

to him now, not only on his own place, but to the poor of the surrounding country, who were unable to pay for medical service. His plantation was on the borders of the pine barrens of McIntosh County, inhabited only by a shiftless class of 'Pine Knockers.' For twenty miles about, in pure charity, he visited these people in their sickness; and in chronic cases even bringing their children to his own house, as the only hope of their recovery. In order to diminish their sense of dependence and to cultivate in them, if possible, a sense of self-respect he sometimes required of them in return some light work, as picking of cotton or gathering of corn. He was looked up to by these poor people as a being of another order from themselves.

"It is easy to imagine the passionate love, the reverence, approaching to fear and even to worship, with which he inspired his children. The effect of such a life and such a character on young John is simply inestimable. To the day of his death John looked back on his father with the greatest love and reverence and upon his influence as the greatest of all influences in forming his character; and, indeed, of all the children John most resembled his father.

"I have dwelt somewhat on the life and character of Louis Le Conte, not only because of its paramount influence on his children, especially John, but also because such a life and such a character ought not to go wholly unrecorded."

Such was the father as described in Joseph Le Conte's own words, and such the environment of two of the most prominent and lovable figures in the history of American science. They both put to splendid usury the talents entrusted them, and left an unostentatious yet distinct impress on American thought and education: John Le Conte was the "father of the University of California," which he was called to organise, and Joseph Le Conte was the second pillar and mainstay of that institution, in which from 1869 he held the professorship of Geology and Natural History, and an honorary professorship of Biology. Professor Le Conte remained active in his literary, educational, and scientific labors to the last, and died suddenly while on a geological excursion in the Yosemite Valley, at the age of seventy-eight.

T. J. McC.

THE ENCYCLOPÆDIA BIBLICA.

A MONUMENT OF BIBLICAL SCHOLARSHIP.¹

Theology is frequently discredited, not only by progressive liberals but also by conservative believers, and placed in an unfavorable contrast to religion. Religion is frequently praised as the genuine article, while theology is blamed for all the evils that appear under certain circumstances to crop out from religion. This view is utterly unjustified and unjustifiable, and is based upon a radical misconception of the nature of theology. Actually, it is held only by those whose judgments are the product of their sentiments, and who allow themselves to be carried away by prejudices. The truth is that if theology were better known there would be fewer misconceptions of religion. If a man like Ingersoll had been familiar with modern

¹*Encyclopædia Biblica*. A Critical Dictionary of the Literary, Political, and Religious History, the Archæology, Geography, and Natural History of the Bible. Edited by the Rev. T. K. Cheyne, M. A., D. D., and J. Sutherland Black, M. A., LL. D. New York: The Macmillan Company. London: Adam and Charles Black. Vol. I., *A to D*, pages, xxviii, 572, 1899; Vol. II., *E to K*, pages, 772, 1901. Price, \$5.00 each.

theology, most of his attacks on Christianity would have remained unspoken. And on the other hand, if our pious but narrow-minded dogmatists who like to pride themselves on being orthodox knew more about theology, their religion would be purer and more elevated and would at the same time make them more tolerant of the scientist and the scholar, who seek the truth and yet lack that confidence which distinguishes the dogmatist.

What is theology but reasoned religion? Or better, it is the science of religion. The word means literally, "the science of [the knowledge of] God," but practically it includes everything that pertains to man's relation to divinity in the widest sense of the word,—worship, adoration, and above all morality. It includes at the same time the investigation of the history of religion, not only Biblical scholarship but also comparative religion. In a word, theology is the scientific conscience of religion; it is its critical regulator, its last court of appeal in matters of truth.

Theology is by no means subject to dogma or to a traditional interpretation of religious tenets. Theology is a science, and has as such always been respected in German as well as in English and American universities. It is true that the conscience of theological professors has sometimes been tied by a promise to teach a certain kind of theology, and allow itself to be regulated by a definite confession of faith, be it the Augustana in Protestant Germany or the Thirty-nine Articles in England. But a promise of this kind is a shackle on institutions, not on theology. All those professors who at their appointment are compelled to take a vow to teach a certain dogma, be it right or wrong, cannot be considered as theologians; they are not scholars, not investigators of truth; they are appointed as teachers, as mere transmitters of tradition, and their office cannot be regarded as being properly theological.

