

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

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

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

ARTICLE VIII.

CRITICAL NOTES.

I.

DO WE KNOW ANYTHING BY CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE
NEW BIRTH?

THE Rev. Dr. G. F. Magoun, Ex-President of Iowa College, in an article in the *Christian Mirror*, of Dec. 17, 1892, which he has done me the honor to devote to certain essays of mine, has questioned the assertion that we know some things about Christian doctrine by our immediate consciousness. The word "consciousness" is employed here in the strict philosophical sense, as the knowledge which the mind has of its own action. The exact drift of his criticism, owing to some misprints, is not clear; but enough is evident to show that he rejects the idea. It is an important idea in certain connections, for if we do know some things in Christian doctrine by true consciousness, then we have as absolute a knowledge of them as of any fact in the world, as we have of that basal fact, our own existence. Dr. Magoun's question naturally leads one to examine again his position, to see if indeed it be true; and I have thought that possibly others beside myself might be interested in the examination.

There are two sides of the new birth, the divine and the human, which have sometimes been distinguished as "regeneration" and "conversion." God sends forth his Holy Spirit and regenerates; and man obeys, accepts, chooses, according as one may prefer this term or that. Our old divines sometimes contend that regeneration and conversion are not to be distinguished whether chronologically or logically; but a better philosophy of the will has led most theologians of the present day to make this, or some similar, distinction between the divine and the human activity.

Beginning with the simple human activity, conversion is essentially an act of the will. I shall call it a choice. Now, choice is an activity, the essential activity of the soul, that activity in which personality resides. If consciousness is the knowledge which the mind has of its own activity, it must embrace the choices of the mind, and must therefore embrace the supreme choice of all others, the choice of Jesus Christ as Lord and as Saviour. And, if I may reduce the Christian choice still further toward its ultimate elements, and define it as a choice of duty, however that duty may come to be apprehended, as a choice fundamental, determinative of all other choices which the

man may make, and irreversible, I may still add that such a choice is and must be embraced within the scope of that consciousness which is the knowledge which a mind has of its own activities.

But this choice is not an isolated phenomenon in a man's life, something which he once makes, and which has no farther reality for him except as it is an object of the memory. It is reaffirmed in innumerable subordinate choices, as when he does a particular benevolent act because "it is his duty," that is because he has already once chosen to do his duty whenever he shall perceive it. If you question the reality of that great fundamental choice at any moment, the man whose choice is questioned, must then and there reaffirm it, or he denies it and nullifies it, a thing, which, according to Christian doctrine, the Christian never does. As a Christian man, I know now, not that I *have* made this fundamental choice, but that I *make* it, for as soon as my thought dwells upon the matter at all, I do remake it. And hence the Christian *always knows the existence within him of the supreme choice of duty by immediate consciousness*, if his thought is directed to the topic at all.

To return, now, to the original moment of the fundamental choice. At this moment there lay before the mind alternatives, for choice always is between alternatives. On the one side was duty, which was finally chosen. On the other was whatever had been the ruling motive in the unregenerate heart, which may have been this or that, but which, merely for illustration's sake, I will denominate pleasure. Pleasure and duty were weighed, and pleasure perceived as inconsistent with, and even hostile to, duty. Whenever any such deliberation is performed by the human mind there *always* springs up an affirmation of obligation. Duty is seen to have claims upon the man. There is a sense of responsibility which may be expressed in the phrase "I ought," in respect to duty, and "I ought not," in respect to pleasure. This is a matter of immediate consciousness. Put in other terms, the man knows by immediate consciousness that he is a *sinner*. He knows, that is, by immediate consciousness, *what* are the prevailing tendencies of his being, and what their *character*.

But, now, as he deliberates, he is conscious of something new, a new attractiveness in duty. It is as if a new brilliancy had been thrown upon it. He is not conscious by immediate consciousness that this new light proceeds from this external source or from that, any more than one is conscious, when a brilliant illumination is cast upon a dark wall by night, from *what one* of several kinds of luminaries, or of individual lights, it may have come; but he is *not conscious* that this radiance proceeds from himself, and, as he is conscious, in the immediate consciousness which he actually *has*, what sort of a reflection upon duty is cast from his own sinful mind, he may be said to know by the *next step* from consciousness, if not by immediate consciousness, *that that radiance was not lent to duty by his own mind*.

In subsequent years, as was said of the fundamental choice itself, he does not merely remember all this; but, since the remade choice is made in the presence of temptations and lapses, the fact of sin and of its essential nature is a fact, again, of present and immediate consciousness.

And, now, he chooses. In this act he *exercises* freedom of the will. Dr. Magoun doubts whether a man is conscious of freedom of the will. But, certainly, Dr. Magoun will confess that the man is *not conscious* of compelling forces operating upon his mind; and in what respect does that differ from saying that he is conscious that such forces *do not* operate upon his mind, or that he is free? In this sense it seems to me that the man does know by consciousness that he is free. He is, strictly speaking, *conscious* of the activities of his mind, hence conscious *what* they are, hence conscious that this one is *free*.

