

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *Journal of Biblical Literature* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_jbl-01.php

EVIL SPIRITS IN THE BIBLE.*

BY PROF. C. H. TOY.

ONE of the most curious phenomena of history is the part which the belief in hostile or evil supernatural beings has played in man's moral-religious development. This belief exists, so far as we know, wherever man is found; and the creeds of various communities in different parts of the world on this point, along with many differences of detail, show remarkable similarities among themselves. The special form of the Hebrew belief is interesting not only from the point of view of ancient sociology, but also from the fact that it has so largely colored our own civilization.

It is not easy to give a full history of the old Hebrew scheme of evil spirits. Many popular beliefs must have perished beyond recovery. We have not in the Old Testament a book which in its present form is earlier than the eighth century. It is probable that all the Old Testament material has undergone a revision at the hands of men who either had it at heart to suppress what they thought degrading beliefs, or else were so much absorbed in higher religious ideas that they willingly ignored and omitted all that did not illustrate Israel's true faith. Here and there only an anecdote, a casual remark, an isolated law, gives us a glimpse into the old life of the people. Even in comparatively late times the notices are so brief and rare that they leave many gaps in the history of religious development. It is, therefore, by no means an exhaustive account of the subject that one can undertake to give, though one may hope to trace with tolerable clearness the general lines of advance.

In the first place we may ask whether the Old Testament contains traces of the ancient belief in hurtful spirits, and whether their injurious power, if they were a part of the popular faith, was only physical, or both physical and moral. The question must be answered in the negative so far as the injurious quality is concerned. There are signs, indeed, of a survival of the old Shamanistic creed; certain extra-human beings are mentioned as in general outside of or hostile to the religion of Israel; but they are denounced as rivals of Yahwe, or they are spoken of as uncanny and undesirable. No physically

*Read in December 1889.

or morally hurtful influence is ascribed to them, and no defence against them prescribed. Thus, the *Sā'ir* appears (Lev. xvii. 7) as a demon, apparently of the wilderness, which the Israelites were inclined to worship with sacrifices. Such a cult is ascribed by the Chronicler (2 Chron. xi. 15) to Jeroboam I, but as the Book of Kings says nothing of it, this notice is perhaps to be treated as a legendary addition to the earlier narrative. The origin of the name *Sā'ir* is doubtful. It is elsewhere (Isa. xiii. 21; xxxiv. 14) used of a wilderness animal, which, it is said, shall cry and dance in the ruins of Babylon; and occurs in the Pentateuch (Gen. xxxvii. 31; Lev. iv. 24; xvi. 5, 9 al.; Num. vii. 16 al.), in Ezekiel (xliii. 22 al.), and in Daniel (viii. 21) in the sense of "he-goat." It seems, then, to be a goat-like, satyr-like being which was propitiated or invoked by offerings. Beyond this nothing is said in the Old Testament; none of its qualities, physical or ethical, are mentioned.

Still more enigmatical is the *Azazel* of Leviticus (xvi. 8, 10, 26), standing isolated, as he does, in a single ritual, and that the most impressive of the Jewish religion. Bearing the sins of the nation on his head, the goat chosen by lot for this service is led into the wilderness and there abandoned, presumably falling into the hands of *Azazel*, who must be considered as representing the domain of sin. He occupies a very different position from that of the *Sā'ir*; he is not an object of worship, no sacrifice is presented to him, his name is not invoked, and he does not appear on the scene. Mysteriously hidden in the wilderness, he receives the national sin of the year, and bears it away out of the sphere of the national life. He is treated in Leviticus as a familiar figure, but of his origin and character nothing is said. The name (אָזָזִיל) is obscure,¹ and no satisfactory account of it has been offered. *Azazel* has been identified with Satan, but this view is opposed to what is elsewhere in the Old Testament (especially Job) said of Satan, who is represented as one of the Elohim beings; and there is no obvious reason why he should here be called by a different name.² True, in the book of Enoch (viii. 1; ix. 6; x. 4-8) he is

¹ The explanation of אָזָזִיל as standing for שָׂרִיזִיל, "the remover" (from שָׂרַז), is simple and grammatically sound; but it is only a conjecture, having no documentary support. A derivation from the Persian Dæva name, Azi (Spiegel, *Iranische Alterthumskunde* 1. 135), does not seem possible.

