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JOURNAL OF  
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EDITED BY THE HONORARY SECRETARY,  
CAPT. F. W. H. PETRIE, F.R.S.L., &c.

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## ORDINARY MEETING, MARCH 4, 1878.

J. E. HOWARD, ESQ., F.R.S., IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the last Meeting were read and confirmed; and the following Elections were announced :—

MEMBER :—The Most Rev. the Lord Plunket, D.D., Bishop of Meath.

ASSOCIATES :—The Very Rev. E. B. Moeran, D.D., Dean of Down; the Venerable Archdeacon G. A. Denison, M.A., Highbridge; the Venerable Archdeacon J. Garbett, M.A., Brighton; the Venerable Archdeacon H. Fearon, B.D., Loughborough; the Rev. W. Eliot, M.A., Vicarage, Aston, Birmingham.

Also the presentation of the following Works for the Library :—

- “Proceedings of the Geological Society.” Part 153. *From the Society.*  
 “The Epoch of the Mammoth.” By Mr. J. C. Southall. *From the Author.*  
 “A Mathematical Paper.” By Mr. S. M. Drach. *Ditto.*

The following Paper was then read by the Author :—

*MONOTHEISM, A TRUTH OF REVELATION, NOT A MYTH.* By the Rev. W. H. RULE, D.D.

**D**ID the writers of Holy Scripture receive their knowledge of the One True God by divine revelation; or did they derive it, in any degree, from the mythologies of Egypt and the East?

By reference to the oldest known texts of these mythologies, we are not convinced that they contain even the faintest vestige of pure monotheism.

The first words of the Book of Genesis record that, in the beginning, God created the Heaven and the Earth; and there can be no doubt that our first parents received a knowledge of this creation from their Creator; but as to succeeding generations, an Apostle writes, that “when they knew God,” as the first human family could not but know Him, “they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.” “*They changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever*” (Rom. i. 21—23, 25).

Now the statement that, on this lapse into idolatry, man-

kind worshipped and served the creature *more than the Creator*, would not so much appear to indicate utter apostasy from the worship of God, as a confusion of that worship with idolatry, and might seem to favour the notion that, although the truth of God was changed into a lie, the lie and the truth became so commingled, that the latter, proving imperishable, might be eliminated in the course of ages, and that Moses, the Prophets, and the Apostles might gradually recover, and work it up again into a slowly developing system of religion, latterly shaped into Christianity, perhaps to ripen hereafter into something yet more perfect.

But a glance on the original text of the passage I have quoted shows that it cannot so be understood. It does not represent humanity as in divided allegiance between the Creator and the creature, but in a state of apostasy from the truth, lost and blinded with the lie. The words are these:—*Μετήλλαξαν τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν τῷ ψεύδει, καὶ ἐσεβάσθησαν καὶ ἐλάτρευσαν τῇ κτίσει παρὰ τὸν κτίσαντα.*

They changed the truth of God into the lie, and they worshipped and served the creature *rather than the Creator*. The construction of the words is exactly the same as *παρὰ φύσιν*, *against nature*, a little farther on. The passage is so understood by critics generally, and is closely rendered by the Vulgate *potius quam Creatori*. Utter opposition rather than partial desertion is the idea which St. Paul must have intended to convey; he has conveyed it very distinctly. My object is to show that his language perfectly agrees with the history of the case, for that the generation to which reference is made worshipped the creature *rather than the Creator*.

Moses records evidence of the forgetfulness of God, whereof St. Paul speaks, and it can only be concluded from the text of Moses that, with the death of Abel, divine worship ceased, and was not resumed until after the birth of Enos. "*Then it was begun* (אָז הִתְחַל) *to call upon the name of the Lord*" (Gen. iv. 26, v. 3-7). Doubtless there continued, from the first, some tradition of the One True God, but so far as is anywhere apparent, it was limited to a few, and not uninterrupted in its current. It is not found to have been incorporated with any of the cosmogonies. Systems of polytheism were framed; and in the great nations of earliest antiquity there is not discovered any recognition of His existence, however the rare tradition may have been cherished by a few faithful ones.

By the True God is not merely meant a first, or a greatest; not some one supreme deity by others inferior to itself; not a Baal, with his wife Beltis, and they rejoicing in a growing family of gods; not the chief Son of an inferior father, a

Jupiter Kronides; much less a half-developed something emerging out of Chaos, nor even a Zoroastrian duality, but God over all blessed for ever, having the essential attributes of self-existence, unity, eternity, omnipresence, truth.

We commence our search, hopeless though it be, in the land where Gentile memory first brought a tradition of the creation of Heaven and Earth, the fall of Man, the curse upon the ground, and the drowning of mankind for sin. The first of the creation tablets, containing the account originally written in Chaldea, then translated in Assyria; and at last found and translated into English by the late lamented George Smith, contains, as he calls it, "a description of the void, or Chaos, and part of the generation of the gods."

1. When above, were not raised the heavens :
2. and below, on the earth a plant had not grown up ;
3. the abyss also had not broken up their boundaries ;
4. the chaos (*water*), the Tiamat (*sea*), was the producing mother of the whole of them ;
5. those waters at the beginning were ordained, but
6. a tree had not grown, a flower had not unfolded ;
7. *when the gods had not sprung up any one of them,*
8. a plant had not grown, and order did not exist,
9. *were made also the great gods,*
10. *the gods Lahma and Lahamu they caused to come,*
11. *and they grew.*
12. *The gods Sar and Kisar were made,*
13. a course of days and a long time passed. (*Chaldean Genesis*, p. 62.)

Three other tablets contain a legendary account of creation in general, and on the fifth is that of the heavenly bodies in particular. The legend seems to say that the great gods were born out of their producing mother, the sea, and that they then agreed to some scheme for concurrent action and division of labour. Then, on the fifth tablet, where one of the gods—Mr. Smith supposes it may be Anu—took the matter in hand:—

1. It was delightful, all that was fixed by the great gods.
2. Stars, their appearance (*in figures*) of animals he arranged,
3. To fix the year through the observation of their constellations,
4. Twelve months (*or signs*) of stars in three rows he arranged,
5. From the day when the year commences unto the close.
6. He marked the positions of the wandering stars (*planets*) to shine in their courses,
7. that they might not do injury, and might not trouble any one.
8. The positions of the gods Bel and Hea he fixed with him.
9. And he opened the great gates in the darkness shrouded,

10. The fastenings were strong on the left and right.
11. In its mass (i. e. *the lower chaos*) he made a boiling,
12. the god Uru (*the moon*) he caused to rise out, the night he overshadowed,
13. to fix it also for the light of the night, until the shining of the day,
14. That the month might not be broken, and in its amount be regular.
15. At the beginning of the month, at the rising of the night,
16. his horns are breaking through to shine on the heaven.
17. On the seventh day to a circle he begins to swell. (*Ibid.*, p. 69.)

It is remarkable that, according to the Chaldeans, the god who created the starry heavens, or the moon under his direction, appointed four Sabbaths in every lunar month, but while the original Sabbatic observance was retained, the primitive tradition of the creation was forgotten, and the name of the Creator was lost. An invaluable translation of tablets of Chaldean astronomy, by the Rev. Professor Sayce, published in the *Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, contains a note frequently repeated: "*The moon a rest on the seventh day, the fourteenth day, the twenty-first day, the twenty-eighth day causes.*" (*Trans. Soc. Bib. Arc.*, iii. pp. 145, 207, 213, 313.) Here, again, there is no recognition of the True God. The moon is keeper of the months. The moon by his own virtue causes rest. He it is that signals the day of rest. He causes the *Sulum*, peace and comfort. He, the moon, is father of the sun. So did these gods, from the dark womb of chaos, gain increase of strength and glory by development through successive generations.

