CHRONICLE

OLD TESTAMENT.

The Problem of the Pentateuch, by the Rev. R. H. McKim (Longmans, 1907), consists of three lectures delivered by the author against the results of modern biblical criticism and, as is unfortunately too often the case with literature of this kind, does not take the trouble to examine with any patience the reasons which have led biblical scholars to depart from the usual traditional standpoint. It is clear that the author does not perceive the character of the Pentateuchal problems, and it is to be regretted that one so ill-equipped should have ventured to publish the one-sided arguments which confront us. An interesting foreword is contributed by the Dean of Canterbury, in the course of which he expresses his 'entire acceptance of the duty and the advantage of an unfettered application to the Holy Scriptures of the processes of sound criticism'. Although he objects to the almost unanimous conclusions which are deduced, he candidly admits: 'of course, if the new views were proved, we should have to accommodate ourselves to them, at the cost of the reconstruction of our faith in vital points.'

That this is both necessary and practicable is seen in the popular little introduction by the Rev. Theodore Knight, *Criticism and the Old Testament* (Elliot Stock, 1907). It is a book which those who are impressed by Mr. McKim's lectures should not fail to read. It removes many of the usual misapprehensions, and its sober and careful treatment of critical results is especially intended for the ordinary reader. Notice is taken of the bearing of biblical criticism upon the larger religious problems of the present day, and the writer hopes that his book may help to bridge the gulf which exists between the work of modern scholarship and everyday religion. Its general utility is increased by the addition of a bibliography which includes works especially helpful for those engaged in teaching the young.

Modern Old Testament research is conducted either in its relation to theology and in its bearing upon religious problems, or, more comprehensively, as a department of the study of ancient history, archaeology, and thought. Viewed in the latter aspect it assumes the character of a more scientific and technical discipline, and much of the work at the present day is devoted to the more thorough investigation of biblical problems in accordance with those principles of historical research which are regularly admitted. Hitherto the literary problems

have received the major share, perhaps an excessive share, of critical attention, and much labour has been spent upon analysis which could more profitably be devoted to synthesis and reconstruction. Nevertheless, we welcome the translation by the Rev. G. H. Box of Prof. Cornill's *Introduction to the Canonical Books of the Old Testament* (Williams & Norgate, 1906), a very fair representative of the moderate standpoint in German literary criticism. As compared with the well-known *Introduction* by Dr Driver, its account of Old Testament canon and text is much fuller, but its treatment of the literary questions is in every respect slighter and less informing. It lacks the array of evidence and careful argument which has made the Oxford Professor's work both indispensable and convincing to the student, and simply claims to be a 'handbook for students' which shall emphasize 'all the important factors that have co-operated in the development of Old Testament Method'. Although the book, viewed as an Introduction, suffers from the scantiness with which several 'introductory' literary problems are handled, Prof. Cornill's many valuable labours in Old Testament literary criticism make it a necessary work of reference, and English-speaking students will welcome its appearance in the new dress.

That there are literary problems which 'still call for final solution' (p. vi) cannot be denied, and it is to be feared that Prof. Cornill is not sufficiently cautious when he pronounces dogmatically upon questions which are still *sub judice*, questions, indeed, whose final solution bear seriously upon numerous minor subsidiary points. For example, there is reason to infer that the period from the middle of the 7th cent. B.C. downwards saw the writing and the redaction of a very considerable proportion of the biblical literature, and consequently the literary problems cannot be separated from the historical criticism of these years. Even if 'the hypercriticism of a G. d'Eichthal . . . and of a M. Vernes . . . may be passed over without further remark' (p. 64), the view that the roll found in the reign of Josiah may be identified with at least a portion of the present book of Deuteronomy is far from certain. The doubts expressed also by Havet (1878) and Horst (1888) have been more recently stated, quite independently and on different grounds, by the Rev. E. Day (1902) and by Prof. Kennett (*J. T. S.* July 1906), and some additional arguments could be adduced which, in my own opinion, combine to make the accepted view too difficult to be tenable. Moreover, in descending later to the period of Ezra-Nehemiah, it is to be regretted that Prof. Cornill's discussion of these books is unduly scanty and somewhat cavalier, and although one may not approve of the precise reconstruction advocated by Kosters, it is too much to say—unless, of course, the work of recent years (Kent, Torrey, Mitchell, G. A. Smith, &c.) has been in vain—

