

CHAPTER XI.

THE JAHAVEH RELIGION.

The Jahaveh religion characteristic of Israel—The points to be examined in this chapter: I. Its origin; II. Its specific initial significance—I. Origin sought for in (1) Indo-Germanic; (2) Assyro-Babylonian; (3) Egyptian; (4) Kenite; and (5) Canaanite language or religion—Conclusion that it is distinctively Israelite—II. Significance—Etymological considerations—Critical derivation, "thunderer"—Biblical derivation—Historical considerations in its favour—Importance of determining the initial signification of the name—If it is of Israelite origin, and introduced under definite historical circumstances, it must have a specific signification—The other explanation is open to the following objections: (1) There is no evidence that Jahaveh was a tribal God; (2) No reason is given for the substitution of the name Jahaveh for El; (3) Stade's proofs are a confusion of early and late, and give no intelligible account of the initial significance of the pre-prophetic conception of Jahaveh—Conclusion that higher qualities were there from the first.

THE thing that distinguished Israel in early times from the surrounding nations, and in later times, was their contribution to the religious good of the world, was the possession of the Jahaveh religion. Even if we admit that, as is maintained, Jahaveh was only to them what the gods of the nations around them were to their worshippers, they had this, at least, as a distinctive mark; and it was from it as a germ that the purer religion of the prophets was

developed. Even if, in pre-prophetic times, the national religion was of a low type, at the bottom of it lay the belief that Jahaveh was Israel's God; nay, even if they thought it no sin to employ the names of heathen deities in forming proper names and so forth, they were all the time professors of the Jahaveh religion, and the most that can be said is, that they bestowed on Jahaveh Himself those names that other nations applied to their gods. I have advanced considerations to show that the positions referred to as to the low character of the pre-prophetic religion are not by any means established. But I insist upon this point now, that even if they were established, the great problem has still to be solved. Two points, mentioned in a former chapter,¹ still remain to be demonstrated: (1) We must be shown the origin of the Jahaveh religion, and it must be seen to have such distinctive marks as will make it characteristic of Israel, and bind them together at the most critical period of their history; and then (2) the process of development must be pointed out by which, in well-marked historical stadia, it rose to the religion which is described as ethic monotheism. Briefly put, we must have an explanation of the Jahaveh religion at both extremities of its development, at its start and at its final development; and it is incumbent on those who refuse to take the Biblical account of the matter to present us with another that will stand the test of historical criticism. They must show us (a) the source of the Jahaveh religion; (b) its specific initial significance; and (c) its historical development from the lower to the higher stage. A consideration of the first two of these three points will be the subject of this chapter.

I. In regard to the origin of the Jahaveh religion, as in

¹ Chapter vi. p. 166.

regard to other distinctive features of the history, investigations have been pursued in various directions with the view of discovering, if possible, some point of contact with and dependence upon other nations with which Israel was brought into connection; and different investigators have thought that they have discovered either the actual name Jahaveh, or the idea which it expresses, in the languages and religious conceptions of different peoples. Inquiries of this kind are perfectly legitimate, and often lead to most instructive results. The issue of them, however, must be carefully noted. When, for example, Wellhausen says that Nabiism passed over from the Phœnicians to Israel at a certain time, that is not a final explanation of Israelite prophetism. Even if the fact were as he asserts—and it depends very much on his assertion—there still remains to be explained how the “passing over” took place at such a time, and the more difficult fact that it passed over into so different a phenomenon; and for both these circumstances we have to fall back upon some predisposing cause, and some inherent capability in Israel. Similarly, should it be proved that the name Jahaveh, or the idea denoted by the name, is found among some other people, we are no nearer the solution of the problem. First of all, we are driven a step farther back in our search for its origin, and have to explain whence that other people got it; and secondly, we have to account for Israel’s adopting it; and lastly, we have to explain why it became, in their hands, quite a new thing.

The investigations that have been made in the directions indicated are interesting and exhaustive. The name, or the idea which it expresses, has been in turn sought for in (1) Indo-Germanic; (2) in Assyro-Babylonian; (3) Egyptian; (4) Kenite; and (5) Canaanite lan-

guage or religion. We must briefly consider the arguments advanced for these various views.

(1.) An Indo-Germanic source of the name has been sought by some scholars. Thus Von Bohlen,¹ referring to the varying forms, Jave, Jaho, and Jao (*Iaw*), under which the name appears in writings of the Jews, Samaritans, and Christian fathers, says that "in this shape it is clearly connected with the names of the Deity in many other languages"—Greek, Latin, and Sanscrit—and that the original form would have been Jah. This opinion has been pronounced by J. G. Müller² as "not lightly to be set aside." The idea is that the Indo-Germanic root *div* = shine, which lies at the basis of Jovis or Diovis, is to be recognised as also underlying the Hebrew tetragrammaton, which originally may have sounded Javo, Jevo, Jove, or Jeva. But the connection of the Indo-Germanic root with the Hebrew vocable cannot be made out so easily as is thus done. And there are two special difficulties in the way of such a theory,—(a) that if Jahaveh is originally an Indo-Germanic word corresponding to a root *div*, which is widely diffused in these languages, it does not appear to have passed over in this sense into the Semitic languages generally, but only to have been appropriated for a special name by a small and comparatively insignificant branch of them; and (b) more particularly, there is already in the Hebrew language, not to speak of other branches of Semitic, a common root, *hawa*, from which the name can be derived by an exact analogy with other proper names, like Isaac, Jacob, and so forth.

¹ Introduction to the Book of Genesis, Heywood's Translation (1855), vol. i. p. 151 f. Compare Vatke, *Bibl. Theol.*, p. 672.

