

**EDUCATION IN ANCIENT
ISRAEL: FROM EARLIEST
TIMES TO 70 A.D.**

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Education in Ancient Israel: From Earliest Times to 70 A.D. by Fletcher H. Swift

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FLETCHER H. SWIFT

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FROM EARLIEST TIMES TO 70 A. D.

BY

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AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED TO
MY FATHER
WHO, FROM MY EARLIEST YEARS,
TAUGHT ME TO KNOW, REVERENCE AND LOVE THE LAW.

PREFACE.

Most treatments of Hebrew education available in English are either out of date or inadequate. The longer one studies the origins of modern education the more difficult does he find it to explain the meagerness of the accounts of Hebrew education thus far presented. Authors of educational histories who have felt it incumbent upon them to include in their treatment of Greek education a discussion of music, dancing, physical and military training, have omitted these and other equally important topics from their discussions of Hebrew education. The fact that the information concerning these phases of ancient Hebrew education is in many cases meager and incomplete is no reason for failing to present such data as are available.

The following account is, I believe, the first attempt in English to give education in Ancient Israel any such broad treatment as has long been accorded to that of other ancient peoples. There is no people whose history presents more difficulties, and none which leaves more room for the play of the personal equation of the writer. It is not to be expected that all the positions presented in this little volume will commend themselves to every reader. It is not offered in any sense as an apologetic of any theory of Hebrew history. Its aim is set forth in the statement of its problem (see page 4). It is hoped that whatever may be its defects it will lead the reader to see that the environment in which the native genius of the Hebrews ripened was a rich and varied one, and that the educative influences were many, not few. If, in addition to this, it stimulates future writers

upon Hebrew education to break away from narrow traditional limits it will not have been written in vain.

The fact that the present account does not extend beyond 70 A.D. accounts for omitting from the bibliography a number of standard authorities (e.g., Grassberger) which deal solely or chiefly with post-Biblical education.

In the spelling of Hebrew words, the *Jewish Encyclopedia* has been followed except in cases where some change seemed necessary in view of the public for whom the present volume is designed.

An explanation of the use of numerals and letters in the citation of authorities will be found in the note preceding the Bibliography at the end of the volume.

The author wishes to acknowledge the valuable assistance he has received from Rabbi S. N. Deinard of Minneapolis, formerly professor of Hebrew Literature and History, University of Minnesota, Professor Julius H. Greenstone of Gratz College, Philadelphia, Professor Theodore G. Soares of the University of Chicago, and Rabbi C. David Matt of Minneapolis, each of whom gave the manuscript a most careful reading and whose criticisms and suggestions have led to a number of important revisions.

FLETCHER HARPER SWIFT.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA,
February 5, 1919.

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