ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES AND THE LITERATURE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES AS A GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING THE LITERATURE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

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TO

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INTRODUCTION

Although the Bible is known all over the world, and has been translated into practically every language and dialect known, only recently did it occur to very many people that this book cannot be understood upon a casual and hit-and-miss reading. The simplicity of the Bible has often been cited. The idea that "he who runs may read" has, by some chance, attached itself to this book, and to the average person it is foolish to argue otherwise.

A bit of careful study, however, convinces any person who would read this book understandingly that its meaning is by no means so apparent as has been supposed. Clothed in ancient metaphors and filled with allusions to events and customs long since forgotten, much of its material becomes meaningless, unless some key to understanding it can be discovered.

Happily, such a key has been discovered. Archaeologists, bent on either proving or disproving the record of the biblical accounts, have brought to light much that is of great importance in attempting to understand many heretofore unintelligible Bible stories and allusions.

Biblical Archaeology, on any significant scale, is of comparatively recent origin. It was not until the beginning of the second quarter of the nineteenth century that any scientific attempt was made to discover, classify, and interpret the wealth of material which has been buried for centuries far beneath the ground in Bible lands.

When once this important field was opened, rapid advance-

ment was made from the very start. The spade began to turn up materials which threw light on incidents of which mere fragments are given in the Hebrew writings, enabling scholars to solve many perplexing historical problems. Names which had been known heretofore only in biblical writings now appeared in the contemporary accounts, with illuminating comments on events, places, and persons which modern men had understood before only in the light of the Hebrew interpretation--oftimes a fairly prejudiced view. Such is the importance of recent archaeological discoveries in the understanding of the literature of the Old Testament that one writer has said, "For accurate understanding and interpretation of biblical history, spades are trumps."*

Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, and Palestine have all yielded ancient tablets, pottery, ruins of cities, and the like that illuminate the Old Testament narrative. Archaeologists have found in these places remains of past civilizations, and have investigated their history in the fields of art, architecture, literature, customs and religion, and have used their findings to aid the modern student in arriving at a clearer understanding of the Hebrew literature.

In this study, this conviction has grown on the writer: Scholars have taken the discoveries made, examined and classified them, and then interpreted them according to their own beliefs and prejudices. To the so-called "fundamental" scholar, certain findings verify his "fundamental" beliefs. To the much-heralded "liberal" scholar, the same findings ver-

* E.W.K. Mould, Essentials of Bible History, p. 60.

ify his "liberal" convictions. Although the question of the accuracy of the account given enters into the study of any literature, and consequently is treated in the present study of the Old Testament as the highest example of Hebrew literature, this question is not treated in relation to any school of biblical interpretation.

By the very nature of the case, this study is limited to a few major incidents taken from the Hebrew record, with comparisons with other accounts which explain either the meaning or the source of the Old Testament accounts. It can readily be seen that in such a limited study, many items of interest and importance are omitted because of lack of time and space. It is the hope of the writer to enlarge and expand the present study by further investigation at some future time.

I. Archaeology And The Genesis Record

One of the most discussed parts of the Old Testament is the book of Genesis, with its record of beginnings, its story of the call and blessing of Abraham, and the story of the enslavement and final triumph of Joseph. It is upon this part of the Hebrew literature, also, that the discoveries of the archaeologists have cast the most light. In many parts of the ancient world, ancient papyri and stone tablets have been found. In many of these accounts, light is thrown upon the source and meaning of the Hebrew record. Oftimes, also, interesting comparisons can be made between the beliefs and ideals of the Israelites and their contemporaries.

1. The Record of Beginnings.

The immortal story of creation and early beginnings, as told in the opening verses of Genesis, begins thus:

> "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."*

After this account follows the record of the seven days, the first six filled with creative activity, and the seventh given over to rest on the part of God, giving thereby a pattern for the Jewish Sabbath.

* Genesis 1:1,2.

The Genesis record of beginnings states that on the first day of creation light was created. On the second, the firmament was brought into order, and on the third, land and vegetation were brought into being. On the fourth day, the sun and moon were fixed in place. The fifth day saw the development of sea-life and the fowls of the air. On the sixth day, the higher animals and man were created and given their places, while on the seventh, God rested.

In understanding this record of beginning, and tracing its source, the work of archaeologists is of untold value, for no less than four accounts from other sources have been discovered, giving the myths of ancient peoples regarding the beginnings of things.

The best-known of these, and the one most like the Genesis record, is the Babylonian account, which was circulated in Babylonia about seven centuries B.C. This record has been discovered, recorded on seven tablets, and divided into seven epochs, or cantos. It tells the story of the making of man and ascribes the creative work to the Babylonian god, Marduk.

It is interesting to compare the two accounts, the Genesis record and the Babylonian. The beginnings, as related in Genesis, were all the handiwork of God, as was seen from the verses quoted above. There is a striking similarity between the opening paragraph of Genesis and the Babylonian creation epic:

"Time was when above heaven was not named;

Below to the earth no name was given.

Then the primeval Abyss their begetter,
The roaring Sea who bore them,-
Their waters together were mingled." *

In comparing the two accounts, there are several notable likenesses and more noticeable contrasts. The two agree in assuming that primeval chaos consisted of a mass of waters. The Hebrew account is divided into seven days; the Babylonian into seven cantos. The Hebrew account ends with the Sabbath, and the Babylonian with a hymn in praise to their god Marduk. The two agree in placing the creation of the heavens in the fourth epoch, and the creation of man in the sixth. In the Hebrew account, the sun is created, but in the Babylonian, since Marduk is the sun god, that planet is taken for granted. The Genesis record affirms man's kinship with God by stating that he was made in the image of God, while the Babylonian account says that man was made from the blood of Kingu, the dead god, thereby giving him a kinship with divinity that is just as close.

The chief difference between the two lies in the religious ideas contained in them. To quote a well-known biblical archaeologist:

"A more important difference lies in the religious conceptions of the two. The Babylonian poem is mythological and polytheistic. Its conception of deity is by no means exalted. Its gods love and hate, they scheme and plot, fight and destroy. Marduk, the champion, conquers only after a fierce struggle, which taxes his powers to the utmost. Genesis, on the other hand, reflects

* George A. Barton, Archaeology and the Bible, pp. 287 ff.

the most exalted monotheism. God is so thoroughly the master of the elements of the universe, that they obey his slightest word. He controls all without effort. He speaks and it is done. Granting, as most scholars do, that there is a connection between the two narratives, there is no better measure of the inspiration of the Biblical account than to put it side by side with the Babylonian. As we read the chapter in Genesis today, it still reveals to us the majesty and power of the one God, and creates in the modern man, as it did in the ancient Hebrew, a worshipful attitude toward the Creator."*

Still another account found in Babylonia, now in the British Museum, gives a bit of insight into another part of the creation story. This epic attributes the work of creation to the goddess Aruru, and in part parallels the Genesis account of God making man of the dust of the earth, and making a living soul of him. This record reads:

"Aruru washed her hands;
Clay she pinched off and spat upon it;
Eabani, a hero she created,
An exalted offspring, with the might of Ninib."**

These accounts of the beginnings of things are of great value in understanding the Old Testament record. Scholars of all shades of opinion agree that there is a definite conn-

*Barton, op. cit., -. 306

**Translated in Barton, op. cit., 312

ection between these stories and the Genesis record. Some see them as mere repetitions of the same stories:

> "In Israel the writer considered Yahweh to be identical with Marduk."*

Others recognize the debt of the Hebrew writers to the Babylonians, but believe that the stories, while maintaining some essential likenesses, have a different meaning to the two peoples.

Where did the Hebrews learn this Babylonian account? Some have attempted, because of the likeness of these accounts, to link the early roots of Hebrew religion and civilization very intimately with Babylonia. This position is strongly contested by outstanding authorities today:

> "The writer ventures to go even farther and to claim that the influence of the Babylonian culture upon the peoples of Canaan was almost nil."**

> "Thus Amurru, Syria and Palestine, is declared to be the home of the northern Semite; if not the original home, at least an earlier home than Babylonia. Thus the course of Semitic culture was from West to east, and not from east to west."***

The most satisfactory answer to the problem has been proposed by Professor Mould:

> "Strangely enough, a copy of this poem (the Babylonian creation epic) found its way into Egypt not later than the early part of the fourteenth century

*Clay, Amurru, p. 17. **Ibid, p. 13.
***M. G. Kyle, Deciding Voice of the Monuments, p. 118.

Before Christ and was recovered with the Tell-el-Amarna tablets. If Egypt was acquainted with the Babylonian story a century before Moses' day, it is natural to suppose that it was known pretty generally in the centuries following, and would have been known to the Hebrews." *

In understanding the Old Testament records of beginnings it can be said in summary:

1. The archaeological discoveries lead us to believe that all primitive peoples possessed a certain body of myths, the purpose of which was to answer the natural query, "How did things begin?"

2. The most ancient of these, namely, the Babylonian and Hebrew, have so much in common that scholars agree that they must have had a common source.

3. To read the Old Testament understandingly, it must be kept in mind that this ancient material had a different meaning to the people that first recorded it than it has to us today. It cannot be read as a book of present-day fiction is read and its truest value to a present-day reader be realized. The customs, social traditions, religious concepts, and other factors that went to make up the total life-outlook of the people that produced the Bible must be considered. This, to a very great degree, is the contribution of archaeology to the understanding of the writings of the Old Testament.

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* E.W. K. Mould, Essential of Bible History, p. 53.

2. The Fall and Redemption of Man.

One of the most important topics with which the Old Testament writers deal is the problem of moral evil. How did evil come into being? Or, is evil merely a superstition without a basis in fact? It is both interesting and helpful to compare the Hebrew story of man's purposes, failings, and final success in his world, with the stories of other ancient peoples.

The purposes of man in his world, as recorded by the Hebrew writer, was "to dress it (the garden of Eden) and to keep it."* His only restriction was concerning a certain tree, "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."**

A part of a Babylonian account of man's purposes in the world was discovered in the city of Ashur. It has been translated by Assyrian scholars, and a part of it deals in a very similar way with the duty of man to serve the gods by building their temples, keeping their cities, and caring for their gardens:

> "Let the bonds of the gods be bound upon them; for future days the limit be established; The yoke and the lifting cord on their hands be placed, The temple of the great gods unto a lofty sanctuary to bring, The meadows to mark out, forever their limits to establish.....To make the field of the Annunaki

* Gen. 2:15 ** Gen. 2:17

produce, To increase the abundance of the land,
To keep the feasts of the gods."*

The story of Adapa, recorded in the four fragments of the so-called "Adapa myth" which have been found, correspond very closely to the story of the expulsion of man from Eden in Genesis 3. The story agrees with the Genesis record, in that immortality seems to depend upon eating a certain type of food. Also, for his disobedience, Adapa was subjected to sickness, disease, and restlessness, much as Adam was doomed to toil, and Eve had the pangs of childbirth imposed upon her.

By the discovery of these accounts, scholars have learned that the story of the beginning of moral evil, of man's mortality, and his relation to his creator are not the sole porperty of the Hebrew people as was once believed. These stories, with some minor variations, seem to belong to practically all ancient races. This thought agrees with the biblical idea that the human race had a common ancestry, as these stories would perhaps not be so universally known if they had not come originally from a common source.

In comparing the Babylonian and Hebrew accounts, one writer has said:

"An increasing number of modern scholars regard the Babylonian story as an earlier form of a narrative which the Hebrew writer took and purified. Others

* Barton, op. cit., p. 315.

hold that it is a somewhat degerate form of the biblical narrative. In any event, the Babylonian story proves the Biblical conceptions to be very ancient, and, by its contrasts to that of Genesis, it exhibits the dignity and religious value of the Biblical narrative. In the Babylonian myth, the gods, Ea and Anu, are divided and work at cross purposes; Ea tells a falsehood to accomplish his end. Genesis, while it represents Jehovah as feeling and acting in a much more human way than some parts of the Bible do, still portrays him as a consistently righteous, omnipotent God who demands obedience, and whose punishments are the reasonable recompense of transgressions. The superiority of the Old Testament stands out in striking contrast."*

By comparing these accounts, we may conclude that the problem of evil was one that was considered by different ancient races, and was solved satisfactorily, to them at least, by making disobedience of one person the beginning point of universal disobedience.

