

minimum, so that the temple and the altar have lost the greater part of their sacrificial importance.

I propose, then, in subsequent chapters, to trace the growth of the idea of a God from the most primitive origins to the most highly evolved forms ; beginning with the ghost, and the early undeveloped deity: continuing through polytheism to the rise of monotheism; and then returning at last once more to the full Christian conception, which we shall understand far better in detail after we have explained the nature of the yet unresolved or but provisionally resolved Jehovistic element. I shall try to show, in short, the evolution of God, by starting with the evolution of gods in general, and coming down by gradual stages through various races to the evolution of the Hebrew, Christian, and Moslem God in particular. And the goal towards which I shall move will be the one already foreshadowed in this introductory chapter,—the proof that in its origin the concept of a god is nothing more than that of a Dead Man, regarded as a still surviving ghost or spirit, and endowed with increased or supernatural powers and qualities.