

MISCELLANEOUS.

BOOK REVIEWS.

EDUCATION IN ANCIENT ISRAEL, from Earliest Times to 70 A. D. By *Fletcher H. Swift*. Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Company, 1919. Pp. xii, 134.

The miracle of the continued existence of the Jewish people, in spite of the many centuries of persecution and adversity, can be explained only on the ground of the wonderful system of education that the nation has evolved through the long period of its history. Through this system of education, the Jewish people developed extraordinary powers of endurance which made it possible for them to maintain their vitality and solidarity against all odds. Early in Jewish history, the instinct of self-preservation became keen, because of the many dangers of assimilation that threatened the annihilation of the small nation, and this instinct was constantly sharpened and deepened by means of the many laws and regulations that tended toward keeping the people separate and distinct from the other nations with which they were forced to come in contact. From earliest childhood, the Jewish youth was subjected to a severe discipline of life, every detail of which was regulated and controlled by some religious precept or injunction, so that his racial self-consciousness and his debt of loyalty to the ideals and hopes of his people constantly received new emphasis and new meaning. Holiness in its double significance—separateness from the rest of the world and devotion to higher ideals—which is the message of most of the practices of Judaism, was also the main factor in the aims of the training of children in ancient Israel. Through precept and observance, the Jewish child was led to the realization of his affiliations and duties and had developed in himself that strong racial consciousness which made it possible for the nation to maintain a stubborn resistance to all outside influences throughout the centuries.

Professor Swift endeavors to trace the origin and the foundations of this system of education which made such a development possible. This was no easy undertaking, and our author fully realized the difficulty of his task. It appears that the many writers on the history of education have failed to appreciate the full importance of the course of development of Jewish education and have either given but scanty space to it or omitted it entirely. A few desultory treatises on this subject have appeared, but there is not as yet a work that should deal with the details of the development of the system of education in ancient Israel. Our author had therefore to work practically on virgin soil, and his efforts will be highly appreciated by all students of education.

The subject divides itself naturally into two large divisions, namely the period closing with the Babylonian Exile (586 B. C.) and the period closing

with the Roman conquest of Judea (70 A. D.). Before discussing the educational conditions of each period, the author properly gives the historic background, in so far as it relates to the internal movements and events in the social life of the people. The treatment of the various details of the educational activities of each period is splendidly executed, from the point of view of arrangement and vividness of presentation. The author properly lays great stress on the various rites and ceremonies of the Jewish religion, as they developed in the course of the people's history, because these proved to be some of the most potent adjuncts to education. The various cultural movements in ancient Israel, priesthood and prophetism, Sopherim and Pharisees, the origin of the synagogue and its worship, the various forms of study followed during the latter part of the second commonwealth, are treated briefly but carefully. The author had to rely to a large extent on secondary sources for his information, but he uses these with fine skill and discernment. The tables, summaries, bibliography, and index will be of great value to the student.

The author is to be congratulated on this modest volume. He treats his subject with broad sympathy and without any apparent religious bias. He steers clear of all polemic or controversial matters, although in several instances, especially in the earlier portion of the book, he had to make a choice among varying theories and conjectures. His treatment is fair, appreciative, and scientific. While he had to set certain definite limits to his investigations, he should have intimated that Jewish history did not stop with 70 A. D., but that the system of education laid down by the early leaders of Jewish thought was carried out in further detail by the Jewish people in exile and greatly enriched by their contact with the civilizations of the East and of the West throughout the Middle Ages. We hope that this book will give the impetus to other students of education to continue the studies through the further development of Jewish education in the diaspora, a work that cannot fail to be of great value to all who are interested in the progress of the human mind along cultural and educational lines.

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ANNALS OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL CLUB OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY, written from its minute books. By *T. G. Bonney, Sc.D., LL.D., F.R.S.* London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1919. Pp. x, 286. Price, 15s. net.

This record is complementary to Sir A. Geikie's *Annals of the (Senior) Royal Society Club*, and on the latter's appearance, it was thought desirable to print the minutes of the Philosophical Junior Club, which was founded in 1847. The younger club owed its origin to a feeling of dissatisfaction with the management of the Society, which, it was feared, was degenerating into an attractive but not very influential club, and aimed at checking any retrograde tendencies in the Council of the Society, and at strengthening the influence of science in Britain. At their dinners, the chairman invited communications on some subject of interest, and these, recorded in the minutes, are printed for the first time. Arranged by date, the progress of science can be seen informally and synoptically. About 1889, the aims of the Philosophical Club had attained fruition, the Royal Society had been reformed, its scientific character raised to a higher level, its Fellows being at this date chiefly men engaged in scientific work, but the amalgamation of the two clubs was deferred until 1901.