² Lev. xvi. is later than Job i. and Zech. iii., and its author, one would suppose, must have been acquainted with these passages.

introduced as the prime corrupter of men, and is put into darkness to be afterwards, on the great day of judgment, cast into the fire. But this is merely a fancy of later times, and proves nothing for the Old Testament.³ Yet Azazel occupies so high a position in Leviticus that one is inclined to suppose that he was regarded as a chief of the kingdom of evil. In that case he must have come to the Jews by a different path from that of Satan. We might suspect a Persian origin, though of this there is no evidence beyond the fact that Lev. xvi. assumes the existence of the two opposed realms of good and evil, and that Azazel stands for the latter. The transference of sin from the one realm to the other is represented by what seems to be a primitive bit of symbolism.⁴

The *lilith* of Isa. xxxiv. 14 appears to be a wild animal, and not a demon; it occurs in a list of animals, and does not seem to be in any way distinguished from the others. Still, as the name in Babylon and the later Judaism (in the Talmud) denoted a female demon (not unlike the Persian Drujas and Pairikas), it is possible that this use existed in Old Testament times. The *lilith* would then have to be considered as a remnant of the old Shamanism or spiritism, a true creation of popular fancy. There is no evidence that it ever had more religious significance than attaches to such figures in all nations. It would be feared and propitiated by the people, but it did not enter into the substance of the developed Old Testament religion.⁵ It is sufficient to mention the Asmodæus of Tobit, a loan from the Persians (Aeshma

³ The book of Enoch shows great fecundity in the elaboration and organization of angels and demons.

⁴ Compare the Iroquois ceremony of the white dog, which at the annual feast was laden with the confessions of the people, and then burned (Garrick Mallery, in *Popular Science Monthly*, Nov. 1889, p. 73). Both dog and goat seem to have been originally conceived of as actually charged with the national sin. Since the goat acts as a subject of Azazel, it may be that the latter was a goat-demon. Compare, however, the Arabian deities Uzzā and Aziz; from the same stem Azazel might come by formative addition of *z* (in spite of the long final vowel), the *z* being a mere vowel-letter. He might then be regarded as an old Hebrew figure, the chief of the wilderness demons, elevated through the influence of Persian ideas to the position of representative of the kingdom of evil. On Uzza comp. Wellhausen, *Reste arabischen Heidentumes*, p. 32.

⁵ On the Babylonian *lilit*, see Fr. Lenormant, *La Magie chez les Chaldéens* (Paris, 1874), and the German translation of the same work; and on the later Jewish conception, Weber, *Lehren des Talmud*, p. 246. On the relation between demons and animals, see W. R. Smith, *The Religion of the Semites*, pp. 113 ff.

daeva), but, so far as we know, of small religious importance. He does not appear in Enoch.⁶

Of all these it is to be noted that they are not mentioned in any book earlier than the Babylonian Exile. This fact may be without significance; their omission may be simply an accident. Perhaps, however, we are to see here a result of Babylonian and Persian influence. The prominence of evil spirits in the religious systems of these peoples may have colored the thought of the Jewish exiles, led them to adopt, perhaps in modified form, figures from the popular mythologies of their neighbors.

There seems to be no evidence that foreign deities are ever regarded as demons in the Old Testament. In early times (Jephthah, Judges xi. 24, and David, 1 Sam. xxvi. 19) such deities were treated as real and powerful divine beings. Elijah may have spoken ironically of Baal's godship, but he did not represent him as an evil spirit. The quarrel of the prophets with foreign divinities was that they were not Israelitish, that they seduced the people from their own God, and that their worship often involved immoralities. In the course of time (from the latter part of the Exile on) they were held up to ridicule by advanced Israelitish thinkers as impotent, or as nothings (Isa. xlv. 9-19; Ps. cxv. 4-8). The expression "worthless thing" (*elil*) for "idol" is found as early as Isaiah (Isa. ii. 8), and as late as Chronicles and Psalms (1 Chron. xvi. 26; Ps. xcvi. 5). There is one term (*shed*) which has been supposed to involve an identifying in the Old Testament of non-Israelitish deities with evil spirits. This term occurs twice (Deut. xxxii. 17; Ps. cvi. 37), and is rendered in the King James version "devil," and in the Revised version "demon," doubtless after the Septuagint (*δαμόνιον*), the Syriac (ܕܡܘܢܝܘܢ), and the Latin Vulgate (*daemonium*); but none of these ancient versions can be taken as authority for such a term. In the passage in Deuteronomy *shedim* is parallel with "gods," and in the Psalm-passage with "idols" (עֲצָבִים), that is, it apparently represents divine beings of the ordinary sort. Nor does the Assyrian use of the term favor any other sense. The Assyrian *shidu* is the expression for the bull-deity, which, while perhaps not equal in rank to the chief gods, is nevertheless distinguished from spirits and demons.⁷ Nor can the some-

