

Harvard Theological Review

<http://journals.cambridge.org/HTR>

Additional services for *Harvard Theological Review*:

Email alerts: [Click here](#)

Subscriptions: [Click here](#)

Commercial reprints: [Click here](#)

Terms of use : [Click here](#)



***History of Religions.* George Foot Moore.
Vol. II: Judaism, Christianity,
Mohammedanism. Charles Scribner's Sons.
1919. Pp. xv, 552. \ \$3.00.**

Edward Washburn Hopkins

Harvard Theological Review / Volume 13 / Issue 03 / July 1920, pp 290 - 294
DOI: 10.1017/S0017816000013122, Published online: 03 November 2011

Link to this article: [http://journals.cambridge.org/
abstract_S0017816000013122](http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0017816000013122)

How to cite this article:

Edward Washburn Hopkins (1920). Harvard Theological Review, 13, pp 290-294 doi:10.1017/S0017816000013122

Request Permissions : [Click here](#)

BOOK REVIEWS

HISTORY OF RELIGIONS. GEORGE FOOT MOORE. Vol. II: Judaism, Christianity, Mohammedanism. Charles Scribner's Sons. 1919. Pp. xv, 552. \$3.00.

With well-timed entrance upon the stage this second volume of Professor Moore's history is synchronous with the reappearance of the first volume in a second edition, an honor of which it was well deserving and which will doubtless come also to its successor. It is six years since the earlier work was noticed in this Review. The author, being as it were more at home in the province now under consideration, has in the reviewer's opinion here surpassed himself; his second volume is distinctly better even than the first. One walks one's own field more securely and works it with truer understanding, perhaps in all senses more happily. As a succinct exposition of the three religions represented, this volume is worthy of high praise. So far as the reviewer is competent to express an opinion, it is as sound in judgment as it is accurate in details. He has even the feeling that the author's style has improved, possibly in lightness of touch, in the course of the half-dozen years since the first volume came out, although one may find a sentence of no less than one hundred and one words, the reputed significance of the number doubtless having escaped the attention of the learned author, who would not otherwise have devoted this particular number of words to the opening paragraph of his chapter on Christianity!

One reason why this volume is excellent is that it treats of only three religions in five hundred pages as compared with nine religions discussed in the six hundred pages of its predecessor. The author is thus able to do justice to his themes, and one wishes only that he had been permitted to give a whole volume to each of the three. As it is, a fair proportion of his book is devoted to Judaism, a somewhat longer exposition covers Mohammedanism, and these two together do not take quite so much space as does Christianity, to which rather more than half the book is dedicated. Albeit Professor Moore has been so generous to the most important religion of the three, one cannot but lament that, especially in this field, he has been forced to confine himself within the bounds of the 280 pages he has allotted to Christianity. One gets the impression often that he had more to say than he has said, and the reader must regret that anything has been omitted.

Professor Moore, who believes that nothing can be learned about a religion "from ignorance and superstition," has not only in his *His-*

tory of Religions ignored all lower and middle-class religions, such as those of Peru and northern Europe, but has naturally sacrificed in his account of the selected religions which he discusses those elements which make the foundation of the higher faith. So in Judaism a few general remarks dispose of the remote nomadic phase, and no time at all is lost in discussing the kind of cattle in which the tribes were interested, whence these tribes originally derived, or whether their god was at first the moon, a storm-god, or a tree-spirit. The author is obviously more interested in higher things than legends and surer things than theories. Enough to say that Jehovah (Professor Moore retains this form) was the god who fought for the Israelites and had his seat on some mountain, as contrasted with the local Baals, proprietors of fields and cities. A dozen pages thus sweep the reader on to the prophets, whose ideals are embodied in the institution of Deuteronomy. Here one feels inclined to ask, Which prophets? And at this point, despite the circumscribed space, one would have liked to see a distinction made between the various types of prophets, not only in the stereotyped sundering of the prophet of hope and prophet of love, but between the classes of prophets, those who relied on visions and those who did not, the prototype and the later imitator. Some estimate too of their relative value might have been given, and an answer to the modern question whether the prophets represent spiritual or ethical awakening. Jeremiah, the greatest of all the prophets, deserves at least a posthumous appreciation.

