

**THE JEWISH
DOCTRINE
OF MEDIATION**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649122844

The Jewish doctrine of mediation by W. O. E. Oesterley

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W. O. E. OESTERLEY

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OF MEDIATION**

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DOCTRINE OF MEDIATION.

BY

THE REV. W. O. E. OESTERLEY, D.D.,
Jesus College, Cambridge ;
Examiner in Hebrew and Greek Testament,
University of London.

LONDON :
SKEFFINGTON AND SON,
SOUTHAMPTON STREET, STRAND, W.C.
1910.

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KNOX COLLEGE
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LONDON :
CHARLES COLL. AND SON,
15, HUGHTON STREET, ALDWYCH,
AND AT CHISWICK.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

This volume offers, in as small a compass as possible, some of the results of an investigation into what is to be gathered concerning the doctrine of Mediation in Jewish Literature, ancient and modern.

The subject is obviously one of interest and importance on account of its bearing on the Christian doctrine of Atonement.

One object which the writer has had in view has been to try and illustrate the truth that the development of ancient Judaism leads inevitably to Christianity, unless the course of development be forced into a direction other than the natural one.

Another object has been to try and obviate, in however small a degree, some of the prejudice which so many Christians entertain towards Judaism, by showing them that in respect of the doctrine of Mediation Historic Judaism offers much that tends in the direction of Christianity.

The teaching of the Old Testament, the Apocrypha, the Pseudepigrapha, the Targums and the later Rabbinical literature, including Mishnah, Gemara and Midrashic works, as well as the Jewish Prayer Book and some representative modern Jewish writings, have all, to a greater or less extent, been taken into consideration.

In giving some of the results of several years' study of the subject, the writer's intention has been to offer a *résumé* of illustrative quotations which may interest the ordinary reader, not to present anything approaching a treatise.

The Old Testament has been but slightly dealt with, for it did not seem necessary to repeat what has been admirably said by others; besides, the Old Testament everyone can read for himself. It is different when studying the subject in the other classes of literature which have been considered; the books, even in translations, which are required for this are, for the most part, not easily accessible; moreover, pages and pages have to be gone through, very often, before one comes across a relevant passage; the gathering of such passages is, consequently, rather laborious, and most people have not the inclination to do this "spade-work" even if the soil (in the shape of the necessary books) is close at hand. The writer has, therefore, devoted more space to quotations from classes of literature other than that contained in the Old Testament.

The Jewish doctrine of Mediation represents only one part of the subject, for the completion of which the doctrine in the Christian Church must necessarily be dealt with, and a sequel to this volume is obviously required; it is, therefore, the intention of the writer's friend, the Rev. G. H. Box, to publish in due course a companion volume on "The Christian Doctrine of Mediation."

W. O. E. OESTERLEY.

HATCH END,

January, 1910.

INTRODUCTION.

THE principle of Mediation, in the ordinary sense of this word, is at work universally; it is a principle that lies in the nature of things; whether in the natural or the spiritual world there is always a means whereby cause and effect are brought about; the unity of nature, the solidarity of the human race, the spiritual growth in a man—all are conditioned by this principle. But it is not in this general sense that the word is to be used here. In the purely religious domain, and it is that alone with which we are now concerned, the word is used in a restricted sense, and concerns the relationship between God and men.

Two conceptions lie at the root of this *religious* doctrine of Mediation; the history of these two conceptions is co-terminous with that of man as a thinking being; and from the nature of the case, therefore, they have gone through a long process of development; and just as these two conceptions have during their history undergone modification and growth, so the ideas of the principle of Mediation have altered according to the varying standpoint of these. The two conceptions which lie at the root of the religious doctrine of Mediation are: The Idea of God, and the Sense of Sin. According as to whether the conception of God is exalted, according as to whether the sense of sin is deep, so will the intensity of the need of a Mediator between God and man assert itself. Moreover, in accordance with