

The Religion of the Old Testament  
Karl Marti  
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The aim of this volume is to give an account of the nature of the religion of the O.T., especially of those features which specifically differentiate it from the other religions of antiquity. This is done, however, in the form of a history of the religion, and the principles on which the history is constructed are those of the Graf-Wellhausen School. Hence we meet with the stereotyped division brought into vogue by this school: The Nomad Religion, the Peasant Religion, the Religion of the Prophets, the Legal Religion. Prof. Marti is well qualified to be the spokesman of this still widely-prevailing view of the religious history of Israel. His redaction of Kayser's "Alttestamentliche Theologie", which in its later views became virtually an independent work under the title "Geschichte der Israelitischen Religion" and his authorship of several parts of the "Kurzer Handkommentar zum A.T.", of which he is the editor, are sufficient guarantees of a thorough familiarity with the field traversed both exegetically and constructively. For those who desire a brief and reliable statement of the hypothesis, the present volume will prove serviceable. It gives the Graf-Wellhausen tradition in its old unadulterated form. A few statements like "the thought of reward apart from the fulfilling of the divine will is altogether foreign to the prophets" (p. 157); "both (the Sabbath and circumcision) had been rejected by the prophets" (p. 208); "the real Messianic prophecies are to be declared as products of the legal stage of the religion" (p. 215), sufficiently characterize the author's position. The "pure ethical Monotheism" in which writers like Marti find the valuable essence of the O.T. religion, forms an antithesis to the principle of redemption, and that, apart from its naturalistic principles in the question of origins, is the main reason why this critical hypothesis is inconsistent with the historic faith of the Church.

The writer takes some account of the recent entrance of Assyriological and Babylonian research as a factor to be reckoned with in the controversy about the Old Testament. His conviction evidently is that it has left the central positions of Wellhausenianism untouched. The translation is well done. On p. 49 "rights" is a misprint for "rites".