Another purpose is seen, however, as we study the Genesis record and compare it with other records. It becomes increasingly evident that these ancient writers had as a second purpose the location of the cradle of civilization. The Euphrates valley is agreed upon by practic-

* Barton, op. cit., p. 320.

ally all of them as the starting point of civilized life. * And, strangely enough, we are made to recognize the rightness of their assertions when we read the conclusions of accepted students of archaeology. For example, Kyle has the following to say regarding the rightness of the assumptions of the Hebrews and Babylonians with regard to the cradle of the race:

> "This story of Eden purports to give a beginning, to focalize the streams of history in one principal fountain somewhere in the Euphrates valley. From this same general region in Western Asia, also, the second dispersion is represented to have taken place. Thus according to the Bible account, Eden, notwithstanding the subsequent destruction of men by the Flood and the repeopling of the world, remains the starting point of the race.
>
> "The theory of this location of the point of departure for the dispersion of the race, as indicated by the record in the Bible and by facts ascertained by research, is all but universally held. It cannot be said that it is yet definitely substantiated, but it is receiving cumulative corroboration along ethnological and philological lines. Wherever it is possible to trace back lines of migration of the early nations mentioned, or to gather notes of direction from the

* Genesis 2:14

* Line 23 of the Babylonian Creation Epic, Barton, op. cit., p. 311.

from the traditions of various peoples, or discover indications of the derivation of languages, it is always found that the ultimate direction is toward a comparatively small area in western Asia."*

When understood in the light of the myths existing among contemporary races, the Hebrew story of man's moral responsibility, his relationship to a God who is a moral being, and his essential brotherhood to all other existing races since all began with a common ancestry in the Euphrates valley, gain new meaning. These accounts are seen to be the property of a number of ancients peoples, but which are purified and invested with a higher meaning by the writers of the Old Testament. They are not only a group of stories told interestingly, but in their new setting, they become instruments of great value for the lifting of life to a higher level morally and socially. Because his world holds together through the intervention of a God who is morally responsible, the Hebrew begins his long march upward in setting forth a moral interpretation of the universe for all men of all ages. Because he believed all men to have a common ancestry, his writings have been sources of inspiration to socially-minded men in every generation, although the Hebrew himself became for a time the most self-centered of all men. The testimony of these ancient discoveries is an invaluable aid to those who would understand the sources, meaning, and values of the Hebrew record of man's beginning.

* Melvin G. Kyle, Deciding Voice of Monuments, p. 63

3. The Record of the Deluge.

One of the most interesting parts of the Genesis record, and one upon which archaeological discoveries have cast a great deal of light, is the story of the great flood which was recorded as covering the entire world:

> "And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations and Noah walked with God. And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth. The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and behold it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch."*
>
> "In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was

* Genesis 6:7-14

upon the earth forty days and forty nights."*

"All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died."**

"And it came to pass in the six hundredth and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth: and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold the face of the ground was dry."***

"And Noah builded an altar unto the Lord; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled a sweet savour; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake."****

This, in brief, is the story of the great flood according to the Genesis record. As can be seen, the flood is said to be the result of man's forgetfulness of God, and those who were saved from it were to be the seed of a new race in which God's purposes could be worked out.

In the discoveries of the archaeologists, some interesting antecedents of this Genesis account have been found. Perhaps the oldest account is that written in Nippur, and generally believed to date back to circa 2000 B.C. The tablet opens with an account of man's coming restoration to favor with the gods, and how four gods created men and animals. Then the building of cities is described. Following

* Genesis 7:11, 12. **Genesis 7:22
*** Genesis 8:13 ****Genesis 8:20, 21.

this account, Ziugiddu, who is to be spared in the deluge, is given the warning, as was Noah in the Hebrew record:

"For the settlement of the gods a wall.....
Ziugiddu stood by its side, he heard.....
"At the wall at my left side stand...
At the wall I will speak a word to thee
O my brilliant one, let there enter thy ear
By our hand a deluge....will be sent.
The seed of mankind to destroy.....
Is the momentous decision of the assembly (of gods)
The words of Anu and Enlil..... "*

Then follows the description of the flood itself:

"The evil winds, the wind that is hostile, came;
The deluge.....came on with them
Seven days and seven nights
The deluge swept over the land,
The evil wind made the huge boat tremble.
Shamash came forth, on heaven and earth he shone;
Ziugiddu the ship at the top uncovered,
The peace of Shamash, his light, entered into the boat.
Ziugiddu, the king
Before Shamash bowed his face to the earth.
The king---an ox he sacrificed, a sheep offered as oblation."**

It is quite clear that this account, written some fif-

* Translated by Barton, op. cit., p. 342. **Ibid, 342.

teen hundred years before the Hebrew version was put into written form, has many points that are used as a foundation for the Hebrew record. Ziugiddu, as Noah, was warned of the approaching flood, although there is no hint as to why he is given warning. Noah is represented as being warned because of his "righteousness." This account has no such idea, although there is a Babylonian version, dating from about 650 B.C., which attributes the deluge to the fact that men repeatedly sinned, but were given many chances to obey the gods. The flood was sent as a last resort.*

This account makes the deluge of shorter duration than the Hebrew, but both end with the man who was saved from it making a sacrifice. So nearly are they parallel that it is evident that the Babylonian was the original source of the Hebrew account.

Another Babylonian flood account, written about a century or two before the recording of the Hebrew record, is more detailed than the one mentioned, and more nearly produces the elements which are outstanding in the Genesis record. The gods had decided to make the deluge, and the hero of this account, Utnapishtim, was warned. We have his account of building the ark, as follows:

"The strong....brought what was needed.
On the fifth day I raised its frame.
According to the plan its walls were 120 cubits high;
120 cubits correspondingly was extent of its roof.

* Rogers, Cuneiform Parallels to the O.T., p. 114 ff.

I laid down its hull; I enclosed it.
I constructed it in storys, upto six;
I divided it into seven parts....
6 sars of bitumen I poured over its outside;
3 sars of bitumen I poured over its interior. "*

This reminds us of the Hebrew record of Noah "pitching it within and without." Then followed the flood, which was so fierce that

"The gods were frightened at the deluge,
They fled, they climbed to the highest heaven;
The gods crouched like dogs, they lay down by the walls.
Ishtar cried like a woman in travail."**

Birds were sent out, until one found land, as in the Hebrew record. After Utnapishtim disembarked, he too made a sacrifice:

"I appointed a sacrifice on the top of the mountain;
Seven by seven I arranged the sacrificial vessels;
Beneath them I piled reeds, cedar wood, and myrtle.
The gods smelled the savor,
The gods above the sacrificer collected like flies."***

Then follows a promise that another deluge will not come on all people, but "on the sinner let his sin rest."

Although plainly a forerunner of the Hebrew record, this account illustrates the use to which the Hebrews put the ancient myths which they used. The Babylonian record makes

*Barton, op. cit., 336. **Ibid, 337. ***Ibid., 338.

the gods at crossed and confused purposes, with the god directly accountable for the deluge receiving punishment from the others. They are frightened, cringing like dogs. Finally, like flies they gather around the altar. How unlike the stately dignity of Yahweh in the Hebrew record, who is creator, all-powerful, and who speaks and it is done. His act is not one of caprice, but has a purpose, and is finally seen accomplishing that purpose.

The fact remains, however, that the archaeologists have given an invaluable key to understanding this record in these discoveries of the records from which it was taken. It is seen that the Hebrew story is not an independent one, But was based upon a tradition common to these ancient races. In fact Frazer, in his study of Folk-Lore in the Old Testament, declares that he has found traces of the flood record in the literature of the Babylonians, Hebrews, Greeks, the people of India, Asia, Australia, Ploynesia, South America, Mexico, and North America.* It is of special interest to note that in the Aztec pyramids, discovered in Mexico and Central America, records have been found that show a flood tradition very similar to the Babylonian story.

It remained for the Hebrew historian to take this record and invest it with a moral meaning, and make it a means of revealing the dignity, power, and majesty which the Hebrew people attributed to their God, Yahweh.

* Frazer, Folk-Lore in the O.T., 1 v. edition.

4. The Time of Abraham and Melchizedek.

One of the principal accounts used by the Hebrew historian to record the early days of the Hebrew nation and its background is the record of Abraham. Closely connected in time and interest is the story of a priest-king by the name of Melchizedek.

Of the beginning of Abraham as a man "called of Yahweh" the Hebrew record states:

> "Now the Lord had said unto Abraham, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, and unto a land that I will shew thee. And I will make thy name great. And I will bless thee, and thou shalt be a blessing. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."*

Then follows the account of Abraham's moving out into Palestine, then down into Egypt, because of a famine. It appears that with him was an army of over three hundred servants, aside from his own family and what members of his tribe that had accompanied him. Such is the beginning of the Hebrew race, and of the Hebrew history.

The chief interest in the story of the early wanderings of Abraham lie in the fact that the type of life and customs followed by him indicate a close connection between the life of these early Semitic nomads with the life of

* Genesis 12: 1-3

Babylonia. Hammurapi, king of Babylonia at this period, is recorded as conquering the "west land", which meant the Mediterranean coast, including Palestine. There was a large amount of trade between the countries, and wagon trains made the trip often. In fact, one man in leasing a wagon to a friend during this time, specifically forbade his driving it to "the land of Kittim," or the West.* During this period, the name of "Abraham" appears often in the commercial records of Babylonia, showing a large number of Semitic people to live there.** Archaeologically, then, the records of the name, customs, and type of living of Abraham furnish a link to account for Babylonian influences in Israel.

Whether the historical or the eponymic view of the narratives of Abraham and Melchizedek. is correct, the value of the stories is the same. In understanding the meaning of the stories, some recent archaeological discoveries are of great value.

For example, the story of Abraham's covenant sacrifice has had little meaning until its significance has been brought out in full by the discovery of similar sacrificial ceremonies among the Hebrews and other peoples. The story of the sacrifice is as follows:

> "And he said, Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it? And he said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and

*Barton, op. cit., 355 **Ibid 151.

a young pigeon. And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds he divided not."*

To some, this answer given to Abraham is a meaningless one, in view of the fact that he had asked pointedly for a sign that he was to receive the inheritance promised. It becomes understandable in the light of the following discoveries made by Professor Frazer:

"We know from Jeremiah that it was the custom of contracting parties to cut a calf in twain and pass between the pieces. That this was the regular form observed on such occasions is strongly suggested by the Hebrew phrase for making a covenant, which is literally to 'Cut a covenant,' and the inference is confirmed by analogies in the Greek language and ritual; for the Greeks used similar phrases and practiced similar rites. Thus they spoke of <u>cutting</u> oaths in the sense of swearing them, and of <u>cutting</u> a treaty instead of making one. Such expressions, like the corresponding phrases in Hebrew and Latin, are undoubtedly derived from a custom of sacrificing victims and cutting them in pieces as a mode of adding solemnity to an oath or a treaty."**

Professor Fraser then goes on to show that like customs existed among the Scythians, tribes of Assam, among the

* Genesis 15:8-10
** Frazer, op. cit., p. 154

Assyrians, the Romans, and other ancient races.* By a careful reading of the materials associated with these ceremonies, the general custom seems to have been to cut the sacrifices in half, and then the contracting parties would pass between the divided victim's parts, thus putting themselves under a blood oath to perform their covenant. The smoking furnace and the burning lamp that passed between the pieces of Abraham's sacrifice signified the passing of God between them. We see in this the Hebrew conception of God as a person much like themselves, who would contract individually with another person. We understand the awful solemnity of this covenant, for the passing between the pieces of a sacrifice always obligated the person even to death to fulfill his agreement. The passage thereby gains a deeper meaning for us, as it teaches, when understood from the light thrown upon it from the archaeological discoveries discussed by Professor Frazer, that the God of Abraham had taken a solemn oath to make his covenant good.