And yet there is a certain sort of struggle, an effort, and a freeing of the soul by its own activity from a condition which is popularly called bondage, and with reason. Habit exercises a force which is not a compelling force, but an influence powerfully tending to persuade to the perpetuation of the old prevailing choice. The man realizes, is *conscious*, how prevailing his choice of pleasure is, realizes, is *conscious*, how all his life is under its sway, and how opposed it is to duty, and in this sense is *conscious* of his present bondage, which he breaks up, in part, by the great choice, but of which he still has too much experience.

Thus the converted man has consciousness, in the experience of the new birth, of sin, bondage, freedom, duty, the influences proceeding from his own nature, other influences not himself making for righteousness, the actual fundamental choice, and he also has, what I have not mentioned, but which needs no argument, a *conscious* sense of the harmonious play of his moral faculties, which we ordinarily style peace, or forgiveness.

I now proceed to a difficult point. What is this Not-himself-making-for-righteousness which enters into the Christian's experience? He is conscious, strictly speaking, of certain *influences* not himself: is there any "consciousness" of the Not-himself?

Consciousness, as above defined, strictly has relation only to the mind's knowledge of its own activities. But, when I come in contact with an object without me which resists me, and thus manifests a force antagonistic to my own, I am in this strict sense, conscious of involuntary modification. Certainly I am conscious of a definite feeling, for I am conscious of all my feelings. I am not conscious of antecedent volition accounting for that feeling: I am conscious of not having voluntarily originated that feeling; and these things are consciousness of modification. But how can there be consciousness of "modification" without consciousness of a modifier? How consciousness of any term and a relation, without consciousness of the other term with which there is relation? Or if Dr. Magoun is unwilling to say that we have consciousness, when modified, that something modifies us—note that I say "*that* something modifies us," not *what* thus modifies—then he will undoubtedly admit that the step of inference is exceedingly short by which I pass to the "conclusion," if it be such, that something modifies me.

Applying this to the new birth, when I become conscious of these holy influences which do not originate in myself, I am thereby *conscious*, or I infer without conscious process of reasoning, that there is an *influencer*. Who is he? and of what character?

The influences which this Influencer exerts are adapted to my nature, so as to act persuasively and produce conviction and volition. He then is conscious and personal.

He needed none of the appliances of material forces and employed none. He is then spiritual.

He enforced the law of duty. He is then holy.

Most Christians can trace, and for my own part, I think every Christian *could* trace, this unseen and holy hand dominating in all his history to lead him to the supreme moment where he made the fundamental and decisive choice. At any rate I shall now make, without fear of contradiction from any evangelical Christian, the statement that the Christian perceives upon reflection that the whole course of history, his own, and the world's so far as he is concerned, was bent to procure his conversion. Therefore, this Not-himself is the Ruler of the world.

But, if such, he is infinite.

Now this personal, holy, spiritual, and infinite Ruler of the world, is God.

Thus the Christian has immediate consciousness, in the strict sense of that word, of the new birth; has consciousness, or if you prefer, knowledge by *immediate inference*, that there is a Not-himself-making-for-righteousness; and has *knowledge*, founded upon easy inference from facts of immediate consciousness, what this Not-himself is, viz., that he is God.

Then the Christian is independent of the Bible, is he, and needs not to consult or follow that ancient Book?

He needs, by all means, to follow it; but he is, and he is not, independent of it. He is not independent of it in the sense that this elementary knowledge is usually brought to him through the help of the Word. It is the Bible which gives him the knowledge of the truth which he employs in his various religious processes. But he is independent of it in the sense that when he gets so far along as to *have* the knowledge which I have thus sketched in the paragraphs above, so far as its *certainly* and its *value* are concerned, *it is not of the slightest consequence to him what historical occasion called it out; for it has the same certainty that belongs to the facts of his own existence and mental nature.*

Thus I answer the question of my topic affirmatively, and say that the Christian *does know by immediate consciousness* something about the New Birth, which is the fundamental Christian doctrine.

Will Dr. Magoun deny these things, thus stated?

Oakland, California.

FRANK HUGH FOSTER.

II.

THE DIVINE NAMES IN THE BOOK OF GENESIS, IN THE
LIGHT OF RECENT DISCOVERIES.

MR. SAYCE says, in his "Hibbert Lectures," 1887: "The day of the destructive critic has passed, and it is time for the archæologist to begin to rebuild." He says this in view of the wonderful evidence brought to light, in the East, of a culture and literary commerce of which the modern world has hitherto been in entire ignorance. Since that date, the progress in the same line of discovery has revealed still more astonishing facts, so that scholars have been reading epistolary compositions written in Palestine before the date of the Exodus, and we are at once landed in the indisputable conclusion that the Hebrews migrated from among a writing people into the midst of those who were also writers.

