

34/17ff.) is brief, simple, mainly ritualistic, and already shows the influence of agricultural life. What, then, can we regard as the Mosaic contribution? It is not possible in this sketch to enter into elaborate discussions as to the origin and meaning of the sacred name "Yahweh." In the OT there are different views as to the time when this name and the worship connected with it entered into the life of Israel and of the world (Gen. 4/26, Ex. 3/15, 6/3). The Scripture etymologies also, while revealing the thought of the day in which they arose, cannot be regarded as scientific or ultimate. The exact origin and original meaning of such words (e.g. the English "God") are lost in the obscurity of the remote past. Neither can we face the question of the relations of the early Hebrews to the Kenites, and their mutual influence in the region of politics and religion. Such relationship no doubt exerted an influence not only during the sojourn at the sanctuary at Kadesh, but also at a later time (Ex. 18; Jg. 1/16. 4/11, 17-22, 1 Ch. 2/55). Moses had gathered a number of tribes together, and was preparing them to press into the West Jordan region to find a permanent home. They had their separate family affiliations and their different clan customs. But success in their present undertaking demanded a large measure of unity and co-operation, and this could be created only by a powerful religious impulse. This impulse was given by belief in Yahweh as the God common to all the tribes, and faith in the power of His name as redeemer and leader. In God's good providence Moses was the man chosen as the instrument to kindle this faith and to give the highest expression that it could receive at that time. For, while we can now talk freely about *eternal* principles and the "timelessness" of Scripture, we cannot study the origin and growth of a great religion without seeing that every great truth has had to come in lowly, concrete form, limited and conditioned by the circumstances of a particular time and place. This, then, is the birth-hour of the Hebrew nation and religion, an event of immense importance for the religious life of the world. Though the idea of "a covenant" between Yahweh and Israel had been expanded and presented from different points of view by later prophetic and