Recent Biblical and Oriental Archaeology.

BY PROFESSOR J. V. PRÁŠEK, PH.D., PRAGUE.

Professor Hommel and Modern Biblical Criticism.

UNDER the title *Grundriss der Geographie und Geschichte des alten Orients* our highly esteemed fellow-worker, Professor Hommel of Munich, has lately given to the world the first half of an extensive work intended to supply the place of a second edition of his *Abriss* which was published sixteen years ago. The book, which has already been noticed by Professor Sayce (see the March number, p. 285 f.), forms one of Iwan Müller's series of 'Handbücher der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft,' and is practically an encyclopædia of the whole science of Ancient Eastern archæology, besides bestowing a praiseworthy amount of attention on the ethnographical relations of Palestine prior to and during the Israelitish period.

In the opinion of Professor Hommel—an opinion reached as the result of long years of reflexion and close study of all the data—there were four families of peoples who were the makers of Ancient Eastern history till the latter was brought to a close by the conquests of Alexander the Great. These are the *Semites*, with whom ethnologically must be reckoned the Egyptians (whose language shows a very close affinity with Berber dialects); the so-called *Alarodians*, for whom Professor Hommel claims not only the peoples surrounding the Semites in a great curve from Elam to Western Asia Minor, but also the Etruscans in Italy; the *Berbers* of N. Africa and S.W. Europe; and the *Iranians*, to whom he assigns a larger place than has hitherto been usual. As far as Palestine and the neighbouring countries are concerned, the forefront is occupied by the Semites. But as the latter, according to their own tradition, migrated there at the dawn of the historical period, it is a natural conclusion that their predecessors are to be viewed as non-Semites. Some of the older investigators held the aborigines of Palestine to have been Hamites—far too vague a term, whose inappropriateness is now universally recognized. A different course is followed by Professor Hommel, who seeks to solve the problem of the racial connexion of the original inhabitants of Palestine by calling in the Iranians. I am sorry that on this point I am unable to follow my old friend, because I can discover no valid reasons for holding that the Iranians were even before the Amarna period in possession of Syria and Palestine, and that the Amorites as well as the alleged Hittites of Judæa are to be reckoned as belonging to them. I am all the less able to assent to Professor Hommel's theory, as there are weighty reasons of an archæological and ethnological nature that forbid us prior to the middle of the second millennium B.C. to differentiate this Indo-European group composed of Indo-Aryans and Balto-Slavs. With reference to the so-called S. Palestinian Hittites—still the focus of the discussion—I cannot help saying that the identity of the Benê Ḥeth and the Ḥittîm, contended for also by Professor Sayce, appears to me impossible; and this all the more, seeing that Professor Hommel himself admits in his recently published work that in the Hittite inscriptions as yet discovered Hamath is the southern boundary. I might also adduce ethnological objections to the identity in question. The Benê Ḥeth of Genesis are contemporary with Abraham, *i.e.* with the reign of Ḥammurabi (Amraphel), who founded the kingdom of Babylon ± 2250 B.C. It is true that there are some traces of the presence of the Benê Ḥeth also during the earlier monarchical period in Israel, but there is no sufficient evidence of their existence in Palestine during the height of the power of the Hittite Empire *c.* 1350 B.C., when the sharp boundary to the south was formed by the parallel of the Nahr el-Kelb. The mention of the Ḥittites in catalogues of the Canaanite tribes subdued by the Israelites is historically worthless, for these are plainly later redactory insertions, which cannot maintain themselves alongside of the archaic diction of the genuine passages.

And now, after this introduction which I have found necessary, I come to speak of Professor Hommel's standpoint with reference to the question of Pentateuchal criticism. It might have been well if he had put forward his ideas and suggestions in this matter in a separate work, for, without assuming an attitude of approval or disapproval towards them, it must be confessed that they are extremely interesting and bear the seal of originality. In his argument Professor Hommel starts quite logically from the position that in the Pentateuch we have not to do with a document written at the time, seeing that our oldest MSS date from the beginning of the Middle Ages. At the same time he points out that the want of the authentic and authoritative text of ancient Israel is supplied by the so-called Septuagint version, a comparison of which with the extant Hebrew text justifies the conclusion that as early as the third century B.C. the books of the Old Testament, apart from a few appendixes and additions, had in all essentials the same form as has been transmitted to us by the Jewish scribes. After this preliminary statement, Professor Hommel comes to the sharp conflict occasioned by the advent of Wellhausen and his school. He criticises sharply and in detail the leading principles of the latter, and on the other hand puts forward a new and wholly independent theory to explain the internal structure of the Pentateuch.