Theology has made great advances of late. Scientific investigation has brought its light to bear upon religion. We understand at present more of the psychology of religion; we are better familiar with the facts of the history of the people of Israel; we know of the influence which Babylonian views exercised upon the several authors of the Old Testament. We understand the composition of the Bible and the elements from which the Scriptures have coalesced; and all this increased knowledge, far from destroying our interest in Hebrew literature, has tended to increase it. The so-called "higher criticism" has found much disfavor in certain circles on account of its name. The religious sentiment resented the term *criticism* because the pious were shocked at the idea that the Scriptures, which contain in their opinion a direct revelation of God, should be subjected to investigation, should be called before the tribunal of science which was deemed to be human and therefore fallible; and it would perhaps have been better if the term "higher criticism" had been avoided, and had been replaced by "Biblical scholarship," in the sense of a scientific treatment of the Scriptures. At any rate, under whatever name it may appear, the higher criticism is nothing but a better comprehension of the Bible, and the removal of misconceptions which in the long run can only detract from the purity, the goodness, and the truth of religion.

The present age, far from being irreligious, is more intensely religious than any prior age; but the religion of the twentieth century will no longer be a child-like submission to traditional doctrine; it will be the independent and conscious comprehension of the revelation of religious truth which began with the dawn of history and is by no means as yet exhausted or concluded. The Polychrome Bible, of Paul Haupt, assisted by of the most eminent Bible scholars of both hemispheres,

is one symptom of the increased interest in religion, not from a purely sentimental aspect, but from a desire to comprehend the truth scientifically.

We now hail the appearance of the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, edited in a most scholarly manner in the spirit of the late Professor William Robertson Smith, by the Revs. T. K. Cheyne, M. A., D. D. and J. Sutherland Black, M. A., LL. D., the former Oriel Professor at Oxford, the latter the theological assistant editor of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. The first two volumes, covering the letters *A* to the beginning of *K*, lie now complete before us, and the editors may be congratulated upon the success of their work, which is satisfactory to theologians of every school and tendency, giving information concerning the progress of our comprehension of the Bible, historically as well as archæologically and geographically, covering all the wants of any one who for some reason or another is interested in a thorough knowledge of the Bible.

The work is most appropriately dedicated to the memory of Prof. William Robertson Smith, and his spirit is perceptibly moving over all the columns of the articles presented in these volumes. They are written in a deeply devout spirit, and yet are uncompromisingly progressive in accepting scientific truth wherever it can be positively obtained. The Bible Dictionary which lies before us has become what he contemplated such a work should be, that is to say in the words of the editors: "No mere collection of useful miscellanea, but a survey of the contents of the Bible, as illuminated by criticism—a criticism which identifies the cause of religion with that of historical truth, and, without neglecting the historical and archæological setting of religion, loves best to trace the growth of high conceptions, the flashing forth of new intuitions, and the development of noble personalities, under local and temporal conditions that may often be, to human eyes, most averse."

The work is addressed mainly to the scholars of the Christian community, but of course it will be useful to all investigators and readers of the Bible. The price seems high at first, but considering the expense at which these large heavy volumes have been brought out, and the condensed and reliable information which they contain, it is by no means exorbitant. At the same time it becomes an indispensable hand-book which can no longer be ignored or left unconsulted.

We cannot give our readers a better insight into the nature of the *Encyclopædia Biblica* than by offering a sample article, and we select for it the explanation of Asherah, which commends itself by its concise brevity and is a subject of universal interest. It is signed by George F. Moore, Professor of Hebrew, Andover, Mass.

Asherah, plur. Asherim, the RV (Revised Version) transliteration of the Heb. אֲשֵׁרָה (pl. אֲשֵׁרִים; in three late passages אֲשֵׁרֹת), a word which AV (Authorised Version), following G (Greek Version) (*alcoc* [BAFL]) and Vg. (the Vulgata) (*lucus*), renders *grove, groves*. That this translation is mistaken has long been universally recognised. RV avoids the error by not translating the word at all; but, by consistently treating the word as a proper noun, it gives occasion to more serious misunderstanding.

