

## THE NEW ENCYCLOPÆDIA OF THE BIBLE.

We devoted considerable space in our August number of 1901 to the story of the inception and character of the great critical Encyclopædia of the Bible<sup>1</sup> edited by Cheyne and Black and conceived by the late Prof. W. Robertson Smith, the author of the chief Biblical articles in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. We have now to chronicle the appearance of the third volume of this latest and crowning achievement of British Scriptural scholarship. The material covers the letters from L to P (including 1299 columns of fine print). The contributors are forty-nine in number, and while they come mostly from Great Britain and Germany, still Holland, Switzerland, and America are not unrepresented. This international character of the undertaking is a certain guarantee of its sound critical and progressive spirit. These volumes have brought the bewilderingly vast material, historical, archæological, geographical, critical, and what not, now offered by Oriental research, up to the "high level of the most recent scholarship," and so constitute a work of reference that supersedes or supplements existing English literature in this field, and that no modern student of the Bible therefore can afford to be without.

But the work is not a collection of disjointed information about the Bible,—not a dictionary; it is "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 adverse."

We quote below, and in full, one of the interesting articles of the work, showing the outspoken critical and historical spirit in which delicate Biblical questions are treated and offering also much valuable information on an important subject. We naturally omit the cross-references to the other articles of the *Encyclopædia*, which form a very essential feature of the work as a whole.

## NATURE-WORSHIP IN THE PROGRESS OF RELIGION.

The earliest stage of the development of religious ideas about nature is that in which man conceives natural objects as animated by a demonic life; the second, that in which these objects and localities are regarded as inhabited by a divinity or frequented by it; the third, that "in which they are the visible symbols wherein the presence of a god is graciously manifested, and, finally, to the rejection of the symbol as incompatible with the conception of a god whose invisible presence fills earth and heaven.

"The first of these stages had been left behind by the religion of Israel long before our knowledge of it begins; but innumerable customs of social life and ritual observance that had their root and reason in animistic beliefs survived even to the latest times, and doubtless the beliefs themselves lingered as more or less obscure superstitions among certain classes of the people, as they do to the present day among the peasantry in Christian Europe.

<sup>1</sup> *Encyclopædia Biblica*. A Critical Dictionary of the Literary, Political, and Religious History, the Archaeology, 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. 1902. Vol. III., L to P, pages, xv, 650.

"It is obvious that the nature of the object itself determined how far it could be carried along by the advancing religious conceptions. A holy mountain, for example, most easily became the abode of a god, whose power was manifested in storm and lightning, or in the beneficent rain-clouds which gathered around its top; a cave near the summit might be in a special sense his dwelling-place. A natural rock which had been revered as the seat of a numen might become a rock-altar or a *massebah*, in which a deity no longer bound to the spot received the sacrifices of his worshippers and answered their requests; and might even finally be understood by higher spirits as only the symbol of the divine presence. On the other hand, the sacred tree was not so easily dissociated from its own life; its spirit might be very potent in its sphere, but it was to the end a tree-spirit, even if some greater name was given it. Consequently, the beliefs and customs connected with trees and with vegetation generally have been left behind in the progress of religion and often put under its ban, though nowhere extirpated by it.

#### HOLY TREES IN ISRAEL.

"We find this true in the Old Testament. The mountains and the sacred wells and springs which once had, as in some instances we can still perceive, their own numina, have been taken possession of by Yahwè, and become his holy places, seats of his worship; no traces of a distinctive cultus have been preserved; the rocks, so far as they have a religious association at all, are his altars or memorial stones.

"Sacred trees, too, are found at the sanctuaries of Yahwè; at Beersheba, by the holy wells, was a tamarisk which Abraham planted with religious rites (Gen. xxi. 33); at Hebron Abraham built an altar at the '*elon Mamre*' (xiii. 18), where he dwelt (xiv. 13); beneath the tree Yahwè appeared to him in theophany (xviii. 1 ff.). At the '*elon morè*' at Shechem Yahwè appeared to Abraham (Gen. xii. 6 f.); under the '*elah*' at the same place Jacob buried the idols and amulets of his Aramæan household (Gen. xxxv. 4); there Joshua erected a *massebah* beneath the '*elah*' which is in the sanctuary of Yahwè (Josh. xxiv. 26); by the same tree Abimelech was made king (Judg. ix. 6); near Shechem stood also an '*elon me'onenim*' (Judg. ix. 37); the tomb of Deborah was under a tree near Bethel named '*allon bakkuth*' (Gen. xxxv. 8); beneath the '*elah*' at Ophrah the angel of Yahwè appeared to Gideon, who built an altar on the spot (Judg. vi. 11, 19, 24). Compare also the place-names, Elim (Ex. xvi. 1), Elath (2 K. xiv. 22), Elon (Judg. xxii. 11); see also Judg. iv. 5, 1 S. xiv. 2, xxii. 6, xxxi. 13 (1. Ch. x. 12). The words אֵלָה, אֵלֹהִים ('*elah*', '*allah*'), אֵלֹן ('*elon*', '*allon*'), ordinarily mean 'holy tree' (cp. Is. i. 29); the substitutions made in the Targums and by Jerome (i. e., Jerome's Jewish teachers) show how keenly this was felt at a late time. The etymological connection of the word with אֵל ('*el*'), 'numen, god,' is very probable. The names '*elon morè*', '*elon me'onenim*', point to tree oracles; and though these names, like many of the others, are probably of Canaanite origin, we may observe that David takes an omen from the sound of a marching in the tops of the *baka* trees (2. S. v. 24).