From those fragments of creation-tablets Mr. Smith elaborated a sketch of the Chaldean theogony, so far as it could be gathered, and he tabulated the result of a very close examination, which may be found in his *Chaldean Account of Genesis* (pp. 60, 64—66). First of all Tavtu (*the sea*) and Absu (*the deep*) appear side by side, as the primordial elements of the universe. These might seem to be the same at the תַּוְּתוּ and אַבְסוּ of Genesis, if it were not that the chaos of the Greek, instead of being the world in a state of emptiness and confusion, is confusion itself. The Chaldeans made of it a distinct thing, born, as it were, of the other two, called in the tablet *Mummu*, explained by *chaos*, and thought to be equivalent with מְרוּמָה, if such a word is to be found in Hebrew or Chaldee, which may be doubted. However, out of Mummu come Lahma (*force or growth*) and Lahama, which may be feminine of Lahm; and from these two, whether principles or persons, proceed Kizar (*the lower expanse*), and Sar (*the upper expanse*). How sea and deep came into existence is not said, nor how they produced confusion, nor how confusion produced the two expanses, nor what is meant by the

two expanses. But that matters not. After the expanses come Anu (*heaven*) and his wife Amatu (*earth*), formed or born out of the lower expanse; and Bel, with his wife Beltis, out of the upper expanse. Now comes an abundant progeny of gods; Vul, god of winds; Vulcan, god of fire; then gods, planets, stars, men. Until Bel and Beltis made their appearance there was no sign of vital energy, but only a lingering, dull development of one knows not what. Surely there was no god in the beginning of this mythology, and when the first tablets were written polytheism was absolute.

But were the wise men of Egypt more successful? Moses mastered all the wisdom of Egypt, and some fancy that he might have utilized it in compiling the Book of Genesis; which, if so composed, could not be an inspired book: and in framing a code of laws for the Israelities; which would imply that those laws were invented by Moses, and not delivered to him by the Lord.

It is indeed quite possible that uninspired writings might contain some vestiges of true tradition, and, in fact, many authentic writings confirmatory of Biblical history have been recovered, and are of inestimable value. But those writings are very various, and must be made use of with discrimination.

Historical monuments, such as the annals of a king, the account of a battle, or the conveyance of an estate, or the notes of an astronomer, may be at once accepted as material of history, and much of the historical portions of the Old Testament is both confirmed and illustrated by original inscriptions from Babylon, Assyria, and Egypt.

Tradition of events and legend have great value; not always for direct confirmation, but very often indeed for the elucidation of parts of Holy Scripture which could not be fully understood without a knowledge of contemporaneous literature. Hymns, divinations, charms, blessings and cursings, yield much instruction, and afford points of both comparison and contrast with the Sacred text.

Mythology, however, lies beyond the verge of all reality, is totally different from all tradition of events, and for the confirmation or understanding of divine revelation it is naught. It adds much to the history of error; it can have contributed nothing to the revelation of truth.

We are sometimes invited to believe that the Egyptians possessed knowledge which could only have come to them by revelation, or have been evolved by themselves from some tradition of primeval faith, and made part of their own religion, at the beginning nearer to truth than it afterwards

became; and my present object is to show that their writings before Moses did not contain anything that could have suggested to him what he writes concerning God and the Creation. My first reference, for I cannot quote Egyptian, shall be to the work of Professor Lepsius on the Oldest Texts of the Book of the Dead, wherein he produces texts of the seventeenth chapter of that collection of sentences, containing a full exhibition of the religious belief of the Egyptians,\* and translates this chapter into German.

He places in parallel columns two specimens; one from the sarcophagus of Mentuhotep, a king of the eleventh dynasty, which is said to have begun 2,240 years before Christ, and one from a papyrus of the twenty-sixth dynasty, which began 664 years before Christ, 1,576 years later than the commencement of the former. Considering that the earlier of these dynasties, though counted as the eleventh, was in reality the first Theban dynasty, and that Mentuhotep probably died within the second century after the Deluge, and lived at the same time with some members of the family of Noah, the sentences written on his coffin represent the religion of his day, and show what was believed in Egypt concerning the gods about 600 years before Moses. It is headed: "The Chapter of the uprising of the dead in the day of days in the underworld," and reads thus:—"This is the word. I am Tum,† one being, one thing. I am Ra‡ in his first dominion. I am the great god, existing of himself, the creator of his name, the Lord of all gods."

The same words, with enlargement, reappear on the papyrus, and show how they are understood after the lapse of at least fifteen centuries. The earlier text is now in italics. The heading is: "*The chapter of the awakening of the dead, of the uprising, and of the entrance into the underworld,*" &c. Then follows: "*This is the language of men, spoken concerning Osiris Aufanch the Justified. § I am Tum, as one being, that am one thing, as primal water. I am Ra in his dominion, in the beginning of his reign on which he has entered. What does this mean? It means that Ra, in his dominion, in the beginning of Ra reigning in Hat-Suten-Chunen, as a being from himself arisen, the exaltation of*

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\* The whole book, so far as contained in one of the best manuscripts, is translated into English, with copious commentary, by Dr. Birch in the fifth volume of Bunsen's *Egypt*.

† *Tum*, the setting sun.

‡ *Ra*, the risen sun.

§ The deceased, like *ὁ μακάριος*.



Nun,\* who is on the height of Am-susennu, who has brought to nought the rebels on the height of Am-susennu. *I am the great god, existing of himself*; that is to say, the water, the divine original water, the father of the gods. What does this mean? The great god, existing of himself, is Ra, the father of the gods; or also, This is Ra, *the creator of his name*, as *Lord of all gods*. What does this mean? This Ra, the creator of his members, which are become gods like unto Ra."

If the assertion, "I am the great god, existing of himself," meant, unexplained, what it would seem to mean, it might be fairly inferred that the Egyptians did really entertain that conception of Godhead which prevails unchanged in all the books of Holy Scripture; but it is not so explained, nor could ever be so understood. Now, if the name of this Egyptian god *Tum* be really the same as תוּמ, *the deep*, or the primeval ocean, and if this word was originally Egyptian, and fell into the Hebrew language, retaining that sense, it only confirms, once more, the belief that those ancients supposed all things to have originated in the waters; and the paraphrase in the second rendering only shows that in the long interval between these two issues of the *Book of the Dead*, the grand conception of an essential and undivided godhead had made no advance; but we shall soon see that no such conception ever followed from it. Nay, though it certainly existed elsewhere, it was absolutely precluded from the mythology of Egypt, where an incipient pantheism, from the very first, had invested all gods, men, and consecrated things with a common attribution of divinity. The great god, the father of all gods, Tum, Osiris, Ra, is self-existent in a way peculiar to himself; for the words in which men declared the dogma, pronounced that he *was water*, that *he derived existence from the water*, that he was exalted out of NUN, another name for *the deep* over which darkness hung. The same symbolic document said of him that he was *water, the divine original water, the Father of the gods*. He was also *Osiris*, he was also *Horus*, yet in relation to all these he was one, and this godhead we find immeasurably widened. At Thebes he was the local god, and there they called him Amen-Ra. A hymn to him, translated by Mr. Goodwin, has been much quoted, and by some is considered to prove that the Egyptians believed in the True God,

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\* *Nun*, the abyss, the immensity of the heavenly waters, on which floats the solar barge. It is also the deification of the primal waters (Pierret, s. v.).

and that the priests and wise men worshipped him esoterically. It may be found at length in the second volume of *Records of the Past*. The very same praises are paid to the river Nile in a hymn written in the nineteenth dynasty, in the time of Moses, or near it, translated by Canon Cook, and may be found in the fourth volume of the *Records*. The river is addressed by the names of Amen, and Ra, and Ptah. If one could forget that it was to be sung to a river, he might imagine that Joseph had penned it to the honour of his father's God.