that 'we may rest assured that in Ezra-Nehemiah we have every reason to recognize an essentially trustworthy recital of the events narrated therein' (p. 254). It may suffice to refer to Prof. G. A. Smith, *Expositor*, 1906, July, p. 12 sq. as proof that there are chronological and other problems which it is not 'hypercritical' to acknowledge, and that attempts to solve them ought not to lose 'all claim to serious consideration'.

The failure to perceive the phenomena which appeal to others hardly warrants the use of the term 'hypercriticism', least of all from a biblical critic, however arbitrary or uncalled-for the views of others may at first appear. Literary criticism is still in its analytical stages, and it is enough to refer to the traces of the repeated revision of P, to the admittedly late incorporation of a quantity of independent material, and to the recognized twofold redaction of D, as features of importance for the literary problems as a whole. It is now acknowledged that the last-mentioned extended over a long period (spanning the Exile in fact), and its twofold character is not only regularly admitted in Kings, but has been traced in Joshua (Albers, Holzinger, &c.), suspected in Judges (Budde), and may be plausibly recognized in the books of Samuel. To attempt to follow the complex editions of D through all its stages may be 'a useless task' (p. 67), but the exact relation between D and earlier material, whether incorporated by D or subsequently inserted, is so intricate (cp. Steuernagel on Joshua) that, until more is known, the criticism of the historical books, at least, can only claim to have touched the preliminary questions.

The thirty years in which the Wellhausen literary hypothesis has taken firm root have recently seen the rise of newer tendencies among those who have felt the necessity of probing biblical problems more deeply and comprehensively. It is true that in these advances the risk of error is increased through the scanty character of the evidence, and that little unanimity has been found among those responsible for them; working as they are chiefly on their own lines, that security which is obtained when results converge is still distant; only the fact that they agree that biblical criticism cannot remain in its present impossible position forbids us to treat them as ephemeral vagaries or, to use Cornill's term, as 'curiosities'. There is an increased tendency to assign more of the Old Testament literature to the Persian and even to the Maccabaean age; the old Oriental 'astral-lehre' of Winckler has made great strides, especially through the popularization of the theory in the elaborate work of Alfred Jeremias; to these we must add the application of Winckler's theories to biblical history by Erbt, and Prof. Cheyne's unceasing labours at the text and traditions of the Old Testament. All these pursue to further limits principles or

results already commonly recognized, or present old and familiar tendencies in new forms. For example, in regard to Prof. Cheyne's *Traditions and Beliefs of Ancient Israel* (A. & C. Black, 1907), it is hardly necessary to explain that the comparative method of research inaugurated by Robertson Smith in the department of Semitic religions can be profitably extended to other departments. The study of folk-lore and mythology, when undertaken with discrimination, allows the comparison of evidence from the most widely-severed races, and the comparative method will suggest the explanation of obscure features in one locality from the more complete form which they may take elsewhere. Further, it is repeatedly found that there is an inevitable and unconscious tendency to clothe historical tradition in a singularly unhistorical dress. Traditions of common origin will continue to change, and not only can the same tradition appear in different forms, but the same legendary or unhistorical dress will clothe different traditions. Historical research elsewhere does not ignore these features, and the treatment of the tales of the creation and deluge, or of the birth of Moses, not to mention other details, has led to the recognition that earlier forms of incidents or persons may underlie the present narratives in the Old Testament. It is precisely the recovery of the underlying traditions with which Prof. Cheyne deals in this book. But where we may suspect that any narrative gives us only a late or secondary form of a tradition, the recovery of the original must be necessarily hazardous, and its success will depend upon the validity of the evidence adduced. Even where it is possible (in other fields) to compare the various forms which the same tradition may take, the variation is such that it still remains doubtful whether it would be possible to give in detail the presumably original form of any particular narrative under consideration.

