

# **THE EVOLUTION OF THEOLOGY: AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY**

**ESSAY #8 FROM "SCIENCE AND HEBREW  
TRADITION"**

**By Thomas Henry Huxley**

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I conceive that the origin, the growth, the decline, and the fall of those speculations respecting the existence, the powers, and the dispositions of beings analogous to men, but more or less devoid of corporeal qualities, which may be broadly included under the head of theology, are phenomena the study of which legitimately falls within the province of the anthropologist. And it is purely as a question of anthropology (a department of biology to which, at various times, I have given a good deal of attention) that I propose to treat of the evolution of theology in the following pages.

With theology as a code of dogmas which are to be believed, or at any rate repeated, under penalty of present or future punishment, or as a storehouse of anaesthetics for those who find the pains of life too hard to bear, I have nothing to do; and, so far as it may be possible, I shall avoid the expression of any opinion as to the objective truth or falsehood of the systems of theological speculation of which I may find occasion to speak. From my present point of view, theology is regarded as a natural product of the operations of the human mind, under the conditions of its existence, just as any other branch of science, or the arts of architecture, or music, or painting are such products. Like them, theology has a history. Like them also, it is to be met with in certain simple and rudimentary forms; and these can be connected by a multitude of gradations, which exist or have existed, among people of various ages and races, with the most highly developed theologies of past and present times. It is not my object to interfere, even in the slightest degree, with beliefs which anybody holds sacred; or to alter the conviction of any one who is of opinion that, in dealing with theology, we ought to be guided by considerations different from those which would be thought appropriate if the problem lay in the province of chemistry or of mineralogy. And if people of these ways of thinking choose to read beyond the present paragraph, the responsibility for meeting with anything they may

dislike rests with them and not with me.

We are all likely to be more familiar with the theological history of the Israelites than with that of any other nation. We may therefore fitly make it the first object of our studies; and it will be convenient to commence with that period which lies between the invasion of Canaan and the early days of the monarchy, and answers to the eleventh and twelfth centuries B.C. or thereabouts. The evidence on which any conclusion as to the nature of Israelitic theology in those days must be based is wholly contained in the Hebrew Scriptures—an agglomeration of documents which certainly belong to very different ages, but of the exact dates and authorship of any one of which (except perhaps a few of the prophetic writings) there is no evidence, either internal or external, so far as I can discover, of such a nature as to justify more than a confession of ignorance, or, at most, an approximate conclusion. In this venerable record of ancient life, miscalled a book, when it is really a library comparable to a selection of works from English literature between the times of Beda and those of Milton, we have the stratified deposits (often confused and even with their natural order inverted) left by the stream of the intellectual and moral life of Israel during many centuries. And, embedded in these strata, there are numerous remains of forms of thought which once lived, and which, though often unfortunately mere fragments, are of priceless value to the anthropologist. Our task is to rescue these from their relatively unimportant surroundings, and by careful comparison with existing forms of theology to make the dead world which they record live again. In other words, our problem is palaeontological, and the method pursued must be the same as that employed in dealing with other fossil remains.

Among the richest of the fossiliferous strata to which I have alluded are the books of Judges and Samuel. <sup>1</sup> It has often been observed that these writings stand out, in marked relief from those

which precede and follow them, in virtue of a certain archaic freshness and of a greater freedom from traces of late interpolation and editorial trimming. Jephthah, Gideon and Samson are men of old heroic stamp, who would look as much in place in a Norse Saga as where they are; and if the varnish-brush of later respectability has passed over these memoirs of the mighty men of a wild age, here and there, it has not succeeded in effacing, or even in seriously obscuring, the essential characteristics of the theology traditionally ascribed to their epoch.

There is nothing that I have met with in the results of Biblical criticism inconsistent with the conviction that these books give us a fairly trustworthy account of Israelitic life and thought in the times which they cover; and, as such, apart from the great literary merit of many of their episodes, they possess the interest of being, perhaps, the oldest genuine history, as apart from mere chronicles on the one hand and mere legends on the other, at present accessible to us.