The time of Abraham is most generally accepted as being somewhere between 2000 and 1600 B.C. There were many Bedouin princes during that period who lived as Genesis represents Abraham as living. It is altogether a false picture, as has been proved by discoveries which give an accurate picture of that period, to imagine him a lonely, poverty-stricken old man, persecuted because of his religious convictions. This is the common view of him, and has been used for glowing

* Frazer, op. cit., Chapter I of Part II.

flights of oratory concerning the essential value of suffering for a cause for millenniums. Of this experience, Professor Kyle says:

> "If semi-nomadic life was quite in vogue in the land of the Amorite, it was no strange state or novel experience for Abraham, for he only lived there the life he brought with him. He came not as a lone emigrant to a Bedouin experience, but moved about as a Bedouin Prince, and, on occasion, put three hundred and eighteen men of his 'trained servants, born in his own house,' into the field armed for battle, if battle there should be....And though the sovereignty of Babylonia was somewhat uncertain and insecure at the time, the jealous enemies on the southwest, the Hyksos dynasty of Egypt, were themselves 'Bedouin Princes' who were ready to accord Abraham a royal welcome, and a safe retreat from famine.
>
> "Thus the pathetic picture of a pioneer career in a dangerous land has grown dim and dimmer until at last it has faded out completely in the ever-increasing light of contemporary history brought out by Babylonian and Palestinian and Egyptian discoveries."*

During this period, some cities were already well established in Palestine. One of these was called Salem, or what is now called Jerusalem. An incident which occurred at this place gains new meaning when understood in the

* Kyle, op. cit., p. 76

light of contemporary history. This incident concerns Abraham and Melchizedek, and the interest in it centers expressly in a descriptive passage, saying that Melchizedek was "without father, without mother, without descent, neither having beginning of days nor end of life."*

In the first place, who could such a person as Melchizedek be? Duncan says:

> "The earliest reference to Jerusalem occurs in Genesis xiv in the incident of the rescue of Lot by Abraham. The governor of that time is named Melchizedek which means 'Righteousness is my King.' Melchizedek thus appears to have been the Canaanite governor of the period between 2000 and 1600, and to have combined the office of Priest of El Elyon, the Amorite God of the Mountains, with his position of governor."**

By referring to the Tell-el-Amarna letters, which many scholars believe to be contemporary records of the Hebrew conquest, and others believe to be from the Patriarchal period, we find that a line of kings ruled in Palestine, but held their authority only by permission of the king of Egypt. The customary salutation of these letters is something like the following:

> "Behold, I am a shepherd of the king, and one who brings tribute unto the king am I. Neither my father nor my mother established me in this position, but it was the mighty arm of the king himself who made me mas-

* Heb. 7:3 **J. Duncan, Digging Up Biblical History, p. 100.

ter of the lands and possessions of my father."*

While this salutation does not identify Melchizedek individually, it does give some insight into the mysterious title given him. His "without father, without mother," simply acknowledges that he holds his office by authority of the King of Egypt, and not by hereditary right. Once again the testimony of the rocks explodes a beautiful theory of the mystical nature of a famous character.

The discoveries of the archaeologists have given us an insight into the meaning of the incidents mentioned above. We may now ask, What, if anything, do they tell us of the whole scheme of stories about this Patriarch? Again, it must be said, nothing can be decided at the present time, from an archaeological point of view, concerning the historicity of these accounts. Stories of the wanderings, the battles, the prowess, the kindness of the gods, of the father of many ancient races have been found. Frazer's study of folk-lore** has convinced him that almost all primitive people had certain tales of prowess that were attributed to a founder of their tribe. This custom still exists, in more modern literature. For an example, the Spanish legends of El Cid Campeador, and others, give the miraculous visions, battles, and the like of their national hero.

These studies have convinced most modern scholars that if we are to get the greatest good out of the stories of Ab-

*Translated in Barton, op. cit., p.443.
**Frazer, Folk-Lore in the Old Testament, 3 vvs.

raham, this patriarch must be considered as a type, without consideration as to the historicity of the narrative, although there is more reason to believe the story as a true history than there is to consider it an eponymic device. Its value, whether in the Hebrew account or in the Assyrian or Arabic account of Ibrahim, is similar to that of the old morality plays of early English literature. No one ever stops to argue if Everyman really lived before considering the literary and social worth of that old morality. Its value is accepted face value, and its meaning is studied out, rather than questions of its historicity.

By giving us light on the times in which the account takes place, by helping us understand the rites and customs related therein, and byhelping to explain hitherto unintelligible titles and metaphors, the archaeologists have opened up a new world of appreciation for the record of Abraham.

5. Archaeology and the Joseph Record.

Joseph, one of the sons of Jacob and a great-grandson of Abraham, became prime minister of Egypt, and worked out the first recorded plan of caring for surplus commodities! This is a part of the Genesis record.

The first part of Joseph's adventures in Egypt has to do with his being enticed by Potiphar's wife and his rejection of her attention.

There has been found an ancient story, dating back to about 1200 B.C. in its present form, which forms a striking

parallel to the story of Joseph's experiences with the wife of Potiphar. It is called "The Tale of the Two Brothers."* Like Joseph, the younger brother in the tale was trusted by his elder brother with all the elder had. The wife of the elder brother, like Potiphar's wife, tempted the younger brother, who resisted the temptation, as did Joseph. The sister-in-law, like the wife of Potiphar, charged him with the crime he did not commit, to the misfortune of the youth. Concerning this story, Professor Barton says:

> "Scholars of the critical school regard this as the original of the story in Genesis. While they recognize that it is a theme which is not confined to Egyptians and Hebrews (compare for other parallels Lang, Myth, Ritual and Religion, II, 303 ff), the fact thatthe theme of the Biblical story is laid in Egypt leads them to think it extremely probable that there is a connection between the two."**

Kyle, on the other hand, sees no reason why there is any connection between the two:

> "Is it so impossible to imagine that in the whole history of Egypt there was more than one court scandal? ....Why then should this Tale of Two Brothers in the time of Ramases II be asserted to be the original of the story of Joseph? Are we to understand that, because practically every scandal of French fiction involves an unfaithful wife or woman of the demi monde, that

*Translated in Barton, op. cit., p. 363.
**Ibid, 366

therefore there was no real Madame Pompadour? Let us rather recognize thatt he dangers of Oriental home life always made reasonable just such an episode in the life of a manservant about the house."*

More interesting than the archaeological light upon the life of Joseph in the house of Potiphar are the records of some man who garnered grain, as Joseph said he did. Of this record, Professor Kyle says:

"Archaeological evidence, which thus far in the career of Joseph has, for the most part, only cleared difficulties out of the way, now becomes more positive concerning the great work of Joseph the Prime Minister. In the tomb of one Baba at el-Kab, now unfortunately much mutilated, is an inscription of the time of Se-Kenen-Ra-Taa III, a vassal king of Upper Egypt under the Hyksos rulers. Exact dates are here impossible, but the time of this king and of this inscription is known to be about the time of Apophis, the traditional Pharaoh of Joseph according to Syncellus....Baba says, 'I collected corn, as a friend of the harvest god. I was watchful att he time of the sowing. And when a famine arose, lasting many years, I distributed corn to the city each year of the famine.'....Great famines are most rare in Egypt and the details of this narrative of Baba follow the details of the famine story in the days of Joseph."**

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* Kyle, op. cit., 262
* Ibid, 263

Barton, on the other hand, does not identify this Baba as Joseph. But, whether this is the same or not, this discovery of the archaeologists helps us to understand that at this time in Egypt, famines were known, and already social planning was an art which was practiced with enough care that the starvation usually resulting from famine was being reduced. This account helps us to observe the growing social consciousness of man. He is aware of himself now as a member of a society group, and as a man with social responsibilities.

This is the chief value of the Joseph stories, and the stories discovered in Egypt which throw light upon them. The "Two Brothers" episode shows the beginning of man's consciousness of trustworthiness. The sin, feared by both the younger brother and Joseph, does not seem to be that of illicit relationships with another's wife. It seems rather a sense of honor in being trusted that delivers both Joseph and the brother. Man is aware of himself by this stage in his progress as a person who, if he is to live in peace, must be able to trust at least those who are his chosen friends. Then, as Joseph becomes ruler in Egypt, he develops the further thought of the responsibility of the ruling and governing group in society for the welfare of those over whom it rules. Such is the story of man's great adventure in living.

6. A Summary of Genesis.

From the archaological records, we are to conclude that the stories in Genesis, for the most part, are the property

of a number of ancient peoples. By comparison, however, it becomes evident that these records reach their highest form in the Hebrew literature. They not only reach their highest literary form, but they reach their highest meaning in the Old Testament record, also. They become symbols by which the universe is explained, and by which man's struggle for progress is illustrated.

Archaeological light upon Genesis also convinces us that most of these stories, in their original form, were songs or epic poems. They were to be sung around the camp-fire, in their earlier forms, and to be used in the ritual of worship in the later forms.

Because these stories are poems which have been mutilated somewhat in translation, their meaning and value have often been missed. They are subject to the same freedom, limitations, and poetic license that are accorded poetic literature today. Many of the records that critics have attacked with high glee as being evidences of unreliability are, in fact, examples found in all poetry, of poetic symbolism.

While we find that stories that are common to all ancient people in that section of Asia are used as backgrounds of biblical material, the mythical and the real can easily be separated. We are not to argue that myths of old were believed altogether by the Hebrew writers who used them, any more than we are to affirm that Milton was deeply worshipful at the shrines of the Greek deities because he used Greek mythology in Paradise Lost.

In the light of the recent archaeological discoveries, the book of Genesis becomes a living thing, rising out of the traditions and experiences of an ancient people, yet so filled with a symbolism that links it to the Universal Mind that it is a challenge to us even today to a higher social, moral, and religious life.

II. ARCHAEOLOGICAL LIGHT ON THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE HEBREWS.

When one thinks of the social and political structure of the Hebrew people, he is apt to see in his mind a highly developed system of laws regulating agriculture, industry, trade, and commerce, with the whole undergirded by a highly developed system of religious worship, directed by a priestly aristocracy. When the Hebrew literature is read, it is so often interpreted in the light of all these supposed developments.

This picture of a highly cultured people, with well-established social institutions is far from the truth. The processes of development through which the Hebrew people passed before arriving at any semblance of national unity or purpose is summed up by Soares as follows:

> "From the period when we first have knowledge of the Hebrews as a nomad race on the borders of Palestine to the life of the Jews in the days of Christ, there is a stretch of time about equal to that which separates the Anglo-Saxon conquest of Britain from the present day. We recognize a long development in social institutions from the primitive conditions of the pagan Angles and Saxons to those of the complex civilization of the twentieth century. If, for example, we should undertake to study the family in English or American life, it is evident that we should have to consider the many modifications which that institution has undergone

through the centuries as a result of the changing conditions of society. A treatment of the subject in a static fashion would be wholly misleading. We must take the same point of view in the study of the social life of Israel."*

Not only from the records left us in the Old Testament, but also from the findings of archaeologists we can trace in some measure the story of the development of the Hebrew political and social institutions.

1. Early Hebrew Laws.

The earliest forms of Hebrew laws were laws to govern a simple, nomadic society. They are what are sometimes referred to as "the first decalogue," or "the Book of the Covenant," and are contained in Hebrew literature in the twentieth to twenty-third chapters of Exodus, inclusive.

At a glance, it can be seen that these laws are to govern a simple society. Property laws are concerned with such property as a nomadic people would normally move from place to place in their wanderings. The social institutions of such a society were naturally simple and primitive. The family, patriarchal in nature, and ruled by the eldest or strongest by common consent, was the chief unit of society. Property ownership, hereditary rights of children, sharing of pasture lands, marriage customs, and recognition of the national God, Yahweh, were practically the only matters prov-

* T. G. Soares, The Social Institutions and Ideals of the Bible, p. 19.

ided for in the primitive Hebrew law system.

In studying these laws, and the social institutions for which they made provision and those which grew out of them in later history, it is interesting to note that they had their roots in the older codes of laws which have been brought to light by the archaeologists in recent years. Two codes especially which preceded the earliest Hebrew code. seem to have a bearing on the Hebrew laws. The oldest of these, the code of Hammurabi, is a codification of the Babylonian laws which were in force about 2000 B.C. The other, the old Hittite code which has been found at Boghaz Koi, dates from about 1350, and, while making some fundamental departures from the code of Hammurabi, is unmistakably related to it. The earliest recorded Hebrew laws most probably date from 1250--1200 B.C., and, as will be shown, owe much to these older codes.

The underlying basis for the primitive Hebrew code of justice was the law of blood revenge and the Semitic custom of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. Stated in the language of the Exodus record:

> "He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death." Exodus 21:12.
>
> "Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe." Exodus 21:24,25.

In the code of Hammurabi, the basis for these laws had been prepared over a thousand years before their inclusion in

the Hebrew code:

"If a sonstrikes his father, they shall cut off his hand.