² *Die Semiten in ihrem Verhältniss zu Chamiten u. Japhethiten* (1872), p. 163 f.

Hitzig¹ sought in another way to derive the name, or rather the idea, from an Aryan source. The Armenian name of God is Astuads (Astovads)—*i.e.*, *astvat*, "the becoming one"; and Hitzig supposed that Moses—to whom he ascribes the introduction of Jahaveh as a divine name—reflecting on the truth and depth of the thought contained in this designation of the Deity, adopted it in a translated form as the name of the God whose religion he taught. What gives a colour of support to this explanation is, that some of the earliest traditions of the Hebrews seem to come from or to be connected with Armenia and the north-east generally.² There remains the difficulty, however, of explaining how Moses, in the land of Egypt, should have had a knowledge of the Armenian language, and should have turned to that quarter for an idea to denote his God. If there is any truth in the theory at all, it would rather lead to a pre-Mosaic origin of the idea. And if the early Armenians expressed the idea they attached to God by a word denoting Being or Becoming, it is possible to conceive that the family of Abraham, travelling from Babylon by that way, may have reached the same notion; and that thus the *idea*, kept as a primitive tradition down to the time of Moses, found expression in the tetragrammaton which was its translation.

(2.) Turning now to another quarter, Friedrich Delitzsch³ has lately maintained that the name Jehovah is of Assyro-

¹ *Bibl. Theol. d. Alten Test.*, p. 37 f.

² Dillmann, in a paper, "Ueber die Herkunft der urgeschichtlichen Sagen der Hebräer" (*Sitzungsberichte der Akad. d. Wissenschaften zu Berlin*, 27 April 1882), contends that many of these traditions not only have their counterparts in Babylonian beliefs, but are the common property of other Eastern peoples.

³ *Wo lag das Paradies?* (1881), p. 158 ff.

Babylonian origin. The divine name Jau, he says, the Hebrews had in common with at least the Philistines, and probably with the Canaanites generally; and it was in fact to distinguish their own God from the Jau of the other peoples that the name was modified to the Hebrew form, in the sense of the "becoming one." But, he proceeds, this Canaanite name Jah (like most other Canaanite divine names) has its root in the Babylonian pantheon, answering to Ja-u (corresponding to Ilu), the supreme God of the oldest Babylonian system. The name, however, is the creation of the non-Semitic people of Babylon, though it came to the Canaanites through the Semitic Babylonians. The original Accadian form of the name was *i*, which the Semitic Babylonians transformed into Jau, in which form it reached the Canaanites; so that, instead of forms like Jah, Jahu, being abbreviations of the longer Jahaveh, the longer form was produced by successive modification from the primary monosyllabic *i*. As to this opinion, it is just as conceivable, to say the least, that the full name Jahaveh became contracted into Jahu, Jau, Jo, or Jah, as that the converse process took place. We have a parallel example to illustrate the contracting process,¹ but the lengthening process, especially as described by Delitzsch, seems highly artificial; and, in point of fact, another competent authority,² in examining the question whether the name Jahaveh can be traced to Accadian-Sumerian origin, denies that deities of the names Jau and *i* were ever recognised at all in those regions.

¹ As has been pointed out, there is a complete analogy in the form *yishtahaveh* (ישתַּחַוֶּה), regularly contracted into *yishtāhu* (ישתַּחַוֶּה).

² Friedrich Philippi in *Ztschr. für Volkerpsychologie u. Sprachwissenschaft* (1888), pp. 175-190.

In another way it has been attempted to prove that this name came from the same quarter. It is supposed that Canaanite immigrants who wandered out from the region of the Erythræan Sea¹ and came in contact with Semitic peoples, brought this name with them, and that it was adopted into Semitic. In support of this view it is pointed out that Toi, king of Hamath, in David's time sent his son, named Joram, to salute David (2 Sam. viii. 9), and that the name of this son contains the tetragrammaton in an abbreviated form, just as certain names of Hebrew personages do. There are other isolated cases found on the cuneiform inscriptions; but seeing that they occur at a period when the religion of Jahaveh was long the acknowledged religion of the Hebrews, it is perhaps safer to regard these as isolated instances of what was not uncommon—a non-Semitic people adopting the name of a Semitic god into the circle of their deities. This is the view taken by Baudissin,² and also by Schrader, whose cautious remarks, in favour of a concurrent derivation of the name Jahve by the Hebrews and Assyrians, are worth referring to.³

(3.) Let us turn now to Egypt and see whether any light can be derived from that quarter. And here we have, (*a*) first the attempts to trace the name itself, as by Röth,⁴ who identifies Jahaveh with, or makes it a modification of, the Egyptian Joh, the moon-god. He does not

¹ In proof of such wandering, see König's *Hist. Krit. Lehrgebäude der Heb. Sprache*, vol. i. (1881) p. 14 f. The proof, he maintains, is not invalidated by Budde, *Die Biblische Urgeschichte* (1883), p. 320 ff.

² *Der Ursprung des Gottes namens Iaw*, in his *Studien*, vol. i. p. 223.

³ *The Cuneiform Inscriptions and the Old Test.*, Eng. transl., vol. i. p. 23 ff.