But it is often said with exultation by writers of one party, and often admitted, more or less unwillingly, by their opponents, that these books are untrustworthy, by reason of being full of obviously unhistoric tales. And, as a notable example, the narrative of Saul's visit to the so-called "witch of Endor" is often cited. As I have already intimated, I have nothing to do with theological partisanship, either heterodox or orthodox, nor, for my present purpose, does it matter very much whether the story is historically true, or whether it merely shows what the writer believed; but, looking at the matter solely from the point of view of an anthropologist, I beg leave to express the opinion that the account of Saul's necromantic expedition is quite consistent with probability. That is to say, I see no reason whatever to doubt, firstly, that Saul made such a visit; and, secondly, that he and all who were present, including the wise woman of Endor herself, would have given, with entire sincerity, very much the same

account of the business as that which we now read in the twenty-eighth chapter of the first book of Samuel; and I am further of opinion that this story is one of the most important of those fossils, to which I have referred, in the material which it offers for the reconstruction of the theology of the time. Let us therefore study it attentively—not merely as a narrative which, in the dramatic force of its gruesome simplicity, is not surpassed, if it is equalled, by the witch scenes in Macbeth—but as a piece of evidence bearing on an important anthropological problem.

We are told (1 Sam. xxviii.) that Saul, encamped at Gilboa, became alarmed by the strength of the Philistine army gathered at Shunem. He therefore "inquired of Jahveh," but "Jahveh answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets." <sup>2</sup> Thus deserted by Jahveh, Saul, in his extremity, bethought him of "those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards," whom he is said, at some previous time, to have "put out of the land"; but who seem, nevertheless, to have been very imperfectly banished, since Saul's servants, in answer to his command to seek him a woman "that hath a familiar spirit," reply without a sign of hesitation or of fear, "Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor"; just as, in some parts of England, a countryman might tell any one who did not look like a magistrate or a policeman, where a "wise woman" was to be met with. Saul goes to this woman, who, after being assured of immunity, asks, "Whom shall I bring up to thee?" whereupon Saul says, "Bring me up Samuel." The woman immediately sees an apparition. But to Saul nothing is visible, for he asks, "What seest thou?" And the woman replies, "I see Elohim coming up out of the earth." Still the spectre remains invisible to Saul, for he asks, "What form is he of?" And she replies, "An old man cometh up, and he is covered with a robe." So far, therefore, the wise woman unquestionably plays the part of a "medium," and Saul is dependent upon her version of what happens.

The account continues:—

And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he bowed with  
 his face to the ground and did obeisance. And Samuel said  
 to  
 Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me to bring me up? And  
 Saul  
 answered, I am sore distressed: for the Philistines make  
 war  
 against me, and Elohim is departed from me and answereth  
 me no  
 more, neither by prophets nor by dreams; therefore I have  
 called  
 thee that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do.  
 And Samuel said, Wherefore then dost thou ask of me,  
 seeing that  
 Jahveh is departed from thee and is become thine  
 adversary?  
 And Jahveh hath wrought for himself, as he spake by me,  
 and  
 Jahveh hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand and given  
 it to  
 thy neighbour, even to David. Because thou obeyedst not  
 the  
 voice of Jahveh and didst not execute his fierce wrath  
 upon  
 Amalek, therefore hath Jahveh done this thing unto thee  
 this  
 day. Moreover, Jahveh will deliver Israel also with thee  
 into  
 the hands of the Philistines; and to-morrow shalt thou  
 and thy  
 sons be with me: Jahveh shall deliver the host of Israel  
 also  
 into the hand of the Philistines. Then Saul fell  
 straightway his  
 full length upon the earth and was sore afraid because of  
 the  
 words of Samuel... (v. 14-20).