“He maketh his might a buckler.

He is not graven in marble.

As an image bearing the double crown

He is not beheld.

He hath neither ministrants nor offerings.

He is not adored in Sanctuaries.

His abode is not known.

No shrine is found with painted figures.”

This is noted as a relic of primeval monotheism. At first reading, it awakened my admiration, but I now cease to admire, and am gratified to find myself in accord with the learned translator, who, in the *Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archaeology* (ii. 365), truly says that it consists of little more than high-sounding epithets of the god, some of them containing allusions to mythological stories not very intelligible, and strung together without any obvious law of connection. In short, the cosmogony and the theosophy of Chaldea and of Egypt exactly agree in ascribing the birth of the gods to a sort of spontaneous generation from the water of the Great Deep. Many of us are familiar with the same notion, as repeated by Latin and Greek poets. We have read it in the Theogony of Hesiod :—

“But chaos was first of all, then after chaos the wide-spread land,

Firm dwelling for all the immortal gods” (116-118).

Here it was not the spirit of God moving on the face of the waters, where to complete the work of creation of heaven and earth previously begun, as the context in Genesis may imply ; or to revisit the emptiness and restore from the confusion a world once well ordered, but, like some ruined city, laid waste (compare the Hebrew text of Gen. i. 2, and Is. xxxiv. 11) and without inhabitants. There was not in all those figments any image of one eternal God and omnipotent Creator. Perhaps a more perfect exemplification of the latent and resistless Pantheism of those mythologies cannot be found than in the celebrated Orphic hymn rendered as closely as possible

from the copy preserved by Eusebius, and exhibiting its outgrowth in the West :—

“ Zeus was born first, Zeus last, glorious thunderer.  
 Zeus the beginning, Zeus the middle, and of Zeus all things are.  
 Zeus was born male, Zeus became pure virgin spouse.  
 Zeus is foundation both of earth and starry heaven.  
 Zeus breath of all, Zeus force of unwearying fire.  
 Zeus root of sea, Zeus both sun and moon.  
 Zeus king, Zeus himself chief parent of all things.  
 One power, one dæmon born, great prince of all,  
 And one royal frame, whereby all things are encompassed.  
 Fire and water, and earth and æther, night also and day.  
 Both parent first in counsel and much-delighting love ;  
 For in the vast body of Zeus do all things lie.  
 Then by seeing his head and lovely features,  
 Brilliant heaven, around whom golden hairs  
 Of shining stars arise most lovely ;  
 And on both sides two bulls’ horns of gold  
 Both east and west, ways of the celestial gods.  
 And for eyes, the sun and the moon opposite thereto.  
 And for mind, unerring, royal, untainted æther.  
 Around him all things move, and he deliberates, but there is no sound,  
 No clamour, and no uproar ; not a single voice.  
 The son of Zeus is not ignorant of the anger of Chronion,  
 Even he who had his immortal beginning, and his mind,  
 And his body dazzling bright, not to be pierced through nor injured.  
 Robust, powerful, resistless, whomsoever he encounters.  
 Shoulders and breast and back broad, as becomes a god.  
 Air wide-prevailing, and far-reaching wings,  
 With which he broods o’er all ; and he has a sacred bosom.  
 And earth, mother of all, with lofty mountain-heights,  
 And for mid zone the swelling of deep sounding sea,  
 And remote ocean-bed, and the deep foundations of the land,  
 And the broad plains of Tartarus, and utmost ways of earth.  
 And having hidden things out into glad light again,  
 Is about to offer from the heart most sacred gifts.  
 Zeus, then, is all the world, life of the living, and god of gods.”  
 (Euseb., *Præp. Evang.*, iii. 9.)

If we turn to the religious system of Canaan or Phœnicia, as described by Sanchoniathon, we find that the Phœnician cosmogony closely resembles that of Chaldea and Egypt, while the mythology which follows is rather atheistic than polytheistic. It is preserved by Eusebius from Sanchoniathon, and I borrow Mr. Kenrick’s translation :—

“He supposes that the beginning of things was a dark and windy air, or a breeze of thick air, and a turbid chaos resembling Erebus, and that these were unbounded, and for a series of ages had no limit. But when the wind became enamoured of its own first principles, and an intimate union took place, that connexion was called Pothos, and this was the beginning of the creation of all things. And from this sprung all the seed of the creation, and the generation of the universe.”

By a wonderful succession of developments, the universe grew into shape. The text is too tedious to be quoted at length. It tells of certain animals without sensation; then intelligent animals formed in the shape of an egg; then the sun, the moon, greater stars, lesser stars; then light, winds, clouds, torrents of waters. At length thunders and lightnings startled the intelligent animals into motion in earth and sea. At this point there is an allusion to the books of Taautus, Thot, or Hermes, showing that the whole fiction must have been made up out of Egyptian absurdities. Then come forth *men*, who worship the productions of the earth, and call them gods. Now the wind Colpias and his wife produced two mortal men, one of whom discovered food from trees. Their descendants worshipped the sun, and now began the generations of mankind. Long ages of silent mystery are supposed to follow, and tardy invention of but the rudest art. After all, partially-developed mankind began to bear some features of humanity. A man called Elyón, or *most high*, had a son called Heaven and a daughter called Earth, and after these the heaven and the earth received their names; but the most high father of the living Heaven and Earth lost his life in a combat with wild beasts, and was afterwards worshipped by the Phœnicians. To him, or to his name, I may presently refer. (See Kenrick's *Phœnicia*, p. 330.)

Meanwhile, seeing what Phœnicia, and perhaps Greece and Rome too, received from Egypt, and having been invited to expect that light from Egypt may be thrown upon truths first revealed in the Old Testament, and possibly on Christianity also, it may be well to know how far the sages of Egypt itself advanced upon the wisdom of their fathers in speculation on the being of a God; and thence we may judge how far they were at any time capable of enriching the mind of writers of Holy Scripture on the awfully sublime subject of the Divine Nature. Porphyry, a notorious assailant of Christianity in the third century, also assailed the superstition of Egypt, and Jamblicus, a clever Egyptian, resident in Syria, undertook to answer him. The parts of his work on mysteries which relate

directly to the gods furnish authentic information of the theology of Egypt, and is the more valuable as a very earnest apologist of that theology, he represents it under the most favourable aspect.