#### SURVIVALS IN CULT AND CUSTOM.

"Of an actual tree cult we have no evidence in the Old Testament, the prophetic irony directed against the veneration of stocks (אֲשֵׁרִים) and stones more probably referring to '*aserahs*' or wooden idols. But the places of worship 'under every luxuriant tree' had at least originally a deeper reason than that 'the shade was good' (Hos. iv. 13); and we shall probably not err if we see in beliefs which in many

other parts of the world have been associated with the powers of tree-spirits and the life of vegetation at least one root of the sexual license which at these sanctuaries was indulged in in the name of religion. Doubtless the custom existed, which still prevails in Syria as in many other countries, of hanging upon the trees bits of clothing, ornaments, and other things which keep up the connection between the man to whom they belonged and the spirit of the tree. At least one law—the three years *'orlah* of fruit-trees when they begin to bear (Lev. xix. 23-25)—perpetuates a parallel between the life of tree and man which was once more than an analogy. The prohibition of mixed plantations (*kil' ayim*, Dt. xxiii. 9) is probably another instance of the same kind. The prohibition of reaping the corner of a field (Lev. xix. 9, xxiii. 22), though now a charitable motive is attached to it, had primitively a very different reason: the corner was left to the grain-spirit. That the first sheaf of the harvest, the first cakes made of the new grain, were originally not an offering to the God of the land, but a sacrament of the corn-spirit, is shown by similar evidence.

"If all this belongs to an age which to the Israelites was prehistoric, the gardens of Adonis (Is. xvii. 10) and the women's mourning for Tammuz (Ezek. viii. 14) show that in mythologised, and doubtless foreign, forms, the great drama of plant life—the blooming spring, the untimely death under the fierce midsummer sun, and the resurrection of the new year, maintained its power over the Israelites as well as their neighbors.

#### WATER LIBATION.

"The holy wells and springs in Palestine, like the mountains, were taken possession of by Yahwè when he supplanted the baals in their old haunts. No trace remains in the Old Testament of distinctive rites or restrictions connected with sacred waters such as we know in abundance among the neighbors of the Israelites. But one ceremony was observed annually in the temple, at the Feast of Tabernacles, which must be briefly mentioned here. At this season water was drawn from Siloam, carried, amid the blare of trumpets, into the temple precincts through a gate called for this reason the water-gate, and poured upon the altar, running down through a drain into the subterranean receptable. The reason for the rite is given in another place: 'The Holy One, Blessed is he! said, Pour out water before me at the Feast, in order that the rains of the year may be blessed to you.' The libation was thus an old rain charm, a piece of mimetic magic. A very similar ceremony at Hierapolis is described by Lucian.

#### WORSHIP OF THE SUN AND MOON.

"The heavenly bodies, especially the sun, moon, and (five) planets, appeared to the ancients to be living beings, and since their influence on human welfare was manifest and great they were adored as deities (see Wisd. xiii. 2 ff.). The relative prominence of these gods in religion and mythology differs widely among peoples upon the same plane of culture and even of the same stock; they had a different significance to the settled population of Babylonia from that which they had for the Arab nomad, and besides this economic reason there are doubtless historical causes for the diversity which are in great part concealed from us.

"That the Israelite nomads showed in some way their veneration of the sun is most probable; but there is no reason to believe that sun-worship was an important part of their religion. In Palestine the names of several cities bear witness to the fact that they were seats of the worship of the sun (*Shemesh*). The best

