

**TWELVE STUDIES ON THE
MAKING OF A
NATION: THE BEGINNINGS
OF ISRAEL'S HISTORY**

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Twelve Studies on the Making of a Nation: The Beginnings of Israel's History by Jeremiah Whipple Jenks & Charles Foster Kent

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JEREMIAH WHIPPLE JENKS & CHARLES FOSTER KENT

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OF ISRAEL'S HISTORY**

THE BIBLE'S MESSAGE TO MODERN LIFE

Twelve Studies on
The Making of a Nation
The Beginnings of Israel's History

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA
BY

CHARLES FOSTER KENT
JEREMIAH WHIPPLE JENKS

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The best of allies you can procure for us is the Bible. That will bring us the reality — freedom.—*Garibaldi*.

If the common schools have found their way from the Atlantic to the Pacific; if slavery has been abolished; if the whole land has been changed from a wilderness into a garden of plenty, from ocean to ocean; if education has been fostered according to the best lights of each generation since then; if industry, frugality and sobriety are the watchwords of the nation, as I believe them to be, I say it is largely due to those first emigrants, who, landing with the English Bible in their hands and in their hearts, established themselves on the shores of America.—*Joseph H. Choate*.

And, as it is owned, the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood, so, if it comes to be understood, it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come at; by the continuance and progress of learning and liberty, and by particular persons attending to, comparing and pursuing intimations scattered up and down it, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world. Nor is it at all incredible that a book which has been so long in the possession of mankind should contain many truths as yet undiscovered.—*Butler*.

Mr. Lincoln, as I saw him every morning, in the carpet slippers he wore in the house and the black clothes no tailor could make really fit his gaunt, bony frame, was a homely enough figure. The routine of his life was simple, too; it would have seemed a treadmill to most of us. He was an early riser; when I came on duty at eight in the morning, he was often already dressed and reading in the library. There was a big table near the centre of the room; there I have seen him reading many times. And the book? It was the Bible which I saw him reading while most of the household slept.—*William H. Crook*, in *Harper's Magazine*.

The Bible has such power for teaching righteousness that even to those who come to it with all sorts of false notions about the God of the Bible, it yet teaches righteousness, and fills them with the love of it; how much more those who come to it with a true notion about the God of the Bible.—*Matthew Arnold*.

If we be ignorant, the Scriptures will instruct us; if out of the way, they will bring us home; if out of order, they will reform us; if in heaviness, comfort us; if dull, quicken us; if cold, inflame us.—*King James's Revisers, 1611*.

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INTRODUCTION

THE REDISCOVERY OF THE BIBLE

In the early Christian centuries thousands turned to the Bible, as drowning men to a life buoy, because it offered them the only way of escape from the intolerable social and moral ills that attended the death pangs of the old heathenism. Then came the Dark Ages, with their resurgent heathenism and barbarism, when the Bible was taken from the hands of the people. In the hour of a nation's deepest humiliation and moral depravity, John Wycliffe, with the aid of a devoted army of lay priests, gave back the Bible to the people, and in so doing laid the foundations for England's intellectual, political and moral greatness. The joy and inspiration of the Protestant Reformers was the rediscovery and popular interpretation of the Bible. In all the great forward movements of the modern centuries the Bible has played a central role. The ultimate basis of our magnificent modern scientific and material progress is the inspiration given to the human race by the Protestant Reformation.

Unfortunately, the real meaning and message of the Bible has been in part obscured during past centuries by dogmatic interpretations. The study of the Bible has also been made a solemn obligation rather than a joyous privilege. The remarkable discoveries of the present generation and its new and larger sense of power and progress have tended to turn men's attention from the contemplation of the heritage which comes to them from the past. The result is that most men know little about the Bible. They are acquainted with its chief characters such as Abraham, David and Jesus. A few are even able to give a clear-cut outline of the important events of Israel's history; but they regard it simply as a history whose associations and interests belong to a bygone age. How many realize that most of the problems which Israel met and solved are similar to those which to-day are commanding the absorbing attention of every patriotic citizen, and that of all existing books, the Old Testament makes the greatest contributions to the political and social, as well as to the religious thought of the world? National expansion, taxation, centralization of authority, civic

responsibility, the relation of religion to politics and to public morality were as vital and insistent problems in ancient Israel as they are in any live, progressive nation to-day. The gradual discovery of this fact explains why here and there throughout the world the leaders in modern thought and progress are studying the Bible with new delight and enthusiasm, not only because of its intrinsic beauty and interest, but because in it they find, stated in clearest form, the principles which elucidate the intricate problems of modern life.

THE OBJECTS OF THESE STUDIES.

There are two distinct yet important ways of interpreting the Bible: The one is that of the scholar who knows the Bible from the linguistic, historical and literary point of view; the other, that of the man who knows life and who realizes the meaning and value of the Bible to those who are confronted by insistent social, economic and individual problems. These studies aim to combine both methods of interpretation.

Briefly defined the chief objects of these studies are:

(1) To introduce the men and women of to-day to that which is most vital in the literature and thought of the Old Testament.

(2) To interpret the often neglected Old Testament into the language of modern life simply and directly and in the light of that which is highest in the teachings of Christianity.

(3) To present the constructive results of the modern historical and literary study of the Bible, not dogmatically but tentatively, so that the reader and student may be in a position to judge for himself regarding the conclusions that are held by a large number of Biblical scholars and to estimate their practical religious value.

(4) To show how closely the Old Testament is related to the life of to-day and how it helps to answer the pressing questions now confronting the nations.

(5) To lead strong men to think through our national, social and individual problems, and to utilize fearlessly and practically the constructive results of modern method and research in the fields of both science and religion.

THE PLAN OF WORK.

These studies are planned to meet the needs of college students and adult Bible classes. Those who are able to command more time and wish to do more thorough work will find in the list of

Parallel Readings on the first page of each study carefully selected references to the best authorities on the subject treated. For their guidance are also provided *Subjects for Further Study*. In using this text-book the student may proceed as follows:

(1) Read carefully the Biblical passage indicated in connection with each title; for example, in the first study, Genesis 1 and 2.

(2) Read the Biblical and other quotations on the first page of each study. Unless otherwise indicated the Biblical quotations are from the American Revised Version. They include the most important Biblical passages. The other quotations embody some of the best contributions of ancient and modern writers to the subject under consideration.

(3) Read and think through the material presented under each paragraph. This material is arranged under six headings for the convenience of those who wish to follow the plan of daily reading and study.

BOOKS OF REFERENCE.

The books suggested in connection with this course have been carefully selected in order that each person may have for his individual use a practical working library. The following should be at hand for constant reference.

Kent, C. F., *The Historical Bible*, Vols. I and II. Contains the important Biblical passages arranged in chronological order and provided with the historical, geographical and archæological notes required for their clear understanding. The translation is based on the oldest manuscripts and embodies the constructive results of modern Biblical research. New York, \$1.00 each.

Jenks, J. W., *Principles of Politics*. New York, \$1.25. Prepared to explain the principles by which political action is governed and thus to aid thoughtful citizens both to gain a clear outlook on life and wisely to direct their own political activity.

Aristotle, *Politics*. The greatest masterpiece of scientific political thought. Its different point of view will suggest many illuminating comparisons between Greek and modern political ideals and institutions and give the reader a broad basis for the appreciation of that which is essential and enduring in the statecraft of all ages. \$2.50.

For further parallel study the following books are suggested: Breasted, J. H., *History of the Ancient Egyptians*. Clear, concise and authoritative. New York, \$1.25.