It would seem that he keeps monotheism out of sight until it is forced on him by the suggestions of his adversary. When treating on gods and spirits (sect. iv. chap. 1) he speaks of multitudes of gods, some more excellent than others; then on a sort of judicial spirits of a middle class, which make distinction between good and evil; and after these a third set of spirits, irrational and incapable of judgment; besides other spirits, utterly bad and pestilential. But he endeavours to justify their evil doings by a consideration that gods and spirits have a standard of justice very different from that of men (chap. 4). Some of the gods of Egypt govern matter, and others have power over spirit (chap. 14). Some are to be worshipped with the body, and others with the mind (chap. 16). Few men are wise enough to calculate their number (chap. 21); fewer still, if any, are capable of worshipping all the gods within the lifetime of a man (chap. 22). Certain things, or certain animals, are acceptable to certain gods, but man is acceptable to all of them, and everywhere he is a sacred object (chap. 24). Mistakes in sacrificing to the gods, so that to every one of them the animal peculiarly consecrated, and no other, be offered, are to be carefully avoided (chap. 25); and the same caution must be observed as to the prayers chosen for presentation to this or that god (chap. 26). Jamblicus confesses that the Egyptians are less careful than the Chaldeans to avoid confounding demons with gods, and that they not only address threatenings to demons, but presume to threaten the gods, not even excepting the great ones, Isis and Osiris (sec. v. chap. 7).

Passing beyond these generalities, on which I have touched very slightly, he endeavours to expound *the theology of the Egyptians* in a chapter on the god Ra, or the Sun, whom they believe to be the Ruler of the World. This chapter reads as follows:—

“Hear, then, according to the mind of the Egyptians, the intellectual interpretation of symbols; but dismiss from your imagination whatever you may hear as to the visible images of symbolic things, and fix your attention on the intellectual truth itself.

“CLAY, therefore, you must understand to be all that which is corporeal and material: either nutrition and generation, or whatever appearance of material nature, agitated with the changing flows of matter; or whatever contains

the stream of generation, and coincides therewith, or the primary and elemental cause of all powers and elements therein is comprehended in the word. And the cause which causes all such as this, all generation and all nature, and all the powers that are in all the elements, is God. Because He is indeed supereminent over these, immaterial, incorporeal, supernatural, unbegotten and indivisible, entire by Himself, and in Himself, He is before them all, and because, in Himself He comprehends them all, and from Himself distributes all things to the world, He appears again in them. Therefore, also, He is above them all, and is alone on high, and shines forth separate, free, sublime, and sails aloft by Himself over all the forces and the elements that are in the world, and by Himself bears witness to the following symbol : that *God sits above the lotus*.

“This figure signifies that supereminence of power which does not so much as touch the clay, but sets forth the intellectual and empyreal government. For He beholds in the lotus all that is circular in the form of the leaves, and in the appearance of the fruit, the energy which is indeed akin to the only movement of the revolving mind, that which is like these, and in like manner also, in one order and in one manner manifest. This God also rests within himself, and over all government and energy of this kind, he is venerable and holy. He dwells aloft and abides in Himself, which indeed the figure of sitting is chosen to signify.

“And when He is represented in pictures as *one who navigates a ship* (Ra in his boat) this represents the power of governing the world. So as the governor is separate from the ship, He himself being seated at the helm, He from above steers all things, and impels all by a brief movement of His own; so God was above from the first beginnings of nature, and imparted by Himself alone the first impulses of motion, and these things indeed, besides many others, are signified by the ship He steers” (sec. vii. cap. 2).

Now, this sounds to be very near the truth ; but at length Jamblicus comes to the most important question of Porphyry:—

“What do the Egyptians believe to be THE FIRST CAUSE? τὸ πρῶτον αἴτιον. Is it mind, or something above mind? Is it alone, or with something else, or with some other things? And is it incorporeal or corporeal? And then; is it the same as the Creator, or was it before the Creator? And again; Do all things come from one or from many? And have they any knowledge of matter, or the first corporeal forms? And is matter produced or unproduced?” (sec. viii. cap. 1).

Jamblicus answers that on these points the ancients held various opinions, as do his own contemporaries, and Hermes (the Egyptian Thoth) is said to have written 20,000 books, or, according to Manetho, 36,525; but they left the matter unsettled, and every one is free to inquire for himself. However,

he proceeds to say what might seem, at first hearing, to almost agree with the statements of inspired prophets.

“Before the things that really exist, and before the beginning of them all, there is one God; before even the first god and king.” This first god and king he has already said to be the sun, or in the sun. “He is immutable, abiding in the singleness of his own unity. For neither is anything intellectual, nor any other thing, to be confounded with him. He stands firm, pattern of the *self-father*, *αὐτοπάρος*, of the self-begotten and only-father God, who is truly good. For this is that which is greatest and first, the foundation of all things, and the root of intelligible ideas of existing beings. And from this one the self-sufficient god *shone forth upon himself*, *ἐαυτὸν ἐξέλαμψε*; wherefore he is his own father, and self-sufficient. So this is the beginning, and god of gods, *monad of that which is one*, *μὴνὰς ἐκ τοῦ ἑνός*, first existing and beginning of existence; for of him is the essentiality of essence; wherefore also he is hailed as the intellectual principle, *νοητάρχης*. Now these are the very oldest principles of all things, which Hermes places before the ethereal and empyreal gods, and them that are above the heavens” (sec. viii. chap. 2).

In this chapter there are forms of speech which recall passages in the Jewish and Christian theologians of Egypt in an early age; and we must remember that Jamblicus the Egyptian, living in the very centre of primitive Christendom, by education an Egyptian, by language a Grecian, resident in a land where true monotheism was known and upheld, and “the Most High God” worshipped from the days of Abraham and Melchizedek, and therefore fully cognizant of this truth, that there is but one God, is endeavouring to defend the gods of Egypt against the taunts of the most keen of sceptics, and borrows for this purpose the familiar terms of Greek philosophy, as they might be employed by a Philo or a Clement. It must also be noticed that, these few passages excepted, the shadow of Bible monotheism is exceedingly faint, and the verbal resemblances few, and very incidental, while the substance of Egyptian polytheism remains intact. There has not been a glimpse of real monotheism, so far as I can find, in the preceding sections of this elaborate apology, and that of the kind which has now been quoted is unsaid in the very next chapter, which I translate closely.

“But he,” that is, the Egyptian god of wisdom, and author of many books, “presents another god, Hemeph, as leader of the celestial gods, whom he says to be the mind that understands itself, and converts the intelligences to itself, and before

this one he places *the one thing that is indivisible*; τὸ ἐν ἅμεις, and calls it *the first principle of magic*, μάγευμα, which he also names Eicton, wherein is first found that which understands and may be understood, and is worshipped in silence only. Besides these, other chiefs preside over the visible creation; but the creative mind and guardian of truth and wisdom is called Amon in the Egyptian language, and he that skilfully and truly makes everything perfect without failure is called Phtha" (sec. viii. chap. 3). Now, again, come other gods in full strength, making up the Egyptian pantheon, and bringing into full view the main fact that their monad, unity, first principle, self-begotten father, or whatever else, is but something in a stage of development from the primeval water, not yet complete, and in advance towards the divine multitude, consisting of gods, of whom each was imperfect, and for most of what one sufficient god would be capable, impotent alone. It could receive certain offerings, hear only some select prayers, and take its turn only for a part of what each worshipper would have to give, in the course of his devotions, to a larger crowd of gods than any man living could have lived long enough to worship all.