"If a man destroys the eye of the son of a patrician they shall destroy his eye.

"If he breaks a man's bone, they shall break his bone." *

It is interesting to note that both codes provide for an escape from the harsh penalty if the taking of a life is accidental. A close examination of the Exodus code shows it to be much more democratic than the code of Hammurabi, which made wide distinctions between the penalty for injuring a patrician, a workingman, and a slave. Although the Hebrew code recognizes freemen and slaves, it gives the latter a much more equitable protection than they enjoyed in the sight of the Babylonian code.

The Exodus code provides for the protection of such simple property as a nomadic people might possess. It directs that, if a man steals a sheep or an ox and kills it or sells it, he shall restore five oxen for an ox and four sheep for a sheep. In case it is not sold, he shall restore double. (Exodus 22:1-9). The code of Hammurabi presents an interesting background for these property laws:

"If a man has stolen ox, or sheep, or ass, or pig, or boat, either from a god (temple) or a palace, he shall pay thirtyfold. If he is a poor man, he shall restore

* Translated in Barton, op. cit., p. 397

tenfold. If the thief has nothing to pay, he shall be put to death.

"If a man, who has lost anything, finds that which was lost in a man's hand, and the man in whose hand the lost thing is found says: "A seller sold it; I bought it before witnesses"; and the owner of the lost things says; "I will bring witnesses who know that the lost thing is mine"; if the purchaser brings the seller who sold it to him and the witnesses in whose presence it was bought, and the owner of the lost thing brings the witnesses who know that the lost thing is his, the judges shall examine their testimony. The witnesses before whom the purchaser purchased it, and the witnesses who know the lost thing, shall give their testimony in the presence of a god. The seller is a thief; he shall be put to death. The owner of the lost thing shall take that which was lost. The purchaser shall take from the house of the seller the money which he had paid."**

Although much older, it can readily be seen that the Babylonian laws on the rights of property owners presuppose a much more highly developed society than do the Hebrew laws. In the Hebrew laws, the thief was brought before God, in much the same manner as the Babylonian thief was made to swear before a god, but the final judgement under the Babylonian code was given by the judges, while the Hebrew law provided for a religious test to determine guilt.

The ownership of property, especially livestock, was

*Translated by Barton, op. cit., p. 379.

a matter which entailed certain responsibilities for the primitive Hebrew, as well as granting certain privileges:

> "If an ox gore a man or a woman, that they die: then the ox shall be surely stoned, and his flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox shall be quit. But if the ox were wont to push with his horn in time past, and it hath been testified to his owner, and he hath not kept him in, but that he hath killed a man or a woman; the ox shall be stoned and the owner thereof shall be also put to death. If there be laid on him a sum of money, then he shall give for the ransom of his life whatsoever is laid upon him...If the ox shall push a manservant or a maidservant; he shall give unto their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned."*

These provisions show us the sense of social responsibility which existed even in the primitive stages of Hebrew society. When we read accounts of other nomadic peoples, we very often do not find this highly defined recognition of a man's responsibility for the acts of his property. As a basis, the Hebrews used the code of Hammurabi, which has some similar provisions:

> "If an ox when passing along the street gores a man and causes his death, there is no penalty in that case. If the ox of a man has the habit of goring and they have informed him of his fault and his horns he has not protected nor kept his ox in, and that ox

*Exodus 21:28-30, 32

gores a man and causes his death, the owner of the ox shall pay one half mana of money. If it is the slave of a man, he shall pay one third of a mana of money."*

Although the relation of the Hebrew law to the Babylonian is evident, some differences are apparent. The Hebrew law demands the stoning of the ox, even in event of the loss of a slave, and calls for either the death or a large ransom on the part of the owner of the ox.

These instances are cited as examples of the Babylonian and Hebrew property laws to show the relationship of the Hebrew conception of property to the ancient Babylonian conception. Many writers have assumed that the Hebrew laws were a new departure in property legislation, without any close precedent. They have been cited as examples of the beginning of a higher order of society, but when seen in the light of the backgrounds which archaeologists show them to have, they appear to us but another step in the ladder of social legislation.

The marriage laws in the primitive Hebrew society were simple statements of the responsibilities of a man to woman if he decided to take her as his wife after having her in his house as a slave, or if he decided to give her to his son as a wife. (Exodus 21:7-11). There is one further provision for justice if an unmarried woman is overcome by a man (Exodus 22:16). She can demand that he take her as his wife; or if her father refuses to allow this, her father can demand a

* Translated by Barton, op. cit., p. 401

payment equivalent to the usual dowry of Hebrew daughters. These statements, added to the original primitive Hebrew commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultry," seem to be the total basis for marriage and chastity in the first period.

It is interesting to note that of the thirty-three sections of the Babylonian code which deal exclusively with the matters of chastity, marriage, and divorce, there are none which parallel these primitive laws of the Hebrews. The later Hebrew codes, found in Leviticus and Deuteronomy, tend to become more like the Babylonian. No provision is made in the biblical code for plurality of wives, though that custom was practiced among the Hebrews. The Babylonian code provided for the giving of concubines to their husbands by the wives, which gives the background for such action by Sarah (Genesis 16), and by Rachel and Leah (Genesis 30:1-14).

It would seem, after comparing the early Hebrew code with the Babylonian, the Hittite, and the Assyrian (the latter dating back to approximately 850 B. C.), that there is a slight departure upward in the Hebrew idea of chastity, and of the rights of a bethrothed virgin. This departure upward, which archaeologists so far have found to belong almost exclusively to the Hebrew codes, may be the distinctive contribution to the universal idea of morality which the primitive Hebrews have made.

The first Hebrew code also provided for worship of God according to certain simple rituals. The principal matters

of worship specified in this code were these:

> "Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them." Exodus 20:3-5a.
>
> "Thou shalt not taket he name of the Lord thy God in vain." Exodus 20:7a
>
> "He that sacrificeth unto any god, save unto the Lord only, he shall be utterly destroyed." Ex. 22: 20.

Then followed the directions for keeping the Sabbath and certain feasts. It is to be noted that in studying the other ancient codes, no religious meaning is found therein. To be sure, provision is made for temple prostitutes, for swearing before a god, and for acts of the gods in taking away property, but no essential spiritual interpretation of life, personal or national, is attempted. Thus again archaeological discoveries have aided the modern student of ancient culture to discover the one contribution of the Hebrew nation to the progress of the ages. His national genius has been the interpretation of the whole life in the terms of religious and spiritual meanings, complementing an otherwise strictly materialistic philosophy of life.

2. Later Developments in Hebrew Society.

This simple society of the Hebrews which existed in the period of wanderings before entering Palestine naturally underwent some great transformations when these people settled down to a fixed manner of living. And, as the shift from a nomadic to an established society was made, certain changes in social institutions were made, also. As these changes came, new patterns were developed in the social, commercial, and religious life of the people. Did they have any backgrounds for the regulatory laws which now appeared? It will be seen that these, also, were influenced by the Hittite and Babylonian codes.

Because of the higher level of agriculture practiced here, new laws regarding landmarks, inheritance, purchase and sale of property, and simple mortgage laws came into being.

One fundamental law underlying the Hebrew land code was that the land should not be sold (Leviticus 25:23). It could, however, be mortgaged and redeemed by its tribal owner, without interest, but with a payment of a certain amount for the privilege of buying it back, (Leviticus 25:24-34). This non-saleable conception of property in the form of real estate rested on the assumption that the land belonged to Yahweh in reality, and he was but allowing them to occupy it.

On comparing the land laws of the Babylonian code with those in the Hebrew record, it will be seen that the Hebrew

assumes a more democratic organization of society than does the Babylonian. Of the sixteen sections of the code of Hammurabi which deal with land * ten of them deal with the relationship of tennant and owner, while the Hebrew laws throughout assume that each man will own and work his land.

The Hebrew code (Exodus 22:5,6) makes a man who causes loss to his neighbor's crop responsible for it. The Babylonian code makes a like provision:

> "If a man the side of his strong dyke has neglected and has not strengthened it, and in his dyke a break occurs, and the water destroys the farm-land, the man in whose dyke the break occurs shall restore the grain which was destroyed. If he is not able to restore the grain, they shall sell him and his possessions for money, and the owners of the fields whose grain was destroyed shall share it. If a man has opened his sluice for watering and has left it open and the water destroys the field of his neighbor, he shall measure out grain to him on the basis of that produced by neighboring fields. If a man opens the water and the water destroys the work of a neighbor, he shall measure out 10 Gur of grain for each Bur of land."**

On the basis of these comparisons, it is safe to state that the Babylonian code, which was well-known to the Hebrews during the time of their formative period as a nation, helped them to formulate certain ideas of fundamental justice and to outline, in primitive form at least, certain "rights of man."

* Barton, op. cit., pp. 382, 383. ** Ibid, 382

In the later Hebrew laws, provision was made for inheritance rights to be passed on to the sons of the house, with the first-born getting twice as much as any others, and if there were no sons, the estate was to go to the daughters. If there were no daughters, nearest relatives received the inheritance. (Deut. 21:15-17 and Numbers 27:8-11).

In the code of Hammurabi, there are twenty-two sections that deal with the inheritance, giving certain regulations for the inheritance of a mother's dowry, the right of an eldest son to his gift given by his father for his marriage above the stated amount received when the estate is divided, and the right of women to their property, under certain conditions.*

It is helpful to compare the two, for it becomes at once apparent that the Hebrew code is indebted to the Babylonian, but that the latter is a far more developed system. The Hebrew society must have been very primitive, and must have, at best, accorded women but scant recognition and protection against want and poverty.

During this period of Hebrew history, it is apparent that a part of the industrial system was based on the ownership of slaves. The words in the Decalogue which are translated "maidservants" and "manservants" in reality are words meaning "slaves". It appears that, because of natural misfortunes, one landowner might mortgage his land, his children, or himself to another in a lean year. If conditions

* Translated by Barton, p. 393, op. cit.

continued unfavorable over a period of years, the unfortunate man might find himself and his family slaves to the more posperous fellow-countryman. The laws regulating slavery in the Hebrew nation were simple:

> "If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself: if he were married, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master have given him a wife, and she have born him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself."*
>
> "And if thy brother that dwelleth by thee be waxen poor, and be sold unto thee; thou shalt not compel him to serve as a bondservant: But as an hired servant, and as a sojourner, he shall be with thee, and shall serve thee unto the year of jubile: And then shall he depart from thee, both he and his children with him, and shall return unto his own family, and unto the possession of his fathers shall he return....Of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, and of their families that are with you, which they begat in your land: and they shall be your possession. And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you."**

The Babylonian code, while forming the basis which the Hebrew code outlines for the treatment of slaves, does not

* Exodus 21:2-4 **Leviticus 25: 39-41, 45, 46a.

make any distinction between a fellow countryman and a stranger, nor does it provide for the freeing of slaves at any stated times.

Although the institution of slavery is recognized in the Hittite code, the slaves evidently enjoyed certain privileges, something akin to those enjoyed by the Hebrew who had become a slave to a brother:

> "If a slave takes a free woman, the law is the same (if they get on badly, they divide the house between them, the man takes the children except one, which goes to the woman).
>
> "If a slave pays the bride price for a woman and takes her for his wife, and gives her up, no one shall remit it.
>
> "If a jeweler or a shepherd takes a free woman and does not pay the bride price, then he shall serve as a slave for three years.
>
> "If a slave pays the bride price for a free girl and as a husband lives with her, no one shall afterward take her away."*

It is evident that under this Hittite code slaves could accumulate wealth, gain a free woman as a wife, and enjoy certain rights such as were guaranteed a Hebrew slave under the Hebrew code. The humaneness of these laws and their likenesses make it probable that they came from a common source.

It is interesting to note the custom mentioned of a

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* Translated by Barton, op. cit., p. 409

young man, unable to pay the bride price, serving as a slave for a certain period instead. So, instead of considering the action of Laban toward Jacob (Genesis 29) a bit of heartless scheming, by comparing these acts with the customs of other ancient people, we see them to be altogether right and natural. It does appear, however, that Father Laban overworked poor Jacob a bit, since three years instead of seven is prescribed in the Hittite code.