⁴ *Geschichte unserer Abendländischen Philosophie*, Erster Band, 2te Auflage (1862), Note 175, p. 143.

explain, however, how it was that the name of a god especially associated with the moon should have been bestowed on a deity of whose connection with the moon we have no trace; and it is very probable that we have here nothing more than a fortuitous coincidence of two names which never had any connection in the minds of those who employed them. (b) On the other hand, not a few have thought that the *idea* expressed by the name is to be found in Egyptian sources, and may have been borrowed in Hebrew form by Israel in Egypt. (a) Plutarch mentions an inscription on the temple of Isis at Sais, in which a deity is described in terms resembling the "I am that I am" denoted by Jahaveh (Exod. iii. 14); but the ideas conveyed by the two do not, when examined, correspond in the way that it is alleged.¹ (β) Others, again, find in the name Jahaveh a Hebrew reproduction (I am that I am) of the Egyptian *nuk pu nuk*.² But on this subject we should hear what is said by so competent an authority as Le Page Renouf:³

"It is quite true that in several places of the Book of the Dead the three words *nuk pu nuk* are to be found; it is true that *nuk* is the pronoun I, and that the demonstrative *pu* often serves to connect the subject and predicate of a sentence. But the context of the words requires to be examined before we can be sure that we have just an entire sentence before us, especially as *pu* generally comes at the end of a sentence. Now if we look at the passages of the Book of the Dead where these words occur, we shall see at once that they do not contain any mysterious doctrine about the divine nature. In one of these passages the deceased says, 'It is I who know the ways of Nu.' In

¹ König, Hauptprobleme, p. 81, to whom I am indebted for much of the material and many suggestions in this chapter.

² So Walmund, Babylonierthum, Israelitenthum, Christenthum, p. 219.

³ Hibbert Lecture for 1870, p. 244 f.

another place he says, 'I am the ancient one in the country [or fields]; it is I who am Osiris, who shut up his father Seb and his mother Nut on that day of the great slaughter.'"

These attempts to derive the name or the idea from Egypt are therefore very precarious.

(4.) Once more, the idea has been put forth that the national God of Israel was first of all the tribal God of the Kenites, with whom Israel came in contact in the wilderness, and to whose family Moses is represented as being related by marriage (Exod. ii. 16; Judges i. 16, iv. 11). This supposition, advanced by Ghillany,¹ has been taken up and advocated by Tiele,² and also by Stade.³ The only shadow of proof I can find for this view as put forth by Stade is, that Moses must have borrowed the name of his deity from some one; and as Jethro was a priest and Moses was in close association with him, the name was simply carried over, and thus marks the continuation of an older faith. Of actual proof that this was so, we have none; and even if we had, we should simply have to go in search of an older source. No proof is given that Jahaveh was the tribal God of the Kenites, nor is any explanation given why the Hebrews, if they had no tribal god before, should have adopted this deity, or, if they had, why they made the exchange at this particular time. It may be urged, moreover, against this supposition, that the

¹ Theologische Briefe an die Gebildeten der deutschen Nation von Richard von der Alm (1862), vol. i. pp. 216, 480. Though Ghillany writes under this pseudonym, the tone of this work, like that which finds expression in his 'Menschenopfer der Hebräer,' is unmistakable. The deity of the Kenites, he says, was the sun—worshipped, however, not as a living bull as in Egypt, but in the form of a metallic image.

² Vergelijkende Geschied. van de Egypt. en Mesopot. Godsdiensten, p. 559; Kompendium, § 52.

³ Geschichte des Volkes Israel, vol. i. p. 130 f.

Kenites, though both in the wilderness and in Canaan seen in close friendship with Israel, are always a small body, and occupy somewhat the position of pious sojourners or proselytes; and it seems contrary to the usual way in which even the critical writers explain events, that the larger people should have adopted the god of the smaller tribe.

(5.) Most of the views that have already been mentioned have this in common, that they place the adoption of the Jahaveh religion by the Hebrews at some period anterior to their entrance into Canaan. We have now, however, to look at another explanation, which regards the name of Jahaveh as one gradually adopted with other parts of religious belief and practice from the Canaanites in Palestine.¹ As, however, this view has been successfully attacked by writers of the same general school of criticism, it may be sufficient to refer to what these latter have advanced in the way of refutation. The objections urged by Kuenen against Land² deserve special emphasis. He argues as follows: (*a*) It cannot be denied — Land himself admits it — that, in the struggles that took place between the Canaanites and the Israelites, there was involved a contest between the gods of the two peoples; and since at the close of the contest the Israelites and their God were victorious, it cannot be supposed that the deity who thus asserted his superiority was originally of Canaanite origin. Further, (*b*) not only have we, he

¹ This view was independently put forward by Colenso (*Pentateuch*, Part II. chap. viii.), who afterwards discovered (*Part VII. chap. xix.*) that he had been anticipated by Hartmann, Von Bohlen, and Von der Alm. It has also been advocated by Dozy (*De Israeliten te Mecca*, Germ. transl., 1864, p. 39), Land (*Theol. Tijdschr.*, 1868, pp. 156-170), and Goldziher (*Mythology among the Hebrews*, Eng. tr., pp. 272, 290).

² *Relig. of Israel*, vol. i. pp. 398-403.

contends, in the names Jochebed (Moses' mother), Joshua (Moses' contemporary), and Jonathan (Moses' grandson)—in all which the name Jo or Jeho enters as an element—an indication that the name was known to the Israelites independently of and prior to their contact with Canaanites; but also the song of Deborah, in which Jahaveh is represented as coming from Seir, furnishes a plain proof that the God of the Israelites was conceived as having His original home outside of Palestine. Lastly, (c) he argues rightly that the view under consideration deviates from the whole tenor of Israelite tradition, which gives no support to the supposition that Jahaveh was a God of Canaanite origin. "I will not," he says, "assert that the latter [*i.e.*, the Canaanite origin of the name] must be rejected on this account alone, but I do assert that it is only on strong grounds that it can be accepted. In other words, it must be clearly and irrefragably proved that Jahaveh was really a god of the Canaanites. The evidence with which this is attested must be of such a nature as to leave no room for reasonable suspicion of Israelite or Old Testament influence. But such proof as this is not furnished."¹ The principle which Kuenen here lays down is of wide application,—*viz.*, that the clear testimony of the religious consciousness of Israel—in other words, a persistent tradition—is only to be set aside on the most undoubted positive proof. Kuenen himself is far from observing his own canon, and Wellhausen openly contradicts it;² although by rejecting it we cut ourselves away from any firm ground of historical criticism.