The twelve chief gods of Egypt must have been well known by name to Moses, and other writers of the Old Testament, but were only mentioned by them with the clearest expression of abhorrence as false gods. No resemblance of name, or attributes, or history, appears in any title, or mingles in any description of the true God; neither does any resemblance of Egyptian idolatry find place in the divinely-appointed ritual of Moses. Between the theogonies quoted in this paper and the divine revelation of Holy Scripture can be traced no resemblance, nor can any abatement of the most emphatic condemnation be detected. As to the religion of Egypt, as expounded by the latest original authority just quoted, I venture to think that it has characteristics undiscoverable in the *Book of the Dead*, having been introduced during the Ptolemaic period, when the Egyptian priests flattered the conquerors of Egypt by admitting them also into the number of their gods. Of this the Canopus inscription is a sufficient evidence.

I may remark further that there was always so utter an incongruity of the conceptions of heathenism with the truths of Revelation, that even the terms by which truth was originally conveyed in Holy Scripture lose their meaning when borrowd by the idolater. Take, for example, the title of Most High. It was used in the time of Abraham by the patriarch himself, and by the king-priest Melchizedek, to name the one true God, as is distinctly stated in the book of Genesis.



But the same term, עליון, ὑψιστος, was found among the Phœnicians, as we learn from Sanchoniathon; and it appears again in the Phœnician language, according to Plautus, where it is the proper word for a god, and עליונים and עליונות mean gods and goddesses. It reappears in the common language of their successors in Gadara, according to the Gospel, and was used by the Macedonian girl possessed by an evil spirit, when she cried, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, who show unto us the way of salvation." From the lips of a heathen, the word was to signify a god, either true or false; but when used in Holy Scripture it never conveyed the false idea, and never implied what is impossible—an agreement between the temple of God and idols.

I therefore humbly, but confidently, maintain that holy men of old, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, never borrowed the myths of heathenism for the purpose of declaring the truths of God; neither to frame a ritual nor to construct a creed.

Let us now dwell on a few reasons to show that the monotheism of the Bible is so essentially different from the polytheism or pantheism described in the writings above quoted, that it could not possibly have been suggested by anything which they, or other writings like them, might contain.

From first to last, the writers of Holy Scripture were earnest and single-minded men. They were intent on the maintenance of great truths; chiefly, the existence, the universal sovereignty, and the omnipotence of One Eternal God. This truth underlies every statement, and pervades the text of all the sacred books. Here is the Creator of the Universe, existing before all worlds, such as no heathen ever heard of. Here is One God and Father of Heaven and Earth, Himself uncreate. None by searching could find Him out. His works are perfect like Himself, and so the only accredited revealer of His great creation-work has not to tell of some slowly-developed cosmogony, but marks each completed stage of the creation as His own unaided work. "He spake and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast." Through the history of successive ages, however brief the notes may be, or however full the narrative of events, He is the ONE BEING, acknowledged Lord of all creatures. All prophets derive their authority from Him alone; all wise men pay their homage to Him alone. The Egyptian priests could indeed recite the names of many gods, and profess themselves ignorant of many more, but could not trace the best of any of them farther back than a dark and fathomless

abyss. Other priests had their own tales to tell, but all came to a similar origin of Godhead, conceived in the matrix of a mysterious confusion. They were generated spontaneously, or gradually developed from monads into animated creatures, and thence by slow processes into gods. Some were born of woman, and in due time deified. We cannot find a vestige of these fables in the authentic teachings of the Bible, whose authors never vacillate in ascribing peerless and incommunicable perfection to one God alone; while the heathen mythologies, in some passages grand, if not sublime, and boastfully elaborated, allot to their chief gods respectively, no more than small shares in the government of the world, some for good and some for evil.

The religions and customs of the great nations of antiquity before Moses were necessarily correspondent to their notions of these local and insufficient gods, but to concentrate all reverence and love on One was a sentiment unknown to them; so that allegiance was divided and wasted between gods many and lords many, and no man had a god whom he could love with all his heart. The enthusiasm of the polytheist who patronized many gods could not be transferred into the bosom of a man who adored one God, and protested against the very thought of having more than one. The divinities of Egypt and the East beyond the Flood were not only many, but their presence was more or less limited to the regions where they were worshipped. Their character was not entirely divine, for it was shared with men, and even their names were assumed by men. Between them and the pure Spirit known to Abraham and his children, infinitely above all human taint and imperfection, there could be no comparison. The features of the several religions were utterly unlike; their spirit and their language were foreign from the high conceptions of Divinity entertained by worshippers of the True God, and all their ideas were mutually incompatible. Compare, for example, the Hymn of Amen-Ra with the Prayer of Solomon at the dedication of the temple. Take the descent of Ishtar, and as many hymns, prayers, and incantations of Egypt and Assyria as you like, with charms of Chaldean magic, and lay them side by side with the book of Psalms. Consider how far the writings of the polytheists could be made use of to enrich the productions of servants of the One True God.

Yet much more difficult would it be to fix upon any one essential truth in the heathen writings, which could have been found there antecedently to its production in the Old Testament, or, perhaps, its reproduction by Moses, having been

revealed before him to his fathers. Words, and even sentences, may be collected that express generally-acknowledged verities, such as could not be abandoned by the general conscience of mankind, but our present question relates to fundamental truths of Divine Revelation, especially the existence of One Only God, which we have heard attributed to a Chaldean sect. On this truth depends all that is distinctive in Christian doctrine as compared with the various religions of the world.

There is an indestructible unity in the moral teaching of the Bible, which would be fatally impaired by the introduction of any extraneous element, whether the product of a foreign system, or the adaptation of an originally foreign institution. That there is one mind prevailing in the Bible must be acknowledged by every careful student; and is, in fact, presupposed by those disputants who appeal to the Sacred text for the confirmation, even of mutually destructive propositions. There is evidence of one ruling mind in the consistency of laws laid down in successive ages for the government of human society, as also in the consent of counsel given for the right application of these laws. The rules of conduct, both towards God and men, first delivered to Adam, then to the Patriarchs, and then embodied in that imperishable monument of Divine wisdom and justice, the Decalogue, attest the same unity of origin, and may be distinguished in each particular from the false worship and licentious customs of the peoples who, at the time of the Exode, retained the oldest traditions and mythologies; namely, the Egyptians, Assyrians, and Canaanites. We recognize the same unchanging principle and purpose in the constant application of the primitive laws—laws of the God who says: "I the Lord change not." We have again the evidence of History that the ever-advancing standard of Morality, raised and maintained, as by one persistent purpose, is apparent in the Mosaic Institutions, as to Peace and War; Servitude, as distinct from Slavery, the protection of Life and Property; the provisions of the Law of Moses having opened the way for the eventual establishment of the kingdom of Righteousness and Peace so clearly predicted by the Prophets. The original Institution of Marriage at the creation, "as it was at the beginning," an institution which men had abused in licentiousness and in hardness of heart, was restored at last by the Author of Christianity Himself, for the sanctification of domestic life, and the renovation of the world; so fulfilling the original intention. The active presence of one sovereign mind is further shown by the gradual wasting away of polytheism in the world; not by its

own weakness, for some systems of polytheism have been so organized and sustained as to have immense power,—but by means of the succession of writers who complete the code of revealed and divinely-authorized truths contained in the Bible, wherein was first revealed the pure and perfect monotheism of which we speak, and which we all believe.