⁶ In the Talmud he is the head of the *shedim* (Weber, *Lehr-n des Talmud*, p. 245).

⁷ Heathen gods are termed demons in Baruch iv. 7 and 1 Cor. x. 20, 21, and in

what obscure passage (Isa. xxiv. 21-23) be regarded as referring to demonic powers. The "host of the height in the height," here contrasted with the "kings of the earth on the earth," seem to be the deities that are held to dwell in and control the heavenly bodies, apparently a reference to the Babylonian astral divinities conceived of as hostile to the God of Israel. Yahwe, says the prophet, to show his power over these foreign gods, will confound the moon, and put the sun to shame. It is only another form of the exclamation in Exodus xv. 11, "Who is like unto thee, O Yahwe, among the gods?"

Magic and soothsaying do not necessarily involve dealing with evil or hurtful spirits. The Ob-masters of Endor, of Isaiah viii. 19, Leviticus xix. 31, etc., the conjurers and necromancers, summoned the spirits of the dead to answer the questions of the living; but these were not thought of as morally bad, as ill-natured or malevolent. They were simply beings endowed with more than human knowledge, who might be appealed to for guidance. It might thus seem that the belief in malevolent demons did not form a prominent or influential element in the old Israelitish religion, but this would be a hasty conclusion. We should naturally suppose that the primitive spiritistic faith would survive in the life of the people. Though it has vanished from the Old Testament literature under the power of higher thought, it may reappear, transformed, assimilated by the higher life, and re-organized. Whether this last is the case, we shall presently inquire.

We may first turn to the realm of the Elohim-beings, the "sons of the Elohim," the "messengers" of Elohim or of Yahwe, and ask whether malevolent beings are to be found in their ranks. Without undertaking here to go into an examination of their origin, it will be sufficient to recognize them, as they everywhere appear in the Old Testament, as servants, messengers, ministers of the God of Israel, endowed with superhuman powers, but acting always under Yahwe's control, and only in accordance with his will and command.

We may distinguish two stadia in the functions of the angels. In the first, they are simply executors of the divine will, whether for good or for evil, for blessing or for cursing; in the second, they are

the Talmud *shedim* are demons. The Septuagint *δαίμωνιον*, in Deut. xxxii. 17; Isa. lxv. 11; Ps. xevi. 5 and cvi. 37, is probably used in the more general sense of "divinity," or "bad or hostile divinity"; whence the later employment of the term for "evil spirit" would easily come. It would seem that in the first century of our era it was used in both senses.

in great measure removed from the sphere of individual human life, acting almost exclusively as world-functionaries, directing the affairs of nations, or moving in celestial places. To the first stadium belongs the representation of the whole of the Old Testament, except the book of Daniel.⁸ Angels are here sometimes ministers of punishment and evil, inflicting plagues (2 Sam. xxiv.; 1 Chron. xxi.; 2 Kings xix. 35), and pursuing the enemies of the chosen people (Ps. xxxv. 5, 6; lxxviii. 49). But they are not represented as being themselves actuated by animosity; they simply carry out the commands of Yahwe, from whom proceed all things, good and evil.