But the wonder does not cease here. The script employed by those who have left us this legacy was Babylonian, and the language akin to the Hebrew.

Another discovery which warrants the reconsideration of the date and sources of the earliest biblical literature, is that of a new Chaldean Genesis parallel, to some extent, with what we have in our Genesis.

These facts have been brought out and duly emphasized in the recent Congress of Orientalists in London. Max Müller, in his opening address before this body, said: "We possess in the tablets found in Tel-el-Amarna in Egypt a kind of diplomatic correspondence, carried on at that early time, more than a thousand years before the invasion of Greece by Persia, between the kings of Egypt and their friends and vassals in Babylon, Syria, and Palestine. To us this correspondence is of the greatest importance, as showing the existence of a literary and intellectual intercourse between Western Asia and Egypt of which historians had formerly no suspicion. The spelling is chiefly syllabic; the language, an Assyrian dialect. Doubtful Accadian words are often followed and explained by glosses in what may be called a Canaanite dialect, which comes very near to Hebrew."¹

Mr. Sayce had already said:² "The revelations which may be expected from this extraordinary discovery need not be described. It shows that Western Asia was a scene of literary activity in the sixteenth century before our era, and that Babylonian at that time occupied the place afterward taken by Aramaic as the language of diplomacy and science in the civilized East."

In respect to the newly discovered version of the Chaldean Genesis, Mr. Pinches, of the British Museum, said in his paper before the Congress: "A short time ago I had the good fortune to bring to the notice of scholars a second Babylonian Story of the Creation differing as much from that translated by George Smith, as the two biblical accounts do from each other. It has a strong impress of a non-Semitic origin, which is confirmed by the fact

¹ London Times, Sept. 6, 1892.

² Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology, June, 1888.

that it is written in two languages. It is short, and tells all it has to say in a few words, whereas the other extends over six or seven closely written tablets and introduces at great length the fight between Bel and the Dragon."¹

The inferences from these facts, taken also in connection with the abundance of literature on almost every variety of subject which has been unearthed in the Euphrates Valley, and going back into the third millennium B. C., are far reaching, and touch at many points the questions of Old Testament criticism, which are so rife at present. If Abraham did not understand the art of writing and bring literature with him into Palestine, it certainly was his own fault, and not that of his times. It becomes probable, also, that the non-discovery of literature on perishable materials, elsewhere than in Egypt, is not due to its total want of use in other countries, but to the conditions of climate and customs in Egypt favoring its preservation. We know that papyrus was used there long before the date of the Exodus. We have at least one such preserved to us, the Prisse papyrus. And its contents, a kind of moral or devotional handbook, prove that the use of papyrus was not rare or limited to any particular kind of documents. Since, then, there was this literary and necessarily attendant commercial intercourse between Egypt and the East, it is not to be believed that none of this material found its way to other countries or was imitated there.

But our attention is at present directed to the new light which is thrown upon the probable date and sources of the book of Genesis, as accounting for its use of the divine names. These revelations of early Eastern life, in the first place, carry back the probable date of a connection between the Hebrew and the Chaldean versions of the creation, the deluge, etc., to a much more remote period than recent critics have assigned for it.

This remoteness of connection has been more than suspected before, but it had not been possible to determine it beyond question, and Mr. Sayce gives it as his conclusion that the Creation-story translated by George Smith belonged to the time of Assur-bani-pal, i. e., the seventh century B. C. The matter, however, is now put beyond dispute, by Mr. Pinches, that Creation-stories similar to our first chapters in Genesis existed in Babylonia before the time of Abraham. The main point of this proof is the Old Accadian original which accompanies the Semitic text. If this newly discovered narrative is so ancient, it also adds force to certain Accadian features of the one Mr. Sayce discusses, and that also will most surely now be referred to a much earlier date. The fact, also, that the fragments of Berosus give a version somewhat different still, shows that the Babylonian Creation-stories must go back to a very early time for their common source. For no scholar doubts that they have some connection with each other and with our Genesis. The questions are, When? and What? Mr. Pinches, in the paper referred to, states his conclusion thus: "The real and true original or originals of the Bible version or versions, as they have come down to us, are yet to be found."

But this new Chaldean version resembles more what is generally considered

¹ London Times, Sept. 10, 1892.

the second Hebrew narrative, i. e. that contained in the second chapter of Genesis, than what is found in the first chapter, while the version translated by George Smith bears numerous points of likeness to the latter. That the latter was given the precedence by the writer of Genesis is additional evidence that it is not inferior in antiquity to the other.