Such a succession of sacred writers is not to be found in any other great religious system of the world, because none of them was ever under the same unchanging guidance.

All the polytheisms of high antiquity, or very nearly all, have been wrecked, or are visibly in process of decay; but many fragments of their teaching are now recovered, and if it be supposed that the sacred writers were indebted for any of their knowledge of fundamental truth to what was written or described by their teachers, in marble, clay, or papyrus, or if the forms of worship or institutions of society now known as Christian, originated in their mythologies or legends, now is the time for such origination to be proved, or, at least, shown to be probable. There is material enough at hand, and learning enough, and critical power enough, to examine this question with the thoroughness it requires. One immediate benefit resulting from such examination will, doubtless, be the advancement of sound Biblical science; for which, also, we have material and means enough, and the Oriental archaeologists will be, as they are already, our most valued helpers.

But there are a few words to be said before the conclusion of this paper, on two points:—

1. That the principle of *oneness* in relation to God, the only object of universal worship, and the same from everlasting to everlasting, appears in the one hope, with regard to the future condition of all mankind, that is manifest in the sacred writers. They all have one object constantly in view. To illustrate this would require no inconsiderable tractate, which is not necessary here. We are historically certain that Moses expected that one like himself would, in course of time, arise, to whom men would hearken. It is generally believed that the New Testament is inseparably related to the Old, and has yet to be the instrument of a glorious renovation of the world. We know not that polytheism, or its consequent pantheism, ever had such hope. But we do know that the idols once in their temples have perished; or, if a few remain, it is only to be exhibited as trophies of the Christian conquest. If, however, we are debtors to the inventions of the old mythologists for any portions of our Bible, we should render them some correspondent honour; but we cannot discover any

such association of that which is perishable with that which is eternal.

2. Every one of the sacred writers had a mission, express or understood, to take his part in working the ultimate abolition of idolatry, or polytheism, with all its vanity, falsehood, licentiousness, and cruelty. Every provision of the Mosaic Ritual and Civil Law was so framed as to be counteractive of the teaching and practices of idolatry. The entire economy of the Hebrew State and the order of domestic life were characterized by constant separation from polytheists. The ליהו wall of separation in the Temple, like the wall of separation in the Eastern city, the distinction of meats, and other regulations tending to the same end, kept the worshippers of One God separate from the devotees of many, and was a perpetual restraint upon themselves, and test of their fidelity to God. At last, it became a signal, also, of intolerance; but in many lands it had its use, and still has it; and he who, in this view, reads how severely Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and the post-captivity prophets set themselves against even the least appearance of conformity to the worship or bare acknowledgment of other gods, and avoidance of the ways of their worshippers, cannot but feel at once the extreme improbability that they and their brethren and fathers would have stooped to borrow or mature their doctrines, or to adorn their worship with aught that polytheism could offer.

But still, if it be thought that the alloy of paganism anywhere mingles with the gold of Revelation, let him point it out who can, and no pains will be spared in applying the fit criterion.

The CHAIRMAN (J. E. Howard, F.R.S.).—I have now to convey the thanks of the meeting for this interesting paper; there is a great deal in it with which I am in perfect accord. I, however, almost fear that the writer has not fully grasped the question of the fading away of the primitive knowledge of a loving and true God, and of this knowledge having been superseded by idolatry. In order to prove that Moses and the writers of Scripture are in no way indebted to the Pantheists for any portion of their truth, he goes farther than was necessary, in stating what he supposed to be the entire absence of all knowledge of the one God among those who were other than the chosen nation. I would take, as the first instance of this, the title of El Eliou, the Most High God, to whom Dr. Rule has alluded in pages 356 and 357. He says, "Take, for example, the title of Most High. It was used in the time of Abraham by the patriarch himself, and by the king-priest Melchizedek, to name the one true God." Dr. Rule, I suppose, does not consider Melchizedek to have been an idolater, I take it for

granted that he has no thought of that kind ; but neither was he one of the chosen people. We are told in Scripture very distinctly what he was ; and he uses the term which we know, from other sources, was the name of God in Phœnicia. Abraham and Melchizedek unite in the worship of the one true God, and yet His name is not the name commonly used in the Bible for God, but it is a Phœnician name ; and I think we must suppose that the knowledge of this one true God had prevailed downwards from the beginning in that country in which Melchizedek, the king of Salem, was found worshipping as an acceptable worshipper. The word El for God seems to have been in use before the Flood, as is seen in the composite name Mahalale-el. If I mistake not, the recently discovered Assyrian inscriptions show that the original and far more ancient worship was the worship of the Father. The Al Fader of the Teutonic nations carries us back to the same thought which elsewhere prevailed, as I have shown with regard to the universal Father. Dr. Gutzlaff, than whom no one knew more of Chinese literature, the Chinese people, and their doings and ways, told me that though the goddess of the sailors was originally the Queen of Heaven, yet whenever the Chinese sailors got into any great straits or difficulty they called on the old Father, looking upwards and recalling to their minds a tradition which has not yet faded away, even in that country, of the universal Father of mankind. (Hear, hear.) We have, I think, traces of this primitive knowledge of the Father, combining itself with the Pantheism of Egypt, in the very curious way that has been partially shown in this paper. The epithets "True and Living God," and "The Creator," are given to the various subordinate deities ; but then, this is a part of the inconsistency that prevails everywhere, as well in the Pantheism of Egypt as in the idolatry of other nations. The God who is in this paper called Tum, is the setting sun, and I do not think that this name can be identified with תומ, the deep. There is no connection between the deep or the abyss in the book of Genesis and the *Tum* of Egypt. The creation of the gods from the abyss is part of the rubbish that any one who takes the trouble to study these ancient cosmogonies will have enough of ; but before all these creations of the gods, and independently of them, we find the idea of the "supreme God the first and only principle from which the other gods were derived," who was called *Ilon*, or in Accadian *Dingira*, whose name signifies the God *par excellence*. Babylon owed to him its name of Bab-ilon ; in Accadian *Kâ Dingira* (the gate of God).\* Below *Ilon* comes in *Bel*, the Demiurge, the ruler of the organized universe, something like that which is expressed in what has been alluded to from the Hermetic creed, as a second mind proceeding from the First, arranging all things according to perfect order and perfect development. It is a very wonderful thought, when we compare it with what we ourselves know from the Bible.

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\* This is from M. Lenormant's very complete analysis of the subject.

This you certainly find in the Egyptian, and, I think, in the Indian cosmogonies. I must apologise for making these remarks ; but I could hardly do otherwise than state how far I agreed, and how far I did not fully agree with the paper read by Dr. Rule. I hope I shall be succeeded by some one who will be able to do fuller justice to the subject, but I would just say, before sitting down, with regard to the Lahma which is alluded to here as one of the gods, or Lakh-mu, explained by Mr. Boscawen as meaning "light," that Lakh-mu was so called originally, just as in Genesis God says, "Let there be light, and light was." So we find it stated on the 4th page of this paper, "Out of Mummu came Lahma" (force or growth). According to Mr. Boscawen this latter word means "light"—it means that light penetrated into the abyss, and that great results followed. Every one knows that in the Egyptian mysteries there was always a hidden or esoteric meaning, known only to the priests ; and an outward or exoteric meaning, which was propounded to the common people. This I take to be what was meant by the Apostle Paul, when he teaches that they held down the knowledge of God that they had, and prevented it from having its right effect, either on themselves or those they had under their teaching. I came here not having the expectation of taking the Chair ; and, as I am obliged to retire now, I will ask Mr. Cadman Jones to take my place, feeling assured that he will fill it better than I can.

