

A HISTORY
OF
THE HEBREW PEOPLE

*FROM THE SETTLEMENT IN CANAAN TO
THE DIVISION OF THE KINGDOM*

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WITH MAPS AND PLANS

NINTH EDITION

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1905

PREFACE

THE purpose in the present work is to introduce the general as well as the technical Bible student to the essential features of the political, social, and religious life of the Hebrew people. To the candid and thoughtful it is a cause for thanksgiving rather than regret that the earnest scholarship of to-day is carefully sifting the current conclusions concerning the teaching and history contained in the Bible. Although at first the results of this critical study seem only destructive and even alarming, yet a closer examination demonstrates that they are but necessary means to an end. That end is the acquisition of the whole instead of partial truth. The enveloping masses of cloud must be scattered by the sunlight and driving gales, before the outlines of the eternal mountains can be seen in their true proportions. That which dispels human traditions and misconceptions is of inestimable value, because it discloses the real. In reconstructing the facts of Hebrew history in the light of modern biblical research, however, positive rather than negative results command attention. It is sufficient in most cases to ignore the old conceptions, which have been proved incorrect, and to present established conclusions.

Recognizing that some of the questions necessarily treated are still in the state of being answered, I have introduced into the text full biblical references, that the reader may personally investigate the grounds for the deductions. In the same connection special attention is called to the authorities cited in the Appendix, where definite page references are given under each chapter heading. These also indicate in part the debt which I owe to those who have laid the foundations for the new history of the Hebrew people. In the same class may properly be included the many University and University Extension students with whom it has been my privilege to consider this important chapter of human history, and whose valuable suggestions are herein incorporated.

No apology is required for devoting so much attention to the historical sources. The general reader is entirely justified in demanding a view of the foundations as well as of the superstructure of a history so important as that of the Hebrew people. All technical terms, however, are avoided, and only those results presented which are intelligible to students of the English Bible who are familiar with historical and literary methods of study. For the more detailed and technical treatment of each subject the reader is again referred to the Appendix.

The early history of the Israelitish tribes, when viewed in the uncolored light of the oldest records, appears at first quite different from that to which we were introduced by our parents. But reflection soon demonstrates that nothing essential to faith or the Old

Testament revelation has been lost. In reality the difference between the present and the earlier view is chiefly one of language and form of expression. The Hebrews were right in seeing God in everything, and in attributing all that came to them directly to his influence; but they knew no distinction between the natural and the supernatural. Even the idea associated with the word "natural" was yet unborn. They accordingly classified the most ordinary phenomena of life as supernatural. A pestilence or eclipse was regarded as a superlative miracle. The discovery of natural laws has radically changed our conception of history as well as of Nature. God, however, is by no means read out of his universe because we are able to follow and understand the methods whereby he realized his divine purpose through the Hebrew people. Instead, the old Hebrew conception of God in everything is expanded and vindicated.

"And God is seen God
In the star, in the stone, in the flesh, in the soul, and the clod."

True, "Israel was hewn from the rock" by the action of much the same forces within and without which have been employed in all ages by the Highest to accomplish his supreme ends. The winds that blew back the waters of the Red Sea were like other winds. If the testimony of travellers is to be accepted, the phenomenon itself is not without parallel. But its opportuneness was the result of no mere chance. So also, not only at the crises, but throughout Hebrew history, we recognize the hand of God in the wind and storm, in the configuration of the land of Canaan, in

the environment of the Israelites, in the events of their national experience, and in the voices of their enlightened prophets, priests, and wise men. Not all at once, but by a long and painful process were the barbarian nomads developed into a nation with a message and mission to humanity. It does not, therefore, at all shake our faith in that message to find that in life and thought the early Hebrews were very like other races in the corresponding stages of their development.

While we have lost nothing in adopting the modern point of view, our new history of the Hebrew people becomes living and real. Its heroes seem at home in their surroundings. They command our admiration, not because they were perfect, but because, laboring under all the limitations of their age, they were struggling, though afar, toward perfection. With a true historical perspective, not a few of the perplexing questions which have caused so many in the past to stumble are easily and satisfactorily answered. In this new light also we are able for the first time to appreciate justly the work and teachings of the Hebrew prophets. The evidence of a progressive development running through Israel's history brings it into closer relations with all history and with the universe, where God's law of progress is dominant. In this simple way we are led to realize that the ancient Hebrews are not creations of the fancy; nor are they dead, but still live, as they firmly believed they would, in the abounding life of humanity. Therefore, we watch with a personal interest the faint glim-

mers of spiritual light which broke through the darkness of heathenism, and gradually became brighter and brighter until inspired prophets were able to herald in the distance the rising Sun of Righteousness in whose full light we stand to-day.

It is perhaps needless to add that I am fully aware of the difficulties of the task which has been undertaken, and how imperfectly it has been performed. No one who believes that through the life and literature of the Hebrew race the most precious revelation of God is conveyed to man, can maintain for a moment that he or any age has grasped more than a part of the truth therein contained. Therefore, the conclusions which I present are laid before the public with the earnest hope that where they are entirely or partially incorrect they may be speedily disproved by the fuller truth.

C. F. K.

PROVIDENCE, March, 1896.

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The Historical Series for Bible Students.

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THE UNITED KINGDOM.

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TO
MY WIFE
FOR AND WITH WHOM IT WAS WRITTEN
THIS HISTORY
IS LOVINGLY INSCRIBED