweh had of old established a close fellowship between the nation and Himself. The obligations of this fellowship, which the people had accepted for themselves, had not been observed. It was, therefore, rendered null and void. But Yahweh's purpose could not thus be frustrated. When He has once again restored the nation the old relationship would be abolished and a new one inaugurated to take its place. This would be of such a nature as to guard against failure.

---

1. Jer.23:3,4; also 30:3,18f.; 32:37f.
2. Jer.30:9.
3. E.g., Isa.19--on Egypt.
4. Jer.12:14f.

> "Behold, the days come, saith Yahweh, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith Yahweh: but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith Yahweh, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know Yahweh: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith Yahweh: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."[1]

The New Covenant forms a vital contrast to the old. It is to be inward in that an external law is to be replaced by a law that is written in the heart, and religion becomes a relationship with God that is truly spiritual and personal. It is to be made with the individual in that all the people will have real knowledge of Yahweh. Finally, it includes the forgiveness of sin. Of these three elements the first is given the greatest emphasis. The second forms a natural result of the first, while the third states only what would be a necessity if religion were to become centred in the heart, that is, reconciliation with God. The significant element in the New Covenant thus lies in its thought of the inwardness of religion. The external law for the guidance of the nation in the past might not be read, or, if

---

1. Jer.31:30-33.

read, not understood. This would be impossible in the future. Each person will know the law and will of Yahweh. The inquiring for these by oracles from the hands of the priests would no longer be necessary. This special function of the priesthood from earliest days becomes the property of everyone, not by oracles but through spiritual apprehension. The law written in the heart will become a part of every man's intellectual and moral being. Conduct will be determined, not by ceremonial observances, which occupied the chief place in the old covenant, but according to the great principles of justice, truth and purity, principles that would be inseparable from human thought and activity. Thus teaching and preaching will not be needed. It is to be a new beginning for the people and under new spiritual conditions, brought about by a divine act of grace.[1]

Jeremiah goes beyond the thought of Hosea and Isaiah. For them there was to be a future time of righteousness and peace, but it was a continuation of the old relationship. The covenant had been made with the nation and that covenant would not be

---

1. The new law of the future cannot mean simply the Decalogue written in the heart, as P.Volz suggests ("Der Prophet Jeremia," p.296). Only in a figurative sense could this apply. Jeremiah is thinking of the law of spiritual guidance. He pictured everyone being as himself, and this was the only law of which he was conscious in his own experience.

broken by Yahweh. But Jeremiah states definitely the end of the old institutions, civil and religious, and the beginning of a new order. He has a deeper conception of the divine grace. For him the old covenant had been broken by the people's sin, it had failed through its legalism and inability to exclude degrading elements. But Yahweh will demonstrate an affection that reaches beyond sin and disobedience, and, out of His love, establish a New Covenant with His people. In this the terms of the old covenant will be completely fulfilled: Yahweh is to be their God, the object of their love and worship, while they are to be His people, the objects of His grace and providence. The sin of the past will be forgiven and forgotten, and sin no longer be found among them. Thus, although Jeremiah destroys the covenant theory, he does not hesitate to use its well-known, and well-loved, dress. In that time of uncertainty and fear the people cling to the hope of the covenant. Jeremiah blasts that hope but gives them another in its place. By clothing it in the same form as the old he provides a bridge across which the faith of every Israelite could reach the new.

In the following years there are but two important developments in the thought of the covenant obligations. One is the more formal expression of the

---

observance of religion revealed in the regulations of Ezekiel[1] and in the Priests' Code. The other is the advance of Deutero-Isaiah in his thought of Israel's responsibility. He is seeking for an explanation of Israel's election and then of its rejection and suffering. This is found in Israel having a mission to the world. The history of the nation has been the working out of a divine purpose, the equipment of Israel for the salvation of mankind. The nation was given the privilege and the responsibility of becoming the servant of Yahweh.[2] This is the highest thought of the significance of the covenant relation found in the Old Testament. The author is the true successor of Jeremiah, building on his thought of the spirituality of religion and interpreting even the spirit of his experience of vicarious suffering in the fulfilment of a divinely-given duty. He likewise uses the term בְּרִית: "I will give thee (the Servant) for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles."[3] The significance is probably, 'I will give thee as a covenant-people to lead the Gentiles into the covenant relationship.' A purified and holy Israel, as befits the covenant people envisaged by Jeremiah, will induce all nations to accept Yahweh and follow His will in the same manner

---

1. Chapters 40-48.
2. Cf. Isa.42 and 49.
3. Isa.42:6; also 49:8.

as the Israelites. Thus the conception of the New Covenant is basic, Deutero-Isaiah simply carrying out a logical consequence of its thought.

This is evidently the significance which it carried to the mind of Jesus Christ. The old covenant at Sinai was ratified by the sprinkling of blood. A new covenant would necessitate an equally significant ceremony for its confirmation, which is the one vital element lacking in Jeremiah's conception. Thus the fulfilment of that conception had to wait until the night when, in that upper room in Jerusalem, Jesus Christ, the perfect embodiment of the 'Servant of God,' presided at the Last Supper and declared,

> "This cup is the new testament (διαθήκη) in my blood, which is shed for you."[1]

He expressed His work as being the bringing in of the New Covenant of Jeremiah, which has become one of the fundamental thoughts of Christianity. The experience of salvation of the Christian forms a parallel to the prophet's conception of the New Covenant relationship. Paul expresses it by saying,

> "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."[2]

---

1. Lu.22:20; also Matt.26:28; Mark 14:24; 1Cor.11:25.
2. 2Cor.5:17; cf. also Eph.3:16; 4:24.

Jeremiah, therefore, stands high among the religious souls of mankind. He is mid-way between Moses and Jesus Christ, creating a deeper and larger truth out of the work of the one, pointing to the coming of the other.

CHAPTER 5

THE RELATION OF THE INDIVIDUAL TO YAHWEH

One phase of the conception of the covenant still remains to be considered before our view of this is complete. In speaking of the relation of Yahweh to Israel and of Israel to Yahweh it was, in each case, the nation, as a nation, which was regarded as the human party. At Sinai it was the people as a whole, the future nation of Israel, which entered into the covenant with Yahweh. Yet, on coming to the time of the Exile, we find Jeremiah speaking of his New Covenant as being a relationship between Yahweh and the individual Israelite, while succeeding thought, in Ezekiel, in Deutero-Isaiah and in other post-Exilic writers, gives the individual, as such, a large place. Our problem, then, is to account for this important change, and so indicate who constituted the covenant people in the thought of Israel.

Primitive people, generally, regarded the individual merely as a member of a tribe, a clan or a race. In religion it was the same. The individual worshipped as a member of his group, not because of his own personal belief. In this point of view Israel was no exception. Thus we have most scholars agreeing with Wellhausen when he says, of the individual of pre-Exilic days,

---

> "Over him the wheel of destiny remorselessly rolled; his part was resignation and not hope."[1]

They agree that he stood in no direct relation to Yahweh except as a corporate member of the nation and that only with the Exile did he come to be recognized in his own right.

This can scarcely be the whole truth. A sudden change from one type of religion to another is not characteristic of the religious life of man. Rather it advances gradually through the work of some divinely inspired mind, or minds, building on a foundation previously prepared. The Old Testament itself is the foundation on which Christ built, His work being the fulfilment. Post-Exilic religion does show an enrichment of thought concerning the individual, but it is during this time also that the thought of the nation reaches its highest expression. The individualistic literature which features that period, such as the Psalms and Wisdom Books, did not suddenly spring into being but must have existed to some extent before the Exile. We are, therefore, justified in assuming that there must have been at least a certain amount of activity and development in the sphere of individualism in

---

1. "Prolegomena to the History of Israel," p.469; also Duhm, W.R.Smith, B.Gray, L.Köhler, J.Pedersen, and others.

the centuries prior to the Exile. On examining Israel's religious history during these years we find this to be so.

We must begin by reviewing the heritage which Israel received from its pre-Mosaic days. Worship was then of a primitive type, similar to that of the Arabian nomads. The Israelites were not, however, merely Bedouin Arabs, but Semites who had adopted the nomadic form of life. They were of the same descent as the people of Moab and Edom, while the Amalekites are the true Bedouin of the Old Testament. Thus, in the ancient Israelite, there were united the characteristics of the Semitic people and those of the wandering desert tribes.

One thing, in particular, the Israelite received from the Arab. This was a passionate love of freedom, and objection to all restraint, a heritage from the free desert life. No code of laws bound him. The controlling factor was the power of custom and of public opinion. Even the power of the tribal leader, or sheik, was limited. His main duties were to act as a judge when disputes arose and to lead in warfare. A spirit of independence was thus not confined to tribal interests alone, but was the possession of every individual.

In the matter of religion the Israelites were little different from the Bedouins. Worship was offered chiefly to the many spirits, or Numina, which were thought to inhabit trees, stones, springs, hills and other such objects which attracted the attention. At any spot where a strange occurrence, which would be regarded as the manifestation of a spirit, such as a dream, had taken place, a heap of stones or rude altar was erected, and the place became sacred. These spirits had to be conciliated and kept friendly, which was done mainly through sacrifices.

Then Family gods, or House-oracles, called Teraphim, were worshipped by all the Semitic peoples.[1] These were images of various sizes and may have been merely representations of local spirits, or images of dead ancestors, as there was a certain recognition of these. Religious rites likewise gathered round all important, or unusual, events--the birth of a child, and his initiation into full manhood, marriage, revenge, illness, death, and so on. Many of these were tribal interests, including some which we would now regard as private, such as illness. In these the individual took part as a member of the tribe, but in

---

1. Cf., e.g., F.B.Jevons,"Introduction to the History of Religion," p.186, and A.C.Welch,"Teraphim," HDB, iv., p.718.

those which were personal he was, we might say, his own priest. The covenant and blood-covenant formed a part of the religious activity since the tribal deity readily entered into the life of his worshippers through the making of these.