known of these is Beth-shemesh—now 'Ain Shems—in the Judæan lowland, just across the valley from Zorah, the home of Samson, whose own name shows that Israelites participated in the cult of their Canaanite neighbors, and perhaps appropriated elements of a solar myth. It may be questioned whether the worship of the sun at these places was of native Canaanite origin, or is to be ascribed to Babylonian influence, such as we recognise in the case of the names Beth-anath and, probably, Beth-dagon. If we may judge from the evidence of Phœnician names, the worship of the sun had no such place in the religion of Canaan as Shamash had in that of the Babylonians and Assyrians, and it seems more likely that the god whose cult gives a distinctive name to certain places was a foreign deity. These considerations lend some additional probability to Budde's surmise that the southern beth-shemesh is the place designated in the Amarna Tablets, no. 183. l. 14 ff., as Bit-Ninib in the district of Jerusalem. The name of the city of Jericho—the most natural etymology of which derives it from 𐤁𐤓𐤏, moon—may indicate that it was a seat of moon-worship; but we have no other evidence of the fact. The names of the Desert of Sin and the holy mountain Sinai bear witness to the fact that the region was a centre of the cult of the moon-god Sin, who was zealously worshipped in Syria (Harran), Babylonia, and southern Arabia; in later times Greek and Latin writers as well as Nabatæan inscriptions attest the worship of the moon by the population of Arabia Petræa; the appearance of the new moon is still greeted by the Bedouins, as it was by Canaanites and Israelites in Old Testament times. The religious observance of the new moon with festal rejoicings and sacrifices belongs originally to a lunar cult; but, as in many other cases, this festival and its rites were taken up into the religion of Yahwè—the national religion absorbing the nature religion. Whether the Canaanite Astarte-worship was associated with the planet Venus we do not certainly know; the worship of the Queen of Heaven in the seventh century was evidently regarded as a new and foreign cult.

“The opinion, formerly widely entertained and not yet everywhere abandoned, that the Canaanite worship of Baal and Astarte was primitive sun- and moon-worship, is without foundation; the identification—so far as it took place in the sphere of religion at all—is late and influenced by foreign philosophy.

#### WORSHIP OF THE STARS.

“If the evidence of the worship of the heavenly bodies in Israel in older times is thus scanty and indirect, the case is otherwise in the seventh and sixth centuries. Jeremiah predicts that the bones of all classes in Jerusalem shall be exhumed and spread out before ‘the sun and the moon and the whole host of heaven whom they have loved and served and followed and consulted and prostrated themselves to’ (Jer. viii. 2). The deuteronomic law pronounces the penalty of death against the man or woman who worships the sun or the moon or the host of heaven (xvii. 3); cp. also Dt. iv. 15, 19. The introduction of this cult in Jerusalem is ascribed to Manasseh, who built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the temple (2 K. xxi. 3, 5); the apparatus of this worship, with other heathenish paraphernalia, was destroyed by Josiah in his reformation (621 B. C.) and the priests put out of the way (2 K. xxiii. 4 f.). The altars of the astral cults were under the open sky, frequently upon the flat roofs of houses (Jer. xix. 13, Zeph. i. 5); probably the altars on the roof—the ‘upper story’ of Ahaz—(2 K. xxiii. 12), apparently an addition to the temple, were of this sort. Sacrifices were burnt upon them (2 K. xxiii. 5). The heavenly bodies needed no idol, they were visible gods; and

although various symbols of the sun are found in Assyria as well as Egypt, it is not certain that there were such in Jerusalem. Horses dedicated to the sun were stabled at one of the entrances to the temple, apparently in an annex on the western side (2 K. xxiii. 11), and with them chariots of the sun. The horses, animals sacred to the sun (Bochart, i. 141 ff., ed. Rosenm.), were not kept for sacrifice but, harnessed to the chariots, were driven in procession; according to the Jewish commentators, driven out (toward the East) to meet the sun at his rising. These horses were probably, as elsewhere, white. The rite, one of those imitative acts of cultus which have their ultimate origin in mimetic magic, probably came to the Jews from Assyria, though the special sacredness of the horse to the sun seems rather to be of Iranian origin. Another rite is described by Ezekiel (viii. 16): in the inner court of the temple, at the very door of the *vuós*, between the prostyle and the great altar, men were standing with their backs to the sanctuary of Yahwè and their faces to the East, prostrating themselves eastward to the sun. The words in the next verse, translated in the Revised Version 'they put the branch to their nose,' have been thought to refer to another feature of the ritual, similar to the use of the bunch of twigs called *baresma*, held by the Persians before the mouth when at prayer; not only this interpretation, however, but the connection of the words with the sun-worship of v. 16, is uncertain. The throwing of kisses to the sun and moon is alluded to in Job (xxxii. 26-28) as a superstitious custom; it corresponds to the actual kissing of an idol (1 K. xix. 18, Hos. xiii. 2).