¹ In spite of Land's rejoinder in *Theol. Tijdschr.*, iii. Bd., 1869, pp. 347-362, Kuenen's position may be held as proved. So Bandissin has on this point taken Kuenen's side, *Studien*, vol. i. pp. 213-218.

² *Hist. of Israel*, pp. 318, 319.

Among the writers who seek to derive the name of Jahaveh from a Canaanite source reference may be made to Von Bohlen,¹ who would place the introduction of the name as late as the time of David and Solomon. Some of his arguments are of little force, and he has found few supporters of his view; but there is one argument he employs which, though not valid for his purpose, directs our attention to a fact which is worth noting. He remarks that proper names compounded with the more primitive name of God, El, such as Israel, Samuel, disappear from history more and more from David's time, and that names compounded with Jeho first appear in David's reign or about his time. Now it is a fact that this element does not appear widely in proper names before the time of Samuel. We have the names of Joash, father of Gideon (Judges vi. 11), Jotham, Gideon's son (Judges ix. 5, 7), and Jonathan, grandson of Moses (Judges xviii. 30). Besides these, we have two names before the time of Samuel—viz., Joshua, the companion of Moses, whose name is said to have been changed from Hoshea (Num. xiii. 16), and Jochebed, the mother of Moses (Exod. vi. 20). In view of these it becomes no longer a question as to the introduction of the name Jeho or Jahaveh in the time of David, but how we are to explain its existence in the name of Joshua, Moses' contemporary, or, allowing that to be an altered name, in the name of the mother of Moses. It is known that whereas the Jahavist writer in Genesis freely uses the name Jahaveh in reference to times antecedent to that of Moses, the Elohist writer retains faithfully the distinction of the periods; but the name of the mother of Moses would lead us to conclude that even before the time when the God of Israel pro-

¹ Introduction to Genesis, Heywood's transl., vol. i. p. 168 f.

claimed His sacred name to Moses at the bush, the name itself had been known beforehand in a narrower circle, or at least in the family of Moses himself. And this view is adopted by many of the best interpreters.¹ On this subject Kuenen says, "Moses can scarcely be supposed to have *invented* the name 'Jahaveh'; in all probability it was already in use, among however limited a circle, before he employed it to indicate El Shaddai, the God of the sons of Israel;"² and to the same effect Wellhausen³ says that Jahaveh was before Moses a designation for El, and that he was originally a god in the family of Moses or in the tribe of Joseph.

On a review of this whole inquiry, therefore, we need not wonder that Kuenen⁴ comes to the conclusion that the name is of Israelitish origin. It may be observed in passing that it is somewhat remarkable that the attempt should always be made to derive the religious conceptions of the Hebrews from non-Hebrew sources, without supposing that an influence in the opposite direction may have been exerted, from the Hebrews to their non-Hebrew neighbours. It is no doubt the case that the tradition places the native place of Abraham in Chaldæa, and it is natural to suppose that the progenitors of the Israelites were affected by the thoughts of the time and country from which they came, just as the nation was sensibly affected by contact with Egyptians and Canaanites. It must be remembered, however, that the tradition ascribes Abraham's departure from his native land to religious impulse, and Renan has dwelt

¹ A list of writers who take this view is given by König, *Hauptprobleme*, p. 27.

² *Relig. of Israel*, vol. i. p. 279 f.

³ *Hist. of Israel*, p. 433.

⁴ *Relig. of Israel*, vol. i. p. 398.

upon the circumstance that religious conceptions remain more pure and elevated among simple nomads than among civilised dwellers in cities.¹ The exhaustive inquiry, however, that has been made by scholars, has its justification in the conclusion to which it comes, that there is no outside source from which it can be shown that the religion of Jahaveh was derived. The use of the name is, at least, as old as the time of Moses; and whether to any extent (which in any case must have been limited) it was known before his time, he has the distinction of having impressed it upon the consciousness of the people of his time in a special way as the designation of their national God, under the aspect in which He was distinctively made known to them, and by them to be exclusively revered. The unanimous voice of Israelite tradition is that the declaration, "I am Jahaveh thy God," was made through Moses. There is not the least hint in the recollections of the people that the name was proclaimed by any other person. Between Moses and Samuel there was no time at which we can conceive it to have been introduced; and the time of Samuel itself is but a time of revival and reformation, after which it was not unnatural that the name of the covenant God, to whom the people's heart had again turned, should appear, as has been pointed out, more extensively in the formation of proper names.

In opposition to all attempts at deriving the name or conception from a foreign source, and as showing how it was regarded throughout by the people of Israel as a distinctive possession of the nation, there stands the hard fact that in Scripture Jahaveh is ever the God of Israel alone. According to the views of the Hebrew writers,

¹ Hist. d'Israel, vol. i. chap. iii.

the non-Israelite has no part or right to Jahaveh, but knows only the general name of Elohim, God, or that of his own native deity.¹ In the mouth of such a one the name Jahaveh would denote a strange god—*i.e.*, the god of the people of Israel (cf. 1 Kings xx. 23 with v. 28). So when a Hebrew speaks to a non-Israelite, he is represented as using the name Elohim, and so also when a non-Israelite addresses a Hebrew. And in such cases it is noticeable that the name Elohim is sometimes construed with a plural verb (cf. 1 Sam. iv. 8), the narrator thereby assuming for the time the standpoint of the non-Hebrew speaker or hearer.