In all this we can see a large field of religious activity was open to the individual in spite of the strong tribal consciousness which predominated at that stage of religious development. There were many interests which were peculiar to the individual because peculiar to his needs. This individual activity was intensified by the sojourn in Egypt. The oppression of the Israelites there would prevent any public expression of religion and the people would be confined to whatever observances could be practised by individuals.

Into this situation Moses came, rallying the people in the name of Yahweh. An index of what his work was to mean is revealed in his request to Pharaoh,

> "Thus saith Yahweh, God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness."[1]

It was the bringing in and emphasizing of worship by the group as a community of people. The preservation of the Israelites in the wilderness journey, climaxed

---

1. Ex.5:1.

by the Sinai covenant, contributed to the same end. They were being dealt with as a people for the purpose of bringing them into relationship with Yahweh. This meant the beginning of the idea of the Kingdom of God, and had a religious rather than a political significance. Yet the creation of a nation came as a natural result, with Yahweh, now the God of the confederate tribes, holding the position of a national God. The whole activity of Moses was thus working toward the setting aside of the importance of the individual by drawing him into the life of the group.

The covenant, however, exerted an influence in two directions which, although not bearing fruit until much later, were gradually growing through the years and working against the complete absorption of the individual into the nation. The covenant relationship, resting of a moral basis, set up a standard of conduct. This introduced the conditional element in religion into a new field. Loyalty to the deity became, not simply the observance of community festivals, but the honouring of the covenant conditions, which were expressed in the Decalogue and the Book of the Covenant. Even though these were regarded as a national code of laws, revealing the nation's relation to Yahweh, yet, in the final analysis, the responsibility for their observance would fall on

---

the individual. It is his personal conduct which, ultimately, becomes the important consideration.

On the other hand, there was the recognition of the rights of the individual. The element of justice in Yahweh's nature led Moses to become the law-giver and judge of his people, and through him we have laws relative to the life of individuals, such as the rights of slaves, punishment for murder and manslaughter, the causing of bodily harm to men or their animals, theft, and so on. This would create a deep impression on the people, whose inherited love of freedom had been desecrated by the Egyptian bondage. It would result, not only in gratitude and loyalty to Yahweh, but tend to create and preserve a consciousness of the importance of the individual Israelite.

Along with the worship of Yahweh there continued much of the old religious activity of the individual, which was of a distinctly lower type than Yahwism. There were still the local spirits to be propitiated, the teraphim were still in use and ceremonies in connection with the dead continued. These activities were kept alive by the religious needs of the individual, the desert life, and the continued tribal organization. The worship of Yahweh, on the

---

other hand, was mainly a matter of national interest with little provision for the individual. During the years spent in the wilderness under Moses Yahweh became firmly established as the God of the confederate tribes of Israel, with all worship of a community nature offered in His name. Thus there existed a sort of dualism in religion, that of the individual and that of the nation.

During the time of the settlement in Canaan the significant factor is the lack of any central authority. This left not only civil but religious matters in the hands of the people. Individual initiative was thus intensified. The appearance and the work of the Judges alone illustrate this. In moments of crisis they came forward to save the situation and afterward acted for a time as head of their tribe. Their authority was localized and very limited. Even Samuel, whose work was of such importance for Israelitic religion, was unknown beyond his tribe and the district of Ephraim, since Saul, a Benjamite, never heard of him until his servant speaks of this "man of God."[1] The conditions of the time left full scope for the activity of individuals, and many did arise to serve their people. As the Book of Judges repeats several times,

---

1. 1Sam.9:6.

> "In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes."[1]

In the field of religion there was the syncretism of Yahwism with Baal worship. For the individual this had one important result. The Baals were concerned with the daily life of the individual. They were looked to for help and blessing during the seed time and in the harvest. If a man obtained a good harvest he was thought to be in the favour of the god. For the Israelites, then, the identification of Yahweh with these Baals meant that their national God was concerned with the personal needs of the individual man. The obtaining of this favour was not as yet a moral question, but Yahweh was brought into intimate contact with the everyday life of the people.

That there resulted a devout worship of Yahweh in many homes is shown by the action of Hannah when she desired a male child, a story that comes to us from the later of the two Samuel-narratives.[2] Hannah's desire is a strictly personal one and it is to Yahweh that she presents her plea. She goes to the former Canaanite temple of Shiloh and her prayer is

---

1. Jud.17:6; also 18:1; 19:1; 21:25.
2. 1Sam.1f.--a pre-Deuteronomic narrative (cf. Driver,"Intro." p.177).

made with such passion that Eli, the priest, thinks she has taken too much wine, a conclusion that is significant as illustrating what was, at least occasionally, the conduct of worshippers. Her answer is humble and portrays a deeply religious spirit:

> "I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit; I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before Yahweh." (vs.15).

As is customary, she makes a vow with her prayer. It is the consecration of the child, if one be given to her, to the service of Yahweh, and "there shall no razor come upon his head." It is a vow which reminds us of that which marked the Nazirite.[1] Later she fulfils her vow, going up to the temple with the child Samuel, and taking with her a sacrifice of bullocks, wine and flour. In this story we find mention of the "yearly sacrifice," likely the Feast of Tabernacles. Thus within the national cult the individual was finding a place of his own.

The shrine of Micah shows that a man could set up a private sanctuary for his household and have his own priest, or a Levite, in connection with it.[2] Images were freely used in private, as in public, worship, while divination, sorcery and enchantment were practised.[3] At this time the seed of that individual

---

1. Cp. Num.6:5. 2. Jud.17.
3. 1Sam.28:3.

activity which meant so much for the later religion of Israel, and indeed for all later religion, began to germinate. The Nazirites and the Rechabites appeared with their protest against settled life, and the nebi'im came with their call for loyalty to the nation and to the national God. Anyone, if possessed by the spirit of Yahweh, might become His representative. Thus these men acted as a powerful influence in the direction of religious individualism. Besides these there were the Wise men, of whom little is related but whose influence must have been far-reaching. Of them C.F.Kent says,

> "They spoke in private to the individual, and not in public to the nation. They were the personified common-sense of their age and race. Ripe in personal experience, keen observers of human nature, enriched by inherited wisdom, they became the advisers of all classes in ancient Israel. Everything that concerned the ordinary man commanded their attention. They were equally ready with practical advice concerning anything, from the purchase of a farm to man's duty to his God."[1]

During these years of the settlement in Canaan the national religion, as such, made comparatively little development. The great hindrance was the lack of cohesion among the Israelitic tribes. But we find that the Israelites never lost their consciousness of possessing a common blood and a common faith. The age was, essentially, one of individualism.

---

1. "A History of the Hebrew People," p.14.

This was not, however, of a very high type. It was an undirected individualism, every man doing what was right in his own eyes, with the result that it was a condition not far from anarchy. Such could not achieve any very high development in any direction. Yet certain developments took place which laid the basis for future progress. Chief among these was the bringing of Yahweh into touch with the life of the individual person. Through it the division, or dualism, in religion which had existed in the desert between the worship of the national God and the religion of the individual now disappeared. In the process there was a lowering of the religious tone, but Yahweh became, not only the God of the nation, but the God of the individual Israelite. Equally important was the stimulating of individual religious activity, which brought forth men here and there throughout the country to proclaim the will of Yahweh as they understood it. The period was one of testing uncertainty for the Israelitic covenant faith, but was an age which had its own particular contribution to make.

The thought of the covenant relation remained the only influential bond of unity throughout that time and the leading minds eventually realized that a decisive step must be taken to save the nation from itself

---

and from its enemies. The result was the institution of the monarchy. Once it was firmly established law and order took the place of chaos in civil life, which soon made itself felt in the sphere of religion also. With the placing of the ark in Jerusalem and the building of the temple as the royal sanctuary, a more definite ritual was established and the king became the head of the nation's worship. Religion thus became intensely nationalistic. The division of Israel into two kingdoms did not hinder this, as national sanctuaries were established at Bethel and Dan to take the place of that at Jerusalem. The gradual disintegration of the tribal divisions during the preceding years aided the nationalistic development. The interests of the individual were merged in those of the nation and he became definitely of secondary importance.

The growth of individualism, however, did not altogether cease. Prophetic activity increased greatly. There were the four hundred prophets of Ahab, and the names of outstanding prophets are numerous. These appeared as defenders of the rights of the individual. Nathan boldly condemned David for taking the wife of Uriah,[1] and Elijah did the same with King Ahab for his action in obtaining the vineyard of Naboth.[2] From these we can see the growing conception of the civil rights

---

1. 2Sam.12:1f.

2. 1Ki.21:17f.

of the individual, and the higher moral demands that were being made. Then, through their very existence, as well as through their message, these men were assisting in that development which was bringing Yahwism into the field of individual religious activity, while a beginning was being made in the elevating of this activity out of the atmosphere of Baal worship.

The prominence of personal names compounded from Yahweh from this time on, shows the close personal feeling which must have existed between the people and their God. David's fourth son, for example, is called אֲדֹנִיָּהוּ,[1] 'Yahweh (is) my lord,' Ahab's second son is יְהוֹרָם,[2] 'Yahweh (is) exalted,' and the name of the great prophet Elijah, אֵלִיָּהוּ,[3] signifies, 'My God (is) Yahweh.'

At the close of the period the work of Elijah had one significant result. In his encounter with Jezebel he, and those who are sympathetic toward him, are arrayed on one side, Jezebel, with her sympathizers, on the other. Elijah thinks that he is alone in his defence of Yahweh, but God tells him that seven thousand are still faithful. There is thus a division made between the faithful and the unfaithful, within the nation. This is the first indication of

---

1. 1Ki.1:5. 2. 2Ki.3:1. 3. 1Ki.19:1.

the possibility of the covenant relationship extending, not to the nation as such, but to a group within the nation.

