

every age of the world there have been some, however few, who retained that knowledge in their minds and gave to Him alone the homage of their hearts. Moses is the great prophet of monotheism who first gave it enduring form as a national faith, and so guaranteed its perpetuity, but even he only regarded himself as continuing the faith of a line of patriarchs and prophets that reached back to the very origin of the race and joined hands across the centuries. The very first man has a knowledge of God and the first family are represented as uniting in sacrificial worship at His altar. Defection indeed comes early and spreads rapidly, but even in the darkest days Jehovah never left Himself without a seed to serve Him. The true religion never altogether disappeared from the earth, or the knowledge of it from among men. There has been more than enough of polytheism, and of animism, and of fetishism, and even of atheism in the world. But no one of these is the original religion. They are all degradations from a purer monotheism, which formed part of man's spiritual outfit at the beginning of his career. If the modern view is the correct one, we shall have to reverse all these conceptions and write afresh the earliest chapters of man's religious history, so as to bring them into harmony with the new theory.

Now, it is quite possible that we have come to read into these early chapters of Genesis a higher type of monotheism than the writer intended or than is warranted by any of the statements made. We are always apt unconsciously to attribute our own highest ideas to historical characters who have won our sympathy and appreciation in any way. There is monotheism and monotheism. Adam and Abel, and Seth and Enoch, and Noah may all have been monotheists, and yet their conceptions of the one true God be very different in many ways from what we would now understand by that name. Did they for instance understand that God was a purely spiritual being? The narrative is full of anthropomorphisms, and would be quite consistent with a far lower conception. Did they regard Him as being more interested in the moral character of his worshippers than in the ritual by