This hard fact is not to be set aside by any vague etymological arguments. Even if it were shown to be certain, or even probable, that the name or the conception of Jahaveh was got from some non-Israelite quarter at some time or another in history, it would remain beyond dispute that, on the one hand, the name thus borrowed disappeared from the language and thoughts of the people from which it was derived; and on the other, that it came very soon to be regarded as the exclusive and distinguishing possession of the people who borrowed it—a supposition which, considering the attributes with which Jahaveh was endowed, and the readiness of polytheistic nations to retain the names of any number of gods, especially such as had vindicated themselves as powerful, is not to be entertained.

II. We come now to inquire whether we can determine what precisely was the idea attached to this name among its earliest possessors, so as to discover, if possible, where-

¹ This is well brought out by Tuch in his *Comm. to Genesis*, second edition, p. xxxii. He refers to these and other passages: Judges i. 7, vii. 14; 1 Sam. iv. 7, 8; Jonah iii. 3, where with verses 5, 8, 9, 10, compare 1 Sam. xxx. 15, xxii. 3.

in the inner potency of the Jahaveh religion consisted. The introduction of a new name we would expect to be accompanied with a new reference, a new attitude, a new mode of regarding the deity; and we naturally ask whether the name itself does not furnish its own explanation.

Those who seek to prove that the religion of Israel was originally a nature religion, in which the powers of nature were deified, explain the name Jahaveh in keeping with this view. Thus Daumer¹ connects the verb from which it is derived with the idea of destroying, and makes Jahaveh "the Destroyer," an idea which suits his notion that Jahaveh and Moloch were originally names for the same deity. The more common view of those who similarly seek the source of the name and idea in nature religion, is that the verb from which the name is derived means to "come down," "fall down," and then in its transitive form "to send down" or "cast down"; according to which Jahaveh would be a *Jupiter tonans*, the Being who casts the thunderbolt, or the lightning, to the earth. In support of this view, we are pointed to the fact that the verb in Arabic (*hawa*), which, letter for letter, corresponds to the Hebrew verb, has the sense of gliding freely, and particularly of gliding or falling down. This sense, it is said, actually attaches to the Hebrew verb itself in one place at least (Job xxxvii. 6), "He saith to the snow, Fall thou on the earth."

The Biblical derivation of the word, as is well known, is from the verb in the sense "to be" or "become." It may be that from such a primary and material sense as that of "falling," the verb in Hebrew came to have the more abstract and secondary meaning of becoming—viz., to

¹ Feuer und Molochdienst, p. 11.

"fall out," "happen," "come to pass," as in Gen. vii. 6, "the flood was upon the earth."¹ This is certain, that the sense "to fall" can at most be only detected as adhering to the Hebrew verb, which has, however, appropriated to itself the one signification of becoming. In other words, from the earliest time at which we know the language, this verb was the usual one employed to express the idea of "being," not, however, in the abstract sense of "existence," but in the sense of "becoming"; there was no other verb in the language with that signification; the meaning of "falling," if it originally belonged to it, had almost disappeared; and another verb altogether was employed to express that idea.

We can quite easily comprehend how a verb "to fall," and then "to send down," could, among a polytheistic people, or even a monotheistic people at a primitive stage of culture, furnish the starting-point for a name of the deity. He would then be the Being who "sends down" rain, or thunder, or whatever it might be. The name would stand on the same level, or, I should say, a lower one, than such names as *El*, or *Shaddai*, the "strong one," or *Baal*, *Adon*, "lord," or *Molech*, "ruler"; for any one of these gives a fuller significance to the Being so named. Against this origin of the name among the Hebrews, however, we have, besides the fact that there is no proof whatever of the Hebrews adopting a god of that name from Arabic tribes as Stade will have it, or of their attaching such an idea to the name of their national

¹ For the idea of being and becoming, the Hebrew uses almost exclusively *hayah* הָיָה, *hawah* הָוָה being found in that sense only in poetic archaic passages; as in Gen. xxvii. 29, where Jacob is blessed by Isaac, "Be lord over thy brethren," also Isa. xvi. 4, the oracle on Moab. Later writers are influenced by Aramaic.

god, the stronger fact just alluded to, that the verb had appropriated to itself the sense of *be, become*, which would be transitively to *cause*. That is to say, assuming that such a name was formed or introduced at some historic time, at some time when the language contained the roots or stems it now possesses, the mere utterance of the name would call up in the mind of the hearer the idea of being, becoming, causing. And this is very much the same as saying that the person who introduced it wished to convey by it that meaning, since he could not but have seen that it would suggest such an idea. To attach to the name the other and more physical signification, would necessitate some proof that the name is of much older origin than the time of Moses, older than the language in the form in which we have it; and that—if the primary meaning of descender or sender down attached to it—there must have been a constant effort in the mind to retain this antiquarian idea, and to exclude another which was soon suggested and *which was more exalted*. For it is a point of the greatest significance here, that the other names of God found among the Hebrews and their neighbours are connected with stems which are in the language and have a precise and intelligible meaning. On this line of reasoning, then, I should conclude, that from the time that the verb to be, to become, was a regular constituent element of the language, the name Jahaveh must of necessity, if it was later than the verb, have partaken of that signification. Either the name Jahaveh was directly formed from an existent verb “to be”; or it was formed from a verb having the meaning to descend which meaning, however, was, if not obliterated, yet certainly overshadowed, at the earliest known stage of the language, by another sense.