Under the monarchy, therefore, we find that the consciousness, both of the nation and of the individual as being in relationship with Yahweh, is deepening. It is a parallel development due, on the one side, to the organizing of the State and of religion, and on the other to the work of the early prophets, who emphasize the moral responsibility of the nation and thus of the individual. The appearance of J and E, expressing the highest ideals of the nation and emphasizing the covenant relation, would also have a certain influence in the same direction.

On coming to literary prophecy we find a great development in the recognition of the place of the individual, just as there was development in every other phase of Israelitic religion. With Amos there appears a different method of approach to the sin within the nation. His predecessor, Elijah, was content with denouncing the members of the royal household, whose sins made "Israel to sin."[1] But Amos turns against the rich land-owners and the corrupt judges, the priests and the women, the statesmen

---

1. 1Ki.21:22; 22:53; etc.

and the worshipper at the sanctuaries. It is the nation as a whole that he has in mind, but the nation is sinful and doomed to destruction because of the sin of these corrupt classes and individuals. Once only does he denounce the royal house.[1] Amos sees the sins of the king, as did Elijah, but he looks farther and sees the responsibility for the nation's sin resting on the people also. Thus there is an increased consciousness of the shortcomings of groups and of individuals.

This is true of all the successors of this prophet. The leaders had proved unworthy of their position and had failed in their duty of leading the people to Yahweh, so the people themselves had gone astray. All were boldly denounced, both as groups and as individuals, for their many sins. With this condemnation the prophets placed before the people a higher standard of conduct, not only in their public, or national, religion, but in their everyday living. Preaching of this nature could not help but have the result of increasing in those who listened a self-consciousness, as distinct from their national consciousness, a consciousness of themselves as persons with moral responsibilities.

---

1. Am.7:9.

Yet we can go even further than this. The message of Amos, with his demand for justice between man and man and the declaration of coming doom, is the result of his faith, a faith in the moral purpose of Yahweh for Israel. He speaks, not only to the nation at large, but to men who share that faith, that is, to the religious men of Israel. The fact that a man has been born an Israelite and has observed the cult of the Yahweh-religion does not necessarily make him ready to listen to, and heed, such a message. Rather, they must be men holding something of the faith of Amos. The evidence that such people existed in the nation is seen in the fact that his message was accepted and preserved for future generations. His only real opposition comes from the organized national religion in the person of Amaziah, the priest of Bethel. Another move is thus made toward individualism. Amos appeals to a group of men within the nation. By his fundamental ideas, together with those of his successors, this group is being driven toward forming a separate Church within the State. Amos did not face this consequence of his words. He was no theologian, but a stern moralist who saw the dire results that were sure to come from the evils of his time. His vision is practically confined to

---

calamity. But a Church is involved in his message. Amos is here far from the old idea of a covenant with the nation, as a nation. The State has to go, and a group of men within it are beginning to ponder on how this is to affect their relationship to Yahweh.

Then Hosea appears with his doctrine of love. G.A.Smith truly names him, "The First Prophet of Grace, Israel's earliest Evangelist."[1] In his representation of Israel as the unfaithful wife of Yahweh and as His wayward son, Hosea brings a richer note into the conception of the people's relationship to God than had yet been grasped. Through them he struck deep into the heart of Israel's religious ideas. Taking these intimate human relations he made them the symbols of the divine affection, illustrating the love of Yahweh in so striking a manner that men would see it to be the fullest expression of the relation existing between them and Yahweh. His message, as with Amos, would make an appeal to the higher minds within the nation, giving them as individuals a new and loftier appreciation of their place and duty in the covenant relationship.

Hosea, however, confined his thought to the nation. It is Israel, Yahweh's spouse, whom Yahweh drives out of the land, which is His house. In his

---

1. "The Book of the Twelve Prophets," i., p.230.

thought of the future, too, after this time of punishment, or separation from Yahweh, is over, it is Israel who is to be brought back and betrothed to Him forever. The prophet's message ends with a prediction of the restoration of all Israel. Hosea is thus more consistently nationalistic in his words than are any of the writing prophets. Yet his portrayal of the nation as an individual implies that in his conception of religion personal faith is the primary requirement. That is to say that the nation's relationship with Yahweh depends solely on the individual's fellowship with Him.

All the prophets, in their call from Yahweh to take up their office, reveal the extent to which an individual might, and, as we see, did have personal communion with Yahweh. A direct command to Elijah sends him to his work.[1] Amos is called from following the flock with the words, "Go, prophesy unto my people Israel,"[2] and he makes the statement, "The Lord Yahweh hath spoken, who can but prophesy?"[3] The call of Hosea came through Yahweh speaking to him in the tragedy of his broken home life. In the midst of that experience he is told to "yet love a woman,...an adulteress, according to

---

1. 1Ki.17:1,2; 18:1; etc. 2. Am.7:15.
3. Am.3:8.

the love of Yahweh toward the children of Israel."[1] But it is in the call of Isaiah that we see this especially, perhaps because the prophet has more fully described his experience.[2]

Isaiah felt not only the sin of the nation, but his own personal guilt. He felt himself to be "a man of unclean lips." The power of Yahweh to forgive iniquity and His grace to cleanse His servants is vividly portrayed in the live coal from the altar being placed on his lips, with the words, "thine iniquity is taken away and thy sin purged." Then the voice of Yahweh calls Isaiah to "Go, tell this people." Isaiah first sees a vision of Yahweh, then he is cleansed and finally he is given his mission. This order shows that for the prophet all service in the name of Yahweh must have its preparation in personal religion and a personal consecration.

The interest of Yahweh in the moral life of men is also brought home to the prophet in his vision in the temple. The sublime holiness of Yahweh first awakened within him a realization of his own and his people's moral unworthiness. Yahweh is holy, and "the whole earth is full of His glory."[3] Thus, as G.A.Smith says, "Yahweh is not only the

---

1. Hos.3:1. 2. Isa.6. 3. Isa.6:3.

infinitely High but the infinitely Near,"[1] and His moral interest will extend to the smallest acts of men. He sees each fault, hates every sin and feels the wound of each act in their neglect of Him. Nor is this interest confined to Israel alone. The oracles on foreign nations, and various references to them, show that Yahweh's standards of righteousness are for them also and that He has a place for them in His purpose for the world. Thus Isaiah is not only more of an individualist, but more of a universalist, than his predecessors.

It is in his thought of the future relationship of Yahweh to His people that this prophet reveals most clearly the growing importance of the individual. In this he goes farther than either Amos or Hosea. The former declared that Yahweh chose Israel to fulfil His righteous purpose, but the nation had failed Him. Thus it is rejected. Yet such a purpose cannot be fulfilled by mere rejection so something else must take the place of the nation after it is gone. This would be the faithful individual. Hosea, from his different point of view, shows that the relation between Yahweh and Israel is so deep that a nation could not fulfil it. Construe divine Grace as love, demanding

---

1. "Isaiah," HDB, ii., p.491.a.

a full and loving dependence of man upon God, and the relation is too deep to be fulfilled by any casual group of men. It goes beyond the nation, and thus again it is on the faithful individual that the emphasis falls.

But this is carrying the principles of these two prophets beyond their words to a logical conclusion. Isaiah draws this conclusion. The nation, as a nation, is to disappear into captivity, but Yahweh will raise up a remnant:

> "There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots."[1]

This remnant is to be composed of the faithful individuals of the nation, who, having Yahweh's favour, will return and inhabit Zion once more.[2] Impelled by the absence of any sign of repentance on the part of the people, Isaiah drew together his band of disciples who would form the beginning of this "holy seed" of the future.

Furthermore, Isaiah had an individual for his Ideal. At the head of the restored community of the future there was to be a God-like hero, the Messiah, or Saviour, of Israel. In this figure the prophet expresses all the qualities, not only of an

---

1. Isa.11:1.
2. Isa.1:26.

ideal King, but his ideal for any individual:

> "A man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."[1]

For him the source of any social progress is found in the character of the individuals who make up the community.

Hence, for Isaiah, the true people of the covenant relation is no longer the nation. It is a group of individuals within it, who occupy such a position only because of their worthiness as individuals. It is, in reality, a conception in which a Church takes the place of the nation.

Thus far the relationship between Yahweh and His people was confined to this life. As yet there was no doctrine of immortality for the individual. The Yahweh-religion concerned itself with death only in the matter of establishing certain taboos, regarding a corpse as unclean.[2] The legislation of Deuteronomy, prohibiting cutting oneself or shaving the head in honour of the dead,[3] shows that the ancient customs still held sway in the

---

1. Isa.32:2; cf. G.A.Smith,"The Book of Isaiah," i., p.254, regarding the authenticity of this section, which he accepts.
2. Num.5:2; 19:11f. (P); cp. Lev.22:4; 21:1; etc.
3. Deut.14:1; 26:14.

popular religion. Nor does Isaiah deal with this question. Nevertheless, in his principles we have all the premises for the later conception of immortality. He states that Yahweh does all things according to reason. His acts are not capricious, and He will even reason out His demands with men, if they will only listen to Him.[1] Just as the farmer is wise and works according to plan in the treatment of his crops, so is Yahweh in dealing with Israel.[2] His judgment against the nation is a part of the divine widsom, the act of One who is "wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working."[3] This is an extension of the words of Amos that Yahweh had placed a plumbline in the midst of Israel and found that the nation had failed in fulfilling His righteous purpose.[4] But Isaiah sees that because Yahweh is a God of judgment, working according to method and with a definite purpose, His people would survive the impending catastrophe. All who committed themselves to Him would share in the new order, and life would be guaranteed them. It was a statement of the immortality of goodness. Isaiah here only provides for the living. He does not touch the question of the faithful dead, but it was an immense step on the way. His

---

1. Isa.1:18; 31:2.
2. Isa.28:23-29.
3. Isa.23:29.
4. Am.7:7,8.

problem was to provide for the future of the covenant relationship. He did so, and left any further speculation for another age.