I have included "the sons of the Elohim (or Ehim)" above, in the same category with the "messengers" or "angels." But, though the two classes of beings may both be designated as belonging particularly to the Elohim sphere, the usage of the Old Testament makes a difference between them. While the term *mal'āk* describes those super-human intelligences who act as agents or representatives of God in his control of affairs, the "sons of God" are mentioned in other connections, not so much as ministers, but rather as members of the divine court, attendants on God, yet in a sort independent. The infrequency with which they are introduced points to something peculiar in the conception of them. The title occurs in only three books. In Gen. vi. 2, 4, they descend to earth and form marriage alliances with the daughters of men. The curtness of the narrative here leaves many obscurities; but the "sons of Elohim" act without reference to the supreme God; they are, in fact, themselves gods, and their intermarriages with women are here mentioned, apparently, to account for

⁸ The word *mal'āk* in the sense of "angel" is not of frequent occurrence in the Old Testament; it is found 113 times, and the occurrences are unequally distributed among the various books, as follows: Genesis, 15; Exodus, 6; Numbers, 11 (of which 10 are in the story of Balaam); Judges, 22 (all but 3 in the stories of Gideon and Samson); 1 Samuel, 1 (in the mouth of the Philistine Achish); 2 Samuel, 7 (4 in the story of the plague, 2 by the wise woman of Tekoa, 1 by Mephibosheth); 1 Kings, 3 (1 by the old prophet of Bethel); 2 Kings, 3; 1 Chronicles, 9 (all in the story of the plague); 2 Chronicles, 1; Job, 2; Psalms, 8; Isaiah, 2 (1 in the historical part); Hosea, 1; Zechariah, 20; Daniel, 2. It appears that there is but one prophetic mention of angels till towards the end of the Exile, and that (Hosea xii. 5) relates to the patriarchal period; in Deuteronomy none; relatively many in the post-Exilic prophets; and most in popular narratives. The conception seems to have belonged originally to the folk-lore, and to have been organized later under the influence of foreign thought.

the birth of the heroes who illustrate ancient history.⁹ In Job they are attendants on the divine majesty, once (i. 6; ii. 1) presenting themselves before Yahwe in order, as it seems, to make reports of their doings (though their functions are not mentioned); another time (xxxviii. 7) rejoicing at the creation of the world (compare Gen. i. 26). In Ps. xxix. 1, and lxxxix. 6 (7), they are a class of divine beings to whom Yahwe is declared to be superior, and who are called on to ascribe glory to him; and in like manner we are probably to understand Ps. lxxxii. as an address to the sons of the Elohim, who are here, apparently, foreign deities.¹⁰ They seem to represent a tradition which conceived of the Elohim-beings in a form more nearly resembling their primitive divine character; while the messengers or angels are these same beings organized as agents of the divine government.

It is in the ranks of the sons of the Elohim that the Satan appears in the book of Job. Both here and in Zechariah (iii.) he still stands in the circle of Yahwe's servants, and under his immediate direction. In Job he is a skeptical, sardonic spirit, an observer of human life, but not acting till he is bidden by Yahwe, when he becomes the instrument of trial for Job, the means of demonstrating the hero's integrity, and of illustrating the author's theory that suffering is sometimes sent by God not as punishment, but as test and discipline. In Zechariah he is the accuser of the high priest before the judgment-seat of the angel of Yahwe. His figure is here not so distinct as in Job; but he is evidently introduced for the purpose of affirming that, though charges had been brought against Israel, they had been dismissed by Yahwe, who was ready to re-establish his people in peace. We can see a certain resemblance between the rôle of the Satan in these passages, and that assigned to the lying spirit by Micah in 1 Kings xxii. 19-22. This last goes forth as a messenger of Yahwe to entice Ahab, through his prophets, to folly and death. This is the older conception, that all evil was produced immediately by purpose

⁹ This seems to be not old Israelitish tradition, but a loan from a foreign people (probably the Babylonians or Persians), transformed somewhat by the later monotheistic feeling, and loosely inserted into the history of the primeval times. It is not brought by the Israelitish editor into relation with the flood or with the sin of the race.

¹⁰ The first verse should probably read:

“Yahwe stands in the assembly of the Elim,
Among the Elohim he pronounces judgment.”

and command of God — a view that is still held in Job and Zechariah. But there are two differences between Micaiah and the writer of Job. The first is, that whereas the evil spirit of the former is summoned by Yahwe and sent simply to execute a divine command, the Satan of the latter has his own independent thought and purpose — in the one case the initiative is taken by God, in the other by Satan. The earlier lying spirit is without malice, a mere instrument; the later spirit sneers at human virtue, and hopes to drive Job to a renunciation of his integrity.

