



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## THE RELIGION OF ISRAEL<sup>1</sup>

TO ONE who is accustomed to draw his knowledge of the Bible and of Biblical ideas from some of the more advanced German higher critics, it will be refreshing to turn to these books, which are entirely free of any bias or prejudice. Some of the German scholars are unable to dissociate their personal antipathies towards Israel of the present from their studies of the experiences and achievements of Israel of antiquity. They begrudge the credit due to Israel, because of their dislike for the descendants of Israel living in their midst. They therefore seek to discredit the contributions made by the Jewish people to the spiritual growth of humanity. Some of them (e.g. Friedrich Delitzsch in his *Babel und Bibel* series, and especially in his latest diatribe *Die grosse Täuschung*) would go to the extent of robbing ancient Israel of all moral excellence and even of religious genius. These American scholars, however, approach the subject with reverence and with sympathy. While believing firmly in the superiority of their own faith, and neglecting no opportunity to point out this superiority and to emphasize it, they nevertheless recognize the grandeur of the teachings of ancient Israel, and extol with genuine appreciation the achievements of our great prophets and seers. Some of the German Biblical scholars have not yet learned the lesson that Dr. Barton (p. 243) deduces from the Book of Esther. 'Modern lands suffer as acutely from race antagonism as did any country of the ancient

<sup>1</sup> *The Religion of Israel*. By GEORGE A. BARTON, Professor of Biblical Literature and Semitic Languages in Bryn Mawr College. New York: THE MACMILLAN COMPANY, 1918 (The Religious Science and Literature Series). pp. 289.

*The Religious Teachings of the Old Testament*. By ALBERT C. KNUDSON, Professor in Boston University School of Theology. New York, Cincinnati: THE ABINGDON PRESS, 1918. pp. 416.

world. This antagonism results in plots as bloody and cruel as that depicted in the Book of Esther, and, sometimes, in massacres and lynchings, which, if not as extensive as those portrayed in Esther, are no less barbarous. . . . We read in the pages of Esther how hate always begets hate, that violence begets violence, and that it may deflower the souls of those who participate in it of their fairest beauty and noblest spirit.'

While dealing practically with the same subject, since Barton also does not carry his investigation any further than the period of the rise of Christianity, these two volumes differ widely in the manner of approach, in the attitude towards the subject under discussion, and in the form in which it is presented. Professor Barton's book is intended primarily for the college student, who 'wishes to know the truth as fully and frankly as it can be known'. It is therefore really a text-book, not necessarily suggesting dryness and stiltedness, because the author's style is most charming and his diction exceedingly lucid and attractive. It is a text-book, distinguished by precision and accuracy, by strict logical sequence, and by an apparent effort at economy of space. Professor Knudson's book was written 'to meet the needs of the preacher and the general Bible student'. It is therefore supposed to be a popular book. The style is in consequence at times more emotional, less matter of fact, and sometimes even homiletic. Without detracting from its scientific value, the author succeeded in producing a volume that is most readable, that will appeal to the uninitiated, and will also be of value to the specialist. Because of the different aims that the authors had in mind, they also follow different methods in presentation. Dr. Barton follows the chronological order, preferring to dwell on the causes that led to the development of the various religious ideas among the ancient Israelites, although at the end of the book several chapters are devoted to the treatment of specific theological topics. Dr. Knudson, on the other hand, follows the topical method, taking up one after the other the chief theological ideas and showing how these were gradually evolved in the course of Old Testament Jewish history.

Dr. Barton introduces his work with a study of the early Semitic religions and of the value of the Biblical narratives. This he regards necessary in order to establish the proper background for the investigation which is to follow. The author's theories regarding Semitic origins, which he elaborated in several other works and articles, are here boiled down into a few chapters and presented with clearness and precision. While discarding the fanciful allegorical interpretations of the Biblical stories advanced by Winckler and his followers on the one hand, and the equally ingenious inventions of Jensen and Zimmern and their followers on the other hand, the author still refrains from accepting the narratives regarding the beginnings of the Israelitish nation literally. He maintains that the early stories clustering about the patriarchal family are stray reminiscences of characters and events that may actually have existed, but were not necessarily in any way connected with the origin of Israel. The main stock of the early Israelites were the Leah tribes (cowboys?), who later entered into an alliance with the Rachel tribes (shepherds?), and still later with the Bilhah and Zilpah tribes. The Rachel tribes only lived in Egypt for a time, and after their deliverance from Egypt through Moses made a covenant with Yahweh. This was the first distinction between the relation of these tribes to their God and the relation of other peoples to their gods. While the latter regarded their gods as related to them in a physical way, the Rachel tribes looked upon their God as related to them by means of a covenant, which implied mutual responsibilities. When they settled in Canaan and became an agricultural people, the religion of these tribes underwent many changes, influenced by the religious notions and practices prevalent in Canaan. Yahweh became the God of Canaan, owning the land and taking special interest in its cultivation. Hence many of the agricultural laws became prominent in the covenant with Yahweh and the festivals were given a new meaning, as a result of the agricultural conditions of the land.