Following Isaiah, the Book of Deuteronomy began a deepening of the individual's appreciation of his own place in religion. Since this Code sought to incorporate the principles of the prophetic teaching it was more than merely a set of ritual and legal regulations. Rather, its aim was to deepen individual religion in order that the covenant relationship of the nation with Yahweh might be maintained on a high ethical level.

In this task the author, or authors, of Deuteronomy constantly emphasize the past experiences of the nation. There is, first of all, its choice by Yahweh through a free will act because of His love. Thus the basis of the relationship between Him and His people is love, a love extending, not only to the nation which He had chosen, but to the individuals who make up that nation. This is expressed particularly in speaking of the Israelites as the "children" of Yahweh, who regards them with the love of a father.[1] On the part of the individual, then, there is expected a reciprocal love toward Yahweh, and gratitude for His love and all

---

1. Deut.14:1; cf. also 4:37; 7:13; 23:6.

its results for the well-being of the nation.

The people are reminded of the covenant Yahweh made with their fathers.[1] Yahweh has not forgotten this, and His faithfulness calls for a like faithfulness to the covenant conditions resting on the individual Israelite.

The holiness of Yahweh, with consequently the requirement of holiness on the part of His people, is another thought of the Book of Deuteronomy. The people remain holy to Yahweh if they keep His commandments,[2] avoid all idolatry, heathen rites and anything that is unclean.[3] This holiness extends, also, to the individual, since the commandments, or laws, not only are laid upon the individual, but express a real concern for his interests, that is, justice and kindness among men of all classes and in all things.[4] Yet the outward acts are to be but the expression of an inward state. The laws are to be kept through the incentives of love, gratitude and fidelity which the individual feels toward Yahweh.

This is well illustrated in the liturgy

---

1. Deut.4:13,23,31; 9:9f.
2. Deut.26:18f.; 28:9.
3. Deut.7:6; 14:2,21.
4. E.g., Deut.24:10f.

which we find in Deuteronomy, chapter 26, vss. 1 to 11, which was that followed by the individual when he came to the temple to offer the firstfruits of his field. These were to be carried in a basket and given to the priest. The worshipper repeats a formula expressing gratitude and thanksgiving to Yahweh for bringing the nation out of Egypt and blessing His people with the fruitfulness of Canaan. As he presents his gift to the priest, his concluding words are,

> "And now, behold, I have brought the first-fruits of the land, which thou, Yahweh, hast given me."[1]

The high dignity of this liturgy is in strong contrast to the licentious community orgies of the Canaanite festival. In some ways it is very close to our Christian Thanksgiving Service.

An increased recognition of the individual is indicated by the fact that the Book of Deuteronomy rises above the idea of corporate sin.

> "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin."[2]

The same principle is expressed in the phrases, "That it may be well with thee," and "that thou mayest prolong thy days."[3] The keeping of Yahweh's commandments

---

1. Deut.26:10. 2. Deut.24:16; cp. 2Ki.14:6.
3. E.g., Deut.4:40; 22:7; 19:13; 17:20.

would react to the personal advantage, spiritually as well as materially, of the individual. Thus, both punishment for wrong, and reward for well-doing, was to be experienced directly by the individual according to his own conduct. The primitive thought of the solidarity of the community was therefore challenged.

With Deuteronomy, however, there came the centralization of worship in the capital city of Jerusalem. This emphasized a further nationalizing of the worship of Yahweh, particularly through detaching sacrifice from the everyday life of the people and making it solely a part of the national religion, and confined to Jerusalem. Moreover, being a law-book, Deuteronomy was confined in its view to Israel alone. There is no indication of a broadening of its laws or principles to include other nations. Rather, the reverse is true. The Canaanites are to be exterminated from the land, covenants and intermarriage with foreigners is forbidden, and strangers are to be accepted among the Israelites only as far as showing them justice and kindness.[1] This Book proved to be the first step in the direction of the extreme nationalism, with its stern exclusiveness, which marked the Judaism of some centuries later.[2] Yet it also exerted

---

1. Deut.7:1f.; 24:17f. 2. E.g., Matt.3:9.

a great influence on individual religion. Even in the matter of sacrifice there were important results. The centralization of this marked the first step away from the temple toward the synagogue, where prayer took the place of sacrifice. The immediate contribution of Deuteronomy, however, was made through its being "a book of personal religion," and, because this is so, it is also a book "of universal religion."[1] Thus we find the same trend of development as under the early monarchy continuing. Individualism and nationalism were both developing side by side. The consciousness of the Israelites as being a nation in covenant with Yahweh was being more fully aroused, while the conviction that the individual, as a member of the nation, stood in an intimate and personal relation to Yahweh, was becoming a recognized fact.

Jeremiah is perhaps our most important figure in connection with this subject. He can well be termed 'the prophet of individualism,' not only because of his words but because of the message of his own life. He had to forego the joys of a home and of social life.[2] The prophets of his day, who, above all others, should have been his greatest sympathizers, were his bitterest opponents.[3] His message of /condem-

---

1. S.R.Driver,"Commentary on Deuteronomy," p.xxxiii.
2. Jer.16:2; 15:17.
3. E.g., Jer.27 and 28.

condemnation brought only the antagonism of the people, even of the citizens of his native city of Anathoth,[1] while his plea for submission to the Babylonian power won for him nothing but persecution and ostracism.[2] This isolation left the prophet alone with his God. Yahweh was the only one to whom he could turn, and there is revealed a depth of intimacy between them formerly unknown in individual religion. In the midst of his disagreeable and seemingly hopeless task the prophet awakens to the realization that the words of Yahweh are really the joy of his life, without which he could not continue.[3] As with Hosea, the personal life of Jeremiah became a fundamental part of his message. Yet it was a message, not for the nation but for the individual soul. He presented to his generation, and to every succeeding generation, a picture of an individual experiencing a rich fellowship with Yahweh.

One factor which stands out in importance in the experience of Jeremiah is the large place occupied by prayer. The presence of this in the lives of his predecessors is a question which cannot be answered for lack of evidence. That it was present can scarcely be denied when we think of Isaiah

---

1. Jer.11:21f.; 26:10f.; etc.
2. Jer.32:2f.; 36.
3. Jer.20:9-13; 15:19f.

in the temple. His vision could only have come to a soul that was already reaching out toward God. Yet with Jeremiah prayer is the centre of his religious experience. Through it his intimate communion with Yahweh ripens until his only source of strength and his only joy are found in prayer. He does not reach the heights of the true Christian in this, as illustrated in the words of Jesus:

> "Not my will, but Thine, be done," and
>
> "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."[1]

Jeremiah can plead for the destruction of his enemies.[2] Yet for him prayer is more than merely petition. It is the throwing open to God of his inner life, with all its struggles and needs, and the effort to bring every phase of his life into harmony with the will of God. The reward of such prayer was his in the conviction of a spiritual victory over his persecutors and, what is of greater importance, over himself, while the consciousness of Yahweh's protection was continually with him.[3]

Out of this intimate fellowship came Jeremiah's conception of Yahweh as a purely ethical Being. His predecessors had achieved such a view but he was the first to apply it to the sphere of the individual

---

1. Lu.22:42; and 23:34.
2. E.g., Jer.10:25; 15:15; 17:18. 3. Cf. Jer.15:19f.

life. Yahweh was one who "judgest righteously, that triest the reins and the heart."[1] The prophet had to overcome his own hesitancy in proclaiming the word of Yahweh and to realign his every desire and feeling with the divine will, bringing into question many things in his own nature of which he had scarcely been aware. We are given, for the first time, a clear view of the conscience vitally alive in an individual life. Jeremiah does not call it such. For him it is the searching and all-revealing eye of Yahweh turned upon his inner life, judging it according to the divine righteousness.

Jeremiah carries this thought into his message. In his condemnation of the people's sins, even more than his predecessors, he singles out individuals, such as Pashur, Hananiah and Shemaiah,[2] and probes more deeply into the individuals' shortcomings. The lack of truth and the presence of sexual license, in particular, are persistently denounced as revealing the injustice and corruption which permeated society. He goes so far as to declare that Yahweh will pardon Jerusalem if but a single righteous man can be found within the city: but there are none.[3]

---

1. Jer.11:20; cf. also 17:9,10; 20:12; etc.
2. Jer.20:1f.; 28:5f.; 29:24f.
3. Jer.5:1; and cf. following verses.

The prophet's conception of the individual in relation to Yahweh reaches its peak in his thought of the future. Just as Yahweh had always been the victor in His dealings with the prophet so would Yahweh likewise be victorious in His dealings with the nation. A relationship, however, such as that which Jeremiah knew in his own life was too deep for a nation to experience. Nor were the people, because of their sin, able to enter into that relationship of themselves, as Jeremiah had done. Evil had become so much a part of them that they could not change any more than the Ethiopian could "change his skin, or the leopard his spots."[1] His hope is in the creative Hand of Yahweh, who will yet give His people 'a heart to know Him.' Those who remain evil, the "evil figs" remaining in Jerusalem after the first Captivity, will be scattered throughout the world and eventually destroyed.[2] But the "good figs" shall be brought again to Palestine where Yahweh will bless them. Returning to Yahweh with a "whole heart," they will be His people and He will be their God.[3] Like Isaiah, Jeremiah speaks only of the living. For him the dead, simply, "are not,"[4] and he can only grieve over them.[5] Yet in his thought of a spiritual/relation-

---

1. Jer.13:23.
2. Jer.24:7f.
3. Jer.24:5-7.
4. Jer.10:20.
5. Jer.9:16-21.

relationship existing between man and his God the prophet took another long step toward the faith that was to come through Jesus Christ.

