

mercy, justice, and holiness, are brought out in the Old Testament in a far more distinct and impressive manner than in all other ancient writings. Another point, and a vital one, with the writers of the Old Testament, in which that inspired volume goes infinitely beyond the philosophers, is the unity of God. They teach, as a fundamental principle, and with all the earnestness which inspiration can bestow, not only that Jehovah is supreme, but that he is God alone, and that no other gods exist. You may, indeed, find statements to this effect in the works of the philosophers; but the conduct of Socrates, the most enlightened of them all, in his dying moments, in directing a sacrifice to be made to *Æsculapius*, is a good practical commentary upon their doctrine of the divine unity. It shows that, with some correct notions of the supreme divinity, they believed in the existence of inferior deities; or, at least, they did not regard the popular error on this subject of importance enough to require them boldly to testify against it. But such testimony constitutes the burden of the Old Testament, as if all other religious truths were of little importance without it. And so far as these inspired books succeeded in fixing this doctrine in the minds of the Jews, they performed an immense service for religion. They swept at once from the universe the thirty thousand divinities of Greece and Rome, and placed Jehovah only on the throne. But, for some reason or other, polytheism has always been a doctrine most congenial to human nature; especially to the uncultivated mind; and the probability is, that the great mass of the Jews, while they believed in the supremacy of Jehovah, still supposed that the gods of the heathen had a real existence. This certainly was the case before the Babylonish exile, though doubtless the patriarchs had more correct notions. This fact explains the otherwise unaccountable disposition of the Jews to fall away to idolatry, in spite of all which Jehovah did to preserve among them his true worship.

On the subject, also, of the divine spirituality, we have evidence that the notions of the great mass of the Jewish nation were low and confused. They distinguished, it is true, very clearly between the body and the soul. But they probably conceived of the latter as a very subtle, invisible, corporeal essence, and not that pure, immaterial substance which is understood by that term in metaphysics. The abstract ideas