With the appearance of the great prophetic personalities in the eighth century B. C. E., as those of Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and

Micah, a new epoch set in the development of the religious life of the people. Then the great ideas of monotheism, of an ethical and social religion, of God's love for His creatures, and later, in Isaiah, of the messianic hope, with all that this implied, came to the foreground and little by little sank into the consciousness of the mass of the people. These ideals were further developed by Jeremiah, who emphasized the universality of God and the idea of individual responsibility, and still later by the Second Isaiah, who gave new meaning to the notions of the Election of Israel, Israel's Mission, and Israel's Sufferings. The priestly code was compiled during the Babylonian exile. This brought a puritan spirit into Jewish life and helped to transform the Jewish nation into a Jewish church. The law gradually endeared itself with the people, and the establishment of the synagogue, with its popular appeal, helped a great deal in strengthening the hold of the law on Jewish life. The Pharisees and the Rabbis still further developed the law in its application to every detail of life, and allowed it to become the ruling principle in the Jewish religion.

In the course of this historical résumé, Dr. Barton discusses the several religious ideas of ancient Israel, showing how they were influenced in their growth by the events and conditions, and how they in turn influenced Jewish life and conduct. The last few chapters of the book are devoted to the treatment of several specific subjects, as the development of the priesthood, the subject of angels and demons, the religious ideas of the Psalms and of the wisdom books, the smaller books of the Bible and the Apocrypha. The last chapter is devoted to a discussion of the Jewish Dispersion.

Although concise, the small volume contains a wealth of information and of suggestive thought. Every chapter is provided at the end with Topics for Further Study, which include also references to standard volumes on the various subjects suggested. One need not accept all the conclusions of the author, but one will be greatly stimulated by the lucid presentation and the fair criticism of the subjects covered by the author.

Much more conservative in tone, though maintaining through-

out a scholarly and critical attitude, is the work of Professor Knudson. The author, at the very opening of the book, enunciates the principle 'that the literary prophets were not, in the proper sense of the term, the "creators of ethical monotheism"'. The higher faith of Israel may be traced back into the preprophetic period. Indeed its germ is to be found in the teaching of Moses'. This heresy, from the point of view of the most advanced critics of the Bible, is valiantly defended and repeatedly emphasized. The author does not hesitate occasionally to establish some relationship between the religious ideals of ancient Israel with modern thought and experience. Some might condemn such attempts as unscientific, but it is really these human touches that make the book so eminently readable and interesting.

After an introductory chapter on the development of Old Testament Religion and Literature, the author begins the topical treatment of his subject. The book naturally divides itself into two large divisions: one treating of God and the other of man. In the first division, the author discusses the Personality of God, His Unity, Spirituality, Power, Holiness, Righteousness, and Love, concluding with a chapter on angels and other divine beings. The second section deals with the Nature of Man, the Doctrine of Sin, the Problem of Suffering, Forgiveness and Atonement, Nationalism and Individualism, the Messianic Hope, and the Future Life. Throughout the book the human element predominates. Copious quotations are given from the works of other authors, with which the author shows great familiarity, but the author's personality and his own convictions are manifest on each page. All technical terms and metaphysical expressions are first clearly explained before they are used in the text. With due modesty, the author does not hesitate to leave certain matters unsolved, admitting that he was unable to find a solution for them.

In discussing the principle of the Unity of God, Dr. Knudson is naturally forced to consider the Christian belief in the Trinity. Recognizing the great advance of the monotheistic ideal in face of

the polytheistic worship of the ancients, Dr. Knudson still feels that 'it failed permanently to provide for the complexity and richness of the divine nature which seems necessary to satisfy the deepest needs of the human heart. And so in the course of time there grew up the Christian doctrine of the Trinity or Tri-unity'. He then proceeds to show that even in the Old Testament we find a 'number of tendencies towards the establishment of hypostatic distinctions in the divine nature'. For a non-Christian it is rather difficult to understand why the 'complexity and richness of the divine nature' cannot be conceived, as indeed it was conceived throughout Jewish history, to be inherent in God Himself, as the attributes applied to Him, without giving them each a separate existence. The assumption that the expressions Spirit of God, Word of God, and Wisdom of God, which occur in the Bible, are personified and conceived of as having true hypostasis is based on very flimsy proof. The deep Christian feelings of our author and his firm faith make him see things which are not quite patent to the impartial observer. He avoids, however, the old orthodox policy of trying to find in the Old Testament references to Jesus and to his advent. He lays great emphasis on the messianic hope as enunciated by the prophets, and believes that this hope coloured and stimulated their exalted ethical and social ideals. In agreement with most modern Biblical scholars, he interprets the 'servant' passages in Isaiah to refer to the people of Israel as a whole, whose sufferings are regarded as 'vicarious and redemptive'. The heathen nations, in the words of the prophet, realized that the affliction that befell Israel should have been their lot, and this realization carried with it wonderful redemptive qualities. 'It led to repentance and confession and the recognition of Israel's God as God of all the World.' Our author does not even find it necessary to add here, as does Dr. Barton (p. 131): 'It remained for Jesus of Nazareth, the ideal Israelite, to take up in his person and experience the work which the prophet had conceived as possible for the nation, and to make the ideal real.' The ideals held out for the nation by the prophet, the interpretation given by him to Israel's mission in

the world, were the ideals and interpretation held and urged by the best Jewish minds throughout the centuries. It was not necessary for them to have these ideals incorporated in a person. The prophet's picture of Israel's election as an election for service, as an example to humanity, was to the Jews of all ages sufficiently clear and sufficiently concrete so as to mould their lives accordingly. Of course, the nation did not always live up to the ideal. But this did not in any way lessen its potent influence on Jewish life and thought. It even influenced the strictly legal enactments of the Rabbis of later ages, and, as Dr. Schechter puts it, the idea of the election of Israel 'always maintained in Jewish consciousness the character of at least an unformulated dogma' (*Aspects of Rabbinic Theology*, p. 57).

JULIUS H. GREENSTONE.

Gratz College, Philadelphia.