Jeremiah's view of the future contains two elements which are of particular importance for the individual. He first explicitly states personal responsibility for sin.

> "In those days they shall say no more,
> The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and
> the children's teeth are set on edge.
> But every one shall die for his own in-
> iquity: every man that eateth the sour
> grape, his teeth shall be set on edge."[1]

This has been questioned as an authentic statement by Jeremiah. But there is no more reason for doubting it than for doubting his prophecy of the New Covenant.[2] It is expressing what Deuteronomy has already stated, and what is the natural consequence of Jeremiah's own experience of Yahweh as one who searches the individual heart and judges accordingly.

The second element is the hope of a New Covenant, the significance of which can scarcely be exaggerated. Through it religion breaks its bonds of nationalism, both in the cult and in the connection with a particular land. The covenant people ceases

---

1. Jer.31:28,29.
2. Cf. Cornill,"Intro." p.301f. (cp. E.Pace,"Ideas of God in Israel," p.158f.)

to be a national unit and becomes the individual person. The New Covenant may thus be fulfilled wherever an Israelite looks up to Yahweh in gratitude and faith. Jeremiah still speaks in terms of the nation, "the house of Israel" and "the house of Judah."[1] This seems to be an adherence to the national idea,[2] but the nation of the future is one composed only of those who know Yahweh, "from the least of them unto the greatest of them." In the prophet's strong individualism the nation as such has little place. He sees the nation being broken up and the evil ones within it being scattered. Further, the "house of Israel" was already gone as a nation and his inclusion of it in his New Covenant seems to eliminate any possibility of his conception being that of a national institution in the sense of the Old Covenant. For Jeremiah the spiritual solidarity of the nation is definitely broken and the covenant relationship conceived as an intimate personal fellowship existing between Yahweh and the individual. The future 'Israel' is no longer a nation, it is, in reality, a Church

Such a relationship, however, is possible,

---

1. Jer.31:30.
2. As maintained by J.Skinner, "Prophecy and Religion," pp.325f.

not only for the Israelite, but for all people. Even Jeremiah grasped something of this. In speaking of the enemies of Israel, he declares:

> "And it shall come to pass, after that I have plucked them out I will return, and have compassion on them, and will bring them again, every man to his heritage, and every man to his land. And it shall come to pass, if they will diligently learn the ways of my people, to swear by my name, Yahweh liveth; as they taught my people to swear by Baal; then shall they be built in the midst of my people."[1]

Faith in Yahweh is the one demand that is made, and not Israelitic birth. It is the natural consequence of the truth first glimpsed by Amos of Yahweh's relationship extending beyond Israel to the nations of the world. The door is thus opened to a universal religion of faith in one God.

Ezekiel is frequently spoken of as the outstanding prophet if individualism. Certainly his eighteenth chapter is the clearest statement of individual responsibility and freedom that we possess. Also with the end of the national life there were only individuals left with which to deal, and the post-Exilic prophets, as a whole, are more occupied with the individual than their predecessors. Their message still refers to the Israel of the past and the Israel coming in the future but, in common with Ezekiel, they deal with an Israel conceived of as purified and righteous.

---

1. Jer.12:15,16.

That is, they are thinking of a Church. Even in the present community of Israelites they think of the two groups, the righteous and the unrighteous, the latter to be eventually destroyed or excluded.[1] This is a long way from the conception of the nation as a whole in its relationship to Yahweh. Now it is a righteous group made up of individuals in a right covenant relation. The peak of the Old Testament thought of the individual is reached in Deutero-Isaiah in his Servant of Yahweh, whose task is to give himself in the service of the nations of the world. Whether this Servant is an individual or a group the ideal is one that concerns the personal life. Yet in all this we can see that post-Exilic thought stood on a foundation already fully prepared. There was simply the presentation of a more complete statement and the logical extension of the principles received. The honour must still be given to Jeremiah for having completed the foundation of individualism and for having originated the doctrine of the New Covenant of personal religion.

Beginning with the distant past there were forces always present among the Israelites which contributed to the stimulation of the self-consciousness of the individual. At first confined to a lower level of religious activity we find Yahwism, in spite of its

---

1. Ezek.5:1f.

nationalistic character, gradually recognizing the individual. This it was impelled to do, as in its march of progress it eradicated the various practices that were alien to its spirit, although many of these were the means of religious expression for the individual. In fact, its progress was due to the work of divinely-inspired individuals, with the result that a certain degree of individualism automatically came with the development of Yahwism. Thus from an early dualism in religion there was a change to the separate development of two phases of the same faith, the interpretation of the covenant relation in terms of nationalism and of individualism. Time eventually brought the triumph of the latter. Just when the nation, as a nation, was about to come to an end individualism had sufficiently developed to come forward and preserve for the future, both of Israel and of the world, all that was good in Israelitic religion.[1]

---

1. Cf. Appendix 3.

C O N C L U S I O N

The ברית, when it first meets us in the life of man, is a well-recognized and commonly used institution. It was the regulating force, apart from blood kinship and custom, in social contacts of all kinds between men, providing an element otherwise lacking. On account of the type of organization characteristic of primitive society the main social tie was that of physical kinship. A tribe was composed of people bound together by blood relationship or marriage, and no one would be regarded as a member of a tribe unless there was this blood tie. For an alien, then, who wished to become a member of a tribe this barrier must be overcome. For associations of one tribe with another, such as establishing friendship, uniting in a campaign for war, or in concluding peace treaties, there was no provision made. Relationships between individuals, where no blood kinship existed, were in the same position. Conduct was determined according to custom, and this had no force in connection with anything that was at all new, such as setting up a code of laws, the accession of a king to the throne, or the making of some other change in the political or social sphere. There was, therefore, a large

---

field to which the bond of kinship and the power of custom did not apply, and a real need for some bond or sanction other than these. To fill that need was the purpose of covenanting. Through this two parties could be bound together for any purpose, quite irrespective of kinship or custom. Whether or not the relation that was established created an artificial kinship, as in the blood-covenant, the covenant bond was a solemn one that was rarely broken. The difference between it and the common oath is, to some extent, illustrated by our use of "promising," as contrasted with "promising on one's honour," The latter carries a deeper significance to the average mind than does a mere promise.

Just as primitive peoples generally gave to everything a religious significance, so was the covenant brought into touch with religion. The deity was frequently appealed to to witness the making of a covenant. He became a third party to it, acting as the guardian of the bond, ready to bring severe punishment upon any covenant-breaker. In this way the bond was strengthened. By the divine sanctioning of the new relationship a supernatural power was introduced, particularly in /con-

---

connection with the בְּרִית.

The nature of the bond created by a covenant had a certain mechanical side to it, expressed by the ceremony. The two parties ate or drank from a common vessel, exchanged blood, some article they possessed, or each retained the half of a split token or divided victim, human or animal. By so doing some part of each party remained in the possession of the other, and thus they were, in a certain sense, united. When the deity became a member of the covenant the sacrificial victim that would then be offered, was shared by the deity and each of the covenanting parties. Part would be burned on the altar and part eaten by the human parties, or the blood poured out 'before the deity' and the flesh eaten. Through this it was thought that the spirit of the deity entered into the covenanters, not only uniting them thereby, but being an ever-present force to bring about their punishment in case the covenant oath was neglected or broken. Thus there was a mechanical transference of the life, or the spirit, of the one to the other accomplished through these rites.

Another phase in the covenant relation existed which was of still greater importance. It

---

had an ethical significance. A covenant was a free will action on the part of both parties. On their own initiative they chose to accept the obligations which the covenant involved. The responsibility for honouring these rested with the group or the individual forming each party to the agreement. A certain moral consciousness resulted. Further, the covenant parties were unequal in strength, social position, or in some other way. Frequently the lack of equality was pronounced, as in the case of a peace treaty between the conqueror and conquered, or a king accepting his royal prerogatives. Thus the covenant was the instrument by which the rights of minorities, of the weak and of the helpless, were protected. For these reasons it not only acted as an open door by which progress might enter without destroying the accepted standards and usages of the time, but was the medium which expressed the highest morality of primitive society.

The covenant, as an institution, was common among all the Semitic races, including the Hebrews. When, with the Exodus from Egypt, a turning-point was reached in the history of the latter, and new elements and ideals were flowing into their world, this institution was the only logical means by which

---

to adopt these things and make them a part of their national life. In doing so a fresh line of development was begun. From the nature of the case kinship could not be the tie which bound the Israelites to Yahweh. The only other bond known was that of covenanting, and therefore a covenant was made at Sinai, with Yahweh and the nation constituting the two covenant parties. It was the first time that a covenant was used to express the relation between a nation and its God, but it was also the first time that a situation had arisen in which a God had chosen a nation to be His without any bond of kinship thought of as existing between the God and His people. Through this election of Israel a change of emphasis comes into the conception of ברית as used in secular life. The one covenant party, Yahweh, is solely responsible for the covenant, and He alone imposes its conditions. During the ensuing years this covenant-idea was never outgrown. Rather, each age read the relationship between God and people in a deeper and a larger way, and the idea became the medium by which Yahweh was conceived in a purer and higher form, while the obligations resting on the Israelites experienceda parallel development. With literary prophecy we come to the peak of this gradual unfolding, the prophets interpreting the

---

nature of Yahweh to the people in a fuller manner than had been known in any previous age. Thus the covenant eventually came to express the entire content of religion, and thereby the Hebrews have made it a possession peculiarly their own. Throughout this development we find the nature of the covenant relation following two distinct, though inter-acting, lines of thought, growing out of the nature of that bond as it is found generally in covenanting. These are what we have called the mechanical and the ethical.