The author in speaking of the Law of Holiness says that the notion of sin as defilement is purely sacerdotal, the most heinous sin to the priestly mind being defilement of holy objects and profanation of the Holy Name. But one does not have to wait for the development of a sacerdotalism to find this attitude; it is inherent in all forms of taboo, and some African savages are as fearful of profaning holy names as were the Jews. Ezekiel represents not advance but retrogression. Monotheism, it is well emphasized by the author, not only differs from monolatry but, among the Jews, owes its being to the conception of history as a moral order; it was not the result of philosophical speculation. The origin of the Pentateuch is sketched briefly, so briefly that an unversed reader would hardly realize its historical background. Perhaps some of the space later expended on the brilliant mediæval scholars might have been utilized to make clearer the component parts of the Old Testament. The historical "strands," though mentioned, are left rather twisted. This may be due to the fact that the author regards purely literary questions as beyond his present mark. But this is not so in the case of "Isaiah," in respect of whom it is

religiously of moment whether (but the author does not touch the topic) he represents a single, duplicate, or triplicate personality. A short and sufficient analysis disposes of the stories of creation, paradise, the deluge, and dispersion of nations as "Hebrew mythology," which found literary expression from the ninth century till the Persian time. Literary dependence on Babylon, in the author's view, is suggested by the story of the flood but not by the story of creation. Jewish eschatology, he opines, was developed into a definite scheme under Persian and (or) Orphic influence, but its premisses are to be found "in the religion itself." One would like to see this thesis stated more definitely. The religion itself scarcely seems to have any eschatology save that of ghosts and graves. Sheol is hardly a premiss of heaven.

The closing chapters of Judaism, discussing mediæval and modern Judaism, are introduced by an account of the protestant Karaites, and then present in masterly fashion a summary of Jewish mediæval scholarship with its galaxy of learned men, such as Saadia, Maimonides, and Mendelssohn. Zionism and its prospects are also included in the general subject of Judaism.

In his account of Islam the author tells us that most prevalent opinions about Islam are wrong, and that, for example, contrary to common belief, the prohibitory laws of the Moslem religion have proved as ineffective as have modern Christian experiments. The Eighteenth Amendment is probably not referred to in this remark; but while it is true that, as Professor Moore states, the intemperance of the Bagdad caliphate clings to later Mohammedan literature and a single verse of the Koran has certainly not made all Mohammedans abstainers, yet the verse and later insistence upon it have had in general a far deeper effect than any Christian mandate. One needs only to contrast the abstemiousness of the Moslem world in India with the self-indulgence of Christians there, not to speak of Hindus, to realize that prevalent opinion in this regard, while it exaggerates, is not wholly wrong.

Professor Moore thinks that Sufism was affected not only by Greek and Christian influences but also by Buddhism; that Fanâ is a form of Nirvana. This, though the latest theory, is by no means certain. It would be safer to say that some form of Fanâ (there are various forms) seems to derive from India. According to Havell, who has lately demonstrated how poor a historian a good artist can be, the only question as to the influence of Buddhism on Mohammedanism is whether the Prophet himself belonged to the Hîna or to the Mahâyâna! Professor Moore very properly ignores this absurd theory. He

mentions here, rightly to repudiate it, another opinion formerly prevalent but incorrect, that Sufi pantheism was an Aryan (Persian) reaction against the hard Semitic deism of Mohammedan theology. Another "erroneous notion" is that Moslem law is wholly derived from the Koran. This notion is due to a failure to distinguish between civil and religious law.