Although it does not define the office nor tell how a judge is installed, the Hammurabi code is based on a system of judges who shall administer justice under the code. They are expected to deal wisely, justly, and not to make a hasty decision which must be retracted. This statement shows how sure he must be of his ground before making a decision:

> "If a judge has pronounced a judgement, made a decision, caused it to be sealed, and afterward has altered his judgement, that judge shall they convict on account of the case which he decided and altered; the penalty which in that case he imposed he shall pay twelve fold, and in the assembly from the seat of his judgement they shall expel him; he shall not return; with the judges in a case he shall not sit."*

It is likely that this restriction was intended to make the judge careful in his judgement, and also to make it impossible for an influential litigant to bribe him to change his decision. A similar provision is made in the Hebrew code:

* Translated by Barton, op. cit., 378.

"Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, which the Lord thy God giveth thee, throughout thy tribes: and they shall judge the people with just judgement. Thou shalt not wrest judgement; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift: for a gift d doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous."*

This idea of universal justice, while it is perhaps an outgrowth of the inherent sense of fair play which all men have, no doubt is influenced by the epilogue which Hammurabi has attached to his code:

"The oppressed who has a suit to prosecute may come to my image, that of a righteous king, and read my inscription (code of laws) and understand my precious words, and may my stele elucidate his case. Let him see the law he seeks, and may he draw his breath and say, 'This Hammurabi was a ruler who was to his people like the father who begot them. He obeyed the order of Marduk his lord, the commands of Marduk he followed above and below. He delighteth the heart of Marduk his lord, and granted happy life to his people forever.' Let him recite the document."**

The idea that the just man would be blessed of God was taken from this epilogue and included in the Hebrew code as follows:

* Deuteronomy 16:18, 19.
** Translated by C. F. Kent, Israel' s Laws and Legal Precedents, p. 5.

"Thou shalt not wrest judgment....that which is altogether just shalt thou follow, that thou mayest live, and inherit the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."*

It is clear that this idea of the longevity of the rulers who dealt justly had currency among many ancient people, therefore it is not strange that it occurs often in the Hebrew writings. In the account of Wenamon, found among certain Egyptian records dating back to approximately 1100 B.C., in urging the king who captured him to show mercy, he pleads on the basis of long life for the just king:

"Lo, art thou not glad? and dost thou not have made for thee a tablet, whereon thou sayest: 'Amon-Re, king of gods, sent to me "Amon- the-way", his divine messenger, and Wenamon, his human messenger, after the timber for the great and august barge of Amon-Re, king of the gods? I felled it, I loaded it, I supplied him with my ships and my crews, I brought them to Egypt to beseech for me 10,000 years of life from Amon, more than my ordained life, and it came to pass."**

While it is true that the Babylonian laws, the account of Wenamon, and the Hebrew code all promise long life to the judge, and all other men as well, who dealt justly, it was soon evident that certain restraints must be established to assure truth and honesty. The bribe of a long life evidently did not appeal to some persons. One of these restraints

* Deut. 16:19a, 20.
* From Breasted's Ancient Records, Egypt, IV p. 278.

in Hammurabi's code was the law concerning false witness:

> "If in a case a man has borne false witness, or accused a man without proving it, if that case is a capital case, that man shall be put to death.
> "If he has borne witness in a case of grain or money, the penalty of that case he shall himself bear."*

When the later Hebrew code was prepared, this law was lifted almost bodily from the code of Hammurabi and included as a basis for the Hebrew idea of justice. It is the idea of retaliation, making the unjust, the false witness, the unfair accuser, suffer in the same way he had intended to make the innocent suffer. This explains in a great measure the underlying philosophy of justice found in the Hebrew code. Their law with regard to this matter is:

> "If a false witness rise up against a man for an testimony against him to testify that which is wrong; Then both the men, between whom the controversy is, shall stand before the Lord, before the priests and the judges, which shall be in those days; And the judges shall make diligent inquisition: and, behold, if the witness be a false witness, and hath testified falsely against his brother; Then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his brother: so shalt thou put the evil away from among you."**

As the Hebrew nation developed, the kingship arose, and

*Translated by Barton, op. cit., p. 378
**Deut. 19:16-19

with it, a more coherent social pattern. The laws of the land became more codified, and the life of the people became more normal. With the rise of the kingship, however, arose other difficulties. The great courts of the kings must be maintained at the expense of the common people. Taxation and oppression often resulted. The military leaders, the king's courtiers, and others of this type, became the popular hero instead of the common peace-loving man idealized in the earlier writings, during the period in which the Hebrews faced the future expecting great peace and prosperity in Palestine. As a renowned example of this oppression, we need to call to mind the building of Solomon's temple, palaces and other public buildings. Most of these were built by forced labor, given partially by the captured slaves, and partly by Hebrews who were forced to do the work gratis. The wealthy class of land owners in the nation, following the example of the king, began to oppress the poor and hire their labor cheaply.

The Babylonian code forestalled such a condition by defining the price which should be paid for labor:

> "If a man hires a field-laborer, he shall pay him 8 Gur of grain per year. If a man hires a herdsman, he shall pay him 6 Gur of grain per year."*

The Hebrew law-givers had such a provision in mind, to be sure, when, following this pattern, a provision was placed in their code requiring a laborer to be paid his hire:

"Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant that is poor

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*Translated by Barton, op. cit., 402

and needy, whether he be of thy brethren, or of thy strangers that are in thy land within thy gates: At his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it; for he is poor."*

The good intent of these laws, so needed because of the plight of the poor in these countries, was evidently frustrated by the land owners, for we find in the later literature of these ancient people some references to the oppression of the poor, much as is found in the Hebrew prophecy literature. Although no writings of this kind have come down from Babylonia, one interesting document from the approximate time of Hammurabi has come from Egypt, revealing the already growing Egyptian social conscience.

This story, "The Tale of the Eloquent Peasant", relates the experiences of a peasant who left his home to find corn for his children's bread. A serf of the chief Steward saw his loaded asses, and robbed the peasant. After trying vainly to secure justice from the robber, the peasant brought his suit to the chief Steward, eloquently pleading not only his own cause, but also that of all the poor. In the end, so pleased was the chief Steward that he selected goods from the estate of the robber, according to the ancient ideas of justice which we have observed from both the code of Hammurabi and the Hebrew laws, and sent the peasant joyfully on his way home.

Some of the pleas of the peasant are so like the pleas

* Deut. 24:14, 15.

for justice found in the Hebrew prophets that they may well be studied in connection with those writings. In making his plea known to the Steward, the peasant calls to his mind the treatment a ruler owes the widows and orphans:

> "For thou art the father of the orphan, the husband of the widow, the brother of the desolate, the garment of the motherless. Let me place thy name in this land higher than all good laws: thou guide without avarice, thou great one free from meanness, who destroyest deceit, who createst truthfulness."*

The opposite of these characteristics are said by the Hebrew prophets between a thousand and fifteen hundred years later (the Egyptian writing dates from circa 1800 B.C.), to be things which are making for decay in the nation:

> "Learn to do well; seek judgement, relieve the oppressed judge the fatherless, plead for the widows." **
> "Thy princes are rebellious and companions of thieves , every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them." ***
> "Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write greviousness which they have prescribed; To turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of my people, that widows may be their prey, and that they may rob the fatherless."****

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*Translated by Barton, op. cit., 526.
** Isaiah 1:17. ***Ibid, 1:23. ****Ibid, 10:1,2.

> "And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the Lord of hosts."*

It is likely that in the days of the Hebrew captivity in Egypt this "Tale of the Eloquent Peasant" was extant in the literature which made up "the learning of the Egyptians." It is likely that many other like writings were also known among the Egyptians. With this learning as a background, the Hebrews included these ideas in their own laws and in their prophecies.

Such is the picture of the rise of the Hebrew social pattern, with the pictures of its antecedents which the archaeologists have helped to construct. For a long time, as has been suggested before, it was thought that the Hebrew nation was a completely new departure in national economy, without any background. The statement concerning the tabernacle, "Make it according to the plan showed thee in the holy mount," is suggestive of the way in which all Hebrew institutions were thought to have developed. We see them now, however, as a people who developed from a wandering nomadic tribe into a nation of civilized workmen, with their institutions such as agriculture, commerce, and religion, going through the normal course of development for such institutions.

*Malachi 3:5

The Hebrews, however, were ever the people of a great hope. They looked at their devestated land, their ruined temple and sacked cities, and wept while they prophesied of the coming of a great king who should drive the enemies from their land, and make the nations round about to serve the Hebrews, while they lived in peace forever. This was to be the Hebrew golden age.

This idea, also, was the property of the Egyptians, as can be seen from this prophecy dating back about 2500 years B.C.:

"A king will come from the south by the name of Ameni
He will be born from a woman of Nubia;
He will be born in the city of Nechen;
He will seize the crown of Upper Egypt
And set the crown of Lower Egypt on his head.
He will unite the double crown
And happily join Horus and Set in love.
He will hasten through.....
Mighty in his time.....
The people will rejoice in the time of the son of man;
His name shall endure for all eternity,
For they shall be far from misfortune.
He who entertains hostile thoughts
Shall be confounded for fear of him."*

This idea found its way into the Hebrew writings soon after the Egyptian captivity. Traces of it are seen in the

* Translated by Barton, op. cit., 522.

promise of the coming of a great prophet, whose words will be a guide to the Hebrew nation, and who will lead them to greatness (Deut. 18:15-19). In the prophecy of Daniel, this Egyptian prophecy is almost paralleled, especially in the seventh chapter which describes this coming king, and gives a description of him almost identical to this one, using the designation "Son of man" to refer to him, as does the Egyptian prophecy. It is altogether probable that Daniel, who was learned in all the wisdom of the East, could have known this very Egyptian writing. Because of favorable trade relations, he could have encountered it either in his own Palestine or in Babylonia, where he was a court captive. This sense of destiny, then, is not alone a Hebrew idea, but is common to Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria, and possibly other ancient nations.

3. Hebrew Use of Existing Material in Developing the Hebrew Social Pattern.

In our study of the use made by the Hebrews of existing legal codes, wisdom writings, and prophetic literature in developing the Hebrew social and political institutions, the question naturally arises, "If these materials served as a basis for the Hebrew pattern, what, if anything, did the Israelites contribute to the development of social and political precedents?"

It should be stated again that the likenesses between the Hebrew legal code and the existing codes are so great

that it is a self-evident fact that the latter exercised a great influence upon the Old Testament laws. Aside from the similarity of material, there is a likeness in the manner of setting up the legal statutes and gaining recognition for them. Moses is represented as going up on the mountain alone, and receiving the Mosaic code directly from the hand of Yahweh. Hammurabi pictures himself as receiving his code from the sun god directly.

A fundamental difference seems to be seen in the attitude of the other codes and that of the Hebrew. Hammurabi, after so picturing himself receiving the code, takes full credit to himself for establishing justice, outlawing oppression, and the like. The Hebrew code, on the contrary, interprets the national order in the terms of the laws of Yahweh, with man as only the instrument and the legislation coming from their God himself.

The ownership of land in the Hebrew code, while based upon the Hittite and Babylonian, is stated to reside in Yahweh, and to be his gift to his nation. The other codes, while recognizing certain religious ideas, are strictly materialistic. The Hebrew attempts a spiritual interpretation of national life.

The Hebrew laws regarding man's relationship to man are much like the Babylonian in their operation, but rest on a different fundamental basis. Men are not to be oppressed according to the Hebrew code because they are brothers, and Yahweh's children. In the other codes, justice is to be secured because it

will help to make for happiness; in the Hebrew, because it is an inherent right of man.

The Hammurabi code is prepared for a much more a d-vanced society than is the Hebrew. From the study and com-parison of these laws, we learn that the Hebrew nation was comparatively poor, uncultured, and unused to governmental proceedings.

In the code of Hammurabi and the Hittite code, certain license was given freely for a lower moral code than is re-quired under the Hebrew laws. If in anything it is super-ior, the Hebrew code is superior in that it contributes to the idea of law that certain moral ideals must be provided for. In this it standsuniquely alone among the many ancient systems of law.

III. ARCHAEOLOGICAL LIGHT ON HEBREW ARTS AND CULTURE.

If it can be said that the Hebrew social institutions during the period of desert wanderings were in an extremely primitive stage of development, it is equally true that the arts and the culture of that period were likewise such as would be expected of a simple and primitive people. Many persons have idealized this period of Hebrew history and have supposed it to contain more fully developed institutions than any such simple society could contain.

