

Young - Friends' - Review.

"NEGLECT NOT THE GIFT THAT IS IN THEE."

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THOUGHTS.

If doing good be our life's aim,
Then let us go with hearts of love,
And labor not for wealth or fame,
But for the home that is above.

Oh, many times how sad we feel
When the dark clouds come floating o'er,
But all is cleared, if we but kneel
And our Creator's help implore.

The bright light then comes shining through,
And drives the darkness all away;
Now, let us strive the right to do,
And we will see eternal day.

—E. E. W.

EVOLUTION OF THE HEBREW CONCEPTION OF GOD.

III.

It is a fact fully established by comparative study, that religions *grow*, as do living organisms, from crude to nobler forms, keeping pace somewhat with the advance of civilization. "The oldest religions contain the germs of all the later growths," but the more highly developed forms become so enriched with ethical principles, that it is sometimes difficult to trace the parent stem. The Hebrew religion, fortunately for the purpose of these articles, has been so carefully preserved by tradition, and handed down in the records of sacred books, that we have little difficulty in tracing its development. Indeed, were the Bible records arranged in chronological order, the most casual reader could not fail to see the regular process of its evolution. As it is, it is strange that mankind have so long persistently misunderstood the early records of the Bible, and have not looked upon them "as true *children* of their *own* time." All religions, in their early forms, exhibit crude and immature conceptions of God—His character and His relation

to the universe,—and it is not to be expected that the Hebrew religion was noble in its earliest stages. Jesus uttered a philosophical truth, as well as a valuable one, in religion, in his declaration: "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I come not to destroy, *but to fulfill*." Before him were the prophets, with whom arose in the history of the Hebrew religion, the first conception of Jehovah, as the *one* God, the *only* God in the universe. Before the age of the prophets, Jehovah, as the God of Israel, was a *tribal* god, or a *national* god, believed by the Hebrews to be superior to all other gods, but not the *only* helpful god, whose favor might be secured if properly propitiated. From the patriarchs to the time of Solomon, the Hebrews treasured domestic gods, which were supposed to bring health and good fortune to the household, and which were held in esteem pretty much as were the Lares by the Greeks in later days. These household gods were called Teraphim.

We find allusion to these in Gen. xxxi., 19, where we are informed that while "Laban was gone to shear his sheep, Rachel stole the teraphim that were her father's," which in verse 30 Laban describes as "my gods." In later times Judges xvii., 5, we find that Micah "had an house of gods" in which Teraphim occupied an honored place, and in Judges xviii., we are told that a Levite priest, who was none other than Jonathan, the grandson of Moses, instead of destroying them, took the Teraphim with him when he changed his service from the house of Micah to the tribe of Dan. Still later (about 1000 B.C.) we find Teraphim treasured in the household of David, for we are told (1 Sam. xix., 13,) that Michal, in