In "Christianity" Professor Moore has given an unbiased history of the Church, admirable for its objective presentation, fairness, and fulness of detail; less admirable, if with all respect one may so express it, for its careful reticence. It is, however, seldom that one writes a history of Christianity without saying anything to offend anybody, and that alone is a notable achievement. Yet what the reviewer has in mind can be illustrated by the course of the author's history of Jesus. The story, as told by Professor Moore, repeats in abbreviated, one might almost say expurgated form, the Gospel narrative, expanded occasionally by a scholarly aside ("his mother-tongue was the Aramaic vernacular of Galilee"). But there is no intimation that Jesus is reported to have performed any other miracles than those of healing (including expulsion of demons). There is only a deferred and remote hint (by means of a reference to pages in the preceding volume) that the resurrection story is one of a type of resurrection stories. The history of Jesus himself stops short with the crucifixion. This same attitude of silence is maintained through the history of the Church. The ridicule heaped upon Calvin by his own brethren is ignored. In regard to Calvin's part in burning Servetus it is merely said that "when the Genevans burned him" and the Inquisition burned his books, the heresy of Servetus was ended. This, to be sure, is history so far as it goes. Jesus is said to have performed miracles of healing and "the Genevans" burned Servetus. But there seems to be something lacking to completeness. Thus, too, in another matter, it is not even hinted that the Quakers in England and America made themselves a public nuisance and offended decency, but they are charitably (and truly) described as anti-formalists pervaded by a soul of mysticism. Their honesty, simplicity, and philanthropy are apparently the only traits preserved by history. It is not in reference to them or to any other Christian sect that the general observation is made, "Antinomianism is, indeed, inherent in all mysticism."

In regard to the influence of Paul, Professor Moore holds that the main current of Christian thought did not take its rise in him and did not even pass through him: "Rather it flowed by him as around a rock in the bed of a stream." Thus, so to speak, Peter was the rock on which the Church was built and Paul the rock on which it split.

This review cannot do justice to the acumen and erudition with which the work of the Church in its monastic and mediæval phases is presented, the admirable account of the Protestant Reformation, with the added chapter on the Catholic Reformation, and the clear analysis of the hair-splitting symbols which for generations intrigued the bellicose metaphysicians who thought themselves Christians. If the volume as a whole has any defect, it is the one already noticed. The generous desire to bring into light only the unimpeachable side has here and there led to the picture becoming slightly out of focus. The weaker aspects of Christianity, its fables, superstitions, tragedies, indecencies, no one wishes to see emphasized, but they should not be passed over without a word. Discreet reticence has its place in an apologia rather than in a history. Professor Moore has told the truth about Christianity but not the whole truth, and this is a pity because his work is likely to be popular in those institutions where devout minds that turn with horror from "radical" writers need enlightenment from a source they are bound to respect.

As with the preceding volume, the author has added a well-selected bibliography and (a point rarely noticed in reviews) his index is a real index.

EDWARD WASHBURN HOPKINS.

YALE UNIVERSITY.

A GRAMMAR OF NEW TESTAMENT GREEK. JAMES H. MOULTON. Vol. II. Accidence and Word-Formation. Part I. General Introduction; Sounds and Writing. Ed. by W. F. HOWARD. T. & T. Clark. 1919. Pp. 114. 7s.

The first volume or *Prolegomena* of this grammar was published in 1906, and quickly won recognition as a new departure in the field. The MS. for the second volume was about two-thirds finished ten years later at the time of the author's tragic death. This first installment of it is an earnest that it will be completed and published to the satisfaction and service of New Testament scholars. The subjects with which it deals do not generally secure as much interest as do the matters of syntax treated in the earlier volume. But even the comment on sounds and writing presented in this section is made readable by the easy style of the author and by the interest of his evidence from the papyri. Besides, Professor Moulton did not construe his duty as a grammarian to be the cataloguing of all linguistic phenomena, but merely the elaboration of those questions on which new light is needed or is available.