The second difference is this, — that the one spirit (that of Kings) acts on the minds of men, influencing their thought, while the other controls only external conditions. This second difference vanishes in the rôle assigned to Satan in Chronicles (1 Chron. xxi. 1), where he incites David to number Israel; the two conceptions have become welded into one. But this process seems to have required a considerable time (if we assign to Chronicles the date B.C. 300), and the natural inference is, that the Satan of Job is not the direct descendant of the old Israelitish "spirit of Yahwe," which was assumed as the immediate cause of all dispositions of men's hearts, good and bad. It is a new element of religious faith that here makes its appearance. The ancient Hebrew creed, in the form in which it is set forth by the prophets, recognized no power in the heavens that was not in accord with the God of Israel, no event on earth that was not his immediate act (Amos iii. 6); here we have an independent originator, capable of so influencing God himself as to bring suffering on a righteous man. Between these two conceptions lies the rise of the idea of a morally evil supernatural being: between them lies also a considerable period of time and the Babylonian Exile. Can the development of the Satan, the adversary of the righteous in the divine court, be explained as a natural outcome of Jewish thought? or must we call in the aid of foreign influence?

To explain this new figure, it seems to me, we must call to mind two directions in which the Israelitish national thought was modified by the Exile — there was an oppressive, almost overwhelming, sense, in the higher souls, of national disaster; and there was close contact with a new civilization. The problem of the national suffering was dealt with in different ways by different thinkers. The prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel regarded it simply as a chastisement for sin, to be followed by restoration and prosperity. The author of Isa. liiii.,

with a larger vision, interpreted the affliction of the pious kernel of the people (for it was they who suffered) as vicarious, destined to subserve wider divine purposes, to purify the whole nation into a fit dwelling-place for God and a fit instrument for the enlightenment of other peoples. To others, of whom the prophet Zechariah is an example, came the thought that in the heavenly court there was an adversary who sought to obtain judgment against Israel. The author of the book of Job gave the question of suffering a wider range, and, after the manner of the sages, treated it as a general fact of human experience. He also solved it by the introduction of a heavenly adversary; but I am inclined to refer the origin of his explanation to national feeling as represented by the prophets. First in natural order would come the larger, more prominent fact, as it seemed to the majority of men, the suffering of a nation; and then, later, reflection on human life would demand an explanation of the really greater fact of human suffering in general.¹¹ To those who believed that the nation or the man was righteous, and that therefore the ground of suffering was not to be sought in sin, it would seem that the author or instigator of the trouble must be looked for in some superhuman being who was hostile to the righteous nation or man.

But it is not easy to see how the conception of a hostile superhuman intelligence arose. The Old Testament throws little or no light on the question. In the pre-exilian prophets, in the exilian prophets and historical books, in the pre-exilian and exilian law-books there is, as is pointed out above, no hint of a malevolent personage in the court of Yahwe. It is natural, therefore, to look outside of Israel, and ask whether this conception was not suggested by foreign theology. Of the two peoples with whom the Jews of this time were in contact, — the Babylonians and the Persians, — the former do not supply satisfactory material for the explanation of the idea of Satan.

¹¹ Certain resemblances between the book of Job and the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah have led some critics to regard the figure of Job as meant to be a representative of Israel. But a serious objection to this view is the decided non-national tone and coloring of this work, as of all the productions of the Hebrew Hokma. It is not likely that a writer whose thought is so devoid of Jewish peculiarities would take the nation for his hero, and it is equally unlikely that one whose intention it was to present the fortunes and the religious problem of the nation under the form of those of a man should give no hint of his purpose. Job would seem to be later than Zechariah. The difference between them in the degree of hostility they ascribe to Satan does not seem to be important.

It is unnecessary to give the details of the Babylonian demonology, for which I may refer to the books on the subject.¹² The demonic creed of Babylon belongs to the old spiritistic system which has little in common with the person and rôle of the adversary of the Old Testament. There is, indeed, one figure in the old Babylonian myths which has been supposed to stand in close relation with an old Hebrew superhuman agent of evil: the dragon Tiamat, which makes war against the gods, may reasonably be compared with the serpent of Gen. iii., which undertakes to defeat the purposes of the Creator. But between these figures and that of Satan there is a wide difference. They belong to a sphere wholly apart from that of the gods, to whom they are openly hostile; while he, at his first appearance, is one of the host of the sons of the Elohim, who are in immediate attendance on Yahwe and completely subordinated to him. Later, in the Wisdom of Solomon (ii. 24), he is identified with the serpent; but in the Old Testament the two stand apart in different spheres, are never mentioned together, and seem to have been arrived at by different lines.