#### THE HOST OF HEAVEN AND THE TWELVE SIGNS.

"In the references to this worship, beside sun and moon, two other names appear which require a word of comment. One of these *seba hás-samàim* (שְׁבַע הַשָּׁמַיִם), 'the host of heaven' (S in Dt. ὁ κόσμος τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, elsewhere *dínauis*, *στρατιά*; Vg. *militia*), is a collective term, sometimes apparently including the sun and moon, sometimes designating the other heavenly bodies; see Dt. iv. 19, 'the sun and moon and stars—all the host of heaven.' The word 'host' (*saba*) is the common Hebrew word for army; the stars, conceived as living beings, not only by their number (Jer. xxxiii. 22), but also by their orderly movement as though under command, resembled an army in the field. In at least one old passage, the phrase 'the host of heaven' designates the beings (cp. 'a certain spirit,' v. 21) who form Yahwè's court and execute his will (1 K. xxii. 19 ff., Micaiah's vision; cp. also Josh. v. 13 f.). It is unnecessary to suppose that the author's conception here is essentially different from that implied in the more common use of the phrase, as though in the latter the stars were meant as merely astronomical bodies and in the former 'angels'; unnecessary, therefore, to seek a remote connection between senses which only our modern ideas have separated. The 'host of heaven' are the ministers of Yahwè.

"The other word, *mazzaloth*, occurs only in 2 K. xxiii. 5 (מַזְלוֹת, S *μαζοτροθ*, Vg. *duodecim signa*, Pesh. *mauzlatha*, Tg. מַזְלוֹת), and—if the words are rightly identified—in Job xxxviii. 32 (מַזְלוֹת), and is variously understood of the signs of the zodiac (so Jerome above), or the planets. It appears to be a loan-word from Assyr. *manzaltu*, 'station, abode,' and points to the origin of the religion.

#### HISTORY.

"The worship of the 'sun and moon and the whole host of heaven' came in under Assyrian influence in the seventh century; it flourished under Manasseh; was temporarily suppressed, with other foreign religions, by Josiah in 621; but

sprang up again after his death, and continued in full vigor down to the fall of the kingdom of Judah in 586; nor did that catastrophe extinguish it. We cannot doubt that astrological divination, if not the worship of the heavenly bodies, was one of the strongest temptations of heathenism to the Jews in Babylonia (see Is. xlvii. 13, cp. Dan. ii. 2, etc.).

"The development of theological monotheism involved the assertion of Yahwè's supremacy over the heavenly bodies: he created them, he leads out their host in its full number, calls them all by name, so great is his power not one of them dares be missing (Is. xl. 26, cp. xlv. 12, Gen. i. 14 ff., Neh. ix. 6). They are not mere luminaries set in the sky, but superhuman beings; it is by Yahwè's ordinance that the nations worship them (Dt. iv. 19 f., cp. xxxii. 8 G, Jubilees, xv. 31 f.); the final judgment falls no less upon the high host on high, who guide and govern the nations in history, than on the kings of the earth on earth; they shall together be shut up in prison (Is. xxiv. 21-23; Enoch xviii. 13-16, xxi. 1-6; Rev. ix. 1 f., 11; cp. Dan. viii. 10 f.).

"Philo is therefore in accord not only with Greek thinkers but with the Old Testament in representing the stars as intelligent living beings; they are of a 'divine and happy and blessed nature,' nay, 'manifest and perceptible gods'—expressions which, as he means them, are not incompatible with his monotheism. The Essenes are said to have observed certain religious customs which imply peculiar veneration for the sun; but whatever may have been the origin of the practices, it may be assumed that they had found in them some symbolical meaning in harmony with the fundamental dogma of their Judaism." μ.

### SECRECY IN RELIGION.

*To the Editor of The Open Court:*

The interesting contribution of the Countess E. Martinengo-Cesaresco in the September *Open Court* refers to a condition of Oriental reticence in the presence of aliens of other cults, of which there is a parallel in the existence of a like secrecy in the Far East. Even in the company of compatriots the initiates do not utter the sacred Mantra, or make Mudra manipulations openly. Especially is this so in the esoteric sects, such as the Shin-gon, and the Tendai,—especially in the higher classes of the Order of Yama-bushi, of which there are two branches. The chief monastery of the Shingon branch is at the former imperial retreat of Daigo, "Sam-bo In" (Three Treasures, Tri-ratna), near the Yamashina railway station beyond Kioto. That of the Tendai—now connected with Mii-dera at Otsu—is at the north-east suburb of Kioto, named "Sho-go In," formerly the residence of an imperial prince. The rites are esoteric and do not materially diverge. The writer has been initiated.

In the Tendai and Shingon ritual, on special occasions, the Gayatri—in an esoteric form—occupies a prominent place; the A-a-a-a, U-m-m-m-m, being joined in by the assembled Bonzes, and heard by the votaries who are railed off at a distance from the high altar. The chief abbot performs the secret manipulations facing the altar, with his hands concealed from the gaze of the laity, and reciting (or reading) the litanies meanwhile in a subdued voice, or silently moving the lips.

Circumambulation, the clanging of cymbals, and in special ceremonies the blowing of a conch, form a feature.

At the temples in the mountains, the rendezvous of periodical pilgrimage and assemblies of the Order, there are secret ceremonies for adepts and initiates, the