But a little reflection upon the present aspects of the matter will convince any one that we need not expect ever to find an original of the Genesis account or even of the Chaldean. To state the matter broadly and briefly, the evidence now points to a unity of some kind, when the Hebrew and Chaldean Semitic languages were one and the same. This alone will give time enough to account for the resemblances and the differences in the narratives, and afford a rational historical setting. Even this vista may not reach far enough, for Mr. Pinches' new version is in bilingual writing, the Semitic and the Sumerian-Accadian. The original tradition, therefore, may have belonged to the Accadians, which means the people of the third and fourth millennium B. C. Or, in the various narratives, we may have the collated versions of the Accadians and the proto-Semites. If we follow this view, we shall find the strongest reasons for abandoning a view of the origin of Genesis which has been very popular since George Smith's discoveries.

So far as I know, Lenormant first suggested that the biblical Genesis was a monotheistic version derived from the Chaldean by the expurgation of polytheistic error, under the guidance of inspiration. (He was a believer in divine inspiration.) And the latest expression of the same opinion which I have noticed, is that of Professor Ryle, of Cambridge, in his "Brief Introduction to the Study of Genesis." He says: "The saints and prophets of Israel stripped the old legend of its pagan deformities. Its shape and outline survived. The popular tradition was not abolished; it was preserved, purified, hallowed, that it might subserve the divine purpose of transmitting, as in a figure, spiritual teaching upon eternal truths."

Among the reasons for rejecting this view is, first, that to limit the work of the Inspiring Spirit to such patchwork seems unworthy of him. If the Divine Mind wished to direct the thoughts of men to absolute truth, we must think that a more ready method would occur to him than to sift and work over polytheistic myths. Yet, while we say this, we have no idea ourselves that Genesis was a direct revelation to Moses or any one else, unconnected with foregoing traditions. We think that the God of history has always followed a conservative method, and that truth once in the world has never been allowed to be entirely lost sight of.

The second reason referred to is that the Chaldean stories are all of them poetry, while our Genesis is prose; and to derive prose literature from poetry is to reverse the natural and universal order in the development of popular literature. No critic would think of doing such a thing in any other case. Prose thought may not always be the first committed to writing; probably, as a rule, was not on any extended scale; but that it existed first no one will doubt.

Again, a poetic cosmogony was almost a necessary attendant upon poly-

theism, which gave an unlimited opportunity for variety of conception and dramatization. And, not to introduce here the question, Which must have had the precedence, monotheism or polytheism? I call attention to the fact, that careful and candid Oriental scholars admit that monotheistic thought has existed by the side of polytheistic in all Eastern literature from the first origin of such literature. It has been more distinct in some nations, as China and Persia, but it has never been entirely wanting.

Now, to derive the early prose cosmogony from the poetic, would be like deriving our Genesis, supposing it were original in English, from Milton's "Paradise Lost," or the New Testament doctrine of the future life from Dante.

If then, at the period I have supposed, the Hebrew and the Chaldean Creation-stories belonged to the same people and language, all we have to say is that the Hebrew represents the monotheistic prose of the reflective reason, and the Chaldean the polytheistic imagination.

There is a feature of one of the Creation-tablets which strongly confirms the idea that the whole is a poetic version of a prose monotheistic original. A whole side seems to have been taken up with instruction to man in his duties to God. (The voice of God in the garden?) This runs in the simple designation, "God." And is it not significant that this form should have been preserved, in the midst of its polytheistic setting, where man's conscience and his inner nature is appealed to? Is it not a kind of acknowledgment that all the accompanying dramatization was but the ornamental setting of the great truth of the way man should think of his God? ¹

Before looking farther into the origin of the book of Genesis, we glance at the historical and geographical position of the Hebrews. It is plain that God, in developing and maintaining among men the true idea himself, has not relied alone upon the subjective work of inspiration. Israel was placed providentially between the two great ancient centres of scientific and speculative thought, Babylon and Egypt, and brought directly into receptive contact with both. This was a most important factor in their spiritual and intellectual development. Abraham brought from Chaldea the best it could give. He represents the monotheistic element of that land. We must not for a moment suppose that monotheism was something of which he knew nothing until he received it by direct revelation from God. For aught we know, he may have gone out, as a Puritan, to secure liberty and opportunity for the worship of one God, and to escape from the abominations of polytheistic corruptions. And Abraham brought with him the generic name of God derived from the conception of him as of infinite power, "God Almighty."