Mr. H. CADMAN JONES then took the Chair.

The HONORARY SECRETARY stated that it was held by Canon F. C. Cook "that distinct traces of primeval monotheism are found in Egypt, and that the confusion with mystical legends began early and continually increased."

Bishop CLAUGHTON.—I rise with great diffidence, after having listened to the very interesting paper that has just been read, to make a few remarks. It would be impossible at this hour of the evening, and in a meeting of this kind, to go fully into this question, nor do I feel competent or able to do so ; but at the same time I think that the subject of this paper is one of the very deepest interest, and I will venture to make a few observations. I must say that I think the writer of this paper has made out his case, and that, so far as his reasoning has gone—and he has told us that he could not go further into so wide a field—he has quite proved that the monotheism of the Holy Scriptures is not in any way depending on, or derived from, any of the other systems of which he has given us an outline. (Hear, hear.) But there is one very striking thought that must occur to most of us when we come to consider those very confused, I will not say historical, but conjectural, systems of theology, and it is this :—When man has lost his knowledge of the true God, he has always, either in his ignorance or false learning, tried in some way to recover it. The untaught savage has a firm belief in a Father—a good spirit, and, also, in an evil spirit ; and the sages and priests of Egypt and Phœnicia, as well as others of those who propounded those very ancient systems of which we have heard to-night, held theories that were widely distinct from the simple

guesses of the savage. They had an elaborately constructed system of theogony, answering to what the New Testament calls the "genealogies," of which the Apostle speaks (1 Tim. i. 4). But I am more familiar with some of the further Eastern systems—those of the Hindoos and the Buddhists; and there is also another system, that of the Mahommedans, to which I may refer. The Hindoo system is a perpetual genealogy of false gods, tainted much more by the corruption of what is entirely human and carnal than almost any other; in short, the very history of their gods is, in fact, the history of evil. Now, I maintain that there always was outside the chosen people a tradition of a belief in the true God. There is always some witness to the true God in some part of the world besides those who are to be found in God's own Church, and one great blessing in the end will be that all these followers of the belief in the true God will be gathered up into God's own family and brought to the true knowledge of Him, just as many of our Christian brethren, separated from us by many of the barriers of error and prejudice, will become—as indeed they now are, but more surely and really—our Christian brethren. But there are some especially who have raised up in those far-away portions of the world a protest against those elaborate systems of Polytheism, one of which is Buddhism and another Mahomedanism. Let us take, for example, Buddhism. I firmly believe, although it is not one of those things that are brought before us by the learned writers on the subject, that the simple history of Buddhism was the result of the effort made by one superior and comparatively pure-minded man—sincere, if fanatical—to attain the Truth and free himself from all these elaborate systems of Polytheism. He took, alas, a most mistaken line in endeavouring to do this. First of all, he preached Atheism, which by degrees became Pantheism; but as the founder of Buddhism, what he taught was Atheism. I do not believe he meant to say, "There is no God." I believe his meaning was that there were not these many gods, that there was no truth in what the people had heard of the family of gods—gods of evil men. He taught his false and mistaken principle that men, by their own inherent goodness, if they would only conquer their bodies and lower natures, might become first, better, then good, holy, and divine. That was, I think, the simple foundation of Buddhism; and its author failed, for several reasons. I will not enter into the history of Buddhism, which is not a system of idolatry, but I will pass on to Mahomedanism. If the founder of that system had not been an ambitious man, and I may say a carnal-minded man, although, undoubtedly, he had a great deal of wonderful power in him, he would have been more successful and more like the founder of Buddhism. He made a protest against two false systems—Polytheism and Idolatry, and although he put it on a false basis and carried it by the sword, his was a successful protest against Idolatry and Polytheism; and I believe that at this moment, if the followers of Mahomet could be induced to go back to the point from which he went wrong, they might be more easily brought to a true knowledge of Christ than



any other race in the world. I would put the morality of the Buddhist teaching next to that of the Christian doctrine ; but I cannot speak, I am sorry to say, in the same terms of the Mahommedan system ; there is no doubt, however, that it was intended to be a protest against Polytheism and Idolatry. Why did Buddhism fail? Just because man cannot of himself become wholly good. He is a fallen creature, and in order to become good he must go to the Source of all goodness. We know that we have in our blessed Saviour the source of an inspiration of goodness, and we can recover from Him that which we have lost. Well, the reason why the morality of the Buddhist nations is not successful is, that their system is inconsistent with true religion as the basis of morality. If you take Mahommedanism, you find that it is widely at variance with true morality. Do not misunderstand me. I do not wish you to suppose that there is nothing good and true in Mahommedanism, and that the Mahommedans have not great virtues and high qualities, but these are all marred and blurred by that which drags them down ; namely, first of all, the fact of their being linked to a gross imposture, and next, the false and carnal morality, or rather immorality, which is mixed up with the religious system itself. Now, we as Christians inherit the learning and faith that have come to us from the very highest and first source ; we do not borrow, and have not borrowed in the least, from those other systems of which we have heard in the Paper read to-night. Our monotheism, our belief in one great God and Father and Creator, comes to us as our first fathers knew it ; and it has been handed down to us unimpaired, although often lost to the great part of mankind. Still it did come to us, and if it came in no other way, God preserved it among His own chosen people, who were selected as the repositories of His truth, until Christ came, as the True Light of the world, and we now are the inheritors of that great light. I do not think there would be much edification in going very deeply into these questions. I would not deny the usefulness of those antiquarians who take us into these things, nor the gratitude we owe them, but there is this difficulty, that in going into these matters of the far past we may be so easily mistaken ; and I must say for myself that I cannot follow them with the zest I should like to feel in these interesting, but sometimes not very edifying, paths of history, or rather of conjecture. Still, I think we are much indebted to those who prepare for us papers such as that which we have heard to-night, and who thus create an interest in this sort of investigation. I am afraid I have not contributed much in the way of throwing light on the subject of this evening, but I must thank you for the kindness with which you have listened to me. (Hear, hear.)

