

**RELIGION IN THE
MAKING: A STUDY IN
BIBLICAL SOCIOLOGY**

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Religion in the making: a study in Biblical sociology by Samuel G. Smith

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BIBLICAL SOCIOLOGY**

RELIGION IN THE MAKING

A Study in Biblical Sociology

BY

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FOREWORD

FOR nearly twenty years I have been teaching sociology to the upper classmen in the University of Minnesota. During about the same length of time I have been teaching the Bible to special classes in connection with the Peoples Church of St. Paul. It was not until ten years ago that the thought occurred to me that there is anything in common between these two departments of labor. About that time I formed the opinion that sociology might prove one of the best instruments for the interpretation of the Bible, and that, on the other hand, the Bible might prove to be one of the best sources of sociological material. My subsequent studies have been largely influenced by this conclusion. During two winters I pursued the joint study with selected companies of students. The work seemed so promising that four years ago I offered work in biblical sociology to my classes in the university. This book is a condensation of a part of the work done in the university classes. The survey of the subject will be completed by another volume in the course of preparation dealing

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with the domestic, political, and industrial life of the Hebrews. I have avoided notes, debates, and citation of authorities, in the interest of brevity and clearness. Acknowledgment of obligations to various authorities will be made in the bibliography which accompanies this work. The book, however, is a fresh study at first hand of the Bible in the light of the principles of sociology. So far as I know, the term "biblical sociology" was first used in my announcements. It has since been adopted by two or three other writers.

SAMUEL G. SMITH

ST. PAUL

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RELIGION IN THE MAKING

CHAPTER I

SOME ASPECTS OF THE RELIGIOUS PROBLEM

THE beauty of the lily is not challenged because it grows out of the muck. The roots of all the social values in the world are planted in darkness and ignorance. Men have only grown wise by the rejection of their mistakes. The true interpretation of history is not found by emphasis of the ignorance and the weakness of early men, but rather in remembering that we are forevermore their debtors because out of their lowly experiences have grown the beautiful forms of goodness and of truth. The study of the world's experience breeds hope for the future because of faith in the past. One of the greatest influences in modern life flows from the Hebrew life and literature. The present need is to frankly acknowledge our obligation rather than to discover wherein the Hebrew was weak or at fault. To discover what our debt is to the Hebrew