that the Biblical writers intended their readers to understand that the relations between God and man were defined by the most impressive and binding formulæ known to men, and were guaranteed by the same credentials as those which men accepted from one another. *With your seed* (descendants) *after you*. The covenant was to be endless in duration.

Vs. 10, 11. *And with every living creature*. The covenant was to embrace animals as well as men. Note the kindly attention which is given to animals in the Bible. (See Deut. 5 : 14 ; Jonah 4 : 11 ; Matt. 6 : 26.) *Neither ..any food..to destroy*. This was God's side of the covenant,—a promise that the earth shall never again be devastated by a flood. Vs. 1-7 tell what was required of man.

II. The Token. 12-17.

V. 12. *This is the token :* that is, the sign. "In times when contracts were not reduced to writing, it was customary on the occasion of solemn vows, promises and other 'covenant' transactions, to appoint a sign, that the parties might at the proper time be reminded of the covenant, and a breach of its observance be averted" (Gunkel). It will be seen, therefore, that in ancient times these signs played a great rôle. For examples of the "signs" sometimes used, and the method of their employment, see chs. 15 and 21 : 30. (See also Light from the East.) *Between me and you..every living creature..for perpetual generations*. God's covenant is : (1) personal. Religion is a personal relation between God and man ; (2) universal, embracing all men and even animals ; (3) everlasting.

V. 13. *I do set my bow*. Among all primitive people the rainbow has been a matter for wonderment and speculation. To the people of India, it was the battle-bow of their god, Indra, laid aside after his conflict with the demons. By the Greeks it was personified as Iris, the messenger of Zeus, king of the gods, and in all myths it is explained in similar fashion. *In the cloud*. The rainbow requires, to produce it, the light and the storm. Its cause is the refraction of light by the cloud. It pictures God writing His

promise on the darkness with the light for His pen.

Vs. 14-17. *When I bring a cloud ;* or "clouds," literally, "cloud with cloud," as if the whole sky were dark with storm. God's control over nature was, in the Hebrew view, very direct and close. He directs the winds and spreads the clouds and speaks in the thunder. *The bow shall be seen ;* removing the fear of another flood with which the sight of gathering clouds might otherwise have filled Noah's heart. *I will remember*. The bow is the sign, but God is the Saviour. *Everlasting covenant*, etc. By repetition the writer exphasizes the unendingness and universal scope of the divine covenant.

Light from the East

COVENANT—When two parties entered into a solemn bond in the olden time, they each cut some part of the body and each swallowed a drop of the other's blood and thus they became covenant brothers. Later, sacrificial animals were divided along the backbone and the contracting parties passed between the pieces, thus signifying their readiness to be slain the same way if they failed to keep the promise so solemnly ratified. The flesh of the victims was afterwards eaten in a sacrificial meal, which still further sealed the compact and is sometimes referred to as a covenant of salt, which in that case is the substitute for blood. This ritual inherited from the nomadic period was afterwards generally supplanted by a solemn oath to observe the covenant accompanied by a clasping of hands, an invocation of God as a witness, and the imprecation of a curse on the non-observance of the promise. Often the agreement was confirmed by some outward sign such as the setting up of a pillar or a heap of stones, so that the parties might at the proper time be reminded of the covenant and a breach of it be averted. So the brilliant spectacle of the up-turned bow against the dark background of the retreating storm, is a natural reminder of the promise which God has given guaranteeing the stability of physical law.