

Gesenius, Schenkel, Cassel, Winer, Herzog, Delitoch, Kitto, Davidson, Smith, etc., etc.

The meaning of Bel, or Baal, is equally unquestionable. The name is derived from the Hebrew verb (baal), which means to be lord or master over anything. It was the name of a tutelary god of the Phœnicians, Tyrians and Hebrews of Samaria. See Gesenius, Winer, Shenkel, Buxtorf, Kitto, or any standard authority or common encyclopædia. It would be easy to quote authorities and give extracts *ad infinitum* on this point, but I will cite only three, from works in our own language, easily accessible to all.

Gesenius' Hebrew and English Lexicon, p. 136, says; "Baal, *i. e.* the Lord, (by pre-eminence), as the name of a chief domestic and tutelary god of the Phœnicians, and particularly of the Tyrians; worshipped also by the Hebrews, especially of Samaria, with great pomp, along with Astarte."

Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, edited by Hackett & Abbot, vol. I, p. 206, says; "Baal, the supreme male divinity of the Phœnician and Canaanitish nations, as Ashtaroth was their supreme female deity."

New American Encyclopedia, vol. 2. p. 436, article "Baal" says; "This word (Baal) is of Phœnician origin, and signifies lord or ruler, and was used to designate the supreme deity by the Phœnicians and the Chaldeans, and most of the oriental nations of the time of the Exodus.

That Baal and Bel are synonymous—Bel being the Chaldaic form and the Babylonian name of the God Baal—may be seen by reference to Gesenius, Furst, Axtorf, and others.

Baal or Bel, then, is recognized by all oriental scholars as being the name under which many of the early nations worshipped God, or a god; and the statement reported to have been made at the last meeting of the General Grand Chapter, that it was the name of the devil, has, apparently, not the slightest foundation; in fact, is not alluded to in so far as I can ascertain by any authority whatever; certainly in no standard authority of the present day.

On was both the name of an Egyptian and the Coptic name for light, or the sun. As the name of an Egyptian city, it was called, by the Hebrews, Bethshemesh, or "house of the sun." By the Greeks, Heliopolis, or "city of the sun." By the Arabs, Ainsheims, or "fountain of the sun;" and it was celebrated for the worship and temple of the sun, one of the Gods of the Egyptians.

The primitive meaning of On, however, was sun, or light, and under the name On, *i. e.* ancient Egyptians worshipped God. To the fact that On meant the sun or light, we have the testimonies of Cyrill (Bishop of Alexandria) Jablonski, Champollion, August Knobel, Gesenius, Ritter, Winer, Herzog, Hamburger, Kitto, and many others. In proof of this, I will give a few, from many references that I have collected, principally from English and German authorities.

Dr. G. B. Winer, *Biblisches Real-Wörterbuch*, 1., 175, says; "In Egyptian, On means light, sun."

Kitto, *Cyclopedia of Biblical Literature*, vol. 3, p. 365. says; "On is a Coptic and ancient Egyptian word, signifying light and the sun.

Lastly, Herzog, in his *Real Encyclopædie*, X., 610, says. "This worship (of On) was, without doubt, the most spiritual of all the Egyptian worship; this priesthood was, without doubt, not only the most influential in the State, but also the most fitted to draw a worshipper of Jehovah into his circle;" "since On was the city of the temple of the sun, and On, in Coptic and old Egyptian, means sun light."

In conclusion, permit me to say that I have examined these questions, not as a Mason, but as a scholar. The authorities, to whom I have referred, are scholars who are Masonically unknown, and whose opinions on these and similar questions submitted by you to me for examination are,

*First*, That Jah or Jehovah was the name by which the Hebrews knew the Supreme Deity, and signified the *eternal*, the *immutable*.

*Second*, That Bel, or Baal, was worshipped both as the Supreme God, and as a god by many of the early nations, such as the Phœnicians, Tyrians, Byblonians and Hebrews; and there is no evidence to show that it was ever applied to Satan.

*Third*, On was the name both of an Egyptian city, celebrated for its temple and worship of the sun, and also of the sun and light itself; and by that name God was anciently worshipped.

Most sincerely and fraternally yours,

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The desire to legislate seems to be increasing among the Craft, and