The statement that Saul "perceived" that it was Samuel is not to  
 be taken to imply that, even now, Saul actually saw the shade of  
 the prophet, but only that the woman's allusion to the prophetic  
 mantle and to the aged appearance of the spectre convinced him  
 that it was Samuel. Reuss [3](#) in fact translates the passage "Alors  
 Saul reconnut que c'était Samuel." Nor does the dialogue between  
 Saul and Samuel necessarily, or probably, signify that Samuel  
 spoke otherwise than by the voice of the wise woman. The  
 Septuagint does not hesitate to call her [Greek], that is to say, a  
 ventriloquist, implying that it was she who spoke—and this view  
 of the matter is in harmony with the fact that the exact sense of the

Hebrew words which are translated as "a woman that hath a familiar spirit" is "a woman mistress of *Ob*." *Ob* means primitively a leather bottle, such as a wine skin, and is applied alike to the necromancer and to the spirit evoked. Its use, in these senses, appears to have been suggested by the likeness of the hollow sound emitted by a half-empty skin when struck, to the sepulchral tones in which the oracles of the evoked spirits were uttered by the medium. It is most probable that, in accordance with the general theory of spiritual influences which obtained among the old Israelites, the spirit of Samuel was conceived to pass into the body of the wise woman, and to use her vocal organs to speak in his own name—for I cannot discover that they drew any clear distinction between possession and inspiration. 4

If the story of Saul's consultation of the occult powers is to be regarded as an authentic narrative, or, at any rate, as a statement which is perfectly veracious so far as the intention of the narrator goes—and, as I have said, I see no reason for refusing it this character—it will be found, on further consideration, to throw a flood of light, both directly and indirectly, on the theology of Saul's countrymen—that is to say, upon their beliefs respecting the nature and ways of spiritual beings.

Even without the confirmation of other abundant evidences to the same effect, it leaves no doubt as to the existence, among them, of the fundamental doctrine that man consists of a body and of a spirit, which last, after the death of the body, continues to exist as a ghost. At the time of Saul's visit to Endor, Samuel was dead and buried; but that his spirit would be believed to continue to exist in Sheol may be concluded from the well-known passage in the song attributed to Hannah, his mother:—

*Jahveh killeth and maketh alive;  
He bringeth down to Sheol and bringeth up.*  
(1 Sam. ii. 6.)

And it is obvious that this Sheol was thought to be a place underground in which Samuel's spirit had been disturbed by the

necromancer's summons, and in which, after his return thither, he would be joined by the spirits of Saul and his sons when they had met with their bodily death on the hill of Gilboa. It is further to be observed that the spirit, or ghost, of the dead man presents itself as the image of the man himself—it is the man, not merely in his ordinary corporeal presentment (even down to the prophet's mantle) but in his moral and intellectual characteristics. Samuel, who had begun as Saul's friend and ended as his bitter enemy, gives it to be understood that he is annoyed at Saul's presumption in disturbing him; and that, in Sheol, he is as much the devoted servant of Jahveh and as much empowered to speak in Jahveh's name as he was during his sojourn in the upper air.

It appears now to be universally admitted that, before the exile, the Israelites had no belief in rewards and punishments after death, nor in anything similar to the Christian heaven and hell; but our story proves that it would be an error to suppose that they did not believe in the continuance of individual existence after death by a ghostly simulacrum of life. Nay, I think it would be very hard to produce conclusive evidence that they disbelieved in immortality; for I am not aware that there is anything to show that they thought the existence of the souls of the dead in Sheol ever came to an end. But they do not seem to have conceived that the condition of the souls in Sheol was in any way affected by their conduct in life. If there was immortality, there was no state of retribution in their theology. Samuel expects Saul and his sons to come to him in Sheol.

