

Yahweh ever remained the God of Israel, and men had to learn to recognize Him as the God of righteousness, of history, and of the particular manifestations and products of nature before they could claim for Him, in the fullest sense, the supreme position as God of the whole earth. Hence, while angels and spirits appear in the earlier literature, it is in an unsystematic fashion; Yahweh is not only supreme within His kingdom, but His action is direct, immediate (*cf.* the Yahweh-Elohim of Gen. 2f. with the Elohim of 1, also the two different statements regarding the same events in 2 S. 24/1 and 1 Ch. 21/1). We do not attempt to smooth all these differences that give individuality to the different accounts, but rather rejoice in the sense of historical perspective that they help us to acquire. The gods of other nations are at one time rival deities belonging to rival tribes; later they become "idols," and even the great heavenly bodies worshipped by the Babylonians are claimed as creatures of Yahweh (Is. 40/26). These finally become mere *lamps* for the service of man, and specially to regulate his religious festivals (Gen. 1). The idols then become simple images, things that man has made and to which it is foolish to attach any divine significance. The "gods" have passed away from them and become "angels" or "demons," to whom Yahweh allows a limited sphere of service. This is different from the hard monotheism of Mohammedanism, which is more suitable to the bareness of the desert than a rich, complex social life. We can never go back to Moses or back to Christ in any narrow, mechanical way, because from the OT as well as from the NT we have inherited a religion which claims the right to grow and to baptize new things, when they have proved their reality, with the old sacred name.

Such development can also be recognized in connexion with an idea that must be central in any living conception of true religion, that of sacrifice. Whether the original idea was that of a gift to the God to win His favour, or of communion through a common meal shared by the worshippers and the deity, we must not attempt to settle; it is possible that both thoughts might become blended in the one transaction. Traces of these views in their more primitive form may still be found