Then the patriarchs, and subsequently the whole nation, were brought into the closest relations with Egypt, where "all the wisdom of Egyptians" could not be concealed from them. Here they met a speculative belief in God as the "Self-existent One." All Egyptologists agree that along with the intricate polytheism of Egypt, a doctrine of the divine unity and self-

¹ See George Smith's Chaldean Genesis, Chap. v.

existence can be traced, and that in the earliest historical period it was avowed with the greatest distinctness. Thus Renouf says: "It is incontestably true that the sublimer portions of the Egyptian religion are not the comparatively late result of a process of development or elimination from the grosser. The sublimer portions are demonstrably ancient."¹ He quotes Rougé as saying: "The unity of the Supreme God and his attributes as Creator and Lawgiver of man are the primitive notions in the midst of the mythological superfetations accumulated in the centuries which have passed over that ancient civilization." Any one can read to-day monotheistic reverence for God in the translations of the Prisse papyrus. The impression which the Greek immigrants received is evinced in the inscription of which Plutarch says: "The temple of Minerva which is at Sais (whom they look upon as the same with Isis) had upon it this inscription: *εγώ εμι τὸ θεγονός και ὅς και ἑορμαίνω.*" And the thoughtful among the Hebrews could not have failed to gain the same idea.

Thus the monotheism which the patriarchs brought into Egypt, instead of being lost there, must have been, for the wise among their descendants, strengthened and metaphysically enlarged. No providential events in the world's history are more wonderful than this preparation, for the Hebrews as a nation, of the proper knowledge of and name for the Divine Being. Here was what I call the divine conservation of truth in the world. Here occurred the concentration in the Hebrew race of the world's best knowledge of God, whether bestowed by immediate inspiration or mediated through the reason.

Now as to the term which became the name of the Deity for the Hebrews, and has come down to us as Jehovah, no period can be fixed upon for its general adoption, so natural as the time of their first national consciousness, which began objectively at the emigration from Egypt. That the word belongs to the Hebrew language, and that only, has been newly demonstrated by Professor James Robertson, of Glasgow, in his recent work, "The Early Religion of Israel," where he has exhaustively treated the question. He has refuted all claims for a Gentile origin of the term. It only remains to account for its choice within the circle of Hebrew thought. This can be done by the contact I have mentioned of the Hebrew mind with the Egyptian speculation upon the self-existence of the Deity. We cannot suppose, as it has often been said, that Moses announced a name of God to his people, as a sudden invention, one of which they had never heard. This would have seemed to them simply ridiculous. We must know, therefore, that the Hebrews must have become somewhat familiarized with the term as a method of expressing, in their tongue, a phase of the divine existence, as described by the Egyptian sages around them.

The crisis for a choice of a national name for God was, as I have said, the time of their leaving Egypt and beginning an independent life. But the fixing upon a national name for God was a very different thing from the choice of a national god. Abraham could not have brought a national name,

¹ Hibbert Lectures, 1879, Lect. iii.

for he was not a nation; neither were the patriarchs after him linguistic inventors. They used the name of God belonging to their time and their tongue. But for the organizer of the Hebrew nation to select for them a national name for God was as natural and almost as necessary, according to ancient ideas, as to march them out of Egypt. Every student of antiquity understands that it was almost a part of national life for a people to have their own peculiar designation for the Deity, and that independently of any polytheistic intent; for, whatever may have been true of the populace, there is evidence that ancient sages in every land understood well that, as the Vedist says, "Many names belong to the unique Being." The Stoic Cleanthes in his hymn calls Zeus "the many-named," and the Egyptians spoke of God or a god under one name as "the myriad-named."

That the Hebrews did actually fix upon Jehovah as their national or covenant name for God, at the time of their exodus, is apparent from Exodus iii. 13, 14; vi. 3. These passages open to us the progress of the idea and its final adoption.

But the origin of the whole book of Genesis must, in its substance, not to speak of its final form in which it has come down to us, be also associated with the first national consciousness, and the emigration from Egypt. The new critics would have us believe that the narratives of the patriarchs were first composed during the regal period in the land of Palestine, as a literary effort to account for the dim beginnings of the nation, of which little or nothing was really known, beyond that there must have been a beginning—"a glorified mirage," in the words of Wellhausen.

Now, however, we are able to point to the increased probability, not only that these traditions had their origin in the times of which they speak, but that they were *written* memorials cherished by families and tribes during the sojourn in Egypt. Professor Robertson has pointed out how unlike they are to the Gentile myths to which these critics compare them. It should also be said that the theophanies, and divine speech with men, which constitute almost the only feature that marks them off from ordinary prose writings, do not make myths. This is simply the theocratic form of writers who have an unwavering belief in the presence of God in the thoughts and actions of men. It is the interpretation, from the divine side, of God as a factor in history. But before the facts can be thus traced to God by a writer not of myths but of history, the facts themselves must have existed. And history which cannot be disputed, has given its testimony to the necessarily antecedent existence of the patriarchal literature. I refer to the conquest of Canaan under Joshua. You might as well attempt to account for the first fiery conquests of the Moslem armies without a Mohammed and the Koran, as for the resistless sweep of the Israelites under Joshua without a Moses and the divinely given charter of the promised land, as you find it in patriarchal narratives of Genesis. Their victories were wrought in the highest religious enthusiasm, based upon the supposed immediate presence of God, come at

length to fulfil his promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Such zeal reveals long culture and intense direction, till at length it overleaped all barriers and went straight to its end.