"The *asherah* was a wooden post or mast, which stood at Canaanite places of worship (Ex. 34₁₃ Jud. 6₂₅ and frequently), and, down to the seventh century, also, by the altars of Yahwe, not only on the high places, or at Samaria (2 K. 13₆) and Bethel (2 K. 23₁₅), but also in the temple in Jerusalem (2 K. 23₆). The *asherah* is frequently named in conjunction with the upright stone or stele (*masseba, hamman*). The pole or post might be of considerable size (cp. Judg. 6₂₅ f.); it was

perhaps sometimes carved (1 K. 15₁₃),¹ or draped (2 K. 23₇), but the draping especially is doubtful.

"The shape of an *asherah* is unknown. Many Cypriote and Phœnician gems and seals representing an act of adoration show two (more rarely three) posts, generally of about the height of a man, of extremely variable forms,² which are supposed by many archæologists to be the *asherahs* (and *massebas*³) of the OT (Old Testament). This is not improbable, though direct evidence is thus far lacking; but in view of the great variety of types, and the age and origin of the figures in question, it can hardly be confidently inferred that the *asherahs* of the Old Canaanites and Israelites were of similar forms. The representations do not give any support to the theory that the *asherah* was a phallic emblem.

"It is the common opinion that the *asherah* was originally a living tree (*Sifre* on Dt. 12₃, *Aboda zara*, fol. 45 *a. b.*; cp. Di. on Dt. 16₂₁), for which the pole or mast was a conventional substitute.⁴ This is antecedently not very probable. The sacred tree had in Hebrew a specific name of its own (*el, ela, elon*, or, with a different and perhaps artificial pronunciation, *alla, allon*), which would naturally have attached to the artificial representative also; nor is it easy to explain, upon this hypothesis, how the *asherah* came to be set up beneath the living tree (2 K. 17₁₀). The only passage in the OT which can be cited in support of the theory is Dt. 16₂₁: 'Thou shalt not plant thee an *asherah* of any kind of tree (RV) beside the altar of Yahwe thy God,' or, more grammatically, 'an *asherah*—any kind of tree' (אשרה כל עץ). As, however, in the seventh century the *asherah* was certainly not ordinarily a tree, this exegesis would be very strange. In the context, whether the words in question be original or a gloss, we expect, not a restriction of the prohibition such as this rendering in effect gives us, but a sweeping extension of it. We must, therefore, translate, 'an *asherah*—any wooden object.'⁵

"It does not appear from the OT that the *asherahs* belonged exclusively to the worship of any one deity. The *asherah* at Ophrah (Judg. 6₂₅) was sacred to Baal; the prohibitions of the law (Dt. 16₂₁ f.) are sufficient proof that they were erected to Yahwe;⁶ nor is there any reason to think that those at Bethel, Samaria, and Jerusalem were dedicated to any other god. The assertion, still often made, that in the religion of Canaan the *massebas* were sacred to male, the *asherahs* to female deities, is supported by no proof whatever.

"From certain passages in the OT (especially Judg. 3₇ 1 K. 18₁₉ 2 K. 23₄),⁷

¹ 'A shocking thing (Jewish tradition, *phallus*) as an *asherah*;' on 2 K. 21₇ see below.

² See Lajard. *Culte de Mithra*, 184 f.; Ohnefalsch-Richter, *Kypros*, 1893, where a great many of these pieces are collected. Similar figures are found on Assyrian reliefs, and on Carthaginian *cippi*. We may compare the Egyptian *dedu* column (at Busiris), the Indian sacrificial post (Oldenberg, *Religion des Veda*, 91), the so-called "totem-posts" of the N. American Indians, etc. See in general Lippert, *Kulturgeschichte*, 2376 ff., and Jevons, *Intr. Hist. Rel.* 134 f.

³ *Massebahs* are sacred stones or monoliths, sometimes heaps of stones, probably the oldest form of consecrating a special place to a religious worship of some kind or other.—*Revuever*.

⁴ See Ohnefalsch-Richter, *Kypros*, etc., Pl. lxxxiv. 3 and 7, where in precisely similar relations to the scene a carved post (supposed *asherah*) takes the place of a cypress tree.