After the occupation of Palestine, through contact with other nations and through application to more peaceful pursuits on the part of her own people, the Hebrew nation began to develop a national culture, with its attendant arts and institutions peculiar to her own people. Archaeological discoveries have done much to restore to us a picture of this culture.

1. Music among the Hebrews.

Any people who feel as deeply as did the Hebrews are sure to express themselves in music. It seems they sang in times of harvest, in times of victory, in times of religious worship. Those who have examined their songs have concluded that artistically the music was very crude and primitive. It seems to be more an overflowing expression of deep emotion, instead of trained artistry. It was a loud and piercing music, accompanied by cymbals, the harp, the lyre, and the pipe or flute.

In his excavations at Gezer, Dr. Macalister found in the third Semitic stratum, or the period just before the coming of Israel, a pipe such as was used for musical purposes. It is really a stone whistle, very crude, about four inches long, and about one and one-eighth inches around at the larger end, and one half inch at the other. Since the word used in Genesis 4:21 means literally "a pierced thing", it was no doubt this perforated stone instrument that was attributed to the inventive Jubal when it says of him

> "He was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ."

The music of the Hebrews was oftimes used to develop a mad ecstagy in their religious meetings. Prophets were said to play on the instruments until the "spirit of the Lord came upon them and they prophesied."

During this time, too, it seemed to be the custom of every king and governor to have his court musicians. The Old Testament gives us an account of David as a youth serving in this capacity in Saul's court.(I Samuel 16).

In reproducing the picture of this custom in the courts of the kings of Judea, the court records of Sennacherib, who overcame Hezekiah, king of Judea, and imposed a tribute on him, furnish an interesting story. Sennacherib recounts his conquest of Judea, and ends his tale of it by giving a list of the treasures that went to make up his spoil:

> "With 30 talents of gold, 800 talents of silver, precious stones, rouge, dakkasi, lapis lazuli, great angu-

gmi-stones, beds of ivory, stationary ivory thrones, elephants' hide, ivory, ushu-wood, ukarinnu-wood, all sorts of objects, a heavy treasure; also his daughters, the women of his palace, male and female musicians he sent after me to Nineveh, my capital city, and his messenger to present the gift and do homage."*

The very fact that such a wide variety of rich treasures was contained in Hezekiah's palace is of interest, but especially interesting is the fact that in the regular employ of that king there was a company of musicians. Such a custom must have existed in many ancient countries, for it is evidently taken for granted in Sennacherib's record, with no indication that it was unusual.

It would seem that from the semi-civilized Semite, living in his Bedouin tent and chanting his heroic ballads by the side of his camp fire, to the picture of the richness of the royal court of Hezekiah which the spoils enumerated must indicate, the Hebrew people had made a long step upward in the space of four hundred years.

2. Hebrew Sculpture and Statuary.

While it is true that the Hebrews did no sculpturing as such, they did produce many wood-carvings and metal castings representing both human and animal figures. Unlike many other ancient people, they did not produce these works of art as such, but all were for a religious use. It will be kept in mind that such a custom was directly condemned by the Hebrew

* Translated in Barton, op. cit., p. 471.

religious law, which strictly forbade the making of any images (Exodus 20:4). Soon after the arrival of the Hebrews in Palestine, many of them began to break this law, as recorded in the book of Judges:

> "And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers.... and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the Lord to anger. And they forsook the Lord and served Baal and Ashtaroth."*

Excavations of the archaeologist Dr. Macalister at Gezer show how easily and naturally the Hebrews could have fallen into the form of worship of the people around them. Dr. Macilister discovered a temple in the third Semitic stratum or just before the Israelites came into Palestine. This temple provided for just such worship as is condemned by the writer of Judges, and as part of its fixtures has several ashetroth, or figures of the goddess Ashtart. Thus the Hebrews began to disregard their law, and make figures for their own temples, all the way from these small figurines to large gruesome idols much like those used in idol worship about them.

Many images of different types have been found, dating from before the Hebrew invasion. Brazen serpents, figures of the sacred bull, and other symbols strictly forbidden by the Hebrew law were used. All of them are crude as far as works of art are concerned, but are of great importance in giving a picture of the religious influence exercised upon the He-

* Judges 2:12,13.

brews by thereligion of the people already in Palestine at the time of the invasion.

3. Trade and Commerce in the Hebrew Nation.

In the Old Testament record of the advancement of the Hebrew nation, Solomon is given most credit for opening up avenues of trade for them. The story of the beginning of the Hebrew sea trade is given in these words:

> "And king Solomon made a navy of ships in Ezion-geber, which is beside Eloth, on the shore of the Red sea, in the land of Edom. And Hiram sent in the navy his servants, shipmen that had knowledge of the sea, with the servants of Solomon. And they came to Ophir, and fetched from thence gold, four hundred and twenty talents, and brought it to king Solomon."*
>
> "And the navy of Hiram....brought in from Ophir great plenty of almug trees, and precious stones.... Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred threescore and six talents of gold."**

Some have objected to this story of such a rich traffic, on the grounds that such a poor country, in such uncivilized days, would not be likely to carry on such a trade. That it was altogether normal is shown by certain archaeological discoveries.

One of these is a tale of Wenamon, an Egyptian sea trader who was sent for cedars in Lebanon, and was held captive

* I Kings 9:26-28
** I Kings 10:11, 14.

in one of the ports he touched. He describes the number of ships sailing the seas, and then recounts the great price in gold, silver, royal linen, and other materials that were given in exchange for the trees. Then is described the work of felling the trees and making them ready for the ship:

> 'The prince rejoiced, and detailed 300 men and 300 oxen, placing overseers over them, to have the trees felled. They spent the second season therewith.....In the third month of the second season they dragged them to the shore of the sea."*

Then after many more adventures, the boat was loaded, and Wenamon made his way, amid many other mishaps, back to Egypt.

This account, predating Solomon's time by at least a hundred years, might be a description of the difficulties undergone by that monarch in getting cedars for his great public buildings. It does throw light on the Old Testament stories of commerce, by showing that shipping was an important industry, engaged in on a large scale. So, Solomon's great cargoes become natural in the light of contemporary trade records.

Trading, as recorded in the Old Testament, was a long and tedious process. We have the record of Abraham's purchase of the cave Machpelah. As was the custom, the owners

* Breasted's Ancient Records, Egypt, IV, p. 379

of the cave insisted that he must take it for nothing (Genesis 23:6). Many in reading this story have remarked that these sons of Heth were extremely sympathetic in time of the death of Abraham's wife. Investigation, however, reveals that this polite insistence was mere custom--the owner intending meanwhile to drive a shrewd bargain. Bargaining and arguing in trade is the meat and drink of the Semite. So in this account, after several protestations, Abraham weighed out four hundred shekels of silver for the owner (Genesis 23:16).

When Hammurabi, king of Babylonia circa 2000 B.C., set himself to write a commercial code, he purposely made it impossible for such a time of bartering to take place as is recorded in Genesis 23. Here we have the first price-fixing code, ante-dating the American Experiment by almost four thousand years:

> "If a man hires an ox for threshing, 20 Qa of grain is its hire....If a man hires a wagon only, he shall pay 40 Qa of grain per day. If a man hires a field-laborer from the beginning of the year until the fifth month, he shall pay him 6 She of money; as the wages of a tailor, 5 She of silver; as the wages of a stone-cutter, ...She of silver....If a man hires a boat to go upstream, it hires for 3 She of silver per day. If he hires a boat to float downstream, he shall pay as its hire 2½ She of silver per day."*

*From Harper's text, Code of Hammurabi, Sections 268-277.

In these commercial laws from Babylonia, we can see a comparatively greater social and economic maturity than can be found in the Hebrew commercial regulations. In the first place, no doubt the Babylonian law-giver had seen the great amount of time wasted in bartering, so prices were fixed and business became a matter of regularity. Then, it seems that the Hebrew law-giver took for granted that a mere mention of the rights of the poor (Exodus 23:6) would secure equitable commercial relations. The longer experience of the commercial Babylonians revealed the necessity of regulations.

All these records, made available to us by the recent archaeological discoveries, help us to reconstruct a picture of the Hebrew commercial development, beginning with the haggling barterer, and finally developing into a little nation that had its part in the "10,000 ships in the sea" which Wenamon, in his speech, declared were known to be sailing at that time.

It is interesting to note that about this time the idea of guaranteeing merchandise dealt to another begins to appear in certain archaeological records. This tablet regarding the sale of a slave, dating from the time of the Kings, has been found recently:

> "Whoever in the future at any time shall rise up and lay claim, whether Atarkhasis (the seller) or his sons, whoever against Nabushallimushunu or his sons legal process shall begin, 10 manas of silver shall pay. Against an attack of rheumatism for 100 days and legal

claims for all time he is guaranteed."*

Although this guarantee is founded on Hammurabi's code regulating sale of slaves**, this instance recorded here appears to be the record of a Hebrew transaction. The contracting party is "Atarkhasis, son of Aushezib," and it is believed that AU is a translation of Jeho, which would make this name identical with the Hebrew Joshua. If this be true, then the influence of Hammurabi's code is found in the life of the Hebrew's personal trading as late as 700 B.C.

4. Mining and Metal Work Among the Hebrews.

It is evident from both the Old Testament record and the discoveries of archaeologists that the Hebrews and the peoples who occupied Palestine before their conquest were adept in the art of metal work. The earlier period of Hebrew history often refers to "workers in brass" (Genesis 4:22), and in the book of Numbers we have this provision for purification of metal vessels:

> "Only the gold, and the silver, the brass, the iron the tin and the lead, everything that may abide the fire ye shall make it go through the fire and it shall be clean."**

Along with other fine ornamentations, King Solomon is said to have ornamented his public buildings with bronze, and to have had much gold work in the temple.

It is probable that the metal arts were learned from

* Johns, Assyrian Deeds and Documents.
**Numbers 31: 22, 23a

the previous inhabitants of Palestine, for archaeological evidence is conclusive in pointing to an abundance of this type of work in that country before the Hebrew invasion. The Egyptian ruler Thothmes III (1501-1447 B.C.) has left a record of his invasion of Palestine and Phoenicia. In this record he lists as spoil chariots plated with gold, chairs of cedar and ebony gilded with gold, and a sword of bronze.* Part of the rapid advancement of the Hebrews in metal work and a measure of their love for it in their public buildings may be attributed to the fine examples of it which they found when they entered Palestine.

Shalmaneser III, King of Assyria from 859 to 825 B.C., recorded his campaign against Jehu, king of Israel. In his pictures of the campaign, Jehu is represented as sending rich gifts by messengers who do homage. Shalmaneser describes the gifts as being, in a great part, specimens of metal work:

> "Tribute of Jehu, son of Omri: silver, gold, a bowl of gold, a basin of gold, cups of gold, pails of gold, bars of lead, scepters for the hand of the king and balsam wood I received from him."**

When we read in the Old Testament account of the looting of the Hebrew temple by Nebuchadrezzar of Babylon (2 Kings 24: 10-13), we learn that many gold vessels and temple decorations were taken as loot at that time, as well as the decorations from the king's house. The fact that Jehu could give such a tribute as Shalmaneser's obelisk mentions two

* A. H. Sayce, Archaeology and Cuneiform Inscriptions, pp.156-7.
* Translated by Barton, op. cit., p. 459.

centuries before the complete dismantling of the Temple by Nebuchadrezzar, without taking the temple vessels, indicates that a great amount of wealth must have been amassed by the Hebrews in the form of vessels of precious metals.

5. Literature and Learning Among the Hebrews.

In literature and in religion, as in no other cultural pursuits, the Hebrew people were truly creative. In making this statement, however, it must be said that even in these fields of interest they were creative in the sense of treatment and interpretation, and not in the sense of absolute originality in subject matter. The literature of the Hebrews had its distinct forerunners.

To begin with, the Hebrew literature is a literature of religious subject matter. To be sure, the Hebrew kings had their court records, but even these were filled with a religious interpretation of history. This interpretation is absent from the records of Shishak of Egypt, Ashurnasirpal of Assyria, Shalmaneser of Assyria, and Tiglath-pileser of Assyria, all of whom have left us records of their conquests.* These records simply state the acts of the kings, while the Hebrew records attribute the acts of their kings to the command of their God, as in this instance from David's life:

> "And it came to pass after this, that David inquired of the Lord saying, Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah? And the Lord said unto him, Go up."**

* Translated in Barton, op. cit., pp. 455-65. **2 Sam. 2:1.

