

tions and a high religious sanction (Gen. 38/24). The "ghost" of Samuel is referred to as *Elohim* (god). The sacrificial clan feast (1 S. 20/29) and the mourning customs are interpreted by many in the same direction. Ceremonies connected with such things linger on when their origin has been wholly or partly forgotten; but the legislators and the preachers of a purer faith, in their jealousy for the supremacy of Yahweh, felt a repugnance to customs that belonged to a sphere which in their day had become "heathenish" and "superstitious." With them it was not a mere matter of "archæology" (Kautzsch, HDB) but of actual religious life.

Circumcision is a rite with a long history. In later times it was performed when the male child, at the end of the first week of its life, was dedicated to the God of Israel, and it became a distinctive mark of Judaism; but it was a primitive rite among many nations, and not a discovery of Abraham or Moses or a monopoly of the Israelites. The various traditions in the OT as to its origin and intention represent different points of view (Gen. 17 *; Ex. 4/26; Jos. 5/3 *). This mutilation, in the early days, was no doubt a rite of initiation into full membership in the tribe, when the young man was considered qualified to assume the duties of husband and soldier. The strange story in Ex. 4 may be meant to explain the transfer to childhood of an act of blood-dedication which left on the person a permanent tribal mark. The original form of the passover sacrifice, before it became associated with the feast of unleavened bread and received an historical interpretation, no doubt goes back to the nomadic days. We cannot, in a brief review, attempt to trace all these details or to discuss controverted points (see article, "The Religious Institutions of Israel") but we need to bear in mind all the time that we are dealing with the complicated story of human life, and not with an abstract theology. The Mosaic period is not a blank space upon which a new revelation is written in a mechanical fashion; the Israelites do not come into an empty land free from history and destitute of customs. The new must relate itself to the old in the way of conflict or absorption. Different types of thought and different modes of wor-