

idea of God. The priests of Judaism conceived of Jehovah as one who dwelt apart from men in secret, inaccessible shrines, within closed doors and behind thick veils. God was only to be approached through the priesthood. He was normally a God at rest. His august leisure must not be disturbed. His majestic calm must not be rudely ruffled by the invasion of trifling human concerns. The priestly notion, so far as it prevailed, made for religious barrenness and deadness. It laid an icicle on the breast of the worshipper which smote his finer enthusiasms down with deadly chill. It tended to paralyse both the sensory and the motor nerves of faith. With God remote, unapproachable, impassive, religion grew formal and passionless. Had not singers and seers arisen to quicken the spiritual pulse of the nation with the thought of God's perpetual presence, the faith of Israel would have withered into a seedless and abortive thing. But the poets and prophets, with their mystic insight, were continually protesting against the hard, cold, deistic creed of the priesthood. They saw God in nature and in history and in the events of their own times. They found Him in the gales of inspiration which smote upon their own