Rev. Principal J. H. Rigg, D.D.—I could have wished that my excellent and learned friend Dr. Rule had not been quite so strict in his adherence to his own particular object. He has set the example of not indulging even in an introduction to his subject, and I think that that is one reason why the subject itself is liable to be more or less misunderstood. I do not under-

stand that Dr. Rule means to throw any doubt on the fact of the primeval unity of patriarchal faith and theology; there are two or three phrases to be found on looking carefully through the paper which seem to imply the contrary—that Dr. Rule holds to that unity of primeval patriarchal faith and theology; but it was no part of his object to dwell upon this, but rather to deal with the particular proposition which he desired to prove. I suppose that Dr. Rule not only has read, but that among the learned company he keeps he meets with those who are in the habit very quietly and easily of assuming, that whatever there is of wisdom in the writings of Moses was borrowed from Egypt, and that whatever there is of grandeur and nobleness in the conceptions of the Bible was most probably obtained by means of some man, or men, of grand and powerful genius, by whom the great ideas of other nations were taken and moulded into a system, and that thus we have in the writings of the Old Testament the results of an inspiration gathered from various origins round about—partly from Chaldea, with which, of course, the Jews in their earlier history were very closely connected, partly from Phœnicia, and partly from Egypt, and that lying, as the Hebrew race did, in the centre of those other races—Chaldean and Phœnician and Egyptian—they thus gathered into a focus the rays of nobleness, and grandeur, and impressive speculation with regard to the existence of a God and the creation of the world, and that this is the natural history of the Books of Moses and of the foundations of our religion. Now, I suppose that Dr. Rule has met with all this sort of thing, and, finding it current in society, he has undertaken to prove, on the other hand, that these ancient books do not owe anything to the sources which are supposed to have contributed all that is precious, all that is glorious, in them. (Hear, hear.) That I take to be the proposition which Dr. Rule has undertaken to establish. I agree with a good deal that our former Chairman said in regard to the primitive truth that is found mixed up in various forms of religion. I think that no one can have examined the earliest writings of the Hindoos without finding that it was a very different system which prevailed among the Aryan fathers of the Hindoo race, from that fearful and monstrous growth of tales of pollution and absurdity to which Bishop Claughton has made reference. I think, if we refer to that sister branch of the great Aryan family from which the Parsee worship is derived, and to the relics and indications of their most ancient form of worship, from which the comparatively modern Zoroastrianism is a derivative, we shall see that there has been a sort of unity between the Persian principles and faith and the Hindoo principles and faith, and that both may be traced up to the same cradle and the same age. Nor do I doubt that there has been a sort of identity between them and the earliest originals of the Egyptian faith; but what I understand Dr. Rule to say is, that that being so, all that is good and pure in the old faiths, coming as it did from one heavenly original, has been perverted and corrupted by the various forms of heathenism; that the different families of heathenism invented for themselves a human cosmo-

gony and a heathen mythology; that they laid hold of whatever was pure and noble, and turned and perverted it into conceptions that have nothing in common with a pure and high theology such as we find enshrined in the books of the Old Testament; that, in fact, a direct line of derivation for all that is true and pure in these systems is to be traced to the Divine revelations, which are presupposed by, or contained in, the writings of the Old Testament Scriptures, instead of these systems being the originals from which the sublimity of the Old Testament, as certain parties pretend, is derived. (Hear, hear.) I think that this is something like his general argument, and it is not unimportant that we should consider these matters; indeed, I think I might venture to say to the right reverend gentleman who has spoken, that these things are not matters of indifference, that they are matters practically bearing on the faith of the people day by day. I imagine that my friend Dr. Rule would hardly have been at the trouble of writing this paper if he had not found clear evidence that it is a difficulty in gaining the allegiance of a certain set of students of ancient history, mythology, theology, and cosmogony, that they can and do assume, and take it as fully granted, that the Scriptures are mere derivatives from other sources. (Hear, hear.) Therefore, I think that Dr. Rule has been dealing with a practical evil in demonstrating that it is impossible that the statements of the Scripture could have been derived from those other sources to which reference has been made. Possible it is that the divine truths presupposed in earlier books of the Scriptures may have been perverted and degraded by the later mythologies and cosmogonies; possible enough is it that these false systems may have played havoc with everything that was true and good, but it is not possible that the real original truth itself should have been gathered by a strange system of derivation and a gradual method of purification and analysis from those other sources. (Hear, hear.) I have been reminded, in reading and hearing this paper, of what I have always felt to be one of the great evidences of the truth of the Old Testament, and that is, that they are so entirely separate, so altogether in contrast with all the systems of mythology that have prevailed in the world. There was a time in my life when I gave a good deal of attention to these studies, and I then came to something like this conclusion—that a man left to the mere efforts and struggles of his own unaided reason when endeavouring to grapple with the problem of existence would never be led to the real and grand solution which we hold, namely that there is a personal God. (Hear, hear.) I believe that in order really to attain to that sublime, that wonderful truth, revelation was necessary. (Hear, hear.) As a matter of fact we do find that in any such mental struggle men are continually led to suggest such poor pitiful attempts at a solution of the problem as those we have had a sample of to-night. We find that the metaphysicians of to-day, when they refuse to accept the teachings of revelation on this subject, are very much in the same

condition as the mythologists of Greece and Rome, and, before their day, the mythologists of Egypt and Chaldea. We find that where they will not accept the doctrine of a personal Deity, they go back to an inscrutable power—they do not tell you what it is, but they say it is not personal, and they cannot attribute personality to it. They go back to fate and tendencies, to eternal somethings, not ourselves, which make for righteousness, and we know not what besides, because they will not admit a personal Deity. If we study the matter, we shall find nothing more intelligible in their various ideas on the subject than there is in the strange, sad, grotesque, but yet pathetic attempts of those old heathen thinkers to grapple with and solve the mystery of the universe. (Hear, hear.) I must add that when I look at the Jewish people and think of them as they were, with no greater advantages in many respects than others, and often even with less, and when I see that along their line the wonderful, the pure, the lofty, the consistent, the steadfast conception of a personal Deity, unalloyed, with no base mixture of mean and low anthropomorphism about it, but, whatever there was of it sublime, elevated, purified, and ennobled in a way absolutely divine,—I say, when I remember all this, it seems to me to be one of the strongest evidences of the fact and the truth of Divine revelation that could possibly be afforded, and a strong argument for our retaining our faith in the full and complete authority of the sacred Scriptures. (Cheers.)

Rev. J. FISHER, D.D.—I think that the writer of this paper has fully and clearly made out and established the point with which he started. I think he has made out very clearly that the monotheism of the Bible is not derived from the Egyptian mythology, nor from the Phœnician, Assyrian, or Chaldean systems, for they had no monotheism to give. I say that no twelve honest men would leave the jury-box after hearing the case Dr. Rule has put, till they had brought in a verdict in favour of the paper he has read and the truth it establishes. It was not necessary for the writer of the paper to go back to the antediluvian period. I do not agree with him that the worship of God ceased with the death of Abel, because in that case the Church would have ceased, and I think it did not. We have a great revival about the period of the birth of Seth, when men began to call on the name of the Lord; and taking it onward from the time of Noah, who, with his sons, were monotheists, it was carried forward through long ages. I think the founders and fathers of the systems of the early Egyptians and Phœnicians, and Chaldeans and Assyrians were monotheists; and I believe that the oldest work of magnificence in the world, the Great Pyramid, was built by monotheists. There is no trace of idolatry on it, and it is supposed by those who have examined it most closely that it was built by monotheists. We find at the time of Abraham a great spread of monotheism; then we come to Job, who knew the true God, and when Joseph went to Egypt there was a remnant of monotheism there. The further we go back into the history of the nations, the nearer we find them to monotheism. There are traces of it in the old Vedas, and there is the same thing in the Egyptian mythology.

I think that Dr. Rule has proved his point fully and completely, and that Moses did not borrow his monotheism.

Dr. RULE.—I will not consume a minute in what I have to say. In page 2 of my paper I instance the tradition which Mr. Howard supposed I had forgotten. I avoided most distinctly all that I might have said about Persia and so forth, because I wished to confine my observations to the point with which my paper deals. I also avoided speculations as to traditions and words which I conceive to be utterly useless and idle, and because there is no end to these speculations, and things without an end are exceedingly unpleasant. I have now only to thank you for the courtesy with which you have listened to me.

The meeting was then adjourned.

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