Of course this argument proceeds on the assumption that those who used the name, or at least the thoughtful part of the nation when they used it, attached to it *some* significatiou, which is surely very likely, and in analogy with such names as Moloch and Baal, which could not but keep in the mind the ideas of kingship or lordship. It would surely be an extraordinary supposition that the Hebrews had got hold of a non-Hebrew name for their deity which they used for a time without attaching to it any sense at all, and then read into it a meaning suggested by its resemblance to a common verb in the language. It is not certainly to be concluded that the bare etymological meaning and no more would always adhere to a word; but if this name Jahaveh starts from the idea of being, or must have suggested that idea at its first use, the expansion of the conception in the minds of thinking persons would be in the line of the primary meaning.

Now, as we have already seen, the name was introduced at what the tradition makes a pretty advanced stage in the development of the religion. By the time of Moses the whole patriarchal phase of it had run its course; and, according to the Biblical account, the earlier conception of the deity had been expressed by the terms *EI* and *Shaddai*, embodying the simpler ideas of strength, power. Stade himself tells us that in the pre-Mosaic religion, the name *EI* was used to denote the native spirit or spirits, and the name *Elohim* is certainly old. And just as the abstract idea of being, or transitively the idea of causing, is one that comes comparatively late in consciousness, or at least does not come at the primitive stage, so the introduction of the name of Jahaveh, "He who will be," or "who will cause to be," marks a point of advance in the conception of the national God. It is therefore fitly placed in the time

of Moses; for it cannot be denied that, as the whole consciousness of Israel looked back to the period of the exodus as a new era in their national life, so the belief that Jahaveh was their God from Egypt onwards, as it is expressed by Hosea, was deeply rooted in the nation's mind and heart.

It seems to me that the frank recognition of this fact, so firmly embedded in the national life and literature, would go far to explain the striking phenomena which criticism has brought into clear light; and, on the other hand, that the refusal to accept it frankly has led modern writers to the precarious shifts and extravagant positions which mark the course of their disquisitions. They look for development, but they will not look for it at the right place. Instead of accepting the fact, that in the patriarchal period there was already a knowledge of God, at least on a level with, and presumably higher than, that of the polytheistic nations around Israel, they insist on finding the transition from the barest animal religion going on in a period after that stage had, for the enlightened part of the nation, passed away. Instead of accepting the fact that the name Jahaveh denotes a high stage achieved, they insist on starting with that name as embodying the most primary conceptions; and in tracing the development of the conception in the hands of the prophets, they neglect the clue given to the development in the possession of the name itself. I take my stand upon the assumption that this name must have had some meaning, some suggestion, to the thinking portion of the people, and must have, to an appreciable extent, controlled the conceptions of God which were raised in the mind by the mention of the name. There were other names—El, Elohim, Shaddai, Elyon, Baal, Molech—all of which may have

been used to denote deity; but each and all of them have a specific meaning attached to them, and Jahaveh must have also had its meaning, a specific meaning; and being a special proper name, must have been intended to denote all the others put together, nay, more than all the others combined, else there would have been no reason for the introduction of a new name. The question is, What *was* that meaning? If the name meant merely "the one that sends down rain" or "thunderer," I submit that that does not go beyond El or Shaddai, and would not therefore entitle Jahaveh to be selected as the highest name that the best could bestow on God. There is the verb "to become" lying patent as a verb with which to connect a name which comes to supplement or to comprehend all the other names. And the name is put at the very period when the nation's consciousness of a destiny before it is represented as appearing. All this cannot be fortuitous, nor is it likely to have occurred as a happy thought to the early writers who have left us these traditions. The conclusion seems well justified, that, with the use of the name Jahaveh, the idea seized the mind of Moses and his successors that the God they worshipped was one of ever-developing potency, an ever self-manifesting, ever actively-defending God, whose character was not so much denoted by a quality as by a constant activity, or rather (judged by the analogy of similar personal names) by a person ever active; that in fact, as a nation does not die, so their national God would ever be with them. The name comes in at a definite historical crisis in the nation's life, and was meant to indicate that the deity so named was concerned, not merely with natural phenomena, but with national and historical events.

Let us try to think of Moses proclaiming to his people

a new name that they had never heard before, or heard only as the name of the sender of the lightning, and his saying to Israel—and with effect—"this Thunderer is to be your only God for all time coming." The question would naturally arise, "Who is Jahaveh that we should serve Him? We know what is meant by a 'Strong One,' a 'Lord,' a 'Master,' a 'Most High One' (for kindred nations had called their gods by such names as far back as we have knowledge, and why should the Hebrews be placed beneath them in intelligence?). But who is the sender of rain or of thunder any more to us than the deity we already worship? What is He to us, or what are we to Him in particular, that we should be thus wedded together?" The only answer that he could conceivably have given to such most obvious questions is, that Jahaveh had done something for them to claim their regard. People do not set up gods for nothing. What then had Jahaveh done for them? Wellhausen comes to our aid (though Stade refuses to go so far), and tells us that the people had experienced His power in the deliverance from Egypt.¹ This is a reasonable account to give; but it only raises another question, "Who was this that interfered on behalf of a nation of slaves in Egypt, and why did He interfere?" And the only answer that all these questions admit of is just the Biblical answer, "The God of our fathers hath appeared to me:" in other words, there is a linking on of the deliverance of the present to the recollections of the past; the God of Abraham is not dead, but alive and acting on behalf of Abraham's seed; and