We must, indeed, expect that a foreign conception adopted by the Israelites would be modified no little in the process of fitting it into the Jewish monotheistic scheme of thought. But the transformation of the serpent tempter into the Satan of Zechariah or Job involves a highly improbable change of view. When both were well established, they might in course of time be identified; but at the outset they stood too far apart to suggest the supposition that one came from the other.

There is less difficulty in the supposition of a transformation of the Persian evil spirit into Satan. The Persian conception of the two opposed realms of evil and good may not at first have been fully comprehended by the Jews, or, if it were understood, would seem to them impossible. But the general notion of a great anti-godly power in the universe, whose aim it was to ruin the good work of the Creator, may have appeared to them to offer a welcome solution of the mysterious problem of evil. Such a malevolent being would naturally be construed by Israelitish monotheism as, in the first place, of exalted position and great power; and in the second place, as subordinate to the God of Israel; and these two conditions would be fulfilled by a figure like Satan, one of the mighty Elohim-beings.

¹² See Lenormant, *La Magie chez les Chaldéens*.

standing near the divine throne, and powerless to act except with the divine permission.

In Chronicles, as has already been remarked, he assumes the position of tempter and instigator to evil, and this is the rôle which he continues to play. The conception of Satan did not easily enter into the Jewish religious consciousness. In the literature of the three centuries preceding the beginning of our era, he appears only twice. In the book of Psalms, in which inward religious experience is a prominent feature, he is not once mentioned (in Ps. cix. 6 it is a human adversary that is meant), and he is equally ignored in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, and even in Tobit, in which a Persian evil spirit plays a very important part. It is in the Wisdom of Solomon (ii. 24) that the name Diabolos is first given him. The first part of Enoch has its own scheme of fallen angels, of which Azazel seems to be chief; in the Parables appear a host of Satans, under the control of a chief Satan; and to him, Azazel¹⁸ and all his hosts seem to be subordinate (Enoch xl. 7; liii. 3; liv. 5, 6). The fallen angels are evidently connected with the sons of the Elohim of Gen. vi., and the Satans descend from the great adversary of Zechariah and Job. The precise relation between Satan and Azazel is not stated. May we not infer from this that the later Jewish demonology was composite in structure, coming down from the Old Testament in these two different lines, and not at first shaped into a unitary system? The Jews were led by their advancing moral sense to construct a kingdom of evil, whose materials they took from all accessible sources, and whose organization was naturally a gradual process. Especially was it true that the idea of an ever-present tempter, seducing men's minds — opposed as it was, or seemed to be, to the unbending Jewish monotheism — made its way with difficulty, and, indeed, was never fully adopted by the Jews; the attacks of Satan were thought of rather as outward than as inward (Weber, *Lehren des Talmud*, § 54.)

It is in the New Testament, with its more finely developed ethical contrasts, that Satan takes full shape as head of the spiritual kingdom of evil. He is the god of this age, who blinds the minds of the unbelieving (2 Cor. iv. 4), and is able to fashion himself into an angel of light (2 Cor. xi. 14); he instigates the treachery of Judas (Luke xxii. 3) and the deceit of Ananias (Acts v. 3). The older conception of

¹⁸ The Azazel of Enoch seems to be a different conception from the demon of Lev. xvi.; the name only is borrowed.

his physical power is, however, not lost. Certain offenders are to be delivered over to him for the destruction of the flesh (1 Cor. v. 5); Paul is buffeted by one of his messengers (2 Cor. xii. 7), and hindered by him in his work (1 Thess. ii. 18). The two conceptions stand side by side in the New Testament, and so continued a long time afterward (Luther). Further, it appears that, in assuming the position of headship, Satan appropriated the functions and the names of various other prominent evil supernatural beings. In the New Testament he is identified with the serpent of Gen. iii. (as before in Wisdom of Solomon) (2 Cor. xi. 3; Rev. xii. 9); he is called Beelzebub (Matt. x. 25) and Belial or Beliar (2 Cor. vi. 15), and he is conceived of as being precipitated from heaven (Luke x. 18). These expressions seem to bear witness to the composite nature of his person; he became, in a word, the representative of all that was evil in the supernatural sphere.