In the literature of other peoples there have been found some religious writings which may well be compared with the Hebrew writings in their essential religious outlook. The inscription of Mesha, King of Moab during the time of Ahab, is closely akin to the Old Testament records in its interpretation of history in a religious manner:

> "I am Mesha, son of Chemoshmelek, king of Moab, the Dibonite. My father ruled over Moab thirty years, and I ruled over it after my father. And I made this high place to Chemosh in Qarhah because of the deliverance of Mesha, because he saved me from all the kings, and because he caused me to see my desire upon all who hated me....And Chemosh said to me: "Go take Nebo against Israel"; and I went my night and fought against it from break of dawn till noon, and I took it....."*

It is most remarkable that this Moabite stone is the only literature remaining from the Moabites, while the literature of the Hebrews has been preserved for us in such a great measure, relatively speaking.

From the Phoenicians also we have a relatively small amount of literary work remaining, principally the Ras-Shamra tablets. One of these tablets contains a poem relating the death of Alein, the vegetation god; how he was missed on earth; and how his mother Anath destroyed death and brought him back to life. A part of the poem follows:

* Hastings, Dictionary of the Bible, v. III, 406.

"And he (Alein the lord), lives,
and he, Zebul, lord of the earth, exists.
In a favorable dream El-Deped heard:
'Good tidings, O my son whom I have borne,
the heavens shall rain oil, the valleys
shall flow with Honey.'
The good omen made El-Deped glad;
his faced used to be sad with grief,
but he put away grief and laughed.
He lifted up his voice and cried:
'I will sit down and rest
and my soul shall rest in my breast,
because Alein, the lord, live."*

This poem tells how Alein was missed on earth, how life ceased to be passed on; and how, when his mother Anath, a virgin, overcame death, life and joy returned to the earth.

Isaiah could well be indebted to this poem for his figures used to describe the joy of Israel when Yahweh again turned his face in pleasure upon his people. Just as Alein had left the earth, Yahweh had withdrawn himself from his people. When justice and mercy were reestablished, then

"The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing."**

*Translated by Barton, op. cit., p. 535. **Isaiah 35:1,3.

In both the prophecy of Isaiah and the Syrian poem, the idea of returning joy and life going on anew is connected with the return of the favor of the god.

In this Syrian poem, written before 1500 B.C., the mother of Alein is a virgin. This figure was also used by Isaiah in describing a deliverer for Israel:

> "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."*

The name "Immanuel" means simply "God among us" as Alein meant "Our Lord." For his prophetic writings, it would seem probable that Isaiah was borrowing from this Syrian poem. His creative genius is a thing of heightened treatment, then, rather than complete originality in form and subject matter.

Letters and learning seemed to flourished in Judah during the time of Hezekiah. He is said to have had scribes and recorders among his court officials (2 Kings 18:18), which would indicate a certain amount of literary activity. Learning of other types is indicated by the work which is said to have been done which required the use of mathematical principles:

> " And the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and all his might, and how he made a pool, and a conduit, and brought water into the city, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?"**

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* Isaiah 7:14 **2 Kings 20:20

This possession of such a high mathematical skill as is claimed for the men of Judah in Hezekiah's time is amply verified by the discovery of such a conduit, 1700 feet long, connecting the Virgin's Well at Jerusalem with the Pool of Siloam. An inscription describes the work:

> "The boring through is completed. And this is the story of the boring through: while yet they plied the drill, each toward his fellow, and while yet there were three cubits to be bored through, there was heard the voice of one calling unto another, for there was a crevice in the rock on the right hand. And on the day of the boring through the stone-cutters struck, each to meet his fellow, drill upon drill; and the waters flowed from the source to the pool for a thousand and two hundred cubits, and a hundred cubits was the height of the rock above the heads of the stone-cutters."*

Thus the literary development and the development in mechanical science can be said to exercise no small amount of influence on the people of the Hebrew nation. Their cultural rise is being recorded by the record of the rising tide of their literary achievement and by the adaptation of other fields of learning to their social progress.

6. Hebrew Pottery

No discussion of Hebrew culture is complete without some reference to the discoveries of pottery and clay products.

* Translated in Barton, op. cit., p. 475

They are, indeed, one of the most valuable sources of information open to the archaeologist in reconstructing Hebrew developments.

During the wilderness period, the Hebrews did not use clay vessels, but used the unbreakable animal skin instead. Even after entering Palestine, for some time wooden vessels were used. Finally, however, the craft of the potter began to develop, and his art became a necessary part of the daily life of the Hebrew people.

Discoveries of the remains of different types of pottery are numerous, so only a few can be mentioned here. Of special interest is the unearthing of the old city Kirjath-Sepher, now called Tell-Beit-Mirsim. It is referred to in Judges 1:11-15 as being a gift bestowed upon the daughter of Caleb and her husband. Altogether six successive cities are found in six strata on this site, the fifth being the Hebrew city built by Othniel, after he captured and destroyed this place (Judges 1:13).

The pottery of this stratum sheds light upon a part of the Old Testament narrative. It has to do with the Philistines and their living in this old city with the Israelites. During the time of Samson, the record states that

> "And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord delivered them into the hand of the Philistines forty years."*

This warring back and forth between the Philistines and

* Judges 13:1

Israel continued for a number of years, as is recorded in the book of I Samuel.

The pottery discovered in Kirjath-Sepher gives ample evidence of Philistine residence in Palestine during this period, about 1100 B.C. In the stratum which contains the remains of Othniel's city, a large of deposit of Philistine pottery was found. It has been identified as Philistine by the distinctive type of jug, with the rhone-pipe strainer on the spout. Also, the vases are painted in the Philistine manner. Thus again the archaeologists, this time through the medium of pottery, have illustrated for the modern reader certain passages in the literature of the Old Testament.*

In the sixth stratum in Kirjath-Sepher was found a seal bearing the inscription, "Eliakim, Servant of Jehoiachim," showing the date of the ruins to be circa 600 B.C. Many relics are found here, the most interesting being a series of jar-handles with the stamp "To the King: Hebron," seeming to indicate that the jar had been a wine or grain measure used to pay royal taxes in. Hebron was one of the four revenue centers for the kingdom, and Kirjath-sepher paid its taxes there.*

The discoverers of this site find in these jar-handles with the official stamp on them an indication that the king had at this time ordained an official measure, doing away with the business trickery mentioned in Micah when he condemns the trades men for their dishonesty:

* Accounts of the excavation of Kirjah-Sepher are found in the Quarterly Statement of the Palestine Exp. Fund, Oct. 1926.

"Are there yet the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked, and the scant measure that is abominable?"*

While the Hebrews became prolific producers of pottery, it is said that they never became artists at this craft. The pottery found in the stratum of the Hebrew occupation of Canaan indicates that they were inferior in methods of composition, baking, and shaping their ware. At first, it appears to have been shaped on a hand-operated wheel, but Jeremiah's mention of "the wheels" indicates that by his day the Hebrews had adopted the foot-operated potter's wheel.

In comparing the Hebrew pottery with other forms, Duncan says:

"It cannot be said that the Hebrews showed any marked originality in introducing new methods or forms. On the contrary, they imitated badly....The tendency is for curved surfaces to become straight lines, which gives the vessel a stiff and angular appearance."**

The prophets in Israel, especially Jeremiah, used the figure of the potter and the clay to show God's absolute sovereignty. He observed the clumsiness of the Hebrew potter, and noted that often he had to crush the vessel he had begun and begin again,(Jer. 18:1-9). In several cities, the potter's house has been found, with its heap of broken jars which were cracked in the process of manufacturing. Jere-

* Micah 6:10

**J. G. Duncan, Digging Up Biblical History, p. 240

miah had noted these mishaps which attended the making of pottery, and the waste of materials. He observed that the vessel was beyond repair. He used this incident to illustrate a sermon:

> "Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Even so will I break this people and this city, as one breaketh a potter's vessel, that cannot be made whole again."*

If it is true that the Greek influence after Alexander the Great was felt in the religious philosophy of the Hebrews, it is equally true that this influence is seen in the cultural life of the Hebrews by their imitation of Greek forms in making pottery. Wares were now burned hard, and the clays were the best. Macalister, in his excavations at Gezer, found the broken pieces in this period to emit a distinct musical "clink" as compared to the dull thud of the clumsier ware of the earlier period.

The Hebrew lamp is a most interesting study. It was often a saucer, notched to allow for the wick to be prevented from falling into the oil. This lamp is often mentioned in the scriptural writings. God is called the lamp of Israel, (2 Sam. 22:29). Life is called a lamp. When the thought of life's uncertainty was expressed, the writers naturally thought of the ease with which this crude lamp was extinguished; hence the expression "the lamp of the wicked shall be put out, (Prov. 13:9).

Indeed, it must be said that the potter's wheel has giv-

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*Jer. 19:11.

en a most interesting insight into the struggle of the Hebrew against the Greek influence in his religious life. We have seen in the Wisdom literature of the Old Testament the gradual infiltration of the Hebrew religious conceptions by the Greek ideal of the present "good life". Side by side the two ideals often stand. Perhaps this struggle and gradual victory of Hellenizing influences can be symbolized by certain findings at Jericho. Ten jar handles were found here, bearing evidences of the Greek period. They were shaped to imitate the Greek designs. They were imprinted with the mark of the potter, and his motto in Greek letters. The motto, however, is distinctly Hebrew: "Jah (abbreviation for Jehovah) is my God." Thus we see the Hellenizing influences side by side with the Hebrew determination to be separate and distinct.

Although the Hebrews never learned to excel in the potter's art, it is becoming increasingly evident that their pottery is one of the most important means we have in understanding the customs, manner of life, and history of their times.

IV. ARCHAEOLOGICAL LIGHT UPON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE RELIGIOUS IDEAS OF THE HEBREWS.

Repeatedly throughout this study, our path has crossed and recrossed the trail of Hebrew religious ideas. This is natural, no matter what phase of the life of these people is being discussed, for the history of the Hebrew people is essentially the history of the development of certain religious patterns. However, a study of the development of the forms in which the final thought in Hebrew religion were cast is a study of great interest, aside from the other phases of Hebrew life already considered. Upon this part of the Old Testament record the archaeologists have shed a great deal of light.

1. Religion of the Nomadic Tribe Before Moses.

There are certain rites in the religious observances of Israel that arise from such antiquity that their source and original meaning are difficult to determine. What was the source and original meaning of the sabbath, of circumcision, and the rite of taking unleavened bread? The definite answer is all but impossible to determine.

These rites were observed by the nomadic Semites who later developed into the Hebrews. They had a certain amount of recognition before Moses' time. These, and a few simple acts of worship, made up the religious system of the Semites.

The rite of circumcision was known in ancient Assyria, long before the rite was used in Israel. It was a tribal

custom only in Assyria, having little or no religious meaning. When it was taken over by the early Hebrews, it was invested with religious significance, and became a part of their system permanently. It signified the setting apart of the Hebrew as a peculiar property of Yahweh:

> "This is my covenant which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you."*

Some there are who connect this rite with the ancient rite of branding slaves, as described in Hammurabi's code**; in which case it would signify the complete submission of the circumcised race to the commands of Yahweh.

It is now known that the ancient Babylonians had a day which closely corresponds to the Hebrew Sabbath. It is described in this passage:

> "The seventh day is the feast of Marduk and Zarpanit. It is an evil day. The shepherd of the great people shall not eat flesh cooked on the coals which is smoked. The garment of his body he shall not change; a clean one he shall not put on....At night before Marduk and Ishtar the king shall bring his offering; a libation he shall pour out. The lifting up of his hands shall then be pleasing to the gods."***

*Genesis 17:10, 11.
** Discussed in Section II of this study, pp. 34 ff.
***Translated in Barton, op. cit., p. 317.

From these and other archaeological discoveries, it now appears quite probable that the Sabbath in some primitive form was observed by the Hebrews before the giving of the Mosaic laws. The purpose of the priestly account of creation (Genesis 1:1--2:3) is to show the observance of the Sabbath from the dawn of history.

