

but here we are compelled to find something more real—a spiritual life, and not a mechanical matter of mere political accretion. While admitting the baffling nature of all origins, we believe that a new chapter in the history of religion begins here; that, though Moses was not a literary man or a systematic theologian, he had a real message from the eternal God, whose highest messenger always appears in the lowly form of a servant. Men rightly looked back to this as a great hour (Hos. 11/1). Prophets and priests idealized it, each from their own standpoint; and the belief that this was an hour of new revelation was never lost. Of course it was germinal; it would have been just as difficult for any human observer of that time to tell exactly what would come out of it, as it is for us now to disentangle its exact feature out of a mass of varied and in some respects contradictory material. A struggling mass of human beings, feeling that the great blessing they needed from their God was their daily bread and a place to live in peace—this was the unpromising material out of which sprang the greatest religious movement that this world has known. But in it, with its simple elemental facts and its complexity of motives, may be found a symbol and suggestion of many similar movements, when men have been thrown back upon the abiding mercy and supreme power of God.

*The Period of Struggle and Settlement.*—The picture given in the original parts of Jg. is what we might expect under the circumstances. Tradition rightly represents that time as one of confusion, struggle, assimilation. No real political unity had been attained. “In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (Jg. 21/25). The material has been set in a later form and interpreted by a simple formal religious philosophy, but the primitive records tell of only partial conquest, involving perpetual conflict. It is easy to see what kind of theology and religious ceremonies were likely to grow in such a time and place. There is little of purity or exclusiveness either in race or religion. The Song of Deborah shows that only part of the tribes gather for the great effort. In this noble battle-song