⁵ עץ is not only a *tree*, but also a *stake* (Dt. 21₂₂ and often). That the trees depicted on Phœnician coins, etc., were called *asherahs* (Pietschmann, *Phönizier*, 213) is merely inferred from the OT.

⁶ The condemnation is based, not on the fact that the presence of these symbols presumes the worship of other gods, but on the principle that Israel shall not worship Yahwe as the Canaanites worship their gods (Dt. 12₂ ff.).

⁷ In 2 K. 21₇, "the image of the *asherah*," the word *image* is a gloss; cp. v. 3 and 2 Ch. 33₇. On 1 K. 15₁₃ and 2 K. 23₇, see above. In 1 K. 18₁₉ the 400 prophets of *Ashera* are interpolated (We., Klo., Dr.).

it has been thought that there was also a Canaanite goddess Ashera, whose symbol or idol was the *ashera* post. Since in the places cited the names of Baal and Ashera are coupled precisely as those of Baal and Astarte are elsewhere (Judg. 2₁₃ 10₆ I S. 7₄ [ἘΒΑΛ¹ τὰ ἄλση Ἀστανρωθ] 12₁₀ [ἘΒΑΛ τοῖς ἄλσεσιν]), many scholars have inferred, further, that Ashera was only another name or form of the great Semitic goddess, Astarte (Theodoret, *Quest.* 55 *in iv. Reg.*, Selden, Spencer, etc.); whilst others attempt in various ways to distinguish them—e. g., Astarte, a pure celestial deity, Ashera, an impure 'telluric' divinity (Movers); or the former a goddess of the Northern Canaanites, the latter of the Southern (Tiele, Sayce).

Conservative scholars such as Hengstenberg, Bachmann, and Baethgen, however, have contended that in the passages in question the symbol of Astarte is merely put by metonymy for the name of the goddess; and many recent critics² see in these places only a confusion (on the part of late writers) of the sacred post with the goddess Astarte.³ A critical examination of the passages makes it highly probable that in the OT the supposed goddess Ashera owes her existence only to this confusion. In the Amarna correspondence, however, there is frequent mention of a Canaanite who bears the name Abd-asratum, equivalent to Heb. 'Ebed-*ashera*, sometimes with the divine determinative,—i. e., Servant of (the divine) *Ashera*. This has not unnaturally been regarded as conclusive evidence that a goddess Ashera was worshipped in Palestine in the fifteenth century B. C.⁴ The determinative might here signify no more than that the *ashera* post was esteemed divine—a fetish, or a cultus-god—as no one doubts that it was in OT times; cp. Phœnician names such as 'Ebed-susim, Servant of (the sacred) horses (*CIS* i. 46, 49, 53, 933, etc.); or 'Ebel-hekal, Gerhekal (G. Hoffmann), which might in Assyrian writing have the same determinative; further, Assyri. *ekurru*, 'temple, sanctuary,' in pl. sometimes 'deities' (Del. *HWB* 718).

'The name of the 'goddess *Asratum*,' however, occurs in other cuneiform texts, where this explanation seems not to be admissible: viz., on a hæmatite cylinder published by Sayce (*ZA* 6₁₆₁); in an astronomical work copied in the year 138 B. C., published by Strassmaier (*ZA* 6₂₄₁, l. 9 ff.); and in a hymn published by Reisner (*Sumer.-babylon. Hymnen*, 92)—in the last in connexion with a god *Amurru*, which suggests that the worship may have been introduced from the West. See Jensen, 'Die Götter *Amurru* und *Asratu* *ZA* 11₃₀₂₋₃₀₅.'

The word *ashera* occurs also in an enigmatical Phœnician inscription from Ma'sub, which records a dedication 'to the Astarte in the *ashera* of El-hammon' (G. Hoffmann); where it is at least clear that *ashera* cannot be the name of a deity. The most natural interpretation in the context would be 'in the sacred precincts.' In an inscription from Citium in which the word was formerly read (Schroeder, *ZDMG* 35₄₂₄, 'mother Ashera'; *contra*, St. *ZATW* 1₃₄₄ f.; cp. E. Mey. in Roscher, 2870), the reading and interpretation are insecure.

