

## II

### GOD AND THE WORLD

AMONG the many strange statements by which the Jewish student is struck, when reading modern divinity works, there is none more puzzling to his mind than the assertion of the transcendentalism of the Rabbinic God, and his remoteness from man. A world of ingenuity is spent to prove that the absence of the mediatorial idea in Rabbinic Theology is a sign not of its acceptance of man's close communion with God, but of its failure to establish the missing link between heaven and earth. Sayings of a fantastic nature, as, for instance, when a Rabbi speaks of God's abode in heaven, with its various partitions;<sup>1</sup> epithets for God, such as Heaven or Supreme, which antique piety accepted for the purpose of avoiding the name of God "being uttered in idleness"; terms expressive of his providence and his sublime holiness, as the Holy One, blessed be he, the King, the Lord of the World,

<sup>1</sup> See Weber, *System der Altsynagogalen Palästinensischen Theologie* (Leipzig, 1880), pp. 158, 159. See B. Jacob, "*Im Namen Gottes*," p. 171. It is interesting that in the very passage in *Chagigah*, 5 b, where this sharp division between the inner and outer departments is given, it is also stated that in the latter God is mourning over the misfortunes of Israel.