

Das antisemitische Hauptdogma
Eduard König
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The doughty Bonn Professor, who has fought for the good rights of the Old Testament on so many fronts, in this brochure takes up its defense, and incidentally also the defense of Old Testament science, against the attacks of a certain type of Anti-Semitism. There is one extreme wing of the Anti-Semitic propaganda which does not hesitate to decry and reject the biblical religion, including Jesus and Christianity, in toto, on the plea of its being so typically Semitic as to be irreconcilable with and injurious to the national Germanic aspirations. Others however go less far in their condemnation of the biblical teaching. Loath to cut themselves loose from the Bible and Christianity after so radical a fashion, and yet desiring to put the social, political and economic objections raised to the influence of the Hebrew element in modern civilization on a broad basis, they distinguish between two strands in the biblical development, one of which they attack as the root of all that appears to them at the present day offensive and dangerous in the activity of the Jews, whilst from the other they derive all that is good and noble in the Old Testament religion and in Christianity. In part the distinction is drawn between Judaic and Israelitish elements, in which case the northern tribes are idealized at the expense of Judah; in other cases, and alongside of this, however, the claim is made that Aryan elements were present and influential among ancient Israel, and that to them is due the production of what it is still possible to cherish as a valuable inheritance from that ancient source. Dr. König is, as usual, very methodical in his presentation of the polemic material that has been advanced along both lines and in the reply to its main arguments. It is amazing to learn what shallowness of biblical scholarship, what cheap, journalistic credulousness in regard to the wildest and most baseless speculations, the rabid Anti-Semites display in their writings. One cannot help suspecting that to a considerable extent it is not with them a case of honest conviction but of unscrupulous use, regardless of historical support, made of any material that may suit the purpose of their propaganda. An amazing feature of the situation is that the Anti-Semitic writers do not hesitate on their part to accuse Old Testament scholars of incapacity in understanding the true trend of the biblical development and introduce themselves as discoverers and liberators in a field enslaved to blind traditionalism. In exposing the fatuousness of all this the author renders a valuable service. At the same time his work, although of small compass, gives a good summary of what has been written of recent years in support of the theory of non-Hebrew or non-Semitic influence in the development of the biblical ideas, from a more reputable quarter, though in most instances with little more historical foundation. Especially the sketch of the modern controversy, if it may be dignified by that name, about the Aryan or semi-Aryan descent of Jesus is helpful. Not only those who are interested in the question of Anti-Semitism, but also the general theological student will find Dr. König's pamphlet well worth careful perusal.