The next circumstance to be remarked is that the name of *Elohim* is applied to the spirit which the woman sees "coming up out of the earth," that is to say, from Sheol. The Authorised Version translates this in its literal sense "gods." The Revised Version gives "god" with "gods" in the margin. Reuss renders the word by "spectre," remarking in a note that it is not quite exact; but that the word *Elohim* expresses "something divine, that is to say,

superhuman, commanding respect and terror" ("Histoire des Israelites," p. 321). Tuch, in his commentary on Genesis, and Thenius, in his commentary on Samuel, express substantially the same opinion. Dr. Alexander (in Kitto's "Cyclopaedia" s. v. "God") has the following instructive remarks:—

*[Elohim is] sometimes used vaguely to describe unseen powers or superhuman beings that are not properly thought of as divine. Thus the witch of Endor saw "Elohim ascending out of the earth" (1 Sam. xxviii. 13), meaning thereby some beings of an unearthly, superhuman character. So also in Zechariah xii. 8, it is said "the house of David shall be as Elohim, as the angel of the Lord," where, as the transition from Elohim to the angel of the Lord is a minori ad majus, we must regard the former as a vague designation of supernatural powers.*

Dr. Alexander speaks here of "beings"; but there is no reason to suppose that the wise woman of Endor referred to anything but a solitary spectre; and it is quite clear that Saul understood her in this sense, for he asks "What form is HE of?"

This fact, that the name of Elohim is applied to a ghost, or disembodied soul, conceived as the image of the body in which it once dwelt, is of no little importance. For it is well known that the same term was employed to denote the gods of the heathen, who were thought to have definite quasi-corporeal forms and to be as much real entities as any other Elohim. <sup>5</sup> The difference which was supposed to exist between the different Elohim was one of degree, not one of kind. Elohim was, in logical terminology, the genus of which ghosts, Chemosh, Dagon, Baal, and Jahveh were species. The Israelite believed Jahveh to be immeasurably superior to all other kinds of Elohim. The inscription on the Moabite stone shows that King Mesa held Chemosh to be, as unquestionably, the superior of Jahveh. But if Jahveh was thus supposed to differ only in degree from the undoubtedly zoomorphic or anthropomorphic

"gods of the nations," why is it to be assumed that he also was not thought of as having a human shape? It is possible for those who forget that the time of the great prophetic writers is at least as remote from that of Saul as our day is from that of Queen Elizabeth, to insist upon interpreting the gross notions current in the earlier age and among the mass of the people by the refined conceptions promulgated by a few select spirits centuries later. But if we take the language constantly used concerning the Deity in the books of Genesis, Exodus, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, or Kings, in its natural sense (and I am aware of no valid reason which can be given for taking it in any other sense), there cannot, to my mind, be a doubt that Jahveh was conceived by those from whom the substance of these books is mainly derived, to possess the appearance and the intellectual and moral attributes of a man; and, indeed, of a man of just that type with which the Israelites were familiar in their stronger and intellectually abler rulers and leaders. In a well-known passage in Genesis (i. 27) Elohim is said to have "created man in his own image, in the image of Elohim created he him." It is "man" who is here said to be the image of Elohim—not man's soul alone, still less his "reason," but the whole man. It is obvious that for those who call a manlike ghost Elohim, there could be no difficulty in conceiving any other Elohim under the same aspect. And if there could be any doubt on this subject, surely it cannot stand in the face of what we find in the fifth chapter, where, immediately after a repetition of the statement that "Elohim created man, in the likeness of Elohim made he him," it is said that Adam begat Seth "in his own likeness, after his image." Does this mean that Seth resembled Adam only in a spiritual and figurative sense? And if that interpretation of the third verse of the fifth chapter of Genesis is absurd, why does it become reasonable in the first verse of the same chapter?

