

The Study of the Bible Today and Tomorrow, edited by Harold R. Willoughby  
(The University of Chicago Press, 1947)

"The Present State of Biblical Archaeology" G. Ernest Wright *Wright's Spelling*

p. 87 When it is sometimes said that recent study has done little to disturb the basic tenets of the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis, we should not fail to observe that the statement is confined to the continued recognition of the basic documents and the acceptance of certain dates for their completion. There is more, however, to Wellhausenism than this. It is primarily a reconstruction of the whole institutional history of Israel in line with Hegelian developmental patterns and based upon the assumption that the material within a given document is more of a reflection of the age in which the document was compiled than of the age which it purports to describe. Archeological discoveries and the new perspective which they are bringing about are attacking this aspect of Wellhausenism, with the result that many of its basic tenets are being revised.

p, 89 The Graf-Wellhausen reconstruction of the history of Israel's religion was, in effect, an assertion that within the pages of the Old Testament we have a perfect example of the evolution of a religion from animism in patriarchal times through henotheism to monotheism. The last was first achieved in pure form during the sixth and fifth centuries. The patriarchs worshiped the spirits in trees, stones, springs, mountains, etc. The God of pre-prophetic Israel was a tribal deity, limited in his power to the land of Palestine. Under the influence of Baalism he even became a fertility god and sufficiently tolerant to allow the early religion of Israel to be distinguished little from that of Canaan. It was the prophets who were the true innovators and who produced most, if not all, of that which was truly distinctive in Israel, the grand culmination coming with the universalism of II Isaiah.<sup>89</sup> <sup>90</sup> Thus we have animism, or polydemonism, a limited tribal deity, implicit ethical monotheism, and, finally, explicit and universal monotheism. The second and third stages have been variously grouped by scholars under polytheism, henotheism, and monotheism, depending upon the particular emphasis of the individual

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scholar.

42 The pattern of Hegelian dialectic is evident behind this reconstruction: thesis (pre-prophetic), antithesis (prophetic reaction), and synthesis (nomistic stage).