¹ Wellhausen, *Hist. of Israel*, pp. 429-438; cf. here Kuenen, *Relig. of Israel*, vol. i. p. 276 ff. Stade will not even admit that the Israelites, in any appreciable sense, ever sojourned in Egypt. "If any Hebrew clan dwelt in Egypt," he says, "no one knows its name."—*Geschichte*, vol. i. p. 129.

in commemoration of the new deliverance, and to mark a new era, He receives or adopts a new name, distinctive from mere appellations of deity generally, and the God of pre-Mosaic times is the same God in fuller manifestation still. Moses, says Prof. A. B. Davidson, "stamped an impress upon the people of Israel which was never effaced, and planted seeds in the mind of the nation which the crop of thorns that sprang up after his death could not altogether choke. Of course, even he did not create a nation or a religious consciousness in the sense of making it out of nothing. When he appealed to the people in Egypt in the name of Jehovah their God, he did not conjure with an abstraction or a novelty. The people had some knowledge of Jehovah, some faith in Him, or His name would not have awakened them to religious or national life. In matters like this we never can get at the beginning. The patriarchal age, with its knowledge of God, is not altogether a shadow, otherwise the history of the exodus would be a riddle. Moses found materials, but he passed a new fire through them, and welded them into a unity; he breathed a spirit into the people, which animated it for all time to come; and this spirit can have been no other than the spirit that animated himself."¹

The importance of dwelling on this question of the meaning attached to the name of Israel's national God in its initial conception and at its first use will be self-evident. It brings to a point the sharp contrast between the Biblical account of the matter and the views presented by writers of the modern critical school. We may say, in a general way, that the various aspects of the pre-prophetic religion, as we have seen them put forward in the preceding chapters, have this in common, that they rep-

¹ Expositor, third series, vol. v. p. 42.

resent the Jahaveh of pre-prophetic times as a being rather of might than of moral greatness, a nature-God rather than a God of nature, the only national God of Israel indeed, yet, except in this particular, very little if anything different from the gods of the surrounding nations even in the estimation of His own worshippers. Such representations of Jahaveh are the natural development of the initial conception with which these writers start. Wellhausen says¹ that "no essential distinction was felt to exist between Jehovah and El, any more than between Asshur and El;" and Stade tells us that El denotes a superhuman being, though not sharply separated from nature in which he operates. Each place had its El, and the collective Elim or Elohim was the sum of these, or the expression in a plural of majesty, of the power of these superhuman beings.² According to the view of these writers, then, the name Jahaveh, given originally to a family or tribal god, either of the family of Moses or tribe of Joseph, as Wellhausen³ supposes, or of the tribe of the Kenites as Stade thinks, implied no more than El; only, having become current within a powerful circle, it "was on that account all the more fitted to become the designation of a national God."

But if there is any force at all in the considerations that have been put forward, that this name Jahaveh is not of foreign but of Israelitish origin, that as a separate and new name it must have indicated something more than other names already existing, and that in its derivation or immediate suggestion it had the sense of "becoming," then we must demand for the initial stage of the Jahaveh religion a much higher level than the critical school allows.

¹ Hist. of Israel, p. 433.

² Stade, Geschichte, vol. i. p. 423.

³ Hist. of Israel, p. 433.

In addition to this general remark, there are the following points again to be insisted on:—

(1.) There is absolutely no proof that Jahaveh was originally the name of a family or tribal god in the sense understood by these writers. Even if the name of the mother of Moses be taken as an indication that the name was known in the circle of his family, there is no proof that it denoted no more than El or a superhuman nature-spirit.

(2.) And then no reason is assigned for the name Jahaveh superseding El or the Elim, if, according to the hypothesis, it signified no more than these names. Dillmann remarks¹ that wherever an actual change in the religion of a people takes place, there is ever a historical consciousness of the fact preserved among them. The assertion that this name was a special name of El, which had become current in a powerful circle, and on that account was all the more fitted to become the designation of a national god, is, in the first place, destitute of historical proof, and, in the second place, most improbable. If the introduction of the name was connected with some striking event, such as the exodus, we should expect the name to mark an advance—as the Biblical writers represent—on the conception; but according to the modern view, Jahaveh still remains a nature-God: although a national God, His attributes are almost entirely physical.

(3.) In the next place, though the proofs from Scripture which Stade, for example, advances in support of his picture of the character of the pre-prophetic Jahaveh, are selected and manipulated in the extraordinary fashion to which reference has already been made,² yet it is exceed-

¹ Ursprung der Alttestl. Religion, p. 6, quoted by Baudissin, *Jahve et Moloch*, p. 77.

² In chap. viii. p. 205.

ingly difficult to form a conception of the character he seeks to delineate. He roams at will over Genesis, the historical books, and even the prophets, finding in later productions proofs of a low tone, and in the earlier books proofs of a high tone of religious thought, till it is absolutely impossible to make out what the initial conception of Jahaveh, in his theory, could have been. An example may be taken from his treatment of the story of Elijah. At one time, in the midst of his argument to prove that Jahaveh's power was confined to His own land, he tells¹ us that Elijah, who fights valiantly in the land of Israel against the worship of Baal, yet goes and lives with a widow at Sarepta, who must have been a Baal-worshipper, and eats her food, which would be consecrated by offering to Baal—touches for which there is absolutely no warrant, and which make the character of the "prophet of fire," as drawn by the narrator, simply incomprehensible. Presently he tells us that in this same story of Elijah the belief finds expression that Jahaveh accompanies His worshippers in their wanderings, for He performs miracles at Sarepta at the prophet's request, and sends him back to his own land.² This same belief, he says, is expressed in the promise to be with Jacob (Gen. xxviii. 15, J.), in His being with Joseph in Egypt (Gen. xxxix. 2, J.), and in His going down to Egypt with Jacob (Gen. xlvi. 3 f., J. and E.) And in order to prove the same thing he refers to a passage as late as Isaiah xix., where the prophet speaks of Jahaveh riding on a swift cloud and coming to Egypt, and the idols being moved at his presence. Similarly he proceeds in speaking of Jahaveh's power. The conceptions of all-mightiness and omniscience, we are

¹ Stade, *Geschichte*, vol. i. p. 430.