The former can be seen working out in the simpler ideas of the mass of the people. For them, the making of the covenant signified the establishing of a relation that could not be broken. It was an unconditional bond, similar to that of the kinship which existed between their neighbours and their deities. Thus Yahweh was their God and would always be their God, irrespective of their own acts. He might punish them, or, because of His wrath, leave them to their own devices for a time. Yet it would be only for a time. Yahweh and the nation were bound together; eventually His anger would cease and He would smile upon them with favour once more. This view lies behind the later narrative of the conquest of Canaan and the years immediately following. It speaks of a recurring circle of disobedience

---

to Yahweh, punishment, renewed obedience and the returning favour of Yahweh. The sacrificial system likewise embodied a mechanical view of the covenant relation. Sins within the covenant were forgiven through performing the proper ritual acts while those which placed one outside this relation, like idolatry, were punished by death. The priesthood came to represent this interpretation of the covenant. As Yahweh's representatives they gathered into their hands the means of maintaining the relation between the people and Yahweh. His voice was heard through the manipulating of the sacred lot, which they controlled, giving laws and regulations for the guidance of the people. Through other ritual acts, sacrificing, cleansing, healing, and so on, they furthered this control. Thus the sacrificial system, with the law, was to act as a wall between the Israelites and all other peoples and gods, automatically keeping the nation separate for Yahweh.

Yet, because this system was mechanical in its working, it lent itself to the influx of degrading elements--from the Canaanites and other religions with which the nation was brought into contact. Adjustments in the system were easily made, especially as long as the priesthood regarded the relationship

---

of the nation to Yahweh as depending chiefly on ritual acts rather than moral achievement. Right and wrong for them was mainly a matter of the proper or improper ritual. The result was that ethical distinctions soon became somewhat vague. This was revealed in their own conduct, as well as influencing the people, which led to the prophets' denunciation of the priests and of the way in which they had proved unworthy of their position.

But there was also development in the ethical side of the covenant relation. A covenant between God and man, because of the conditional character of any covenant, implied the idea of a moral law, binding on both God and man. Also there was the ethical element in the nature of Yahweh, glimpsed through the events of the deliverance from Egypt.

These two worked together, the character of the covenant opening the way for an ethical interpretation and furthering the development of this during the ensuing centuries. Throughout these years the conception of Yahweh remained fundamentally the same. New terms might be used in referring to Him, such as יהוה, after Canaan became fully acknowledged as His, and אלהים, replacing אל, but His nature did not

---

change. It was viewed more broadly and the ethical given greater emphasis, but that was all. With the rise of the prophets there was the greater development in the ethical significance of religion. They founded their faith on the nature of Yahweh and the character of the covenant relation--a nation that was to be His in any real sense had to express His character in the life of its people. When the prophets saw that the nation had failed and that it could not fulfil the terms of the covenant relation they moved on to the view of that relation extending in the future only to a group within the nation, finally regarding the individual Israelite as the unit of religion and the relation as being one between Yahweh and the individual soul.

These two phases, or interpretations, of the covenant relation, the mechanical and the ethical, interacted one upon the other. Thus the influence of the ethical gave to the law of Israel and to its sacrificial system a loftier significance, as we find expressed in the Book of Deuteronomy. On the other hand the legal and ritual, with the degrading elements which crept into these, prevented the people attaining the purer conception of religion presented by the prophets, which is seen in the continual /crit-

---

criticism which they directed against the popular religion. Thus an appreciation of both phases of development are needed for a full understanding of the conception of the covenant.

The covenant in history first expresses a relation between men. With the Hebrews it is adapted to express the relation between the nation and its God. At the close of the period which we have been examining it expresses the relation between an individual soul and Yahweh. This development is due to a constant broadening and deepening of the ethical significance of the conception of the covenant in the thought of Israel. When the foretold disaster came to the State there was already sown the seed of the Jewish Church. Post-Exilic religion began reaching out toward universalism, as expressed in the thought of Israel having a mission to the Gentile world. Once religion is understood as meaning the individual soul in communion with God, it is ready for the realization that all men, whether Jew or Gentile, can attain this spiritual fellowship. The Hebrew prophets achieved the first step, while it remained for Jesus Christ to take the second, to break down all national barriers and, teaching the sacrificial love of a Father-God toward each of His

---

children, bring in the New Covenant which Jeremiah had proclaimed. There was thus achieved, through the covenant-idea, that spiritual connection between the Old Testament and the New Testament which lies behind, and gives meaning to, the historical.

A P P E N D I X

APPENDIX 1

The Baal-Berith of Shechem

The בַּעַל בְּרִית,[1] 'lord of the covenant,' also called אֵל בְּרִית,[2] spoken of in connection with the town of Shechem, may have obtained its title for a variety of reasons. Occasionally we find that local deities were spoken of by some name indicating their special attribute, or sphere of activity. Thus there was Baal Marqod, lord of the dance, and Baal Marphe, lord of healing.[3] Baal-Berith would, then, be another case of the same thing, his special duty being to guard the keeping of oaths made in his presence or in his name.

Further, Shechem was apparently the centre of a confederacy of Canaanite tribes, including at least the cities of Millo, or Beth-Millo, Arumah, and Thebez.[4] To the sanctuary at Shechem would be brought, as a result, all matters of interest to the confederacy that involved the aid of a deity. This was the temple

---

1. Jud.8:33; 9:4. 2. Jud.9:46.
3. Cf. A.Lods, "Israel from its Beginnings to the Middle of the Eighth Century," p.121.
4. Jud.9:6,31,50.

of Baal-Berith, the deity obtaining his name from the fact that he was the god of the covenant entered into by these Canaanites.

This confederacy may have existed before the Israelites or Abimelech appeared on the scene.[1] Judges, chapter 8, verse 33, seems to indicate that the Israelites were admitted into it and, in common with the others, worshipped the god who protected their common interests. Judges, chapter 9, however, might be interpreted as though Abimelech was elected king over a confederacy of the Canaanites and Israelites, formed at that time, with the local Baal made the guardian of their covenant.[2] In this case loyalty to Abimelech would form a part of the covenant-oath and it would be surprising to find the Shechemites, after but three years, leading a revolt against him.[3] It would have been their own local god who was made the guardian of the covenant, and revolt against Abimelech would be tantamount to revolt against their god. But several members of the league seemed to have taken part in the rebellion, which was against the kingship of Abimelech only, and Baal-Berith remained the god of the /re-

---

1. So A.Kuenen,"The Religion of Israel to the Fall of the Jewish State," i., p.302.
2. Cf. A.B.Davidson,"Old Testament Prophecy," p.56; R.Kittel,"The Religion of the People of Israel," p.43.
3. Jud.9:23f.

rebels since they fled to his temple for protection. Moreover Abimelech destroyed it,[1] a thing he would not have done had he been defending a covenant made with himself. He would then have been allied with the 'god of the covenant' and protecting their mutual interests by wreaking vengeance, in his name, on the covenant-breakers.

The view which seems to best fit the situation and the facts is that, at Shechem, there was a local god whose sphere of power was specially concerned with the making of oaths and treaties, just as with the Greek Ζεὺς Ὅρκιος and the Roman "Jupiter Jurarius."[2] Thus the god was called Baal-Berith. On the forming of a league between some of the Canaanite tribes this deity naturally became the guardian of their pact and Shechem the centre of the league. The Israelites, on entering the district, were peaceably received[3] and taken into the confederacy. As a result they also joined in the worship of Baal-Berith. The contention of Kittel[4] that the Israelites spoke of

---

1. Jud.9:47,48.
2. A.Lods, op. cit., p.121; G.A.Cooke,"Baal-Berith," HDB, i., p.211.
3. Cf. Gen.34; Jud.1.
4. Op. cit., p.43f.

this deity as El-Berith while the Canaanites used the term Baal-Berith seems to be arbitrary. Yet, even if this were true, it would in no way affect the relationship of the Israelites to the other members of the league or to the covenant-deity. When Abimelech was elected king his sovereignty extended over the entire group and, had the revolt against him three years later been successful, it would only have entailed the election of another king to head the confederacy, Baal-Berith remaining the guardian deity.

APPENDIX 2

The Naturalistic View of Religion

The attempt has been made by some scholars, such as Wellhausen, Stade, Kuenen and Montefiore, to explain the ethical monotheism of the prophets on purely natural grounds. All the development in early times and throughout Israel's history is thought of as a purely historical process. No impact of God upon the human soul is allowed, but the 'genius' of Israel is regarded as sufficiently accounting for the ethical development in its religion. Thus the covenant at Mount Sinai is, in their view, but a reading back of later prophetic thought (Wellhausen), the uniting of some Israelite tribes with Midian (Schwally)[1], or the uniting of a number of nomadic tribes into a confederacy under Yahweh (Eerdmans)[2].

Against this naturalistic view many have taken their stand, such as Schultz, König, Ewald, Budde, W.R.Smith, Robertson, W.S.Bruce, A.B.Davidson, A.C.Welch, W.Eichrodt, and others. These scholars look back to the time of Moses and find that even then there was a moral element present in the /con-

---

1. Schwally, Semit. Kriesaltertümer, i., p.2, quoted by E.Kautzsch,"Rel.", p.632 (footnote).
2. Eerdmans, Theol. Tijdschrift, xxxvii., p.19f., quoted by Kautzsch,"Rel.", ibid.

conception of Yahweh and that, through the covenant at Sinai, there was implanted the seed of all the future ethical development.[1] This view, as the thesis reveals, seems to be the only one consistent with the history of Israel. W.S.Bruce pointedly remarks,

> "No proof, worthy of the name of evidence, has yet been adduced to show that this consciousness of Israel's personal relation to a moral Ruler, and of their ethical superiority over other races, was reached by philosophic thought, or by a train of reasoning. It springs out of that historic relationship which was established by God between himself and the people of His choice. Through this relation Israel attained to its conception of one holy and true God, a God who has His people's moral good so much at heart that, to perfect it, He will not spare them many bitter trials."[2]

---

1. Cf., e.g., J.Robertson,"The Early Religion of Israel," p.298f., F.E.König,"The Religious History of Israel," p.43f., W.R.Smith,"The Prophets of Israel and Their Place in History," p.53f., W.Eichrodt,"Theologie des Alten Testaments," i., Chapter 2.
2. "The Ethics of the Old Testament," p.36.