But let us go further. Is not the Jahveh who "walks in the garden in the cool of the day"; from whom one may hope to "hide oneself among the trees"; of whom it is expressly said that "Moses and

Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel," saw the Elohim of Israel (Exod. xxiv. 9-11); and that, although the seeing Jahveh was understood to be a high crime and misdemeanour, worthy of death, under ordinary circumstances, yet, for this once, he "laid not his hand on the nobles of Israel"; "that they beheld Elohim and did eat and drink"; and that afterwards Moses saw his back (Exod. xxxiii. 23)—is not this Deity conceived as manlike in form? Again, is not the Jahveh who eats with Abraham under the oaks at Mamre, who is pleased with the "sweet savour" of Noah's sacrifice, to whom sacrifices are said to be "food" <sup>6</sup>—is not this Deity depicted as possessed of human appetites? If this were not the current Israelitish idea of Jahveh even in the eighth century B.C., where is the point of Isaiah's scathing admonitions to his countrymen: "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith Jahveh: I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats" (Isa. i. 11). Or of Micah's inquiry, "Will Jahveh be pleased with thousands of rams or with ten thousands of rivers of oil?" (vi. 7.) And in the innumerable passages in which Jahveh is said to be jealous of other gods, to be angry, to be appeased, and to repent; in which he is represented as casting off Saul because the king does not quite literally execute a command of the most ruthless severity; or as smiting Uzzah to death because the unfortunate man thoughtlessly, but naturally enough, put out his hand to stay the ark from falling—can any one deny that the old Israelites conceived Jahveh not only in the image of a man, but in that of a changeable, irritable, and, occasionally, violent man? There appears to me, then, to be no reason to doubt that the notion of likeness to man, which was indubitably held of the ghost Elohim, was carried out consistently throughout the whole series of Elohim, and that Jahveh-Elohim was thought of as a being of the same substantially human nature as the rest, only immeasurably more powerful for good and for evil.

The absence of any real distinction between the Elohim of different ranks is further clearly illustrated by the corresponding absence of any sharp delimitation between the various kinds of people who serve as the media of communication between them and men. The agents through whom the lower Elohim are consulted are called necromancers, wizards, and diviners, and are looked down upon by the prophets and priests of the higher Elohim; but the "seer" <sup>7</sup> connects the two, and they are all alike in their essential characters of media. The wise woman of Endor was believed by others, and, I have little doubt, believed herself, to be able to "bring up" whom she would from Sheol, and to be inspired, whether in virtue of actual possession by the evoked Elohim, or otherwise, with a knowledge of hidden things, I am unable to see that Saul's servant took any really different view of Samuel's powers, though he may have believed that he obtained them by the grace of the higher Elohim. For when Saul fails to find his father's asses, his servant says to him—

*Behold, there is in this city a man of Elohim, and he is a man that is held in honour; all that he saith cometh surely to pass; now let us go thither; peradventure, he can tell us concerning our journey whereon we go. Then said Saul to his servant, But behold if we go, what shall we bring the man? for the bread is spent in our vessels and there is not a present to bring to the man of Elohim. What have we? And the servant answered Saul again and said, Behold I have in my hand the fourth part of a shekel of silver: that will I give to the man of Elohim to tell us our way. (Beforetime in Israel when a man went to inquire of Elohim, then he said, Come and let us go to the Seer: for he that is now called a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer <sup>8</sup>) (1 Sam. ix. 6-10).*

In fact, when, shortly afterwards, Saul accidentally meets

Samuel, he says, "Tell me, I pray thee, where the Seer's house is." Samuel answers, "I am the Seer." Immediately afterwards Samuel informs Saul that the asses are found, though how he obtained his knowledge of the fact is not stated. It will be observed that Samuel is not spoken of here as, in any special sense, a seer or prophet of Jahveh, but as a "man of Elohim"—that is to say, a seer having access to the "spiritual powers," just as the wise woman of Endor might have been said to be a "woman of Elohim"—and the narrator's or editor's explanatory note seems to indicate that "Prophet" is merely a name, introduced later than the time of Samuel, for a superior kind of "Seer," or "man of Elohim." 9