² *Ibid.*, p. 431.

told, are not yet reached. That He was not regarded as knowing *all* things is seen from the patriarchal stories, which speak, for example, of God going down to Sodom to see whether its condition was such as the cry represented it.¹ Still the same God knows Sarah's thoughts, and the belief in the oracle shows that He was regarded as having a knowledge of secrets such as children ascribe to God. His power came in the same way to be represented by the religious sentiment as adequate to anything, as appears in the saying, "Is anything too hard for Jahaveh?" (Gen. xviii. 14); and in that other saying, "There is no restraint to Jahaveh to save by many or by few" (1 Sam. xiv. 6). So He performs wonders, shakes the earth, overthrows cities, punishes His land with famine and plague, and slays men without any apparent disease. One other example may be given of Stade's reasoning. The preponderance of the idea of might in the conception of God, he says, combined with the fact that in a primitive age the difference between evil and misfortune was not apprehended, hindered men from regarding Jahaveh as a Being who always acted for moral ends. Traces of a higher conception are not indeed wanting in the pre-prophetic age. Jahaveh, as the defender of His people and of the land, is the guardian of moral customs, the avenger of broken covenants, and so far as concerns the relations of one Israelite to another, His will is the expression of moral and just rule.² Thus He avenges a broken oath, and fulfils the prayer of the unjustly oppressed. Especially is He the avenger of innocent blood, which cries to Him from the ground (Gen. iv. 10, xlii. 22, E.) So, as He is the God of the land, He maintains law and order in it, punishing—*e.g.*, Sodom and Gomorrah

¹ Stade, *Geschichte*, vol. i. p. 432.

² *Ibid.*, p. 434.

—for breaking it. By such advances as these the idea of holiness was enlarged and purified in later times. But in earlier times these ideas did not extend to the general course of events, and to the relation of Israelites to non-Israelites and the surrounding world. In such matters moral conceptions are so little apparent, that God is the author even of evil. Men had not reached the belief in a world in which imperfection was necessarily involved, and of evil left for a time even for the sake of the good. Accordingly, when we would say God permits this or that, the ancient Israelite said straight out that Jahaveh did it.¹ Evil and misfortune are expressed by one word, *ra'*; and Amos says (iii. 6), "Is there evil in the city, and Jahaveh has not done it?" And not only outward calamities, but the evil passions and inner impulses of men, are ascribed to Jahaveh; and, as among heathen nations, He is believed to make people mad, or leads them on to do things which will bring down His own wrath. Thus the sechism of the kingdoms, the greatest misfortune to Israel, was from Jahaveh (1 Kings xii. 15). So He sends a lying spirit among the prophets of Ahab, that the king may be led to go confidently against Ramoth-Gilead, and only the prophet Micah remains unmoved (1 Kings xxii. 20 ff.) So He sends an evil spirit between Abimelech and the Shechemites. And that this is not merely or in all cases a punishment for former transgression, is proved by the remarkable passage (1 Sam. xxvi. 19) in which David says to Saul, "If Jahaveh hath stirred thee up against me, let him accept an offering; but if it be men, let them be accursed of Jahaveh."

This kind of reasoning may be carried out indefinitely, but though it may make a big book, it does not amount

¹ Stade, *Geschichte*, vol. i. p. 436.

to a strong argument. Stade does not or will not see that by thus heaping together texts referring to different periods within or beyond the prophetic period indiscriminately, he is destroying the position he holds that the prophetic religion is an advance on the pre-prophetic. And when he finds in such a writer as Amos, or even Isaiah, instances of the lower type of conception, what becomes of the position that higher types found in Genesis, *e.g.*, are "signs of advance" or "breaking down" of narrow views? What we want to know is the alleged initial stage at which the national God was no more than *El*, a nature-God; and instead of this we get this mixing up of early and late which is quite unintelligible. The truth is, the difficulty he finds in reconciling the contradictory or conflicting statements of contemporaneous authorities arises simply from the fact that the "higher" or moral conception is present from the first. In opposition to all this kind of reasoning I would take my stand upon the reasonable principle, that in writings belonging practically to the same period the lower expressions are to be controlled by the higher, and that one statement in plain terms should outweigh any amount of metaphorical or figurative language. The Hebrew writers employ the boldest anthropomorphisms, for example; but as Stade himself says, this was a necessity for people unaccustomed to philosophical speculation: it is more, it is a necessity of religious language. Nor are they afraid to employ the most simple and childlike expressions; but there is ever the absence of gross conceptions, and ever and anon the utterance of the most exalted ideas, showing what the essential character of Jahaveh, in their opinion, was. Side by side with the boldest anthropomorphisms are found the most spiritual expressions, and the same

writers who speak of Jahaveh as having a local seat ascribe to Him control over all the nations of the world. In view of all this it is sheer trifling to explain the one set of expressions as remnants of a belief in a nature-God, and the other as signs of a breaking down of narrow views. The Hebrew writers, from the earliest times at which we have access to their words, are on a higher plane of thought than the modern critics will allow; and just because they are so firmly fixed there, they do not hesitate to employ the boldest pictorial or metaphorical language to express their thoughts.