Recent Foreign Theology.

Loofs on the Creation-Narrative.

An admirable example of the hallowing of criticism is given by Professor Loofs of Halle in No. 39 of the series of present-day pamphlets[1] which are being published as 'Hefte zur Christlichen Welt.' The narratives of the Creation, the Fall of Man, and the Building of the Tower of Babel, form the respective themes of three academic sermons, which are no dry, abstract discussions, but practical discourses in which difficult subjects are treated with tactful wisdom and spiritual insight. Sometimes with rare skill the results of criticism are shown to be destructive, not of faith, but of theories which interpret these stories as uninspired myths. Preachers who have avoided the early chapters of the Book of Genesis, and whose point of view may not be that of Loofs, may learn from his devout expositions that these old biblical stories are full of present truth, and are indeed 'Scripture inspired of God, and profitable for instruction which is in righteousness.'

In this notice a summary of the sermon on the Narrative of Creation will be given. In the introduction Loofs speaks with genuine pathos of the hundreds of thousands of simple folk who have been taught that the story in Genesis is a foolish myth. In 'The Bible in the Waistcoat Pocket,'—a little book, widely circulated by the social democrats,—the creation of the world is described as a 'natural event of which when the Bible was written no man, least of all the uneducated Jews, could know anything; the tradition handed down to us consists of some misunderstood scraps picked up from other nations, and this tradition is still being drummed into our children as pure truth.' When such teachings are constantly being 'drummed into' the people, the Christian pulpit ought wisely but frankly to deal with the question of the origin of the Bible story.

Is the narrative of Creation itself a creation of the author's imagination? That cannot be, for then it would be inexplicable that amongst other nations of that time there should exist stories which in many details remind us of the Bible narrative.

Is the story in all its details a supernatural revelation to the author of events which no man witnessed? Divine revelation has ever in view our salvation, its purpose is not to impart scientific information. Moreover, the variations in the two narratives found in the first two chapters of Genesis prove that neither was regarded as inspired in all its details.

Archæological research has shown that the background of the Old Testament narrative consists of ancient traditions similar to those which were current in neighbouring nations, especially amongst the Babylonians. Hence the significance of the Hebrew account of Creation must lie not in its agreements with, but in its differences from, the Babylonian account as it has been deciphered from the cuneiform inscriptions.

In what respects is the biblical narrative unique? The Creation stories of other nations include the gods in their account of how the world came into being. 'Of old,' says a Babylonian inscription, 'when the heavens above were not named and the earth beneath bore no name . . . of old, when none of the gods existed, then were the gods created.' How striking the contrast with those majestic words: 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.' God *was*, when all things had their beginning, that is the one eternal truth which Israel learnt from the Creation-narrative.

The second truth taught in the Hebrew story of Creation, and in that alone, is that this one God did not form the world out of material already existing: 'God said, Let there be light: and there was light.' How could the great truth that the world had its origin in the free creative will of God be more plainly and intelligibly expressed than in those sublime yet simple words? Therefore, so far from the Bible narrative of the Creation being a collection of 'fragments of the wisdom of other peoples,' as the social democrats declare, it makes known two profound truths, the knowledge of which was Israel's peculiar glory amongst the nations.

But granted that the Hebrew narrative of Creation is vastly superior to the heathen myths of the

[1] *Die Schöpfungsgeschichte, der Sündenfall und der Turmbau zu Babel in drei im akademischen Gottesdienst zu Halle gehaltenen Predigten behandelt.* Von Dr. F. Loofs, Professor der Theologie in Halle. Williams & Norgate.

origin of the gods and men, has not the science of the nineteenth century made it antiquated and obsolete? How much is now known about the evolution of the universe of which the pious Israelite had no conception, and how different the meaning of 'the world' to him and to us! Science tells us that the sun is older than grass and herbs, and that the processes of Creation require, not six days, but thousands of years; are we therefore to regard her teachings as delusive errors? That would be to exchange the knowledge which God has enabled men to discover for traditions which Israel possessed in common with heathen nations. On the other hand, the manifold attempts to read into the ancient story the discoveries of modern science are failures, because such cannot have been the meaning which the author of the narrative attached to its words.

The unique element in the Bible story of Creation is not affected by the teachings of science. For us, as for the Israelite of old, the existence of the world remains a riddle. Evolution cannot explain beginnings. To call Creation a 'process of nature' assumes the existence of nature; and those who say nature existed from eternity no more evade the difficulties of the problem than the ostrich escapes its enemies by hiding its head in the sand.

For our belief that this world is the creation of Almighty God, and that He whose free will called it into existence still sustains it by His power, we have a more sure foundation than the author of Genesis. To know Christ as the goal of the ages, is to know that the world exists in order that the eternal counsel of the God of our salvation may be fulfilled; faith in the Almighty Creator is inseparable from faith in the God of redemption.