Alongside of him, in the New Testament, stand two classes of superhuman evil spirits, whose origin and functions are not very clearly stated, but who appear as hostile to God and men. One of these classes is denoted by the titles "angels," "principalities," "powers," etc. In Rom. viii. 38 the possibility of their hostile attitude is assumed; in 1 Cor. xv. 24 the "rule, authority, and power" are apparently regarded (ver. 25) as enemies, and from the general context Paul seems to have supernatural agencies in view; in Eph. vi. 12, the principalities, authorities, world-rulers of darkness, and spiritual powers of wickedness in heaven are expressly contrasted with flesh and blood, and described as antagonists of the Christian life; and in Col. ii. 15 the principalities and authorities are conquered and triumphed over by Christ.

The conception of supernatural beings contained in these passages belongs to the later Jewish development, whose history it is unnecessary to trace here; it is sufficient to bear in mind that it is the old Israelitish scheme of Elobim-beings, divided into the two hosts of good and evil under Persian influence, and further organized into hierarchies under the guidance of Persian and gnostic ideas. The main religious-historical point of interest is the retention of the hostile angelic beings in heaven, as in Job and Daniel. This is a survival of the Old Testament view, holding its place alongside of the development of the person of Satan, whose relation to these other powers is apparently alluded to in Rev. xii. 8. It may probably be

supposed that they were regarded as forming a hostile kingdom, of which he was the head; but the idea of this kingdom came by historical descent from the old Hebrew scheme of Elohim-beings as developed in the books of Daniel and Enoch, while the person of Satan is to be traced directly to the book of Job. The two conceptions may thus have stood side by side, not perfectly fused into a unity.

The other class of evil spirits to be noted in the New Testament is the demonic proper, particularly prominent in the Gospels. The basis of this conception is to be found in the Old Testament view that extraordinary mental conditions were produced by the indwelling of a spirit sent from God. When, in process of time, the sharp separation between ethically good and bad agencies took place, beneficial effects were ascribed to the former, and injurious to the latter—the evil spirits became demons.¹⁴ There is nothing of demoniacal possession in the Old Testament, and only one mention of it in the later pre-Christian Jewish period (Joseph. *Jewish War*, 7, 6, 3). Its frequent occurrence in the New Testament is due chiefly, perhaps, to the nature of the subject-matter—the biographies of great teachers and preachers, one of whose functions was to minister to human suffering—of Jesus and Christian teachers, who represented the established kingdom of God and its antagonism to the kingdom of evil. It was natural that the portraiture of the beneficent activity of the divine kingdom should include the subjection of the demons who tormented men. The intenser the ethical feeling of Christianity, the more it would emphasize in the history the activity of the evil powers. These demonic powers are represented in the Synoptic Gospels as subjects of Beelzebub, who is Satan (Matt. xii. 24–29; Mark iii. 22–27; Luke xi. 15–22), and sometimes (1 Cor. x. 20, 21) as heathen deities (see note ⁷). They are the Old Testament spirits sent from God, here organized, according to the general Jewish development, into a separate body, and united with the evil host of which the devil is the head.

In this conception we have a testimony to the belief of Old Testament Judaism. What was prevalent in the first century of our era must have had its roots in the past; and we may reasonably infer that, from the days of Saul (and earlier) on, the Israelites ascribed to

¹⁴ The term occurs in this sense in Jewish literature first in Tob. iii. 8, where it is qualified, however, by the epithet "wicked"; we seem to have here the transition from the earlier to the later meaning.

the agency of evil spirits those peculiar mental conditions in which the man lost mastery over himself and obeyed evil impulses.

The general advance was in the direction of organized contrast of the good and the evil powers, the old material being constantly expanded, and shaped by ethical growth and the stimulus of foreign thought; and, as is pointed out above, in such a development we must not be surprised to find the old maintaining its place in part alongside of the new.