APPENDIX 3

The Development of Nationalism and Individualism

A.C.Knudson[1] has ably pointed out the large place of the individual in pre-Exilic religion. His examination of this has led him to say of it,

> "Nationalism and Individualism, in their higher forms, instead of being mutually antithetical, were really mutually complementary."[2]

That is, he regards nationalism and individualism as developing side by side, the one always contributing to the development of the other.

In support of this he maintains that there was at first no conscious recognition of either the group or the individual, as such. Then, as the group furnished a worthy field for the activity of the individual his achievements would heighten his self-consciousness. Thus the group and the individual interacted upon each other, and advance in recognition of the one brought a similar advance in the other. Knudson illustrates his view by showing the individualism which existed in the religion of pre-Exilic Israel, and the growth in both nationalism and individualism after the Exile.

---

1. in "The Religious Teaching of the Old Testament."
2. Op. cit., p.340.

While much of what he says is true his general principle does not always hold. If we think, for example, of Israel from the time of the entrance into Canaan until the establishment of the monarchy we find that it cannot apply. The national consciousness was then at a very low ebb, while, since "every man did that which was right in his own eyes," the self-consciousness of the individual was greatly strengthened. The two at that time were not "mutually complementary." During the monarchy, especially in its later years when under the prophetic influence, Knudson's principle does apply. But as the thought of the individual later deepened and crystallized it does not hold. A man then entered into fellowship with Yahweh, not because of his Jewish birth, but solely because of his faith in Yahweh. It is true that those who are faithful are still spoken of as the nation, Israel; yet it is really a nation no longer, but a Church, and a Church, eventually, with a world-wide mission.

According to Knudson, the peak of development in individualism would mean also an intense nationalism. We find, however, the reverse to be the case, since individualism reached its peak when the State was crumbling to pieces and the Israelites carried away to Babylon. Only after the years of the

---

Exile were well advanced was there a return to nationalism, when men were beginning to idealize the past and project it into the future, giving it a larger place in the hopes of what was yet to be.

It would be truer to say that nationalism developed with the nation itself, increasing as its welfare and future prospects increased, while individualism developed when opportunities for individual activity on the part of members of the nation presented themselves and found men ready to serve the interests of their fellowmen, not forgetting that when God speaks His greatest words to mankind He does so through a human mind. There were two distinct lines of development, sometimes flowing side by side, sometimes quite apart. There was also interaction of the one upon the other, but not always furthering the development of the other. Thus the work of Samuel resulted in a great increase in both the national consciousness and in individualism, while the work of Jeremiah had a much greater importance for the individual self-consciousness than for the national. This view is seen to be true, not only in the history of Israel, but also in that of other nations, both of primitive times and in our modern world.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Works read or referred to in the preparation of this Thesis

Adams, J., "Israel's Ideal, or Studies in Old Testament Theology,"
T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1909.

Addis, W.E., "Hebrew Religion to the Establishment of Judaism under Ezra,"
Williams and Norgate, London, 1906.

Aytoun, R.A., "God in the Old Testament,"
George H. Doran Co., New York, 1923.

Batten, L.W., "The Hebrew Prophet,"
Methuen and Co., London, 1905.

Baynes, N.H., "Israel Amongst the Nations,"
Student Christian Movement, London, 1927.

Bennett, W.H., "The Religion of the Post-Exilic Prophets,"
T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1907.

Blunt, A.W.F., "The Prophets of Israel,"
Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1929.

Box, G.H., "The Book of Isaiah,"
Sir Isaac Pitman and Sons, Ltd., London, 1908.

Bruce, W.S., "The Ethics of the Old Testament,"
T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1895.

Budde, K., "Religion of Israel to the Exile,"
G.P.Putnam's Sons, New York & London, 1899.

Bury, J.B., "A History of Greece, to the Death of Alexander the Great," Second Edition,
MacMillan and Co., Ltd., London, 1924.

Cadbury, H.J., "National Ideals in the Old Testament,"
Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1920.

Cheyne, T.K., "Traditions and Beliefs of Ancient Israel,"
Adam and Charles Black, London, 1907.

Cheyne, T.K., "The Two Religions of Israel,"
Adam and Charles Black, London, 1911.

Cheyne, T.K., "The Prophecies of Isaiah," Vol.1,
C.Kegan Paul and Co., London, 1880.

Cheyne, T.K., "Jeremiah: His Life and Times,"
James Nisbet and Co., London, 1888.

Cornill, C.H., "History of the People of Israel,"
The Open Court Publishing Co., Chicago, 1917.

Cornill, C.H., "Introduction to the Canonical Books of the Old Testament," Trans. by G.H.Box,
Williams and Norgate Ltd., London, 1907.

Cornill, C.H., "The Culture of Ancient Israel,"
The Open Court Publishing Co., Chicago, 1914.

Crawley, E., "The Mystic Rose,"
MacMillan and Co., Ltd., London, 1902.

Cripps, R.S., "A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Amos,"
Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, London, 1929.

Davidson, A.B., "Old Testament Prophecy," edited by J.A.Paterson,
T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1904.

Davidson, A.B., "The Theology of the Old Testament," edited by S.D.F. Salmond,
Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1904.

Denney, J., "The Death of Christ,"
Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1902.

Dewey and Tufts, "Ethics,"
George Bell and Sons, London, 1909.

Douglas, G., "The Book of Jeremiah,"
Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1903.

Driver, S.R., "A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy,"
T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1895.

Driver, S.R., "The Book of Genesis,"
Methuen and Co., London, 1904.

Driver, S.R., "An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament," Eighth Edition,
T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1909.

Driver, S.R., "The Ideals of the Prophets,"
T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1915.

Driver, S.R., "The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah,"
Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1907.

Duff, A., "Old Testament Theology,"
Vol.1, 1891, Vol.2, 1900.
Adam and Charles Black, London and Edinburgh.

Duff, A., "The Theology and Ethics of the Hebrews,"
Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1902.

Duhm, B., "The Twelve Prophets," Trans. by A.Duff,
Adam and Charles Black, London, 1912.

Edghill, E.A., "An Enquiry into the Evidential Value
of Prophecy,"
MacMillan and Co., Ltd., London, 1906.

Eichrodt, W., "Theologie des Alten Testaments," Vol.1,
J.C.Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, Leipzig, 1933.

Ewald, H., "The History of Israel," Vol.2,
Longmans, Green, and Co., London, 1883.

Farley, W.J., "The Progress of Prophecy,"
The Religious Tract Society, London, 1925.

Fowler, H.T., "The Origin and Growth of the Hebrew
Religion,"
University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1916.

Frazer, J.G., "Folk-lore in the Old Testament," 3 Vols.,
MacMillan and Co., Ltd., London, 1918.

Galling, K., "Die Erwählungstraditionen Israels,"
Verlag von Alfred Töpelmann in Giessen, 1928.

Gordon, A.R., "The Prophets of the Old Testament,"
Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1919.

Gordon, T.C., "The Rebel Prophet,"
James Clarke and Co., Ltd., London, 1931.

Gray, G.B., "A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on
the Book of Isaiah, i-xxxix," Vol.1,
Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1912.

Gressmann, H., "Mose und seine Zeit,"
Göttingen, Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1913.

Harper, W.R., "A Critical and Exegetical Commentary
on Amos and Hosea,"
T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1905.

Houston, D., "The Achievement of Israel: A Study in
Revelation Applied to Life,"
James Clarke and Co., Ltd., London, 1923.

Jevons, F.B., "An Introduction to the History of Religion," Sixth Edition, Methuen and Co., Ltd., London, 1914.

Jordan, W.G., "Prophetic Ideas and Ideals," Fleming H. Revell Co., London and Edinburgh, 1902

Joyce, G.C., "The Inspiration of Prophecy," Oxford University Press, London, 1910.

Kaplan, J.H., "Psychology of Prophecy," Julius H. Greenstone, Philadelphia, 1908.

Kautzsch, E., "An Outline of the History of the Literature of the Old Testament," Williams and Norgate, (Trans. by J.Taylor), London and Edinburgh, 1898.

Kennett, R.H., "Early Ideals of Righteousness," T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1910.

Kent, C.F., "A History of the Hebrew People, from the Settlement in Canaan to the Division of the Kingdom," Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1908.

Kent, C.F., "Biblical Geography and History," Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1926.

Kennett, R.H., "Old Testament Essays," University Press, Cambridge, 1928.

Kittel, R., "The Religion of the People of Israel," Trans. by R.C.Micklem, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, 1925.

Knudson, A.C., "The Religious Teaching of the Old Testament," The Abingdon Press, New York, 1918.

Köhler, L., "Theologie des Alten Testaments," Verlag von J.C.B.Mohr (Paul Siebeck), Tübingen, 1936.

König, F.E., "The Religious History of Israel," Trans. by A.J.Campbell, T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1885.

Kraetzschmar, R., "Die Bundesvorstellung im Alten Testament," 1896. N.G.Elwer'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, Marburg.

Kuenen, A., "The Religion of Israel to the Fall of the Jewish State," Vol.1, Williams and Norgate, London & Edinburgh, 1874.

Lidgett, J.S., "The Fatherhood of God, in Christian Truth and Life," T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1902.

Lods, A., "Israel From Its Beginnings to the Middle of the Eighth Century, " Trans. by S.H.Hooke, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., Ltd., London, 1932.

Loisy, A., "The Religion of Israel," Trans. by A.Galton, T.Fisher Unwin, London, 1910.

