

what he thought to be the commandment to so large an extent as he did.

In the present day one cannot believe that this difficulty about the Amalekites was the real cause of the troubles that befell Saul. It can only be the explanation given by his generation of the development of the mental weakness that was inherent in his nature, and which, as has been already suggested, incapacitated him from being a successful leader of men. We may charitably suppose that the reasons given only echo the ideas held in these early times about the government of the world;

"Nor is it possible to thought
A greater than itself to know."

The modern theory of the gradual revelation of God from the dawn of history, each age being only able to appreciate his character as far as its mental capacity in spiritual matters permitted it, is a very instructive one. It enables us to understand how certain ideas and motives in different circumstances came to be attributed to the Deity. They were but the reflection of the opinions of the society of the day, about Jehovah, projected into the skies and coming back as the voice of God.

Far indeed were these ideas in the days of Saul from the belief of an earlier age, and it is refreshing as a breath of pure air to turn from them and read of the noble faith of Abraham in a just and merciful God. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" asks Abraham in the memorable interview with a God so merciful as to promise to spare the whole city of Sodom for the sake of even ten righteous men, if this small number can be found. But the long years of the captivity had borne their fruit in the degeneration of body and spirit. The people, led by Moses out of Egypt, could not escape from the dark shadow cast by slavery and sacerdotalism into the pure light that shone on the path of their wandering founder.