Another very instructive passage shows that Samuel was not only considered to be diviner, seer, and prophet in one, but that he was also, to all intents and purposes, priest of Jahveh—though, according to his biographer, he was not a member of the tribe of Levi. At the outset of their acquaintance, Samuel says to Saul, "Go up before me into the high place," where, as the young maidens of the city had just before told Saul, the Seer was going, "for the people will not eat till he come, because he doth bless the sacrifice" (1 Sam. x. 12). The use of the word "bless" here—as if Samuel were not going to sacrifice, but only to offer a blessing or thanksgiving—is curious. But that Samuel really acted as priest seems plain from what follows. For he not only asks Saul to share in the customary sacrificial feast, but he disposes in Saul's favour of that portion of the victim which the Levitical legislation, doubtless embodying old customs, recognises as the priest's special property. 10

Although particular persons adopted the profession of media between men and Elohim, there was no limitation of the power, in the view of ancient Israel, to any special class of the population. Saul inquires of Jahveh and builds him altars on his own account; and in the very remarkable story told in the fourteenth chapter of the first book of Samuel (v. 37-46), Saul appears to conduct the

whole process of divination, although he has a priest at his elbow. David seems to do the same.

Moreover, Elohim constantly appear in dreams—which in old Israel did not mean that, as we should say, the subject of the appearance "dreamed he saw the spirit"; but that he veritably saw the Elohim which, as a soul, visited his soul while his body was asleep. And, in the course of the history of Israel Jahveh himself thus appears to all sorts of persons, non-Israelites as well as Israelites. Again, the Elohim possess, or inspire, people against their will, as in the case of Saul and Saul's messengers, and then these people prophesy—that is to say, "rave"—and exhibit the ungoverned gestures attributed by a later age to possession by malignant spirits. Apart from other evidence to be adduced by and by, the history of ancient demonology and of modern revivalism does not permit me to doubt that the accounts of these phenomena given in the history of Saul may be perfectly historical.

In the ritual practices, of which evidence is to be found in the books of Judges and Samuel, the chief part is played by sacrifices, usually burnt offerings. Whenever the aid of the Elohim of Israel is sought, or thanks are considered due to him, an altar is built, and oxen, sheep, and goats are slaughtered and offered up. Sometimes the entire victim is burnt as a holocaust; more frequently only certain parts, notably the fat about the kidneys, are burnt on the altar. The rest is properly cooked; and, after the reservation of a part for the priest, is made the foundation of a joyous banquet, in which the sacrificer, his family, and such guests as he thinks fit to invite, participate. <sup>11</sup> Elohim was supposed to share in the feast, and it has been already shown that that which was set apart on the altar, or consumed by fire, was spoken of as the food of Elohim, who was thought to be influenced by the costliness, or by the pleasant smell, of the sacrifice in favour of the sacrificer.

All this bears out the view that, in the mind of the old Israelite, there was no difference, save one of degree, between one Elohim

and another. It is true that there is but little direct evidence to show that the old Israelites shared the widespread belief of their own, and indeed of all times, that the spirits of the dead not only continue to exist, but are capable of a ghostly kind of feeding and are grateful for such aliment as can be assimilated by their attenuated substance, and even for clothes, ornaments, and weapons. <sup>12</sup> That they were familiar with this doctrine in the time of the captivity is suggested by the well-known reference of Ezekiel (xxxii. 27) to the "mighty that are fallen of the uncircumcised, which are gone down to [Sheol] hell with their weapons of war, and have laid their swords under their heads." Perhaps there is a still earlier allusion in the "giving of food for the dead" spoken of in Deuteronomy (xxvi. 14). <sup>13</sup>

It must be remembered that the literature of the old Israelites, as it lies before us, has been subjected to the revisal of strictly monotheistic editors, violently opposed to all kinds of idolatry, who are not likely to have selected from the materials at their disposal any obvious evidence, either of the practice under discussion, or of that ancestor-worship which is so closely related to it, for preservation in the permanent records of their people.

