

the Old Testament as a source of religious force (cp. also pp. 42, 220) and as a subject of scientific investigation.

The index of Scripture passages is exhaustive, but one misses an index of subject matter, where one would have, for instance, all the references to the influence of Canaan and other countries on the Old Testament, without hunting through the whole book. But that is a small matter.

One's admiration deepens the more one uses this standard work.

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*Die Ursprünge des israelitischen Rechts*, by Albrecht Alt, *Berichte der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften: Phil.-hist. Klasse*, 86, No. 1, Leipzig, 1934.

Multum in parvo! In the monograph before us Professor Alt of Leipzig, Kittel's successor, has revolutionized our approach to the juristic origins of Israel, and has accomplished this feat in less than seventy pages of closely-written argument. It will henceforth be impossible for any serious student of Israel to study Hebrew law without detailed consideration of every page of Alt's investigation.

In a series of monographic treatments Alt had previously dealt with *Die Landnahme der Israeliten in Palästina* (1925), *Der Gott der Väter* (1929), and *Die Staatenbildung der Israeliten in Palästina* (1930). Each of these studies is a model of sound method in its field. *Die Ursprünge des israelitischen Rechts* is, in the reviewer's judgment, superior to all of them, and shows the distinguished author at his best. One may go farther and say that it is the most important contribution to the study of Hebrew law since Wellhausen's *Prolegomena*, which first appeared in 1878. This assertion will undoubtedly come as a surprise to many readers, so some justification is necessary.

The great importance of Wellhausen's work lay in two directions. First, he proved to the satisfaction of most subsequent students that the then commonly accepted chronological order of the documents, G (P), E, J, D (using present terminology) was wrong, and should be corrected with Graf to J, E, D, P. The *Grundschrift*, now known as the Priestly Document, was thus the latest Pentateuchal source, not the oldest. Secondly he showed by rigid logic how such problems should be attacked. It is increasingly recognized now that the resulting system was far too rigid and that Wellhausen began with two erroneous premises, first that the evolution of Hebrew culture and religion followed Hegelian principles as enunciated by Vatke, and secondly that Israel was an isolated people which began in