

## LONGER OUTLINE

W. F. Albright, "From the Stone Age to Christianity: Monotheism and the Historical Process" (Johns Hopkins Press, 1940)

### PURPOSE

"to show how man's idea of God developed from prehistoric antiquity to the time of Christ, and to place this development in its historical context ... a task both for the historian and for the philosopher of history".

### CHAPTER I - NEW HORIZONS IN HISTORY

(Archeological and philological method in Near Eastern history)

- A. Success in handling source materials. 1-33
  - I. Near East most important focus of civilization in antiquity.
    - a. Current ability to handle the various languages in the field.
      - 1. Linguistic and philological achievements and limitations.
    - b. Development of methodology in physical archeology.
      - 1. Achievements and limitations in physical archeology.
- B. Relative value of oral vs. written transmission of history. 33-43
  - I. Importance of oral tradition.
    - a. Oral tradition basic; writing primarily an aid to memory.
    - b. Oral tradition reliable; necessary only to slough off
      - 1. Accretions of myth and folklore;
      - 2. Etiological explanations of elements; and
      - 3. Tendency to drama.
    - c. "Archeological discoveries confirm ... Israelite tradition almost always".
  - II. Modern methods of analysing written documents give increasing respect for validity of Old and New Testament narratives: 43-47
    - a. Study of categories of literary style;
    - b. Understanding of oriental reverence for written word; and
    - c. Understanding of what might legitimately be added to a transmitted tradition.

### CHAPTER II - TOWARD AN ORGANISMIC PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

(Analysis of the fundamentals of philosophy of history)

- A. Because human life develops in patterns, we need a philosophy of history. 48-50
- B. Two main schools of philosophy of history are:
  - I. Relativistic (strong subjective trend); and
  - II. Positivistic (attempting to be objective).
    - a. Positivism, plus rigid evolutionary frame, leads to historicism, which may
      - 1. Produce scepticism as to values, or
      - 2. Force evidence to fit a rigidly conceived evolutionary pattern.
- C. Various philosophies of history.
  - I. Hegelian. 50-53
    - a. HEGEL'S three stages:
      - 1. Thesis (Asiatic: absolute monarchy);
      - 2. Antithesis (Mediterranean: individual freedom); and
      - 3. Synthesis (Germanic: individual voluntarily subordinated to group).