The mysterious objects known as *Teraphim*, which are occasionally mentioned in Judges, Samuel, and elsewhere, however, can hardly be interpreted otherwise than as indications of the existence both of ancestor-worship and of image-worship in old Israel. The teraphim were certainly images of family gods, and, as such, in all probability represented deceased ancestors. Laban indignantly demands of his son-in-law, "Wherefore hast thou stolen my Elohim?" which Rachel, who must be assumed to have worshipped Jacob's God, Jahveh, had carried off, obviously because she, like her father, believed in their divinity. It is not suggested that Jacob was in any way scandalised by the idolatrous practices of his favourite wife, whatever he may have thought of her honesty when the truth came to light; for the teraphim seem to

have remained in his camp, at least until he "hid" his strange gods "under the oak that was by Shechem" (Gen. xxxv. 4). And indeed it is open to question if he got rid of them then, for the subsequent history of Israel renders it more than doubtful whether the teraphim were regarded as "strange gods" even as late as the eighth century B.C.

The writer of the books of Samuel takes it quite as a matter of course that Michal, daughter of one royal Jahveh worshipper and wife of the servant of Jahveh *par excellence*, the pious David, should have her teraphim handy, in her and David's chamber, when she dresses them up in their bed into a simulation of her husband, for the purpose of deceiving her father's messengers. Even one of the early prophets, Hosea, when he threatens that the children of Israel shall abide many days without "ephod or teraphim" (iii. 4), appears to regard both as equally proper appurtenances of the suspended worship of Jahveh, and equally certain to be restored when that is resumed. When we further take into consideration that only in the reign of Hezekiah was the brazen serpent, preserved in the temple and believed to be the work of Moses, destroyed, and the practice of offering incense to it, that is, worshipping it, abolished—that Jeroboam could set up "calves of gold" for Israel to worship, with apparently none but a political object, and certainly with no notion of creating a schism among the worshippers of Jahveh, or of repelling the men of Judah from his standard—it seems obvious, either that the Israelites of the tenth and eleventh centuries B.C. knew not the second commandment, or that they construed it merely as part of the prohibition to worship any supreme god other than Jahveh, which precedes it.

In seeking for information about the teraphim, I lighted upon the following passage in the valuable article on that subject by Archdeacon Farrar, in Ritto's "Cyclopaedia of Biblical Literature," which is so much to the purpose of my argument, that I venture to quote it in full:—

The main and certain results of this review are that the teraphim were rude human images; that the use of them was an antique Aramaic custom; that there is reason to suppose them to have been images of deceased ancestors; that they were consulted oracularly; that they were not confined to Jews; that their use continued down to the latest period of Jewish history; and lastly, that although the enlightened prophets and strictest later kings regarded them as idolatrous, the priests were much less averse to such images, and their cult was not considered in any way repugnant to the pious worship of Elohim, nay, even to the worship of him "under the awful title of Jehovah." In fact, they involved a monotheistic idolatry very different indeed from polytheism; and the tolerance of them by priests, as compared with the denunciation of them by the prophets, offers a close analogy to the views of the Roman Catholics respecting pictures and images as compared with the views of Protestants.

It was against this use of idolatrous symbols and emblems in a monotheistic worship that the second commandment was directed, whereas the first is aimed against the graver sin of direct polytheism. But the whole history of Israel shows how utterly and how early the law must have fallen into desuetude.

The worship of the golden calf and of the calves at Dan and Bethel, against which, so far as we know, neither Elijah nor Elisha said a single word; the tolerance of high places, teraphim and betylia; the offering of incense for centuries to the brazen serpent destroyed by Hezekiah; the occasional glimpses of the most startling irregularities sanctioned apparently even in the temple worship itself, prove most decisively that a pure monotheism and an independence of symbols was the result of a slow and painful course of God's disciplinal dealings among the noblest thinkers of a single nation, and not,

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