'The etymology and the meaning of the word are obscure. The most plausible hypothesis perhaps is that *asherim* originally denoted only the *sign*-posts set up to mark the site or the boundaries of the holy place (G. Hoffmann), l. c. 26). The use of the word in the Ma'sub inscription for the sacred precincts would then

¹ The abbreviation Bal after Ḫ (Greek version) means an agreement of the editions Lagarde and Swete.—*Reviewer*.

² We., G. Hoffmann, E. Mey., St., WRS, and others.

³ This confusion is found in a still greater measure in the versions.

⁴ Schr. *ZA* 3₃₆₄, and many. The name is once written with the common ideogram for the goddess Istar (Br. Mus. 33 obv. 1.3).

be readily explained, and also the Assyrian *asirtu* plur. *asrati* (*esreti*), defined in the syllabaries as meaning 'high place, oracle, sanctuary.' In any case, *ashera* is a *nomen unitalis*, and its gender has no other than a grammatical significance.

The same author has spoken of the *asherahs* in his article on Idolatry (§ 7, History), which reads as follows :

"The Israelites when they invaded Canaan brought with them the common ideas of the nomadic Semites; they had their holy mountain (Horeb), holy wells (Beer-sheba), and fountains (Kadesh); the standing stone or stone-heap (altar) represented the deity in sacrifice; domestic idols were probably not unknown. They found in Canaan a people of kindred race, possessed of an agricultural civilisation which the newcomers adopted. The Canaanite high places became Israelite sanctuaries, and the *massebahs* and *asherahs* beside the fire-altars and beneath the holy trees were taken over with them; if new sanctuaries were founded, they were furnished with a similar apparatus. The prophets and prophetic historians regard the idols also as adopted from the Canaanites; and, speaking generally, this is doubtless true. The Baals and Astartes, the gods of the land, were worshipped by the side of Yahwe. The founding of the national kingdom gave rise to international relations and led to the introduction of foreign religions (Phœnician, Moabite, Ammonite 1 K. 11), which were externally much like that of Israel. The worship of the Tyrian Baal in the reign of Ahab, however, provoked a reaction which overthrew the dynasty of Omri. The larger political horizon in the eighth and seventh centuries, and especially the long-continued friendly relations of Judah with Assyria, opened the way for the introduction of many foreign cults, among which the worship of the Host of Heaven, the Queen of Heaven, the Moloch-worship, and the rites of mourning for Tammuz are the most important; 2 K. 23, ff. shows us the state of things in Jerusalem and its suburbs in 621.

"The reforms of Josiah made no permanent change, as is evident from the prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel; the latter gives us glimpses of the strange rites which were introduced or revived in the last years of the city (Ezek. 8). In the Persian period the strongest foreign influence was Aramæan; this is seen not only in the gradual displacement of Hebrew by the Aramaic vernacular, but also by the allusions to Syrian cults such as those of Gad and Meni (Is. 65₁₁). Under the successors of Alexander, the Jews in Palestine as well as in Egypt and Syria were brought under the spell of Hellenic civilisation, and the liberal party, especially strong among the priestly aristocracy, showed no prejudice against the Greek religions,¹ until the violent measures of Antiochus Epiphanes provoked an equally violent reaction."¹

P. C.

SYNEDRIUM OR PRETORIUM?

To the Editor of The Open Court:

In the year of the crucifixion of Christ—33—did the Roman officials of Judea represent unfettered power?

Was not the mighty Sanhedrin the important governing body?

¹The older literature is cited under Ashtoreth [*q. v.*]. For recent discussion see We. *CH* 281 f. note; St. *GVI* 1458 ff., cp. *ZATW* 1345, 4293 ff., 6318 ff.; G. Hoffmann, *Ueber einige phön. Inschriften*, 26 ff.; WRS, *Rel. Sem.*(2) 187 ff. On the other side, Schr. *ZA* 3384. Reference may be made also to Baethgen, *Beitr.* 218 ff.; and to Collins, *PSBA* 11291 ff., who endeavors to show that the *ashera* was a phallic emblem sacred to Baal.

²See Scholz, 419 ff.

³Quoted from *Encyclopædia Biblica*, Vol. II., 2157.