The Hebrew religion before Moses included the worship of certain images, called "teraphim." These are referred to in Genesis:

> "And Laban went to shear his sheep; and Rachel had stolen the teraphim that were her father's."*

In those patriarchal days, each family seemed to have its own images, to whom the head of the clan offered sacrifices. In excavating Gezer in Palestine, several of these teraphim, small figurines of Ashtart, have been found, indicating that the Hebrews still followed this custom of having family gods at the time of entering, although this had been strictly forbidden.

Psalms in the form of prayers to Ashtart (Ishtar in Babylonia) have been found in excavations in that country. A portion of one of them is produced below:

> "Mother of gods, fulfiller of the commands of Bel,
> Thou bringer-forth of verdure, thou lady of mankind,--
> Begetress of all, who makest all offspring thrive,
> Mother Ishtar, whose might no god approaches,
> Majestic lady, whose commands are powerful,

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* Genesis 31:19

A request I will proffer, which--may it bring good to me...
O my lady, teach me what to do, appoint me a resting-
place.
My sin forgive, lift up my countenance."*

It was perhaps such a chant as this that was offered by the Hebrews before Moses' time before his teraphim. This prayer has many likenesses to the Psalm, notably the lines which call Ishtar all-powerful, and others (not quoted above) which refer to the god of heaven and earth:

"For the Lord is great, and greatly to be praised: he is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the nations are idols: but the Lord made the heavens."*

That these family altars, where the clan head offered sacrifices, continued until the seventh century B.C., despite the laws demanding public worship, is amply attested. In Shechem, excavations reveal one of these small altars, two feet high and 14 inches broad, in the ruins of a home of the seventh century B.C. era. **

Aside from the simple worship ritual carried on by the head of the clan, the pre-Mosaic people often worshipped the serpent. Ashtart usually was represented with a serpent twined about her. Also, Macalister discovered in Gezer brazen serpents used for worship, and other indications of the serpent being used in worship. We remember Moses himself making the brazen serpent (Numbers 21), although it

*Translated in Barton, op. cit., p. 496.
**Duncan, op. cit., 101
***

was not to be used as an object of worship. It was used for this purpose, however, as is attested by this passage:

> "He brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made; for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it."*

In this type of worship, the Israelites were not going afar to find a familiar object of worship, but were returning to a well-known custom from which Moses was trying with small success to win them.

This simple religion of the Hebrews before Moses had two outstanding taboos. One forbade the eating of swine, and the other the seething of a kid in milk. These were included in Moses' law, but were already known to the people. Archaeologists have discovered indications in Gezer that the pig was the animal of sacrifice in some of the Ashtart cults. It was therefore forbidden,in order to establish a wide breach between Yahwehism and the worship of Ashtart. Again, the Ras Shamra texts give directions for the slaying of a kid, and cooking him in milk for sacrificial purposes, and a prayer to be prayed to Asherat. In forbidding these customs, which archaeologists show were a part of the religious practice before the introduction of the worship of Yahweh to the Hebrews, the law-giver of the Hebrews hoped to widen the breach between the people separated to Yahweh and the "nations." Thus the groundwork was laid for the introduction of the Mosaic system of Yahwehism.

2. Religion Among the Hebrews After Moses.

After the mystical experience of Moses in Horeb, and after the giving of the first decalogue, there was a decided change in the outlines of the Hebrew religious pattern. As has been stated, the old worship existed alongside the worship prescribed in the Mosaic system, but it was continually watched and gradually weeded out.

Moses represents God as the Lord of the storm and of the mountain:

> "And it came to pass on the third day in the morning that there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled."*

Archaeological discoveries have revealed an attempt on the part of Amenophis IV, ruler of Egypt from 1400 to 1350 B.C., to establish a monotheism in Egypt. Aton, the sun god, was to be worship exclusively. This attempt failed, but the songs written about this time to the sun god give a good example of fine poetry, and are the first expression of a monotheistic idea, outside of the Hebrew literature. The power attributed to this sun-god is expressed in this hymn to him:

> "Thou art a craftsman shaping thy own limbs;
> Fashioner without being fashioned;
> Unique in his qualities, traversing eternity;

* Exodus 19:16.

Over the ways, with millions under his guidance....
Sole lord, taking captive all lands every day....
He makes the seasons by the months,
Heat when he desires,
Cold when he desires."*

It is certain that Moses, learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, knew this song, and the many others to Aton which flourished at this time. Other Hebrews no doubt were familiar with it also. So, when the first utterance of the Mosaic law was a demand for monotheistic worship (Exodus 20:3), the children of Israel were prepared by their knowledge of the Egyptian experiment in monotheistic ideas to respond.

As a part of the Hebrew religion, certain festivals and feast days now developed. Examples of such days in other religious systems before the Hebrews are numerous in the archaeological discoveries. The declaration of a Babylonian Sabbath, quoted above (page 82)shows it to be a day of abstinence. There were, however, certain acts of sacrifice which closely correspond to the Hebrew holy days. In the Babylonian flood account, after the hero left the ark, he worshiped:

"I appointed a sacrifice on the top of the mountain peak; Seven by seven I arranged the sacrificial vessels....He brought my wife and made her kneel at my side."**

*Breasted's Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt, p. 315.
**Translated in Barton, op. cit., 338

These passages from archaeological discoveries have been cited to illustrate the indebtedness of Moses to the culture of Egypt for some ideas which were an essential part of the Mosaic system. Although the Hebrews have repeatedly taken existing materials as bases for their religious patterns, it can be seen that such were heightened and invested with a new and better meaning by the treatment given them. Such is the mystical insight and genius of the Hebrew people.

A national religion now emerges in Hebrew history, with its public places of worship, its code of laws regulating worship and other matters. Naturally a class of people to conduct this worship also emerges, the priests. Through them finally is worked out the elaborate ritualistic system that is now known to us as the system of Hebrew worship.

Certain ethical aspects also emerge in the Hebrew system at this period. As we have seen in the Babylonian flood account (page 19), there was no sense of moral responsibility on the part of their gods. They were creatures of caprice. The idea of a god of law and purpose is found in the Egyptian hymns to Aton:

"How excellent are thy designs, O lord of eternity.
...Thy rays nourish every garden;
When thou risest thy live,
They grow by thee."*

* BarTon, op. cit., p. 503

Then follows a description of the regularity of the sun, and his wonderful works. This long hymn is much like Psalm 104, in which the works of God in nature are described in much the same attitude and manner. It seems probable that the ideas from these great religious poems may have become a part of the Hebrew thought pattern while in Egypt. If so, it seems natural that they should go into the very groundwork of the religious practices that followed the Egyptian captivity.

The idea of a responsible deity began to make way for a feeling of responsibility for ethical conduct on the part of man. One hymn to Aton speaks of man being established by this god in order to "live in truth."* This high ethical idea of God is transferred to the early Hebrew system in these words:

> "Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultry. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor."**

Although the Egyptian idea does not have the beauty and depth that is found in the Hebrew, it formed a good basis upon which these people began in building an idea of a responsible deity who holds together cities, towns, tribes, highways and rivers, and a sense of man's resultant moral responsibility.***

It must be said that God was still thought to be a

*Barton, op. cit., 504. **Exodus 20:13-16. ***Barton, p. 503, line 115.

tribal deity, interested only in one tribe or nation. Aton is said in one Egyptian poem to be the one who is

"Illuminating the Two Lands (Egypt) with his disc"*

This idea was held in Moab with regard to the god Chemosh, during the time of the Kings of Judah. The Moabite Stone shows how similar the idea of their god was to the Hebrew idea of Yahweh:

"I am Mesha, son of Chemoshmelek, King of Moab.... Omri, king of Israel--he oppressed Moab many days, because Chemosh was angry with his land....but Chemosh restored it in my day."**

This passage is very much like some in the Hebrew record which attribute national misfortunes to the anger of Yahweh:

"Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel and removed them out of his sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only."***

The idea of Chemosh fighting for Moab is identical with the tribal idea expressed in Nehemiah:

"In what place therefore ye hear the sound of the trumpet, resort ye thither unto us: our God shall fight for us."****

Thus we have the development of religion in Israel. The worship of Yahweh is now supreme. Yahweh is a God who

* Barton, op. cit., p. 500 **Ibid, p. 459.
***2 Kings 17:18 ****Nehemiah 4:20

is intensely interested in the national life of Israel. Worship has now become something requiring offerings on certain days in certain places, although some private worship still existed, as has been shown. Yahweh is a God who is responsible, hence he demands responsible action on the part of his people. In this idea the Hebrew religion outstripped all others in ancient times. Paying just tribute to the Egyptian ideas which they were familiar with, we still must acknowledge the outstanding dignity and religious insight in the Hebrew writings.

3. Prophetic Religious Works.

Religion, which was now a monopoly of a class, soon became a ritualistic form, and a means of accumulating wealth for the priestly class. The idea of Yahweh as a personal being became dimmed. It remained for the prophets, arising after the time of the divided kingdom, to call men's minds back to the older conceptions of religion. Their works stand as the supreme expression of high religious purposes in Hebrew literature. It is of interest to note that archaeological discoveries have revealed a like literature among other ancient people.

Against the selfishness of his day, Amos projected his ideas of God as a worker of justice for all. In this, as in other fields, there is an Egyptian literature which antedates Amos by about 1000 years. The great Egyptian book which demands justice for all is "The Tale of the

Eloquent Peasant", a part of which has been discussed before. In some ways it is almost a parallel of Amos:

> "Thou guide without avarice, thou great one free from meanness, who destroyest deceit, who createst truthfulness. Throw evil to the ground. I will speak, hear me. Do justice, O thou praised one, whom the praised one praise. Remove my oppression: behold, I have a heavy to carry. Behold, I am troubled in soul; examine me, I am in sorrow....Speak the truth; do the truth; for it is great, it is mighty, it is everlasting. It will obtain for thee merit."*

This wonderful tribute to justice and truth might well have been the foundation for Amos' immortal appeal for these same qualities:

> "But, let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream."**

Against this stern picture of the justice of God, Hosea, a fellow-prophet of the same period of Amos, outlines an appealing picture of the love of God. The Egyptians alone have any like passages to show the love of a god for human-kind:

> "Thou (Aton) bindest them by thy love."***

The conception of Isaiah, recorded in Chapter 6 of his prophecy, has no precedent as far as archaeologists

*Barton, pp.526, 527. **Amos 5:24 ***Barton, p. 501

have yet discovered. To be sure, the Babylonian prayers to Ishtar mentioned above, and the Egyptian psalms to Aton, all mention the glory, pomp, splendor and power of their gods. But the idea, "I am unclean....for my eyes have seen the king, the Lord of hosts," seems to be a new conception of the dignity of Deity. Hitherto he has been regarded as a large man, with certain human manners.

Slowly the prophets of Israel realize that the glory of their kingdom cannot be restored by natural means. The final stage of development of their religious ideas, aside from the Hellenistic conception of the value of wisdom, was the looking forward to "the day of Yahweh." This is best illustrated in Zephaniah:

> "The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord: the mighty man shall cry bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness."*

Then follows the description of the wasting of Israel's enemies by Yahweh, and the restoration of Israel's power. Restoration, then, wast o be by direct intervention of God, rather than by natural growth and development.

An Egyptian prophecy, dating back to circa 2900 B.C., furnishes a most interesting parallel to this prophecy. It begins by recounting the evil abroad in the land, as

* Zephaniah 1:14, 15.

does Zephaniah. Then follows a prediction of the coming of a great king who will unite upper and lower Egypt. He will have power to give water, food, and contentment. He will confound all who doubt, and those who even think rebellious thoughts will be destroyed.* This idea, then, is not strictly a Hebrew idea. When trouble came to a nation, oftimes it was interpreted as the displeasure of the gods, and a promise was given of direct intervention by them, and an era of peace.

The highest pitch of Hebrew religious thought is to be found in the prophetical works. If they borrowed ideas and figures from these Egyptian and Babylonian sources, they have treated them so originally and with such inspiration that they become alive with a new meaning in the Hebrew record.

Most, if not all, ideas discussed in this study have been shown by archaeological discoveries to have not originated with the Hebrew people. They were the property of a common race, or of a number of races. If they were used before, these ideas did not lose any of their meaning, for the Hebrews have taken them and given us the most outstanding piece of literature in the world, The Bible. Whatever its archaeological antecedents, the work produced by these people stands alone as mute evidence of their originality, genius and insight.

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* Barton, op. cit., p. 521 ff.

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