CHRONICLE

OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY AND CRITICISM.

Das nordhebräische Sagenbuch, die ELOHIMQUELLE, *übersetzt und untersucht* von Lic. Dr O. PROCKSCH. (Leipzig, J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1906.)

THE scope of the work thus described is in reality far wider than the name implies. In addition to an exhaustive enquiry into the origin of the *Elohimquelle*, i. e. that document of the Hexateuch commonly denoted by the letter E, and into the source of the legends therein contained, Dr Procksch has included in his book a fairly full discussion of the kindred documents J, D, and P, and has attempted moreover not only to discover what historical facts underlie the legends, but also to sketch the primitive history of the tribes which made up the people of Israel, as well as their unification and growth as a nation.

It will thus be seen that the book deals, not with one portion of the Hexateuch only, but with the whole of that most complex work, and may therefore claim the attention of students of the Old Testament, who will indeed find in it much that is both suggestive and stimulating.

At the same time it must be admitted that there are probably many who, though they are in general sympathy with the author's methods and aims, will hesitate to accept the results at which he arrives. In a work of this magnitude it is obviously impossible to criticize in detail, and it must suffice to point out those characteristics of the book which most invite criticism.

In spite of a somewhat lengthy analysis of the documents themselves, Dr Procksch seems disposed to attach too much weight to isolated statements, and to allow too little scope for the several redactors who have combined the legends, whether in their oral or literary stage, into the form in which we now have them.

Again, Dr Procksch claims for the several documents an antiquity which is scarcely borne out by the passages which he adduces as proofs. It would indeed be unreasonable to doubt that legends to which Hosea refers are contained in the Hexateuch; but, on the one hand, the evidence available is insufficient to prove that Hosea knew those legends in the form in which we now read them, and, on the other, the utter absence of any reference in Hosea or any other pre-exilic prophet to the legends of Abraham demands much fuller consideration than Dr Procksch has apparently given to it. Although it would be rash to affirm that Hosea had never heard of Abraham, the natural conclusion from the lack of

mention of him is that in the latter half of the eighth century B. C. he was not regarded by all the tribes of Israel and Judah as their common ancestor. It is reasonable to suppose that the stories of the patriarchs were told for the most part at those sanctuaries which the patriarchs were said to have founded, or in the neighbourhood of the places where it was believed that they had been buried. In this way the legends would presumably be current originally only in the particular district which recognized as its sanctuary some holy place such as, for example, Beersheba, Hebron, Bethel, or Shechem. With the gradual unification of the tribes the eponymous ancestor of one tribe would come to be regarded as the ancestor of all other tribes associated with it, which would at the same time take over all the legends related of their supposed ancestor.

On this supposition we have a perfectly natural explanation of the peregrinations of the patriarchs. The natural source of the stories of Abraham, for example, is to be looked for at Hebron, at all events in Judah. The statements therefore that Abraham built altars at Shechem and at Bethel are probably merely the outcome of the desire, which arose after the unification of the people, to trace back the sanctity of each altar to the earliest common ancestor. But if this be so, the stories of Abraham in E must belong to the later *strata* of that document. They might conceivably have found their way into N. Israel before the disruption of the kingdom; in that case however, if stories of Abraham were told both at Shechem and at Bethel, Hosea's silence about Abraham is scarcely explicable. On the other hand, in the seventh century B. C., when the destruction of N. Israel had removed the great cause of jealousy between the two kingdoms, and when, at all events among the reforming party, there was a general *rapprochement* and a growing sense of the unity of Israel, it is easy enough to understand how Judaean stories would become current in N. Israel, and N. Israelitish stories in Judah. It is no argument for the exclusively northern *provenance* of the story of Abraham that it is apparently not contained in J (the Jahvistic elements being probably due to the redactor). If we assume that the story rests upon a Judaean legend, its absence from J can nevertheless be easily accounted for; since its earliest form was probably such that the Judaean prophets, having to contend against the Moloch worship, would have deliberately rejected it. But if the story of Abraham's sacrifice only took shape in N. Israel in the seventh century B. C., can a very high antiquity be claimed for the *Elohimquelle* as a whole?

Dr Procksch finds the explanation of the prophetical character of E in the influence of Elijah. But without calling in question the importance of Elijah's work it may be pointed out that the conception of a prophet

which we have in E accords far better with the age following Hosea's labours than with the previous century.

Although Dr Procksch does not claim for the Book of the Covenant so great an antiquity as for the *Grundschrift* of E, assigning it approximately to the year 700 B. C., he maintains that in substance it is for the most part much older, and to a great extent Mosaic. It is, however, extremely improbable that any prohibition of images existed, at the earliest, before the time of Hosea; for it is difficult to believe that, if Hosea had known of a law against image worship purporting to be Mosaic, he would not have appealed to it. Moreover, the law allowing a plurality of altars (Exodus xx 24 f) may well have been formulated at any time before the adoption of the law of the One Sanctuary, which took place in N. Israel certainly not before 621, and probably some time during the sixth century B. C.

It must be remembered that the inferiority of the teaching of J and E to that of Hosea or Isaiah is not an argument for the priority of their writing. As a matter of fact, the law of the One Sanctuary (inferior as it is in some respects to the teaching of the prophets) was only arrived at as the result of successive compromises. In every reformation there are some who either do not agree with the extreme teaching of the leading reformers, or who are unable to see for themselves the full bearing of that teaching on their earlier beliefs and customs. It was not till some two centuries after the time of Hosea that a school of thought arose which judged all the past in a cold pragmatical spirit.