Prof. Cheyne's elaborate discussion of the narratives in Genesis and portions of Exodus illustrates, in the first place, the value of archaeology in its widest extent, and employs a vast amount of material from all sources (including even the recently published Assuan papyri) to support his numerous original suggestions. These follow upon the lines of his recent publications, in which he constantly urges the necessity of a more comprehensive treatment of biblical problems, while indicating the methods which, in his opinion, provide the best solution. Now, to take only one point, it is certain that notwithstanding the arguments of opponents of the theory of a South Palestinian or North Arabian Musri-Mizraim, the probability of the extension of the term outside the limits of Egypt proper cannot fairly be denied, and it is conceded by many who naturally do not commit themselves to any extensive inferences based thereupon. Also, as Prof. W. R. Harper wrote:

'Every year since the work of Robertson Smith brings Israel into closer relationship with Arabia' (*Amos and Hosea* p. liv). The movement of Arabian tribes into Palestine cannot be summarily rejected, and the importation of desert peoples into Samaria by Sargon in 715 B.C. is of some significance, partly in view of the age to which literary critics ascribe much of the Old Testament, and partly because the immigrants presumably brought their own traditions with them. Thus, there is something to be said in favour of the theory that Musri and South Palestinian clans once played a prominent part in biblical history, and Prof. Cheyne's views resemble those of other pioneering critics in the exaggeration of considerations which in a simpler form would not be devoid of plausibility or even probability.

But although there is a distinct tendency nowadays, with the aid of metrical theories, to resort to emendation and excision, Prof. Cheyne's conclusions necessitate the assumption that the Masoretic text has suffered to an extent which perhaps finds its nearest parallel in the free correction of unintelligible manuscripts by the scribes of the Carlovingian Renaissance (and later)[1]; and if this were accepted, one would be confronted with the further difficulty (which invariably arises in the presence of hopelessly corrupt passages) that no reconstruction of the earlier ruined MSS would be possible. Besides, historical research must allow that the particular tradition incorporated in any document is perhaps only one of several formerly extant. Thus, apart from parallels to the story of the Deluge among other peoples (pp. 125 sqq.), purely local forms have been found in Palestine and Syria, and only the strongest of reasons will force the necessity of seeking a north-Arabian or Jerahmeelite origin for the present narratives (p. 146). The present writer does not depart from his own views in the article 'Jerahmeel' (§§ 1–3) in the *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, and indeed certain evidence might suggest that Jerahmeel and allied clans played a curiously prominent part at some period of the biblical history *or* at some stage in the growth of the present literature; but the same evidence also suggests that their traditions were subordinated or excised, and it would be equally legitimate to look for the underlying traditions of immigrants from other quarters.

Consequently, since a distinction must naturally be drawn between the recognition of the deeper biblical problems and the best method of solving them, one must confess that Prof. Cheyne's theory, in the form stated by himself, not only raises many questions relating to biblical history and literature which invalidate those considerations which are legitimate and acceptable, but involves a reconstruction for

[1] See Langlois and Seignobos *Introduction to the Study of History* p. 76 note.

which no conclusive evidence is as yet forthcoming. Nevertheless, there is a growing feeling that biblical critics have not yet presented a reconstruction which satisfies all the evidence, and while those 'pioneers' who are responsible for the new advances of criticism are moved by common aims, it will be recognized that they are working on highly specialized lines, and appeal more to the co-operation of critical scholars than to the ordinary reader, who, even if acquainted with the necessity of criticism, may not appreciate the urgency for deeper research. As Prof. Cheyne has very truly observed: 'The problems of various kinds now before us are partly new, partly old questions which have lately become more complicated and difficult. The co-operation of critical scholars is therefore very much to be desired, as well as a more general recognition of the necessity of pioneering work' (p. vii. The whole paragraph is important).