The first failure under Moses, explained theocratically as the result of sin, clearly made evident the necessity of training a new generation into full faith in the divine gift and their unquestionable rights in the land for which they had set out; this explains the war of Joshua as naturally as the Crusades are explained by Christianity and Peter the Hermit. But without Genesis in some form approaching what we now have, nothing is explained. Moreover, the transference of the bones of Jacob and Joseph to Canaan is a material fact which fits in with and demands the historical verity of the patriarchal traditions. The sepulchral cave at Hebron testifies to-day to one of these events.

The union in one book of the beginnings of the race with the beginnings of the nation belongs also nowhere so fitly as to this same period of first national self-assertion. The dignity of the new people would be enhanced by tracing their lineage to the first men, and to the God who had promised them a land to dwell in, and was then and there leading them towards it. If it be admitted that Moses was the constitutor of the nation, no other can be so properly held to be the authority for the composition of this first national literature. For here at once were laid the foundations of both political and religious life supporting each other; and the people were taught to believe in themselves, and to worship the One True God, the Creator of all things and the Father of mankind.

That the first author of Genesis compiled his work from previously existing "sources," is now too generally admitted on all sides to call for an argument here. The real dispute is regarding the character and date of those sources. And I may remark here, that the discovery I have mentioned, of a written dialect in Canaan and known in Egypt before the Exodus, which resembled the Aramaic, has been seen to account for certain so-called Aramaisms in Genesis and the rest of the Pentateuch. These, now, instead of being late forms, take their place as archaisms, and support an early date wherever they occur.

With these facts and opinions before us, we are able to arrive at a rational theory of the diversity in the use of the divine name in the book of Genesis. The first step is to place the composition of Genesis immediately subsequent to the determination of a national name for God, as indicated in the passages in Exodus to which I have referred. An author at this standpoint would have reasons for using the names as we find them, which one writing centuries later would not have. It was his task to gather up the most advanced truth regarding the eternity and self-existence of the Deity, which had been developed by the best thought of Egypt, and, under divine direction, combine it with the idea of God as an Almighty Creator which the patriarchs had brought from Babylonia. God would be known to his chosen people as the great I AM, the eternally existent but the incomprehensible God. Therefore, in instituting the beginnings of a national literature, he must use this name,

and so familiarize the people with it, and fix its place for the future of the nation. At the same time, as I have said, it does not belong to the divine conservative methods to make an entire break with the past. Progress by development and addition is the divine law. The patriarchs were not to be pictured as never using the name of God which they had actually employed. And what is more, every nation has made use of the generic name of God by the side of a more specific designation. The author of Genesis certainly found previous documents, racial or family, running in a generic name for God or in local names, and probably both. In combining them into a single work, he must have been governed by two motives,—one to secure a proper continuous literary style, the other to give the required prominence to the new name. In this the personal judgment or taste of the writer, under divine direction, must have been the norm. This personal element of course makes it impossible to say in all cases why he writes as he does, but it is not difficult in most instances to discern the operation of his mind, if we allow ourselves a reasonable liberty of imagination as to the form of his sources. And let me say here, that the earlier we place the composition of the book, the easier it is to account for the possibly duplicate and discrepant narratives, as in the case of Hagar, and of Abraham, and Isaac at the courts of Pharaoh and Abimelech. The new critics would have us believe that such compilation took place at the height of the literary period in Israel, and was left intact by subsequent redactors; though what redactors who passed such work were good for, it is hard to see. But when we go up nearer the fountain of all possible writing with the Hebrews, we find an explanation which does no violence to reason. In the earliest times all writing had a kind of sacredness about it. With the Babylonians and the Egyptians its invention and patronage was referred to a god. When such ideas were prevalent, an author might naturally hesitate to sift his materials and reject a part. It might rather occur to him to put in everything which could possibly be true, expecting to reach the absolute truth by including all possible sources of it, content with the certainty of having preserved the best possible data, within which the real truth must lie somewhere. This may not agree with the modern philosophy of divine inspiration; but I do not know as we moderns can prove that God did not inspire men in this way to do the best they could. That tribal traditions must have varied in details and, at the same time, must have contained the real historic verity, in their totality, is quite certain.

Our theory then postulates the existence of archaic prose monotheistic traditions, probably written, that these ran in the generic name of God, and this sometimes in combination with a local name of God with monotheistic intent, or perhaps polytheistic, provided the polytheism had not infected the substance of the tradition, and, along with these racial or secular traditions, family memorials from patriarchal times. But even on the theory of elimination from polytheistic poems, which we have rejected, it is not difficult to account for the simple use of the generic name of God in the first section of Genesis i.-ii. 3. For, as I have said, a part of the poem employs such a designation, and a monotheist would not be slow in seizing upon this clue.