In his reconstruction of the history Dr Procksch rightly attaches great weight to the division of the nation into the Leah and Rachel tribes, though his sketch of the early history of the Leah tribes is scarcely convincing. Surely, considering the way in which the narratives of the Hexateuch are strung together, Genesis xxxv 22 is insufficient to prove that Reuben formerly occupied a district west of the Jordan.

It is the duty of a critic to criticize, but it is only fair to acknowledge that the above criticism deals with matters on which it would be vain to expect unanimity.

Dr Procksch's work is accurate and scholarly, and whatever the ultimate verdict on his theories may be, it must be admitted that his work is a valuable contribution to the evidence on which the decision must finally be given. It is much to be hoped that the present work may stimulate more scholars to labour in the same field.

The Three Additions to Daniel, by WILLIAM HEAFORD DAUBNEY, B.D. (Cambridge, Deighton Bell & Co., 1906.)

THOSE representatives of traditional orthodoxy who welcome any defence of views assailed by the 'higher criticism' will find this book a

veritable oasis in the desert. Although the writer does not dogmatically assert that the three additions to Daniel are historical, it would appear that he himself is inclined to this opinion. His discussion of the historical character of the additions is particularly striking. Thus he writes (p. 214): 'As described in the Greek, Daniel's method of destroying the Dragon appears quite inadequate to effect his purpose. The ingredients named as composing the ball do not seem capable of achieving the result which followed. But in Gaster's Aramaic a different light is thrown upon the matter; for the ball is merely used as a vehicle to conceal sharp teeth embedded in it, so that the Dragon might swallow them unawares, and sustain internally a fatal laceration': and again (p. 230), in a discussion of the difficulty of making Habakkuk 'a contemporary of the grown-up Daniel'—'The fact incidentally brought out in the story that Habakkuk was not engaged in reaping, but was occupied in taking out food for the reapers, fits in well with the idea of his advanced age. Such a task might well be undertaken by one who was no longer strong enough for field labour.' In the light of this explanation it is much to be wished that Mr Daubney had discussed the difficulty presented by the transportation of so aged a person from Judaea to Babylon in the singularly unceremonious way described in *v.* 36.

The Chronology of the Old Testament, by the Reverend DAVID ROSS FOTHERINGHAM, M.A. (Cambridge, Deighton Bell & Co., 1906.)

THIS book is an ingenious and laborious, but, it must be admitted, a not very successful attempt to rehabilitate Old Testament chronology. Not only is Mr Fotheringham disposed to assume that with few exceptions the chronological statements in the Old Testament are excerpted from genuine historical records, ignoring the temptation which would beset a compiler to fill up gaps by his own inferences, but he also argues too frequently from the text as it stands. Thus, for example, in 2 Kings viii 16 he accepts both the translation and explanation of the Authorized Version. But can it be seriously maintained by any Hebrew scholar that a Hebrew writer, if he had meant to state that Jehoram was made regent in his father's lifetime, or reigned conjointly with his father, would have stated it in the words of the Masoretic text?

Old Testament History for Sixth-form Boys, by Rev. T. NICKLIN, M.A. Part I. From the Call of Abraham to the Death of Joshua. Part III. From the Death of Jehoshaphat. (London, Adam & Charles Black, 1906, 1905.)

IN the first of these little books it is to be feared that the author has attempted the impossible, viz. to produce a work which may be used by both those who accept and those who reject the conclusions of the

'higher criticism'. The result is, notwithstanding an honest effort to set forth the views of both schools, a halting between two opinions. Considering the 'advanced views' which Mr Nicklin holds on many points, it is curious to find him apparently accepting as facts statements which, if the critical division of the documents be allowed, can scarcely claim to be considered historical. The book contains, it is true, much that is valuable as an introduction to Old Testament study, and its reverent tone is greatly to be commended; but it is to be feared that, while it will certainly shake the readers' faith in the traditional views, it gives them only a somewhat vague idea of critical opinions. There are two ways of using Genesis open to the Christian student. One is to take the stories as they stand, and draw from them spiritual lessons as from our Lord's parables; the other is to analyse them critically and to learn from the analysis the evolution of religious ideas in Israel. The defect of Mr Nicklin's book is that it appears to confound the two uses.

The general plan of the second of these volumes (Part III) as well as its tone, is altogether praiseworthy. Mr Nicklin has made it his object to point out the vital connexion between the Old Testament and the history of the nation in which it was produced. The extracts which he gives from the teaching of the Prophets are calculated not only to make the dry bones of history live, but also to shew English readers the true centre of gravity of the Old Testament.

The chief defect in the book is a tendency to state dogmatically controverted theories. Such a defect is perhaps in some measure inseparable from a book intended for the use of schoolboys. Every teacher of elementary lessons knows how the average pupil clamours for dogmatic certainty, and resents the presentation to him of alternative theories. Nevertheless, what is at best only probable should not be stated as fact, no matter how great the authority of the scholar whose opinion it is. Thus, to give but one illustration, Robertson Smith's theory that Jachin and Boaz were pillar altars remains but a theory; yet Mr Nicklin says (p. 66) that 'the King reserved to himself the office of putting blood on the old Jachin pillar which Solomon set at the front of the Temple'.

It would be well also if it were pointed out that the dates are in many cases only approximate, and in some altogether doubtful.

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NEW TESTAMENT CRITICISM AND APOLOGETIC.

The Genuineness and Authorship of the Pastoral Epistles, by the Rev. J. D. JAMES, B.D. (Longmans, 1906), is, the author tells us,