Marti, K., "The Religion of the Old Testament: Its Place Among the Religions of the Nearer East," Trans. by G.A.Bienemann, G.P.Putnam's Sons, New York, 1907, (Williams and Norgate, London).

Mitchell, H.G., "The Ethics of the Old Testament," University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1912.

Montefiore, C.G., "The Origin and Growth of Religion as Illustrated by the Religion of the Ancient Hebrews," Williams and Norgate, London & Edinburgh, 1893.

McConnell, F.J., "The Prophetic Ministry," The Abingdon Press, New York, 1930.

McCurdy, J.F., "History, Prophecy and the Monuments," Vol.1, MacMillan and Co., New York, 1894.

McFadyen, J.E., "The Message of Israel," James Clarke and Co., Ltd., London, 1931.

McNeile, A.H., "The Book of Exodus," Methuen and Co., London, 1908.

Nairne, A., "The Faith of the Old Testament," Longmans, Green, and Co., London, 1914.

Oesterley, W.O.E., and Robinson, T.H., "Hebrew Religion, Its Origin and Development," Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, London, 1933.

Orelli, C. von, "The Old Testament Prophecy of the Consummation of God's Kingdom, Traced in its Historical Development," Trans. by J.S.Banks, T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1889.

Orr, Jas., "The Problem of the Old Testament," Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1906.

Ottley, R.L., "Aspects of the Old Testament," Longmans, Green, and Co., London, 1897.

Ottley, R.L., "The Religion of Israel," University Press, Cambridge, 1905.

Pace, E., "Ideas of God in Israel; Their Content and Development," George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, 1924.

Patton, W.M., "Israel's Account of the Beginnings," The Pilgrim Press, New York, 1916.

Peake, A.S., "Brotherhood in the Old Testament," Hodder and Stoughton Ltd., London, 1923.

Peake, A.S., "The Problem of Suffering in the Old Testament," C.H.Kelly, London, 1904.

Peake, A.S., "The Servant of Yahweh," (Lectures on Old Testament and New Testament Subjects), Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1931.

Peake, A.S., "A Commentary on the Bible," Edited by A.S.Peake and A.J.Grieve, T.C. and E.C.Jack, Ltd., London & Edinburgh, 1924.

Peake, A.S., "The People and the Book," (Old Testament Essays edited by A.S.Peake), Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1925.

Pedersen, J., "Israel, Its Life and Culture," I-II, Oxford University Press, London, 1926.

Peters, J.P., "The Religion of the Hebrews," Ginn and Co., Boston and London, 1914.

Piepenbring, C., "Theology of the Old Testament," Trans. by H.G.Mitchell, Thomas Y. Crowell and Co., New York, 1893.

Ramsay, A., "Studies in Jeremiah,"
Samuel Bagster and Sons Ltd., London, 1905.

Robertson, Jas., "The Early Religion of Israel,"
Wm. Blackwood and Sons,
Edinburgh and London, 1892.

Robinson, H.W., "The Religious Ideas of the Old Testament,"
Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1927.

Robinson, H.W., "The Cross of Jeremiah,"
Student Christian Movement, London, 1925.

Robinson, T.H., "The Book of Amos," (Trans. into colloquial English), Second Edition,
National Adult School Union, London.

Robinson, T.H., "A History of Israel, from the Exodus to the Fall of Jerusalem," Vol.1,
Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1932.

Robinson, T.H., "Prophecy and the Prophets in Ancient Israel,"
Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1928.

Sanday, W., "Inspiration," Eighth Edition,
Longmans, Green, and Co., London, 1914.

Sayce, A.H., "Early Israel and the Surrounding Nations,"
Service and Paton, London, 1899.

Schultz, H., "Old Testament Theology," Vol.1, Vol.2,
Trans. from Fourth German Edition by J.A.Paterson,
T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1892.

Skinner, J., "Genesis," International Critical Commentary,
T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1910.

Skinner, J., "Prophecy and Religion: Studies in the Life of Jeremiah,"
University Press, Cambridge, 1922.

Smend, R., "Lehrbuch der Alttestamentlichen Religionsgeschichte,"
J.C.B.Mohr, Leipzig und Tübingen, 1899.

Smith, G.A., "The Book of the Twelve Prophets," Vol.1,
Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1900.

Smith, G.A., "The Book of Isaiah," Vol.1,
Chapters i.-xxxix., New Edition,
Hodder and Stoughton, Ltd., London, 1927.

Smith, G.A., "Jeremiah," Fourth Edition,
Hodder and Stoughton, Ltd., London, 1929.

Smith, H.P., "Old Testament History,"
Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1903.

Smith, H.P., "The Religion of Israel,"
Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1914.

Smith, J.M.P., "The Moral Life of the Hebrews,"
University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1923.

Smith, J.M.P., "The Prophet and His Problems,"
Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1914.

Smith, W.R., "Lectures on the Religion of the Semites,"
Third Edition, with Introduction and
Additional Notes by S.A.Cook,
A. and C.Black Ltd., London, 1927.

Smith, W.R., "The Prophets of Israel and Their Place
in History," Reprint of Second
Edition, with Introduction and
Additional Notes by T.K.Cheyne,
A. and C.Black, Ltd., London, 1928.

Smith, W.R., "The Old Testament in the Jewish Church,"
A. and C.Black Ltd., Edinburgh, 1881.

Todd, J.C., "Politics and Religion in Ancient Israel,"
MacMillan and Co., Ltd., London, 1904.

Trumbull, H.C., "The Blood Covenant,"
George Redway, London, 1887.

Trumbull, H.C., "The Threshold Covenant,"
T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1896.

Volz, Paul D., "Der Prophet Jeremia,"
A.Deichertsche Verlagsbuchhandlung D.Werner
Scholl, Leipzig, 1928.
(Kommentar zum Alten Testament, herausgegeben
von E.Sellin).

Wade, G.W., "The Book of the Prophet Isaiah,"
Methuen and Co., Ltd., London, 1911.

Welch, A.C., "The Religion of Israel Under the Kingdom," T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1912.

Welch, A.C., "Deuteronomy, the Framework to the Code," Oxford University Press, London, 1932.

Welch, A.C., "Jeremiah, His Time and His Work," Oxford University Press, London, 1928.

Welch, A.C., "The Book of Jeremiah," (Trans. into colloquial English), Second Edition, National Adult School Union, London, 1928.

Wellhausen, J., "Prolegomena to the History of Israel," Trans. by J.S.Black and A.Menzies, Adam and Charles Black, Edinburgh, 1885.

Westermarck, E., "The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas," Vol.1, 1906, Vol.2, 1908, MacMillan and Co., Ltd., London.

Westphal, "The Law and the Prophets," Trans. by Du Pontet, MacMillan and Co., Ltd., London, 1910.

Whitehouse, O.C., "Isaiah, i.-xxxix." Oxford University Press, American Branch, T.C. and E.C.Jack, Edinburgh, 1905.

Woods, F.H., "The Hope of Israel," T. and T. clark, Edinburgh, 1896.

ARTICLES

Expositor, The, Edited by W.R.Nicoll,
Eerdmans, B.D., "Primitive Religious Thought in the Old Testament," Series 8, Vol.6, 1913.
Welch, A.C., "The Present Position of Old Testament Criticism," Series 8, Vol.6, 1913.

Expository Times, The,
Budde, K., "Imageless Worship in Antiquity," Vol.9 (1897-98).
Cameron, G.G., "A New View of Deuteronomy," a review of A.Duff, "Old Testament Theology; or The History of Hebrew Religion," Vol.12 (1900-1901).
Candlish, "The Notion of Divine Covenants in the Bible," Vol.4 (1892-93).

Cormack, G., "The Holy City of Deuteronomy,"
Vol.9 (1897-98).
Danson, J.M., "Amos," Vol.11 (1899-1900).
Davidson, A.B., "The Theology of Isaiah,"
Vol.5 (1893-94).
Konig, E., "Prophecy and History," Vol.11 (1899-1900).
Laidlaw, A.S., "The Priest and the Prophet,"
Vol.11 (1899-1900).
Taylor, J., "Wellhausen's Latest Work on Hebrew
History," Vol.6 (1894-95).
Walker, N.L., "The Ministry of Elijah," (A Theory),
Vol.4 (1892-93).
Woods, F.H., "Hebrew Prophecy and Modern Criticism,"
Vol.5 (1893-94), Vol.6 (1894-95),
Vol.7 (1895-96).

Hastings, J., "A Dictionary of the Bible," in 5 Volumes,
Edited by J.Hastings and J.A.Selbie,
Charles Scribner's Sons, New York,
T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1908.
-- numerous Articles, including:
Bernard, E.R., "Sin," iv.
Davidson, A.B., "Covenant," i.
"Jeremiah," ii.
"Prophecy and Prophets," iv.
Driver, S.R., "Law in the Old Testament," iii.
Kautzsch, E., "The Religion of Israel," v.
Konig, E., "Book of Judges," ii.
Paterson, W.P., "Sacrifice," iv.
Ryle, H.E., "Deuteronomy," i.
Skinner, J., "Holiness in the Old Testament," ii.
Smith, G.A., "Isaiah," ii.

Hastings, J., "Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics,"
Edited by J.Hastings,
T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1911.
Ehrhardt, E., "Individualism,"
Kennett, R.H., "Israel."
MacCullock, J.A., "Covenant."
Royce, J., "Monotheism."

Kittel, G., "Theologisches Wörterbuch Zum Neuen Testament,"
Vol.2, Verlag von W.Kohlhammer, Stuttgart, 1935,
Article on "Διαθήκη," p.106f.

Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, The New,
McCurdy, J.F., "Covenant."

Zeitschrift fur die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft,
Valeton, "Das Wort ברית bei den Propheten und in
den Ketubim--Resultat," xii. xiii. (1892-93).