J. G. TASKER.

Handsworth College.

Kautzsch's 'Apocryphen und Pseudepigraphen.'

SINCE our last notice of this important work (published by J. C. B. Mohr, Freiburg i. B., and procurable, only by subscribers, at a cost of about 15s. for the whole), another issue has appeared, comprising *Lieferungen* 7–10. The literature dealt with is as follows:—The 'Additions to Esther' by Ryssel, the 'Book of Baruch' and the 'Epistle of Jeremy' by Rothstein, the 'Book of Sirach' down to 18^{17} by Ryssel. The names of Ryssel and Rothstein are a sufficient guarantee of the quality of their work, which is worthy to stand side by side with that of the editor, Professor Kautzsch, himself. In particular we may refer to the very careful treatment of the many important questions connected with Sirach, the recently recovered Hebrew fragments of which receive the attention from Professor Ryssel to which they are entitled. The present issue certainly reaches the high standard for which one looks in such a work.

Bertholet on 'The Hebrew Notions of the State after Death.'[1]

PROFESSOR BERTHOLET has done well in publishing in pamphlet form this lecture. The notions regarding the state after death which prevailed in Israel constitute a fascinating subject, on which much light has been thrown by Stade, Schwally, and others. It is a pity the theological pamphlet is not popular among English readers, else we should have had no hesitation in recommending the translation of this little work, which contains nothing but what would be perfectly intelligible to educated laymen. But as such an event is scarcely likely to be realized, the pamphlet may be very warmly commended to all who can read German. Even those who have studied larger works, like Schwally's *Leben nach dem Tode*, will find conclusions already familiar to them presented in a most convenient form, and will not infrequently meet with original and attractive suggestions of the author's own. The pamphlet commences by introducing us to the scene in an Israelitish home immediately after a death has taken place, describes the various observances, such as the closing of the eyes of the deceased, the rending of the clothes, the shaving of the hair and beard, the holding of the funeral meal, etc. etc., and accounts for these as for the most part at least survivals of ancestor worship, although their original meaning had been largely lost before historical times. There is much on other subjects as well which will repay careful study.

[1] *Die Israelitischen Vorstellungen vom Zustand nach dem Tode.* Von A. Bertholet a. o. Prof. der Theol. in Basel. Freiburg i. B.: J. C. B. Mohr. Price 75 pf.

Benzinger on the 'Books of Kings.'[1]

THE *Kurzer Hand-Commentar* continues to make steady progress, and each succeeding volume shows no falling off in quality from its predecessors. It goes without saying that the commentary on Kings fell into excellent hands when it was assigned to the learned author of the *Hebräische Archäologie*. In addition to the *Einleitung* and commentary proper, the book contains nine figures, meant as tentative illustrations of Solomon's buildings or of the furnishings of the temple, as well as a plan of ancient Jerusalem, and a Comparative Table showing the contemporary history of Assyria, Babylonia, Egypt, and Damascus.

Benzinger holds the Books of Kings in their present form to have undergone two processes of redaction, the one before, the other during, or after the Exile. The mention in 2 K $25^{27ff.}$ of the release of Jehoiachin by Evil-merodach brings us down only to 561 B.C., but there is no reason, as Benzinger points out, why this note should not have been written *after* the Exile, the Return being unmentioned because it constituted the beginning of the new period and not the close of the old, and was therefore irrelevant from the writer's point of view. Exilic and post-exilic traces are plainly discoverable also in other passages, notably 1 K 8. 9^{1-19}, 2 K 17^{21} (partly) 22^{15-20} etc. On the other hand, there are passages (*e.g.* 1 K 8. $11^{29ff.}$, 2 K $8^{18f.}$ 17^{7-23}) due to a redactor who wrote between 621 and 597 B.C., *i.e.* subsequent to the Fall of the Northern Kingdom but prior to the Captivity of Judah. Both redactions are of a strongly Deuteronomistic tinge. The pre-exilic redactor (R^1) is the 'author' of the book in the sense that it was he that compiled the material from the different sources. Then his work received various expansions and modifications at the hands of R^2 and possibly others during the Exile and subsequently to it.

The Text of Kings and the Chronology both receive careful treatment from our author, who also appends a pretty full Bibliography, which we may supplement by the mention of the extremely careful article on KINGS (BOOKS OF) in vol. ii. of Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, by Mr. Burney, whose *Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of Kings* will be published shortly by the Oxford University Press.

