

ship meet and mingle, but the faith in Yahweh shows its originality and strength by its power to live and conquer. For example, suppose we ask the question, "Was human sacrifice ever a part of Hebrew religion?" The answer will depend upon our point of view. It certainly does not belong to the religion of Yahweh, and never receives the sanction of any prophet. Hebrew religion first modified and then banished this ancient widespread and barbarous custom. But we know from clear statements that child-sacrifice was practised down to a late time by superstitious or despairing Israelites (Jer. 7/31). Such polemics against this custom as we find in the beautiful story or noble sermon show that it had a real hold on the minds of many people (Gen. 22, Mi. 6/1-8). The case of Jephthah's daughter shows the possibility of such a sacrifice among early Israelites from a quite honourable motive; the vow is to Yahweh, and He chooses the sacrifice. But two things must be borne in mind, viz. the probability that such occurrences were much less frequent among the ancestors of the Hebrews, who led a stern, simple life, than among the Canaanites, and that such desperate religious remedies are apt to be used in times of great confusion and distress. Alongside of the highest prophetic teaching these tragic relapses may take place. Further, in the thought of that time, when all public activity was completely controlled by religious motives, people saw "sacrifice" where we do not see it. The destruction of Achan and his family (Jos. 7), Agag hewed in pieces by Samuel "before Yahweh" (1 S. 15/32), and the impaling of the seven sons of Saul "before Yahweh" (2 S. 21/9), may all be classed as judicial procedure, exercised according to the tribal ideas of that time, but to the ancients there is in them a sacrificial and propitiatory element. Ideas attached to lower gods and demons were transferred to Yahweh, and then the thoughts concerning His being and character received a fuller purification and enlargement. The higher stage does not completely displace the lower; but there is an increase in the complexity and richness of life all round, with brilliant lights and deep, dark shades. The same remarks may be made and the same principles applied to the question of "idol" or "image worship." It took