

PREFACE

THE idea of preparing a new Dictionary of the Bible on critical lines for the benefit of all serious students, both professional and lay, was prominent in the mind of the many-sided scholar to whose beloved memory the present volume is inscribed. It is more than twelve years since Prof. Robertson Smith began to take steps towards realising this

Genesis of the Encyclopædia.

idea. As an academical teacher he had from the first been fully aware of the importance of what is known as Biblical Encyclopædia, and his own earliest contributions to the subject in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* carry us as far back as to the year 1875. If for a very brief period certain untoward events arrested his activity in this direction, the loss of time was speedily made up, for seldom perhaps has there been a greater display of intellectual energy than is given in the series of biblical articles signed 'W. R. S.' which appeared in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* between 1875 and 1888. The reader who is interested in Bible study should not fail to examine the list, which includes among the longer articles BIBLE, CANTICLES, CHRONICLES, DAVID, HEBREW LANGUAGE, HOSEA, JERUSALEM, JOEL, JUDGES, KINGS, LEVITES, MALACHI, MESSIAH, MICAH, PHILISTINES, PRIEST, PROPHET, PSALMS, SACRIFICE, TEMPLE, TITHES, ZEPHANIAH; and among the shorter, ANGEL, ARK, BAAL, DECALOGUE, ELLI, EVE, HAGGAI, LAMENTATIONS, MELCHIZEDEK, MOLOCH, NABATEANS, NAHUM, NAZARITE, NINEVEH, OBADIAH, PARADISE, RUTH, SABBATH, SADDUCEES, SAMUEL, TABERNACLE, Vow.

Nor should the students of our day overlook the service which this far-seeing scholar and editor rendered to the nascent conception of an *international* biblical criticism by inviting the co-operation of foreign as well as English contributors. That names like those of Nöldeke, Tiele, Welhausen, Harnack, Schurer, Gutschmid, Geldner, appeared side by side with those of well-known and honoured British scholars in the list of contributors to the *Encyclopædia* was a guarantee of freedom from dangerous eccentricity, of comprehensiveness of view, of thoroughness and accuracy of investigation.

Such a large amount of material illustrative of the Bible, marked by unity of aim and consistency of purpose, was thus brought together that the *Encyclopædia Britannica* became, inclusively, something not unlike an *Encyclopædia Biblica*. The idea then occurred to the editor and his publishers to republish, for the guidance of students, all that might be found to have stood the test of time, the lacunae being filled up, and the whole brought up, as far as possible, to the high level of the most recent scholarship. It was not unnatural to wish for this; but there were three main opposing considerations. In the first place, there were other important duties which made pressing demands on the time and energy of