The Commentary itself is an admirable piece of work, whether we look to the author's own conclusions or to the abundant data which enable the student to form an independent judgment for himself. We naturally turn with interest to see how Benzinger treats the narrative of Josiah's reforms and of the finding of the Book of the Law. On the latter question the brevity which characterizes the *Kurzer Hand-Commentar* prevents our ascertaining very clearly what our author thinks about the real character of the part played by Hilkiah, and about some other burning questions. But he is clear enough that the whole passage 2 K 22^{1}–23^{30} has undergone serious modifications and transformations at the hands of redactors. This remark he considers to apply to what is left even after the separation of such additions as $22^{5b.\ 6}$ $23^{4b.\ 5.\ 7b.\ 8b}$(?) $^{14.\ 16-20}$ and glosses like הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל, 22^{8}, etc. The oracle of Huldah he attributes to the later redactor. In its original form the reply of the prophetess to Josiah's deputation must have been of a more favourable character, for Josiah and his subjects both seem to have looked for material prosperity as the result of the carrying out of the enactments of the Law book. The fatal day of Megiddo changed all this, and the original prophecy had to be altered to suit the subsequent historical situation, just as the same redactor had in other cases to harmonize certain promises with the fact of the Exile. Benzinger believes, too, that the original account of Josiah's passover has been replaced by a later composition, but he is not inclined to agree with those who would make practically the whole even of the original story of the Reformation an invention of the earlier compiler of the Books of Kings.

Like all the commentaries of this series, this one of Benzinger's will be found reliable, up to date, and in every way serviceable to the student of the Old Testament.

[1] *Kurzer Hand-Commentar z. A.T.* Die Bücher der Könige. Von I. Benzinger. Freiburg i. B.: J. C. B. Mohr. London and Edinburgh: Williams & Norgate. Subscription price, 3s. 6d.; non-subscribers, 5s.

Köberle on 'The Temple Musicians.'[2]

THE temple music of the O.T. is a subject regarding which there is much difference of

[2] *Die Tempelsänger im A.T.* Ein Versuch zur isr. u. jüd. Cultusgeschichte. Von Lic. Justus Köberle. Erlangen: Fr. Junge, 1899. Price M.4.

opinion. Its history, and in particular the extent to which it was introduced and regulated in the first temple, is involved in much obscurity. The work before us is an attempt, and the author very modestly insists that it is nothing more, to enlighten this obscurity as far as possible. We certainly are of opinion that there is a good deal in his work to which exception may be taken, but we must accord a hearty tribute to the exhaustive and painstaking examination to which he subjects all the O.T. passages that bear upon his subject. If one's conclusions may differ from those of Köberle, he will feel indebted to the latter all the same for setting the evidence in such a clear light for the reaching of an independent judgment.

The work is divided into four chapters, of which the first deals with the period of Israelitish history down to the Return from Exile, the second with the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, the third with the evidence of the Chronicler, and the fourth with the names Asaph, Jedithun, Heman, and Korah. Some of the main conclusions he reaches are the following:—From very early times song and music were naturalized in Israel, and found the most varied employment in the service of religion. There are numerous indications that in the time of Samuel, and, above all, of David, a great impulse was given to sacred music. Köberle sees no convincing reason for denying that David personally contributed to this movement as a singer, an inventor of musical instruments, and even as a composer of religious lyrics. — 'Levites' was a general term for all those who were occupied with the cultus. But while pre-eminently an official title, it had from the first also a genealogical sense, and in course of time this last attained always more emphasis. At the reformation by Josiah the word 'Levites' ceased to be a distinctive genealogical term for those entitled to exercise the priestly office, and became the technical designation of the highest class of subordinate cultus officials, the other two classes being the singers and the doorkeepers.—Towards the end of the monarchy the title 'sons of Korah' as = 'singers' had been displaced by the term 'sons of Asaph.' These last were apparently, to begin with, a branch of the Korahites, but in course of time had practically usurped a monopoly of the singers' office, while the rest of the Korahites became doorkeepers. — Another family, which presently appears alongside of the sons of Asaph, is that of the sons of *Jedithun*, whose origin, whether they were a branch of the Benê Asaph or directly descended from a 'Levitical' family (Merari), Köberle leaves uncertain. It is not improbable that Nehemiah found a collection of songs of the past which for a considerable period had been employed in the temple worship. These included especially compositions attributed, partially at least with some justification, to David and Asaph. Regarding others, all that was known was that they emanated from the circle of the singers at a period when the latter were designated 'sons of Korah.' *Heman* is the latest of the three classes. It included the most numerous and the most distinguished families of singers, while Asaph perhaps comprised the most ancient. Köberle doubts whether it is correct to say that the liturgical and other arrangements which in the books of Chronicles are attributed to David, are simply those that prevailed in the Chronicler's own day.

All the above positions Köberle seeks to establish by close and careful arguments, which merit the attention of all students of the Old Testament.

J. A. Selbie.