But monotheistic thought must have preserved itself in oral or written tradition from primeval times, and its word of Creation-story must have been simply that GOD did so and so. But side by side with this generic account, the author doubtless found others more or less symbolic, and the possible source of the other Chaldean versions. Or, if one please, allow that the symbolism of the second and third chapters of Genesis may have been derived from Chaldean poetry, then all he had to do was to substitute the new name, he wished to introduce, for any local or polytheistic term. Indeed, the change to a double designation in Genesis ii. may have been designed in part to mark the fact that he was passing from one to another source. In the third chapter he at first uses the double designation of the making of the serpent, because he had just used the same of the making of all the animals. Having thus brought his different documents into rhetorical unity, he then proceeds with the generic name which his source may be supposed to have presented as an exceedingly archaic document or tradition, until he comes to narrate the personal converse of the Lord with his human children, when he adds the covenant name under which he was to be known to the pious in Israel and finally in all nations. Traces of an account of the origin of evil have also been found, independently of the Creation-stories, in cuneiform literature. The portions of Genesis relating to Cain, Lamech, and Seth point to sources which must have had their own peculiar forms, and been wrought into the combined work according to the judgment of the writer. With respect to all these primeval traditions, our argument does not depend upon any theory of their first origin. Their existence is enough for our purpose, and dating them early or late does nothing toward determining the method of their first appearance. But I cannot pass them without remarking that any one who believes that the Son of God, Jesus, was sent into the world to make a revelation of God, will also be very much inclined to believe that God did not leave the first human "son of God" entirely without a revelation.

Farther on in Genesis the stories of Melchizedek and Joseph are good examples of the author's method. The former must have been a tradition from the time of Abraham, any critic to the contrary notwithstanding, and must have contained some other name than Jehovah. Accordingly we find the name *El Elyon* which preserves the archaic form that belongs to its time. Then, in the next chapter, when the writer returns to God's personal gracious dealings with the patriarch, he naturally resumes the covenant name which was to belong to the nation.

In the case of Joseph he gives his own narration in the name of Jehovah, but when he introduces Joseph speaking to Pharaoh, Pharaoh's wife, or to his brethren, he employs Elohim as representing in the Hebrew a generic Egyptian name of God. In passing, let me say here, that Joseph's saying "I was stolen out of the land of the Hebrews," which has been a standing citation with the new critics to prove a late date, gets light thrown upon it from these recent studies. Mr. Sayce, in the article referred to above, says of the Tel-el-Amarna tablets, "It will also be seen that we may read the name of the Hebrews in another" tablet,—this before the Exodus and possibly long

enough before to cover the time of Joseph. But even without this evidence, it is strange that it should not have occurred to the critics that the descendants of Abraham's retinue, fellow-emigrants, certainly a large community, since they furnished "three hundred" fighting men, must have, by Joseph's time, occupied a considerable territory and were as likely to be called Hebrews as Abraham himself.

The use of Jehovah in iv. 26 has not failed to attract the attention of all students of our theme, and has met various explanations. From our present point of view, it is important to note that it plainly belongs to the author's own narrative, and not to any of his sources. Hence he may be said to have used the name of God which he wished to make prominent simply from the absence of any cause determining to the contrary. And we claim that this is a sufficient reason in every case where no other appears.

In the sixth, seventh, and eighth chapters, there is a peculiar alternation of Elohim and Jehovah, which has led many critics to affirm that the account of the Flood must have been a late compilation from two narratives current in Hebrew tradition. But in the way we have been looking at our subject, we have no occasion for any such theory. The proofs which throw back the origin of the Creation-stories to a very primitive period in Babylonia necessarily carry the Flood poem which George Smith also translated to the same general period, so that it would have been at hand for a writer of the age of Moses or Abraham as truly as one of the seventh or eighth century B. C. But this is not all. Orientalists have pointed out that similar duplicating features appear in the Chaldean narrative. M. Vigouroux claims this in his "*La Bible et les Decouvertes Modernes*," chap. iv. Mr. Sayce reaffirms the same in the "*Hibbert Lectures*." Any one, therefore, can take his choice between regarding the double features as merely apparent, or placing them early enough to have belonged to a common prose original of both Genesis and the Chaldean versions. And until we know something more positive regarding this source we are at liberty to suppose that our author found in portions of it some name other than the generic name of God which he would of course replace with Jehovah, if he did not wish to confine himself to the generic name. Here was an opportunity, like others of which he availed himself, to put forward the national, the covenant name, in the education of the people, to its use. Thus they were continually reminded that Jehovah was no new god, but merely a chosen name of the One God who had made heaven and earth, who had made man very good, but destroyed him for his sin.