Wellhausen's main argument is founded, as is well known, upon the theory that during the period of the Judges there is no trace to be found of the Mosaic legislation, and that the latter was gradually developed on the basis of the efforts of the Jerusalem priesthood in the monarchical period to centralize the cultus, until it reached its goal in the Book of Deuteronomy in the reign of Josiah, and gained exclusive authority after a hard struggle with the efforts of the country priests. This theory assumes that the Israelites of Moses' time were a rude horde of nomads whose religious notions were of the lowest order. But Professor Hommel contends, upon the ground of the traditional proper names of the Exodus period, that the Israelites were even then devoted to a relatively very high (worthy of the name of henotheistic) form of star-worship. The requisite support for this contention he finds, especially for Midian, in the Minæan inscriptions. The political conditions, in particular the unrest during the period of the Judges and the disruption of the kingdom after Solomon's death, seem to Professor Hommel to account for the Mosaic legislation remaining a dead letter. How, he asks, could the Mosaic priestly *torah* have been carried into general practice at such a time when, through amalgamation with the Canaanites and the adoption of the Canaanite idiom, so much came in from the side of heathenism and for a time almost choked out pure Jahwism? The priests and prophets who remained faithful might be thankful if they could preserve unimpaired the sacred traditions by translating them into the newly adopted Canaanite form of writing. Under the actual conditions and amidst the prevailing barbarism this was the first attainable goal. At the same time they must have laboured to gain once more a general recognition of the conception of Jahweh in opposition to the religion of Baal and Astarte, in order to pave the way for the introduction of the pure cult of Jahweh which was codified in the *torah* of Moses. It must also be kept in mind that the opposition of the older prophets of Israel, Elijah and Elisha, was directed not against the worship of Jahweh in the temples of Bethel and Dan, but against the ancient Canaanite worship of Baal, so that the idea of a centralized worship of Jahweh at Jerusalem was remote from the thoughts of the zealots of the Omri period.

Having thus defined his position towards the Wellhausen theory in general, Professor Hommel labours to establish a new and unique view in place of the one whose foundations he has shattered. He, too, starts from the general designation of God as *El*, seeks to explain the rise of the plur. majest. *Elohim* from *Eloah*, 'Deity'; and concludes that throughout the Pentateuch and originally also in the Book of Joshua, in every instance where at present we read *Elohim*, either *Eloah* or simply *El* stood at first. The abbreviation י׳ for Jahweh, which has its counterpart in the Talmudic abbreviation ה׳, Professor Hommel seeks to explain by assuming a monosyllabic divine name such as *Ja* or *Hô*. The first of these occurs in the form *Jah* elsewhere than in personal names, especially in the liturgical formula *Hallelu-Jah* ('praise ye Jah'); the other has survived as *A'u* in cuneiform inscriptions among the Aramæans. Professor Hommel thinks it is no longer possible to decide in which passages of Genesis *Hô*, and in which *Ja* or *Ai*, originally occupied the place of the present *Jahweh*; but he offers the suggestion that *ha-Elohim*, which repeatedly occurs in Genesis, may be a misreading arising from *Hô* + the gloss '*Elohim*.'

In Professor Hommel's opinion this god Ja was identical with the primitive Semitic moon-god, and

Hô with the deified heavens. From names like *Abijam*—an older form of *Abijahu*—he argues, further, for the existence at one time of a sea-god named *Jam*. As a rule these primitive divine names were replaced in Genesis by the name *Jahweh*, a circumstance which, when compared with the occurrence of duplicate narratives, gave rise to the distinguishing of the two main sources, the Jahwist and the Priests' Code. The circumstance just noted has not escaped the attention of Professor Hommel, but he explains it from the geographical standpoint, holding upon the ground of Gn 29^{31-35} (where the help of Jahweh is emphasized in connexion with the birth of Jacob's sons, Reuben, Simeon, and Levi), that *Jahweh* (or whatever form of the name stood there originally) was the god of the southern tribes which formed the connecting link between Midian and Palestine, while *Elohim* or *El* was the divine name current among the northern tribes. Thus the usual distinction of two poetical narrators—the Jahwist and the Elohist—as the source of the patriarchal legends is rejected by Professor Hommel, who puts forward the following hypothesis of the origin of the Book of Genesis. During the sojourn of the Israelites in Goshen (which is to be taken as including also Edom as far as S. Palestine) a great mass of narrative was accumulated; and during the period of the Judges this was taken into a unified collection of all the ancient traditions, forming a sacred legend of the creation of the heavens and the earth and the various 'generations' or *tôlĕdôth*. In carrying out this work the compilers followed a fixed plan, using a sort of framework into which the whole of the matter is fitted. 'Each particular book has of course again a history of its own, for the clearing up of which we frequently lack materials, so that we are reduced to more or less plausible conjectures. Even in instances where smaller or larger explanatory additions (glosses and paraphrases) or variants have found their way from the margin into the text, it is not necessary always to postulate one special source; or if a source is drawn upon, this may have been present in the text in question only for this particular passage; and thus it is quite wrong to set down this source without more ado as one of the great sources (J, E, D, P, or whatever they may be called) which ha[ve been] constructed at the study table.'

Contributions and Comments.

'Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it.'

Rev. iii. 8.

I.

The Door was open, and I entered in:
Jesus was there, amid a motley throng
Who kept the Marriage Feast with mirthful din:
The ruby cup went round and jovial song;
And in that Hall of *Privilege* 'twas mine
To taste the water that was turned to wine!

II.

Another Door there was, wide open too:
And He within, washing His servants' feet:
'That ye should do as I have done to you,'
He said, when He had made the task complete:
So then I took from His dear lips to mine
Duty's cold cup, and lo, it turned to wine!

III.

Another still—stood open like the rest:
It brought me to the Garden's lonely gloom,
The ruddy drops, the groans that rent His breast,
Shadowed in wine-cup of the Upper Room;
Wherewith I touched these trembling lips of mine—
Love's cup of sweetest *Sacrificial* Wine!

Bootle, Liverpool. THOMAS DUNLOP.

The Royal Potters.

1 Chron. iv. 23.

It has, I think, escaped notice that the four names, *Ziph*, *Hebron*,[1] *Shocoh*, *Memshath*,[1] found

[1] Slightly corrupted (to Heber and Mareshah respectively) in the Received Text.