A small pamphlet by Fr. Giesebrecht on *Jeremias Metrik* (Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, Göttingen, 1905) gives the Hebrew text of those portions of the prophecies of Jeremiah which he holds to be metrical, with explanatory footnotes on the text, and a brief preface stating his attitude to the metrical problems. This interesting contribution to the 'new burning question of Old Testament Science'—to quote Prof. Cornill—will be welcomed by those interested in that question, and as Cornill himself has already shewn that this distinguishing feature of recent research properly holds a place in Old Testament 'introduction' (see his *Introd.* pp. 15–26), it is well to remember that scholars are not yet unanimous as to the extent to which the problems have been adequately solved.

Dr J. W. Thirtle, already known for an ingenious explanation of the titles of the Psalms, now publishes a series of 'critical studies in the Psalms and Isaiah' under the title *Old Testament Problems* (Frowde, 1907). The tradition of the men of Hezekiah who copied out the proverbs of Solomon forms a suggestive starting-point. The fifteen songs of the ascents or 'degrees' are then associated with the fifteen years added to Hezekiah's life when the shadow returned ten 'degrees' upon the dial of Ahaz. Following out the view of old John Lightfoot, these Psalms are placed in Hezekiah's reign, and naturally it is an easy step to the argument that the whole Psalter, 'in some of its most distinctive portions', is a reflexion of his age. Isaiah's turn comes next, and, denying the evidence for the partition of the book, Dr Thirtle identifies the 'servant of Yahweh' with Hezekiah. The Deutero-Isaiah leads to the book of Job, which was written to console Hezekiah in his illness, &c., &c. It will be evident how far Dr Thirtle may enjoy his claim to represent 'an alternative criticism of the Old Testament from which results of peculiar interest may be expected'

(p. v). The book has no arguments worthy of discussion, and the arbitrary views on 'adaptation' and the like are strange in one who is not friendly to scholarly criticism. The author has produced one of the curiosities of the day, and illustrates the danger of relying upon an uncontrolled imagination and an untrained intuition.

Prof. G. C. Workman, of Montreal, has written an earnest and helpful study of the problem of the *Servant of Jehovah* (Longmans, 1907) His thesis that the reference is to the Jewish Church or people 'viewed either temporally or spiritually' is worked out carefully, and his treatment of the fulfilment of the mission of the servant is highly sympathetic and stimulating. The book can also be commended for expository purposes. Special attention must be called, also, to the very elaborate proof of the late date of the Deutero-Isaiah, for, although the opinion of scholars is unanimous on the point, many will be glad to see the arguments on both sides restated in the completest possible manner. In this respect chaps. iii and iv are models of their kind.

The profound study of *The Samaritans*, by Prof. J. A. Montgomery, of Philadelphia (J. C. Winston Co., 1907), is the most thorough work that has ever appeared upon the history and literature of this interesting community. The author describes briefly the awakening of European interest, passes to a full treatment of modern conditions, and then traces the history from the fall of Samaria to the Mohammedan age. He collects all the references in the early writings (the Apocrypha, New Testament, and Josephus), and gives a very useful conspectus of the Talmudic evidence, including a translation of the interesting *Masseketh Kūthīm*. There is a good account of the theology of the Samaritans and their religious sects, and the concluding chapter deals at length with their language and literature. Illustrations, plates and maps illuminate the text; and a complete bibliography and several indexes give this monograph the necessary 'finish'. I have no space to refer to any of the more interesting points which Prof. Montgomery raises, but for Old Testament study perhaps the most valuable feature is the proof that the author's sub-title, 'the earliest Jewish sect', is thoroughly justified. Indirect light is thereby thrown upon the internal religious conditions in Samaria previous to the great schism, thus shewing how precarious is the not uncommon assumption of the low and degraded state of earlier thought in Palestine, and lending independent support to the recent views of Prof. Kennett regarding the position in Palestine during the Exile (*J. T. S.* 1905, pp. 169 sqq.; 1906, pp. 498–500).

STANLEY A. COOK.