It is unnecessary to go more into detail in the application of the principles here adduced. Of course they take one far from the ground of the new critics who date Genesis in the period of the Kings, or later, and make it the collaboration of the Jehovist, the Elohist, etc.; but we claim for our results a harmony with the demands of known history, a simple and natural explanation of the literary phenomena, and a solid foundation upon the most recent archaeological discoveries in the East.

Hartford, Conn.

THOS. STOUGHTON POTWIN.

III.

A FEW MORE SUNDAY BOOKS.

WE have not undertaken a complete bibliography of Sabbath Literature, but are glad to supplement the list of books already given with brief references to a few others worthy of mention.

A book that deserves to be better known in America is "Four Essays on the Sabbath,"¹ which was published in Scotland a few years ago. The four essays are those which received the prizes of the Sabbath Alliance of Scotland, and contains studies of the themes, by the respective authors following: "Our Rest Day: Its Origin, History, and Claims," by the Rev. Thomas Hamilton, A. M., Belfast; "Heaven Once a Week," by the Rev. W. C. Wood, A. M., of Boston; "The Sabbath: Scripturally and Practically Considered," by the Rev. James Orr, D. D., of Hawick; and "Some Aspects of the Sabbath Question," by "A Member of the College of Justice, Edinburgh." The volume contains a preface by Andrew Thompson, D. D., and is valuable.

We have had inquiries concerning works treating of the Sunday closing of the World's Columbian Exposition. We do not know that any such work has appeared. No reports or addresses have been published by Congress up to the time of writing this notice, excepting in the *Congressional Record*. The pamphlet containing notes of the hearing on the Sunday Rest Bill² covers much of the same ground and may be had without charge. Rev. Alonzo T. Jones, who represented the Seventh Day Adventists before that committee, not being entirely satisfied with his speech as it appears in the above document, having been at times deflected from the course of his argument by some of the one hundred and sixty-nine interruptions of Senator Blair, has amplified his argument and published it in a pamphlet by itself.³ The same publishers that issue the above, issue also another pamphlet entitled "Church and State," by James T. Ringgold of the Baltimore bar. It is too controversial to be entirely fair in its claim that a union of Church and State exists in America. We believe, however, that Christians who observe the first day of the week cannot too emphatically condemn the laws by which, in Tennessee and Arkansas, conscientious men who observe the seventh day have been prosecuted for working quietly upon the first.⁴

The Congregational Sunday-School and Publishing Society issued, a few years ago, a book of "Sabbath Essays," being the addresses delivered before the Massachusetts Sabbath Conventions in 1879. The address which excited most controversy was the one delivered by Professor Egbert C. Smyth of

¹ Edinburgh: James Gemmill. 1886. (Pp. viii, 179, 135, 144, 79).

² Mis. Doc. No. 43, 50th Congress, 2d Session.

³ The National Sunday Law. By Alonzo T. Jones, Battle Creek, Mich. The National Religious Liberty Association. (Pp. 191. 3½x6.) 25 cents.

⁴ Uniform with the last; pp. 60, 10 cents.

Andover, which was a surprise to many.¹ This book is now out of print, but is worth buying when it can be found.

One book calls for more extended notice. Rev. J. Q. Bittinger of Haverhill, N. H., is the author of a small volume entitled "A Plea for the Sabbath and for Man; with Discussion of Social Problems."² Without aspiring to be a great book, it is a valuable contribution to Sabbath literature. One of the chapters in this volume was published some time since in the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, and made at the time of its appearance a favorable impression. Mr. Bittinger considers the Sabbath, as Christ did, as founded in the need of humanity for a day of rest. Its obligation and the method of its observance, therefore, are indicated in human nature and in social conditions. Mr. Bittinger anticipates the objection that too great emphasis is laid on the physical side of the question: we regard this as one of the chief merits of the book. The Sabbath was made for man: the wisdom of its establishment and the benefits accruing to mankind from obedience to the divine command appear to every careful student of the subject. It adds no authority to a divine command to forbid inquiry concerning the underlying reason: it honors God as much to say, "God commands it because it is right," as to say, "It is right because God commands it;" and both are true.

We have the impression that readers who want the entire Sunday question in small space, and treated in a manner at once candid, reverent, and scholarly, will find what they want in this volume. Those who wish to give attention to special phases of the subject will find in the list of books above, and those previously given, abundant opportunity to choose such as they like, and will be informed of others as they shall appear.

Boston, Mass.

W. E. BARTON.

¹ Edited by Rev. Will C. Wood, Boston, 1880.

² Boston and Chicago: Congregational Sunday-School and Publishing Society. (Pp. 236. 3x5 $\frac{1}{2}$.) \$1.25.