

**THE THEOLOGICAL
EDUCATOR: AN
INTRODUCTION TO
THE OLD TESTAMENT**

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The Theological Educator: An Introduction to the Old Testament by Charles H. H. Wright & W. Robertson Nicoll

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CHARLES H. H. WRIGHT & W. ROBERTSON NICOLL

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INTRODUCTION TO THE
OLD TESTAMENT.

BY THE REV.
CHARLES H. H. WRIGHT, D.D., PH.D.,
RAMPTON LECTURER (1878) IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD,
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PREFACE.

THE manual of Introduction to the Old Testament now presented to the English student endeavours to give the ascertained results of modern criticism, as far as is possible within very confined limits. The lists of works, English and foreign, appended under each heading, point out the sources where fuller information can be obtained, and may, perhaps, stir up some to take a deeper interest in Biblical studies.

Those lists do not pretend to be exhaustive. Among the books of special importance to the Biblical student is the *Bibliotheca Rabbinnica* of Dr. August Wünsche, being a German translation of the entire *Midrash Rabbah*, etc., with notes, which has opened up that rich treasury of myth, legend, and parable to a wider circle of readers. Those ancient Midrashim, notwithstanding many short-comings and mistakes, afford much information to the student of the Old Testament.

The *Bibliotheca Rabbinnica* has been published in parts from 1880-1885, and contains the Midrash on Genesis (pp. 558), on Exodus (pp. 408), Leviticus

(pp. 298), Numbers (pp. 676), Deuteronomy (pp. 184), besides the Megilloth, Esther (pp. 102), Ruth (pp. 98), Lamentations (pp. 176), Koheleth (pp. 165), Song of Songs (pp. 208), the Pesikta of Rab Kahana (pp. 300), and the Midrash on Proverbs (pp. 76). These numbers include the Notes, but not the Introductions. The extent and importance of the work is thus apparent.

In England besides the *Speaker's Commentary* and the *Pulpit Commentary*, much new work has been done. The Bishop of Gloucester's *Old Testament Commentary for English Readers*, 5 vols., royal 8vo, especially on the Prophets, is worthy of the attention of scholars, though not referred to in our pages. Bishop Wordsworth's *Holy Bible with Notes and Introductions* will often repay a reference. Dr. Joseph Parker's *People's Bible*—vols. i.-xiii. already published, including *Genesis to Proverbs* (Hodder & Stoughton)—is not critical, though often highly suggestive. Nisbet's series of *Men of the Bible* has been occasionally referred to, and might have been referred to throughout. The Religious Tract Society's scholarly series of *By-paths of Bible Knowledge* has brought recondite information to almost every door. The *Records of the Past*, or the English translations of the Assyrian and Egyptian monuments, edited by S. Birch, LL.D., vols. i.-xii., ought to be more known; and the new series, edited by Professor Sayce, of which vols. i. and ii. have already appeared,

promises still better things. The *Porta Linguarum Orientalium*, edited by J. H. Petermann and H. L. Strack, deserves more attention than might appear from the casual references made to it in these pages. It embraces two volumes of Assyrian grammar and chrestomathy by Friedr. Delitzsch, 1889, and an Ethiopic grammar and chrestomathy by Prætorius. Gustav Dalman is writing in the same series a grammar, with chrestomathy, of the Palestinian Talmud. The publications of the Palestine Exploration Fund are in many ways valuable, as well as the works of the German Society established for the same purpose. Especially useful is *Names and Places in the Old Testament and Apocrypha*, 1887, issued by the Palestine Exploration Fund. Schürer's massive *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes im Zeitalter Jesu Christi*, 2nd ed., 1886, 1889, 1890, cannot be dispensed with. T. and T. Clark have begun the publication of an English translation. Nor must Hatch's *Essays in Biblical Greek*, 1889, be forgotten.

The problems connected with the Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament are numerous and intricate. Although so much has been effected in modern times, the field of research cannot yet be considered exhausted. Discoveries in the departments of Assyriology and Egyptology have done much to elucidate the meaning of many passages of Holy Writ, but they have sometimes brought to light new difficulties. Those discoveries are even now

only in their infancy, and much has yet to be accomplished by the aid of the spade and pickaxe in Palestine and Egypt, and elsewhere, ere we can regard many Old Testament questions as finally settled.

In every field of scientific investigation hypotheses have been found necessary in order to group together known facts, and to lead onward to new discoveries. Theories which have proved ultimately to be erroneous have yet frequently been productive of great results. The earnest seeker after truth in the department of Biblical research ought, therefore, to be tolerant of speculations, even when opposed to his holiest sentiments and convictions. No theory of modern days has created more repugnance among orthodox expositors than the Graf-Wellhausen theory of the composition of the Pentateuch. And yet it is well to observe that even the strongest defenders of that theory, while insisting on the very late compilation of the Pentateuch, maintain that the substance of many of its narratives and laws was in existence at a far earlier date. The theory does not necessarily make the Pentateuch a mere fabrication of designing priests, as is sometimes affirmed. In setting forth the consequences of the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis, this ought to be borne in mind.

The Old Testament Scriptures have, alas! been treated by many critics with an irreverence which cannot be too strongly condemned. On the other